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## A Model of Travel Itineraries

MARTIN OPPERMANN

*A model of travel itineraries is proposed with two single- and five multideestination itineraries. The validity of these itineraries is tested by analyzing travel patterns of 1,000 international tourists to Malaysia. The study indicates that the advanced travel itineraries are relevant and comprehensive. Further, it suggests that international travel patterns are much more complex than is usually assumed.*

Travel itineraries have received little attention in tourism research. While there is a growing literature on intranational travel patterns (e.g., Murphy and Keller 1990; Steingrube 1992; Oppermann 1992, 1994a) describing flow patterns and differences between market segments, few studies have investigated the underlying itineraries of the individual tourist (Mings and McHugh 1992; Lue, Crompton, and Fesenmaier 1993).

The advantages of inquiring into visitors' trip itineraries are many. Understanding the spatial configuration of holiday trips allows for better demand forecasting at all levels (Lue, Crompton, and Fesenmaier 1993; Pearce 1990; CDT 1992). Thus, potential bottlenecks can be identified and planned for (Forer and Pearce 1984; Pearce 1987). Knowledge of linkage patterns between destinations helps in identifying key nodes and possible ways of rerouting visitors when threshold levels are reached (Forer and Pearce 1984). It also contributes to recognizing natural partners in regional or locational cooperation, especially in concentrating marketing efforts (Lue, Crompton, and Fesenmaier 1993). Market segmentation analysis of spatial travel patterns facilitates the delineation of market segments whose dispersal patterns are more congruent with policy goals — for example, regional diversification (Pearce 1990). It can help hotels or hotel chains obtain a better location estimation of potential new sites (Lue, Crompton, and Fesenmaier 1993). Yet not many national and regional tourism organizations, hotel chains, and other key actors in the tourism industry seem to bother (Pearce 1990; Ayala 1993). National tourism organizations are mostly interested in total tourist arrivals and foreign exchange earnings, but not in where and how the visitors spend their money and who benefits from it (Pearce 1990; Din 1990). According to Ayala (1993), only a few hotel chains offer explicit hotel circuits. This is despite worldwide operation of a number of hotel chains that may own or manage several hotels and resorts in one country or region. One sector that is more concerned about tourists visiting several destinations in one

country are rental car agencies because they stand to profit from growth in the multideestination market. Fly-and-drive packages have been sold for more than 20 years (e.g., by Lufthansa and Avis). One recent phenomenon is the fly-and-drive package complemented by a voucher system either for one chain or for a collection of different hotels (e.g., Malaysian Airlines).

The purpose of this article is to forward a comprehensive set of travel itineraries on which a destination can perform a market segmentation analysis (i.e., single- versus multideestination travelers). This set of itineraries is subsequently tested with primary data on intranational travel patterns in Malaysia by international tourists to determine if the suggested itineraries are comprehensive or if others need to be added.

### MODEL OF TOURIST FLOWS

In his review of the literature on intranational tourist flows, Pearce (1987) stated that the evolving general pattern is that of a hierarchical system, where some places (nodes) attract the majority of the visitors while others have less demand. Several recent studies have confirmed this model (Murphy and Keller 1990; Oppermann 1992, 1994a; Steingrube 1993). As shown by those studies that inquire into tourists' travel patterns, tourist trips are not solely composed of single-destination trips but may take a variety of forms involving several destinations in one country or numerous countries. Depending on the location and size of the destination country, its tourist attraction base, and the composition of its visitors (e.g., short-, medium-, or long-haul markets), single- or multideestination itineraries within the country may be dominant. Multideestination trips are the primary trip type in New Zealand; it is a long-haul destination for most of its visitors and offers a range of scenic attractions (Oppermann 1993; Pearce 1990). The Bahamas, on the other hand, are located close to the United States and do not have such a diverse resource base; therefore, the majority of tourists stay largely on one island, if not in the resort itself (Debbage 1988; Ungefehr 1988).

The intranational travel pattern may be differentiated into a number of categories. In studying travel patterns of

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visitors to Yellowstone National Park, Mings and McHugh (1992) identified four distinct route types: direct route, partial orbit, full-orbit, and fly-and-drive trips. The direct-route itinerary leads the visitor directly to and from the main destination. This is commonly considered a single-destination trip. The partial orbiters set out on a more or less direct route to the destination area; however, upon reaching the area they tour the countryside, visit several destinations, and stay at different places. Toward the end of the trip the "orbit" is closed and the return path is, to a considerable extent, the same as the one taken initially. This is very similar to the fly-and-drive itinerary, only the plane is taken for the initial and return leg. The full-orbit trip involves visiting a number of different places while never traveling on the same travel leg twice.

