

Factors Affecting Educational Tourism Development among Local Communities in the Klang Valley, Malaysia

Asnarulkhadi Abu Samah ¹, Maryam Ahmadian ¹, Sarjit S. Gill ¹, Roozbeh Babolian Hendijani ²

¹. Department of Social and Development Sciences, Faculty of Human Ecology, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400, UPM Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

². Department of Foodservice and Management, Faculty of Food Science & Technology, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400, UPM Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia
asnarul_n9@yahoo.com , marydian50@yahoo.com

Abstract: The purpose of this study is to examine factors influencing educational tourism development among local communities in Malaysia. The results denote that socio-cultural impact, economic impact, and local community attitudes towards educational tourism were significantly related to residents' practice and communication with international students. In addition, residents' attitude can affect local communities' interaction with international students more than other variables. Since educational tourism plays an increasingly important role in the development of communities in Malaysia, the implications of this study provide new insights into future researches by highlighting this current challenge.

[Asnarulkhadi Abu Samah, Maryam Ahmadian, Sarjit S. Gill, Roozbeh Babolian Hendijani. **Factors Affecting Educational Tourism Development among Local Communities in the Klang Valley, Malaysia.** *Life Sci J* 2012;9(4):3298-3303]. (ISSN: 1097-8135). <http://www.lifesciencesite.com>. 488

Keywords: Educational Tourism; Socio-cultural Impact, Economic Impact, Environmental Impact; Attitudes; Practice

1. Introduction

Nowadays, tourism has been gaining attention in the global economy. The development of tourism is viewed as a resource of new employment, foreign exchange, additional taxes, and an enhancement to community infrastructure that will fascinate other industries (Jud and Krause, 1976; Cooke, 1982; Loukissas, 1983; Liu and Var, 1986; McIntosh and Goeldner 1986; Davis, Allen and Cosenza, 1988; Allen Long, Perdue, and Kieselbach, 1988; Lankford and Howard, 1994).

The South East Asian countries have been rapidly growing to attract tourists from abroad since 2001 (Hsu et al., 2009). Malaysia has a remarkable economic growth in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The tourism industry is Malaysia's third most important industry after the manufacturing and palm oil sector (Asari et al., 2011). Currently, educational tourism is one of the foremost segments of tourism around the world. Malaysia has also attained a world ranking of 11th in terms of total international student population around the worlds. Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) has set a goal of 200,000 international students in Malaysia by the year 2020 (MOHE, 2011).

Educational tourism is a program which potential learners move to a location as a group with the aim of engaging in a learning practice directly related to the location (Bodger, 1998). However, the role of local community is an important issue in the evaluation of social impact of tourism and it has not

received much consideration in tourism literature (McCool & Martin, 1994). There is a lack of studies on educational tourism and the local communities' attitude toward this issue, particularly the international students and their impact on residents' life. Residents' behaviour toward tourism development and tourists, affect tourist satisfaction (Davis, Allen, and Cosenza 1988; Cooke 1982), which is another reason of considering residents as the major stakeholders in tourism planning and development process (Hall 1994; Jamal and Getz 1995; Joppe 1996).

Residents' perception toward sustainable tourism has significant influence on tourism development policy. Sirakaya, Ekinci, and Kaya (2008) stated that policy makers and destination marketers may benefit from a better understanding of residents' opinion toward sustainable tourism. Since one of the determinants of successful tourism is residents' perception, it is important to have a tool which enables us to measure different factors toward educational tourism development. Over the past few years, many researchers have examined several factors to measure resident's behaviour towards tourism development such as social, environmental, perceived economical benefit and attitude factors (Sirakaya, Jamal, and Choi, 2001; Ko and Stewart, 2002; Gursoy, Jurowski, and Uysal, 2002; Yu, Chancellor, and Cole, 2011).

