

Contextualizing 'International Educational and Academic Travel' within Existing Tourism Literature

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: In recent years, the global population of students who move to another country to study has been on the rise. International student mobility more than doubled from 2.1 million in 2000 to about 5 million in 2014 (ICEF Monitor, 2016) and is projected to reach annually around 8 million students by 2025 (OECD, 2012). Since all these statistics usually consider only those students with at least a year of study at the destination country, the final figures for all international students travel would substantially increase if shorter-term movements for exchange programmes, internships, project work, study tours, international summer schools, volunteer-work-travel schemes etc are included. Then there are other international travels for academic-related conferences, seminars, workshops, research works etc, in which students and other faculty members/academics participate in. The purpose of this paper is to build a better understanding of international travel for educational and academic purposes, from the tourism perspective. The overall aim is to contribute to the tourism academic literature and strengthen the advancement of such types of travel as a distinct travel segment.

Design/Methodology/Approach: An integrative literature review method was used to assess and synthesize the literature related to international educational and academic travel. These were then critically analysed to develop new terminologies and theories. The paper is the outcome of the expansion on the ideas generated in a doctoral thesis on educational and academic exchanges as a promotional tool for tourism critically analysed through international study tours to India

Findings: No attempt has been made either in tourism literature or industry operations to document and account for all international educational and academic travel as a separate distinct travel segment. Moreover, the present understanding and scope of Educational Tourism are still rather fragmented to accommodate and regulate the totality of such large-scale travel. A major consolidation point which this paper provides is that the travel and experiences component of international educational and academic travel group display unique characteristics and is quite different from conventional tourists. This will have major implications for tourism destination marketers while planning and targeting this travel group.

Originality/Value: The current study addresses some existing conceptual gaps in educational tourism. A contour for a consolidated and specific travel segment was framed by defining what constitutes international educational and academic travel. While a body of knowledge from multiple perspectives and contexts is required to establish a new travel group; an initiation at least is made in this study. The use of 'educational and academic' as a single collective term help overcome the various interpretations within existing educational tourism and educational travel debate owing to the broad implicative meaning of the term 'Education'.

Paper Type: View Point

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Introduction

International travel for education and learning is not a modern phenomenon but an age-old concept. Historical accounts from various countries are a testimony to this fact. The exploits of Chinese scholars Huang Tsuang travelling through the Indian sub-continent is well documented. Important centres of learning of the past include the ancient universities in the Indian subcontinent such as Nalanda, Takshila, and Sarnath dating back to the seventh and eighth centuries; Alexandria, Fez, and Baghdad; medieval European universities such as Bologna and Padua and thus there is nothing new about international student mobility (Rizvi, 2011). Another testimony is the 'Grand Tour' involving travel to Europe by young English elites of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These tours were considered an educational rite of passage; to broaden horizons and acquire new experiences and sometimes last several years.

Now, what has definitely changed over the centuries is that these movements or international travel for educational purpose have reached not only phenomenal proportions in recent years but also have taken various forms. The most visible manifestation is the continuing rise of the global population of students who move to another country to study. International student mobility more than doubled from 2.1 million in 2000 to about 5 million in 2014 (ICEF Monitor, 2016) and is projected to reach annually around 8 million students by 2025 (OECD, 2012). Since all these statistics usually consider only those students with at least a year of study at the destination country; the final figures for all international students travel would substantially increase if shorter-term movements for exchange programmes, internships, project work, study tours, international summer schools, volunteer-work-travel schemes etc are included. Then there are other international travels for academic-related conferences, seminars, workshops, research works etc, in which students and other faculty members/academics participate in. In fact, Academic conference is a subset of the booming MICE tourism segment; and convention and conference planning is now a major profession. The objective of this paper is to build a better understanding of international travel for educational and academic purposes from the tourism perspective. The overall aim is to contribute to the tourism academic literature and strengthen the advancement of such types of travel as a distinct travel segment.

