

## Developing and Testing School Student Educational Tourism Experience Scale

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# **Developing and Testing School Student Educational Tourism Experience Scale**

## **Introduction**

Education and tourism are two important sectors for every country. The past two decades witnessed the convergence of these two industries, with education facility mobility and learning becoming a vital part of the tourist experience (Ritchie et al., 2003). Educational tourism is considered an emerging segment in the travel business and plays a significant role in local development (Tomasi et al., 2020) and economic growth in a country (Matahir et al., 2017). It can be defined as tourist activity undertaken by those who are participating in an overnight vacation and those who are undertaking an excursion for whom education and learning is a primary or secondary part of their trips, which is a continuum ranging from “general interest learning while traveling” at one end to “purposeful learning and travel” at the other (Ritchie et al., 2003). Therefore, educational tourism is a broad and complicated field and has many segments, including general travel for education and adult or senior educational tourism and university/college students and school student educational tourism.

In 2016, the Chinese Ministry of Education and the other ten departments issued Opinions on Promoting Study Tours for Primary and Secondary School Students together, which certifies the importance of study tours and improves school student educational tourism’s rapid development. According to the Chinese Ministry of Education statistics, the total number of school students is 0.2 billion in 2019, a vast potential market for developing educational tourism. Therefore, knowing the educational experience quality of current school students is urgent. However, there is little previous research on educational tourist experience which is consequential to the sustainable development of educational tourism, since the previous research has proved that tourist experience significantly impacts tourism satisfaction, word-of-mouth, and loyalty intentions (Klaus & Maklan, 2013). Besides, the previous studies tend to concern the overall market of educational tourism or adult educational tourism market and lack school student segment. With this in mind, this study will develop a scale to measure school student (including students in elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools) educational tourism experience and test the scale’s reliability and validity, filling the last research gaps and helping educational tourism operators create better school student educational tourism products and promoting the healthy development of educational tourism.

## **Literature Review**

The previous research on educational tourism mainly includes five aspects, conceptualizing educational tourism, educational tourism marketing, the impacts of educational tourism, the factors influencing educational tourism, and the function of educational tourism. Moreover, the research on the school student segment is deficient.

As for conceptualizing educational tourism, Maga and Nicolau (2018) conceptualize educational tourism and delineate its boundaries with other types of tourism and education activities. Zhou and Yu (2020) define educational tourism in a broad sense. It refers to people who leave their homes for a short period to travel to different places for cultural knowledge, practical experience, research, and exploration. Ritchie et al. (2003) also have a definition about educational tourism.

As for educational tourism marketing, Pitman et al. (2010) examine the differing perceptions of providers, participants, and academics to what they expect from educational tourism. Arcodia et al. (2020) investigate participants' motivations and perceptions of a field trip. Rahman et al. (2017) examine the critical factors influencing international students' perception in selecting a destination for education tourism. Astanin (2013) investigate the spatial pattern of educational tourism in the Krasnoyarsk region. Wang and Li (2008) attempt to identify the essential characteristics of education tourists demands. Al-Shwayait (2017) examines international student's perception toward educational tourism. Samah et al. (2013) research residents' attitude to educational tourism through a cross-sectional survey among residents in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. The current educational tourism marketing studies can be classified into two types, supply aspects and demand aspects. The studies include the spatial pattern of educational tourism resources, residents' attitudes to educational tourism, and educational tourism planning in terms of the supply side. The research contains motivation and perception of educational tourism, educational tourism destination choice, and different segments study, such as adult and older people, for the demand side.

As for the impacts of educational tourism, Tomasi et al. (2020) investigate universities' role in fostering local development through educational tourism and use a qualitative method. The study of Matahir & Tang (2017) finds educational tourism's effect on Malaysia's economic growth by extending the Solow growth model. Samah & Ahmadian (2013) discuss educational tourism impacts on the residents in the Klang Valley, Malaysia.

As for the factors influencing educational tourism, Zarzuela et al. (2013) present a study on a Virtual Reality Serious Game that can help the user to increase the knowledge about the city of Valladolid in Spain, which can be seen as virtual educational tourism and extend the form of educational tourism. Samah et al. (2012) examine factors influencing educational tourism development among local communities in Malaysia. Irfan et al. (2017) review the existing literature to determine the impact of social media on promoting education tourism. They suggest that the higher education institutes, education ministry, and tourism department should aggressively use social media to promote education tourism for the country's economic development.

As for the function of educational tourism, Bhuiyan et al. (2010) explore the relationship between educational tourism and forest conservation. Sharma (2015) considers educational tourism as a tool to promote tourism development sustainably in Rajasthan. The study of Smith (2013) finds that educational tourism is a vehicle for raising academic standards. Educational tourism should be encouraged and supported on a national level in a coordinated effort to learn from one another and improve academic standards and achievement worldwide. Prakapiene & Olberkyte (2013) explore the relationship between educational tourism and geography education and find that educational tourism can promote geography education.

## **Methodology**

This study will use a sequential mixed method to develop and test the school student educational tourism experience scale. The qualitative method will be used to develop the scale, and the quantitative method will be utilized to test the scale's reliability and validity.

In the scale developing stage, interviews will be used to collect data, and this study will interview 30 school students with educational tourism experience, ten school student educational tourism operators, and five educational tourism experts. Then, by analyzing these interview data,

the scale construct will be specified. After defining these domains, items pools will be created. Then, these items will be sent to 30 educational tourists and five educational tourism experts to provide feedback on item wording and clarity and ensure the content validity, respectively. Finally, the scale will include the retained items and distribute them to 500 school students who have educational tourism experience to test the scale's reliability and validity.

## **Results**

The results include the reliability and validity analysis outcomes and the final scale.

## **Conclusion and Discussion**

The limitation of developing and testing the scale will be discussed. Moreover, the implication for educational tourism operators will be put forward.

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