

HOME-BASED TRAVEL MOTIVATIONS OF STUDENTS IN SELECTED PUBLIC SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN TAMALE METROPOLIS, GHANA

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Abstract

The culture of travel for purposes of tourism has not been with Ghanaians for long and the reason for this is not far fetched:-poverty. Despite this scenario, some of the elite are gradually embracing the phenomenon for various reasons. In recent times, it is not uncommon to see bus load of students heading for excursions/tours in other parts of the country. This study is therefore aimed at; finding out student travel motivations and identifying places of interest visited in the country. In this regard, six public Senior High Schools (SHS) within four educational circuits were selected in Tamale Metropolis for the study. In all, 246 respondents (students) were obtained from the final year cohorts in the selected public SHS employing the simple random technique. Information was sourced using questionnaire administration and in-depth interviews. The study revealed the factors that accounted for students' choice of places with touristic scenes in the country which included; nature admiration (site seeing) prestige, academic pursuits and socialization. Whilst arguing for tourism issues to form part of the agenda and discussions at PTA meetings, it is also prudent for these attraction sites to be properly maintained to

continuously serve student travel or excursion needs and that of the broader domestic or foreign vacationer.

Keywords: Travel, tourism, student, Senior High School, motivation, excursion

1. Introduction

Motivation is the driving force which compels an individual to take action (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2004). It further also implies that motivation moves a person to do something in order to travel (Ryan and Deci, 2009). The reason behind why people travel or choose a destination over another has been a topic for many researchers and people in academia and are important considerations for both planners and managers of the tourism industry. The motivation which leads to a choice of a destination over the other for a vacation is an interesting issue which allows for a better understanding of people's behaviour in the area of leisure spending, (Phan-thi, 2010).

Kotler, Bowen and Makens (2003) discussed the factors that account for an individual's patronage of a product which they linked to the choice of a destination. In their view, the product itself a destination has to offer, the price of accessing the destination, the place in question and the promotion of the place to the world (the four P's) are worth considering. Other factors such as economic, technological, political and cultural also inform a person's choice of a particular product, that is, to choose to travel to a particular destination for pleasure or otherwise.

In recent times, nature tourism is one of the fastest growing segments of world tourism (Allan, 2000). This explains itself in all sense of thought because nature is endowed with all the unique features of various resources to give pleasure, hence must be conserved. Natural area tourism therefore explicitly refers to, tourism in natural settings (Newsome, Moore and Dowling 2002). Newsome *et al* (2002) includes under nature tourism: adventure, nature-based, wildlife and ecotourism. Other scholars expand the scope of nature tourism to include; educational tourism, responsible tourism and many other forms of outdoor oriented, non-mass tourism activities (Mckercher, 1998). With this, it explains much better that the visit to natural attractions involves a conjunction of different forms of attractions and activities to motivate a tourist choose a particular natural site over the other.

Internationally, among the top ten reasons why students must study abroad, aside from acquiring quality education, most students travel to other countries to further their education because there are so many amazing things to experience around the world. They are motivated by different natural landscapes and climate that do not exist in their countries, man-made features like the Great Wall of China, the Golden Gate Bridge connecting San Francisco and Marin county and many others which they might have read about, watched documentaries on or heard about by word of mouth (<http://things-to-see.info/authors/admin>).

The concept of student travel motivation is closely linked to other constructs of attention, needs, goals and interest which contributes to stimulating the students interest in learning and their intention to engage in particular activities and in this case to go on tour. Students prefer to expand their knowledge of the world, actually being there, seeing it, touching it and experiencing it (Krause et al, 2005).

Pictures in textbooks make descriptions of a destination seem abstract. For instance, visiting the Congo rainforest or the Brazilian Amazon gives a student who has heard about the different species that are unique to these forests an exciting experience which is not abstract. This therefore enables students to understand the world in a direct and all-encompassing way. Most visits to natural sites in different places or countries and their cultures help one to see the world in a different perspective hence shedding more light on the common saying that ‘seeing is believing’. Across the world, students have been organizing trips to areas with natural attractions and so many factors go in to inform the decision of student travel or visits to places. Margaret Mead (1901- 1978) once said, “A traveller who has left his home is wiser than he who has never left his own door steps”.

