



Rethinking Edutourism in Indonesia: A Systematic Review of Global Evidence and Policy Implications

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ABSTRACT

Edutourism is gaining momentum globally as a transformative learning paradigm that integrates education, tourism, and socio-cultural development. Unlike traditional study tours, edutourism emphasizes experiential learning, critical reflection, and contextual immersion. In Indonesia, however, the development of edutourism is hindered by fragmented regulations, geographical disparities, and limited institutional capacity. This study uses a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and bibliometric analysis of 88 peer-reviewed articles published between 2016 and 2025, sourced from Scopus and Google Scholar, to identify key trends in global edutourism practices. The analysis reveals seven thematic clusters: ecological awareness, governance, rural resilience, cultural identity, spatial efficiency, social impact, and policy innovation. Findings suggest that successful edutourism models globally are driven by cross-sectoral policy integration, collaborative governance, and pedagogical alignment with local contexts. In Indonesia, overcoming challenges such as uneven infrastructure and funding gaps requires a phased, locally grounded approach. To advance edutourism, pilot-based strategies that emphasize decentralization, digital integration, and alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offer a more effective path forward than national mandates.

Keywords: Educational Tourism; Contextual Learning; Policy Integration; Sustainable Education; Bibliometric Analysis

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ABSTRAK

Wisata edukasi (edutourism) semakin berkembang secara global sebagai suatu paradigma pembelajaran transformatif yang mengintegrasikan dimensi pendidikan, pariwisata, dan pembangunan sosial budaya. Berbeda dari kegiatan studi wisata konvensional, edutourism menekankan pembelajaran berbasis pengalaman, refleksi kritis, serta keterlibatan peserta secara mendalam dengan konteks lokal. Di Indonesia, pengembangan edutourism masih menghadapi berbagai hambatan, antara lain regulasi yang terfragmentasi, kesenjangan geografis, dan keterbatasan kapasitas kelembagaan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan Systematic Literature Review (SLR) dan analisis bibliometrik terhadap 88 artikel ilmiah terbitan tahun 2016–2025 yang diindeks dalam Scopus dan Google Scholar untuk mengidentifikasi tren utama praktik edutourism di tingkat global. Hasil analisis menunjukkan adanya tujuh kluster tematik utama, yaitu: kesadaran ekologis, tata kelola, ketahanan wilayah perdesaan, identitas budaya, efisiensi spasial, dampak sosial, dan inovasi kebijakan. Temuan penelitian mengindikasikan bahwa model edutourism yang berhasil secara global umumnya ditopang oleh integrasi kebijakan lintas sektor, tata kelola kolaboratif, dan keselarasan pendekatan pedagogis dengan konteks lokal. Dalam konteks Indonesia, upaya untuk mengatasi tantangan seperti ketimpangan infrastruktur dan kesenjangan pendanaan memerlukan pendekatan bertahap yang berpijak pada kondisi lokal. Untuk memajukan edutourism, strategi berbasis proyek percontohan yang menekankan desentralisasi, integrasi teknologi digital, serta penyelarasan dengan Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) dipandang lebih efektif dibandingkan pendekatan yang mengandalkan mandat nasional semata.

Kata Kunci: Wisata Edukasi; Pembelajaran Kontekstual; Integrasi Kebijakan; Pendidikan Berkelanjutan; Analisis Bibliometrik.

1. Introduction

In recent decades, the global educational paradigm has experienced a significant shift toward approaches that emphasize contextual learning, real-world experiences, and the reinforcement of character values. One concrete form of this transformation is the emergence of educational tourism (edutourism), an evolution of traditional study tour practices, that integrates education, tourism, and socio-cultural development into a comprehensive learning system. Unlike conventional study tours that are incidental and recreation-oriented, edutourism adopts a systemic approach based on direct experience, critical reflection, and active participation in social, cultural, and ecological environments (Pennings, Cushing, Gomez, Dyson, & Coombs, 2019; Piščalkienė & Ingemann Lottrup, 2019; Selvakumar, Seenivasan, Raha, Ravikumar, & Gandhimathi, 2024). This approach not only bridges the gap between theory and practice but also contributes to the development of self-identity, ethical values, and students' social awareness (Hulaikah, Degeng, Sulton, & Murwani, 2020; McDonald & Perry, 2023; Mehta, Fernandes, Llerena, Weine, & Bosland, 2023). Although edutourism has the potential to enrich the formal curriculum, its approach is more flexible and can be applied through co-curricular or extracurricular activities based on local contexts and the readiness of each institution. This allows it to be tailored to diverse educational needs without requiring rigid inclusion in the formal curriculum.

The impact of edutourism has been documented across multiple dimensions, benefiting tourism entrepreneurs, students, and teachers alike. From an economic perspective, it supports the growth of tourism businesses, generates employment, and increases community income through concrete multiplier effects (Oktaviani & Yuliani, 2023). Socio-culturally, edutourism strengthens social networks, fosters a sense of belonging to the destination, and promotes appreciation for local values (Rasoolimanesh & Jaafar, 2016). Environmentally, sustainable approaches in edutourism protect natural and cultural elements, prevent harmful land conversion, and raise ecological awareness among local communities (Khoirunisa Wahida & Hoirul Uyun, 2023; Rachmatullah, Avenzora, & Sunarminto, 2017). For students, the direct

benefits include enhanced skills, increased learning motivation, and authentic learning experiences (Donge, 2018; Husnawati, Puspitasari, & Yundayani, 2024; Pradanti & Muqtada, 2023). For teachers, edutourism contributes to career development, improves job satisfaction, and fosters a safer and more supportive work environment (Hendricks, 2015).

Globally, edutourism practices have evolved across various countries, adapted to their respective social conditions and policy frameworks. In Asia, countries such as Malaysia, China, Japan, and Singapore have developed edutourism destinations by integrating cultural sites, conservation efforts, and educational technologies. In Europe, the United Kingdom, Finland, and Italy have focused on history- and culture-based programs, while in North America, regions such as Ontario and New York have utilized institutional partnerships and local attractions. African and Oceanian countries, including Nigeria, Egypt, Australia, and New Zealand, also demonstrate innovative practices that combine education and tourism to foster character development and community empowerment (Husin et al., 2023; Rozi & Poernamasari, 2024).

Indonesia, with its abundant natural and cultural resources, holds considerable potential for the development of edutourism as a strategy for contextual learning and character building. Activities such as visits to tourism villages, historical sites, and conservation areas have proven to support learning outcomes and instill national values (Saepudin et al., 2023; Sumarmi et al., 2023). Moreover, edutourism is increasingly viewed as a cross-sectoral learning strategy capable of linking the education sector with local economic empowerment.

Nonetheless, the implementation of edutourism in Indonesia faces multiple structural and regulatory challenges. A key issue is the absence of standardized national regulations, leading to inconsistent practices regarding safety, inclusivity, and educational effectiveness (Koerner, Sushartami, & Spencer, 2024; Suwarni, Siti Khadijah, & Rachmat, 2021). Reports from various regions reveal serious issues such as unaffordable program costs, potential budget misuse, and discrimination against students who are unable to participate (Guntur, Hasanah, Musyarrofah, Ningsih, & Sahronih, 2023; Marpaung & Purba, 2023).

In this context, the development of edutourism in Indonesia requires strong, adaptive, and cross-sectoral national policy support. Comprehensive regulations must address child protection, certification of implementing partners, and sustainable evaluation systems (Soesanta, Putra, & Hutagalung, 2023). International comparative studies highlight that countries such as Japan, the United Kingdom, and Singapore have succeeded in building edutourism ecosystems through multi-stakeholder collaboration enabled by integrated public policy frameworks (Rosnan & Abdullah, 2018).

Beyond its educational dimension, edutourism has a tangible impact on local economic empowerment. It promotes the growth of culture-based micro-enterprises, enhances community participation, and produces multiplier effects in the tourism and creative industries (Atef, Al-Balushi, & Hamza, 2019; Syafruddin, Ilyas, Suryanti, Wadi, & Handayani, 2021; Yunas, Susanti, Nadya Izana, & Widyawati, 2023). Thus, edutourism not only serves as a contextual learning medium but also as a strategic tool for local development.

Unfortunately, most research on edutourism in Indonesia remains largely descriptive and confined to case studies in specific regions (Muhtadi, 2023; Muryanti & Herman, 2021; Tisnakusumahnitia & Putri, 2024). There is a noticeable lack of systematic, interdisciplinary studies that examine edutourism across national contexts, compare international best practices, or assess its policy implications. This research gap underscores the need for a study that synthesizes prior findings, maps out key thematic clusters, and provides a comprehensive analysis of the dynamics of edutourism development.

This study contributes theoretically by proposing a Policy and Practice Integration (PPI) framework that unifies cross-sectoral policy coupling (education, tourism, conservation), polycentric governance (national, regional, institutional), and experiential pedagogy (experience,

reflection, evaluation) into a single causal cycle spanning policy formulation, place-based implementation, multidimensional assessment, institutional learning, and policy renewal. While edutourism has a potential role in enriching student learning experiences, its implementation should be gradual and adaptive rather than being part of a strictly formal curriculum. Therefore, policies and practices supporting edutourism must enable flexible educational models such as co-curricular activities, project-based learning, and technology-mediated initiatives that align with local contexts and institutional capacity.

