



## ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL TOURISM IN ENHANCING STUDENTS' CULTURAL AND PRACTICAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES

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### Abstract

*Educational tourism is now an essential component of contemporary education since it is a fusion of education and real-life experience, culture, and exposure. The current research paper examines how educational tourism can help students to improve their cultural knowledge and in their hands-on learning experiences. This research examines the role of educational tours in helping students to develop academically, communicate, collaborate, gain cultural awareness and experience personal growth. The study used a descriptive and quantitative research design and the primary data were gathered using a structured questionnaire on 150 university students that had been involved in educational tourism activities. Frequency and percentage analysis was used to analyze the data collected. As the study results indicate, educational tourism plays a crucial role in enhancing effective knowledge of academic concepts, communication skills, leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving skills in students. Another finding of the study was that educational tourism improves the value that students have of cultural diversity, historical heritage, and social awareness by engaging them with communities and environments different to their home countries. The majority of the respondents indicated that they are very satisfied with their educational tourism experiences, yet they have identified the problem of financial limitations, problems with time management, and safety problems. The research concludes that educational tourism is an educational tool that is effective in helping to bridge the gap between theoretical learning and practical application besides enhancing cultural and personal development of students.*

**Keywords:** Educational Tourism, Experiential Learning, Cultural Awareness, Practical Learning, Student Development, Academic Tourism.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The learning in the modern-day education system is no longer confined in the classroom and textbooks. Learning institutions are also moving towards experiential and activity-based learning approaches in order to expose the students to practical exposure and experience. Educational tourism is one of such valuable strategies that involve travelling and studying as well as cultural exposure. Educational tourism can be defined as a structured form of travel which has a specific purpose of education and students are able to acquire knowledge, practical exposure and cultural awareness without being in the traditional classroom set up.

Educational tourism consists of field visits, industrial tours, historical site visits, visiting museums, cultural exchange programs, ecological trips and study tours. These activities allow students to learn the practical use of theoretical ideas as well as being exposed to various cultures, traditions and lifestyles. By having a personal observation and interaction with the subject, students gain a better insight into the subject being taught and have a better learning experience.

In the present globalized society, students must not only be knowledgeable but also culturally savvy, have communication skills, collaborate with others, be flexible, and find a solution to a problem. Educational tourism has a big role to play in instilling these attributes in students. Exposure to diverse individuals in terms of cultural and social backgrounds increases tolerance, understanding, and appreciation of diversity among students. Simultaneously, fieldwork in educational field trips enhances the confidence of students, their ability to lead and their critical thinking capabilities.

Educational tourism is also associated with the personal and professional growth of students as it helps them to close the gap between the theory and practice. Students who are involved in educational tours usually emerge as more active students, since they get to have the practical experiences and real-life information that cannot be actualized by classroom learning alone. These experiences are beneficial in enhancing memory, academic interest, and social interaction in students.



### 1.1.Objectives of the Study

The major research objectives of the present study are as follows:

- To examine the role of educational tourism in enhancing students' cultural awareness and understanding.
- To analyze the impact of educational tourism on students' practical learning experiences and skill development.
- To identify the influence of educational tourism on communication skills, teamwork, leadership abilities, and social interaction among students.
- To evaluate students' overall perceptions, satisfaction levels, and challenges associated with educational tourism activities.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Educational tourism has become a significant field of research in contemporary education with its role in experiential learning, exposure to culture and development of skills among students. Researchers have noted that educational tourism adds to the academic knowledge of students by integrating the theoretical knowledge with the real experiences that students get as a result of travelling and field-based learning activities.

**Tomasi, et al. (2020)** analyzed how educational tourism and local development are related to each other with a particular focus on the contribution of universities in marketing educational travel activities. The paper identified universities as big stakeholders in the organization of educational tours, field visits and exchange programs which offer students the opportunity to learn through experience. The authors established that educational tourism does not only aid in academic development, but also facilitates cultural exchange, regional awareness, and student engagement. The research also proposed that educational tourism helps in the personal development of the students by enhancing their flexibility and social knowledge.

**Arcodia, et al. (2021)** paid attention to experiential learning based on educational field trips and evaluated the perception of students on the educational tourism activities. They discovered that educational tourism plays a major role in enhancing academic learning in students as they are able to observe and have first-hand experiences with academic concepts. The study further indicated



that educational tours improve teamwork, communication skills, interpersonal skills, and problem-solving skills among the students. The authors state that experiential learning acquired during educational tourism enhances motivation of students to learning and their engagement in academic activities.