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between the local

communities' attitude and the socio-cultural, economic, and environmental impacts of educational tourism with residents practice in educational tourism development. Should such a relationship exist between educational tourism development and perception of residents; the marketers and stakeholders have to examine the effectiveness of these relationships in marketing strategies. The importance of this study on factors affecting educational tourism would help marketers and researchers to analyze residents' support for educational tourism in diverse communities. This research investigates the factors affecting educational tourism which are perceived by residents in the Klang Valley, Malaysia.

2. Methodology

Based on previous studies and a pilot test, a multi-dimensional questionnaire was developed to evaluate residents' attitude and practices towards educational tourism development in Malaysia. Some casual in-depth interviews have also been conducted with different stakeholder groups towards educational tourism to help in constructing the questionnaire before a pilot study.

The instrument consisted of questions related to the socio-cultural, economic and environmental impacts of educational tourism on residents in the Klang Valley neighborhood in Malaysia. Besides, the instrument assessed residents' demographic variables. All items were measured using a 5-point Likert-scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Economic impact was assessed by eight items. For example, "International students create employment opportunities for local residents." Socio-cultural impact was measured by 12 items. For instance, "Educational tourism is the major reason for the great variety of entertainment in Malaysia."

Environmental impact was evaluated by 7 items such as "Because of educational tourism public transportation has improved." The attitudes of residents were appraised by asking respondents to answer to the five statements such as "I am looking forward to meet international students to learn about their culture." Moreover, residents' practice towards educational tourism development was measured by asking them to reply to the five items. For example, "I have developed a friendship with international students."

Some informal in-depth interviews were carried out among different stakeholder groups of residents (e.g. tourists, residents, entrepreneurs, and local government officials) in the Klang Valley. Those interviews helped to construct and process the instrument. The instrument for the study was

modified by the researchers through literature review and adjusted for content validity by an expert panel, which comprised two social scientists with specialty in community development and three key informants specialized in tourism industry. Besides, a pilot test was performed with actual residents in the Klang Valley to make certain that the statements selected had suitable psychometric characteristic.

A cross-sectional survey was conducted in six districts in Selangor namely Bangi, Petaling Jaya, Kuala Lumpur, Serdang, Gombak and Shah Alam which are located in the Klang Valley, and in Nilai in the district of Negeri Sembilan (an educational township placed next to Klang Valley). Most of public and private universities and colleges are also placed there such as Universiti Malaya, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, International Islamic University Malaysia, Lim Kok Wing University, Sun Way College and INTI College, or etc. 700 questionnaires were distributed to residents of these areas for educational tourism development. Descriptive statistics were computed to examine the demographic characteristics of the sample. All analysis was achieved using SPSS version 20.0 (SPSS, Inc., Chicago, IL) in data processing and analyzing in order to answer the objective of this research.

Of the 700 questionnaire completed by residents in the Klang Valley, the mean age of the respondents was 33.46 years old, within the age range of 18-67. Males accounted for 60.4% of the respondents and female accounted for 39.6% respondents. The largest number of respondents (51.6%) reported middle school as their highest level of education. The results also demonstrated approximately 77.3% of the respondents were Malay and it followed by Chinese (12%) and Indians (9.7%). Majority of respondents were Muslim (77.3%) and were employed in services industries (39.7%). The average of salary was 3474.91 RM and it differed so widely among residents from high income (24000.00RM) to low income and no income respondents such as housewives and students (0.00 RM).

Table 1 illustrates the items for variables which were studied in multiple regression analysis for the paper.

