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"THEORIES & APPLICATIONS"

Editors:
Badaruddin Mohamed
Morshidi Sirat

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Preface

This proceedings contains the contributions presented at the 2nd National Symposium on Tourism Research, held in Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang in 2009. The symposium was organised by Cluster of Tourism Research, Social Transformation Platform, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang with the collaboration of the Tourism Research Circle, School of Housing, Building and Planning. The symposium provided a platform and stimulating inter-disciplinary discussions, networking and sharing of tourism research topics and findings to further enhance and enrich the knowledge of academicians, practitioners, professionals and post-graduate students on tourism.

Nowadays, as research in tourism is rapidly developed which covers wide range of scopes and integrated, thus it requires multi disciplinary approach besides a continuity of cooperation and input from the stakeholders to ensure a successful tourism development. Hence, with theme 'Theories and Applications', the symposium organiser invited research papers, working papers, industry initiatives, graduate student research papers or presentation proposals with relevance to tourism or the hospitality industry.

The Editors would like to thank all authors and scientific committee members who were contributed to published quality papers. Your kind cooperation and willingness to share your vast knowledge and experience, and certainly providing the direction of discourse that shall follow are highly appreciated.

The Editors

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TOURISM RELATED ISSUES

Sustainable Tourism: The Role of Small Firms

Vivien Laykian Lim[1], Victoria Alexander and Olivia Nyuin
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The new era of environmental concern is of immediate relevance to tourism as the tourism industry depends on a rich and diverse, natural and built environment for its economic wellbeing. This study examines the level of awareness of issues associated with sustainability amongst a sample of tourism firms. Study focused on their desire to follow a path of sustainable development and any action taken to achieve this. Researchers in this study interviewed 15 travel agencies. Findings show that more than half of the travel agencies agreed that the fortunes of tourism and the environment are closely related. The study found out that half of the travel agencies were with agreement of holding the environment and resources of the country in trust for future generations and have the responsibility to pass these on in good condition. It is highly recommended that government must be responsible to provide travel agencies with all information especially about sustainable tourism. All rules and updated news must be well disseminated so that travel agencies can continue the flow of tourism activities based on government requirements.

Key words: sustainable, tourism, environment, travel agencies

Introduction

Background of the Study

The new era of environmental concern is of immediate relevance to tourism as the tourism industry depends on a rich and diverse, natural and built environment for its economic wellbeing. As a resource dependent industry, tourism must recognize its responsibility to the environment. Tourism development which consistently ignores environmental concerns is unlikely to remain viable in the longer term. Sustainable tourism as defined by The Brundtland Commission as a development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs.

Sustainable tourism is a concept which has developed mainly during the last 5 years, following on from the popularization of the concept of sustainable development and the growing recognition of the potential for tourism to have a negative impact on the environment. This study examines the relationship between issues of sustainable development and the operation of small tourism businesses.

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Problem Statement

Is the small firm in the tourism industry playing their roles in sustaining the nature and applying sustainable development in their business?

Purpose of Study

This research aims to examine the role that small firm plays in sustainable tourism. The intention is to assess the potential for progress towards sustainable tourism among firms of this nature.

Research Objectives

An assessment of the level of awareness of issues associated with sustainability amongst a sample of tourism firms, their desire to follow a path of sustainable development and any action taken to achieve this;

The identification of any relationship between certain "type" of business/owner and the adoption of sustainable approach to business operation.

To identify the respondents' perceptions of sustainability, their level of knowledge about the concept and to determine if they have taken any action to alter their business practices.

The intention to classify the firms to help in exploring whether different types of firm relate to sustainability in different ways.

Significance of the Study

This study is important as it will recognize the role and responsibility of small firms in tourism industry to sustaining the nature and applying the sustainable development in their business. This becomes important because small firms in the tourism industry also contribute to the development of the tourism industry and at the same time contribute to the sustainable development. Sustainable development is essential to create better living and maintaining the nature and the growth of tourism industry.

Literature Review

According to Irvine and Anderson (2004), planning is an important factor in small business performance. So, one of the important role of small firms in sustainable tourism is to have an effective plan. The authors identified effective small business firms as those that planned, were flexible, participative and adaptive.

Jayawardena, Patterson, Choi and Brain (2008) stated that sustainable tourism requires planning and described tourism planning as a necessary condition for successful community tourism development because poorly planned tourism has inflicted severe damage upon community destinations. Planning also can help developers manage uncertainty, require them to identify the objectives of development, and provide an action map for all stakeholders to follow.

Small firms also need to develop long-term tourism master plans with mid-term reviews systems and short-term implementation action agendas based on the inputs and external viewpoints as well as expertise related to worldwide best practices (Jayawardena, 2008). The author said that the resulting action agendas must address issues such as future consumer-focused product and service development, analysis of skills required to deliver such products and services in the future and resulting human resource development actions.

In addition, Jayawardena, Patterson, Choi and Brain (2008) underlined that the integrated planning should invite the participation of experts inside and outside of academia, and all community stakeholders.

Furthermore, sustainable tourism planning should be systematically managed, monitored and evaluated. However, the authors stated that many small firms lack expertise and management skills. Many small businesses do not have the time or resources to implement plans and follow them and live very much hand to mouth (Irvine and Anderson, 2004).

Wilson and Boyle (2006) also have quite similar point and stating that individual agencies can plan and manage their own responsibilities effectively, but lack machinery for taking decisions going beyond their own areas of responsibility.

On another point, according to Jayawardena, Patterson, Choi and Brain (2008), there should be no sustainable tourism without full community participation. Thus, involving full stakeholders with balanced representation of local communities and devolution of the decision making power will enhance the accountability and effectiveness of the development process while making sustainable tourism development attainable. The authors also highlighted Bulter's concept of sustainable tourism which is community-based, embraces long-term planning, protects natural and human resources, is manageable in scale by destinations, optimal economic growth, and reflects an ethical treatment of the environment. Without local participation, sustainable strategy cannot be achieved.

This participation has ensured collective vision and ownership of the process, which are vital for sustainable development (Arthur and Mensah, 2006). Therefore, it is important for small firms to get the community involvement as part of their role to achieve the sustainable tourism goals.

Methodology

Primary data was conducted by interviewing 15 travel agencies. Researchers distributed questionnaires to those travel agencies. Various sorts of secondary data are collected for understanding specific characteristics of each member of travel agencies.

The respondents are presented with six statements with which they are asked to agree or disagree on a scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The questions are;

1. "We are holding the environment and resources of the country in trust for future generations and we have a responsibility to pass it on in good condition"
2. "The fortunes of tourism and the environment are closely linked. Without a beautiful environment, tourism could not flourish and be sustained"
3. "The greater the attraction of a beautiful place the greater the danger that large numbers of visitors will reduce its attractiveness"
4. "It is relevant for tourism businesses of all sizes to encourage the development of a tourism industry which can serve the needs of both current and future generations"
5. "We can all respond to the need to protect the environment, for example by altering some of our everyday businesses activities"

6. “The chance to ‘go green’ is a real opportunity as it can be of immense benefit to your business, your customers and your staff, as well as making environmental sense”

Findings and Discussion

Sustainable development can be defined as development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The interview of small firms in Shah Alam comprised of an assessment of the level of awareness of issues associated with sustainability amongst a sample of small tourism firms, their desire to follow a path of sustainable development and any action taken to achieve this; the identification of any relationship between a certain “type” of business/owner and the adoption of sustainable approach to business operation.

Five demographic questions were mentioned to 15 established small firms, which are packages focused by operation, duration of operation, number of permanent worker(s), is there natural attraction packages provided and how customer retrieve information about the company.

Based on the enquiry, about 11 of the travel agents provided packages for inbound tourists and outbound while only 5 travel agents provide inbound. Most of the travel agents provide natural attraction packages which consists of 13 in number.

In terms of the duration of establishment and operation most of the travel agents were established 3-5 years ago of which consists there were of 8 in number, followed by 5 travel agents for more than 10 years ago of establishment.

Based on the number of permanent workers the majority of travel agents currently hired more than 2 permanent workers. 3-5 workers recently hired to run the operations of 5 travel agents, 6-9 workers recently hired by 4 travel agents followed by less than 2 permanent workers to 3 companies while the rest 10 permanent workers were being hired.

To seek the information by the customers, the travels agents noticed that customers prefers to retrieve the information about the operation through the internet, magazines, brochures and yellow pages.

As mentioned earlier, in this study, respondents were presented with six statements from which they were asked to agree or disagree on a scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Overall the response to the statements was encouraging for those wanting to promote the idea of sustainability. However, these statements also prompted the observation that these principles are easy to agree with on the surface. Of course, we have a responsibility to pass the resources of the world on to future generations in good condition. The accompanying comments indicated that, although they agree that they have a responsibility to take action, some have either not consciously made this connection before or they have to date lacked the motivation or time to act on their beliefs.

Some business owners found it difficult to identify action they had actually taken in recent years within the running of their business to help protect the environment. Although they had no prior questioning of what was meant by environmental issues, several respondents hesitated when asked this question and had to be prompted before they could list things they had done. There appears to be a gap between the desire to act and an appreciation of what constitutes environment friendly business practices. The latter seem not to be connected with local consumer practices. While the majority had taken action, and the majority was prepared to take action in the future, it is clear that there is a lack of information, confusion over what constitutes environmental issues and a lack of awareness about which business practices might help protect the environment.

From the findings that we gathered, there were 50% with strong agreement of holding the environment and resources of the country in trust for future generations and have a responsibility to pass these on in good condition. (Figure 1.) While 11% strongly disagree with the statement. 56% strongly agree that the fortunes of tourism and the environment are closely related. Without a beautiful environment tourism could not flourish and be sustained and only 5% strongly disagree. (Figure 2).

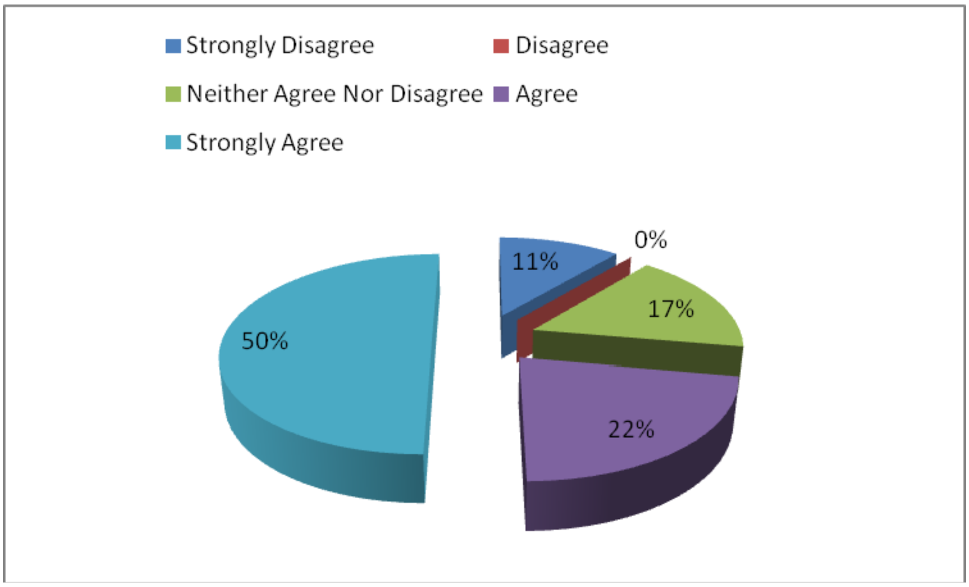

Figure 1: Holding the environment and resources of the country in trust for future generations and have a responsibility to pass these on in good condition.

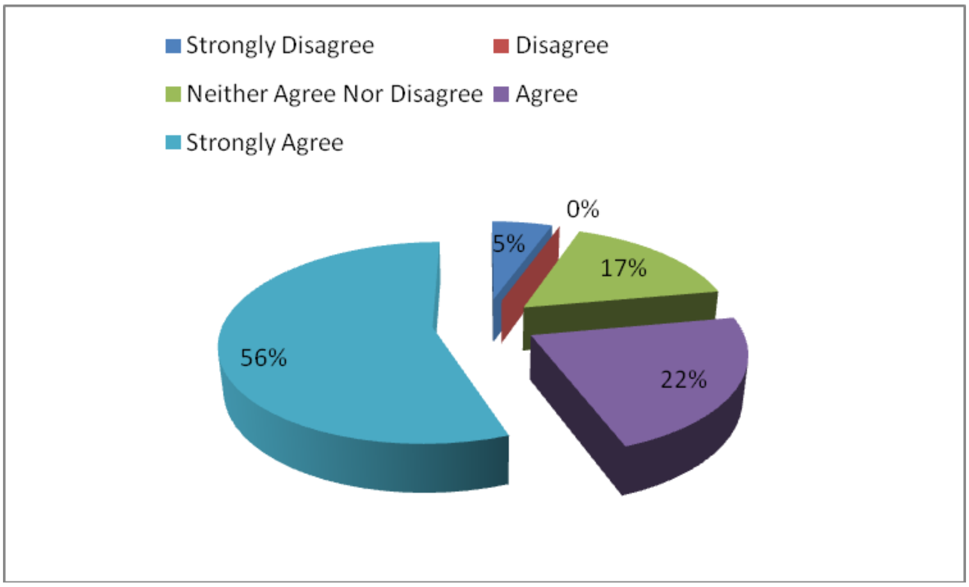

Figure 2: The fortunes of tourism and the environment are closely linked. Without a beautiful environment tourism could not flourish and be sustained

To the statement that the greater the attraction of a beautiful place the greater the danger that large numbers of visitors will reduce its attractiveness collected 56% of agreement and 0% disagreement. (Figure 3). 50% agree that it is relevant for tourism business of all sizes to encourage the development of a tourism industry which can serve the needs of both current and future generations while 5% strongly disagree. (Figure 4).

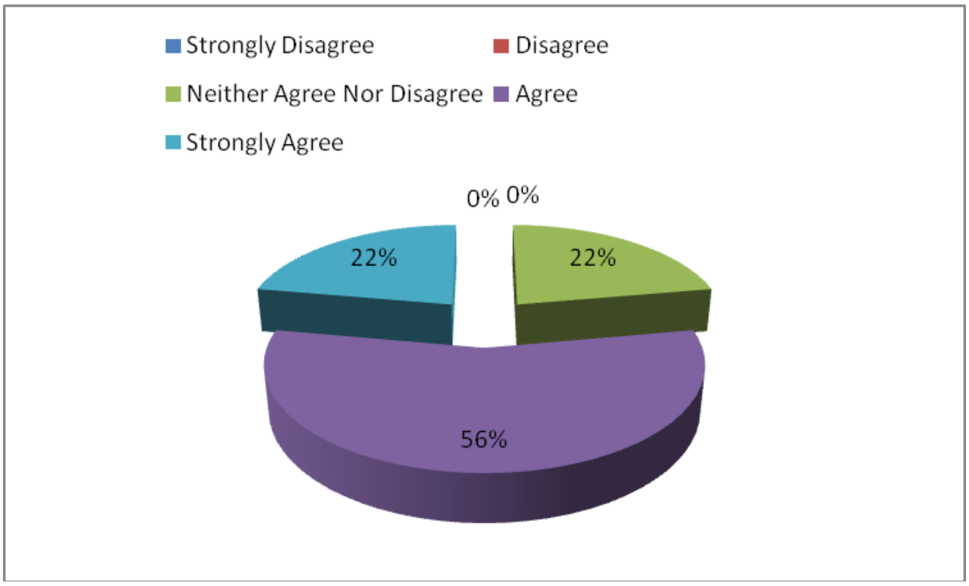

Figure 3: The greater the attraction of a beautiful place the greater the danger that large numbers of visitors will reduce its attractiveness

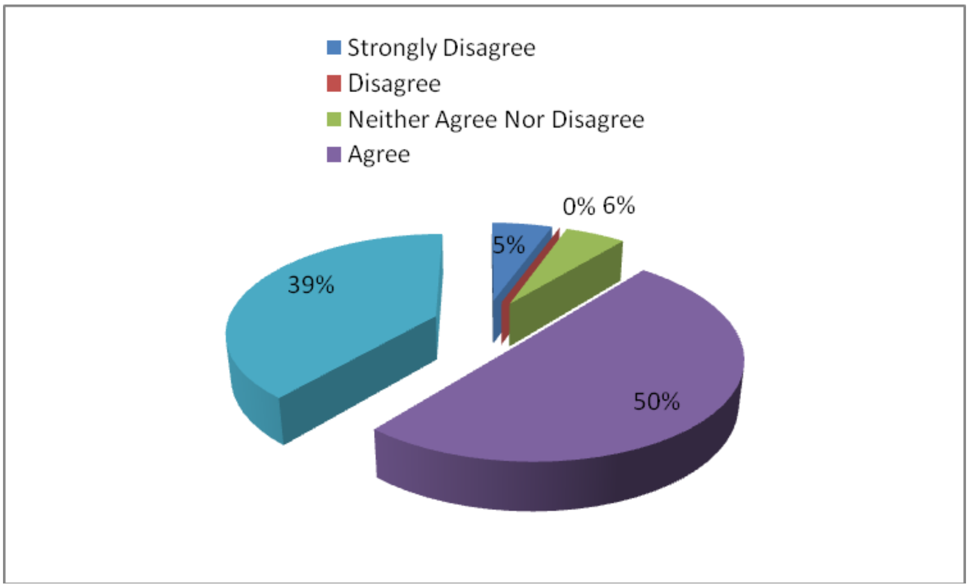

Figure 4: It is relevant for tourism business of all sizes to encourage the development of a tourism industry which can serve he needs of both current and future generations

There were 50% who agree for the need to protect the environment, for example by altering some of our everyday business activities and 5% strongly disagree. (Figure 5). Lastly, the chance to "go green" is a real opportunity as it can be of immense benefit to your business, your customers and your staff, as well as making the environmental sense collected 39% agree and 6% strongly disagree (Figure 6).

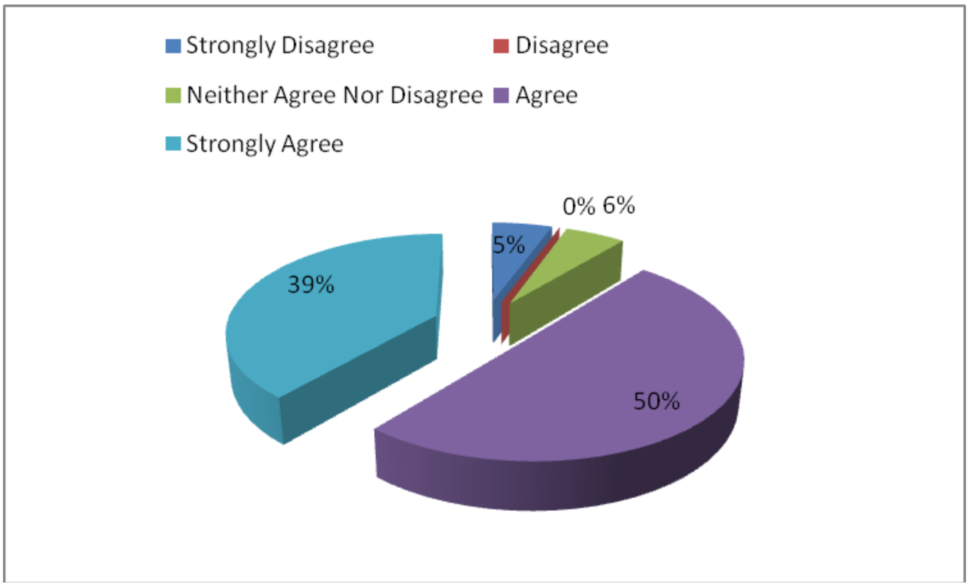

Figure 5: The need to protect the environment, for example by altering some of our everyday business activities.

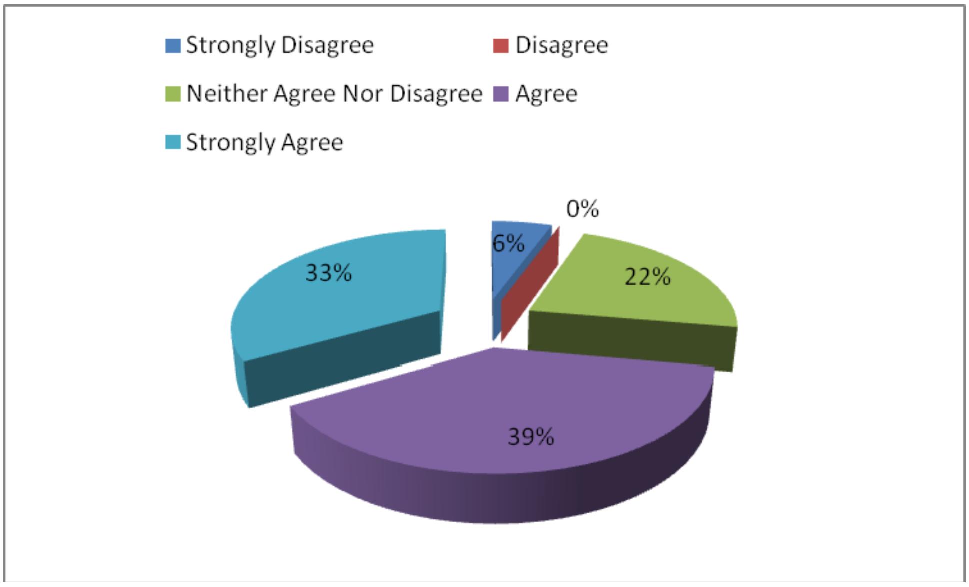

Figure 6: The chance to "go green" is a real opportunity as it can be of immense benefit to your business, your customers and your staff, as well as making environmental sense

Recommendation

Sustainable tourism is a form of tourism that follows the principles of sustainability. Sustainable tourism in its purest sense is an industry committed to making a low impact on the natural environment and local culture, while helping to generate income and employment for locals. Sustainable tourism has become a major critical area that has always been ignored by tourism industry in the country. In well developed countries, tourism industry especially in sustaining the tourism has been well implemented. In Malaysia, the government as the responsible organization towards sustainable tourism has not acted in the direction. Government has developed many tourists' attractions around Malaysia but has not emphasized the maintenance of the attractions. One of the most suitable examples is Bukit Cerakah in Selangor.

