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KHẢO SÁT NHU CẦU VỀ THỜI GIAN NGHỈ TRONG VÒNG MỘT NĂM HỌC CỦA SINH VIÊN CHƯƠNG TRÌNH TIỀN TIẾN QUẢN TRỊ KINH DOANH ĐẠI HỌC NGOẠI THƯƠNG

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Tóm tắt

Các trường đại học ngày càng quan tâm nhiều hơn đến nhu cầu và sự hài lòng của sinh viên, và nhu cầu nghỉ học trong năm học của họ cũng không ngoại lệ. Bài nghiên cứu này sẽ xem xét nhu cầu về thời gian nghỉ trong một năm học của sinh viên Chương trình Tiên tiến Quản trị Kinh doanh Quốc tế (hay Chương trình Tiên tiến FBA) thuộc trường Đại học Ngoại thương để đưa ra cái nhìn tổng thể và đề xuất thực hiện các điều chỉnh phù hợp để cân đối thời gian cần thiết trong năm học phù hợp với nhu cầu của sinh viên. Một cuộc khảo sát ban đầu đã được thực hiện để nghiên cứu mức độ hài lòng của sinh viên và thời gian họ mong muốn cho Kỳ nghỉ Xuân và Kỳ nghỉ Hè trong một năm học tại Chương trình Tiên tiến FBA. Nhóm nghiên cứu đã nhận được tổng cộng 80 phản hồi, được phân bổ đều cho các sinh viên năm nhất, năm hai, năm ba và năm cuối. Kết quả của nghiên cứu chỉ ra rằng sinh viên Chương trình Tiên tiến FBA khá hài lòng với thời gian nghỉ học. Tuy nhiên, kết quả cũng cho thấy rằng đa số muốn nghỉ Hè dài hơn một chút và Kỳ nghỉ Xuân vẫn không thay đổi. Tuy nhiên, nghiên cứu này có những hạn chế bao gồm mẫu và quy mô khảo sát tương đối nhỏ. Vì thời gian biểu kéo dài cả năm được áp dụng cho tất cả các chương trình trong trường đại học nên chỉ khảo sát sinh viên Chương trình Tiên tiến FBA có thể không suy ra được mức độ hài lòng của tất cả sinh viên FTU và nhu cầu nghỉ học của họ. Do đó, nghiên cứu này đại diện cho tập thiếu số và cần có nghiên cứu sâu và rộng hơn để đưa ra kết luận và đưa ra các biện pháp khắc phục cụ thể.

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Từ khóa: Đại học Ngoại Thương, độ dài kì nghỉ, mức độ hài lòng, nhu cầu, nghỉ học, sinh viên chưa tốt nghiệp.

DEMAND OF FBA ADVANCED PROGRAM STUDENTS FOR HOLIDAYS LENGTH WITHIN A SCHOOL YEAR

Abstract

Universities are paying more and more attention to student needs and satisfaction, and their demands for school breaks during the academic year are no exception. This paper will examine the demands for holiday length within an academic year of students from the Advanced Program of International Business Administration (or FBA Advanced Program), Foreign Trade University to provide a holistic view and suggest implementing appropriate adjustments to adapt both courses' required time and students' demands for school break. An initial survey was conducted to study the level of students' satisfaction and their desired lengths for Spring break and summer break in a school year within the FBA Advanced Program. In total, we received 80 responses, distributed equally for students in freshman year, sophomore year, junior year and senior year. The results of the study indicate that FBA Advanced Program students are fairly satisfied with the lengths of school holidays. However, it also states that the majority wants a slightly longer summer break and the Spring break remains unchanged. However, this research does have limitations: Relatively small sample and population size. As the year-long timetable is applied to all programs in the university, examining only FBA Advanced Program students may not be able to deduce the degree of satisfaction of all FTU students and their demands for school breaks. Hence, this research represents a minority: more extensive and in-depth research is required to draw conclusions and offer particular remedies.

Keywords: Foreign Trade University, holiday length, undergraduate student, level of satisfaction, demands, school break.

