

Review of: "Fieldwork Studies Encourage Graduates to Revisit Studied Regions: Lifestyles of Young People in the Age of Mobilities"

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This study addresses an extremely important topic that, to my knowledge, represents a major gap in the literature on study abroad and its impact. The data for the paper have very impressive statistical power, with a huge sample of 1,000 former FWS participants. It also has implications that go well beyond study abroad. For example, it would be really valuable to know how many former JET participants remained engaged with Japan and how. Or how many former UN Volunteer Corps members or former US Peace Corps volunteers remained engaged with the regions where they served? Thus, in many ways, this paper is really cutting-edge!

Despite its great relevance and importance, the paper has some serious problems, which can be summarized as follows:

1. We need to know in more detail the nature of the large sample and how it was selected.
2. Because of the great statistical power, findings with little size effect or substantive meaning will be found to have really high statistical "significance." In the study's major regression analysis, the beta weight for PC1 is .107, which means that it explains only .011% of the variance, and the beta weight for PC2 is .123, which means that it explains only .015% of the variance. Thus, the only meaningful finding from the regression analysis is that men are much more likely to return to the regions where they studied. But this finding is not adequately discussed nor interpreted.
3. Factor analysis is normally a valuable tool used for data reduction and/or construct validity, not hypothesis testing.
4. A sophisticated ANOVA analysis is done, but despite the high statistical power, only one variable is found to be statistically significant.
5. Apparently, "region" was left to be defined by survey participants. But "region" is very vague. It could be the country where individuals studied or larger regions such as Africa, Asia, the Middle East, or Southeast Asia.
6. The key outcome variable is quantitative, the number of return visits to the "region." This is quite superficial. A single visit could involve much more engagement than frequent "touristy" type visits.
7. The author suggests viewing FWS as a form of tourism. This is problematic, given the harsh criticism of much short-term study abroad as "glorified cultural tourism" (see the work of the British scholar, Michael Woulf).
8. It is impossible to measure or assess the impact of FWS on regions.

Hope these comments are helpful and useful.

