

## Travel Behavior Among Tourism Students

Azlinda binti Ahmad<sup>1</sup>, Aklimima binti Awang<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> (Politeknik Sultan Idris Shah, Selangor

E-mail: [azlindaahmad03@gmail.com](mailto:azlindaahmad03@gmail.com))

<sup>2</sup> (Politeknik Sultan Idris Shah, Selangor

E-mail: [aklimima@gmail.com](mailto:aklimima@gmail.com)

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### Abstract:

The aim of this study is to identify the travel behavior of tourism students at Politeknik Sultan Idris Shah (PSIS) Selangor, with a focus on their travel motivations, barriers, and the impact of travel on their academic and professional development. This is a quantitative study conducted through a survey. The sample consists of 243 students selected using random sampling from the Diploma in Tourism Management program, ranging from Semester 1 to Semester 5. Descriptive analysis was used to assess the responses for each item in the study. The findings reveal that travel has a positive impact on students' academic and professional growth, enhancing cultural understanding, tourism knowledge, and communication skills, in line with the studies by Stone and Petrick [13]. These findings emphasize the need for educational institutions and the tourism industry to create more accessible travel opportunities to enhance the educational and career readiness of tourism students.

**Keywords — Travel behaviour, Travel Motivation, Tourism Students, Barrier, Impact of Travel**

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Travel behavior is a key aspect of tourism studies, reflecting how individuals make decisions regarding destinations, transportation, budgeting, and overall travel experiences [10]. For tourism students, travel is not just a recreational activity but an essential component of their academic and professional development. According to past studies, travel plays a significant role in enhancing students' understanding of tourism concepts, increasing cultural awareness, and providing hands-on learning experiences that bridge theory with practice [5]. Moreover, according to Cohen [2], firsthand travel experiences enable students to develop important industry skills, such as destination management, customer service awareness, and sustainable tourism practices. Additionally, travel exposes students to diverse cultures, broadens their global perspective, and enhances their adaptability [8]. Budget travel, which is common among students, also teaches

financial management skills, improving their ability to plan and market travel experiences more effectively [11].

Although the importance of travel behaviour among students is recognized, research on tourism students, particularly in institutions like Politeknik, remains limited. Understanding their travel patterns, motivations, and constraints is essential for improving tourism education and aligning academic programs with industry needs. Additionally, course structure requirements that involve student travel, either domestically or internationally, have encouraged tourism management students at Politeknik to engage in travel.

### II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Understanding travel behaviour is essential in tourism studies, as it reflects individuals' preferences, motivations, and decision-making processes when engaging in travel activities [10]. For tourism students, travel is not merely a leisure

activity but a critical component of their academic and professional development [14]. Prior research highlights that tourism students benefit significantly from travel experiences, as it enhances their industry knowledge, cultural awareness, and practical skills, which are crucial for their future careers in the tourism and hospitality sector [5], [2]. However, despite the recognized importance of travel, studies indicate that several factors, including financial constraints, academic workload, and accessibility, influence students' ability to travel [8], [7].

While much research has been conducted on general student travel behaviour, limited studies have specifically examined why and how tourism students travel, particularly those enrolled in vocational and technical institutions such as Politeknik. Unlike university students, Politeknik students follow a more practical-oriented curriculum, making real-world travel experiences even more vital in shaping their industry readiness. A lack of travel opportunities may limit their exposure to tourism operations, cultural diversity, and destination management strategies, ultimately affecting their career preparedness and competitiveness in the job market [11].

Therefore, this study aims to examine the travel behaviour of tourism students at Politeknik, focusing on their travel motivations and factors restrict student to travel. It also seeks to explore why travel is essential for the academic and professional development of tourism students. The findings of this study will assist educators and institutional management in developing strategies to encourage and facilitate student travel, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of tourism education and workforce readiness.

### III. OBJECTIVE

- 1) To identify the travel motivations that influence the travel behaviour of tourism students
- 2) To examine the factors that restrict tourism students from traveling

- 3) To assess the impact of travel experiences on the academic and professional development of tourism students

## IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Travel Motivation

Travel motivation encompasses psychological, social, and environmental factors that drive individuals to engage in travel. It is often categorized into push and pull factors. Push factors originate from internal desires such as relaxation, self-discovery, adventure-seeking, and escaping from daily routines, while pull factors are related to external attributes of a destination, including cultural attractions, natural beauty, and entertainment opportunities [3]. Tourism students often view travel as an opportunity for both educational and professional growth. According to Kim and Lee [6], one of the primary motivations for tourism students to travel is the opportunity to gain practical experience and expand their knowledge of the tourism industry. These travel experiences allow students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world contexts, develop professional skills, and explore potential career paths within the tourism sector. Travel also offers opportunities for networking, internships, and job placements, which can significantly boost students' future employability.

### B. Travel Behaviour

Travel behaviour refers to the actions, decisions, and patterns individuals exhibit regarding their travel activities, such as the destination choices, travel frequency, budgeting, and purpose [10]. In the context of tourism education, travel behaviour can be an essential factor in shaping the experiences and skills of students, particularly those studying tourism, where hands-on learning is a critical component. Students' travel choices are influenced by various internal and external factors such as socio-economic background, motivations, peer influences, and external constraints like finances and time [8].