Table 1. Measures of Variables

Variables	Items (strongly disagree - strongly agree)
Economic	International students in the nearby collage / university are our source of income. International students in this community made more opportunities for local entrepreneurs. International students in this community made more opportunities for foreign entrepreneurs. International students have given economic benefits to local people and small business. International students created employment opportunities for

	local residents. The presence of international students has increased the standard of living. The prices of goods and services have been increased due to the presence of international students. The presence of international students has increased the value of real estate (housing).
Socio-cultural	Educational tourism has improved my community here. Because of educational tourism, our quality of life has improved. Educational tourism is the major reason for the great variety of entertainment in Malaysia. The local community has got familiar with the diversity of culture brought by international students. Educational tourism results in more "cultural exchange" between local residents and international students. Educational tourists have a positive impact on Malaysian's cultural identity. Educational tourism has led to more prostitution and other misconduct cases (such as drugs trafficking). Educational tourism has increased street crime. Local residents are suffering living with international student in the same residential areas. The different types of culture (e.g. art, literature) that international students bring to Malaysians are more important than the social costs created by tourism. The differences of culture and tradition brought by the international students have given a positive impact on our own community. Meeting tourists (international students) from other regions is a valuable experience to understand their culture and society.
Environmental	Because of educational tourism public transportation has improved. Because of educational tourism health service has improved. Because of educational tourism more parks and other recreational areas have been developed. Because of educational tourism transportation systems are becoming more convenient. The construction of student's facilities for international students has destroyed the natural environment. Educational tourism has created traffic congestion, noise and air pollution. Educational tourism has resulted in crowded public places for the local population.
Practice	I have developed friendships with international students. My interactions with international students are positive and useful. I enjoy interacting with students. I enjoy visiting student's areas. Most people I know don't like to communicate with foreign students.
Attitude	The open policy by the government will encourage international students to study in Malaysia and promotes educational tourism. The initiative by the government to make Malaysia as an educational hub will encourage educational tourism. I am looking forward to meet international students to learn about their culture. Educational tourism will bring more positive outcomes than negative outcomes to the Malaysian people. If I have friends abroad, I would like to encourage them to send their children to study in Malaysia.

Table 2 shows the categorical socio-demographic variables of the survey respondents:

Table 2. Demographic Characteristic of the Respondents (n=700)

Gender	Male	423 (60.4%)
	Female	277 (39.6%)
Education	Elementary school	35 (5%)
	Middle school	361 (51.6%)
	College	132 (18.9%)
	Bachelor degree	126 (18%)
	Graduate degree	46 (6.6%)
Race	Malay	541 (77.3)
	Chinese	84 (12%)
	Indian	68 (9.7%)
	others	7 (1%)
Religion	Muslim	551 (78.7%)

	Buddha	63 (9%)
	Christian	31 (4.4%)
	Hindu	53 (7.6%)
	Others	2 (.3%)
Occupation	Administration	27 (3.9%)
	Clerical	37 (5.3%)
	Marketing	244 (34.9%)
	Not working	26 (3.7%)
	Operators	11 (1.6%)
	Professionals	77 (11%)
	Services Industries	278 (39.7%)

3. Results

A reliability test was done to determine the internal consistency of the result measurements. It was used to evaluate the internal homogeneity among the items scale in this research. Values were all above the recommended cut-off of 0.70 (socio-cultural impacts = 0.70; economic impact= 0.82; environmental impact = 0.71; attitude= 0.76; practice= 0.74).

The results showed that these multiple measures are extremely reliable for measuring each construct (Ryu et al., 2008). Construct validity assesses the degree to which a measurement represents and logically connects, via the underlying theory, the observed phenomenon to the construct (McDaniel and Gates, 1993). In this study, there was acceptable convergent and discriminant validity among measurement items for study constructs.

Table 3 illustrates the correlation matrix of the study constructs. However, correlation does not imply cause and effect. Thus, it is not needed to assume that correlation equals causation and over interpret correlation coefficient. Results show the correlation coefficient which measures the strength of a linear relationship between two variables as follows: There are slight positive associations between the main constructs in the study. Results showed that correlation coefficient score was not more than 0.9 and there is not any multicollinearity problem among variables.

