



**GROUP INFLUENCES ON INDIVIDUAL HOLIDAY DECISION-  
MAKING AND BEHAVIOUR: A STUDY OF GROUP DYNAMICS IN  
TOURIST PARTIES OF YOUNG PEOPLE**

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## Abstract

This study investigates the group decision-making processes and holiday behaviours of young people in the age-range 18-35 years and provides insights into how social influences within various travel parties affect individuals' decision-making and behavioural processes. Although holiday decision-making has a long tradition in tourism research, the number of studies focused on how holiday decisions are formed within groups of travellers is relatively low considering the social character of pleasure travel. The majority of researchers continue to portray the individual's holiday decision-making process at the expense of social interactions among group members. While research on family holiday decision-making is relatively well established in the consumer behaviour literature, the ways in which other decision-making units, such as groups of friends, make their holiday plans have been comparatively overlooked. This oversight occurs despite the fact that friends are common companions for leisure travel activities, especially for young people, who generally prefer to holiday with their peers.

Based on empirical research through quantitative surveys (n=412 and n=200) and longitudinal in-depth interviews (n=10), this thesis challenges the view that holiday decisions are usually made jointly, and instead suggests that specific holiday sub-decisions are often dominated by a single individual within a group setting rather than being equally influenced by all group members. The nature of joint decision-making is significantly related to the size and structure of travel parties; that is, decisions made by bigger travel parties, families and groups of friends could often be characterised as autonomic rather than syncretic decisions. Furthermore, group-based behaviour is a modification of individual behaviour, which makes individuals engage in activities they may not have done otherwise. Accordingly, compromise is the most frequently used 'Non-coercive/Non-Confrontational' conflict resolution strategy when making holiday decisions. The results of this thesis further show that tourist behaviour is highly context dependent, with external, situational and environmental influences, which mediate holiday decisions. Therefore, although the data demonstrate the existence of four distinct clusters of young holidaymakers, these segments are only representations of individuals' attitudes and behaviours at a moment in time. A tourist's identity is fluid and dependent on the context, which highlights the need for new contemporary perspectives on tourist decision-making.

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