

INDIAN INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AS QUASI-  
DOMESTIC TRAVELLERS IN CANADA: EXPLORING  
TRAVEL MOTIVATIONS AND BEHAVIOURS

by  
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INDIAN INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AS QUASI-DOMESTIC TRAVELLERS IN  
CANADA: EXPLORING TRAVEL MOTIVATIONS AND BEHAVIOURS

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Presented as part of the requirement for the award of Master of Arts in Sustainable Leisure  
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## Thesis Examination Committee Signature Page

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Department of Recreation and Tourism Management for acceptance, the thesis title “Indian International Students As Quasi-Domestic Travellers In Canada: Exploring Travel Motivations And Behaviours” submitted by Diotima Dey in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Sustainable Leisure Management.



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## Declarations

This thesis is a product of my own work and is not the result of anything done in collaboration.

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I agree that this thesis may be available for reference and photocopying at the discretion of Vancouver Island University.

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## Abstract

As the domestic tourism industry is one of the most important economic contributors in Canada's economy, this exploratory quantitative study focused on the travel motivations and behaviours of Indian international students as quasi-domestic tourists in Canada. As of 2018, 28% of international students in Canada were from India (CBIE, 2019). These international Indian (IIS) students represent a large and potentially lucrative market for various sectors of tourism industry in Canada. Although previous researchers have examined this topic as a homogeneous market, the niche market of IIS have not been studied separately. In order to achieve the research goal, this study employed the REP scales to understand the underlying travel motivations of Indian students in Canada and also explored various travel behaviour aspects of the Indian students.

A total of 116 completed questionnaire were collected from Indian students currently enrolled in various academic programs at Vancouver Island University in Nanaimo, British Columbia. The method employed to collect data was an online questionnaire. The data were analyzed through SPSS, a social sciences analytical software.

The findings suggested that *learning* and *being close to nature* were the main travel motivations for Indian international students. Contrary to the common belief that students seek adventure while travelling, *risk-taking* and *achievement* were not found to be travel motivators for IIS. The travel behaviour analysis revealed that the participants travelled for an average of three days, stayed at hotel/motels rather than hostels or a campground, used cars for travelling, and favoured restaurants/bars over other food and beverage options. In general, the findings contrasted many of the general perceptions of student travel but had more similarities to Canadian domestic tourists. The findings were also more similar to motivations and behaviours of Chinese international students than their western counterparts.

## **Acknowledgements**

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## Table of Contents

Declarations	i
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Figures	vi
List of Tables	vi
<b>Chapter One: Introduction</b>	1
International students in Canada	2
Quasi-Domestic Tourist	4
International Students as Quasi-Domestic Tourists	4
Quasi-Domestic Travellers but Not a Homogeneous Group	6
Research Context	7
Research Purpose & Questions	9
Outline of the Thesis	10
<b>Chapter Two: Literature Review</b>	11
Travel Motivation	11
Importance of Understanding Travel Motivation	12
Theories of Travel Motivation	13
REP Scale of Leisure Motivation	15
International students' Travel Motivations	17
Travel Behaviour	18
International Students' travel behaviour	18
Activities & Experiences	19
Modes of Transportation	19
Types of Accommodation choices	20
Food & Beverage Outlets	20
Time and duration of Travel	21
Influence of culture on IIS's Travel Motivation & Behaviour.	21
Gaps in the Literature	24
<b>Chapter Three: Methods</b>	24

Study Design	25
Population & Sampling	25
Data Collection	26
Survey Design	27
Ethical Consideration	28
Researcher Positionality	29
<b>Chapter Four: Data Analysis &amp; Results</b>	<b>31</b>
Data analysis	31
Results	32
Demographic Profile of the Respondents	32
REP Domains Reliability Analysis	33
Travel Motivation	37
Analysis of Travel Motivation by Gender	37
Analysis of Travel Motivation by Relationship Status	38
Analysis of Travel Motivation by Employment Status	38
Analysis of Travel Motivation by Age	40
Analysis of Travel Motivation by Current Level of Education	42
Travel Behaviour	44
Analysis of Accommodation Choices	44
Analysis of Mode of Transportation Choices	45
Analysis of Food and Beverage Choices	47
Analysis of Number of Days spent at a Destination	49
Analysis of time of Travel	50
Analysis of Destination Choice	51
Analysis of Activity Participation during a Leisure Trip	52
Conclusion	54
<b>Chapter 5: Discussions</b>	<b>56</b>
Travel Motivation of Indian International Students	56
Travel Behaviour of Indian International Students	59
Destination Choice	61

Limitations of this Study	62
Practical Implications and Future Research	63
<b>References</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Appendix A: Online Questionnaire</b>	<b>83</b>

### **List of Figures:**

<b>Figure 1</b> : Percentage of International Students in 2018 by Citizenship in Canada	3
<b>Figure 2</b> : Map of Vancouver Island with Nanaimo	8
<b>Figure 3</b> : Accommodation choices by the Respondents	42
<b>Figure 4</b> : Mode of Transportation Used by the Respondents	46
<b>Figure 5</b> : Food and Beverage Choices by the Respondents	48
<b>Figure 6</b> : Analysis of time of travel	50

### **List of Tables:**

<b>Table 1</b> : Socio- Demographic Data of the Respondents	30
<b>Table 2</b> : REP Scale Domains , Items, Cronbach's Alpha and Aggregate Means	32
<b>Table 3</b> : REP Domain Means (ordered)	33
<b>Table 4</b> : Independent Samples t-Test on the REP Domains based on Gender	34
<b>Table 5</b> : Independent Samples t-Test on REP Domains based on Relationship Status	36
<b>Table 6</b> : Independent Samples t-Test on Rep Domains based on Employment status	37
<b>Table 7</b> : Independent Sample T test of REP Domains by Age Range	39
<b>Table 8</b> : ANOVA of Travel Motivation by Current Level of Education	41
<b>Table 9</b> : Chi Square test based on Accommodation	45
<b>Table 10</b> : Chi Square test based on Mode of Transportation	47
<b>Table 11</b> : Chi square test based on Food and Beverage choices	49
<b>Table 12</b> : No. of Days Spent at a Destination by Participants	49
<b>Table 13</b> : Destinations Visited by the Participants	52



## Chapter One: Introduction <sup>1</sup>

The domestic tourism industry is an important contributor to Canada's economic growth. The Canadian travel and tourism industry have proved to be an important, consistent and robust contributor of economic growth during a time of constant struggle for other orthodox economic sectors due to a universal decline in global commodity prices and negatively apprehensive dollar index (Tourism Industry Association of Canada, 2016). In 2017, Canadians made more than 328 million domestic trips, which contributed over \$51 billion to the travel and tourism market (Statistics Canada, 2017). As the domestic travel market is crucial for the economic growth of Canada, exploring ways of sustaining and promoting growth in this market are pivotal.

An important emerging market in domestic tourism is international students' travel within the host country (Kim, 2007; Payne, 2009). Despite the long-standing importance of student travel, it is the exponential growth of the international student population in the last decade that has brought this market into the limelight. International students represent a large and potentially lucrative market for various sectors of the domestic tourism industry, but the international student travel market has not been studied in great detail, primarily due to the misconception of its low economic value (Payne, 2010).

International students create a relatively constant demand in the tourism market; so, both academics and practitioners should want a better understanding of the motivations and travel behaviours of these students. Without this information and understanding, the ability to expand this market is hampered, and consequently, the host country may lose out significant revenue generated from this niche market (Arcodia et al., 2006; Kim, 2007). With India currently

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<sup>1</sup> This research was conducted prior to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

accounting for the maximum number of international students' enrollments in Canada (CBIE, 2019), it is important for tourism researchers and practitioners to understand the travel motivations and behaviours of these students.

### **International students in Canada**

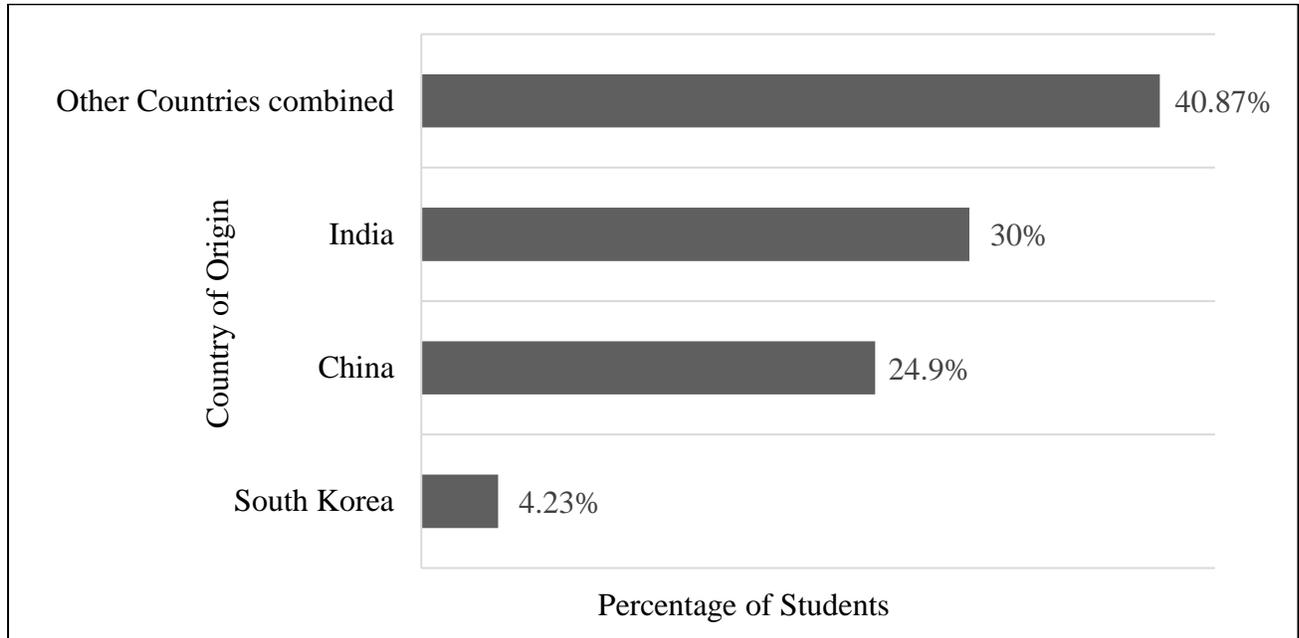
Travelling for educational purposes is an ancient and also a contemporary phenomenon for many nationalities (Gibson, 1998). More students are opting to pursue their higher education from a university in a foreign location and this trend has been growing exponentially every year.

The number of international students in Canada has also grown significantly in the last decade. According to the Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE, 2018), the number of international students increased 119% between 2010 and 2017. In 2017, there were approximately 495 thousand international students in Canada (CBIE, 2018), surpassing Canada's International Education Strategy goal of enrolling 450 thousand international students in Canada by 2022 (CBIE, 2019). The population of Canada currently is 36.54 million (StatsCan, 2018), with international students representing 1.36% of this number.

In 2017, China was the top country of origin for international students (28%) in Canada, followed by India (25%) and South Korea (5%). However, India overtook China as the top source of international students in 2018. Figure 1 illustrates the country of origin for international students studying in Canada in 2018 (CBIE, 2019).

**Figure 1**

*Percentage of International Students in 2018 by Citizenship in Canada (CBIE, 2019)*



Previous research has consistently demonstrated that international students travel around the host country during their period of study and contribute the economy of the host country (Kim, 2007; Payne, 2010); therefore, understanding the travel motivations and behaviours of the international students is important. Although some research describes the travel behaviour and motivations of international students in general, virtually none addresses these aspects of the Indian students in their host countries. Without reliable information, improvement of the international student tourism market segment is not possible, and the host country could fail to capitalize on this potentially lucrative existing market. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the travel motivations and behaviours of Indian international students to have better insights for this niche market.

## **Quasi-Domestic Tourist**

It was important for this study to explain the term “quasi-domestic tourist” as it has been used frequently in this study. The meaning of the word “Quasi” as per Oxford Advanced American Dictionary (2018) is “appears to be something but is really not so”. A domestic tourist is defined as a tourist travelling within his/her country of residence (WTO, 2016). Hence the meaning of the term quasi domestic tourist would be a tourist who shares characteristics of a domestic tourist but is really not a domestic tourist as per the standard definition and does not fit the traditional model. The next paragraph offers explanation as to why this study considers international students as quasi-domestic tourists.

## **International Students as Quasi Domestic Tourists**

The World Tourism Organization (1995) defines tourism as "the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business or other purposes" (p. 12). International students are generally not seen as tourists according to this definition; nevertheless, the World Tourism Organization (2016) acknowledged that international students are a type of tourist.

In tourism statistics, international students may or may not be regarded as international visitors given their length of stay. Visitors are generally classified as international tourists if they live in a different country and stay in the destination for less than 365 consecutive days as per WTO (2016). However, in most cases, international students study for more than a year in their host country. Hence, they do not qualify as typical international visitors as per the guidelines suggested by the WTO.

In 2018, 75% of international students in Canada were pursuing a post-secondary study, which usually takes more than one year to complete (CBIE, 2019). Hence, by the WTO

standards of international tourists, most of these international students do not qualify as international visitors when they travel in their host countries. They are more similar in characteristics to domestic tourists if they do not travel outside of their host countries more than a year. When compared with international visitors, international students also typically stay longer and establish temporary residence in their location of study.