Research Approach: An integrative literature review method was used to assess and synthesize the literature related to international educational and academic travel. These are then critically analysed to develop new terminologies and theories. The paper is the outcome of the expansion of the ideas generated in a doctoral thesis on educational and academic exchanges as a promotional tool for tourism critically analysed through international study tours to India. Student mobility is a much-researched theme in the

Education discipline and ample literature exists but those specifically explored in the context of tourism are infrequent, as also literature on educational tourism. A Bibliography of Research and Publications on 'Student and Youth Travel' compiled by two researchers for the International Student Travel Confederation (ISTC) and Association for Tourism and Leisure Education (ATLAS) was taken as the base literature pool. Additional literature was sourced from references/bibliography given in related research papers and books using the snowballing method.

To understand any travel market segment, the starting point is to first situate it within existing tourism terminologies. Any attempt to situate any travel for educational and academic purpose in the tourism context would definitely point towards the 'Educational tourism' terminology, which have gained some momentum in the last two decade or so but which otherwise is still a marginalized area/theme in tourism research; its diverse and complicated nature being the main deterrent (Smith and Jenner, 1997; Ritchie, 2003) or because "reliable, systematically-collected data has been hard to generate" (Taylor, 2006). That it is still not yet a mainstream research area within the tourism academic circle is evidenced by literature on the theme appearing mainly as independent research papers or as chapters in tourism management and marketing books. A complete book on the theme is a rarity. Ritchie's book 'Managing Educational Tourism' published in 2003 with contributions from other two scholars Carr and Cooper is probably the only comprehensive one on Educational tourism to date.

The Educational Tourism debate

The broad implicative meaning of 'Education' (the dictionary meaning of Education is 'learning') makes the type of travel that can be categorised under Educational tourism a major debating point. They range from conference travel, museum trips, interpretive programmes such as at national parks, hands-on learning programmes like culinary arts, storytelling etc (Holdnak and Holland, 1996) to special interest travel like "ecotourism, heritage tourism, rural/farm tourism, and student exchanges between educational institutions" (Ankomah & Larsoh, 2000) thereby making it difficult to arrive at a standardised definition of Educational tourism. This absence of a standardised definition leaves the term open to various interpretations and contextualization with some researchers like Smith & Jenner (1997) even noting that almost all forms of travel have an educational component in the sense that new knowledge is inevitably acquired when exposed to an environment or situation outside the normal routine setting.

Educational tourism has therefore been defined and viewed differently as "travel experiences in which there is organised learning" (Kalinowski & Weiler, 1992) or "travel to a location as a group with the primary purpose

of engaging in a learning experience directly related to the location" (Bodger, 1998). It also invites categorization like 'general interest in education during traveling, educational tourism for the elderly and educational tourism for students' (Hilaly et al). The Canadian Tourism Commission (2001) places Educational tourism along a continuum ranging from 'general interest learning while travelling' at one end to 'purposeful learning and travel' at the other end while Pitman et al (2010) place it in the middle of a continuum consisting of three types of learning experience associated with travel, the two ends being, study abroad or credit based tours organised as part of university curriculum which they describe as formal learning on one end and on the other travel for informal learning experiences like family holidays, backpacking etc. Ritchie (2003) offers another view, that of a trip taken either domestically or internationally with education or learning as the primary or secondary travel motive. He describes them as two categories of Educational Tourism differentiating them as:

- 'Tourism First' or general travel incorporating elements of learning. Here, education or learning is a secondary purpose. Special interest Tourism like Eco-tourism, Cultural and Heritage Tourism etc may be cited as examples
- 'Education First' or travel for purposeful study or education. Here the educational intention is the primary purpose and touristic experience is the secondary purpose. Examples of University/College and School Students' tourism may be cited

Then the one-year upper limit stay duration as emphasized in the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) definition of a tourist also brings in another viewpoint of defining the term.

