



Unlocking the Wanderlust: Exploring Motivations and Barriers in International Student Travel among India's Youth

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Abstract.

This research examines the travel motivation and constraints experienced by international students enrolled in higher education programs in India, employing the Push-Pull Framework. Further investigates the potential factors influencing student travel and gains initial insights into their motivations, including pursuing personal rewards, escaping from personal and interpersonal environments, and the desire for interpersonal rewards, using motivation theory as a guiding framework. A sample of 300 international students studying in India was selected using purposive sampling techniques. Data was collected through a self-administered survey comprising 20 items measuring motivational factors on a five-point Likert scale, adapted from existing literature. The study provides empirical evidence of distinct patterns in international student travel, encompassing various profiles, travel motivations, and obstacles encountered by international students in India. Furthermore, the findings indicate that international students constitute a heterogeneous group of travellers engaged in travel for diverse reasons. The preference for affordable and budget-friendly modes of transportation was observed among international students. At the same time, their willingness to allocate additional funds towards a wide range of tourism offerings at their destination was evident. The implications of these findings and recommendations for future research are discussed, emphasising their significance for academic and tourism stakeholders.

Kata Kunci:

Motivasi perjalanan,
Hambatan
perjalanan,
Pelajar internasional,
Program pendidikan
tinggi,
India.

Abstrak.

Penelitian ini mengkaji motivasi perjalanan dan kendala yang dialami oleh pelajar internasional yang terdaftar dalam program pendidikan tinggi di India, dengan menggunakan Kerangka Dorong-Tarik. Selidiki lebih lanjut faktor-faktor potensial yang mempengaruhi perjalanan siswa dan dapatkan wawasan awal tentang motivasi mereka, termasuk mengejar penghargaan pribadi, melarikan diri dari lingkungan pribadi dan antarpribadi, dan keinginan untuk mendapatkan penghargaan antarpribadi, dengan menggunakan teori motivasi sebagai kerangka panduan. Sampel sebanyak 300 mahasiswa internasional yang belajar di India dipilih menggunakan teknik purposive sampling. Data dikumpulkan melalui survei mandiri yang terdiri dari 20 item yang mengukur faktor motivasi pada skala Likert lima poin, yang diadaptasi dari literatur yang ada. Studi ini memberikan bukti empiris mengenai pola berbeda dalam perjalanan pelajar internasional, yang mencakup berbagai profil, motivasi perjalanan, dan hambatan yang dihadapi oleh pelajar internasional di India. Lebih jauh lagi, temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa pelajar internasional merupakan kelompok wisatawan heterogen yang melakukan perjalanan karena berbagai alasan. Preferensi terhadap moda transportasi yang terjangkau dan ramah anggaran terlihat di kalangan pelajar internasional. Pada saat yang sama, kesediaan mereka untuk mengalokasikan dana tambahan untuk berbagai penawaran wisata di destinasi mereka juga terlihat jelas. Implikasi dari temuan ini dan rekomendasi untuk penelitian di masa depan dibahas, dengan menekankan pentingnya hal tersebut bagi akademisi dan pemangku kepentingan pariwisata.

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1. Introduction

Student behavioural studies, while focusing on consumption patterns of multiple products, have been at the centre of research in several domains, highlighting choice and consumption, such as education, medicine (Leslie & Brinkman, 1987; Merton et al., 1957), last but not the minor travel (Richards & Wilson, 2004; Min-En, 2006; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). According to the Student Travel Business Barometer Annual Report 2019, specialised professional and youth travel companies provided activities for 1.8 million travelling students (Assante, 2020). Given the statement, with opportunities arising from travel as a phenomenon, some receiving international student markets have gained increased attention with benefits in terms of substantial scale, growth, and further effort to innovate, create and package student-friendly travel (Gardiner et al., 2013). Gearing the tunnel vision approach and the future potential of international students, a critical understanding of the concept allows for pondering the central significant lights and distinctions of international student travel. The international student in the host country comes for a more extended stay than international visitors with an aggregate higher propensity to explore the host country in their leisure time before returning home. Moreover, the report also emphasised the economic contribution of more than US\$ 1.4 million from students enrolled at a single university on travel-related expenses in planning and activities undertaken during spring break taken forward.

