

Article

Students' Learning Need and Perceived Value in Selection of Educational Institutions Mediated by Satisfaction from Edu-Tourism Context in Malaysia

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Abstract

Edu-tourism and education encompass globalization involving the same history over the years. It has been identified that Malaysia has become a prominent destination among international students for affordable living cost and quality education. The purpose of this study was to investigate the potential of Edu-tourism sector in Malaysia and students' perception towards the selection of a destination for education which fundamentally changes tourism dynamics and faces the challenges of redressing Edu-tourism. In this research, data were collected through survey questionnaires from a total number of 228 students which were undergraduate and postgraduate students. However, this primary study was directed to realize the factors which create an impact on students to select International Islamic University Malaysia as their foreign learning institute. Data were analyzed based on factor analysis and to test the suggested research hypotheses, structural equation modelling using AMOS was applied. It has been found that satisfaction mediates the relationship between students' learning need and perceived value towards the selection of educational institute. Meanwhile, it ascertains guidelines for potential research on international educational tourism which will influence students' perception towards Edu-tourism and promote a general process of combination through comprehensive learning into touristic way.

Keywords: *Learning Need, Perceived Value, Satisfaction, Edu-tourism, Malaysia*

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Introduction

Currently, among all the potential industries, tourism is in the top spot today in the world. Business-oriented peoples and Investors consider this as a platform for economic and business opportunities for any country. Indeed, it involves some variations in segmentation as natural divulging, sustainable development tool, environmental awareness, source of earning, day to day activities and cultural progression. Apart from this, society can benefit from this sector's goal towards utilizing these various features of choice and many parts of their aspects.

Edu-tourism is considered as illustrious sub-types of the travel industry on the earth today. It has a huge imminent for creating occupations and procuring an enormous earning a large sum of foreign exchange other than providing for the nation's monetary development (Kamdi, Hasan & Jamal, 2016). Its attractiveness and need in the travel industry market increase over time. Many nations in the world utilized Edu-tourism as their fundamental earning sources. Having said that program in which participants travel to a location as a group with the primary purpose of engaging in a learning experience directly related to the location (Rodger, 1998). Moreover, there are many criteria comprised of many subtypes as heritage tourism, ecotourism, rural tourism, and student exchanges between educational institutions.

Some ecological limits discover in Education tourism; observing to reestablish declining populaces and oversee living space change; following the natural surroundings of uncommon endemic carnivores. It isn't happening for all individuals equally. It relies upon some statistic components, profession, level of earning, age, gender, and religion. Proper execution of educational tourism can also benefit the social and economic condition of an individual. The socio-economic condition of individuals is not equivalent to a territory. The geographic and psychographic divisions are the most thinking factor for the educational tourism industry, because of their proper attitude. Conversely, tourism involves together with education has created much vigor from the beginning of the tourism industry and this is shown in the progression of research and information (Smith & Jenner, 1997). Carr (2003) likewise concurred about numerous platforms still can't seem to be analyzed exactly concerning the connections among the elements. As verified by Siti (2006), Selection procedures of the main variables are relying on some methodological understandings which influence international students to pick a host country.

The socio-economic condition of a zone likewise affects the execution of the instructive travel industry. The situation of individuals is not equivalent in the long run. The geographic and psychographic division is the most thinking about variables for education tourism, because of their solid impacting way. Some geographic components are sources, good ways from destinations and methods of transport, sorts of visitors. Some geographic components are starting points, good ways from locales and methods of transport, sorts of visitors. Search for undertakings; effectively looking for ecologically delicate items and supervisions are some psychographic components in such manner. However, Smith & Jenner (1997) argued that the study abroad and tourism has reflected in the gathering of research and data which generated little excitement within this. Carr (2003) also stated that tourism and education are yet to be linked by empirical examination. As noted by Siti (2006), the selection procedure of the host nation underlies the basic need to make and understand the fundamental variables to pick Malaysia by international students.

Literature Review

Society benefits through Educational tourism which is considered a useful absorbing system for society. University students are the leading target group where lifelong learning can be successfully achieved. For a student, university tenure is considered a crucial stage of student life. Students' active involvement in tourism conservation can benefit their life learning towards Edu-tourism. Practical and theoretical experience may achieve throughout this life.