According to the WTO (2016), “domestic tourism” comprises the tourism activities of a resident visitor within the country of reference. In reference to this definition of domestic tourism, international students are also distinguishable from domestic leisure visitors through their briefer residency in the destination country and higher propensity to explore the country before returning home (Min-En, 2016). They often display unique tourism behaviours and patterns because their status is not the same as typical domestic tourists as they serve multiple roles as temporary residents, students, and tourists at a host destination for a relatively more extended period of time (Bae & Song, 2017). They are also distinguishable from domestic travellers due to their funding sources and lifestyles, which are often combining study with work and leisure (Gardiner, King & Wilkins, 2013). In addition to this, previous research has showed that international students are also not synonymous with youth travellers or backpackers; rather, international students form a niche market (Gardiner, King & Wilkins, 2013).

Another characteristic of international students is their contribution to visiting friends and relatives’ (VFR) market, which sets them apart from other international tourists. This market is lucrative for a country as it is not only relatively stable in turbulent economic times, but also less likely to show negative decline (Australian Ministry of Tourism, 2009). In most cases, the international students usually act as a domestic guide and host to the VFR market while they are travelling around the country during their visit (Michael et al., 2004; Min-En, 2006; Weaver,

2004). It is also noticeable that they are likely to generate word-of-mouth recommendations for VFR travellers and contribute indirectly to the economy of the host country (Bischoff & Koenig-Lewis, 2007). This characteristic is also similar to the local residents as they act as a domestic guide to their international visitors and are very likely to generate word-of-mouth recommendations for the international visitors.

The international student travel market is different from the international visitor market and domestic travel market. This quasi-domestic travel market borrows characteristics from both international and domestic travel segments, while also having a unique set of specific features. Despite the bright prospects of this market, the tourism industry has failed to tap into it successfully (Gardiner, 2013) and officially, international students have not even been categorized as domestic tourists or international tourists yet.

Huang (2008) has suggested conceptualizing international students as a separate type of tourist. She also argued that international students contribute to the economy in many ways, beyond their tuition and living expenses, one of them being traveling around the host country which generate considerable revenue and employment opportunities. Supporting Huang's (2008) perspective, several researchers have argued that the tourism and international education sectors needs to work together to understand this niche market better and promote the host country's tourism among international students (Glover, 2011b; Michael, Armstrong, & King, 2003; Shanka & Taylor, 2003; Taylor, Shanka & Pope, 2004).

### **Quasi-Domestic Travellers but Not a Homogenous Group**

While there is support for viewing international students as a quasi-domestic niche, researchers have also found substantial differences in tourist motivation and behaviour among the different nationalities (Field, 1999; Kim & Jogaratnam, 2002; Kim & Jogaratnam, 2003;

Shanka & Taylor, 2003; Kim, 2007; Kozak, 2002). Therefore, researchers need to go beyond an understanding of “international students” in general, and consider subcategories based on demographics and nationalities.

Arcodia et al., (2006) argued that tourism organizations have not attempted to understand the key consumer characteristics of international students depending on their nationalities, thereby overlooking their cultural values and preferences. Due to this, student travel behaviour of some nationalities have not been focused upon much in the past tourism research literature, and limited knowledge is available about the travel needs of international students from India as a separate emerging tourism market.

As of 2019, 30% of international students in Canada were from India, therefore a better understanding of the travel motivations and behaviours of these students is needed that tourism companies can take advantage of this market. The research presented here explored the travel behaviour and motivations of Indian students at Vancouver Island University’s, Nanaimo Campus.

## **Research Context**

This study was aimed at understanding the travel motivations and behaviours of Indian students at Vancouver Island University located in the city of Nanaimo, British Columbia. The following is an overview of the city of Nanaimo and Vancouver Island University.

**Nanaimo, British Columbia, Canada.** Located on the west coast of Canada, Nanaimo is in the central region of Vancouver Island, a short 95 minutes ferry ride from metro Vancouver or a 90 minute drive from Victoria, the capital of British Columbia. The city of Nanaimo is serviced by a domestic airport with daily flights to Vancouver International airport (15 min). Travellers can also use seaplanes and helicopters to visit Vancouver, Tofino, or Victoria. Nanaimo also acts

as a gateway to other tourist destinations like Tofino, Comox valley, Gulf islands, Mt.

Arrowsmith, Ucluelet, Campbell river etc. located on Vancouver Island by ferry and road

With a population of 90,505 (Statistics Canada, 2017), it is the second most populated city on Vancouver Island. While Nanaimo is considered as one of the most multicultural cities in Canada (TIAC, 2016), its location also puts students in close proximity to Canada's third-largest South Asian Canadian community (Metro Vancouver: Statistics Canada, 2017). The primary portion of the population in Nanaimo is of European descent (78.7%), with 9.1% being indigenous people. Other ethnic groups, such as Asians, South Americans, Africans etc. accounts for around 12% of the population in Nanaimo. Figure 2 shows the location of Nanaimo on the map of Vancouver Island.

**Figure 2**

*Map of Vancouver Island (Tourism Vancouver Island, 2015) with Nanaimo.*



**Vancouver Island University (VIU).** VIU is a public university located on Vancouver Island with campuses in Nanaimo, Cowichan, and Powell River. In 2016-2017, VIU had 1983 international students, representing 12.7% of the student community, of which 251 were Indian students (VIU, 2018). From the academic year of 2012-2013 to 2016-2017, there was 326% growth in the number of Indian international students at Vancouver Island University (VIU, 2018). As the number of Indian International students has increased annually, the importance of understanding this specific market became more important.

### **Research Purpose & Questions**

The purpose of this study was to explore the travel behaviours and motivations of Indian students as quasi-domestic travelers in Canada. The research questions that guide the objective of the study were :

1. What were the main motivations, as measured by the Recreation Experience Preference Scale (REP), for Indian international students to undertake leisure travel while studying in Canada?
  - Were there any significant differences between the travel motivations based on gender, age, education level, employment status, and current relationship status of Indian international students?
2. What were the behavioral patterns of Indian international students including: a) destination choice, b) trip duration, c) mode of transport, d) accommodation choices, e) food and beverage choices, and f) activity participation?
  - Were there any differences in the behavioral pattern of Indian international students based on gender?

## **Outline of the Thesis**

The following thesis includes a literature review, a description of the methods, data analysis, results, and discussion. The literature review provides an overview of the existing literature on international student travel behaviour and travel motivations along with different theories of motivation and rationale for using the REP scale for this study. The methods chapter discusses the methods used for survey design, data collection and as well as the ethical considerations for this study. Chapter 4 discusses the data analysis techniques used in this study and presents the results. The last chapter includes a discussion of the study results, conclusions drawn, as well as practical implications and ideas for future research.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter details the rationale for using the Recreation Experience Preference (REP) scale of leisure motivation to understand the travel motivations and travel behaviours of Indian students in Canada as quasi-domestic travelers. To provide a foundation for the study, this chapter also discusses previous research in six primary areas: a) travel motivation and importance of understanding travel motivation; b) different theories of travel motivation and REP Scale; c) international students' travel motivation; d) behaviours of international students in their host countries; e) different characteristics and aspects of international students' travel behaviours; and, f) possible influence of culture on Indian international students' travel motivation and behaviour. The following sections also explain how this study aimed to address the gap in literature about motivations and behaviours of Indian international students as quasi-domestic travelers.

### **Travel Motivation**

Human behaviour is a complex range of emotions and various competing needs that influence behaviours (Ambady & Weisbuch, 2010). Motivation has been defined as an inner state that directs and energizes human behaviour (Kassin, 1998; Moutinho, 2000; Murray, 1964). As a psychological term, motivation has also been defined as the inner driving force that induces people's actions (Pizam et al., 1979).

A motive is a starting point that activates the decision-making process (Crompton & McKay, 1997) and has been also viewed as the drive to satisfy both the physiological and psychological needs of people for travelling (Berkman, Lindquist & Sirgy, 1997). In the tourism context, it refers to a set of needs that causes individuals to travel to specific destinations or to

engage in certain tourist events (Plangmarn et al., 2012). Mill and Morrison (2002) similarly explained that travel motivation occurs when an individual is made aware of a need deficiency.

### ***Importance of Understanding Travel Motivation***

Investigating travel motives started from a simple, yet important interest concerning of why people travel (Pearce & Lee, 2005). Today, understanding travel motivation is essential for analyzing tourists' decisions, and subsequent travel behaviours, which is used to predict tourist consumption behaviours. The understanding of travel motivation ultimately benefits the travel destination and tourism operators, as motivations of people travelling are regarded by tourism professionals and academics alike as one of the most important factors in the explanation of the tourist's behaviour (Crompton, 1979; Fodness, 1994; Iso-Ahola, 1982).

For tourism professionals attempting to market a destination successfully with associated products and services, an understanding of the motivations that lead tourists to their travel decisions and consequent consumption behaviour is essential to position the tourism product correctly (Crompton & McKay, 1997; Gee, Choy, & Makens, 1984; Oh, Uysal, & Weaver, 1995). Crompton and McKay (1997) argued that :

“Understanding a visitor's motivation is the key to designing offerings for them, as a product or service is not purchased in isolation. It is the expectation of the associated benefits of the product that will satisfy an individual's intrinsic needs, which is the motivating force throughout the whole process.” (p. 426)

Therefore, travel motivation is a fundamental factor in determining tourists' travel activities and behaviour, which provides necessary information to facilitate tourism operators to reach potential travelers (Cha et al., 1995; Crompton, 1979; Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987).

While it is often easy to describe the purpose of travelling (business and pleasure), it is more challenging to find the underlying and often hidden reasons (Pearce, 2005). Supporting this perspective, Swarbrooke and Horner (2012) argued that motivation also depend on numerous factors like demographic characteristics, the personality of the traveler, and past experiences. Crompton (1979) noted that, the who, when, where, and how of tourism are easier to get answered than the why question. While motivation might be more difficult to research but it is vital for tourism development in the modern world as it is seen as the driving force behind all actions (Alsawafi, 2017; Crompton, 1979; Farmaki et al., 2019; Fodness, 1994; Khan & Khan, 2016; Iso-Ahola, 1982; Pearce & Lee, 2005). Hence, it can be concluded that understanding the travel motivation of tourists is particularly crucial in tourism research.

Researchers have argued that demographic factors are important to understand travel motivations. Past studies have examined gender, age, relationship status, educational level, and employment status to understand how these factors influence travel motivation (Meng & Uysal, 2008; Perks, 2015; Swarbrooke & Horner, 2012; Jung & Wu, 2006; Weighill, 2009) and found significant differences based on these demographic factors. So, this study also used these factors to strengthen the understanding of travel motivations of IIS and to explore differences.

Motivation theories applied to tourism typically try to explain why people travel (Cooper et al., 2008). Several different motivational theories have emerged and the next section reviews some of them in providing the rationale for using REP scales to explore Indian international students' travel motivations.

## **Theories of Travel Motivation**

One of the earliest theories applied to understand travel motivation was Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow theorized that human needs could be arranged in a hierarchy and that only unsatisfied needs motivate a particular behaviour. He also hypothesized that an individual's needs must be satisfied in a given order. This theory had been criticized by researchers such as Collier (1995), who believe this assumption to be incorrect because a lower order need may not have been fully satisfied before a higher-order need emerges. Iso-Ahola (1989) also noted that while the theory was initially appealing, its basic assumption (i.e. hierarchy of needs) remains suspect. Crompton and McKay (1997) continue this criticism when they point out that there is no empirical support for the Maslow's theory that has appeared in the tourism literature to this point.

Iso-Ahola (1982) argued that travel behaviour was explained by seeking and escaping forces that were subdivided into personal and interpersonal dimensions. The personal environments that an individual wish to escape from may include personal troubles or failures, while an interpersonal force may include escaping from family or co-workers. The personal rewards that an individual may seek could include mastery of a subject or the exposure to a new culture. The interpersonal rewards an individual may seek could include varied social interaction, friends, or a new place. A criticism of this model is that not all trips can be classified on this 50/50 basis of escaping and seeking (Uysal & Hagan, 1993).

Push and pull factor is another well-accepted way of capturing motivations on a two-dimensional or forces approach (Backman, Uysal, & Sunshine, 1995; Crompton, 1979; Uysal & Hagan, 1993). Similar to Iso-Ahola's theory, the push factors, especially for holiday or vacation travel, are internal and socio-psychological – often reflecting individual desires to, say, escape,

relax, seek adventure, and interact with others (Crompton, 1979; Uysal & Hagan, 1993; Zeppel & Hall, 1991). Whereas, pull factors are external qualities of a destination, its attractions or appealing characteristics, and can explain a tourist's choice to travel to a particular place. The qualities can be tangible resources, such as sporting events, famous historical sites, indigenous cultures, or pristine beaches (Andreu, Bigne, & Cooper, 2000). Pull factors can also be intangible features that provide tourists with a sense of novelty or an opportunity for education (Crompton, 1979; Uysal & Hagan, 1993). However, this theory does not comprehensively explore the various dimensions of motivation of a tourist visiting a particular destination.

### ***REP Scale of Leisure Motivation***

Driver (1996) and associates developed the Recreation Experience Preference (REP) scale to help explain motivation for outdoor recreation. They identified a total of 21 motivational domains which consist of over 40 scales. The motivational domains are; a) achievement/stimulation, b) autonomy/leadership, c) risk-appeal, d) equipment, e) family togetherness, f) social interactions (with new or similar people), g) education, h) nature enjoyment, i) introspection, j) creativity, k) nostalgia, l) physical fitness, m) physical rest, n) escapism (from physical, familial or personal-social pressures), o) social security, p) teaching-learning from others, q) risk reduction, and r) temperature.