The billion-dollar business economy of tourism looks to extend a segmented market approach toward attracting and capitalising on the young youth. India is applauded as an ideal destination for students from the South Asian Region and other parts of the world. With a phenomenal rise in Public and Private Institutions embarking, nearly 900 universities and 40000 colleges in India (Association of Indian Universities, 2019) exhibit world-class infrastructure for education, showing its presence on the education map of the world. There was a rise in the number of international students in India to 49,348 in 2019- 2020 from 47,427 in 2018-2019, with a steady upsurge in the number of students opting for different educational programmes in various cities of India. As the international student population grows, young people's wages improve, and new markets open in rapidly industrialising economies, student travel is a substantial prospective growth sector. Exploring the future possibilities and trends from the last report showed a multi-dimensional interest among the students in medicine to commerce-oriented courses. The importance of international student travel was first emphasised and highlighted globally in November 1991, when the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) held its inaugural young tourism conference in New Delhi. One of the reports published by the All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE, 2015-2016) reported a figure of 45,424 international students enrolled from 165 countries across the globe in various higher educational institutes in India. The Federation of International Young Travel Organizations (FIYTO) summarised statistics while reporting the contribution of more than 20% of international arrivals from international student travel. In addition, Xie and Ritchie (2019) affirm the importance of student travel as a significant market segment. Even this, challenges with the lack of understanding about student travel and asymmetries arising from demand and supply patterns of youth travel further received little attention, owing to the belief that these travel market segments are low value.

The present study intends to probe into the travel motivations and constraints of international students pursuing higher studies in India, focusing on improving tourism facilities and infrastructure with ease of travelling and overcoming the constraints of young youth student travel. The behavioural patterns demonstrated by students travelling within a country's geographic boundaries differ from domestic travellers. The core reasons for site highlighting are financial commitments, lifestyle descriptions, etc. (Gardiner et al., 2013). Moreover, the study's findings aspire to provide practical measures in promoting India as a brand destination in meeting international student travel expectations to attract niche segments to travel within India during visits or free time.

The paper is organised as follows: Firstly, it presents an overview of relevant literature discussing the theoretical overview of motivation theory influencing tourism activity in general with further specifications for an international student. Secondly, data and sample selection are described in the next section. Thirdly, tourist responses have been evaluated and interpreted using statistical measures. Finally, the research elucidates the outcome with discussion and managerial implications set from research goals.

2. Literatur Review and Hypothesis Development

The contemporary research topic explores the literature in the student travel domain, focusing on various motivation factors and critically observing the constraints international students face while travelling.

2.1. *International Student Market*

Several past studies have lumped student travel with the broader and intricate youth travel sector. Exploring the factors with the freedom to travel independently is unsurprising; youth tourism encompasses all travel by young people aged 15 to 29 (UNWTO, 1991).

2.2. *Tourism Motivation Factors of International Students*

Motives have been put at the base of consumption patterns of the individuals/organisations or groups and further set the motion for action for stimuli to act. The goal set from the need and choice allows individuals to meet the hierarchical needs identified by Maslow's theory (Maslow, 1943). The means-end goals allow people to search, explore, purchase and consume products. The pioneering work by tourism researchers, while trusting the validity of a concept of motivation, has led to the development of several concepts and models like 'allocentric-psychometric, which showed the way for others to explore the dimensions of motivation with travel (Plog, 2001). Douglas et al. (2024) asserted push and pull aspects of motivation for destination selection and added ego-enhancement and anomie as significant factors to the motivation theory for travel. The other works in the motivation theory of travel come from the efforts of Pattanayak et al. (2022). The number of reasons and factors admit classifying pull and push motivation as a critical determinant for/to travel at a destination. Yoon and Uysal (2005) identified the psychological aspects of an individual as a significant contributing factor to pushing a traveller to travel towards a destination and are linked to identification as a wish to escape from regular surroundings in search of recreation and adventure or social collaboration. On the contrary, pull factors for travel are more linked with outside factors such as the physical characteristics of the picked destination, relaxation framework, and social or regular highlights of the destination. A clear understanding of the pull-push framework admits highlighting destinations are not for all segments of travel and funnelling of destination choice models with the inert set, inept set, and awareness set to the consideration set for destination selection (Pattanayak et al., 2022).