Government has explored the area and has made it into one of the most beautiful natural attractions. Nowadays, the attraction has been ignored and has become an eyesore. Although organizations especially the government has been well informed about sustainable tourism, but how about the private organizations and their role?

Research conducted in travel agencies in Shah Alam, Selangor have shown that private and small organizations also play an important role in sustaining the tourism industry in Malaysia. It is because travel agencies are the essential body who act as agent to continue the flow of tourism activities. The environmental policy has been created in Malaysia, but it is not been well implemented . It is recommended that government need to implement the specify law on environmental issues and better policy on sustainable tourism. thus, small organization such as travel agencies can conduct tours by following the law and policy as guidelines.

Other than that, government should do their important part in protecting the green. Then it will be followed by the travel agencies to follow the rules and regulations Furthermore, government is the main body to be referred to. Travel agencies in Malaysia will conduct any activities after referring to the government. This situation shows that government must be responsible to provide travel agencies with all information especially about sustainable tourism. All rules and updated news must be well disseminated, so that travel agencies can continue the flow of tourism activities based on government requirements.

Besides that, a budget must be allocated by government for the travel agencies to conduct activities in Malaysia. A sufficient budget will ensure the success of the 'Go Green' campaigns. After the government has taken steps to develop sustainable tourism in Malaysia, travel agencies also must play their roles to help government to sustain the tourism industry.

Conclusion

The preliminary findings of the research project suggest that many small tourism business owners organize sustainable tourism development but do not necessarily identify central roles for themselves in its implementation. Clearly, there is still a critical need to find effective means of converting good intention into appropriate action. Respondents voiced a strong desire to be involved in decision making in a more meaningful way so that they felt committed through their own involvement in helping to safeguard the future environment. It is widely accepted to consider small firm as homogeneous and unhelpful in understanding the dynamic of this sector. However, the attempt to find a suitable method of categorizing this small firm failed when what appeared to offer the most fruitful approach proved inappropriate. Some publications, like “The Green Light” already seeks to do this, but no one of the respondent was aware of having even seen the documents. The challenge for the next phase of the study is to explore in depth what lies behind the respondent values to examine the decision making processes that lead to business practice. It is also intended to introduce the respondent to the main publication available to help them to identify ways of ensuring that their business operation are more sustainable to assess their reaction to these.

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Going Green: A Case Study on Environmental Management Practices of a Hotel in Malaysia

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This paper presents a case study of the environmental management practices of a hotel located in the northern part of Malaysia. The selected hotel was chosen since it has received both national and international recognitions on its environmental management practices. The hotel is able to operationalise the green concept in their own context by implementing a number of environmental friendly practices. The sources of these practices are mainly adopted from other hotels, from ideas of their employees and also through searching e-information resources. The hotel used this green image as its major competitive advantage.

Key words: environmental management practises, hotel

Introduction

The view of Nash and Turner (as quoted in Nash, 1996), i.e., "*Tourism: the systematic destruction of everything that is beautiful in the world"* aptly describes the impact of tourism to the natural environment. Without the sustainable environmental management practice among the industry players, the influx of the tourist and unsustainable tourism development can cause a detrimental environment impact (Siti-Nabiha et al.2008). Given that the hotel and accommodation sector depends greatly on beauty of nature to ensure the sustainability of their business. Thus, it is imperative for hotels to incorporate environmentally friendly practices in their operations.

It is not surprising that there increasing customer concern and support for "green hotel" is growing as illustrated from various studies. For example, Feiertag (1994) found that 75 percent of their interviewed respondents claimed that they are environmentally-minded consumers and they would choose hotels which are environmentally friendly. A more recent survey done by Trip Advisor (2007) found that 34% of the respondents are willing to pay more to stay at an environmentally friendly hotel. Beside customer demands for environmentally friendly practices, governmental bodies and other parties have encouraged environmentally practices

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through giving awards and recognitions to environmentally friendly hotels. The awards are for example, the Prime Minister's Hibiscus Award given by the government Malaysia, ASEAN Green Hotel Recognition Awards, an initiative of the national tourism organizations of the ASEAN nations, and Virgin Holidays Responsible Tourism Awards, a collaborative effort between an online travel directory, i.e., responsibletravel.com and some UK media.

Given such demands from customer for environmentally friendly accommodations, hotels and accommodations worldwide can also seek for environmental certifications. For example, the New Zealand government in partnership with the tourism industry is working on developing certification program for sustainable tourism. However, in Malaysia, the environmental certification of hotels has not caught up yet. The hotels are still graded based on the normal service quality. As such, there is still scant knowledge about the environmental practices of hotels in Malaysia.

Hence, the purpose of this paper is to present illustrative case study of an environmentally friendly hotel which received awards and recognitions based on its practices. The approach in the research is close action research, using case studies that aim to explore the rich background of the case. One selected "green hotel' was chosen based on high level of green practices and the recognition received from environmentally friendly web survey and other local and international awards achievement. Besides the environmental elements, the social responsibility practices of the hotel are also discussed in this paper.

Literature Review

Various researches have examined various aspects and issues pertaining to environmental management practices in the hotel industry. For instance, Chan (2008) studied the barriers to EMS in the hotel industry, Mensah (2006) discussed environmental management practices among hotels in the greater Accra region, while Kirk (1998) explored attitudes to environmental management held by a group of hotel managers in Edinburg and Chan and Ho (2006) investigating hotels' environmental management system creative financing strategy.

Among the most common green practices of the hotels are recycling of waste, waste management, energy saving, water conservation, compliance with legislation, green purchasing policy and environmental education (Forte, 1994; Middleton and Howkins, 1999, as cited by Mensah, 2006) but the most popular practices among all is waste management and energy saving (Mensah, 2006).

There are also researches that investigate the forces and factors that drive or provide barriers to implementing environmentally friendly practices; Kirk (1995) revealed five main motivation factors of change and pressure to reduce negative environmental impacts: legislation and codes of practices; fiscal policies; public opinion consumer pressure; and financial advantages resulting from saving resources. Whereas the factors that hinder hotels from adopting formal EMS are (1) lack of knowledge and skills; (2) lack of professional advice (3) uncertainty of outcome; (4) certifiers/verifiers; (5) lack of resources; and (6) implementation and maintenance costs (Chan, 2008). It was also noted that the barriers would likely be removed with the benefit after implementing formal EMS. The benefit is probably worthwhile because many claimed benefits such as cost saving, reassurance of regulatory compliance, improvement of corporate image, operational efficiency, etc. (Taylor (1992); Pattie (1995); and Welford (1998) as cited by Chan (2008)). Nevertheless, not many researches have conducted an in-depth investigation of the green practices of hotel and determine the reasons, challenges and constraints facing the organization.

Research Methodology

The data gathered this paper is based on two days site visit at the resort. A tour of the resort green facilities and programs were made during the visit. Interviews with the Assistant Landscape Manager (Pool and Sustainable) and a senior staff that served for over 16 years were also undertaken. Conversation with other member of staff and observation approaches are used to catch and digest the information gathered. In order to validate and verify the practices, a tour had been done in several places around the hotel vicinity such as, organic garden, nursery, recycle storage space, water harvesting area, organic compost side, waste water garden, chicken and duck barnyard, wetland and etc. To gain a deeper evaluation of the resort green practices as compared to other hotels, interviews and site visits were also made to four other hotels in the same location. The hotel green practices relating to waste, water and energy conservation and use of natural resources are discussed in this paper.

Background of the "The Green Resort[3]"

The Green Resort is located in the northern part of Malaysia. It was established in early 1990's with an accommodation of 100 rooms situated on a nearly 3 hectares site and located along 400 meters of beachfront. It was a three star hotel during that time and was run by 103 staffs and it was a foreign owned resort. In the early 2000's, the resort's is taken over by Malaysian businessman with the total acquisition value of around RM 18 million. Another RM 5 million was spent on upgrading the resort. The resort is not under professional management company. It is managed by the owner who came to the hotel monthly. The resort now has 117 room bungalows and villa styled accommodation and is managed by 130 staffs including 11 management level personnel that run the whole entire hotel movement. With the upgrading, the resort now has gained a four star status. Most of the resort guests are from European countries such as Sweden, Russian, German and Switzerland. They also received guests from Middle East and a small number of local visitors. The average occupancy rate for low season (April and May) is around 60%. During the peak season (November to February) the resort able to achieve nearly 100% occupancy rate.

The key player and driver behind the green hotel setup is the owner himself. He is very active in attending and presenting papers at conferences and seminars pertaining to environmental practices. As a result of his effort in promoting eco-tourism locally and internationally he had been appointed to hold posts in travel and congress and convention associations. He also sits in various committees including the Sustainable Tourism Committee of those associations. The result from the awareness and opportunity, he formulated and blends all the green practices that he gathered from other green hotels he visited and implements it to his new resort. Most of the practices is replication from other green hotel practices or gathered the information from the internet for example, the rain water harvesting, food composting, and recycle program. The hotel has received several local and international recognitions and awards due to its environmental friendly practices.

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[3] The real name of the hotel was not disclosed

Environment Management Practices of the Hotel

The resorts has managed to operationalise the concept of green hotel in their day to day practices with the four R concepts, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Rethink as a guide. First, they reduce purchased which is partly done through reused and recycle of old or discarded materials. For example to reduce waste, glass and jugs were used to provide drinking waters during meetings instead of using bottled plastic water. Old furniture and old roof tiles are reused back in some instances as decorations. Some of their reuse of materials as for example, recycled polystyrene for making decorations, old carpet as reused as soundproof between rooms, coconut husks as ashtrays and coconut shells as flower pots, used marble are transformed into signage, used glass bottles are used as decorations and decorative lamps, paint pail is reused as watering plant and etc. In addition, the staff also incorporate their local practices in the hotel operations such as neem leaves are used as pesticides and coconut trunk as terminate trap. The hotel has more than 100 green practices in place. A elaboration of these practices relating to (i) incorporating green practices in hotel operation 2) waste management 3) conservation of water, 4) energy conservation, 5) usage of natural resources, and 6) the hotel social and community programs are discussed next.

1) Hotel Operation and Workplace

The resort has an appointed manager in charge in environmental management practices. The manager duties are to facilitate and monitor the progress of green practices. In order to gained staff support and commitment, a *green team* was formed in the resort where every department has one representative in the team. The team responsibilities are to contribute and seek for ideas to improve the current practices and also to conduct an eco-friendly training classes. Thus, the staffs are trained to be eco-friendly.

In addition, Green Champion Award (GCA) competition had been setup to encourage and give recognition to department with the most effort in green practice. The green champion competition consists of three areas: departmental organic garden contest, creation of handicraft made from recycled items, and presentation contest and the winner will receive a token in a form of money, recognition and award.

Inculcating green practices among the hotel guests are also undertaken and it is part of the hotel agenda. Hotel guests are encouraged to conserve electricity and reduce water usage, change towels and bed linen only when needed. The environmental awareness is dissemination to guest through providing information on bulletin board, guest information pack in the rooms, pamphlet, and etc. The list of the practices in place to ensure an environmentally friendly hotel is listed in Table 1.

Table 1.0: Hotel Operations Green Practices

Green Attribute	The Resort Practices
Have an environmental practices	- Implementing waste management system and green hotel concept
Have a manager in charge of environmental management	- Have environment and education officer
Trained staff to be eco-friendly	- Educating & training staffs on environmental practice - Conduct Green Campion Competition among the staff and department - Have Sustainable Education class for staffs to educate them on environmental topics such as environmental issue, principle of recycling and importance of environmental protection
Investment in human resources development for environment management.	- Have Sustainable Education class for staffs to educate them on environmental topics such as environmental issue, principle of recycling and importance of environmental protection
Instruct staff in green practices	- Enforce green practice by implement 4 R's policy - Every single member of staff is taken on a one-on-one green tour of the resort
Include green room info packs	- Put green info pamphlet at all rooms
Encouraged guests to be eco-friendly	- Provide environmental tips at the guests room to encourage them in participating sustainable tourism during their vacation - Encourage guests to participate in resort energy conservation during their vacation by not changing their bed linen and towel everyday
Educated guests on environmentally friendly	- Environment info provide at guest room, bulletin board, and inculcate environment awareness during Nature Walk activity
Maintain biodiversity.	- Wetland is created to attracting wildlife such as cattle egret, water hen, water monitor lizard, tortoise, terrapin and giant catfish - Have 238 trees to provide shade, cooling the room and reducing use of air-conditioning - Green cover that help preventing soil erosion and help reducing heat generated from sunlight reflection at beach area
Fresh fruit, flowers and eggs from the property	- Have organic garden that provide fresh local fruits, salad and vegetable and have organic farm (duck & chicken) that source meat supplies

2) Waste Management

Managing and minimize solid and liquid waste is a vital part in of a good environmental practices. The resort has taken several actions in this area which is recycling and managing kitchen and garden wastes. Rubbish is sorted according to various categories, i.e., paper, plastics, aluminum can, glass, and metal. Kitchen and garden wastes plus leftover foods are used for composting organic fertilizer. For composting tool, old bathtubs are used as composting container and old wooden flooring is recycled as container lid. In 2008, 14,600 kg of food waste was collected from restaurant and kitchen for composting with average of 40 kg/day. Meanwhile, food waste was collected from staff cafeteria and was reused to feed the free-ranging ducks and chicken rear in the hotel site. The hotel also has wetland for discharged treated grey water. The list of practices pertaining to waste management is listed in table 2.

Table 2: Green Practice: Waste Management

Green Attribute	Example of Resort Practices
Presence of infrastructure to manage and minimize solid and liquid wastes	- Wetland sewage system - Septic tanks The only hotel in their vicinity have wetland for discharge treated gray water
Recycled waste	- Treated gray water is channeled out to wetland pond - Underground water from well used to watering organic garden
Reused linen and towels	- One of the souvenirs gave to the guest used resort-made compost. Instead of plastic bag, housekeepers made gift bag from old linen
Composted food leftovers	- Kitchen waste & garden waste are used in compositing organic fertilizer

Some of the recycle items were then sold off and in 2007, and the hotel earned RM4, 000 for recycling of nearly 9000 kg trash.

3) Water Conservation

Water conservation is the most successful practice had been implementing by the resort. The objective of water management and conservation is to achieve sustainability in water supply and reduce dependency on government supplied treated water. The motto for water conservation at the resort is “Save water, save the planet”. Rainwater harvesting is used in the resort by using 20 units of 880 gallons water tanks. The rain water from these tanks are channeled to taps located around the resort area and these 20 units tanks they able to collect 30,330 gallons (114,811 Liters or 114.811 cubic meters) of recycled water storage and able to save RM137.77 for every 30,330 gallons of rain water harvested. The harvested water is use for irrigation, toilet and laundry purposes. Besides that, resort also utilizing underground water from three wells located at their organic farm and to water fruit trees and vegetables at the farm. The data pertaining to water changes are gathered at the hotel. Table 3.0 illustrated the savings gained from water conservation measures taken.

Table 3: Savings from water conservation

Year	Average water of cost per occupied room (RM)	Average monthly saving compared to year 2006 (RM)
2006	4.10	/
2007	2.83	(4.10-2.83)*1717 =2,180.59
2008	1.73	(4.10-1.73)*2091 =4,955.67

4) Energy Conservation

They have a policy on energy conservation and train their staffs on methods to save energy. For example, security staffs assist in switching off compound lighting at dawn and housekeeping staffs assist in switching off unnecessary switch and electrical appliance after room cleaning and unnecessary electrical appliance in office and resort compound. Besides that, solar panels are installed to replace boilers for supplying hot water to rooms and kitchen. Energy saving light bulb are also used. The list of practices pertaining to energy conservation is listed in table 5

Table 5: Energy conservation practices

Green Attribute	Example of Resort Practices
Adoption of technologies that reduce: -consumption of natural resources -production of wastes -incidence of pollution (sustainable energy like solar power)	- Installed solar panel for water heating - Sand filter system with UV light
Installed solar hot water	- Installed solar panel for water heating
Provided energy efficient appliances	- All electric appliance in room including fridge are switched off when room is vacant
Reduce oil / gas carbon emissions	- Have a geosite near the resort with rocks and fossils, some 350 million years old. Guests need not travel by car or boat to see a geosite - Provide non-motorised daily activities such as beach volleyball, traditional fishing and coconut tree climbing to the guests - Recycle cooking oil for candle lighting
Eco Permaculture Features include: solar panels, adobe construction, composting toilets, recycling, roof water collectors, gray water systems, organic gardens, community education and aid work, reforestation, erosion control	- Installed solar panel for water heating - Roof, balcony and all railing are with slope for batter flow of water - Have organic farms and garden - School organic farm project and village adoption program.

The solar panel for water heating replaced 4 boilers previously used for supplying hot shower for rooms. Due to this measure, the saving gained is around RM14.69/hour of usage. The usage of energy light bulb also saves approximately RM40 per day. 338 8-watt energy-saving bulbs have replace 40-watt bulbs for lightings at rooms, public toilets, restaurant and staff quarters.

5) Usage of Natural Resources

Natural resources conservation is one of the main parts in EMPs. The resort maintains and preserves the natural beauty through greening the resort area with flowers, plants and trees. Natural products are used using to reduce chemical usage, for instance using coconut trunk as termite trap, rearing guppy fish at ponds to control mosquitoes, homemade organic mosquito repellant using lemongrass juice, and utilize their wet land to treated grey water and watering farm plant. In addition, organic duck and chicken rearing and organic garden were created to reduce food cost, carbon footprint of food supply transportation and to be self-sustained. Besides that, resort also utilizing the natural resources by taping solar and rain water as an alternative energy resources (see table 6)

Table 6: Usage of sustainable materials

Green Attribute	Example of Resort Practices
Use of environment-friendly chemicals (e.g. biodegradable soaps and detergents)	- Use lemon grass as mosquito repellant - Use Neem leaves from herb garden to make organic pesticides - Used pineapple skins to neutralize the chlorine at koi pond
Use renewable natural furnishings e.g. reused thrift/vintage furnishings; eco-conscious interior designer decorated each room	- Made file rack and shelf from recycled woods - Used wood flooring from old buildings to make roof trust - Purchased furniture from a factory which uses recycled woods
Use reclamation building materials	- Coconut trunk and recycled wood are used to build the water tank supporting base
Alternative Energy Resources e.g. Solar, Wind	- Installed solar panel for water heating

6) Social and Community Programs

A social and community program is a part of the EMPs necessity and resort also conducts several community programs fulfill the obligation. However, the community outreach program seems to be not a main priority to the resort. Nevertheless, the 80% of hotel's workforce are locals and 40% of its produce is sourced locally. Among the resort community outreach program is raising awareness among school children. In 2007 the hotel adopted two schools and organized environmental education for the school children. They also conduct exhibition to promote green practices and environmental awareness to local communities by sharing their hotels green practices information. One of the resort Corporate Social Responsibility projects is done in collaboration with a local bank to help the local community, i.e., single mothers, by providing them with equipments so that they could produce handicraft and local cuisine for sale.

Table 7: Social and Community Programs

Green Attribute	Example of Resort Practices
Ensure communities are involved in and benefit from tourism	- Adopted 10 school for organic farm project and will purchase their yields - Collaborate with local bank to help local community by providing equipment so that they could produce handicraft and local cuisine for sale
Source food locally	- Buy organic vegetable and fruit from local school that participate in their School Organic Farm Project
Conserve/care for wildlife in the area	- Educate tourist and staff to conserve wildlife and natural beauty
Offer local employment	- Have policy on recruiting local people. All staffs are with 80% of staffs are locals
Advised guests on local customs and traditions	- Coconut tree climbing activity - Traditional fishing activity
Motivating guest and support local community	-Provide schedule of night market to the guests for them to experience local culture and cuisine -Conduct nature walk for guests twice a week to share the resort green practices with them and to promote environmental awareness

Benefits and Challenges in Implementing the Green Practice

The advantage of implementing these green practices is that the hotel is able to reduce their average energy, water, and food consumption. More importantly, the green hotel concept obviously is used as marketing tool in promoting the hotel. The green concept is used to brand the hotel. The hotel managed to attract oversea repeated guests and most of them choose the hotel because of the beautiful beach and its the green practices. As mentioned, the hotel has received several national and international awards due to its green practices.

However, based on evaluation of the hotel green practices, it seems that most of the resort green practices are not implemented systematically with inputs from experts. Some of the practices are done on a trial and error basis. For example, all the specifications and technical information to build water harvesting tank is not gathered from experts, the resort gather the technical information from the internet and only after several trial and modifications made that the hotel are able to achieve the appropriate design and results. This situation occurs because there is no technical expertise and recognized environmental management system, such as ISO 14000 put in place to facilitate the process. Most of the hotel green practices do not required substantial amount of investments.