To make the items more reliable and valid, Driver and associates developed them over a 16-year timespan, adapting existing psychometric scales and hosting extensive open-ended qualitative discussions on motivation with recreationists. In the first phase of creating the REP scale, Driver and his associates tested subjective groupings of items using cluster analytic procedures and subsequently refined the scale. Then the second phase was directed at creating scale reliability and testing validity in measuring the desired experiences of recreationists (Driver

et al., 1991; Manfredi & Driver, 1996). A meta-analysis of 36 studies (Manfredi et al., 1996) using REP scales suggest the following observations:

1. The REP scales can be used to determine trip-specific motivations for leisure (i.e., why individuals are on a particular trip) and activity-specific motivations (i.e., why individuals participate in a particular activity). Hence, researchers have to understand and distinguish their study interests before they select a subset of these scales.
2. The REP scales are also suitable for measuring recreational fulfilment.
3. Researchers need to identify selected scales to measure experience preferences in a given study.
4. Researchers need to provide empirical checks on scale consistency by testing for reliability using Cronbach's alpha (greater than .60) (Manfredi et. al., 1996).

Even though initially developed to explore outdoor recreation motivation, these scales were used in multiple leisure (including travel) and cultural contexts to explore motivations from a multidimensional perspective. Stewart et al. (1996) used REP scales with two groups of Japanese: day-hikers and university students enrolled in recreational classes. They found that the selected REP items in the study were applicable to both groups and their study provides a cross-cultural perspective on analyzing the REP scales by utilizing it on a completely different cultural prospect. Walker, Deng, and Dieser (2001) examined the REP scales cross culturally and successfully used it to explain relationships between culture and motivation. Walker et al. (2005) used the REP scale to examine the motivations of tourists who visited casinos. This study successfully classified male casino goers into two groups, and female casino goers into three groups depending on their motivations of visiting a casino. Wang (2009) used the REP scale in a cross-cultural study to understand the tourism motivational differences between Canadian

domestic students and Chinese international students and found that five out of seven motivations differed significantly between the two groups . Recently Garms et al. (2017) applied the REP scale to examine the travel motives of German tourists to visit the Fulufjället National Park, and the scale proved to a reliable instrument for the study. Therefore, the REP scale has proved to be a reliable research instrument across various cultures to examine tourist motivations in different settings.

Compared with the push-pull factors or the escape/seeking motivational theories, REP scales are more comprehensive and provide for a more efficient and systematic understanding of tourists' motivations (Grams et al., 2017). Therefore, the REP scale of travel motivation will be used in this study to understand the travel motivations for Indian students in Canada as it has proved to be a valid scale for measuring motivation across cultures.

### **International Student's Travel Motivations**

People often travel to fulfil particular needs and understanding these needs can help predict tourists' travel behaviour and choices of activities (Kim 2007; Ross & Iso-Ahola 1991). Tourism research on international students places particular attention on travel motivations (Kim et al., 2007; Thrane, 2008; Xu et al., 2009). However, little is still known about Indian student motivations, as they have been largely neglected in the literature. In this section research on Chinese student travel and motivations is reviewed to gain an understanding on the travel motivations of Asian international students, as China is India's close Asian counterpart.

Yan and Zhang (2007) in their research, subdivided Chinese international students into four motivation-based clusters: 1) relax and sightsee, 2) explore a place and people, 3) simply relax, and 4) seek career-opportunities. Liu and Ryan (2011) used the REP method, and the study found that the following motivation items on the REP scale were of both high importance and

high satisfaction: a) to relax mentally, b) to relax physically, c) nature enjoyment, d) escape from physical and personal pressure, e) to learn about new places and things, and f) to travel with existing friends/relatives or similar people. Therefore, the associated REP domains: a) *learning*, b) *escape physical pressure*, c) *escape personal-social pressure*, d) *enjoy nature* and e) *similar people* were found to be important motivations for the Chinese international students.

Indian students may differ from Chinese students, given the different subcultures and ethnic groups between these two countries (Clements, Hobson & Joasim, 1994). Unfortunately, much of the current literature focuses on international students as a homogeneous group and as Weaver (2004) argued, national origin has a distinct influence on tendency to travel. Therefore, it is crucial to focus on Indian international students' travel motivations and behaviours as a separate national and cultural group.

## **Travel Behaviour**

Travel behaviour refers to the choices and scheduling of tourism activities and destinations (Recker et al., 1986). While on a trip, travelers usually participate in unconventional activities in contrast to their regular leisure behaviour at home (Carr, 2002; Leontido, 1994). Understanding the behaviour of tourists is essential for the policy making process, destination management, and developing tourism products ( March & Woodside, 2005).

Efforts to understand travel behaviour in the academic literature has focused on researching choices about: a) food and beverage, b) transportation, c) destinations, d) accommodation, e) activity preferences, and f) seasonality preferences (i.e., timing of travel) and a few other tourist behaviours ( Xu et al., 2009). The tourism industry would be wise to study these aspects of travel behaviour of international students to develop tourism strategies to capitalize on it, as it is already established that international students often travel within their

host country to understand its culture and people better, resulting in considerable revenue and employment opportunities for the host country (Shanka, Ali-Knight & Pope, 2001; Sung & Hsu, 1996; Bae & Song, 2017).

### ***International students' Travel Behaviour***

Previous research has shown that most international students have travelled at least once during their study period and they often displayed behaviours unlike other tourists (Bae & Song, 2017; Ali-Knight, Shanka, & Pope, 2001; Sung & Hsu, 1996). As they are also students, they usually minimize expenditures on commercial lodgings or heavy tourist shopping. Student travellers also change their travel plans more readily to adapt to their new setting (Field 1999). Hence, international university students constitute a distinct quasi-domestic travel market as compared to international visitors. Carr (1998) noted that they are also a part of the youth tourist segment; however, they have separate identities and show distinct interests and travel choices from other youths (Field, 1999; Glover, 2011a; Kim & Jogaratnam, 2002; Kim & Jogaratnam, 2003).

### ***Activities & Experiences***

Previous studies have noted that international students are drawn to activities that are passive and economical (inexpensive or free) while travelling within the host country. Sightseeing was a popular activity for most of the students, followed by visiting historical monuments or beaches (Field, 1999; Hsu & Sung, 1997; Kim & Jogaratnam, 2003; Richards & Wilson, 2004). Hiking, shopping, and visiting cafes were also popular and frequently undertaken (Field, 1999; Hsu & Sung, 1997). Some international students expressed a desire to understand local cultures better by travelling (Marques et al., 2018). These findings contravene the general perception of students as youth travelers seek for adventurous or thrill-seeking activities such as

bungee jumping or white-water rafting (Kadir & Faruk, 2016). In reality, adventure activities were rarely given as a priority (Hsu & Sung, 1997). However, participants in these studies were exclusively from Asian countries, so ethnicity may influence their choice of activities.

International students tend to travel by car, and, unlike other youths, they seldom travel by bus or train (Field, 1999; Hobson & Josiam, 1992; Hsu & Sung, 1997; Gardiner et. al, 2014; Shanka, Ali-Knight & Pope, 2002). They prefer car travel, as it allows them to go where they choose and frees them from a strict schedule (Hobson & Josiam, 1992; Shoham et al., 2004). Driving further tends to lower the cost of travel and therefore it is a popular choice of transportation among international students (Shanka, Ali-Knight and Pope, 2002).

### *Accommodations Choices*

Despite common perceptions of tourism industry, international students tended to stay in hotels and motels as opposed to the more economical hostels (Field, 1999; Hsu & Sung, 1997; Ali-Knight, Shanka & Taylor, 2001; Weaver, 2004). Next to hotels or motels, friends' or relatives' homes were the most popular accommodations for Asian international students (Hsu & Sung, 1996; Hsu & Sung, 1997). Ethnicity and nationality have been found to play an important role in accommodation preferences for international students. Females from Asian culture, in particular, would find it inappropriate to share a room with male travelling companions (Ali-Knight & Shanka, 2001) as Asian culture is much more conservative compared to western culture (Bonnett, 2017). Therefore, staying at a co-ed hostel or sharing a bunkroom would not be a preferable option for them.

### ***Food and Beverage Choices***

Travelling students tend to choose economical food outlets, spending US\$20.00 or less on food per day (Sung & Hsu, 1996; Richards & Wilson, 2004). They tend to eat at fast-food restaurants, compared to domestic students who often eat at family-style restaurants while traveling (Kim & Jogaratnam, 2003; Ryan & Zhang, 2007). Some international students prepare their own meals on vacation (Field, 1999). However, the research to date focuses on Asian international students as a homogeneous mix, and studies have been mostly focused on Chinese international students in terms of Asian international students.

### ***Timing and Duration of travel***

Research has shown that international students will often travel both during and after their completion of study (Kim, 2007). Previous literature on international student travel has also suggested that international students took one to three trips per year that usually lasted two to three days, the students who were older longer tended to plan a trip further in advance, and undergraduate international students tended to travel more than graduate students (Sung & Hsu, 1996; Kim & Jogaratnam, 2002; Glover, 2011).

### ***Influence of Culture on Indian Students' Travel Motivation and Behaviour***

Culture shapes people's behaviours, including their travel behaviours (Reisinger & Turner, 2012). Research on tourist behaviour and motivation have found substantial differences in tourist behavior depending on the culture of the tourist (Cho, 2008; Kozak, 2002; Pizam & Telisman-Kosuta, 1989). Supporting the above studies, Chick and Dong (2005) pointed out that culture exists in behaviours and behavioural patterns highly characteristic of certain groups.

Over the years, a number of frameworks have emerged to improve understanding of culture, the most notable of them being Hofstede's (2010) cultural dimensions. This cultural

framework emerged in 1967 and since has evolved with a new dimension being added in 2010 based on emergence of new data (Hofstede & Minkov, 2010) bringing it to a total of six dimensions. The six dimensions are labelled as:

1. ***Power Distance***, related to the different solutions to the basic problem of human inequality.
2. ***Uncertainty Avoidance***, related to the level of stress in a society in the face of an unknown future.
3. ***Individualism versus Collectivism***, related to the integration of individuals into primary groups.
4. ***Masculinity versus Femininity***, related to the division of emotional roles between women and men.
5. ***Long Term versus Short Term Orientation***, related to the choice of focus for people's efforts: the future or the present and past.
6. ***Indulgence versus Restraint***, related to the gratification versus control of basic human desires related to enjoying life.

India, as a country, is so heterogeneous in nature that it is difficult to identify common threads of Indian culture and core values (Pandey & Darji, 2011). There are many different sub-cultures that co-exist in Indian society with their own distinctive values, norms, beliefs, and behaviours and applying a cultural dimension model due to this heterogeneous nature of India is difficult. However, one of the most common threads of culture in India among all the subcultures is, it emphasizes the importance of interpersonal relationships. Indian culture encourages interpersonal connections, mutual compromise, and social interdependence as dominant values creating a collective identity among individuals (Tafarodi & Swann, 1996). In India, family plays

a vital role all along an individual's life and family is of dominant concern for most Indians and the role of patriarch is very crucial in Indian society (Mandelbaum, 1970). Research has shown that student's travel behaviour and preferences will be influenced not only by previous travel experience, but also by the experience of the family (Pearce, 2005). Therefore, in the travel motivation context, interpersonal relationships, parents' decisions, and family stature might influence the travel motivations of Indian international students. As per Hofstede's (2010) dimensions on individualism and collectivism cultural trait, and existing research on Indian society, India can be classified as a fundamentally collectivist society and research has also proved that collectivism prevails in eastern countries while individualism prevails western countries.

Pandey and Darji (2011) revealed that an average Indian, tends to be a "safe player" in terms of way of life. They do not like to take risks in various aspects of life, including investments, expenditure, advancement, job security, way of life etc. They do not tend to deviate from the "safe zone". This might have an influence on the travel behaviours and motivations of Indian international students. Due to this cultural norm, Indian students might be more interested in passive activities rather than adventurous or risk-taking activities as opposed to general student travel perceptions. This cultural aspect of India relates closely to the uncertainty avoidance dimension of Hofstede's (2010) work, where the culture has programmed its members to feel uncomfortable in unstructured situations.

One of the most important cultural aspect of the Indian society is spirituality. India is a deeply spiritually inclined country irrespective of social hierarchy, and people are usually spiritually conscious and more inclined towards religion (Peter, 2002). Annual pilgrimage tourism is extremely important in India and millions of people travel to visit their deities all

across the country, sometimes several times in a year (Hole et al., 2019). Hence, to visit a temple or a deity, or to simply attend a religious festival, could be an important reason to travel for an Indian international student in Canada.

### **Gaps in the Literature**

Though multiple studies have been done on international student travel motivations and behaviours, very little is known about travel motivations and behaviours of Indian international students. Researchers have looked at international student market as a homogeneous mix, but it is also necessary to understand the unique characteristics belonging to a specific culture. As Indian students are the fastest growing segment of international students in Canada, it is imperative that the Canadian tourism industry learn more about this unique group of quasi-domestic travellers to sustain growth in the domestic tourism market of Canada to profit from this niche market of quasi-domestic travellers.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODS**

This chapter presents the methods used in this exploratory study of the travel motivations and travel behaviours of Indian International students. Specifics about the sampling, data collection, ethical considerations, and researcher positionality are also presented.

### **Study Design**

This study used survey design to explore international Indian students' motivations and behaviours to travel in Canada. Surveying is a systematic way to collect data via distributing questionnaires to a sample or population (Fowler & Cosenza, 2009). According to Creswell (2014), as survey research can provide a quantitative reporting of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of the population, making this design well suited for this study. Survey design also suited this study as it allowed for the collection of responses from many Indian international students at VIU within a short period of time. Survey design was used in previous researches on travel motivations using the REP scales (Liu & Ryan, 2011; Stewart et. al, 1996; Walker et. al, 2001; Wang, 2009; Weighill, 2009); therefore, the ability to use existing and reliable scales made this design appropriate.

### **Population and Sampling**

The population for this study included all Indian students' study at Vancouver island University who had: (a) taken at least one leisure trip in Canada, and (b) spent a minimum of six months in Canada. All members of this population were invited to participate through a variety of recruitment tools.