1. Introduction

Universities all around the world are now significantly focusing more on the primary requirements of students. Student satisfaction should always be taken into consideration when evaluating educational institutions since doing so will contribute to the improvement of the learning environment and strengthen the school's reputation. Regarding this issue, a current concern of university councils is whether or not students are pleased with their annual breaks. In this research study, we will examine students from the FBA Advanced Program satisfaction and expectations with respect to the length of each vacation in an academic year.

This study was conducted to answer those following questions: *(1) What is the students' demand for the length of vacation?; (2) Why do the students have the above demand?.* And the survey in the study was conducted to: *(1) Collect data to assess FBA Advanced Program students' demand for vacation length within a year; (2) Collect data to assess the reasons for the above desired vacation length.*

A comprehensive picture on FBA Advanced students' demands for holiday will be presented and then some recommendations will be suggested for adopting suitable changes to accommodate the expectations of students for school breaks and the time required for courses.

2. Theoretical background and literature review

2.1. Theoretical background

Summer vacation

Summer vacation, often known as summer vacations or summer break, is a vacation between school years when both students and teachers are off from class. Summer vacations in Vietnam often start in late May or early June and last for two or three months. For the majority of kids, summer vacation is a time to unwind, have fun, catch up on schoolwork, or just spend time with family or friends. Summer vacations didn't start to be used widely until the late nineteenth century. One measure of a school's quality at the time was how many days it was open (Weiss & Brown, 2005). The traditional summer vacation seems to have become ingrained in American culture during the previous 200 years. At the moment, the summer recess is regarded as the cornerstone of some country's educational systems. The kid-friendly summer activities appear to add credence to a writer's description that the school year is one of the "great clocks of our culture" (Weiss & Brown, 2003).

The shortfalls brought on by "summer fade," the time between the end of one school year and the beginning of the next during which many students do not receive any formal education, most frequently have a severe negative impact on children from low socioeconomic areas and at-risk students. According to certain studies, academic setbacks at each grade level might last up to 3 months (Cooper, 1996). According to other studies (Cooper, 1996), students from different socioeconomic backgrounds may make academic advancements comparable to those of their peers during the academic year, but those from low socioeconomic groups experience academic disadvantages over the summer. Furthermore, High-achieving students are known to benefit from attending institutions with year-round schedules that can provide accelerated programs and challenging coursework (Coalition, 2009).

2.2. Literature review

Weiss & Brown (2003) had done a research on the topic "Constructing and Deconstructing the School Calendar". Accordingly, their study was conducted to answer the following research questions:

- How did the modern school clock get started?
- How did this present-day school calendar of September to June with short periods of holidays such as Christmas and Easter, and a longer two-month summer break originated?

Similar to our research, they also mentioned the issue of student schedules and vacations during the year, however, Weiss and Brown's paper answers different research questions from ours, which focus on analyze the history and the elements that make up the student's current

schedule. They also pointed out the importance of the summer vacation for compulsory schooling and some of the reasons that are believed to lead to the impediment to changing the school calendar. After reviewing and understanding the origin of the school calendar and the importance of summer vacation, our research was conducted to follow up by surveying the desired length of vacation within a year of university students.

Ngan (2016) had also conducted a study on the topic "Research on the trend of absenteeism from school of Foreign Trade students at Campus 1". The content of this study analyzes the absenteeism of Foreign Trade University students, points out a number of reasons for absenteeism based on survey data of Foreign Trade University students at Campus 1 from K53 to K55. However, this topic focuses on the causes of students' skipping and dropping out of school in violation of regulations and without permission. Therefore, the research objective is different from this topic, which studies the demand of vacation length within a school year of FBA Advanced Program students. The research object of the two articles is also different. While our study only focuses on analyzing students at FBA Advanced Program, the paper above is based on a sample set of students from Foreign Trade University at Campus 1. However, the reference to some reasons leading to the student's absence provided our research with an overview of some student's problem and the importance of a school calendar. Our research is conducted based on that to summarize some insights for a reasonable schedule for university students.

In conclusion, after reviewing some domestic and international research, we found several studies on student schedules and absenteeism. However, there has not been a study that addresses the demand for vacation length within a school year of university students. Therefore, the topic does not overlap with other published topics but on the other hand, this study was conducted to develop and clarify previous research supporting the importance of the vacation in general.

