

**DETERMINING INTERNATIONAL
POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS' TRAVEL BEHAVIOR IN
MALAYSIA**

by

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PENENTUAN TINGKAH LAKU PERJALANAN PELAJAR ANTARABANGSA DALAM MALAYSIA

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini dijalankan untuk menilai tingkah laku perjalanan pelajar pasca siswazah antarabangsa dan mengetahui faktor-faktor penting yang mempengaruhi pilihan perjalanan serta aktiviti-aktiviti mereka. Ia juga bertujuan untuk memberi maklumat berguna tentang kepentingan tingkah laku perjalanan pelajar antarabangsa kepada industri pelancongan, diikuti dengan perbincangan mengenai batasan dalam literatur dan cara untuk mengatasi jurang yang dikenal pasti. Kajian ini juga menyediakan maklumat terperinci kepada pilihan perjalanan, aktiviti berkaitan perjalanan, destinasi lawatan, sumber yang digunakan bagi mendapatkan maklumat tentang destinasi pilihan dan perbelanjaan keseluruhan oleh pelajar antarabangsa semasa bercuti di Malaysia. Oleh itu ia menyumbang kepada literatur sedia ada dan menjadi asas kepada penyelidikan yang akan dijalankan. Hasil kajian adalah berdasarkan respon yang diperolehi daripada kaji selidik terhadap 409 pelajar pasca siswazah antarabangsa universiti penyelidikan (UPM, USM, UM, UTM, dan UKM) di Malaysia. Melalui hasil kajian, model tingkah laku perjalanan yang baru telah dibina dan disokong oleh data empirical, menambah pembolehubah baru dan '*constructs*' kepada model tingkah laku perjalanan sedia ada. Data empirikal tersebut menemukan hubungan di antara ciri-ciri sosio-demografi perjalanan pelajar antarabangsa, sumber maklumat, pilihan perjalanan dan aktiviti yang dijalankan semasa dalam perjalanan. Kesan kawalan sumber maklumat mengenai hubungan kewarganegaraan dan tingkah laku pelancongan juga telah dikenal pasti oleh kajian ini untuk kali pertama. Kajian kuantitatif mendapati model akhir adalah

praktikal dan hasil kajian menunjukkan kebolehpercayaan yang boleh diterima dan kesahan dibina dalam model pengukuran untuk menyiasat tingkah laku pelajar antarabangsa dalam konteks perjalanan.

DETERMINING INTERNATIONAL POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS' TRAVEL BEHAVIOR IN MALAYSIA

ABSTRACT

This study examines international students travel behaviors in an attempt to find out important factors influencing their travel preferences and activities. It also aims to provide useful information about significance of international students' travel behavior to the tourism industry followed by a discussion of the limitations in the literature and try to overcome the identified gaps. The study further attempts to provide detailed information on travel preferences, travel related activities, destinations visited, sources using for obtaining information about preferred destinations and to investigate the overall expenditure by international students while on holiday in Malaysia. Consequently it contributes to the existing literature and also lays a foundation for further research to be conducted. Finding of this quantitative study are based on the responses obtained from a self-administered survey of 409 International postgraduate students of research universities (UPM, USM, UM, UTM, and UKM) in Malaysia. Through the findings a new travel behavior model was generated which has been supported by the empirical data and added new variables and constructs to the existing models of travel behaviors. The empirical data further, found the relationship among socio-demographic characteristics of international student travelers, information sources, travel preferences, and activities undertaken while travelling. The moderating effect of information source on relationship between nationality and travel behavior also has been identified by the current study for the first time. The quantitative research found the final model to be practical and the results revealed acceptable reliability and construct validity in measurement model to investigate international students' behaviors in travelling context.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Tourism has become a key industry, standing fourth following fuels, chemicals and automotive products (Pane, 2010). According World Tourism Organization, 2010 taken as a whole income created by international tourism reached US\$ 1.1 trillion in 2008, or US\$ 3 billion a day. Tourism exports constitute 30% of exports of commercial services and 6% of goods and services exports taken as the whole. For majority of developing countries it is one of the most important earnings basis and the key type of export, generating a large amount of employment and development opportunities (World Tourism Organization, 2010). Nowadays international students market as an integral part to the tourism industry is considered as one of the key earning sources.