As the study aimed at exploring the leisure motivations and behaviours of a range of people rather than being able to generalize to a wider population, it was appropriate to apply a non-probability sampling technique like convenience sampling to recruit the participants

(Altinay, Paraskevas, & Jang, 2016). Participants were recruited through posters, the VIU Students' Union (VIUSU) mobile app, and on social media platforms ( i.e. Facebook and Twitter).

Posters containing the link to the study were displayed in the cafeteria, the graduate study lounge for MBA students, the VIU Student's Union building, and in the common areas of the Faculty of Management (FOM) building inviting students to participate in the survey. A softcopy of the poster was posted on the VIUSU app about once a week during the data collection period for 2 months and on various social media platforms to invite potential participants for the study. Given the high percentage of international students in the FOM, the researcher also visited six classes in the FOM programs to recruit participants for the study.

### **Data Collection**

The approach used for data collection was an online survey on the Google Form platform. Initially the data collection tool was pilot tested by 3 Indian international students and minor editorial changes were made based on feedback. Data were collected between December 2019 and February 2020. The survey was completely anonymous and no personal identifiable information such as email address, student identification number or names were collected through this survey. This allowed the respondent to remain anonymous and answer the questionnaire at his/her convenience. In addition, the electronic nature of this survey allowed the information collected to be transferred automatically into a database, thus saving time, and avoiding errors in data entry.

## *Survey Design*

The questionnaire (Appendix A) consisted of four sections for participants: a) introduction and screening questions, b) questions regarding respondents' travel behaviour, c) questions regarding the motivation (REP scale), and d) respondents' demographic information. The first section contained two screening questions and also an explanation to the participants involving a clear and brief introduction to ensure respondents know the purpose of the study that will enable them to record their answers accurately. The second section included a few close ended multiple-choice questions on the participants' travel behaviours including, a) activities participated in, b) types of accommodation used, c) food and beverage outlet visited, and d) the main mode of transportation used.

The third section examined participants' motives for their last holiday using REP scale items developed by Driver (1983) and associates. Based upon the review of literature, the following REP scales were chosen for this study: (a) achievement/stimulation, (b) autonomy, (c) family togetherness, (d) similar people, (e) new people, (f) learning, g) escape personal-social pressure, (h) nature, (i) physical rest, (j) risk-taking, and (k) escape physical pressure. To measure these domains, participants were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with 25 item statements as they related to 'why' they took their last trip.

In addition to doing literature review to understand the appropriate motivational domains/items to use for the questionnaire, the researcher also sat down with a group of four Indian international students to discuss the same and understand the motivational domains they relate to. From a list of 15 domains shortlisted by the researcher based on literature review, a final list of 11 domains with 25 items were finalized for the questionnaire. After this step, the final list was sent to the thesis supervisors for their final approval and advice.

The fourth and final section of the questionnaire consisted of demographic questions on aspects such as gender, ethnicity, English language skills, and marital status. These questions were designed based upon previous studies of motivation and literature suggesting that factors such as marital status, gender, and ethnicity may influence both motivation and behaviour (Dann, 1977; Benckendorff, Murphy & Moscardo, 2007; Hsu & Sung, 1997; Weighill, 2009).

The demographic data collected on VIU trips was not included in the main analysis as VIU trips are essentially day trips, and this research was focussing on trips where the respondent had spent at least one night. Data were also collected on the state of residence of the respondent in India, but these data were not used in the final analysis. The reason behind this was the small sample size, which when distributed between 29 states and 7 union territories of India, yielded extremely small sample sizes, with some states having only one or two respondents making it difficult for further analysis.

### **Ethical Consideration**

The survey obtained information only from adult Indian international students and no personal identifying information was collected in the survey. As it was a web-based survey questionnaire, the participants remained completely anonymous, and no direct contact between the researcher and any participant was established. The anonymity of the survey kept the respondents from any possible harm as the answers were completely confidential. Also, due to the anonymous nature of data collection, the researcher did not know if her friends have or have not participated as this method was chosen to reduce any perception of undue influence.

The anonymous questionnaire used asked close ended questions; thus, there was no opportunity for incidental findings. As the primary focus of the study was travel motivations and

behaviours, the possibility of making the participants feel distressed while filling out the questionnaire was minimal.

Prior to participating in the survey, the participants were required to read over the consent form and provide consent by clicking a button. It was also made clear to the participant that consent was on going and they can choose to withdraw from the study or skips questions prior to submitting the questionnaire. The form included details about participation in the survey, confidentiality information; data storage and use of responses (see Appendix A). If the participant chose not to consent at the beginning of the questionnaire, he/she was taken to the end of the survey questionnaire and thanked for their time. However, due to the anonymous nature of the survey, withdrawing from the study after submitting the questionnaire was not possible and the participants were made aware of this.

### **Researcher Positionality**

I was born and brought up in one of the most densely populated metropolitan cities in India, Kolkata. Before moving to Canada, I lived my entire life in India in different cities. I am passionate about travelling and experiencing new cultures from a very young age. After I had moved to Canada with my spouse, we frequently took advantage of our free time to explore the country we have moved to.

Faced with the choice of topic for my master's thesis, naturally my inclination was to find out more about the travel motivations and behaviours of international Indian students in Canada. Also, while studying Sustainable Leisure Management at VIU, the lack of academic knowledge about travel behaviours and motivations about Indian students in existing research literature had me concerned and I wanted to contribute to the academic literature on Indian international students.

As an Indian student myself, I was aware that my own beliefs and values could impact my study and to minimize that I choose a frequently used quantitative tool to collect the data for my study. The most important factor that influenced my study was my own background as an Indian international student in Canada. It influenced my choices when I was selecting the REP leisure domains I wanted to work with while collecting data as I thought about which of these would be relatable to IIS from my own perspective and the demographics on which I wanted to collect data on for my study. The final list of REP domains was based on thorough literature review and multiple discussions, but my background had an initial influence on selecting particular REP Domains.

The other factors that shaped my personal values are, a) growing up in India in a populated metropolitan city, b) being part of a very close knit extended family, c) travelling with family frequently, d) very limited experiences in outdoors while growing up and e) growing up in a gender biased society. I do acknowledge the fact that other international students from India might have had completely different cultural experiences and personal values while growing up as India is a diverse multicultural country.

On the other hand, I feel that my background as an IIS has helped to comprehend the data in the data analysis process. It has helped me a gain a broader perspective about my own peers and contributed to my understanding of Indian international students.

## **Chapter 4: Data Analysis & Results**

This research explored the leisure travel motivations and behaviours of Indian International students studying in Canada on student visas. This chapter describes the steps that were taken to analyze data, followed with an overview of the socio-demographic profile of the sample. The next section speaks to the REP data for analysis including reliability analysis and aggregation of items into domains. This is followed by the results related to travel motivation based upon (a) gender, (b) relationship status, (c) employment status, and (d) age. Finally, the behavioral characteristics of the participants were explored in this chapter using descriptive statistics only as sample size did not allow for more detailed between group comparisons.

### **Data Analysis**

Responses (n=120) were imported into SPSS and screened for duplication, inconsistency, and missing data. This resulted in the removal of four cases in which more than 30% of the REP items were left blank. A final sample of 116 participants were analyzed.

After data were cleaned, the internal consistency of the REP motivational domains were investigated using Cronbach's alpha. Previous research using the REP scales indicate that the alpha score should be at minimum .60 (Manfredo et al.,1996; Gliem & Gliem, 2003; Weighill, 2009) and this standard was used in this research. After this was completed, REP item scores were aggregated to create a single score for each of the REP domains.

Independent samples T-tests were performed to identify significant differences in travel motivations based on gender, relationship status, employment status and age and a one-way ANOVA was performed on the data to test for differences in travel motivation based on educational level. For the travel behavioural section descriptive statistics was used to analyse the data to answer the research questions.

## Results

This section is organized into three primary sub-sections: a) sample description, b) travel motivations, and c) travel behaviours of participants. The sample description provides an overall summary description of the participants (n=116) while the subsections on travel motivations and travel behaviours are focused on addressing the research questions.

### *Demographic Profile of the Respondents*

Analysis revealed that the sample was evenly split between males (49.10%) and female (50.90%) and those 19-26 years old (50.90%) and 27-40 years old (49.10%). As seen in Table 1, participants were mostly in graduate school (48.70%), employed (77.20%), and single (77.40%). It is notable that 75% of the students in the sample were pursuing graduate or undergraduate studies in Canada which usually takes more than two academic years to complete. The demographic data is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**

### *Socio- Demographic Data of the Respondents*

<b>Sample Characteristic (n)</b>	<b>Participants %</b>
<b>Gender (n= 114)</b>	
Male	49.10
Female	50.90
<b>Age Category (n=114)</b>	
19-26 years old	50.90
27-40 years old	49.10
<b>Level of Study at VIU (n=115)</b>	
Diploma/Certificate	24.30
Bachelor's degree	27.00
Graduate Studies	48.70

**Employed with a part time job (n=114)**

Yes	77.20
No	22.80

**Relationship Status (n=115)**

Married	22.60
Single	77.40

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***REP Domains Reliability Analysis***

The REP scale items on the survey were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. To assess the reliability of the scale, Cronbach’s Alpha reliability test was conducted for each of the 11 REP domains. Based on previous studies (Manfredo et al., 1996; Gliem & Gliem, 2003; Weighill, 2009) a minimum alpha of .60 was used to check the reliability of each domain.

Analysis revealed that for two domains items needed to be dropped to achieve the alpha and one domain needed to be dropped from further analysis due to low reliability. Specifically, for the *family togetherness* domain (.54), the item of *spouse choice* was dropped, for the *achievement* domain (.53), the item of *experience adventure* was dropped, and the REP domain *take physical rest* domain (.38) was completely dropped. Table 2 includes the results of the reliability analysis, including the REP domains and associated scale items.

**Table 2***REP Scale Domains, Items, Cronbach's Alphas and Aggregate Means.*

REP Scale Items	<i>Alpha</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Achievement/Stimulation	.60	3.05	.92
Wanted to gain self confidence			
Wanted to develop my skills and abilities			
Autonomy/ Leadership	.66	2.82	1.07
To be on my own.			
Be free to make my own choices			
Family Togetherness	.60	2.72	1.16
To bring my family close to each other			
To please my parents			
Similar People	.60	3.60	1.01
Be with my friends			
Be with people with similar ideas			
New People	.66	3.20	1.04
To make new acquaintance			
To meet new people in the area travelled to			
Learning	.82	4.06	.95
Learn about various things			
See new and different things			
Learn more about the area travelled to			
Nature	.86	3.63	1.26
To view scenic beauty			
To be close to nature			
Escape Personal pressure	.79	3.82	1.01
To reduce or release built up tension			
To give my mind a rest			

Escape physical pressure	.91	3.91	1.07
To be alone			
To experience solitude			
Risk Taking	.61	2.88	1.11
To experience adventures			
To take risks while travelling			

REP Domains of *learning* ( $M= 4.06, SD = .95$ ), *escape physical pressure* ( $M=3.91, SD= 1.01$ ), *escape personal pressure* ( $M=3.82, SD= 1.01$ ), *nature* ( $M= 3.63, SD = 1.26$ ) and *similar people* ( $M= 3.6, SD= 1.01$ ) had the highest mean scores and were motivations for the survey respondents. The *new people* ( $M= 3.20, SD = 1.02$ ) and *achievement* domain had a mean score close to neutral. The rest of the domains had a score less than neutral and were not considered as a motivator by the respondents. Table 3 illustrates the REP Domains ordered by the highest means to lowest means.

**Table 3**

*REP Domain Means (ordered) –*

REP Scale Domains	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Learning	4.06	0.95
Escape Physical Pressure	3.91	1.07
Escape Personal Pressure	3.82	1.01
Nature	3.63	1.26
Similar People	3.60	1.01
New People	3.20	1.04
Achievement	3.05	0.92
Risk Taking	2.88	1.11
Autonomy	2.82	1.07
Family Togetherness	2.72	1.16

## Travel Motivation

This section is organized into subsections that showcase the results of the analysis of possible motivational differences between groups. Comparisons were conducted using independent samples t-tests and ANOVA using the following grouping variables: a) gender, b) relationship status, c) employment status, d) age group, and e) current level of education to answer the research questions.

### *Analysis of Travel Motivation by Gender*

Analysis revealed that there were no significant motivational differences ( $p > .05$ ) between the female and male groups. A similar pattern of the motivators was observed between the two groups. Results indicated that *learning* domain for both genders, females ( $M = 3.98$ ,  $SD = 1$ ) and males ( $M = 4.17$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ) was the strongest motivator to travel, followed by *escape physical pressure*, females ( $M = 3.86$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ) and males ( $M = 4.02$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ). Whereas the motivational domains *family togetherness*, *autonomy* and *risk taking* had scores below neutral, and were found to not be motivating for either groups (see Table 4).

**Table 4**

*Independent Samples t-Test on the REP Domains based on Gender*

Motivational Domain	Female		Male		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Achievement	3.05	0.97	3.03	0.88	0.10	110	.91
Autonomy	2.71	1.10	2.92	1.03	-1.03	110	.30
Family Togetherness	2.61	1.04	2.87	1.28	-1.17	110	.24
Similar People	3.68	1.06	3.52	0.91	0.82	109	.41
New People	3.26	1.20	3.17	0.87	0.47	109	.64
Learning	3.98	1.00	4.17	0.85	-1.09	110	.28
Nature	3.55	1.27	3.80	1.20	-1.08	112	.28
Escape Personal Pressure	3.79	1.00	3.91	0.97	-0.67	111	.50

Escape Physical Pressure	3.86	1.09	4.02	0.97	-.084	111	.40
Risk Taking	2.92	1.10	2.87	1.12	0.23	110	.82

*Note* – Motivation was measured using a five-point scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree, and 5 = Strongly Agree.