3. Methodology

3.1. Questionnaire

Six questions were asked to determine the concept of the ideal summer break/Tet holiday for FTU Students based on our selected criteria when it comes to describing a summer break/Tet holiday, including but not limited to the duration of the break and the activities that students tend to do in the break.

Table 1. Survey question

Characteristics	Content	Answers
Level of satisfaction with current holiday length	Currently, the students' summer vacation and Tet holiday include a total of 8 weeks. Are you satisfied with the time off as above?	Likert scale from 1 to 10
Students' demand for holiday length	How long is your desired summer vacation? (Calculated by weeks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-3 weeks

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-5 weeks • 6-7 weeks • Other answers
	How long is your desired Tet holiday? (Calculated by weeks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2 weeks • 2-3 weeks • 3-4 weeks • Other answers
Desired beginning time of summer vacation	When do you want the summer vacation to start?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April • May • June • July • August
Reason for the demand for holiday length	What do you usually plan for summer vacation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part-time job • Hanging out/Traveling • Study • Internship
	What do you usually plan for Tet holiday?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play sports • Visit hometown • Other answers

Source: Research group

We gave the participants pre-determined answers to best control the grouping of data and to allow for ease of analysis. We think the simplicity and straightforwardness of the survey allow for more accurate results and representation of the FTU student body as a whole. The answer choices are drawn from those with the most common responses after conducting a pilot test.

3.2. Data collection

We conducted the survey in the form of a questionnaire through Google Forms and received 80 replies in total, with a 20-20-20-20 split in the number of K57-K58-K59-K60 students who replied. We spread the survey around through word of mouth and put a 20-student cap on each category of students to ensure fairness in data analysis. From the survey results, we analyze

through graphs and statistics to draw out the demand of holiday length according to the regulations of Foreign Trade University students and explain the reasons for that demand.

Table 2. Characteristics

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	27	33.8%
	Female	52	65%
	Others	1	1.2%
Cohort	Freshman	20	25%
	Sophomore	20	25%
	Junior	20	25%
	Senior	20	25%
Demand for summer holiday length	2-3 weeks	3	3.8%
	4-5 weeks	17	21.3%
	6-7 weeks	52	65%
	8-10 weeks	10	12.5%
	All year round	1	1.2%
Desired beginning time of summer vacation	April	0	0%
	May	6	7.5%
	June	46	57.5%
	July	28	35%
	August	0	0%
Demand for Tet holiday length	1-2 weeks	7	8.8%
	2-3 weeks	31	38.7%
	3-4 weeks	41	51.3%
	~ 8 weeks	1	1.2%
Reason for the demand for summer holiday length	Part-time job	53	66.3%
	Hanging out/Travelling	73	91.3%
	Study	54	67.5%
	Internship	44	55%
	Play sports	34	42.5%

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percent
Reason for the demand for summer holiday length	Visit hometown	40	50%
	Part-time job	8	10%
	Hanging out/Travelling	51	63.7%
	Study	17	21.3%
	Internship	5	6.3%
	Play sports	13	16.3%
	Visit hometown	61	76.3%
	Thinking about life	1	1.3%
	Rest	1	1.3%

Source: Research group

3.3. Data analysis

In order to analyze data, we used the descriptive statistics method. Descriptive statistics are information coefficients that summarize a given data set, which can be a sample of the population. Descriptive statistics are divided into measures of central tendency and measures of variability (spread). Measures of central tendency include mean, median, and method, while measures of variability include standard deviation, variance, minimum and maximum variables, etc.

This thesis was conducted based on the combination of quantitative research and qualitative research. In which, quantitative research is mainly used:

Quantitative research is the systematic empirical investigation of observable phenomena through statistics, mathematics or numbers, or computer engineering;

Qualitative research is an investigative method used in many different fields of science, not only in the traditional sciences but also in market research and other contexts.