In addition, the resort only focused their water conservation practices solely in rainwater harvesting which is used for outside purposes rather than plans to control rooms and toilets water consumption. The room and toilet water consumption can be manage and control by installing more proper mechanism such as installing dual flush toilets, low-flow shower head or sink aerator that proven give a significant cost saving and more sustainable and practical practices. In social and community part, the credit can be give to the resort in their commitment and effort to better off local community economy by hiring local people and collaborate with third party. However, this social and community projects seemed not to be the main focus of the hotel.

Conclusion

Environmental management systems are important to be in place at hotels. Unfortunately, many hoteliers are unable or unwilling to implement the system due to resources constraints. Thus, it is not surprising that this hotel starts with easy-to-achieve and low cost environmental practices. Moderate and high investment project can be scheduled later when hoteliers had confidence in and established benefit from earlier environmental actions (Iwanowski, 1994; Krik, 1995 as cited by Chan and Ho, 2006). The hotel should be commended for being able to inculcate and motivate their staff to incorporate green practices. More importantly, the green practices concept has been used successfully by this hotel as part of their competitive advantage.

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Measurement of Customer Satisfaction in the Ecotourism Area

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Increasing customer satisfaction is important for boosing repeat business, given the benefit of the positive word-of-mouth publicity and at the same time increasing long term profitability. In addition, the measuring of customers satisfactions provide benefits to the organization because they will be able to identify the satisfaction levels of current customers and at the same time to determine customers need for product development and to analyze customers retention and loyalty. In a research on customer satisfaction in the ecotourism industry, customer expectations and experiences are the important determinants. However, the relationship between customer expectations and experiences has remained unclear. The aims of this paper are to determine what customer satisfaction is and to ascertain the attributes for measuring customers satisfaction. This paper develops the attributes to identify customer satisfaction in ecotourism industries. It utilizes disconfirmation theory proposed by Oliver (1993) in order to define customer satisfaction. There are two types of customers namely the internal and the external customers. The external customers are the customers in the marketplace, whereas the internal customers are the employees of the organization. In addition it also utilizes service quality model proposed by Parasuraman et al (1988) to measure customers satisfaction based on five dimensions, namely tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy.

Key words: customer satisfaction, customer expectations, customer experiences

Introduction

Ecotourism plays an important role in today`s environmental management. The aim of this paper is to identify the dimensions which are more influence customer satisfaction in order to measure level of customer satisfaction in the ecotourism area. Ecotourism developed within the womb of the environmental movement in the 1970s

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and 1980s (Honey, 1999). Ecotourism is identified as the new tourism product in Malaysia by the National Tourism Policy. Ceballos-Lascurain is the first person defines meaning of ecotourism. He defines ecotourism as:

> "*Tourism that involves traveling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestations (both past and present) found in the areas"* (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1988)

Stephen (2002) identified five core characteristics that are fundamental to ecotourism. They are that ecotourism is nature-based, ecologically sustainable, environmentally educative, locally beneficial and generates tourist satisfaction. The first three characteristics are considered to be essential for a product to be considered ecotourism while the last two are viewed as being desirable for all forms of tourism (Dowling, 1996). Ecotourism not only generates government revenue through business and other general taxes, but also through industry-specific channels, such as payment of occupancy and departure taxes and generates fiscal costs for example funding of infrastructure (Lindberg, 2001) and at the same time generates much needed foreign currency, both locally, nationally and providing a strong incentive to combine nature`s strongholds in a way that would conserve them (Kruger, 2003). The major effect was that through ecotourism either new areas received protection or existing protected areas were conserved more effectively because higher incentive to do so (Kruger, 2003).

According to Goodwin (1996) ecotourism can benefit protected areas in three ways, that is through generating money to manage and protect natural habitats and species, enabling local people to gain economically from the protected areas, therefore encouraging their support of protection of the protected area, and offering a means by which people`s awareness of the importance of conservation can be raised. Monteros (2002) also emphasized that ecotourism could provide the momentum and economic investment for improved conservation of species and habitats.

On the other hand, ecotourism supports nature conservation by providing an economic demand for natural ecosystems (Hearne and Santos, 2005). Entrance fees and tourist expenditure provide financial incentives to national park and communities so they can maintain secure, accessible, and pure visitation opportunities (Hearne and Santos, 2005). Another important effect of ecotourism was an increase in revenue creation for local communities, which subsequently led to changes in land-use pattern from consumptive use to non-consumptive use and ecotourism also was change the attitude of local communities towards the protected area in their surrounding area which in turn reduced poaching, timber felling and other consumptive land uses (Kruger, 2003).

Literature Review

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is the key factor determining how successful the organization will be in customer relationships (Reichheld, 1996), therefore it is very important to measure it. Measuring customer satisfaction is an integral part of the effort to improve a product or service quality, resulting in a company's competitive advantages (Garvin 1991). Customer satisfaction is a psychological concept that involves the feeling of well-being and pleasure that results from obtaining what one hopes for and expects from an appealing product/or service (WTO,1985). Customer satisfaction also can be defined as satisfaction based on an outcome or a process (Pizam and Ellis, 1999). According to Vavra's (1997), outcome means end-state resulting from experience of consumption. Vavra also puts forth a definition of customer satisfaction based as a process, emphasizing the perceptual, evaluative and psychological processes contributing to customer. In this definition, assessment of satisfaction is made during the service delivery process (Pizam and Ellis, 1999).

Customer satisfaction is the criteria for determining the quality delivered to customer through the product or service and the accompanying services (Vayra 1997). Offering high quality service and thereby improving customer satisfaction has been identified as the most important challenge facing businesses in the 1990s (Barsky and Labagh, 1992). Ultimately, the individual's test of his or her tourism experience is how well it has satisfied his or her own expectations, but importantly it is the sum of all of these which underpins the organization's reputation, and its continuing success (Maree, Eric, 2004). This reinforces Grȍnroos (2001) who suggests both of the organization should be designed around good service delivery, and that its management should focus on quality issues. Customer satisfaction measurement variables are different depending on type of industries. In ecotourism industry, service quality is the important variables need to be studied because it will effect to the customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction study will show the achievement or performance of the organization and at the same time increase the profits of the organization.

Measuring Customer Satisfaction

Gerson (1993) emphasized the reason measuring customer satisfaction is important in order to learn how to improve service quality and increase customer satisfaction. Increasing customer satisfaction is the main focus of the organizations to boost repeat business, benefit from positive word-of-mouth and at the same time increasing long term profitability (Wirtz, 2001). Effective organizations are always asking questions about what makes their service successful or unsuccessful (Zeithmal, 2000). Naumann (1995) identified the advantages of customer satisfaction measurement to organizations. Firstly, measuring customer satisfaction is to find which attributes affect the customer's decision making and get a performance evaluation of how well the organization is delivering each attribute. Secondly, measuring customer satisfaction is important for continuous improvement and to measure strengths and weaknesses of the organization. Effective managers are always asking questions about what makes their service successful or unsuccessful (Zeithaml, 2000). Noe (1999) has stated that "greater challenge exists in the marketplace than for a business to be responsible for providing satisfactory tourist and hospitality services". In ecotourism industry, measuring customer satisfactions give benefits to the organizations because they can know the satisfaction levels of current customers and at the same time determine customer needs for product development and analyzing customer retention and loyalty (Ingrid, 2004). The resort operators also can identify trend of demand for the products and services provided. In addition, measuring customer satisfaction is to increase profits from decreasing quality costs processes. (Gerson, 1993).

Service quality is the best indicator to measure customer satisfaction. The relationship between service quality and satisfaction has been studied by many researchers in recent years (Johnston, 1995; Qu et al., 2000). Service quality and customer satisfaction are different constructs but both influence visitors' future destination selection intention (Tian-Cole & Crompton, 2003). This is important to ecotourism area and resort especially when they want to become international destination. According to Briggs et al. (2007), service quality is an overall evaluation of the destination while satisfaction is concerned with the overall evaluation of the experience at the destination (Tian-Cole & Crompton, 2003). In tourism industries, providing high quality service and ensuring customer satisfaction are the most important factors to success (Stevens et al. 1995). Quality services and tourist satisfaction encourage long-term relationship with tourists and will bring destination loyalty. There are two important approaches in measuring quality. The most important one is SERVQUAL.

SERVQUAL model compares the level of perception against expectation. Another one which is straight forward that just measure on the present level known as SERVPERF. The nature of evaluating service quality stems from comparing service expectations with actual performance perceptions (Parasuraman et al. 1988). In other words, it is the result of the comparison that customers make between their expectations about a service and their perceptions of the way service has been performed (Parasuraman at al. 1985). SERVQUAL model was developed by Parasuraman et al.(1985) with ten attributes of service quality which are accessibility, security, understanding the customer, tangible and so on. Then, the attributes was cut down into five dimensions which are tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Parasuraman et.al. (1988) define all the dimensions. Tangible means the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication material and reliability means the ability the organization to perform the promised services dependably and accurately. While responsiveness means willingness the employees to help customers and provide prompt service. In addition, assurance means knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence and finally empathy means caring and individualized attention from the organization to his customers.

Cronin and Taylor, 1992 argued model proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1985) and conclude that it is not necessary to measure customer expectations because it is sufficient to measure only customer perceptions. The researchers developed SERVPERF model to explained customer satisfaction measurement. They emphasized that customer satisfaction could be measured only by perceptions or experiences. The authors also identified that service quality is a form of customer attitude and the performance only measure of service quality is an enhanced means of measuring service quality. They argued the SERVQUAL model and stated that service quality only base on perceptions or experiences and can be determined as similar to an attitude. However, Parasuraman et al. (1985) stated that service quality measurements that incorporate customer expectations provide richer information that those focus on perception only. An important advantage of the SERVQUAL instrument is that it has been used and validated across different contexts in the service industry, e.g. hospitals (Babakus & Mangold, 1992), mechanic shop, higher education (Boulding et al. 1993) and departmental stores (Finn and Lamb, 1991; Teas, 1993). Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons (1994) confirmed that the SERVQUAL instrument still remains the best measure cross-sectional research and industry benchmarking. Table 1.1 shows the independent variables include 5 SERVQUAL dimensions proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1985):

Table 1.1: Statements Pertaining to SERVQUAL dimensions

Variables	Service Quality Dimensions
1. Modern equipment 2. Visually appealing physical facilities 3. Employees are neat appearing. 4. Visually appealing materials associated with the service.	Tangibles
5. Keep promises 6. Show sincere interest in solving customer problems. 7. Perform the service right the first time. 8. Provide their service as promised 9. Insist on error free record	Reliability
10. Inform exactly when services will be performed 11. Employees give prompt service. 12. Employees are always willing to help. 13. Employees are never too busy to respond to requests.	Responsiveness
14. Employees' behaviors instill customer confidence. 15. Customers feel safe in their transactions. 16. Employees are consistently courteous. 17. Employees have knowledge to answer questions.	Assurance
18. Give customers individual attention. 19. Operating hours are convenient to all customers. 20. Employees give customer personal attention. 21. Customers' best interests are at heart. 22. Employees understand the specific needs of customers.	Empathy

Conclusion

This proposed research aims to assess the customer expectations and perceptions in order to measure customer satisfaction in ecotourism area. It is hoped that the findings of this study will help the resort operator to improve their services and will contribute to the setting of a policy for future development for the ecotourism area in Malaysia. In this study, the five dimensions of SERVQUAL model have been used as the variables that influence customer satisfaction. Although there are some limitations in this study, it is hope that the result will appear significant for justification.

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Organizational Culture of Resort Operators in the Ecotourism Industry

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The concept of organizational culture has been the main concern among social science and management scholars. Previous studies have shown that organizational culture and performance seem to be interdependent in the ecotourism resort operation. That is, organizational culture needs to evolve as the performance evolves. A successfully implemented and used organizational culture, leads to a more participative and consultative management style and thus better performance. The aim of this paper is to review the dimensions of organizational culture that may influence the performance of resort operators in ecotourism industry. First it defines the meaning of organizational culture and explores the characteristics of resorts in ecotourism industry. Then it discusses the dimensions of organizational culture based on the work of previous studies. The performance of a resort organisation will also be examined. At the end of the paper a framework for mapping the interaction of these three areas; resort characteristics, organisational culture and performance is presented.

Key words: Organizational Culture, Ecotourism Industry, Resort Operators, Performance

Introduction

Organizational culture has been the main concern among social science and management scholars. It is believed that, organizational culture plays vast role in enhancing the performance and productivity of an organization, and in maintaining its durability and stability. Similarly in ecotourism industry, organizational culture can enhance the performance of ecotourism resort. Some resorts are world renowned for their specific location, the guest amenities offered, and/or the service level provided. However, the manager operating these properties are keenly aware of the importance that service levels play in maintaining an image as an exclusive and highly desirable destination (Ninemeier and Perdue, 2005) and in increasing its performance. Via exploring whether best performer operations in the ecotourism industry share certain

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values, assumptions and beliefs critical for their functioning and effectiveness in order to inform the debate on creating the right environment for enterprise (ecotourism resort) to flourish (Kyriakidou & Gore, 2005).

Definition of Organizational Culture

There are two main definition of organizational culture. First, most of the authors view culture as a belief system (Maull, Brown & Cliffe, 2001) or values that effect their meanings, behaviour or action. According to Davis (1984) culture is the pattern of shared beliefs and values that give members of an institution meaning, and provide them with the rules for behaviour in their organization. Basically, culture is "the way we think about things around here" (Williams, Dobson & Walters, 1994) or "the way we do things around here" (Bower 1976; Williams et al., 1994). This has to do with the company's institutionalized way of thinking and acting (Chiavenato, 1999).

Sathe (1985) define culture as what is commonly held in community members' minds. He adopt the view that culture is commonly held beliefs, attitudes and values which give meaning to organizational life for its members and provide them with rules for behaviour. He also views culture as that which is directly observable about the members of a community – that is their patterns of behaviour, speech and use of material objects. Some authors defined culture as the collective programming of the mind (Hofstede, 1980; Maull, et al., 2001), which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another. This definition stresses that culture is mental software, therefore invisible and intangible as such.

Besides, culture is defined as a set of understandings (Becker & Geer, 1960; Louis, 1980) around which action or a system of meanings shared by a group of people (Chiavenato, 1999) is organized, and are clearly relevant and distinctive to the particular group which are also passed on to new members. Organizational culture also has been defined as "widely shared and strongly held values" by Chatman and Jehn (1994). It is the value dimension of culture that is reflected in the cultural artifacts of an organization (Zammuto & Krakower, 1991). The models of most referred organizational culture, are those by Hofstede (1980) and Schein (1997) that describe culture as a distinct set of levels: core values, norms, beliefs and values, behaviors and artifacts. Field and Davies (1986) refer to culture as the behavioral patterns and standards that bind the organization together.

The second perspective is one that views culture as a learned entity (Maull et al., 2001) that evolve or change slowly over time (Wilson, 2001). A widely accepted definition of culture provided by Schein (1984) is: The pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaption and internal integration, and that have worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. In short, an evolutionary process where people within an organization learn from making repeated choices (Wu, 2007).

Kotter and Heskett (1992) explained that culture evolves as a result of the turnover of group members, changes in the company's market environment and general changes in society. Organizational cultures consist of interactions among critical masses of people with different preferences and past choices that have the capacity to wield critical influences upon each other, both in the short and long terms, within and beyond the confines of organizations and resource constraints (Wu, 2007). Tangible or intangible, deep or shallow, forms or meanings, organizational cultures live among people, come and go when people come and go (Giffords and Dina, 2003; Weber and Camerer, 2003).

From the discussion above, organizational culture is defined as: a set of assumptions, beliefs or values, which are developed by the members of an organization in learning to cope with their internal and external problems. It effects their actions, behavior, and attitude and evolve over time. It give meaning, which provide the guidelines, norms, or rules for the standards or patterns of behavior or action and which lead to a common agreement on how to approach problems and make decisions. The definition of organizational culture can be summarized as in Figure 1.

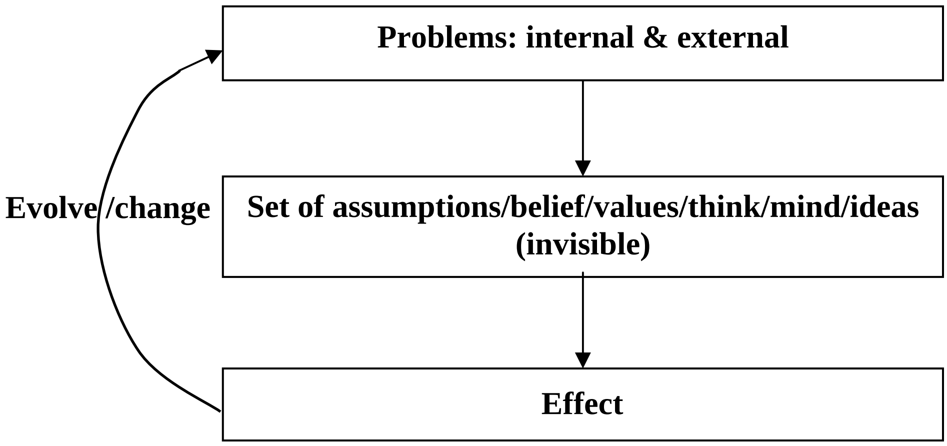


Figure 1: The summary of definition of Organizational Culture

Ecotourism Resort Characteristics

Resorts are full-service hotels that are frequently offered in locations with additional attractions including ocean (beach) activities (Ninemeier and Perdue, 2005), lakes, highlands, and forests. In ecotourism industry, resorts are usually developed in the ecotourism areas, and travelers can engage themselves in enjoyable recreational or leisure activities that are not possible in their everyday lives (Ninemeier and Perdue, 2005).

For most major resource areas, it is now being understood that major tourist services are better located at the edge rather than within the park (Gunn and Var, 2002). The proliferation of eco-lodge development (accommodations within the ecotourism concept is especially invasive) (Gunn and Var, 2002). Resource areas being considered for ecotourism development already have their own economic value and nonmarket goods (Gunn and Var, 2002). This means that an eco-lodge may destroy this intrinsic value unless extreme caution and environmental design and management are employed (Gunn and Var, 2002).

Dimensions of Organizational Culture in Ecotourism Industry

There are abundance of theories and dimensions used in measuring organizational culture. But the most referred work is done by Hofstede. In the mid 1970's, Geert Hofstede, did an extensive survey at IBM in which he investigated the influence of national culture. National cultures affect mainly people's values (Hofstede, 1980) which are considerably different from one country to another. National culture was primarily based on differences in values which were learned during early childhood. These values were strong enduring beliefs, which were unlikely to change throughout the person's life (Hofstede, 1980).

Continuously, in 1997 Hofstede produce a set of dimensions for Organizational culture that was based more on differences in norms and shared practices, which was learned at the workplace and considered as valid within the boundaries of a particular organization. During the 1990s, Robert House extended Hofstede's work with the Global Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness (GLOBE) Research Program. The GLOBE detailed methodology resulted in the identification of nine major attributes of cultures which, when quantified, are referred to as dimensions (Gerras, Wong & Allen, 2008)

Nevertheless, the dimensions produced by both Hofstede (1980, 1997) and House (2004) are dimensions of organizational culture in all industry. None of the study focuses on hospitality or tourism industry. In order to produce quantitative research on organizational culture in ecotourism resort, findings by Kyriakidou & Gore (2005) in their semi-structured interview on organizational culture in hospitality, tourism and leisure are utilised and are integrated with the work of Hofstede (1970, 1980) and House (1990). Consequently, ten attributes of organizational culture in hospitality and tourism sector are identified:

i) Power Distance Index by Hofstede (1980), and House et al., (2004)
Captures the degree to which members of a collective expect power to be distributed equally. In organizational terms, it reflects the extent to which an organization accepts and endorses authority, power differences, and status privileges.

ii) Uncertainty Avoidance Index by Hofstede (1980), and House et al., (2004)
Cultures which try to minimize the possibility of such ambiguity situations by strict laws and rules, safety and security measures. Therefore organizations with uncertainty accepting cultures are more tolerant of opinions different from what they are used to; try to have as few rules as possible, and not expected by the environment to express opinions (Hofstede, 1980).

iii) Individualism vs. Collectivism by Hofstede (1980), or Institutional Collectivism by House et al., (2004)
Individualism is the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups. An organization which depends on groups of which individuals form part is expected to exhibit team work and collective decision making. (Gouveia and Ros, 2000).

iv) Open system vs. closed system by (Hofstede, 1997)
Open-systems culture, members consider both the organization and its people open to newcomers and outsiders, almost anyone would fit into the organization. In closed systems, the organization and its people are felt to be closed and secretive, even among insiders. (Hofstede, 1997).

v) Job-oriented vs. employee-oriented by Hofstede (1997)

Job-oriented culture only emphasize on employees' job performance only, and nothing more (Blake and Mouton, 1964), and these people experience a strong pressure to complete the job; they perceive the organization as only interested in the work the employees do (Hofstede, 1997). While employee-oriented cultures assume a broad responsibility for their members well-being (Blake and Mouton, 1964) and feel that their personal problems are taken into account; the organization takes a responsibility for employee welfare (Hofstede, 1997).

vi) Parochial Vs. Professional by Hofstede (1997)
Members of parochial culture feel the organization's norms cover their behavior on the job as well as their home. Members of professional cultures consider their private lives their own business (Hofstede, 1997). In short, it opposes units whose employees derive their identity largely from the organization to units in which people identify with their type of job.

vii) Pragmatic vs. normative by Hofstede (1997)
Describes the prevailing way (flexible or rigid) of dealing with the environment, in particular with customers (Hofstede 1998). To pragmatic units' people, results and meeting customer needs is more important than following the procedures (Hofstede, 1997). On the other hand, units involved in the application of laws and rules towards the normative (rigid) side (Hofstede 1998).

viii) Tightly vs. loosely controlled by Hofstede (1997)
Deals with the degree of formality and punctuality within the organization. It refers to the amount of internal structuring in the organization. In loose control units, people think that no one is concerned about costs, meeting times are only approximate, and jokes about the organization and job are frequent. People in tight control units describe their work environment as cost conscious, specific meeting times, jokes about the company or job are rare (Hofstede, 1997).

ix) Performance Orientation by House et al., (2004)
Reflects the extent to which a community encourages and rewards innovation, high standards, and performance improvement and excellence. It relates to the issues of both external adaptation and internal integration mentioned earlier in the discussion of Schein's assumptions. This dimension also includes the future oriented component of the dimension called Confucian Dynamism by Hofstede and Bond (1988).

x) In-Group Collectivism by House et al., (2004)
Reflects the degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations or families.

