

INNOCENTS ABROAD

Attitude Change toward Hosts

Abstract: Tourism can bring people from different cultures into contact which, based on contact theory may in turn, promote socio-cultural understanding through attitude change. However, not all interactions between tourists and hosts have a positive outcome. The purpose of this study was to examine the role of social distance, prior expectations, and trip experience on post-trip attitudes in multiple destinations. This study is based on surveys conducted with two groups of students: 1) a group participating in a summer study abroad program to the South Pacific (Australia and Fiji) or to Europe (Austria and the Netherlands), and 2) a control group who did not participate in the study abroad programs. The results show that attitude changes were positive towards Europeans, negative towards Australians, and mixed towards Fijians. This study supports the expectation value theory, but contradicts the cultural distance theory of attitude change. Further, the results show that experience with non-tourism related services played an important role toward attitude change. **Keywords:** attitude change, expectancy theory, social distance, contact theory, study abroad.

INTRODUCTION

While the world faces serious conflicts and tensions based on social, cultural ideological and other differences, it has been argued that tourism can be a vital force for world peace by bridging the psychological and cultural gaps that exist between people (Kaul 1980). Tourism provides the opportunity for millions of daily interactions between tourists and hosts to create diverse socio-cultural understanding, thereby reducing the level of prejudice, conflict and tension that is necessary to improve global relations between people and nations (D'Amore 1988; Thyne, Carson and Todd 2006). The noble idea of tourism and peace is based on the assumption that the attitude and behavior of groups or individuals can be changed through intercultural contact and interactions, which are explained by the contact theory (Allport 1954). However, the existing empirical research has mixed findings. Carlson and Widaman's (1989) study indicated an increase in the level of international understanding of participants, with a more positive attitude after the trip, whereas (Krippendorf 1982) suggested that tourism can have the opposite effect. A study by Pizam, Jafari, and Milman's (1991) on the other hand, could not demonstrate that tourist's attitude would improve after visiting a host country. What appears to be a consensus from existing studies is that attitude changes may depend on a number of factors including social distance, prior expectations, and the experience during the trip. The purpose of this study therefore was to examine how social distance, prior expectations, and trip experiences would impact the post-trip attitudes of students in multiple destination settings.

Tourism, Cross-cultural Understanding and Peace

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There has been a great deal of attention in recent years among some international agencies and researchers about the extent to which tourism can have a positive effect on world peace. In this regard, it is worth noting the initiatives taken by the United Nations and the International Institute for Peace through Tourism (IIPT). Recognizing tourism as a vital force for world peace through the contacts and interactions between hundreds of millions of travelers and hosts, the United Nations organized a conference in Manila, the Philippines in 1980 (Kaul 1980). Following the Manila conference, IIPT has organized a series of international conferences in order to understand the relationship between tourism and peace. The First Global Conference on Tourism: A Vital Force for Peace was held in Vancouver, Canada in 1988 with the purpose of exploring ways in which tourism can promote understanding, trust, and goodwill between people, which are precursors to peace (Jafari 1989). The conference developed a credo of peace traveler (Goeldner and Ritchie 2006). Subsequently, two more conferences have been held in Montreal in 1994 and Scotland in 1999. In order to bring together leaders from different sectors of the tourism industry, academia, and related sectors including culture, environment and development, IIPT initiated a larger scale global summit in Jordan in 2000. Since then two more summits have been held in Switzerland and Thailand in 2003 and 2005 respectively.

Empirical research, however, has had mixed findings on whether or not tourism can contribute to world peace through attitude change. Ap and Var (1990) examined perceptions that tourism promotes world peace as well as the perceptions of the general benefits of tourism. While the results of their study does not support the argument that tourism promotes peace, their study urged the need to develop better measurement of the social attributes that would help support the relationship between tourism and peace. D'Amore (1988) advanced the notion that tourism can bridge the psychological and cultural gaps that exist between people and that tourism can contribute to the appreciation of the diversity in the world. The main argument is that millions of daily personal interactions that take place between tourists and hosts have the potential to create the sensitivity and understanding that is needed to improve global relations between individuals, communities as well as nations (D'Amore 1988). In order to quantify the relationship between tourism and peace, it is necessary to examine the intercultural interactions of people, especially in tourist-host roles. Theoretically, as tourism brings people from different backgrounds into contact, it should provide opportunities for social and cultural awareness, as well as understanding and acceptance. This in turn could reduce the extent of prejudice, conflict and tension between the individuals, that can hopefully extend to the national levels of hosts (residents) and guest (tourists) (Thyne et al 2006).

Intercultural contacts and interactions between tourists and hosts can be explained by the contact theory (Allport 1954). The theory suggests that contact between cultures can create an opportunity for mutual acquaintance, and ultimately can enhance understanding and acceptance and reduce inter-group prejudice, conflict and tension. Initial contact alone will not necessarily provide a positive cross-cultural experience, as other factors often have influence over the environment in which the interaction takes place.