4. Empirical findings of demand of FBA Advanced Program students for holiday length within a school year

4.1. Test the FBA Advanced Program students' satisfaction level of current holiday length

After analyzing the data collected from 80 students, it can be inferred that, in general, students show the above average satisfaction with the current summer and Tet holiday schedule (Mean point ≈ 6.29). In particular, the scores are densely concentrated in the range of 5-8, which includes 47/80 responses. Notably, there were 3 "1 point" answers expressing extreme dissatisfaction and 9 "10 points" answers indicating that they were extremely satisfied with the school's current holiday schedule. Compared with the original Hypothesis that students are generally satisfied with

the vacation schedule, the evidence show that the satisfaction level is slightly lower than expectations.

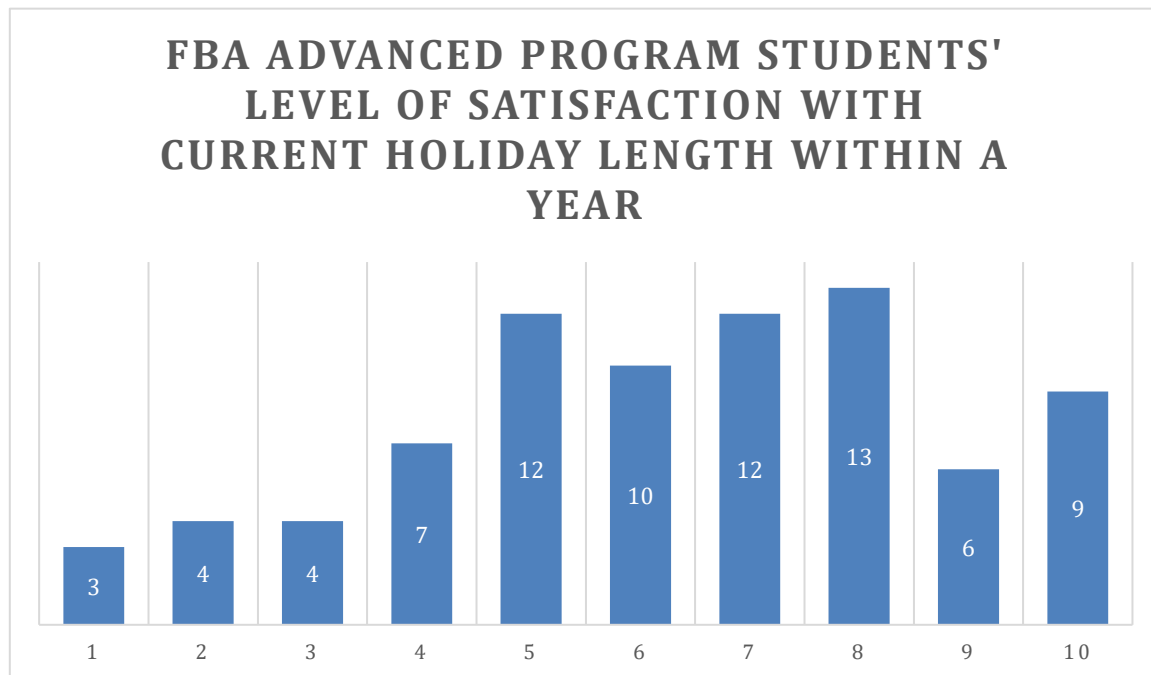


Figure 1. FBA Advanced Program Students' Level of Satisfaction with Current Holiday Length Within A Year

Source: Research group

4.2. Desired summer holiday length of FBA Advanced Program students

The majority of students who participated in the survey (about 65%) indicated that they wanted the summer vacation to last 6-7 weeks instead of 5 weeks as before. The shortest desired summer vacation length was 2-3 weeks, but only 3.8% of the students surveyed chose this option. There were 2 particular options from students who think that they wanted their summer vacation to last 3 months and a year, respectively. This was also the longest desired vacation length being voted, but the above options were only isolated and accounted for a negligible number. 21.3% of the students who participated in the survey showed their demand to have a 4-5 week summer vacation schedule like the current one; and the rest were students who wanted to take a summer vacation of 8-10 weeks.