Besides, little research has been done on educational tourism (Smith & Jenner, 1997). Carr, (2003) also mentioned that previous researches could not seem to show the significant relationship between education and tourism. Both of these concepts are needed for the development of enterprises' ventures that will benefit them in monetary aspects. Ankomah and Lawson (2002) stated that nations could gain more benefits by connecting tourism and education for unanimous trade and knowledge.

The recent circumstances of merging tourism and education activities in the last couple of decades are considered as a significant aspect of the tourist's experience. Unfortunately, educational tourism has generated little excitement to date from the tourist industry (Smith & Jenner, 1997). According to Carr (2003), the relationships between education and tourism have yet to be examined empirically in many areas. There is a lack of researches found in education within the travel industry. The vast trade on the movement business study was endeavoured by Kalinowski & Weiler (1992) and later by Wood, (2001). Nonetheless, experimentation has taken into consideration the current perspective of the travel industry by talking about fundamentally grown-up expansion projects or grown-up study visits and social education of tourism. As clarified by the Canadian Tourism Commission, educational tourism is a general enthusiasm towards learning and performance while combining them (Ritchie, Carr & Cooper, 2003). The specialists have focused on intentional education and discovering idea in tourism education. They have been persuaded by learning and adapting yet might ignore tourists as an unimportant element as they are not an essential inspiration to come forward. In other words, these tourists went to foreign countries are mainly in their spare time for adventure and recreation exercises. Even though they might not see it as an essential effect on education, they could be involved in the tourism journey and providing some suggestions that might be considered as education-related information.

Meanwhile, Pitman et al., (2010) observed that the perception of "tourism" and "education" are "risky associates" is related as fitted the absence of an agreement concerning what comprises educational tourism. Researchers generally agreed on travel for education is either the essential or auxiliary consider as a reason to learn in a unique environment for study (Pitman et al., 2010; Richards, 2011; Ritchie, 2003; Stoner et al., 2014). A significant part of educational tourism defines to characterize educational tourism from a specific point of view regarding the business areas or sections that incorporates or bars. Moreover, Richards (2011) recommended the development in Edu tourism is a result that fractures social and tourism. Edu-tourism also is a different specialist from explaining the travel industry, language, and creativity. In perspective on the above mentioned, every one of the segments is related to one another as far as Edu-tourism is concerned, hiking, volunteer and youth tourism are combined. Bodger, (2009) recommends that there are four subtypes in Edu-tourism that integrates the travel industry: 1) eco-tourism; 2) heritage tourism; 3) rural; and 4) firm tourism and students exchange between educational institutions. Ritchie, (2003) also suggested that educational tourism comprises four sections, however as opposed to characterizing them as per topic, as Bodger, characterized in three fragments demographically, while his fourth class is named "Edu-tourism" and later on whose model a significant part of the examination in Edu-tourism has been based in the course of the most recent decade.

Ritchie, (2003) found that persuasive elements of educational tourism embrace an anthropological point of view was founded on the division of exemplary circumstances. In his model, he argued that it might either an essential or optional incentive of the process of travel and learning which may happen officially or casually. Moreover, study abroad is considered as commercial development (Ojo & Yusufu, 2013; Lam et al., 2011; Bohm et al., 2004). Countries demand to change about an economy that has learning habit and has fundamentally impacted on the disguise of advanced education internationally, which give the student a stage about information to move over the nations (Mohamed et al., 1999). Besides, developing examples

about learning power on the planet economy push the organizations, conveying data, while study abroad is here is expecting an occupation of data and dispersal (Ojo & Yusufu, 2013). The assessment on education in tourism was contemplated in a bit thoughtfulness regarding the ancient of the tourism business, and this how it is seen as the absence of study and data here (Smith & Jenner, 1997). As indicated by Carr, (2003), there is a need about researched observationally towards the connections between tourism and education.

Furthermore, the critical exploration of the travel industry was done by Kalinowski & Weiler (1992) & Wood (2001). The two examinations indicated a small perspective on Edu-tourism talking about principally grown-up augmentation projects and grown-up study visits and social educational tourism. Considering the above, it is the demonstration of going about expects motivation behind learning. With regards to this, it eludes scholarly program for contributions to the learning foundations where members are making a trip to a goal with the fundamental role of participating in education and learning knowledge that incorporates grown-up education visits, exchange program, and trade programs (Ritchie et al., 2003). Investigators described Edu-tourism for potential outside understudies that put a specific territory to tie down perfect learning or information to their related request (Sie et al., 2016; Samah & Ahmadian, 2013; Bodger, 1998; Pittman, 2003; Ritchie et al., 2003).