### ***Analysis of Travel Motivation by Relationship Status***

The respondents were grouped into two categories based on their relationship status, married or single. Analysis revealed that no significant motivational differences ( $p > .05$ ) were found between the groups. A similar pattern was observed between the two groups with the motivational domain of *learning* for married respondents ( $M = 3.83$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ) and for single respondents ( $M = 4.12$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ) as the strongest motivator followed by *escape physical pressure* for both the married respondents ( $M = 3.67$ ,  $SD = 1.34$ ) and the single respondents ( $M = 3.98$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ). It is worth mentioning here that even if the *new People* domain did not have significant motivational differences between the two groups, this domain was a comparatively stronger motivator for the married group ( $M = 3.50$ ,  $SD = 0.69$ ) than the single group ( $M = 3.14$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ ) as the  $p$  value was just below .05 ( $p = .06$ ). The associated Cohen's  $d$  value is .4 which indicates a small effect size. Future research could examine this to gain deeper understanding. *Autonomy* and *family togetherness* were found to be not motivating ( $M < 3.00$ ) for both the groups (see Table 5)

**Table 5***Independent Samples t-Test on REP Domains based on Relationship Status*

Motivational Domain	Married		Single		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Achievement	3.18	0.78	3.00	.95	.83	111	.40
Autonomy	2.74	1.03	2.83	1.09	-.40	110	.69
Family Togetherness	3.00	0.92	2.66	1.21	1.51	111	.14
Similar People	3.30	0.92	3.67	1.02	-1.63	110	.11
New People	3.50	0.69	3.14	1.12	-.94	110	.06
Learning	3.83	1.08	4.12	.91	-1.35	111	.18
Nature	3.67	1.11	3.65	1.29	0.06	113	.96
Escape Personal Pressure	3.61	1.25	3.89	.93	-1.22	112	.23
Escape Physical Pressure	3.67	1.34	3.98	.97	-1.12	112	.27
Risk Taking	3.11	0.91	2.83	1.15	1.14	111	.26

*Note* – Motivation was measured using a five-point scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree, and 5 = Strongly Agree.

### ***Analysis of Travel Motivation by Employment Status***

Independent Samples t-tests were conducted to examine whether the participants travel motivations differed significantly based on employment status of the participants. Analysis revealed a statistically significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) between those employed ( $n = 88$ ) versus those unemployed ( $n = 26$ ) on the motivational domain of *nature* [ $t(112) = -3.14, p = .002, d = .7$ ]. Specifically, those unemployed ( $M = 2.98, SD = 1.26$ ) indicated that they were neutral about this domain, whereas those employed group ( $M = 3.84, SD = 1.21$ ) were motivated by it. The associated Cohen's  $d$  (0.7) indicated a medium effect size (Palant, 2011), suggesting that the difference between these groups was not due to chance and should be considered in decision making.

A statistically significant difference was found also between the two groups on the motivational domain of *New people* [ $t(108) = 2.90, p = .004, d = .7$ ], with those unemployed ( $M$

= 3.74,  $SD = .94$ ) being motivated by it and those employed being neutral ( $M = 3.06$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ). The associated Cohen's  $d$  (0.7) indicated a medium effect size. This might be due to the reason that the need for meeting new people was already satisfied through work for the employed respondents, but the unemployed respondents did not have this opportunity.

Examination of the *achievement* domain revealed that a statistical difference between the two groups existed [ $t(110) = -1.99$ ,  $p = .05$ ,  $d = .4$ ]; however, a closer look at the results illustrates that it was not a strong motivating factor for either group. Those unemployed were slightly below the neutral midpoint of 3 ( $M = 2.73$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ) and those employed ( $M = 3.13$ ,  $SD = .87$ ) were slightly above. The associated Cohen's  $d$  value is 0.4 which is a small effect size, suggesting that future research should explore how achievement correlates with employment.

Further examination of the mean scores also reveal contrasting patterns between the two groups (Table 6). While *escape physical pressure* ( $M = 4.23$ ,  $SD = .84$ ) was the most important motivator for the unemployed respondents to go on a holiday while the *learning* domain ( $M = 4.14$ ,  $SD = .96$ ) was the most important motivator for the employed respondents. *Autonomy* and *family togetherness* domains were found to be not motivating for either group.

**Table 6**

*Independent Sample T test based on employment status*

Motivational Domain	Unemployed		Employed		$t$	$df$	$p$
	$M$	$SD$	$M$	$SD$			
Achievement	2.73	1.07	3.13	.87	-1.99	110	.05*
Autonomy	2.58	1.29	2.88	1.00	-1.24	109	.22
Family Togetherness	2.94	1.35	2.65	1.11	1.08	112	.28
Similar People	3.92	1.02	3.94	.99	1.86	109	.07
New People	3.74	.94	3.06	1.04	2.90	108	.004*
Learning	3.79	.93	4.14	.96	-1.62	110	.11

Nature	2.98	1.26	3.84	1.21	-3.14	112	.002*
Escape Personal Pressure	4.11	.75	3.73	1.08	1.67	111	.09
Escape Physical Pressure	4.23	.84	3.83	1.02	1.92	110	.06
Risk Taking	3.15	1.02	2.81	1.13	1.36	110	.18

Note – Motivation was measured using a five-point scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. \* denotes a significant alpha.

### ***Analysis of Travel Motivation by Age***

Independent Samples t-tests were conducted to examine whether the participants' travel motivations differed based on age of the participants. The results revealed statistically significant differences [  $t(110) = -2.09, p = .04, d = .4$ ] were found between the groups on the motivational domain of *family togetherness*; with those 19-26 years old ( $M = 2.51, SD = 1.15$ ) disagreeing with the statement and those 27-40 years old feeling more neutral ( $M = 2.97, SD = 1.14$ ). The associated Cohen's  $d$  (0.4) indicates a medium effect size suggesting that there is really a difference between these groups and should be considered while making decisions.

A significant difference was found between the groups on the motivational domain of *similar people*. Those between 19-26 years of age ( $M = 3.79, SD = .93$ ) more strongly agreed with the importance of similar people than did those between 27- 40 years of age [ $M = 3.40, SD = 1.02; t(109) = 2.07, p = .04, d = .4$ ]. The Cohen's  $d$  (0.4) associated with this indicates a small effect size, meaning that while a difference exists managerial decisions should not be based upon it.

Further examination of the mean scores reveal that while *learning* ( $M= 4.16, SD = .77$ ) was a motivator for the younger age group while the *escape physical pressure* domain ( $M = 4, SD = 1.17$ ) was a stronger motivator for the older age grouped respondents (Table 7). The results are presented below in Table 7.

**Table 7***Independent Sample T test of REP Domains by Age Range*

Motivational Domain	19-26 years		27-40 years		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Achievement	3.14	0.98	2.94	0.85	1.11	110	.27
Autonomy	2.69	1.01	2.94	1.12	-1.215	110	.28
Family Togetherness	2.51	1.15	2.97	1.14	-2.09	110	.04*
Similar People	3.79	0.93	3.40	1.02	2.07	109	.04*
New People	3.20	1.10	3.24	1.00	-0.19	109	.85
Learning	4.16	0.77	3.98	1.07	0.99	110	.33
Nature	3.67	1.15	3.68	1.35	-0.03	112	.98
Escape Personal Pressure	3.72	0.78	3.98	1.15	-1.38	111	.17
Escape Physical Pressure	3.89	0.89	4.00	1.17	-0.57	111	.57
Risk Taking	2.80	0.97	3.00	1.24	-0.95	110	.35

*Note* – Motivation was measured using a five-point scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. \* denotes a significant alpha.

### ***Analysis of Travel Motivation by Current Level of Education***

One-way ANOVA was performed to analyse significant differences between the participants based on their current level of education and participants were divided into three groups according to their current educational level. As can be seen in table 8, the participants pursuing diploma/certificate and undergraduate studies had almost a similar pattern in terms of the motivational domains. Both of these groups indicated that *escape physical pressure*, *learning*, *escape personal pressure*, and *similar people* as the most important motivation for travelling. In contrast, the participants pursuing graduate programs chose *learning* as the most important motivator for travel, followed by *nature*, *escape physical and personal pressure*.

While statistically significant differences were found between the groups on the motivational domain of *autonomy*, [ $F(2,110)= 5.18, p= .007$ ] and *escape physical pressure*,

[ $F(2,110) = 3.23, p = .043$ ], examination of the mean scores reveal that *autonomy* was not an important motivation for any of the groups.

For the *escape physical pressure* motivational domain, despite reaching statistical significance between the groups, the effect size, calculated using an eta-squared, was a very small effect (0.05). Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the graduate programs group ( $M = 3.67, SD = 1.27$ ) was significantly lower than the undergraduate ( $M = 4.12, SD = 0.75$ ) and diploma/certificate groups ( $M = 4.21, SD = 0.75$ ). This indicated that graduate students indicated a lower level of agreement with escaping physical pressure as a reason for their travel (see Table 8).

**Table 8***ANOVA based on educational level*

Motivational Domain	Diploma/ Certificate		Undergraduate		Graduate		F	Sig.
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Escape Physical Pressure	4.21	0.75	4.12	0.75	3.67	1.27	3.23	0.04*
Learning	4.10	0.63	4.22	0.83	4.00	1.10	0.55	0.57
Escape Personal Pressure	3.96	0.71	4.01	0.74	3.67	1.21	1.40	0.24
Similar people	3.87	0.75	3.74	1.08	3.37	1.03	2.74	0.06
Nature	3.83	1.08	3.46	1.34	3.67	1.27	0.65	0.52
New People	3.19	0.97	3.43	1.15	3.15	1.01	0.73	0.48
Achievement	3.01	0.78	3.20	1.03	3.00	0.94	0.44	0.64
Autonomy	3.00	0.89	3.23	0.86	2.50	1.18	5.18	0.007*
Risk Taking	2.96	1.03	3.11	1.20	2.72	1.09	1.26	0.28
Family Togetherness	2.74	1.10	2.70	1.25	2.73	1.18	0.00	0.99

*Note-* Motivation was measured using a five-point scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree. \* indicates a significant *p* value.

## Travel Behaviour

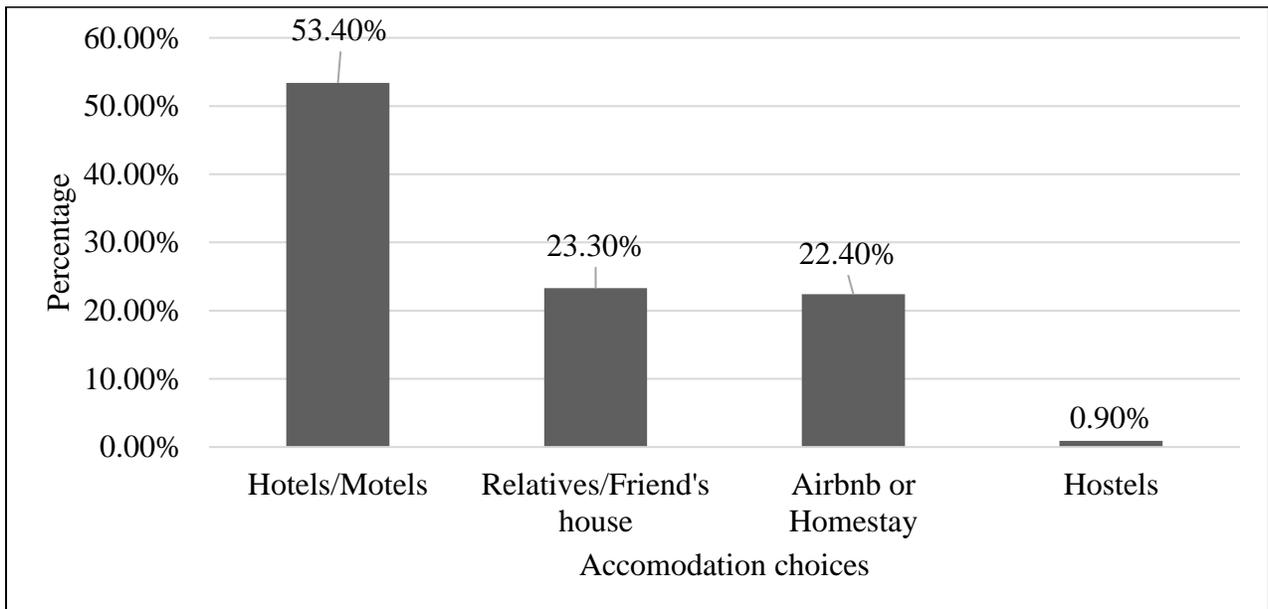
In this section results from the behavioural analysis have been categorized in to: a) accommodation choices, b) mode of transportation choices, c) food and beverage choices, d) nights spent at a destination, e) timing of travel, f) destination choices, and g) activities participated in while travelling.

### *Analysis of Accommodation Choices*

The results showed that 76.70% of respondents paid for their accommodations with 75.80% of the respondents staying in hotels/motels or an Airbnb/homestay. About one fourth (23.30%) of the respondents stayed with friends and family. A small percentage (0.09%) of the respondents indicated that they have used hostels and none of the respondents indicated that they had chosen camping as their main form of accommodation.

### Figure 3

*Accommodation choices by the Respondents (n=116)*



Further analysis revealed that 36% of the females stayed at a relative's/friends house compared to only 10% of the male respondents, while 43% of the female respondents and 62% of the male respondents stayed at hotels. Depending on age of the respondents, hotels were the most popular choice by both age group, while the older age group preferring Airbnb/homestay (25%) slightly more than the younger age group (18%). Chi square test (Table 9) revealed that only relative's/friend's house as a dependent variable revealed significant differences between the gender groups ( $\chi^2 (1) = 6.11, p < .01$ ) with medium effect size of .31 and indicated that females were more likely to stay at a relative's/friend's house than the male respondents.

