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ScienceDirect

Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 144 (2014) 15 - 24



5th Asia Euro Conference 2014

An investigation of the appropriateness of tourism development paradigms in rural areas from main tourism stakeholders' point of view

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Abstract

Rural tourism or tourism in rural areas is a new form of activity that can bring economic and social benefits to the society. It will not only generate employment for the people but it can also develop social, cultural and educational values; therefore, rural tourism has attracted increasing attention from governments, NGOs and other organizations. Economic regime change from Fordism to post-Fordism and cultural regime change from Modernism to post-Modernism resulted in the emergence of new forms of tourism such as Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT), Community-Based Tourism (CBT), and Community Benefit Tourism Initiative (CBTI). Moreover, it should be considered that stakeholders' views such as local communities' and local operators' opinions on tourism development within their region vary significantly based on some variables such as their perception of benefits, and their expectations. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the appropriateness of tourism paradigms developed in rural areas from main stakeholders' point of view by doing a comparative study of CBT and CBTI in 2 villages of Lower Kinabatangan region to find out the main stakeholders' choice of appropriate tourism paradigm in their regions as well as their reasons. The local communities of Mukim Batu Puteh village and Sukau village alongside the homestay operators from Batu Puteh village and eco-lodge operators from Sukau village have been considered as the main stakeholders in the region. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed to achieve the research goals; first of all, a Decision Support System (DSS) model was created based on the 42 research variables as its input data by undertaking Cybernetic Analytic Network Process (CANP) method. The DSS model which was verified through a Delphi technique, measured the local communities' and local operators' choices of CBT and CBTI through specific questionnaires. The results of the first on-theground study revealed that both local communities from the 2 villages together with the homestay operators from Batu Puteh village preferred CBT as the appropriate tourism paradigm for their region while eco-lodge operators from Sukau village preferred CBTI as the appropriate tourism paradigm in the region. Finally, it should be emphasized that the result of qualitative survey validates the result of quantitative study; therefore, there is no doubt about their choices. Consequently, the research goals

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are met totally since the researcher concludes that the main reason for the difference in eco-lodge operators' choice with others' choice refers to the fact that these eco-lodge operators are totally outsiders and non-indigenous people while other three groups of our respondents are totally locals and indigenous people of the region. Therefore, this research article recommends that outsiders who want to bring and develop new forms of tourism such as CBTI for rural people should consider locals' perceptions and expectations of tourism venture in their village while listening to their voices.

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Peer-review under responsibility of the Scientific Committee of 5AEC2014.

Keywords: tourism development paradigm; Community-Based Tourism (CBT); Community Benefit Tourism Initiatives (CBTI); main tourism stakeholders

1. Introduction

Tourism is currently the world's largest industry and the fastest growing sector of the market. Tourism is usually viewed as being multidimensional, possessing physical, social, cultural, economic and political characteristics. Tourism is the fastest growing industry in the world. Travel and Tourism is one of the world's leading industries or economic sectors, representing a major source of GDP, employment, exports and taxes. In 2011, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) expects it to contribute almost US\$6 trillion to the global economy, or 9% of global GDP (WTTC, 2011). Worldwide tourism is ranked second highest revenue-generating industry next to the oil industry.

Mowforth and Munt (2003) believe that the concept of globalization should be considered in the analysis of tourism due to the general ubiquity of tourists and tourism. McGrew (1992) contends that globalization make the politics and social activities stretched across the globe while it also entails an intensification in the level of interaction, interconnectedness, and interdependence between societies and states which form the world community. Moreover, in line with this stretching, there goes a deepening of the impact of the processes on national and local communities (McGrew, 1992). Therefore, Mowforth and Munt (2003) conclude that this intensity and deepening is endorsed in the way that the Third World countries and their communities are progressively drawn into tourism. It has been argued that global economic change and development are the relevant features in the study of globalization while it is necessary to solicit the main features of global economic change to find out how these changes have affected the contemporary tourism and to see how these changes are reflected in the existing tourism development. Three main features have been identified as the main features of global economic change where the first feature is rapid growth in world market which resulted in the emergence of world economic system, the second feature is the rapid First World de-industrialization with an equally a rapid growth in service sector which helps us to understand the development in the First World consumption of tourism, the third feature is that capitalism has progressively entered the Third World and combined these countries into a global capital system which in return has increased the number of countries which are implicated in capitalist production (Mowforth and Munt, 2003).

