

Walking Tours as Experiential Learning: Promoting Local Culture and Sustainable Tourism

Li-Jiuan Tsay

Ming Chuan University, Taipei City, Taiwan

Hsiang-I Chen

Ming Chuan University, Taipei City, Taiwan

Abstract:

Walking tours have gained increasing attention in Taiwan as an environmentally friendly way to explore local history and cultural heritage while supporting sustainable tourism. Beyond their tourism value, walking tours can also function as experiential learning activities that connect classroom knowledge with authentic cultural contexts. Grounded in experiential learning theory and sustainability education, this study investigates how participation in walking tours influences university students' learning experiences and cultural awareness.

This exploratory study adopts a quantitative research design using a questionnaire survey administered to 32 university students who participated in course-related walking tour activities. The survey employed a five-point Likert scale to examine three dimensions: experiential learning engagement, cultural understanding, and perceptions of sustainable tourism. Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to examine students' learning perceptions after the activity.

The findings indicate that students generally reported positive learning outcomes from the walking tour experience. Participants particularly valued the opportunity to directly engage with historical sites and local narratives, which enhanced their understanding of Taiwan's cultural heritage and strengthened their appreciation of local communities. The activity also increased students' awareness of walking tours as a low-carbon and sustainable form of cultural tourism.

The study suggests that integrating walking tours into university courses can serve as an effective experiential learning strategy that promotes cultural literacy, sustainability awareness, and community engagement. These findings provide pedagogical implications for higher education instructors seeking to incorporate place-based learning and sustainable tourism concepts into their teaching practices.

Keywords:

Experiential learning, walking tour, sustainable tourism, cultural heritage.