Variations in the demographic composition of a population create a variety of opportunities for presenting and providing a multiplicity of tourism products and services. One of these changes is the amplified involvement of overseas students in education that has been occurring in numerous countries over the past 10 years (Glover, 2011). Educational based travelling is considered as one of the earliest universal chance for students that have been experienced by numerous societies for many centuries. Nowadays in the 21st century, this experience has been changed to an industry with millions of people travelling abroad to study who are currently considered as international students (Payne, 2010).

Students travel much more than their previous generations (Schrage et al., 2001). Increasing of different choices for transportation and decrease in costs of air travel have made traveling much more unproblematic than it has been in the past resulting in creating great chances for students to discover the world (Shoham et al., 2004). Having free time during semester breaks and holidays and also great motivation of international students to travel while studying in a foreign country in an endeavor to understand the culture of the local people, will result in frequent traveling of international students inside the host country. This type of traveling is considered as an integral part to the overall overseas education experience and consequently a host country will considerably gain benefits of these travel expenditure, however tourism managers and organizations have rarely tried to recognize international students' needs and desires. One of the most important reasons that role of international students' travels has been disregarded is because the tourism industry have either held their implication to the tourism industry in low esteem or have neglected the market; therefore international students are not considered as a key tourist group (Arcodia et al., 2007).

When international students travel during their study's time it can make considerable revenue and employment opportunities for the host country (Pane, 2010). However, understanding of students' travel behaviors is helpful for tourism market segmentation and it can be a considerable benefit for marketers in many tourism destinations, a main challenge identified by researchers and tourism operators is the deficiency of research and information regarding to international students' travel behavior, particularly while travelling domestically in the host country (Ryan & Zhang, 2007). Without this information available, it would be

impossible improving this market hence, the host country will fail to benefit from millions of dollars made by this type of tourism (Chadee & Cutler, 1996; Arcodia et., al 2006; Kim et al., 2006; Kim, 2007). Therefore regarding to importance of international students market this research project attempts to contribute further research and provide detailed information on the travel behavior, travel preferences, travel related activities, destinations visited, sources using for obtaining information about preferred destinations and to investigate the overall expenditure by international students while on holiday in Malaysia. Consequently it will contribute to the existing literature and also lay a foundation for further research to be conducted.

1.1.1 The Significance of Doing Research on Students' Travel Behaviors

Traveling is one of the most important tourism activities which makes a significant contribution to the tourism industry's development. According to Hsu and Sung (1997) identifying travel behavior of each market segment is very important in order to create the significant contributions for improvement of marketing strategies and can help to provide appropriate products. Weinstein (1987) also stated findings on travel behaviors of different segments of market will upgrade competitive positions of organizations and assist them to better provide their customers' needs and desires.

University students are social groups that have a propensity to have unique travel behaviors and since proper products and services could be developed to motivate them to travel (Shoham et al., 2004), the necessity of constructing and delivering modified products is considering more critical (Field, 1999). Country's

economy can be benefited from international students through their tuition fees, living costs and travel behaviors (Payne, 2010) and since students frequently travel during time of their study, they are considered as a main part to study (Hsu & Sung, 1997), consequently, understanding students travel behaviors are of an essential issue to marketers and research findings on the travel behavior of international students can provide marketers such essential information (Shoham et al., 2004).

Notably, according to Chacko (1997) and Field (1999) identification of different segments' preferences can assist tourism managers in positioning of tourism destinations by providing appropriate products. Latest research (Sussmann and Rashcovsky, 1997; Oppermann, 1993) proposes that marketers have to consider the influence of some classifications such as nationality, age, and gender and build their marketing strategies accordingly.

Pane (2010) also stated carrying out research into international students' travel behaviors will enable the international students' market to grow and contribute to a country's economy by investigating what tourism products the international students consume on holiday, along with their travel behaviors, expenditure and activities which undertake in travel. By undertaking this research, analyzing and sharing these results with all stakeholders, consequently a better ability to market appropriate products and services of this potentially profitable target market can be occurred (pane 2010).

Kim et al., (2003) indicated that it is beneficial for destination and tour operators that wish to target the international student traveler market to understand

and recognize activities that are preferred and popular amongst such group. Michael (2001) also argued that tourism operators should identify student preferences for entertainment and travel activities and target this segment with carefully selected products and services. Shanka et al., (2002) agree with this, suggesting tour operators need to plan their services around the activities that mostly attract international students through creating tours that are accessible and concentrate on revealing the uniqueness of the destination and since market segmentation into the smaller groups will lead to more targeted planning travel behavior information is considered so valuable to tourism policymakers, planners, and service providers.

