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Panchal, Jenny (2017) *Singapore: international students' stepping stone to the world*. In: Pearce, Philip L., and Wu, Mao-Ying, (eds.) *The World Meets Asian Tourists*. Emerald Group Publishing Limited, Bingley, UK. pp. 305-323.

Access to this file is available from:

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/S2042%2D144320160000007018>

Chapter 18

SINGAPORE

International Students' Stepping Stone to the World

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Abstract: Perhaps more than any other country, the island nation of Singapore offers a bridge among cultures. Using data from multinational cohorts of international tourists studying in Singapore, this chapter reveals the travel patterns and preferences of Indian students whose tourist behaviors are less well understood. This chapter aims to identify their key motives using Pearce and Lee's travel career pattern model. It also aims to identify the destination-based factors that attract Indian students in Singapore. The findings suggest that the students' travel motives are linked to kinship and collectivism, and they are most concerned about price and safety when choosing destinations. This chapter reveals core motives and how the students can be welcomed in the next steps of their travel trajectory. **Keywords:** Indian students; Singapore; motivations; travel career patterns

INTRODUCTION

The intended travel behavior of Asian students, and most directly Indian students, is the focus of this chapter. The core argument is that Indian

The World Meets Asian Tourists

Bridging Tourism Theory and Practice, Volume 7, 305–323

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ISSN: 2042-1443/doi:10.1108/S2042-144320160000007018

students already studying in another location, specifically Singapore, offer a window into the future for assessing trajectories of travel and the necessary accommodation and services to meet their future needs. The movement of students between countries is now a mass movement (Maslen, 2014) and tourism marketers have noticed the unparalleled growth in the student-related travel and leisure behavior. The growth and spread of this global phenomenon has increased at an unprecedented scale in the last two decades, particularly in the “big four Anglophone countries”: the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada (Choudaha & Chang, 2012; Glover, 2011b; QS Quacquarelli Symonds, 2014). More recently, however, an increased regionalization of higher education which caused the decrease in popularity of the big four destinations has been observed (QS Quacquarelli Symonds, 2014). This means that as the demand for overseas education rises, students also search for new destinations that may offer more affordable and culturally relevant programs of study (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2014). This is also to say that students are likely to be considering countries in their own region.

Maslen (2014) suggests that nearly five million international students are likely to be studying for degrees outside their home countries, based on the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development’s data which showed nearly 4.5 million international students in 2011. According to International Consultants for Education and Fairs Monitor [ICEF] (2014), Asia is a key contributor to the bulging international student market; Asian students account for about 53% of the total, most of whom are from China and India. The 2011 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development data show that Chinese students, in particular, account for more than 720,000 studying outside mainland China, that is, one in six international students is Chinese, while Indian overseas students account for more than 223,000 (5.3%) (ICEF, 2014). The other major markets include South Korea and Malaysia.

In the Asia Pacific region, Singapore and Malaysia have started to compete with traditional educational destinations, such as Australia and Japan (Anderson & Bhati, 2012; UNESCO Bangkok, 2013; UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2014). Singapore is increasingly being recognized as a leader in education, research and innovation. Its universities attract about 70,000 international students annually, or 18% of all students in the city-state (StudyLink, 2015). It further relates that the government is cutting funding opportunities to lower international enrollment by 15%. This action is intended to accommodate more domestic students. Places for international students, nonetheless, are still abundant.

Singapore is a popular education destination for Asians, especially for Indians. [Anderson and Bhati \(2012\)](#) suggest that safety and proximity to India and lower cost of living (as compared to Australia) are the key motives for Indian students in choosing Singapore. Better job prospects in the country, as compared to big four destinations, are also appealing. This can be underpinned by [Matthews' \(2013\)](#) report that they study in Singapore to find a job locally. With the recent changes to workplace and immigration policies, however, it can be viewed that these motives may have changed, albeit not significantly.

In the discussion of international student mobility, it is important to define the subjects in this study. Following the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, [Gardiner, King, and Wilkins \(2013\)](#) advocate that international mobile students can be illustrated by those who leave their country of origin and move to another country or territory with the objective of studying. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development provides a similar definition of "international students." For the purpose of this chapter, the terms "international mobile students," "international students," and "overseas students" are used interchangeably. The term "travel" mainly refers to international travel that is the movement of people to destinations outside Singapore by any mode of transportation. This involves crossing geographic borders and going through standard immigration checks in Singapore and the destination country. This is because country is a small city-state, and the term domestic travel, which traditionally refers to travel within the country, may simply mean daily commuting for most nationals.

A review of related literature suggests that very little attention has been paid to Asia-based international students' travel behavior. More specifically, it has been observed that understanding about Indian students' travel patterns is limited. This gap is addressed in this chapter by identifying the key motives of Singapore-based Indian students using [Pearce and Lee's \(2005\)](#) travel career pattern (TCP) model.