In a separate, more theoretical study, Lue, Crompton, and Fesenmaier (1993) proposed five spatial patterns of pleasure vacation trips: single-destination, en route, base camp, regional tour, and trip-chaining pattern. The single-destination corresponds to Mings and McHugh's direct-route trip; the regional tour pattern is evident in the partial orbit and fly-and-drive trips; and finally, the trip-chaining pattern is equivalent to the full-orbit itinerary. Although Lue, Crompton, and Fesenmaier (1993) grouped the base camp pattern into the multidestination category, it is closer to an extended single-destination pattern because the visitors stay only in the "base camp," undertaking day excursions from that base. This is quite common for a single-destination pattern, especially when the stay is longer than just a few days. The en route pattern represents an itinerary where the visitors have one main destination but visit other places en route to that main destination.

The approaches of both Mings and McHugh (1992) and Lue, Crompton, and Fesenmaier (1993) have been developed in a largely U.S. (domestic) tourism context. On an international level, however, the addition of at least two more multidestination travel patterns are needed. Figure 1 shows two types of single-destination and five types of multidestination travel patterns, whereby S1, S2 and M1, M2, and M3 correspond to patterns identified by Mings and McHugh (1992) and by Lue, Crompton, and Fesenmaier (1993). The open jaw loop (M4) is a type of long-haul travel becoming more and more popular. Arrival and departure points in the destination area (region) are not identical. For example, a European visiting the United States arrives in New York, rents a car, and crosses the continent to depart from San Francisco back to Europe. This type of traveling is very logical when a number of destinations that are far apart are to be visited, making the return to the arrival point too bothersome. Statistics on arrivals and departures for New Zealand and Australian airports show that a considerable percentage of visitors to those countries are actually using different gateways to arrive and depart (BTR 1991; NZTD 1990).

The multidestination area loop (M5) is an extension or combination of the destination area pattern (M3) and open jaw loop pattern (M4). The tourist visits completely different regions and travels to a number of places within each region. The most typical case is the round-the-world tour. From North America, for example, the tourist first travels to Europe and visits several locations in a number of countries. Then he or she flies to India. After having visited the major attractions there, the traveler boards a plane to Bangkok and then travels overland to Singapore. The trip also includes stops in Australia and New Zealand and an island in the Pacific before returning home. Such a travel pattern consists of destination area loops and/or open jaw loops that

are strung together. Simple forms may involve only two destination areas — for example, a visit to Australia that is combined with a tour of New Zealand. Statistics from Australia show that 13% of its international tourists visited New Zealand on the same vacation trip (BTR 1991).

## METHODOLOGY

To achieve the above objectives, data were needed on the intranational travel patterns of international tourists in a destination country and their international travel itineraries. An exit survey of 1,000 international tourists to Malaysia was conducted after pretesting the questionnaire with 54 respondents at Kuala Lumpur airport in July 1990. The survey period was August and September 1990 and took place in the departure lounges of the two main international airports, Kuala Lumpur and Penang. This approach excluded all visitors leaving Malaysia by land or by sea and particularly those crossing the Causeway to Singapore. However, a survey permit for the Causeway was not granted. Except for visitors from neighboring Thailand and Singapore, the two airports account for 70%-80% of all visitors (TDC 1986; Pempena Consult 1992). Data on Singapore tourists via the Causeway suggest that their main and sole destination is the border town Johor Bahru (SRM 1974, 1977). Since the objective of this study was to determine the existence of the proposed itineraries rather than the estimation of the relative share of each category, the exclusion of Singaporean and Thai overland travelers was not considered detrimental.

A stratified random sampling approach was adopted using the most recent data on visitor composition with respect to country of origin and port of departure. Besides questions on some socioeconomic aspects, the respondents were asked to list their day-to-day travel itinerary within Malaysia, all other countries visited or intended to be visited, and total length of trip. Depending on their length of stay in Malaysia and the complexity of their travel itinerary, personal interviews lasted 5 to 30 minutes. Language barriers were encountered in a few cases with visitors who were traveling on an escorted package tour. In these cases, tour guides helped to translate or gave the relevant information on the travel itinerary.

