

# International Student Research: Understanding the Global Student Mentality

## *Differentiation in a plural student population*

### RESEARCH REPORT SUMMARY

Published February 2014

By

International Student Identity Card (ISIC) Association

The Economist

MasterCard

Motivaction



February 2014



# Introduction

## Who?

- Initiative of the International Student Identity Card (ISIC) Association to establish a footprint of international students today.
- ISIC and *The Economist*, that identified students as one of their key target groups, agreed to collaborate on the research. ISIC and *The Economist* have worked together to support students since 2010.
- ISIC teamed up with MasterCard. ISIC and MasterCard have partnered together since 2007 to deliver the ISIC–MasterCard Programme offering a combined bank and ISIC card, available to full-time bona fide students and providing safe and secure payment solutions tailor made for students.
- Motivaction was selected as the research expert to conduct the fieldwork and data analysis of this research.

## Why?

- To conduct representative and relevant research about students worldwide.
- To establish the first and unique footprint of students today. There is no existing international research of this nature.
- To understand the student market internationally.
- To identify and evaluate knowledge and trends about students.
- To identify opportunities relevant for students.
- To establish global and local student profiles.
- To make informed decisions that will best serve students internationally.

To receive a full copy of the *International Student Research: Understanding the Global Student Mentality – Differentiation in a plural student population* research report please contact the ISIC Association [communications@isic.org](mailto:communications@isic.org)





## Introduction

- This research shows that there is no such thing as THE typical international student. There are numerous and different attributes that characterise students and their way of life.
- Different types of students have different wants and needs, for example, how they spend their money, how they read news, how they use internet technology, what brands they like, and what celebrities they identify with.
- A “one size fits all” approach to understanding students does not suffice; the tone of voice and message needs to speak to specific groups of students.

## Four student mentalities

- According to Motivaction’s unique international mentality model, four main student mentalities have been identified: Loyalists, Hedonists, Conservatives and Liberalists.
- There are two main dimensions that differentiate between these four mentality orientations:
  - Openness to change;
  - Trust towards others.

## Division of the mentalities

- General student population: Conservatives are most common (34%), Liberalists are the least prevalent (19%).
- ISIC cardholders: Loyalists form the largest group (30%) with Hedonists being the least likely to have an ISIC card (20%).
- *The Economist* student readers: Conservatives are more likely to read *The Economist* (36%), Hedonists are the least likely (17%).
- MasterCard cardholders: Conservatives form the largest group of product owners (35%), Liberalists being the least prevalent (20%).





## Geographical diversity & similarities

- All countries have their own specific profile showing differences within the country itself and its cities.
- On a regional scale, countries form mental landscapes that differentiate continents and regions from each other.
- Looking at the world map, regional similarities can be observed:
  - Two regions with optimistic, high trust students are Latin America and Asia - Conservatives are the dominant student mentality;
  - Two regions with low trust, “modern” values are Eastern-Europe & Russia, and Australia - Hedonists are most common and Conservatives are rare;
  - North-America is the region with low trust and “traditional” value students - Loyalist are the most prevalent student mentality;
  - Western Europe has a fairly equal balance between the mentalities – with Hedonists, Loyalists and Liberalists being the most prevalent mentalities.

## Finances & expenditures

- Students spend most of their disposable income on buying clothes or other personal items (56%), going out with friends (46%) and going out to eat (43%).
- 22% students spend their spare money on travelling.
- Saving money is important to 37% of all students.
- Students show a cautious attitude towards loans or credit.
- 53% of students use internet banking, 22% use mobile banking.
- Students use cash (76%) as their most used method of payment.
- Payment cards (debit, credit, prepaid) are used by more than half of students.
- Students use online or mobile banking far more to check their accounts than for making payments.
- When asked why they don’t use online banking, 38% of the students say they don’t need it and 29% say they don’t feel it is secure. The same for mobile banking: 41% say they don’t need it, 30% say they don’t feel it is secure.
- The overall key appeal of financial services for students is driven by opportunities to save money.



# Summarised findings from the research



## Daily life

- Students are interested in entertainment, music and nightlife (63%) and online activities such as surfing the web, social media and blogging (63%).
- The third most important interest for students is travelling (58%).
- Nearly half of all students travelled in 2012 (49%), 30% travelled more than once.
- Travelling is mostly for vacation purposes (64%).
- 12% of students travel to study abroad.
- Almost half of students have a job alongside their studies.
- Google, Facebook, Apple, Samsung and Coca Cola are the top five most appealing brands.
- The top celebrities preferred by students are mostly politicians, world leaders and entrepreneurs.
- Classical music (33%) is similarly popular to hip hop (34%) and electronic music (32%). Only pop and rock genres score higher.

## Internet & technology

- Laptops (77%) are used far more than a desktop computer (45%) to access the internet, while the use of tablets (23%) is still considerably lower.
- About three quarters of the students use apps frequently on their phone.
- About half of students use QR codes occasionally.
- Email (78%) is a more popular online activity than social media (66%) amongst students.
- Students use the internet more for studying (71%) than for social media (66%).
- In terms of online footprint, 27% of students have their own YouTube channel and 21% have a personal blog. This is in addition to their presence on social networks.
- Websites are the most used media types, but students expect to use them less often in 2 years from now. Upcoming media types are e-books and news apps.
- Privacy is important to students, a quarter of the students do not feel secure or comfortable with their privacy on the net.