Mass production and mass consumption had formed the basic characteristic of Fordism economic regime among capitalist economies since post-Fordism economic regime emerged with a qualitative shift from mass production and consumption to more flexible system of production and organization in a way that it makes links to the changes how these goods and services are consumed. The applicability of these ideas to the changes in tourism has been recognized due to the growing emergence of small group tourism activities and new alternatives in comparison to mass tourism. Moreover, Crompton (1993) contends that recent works done on the growth and development of the middle class are comprehensively associated with the growth of consumer capitalism and an emphasis on lifestyle. The new middle classes are not only considered as cultural mediators but they also reflect the political alignments or socio-environmental organizations; they are concerned with various issues; however, their engagement in assessing environmental politics and the term of sustainable lifestyle movement is linked with the development of new Third World tourism; Crompton's statement encompass the cultural regime change from modernism to post-modernism style of life which resulted in the emergence of new tourism alternatives against mass tourism (Mowforth and Munt, 2003).

Furthermore, the growth of mass tourism led to some problems such as environmental, social, and cultural degradation besides unequal distribution of financial benefits which have been mentioned by so many researchers and are well publicized over recent years. Therefore, it has been usually claimed that the development of alternative forms of tourism is a response to these problems; however, Mowforth and Munt (2003) believe that link between the growths of new forms of tourism with the problems caused by mass tourism is misplaced; this growth in new forms of tourism has appeared more as the natural continuation of the historical inequalities between First World and Third World countries. It should be taken into consideration that the study of new form of tourism is still in its infancy, therefore, there is no clear agreement on their definitions, conceptual, and practical boundaries; consequently, implying a disagreement between those who study new forms of tourism and those who operate tours while these disagreements are evident among other groups in the field such as government officials, the conservationist and service providers. However, the new tourisms are truly contested ideas and tourism literature is peppered with claim and counter-claim, with mainly academics and interest groups advocating and defending particular terms and definitions. Protagonists consider the new forms of tourism as 'sustainable', 'no-impact', 'responsible', 'green', and 'environmentally friendly' forms of tourism (Mowforth and Munt, 2003). There are various types of new tourism while this research article mainly focuses on two of them; Community-Based Tourism (CBT), and Community Benefit Tourism Initiatives (CBTIs).

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) has emerged in recent years due to increasing attention at community involvement in tourism ventures aiming to develop the community's area, conserve resources, and develop the industry itself. Therefore, numerous research efforts have been concentrated on this issue which the new ones suggest that approaches to community-based tourism, especially in rural areas, should consider the important role of public participation in tourism and bring the grass-root members of the community on board to be involved in decision making procedure in their region which has triggered rapid growth and evolution of CBT around the world, particularly, in developing countries (Richards and Hall, 2000).

Batta and Pathak (2009) conclude that in unsustainable way of tourism where the local community is paying the cost of tourism development in the form of degradation of environmental resources, commercialization of landscape and congestion; the main economic benefits are not flowing to the local community; therefore, they suggest a Community Benefit Tourism Initiative (CBTI) model for achieving sustainable tourism development at the destination through multiple stakeholders' partnership. Community Benefit Tourism Initiative (CBTI) relies on transfer of benefits to a community regardless of location, instigation, size, level of wealth, involvement, ownership or control; therefore, in this model Stakeholders in a partnership aim at ensuring the delivery of benefits to the community while achieving sustainable tourism development.