## RESULTS

Restricting the present study to air travelers only reduces the number of different travel pattern types previously identified in Figure 1. Since both M1 and M2 are based on overland travel from home they are *a priori* excluded in this study. However, this does not mean that these types do not occur in Malaysia. A survey of departing Thai or Singaporean tourists at the border checkpoints would yield such travel patterns. Mings and McHugh's (1992) study showed the existence of such itineraries. In the following discussion, five main types of travel patterns are distinguished. They are: single-destination trip S1, base camp S2, destination area loop M3, open jaw loop M4, and multiple destination area loop M5. While tourists classified into S1, S2, M3, and M4 were solely traveling to and within Malaysia, M5 travelers visited other countries as well. Because the latter is much more prevalent, M5 visitors are further differentiated according to their international and mostly intranational travel itinerary. Again, four different subtypes are identified: stopover (M5a),

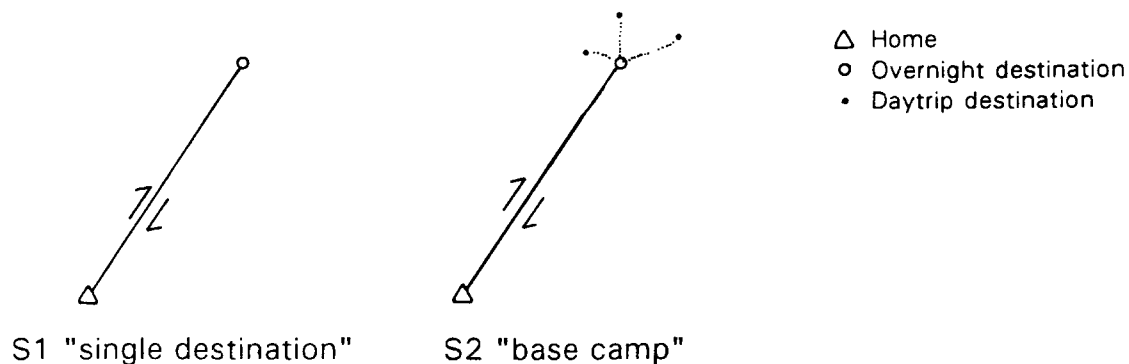
single destination (M5b), destination area loop (M5c), and open jaw loop (M5d). These subcategories are also identified in Figure 1. While the distinction between M5c and M5d is obvious, M5a and M5b are distinguished by length of stay in Malaysia as compared to the whole vacation trip. If Malaysia was a minor stopover involving less than 5% of all nights, it was classified as M5a. Cases where Malaysia was part of a larger travel itinerary but the stay in Malaysia was

of equal importance to stay in other countries were categorized as M5b.

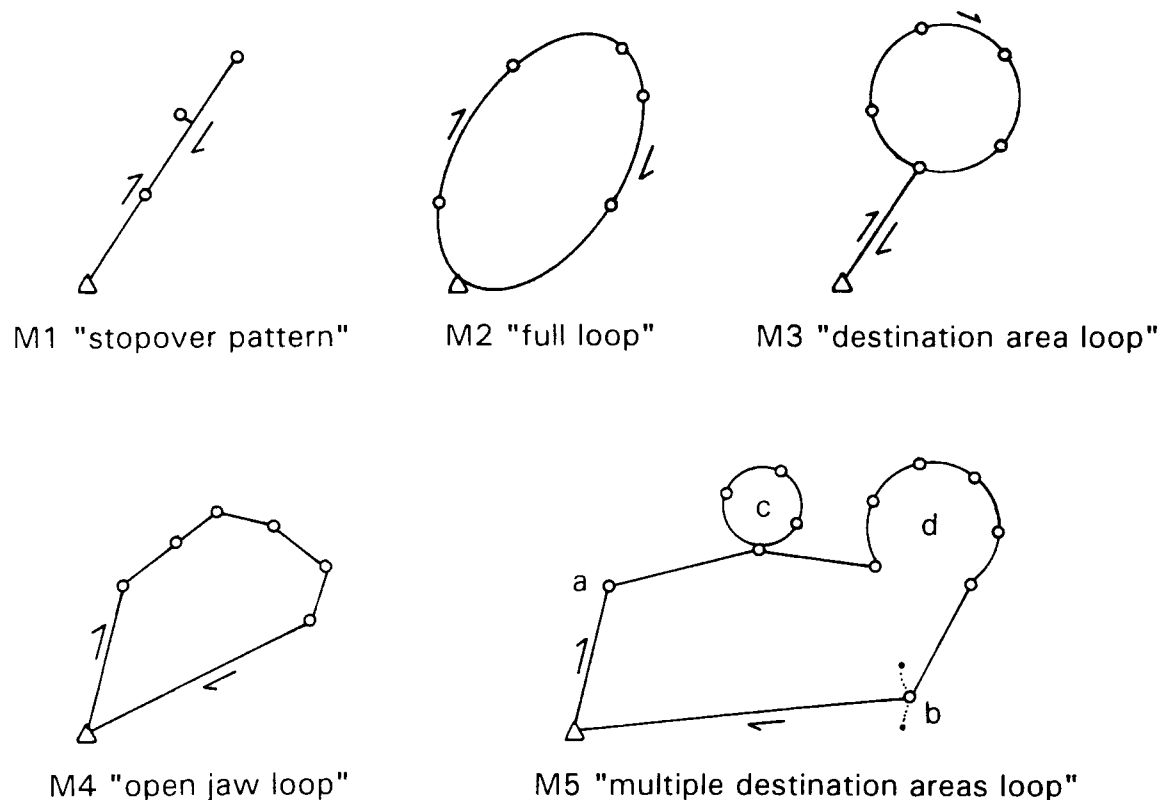
Using the proposed travel patterns shown in Figure 1, all 1,000 respondents could be classified (Table 1). This suggests that the forwarded travel itineraries are comprehensive. Respondents were almost evenly split between those who just visited Malaysia (47.4%) and those for whom Malaysia was only part of a multicountry itinerary (52.6%).

