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# Relating travel personality to Big Five Factors of personality

## Abstract

*Despite the wide use of personality in understanding human behavior, there is a lack of empirical research relating the commonly agreed personality measurement with travel personality or travel related activities. In filling the knowledge gap, this study aims at exploring the relationship between the Big Five Factors (BFF) of personality and travel personality. Using self-administered questionnaire to Korean domestic tourists, a data set of 360 was obtained that was subjected to one way ANOVA. Out of 60 possible relationships between the BFF and 12 travel personalities, 20 significantly indicated group difference with respect to the BFF. Openness to experience and extraversion factors among the BFF serve in differentiating 6 and 5 travel personalities respectively while conscientiousness and agreeableness explain respectively 4 and 3 differences in travel personalities. Neuroticism among the BFF explained only 2 group differences in travel personalities. Theoretically, the study affirms the application of personality theory in explaining human behavior. The study results shed light on how tourism professionals can use the BFF in marketing and designing their tourism products in enticing and satisfying different tourists having different travel personalities as well as different BFF of personality.*

*Key words: Big Five Factors; travel personality; marketing; tourist; South Korea*

## Introduction

The utility of psychological factors in understanding and predicting tourist behavior has a long tradition in tourism literature (e.g. Plog, 1974). Tourist type or travel personality (Gretzel, Mitsche, Hwang & Fesenmaier, 2004; Park, Tussyadia, Mazanec & Fesenmaier, 2010) that connotes the role played by tourists (Yiannakis & Gibson, 1992) while experiencing a destination is a recent concept that has emerged in tourism literature to connote the stable travel characteristics that are presupposed to be influenced by deeper personality factors. Personality entails the stable enduring individuals' patterns of thoughts, emotions, and behavior (Arnould, Price & Zinkhan, 2002). An understanding of personality in general and travel personality specifically by tourism marketers offers insights on how to market their products and services as well as ensuring satisfaction of their customers.

Despite the agreed value of personality in marketing (Baumgartner, 2002), its usage in tourism research appears to be low (Leung & Law, 2010). Plog (1974) among the first to explicitly use personality in tourism, explained the possible destination choice by the tourist. Albeit the recent interest (e.g. Gretzel *et al.*, 2004, Park *et al.*, 2010) in the usage of personality in tourism reflecting the activities undertaken

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in the destination, its relationship with the deeply seated personality elements is yet to be affirmed. This research paucity is surprising given the presence of well established measures of personality like the Big Five Factors (BFF) that are believed to be universal (Mowen, 2000) and that could have been used to further understand tourists and predict their possible travel personality.

The Big Five Factors of personality include openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism as the main factors that drive most of the human behavior. The few empirical studies in tourism and leisure indicate the presence of relationship between the five factors and travel personality. Scott and Mowen (2007) for instance observed significant relationships between the BFF and the propensity to be an adventure traveler. Within the same adventure travel context, Schneider and Vogt (2011) noted openness to experience to be a significant differentiating factor between hard and soft adventure travelers. Abbate and Di Nuovo (2013) attempted to relate the BFF and the motivation for visiting religious sites with findings indicating difference between the BFF scores for different motives. Frew and Shaw (1999a) conceptually derived relationships between Holland personality typology and travel behavior. Their follow up empirical study (Frew & Shaw, 1999b) observed significant relationships between some of the personality factors and travel behavior. McGuiggan and Foo (2004) using Myers-Briggs Type Indicator of personality observed a weak relationship between personality and travel personality. Within leisure behavior literature, several studies indicate the presence of significant relationships between personalities in general and leisure behavior (Barnett, 2006; Kraaykamp & Eijck, 2005) that further shed light onto the personality and travel personality relationship. Despite previous studies being informative, these studies are limited in context, used narrow measure for personality, as well as having inconclusive findings. This study aims at filling the knowledge gap by embarking on further exploring the relationship between personality, particularly the BFF and travel personality.

