Holiday Behaviors of International Students in New Zealand

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Abstract
This research investigated the holidaying behaviours of International Students in New Zealand. A total of 132 international students was contacted to collect data on structured questionnaire consisting 27 questions including 2 open ended questions. Descriptive statistics and factor analysis were used to analyse quantitative data and textual data was analysed manually with the help of Microsoft Excel worksheet. Results outlined the students' travel characteristics in terms of travel frequency, length of trip, and per day expenditure indicating that; an average of 2.49 times travel frequency per year, an average of 134.88 NZ$ per trip expenditure, and an average length of 4.33 days per trip. In terms of transportation and accommodation preferences, car transportation and youth hostel accommodation were the most popular among students. Safety and mental refreshment were the main expectations from a trip. The factor analysis yield two factors with regard to motives and expectations of a travel; 'fundamental preferences' and 'associated preferences'.

Keywords: Travel motivation, Travel characteristics, students travel behaviors

1. Introduction

New Zealand has become one of the popular destination countries for education in the global education context. Most of the international students take part certain travel activities during their period of study. According to Ian, Anona, and Brian (2003), international students not only travel while they are studying in the destination country but also, they tend to come back again for a visit after they return to their homeland. Therefore, this particular segment of travelers plays a considerable role in country's tourism industry. As Reisinger and Mavondo (2004), the student travel market is a very important segment in the travel industry and its economic importance is significant. According to Heung and Leong (2006), the purchasing power of university students on tourism services is becoming bigger. Further the research conducted by Min-En (2006) on international students' travel behavior in Australia found that the international students

are significant contributors to tourism by visiting places of interest, purchasing souvenirs, casual work in hospitality and visits by friends and relatives etc. According to Richards and Wilson (2004) the student travel industry is well established and has a growing global network of suppliers.

However, there are signs that many students are bypassing "traditional" distribution channels in their selection of tourism products; e.g. students find the local tourist destinations through their friends than traditional sources of travel information (Ian et al., 2003). Therefore, to understand and meet the travel expectations of international students, it is important to study the travel behavior of this specific travel segment in the country. This study expects to recognize the main tourist characteristics and considerations of international students.

Young people travelling for educational reasons, commonly known as 'international students travelling', is a multibillion dollar industry (Payne, 2010). In New Zealand, foreign students contribute NZ$2.1 billion to the country's economy (Payne, 2010). According to a report from the international division of the Ministry of Education of New Zealand (2011), the revenue from the tuition fees was over $708 million in 2010. A study by Xiaoying and Abbott (2009), showed that there are different reasons why international students are attracted to New Zealand. First, compared to other Western countries such as Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom, New Zealand has a lower cost of living. Second, some international students are attracted to New Zealand because of the permanent residential potentials. However, some argue that there are some risks associated with relying on the international student market. Xiaoying and Abbott (2009) argue that this market, on one hand, can be a potentially profitable and, on the other hand, it can also be more unstable than that of most domestic markets.

China is the main market for New Zealand universities and schools. However, Chinese students' interest in New Zealand has declined for many factors (Payne, 2010). One factor is an increased competition forced by other countries such as Australia, England, Canada, Singapore, and Malaysia. These countries attract international students by offering scholarships that New Zealand cannot compete with. A further fact is that in recent years there has been a notable change in the New Zealand dollar's value and this has had an impact on the number of international students (Ministry of Education, 2011).

Given the brief discussion, the international students have become one of the main foreign exchange earning sources for many well-developed economies including New Zealand. More importantly, students engage in different travel activities in their destination country while studying. The next section evaluates the literature of students travel behavior to outline the conceptual framework of the study. Therefore, the aims and objectives of this study are summarized as follows.

The broader aim of this study is to discover the holidaying behavior of international students of New Zealand. To accomplish this, five research objectives were set.

1. Identify the travel expectations of students holidaying
2. Identify the motives for students' holiday travels
3. Classify the students' travel motives and expectations onto factors

4. Identify the preferences on transport, accommodation, destinations in students travelling
5. Identification of popular New Zealand destinations for international students

2. Literature Review

Travel motivations, transportation, accommodation are main forces and components of a travelling activity. Reisinger and Mavondo (2004) described psychographic make-up of student travel market under five factors such as cultural values, personality, travel motivation, preferences for activities, and lifestyle. According to Xu, Morgan, and Song (2009), a tourist product may include attractions and activities, accommodation and transport. These elements may be available either as a package or as separate products for travelers. Therefore, the literature review of this research study includes the areas of tourist behavior, travel motivations, accommodation, and transportation to understand the theoretical background of the study.