**Franco, et al. (2022)** performed a theoretical overview of educational tourism and addressed its increasing significance to the education industry. The paper articulated that educational tourism directs classroom learning to practical application. The authors pointed out that educational tourism promotes cultural awareness, international understanding and individual growth in students. The study also pointed out that exposure to different communities and settings through educational tours can aid the students to become socially aware, culturally sensitive, and have wider perspectives of the society and heritage.

**Staroseltseva (2024)** compared the role of English language schools in educational tourism and discussed the approaches implemented by educational organizations to draw students to tourism-oriented learning programs. The research revealed the need of creative learning settings, exposure abroad and cultural interplay in enriching students learning experiences. The results showed that learning tourism has a great role to play in enhancing communication skills, cultural awareness, and practical learning skills in students. The paper also highlighted the emerging importance of educational institutions in enhancing tourism-related educational activities towards the holistic development of a student.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The section details the research methods and techniques applied to gain data collections, analysis and interpretation to explain the role of educational tourism in improving cultural and practical learning experiences of students.

#### **3.1. Research Design**

The research design is a descriptive and quantitative one. The descriptive research design assisted in comprehending the views, experiences, and perceptions of students towards educational tourism and the quantitative one assisted in quantifying the responses using numerical data and statistical



analysis. This design was deemed suitable since it facilitated the researcher to examine the effects of educational tourism on cultural awareness of students, practical learning, communication skills and general satisfaction of students.

### **3.2. Sources of Data**

Both primary and secondary data were used in the study.

- **Primary Data:** A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data among students that had undergone some kind of educational tourism activities.
- **Secondary Data:** Secondary data was gathered by searching books, journals, research articles, websites and educational reports on educational tourism and experiential learning.

### **3.3. Sample Size**

The study was carried out among a sample of 150 students. The sample size was also diverse with students of various universities and academic backgrounds to provide a variety of opinions and experience on educational tourism.

### **3.4. Sampling Technique**

The research employed convenience sampling method in selecting the respondents. The reason this sampling technique was selected was due to the fact that, it gave the researcher the opportunity to gather data of students that were readily available and also had an experience in educational tourism activities in the past.

### **3.5. Research Instrument**

A structured questionnaire has been used as the main research instrument for data collection. The questions in the questionnaire concerned:

- Cultural learning experiences
- Practical learning outcomes
- Skill development
- Satisfaction level

Challenges encountered in educational tourism.

### 3.6.Data Collection Method

Questionnaires were given directly to the students. The respondents were made aware of the purpose of the study and their responses were taken purely with academic intentions.

### 3.7.Data Analysis Tools

Simple statistical tools such as: were used to analyze the data collected.

- Frequency analysis
- Percentage analysis
- Tables and interpretations

The results were presented in tabular form for better understanding and interpretation.

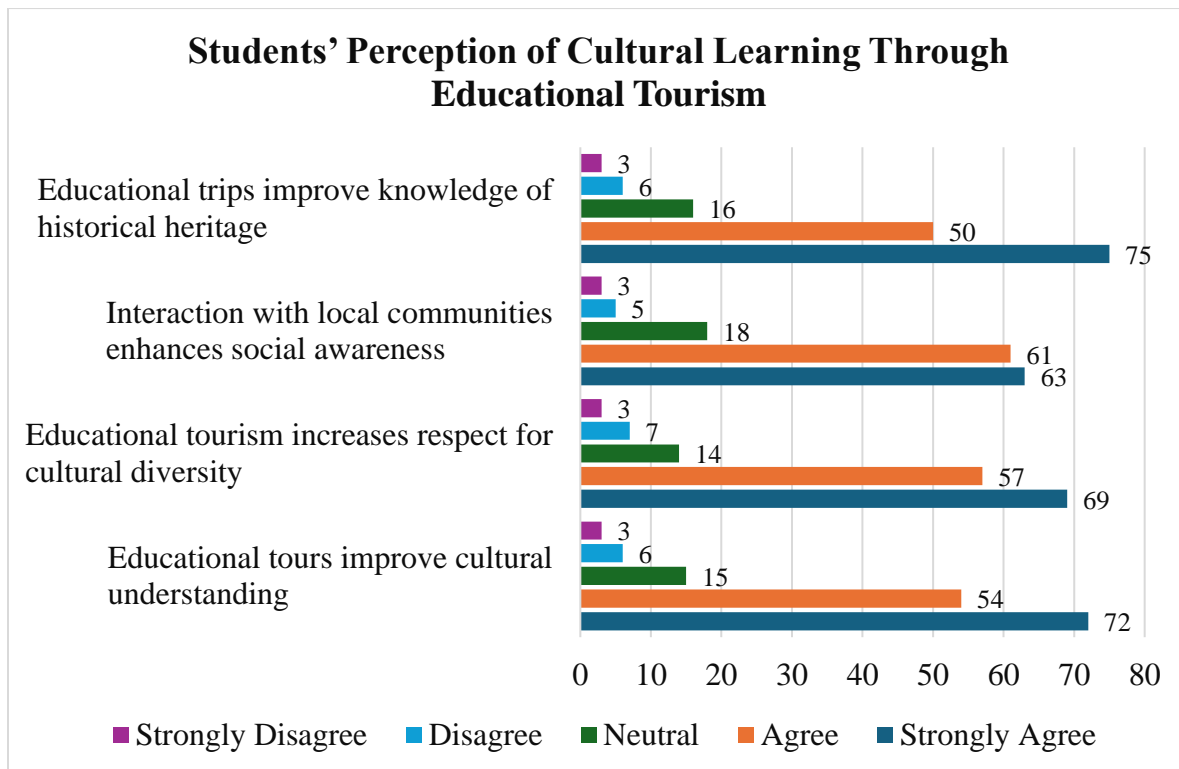
## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Frequency and percentage analysis were used to analyze the data collected and the results are given below in tabular form with interpretations.

