

## TOURISM BEHAVIOR TOWARD DISASTERS: A CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON

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The current study extends the author's previous study in which Hofstede's uncertainty avoidance dimension (1991) was applied to the case of the September 21st earthquake in 1999, the largest natural disaster of the 20th century in Taiwan. The study assessed how the behavior of Japanese and United States tourists has been affected. The results indicate clear differences in rebound status between Japanese and American visitor arrivals that are remarkably consistent with Hofstede's conceptualization – the Japanese tended toward uncertainty avoidance more than the Americans.

However, individual tourists and different cultures react differently toward different episodes, which is an important area for academic research and managerial practice. Thus, this study empirically examines the relationship between personality traits and travel behaviors in response to adverse events, adopting a cross-cultural perspective. The Big Five model is used to measure the respondents' personality attributes when purchasing travel products. This model is widely applied in different fields. It accounts for most of the variance in the field of personality: Extraversion, Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Openness to Experience (Digman, 1990). Figure 1 illustrates the framework of the study.

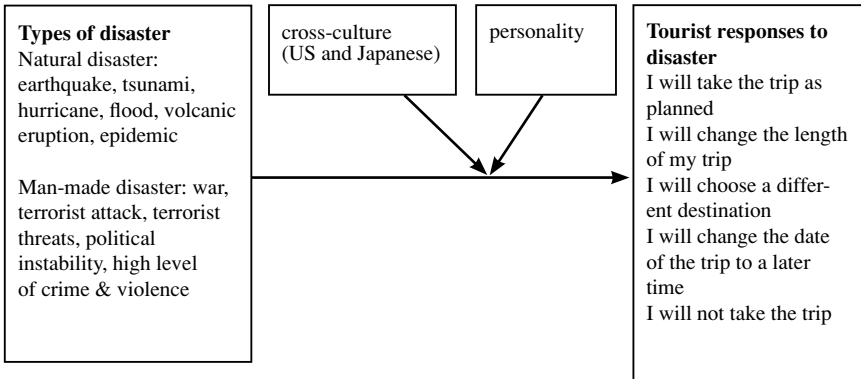
*Keywords:* tourism, natural disasters, Hofstede's uncertainty avoidance dimension, earthquake, the Big Five Model, personality.

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Appreciation is due to anonymous reviewers.

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**Figure 1.** Conceptual Model

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- Hofstede, G. (1991). *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind*. New York: McGraw Hill.