Understanding tourism behavior is crucial for formulating any tourism strategy. There are various tourist market segments such as business tourism, hedonistic tourism, educational tourism and religious tourism (Phau, Shanka, & Dhayan, 2010). The understanding of tourism behavior facilitates organizations with a guideline of uncovering the factors of buying a particular tourism product and interlinked influential factors.

The factors of understanding the students' tourist behavior help to create a differentiated product (Moreno, Padilla, ourismIspas, & Seitan, 2008) which, in turn, can increase the competitiveness in the market (Huang & Xiao, 2000). Destination managers should take the advantage of producing a differentiated product while utilizing the base destination sustainably. However, some characteristics are indeed uncontrollable and beyond predictions (Moreno et al., 2008). The predictable and controllable factors must be evaluated timely and efficiently by making comparison of one tourism product with other in the same competitive market (Ray & McCain, 2009).

Researchers attempting to define tourist motivation typically develop a list of the reasons for travel (Fodness, 1994). Kozak (2002) produced four motivational (travel) categories: culture, pleasure-seeking/fantasy, relaxation, and physical. Further his study explored that different nationalities have different motivations for travelling i.e., German tourists were more likely to have culture and nature-oriented motivations, and British tourists liked to have fun and mix with other fellow tourists. Further it was noted that the motivations differ with the travel destination.

Literature provides some evidences about travel motivators of students as specific travel segment. Kim (2007) found eight 'push' factors (escape, education, connection and thrill, friends, family togetherness, scenery, fun, and relax) and six 'pull' factors (accessibility, beach and sun, sports, attractions, natural environment, and family oriented) as significant in students' travel behavior. Mohsin and Alsawafi (2011) investigated Omani students' holidaying attributes under pull and push theory of travel motivations. The study found three push factors to travel abroad by Omani students; to be mentally refreshed, to learn something new or increase knowledge, and to spend the time without worrying about study. Further it found that safety and security, natural attractions, and availability of mosque as pull factors for students travelling. As per the study done by Mohsin and Ryan (2007), the motivations for travel for Indian university students are to increase knowledge, general relaxation needs and to see new cultures. According to Richards and Wilson

(2004), visiting historical sites, walking, sitting in cafés and restaurants, and shopping were found to be as the frequently mentioned motivations. Moreover, as per the study done by Ian et al. (2003), activities like dining, festivals and going to national parks are more popular among international students in Australia. Heung and Leong (2006) did a study on student's travel decision making and it was identified that experience new and different styles, take it easy and relax, go to places 'I haven't been before' and outstanding scenery were important motives for travelling.

Accommodation is one of the main considerations of a traveler and there are ranges of accommodation services available. Kim and Jogaratnam (2003) categorized the accommodation options into four categories (hotel/motel, home of friends/relatives, hostel, and campground/trailer park) in a study which investigated students' travel behaviors in the USA. A study conducts by Xu et al. (2009) on travel behaviors of UK and Chinese students categorized the accommodation options into five categories; hotel/B&B, youth hostel, camp site, with friends, and self-catering. Further this study found that both Chinese and UK students mostly prefer the serviced accommodation followed by the staying with friends.

Cleanliness is considered as one of the main considerations in accommodation selection (Lockyer, 2002). Lockyer (2003) further analyzed this factor and found that the cleanliness in the bathroom and toilet and kitchen is most important for guests where the females demonstrated more importance of these features than males. According to Moreno et al. (2008), staff and cleanliness, kitchen, outside areas and primary services determine the overall image of a particular accommodation facility. Further a study conducted on travel behaviors of international students in Malaysia found that the type of accommodation is associated with the satisfaction of the visits of international students in Malaysia (Jason, Bik, Crystal, Ooi, and Goh, 2011). As far as the visitor type is considered, most of the backpackers like low cost accommodation (Ryan & Mohsin, 2001).

Choice of the mode of transportation is another factor which describes the travel behavior. According to Lam, Ariffin, and Ahmad (2011), air transportation, motor vehicles, railroad transportation and water transportation are the main modes of a transport system. Out of these various types of transportation means, surface transport is considered crucial for New Zealand tourism industry (Pearce, Reid, and Schott, 2009). Because, the travellers travelling in New Zealand tend to cover large number of sites as well as to travel longer distance trips (Holt, Higham, & Kearsley, 1998). When the students travelling is concerned, the use of private cars is popular than other transportation modes (Shanka, Ali-Knight, and Pope, 2002).

3. Methodology

This study was mainly based on a quantitative deductive approach. A structured questionnaire was used for the data collection with two open-ended questions. Questionnaire consisted with four main parts; students' demographics, holidaying motives and requirements, and preferred destinations. A five-point Likert scale was adopted for 16 questions, developed based on the relevant literature, which covered travel motives and requirements, mode of transport and accommodation preferences. Construct validity of the instruments was established taking views of the expert in this field and using literature related to this particular area.