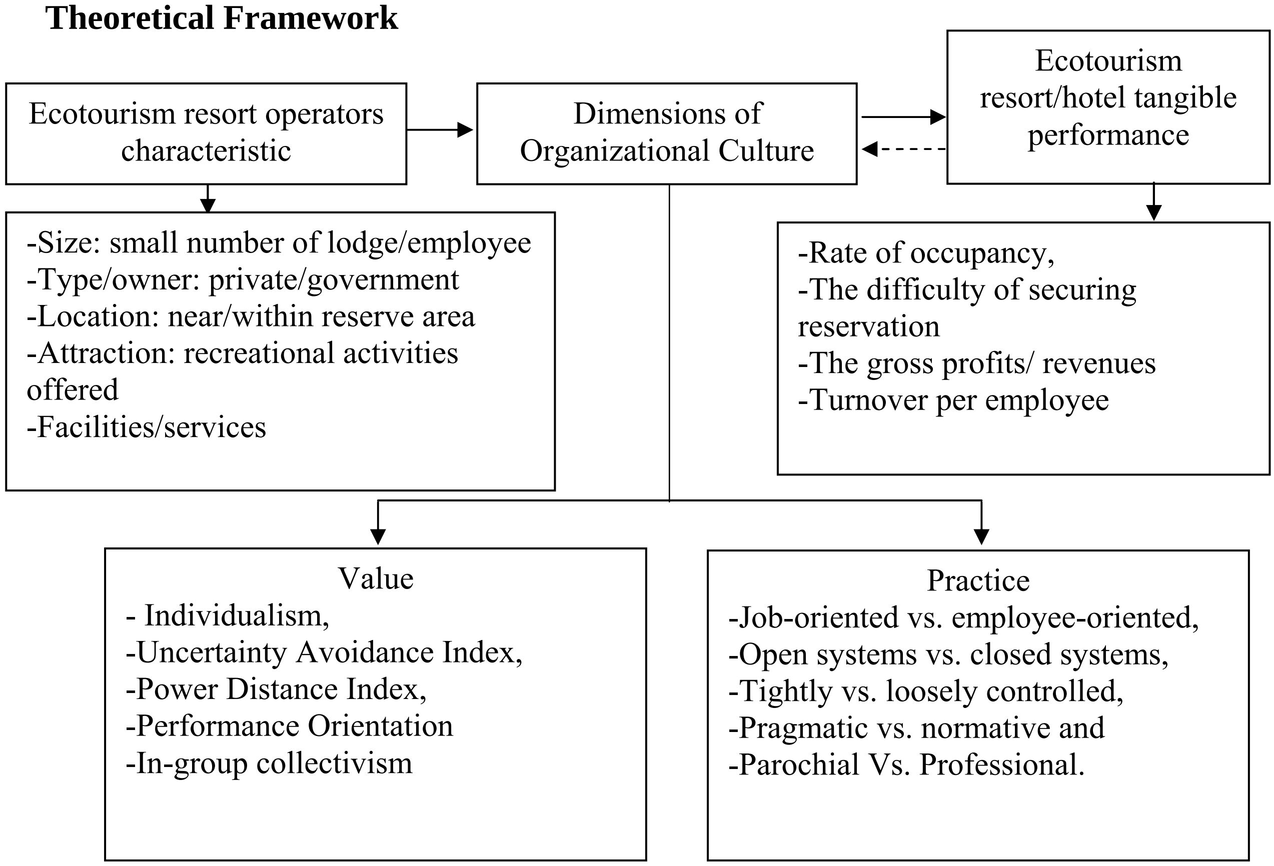
Resort Performance

According to Doyle (1994) (as cited in Hin, 2007) there was no single measure or best measure of organizational performance. Organizations adopt different objectives and measurement for organizational performance. Hofer (1983) (as cited in Kifli, 2007) said different fields of study will and should use different measures of organizational performance because of the differences in their research questions.

While financial data from secondary sources may be accessible in the case of large, publicly held company, such information is extremely difficult to obtain on the case of small firm. Objective data on the performance of small firms are usually not available because most small firms are privately held and the owners are neither required by law to publish financial results nor usually willing to reveal such information voluntarily to outsiders (Dess & Robinson, 1984 as cited in Kifli, 2007).

In perspective of ecotourism resort, most of the resorts are small scale resort. Thus, the tangible performance would be the rate of occupancy, the cost and/or the difficulty of securing reservation (allow the owner to demand and receive high room rates) (Ninemeier and Perdue, 2005) and the profits.

Theoretical Framework



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Impact of Coastal and Marine Tourism: Application of Limits of Acceptable Change

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Coastal and marine tourism activities are the highest commercial value and can be the major contributor industries for the country's economic development and quality of life. The concept of coastal and marine tourism embraces the full range of tourism, leisure, and recreationally oriented activities that take place in the coastal zone and the offshore coastal waters and marine-based activities. The impacts are classified variously: environmental, economic and socio-cultural, positive or negative, direct or indirect, immediate or cumulative, short term or long term. Undoubtedly, unplanned and poorly managed tourism development can damage the natural environment, but the overall understanding of the interaction between tourism and the environment. Limit of Acceptable Change is a framework to address the visitor management issues and this is another alternative for carrying capacity that can achieve the real objectives to handle this management issues. This paper focuses on the coastal and marine tourism impacts and discusses the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) framework for the better management at the coastal zones in Malaysia especially Marine Parks.

Key words: coastal and marine tourism,impact, limits of acceptable change

Introduction

Tourism is the world's largest industry that can contribute gross national profit to one country especially Third World Countries. Coastal and marine tourism had become the most popular from any others tourism in the world for the natural-based of the pristine beach and always be connected with 3 S's, sand, sun and sea. Coastal and marine tourism activities are the highest commercial value and can be the major contributor industries for the country's economic development and quality of life. In Southeast Asia, tourism had become the most important and fastest growing industries and become popular destination for all over the world for the enormous differences exists between the various countries. For example, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore

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are in the top league for tourism industry. For this purposes, Malaysia had increased the number of promotion and programmes to promote Malaysia as a destination of excellence and to make the tourism industry a major contributor to the socio-economic development of the nation. This paper focuses on the coastal and marine tourism impacts and discusses the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) framework for the better management at the coastal zones in Malaysia especially Marine Parks.

Coastal and Marine Tourism

Coastal tourism specifically defined as tourism that correlated with coastal environment and its natural and cultural resources. The concept of coastal tourism embraces the full range of tourism, leisure, and recreationally oriented activities that take place in the coastal zone and the offshore coastal waters. These include coastal tourism development and constructions (accommodation, restaurants, food industry, and second homes), and the infrastructure supporting coastal development (e.g. retail businesses, marinas, and activity suppliers). Also included are tourism activities such as recreational boating, coast- and marine-based ecotourism, cruises, swimming, recreational fishing, snorkeling and diving (Miller, 1993). While marine tourism closely related with coastal tourism but mostly about ocean-based tourism such as deep-sea fishing, cruises, pontoon, moorings and fish feeding. Orams defines marine tourism as including 'those recreational activities that involve travel away from one's place of residence and which have as their host or focus the marine environment (where the marine environment is defined as those watersk which are saline and tide-affected)'.

Eastern Asia includes some of the most magnificent sandy beaches in the world, many of which are still unspoiled, particularly those fringing remote coral islands. Beautiful sandy beaches also make up 90% of the eastern coastline of Malaysia. This pristine beaches of coastal and islands had attracted tourists from all over the world to enjoy their coastal and marine based holiday. Popular beaches and islands such as Pulau Langkawi (Kedah), Port Dickson (N. Sembilan), Teluk Chempedak (Pahang) and Marine Parks such as Pulau Payar, Pulau Redang and also Pulau Tioman. Those beaches and island had attracted more than thousand hundred of tourists per annum and became one of major contributor for Malaysian economy.

Tourists Arrival

Tourism industry is second biggest contributor to the growth of service sector and Malaysian economy. The number of tourists increased for the past ten years. Extremely tourism promotional such as Visit Malaysia 2007, Meetings, Incentives, Convention and Exhibition (MICE) industry and Malaysia My Second Home (MM2H) programmed had boost the growth of tourists to visit Malaysia. As the result shows below, the numbers of tourist arrival to Malaysia are 22.0 million and had contribute receipts of RM 49,561.2 million. From that numbers, most of the tourists attracted to go to the beaches and islands around Malaysia such as Pulau Langkawi, Pulau Pangkor, Penang, and Kuala Terengganu popular as Water Heritage Bay and others for ocean-based activities.

Table 1: Tourist arrival to Malaysia from 2000 until 2008

Year	Arrivals	Receipts
2008	22.0 Million	49,561.2 Million
2007	20.9 Million	46,070.0 Million
2006	17.5 Million	36,271.1 Million
2005	16.4 Million	31,954.1 Million
2004	15.7 Million	29,651.4 Million
2003	10.5 Million	21,291.1 Million
2002	13.2 Million	25,781.1 Million
2001	12.7 Million	24,221.5 Million
2000	10.2 Million	17,335.4 Million

Table 2: Numbers of tourist to coastal/ island destination in Malaysia in 2007 and 2008.

Popular Coastal/ Marine Destination	2007	2008
Pulau Payar	110,662	85,325
Pulau Langkawi	2,334,365	1,871,177
Penang	5,386,611	*4,401,544
Pulau Pangkor	788,502	*503,544
Kuala Terengganu	727,354	*679,876
*2008(Jan-Sept) Source: Department of Statistic Malaysia		

Figure 1: Breakwaters at Merang river mouth.
Source: NAHRIM

Tourists Activities

Marine and coastal tourism industry was very popular among the foreign and also to the domestic tourists is because of the ocean-based activities and their natural beauty of marine environment. For example, Pulau Payar Marine Park and Pulau Sipadan is a popular destination for the snorkelers and divers around the world because of the biodiversity of the coral reef in those islands while Pulau Langkawi unique for the legends myth and eagles. Meanwhile, P. Langkawi got recognition given by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) declaring Langkawi as a geopark on June 1, 2007, the first in Southeast Asia and 52nd in the world. Langkawi is the only geopark in the world, comprising 99 islands with duty-free status for shopping. While, Terengganu is popular with the longest white sandy beach in Malaysia and crystal clear water islands such as Pulau Redang and Pulau Perhentian. Kuala Terengganu most popular activity once a year that also had attracted tourists all over the world is Monsoon Cup, a boat sailing competition among great sailors.

There are many activities that can be done along the coastal and island in Malaysia such as SCUBA diving, swimming, snorkeling, sun bathing whether along the beach or pontoon, motorized water sport such as jet ski, cruises, deep sea fishing, watching seabirds, turtle-watching and any other non motorized water sport. There are many other activities that can be held at coastal and islands of Malaysia because of their unique biodiversity, pristine sandy beaches and also the crystal clear water.

Tourism Development and Impacts

As the coastal and marine tourism become a major contributor, an investment for the coastal tourism development such as accommodation, airports, marinas, resorts and hotel for the tourist's attraction. But the short term benefits had giving a long term impacts to the natural environment especially coastal and marine environment because of the coastal development as investment to increase tourist numbers in Malaysia. Generally, tourism at the coasts is associated with a wide variety of development activities, environmental impacts and coastal management problems. The impacts are classified variously: environmental, economic and socio-cultural, positive or negative, direct or indirect, immediate or cumulative, short term or long term (Wong, 1998). This investment had giving big and critical impacts to the environment. That tourism can have harmful impacts on the physical and marine environments have now become well recognised. However, that tourism automatically has a negative effect has now become something of a truism in much of the contemporary travel literature. Undoubtedly, unplanned and poorly managed tourism development can damage the natural environment, but the overall understanding of the interaction between tourism and the environment particularly within coastal areas is quite poor, with debates over the impacts of tourism development often dealing in generalities rather than the outcomes of scientific research on tourist impacts in a specific environment or on a specific species. The coastal zone of Malaysia has a special socio-economic and environmental significance. Length of the coastline of Malaysia is 4800 km comprises of mudflat and sandy beaches and the percentage of population within 100km of the coast is 98% (EarthTrends, 2003). More than 70% of the population lives within the coastal area and a lot of economic activities such as urbanization, agriculture, recreation and eco-tourism, fisheries, aquaculture and oil and gas exploration are situated in the area. With 4,800 km of coastline and a large percentage of population living within 5 km from it, demands of developments and industrialisation in these areas had made a very big impact on the resources and the coastline itself. (Nor Hisham M.G., 1999).

Tourism industry contributes to the country economy over the last 30 years because fast growing industry and by foreign exchange and also to the local communities such as increased the job vacancies and their earning by selling local products and also handicraft. In recent years, long-haul travel has increased, a development which Malaysia can leverage on to increase its share of tourist arrivals and receipts (MOF, 2009). Many accommodation and facilities had been developed along the coastal areas especially the islands to increase the market demands to increase the tourists number. As a result, unplanned resort and hotel development along the coastal were held without thinking the impacts to the coastal environment in order to meet tourists demand and the profits from the development.

From the previous research indicates that the increasing number of tourists would increases the recreation use and often causes impact and change. For example ecological impacts; water pollution, coral reef destruction, coastal pollution, erosion and sedimentation while social impacts including tourist's satisfaction and quality recreation experiences through crowding, conflict and the aesthetic implication of resources degradation (Manning, 1999; Manning and Lime 2000). Figure 1 shows the hypothetical relationship between visitor use and impacts to the resource, experience and management components of parks. The relationship suggests that increasing recreation use can and often does cause increasing impacts in the form of damage to vegetation, coral reef, marine environment, crowding and conflicting uses and more direct and intensive recreation management actions. There are several environmental impacts caused by marine and coastal tourism; erosion, sedimentation, water pollution, coral destruction and also social impacts; tourists satisfaction through crowding, conflicts and others. But, it is not clear to what degrees the impacts and visitor use level are acceptable, thus, the concept of limits of acceptable change was developed.

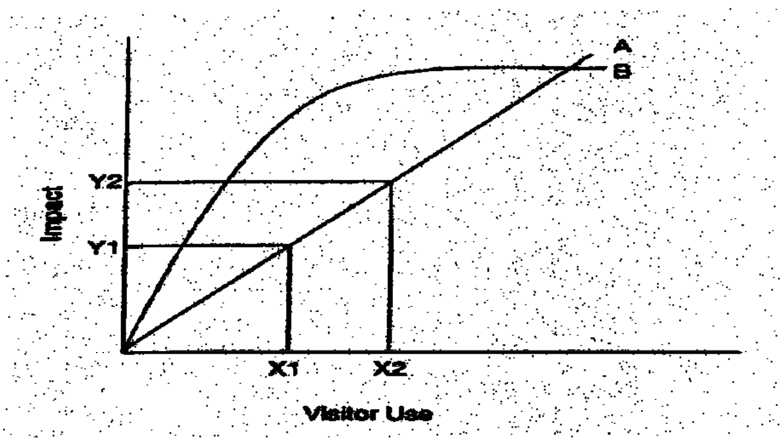

Figure 1: Hypothetical relationship between visitor use and impacts (Manning, 2001)

Limits of Acceptable Change

The LAC framework was developed by Stankey *et al.* (1985) to help better manage increasing demands and impacts by hikers and backpackers in U.S wilderness system. It assesses the probable impact of an activity, decides in advance how much change will be tolerated, monitors what's happening systematically and regularly, and determines what action are appropriate if agreed-upon quality standards are surpassed. The Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) planning system was developed in response to growing recognition in the U.S. that attempts to define and implement recreational carrying capacities for national park and wilderness protected areas were both excessively reduction and failing. The carrying capacity concept itself, while useful in a generic way to encourage discussion about visitor impacts, was based on biological models of the capability of resources to sustain a given number of animals over a period of time on a particular range or pasture. Such models did not transfer well into ecosystems being managed for human benefits based primarily on recreational experiences that were not themselves well understood. LAC was based on the recognition that (1) specific objectives were needed to identify what it was that management was to protect, (2) change is always present in nature-dominated systems, (3) any recreational use leads to some change, (4) management is therefore confronted with the question of how much change is acceptable, and (5) monitoring of the outcomes of management is needed to determine if actions were effective.

Major Environmental Impacts Caused by Marine and Coastal Tourism

Erosion and Sedimentation

Coastal erosion had become a critical impact to the environment. Erosion was identified as a national problem in the National Coastal Erosion Study (1984-1986) with more than 28% of Malaysia coastline is facing erosion. Mangrove clearance and coastal development for coastal roads, jetty, breakwaters, building airport, coastal towns as well as heavy investment for tourist's infrastructure became the factors caused to coastal erosion and sedimentation. This tragedy also had declined the coastal fishermen fish's catches due to mangrove clearance. Peninsular Malaysia has lost around of a third of our mangroves (from an original area of around 150,000 ha to less than 100,000 ha today). In the last ten years Penang, for example, has lost a fifth of its mangroves classified as permanent forest reserves.

Coastal development and reclamation not only effect on mangroves but increases the sediment loading around the coastal area and being the great harm to the reefs and also seagrass. Even the natural impact could be the factors of reef and seagrass declined, but anthropogenic still became the main factor impacts of the most beauty, diversity and ecological importance. Recently, the World Resources Institute estimated the potential threat to coral reefs using standard criteria to calculate a "reefs at risk" indicator (Bryant *et al*., 1998). The reefs identified as being at greatest risk are in South and Southeast Asia, East Africa, and the Caribbean. Specifically, over 85% of the reefs of Indonesia and Malaysia, and over 90% of those in Cambodia, Singapore, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam are threatened. As the reefs, mangroves and seagrass were the natural buffer zone declined; this will caused great coastal erosion, sedimentation and other natural disaster around the coastal areas.

The corals in front of the Marine Park Centre show the visible damage cause by snorkelers, boat and jetty construction and also sedimentation caused by development on the island.

Pollution

Coastal development for tourism infrastructure and increased of tourists population around the coastal area will caused to marine pollution, coastal runoff and increased water nutrients caused by unmanageable sewage disposal and tourists behavior. Due to the fact that as the population increases, the amount of waste water disposed into the sea also increases, tourism can be considered as a main source of coastal pollution (Saeijs' *et al.,* 1984; Keckes, 1983). Marine pollution also could increase the microorganisms caused by declined of the hygienic seawater due to high population of tourists in the coastal areas.

Pulau Payar Marine Park facing the same problems as other islands or coastal area where there an research said that high number of tourists for snorkeling, diving, swimming also can lead to increase the nutrients such as phosphate and nitrate in the water especially in the areas of bleached corals because of sewage or pollution that may cause to increase the number predators to the corals such as crown of thorn and also giving impact to the health of the corals. These nutrients are believed to originate from Pulau Payar due to the lack of proper sewage treatment and disposal facilities on the island (Tan, 1996).Most of the pollutions come from mainland brought by the tourists such as sewage and rubbish and give impact to the coral reef health.

Application of Limits of Acceptable Change to Marine Park

Tourism management planning for the Marine Park is important for better management and to avoid tourist's impact to the marine environment and resources. This is also important for the marine park managers to provide for quality enjoyment of increasingly large numbers of visitors while preserving the fragile ecosystems within the marine park, such as the coral reefs. By applying certain management tool enables a park to preserve its natural and cultural resources a mandate from the government by limiting the numbers of visitors and/or vehicles or find another alternatives for certain indicators within an area at a given time. The main problem is not the number of tourists individually but also their behaviors and attitude. Limit of Acceptable Change is a framework to address the visitor management issues and this is another alternative for carrying capacity that can achieve the real objectives to handle this management issues. McCool (1994, 1995) has suggested that among several frameworks dealing with sustainable tourism development, the limits of acceptable change (LAC) planning framework has good potential as a tool that can assist in operationalizing the sustainability concept. LAC not only can be applied on wilderness or national forest but also can be applied on marine protected area or Marine Park as long the management of the marine reserve area need to be protect from the unlimited number of tourists and other side effects from that impacts. The LAC process gives primary attention to the marine park conditions that exist and that are judged acceptable. Managers are interested in achieving certain conditions and in the relative effects of different management actions to achieve those conditions. Because use levels are of limited value in predicting either social or ecological impacts (Washburne 1982), this process focuses on defining what management actions are needed to achieve certain marine park conditions.

