

# Edu-Tourism: A Case for Alternative Tourism in St. Lucia

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# Introduction

- Edu-tourism or educational tourism -travel undertaken by an individual to a unique location for the purpose of formal or informal learning in various forms such as work experience, training in a new language, culinary training, medical tourism, cultural tours, and professional development (CETA 2010).
- It can be the primary or secondary purpose for the visit and can include general educational tourism, adult study tours, international and domestic university and school students' travel, including language schools, school excursions and exchange programmes (Ritchie, Carr and Cooper 2003).
- Research on international students who travel to an overseas setting to undertake long term studies and their tourist behavior is largely limited to studies in the United States of America (USA) ; Canada , the United Kingdom and Australia .

# Introduction

- Students make a significant contribution to tourism industry by traveling for non-educational purposes domestically and engaging in other tourist activities (Weaver 2003).
- In the US, foreign students contributed approximately US\$18.8 billion to the economy in 2009-2010 (NAFSA 2010).
- In Australia the contribution was A\$17.2 billion for 2008-2009 (AEI 2009).
- For the UK, the contribution estimated in 2007 was £8.5 billion (Lenton 2007).
- Canadian C\$5.0 billion (Kunin and Associates 2010)
- New Zealand, NZ\$2.1 billion (Payne 2009).

# Introduction

- In the Caribbean, the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (ECCU), offshore medical schools are the major institutions which accommodate international students.
- Within the ECCU, schools established since 1977 with St. Georges University in Grenada being the first to open followed by Ross University in Dominica in 1979.
- St. Lucia, Spartan Health Services University was the first medical school to be opened in 1980.
- Only research on international students or medical schools in the Caribbean (World Bank 2005)

# Research Contribution

- This paper represents the only research on offshore medical schools in St. Lucia and the wider Caribbean that utilizes a student survey to critically assess spending and travel behaviour in the country of instruction.
- Extended to contributions to the local tourism industry based on student entertainment patterns, the benefits of visiting friends and relatives, return visits.
- The study adds to literature by providing a measure of the economic impact of an offshore university in a developing country.

# Background

- Number of higher education students enrolled outside their country of citizenship, 0.26 million in 1975; 0.8 million in 1980; 1.3 million in 1990; 2.0 million in 2000; 3.3 million in 2008 (OECD 2010; IIE 2010).
- The countries with the highest number of foreign students are the United States of America (USA), United Kingdom (UK), Australia, France, Germany and Canada (OECD, 2010)
- 25 offshore medical and veterinary schools registered in the Caribbean in 2004, 13 of which were located within the ECCU region
- 5 medical schools registered in St. Lucia with approximately 420 students

# Economic Impact Studies

Model	Author and Year
Caffrey & Isaacs (ACE) Method	Caffrey & Isaacs 1971
Input-Output Models	Blake and McDowell 1967
Keynesian Local Multiplier Model	Bleaney et al. 1992
Econometric Models	Gana 1992
Human Capital Models	Bluestone 1992; Berger and Black 1993
Ryan Short Cut Model	Ryan 1992
Bill of Goods Approach	Ambargis et al. 2011

# Literature Review

- Limited studies on tourist behaviour of overseas students, Weaver 2004,
- Students make significant contributions to the tourism industry of the destination, Weaver 2003
- Edu-tourism represents a growing market that is being ignored and underestimated, Arcodia et al. 2007
- Contributions through visiting family and friends VFRs during the course of study or upon graduation (Weaver et al. 2000; Thorpe & Haselhurst, 1999; Talyor et al, 2004
- Return visits, 58 % of international students returned to Australia for vacation, Shanka et al. 2001
- Weaver 2003-Australia



