# Influence of Policy Strategies, Instruments, and Malaysians' Attitude on Sustainable Edu-tourist Industry in Malaysia

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**Abstract**
This paper proposes a theoretical model that explains predictive influence of edu-tourist policy strategies, and instruments, including, attitude of Malaysians towards international edu-tourists on sustainable edu-tourist industry in Malaysia. The design / methodology that was adopted in this article involves presentation of an hypothetical model which shows sustainable edu-tourist indusrty in Malaysia as a dependent variable been influenced by two (2) sets of  independent variables: policy strategies, and instruments, including, the mediating influence of attitude of Malaysian towards internaional edu-tourists between Malaysian edu-tourist policy strategies, and instruments, and sustainable edu-tourist industry in Malaysia. These variables, whether consciously or unconsciously influence the choice of Malaysia as a preferred edu-tourist destination country among international edu-tourists. The limitations of this study stem from the nature of the study itself.  The study integrate factors identified in existing literature that influence sustainable edu-tourist industry in other countries, hence, replicate same in the context of Malaysia.  Future research on the subject in Malaysia context will examine the existing relationships among the aforementioned variables. In particular, it will give and analyse the weight of each factor and the relative importance of each element for the factor it belongs. Therefore, determining the relative importance of each element and factors they belong would constitute an important source of information for future work on sustainable edu-tourist industry in Malaysia. Since, there are few studies which try to examine the influence of policy strategies,and instruments, including, the mediating effects of attitudes of Malaysian towards internaional edu-tourists between edu-tourist policy strategies, and instruments, and sustainable edu-tourist industry in Malaysia from an integrated point of view, this paper contributes to bridging the gap.
**Keywords:** Policy Strategies, Policy Instruments,  Edu-tourism, Edu-tourist.

## Introduction

Edu-tourist industry describes those, businesses, educational institutions and regulatory agencies located either in edu-tourist generation regions, and or at destinations that contribute to enhancing memorable learning experience and stay of edu-tourists (Bello et al., 2014).  Edu-tourist industry in recent time has become a global industry following the trends of other industries (Naido, 2007).  International university education, a subset of edu-tourist industry is now a multi-billion dollar business for many edu-tourist destination countries (Cheung et al., 2011). In 2010, the number of edu-tourists seeking cross-border edu-tourist services globally is put at about 4.1million and hence, forecasted to hit 7.2 million by the year 2020, thereby, creating market worth US$40-50 billion (Bohn, et al., 2012).  Due to economic, social, political and cultural  potentials of edu-tourism, many countries are been attracted to exporting edu-tourist services (Verbik and Lasanowski, 2007).

Malaysia is one of the major edu-tourist destination countries in the world, hence, rated as 11th most preferred edu-tourist destination (UNESCO, 2010).  The government of Malaysia attracted about 86,000 international edu-tourists from over 168 countries in 2010 (MOHEM, 2011), and generated approximately RM27 billion or 4 percent to Malaysia's Gross National Income (GNI) in 2009 (Borneo Post Trade, 2011).  It was reported that edu-tourist industry in Malaysia has the potential to contribute RM60 billion to Malaysian GNI per year from year 2020 (Rehda Institute, 2014), and consequently, creating additional jobs of about 536,000 with the majority of them in the professional and technical fields.  As a result of this, the government of Malaysia targets to attracting 150, 000 and 200,00 international edu-tourist by the year 2015 and 2020 respectively (Cheung et al., 2011; MOHEM, 2011).

However, recent available data on the enrollments of international edu-tourists in Malaysia shows a gradual increase but, at a decreasing rate, especially from countries where she presumed to have a competitive advantage a presented in Table 1, hence, a trend that should be discontinued for sustainable edu-tourism industry in Malaysia.