1.1.2 The International Student Market

It is totally accepted that international students' market is considered as a growing market in tourism industry in any destination country. Taylor et al., (2004) indicated that due to the prolonged nature of international students staying at their chosen destination, the economic benefits of international students' travel have considerable value to the tourism industry in addition to the education sectors. The student travel market is as a sector with the potential to develop into a billion-dollar market therefore, increase in the number of international students will undoubtedly cause significant contribution to the student travel market.

International students contribute significantly to the country that they study through tuition fees, costs of living, engaging in travel and even indirectly when family and friends visit them. Payne's study (2010) also revealed that international students travelled frequently and repeatedly, and spent large amounts of money most being spent on activities while travelling. This is worth mentioning due to the

potential spending power of this section could motivate travel marketers and researchers in order to figuring out why they travel and expand modified and appropriate products to meet university students' needs and desires (Kim & Jogaratnam, 2003).

1.1.3 Economic Contribution of International Students

International students contribute to a country's economy both directly and indirectly. Direct contributions to a country's economy are primarily through tuition fees and living costs, and secondly through the travel and tourism they engage during their study. Indirect contributions occur when friends and relatives travel from overseas to visit the student (Arcodia et al., 2006). The direct and indirect contributions to the country's economy by international students are discussed in the following section.

1.1.3.1 Direct Contributions

International students directly contribute to a country's economy in two ways, firstly through tuition and living costs and secondly through travel and tourism expenditure (Payne 2010). Countries that have an established export education industry directly benefit from this growing market. Money which is spent by international students, leads to the creation of new employment opportunities and jobs and tourism and travel benefits.

It is also well documented that international students contribute to the conventional tourism sector in the host country by travelling for non-educational purposes during their stay (Weaver, 2004). Firstly, Weaver (2004) strongly argued

that international students tend to undertake tourist activity in the country of their study, and their large leisure travel expenditures are of the great significance to the industry. Both Field (1999) and Son (2003) indicated that since international students have the opportunity to travel during semester break, they are significant contributors to the total tourism market in the country where they study. Chen and Kerstetter (1999) also explained that international student travelers are a lucrative segment of the pleasure travel market due to their economic contribution.

1.1.3.2 Indirect Contributions

In addition to direct contributions of international students to the tourism industry, there are also significant indirect contributions that should be noted. Indirect contributions occur when friends and relatives of students come to visit them for graduation ceremonies or to help students to set up at the start of the academic year. Dockery et al., (1999) stated that benefits to the local area will be gained when international students' friends or families come to visit them during their studies. Taylor et al., (2004) also argued that the expenditure of visiting friends and relatives on travel is of the great significance to the tourism industry. They explained further that higher education students make a profitable market segment for the travel industry and they also encourage visits from family members (Taylor et al., 2004). Shanka et al (2001) agreed with these statements, suggested the education sector generates revenues from international students and acts as a motivator to attract friends and relatives to visit the students as well.

Shanka et al., (2001) also stated that a majority of international students would receive visits from relatives and friends, particularly to attend graduation

ceremonies where at least two to three family members would attend. Roppolo (1996) suggested friends and relatives who come to visit the students are also likely to spread of their travel experience to other travelers when they return to their home country, and return for future visits.

1.1.4 International Students in Malaysia

As it is documented in the previous studies (Kalinowski & Weiler; 1992; Gibson, 1998; Holdnak & Holland, 1996) traveling for educational reasons is not new and its recognition in the tourism industry is estimated to increase (Holdnak & Holland, 1996; Gibson, 1998). Malaysia also has the required potential to increase its tourism income through tapping into this developing market. Nowadays most of the institutions of higher education in Malaysia are trying to attract students from around the world (Yusoff & Chelliah, 2010) to choose Malaysia as the preferred choice for continuing education. The number of students travelling abroad to study has been increased dramatically in the past 10 years and taken a great proportion among the postgraduate students in Malaysian universities.