The number of Ghanaians travelling for purposes of tourism is generally low due to poor income levels and the general lack of the culture of travel. Despite this scenario, organized tours by students in Ghana are becoming popular. In this light, students in public SHS in Tamale Metropolis do organize tours in the form of excursions or trips to destinations for various reasons in the country. The main aim of this study therefore is to assess motivational factors influencing tours to attraction sites in the country by students in selected public senior high schools in the Metropolis while seeking specifically to.

- i. Find out category of attractions visited mostly by students in the country.
- ii. Assess if their travel aspirations to these sites are met and the way forward

2. Motivation to Travel-What the Literature Says

Travelling as perceived by Theobald (2005) is not a latter day phenomenon because throughout the course of history, people have travelled for different reasons. Crompton (1979) explained that, motivation is a critical starting point to understanding travel behaviour, little information has been documented about student travel motivations. The idea of travel motivation has been explained by many authors and researchers. The general factors that motivate people to travel were identified by Pearce and Lee (2005) as escape/ relaxation, family cohesion, health and fitness, desire for romance and recognition. However, motives underlined by research of why nature tourism is the fastest growing segments internationally in tourism are; widespread changing environmental attitude, development of environmental mass media and environmental education (Lindberg, Wood and Engeldrum, 1998). It can be deduced that the more people hear about attractions the more they yearn to see and it goes a long way to influence their concern about environmental issues involving conservation.

It is also a well known fact that the image a destination portrays goes a long way to determine its patronage by tourists and this is why natural attractions are leading (Phan-thi, 2010). The question now is can natural attractions maintain its position in leading tourism in the near future? If the answer is threatening then what needs to be done to maintain that stand, on the other hand, if the answer is positive, what brings about a motivations in people to the natural attractions thus to hold on to them or better. Berlin and Martin (2004) proved that motivation is the need that desires an individual to act in a certain way to achieve the desired satisfaction. Although the decision to satisfy needs may rely on other psychological variables to satisfy it by motivation. The various theories that have sprung from research on motivation indicate the complexity of the problem of determining the possible interactions among the many components—individual differences, situational differences, social and cultural factors and cognition (Wati, 2011).

It has been suggested in their motivation theory, how an individual's level of motivation can be derived from one or in a broader sense, tourist motivation can be defined “as the global integrating network of biological and cultural forces which gives value and direction to travel choices, behaviour and experience” (Maehr and Braskamp, 1986; Pearce *et al* 1998).

Stipek (1988) makes a strong case for strengthening the degree of intrinsic motivation students feel for learning. While she does not argue for the complete elimination of extrinsic

reward systems, she believes that “there are many benefits to maximizing intrinsic motivation and many ways to foster it”. She identifies four perspectives from which intrinsic motivation can be viewed: competency motivation, curiosity, autonomy, and internalized motivation.

Competency motivation assumes “that individuals engage in tasks, in part, for the purpose of developing competence and experiencing the positive feeling of efficacy associated with successful mastery attempts”. Her idea can be related to the fact that travelling to visit areas to have a practical feel of something being taught in the classroom will go a long way to satisfy curiosity and increase competency in that regard.

Morrison and Rutledge (1998), also presents ten trends which represents important issues of content in describing tourist motives, amongst these, four are considerate in our case, in terms of nature tourism motivation; motive to pursue special interest and skills (scuba diving, fishing etc), motive to rest and relax in pleasant settings, motive to experience the environment and the motive to be healthy and fit. These motives are good starting points to discuss motivation of nature tourism, but some appear to be just social changes or reasons that have affected in some way the motives of the tourist (Müller and Stewart, 2009).