Moreover, it should be considered that stakeholders' opinions on tourism development within the area vary significantly based on some variables such as their perception of benefits, and their expectations (Jamal and Getz, 1995). Also in line with their perceptions and expectations, these stakeholders possess some values which are the beliefs upon which they act by preferences; the impacts of these values can make people consider the surrounding environment and things positively or negatively (Rokeach, 1973). Therefore, the goal of this research paper is to address this issue as a gap in the development literature and also in practice by conducting a comprehensive study that investigates the appropriateness of rural tourism paradigms based on main tourism stakeholders' perspective.

2. The Objectives of the Study

In this study, with the aim of investigating the appropriateness of tourism development paradigms in rural areas from main tourism stakeholders' point of view, the researcher undertook to determine: (1) to investigate which tourism paradigm main tourism stakeholders prefer as the appropriate tourism paradigm in their region as well as their reasons. (2) To compare and contrast local communities' choices with local operators' choices.

3. Study Area

The Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary is located in the lower basin situated between Sandakan and Lahad Datu Covering 26,103 ha which is managed by District Wildlife Office. The region is hotspot for 10 species of primates (including Orang Utan, proboscis monkey and Bornean gibbon), 50 mammal species including Pgymy elephants, 250 bird species, rare freshwater sharks, and more and it is the home for over 20 ethnic groups collectively known as Orang Sungai.

3.1. Mukim Batu Puteh (Batu Puteh Habitation)

Mukim Batu Puteh which consists of 4 villages of Perpaduan, Batu Puteh, Mengaris, and Singgah Mata is situated on the East Coast of Sabah in the Kinabatangan district some 6 hours away from Kota Kinabalu. Mukim Batu Puteh is positioned within Malaysia's largest river flood plain and is partly gazetted as a Wildlife Sanctuary Area because of the high quality of nature all around it. Mukim Batu Puteh has got some 1266 inhabitants where most of them are small-scale farmers and fishermen. Quite a number of the communities are involved in a group called MESCOT (Model Ecologically Sustainable Community Based Conservation and Tourism), which was established in 1998. WWF-Malaysia and Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment have been responsible in facilitating the establishment of MESCOT.

One of the major activities of MESCOT is the Miso Walai homestay; it is a well-known program and the village has received an international award and a national award for the outstanding display of community participation in the ecotourism industry. Miso Walai homestay program offers an experience of the Sungai lifestyle and customs along with ecotourism activities involving appreciating the wildlife and pristine natural environment of Kinabatangan wetlands. Tourists have the chance to contribute back to the environment by joining the rainforest tree plantation program for rehabilitation of the surrounding natural environment. There are also campaigns for village landscaping, cleaning up litter and monitoring illegal logging activities. Miso Walai receives a great number of foreign tourists, usually brought by specialized tour operators. MESCOT has been working on aspects such as training guides and providing business fundamentals needed to operate homestay services, boat services and other ecotourism-related activities.

3.2. Kampung Sukau (Sukau Village)

Sukau village is located 70km up the Kinabatangan River from the east coast city of Sandakan. It is a small village surrounded by the Wildlife Sanctuary Area and oil palm plantations. Sukau has the highest ecotourism lodge concentration in Sabah. It is some 8 hours away from the capital city, Kota Kinabalu, and is located at the Kinabatangan Wetlands, one of the richest ecosystems in the world. A large part of it has already been gazetted as a Wildlife Sanctuary Area. This village has got a population of 2000 where most of its people are self-sufficient farmers and low ranking government servants.

Tourists started coming to the lower Kinabatangan area in the late 1980s, mainly to Kampung Sukau, Kampung Abai and Batu Puteh. However, the number of tourists was small and the visits were infrequent. Kampung Sukau has evolved into a prominent ecotourism destination because of its close proximity to the scenic Menanggul tributary where the world famous endemic monyet bangkatan or proboscis monkey can easily be spotted during a river cruise, and the historical Gomantong Caves where edible swallow nests, which are as valuable as gold, are collected. At present, Sukau receives a steady stream of visitors, mostly foreigners, from all over the world. The villagers are from the Sungai ethnic group and they are mainly government servants and self-sufficient farmers and fishermen. Some of the youth are hired to work at the lodge. One local owns a lodge, while urban-based tour operators own the others. Visitors usually follow a scheduled tour, which consists of river cruising for wildlife observation during sunrise and sunset, exploring the river and oxbow lakes nearby and wildlife watching at night in the jungle. There are usually optional activities such as exploring the nearby Gomantong Caves or having tea with the locals in their homes.