Allport (1954) and Amir (1969) have suggested some criteria that must be present in order for a positive intercultural experience to take place. It has been argued that there must be equal status (Riordan 1978), the interaction should be voluntary, and participants from each group must be engaged in an intimate interaction with institutional support and pursuing common goals, and the initial attitudes between groups should not be extremely negative (Allport 1954; Amir 1969; Thyne et al 2006). In addition, while tourism can provide an environment from which tourists and hosts can learn and appreciate each other's perspective, they will have to overcome factors of unequal economic status between hosts and tourists, as well as the typical superficial interactions between hosts and visitors (Dörnyei and Csizér 2005). In a tourism context, following Fisher's (1991) model Gomez-Jacinto, Martin-Garcia, and Bertiche-Haud`Huyze (1999) developed a tourism experience and attitude change model. The model proposed that the influence of intercultural interaction, tourist activities and service quality on attitude and stereotype is completely indirect, mediated by holiday satisfaction and experience. Measuring the outcome of the interaction between the hosts and guests, and factors that influence the interaction are among the important issues researchers have been struggling with since the inception of the idea of peace through tourism. This paper perceives attitude change as a way of measuring the outcome as it has been widely used in the cross-cultural literature. Among the factors that influence the interaction, this paper attempts to integrate three factors including social distance, prior expectations, and trip experience.

Tourism and Attitude Change

Several studies have attempted to examine changes in attitudes as a result of the interaction between tourists and hosts. As Riordan (1978) indicated, equal status between hosts and guests is one of the criteria for positive outcome during the contact between two cultures. This criterion is better explained by social distance theory in sociology and cross-cultural studies. Social distance is defined as the cultural differences between two groups (Poole 1926), which has been used in studies of ethnic, class, gender, religions, peace, conflicts, and other kinds of social relationships since its conception in the late 19th century by sociologists George Simmel and Robert Park. Although social distance is a function of a state of mind (Giddings 1895), people maintain social distance by spatial segregation such as choosing residential, leisure, and work space (Shibutani, 1955; Ethington, 2008). Social distance can range from differences between siblings to different races. In this study, our purpose is using social distance between cultures, which are often measured by nationality as most individuals from the same nation are most likely to share a stable and dominant culture character (Reisinger and Turner 1997; Thyne et al 2006). The social distance theory assumes that host respondents are more accepting and tolerating of people more socially and culturally similar to themselves (Thyne et al 2006). Using conjoint analysis, Thyne et al (2006) examined the importance of a tourist's nationality in residents' acceptance of, and attitude towards, tourists in New Zealand. The nationalities included Americans, Japanese, Germans, and Australians. Among these

nationalities, cultures similar to New Zealand were Australians and Americans, and those different were the Japanese and Germans. Their findings revealed that for New Zealand, Americans are the most preferred nationality and Japanese and German the least preferred, confirming the theory behind social distance. The study further noted some other factors that have played important role since Australians are probably socially closer to New Zealanders, but were not the most preferred. The reasons could be economic gain from American tourists, influence of American culture, and other circumstances, particularly rivalry between Australia and New Zealand, visibly manifested in the sports of Rugby in particular, at the time of the research (Thyne et al 2006).

With respect to interactions, studies have shown that the nature of the experience from interactions between tourists and hosts can have a strong influence on the attitudinal changes of the tourists. Students on study abroad programs provide an example of visitors that often have greater levels of interaction with hosts than “institutionalized mass tourists” (Cohen 1972). A number of studies have actually examined changes in attitudes of students who participated in a study abroad program. Pizam et al (1991) did a pre-trip and post-trip survey to study changes in attitudes of American students visiting the former Soviet Union. In this particular study, a group of twenty-four study abroad students and a control group of 36 students were asked to complete the survey about attitudes towards Soviet citizens, their political beliefs and their institutions. The results showed that students who were participating on the study abroad program to the USSR had more positive attitudes on 12 of the 14 statements than the control group, suggesting that people’s attitudes towards the hosts improves when they decide to visit the destination. While the overall satisfaction of the tourist experience in the USSR by the students was high, the difference between pre and post-trip test did not confirm that tourists’ negative attitude would change into positive domain as only 2 of the 14 items showed a positive change in attitude.

Carlson and Widaman (1988) also conducted a study on the effects of a year long study abroad program at a European university on attitudes towards other cultures. Their study supported the contention that the level of international understanding of students who took the study abroad program increased in international political concern, cross-cultural interest, and cultural cosmopolitanism. The study abroad group also had more positive, but critical attitudes towards the United States. There were a numbers of important differences that indicate factors that may influence or affect students’ attitudes. For instance, students with prior living/traveling experience to Europe before their junior year displayed greater political concern and cross-cultural interest, and the study abroad trip worked as an equalizer. Other factors such as gender and college major also had an affect on the outcomes. For example, female students and humanities majors had higher cross-cultural interest prior to and after their study abroad. The overall results of the study suggest that studying abroad can contribute to increased international awareness as well as cultivate the attitudes and behaviors necessary for greater international understanding.