Based on SLR-bibliometric evidence mapping seven thematic clusters and ten systemic components, it identifies standards, safety and inclusion protocols, and reflective assessment instruments as mechanisms that translate national regulations into context-sensitive program designs. In line with this study's findings on Indonesia's geographic dispersion and Dapodik-documented scale, the framework does not prescribe uniform curricular embedding; rather, it guides the translation of policy into locally adaptive co-curricular and extracurricular formats, short field intensives, and technology-mediated alternatives that empower communities while safeguarding quality and equity.

Therefore, this study applies a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach combined with bibliometric analysis to explore the practices, challenges, and opportunities of edutourism development from both national and international perspectives. This approach also allows for a critical examination of the relevance of international experiences as comparative references for constructing a more adaptive, context-sensitive, and sustainable national edutourism framework. Ultimately, this research seeks to assess the role of edutourism in enhancing contextual learning, character education, and local economic development in Indonesia. It also aims to formulate evidence-based policy recommendations grounded in global best practices, supporting the realization of an inclusive and adaptive edutourism ecosystem aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Educational Tourism

Edutourism, or educational tourism, is an alternative form of tourism that has emerged in the context of globalization and increasing international mobility. This activity refers to the travel of individuals or groups to a destination with the primary aim of acquiring educational experiences, engaging in learning, and developing knowledge beyond their place of origin (McGladdery & Lubbe, 2017 dalam Alipour et al., 2020; Ritchie, 2003). Edutourism is characterized by distinctive spatial and temporal attributes and contributes not only to the education sector but also to broader social, cultural, economic, and environmental dimensions (Alipour et al., 2020).

As an alternative tourism model, edutourism is typically small-scale, sustainable, locally managed, and intentionally designed to avoid the negative externalities associated with mass tourism (Holden, 2016; OECD, 2019). Moreover, the growth of edutourism reflects the convergence of the education and tourism sectors, aligned with the rising global trend of lifelong learning and the increasing demand for meaningful travel experiences (Ritchie, 2003). Edutourists are often students engaged in formal studies who exhibit a high degree of social involvement and interaction during their travel experiences (OECD, 2018).

2.2. Contextual Learning in Edutourism

Contextual learning within edutourism represents an innovative educational approach that integrates the learning process with direct experiences in the physical, social, and cultural environments of tourism destinations. This approach is both authentic and reflective, enabling the meaningful integration of academic knowledge with real-world field experience (Jumadil Hamid, Pebriyan Pebriyan, & Gusmaneli Gusmaneli, 2024; Reddy & Revathy, 2024; Ritchie, 2003). Through direct engagement, students not only experience increased motivation to learn, but also

develop social skills, intercultural understanding, and environmental awareness (Nasruddin, Normelani, & Kumalawati, 2019; Parwati, Suparta, & Mariawan, 2017; Sulaiman, Chusmeru, & Kuncoro, 2019).

Beyond strengthening the connection between theory and practice, edutourism supports collaboration between educational institutions and the tourism sector in responding to the demands of globalization and promoting experience-based learning (Rijal, Arifin, Rante, Musawantoro, & Badollahi, 2022). This approach also encourages deep observation and the application of theoretical concepts in real-world contexts, thereby expanding learners' understanding of both global and local issues (Wilby, Black, Benetoli, & Paravattil, 2022). The integration of local wisdom into the curriculum not only helps preserve cultural heritage but also reinforces national identity and character development (Wahyu, Warto, & S, 2020).

2.3. Education and Tourism Policy

Education and tourism policies require cross-sectoral synergy among educational institutions, governments, and the tourism industry to facilitate academic mobility, promote institutions as learning destinations, and strengthen cultural diplomacy (Ritchie, 2003; Saiful, Firman, Maharida, & Bakri, 2022). In the context of globalization, such collaboration becomes essential in addressing the demand for experience-based education and the growing trend of educational tourism (Latifah & Damayanti, 2016). In Indonesia, the implementation of edutourism governance models, based on dynamic governance, highlights the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration, policy adaptability, and the integration of learning with sustainability practices at educational tourism destinations. The effectiveness of these policies is largely determined by the active involvement of local communities, the promotion of cultural values, and the reinforcement of national identity through contextual education (Afrisal, 2022).

2.4. Local Economic Empowerment through Edutourism

Edutourism functions as a catalyst for local economic empowerment through tourism-related activities, job creation, the development of culture-based micro-enterprises, and increased community engagement in the provision of educational services (Ritchie, 2003). In addition to generating direct economic benefits, such as increased local income, edutourism also produces multiplier effects that strengthen the economic structure of host communities (Islahuddin, Rijal, Salam, Idrus, & Randy, 2024; Novita & Azzahra, 2024; Qotrunnada & Ansori, 2023). This participatory approach further supports regional resilience rooted in local wisdom, enhances social inclusion, and amplifies the long-term impact of educational and tourism policies in a sustainable manner.

3. Method

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) combined with bibliometric methods to analyze the development and practice of edutourism within the context of contextual learning, character education, and the integration of education and tourism sectors. This approach was chosen for its ability to systematically review literature, identify thematic patterns, publication trends, and research gaps from 2016 to 2025. The bibliometric method quantitatively evaluates scholarly publications using metadata (keywords, citations, author affiliations), enabling a comprehensive mapping of the intellectual landscape surrounding edutourism (Donthu, Kumar, Mukherjee, Pandey, & Lim, 2021).

The data were sourced from two major academic databases: Scopus and Google Scholar. A combination of keywords, including edutourism, educational tourism, character education, contextual learning, tourism education, school excursion, and study tour, was used in the search. To ensure broad and relevant coverage, Boolean operators (AND, OR) were employed. The

search was limited to peer-reviewed publications in reputable journals or academic proceedings and available in full-text format, in either English or Indonesian.

The literature selection was conducted in multiple stages. The initial search identified 242 articles, which were screened by title and abstract. A total of 181 articles were deemed relevant and read in full. Further filtering was conducted based on specific inclusion criteria: articles must address edutourism in either formal or informal educational settings, include at least ten occurrences of the primary keywords, and be published within the specified timeframe. Editorials, opinion pieces, articles with incidental references to edutourism, and those lacking full-text access were excluded. After this process, 88 articles met the criteria and were analyzed in-depth. Each article was extracted into a review matrix, including author(s), publication year, research objectives, methodology, main findings, and relevance to edutourism.

Bibliometric analysis was conducted using VOSviewer software, which visualizes keyword relationships, term frequencies, and thematic clusters in the literature. In the visualizations, node size represents term intensity, color indicates thematic clustering, and connecting lines reflect the strength of keyword associations (Dhua et al., 2023; Medina-Mijangos & Seguí-Amórtégui, 2020).

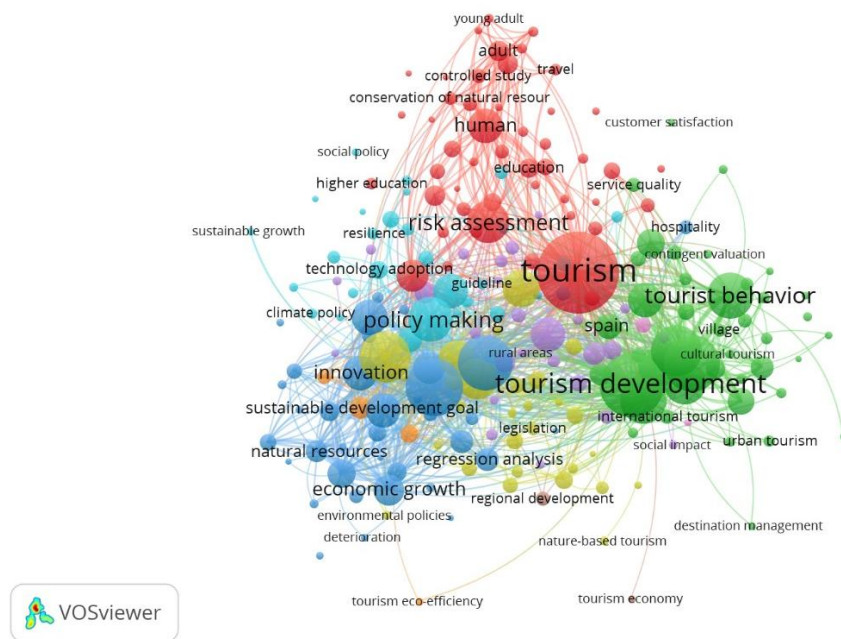
The results showed that keywords like character education, school tourism, contextual learning, student motivation, and local wisdom were dominant and interrelated. Thematic clustering identified seven major research themes in edutourism: (1) character and civic education, (2) experiential contextual learning, (3) integration of education and tourism sectors, (4) empowerment of MSMEs and local economic development, (5) cross-sectoral regulation and policy, (6) tourism development based on local wisdom, and (7) student motivation and participation in educational tourism. These findings highlight the multidisciplinary nature of edutourism, which intersects with sustainable development, curricular transformation, and public policy governance.

Qualitative interpretations were derived from the bibliometric clusters generated by VOSviewer through content analysis of high-frequency keywords and top-cited documents within each cluster. A purposive sample of representative articles was selected for close reading to refine the cluster themes and labels. To ensure reliability and validity, studies were double-screened against predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. A piloted keyword codebook was used for independent coding by two reviewers, with intercoder agreement assessed (Cohen's $\kappa = 0.89$). Discrepancies were resolved through discussion. Additionally, keyword normalization (including stemming and synonym merging), record de-duplication, and robustness checks were performed by adjusting co-occurrence thresholds and reanalyzing across databases to assess construct stability. The study selection followed a PRISMA flow: 242 records were identified, 181 full-texts were screened after title/abstract review, and 88 studies were included for analysis..