Box 1: UNWTO definition of a tourist

People who `travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for more than twenty-four (24) hours and not more than one consecutive year, for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited'

Source: UNWTO

Rodríguez et al (2012) factored in this one-year limit when they coined the term 'Academic tourism' as a distinct type of tourism for travel less than one year stay for completion of degree-level studies or a language course in a higher education institute located outside usual environment. Taylor (2006) addressed this duration limit in his doctoral thesis, *'Theorizing Educational Tourism: Practices, Impacts, and Regulation in Ecuador'* where he defines an educational tourist as,

"one who: crosses an international border; spends more than two weeks and less than one year at a destination; is motivated to study and learn as the primary or secondary motivating factor for the trip (the subject of study most usually being something 'in its context'); and engages in structured learning and study in a formal environment at the destination"

The above two definitions automatically dissociate all international students who have enrolled in a degree-earning formal academic programme which essentially are of a much longer duration extending up to even 5-6 years but incidentally, this group constitutes the most easily identifiable segment among the educational and academic international traveller group. The two-week lower temporal limit used in Taylor's definition also excludes those who travel for academic meetings, conferences and seminars etc which may last for only a few days. Taylor argues that these limits were necessary since a "prolonged period of time at the destination is essential for the aims of educational tourism" and that the average length of stay by tourists in most countries of the world is usually more than two weeks. A demarcation of travel for educational purposes based on the duration spent at the destination was also proposed in the said thesis.

Box 2: Demarcation of travel for Educational purposes

Duration of travel	Terminology
Less than 2 weeks	<i>Educational Visitation</i>
2 weeks to 1 year	<i>Educational tourism</i>
more than a year	<i>Educational Migration</i>

Source: Taylor (2006)

Meanwhile, scholars like Hale et al (2013) show reservations about using the term 'tourism' in the context of any travel associated with educational purposes since the term 'tourism' supposedly has a more recreational connotation, Instead they prefer the nomenclature 'Educational travel' which they define as "programs in higher education that take students from their home institution to foreign destinations for educational purposes and credit including study abroad and other short-term studies, service learning, and internship programs". Though the authors had framed the above definition in the context of a study to address sustainability concern gaps in educational travel programmes within higher education, the emphasis on the higher education sector alone becomes the most limiting part of this definition since education and for that matter, 'students' cannot be solely associated with higher education sector alone.

From the above discussion, it can be assumed that the present understanding and scope of Educational Tourism is still rather fragmented to accommodate and regulate the totality of large-scale travel for the educational and academic purposes taking place internationally. No attempt seems to



be made either in tourism literature or industry operations to document and account for all such travels as a separate homogenous travel segment. Here it becomes important to define what constitutes 'international educational and academic travel'. This will help form a contour for a consolidated and specific travel segment.

Defining International Educational and Academic Travel

The following are specific reasons for undertaking educational and academic travel internationally.

1. **Formal degree programmes:** This involves students studying in full time programmes in a foreign educational institute leading to the award of a degree; these students are referred to as *foreign or international students*
2. **Study Abroad programmes:** This involves students completing a part of their academic programme through study in another country (maybe a few weeks, a summer or one/two semesters). Usually academic credits are earned which are recognised and integrated by the home institution. Twinning programme also come under this category. Students also enroll/participate in a number of non-credit courses as part of their international exposure-seeking experience.
3. **Educational/Study Tours:** These are often clubbed in the 'study abroad' category, and can be seen as a unique mode of students and faculty travel lasting from about a week to a month to one or multiple foreign countries. Such travel combines both educational and cultural exposure depending on the theme of the tour. Short Educational/Cultural Exchange programmes between partner institutions are also considered as study tours.
4. **Research Work:** Travelling abroad for research work is an important dimension of academic life, be they a student, a researcher, or a faculty member.
5. **Teaching assignment:** This is related to teaching as a Visiting Faculty in foreign universities or colleges for a semester, a year or more; teaching in schools; a language course or other short term courses in recognised educational institutions
6. **Internship:** Here it relates to students working in an organisation to satisfy requirements for a qualification/degree, providing students with an opportunity to experience a professional setting while typically still enrolled at an academic institution
7. **Seminars, Conferences, Workshops, Meetings:** very short interactive visits usually less than a week for presenting research papers, delivering lectures, as resource persons etc