**Table 1:  Enrollment Trends of Top 20 International Edu-tourist Source Countries in Malaysia (2008-2011)**

| S/n | Country | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | | 2011 | |
|-----|---------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | | | | % Annual Growth Rate | | % Annual Growth Rate | | % Annual Growth Rate |
| 1. | Iran | 6604 | 10932 | 39.6 | 11823 | 7.5 | 9888 | -19.57 |
| 2. | Indonesia | 9358 | 9812 | 4.6 | 9889 | 0.77 | 8569 | -15.40 |
| 3. | China | 7977 | 9177 | 13.08 | 10214 | 10.15 | 7394 | -38.14 |
| 4. | Nigeria | 5424 | 5969 | 9.13 | 5817 | -2.61 | 5632 | -3.28 |
| 5. | Yemen | 4282 | 4931 | 13.16 | 5866 | 15.94 | 3552 | -65.15 |
| 6. | Libyan Arab | 1788 | 4021 | 55.53 | 3930 | -2.32 | 856 | -359.11 |
| 7. | Sudan | 2307 | 2443 | 5.57 | 2837 | 13.89 | 2091 | -35.68 |
| 8. | Saudi Arabia | 2752 | 2331 | -15.30 | 2252 | -3.51 | 1439 | -56.50 |
| 9. | Bangladesh | 2021 | 1957 | -3.27 | 2041 | 4.11 | 2323 | 12.14 |
| 10. | Botswana | 2350 | 1939 | -20.94 | 1911 | -1.47 | 970 | -9.70 |
| 11. | Iraq | 1621 | 1712 | 5.3 | 1835 | 6.7 | 1826 | -0.49 |
| 12. | Pakistan | 1514 | 1680 | 9.88 | 1789 | 6.09 | 1843 | 2.93 |
| 13. | Thailand | 1464 | 1679 | 12.81 | 1725 | 2.67 | 717 | -140.59 |
| 14. | India | 1313 | 1335 | 1.65 | 1338 | 2.22 | 793 | -68.73 |
| 15. | Maldives | 1356 | 1323 | *-2.49* | 1349 | 1.93 | 864 | -56.13 |
| 16. | Somalia | 1390 | 1320 | -5.30 | 1478 | 10.59 | 1215 | -21.65 |
| 17. | Kazakhstan | 542 | 1217 | 55.46 | 1258 | 3.30 | 829 | -482.02 |
| 18. | Sri Lanka | 1083 | 982 | -10.29 | 1103 | 10.97 | 734 | -50.27 |
| 19. | Tanzania | 619 | 863 | 28.27 | 830 | -3.98 | 524 | -58.40 |
| 20. | South Korea | 1508 | 860 | 57.30 | 1454 | 40.84 | 641 | -126.83 |

**Source: (National Education Statistics Malaysia, 2012)**

Various studies had been reported in domain of edu-tourist destination management, however, limited study had been conducted on sustainable edu-tourism (Mazzarol et al., 1997).  Previous studies on sustainable edu-tourism reported the influence of edu-tourist policy strategies and instruments has had influence on the choice of Netherland among international edu-tourists (Marianne, 2014; Becker and Kolster, 2012).  To the best of our knowledge, studies that reported the influence of edu-tourist policy strategies and instruments, including, the mediating influence of behaviour of locals towards international edu-tourist and its corresponding influence on sustainable edu-tourist industry in Malaysia are limited.  Previous studies in domain of edu-tourism in Malaysia focuses only on factors influencing international edu-tourist's choice of a university (Jason et al.,2011; Foo et al., 2010; Jacqueline, 2010; Siti et al., 2010).  Due to intensed competition in the global edu-tourism market, research on edu-tourism in Malaysia should go beyond institutional factors influencing edu-tourist choice of a university, thus, embracing the influence of policy strategies and instruments, including, attitudes of locals towards international edu-tourists (Becker and Kolster, 2012 ).  Therefore, the aim of this article is to examine predictive influence of policy strategies and instruments, including, attitudes of Malaysians towards international edu-tourists and its influence on sustainable edu-tourist industry in Malaysia.