4. Results

4.1. Visualization and Bibliometric Findings on Edutourism

The bibliometric analysis conducted using VOSviewer identified seven primary clusters that illustrate the position of edutourism as a multidisciplinary field, encompassing domains such as public policy, technology, cultural tourism, and sustainable development. This mapping indicates that edutourism is not merely a form of educational travel, but rather a cross-sectoral strategy that requires collaborative and systemic governance. Overall, the results demonstrate that edutourism functions as a catalyst for social and economic transformation, with significant potential to support sustainable development agendas through the integration of the education and tourism sectors. The visualization is presented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Bibliographic visualization of edutourism keywords

Source: Author's visualization using VOSviewer (2025)

Figure 1 presents several major themes that are interrelated with edutourism, where keywords are grouped into distinct color-coded categories. The interpretation of these thematic clusters is summarized in the following table:

Table 1. Thematic Clusters of Edutourism Based on VOSviewer Bibliometric Analysis

Cluster Color	Core Focus	Representative Keywords	SDG Contributions
Red	Ecological awareness & risk mitigation in nature-based tourism	Perception, Conservation, Ecosystem service, Land use, Protected area, Animals, Urban area, Health risks, Food safety, Risk, Safety	SDG 3 (Health), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life on Land)
Dark Blue	Adaptive public policy & governance	Policy making, Innovation, Technology adoption, Sustainable development goal, Climate policy, Natural resources, Environmental policies, Resilience, Economic growth, Governance, Climate action, Knowledge management, Smart city	SDG 4 (Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work & Economic Growth), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities), SDG 13
Light Blue	Climate resilience & rural development	Policy making, Resilience, Climate policy, Technology adoption, Sustainable development goal, Innovation, Rural areas/Rural tourism	SDG 11, SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 13
Green	Local identity & socio-cultural education	Tourism development, Tourist behavior, Cultural tourism, International tourism, Urban tourism, Village, Hospitality, Customer satisfaction, Destination management	SDG 4, SDG 11, SDG 16 (Social Inclusion)
Yellow	Spatial efficiency & community-based regional development	Regional development, Tourism economy, Tourism eco-efficiency, Nature-based tourism, Legislation, Rural areas, Destination management, Social impact	SDG 8, SDG 11, SDG 15
Purple	Social impact & tourist reflection	Village, Cultural tourism, Urban tourism, International tourism, Social impact, Hospitality, Customer satisfaction, Contingent evaluation	SDG 4, SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 17 (Partnerships)
Orange	Data-driven evaluation & policy innovation	Innovation, Sustainable development goal, Regression analysis	SDG 4, SDG 8, SDG 13, SDG 17

Source: Processed using VOSviewer, 2025.

The bibliometric analysis conducted using VOSviewer identified seven major thematic clusters in the global edutourism literature, each focusing on different aspects that contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These clusters reflect the role of edutourism in integrating environmental, social, and economic policies.

The first cluster, which focuses on ecological awareness and risk mitigation in nature-based tourism, emphasizes the importance of tourist perceptions regarding conservation efforts and environmental risk management. This is linked to SDG 3, SDG 13, and SDG 15. This perspective is supported by studies such as those by Purwantini et al. and Muniz et al. (2021). The second cluster highlights the role of public policy and adaptive governance in integrating edutourism with the SDGs, specifically SDG 4, SDG 8, SDG 11, and SDG 13, as discussed in the works of Purwantini et al. and Muniz et al. (2021), and further supported by Djalle et al. (2025) and Serio et al. (2024).

The cluster on climate resilience and rural development stresses the importance of adaptive local policies for enhancing resilience to climate change. This contributes to SDG 11, SDG 12, and SDG 13. Meanwhile, the socio-cultural dimension of edutourism, portrayed as informal education grounded in community interaction and experiential learning, supports SDG 4 and SDG 16.

Another cluster, focused on spatial efficiency and community-based regional development, emphasizes resource-based policy design and destination management. This contributes to SDG 8, SDG 11, and SDG 15. The social impact and tourist reflection cluster investigates how edutourism experiences shape educational values through reflective interaction, contributing to SDG 4, SDG 10, and SDG 17.

Finally, the cluster on data-driven evaluation and policy innovation emphasizes the use of quantitative analysis to assess the impacts of edutourism and design more effective policies. This approach is linked to SDG 4, SDG 8, SDG 13, and SDG 17.

Collectively, these findings demonstrate that edutourism is not simply a form of education-based tourism, but rather a cross-sectoral development strategy contributing to the SDG agenda through the integration of education, policy, technology, and cultural preservation. This framework, as discussed by Purwantini et al., Muniz et al., Djalle et al., and Serio et al., connects multi-sectoral actors in a continuous policy-implementation-evaluation cycle, applicable at both global and national levels.

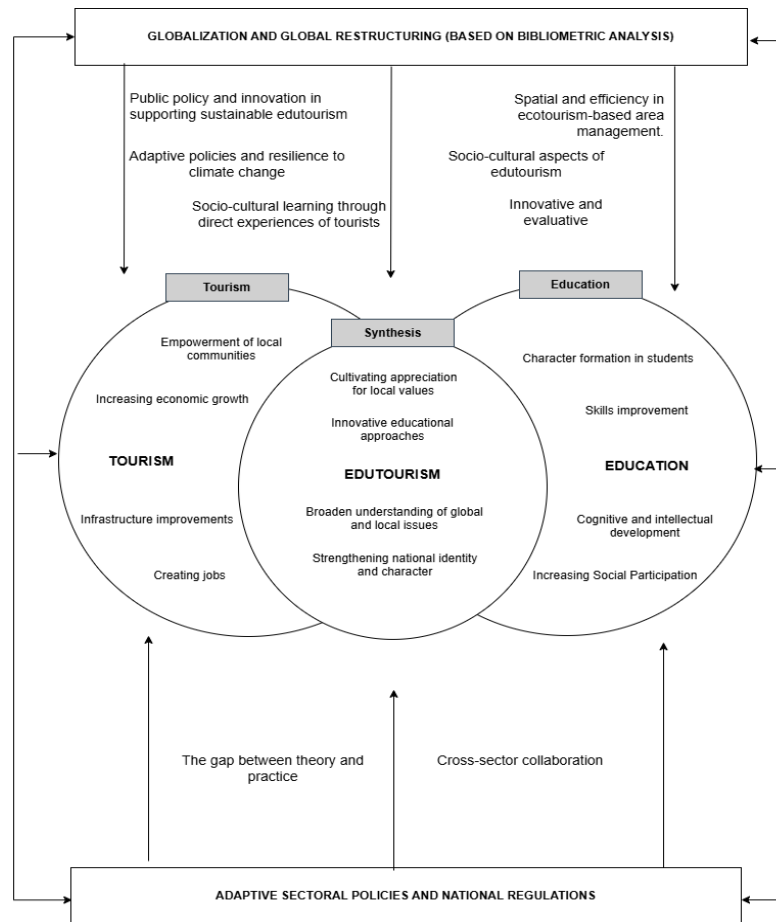
Based on this analysis, a systemic framework of edutourism can be conceptualized, emerging from cross-sectoral interactions and the dynamics of policy within global and national settings.

Figure 2 illustrates the synthesis between the tourism and education sectors within the concept of edutourism, driven by the dynamics of globalization and global restructuring. From the tourism perspective, its contributions encompass community empowerment, job creation, economic growth, and infrastructure development, while the education sector focuses on character building, skills enhancement, cognitive and intellectual development, and social participation. The intersection of these two sectors occurs in strengthening national identity, appreciating local values, and implementing innovative educational approaches. However, the implementation of edutourism often faces a gap between theory and practice, highlighting the importance of cross-sector collaboration.

In Indonesia, the greatest challenge in edutourism development lies in the lack of policy synchronization between the central and regional governments, the unpreparedness of educational institutions, and limited funding issues (Koerner et al., 2024; Guntur et al., 2023). Therefore, adaptive sectoral policies and national regulations responsive to global dynamics are crucial to ensuring the sustainability of edutourism that is rooted in local values and community needs. International studies also indicate that the success of edutourism in other countries, such as Japan and the United Kingdom, has been driven by collaboration among various stakeholders and policies supporting the holistic development of the sector (Serio et al., 2024; Rosnan &

Abdullah, 2018). In Indonesia, a pilot project-based approach tailored to the local context, along with the integration of digital technology, could be an effective strategy to expand access and ensure the sustainability of this program in the future (Amalia et al., 2024).

Figure 2. Systemic Framework of Edutourism Based on Globalization and Adaptive National Policy



Source: Author's analysis (2025), adapted from Ritchie (2003)

The framework underscores that edutourism must operate as an integrated ecosystem rather than as a fragmented program. Effective implementation requires aligned curriculum design, destination management, community participation, and regulatory oversight. This demands performance-oriented governance, clear stakeholder roles, and indicators that measure learning outcomes, community benefits, and cultural preservation. Without such coherence, edutourism risks becoming symbolic branding rather than a transformative development tool.

4.2. Contextual Analysis of Indonesia Based on Literature Mapping

The bibliometric mapping using VOSviewer reveals strong relevance to the current landscape of edutourism in Indonesia. Keywords such as cultural tourism and tourist behavior reflect the growing trend of culture-based tourism emerging in various tourism villages (*desa wisata*). This phenomenon indicates a high demand for educational tourism models that are integrated with local wisdom and cultural heritage.