An overview of the above-mentioned reasons points towards academic pursuits and deliberations as the most characteristic feature of these travels and one which involves contact and interaction with specified members of the host population to fulfil travel/visit objectives that are educational in nature. Also, all these travels happen within or in association with formal educational institution functioning. Putting into the right perspective the phrases or terms which exude similar and sometimes alternative meanings is crucial. The use of both somewhat similar terminologies-'Educational' and 'Academic' as a collective term, 'educational and academic' is proposed to convey a comprehensive understanding, which is provided by the broader learning outcome inferred by 'Educational' and the more specific scholastic overtone of 'Academic'. While this usage may be debatable or of no consequence in the domain discipline of Education, where these two terms principally belong but when applied and used in the context of another discipline like tourism, the reference is quite vital. There are instances of international education studies where scholars use the two terms synonymously, for example, the same International Exchange programmes is referred to either as International *Education* Exchange programmes (Tierney, 1977; Jenkins, 1977; de Lima 2007) or International *Academic* Exchange programmes (Trost & Wallin, 2013). The use of both as a collective term, 'Educational and Academic' facilitates differentiation of a specific international travel segment within the educational tourism debate. This will also help to address the numerous interpretations within the existing educational tourism debate by positing an alternative nomenclature that is specific and self-explanatory. Thus international educational and academic travel can be seen as a specific travel segment beyond the existing educational tourism and educational travel debate; quite different from travels with general and informal learning experiences like guided tours, interpretative programmes, specialised forms of tourism like eco-tourism etc on one hand and on the other consolidating and expanding on related concepts like academic tourism and curriculum-based travels. The following definition is proposed- *International educational and academic travel can be defined as travel to another country by a person/(s) as part of a recognised education-imparting institution for any purposes directly or indirectly related to the teaching-learning process or related to the dispersion and the sharing of academic knowledge.*

An extension to the international educational and academic travel terminology is the use of the word 'exchange'. This is discussed below.

Educational and Academic Exchanges

Humans by nature are generally social, and curious to know and share and therefore during educational and academic travel, a lot of informal interactions must also happen through which visitors are exposed to the culture and customs of the locals. For example, an invitation to attend a social function

at a local colleague's/friend's place; accompanying a host resident to a local event, hang-out points etc or living with local families in homestays. The culture of the destination thus may be lived in and experienced firsthand which may be more intimate vis-à-vis the experience of tourists (those who travel for tourism purposes). Once back home, like a tourist or any other international travelers, their educational and academic-related travels must also have a spill-over impact on their family, colleagues and social circles through experience narratives, which in marketing terminology is referred to as word-of-mouth (WOM) communication. From this viewpoint, international educational and academic travel and interactions during such travels may provide an opportunity that can be examined for creating awareness and interest in the destination visited and by extension its promotion as a tourism destination. The travel and the interaction component in such cases may be collectively termed as 'exchanges'. While the dictionary meaning of 'exchange' is "a situation in which people give each other information or discuss their ideas and opinions"; de Lima (2007) while researching the role of international educational exchanges in public diplomacy cautioned against giving "too rigid a significance to the connotation of exchange". Drawing upon the views of other researchers like Frankel (1965), Marshall (1970) and Hornby & Wehmeir (2000); de Lima further explores other dimensions of the word 'exchange', relating it first to an idea of mutuality; a certain level of deliberation; and an activity that is deliberately pursued in order to serve distinctive purposes. In this sense, 'Exchange', which usually relates to reciprocal giving and receiving, when used as 'Educational and Academic exchanges' can relate to a realm of knowledge dispersion given that both the terms 'Educational' and 'Academic' can broadly be identified with learning and acquisition of knowledge. 'Educational and Academic exchanges' can be defined as 'a situation or a happening involving discussion/ interaction/ discourse/exploration for educational and academic knowledge dispersion'. Thus 'educational and academic travel' when used as 'educational and academic exchanges' opens up a new dimension of destination promotion. This is a theory that can be further explored.

