CONCEPTUALISING THE INTRINSIC AND EXTRINSIC PUSH FACTORS INFLUENCING INTERNATIONAL EDU-TOURISTS DECISION TO STUDY ABROAD: THE MALAYSIA PERSPECTIVE

1Bello Yekinni Ojo, 2Raja Nerina Raja Yusof, 3Yuhanis Binti Ab Aziz and 3Khairil W. Awang
1School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia / Federal Polytechnic, Auchi. Nigeria
2Putra Business School of Management, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Malaysia
3Faculty of Economics and Management, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Malaysia.

Abstract

This article conceptualised the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence international edu-tourists from the emerging economy to study in an emerging economy like Malaysia. A growing body of models has been developed to explain the factors influencing international edu-tourist from the emerging economies to choose to study abroad in the developed economy. In view of the new mobility trend of the international edu-tourists from the emerging economies to study abroad in an emerging country, including limited model to explain this new mobility trend in Malaysia, this article contributes to the Malaysia literature pertaining to this subject. The article proposes 4 intrinsic and 2 extrinsic antecedent variables in predicting the new mobility behaviour of the international edu-tourists from the emerging economies who chooses to study abroad in Malaysia (an emerging economy). The limitations of this article stem from the nature of the study itself. Being a preliminary study, it integrated the factors identified in the existing literature. Thus, future empirical research on this subject is required to examine the existing relationships among the aforementioned factors, by giving and analyse the weight of each factor influencing the choice to study abroad in an emerging economy by the international edu-tourists from the emerging countries. Therefore, determining the relative importance of each element and factors that constitute an important source of information for future work in international edu-tourism studies.

Keywords: Edu-tourism, International, University, Edu-tourists, Emerging, Economy.

Introduction
Edu-tourism is one of the tourism typologies and it is primarily motivated by the quest for
education and learning (Ritchie, Carr and Cooper, 2003). It refers to a form of tourism in
which the participants travel to a location outside their original places of domicile with the
primary purpose of engaging in a learning experience (Jiménez and Luis, 1986). Various
forms of edu-tourism in practice include participation in an academic conference (Dwyer,
2002; Leipe, Mc Cabe, Poole and Weeks, 2000; Oppermann, 1996), adult study tours / life
long learning (Wood, 2001; Kalinowski and Weiler, 1992), international and domestic
university studies (Corigliano, 2011; Shi, Nakatani, Sajiki, Sawauchi, and Yamamoto, 2010;
Armstrong, King and Michael, 2014), secondary school students travel, and exchange
programs (Smith and Jenner, 1997).

The above information revealed that tourism based on the need to explore educational
resources that translates to learning experience gives rise to the concept of edu-tourism.

This article attempts to focus on edu-tourism that is based on the international university
study. This is because, this type of edu-tourism is gradually becoming an attractive economic
activity due to its socio-economic contributions to both the host and the sending countries
(Anthony, Marcelo, Andrew, Sarah, Neil, Denis, David, and Kelvin, 2004). International
university study is significant in terms of size and export earnings, it is knowledge intensive,
high value added, and offers long-term socio-economic benefits (Shank, Quintal and Taylor,
2005). It is no longer an understatement to say that international university study, a subset of
the edu-tourist industry is now a multi-billion dollar business to many countries (Cheung,
Yuen, Yuen and Cheng, 2011).

In 2013, it was estimated that the expenditure of the international edu-tourists that seeks
university education services supported 313,000 jobs and contributed US$24 billion to the
United State economy (NAFSA, 2013) as against US$22.7 billion in 2012 (ICEF Monitor, 2012a). The Canadian Government reported that international edu-tourist’s expenditure on university education services contributed more than CDN$8 billion to the Canadian economy in 2010 as against CDN$6.5 billion in 2008 (ICEF Monitor, 2012b). It was also estimated that international edu-tourists (i.e. International students) supported about 86,570 jobs and generated CDN$455 million as tax revenue for the Canadian government in 2010 (ICEF Monitor, 2012b). The economic contribution of international edu-tourists being attracted by university education to the Australia grew slightly from AUS$13.5 billion in 2007 to AUS$13.9 billion in 2011 (Deloitte Access Economics, 2012).

Furthermore, export of edu-tourism services in the United Kingdom are valued at €8.8 billion in 2012 of which approximately €7.6 billion is associated with expenditure of international edu-tourists that consumed university educational services (ICEF Monitor, 2012a). In 2012, the government of New Zealand earned about NZD2 billion from the international edu-tourists that seeks university educational services (ICEF Monitor, 2013), as against NZD597 million in 2008 (ICEF Monitor, 2013). The study on the economic impact of edu-tourism by the info-metrics, estimated that the industry supports approximately 32,000 jobs in New Zealand in 2012 (ICEF Monitor, 2013).