**Table 1:** Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	82	54.7%
	Female	68	45.3%
Age Group	18–20 Years	58	38.7%
	21–23 Years	71	47.3%
	Above 23 Years	21	14.0%
Academic Level	Undergraduate	102	68.0%
	Postgraduate	48	32.0%

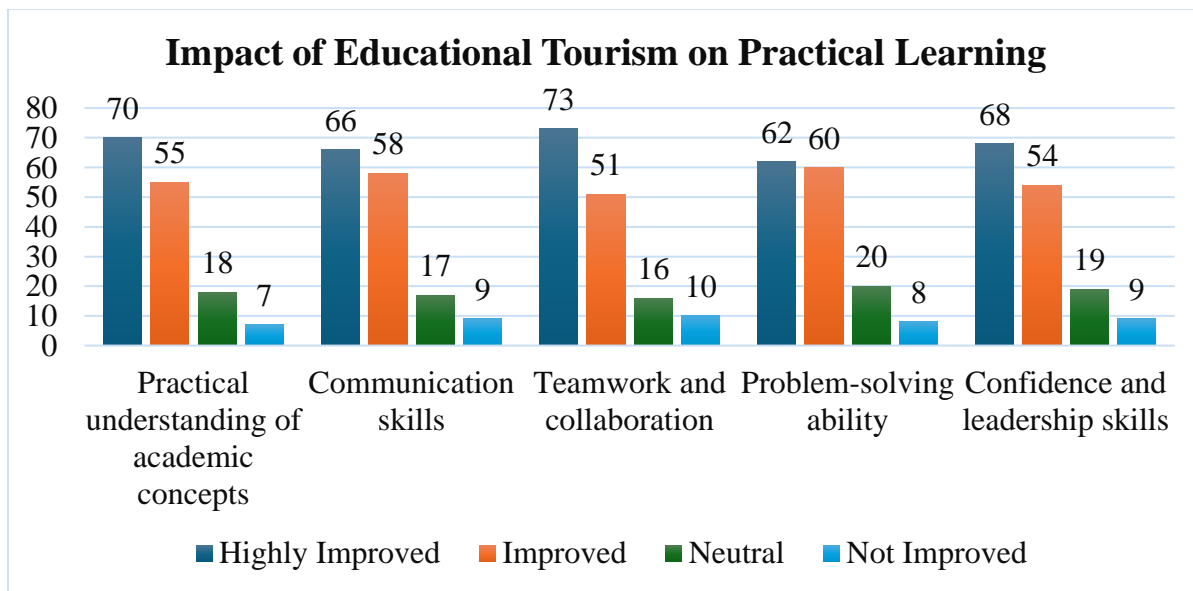
Table 1 shows the demographic of the respondents who were involved in the study. The review reveals that the sample had a marginally greater number of male students with 54.7 percent, compared to female students with 45.3 percent. In terms of age, most of the respondents were in the age group of 21-23 years with 47.3 percent of the respondents in the age group, then there were 38.7 percent of respondents in the age group of 18-20 years, and only 14.0 percent were older than 23 years. This shows that young university students are more popular in education tourism activities. As regards academic qualification, the highest number of 68.0% were students (undergraduate) and 32.0% were postgraduate students. The results of Table 1 indicate that undergraduate students are more proactive towards educational tourism programs because they are exposed to more curriculum-based tours and experiential learning opportunities in their academic studies.