Existing literature linking 'international educational and academic travel' and 'tourism'

The key term in any international movement is 'travel' from the country of origin to the destination country, which incidentally is an activity around which a whole segment of the tourism industry revolves and thrives on, that of 'International tourism'. Categories of 'international educational and academic travel' is no exception and therefore linkages and implications between the two are bound to exist especially since both travels involve means of transport, accommodation, food, various activities and exposure to the local culture.

Among the various reasons for international educational and academic travel, the majority of the literature with a tourism perspective or association is related to the international student segment. This is understandable because the presence of foreign students on campus besides being the most visual example also provides an accessible respondent platform within specific campus boundaries for data collection purposes. Huang (2008) argues that international students are much more than just students for the host country if their full experience of stay is considered and compared with different tourist experiences theorized in the existing tourism literature as opposed to only their academic experience. Huang substantiates this view by scrutinizing the characteristics and experiences of international students and positioning them within the tourist typologies (organized mass tourist, individual mass tourist, explorer and drifter) and tourist experience categories (recreational, diversional, experiential, experimental and existential) proposed by Eric Cohen, a much-cited author in tourism research circle. The comparative review likens international students to an *explorer* (makes their own travel arrangement, try to get off the beaten track and make effort to sample local cuisine and culture but at a desired comfort level) and also organized mass tourist (availing service of agencies facilitating all such educational travel processes) and their experiences as experimental and existential (try to find comfort in hosts' culture) and yet experiential in nature since their physical and psychological base is firmly in their home culture. The study also found that international students commonly perceive their stay as part of a total experience package with no distinct differentiation between study, work or travelling even though the primary motive was education.

Huang cites Mazzarol & Soutar's (2013) research on international students from Indonesia, Taiwan, China and India which highlighted the fact that international students' experiences have unique characteristics, which do not qualify them as tourists according to academic tourism theories. They are essentially affiliated with an Educational institution and have a longer duration of stay and hence their living arrangement and experiences tend to be quite different from those of conventional tourists. Constraining issues of this market like restricted budgets and academic success aspiration as inhibiting effects on travel were also cited. But because international students have travelled with a purpose and also actively 'doing tourism' during their stay (extended breaks like semester breaks, long non-working weekends etc) they can be viewed as 'special interest' or 'niche' tourists (Hall and Weiler). A major contentious issue is whether the term 'tourist' can even be applied owing to the commonly followed one-year stay duration limit of defining the term. Huang questions the logic of this stay duration capping which he argues only satisfies a country's or organisation's desires for statistics while ignoring important issues of the social and cultural practices of international students. Critics would argue that for a discipline to grow academically,

the conceptual theories and debates should have certain structural principles, the definition being one of the most basic requirements. However, going by acute business and commercial sense, it would hardly matter to tourism destinations or for that matter any tourism enterprise whether identified target groups fit into an acceptable tourist typology or not so long as the inflow of visitors' traffic is in conformity with set targets.

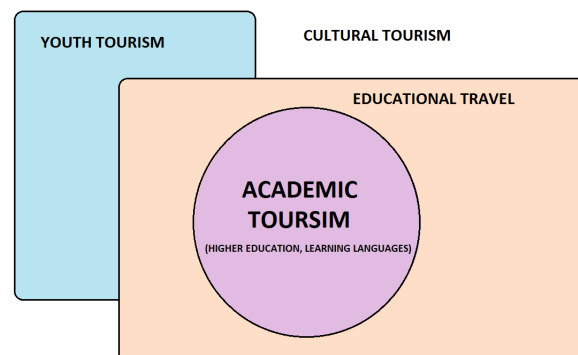
Regarding international students, some researchers also have attempted to find out how such students' stay benefits the destination. One of the most significant studies regarding tourism opportunities for host destinations as a result of international student stay was a project titled *International Education visitation-Tourism Opportunities* conducted by a group of 6 researchers led by Davidson in 2009-10. The objective of the project (funded by the Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre, established and supported under the Australian Government's Cooperative Research Centres Program) was to profile the tourism behaviour of international students studying in Australia, and their visiting friends and relatives (VFRs); the basic intention being to identify the product and service gaps and opportunities associated with this market and inform the same to the tourism leaders. 5991 students were surveyed, those studying in Australia in higher education, vocational education and training and English language institutions as these programs represent the largest number of international student enrolments in Australia. It also involved focus group study components. Two key findings which relate to tourism opportunities are:

