



Students' Perceptions of Edu-Tourism Activities in Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) Learning

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Abstract. This study examines students' perceptions of edutourism activities implemented in Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) learning as part of a contextual learning approach in higher education. The study uses a descriptive quantitative approach aimed at obtaining an overview of students' perceptions of edutourism in ICC learning. Data were collected through a questionnaire using a 1–5 Likert scale to measure students' perceptions of four aspects, namely educational value, experiential value, social value, and satisfaction. The participants consisted of 33 second-semester students enrolled in the ICC course at the University of Mataram who had participated in edutourism activities. The findings indicate that students' perceptions of edutourism activities are highly positive. Participants demonstrated very positive perceptions of educational value, experiential value, and satisfaction, while social value was perceived at a positive level. Overall, the average perception score shows that students hold very positive views toward edutourism activities in ICC learning. Edutourism was perceived to contribute positively to intellectual capacity, creativity, self-confidence, critical thinking skills, and communication skills, as well as to provide new experiences, cultural learning, and meaningful social interaction. In terms of satisfaction, students reported high levels of satisfaction with both the destinations visited and the learning experiences gained. Therefore, edutourism is considered capable of providing positive learning experiences and may serve as a viable solution for improving the quality of ICC learning from the students' perspective.

Keywords: edutourism, students' perception, Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

1 Introduction

The most difficult test of an effective and efficient education system is the extent to which learners are able to meet the life challenges that occur in society [1]. The challenges currently faced by society are sustainability-related challenges associated with environmental changes, which can only be addressed through education [2]. Sustainability-oriented education has become a major focus since the establishment of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by UNESCO in 2017, one of which is quality

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education. Sustainability-oriented education is directed toward preparing young generations to possess the knowledge, skills, and values that can support sustainability [3].

In order to achieve these educational goals, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) identifies eight sustainability competencies, which include systems thinking competence, anticipatory competence, normative competence, strategic competence, collaborative competence, critical thinking competence, reflective competence, and integrated problem-solving competence[4]. These eight sustainability competencies are then condensed into four 21st-century competencies that learners are expected to achieve, namely creativity, communication, collaboration, and critical thinking. More specifically, the achievement of these competencies should be reflected in the stages of learning activities implemented. In Intercultural Communicative Competence learning, for example, learning activities can be conducted through cultural educational tourism-oriented field activities.

Educational tourism (hereinafter edutourism) is a type of tourism that has shown a positive trend in recent years, as evidenced by the high level of public interest in participating in such activities [5]. The basic principle of edutourism is travel undertaken by individuals or groups to a particular place for the purpose of learning something from that place [6]. A similar view is also expressed by Ritchie and Crouch, who state that edutourism is a form of travel undertaken by individuals as part of a learning process [7]. In essence, edutourism is an activity aimed at acquiring knowledge through travel.

Furthermore, they identify several advantages of edutourism-oriented learning [7]: (1) it encourages contextual and meaningful learning, making learning materials easier to understand because they are related to everyday life; (2) it promotes experiential learning, thereby enhancing critical thinking skills as well as social and communication skills, and strengthening knowledge through real practice; (3) it increases learning motivation and interest by reducing classroom boredom and facilitating kinesthetic, visual, and social learning styles; (4) it enhances students' curiosity and active exploration; and (5) it supports collaboration and 21st-century skills, as edutourism activities encourage students to collaborate, communicate, think critically, solve problems, and adapt to new environments.

The impacts resulting from the implementation of edutourism are experienced by at least three parties, namely students, higher education institutions, and local communities involved in tourism activities. Learning conducted in the classroom is strengthened by knowledge gained through direct experience [8]. Edutourism must be carefully designed in order to obtain an effective and efficient model. As an initial step, for example, students' perceptions need to be mapped in order to gather information about the edutourism activities they will undertake.

Students' perceptions of edutourism reflect how they assess, feel, and interpret the experiences gained during edutourism activities. These perceptions strongly determine the effectiveness of the activities, as experiences perceived as positive will lead to increased learning motivation, active participation, and more optimal learning outcomes [9]. Several previous studies also indicate that students' perceptions of edutourism tend to be positive, particularly when the activities are well designed, contextual, and relevant to students' learning needs [10]. However, in practice, various perceptions are still

found, influenced by factors such as students' readiness, the quality of the visited sites, and the integration of learning materials. Therefore, the study of students' perceptions is important for evaluating, developing, and refining the implementation of edutourism in higher education.