One of the critical markets for marketers not yet identified as opportunities arising from student travel and assessing motivation factors for future decision-making in destination choice and selection. Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) identified the top six reasons for the universal student to select a destination as (i) knowledge, (ii) mindfulness, (iii) personal proposals, (iv) cost issues, (v) environment, (vi) geographic closeness, (vii) social joins. Wu et al. (2020) examined a model of motivation for tourism and expectation formation and explored the relationship between expectations and motivations. Bicikova (2014) focused on segmenting British university student travellers based on their motivational and behavioural characteristics while using a web-based survey on decision-making and holiday patterns and found heterogeneity in motivations and behaviour. Kim et al. (2007) tried to create a network of analysis with push and pull motivation and found that internal

factors do motivate the students to travel to the destination, and later pull factors contribute to destination selection coming out of the synthesis of results of 469 students as respondents studying in various US universities.

Field (1999) used the market segment strategies to compare international and domestic students at Southeastern University, explored substantial contrasts and similarities among the student groups, and concluded by identifying marketing strategies for college students. Demographics, travel motivations, and involvement are detrimental to making travel decisions. Push and pull motives are progressively associated with a trip to a destination or occasion (PS & Das, 2020). Xu et al. (2009) emphasised the similarities between students' travel attitudes and behaviour in Britain and China. Motivation factors for travel lead to destination choice. Liang et al. (2024) emphasise attributes like cost/price, security issues, scenery, accessibility to the destination, food and beverage, hotels, and nightlife/entertainment as variables in the future course of action. Wang (2016) understood the travel motivation of the students and worked on different constructs like motivations in travel, memorable tourism experience, revisit intention, and further intent to recommend. Thaothampitak and Wongsuwatt (2022) explored the possibilities of student travel in the marketing domain and explained that students play an essential role in destination competitive advantage and image.

Considering in the modest way possible, many studies have only examined the Push and Pull Motivation of travel and neglected one of the most critical considerations for student travel, i.e. constraints. Furthermore, to the best knowledge, none of the studies has examined the choice pattern of destinations of international students in India. Thus, exploring further the study presented holistically travel patterns of international students and their study in India.

2.3. Travel Constraining Factors of International Students

The concept of constraints has been used for tourism from two perspectives: tourism geography and leisure. In the 1970s, the geographer (Hägerstrand, 1970) devised a constraints model based on assumptions and putting time and space in inseparable places. Hillman et al. (2021) highlighted the emergence of two critical underpinnings to travel, i.e. benefits of leisure and constraints on leisure. Travel and Tourism are being attributed as significant contributors to the leisure industry. The early discussion of constraints in the field of leisure-focused on structural restrictions such as time and financial resources. It explained the constraints' impact on holiday activity participation or non-participation (Popp et al., 2021). Gardiner et al. (2013), in a study with a large sample size of 4633 in Australia from student travel, investigated and identified previous studies' results as more homogenous and research restricted to small sample sizes.

Along with the same, the researcher explored the possibilities of travel with international students, finding nationality-based differences and exploring factors restricting their travel movements. The primary constraints that became the limelight of the study are segmented as (i) money-related concerns, (ii) time limitation concerns, and (iii) examination pressure concerns. Literature also shows that constraints adversely affect the intention to travel as a student. Another study by Dale and Ritchie (2020) on student travel behaviour for excursions found that various constraints, such as the destination's cost, travel funding, and transportation, substantially impacted actual and intended plans.

The current research admits the gaps in the previous literature with a focus on the Western world, with a limited number of studies focussing on international students travelling to India for studies. The present research also explores the missing opportunities arising from the constraints for student travel in a developing nation like India while making India a travel hub for education in the country's

national policy. The key focus of the study is designed to overcome the limitations in terms of infrastructure and travel tourism support barriers to target and polish the niche segment of travel.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Using the Push-Pull Framework, this study explored the travel motivation and constraints of international students studying in private and public universities in India. The study's objective influenced the adoption of positivism philosophy, quantitative method, and deductive approach. An in-person survey was conducted using a self-administrated, structured, closed-ended questionnaire for data collection.

