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ELEMENTS OF COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING (CCB)FOR CBET DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Ecotourism is an alternative form of tourism and is usually confused with natural and cultural tourism.CBET is fast becoming a popular biodiversity conservation tool that develops and benefits the local community. Based on the context of conservation theory and practice, Community-Based Ecotourism (CBET) is a form of community-based natural resource management. However, a sustainable CBET development through Community Capacity Building (CCB)programs is not something that it easily achievable. Local community's capacity varies from one culture to another. It takes a high level of community participation, in order for it to come to a level where the community members themselves are motivated to participate and contribute to the development of the program. This fully qualitative research involved 15 respondents from the community of Kg. Selai, Bekok in Johor, Malaysia. The result show there are five factors that sustained the ecotourism development based for Orang Asli Community in Kg. Selai, namely, existing CBET development, past CBET development, local community participation in planning stage of tourism, local participation in implementation stage of tourism and participation in nature conservation.

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is one of the biggest contributors to Malaysia's economy. The number of incoming tourists and revenue from tourists' spending has been increasing steadily since the creation of Tourism Development Corporation under the Ministry of Trade and Industry in 1972 which is known as The Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture

(MOTAC) since 2013. The revenue from tourism is the solid proof of this steady growth, generating RM46.07 billion in 2007, RM58.3 billion in 2011 to RM60.6 billion in 2012 (Kayat, 2011; Ministry of Tourism, 2013). In 2013, tourism generated RM65.4 from tourist receipts (Tourism Malaysia, 2014). It was suggested that because of the heavy promotion of Visit Malaysia Year in 2014, a further 10% bump in 2014 to RM72.0 billion was reported by Tourism Malaysia, (2015). However, it declined to RM69.1 billion in 2015 (Tourism Malaysia, 2016) together with the tourist traffic which was suspected due to the MH370 incident in December 2014, security issues in Sabah and the global economy drop. In 2016 tourist receipts bounced back again to RM82.1 billion (Tourism Malaysia, 2017).

There is a need for Community Capacity Building (CCB), in order to include the local community participation in Community-Based Ecotourism (CBET) or any other form of community development. In a simpler term, community capacity can be defined as the "essence of development" as coined by Smith et al. (2001), and building that capacity is a necessary condition for development (Goodman et al., 1998). With their capacity for the development built, the local community can sustainably operate and manage CBET in their area, thus, securing the economy of the local community, increasing conservation of the natural environment and empowering the local community (Ibrahim &Razzaq, 2010).

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

The number of tourists coming into Malaysia increased from 20.97 million in 2007 to 24.58 million in 2010. By 2011, the number of tourist arrivals had reached 24.71 million, which put Malaysia as the 9th most visited country of the United Nation World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) topten list of countries with the highest tourist arrivals (Ministry of Tourism, 2013). Tourism, being a service industry and naturally labor intensive, require a lot of work force to operate. Tourism provided Malaysia with almost 2 million jobs opportunities in 2012, which made up 16.4% of the total national employment (Ministry of Tourism, 2013). By 2014, the tourism industry in Malaysia was ranked the sixth largest contributor to the national revenue (Mohsen, 2015). The tourism industry also ranked the third largest foreign income earner in Malaysia after manufacturing and palm oil industry in 2016 (Misachi, 2017).

Nevertheless, tourism also promotes an unhealthy introduction of new cultures, from the alien designs of infrastructures and accommodations to introduction of foreign services and businesses which are often forcefully copied by the locals to keep up with the tourists' demand (Razzaq et al., 2011). For example, in Sabah where the Taiwanese and Korean tourists are the dominant market, more and more tourism products are being suited to their needs beginning from the shop signs in Korean and Mandarin language to the air-conditioned beach huts to suit their ideals, and tourists friendly mosque that has been causing issues with the locals. Heavy tourism also promotes negative impacts on the environment such as the tourism related pollutions, behavior of the tourists towards the

environment and the competition for resources to satisfy tourism's need (Holden, 2008). Mass tourism has a crucial role of generating national revenue, however, its negative impacts are also apparent. With such impacts, some of which are irreversible, a better form of tourism must be developed and practiced as a norm in Malaysia in order to keep up with the growing tourism pace.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Study has shown that there is a high potential of tourism for TNJER, specifically for ecotourism, antourism (Shafiq, 2016) and phytourism (Salasiah, 2016). This is due to the abundance of biodiversity in TNJER and its surrounding area, including Kg. Selai, which explain the array of possible tourism products in the area. Furthermore, the Orang Asli Hulu (Jakun) has a rich culture that can be packaged as a tourism experience to foreign and local tourists. Cultural crafts, such the *Kercang* (traditional puzzle), *Bubu*(traditional fish trap), *Sumpit* (traditional blow pipe), and weaved items made of pine or Pandan leaves are crafted traditionally by the Orang Asli Hulu (Jakun) themselves and can be produced in house for retail. There are also non-material culture such the traditional medicines and the belief in *Bisan*, an Orang Asli's belief related to insects (Aminah& Wee, 2013) that can be packaged to showcase the richness of their culture. Therefore, the Orang Asli Hulu (Jakun) community in Kg. Selai is primed for tourism.