Nowadays, large numbers of young individuals from around the world study in Malaysia and contribute to the cultures and languages in Malaysia. Since 1996 due to facilitate the international students' entry into Malaysian universities owing to introducing various higher education reforms, the number of overseas students has been increased, (see Figure 1.1)

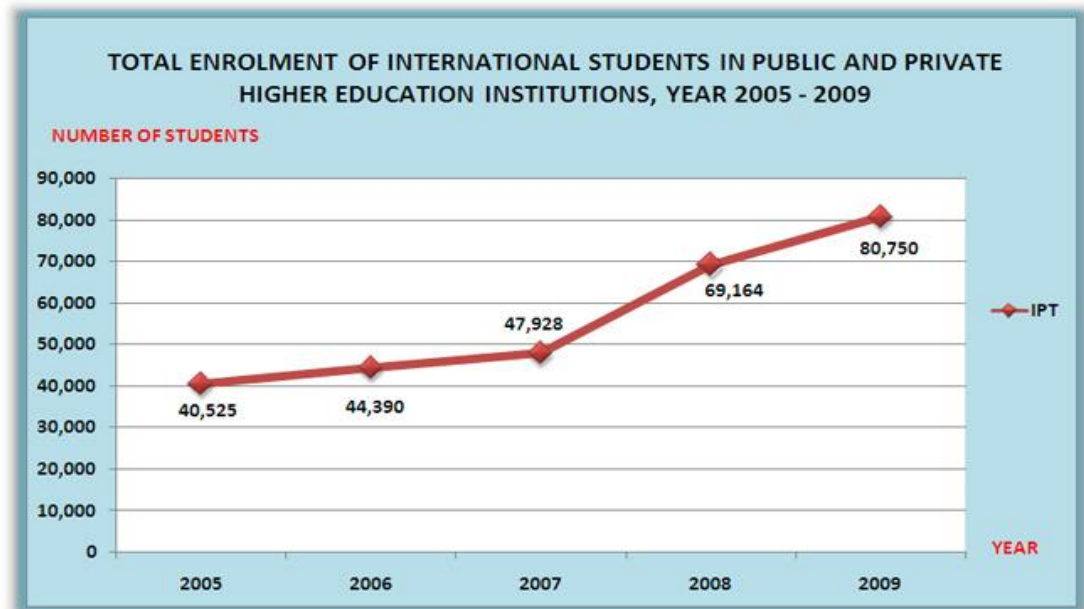


Figure 1.1 Total International Students Enrolment in Higher Education Institution

Source: Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia (2010)

Going by the latest statistics total number of international student enrollment is 86,923 which 24,218 are studying in public institutions and others (62,705) are studying in private institutions (Ministry of Higher Education, 2010). Out of the figures provided by Ministry of Higher Education, Iran, China and Indonesia represent the highest number of international students in Malaysia. They number 11,828, 10,241 and 9,889 respectively.

Table 1.1 Top 10 Countries and Percentage of Total International Student Enrollment

Place of origin	Number of students	Percentage of total
Iran	11,823	13.6%
China	10,214	11.8%
Indonesia	9,889	11.4%
Yemen	5,866	6.7%
Nigeria	5,817	6.7%
Libya	3,930	4.5%
Sudan	2,837	3.3%
Saudi Arabia	2,252	2.6%
Bangladesh	2,041	2.3%
Botswana	1,911	2.2%

Source: Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia (2010)

According to the reported statistics, the number of university students in Malaysia who have a great propensity to make unique travel behaviors is growing owing to trying to attract students from around the world by Malaysian higher education institutions. This attempt has caused a rapid rise of overseas students studying in Malaysia from 1996 along with introducing of the Higher Education Act by government leading to international education improvement as an integral part of this development.

Although the first Malaysian university was established in 1962, foreign student enrollments in Malaysia have increased speedily during past 25 years. The total number increased from 32 in 1970 to 12,605 in 1999. This amount is expected

to grow over the coming decade due to government policy to liberalize higher education (Ministry of higher education Malaysia, 2010).

1.1.5 Universities in Malaysia

Malaysia, as an international education hub attracts students from different countries around the world regarding its comprehensive list of programs: pre-university, diploma, degree and post-graduate courses as well as distance learning and online study. All these internationally recognized programs with affordable price, makes Malaysia as one of the top choice destination for international students.