3.2 Research Instrument

The present study measured all the variables through multiple items adapted from the previous literature. A 5-point Likert scale was employed to understand the respondents' agreement and disagreement with the measurement items. The questionnaire was reviewed by four experts (two professors specialised in marketing and two industry person experts in tourism businesses) for content validity. Several modifications were carried out based on the suggestions of the experts. The survey consisted of four sections, initiated with a short description of the survey along with one screening question (e.g., Are you an international student?); the demographic profile of the respondents was included in section two, and section three included all the measurement items for motivational factors. Whereas section four consisted of measurement items for constraint factors. There were 20 items for motivational factors for the variables enhancing prestige, enhancing relations and social circle, seeking relaxation and spirituality, exploring culture and touristic spots adapted from Kim et al. (2007) and Gardiner et al. (2013). 5 items for constraint factors including finance, time, academic commitment, transport inconvenience, and travel discounts were adapted from Gardiner et al. (2013). All the measurement items are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

3.3 Data Collection

A pilot test was conducted by employing an online survey of 50 respondents to assess the reliability of the measurement items. The pilot study result showed a high level of reliability as all the Cronbach's alpha values of measurement items were above 0.7 (Kennedy, 2022). The primary study's data was collected through an in-person survey conducted in 27 universities in India from 10 January 2022 to 28 February 2023. First, universities and, later, respondents were selected based on the purposive sampling technique. The respondents were asked one screening question to assess their eligibility for participating in the present study survey. The inclusion criteria of the respondents were determined based on their positive responses to the screening question. A total of 319 responses were collected, and after the data screening process, 300 responses were taken for further analysis. The demographic profile of the respondents is presented in Table 1.

4. Results

4.1 Demographics of the Sample

Table 1 depicts the demographic profile of respondents studying in India as international students. The majority of respondents are males (69%) than females (31%) and belonged to the age group of 20 - 24 years (63%), followed by 25-29 years (23.7%) and the least from 30 years and more (13.3%). Most of the students are pursuing post-graduation (72%), followed by under-graduation (28%) in

their level of education. The annual family income of the respondents falls below \$2000 (79%), and the least belongs to above \$3000 (5%), and respective governments sponsor numbers of students to pursue education in India. The background education program of the study belongs to the STEM category, with a total intake of 72% from the respondents' preferred courses in major STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Management) field, and 28% of respondents opted for the non-STEM area of study with a focus on courses on humanities and social sciences.

Further, respondents' travel results demonstrate that 50% travelled once a month to the tourist places in the host destination, 25.3% of respondents travelled once every six months, and the rest 24.7% travelled more than once a year. The majority of the respondents (84%) admitted that travelling is a significant requirement and is essentially a part of the course curriculum or otherwise; travelling within India is comfortable while overcoming the multiple admitted constraints like financial, time, excessive study commitments and transportation along with travel mechanism are other minor constraints highlighted during academic tenure travel. Respondents (37.7%) have been highly motivated to travel to the seven significant states of Northern India: Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttrakhand, Chandigarh and Punjab. Further, emphasising the results, Himachal Pradesh is the most-liked and valued destination in terms of tourism product quality and student-friendly, with 23% of students selecting the unique product offering of the state.

Table 1. Demographics of the sample (n=300)

Measure	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	208	69.0
Female	92	31.0
Age		
20 – 24	189	63.0
25 – 29	71	23.7
30 and above	40	13.3
Education Level		
Undergraduate	84	28.0
Postgraduate	216	72.0
Family Income		
Up to \$2000	237	79.0
\$2000 - \$3000	48	16.0
>\$3000	15	5.0

4.2 Demographics of the Samp Ranks of Motivational Factors

Table 2 illustrates the four factors' mean ranks and values of motivational factors from highest to lowest. The first factor, 'enhancing prestige', consists of 5 items with a mean range of 2.17 to 3.74. The highest mean rank value (3.74) for increased knowledge and the lowest (2.17) were observed in the increase in social status. The item 'to meet new people' ranks with a high mean value of 4.17 in the second motivational factor, 'enhancing relation and social circle', while 'visiting friends and relatives' ranks with a low mean value of (2.66). The third motivational factor, 'seeking relaxation and spirituality,' means value ranges from high (3.72) for the 'to be away from the home item and low (2.39) for the 'reconnecting with spiritual roots' item. Finally, the fourth motivational factor, "exploring culture and touristic spots' scored the highest mean value (2.88) for 'to explore cultural resources and the lowest mean value (2.20) for the items 'to sightsee touristic spots'. As a result, improved knowledge about an overseas destination, meeting new communities, being away from home, and exploring cultural resources are considered the highest-ranking motivating factors in travel.