## Literature review

### Big Five Factors of personality

Personality refers to the distinctive and enduring patterns of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors that characterize each individual's adaptation to the situations of his or her life (Arnould, Price & Zinkhan, 2002). Among the different perspectives used to study personality, none enjoys the wide acceptance by researchers particularly in consumer behavior than the trait perspective. The Big Five Factors (BFF) of personality considered to be universal (Mowen, 2000) employs the trait perspective that categorizes personality traits into openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (or emotional stability) (John & Srivastava, 1999). Openness to experience dimension include adjectives like creative, curious, artistic, intellectual, deep thinker, and insightful. High conscientiousness person can be described as orderly, efficient, precise, persistent, and industrious while low in that dimension are the opposite of those high in it. Extraversion dimension of the BFF depicts individuals basing on their higher levels of talkativeness, assertiveness, vigorousness, and social abilities. Agreeableness portrays how an individual gets along with others with sub-dimensions like being warm, empathetic, generous, and moral. Neuroticism being the opposite of emotional stability reflects anxious, uptight, nervous, and easily agitated among its sub-dimensions.

Since personality is believed to be enduring during one's course of life (Costa & McCrae, 1988) due to its emanation from biological (nature) as well as social aspects (nurture) of the individual (Friedman & Schustack, 2009), then it can be assumed to be a better and stable predictor of human behavior than other personal factors like demographic (age, income). Demographics that are commonly used in consumer behavior including tourist behavior are liable to change over time thus requiring a continuous search for the understanding of consumer or tourist, which inevitably have cost implications for tourism organizations. With the view of the stability of personality and its possible research cost reduction by a tourism organization, this study integrates the use of the BFF of personality in understanding tourist behavior through travel personality concept.

## Travel personality

Travel behavior of the tourist in a visited destination has been understood differently by different authors. Some have termed it as travel style (Madrigal, 1995), which is part of the tourists' psychographics (Silverberg, Backman & Backman, 1996), travel personality (Plog, 1974; Gretzel *et al.*, 2004), vacation or travel activities (Madrigal & Kahle, 1994; Hsu, Kang, & Wolfe, 2002), or the combination of travel activities and preferred destination (Frew & Shaw, 1999). The plethora of conceptualization of travel behavior seems to be a never-ending endeavor with other researchers conceiving travel behavior to be vacation lifestyle (Chen, Huang, & Cheng, 2009) or tourist roles (McGuiggan & Foo, 2004; Yiannakis & Gibson, 1992). Despite the different conception and labeling of tourist travel behavior, authors share a common goal by coming up with a stable and predictive psychological variable that can be used in marketing tourism products. This study uses travel personality to connote the stable travel activities of a tourists while traveling. The main reason for employing such a term include the stability aspect of personality and thus being in line with the previous research endeavors to come up with a stable construct for travel behavior (Park *et al.*, 2010)

Plog (1974) was among the first to use the concept of personality in understanding tourist destination selection by exploring the personality of those who fly and those who don't fly. Plog (1974) categorized personality into a continuum of allocentrics and psychocentrics. Allocentrics were noted to prefer independent travel experiences in an unexplored destination that is not visited by mainstream mass tourists. In the follow up article (almost 30 years later), Plog (2001) labels these as venturers and describes them as those who are curious in nature, make decision quickly, are self-confident, energetic, and spend discretionary income more readily. The psychocentrics that were later re-labeled as dependable (Plog, 2001) are contrary to allocentrics in character. In between the two bipolar travel personalities there are those who have a blend of the two personalities. These blended personalities were labeled as near dependable, centric dependable, centric venture, and near venture. The characteristics of Plog's personality can be related with some of the BFF traits like openness to experience with curiosity; self-confident and energetic being elements of extraverts; readily spending money with conscientiousness. The nature of destination selection of allocentrics and psychocentrics preferring uncommon and common destinations respectively can be related to their level of agreeableness while neuroticism elements are reflected by psychocentrics who prefer common destinations as a means of avoiding risks. Despite Plog's allocentric-psychocentric continuum being informative in understanding tourist behavior, the categorization has not escaped research criticism. Litvin (2006) argues that the Plog personality does

not predict where the travelers are likely to visit but rather suggestive of an ideal place the tourists are likely to visit.