INDIAN STUDENT TRAVEL

Much has been written about international students' travel patterns and behavior. It has been observed that most studies have been undertaken in Australia ([Gardiner et al., 2013](#); [Glover, 2011a](#); [Michael, Armstrong, & King, 2003](#); [Pope, Shanka, & Ali-Knight, 2002](#)), New Zealand ([Chadee & Cutler, 1996](#); [Payne, 2009](#)), and the United States ([Hsu & Sung, 1997](#); [Kim,](#)

Jogarathnam, & Noh, 2006). It was only recently that travel behavior of international students in Asia received some attention. The recent work of Varasteh, Marzuki, and Rasoolimanesh (2015), for example, focused on different factors which influence Malaysia-based international students' travel behavior. In Japan, Shi, Nakatani, Sajiki, Sawauchi, and Yamamoto (2010) investigated the differences in travel behavior and preferences between Chinese and non-Chinese university students.

The literature suggests that ethnicity and culture are significant factors affecting travel behavior among international students in any part of the world (Chadee & Cutler, 1996; Glover, 2011a; Hsu & Sung, 1997; Kim et al., 2006; Payne, 2009; Varasteh et al., 2015). While this can be supported by a corpus of academic work, fragmented attention has been given to specific ethnic groups of international students. It has been recognized, however, that a few cross-cultural comparisons between international and domestic students have been undertaken. Glover (2011a), for example, compared international and Australian students' tourism behavior, and found that international trip characteristics differed significantly from those of domestic students. She also found that the length of stay in Australia did not result in international students adapting to domestic students' behavior. Walker and Wang (2010) studied the effect of face concern (an indigenous Chinese concept that influences people's behaviors) on Chinese and Canadian university students' leisure travel. They found a significant difference between the cohorts in terms of perceived importance of face concern, that is, the face concern is more important to Chinese students than to Canadians. Other research studies that compare one ethnic group with the rest of international students have been undertaken (Shi et al., 2010).

Although both Chinese and Indian students account for majority of the international students, it is evident in the literature that the former is given more attention than the latter, especially in Asia. Shi et al. (2010), for example, suggest significant differences between Chinese and non-Chinese students in terms of travel-related sources of information and accommodation preferences. While this is of interest, the literature offers similar themes about Chinese students in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and others (Hughes et al., 2015; Ryan & Zhang, 2007; Walker & Wang, 2010). On the contrary, no known study exploring Indian students' travel behavior was found. This means that in spite of the significant number of Indian students around the globe, very little has been documented on this subject.

The apparent dearth of studies paved the way for this study. The gaps are approached from three perspectives. The first lies in the geographical

context of this study. Singapore is one of the most competitive education destination of choice in Asia for foreign students apart from Hong Kong and Malaysia (UNESCO Bangkok, 2013). The second and third approaches are linked, focusing on Indian overseas students by using the TCP theory (Lee & Pearce, 2003; Pearce & Lee, 2005) to understand their travel motives. Because Indian overseas students' travel behavior is not clearly defined in the literature, it is important to use a tested motive-based theory to analyze a group of people whose travel patterns are less understood. It should be noted that no known study has applied the TCP model in exploring international students' travel patterns.

The TCP is a modified version of the travel career ladder model. The structural underpinnings of the travel career ladder were based on adopting a multi motive approach, linked in part to the work of Maslow, and the concept of career which was assimilated from Hughes' (1937) work on leisure careers. The travel career ladder has been criticized and re-appraised (Bowen & Clarke, 2009; Hsu & Huang, 2008; Ryan, 1998); some commentaries focused on the term "ladder" and its analogy to a physical one where an individual goes one step at a time and stays at that level for a long period (Panchal & Pearce, 2011; Pearce, 2005). The change from "ladder" to "pattern" has made the model's hierarchical components less pronounced (Panchal & Pearce, 2011). The use of the three-layer TCP concept includes 14 key travel motives. The model suggests that novelty, escape/relax, and relationships are the most important motives that influence tourists in their decision making regardless of their tourism experience. Changing the terms de-emphasizes TCL's analogy to a physical ladder. The two other layers of motives in the TCP suggest that there are moderately important motives (self-enhancement and host-site involvement) and less important motives (romance, nostalgia). Therefore, the model puts "more emphasis on the change of motivation patterns reflecting career levels than on hierarchical levels." It also posits that tourists manifest "changing motivational patterns over their life-stages and/or with travel experience" (Pearce, 2005, pp. 54–56).