The population of this study includes international students traveling in New Zealand during their study period. The respondents were approached conveniently at one of the New Zealand prominent Universities and the individual who has had travelling experiences in New Zealand were identified as respondents. The convenient sampling techniques is suitable as the respondents are to be filtered before identifying them as the correct respondent for the study as mentioned. Moreover, at the university, students are engaging in various tasks and, therefore, it is good to approach students those who demonstrate a certain freedom to talk with to share their travel experiences.

A total of 132 completed questionnaires were collected. Descriptive analysis and factor analysis were used to analyze quantitative data. Textual data collected on two open ended questions were analyzed manually with the help of MS Excel worksheet.

4. Results and Discussions

Demographics distribution of the sample

Table 1 depicts the demographics distribution of the sample.

Table 1
Demographics distribution of the sample

Category	Frequency (%)	Category	Frequency (%)
Gender (*N* = 132)		**Marital Status (*N* = 132)**	
Male	73 (55%)	Unmarried	84 (64%)
Female	59 (45%)	Married	48 (36%)
Main source of income while studying (*N*=132)		**Country of Residence**	
Scholarship	53 (40%)	China	38 (29%)
Student loan	12 (9%)	Saudi Arabia	19 (14%)
From parents/family	49 (37%)	India	12 (9%)
Own savings	14 (11%)	Papua New Guinea	6 (5%)
Bank loan	4 (3%)	Tongo	5 (4%)
		Malaysia	4 (3%)
Age group (*N* = 132)		Samoa	4 (3%)
18-19	8 (6%)	Solomon Islands	4 (3%)
20-21	29 (22%)	Sri Lanka	4 (3%)
22-24	26 (20%)	Germany	3 (2%)
25-29	36 (27%)	Other countries	13 (10%)
30-34	23 (17%)	Not mentioned	20 (15%)
35 and above	10 (8%)		

According to Table 1, total number of respondents was 132 and out of that 73 were male and 59 were female representing 55percent and 45percent respectively. Age group 25-29 shows the highest number representation of 36 respondents followed by groups 20-21 and 22-24 which represented 29 and 26 respondents respectively. Furthermore, 48

respondents were married and the total numbers of unmarried respondents were 84 representing 36percent and 64percent respectively in the sample. As Table 1 shows, scholarships finance 53 respondents to study as the main financing source and it represents 53percent of total respondents. Further bank loan represents the lowest contribution in financing education (only 3%). Moreover, most of the students in the sample were from China followed by Saudi Arabia and India respectively. Number of respondents who had not mentioned the country was 20.

Students travel characteristics

Table 2
Students' travel characteristics

Category	Frequency (%)	Category	Frequency (%)
Travel frequency Per Year (*N* = 132)		**Per day Expenditure** (*N* = 132)	
1-2 times	73 (55%)	50$ and less	24 (18%)
3-4 times	40 (30%)	50-100	47 (36%)
More than 4 times	19 (15%)	100-150	25 (19%)
		150-250	19 (14%)
Length of trip (*N* = 132)		250-400	11 (8%)
1-2 days	46 (35%)	More than 400$	6 (5%)
3-4 days	33 (25%)		
5-6 days	19 (14%)		
7-8 days	23 (17%)		
More than 8 days	11 (8%)		

According to Table 2, 73 students have travelled 1-2 days per year and it represents 55percent of total number of respondents. Further, 40 and 19 students have travelled 2-4 times and more than 4 times representing 30percent and 15percent respectively. Moreover, 47 of the students have spent 50-100 per day in their holiday trips and it represents 36percent of the total respondents. Only 6 students have spent more than 400$ per day in holidaying and it represents 5percent in the sample. When the length of the trip is considered, 46 students have participated 1-2 days holidaying trips and 33 students have travelled for 3-4 days. Further only 11 students have travelled for more than 8 days for a holiday.

Student Travel Behavior

Descriptive statistics for three variables were calculated and Table 3 shows the respective values.

Table 3
Summary Statistics of Student Travel Behaviour

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Travel Frequency	1.50	4.50	2.49	1.18
Per-day Expenditure per-person (NZ$)	25.00	500.00	134.88	116.19

Length of Trip (Days)	1.50	9.50	4.33	2.69

According to Table 3, average student travel frequency is 2.49 times a year and the average length of the journey is 4.33 days. Further Average expenditure per person per day is 134.88$ in the whole sample.

Student Travel Preferences

Table 4 shows the Mean and Std. Deviation of 8 factors of students travel preferences on a scale of 1 to 5. According to the table, students care mostly about the safety and security. Next, they travel because of mental refreshment and to have a time without worrying about their studies. Experiencing new food and drink and festivals have been identified as less important in travelling.