According to Backman *et al* (1995), motivations are associating with basic needs for participating, for instance, in activities, hence motivations are important in explaining why travel to particular areas. Previous studies had indicated that tourist behaviours can be explained by place attachment activities, destination image, and tourist attitude, subjective norms and perceived control behaviour (Lam and Hsu, 2006; Lee, 2009). Recently, the average level of formal education attainment is rising globally for both male and females. Literacy is increasing too, particularly in less developed countries. Higher educational levels are strongly correlated with demand for outdoor recreation activities, and lead to changes in the patterns of recreation and tourism (Eagles et al, 2002)

Falk and Dierking (2000), used a constructivist standpoint when developing their contextual model of learning. This model was developed to examine free choice learning situations, notably learning taking place as a result of museum visits. Their model examines the personal context, socio-cultural context, and the physical context of each learning situation, and how these factors interact and change through time.

Understanding natural history and ecology - has gained increasing attention in secondary and tertiary level of outdoor education courses in Australia (Müller and Stewart 2009). While

teaching and learning natural history shares subject matter with the more traditional disciplines of ecology and geography, their approach, in line with a number of authors underlines the need for local specificity in nature-focused programmes as an alternative to the universalist conceptions of nature which usually characterize teaching in formal scientific disciplines (Brookes 2002a; 2002b; Stewart 2006, Pyle 2008). There is however little available material documenting how this might best be undertaken (Stewart 2006; Muller and Stewart, 2009).

Some authors also discussed and gave some evidence that a paradoxical situation occurs: even though the knowledge about the environment may increase among travellers, personal behaviour may be characterized by increased resource consumption (Gossling, 2002). This idea of change in perception will go a long way to inspire students to travel. Majority of research into the efficacy of approaches and the factors that might influence nature focused outdoor education outcomes is mostly focused on outdoor excursions that are adjunct to classroom based learning (Dillon *et al* 2006) or residential camps (Ballantyne and Packer, 2009).

The Maslow theory of needs in his 1943 paper, in a way tried to help digest and increase our understanding of motivations to travel in general. In his theory he talked about five needs in a hierarchy form that an individual ought to mostly forfeit. According to Maslow in 1943, (see Figure 1) the lowest is physiological needs which a person seeks to satisfy first before the remaining needs hence the need to travel by students will always be met if their physiological needs as students are met notwithstanding their safety needs. Tourism is a higher need and in northern Ghana most parents are poor and for this limitation, a lot of students are not given enough money to cater for their upkeep in schools let alone to go on tours. Hence, the huge cost involved in organizing these trips in terms of fares deters many of them as most will prefer to keep the little cash in hand to help supplement their feeding privately.

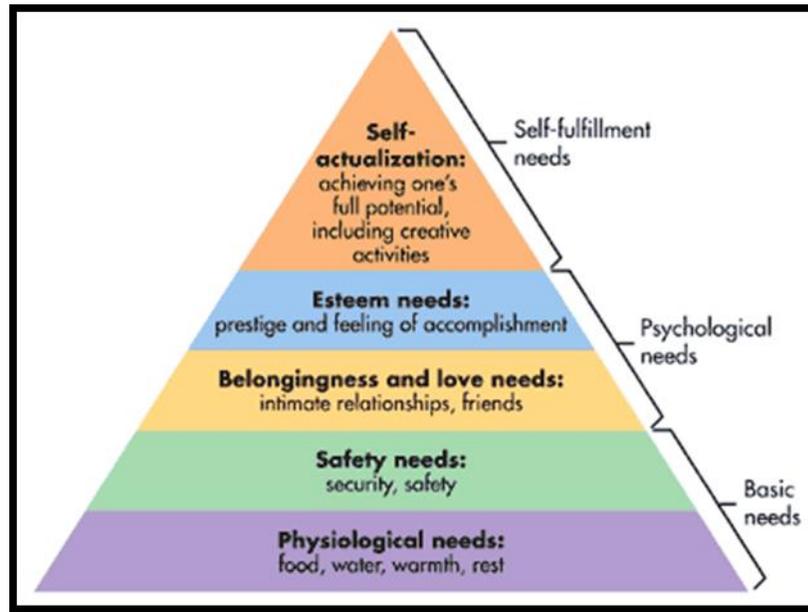


Figure 1: Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (1943)

3. Methodology

The survey was carried out in the Tamale Metropolis of the Northern Region of Ghana. There are ten public senior high schools (SHS) within the metropolis and all the public schools are grouped under circuits as follows (see Table 1).