**Theoretical Perspective: Edu-tourist Policy Strategies, Instruments, and Malaysians' Attitude on Sustinable Edu-tourist Industry**

Push pull theory was proposed in the late nineteenth century by famous geographer, Ravenstein and used in the field of geography to explain factors influencing migration of people (Chen, 2007; Lee, 1966).  Numerous empirical studies further applied push and pull theory, especially, in tourism motivation studies (Jason et al., 2011; Bashar and Ahmad, 2010; Foo et al., 2010; Jacqueline, 2010).  The theory identified policy strategies, and instruments have had influence on sustainable edu-tourist industry (Marianne, 2014; Becker and Kolster, 2012). As it applied to this article, the theory holds that policy strategies, and instruments, including, attitude of Malaysians towards international edu-tourists has influence on sustainable edu-tourist industry in Malaysia.  An overwhelming numbers of literatures on influence of policy strategies, and instruments, including, attitude of locals / citizens of the destination towards international edu-tourists, and its corresponding influence on sustainable edu-tourist industry include:

**Edu-tourist Policy Strategies and Sustainable Edu-tourist Industry in Malaysia**

Edu-tourism policy strategies explains one, or all, of a range of activities, including: a broad statement of intent, a set of specific proposals authorized by governments and parliaments, backed by resources with aim to develop, regulate and promote edu-tourist business activities (Cairney, 2012; Sabatier, 2007; Colebatch, 2006).  In a study

of edu-tourist policy strategies of 11 edu-tourist destination countries, including that of the Netherland, (Becker and Kolster, 2012) identified edu-tourist policy strategies as those legal frameworks enacted by government of edu-tourist destination countries to promote favourable conditions for operation and management of edu-tourist businesses.  The index in the above information shows that edu-tourist policy strategies involves those body of regulations enacted by government of edu-tourist destination countries to enhance edu-tourist resources, economic development and other environmental variables required for successful practice of edu-tourist businesses.

Notable edu-tourism policy strategies identified in literature includes: setting up international edu-tourists recruitment plans by the national government of the recruiting country (Douglas and Edelstein, 2009),  enactment of privatization and commercialization policy for edu-tourist industry (Malaysia University Portal, 2013; Bagheri and Beheshti, 2010),   including, provision of budgetary allocation for edu-tourism in the fiscal policy of government (Varghese, 2011).  Other notable edu-tourism policy strategies include, enactment of acts establishing and regulating activities of edu-tourist institutions (MOHEM, 2011; Douglas and Edelstein, 2009),  and enactment of foreign aid policies that offers broad financial support and generous grants to international edu-tourists (Cairney, 2012; Sabatier, 2007 ).  It was argued that edu-tourist policy strategies includes formulation of international treaties between the government of destination and that of sourced country, including, policies related to immigrations and visa issuance (Okoli, 2011).

The absence of edu-tourist policy strategies in an edu-tourist destination may influence international edu-tourist(s) to assume that edu-tourist services in such destination is either not existing, or at infancy stage in their development setup (Iyanga, 2009), hence, influence attractiveness of such edu-tourist destination among international edu-tourists.  Therefore, it is rational to concede to the fact that the sustainability and attractiveness of any edu-tourist destination is dependent on the degree of friendliness of edu-tourist policy strategies practiced in such edu-tourist destination. Therefore, this study hypothesise that edu-tourist policy strategies have direct positive influence on sustainable edu-tourist industry in Malaysia.

**Edu-tourist Policy Instruments and Sustainable Edu-tourist Industry in Malaysia**
Edu-tourist policy instruments explain those administrative frameworks taken by government of edu-tourist destination countries and her agencies, including, edu-tourist institutions with the aim to promote and sustain edu-tourist business activities (Cairney, 2012).  Indices such as institutional recruitment strategies (Becker and Kolster, 2012), affordable tuition fees and scholarship opportunities (Marianne, 2014), friendly and stress free visa issuance and immigration administration (Becker and Kolster, 2012), among others are identified in literature to measure edu-tourist policy instruments.   Other, items adapted to measure edu-tourist policy instruments includes: opportunities for employment during and after study (McGowan and Potter, 2008; Rayner and Easthope, 2001), usage of generally acceptable language for academic instruction (Bardsley, 2010; Altbach et al., 2009), robust research cooperation and academic programmes (Rayner and Easthope, 2001) and export of higher education services (Chen, 2007).  In view of the above items, edu-tourist policy instruments are viewed as those formal decisions or plan of actions of government and her edu-tourist institutions which seek to solve certain problems in edu-tourist industry (Sabatier, 2007).

