

Study on Selection Criteria of Field Trip Planners for Junior High School

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Abstract

This study aims to probe into reasonable selection model to select field trip planners for junior high schools, and construct appropriate items Tender in order to enhance objectivity and fairness of selection and increase teachers' intention to organize field trips.

The subjects were public schools in Hsinchu County and City. A hierarchical framework was constructed based on literature review and Modified Delphi Method. Two rounds of expert questionnaire survey were conducted to generalize selection criteria of field trip planners.

The results showed that safety management ability is the most important for experts, followed by quality of food, activity planning, arrangement of hotels, and prices. Based on the results, conclusions and suggestions are proposed for junior high schools in Hsinchu to select field trip planners or serve as reference for future studies.

Keywords: Field Trip, Delphi Method, Selection Model

INTRODUCTION

American educator John Dewey proposed the concept "education is life", and defined the purpose of education as to teach students how to live. Learning of skills and knowledge are important. The best measure of skill learning is activity instruction. Although students mainly learn on campus, outdoor environment can be their classroom. There are rich resources and teaching materials in nature and society.

Currently, field trips in junior high schools and elementary schools in Taiwan are mostly short-term excursion, cultural and artistic visits, institution visits, or physical activities. However, for teachers who are occupied with teaching, field trip preparation is not in their area of expertise. In recent years, junior high schools and elementary schools have commissioned professional firms to organize field trips.

This study aims to construct effective evaluation criteria for field trip planners. Price is not the only factor in bidding. The quality of field trip serves as a reference for future planning of field trip. In addition, the evaluation model of this study was restricted to research on evaluation criteria field trip planners for junior high schools of Hsinchu. The findings can only serve as reference for junior high schools in Hsinchu for selecting field trip planners, and cannot be applied to different regions and levels.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews related literature on planning and outsourcing of field trips. It is divided into two parts, namely field trips, Delphi method and Modified Delphi Method.

Content of field trip

Field trip is a common practice in junior high schools and elementary schools in Taiwan. It expands teaching to outside of classrooms, meaning the teachers and students leave the schools for teaching activities (Hung, L.Y.,2010). Field trip is the practice of experiential learning. From the perspective of curriculum, field trip is an informal course that supports the content of formal curriculum, allowing students to have a rich life experience and to learn in reality. It blends into the content of formal curriculum(Su, G.Y.,2006).

The organization of field trips includes visit, investigation, exchange, appreciation, sketching, etc. Hence, graduation trips, camping or off-campus visits are also field trips.

The purpose of field trips is to expand students' learning, enhance their learning experience, enrich the school life, and integrate learning effectiveness, in order to improve teaching effectiveness. With precise standard procedure of administration, field trips are carried in a safe environment, and the expected effectiveness can be accomplished.

The main advantage of field trips is that in natural environment, teachers can have more interaction with the students in a more relaxed manner. The advantages are listed below (Su, G.Y.,2006):

- 1) to achieve the instructional goal in cognition;
- 2) to achieve the instructional goal in affection
- 3) to achieve the instructional goal in skills
- 4) to achieve the instructional goal in developing interpersonal relationship

In brief, the value of field trip is to expand the living environment of students, acquainting them with the environment, and develop related knowledge. Students are trained to collect data by scientific methods. Through sharing and discussion, they can develop problem-solving skills.

However, in the organization of field trips, there are some obstacles. Research has mentioned three obstacles of field trip: teachers' withdrawal, budget, and parents' opposition (Chen, C.R.,2012). Literature (Lee, S.H.,2013) proposed four difficulties in organizing field trip: administration, activity design, student management and transportation. Literature has also pointed out one of the obstacles for schools to organize field trips is the shortage of resources and information exchange. In order to avoid the pressure of administration in organizing field trips, schools tend to hire professional firms to plan field trips. The firms provide guides to lead the field trips and offer introduction(Chen, S.T.,2007).

In order to deal with the difficulties in organizing field trips and increase teachers' willingness to hold field trips, this study identifies the main concerns of field trips in literature as "activity planning", "activity content", "safety management", "funds" and "support of guides".