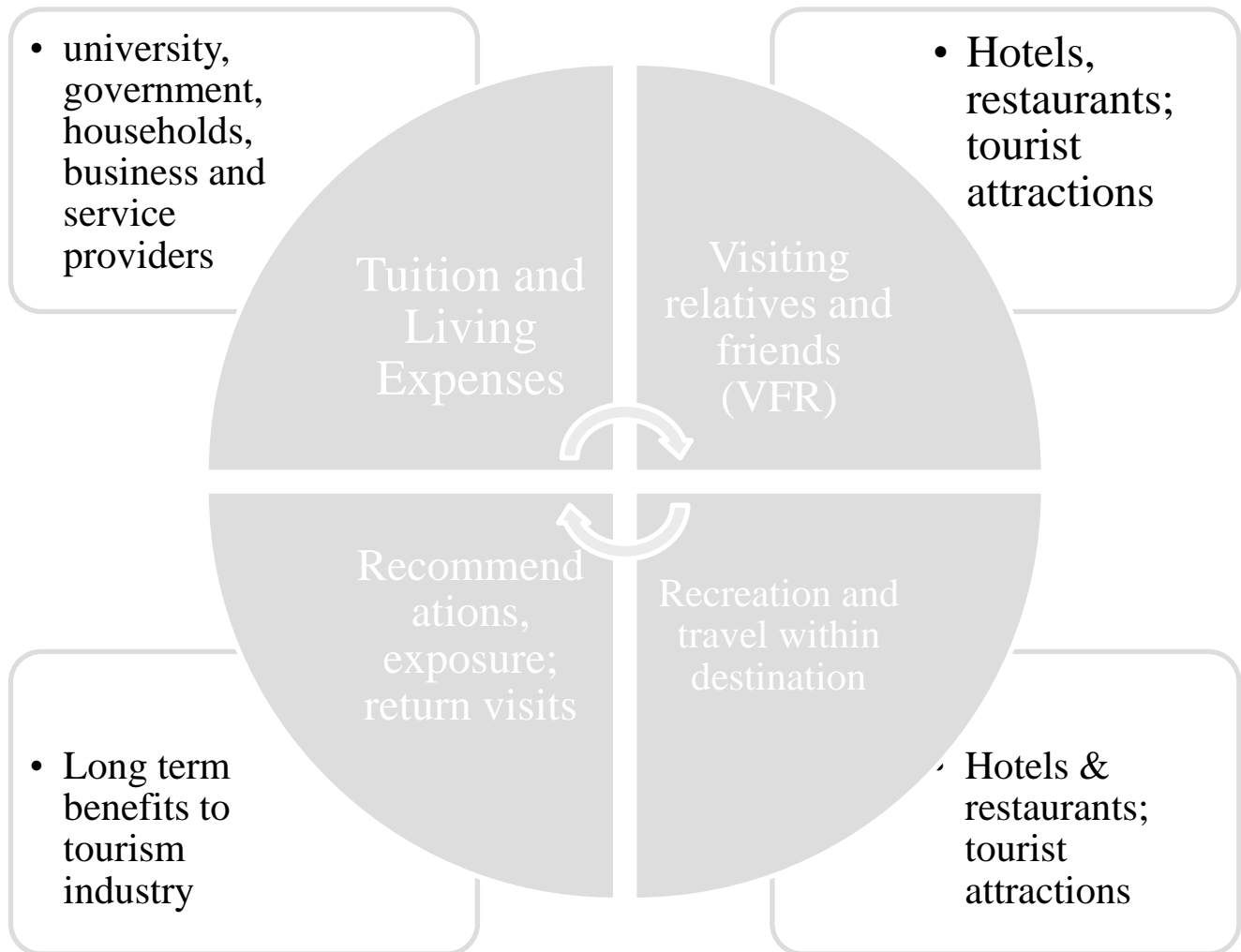
# Literature Review

- World Bank 2005 surveyed 9 schools
- Direct benefits: corporate tax; student tax; import duties; income tax
- Indirect benefits: living expenses of students and academic staff
- Total impact range US\$1.3 m for St. Lucia and US\$23 m for Grenada

# Methodology

- Data Source: student survey, interviews
- Survey instrument: student and official questionnaire
- Student sample size: 85 students from 3 schools
- ACE framework used
- Focus on student spending
- Student expenditure distributed to 3 major agents; university, business and service providers and landlords or households