Another study by Var, Schluter, Ankomah, and Lee (1989) investigated how Argentinean students perceived the socioeconomic and environmental impacts of tourism, and the idea that tourism promotes world peace. The results showed that the majority of the students perceived tourism as having a positive effect on economic development, employment, conservation of the natural environment, in addition to conservation of the cultural environment. The study also found that 80% of the students thought that tourism promoted international understanding, and that 61% of the students thought that tourism ultimately promoted world peace.

A study by Litvin (2003) also examined the effects of trips on the attitudes and perceptions of students towards their host and host countries using fifty students traveling from Singapore to Egypt and Israel on a 12-days trip. The pre- and post-trip survey results showed that thirty six of the sixty two attitude questions changed significantly between the pre and post test. The attitudes toward the Egyptian people and towards Egypt changed negatively, but the attitudes towards Israelis and towards Israel changed positively. The study suggests that the direction of attitude change depends on the country of origin and that being visited.

Prior expectations on the part of visitors may also have an important role in determining the direction of attitude change. Marion (1980) indicated that students with high preconceived notions about the host country could become less favorable after the trip as a result of the unrealistically high level of their expectations that were not met. Weissman and Furnman (1987) had similar results to their study of the expectations and experiences of visitors that they called “temporary American sojourners in England.” This situation can be explained by the expectancy value theory, which assumes that all unmet expectations will always result in negative consequences (Feather 1982). Further, high expectations which cannot be met can lead to disappointment and negative attitudes about the destination and its residents. Another study on expectation-experience discrepancies conducted by Rogers and Ward (1993) focused on the psychological adjustment during cross-cultural reentry by secondary school students returning to New Zealand. Their findings revealed that expectations had predictive power when considered in terms of discrepancy from the actual experience. The general conclusion is that expectations are formed by various factors. Although the role of social distance has not been explicitly explained, it has been argued by Martin, Bradford, and Rohrlich (1995) that social distance helps to form expectation. In a study of a group of American visiting England, Martin et al (1995) found that Americans were very unsatisfied with their trip to England because they had very similar expectations to their country because in general, they share similar culture and language. As a result, their expectations of England were violated more negatively than other countries. Their study suggests that social distance is not the only influence on the post-trip attitude, but also the expectations on what those experiences will actually be like.

Built upon the previous literature reviewed above, this study uses two dominant social and psychological theories to examine tourism and attitude change. First, the study compares the pre- and post-

trip attitudes of American college students on a summer study abroad to four countries: Australia, Fiji, Austria and Holland. The primary objective was to examine the relevance and role of the social distance theory and expectancy theory. Based on the social-distance theory, both pre-and post-trip attitudes are expected to be higher for Australia, followed by the two European countries (Austria, Holland), and finally Fiji. Expectancy theory was tested comparing pre-trip expectations and difference between post- and pre-trip attitude scores. Based on the expectancy theory, students with very high expectations about the destination are more likely to rate the pre-trip attitudes high, which may result in negative or minimal change in attitudes. Second, the paper further examined the role of tourism and non-tourism related experiences in post-trip attitude formation.

METHODS

Data for this study were collected in summer 2006 from two groups of undergraduate students at an American university. The first group of students consisted of those participating in a five-week long summer study abroad program (SA). The SA group consisted of a total of 66 students who went either to the South Pacific (Australia and Fiji), or Europe (Austria and the Netherlands). The program was not a degree or graduation requirement and all students who enrolled in the program voluntarily participated in the study. The second group was the control group which included 80 undergraduate students enrolled in randomly selected classes who did not participate in the study abroad programs. Of a total sample of 146 students, there were slightly more female students (57.8%) than male (42.2%). Although the percentage of male and female subjects was very close (49% and 51%, respectively) in the control group, there were more female students (69%) participating in study abroad programs. Almost four-fifth of the sample students were either juniors (45%) or seniors (34%), and the rest were sophomores and freshmen. The SA group was surveyed twice: prior to the trip (pre-trip) in April and May and after the trip (post-trip) in June and July of 2006. The control group was surveyed only once between April and May of 2006. Questionnaires for the control group included four sets of attitude questions toward Australians, Fijians, Austrians, and the Dutch. The pre-trip and post-trip questionnaires included exactly the same attitude questions but only about the countries specific to the trips. In terms of their international travel experience, 77 percent of the students reported that they had previously traveled outside of the US. However, previous travel outside the United States was to either Canada, Mexico or the Caribbean. Only 5 percent of the SA group had previously been overseas or outside the Americas. Although the self reported knowledge of other cultures was not different between the SA and control group, the control group was more knowledgeable about world geography than the SA group.