Malaysia had her fair share from exporting edu-tourism services (Bashir, 2007). Ranked as the world's 11th largest exporter of edu-tourism services, the country hosts more than 86,000 international edu-tourists from over 160 countries cut across every region of the world as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: International Edu-tourists Source Regions in Malaysia (2008-2010).**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/n</th>
<th>Edu-tourist Source Regions</th>
<th>International Edu-tourist Enrollment Per Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regions in Europe</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Northern Europe</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Western Europe</td>
<td>2214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Central /Eastern Europe</td>
<td>4428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Southern Mediterranean Europe</td>
<td>8856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regions in Asia / Pacific</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>North-East Asia</td>
<td>10094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>South-East Asia</td>
<td>14410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>14133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regions in America</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>North America</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Central America</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>South America</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regions in Africa / Middle East</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>North Africa</td>
<td>2484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Sub Sahara Africa</td>
<td>13283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>12543</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2008 – 2010)

This specialised form of edu-tourist product contributed approximately RM27 billion or 4 percent to the Malaysia’s Gross National Income (GNI) in 2009 (Borneo Post, 2011). The government of Malaysia forecasted to earn about RM60 billion a year from this segment of edu-tourists by the year 2020 (Rehda Institute, 2014). The projection is based on an average earning of RM30,000 per international edu-tourists annually, consequently, creating
additional jobs of about 536,000 with the majority of them in the professional and technical fields (Musa, 2010).

The index in the above information revealed that edu-tourist industry in Malaysia is gradually becoming a cheap source of foreign exchange (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2008).

Presently, Malaysia boost of 20 public universities, and a University College (Higher Education in Malaysia, 2014). There are 37 private universities, 20 private universities-colleges, 7 foreign branch university campuses and 414 private colleges in Malaysia (Higher Education in Malaysia, 2014), hence, providing alternative avenues for higher educational service for the international edu-tourists. However, despite the success story of Malaysia as an edu-tourist destination of repute, recent reports on the enrollment statistics of the international edu-tourists in Malaysia revealed that the enrollment pattern of international edu-tourist in Malaysia is characterised by gradual increase but at a decreasing rate (MOHEM, 2011b). The report reveals that the annual growth rate of international edu-tourists enrollment from the Malaysia major edu-tourist source countries are decreasing as presented in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/n</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% Annual Growth</td>
<td>% Annual Growth</td>
<td>% Annual Growth</td>
<td>% Annual Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Growth Rate</td>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>Rate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Furthermore, the recruitment target of the Malaysian government to attract a minimum of 100,000 international edu-tourist in the country by the year 2010 (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia (MOHEM), 2008) was not met. Recent available data on the enrollments of the international edu-tourists in Malaysia show that the government of Malaysia succeeded in attracting about 86,000 international edu-tourists into the country in 2010 (MOHEM, 2011a). Thus, a practical gap and deviation from the target of recruiting 100,000 international edu-tourists by the year 2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Enrolments 2010</th>
<th>Year-on-Year Change</th>
<th>Enrolments 2011</th>
<th>Year-on-Year Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>6604</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>11823</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>9358</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>9889</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>7977</td>
<td>13.08</td>
<td>10214</td>
<td>10.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>4282</td>
<td>13.16</td>
<td>5866</td>
<td>15.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Libyan Arab</td>
<td>1788</td>
<td>55.53</td>
<td>3930</td>
<td>-2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>2307</td>
<td>5.57</td>
<td>2837</td>
<td>13.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>2752</td>
<td>-15.30</td>
<td>2252</td>
<td>-3.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>-3.27</td>
<td>2041</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>2350</td>
<td>-20.94</td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>-1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>1621</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>1835</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>1514</td>
<td>9.88</td>
<td>1789</td>
<td>6.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>1464</td>
<td>12.81</td>
<td>1725</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>1313</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>1338</td>
<td>2.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>1356</td>
<td>-2.49</td>
<td>1349</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>1390</td>
<td>-5.30</td>
<td>1478</td>
<td>10.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>55.46</td>
<td>1258</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>1083</td>
<td>-10.29</td>
<td>1103</td>
<td>10.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>28.27</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>-3.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>1508</td>
<td>57.30</td>
<td>1454</td>
<td>40.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (National Education Statistic Malaysia, 2012)

Literature in domain of edu-tourism shows that the global edu-tourism system had been characterised by high edu-tourist mobility from the emerging countries to the west, especially, the English speaking countries such as the United State, United Kingdom and
Australia (Chen, 2007; Verbik and Lasanowski, 2007), thus, a traditional edu-tourist mobility trends. The traditional edu-tourist mobility trends are now changing as an emerging country such as Malaysia now play host to many international edu-tourists from the emerging countries (Becker and Kolster, 2012). Despite the important contributions of international edu-tourists to the socio-economic development of Malaysia, and moreso, that majority of her international edu-tourists are from the emerging countries (i.e. The contemporary edu-tourist mobility trend), limited studies had been conducted to develop a model capable of explaining the new mobility trend (Becker and Kolster, 2012). Hence, resulting in the dominance of the traditional mobility models in the body of literatures.

