**Study Note: Shared Travel Behavior of University Students**

For all its focus on personalization and identity, young adulthood is a period when most individuals make group or shared travel decisions. As such, new findings from an auxiliary survey of shared travel behavior among University of Texas at Arlington students are highly relevant, and have direct implications for our qualitative interviews with 18–24-year-olds (Etminani-Ghasrodashti et al. ).

**Private Cars Dominate, Even When Students Have Free Rides**

Free and subsidized travel options are not a silver bullet. While we know students heavily underutilize public transit, it is instructive to note the results for free and discounted shuttle services: the survey reveals that nearly all respondents did not ride on any of the three past six months, citing preference and information deficits as the most common barriers (Etminani-Ghasrodashti et al. ).

Implication for us: information visibility is a first-order barrier; convenience and reliability perceptions of cars dominate early choices.

**Live Where, Have Access to What, and Want to Drive Cars? Three Clusters Explain Most Variation**

Distance from campus, car availability, and attitudes are decisive in the usage equation. Multinomial regression shows respondents living further away (and who have more vehicles in the household) are less likely to be in the high-use category for both fixed-route and on-demand shuttle services, while pro-transit/active-mode attitudes predict high fixed-route and on-demand usage (Etminani-Ghasrodashti et al. ).

Implication for us: combine structural questions (distance, car access) with attitudinal items to explain adoption gaps.

Race, Nationality, and Cultural Background Play an Important Role, Too

As one would expect, there is a meaningful difference in the use of fixed-route campus shuttles, on-demand shuttles, and SAVs by students’ self-identified race and nationality: Asian and international students were the most likely to use fixed-route and SAVs, and the least likely to never use fixed-route or on-demand shuttles; conversely, White and domestic students were the least likely to use fixed-route and SAVs, and most likely to never use fixed-route or on-demand shuttles (Etminani-Ghasrodashti et al. ).

Implication for us: consider cultural background and prior transit norms when sampling and interpreting segments.

**Shared Modes May Be Complementary Rather Than Competitive, Especially Early On**

The co-use of the study’s shared mobility modes is strong evidence that they may complement each other (rather than compete for users) at least in a university context: fixed-route use increased the odds of using on-demand shopping shuttles by 217% (95% CI: [1.2, 3.9]), and on-demand usage increased the odds of using SAVs by 132% (95% CI: [1.02, 1.98]) (Etminani-Ghasrodashti et al. ).

Implication for us: exposure to one mode can prime adoption of others—design interventions that chain modes (e.g., campus shuttle → shopping shuttle → SAV).

**Methods of the Original Study (for better alignment with our own)**

Setting & services. This was a University of Texas at Arlington study, where 18+ students had access to fixed-route campus shuttles (MavMover), an on-demand shopping shuttle (Via), late-night security on-demand vans, RAPID shared autonomous shuttles (SAVs), and full-price Via—what we might call a one-stop shop for integrated services (Etminani-Ghasrodashti et al. ).

Sample & timing. All students were invited (N=25,000; April 2022); 1,724 respondents completed the survey, and 1,316 valid responses were included in the analysis (Etminani-Ghasrodashti et al. ).

Measures. How often each mode was used was recorded on a 1–6 Likert scale (“never” → “>2×/week”); respondents that selected “never” for a given mode were then asked follow-up questions on reasons for non-use; finally, attitudes toward auto use and other shared modes were reduced to a pro-transit/active-mode factor via EFA (variance ≈ 51%) (Etminani-Ghasrodashti et al. ).

**Descriptive Findings We Can Leverage**

Reasons not to use. For fixed-route shuttles, many respondents cited walking/biking or parking near classes as a substitute; for on-demand shuttles and SAVs, the most popular reason for non-use was simply owning/driving a private car, with “lack of information” being the second most frequently cited barrier for all three modes (Etminani-Ghasrodashti et al. ).

Residence is key. Overall, ~73% of respondents lived off-campus and >50% reported living >20-minute walk from campus—two conditions found to be inversely associated with usage (Etminani-Ghasrodashti et al. ).

**Regression Outcomes to Inform Our Hypotheses**

Fixed-route usage: individuals who were more likely to walk or bike instead or already used Via/SAV also had a greater probability of higher fixed-route usage; conversely, those who lived off-campus and those whose campus residence was >20-minute walk had lower odds of higher fixed-route usage, while pro-transit attitudes were a positive predictor (Etminani-Ghasrodashti et al.). Pseudo-R² ≈ 0.21.

On-demand (shopping shuttle) usage: walkers/bikers and users of fixed-route/SAV had higher probability of higher on-demand usage, while having more vehicles in the household, living >20-minute walk from campus, and being domestic/White students had negative effects, and pro-transit attitudes were also a positive predictor (Etminani-Ghasrodashti et al.). Pseudo-R² ≈ 0.31.

**Reference**

Etminani-Ghasrodashti, R., Hladik, G., Kermanshachi, S., Rosenberger, J. M., Arif Khan, M., & Foss, A. (2023). *Exploring shared travel behavior of university students. Transportation Planning and Technology, 46*(1), 22–44. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03081060.2022.2160718>