Table 3. Pearson-Correlation among Variables

Table 5: Pearson Correlation among Variables							
Variables	Mean	S.D	Correlation				
			Socio-cultural Impact	Attitude	Environmental Impact	Economic Impact	Practices
Socio-cultural Impact	3.54	.440	1.000				
Attitude	3.55	.693	.401**	1.000			
Environmental Impact	3.35	.628	.349**	.286**	1.000		
Economic Impact	3.36	.710	.447**	.368**	.374**	1.000	
Practices	3.37	.548	.366**	.393**	.236**	.368**	1.000

**Correlation is significant at level 0.01(2 tailed)

Multiple Regression and Relationships among Study Variables

Equation results are illustrated in Table 4. These results demonstrate that socio-cultural impact, economic impact, and local community attitudes towards educational tourism were significantly associated with residents' practice towards the development of educational tourism in the Klang Valley. However, the four independent variables explicated approximately 24% of variance in community practice because the R^2 -value was .237. There is little research that supports the effects of these independent variables and their relationship with community practice.

The findings showed that the sign of the coefficients of all independent variables are positive. Thus, there was a positive relationship between those certain variables and community practice towards educational tourism in Malaysia. Findings showed that the variance due to regression is enough greater than the variance due to residual noise to make the model $\{F(4, 695) = 53.835, p=.000\}$. Results indicated that among four variables, most of them had a significant association with the dependent variable (economic impact: $\beta=.188, p=.000$; socio-cultural impact: $\beta=.172, p=.000$; attitude: $\beta=.244, p=.000$). Only environmental factor was not significantly related with resident's practices towards educational tourism ($\beta=.036, p=.328$). The highest value of standardized coefficient in this column has the highest effect on the dependent variable. The coefficient of attitude was also greater than other independent variables' coefficient. This suggests that local community attitude to educational tourism has a greater influence on residents' practice and interaction with international students in the Klang Valley area.

Table 4. Regression Estimates of Equation (Enter Method)

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	R (R ²)	Regression coefficient			
			Unstandardized	Standardized	Sig.	t value
Community Practice	Socio-Cultural	.49 (.24)	.214	.172	.000	4.3708
	Impact					
	Attitude		.193	.244	.000	6.515*
	Economic		.145	.188	.000	4.812*
	Environmental Impact		.031	.036	.328	.979

* $P < .001$

$\{F(4, 695) = 53.835, p=.000\}$

4. Discussion

The main assumption of this study was that the local communities' attitude and the socio-cultural, economic, and environmental impacts of educational tourism have relationship with residents practice in educational tourism. The assessment of this statement was carried out among a sample of 700 adult Malays in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. The results of multiple regression analysis indicated that the

relationship between community attitude, along with the socio-cultural and economic impacts of educational tourism with residents practice is statistically significant.

The results also showed that contacting with international students for residents in the Klang Valley take important place and help them to learn more about other cultures. In fact, the residents acknowledged the economic impact of international students on the Malaysian economy and the creation of more opportunities for local residents. Most previous studies in this field show that there is obviously an assumption that practices towards tourism involve tourism development and improve quality of life (Perdue, Long, and Allen, 1990; McCool and Martin, 1994; Andereck and Vogt, 2000). However, there is a lack of study relating to residents' awareness, attitude and practice to educational tourism.

Based on the results, the environmental impact of educational tourism did not have any significant influence on the local communities practice towards educational tourism. Nevertheless, this relationship appears to be confined to certain dimensions of community life related to public services such as public transport system and health care facilities in the area. It should be noted that the local government, tourism marketers, and entrepreneurs must focus on understanding the many different aspects of educational tourism in Malaysia. However, most of residents approved the positive impacts of educational tourism as a source of local community development for Malaysian residents. The fact that the local communities and their support is critical for the government's policies to educational tourism development.

For education tourism development, the study findings suggest that the international student numbers in Malaysian public and private higher education institutions relies not only on the quality of those institutions, but also to the impacts of educational tourism on the target region and residents. The study results proved that the relationship between the local communities' attitude, the socio-cultural, and economic impacts of educational tourism are important in pursuit of residents' practice in educational tourism development. In fact, factors such as more opportunities for local entrepreneurs, economic benefits to local people and small business, and employment opportunities may directly affect residents' interaction with international students in their neighborhood.

