

Universities as tourism destinations, attractions, and generators: The relationship between university students and VFR tourism

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“Enjoy life. Have fun. Be kind. Have worth. Have friends. Be honest. Laugh. Die with dignity. Make the most of it. It's all we've got.”

-Ricky Gervais

Abstract

This thesis presents findings of a systematic literature review on the relationship between university student related VFR tourism, attractions, and generators, and the impact that this has on the destination and the surrounding region. The aim of this review is to collate and synthesise the current literature on student related VFR tourism, generating new insight into the relationship and highlighting potential areas for further investigation. The research was informed by an initial thematic literature review on six key components of campus tourism. Which revealed a significant gap in available literature on student related VFR, thereby justifying the need for a comprehensive systematic review on the phenomenon. Using a predefined and methodical approach protocol, the systematic review revealed a total of sixteen relevant publications of which the full texts were analysed in two distinct ways. Firstly, an analysis of article characteristics was conducted, followed by a thematic analysis to identify the relevant themes and findings present across the sixteen articles. Data collected in this analysis was then used to reveal trends in the literature, to draw meaningful conclusions about the relationship of student related VFR tourism, and its potential future impact.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	i
Abstract.....	ii
List of Figures.....	vii
List of Tables.....	viii
1.0. Introductory Chapter.....	1
1.1. Introduction.....	1
1.2. Research Aim.....	2
1.3. Research Objectives.....	2
1.4. Research Justification.....	3
1.5. Definitions.....	3
1.5.1. VFR Component.....	3
1.5.2. Higher Education Hosts.....	4
1.5.3. New Zealand Campus Tourism.....	5
1.5.4. International Student Mobility.....	6
1.6. Thesis Outline.....	7
1.7. Chapter Summary.....	8
2.0. Literature Review Introduction.....	9
2.1. Tourism.....	10
2.2. Universities as Tourism Attractions.....	11
2.3. Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR).....	11
2.3.1. International University VFR Context.....	13
2.4. Educational Tourism.....	16
2.4.1. International University Educational Tourism Context.....	18
2.5. Business Tourism.....	23
2.5.1. International University Business Tourism Context.....	25
2.6. Hospitality.....	27

2.6.1. International University Hospitality Context	29
2.7. Cultural and Heritage Tourism	30
2.7.1. International University Cultural and Heritage Context.....	31
2.8. Sport Tourism	33
2.8.1. International University Sport Tourism Context	34
2.9. Chapter Summary	36
3.0. Methodology	38
3.1. Overview.....	39
3.2. Rationale	40
3.3. Development of Review Protocol.....	40
3.3.1. Thematic Review	40
3.3.2. Expert Panel.....	40
3.3.3. Incorporation of Grey Literature	41
3.4. Conducting the Review.....	41
3.4.1. Research Objectives	42
3.4.2. Framework – PRISMA-P	42
3.4.3. Information Sources	45
3.4.4. Key Search Words	46
3.4.5. Eligibility Criteria.....	50
3.4.6. Study Characteristics	50
3.4.7. Selection Process	51
3.5. Document Identification	52
3.5.1. Keywords.....	53
3.5.2. Document Eligibility	53
3.5.3. PRISMA Flow Diagram	54
3.5.4. Articles Included in Review	54
3.6. Statements of Ethics.....	56

3.7. Chapter Summary	56
4.0. Results and Discussion	57
4.1. Article Characteristics.....	57
4.1.1. Year of Publication.....	57
4.1.2. Authorship	58
4.1.3. Research Affiliations, and Collaborations.....	60
4.1.4. Research Location, Study Population, and Size	61
4.1.5. Research Method	62
4.1.6. Journal Outlet Representation	63
4.1.7. Research Purpose.....	64
4.1.8. Summary of Research Findings and Arguments	65
4.2. Behaviour Characteristics and Themes.....	66
4.2.1. Travel Purpose and Triggers.....	67
4.2.2. Travel Experience.....	68
4.2.3. Transport.....	69
4.2.4. Marketing Implications and Promotions	70
4.2.5. Student Travel Patterns.....	72
4.2.6. VFR Travel Patterns	73
4.2.7. Duration of Stay.....	75
4.2.8. Accommodation.....	76
4.2.9. Information Sources	78
4.2.10. Economic Travel Expenditure	79
4.2.11. Cultural Context	82
4.2.12. Student Mobility	82
4.2.13. Travel Motivation	83
4.2.14. Travel Satisfaction.....	83
4.2.15. Travel Limitations and Constraints	85

4.2.16. International Students Impact on VFR Tourism.....	85
4.2.17. Student Hosts.....	87
4.3. Chapter Summary	89
5.0. Concluding Chapter	90
5.1. Summary of Research Purpose	90
5.2. Research Contributions.....	90
5.2.1. Practical Implications	91
5.2.2. Theoretical Contributions and Implications	95
5.3. Research Limitations	96
5.4. Future Research Recommendations.....	97
5.5. Conclusion	97
6.0. References.....	99

List of Figures

Figure 1: Components of Campus Tourism.....	9
Figure 2: PRISMA Information Phase Flowchart	52
Figure 3: Publishing Date Characteristics.....	58
Figure 4: Summary of Authorship Characteristics.	59
Figure 5: Attractions and Generators of University Tourism	95

List of Tables

Table 1: Student Motivations to Travel Abroad for the Purpose of Higher Education	20
Table 2: Benefits of Education Tourism	20
Table 3: The Main Benefits of Business Tourism for Destinations.....	23
Table 4: Similarities and Differences Between Leisure Tourism and Business Tourism	24
Table 5: Classification of Sport Tourism in Western Countries.....	33
Table 6: Systematic Review Definitions.....	38
Table 7: PRISMA-P Checklist.....	43
Table 8: Articles Identified Through Final Scopus Search.....	52
Table 9: Articles Included in the Review by Keyword Search String	54
Table 10: Author by Country of Affiliation.....	60
Table 11: Key Text Information	61
Table 12: Research Methods Employed	62
Table 13: Journal and Book Chapter	63
Table 14: Research Studies Purpose	65
Table 15: Research Studies Key Findings	65
Table 16: Time Spent at Destination:	75

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0. Introductory Chapter

This thesis presents the findings of a systematic review on the relationships between student VFR tourism attractions and generators, and the impact these components have on higher education institutions and wider destination and surrounding region. This literature review examines the current body of knowledge, introducing key concepts of both phenomena and their impact on campus tourism.

1.1. Introduction

Higher education plays an essential role in developing a knowledge-based society, that helps contribute to the development of the economy, but it is not usually considered in their role as tourist attractions (Arionesei et al., 2015). However, as well as their broader educational and research role, universities play an important role in regional tourism economies, as destination attractions and tourism generators. (Hall, 2007; Singagerda & Sanusi, 2018). For example, in addition to the direct attraction of domestic and international students from outside of the university's region, they attract exchange students who choose universities as destinations based on push factors such as travel, social interaction and fun (Llewellyn-Smith & McCabe, 2008).

Universities attract business and conference travel, as well as visiting friends and relatives (VFR) market, such as visits from the parents and friends of students, and alumni as visitors to a region (Hall, 2007). This attractiveness is also enhanced by the hosting of educational and cultural events on campus and in some cases, the provision of accommodation that is available to visitors (Hall, 2007). Obrien and Jamnia (2013) argue that international students help local economies through on campus spending directly related to their studies like tuition fees, and off campus spending on housing, food, books, transportation, clothing, and entertainment, which directly links to the local tourism industry, including VFR. A case study by Rinaldi et al. (2020) focused on a local unnamed university in Italy that took a prominent role in developing a city and its countryside in tourism terms, suggesting that there are rich opportunities for further research in this field (Rinaldi et al., 2020). However, there is a need for deeper analysis of the phenomenon, especially within a New Zealand based context where

there is very limited research available on universities contribution to tourism (New Zealand Institute of Economic Research, 2016; Te Pōkai Tara, 2021a).

Universities attract international students which increases the level of economic activity through the fees paid by international students for their education and the goods and services that they buy while in New Zealand, and the additional tourism spending in their own right or as a result of friends or family that travel to New Zealand to visit them (New Zealand Institute of Economic Research, 2016, p. 10)

1.2. Research Aim

The aim of this study is to identify the VFR tourism-related attributes of universities as tourism destinations, attractions, and generators and the subsequent implications for tourism. This will be achieved by conducting an initial thematic literature review on the extent to which universities contribute to their surrounding environment through six key components of campus tourism, by collating and synthesising current literature focusing on university tourism. This initial thematic review will help inform and assist the development of the systematic review as a means of deciding on relevant key search terms on the relationship between university students and VFR tourism.

1.3. Research Objectives

The objective of this research is to systematically review the findings of current student VFR tourism literature. The first part of the thesis includes a thematic literature review on the existing body of knowledge on university tourism both internationally and for New Zealand. The structure of the initial literature review will be based on overarching themes present across university tourism studies shown in Figure 1. An analysis will then be drawn from the findings, identifying any key gaps in literature that require further research. The second part includes a detailed justification for the chosen methodology and research strategy that will be implemented. Finally practical and academic contributions will then be identified, indicating the purpose for analysing and researching student related VFR tourism attractions and generators. The proposal will then conclude with a final summary and concluding statements on the validity of the chosen topic. The systematic review seeks to provide insight into the following research questions:

1. How do identified article characteristics such as authorship, publishing year and journal outlets describe the body of university student related VFR literature?
2. What key themes are present across the identified articles that impact the relationship of university student related VFR tourism?
3. How can understanding the attractions and generators of university student related VFR inform future research and tourism destinations?

1.4. Research Justification

This thesis provides both theoretical and practical motivations to the field of VFR tourism. As also identified in the initial thematic literature review, there is a lack of knowledge in the identified field of student VFR. Current practitioners and scholars as well as universities themselves could benefit from understanding the global impact this phenomenon can have. The justification and purpose for this thesis is to expand the current knowledge of student VFR tourism, through reviewing and synthesising the currently available literature, that will act as a potential base of knowledge for future research.

1.5. Definitions

To ensure research clarity, it is important to establish set definitions of the terminology used throughout the thesis. For this purpose, the thesis has included the following sections to introduce the relevant concepts and themes as working definitions that allows the researcher and readers to make informed decisions on why articles were included or excluded during the systematic review. This is achieved by presenting an initial introduction to VFR tourism, higher education hosts, student mobility and campus tourism in a New Zealand context.

1.5.1. VFR Component

The article by Jackson (1990) on VFR tourism was among the earliest published work on the phenomenon, that revealed its potential impact, resulting in a wave of subsequent research in this area (Backer, 2012; Backer et al., 2017; Braunlich & Nadkarni, 1995; Dutt & Ninov, 2017; Dwyer et al., 2014; Griffin & Dimanche, 2017; Janta et al., 2015; Lockyer & Ryan, 2007; McKercher, 1996; Munoz et al., 2017; O’Leary et al., 1995; O’Leary & Morrison, 1995; Seaton, 1994; Seaton & Palmer, 1997; Seaton & Tie, 2015; Shani & Uriely, 2012; Tagg & Seaton, 1995; Tran et al., 2020; Yaman, 1996). Visiting friends and relatives can be commonly defined as a form of travel involving a visit where “the purpose of the trip or the

type of accommodation involves visiting friends and or relatives” (Backer, 2003, p. 4). VFR can be described as a means for strengthening social networks for friends and relatives that are geographically scattered (Larsen et al., 2007). The phenomenon is one of the leading motivators for travel and day trips to a destination, representing a large and significant component of tourism for a destination (Asiedu, 2008). According to Larsen et al. (2007, p. 247) “VFR tourism is about being copresent with significant “faces”, being their guests, and receiving their hospitality and perhaps enjoying their knowledge of local culture.”

VFR represents a large and significant component of tourism, that is heavily “rooted in marketing and thus highlights a definition linked to tourism commercialisation and destination management” (Munoz et al., 2017, p. 480). Munoz et al. (2017) identified the need to incorporate the influence of the host in the definition, stating that mobility refers to the movement of humans “where some aspect (component) of the visitor’s journey is influenced to some degree by a host, who has experience and knowledge of the community to be visited to the extent that it impacts destination choice or in-destination behaviour” (Munoz et al., 2017, p. 483). A more in-depth analysis on the history, features, and benefits of VFR tourism is provided in section 2.3.

1.5.2. Higher Education Hosts

Higher education is an important global phenomenon, as each year millions of people pursue higher education at international institutions that can therefore potentially be considered tourism attractions, as these future students will contribute to local and national income and employment at the host destination (Katircioğlu, 2010). Previous research into this phenomenon revealed several beneficial outcomes for universities as hosts, involving student exchange programs as well as marketing programs that provide an opportunity to advertise potential leisure and social activities through educational exchange programs (Llewellyn-Smith & McCabe, 2008). Host countries benefit from international student’s expenditures on accommodation, food, beverages, entertainment, leisure activities, taxes and tuition fees, that helps create a positive impact on the hosts economy (Tomasi et al., 2020).

Bischoff and Koenig-Lewis (2007) suggest that the participation rate in VFR tourism for both a host and traveller is significantly higher among university students compared to the general population, but this can be heavily influenced from the student’s academic year structure, that

dictates when they can travel. The role the host plays is heavily influential, as the VFR tourist often utilises their knowledge of the surrounding destination to determine what activities and ventures, they engage in (Bischoff & Koenig-Lewis, 2007). Hosts not only generate visits by inviting guests, but they also influence where they stay and what activities are undertaken, as they become makeshift travel guides who also recommend future travel destinations (Bischoff & Koenig-Lewis, 2007).

Universities are an integral platform for science culture, human resources, and knowledge (Mangi et al., 2019), with public interest rising to arrange visits to these destinations, as many well-known universities are now attracting people by their campus aesthetic, historic buildings, museums, bookstores, cultural activities, arts, and exhibitions presented by the host destination (Zhi-Gui, 2011). Campus tourism refers to visits to a higher learning institution's unique architecture, aesthetic scenery, rich cultural heritage, and academic atmosphere that leads to socio economic benefits (Mangi et al., 2019; Pan et al., 2011; Zhi-Gui, 2011). A university campus can be described as a hub for activities, seminars, and exhibitions that not only serve students and staff of the institution, but also the surrounding population and visitors, as most campuses have museums, sports stadiums and facilities, art institutions and various yearly events, helping to provide a greater environment for learning while also providing the potential for a communal public space (Gumprecht, 2007; Mangi et al., 2019).

Campus tourism has become very popular around the world, with “world-renowned universities like Harvard university, Stanford University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), University of Cambridge, University of Oxford, Paris University and University of Toronto” (Mangi et al., 2019, p. 3), all being open for visits. Countries across the world have now begun to realise the potential for utilising their universities as local tourism brands, as these higher education campuses feature attractive environments, sophisticated equipment, advanced utilities, and stunning architecture that can attract tourists and visiting friends and relatives (Liu, 2017; Mangi et al., 2019).

1.5.3. New Zealand Campus Tourism

Campus tourism is a niche tourism market that has garnered the attention from several authors publishing articles relating to its impact on destinations (Cheng et al., 2020; Li et al., 2021; Llewellyn-Smith & McCabe, 2008; Mangi et al., 2019; McManus et al., 2021; Rinaldi

et al., 2020; Zhi-Gui, 2011). Campus tourism is discussed frequently in terms of the following six key terms, VFR, educational tourism, business tourism, hospitality, cultural and heritage tourism, and sport tourism. In recent years, the New Zealand government has actively encouraged international students around the world to pursue studies in New Zealand by providing competitive price incentives for students. The New Zealand international education system has developed 3 key goals from 2018 to 2030 to incentivise international students, the first goal is to deliver an excellent education and student experience, second is securing sustainable growth, and the final goal is to develop global citizens (Ministry of Education, 2021). Over the course of a normal academic year, there would be around 115,000 thousand international students in the country (Erudera, 2021). Campus tourism is therefore not only beneficial to the tourism industry but also to the education export industry.

1.5.4. International Student Mobility

There is an emerging body of empirical research on international students as a tourism market (Chen & Kerstetter, 1999; Gardiner et al., 2013; Glover, 2011; Varasteh et al., 2015), as international students contribute heavily to the local economy and community by engaging in local culture and creating lasting connections with the host population. Indicating a crucial reason for understanding student's tourism experiences in their chosen host country.

International education contributes \$5.1 billion locally for New Zealand, and creates over 49,000 jobs locally (Education New Zealand ENZ, 2018), globally international students studying abroad contribute \$300usd billion to major economies across the world (ICEF Monitor, 2019). Over the past 20 years the scale of international student mobility has been expanding and destinations diversifying, in 2019 6.1 million tertiary students had crossed a border to study, resulting in a 5.5% increase per year from 1998 to 2019 (OECD, 2021). It is worth noting that because of the COVID-19 pandemic, higher education institutions closed around the world, potentially impacting 3.9 million international students that could have a lasting impact (OECD, 2021).

Even though the main purpose of student mobility is to study, it can also be considered a type of tourist activity, first explored by Ritchie (2003), who categorized students into two segments, education first, and tourism first, with the distinguishing feature being their motivations for participation. Education first is where an individual's leading motivator is for

learning and education, compared to tourism first where the primary focus is to travel (Kosmaczewska & Jameson, 2021; Ritchie, 2003).

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) definition for international mobile students, is students who leave “their country or territory of origin and move to another country or territory with the objective of studying” (UNESCO, 2009, p. 36). Students are considered mobile students if they meet the following criteria, first students are not permanent residents of their chosen host country, second they have obtained the necessary qualifications from their prior education and have been granted entry to their current level of study, third they are not citizens of the host country in which they pursue their studies (UNESCO, 2009).

A key area of interest for international student mobility is the subgroup of students visiting friends and relative’s tourism. VFR mobility is defined by Munoz et al. (2017, p. 477) “as a form of mobility influenced by a host that includes face-to-face interaction between a host and visitor who have a preexisting relationship.” Emphasizing the host-guest interaction and what influence hospitality has on the guest. The relationship between students and VFR tourism can be extremely complex but an equally valuable relationship. For that reason, this research aims to update and extend the level of knowledge through conducting a systematic review on available student related VFR literature.

1.6. Thesis Outline

This thesis consists of five chapters. This first chapter introduced the overall purpose for this research with a brief introduction of VFR tourism, educational tourism, campus tourism and student mobility, to help familiarise the reader with the research objectives and justification for this thesis. This discussion presents an initial understanding of the topic of interest, its academic and practical relevance and overall contribution.

Chapter two, the thematic review, discusses the identified six key components of campus tourism. This chapter provides historical background information to the current level of knowledge researched for the identified six components of tourism. While also providing a source of comparison between available literature from a New Zealand and international

context. Revealing a significant gap in available literature on student VFR themes, justifying the need for a comprehensive systematic review on the phenomenon.

Chapter three, methodology, describes the process behind conducting a systematic literature review, value, protocol, and the design of eligibility criteria to draw significant conclusions from a range of identified articles. The PRISMA-P framework was used as a guiding process for conducting the review and reporting on the findings. This chapter also addresses the difficulties that arose during the review and comprehensively covers the review practice for a transparent systematic review.

Chapter four, results, and discussion, presents the findings of the systematic review. The identified articles were analysed, with critical characteristics explored and discussed. Conclusions were then drawn on the relationship of student VFR and accompanying attractions and generators.

Chapter five, conclusion, provides an overview of the research purpose, discussion, limitations, and suggestions for future research, that concludes with a summary of the findings.

1.7. Chapter Summary

This chapter provides a brief introduction to six key themes that appear throughout VFR tourism studies and their impact on educational institutions. Further supplemented by the lack of available literature and the need for further understanding the relationship between student VFR tourism. The chapter concludes by outlining the subsequent chapters. The next chapter will provide a review of the relevant literature of the six identified components of campus tourism.

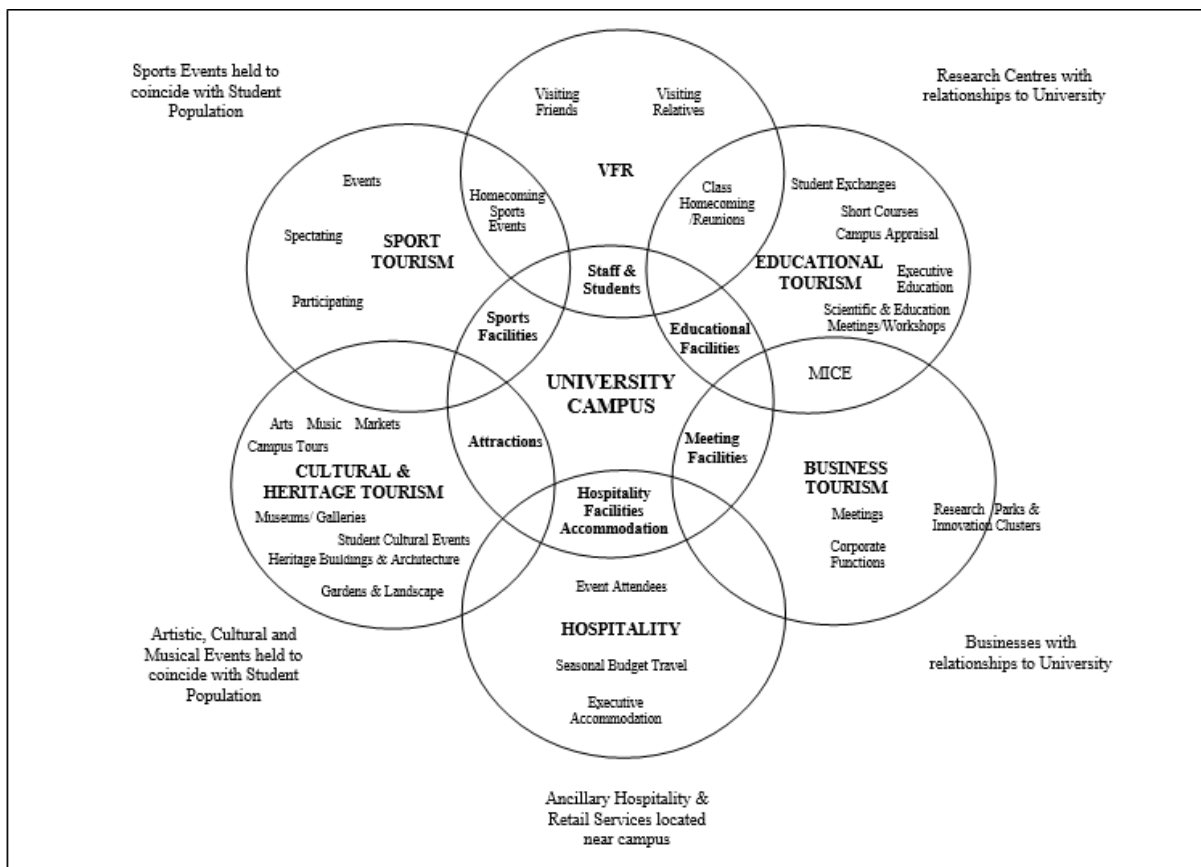
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Literature Review Introduction

This narrative literature review discusses academic literature on the role of universities in tourism. From an initial review of the literature, it is evident there are some overarching themes that appear throughout tourism studies. These components are most notably identified in Hall (2007), where six key components of campus tourism are identified; Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR), Educational Tourism, Business Tourism, Hospitality, Cultural and Heritage Tourism, and Sport Tourism. These components will serve as the central focus for this literature review displayed in Figure 1. To provide context for these components, relevant literature on international and New Zealand based universities is presented. The model will also be returned to at the end of the thesis with respect to its appropriateness considering the data collected for this study.