Nevertheless, the implementation of edutourism in Indonesia continues to face significant structural challenges. The lack of synchronization between national and local government policies, weak risk management systems, and the absence of standardized destination management frameworks are among the primary barriers. These challenges are reflected in the dominance of keywords such as risk assessment, policy making, and social policy in the clustering results. Governance uncertainty impedes both program efficiency and sustainability.

The limited availability of proactive policies aligning central and regional governments in supporting edutourism development has prevented local communities from fully capitalizing on available opportunities. Proactive policymaking is essential to equip local communities with the skills and resources needed to harness the benefits of tourism (Khan, Bibi, Lorenzo, Lyu, & Babar, 2020).

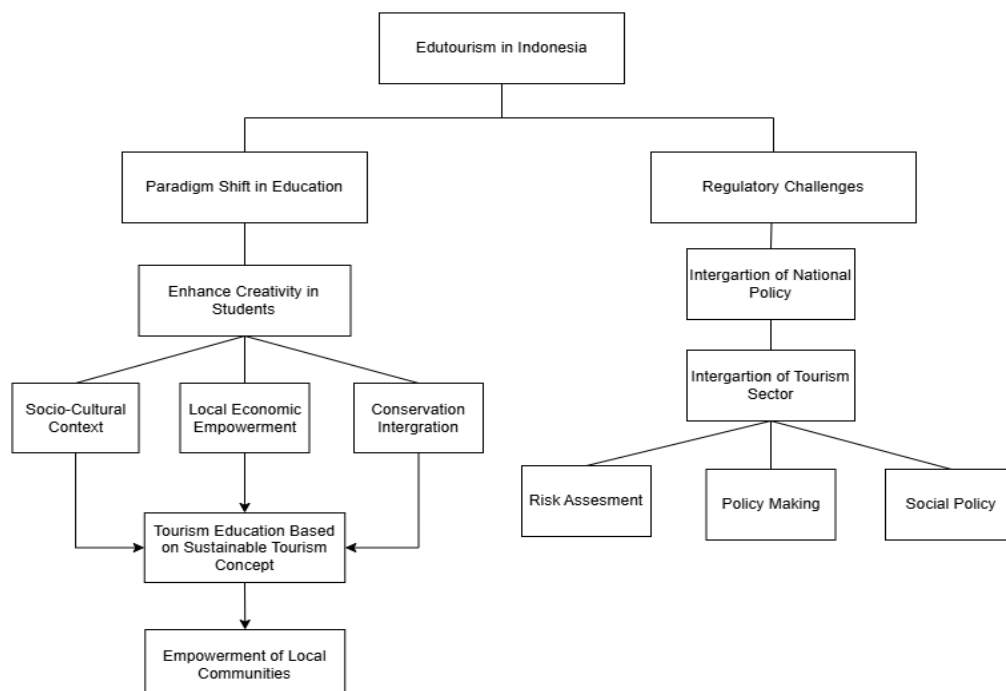
On the other hand, the emergence of clusters such as economic growth and eco-efficiency suggests that edutourism holds substantial potential as a driver of local economic development based on conservation and community empowerment. Edutourism contributes to the creation of alternative income opportunities for local populations, thereby reducing dependency on mass tourism, which tends to be economically volatile. This form of economic diversification can enhance the stability and long-term sustainability of community-level economies (Tang, 2021). In line with this, research by Kambali (2022) shows that the management of Edu Wisata Lontar Sewu positively contributed to the increase of local income in Hendrosari Village, with a measurable contribution of 29.7%. These findings underscore the importance of edutourism governance as a strategic tool for improving local economic welfare.

Despite such promising potential, data-driven evaluative approaches, such as regression analysis, remain rarely applied in the Indonesian context. These methods are essential for systematically measuring the social, economic, and ecological impacts of edutourism programs in an accountable and evidence-based manner.

Overall, edutourism in Indonesia holds strategic potential as a sustainable development model that integrates education, environmental conservation, and local economic strengthening. The success of this initiative will largely depend on the integration of adaptive public policies, the adoption of digital technologies, and the implementation of evidence-based evaluation systems. The VOSviewer mapping affirms that the future of national edutourism lies at the intersection of strong local practices and responsive policy designs that address the challenges of global sustainability.

Based on the bibliometric analysis and contextual review, the following conceptual model summarizes the key challenges and opportunities of edutourism development in Indonesia.

Figure 3. Conceptual Model of Edutourism in Indonesia: Integration of Education and Regulatory Challenges for Local Community Empowerment



Source: Author's analysis (2025)

Figure 3 illustrates a conceptual model of edutourism in Indonesia that integrates educational transformation and regulatory frameworks to strengthen local community empowerment. This model is divided into two key perspectives: the educational and the regulatory.

From the educational perspective, edutourism promotes a paradigm shift by enhancing creativity in students. This is achieved through engagement with the socio-cultural context, local economic empowerment, and conservation integration. These components form the foundation of tourism education based on sustainable principles, ultimately leading to the empowerment of local communities. The model emphasizes that the integration of these elements helps create an experiential and contextual learning environment, encouraging students to engage directly with local cultures and environments (Jannah et al., 2024; Syafruddin et al., 2021). Furthermore, this approach fosters the development of critical thinking and creativity among students, which are essential for addressing the challenges of the modern world (Sumarmi et al., 2023; Pradanti & Muqtada, 2023).

From the regulatory perspective, the model identifies challenges in aligning national policy with the tourism sector. The integration of national policies is particularly critical in areas such as risk assessment, policy making, and social policy. This is necessary to ensure that edutourism initiatives are governed effectively and that there is consistency across different regions in terms of safety standards, quality assurance, and equitable access. The regulatory framework plays a crucial role in protecting the interests of students, tourists, and local communities, ensuring the sustainability of the edutourism sector (Guntur et al., 2023; Koerner et al., 2024). The alignment of policies across different sectors is essential for maximizing the potential of edutourism to contribute to national development goals, such as economic growth, social equity, and environmental sustainability (Yunas et al., 2023; Rijal et al., 2022).

This model underscores that the sustainability and success of edutourism in Indonesia depend on the synergy between innovative educational approaches and adaptive regulatory mechanisms. This dual integration is key to ensuring both local relevance and broader developmental impact, creating a balanced framework for the future of edutourism in Indonesia (Nasruddin et al., 2019; Muhtadi, 2023).

4.3. Global Comparative Study: Asia, North America, Europe, Oceania, and Africa

4.3.1. Edutourism in Asia

Edutourism across Asia has developed through diverse policy approaches, from top-down models to institution-driven initiatives. China stands out with its centralized policies such as the *Opinions on Promoting Educational Tourism* and the *Double Reduction Policy* (Yao, Zhu, Hong, & Sun, 2024), alongside geofencing technology for participant safety (Lin et al., 2023). However, challenges like commercialization and a shortage of qualified professionals persist (Li, 2021).

In Malaysia, edutourism is advanced through university-industry collaborations, such as the empowerment of cultural tour guides at heritage sites like the Clan Jetties (Tan, Lee, & Fu, 2022), and promoting pro-environmental behaviors through educational tourism programs (Ting & Cheng, 2017). Thailand employs a cultural immersion strategy with homestays and student exchange programs, fostering contextual learning (Sirivadhanawaravachara, 2024), although infrastructure issues and lack of accreditation standards remain (Ratanavaraha, Jomnonkwao, Khampirat, Watthanaklang, & Iamtrakul, 2016).

In Indonesia, eco-edutourism rooted in local wisdom, such as the Taka Bonerate initiative, shows promise (Jannah et al., 2024). However, challenges persist in integrating edutourism into the national curriculum and developing human resource capacities (Yfantidou & Goulmaris, 2018). Vietnam excels in field trip-based English language education (Doan, 2020), though the absence of explicit national policy causes quality disparities.

Singapore integrates edutourism into its national education system through the *Learning Journey* program, combining multicultural education with experiential learning from early

childhood (Layne & Teng, 2022; Nurbaya, Maklassa, Suarni, & Sulaeman Masnan, 2024). Meanwhile India, utilizes edutourism to foster global citizenship through international visits that emphasize cross-cultural understanding and global employability (Hol et al., 2016).

The success of edutourism in Asia is supported by three key factors: (1) explicit national policies (China, Singapore), (2) cross-sectoral collaboration (Malaysia, Thailand), and (3) impact-based evaluations (Vietnam, China). Recommendations for Indonesia include integrating education and tourism policies, leveraging technology for monitoring and safety, curriculum standardization, and capacity-building for educators and facilitators.

In conclusion, edutourism in Asia follows a dynamic cycle of policy formulation, collaboration, program quality improvement, and impact evaluation that informs policy revisions. Indonesia can strengthen local capacities and integrate edutourism into the national curriculum, drawing from the successful practices in other Asian countries. However, given Indonesia's geographical diversity and institutional disparities, this integration should be approached gradually and adaptively through co-curricular or pilot-based initiatives, rather than as a uniform national mandate.

4.3.2. Edutourism in North America

Edutourism in North America reflects three core models: experiential reflection-based (U.S.), intercultural collaborative (Canada), and strategic policy learning (Mexico). In the U.S., experiential learning, especially in creative disciplines, uses personal reflection (e.g., journaling) to deepen engagement, but the lack of national edutourism standards and interdisciplinary outcome indicators highlights the need for comprehensive development (Gomez-Lanier, 2017). Canada stands out through collective intercultural learning and community partnerships (e.g., International Days), using group reflection techniques like round-robin writing. However, community participation remains largely symbolic, and connections with professional associations are underdeveloped (Bentley et al., 2024). Mexico uses edutourism for policy learning, such as the study of Bogotá's transport policy adoption in Guadalajara, involving NGOs, donors, and local governments. However, systemic replication is hindered by reliance on external funding and the absence of a national policy framework (Montero, 2017).