With regard to socio-cultural impacts like the quality of life, more cultural exchange between local residents and international students, the study

findings showed that local communities' practice was also influenced by those factors in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. In addition, residents' attitude was a main variable in relationship with their practice in educational tourism development. In other words, local communities' view towards Malaysia as an educational hub may specifically influence on their practice such as communication with students. Nevertheless, it is important to say that all individual characteristics of local residents such as age, education, occupation, income and their culture may be crucial factors in relationship with their practice towards educational tourism progress.

Limitations of the Study

The first potential limitation that should be recognized is related to multivariable regression analysis because it does not reflect all specific factors which may affect practice in educational tourism in Malaysia. An independent variable may be inaccurately fallen from an analysis since its coefficient is not found to be significantly different from zero; this may direct to an underestimation of dependent variable. Another possible limitation that should also be acknowledged relates to analysis of cross-sectional studies or the data may contain significant errors. Furthermore, despite the focuses on tourism development in Malaysia, there has been limited research performed specifically on educational tourism.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this study is to investigate factors affecting educational tourism development among local communities in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. The results showed that socio-cultural impact, economic impact, and local community attitudes towards educational tourism had a significant role in residents' communication with international students.

This study creates some methodological and conceptual contributions to the understanding of local community response to educational tourism development. To begin with, a multi dimensional questionnaire for educational tourism development was developed to measure residents' awareness and attitudes towards educational tourism in Malaysia. The results suggest that the instrument will be tested on other communities to ensure that it reacts appropriately in practice.

The development of the scale responds to the call for the concern of standardized instrumentation for practice in tourism research (Tyrrell and Spaulding; 1984 Crompton, 1990; Lankford and Howard, 1994). Additional testing of attitude with this scale will offer a more certain basis for comparative study of the nature and changing

dynamics of resident attitudes toward tourism (Lankford and Howard, 1994).

Theoretically, this study supports previous studies in other aspects of tourism sector. However, additional analysis should be required for theory testing research beyond the scope of this paper. Additional insights can be attained through qualitative methods such as face to face interview with residents and the stake holders in charge for this segment of tourism.

Finally, results of this study present useful information for both Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Higher Education on educational tourism for sustainable development programs and help residents to know about successful tourism marketing strategies. It also provides new insights for future tourism studies and community development.

Acknowledgement

We would like to express our sincere thanks to Universiti Putra Malaysia for providing us the grant for the research of this paper. This research and development project was funded by the Research University Grant Scheme (Project No: 0604101015RU) under Universiti Putra Malaysia.

Corresponding Authors

Dr. Asnarulkhadi Abu Samah ¹

Dr. Maryam Ahmadian ²

Department of Social and Development Sciences

Faculty of Human Ecology

Universiti Putra Malaysia

43400, UPM Serdang

Selangor, Malaysia

E-mail ¹: asnarul_n9@yahoo.com

E-mail ²: marydian50@yahoo.com

References

1. Allen, L. R., Long, P. T., Perdue, R. R. & Kieselbach, S. (1988). The impact of tourism development on residents' perception of community life. *Journal of Travel Research*, 27(1), 16-21.
2. Andereck, K. L. and Vogt, C. A. (2000). The relationship between residents' attitudes toward tourism and tourism development options. *Journal of Travel research*. 39: 27-36.
3. Asari, F.F.A.H., Idris, A.R. and Daud, N. M. (2011). Modeling education tourism using gravity model in Malaysian public higher education institutions. *Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences*. 5(5): 1257-1274.
4. Bodger, D., 1998. Leisure, learning, and travel. *Journal of Physical Education. Recreation & Dance*. 69(4): 28-31.