Figure 1: Components of Campus Tourism



Source: (Hall, 2007). Used with permission of the author.

2.1. Tourism

Tourism in New Zealand is an “essential part of the local economy, providing employment and foreign exchange and enabling transport and communication connectivity” (Hall, 2010, p. 246). Tourism plays a major role in countries around the world, contributing to society, nature, culture, and the economy (Tourism New Zealand, 2020a). According to Syroid (2020, p. 3) tourism can be commonly understood as “a direct process of travel,” with the main characteristics of tourism including departure from the usual environment, temporary nature of the trip, consumption of hotels, restaurants, transport, excursion, leisure, recreation, visiting friends and relatives, business and professional purposes, treatment, and religion among other reasons. Significantly from the perspective of university related tourism, official definitions of tourism include international inbound and outbound travel, domestic tourism, and day tripping (UNWTO, 2008). These are usually classified as being less than one year’s duration, at which point such travel is classified as short-term migration, that link to VFR, leisure travel, and education, all of which are potentially relevant for universities (UNWTO, 2008).

The economic contributions of universities are well recognised (New Zealand Institute of Economic Research, 2016). As according to Sobaih and Jones (2015) universities in both developing and developed countries are shifting towards more of an entrepreneurial mind set by developing stronger links with industry. Higher education plays an essential role in developing a knowledge-based society, contributing to the development of the economy, but they are not usually considered in their role as a tourist attraction, even though travel and tourism underpins innovative economies, clusters, and networks (Arionesei et al., 2015; Hall & Williams, 2020). Universities therefore help create a learning and knowledge-based society that can be a significant growth area for campus based or generated tourism (Connell, 2000). In addition, according to Murphy (2013, p. 27) “universities are being forced into the tourism market to supplement their educational revenues and maximise plant use.” For example, making student accommodation available to tourists when students are not in residence. Tourism provides numerous benefits for the country of New Zealand (Tsui et al., 2017), justifying the need for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, especially in a New Zealand based context as export income of university fees paid by international students accumulated to an estimated \$340 million in 2014, with living expenses estimated to be about \$300 million in the same year (New Zealand Institute of Economic Research, 2016).

2.2. Universities as Tourism Attractions

Tourism attractions can be classified from three general perspectives: the ideographic listing, the organisation, and the tourist cognition of attractions with all comparisons based on the historical location and various other aspects of attraction (Lew, 1987). As commented by Gunn (1972) “without tourist attractions there would be no tourism. Without tourism there would be no tourist attractions” as quoted in (Lew, 1987, p. 554).

Anderson and Westcott (2020) define tourist attractions as places of culture, heritage, nature, and activities that can draw people to visit. Lew (1987, p. 554) suggests that “tourist attractions consist of all those elements of a “non-home” place that draw discretionary travellers away from their homes. They usually include landscapes to observe, activities to participate in, and experiences to remember.” Leiper (1990) uses the Tower of London as an example to illustrate how it wouldn’t be considered a tourist attraction if no tourist ever visited it, as they are clearly a necessary element. In the university context Llewellyn-Smith and McCabe (2008) state that an educational tourist is one who travels to a particular attraction and participates either formally or informally in a learning experience. The literature clearly establishes what constitutes a tourism attraction and subsequently how a university can potentially be regarded as one.

2.3. Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR)

Visiting friends and relatives (VFR) is an extremely significant form of tourism worldwide (Backer, 2012). The history of VFR tourism is linked to the development of international migration patterns and as argued by Jackson (1990), VFR is both a cause and an effect for migration. In a world of increasing mobility, including student mobility, the scale and scope of migrants that continue to travel to new locations continues to rise (Beech, 2018; Choudaha, 2017; Dwyer et al., 2014; Javed et al., 2019). The relationship between short term (study) and long term (permanent) migration and VFR are clearly linked together, creating these push and pull factors around family and friend activities and place oriented activities (Williams & Hall, 2000), with potentially long term economic and social relations as a result of VFR travel flows.

History

Despite the current extent of VFR research, the first dedicated article did not appear in a tourism journal until the 1990s by Jackson (1990). The history of VFR tourism is closely linked with the history and development of international migration patterns as discussed by Dwyer et al. (2014) who found that migration is an important determinant of VFR tourism, indicating that the relationship is still progressively growing. Traditionally VFR travel has been commonly understood as one of the key reasons for travel alongside pleasure and business (Seaton, 1994). There has been increasing interest in VFR tourism since the 1990s as in some instances this growing phenomenon is considered the sole source of inbound tourists, providing significant financial support in terms of travel among certain migrant and ethnic groups (Dwyer et al., 2014; Seaton & Palmer, 1997).

Features of VFR tourism

VFR tourists tend to participate in a variety of local and regional leisure activities and have been found to be generous spenders in areas such as leisure shopping, and transportation (Shani & Uriely, 2012). These visitors would often rely on word-of-mouth recommendations from friends and relatives as they tend to be the first point of contact, essentially becoming a type of tour guide for the destination (Shani & Uriely, 2012). VFR travel enables its participants to feel at home in a foreign place, allowing them to ignore their home life circumstances and enjoy newfound comforts while maintaining social relationships (Uriely, 2010). This form of tourism is a leading contributor for seasonal compensation, as it offsets the peaks and troughs found in broader tourism seasons. This also allows some destinations to become less dependent on peak season traffic, as it becomes more evenly distributed throughout the year and is less susceptible to economic conditions and trends found with seasonality (Asiedu, 2008; Seaton & Palmer, 1997; Yousuf & Backer, 2015).

Benefits of VFR tourism

VFR tourism can create business opportunities for the host destination by increasing exposure to tourists that can, in turn lead to an increase in income (Dutt & Ninov, 2017; McKercher, 1996; Morrison et al., 2000). It is well documented that the benefits of tourism extend beyond business and economic factors to health and well-being, however such benefits are distributed neither equally or uniformly (Backer & King, 2016). VFR travellers have been found to stay longer in one destination than traditional tourists, often staying with a host and making more frequent and repeated visits to a destination, leading to an increase in expenditure over a

lifetime compared to one-time travellers (Meis et al., 1995). VFR also relies less on primary activities and major tourism infrastructure, it therefore creates less impact on the destination's environment, as friends and relatives can integrate with the environments existing infrastructure (Scheyvens, 2007; Yousuf & Backer, 2015). Research has shown that there is still a considerable amount of VFR travellers that use commercial accommodation, with the average length of stay exceeding those of holiday visitors, who often spend considerable amounts on travel, retail, entertainment, and other services (Bischoff & Koenig-Lewis, 2007; Morrison et al., 2000; Seaton & Palmer, 1997).

VFR research

VFR tourism is still an under researched area (Backer & King, 2015a), as there is still no single universally agreed definition of VFR tourism which hinders a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena. VFR tourism is usually accepted as a form of travel whereby the purpose of the trip or the type of accommodation, or both involves visiting friends and relatives (Backer, 2007; Tran et al., 2020). However, more recently, Munoz et al. (2017) defined VFR mobility as something that is influenced by a host and the visitor, helping to emphasise the important interaction between the host and guest. But further research is required to establish the true relationship and identify the importance of a host destination.

2.3.1. International University VFR Context

The literature that exists on the relationship between VFR and universities is well established with one of the first pieces published by Bischoff and Koenig-Lewis (2007) on *VFR Tourism: the importance of university students as hosts*. Where the role of VFR is examined at a university located in the United Kingdom, discovering that “universities represent large, frequently underestimated, generators of VFR tourism and that significant differences exist between the friends and the relatives” (Bischoff & Koenig-Lewis, 2007, p. 465). Bischoff and Koenig-Lewis (2007, p. 478) concluded that students represent the most effective target for promotion as the study demonstrated that the “vast majority of students receive VFR visits and that the average frequency of visits is fairly high.” This is supported by Tran et al. (2018) who observed a strong connection between international education, particularly at a tertiary level. Tran et al. (2018) found that the relationship continues overtime with students acting as either hosts, guests, or both throughout the pre and post education periods. Some potential

gaps were identified in terms of how cultural distance may affect some elements of international VFR, which could require further research.

Taylor et al. (2004, p. 62) defines an international student from a tourism perspective as “someone who travels from their usual country of residence to another country for the purposes of study.” The past decades have seen significant growth in international student numbers, solidifying itself within the context of inbound tourism (Shanka et al., 2006; Taylor et al., 2004). Bischoff and Koenig-Lewis (2007) examine the role of student-generated VFR tourism in the UK, observing the domestic component, demonstrating that most students receive VFR tourism visits that helps generate positive economic returns. VFR mobilities are a crucial element associated with this form of tourism as their family and friends visit them for important celebrations such as graduations, marriages, birth, death, or illness (Bischoff & Koenig-Lewis, 2007; Janta et al., 2015)

VFR travel for shorter term migrants is an important component for tourism demand and mobility, particularly in the migrants who travel for longer periods of time, with tensions rising regarding who should host or travel, as although visitors might pay travel expenses, hosts often carry the costs of hospitality which becomes demanding in terms of resource deployment, opportunity cost, and time (Janta et al., 2015). Janta et al. (2015) identifies that the traditional model of long-term migration has now begun to shift towards more short term and circular movements, with international students becoming an attractor of migration, generating high VFR flows.

Increasing global mobility is a complex phenomenon that led to an increase in VFR, with research by Tran et al. (2018) revealing a clear link between international education and the tourism industry. Tran et al. (2018) investigates a specific form of tourism, researching international student’s mobility and involvement with Visiting Friends and Relatives. In which a conceptual framework is developed to help illustrate this crucial relationship between key dimensions of VFR tourism and international students, highlighting new avenues for potential research.

Tran et al. (2018) presents the idea that tourism and migration can be considered an interrelated outcome of mobility, with students and VFR tourism being interconnected in a

complex way. The framework presented in Tran et al. (2018) attempts to understand this connection through identifying two crucial dimensions, the first is overall patterns of VFR travel behaviour (spatial and behavioural aspects) and hosting and the guest role of international students (socio-cultural aspect). The framework also highlights two crucial elements (international and domestic) and what's involved (visiting/ being visited/ meeting in a third place) suggesting that all elements are interconnected, influencing each other (Tran et al., 2018). Supported by Hunter-Jones (2008) who explores the relationship between the student population and VFR traffic, focussing on the VFR journey in relation to five specific areas such as, pre visit, the travel experience, accommodation experience, visit experience and post visit. Confirming that the student population are opinion leaders, playing a crucial role in the VFR experience, influencing the selection of accommodation, activities pursued, food and beverage suggestions, that have proven to be a magnet for repeat business (Hunter-Jones, 2008). Barnes and Rogerson (2021) have conducted a study on South African student-centred VFR travel in Johannesburg, identifying that VFR tourism is an important phenomenon for cities across the world, providing local economies with more people that bring about positive economic returns impacting the social climate, as international students are considered attractors for VFR travel.

A study conducted by Liu (2019) identifies that the VFR market is a leading global tourism market that is being continually influenced by globalization, as from the beginning of the 21st century there has been a remarkable expansion in student mobility. Liu (2019) explores the impacts on host nations and accompanying effects of VFR travel from the perspectives of the host. Finding that international students take on multiple roles while their friends, family and relatives visit. Liu (2019) revealed international students are an essential factor for driving friends and relatives to visit. However, the situation of people who visit friends is very different from the situation of people who visit relatives (Backer et al., 2017). Where the main purpose of family members who come to visit the host, tend to stay for a period of one month, staying at the hosts accommodation and cook by themselves, relying on the students to make the itinerary during their stay, where on the other hand friends usually have their own ideas before visiting, but that ultimately depends on the intimacy of the relationship that will determine the hosts behaviour (Backer, 2012; Liu, 2019).

The New Zealand VFR Context

Tran et al. (2020) examined the phenomenon of VFR tourism in New Zealand. This was achieved through both quantitative online survey responses and qualitative focus groups methods, with the findings reiterating the previous literature, that international PhD students had participated in VFR tourism, usually occurring 1-3 times a year (Tran et al., 2020). The study also found similar variations between visiting friends and relatives (Backer et al., 2017; Bischoff & Koenig-Lewis, 2007; Tran et al., 2020), and presents empirical evidence that visiting friends and visiting relatives are not alike, concluding that the number of visiting relatives exceeded visiting friends.

Ge (2008) investigates the effects of socio-demographics, travel-related, psychographic variables, travel behaviour and expenditure patterns of Chinese university students in New Zealand during their stay. Ge (2008) finds that travel motivation has a clear link with travel satisfaction, aided by travel activities affecting overall loyalty which can impact the likelihood of future VFR trips. Ge (2008) suggests that promotional campaigns should be used to encourage these students to invite friends and relatives and inform them of different attractions and activities to visit.

Cave et al. (2003) found that 38.6% of all trips by New Zealand residents are linked with visiting friends and relatives, indicating high tourist demand for the country, as 29% of day trips in New Zealand's capital city-Auckland are for VFR reasons. VFR tourism does not typically fall under normal tourism trips, as they are often regarded as more of an obligation for VFR travellers to fulfil (Capistrano & Bernardo, 2018). Becken (2003) discovered that VFR tourists in New Zealand increased from 6% in 1999 to 14% in 2001, indicating a continuing increase in VFR travel. Increases in VFR travel can also be influenced by migrants to a new country who are often followed by their friends and relatives who wish to visit them, with each round of migration creating new arrangements of friendship networks, generating an array of VFR tourism flows (Becken, 2003; Ge, 2008).

2.4. Educational Tourism

Educational tourism is an important segment of tourism that has seen recent growth, with more universities identifying the potential business opportunity this sector presents (Abubakar et al., 2014; Donaldson & Gatsinzi, 2005; Quezada, 2004). From a student's

perspective “the learning component is a primary or secondary part of the journey” (Tomasi et al., 2019, p. 97), for students developing key competencies through their studies, helping them face the demands of the working world. Ritchie (2003, p. 18) defines educational tourism as “tourist activity undertaken by those who are undertaking an overnight vacation and those who are undertaking an excursion for whom education and learning is a primary or secondary part of their trip.”

The process for defining educational tourism according to Pitman et al. (2010) features the following; firstly, that the trip is intentionally educationally focused; secondly the style of learning is experiential and finally the trip is structured around an educational programme (McGladdery & Lubbe, 2017a). Although there is an overlap between travel for a tertiary degree and study, the term educational tourism has historically been used more to describe educational travel, for such experiences as language immersion, course for credit, exchange, and curiosity to learn about other populations language and culture, that is usually for less than a one-year period (Conceição & Skibba, 2008; Hsu et al., 2017; Stoner et al., 2014; Tomasi et al., 2019).

Studying abroad provides students with numerous benefits by providing them with an opportunity to learn about a foreign country’s political and social issues, people, geography, history, and culture (Chieffo, 2007). While also supporting their personal growth by improving their organisational, communication and problem-solving skills (Gmelch, 1997; Tomasi et al., 2019). New location-based learning can help students enhance their employability, by expanding on their business knowledge and gaining work experience that helps to improve their abilities in problem solving and teamwork (Croy, 2009; Paris, 2011; Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). Students have also found that these experiences boost their motivations and help to build up self-esteem and develop better morals by engaging in new learning experiences, that can also be enjoyable to further their personal development (Gmelch, 1997; Shah et al., 2015).

Educational tourism refers to any “program in which participants travel to a location as a group with the primary purpose of engaging in a learning experience directly related to the location” (Rodger, 1998, p. 28). The key attractions that draw potential education tourists range from the host regions historical and heritage significance, archaeological, wildlife,

sports, and cultural tourism elements (Sharma, 2015). Education tourism involves cultural exchange and collaborations between different people from diverse backgrounds, as educational tourism is an ongoing learning process.

It is suggested by Sharma (2015) that for educational tourism to thrive, universities should work in partnership with the local population to establish the intentions of their visitors, while efforts should also be made to provide authentic accommodation and food offerings that link to the location's traditions, as these experiences will register positively with visitors as they feel connected to a destination. These ventures by host universities can be further supported by nations governments to encourage educational tourism, through government policy advocating for more jobs in the sector, while also creating better marketing strategies targeted towards both international and domestic residents (Abu Samah et al., 2013; Sharma, 2015; Tomasi et al., 2019). One study in the United Kingdom stated that the government is constructing a strategic policy that will try to enhance the employability of those students completing a university degree to extend skills across the United Kingdom (Shah et al., 2015).

Education tourism is a segment of tourism which works to meet growing demands of student and staff mobility as a key tool for personal development, to enrich the learning and research experience to improve knowledge transfer through active participation in “multilateral projects, thematic networks, joint degrees and initiatives at regional and international level” (Kublashvili, 2013, p. 77)

2.4.1. International University Educational Tourism Context

Educational tourism has been discussed by Tomasi et al. (2020, p. 2) who “investigates the role of universities in fostering local development through educational tourism.” Their literature review revealed that students studying overseas has been increasing, which in turn has seen a boost to location-based activities, increased tourism business, and finally economic and social benefits to the host destination (Tomasi et al., 2020). In addition to the direct attraction of domestic and international students from outside of the university's region, universities attract exchange students who choose university destinations based on push factors such as “travel, social interaction and fun” (Llewellyn-Smith & McCabe, 2008, p. 604).

O'Brien and Jamnia (2013) argue that international students help local economies through on campus spending, directly related to their studies like tuition fees, and off campus spending on housing, food, books, transportation, clothing, and entertainment, which directly links to the local tourism industry, aided through domestic travel, including VFR. Tomasi et al. (2020) recommends higher education industries optimise their exchange programs to incentivise attraction, additionally they could collaborate on marketing strategies to communicate both the institution and the destination through various mediums to promote themselves.

McGladdery and Lubbe (2017b), propose a model of educational tourism as a transformative process, where according to the model, for effective learning to occur clearly defined outcomes need to be established from cognitive outcomes, affective outcomes, and behavioural outcomes. These outcomes can be used to determine effective learning. The model encompasses the lifecycle of a tourist, to be truly effective a tourist needs to experience needs that differ from their usual frame of reference. According to McGladdery and Lubbe (2017b) educational tourism is a transformative process with clearly defined outcomes that are measurable.

Quezada (2004) analysed educational tourism, by providing a lens on student teaching programs abroad, where over 100 universities in the United States provide some form of student teaching abroad, where for the most part teachers end up staying with their host families, with some opting for university housing or private accommodation. This experience allowed for university students to grow both personally and professionally, becoming more “sensitive to issues of multiculturalism” (Quezada, 2004, p. 464).

However, according to Sie et al. (2016) there has been little research on understanding the incentives behind individuals who seek to participate in educational tourism and their motives. Most studies that have been conducted in this area have occurred during the end of their stay, where the participant's opinions could have changed. Sie et al. (2016) states that educational tourism can be observed as a potential platform to facilitate experiential learning. Abubakar et al. (2014) identified fifteen factors that motivate students to travel abroad for the purpose of learning, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Student Motivations to Travel Abroad for the Purpose of Higher Education

Themes	Categories
Motivations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation, reputation, future job, and English as a teaching medium • Quality of education • Failing in entrance exam in the home county • Culture, new language, travel, and welcoming attitudes of the locals • Tuition fees and scholarships • Safety and low rate of discrimination in host country • Quality of life and living expenses in the host county • Political instability in the home country • Easy to get visa • Easy admission • Recognition in the home country • Qualified and friendly academic staff • Natural and environmental factors • Lack of availability of program in the home country • Proximity of home country

Source: Abubakar et al. (2014, p. 60)

Sharma (2015) suggested that universities should invest in distance learning programs to create awareness and promotion for tourist destinations. Sharma (2015) argues that educational tourism is beneficial for society at large, providing development across states and countries. Table 2 provides a glimpse into the benefits of educational tourism, allowing destinations to gain an identity on a global scale (Sharma, 2015). The tourism industry is fast becoming one of the leading sectors that contributes to economic growth of a country, with a rapid expansion in higher education driving a flow of youth traveling to other countries for educational purposes, that can create a new source of economic growth for destinations (Matahir & Tang, 2017).

Table 2: Benefits of Education Tourism

Benefits of Education Tourism	
Encouragement to investments	Development of infrastructure
Introduction of new training courses for tourism	Greater employment opportunities
Skilled workforce availability	Boost risk taking and entrepreneurship

Exploration of new locations	Societal development and welfare
Cultural exchange	International collaboration
Globalisation of the tourism sites	Create distinct image of regions

Source: Adapted from Sharma (2015, p. 10)

Martínez-Roget et al. (2013) analysed the positive economic impact of academic tourism in Spain, revealing that academic tourism has a greater economic impact than conventional tourism and recommends that destinations consider this to be their new growth strategy. As both short and long-term students have a similar ability to attract VFRs and therefore have a direct relevance in the generation of tourism demand for a region (López et al., 2016).

Studying abroad for students helps boost their ability to self-reflect as “the awareness of students of their own contexts increases significantly while living and researching in another context” (Portegies et al., 2011, p. 105). This self-reflective perspective is beneficial for students as it encourages exposure to new situations and tourism destinations, as the students can then begin to see the destination in its natural way (Cater et al., 2018).

In the past few decades higher education institutions have witnessed important growth in student mobility across multiple countries for the purpose of studying, and is considered a new type of tourism known as academic tourism, defined as “a distinct type of tourism that would include any stays made in higher education institutions in places outside their usual environment for a period of less than one year” (Rodriguez et al., 2013, p. 89). The main incentives are to complete degree level studies in universities, attend language courses, excursions, and exchange programs (Bento, 2014; Rodriguez et al., 2013).

Student mobility for higher education purposes can be considered a type of tourist activity and can include the following, a prolonged stay at a destination, a greater consumption of local goods and services and shared accommodation, these combined characteristics help distinguish academic tourism from other types of tourism (Bento, 2014; Rodríguez et al., 2012). Host destinations can appeal to international students through their ethnic origin, language, cultural proximity, education quality systems and future employment opportunities (Bento, 2014).

The economic effects of international student mobility has also been studied, with the research predominantly focusing on the determinants of student mobility both in domestic institutions and internationally (Bento, 2014; Cater et al., 2018; Faggian et al., 2007; López et al., 2016; Martínez-Roget et al., 2013; Rodriguez et al., 2013; Rodríguez et al., 2012; Rosenzweig, 2006; Szelényi, 2006; Thissen & Ederveen, 2006). These studies correlated the common factors that influence mobility decisions of students such as quality differentials, educational opportunities, government spending on higher education, per capita income, cost of living, financial capability, cultural, religious, and travel distance are just some of the main determinates of student mobility. The numbers of students studying abroad has also rapidly increased over the past decades, especially for those studying for more than 3-12 months abroad (Thissen & Ederveen, 2006).

Academic tourism provides significant economic advantages, such as extended lengths of stay, which helps destinations become less dependent on seasonal tourism traps, including consumption patterns that are similar to the local citizens, repeated visits from friends and family, as well as favouring the local demand and supply of goods and services (Rodríguez et al., 2012). Rosenzweig (2006) suggests that an investment in the quality and quantity of education institutions in developing nations will encourage more push factors for students to study abroad rather than remaining at home. As demand doesn't typically resolve around economic decisions, with greater emphasis typically on the individual's habits, preferences and their perception of the university that is commonly represented from word of mouth (Rodríguez et al., 2012).