Table1: Schools and their circuits in the metropolis

Circuits	Names of School
A Educational Ridge	1. Tamale Senior High School (Tamasco) 2. Northern School of Business (Nobisco)
B Bolga road	1. Kalpohin Senior High School 2. Northern Business School (Bisco)
C Hospital Road	1. St. Charles Senior High School 2. Tamale Girls Senior High School 3. Presbyterian Senior High School 4. Ghana Senior High School 5. Vitting Secondary/ Technical School
D Kamina Area	1. Tamale Islamic Secondary

Source: Tamale Metropolitan Educational Office, (2012).

3.1 Sampling

The simple random sampling method was used to select a school from each circuit, by equal chance during the survey. The lottery method was employed where all the names of schools in the circuit were written on pieces of paper and here a school was chosen by lucky dip. However, with the hospital road circuit, two schools were selected out of five in that circuit. In all six schools were selected out of ten. The study took 10% of all final year student cohorts in each of the schools contacted and the reason behind the engagement of the final year groups was that these crop of students would have had greater opportunity to travel while on campus for the four year period of stay than their schoolmates in first, second or third year.

Table 2: Schools and number of students selected

Circuit	Selected Schools	Number of Students in Final Year	Number Selected	Male	Female
A. Educational Ridge	1.Tamale SHS (Tamasco)	602 students	10% of 602 =60students	45 male	15 female
	2.Northern School of Business (Nobisco)	396 students	10% of 396 =40students	30 male	10 female
B. Bolga road	1.Kalpohin Senior High School	293students	10% of 293 =30 students	20 male	10 female
C. Hospital Road	1.Ghana Senior High School	482 students	10% of 482 =48students	32 male	16 female
	2. Tamale Girls Senior High School	320 students	10% Of 320 =32 students		32 female
D. Kamina Area	1.Tamale Islamic Secondary	296 students	10% of 352 =36 students	25 male	11 female
Total	6 schools		246 students	152male	94 female

Source: Administrations of Schools visited/ authors' construct 2012

In all, 246 students were contacted for the study comprising 152 male (62%) and 94 female constituting 38% (see Table 2 above). The main data collection instruments were questionnaire administration and the use of in-depth interviews. Data collection lasted a period of two months spanning April 30, 2012 to June 30, 2012.

4. Findings and Discussions

With regard to the demographic characteristics of students, the study revealed that majority of these students (63%) in final year contacted were between the ages of 16–18 years. This confirms the finding of Crompton (1979) that majority of those travelling from the USA and Europe are those below age 16. About 19% were within the age of 17-19 and the remaining 18% of them contacted were above the age of 20 years.

4.1 Educational Background of Parents /Guardians

Table 3 below shows the educational background of parents/guardians of these students as revealed by the study in percentages. Close to 24% of parents/ guardians of these students had no formal schooling which have implications on their income levels and their ability to give extra pocket money to their wards during the schooling term.

Table 3: Educational background of parents/guardian (N=246)

Level of Education	Number of Parents	Percentage (%)
Tertiary	44	18.0
Secondary	59	24.2
Basic	84	34.3
No formal schooling	59	23.5
Total	246	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2012

The professions of the parents or guardian of the respondents (students) were obtained. What was recorded has been summarized in table 4 which shows that 30%, 32% and 21% of guardians or parents of these students are farmers, petty traders and artisans respectively who are

generally on irregular incomes. It therefore stands clear to reason that most students are not able to afford because of meager pocket money availed by their parents.