Conclusion

Limits of Acceptable Change should be applied to any management of coastal area and island and especially to the marine park in order to help the Marine Park Managers to provide for quality enjoyment of increasingly large numbers of visitors while preserving the fragile ecosystems within the tourism area. This is also important to conserve, protect and manage the perpetuity representative marine ecosystem of significance marine flora and fauna in order to avoid from unlimited number of tourists to coastal area.

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The Pressure and Benefits of Environmental Management Practices for the Hotel Industry

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The hotel industry, one of the major players of the tourism sector, needs to take a major role in protecting the environment since the industry generally uses huge amounts of energy, consumes large amounts of water and generates unbalanced amounts of waste. Besides protecting the environment, the hotels, in incorporating environmentally friendly practices could also ensure the sustainability of their businesses. As such, this paper discusses the pressures and benefits of environmental management practices for the hotel industry.

Key words: environmental management practises, hotel, pressure, benefits

Introduction

Malaysia is aiming to ensure that tourism industry will be sustainable through formulating and developing environment-friendly tourism products, and promoting of cultural and natural heritage. The Malaysian Government has budgeted more than 309 million Malaysian Ringgit in support of environment-friendly projects, including the provision of budget hotels, historical site conservation, provision of pedestrian walkways and bicycle trails, and provision of soft loans for small to medium-size tourism related projects.

The hotel industry, one of the major players of the tourism sector need to take a major role in protecting the environment since the industry generally uses huge amounts of energy, consumes large amounts of water and generates unbalanced amounts of waste (USAID, 2002). Hotels should focus on being environmental friendly because it not only saves money for the shareholders of the hotels, but also resources for the world, while at the same time letting their guests do good things for the environment and learn to become environmental conscious (Font & Tribe, 2001). Besides that, guests are attracted to the “green” hotel because it is taking environmental friendly steps (Kirk, 1995). Whether it is water or energy conservation, recycling, or reducing the consumption of natural resources, a positive impact can be made by the hotels (www.environmentallyfriendlyhotels.com).

It is argues that hotels, by minimizing energy and water consumption, making efficient use of resources, and reducing waste without compromising on quality or

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standard of service, can increase the competitiveness of their business (Font & Tribe, 2001). Furthermore, being responsible to the environment, they are well positioned to encourage their suppliers and business partners to do the same (Font & Tribe, 2001). This interdependence with so many other businesses gives hotels a unique opportunity to challenge their business partners to help in environmental mission and to look at how they might change their own activities to be more environmentally friendly (Delmas, 2002).

Thus, it is not surprising that there is an increase of guidelines for best practice and also methods to recognize those organizations achieving such environmental standards (Font, 2001). The first milestone in environmental certification is Blue Flags in 1985, Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) in 1993, International Standards Organization (ISO) in 1996 and so on. Since then, over than 100 eco-labels for tourism, hospitality and eco tourism had emerged with many of them overlapping in sectors and geographical scope (Ecotrans, 2001; Font & Buckley, 2001) such as the Green Leaf (USA), Green Key (Denmark), Nordic Swan (Scandinavia), and EU Flower (European Union). However, the various standards of eco-labels of varying quality, criteria, content and scope, are confusing to the point that some hotels prefer to ignore these standards altogether (Font, 2002).

In addition to the eco-labeling, there is also is one of the associations that brings together, all hotels which are interested in becoming environmental hotels or "green" hotels. One of which is the Green Hotel Association (GHA). The three main objectives of this association are saving water, energy, and reducing solid waste while saving money. GHA also claimed that these three steps can save five percent on hotel utilities, and at least 70 percent of the customers will participate on these ideas (Green Hotel Association). There are also websites that provides the list of environmental friendly hotels based on the evaluation of the environmental management practices (EMS) listed on the website.

In Malaysia, the environmental management practices at hotels are still in infancy. Eco-labeling is not yet practiced and hotels still graded based on the normal rating criteria and does not really focus environmental aspects. Environmental management practice has not been internalized in the hotel management process. For example, a study by Abdul Samad et al. (2008) found that only 50 percent of hotels in Malaysia have committees on environmental issues and about 40 percent to 45 percent on energy consumption of hotels. Thus, the quest to have a more sustainable tourism industry is challenging for Malaysia. Only twelve Malaysian hotels are listed as the Green Hotel by the Environmentally Friendly Hotels and only one hotel in Malaysia gets four marks out of seven. However, even this hotel fulfills only 18 out of 33 environmental friendly items set up. The average hotels in Malaysia only get one mark from *The Best Green Hotels* and Malaysian hotels are not listed in as the Green Hotel in the world (www.environmentalfriendlyhotels.com).

Thus, in this paper, the conceptualization of environmental management practices for the hotel industry is discussed. This is followed by the discussion of the pressures and benefits of being environmentally friendly for the hotel industry.

The Conceptualization of Environmental Management System

Environmental management is conceptualized by Mensah (2006) as "a continuous process adopted through management decisions, by which a hotel's activities are monitored and appropriate programs and activities devised to reduce the negative environmental impact" These processes comprised the hotels formulating an environmental policy, training and rewarding workers to find opportunities to prevent pollution, setting corporation-wide internal standards that are maintained even by facilities in other countries with lower environmental standards, undertaking internal environmental audits and adopting the philosophy of total quality management (TQM) in environmental management (Anton et al., 2004). With EMS system in place, a hotel can answers what needs to be done, when it has to be done, which needs to do, what and how it is to be done with regard to environmental issues and the resource requirement for the action plans (USAID, 2002). Furthermore, EMP system lead to an initial review with a situation analysis carried out by an environmental task force of the EMPs to look at operational impacts, current attitudes, and communications practices (Faulk, 2000). Therefore, through the EMPs in the hotels industry not only can educate the staff but also can educate the customer to practice to become environmental friendly.

George et al. (2003) come out with measures for EMPs. These include, first, a merit between front and back office measures. Secondly, an examination of better measures of resource savings program (such as energy management measures in hotels) and an assessment of housekeeping and maintenance practices that reduce impacts, waste, and costs. The measures for environmentally responsible practices in the design and construction of facilities, for example the construction of "green" rooms with a longer average life are also needed. Finally, an evaluation of the use of environmental information systems that allow customized reporting, sharing of information among managers, and also provide a benchmarking system (Goodman, 2000; Schendler, 2001; George & Andreas, 2003).

Hotels with EMP can also get environmental certification, i.e., the ISO 1400. Environmental certification is widely acquired in other industries. According to statistics published by ISO, up to the end of 2002, at least 49,462 ISO 14001 certified had been issued in 118 countries. It is expected that agreement to ISO 14000 standard and consequently obtaining the registration for it will be perceived by firms as necessary to gain entry into the global market (Tan, 2005). Therefore it is not surprising many companies are seeking ISO 14000 registrations. In Malaysia, 38 companies overall were registered with ISO 14001 by 1998, the number has increased significantly to 83 companies in 1999, and it risen to 566 companies has certified the ISO 14001 in 2005 (www.goodearth.com.my) and nearly 600 in 2009. In other industries in Malaysia, the implementation of an environmental management system (EMS) through the registration with ISO 14001 will be the norm rather the exception. This will have significant effect on the management practices in Malaysia (Tan, 2005).

The Benefits of EMS

There are various reasons for a hotel to be environmental friendly. One of the reasons is might be because some operators believe that operating in an environment friendly manner is the right thing to do. Increasing governmental regulation pertaining to environmental matter also is a motivating factor for being environmentally friendly.

In addition, the major push factor for going green is due to the demand form the hotel guests for the hotel to have "green" operations, (Enz & Siguaw, 1999). It has been observed that the demand for standards especially in the western country is fundamentally "market driven".

However, this is not the case in Malaysia. For example, a study of implementation of ISO standards in Malaysian companies found the top management's direction was the main motivation for acquiring the ISO registration rather than customer demand (Tan & Sia, 2001) Nonetheless, the Malaysian companies studied, did not seem to have paid attention to areas like enhanced employee empowerment, improved relationships with stakeholders, or improved production of competitive products/services, as compared to those in industrialized countries. Their experiences were more similar to those of Asian countries like Hong Kong and Singapore than with those of developed countries.

There are various benefits gained from being environmentally friendly and also gaining the ISO 1400 certification. Minimization or reduction in waste, improved operational safety, improved material utilization efficiency, better communication, and market expansion, as well as improvement in company image as benefits enjoyed after being registration with ISO 14001 (Tan, 2005).

For the hotel industry, gaining the certification and engaging in environmentally friendly practices can help to increase customer loyalty and to improve employee morale, resource savings, cost reduction, and attractive competitiveness, (George and Andreas, 2003). This is similar to the insights from a study undertaken by Meade and Pringle (2001) found hotels around the world are now implementing EMPs to ensure efficient usage of resources. The use of EMP has lead to reduction in operating costs, increasing staff involvement and guest awareness about the environment. Consequently, the hotels gained international recognition in the travel and tourism marketplace. In addition, some authors have suggested that part of the environmental initiatives of hotels should also be targeted to the hotel guests to stimulate their "environmental conscience" and subsequently create demands for more green alternatives within the hotel and tourism marketplace (Bohdonowicz, 2005).

Empirical research conducted has also shown the benefits of being environmentally friendly. In their study, George and Andreas (2003) found that there is a positive relationship between EMPs. Similarly, Hesket et al (1994), argue that EMPs are positively related to hotel performance, and conclude that EMPs should be a vital component of a service firm's operations. Such findings also emphasize the importance of EMPs in gaining customer loyalty and satisfaction and subsequently improvement in performance (George & Andreas, 2003).

Conclusion

There are various reasons for hotels to incorporate "green" practices in their operations (Enz & Siguaw,). Whatever their reasons are, it is important for the hotels to realize their role and potential that they can play in ensuring environmental protection which will also resulted in sustainability of their business. The hotel industry needs to recognize the importance of EMPs and the way to apply it. Even though there are studies that found that some companies are fearful of certification process since it lays the organizations performance open to public scrutiny (Delmas, 2002), there are various benefits from gaining certifications. The hotels may get legitimacy from their stakeholders especially from the hotel guest which are now more environmentally conscious and demand more environmentally friendly products

One of the steps to be taken is for the hotel industry in Malaysia to have its own environmental standards. Even though there are various standards developed, but most of these are at sub-national level, with differences in criteria and management (Font, 2002 quoted from Hamele, 2001). Due to this reason, some standards cannot be applied as benchmark to other countries such as in Malaysia because of the differences in religion, culture, weather, thinking or opinion and etc., (Font, 2002). There are also studies that found that the environmental behavior of hotels usually depends on the owner's attitude and knowledge (Bohdonowicz, 2005). Small hotels generally do not have enough guest pressure, as well as the resources to invest in environmental friendly measures. For that reason, the hotels need to have to considerable flexibility in determining the extent of adopting EMPs. Thus, the comprehensiveness of the EMS is expected to vary across the organizations (Anton et al., 2004). With environmental certifications, guests can also evaluate and choose hotels not only based on the normal criteria but also based on the hotel environmental performance.

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The Flip Side of Medical Tourism

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Medical tourism is becoming very popular in the ASEAN region and countries in the region are competing for a share in this market. While the benefits of medical tourism have been widely acknowledged, the disadvantages of it are frequently underestimated. This study has been carried out through an extensive review of the existing literature on medical tourism using different sources such as the printed and electronic media, academic texts, journals and the internet. In this study, many of the negative impacts of medical tourism have been identified such as: most of the private hospitals that promote health tourism are foreign equities which provide packages where most of the gains are retained by them. Another important impact is the migration of expertise from the public sector to the private sector, notably to these private hospitals which will, in effect, deny access to the locals. The country is facing a perennial shortage of medical personnel, especially in the public sector. The move to medical tourism will further starve the public sector. This will be made worse by the fact that the foreign tourists will enjoy the benefits of medical tourism at the expense of the taxpayers who would be paying for the infrastructure, maintenance and administration involving the healthcare delivery system. As a conclusion, this is a call for the policy makers to take cognizance of these facts when pushing for this policy.

Key words: medical tourism, impact

Introduction

Medical tourism is gaining international significance and millions of patients from around the world flock to some of the most popular medical tourism destinations each year, in order to receive five-star medical treatment at unbelievable prices (Horowitz et al., 2007). It is estimated that medical tourism to Asia could generate as much as US$4.4 billion by 2012, with approximately half of this revenue going to India (Appleby and Schmidt, 2006). In the ASEAN region, some of the hottest medical tourism spots are Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines and Singapore (MacReady, 2007; Connell, 2006).

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Defined as the practice of traveling abroad to another country to seek medical treatment, medical tourism can no longer be regarded as a novelty but rather as a global trend in healthcare (Garud, 2005; Leahy, 2008). Why is the medical tourism industry flourishing? Some of the contributory factors are the high cost of healthcare in one's own country, the long waiting time for medical procedures, the ease and affordability of international travel, improvements in technology and high standards of care in the host country (Garud, 2005). These factors have contributed significantly to the increased popularity of medical tourism in general and in the ASEAN region in particular.

Malaysia is gaining prominence as a fast growing medical tourism destination (Chee and Heng, 2007; Ang, 2009). Statistics from Tourism Malaysia reveal that 75,210 foreign patients were treated in 2001 and that figure had risen to 296,687 by 2006, amounting to US$59 million in revenue. According to the Association of Private Hospitals of Malaysia (Association of Private Hospitals of Malaysia, 2009), it is estimated that in 2010, the Malaysian medical tourism sector will contribute RM540 million by offering medical treatment to approximately 625,000 medical tourists.

Objective

The staggering growth of Malaysia medical tourism industry may be a cause for celebration to many but there is a darker side to it. Thus, the main objective of this study is to explore the negative aspects of medical tourism in Malaysia.

Methodology

The researchers have conducted a narrative review of the available literature on medical tourism.

Results and Discussion

As stated previously, statistics from Tourism Malaysia (Ang, 2009) reveal that 75,210 foreign patients received medical treatment in 2001 and that figure had risen to 296,687 by 2006 while in 2007, that number had grown to 350 000 (Tourism Malaysia, 2008). In addition, one in five hospitals in Malaysia were catering to foreign patients, offering a variety of medical procedures and the treatments in demand included cardiology, cardiothoracic, dental, cosmetic and general surgery (Sivanandam, 2009). The Association of Private Hospitals Malaysia projected that the number of foreigners seeking medical treatment in Malaysia will continue to grow at a rate of 30 percent a year until 2010 (Association of Private Hospitals of Malaysia, 2009).

Association of Private Hospitals of Malaysia board member and chairman of committee on database and health/medical tourism, Datuk Dr K. Kulaveerasingam is confident that Malaysia has the potential to become a health/medical tourism hub in the next few years (Association of Private Hospitals of Malaysia, 2009). He told The Star: "Malaysia is slowly coming up in the health/medical tourism business – "we can see from the statistics that it is growing". Health/medical tourism started to pick up from 2002 (revenue worth RM 90 million) in Malaysia and is currently on the uptrend. The outlook for health/medical tourism in the country is very bright – it is a recession proof industry."

Many reasons have been identified for promoting medical tourism in Malaysia and they include (Chee and Heng, 2007; Sivanandam, 2009; Newman, 2006):

1. A huge potential market in terms of health tourism and economic spillovers such as hotel occupancy rates, increase in tourist arrivals and foreign tourist dollars spent.
2. High Quality and Affordable Services
3. Language barrier is minimal or nil as the medical staff are conversant in English
4. Favourable exchange rates (Value for money: US 1.00 = RM 3.50)
5. Highly trained specialists
6. State-of-the-art facilities
7. Well developed infrastructure
8. Comprehensive network of hospitals and clinics and easy accessibility from all major airports
9. Opportunities for new jobs

However, it must be noted that while there may be many reasons for promoting medical tourism, there are negative impacts as well (Chee and Heng, 2007).

1. Economic spillover and creation of jobs: One of the reasons for promoting medical tourism is the economic spillover and the creation of jobs. But the question arises as to who will actually benefit from this spillover and how significant the creation of jobs would be. For instance, the ownership of facilities such as hospitals and hotels which cater to the medical tourists- would they be locally owned or would it have international stakeholders? The Gleneagles Hospital and the Sheraton Hotel have foreign equity, so who actually gains?
2. Foreign tourist dollars spent: On the surface, it appears that foreign tourist dollars are being spent. However, a closer look will reveal that these tourist dollars spent involve expenditure on 'packages' developed with the foreign agent which include:
    a. travel cost-foreign airlines
    b. procedure cost - devices and peripherals used are imported, so money is usually repatriated
    c. recuperation and services for recuperation-devices for rehabilitation are also imported
    d. possible tours
3. Highly trained specialists: While it is true that Malaysia has highly trained specialists, there are several issues that must noted and they include:
    a. Perennial and acute shortage of doctors especially specialists in the public sector
    b. Creating wards for foreign tourists will exacerbate this shortage
    c. Importing foreign specialists/ nurses to meet shortages – means repatriation of money
    d. Health Ministry Parliamentary secretary is quoted as saying that the country needed 5743 doctors to achieve the ratio of 1doctor:600 patients.
4. High Quality and Affordable Services: The beneficiaries of these services are foreigners and the only the affluent and the well-heeled can gain access to these services. High quality and affordable services shouldn't be provided at the expense of the common man.

5. State-of-the-Art Facilities: These facilities are developed through subsidies and they are meant to reach the people who need them the most and NOT those who can pay for these facilities.
6. Well developed Infrastructure: This includes infrastructure within the hospital and outside such as utilities, access roads, airports etc. They cannot be seen in isolation as many different parties are involved such as the local government, public works, airport authorities and so forth. It must be remembered that a lot of these services are subsidized by the taxpayers
7. Cost of drugs and the Generation, Storage and Disposal of Waste: This will increase proportionately with the number of medical tourists.

Conclusion

The global medical tourism industry is estimated to generate around US$20 billion of dollars per year, and by 2010, this figure is expected to more than double. The Malaysian government is planning on opening up the public sector for medical tourism but has the government sufficiently researched the impact of promoting medical tourism?

The overall quality of healthcare in the country is bound to be affected negatively with the expansion of lucrative, profit oriented medical tourism. Some of the negative consequences of promoting medical tourism include:

a. Increase in demand for high-end medical services, especially by the well-heeled.
b. Reinforcement of the healthcare system where the public sector continues to serve long lines of patients while the private sector with experienced and highly trained doctors treat the more well-to-do patients, often for minor complaints and ailments.
c. Development of more lucrative specialties such as cosmetic/plastic surgery at the expense of other less lucrative areas.
d. Exodus of specialists to the private sector
e. Acute shortage of medical specialists in public hospitals due to the exodus
f. Diversion of government resources (subsidies, tax incentives, land) to start up private facilities with state-of-the-art facilities
g. Healthcare becomes a commodity

While the glamour and profitability of medical tourism cannot be denied, it must not edge out the common man to the fringes of healthcare. Perhaps the government policy on medical tourism needs to be reviewed and debated once more.

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The Potential and Challenges of Salt Lick Tourism

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Salt licks are natural geological formation. They are the source of minerals for wildlife. Since ancient time, Homo sapiens have been amazed by the gathering of wildlife at salt licks and have exploited them for a living. Many human settlements grew around salt licks for the hunting they gave. While modern-day hunters, especially poachers continue to stalk their prey near salt licks, many other visitors hide there to observe and marvel at the biodiversity of wildlife that frequent these salt licks. Salt licks within the parks have been thus exploited as an ecotourism attraction. As more demand for tourists to visit salt lick areas, it becomes important to identify this niche product for future sustainable management and economic interests. This paper intends to study the potential and challenges of salt licks ecotourism and wildlife viewing. The ultimate goals of this paper were to contribute to the knowledge of niche tourism and the ecology wellbeing of our natural heritage in Malaysia.

Key words: salt lick tourism, park, ecotourism, potential and challenges

Introduction

According to article 76 of Wildlife Act Malaysia (1972), "salt lick" includes any mineral spring or ground containing or bearing salt or any other mineral (whether of the same genus or not), the consumption of which is conducive to the health or well being of wild animals. A salt lick has been described (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_lick, accessed 5/9/08) as a salt deposit that animals regularly lick. In an ecosystem, salt/mineral licks sometimes occur naturally, providing the sodium, calcium, iron, phosphorus and zinc required in the springtime for bone, muscle and other growth in deer and other wildlife, such as moose, elephants, cattle, woodchucks, fox squirrels, mountain goats and porcupines. Harsh weather exposes salty mineral deposits that draw animals from miles away for a taste of needed nutrients.

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Figure 1: Pictorial data on the differences - Left (Wet Lick, Ulu Muda Forest Reserve), Centre (Dry Lick, Temengor Forest Reserve), Right (Wallow, Bukit Kukus, Penang)

Figure 1 above will be able to differential between all terms synonym with "salt licks" such as "mineral licks" and "wallow". Salt lick has the most abundant Na (Sodium) element while mineral lick has Mg, Ca, and P in abundant (Atwood and Weeks Jr 2003). Wallow is practically a mud bath frequented by pigs, elephants, red deer, hippopotami as a cooling aid (Free Dictionary, assessed 1 May 09) although there may be wallow found at salt licks and mineral licks. There was no "salty" lick in our areas of study. They were mainly "mineral licks" although they were all referred as "salt licks" in tourism brochures. There are practically 2 kind of licks – Wet Licks and Dry Licks. Perhilitan (2007) added "*Jenut Batu*" (Rock Lick) to the list. However, we will refer Rock Licks as subset of Dry Licks. Wet licks are those that are wet either with spring or rain water. Dry licks are those earths that contain minerals and consumed by wildlife. The practice of geophagy happened in dry licks. According to Wikipedia (assessed 30 April 09), *Geophagy is the practice of eating earthy or soil-like substances such as clay, and chalk, in order to obtain essential nutrients such as sulfur and phosphorus from the soil.* To simplify our discussion in this paper, all licks frequented by wildlife to lick, feed or geophagy, will be referred as "salt licks". *Salt licks are either natural or artificial licks* (Perhilitan 2007).