The fact however, shows that there is still a lack of neither tourism research nor activity in Kg. Selai. This view is supported by Othman, et al., (2018) who noted that the Orang Asli Hulu (Jakun) community, specifically at the West entrance of TNJER, was never approached to study their understanding on how they can take advantage of the ecotourism industry in their own area. In support of that remark, this research intends to explore the possibility of using CCB to develop a sustainable CBET in Kg. Selai.

Tourism is now booming, relative with the expansion of transportation facilities and information technology. Beginning from its origin of committed travelers, venturing the distance to seek healthcare, or to expand one's knowledge or even to show devotion to religion, tourism has now evolved to a more common leisure-seeking motives with higher frequency of travel, giving the birth to the conventional mass tourism.

Mass tourism, according to Newsome, Moore & Dowling (2006), can be characterized by large numbers of people seeking a packaged replication of familiar culture in institutionalized settings with minimal host's cultural or environmental interactions in its natural environment. It has been widely accepted especially by the Westerners who are used to enjoying their cultural luxuries in an exotic location, giving birth to African Safaris, and high-end resort chains in rural parts of the hosts country such as the Shangri La's group. As successful as it is, mass tourism promotes an unhealthy introduction of new cultures, from the alien designs of infrastructures and accommodations to introduction of foreign services and businesses, often forcefully copied by the locals to keep up with the tourists' demands. Such process of satisfying tourism demand is called

tourism commercialization. "The process of commercialization and commodification may ultimately erode the local goodwill and authenticity" (Fennel, 1999: 1-12).

Fennel (1999), also believes that mass tourism affects the local community's economy negatively by using outside materials for architectural development and non-local food that suit the mass tourism needs. In addition, the seasonal factor of mass tourism can cost the locals more than they do for the investors. The fact that mass tourism players are usually well-established international companies, there will be economical leakages and not much income actually stays within the local community. Another of mass tourism characteristic is that it promotes heavy centralization of tourism activities. Mass tourism countries like Thailand and Malaysia have been suffering from a highly uneven pattern of tourism development and tourist distributions. "Even in these high performers, most international tourism activity is concentrated in just a few urban areas (e.g. Bangkok, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Manila)" (Weaver, 1998).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach was chosen for this research because it involved a lot of variables from multiple parties and the topic needed to be explored in depth (Zaid et al., 2020). An exploratory single case-study design, (Yin, 2003) dictated the framework of this research. It was found suitable and the rationale for choosing the design was discussed in this chapter. The details of the data collection procedure and the reasons for choosing semi-structured interview as the only source of evidence were also explained (Norazmi et al., 2020).

Other specifics pertaining the research sites in Kg. Selai, Bekok was further discussed in this chapter. The rationale for participant sampling was clarified through a table showing details of selected participants. Finally, ethic consideration for this research was reviewed. This study involved 15 respondents.

FINDINGS

Elements of CCB for CBET Development

The data significantly showed that both stakeholders agreed on the recent CCB program towards CBET in the area. This was proven with 2/3 of the participants mentioning positive responds about the program, as cited below:

"I feel, feel enjoy, happy, excited, happy la. Because never have we, what people say, in all program, this program really, really I am happy la" (P04)

"The program was great! Firstly, when we want to expose somebody to something they don't understand, its better that we start from the basics. So that's correct, the basic of using English is necessary..." (P09)

1/3 of the participants also mentioned that the CCB program had a positive impact and that it was suitable for tourism development in the area. With participants specifically stating that such programs were suitable for generally, any tourism development within a community. Moreover, in a rural community a sustainable development was needed in order for the community to have the chance to face changes in the future. However, more than just CCB program was needed in order to have a truly sustainable CBET development in the area. Below are some of the revealing data from the interviews:

"Positive, because when it involves stakeholders like MOTAC, so that participation plays and important part for tourism development in the area. According to my observation, this program is suitable for tourism sites, but we have add certain necessities and facilities." (P12)

Data from this sub question showed that there was a high community support from the community members of Kg. Selai and that they were beginning to see and grasp the potential of CBET in the area. Similarly, the governing bodies and related agencies also agreed with the positive impacts of such CCB program and approving that it was suitable for future tourism development. Ideally, this was the support that could be given by the governing bodies and related agencies and in order to have such program continuously they had to increase their capacity to develop a sustainable CBET in the area.