The recent appearance of studies that have used travel personalities (Gretzel *et al.*, 2004; Huang, Gursoy & Xu, 2014; Jani, 2014; Lin, Kerstetter, Nawijn & Mitas, 2014; Park *et al.*, 2010) in understanding tourist behavior might indicate the marketing value of the travel personality within tourism. Gretzel *et al.*, (2004) in debating whether to use the general BFF or travel personality in predicting tourist destination preference as en route to developing destination recommendation systems, argue for the use of travel personality as it does factor in specific personality traits specific for travelers. In expanding the travel personality concept, Park *et al.*, (2010) use travel personae to refer to the aggregate of travel personalities over time. In their study (Park *et al.*, 2010) came up with 955 combination of travel personae that consist of different travel personalities. Despite their study being informative and ensuring the validity of travel personality, their study is nowhere near parsimonious with the exorbitant many combinations of travel personalities. Consequently, this study adopts travel personalities of Gretzel *et al.*, (2004) having twelve categories as they are more encompassing as well as offering a simpler way of categorization. The twelve travel personalities are presented as Table 1.

Table 1  
**Travel personalities and their characteristics**

<b>Cultural creature:</b> theatre, shows, museum, festivals, local culture.	<b>Beach bum:</b> laying around the beach.	<b>Trail trekker:</b> hiking, parks, mountain, forests, and bird watching.
<b>City slicker:</b> clubs, meeting people, in need of pulse of the city.	<b>Avid athlete:</b> games of any type.	<b>History buff:</b> historical facts and sites.
<b>Sight seeker:</b> always stop for landmark, event or attraction.	<b>Shopping shark:</b> like shopping.	<b>Boater:</b> water activities or attractions.
<b>Family guy:</b> spend time with family during vacation.	<b>All rounder:</b> go where there is lot to do and see.	<b>Gamer:</b> gaming, fantastic fares, and night entertainment.

Source: Gretzel *et al.*, (2004).

## Relating personality and travel personality

Despite personality being researched in relation to human behavior, such are few within tourism context (Leung & Law, 2010; Christian & Zehrer, 2012). This is surprising given the general indications of personality being an influential element in human behavior, and thus could have been utilized in marketing tourism products. In leisure travel where the individual has the liberty to select which activities to undertake, they are likely to reflect the individual's personality (Melamed, Elchanan & Amit, 1995) and thus shed light onto personality and travel personality relationship. With the proposed hierarchical relationship between deeper elemental personality traits and observed surface behavior (Allport, 1937; Mowen, 2000) with the former being basic that has an influence on the latter ensuing behavior under the 3M model of motivation and personality (Mowen, 2000), it is logical to conclude that basic personality factors like the BFF and travel personality are related. This hierarchical model of personality has been adopted by few tourism researchers in elucidating the relationship between personality and

travel related behavior (Schneider & Vogt, 2012; Scott & Mowen, 2007). Scott and Mowen (2000) in relating the BFF within adventure travel context observed positive effects of agreeableness on hard adventure travel, soft adventure, and camping; conscientiousness had a positive effect only on camping. In the same fashion and context, Schneider and Vogt (2012) noted only openness to experience among the BFF to have an influence on hard adventure travelers. A study by Abbate and Di Nuovo (2013) that aimed at relating tourist motivation and BFF for religious tourist noted all aspects except neuroticism to have significant relationships with some travel motivations thus rendering support to the hierarchical relationship between personality and consumer behavior. Despite these studies being informative, they are context limited as they focused only on few travel personalities.