- international students are opportunistic travellers with almost 85% affirmative answers of travelling through Australia while studying though the trips are mostly short ones.
- the generation of a large Visiting friends and relatives (VFR) market, which is good news for Australian tourism with over 70 percent expecting at least two or more family members to visit them in Australia and over half indicated that they have already had a friends and/or family visit them while studying in Australia. Another 12.2 percent and 6.4 percent thought that more than ten friends would visit them and more than ten family members would visit them respectively while they study in Australia. The stay duration is also considerable with a majority staying one to two weeks and a significant 20.1 % staying more than a month.

These findings showed how the destinations' tourism sector stands to benefit from hosting international students to demonstrate a positive aspect but no suggestion was given to build on them for further research. Fees from international students are a major source of income for the majority of the host educational institutions and this importance is not lost out in many national- level education policy frameworks. The identification of tourism opportunities helps acknowledge the

contribution of international students beyond the education sector and thus further cement the role they can play in strengthening the economy of respective host countries. The same study also found 93 % of all international students surveyed responding 'yes' to the question- Do you encourage your friends and family to visit Australia?, while 68.2 % strongly agree with the statement, "the stories I tell about Australia encourage my friends and family to visit here". This can be interpreted as the specific role of international students in influencing visitation of VFR to the host destination and the nature of the role corresponding to *word-of-mouth communication* (story-telling) and *recommendation* (visitation encouragement) of the destination.

Students were asked for one or multiple responses to the types of activities which the students indulge in within the city/town where they study and outside. Shopping for pleasure is the most popular activity in the town or city where they study followed by sightseeing and visiting natural attractions such as beaches or national parks. These three activities were also the most popular activities undertaken outside of the city or town where they study though not exactly in the same order. Findings of the majority of international students taking trips within the destination as well as receiving visits from friends and family during their stay were also reported by Rodríguez et al (2012) in their academic tourism demand study in Galicia, Spain. One of the major contributions of this paper was a formal conceptualisation of the term 'academic tourism' and its relation to other tourism types as reproduced below.



Source: Rodríguez et al (2012)

Figure 1: Relationship between academic tourism and other types of tourism

One of their justification for the term was that the duration conforms to the UNWTO specifications of a one-year stay duration limit for defining a tourist or inclusion of students taking courses of short duration i.e less than one year under the category of 'visitors'. The authors further place this form of tourism within the Educational Travel segment (above fig), both of which are then depicted to share some common grounds with Youth tourism and finally all enclosed within the Cultural Tourism sphere. The use of the term 'travel' for

the educational segment as opposed to tourism for youth and cultural in the above figure reiterates the complexity of educational tourism discussed so far. Hale et al (2013) also preferred the use of 'travel' over 'tourism' for Educational travel. Another important finding and the corresponding issue which Rodríguez et al raise in their study mentioned above is related to positive references or word of mouth as one of the key elements of generating demand among international students for studying in the Galician universities. In this context, the authors highlight the crucial role of offering the enrolled students' assistance and adequate treatment like "an adequate welcome, clear information and support in areas where they might need it, such as administrative procedures, language difficulties and educational issues". The underlying idea is the suggestion that there is a directly proportional relation between a satisfying stay experience and positive word-of-mouth referral. This is in line with results of other studies that satisfied tourists' recommend destinations.