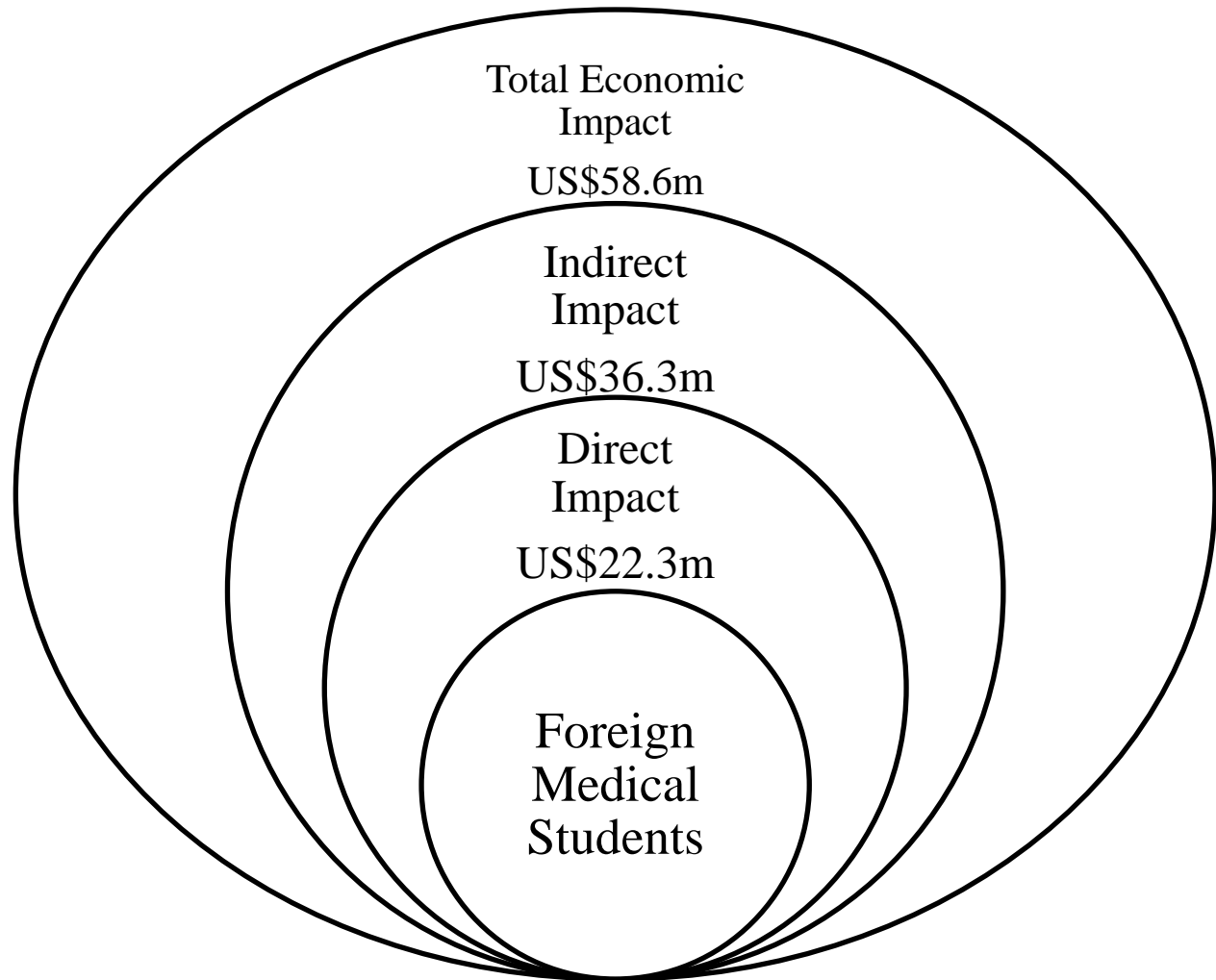
# Methodology



# Demographic

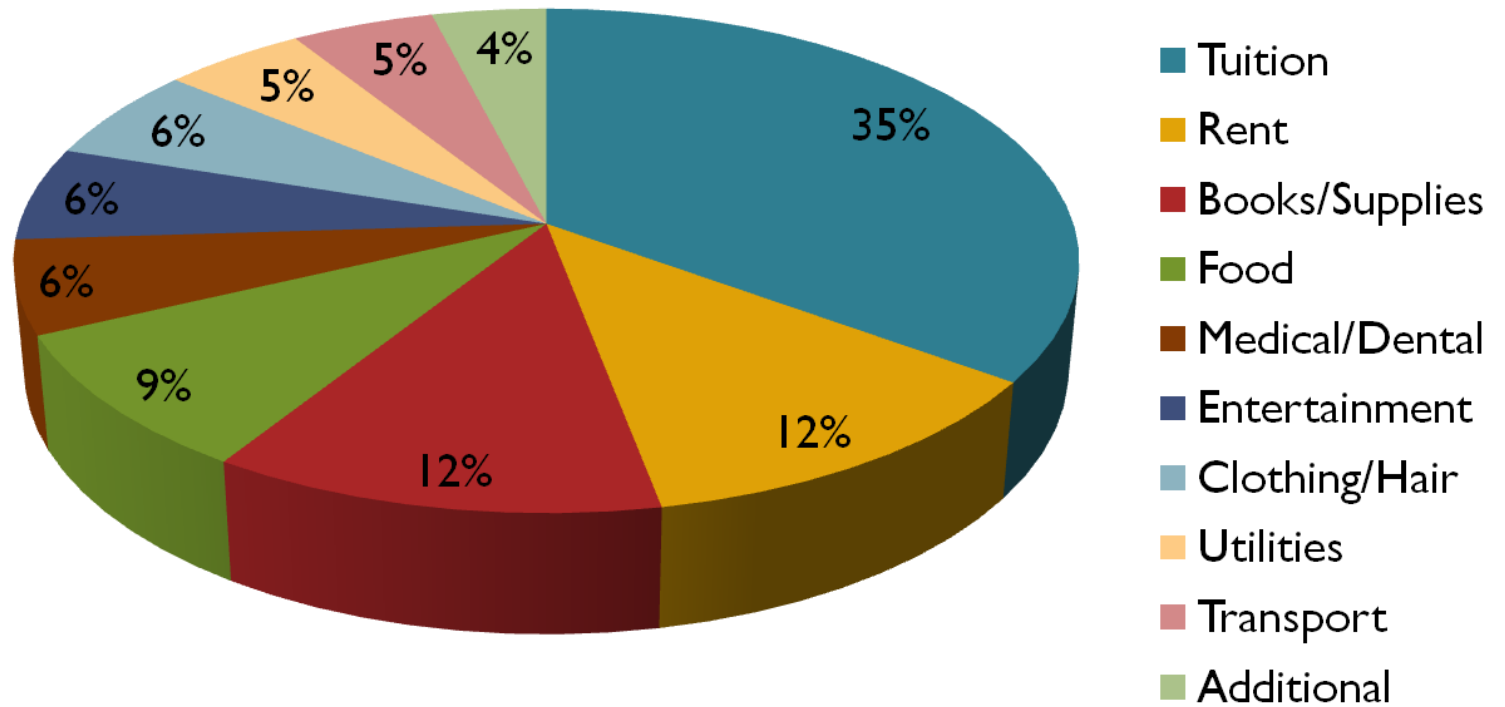
- Response rate 72.9 per cent
- Male 56.5 %; Female 43.5%
- Age: 71 % of respondents between 18-25
- Nationality: 40.3 % American; 21.0 % Indian
- 97 % enrolled in Basic Sciences

# Results: Economic Impact



# Results

## Categories and Percentage of Student Expenditure



# Results: Indirect Impact

- Impact on Tourism Industry
  - Entertainment: US\$1.4m (tourist attractions, hotel stays)
  - According to Michael, Armstrong and King 2004, students in Australia would normally take short day trips for sightseeing, visiting natural disasters
  - Students are visitors and guests to the island over a longer period
  - Important marketing agent; recommendations to friends, family; exposure of the island

# Results

- Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFRs): 51.6 % at least one visit; 6.5 % two or more
- Repeat visits: 35.5 % very likely; 32.3 likely
- Recommendation: 29.0 % very likely; 35.5 likely
- Choice of school: family and friends recommendation (41.9 %); internet & school website (33.9 %)
- Other benefits: employment; health care; local students



# Policy Implications

- Accreditation
- Training hospital
- Code of ethical practice
- Marketing
- Security; utilities (water)

# Conclusion

- Edu-tourism represents a niche market for the island
- Total contribution is 4.7 % of GDP for St. Lucia
- Benefits: direct and indirect
- Benefits the local economy and community
- Indirect: tourism industry
  - recommendations; return visits; VFRs



**THANK YOU**