Wildlife salt licks are found in large, relatively undisturbed forested terrain which can be found in Taman Negara National Park, Belum-Temengor Forest Complex and Ulu Muda Forest Reserve. Salt licks play an important role in providing many species of wildlife especially herbivorous mammals (usually ungulates) with minerals for their health and digestion of food. However, salt licks in Peninsular Malaysia have generally been studied for their composition and geology (Mike H.N. Chong et al., 2005). None or very few have reported on their importance to the local ecology and the survival of animal species. It was cited that several authors (Smiet 1982; Blouch 1989; Oliver 1993) have concluded that wild species are directly vulnerable to hunting while logging and mining activities put adverse pressure on these species as well. However, there is little record of the effect of mass human presence as ecotourists at salt licks. Visitors to Taman Negara, Malaysia's oldest and largest National Park set in a 300 million year old rain forest seldom miss the artificial salt lick located at Tahan Hide. This salt lick is within walking distance from the park HQ and is very popular and overcrowded.

Ecotourism, also known as ecological tourism, is a form of tourism that appeals to ecologically and socially conscious individuals. It typically involves travel to destinations where flora, fauna, and cultural heritage are the primary attractions (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecotourism, accessed 5/9/08). Ecology describes the interdependence of all elements, living and inanimate, in an environment. Mutual dependence among all these elements often produce a fragile balance that can be easily tilted if a key element is removed (for example, become extinct). The upheaval may lead to loss of biodiversity.

Salt lick is called differently in different part of Malaysia. In northern Peninsular, it is called "*sira*" while in the south it is called "*jenut*". In Sarawak, it is often called "*lubang temu*". In Indonesia it is called "*mata air asin*" or "*mata air mineral*". There could be other interesting names given to salt lick depending on the local dialects but that is not the subject of our study.

What will be the effect of allowing more people into isolated jungle area? The Endemicguides' website noted that, "*It has been proven that introduction of people to the area will cause the animals to flee from their usual waterholes and saltpans, which has occurred in Taman Negara*" (Endemicguides, 2007). Is this a true statement? Has it been scientifically verified?

Area of Study

Salt licks are spread out over isolated parks and forest reserves all over Malaysia. Some salt licks are small while some can accommodate large animals such as elephants and tapirs. For this paper, salt licks studied will be limited to Peninsular Malaysia and special emphasis to Taman Negara (Pahang), Belum-Temengor Complex (Perak) and Ulu Muda Forest Reserve (Kedah). Taman Negara and Royal Belum are both sanctioned parks while south of Royal Belum called Temengor together with Ulu Muda are forest reserves. Both Royal Belum and Taman Negara have special hides built overlooking salt licks. However, in forest reserves, the lack of popularity and the funding were the main reason there were no hide (except for the failed Sira Air Hangat of Ulu Muda built by a tour company).

Methodolody

The methodology used in this research is based on quantitative methods using observations, interviews, photography, video data, and secondary data from informed sources. A large part of research materials were also sourced from published articles, web pages and journals from the electronic media. We reviewed the works of relevant authors in this field based on their findings on salt licks. Interviews were also conducted on researchers, tourists, tour staffs, nature guides, local communities and park rangers as primary data. Other *in situ* data collected were photographic data in the area studied.

Tourism Potential

Wildlife viewing is currently one of the fastest growing recreational activities. For instance, in 1996 in the US, more than 24 million Americans over the age of 16 took trips to view wildlife (Judith, 2006). At present in Malaysia, we do not keep sustained records of the principle activities or purposes of tourists, both local and from abroad. Most trips to view wildlife (except for the simpler and popular bird watching) are found only as part of a larger itinerary that focuses on trekking, caving, photography, adventure and ecological studies. However, in Tabin Wildlife Reserve, Sabah, visit to the mineral-rich mud volcano which acts as a salt-lick wildlife is one of the highlights there (Times 2008). As most wildlife are probably best observed at salt licks, it becomes important to study the many factors that can and will influence observation of wildlife at salt licks as a major tourist activity and attraction but a balance must be struck between tourism development and conservation (Chan, 2004).

Tourism has always been important source of income for countries endowed with attractions for visitors. Table 1 below shows tourist arrivals to Malaysia in 2007 reached 20.97 million and surpassed the 20.1 million targets set by the government. This figure represents an increase of 19.5% over the number of visitors for the same period in 2006. The total tourist receipts for 2007 was RM46.1 billion that also surpassed the target of RM44.5 billion. For 2008, arrivals jumped to 22 million with a revenue of RM49.6 billion (Tourism Malaysia, assessed 1 May 2009). The consistent tourist arrivals and receipts are indeed a boom on our tourist attractions. Visitation to salt licks will continue to increase with increase in tourist arrivals.

Table 1: Comparison of tourist arrivals and receipts to Malaysia

Year	Arrivals (million)	Receipts (RM) (million)
2008	22.0	49,561.2
2007	20.9	46,070.0
2006	17.45	36,271.1
2005	16.4	31,954.1
2004	15.7	29,651.4
2003	10.5	21,291.1
2002	13.2	25,781.1
2001	12.7	24,221.5
2000	10.2	17,335.4
1999	7.9	12,321.2
1998	5.5	8,580.5

Source: Tourism Malaysia

It becomes evident that the increase in tourists' arrival will overflow to other area of interest including salt licks' sites. The ease in infrastructures and the information availability on salt licks will attract more ecotourists. According to Lonely Planet (2007), *there's a chance of spotting tapir, wild boar or deer, but sightings of elephants and other large game are extremely rare.* The authors of Lonely Planet (Vol. 2007), go on (Pg 270) to advise would-be-tourist to head for hides furthest away from park headquarters for better chances of seeing wildlife. With such advice to a growing generation of ecotourists willing to travel far and into remote areas to view wildlife in their natural state, identifying salt lick sites away from the crowded parts of a park becomes important in the planning for increased tourism capacity. Thus creating prospect of salt licks becoming potential tourism earner.

Rea, Hodder et al. (2004) cited several authors on the reasons why animals visit licks, among other things, mineral supplementation, soils to aid digestion, and water and social gathering (Fraser and Hristienko 1981, Jones and Hanson 1985, Risenhoover and Peterson 1986, Couturier and Barrette 1988, Heimer 1988). Salt licks were not just for wild animals, researches shown that butterflies (George Mathew and C.F.Binoy, 2002), birds (S. Granholm, 2005) and bats (Christian et al., 2007) frequented salt licks too. In Malaysia, one such salt licks that attract butterflies are Ulu Groh, Gopeng, Perak. These salt licks at Ulu Groh have also attracted tourists as well as butterflies' collectors thus jeopardizing the Rajabrooke birdwing's species – the negative impact of tourism.

Findings and Discussions

Salt lick as a non-living geological formation is a part of the natural environment that nevertheless is a participant in the life cycles of living creatures. It has a unique niche in any ecological system and therefore it bears a sustainable economical value. Salt lick ecotourism can then mean a sustainable form of tourism that makes visits to actual natural site with salt deposit or even artificially constructed ones to observe, study and marvel at the resulting dynamic ecosystem that pivots around each salt lick the central aim and purpose.

Unfortunately today, some of these salt licks have been badly disturbed by intrusion of human activities expanding into forested areas. Jenut Muda in Taman Negara Pahang has one such salt lick where a trail passes directly through the salt lick. No large animal has been recorded since the last sighting in 1995 (Personal observation, from 1990-2008). How can such salt licks be preserved in order to realize sustainable economic gains from them?

In Kenya, the fauna and flora safari tour (www.kenyasafaris.de*) includes relaxing at dramatic comfortable lounge areas in full view of a* ***floodlit*** *waterhole and salt lick that allows guests to view visiting animals at any time of night.* The animals seen in those floodlit waterhole and salt lick were rhino, lion, elephant and buffalo. It could not be ascertained that these safari animals are not as "shy" as our Malaysian's wildlife. Or is there another reason? The need to lick overcomes all fear? According to Hebert et. al. (1971), wildlife visited the salt licks despite increased exposure to hazards of predation. The carving for salt and the lacking of alternative salt lick sites could be the reasons why wildlife took risk to visit licks where human are present. This was possibly the reason why Tahan Hide (Taman Negara Pahang) and Kenya's safari tour have been successful salt lick observation areas.

There are more than 60 salt licks in Belum-Temengor Forest Complex. However, according to a staff in Wildlife Conservation Society, there was none known salt lick in Endau-Rompin State Park. Could the landscape consist of salt-bearing rocks? *Perhaps when there are sufficient aquatic forage available with sodium* (Panichev, Zaumyslova et al. 2002) that wildlife do not utilize salt licks. Panichev et al. (2002) cited that in *boreal ecosystems, the sodium deficiency in terrestrial plants can be compensated for by moose through consumption of sodium-rich aquatic plants, which was demostrated in a number of studies by North-American investigators* (Botking et al. 1973, Belovsky and Jordan 1981, Fraser et al. 1984). Parks with lack of sodium-rich food-plants need salt licks to compensate with. Salt licks in parks (in area lacking sodium-rich food) play an important role to secure the wildlife ecosystem.

Salt lick is an important part of the living species. Perhaps the first documented salt lick as mentioned by Charles et al. (2006) referring to elephants eating salt-bearing earth and rocks was that of ancient citation (Aristotle, ca 350 BC) who wrote about elephants *"And if it eats earth it becomes weakly, unless it eats continually; if it does so continually, it is not harmed. It also swallows stones sometimes"*. The need for salt licks was supported by many researchers including one on domesticated lamb by N. Karb (2006) which shown that animals that lick in salt licks were healthier and their offsprings were heavier. (Bureau Undated) suggested that activities at salt licks should be limited during high use periods such as May – August for mountain goats by avoiding mechanized activity place within 500m. A study by (Panichev, Zaumyslova et al. 2002) that the *most visited salt licks* (by wildlife) are those with *highest content of sodium and abundant water and that salt licks are also centers for breeding activities*.

Ulu Muda Forest Reserve is rich in wildlife. After the surrendering of CPM (Communist Party of Malaya), poachers have gone rambling through the forest reserve hunting for meat. Many artificial salt licks were created. In Malaysia, there is no regulation on salt baiting. This small detail should be looked into and acted by government agency to prevent problem later on. Robert Jackson (2001) an experienced park ranger noted in his testimony that the practice of salt baiting in Yellowstone National Park (US) has an adverse effect on the human-animals conflict beside the number of killed wildlife, salting created overcrowding of hunters and construction of illegal trails. He championed that the practice of salt baiting be made illegal.

Salt licks are potential sites for transmission and spreading of diseases (Jog and Watve 2005) through ticks, parasites and lice. The popularity of salt licks could also be the source of parasitic diseases. Tourism near salt licks could become a health issue. The risk of contacting parasitic diseases and bringing home would be a concern for ecotourists.

Studies by Noss, A. J., R. L. Cuéllar, et al. (June 2003), showed that *duration of visits to salt licks by animals differed between different species. For example, tapir visits to salt licks are brief, generally less than five minutes, in comparison to gray brocket deer (10-20 mn), white-lipped peccary (10 mn) and collared peccary (20-60 mn)* (Noss, Cuéllar et al. June 2003). Cited by Rea, Hodder et al. (2004) that *the health of some moose herds has been reported to be dependent on the presence of and regular access to mineral licks (Best et al. 1977) and that since land management activities may disrupt the integrity of mineral licks and possibly impact ungulate populations (Weeks and Kirkpatrick 1976, Dormaar and Walker 1996), several authors have recommended protective measures for licks be integrated into land use policy (Best et al. 1977, Tankersley and Gasaway 1983,Regerl987,Bechtold 1996, Dormaar and Walker 1996, Klaus and Schmid 1998).*

Malaysia has recognized the importance of natural licks and has an Act (Peninsular Malaysia) and Enactment (Sabah) to ensure the licks are protected in land management plans. But how well these guidelines being implemented were difficult to ascertain and there were not enough effort to enforce proper management plan in salt licks area.

> Laws of Malaysia Act 76 (1972)/*Undang-undang Malaysia Akta 76 (1972):*
>
> *79. Every person who*
>
> *(a) shoots kills or takes any wild animal or wild bird within a quarter of a mile of any salt lick;*
>
> *(b) is in possession of any firearm bow and arrow blowpipe spear catapult or any other weapon (whether of the same genus or not) which is capable of shooting killing or taking any wild animal or wild bird within* **a quarter of a mile (estimate at 402 m)** *of any salt lick; or*
>
> *(c) waits in any place, builds any platform or shelter or sets or places any unlawful snare poison poisoned bait birdlime or net for the purpose of shooting killing or taking any wild animal or wild bird within a quarter of a mile of any salt lick or within a quarter of a mile of any approach to any salt lick, is guilty of an offence and shall on conviction be liable (in addition to any other penalty provided for any other offence) to a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding six months or to both,*

91. (1) Save as otherwise provided in this section, every person who knowingly disturbs any salt lick or the land in the immediate vicinity of any salt lick (which land if disturbed would render the salt lick unattractive or unsafe to any wild animal) is guilty of an offence and shall on conviction be liable to a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding six months or to both.

In the Wildlife Conservation Enactment 1997 of Sabah*, article 33 (g) of Part IV Protection of Animals and Hunting, Prohibited methods of hunting, states that no person, except (1) with the authorization of the Director, Shall for the purpose of hunting, approach or build any platform or hide within* ***500m*** *of any salt lick or mud wallow.*

Figure 2: Tabing Hide (left), Tahan Hide (centre) and Dry Lick at Tahan Hide. Note that the distance between the hides and the licks are less than 100 m.

While Peninsular Malaysia set protected distance from salt licks as ¼ mile (estimate **402 m**), Sabah set the distance as **500 m**. Rea, Hodder et al. (2004) cited from Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (1988) which "*recommends a minimum buffer of* ***120 m*** *around mineral licks for moose with the recognition that some development and/or extraction activities (i.e., forest harvesting) may occur under special circumstances within the buffer area. Unlike other jurisdictions, Ontario recommends a site specific approach to establishing buffers around a lick site that considers the forest stand and other landscape characteristics (e. g., local hydrology and topography). This includes designing the shape and extent of the buffer zone to ensure the integrity of the site and safe access for moose*". This difference in distances make us wonder whether these distances really matters or are the distances enacted without any concrete scientific data? However, it is interesting to note that the Ontario's chapter further mentioned the distance could be subjected to "the forest stand, other landscape characteristics, buffer zone and safe access".

From the reasons above, it becomes important for a comprehensive and detail studies on the management of salt licks before they can be opened for tourism activities. A study by Rea, Hodder et al. (2004) provided a standard benchmark procedure in managing a salt lick.

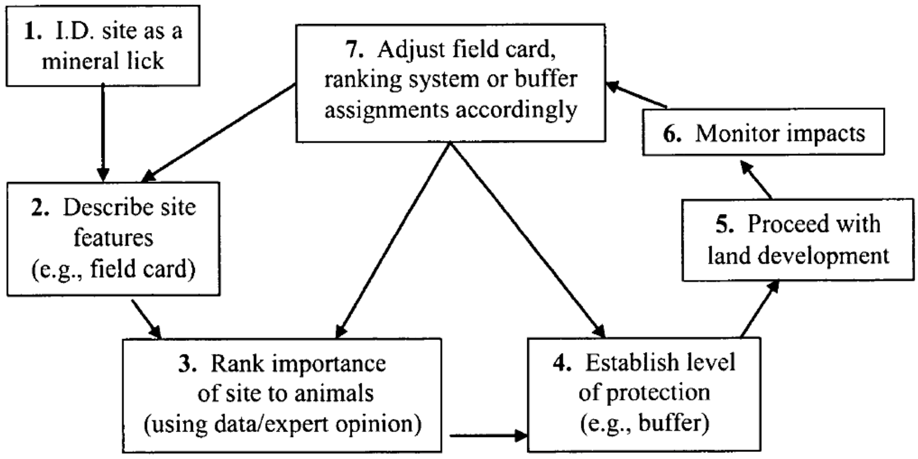

Figure 3: Process recommended for determining and assigning the appropriate level of protection for mineral licks threatened by land development activity.
Source: Rea, Hodder et al. (2004)

To manage well a salt lick, Rea, Hodder et al. (2004) provided an integrated management plan as in Figure 3 above. First, we need to identify the site, then describe the site, rank the importance to animals, establish level of protection and proceed to land development. *The final step in this integrated management process is to monitor the impact of prescriptions and subsequent development activity on the biophysical attributes of the site, site use, and activity patterns of moose. Monitoring and assessment are imperative in the continual process of developing and modifying guidelines, and allow for feedback during the process* (Rea, Hodder et al. 2004).

Silverberg et al. (2003) in their research on "Moose Response To Wildlife Viewing" recorded that loud viewers caused the largest reduction in feeding (> 46%) when compared with other disturbances such as moving trucks, and other human activities. They added that "*The presence of quiet, well-behaved viewers had minimal effect on feeding activities and fleeing occurred < 4% of the time. If disturbances were more frequent and of longer duration, moose may alter their visitation time and duration, or conversely, become habituated to the presence of noisy visitors.*" This indicates that the present of viewers in salt licks within a reasonable distance will have little effect on moose feeding at salt licks. However, we cannot make assumption that all wildlife follows mooses' behavior. In Malaysia, deers (same family as moose of USA) have been spotted at Tahan Hide (Taman Negara) with little concern from human present. The deers could have become habituated with the tourists. We must be aware that not all animals can be accustomized with human presence. Gaur (seladang), tapirs, rhinoceros and elephants are sensitive to human presence and this wildlife will flee with the slightest indication of human odour. There is also the danger of elephants charging on human if this wild beast felt threatened. Hence, we should not presume what that can work in foreign countries can be adapted to Malaysia.

Mineral contents of each salt lick differ from one and the other. According to Ayotte, Parker et al. (2006), *the geochemistry varied between licks of the same type (e.g., wet or dry) and among sites at the same lick. In contrast to wet licks, concentrations of sodium, magnesium, and sulfate, as well as pH, always were highest at high-use sites* and that *there were no consistent patterns in the mean concentrations of soil components among the 3 wet licks analysed* (Ayotte, Parker et al. 2006). They concluded that *each lick serves multiple functions and that although there is variation* *between lick types and among sites within licks, there are similarities in function across all licks in the study area.*

Figure 4: Abandoned salt lick at Ulu Muda Forest Reserve. A natural heritage lost forever when an access road built within 50 m from this salt lick. Note the mud flow into the lick diluting the mineral in it.

Figure 4, a photographic evident has proven to us that a poor understanding of salt lick ecosystem and the greed for short term economical gain could spelt an irreversible loss of natural heritage. It is urgently important to have a strong vision and strong commitment by our politicians (particularly in Malaysia) and parks' managers to see to these poorly managed natural heritages. New salt lick hide **should not be built** just because some researchers suggested one. An example was taken from a paper, "*Bako National Park its Scientific Value and its use*" by Pearce et al. (1983) which suggested, "animal hides and outstation huts enabling longer stays away from the commercial zone could be built", without giving any due consideration for the ecosystem, biodiversity, and the carrying capacity. It was suggested purely for commercial interest – is the welfare of the wildlife being considered?

Suggested here, a set of good Management Practices (Bureau Undated) adapted to provide a good benchmark for our Malaysian's standard.

- *Minimize road development that will provide access to wildlife habitat areas.*
- *Avoid development of any roads within 200m of escape terrain or mineral licks*
- *Avoid development of permanent roads within 1000m of escape terrain or mineral licks*
- *Deactivate/unbuild all spur and in-block roads within 500m of escape terrain or* mineral licks
- *Avoid development of any road that crosses a trail joining a mineral lick to primary wildlife range*
- *Locate roads so that they do not provide direct lines of sight onto goat habitat areas, where possible*
- *No camps (temporary or permanent) should be established within 1000m of wildlife habitat areas.*

Conclusion

Observation of wildlife such as moose and elk have been documented to as close as 10 m in the report, "USE OF NATURAL LICKS BY FOUR SPECIES OF UNGULATES IN NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA" in which "*temporary tree blinds to reduce the effects of our presence while remaining* ***within 10 m*** *of the licks to document individual animal behaviours*" (Ayotte, Parker et al. 2008). However, animal such as gaur inhabits relatively **undisturbed** lowland tropical rainforests depending on the availability of water, salt licks and food abundance (Department of Wildlife Undated). Gaurs being shy and timid are sensitive to stress and human presence should be left alone in their natural salt licks. We cannot presume that a 10 m observation distance (for moose or elk) is applicable to wildlife in Malaysia. Manager of salt licks have to take into account many factors before developing salt lick tourism project. Factors include the salt licks' mineral contents, type of animals visited, availability of other salt licks in the area, landscape of the salt licks, corridors available for escape route, vegetation, capacity of salt licks, breeding & lactation seasons, peak visitation hours, path to salt licks and other factors that might be important for the survival of wildlife.