In view of this gaps, there is a need to develop a model that could explain the factors that inform the new destination choice behaviour among the international edu-tourists from the emerging economies (Combs, Micheal and Castrogiovanni, 2009; Chatterjee and Hambrick, 2007).

**Literature Review and Conceptual Foundation**

This article ancoured on the push and pull theory. The theory was developed by Ravenstein in the late nineteenth century and was used to explain the factors that influence the migration of people (Lee, 1966 cited in Chen, 2007). Numerous empirical studies had applied the theory, especially, in tourism motivation studies (Jason, Ahamad and Azhar, 2011; Bashar and Ahamad, 2010; Foo, Russsayani and Lim, 2010; Jacqueline, 2010; Baloglu and Uysal, 1996; Crompton, 1979). The theory holds that travellers embarked on a non remunerated trip because they are pushed by their own internal forces (intrinsic factors) and the external forces (extrinsic factors) of their origin country (Foo, et al, 2010). Thus, indicating that the push factors are personal oriented and origin country based. The theory also holds that travellers
are pulled to migrate to a particular destination as a result of the attractiveness of the destination as being perceived by them. (Baloglu and Uysal, 1996; Lee, 1966 cited in Chen, 2007).

Lately, the theory had been used to explain the decision of international edu-tourists to choose to study abroad (Mazzarrol and Soutar, 2002; McMahon, 1992), however, not in the context of Malaysia. As it applied to the present article, the push factors are divided into intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Mazzarrol and Soutar, 2002; McMahon, 1992). The former, “intrinsic factor” explained the personal desire, preferences and motivations of individual edu-tourists that motivate them to seek cross border education (Becker and Kolster, 2012). The latter, “extrinsic factor” according to the push-pull theory, emphasised on the characteristics of the international edu-tourist’s home country that inform their decision to study overseas rather than studying in their respective home countries (Becker and Kolster, 2012; Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002).

The index in the above information implies that international edu-tourists from the emerging economies decided to embark on an edu-tourism trip to study abroad in an emerging economy because they are pushed by their own internal (intrinsic) forces and the external (extrinsic) forces of their origin country (Foo, et al, 2010). Based on previous studies in the domain of edu-tourism, the following dimensions are assumed as the intrinsic push factors that influence international edu-tourists from the emerging economies to study abroad:

**Edu-tourist Characteristics:** Edu-tourist characteristics play important role in the decision making of the international edu-tourists from the emerging economies to choose to study abroad in the developed economy (Chen, 2007; Mc Mahon, 1992). The authors identified
items such as: edu-tourists’ academic ability, desire to enhance socioeconomic status, a quest for personal fulfillment, the opportunity to gain freedom from family and a quest to reunite with family abroad as having the most influence on the edu-tourists decision to study abroad. Based on this finding, the present study assumes that there is a significant positive relationship between the edu-tourist characteristic and the decision to study abroad.

**H1.** There is a significant positive relationship between the edu-tourist characteristics and the decision to study abroad.

**Academic Learning:** International edu-tourists choose to study overseas for academic or career-related reasons (Becker and Kolster, 2012). The quest to learn a specific specialty not available at home country (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002) may inform edu-tourist decision to study abroad. Desire to learn new invention and current technology innovation, global recognition of previous degree and reinforced commitment to learn foreign language influence international edu-tourists to seek cross boarder education (Becker and Kolster, 2012). International edu-tourists choose to study abroad when not satisfy with the quality of education facilities in the home country (Chen, 2007). As a result of the above findings, the present study hypothesises that academic learning has a significant positive relationship with the decision of the international edu-tourists to study abroad.

**H2.** Academic learning has a significant positive relationship on the decision of international edu-tourists to study abroad.

**Personal / Career Development:** The universal knowledge gained from studying abroad (Chen, 2007), opportunities for personal and career growth (Becker and Kolster, 2012; Chen, 2007), desire to acquire the skill set for enhanced salary, and interaction with people of various cultures that help break down cultural barriers and enable edu-tourists connect larger
social issues (Becker and Kolster, 2012; Chen, 2007) informed their decision to study abroad. Others include desire to build a strong resume for future employment (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002).

