

**International Journal of Sciences:
Basic and Applied Research
(IJSBAR)**



ISSN 2307-4531

(Print & Online)



<http://gssrr.org/index.php?journal=JournalOfBasicAndApplied>

**An Introduction to Edu-Tourism in Northern Cyprus: A
Short Communication**

Hamed Rezapouraghdam^a, Amin Shahgerdi^{b*}, Omidali Kahrizi^c

^{a,b} Faculty of Tourism, Eastern Mediterranean University, Gazimagusa, via Mersin 10, Turkey.

^c Dept. of Economics and Business Administration, Eastern Mediterranean University, P.O. box 95, Famagusta
North Cyprus via Mersin 10, Turkey

^aEmail: rezapouraghdam@gmail.com

^bEmail: amin.shahgerdi@gmail.com

^cEmail: omidkahrizi@yahoo.com

Abstract

The concept and significance of Educational Tourism, as a sub type of tourism, has gained high attention and popularity in recent decades among researchers, tourism policy makers and also public and private sectors. Educational tourism occurs when an individual travels to somewhere and during the trip intentionally or unintentionally involves in the process of learning. Since tourism is considered as one of the main industries and sectors highly contributing to economic development of North Cyprus, this region can be an ideal case for studying the issue of educational tourism. This article tries to introduce the educational tourism as an important alternative source of economy accelerator in the context of Northern Cyprus.

Keywords: Educational tourism; EMU; Famagusta; Economy; Northern Cyprus

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: amin.shahgerdi@gmail.com

1. Introduction

1.1. Tourism and Northern Cyprus

According to the statistics in 2005, the tourism industry contributed \$145.6 million (3.3 per cent) to the GDP of North Cyprus and created 8.004 jobs. The North Cyprus' Fig. 1 tourism industry hosted 589.549 tourists, with its bed capacity of 12.222, with an annual occupancy was 40.7% in 2005. Moreover, 395.4 million US dollar is the value added in tourism sector in 2005. That is while according to [9] the issue of political and economic isolation of North Cyprus and the embargoes and limitations which TRNC is facing internationally, including postal and communication services and lack of international flights to North Cyprus [11,2] has created many problems and damages for North Cyprus in terms of foreign trade, agriculture, tourism industry and etc. [1] agree that political isolation and uncertainty of North Cyprus has kept back the tourism and hospitality sector from development in terms of number of tourism arrivals and contribution to the national economy of TRNC.



Fig 1. Cyprus Island and the divisions [14].

Still, due to the great advertisement for the international universities in Northern Cyprus and the expansion of globally recognized universities in Northern part of the island, the demand for studying overseas especially Northern Cyprus has increased in recent years. The flock of international students to the universities of Northern Cyprus has been quite great that has made the educational tourism sector in TRNC as the major sector which earns considerable revenue and income for the area [10].

1.2. Edu-tourism

During the recent years tourism education and training has gained highly amount of attention both by public and private sectors evidences are the variety types of training programs available at different levels, especially in countries where tourism has become a major socioeconomic phenomenon [12]. The engagement of a person's learning process with a touristic context such as experiencing an unfamiliar culture is more effective than

ordinary studying within a classroom [16]. Since through travelling the familiarization with new populations, landscapes, languages, cultures, and traditions occurs, every touristic trip epitomizes an act of acquiring knowledge which implies the meaning of educational tourism.

A more comprehensive definition of educational tourism is given also by [15], where they have highlighted the term as:

“Tourist activity undertaken by those who are undertaking an overnight vacation and those who are undertaking an excursion for whom education and learning is a primary or secondary part of their trip. This can include general educational tourism and adult study tours, international and domestic university and school students’ travel, including language school, school excursion and exchange programs. Educational Tourism can be independently or formally organized and can be undertaken in a variety of natural or human-made settings”.

1.3. Famagusta, the main educational tourism destination

According to the statistics that prepared in February, 2011, the population of this city was 35453. Famagusta Fig.2 is one of the most important, greatly fortified ports on the shores of Mediterranean. To the north of Famagusta lie the fabulous ruins of Salamis. This great city is believed to have been founded in the 11th century BC and after the influences of the many conquering nations (notably the Romans) the city was finally abandoned in 648 AD following the combined catastrophes of earthquakes and raids by Arab pirates. The population of salamis then moved to Famagusta.



Fig 2. Famagusta region

Later under British administration (1878-1960), the modern section, called Varosha, was developed mainly as a tourist resort. After 1974, Varosha was sealed off from civilians and tourism ceased. Ferry service, which began in 1978 between Mersin, Turkey, and Latakia, Syria, include Famagusta on its run [13].