Table 2. Ranks of Motivational Factors

Factors	Motivational Factors	Ranking	Mean
EP1	To increase my social status	5	2.17
EP2	To satisfy the dream of staying in an overseas land/country	4	2.68
EP3	To contribute to your Academics	3	2.86
EP4	To stay at a location that I have not visited earlier	2	3.55
EP5	To improve knowledge about an overseas destination	1	3.74
ERSC1	To visit friends and relatives	6	2.66
ERSC2	To take part in new activities	2	3.97
ERSC3	To appreciate natural resources	5	3.23
ERSC4	To exchange customs and traditions	3	3.59
ERSC5	To meet new people	1	4.18
ERSC6	To feel new and different lifestyles or traditions	4	3.37
SRS1	To relax spiritually	2	3.07
SRS2	To rewire with spiritual roots	4	2.39
SRS3	To find thrills and delight	2	3.07
SRS4	To satisfy the desire to be somewhere else	3	2.75
SRS5	To be away from home	1	3.72
ECTS1	To explore cultural resources	1	2.88
ECTS2	To see how people of various traditions live	3	2.37
ECTS3	To sightsee tourist spots	4	2.20
ECTS4	To have an enjoyable time with my travel friend(s)	2	2.55

Note: (Enhancing Prestige=EP, Enhancing relations and social circle=ERSC, Seeking relaxation and spirituality=SRS, Exploring culture and touristic spots=ECTS)

4.3 Ranks of Constraint Factors

Table 3 exemplifies the mean ranks and scored values for five items of constraint factor. The highest value (3.57) was for 'transportation inconvenience', and the lowest (2.40) was for 'financial concerns' of international students.

Table 3. Ranks of Constraint FactorsNote: (Constraint Factors=CF)

Factors	Constraint Factors	Ranking	Mean
CF1	Financial Concerns	5	2.40
CF2	Time Constraints	4	2.67
CF3	Excessive Study Commitments	3	3.07
CF4	Transportation Inconvenience	1	3.57
CF5	Travel Mechanism (lack of student-specific concessions and packages as constraints on travelling)	2	3.29

4.4 Reliability Analysis for Motivational Items

Table 4 demonstrates the reliable analysis of tourism motivational factors. The Cronbach's values for enhancing prestige factor (0.647) and enhancing relation and social circle (0.700) were the highest. Seeking relaxation and spirituality (0.753) and exploring culture and touristic spots scored the highest (0.738). This illustrates the internal consistency of the constructs, which is reliable and highly correlated with each item belonging to the motivating factors in tourism.

Table 4. Reliability Analysis for Motivational Items

Factors	Motivational Factors	Cronbach's Alpha
EP1	To increase my social status	0.847
EP2	To satisfy the dream of staying in an overseas land/country	
EP3	To contribute to your Academics	
EP4	To stay at a location that I have not visited earlier	
EP5	To improve knowledge about an overseas destination	
ERSC1	To visit friends and relatives	
ERSC2	To take part in new activities	0.700
ERSC3	To appreciate natural resources	
ERSC4	To exchange customs and traditions	
ERSC5	To meet new people	
ERSC6	To feel new and different lifestyles or traditions	
SRS1	To relax spiritually	
SRS2	To rewire with spiritual roots	
SRS3	To find thrills and delight	
SRS4	To satisfy the desire to be somewhere else	
SRS5	To be away from home	
ECTS1	To explore cultural resources	0.738
ECTS2	To see how people of various traditions live	
ECTS3	To sightsee tourist spots	
ECTS4	To have an enjoyable time with my travel friend(s)	

4.5 Reliability Analysis for Constraint Items

Table 5 elucidates the reliability analysis of five items in constraint factors (0.768). The internal consistency of alpha is reliable, and the correlation between each item belonging to the constraining factors in tourism is high.

