

A survey of tourism behavior of international students in Pécs as tourism re-emerges in a post-pandemic phase

Abstract

Expanding international awareness and improving global integration through tourist activities is one of the positive driving forces which is increasing the number of students going abroad every year. Most international students take advantage of every holiday whilst studying and living overseas, especially if that country is located on another continent, to explore the local culture, and enjoy the distinctive culinary culture. Consequently, this not only boosts the local tourism economy but also contributes to the national economy. Strongly, study-abroad programs create more options for local entrepreneurs, economic benefits for small enterprises, and job opportunities for residents. To date, there have been a number of studies which identify international students as niche customers who, bring much potential to the local economy.

This study examines the tourism behavior of international students studying in Pécs, one of Hungary's cities attracting a large number of international students each year. The study is produced as the crisis came under control, each citizen being offered free vaccinations, and tourism activities in Hungary and European countries are gradually recovering. The research's main goals are to (1) establish a network of domestic and international destinations in order to identify destinations that attract international students in the post-Covid-19 era; (2) synthesize international students' evaluations of night-life tourism activities in the city of Pécs; (3) determine international students' spending levels on tourism activities; and, finally, (4) to propose some orientations for diversifying tourism activities in Pécs for the new normal period.

To have the desired results, an online poll of international students studying at the University of Pécs is being undertaken. Gephi 9.2 software (Network analysis) is also be involved to build a destination network of options. Fundamentally, the initial study generates data on international students' travel behavior, including the determinants of destinations, the ability to decide domestic and international routes during the tourism recovery time, the level of spending on tourism activities, especially the reviews and recommendations on night-life products and services in Pécs. The study in part helps tourism managers in Pécs to understand the characteristics of a niche traveler, but also gives the potential for the development of the local tourism economy – to elaborate plans for product diversification, strengthen tourism activities and enhance the attractiveness of the destination image of Pécs.

Keywords: International student, Pécs, Network, Tourism recovery, night-life activities