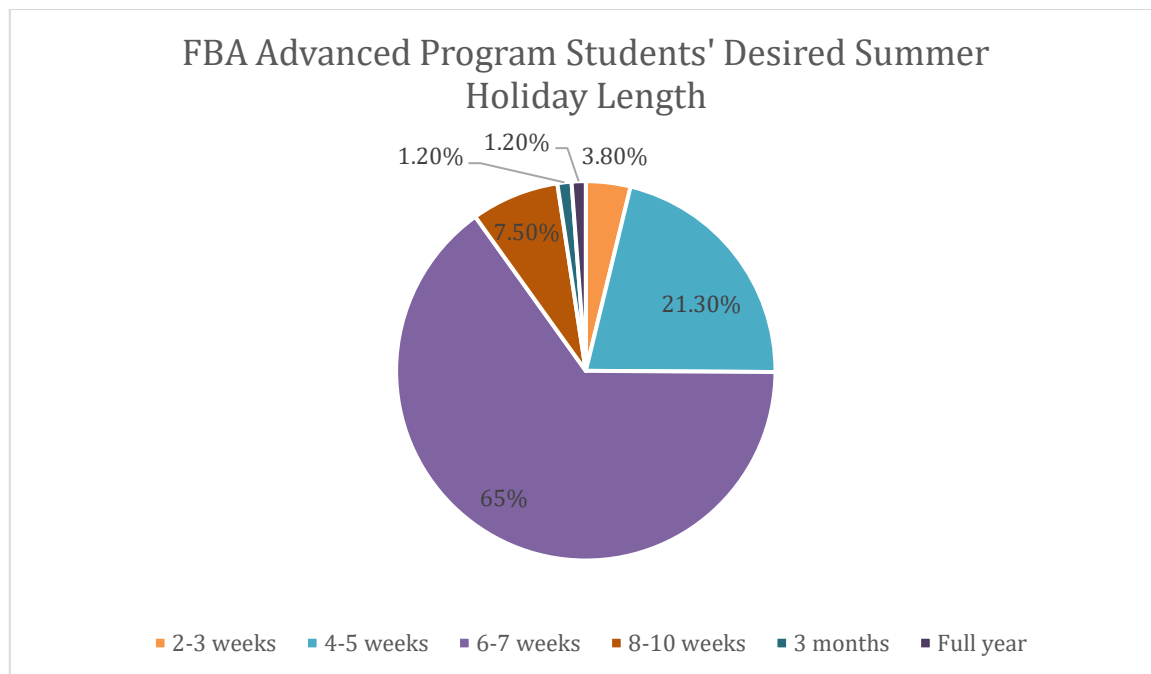


Figure 2. FBA Advanced Program Students' Desired Summer Holiday Length

Source: Research group

In terms of the desired beginning time for summer vacation, the responses focused in 3 options "May", "June", and "July" in order of increasing the number of responses among each option. A few students participating in the survey (7.5%) expected to start their summer vacation in May. In contrast, summer vacation starting in July was considered to be the most satisfying for students when the answer to this option accounted for 57.5% of the students participating in the survey. In summary, it could be seen that the 6-7-week-length summer vacation schedule with the beginning on June would satisfy the most number of FBA Advanced Program students.