With respect to advance trip preparation, the university held about four orientation sessions dealing with travel logistics, university policies, student codes of conduct, legal, medical, safety, security, and matters dealing with emergencies in a foreign country. Students were encouraged to read up on each country

in advance, however, there were no formal lectures that dealt with the specific countries until after the group's arrival at each destination. Basically, students were "innocent" in a formal sense, since their immersion did not begin until arrival overseas.

To measure attitude, a set of 23 attitude questions were selected based on previous studies (Allport 1954; Litvin 2003; Milman, Reichel and Pizam 1990; Pizam, Jafari and Millman 1991). Allport (1954), who is considered a pioneer of attitude research, defined attitude as a state of mind and process for response. Further, Katz (1960) provided a more complete definition of attitude as "predisposition of the individual to evaluate some symbol or object or aspect ...in a favorable or unfavorable manner.... Attitudes include the affective or feeling core of liking or disliking, and the cognitive, or belief, elements which describe the effect of the attitude, its characteristics, and its relations to other objects" (p.168). There is a consensus among psychologists and social psychologists that attitude is a function of experience. This study uses the rating scales developed by Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (1957), which were used by Milman et al (1990), Pizam et al (1991), and Litvin (2003) in tourism context, with some modifications. In this semantic differential form, a set of bipolar semantic scales are anchored at each pole by an adjective describing the continuum. Respondents were given exactly the same attitude questions and asked to place a check mark at the point on a seven-point scale (Dawes 1972). Each of the points has a numeric label to help respondents.

For the purpose of evaluating their experience with the trip, respondents were asked to rate 11 items using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1= *very dissatisfied* to 5= *very satisfied*, with an option of *not applicable*. These items included both tourism and non-tourism related services (see Table 1). An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the 11 items to test the factorial validity of these questions. Principal component factor analysis resulted in two factor solution with eigen values of 3.49 and 2.44. Six items converged on the tourism services experience, while five items converged on the non-tourism experience. The factor loadings for the two-factors solution clearly demonstrates that these items do not have cross-loadings (Table 1). Additionally, reliability analyses were conducted to measure the consistency of these items using Cronbach's alpha scores. Both of these factors have high scores (.79 each), suggesting that these items measure the tourism and non-tourism services very well. Tourism-related services included accommodations, food services, transportation services, tour guides, general quality of service delivery, and tourist attractions. Non-tourism-related services were experience with general public, how local residents perceive the respondent's country, how locals perceive the resident population of the respondent's country of origin, and experience with local police and customs officials.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

FINDINGS

Comparative Attitude Changes

To compare the pre-trip and post-trip responses, and the control group's attitudes, a series of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests was carried out. Scheffe, a post-hoc, test was further conducted to examine any differences among the groups. Overall, cumulative mean scores of 23 attitude variables showed that the students who went to the South Pacific had very positive attitude about Australia (overall mean=5.54 on a seven point semantic scale) prior to the trip. This declined significantly after the trip (overall mean =5.03), and was even lower than the control group (5.17) ($F=4.368$, $p=.014$) (Table 2). The results also showed that 8 out of 23 items related to the attitude towards Australians were significantly different among three groups (Table 3). Interestingly, for all of the significant attitude items, the changes were in a negative direction after the trip. This means that the students had higher positive attitude prior to their trip but this declined after their trip.

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INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

INSERT TABLE 4 HERE

In contrast, students' attitude towards Fijians was mixed. Out of 14 significantly different items, 4 items had changes in a positive direction (Table 4). These attitude items include "Fijian are warm/cold hearted", "Fijians are nice/awful", "Fijians are Friendly/unfriendly", and "Fijians love/hate Americans". For only one item, "Fijians are active/passive" the change was in a negative direction. Attitude towards the Dutch was overall, in a positive direction (Table 5). Out of 10 attitude items, 6 items had post-trip means significantly higher than the pre-trip means suggesting increasing positive attitude after the trip. Finally, when evaluating the change of attitudes towards Austrians, for 17 items, the changes were in a positive direction (Table 6).

INSERT TABLE 5 HERE

INSERT TABLE 6 HERE

Overall, the above analyses show mixed results, suggesting that attitude change varies with the country visited. For example, attitudes towards the Dutch and Austrians were in a positive direction after the trip. However, attitude towards Australians was in a negative direction.

For the purpose of testing the social distance theory, responses for the four countries were compared for pre-trip, post-trip, and the control group using One Way Analysis (ANOVA) (Table 7). As expected, the pre-trip attitudes results show that respondents had significantly higher attitude towards Australia (mean=5.58) than the other three countries. This is also true with the control group. However, there was no

significant difference in attitude toward Fiji, The Netherlands, and Austria. Based on the social proximity to the destination culture, it was hypothesized that attitudes towards Austrians and the Dutch would be better than attitudes toward Fiji. Interestingly, for the post-trip attitude, mean scores were not significantly different. Although the social distance theory was partially supported by the pre-trip and control group attitude, this was not observed for the post-trip attitude change.