5. Cooke, K. (1982). Guidelines for Socially Appropriate Tourism Development in British Columbia. *Journal of Travel Research*. 21 (1): 22-28.
6. Crompton, J. L. (1990). Tourism Research: Redirections for the Nineties. Paper Presented at the Outdoor Recreation Trends Symposium III, Indianapolis. Proceedings of the National Outdoor Recreation Trend Symposium III, pp. 944-964. West LaFayette IN: Department of Forestry and National Resource, Purdue University.
7. Davis, D., Allen, J. & Consenza, R. M. (1988). Segmenting local residents by their attitudes, interested and opinions toward tourism. *Journal of Travel Research*, 27(2), 2-8.
8. Gursoy, D. J., Jurowski, C. and Uysal, M. (2002). Resident Attitudes: Structural Modelling Approach. *Annals of Tourism Research*. 29(1): 79-105.
9. Hall, C. M. (1994). *Tourism and Politics: Policy, Power, and Place*. Chichester, UK: Wiley.
10. Hsu, T.K., Tsai, Y.F., and Wu, H.H. (2009). The preference analysis for tourist choice of destination: a case study of Taiwan. *Tourism Management*. 30: 288-297.
11. Jamal, T. and Getz, D. (1995). Collaboration Theory and Community Tourism Planning. *Annals of Tourism Research*. 22(1): 186-204.
12. Joppe, M. (1996). Sustainable Community Tourism Development Revisited. *Tourism Management*. 17: 475-479.
13. Jud, D. G., and Krause, W. (1976). Evaluating tourism in developing areas: an exploratory inquiry. *Journal of Travel Research*. 15: 1-9.
14. Ko, D.W., and Stewart, W. P. (2002). A Structural Equation Model of Residents' Attitudes for Tourism Development. *Tourism Management*. 23(5): 521-530.
15. Lankford, S. V., & Howard, D. R. (1994). Developing a tourism impact attitude scale. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 21(1), 121-139.
16. Liu, J. C. & Var, T. (1986). Residents attitudes toward tourism impacts In Hawaii. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 13, 193-214.
17. Loukissas, P. (1983). Public participation in community tourism planning a gaming simulation approach. *Journal of Travel Research*, 22, 18-23.
18. McCool, S., F., and Martin, S. R. (1994). Community attachment and attitudes towards tourism development. *Journal of Travel Research*. 32(3): 29-34.
19. McDaniel, C.J., Gates, R., 1993. *Marketing Research Essentials*. West Publishing, Wadsworth, WA.
20. McIntosh, R. W., and C. R. Goeldner (1990). *Tourism: Principles, Practices, Philosophies*. 6th ed. New York: John Wiley.
21. MoHE. (2011). Higher education indicators 2009 - 2010. Putrajaya: Research and Planning Division.
22. Perdue, R. R., Long, P. T. and Allen, L. (1990). Resident support for tourism development. *Annals of Tourism Research*. 17(4): 586-599.
23. Ryu, K., Han, H., & Kim, T. H. (2008). The relationships among overall quick-casual restaurant image, perceived value, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intentions. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 27(3), 459-469.
24. Sirakaya, E., Ekinci, Y. and Kaya, A. G. (2008). An Examination of the Validity of SUS-TAS in Cross-Cultures. *Journal of Travel Research*. 46(4): 414-421.
25. Sirakaya, E, Jamal, T. and Choi, H.S. (2001). Developing Indicators for Destination Sustainability. In D. B. Weaver. *The Encyclopedia of Ecotourism* (pp. 411-432). New York: CAB International.
26. Tyrrell, T., and I. A. Spaulding. (1984). A Survey of Attitudes Toward Tourism Growth in Rhode Island. *Hospitality Education and Research Journal* 8(2): 22-33.
27. Yu, C.P., Chancellor, H.C., and Cole, S.T. (2011). Measuring residents' attitudes toward sustainable tourism: a re-examination of the sustainable tourism attitude scale. *Journal of Travel Research*. 50(1): 57-63.

10/30/2012