According to the ministry of higher education official web portal (2010) there are more than 594 institutions of higher learning available all over this country which the number of public institutions is 118 and the private institution's number is 476. These institutions of higher learning offer long-term program such as diplomas, bachelors, masters and postgraduate degree and also short-term programs such as English language courses.

Historically, the first university was established in 1962 when the division of the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur was upgraded to a full university status. Nine other universities were established between 1969 and 1995 and they were Universiti Sains Malaysia (1969), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (1970), Universiti Putra Malaysia (1971), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (1972), Universiti Islam Antarabangsa (1982), Universiti Utara Malaysia (1984), Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (1994), Universiti Malaysia Sabah (1995), and Universiti Teknologi MARA (1997), other public universities were established from 1998 through (2006).They

were Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (1998), Kolej Agama Sultan Zainal Abidin (1998), Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (1998), Institut Teknologi Tun Hussein Onn (1999), Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (1999), Kolej Universiti Islam Malaysia (2000), Kolej Universiti Sains & Teknologi Terengganu (2000), Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (2000), Kolej Tunku Abdul Rahman (2000) and Kolej Universiti Teknikal Melaka (2001), Universiti Malaysia Perlis (2001), Universiti Malaysia Pahang (2002), Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (2006), Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia (2006), Most of the private universities were established after 1998.

1.2 Problem Statement

Since tourists are magnificently different in age, motivation, and preferred activities (Pearce, 2005), categorizing tourism into sectors that need particular desires, services and marketing strategies plays a crucial role in the tourism industry. Such these divisions help tourism marketers in appropriately recognizing beneficial target groups under ever more competitive market conditions. It facilitates much more lucrative marketing by designing, promoting, and positioning of appropriate products effectively intended to meet the identified desires and needs of those specific groups (Middleton, 2009; Court and Lupton, 1997).

Traveling as one of the most important tourism activities could make a significant contribution to the tourism industry's development and since students have a high tendency to travel due to having free time during school breaks they are considered as a significant segment to study (Hsu & Sung, 1997). Consequently, understanding students travel behaviors are of a great significance to marketers and

research findings on students' travel behavior can present such necessary information (Shoham et al., 2004).

As it was mentioned earlier students' travel behaviors have been overlooked as a precise market segment particularly in the case of Malaysia. To date, few studies have been done in order to identify international students' travel behavior in this country. Since Malaysia is increasingly recognized by great number of young foreign people as the preferred choice for continuing education it is necessary to identify this important group's travel behavior but quite little is known about travel preferences of university students in Malaysia.

Source for obtaining information has also been considered empirically as a segmentation variable. It has presented important insights for developing marketing strategies while employed as a descriptor to outline the behavior of tourists who have been segmented on some other basis, (Moutinho, 1987). Although tourists are segmented based on their search behavior, information search behaviors have also received little attention in the case of Malaysia.

Based on the existing gaps and since student travel market displays separate characteristics quite distinct from other travel and tourism markets (Chadee & Culter, 1996), there is a crucial need to establish a disciplined network of specialists in order to serve specifically to student travelers. Thus, this study is intended to fill the gaps identified above and try to increase knowledge of tourism planners and policy makers regarding this valuable and significant market. Identified significant differences and similarities of preferences including preferences for entertainment

and travel activities will be informed to tourism operators consequently they would account for them through adapting their strategies to students in various characteristics of the travelers, rather than standardizing the strategy.

1.3 Research Questions

In order to figure out the research problem series of research questions are presented throughout the case study depicting travel behaviors of five Malaysian research universities' international students.

1. What are the travel behaviors (travel preferences and activities undertaken while traveling) of international students in Malaysia?
2. How do international students collect information about different destinations Is within Malaysia?
3. Are there any relationship between demographic characteristics, information search and travel behaviors of students?

1.4 Research Objectives

This research intends to achieve the following objectives:

- To determine travel behaviors of international students in Malaysia.
- To identify sources used by international students to obtain information about the destinations they visited.
- To examine the relationship between demographic characteristics, information search behavior, and travel behaviors of students.

1.5 Research Hypothesis

Based on an extensive literature review and study's research questions, three hypotheses have been developed which will be addressed throughout this study:

H₁: There is a significant relationship between demographic characteristics and travel preferences of international students in Malaysia.

H₂: There is a significant relationship between demographic characteristics and activities undertaken by international students in Malaysia while traveling.