INSERT TABLE 7 HERE

The attitude change between the four countries revealed that attitudes toward Australians changed in a negative direction while Fijians had a nominal positive change. Attitudes toward the Dutch had positive change by only .6 points, while Austria had the highest positive change by 1.01 points (Table 7). Interestingly, while Australians received the highest pre-trip attitude score, they received the lowest post-trip attitude score, indicating the most shift from pre-trip to post trip ranking. In contrast, Austrians had the lowest pre-trip attitude scores, but the highest post-trip attitude score. High expectations of Australians prior to the trip may have resulted in a negative post-trip attitude directional change. It must be emphasized that the post-attitude score was still positive (5.05 in a seven point scale). In contrast, Austrians had very low pre-trip attitude score, but changed to a positive post-trip direction. Although post-trip attitudes among the four countries were not significantly different, the pre-trip expectations played an important role in changing post-trip attitudes. Based on these finding, the results of this study support the expectancy theory.

In order to examine the extent to which actual trip experiences may be responsible for attitude change, respondents were asked to evaluate 11 experiential items on a five-point Likert type scale ranging from very dissatisfied (1) to very satisfied (5). The experiences were compared among the four destinations to find out the role of respondents' experience in their post-trip attitude. The results reveal higher means for Australia (4.19) and Austria (4.41) compared with Fiji (3.68) and the Netherlands (3.64) ($F=14.46, p<.001$), with respect to tourism-related service experience (Table 8). However, respondents were least satisfied with their experience in Australia (mean=3.43) with respect to non-tourism related services among the four destinations. This suggests that the nature of non-tourism related service may play an important role in the overall attitude change between the pre and post –trip assessment.

INSERT TABLE 8 HERE

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Further, item-wise analysis was conducted to examine the differences in individual items (Table 9). The results revealed that respondents indicated a consistently higher level of satisfaction with most of the tourism related services in Australia. However, they were less satisfied with a number of specific

experiences including those with the general public and custom officials/ police than with similar experiences in the other three countries. More importantly, respondents were very unsatisfied in Australia with “how locals perceive the U.S.” and “how locals see Americans.” Both of these items received less than 3.00 in a five point scale.

DISCUSSION

After two world wars, hundred of regional and local wars in the past 50 years, and the present potential for what may be a global war, the quest for peace is even more crucial and urgent. Many believe that the seeds for peace can be planted at the personal level through travel and tourism. Organizations such as the International Institute of Peace through Tourism (IITP) have organized a number of international conferences on this topic, while different forms of tourism have emerged to foster “peace tourism.” These include “volunteer tourism,” “people-to-people tourism” and “home stay tourism.” Universities have come a long way since the “Grand Tour” that was the sole preserve of Europe’s aristocracy in educating their children. Today many universities and colleges actually mandate students to take “Global Awareness” courses. A key component of this is the existence of different types of Study Abroad Programs. In the United States, study abroad programs for college students vary from a few weeks up to a year or more. They also vary from “enclave” programs where students stay in a hotel to “cultural immersion” programs with local host families. Regardless, they all have elements that could foster “peace tourism.” First, the duration ranges from a few weeks to a semester or even several years. Second, pre-trip preparations allow or require students to learn about the geography, history, as well as the economic, politics and cultural settings of the host country. Accomplishing this has become relatively easy with the availability of information technology and related resources. Third, the academic focus of the program requires or even demands that the students learn about diverse aspects of their host country and its residents. Fourth, study abroad programs normally incorporate expert guest presentations, field trips, site visits, and research assignments. Finally, these programs also provide free time (especially on week-ends) for students to pursue independent activities. These activities could range from visits to local attractions, shopping, attending local events such as festivals where they are likely to meet and interact with local residents while experiencing local attractions and services. Some programs include home stay or assignment to local host families. Consequently, most students develop attitudes, impressions and actual knowledge about their host country and its residents prior to their trip. Ultimately, based on their activities and interactions during the trip, students’ pre-trip attitudes about their host country and its residents are affected and subjected to changes. Hopefully, they will have lasting impressions about the country, their host, and they in turn, will be affected, sometimes, in life-altering ways. This, many believe, bode well at the individual level, and ultimately, at the societal level for global peace. The purpose of this study, as stated at the outset was to examine some of the factors that affect changes in students attitude when the go on study abroad programs.