Between preservation of natural heritage and the exploitation of economical gains, one has to weigh the need, the effect and the sustainability of our natural resources in long term interest. An interesting recommendation that some potential ecotourism attractions should not be made accessible to visitation because of their vulnerability to erosion or destruction (Drumm, Moore et al. 2004). We can't deny that business entrepreneurs always look toward profit rather than sustainable ecotourism. This has become very urgent whereby; potential attractions in fragile ecosystem need careful management in order to open up the area for tourism. Perhaps, the Tahan Hide could be a possible viable model – that is, salt lick areas be opened only where timid and rare wildlife visitations are limited.

Intensive Use Zones and Extensive Use Zones (Drumm, Moore et al. 2004) are usually quite small in area, representing less than one percent of a protected area's territory where permit for some ecotourism activities on a highly limited and controlled basis, frequently requiring a permit can be used as a sustainable model. Drumm et al. (2004) added that *if conservation management objectives are threatened by establishing a visitor use zone then some potentially attractive sites* ***should not be established****. Planners and managers must balance the need to generate income with the potential negative impacts and positive economic and educational impacts that can occur with ecotourism.* Commercialization without regulation in wilderness means compromised wilderness (Robert Jackson, 2001).

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Strengthening Agro-tourism: Rethinking Current Practices to Realize its Full Potentials

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Although Malaysia has a long history in agriculture and wide array of agricultural products and services, the country has not achieved comparable success in agro and rural tourism like those experienced in other countries such as the U. S., Australia, New Zealand, South Korea and India. Comparatively Malaysia is not short of agriculture and rural heritage but in order to do well the country has to break out of the current limiting mentality that promotes piecemeal development and opportunities to a few elite groups, and leaving the mainstream rural community out of the development process. This paper intends to build bridges by proposing how agro and rural tourism could reach its full potentials in Malaysia, benefitting the international tourists and Malaysians all-round, through paradigm shifts in critical areas of agro-tourism operations. This paper will especially discuss the strengthening of integration, inter-linkages and institutional capacity in agro-tourism as a process for sustainable development and poverty reduction.

Key words: agro-tourism, rural tourism, potential

Introduction

Setting the Scene

Agro-tourism and rural tourism has existed for a long time. In North America it has been around since the 1800s, where families from urban areas visited their relatives in the rural areas in order to find solace from the urban summer's heat. (CPA, 2005). Similarly the movements of people for recreation in farms have been practiced in Europe since the 16th century as a getaway from urban squalor and stress emanating from unpleasant urban environment such as congestion and pollution that began to get serious during the industrial revolution. (OEDC, 1994).

In developing countries people from the urban areas are periodically spending their annual holidays in their places of origin. So in Malaysia the periodic urban-rural visitation is reflected by the recurring *balik kampong* nostalgia. Due to this strong cultural linkage, in addition to her long agricultural history and rich rural and farming cultures, Malaysia is well poised to tap onto the agro-tourism potentials and attract local and international visitations.

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Potentials of Agro-tourism

Like eco-tourism, one of the attractions of agro-tourism[11] is the natural landscapes and environment but in addition to these elements, the main appeal is the rural and farming cultures. Visitors and tourists[12], and the local community could enjoy substantial benefits from agro-tourism. The first two are willing to travel to rural destinations, and spend money to improve their quality of life, which could emanate from psychological factors such as solace from stressful urban lifestyle and environmental degradations, the desire for education from seeing and experiencing farm processes, authentic cultural experiences and hands-on experiences like picking fruit and vegetables, and operating farming utensils and machines, tasting local food and beverages and so on.

The demand of agro-tourism visitors and tourists give opportunities for farmers and the rural people to diversify their farming and rural activities by supplying these needs, which create new market niches. This gives the rural community additional incomes, which have been known to improve their quality of life.

If the flow of money from agro-tourism to a certain rural region is sufficiently large then agro-tourism could lead to regional development and socio-economic growth. With the money flow, rural employment could also grow. Such a prosperous local economy could also reduce rural to urban migration, which means that agro-tourism could contribute to the stabilization of the rural population.

In addition agro-tourism could become the impetus to preserve and conserve rural landscapes and scarce agricultural land, which contributes to the security of the rural environments and the stabilization of local food sources. In a developing rural society local farming and rural cultures and history could be easily be lost in the process of modernization but the demand of agro-tourism could revitalize these cultural and historical elements by restoring their social values. This could strengthen local and national pride.

Purpose of the Paper

Within the background discussed above, the main aims of this paper are as follows:

- Discuss the elements that contribute to successful agro-tourism development as learned from world-wide experiences.
- Observe how agro-tourism is being practiced in Malaysia.
- Discuss the importance of building sustainable agro-tourism through proactive approaches, capacity building, and strengthening of integration and inter-linkages in agro-tourism processes, as the means for agro-tourism to reach its full potentials.

Successful Agro-tourism Destination–Lessons from Experiences

Observations from successful agro-tourism destinations indicate they possess the qualities show in Figure 1. As shown the tourism environment should be conducive

[11] Agro-tourism is also known as agri-tourism in the US and neighbouring countries.
[12] Visitors are those making day trips and returning to their place of origin on the same day. On the other hand tourists are those staying at least overnight at the tourist destination.

for tourism such as the availability of many interesting, attractive and motivating things for the visitors and tourists to see, do and buy. This depends on the attributes of the local agro-tourism destinations shown at the bottom box of Figure 2. Basically the attributes of the local agro-tourism destination determine the motivating factors that induce visitors and tourists to come to it and these are shown on the left-hand box of figure 1. In agro-tourism the motivating forces depend on the recreational, educational and awareness-raising potentials, which are shown at the right-hand box of Figure 2. There are many factors that contribute to recreational, educational and awareness raising opportunities but some important ones is shown below:

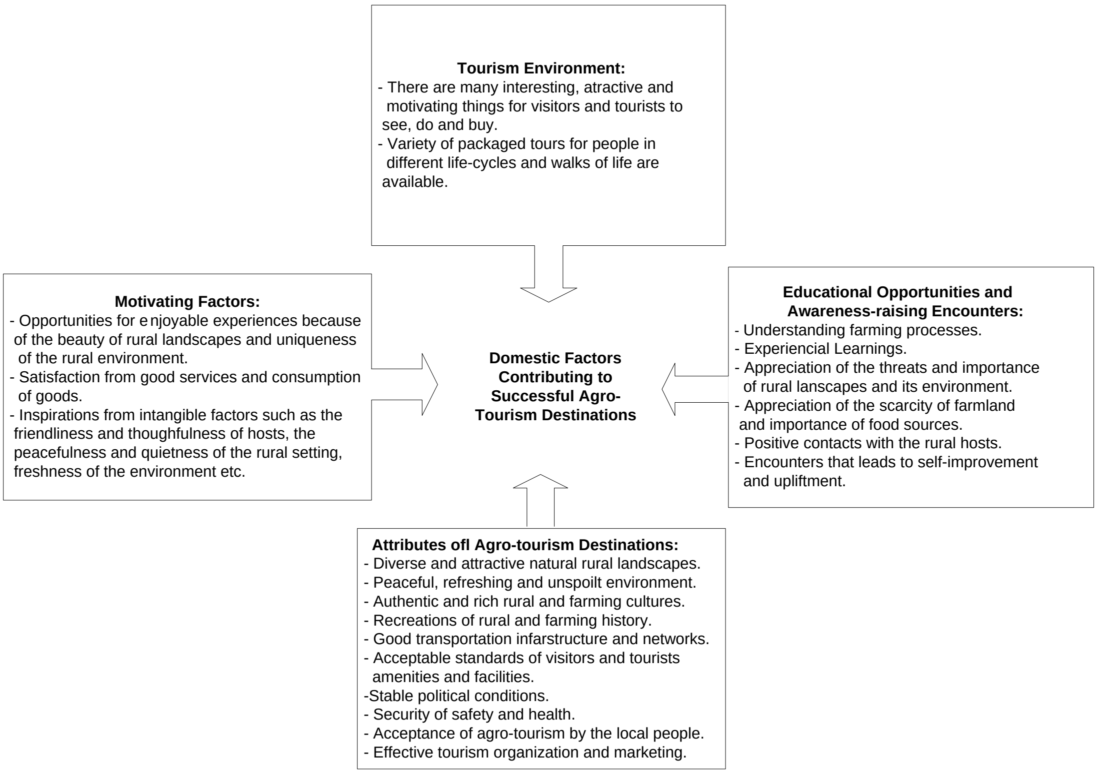

Figure 1: Factors Contributing to Successful Agro-tourism

- Demonstrations of a particular farm processes such as how to turn milk into cheese or grape juices into wine.
- Participation in educational tours with good interpretation of the local natural and cultural attributes.
- Farm workshops showing how to repair or assemble certain things such as putting on a horse shoe, how to sharpen farm cutting utensils, how to handle farm machineries etc.
- Living historical farm and culture (things of the past that are show in a cultural or model village).
- Recreations of rural or farming history (for example, showing how the pineapple plantation was developed in Hawaii; how life used to be in an important agricultural town in Australia etc).

Agro-Tourism Malaysia

Brief Agricultural History of Malaysia

Malaysia's economy before and after independence has always been inextricably linked with agriculture as the early settlements along the coasts and rivers have continuously depended on fisheries, farming and livestock rearing. Before independence agriculture in Malaysia was mainly subsistence in nature and the rubber plantations were mainly run by small holders. After independence the large-scale plantations began to appear mainly with the cultivation of oil-palm, tea, pineapple and cocoa. Inexorably the development history of agriculture has existed much longer than other economic activities. Industrialization only began in the early 1970's and it was not until the 1980's that tourism began to be seriously promoted.

However agro-tourism is relatively a new enterprise in Malaysia. It started mainly because other destinations have shown that agro-tourism can become successful. The development of agro-tourism in Malaysia is appropriate because the country has a long agrarian history and rural culture on which to capitalize on.

Overview of Agro-tourism in Malaysia

Observations of agro-tourism in Malaysia show that much of the tourism initiatives are determined by external organization such as the tour operators, so not much local initiatives are involved. Most of the clients from tour operators mainly are brought to rural destinations for sigh-seeing. Not much of these visitors stay overnight, except in home-stay programmes. There is little spending in the rural destination so agro-tourism on the whole does not contribute much to local incomes. Due to these factors agro-tourism does little to support the local economy and community.

Since the early 1970's there has been a mushrooming of home-stays[13] in Malaysia. However the growth is more organic than systematic development. Over the years there have been many rural residents trying out the home-stay business. Some have been successful; many have stagnated or failed. This means that the home-stay business has not been sustainable because of various reasons such as lack of operational knowledge in the home-stay business and lack of attractive itineraries to retain the support of the tourists. Studies relating to home-stay operations have cited the lack of meaningful tourists-hosts interactions, lack of fitting tour itineraries, lack of hygiene and security, poor services, lack of integration of tourism components such as organization, marketing, product development, infrastructure and facilities provisions and human resources development, and lack of linkages between agriculture, the rural cultures and tourism. This shows that Malaysia has a lot to do in agro-tourism in order to be included among successful agro-tourism destinations.

The Challenge in Agro-Tourism Development

Awareness, Responsibility and Paradigm Shift

At present agro-tourism is run in a parochial manner with much of the initiatives being dictated by powerful urban tourism enterprises so they reaped much of the

[13] According to MOCAT (1995) home-stays are programmes whereby "the tourists stay with the host family and experience the everyday way of life of the family in both a direct and indirect manner".

benefits from agro-tourism. They bring visitors mainly for sight-seeing day trips, rarely staying in rural accommodation and the people they bring spend little in the area. On the other hand the rural community, the main stakeholders of rural natural and cultural resources, has been largely sidelined from the economic mainstream and development process.

The above-said scenario is vastly different from successful practitioners of agro-tourism where the local community own a majority of the agro-tourism business. Unlike in Malaysia, the rural stakeholders in these countries are the main providers of tourism services and products and where the urban tourism enterprises are partners in marketing and supply of visitors and tourists. It is this interdependent supply-demand relationship that helps to promote a prosperous and sustainable agro-tourism.

In order for Malaysia to emulate agro-tourism development, characterised by successful countries, there should be a purposeful paradigm shift that embraces responsible actions such as interdependent and co-operative efforts between stakeholders in order to achieve integrated agro-tourism development, and the strengthening of linkages between agriculture, the rural community and tourism. Here awareness-raising is important to enlighten tourism enterprises that their economic prosperity is dependent on how they uphold the principles of sustainable tourism. It is also important for the rural stakeholders to know that this interdependent relationship is crucial to bring in the visitors and tourists that would sustain their agro-tourism businesses.

The main objectives of responsible and sustainable tourism are as follows:

- Preserve and conserve the rural landscapes and cultures that agro-tourism depend on. Care should be taken to minimize the negative economic, social and environmental impacts from agro-tourism at the regional, community and site levels.
- Instil awareness-raising and educate the key tourism stakeholders, visitors and tourists and the public concerning the importance of agro-tourism and its resources (mentioned above) it depended on for survival. This include respecting the local environment, land, man-made resources, livestock and cultures.
- Nurture the interdependency of stakeholders so that they could make cooperative efforts in planning, implementing, managing, and marketing agro-tourism. From this togetherness they could develop and maintain the attractiveness of tourism supply, which is critical to sustain the volume of visitors and tourists.
- Foster society-wide equitable sharing of agro-tourism economic benefits. This could be realised by the creation of local incomes and appropriate employment through the development of local agro-tourism businesses. This is where urban agro-tourism enterprises should learn how to *prosper thy neighbour* and be responsible not to sweep-clean all economic benefits to their advantage and to exert socio-economic pressures that would kill the *goose that lay the golden egg*. Long-term sustainable agro-tourism can only be achieved through responsible co-operative efforts to achieve equitable sharing of agro-tourism resources and economic benefits. Agro-tourism stakeholders should be aware that there is more benefit to be achieved from the sharing of wealth and proactive approaches.
- The creation of local incomes and employment is one way of promoting the well-being of the rural community. This should extend beyond the economic dimension. There should be community support such as

education, training and funding so that the local heritage and agro-tourism resources could be sustained. It also means that agro-tourism initiatives and businesses should be cohesively developed and promoted in a manner that is suitable for the local community.

- Inculcate the equitable sharing of agro-tourism resources. In a one sided affair where most of the benefits are reaped by the urban agro-tourism enterprises, the discontented rural stakeholders may one day decided not to allow access to their farmlands and cultures. This is where the reap-all approach could kill the *goose that lay the golden egg*. Agro-tourism stakeholders should learn that selfish interests inhibit the prospect of sustainable long-term gains. On the other hand a proactive spirit is important for the perpetual enjoyment of agro-tourism resources by all agro-tourism stakeholders. They should learn to *give and take* and share agro-tourism resources for the long-term benefit of society and the country.

Strengthening Integration, Linkages and Poverty Alleviation

There are two main approaches of developing agro-tourism on-site. Firstly the farming or rural activity is seen as a primary business and agro-tourism activity is a secondary and separate activity. The second approach is to develop agro-tourism as part of the farming or rural activity, which means that the former is integrated to the latter. Figure 2 shows that in the integration of agro-tourism resources–the rural and agricultural environment, and commodities and cultures are used to develop the agro-tourism business. Tourism and agriculture or rural activity becomes a unity. Farming or rural activity are run during the normal times, while the tourism activity either takes place during the spare times or are carried out concurrently. This allows for the diversification of the farming or rural business.

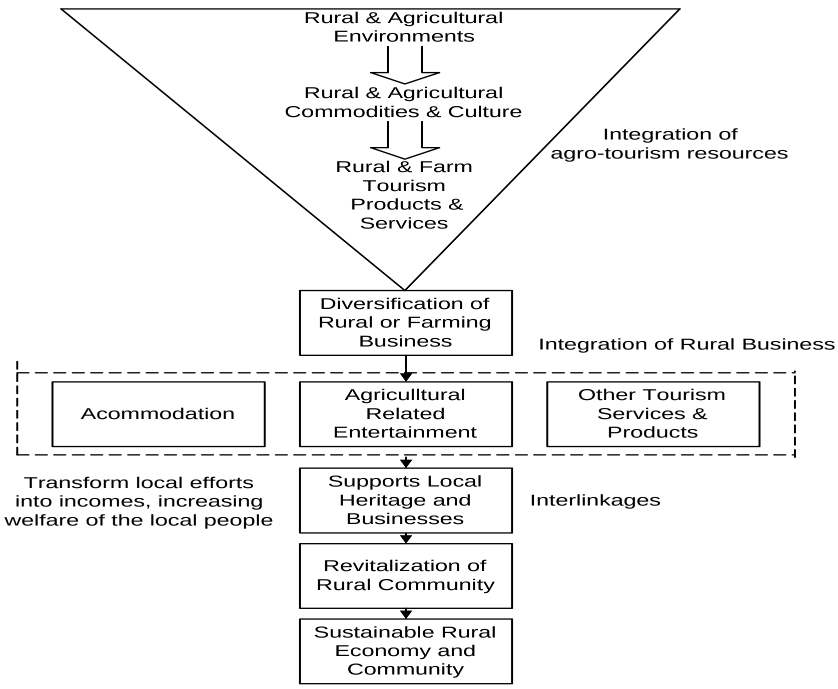

Figure 2: Integration and Inter-linkages

The farming or rural business may also decide to offer other services such as accommodation, agricultural related entertainments and other tourism services and products. These business entities may be integrated to form part and parcel of the agro-tourism and farming or rural business. Farm and rural businesses also become suppliers of food and rural products to the tourism industry such as hotels, resorts, gift shops and so on.

As shown in the lower part of Figure 2, the agro-tourism businesses may augment their tourism products by buying traditional products such as woven materials, embroideries and other arts and crafts from the local community or incorporate traditional services such as dances, music and shows into its agro-tourism business. This will support the growth of local heritage. The inter-linkages transform local efforts into incomes, which may improve the welfare of the local people. This revitalizes the rural community, which forms the basis for sustainable rural economy and community. The process of strengthening the integration and inter-linkages as described in this section will help to achieve sustainable agro-tourism development. Since the process is directed to enhance the incomes and welfare of the local community, agro-tourism becomes a platform for the reduction of rural poverty.

Building Blocks for Competitive Advantage

Just like other industries Figure 3 shows the uncertainties in agro-tourism. The quality of natural and physical infrastructure may degrade with development; the domestic political, social, economic and demographic conditions may change becoming worse or better; and so would the externally induced macro-forces such as inflation, exchange rates, policy and so on. It is these uncertainties that would cause unsustainable agro-tourism. So there is a need to manage the agro-tourism resources (see Figure 3) by government policy and intervention to develop *competitive advantages* in the agro-tourism industry.

Figure 3 show that sustainable agro-tourism may be achieved by building institutional capacities to achieve competitive advantage in agro-tourism. These institutional capacities would be the main building blocks for the formulation and implementation of agro-tourism strategies to achieve the socio-economic and sustainable outcomes shown in Figure 3. A strong institutional infrastructure to facilitate for decision-making capacities is essential to support agro-tourism integration, inter-linkages and poverty reduction discussed previously in this paper.

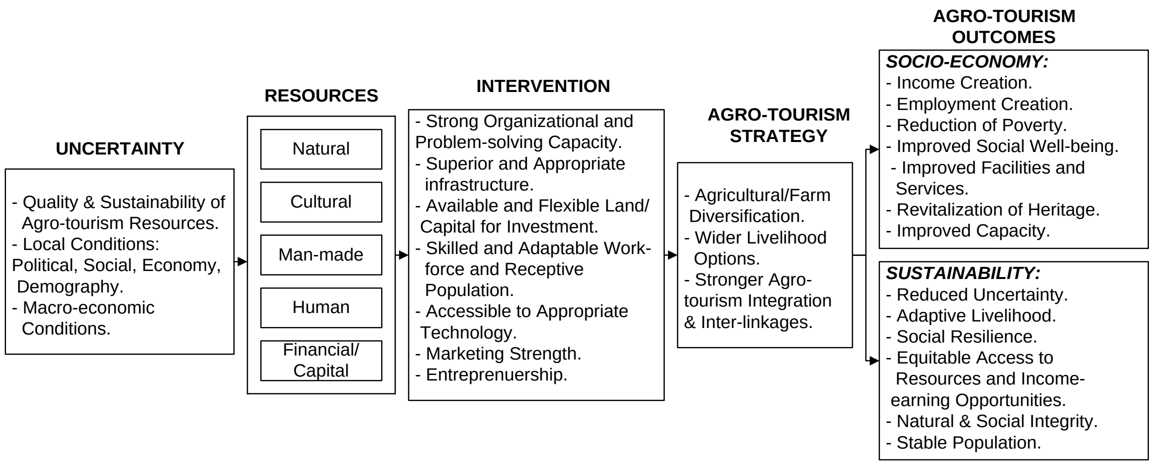

Figure 3: Building Blocks for Competitive Advantage

Conclusion

The Challenge of Sustainable Agro-tourism Development

In summary, sustainability in agro-tourism is not about development and modernization in order to induce prosperity in agro-tourism. It is about the preservation and conservation of unique rural landscapes, farmlands and environment, and the rural agricultural and social cultures on which agro-tourism thrives on. It is also about transforming local initiatives and efforts into local incomes so as to augment the welfare of the rural community. It is achieving sustainable local community and their incomes that enhance preservation and conservation.

Inevitably responsible travel to rural areas and farms should preserve and conserve its unique landscapes, environment and cultures as well as improves the incomes and well-being of local people. In this way the unique natural, cultural and man-made agro-tourism resources that are currently enjoyed by the local population, domestic and international visitors and tourists, will have their integrity protected for the enjoyment of future generations to come. Decision- makers and developers should have this in mind in order to work for sustainable agro-tourism development.