All three countries share structural challenges, including the lack of learning evaluation standards, limited interdisciplinary inclusivity, and weak institutional support. Strategic interventions are needed in the form of: standardized learning outcomes (U.S.), strengthened professional and multisectoral partnerships (Canada), and sustainable policy and funding frameworks (Mexico). The regional cycle involves experience-based curricula followed by reflection (U.S.), community collaboration (Canada), and strategic policy learning (Mexico), followed by evaluation processes to reinforce program legitimacy and integrate edutourism into formal education policies.

For Indonesia, this suggests the adoption of principles like learning quality, measurable evaluation, and institutional support as prerequisites; formulation of national edutourism outcome standards (based on U.S. practices), orchestration of campus-community-professional association partnerships (drawing from Canada), and the development of policy frameworks and sustainable funding schemes for cross-city/regional policy learning programs (lessons from Mexico) (Gomez-Lanier, 2017; Bentley et al., 2024; Montero, 2017).

4.3.3. Edutourism in Europe

Edutourism in Europe operates within a sustainable cycle linking policy, local practice, evaluation, and cross-sector collaboration, with the quality of learning experiences at its core. In the United Kingdom and Poland, formal, regulation-based frameworks ensure access and quality, such as the UK's Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto and Poland's Social Assistance Act (Si, Zeng, Wang, Wang, & Yang, 2019). Finland's decentralized approach grants teachers

autonomy but faces challenges with documentation and quality disparities (Sevinç Özgen & Tantekin Erden, 2024). Italy, Malta, and Spain focus on internationalization and intercultural learning, but logistical issues and insufficient evaluation limit effectiveness (Pond, 2017). Hungary uses edutourism to promote national identity but risks political bias if not inclusive (Rátz, Michalkó, & Keszeg, 2020). Greece employs technology, such as virtual reality, to bridge geographic gaps (Yfantidou & Goulmaris, 2018).

The UK and Poland prioritize formal, policy-based evaluations, while Finland and Italy favor reflective, practice-based assessments, fostering cross-sector collaboration between educational institutions, the tourism industry, local governments, and civil society. This collaboration contributes to institutional strengthening, hybrid financing models, and curricular innovations. Continuous evaluation and collaboration have led to the replication of best practices: the UK and Poland have reinforced regulatory frameworks, Finland has documented teacher-led innovations, and other countries adapt successful elements to local contexts. This cycle—policy formulation, quality enhancement, evaluation, collaboration, replication, and policy renewal—drives progress.

The success of European edutourism is underpinned by three key elements: (1) comprehensive and accountable evaluation, (2) participatory cross-sector coordination, and (3) replicable local innovation. These elements support social development, cultural exchange, and sustainable educational policy across Europe, offering valuable lessons for Indonesia's edutourism development.

4.3.4. Edutourism in Australia and Oceania

Edutourism in Australia and Oceania integrates experiential learning with environmental sustainability. In Australia, a tour-based learning model includes a pre-tour handbook, on-site facilitation, and post-activity reflection, linking tourism destinations with formal learning objectives based on constructivist pedagogy (Kolb, 1984 in Hol et al., 2016; Pitman et al., 2010). Tour leaders and local facilitators play key roles in connecting field contexts with academic content. Challenges include balancing educational goals with commercial objectives and the lack of standardized post-tour evaluations, necessitating pedagogical training and measurable evaluations that address affective and social learning.

New Zealand focuses on nature-based immersive learning, combining outdoor education, digital technologies (e.g., virtual reality), and environmental conservation themes (Yfantidou & Goulmaris, 2018). Partnerships with organizations like WWF and The Nature Conservancy raise awareness of climate change, though implementation depends on infrastructure, policy, and funding support. While The Code protects international students, a fully integrated conservation curriculum is still needed for broader impact.

Edutourism in this region comprises nine interrelated elements: (1) national regulations for curriculum integration; (2) local facilitators linking academic content with real-world contexts; (3) conservation partnerships for sustainability values; (4) participant experience as the core of place-based learning; (5) technology and reflection supporting cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains; (6) learning outcomes focused on ecological and cultural empathy; (7) impact-based evaluation for program refinement; (8) sustainable funding for continuity; and (9) curricular innovation driven by feedback and evaluation.

The success of edutourism in Australia and New Zealand depends on integrative pedagogical design, adaptive facilitation, and reflective evaluation systems. With a participatory and conservation-focused curriculum, this region offers a model for sustainable education and long-term socio-ecological impact, offering valuable lessons for Indonesia's edutourism development.

4.3.5. Edutourism in Africa

Edutourism in Africa integrates cultural values and environmental awareness, as seen in Egypt and Nigeria. In Egypt, cultural heritage drives edutourism initiatives, with universities organizing

guided visits to historical sites like pyramids, contributing to cultural diplomacy and enhancing international competitiveness in higher education (Attaalla, 2020). However, challenges include insufficient infrastructure and the lack of a national edutourism policy. To scale these programs, Egypt requires strengthened cross-sector policies, educational transportation systems, and international partnerships.

In Nigeria, forest-based edutourism models combine ecological conservation with interactive technologies like virtual reality and serious games, engaging local communities and conservation NGOs such as WWF (Yfantidou & Goulimaris, 2018). Despite progress, challenges include inadequate digital infrastructure in rural areas and a lack of long-term funding. Proposed solutions include investments in educational technologies, expanding CSR programs, and strengthening global conservation partnerships for sustainability.

Africa's edutourism model integrates cultural preservation and environmental education, relying on nine interrelated elements: (1) contextual learning design by educational institutions and travel agencies; (2) facilitation by local communities and conservation experts; (3) use of cultural and natural sites as learning spaces; (4) incorporation of technology to enhance literacy; (5) learning reflection for evaluation and reform; (6) institutional legitimacy through program evaluation; (7) infrastructure and funding support; (8) international partnerships and CSR for innovation; and (9) curriculum replication to expand edutourism.

Egypt's culture-based and Nigeria's environment-based models offer innovative and context-sensitive frameworks. With systemic policy management, strategic partnerships, and reflective evaluation, edutourism in Africa can contribute to higher education reform and the sustainable empowerment of local communities, offering valuable insights for Indonesia's policy development.

4.4. Global Edutourism System Model

Global trends in edutourism highlight diverse approaches tailored to local contexts while aiming for global competencies, cross-cultural learning, and sustainability. In Egypt, a heritage-based approach fosters national identity and educational diplomacy through university-led programs involving local experts. However, infrastructure limitations and the lack of a national policy framework hinder scalability (Attaalla, 2020). In New Zealand, nature conservation and technology (e.g., virtual reality) are integrated within immersive learning models, supported by The Code for international student protection. Challenges include digital infrastructure gaps and reliance on short-term funding (Yfantidou & Goulimaris, 2018).

Indonesia's edutourism model emphasizes local wisdom and community participation, as seen in the Taka Bonerate initiative, which integrates ecological preservation and reflective learning (Jannah et al., 2024). However, the lack of a national policy framework hampers broader integration. In Nigeria, forest-based edutourism merges digital technologies with community collaboration and international NGOs, yet regulatory weaknesses and lack of long-term funding challenge sustainability (Yfantidou & Goulimaris, 2018). In Southern Europe and the Mediterranean (e.g., Spain, Italy, Malta, Israel), edutourism is focused on internationalization through student exchanges and intercultural programs, though curriculum harmonization and cross-national accreditation remain issues.

Culture underpins edutourism in Egypt and many European countries, ecology drives Indonesia and Nigeria, and technology is central in New Zealand. Despite regional differences, all approaches emphasize contextual, transformative learning with a global focus. Shared challenges include the absence of coherent national regulations, infrastructure disparities, and unsustainable funding mechanisms.

Addressing these challenges requires a global edutourism strategy integrating cross-sectoral policies (education, tourism, conservation, technology), infrastructure investments in underdeveloped and remote areas (3T regions), enhanced international partnerships, and hybrid

funding models involving public-private collaboration and CSR initiatives. This approach is crucial for Indonesia's edutourism policy development and broader global adaptation.

The global edutourism system can be mapped into ten key components:

1. National policy as the strategic regulatory foundation, evident in countries like New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and Poland, in contrast to emerging institutional frameworks in Egypt and Nigeria.
2. Local and international collaboration, such as partnerships between educational institutions and conservation organizations (e.g., WWF) in Thailand, Nigeria, and New Zealand, enhance relevance and sustainability.
3. Learning technologies such as VR and serious games are effectively utilized in Greece, Nigeria, and New Zealand to improve accessibility and engagement.
4. Utilization of cultural and natural heritage as a medium for contextual learning is demonstrated in Egypt (historical sites) and Indonesia (marine ecotourism).
5. Multisensory approaches—combining cultural narratives, physical activity, and technology—are applied in Australia, Finland, and Spain.
6. Active student participation in conservation and cultural preservation, as seen in Thailand and Vietnam, strengthens reflective and social dimensions.
7. Global and ecological literacy serve as success indicators in countries such as Canada, Italy, and India.
8. Evaluation mechanisms and safety standards, as implemented in the UK and Poland, ensure quality assurance and program accountability.
9. Sustainable funding, including public budgeting (Indonesia, Mexico), international grants (Vietnam, Egypt), and CSR initiatives (Malaysia, Nigeria), is a prerequisite for scaling.
10. Program innovation and replication, as evident in Finland, Singapore, and China, contribute to curriculum enhancement and geographic expansion.