The TCP model has been used in different geographical contexts and in more specific forms of tourism. In modifying it, Pearce and Lee studied tourists' motivations in South Korea and Australia, and it was found that the patterns were consistent for the Western and Asian tourists (Pearce, 2011). Panchal (2012) and Panchal and Pearce (2011) also used the model in studying spa-going tourists in South and Southeast Asia, specifically in India, Thailand, and the Philippines. Their studies suggest that spa-going tourists' motives correspond with the different levels of experience. They

slightly expanded the TCP by adding health and beauty motives to it. They found that the model is dynamic and flexible and can be used in many forms of tourism (Panchal, 2012; Panchal & Pearce, 2011).

Study Methods

An online survey was used in collecting data for this study. The advantages of this technique have been well-documented. The elimination of printing, postage, and data entry which make web-based surveys inexpensive are the key factors over the conventional survey method. Researchers have reported substantial improvement in response speed over traditional mail surveys (Dillman, 2000; Fricker & Schonlau, 2002). Online surveys, however, come with disadvantages as well. Critiques of online surveys point out coverage error as the most common shortcoming. Data quality—usually measured by the number of respondents with missing items or the percentage of missing items—is also a potential weakness of this method (Fricker & Schonlau, 2002). Further, Fricker and Schonlau (2002) identified sampling error as another weakness. As argued earlier, however, convenience sampling provides very minimal sampling issues because the target respondents are accessible and can be identified easily. Hence, even the ubiquity of the Internet which allows easy access to a larger sample was not a main consideration in choosing the web-based survey method.

This study is part of a larger project that explores Singapore-based international students' travel motives. Convenience sampling, also known as accidental sampling (Salkind, 2010), was employed in the data collection. This technique involves selecting participants based on convenience and accessibility (Salkind, 2010; Sedgwick, 2013). A small group of student volunteers invited international students at James Cook University in Singapore to sign up for the study over a period of two weeks. The 372 signatories were sent an invitation to participate in the research. The invitation included a link to the survey, which had four key sections: travel motives, including motivation to travel outside Singapore while studying (using the TCP model) and destination characteristics; travel experience; travel preferences; and demographic information. A total of 215 responses were generated over a period of four weeks; 132 were Indian students whose responses were selected and filtered for analysis for this study.

Salkind (2010) argues that obtaining samples using this technique is easy and low cost. Nonetheless, he also argues that results from studies that

employ convenience sampling, because of its narrow focus, are not generalizable. In this study, however, it is argued that because the participants were not selected at random from the population of students and that it focused on respondents that need to meet certain criteria, convenience sampling is the most appropriate technique. Indian nationals enrolled at James Cook University in Singapore (based on their student IDs), were selected.

In using the TCP model, only 52 out of the 69 statements from the foundation study were used, because some were thought to be overlapping or inapplicable to the present study. The statement “doing things with my companions,” for example, was omitted because it was overlapping with another statement, “doing things with my family/friends.” The latter is more applicable to the context of what is being studied. Also, the statements for “strengthening relationships” and “securing relationships” were combined. Strengthening relationships is more outward-looking (extrinsic); it was about doing and enjoying things with companions and contacting family/friends who live elsewhere. On the other hand, securing relationships is inward-looking (intrinsic); it was about feeling personally safe and secure, being with respectful people and meeting those with similar interests. It also involved the feeling of belongingness. The items for these two were analyzed and labeled as one factor (relationships). It is argued that both intrinsic and extrinsic approaches to relationships can be combined to represent one’s need for kinship. The key background information is provided in [Table 1](#). Therefore, this study provides for a 13-factor model instead of 14.

Importantly [Table 1](#) shows some important balances in the sample which are valuable in discussing Indian students and more generally Indian tourist behavior. (see also Chapter 6 about differences in Indian tourists as airline passengers). [Table 1](#) shows that the sample consisted of almost equal numbers of males (51.5%) than females (48.5%) and were mostly between 21 and 25 years old (71.2%). The students were well distributed from the diverse parts of India: from the states of Punjab (10%) and Haryana (2%) in the North; Rajasthan (2%), Gujarat (12%), and Maharashtra (18%) in the West; Tamil Nadu (26%), Andhra Pradesh (13%) and Kerala (9%) in the South; Manipur and Nagaland (2%) in the Northeast; and West Bengal (6%) in the East. The students were predominantly in business degrees.