◀Contents		A: TRNC			B: TR	C: 3rd Countries			D: Total	
		2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Grand Total	A	10,137	9,922	10,371	10,586	9,239	9,886	9,310	8,356	12,666
	B	15,307	18,398	22,626	28,565	26,873	29,837	33,288	29,191	24,319
	C	2,304	2,285	2,476	2,714	2,667	3,298	3,036	2,884	4,248
	D	27,748	30,605	35,473	41,865	38,799	43,021	45,634	40,431	41,230
Eastern	A	5,176	5,152	4,837	4,473	3,120	3,355	2,502	2,317	2,236
Mediterranean	B	7,104	7,723	7,952	9,084	7,967	8,966	9,451	8,213	7,318
University	C	931	1,063	1,274	1,534	1,458	1,488	1,302	1,176	1,379
	D	13,211	13,938	14,063	15,091	12,545	13,809	13,255	11,708	10,930
Girne	A	407	443	530	529	484	554	444	484	591
American	B	1,071	1,681	2,686	3,975	3,767	3,991	4,115	3,776	4,013
University	C	170	230	269	394	339	454	377	344	865
	D	1,648	2,354	3,485	4,898	4,590	4,999	4,936	4,604	5,469
Near	A	2,120	2,108	2,890	3,481	3,886	4,231	4,395	3,668	4,573
East	B	4,251	5,168	6,075	6,777	6,581	7,251	8,963	6,903	7,914
University	C	1,047	830	782	585	690	1,054	912	675	1,019
	D	7,418	8,106	9,747	10,843	11,157	12,536	14,270	11,246	13,506
Lefke	A	345	322	302	282	270	279	218	202	181
European	B	846	1,164	1,802	2,609	2,658	2,693	3,058	2,566	1,863
University	C	72	74	117	106	115	197	253	350	317
	D	1,263	1,560	2,221	2,997	3,043	3,169	3,529	3,118	2,361
International	A	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
American	B	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
University	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	D	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cyprus	A	102	96	69	79	54	62	65	118	3,714
International	B	527	1,189	2,036	3,283	3,180	3,790	4,136	4,095	230
University	C	57	61	33	82	46	75	147	281	594
	D	686	1,346	2,138	3,444	3,280	3,927	4,348	4,494	4,538
Anadolu	A	1,987	1,801	1,743	1,727	1,397	1,352	1,628	1,482	1,281
University1	B	1,508	1,473	2,075	2,488	2,093	2,225	2,425	2,343	1,645
	C	27	27	1	1	-	-	-	2	-
	D	3,522	3,301	3,819	4,216	3,490	3,577	4,053	3,827	2,926
METU	A	-	-	-	15	28	53	58	85	90
North Cyprus Campus	B	-	-	-	349	627	921	1,140	1,295	1,336
	C	-	-	-	12	19	30	45	56	74
	D	-	-	-	376	674	1,004	1,243	1,436	1,500

Figure 3. Students at TRNC

Turkish Cypriots continue to live north of Varosha, especially in the walled city. These sections of Famagusta remain vibrant with many fascinating buildings. The population of the city before 1974 was 39,000. Of this number, 26,500 were Greek Cypriots, 8,500 Turkish Cypriots and 4,000 from other ethnic groups. After the invasion, in 1975, the population was 8,500, all of them Turks. Today the population is 39,000, though this figure excludes the Greek Cypriot legal inhabitants. Because of its isolation and neglect over the past 30 years despite being such a historically and culturally significant city, Famagusta was listed on the World Monuments Fund's 2008 Watch List of the 100 Most Endangered Sites in the world [6].

After Turkish intervention of 1974 in the northern part of the Cyprus, Tourism development has taken a different direction [17]. International tourism and the emergence of the higher education sector are two major sources of foreign exchange for North Cyprus. However, the tourism sector also faces great difficulties in attracting international tourists because of problems such as the lack of direct flights to North Cyprus and high transportation costs [7].

1.4. Eastern Mediterranean University

In this respect Eastern Mediterranean University, as the pioneer university in North Cyprus, through holding international conferences and visits of foreigners to the university is helping TRNC to be recognized by the international community and informally by other countries [9], while it is having a great contribution to the fiscal affairs of the Northern part of the Island. The EMU was originally set up in 1979 by the Turkish Cypriot administration as a Higher Technological Institute (HTI) with English as the medium of instruction. In 1982 Turkish Higher Education Council (YOK) of Turkey accredited a four year B. Eng. course which was confirmed in 1984 [3]. Based on the official webpage of the university more than 14000 students from 68 different nationalities (African countries, European countries, Middle East countries and other regions) were studying in the university.

2. Materials and Methods

The primary goal of the current paper is to introduce the edu-tourism in a real context without any initiative hypothesize or final judgment. Thus the documentary research method was found so appropriate and the whole data of the current piece of work was collected through primary and tertiary sources. In order fit the authenticity criteria of documentary method the authors collected all of the data from official, governmental and internationally accredited sources via journals, websites, and books and so on.

3. Conclusion

The study aimed at introducing the constant developing educational tourism in Famagusta and the University of EMU which hosts lots of students from all around the world. From the time that the Northern part of island separated from the Southern part in 1974 and isolated, due to the heavy embargos imposed to the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus (TRNC), many economic problems occurred for Northern Cyprus as an unrecognized country in the world. The governors found the best remedy to evade from the difficult situation in developing educational tourism mostly in the city of Famagusta. Today the University of EMU is known as the biggest university of the whole Island. Applying this politic definitely brought lot of revenues for the TRNC and the policy makers should focus on the sustainable development of this phenomenon more. Since the current work just briefly introduced this sort of tourism in Northern Cyprus, the future studies may holistically concentrate more deeply on this trend from different perspectives and theoretical frameworks. Other limitation of this study is that it provided detailed information only about one of the universities of the island and it would be better the future works consider all the universities equally into consideration.

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