New Zealand Educational Tourism Context

According to Tarrant et al. (2014, p. 404) short term educational travel “is emerging as a major tourism opportunity.” As countries like New Zealand rely on international education for export revenue in conjunction with individual universities, as they face increasing competition from other destinations (Tarrant et al., 2014). Therefore, universities need to understand their niche market to obtain any market share. Tarrant et al. (2014, p. 415) states that a study tour to New Zealand “can yield important learning outcomes with respect to enhancing awareness of sustainability and in nurturing a global citizenry – critical platforms for developing future sustainable development, and sustainable tourism.” However, there is little recent in-depth research on educational tourism in a New Zealand context.

2.5. Business Tourism

According to Gursoy et al. (2015) studies in recent years have suggested that global tourism no longer revolves around single businesses and rather consists of clusters of tourism related operations. As stated by Gursoy et al. (2015, p. 15) “forming and becoming part of a collaborative entity is becoming increasingly important as markets become more and more competitive,” the need for cooperation among businesses is only heightened by the drastic changes in consumer’s needs and wants in an ever-changing business environment. Business tourism is an important sub section for tourism in which income is generated through business meetings and other organised events that bring in significant economic returns for host destinations (Gračan et al., 2010). Business tourism is described as a “cross section of industries and businesses and an interaction between stakeholders to meet the needs and everyday requirements of business travellers” (Marais et al., 2017, p. 2).

Business tourism plays an important role in tourism and can lead to increased revenue, trade flows, and economic growth (Poole, 2010; Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001; Tan & Tsui, 2017; Tsui et al., 2017). Therefore, it is not surprising that destinations are keen to attract all sorts of business tourists. Table 3 identifies the key features of business tourism for destinations.

Table 3: The Main Benefits of Business Tourism for Destinations

Benefits of Business Tourism for Destinations	
Visits are generally during off peak seasons	Relatively high expenditure per day and per tourist
Helps to justify the need for investment in infrastructure which in turns benefits the local population	Business tourists tend to be relatively well behaved and cause little problems for the local destination
Helps to ensure the longevity and viability of community leisure facilities, such as shops and theatres.	Provides business for a wide range of local businesses surrounding the destination.

Source: Adapted from Swarbrooke and Horner (2001, p. 9)

Business tourism can be a lucrative segment of tourism, with studies suggesting that business tourists spend larger amounts of money on accommodation, food, beverages, and transportation when compared to other tourists (Donaldson, 2013; Kumar & Hussain, 2014;

Marques & Santos, 2016; Tichaawa, 2017). In addition to what a business tourists directly spends at a destination, there is also the additional expenditure by others who organise, manage, and arrange various meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions on their behalf (Tichaawa, 2017), many of which may be connected to university and academic activities. Business tourists tend to travel during times of the year when other tourists don't tend to visit, which ultimately helps support the local development and maintenance of the tourism infrastructure, such as hotels and other attractions that helps balance seasonal tourism (Tichaawa, 2017; UNWTO, 2014).

An important distinction to be made is between leisure tourism and business tourism, there are numerous links between the two tourism sectors, in terms of both supply and demand, with research suggesting that business tourists are higher spenders and have an overall lower impact on the environment, as business tourists tend to visit manmade structures such as urban spaces, airports, hotels and universities and therefore do not disturb natural environments (Donaldson, 2013). Business tourism is a complex segment of the tourism industry and shares a lot in common but is also differentiated from leisure tourism as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Similarities and Differences Between Leisure Tourism and Business Tourism

Factors of influence	Leisure Tourism	Business Tourism	Extra conditions
Payment	Tourist	Tourist employer or association	Managers and self-employed tourists pay their own way
Travel destination decisions	Tourist	The organiser of the meeting, incentive, conference, or exhibition	Delegates wishes are considered by the organisers
When do these trips take place	During holiday periods and weekends	All year round, can occur anytime from Monday to Friday	July and August are often avoided for major events
Period between booking and going on the trip	Holidays are usually booked a few months in advance; short term are often a few days	Business trips can often be made at short notice	Major conferences are booked years in advance to secure spots. With some holidays being organised hours beforehand
Who attends	Anyone with the necessary spare time and money	Those whose work requires them to travel or associate members	Some people on business trips can be accompanied by partners
What kind of destinations	Varies from city's, costal, mountain, countryside, and full package resorts	Largely cantered around towns, cities in build-up industrialised countries	Some business meetings and training courses can take place in more rural areas

Source: Adapted from Ioan and Cosmin (2012) and Swarbrooke and Horner (2001).

Business tourists tend to spend more on accommodation and transportation compared to leisure tourists, as these travellers often require a better quality of services or extra facilities when compared to the leisure tourist, such as conference rooms or translators (Ioan & Cosmin, 2012). However, there are four ways in which the world of business tourism and leisure tourism overlap each other.

- 1 The business traveller usually becomes a leisure traveller once the working day is over.
- 2 Conferences often include a programme of leisure activities in between conference sessions for delegates.
- 3 Incentive travel involves offering leisure travel as a reward for good performance at work.
- 4 Many business travellers are accompanied by their partners and/or children. These accompanying persons are to all intents and purposes leisure travellers for all or most of the duration of their trip (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001)

Expenditure during business events by attendees can include registration fees, transportation, accommodation, and food and beverage with some business travellers shopping in their own leisure time (Hodur & Leistriz, 2006; Kumar & Hussain, 2014). Business tourism can lead to increased trade which in turn can directly impact economics of scale, increase comparative advantage, technology and innovation, increased competition which leads to lower prices faster GDP growth, economic stability and rising incomes and job creation (Kumar & Hussain, 2014; WTTC, 2012).

2.5.1. International University Business Tourism Context

A central element of business tourism are meetings and facilities (Hall, 2007). Which can directly be related to universities, as delegates attend conferences year-round, who are likely to bring families and other accompanying people with them (Rogers, 2003). Ultimately it makes complete sense to utilise on or off-site university accommodation for various meetings and corporate functions if the timing is right.

Business tourism is a highly lucrative and competitive sector of the tourism industry, as business tourism can enhance a destinations image and counter effects of seasonality, as

compared to leisure visitor's, findings also suggest that business visitors spend double the amount per day (Haven-Tang et al., 2007). Thomas (2012) suggests that the British government has made inroads in introducing programs designed to strengthen the bond between businesses and universities, with councils funding ways for academics to communicate their ideas to practitioners, through networks, hosting seminars, or through their publications (Thomas, 2012).

Abreu et al. (2008) argues that universities are crucial generators and attractors of knowledge in our society. Aligning the interests of business with academics can be challenging but requires mutual understanding and trust to broker a bond, to overcome barriers and foster relationships to build sustainable growth (Abreu et al., 2008). According to Ioan and Cosmin (2012, p. 433) "business tourism involves travelling to another town, a distance more than 50 kilometres from the town of origin, business travel being strictly determined by events or educational purpose." As "business tourism performed for the governmental, commercial and educational purpose, attracts clients not fully interested in prices but rather interested in speed, and quality and efficiency" (Ioan & Cosmin, 2012, p. 437).

There are several links between accommodation and business tourism, as accommodation establishments can provide both sleeping arrangements and meeting locations for delegates, with some accommodation establishments encouraging people to attend conferences because of their perceived name and quality reputation, as accommodation doesn't necessarily mean hotels and can include the following, time share developments, university hall of residence, youth hostels, cruise ships and novel forms of accommodation (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001)

University accommodation is ideally suited for group visits. The range and style of accommodation available is extensive with catering options to satisfy budgets both large and small. The sports and leisure facilities will be at the group's disposal and special activities such as sports evenings or outings can often be arranged for larger groups. Whether a holiday or business group you can make full use of the amenities on and around the campus such as banks, shops, laundrettes, and cafeterias (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001, p. 282)

One clear example of business tourism occurring, is the New Zealand tourism research conference, where tourism academics get together to discuss innovative ideas and research being undertaken in the field of tourism (Landvogt, 2005). This is just one example of how New Zealand universities can be utilised as a tourism attraction. Business relationships with universities can also provide joint industry collaboration. As this is increasingly becoming the norm, creating new avenues for innovation while ensuring long term strategic relationships with industry (Te Pōkai Tara, 2018). Business tourism has seen significant growth in New Zealand, with empirical findings in Tsui et al. (2017) identifying four key determinants for business tourism, New Zealand's EPU index, bilateral trade volumes and two non-economic aspects, including flying distance and total direct flight seats.

Business events are a large and important contributor for destinations as they provide a regular source of revenue, defined by The Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (2022, p. 1) "a business event is as an event that is hosted by an organisation (association, corporate, government) and is either an incentive, conference, convention, exhibition, or trade show." For the year ending June 2019 in New Zealand, there was a total of 3999 education commissioned business events (Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, 2019). Although affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the significance of education related business events is supported by Tourism New Zealand (2020b) who state that 55% of business events that were planned for 2021 in New Zealand were for up to 100 delegates, with larger urban cities in the country being the main locations organisations considered for business events.

2.6. Hospitality

A subsector of tourism that has increasingly become more significant over the last three to four decades is hospitality (Hall & Prayag, 2020; Kozak & Kozak, 2016; Morrison & O'Gorman, 2008). Hospitality is often not perceived as a knowledge-based industry and therefore presents a potential collaboration problem (Sobaih & Jones, 2015). Nevertheless, most universities host hospitality services in the form of staff clubs, student pubs and cafes, catering services, restaurants, and accommodation (Park et al., 2011; Pforr, 2002; Sobaih & Jones, 2015).

Over time universities have had to adapt to the changing economic and social environment, to meet demand for marketing and hospitality (Morrison & O'Gorman, 2008; Tribe, 2003).

According to King,

Hospitality in a commercial or organizational setting is a specific kind of relationship between individuals—a host and a guest. In this relationship, the host understands what would give pleasure to the guest and enhance his or her comfort and well-being, and delivers it generously and flawlessly in face to face interactions, with deference, tactfulness, and the process of social ritual. The objective is to enhance guest satisfaction and develop repeat business, (King, 1995, p. 229).

In a commercial context, hospitality has various elements that highlight the exchange between the host and guest relationship, and how defining hospitality for one specific relationship is challenging (King, 1995). The key concepts of hospitality and tourism are concerned with the provision of goods and services. With research showing that the tourism and hospitality industry relies heavily on the development of positive perceptions of people providing services to tourists (Mok et al., 2013).

Tourism infrastructure is an indispensable pillar of overall economic and tourism development, with recreational facilities, hotels and other hospitality facilities forming an integral part of the physical infrastructure (Mandić et al., 2018). Each of these elements contributing to the development of a destination, by increasing its overall appeal (Khadaroo & Seetanah, 2007). Several authors have cited the significance behind the infrastructure base of a destination, as a potential determinant of the attractiveness of a destination (Inskip, 1991; Khadaroo & Seetanah, 2007).

Hospitality and tourism are not widely recognised as knowledge-based industries, and therefore university industry collaboration can prove to benefit, as hospitality is more deliberate and would prove to benefit both parties (Sobaih & Jones, 2015).

Hospitality research has become increasingly valued in aiding with decisions relating to the tourism and hospitality sector, in response to the globalisation of the tourism industry (Kattara et al., 2004). Research conducted on delegate attendance and satisfaction is growing, and studies have begun to identify crucial areas of attendance motivations, such as

motivations, networking, personal and professional development, location, time and convenience, and health and wellbeing (Mair et al., 2018). Findings in Mair et al. (2018) suggest that conference attendees are now using these opportunities to combine conference attendance with VFR.

2.6.1. International University Hospitality Context

Universities can play a crucial role in short term benefits for areas surrounding the campus, as they attract thousands of students and employees to local economies (Lee, 2019). Therefore, the large demand for local services turns into job creation opportunities (Lee, 2019; Moretti, 2010). For example, “thousands of college students possibly increase the demand for haircuts, restaurant meals, and medical care” (Lee, 2019, p. 316). Lee (2019) examined the opening of UC Merced in 2005, where he used a synthetic control method to establish the economic effect of a large-scale university. The study revealed that having a larger university can have immediate effects on local economies due to the high demand from students (Lee, 2019). This study reveals the economic impact from large universities in a highly populated area but fails to touch on other aspects of economic impact from smaller populated areas to support their arguments. Due to the emerging tourism economies because of student mobility, host destinations have seen the spread of economic benefits for hosting international students (Jarvis, 2020).

Sangpikul (2009) argues that university hospitality is vital for higher education to actively establish international relationships, through enhancing the quality of hospitality and tourism for higher education (Sangpikul, 2009). As identified by Horng and Lee (2005, p. 172) “the development of tourism and hospitality higher education in Taiwan is closely related to the growth in domestic tourist market and the social development of the country.”

Educational accommodation includes universities and other institutions of higher education, that are often rented out to students, this form of accommodation is usually situated near major tourist destinations such as London, Cambridge, Oxford and Edinburgh among many other major university cities (Camilleri, 2018). Several universities have experienced considerable success in this venture and have further expanded their involvement with the leisure market, by providing essential facilities that reflect the budgets of holidaymakers (Camilleri, 2018).

New Zealand Hospitality Context

Events such as the hospitality research conference hosted by the university of Wellington is a clear example for how universities can become tourism attractions, through offering their facilities up for future events (Harkison, 2004). Large scale events in New Zealand represent significant opportunities for the tourism sector and hospitality facilities and services (Higham & Hall, 2003). As according to Ge (2008) international students contribute to the development of community services and facilities, as these facilities and activities are also desired by local residents, therefore locations that can meet high levels of demand and provide high quality hospitality, recreation sporting, entertainment and leisure facilities and services, can help boost society development in the country. As local hospitality and services was identified in Sirakaya and McLellan (1997) as one of nine motivational pull factors for college students.

2.7. Cultural and Heritage Tourism

Cultural and heritage tourism aims to achieve economic development through visitors from “outside the host community motivated wholly or in part by interest in the historical, artistic, scientific or lifestyle/heritage offerings of a community, region, group or institution” (Silberberg, 1995, p. 361). The key element that distinguishes it from other forms of tourism is the motivation for culture (Silberberg, 1995). Such heritage travel is geared towards experiencing cultural environments, including landscapes, visual and performing arts, values, traditions and events (Rosenfeld, 2008). Cultural and heritage tourism can also be effective in satisfying the local community by providing residents with a greater sense of belonging (Chang, 1999; Rosenfeld, 2008) which can end up being mutually beneficial as, according to Rosenfeld (2008, p. 2), “cultural and heritage tourists stay longer and spend more money than other kinds of travellers thus making such tourism an important economic development tool.”

Heritage tourism is concerned with the cultural legacy of the past, usually contained in old buildings, museums, monuments, and landscapes and is centred in what we have inherited (Richards, 2000; Yale, 1991). Most countries are actively engaged in developing their cultural and heritage sites for tourism purposes, allowing locations to market themselves across a global market (Richards, 2000). However, sometimes the local culture is simplified to make it more assessable for tourists to interpret and understand the local culture (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). Equally culture and heritage has become an increasingly

important means for constructing local identities in a globalising world. “Heritage tourism offers a profitable return on the use of a free existing resource with the additional benefits of enhanced local identity, social cohesion and favourable market images” (Ashworth, 2000, p. 19). Promoting cultural heritage conservation is a useful tool to ensure sustainable development, through positively influencing visitor spending habits, by creating positive attitudes and values that cultural and heritage tourism can provide (Prideaux et al., 2013).

2.7.1. International University Cultural and Heritage Context

Smith and Richards (2013) suggest that university destinations could benefit from destination management to enhance product development, image and identity and the tourist experience. There are however various issues associated with this idea between students and tourists needs, such as access, accommodation and the associated presentation required, as the “impacts on the built heritage, host communities and atmosphere of place also need to be considered when developing academic landscapes as tourist destinations” (Smith & Richards, 2013, p. 245).

Smith and Richards (2013) suggest that outside of China, campus tourism has generally been untouched by academics, yet across the world many universities operate as popular tourist attractions. For example, Harvard University, University of Oxford, University of Cambridge, Yale University, Columbia University, Stanford University, University of California - Los Angeles, and Princeton University (Quacquarelli Symonds, 2021), chosen due to their heritage. Where usually the “historic buildings associated with centuries of learning provide an iconic and attractive physical presence that helps the destination build its sense of place” (Smith & Richards, 2013, p. 265).

Another argument for the opening of public universities to tourists, is that the public should be allowed access to any facilities in which they have contributed through the taxation system, especially as they will then be able to generate revenue for education and provide a level of social tourism (Connell, 2000). As Connell (1996, p. 541) states “Universities have almost been ‘forced’ into becoming tourism providers in order to supplement revenues,” through their various accommodation facilities, computing suites, laboratories and libraries. The reconstruction and constant maintenance of historical monuments, architectural

complexes, traditions, and customs contribute to the overall appeal to attract tourists and the development of higher education tourism (Kabanova et al., 2016).

Cultural tourism has emerged as a significant tourism activity in recent years with many destinations beginning to promote their tangible and intangible cultural and heritage sites for tourist consumption (Uysal et al., 2012). The process of cultural tourism product development involves transforming cultural and heritage assets into tourism products, turning both community resources and residents into passive and active participants of tourism that hopefully will provide positive economic return (Uysal et al., 2012).

Universities demonstrate and help protect cultural identity, as these sites are considered far more than just a place where debates and theories are produced (Saifi, 2021). Universities are an important part of cultural heritage as the “university continues to function as a transmitter of messages through time” (Sanz & Bergan, 2002, p. 9), and should therefore be valued and protected as historically significant sites. In addition, universities are often locations for museums, art galleries, libraries, fine arts, and performance culture.

New Zealand Cultural and Heritage Context

In New Zealand there are two prevalent understandings of heritage, first is the Pakeha (European) position, where heritage is associated with landscape and built environments, implying that humankind is separate from the landscape, second is the indigenous (Māori) stance on heritage where humankind is not separated from the landscape but is one (Hall et al., 1992). Galleries and various exhibition spaces exist across multiple universities including the University of Canterbury, University of Otago, University of Auckland, and the Adam Art Gallery located in Victoria University, that feature numerous exhibits, gaining the attraction of the public (Adam Art Gallery, 2021; The University of Auckland, 2021; University of Canterbury, 2021; University of Otago, 2021b). The University of Otago is the oldest university in New Zealand, opening in July 1871 when it was provided with 100,000 acres of land to grant degrees, ranging from medicine, arts, law and music (Te Pōkai Tara, 2021b; University of Otago, 2021a). The Otago university is an important historical site, situated right in the centre of Dunedin providing the opportunity for tourists to visit and is included on tourist guided tours.

2.8. Sport Tourism

Sport has long been a major focus of students and university related travel, especially in the North American context, where there are numerous college sports competitions often played in substantial arenas, with associated media and television coverage (Higham, 2018; Higham & Hinch, 2009; Melo & Sobry, 2017; Singh et al., 2016). A recent review by Alexandris and Kaplanidou (2014, p. 125) states that “sport tourism is one of the fastest growing forms of special tourism internationally,” contributing towards the economic and tourism development of local communities, cities, regions, and countries (Higham, 2018). Gibson (1998b) distinguishes three domains of sport tourism:

active sport tourism, which refers to people who travel to take part in sport; event sport tourism, which refers to travel to watch a sports event; and nostalgia sport tourism, which includes visits to sports museums, famous sports venues, and sports themed cruises (Gibson, 1998b, p. 45)

This definition is similar to De Knop (1990), in Gibson (1998b) where he suggested that in Europe the phenomenon focused on active participation, where he identified three variations. First the pure sport holiday, second taking advantage of the sport facilities available on holiday, and third a private sporting geared holiday, where tourists take part in a non-organised sporting event (Gibson, 1998b). Melo and Sobry (2017) identified six different variations for defining sport tourism (Table 5).

Table 5: Classification of Sport Tourism in Western Countries

Criterion	Representatives	Classification
Participation	Gammon and Robinson (1997)	Sports participant; leisure and entertainment participant
	Standeven and De Knop (1999)	Active participation, such as scuba diving, cycling, golf; passive participation, such as sports exposition
	Pigeassou (2002)	Action, show, cultural and activism
Supply	Kurtzman (2005)	Attractions, resorts, cruise tourism, sightseeing tourism, events tourism, adventure tourism
	Bouchet and Bouhaouala (2009)	All kind of supply, tourism, and excursion's
Trichotomy	Gibson (2003)	Active sport tourism, event sport tourism, nostalgia sport tourism

Source: Melo and Sobry (2017)

2.8.1. International University Sport Tourism Context

Most of the literature on university sports tourism appears in the United States of America, with millions of dollars being pumped into the local economy because of college sports (Chen, 2011). Chen (2011) illustrates that this is not usually a one-off event but instead is an annual event that becomes a regular source of economic return for the local economy. However, an empirical study conducted by Baade et al. (2008) on the economic impact of spectator sports in local economies, found no significant statistical evidence to suggest that college football games contributed positively to a host's economy. Subsequent research by Baade et al. (2011) conducted a regression analysis on the economic impact of college sports that reinforced this finding. Baade et al. (2011) does however note that successful college athletic programs may experience significant economic returns, depending on the level and associated sport. A literature review conducted by Getz and Page (2016) identified the need for custom design targeted event experiences, based on dimensions such as, type of event, setting and management systems. Getz and Page (2016, p. 620) argues "the rise of event tourism is generating a greater need for accountability, transparency, and comprehensiveness in evaluation of politics, strategies, investments and interventions."

Gibson (2004) identifies the difference between a day tripper, who is commonly known as somebody who does not stay overnight, and a fully-fledged sports tourist who includes at least one overnight stay during their trip. With the distinction between the two sporting tourists market proving to be a major contributor in understanding sports tourism behaviour (Gibson, 2004). Most notably is their economic impact, with the overnighter tending to spend more in the community as they are there for a greater period engaging in other activities.

Llewellyn-Smith and McCabe (2008) analysed university pull factors that influence the selection of a host university, including student's levels of satisfaction with their experience, social activities and sporting clubs. Llewellyn-Smith and McCabe (2008) suggests that nearly half of the respondents (students that completed an exchange program at an Australian university), (47%) were satisfied with their social and sporting clubs at their host university. Respondents mentioned that the most satisfying aspect of the experience was meeting new people. Llewellyn-Smith and McCabe (2008) advice for universities is to place stronger focus on the specific services associated with exchange students, and to work collaboratively with local housing agencies for accommodation for their exchange students. Gozalova et al. (2014)

points out that sports tourism tours have the potential to draw visitors to their favourite sporting event, as sports and travel have become an integral part of modern society.

University sporting events are a globally recognised element of tourism that draw people from across the globe and are becoming an integral part of tourism development, now appearing across a range of marketing strategies (Ntloko & Swart, 2008). Sport as a tourist attraction represents the opportunity to provide a niche tourism experience, by marketing specific sports targeted to unique subgroups that can draw a range of supporters to new destinations (Higham, 2005). The fact that sporting events attract tourists is well documented, as the uncertainty of sport competition, linked with the authentic tourist experience is also synonymous with specific locations in which these events take place (Higham, 2005). With loyal sporting tourism fans directing more effort and resources into attending sporting events, where they can spend their money and time traveling to the destinations their teams travel to (Cho et al., 2019). Xiaomin (2012) identifies that college students are a special subgroup in society that are more inclined to risk taking and are forward thinking when it comes to travel, providing the potential to become a significant source of tourism. According to Gibson (1998a) there are three main categories of sport tourism: including watching sport events, visiting sports related attractions and active participation.