All procurement projects of schools need to meet procurement specifications and regulations of the educational authorities. The Most Advantageous Tender is a type of general evaluation, by which the firm that best meets the specifications is selected(Chen, S.T.,2007). As it is the result of general selection, the selected firm tends to have high marks, good products, strong functions, and high yet reasonable prices(Chen, S.R.,2002). Since the bidding price allows the firms to make reasonable profits, such approach can enhance the firms' intention in entering the bid and fulfill the contracts with good quality products or services (Hong, T.F.,2004).

The purpose of firm selection is to select the firm that best satisfies the buyers' needs. Thus, the key point of evaluation criteria is to find if benefit or service of the firms can satisfy the buyers' needs (Chen, S.T.,2007). According to regulation of evaluation of the Most Advantageous Tender, regulations of educational authority on field trips, and the process of field trips, from preparation to execution, the evaluation criteria of field trip procedure are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Evaluation criteria of field trips

Activity execution	Activity preparation			Process of implementation
	Activity design	Confirmation of activity demand	Formation of activity concept	
			Educational function of activity design	Function
1. Capacity to execute activities	1. Itinerary planning 2. Activity content 3. Creativity of activity		1. Completeness of activity 2. Characteristics of itinerary 3. Creativity of activity	Technique
1. Quality of food 2. Quality of hotels 3. Car rental		1. Arrangement of food 2. Arrangement of hotels 3. Transportation planning		Quality
1. Quality of guides 2. Safety management 3. Hygiene management 4. Capacity to deal with emergency				Management
	Reasonable price composition	Firms' commitment to extra payment to institutions		Price
Chen(2007) Lin(2007) Ministry of Education(2012) Department of Education, Taipei City Government(2007a) Department of Education, Taipei City Government (2007b)	Public Construction Commission Executive Yuan(2007c); Department of Education, Taipei City Government, 2007b	Ministry of Education(2012) Education Bureau, Kaohsiung City Government(2007)	Letter of Ministry of Education Tai- Guo (I) Tze- Di # 0940032674 in 2005. Public Construction Commission Executive Yuan (2007c). Department of Education, Taipei City Government(2007b)	References

(According to the criteria of the Most Advantageous Tender of Government Procurement Act and regulations of government on field trips)

Finally, based on literature review, the Government Procurement Act, and related regulations, this paper generalizes the factors of the Most Advantageous Tender of field trip and items of Evaluation of the Most Advantageous Tender: “activity planning”, “quality of food”, “arrangement of hotels”, “safety management” and “price”. Principal items, sub-items and evaluation criteria are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Items of evaluation of the Most Advantageous Tender of field trip purchasin

Number	Principal items	Sub-items	Classification of literatures		
			Factors of field trip	Regulations of authority	Classification of Article 5 of regulation of evaluation of the Most Advantageous Tender
1	Activity planning	1. Propriety of itinerary planning	P	P	Technique
		2. Propriety of activity content	P	P	Technique
		3. Characteristics of itinerary			Technique
		4. Creativity of activity			Technique
2	Quality of food	1. Hygiene of food		P	Quality
		2. Variety of food			Quality
		3. Amount of food			Quality
3	Arrangement of hotels	1. Location of hotel			Quality
		2. Environment of hotel			Quality
		3. Facility of hotel		P	Quality
4	Safety management	1. Car rental	P	P	Management
		2. Quality of guides	P		Management
		3. Capacity to respond to emergency		P	Management
5	Price	1. Reasonable prices	P		Price
		2. Discount of service			Price
		3. Reasonable price composition			Price

Delphi method and Modified Delphi Method

Delphi method is expert predication, and it can be considered as group decision making. The purpose of the method is to obtain experts' opinions and consensus. It can collect ideas, and take into account of the quality of experts' independent judgment. However, in actual application of Delphi method, some expert opinions may not be converged. In order to obtain better result, more surveys need to be conducted, but the cost and time will increase. In addition, Delphi method is based on mean as the selection criteria. The statistical method is easily affected by extreme values, and can even twist the experts' meanings (Su, S.K.,2012).