**Table 9**

*Chi square test based Gender on Accommodation Choices*

Accommodation Choices	Male (%) (n=56)	Female (%) (n=58)	$\chi^2$	df	p	V
Hotels	64.29	43.10	.81	1	.32	-
Hostels	0.01	0	.00	1	1.00	-
Airbnb/homestay	23.21	20.69	.00	1	1.00	-
Relative's/Friend's house	10.71	36.20	6.11	1	.01*	.31

\* indicates a significant p value

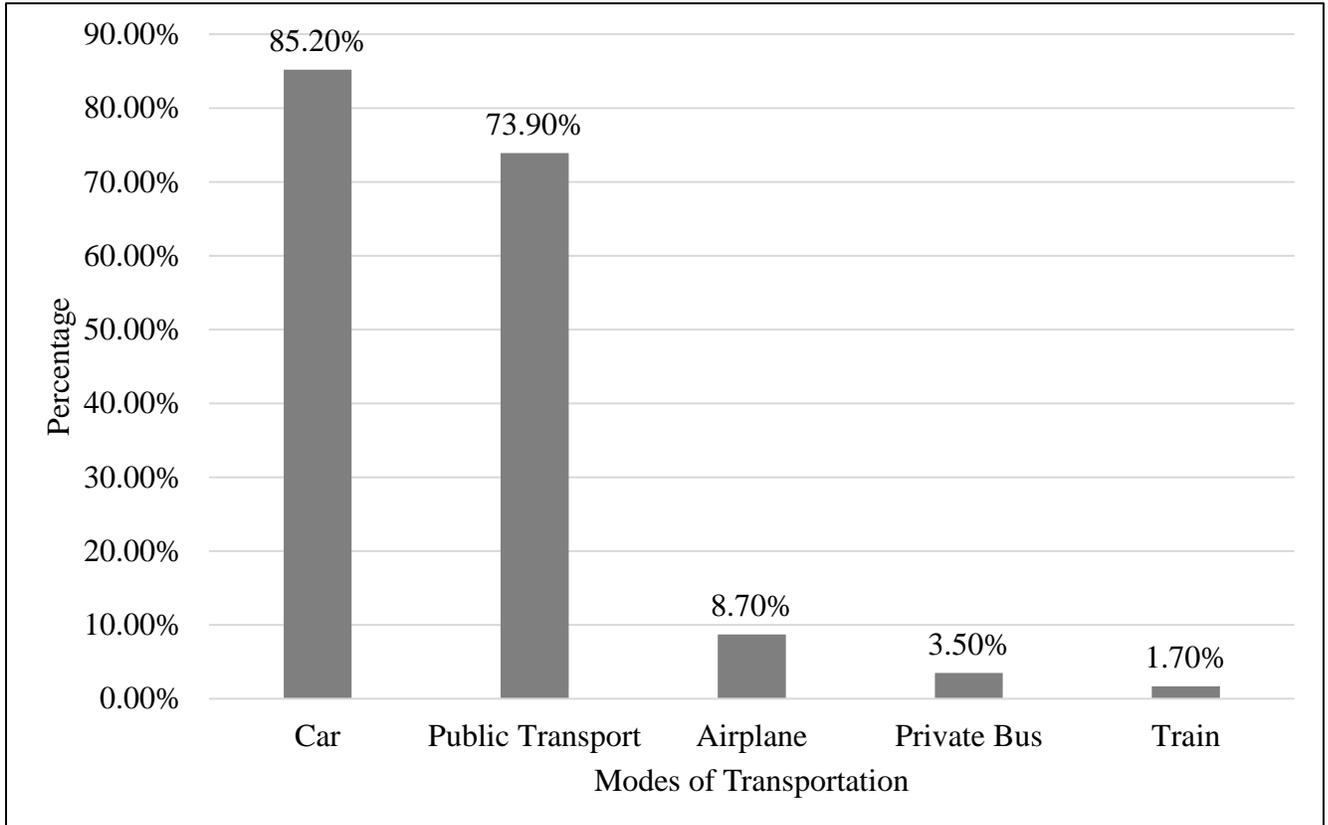
***Analysis of Mode of Transportation Choices***

Analysis revealed that majority of the participants (85.20%) used cars as their main mode of transportation. This choice is followed closely by public transportation (Ferry/ Public Transit bus / Skytrain); however, this might be due to the fact that VIU is located on an island and those visiting mainland BC or beyond my have taken the ferry. Data revealed that 74.5% of the car users had indicated that they have in fact used public transportation as well. Very few respondents had used private buses and trains to travel. This explanation might be partly due to

the fact that Vancouver Island does not have a passenger railway system. The totals in Figure 4 illustrate all forms of transportation used while travelling; therefore, totals do not add to 100%.

**Figure 4**

*Mode of Transportation Used by the Respondents (n = 116)*



Further analysis also revealed that cars were the most popular choice among both genders, while public transport was a slightly more preferred choice of transportation for females (77%) than males (67%). Cars were also the most used transportation choice for both the age groups but were preferred more by the younger age group (91%) than the older age group (76%). Chi square test revealed that only airplane as a mode of transportation revealed significant differences between the gender groups ( $\chi^2 (1) = 5.11, p < .02$ ) with small effect size of .01 and females were more likely to travel by airplane than their male counterparts. Table 10 illustrates the chi square test results based on gender as independent variables.

**Table 10***Chi square test based on Gender on Transportation Choices*

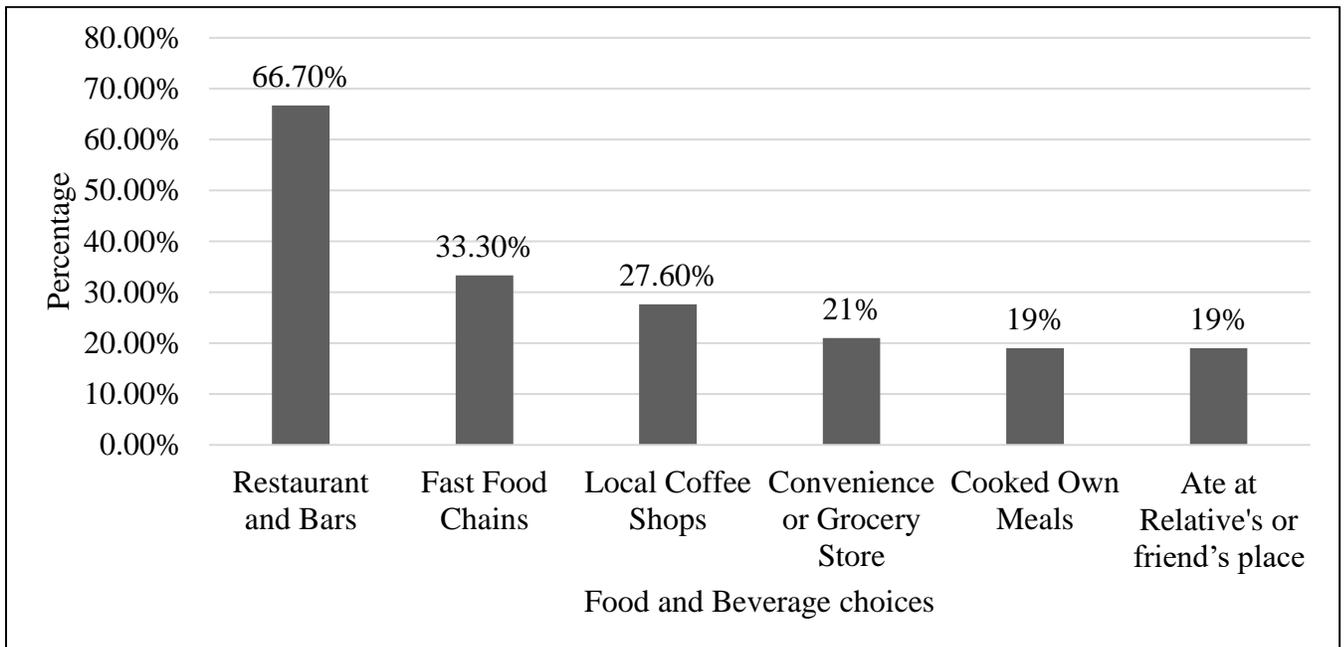
Transportation Choices	Male (%) (n=56)	Female (%) (n=58)	$\chi^2$	df	<i>p</i>	<i>V</i>
Car	87.50	81.03	.00	1	1.00	-
Train	1	1	.00	1	1.00	-
Private Bus	3.60	3.44	.00	1	1.00	-
Airplane	1	15.52	5.11	1	.02*	.01
Public Transport	67.85	77.59	.92	1	.34	-

\* indicates a significant *p* value***Analysis of Food & Beverage Choices***

From a list of multiple-choice options, the participants were asked to select three food and beverage options that they visited during their leisure trips. Analysis revealed that majority of the participants (66.70%) ate at restaurants and bars. The options of dining at a friend's or relatives house (19%) or making one's own meal were chosen by the least number of participants (19%). The totals in Figure 5 illustrate all forms of food and beverage choices by the respondents; therefore, totals do not add to 100%.

**Figure 5**

*Food and Beverage Choices by Participants (n=116)*



Further analysis reveals that while there was not much difference based on gender on food and beverage choices, male respondents (23%) tended to cook their own meals more than their female counterparts (10%) while travelling. This was an unexpected result based on gender roles. The older age group preferred to eat at fast food chains (39%) more than their younger counterparts (20%); however, they were also more likely to cook their own meals (22%) than their younger counterparts (10%) while travelling. Chi square test revealed that only local coffee shops as the dependent variable revealed significant differences between the gender groups ( $\chi^2(1) = 6.11, p < .01$ ) with small effect size of .24 indicating females are more likely to dine at local coffee shops than their male counterparts. Table 11 illustrates the chi square test results based on gender as independent variables.

**Table 11***Chi square test based on gender on Food and Beverage Choices*

Food and Beverage Choices	Male (%) (n=56)	Female (%) (n=58)	$\chi^2$	df	p	V
Fast Food Chains	33.92	25.86	.542	1	.46	-
Local Coffee Shops	14.29	37.50	6.11	1	.01*	.24
Cooked Own meals	23.21	10.34	2.53	1	.11	-
Convenience or grocery stores	17.86	18.96	.000	1	1.00	-
Friends'/Relative's place	17.86	17.24	.000	1	1.00	-
Restaurants and Bars	58.93	62.17	.023	1	.88	-

\*indicates a significant p value

***Number of Nights spent at a Destination***

Analysis revealed that the duration of participants' trips ranged from 1-10 nights; however, on average they spent approximately 3 nights away ( $M = 2.97$ ,  $SD = 2.45$ ). Further analysis revealed that 81.00% of the respondents spent between one and three nights away (Table 12).

**Table 12***Number of Nights Spent at a Destination by Participants*

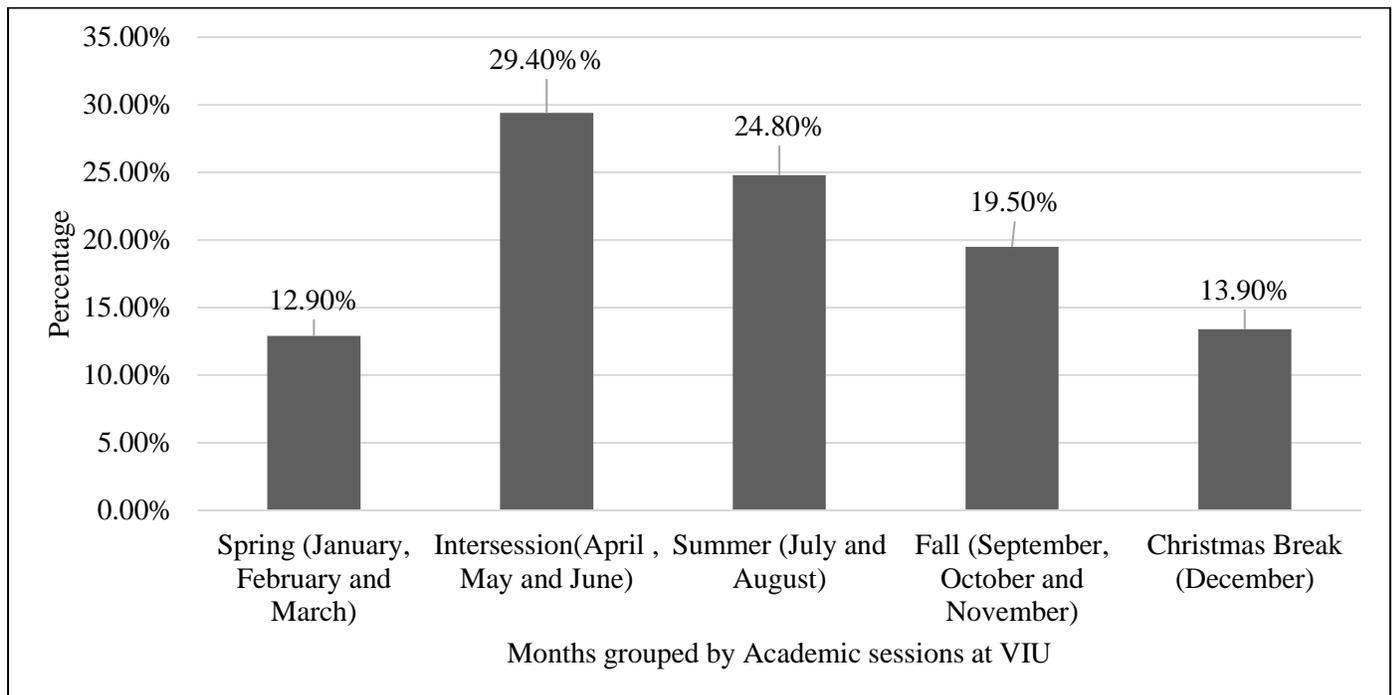
Duration (nights)	Percent (%)
1	20.70
2	42.20
3	18.10
4	3.40
5	4.30
6	1.70
7	0.90

### *Analysis of time of travel*

The respondents were asked to indicate when (months) they travelled. The monthly data was grouped in accordance to the school sessions and semester breaks at VIU as previous research has shown that school vacations and extended holidays provided college students with the time to travel (Mattila et al., 2001). Analysis revealed that majority of the participants travelled the most during the intersession (May-June), summer (July-August), and Christmas break (December). While some MBA students attend during summer months, the majority of travel took place between April and August (54.20%) which coincides with the spring and summer breaks. This travel pattern also matches with the domestic travel patterns of Canadians (Destination BC, 2019) which are influenced by public school breaks and better weather across the country. The totals in Figure 6 illustrate all the times the respondents have travelled; therefore, totals do not add to 100%.