FIGURE 1  
TOURIST FLOW PATTERNS

### Single Destination Patterns



### Multiple Destination Patterns



**TABLE 1**  
**DISTRIBUTION OF TRAVEL PATTERN TYPES**

Travel	Pattern Type	Respondents
S1	Single destination	343
S2	Base camp	41
M3	Destination area loop	45
M4	Open jaw loop	45
M5	Multiple destination areas loop	526
M5a	Stopover	(70)
M5b	Single destination	(262)
M5c	Destination area loop	(63)
M5d	Open jaw loop	(131)
	Total	1,000

### Single Destination and Base Camp

More than 38 % visited only one destination in Malaysia (Table 1). Only a minority (4.1 %), however, visited that destination as a base camp, while the majority (34.3 %) did not venture on excursions (Table 1). Table 2 indicates that these types of travel itineraries were especially common among visitors from the other ASEAN countries (Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, and Brunei). It appears that the longer the distance from the country of origin, the less the share in this type of travel pattern. Long-haul visitors seem to visit more destinations than do short- or medium-haul travelers.

**TABLE 2**  
**TRAVEL ITINERARY BY REGION OF ORIGIN**  
**(IN PERCENT)**

Itinerary	ASEAN N = 371	Asia N = 339	Australia N = 57	Europe N = 156	Other N = 77
S1	67.9%	19.8%	7.0%	8.3%	9.1%
S2	3.5	5.6	10.5	1.9	-
M3	4.6	5.0	7.0	2.6	3.9
M4	5.7	4.7	5.3	1.9	2.6
M5	18.3	64.9	70.2	85.3	84.4
M5a	2.7	4.7	21.1	12.2	16.9
M5b	12.7	41.0	26.3	17.9	42.9
M5c	1.1	5.6	5.3	19.2	9.1
M5d	1.9	13.6	17.5	35.9	15.6

$\chi^2 = 451.94$ ; d.f. = 24;  $p = 0.0000$ .<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> To adhere to statistical requirements of the chi-square test, S1 and S2 were combined for the chi-square analysis. Thus, the matrix consisted of five regions of origin categories and seven itineraries (S1/S2, M3, M4, M5a, M5b, M5c, M5d).

Travel purpose causes a significant difference in travel itineraries. Those respondents who stated pleasure as their sole purpose were less likely to visit just one destination, while the majority of respondents visiting their friends and/or relatives (vfr) and those on business visits have a single-destination or base camp itinerary. Business and vfr visitors have a specific destination to visit and are, therefore, more likely to travel directly to that location without stopping at other places. This confirms results of a study in Japan (Shirasaka 1982).

### Destination Area and Open Jaw Loop

Both destination area and open jaw loop itineraries are not very common among respondents who visited only Malaysia. This is attributed to the nature of the study country

for two reasons. First, the number of international airports that could be combined in open jaw loops is limited. Second, Malaysia is commonly part of a multicountry itinerary and specifically a Southeast Asian circuit. Thus, many visitors on a destination area pattern and open jaw loop pattern are recorded in the multiple destination area loop category (M5c, M5d), which accounts for about 20 % of all respondents. The two travel itineraries have only minor differences in country of residence and travel purpose.

### Multiple Destination Area Loop

For 52.6 % of the respondents, Malaysia was the only country on their vacation trip. Their international travel itineraries ranged from just one other country (e.g., Singapore) to a number of countries on a round-the-world trip. The percentage ranged from 18.3 % (ASEAN) to 85.3 % (Europe), which seems to be a result of the distance decay factor. That is, the farther people travel, the more places and the more countries they want to visit. More than 70 % of all pleasure tourists belonged in the M5 category. The relatively high share among the Mixed/Other category is explained by the large number of mixed purposes where pleasure was one purpose (e.g., conference and pleasure).