This study does not support the assumption that tourism always promotes peace through changing visitors' attitude after their trip. Attitude change was positive towards Europeans (the Dutch and Austrians), negative towards Australians, and mixed towards Fijians. This result is consistent with Litvin (2003) and Thyne et al. (2006) providing further support that post-trip attitude change depends on the country visited. The study has added an interesting aspect to looking at the social distance theory on tourism and cultural understanding. Social distance plays a more important role in forming attitudes prior to the trip than attitude change after the trip. One of the reasons for this is the gap between the pre-trip expectations and the actual experience during the trip. The results from this study indicate that the experience during the trip has to meet or exceed the expectation prior to the trip. As indicated by the psychological theory of expectancy value theory (Feather, 1982), high expectations prior to the trip are hard to be fulfilled by the trip and hence result in a negative direction, whereas low expectations result in a positive attitude change (Marion, 1980; Rogers and Ward, 1993). High expectations may help tourists to make their initial decision to visit a country, but unmet expectations would play a negative role in their overall satisfaction of the trip, which could have a negative consequence on repeat visits and word-of-mouth promotion.

Another factor that plays an important role in attitude change is the quality of service received from both tourism and non-tourism related sectors. The focus of existing literature is on the relationship between tourism-related services and attitude change (Pizam et al. 1991). This study, however, contributes to establishing the link between visitors' experience of non-tourism related services and their attitude toward the destination. Results of this study indicate that non-tourism related services have very strong relationship in attitude change. Particularly, students visiting Australia were very dissatisfied with their experiences of non-tourism related services.

This study has implications for destination management organizations that are charged with quality service delivery to international visitors. Tourism industries focus on attracting more tourists through provision of better services to their clients. However, there are some other factors that play important roles in tourists' overall evaluation of their visits. Some government sectors, particularly customs, security, and immigration officers have direct contact with tourists, but their behavior towards tourists may not be very welcoming. The study showed that the interaction with the general public is even more important for overall attitude change towards the host country and its residents. Political relationship between the origin and destination countries and international policies play a crucial role in hosts and guests attitudes to each other. The US war in Iraq has produced a lot of resentment among Australians towards the United States and its citizens, which was demonstrated by the Australians when they interacted with the students. Other factors that might have played some roles in attitude formation are socioeconomic conditions of the students, duration of trip, and location of the university. Further study is suggested with a larger sample including more countries and universities to analyze these factors.

CONCLUSIONS

Three important findings have emerged from this study. First, this study provides evidence that the social distance theory plays an important role in pre-trip attitude formation, but its role on attitude change was very weak. While Australians appeared to be culturally closer to the United States than the other three countries, students' attitude change was more negative after the trip. Second, the results support the expectation theory. The negative attitude towards Australians after the trip could be attributed to students' highly positive pre-trip attitude (highest among the four countries). Although the post-trip attitude was still positive, the higher pre-trip attitude resulted in significant decline in attitude based on actual travel experiences. Third, non-tourism related services play crucial role in tourists' attitude towards the destination and its resident population.

Tourism is not just an industry; it is a human phenomenon which has social implications. The interaction between two countries can take place at different levels. The first can be government to government through their diplomatic missions including embassies, government delegates, and other diplomatic activities. The second level of interaction takes place between people, which is facilitated by tourism through hosts and guests interactions (Smith1989). Peace starts from the understanding at the individual level. Tourists and hosts are the best peace promoters if their interactions are positive and based on mutual respect. Once tourists observe and experience the reality, they can influence politicians and change policies through both passive and active ways, such as lobbying and boycotting. This was observed in the case of Myanmar, where many tourists boycotted the country after the military coup. This is even more important in the case of students because of their young age, quest for global and cultural awareness, as well as future leaders in various fields of endeavor. Study abroad programs are a global phenomenon involving multi-directional student mobility programs and activities all around the world. In the United States alone, according to the Institute of International Education (IIE), nearly 600,000 international students came to pursue studies in the United States during the 2005/2006 academic year. The number of Americans studying abroad has increased significantly in the last 10 years. For example, in the 1994/1995 academic year, about 84,400 studied overseas. The number had increased with 10 short years to about 206,000 during the 2004/2005 academic years (IIE 2007). It is projected that at this rate, about half a million American students will be studying overseas by 2015. The contribution of this study is to explore the nature and extent of the attitudes of this important group of travelers, as well as some of the factors that influence such changes. Future research could examine these issues focusing on foreign students coming to the United States in order to identify any similarities or differences, and including more universities and countries to examine other factors that may play an important role in attitude formation. ■

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Table 1. Factor Analysis of Experience

Factor/item	Factor Loading	
	Factor 1	Factor 2
Experience with Tourism Services		
Experience with hotel/ accommodation	.530	
Experience with restaurants and food services	.621	
Experience with transportation services	.734	
Experience with tour guides	.738	
Experience with general service delivery	.765	
Experience at tourist attractions	.727	
Experience with Non-tourism Services		
Experience with the general public		.625
Experience with how locals perceive the United States		.903
Experience with how locals see Americans		.881
Experience with the police		.511
Experience with custom officials		.626
Number of items	6	5
Alpha	.79	.79
Eigen Value	3.49	2.44
Mean Experience	4.00	3.97
% Variance Explained	31.70	22.20

