

Sustainable Community Participation in Homestay Program

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Abstract: This study explores the emergence and possibilities of sustainable community participation in the homestay program as a new approach in the tourism industry in Malaysia. This study focusses on the assessing the relationship between community participation, attitude and sustainable development in the homestay program. This research uses a path-model survey to acquire the causal relationships and multiple regressions to verify the adjusted R^2 with the data derived from 306 homestay participants in Malaysia. The result found that the first layer of the path diagram indicate 16.1% of variance attitude was determined by factors involving community participation and 31.1% of sustainable development was determined by community participation and attitude. The findings imply that attitude emerges as a prominent intermediary and moderating variable in discerning the relationship between community participation and sustainable development. Finally, the results indicated that the community participation is a crucial factor in developing sustainable development in the homestay program.

Key words: Community participation, attitude, sustainable development, homestay program, relationship

INTRODUCTION

According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2011) tourism has become the important sectors contribute to the world economic growth. The increase of international tourists arrival from 438 million in 1990 to 940 million in 2010 or 114.6% show that the tourism has a potential sector in providing a huge job market to the people. Referring to UNWTO (1998), the tourist arrivals are expected to increase 4.4% between years 2010-2020. RNCOS (2009) conclude Malaysia is a popular tourism destination in the ASEAN because of the multicultural society, historical background and the beautiful of nature. The development of tourism sector in Malaysia begin in 1970s where the objectives are to increase income from money exchange, increase employability, encourage regional development and diversified economic base in order to increase revenue of the country (Lo *et al.*, 2014). The numbers of tourists are increased from 22 million in 2008 to 23.6 million in 2009 and the figure has increased to 24.6 million in 2010. The numbers of tourist arrival are targeted 25 million by the year of 2015. Badaruddin and Tourism Malaysia noted that the tourism sector will contribute 115 billion Ringgit Malaysia and provide 2 million employability to the country by the year 2015.

Realizing the potential of tourism sector, the government through Ministry of Tourism has formulated

Tourism Transformation Plan 2020 to promote creativity and innovation in tourism industry to achieve the target 36 million tourist arrivals and revenue 168 billion ringgit Malaysia by 2020. Nowadays, community rural tourism has been given special emphasis by the government through the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Rural Development. The Community Based Tourism (CBT) has become crucial in the tourism industry especially in Asian countries such as Thailand, Indonesia, Cambodia and also in others countries in Africa, United Kingdom, Australia and Caribbean. In Malaysia, a community based homestay is one the popular program in the CBT activities (Hamzah, 2009). Based on the statistics from the Ministry of Tourism, the numbers of homestay participants in Malaysia has increased to 2984 in year 2010. The growing concerns of the homestay program are the sustainable revenue of the community participants is still low compared to the others types of accommodation. Whereas the participants involved in the program homestay are increased. Therefore, the objective of this study is to develop structural model of sustainable community participation in homestay program in Malaysia.

Community based tourism homestay program: Community based tourism can be delineated as a form of tourism where the local community has substantial control over and involvement in its development and management

and a major proportion of the benefits remains within the community (Razzaq *et al.*, 2013). Community based tourism is a form of rural tourism that has increasingly been accepted in most developing countries as a strategy towards poverty reduction (Goodwin, 2006). According to Murphy (1985), the concept of Community Based Tourism (CBT) has emerged in response to the negative impact of mass tourism that took place during the early stages of tourism development; particularly towards local people. Attributable to the potential of Community Based Tourism (CBT) towards community development, many rural communities have turned to tourism as a way of diversifying their economy activities (Briedenham and Wickens, 2004; Mair, 2006).

Community Based Tourism (CBT) can be concludes persons by some collective responsibilities and the ability to make collective decisions by representative bodies (Jamaludin *et al.*, 2010). In Malaysia, the first homestay program was launched in Temerloh Pahang 1995 by Minister of Culture, Arts and Tourism. This program is under the 9th Malaysia Plan (2006-2010) which is one of the government focuses to increase income and to create employability among the rural community through involving in the rural tourism industry. Community have their power to decide its own pace of development such as protects the environment and foster cross cultural awareness (Tsonis, 2009). Homestay program activities were carried out collectively by the activities hosted by visitors. This activity is based on the activities of the local community and do not need to go out of town for an activity. This program provides many benefits to the local community and visitors.

The concept of homestay program in Malaysia might be different from others countries. In Malaysia, homestay program which is the guests have the opportunities to interact, gain knowledge and experience the life style and culture of the host family as well as the local community. This element involves the guests eating, cooking and engaging in many activities together with their adopted families thus allowing two parties with different cultural backgrounds to interact and learn from each other (Ibrahim and Razzaq, 2009). In Australia, the term is particularly associated with farmhouse accommodation whereas in United Kingdom it is associated with learning the English language. According to Lanier and Berman (1993), homestay program can be defined as privates home in which unused rooms are rented for the purposes of supplementing income and meeting people. According to the ministry of tourism, homestay program is where tourist stays with

the host's family and experience the everyday way of life of the family in both a direct and indirect manner.