There were also researchers mentioned that the host country is solely responsible for the development of tourism in education and business opportunities (Akroush et al., 2016; Chinta et al., 2016; Cavagnaro & Staffieri, 2015; Samah & Ahmadian, 2013; Sirakaya et al., 2008; Gursoy et al., 2002; Yu et al., 2011). Meanwhile, a few studies were coordinated being the observation towards the tourism improvement of host countries, by and by, minimal experimental works have been done detecting of the student's viewpoint that impact to the impression of training the travel industry items. Starting late, goal advertisers and the travel industry investigate researchers have discovered the criticalness of assurance about tourist's acknowledgement; aim to visit goals and their apparent administration quality (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Prayag et al., 2017; Antón et al., 2017). Nevertheless, it is necessary for the Edu-tourism destination marketers to mindful of the expanding pattern of international students who aim to study abroad. Although the connections between traveller's perceptions, satisfaction and their intention to a destination and perceived service quality have been examined in various nations, studies demonstrations gave the considerable measure of connections between the factors which have not been at this point adequately researched in the viewpoint of Edu tourism setting. As Lam et al., (2011) expressed that from a social and financial perspective, the development of educational tourism prompts a momentous change of the discernment among the travel industry players. Countries that can make a viable circumstance for Edu-tourism for different worldwide learning venture could be continuously compelling and on a fundamental level grow of showing this action about instruction and acknowledging the standard of the focal point (Ankomah & Larson, 2002; Lam et al., 2011). Various investigations are required to beat the ebb and flow research hole in the Edu-the travel industry perspective.

The variables in this investigation are one of the most central heralds that indeed associated with the improvement of Edu the travel industry goal to any country. Additionally, towards the choice of a higher learning foundation, understanding the remote understudy acumen in the outside nation is well-embedded by the acknowledgement, administration quality, and students' satisfaction level. It is essential to recognize the components that may impact understudy's desire to visit a goal for their propelled instruction similarly to making strategies for the Ministry of Higher Education for making and completing systems. Agarwal & Winkler (1985) considered the interest of global training in the US and among the students from 15 developing nations all through after the Second World War period. Later, it has been found that the rate of studying in the US has gone down. Moreover, international students'

stream went high since the 1950s because of the increasing expense of college instruction and the enhancements in advanced education prologues from different nations like Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia or even China. Additionally, investigations identified that the main components of choosing abroad for studies was costly among home and host nations, which the nation of the home country and anticipated advantages of studying abroad consider as opportunities.

Numerous studies were directed about deciding the components which impact the interest in education abroad. Calm attitude has been found about entering to advanced education among numerous nations particularly from the underdeveloped nations which later might be as crucial drivers for an opportunity of the student flow that has occurred to move to other nation in the late twentieth century. Likewise, recorded or pioneer interfaces among host and home nations have assumed a significant part in deciding the course of the international student flow. Lee & Tan (1984) said, there is an effect if the education system maintains the standard of influences international students and surely that affects the GDP. Meanwhile, McMahan (1992) analyzed that there was an examination occurred about international students from 18 developing nations who were studying during the 1960s and 1970s, where he tested the push and pull model. The "push" model recommended a subject that attitudes to the degree of stability in the economy, understanding the level of inclusion that creates nations about the economy. It has been suggested by McMahan that the pull model attraction to a host country influenced by the condition. A portion of the 'pull' model components was very comparative with the past research done by Agarwal & Winkler (1985) and Lee & Tan (1984).

Mazzarol, Kemp & Savery (1997) discovered six factors that relatively influence international students to decide the best about going host nations. First, a significant degree of learning need and consciousness in the student's home nation. Needs research is not a modern concept in education or academia. This method is regarded as a powerful guide for curriculum creation and evaluation by many researchers and educators around the world because it is a framework that can be used to align students' current academic learning with their potential needs. This is also valid when it comes to selecting educational institutions. Second, the degree of recommendations or individual proposals that the anticipated from guardians, relatives, companions and other "gatekeeper" before settling on an official conclusion. This is significantly important for students who arrived in the country previously to increase some knowledge that lay some result which identified with the host nation for the conceivable competitors that will choose abroad for studies.