### *C. Travel Behaviour Among Tourism Students*

Although studies on general student travel behaviour are abundant, there is limited research on how tourism students in vocational education settings, like Politeknik, behave when it comes to travel. Politeknik institutions in Malaysia are known for their practical-oriented programs that emphasize industry experience, making it crucial to understand how travel experiences shape students' academic and career development. Research on university students has shown that travel influences career outcomes, with students gaining better job market prospects due to the exposure to international tourism practices [8]. However, Politeknik students may face different challenges in their travel behaviour, such as tighter financial constraints or more intensive schedules, which could affect the extent of their travel activities.

Kim, Wen, and Doh [7] found that vocational students, due to their curriculum's hands-on nature, often participate in industry trips, internships, and field visits, which enrich their educational experience. These activities not only promote learning but also help students build a network in the industry. For Politeknik tourism students, similar opportunities might exist, though limited access to travel may hinder their full exposure to the tourism industry and its global aspects.

### *D. Importance of Travel for Tourism Students*

Travel experiences are not just beneficial for tourism students' academic learning; they also play a key role in their professional development. According to Huang and Petrick [5], tourism students who travel gain a better understanding of the dynamics of the tourism industry, from customer service to sustainable tourism practices, which enhances their employability. Cohen, Prayag, and Moital [2] noted that tourism students with practical travel experiences are more likely to develop critical thinking skills, cross-cultural competencies, and a global perspective, all of which are highly sought after by employers in the tourism sector. Moreover, Arcodia et al. [1] found that field trips significantly enhance students' ability to apply classroom concepts in real-world contexts, further reinforcing their understanding and skills.

## **V. METHODOLOGY**

The design of this study is a survey study using a questionnaire method with a quantitative approach. In addition, the study is descriptive, with data obtained from the questionnaire forms. Accordingly, the research instrument was developed based on previous studies.

In this study, the sample group consists of Tourism Management Diploma students from Semester 1 to Semester 5. These students were chosen because they are required to participate in academic field trips each semester as part of their course requirements. This questionnaire consists of four sections, Section A: Student Background, Section B: Travel motivations that influence the travel behaviour of tourism students, Section C: Factors that restrict tourism students from traveling and Section D: Impact of travel experiences on academic and professional development. The survey instruments were adapted from studies by Hamid et al. [4]. Respondents will answer the questionnaire using a Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The collected data will be analysed descriptively. Level classification follows Ngadiman et al. [9], with ratings categorized as: 1.00–1.99 (Weak), 2.00–2.99 (Low), 3.00–3.99 (Moderate), and 4.00–5.00 (High).

## **VI. RESEARCH FINDING**

### *A. Respondent Background*

This study was conducted among the students of the Diploma in Tourism Management at Politeknik Sultan Idris Shah (PSIS). A total of 243 students participated, comprising students from Semester 1 through Semester 5. In this study, the respondents consisted of 62.6% females and 37% males. Most respondents were aged between 18-20 years 71.6%, followed by 25.5% who were 21-23 years old and only 2.9% who were 24 years old and above. In terms of academic standing, most respondents are in their early semesters, with Semester 1 students making up the largest group 31.3%, followed by Semester 2, 23.0%. The ethnic distribution indicates that the majority are Malay 89.3%, while other

ethnic groups, including Indian 5.8%, Chinese 0.8% and others 3.3% have lower representation. Regarding financial support, most students rely on family income 59.3% while 18.1% depend on PTPTN loans, 13.6% source of income from family and PTPTN and only a small percentage 3.7% receive scholarships. This suggests that a significant number of students are financially dependent on their families

*B. Travel motivations that influence the travel behaviour of tourism students*

The findings indicate varying levels of travel motivation among tourism students based on mean scores. Beautiful landscapes and natural attractions received the highest mean 4.55, indicating a strong preference for scenic environments. This is followed by relaxation 4.43, adventure activities 4.42, and learning about difference cultures 4.41, all of which fall within a high motivation level mean > 4.0. These results suggest that students are primarily driven by aesthetic appreciation, stress relief, adventure, and educational experiences.

On the other hand, escaping from daily routine has the lowest mean 3.86, placing it in the moderate motivation level 3.0 – 3.99. This suggests that while students may seek a break from their routine, it is not their primary reason for traveling.