The effect of the above-listed edu-tourist policy instruments on edu-tourist destination choice process among international edu-tourists are profound (Larouche et al., 2003),  hence, influences sustainable development of edu-tourist industry.  The underlying force of international edu-tourist behaviour and its motivation for choice of a destination is itself fundamentally different in countries (Rayner and Easthope, 2001).  Thus, edu-tourist destination country with attractive and favourable edu-tourist policy instruments may likely attracts more international edu-tourists, thereby, sustaining her place in the global edu-tourist market (Verbik and Lasanowski, 2007).  The index in th above information shows that there is positive relationship between edu-tourist policy instruments and sustainable edu-tourist industry.  In view of the above, we hypothesised that edu-tourist policy instruments have positive influence for sustainable development of edu-tourist industry in Malaysia.

**Malaysians' Attitude and Sustainable Edu-tourist Industry in Malaysia**
Several studies conducted in domain of edu-tourism had established the link between attitude of locals communities at the destination and sustainable edu-tourist industry (Igbojekwe et al., 2013; Bankole, 2002).  It is reported that international edu-tourists are likely to be deterred from traveling to an edu- tourist destination whose locals or citizens are hostile to visitors (Bello et at., 2014).  Hostility in this context implies: insecurity through crime and terrorism (Bello and Adebayo, 2009; Bankole, 2002),  violence against international edu-tourists, (Open-door Report, 2013) and extent of reliability of police service protection for international edu-tourists (Open-door Report, 2013).  Other items to describe hostility against international edu-tourists include: poor disposition and openness of local population to foreign edu-tourists (Jennifer and Thea, 2013),  racism, and denial of international edu-tourists access to facilities and assistance required for their studies (Petruzellis and Romanazzi, 2010), localization of medium of academic instruction in public lectures (OECD, 2007) and discrimination in all ramifications against international edu-tourists (WTO, 2014; Kotler et al., 2006). The above items, whether

consciously or unconsciously influence the choice of an edu-tourist destination country among international edu-tourists.

Previous studies in domain of edu-tourist destination managment argued that international edu-tourists may not select or recommend a particular edu-tourist destination country to other prospective internatonal edu-tourists if the attitude of her locals is hostile towards them (Igbojekwe et al., 2013; Bankole, 2002). This not withstanding   attractive policy strategies and instruments put in place by the government and edu-tourist institutions of such edu-tourist destination country (Igbojekwe et al., 2013; Bello et al., 2014; Bankole, 2002).  The above information reveals that attitude of locals or citizens of an edu-tourist destination have a mediating influence on the choice behaviour of an edu-tourist destination by international edu-tourists, hence, enhances edu-tourism competitiveness of a country.  Therefore, based on the above submition, the present study hypothesize that attitude of Malaysians towards international edu-tourists have a mediating influence between Malaysian edu-tourist policy strategies and instruments and sustainable edu-tourist industry in Malaysia.