The integration of these ten components forms a participatory, contextual, and sustainable global edutourism ecosystem. Its success depends on the synergy of policy, technology, conservation, evaluation, and cross-sector collaboration—with the ultimate goal of improving educational quality, fostering global literacy, and empowering local communities.

Table 2. Key Global Issues in Edutourism Implementation

Issue	Country / Benchmark	Relevant Notes
Access Disparities and Global Inequality	Indonesia, Nigeria, Vietnam	Geographical and financial disparities restrict access to edutourism in remote regions.
Child Protection and Ethical Participation	United Kingdom, European Union (Poland, Italy), Egypt, Indonesia	Varied child protection standards, with some countries lacking proper systems.
Commercialization and Educational Integrity Risks	China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand	Risk of programs being commercially exploited, compromising educational objectives.
Environmental Sustainability and Social Impact	New Zealand, Indonesia, Nigeria, Mexico	Conservation components often lack long-term sustainability due to inconsistent funding.
Weak Impact Evaluation Mechanisms	United States, Canada, Finland, Egypt, Indonesia	Limited systems for evaluating learning outcomes and program effectiveness.
Digital Transformation and Innovation Potential	New Zealand, Nigeria, Greece, Indonesia	Uneven distribution of digital technologies, contributing to a digital divide.

Source: Author's analysis, 2025

The table 2 highlights critical challenges in edutourism, including access disparities, ethical concerns, commercialization, sustainability, impact evaluation, and digital integration. Geographical and financial inequalities in countries like Indonesia, Nigeria, and Vietnam limit access to edutourism, particularly in underserved areas, hindering equitable participation

(Nasruddin et al., 2019; Syafruddin et al., 2021). Child protection remains inconsistent across regions, with countries like the UK and EU ensuring robust systems, while others such as Egypt and Indonesia lack adequate safeguards, raising ethical concerns (Koerner et al., 2024; Guntur et al., 2023). The risk of commercialization is evident in China, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, where the prioritization of profit over education undermines the integrity of these programs (Muhtadi, 2023; Pradanti & Muqtada, 2023).

Environmental sustainability is compromised by the lack of consistent funding for conservation initiatives, particularly in New Zealand, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Mexico, which threatens the long-term impact of these programs (Yunas et al., 2023; Khoirunisa Wahida & Hoirul Uyun, 2023). The absence of comprehensive impact evaluation mechanisms in countries like the US, Canada, Finland, Egypt, and Indonesia limits the ability to measure learning outcomes and program effectiveness, hindering the identification of best practices (Gomez-Lanier, 2017; Koerner et al., 2024). Additionally, while digital technologies offer opportunities to enhance edutourism, their uneven distribution in countries such as New Zealand, Nigeria, Greece, and Indonesia exacerbates the digital divide, limiting access for students in remote areas (Jannah et al., 2024; Ameli et al., 2024).

Addressing these issues requires targeted interventions in infrastructure, policy, funding, and regulation to ensure edutourism's accessibility, sustainability, and educational integrity.

5. Discussion

5.1. From Global Lessons to Local Realities: Strategic Implications for Indonesia

Global comparative studies indicate that successful edutourism implementation depends on integrated cross-sectoral policies (Jannah et al., 2024), strong institutional collaboration, and context-specific pedagogical innovations. For Indonesia, key strategic lessons include: (1) formulating a national policy integrating education, tourism, and conservation; (2) strengthening partnerships between educational institutions, local communities, and industries; and (3) developing curricula that incorporate experiential and reflective learning.

The development of edutourism policies in Indonesia should not aim for its integration into the formal curriculum. Instead, edutourism should be positioned as co-curricular or extracurricular activities that can be implemented flexibly and based on local contexts. This approach allows for inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable educational experiences without overburdening the formal educational system. As part of the development of contextual and experiential education, edutourism should be implemented in flexible formats such as extracurricular activities, field-based intensives, and technology-mediated learning models. This allows for more adaptable education that reflects local readiness and institutional needs (Chuang, 2021)Ameli et al., 2024; Soesanto et al., 2020). Learning evaluations must cover cognitive, affective, and social dimensions (Silva, Souki, Oliveira, Vieira, & Serra, 2024), and sustainable financing mechanisms through public-private synergy are crucial for an inclusive, resilient edutourism system (Chai, Dai, Zhang, & Wang, 2024).

Indonesia has significant potential to build an edutourism ecosystem responsive to global trends, yet faces structural challenges. The national education system, with over 441,128 institutions spread across more than 17,000 islands, struggles with disparities in access and quality (Dapodik, 2025)Ameli et al., 2024; Soesanto et al., 2020). Most institutions are still unable to meet basic learning standards, which makes the integration of logistically intensive edutourism programs, requiring additional resources, challenging—particularly in infrastructure-poor regions.

The scale of the student population further complicates the situation: with 52,913,427 students registered in 2024/2025 (Dapodik, 2025), uniform edutourism implementation would overburden resources—especially in low-capacity schools—and exacerbate regional disparities. Funding constraints are also critical, as existing mechanisms such as School Operational

Assistance (BOS) and Education Operational Assistance (BOP) do not support experiential outdoor learning under Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology No. 63 of 2022 (Menteri Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi Republik Indonesia, 2022). Therefore, rather than enforcing edutourism uniformly within the national curriculum, Indonesia should adopt a phased, locally grounded model in which edutourism serves as a co-curricular or experiential learning complement to formal education.

Edutourism, requiring transportation, professional facilitators, and student insurance, is not currently accommodated in national education budget planning. Without a proper regulatory framework and monitoring system, edutourism may devolve into commercialized tourism rather than a meaningful educational tool, thus exacerbating inequality and undermining pedagogical goals (Alipour, Fatemi, & Malazizi, 2020; Ritchie, 2003). A policy reformulation is necessary, considering local diversity, institutional heterogeneity, and the need for inclusive, equitable, and sustainable mechanisms for supervision and financing.

The findings of this study align with theoretical frameworks such as policy integration, adaptive governance, and experiential learning. These frameworks underscore the necessity of cross-sectoral collaboration and adaptive governance models to implement edutourism effectively in local contexts. By combining education, tourism, and community development through these frameworks, edutourism in Indonesia can address its challenges and contribute to both educational and tourism sectors' growth.

5.2. National Implementation Strategy for Edutourism

5.2.1. Strategic Alternative: Gradual Incubation

Given the complexity of the challenges previously outlined, a more flexible and adaptive approach is necessary for implementing edutourism in Indonesia to ensure program sustainability and relevance. Edutourism should not be immediately institutionalized as a mandatory component of the national curriculum. A more realistic alternative is to position it within the framework of extracurricular or co-curricular learning. Under this model, edutourism can be developed as a thematic extracurricular activity or voluntary project aligned with the Merdeka Belajar (Freedom to Learn) philosophy—contextualized and non-obligatory across all educational institutions. This aligns with the Merdeka Belajar principle, which promotes learner-centered programs based on institutional capacity and local specificity, without overburdening the national education system (Amalia, Setiawan, & Rahayu, 2024; Sumarmi et al., 2023).

Furthermore, research shows that collaboration between educational institutions and local communities in developing edutourism strengthens community empowerment and enhances program relevance to local needs (Amalia et al., 2024; Nasruddin et al., 2019). This approach not only maintains the quality of education but also adds value to the tourism industry and directly involved communities.

The government must also avoid issuing ambiguous regulations, such as designating edutourism as part of the curriculum without clear implementation mandates. Such ambiguity risks being misused by certain parties for commercial interests, thereby diluting the pedagogical value of edutourism (Utami, Susilana, & Dewi, 2024). As a strategic step, a spatial pilot project approach can be applied in regions with adequate infrastructure and human resources, such as Yogyakarta, Bandung, or Denpasar. Studies suggest that pilot programs in well-prepared areas serve as effective platforms to test national guidelines and develop best practices, without imposing undue pressure on less-equipped regions (Otaki et al., 2022). In addition to fostering local innovation, this model enables gradual replication based on context-specific evidence of success.

To address access inequality in education and tourism, digitalization—particularly through the development of virtual tours and VR-based media—has proven to be a strategic solution. Virtual tours not only expand access for students in remote areas but also provide low-cost,

meaningful educational experiences (Klippel et al., 2019; Djunarto et al., 2022; Daşdemir & Koca, 2023). Moreover, integration with local communities through partnership schemes in developing tourism villages or edu-villages can position edutourism as a culturally grounded, community-driven movement, supporting social inclusion and sustainability promotion (Sholikhah & Tamrin, 2023; Movono & Hughes, 2022; Pattaray & Nipri, 2022).

In terms of governance, a decentralized approach is essential to ensure that policy design and program implementation are aligned with local contexts. The central government should focus on developing general policy frameworks, establishing minimum standards, and ensuring accountability mechanisms; meanwhile, the technical and operational implementation should be delegated to local governments and educational institutions. This model encourages local innovation and allows for more responsive action in addressing the diverse needs of various regions (Chamidah et al., 2020; Indahsari et al., 2022).

With a gradual, contextual, and locally collaborative approach, edutourism in Indonesia holds significant potential to evolve into an inclusive, relevant, and sustainable instrument of transformative education. In this regard, edutourism is best positioned as a strategic complement to formal education, implemented through co-curricular and pilot-based programs that reflect local readiness, institutional capacity, and sustainability principles.