Meanwhile, factor three that discovers various issue as cost, including the expense of charges, everyday costs, travel expenses, and social costs, for example, wrongdoing, wellbeing and racial separation. As for the closest of their friends from a similar home nation (social expense) and the accessibility of low maintenance work (budgetary costs) additionally shaped piece of this factor. The fourth factor identifies the atmosphere, which is the impression of the investigation "atmosphere" in the destination nation just as its physical atmosphere and way of life. The fifth factor is geographic closeness, which identifies with the geographic (and time) vicinity of the potential destination country to the student's nation. The last factor is familiar connections which suggested if a student has any relationship over there such as their family and companion are living in the selected country that student's plan to move on.

More than three individual stages about decision procedure are equally crucial for the student who is planning to go abroad. It depends upon a student who thinks about it globally or locally. Based on their perception is the choice for study abroad relies on. Some optional factors might come up if they became more significant. Moreover, "auxiliary" factors make its rivals as well. These are the factors that cause significant impact in various areas as the valuation of development institution reputation, resource size and advancement growth (Mazzarol, 1998). According to Tratnik (2017), there are major gaps in student satisfaction

standards when it comes to educational matters. In schooling, satisfaction in educational institution selection is critical. Furthermore, relative to satisfaction, several recent findings show that perceived value is a better indicator of behavioral intention (Dedeolu et al., 2015; Ghazali et al., 2017). The social exchange theory stresses the potential costs and advantages of a particular partnership, as well as the consequences for the parties involved in fulfilling the relationship (Fan et al., 2019).

Hypotheses and Conceptual Framework

In the proposed framework, five hypotheses were developed from the literature review to test the relationships among the four constructs. The research framework of the study is shown in Figure 1 where students' learning need and students' perceived value are the independent variables and students' satisfaction as mediator whereby selection of the educational institution acts as the dependent variable.

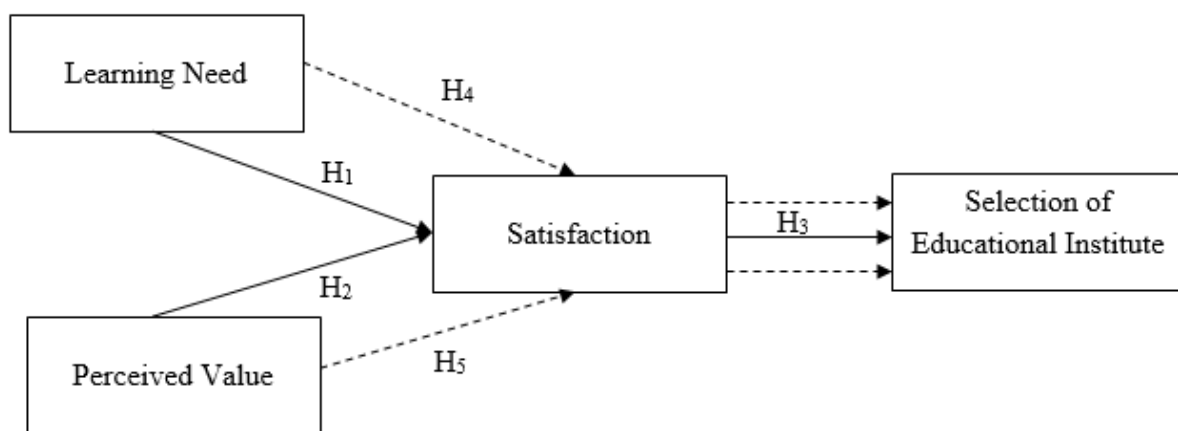


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Based on the above conceptual framework the following hypotheses were proposed:

- H₁*: There is a significant positive relationship exists between students' learning need and satisfaction.
- H₂*: There is a significant positive relationship exists between students' perceived value and satisfaction.
- H₃*: There is a significant positive relationship exists between students' satisfaction and selection of educational institute.
- H₄*: Students' satisfaction mediates the relationship between students' learning need and selection of educational institute.
- H₅*: Students' satisfaction mediates the relationship between students' perceived value and selection of educational institute.