Extraction method- Principal Component Analysis
 Rotation Method- Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

Table 2. Overall Comparison of Attitudes between Pre-Trip, Post-Trip and Control Groups

<i>Country</i>	<i>Pre-Trip Mean</i>	<i>Post-Trip Mean</i>	<i>Control Mean</i>	<i>F Value</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
All countries	5.03 ^{ab}	5.21 ^b	4.88 ^a	6.351	.002
Australia	5.54 ^a	5.03 ^b	5.17 ^{ab}	4.368	.014
Fiji	5.02	5.09	4.81	2.072	.129
Netherlands	4.58 ^a	5.18 ^b	4.78 ^{ab}	3.896	.023
Austria	4.50 ^a	5.48 ^b	4.71 ^{ab}	9.700	.000

^{a, b, c} indicate significantly different groups at .05 level.

Table 3. Attitudes towards Australians

<i>Attitude Item</i>	<i>Pre-Trip Mean</i>	<i>Post-Trip Mean</i>	<i>Control Mean</i>	<i>F Value</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Warm/Cold Hearted	5.98 ^a	5.06 ^b	5.41 ^b	6.095	.003
Nice/Awful	6.05 ^a	5.24 ^b	5.46 ^b	5.390	.005
Friendly/Unfriendly	6.30 ^a	4.88 ^b	5.59 ^c	15.547	.000
Flexible/Rigid	5.49 ^a	4.79 ^b	5.09 ^{ab}	3.215	.043
Love Americans/Hate Americans	4.95 ^a	3.79 ^b	5.03 ^a	9.676	.000
Kind/Cruel	5.88 ^a	5.09 ^b	5.43 ^{ab}	5.425	.005
Relaxed/Tense	6.07 ^a	5.18 ^b	5.38 ^b	6.706	.002
Active/Passive	6.07 ^a	5.27 ^b	5.61 ^{ab}	5.417	.005

Table 4. Attitudes towards Fijians

<i>Attitude Item</i>	<i>Pre-Trip</i>	<i>Post-Trip</i>	<i>Control</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Value</i>	
Warm/Cold Hearted	5.67 ^a	6.48 ^b	5.59 ^a	7.833	.001
Nice/Awful	5.86 ^a	6.64 ^b	5.59 ^a	12.139	.000
Good/Bad	5.67 ^{ab}	6.30 ^a	5.55 ^b	5.171	.007
Friendly/Unfriendly	5.86 ^a	6.67 ^b	5.60 ^a	10.317	.000
Submissive/Aggressive	5.12 ^{ab}	5.64 ^a	4.72 ^b	6.121	.003
Hardworking/Lazy	5.79 ^a	5.55 ^{ab}	5.01 ^b	4.642	.011
Fast/Slow	4.05 ^a	2.55 ^b	4.21 ^a	19.342	.000
Discriminate Against Women/ Do Not At All	5.02	5.06	4.47	3.515	.032
Discriminate Against Minorities/ Do Not At All	5.26 ^{ab}	5.39 ^a	4.69 ^b	4.609	.011
Love Americans/ Hate Americans	4.42 ^a	5.52 ^b	4.58 ^a	10.304	.000
Kind/ Cruel	5.53 ^{ab}	6.18 ^a	5.25 ^b	7.586	.001
Relaxed/ Tense	6.19 ^a	6.58 ^a	5.29 ^b	16.219	.000
Rich/ Poor	3.24 ^{ab}	2.67 ^a	3.81 ^b	9.661	.000
Active/ Passive	5.14 ^a	4.12 ^b	4.39 ^b	5.113	.007
Modest/ Boastful	5.42	5.45	4.89	4.122	.018

Table 5. Attitudes towards the Dutch

<i>Attitude Item</i>	<i>Pre-Trip</i>	<i>Pos-Tript</i>	<i>Control</i>	<i>F Value</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>		
Nice/Awful	4.88 ^a	5.75 ^b	5.06 ^a	4.013	.020
Good/Bad	4.88 ^a	5.75 ^b	5.15 ^{ab}	3.659	.028
Friendly/Unfriendly	4.88 ^a	5.81 ^b	5.15 ^{ab}	4.102	.019
Educated / Illiterate	4.79 ^a	5.69 ^b	5.33 ^{ab}	3.586	.030
Fast/Slow	4.26 ^{ab}	3.39 ^b	4.60 ^a	6.239	.003
Discriminate Against Women/ Do Not At All	4.57 ^a	5.63 ^b	4.79 ^a	5.424	.005
Kind/Cruel	4.65 ^a	5.53 ^b	4.96 ^{ab}	4.049	.020
Relaxed/Tense	4.74 ^a	5.81 ^b	4.79 ^a	7.775	.001
Modern/Old Fashioned	4.57 ^{ab}	5.19 ^b	4.28 ^a	4.683	.011
Modest/Boastful	4.43	5.19	4.61	3.640	.029