Table 5. Reliability Analysis for Constraint Items

Factors	Motivational Factors	Cronbach's Alpha
CF1	Financial Concerns	0.768
CF2	Time Constraints	
CF3	Excessive Study Commitments	
CF4	Transportation Inconvenience	
CF5	Travel Mechanism	

4.6 Factor Analysis for Tourism Motivating

To identify the similar items in the motivational factors, principal component analysis was used to group the factors with common characteristics using the dimension reduction technique named factor analysis. Four motivational aspects were evaluated using varimax rotation, and items in the factor had scored an eigenvalue greater than one. All the factor loadings exceeded the standard of 0.50, and Barlette's test of sphericity ($p < 0.001$) and the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling accurateness ($KMO=0.799$) reached the benchmark. Table 6 represents the internal consistency of the items in the scale (Cronbach's alpha = 0.922), indicating a high internal consistency between the individual items and factors under motivation. The study identified four factors that described

(64.408) of the total variance; the first factor, 'enhancing prestige,' contains five items. The second factor, 'enhancing relation and social circle,' contains six items. The third factor, 'seeking relaxation and spirituality,' contains five items. Finally, the fourth element in exploring culture and tourist spots contains four items. All the factors demonstrate the highest significant motivational factors of travel.

Table 6. Factor Analysis for Tourism Motivating

Motivational Factors	Factor Loadings	Communality	Eigen Value	Variance Explained	Mean	SD
Enhancing Prestige						
EP1 Item 1	0.693	0.524				
EP2 Item 2	0.688	0.369				
EP3 Item 3	0.893	0.612	5.525	25.114	2.35	0.54
EP4 Item 4	0.671	0.091				
EP5 Item 5	0.592	0.525				
Enhancing relation and social circle						
ERSC1 Item 1	0.708	0.268				
ERSC2 Item 2	0.510	0.518				
ERSC3 Item 3	0.603	0.492	4.180	19.000	2.17	0.55
ERSC4 Item 4	0.800	0.725				
ERSC5 Item 5	0.810	0.559				
ERSC6 Item 6	0.704	0.239				
Seeking relaxation and spirituality						
SRS1 Item 1	0.648	0.537				
SRS2 Item 2	0.774	0.685				
SRS3 Item 3	0.765	0.509	2.545	11.569	2.28	0.69
SRS4 Item 4	0.761	0.768				
SRS5 Item 5	0.677	0.192				
Exploring culture and tourist spot						
ECTS1 Item 1	0.582	0.623				
ECTS2 Item 2	0.499	0.679	1.920	8.725	1.92	0.69
ECTS3 Item 3	0.677	0.486				
ECTS4 Item 4	0.704	0.454				
Overall Variance Explained						64.5
Overall Scale Reliability Alpha						0.92
KMO						0.8

4.7 Principal Components for Constraint Items

Table 7 depicts the one factor for (53.113) of the total variance. The internal uniformity of the items in the scale Cronbach's alpha (0.768) indicates a high internal uniformity between the individual items and factors under constraint.

Table 7. Principal Components for Constraint Items

Constraint Factors	Factor Loadings	Communality	Eigen Value	Variance Explained	Mean	SD
CF1 Item 1	0.737	0.544				
CF2 Item 2	0.734	0.538				
CF3 Item 3	0.762	0.580	2.656	53.113	2.25	0.45
CF4 Item 4	0.727	0.528				
CF5 Item 5	0.682	0.466				
Overall Variance Explained						53.1
Overall Scale Reliability Alpha						0.77
KMO						0.64

5 Discussion

Many destinations in India offer meeting academic environments suiting the needs of overseas students to fascinate, attract and allow the segment to come and join institutions of international repute. The initiative in the same direction provides tremendous opportunities for students to explore the hidden tourism wonders. The researcher affirms to contribute with a highlight; most students seek to travel to experience a new destination or attraction to have the privilege of visiting a destination from opportunities arising from staying and studying in India from multiple study domains. Therefore, the picture showcases students' explorative and intuitive nature while travelling to a destination. Firstly, the outcome of the study indicates the practical directional goals for travel and tourism practitioners as students have shown a greater interest in the host region's local tradition, culture, and art forms, allowing them to segment the student travel market as a heterogeneous group differentiating from other non-serious leisure travellers.