H₃: Information search behavior has a moderating effect in regard of the relationship between country of origin and travel behavior of students in Malaysia.

1.6 Proposed Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study (Figure 1.2) has been developed after an extensive review of literature based on previous studies regarding to identify travel behaviors. This study is based upon the theoretical framework and attempted to cover all aspects of travel behavior dimensions. After a review of current approaches to complex travel behavior, the theoretical model was summarized and its components were presented which is discussed in chapter three.

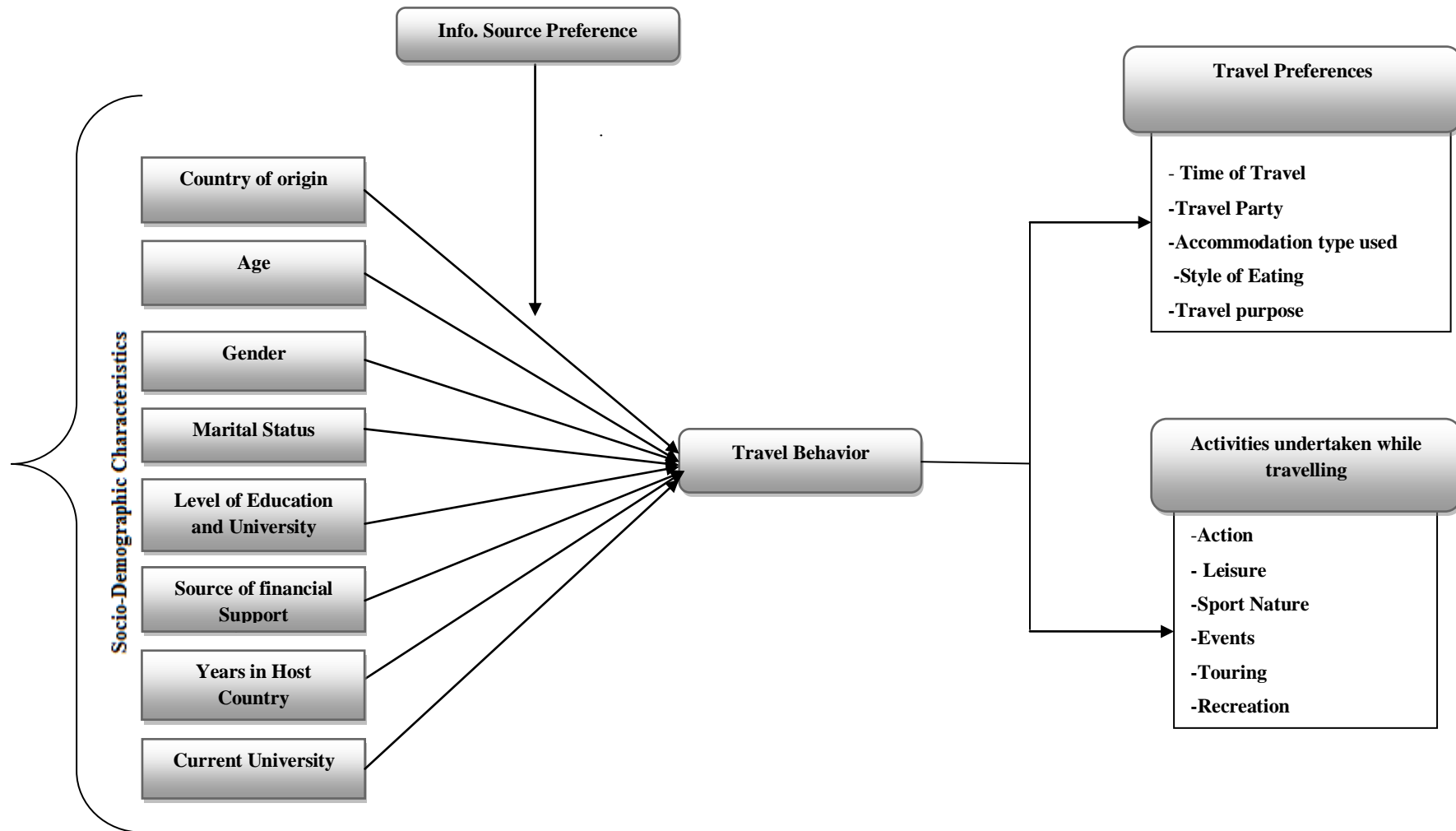


Figure 1.2 The Theoretical Framework

1.7 Significance of the Study

The focus of this project is to determine the travel behaviors of international students in Malaysia. The influence of demographic characteristics on their travel behavior also is studied. With the changing demographics of international students associated with changes to the mix of country of origin, marital status, level of study and etc, it would be interesting to explore the travel preferences of international students.