Study Results

The overarching aim of this chapter is to gain insights about international Indian students’ travel behavior, particularly their motives while studying

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variables		N	%	Variables		N	%
Gender	Male	68	51.5	Education (cont)	Masters	100	76
	Female	64	48.5		MBA (39%)		
Age group	18–20	15	11.4		MBA + MPA (19%)		
	21–25	94	71.2		MPA(10%)		
	26–30	18	13.6		Tourism (6%)		
	30–35	4	3		IT (4%)		
	≥36	1	0.8				
Origin (state in India)	Punjab	13	10	Usual length of trips outside Singapore	Day trip	19	14.4
	Haryana	3	2		2 days/1 night	23	17.4
	Rajasthan	3	2		3–4 days/2–3 nights	40	30.3
	Gujarat	16	12		4–5 days/3–4 nights	20	15.2
	Maharashtra	24	18		5–6 days/4–6 nights	18	13.6
	Tamil Nadu	34	26		One week	6	4.5
	Andhra Pradesh	17	13	Travel companions	More than one week	6	4.5
	Kerala	12	9		Alone	7	5.3
	Manipur/ Nagaland	3	2		With spouse/partner	6	4.5
	West Bengal	8	6		With family	24	18.2
Education	Bachelors	32	24		With friends from my educational institution	52	39.4
	Business (20%)				With friends NOT from my educational institution	9	6.8
	Psychology (4%)				With both family and friends	34	25.8

in Singapore. The profile analysis of the respondents showed that most students have an average of 1–2 trips out of Singapore (excluding India) every three months (48%). In a span of six months, however, 23% said that they traveled 3–5 times. Most of them reported that they usually spent 2–3 nights per trip outside Singapore (30.3%), and mostly did so with friends from the same tertiary institution (39.4%). About a quarter of the respondents also reported that they have mostly traveled with both “family and friends” (25.8%) and with “family only” (18.2%). The proximity of Singapore as well as its relatively easy visa provisions provide opportunities

for parents, siblings, and extended family members to visit their loved ones who are studying in Singapore. As a hub, there are many options for visiting other destinations such as South East Asia (Johor Bahru, Kuala Lumpur, Bali, Bangkok, Ho Chi Minh and Manila), the Middle East (Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Doha), Australia/New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Arguably, these transport links are major considerations facilitating both visits by family and friends and the movement of international students themselves.

During the pre-trip stage, tourists generally search for information that aid them in making decisions. Booking for transportation, accommodation, and, to some extent, destination-based activities also constitute the preparation stage. In this study, the students reported that they heavily relied on the Internet (84%) and friends/family (76%) for information. Prior visits to the destination (organic experiences) were also of considerable importance as sources of information (48%). Booking for the various components of their trips were mostly completed online, with travel agents or onsite. Figure 1 shows that transportation and accommodation were typically booked through the Internet or mobile applications. Although some have reserved online, a sizable segment of the respondents said that it was not necessary to book for transportation within the destination. This may be attributed to practices in many parts of Asia where booking is not a *sine qua non* for public transportation, such as buses, trains, and taxis; in

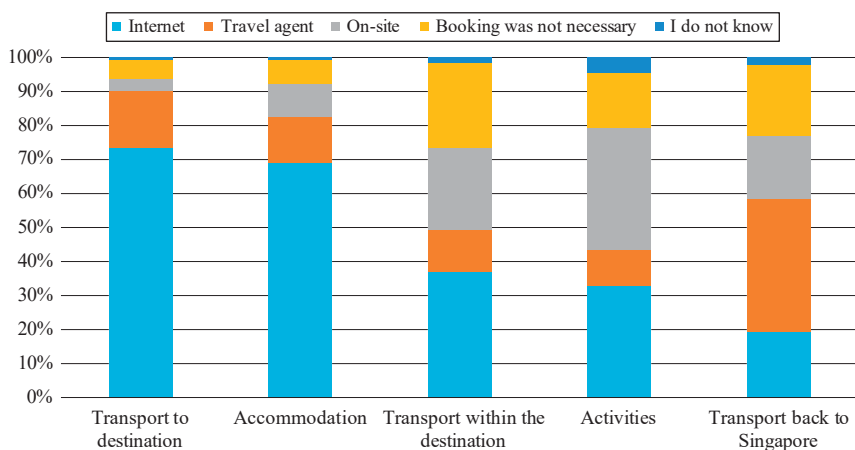


Figure 1. Method of Booking Travel Components

this sense, locals and tourists alike take their chances as passengers. For destination-based activities that require reservations, they usually book them onsite, at the attraction or destination. For transportation back to Singapore, however, students booked them largely through travel agents. While this information cannot be investigated further, perhaps students were not very certain of their return dates or decided to return sooner or later than their intended date and sought the services of a travel agent to re-book their pre-arranged transportation.