Throughout the world universities operate as functional tourism attractions, that not only provide a tangible, heritage component in the destination, but they can also provide an intangible product that can manifest itself through culture, ceremonies, activities, sports, and events both formal and informal (Woodward, 2013). An area that has attracted new attention in recent years is the impact of college sports on local economies, as these events attract new visitors to destinations because of the image associated with the campus (Woodward, 2013). College football plays a crucial role in the United States, attracting some 48 million spectators to college games each year, twice the amount of professional National Football League (NFL) games (Baade et al., 2008). These events help universities in creating a global brand image, that feeds off supporter's engagement and can utilise this to their competitive advantage.

Gibson et al. (2003) found that college sporting events attract a significant proportion of fans from outside the local community, supporting the growing focus on small scale sporting

events. The social aspects behind individuals attending college football includes socialising with other fans, visiting nostalgic sites on campus and off campus, while also visiting local establishments and participating in activities related to the game (Cho et al., 2019). These university sporting events, host both tourists and non-tourists such as community members and local residents to their games, allowing for a shared cultural experience for those attending (Han et al., 2015).

New Zealand Sport Tourism Context

The links between sport and tourism in New Zealand is longstanding, as teams travel regionally, nationally and internationally to engage in sport competitions, serving as important sources of information and imagery related to the places they represent (Higham & Hall, 2003). Sports institutes provide training facilities for a range of sporting disciplines that are commonly developed with association with tertiary education institutes (Higham & Hall, 2003). Wider education services such as Massey University provides the opportunity for elite level training and match preparation for teams such as the New Zealand All Blacks, Sevens, Black Ferns, secondary school rugby teams, university teams and games (Higham & Hall, 2003). Event tourism is closely associated with sport tourism and was first mentioned in 1987 by the New Zealand tourist and publicity department, who reported that “event tourism is an important and rapidly growing segment of international tourism” (Getz & Page, 2016, p. 597). New Zealand’s interest in hosting sporting events has the potential to raise their international profile by promoting the country as an attractive tourist destination in the short and long term, with the country hosting events such as the 2000 and 2021 America’s Cup, 1987 and 2011 Rugby World Cup and the 2023 FIFA Women’s World Cup (Hall, 1997; Nishio, 2013; Orams & Brons, 1999; Tourism New Zealand, 2022)

2.9. Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a foundation of the currently available literature on six key components of campus tourism identified in an initial scoping review and presented by Hall (2007) that included: visiting friends and relatives (VFR), educational tourism, business tourism, hospitality, cultural and heritage tourism, and sport tourism. These components were then used to divide up the relevant literature relating to the identified topic. However, it is important to emphasise that these different forms of tourism both generate and attract tourists, suggesting that the Hall figure requires a more dynamic component. From evaluating the

numerous articles on the identified themes, it is evident that there is a clear gap in research on student related tourism and VFR.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0. Methodology

This chapter identifies the methods used for undertaking a systematic literature review that includes the formulation of review questions, development of protocol, literature search and an assessment of studies attempting to integrate empirical data for the purpose of uncovering evidence. Systematic reviews are a commonly used research method in behavioural, health and social sciences (Roen et al., 2006), and are increasingly being applied throughout marketing research papers (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006; Rowley & Keegan, 2020; Truong & Dang, 2017). A systematic review investigates and reviews a pre-specified eligibility criteria to correlate and synthesise relevant research to answer a given research question (Higgins et al., 2008; Moher et al., 2009; Moher et al., 2015; Russell et al., 1996). Systematic literature reviews seek to systematically search for, appraise and synthesise relevant research evidence, that adheres to predefined guidelines on how to conduct a systematic review (Higgins et al., 2008), and can be defined as follows (Table 6).

Table 6: Systematic Review Definitions

Author	Definition
Moher et al. (2009, p. 874)	“A systematic review is a review of a clearly formulated question that uses systematic and explicit methods to identify, select, and critically appraise relevant research, and to collect and analyze data from the studies that are included in the review.”
Jesson et al. (2011, p. 4)	“Systematic reviews provide a systematic, transparent means for gathering, synthesising and appraising the findings of studies on a particular topic or question. The aim is to minimise the bias associated with single studies and non systematic reviews”
Needleman (2002, p. 6)	“A systematic review can be defined as a review of a clearly formulated question that attempts to minimize bias using systematic and explicit methods to identify, select, critically appraise and summarize relevant research”

Moher et al. (2015, p. 3).

“A systematic review attempts to collate all relevant evidences that fits pre-specified eligibility criteria to answer a specific research question. It uses explicit, systematic methods to minimise bias in the identification, selection, synthesis, and summary of studies. When done well, this provides reliable findings from which conclusions can be drawn and decisions made. The key characteristics of a systematic review are (a) a clearly stated set of objectives with an explicit, reproducible methodology; (b) a systematic search that attempts to identify all studies that would meet the eligibility criteria; (c) an assessment of the validity of the findings of the included studies (e.g., assessment of risk of bias and confidence in cumulative estimates); and (d) systematic presentation, and synthesis, of the characteristics and findings of the included studies”

3.1. Overview

A systematic literature review is based on a set of pre-defined criteria, used to assess the validity of research, conducted using a pre-defined protocol that is designed to draw conclusions from a range of studies (Higgins et al., 2008; Moher et al., 2015; Tranfield et al., 2003). Systematic reviews help compile conflicting and complicated results of different types of studies by making them more accessible and concise (Bambra, 2011), as compiling and reviewing the findings of familiar studies, increases the clarity and applicability. This process represents great value as it is often difficult to correlate and comprehend substantial amounts of information in a particular field (Mulrow, 1994). Systematic reviews can integrate multiple different bodies of research into a single entry helping to combat information overload, occurring from attempting to synthesize articles individually (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). Systematic literature reviews “serve as base/platform/lens for future research as they identify research gaps and suggest exciting new directions for a given field of research, many times with reference to Methodology, Construct/Variables, Theory and Contexts” (Paul & Rowley, 2020, p. 235).

3.2. Rationale

The research method was selected as there is a clear need for the establishment of a clear base of information on student VFR tourism. A thorough examination of currently available and relevant literature discovered, that as far as can be ascertained a systematic literature review has not been conducted on this specific research topic that would appear to be essential for future research, as it will help identify and reduce large quantities of information into “palatable pieces for digestion” (Mulrow, 1994, p. 597). Therefore, this thesis aims to examine previous research to help further understand the relationships between university students and VFR.

3.3. Development of Review Protocol

Systematic reviews are synonymous with their use of rigorous and accurate protocols that leads to statistically reliable results. The subsequent sections provide a detailed account and discussion of the process the researcher went through to develop and refine the systematic literature review, and meta-analysis that consist of a “17-item checklist intended to facilitate the preparation and reporting of a robust protocol for the systematic review” (Moher et al., 2015, p. 1).

3.3.1. Thematic Review

A thematic literature review is often used to summarise, critique, and synthesise relevant articles that cover the topic of interest, while not necessarily using a systematic methodology of a given subject (Campbell et al., 2014). Thematic synthesis enables us to “generate hypotheses which could be tested against the findings of the quantitative studies” (Thomas & Harden, 2008, p. 2). For this reason, a thematic literature review was carried out in (Chapter 2), assisting in informing and defining the relative scope of the research field, as well as identifying sub groups, theories, methods, outcomes and gaps in knowledge (Tranfield et al., 2003). The subsequent knowledge gained was then used to assist with the development of the research protocol, search terms, and appropriate database to search.

3.3.2. Expert Panel

A crucial step in a systematic review is the utilization of a review panel, also known as advisory groups (Bambra, 2011). Expert panels are employed across academic fields to help guide the review process to produce a high-quality review that can become relevant and

applicable for researchers interested in the topic (Pittaway & Cope, 2007). Expert panels consist of individuals with expertise in the chosen topic of interest who are working in or have experienced work in the relevant fields of the research topic (Lasserson et al., 2019; Tranfield et al., 2003). Advisory groups and or expert panels offer a convenient approach for incorporating consumers and other related stakeholders as they will often have knowledge of existing studies, definitions, and organisations that can help inform on key review decisions (Armstrong et al., 2011; Lasserson et al., 2019). Meetings and consultations were also arranged with the supervisory team to help inform and provide feedback on the scope of the project and research questions.

3.3.3. Incorporation of Grey Literature

Grey literature is produced for a wide range of reasons and is often not subject to the peer-review or journal application process, as these studies are often published by non-academic agencies as mentioned in GreyNet (2013, p. 1)

“Grey literature is a field in library and information science that deals with the production, distribution, and access to multiple document types produced on all levels of government, academics, business, and organization in electronic and print formats not controlled by commercial publishing i.e. where publishing is not the primary activity of the producing body.”

In many cases this form of academic work is under no obligation, deadline or pressure to publish in academic journals, unlike other academic papers that are subjected to the peer review process (Adams et al., 2017). It is suggested by Paez (2017) that grey literature helps present a balanced view of literature, reducing publication bias. Grey literature can be effective when used in conjunction with academic journal articles, to ensure valid and reliable contributions when conducting a review (Adams et al., 2017; Haddaway et al., 2015; Hartling et al., 2017).

3.4. Conducting the Review

Systematic reviews are not bound by any universal academically approved process for conducting a literature review and meta-analysis protocol, however scholars are in agreement on the core characteristics a systematic review must contain to be considered effective

(Liberati et al., 2009; Moher et al., 2015; Thomas et al., 2019; Wilson et al., 2014). The general rules that should underpin all systematic reviews are as follows.

- Systematic literature reviews are transparent throughout the duration of the study.
- A framework for how the review is to be conducted is presented with a pre-defined criteria and reproducible methodology.
- An exhaustive search is carried out in a reproducible manner to recognise all studies relevant to the field of research that meets the criteria.
- Evaluation of the validity of the research findings will adhere to the outlined inclusion criteria.
- The report will include a synthesised presentation of the research findings, achieved by evaluating individual articles trends and conclusions.

3.4.1. Research Objectives

The purpose of this review is to provide a comprehensive, systematic review on university student related VFR tourism, generating insight into the relationship, and highlight potential areas for further investigation. The framework that will be applied, aims to address the impact of bias, by providing a transparent account of synthesised knowledge. To meet this objective, the systematic review will provide an exhaustive overview of knowledge in an empirical fashion that answers three key research questions.

1. How do identified article characteristics such as authorship, publishing year and journal outlets describe the body of university student related VFR literature?
2. What key themes are present across the identified articles that impact the relationship of university student related VFR tourism?
3. How can understanding the attractions and generators of university student related VFR inform future research and tourism destinations?

3.4.2. Framework – PRISMA-P

An effective systematic review can synthesise relevant research findings across all fields in academia, while also revealing unique areas that require future research (Denyer & Neely, 2004). Previously the absence of a clear and concise structure has been questioned when developing a systematic review (Grant & Booth, 2009). To combat the quality of reporting an

international group developed a guide called the *Quality of Reporting of Meta-Analyses* (QUOROM) in 1996, that helped address the previously fragmented approaches on reporting meta-analysis. In 2009 the guideline was amended, leading to the development of the *Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis* (PRISMA) guideline (Moher et al., 2009), to help guide higher quality systematic reviews and to encourage the use of a transparent methodological process free from bias (Liberati et al., 2009). In 2015 the PRISMA guideline was developed into the PRISMA-P framework which focuses on a 17-point checklist, that facilitates the preparation for a systematic review protocol (Moher et al., 2015). This research will use the PRISMA-P reporting checklist (Table 7) in conjunction with the PRISMA-P explanation and elaboration checklist (Page. et al., 2021), as the guiding framework for the review.

Table 7: PRISMA-P Checklist

<u>Section/Topic</u>	<u>Item #</u>	<u>Checklist item</u>
ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION		
Title		
Identification	1a	Identify the report as a protocol systematic review
Update	1b	If the protocol is for an update of a previous systematic review, identify as such
Registration	2	If registered, provide the name of the registry (e.g., PROSPERO) and registration number
Authors		
Contact	3a	Provide the name, institutional affiliation, and email address of all protocol authors; provide physical mailing address of corresponding author.
Contributions	3b	Describe contributions of protocol authors and identify the guarantor of the review
Amendments	4	If the protocol represents an amendment of a previously completed or published protocol, identify as such and list changes; otherwise, state plan for documenting important protocol amendments.
Support		
Sources	5a	Indicate sources of financial or other support for the review

Sponsor	5b	Provide name for the review funder and/or sponsor
Role of sponsor/funder	5c	Describe the roles of funder(s), sponsor(s), and/or institution(s), if any, in developing the protocol
INTRODUCTION		
Rationale	6	Describe the rationale for the review in the context of what is already known
Objectives	7	Provide an explicit statement of the question(s) the review will address with reference to participants, interventions, comparators, and outcomes (PICO).
METHODS		
Eligibility criteria	8	Specify the study characteristics (e.g., PICO, study design, setting, time frame) and report characteristics (e.g., years considered, language, publication status) to be used as criteria for eligibility for the review
Information sources	9	Describe all intended information sources (e.g., electronic databases, contact with study authors, trial registers, or other grey literature sources) with planned dates of coverage
Search strategy	10	Present draft of search strategy to be used for at least one electronic database, including planned limits, such that it could be repeated
Study records		
Data Management	11a	Describe the mechanism(s) that will be used to manage records and data throughout the review
Selection process	11b	State the process that will be used for selecting studies (e.g., two independent reviewers) through each phase of the review (i.e., screening, eligibility, and inclusion in meta-analysis)
Data collection process	11c	Describe planned method of extracting data from reports (e.g., piloting forms, done independently, in duplicate), any processes for obtaining and confirming data from investigators

Data items	12	List and define all variables for which data will be sought (e.g., PICO items, funding sources), any pre-planned data assumptions and simplifications
Outcomes and prioritization	13	List and define all outcomes for which data will be sought, including prioritization of main and additional outcomes, with rationale
Risk of bias in individual studies	14	Describe anticipated methods for assessing risk of bias of individual studies, including whether this will be done at the outcome of study level, or both; state how this information will be used in data synthesis
Data		
Synthesis	15a	Describe criteria under study data will be quantitatively synthesized
	15b	If data are appropriate for quantitative synthesis, describe planned summary measures, methods of handling data, and methods of combining data from studies, including any planned exploration of consistency (e.g., I^2 , Kendall's tau)
	15c	Describe any proposed additional analyses (e.g., sensitivity or subgroup analyses, meta-regression)
	15d	If quantitative synthesis is not appropriate, describe the type of summary planned
Meta-bias(es)	16	Specify any planned assessment of meta-bias(es) (e.g., publication bias across studies, selective reporting within studies)
Confidence in cumulative evidence	17	Describe how the strength of the body of evidence will be assessed (e.g., GRADE)

Source: Moher et al. (2015, p. 5)

3.4.3. Information Sources

For this research, Scopus was chosen as the sole database for the systematic literature review, as it is the largest index and citation database available, where every publication undergoes a rigorous review period to ensure the database is of a high standard (Borgel, 2020). The database was selected because of its extensive incorporation of marketing and tourism-based

literature as well as a variety of multi-disciplinary sources. Scopus met the identified requirements for accessibility and search filters, as it is one of the largest online peer-reviewed databases for literature. In conjunction with Scopus the search engine known as Google Scholar was considered, but disregarded as it failed to meet the requirements for this review, as “Google Scholar fails to deliver retrieval capabilities that allow a reviewer to search systematically with high levels of recall, precision, transparency, and reproducibility” (Gusenbauer & Haddaway, 2020, p. 211). Scopus is therefore the chosen database for this review as it allows for advanced search functions required for this systematic review.

3.4.4. Key Search Words

Through the initial process of conducting a thematic literature review, knowledge surrounding the key vocabularies and terms of phrase associated with VFR tourism, students and higher education institutions was established. This knowledge in conjunction with the advisory team and expert panel helped form the appropriate search words for this research. A combination of the words below, were used to develop search strings for the Scopus database.

Note the symbol “*” is used to search for extended forms of the word. i.e., “universit*”, universities.

VFR cluster:

“VFR travel”, “VFR travellers”, “VFR trips”, “VFR tourists”

Or

“VFR hosts”, “VFR accommodation”, “VFR hospitality”, “VFR travel hosts”

Or

“VFR output”, “VFR input”, “Tourism demand”

Or

“VFR behaviour”, “VFR experience”, “VFR social significance”

Or

“VFR”, “Visiting relatives”, “visiting friends”, “visiting friends and relatives”, “VFR definition”, “Friends”, “relatives”, “families”

Or

“VFR mobility”, “VFR tourism”, “VFR impact”

Or

“Host”, “Visitor”, “host-guest”, “destination”, “life”

Or

“marketing”, “tourism marketing”

AND

Higher education cluster:

“Student”, “Students”

Or

“International”, “international studies”, “studies”

Or

“Student exchange”, “study abroad”, “Learning mobilities”, “Education”, “learning experience”, “learning destination”, “experiential learning”

Or

“Educational tourism”, “Business tourism”, “Cultural and Heritage Tourism”, “Sport tourism”

Or

“Campus”, “College”, “higher education”, “University”, “universities”, “educational institution”, “academy”, “institute”, “tertiary”, “tertiary education”, “tertiary students”

Or

“Higher education tourism”, “tourism industry”, “educational tourism”, “education tourism”, “educational travel”, “internationalisation of higher education”

AND

Mobilities cluster

“Mobilities”, “mobility”, “migration”

Or

“Motives for travel”, “foreign students”

Or

“Short term mobility”, “long term mobility”

Or

“Student mobility”, “Higher education mobility”, “learning mobility”, “cross border education”, “intercultural learning”

Or

“Domestic student mobility”, “international mobility”

Or

“Erasmus” (European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students)

AND

Tourism cluster

“tourism”, “tourist”, “travel”

“Tourist experience”, “travel tourism”, “domestic tourism”, “pleasure tourism”, “travel motivations”, “leisure tourism”, “seasonal tourism”

Or

“Travel behaviour”, “tourist experience”

Or

“Social tourism”, “domestic tourism”

AND

“Educational tourism”, “Business tourism”, “Cultural and Heritage Tourism”, “Sport tourism”

After reviewing the term selection above with the supervisory team, it was decided both the tourism cluster and mobilities were not required as they were already incorporated in elements of the search string for student VFR and were therefore disregarded, and an alternative more streamlined formulation was considered.

During the initial testing phase of the search string combinations, it was deemed that the most effective way to incorporate all the identified keywords was to use the following VFR cluster, as the initial document search on Scopus, as this provided a large pool of articles and is a central focus for this research. Previously identified keywords were then used to search within this initial document search string to provide 13 separate search results. The only restriction applied was to limit the search to English. The following includes the initial document search string and the subsequent keywords used to search within Scopus. This method was implemented as it was the most effective method to manage the number of publication results. An example of the search string used in SCOPUS is provided below.

Initial document search:

TITLE-ABS-KEY ("VFR" OR "visiting relatives" OR "visiting friends" OR "visiting friends and relatives")

Identified keywords used to search within the results from above:

"student*"
"study abroad"
"college"
"college AND sports"
"Universit*"
"erasmus"
"graduation"
"exchange*"
"campus"
"higher education*"
"university sports"
"tertiary AND education"
"homecoming"

An example of the final keyword search strings:

(TITLE-ABS-KEY ("VFR" OR "visiting relatives" OR "visiting friends" OR "visiting friends and relatives")) AND ("student*") AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English"))
(TITLE-ABS-KEY ("VFR" OR "Visiting relatives" OR "visiting friends" OR "visiting friends and relatives")) AND ("exchange*") AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English"))
(TITLE-ABS-KEY ("VFR" OR "Visiting relatives" OR "visiting friends" OR "visiting friends and relatives")) AND ("study abroad") AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English"))
(TITLE-ABS-KEY ("VFR" OR "Visiting relatives" OR "visiting friends" OR "visiting friends and relatives")) AND ("campus") AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English"))
(TITLE-ABS-KEY ("VFR" OR "Visiting relatives" OR "visiting friends" OR "visiting friends and relatives")) AND ("college") AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English"))
(TITLE-ABS-KEY ("VFR" OR "Visiting relatives" OR "visiting friends" OR "visiting friends and relatives")) AND ("higher education*") AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English"))
(TITLE-ABS-KEY ("VFR" OR "Visiting relatives" OR "visiting friends" OR "visiting friends and relatives")) AND ("college AND sports") AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English"))
(TITLE-ABS-KEY ("VFR" OR "Visiting relatives" OR "visiting friends" OR "visiting friends and relatives")) AND ("university sports") AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English"))
(TITLE-ABS-KEY ("VFR" OR "Visiting relatives" OR "visiting friends" OR "visiting friends and relatives")) AND ("Universit*") AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English"))
(TITLE-ABS-KEY ("VFR" OR "Visiting relatives" OR "visiting friends" OR "visiting friends and relatives")) AND ("tertiary AND education") AND (LIMIT TO (LANGUAGE, "English"))
(TITLE-ABS-KEY ("VFR" OR "Visiting relatives" OR "visiting friends" OR "visiting friends and relatives")) AND ("erasmus") AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English"))
(TITLE-ABS-KEY ("VFR" OR "visiting relatives" OR "visiting friends" OR "visiting friends and relatives")) AND ("homecoming") AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English"))
(TITLE-ABS-KEY ("VFR" OR "visiting relatives" OR "visiting friends" OR "visiting friends and relatives")) AND ("graduation") AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English"))

3.4.5. Eligibility Criteria

Articles retrieved from the database searches above are subjected to a screening process and review. For each step of the process articles are initially assessed, based on the selection criteria detailed in the following section. Following the initial screening, articles go through additional screening or are excluded based on their failure to meet specified criteria. This process was supported by the supervisory team.

3.4.6. Study Characteristics

Studies will be eligible for inclusion if they meet the following criteria:

- Present findings on VFR tourism, students, or higher education institutions as the primary focus of the research, studies that merely mention VFR in the literature will be excluded from the research.
- Use a population or participants that have been or are still involved in any aspect of student VFR tourism.
- The studies show no evidence of researcher bias that has altered the results presented. Other forms of bias may be less significant, such as individual opinions. These will be accounted for but may not lead to exclusion.
- The articles main text is in English, exceptions can be made where the English translation is available.
- The journal papers had to be available online and linked to tourism.
- The journal articles identified need to be full papers and peer reviewed.

There are no restrictions placed on publication time-period. This decision was made by the researcher as the change in available literature provides a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon and information available.

There are no restrictions placed on the study setting as VFR represents a worldwide interest to academics and tourism destinations.

There are no restrictions placed on the incorporation of different publication status or the type of research included, as previously stated the inclusion of grey literature can sometimes be beneficial as the primary objective of publication is often not the sole purpose (Schöpfel,

2010). To accurately represent the entire body of literature the systematic review will place no restrictions on publication status or type of publication.