Furthermore, in the era of globalization and the complexity of contemporary socio-cultural challenges, edutourism can also serve as a medium for intercultural learning. Activities such as visits to traditional villages, local communities, and conservation areas not only enrich knowledge but also shape tolerant, empathetic, and reflective attitudes toward diversity. Thus, understanding students' perceptions will facilitate the development of more holistic learning models oriented toward character education and global competence.

Based on the discussion above, this study thus proposes to examine how students perceive edutourism in the Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) course. This study is important to analyze students' perceptions of edutourism activities as part of a contextual learning approach in higher education. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of effective, relevant, and meaningful learning strategies for students.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Perception of Educational Tourism

In the context of edutourism, perception can be understood from two perspectives, namely a single-dimensional perspective and a multidimensional perspective. From a single-dimensional perspective, perception is defined as customers' evaluations of the products or services provided [11]. In contrast, the multidimensional perspective focuses more on customers' evaluations of the experiences they obtain [12]. Perception is considered to be closely related to interest, quality, satisfaction, and customer loyalty [13]. In addition, edutourism perception is also defined as the total benefits and total sacrifices gained by students when participating in an edutourism program [14].

Perception is a cognitive process that involves the reception, organization, and interpretation of information from the environment. Robbins and Judge [9] explain that individuals' perceptions determine how they respond to and give meaning to certain experiences or stimuli. In the context of edutourism, students' perceptions are very important because they influence motivation, engagement, and the effectiveness of learning during the activity. Similar findings are also reported by Pratiwi, who show that positive student perceptions of edutourism have an impact on increased learning interest, reflective ability, and intercultural understanding [15]. Conversely, negative perceptions may cause edutourism activities to be viewed merely as recreation without learning value.

The study of students' perceptions is important for several reasons. First, by understanding participants' perceptions, edutourism organizers can evaluate whether learning objectives have been achieved. Second, participants' perceptions provide input regarding which aspects of the activities are most meaningful or less effective, which can serve as a basis for developing more targeted programs [16]. Third, positive perceptions

of edutourism activities tend to increase students' environmental awareness, cultural tolerance, and social responsibility [17].

Edutourism is derived from the words education and tourism, reflecting activities undertaken by individuals or groups to carry out learning about a particular subject [6]. In other words, edutourism combines elements of education and recreation, allowing participants to learn through direct experiences outside the classroom. Historically, edutourism has been practiced for a long time, as individuals or groups have traveled to learn new things such as languages, cultures, and other aspects of life [18][7].

Several research findings indicate that edutourism can enhance individuals' communication skills and their ability to adapt to different cultures. Nagai and Kawishagi further emphasize that edutourism not only provides new knowledge to participants but also contributes significantly to their personal development [18]. From an economic perspective, edutourism has a substantial impact on communities located in tourist destinations. Therefore, it is reasonable that the edutourism trend continues to increase over time, reaching an average growth of 6 percent per year [19], and even achieving an increase of 8.75 percent in 2018 [20].

2.2 Educational Tourism-Oriented ICC Learning

In addition to the benefits related to increasing participants' knowledge and the economic impacts felt by destination communities, as discussed above, edutourism also has significant social impacts. During its implementation, edutourism participants interact and build emotional ties with local communities. These ties encourage participants to revisit the destination, leading to the occurrence of continuous learning [21]. Such ongoing learning is considered capable of reducing stereotypes and increasing cultural awareness among all parties involved.

One of the main motivations of edutourism participants is the desire to gain direct experience of other cultures [22]. This is highly relevant to the objectives of ICC learning, which aim to reduce learners' ethnocentrism and develop individuals with high levels of cultural awareness [23]. High cultural awareness helps learners acquire transversal skills that are essential for their future careers [24]. Unlike the general tourism industry, which emphasizes economic profit, edutourism places greater emphasis on multidimensional aspects and sustainability by fostering learning communities[25].