The Importance of CCB Level for CBET Development

The CCB module used in this thesis was an adapted model by Abdul Rasid, (2012) which was a more focused version of the original model, and that helped by making it easier for the participants to visualize the level of CCB to give their opinion about it.

Questions related to the level and dimensions of CCB were by far the hardest to convey as it involved academic point of views and jargons. Most of the participants interviewed gave a conclusive answer to the question, justifiably, to their best understanding of the question. Some data on this question had to be pried out amongst the confused words provided by the participants. Sometimes, the computer software was not be able to identify and analyze certain words.

From the interviews, it seemed that the community and the individual level was most impacted by a CCB program towards a sustainable CBET development done in Kg. Selai. On the individual level, notably there were some changes within the communication, knowledge on tourism and leadership. On the other hand, exposure and participation towards tourism development were the dimensions that had significantly impacted on the community level. However, the researcher suspected that some of the participants did not understand the question accurately.

Communication Capacity Building

The participants reported that there was a lack of communication skills, especially in English language. It was embarrassingly proven by an unfortunate incident, when a foreign tourist went to the front deck to check out from TNJER Selai. Then, the Orang Asli staff, who was the only one there hid under the table in plain view of the confused tourist.

Communication seemed to be a big barrier not only for the local community, but also to the staff at PTNJ. They agreed on the benefits of such CCB program focusing on English communication, as most of the tourists who visited TNJER Selai were English speaking foreign tourists. They even added to suggest that one such program be done specifically just for PTNJ staff members.

"Alamak! Oh! My Tourism English!" was a monthly, 2-day 1 night, voluntourism based CCB program, aimed to build the communication capacity and was organized by Johor City and Nature Guide Association (JCNTGA), supported by MOTAC, Johor. It was a knowledge exchange program with the focus on volunteers teaching the local community to community in English and in return, the local community shared their cultural knowledge with the volunteers. The focus of the program was mainly on the topic of tourism. Hence, everything thought to the local community must be related to tourism. Below are some pictures of the program, based on observation done during the research.

Knowledge Capacity

Knowledge in this case study mainly referred to the capacity to communicate in English language and general tourism-based knowledge. It was important to highlight the value of available products around them, that could be turned into a tourism opportunity and also the basics of Ecotourism and other associated tourism knowledge that can be effectively applied in Kg. Selai. Focusing specifically on Tourism English was important where the community not only learned the language but also knew how to communicate in English with a tourist more effectively, by using tourism related vocabularies, proper salutations and terms commonly use in tourism operations. These are the backbones that made the syllabus of the "Alamak! Oh! My English!" CCB program. The program also included the basics of tourism operation, such as basic safety and nature tourism guiding for the local community. Furthermore, as part of a knowledge exchange program, the local community also had the chance to share their Orang Asli cultural knowledge. They set up an extensive exhibition of forest traps for wild animals and showed the volunteers how to play the 'Kerchang' and shoot the 'Sumpit', fed them traditional Orang Asli meals, like the infamous 'UbiKacau' and performed their traditional 'Sewang' dance, which was unique for their Orang Asli Hulu (Jakun) Selai tribe.

The volunteers from the tourism related governing bodies and agency were mostly impressed, and agreed that their knowledge capacity of Orang Asli Hulu (Jakun) in Kg. Selai had also increased. It was not surprising to find out from the interviews that both sides of the stakeholders established

that their knowledge capacity had increased after the CCB program and agreed that there was a need to further build on tourism knowledge capacity, in order to have a sustainable CBET development. P03, P04, P05, P12, P13, and P14 pointed out towards knowledge in tourism playing a part in CBET development in the area, namely, knowledge involving Tourism English for better communication and general Ecotourism knowledge.

Leadership Capacity

As proven in past literatures, leadership remained important to CCB in any kind of development, including tourism especially, for CBET where the community had to lead themselves in order to keep the CBET operation sustainable and productive. In any CBT development, there was a need for a 'Local Champion'. He or she should have the highest level of participation in the tourism development amongst the community members while being able to organize and lead the community into a sustainable CBT development.

In this case study in Kg. Selai, P01 was the closest to a 'Community Champion'. The 41-year old male was the village secretary for the 'TokBatin', and seemed to have a good grip on administration chores. He showed a good participation and commitment level and was the working committee leader for the local community side of the CCB program held there. This was not only observed, but was also admitted by other community members interviewed which highlighted that P01 was the favored leader for community programs such as:

"Yes. (P01) has always been the leader, but in this program this time, he seems to be moving forward fast. The changes is that he already knows what to do, and me and the others can follow his work instructions clearly' (P06).

