

TRAVEL BEHAVIOUR OF SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

When developing and managing tourism products, understanding the travel behaviour of niche markets, such as students can create a competitive advantage for tourism products. The purpose of this research was to determine the travel behaviour of tourism students in South Africa. Surveys were conducted at eight Tertiary Education Institutions offering tourism-related qualifications. Second and third year students at these institutions completed a total of 1062 questionnaires. The statistical analysis entailed descriptive statistics and factor analyses of travel motives and factors influencing holiday choices. The results revealed that students have specific preferences, but also similarities with other studies conducted among other tourist markets. Relaxation was found to be a significant motive for students, but gaining knowledge and learning new things were also very important for this market. When selecting destinations, personal influences (for example, previous visits, popularity and season) as well as predetermined influences (for example, availability of a holiday home, size of the travelling group, availability of time share and purpose of the holiday) played an important role.

Key words: Tourism students; Travel motivations; Holiday choice sets; Factor analysis.

INTRODUCTION

The student travel market has shown significant growth over the past few years (Kim *et al.*, 2007), and according to Schrage *et al.* (2001) and Liu (2008), students of today travel more than previous generations. Despite the economic contribution of a growing student travel market, Kim *et al.* (2007) found that there is still a lack of information regarding the travel behaviour and travel motives of students. The latter can assist in explaining or predicting student travel decisions and behaviour (Liu, 2008). Travel behaviour is the result of an attempt to satisfy unfulfilled needs, such as relaxation and spending time with family and friends (Nylen, as cited by Kotze, 2005). It refers to what people do over a specific time and is influenced by various factors, including personality, lifestyles, tourist roles and culture (Pizam & Sussmann, 1995). Carr (2002) states that behaviour is also influenced by a combination of socio-cultural norms, values and personal motivations that is present in both the home and holiday environments. This implies that travel behaviour, motives and destination choices differ according to the life cycle of the tourist (Oppermann, 1995), previous experiences, personal barriers and age, to name but a few.

Today, travel is easier than it has ever been and this leads to new and extended opportunities for the student market (Shoham *et al.*, 2004). Therefore, the aim of this study is to determine the travel behaviour of tourism students at selected universities in South Africa by analysing the demographic profile and factors influencing the travel behaviour of students. The results of such research would be of definite marketing, economic and social value, could lead to a harmonious blend of marketing and planning, and could assist in establishing an integrated information system regarding travel behaviour research (Minghui, 2007).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism can be considered as an experience that is produced and consumed at the same time (Heung *et al.*, 2001). Travelling has become popular for numerous reasons, including increased leisure time and income, new technological booking processes, low-cost airlines, more accessible information, easy transfer of money and easier travelling in general (Yau & Chan, 1990; Hsu & Sung, 1997; Richards & Wilson, 2003; Shoham *et al.*, 2004). Gallarza and Saura (2006) identify students as a relatively neglected segment, which is attracting the attention of many researchers due to the growth in the number of students taking holiday breaks and using very particular tourism services. Both Hsu and Sung (1997), as well as Carr and Axelsen (2005) point out the importance of this market as long holiday breaks, increased mobility, independence, and living far from their parents leave students with enough time to travel. It has become easier for students to travel domestically in addition to globally. Richards and Wilson (2003 & 2005) show that nowadays students spend more time on travel planning, especially regarding the destination visit, the mode of travel and the cost of the trip.

Although students tend to be constrained by relatively low levels of disposable income, the fact that they have few commitments, such as children and dependant spouses makes them more inclined to travel. The travel behaviour of students is further encouraged by society's view of student lifestyles, peer pressure to conform to the travel-orientated image of students and parental expectations of students' travel behaviour (Carr & Axelsen, 2005). It is therefore important to analyse the travel preferences of students and some factors influencing the travel behaviour of this niche market, which include accommodation preferences, transport (method of travel) preferences as well as preferences in terms of frequency and duration of trips.

Accommodation

Michael *et al.* (2003) found that staying with family and friends is the preferred choice of accommodation for students in South Africa. Josiam *et al.* (1994), Chadee and Cutler (1996), Richards and Wilson (2003), and Shoham *et al.* (2004), who conducted research into international student travel behaviour in the United States of America (USA), obtained similar results. A study done by Pearce and Son (2004) found that hotels and motels are the most popular form of accommodation for international students and that backpackers are less likely to use hotels or motels. Chadee and Cutler (1996), Field (1999) and Heung and Leong (2006), confirmed that cultural differences exist among students from different parts of the world.