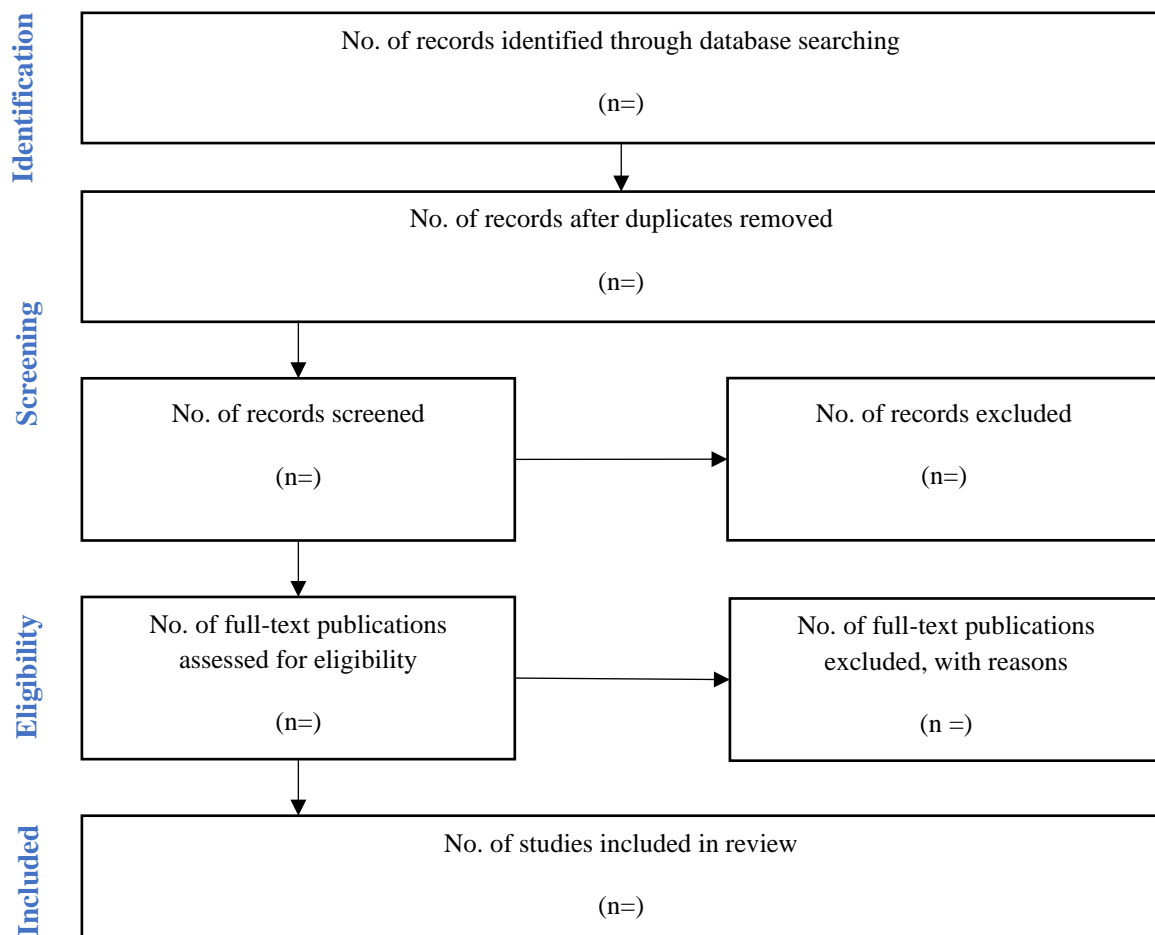
There are no restrictions placed on the methodologies used in any of the identified articles, as this reports focus is on synthesising currently available knowledge to create a more accurate concise collection of student VFR tourism literature.

3.4.7. Selection Process

From the keyword searches, article citations were downloaded to Endnote, for simplicity and ease of data storage. Once articles were identified, duplications were removed. This process was followed for any forwards and backwards reference screening if applicable. The selection process followed uses the PRISMA flowchart as the reporting framework (Figure 2).

- **Title and abstract screening:** The titles and abstracts of all articles undergo initial screening, to review the titles and abstracts against the outlined criteria. If the articles relevance is unclear, it will be included for further screening to determine its validity.
- **Retrieval and screening of full text articles:** Following the screening of articles titles and abstracts, full text copies of the remaining articles were obtained and further screened against the selection criteria.
- **Data extraction:** From the remaining texts, further data was extracted based on the studies population, characteristics, phenomenon in question, themes, and overall outcomes that could aid in understanding the researched phenomenon.
- **Study Appraisal:** Articles were reviewed and assessed on their quality and reliability. During this process articles were also scanned for any potential researcher bias present and, ultimately, how much it meets the selection criteria.
- **Data Analysis:** All information that has been extracted will be summarised. Available statistics were pooled and averaged of all relevant studies to highlight the effect and relationship of university student related VFR.

Figure 2: PRISMA Information Phase Flowchart



Source: Adapted from Page et al. (2021, p. 5)

3.5. Document Identification

Using the predefined search criteria for this report, Scopus was searched using different combinations of the final search strings to identify all relevant literature that has been peer-reviewed on the identified research topics. Table 8 represents the number of articles found at the time of conducting this research (13th September 2022) by keyword search string, that were all subsequently downloaded from Scopus into Excel documents for further screening.

Table 8: Articles Identified Through Final Scopus Search

Keyword Search	No. Publications downloaded
Campus	40
College	202
College and Sport	21
ERASMUS	19

Exchange*	93
Graduation	9
Higher education*	27
Homecoming	28
Student*	156
Study abroad	10
Tertiary and education	14
Universit*	1196
University sports	1

3.5.1. Keywords

To ensure a sizeable number of articles would be returned from the initial search string used on Scopus, the only limitation applied was that the text had to be available in English so the researcher could interpret the data. The 13 keywords utilised all meet the requirements of the research, having been informed by the initial thematic literature review, and were deemed an appropriate method for dividing up VFR search strings in Scopus.

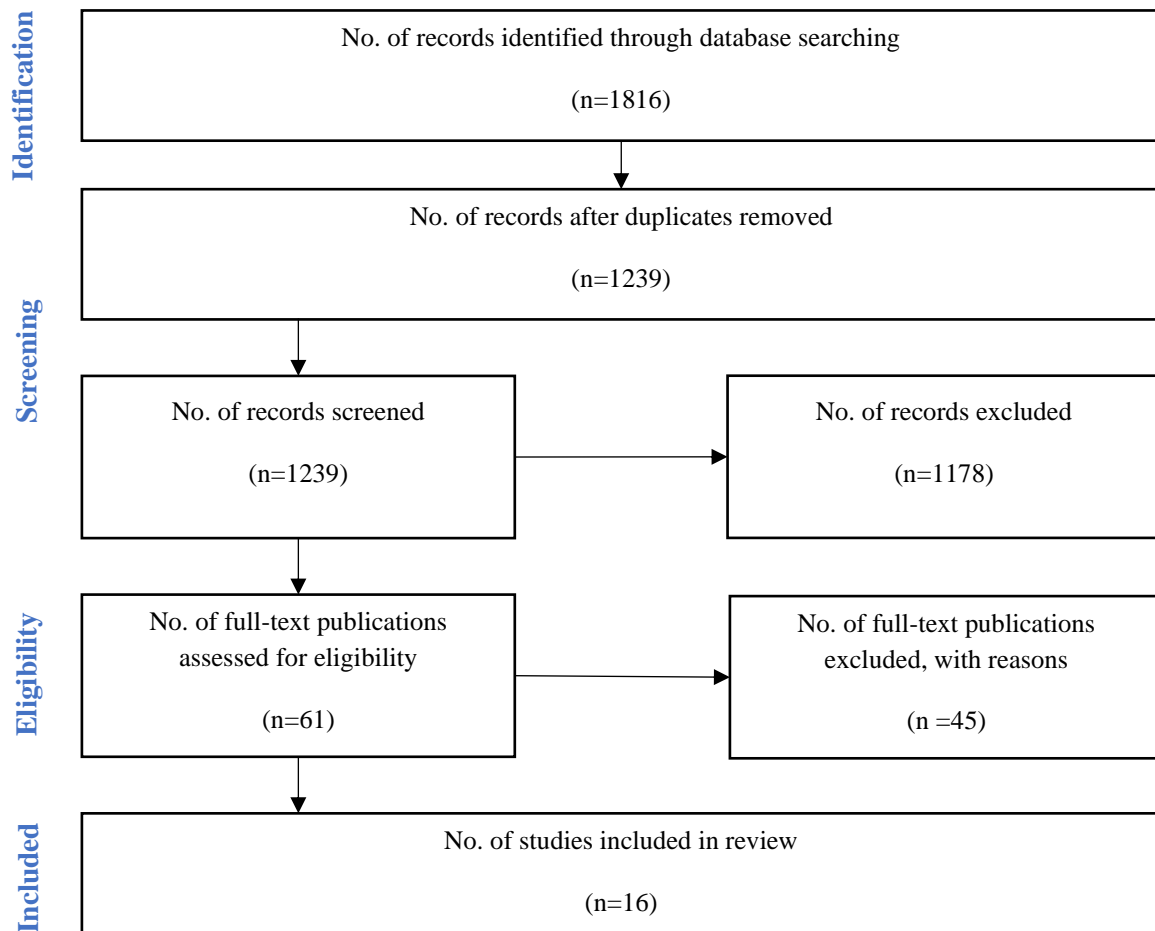
3.5.2. Document Eligibility

Following the search, 1816 articles were downloaded from Scopus into excel spreadsheets with data retaining to the article's citation information, bibliographical information, abstract and keywords. Duplications were then identified, recorded, and removed from the corresponding data files. Post the duplication process each article was submitted to an initial screening process, pertaining to three key factors; title, abstract, and keywords to determine its suitability for inclusion and coded with one of the following *Screening (Include=1, Exclude=0, Maybe=2)*. It was concluded that articles would be included if it was apparent, they incorporated, assessed, described, or examined an element of Student VFR and higher education institutions. In cases where this was uncertain, the article required additional full text screening to ascertain the overall purpose.

Following this initial screening process, full text copies of the articles were located, downloaded, and read to access its eligibility for the final review and was coded accordingly, *Full Text Eligibility (Include=1, Exclude= 0)*. The researcher also took this time to record the relevant PDFs, article's objective, methodology, results, sample size, conclusion, and any additional notes worth recording at the time of review to save double handling.

3.5.3. PRISMA Flow Diagram

Student VFR Prisma Flow Diagram



3.5.4. Articles Included in Review

Table 9: Articles Included in the Review by Keyword Search String

Keyword Search String	Articles Included
Student* Campus Higher education* Universit* Tertiary and education	Barnes, J., & Rogerson, C. M. (2021). Student-centred VFR travel: evidence from Johannesburg. In C.M. Rogerson, & J.M. Rogerson <i>Urban Tourism in the Global South</i> (pp. 173-191). Springer.
Student* exchange* higher education* Universit* Tertiary and education	Chan, C. S., Pikkemaat, B., Agapito, D., & Zhou, Q. (2022). The connection between VFR experience based and sociocultural dimensions of international students and mainland Chinese students. <i>International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research</i> , 16(1), 276-293.
Student* Study abroad Higher education* Universit* erasmus graduation	El Gamil, R. (2021). Exploring the Role of Egyptian International Students as a Generator of VFR Tourism to Turkey. <i>International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Systems</i> , 14(2).

Student* Exchange College Higher education* Universit* Tertiary and education	Huang, R., & Tian, X. (2013). An Investigation of Travel Behavior of Chinese International Students in the UK. <i>Journal of China Tourism Research</i> , 9(3), 277-291.
Student* College Universit* Tertiary and education	Hughes, K., Wang, J., & Shu, M. (2015). Exploring the travel patterns, preferences and recommendations of Chinese university students living in Australia. <i>Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management</i> , 23, 12-22.
Student* Exchange Study abroad College Higher education* Universit* erasmus	Jarvis, J. (2020). 'Study in Estonia': the strategic implications of hosting international students on Estonia's tourism economy. <i>Journal of Baltic Studies</i> , 51(2), 261-274.
Student* Higher education* Universit* homecoming	Kashiwagi, S., Nagai, H., & Furutani, T. (2018). VFR travel generated by international students: The case of Japanese students in Australia. <i>Tourism: An International Interdisciplinary Journal</i> , 66(1), 89-103.
Student* Study abroad Campus College Higher education* College and sports Universit* graduation	Lee, C.-F., & King, B. (2016). International Students in Asia: Travel Behaviors and Destination Perceptions. <i>Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research</i> , 21(4), 457-
Student* College Higher education* Universit*	Michael, I., Armstrong, A., & King, B. (2004). The travel behaviour of international students: The relationship between studying abroad and their choice of tourist destinations. <i>Journal of Vacation Marketing</i> , 10(1), 57-66.
Student* Higher education* Universit* Homecoming	Petry, T., Pikkemaat, B., Chan, C.-S., & Scholl-Grisseemann, U. (2022). Understanding students as hosts: moving beyond sightseeing. <i>International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research</i> , 16(1), 7-19.
Student* College Higher education* Universit*	Ray, G., & Wakelin-Theron, N. (2018). Understanding a tourism culture amongst students to advance domestic tourism in South Africa. <i>African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure</i> , 7(4), 1-13.
Student* Universit* Homecoming	Seaton, T., & Tie, C. (2015). VFR Travel Research: are relatives friends? disaggregating VFR travel 1994–2014. In E. Backer & B. King (Eds.), <i>International Perspectives</i> (pp. 28-45). Channel View Publications.
Student* Universit* graduation	Shanka, T., & Taylor, R. (2003). International student graduation ceremonies: An opportunity for local tourism services providers. <i>Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research</i> , 8(2), 13-22.
Student* Higher education* Universit* Graduation	Taylor, R., Shanka, T., & Pope, J. (2004). Investigating the significance of VFR visits to international students. <i>Journal of Marketing for Higher Education</i> , 14(1), 61-77.
Student* Exchange Higher education* Universit* Tertiary and education graduation	Tran, M. N. D., Moore, K., & Shone, M. C. (2018). Interactive mobilities: conceptualising VFR tourism of international students. <i>Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management</i> , 35, 85-91.

Student College Higher education* Universit* graduation	Tran, M. N. D., Moore, K., & Steel, G. (2020). VFR tourism and intersecting global mobilities: experiences of international PhD students in New Zealand. <i>Tourism Management Perspectives</i> , 35, 100681.
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3.6. Statements of Ethics

This research adheres to the standards of the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee. There was no human intervention at any stage throughout the research, as the primary method exclusively uses secondary data collection and is considered low risk. However, it is up to the researcher to represent the authors of the identified articles and their work responsibly and respectfully. Approval was granted by the Human Research Ethics Chair over correspondence.

3.7. Chapter Summary

This chapter outlines the rationale and purpose for choosing a systematic literature review as the chosen methodology for this research. A comprehensive explanation of the process used to develop a systematic review was also established. The PRISMA-P model was introduced as a guiding review, and the subsequent criteria that all articles will be screened against. Individual diagrams and tables outlining the results of the screening process and review process is presented and discussed from start to finish.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0. Results and Discussion

The following chapter presents the findings of this systematic review in two distinct sections. The first section discusses the characteristics of the final articles identified through the systematic review. The second section examines the overarching aim of this research, which is to review the currently available literature on university student related VFR tourism and assess the core concepts and frameworks that help to explain the key attractions and generators of this relationship. This is achieved through outlining the key themes found in the identified articles, and by analysing and reporting on the paper's findings and discussions, to help determine the level of meaningful contribution each article has to the research question.

4.1. Article Characteristics

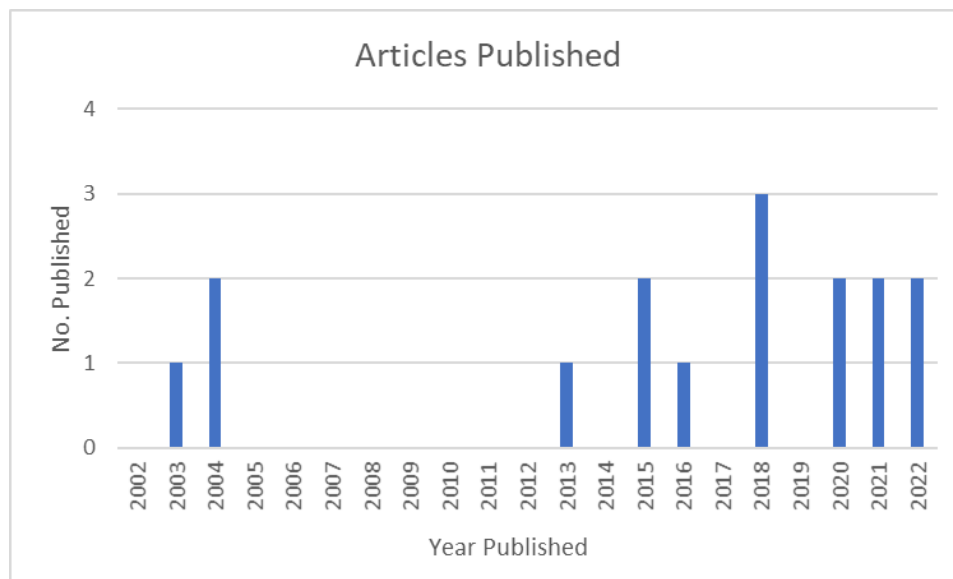
The characteristics summarised in this section aim to fulfil research objective one: How do identified article characteristics such as authorship, publishing year, and journal outlets describe the body of university student related VFR literature? As part of the final review stage, relevant information from all the identified articles was compiled into a comprehensive excel document containing, year of publication, journal outlet, authorship, research location, university affiliations, subjects of interest, research methodology and the overall goal of the research. This information alone would not be sufficient to meet the objectives, therefore the data was analysed to reveal trends, potential gaps, and limitations to provide further insight into the relationship between university student related VFR, that will allow for meaningful conclusions to be drawn.

4.1.1. Year of Publication

From the sixteen articles included in the final review, there has been a clear increase in published articles from 2003 to 2022, especially post 2013, as shown in Figure 3. The oldest article identified in the review was published in 2003 by Shanka and Taylor, which was the only article published that year. Two additional articles were published in 2004 and following this was an 8-year gap in publications from 2005 until 2013. This may have occurred as relative to its size as a tourist market, VFR research is widely neglected and underestimated, even though it is a significant form of tourism. As Backer (2009, p. 2) states, "VFR travel remains well-known but not known well." After a one-year gap in 2013 there was a total of

three articles published from 2015 through to 2016. The largest amount of literature on student VFR was published from 2018 to 2022, as more than half of the identified articles in this review were published during this period. This may be a result of VFR tourism gaining global recognition (Backer & King, 2015b), as well as a growth in interest in university related tourism.

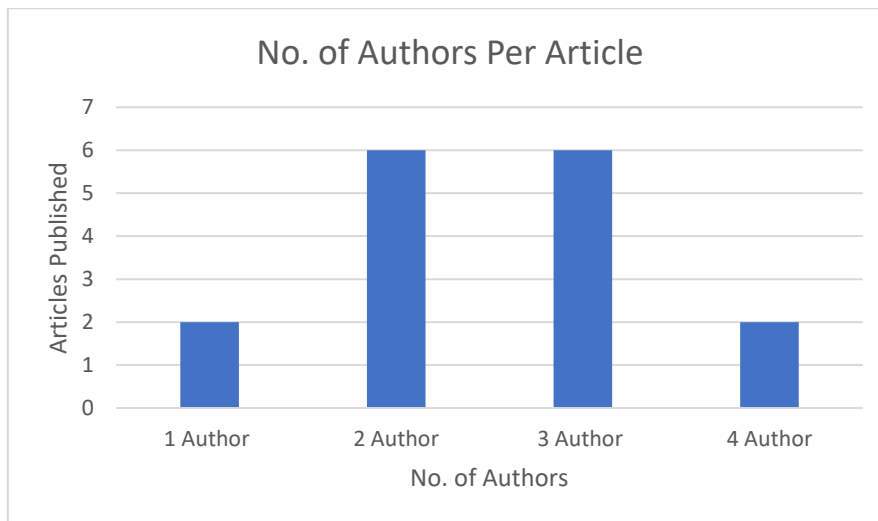
Figure 3: Publishing Date Characteristics



4.1.2. Authorship

The literature examined in this review was primarily written by two or more authors. With only two articles published by a single author (Figure 4). Just 12.5% of the examined literature was published by a single author. Publications with two or three collaborations each contributed 37.5% with the remaining 12.5% comprising of four authors.

Figure 4: Summary of Authorship Characteristics.



These findings can be somewhat expected as the research question overlaps with different authors expertise (Backer, 2015). A key element of research collaboration is that it allows for the sharing of ideas, as more than one person is looking into the quality, accuracy and meaning of the results, helping to increase scientific reliability and probability of success (Katz & Martin, 1997; Kumar & Ratnavelu, 2016; Melin, 2000). Modern research is becoming increasingly complex and requires a diverse range of skills, as according to Katz and Martin (1997, p. 14) “if two or more researchers collaborate, there is a greater probability that between them they will possess the necessary range of techniques.” Multiple research fields including marketing have seen substantial increases in co-authorship and research collaborations reinforcing the presented benefits (Brown et al., 2006; Henriksen, 2016).

These findings are reinforced by the initial thematic literature review, that revealed most published articles on the segments of VFR tourism had some level of collaboration present. VFR can prove to be highly complex in understanding as revealed by King and Dwyer (2015, p. 55) “VFR is often not the sole reason for travel but commonly involves a combination of motives that, when pursued at a destination, results in participation in activities that extend beyond VFR.” Illustrating the need for additional research on VFR relationships, motives and how attractions and generators impact these decisions.

4.1.3. Research Affiliations, and Collaborations.

The geographical locations characteristics presented in Table 10 is based on the information present in the identified articles. From the sixteen articles generated in this study, eleven respective country affiliations are identified, with some authors having multiple affiliations to geographical locations.

Table 10: Author by Country of Affiliation

Country Affiliation	No. of Publications	Authors
Australia	5	Hughes et al. (2015) Jarvis (2020) Michael et al. (2004) Shanka and Taylor (2003) Taylor et al. (2004)
Austria	2	Chan et al. (2022) Petry et al. (2022)
China	3	Chan et al. (2022) Lee and King (2016) Petry et al. (2022)
Egypt	1	El Gamil (2021)
Japan	1	Kashiwagi et al. (2018)
New Zealand	2	Tran et al. (2018) Tran et al. (2020)
Portugal	1	Chan et al. (2022)
Singapore	1	Chan et al. (2022)
South Africa	2	Barnes and Rogerson (2021) Ray and Wakelin-Theron (2018)
Taiwan	1	Lee and King (2016)
United Kingdom	2	Huang and Tian (2013) Seaton and Tie (2015)

A key finding from this characteristic analysis is the global distribution of publications, reinforcing the notion that VFR tourism is a global phenomenon. An important element worth mentioning is the divide between publications in developed versus developing countries. Less than 20% of the publications reviewed in this study were conducted in developing countries with many of the publications representing a dominant Westernised culture. However, further research in a developing country context is essential, as “cities expand and become more diverse the demand and opportunities for these types of travel experiences, and the multi-purpose travel opportunities they bring, will rise accordingly” (Griffin & Dimanche, 2017, p. 108).

Some key predictions for future growth of VFR travel for urban communities include the role of increasing immigration, changing political environments, VFR demand, family evolution,

changing world order, and climate change, which have all contributed to the growing travel opportunities for future cultural connection (Dwyer et al., 2014; Griffin & Dimanche, 2017).

4.1.4. Research Location, Study Population, and Size

Understanding key elements of the samples included in the texts is critical to gain any inferences on the identified study populations. The countries identified in Table 11 summarise the research location of the sixteen texts, as explicitly mentioned in the article itself or by the authors university affiliation. Based on this, nine countries are represented across the sixteen publications included in this review.