4. Study design

While there are different research methods, the researcher has the opportunity to choose one of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods; therefore, there are some factors which cause the researcher choice of one method over another for the design of his research (Creswell, 2009, p.18). In the following, the criteria for choosing a research design are presented:

4.1. The Research Problem

Certain types of social research problems need specific research method approaches, for example, when a concept or a phenomenon is vague and it needs to be understood because it is a new topic and there is little research about it, the qualitative research is the best approach (Creswell, 2009, p.18).

4.2. Personal Experiences

Researcher's personal training and experience can affect his choice of the research method; researchers who are more familiar with technical, scientific writing, and statistics and computer statistical programs would most likely choose the quantitative approach. But researchers who like writing in a literary style or they like doing personal interviews and doing close observations are more prone to select qualitative design (Creswell, 2009, p.19).

4.3. Audiences

Since researchers write for audiences who will accept their work, they should consider which approaches are typically supported and used by their audiences (Creswell, 2009, p.19).

4.4. Method

According to the research principles stated above, mixed method which is a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches has been selected for this research. Both primary and secondary data are used in this research; In terms of primary data, the survey method including quantitative questionnaires for both local communities and local operators in Batu Puteh and Sukau villages as the main source of primary data is used while a descriptive survey method including; semi-structured interviews with local community representatives, and local operators with openended questions is employed as the qualitative part of mixed method by which the researcher goes deeper and further in the results of the quantitative research.

4.5. Sampling

The sampling procedure used in the field research was a non-probability sampling method known as purposive or judgmental sampling (Babbie, 2012). Based on the researcher judgment and purpose of the study, this sampling procedure was seemed optimal as it allowed for the sample population to include the most informed in terms of knowledge of the research topic. For quantitative research, 30 respondents from Batu Puteh and Sukau community were chosen among youth, women, and elderly groups who could read and write to answer the questionnaire. Interviews were also held with the most informed member of key informants.

The fact that the sample population was chosen unilaterally by the researcher, indicates that this is a biased sample. The challenge for the researcher in this situation was not to eliminate the biases completely but try to minimize and reduce bias as much as possible, therefore, the researchers decided to choose the respondents and interviewees among the most informed people, and secondly to stay with local community (Orang Sungai at Batu Puteh and Sukau) for one month in two periods of data collection.

4.6. Data Collection

The secondary data consists of theoretical and practical literature review of CBT and CBTI for extracting common variables of these two rural tourism development paradigms which follows CANP method for building the DSS model for the research through a Delphi technique. The survey technique (quantitative questionnaire) and the descriptive survey technique (semi-structured interviews) were employed in primary research to accomplish the secondary data collection.

4.6.1 Study Variables

Based on literature review focusing mainly on rural tourism development paradigms particularly CBT and CBTIs, 42 research variables under 5 main criteria have been extracted and shown in table 1.

4.1. Data Analysis

The related literature review provides a theoretical background to the various multi-faceted research themes. In terms of primary data, the examination of the appropriateness of tourism development paradigms in rural areas from local community's point of view is based on evaluation of the local community and local operators quantitative questionnaires data while the aggregated interview data revealed the reasons why main tourism stakeholders in two villages prefer one tourism development paradigm over the other one. Furthermore, in this study the local operators in two villages have been investigated in the same way to enable the researcher to conduct a comparative study of local communities' and local operators' preferences and their choice of tourism development paradigm in the region.

5. Study Result

The data result involves 2 parts; 1. The result of CANP method done by Super Decisions software, and 2. The result of qualitative data done by interviews. The data results are given in the following.

5.1. The Result Of CANP Method Done By Super Decisions Software

Super Decisions software has been used to get the results of CANP method which indicate the priorities of tourism paradigms in rural areas from local community's and local operators' point of view in the two villages based on the collected data by the related questionnaires; the result of Super Decision calculations is presented in the following.