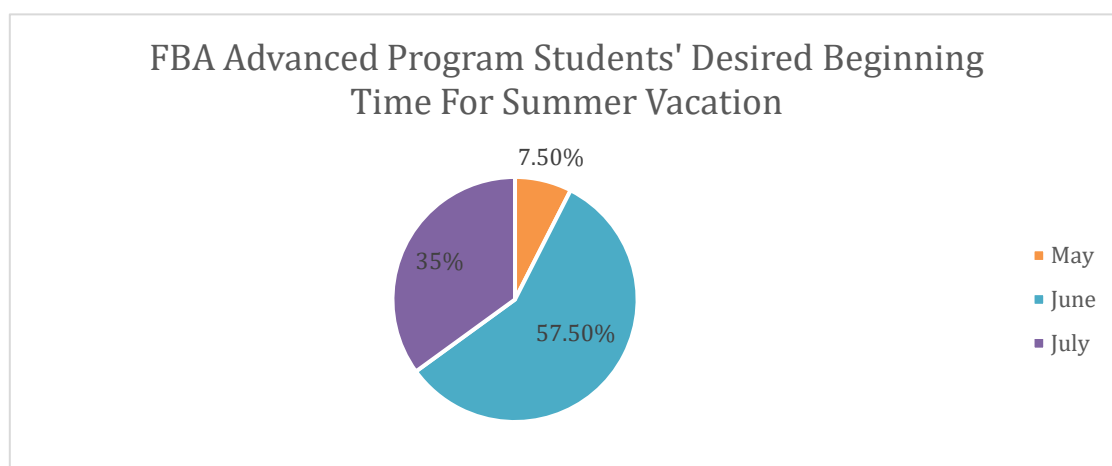


Figure 3. FBA Advanced Program Students' Desired Beginning Time For Summer Vacation

Source: Research group

4.3. Desired Tet holiday length of FBA Advanced Program students

The most chosen holiday length options were “3-4 weeks” and “1-2 weeks”, accounting for 51.2% and 38.7% of the students participating in the survey, respectively. This desired vacation schedule could be considered similar to the current school holiday schedule. However, there was also an isolated response that wants to take 2 months off for Tet Holiday.

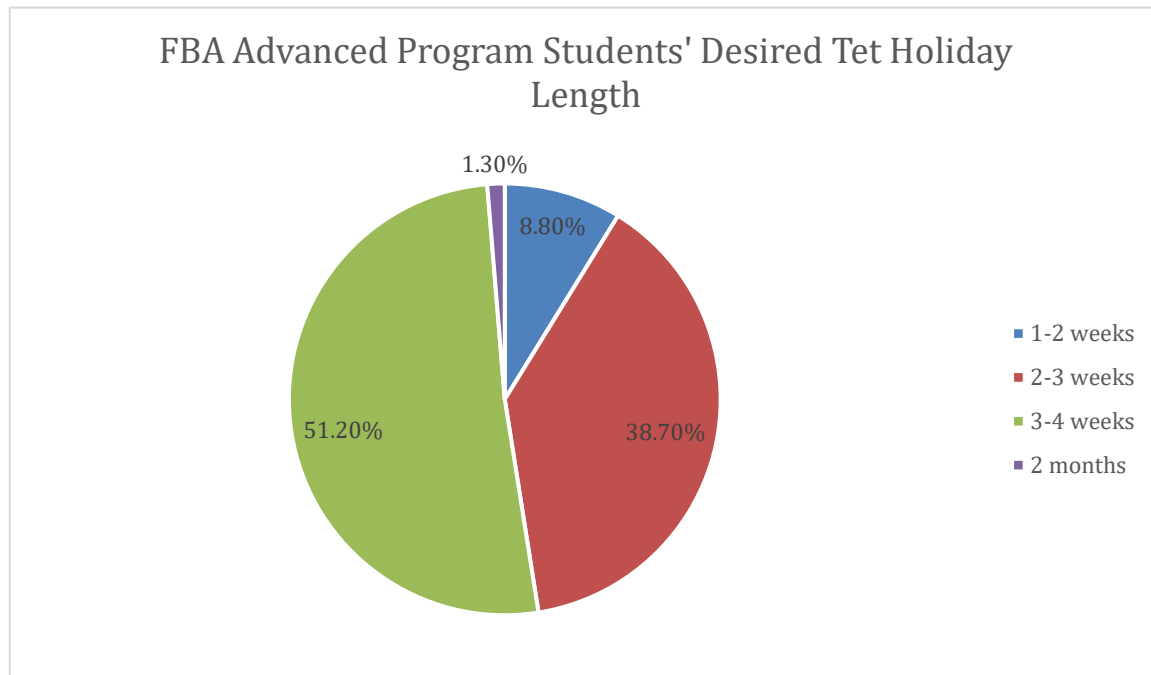


Figure 4. FBA Advanced Program Students' Desired Tet Holiday Length

Source: Research group

4.4. Reason for the demand for holiday length of FBA Advanced Program students

FBA Advanced Students have a variety of plans for their summer vacation. However, the distinction between numbers of students participating in these activities are quite small, which indicates that the eight-week summer vacation is the time when personal preferences differ. It can be seen from the graph that most students (73/80 students) spend their summer breaks on travelling, while the least desired activities are playing sports, visiting hometown and doing internship with the total numbers of 34, 40, and 44 students respectively.