Table 4: Professions of parents/guardian (N=246)

Profession	Number of Parents	Percentages (%)
Civil servant	25	10
Artisan	52	21
Petty Trader	78	32
Farmer	74	30
Others	17	7
Total	246	100

Source: Field survey, 2012

4.2 Student Travels

The study revealed that 160 of these students (65%) contacted have travelled or gone on excursion/tour during the four year duration of their stay on their campuses. Out of this, 48% went on organized tours with school authorities, 10% with school church/religious organizations and 42% with campus based youth associations. However, 35% of the students interviewed had never travelled by any of the above mentioned groups, for the purposes of tourism during the whole course of their stay on the various campuses.

4.3 Reasons Why Students Visit Attraction Sites

Close to 30% of the 160 students stated they visited natural attractions for the purpose of observing wonderful natural scenes or places with uncommon characteristics. Interestingly, 27% of the students also travelled because of the prestige attached to knowing an attraction or a popular place of interest, such as the castles, beaches, waterfalls including Mole and Kakum National Parks are some well known attractions that have gained popularity among students on tour. Although students at second cycle level are still at the physiological needs stage, they are proud among their peers to know a popular destination or to have seen a particular wonderful natural resource.

“I have pictures that testify that I have been to Kakum National Park before and even walked on the canopy walkway, my friends can’t call me a villager anymore”.

These were the words of a science student in Tamale Senior High School (TAMASCO) and it further confirms this element of curiosity to travel (Stipek, 1988) and motive to experience the environment (Morrison and Rutledge, 1998).

About 20% indicated they travelled for educational purposes. For academic purposes, they mostly learned the mysteries in some cultures, natural history and the study of features of wildlife species or the vegetation which is in tandem with the findings of Muller and Stewart (2009) in some Australian secondary and tertiary institutions. However, for fun and socialization the study revealed 12% of students attesting probably also in link with Eagles et al (2002) who noted that higher educational attainments strongly correlated with demand for outdoor recreation activities. Close to 11% of the students travelled due to influence from friends and school authorities as well as the advertisement about a particular trip or excursion as shown in figure 2.