**Proposed Model for Sustainable Edu-tourist Industry in Malaysia**
As it applied to sustainability of Malaysian edu-tourist industry, the researchers were of the view that the independent variable: **"Edu-tourism Policy Strategies"** as explained by a set of seven (7) items which include: *international edu-tourists recruitment plans, privatization and commercialization  of edu-tourist institutions, budgetary allocation for edu-tourism in the fiscal policy of government, enactment of acts establishing and regulating activities of edu-tourist institutions, enactment of foreign aid policies that offers broad financial support and generous grants to international edu-tourists, formulation of international treaties between the government of destination and the sourced country, and enactment of policies related to immigrations and edu-tourist visa issuance* have direct positive influence on sustainability of edu-tourist industry in Malaysia.
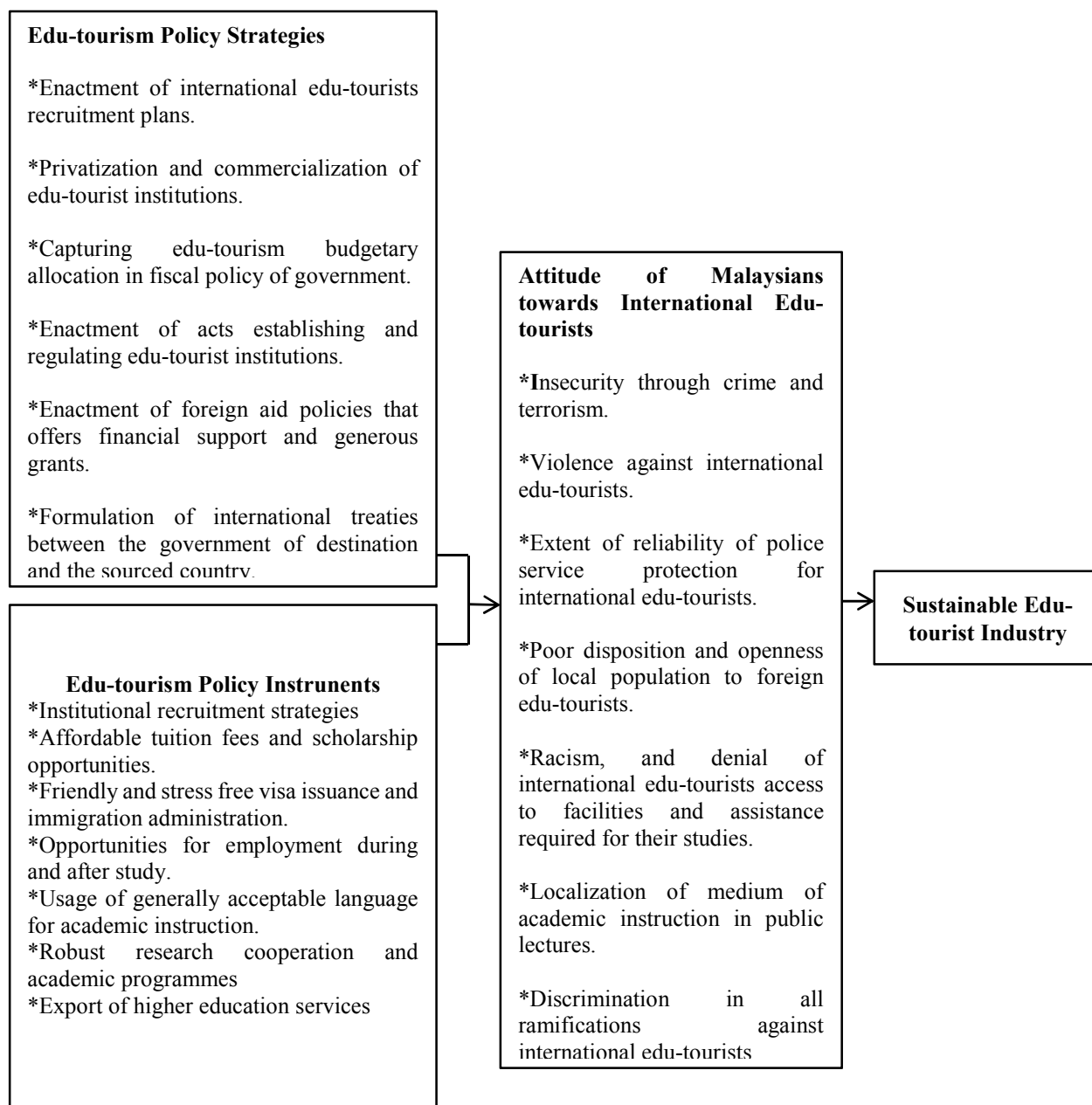
Furthermore, the proposed model holds that the independent variable: **"Edu-tourism Policy Instruments"** as explained by a set of seven (7) items which include: *institutional recruitment strategies, affordable tuition fees and scholarship opportunities, friendly and stress free visa issuance and immigration administration, opportunities for employment during and after study, usage of generally acceptable language for academic instruction, robust research cooperation and academic programmes, and export of higher education services* have direct positive influence on sustainable edu-tourist industry in Malaysia.