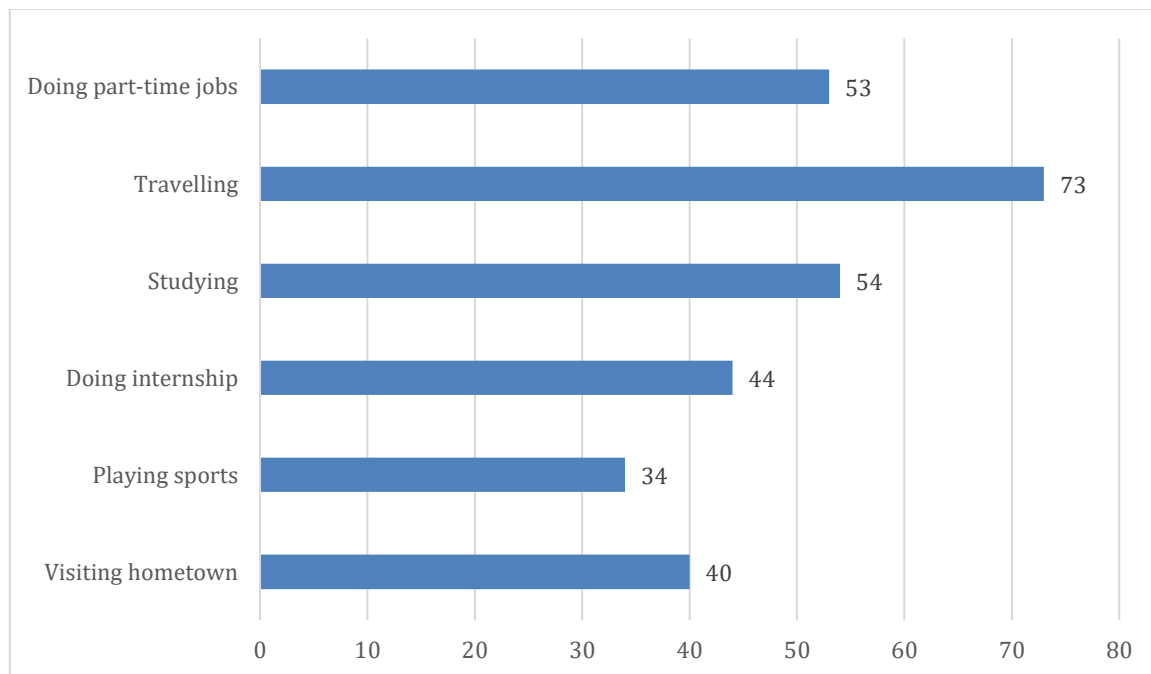


Figure 5. FBA Advanced Program Students' Individual Plans For Summer Vacation

Source: Research group

Contrary to the results obtained from the survey on FBA Advanced Program students' plans for summer vacation, during the Vietnamese traditional holidays - Tet, with a duration of only 3 weeks, students have relatively similar plans. There are two most popular activities on this occasion, which are travelling with 51/80 students and visiting hometown with 61/80 students. Working activities such as doing part-time jobs and doing internship are not universally chosen to be put on students' Tet holiday plans.