This study seeks to understand the similarities and diversities in travel behaviors of foreign students. This research also seeks to identify travel preferences and activities undertaken by international students which could be considered as a guide to understand why students prefer not to be involved in some travel activities and how they can be motivated to do. The research findings of this research will be used as a guide for travel-related service providers to develop proper products for more effective encouragement of overseas students to investigate and visit various parts of Malaysia.

This research compiles a profile of international students who are currently studying in Malaysian universities. Demographic information as well as their travel behaviors including what they did on holiday, destinations visited, how they found out about the destinations they visited, types of accommodation they stayed in, whom they preferred to travel with, time of travel, activities and attractions they participated in, where they ate and how much money they spent in their travel are asked in this survey and then are analyzed. Therefore regarding the findings a deeper understanding of this market segment in Malaysia is gained.

As Roppolo (1996) stated international students are a powerful advertising tool, analyzing population characteristics carefully is essential for tourism business managers in order to positioning the market beneficially. Since data on various market segments' travel preferences could help market to meet the needs of its customers (Weinstein 1987), current study findings will be used as a guide for travel-related service providers in order to explain or predict students' travel decisions (Kim & Jogaratnam, 2007) therefore proper products could be developed for more effective encouraging foreign students for traveling to various parts of Malaysia.

1.8 Scope of the Study

This study attempts to determine international students' travel behaviors and travel-related activities while on holiday. Therefore a comprehensive understanding of international students' travel behaviors who are currently studying in Malaysian universalities was aimed. This study also attempts to examine the existing relationships among student's demographic characteristics, information sources used and travel behavior. Respondents of this study are postgraduate students from five research universities including University Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Universiti of Malaya (UM).

Research universities were chosen to be surveyed in this research and there are just 5 research universities in Malaysia and due to differences between research students' travel behaviors and other students and since most of undergraduate students are local and this study aimed at investigating travel behavior of international students,

this study chose the international postgraduate students of these 5 research universities in Malaysia for the purpose of this research. The selection of the sample will be based on statistics sources from international offices at universities and relevant student representative bodies of the overseas postgraduate student population in Malaysia. An online survey is implemented to collect needed data in five universities in order to determine international postgraduate students' travel behaviors.

This study concentrates only on overnight travels. All the respondents are international postgraduate students which have travelled in the past 12 months. International students' demographics characteristics are collected along with their travel preferences and activities. This study compiles a profile of international postgraduate students who travel in Malaysia during time of their study. This research details the international students' demographics, travel behaviors, what they did on holiday, destinations visited, how they found out about the destinations they visited, types of accommodation they stayed in, whom they preferred to travel with, time of travel, activities and attractions they participated in, where they ate and how much money they spent in their travel. Therefore a deeper understanding of this market segment in Malaysia is gained.

1.9 Organization of the Study

Chapter one presents a background and overview of the study. The research objectives, questions, hypothesis, expected research contributions also are presented in this chapter. Chapter Two reviews the literature pertaining to this research presenting the characteristics and travel behaviors of travelling international students. This chapter also

mentions the previous studies related to determining of students' travel behaviors particularly international students' travel behaviors. It also figures out the limitations of previous studies through having an accurate literature review.

Chapter three presents the theoretical framework of the study and the hypothetical model that examines the relationship among the constructs in the study. Each construct in this model has been chosen based on an extensive literature review and is discussed in this chapter. Chapter four will outline the research methodology that this study will adopt to conduct this study. The process of data collection and sampling are discussed. Pilot study, developing the questionnaire, content validity of the questionnaire, the preparation of data, and form of analysis is discussed as well.