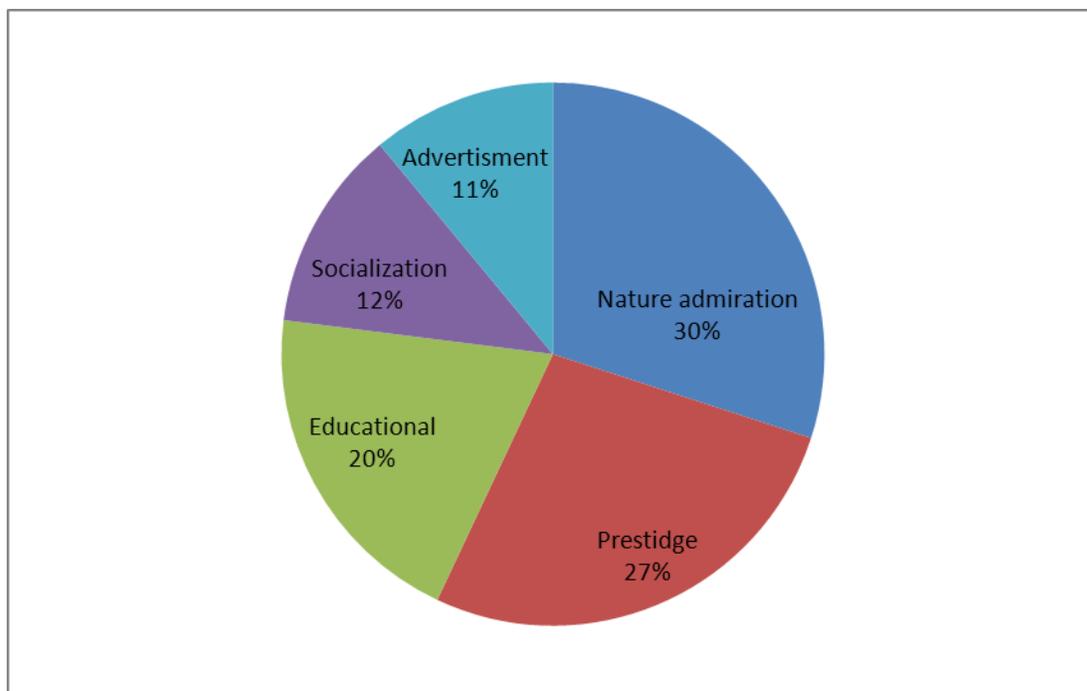


Figure 2: Pie chart showing reasons why respondents travel to attraction sites

Source: Field survey, 2012

4.4 Types of Attractions Visited by Students

The respondents visited tourist destinations across the ten regions of the country. Out of these, 56% visited wonderful natural attractions within the country such as the Mole National

Park, in the Northern Region, Kakum National Park in Central Region, Kintampo waterfalls, in Brong–Ahafo Region and the Gbele Reserve in the Upper West Region in consonance with Steele et al (1992) who observed that, beautiful species and ecosystems are what draw people to natural areas. However 28% visited areas of historical heritage such as the Cape Coast and Elmina Castles and 16% visited different types of destinations for educational, cultural or religious purposes such as communities celebrating festivals. This also confirms that understanding natural history and ecology - has gained increasing attention in secondary and tertiary level of outdoor education courses (Müller and Stewart, 2009).

Table 5: Kinds of attractions visited by students on tour (N=160)

Type of destination	Number of students	Percentage (%)
Natural attraction sites	90	56
Areas of Historical Heritage	44	28
Others	26	16
Total	160	100

Source: Field survey, 2012

The survey again revealed that 75% of the students who travelled were content; in other words their aspirations were met with what they saw hence confirming that the factors that might influence nature focused outdoor education mostly depended on outdoor excursions that are adjunct to classroom based learning (Dillon et al 2006). This obviously provides them a practical feel and a better understanding of what is taught in class. However 25% had reservations with their trips and some registered their displeasure as follows:

“I wanted to see a Buffalo, Zebra and Tiger as our teacher promised, but we went to Mole National Park and I found none of them. This could be due to the fact that some of the animals might have gone deep into the park at the time of our visit”

The students however gave suggestions on how to improve on some of such tourism resources in the country.

4.5 Suggestions by Students on how to Encourage Travel to Tourism Sites

Cutting down cost on excursions by school authorities or by the help of NGOs were the suggestions of about 29% of the 160 students who have ever gone on tour. About 21% of the students interviewed suggested formation of tourism or conservation clubs on campus to be a motivation for them to travel since the formation of these clubs will serve as a panacea to most of the difficulties they encounter in travelling to attraction sites. Moreover, 20% of them also suggested that permits to go on trips of this nature should readily be granted by appropriate school authorities.

In addition, 19% of the respondents suggested the government through collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and Diasporan Relations, the Ministry of Education should include travel and tourism into the curriculum of school calendar in Ghana since this will improve on the desire of students to travel and impart in them the need to develop the urge to travel. Some 11% of the respondents aired their views on the need to improve some tourism infrastructure such as road networks, good reception centres, quality service delivery and advertising for publicity purposes as indicated in figure 3 below.