**Figure 6**

### *Analysis of time of travel*



### *Analysis of Destination Choice*

Participants were asked to identify up to three destinations they visited on their last three leisure trips. The participants were instructed to only include the names of the destinations where they had spent at least one night, and the destination is at a distance of at least 40 kilometers from their current residence. Day trip destinations where the student surveyed had not spent one night were not to be included.

The results revealed that Vancouver (62.90%) was the most visited destination, which may be partially explained by Vancouver being a major commercial and cultural hub in British Columbia, as well being home to the third largest South Asian population in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2016). Besides the shopping malls and tourist attractions, Vancouver also has a number of shops specializing in South Asian groceries and temples that might attract the respondents to visit.

More than 75% of the participants indicated that they had travelled on Vancouver Island for leisure. Nanaimo's location and the ease of travelling on Vancouver Island may have contributed to such a large number of participants to travel for leisure. However, the relative cost of leaving the Vancouver Island, and the time needed to do so, may also play encourage participants to stay on the Island. Moreover, Vancouver Island is a popular tourist destination with lots of beaches, parks, wildlife sanctuaries, historical sites, and museums which provide a lot of opportunities to explore. One-third of the participants revealed that they had travelled outside British Columbia (see Table 13) for leisure purposes. The destination visited by maximum participants outside British Columbia was Toronto, Ontario.

**Table 13***Destinations Visited by the Participants (n=116)*

Destination	Percent (%)
Vancouver	62.90
Victoria	32.80
Tofino	27.60
Rest of Vancouver Island	15.50
Rest of British Columbia	9.50
Toronto	9.50
Rest of Canada	29.40

*Analysis of Activity Participation during a Leisure Trip*

Respondents were asked to indicate (yes/no) in a list of activities they had participated in while travelling. Analysis revealed that visiting parks (58.80%) was the most common activity. This might also be due to the fact that British Columbia has numerous parks and protected areas, and the cost associated with visiting them is relatively low compared to doing other activities. Other nature-based activities were also quite popular among the respondents with wildlife watching (28.90%), participating in outdoor activities (18.40%), and visiting a zoo/aquarium (15.80%) being the most common nature-based activities after visiting parks.

The participants also indicated a keen interest in learning about the local history by visiting local museums (26.30%) and historic sites (25.40%). While religion is one of the most important cultural aspect of India, only 11.40% of the participants had travelled to attend religious festivals or to visit a temple. It is to be noted here that almost all the temples in Vancouver are dedicated to people of Sikh or Punjabi sect/faith of Hinduism (Nayar, 2004; O'Connell, 2000), and are dedicated to the religious practices of people from Northern part of

India, while the respondent sample had 54.50% of respondents from other parts of India as well. This finding also coincides with a very important cultural aspect of India which is pilgrimage (Kodikal, 2005 ; Peter, 2002). The data obtained through Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation under the Indian government (MOSPI, 2017) has indicated that Indians travel domestically due to pilgrimage four times than any other purpose. While it has not been addressed in this study in a detailed manner, further research could look into this aspect of the Indian international students.

It is evident from the results that the passive activities were preferred by the participants over adventurous activities. Though visiting a park was a favoured activity, going hiking or camping were not very popular among the participants. Shopping, visiting a bar/nightclub, and visiting friends and family were much more favoured activities by the participants.

Learning about the local culture through visiting museums (26.30%) and historic sights (25.40%) were highly also favoured activities among the participants. It can be noted here that even if 6% of respondents indicated that they had gone camping, none of them chose campsites as their accommodation option. This might be due to the fact that the respondents were asked to choose the main type of accommodation they used in their leisure trips, and though they indicated they went camping, campsites might not be their main form of accommodation for the whole trip. The findings are illustrated below in Table 14.

**Table 14***Activity Participation by the Respondents (n= 114)*

Activity	Percent (%)
Visit a Park/National Park	58.80
Visit a shopping mall	53.50
Visit friends/family	36.00
Go wildlife watching	28.90
Visit a museum	26.30
Visit a historic site	25.40
Visit a bar/nightclub	21.90
Participate outdoor activities	18.40
Visit a zoo/aquarium	15.80
Visit a temple	14.90
Attend a religious festival	11.40
Visit a casino	8.80
Visit an art gallery	8.80
Participate in a sporting activity	8.80
Visit a theme/amusement park	7.00
Go camping	6.10
Go hiking	3.50

**Conclusion**

Analysis revealed that the most important travel motivators for the respondents were learning, escaping physical and mental pressure, and being close to nature. This matched well with results related to activity participation as activities such as visiting parks, museums, and cultural sites were found to be popular. It was found that Indian international students at VIU were most likely to travel in the coastal region of BC, stay away for 2-3 nights, and to utilize a

personal vehicle. The next chapter will discuss the findings in detail and compare it to existing literature.

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION**

This chapter expands on the results of the research as they related to the study's research questions. Situating the results in existing literature helps to highlight the similarities and differences found as they relate to other Asian student travellers as well as domestic travellers. Furthermore, the chapter reflects on the limitations of this research and provides suggestions for future research.

The purpose of this study was to explore the travel behaviours and motivations of Indian students as quasi-domestic travelers in Canada. The study employed the Driver (1983) and associates' REP scales and was successful in identifying which domains Indian students felt were influencing their choice to travel. The literature review (Chapter 3) indicated a number of travel behaviours to be explored and the results were presented on the basis of: a) accommodation choices, b) mode of transport, c) food and beverage choices, d) destination choice, e) trip duration, and f) activity participation. In this chapter, these results will be discussed in relation to previous research.

### **Travel Motivations of Indian International Students**

The results of this study indicated that the Indian international students, in terms of travel motivation, were more similar to their Asian counterparts than their Western counterparts while having a few of their own defining characteristics. The respondents indicated that learning was a strong motivation which corresponds with previous findings that Asian international students frequently travel in the country where they are pursuing their academic careers in order to learn various aspects of the country (Kim, 2007; Payne, 2009). Previous research has also shown that in general Asians possess higher learning motivation than their western counterparts (Dweck,

1999; Tweed & Lehman, 2002) because learning is of utmost importance within their cultures (Kwok & Lytton, 1996; Stevenson & Stigler, 1992).

Other significant travel motivations for the respondents included escaping personal and physical pressures of daily life, being close to nature, and being with friends while traveling. These results also closely align with studies on international Chinese students who indicated that to relax mentally and physically, to travel with existing friends, to be close to nature and discover new places were the most significant travel motivators (Liu & Ryan, 2011; Yan & Zhang, 2007).

The findings were also congruent with previous research findings for Asian students. When compared to their western counterparts, the IIS indicated that *risk taking*, and *achievement* were not high priority travel motivations for them unlike western students or youth travelers (Kadir & Faruk, 2016). Rather, the findings aligned with previous findings about Asian international students that have almost always illustrated the fact that Asian students were never motivated by adventurous activities, unlike their western counterparts (Hsu & Sung, 1997; Park et al., 2015; Xu et. Al, 2009). This characteristic is also culturally congruent with the findings of Pandey and Darji (2011) which revealed that according to the general culture, an average Indian, tends to be a “safe player” in terms of way of life and risk-taking is never a priority and aligns up with Hofstede’s (2010) uncertainty avoidance dimension of his cultural theory.

Unexpectedly, family togetherness was not considered as an important travel motivation by the participants. Family plays a vital role all along an individual’s life and family is of dominant concern for most Indians (Mandelbaum, 1970) and thus it was expected that it would also be a strong motivation for travel. This discrepancy may be explained by a possible lack of family already living in British Columbia as only 20% of the respondents confirmed that they

have family in Canada; therefore, further study that also addresses whether the students have relatives living in Canada should be done.

Despite the gendered nature of daily life in India (World Economic Forum, 2018) this study revealed that male and female participants did not differ significantly in their motivations to travel. In India, women are considered integral part of the household where domestic chores are their primary responsibility and almost all decisions in the household are taken by the patriarchy (Pandey & Darji, 2011). An Indian woman is rarely even allowed to travel by herself unless accompanied by a male member of the same family and travelling even for pilgrimage purposes comes with strict rules (Singh, 2004). Therefore, this finding was interesting given the gender gap in Indian culture, as some studies have found significant differences on travel motivations based on gender from other cultures (Andreu et al., 2005; Baloglu, 1997). Certainly, this area still needs future empirical investigation as to if it effects and how does it affect travel motivations of an individual from India after immigrating to a different country for educational purposes as this was not examined in the current project. However, some differences were found in travel behavioural aspect between the two genders and that will be further discussed in the travel behaviour section.

When compared to the international travellers from India, the respondents had different travel motivations. While relaxation (mental rest and physical rest) was the top motivator for the Indian international travellers (Destination Canada, 2018), the respondents in this study indicated that learning and nature are the principal motivators for travelling. In contrast, the study actually had similar findings in regard to travel motivators with the domestic Canadian travellers to British Columbia where they indicated that nature (Ministry of heritage, sport, tourism and

culture industries, 2008) was an important trip motivator and these travellers valued cultural learning opportunities as well.

### **Travel Behaviours of Indian International Students**

The participants of this study generally took short trips, ranging from one to three nights. This affirms the findings of past researchers (Glover, 2011; Weaver, 2004) who have described international students as short break travelers. More than 50% of the respondents preferred the summer months of May to August to travel for leisure. This might be due to the fact that the weather is conducive for travelling and additionally, schools are also off session during summer. This finding is supported by previous literature on international students' preferred travel times (Hsu & Sung, 1997; Kim & Jogaratnam, 2003; Mattila et al., 2001). The findings also align with Destination BC (2018) data for the Canadian domestic travellers, where figures have indicated that Canadian domestic travellers spend on an average of 3 nights at a destination and 69% of the travellers made their trips during summer.

A majority of the participants chose serviced accommodation options (hotels and motels) as their preferred place to stay over booking an Airbnb, using a homestay, or staying with a relative/friend. The relatively economical option of staying in a hostel while travelling was chosen by only one participant in the study while none of the participants used a revealed to have stayed in a campsite as their main accommodation. This finding were similar to the researches about international Asian students where studies have found that Asian students preferred expensive forms of accommodation , i.e., hotels and motels rather than staying stay in hostels or campsites ( Field, 1999; Hsu & Sung, 1997; Shanka, Taylor, & Ali-Knight, 2001; Weaver, 2004). This finding also aligns with Destination BC (2019) data which indicated that 57% of the domestic Canadian travellers travelling within BC stayed at hotels/motels while travelling. In

terms of transportation choice, the findings also align up with domestic travel data of Canadians in British Columbia where 80% of the travellers used a car/truck to travel, making it their first choice for transportation (Destination BC, 2019). While we observe that similarities between domestic travellers and international Indian students, it is to be noted that just like India, Canada is also a diverse multicultural country where immigrants from all over the world has made Canada their home which might explain the similarities in travel behaviour.

While comparing the genders on travel behaviour aspect, some significant differences were noticed. It was noticed that the female IIS were more likely to stay at a friend's/relative's house than their male counterparts, tended to travel more by airplanes and were also more likely to eat at a local coffee shop. The behavioural difference based on accommodation choices reflects on the Indian culture where females displayed the risk avoidance cultural dimension by choosing to stay at a relatively safe and known place. This behaviour aligns with Hofstede's (2010) risk avoidance dimension from his cultural dimensions.

Nature based activities like visiting a national park, visiting an aquarium or a zoo and wildlife watching was the most favoured activities among the respondents. Most of the respondents come from densely populated and highly congested cities in India and the novelty of being in an open green natural space might attract them to visit these parks frequently. Shopping was another activity which was highly favoured among the participants. These findings aligned with previous studies which concluded that passive and economical activities like visiting a park or shopping was highly favoured among international students from Asia (Field, 1999; Hsu & Sung, 1997; Kim & Jogaratnam, 2003; Richards & Wilson, 2004).

While compared to Indian international travellers, the study had both similar and contradictory findings. Similar to the respondents, the Indian international travellers preferred

the summer months of May to June to travel to Canada, preferred to stay in hotels and listed visiting natural attractions, important historical cities, viewing wildlife as the most important trip activities (Destination Canada, 2018). Nevertheless, compared to the international students, the international visitors were mostly long haul travellers with an average trip length of 37 days and 72% travellers used flights to travel within their destinations in Canada (Destination Canada, 2018).

Therefore, it can be observed that even if there are a few similarities between the Indian international travellers and the IIS, there are actually more similarities among the domestic Canadian travellers and the IIS in this study. The international Indian students is an unique group in itself which borrows characteristics from both international Indian travellers and Canadian domestic travellers, is mostly similar in travel motivations and behaviours compared to Asian international students and also has its own unique characteristics.