In relation to ICC learning, through edutourism, participants gain two experiences simultaneously, namely education and cultural tourism, enabling them to understand the complex relationship between language, culture, and education [26]. Moreover, in the current era, individuals are expected to become citizens with intercultural communication competence. Therefore, education, which has traditionally been more market-oriented, needs to be redirected toward promoting social good through the development of intercultural competence. Research conducted at several universities shows that edutourism can strengthen intercultural relationships as opportunities for communication increase during the implementation of such activities [27]. Accordingly, the direct involvement of participants in field-based learning increases their motivation[28], especially since edutourism combines two activities at once, namely learning and recreation [29]. Furthermore, edutourism not only has cultural impacts but also social impacts

on both visitors and host communities [30]. Thus, this learning model is believed to offer a solution to traditional learning models that focus solely on knowledge transfer and, as a result, insufficiently prepare students to face life after completing their education.

In general, ICC learning through edutourism activities provides real experiences that enable participants to: a) directly observe local cultural practices and community values, for example through visits to traditional villages and cultural communities; b) interact with people from different cultural backgrounds, thereby improving intercultural communication skills; c) engage in critical reflection on cultural differences and similarities, thus enhancing intercultural communication competence; d) develop empathy, tolerance, and intercultural awareness through real-life experiences [23].

3 Method

This study employs a descriptive quantitative approach aimed at obtaining an overview of students' perceptions of edutourism in Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) learning. This approach is used to collect numerical data that can be statistically analyzed to identify trends in respondents' perceptions.

This study was conducted at several cultural tourism destinations located on the island of Lombok. The research was carried out in May 2025. The population of this study consists of all active students at the University of Mataram. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, with the following criteria: a) active second-semester students enrolled in the ICC course; and b) students who have participated in edutourism activities as part of ICC learning activities. The number of samples used in this study was 33 students, who were considered to represent the population based on the specified criteria.

Furthermore, the data in this study were collected through a questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed using a 1–5 Likert scale to measure students' levels of perception of various aspects of edutourism, such as educational value, experiential value (cultural activities and knowledge), social value, and satisfaction. Afterwards, the data obtained were then analyzed using descriptive quantitative analysis techniques, including: a) frequency distribution to describe respondents' profiles; b) mean scores and percentages for each indicator of students' perceptions; c) visualization of results in the form of tables and charts to facilitate data interpretation.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Students' Perceptions of Educational Tourism Activities

The respondents in this study consisted of 33 students from the English Education Study Program at the University of Mataram who were selected based on purposive sampling criteria, namely students who participated in edutourism activities in ICC learning. The respondents consisted of 3 male students (9%) and 30 female students (91%).

Students' perceptions were analyzed based on four main aspects, namely: educational value, experiential value, social value, and satisfaction.

Educational Value. There are six aspects addressed in relation to students' perceptions when participating in edutourism activities under the educational value aspect. The six questions concern the extent to which edutourism activities are able to improve their communication skills, stimulate critical thinking skills, increase self-confidence, enhance creativity, improve intellectual capacity, and whether the materials to be explored through edutourism activities had been previously explained by the lecturer in the classroom. The results for this value are displayed in Figure 1 below.