Inaddition, the model explains: "Attitude of Malaysians towards International Edu-tourists" as explained by a set of seven (7) items which include: *insecurity through crime and terrorism , violence against international edu-tourists, extent of reliability of police service protection for international edu-tourists, poor disposition and openness of local population to foreign edu-tourists, racism, and denial of international edu-tourists access to facilities and assistance required for their studies, localization of medium of academic instruction in public lectures, and discrimination in all ramifications against international edu-tourists*  has have a mediating influence between edu-tourist policy strategies and instrument and sustainable edu-tourist industry in Malaysia. Thus, the proposed model as shown in Figure 1.

**Conclusion and Suggestions for Further Study**
Until now, research on predictive influence of edu-tourist policy strategies, and instruments, including, attitude of Malaysians towards international edu-tourists on sustainable edu-tourist industry in Malaysia had not been reported.  Previous studies in domain of edu-tourism in Malaysia was done in the context of factors influencing the choice of a university among international edu-tourists (Becker and Kolster, 2012; Jason et al., 2011; Foo et al., 2010; Jacqueline, 2010).  However, the model proposed in this study explains sustainable edu-tourist industry in Malaysia as a dependent variable been influenced by a set of two (2) independent variables such as edu-tourism policy strategies, and instruments, including, a mediating variable, that is, attitude of Malaysians towards international edu-tourists. These factors, whether conscious or unconscious determines choice of Malaysia as a preferred edu-tourist destination country among international edu-tourists, hence, influence sustainace of Malaysian edu-tourist industry.

The limitations of this study stem from the nature of the study itself.  As a theoretical model based study, it aims to integrate factors identified in existing literature. Thus, future research must try to examine the existing relationships among aforementioned factors.  In particular, it must analyse the weight of each set of independent variables on sustainable edu-tourist industry in Malaysia, including, the relative importance of attitude of Malaysians towards international edu-tourists.  Further analysis of edu-tourist policy strategies, and instruments of Malaysia, including, comparing it against those of other key edu-tourist recruitment countries, will enable stakeholders in Malaysia edu-tourist industry identify possible implications of edu-tourist policies of other countries on sustainable edu-tourist indutry in Malaysia.

**Edu-tourism Policy Strategies**

*Enactment of international edu-tourists recruitment plans.

*Privatization and commercialization of edu-tourist institutions.

*Capturing edu-tourism budgetary allocation in fiscal policy of government.

*Enactment of acts establishing and regulating edu-tourist institutions.

*Enactment of foreign aid policies that offers financial support and generous grants.

*Formulation of international treaties between the government of destination and the sourced country.

**Edu-tourism Policy Instrunents**
*Institutional recruitment strategies
*Affordable tuition fees and scholarship opportunities.
*Friendly and stress free visa issuance and immigration administration.
*Opportunities for employment during and after study.
*Usage of generally acceptable language for academic instruction.
*Robust research cooperation and academic programmes
*Export of higher education services

**Attitude of Malaysians towards International Edu-tourists**

*Insecurity through crime and terrorism.

*Violence against international edu-tourists.

*Extent of reliability of police service protection for international edu-tourists.

*Poor disposition and openness of local population to foreign edu-tourists.

*Racism, and denial of international edu-tourists access to facilities and assistance required for their studies.

*Localization of medium of academic instruction in public lectures.

*Discrimination in all ramifications against international edu-tourists

**Sustainable Edu-tourist Industry**

**Figure 1: Model for Sustainable Edu-tourism Industry in Malaysia**

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