Method of travel

The following section deals with different modes of transport used by students, including car, train and air travel. Research by Shoham *et al.* (2004) found that travelling by car is the preferred transport choice for students in South Africa. However, Oosthuizen and Baloyi (2000) reported that many black people in South Africa predominantly use taxis and buses. Travelling by bus is popular and more affordable, and is also considered as a fairly safe way to travel (Bywater, 1993). Hobson and Josiam (1992) found that the majority of trips taken by American students were by car. This was echoed by Josiam *et al.* (1994) in a study in the USA, Shanka *et al.* (2002) in their study in Australia and Shoham *et al.* (2004), who conducted a cross-cultural study. According to Michael *et al.* (2003), poor infrastructure and high costs make travelling by train and airplane less popular, although low-cost airlines have had a significant impact on travel patterns. However, Gmelch (1997) found that travelling by train was becoming more popular with American students, while Pearce and Son (2004) also established that Australian students preferred travelling by train. In an international study conducted by Richards and Wilson (2003), the main mode of transport for students was air travel, followed by rail travel. In a study that questioned students from Canada, the Czech Republic, Hong Kong, Mexico, Slovenia, South Africa, Sweden and the United Kingdom (UK), Heung and Leong (2006) reported that air travel was more popular for the Hong Kong student market. Similar results were obtained by Josiam *et al.* (1999), who studied college students at Panama City Beach (Florida) and Hobson and Josiam (1992), who studied American students. It is clear that preferences differ in terms of preferred modes of transport.

Time and duration

McKercher *et al.* (2006) revealed that most students plan their trip/vacation four to six months in advance. In Australia, students prefer to travel during the summer break (December-February), followed by the break between the first and second semesters, during the southern winter in July (Michael *et al.*, 2003). Kim *et al.* (2006) reported that students stay on average between six and 14 nights, while Josiam *et al.* (1994) and Sung and Hsu (1996) found that the average length of stay for the US spring travel market is five nights peaking at six to seven nights. United Kingdom students on average took two holidays a year, averaging 17 days (Carr, 2005), whereas students from Asian countries and Australia stay up to 10 nights (Frost & Shanka, 1999). The findings of Richards and Wilson (2003), on the other hand, revealed in an international study that for students who travel to long-haul destinations the average length of stay was 63 days. A study by Chadee and Cutler (1996) indicated that the cost of travel highly influenced the length of time students wished to travel.

Various factors can influence the travel behaviour of students (Michael *et al.*, 2003; Pearce & Son, 2004; Shoham *et al.*, 2004; Kim *et al.*, 2006; Liu, 2008), which include income and budget, travel motivations and aspects influencing destination choice.

Income and budget

Financial restrictions are one of the greatest challenges that students have to face when deciding to travel (Donaldson & Gatsinzi, 2005). According to Harvey (2005), students spend exactly the same amount of money as other travellers, with the difference being that they spend the money over a longer period than older tourists. Students tend to cut down on

accommodation costs to afford recreation activities. Tourists who save money on transport to a destination are likely to spend more on other travel components, such as accommodation or activities (Patkose *et al.*, 2005). Mondschein *et al.* (2006) found that people with a higher income level have more choices of destinations to travel to with better transport. Richards and Wilson (2003) state that the average spending of students is relatively low, with most of the students spending less than US\$20 per day. However, the level of daily spending is inversely related to the length of stay. Michael *et al.* (2003) found that the average expenditure per student was A\$392. Payne (2009) established that students spend on average between NZ\$397.81 and NZ\$688.77 per holiday, mostly on activities and transport. The way spending is measured differs among the various studies and it is not always indicated whether it refers to daily spending or average spending. It is therefore difficult to compare studies with one another.