In view of the above findings, the present study assumes that personal / career development has a positive relationship on the international edu-tourist choice to study abroad.

**H3. Personal / career development has a positive relationship on the international edu-tourists choice to study abroad.**

**Social / Cultural Factor:** Theoretically, the development of international sensitivity and global understanding, strengthen edu-tourist perspectives to include a general recognition of human conditions within a social-ecological framework (Carlson, et al, 1990). Desire to expand communication (Rhodes, 2010), seeking cross-cultural experience (Van Hoof and Verbeeten, 2005; Carlson, et al, 1990), and opportunities to make international connections (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002) was identified as social / cultural factors that inform the decision of the international edu-tourists to choose to study abroad. Based on the finding of these studies, the present research hypothesised that social / cultural factor has a positive influence on the decision of the international edu-tourists to study abroad.

**H4. Social / cultural factor has a positive influence on the decision of the international edu-tourists to choose to study abroad.**

Based on literature in the domain of edu-tourism, the following dimensions are assumed as the extrinsic push factors that influence international edu-tourists from the emerging economies to study abroad:
Economic Factor: Having experience studying abroad make it much easier to find a job and acclimate to another culture once working (Mc Mahon, 1992). The quest of the home country to catch up with global economic development, and enhanced economic wealth per capital income of the sending country motivates international edu-tourists to choose to study abroad (Agarwal and Winkler, 1985). The drive for development of human capital resources of the sending country inform the decision of the edu-tourists to seek cross border education (Mc Mahon, 1992; Agarwal and Winkler, 1985). In view of the above finding, the present study hypothesised that the economic factor has a significant positive relationship with the edu-tourists decision to study abroad.

H5. Economic factor has a positive significant relationship on the international edu-tourists choice to study abroad.

Education / Academic System: Lack of access to quality education in the home country, high cost of education fees, and poor infrastructure that supports quality education were identified as reasons the international edu-tourists seeks cross border education (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002). Unavailability of area of specialisation at the home country institutions, and the perception that foreign university graduates are better trained motivates the international edu-tourists to seek international education (Kapur and McHale, 2005). The index in the above information reveals that there is a significant positive relationship between education / academic systems of the edu-tourist home country and the choice to study abroad.

H6. Education / academic system has a positive significant relationship on the international edu-tourists choice to study abroad.

Proposed Hypotheses and Model
In view of the above literature, the present study presents all the hypotheses in Table 3, and the proposed research model to explain the intrinsic and extrinsic push factors that influence the international edu-tourists from the emerging economies to choose to study abroad in Figure 1.

Table 3: Factors that Influence International Edu-tourists to Choose to Study Abroad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis (H)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>Edu-tourist characteristics has a positive significant relationship on the decision of the international edu-tourists to study abroad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>Academic learning has a positive significant relationship on the decision of the international edu-tourists to study abroad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>Personal / career development has a significant positive relationship on the decision of the international edu-tourists to study abroad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4</td>
<td>Social / cultural factor has a positive relationship on the decision of the international edu-tourists to study abroad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5</td>
<td>Economic factor has a positive significant relationship on the decision of the international edu-tourists to study abroad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6</td>
<td>Education / Academic system has a positive significant relationship on the decision of the international edu-tourists to study abroad.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Independent Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intrinsic Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edu-tourist Characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dependent Variable

Figure 1: Proposed Model for International Edu-tourist Choice to Study Abroad

Conclusions

The proposed conceptual model as shown in Figure 1 explains the relationships between the independent variables and a dependent variable. The independent variables that consist of 4 intrinsic factors (i.e. Edu-tourist characteristics, academic learning, personal / career development, and socio-cultural factors), including, 2 extrinsic factors (i.e. Economic factor and education / academic system) is assumed to positively influence the dependent variable (i.e. Choice to study abroad). However, the question is: Are these variables the same for all international edu-tourists and host edu-tourist destination countries in the emerging economies?

This framework only focused on the international edu-tourists from the emerging economies who are currently in the enrollment of either a public or private universities in Malaysia. Hence, it seems possible that the push factors that influence the international edu-tourists from the advanced economies to study in Malaysia universities may differ. Therefore, it is
suggested that future research in this context be conducted. Furthermore, in view of limited models that explain the new mobility behaviour of the international edu-tourist from the emerging economies to study in an emerging economy like Malaysia, the proposed framework will add value to an understanding of the push factors that inform this new edu-tourist mobility trend, hence, offers many opportunities for future empirical investigations.

References