Table 11: Key Text Information

Author	Study population	Research location	Sample Size (useable responses)
Barnes and Rogerson (2021)	Undergraduate students	University of Johannesburg	n=161
Chan et al. (2022)	The study consisted of non-local undergraduate and postgraduate students on campus	Chinese University of Hong Kong	n=26
El Gamil (2021)	Egyptian international students	Turkey's universities	n=176
Huang and Tian (2013)	Chinese international students	United Kingdom	n=321
Hughes et al. (2015)	Undergraduate and postgraduate Chinese students	University of Queensland, Australia.	n=224
Jarvis (2020)	International students	Estonia	n=289
Kashiwagi et al. (2018)	Japanese students	Australia	n=26
Lee and King (2016)	International students	Taiwan.	n=551
Michael et al. (2004)	International university students	Higher education institutions in Melbourne, Australia	n=219
Petry et al. (2022)	University students	Austria	n=307
Ray and Wakelin-Theron (2018)	University students	Gauteng Comprehensive University, based in Johannesburg	n=90
Seaton and Tie (2015)	VFR visitors	Kent County Council, United Kingdom	n=1299 & n=672
Shanka and Taylor (2003)	International students who graduated from the university in the past few years.	Western Australia	n=216
Taylor et al. (2004)	Undergraduate and graduate international students	One of the four public universities in Western Australia	n=296
Tran et al. (2018)	n/a	New Zealand	n/a
Tran et al. (2020)	International PhD students	New Zealand universities	n=419

4.1.5. Research Method

This section reviews the research methods employed by the researchers to identify any patterns, strengths, or limitations associated with their chosen methodology. The identification of research methods present in the current literature was a relatively simple process as every article examined stated their data gathering process and corresponding evaluation.

From the sixteen articles identified, five different research methods were used as the primary data gathering method (Table 12). Four papers employed a mixed methods approach. Including, Petry et al. (2022) who utilised a mix methods approach to derive a deeper empirical understanding, through a quantitative survey and qualitative semi-structured interviews, Tran et al. (2020) utilised quantitative surveys, qualitative focus groups and developed a conceptual framework, Barnes and Rogerson (2021) adopted the use of both qualitative focus groups, structured interview surveys, and a case study, while Seaton and Tie (2015) utilised two online surveys and a focus group to gain further understanding of VFR tourism behaviour.

The most employed methods by authors were surveys, used in thirteen of the identified sixteen articles analysed. Interviews were the second most used, appearing in four papers with two papers developing a conceptual framework. Three papers employed the use of focus groups, and one utilised a case study. Most methods are deployed to investigate the relationship between university students and VFR and the connection this phenomenon has to tourism and the involvement of higher education institutions.

Table 12: Research Methods Employed

Research Method	No.	Authors
Case study	1	Barnes and Rogerson (2021)
Conceptual framework	2	Tran et al. (2018) Tran et al. (2020)
Focus group	3	Barnes and Rogerson (2021) Seaton and Tie (2015) Tran et al. (2020)
Interview	4	Barnes and Rogerson (2021) Chan et al. (2022) Kashiwagi et al. (2018) Petry et al. (2022)
Survey / Questionnaire	13	Barnes and Rogerson (2021) Huang and Tian (2013) Hughes et al. (2015) Jarvis (2020)

Lee and King (2016)
 Michael et al. (2004)
 El Gamil (2021)
 Petry et al. (2022)
 Ray and Wakelin-Theron (2018)
 Seaton and Tie (2015)
 Shanka and Taylor (2003)
 Taylor et al. (2004)
 Tran et al. (2020)

Surveys were one of the most prevalent methods in the identified studies, and are widely used across the field of marketing (Hulland et al., 2018), as they can be used to obtain information about the characteristics, actions or opinions of a large sample population (Glasow, 2005; Glock & Bennett, 1967; Pinsonneault & Kraemer, 1993). Survey research is used to

answer questions that have been raised, to solve problems that have been posed or observed, to assess needs and set goals, to determine whether or not specific objectives have been met, to establish baselines against which future comparisons can be made, to analyse trends across time, and generally, to describe what exists, in what amount, and in what context. (Isaac & Michael, 1995, p. 136).

Marketing scholars recognise the benefits of employing a mixed methods approach of both qualitative and quantitative studies and are successfully being applied and reported in mainstream marketing journals (Harrison & Reilly, 2011). According to Johnson et al. (2007, p. 123) “Mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches.”

4.1.6. Journal Outlet Representation

This section seeks to address the journal and outlet representations of the identified sixteen articles. Table 13 reveals a total of thirteen different journals represented across the sixteen articles present, with only three journals featuring two article publications.

Table 13: Journal and Book Chapter

Journal	No.	Authors
<i>African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure</i>	1	Ray and Wakelin-Theron (2018)
<i>Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research</i>	2	Lee and King (2016) Shanka and Taylor (2003)
<i>GeoJournal</i>	1	Barnes and Rogerson (2021)

<i>International Journal of Culture, Tourism, and Hospitality Research</i>	2	Chan et al. (2022) Petry et al. (2022)
<i>International Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Systems</i>	1	El Gamil (2021)
<i>Journal of Baltic Studies</i>	1	Jarvis (2020)
<i>Journal of China Tourism Research</i>	1	Huang and Tian (2013)
<i>Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management</i>	2	Hughes et al. (2015) Tran et al. (2018)
<i>Journal of Marketing for Higher Education</i>	1	Taylor et al. (2004)
<i>Journal of Vacation Marketing</i>	1	Michael et al. (2004)
<i>Tourism</i>	1	Kashiwagi et al. (2018)
<i>Tourism Management Perspectives</i>	1	Tran et al. (2020)
Book chapter		
VFR Travel Research: International Perspectives	1	Seaton and Tie (2015)

The main finding established, is that most journal outlets are tourism focused, which was expected given that VFR is a leading subsection of tourism, however the inclusion of *GeoJournal*, and the *Journal of Baltic Studies* respectively, indicate the global impact the relationship has across disciplines (Backer & Morrison, 2015).

During the initial screening process of the review, it became apparent that the relationship between university students and VFR, was used for research on the spread of disease and health, which was ultimately beyond the scope of this review. But this is a key point worth noting, as the phenomenon can be used as a useful relationship to conduct cross disciplinary academic research. A content analysis conducted by Griffin (2013) found that a quarter of all VFR articles were found in medical journals, focusing on disease control.

4.1.7. Research Purpose

This section reviews the nature and individual focus, objective and purpose of the research being carried out. For most of the papers the purpose was either stated in the initial summary of the research or abstract, but if not, the corresponding data was extracted from other sections of the article, like the method or introduction. The corresponding author and purpose of their research is shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Research Studies Purpose

Author	Purpose
Barnes and Rogerson (2021, p. 174)	“The focus is on student-centred VFR travel in South Africa.”
Chan et al. (2022, p. 276)	“This paper aims to present the host experience of student hosts in Hong Kong.”
El Gamil (2021, p. 66)	“This paper explores the importance of Egyptian international students in stimulating VFR tourism to Turkey.”
Huang and Tian (2013, p. 277)	“The aim of this article is to examine, from a tourism perspective, the experience of Chinese international students in the UK.”
Hughes et al. (2015, p. 12)	“Using Chinese tertiary students studying in Australia as participants, this research explores their preferences for, and perceptions of, Australian tourism products.”
Jarvis (2020, p. 265)	“The research objectives were to evaluate if the benefits of hosting international students previously identified elsewhere also applied to Estonia.”
Kashiwagi et al. (2018, p. 89)	“To extend our understanding of the international VFR market, this study focused on Japanese international students studying in Australia.”
Lee and King (2016, p. 457)	“This study investigates the incidence of international student travel in Taiwan.”
Michael et al. (2004, p. 57)	“This paper examines why international students opt for their chosen study destination.”
Petry et al. (2022, p. 7)	“This study aims to address students as hosts of VFR travel and analyzes differences in the visitor and the host segment.”
Ray and Wakelin-Theron (2018, p. 1)	“This study focuses on higher education institution (HEI) students - with the view to understanding how tourism has evolved over the years and the part played by the youth in consuming domestic tourism in South Africa.”
Seaton and Tie (2015, p. 28)	“This chapter examines the charge of neglect in relation to an issue that appeared on VFR agendas in the 1990s.”
Shanka and Taylor (2003, p. 13)	“This purpose of this paper is to examine the significance of travel when associated with graduation ceremonies for the international student cohort.”
Taylor et al. (2004, p. 63)	“This paper explores the economic contribution and importance of family and friends’ visits (VFR) of international students studying at a leading university located in Perth, Western Australia (WA).”
Tran et al. (2018, p. 85)	“This paper investigates a specific form of tourism in which international students are involved: Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) tourism.”
Tran et al. (2020, p. 1)	“This article examines the VFR tourism behaviour of international PhD students in New Zealand.”

4.1.8. Summary of Research Findings and Arguments

This section presents a summary of some key findings and conclusions made by the identified authors in their research. These findings are obtained throughout the text, often appearing in the results or conclusion section. Table 15 provides a snapshot of some of the key findings present in the sixteen identified articles. A more in-depth representation of all the findings is presented in section 4.2.

Table 15: Research Studies Key Findings

Author	Main Findings and Arguments
Barnes and Rogerson (2021, p. 186)	“This research contributes to the limited international scholarship about students as attractors for VFR travel. In the global North the volume of student linked VFR travel has been observed as significant and there was a high frequency of such visits.”

Chan et al. (2022, p. 276)	“The results confirm that the VFR host experience is generally shaped by an integration of internal characteristics (sociocultural characteristics of both hosts and visitors) and external environment (urban infrastructure and tourism resources). The two groups distinctively express their host experience that shows some areas of cultural barriers and geographical proximity.”
El Gamil (2021, p. 76)	“The findings noted that Egyptian international students represent a potential opportunity as a pull factor to motivate VFR visits to Turkey as well as playing the role of host. The study showed that VFR visits induced by students could be a significant part of the tourism demand in Turkey.”
Huang and Tian (2013, p. 287)	“The results suggest that educational institutions and the tourism industry have influenced the student travel experience.”
Hughes et al. (2015, p. 20)	“Results obtained highlight the need for Western countries to design new tourism products and services that enrich the travel experiences of both Chinese students and visitors.”
Jarvis (2020, p. 269)	“Findings support the contention that international students become ‘brand ambassadors’ for Estonia and positively influence further visitation.”
Kashiwagi et al. (2018, p. 89)	“The results show that the majority of the students not only played important roles in motivating their friends and relatives to visit their study destinations but also recognised these roles”
Lee and King (2016, p. 471)	“Tourism operators and relevant authorities can benefit from investing time and effort in exploring the VFR market in the Asian context.”
Michael et al. (2004, p. 64)	“The results suggest that the main reason for choosing Australia as a destination for study was the quality of education and that students learnt this through word-of-mouth from friends.”
Petry et al. (2022, p. 7)	“The data identify two distinct hosting styles: functional hosting is concerned with providing outstanding hospitality based on a more traditional, guest-oriented understanding of the role, whereas integrative hosting blurs the lines between hospitality and lifestyle based on a more modern, host-oriented understanding of the role.”
Ray and Wakelin-Theron (2018, p. 10)	“Tourism stakeholders need to focus more on innovative domestic products and services, capturing youth entertainment and experiences. Developing countries focus primarily on domestic tourism, instead of international tourist arrivals.”
Seaton and Tie (2015, p. 39)	“Offers a useful procedural framework for research-led, strategic VFR planning by destination agencies and industry organisations.”
Shanka and Taylor (2003, p. 13)	“Results indicate that at least two to three family members (mostly parents) of graduating international students attend graduation ceremonies in Perth.”
Taylor et al. (2004, p. 75)	“Many of the key developing international students markets are also the same as the key inbound tourism destination markets. This provides an existing over-lap between tourism and education marketing for stakeholders to develop a synergistic framework.”
Tran et al. (2018, p. 85)	“The framework suggests that the interface between VFR tourism and international students can be explained through a number of aspects, two of which are addressed in the paper: VFR travel behaviour and host–guest dynamics in VFR tourism of international students.”
Tran et al. (2020, p. 1)	“The results showed considerable participation of international PhD students in VFR tourism during their studies, although at relatively low travel frequency (1–3 times per year).”

4.2. Behaviour Characteristics and Themes

The following section is divided into sub-categories of themes present throughout the identified texts, to help discover the relationship and impact of university student related VFR and the associated attractions and generators impacting this phenomenon. The researcher undertook a thematic analysis of the identified texts to reveal the most common themes

present and coded them accordingly to reveal the most relevant themes presented in the literature that can help answer the research objectives.

A key theme that emerged from full text screening of the identified publications was a focus on behavioural characteristics of students engaging in VFR tourism (Barnes & Rogerson, 2021; Chan et al., 2022; El Gamil, 2021; Huang & Tian, 2013; Hughes et al., 2015; Jarvis, 2020; Kashiwagi et al., 2018; Lee & King, 2016; Michael et al., 2004; Petry et al., 2022; Ray & Wakelin-Theron, 2018; Seaton & Tie, 2015; Shanka & Taylor, 2003; Taylor et al., 2004; Tran et al., 2018; Tran et al., 2020). Travel behaviours of VFR travellers are unique in terms of accommodation, seasonality, duration, locations visited, travel purpose, transportation, cultural backgrounds, and behaviour patterns. A list of seventeen key themes were extracted from the identified full text articles, and included in this section to help contribute, describe, and analyse the relationship of student VFR.

4.2.1. Travel Purpose and Triggers

One of the key themes that emerged from full text screening was the overarching travel purpose for both VFRs and students themselves (Barnes & Rogerson, 2021; El Gamil, 2021; Hughes et al., 2015; Kashiwagi et al., 2018; Michael et al., 2004; Petry et al., 2022; Shanka & Taylor, 2003; Taylor et al., 2004; Tran et al., 2018). Travel purpose in context refers to the leading factors that influence travel. This theme is presented as a leading focus for VFR travel by (Backer, 2007; Moscardo et al., 2000) to help identify the leading triggers for travel.

A key discovery from the identified texts was the major role students play in attracting VFR visits, with a majority of the extracted data suggesting that students are a significant generator of VFR as identified in (Barnes & Rogerson, 2021; El Gamil, 2021; Kashiwagi et al., 2018; Petry et al., 2022; Ray & Wakelin-Theron, 2018; Taylor et al., 2004). As visiting a student was not only the primary travel purpose but also a trigger for international visits by friends and relatives (Kashiwagi et al., 2018), who were wanting to spend time with the student (Barnes & Rogerson, 2021). Other leading contributors for VFR travel included leisure, recreation business and holiday reasons (Taylor et al., 2004), as some VFRs combined these trips with student visits (El Gamil, 2021).

Barnes and Rogerson (2021) found the most cited response by family members for visiting was to spend quality time with the student. The second most frequent response in the study was that the friend or relative was visiting the location for another purpose and a visit with the student could then also occur. Barnes and Rogerson (2021) suggests that reasons like seeing Johannesburg, shopping, religious visits, or cultural purposes were far less significant attractions. Unlike graduation ceremonies that provide the opportunity for celebration with friends and family travelling to witness the special occasion, where on average two to three friends or family attended the special occasion (Kashiwagi et al., 2018; Lee & King, 2016; Shanka & Taylor, 2003).

Students educational experiences can be divided into phases as presented in Tran et al. (2018), where during their pre-education phase, students have the opportunity to experience the local culture and their future living environments, which can ultimately influence future study destination decisions. As “the combination of tourism and education experiences can make a place particularly appealing in the international students’ eyes. Therefore, return visits in the post-education phase might encourage students’ decisions regarding future migration” (Tran et al., 2018, p. 90). This can be captured and targeted using online social media posts, as this form of media plays a significant role in influencing potential travel destinations and experiences (Hughes et al., 2015).

Petry et al. (2022) suggests the purpose of VFR has three key sub-motives, sense of longing, keeping in touch and curiosity. Sense of longing is influenced by the relationship between hosts and visitors, as higher emotional levels of attachment are considered a leading motivator. Keeping in touch, is concerned with the relevance of the moment, through enjoying the city’s natural sites, events, and outdoor sports. The final motive presented is curiosity, as these guests are interested in observing their hosts personal development during their transition into adulthood, with parents using these trips as a means to see how they live and what they do (Petry et al., 2022).

4.2.2. Travel Experience

Traveling allows students to enrich their lives and gain priceless experiences of international culture, that can provide encouragement for future trips and personal development. Findings in Jarvis (2020) suggest that students are very travel active, as 86.8% of the identified sample

had previously travelled internationally with a further 10.5% indicating they intended on doing the same. These findings are supported in Ray and Wakelin-Theron (2018), finding that their respondents had travelled regularly with others, stating they wanted to travel during their study period with only 10% stating they had not travelled. Survey results from Lee and King (2016) found that 70.1% of their respondents had travelled away from home for pleasure purposes since enrolment, with nearly 60% of them visiting tourist attractions in their chosen destination.

A profile of a typical international student in Western Australia was presented in Taylor et al. (2004), who found that 75% of students had travelled to regional and rural tourist destinations for leisure and tourist activity, with 38% making two or more trips, with visits typically lasting for 2-3 nights (46%), with most time spent seeing local attractions, with less time spent on sports, adventures, or beach trips. As for previous travel experience in the UK, 42% of the respondents in Huang and Tian (2013) had previously travelled more than five times with less than 2% having no prior travel experience.

4.2.3. Transport

Understanding the mode of transport used by students and visiting friends and relatives is useful for destinations to assess their own transportation infrastructure, as “the tourist’s travel experience starts and ends with transportation” (Mammadov, 2012, p. 386).

Previously it was discussed how the identified texts were conducted in different host countries, therefore it is hard to make direct comparisons of the preferred transportation methods employed, as different locations can more easily accommodate some versions of public transport compared to others. An example of this, is the study by Taylor et al. (2004) based on university students in Australia, and found that only 24% of students used public transport, compared to 76% of the sample who considered a private vehicle the most important transport method, with 31% traveling in a rental car. These findings are somewhat consistent with the findings in Ray and Wakelin-Theron (2018) conducted in South Africa, revealing that the majority of students used private vehicles for travel, with less than 5% of the respondents using the rail system.

However, the study by Huang and Tian (2013) in the UK, suggests the preferred mode of transport by students was public transport including either train (47.7%), coach or bus (30.2%), when compared to private vehicle use of just (13.4%). This contrasts the findings present in Ray and Wakelin-Theron (2018) and Taylor et al. (2004), potentially due to the lack of available public transport systems outside the major cities in Australia and South Africa, compared to the UKs easily accessible and preferred transport options. Further support is provided by Lee and King (2016) who examined international students in Asia, and found the main form of transport was by bus (58.2%) and train (23.3%), reflecting the availability of public transport in Taiwan. If international destinations have well-established public transport infrastructure available to students, then these options are ultimately preferred as they provide a cost saving, as the lowest weekly expenditure of students was on transportation, as direct bus services, trains, and ferries provide affordable connections to various destinations in Estonia with most university locations meaning students can walk almost everywhere according to Jarvis (2020).

A key finding in Barnes and Rogerson (2021) was the difference in terms of transportation preferred by VFs and VRs when visiting students, the study found that VFs used mini-buses, taxis, or buses, compared to VRs who had access to the family members private car, though cheaper modes of transport like bus or a shared mini-bus taxi was also utilised. Huang and Tian (2013) suggests future transport strategies need to consider the significance of international students preferred travel methods and the impact student travel has on a destination.

4.2.4. Marketing Implications and Promotions

Student hosts can play an effective role in destination marketing initiatives, by helping to increase the level of attractiveness of a destination to encourage future visits from VFRs (Kashiwagi et al., 2018). This form of VFR is not only an important avenue for future investigation, but “embodies a new direction for the active development of VFR tourism and marketing” (Tran et al., 2018, p. 90). As previously mentioned the links between destination marketing organisations and educational institutions primary interest in persuading prospective students to visit was generally very minimal (Michael et al., 2004). Posing the question of “whether the potential synergies between the promotion of study abroad and of tourism activity are being realised” (Michael et al., 2004, p. 62)

To generate future VFR travellers Kashiwagi et al. (2018) suggests that students should be approached and incorporated into destination promotional marketing strategies as they are the key to generating future international and domestic VFR visits. Chan et al. (2022) suggests that destination marketing organisation take a step further and address the difficulty faced by student hosts in terms of local culture, urban infrastructure, tourism resources and information accessibility. This is echoed by student responses in Ray and Wakelin-Theron (2018) emphasizing the need for tourism industries to encourage travellers to familiarise themselves with the country's local innovative products and services before travelling abroad, that helps to encourage and develop a traveling culture for students. VFR travellers could benefit from tailored marketing campaigns from destination marketing organisations that could promote different socio-cultural spaces and other offerings that provide group social ties (Petry et al., 2022).

Hughes et al. (2015) suggests that promotional efforts should be targeted towards one-off special and novel aspects of tourism attractions, activities, or products as they are more likely to resonate with the identified Chinese market. These promotional efforts could come in the form of online travel modules packages, that include smaller itineraries for the Chinese market. As suggested in Hughes et al. (2015) visitors lacked the required knowledge and skills to develop their own travel plans, with respondents suggesting constructed itineraries could help make both hosts and visitors make more informed decisions. In regards to the international Chinese market, Hughes et al. (2015) suggests that future marketing campaigns should focus less on relaxation, rest, peace or serenity and instead more campaigns should include more variety like photo opportunities, and multiple destination experiences as “the more activities and sights available (particularly if they are iconic, unique, or different), the more the destination is likely to appeal to this market” (Hughes et al., 2015, p. 20).

Brand ambassadors

The idea of students acting as brand ambassadors is presented in Jarvis (2020), as the study destination of Estonia's national branding strategy identified temporary residents as effective target markets, because of the positive role they play in promoting the country. This finding is significant as countries with limited promotional funds can utilise and generate positive word of mouth from students, who can assist in the process of rebranding a destination and becoming positive destination brand ambassadors (Jarvis, 2020). Ray and

Wakelin-Theron (2018) found that current marketing promotions in their study are not reaching or attracting local youth, as their campaigns are neither appealing or financially accessible. Suggesting the current medium used is unable to effectively capture youth as they require immediate access to information. Respondents in Ray and Wakelin-Theron (2018) suggest the introduction of new and innovative tourism promotions methods, that accommodate different market segments through various social media platforms, as they believe this will allow students to become more aware of a destination's products and services and help encourage VFR travel.

4.2.5. Student Travel Patterns

Understanding international and domestic students actual travel patterns, preferences, and perceptions is crucial in determining the attractions and generators of tourism destinations. Findings in Hughes et al. (2015), Michael et al. (2004) and (Ray & Wakelin-Theron, 2018) suggest that most student respondents had travelled at some point throughout the duration of their studies, participating in a range of domestic activities like shopping, wineries, water-based activities, dining experiences, nature walks, sporting events and clubs (Michael et al., 2004; Ray & Wakelin-Theron, 2018).

Hughes et al. (2015) found that most students would not consider traveling until after commencing study, providing an opportunity for host universities to facilitate collaboration between tourism and education sectors to ensure available tourist information is easily accessible. This finding is important, as respondents in Kashiwagi et al. (2018) stated that they would take visiting friends and relatives to locations they had visited during their first two months of study, as they preferred to take their visitors to locations they were familiar with.

Students are considered very travel active by Jarvis (2020), with students themselves turning into domestic tourists when travelling, as they spend nights at hotels and consume other tourism services (El Gamil, 2021). Student responses in Taylor et al. (2004) suggest this tourism market tends to travel to regional and rural destinations for leisure, as during their studies a high proportion of students did not travel to visit their friends, instead favouring domestic travel instead (Tran et al., 2020).

