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**Comparative Study Results of U.S. DOC Survey Air Fares and U.S. DOT DB1B Air Fares
University Study Finds a Strong Correlation between Air Fares**

The United States Department of Commerce (DOC), National Travel & Tourism Office (NTTO), participated with the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill, in a comparison study between the U.S. DOC Survey of International Air Travelers (SIAT) and the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Airline Origin and Destination Survey (O&D DB1B) conducted by the Office of Airline Information (OAI).

In summary, the SIAT fares compare favorably with the DB1B fares, based on origin and destination (O&D), which should give confidence to the hypothesis that the SIAT can serve as a detailed source of information on air travel. This is pertinent for government agencies that rely on air fare data to estimate international travel services exports and imports, and to airline and destination planners.

The study provided a statistical comparison of the market-specific air fare distributions from the two surveys from 2009 to 2011.

- SIAT, question 16.d. ‘What was the total cost of your international air travel tickets?’
- DB1B, the fare and fare class from the passenger ticket surveyed

The attached briefs from the University of North Carolina provide the details of the study.

Brief – 1 [[link](#)]

Brief – 2 [[link](#)]

Salient points:

- DOC SIAT sample size is approximately 0.2% of U.S.-international traveling population whereas DOT DB1B captures 10% of ticketing data from the same markets.
- DOC SIAT captures fare information from all U.S. and foreign carriers (80+ carriers) whereas foreign carriers are exempt from filing O&D data with DOT.
- DOC SIAT extensively measures the traveler and trip characteristics, demographics, choice patterns and ratings. DOT DB1B provides limited information on these characteristics.
- Increasing DOC SIAT samples sizes strengthens the correlation to DOT DB1B.
- Outlier analysis in progress

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Professor Jonathan W. Williams (University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill and formerly of the University of Georgia) has conducted studies on the U.S. airline industry, and in particular studies on the role of airfares and pricing. In March 2011, he published a paper that investigated the success of Congressional mandates aimed at increasing competition at highly concentrated major U.S. airports entitled “Barriers to Entry in the Airline Industry: An Analysis of the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act.”

We welcome comments directed to: ntto@trade.gov

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