# Summarised findings from the research

## News & media consumption

- Students use news media primarily to stay up-to-date on what's happening in the world (77%), to learn something (69%) and to be entertained (61%).
- The internet (85%) is the main channel where students get their news from, followed by television (66%) and social media (60%).
- Students expect to use websites less often in two years, expecting to use e-books and news apps more often.
- Print media is still important to students, with 40% reading newspapers and 30% looking to magazines to get their news.
- More than 60% of students scan news headlines and only read what they find interesting, whilst 30% read articles from start to finish.

## The ISIC card

- The most important reasons for owning an ISIC card is to prove student status (37%), followed by the appeal of student discounts (32%), when the university uses the ISIC card as their student ID (32%) or when the student needs an ID card (32%).
- The aspect of saving money is important for students to get an ISIC card: appeal of student discounts (32%), it gave me discounts and added value on my flight ticket (18%).
- Most students find out about the ISIC card via their university (35%). Other important places are student organisations (13%) and friends or fellow students (12%).
- Half of the ISIC card users use the ISIC card every week or more.
- The ISIC card is most frequently used for campus access card or library card at university (40%), proof of identity (37%), proof of full time student status (36%), to gain access to discounts and benefits (34%) and day to day transport (33%).
- 24% of the ISIC cardholders use their card for travel purposes.
- 20% of the ISIC cardholders use their card for banking purposes.
- Most students confirm that the ISIC card proves their students status, helps them to experience the world and to save money.



# About ISIC and its partners

## About the International Student Identity Card (ISIC) Association

- The ISIC Association is the non-profit organisation behind the International Student Identity Card (ISIC).
- The ISIC card is the only internationally accepted proof of bona fide student status.
- The ISIC card was founded in 1953 with the aim to foster intercultural and international understanding through pioneering discounts that make travel and cultural exchange more accessible to students.
- The ISIC card is endorsed by over 150 organisations and institutions such as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), the Andean Community of Nations, and a wide range of national governments, ministries of education, student organisations and universities worldwide.
- Over 1,000 co-brand partnerships exist with universities, schools, banks, financial institutions and other partners across the globe.
- More than 6,000 point of sales exist worldwide where students can get an ISIC card
- Each year, more than 5 million bona-fide students in 130 countries worldwide are ISIC cardholders. Over 106 million ISIC cards have been issued since 1953.
- ISIC cardholders gain access to more than 42,000 student benefits in over 126,000 locations across the globe.
- ISIC benefits are available both online and offline to facilitate opportunities in all areas of student life like book stores, restaurants, cafes, museums, archaeological sites, national parks, accommodation, transportation, cinemas, theatres etc.
- More information is available at [www.isic.org](http://www.isic.org) and [www.isicassociation.org](http://www.isicassociation.org)



**Motivaction** is an international research company providing research-based market information, policy information and advice. Their insight into the trends and developments taking place in the marketplace and society forms the basis on how to take effective advantage of these developments. Motivaction conducts research using sociological methodologies and makes use of new research techniques relating to direct marketing, social media and neuroscience. Motivaction has developed its **unique international Mentality model**, which has proved to be more powerful in explaining the behaviour of citizens and consumers than traditional classifications based on age, sex, education and income. More information: [www.motivaction.nl/en](http://www.motivaction.nl/en).

**The Economist**, with a growing global circulation and a reputation for insightful analysis and opinion on every aspect of world events, is one of the most widely recognised and well-read current affairs publications. *The Economist* Group delivers information through a range of formats, from newspapers and magazines to conferences and electronic services. More information: [www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com).

**MasterCard** (NYSE: MA), is a technology company in the global payments industry. MasterCard operate the world's fastest payments processing network, connecting consumers, financial institutions, merchants, governments and businesses in more than 210 countries and territories. MasterCard's products and solutions make everyday commerce activities – such as shopping, traveling, running a business and managing finances – easier, more secure and more efficient for everyone. More information: [www.mastercard.com](http://www.mastercard.com).



## Copyright

The copyright of this report rests with the client. However, citing Motivaction's name in publications based on this report – other than the complete and unabridged publication of the report – requires the written permission of Motivaction International B.V.

## Copyright on image materials

Motivaction has made every reasonable effort that may be expected of it in ascertaining entitlement to or ownership of the rights to image materials. Should you nonetheless believe that you are entitled to exercise rights related to any image materials used, please contact Motivaction





To receive a full copy of the *International Student Research: Understanding the Global Student Mentality – Differentiation in a plural student population* research report please contact the ISIC Association directly.

International Student Identity Card (ISIC) Association  
Keizersgracht 174  
1016 DW Amsterdam

[www.isic.org](http://www.isic.org) and [www.isicassociation.org](http://www.isicassociation.org)

### **Contact**

Communications Manager, ISIC Global Office B.V.  
Tel.: +31 20 520 0840  
E-mail: [communications@isic.org](mailto:communications@isic.org)