Further insights on the potential relationship between the BFF and travel personality can be derived from studies that have used other personality measurements. Frew and Shaw (1999a) using Holland personality typology with six personality types of artistic, investigative, realistic, social, enterprising, and conventional argue for the possible relationship with travel behavior. Using empirical study, Frew and Shaw (1999b) observed significant relationships between some of the personality factors and travel behavior. Using Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, McGuiggan and Foo (2004) observed weak relationships between personality and travel personality. Christian and Zehrer (2012) in segmenting Swiss tourist market using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator showed a potential use of personality in understanding travel personality. Griffith and Albanese (1996) tested the correlation between Plog's travel personality scales with some representative of the basic elemental personality traits (boredom susceptibility, experience seeking, thrill and adventure seeking) and noted a correlation up to the tune of 0.50. Albeit Griffith and Albanese's (1996) study being informative, it is limited to student population as well as incorporation of a single element of one variable for one factor of the BFF. Reisinger and Mavondo (2004) subjected American and Australian samples into the test of the influence of personality on vacation activities among other variables and noted a significant effect in both samples with that of Australian having slightly stronger effect. With these findings from previous research being inconclusive on the relationship between personality in general and travel personality, tourism practitioners and researchers are left in a dilemma whether to use personality and/or travel personality in their marketing strategies. Moreover, among the previous studies few (Huang *et al.*, 2014; Jani *et al.*, 2014) have employed the BFF in understanding travel behavior despite the BFF being considered as the universal personality concept. Within leisure research in general, literature abound that indicate the presence of significant relationships between personality in general and leisure behavior (e.g. Barnett, 2006; Kraaykamp & Eijck, 2005) that further shed light onto the personality and travel personality relationship. From the preceding discussions, this study aims at exploring the relationship between the BFF and travel personality.

## Methods

Data for this study emanated from a large study that aimed at gathering information that could relate personality and tourist behavior. A survey research strategy was used where assisted self-administered questionnaires were distributed at conveniently selected Korean tourists at three locations in Busan (a second Metropolitan in South Korea). These three locations were selected due to their popularity and thus having a higher chance of accessing the tourists. The assisted self-administered survey was opted

for in order to minimize unfilled questionnaire as the research assistant could help the respondents in case they needed further clarifications. Furthermore, assisted self-administered survey availed an opportunity for the research assistant to check the returned questionnaire for unfilled questions that necessitated the research assistants to politely request the respondents to complete the missing parts. A focus on one cultural society (Korean) was motivated by two main reasons, one being ease of access by the researchers. The second reason was to minimize the possibility of national culture effect on information search (Gursoy & Umbreit, 2004) that could otherwise increase 'noise' in testing the relationship between personality and travel personality. The data was collected during the period from 15<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> August, 2010. The period was specifically selected as it coincided with summer vacation whereby the chance of finding tourists in tourist attraction was higher. In order to minimize possible age and gender biases, the research assistants were asked to distribute the questionnaire to all age and gender groups. Eventually, a data set of 360 was obtained after deleting unusable responses.

From the questionnaire that was written in Korean language, information for the Big Five Factors of personality traits (John & Srivastava, 1999), travel personality (Gretzel *et al.*, 2004), and demographic variables were extracted and used for this study. The personality items were adopted from John and Srivastava (1999) as they are regarded to be comprehensive among the available Big Five Factors scales. All 44 items (John & Srivastava, 1999) were not used, instead 22 items were opted for as previous studies (e.g. Gosling, Rentfrow & Swann, 2003) have indicated that few among the 44 items can be used with the results being valid. The items were framed in a way that the respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement by indicating number from 1 to 5 with the former indicating the trait to be less likely representing the respondent behavioral tendency while the latter indicated the opposite extreme. Travel personality questions requested the tourist to indicate the ranking of the 12 travel personality from 1 to 12 with respect to the travel personality that reflected their usual travel personality. The data was subjected to a series of one way ANOVA with travel personality being the grouping variables and the Big Five Factors being the independent variables. ANOVA tests were opted for as a means of elucidating BFF mean differences with the travel personality as a proxy for exploring possible relationships between the variables.

