
The effects of consumer ethnocentrism and cosmopolitanism on College students' study abroad behaviors

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Abstract:

Study abroad programs (SAPs) are in international education industry. According to OECD's report, in 2012, more than 4.5 million students were studying abroad and the average annual growth rate was 7%. Many universities and educational institutions from different countries have been promoting SAPs to their college students. To effectively promote SAPs, education practitioners need to find the right target segments and to make SAPs attractive to the target consumers. International marketing scholars suggest consumer ethnocentrism and cosmopolitanism as important segmentation variables to better understand consumer behaviors toward local and foreign products in different countries (Cleveland, Papadopoulos, and Laroche 2011). By the same token, both two constructs may be important segmentation variables for SAPs (domestic/foreign education service), but have not been explored yet. To fill this void, this study examines the impacts of consumer ethnocentrism and cosmopolitanism on college students' study abroad attitudes and behavioral intention. According to Social Identity Theory and the existing literature, this paper suggests three research hypotheses. Furthermore, two empirical studies with online surveys were conducted in the US and in Taiwan to test the research hypotheses. The first study included 209 students at an AACSB-accredited public university in the U.S while the second study had 104 respondents from a private university in Taiwan. The study results highlight the importance of cosmopolitanism trait on college students' SAPs decision, but did not find the negative effects of ethnocentrism. This research offers insights to marketing practitioner in education to promote SAPs.
