

CONSTRAINTS OF ALTERNATIVE TOURISM IN MALAYSIA

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Introduction

Tourism is considered to be one of the biggest industries in the world in the 21st century. In order to gain stable profit from this industry, sustainable tourism development throughout the world should be ensured. Tourism is an economic phenomenon concerning the movement of people to places outside their usual environment for either personal or business or professional purposes. As such, tourism has implications for the economy for the natural and built environment, for the local population at the destination and for the visitor themselves. Due to these multiple impacts, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) encourages an alternative tourism in the formulation and implementation of national and local tourism policies.

It is widely acknowledged that tourism planning is an essential approach to achieve this goal. Simultaneously, interest in the participation of multiple stakeholders in tourism planning is increasing in order to gain advantages from the shared 'vision' and the close collaboration amongst them [1]. Wheelchairs are lost or broken in airplane baggage compartments, public transportation is difficult and often not accommodating and hotel rooms do not always meet accessibility codes. Since 1998, many barriers to travel still exist for persons with disabilities, requiring great skill and patience on the part of the traveler. For many travelers with disabilities, this situation is a familiar one. Tourism is the world's largest growth industry and it's showing no signs of slowing down anytime soon. Receipts from international tourism have increased by an average of nine percent annually for the past 16 years [2].

Ten percent of the worldwide population consists of people with disabilities. Persons with disabilities includes people with intellectual disabilities, physical, sensory (hearing, vision and speech), psychiatric or mental illness. Women who are pregnant, people with permanent and temporary injuries, people with small children and people who suffer from obesity also categorized as disabled. People with disabilities are often marginalized from the social environment. They tend to be older, poorer, less educated and has fewer employment opportunities than those without disabilities. In countries such as Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Afghanistan, many people become disabled as a result of direct conflict either by battle or from wounds due to mine explosions [3]. Access to justice for persons with disabilities is often said to overcome discrimination, communication and physical access. They are at higher risk of becoming victims of crime and exploitation, they may not be aware of the use by others for criminal purposes. This group was not given a chance because of physical differences and the lack of access to facilities and resources needed including courts and other legal institutions [4]. The number of senior citizens also increasing day by day all over the world especially in the developed and developing countries. Because many of these seniors have the desire and the means to travel for pleasure, discover and learning, the ultimate goal for marketer could well be to delight them into becoming repeated customers. However, marketing strategies aimed at delighting senior tourists need to be recognized that this group is far from homogeneous [5].

This paper aims to identify the constraints of alternative tourism which is provided for the disabled person and the elderly in Malaysia. This paper also aims to identify all the facilities available for the disabled currently in four of the National Park in Johor State, Malaysia.

Leisure Constraints

On the other hand, tourism industry sees a robust growth since the 1990s, particularly in the past several years. While it has been an exciting phase in the tourism industry, there are also emerging challenges that have to confront. In examining leisure in general, barriers and constraints are been differentiated. Constraints were viewed as factors that precluded or reduce an individual's frequency, rate or satisfaction as a participant in an activity. Barriers are a physical structure which blocks or impedes something. Leisure constraints can be categorized into three main categories, namely intrapersonal constraints, interpersonal constraints and structural constraints. Intrapersonal constraints includes lack of self-confidence, lack of encouragement or lack of information about opportunities for leisure that effect preference or lead to a lack of interest in a particular type of leisure activity. Interpersonal factors are those associated with other individuals including lack of leisure partners or lack of social interaction skills. Structural barriers are those that exist between individual preferences and participation in a leisure activity, including lack of finances, lack of transportation, limited abilities and lack of time or architectural barriers [2].

Intrapersonal Constraints

Information about the site, traffic and restaurant is very important for the disability in Barrier-free Tourism, which could make their travelling easier. But the fact is the travel destination information is deficient. First, the maps, travel magazines or manuals for the disabled are few in recreation park. Secondly, false or incorrect information on the web would mislead the disabled and reject their second time travelling. For example, exaggerating the effect of the destination and lacking of booking information would mislead them when they try to find the fitful places to go [6].