The students' travel-related spending patterns also provide an insight to their tourism behavior. For accommodation, it was found that almost 38% of the sample spent up to US\$70 (SG\$100), while 34.8% spent from \$71 to \$215. The results revealed that backpackers/hostels were not a very popular choice among the respondents (11.4%). More than 61% usually stayed in hotels, while 15.2% selected resorts. While they may be expected to have spent more because of their accommodation preferences, these findings can be attributed to three perspectives. One is that free accommodation may have been provided by family/friends who live in the destination that they visited (private accommodation = 6.8%). Two, they have shared the accommodation costs among their companions. Lastly, the students who reported expenditure within this range were mostly those who visited places like Myanmar, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Cambodia, where accommodation prices are comparatively lower than the other destinations mentioned in Figure 1.

Transportation, onsite activities, shopping, and food expenses per trip were also explored in the study. Transport-related expenses varied between enroute expenses (round trip combined) and local transportation. Almost 83% usually traveled by air. More than 42% usually spent between \$70 and \$215 for enroute transportation and 52% only spent up to \$70 for the latter. The average spending for onsite activities per trip ranged from \$35 to \$215, while shopping (excluding food) accounted for a higher range, with about 3% of the respondents reporting to have spent more than \$715 per trip. Food expenses were within the range of \$35–\$215 (70.4%).

The push-pull model is a foundation approach for understanding tourism motivation (Dann, 1977). This framework posits that people travel because they are pushed and pulled by motivational factors. The former, which are considered to be socio-psychological motivations that prompt individuals to travel, are pivotal in this chapter. The pull factors, or the characteristics of destinations that attract tourists, are significant components of decision making. Characterizing destinations play an integral part in exploring behavior. Therefore, even though the pull factors do not

constitute the focal points of this chapter, it is worth identifying the characteristics of destinations that attract Singapore-based international Indian students.

The students were asked to rate the importance of a pre-determined list of destination qualities that encompass both physical and social components as prescribed by Pearce (2005, 2011), where 1 was not important at all and 5 was very important. Respondents consider the same factors when considering both education and holiday destinations: price ($\bar{x} = 4.50$) and safety/security ($\bar{x} = 4.44$). The price-sensitive students generally consider the affordability of traveling to and holidaymaking at a destination. Safety and security were also assessed as very important factors in choosing a destination. Weaver and Lawton (2010) suggest that the tourist market is sensitive to any suggestion of social or political instability within a destination. The information pertinent to these concerns is provided in Table 2. The

Table 2. Destination Characteristics That Attract Indian Students in Singapore

Destination Attributes	\bar{x} (importance)
Price (i.e., amount to be spent here as compared to similar destinations)	4.50 ^a
Safety and security	4.44
Popularity of the destination (i.e., to both international & domestic tourists)	3.84
Proximity (i.e., nearer/farther from Singapore)	3.36
Season/time of the year (e.g., summer)	3.27
Climate at the destination (e.g., cooler, warmer)	3.29
Natural setting of the place (e.g., beaches, mountains)	3.80
Water-based activities at the destination (e.g., swimming, surfing, scuba diving)	3.35
Land-based activities at the destination (e.g., hiking, mountain climbing)	3.27
Historical/religious significance of the place	3.05
Non-nature-based activities at the destination (e.g., shopping)	3.14

^aMeasured at five-point Likert scale with 1 = 1 was not important at all and 5 = very important.

importance of security stems from the immediacy of tourists' consumption in and interaction with the setting.

The proximity of destinations from Singapore is also of considerably high importance. This can be linked to their average length of trips. Students are most likely to spend weekends out of Singapore to unwind from university life. Public holidays, which sometimes allow for long weekends, also provide opportunities for travel. The accessibility of neighboring countries, such as Malaysia and Indonesia, make it easier for international students. As Figure 2 suggests, Johor Bahru and Kuala Lumpur are the most-visited cities outside Singapore. Johor Bahru, in particular, has received almost 47%% ($n = 62$) of the respondents. It lies just across the causeway from Singapore, and the ease of travel between these two places makes it a popular weekend destination. Getting to Kuala Lumpur by air (from Changi Airport), by rail, and by road (both via Johor Bahru) also make this Malaysian city a preferred destination for Indian students. Batam and Bintan, the nearest and most accessible Indonesian islands to Singapore, are also popular destinations.

Price, length of holiday, and proximity of destinations can also be closely linked. It can be largely assumed that when traveling, distance is directly proportional to price and the duration of holiday. Traveling to farther destinations is presumably costlier in monetary and temporal terms than holidaying in nearby places. It should also be considered that a longer stay at a destination generally means more expenses (for accommodation, food, and activities). This is evident in the results: a very limited number of students visited Europe and the United States. Indeed, traveling to these distant places from Singapore requires more time and money. The participants who are time-constrained and price-sensitive did not find it appealing to travel to European sites and countries. Term breaks which last between 2 and 4 weeks in a year can also be seen as opportunities for students to take longer holidays. In considering the options available for extended holidays, 77% of them chose to spend the time with family and friends in India. About 18% chose to visit new destinations with their respective families, and the rest did not go anywhere. It was found that about 80% of those holidaying with their family out of Singapore were the ones who visited Australia, Europe, and the United States.