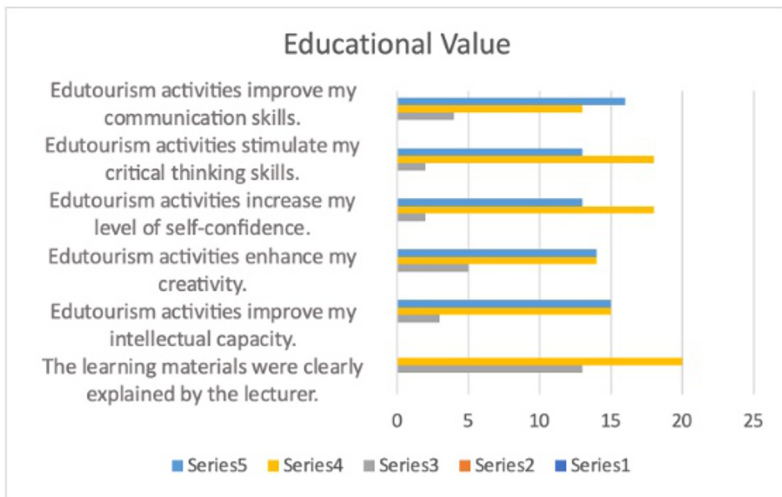


Fig. 1. Students' Perceptions of the Educational Value of Edu-Tourism Activities

In terms of improving students' communication skills, out of 33 respondents, 4 participants (12%) stated that edutourism activities were moderately helpful, 4 participants (12%) stated that they were fairly helpful, 13 participants (38%) stated that they were helpful, and 16 participants (48%) stated that they were very helpful in improving these skills. In addition, edutourism activities were also perceived to have an impact on improving participants' critical thinking skills. Two participants (6%) stated that the activities were moderately helpful, 18 participants (55%) stated that they were helpful, and 13 participants (39%) stated that they were very helpful in stimulating these skills.

Regarding the influence of edutourism activities on increasing participants' self-confidence, 2 participants (6%) stated that the activities were moderately helpful, 18 participants (55%) stated that they were helpful, and the remaining 13 participants (39%) stated that these activities were very helpful in increasing their self-confidence. Participants also felt that their creativity improved after engaging in edutourism activities. Five participants (15%) felt moderately helped, 14 participants (42%) felt helped, and another 14 participants (42%) stated that they were very helped in this regard.

Meanwhile, in terms of improving participants’ intellectual capacity, edutourism activities were perceived to have a significant impact. Three participants (9%) stated that the activities were moderately helpful, 15 participants (45%) stated that they were helpful, and another 15 participants (45%) stated that they were very helpful. Finally, regarding the question of whether the materials explored had been explained in advance in the classroom by the lecturer, 13 participants (39%) felt that the materials were sufficiently explained, while the remaining 20 participants (61%) felt that the materials had been explained.

In general, participants’ perceptions of the positive impact of edutourism activities in the educational value aspect were at the “strongly agree” level, with an average score of 4.21.

Experiential Value. A total of five questions were administered to explore participants’ perceptions of edutourism activities in terms of experiential value. The results can be observed in Figure 2 below.

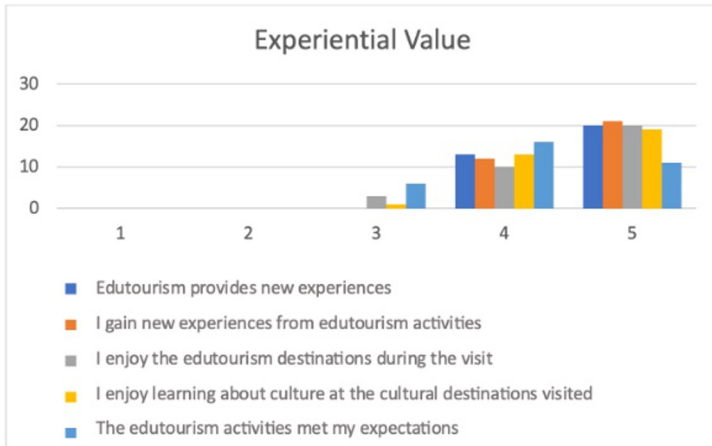


Fig. 2. Students’ Perceptions of the Experiential Value of Edu-Tourism Activities

The first question was related to whether edutourism activities provided new experiences for the participants. For this question, out of 33 respondents, 13 participants (39%) agreed and 20 participants (61%) strongly agreed that edutourism activities provided new experiential value for them.

When participants were asked whether they enjoyed the destination during the visit, 3 participants (9%) stated that they moderately agreed, 10 participants (30%) agreed, and the remaining 20 participants (61%) strongly agreed that they enjoyed the destination visited during the edutourism activity.

Another question addressed in this study was related to whether participants enjoyed the cultural activities obtained through the edutourism program. In this case, 1 participant (3%) stated that they moderately enjoyed the experience, 13 participants (39%)

stated that they enjoyed it, and 19 participants (58%) stated that they greatly enjoyed the experiences gained during the activity.