Travel motivations

Studies into the travel motivation of American students include the one by Josiam *et al.* (1999), who found that the respondents' main motivations are 'good party reputation', 'friends going there', and 'family live there'. In a study of US university students, Kim *et al.* (2006), based on the work of Cha *et al.* (1995), identified seven motivational factors: knowledge, sport, adventure, relax, lifestyle, travel bragging and family. A primary reason for US students travelling is to 'get away and to relax' (Hobson & Josiam, 1992; Josiam *et al.*, 1994). A reason shared by New Zealand students was also to want to 'relax' (Carr, 2003). However, Chadee and Cutler (1996) found that 'adventure' and 'culture' are strong motivators for New Zealand university students, whereas Babin and Kim (2001) identified safety as a concern for US students. Research by Richards and Wilson (2003) revealed factors such as to explore other cultures, excitement, increasing knowledge and to meet different people and places. The findings of a study completed in Australia by Michael *et al.* (2003), made known that the most important travel motives are recommendation by friends and family, good beaches, the variety of attractions and scenic beauty. To 'party and drink' and 'being with friends and family' are also important reasons for both American (Smeaton *et al.*, 1998) and Australian students (Carr, 2003).

Destination choice

Hobson and Josiam (1992) and Shanka *et al.* (2002) found that students are interested in renowned and familiar destinations. Chadee and Cutler (1996), however, showed that students who travel overseas seek adventure experiences and that students from New Zealand travel for adventure. Butts *et al.* (1996) revealed that image influenced the destination choice with the image of the sun being one of the most important factors attracting students to a destination. Bywater (1993) states that many young travellers choose sun and sand destinations. Tourism infrastructure is another aspect that can influence destination choice. Josiam *et al.* (1994), Gmelch (1997) and Payne (2009) found that students choose destinations based on the easy driving distance of three to four hours. A primary factor when choosing destinations is the influence of family and friends, according to studies by Hobson and Josiam (1992) and Josiam *et al.* (1994), while Bywater (1993) and Butts *et al.* (1994) found that students travel to destinations where accommodation costs are low.

The literature review clearly shows that there are similarities, as well as differences in the travel behaviour and motives of students. Other than the studies of Schrage *et al.* (2001), Michael *et al.* (2003) and Richards and Wilson (2003), who addressed South African student travel behaviour and motives as part of a bigger international survey, there has been no research into the travel behaviour and travel motives of South African tourism students. This research aims to determine the travel behaviour of tourism students in South Africa.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

Quantitative research was conducted by means of a survey. The questionnaire was developed after a comprehensive literature review of previous related studies. The questionnaire focused on the demographic characteristics of students, their holiday preferences, type of travel (weekend, domestic travel and longer international travel), travel motivations and factors influencing holiday choice. The survey was conducted during August 2009. All tertiary institutions in South Africa offering Tourism Management as a degree programme were contacted and asked to participate. The eight institutions (and the number of students) that participated in the survey were: Central University of Technology (50), Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (67), Pretoria University (154), Vaal University of Technology (79), Tshwane University of Technology (253), North-West University (179), University of Johannesburg (162) and Walter Sisulu University (118), resulting in a total of 1062 questionnaires.

This research is based on complete sampling, as the number of questionnaires related to the total number of second and third year tourism students willing to complete the survey. The total number of students in these classes formed part of the survey. Lecturers were responsible for administering (distributing and collecting after completion) the questionnaires in the tourism management class. The data for the surveys were captured in Microsoft Excel by fieldworkers of North-West University and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 17.0). The statistical analysis included descriptive analyses and in particular factor analyses.

Factor analyses for travel motivations and holiday choice sets were conducted in order to identify smaller sets of explanatory composite factors that define the fundamental constructs assumed to underlie the original variables. Only those factors with an *eigenvalue* equal to or greater than 1.0 were considered. A factor loading of 0.30 is considered significant, while a factor loading of 0.50 is considered very significant (Field, 2005). However, variables with factor loading coefficients of 0.40 were considered. To ensure quality of measurement, the variables were also subjected to reliability (Cronbach alpha reliability test) and appropriateness (Bartlett's test of sphericity and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy) testing.

RESULTS

Demographic profile

The descriptive analysis (Table 1) indicates that a higher percentage of females (67%) participated in the survey than males (33%), reflecting the reality that in general more

females than males enrol for tourism studies. The age distribution of students was between the ages of 18 and 21, which correlates with the fact that the questionnaires were completed by second and third year tourism students. Black tourism students account for 56% of the sample, followed by White tourism students at 39%. Most tourism students originate from Gauteng (40%) and the Eastern Cape (17%) and speak other languages such as isiXhosa, Sepedi, Sesotho and Xitsonga. This correlates with the locations of the institutions that participated in the survey.