Literature review

Sustainable tourism development: The issues of sustainability become important and increased attention in the literature on the sustainable rural tourism development. Augustyn (1998) has identify the involvement of various stakeholders and local communities in decision making on rural tourism is one of the important strategy to contribute to the sustainable tourism development. Wilson *et al.* (2001) claim that the community participation and contribution is a critical factor for the successful rural tourism development. Cawley and Gillmor (2008) also takes into account all the different types of resources such as community participation in developing integrated rural tourism development. Sustainable tourism can be defined as "tourism which is developed and maintained of community or environment in such a manner that it remains viable over an infinite period and does not degrade or alter the environment (human or physical) in which it exists to such a degree that it prohibits the successful development and wellbeing of other activities and processes (Butler, 1991).

Sustainable development has been extensively discussed in the tourism sectors because of the development can provide the opportunities to enhance economic growth, protects environment and improve quality of life of local communities (Eagles *et al.*, 2002). The community based tourism has become an important tool for sustainable management (Sebele, 2010; Taylor, 1995). This finding support by Gursoy and Rutherford (2004). Nicholas *et al.* (2009) conclude that the development of sustainable tourism is difficult without support and participation of the local residents. In particular, local government should solicit their residents' broad and direct participation which can influence decision-making and guarantee to all stakeholders a fair distribution of benefits (Choi and Sirakaya, 2006). Theory exchange theory has been used to assess the influence of community participation to the sustainable homestay program. Based on this theory, the community will support and participate in the exchanges with visitors if they are benefit to the community. However, if the activities are gain cost more than benefits, they are to oppose this activities or program development (Gursoy *et al.*, 2002; Lee, 2012).

Community participation: Community participation refers to a form of voluntary action in which individuals face the opportunities and responsibilities of citizenship. Opportunities for participation including participation in the governance process itself, responding to an authoritative decision that affects a person's life and work co-operatively with others on issues of common interest (Til, 1984). In other words, community participation is to design and development in such a way that aims to participate in their own development by mobilizing their own resources (Stone, 1989). Community participation plays an important role in the sustainable development of community based tourism because the ability of community participation to increase the values of community by enhancing the positive effects of tourism and reducing the negative effects (Jamal and Getz, 1995). Besides that, community participation is increasingly being regarded as fundamental to the effectiveness of the planning and management of tourism (Drake, 1991; Razzaq *et al.*, 2013). The community participation will aid to attain worthy decision making process and manage resource competently and effectively. It also has the probability to teach and escalate community's responsiveness by being more receptive (Prabhakaran *et al.*, 2014).

Okazaki (2008) and Selin and Chevez (1995) noted that there are three levels of community participation consist of non-participation, degree of tokenism and degrees of citizen power are used to assess various levels of involvement and participation in the community based tourism. Tosun (2006) concluded that by having the participatory approach, local community will gain the opportunities and benefits from the tourist which is taking place in their areas. Whereas, Kayat (2002) indicates that participation in community-based tourism is influenced by community members' motivations to participate. The important implication from this finding is that community-based tourism projects must include awareness programs among its members so as to educate them about the project and to motivate them to participate. In accordance, Hall (2000) identified the importance of communication to disseminate information about Community Based Tourism and create awareness among community which in turn will establish local support and participation. Local community also can contribute to the success of the sustainable tourism program by sharing their knowledge, expertise and provide human resources (Brohman, 1996). Previous research by Stone and Stone (2011) suggest that to ensure maximum community participation, the community should be well informed and educated about its trust,

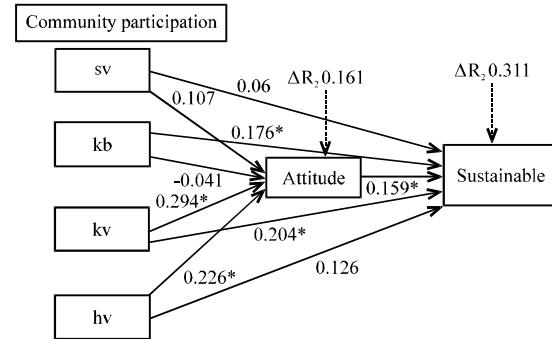


Fig. 1: The path analysis model for community participation in homestay program; sv: involvement; kb: awareness; kv: collective; hv: harmony

management should be transparent and accountable in its dealings, community members should have access to all business records at any time. Communities require training on their rights and responsibilities and should be fully conversant with their constitution and entitlements.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Based on the reviewed of literatures and the corresponding theoretical perspective, this study has proposed the conceptual framework as shown in Fig. 1. Several variables have been identified which have been used as the hypothesis of the study which is shown in Fig. 1. A stratified random sampling based on number of participants in the homestay program was selected from several locations in Malaysia. According to the Tourism Services Division, Ministry of Tourism, Malaysia, June 2009, the number of participants in the Malaysian homestay program is 3,264 people. A total of 306 samples were selected from the homestay program participants and the data was processed and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Among the analysis is a reliability test, descriptive and inferential analysis.