Findings from Michael et al. (2004) suggest that students preferred to make their own travel arrangements with only 10.5% opting for conducted tour packages, and on average took 1.8 to 2.3 trips per year. This finding is supported by El Gamil (2021), who found that 80% of their student respondents had visited one to three different cities in Turkey with their friends and family. Lee and King (2016) also found that (46.5%) of student respondents took day trips with (44.9%) staying away for one to three nights.

4.2.6. VFR Travel Patterns

A key theme present throughout the identified texts was VFR travel patterns, appearing in (Barnes & Rogerson, 2021; El Gamil, 2021; Hughes et al., 2015; Kashiwagi et al., 2018; Lee & King, 2016; Michael et al., 2004; Petry et al., 2022; Shanka & Taylor, 2003; Taylor et al., 2004; Tran et al., 2018; Tran et al., 2020).

Findings from El Gamil (2021) revealed that students received VFRs throughout anytime of the year and either looked to combine their visits with a holiday, leisure, recreation or business travel. The most popular activities undertaken by visitors with hosts, involved eating out at local restaurants, shopping, and visiting local attractions, and specifically nightclubs for VFs (Barnes & Rogerson, 2021). Other activities reported by Tran et al. (2020) include natural attractions and social entertainments which were the most frequently reported types of activities by VFRs, compared to other activities, that saw VFs favour barbeques, eating and singing, compared to VRs preferring activities like cooking, celebrations, and catching up, as social interaction seems to be one the main purposes for VFR tourism.

The differing travel patterns of VFs and VRs was also examined in Petry et al. (2022), who found that there are specific intra-generational activities that visiting friends favour and inter-generational activities favoured by visiting relatives, for example dining and cultural activities were favoured more frequently by relatives, where student hosts were more likely to go clubbing, biking, or skiing with friends (Petry et al., 2022). Student respondents in Hughes et al. (2015) revealed nature-based experiences are extremely popular for visitors in Australia, including natural landscapes and animals, as well as participating in unique experiences like visiting famous attractions, that helps to immerse the traveller in the local culture and lifestyle. Responses in El Gamil (2021) echo the same finding, that the majority of VFR travellers prefer to visit local tourist attractions, going on day trips, eating local food

and shopping. This idea of VFRs preferring authentic experiences is revealed in Hughes et al. (2015), who found that activities associated with stereotypical Chinese visitors, such as taking guided tours, meeting Chinese people, and eating Chinese food was rated as the least important element when travelling, as they preferred to experience authentic destination offerings compared to familiar cultural comforts.

Special occasions like birthdays, weddings, graduation ceremonies, local events and festivals provide both a reason and benefit for VFR travellers, hoping to maintain relationships, as these travellers often have limited free time to visit (Shanka & Taylor, 2003; Tran et al., 2020). These relationships can often prove to be complex in nature as “differences in travel goals, personality clashes and different living habits may lead to conflicts during VFR trips” (Tran et al., 2020, p. 6). However, these occasions can help justify the time spent visiting.

Statistical findings from Taylor et al. (2004) suggest that the majority of VFRs made two or more trips, with most time spent seeing local attractions. Barnes and Rogerson (2021) found that among the recorded VFR sample (29%) had received one visit, (50%) had received two visits, and only (21%) stated they received visits on three or more occasions per year. Among this group that recorded a VFR visit, (64%) were from VRs, and (36%) from VFs. These findings are supported by Michael et al. (2004) who found that over half of respondents had received visits from friends and relatives during their studies. Similar to the findings present in Lee and King (2016) with the most commonly cited visitation pattern being of two or more people (44.5%) was of either friends or family members.

A key finding in Tran et al. (2018) worth noting is the concept of VFR tourism in a third place, that occurs when both parties meet at a mutual destination, either internationally or domestic. The two studies suggest this form of VFR tourism will continue to develop. Tran et al. (2018) argues that VFR in a third place satisfies the elements of travelling for VFR purposes and can therefore be considered a form of VFR tourism. With third place locations likely to be favoured by international students who wish to visit and explore as much as possible during their overseas studies.

4.2.7. Duration of Stay

Understanding any tourist's length of stay is a useful tool for tourism destinations, as it can help destinations develop future marketing strategies and provide the appropriate services for the desired target market depending on the tourist's length of stay (Santos et al., 2015).

Kashiwagi et al. (2018) found that the total length of time spent at a destination, date of travel, and city in which they stayed was determined by the VFRs. The duration of stay is also heavily dependent on personal relationships with VFRs and the student's enrolment period (Tran et al., 2018). As shorter study periods can impact student's host behaviour, given their limited ability to learn and familiarise themselves with the local culture. The frequency of visits experienced was evenly distributed across the four seasons in Petry et al. (2022), stating that this helps support the ability of VFR travel to contribute towards a more sustainable form of tourism and avoid overcrowding destinations.

Barnes and Rogerson (2021) found that although visits by VFRs occurred throughout the South African academic year (February to November). The largest share of visits for both VFs and VRs recorded were during the period of April to July, which is during the middle of the academic year. Supported by the findings in El Gamil (2021), where 42.61% of the sample indicated that VFRs visited students anytime throughout the year. Kashiwagi et al. (2018) identified the popular months for travel to Australia for Japanese VFR travellers was, February, August, and December, which aligns with the peak season for Australia tourist visits. Which is consistent with the findings from Michael et al. (2004), who found that around 36% of respondents mentioned the summer break (December-February) was the best time for travel in Australia, followed by semester breaks in July. Table 16 depicts the identified duration of stay for VFRs, as presented in the identified articles.

Table 16: Time Spent at Destination:

Author	VFRs Duration of Stay
Barnes and Rogerson (2021)	VFs: 4% for one night, 81% for two nights, 15% for three nights
Chan et al. (2022)	Unspecified
Huang and Tian (2013)	Unspecified
Hughes et al. (2015)	Less than 1 week 5.6% 1-2 weeks 55.5% 3-4 weeks 33.3% More than 4 weeks 5.6%
Jarvis (2020)	Avg. of 4.1 nights
Kashiwagi et al. (2018)	Avg. between 5-7 days

Lee and King (2016)	Less than 1 week 37.4% 1-2 weeks 40.3% 3-4 weeks 11.9% More than 1 month 10.4%
Michael et al. (2004)	Most spend 7 days
El Gamil (2021)	Less than 1 week 11.93% 1-2 weeks 38.64% 3-4 weeks 25.57% More 23.86%
Petry et al. (2022)	Unspecified
Ray and Wakelin-Theron (2018)	Unspecified
Seaton and Tie (2015)	Majority were longer than one night, with three nights or longer not uncommon
Shanka and Taylor (2003)	Avg. of 5.3 nights
Taylor et al. (2004)	VF: Avg. of 12.5 nights
Tran et al. (2018)	Unspecified
Tran et al. (2020)	Unspecified

Visits

Barnes and Rogerson (2021) found that 45% of their sample had received at least one visit from either a friend or relative. With the majority of students (55%) receiving no visits from friends or relatives whilst undertaking their studies. Barnes and Rogerson (2021) also found that only a small number of cases saw the lack of VFR visits being offset by students having the funds to make a return home visit. Taylor et al. (2004) found parents were the leading VFR travellers.

4.2.8. Accommodation

The type of accommodation facilities chosen by VFRs can help categorise this phenomenon, as understanding these choices can have significant implications for providers (El Gamil, 2021; Kashiwagi et al., 2018; Tran et al., 2018).

VFR Visitors

Taylor et al. (2004) found that VFR visitors predominantly stayed with students. A similar finding was also present in El Gamil (2021), finding that that most VFRs stayed somewhere between 1-2 weeks and 3-4 weeks with the student host, as VFRs that stayed longer than four weeks would ultimately rent an apartment. Findings in El Gamil (2021) identified that most VFR travellers (56.82%) preferred to stay with the student host, whereas only (30.68%) preferred to rent an apartment.

Kashiwagi et al. (2018) found that Japanese VFRs generated by students booked their own accommodation in advance, preferring commercial accommodation over students' residents, shared houses, or homestay. Shanka and Taylor (2003) reported that 58% of visitors preferred to stay in commercial accommodation facilities, with only 24% of the sample opting for student accommodation. Barnes and Rogerson (2021) found that a majority of university student generated VFRs had links to commercial accommodation services, 89% for VRs and 76% for VFs, with the most common accommodation type being inner city budget guest houses. Barnes and Rogerson (2021) noted the preference difference between VFs and VRs, as VRs prefer commercial accommodation and sometimes student's homes, where VFs would ideally stay with students, which can either be on campus or off campus accommodation.

Students

Key findings on student accommodation, includes the study by Lee and King (2016), who found that Asian students saved money on accommodation by staying with friends. Similar results were also found by Huang and Tian (2013), revealing that Chinese international students would stay with friends and relatives or cheaper alternatives like hotels or bed and breakfast inns.

The ability to stay with friends or relatives is an important pull factor that can influence the student's decision to engage in VFR tourism, as it allows the student to save on accommodation costs (Tran et al., 2018). As stated in Tran et al. (2020, p. 5) "Staying with friends (or relatives) not only enhanced existing relationships but also helped new relationships that were yet to be close become stronger" and would therefore be more likely to continue staying with them in future visits. Tran et al. (2020) identified that by staying with friends or relatives, students were more likely to spend quality time together bonding.

Tran et al. (2020) found that students would often either stay at their friends or relatives place compared to commercial accommodation, although it was not a preferred accommodation option, commercial accommodation was utilised more when visiting friends. The duration of stay has a part to play in student accommodation choices, as if its only for a couple days, then students won't mind staying with VFRs, but are less motivated if it's for a longer duration, as they don't want to overstay their welcome (Tran et al., 2020).

It is worth noting that students preferred choice of accommodation when studying was either university accommodation or accommodation through the private market. Ultimately student expenditure flows directly into the destination's economy, assuming apartments are owned by locals, which is significant as the majority of students have lived in some form of shared accommodation and university accommodation during the course of their studies (Jarvis, 2020; Michael et al., 2004).

4.2.9. Information Sources

Understanding the central sources of travel information is a key element of destination tourism, as it can help inform and influence future visitor tourism decisions. Taylor et al. (2004) findings suggest the majority of students learn about tourist destinations from friends. Michael et al. (2004), also noted the key information sources used by students were friends and relatives, education centres and education exhibitions, with advertisements and consultants also being noted. When it comes to booking attractions and activities, students receiving VFR travellers used online websites, information centres, travel books and brochures before their VFRs arrival (Hughes et al., 2015; Kashiwagi et al., 2018).

According to Hughes et al. (2015), Chinese students preferred seeking recommendations from those of similar backgrounds, especially in a foreign destination. Hughes et al. (2015) also highlights the influencing role social contacts and electronic media has on the travel behaviour of Chinese students and suggests that tourism businesses that utilise social media are more likely to appeal to this market. The internet is considered an important information source for this market, possibly due to the younger age of the respondents and their familiarity with technology (Hughes et al., 2015).

El Gamil (2021) found that students play various roles during VFR visits and are considered the most active communication channel, as the student is aware of all the information, attractions, and accommodations the destination has to offer. Students play this role of information keepers, as they were often required to accompany friends and relatives on activities (Petry et al., 2022). Positive word of mouth was presented as an important source of information for students in Hughes et al. (2015) and Michael et al. (2004), and was noted as

the most popular method for obtaining information about popular places when deciding where to travel.

4.2.10. Economic Travel Expenditure

The following includes evidence from the identified publications on student VFR travel expenditure and economic contributions. The findings hope to provide necessary context to gain understanding on any similarities and differences expressed by this target market.

VFRs

Kashiwagi et al. (2018) identified that most VFRs booked their own flights and accommodation in advance, with students being responsible for planning, booking, and paying for activities and attractions, however students would often be reimbursed for all expenses spared by relatives, where friends would ultimately have to pay their own way. Results presented in Taylor et al. (2004) provide evidence that (50%) of parents pay for student's trips with just (42%) of students paying their own way.

Participants in Petry et al. (2022) found the types of activities engaged in when family members visit are pretty similar compared to friends, but are more of a premium quality and are therefore more costly with family. These findings suggest that differences between VFs and VRs, are their corresponding travel budgets. From the perspective of the host, spending increases when they have VFs compared to VRs, as they are required to spend more of their own income, where VR travellers tend to pay for dinners and other expenses when visiting (Petry et al., 2022).

Shanka and Taylor (2003) found that visitors on average spend A\$976 on accommodation, recreation, entertainment, local transport, shopping, and food and drink for the duration of their stay. With these findings suggesting that shopping was the highest expenditure in this study (Shanka & Taylor, 2003). This finding is supported by El Gamil (2021) who discovered that VFRs spent their money in the study destination, most notably on shopping and eating locally. With the average estimated expenditure for friends being \$394.07 per year, compared to the average estimated expenditure for family and relatives of \$1,764.80 per year, for the study conducted in Turkey (El Gamil, 2021).

Students

As suggested in Tran et al. (2020), being able to combine VFR tourism while studying could prove to be an appealing and convenient option for students, especially given the cost savings potential. According to Hughes et al. (2015) students strive to receive value for money, as these trips can be scarce, and therefore place a significant amount of importance on making the most of the situation, given their limited time and funds available while being a student. The associated economic costs for students depends on the type of visitor they receive. In general, hosting a friend is considered to be more expensive compared to hosting family members (Petry et al., 2022). Participants in Petry et al. (2022) mention three contributing factors that influence the relative cost of hosting friends, including status of friend, personal lifestyle, and finally the mood of the host when they have visitors.

Student respondents in Ray and Wakelin-Theron (2018) noted that it was easier for somebody with additional disposable income to travel. However, the majority of students found domestic travel to be relatively expensive, even if the attractions advertised were reported as reasonable in the media. As noted in El Gamil (2021) the main source of income for just under half of the student respondents (47.16%) was their parents, while only (28.41%) stated their job was the main source of income, with just (20%) relying on scholarships for their source of income. A key finding from Barnes and Rogerson (2021) was that students from the University of Johannesburg, who came from generally low-income backgrounds, had a substantial impact on the nature of their VFRs overall travel patterns.

VFR spending habits

Tran et al. (2018) found that VFRs tend to spend less on commercial accommodation and instead spend more on shopping, food, and activities. Students may not have the largest financial capability but still actively engage in entertainment and leisure activities with VFRs (Tran et al., 2018). Taylor et al. (2004) found that the average expenditure by family and friends was A\$1,637 per visit. With the highest expenditure being on shopping and the least being domestic transport (Taylor et al., 2004). According to Barnes and Rogerson (2021), the three-leading areas of expenditure for VRs were groceries, restaurants, and takeout food, with VFs tending to spend more on alcohol. Barnes and Rogerson (2021) also found that VRs would provide pocket money to supplement student's financial resources and purchases.

Student spending habits

Ray and Wakelin-Theron (2018) found that the majority of students spent considerable amounts of money on public transportation, fast food, entertainment, clothing items, toiletries, and petrol. Findings also revealed that a large amount of student income was going on subsistence expenditure, rather than using it for domestic tourism as they found travel to be quite expensive (Ray & Wakelin-Theron, 2018). This finding is also present in Michael et al. (2004) who found that in absolute dollar terms, accommodation and transport to be the leading expenditures per student. Similar findings are also present in Jarvis (2020), who found accommodation to be the highest expense, followed by food and groceries, restaurants and takeout food, then general shopping, gym memberships, phone costs, and entertainment expenses like pubs and clubs, with transport being the lowest weekly expense.

The study by Lee and King (2016) found that the majority of respondents spent less than NT\$6000 equivalent to \$200 USD on their most recent trip, with half of respondents spending less than half this. These findings also revealed that one third of students saved on accommodation costs by staying with friends and relatives (Lee & King, 2016). Ray and Wakelin-Theron (2018) found that 75% of student respondents were unemployed. With less than 30% indicating they had been actively saving (Ray & Wakelin-Theron, 2018).

Impact

The economic impact of travel and tourism by families and friends of international students in Western Australia in 2003 was estimated to be worth A\$8.8 million, with a more conservative estimate being A\$5.2 million (Taylor et al., 2004). Findings from Michael et al. (2004) found that there was a relatively high prevalence of international students working part-time, which is an interesting finding as these earnings help generate incidences of domestic tourism. Additional findings from Michael et al. (2004) suggest the average expenditure per student was A\$392, with (64.4%) of respondents being actively engaged in travel. Conservative estimates of visiting friends and family, per international student attending graduation ceremonies, can inject upwards of half to three quarters of a million (A\$) (Shanka & Taylor, 2003). El Gamil (2021) findings suggest that VFR tourism can stimulate destination tourism through VFRs expenditure, on locations visited, activities undertaken and duration of stay. El Gamil (2021) suggests that students themselves can play a key role in domestic tourism, by promoting a destination and convincing their friends,

families, and relatives to visit. Anecdotal evidence in Taylor et al. (2004) suggests some families establish homes and or businesses in the identified destinations once their child begins study.

4.2.11. Cultural Context

Culture has increasingly become an important element of tourism, as tourism provides an important means for creating income and enhancing culture to support and strengthen cultural heritage, production and creativity (Richards, 2009). Ray and Wakelin-Theron (2018) found that students wanted to travel and learn more about different cultures. With student respondents from the study suggesting that race did not prevent them from participating in tourism today, stating that anyone is free to consume travel and tourism products and services. Tran et al. (2018) revealed that VFR tourism creates a platform for visitors and hosts to interact and exchange cultural platforms, as “VFR tourism enables its participants to ‘feel at home’ while being away from their own homes” (Tran et al., 2018, p. 89).

Chan et al. (2022) found cultural proximity to the respondent’s hometown and their educational destination to be significant, as students are connected to cultural shock from VFR visitors. The study revealed that Chinese students have high cultural orientation and attachment to their adopted city of Hong Kong, compared to non-Chinese students trying to adapt to the sociocultural gaps, such as the language barriers, eating habits, history and knowledge (Chan et al., 2022). A key finding in Tran et al. (2018) is that prior experience of being a guest in a new destination helps influence student ability to host VFR guests, as they have already gone through the socio-cultural adaption process. Making it potentially easier for them to host future VFR visits as they are more comfortable with their surroundings.

4.2.12. Student Mobility

Increasing “global mobility appears to have triggered the development and growth of international education” (Tran et al., 2018, p. 87). Suggesting international education is a temporary immigration phenomenon that could prove to be the starting point for future migration, with students being the key influencing component that can generate future VFR travel (Tran et al., 2018). However, overall, the papers gave little attention to future long-term mobility.

4.2.13. Travel Motivation

Understanding student travel motivations can assist with destination marketing strategies, product development, enhanced service delivery and the overall tourism experience (Van Vuuren & Slabbert, 2011). Michael et al. (2004) identified some key travel motivators for students, including: recommendations from friends and relatives, good beaches, scenic beauty, and historical significance. Travel motivations of students fall into four key categories according to Huang and Tian (2013) including: relaxation, self-improvement, experience culture, and adventure and excitement, noting that Chinese international students in the UK are frequent travellers. Chinese international students in Huang and Tian (2013) indicated that the most popular motivations for traveling in Britain was for rest and relaxation purposes, closely followed by discovering new places, and to learn about local culture and ways of life. One possible reason for international students identifying the need for rest and relaxation is that they “face significant pressure to succeed, and travelling is a good way for them to relax” (Huang & Tian, 2013, p. 284).

Destination motivations

Survey respondents in Jarvis (2020) revealed that the most common motivation for wanting to study in Estonia, was that the destination was seen as an unusual destination, and that students wanted to be different. The second strongest pull factor or motivator was the desire to travel for tourism, with the third being the lower cost of living in Estonia, in contrast to other destinations (Jarvis, 2020). Michael et al. (2004) sought to understand student motives for picking Australia as a study destination, hoping to gain an insight into the relationship between holidaying, VFR, and study abroad. They discovered that the quality of education was the leading destination motivator, closely followed by recommendations from friends and relatives, with other notable influences including course content and tuition fees (Michael et al., 2004). Another significant motivator was positive word of mouth from previous students, as identified in Jarvis (2020).

4.2.14. Travel Satisfaction

Travel satisfaction can be used to refer to either satisfaction with one trip or satisfaction with travel in general, “trip satisfaction refers to the experienced emotions during a trip whereas satisfaction with daily travel is associated with satisfaction with daily travel needs and opportunities” (Tiikkaja et al., 2020, p. 1).

Student respondents in Huang and Tian (2013) indicated that their overall travel satisfaction in the UK was positive, with 42.1% indicating that they would highly recommend the destination to future friends and family to visit for a short break or holiday. While also expressing an equally positive reaction to the idea of a return visit to the UK post studies (Huang & Tian, 2013). Repeat visitation was also analysed in Lee and King (2016) with (94.3%) of respondents stating they would consider returning to the identified destinations. Shanka and Taylor (2003) also found that a significant number of graduates ended up returning to Australia for leisure holidays, or to visit friends and relatives.

Intended future visits was also discussed in Michael et al. (2004), as about 64% of respondents indicated that they intended on holidaying in the chosen study destination on completion of their studies, these respondents also indicated that they would recommend Melbourne and Victoria to their friends and family. Jarvis (2020) revealed that international students can become repeat visitors, as (59.4%) intended on returning to the country, with (18.1%) of the students stating that they would consider the location for future employment or for starting a business.

In regards to the VFR market 89.4% of student respondents in Lee and King (2016) strongly encouraged their international family and friends to visit Taiwan, however only 35.2% of respondents had welcomed VFRs previously. The study by Jarvis (2020) found that 69.6% of their respondents would recommend Estonia as a holiday destination to their friends and relatives, with 62.4% recommending the destination to their friends as a potential place of study. Results from El Gamil (2021) indicate that 31.25% of VFRs had a positive experience in the study destination (Turkey), and would recommend visiting to their friends, family and relatives, with an extra 17.05% having a very positive experience.

Lee and King (2016) found that student respondents expressed a moderately favourable impression of Taiwan as a tourism destination, citing its beautiful scenery and friendly people. According to El Gamil (2021) 88.07% of the sampled students encouraged their friends and family to visit them in Turkey. Highlighting that students can be considered destination promoters, through word of mouth, as students not only play the role of hosts for VFRs, but they are actively stimulating them to visit.

4.2.15. Travel Limitations and Constraints

Political legislation and policies can impact VFR tourism, creating boundaries for future VFR tourism including visa requirements, destination eligibility, and length of stay (Tran et al., 2020). Other VFR tourism limitations for students can include lack of resources, like money and time, and perceived bad weather (Tran et al., 2020). The responses from Barnes and Rogerson (2021, p. 183) “emphasized the financial situation of households as a constraint upon the volume of student-centred VFR travel at the University of Johannesburg.”

Hughes et al. (2015) revealed constraints preventing student travel options, include financial concerns, study commitments, lack of time, safety, cultural differences, food, destination distance, and mode of transport, with language barriers being considered moderate barriers. The country of residence also impacts on the number of VFR visits (Michael et al., 2004), as the further the distance required for travel, the less likely the destination will feature in respondent’s preferences according to Hughes et al. (2015).

Michael et al. (2004) noted that international students would often travel home during the summer break, however, nowadays most universities provide summer school options for students, reducing the amount of student breaks. Therefore, students may find it less expensive and more convenient to remain in the chosen study destination throughout the breaks, leading to the substitution of international travel in favour of domestic travel. Respondents in Shanka and Taylor (2003) were asked to elaborate on what factors would make it easier for international visitors to travel to tourism destinations in Western Australia, and included the cost of the trip, destination information availability, adequate transportation, accessibility, friendly people, and amenities.