Chapter five reports the statistical analysis of the survey data and interprets the data analysis' results carried out in the present study for the purpose of developing a valuable understanding of international students' travel behavior who currently studying in Malaysian universities. Chapter six presents discussions of research findings in greater detail. This chapter later discusses the research findings in the relationship to the literature review and concludes findings. It also presents the theoretical and practical implications resulting from the findings of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss about student's travel behavior through trying to review the relevant literature in this research area. The discussion begins with a review on international tourism market segmentation followed with further revision of tourist behavior's matters and classifications. Then travel behaviors have been defined based on the previous studies with a further literature review undertaken on the international students' travel characteristics and behaviors regarding to identify travel behaviors' variables. The next section focuses on reviewing previous studies on exploring students' travel behaviors in order to find factors affecting students' travel behaviors. This chapter ends by identifying the limitations of previous studies by doing an accurate literature review.

2.2 Market Segmentation

Segmentation according to Weber (1995) means categorizing a market into different categories of people with similar needs and desires which has been broadly argued in the tourism studies. Generally speaking, the sectors for segmentation include some variables such as demographic, geographic, behavioral, lifestyle, and personality (Zou & Tang 2011). Marketers are also suggested to consider the influence of nationality, gender, age, background, culture, and other classifications of the customers in the certain segments (Sussmann & Rashcovsky 1997; Oppermann 1993).

One of the most significant benefits to emerge from market segmentation is its helpfulness for market planners to earn a competitive advantage and wisely allocate such information to attract highly profitable tourist segments (Zou & Tang 2010). It also will emphasize on importance of offering customized products to unique segments in order to achieve the sophisticated travel market place (Mudambi & Baum 1997). Due to that, university students market can be regarded as a potential segmentation for tourism marketers which recently attracted market researchers' interests. Some of these related studies are discussed in the following sections.

2.3 Definition the Term of International Students

Finding a globally accepted definition of an international student was one the difficulties that this study faced with, because students engaged in formal education out of their country of birth are referred to in various ways (Table 2.1). For example, According to Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2010) international students are those who travel to a country different from their own for the purpose of tertiary study. The American Council on Education and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) use the term international student, with this term being widely used within the United States (Bain et al., 2006).

According to Paige's (1990) definition international students are individuals who temporarily live in a host country in order to study. UNESCO (2006) proposed the term internationally mobile students in order to standardize and make an accurate reporting to this term. The three main criteria of an internationally mobile student area include:

1. Noncitizens of the host country;
2. Not having permanent residency and;
3. Not completing their entry qualification to their current level of study in the host country (Cited in Bain et al., 2006).

Table 2.1 Definitions of International Students in Top Host Countries

Country	Definition	Permanent residents included /excluded
United States	International students are defined as students who are neither: -U.S. citizens -Immigrants -Refugees	Excludes Permanent Residents
United Kingdom	International students are defined by: -Domiciliary address	Excludes Permanent Residents
Australia	International students are defined on the basis of a combination of variables that can distinguish them from domestic students: -Residence permit -country of birth -permanent home residence -year of arrival in Australia -Foreign students enrolled in distance education, and -offshore programs	Excludes Permanent Residents
Germany	International students are defined as non-German citizens. Students with double citizenship are counted as German students. Data on foreign students do not include those enrolled in advanced research programs. Foreign students enrolled in distance education programs are included.	Includes Permanent Residents
Japan	International students are defined as: -non-Japanese citizens	Includes Permanent Residents
France	International students are defined as: -non-French citizens	Includes Permanent Residents

Source Bain et al., (2006)

Pane (2010) noted that definitions not only vary between countries but the types of programs included in international student figures could vary. For example, Australia and the USA consider students enrolled in intensive English language courses as international students while other countries defined international students as ones who only enrolled in degree and above programs (World Education Services, 2007).

According to the Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia (2011) international student is any foreign student enrolls in private and international schools, colleges, private and public universities in a wide range of disciplines at every level of education, including short terms and professional courses, diploma, bachelor degree and other postgraduate studies such as master and doctoral degrees. Hence, in the present study based on Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia's (2011) definition international students are defined as individuals who temporarily inhabit in a host country other than their home country with the purpose of participating in international educational exchange.

2.4 To whom does the Tourist Behavior Matter?

According to Pearce (2005) tourists' behavior firstly matters to the tourists. People tend to be concerned with their life experience and they tend to understand it. Consequently first answer to the question is that tourists own experience is very important for tourists themselves and it matters to them how to make best use of each one, whether it is a short domestic trip or a long international travel.