Methods

Considering the study nature, the respondents of the research were undergraduate and postgraduate students conveniently chosen from International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). The data were collected through survey using structured questionnaire from the respondents. While developing the questionnaire important aspects about Edu-tourism was considered and items were taken based on the context of Malaysia. There were two section in the questionnaire in which "Section A" represents demographic information and "Section B" represents students' learning need, perceived value and satisfaction about selecting educational institute in Malaysia. The items used in the questionnaire were adapted from McMahon (1992);

Mazarrol & Soutar (2002); Gray and DiLoreto (2016) from their 25-item questionnaire scale. A five-point Likert type scale was used with answer "Strongly Disagree (1)" to "strongly Agree (5)". A total of 280 questionnaires were distributed with 236 questionnaires returned which showed 84 percent response rate. A total of 228 surveys were useable for further analysis. This sample size ought to be viewed as enough for exploratory investigation in finding the Edu-tourists' behavior and further analysis would be expected to validate the model (Bejou, Emnew and Palmer, 1998). Therefore, the study used exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on the data to conclude the investigation.

Results

Demographic Information

Table 1 represents the descriptive statistics on demographic information about the respondent which includes the frequencies and percentages of the variables. The summary of the findings represents the demographic variables of their gender, age, level of study and region.

Table 1. Respondent's Profile

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	187	82.0
Female	41	18.0
<i>Age</i>		
20 or less	66	28.9
21-30	102	44.7
31-40	44	19.3
41-50	9	3.9
<i>Level of Study</i>		
Bachelor	99	43.4
Master	70	30.7
PhD	52	22.8
<i>Region</i>		
Asia	34	14.9
Middle East	176	77.2

Reliability Statistics

It is important to measure in any statistical research that the data gathered is reliable or not. Hence, the consistency of the data is equally important to see the scale used in the questionnaires are reliable. The Cronbach's Alpha value of all the constructs were more than 0.8 which indicates strongly that internal consistency and reliability are high.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Researchers use factor analysis to reduce the data which are highly correlated. It is a widely used technique and useful in identifying the underlying dimensions. The KMO table in SPSS showed sample adequacy of 0.748 which is greater than 0.6, meaning that there is no sample size issue. From Bartlett's test of sphericity, we can see that there is at least one significant correlation between two of the items as p-value is significant. From the data extracted for communalities, there is no value which is less than 0.3, means no variables to drop out. From the total variance extraction table, we can see that there are four components which are having

Eigenvalue greater than one and the rest components are having Eigenvalue of less than one. This means that four components should be retained. Therefore, from the factor analysis of the data entered, four factors were extracted by Principal Component Analysis and using Varimax with Kaiser Normalization rotation method. These four factors represent the construct variables which are Learning Need, Perceived Value, Satisfaction and Selection of Educational Institute, presented in Table 2. Only one indicator with low factor loading (less than 0.5) has been dropped here.

Table 2. Rotated Component Matrix

Components	Factors			
	Learning Need	Perceived Value	Satisfaction	Selection of Educational Institute
LN1	.738			
LN2	.743			
LN3	.792			
LN4	.809			
LN5	.822			
PV1		.841		
PV2		.798		
PV3		.776		
PV4		.620		
PV5		.602		
S1			.540	
S2			.626	
S3			.783	
S4			.715	
S5			.666	
S6			.703	
SEI1				.700
SEI2				.729
SEI3				.639
SEI4				.678
SEI5				.684
SEI6				.669
SEI7				.732
SEI8				.632

Table 3 represents the average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) values of the variables which shows that almost all the AVE and CR values are above the threshold level, $AVE > 0.5$ and $CR > 0.7$ respectively. AVE for Perceived value and selection of educational institute are not met the threshold level but very close to it.

Table 3. AVE and CR Values for the Rotated Matrix

Variables	AVE	CR
Learning Need	0.610824	0.886783
Perceived Value	0.538613	0.851498
Satisfaction	0.457593	0.833272
Selection of Educational Institute	0.467868	0.873518

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

To see the relationships among these 4 variables, firstly, it was needed to see the fitness of the proposed model by examining the fit indices. There is a variety of indicators that tells us how good or bad our model fits in SEM. In this analysis, Chi-Square, RMSEA, and CFI values were used to evaluate the model fit. Figure 2 represents the structured equation model based on the variables derived from rotated component matrix.