The other factors are of moderate to lower importance. The season and climate at the destination are of considerably lower importance, compared to the natural setting of the place. Singapore, as a heavily modified urban landscape, may be perceived lacking natural beaches and mountains, which the students seek during their holidays. Indeed, places like Batam,

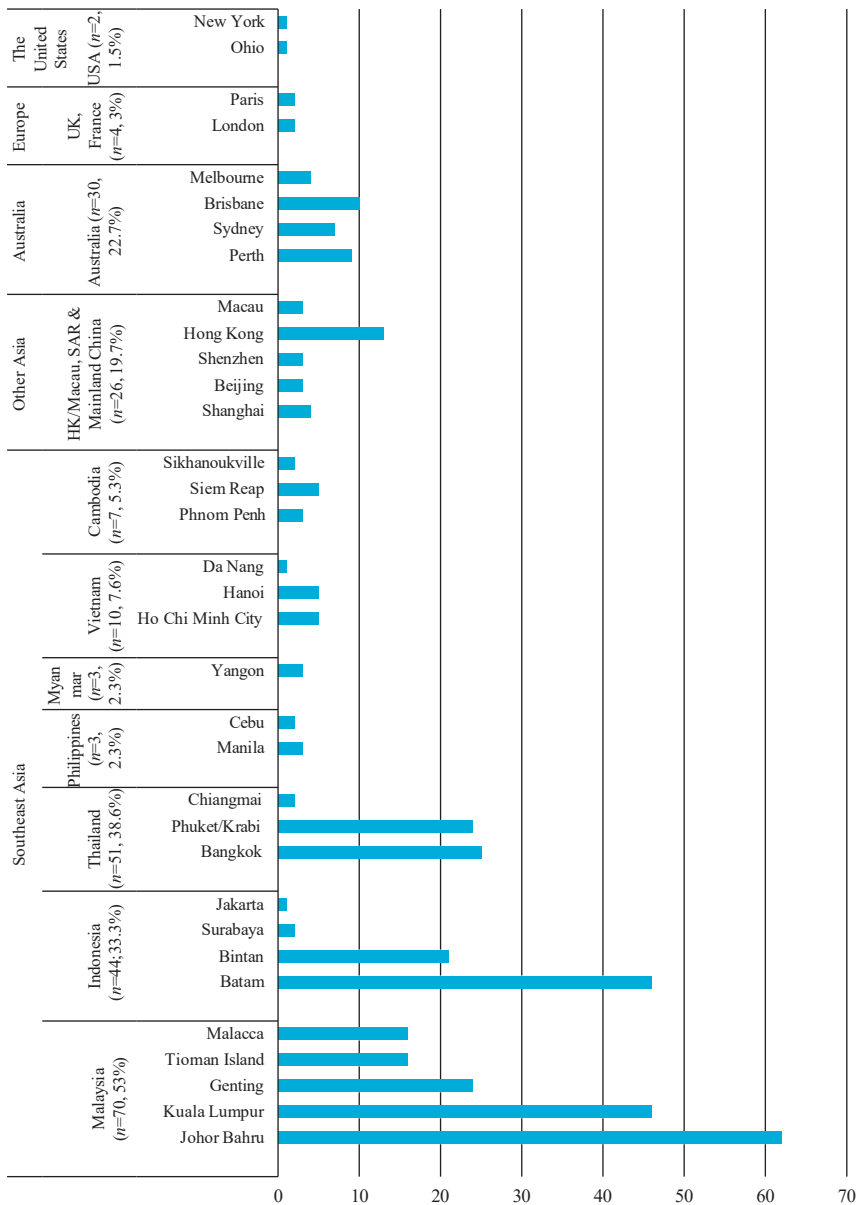


Figure 2. Cities and Countries Visited by Respondents while Studying in Singapore

Bintan, Kuala Lumpur (and nearby places), as well as the destinations in Cambodia, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Vietnam have many natural and idyllic settings to offer. The availability of water and land-based activities are moderately important, while the historical/religious significance of the destination and non-nature based activities at the destination (such as shopping) are of low importance to the students.