The findings of this research are consistent with (Gardiner et al., 2013), providing strong evidence that international students are distinctive in terms of characteristics, establishing a prospective client group for travel agents and tour operators. Secondly, seeking relaxation and spirituality and exploring culture and tourist spots scored the highest motivational value for international students. Further, findings confirm that international students in India have a great interest in travelling to enhance their knowledge by meeting new people and exploring new cultures, making constant Meiand Lantai (2018) reflected that students travel to destinations to explore new cultures living in their home countries. The non-significant differences have been achieved and demonstrated in our study. They are the same as presented (Xu et al., 2009), where international student origin, country location, geography, and cultural similarity play a critical role in the choice to travel and select a destination in the host nation. Pull motivation factors increase the intention to travel in the current study, contrary to push motivation factors, which are constraints, and results reveal opposite results as achieved and presented in similar kinds of studies of the same area (Xie & Ritchie, 2019).

Present study results show that in northern India, international students are most motivated to travel to Himachal Pradesh. Himachal Pradesh is the most favourable destination for international students, followed by Uttarakhand. The reasons can be supportive of the argument that the climate and culture mix which both these destinations present the position of these destinations on the international tourism map. Based on the results achieved in the current study and its interpretation, the same results are highlighted by (Mei & Lantai, 2018), which postulate that time and money are not taken as constraints for international student travel in the same conditions behavioural strategies are applied to mitigate with choice of destinations which are closer to the proximity of the student residential place with a choice of cost friendly accommodations. The ongoing research presents the students from north India choosing Himachal Pradesh as the most preferred destination for travel. Among all the destinations of North Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jammu, and Kashmir provide similar landscapes. Still, Himachal Pradesh has outperformed all destinations near the data collection centre.

Parallel to the prior literature (Gardiner et al., 2013; Wong & Kuo, 2021), measuring constraints has been challenging in international student travel. The critical assessment and measurement of the 'constraints allow us to strengthen the research areas from International students and offerings from India. The current research areas divide the constraints into five categories: financial constraints, time constraints, excessive time commitments, and transportation inconvenience travel mechanisms. Similar constraints have been identified as structural constraints (Crawford & Godbey, 1987). Among all constraints, transportation inconvenience to and at the destination is a significant restraint factor in our study. Similar results are highlighted by (Andreani & Anastasia, 2021). The constraints for the student movement at the host destination are earmarked mainly with the lack of facility for cheap travel to and at the destination, which is primarily reflected in the other constraints and financial

expenditures which support the argument of lack of money or limited finances with the student segment to manage all expenses from limited funds received from parents or guardian. Students may not like to spend heavily on transportation or use cheap transportation means to and from the destination rather than other activities showcased as unique selling propositions of the destination. Many students like to explore the entire length and breadth of the country in their residential time, which may or may not be accurate due to constraints highlighted in the present study. Similar to the previous studies, international students like to study in private institutions, and getting access to student databases by the travel community is daunting due to the secrecy of records. The non-interest among the institutions to share the database is one of the identified standards that hamper the benefit to the travel agents/tour operators.

6 Conclusion

Current research explored the travel motivation and constraints experienced by international students enrolled in higher education programs in India. The findings highlight students' inherent curiosity and adventurous spirit, driving them to explore new destinations and immerse themselves in local traditions, arts, and cultures. Notably, the study delineates international students as a distinct client group for travel practitioners, emphasising their preferences for relaxation, spirituality, and cultural exploration. Moreover, the research sheds light on motivational factors driving international student travel, particularly the pull factors such as destination climate and cultural richness. The preference for destinations like Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand underscores the significance of natural beauty and cultural diversity in shaping travel choices. However, the study also reveals significant constraints international students face, particularly regarding transportation inconvenience and financial limitations. These findings contribute to the body of knowledge on international student travel behaviour, aligning with previous research while offering nuanced insights into the preferences and challenges this demographic faces. Identifying constraints provides a foundation for future research and practical interventions to enhance the travel experience for international students in India. Ultimately, understanding the dynamics of student travel is essential for stakeholders in the tourism industry to tailor offerings and services effectively, ensuring a fulfilling and enriching experience for this growing segment of travellers.