## Results

Of the analyzed 360 questionnaires 46% were male indicating a slightly more females in the data set. A substantial percentage (43.9%) of the respondents were within the age bracket of 21 to 35 followed by those who were aged between 36 to 45 accounting for 19.4% while those below 20 years accounted for 9.7% and those above 55 years counted for 6.1% of the sample. Almost half (47.9%) of the respondents were single while those who were married were 51% of the respondents. 68.6% of the respondents were university graduate or having a postgraduate qualifications.

Frequencies for the different travel personality reflecting the respondents are indicated are shown as Table 2 together with their respective overall ranking. Sight seeker is ranked the first with the highest frequency of 62 out of all respondents, followed by those who undertake all things in their travel. Beach bun travel personality is ranked third followed city slicker travel personality with 47 and 35 frequencies respectively. Family and cultural travel personalities almost tally with 33 and 32 frequencies

respectively. The remaining 6 travel personality had a frequency of 30 and below with the last having a frequency of 8 representing travel personality interested in water related activities.

Table 2  
**Ranking of travel personality**

Travel personality	Frequency	Rank
Cultural	32	6
Beach bun	47	3
Trail trekker	30	7
City slicker	35	4
Athlete	11	11
History buff	22	8
Sight seeker	62	1
Shopping	15	9
Boater	8	12
Family	33	5
All things	50	2
Gamer	15	10
Total (N)	360	

The mean and standard deviation for the 22 BFF items and the mean of the summated BFF dimensions together with the Cronbach alpha for the BFF 5 dimensions are presented in Table 3. The means are similar to previous studies using the same measurement scales in different cultural context (e.g. Yoo & Gretzel, 2011) and thus ensure the validity and utility of the BFF items. The Cronbach alpha for the items under the BFF all except for neuroticism managed to cross the 0.60 threshold for psychological variables (John & Benet-Martinez, 2000). Nevertheless, the marginal Cronbach alpha for neuroticism is considered to be valid given the existence of sub-dimensions within the BFF (John & Benet-Martinez, 2000).

Table 3  
**Mean scores and reliability of the Big Five Factors**

BFF dimension	BFF item	Mean	Stand. dev.	Cronbach alpha (mean of summated items)
Openness (O)	New ideas	3.153	1.00	0.721 (3.204)
	Curios	3.420	0.993	
	Inventive	3.105	0.918	
	Imaginative	3.139	1.05	

**Table 3 Continued**

BFF dimension	BFF item	Mean	Stand. dev.	Cronbach alpha (mean of summated items)
Conscientiousness (C)	Do a thorough job	3.679	0.900	0.632 (3.549)
	Reliable worker	3.509	0.828	
	Persevere	3.579	0.920	
	Efficient	3.585	0.870	
	Follow plans	3.395	0.933	
Extraversion (E)	Talkative	3.036	1.060	0.704 (3.312)
	Reserved (-)	2.927	1.043	
	Energetic	3.523	0.874	
	Quiet (-)	2.576	0.993	
	Outgoing	3.504	0.858	
Agreeableness (A)	Forgiving	3.328	0.938	0.638 (3.430)
	Trusting	3.620	0.778	
	Helpful	3.476	0.834	
	Considerate/kind	3.401	0.842	
	Cooperative	3.325	0.866	
Neuroticism (N)	Depressed	2.192	0.994	0.545 (2.521)
	Worrier	2.877	1.031	
	Nervous	2.495	0.953	

(-) indicates items that were reversed.

From the ANOVA tests, 20 out of 60 BFF and travel personality relationships were found to be statistically significant (Table 4). Family oriented and boater travel personality were the most liable to be differentiated basing on the BFF. For family oriented travel personality, all except extraversion can be used to differentiate whether the person is likely to fall in that travel personality or not. From the mean differences, a traveler is likely to be a family oriented traveler if she is low in openness to experience and neuroticism but high in conscientiousness and agreeableness. For boater travel personality, the traveler is likely to be high in openness to experience and agreeableness but low in extraversion. With respect to the BFF, openness to experience can be used to differentiate 6 travel personalities while extraversion can be used for 5 travel personalities. Conscientiousness, agreeableness, and neuroticism can be used to differentiate 4, 3, and 2 travel personalities respectively.