### **Destination Choice**

Vancouver was the most preferred destination choice by the respondents followed by Victoria and Tofino. This might be due to the fact that Vancouver has the third largest south Asian population in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2017) and is a major multicultural centre in Canada. Also travelling to Vancouver is relatively easy and economical as it is only a ferry ride away from Nanaimo. The city of Vancouver is also home to large and diversified shopping centers, many of which has dedicated South Asian grocery stores which might attract the respondents to visit.

Seventy-five percent of the respondents confirmed that they had travelled within Vancouver Island for holiday. This data aligns again with Vancouver Island tourism statistics

where it was found that 85% of Vancouver Island local residents travel within the island for holiday purposes (Tourism Vancouver Island, 2017).

### **Limitations of this Study**

Limitations of this research revolved primarily around the geographical location and small sample size. Though the results of this study successfully answered the research questions, it is vital to acknowledge these limitations to effectively understand the results of the study.

Data collection was only limited to Vancouver Island University in Nanaimo. This led to a small sample size which did not allow for further in-depth data analysis, including dividing the sample into additional subgroups for comparison. This could be addressed in future research by expanding the data collection to include other universities and obtain a larger sample size. While these results were useful for this particular research project, it is again difficult to generalize the findings to the wider community of international Indian students in Canada.

A major limitation of the study was availability of very limited resources which the researcher could refer to for past researches done on international Indian students travel motivations and behaviours. Though the researcher could find very limited number of studies which had researched Indian international student's travel motivations in comparison with other international students, not a single research was available which was completely dedicated to Indian international students' travel motivations or behaviour. Hence, the researcher had to skim through literature for Chinese international students to derive further understanding and references about Asian international students travel behaviours and motivations though there are large cultural differences between the two groups. Also, this was an exploratory study and used established methods to conduct the research.

## **Practical Implications and Future Research**

The results in this study shed light on the travel behaviours and motivations of Indian International students in British Columbia, Canada. This study discovered that In addition to escaping physical pressure and mental pressure through leisure travel, Indian students also highlighted the need for being close to nature while travelling. This study concluded that there were more similarities in travel behaviour and motivation between the IIS and domestic Canadian travellers than with the Indian international travellers. Thus, this niche market should be considered as a quasi domestic market. Also, this study has contributed the term quasi domestic to tourism research.

In terms of practical contribution, results obtained highlighted the need to develop new tourism products or packages with emphasis given to cultural education benefits, natural surroundings, and relaxation benefits specifically for the IIS. The results also indicate that tourism industry in Canada will benefit from viewing the international students as a collection of subgroups of different nationalities, rather than a homogeneous category. Specifically, the data collected on VIU trips program show that only 17% of the Indian international students actually took part in the program. So, the results obtained in this study could be used to specifically design a few trips with Indian international students in mind so that their participation increases.

Also, it is important for the regional/provincial travel Destination Management Organizations to understand this niche group of market and package the already available product to cater to the needs of IIS. As it has been seen in this study that the IIS gives most importance learning and nature while travelling, tourism business managers can advertise their products to satisfy these needs and attract more IIS travellers.

Family is very important in Indian cultural context, but the research found out that being with family or travelling with family was not considered a motivator for IIS. Future research should also seek to understand if the travel motivations vary when an IIS travels with family.

As this study was only done at one university in Canada, future research should focus on involving more than one university in Canada. Travel opinions might differ depending on the location of the university and therefore researchers might have substantially different results. This knowledge would enable planners to address the various segments of IIS for the travel market as research has shown that identification of international students' preferences can aid managers in the design and positioning of tourism destinations through objective and subjective means (Chacko, 1997; Field, 1999). As travel motivations and behaviours of IIS in Canada is a new research area, this study laid down the foundation for future investigations on Indian international students. Also, as India is a multicultural country, an in depth study should also be done to see if there are any differences between travel motivations and behaviours among Indian international students from different regions in India.

This study would be incomplete without addressing the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which has impacted the tourism industry severely. Although, this study was mostly before the pandemic, it is relevant to the current situation. There are lots of international students who opted not to go back to their home countries or did not have the chance to move back before international borders and airports were shut down to curb the spread of the virus. Canada has also issued a statement welcoming international students who had their visas' approved prior to 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Given the lack of international visitors, international students in Canada are an increasingly important tourism market.

With the removal of public health restrictions, domestic tourism is regaining momentum and reviving the tourism industry. This group of quasi domestic travellers, consisting of the international students, can be part of the solution for recovering local tourism business. As per the latest figures (CBIE, 2019), BC has 1.5 million international students and while many of them might not have the financial means to travel for leisure right now, they may in the near future. Hence, it is important to continue to study and understand this market.

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# Appendix A: Online Questionnaire

1/28/2020

Travel Motivations and Behaviours of Indian International students

## Travel Motivations and Behaviours of Indian International students

Hello. I am a Masters' student at Vancouver Island University (VIU) pursuing Sustainable Leisure Management . I am conducting research on travel behaviours and travel motivations of Indian students at VIU. This study will explore motivations and behaviours of Indian students. Data is being collected only for research purpose. Your participation is voluntary and you can exit at any time before submitting your survey. This survey will take approximately 15 minutes and you may decline to participate or withdraw participation at any time without any consequences. Only my supervisors and I will have access to this information. Data will be deleted and shredded at the end of the project, by approximately June 30th, 2020.

Google Forms is being used to collect your survey responses. Please note that because Google stores data on servers located outside of Canada, data you provide will not be protected by Canadian privacy legislation, may be accessed by foreign government/s in accordance with its/their laws. For information on Google's privacy policy, see <https://policies.google.com/privacy?hl=en-US> . I will download and delete all survey data from Google servers not more than two weeks after completion of data collection, which I expect will be 30th December, 2019. I will not collect any personally identifiable information, including Internet Protocol (IP) addresses. Other personal information, such as name or student number, will not be requested in order to ensure the highest degree of anonymity and privacy. As no identifiable information is collected in this study , withdrawal from the study would not be possible once the survey has been submitted.

The results of this research will be published in my Master's thesis and may be used for conference publications, presentations or published in peer reviewed journals. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at [Diotima.dey@stumail.viu.ca](mailto:Diotima.dey@stumail.viu.ca). If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, any complaints about your participation in the research study, or if you feel as if any problems that occurred in the study, you can contact me. If you prefer to speak with someone else, you they may contact the Vancouver Island University Research Ethics Officer at [reb@viu.ca](mailto:reb@viu.ca) or at (250) 753-3245 ext. 2665.

\* Required



**1. 1. Consent of Participation: With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study \***

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No *Skip to question 21.*

### Student Status

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1hKKoccJroAeq08ZYkNQ5Ou9epxxLf6nRYEC\\_9YSbVdo/edit](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1hKKoccJroAeq08ZYkNQ5Ou9epxxLf6nRYEC_9YSbVdo/edit)

1/11

2. **Are you an Indian student studying at VIU(Vancouver Island University) on a student Visa , have come to Canada more than 3 months ago and have taken at least one overnight leisure trip in Canada ?**

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

### Indian International Student behaviour

I have few questions on what you do on your leisure trips in Canada !



3. **Please tell me how many months have you lived in Canada? Please write down the total number of months. ( 1 year = 12 months )**

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4. **4. The following question relates to the last three leisure trips you took in Canada which was at least 40 kilometers away and you stayed at least one night at the destination. Please tell me where did you go and write the names of the destinations. If it is less than three , you can write down only one or two destinations as well.**

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5. **5. How many days on an average did you spend in your last 3 leisure trips at the destination in Canada?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- 1  
 2  
 3  
 4  
 5  
 6  
 7  
 8  
 9  
 10  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6. **6. Focusing on your 3 last leisure trip, please tell me in which months you took your leisure trip in Canada. Please tick a maximum of 3 boxes only.**

*Check all that apply.*

- January  
 February  
 March  
 April  
 May  
 June  
 July  
 August  
 September  
 October  
 November  
 December

**7. 7. What were the main transports you used on your most recent overnight trips in Canada in the last 6 months? Please select a maximum of two transports.**

*Check all that apply.*

- Airplane
- Car
- Public Transport (Ferry / Sky train / Public Transport )
- Private Bus
- Train
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**8. 8. What was the main type of accommodation you stayed in , in your most recent overnight trip in Canada?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Relative's or Friend's House
- Hostels
- Hotels
- AirBnb or Homestay
- Campsites
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**9. 9. On your most recent overnight trip in Canada, where did you mostly eat? Please select maximum of 3 options.**

*Check all that apply.*

- Fast food chains
- Local coffee shops
- Prepared own meals
- Convenience store or Grocery store bought food ( Sandwiches or heat eat etc)
- Restaurants and Bars
- Ate a friend's or relatives' place
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

10. **10. What activities did you participate in during your most recent trip? Tick as many as you like**

*Check all that apply.*

- Visit friends or family
- Attend a religious festival
- visit a temple
- got to a bar or nightclub
- go to a Casino
- Visit a Museum
- Visit an Art gallery
- Visit a theme or amusement park
- Visit a zoo or aquarium
- Visit a historic site
- visit a shopping mall
- Participate in outdoor activities
- go wildlife watching
- visit a Park to experience nature
- go hiking
- go camping
- Participate in a sporting activity

### Indian International Student Motivations

What motivates you to travel ?



11. **Focusing on your leisure trip which lasted the longest duration in Canada in the past 6 months, please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements involving reasons on why you chose to go on this trip. Choose the number that most closely represent your feeling. 1= Strongly disagree/ 2 = Slightly disagree/ 3= Neutral/ 4 = Slightly agree/ 5= Strongly agree.**

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly agree
I went on this trip to experience adventures	<input type="radio"/>				
I went on this trip as I was very interested in learning more about this area I travelled to	<input type="radio"/>				
I went on this trip as I like to be close to nature while travelling.	<input type="radio"/>				
I went on this trip as this trip gave me the opportunity to be with people who have similar ideas as me.	<input type="radio"/>				
I went on this trip to experience excitement.	<input type="radio"/>				
I went on this trip as I feel travelling with my family brings my family closer to each other	<input type="radio"/>				
I went on this trip as I wanted to meet other people in that area.	<input type="radio"/>				
I went on this trip to be alone and all by myself.	<input type="radio"/>				
I went on this trip to do something that my spouse/partner wanted me to do.	<input type="radio"/>				
I went on this trip because I wanted to gain a sense of self confidence.	<input type="radio"/>				
I went on this trip as this trip gave me the opportunity to talk to new people and make new acquaintances.	<input type="radio"/>				
I went on this trip with my friends as I feel more enjoyment when I travel with my friends.	<input type="radio"/>				
I went on this trip to give my mind a rest	<input type="radio"/>				
I went on this trip to show others that I can do it.	<input type="radio"/>				
I went on this trip as this trip gave me the opportunity to travel and get some rest .	<input type="radio"/>				
I went on this trip as I like to see new and different things on a trip.	<input type="radio"/>				
I went on this trip as I like to take risks when travelling.	<input type="radio"/>				
I went on this trip as I like to view scenic beauty while travelling.	<input type="radio"/>				

	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Strongly agree
I went on this trip as I wanted to be my own boss and make my own choices .	<input type="radio"/>				
I went on this trip as travelling helps me relax physically	<input type="radio"/>				
I went on this trip to be on my own.	<input type="radio"/>				
I went on this trip with my parents as I wanted to please my parents.	<input type="radio"/>				
I went on this trip as I wanted to learn more about various things during my travel.	<input type="radio"/>				
I went on this trip to relaease or reduce built up tensions	<input type="radio"/>				
I went on this trip to experience soltitude.	<input type="radio"/>				

**I want to know about you !! :).. just a little !**

Please select or write down the answer that best fits you !



12. What is your Gender?

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**13. What is your age ? Select the range that best fits you.**

*Mark only one oval.*

- 19-22
- 23-26
- 27-31
- 32-35
- 36-40
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**14. Which is your of state of residence in India ?***Mark only one oval.*

- Andhra Pradesh
- Arunachal Pradesh
- Assam
- Bihar
- Chattisgarh
- Goa
- Gujarat
- Haryana
- Himachal Pradesh
- Jammu & Kashmir
- Jharkhand
- Karnataka
- Kerala
- Madhya Pradesh
- Mizoram
- Nagaland
- Odisha
- Punjab
- Rajasthan
- Sikkim
- Tamil Nadu
- Telegana
- Tripura
- Uttar Pradesh
- Uttarkhand
- West Bengal
- Maharashtra
- Manipur
- Meghalaya
- Andaman & Nicobar Islands
- Chandigarh
- Dadra and Nagar Haveli
- Daman and Diu
- Delhi
- J &K
- Ladakh
- Lakshadweep
- Puducherry

**15. What is your marital status?***Mark only one oval.*

- Married
- Single
- Divorced
- Common Law
- Widowed

**16. What are you currently studying ?***Mark only one oval.*

- Diploma / certificate
- Undergraduate
- Graduate Course
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**17. Do you have a part time job ?***Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

**18. According to you , how do you rate your English skills?***Mark only one oval per row.*

	Poor	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent
Reading	<input type="radio"/>				
Writing	<input type="radio"/>				
Speaking	<input type="radio"/>				

**19. Have you taken advantage of VIU trips for international students?***Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No
- I have no knowledge about the VIU Trips organised for international students

**20. Do you have family that live in Canada permanently?***Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

**Thank you for your participation**

1/28/2020

Travel Motivations and Behaviours of Indian International students

21. **Thank you so much . Please write down below if you have any comments. If you have any question , please feel free to email me at [diotima.dey@stumail.viu.ca](mailto:diotima.dey@stumail.viu.ca)**

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