RESULTS

Demographic profiles: The finding shows that 34.0% are males and 66.0% are female. Based on randomly chosen respondents, it was found that >60% of the respondents were between 40-59 years old. Concerning marital status, it was found that 80% were married. With regard to education, 30.1% had completed primary school and the

highest level of education was the completion of Malaysian Certificate of Education (Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia) schooling at 39.2% (Table 1).

Reliability test and data normality: As shown in the Table 2, the mean value for each of dimension of community participation and sustainable development

Table 1: Demographic profiles

Items	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	104	34.0
Female	202	66.0
Age		
<20 years	0	0.0
20-29 years	10	3.3
30-39 years	24	7.8
40-49 years	85	27.8
50-59 years	107	35.0
60 years and above	80	26.1
Marriage		
Single	18	5.9
Married	242	79.1
Widower status	46	15.0
Monthly income*		
RM300 and below	6	2.0
RM 300 to <550	19	6.2
RM 550 and above	281	91.8
Education		
Never go to school	6	2.0
Primary school	92	30.1
SRP/PMR (completed form 3)	54	17.6
SPM (completed form 5)	120	39.2
STPM	15	4.9
Diploma	13	4.2
Degree	6	2.0
Working length/period as participant of homestay		
<5 years	182	59.5
6-10 years	88	28.8
11-15 years	32	10.5
16 years and above	4	1.3

varies from 1.60-1.93. The standard deviation for these facets ranges from 0.40-0.45. The alpha-value for community participation is 0.873 and attitude is 0.937. The alpha value for dependent variable that is sustainable development 0.920. All these $\alpha > 0.6$ meaning that the factors used in the study is suitable and can be accepted as a measurement (Sekaran, 2003). Furthermore, normality tests shows that the data is normally distributed since, the value of skewness and Kurtosis is below ± 3 (Coakes and Steed, 2003).

Path analysis: Path analysis consolidates the relationship between independent variables, intervening and a dependent variable. This study analyses the interrelation between three variables, namely community participation, attitude and sustainable development. This analysis of interrelation in the path model is divided into two layers. The first layer discusses on the relationship between the independent variables (community participation) and the intervening variable (attitude). The second layer will discuss on the relationship between independent, intervening and dependent variable (sustainable development).

First layer of path model: The R^2 value of this layer shows that the results is low level (ΔR^2 0.161). Table 3 explains that two out of four variables are significant relationship with the attitude. There are collective ($b = 0.294$) and harmony ($b = 0.226$).

The second layer of path model shows the R^2 value is higher than the first layer (ΔR^2 0.311). This layer shown that three variables are significance. There are awareness ($b = 0.176$), collective ($b = 0.204$) and attitude ($b = 0.159$).

Table 2: The significance value of 1st layer

Models	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients (β)	t-values	Sig.	Collinearity statistics	
	B	SE				Tolerance	VIF
Constant	0.976	0.137	-	7.142	0.000	-	-
1							
sv	-0.125	0.075	-0.107	-1.670	0.096	0.664	1.506
kb	-0.050	0.104	-0.041	-0.480	0.631	0.373	2.678
kv	0.316	0.089	0.294	3.540	0.000	0.399	2.505
hv	0.248	0.088	0.226	2.807	0.005	0.425	2.355

Dependent variable: Attitude; Adjusted R^2 0.161; sv: involvement; kb: awareness; kv: collective and hv: harmony

Table 3: The significance value of 2nd layer

Models	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients (β)	t-values	Sig.	Collinearity statistics	
	B	SE				Tolerance	VIF
Constant	0.571	0.108	-	5.274	0.000	-	-
1							
sv	0.061	0.055	0.065	1.112	0.267	0.658	1.520
kb	0.172	0.076	0.176	2.267	0.024	0.373	2.680
kv	0.177	0.067	0.204	2.653	0.008	0.383	2.609
hv	0.112	0.065	0.126	1.710	0.088	0.414	2.416
Attitude	0.128	0.042	0.159	3.036	0.003	0.828	1.208

Dependent variable: Sustainable; Adjusted R^2 0.311; sv: involvement; kb: awareness; kv: collective and hv: harmony

CONCLUSION

The results from this study showed that community participation with for dimensions (involvement, awareness, collective and harmony) are crucial in helping the homestay participants in sustaining their business. Furthermore, the findings of path analysis postulate that the factor of attitude is significantly becoming intervening variable in association of sustainable homestay development. The findings of this study also can be conclude that the attitude is considered an essential factor in involving the relationships between community participation and sustainable development. On top of that the findings of this study also applicable to wide range of homestay program in Malaysia. The positive values have to be embedded to the homestay participants which may help them to increase their positive attitude and sustainable development livelihood. The findings of this study also will help the government agencies to plan and create a new policies, procedures and program of sustainable development of homestay program.

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