Furthermore, when participants were asked whether the edutourism activities conducted met their expectations, 6 participants (18%) stated that the activities were moderately in line with their expectations, 16 participants (48%) stated that they were in line with their expectations, and the remaining 11 participants (33%) stated that the activities were highly in line with their expectations.

The average index score of students' perceptions in the experiential value aspect reached 4.19, which indicates that their overall perception of the edutourism activities in this aspect was at a good level.

Social Value. Four questions were posed to edutourism participants regarding the impact or social value generated by the activity. The results for this aspect are displayed in Figure 3 below.

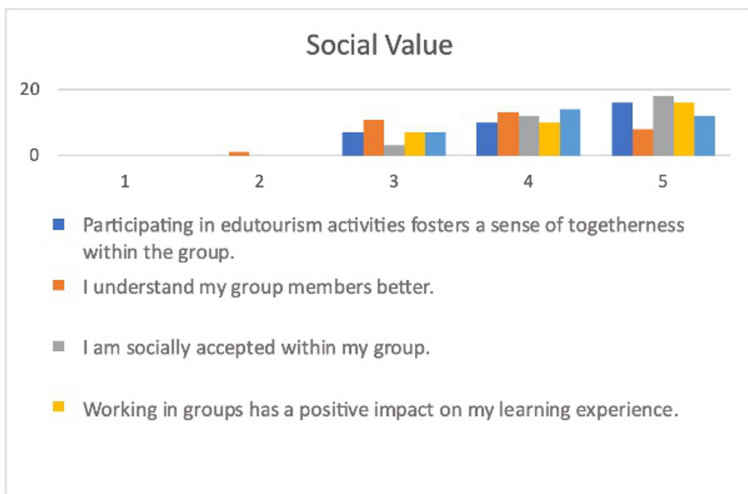


Fig. 3. Students' Perceptions of the Social Value of Edu-Tourism Activities

The first question addressed whether edutourism activities fostered a sense of togetherness within the group. With regard to this question, 7 participants (21%) stated that the activity was moderately helpful, 10 participants (30%) stated that it was helpful, and 16 participants (48%) stated that it was very helpful in fostering a sense of togetherness among group members.

Meanwhile, for the second question related to whether edutourism activities helped participants better understand other members within the group, only 1 participant (3%) stated that it was less helpful. The remaining participants, consisting of 11 participants (33%), stated that it was moderately helpful, 13 participants (39%) stated that it was helpful, and 8 participants (24%) stated that it was very helpful in helping them understand their group members.

The third question posed to edutourism participants was related to the extent to which the activity helped them gain social acceptance within their group. In this regard, 3 participants (9%) stated that it was moderately helpful, 12 participants (36%) stated that it was helpful, and 18 participants (55%) stated that it was very helpful.

When participants were asked whether the edutourism experience had a positive impact on their learning experience, 7 participants (21%) stated that it had a moderate impact, 10 participants (30%) stated that it had an impact, and 16 participants (48%) stated that it had a very strong impact.

The final question related to social value asked whether participants were interested in participating in such activities with people they were familiar with. In response, 7 participants (21%) stated that they were moderately interested, 12 participants (42%) stated that they were interested, and 12 participants (36%) stated that they were very interested.

The average perception score of participants toward edutourism activities in terms of social value indicates a very positive perception.

Satisfaction Level. The final aspect examined among edutourism participants was their level of satisfaction with their participation in the edutourism activities, which can be observed in Figure 4 below.



Fig. 4. Students' Level of Satisfaction with Edu-Tourism Activities

The first question addressed whether participants perceived the activities as beneficial. For this question, 13 participants (39%) stated that the activities were beneficial, while the remaining 20 participants (61%) stated that they were very beneficial.

The next question was related to whether visits to tourist destinations generated a sense of satisfaction among participants. In response, 2 participants (6%) stated that they were moderately satisfied, 15 participants (45%) stated that they were satisfied, and 16 participants (48%) stated that they were very satisfied.

The third question focused on whether the edutourism experience itself made participants feel satisfied. With regard to this aspect, 1 participant (3%) reported being moderately satisfied, 15 participants (45%) stated that they were satisfied, and 17 participants (52%) stated that they were very satisfied.