Families do in general not have the possibility to travel off-season (in particularly families with school-aged children and with disabled child. Families which are facing difficult social circumstances prefer to travel to domestic destinations [7]. Tourist arrivals in Bhutan, for example are subject to pronounced seasonality. March/April and October/November are the top months as the weather is deal for trekking and religious and cultural festivals are taking place all over the country. January/February and June/July are the months with the lowest activity as the weather is too cold or rainy for trekking and there are hardly any significant cultural events taking place. The seasonal nature of tourism leads to a highly inequitable distribution of visitors throughout the year adding pressure on the limited infrastructure during the peak seasons. As a result there is a severe resort to makeshift arrangements that may not meet the desired quality of service [8].

Interpersonal Constraints

The disables need professional service to satisfy their special needs. On one hand, the cicerone or waiter should have the ability to offer special service such as expertly operating the wheelchair, offering gesture language explanation. The college that has the major of tourism always ignores teaching students the special service for the disability [5]. The Department of Tourism lacks both manpower and finance to manage and monitor the tourism industry effectively. There is a lack of qualified manpower, particularly at the management and entrepreneurial levels. there are no formal hotel and tourism training institutes in the country. Most companies have problems in attracting and keeping adequately trained employees at all levels [8].

The government and local communities are now beginning to argue that local communities need to be more involved in the business and should receive more benefits from tourism. Local community involvement is currently limited to providing tourism transport and portage. Proper research, surveys, feedback, statistics, data collection and processing and research related to tourism development are needed for making sound policy decisions in the future. Although the government's policy allows a high margin of profitability to tourism operators, increasing competition has brought about undesirable results. This had led to a break down in pricing integrity. Operators are resorting to discounts and rebates to foreign operators in order to snatch business away from competitors. This practice not only has a direct impact on the loyal government's policy of high value-low volume tourism but also leads to deterioration in the quality of services provided [8].

Structural Barriers

While building regulations now demand that new buildings be accessible, these new facilities are usually in the upper class and charge prices outside the budgets of most disable travelers. A further economic barrier to travel lies in the need for many disabled to be accompanied by an attendant, a parent, spouse, friend or employee. Most people with a disability say that they have had to pay a premium to stay in accommodation that is set-up for people with disabilities. They have experienced room rates that are more expensive than the standard room rates, often because the accessible room is classed as a "suite". This is considered to be discriminatory. Many people with disabilities are on relatively low incomes, which can make cost a barrier to travel [9].

Indeed, being without one's wheelchair is much more distressing than having the misfortune of lost or delayed luggage for the average travelers. Other constraints facing wheelchair-travelers include the difficulty of boarding and disembarking the aircraft, changing flights and the inaccessibility of airplane restrooms. Reasonable accommodations for disabled still another challenges. Access throughout hotels is also problematic. Most of the constraints encountered by tourists in the course of these activities focus on site inaccessibility [9].

Attractions are the elements of a tourism destination that stimulate visitation. They may be contrived (theme parks, sporting events), nature-based (oceans, mountains, climate), historical (museums, antique shopping) or social cultural (festivals, visiting friends or relatives). Most of the constraints encountered by tourist with disabilities were architectural or environmental in nature, mainly focusing on site inaccessibility. It is recommended that individuals with disabilities gather as much information as possible about the site accessible of their intended travel destination. Tourism attraction providers need to provide better, more complete information about site accessibility and the accommodations they have made for travelers with disabilities. In addition, consideration for reduced fees should be made at those attractions where full accessibility is not possible [2].

Facility Auditing

The study has been conducted at the recreation park in Johor, especially in Pulau Kukup, Tanjung Piai, Gunung Ledang and Endau-Rompin. The design consisted of a literature review, and audit observations. The focus of this study is on facilities inside and outside the national park and the data were compared between the study locations. Many research has been conducted in this area due to the development of the Iskandar Development Region (IDR) and South Johor Economic Region (SJER). Tourism market in the study area is increasing from year to year and this is contributing to the economy. Accurate data is shown clearly in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Number of tourists to Johor National Park from 2010 to 2012

National Park	2010		2011		2012		Total
	Malaysian Citizen	Non-citizen of Malaysia	Malaysian Citizen	Non-citizen of Malaysia	Malaysian Citizen	Non-citizen of Malaysia	
Endau Rompin	3,515	968	2,396	768	2,453	764	10,864
Pulau Kukup	16,137	2,316	33,222	2,999	33,688	1,867	90,229
Tanjung Piai	47,470	8,342	56,847	5,334	65,973	6,959	190,925
Gunung Ledang	10,838	4,038	17,837	2,178	26,431	1,738	63,060
Total	77,960	15,664	110,302	11,279	128,545	11,328	355,078