5.1.1 The Result Of Local Community

(i) Mukim Batu Puteh Village

The result of local community's questionnaire for this village calculated by the Super Decision Software is presented in the following table.

Table 1. Research Variables.

CBT(I) aspects	CBT(I) factors and variables
Politic (P)	Local community participation in tourism venture (P1)
	 Local community engagement in decision-making procedure (P2)
	 Local community partnership with other stakeholders (P3)
	• The rights of local community in natural resource management (P4)
	 Local Community's access to tourists and tourism enterprises (P5)
	 Empowering and engaging women in the tourism industry (P6)
	 Local community's influence over government policy (P7)
	 Individual and public capacity building (P8)
Social (S)	Local community formal and informal education and training (S1)
	• Community-oriented development (S2)
	 Bringing Social Justice (S3)
	• Facilitating work force development (e.g. rights and conditions) (S4)
	• Fostering civic pride (in community, culture, heritage, natural resources and
	infrastructure) (S5)
	 Increasing safety and security (S6)
	• Active community organizations (S7)
	• Creating a sense of well-being (S8)
	Promoting greater cross-institutional understanding (S9)
	• Improving poor's access to markets and enhancing their health (S10)
Cultural (C)	Formal and informal education (C1)
	• Local cultural passed on to the next generation (C2)
	• Promoting cultural understanding (C3)
	• Preserving cultural and social heritage and local languages or dialects (C4)
	Supporting and conserving local unique crafts and skills (C5)
	• motivating local community to value their own cultural heritage (C6)
	• Endorsing the awareness of local community towards the uniqueness of their
	culture (C7)
Economic (E)	Income from local production (E1)
Economic (E)	Diversified local economy (E2)
	• Self-reliance revenue (E3)
	• The creation of full or part-time employment for the poor (E4)
	The development of SME opportunities for rural poor people (E5)
	Decreasing Tourism Economic Leakages (E6)
	Providing Direct employment opportunities (E7)
	Providing indirect employment opportunities (e.g. environmental managing entrangenesis) (ES)
	entrepreneurs) (E8)
	Providing consolidation and development to local economies (E9) Providing alternatives to sharping on feding traditional industries (E10)
	• Providing alternatives to changing or fading traditional industries (E10)
Environmental	Natural resource management rights (En1)
(En)	• Environmental responsibility (En2)
(EII)	Natural resource conservation (En3)
	Matural resource conservation (En3) Minimizing negative impacts on the natural environment (En4)
	Improving environment (maintenance changes leading to less degradation of the first changes)
	natural resources) (En5)
	Local community's awareness and appreciation of the environment and other
	Local community's awareness and appreciation of the environment and other tourism resources (En6)
	Enhancing management and stewardship of natural resources (En7)
	Emilianeing management and stewardship of natural resources (EII/)

Table 2. The result of tourism paradigms priorities for the Batu Puteh community.

Tourism Paradigms	CBT	CBTI	
Priority Degree	0.76	0.24	

As it can be seen in this table, the local community from Batu Puteh village prefers CBT over CBTI in their region strongly.

(ii) Sukau Village

The result of local community's questionnaire for this village calculated by the Super Decision Software is presented in the following table.

Table 3. The result of tourism paradigms priorities for the Batu Puteh community.

Tourism Paradigms	CBT	CBTI
Priority Degree	0.8	0.2

As it can be seen in the table above the Sukau community prefers CBT over CBTI in their village significantly.

5.1.2 The Result Of Local Operators

(i) Homestay Operators

The result of homestays' questionnaire for Batu Puteh village calculated by the Super Decision Software is presented in the following table.

Table 4. The result of tourism paradigms priorities for the Batu Puteh community.

Tourism Paradigms	CBT	CBTI
Priority Degree	0.8	0.2

As it can be seen in the table above the Home-stay Operators in Batu Puth village prefer CBT over CBTI in their village meaningfully.

(ii) Eco-Lodge Operators

The result of eco-lodge operators' questionnaire for Sukau village calculated by the Super Decision Software is presented in the following table.