Table 4

**ANOVA test for relationship between BFF and travel personality**

Travel personality	O	C	E	A	N
Cultural (n=32)	3.16 3.17 (0.015)	3.43 3.48(0.315)	2.94 3.522 (19.317***)	3.51 3.530(.021)	2.73 2.71 0.079)
Beach (n=47)	2.98 3.20 (7.415**)	3.47 3.47 (0.012)	3.12 3.32 (7.141**)	3.52 3.54 (0.001)	47 312 (0.247)
Trail trekker (n=30)	3.15 3.17(.042)	3.48 3.470(.010)	3.46 3.28 (3.573*)	3.49 3.53(0.293)	2.67 2.71 0.310)
City slicker (n=35)	3.19 3.17 (.062)	3.42 3.48 (480)	3.33 3.29 (.129)	3.53 3.52 (0.002)	2.70 2.71 (0.007)
Athlete (n=11)	3.63 3.16 (8.585**)	3.23 3.48 (2.812*)	3.36 3.30 (.211)	3.46 3.53 (0.288)	2.89 2.70 (1.834)
History buff (n=22)	3.44 3.16 (5.925*)	3.51 3.47 (0.102)	3.42 3.29 (1.491)	3.47 3.53 (412)	2.85 2.70 (2.472)
Sight seeker (n= 61)	3.19 3.17 (0.067)	3.49 3.47 (0.077)	3.35 3.29 (0.880)	3.50 3.53 (0.285)	2.75 2.70 (0.619)
Shopping (n=15)	3.41 3.16 (3.092*)	3.69 3.46 (3.124*)	3.48 3.30 (2.070)	3.50 3.53 (0.071)	2.86 2.70 (1.791)
Boater (n=8)	3.55 3.16 (4.214**)	3.46 3.47 (0.007)	2.97 3.30 (3.674*)	3.81 3.52 (3.937**)	2.92 2.71 (1.908)
Family (n=33)	2.93 3.20 (7.989**)	3.71 3.45 (8.916**)	3.24 3.30 (0.575)	3.68 3.51 (5.408**)	2.50 2.73 (8.123**)
All (n=50)	3.20 3.17 (0.180)	3.42 3.48 (0.582)	3.49 3.27 (9.207**)	3.54 3.52 (0.148)	2.57 2.73 (5.707*)
Gamer (n=15)	3.01 3.18 (1.423)	3.20 3.49 (5.022*)	3.26 3.30 (0.095)	3.31 3.53 (4.298*)	2.82 2.71 (0.926)

\*p < 0.1, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\* p < 0.01.

Figures in bracket stand for the F-values. Bolded bracketed figures indicate significance differences.

The first mean in each cell stands for those travellers falling under the respective travel personality and the other for those who the travel personality is not applicable.

## Discussion and conclusion

This study has aimed at exploring the relationship between the Big Five Factors of personality and travel personality. The results indicate there are significant differences between travel personalities based on the BFF and thus making the latter to be useful in understanding and possibly predicting travel personalities. The study results provide an understanding of different travel personalities basing on their different BFF levels and their combinations. For instance, the travel personalities can be categorized based on the level of their openness to experience into low and high. Travel personalities high in openness to experience include athlete, history buff, shopping, and boater, while those low in that trait include beach bun and family. The belongingness of the travel personalities into the two categories is a logical one given the activities undertaken by those travel personalities be it cognitively or experientially. History buff being interested in facts and site information of historical monuments

and events can be said to be high in cognitive need (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982) that is an aspect of openness to experience. The categorization of beach bun travel personality into low openness to experience that is typified by a tourist lying on the beach with minimum activities both physically and mentally logically stands to that categorization.