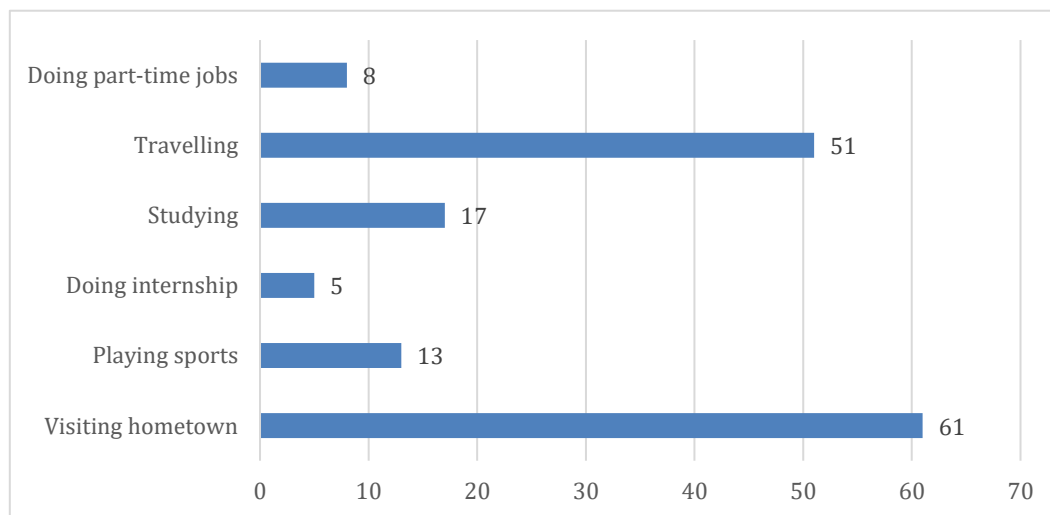


Figure 6. FBA Advanced Program Students' Individual Plans For Tet Holiday

Source: Research group

Overall, students seem to be quite satisfied with their current summer break. However, the analysis results show that most of them still have the needs to change the length of summer vacation and Tet holiday, making the total duration of the two vacations up to 10 weeks, which is 2 weeks more than the current schedule of Foreign Trade University. In order to meet the demands of studying and working, creating conditions for students to become active and creative with off-campus activities, the university can review and adjust the schedule for FBA Advanced Program students. On the other hand, securing a wealth of knowledge should still be a priority, so increasing the length of vacations can become difficult. Therefore, instead of increasing the length of the vacation as above, Foreign Trade University can come up with solutions by arranging the class schedule, reducing the amount of study in the period from June...

5. Discussion

The previous section has presented the desired vacation time of FTU Business Administration Advanced Program students. The results showed that most of the students are quite satisfied with recent vacation time. Although the vacation time is not long, a majority of students are still pleased with this duration. The desired vacation time was the same among the mass of students. This may be because of the nature of the students' age group, as well as their plans for summer, and since the program is well-designed, it might meet the students' summer timeline.

The result of the survey also shows that each student has around 3 to 4 plans for summer vacation and 1 to 2 plans for the Tet holiday. This might be because of the difference in the duration of holidays and the property of activities on each holiday. Moreover, although FTU is located in Ha Noi, most of the students from Ha Noi still want more extended vacations than the others. This could be caused by the job demands of students and the impacts of vacation times in high schools in different areas.

Overall, the data analysis in this study has conducted five major findings on the demands of vacation time of FTU Business Administration Advanced Program students. First, most FBA Advanced Program students are fairly satisfied with the recent holiday length. Second, most students want a 6 – 7 week summer vacation instead of 5 weeks. Thirdly, more than half of surveyed students want the summer vacation to start in June rather than July. Fourthly, most of the surveyed students are contented with the recent Tet holiday length. Fifth, there could be a link between the duration of the desired vacation and the personal plans of students. Since that, we suggest that FTU should remain the general holiday length, and consider to increase the summer vacation to 6-7 weeks.

6. Conclusion and limitation

In conclusion, based on the survey results, we could observe that the majority of students surveyed were quite satisfied with the current summer break/ Tet holiday length. However, the majority of students desire the summer break schedule to begin earlier and end at the same time as now, thus prolonging their break. Regarding the Tet holiday, except for a few outliers, the desired holiday duration is practically in line with what we currently have. Students want to have a long

summer vacation as above because they have a lot of plans for this vacation, most of which are traveling. With the Tet holiday, students have fewer plans, thus, a shorter break is suitable. Accordingly, they mainly want to visit hometown on this occasion. But due to the small sample size, limited time and resources of the research team, the data and the relationship between variables may not be analyzed thoroughly and come to the most specific conclusions. We believe that further research should be conducted on this matter in order to arrive at a more accurate consensus.

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