Table 3. Decentralized and Phased Governance Structure for Edutourism Implementation

National Level	Regional Level	Educational Institutions	Local Communities & External Partners
Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek): 1. Develops general standards and edutourism guidelines applicable to designated pilot regions. 2. Integrates edutourism flexibly within Pancasila Student Profile (P5) projects or similar co-curricular frameworks rather than as a mandatory part of the national curriculum.	Provincial/District Governments: Act as coordinators for edutourism pilot projects and Edu-Zone development. Regional Offices (Education, Tourism, MSMEs): Conduct curation, facilitation, and technical support for schools and destination development.	1. Design edutourism initiatives as part of P5 projects (or equivalent) or thematic extracurricular programs. 2. Develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for edutourism activities, aligned with ISO 31031 on travel risk management. 3. Engage school committees and parents in planning, financing, and evaluating edutourism programs. 4. Prioritize implementation in schools with adequate logistical readiness, human resources, and access.	1. Develop Edu-Villages grounded in local wisdom and culture. 2. Collaborate with universities, NGOs, and certified tour operators. 3. Ensure tour operators are licensed, utilize trained guides, and adhere to educational standards. 4. Position universities and vocational training centers (BLK) as providers of training and certification for educational guides.
Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf): 1. Certifies educational destinations and providers of educational tourism services. 2. Promotes certified programs internationally and provides incentives for tourism entrepreneurs.			
Ministry of Home Affairs (Kemendagri), Ministry of Forestry (Kemenhut), and Ministry of Environment (KLH): Aligns regional regulations, ensures the protection of conservation areas, environmental carrying capacity, and cross-sectoral support.			

Source: Author's analysis, 2025

This framework forges a symbiotic, multi-tiered ecosystem for Indonesian edutourism, moving beyond a mere top-down mandate to envision a dynamic praxis of co-creation. The national level, through its inter-ministerial symphony, performs the critical role of an architect and enabler—setting foundational standards and providing catalytic incentives—while consciously decentralizing implementation to honor the principle of subsidiarity. This empowers regional governments to become the vital linchpins, translating policy into situated action by curating and facilitating place-based pilot projects. Ultimately, the model's vitality depends on its grounding in local praxis: it calls upon schools to exercise pedagogical agency in weaving edutourism into the lived curriculum and challenges local communities to become authentic co-producers of knowledge, thereby transforming external partners from mere service providers into integral stewards of a culturally-resilient and ethically-managed educational experience.

Table 4. Components of a Phased Operational System for Edutourism

Component	Strategic Measures
Standardization and Certification	1. Development of nationally standardized edutourism modules. 2. Certification of tourism destinations based on educational and ecological feasibility. 3. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for departure, supervision, and reporting aligned with ISO 31031 (Travel Risk Management) and UNCPRD (United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities).
Modular Implementation Model	1. Edutourism is not mandated nationally; it is implemented in designated pilot clusters (e.g., Yogyakarta, Bali, Bandung). 2. Thematic modules include history, conservation, culture, technology, urban studies, and industrial tourism.
Digital Access Alternatives	1. Development of virtual tours (e.g., 360° VR, interactive videos) for students in underserved areas. 2. Continuous development of the Edutourism Indonesia platform as an open-access database and learning interface.
Digital Monitoring and Evaluation	1. National app Edutourism Indonesia for registration, legal tour verification, incident reporting, and online evaluation. 2. QR-coded participant ID cards, real-time tracking of student location, and parental notification features.
Non-Formal and Co-Curricular Curriculum	1. Integration into P5 (Pancasila Student Profile) projects or similar community-based school programs. 2. Assessment via reflective journals, portfolios, and soft skills development.
Inclusive Financing Models	1. Cross-subsidy schemes, educational CSR, and crowdfunding mechanisms. 2. Use of School Operational Funds (Dana BOS) to support educational edutourism initiatives. 3. Engagement of local sponsors through corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. 4. Prioritized subsidies for schools in remote (3T) areas and economically disadvantaged students.
Community Engagement and Social Equity	1. Edu-Village model: communities as both educational agents and beneficiaries of economic impact. 2. Dedicated quotas for students from low-income families. 3. Integration of cultural, gender, and diversity education in tour programs.

Source: Author's analysis, 2025

This strategic framework transcends a mere checklist of actions, articulating instead a sophisticated pedagogy of place that harmonizes rigorous standardization with profound contextual sensitivity. It is architecturally grounded in nationally certified modules and ISO-aligned safety protocols, yet this standardization deliberately serves not to homogenize but to empower, enabling a modular implementation model where pilot regions like Yogyakarta and Bali can become living laboratories for thematic, place-based learning. This commitment to equitable access is materially enacted through innovative financing cross-subsidies and a parallel digital ecosystem of VR tours and a national monitoring platform, ensuring that geographic or socioeconomic barriers do not preclude participation. Ultimately, the model's most profound innovation is its reconceptualization of the educational journey itself: by embedding experiences within non-formal curricula like P5 projects and centering community through the Edu-Village concept, it transforms edutourism from a simple trip into a curated, reflective, and ethically-minded praxis that fosters social equity alongside intellectual discovery.

5.2.2. Adaptive Strategic Policy Recommendations

Building upon the foundation outlined in Subsection 5.2.1, this subsection delineates a set of adaptive strategic policy recommendations designed to translate the proposed edutourism model into a coherent, multi-level governance framework. Rather than prescribing uniform, nationwide mandates, the proposed recommendations emphasize phased implementation, spatial prioritization, and institutional flexibility, allowing edutourism initiatives to evolve in accordance with regional capacities, socio-cultural specificities, and infrastructural readiness. At the national level, the focus lies on establishing an integrated regulatory architecture and a dedicated coordinating body, while at the meso and micro levels the emphasis shifts toward curriculum complementation, cross-sectoral partnerships, and locally grounded experimentation through pilot projects. Collectively, these recommendations seek to align edutourism with the SDGs and broader national development agendas, ensuring that its expansion not only enriches learning experiences but also contributes to inclusive economic growth, community empowerment, and sustainable territorial development.

1. Adopt a phased incubation strategy rather than enforcing nationwide integration, allowing edutourism to evolve based on regional and community readiness.
2. Establish Priority Edutourism Zones to serve as policy laboratories for cross-sector mentoring, piloting innovative models, and evaluating scalable practices.
3. Position edutourism as a curriculum complement, embedded within the Pancasila Student Profile (P5) projects or equivalent co-curricular programs, rather than as a compulsory formal subject.
4. Formulate an Integrated Ministerial Regulation involving the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology (Kemendiktisaintek), the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (Kemendikdasmen), the Ministry of Tourism (Kemenpar), the Ministry of Forestry (Kemenhut), the Ministry of Environment (KLH), and the Ministry of Home Affairs (Kemendagri) to provide a cohesive national framework on edutourism governance.
5. Establish the National Edutourism Body (BNET) as a cross-ministerial entity responsible for regulation, evaluation, accreditation, and national promotion of edutourism programs.
6. Align edutourism implementation with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), ensuring that programs contribute to broader national development agendas.
7. Initiate pilot projects in ten priority districts/cities, selected based on local strengths such as conservation zones, historical heritage sites, and vibrant cultural communities, as testbeds for adaptive implementation.

This policy model acknowledges Indonesia's geographical dispersion, infrastructural disparities, and resource limitations. Consequently, it proposes a modular, digital, contextual, and incremental governance strategy as an alternative to uniform, nationwide curriculum mandates. Such an approach enables edutourism to grow organically, tailored to local characteristics and capacities, while expanding access to transformative learning across diverse geographies.

Drawing from a systematic analysis of global edutourism studies, the following section outlines specific policy implications for Indonesia based on international best practices across Asia, North America, Europe, Oceania, and Africa. Indonesia holds substantial potential to advance edutourism as a strategic intersection of education and regional development by adopting a cross-sectoral approach rooted in inclusive regulations, responsive to digital technologies, and centered on community empowerment. As emphasized in the theoretical

Policy and Practice Integration (PPI) framework, the success of edutourism relies heavily on the integration of education, tourism, and community development sectors through cohesive and adaptive policy frameworks. Studies from the United Kingdom, China, Singapore, Thailand, and Canada demonstrate that the success of edutourism hinges on structured, collaborative, and sustainable policy frameworks. These frameworks are grounded in the idea that integrated public policy, combining the efforts of multiple sectors, can maximize the impact of edutourism programs by addressing local needs and ensuring inclusivity and sustainability.

Table 5. Strategic Policy Implications for Edutourism Development in Indonesia

Policy Dimension	Implications for Indonesia	Quantitative Summary
Adaptive Regulatory Strengthening	Implement national regulations to standardize edutourism, including safety, child protection, and certification	88 articles reviewed; 7 publications focus on policy integration and regulatory frameworks (UK, China, Philippines).
Multistakeholder Collaboration	Foster partnerships among schools, local governments, NGOs, and the tourism sector	16 articles discuss multi-stakeholder governance and collaboration (Mexico, Australia, Singapore).
Innovative Tax and Incentive Schemes	Introduce fiscal incentives, including visa facilitation and scholarships, supported by CSR schemes	5 publications emphasize fiscal policies (Thailand, Türkiye).
Community Empowerment & Digital Literacy	Utilize local tourism resources and digital tools (apps, guides) to enhance edutourism	12 publications discuss community empowerment and digital tools (China, Finland, Singapore).
Data-Based Research & Monitoring	Develop a national evaluation system to measure the impact of edutourism on learning outcomes and local economies.	9 publications address data-based evaluation systems (US, Canada, Finland).
Integrated and Reflective Curriculum	Incorporate edutourism into curricula with reflective practices	18 studies highlight reflective learning integration (UK, China, US).
Safety and Risk Mitigation	Implement safety systems (geofencing, GPS) and protocols	7 publications cover safety and risk mitigation technologies (Thailand, US).