Table 4
Student Travel Preferences

Indicator	Mean	Std. Deviation
Holiday travel should be mentally refreshed	4.08	1.009
Holiday travel should increase knowledge and help you to learn something new	3.94	0.979
Holiday travel should be a time without worrying about study	3.99	1.129
Holiday travel should be an opportunity to visit outstanding scenery	3.97	0.916
Holiday travel should be to experience new food & drink	3.67	1.039
Holiday travel should be to experience festivals	3.54	0.894
Holiday travel should be safety and security	4.14	1.117
Holiday travel should be to visit natural attractions	3.93	0.951

Factor analysis was conducted to identify the number of factors yielding from 8 indicators.

Table 5
Factor loadings

Indicator	Component	
	1	2
Holiday travel should be mentally refreshed	.764	.093
Holiday travel should increase knowledge and help you to learn something new	.572	.300
Holiday travel should be a time without worrying about study	.703	.042
Holiday travel should be an opportunity to visit outstanding scenery	.639	.373
Holiday travel should be to experience new food & drink	.245	.795
Holiday travel should be to experience festivals	.065	.887
Holiday travel should be safety and security	.757	.097
Holiday travel should be to visit natural attractions	.609	.185

Principle component and Varimax rotation procedures were applied in producing outputs. The KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) figure was 0.767 with 0.000 of p value. Therefore, the appropriateness of data and the size of the sample for factor analysis is confirmed.

Table 5 depicts the factor loadings for each indicator under two components. Based on that, two dimensions can be derived. 'Holiday travel should be to experience new food and drink' and 'holiday travel should be to experience festivals' make one factor which can be named as *associated features* and rest of 6 items make the next factor which can be named as *fundamental features*.

Student Transportation Preference

Table 6 shows the transportation preference of student holiday trips.

Table 6
Students' transportation preference

Mode of Transport	Mean	Standard Deviation
I prefer bus transportation when going on holiday	2.73	1.192
I prefer car transportation when going on holiday	3.72	1.014
I prefer some other transportation when going on holiday	3.23	.956

According to Mean values, most of the students prefer car transportation. Bus transportation was found as the least popular mode.

Student Accommodation Preference

According to Table 7, most of the students prefer to stay in a youth hostel followed by the friends' and relative place. Staying in some other places was ranked as the least popular accommodation option.

Table 7
Student Accommodation Preference

Type of accommodation	Mean	Standard Deviation
I prefer to stay in a hotel	2.73	1.192
I prefer stay in a youth hostel	3.72	1.014
I prefer to stay in a friends'/relatives' place	3.23	.956
I prefer to stay in another place (other than the above mentioned three options)	2.97	1.223

Popular Destinations

Two open ended questions were used to identify places visited by students and find the future travel destinations. Based on the answers provided, two groups of destinations identified i.e., regions and specific destinations (least mentioned destinations were excluded from the analysis).

Table 8
Travel destinations by region

Destination	Visited	Expected	Total
Auckland	89	11	100
Wellington	32	44	76
Christchurch	17	31	48
Tauranga	35	7	42
Dunedin	8	17	25

According to Table 8, most popular regions are Auckland and Wellington whereas the least popular region is Dunedin.

Table 9
Travel destinations by attractions

Destination	Visited	Expected	Total
Queens town	30	44	74
Rotorua	46	9	55
Taupo Lake	25	13	38
Ragland	18	4	22
Waitomo Caves	7	5	12
Nelson	2	9	11
Waihi Beach	3	8	11
Coromandel Beach	8	3	11
Bay of Plenty	5	5	10
Whakatane	3	7	10

Furthermore, according to Table 9, when specific destinations are considered, the most popular destination is Queens Town followed by Rotorua.

5. Conclusions and Implications

Students travel behavior generally includes their holidaying preferences, travel motivations, transport modes and accommodation choices. Average student travel frequency is 2.49 times a year and the average length of the journey is 4.33 days. Further Average expenditure per person per day is 134.88$ in the whole sample. Students consider the safety and security is the most important factor in travelling. Further they tend to travel because of their mental refreshment and spending time without worrying about studies. More importantly, the exploratory factor analysis revealed two factors which can be named as fundamental travel features and associated travel features whereas fundamental features were a product of six indicators and associated features was actually contained only two factors. This finding provides insights that the students might think most of the holidaying requirements and features are essential features to them.

Moreover, most students like to travel by a car and stay in youth hostels. Furthermore, Auckland and Wellington were identified as most popular cities and Queens town and Rotorua were identified as most popular destinations for international students in New Zealand.

Finally, this study gives some insights about holiday behaviors of international students in New Zealand. Thus, these findings would direct the suppliers of respective segments to make their decision better and make arrangements to satisfy the requirements of their target market.

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