The TCP model, previously tested in specific forms of tourism such as spa settings, was used in this study to identify what drives Indian students to travel while studying in Singapore. The model represents a 14-dimensional space of motivation. In this study, however, only 13 factors were used because the two relationship-based factors were combined. The items comprising the motive factors were summarized and the mean scores for each factor were computed (Table 3). A designation of very, moderately,

Table 3. Levels of Travel Experience and Importance of Motives

Travel Motives	Low Travel Experience (3.79%)	Medium Travel Experience (67.42%)	High Travel Experience (28.79%)	Total Mean	Level of Importance
Novelty	4.20	4.51	4.59	4.52	Very important
Escape/relax	4.37	4.18	4.30	4.22	Very important
Nature	4.10	3.98	4.18	4.14	Very important
Relationships	4.32	4.08	4.25	4.13	Very important
Stimulation	3.80	3.85	4.26	4.05	Moderately important
Host-site involvement	3.90	3.90	4.07	4.04	Very important
Personal development	3.80	4.00	4.21	4.04	Moderately important
Isolation	3.95	3.93	4.12	3.99	Moderately important
Autonomy	4.20	4.06	4.29	3.97	Very important
Self-actualization	3.88	3.99	4.19	3.95	Very important
Recognition	4.00	3.61	3.59	3.72	Moderately important
Nostalgia	3.60	3.71	3.75	3.62	Moderately important
Romance	3.60	3.49	3.41	3.47	Less important

and less important bands of scores was employed and follows the substantive levels of importance scores used in the original formulations of the TCP work.

The results in this study partially mirror that of the original TCP work by [Pearce and Lee \(2005\)](#). In the original study, the most important travel motives identified were novelty, escape/relax, and relationships. While this study reveals the same finding, it was also found that factors such as autonomy ($\bar{x} = 4.13$), host-site involvement ($\bar{x} = 4.05$), self-actualization, ($\bar{x} = 4.04$), and nature ($\bar{x} = 4.04$) were very important. Seeking romance ($\bar{x} = 3.47$) was the least important motive for the Indian students. Moderately important motives were isolation ($\bar{x} = 3.99$), stimulation ($\bar{x} = 3.97$), and personal development ($\bar{x} = 3.95$). Nostalgia ($\bar{x} = 3.91$) and recognition ($\bar{x} = 3.62$) were also in the mid-range of importance to the students.

Previous Travel Experience

As a preliminary comment to the reporting of the results in this study, it should be mentioned that age was disregarded as a variable in the overall experience. While this is seen as a deviation from the original study, it serves as a way of customizing the TCP model in this study. Although age is an important demographic variable that is traditionally used in studying tourist behavior and market segmentation ([March & Woodside, 2005](#); [Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007](#)), it is also reported to be an unreliable predictor of experience, particularly in developing Asian countries ([Kim, Pearce, Morrison, & O'Leary, 1996](#)).

Previous experience was thought as an important variable among the students' propensity to travel. [Pearce and Lee's \(2005\)](#) means of measuring respondents' international and domestic experience was adopted and slightly modified, following [Panchal and Pearce's \(2011\)](#) study of spa-going tourists. Similar to their work, the respondents' tourism experience was determined by the number of times that they traveled "within" and "out of" India (before coming for their education) and Singapore (as a student), and were given values 1 (inexperienced) to 4 (very experienced). Likewise, a standardized variable which represented the combined values for each respondent's domestic and international experiences was created. This variable is based on the supposition that international travel is arguably more influential in building an individual's experience of tourism settings than domestic journeys ([Panchal & Pearce, 2011](#)). In this study, the computation of values resulted in a lowest possible score of zero and a highest possible

score of 12. Scores of 0–4 were low ($n = 5$), scores of 5–8 were medium ($n = 89$), and scores of 9–12 were high ($n = 38$). Table 3 shows the breakdown of the respondents by overall experience.

While some of the findings conform to previous TCP-based studies, the other results of the analysis were a little different. Similar to previous works, novelty, relaxation/escape, and relationships were very important to Indian students regardless of their past experience. Similar findings include host-site involvement and personal development as comparatively very important among more experienced and less experienced tourists, respectively. The search for romance was also consistently of low importance in most studies, including the current one. Some of the findings were, however, unforeseen. Students with greater travel experience, for example, perceived almost all motives as important, including the current one.

A key theme that surfaced from the findings, albeit implicitly, is that the Singapore-based international Indian students' tourism motives and behavior are linked to two related themes: relationships and collectivism. This largely conforms the findings from previous studies that one's cultural and ethnic backgrounds are important factors that affect international students' tourist behavior (Chadee & Cutler, 1996; Glover, 2011a; Hsu & Sung, 1997; Kim et al., 2006; Payne, 2009; Varasteh et al., 2015). Even though they are out of their country, the students still uphold much of their culture especially in valuing relationships and working/doing things together as a group.

This study also found that strengthening/securing relationships is a very important factor. It is argued that these results can be attributed to strong family ties, which are one of the most essential foundations of the Indian society and culture (Hofstede, 2015; Mullatti, 1992). This is evident in their report that the Indian students were accompanied by both "family and friends" (25.8%) and "family only" (18.2%). Reports of long-haul experiences from Singapore (to Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States), albeit very limited, were mostly with family members who were visiting from India. It was observed that the majority of the respondents spent their mid-term breaks with family and friends in India.