However, he was currently swamped with other more important administrative responsibilities, such as land disputes with the Forestry Department and issues with the government housing assistance program, ProjekPerumahan Rakyat MiskinTegar (PPRT). When interviewed, he said that he would welcome the opportunity to build a sustainable CBET development in Kg.Selai, nonetheless, his priorities were already set at that moment. Thus, the researcher can safely say that though there was a viable candidate for it, currently there was no 'Local Champion' for a CBET development in the area.

DISCUSSION

The individual and community levels of the CCB framework played an important role in this case study of CCB for a sustainable CBET development within an Orang Asli community in Kg.Selai. The community level was found to be more significant than the individual level. According to Aref, et al, (2010), all three levels should play equally important role in order to have a successful tourism development through CCB. Nonetheless, the researcher suspected that the tourism development

within the local community had not reached the stage and level of community capacity to move into the next level yet, thus, fulfilling the three levels for CCB towards CBET development in the area. As suggested by Chaskin (2001) that every level had different attributes and aspects that must be developed thoroughly before moving up to the next level in order for the community capacity to be built appropriately which, explained the reason why the community of Orang Asli in Kg.Selai had not been able to fulfill all three levels at this very early stage of a sustainable CBET development yet.

Based on the comprehensive analysis of data in Chapter 4, it was found that CCB dimensions that were crucial for a sustainable CBET development in the area were; 1) Participation, 2) Leadership, 3) Knowledge, 4) Communication, and 5) Exposure. The first four CCB dimensions were mentioned in past literatures, prominently Aref, et al. (2010b), who was compiling a set of CCB dimensions for tourism development. The fifth CCB dimension revealed from this research was a novel finding and correlated with the fact that this study focused on an Orang Asli community. Nonetheless, all five dimensions were found crucial in order for the local community to have a sustainable CBET development in the area. Suggestively, by increasing these five CCB dimensions through CCB programs, the local community of Kg.Selai might have a bright future in the tourism industry. This is supported by Aref, et al. (2010b), that there was a need to build capacities on certain dimensions related to tourism in order to have a successful CBT establishment. Additionally, Abdul Rasid, et al (2012) also concluded that the success of the Miso Walai homestay CBT project could be assured by focusing and building the capacity of certain dimensions.

The CCB program, "Alamak! Oh!! My Tourism English!", which was aimed mainly towards increasing knowledge and communication dimensions, innately increased other vital capacities for a sustainable CBET development. It got resounding positive responds from both sides of the stakeholders, which showed the success of the program, even though the local community was still far from developing a sustainable CBET on their own. Nevertheless, with the support of and collaborations with the related agency and governing body as well as a few more CCB programs focusing on the details of tourism operations, the local community had a fair chance to develop themselves into a sustainable CBET community.

From the synthesized data in Chapter 4, the researcher could conclude that CCB program was a useful, multi-functional, practical, and viable method to develop a sustainable CBET development, not to mention that it was a mindful way of progress, as it promoted a more bottom-up approach towards rural community development. The governing body and related agency also had the chance to come down and meet the local community to experience, spend time and truly learn from the local community. By doing so, they could understand what was truly needed by the local community and they could build trust and relationship in the proper way. The CCB research in the past focused more on other topics, such as health (George et al., 2007; Labonte et al., 2001; Raeburn et al., 2007; Seremba& Moore, 2005), education (Harris, 2001; Smyth, 2009) and agriculture

(Dollahite et al., 2005). Thus, this research is convinced that CCB would be a positive way to build a sustainable CBET development by correlating and supporting the findings of past researchers on using CCB for CBT development (Aref, et al, 2010b, Abdul Rasid, et al, 2012). Hence, CCB program was a suggested way to initiate a sustainable CBET development in an Orang Asli community.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Initially, the research was done because of its significance in providing a better understanding for a sustainable CBET development in the area with the grand aim of pioneering an Orang Asli CBET in the area, which was something new in the research area. Moreover, in the area, where tourism had only been developed through a strict top-down structure and mass tourism was the only prevalent module, making this research a step towards an alternative for a more sustainable tourism development in the area. However, it was proven in the results that this study investigated deeper and highlighted other issues that might be related to the development of this rural community in all aspects. The research managed to get rich data out via data collection process, and was able to explore the implications it had on the stakeholders and the future. This research provided a better understanding for a sustainable CBET development in an Orang Asli community in Kg. Selai. However, because of the comprehensiveness of the subject matter at hand, it was proven in the results that this study went deeper and highlighted more than just the subjects in the title. From the past bad relationship issues between stakeholders to general maintenance of the crucial entrance road, the research became more complex but it gave the researcher a thorough point of view of the whole situation. The CCB module for tourism development was also somewhat new.

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