Table 6. Attitudes towards Austrians

<i>Attitude Item</i>	<i>Pre-Trip</i>	<i>Post-Trip</i>	<i>Control</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Value</i>	
Warm/Cold	4.70 ^a	5.66 ^b	4.84 ^a	4.894	.009
Nice/Awful	4.52 ^a	5.94 ^b	5.04 ^a	9.119	.000
Good/Bad	4.48 ^a	6.00 ^b	5.11 ^a	9.836	.000
Honest/Dishonest	4.74 ^a	6.00 ^b	4.93 ^a	9.854	.000
Friendly/Unfriendly	4.74 ^a	5.88 ^b	4.91 ^a	6.341	.002
Reliable/Unreliable	4.52 ^a	5.56 ^b	4.68 ^b	7.796	.001
Flexible/Rigid	4.39	5.13	4.447	3.299	.040
Intelligent/Stupid	4.87 ^a	5.94 ^b	5.25 ^a	5.263	.006
Hardworking/Lazy	4.78 ^a	6.00 ^b	5.10 ^a	7.275	.001
Educated/Illiterate	4.83 ^a	6.06 ^b	5.39 ^a	6.680	.002
Clean/Dirty	4.70 ^a	5.84 ^b	5.10 ^a	4.971	.008
Discriminate Against Women/ Do Not At All	4.39 ^a	5.88 ^b	4.76 ^a	8.524	.000
Discriminate Against Minorities/ Do Not At All	4.22 ^a	5.91 ^b	4.36 ^a	14.535	.000
Love Americans/Hate Americans	4.26 ^a	5.16 ^b	4.13 ^a	7.965	.001
Kind/Cruel	4.52 ^a	6.00 ^b	4.76 ^a	13.728	.000
Relaxed/Tense	4.30 ^a	5.72 ^b	4.36 ^a	11.824	.000
Rich/Poor	4.35 ^a	5.25 ^b	4.69 ^a	4.207	.017
Modest/Boastful	4.26 ^a	5.59 ^b	4.24 ^a	13.706	.000

^{a, b, c} indicate significantly different groups at .05 level.

Table 7. Overall Comparison of attitudes

<i>Country</i>	<i>Australia</i>	<i>Fiji</i>	<i>Austria</i>	<i>Holland</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Pre-Trip	5.58 ^a	5.01 ^b	4.51 ^b	4.58 ^b	12.530	.000
Post-Trip	5.05	5.07	5.52	5.18	2.11	.102
Difference (post-pre)	-.53	.06	1.01	0.60		
Control	5.20 ^a	4.81 ^b	4.74 ^b	4.79 ^b	4.80	.003

^{a, b, c} indicate significantly different groups at .05 level.

Table 8. Comparison of Tourism and Non-tourism related Experiences among Four Countries

Experience	Australia	Fiji	Austria	Holland	F Value	Sig.
Experience with tourism services	4.19 ^a	3.68 ^b	4.41 ^a	3.64 ^b	15.46	0.000
Experience with non-tourism services	3.43 ^a	4.30 ^b	4.29 ^b	3.97 ^b	11.64	0.000

Table 9. Item-wise Comparison of Experiences among Four Countries

Experience	Australia	Fiji	Austria	Holland	F Value	Sig.
Experience with hotel/accommodation	4.09 ^a	3.82 ^a	4.78 ^b	2.75 ^c	36.87	0.000
Experience with restaurants and food services	4.32 ^a	3.30 ^b	4.22 ^a	3.78 ^{ab}	9.00	0.000
Experience with tour guides	4.18 ^a	3.62 ^b	4.16 ^a	3.84 ^{ab}	4.34	0.006
Experience with transportation services	4.12 ^a	3.48 ^b	4.59 ^a	4.06 ^a	11.62	0.000
Experience at tourist attractions	4.59 ^a	4.12 ^b	4.53 ^a	4.00 ^b	8.72	0.000
Experience with general service delivery	3.79 ^{ab}	3.84 ^{ab}	4.28 ^a	3.45 ^b	4.30	0.006
Experience with the general public	3.76 ^a	4.35 ^b	4.52 ^b	4.32 ^{ab}	5.35	0.002
Experience with how locals perceive the United States	2.91 ^a	4.15 ^b	4.06 ^b	3.74 ^b	10.46	0.000
Experience with how locals see Americans	2.88 ^a	4.15 ^b	4.13 ^b	3.74 ^b	11.83	0.000
Experience with the police	3.53	4.12	4.11	4.00	2.55	0.060
Experience with custom officials	3.97 ^a	4.71 ^b	4.59 ^b	4.00 ^a	10.06	0.000