Nevertheless, it was observed that seeking autonomy was one of the very important drivers for Indian students to leave Singapore, regardless of their past experience. While this may seem paradoxical in relation to strengthening family ties, it does not necessarily mean that the respondents are individualistic. It is important to note that the statements used for this factor were "being independent" ($\bar{x} = 4.10$) and "doing things my way" ($\bar{x} = 4.17$). Being independent and being able to do things by one's self may mean

having the freedom to make tourism linked decisions not just for the individual, but for the travel party.

Relationships are indeed part of the Indian psyche. It is therefore unsurprising that Indians are most likely to do things with their Indian peers. As Mullati (1992) suggests, Indians are fundamentally collectivists. Collectivism represents a preference for a tightly knit structure in society in which individuals can expect their family, friends (and other members of the group) to look after them in exchange for loyalty (Hofstede, 2015). The findings revealed that the overseas Indian students reported to have spent most of their leisure time (including traveling) with their fellow Indians by nationality or ethnicity (68%). In contrast, about 30% said they spent their leisure time with students of other nationalities (including Singaporeans), while 2% said they preferred to spend their free time alone.

CONCLUSION

The work discussed in this chapter has a strong intra-Asian focus, but represents an analysis of a group of younger people about to step out into Western world destinations. The data indicate the value of Singapore as a partially Westernized and multicultural city functioning as an international experience base for Indian students, assisting them move on to destinations such as Australia and New Zealand. The significance of the topic of overseas student mobility in terms of the flow of students in, out, and within a destination has been studied in a variety of contexts. Small as it may be, Singapore is an increasingly popular education destination in Asia. With the increasing influx of students in the city-state, it is important to understand the tourism behavior of international students as outbound tourists. Motivation, as one of the key concepts in the study of tourism (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1981; Pearce, 2005), is pivotal in this chapter. This study aimed to understand the motives and patterns of Singapore-based international Indian students using the TCP model.

The findings support much of the previous studies on international students' travel patterns. Indeed, culture and ethnicity are key factors that shape Indian students' tourism motives. As revealed by the results, kinship is a strong element that influences the way in which international Indian students spend their leisure time (including as tourists) while studying in Singapore. Their affinity to family and friends can be closely linked with their collectivistic approach to the various aspects of their lives. It was found that price, proximity, and safety/security, which are the prime

factors that attracted them to study in Singapore (Anderson & Bhati, 2012) are the key destination elements that they consider as most important when traveling to other destinations.

The use of the TCP was an important and core foundation of the study. Although age can often be disregarded as a variable in the analysis of tourism experience, the findings still partially mirrored those of the previous TCP studies. At core, the results revealed that the search for novelty, relaxation, and relationships are very important motives at any point in a person's travel career. The rest of the findings using the model, link well with previous TCP studies. In particular, many other motives of the Indian students were not strongly differentiated and were often rated as moderately to very important. This lack of differentiation among motives outside of the core set of leading factors of importance was found in earlier studies of inexperienced tourists in the original TCP studies

Overall, this chapter suggests that international Indian students in Singapore are often eager and wide-eyed individuals who are keen to explore the globe. As the life cycle of these young Indians in Singapore mature, their travel careers can also be expected to develop and their trajectories can extend to non-Asian destinations, more specifically to those in the occidental part of the world. Therefore, Western destinations can benefit in knowing that future tourists from Indian are a generation who are educated, price-sensitive, tech-savvy, and have great concern for safety. This means that national tourist organizations and tourism businesses in non-Asian destinations who aim to attract the Indian market can create (or redesign existing) tourism products that match these needs and behavior.

Both Asian and non-Asian destinations can benefit in understanding the apparent tourism behavior of Indian students based in a hub like Singapore, because these have implications for market segmentation, destination marketing, and, to some degree, immigration policies. By knowing the students' preferences, length of stay, and travel companions, tourism businesses can design or enhance destination marketing strategies aimed at these students in the region. Immigration policies may require slightly more liberal visa policies and procedures for international students seeking these experiences. This can encourage greater mobility of overseas students, which in turn benefit tourism businesses, especially in emerging destinations. Any easing of visa controls can encourage greater mobility of Asian students, thus building their knowledge of countries outside their own continent.

Acknowledgment

The author acknowledges the assistance of Lavisha Kirpalani, Akhil Sharma, Yong Mei Xian, Saakshi Prakash, and Hoang Thi Ngoc Huyen who helped in the literature review, data collection, and initial data analysis. Appreciation is also extended to Nimrod Delante for proofreading this work.