Source: Author's analysis, 2025

Several implementable strategies for Indonesia can be considered. First, the development of STEM-based tourism packages in education-oriented cities like Bandung and Yogyakarta, combined with local homestay programs, can enhance cultural understanding while providing educational value. Second, establishing interactive science tourism parks and promoting campus-industry collaborations would offer applicable educational programs aligned with local needs. Third, the optimization of historical heritage through tours such as those centered around Majapahit or literary literacy activities about Pramoedya Ananta Toer, complemented by free museum access and digital guides, would foster a deep sense of cultural appreciation. Fourth, marine conservation-based tourism in areas like Raja Ampat and Wakatobi, integrated with short-term certification programs delivered by vocational training centers (BLKs), can empower local communities through education and sustainable tourism practices.

These strategies align with the principles of adaptive governance, which emphasizes the need for flexible, decentralized management that is responsive to local contexts. As seen in countries like Mexico and Singapore, adaptive governance allows for the tailoring of policies and programs to the unique needs of local communities, ensuring that edutourism initiatives are both context-sensitive and sustainable.

Indonesia, with its diverse regions, would benefit from adopting a similar approach, where local governments and educational institutions have the autonomy to design and implement edutourism programs based on their specific challenges and opportunities.

Fifth, promoting cultural classes such as batik, gamelan, and Balinese dance, with formal certification, alongside the incorporation of traditional wellness practices like herbal medicine (jamu) and spa therapies, would contribute to both education and tourism. Sixth, strengthening religious-based educational tourism, such as Islamic heritage in Aceh or Hinduism in Bali, through short courses supported by scholarships and collaboration between the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education, would offer educational experiences tied to

spiritual and cultural values. Seventh, revitalizing historical routes such as the Spice Route and positioning Yogyakarta–Solo as the epicenter of Javanese cultural edutourism can support local identity preservation. Eighth, developing orangutan conservation tourism in Kalimantan and Sumatra, and colonial history tours in Jakarta and Bandung, could offer meaningful, nature-based educational experiences. Ninth, leveraging colonial sites such as Kota Tua and Portuguese forts as immersive learning environments would serve both educational and tourism purposes. Finally, positioning Bali/Ubud as a global hub for wellness tourism through internationally certified programs would attract international students and tourists alike.

These initiatives must be supported by integrated education-recreation models, which reflect the core tenets of experiential learning. Experiential learning, as described in Kolb's theory (in Kusaeri & Mulhamah, 2016), and the (Kolb, 1984; OECD, 2019; UNESCO, 2018), highlights the significance of active engagement and reflection in the learning process. This model can be seen in countries like Singapore, where interactive science museums and culturally immersive workshops are designed to provide students with hands-on learning experiences in both natural and cultural contexts.

Similarly, Thailand's educational tourism programs, which focus on immersion in cultural practices, also highlight the importance of direct experience and reflection as powerful educational tools. Moreover, campus-industry collaborations, such as the ITB–Pertamina energy tours or educational village models inspired by Japan, can foster innovative local content while providing real-world learning opportunities that are directly connected to industry needs. The implementation of digital technologies such as virtual tours and a multilingual 'Edutourism Indonesia' application could further expand access to these programs, especially in remote areas, aligning with the digital literacy needs of the modern educational landscape.

Effective edutourism management requires standardized procedures based on international safety and learning standards, such as ISO 31031, to ensure safe and inclusive experiential learning. The theory of (Kolb, 1984; OECD, 2019; UNESCO, 2018), which emphasizes the importance of direct experience in fostering conceptual understanding and social competencies, is critical in guiding these educational practices. The adoption of inclusion principles, as outlined in the UN CRPD, ensures equal access for all students, making edutourism an inclusive and accessible form of education.

Standardization dimensions central to edutourism, including curriculum-based educational goals (Kolb, 1984; OECD, 2019; UNESCO, 2018), comprehensive planning and legal authorization (ISTC, 2022), and safety protocols, are critical for maintaining the quality and effectiveness of edutourism programs. These frameworks not only ensure that the programs are educationally sound, but also provide the necessary safeguards for participants, ensuring that all stakeholders—students, tour operators, and local communities—are protected and benefit from the experiences.

Execution demands detailed planning and the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) aligned with global standards. These include structured activity rundowns (Rahmawati & Suryana, 2024; Zaverbnyi & Ilnytskyi, 2024), vehicle and driver verification (Irianto & Djaja, 2017; Priyanka Maddimsetty, Chalasani, & Swapnika, 2024), and risk mitigation through multi-actor coordination (Longyue, 2023; Mattewakkang, Tahir, & Mozin, 2025). The preparedness of local authorities and educational institutions with medical response training (Guo et al., 2017; WHO, 2020) and transparent budgeting (Fatmawati & Nugraha, 2024) is mandatory for a smooth operation of edutourism programs.

From a benefit standpoint, edutourism fosters students' soft skills through exposure to new environments and social interactions, contributing to holistic personal development (Li et al., 2024; Zhao et al., 2022). The impacts of edutourism extend to multiple stakeholders: tour operators at risk of financial loss due to cancellations, local MSMEs as economic beneficiaries, and schools responsible for ensuring educational and safety outcomes. Therefore, SOPs grounded

in ISO 31031, UNESCO, and OECD standards are crucial to ensuring quality, safety, and sustainability within the edutourism ecosystem.

The edutourism framework must be tailored to relevant learning objectives, ensuring that destinations comply with international safety standards, such as ISO 21101:2014 (Suraji, 2022), and acquire the necessary permits (Zul, 2021). SOPs should cover all aspects of planning, including team management (Ferial & Wahyuni, 2022), emergency response scenarios (Muttaqin et al., 2023), and risk assessments (Susilowati, Prawenti, & Puspitasari, 2022). Furthermore, parent briefings, buddy systems (Huriati, Shalahuddin, Hidayah, Suaib, & Arfah, 2022), and student tracking (Kisworo, Fitryasari, Nastiti, & Prayoga, 2024) are essential to ensure a safe and educational experience. Post-tour evaluations should be conducted through satisfaction surveys and student reflections (Asmirajanti et al., 2021) to continuously improve the programs.

Finally, essential documents such as risk registers, itineraries, and participant medical data must be meticulously prepared (Alim et al., 2024; Pranata, Qibtiyah, & Fatiha, 2022). The ISO 31031 risk matrix will help mitigate incidents such as lost students or accidents, with interventions including certified vendors (Siswanto, Hidayati, Hadi, & Ayu, 2023), tracking apps, and WHO checklists. Continuous evaluation using the PDCA (Plan–Do–Check–Act) model (Dwi Saputra, Pertiwi, Warsito, & Priyono, 2022; Octasya & Antika, 2023) will support the refinement of edutourism programs, ensuring that Indonesia can create a safe, reflective, and impactful contextual learning platform for students in the long term.

6. Conclusions

This study reaffirms that edutourism represents a strategic, multidimensional approach that simultaneously enhances the quality of contextual education and drives the transformation of the tourism sector toward a more inclusive, participatory, and sustainable model. By employing a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology combined with bibliometric analysis of 88 international scholarly articles, this research reveals that the global success of edutourism initiatives significantly depends on the existence of integrated cross-sectoral policies, experience-based pedagogical innovations, and multi-stakeholder collaboration involving educational institutions, local communities, and tourism industry actors.

From a tourism perspective, edutourism functions as a transformative instrument that shifts conventional tourism toward a model grounded in educational and social values. The implementation of edutourism programs not only contributes to product diversification but also enhances the length of stay, boosts tourist spending, and fosters the development of community-based destinations such as tourism villages and eco-edutourism sites. Its economic impact is reflected in increased income for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), local job creation, and the strengthening of tourism value chains rooted in local wisdom and environmental conservation.

Nevertheless, in the Indonesian context, the optimization of edutourism's potential remains hindered by several structural challenges, including regional infrastructure disparities, the absence of a comprehensive national regulatory framework, and unequal institutional capacities. Without well-designed policies and adaptive monitoring mechanisms, edutourism runs the risk of excessive commercialization, which may obscure its educational objectives and exacerbate disparities in educational access at the local level.

Accordingly, the development of national edutourism should be pursued through a phased incubation strategy tailored to local contexts and regional readiness. This approach involves the adoption of decentralized governance, the strategic use of digitalization to expand access, and the formation of partnerships among the education, tourism, and community development sectors. By positioning edutourism as a nexus of cross-sectoral integration, Indonesia has a substantial opportunity to build an inclusive, resilient, and competitive edutourism ecosystem—one that not only enriches students' learning experiences but also reinforces tourism's contribution to national

and global development goals, particularly within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Overall, edutourism represents a highly effective educational approach, provided it is applied flexibly and based on local context. This approach does not require integration into the formal curriculum but should be implemented as co-curricular or extracurricular activities, offering contextual and relevant learning experiences for students

7. Limitations and Future Research

This study is limited by its reliance on Scopus and Google Scholar databases, which may exclude non-indexed but contextually significant local literature. The temporal scope (2016–2025) could also overlook earlier foundational studies that may have contributed valuable insights to the field. Additionally, the selection of these databases may introduce a potential bias, as they primarily reflect articles that are indexed internationally, potentially missing region-specific studies or grey literature. Future research would benefit from incorporating a wider range of databases, including regional repositories and non-academic sources, and conducting qualitative field validation to improve the contextual depth of findings and better represent local perspectives.

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10. Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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