



A Study on Educational Tourism: Impacts of Foreign Students on The Perception of Local Turkish Students: Evidence From Northern Cyprus

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Abstract

This study investigates the impacts of educational tourism. In this point, the paper aims to examine the effects of foreign students that are from Middle-East countries and study at Girne American University (GAU) in North Cyprus on the perception of the domestic students with respect to islamic countries and communities. In the literature reviewing, there has been many studies regarding educational tourism and its effects. On the other hand, it was observed that this impact of foreign students has never been studied by scholars in the previous investigations, however there are many students who are from islamic countries and have close relationships between these foreign students and local students. Specifically, this article explores the changes in perception of local students after recognizing islamic students. This paper concentrates on the qualitative case study method that evaluated the perceptions of undergraduate local students and accordingly, the sample of the study is ten students studying at different faculties of GAU. The data were coded and classified for generated issues, this study used data analysis constant comparative method, known as Grounded Theory Method. Owing to little sample size, evidences were analyzed as indicative. Findings showed that there are important effects of Islamic students on Turkish students in terms of changes of their perceptions regarding Islamic countries. The effects of Islamic students on Turkish students were centralized on nine major titles; (a) perceptions about foreign languages in Islamic communities, (b) perceptions about positive sciences developments in Islamic communities, (c) perceptions about the role of women in social life in Islamic communities, (d) perceptions about social relations in Islamic communities, (e) perceptions about dressing styles of people in Islamic communities, (f) perceptions about individual freedom and human rights in Islamic communities, (g) perceptions about the effects of religion in social life of Islamic communities, (h) perception changes about Islamic culture, (i) contributions of Islamic students on the learning experience of Turkish students. This study was carried out with ten students studying at GAU in North Cyprus. To generalize the findings, the other universities might be included and the sample size can be increased in the future research process. The other limitations are specified in the last part of the study.

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