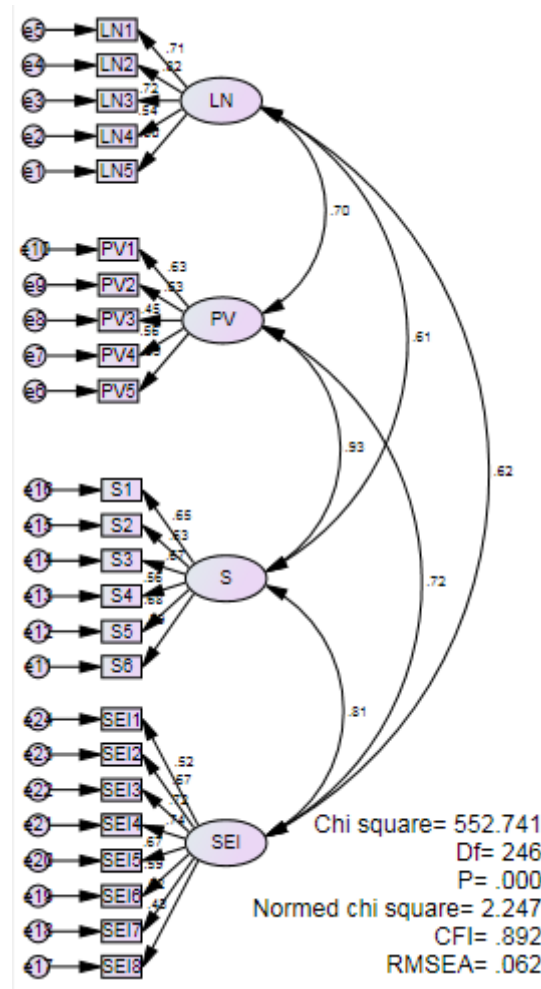


Figure 2. SEM (Default Model)

From the model fit summary, the results demonstrate a good fit index to the observed variables. From the output report generated by the SEM analysis, it was found that the CFI value is close to 0.9; RMSEA value is between 0.05 and 0.10, and Normed chi-square upper limit is between 2 and 3. The CMIN/DF value indicates a perfect fit of the model. The RMSEA and CFI values are close to the standard level. In order to get better results, the modification indices (MI) have been applied (Figure 3) in the model and the changes have a significant effect on output. So, based on CMIN, CMIN/DF, and RMSEA values, our model fit is acceptable.