Table 5. The result of tourism paradigms priorities for the eco-lodge operators .

Tourism Paradigms	CBT	CBTI
Priority Degree	0.43	0.57

As it can be seen in the table above the Eco-lodge Operators prefer CBTI over CBT in Sukau village.

5.2. The Result Of Qualitative Data Done By Interviews

The result of qualitative survey confirmed the result of quantitative survey comprehensively. The two local communities and the Homestay operators from Mukim Batu Puteh who selected CBT as the appropriate tourism development paradigm in the region had mostly the same opinions and views about their choice since the eco-lodge operators in Sukau who preferred CBTI over CBT in the region had their own views. For example, these 3 groups who chose CBT prefer consulted participation in tourism activities in order to be able to give their ideas and hear others' ideas and also to solve the community problems together, all these 3 groups believe that it is very important for them to have control and management over tourism venture in their village since there would be some problems

for them without it. Moreover, they prefer to be self-employed in tourism venture at their village because they intend to help their jobless community to find good job and have a better life. They also disagreed with the outsiders' domination and ownership over tourism resources in their village since they believe when outsiders come to the village they just think about making more money and they don't think about the local community.

However, the eco-lodge operators at Sukau believe that outsiders should bring and manage tourism for local communities since they are short of enough experience and financial resources. All of eco-lodge operators at Sukau village try to provide direct employment opportunities for local community but these operators don't provide local community with SME opportunities because they believe that government should do it for them. Moreover, all of the eco-lodge operators at the Sukau claim that they like to build community organizations for local community but they have not done it yet. Almost all of the eco-lodge operators at Sukau village don't allow local community's interaction and communication with stakeholders outside the community because they believe that Only the management do the interaction and communication with the stakeholders outside the community.

Finally, it should be emphasized that the result of qualitative survey validates the result of quantitative study while revealing some other aspects why the main stakeholders have selected either different or the same choice of the appropriate tourism development paradigm in rural areas; therefore, there is no doubt about their choices, however, the researcher concludes that the main reason for the difference in eco-lodge operators' choice with others' choice refers to the fact that these eco-lodge operators are totally outsiders and non-indigenous people while other three groups of our respondents are totally locals and indigenous people of the region. Therefore, this study recommends that outsiders who want to bring and develop new forms of tourism such as CBTI for rural people should consider locals' perceptions and expectations of tourism venture in their village while listening to their voices.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

This study has provided the contributions that add to the literature in rural tourism especially those which deal with the appropriateness of tourism development paradigms in rural areas. However, it should be taken into consideration that in the current study, the appropriateness of tourism development paradigms in rural areas has been examined based on the main tourism stakeholders' point of view and for two paradigms only; CBT and CBTI. The two debated tourism development paradigms have been measured in five shared clusters of variables where political and economic clusters have got the biggest share in the final outcome of the research. The two communities and the Homestay operators from Batu Putch selected CBT as the appropriate tourism development paradigm in their villages since they are highly concerned about some issues such as their consulted participation in tourism venture, their self-reliance income, and their domination and management over natural resources at their region. The eco-lodge operators selected CBTI as the appropriate tourism development paradigm in the region because they believe that they should bring tourism for local communities since they are short of enough experience and financial resources. These operators also believe that it is not local community's job to own and manage tourism venture in their region. Moreover, the results of this study can help tourism authorities in choosing the right tourism development paradigms in specific rural areas based on the local communities viewpoints while the success experience of tourism development paradigms in rural areas highlights the areas where local community has been emphasized more; therefore, these results lead tourism authorities' efforts in the correct way to obtain the optimal outcomes out of tourism venture implementing among local communities in the rural areas.

Acknowledgements

The funding for this project was made possible through the research grant obtained from the Ministry of Education, Malaysia under the Long Term Research Grant Scheme 2011 [LRGS grant no: JPT.S (BPKI)2000/09/01/015Jld.4(67)]. We also thank all the locals from Lower Kinabatangan region and also all those who contributed to this research.

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