Some 33.2 % of these travelers visited only one destination in Malaysia. Stopover visitors (M5a) were, however, a minority. A relatively high number of Australians were in this category, suggesting that Malaysia was used as a stopover for a trip from Australia to Europe. In fact, both Malaysian Airlines and Qantas promote stopover visits in Malaysia on flights between Europe and Australia.

More travelers belonged in the M5b category — a multi-country itinerary with one overnight location within Malaysia. This category was especially prevalent among Asian and Other tourists. These visitors commonly travel to several places in Southeast Asia. Their short total vacation trip, however, allows for only one stop in each country — for example, Bangkok-Kuala Lumpur-Singapore or Penang-Singapore. An almost even percentage of business and pleasure travelers were in this category.

Europeans dominate among the M5 visitors with a destination area itinerary and open jaw loop itinerary in Malaysia, while visitors from ASEAN countries are almost

**TABLE 3**  
**TRAVEL ITINERARY BY TRAVEL PURPOSE**  
**(IN PERCENT)**

Itinerary	Pleasure N = 439	Business N = 371	Visit Friends/ Relatives N = 84	Mixed/ Other N = 98
S1	14.8%	52.4%	63.1%	27.6%
S2	4.8	4.0	2.4	3.1
M3	5.7	2.6	3.6	7.1
M4	4.5	4.2	4.8	5.1
M5	70.2	36.8	26.2	57.1
M5a	7.7	2.6	4.8	22.4
M5b	28.4	28.6	13.1	18.4
M5c	10.0	2.6	2.4	7.1
M5d	24.1	2.9	6.0	9.2

$\chi^2 = 244.83$ ; d.f. = 18;  $p = 0.0000$ .<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> To adhere to statistical requirements of the chi-square test, S1 and S2 were combined for the chi-square analysis. Thus, the matrix consisted of four travel purpose categories and seven itineraries (S1/S2, M3, M4, M5a, M5b, M5c, M5d).



negligible (Table 2). These itineraries are much more popular with pleasure travelers than with travelers in the other categories. More than every third pleasure tourist was involved in a multicountry and multidestination tour circuit of Malaysia.

## CONCLUSION

Despite the recognition by several authors that intranational travel patterns are an important and valuable field of inquiry, this field is still characterized by a dearth of studies and a lack of coherency in approaches. Largely expanding on suggestions by Lue, Crompton, and Fesenmaier (1993) and Mings and McHugh (1992), this study advances a framework for exploring intranational and international travel itineraries (Figure 1). The testing of the suggested framework with primary data from Malaysia indicates that the identified travel itineraries are relevant and that the suggested additions to previous studies (for example, the multiple destination area loop) are very important in an international context.

The recognition that visitors are involved in a variety of intra- and international travel itineraries can help destinations and destination countries to better estimate their competitiveness and position with respect to their neighboring rivals. Through analysis of visitor itineraries, market segmentations according to the destination's position on the visitor's travel itinerary can be performed. In the present Malaysia case, for example, the obvious target markets for promotion of Malaysia as a stopover destination are Australia and Europe. Similarly, Malaysia may be well advised to team up with Singapore in its marketing efforts in Europe because European tourists to Malaysia are very likely to visit Singapore as well. Hence, the two countries could either save some expenditure or present themselves as a two-in-one destination with a variety of attractions.

The chi-square analysis of country of residence and travel purpose with respect to travel itinerary revealed significant differences. This is an important result since different segments bring different benefits to the destination country. Single-destination visitors, for example, have an impact on only one destination, which is often likely to be the capital city or some resort areas. Multiple-destination visitors, on the other hand, distribute their spending over a wider geographic area and in a number of different economic sectors (Oppermann 1994b).

Research is needed to further explore relationships between travel itinerary and other travel-related variables. Examination of travel itinerary choice as related to life-style or life cycle may improve the understanding of travel behavior at different stages of an individual's life. It may prove useful to further develop the concepts of a travel career (Pearce 1993) and travel style (Becker 1992).

Analysis of travel itineraries can complement usage of the trip index in a comparative study of states or countries. Uysal, Fesenmaier, and O'Leary (1994) showed that different states attract different types of tourists with regard to destination-oriented travel. Instead of using only the trip index (nights spent in state/nights spent on whole trip) as a segmenting

variable, application of travel itineraries within states could further enhance the segmentation power and provide more benefit-oriented segments.

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