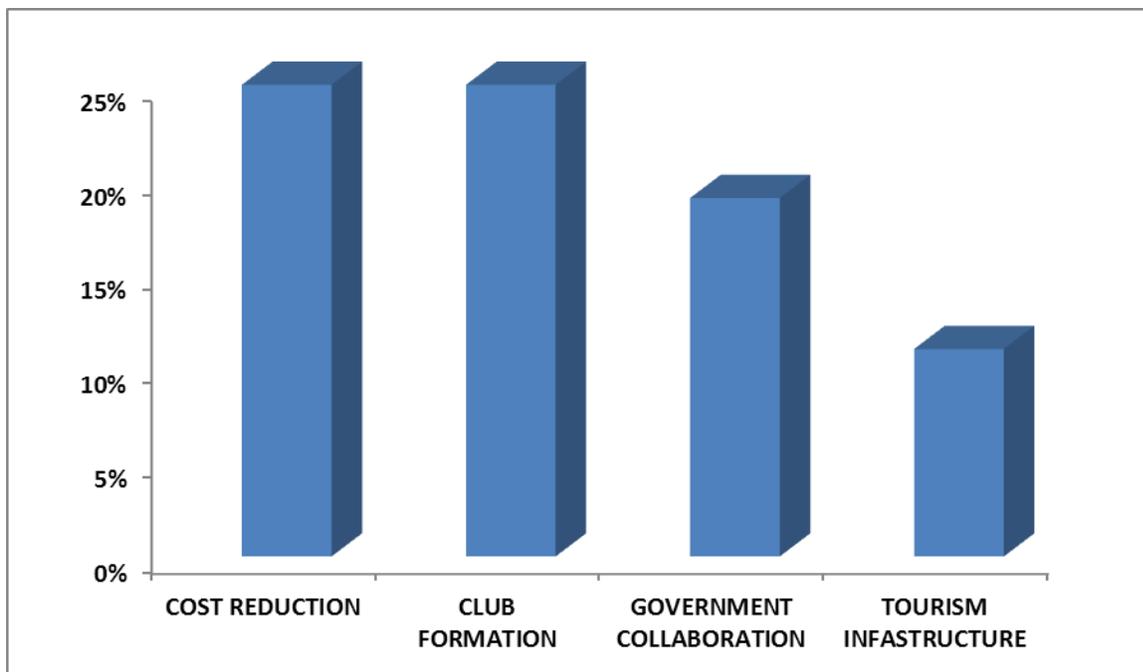


Figure 3: Bar graph showing suggestions of students on how to encourage travel

4.6 Reasons Given by Students for not Travelling

Almost all the students (86 respondents which constitutes 35% of the 246) who had never travelled especially for the purpose of tourism, had their own reasons which in actual sense are very laudable and catchy, the most leading ones are: according to 43 % of the students their inability to afford the cost involved with most excursions prevented them from engaging themselves in organized tours, this is mostly attributed to the fact that their parents did not willingly release money to them for tours or cannot even afford to provide them at all. Close to 21% of those interviewed showed ignorance and lack of interest as their reason. About 20% of the students gave the denial of exit permits by the authorities in charge. Aside from these reasons, 16% indicated the fear of travelling out of their town due to bad roads or the possible occurrence of accidents hence the fear to adventure (see Table 6).

Table 6: Reasons why some student respondents did not travel (N=86)

Reasons	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
Inability to afford	37	43
Lack of interest	18	21
Denial of exit permit	17	20
Fear of adventure	14	16
Total	86	100

Source: Field Survey, 2012

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

It was revealed by the study that, students are motivated to travel to areas with attractions because of admiration for nature, prestige reasons, socialization, academic pursuits and influence from their peers (advertisement). The work has identified natural attraction centres in the country basically national parks, waterfalls, resource reserves as areas of interest visited mostly by students and what must be done to nurture this interest in tourism as future leaders (the catch them young spirit) so that they grow up to be “ambassadors of environmental conservation”. Since majority of them who travelled to areas with natural attractions were content; in other words their aspirations were met, this therefore could be a positive step in “whipping up” their interest in conservation and fostering futuristic tourism development efforts.

The study hereby recommends that:

- Conservation and ecotourism education should be done during PTA meetings to create parental interest in assisting wards to embark on trips or excursions.
- The ministry of tourism should provide brochures on Ghana's tourism resources and places of interest in all school libraries and posters of some of these attractions be made available to school authorities for display at vantage points of the schools, to build up the interest to visit such places by the students.
- There should be the consideration of ecotourism club formation on the campuses of the second cycle institutions with tutors in charge to guarantee successful organization of trips.
- The natural attraction sites (national parks) should be well maintained by way of well laid out paths, provision of sanitation bins, employment of more game wardens and the proper demarcation of recreation areas to enhance visitor satisfaction will go a long way to enhance visitor satisfaction.

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