First, tourism stakeholders should work with universities and colleges to raise recognition and interest in visiting tourist destinations among students. Some of the institute's tourism and hospitality departments can govern by making students aware, selecting, and purchasing student-friendly travel packages to the destination. Glover (2011) claims that collaboration between tourism marketers and educational institutions encourages international students to participate in travel-related activities actively. Tourism marketers might advertise specific locations on campus by putting up advertisements, conducting communication sessions, and renting information tents to various travel companies during significant university events like orientation week and annual events. The tourism marketing professional can think about using social media platforms to engage students, as the young market is a big user of social media and may respond better to social media marketing (Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013; Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). The government can create mechanisms not only to attract international students to travel to India for education but also to develop an ecosystem to retain the trained, skilled human capital to stay back and work in India towards the social and economic progression of the nation. A similar kind of Post-Graduation Work Permit Program (PGWPP) introduced in Canada can lead to an inflow of foreign international students in India who ultimately will look forward to travelling the length and breadth of the nation out of boredom. In parallel to the current research, an effort to attract foreign investors in multiple domains like IT and telecommunications, Medical, and engineering can allow international students to stay back in India along with employment options after studies, which further can help increase student traffic. Inter-university and inter-institutional collaborations at international platforms can allow easy movement

of international students to travel to nations, thus finally helping the travel sector. The findings of the current research confirm that destination management organisations could also look for a prospect for student travel with a critical focus on destination promotion while engaging the participation of a niche market segment of student travel to meet new people, to be away from home, to explore cultural resources which are considered the highest motivating factors in travel which are in tune with the results revealed by the current study. The current research dimensions have allowed practical solutions for student travel with a significant concern on assistance before, during, and after students undertake the travel activities. International students might need support and conceivably are more likely to travel for extended periods and distances. Assistance to the students for leisure travel can be provided by dedicated helpline numbers from government officials, making more and more students travel to different parts of the country. Working carefully with school excursion managers could also boost the length of stay at a destination while focusing on the length and money spent on various activities during student travel. In other words, while promoting a domestic tourist destination, marketers and the government should In continuation, co-creation and experiential learning experiences may provide further insights for managers (Prebensen et al., 2013; Rihova et al., 2015), which can be a crucial focus on the student travel market interpretations from motivation and constraint studies from international students in India. A better overall understanding of the picture also allows the host institution to arrange and look at the commercial model of travel and tourism, providing more learning with and at the destination and giving practical insights into the travel business to travel, tourism and hospitality students of their institute. International educational institutes can collaborate to develop international exchange learning programmes with a critical focus on learning and travelling at the host destination. Ministries of Education and the Ministry of Tourism can come together to provide some critical aspects in the student travel domain.

The research is limited to international students enrolled in universities and colleges in India, restricting the sample's diversity. Moreover, the study emphasises primarily quantitative aspects concerning overseas students, as qualitative data is insufficiently explored, thereby limiting a deeper understanding of the subject matter. A similar kind of research can be applied to other private and public universities and colleges at a macro level. The researcher can also include the technological and cultural variables likely to determine the incentive and constraint in travel intention. When assessing online trip package buying decisions, it is also recommended that foreign student readiness and inclusion be considered. The study can further investigate how overseas students react to trips to other parts of India using higher-order analysis such as path analysis. The destination image analysis from the student perspective can be the next area of research. The same could be explored by identifying and exploring student directional movement to multiple destinations for further studies in search of job opportunities, providing a glimpse of an overall destination demand measurement. Finally, more research is needed into the impact of international students on destination selection and academic restrictions for travel, both of which are vital aspects of attained travel. There has been very little previous research in the current area. Notably, further obstacles are confronted systematically to address trip planning and negotiated with the constraints arising would help achieve incremental revenue growth from student travel motivation and decision-making.

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