Rodríguez et al in another paper (2013) also analysed the experiences of European students in Spanish universities (coming through European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students, ERASMUS programme) to justify how academic tourism is a more sustainable type of tourism than conventional tourism. Findings across all three dimensions of sustainability which favoured academic tourism over conventional tourism include more expenditure per visitor, longer overnight stays, additional spending generated through more local visits and by visits of friends/relatives (economic impact); consumption patterns like domestic students because unlike tourist does not stay in big hotels and activities concentrated in college campus (less negative environment impact) and enlarged capabilities due to exposure to a different culture (social impact). Their study which surveyed 730 respondents also probed the revisit intention (74% responded 'Yes') and willingness to recommend the host university and Galicia as a tourist destination (79.7% Yes and 88.8% Yes respectively). Based on these findings, the authors further recommended that since academic tourism shows a significant positive growth margin, the onus of promotion and enhancement should be both on the universities and the people in charge of the cities in which higher education institutions are located, especially, the regional tourism policy makers. The recommendation however is limited to only increasing the enrolment number of such students; the underlying assumption may be, when enrolment of such students increases, the VFR tourism segment would automatically increase. Considerably high proportion of findings of revisit intention and especially willingness to recommend as a tourism destination (88%) was constructed by the authors only as a means to demonstrate a positive aspect and no suggestion was given to build on them for further research. This was understandable considering the objective of the study was to ascertain how academic tourism is a more sustainable form of tourism. The takeaway is the reiteration of the role of international students in recommending the destination for tourism purposes.

Another important area associated with tourism activities pertains to travelling for academic conferences to a foreign destination. Almost all international educational and academic conferences programme have a scheduled slot for leisure time in the form of either a sightseeing tour of the host destination or an excursion/visit to prominent and popular tourist sites in the vicinity. Moreover, it is common for foreign delegates to extend their stay by a day or two to explore the destination. Having already spent so much towards conference fees, transportation, accommodation etc and having come to a foreign destination, this is therefore quite logical. However, this leisure component has been a major factor in levelling accusations of opportunism against academics attending international conferences. That most of these trips are sponsored ones and hence travelling on taxpayers' money adds to the din. Steyn (2015) however, refutes this allegation of leisure activities taking precedence over academic goals while attending international conferences. Through a comparison between the number of leisure hours calculated for an academic attending a short course abroad versus one who stayed at the home institution, he concluded that the academic who did not travel have more leisure time. Moreover, while some leisure is afforded to those attending conferences, they are mostly self-financed ones and as such cannot be viewed in absolute terms; as a form of generalisation for all conference attendees. With regard to monetary benefits, even in sponsored trips, no advantages was seen which facilitate the indulgence in tourism activities while visiting foreign countries. Ojang (2013) sees these 'beyond the academic task activities' as exposures that generate new ideas and which travel back and get filtered into the teaching and the curriculum at the home country. He explains it so eloquently when he observes, "*It does not make sense for an academic to leave an African country and go to attend a conference in Australia and spend two weeks confined in a university conference venue without discovering and experiencing Australia*". He further iterates that "... when one makes a career choice to be an academic, you automatically become a tourist".

What this existing literature points towards is that people who travel for educational and academic purposes indulge in tourism activities during their stay/visit at host destinations. While the linkage between the two is established, studies probing the types of activities or the time spent pursuing these activities are very few. Aspects of destination promotion in existing literature are also rather limited. The most relevant reference regarding destination promotion is the revisit and recommendation intention of the host destinations by international students observed in studies which probed these aspects. Other references pertain to acknowledging the need for implementing marketing campaigns and recommending the participation of local administration and regional policymakers in the task of promotion and enhancement of such international students' enrolment. Moreover, none of the studies with host destination recommendation findings have pursued and probed this aspect further beyond just acknowledging



its positive contribution to tourism opportunities. What motivates these visitors to recommend their host destination as a tourism destination; whether the type of exposure they have due to their unique motive of visit/stay as opposed to a general tourist motive of visit in any way influences these recommendation decisions; whether such visitors can be seen as an unofficial ambassador for the promotion of the host destination etc are questions which have not been specifically studied thus exposing major research gaps.