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND TRAVEL BEHAVIOUR OF STUDENTS

Attribute & categories	Percentage students N = 1062
<i>Gender</i>	
Male	33%
Female	67%
<i>Age</i>	
18-21	74%
22-25	23%
26-30	2%
30+	1%
<i>Race</i>	
Black	56%
White	39%
Coloured	4%
Indian	1%
<i>Province of residence</i>	
Gauteng	40%
Mpumalanga	11%
North West	7%
Free State	7%
Eastern Cape	17%
Western Cape	1%
Northern Cape	1%
KwaZulu-Natal	3%
Limpopo	8%
Outside RSA borders	4%
<i>Language</i>	
Afrikaans	33%
English	29%
Other	38%

Travel preferences of students

While on holiday, most students stay with relatives (40%) or make use of camping facilities (22%) and hotels (21%), and they travel by car (71%) (Table 2). Students prefer to travel over the weekends and take 7.98 weekend trips per year. However, students take 2-3 holidays per

year (46%) and 75% have never travelled overseas. Holidays last 8.6 days and international trips 12.8 days.

TABLE 2: TRAVEL PREFERENCES OF STUDENTS

Attribute & categories	Percentage: Students (N=1062)
<i>Accommodation preferences</i>	
Relatives	40%
Holiday home	20%
Camping	22%
Chalet	17%
Guesthouse	12%
Backpacker, Youth hostel	8%
Hotel	21%
Other	2%
<i>Transport preferences</i>	
Car	71%
Bus	25%
Taxi	16%
Motorcycle	1%
Aeroplane	16%
Train	5%
<i>Holidays frequency</i>	
Once a year	34%
2-3 times a year	46%
4-5 times a year	10%
More than 5 times a year	6%
Never	4%
<i>International trips frequency</i>	
Once a year	19%
2-3 times a year	4%
4-5 times a year	3%
Never	75%
<i>Weekend trips</i>	7.98 per year
<i>Duration of the holidays</i>	8.6 days
<i>Duration of international trips</i>	12.8 days

Factors influencing travel behaviour

On holiday, students spend R2587.62 per trip, mostly on accommodation (R639.23) and retail shopping (R462.62).

TABLE 3: SPENDING PATTERNS OF STUDENTS

Expense items	Amount
Accommodation	R 639.23
Food and restaurants	R 347.78
Alcoholic drinks	R 186.02
Non-alcoholic drinks	R 116.37
Retail shopping (excl. food & drinks)	R 462.62
Souvenirs and presents	R 158.31
Transport	R 410.55
Entertainment	R 235.36
Other	R 31.38
TOTAL	R2587.62

In order to determine the travel motives of students, a principle component analysis with orthogonal VARIMAX rotation was conducted on the 20 motivational statements measuring travel motivation. The analysis resulted in the extraction of 5 factors with *eigenvalues* greater than one. The 5 factors accounted for 54% of the variance. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.829, which is highly acceptable. The Bartlett test was also found to be significant ($p < 0.00001$).

Table 4 displays the factor loadings of the rotated matrix and the mean values of each factor. The factors are labelled according to similar characteristics: Education and Participation (Factor 1), Relaxation and Escape (Factor 2), Socialisation (Factor 3), Novelty (Factor 4) and Togetherness (Factor 5).

The factor analysis revealed factors that relate to the behaviour of students. Students are enthusiastic tourists and should be exposed to various experiences. They consider Factor 4 (Novelty) to be the most important factor, which means that students would benefit from exposure to new destinations and experiences. Students enjoy being with friends and family, which explains socialisation as a motivational factor.

Mirroring the results of other studies, one of the key factors for students is also relaxation, with a mean value of 3.31. However, students consider the learning experience as less important with a mean value of 2.98. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for Factor 5 (Togetherness) is below the recommended value of 0.5 and can therefore not be considered as a factor. However, the mean value for the items 'to be together as a family' is 3.46, 'to get refreshed' is 3.50 and 'to participate in entertainment' is 3.13.