**Figure 1:** Students' Perception of Cultural Learning Through Educational Tourism

The data presented in Figure 1 shows what students believe is the place of educational tourism in cultural learning experiences. The results show that a big percentage of the respondents strongly

agreed or agreed with the statement that educational tours enhanced their cultural knowledge with 72 students strongly agreeing and 54 agreeing with the statement. On the same note, majority of the respondents viewed that educational tourism enhanced respect towards cultural diversity as indicated by 69 respondents strongly agreeing and 57 agreeing. The engagement with the local communities was also seen in a good light and 63 students strongly agreed and 61 agreed that the engagement with the local communities increased their social awareness. In addition, educational visits were discovered to enhance the historical heritage knowledge among students with 75 and 50 respondents strongly agreeing and agreeing with the statement respectively. On the whole, the findings provided in Figure 1 suggest that educational tourism is an important aspect of fostering cultural awareness, diversity appreciation, social cognition, and historical knowledge in students.



**Figure 2:** Impact of Educational Tourism on Practical Learning

Figure 2 shows the effect of educational tourism on the practical learning experiences and development of skills among students. The results show that educational tourism significantly increased the practical awareness of the academic concepts in students with 70 out of the respondents stating that their understanding was highly enhanced and 55 reporting that their understanding was enhanced. There was also a significant improvement in communication skills with 66 students stating that there were a high improvement and 58 reported improvements after

attending an educational tour. Regarding the ability to work as a team and collaborate, most of the respondents recognized positive growth where 73 students responded that their improvement was high and 51 students responded that they improved. Equally, educational tourism helped in the improvement of problem-solving skills with 62 respondents reporting high improvement and 60 reporting improvements. This also impacted positively on confidence and leadership skills with 68 students indicating high improvement and 54 students indicating improvement in these areas. Figure 2 results indicate that educational tourism is significant in enhancing practical learning, interpersonal, and teamwork skills, leadership qualities, and problem-solving skills in students by exposing them to experience and the real world.

**Table 2:** Overall Satisfaction with Educational Tourism Experience

Satisfaction Level	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Satisfied	74	49.3%
Satisfied	52	34.7%
Neutral	15	10.0%
Dissatisfied	6	4.0%
Highly Dissatisfied	3	2.0%

Table 2 gives the general satisfaction level of the students in terms of their experiences on educational tourism. The results suggest that most of the respondents positively perceived educational tourism, where 49.3 percent of the students stated that they were highly satisfied, and 34.7 percent stated that they were satisfied with their experiences. The proportion of respondents who expressed a neutral opinion was only 10.0% and a very small percentage of students indicated dissatisfaction which included 4.0% dissatisfied and 2.0% highly dissatisfied. Table 2 results strongly indicate that educational tourism programs were effective in ensuring that the students learned academically, were exposed to different cultures, and developed personally. The fact that most of the respondents are highly satisfied indicates that educational tourism positively influences

the acquisition of practical knowledge and social interaction and educational experiences in general.

**Table 3:** Challenges Faced During Educational Tourism

Challenge	Frequency	Percentage
Financial Constraints	48	32.0%
Time Management Issues	35	23.3%
Safety Concerns	29	19.3%
Lack of Institutional Support	21	14.0%
Communication Barriers	17	11.4%

As indicated in Table 3, the key issues encountered by students in educational tourism activities are indicated. Based on the results, the most substantial obstacle was financial constraints where 32.0% of the respondents indicated that the cost of traveling, accommodation and other costs of the educational tours was a hindrance to students participating in educational tours. The second biggest challenge identified by 23.3% of students was time management issues, which implies that the students had difficulties in integrating their academic schedules and tour activities. The safety issue was also taken as a significant matter as 19.3% of the respondents raised their concerns about the safety of their travels and the safety of their security during educational trips. Moreover, 14.0 percent of students have stated that they lack institutional support, which is an indicator of poor guidance, planning and administrative support by the education institutions. The 11.4% of respondents were faced with communication barriers which means they had difficulties communicating with individuals of other linguistic or cultural backgrounds.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that the educational tourism is playing an important part in the development of cultural knowledge and practical learning experiences of students. The results



suggest that educational tourism can assist students to attain practical exposure, enhance communication and teamwork, acquire leadership qualities, and enhance problem solving abilities by participating in experiential learning activities. Tours also aid in cultural awareness as students get to learn about other traditions, communities, history and social setting, which in turn helps to respect cultural diversity and to understand social communities better. The research also shows that a majority of the students have positive perceptions and high levels of satisfaction towards the educational tourism experiences as students find the tours to be more interactive, engaging, and meaningful in the learning process. Nevertheless, issues like financial constraints, time management, security, and no institutional support can influence the students to join educational tourism programs. Overall, the paper has put forward the fact that educational tourism is an effective way of bridging the gap between learning in the classroom and real-world experiences in the field. Educational institutions should thus be keen to encourage and incorporate educational tourism in the academic curriculum to facilitate the whole-round developmental educational, cultural and personal growth of the students.

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