The final question aimed to map participants' overall level of satisfaction with the edutourism activities. In this case, 16 participants (48%) stated that they were satisfied, while 17 participants (52%) stated that they were very satisfied.

The average satisfaction score of participants toward the edutourism activities reached 4.51, indicating that participants were highly satisfied with the edutourism activities.

4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that students' perceptions of edutourism activities implemented in ICC learning are highly positive. Of the four aspects examined and elaborated through 20 questionnaire items, participants demonstrated very positive perceptions in three aspects, namely educational value with a mean score of 4.21, experiential value with a mean score of 4.49, and satisfaction with a mean score of 4.50. Meanwhile, the social value aspect was perceived at a positive level with a mean score of 4.19. Overall, the average perception score of participants toward edutourism activities across all assessed aspects reached 4.34, which signifies that students hold a very positive perception of these activities.

These findings are in line with the results of a study conducted by **Rahma (2021)**, which reported that edutourism activities are able to enhance learners' motivation and engagement in the learning process. Edutourism activities implemented in ICC learning were perceived to make a highly positive contribution to the enhancement of educational values, such as increased intellectual capacity, creativity, self-confidence, critical thinking skills, and communication skills. This may be attributed to the nature of edutourism, which integrates learning with recreational activities, allowing participants to learn through direct experience [29].

Furthermore, edutourism activities were found to have a positive impact in providing participants with direct field-based learning experiences. This learning model is believed to serve as a solution to traditional learning approaches that focus solely on knowledge transfer and, as a result, are less effective in preparing students for real-life challenges after completing their education (**Sayono et al., 2024**). This perspective is consistent with the findings of the present study, which show that edutourism activities contributed positively to participants' acquisition of new experiences, enjoyment of tourist destinations during visits, engagement in direct cultural learning at the visited cultural sites, and the alignment of edutourism activities with participants' expectations.

From a social perspective, edutourism activities were also considered capable of enhancing participants' social values. Based on the data obtained in this study, it can be concluded that edutourism activities foster a sense of togetherness within groups, enabling group members to better understand one another. Participants reported feeling socially accepted within their groups, which in turn had a positive impact on their overall learning experiences through edutourism. This finding supports the results reported

by Ambro [30], who emphasized that edutourism not only produces cultural impacts but also generates significant social impacts for both visitors and host communities.

With regard to the satisfaction aspect, the findings indicate that participants highly appreciated the implementation of edutourism activities in ICC learning. As many as 61% of participants stated that the activities were very beneficial, while the remaining 39% expressed satisfaction, indicating that none of the participants reported being only moderately satisfied, dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied. Two main factors contributed to participants' satisfaction with the edutourism activities: (1) satisfaction with the edutourism destinations visited, and (2) satisfaction with the learning experiences gained throughout the activities. Therefore, it can be concluded that, overall, participants were very satisfied with the implementation of edutourism activities in ICC learning.

5 Conclusion

Based on the results of the study on students' perceptions of edutourism activities conducted in ICC learning, it can be concluded that these activities have a very positive impact on students' learning motivation.

Students who participated in edutourism activities perceived edutourism as an approach that makes a positive contribution to educational value, including intellectual capacity, creativity, self-confidence, critical thinking skills, and communication skills. In addition, edutourism activities were also perceived to have positive impacts on experiential and social aspects. The experiential aspect relates to new experiences gained by participants, experiences associated with the edutourism destinations visited, and experiences of cultural learning at those destinations. Meanwhile, the social aspect includes the development of a sense of togetherness within the group, improved understanding among group members, social acceptance of each member, and the emergence of positive attitudes resulting from the learning experience. Finally, edutourism activities were considered capable of providing positive learning experiences for participants. Students perceived edutourism as highly beneficial because they experienced satisfaction in two aspects, namely satisfaction with the tourism destinations visited and satisfaction with the experiences gained from the edutourism activities themselves. Therefore, the general conclusion of this study is that students who participate in edutourism activities within ICC learning hold very positive perceptions of these activities. Accordingly, it can be suggested that edutourism may serve as a viable solution for improving the quality of ICC learning, particularly from the students' perspective.

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