TABLE 4: FACTOR ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' TRAVEL MOTIVES

Travel motives	Factor 1 <i>Education & participation</i>	Factor 2 <i>Relaxation & escape</i>	Factor 3 <i>Socialisation</i>	Factor 4 <i>Novelty</i>	Factor 5 <i>Together-ness</i>
To experience different lifestyles	.747				
To learn more about my/other countries	.708				
To meet people with similar interests	.648				
To learn new things	.598				
To study	.577				
To participate in recreation activities	.417				
To relax		.727			
To relax from daily tension		.706			
To share familiar/unfamiliar places with someone		.508			
To rest physically		.501			
To escape from a busy environment		.444			
To spend time with friends			.772		
To be together as a group of friends			.723		
To have fun				.701	
To explore new destinations				.543	
To do exciting things				.528	
To do something out of the ordinary				.487	
To be together as a family					.698
To get refreshed					.543
To participate in entertainment					.469
Cronbach's alpha	0.731	0.657	0.705	0.648	0.475
Mean values	2.98	3.31	3.24	3.58	–

A second principle component analysis with OBLIMIN rotation (with Kaiser Normalisation) was conducted on the 21 aspects influencing destination choice due to correlations between the factors. The analysis resulted in the extraction of 6 factors with *eigenvalues* greater than one. The 6 factors accounted for 57% of the variance. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.867, which is highly acceptable. The Bartlett test was also found to be significant ($p < 0.00001$). The factor loadings of the rotated matrix and the mean values of each factor are presented in Table 5.

TABLE 5: FACTOR ANALYSIS: HOLIDAY CHOICE OF STUDENTS

Holiday choices	Factor 1 Personal influences	Factor 2 Predetermined influences	Factor 3 External influences	Factor 4 Financial influences	Factor 5 Destination influences	Factor 6 Image-related influences
Climate at destination	.667					
Season	.623					
Popularity of the destinations	.617					
Previous visits	.458					
Availability of a holiday home		-.763				
Size of the travelling group		-.755				
Availability of time share		-.714				
Purpose of the holiday		-.680				
Length of holiday		-.526				
Sport facilities			.729			
Available recreation activities			.568			
Parents' influence			.527			
Distance to destination				.794		
Finances				.753		
Transport					-.678	
Security					-.661	
Entertainment					-.638	
Type of accommodation					-.509	
Available tours					-.486	
Scenic beauty						.668
Value for money						.475
Cronbach's alpha	0.654	0.775	0.510	0.532	0.710	0.408
Mean value	2.9	2.9	2.6	3.3	3.2	–

The factors were labelled according to similar characteristics: Personal influences (Factor 1), Predetermined influences (Factor 2), External influences (Factor 3), Financial influences (Factor 4), Destination influences (Factor 5) and Image-related influences (Factor 6). The Cronbach alpha coefficient for Factor 6 is below the recommended value of 0.5 and can therefore not be considered as a factor. However, the mean value is 3.33 for 'scenic beauty' and 3.5 for 'value for money', indicating that students consider these two attributes important when making holiday choices.

The factor analysis revealed factors related to holiday choice variables. Students are subjected to personal influences, which include aspects such as climate, season, popularity of the destination and previous visits. The students consider these aspects to be less important with a mean value of 2.9. Students are also affected by predetermined influences over which they have no or little control, such as the availability of a holiday home, the size of the travelling group, the availability of time-share, and the purpose and length of the holiday. Students also considered external factors, including the availability of sport and recreation facilities and activities, and the influence of parents, although the latter was considered less important. The greatest influences on holiday choice are financial matters with a mean value of 3.3, followed by destination influences with a mean value of 3.2.

FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Travel preferences

Accommodation

The results clearly show that students preferred to stay with relatives, which supports research by Michael *et al.* (2003), Richards and Wilson (2003) and Shoham *et al.* (2004). However, this study contradicts the main findings of Bywater (1993) and Payne (2009), who found that students' first choice is backpackers or a hostel, followed by staying with family and friends.

Mode of travel

Travelling by car is the preferred mode of travel for students, which supports the findings of Hobson and Josiam (1992) and Payne (2009). The results, however, contradict the Richards and Wilson (2003) study that revealed that students prefer to make use of air travel followed by rail travel, as well as a study conducted in South Africa by Shoham *et al.* (2004), which reported that students prefer travelling by bus.