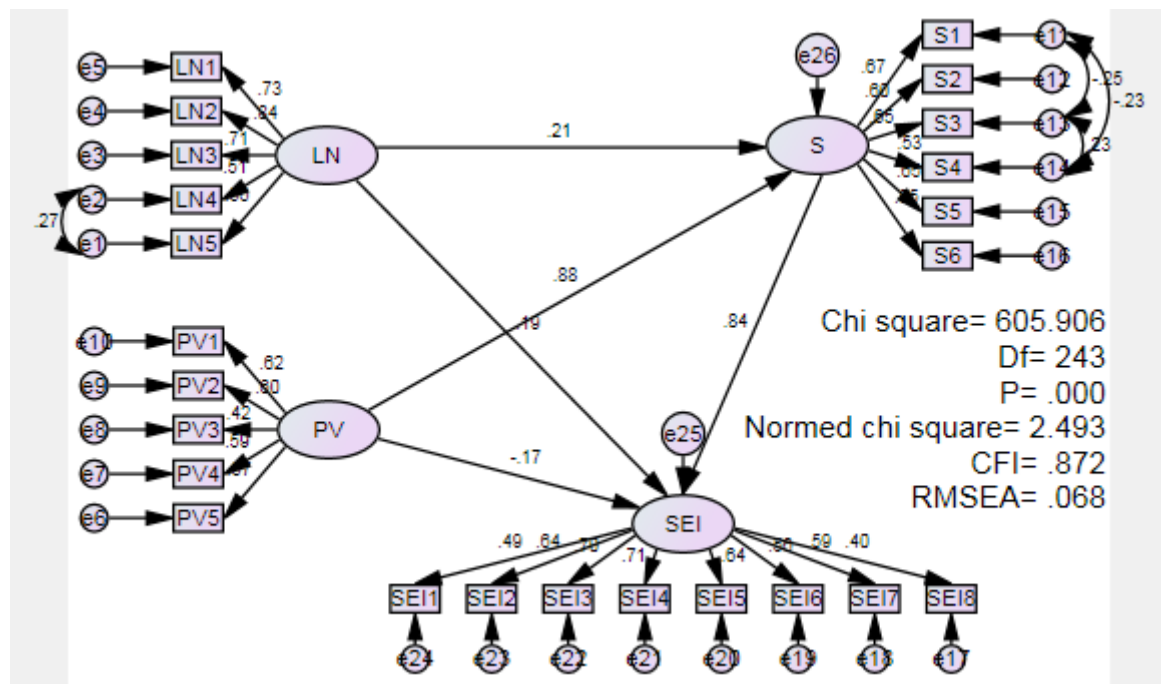


Figure 3. SEM (Path Co-efficient)

Hypothesis Testing

The regression weights in Table 4 represent the hypothesized paths, coefficients, CR, p-values, and testing results. The critical ratio and significance of path coefficients are used as the basis for accepting or rejecting the proposed hypotheses. All the hypotheses (H₁, H₂, and H₃) are supported according to the results of the analysis which states that there are significant positive relationships among students’ learning need, perceived value, satisfaction and selection of educational institute. CR values are above 2 where the threshold is CR ≥ ± 1.96 and the path is significant at the 0.05 level. In the p-value column, three asterisks (***) indicate significance smaller than 0.001.

Table 4. Regression Weights (Default Model)

		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
S	<--- LN	.229	.059	3.882	***
S	<--- PV	.829	.091	9.070	***
SEI	<--- LN	.131	.056	2.339	.019
SEI	<--- PV	-.098	.143	-.687	.492
SEI	<--- S	.529	.174	3.042	.002

Mediation Effects

Satisfaction was evaluated as a mediator in this study between students’ learning need and selection of educational institute and alternatively with students’ perceived value and selection of educational institute (Hypotheses H₄ and H₅). Table 4 also shows all the direct and indirect relationships which concludes that satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between student’s learning need and selection of educational institute. At the same time, satisfaction fully mediates the relationship between student’s perceived value and selection of educational institute as the relation (SEI <--- PV) is not significant (below threshold level). Therefore, hypotheses H₄ and H₅ are supported.

Discussion

The Combination of education and tourism has become a multi-billion-dollar business for many countries that promotes Edu-tourism following the trend of other sectors. Edu-tourism occurs when a person traveling individually or in a group with the primary purpose to engage in an educational activity or program either inbound or outbound to fulfil their learning need. This paper provides a review of concepts and definitions of Edu-tourism and a review of previous literature on Edu-tourism in Malaysia. Though, the ongoing pandemic crisis worldwide has stopped the Edu-tourism sector, there are social distancing procedures has been implemented everywhere in Malaysia to prevent the Corona Virus infections (Haque et al., 2020; Kabir et al., 2020). Most of the researchers had focused their studies on the decision-making behavior and choice of universities among international students in Malaysia. However, there is limited research focusing on the perception from local Edu-tourist and moreover, the concept and definition of the specific group should be highlighted. Hence, there is a need for educational institutions and host government to give priority to the factors that influence students' educational destination selection. Students' satisfaction level of an educational institute can explicitly impact the choice to go to a higher educational institute. Most of the foreign students have their choice in selecting IIUM considering their relatives and friends' experience. Therefore, satisfaction plays a very important role in this choice. Students' who studied before and had a positive perception about the institute encourage more new students to come and study here. As stated by Kotler and Fox (1995), the educational institutions' positive image built upon satisfaction was the entirety of conclusions, thoughts, and impressions that future students will be influenced by towards their pursuit of educational tourism.

Conclusion

This research empirically studied a few constructs from the foreign students' perspective in Malaysia and engaged on a few variables that makes a relationship with students' perception to choose higher educational institute. Future research should take on other international educational institutes to get more reliable results. Additionally, the questionnaire in this study asked only to the foreign students to evaluate their opinions of selecting higher educational institutes abroad can be expanded by including the parents or guardians of the students. It is also recommended that future research may include other factors, such as sociological, financial and cultural factors of the host countries as the main reasons. It is also suggested potential demographic factors such as age, gender, financial solvency, and race can be examined as additional factors which can moderate the decision making.

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