Delphi method process is the continuous writing communication and opinion expression to obtain expert consensus. In the process, due to limitation of time, manpower and funds, the process can be modified. According to Murry and Hammons (1995), in some studies, because of special concerns, Delphi method steps are modified. In other words, brainstorming open-

ended questionnaire survey is skipped. After review and modification of great number of literatures, structural questionnaire is used the first-round questionnaire, in order to save time and allow the experts to focus on the research topic. The disagreement derived from the open-ended questionnaire can be minimized. It is called Modified Delphi Method.

RESEARCH METHOD

Based on literature review, this study identifies factors of field trip planner selection. The Modified Delphi Method questionnaire is used to allow experts to select and modify the possible factors. After two rounds of modification, the indicators of different levels are generalized to select field trip planners. AHP expert questionnaire is developed for experts to fill out. The data obtained are used to calculate relative weights of indicators.

Research Method

This study used literature review to determine the factors to select field trip planners as the theoretical base to construct the selection model. Then, by Modified Delphi Method, it developed evaluation criteria. According to data collected and literature review, this study generalized demand as levels of objective, classification and criteria as primary criteria framework. Through Modified Delphi Method questionnaire, repeated questionnaire surveys were conducted to collect expert opinions. When experts had different opinions, the questionnaire items were modified, and questionnaire survey was conducted again. Once the expert opinions reached consensus, an effective and complete criteria framework was constructed. It was the base to design the “Hierarchical analysis questionnaire of weights of selection items of field trip planners”. The research process is shown in Figure 1:

Research Subjects

The experts of this study were from industrial, official and academic circles, including 5 personnel from travel agencies that have entered the bid of field trip planners, 3 supervisors of Hsinchu County (City) government, and 11 administrators and teachers who frequently undertake or participate in bidding of field trip planners in public junior high schools in Hsinchu County and City. There were a total of 19 experts and scholars to participate in the Delphi survey.

Questionnaire Design

This study designed questionnaire by Modified Delphi Method. As to Modified Delphi Method questionnaire, experts scored the criteria by degrees of importance from 1 to 5 according to decision-making assessment criteria. Questionnaire design was semi-closed questionnaire. There was a column of “others” for the experts to provide their suggestions or opinions for further modification of criteria.

RESEARCH RESULTS

After two rounds of Modified Delphi Method questionnaire survey, according to expert opinions and modification, the criteria for field trip planner selection are generalized as shown in Table 3:

Fig1. Research process

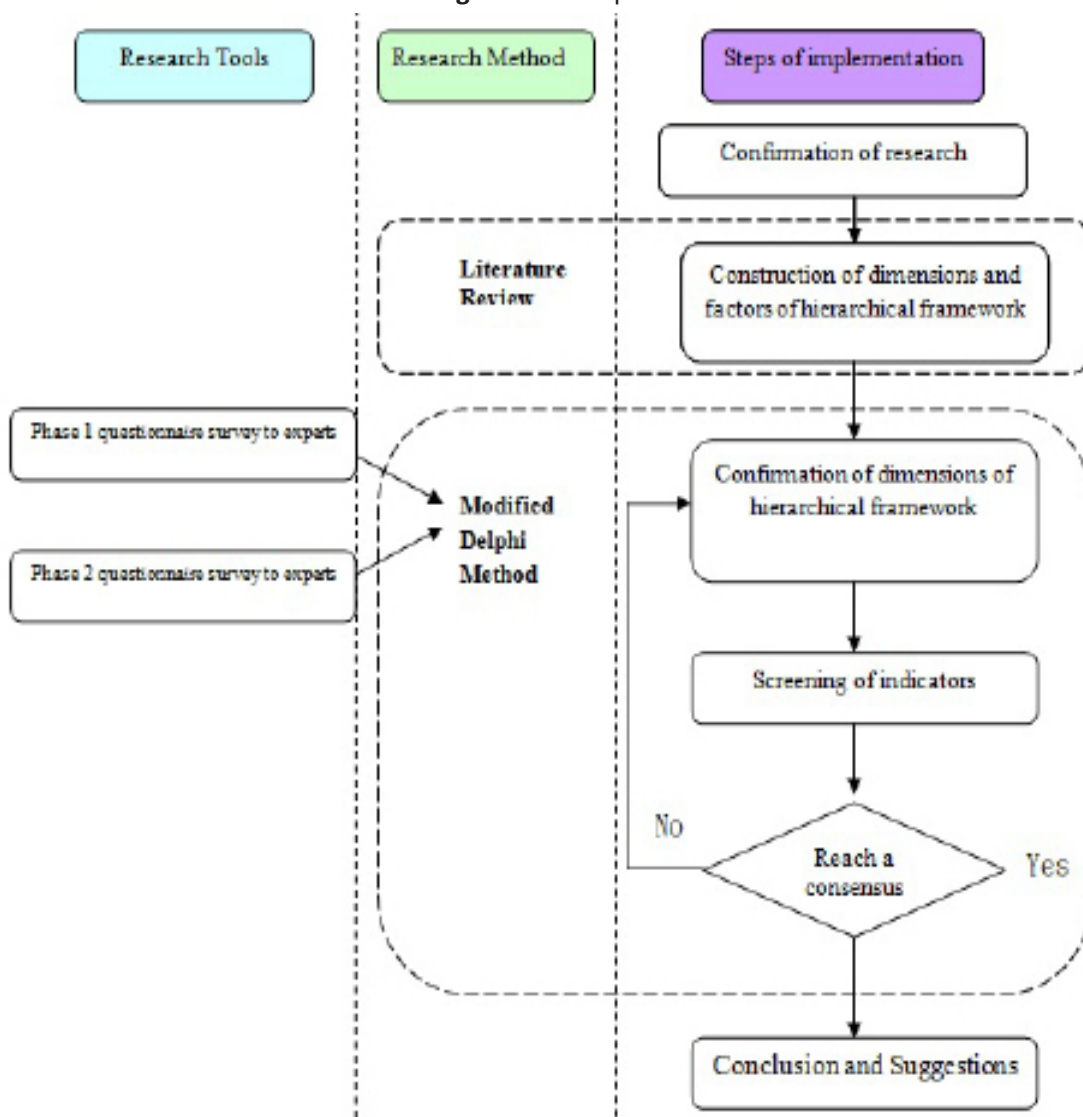


Table 3: Result of Delphi survey

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	
Objectives	Principal criteria	Sub-criteria	
Selection items of field trip firms	Activity planning	1	Propriety of itinerary planning
		2	Propriety of activity content
		3	Characteristics of itinerary
		4	Creativity of activity
	Quality of food	1	Hygiene of food
		2	Variety of food
		3	Amount of food
	Arrangement of hotels	1	Location of hotel
		2	Environment of hotel
		3	Facility of hotel
		4	Fire control of hotels
	Safety management	1	Car rental
		2	Quality of guides
		3	Capacity to respond to emergency
	Price	1	Reasonable prices
2		Discount of service	
3		Reasonable price composition	

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

By literature review, Modified Delphi Method, this study probed into the evaluation criteria of field trip planner selection. The results are shown below:

1) Ranking of principal items is: “safety management”, “quality of food”, “activity planning”, “arrangement of hotels” and “price”.

2) Top 10 of sub-criteria are below:

- (1) Hygiene of food
- (2) Car rental
- (3) Capacity to respond to emergency
- (4) Propriety of activity content
- (5) Quality of guides
- (6) Fire control of hotels
- (7) Propriety of itinerary planning
- (8) Propriety of location of hotel
- (9) Reasonable prices
- (10) Amount of food

Due to limitation of location and time, the subjects were mostly located in Hsinchu and the result is restricted. The results may not be applied to other counties and cities. Future studies can expand the research scope and subjects.

Future studies can also explore different types of field trip model or bidding requirement for different levels of schools, in order to develop specific selection criteria that can meet the requirements of various types of field trip.

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