Frequency and length of stay

The study found that students go on holiday 2-3 times per year for an average of 8.6 days, which is similar to results obtained by Michael *et al.* (2003) and Payne (2009). Kim (2007) also revealed that students tend to stay between 3 and 6 nights. However, this finding is contradicted by Kim *et al.* (2006), who found that students travel for 14 nights, while Richards and Wilson (2003) found that students travelling internationally travel for 63 days.

Factors influencing travel behaviour

Spending

Expenditure results of this study showed that students spend on average R2587.62 on a holiday trip, whereas Michael *et al.* (2003) found that students spent \$392.00 per holiday trip. A comparison of these results is difficult, as the studies were conducted in different years, different spending categories, different currencies and in different countries. Even with the latter taken into consideration, the amounts are similar.

Travel motives

'Novelty' was identified as the most important travel motive with a mean value of 3.58. The combination of 'having fun', 'exploring new destinations', 'doing exciting things' and 'doing

something out of the ordinary' seems attractive to the student market and has not been identified by other studies as primary travel motives. 'Novelty', as identified in this study, has only been found in one other student travel study, that of Klenosky (2002).

The other motives are similar to those identified in previous research: 'to relax' (Cha *et al.*, 1995; Klenosky, 2002; Richards & Wilson, 2003; Kim *et al.*, 2006; Kim, 2007; Payne, 2009), 'to socialise' (Klenosky, 2002; Richards & Wilson, 2003), and 'education and participation' (Richards & Wilson, 2003; Kim *et al.*, 2006; Payne, 2009). However, Kim *et al.* (2006) also found that the main motivations were 'good party reputation', 'friends going there' and 'friends/family living there'.

An interesting finding was that the travel motive 'education and participation', which Richards and Wilson (2003) had identified as an important factor, had the lowest mean value of 2.98. Kim *et al.* (2006), however, found that 'knowledge' had the highest composite mean score (3.54). Although previous studies identified 'participating in activities' as an important factor (Cha *et al.*, 1995; Michael *et al.*, 2003), this is not the case for the South African tourism students who participated in this study.

Aspects influencing holiday choices

Students' holiday choices are influenced by personal factors, predetermined factors, external factors, financial factors, destination factors and image-related factors. The most important influence, with a mean value of 3.3, was finances, which includes the distance travelled to the destination and the finances. McLellan and Sirakaya (1997) and Donaldson and Gatsinzi (2005) also found that the cost of the vacation (finances) was an important factor for the student market. However, these results contradict research by Shoham *et al.* (2004), who identified entertainment as the motive for South African students. Destination factors were the second most important factor and include transport, security, entertainment and the type of accommodation available.

Implications

The student market is a market worth considering, especially since today's student is tomorrow's tourist. However, a more comprehensive study of students' travel behaviour at different tertiary institutions is recommended, as these results contradict similar studies conducted in South Africa. Therefore, it is not possible to generalise the findings. Product owners and marketers have to take into account the different needs of the student market, such as offering new experiences. This is important if they want students to return and implies that any new development has to be communicated to this market. The advantage of the student market is that they are easily accessible and can be reached effectively through promotions on the different campuses.

A key finding, which is also supported by other similar studies, is that this market is price sensitive, which implies offering student discounts on different packages. Many product owners and destinations already give discounts to tourists if they show their student cards. Destinations could also consider forming loyalty clubs that give students a discounted rate on various products at the destination. Low-budget accommodation is also a way for product owners or destinations to attract this market. Furthermore, destinations and attractions need to

provide a variety of entertainment in a safe environment, as the student market considers safety and security to be important when choosing a holiday destination. This is not to say that destinations and attractions should focus only on the student market, but they do need to make provision for this market, which is growing.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this paper was to analyse the travel behaviour of tourism students in South Africa. Results revealed some interesting findings in particular, that 'novelty' is the most important travel motive. This finding contradicts most similar studies. In fact, only one study on student travel behaviour referred to this motive and in general 'escape' is the most common and important travel motive. Ideally, this research should be expanded to students in other programmes in order to obtain a comprehensive view of student travel behaviour in South Africa. In addition, it would be interesting to analyse the travel behaviour of different cultures. It was the first time that this kind of research has been conducted on tourism student behaviour and the findings indicate that this market requires a different approach, since students have specific needs and are price sensitive.

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(Subject Editor: Prof. Rene Haarhoff)