Table 3.2: List of all facilities audit Johor National Park

Element	Endau Rompin		Pulau Kukup		Tanjung Piai		Gunung Ledang	
	Audit	Provision	Audit	Provision	Audit	Provision	Audit	Provision
1. Accessibility								
a) Ramp	√	**	√	*	√	***	√	**
b) Handrail	√	***	√	***	√	***		*
c) Grab-bar	√	***		*		*		*
d) Special or pedestrian paths and sidewalks	√	***		***		***	√	**
e) Building entrance	√	***	√	***	√	***	√	***
f) Staircase	√	***	√	***	√	*	√	*
g) Pedestrian crossings		*		*		*		*
2. Spatial								
a) Special car parking		*		*		*		*
b) Toilet	√		√		√		√	
c) Changing or breastfeeding room		*		*		*		*
d) Provision of residential units or chalets	√	***		*		*	√	***
e) Grocery store or Corner Shop		*		*		*		*
f) Bus stop		*		*		*		*
3. Supporting Facilities								
a) Statement signs	√	***	√	***	√	***	√	***
b) Direction signs	√	***	√	***	√	***	√	***
c) Warning signs	√	***	√	***	√	***	√	***
d) Special sign board		*		*	√	***		*
e) Written signs	√	***	√	***	√	***	√	***
f) Fixed or built-in bench or seat	√	***		*	√	***	√	***
g) Paid phone booths		*		*		*		*
h) Drain or ditch	√	**		*		*	√	***

Criteria for accessibility rating:

***** Facility is fully accessible. Features and facilities meet and exceed the Universal Design principles.

**** Majority of the facility is accessible; however there are some accessibility barriers. Some improvements are needed to make the facility fully accessible.

*** Facility is partially accessible. Barriers exist to fully accessing the facility and an alternate facility may be necessary.

** Facility is partially accessible. Barriers exist to fully accessing the facility and an alternate facility may be necessary.

* Facility has poor accessibility. Alternative facility is recommended if barrier free access is required.

According to Table 3.2, it is found that special facilities for the disabled, less available at all National Park in Johor State. From this table it is found that all of the Johor National Park does not have facilities such as pedestrian crossings, locker room or breastfeeding, grocery store or corner shop, the bus stand and pay phone booths. Most of the fundamental facilities are not available due to high cost and difficulty to determine the demand of the disabled facilities among the specific focus group.

Discussion And Conclusions

From audit and observations it is found that all of the Johor National Park does not have adequate facilities for the disabled. Due to lack of facilities, most people with disabilities are not really interested in visiting national parks in Johor. National Parks Corporation also not keen about making publicity in print and mass media causes people to not know much about a place of recreation provided by this corporation.

Provision of accessible facilities is far more important in doubt to achieve barrier-free tourism for people with disabilities. Assumption of things will change overnight is highly unrealistic due to the limitations of cost and short time. Things which are needed in the short term are a reasonable level of accessibility can balance the needs of users with disabilities, the constraints of the existing situation and the resources available for adjustments. In many cases, this is related to the physical adjustment. In the long run, provide more in-depth approach to promoting the restructuring and overhaul of the hospitality and tourism sector.

Education and training on awareness and sensitivity to disability issues should be more in promoting tourism accessibility. Close collaboration between disabled organizations and tourism industry along with the education sector will facilitate the development of training programs required. It will also help in the production of such guidelines facilitative training and support audio-visual training in the tourism industry. Many seminars which highlight the obstacles of disabled, the challenges faced by the disabled and solutions to all the issues that arise should be widely held. Accessibility and tourism integration is included in the Corporate Social Responsibility strategy and business development, this will be a challenge in the future to contribute to the development of tourism standards.

More and more people, both with and without disabilities are travelling more often. These people are becoming more vocal in expressing their needs and desires, especially with regard to flexibility in travel options. The tourism industry needs to become more familiar with accessibility standards and the needs of tourists with disabilities. Accessibility audits performed by knowledge people with disabilities may be a key to the improvement of facilities and services.

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