Overall, the findings highlight that tourism students are most strongly motivated by nature, relaxation, adventure, and cultural learning, whereas escaping daily life plays a lesser role in influencing their travel behaviour. The results of the study are as shown in Table 1

Table 1: Travel motivations that influence the travel behaviour of tourism students

No	Items	Std. dev	Mean
1.	Escape from daily routines	1.116	3.86
2.	Relax	.822	4.43
3.	Seek adventure and excitement	.926	4.28
4.	Learn different cultures	.778	4.41
5.	Gain knowledge	.799	4.32
6.	Study trips and field visits	.786	4.39

7.	Improve my career prospects	.820	4.32
8.	Beautiful landscapes and natural attractions	.745	4.55
9.	Adventure activities	.856	4.42
10.	Food and culinary	.884	4.35

*C. Factors that restrict tourism students from traveling*

The Table 2 show that financial constraints are the biggest barrier to travel for tourism students, with the highest mean score of 3.95, indicating that affordability significantly limits their travel opportunities. Similarly, students perceive travel as expensive 3.90 and struggle with lack of time 3.87, making these key restrictions as well. These results align with past research, such as Yoo et al. [15], which highlight financial limitations and time constraints as common barriers to student travel. In contrast, health concerns have the lowest mean score 2.50, showing that they are not a significant factor in preventing students from traveling. This finding supports previous studies, such as Lepp & Gibson [8], which suggest that young travellers generally perceive health risks as less of a concern compared to financial and time-related barriers. Overall, the findings suggest that financial and time constraints are the main challenges limiting tourism students' travel, while health concerns have minimal impact, reinforcing existing research on student travel behaviour.

Table 2: Factors that restrict tourism students from traveling

No	Items	Std. dev	Mean
1.	Financial situation	1.053	3.95
2.	Academic workload and class schedules	.991	3.75
3.	Lack of time	.991	3.87
4.	Travel is too expensive	1.013	3.90
5.	My family does not support	1.391	3.18
6.	Health concerns	1.350	2.50

*D. Impact of travel experiences on academic and professional development*

The findings indicate that tourism students perceive travel experiences as beneficial for their academic and professional development. The highest mean score 4.40 suggests that most students agree that travel enhances their understanding of different cultures, emphasizing the importance of cultural exposure in broadening perspectives. This aligns with past research, such as Stone & Petrick [13], which highlights cultural learning as a key benefit of travel.

Students also believe that travel deepens their understanding of tourism concepts and improves communication and interpersonal skills, both with a mean score of 4.32. This suggests that firsthand experiences reinforce academic knowledge and help develop essential soft skills, supporting findings from Ritchie et al. [12] on experiential learning in tourism education.

The lowest mean score 4.24 indicates that students agree that travel enhances academic performance, though it is rated slightly lower than other benefits. However, since all mean scores fall within the high range  $\geq 4.0$ , the findings confirm that students view travel as a valuable tool for both academic growth and professional skill development. The results of the study are as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Impact of travel experiences on academic and professional development

No	Items	Std. dev	Mean
1.	Understand tourism concepts	.856	4.33
2.	Understanding of different cultures	.809	4.40
3.	Contribute to my career development	.837	4.28
4.	Enhances my academic performance	.882	4.24
5.	Apply classroom knowledge	.852	4.29
6.	Enhance my communication and interpersonal skills.	.836	4.32

**VII. DISCUSSION**

This study offers valuable insights into the travel behaviour of tourism students, particularly their motivations, barriers, and the impact of travel on their academic and professional development. The findings support previous research, confirming existing knowledge on student travel behaviour in tourism education. Tourism students are mainly motivated by beautiful landscapes, relaxation, adventure, and cultural learning, which aligns with Pearce and Lee's [10] study. These factors indicate that students seek travel experiences that offer enjoyment, stress relief, excitement, and knowledge.

Despite their strong motivation, students face significant barriers to travel. Financial constraints are the biggest challenge, followed by the perception that travel is expensive and a lack of time. These barriers are consistent with findings from Yoo et al. [15] and Cohen et al. [2], who also identified cost and time limitations as common challenges for student travellers. Health concerns were the least restrictive factor, in line with Hamid et al. [4] research, which found that young travellers typically perceive health risks as minimal. The study also confirms that travel has a positive impact on students' academic and professional development. Cultural understanding was rated as the most important benefit, supporting Stone and Petrick's [13] emphasis on travel's role in broadening perspectives. Travel also helps students grasp tourism concepts and develop communication skills, in line with Arcodia et al. [1], who highlighted experiential learning as vital in tourism education. While enhancing academic performance received the lowest score, all benefits were rated highly, underscoring the importance of travel in both education and career preparation.

**VIII. CONCLUSION**

This study on travel behaviour among tourism students provides valuable insights into their travel motivations, preferences, and decision-making processes, reinforcing findings from past research. According to UNWTO [16], tourism students have a higher tendency to travel compared to their peers in other fields, mainly due to their academic

background, exposure to the industry, and career aspirations. This study supports these findings by emphasizing that travel is not just for relaxation, natural attractions, and recreational activities, but also enhances knowledge, communication skills, and career opportunities. The results of this study align with application in tourism education [6], which highlight the importance of firsthand travel experiences in academic and career development.

This study helps better understand tourism students' travel behaviour and provides useful insights for educators, industry professionals, and policymakers. By valuing travel in tourism education, Politeknik can offer more hands-on learning opportunities like study tours, internships, and exchange programs to prepare students for the industry. Additionally, travel industry players can create affordable and sustainable travel products that meet the needs of tourism students, encouraging early involvement in the sector.

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