An interesting finding revealed by one respondent in Ray and Wakelin-Theron (2018), was that tourism only accommodated healthy people, stating that it was difficult for individuals with disabilities to travel, with their needs not being fully catered for, in regards to public transportation and visitor attractions, leading to an unpleasant experience.

4.2.16. International Students Impact on VFR Tourism

The identified studies have demonstrated that students are frequently underestimated generators of VFR tourism, with students being the most effective target for future promotion

efforts (Bischoff & Koenig-Lewis, 2007; Chen et al., 2015). As VFR tourism also helps students maintain their relationships, friendships, and or place attachment after they have completed their studies. (Tran et al., 2018).

Findings in El Gamil (2021) suggest that international students represent an opportunity as potential pull factors to generate future VFR visits. This segment of tourism is expected to continue growing, and bring about a greater level of internationalization, and will therefore require greater attention from a marketing perspective (El Gamil, 2021). As students themselves represent the most common reason for VFRs to visit a location (Kashiwagi et al., 2018). According to Tran et al. (2018, p. 88) “VFR tourism and international education form a partial interdependency,” revealing that as well as generating VFR tourism, international education itself in part, is generated by VFR tourism.

Jarvis (2020) found that 75% of respondents had received visits from friends or relatives, and or stated that VFRs were planning on visiting during the respondent’s study period, substantiating the role students have on VFR tourism, as on average the sample generated an additional 2.9 overnight visitors. Supporting data was found in El Gamil (2021), as 61.36% of respondents had received visits from their families and relatives, with 57.4% receiving visits from their friends. A high level of involvement in VFR tourism was found in Tran et al. (2020) with 73.3% of respondents having had some form of VFR experience. Kashiwagi et al. (2018) showed the significant role of Japanese international students as generators of VFR tourism, stating they are important drivers of visits from friends and relatives. The study revealed that 65.38% of respondents had hosted at least one VFR traveller, with nearly half of the study receiving multiple VFR visits (Kashiwagi et al., 2018). As even the students that had not received a VFR visit yet, indicated that them being there, had brought the destination to the attention of their friends and relatives (Kashiwagi et al., 2018).

Student responses in Kashiwagi et al. (2018) revealed that there family and friends travelling to the destination would not have occurred without them being there, as students are not only receiving VFRs, but are also actively generating VFR travellers by asking them to visit. As noted in El Gamil (2021), international students trigger VFR travellers at any point throughout the year, which can also help overcome the problem of seasonality tourism, by spreading the volume of tourism activity year round (El Gamil, 2021). El Gamil (2021) stated

that once international VFR visitors arrive in a destination, they start to spend money directly in the tourism sector, such as transportation, meals, tourist attractions, shopping, and other activities, while also traveling around to different locations domestically.

4.2.17. Student Hosts

Kashiwagi et al. (2018) found that VFR guests depend heavily on their students as hosts, as most organise the attractions and activities for their VFR guests. As according to Kashiwagi et al. (2018, p. 96) “the VFR guests wanted diverse experiences during their stays and were able to avoid common mistakes during their travels in Australia due to the students’ knowledge about the cities, activities and language.” Therefore, students can be viewed as travel ambassadors or tour guides as they often accompany VFRs to most attractions (Kashiwagi et al., 2018).

Tran et al. (2018) identified that during a student’s education period, students become either VFR guests, hosts, or both, as they are hosts when they receive visits from friends and relatives, and guests when they travel to visit their VFRs. Indicating that students VFR travel behaviours might vary, depending on if they are a guest or host, as students can embody these roles throughout the duration of their studies (Tran et al., 2018). Petry et al. (2022) identified two distinct hosting styles, relating to the respondent’s own interpretation. The first style is functional hosting, which is based on a more traditional relationship, as the host becomes a makeshift tour guide of the destination, who provides outstanding hospitality. Integrative hosting is the second style, that blurs the line between hospitality and lifestyle, as hosts introduce guests to their way of life, and portray their new destination. The central focus is on sharing and caring, as the key difference with this hosting style, is that hosts do not see themselves as tour guides, instead wanting to provide a more local and authentic experience (Tran et al., 2018).

Student respondents indicated that they play several roles during VFR trips, including arranging the plan, and providing ongoing support before the trip (El Gamil, 2021). As students undertake these roles they essentially become guides, by providing recommendations for activities and places to shop, while also serving as translators when visiting various tourist attractions (El Gamil, 2021). These findings are supported by Chan et al. (2022), who found that Chinese students hold an incredibly strong link between their

perceived host-guest relationship, visitor characteristics, and information accessibility. Another key theme expressed is information accessibility, that can help facilitate a more positive experience for the host and guest (Chan et al., 2022). However, the study also provides evidence of undesirable and unpleasant experiences between hosts and guests, as students may feel negative towards being regarded as guides (Chan et al., 2022). Hosting family members also comes with a clear generation gap, as older relatives have higher levels of expectation (Chan et al., 2022).

Petry et al. (2022) suggests that hosts tend to propose the activities to VFRs and use three decision making strategies. The first strategy states that the most informed individual decides on the plan and chooses all the programs. The second strategy seeks to involve guests in the decision-making process, by presenting them with some available options to pick from. The third strategy is to plan and decide on the agenda when the guests arrive, as guests often don't know enough about the destination and require recommendations (Petry et al., 2022). This observation is supported by El Gamil (2021) who found that student hosts make the decisions regarding travel arrangements, as they know more about the destination. Tran et al. (2018) found that students, had more knowledge surrounding the destinations culture, after living there for a period, and would therefore require less effort in organising trips and activities for VFRs at the end of their studies.

Barnes and Rogerson (2021) stated that previous research has suggested that university students, can become potential destination ambassadors, through introducing their visitors to local tourism, leisure experiences and attractions. Their findings suggest otherwise, as visits to major leisure attractions and experiences were mentioned in the study by only 25% of respondents with either VRs or VFs (Barnes & Rogerson, 2021). In contrast, results in Petry et al. (2022) reveal that students largely associate positive experiences with hosting friends and relatives, despite constraints because of finances, or confined living accommodation, yet still express a significant sense of pride in being able to host significant others.

Seaton and Tie (2015) stated that destinations are already becoming aware of the role students have in attracting VFR trips, and of the cultural factors that make entertaining friends and relatives different, emphasizing the need to understand the ever-changing social relations of generation travel. As “children increasingly work and play away from where they

originated geographically and friends may become more important than family, a tendency that would affect VF/VR balances which have previously been strongly weighted to relative visiting, rather than visiting friends” (Seaton & Tie, 2015, p. 42)

Place attachment

According to Petry et al. (2022), hosts often express high levels of emotional attachment to a destination and enjoy setting up tours for their guests to show off their adopted home. Place attachment is argued, as a significant motivator for attracting VFR travellers, as hosts become positive destination marketers, exercising strong word of mouth (Petry et al., 2022).

4.3. Chapter Summary

This chapter sought to answer the three key research objectives of the thesis and present a summary of the findings of the systematic review, in a way that allows the reader to understand the presented themes across the identified articles.

The first section of the chapter analysed the characteristics of the publications included in the review and addressed research objective one: How do identified article characteristics such as authorship, publishing year and journal outlets describe the body of university student related VFR literature? Through synthesizing the available data and presenting it in a way that provided insight into the current state of university student related VFR.

The second section discussed the key themes identified throughout the article screening process to answer research objective two: What key themes are present across the identified articles that impact the relationship of university student related VFR tourism? And objective three: How can understanding the attractions and generators of university student related VFR inform future research and tourism destinations? Achieved by analysing the identified seventeen themes present across the sixteen articles.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.0. Concluding Chapter

This chapter concludes by reiterating the research objectives and how the research questions were successfully answered, followed by a discussion of the theoretical and practical contributions the research has provided. The research limitations are also addressed, followed by future study recommendations for the topic. Concluding statements will then be provided based on the findings present in the research and the overall contribution of the thesis.

5.1. Summary of Research Purpose

The thesis aimed to contribute towards a greater understanding of the attractions and generators of university student related VFR tourism and its overarching contribution to destinations. The initial thematic literature review revealed the significant gap in knowledge in student VFR tourism, given the availability of VFR tourism publications. The initial review helped identify and create the key research objectives and questions used to develop the systematic review. This phenomenon is increasingly receiving greater attention, as found with the increasing academic publications on the topic of interest. Analysing the identified texts from the review, revealed several key themes that were present throughout the papers results and findings sections. Present throughout the identified texts was the level of impact student VFR has on study destinations, with most of the papers suggesting students play a significant role in generating and attracting VFR visits. The lack of available knowledge of how the two key components interact, justified the value for synthesising and collating the identified relevant literature on student VFR. Through the means of a systematic review, this thesis examined the relationship of student VFR and their corresponding attractions and generators, this was supplemented by secondary research objectives, relating to how the identified articles characteristics describe the relationship, that revealed key areas of interest and potential future research incentives.

5.2. Research Contributions

The findings presented in this review, provide both practical and theoretical implications to the field of VFR tourism, as well as the role of universities in the tourism system, that may impact future marketing incentives, campaigns, and interventions.

5.2.1. Practical Implications

The results of this thesis outline some distinctive characteristics of student VFR tourism behaviour. The purpose of this was to highlight key areas of interest, by explaining the associated attractions and generators of student VFR tourism, that can help inform future marketing campaigns and destination interventions and improve understanding of how students play an active role in generating VFR trips to a destination. This thesis provides a comprehensive application of theory that works to broaden the conceptual understanding for both researchers and practitioners in student VFR tourism.

Collaboration

A primary practical contribution of this thesis identified in Lee and King (2016) is that destination strategies should consider tailored marketing approaches for students, suggesting that tourism operators should collaborate with higher education institutions to develop packages for students and their VFRs. Hughes et al. (2015) concludes that destinations need to promote the unique experiences, distinctive builds, and natural attractions, that make destinations unique. Previously destination management organisations, and higher educational institutions, have not fully utilised or realised the potential of collaboration, with the primary interest to persuade prospective students and their VFRs to visit (Michael et al., 2004). This could be achieved by providing information resources during the pre-education stage. Destination organisations should therefore consider working more closely with universities, education providers, and industry providers, such as airlines, coach companies, attraction owners, and hoteliers to target this growing segment (Michael et al., 2004). According to Shanka and Taylor (2003) urban education infrastructures and regional tourism sectors also need to cooperatively market available tourism opportunities.

On a macro level, national tourism organisations should work with educational institutions to attract students to a host country, while on a micro level, destination marketing organisations and local tourism organisations could market their destinations to students already studying in institutions (Taylor et al., 2004). Accommodation providers, travel agencies, and airlines have the potential to provide special offers and packages to encourage and incentivise VFR tourism (El Gamil, 2021), these campaigns should be designed and distributed throughout the academic year in different languages to attract and inform students about the available services and local attractions.

Destination Marketing

Another practical contribution of the thesis, is for marketing organisations to inform students that their destination is safe, secure, and affordable, to entice students to these destinations, highlighting the tourism infrastructure and a place to pursue quality education (Lee & King, 2016; Michael et al., 2004). This can also be achieved by educational institutions providing a greater variety of scholarships, especially for developing countries, given the associated costs of education globally for students (Lee & King, 2016). Educational cost savings can prove to be a key generator in the eyes of students (El Gamil, 2021; Lee & King, 2016).

Tourism industries in destinations should also utilise online marketing tools, to provide students information about the destinations transportation and key destination attractions (Hughes et al., 2015). Emphasizing not only their destinations education excellence, but also other educational activities, like the cultural and historical backgrounds of cities and universities, and the point of view of the local people's life and culture, as these elements are influential to students (Huang & Tian, 2013). These targeted approaches could incorporate products and services relevant to VFRs, that in turn uses students as destination ambassadors (Chan et al., 2022). Destination marketing organisations could further support students, by providing them with more detailed information pertaining to their cities and the potential opportunities available to them (Petry et al., 2022). Persuasive initiatives could be developed into promotional VFR tour packages, or through the introduction of VFR visa schemes to encourage visits (El Gamil, 2021; Tran et al., 2020). Students should be targeted during their first year, as this is when they have the greatest chance of hosting VFR visits, while graduation ceremonies and special occasions present the possibility of repeat visits (El Gamil, 2021).

Tourism Elements

Results obtained in Hughes et al. (2015) suggest that Western countries need to increase the development of new tourism products and services, that can enrich the travel experiences of both students and visitors. Destination marketing organisations, and the educational sector, should resolve any difficulties potentially faced by student hosts, such as local culture, urban infrastructure, tourism resources, and information accessibility (Chan et al., 2022), as well as developing new products to appeal to VFR visitors, connected with the university experience. The findings in Jarvis (2020) highlight the significance of hosting international students, as

they are a dynamic and diversifying population whose travel has implications for regions beyond their chosen study zones. Tourism sectors could target student interests in travel and entertainment directly (Michael et al., 2004). Even though, according to Petry et al. (2022), students as hosts differ from other hosts in their reluctance to engage in conventional tourism attractions and products.

Tourism stakeholders are advised to focus more on their own innovative domestic products and services to appeal to domestic VFR (Ray & Wakelin-Theron, 2018). Developing countries in particular, often with relatively fewer international students, should focus more on their own domestic VFR tourism opportunities, as this can help foster greater economic and social development, that will see greater benefits for local entrepreneurs and tourism business owners (Ray & Wakelin-Theron, 2018). Findings across the identified papers, reveal the potential economic impact VFR tourism has on destinations, through their expenditures and activities undertaken when visiting, highlighting the impact students can have on domestic tourism by promoting destination tourism elements to help stimulate visits from friends and family.

Student ambassadors

Arguably, the most significant practical finding of this thesis was the capacity to utilise students as destination promoters, suggesting that destinations need to adapt strategies to leverage students 'word of mouth' advertising, like online posts, cards, blogs, and competitions (Hughes et al., 2015). The use of social media sites should also be encouraged, to help provide positive word of mouth advertisements, that are likely to attract this emerging market. The unique role international students play in influencing VFR tourism development, needs to be further evaluated and researched, to ascertain the cultural, personal and economic gain generated from student VFR, and the impact this has on destinations and individual quality of life (Chan et al., 2022). International students are increasingly being recognised as a beneficial market for destinations, as they help generate VFR travellers and provide direct economic and marketing benefits (Jarvis, 2020), and should therefore be utilised as destination representatives (Kashiwagi et al., 2018).

Place attachment plays a major role in converting student hosts into passionate ambassadors and advertisers for destinations, and should be implemented into more promotional strategies

to encourage further participation (Petry et al., 2022). Student hosts are more familiar with a destinations culture and activities and social practices depending on their length of stay, and can therefore be considered useful marketing tools to incentivise VFR travellers (El Gamil, 2021; Tran et al., 2018). Students can be considered the most active communication channel with their VFR visitors, as students play multiple roles during VFR visits, as they hold the most information regarding attractions, accommodations, and activities (El Gamil, 2021). Understanding the complexities of the changing social relations and emerging travel generation is critical for marketing organisations to reach the target market.

Catalyst

Events such as graduations are influential in providing the incentives for VFR travel, and the catalyst for further domestic travel, providing a niche market for both education providers and tourism services to collaboratively develop the market for international students and VFR travel (Shanka & Taylor, 2003). These events provide the chance for bundled programs to attract multiple visitors of graduating students through joint promotional campaigns (Shanka & Taylor, 2003), as students become attractors for VFR tourism (Barnes & Rogerson, 2021) and warrant more research.

Social Media

Given the generation of students and the advances of social media, hosting these travellers is of increasing importance to tourist destinations, as they provide destinations with the ability to become brand ambassadors, who can help dispel negative connotations of destinations (Jarvis, 2020). El Gamil (2021) recommends universities utilise innovative ways, like the use of social media and word of mouth to target international students.

Third VFR

The idea of VFR3rd was presented in Tran et al. (2020), and is appealing to those who want to combine VFR visits with tourism and leisure, where some might be discouraged from engaging due to perceived unfamiliarity with the destination.

Seasonality

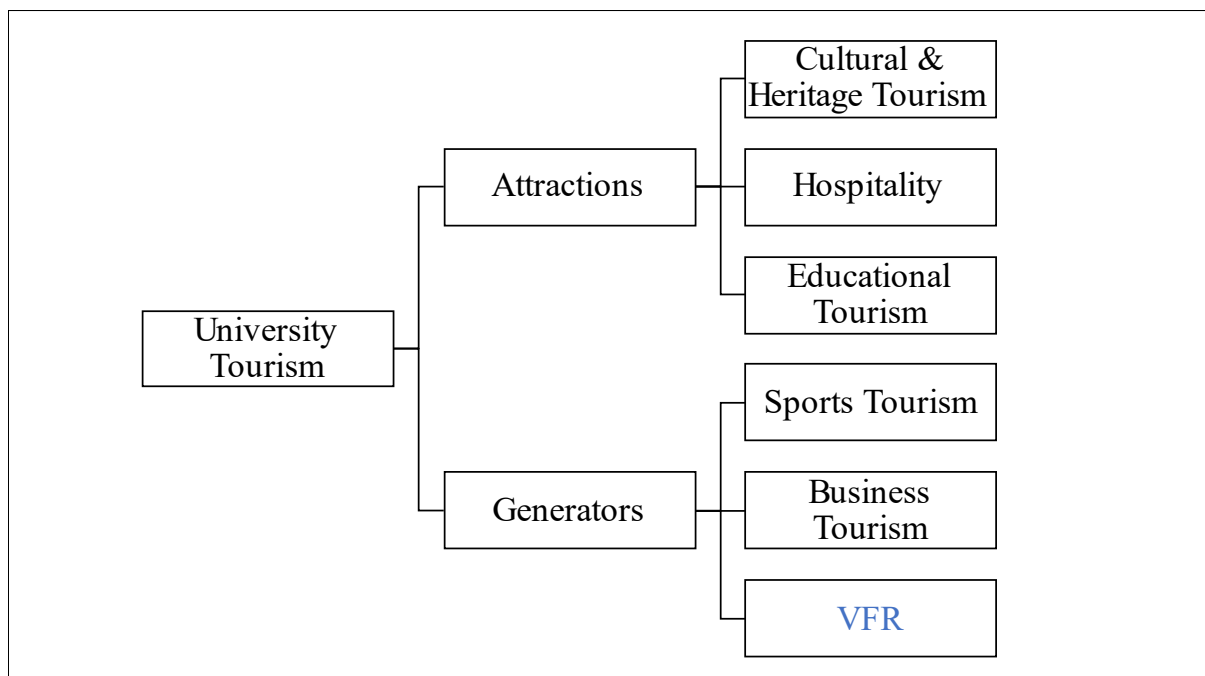
Several destinations, in the identified texts face the problem of seasonality, with VFR visits appearing throughout the course of the year, acting as a potential solution to seasonal

variations in domestic and international tourism arrivals, as students experience visits year round (Kashiwagi et al., 2018; Petry et al., 2022).

5.2.2. Theoretical Contributions and Implications

The model presented in section 2.0, highlighted six noticeable themes present throughout the available literature on university related tourism and was chosen as a means for conducting and structuring the initial thematic literature review. One of the most noticeable components was VFR tourism, and its relationship with university students. This relationship ended up guiding the research process, to establish a clear base of knowledge on university student related VFR tourism, attractions, and generators. Figure 5 adapts the previously presented figure into two key sections, attractions, and generators. Highlighting the push factors these components have towards tourism in general. The new model clearly distinguishes the six key components as attractions and generators, revealing a significant opportunity to expand on the currently available knowledge on the five additional components of university related tourism, that has been briefly captured in the initial stages of this thesis.

Figure 5: Attractions and Generators of University Tourism



The central focus of this thesis has been on the relationship of university student related VFR tourism, as the increasing phenomenon of students moving and studying abroad has propelled students into important roles as VFR tourism generators, with universities and higher

education sectors now representing large frequently underestimated generators of VFR travel (Bischoff & Koenig-Lewis, 2007; El Gamil, 2021; Hunter-Jones, 2008). As students themselves help generate repeat visits for visiting friends and relatives, with most students playing an active role in organising activities and attractions for their guests, as they are also expected to provide ongoing support and recommendations throughout their visit (Kashiwagi et al., 2018; Min-En, 2006; Petry et al., 2022). Results in this thesis, suggest that VFR tourism does have an indirect impact on inbound tourism, through both university students travel patterns and behaviours, and their ability to attract repeat visitors, helping to increase economic and socio-cultural exchanges (Chan et al., 2022; Min-En, 2006; Tran et al., 2018). The study revealed that VFR visits induced by students can be considered a significant part of university tourism.

5.3. Research Limitations

The thesis was subject to some limitations that need to be considered when interpreting the findings and implications. Potential limitations occurred during the initial screening process of the identified publications. As the primary sample size of the thesis is ultimately small, which arose during the initial screening process, that only identified 16 total publications relevant to the research questions.

This study was limited by language bias, as only literature written in English or English translation was included, as the researcher was only fluent in English, with time and resource constraints restricting the possibility for translations. Even though the majority of articles identified and included had connections with English speaking countries. However, had the study been able to include literature in multiple languages, it could have provided a greater spread of international publications.

Systematic reviews in their nature are dependent upon the authors keyword identification and implementation process, to successfully reveal relevant articles appearing in the title, abstract, and keyword section of articles. It is safe to assume that articles identified in the initial scoping review and systematic review, shared similar keywords on student VFR tourism. This is a limitation, as the systematic review methodology screened publications in stages, as the alternative of screening the articles manually was deemed impractical as it could create

greater bias. Systematic reviews are never entirely bias free as these considerations are predominantly left to author interpretation.

5.4. Future Research Recommendations

This section addresses potential areas for future research, that could contribute to the existing body of knowledge on university student related VFR tourism. These recommendations for future research were identified throughout the course of this thesis.

The first potential area for future research, lies in addressing some of the limitations of this thesis, where future research could see the study being repeated in languages other than English, which could reduce the language bias of the present study, and include findings from additional geographical locations. Repeating this study in the future could be done to assess the repeatability and systematic nature of the review, helping to test the strength of review protocol, and then ultimately the conclusions drawn.

Student VFR tourism is a growing phenomenon that demands future academic research to ascertain the global impact the sector has on destinations, and the impact students as hosts have as potential attractors and generators of VFR tourism. Such research should be both economically and socially focused, as the phenomenon contributes greatly to overcome issues of seasonality.

Another potential area lies in the adaption and expansion on the presented (Figure 5) Attractions and Generators of University Tourism. Because of various time and resource constraints, the thesis could only focus on one key part of this model. Therefore, future research may lie in evaluating and examining the additional five components presented in Figure 5, to capture a more complete image and overall contributions of each component.

5.5. Conclusion

This thesis explored the currently available literature on university student related VFR tourism concepts and frameworks, to explain the associated attractions and generators of this phenomenon. Understanding how key article characteristics describe the current body of knowledge, and contribution of research, is imperative to understanding the global impact of VFR tourism, and how universities and university students, contribute to VFR tourism,

through boosting tourism economies in ways that have been significantly underappreciated. This was achieved by providing practical and theoretical contributions that strengthen the understanding and the influencing factors behind student VFR. This research, therefore, contributes to the increasing knowledge by providing a comprehensive analysis of this globally impactful phenomenon.

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