What the Literature review also reveals is that host destination recommendations in the case of international students happen at a personal level in the form of travel narratives and suggestions. Again, in the case of 'travelling academics', the experience gained and knowledge exchanged during such international travels gets reflected in the class interactions with students. Host destination information can thus be said to be disseminated through word-of-mouth (WOM) communication. While this can be assumed as lending support to the notion that such travels are a potential source for promoting tourism destinations since WOM is an accepted promotional tool but the indication of WOM communication alone cannot be the sole criterion to validate a destination promotional tool. This gives more scope for further research in this area.

Discussion and Conclusion

Today knowledge is the key to development and the lack of it is a major constraint to economic and social progress. This realization has made many countries put their priorities in place and expand their educational and academic understanding beyond national borders. Thus international educational and academic travel is here to stay in a big way. Looking for tourism opportunities in such travel is a possibility for destinations.

By listing the various reasons for which people travel internationally for educational and academic purposes and also giving a proper definition, this study helps initiate frame a contour for establishing a defined separate travel segment, which has not been attempted so far. While a body of knowledge from multiple perspectives and contexts is required to establish a new homogenous travel group; an initiation at least is made in this study. The paper also addresses some existing conceptual gaps in educational tourism. The use of 'educational and academic' as a single collective term help overcome the various interpretations within existing educational tourism and educational travel debate owing to the broad implicative meaning of the term 'Education'. The collective term, 'educational and academic' convey a more comprehensive understanding, which is provided by the broader learning outcome inferred by 'Educational' and the more specific scholastic overtone of 'Academic'. The study thereby enriches the poorly-developed empirical academic work within this area.

A major consolidation point that this paper provides is that the travel and experiences component of international educational and academic travel group display unique characteristics and is quite different from conventional tourists. This will have major implications for tourism destination marketers while planning and targeting this travel group.

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Annexure 14.22

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Reviewers Memorandum



Reviewer's Comment 1: The author has done commendable work in consolidating a specific travel segment, international educational and academic travel. An attempt is made in tourism literature to document and account for all such travels as a separate homogenous travel segment, integrative literature review method is used for the same.

Reviewer's Comment 2: The theme of the paper is unique, interesting and a major contributor to the tourism academic literature. The findings show how the destinations' tourism sector stands to benefit from hosting international students to demonstrate a positive aspect. However, the paper is purely based on review of existing literature, an empirical approach could have added to provide a strong base to the findings.

Reviewer's Comment 3: The paper is well written and comprehensive in nature. The study points out the travel and experiences component of international educational and academic travel group display unique characteristics and is quite different from conventional tourists. This will have major implications for tourism destination marketers, that can be further explored while planning and targeting this travel group.



Tangjakhombi Akoijam

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Conflict of Interest: Author of the Paper had no conflict either financially or academically.

Editorial Excerpt



The article has 07% of plagiarism which is the accepted percentage as per the norms and standards of the journal for publication. As per the editorial board's observations and blind reviewers' remarks the paper had some minor revisions which were communicated on a timely basis to the author (Tangjakhombi Akoijam), and accordingly, all the corrections had been incorporated as and when directed and required to do so. The comments related to this manuscript are noticeably related to the theme "**Contextualizing 'international educational and academic travel'** within existing tourism literature" both subject-wise and research-wise. The identification of tourism opportunities helps acknowledge the contribution of international students beyond the education sector and thus further cement the role they can play in strengthening the economy of respective host countries. After comprehensive reviews and the editorial board's remarks, the manuscript has been categorized and decided to publish under the "**View Point**" category.

Acknowledgement



The acknowledgment section is an essential part of all academic research papers. It provides appropriate recognition to all contributors for their hard work and effort taken while writing a paper. The data presented and analyzed in this paper by (Tangjakhombi Akoijam) were collected first handily and wherever it has been taken the proper acknowledgment and endorsement depicts. The author is highly indebted to others who facilitated accomplishing the research. Last but not least, endorse all reviewers and editors of GJEIS in publishing in the present issue.

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