On the conscientiousness factor, high conscientiousness travel personalities include shopping and family while low in the factor are typified by athlete and gamer. This suggests that shopping and family travel personalities are good planners and goal directed while shopping or when traveling as a family. On the other hand athlete and gamer travel personalities are less organized and thus flexible. Cultural, beach bun, and boater travel personalities fall into the low extraversion group while trail trekker and all travel personalities belong to the high extraversion group. Since extraversion pertains to social disposition (Leary & Hoyle, 2009) or social energy, then these groups can be termed as high and low social energy travelers. The low social energy travel personalities (cultural, beach bun, and boater) typically involve activities with minimum social interaction compared to all and trail trekker travel personalities. High agreeableness group include boater and family while low agreeableness has gamer travel personality. This indicates gamer travel personality to be those individuals who are not easily herded into the mainstream travel activities agreeable by majority compared to boater and family travel personalities. Neuroticism differentiated family and all travel personalities with the tourists portraying the travel personalities being low in the BFF factor.

Practically, the categorization of travel personalities with respect to their BFF gives insights to marketers and tourism service providers on how to communicate and design their services. For instance, the knowledge of which travel personality fall under which group of high-low BFF of personality can facilitate tourism professionals on what to communicate, how to communicate, and where to communicate. For travel personalities with high in extraversion, tourism professionals can include elements of extraversion depicting high social context in their communications in order to attract potential tourists. Tan and Tang (2013) and, Jani, *et al.*, (2014) indicate the presence of different usage of travel information by different tourists with different levels of the BFF. For example they note individuals high in openness to experience to have positive perception of word of mouth and printed sources of information during their pre-trip phase while those tourists high in conscientiousness relied much on on-site travel information provided by visitor centres. Borrowing Tan and Tang's (2013) findings, this study recommends tourism professionals to place their communication messages on those platforms that are likely to be accessed by their potential customers having a particular combination of travel personality and the BFF at the right time in their travel phase. On the designing aspect, tourism professionals can apply the study findings in designing their travel products to cater for the target customers with particular BFF. For instance, for cultural, beach bun, and boater travel personalities, tourism organizations are likely to attract and satisfy their customers by ensuring that their customers have minimum social interaction particularly with those who are not in the same travel group.

Far from suggesting an individual usage of the BFF, this study endorses the combination use of the BFF (Hofstee, de Raad, & Goldberg, 1992; Mowen, 2000) in understanding and catering for different travel personalities. Despite being simple and straight forward, the use of the individual BFF of personality does not accurately depicts the travel personalities in totality as each individual has a different high-low combination of all the five factors of personality (Mowen, 2000). With respect to the study

findings, each of the 12 travel personalities should be taken as a manifestation of the combination of the BFF. Boater travel personality for instance is a combination of high in openness to experience, low in extraversion, and high in agreeableness. Thus tourism professionals need to factor in all significant BFF in their marketing and service provision. The congruence of personality and leisure activities including traveling has a significant influence on well being (Melamed *et al.*, 1995). Thus travelers need to strike a balance as well as the marketers to promote accordingly.

Like any study undertaken in a specific context, this study had some limitations that should be factored in the interpretations of the results. Despite the fact that the study reduced the cultural 'noises' by focusing on tourists in one country, different cultural contexts might have different BFF for the different travel personality. For instance, trail trekker for Koreans with their motherland being 80% dominated by mountains, hiking/trail trekking is a social activity enjoyed by majority, thus in other culture the travel personality might manifest differently with respect to extraversion factor. Thus the application of the current study findings should appraise first if the travel personalities used in this study are relevant in that context. Since leisure behavior including traveling and thus travel personality might differ with traveler's situation, the use of cross-section questionnaire survey might impose a limitation in understanding possible dynamism of travel personalities for an individual. Thus future studies can opt for a longitudinal study design in exploring the dynamism of travel personality.

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