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An Analysis of the Gap Between Cultural and Religious Tourism in Iran, A Case Study on Mashhad

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This research is concerned with domestic religious tourism of Iran as a popular kind and tries to estimate the gap between religious and cultural tourism. Religious travels are generally done for specific reasons such as purification, healing or thanksgiving which are totally different from the motivations of most other kinds of travel. People with strong religious beliefs go to some trips because they are ordered by the word of God and their prophets. The religious destination of Mashhad in the eastern province of Khorasan Razavi where the shrine of a Shiite Imam, Imam Reza, attracts many pilgrims during a year has been chosen as the case of study. Investigations through a questionnaire and official figures brought it to the light that respectfully most of religious tourists of Mashhad do not visit cultural and heritage sites such as Tomb of Ferdowsi, an outstanding Persian poet. Regarding that cultural tourism can play a vital role in cultural development of a destination and the reservation of cultural heritage as well, this article suggests a model to bridge the gap between these two kinds of tourism and focuses on the cultural aspects of religion and specifically Islam in order to reach a cultural-religious tourism kind in sacred destinations as a substitute to traditional religious tourism.

Key words: religious tourism, Iran's tourism, cultural tourism

Introduction

Theories of tourism consider this movement as one whose participants are motivated either in part or exclusively by religious reasons (Jafari, 2000). MacCannell in his Sociological thesis emphasizing on Religious Metaphor, considers Tourism a modern alternative for Religion and even compares tourism attractions with religious symbols of primitive human beings (MacCannell, 1976).

As journeys to sacred places are a combination of religious experience and travel, it would be easy to characterize them as religious tourism (Davies & Davies, 1982). It seems that if religious tourism is viewed as only a must-done pilgrimage, it can be characterized as a one-dimensional phenomenon with no considerable cultural need and/or impact and economical benefits. Cohen suggested that Religious Tourism can be viewed as a continuum ranging from pilgrimage to secular tourism (Cohen, 2001).

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Religious tourism can be viewed at least from two different aspects, economy and culture. As an economic concept it helps religious destinations to develop their economy and enhance their cooperation with other sacred sites. While as a cultural concept it focuses on religious aspects of attractions and tourism heritages to promote religion as a mean to develop cultural ties between nations (Al-Hamarneh, 2004). There is concern whether developing holy destinations detracts them from their religious significance (Wall & Mathieson, 2006). The challenges of managing religious sites are twofold: on one hand, the visitors' need for spiritual, social [and cultural] experience should be met, but on the other, practical considerations should not be forgotten (Pavicic, Alfirevic & Batarelo, 2007).

Religious tourism is embedded within a complex of heritage tourism and mass tourism activities (Rotherham, 2007) and it is also closely connected with Cultural tourism (Jafari, 2002). The term cultural tourism refers to travels to cultural heritage sites in order to obtain information and experience for the sake of cultural needs' fulfillment (Chuck, 2000). Flourished cultural tourism in a destination contributes to restoration and preservation of cultural heritage sites and leads decision makers to develop a sustainable attitude. From the other side cultural tourism can connect natives and tourists as it shares a concern for destination's culture and heritage. Religious tourists are not necessarily cultural ones although they can play a great role in destination's cultural development and practical management.

Religious Tourism in accordance with Islamic policies and attitudes in both macro and micro levels is one of the most suitable kinds of tourism in Iran (National Project Office, 2002). Every year many Iranian people travel to domestic religious destinations and also welcome a considerable number of foreign tourists and travelers in sacred sites. Although Iranian-Islamic culture served tourism so much, it seems that, respectfully, religious sectors do not care about cultural or non-religious heritages and therefore loss huge economical benefits daily and yearly. As it is reported an inevitable increase is to occur in cultural tourism focusing on Iranian society and religion between the medium and long terms, e.g. 2008 to 2015 (National Project Office, 2002).

This article tried to estimate the gap between cultural and religious tourism. The case of this study is the holy city of Mashhad situated in Khorasan Razavi Province in the east of Iran and 894 km far from Tehran, the Capital of Iran. (Figure 1) Mashhad, literary means the place of martyrdom, is where the eighth Shiite Imam, Imam Reza, has been poisoned by the king of that time about 1200 years ago. His shrine in the heart of city nowadays hosts many religious tourists during the year especially in religious holidays such as the anniversary of his martyrdom and also in national holidays like Nowruz, Persian New Year.

Mashhad has so many other cultural and natural attractions amongst them the tomb of Ferdowsi, still the greatest epic poet of Iran lived about 1000 years ago, is an outstanding one. This cultural site, less than 15 km out of the city, consists of a large garden, the tomb of poet and his marble statute, a book store, a museum and a traditional tea house.

Method and Results

In order to analyze the gap between religious and cultural tourism, besides using the figures and statistics of Mashhad's branch of ICHHTO (Iran's Cultural Heritage, Handicraft and Tourism Organization), a questionnaire was prepared to estimate the percentage of religious who had visited or prepared a plan to visit tomb of Ferdowsi as an example of a cultural heritage.

In order to reach an acceptable result, 70 questionnaires, on September 2008, were placed on the front desk of two medium-sizes, 3-star hotels so close to the shrine for 5 days and only 5 filled ones were gathered. So the written questionnaire turned to a report-like questioning on narrow crowded pavements of Imam Reza Street leading to the shrine. 27 women and 38 men, who answered YES to the question of "do you travel to Mashhad as a pilgrim", were asked whether they had already visited or had a plan to visit the tomb of Ferdowsi in their trip. 26 women and 34 men answered NO to the second question while 1 woman and 4 men answered YES (figure 2).

Regarding the latest figures of Mashhad's branch of ICHHTO (Iran's Cultural Heritage, Handicraft and Tourism Organization) these results are not only weird but also predictable. According to mentioned official figures during two weeks of the last year's Nowruz holidays beginning on 21 March 2008 more than 6,273,000 religious tourists traveled to Mashhad while the tomb of Ferdowsi, yet among the most visited cultural heritage sites in Iran, welcomed only 180,000 visitors during the same period of time. In the most optimistic view all 180,000 visitors of Ferdowsi's tomb might be among those religious tourists who traveled to Mashhad, although being realistic it couldn't be the situation. They might be natives or visitors from other close cities and areas who did not travel to Mashhad as pilgrims.

According to the results of questioning 93% of religious tourists in Mashhad did not visit Ferdowsi's tomb that is a popular cultural heritage site and again based on official statistics, 97% of religious tourists in Mashhad do not visit Ferdowsi's tomb during one of the longest and most crowded period of holidays in Iran that is Nowruz. Either considering the official figures or the results of questioning, it can be concluded that more than 90% of religious tourists of Mashhad, respectfully, did not show any interest to visit outstanding cultural heritage sites such as Ferdowsi's tomb. (Figure 3 and 4)

Discussion and Conclusion

As the findings of this research showed more than 90% of pilgrims and religious tourists of Mashhad, do not show any interest in visiting cultural heritage of the city. This can be resulted from many different factors; some of them are related to the tour operators and managers. They do not accept to include cultural/ natural visits in their religious tours as they are still thinking that religious tourism is the same as pilgrimage. Or they may not agree that their customers are ready to accept new experiences. Another reason might be the fear of novelty in the field of management of religious experiences. Other reasons might be related to customers, visitors and pilgrims. As they seek a sacred experience, they might not easily accept new aspects in their selected tours.

Although visiting a sacred site is the core of religious tourism, it is not the only part of it. The supplementary products of religious tourism can be set in a way that serves both tourists and natives. As Fernandez in his model of religious tourism mentioned, nature, culture and religion are three factors which should be participated in a religious tourist's experience (Fernandez, 2006) (Figure 5). These effective factors lead the modern religious tourists toward unique and new experiences through their sacred travel.

Although culture and nature are 2 key elements in his model, Fernandez does not mentioned that these factors should be in the frame of religion. Considering a religious frame, it might become easier for decision makers, managers and marketing planners to decide which aspects or parts of nature and culture are fine to be included in a religious travel package or in a sacred site.

According to general tourism marketing, creating new motivations for a specific destination offers a bunch of new experiences to travelers and this novelty can increase the number of tourists, the amount of time and money they spend there and the frequency of their travels (Cartwright, 2002). In religious tourism as tourists have become frozen in particular activities and packages for centuries, it is not easy to improve their tastes. Thus conservative and slow changes are suggested being more successful than dramatic and furious ones. To be effective, new motivations in a religious tourism package should have religious explanations.

A good clarifying example is that no religious tourist is interested to go to an astonishing but crowded sea-side which is full of people wearing their swimming clothes and drinking bier. In contrary participation in a tree planting festival may seem good to a religious tourist. It should be also considered that the experience of a religious tourist does not necessarily include all aspects of religion as well as nature and culture.

In suggested model, that is a revision of Fernandez's; religion is still the main characteristic of religious tourism besides nature and culture that are key factors in shaping the experience of religious tourists (Figure 6). The difference is that selected nature-based activities and culture-based ones in this model are those which are in a religious frame or at least can be justified by religious concepts thus can be easier practiced by managers and accepted by religious people.

In order to encourage religious tourists to visit a cultural heritage site like a museum or a historical monument, the best way seems to be focusing on the educational aspect of that activity. Learning is a respected theme in all religions, specifically Islam. An Islamic phrase (Hadis) says "Learn even if you have to go to China". It is obvious that historical and cultural lessons can be such good motifs leading religious travels and pilgrimages toward a totally new experience which deepens understanding and tolerance of people involved.

Returning to the case of this article, Mashhad, the best solution is probably to focus on what one can learn through a visit of the mentioned cultural site. The nearby museum may contribute a lot to imagine the situation of that time. Role of religion in the poems of Ferdowsi, who was a Muslim himself, can be also another considerable motivation for religious tourists to go deep into the history of his life. Travel agencies also as one of key players may include a visit to the tomb of Ferdowsi in all their religious tours to Mashhad. These all contribute to reach cultural-religious tourism as an alternative to traditional religious one. Though it is not easy and needs time, education and training may push this substitution process forward.

Lack of facilities and infra-structures can be another reasonable justification for low number of visits. Religious travels are generally done for specific holy reasons such as purification, healing or thanksgiving while at the same time require the same facilities and infra-structures as profane tourism. Religious tourists, who make pilgrimages, fulfill pledges, take part in religious celebrations, visit sacred buildings or monuments or make offerings to divinities do need the same transportation, accommodation, restaurants and other facilities just as secular tourists do (Nolan & Nolan, 1992).

This survey only focuses on visit to a cultural heritage and many other factors have not been considered. More researches especially marketing-based ones are needed to develop empirical solutions to substitute traditional religious tourism for a cultural-religious one. It also needs a national willingness to abandon prejudicial attitudes which look at religious travels as only a pilgrimage containing no non-religious activity. Conservative people, restricted rules or common laws and even internal obstacle may not be easy to overcome but if nations want their cultures and religions to remain alive and fresh, they have to welcome changes.

Figure 1:The location of the holy city of Mashhad in Iran's Map. (source: www.irtat.ir)

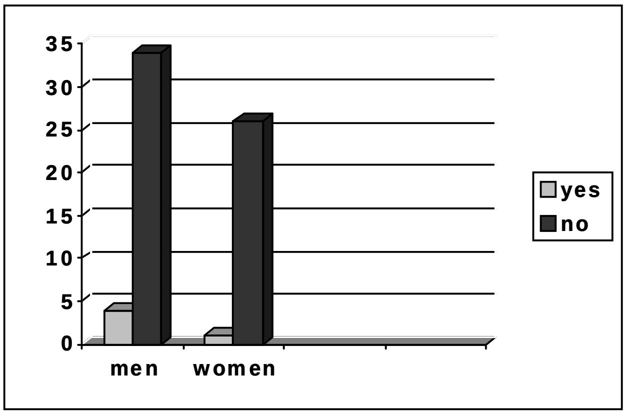

Figure 2: Answers to the first question by men and women.

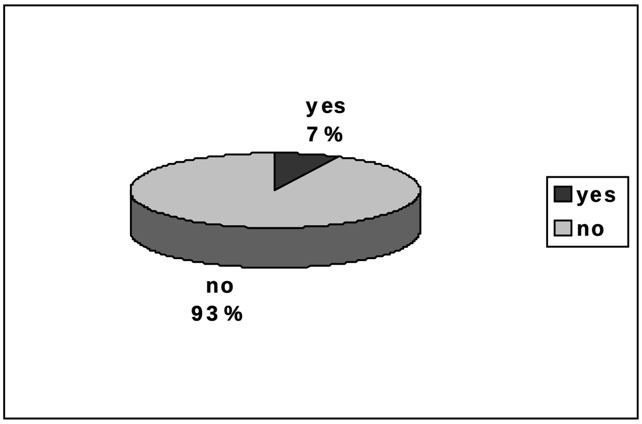

Figure 3:The percentages of religious tourists who visited Tomb of Ferdowsi or had a plan to do so according to the questioning.

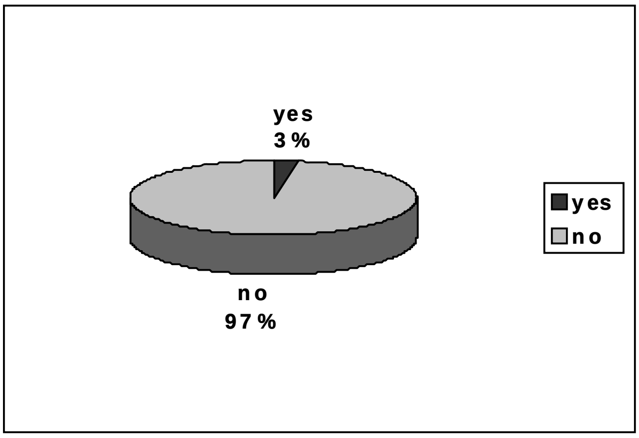

Figure 4: Official percentages of religious tourists who visited Tomb of Ferdowsi.

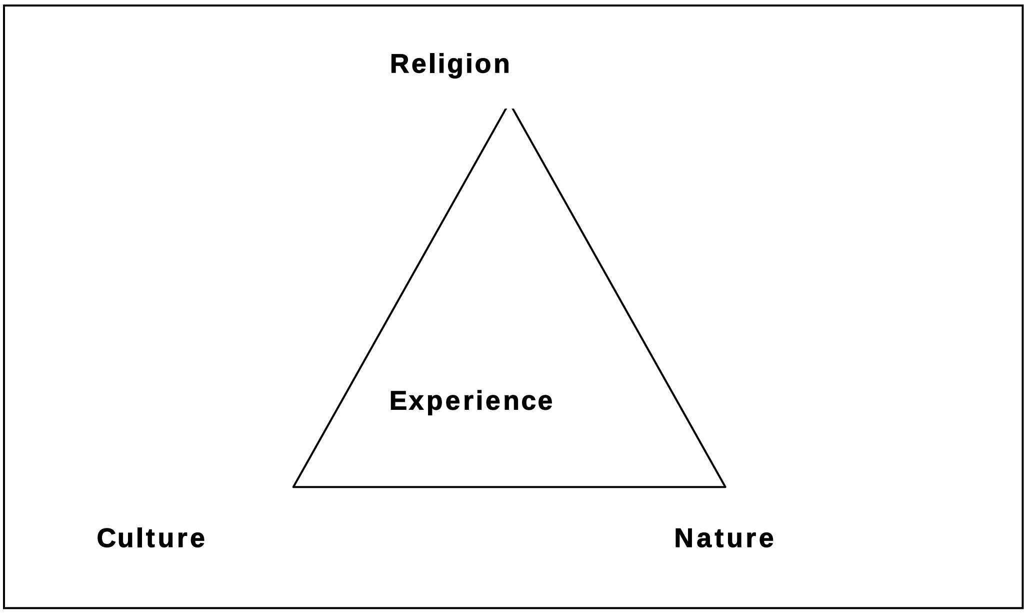

Figure 5: The model of Carlos Fernandez of religious tourism

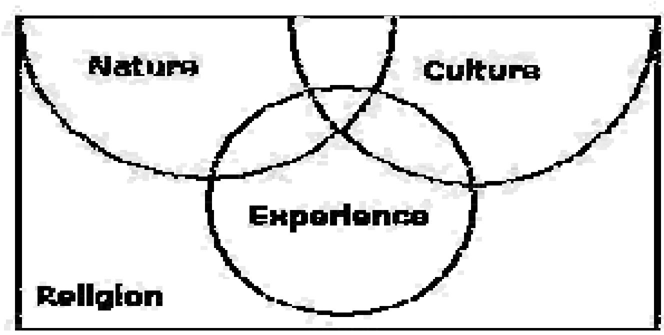

Figure 6: Suggested model of new religious tourism experience

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Sustaining Cultural Tourism Online: Video Documentary as a Digital Media Content

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This paper aims to investigate the perpetual relationship between digital media and cultural tourism in the Malaysian context. It provides an insight on how tourism industry today in Malaysia indulges the digital media main stream, the Web and rich media content such video to transcend their cultural perspectives. The paper further illustrates the making of a video documentary that narrates the spiritual and religious experiences of the Thaipusam festival held in Penang. Presumably, this video will serve as part of a larger online product package to enhance cultural tourism in Penang, through digital and sustainable means.

Key words: digital media, online, cultural tourism, video documentary

Introduction

Digital media is a term coined in the early 90's with the expansion of analogue media. It describes the analogy of storing, distributing information in the form of digital binary code (Lister, 2003). Digital media simply refers to the various elements of media used in a digital form. These digital contents were distributed in various forms and the most common medium is through the World Wide Web and the Internet. The Internet creates a mass network connecting and disseminating information thus generates great potential for new and old industries to grow online. This invasion of digital media and the web is the pinnacle of globalisation. (Dorsey, Steeves & Porras, 2004)

The tourism industry is one of the key industries that still benefits from this system. People are able to 'travel' without physical travel (Mowforth & Munt, 1998). Digital media and the web has been fundamental component in marketing, and promoting its potential destinations. It creates the perception the world is closer (Werthner & Klien, 1999). And this is principally true in the Malaysian context where official arts and cultural agencies, tour agencies and personal blogs often use creative online digital content such as captivating imagery, embedded video clips, virtual tours and panoramic viewing to attract potential visitors.

Tourism in Malaysia is highly commercialised. With Visit Malaysia Year 2008 just over, the industry reported a steady 22 million visitors (Tourism Malaysia: Corporate, 2009). Currently Malaysia is fully geared towards promoting cultural tourism given the advantage of being awarded World Heritage status for its 2 historical cities and 2 natural sites by UNESCO. Today cultural tourism in its broadest is defined as travels or visits to experiences arts (performing/visual arts), unique places of heritage (physical building/environments) and cultural activities (festivals/rituals) (Richard, 1996; Hughes, 1996). The digital media 'induced' cultural tourism caters an exciting array of how tourist can experience Malaysian culture, environment, its people, language, cuisine and lifestyle. This study investigates the rising trend and the significance of using rich digital media content such as video (documentary) to promote as well as to sustain cultural tourism online in Malaysia.

Video as Online Digital Media Content In Malaysia Tourism Websites

Video has the capacity to capture rich information in comparison to any other media. Its moving image and sound never fails to captivate audience. Although it is preceded by image and text, now with faster streaming and better compression methods, video content is more commonly used in Malaysia tourism sites. Popular pages such as *Tourism Malaysia* (Tourism Malaysia, 2009) offers a comprehensive site packed with information and more importantly uses video content / excerpts of official advertisement to promote cultural tourism. Users are welcomed with a thematic one minute promo video in its main page which passes a strong notion that video would be an attraction or content of interest. The site also dedicates an entire page of video archives of documentaries, advertisements and television highlights.

Besides using video as a rich media content to promote tourism online, it also serves as a resource portal for archiving digital documentation and recording of events. This archive plays an integral role in sustaining the present and future cultural insight and digitisation of local arts, performance, ritual and history. This not only contributes to the growth of online tourism but perpetuates as a portal of cultural significance. An example of such a portal is *VirtualMalaysia.Com* (virtualmalaysia.com Sdn. Bhd., 2009). It is the official e-tourism portal endorsed by the Ministry of Tourism, Malaysia. An extensive video archive is included in the site. The video contents are archived into categories; entertainment, festival, destination, events and underwater and are presented as short documentaries and recordings. Each video is linked to a 'video page' that provides a short textual description, and allows users to rate and enter comments.

Another example would be *Malaysia Travel & Tourism Guide* (Malaysia Travel Inc., 2009). Although it is a more commercialised site, it uses video archive as its primary content. The site maximises the potential of digital video as content to express the flavour and experience of Malaysia's multicultural diversity. The site developed by a group of young (foreign) travellers, document and 'blog' their experiences online. Short video documentaries and adventures tell the tale of these young travellers understanding, perception and joy of discovering local culture. Besides this, many other official websites and such as *Malaysia My Second Home* (Ministry of Tourism, 2009), *Culture Sector* (Ministry of Information, Communication and Culture, 2009), *Sarawak Tourism Board (STB)* (Sarawak Tourism Board, 2009), *Labuan Tourism Portal* (Labuan Tourism Action Council, 2009) and *Johor Tourism Portal* (Majlis Tindakan Pelancongan Negeri Johor, 2008) archive and enlist video documentaries and recordings.

Additionally, video is also utilised in various sites to promote and highlight special character and events. These events directly or indirectly serve as an attractions to the local tourism industry. Websites such as *Eye on Malaysia* (Eye on Malaysia Sdn. Bhd., 2008), *The Monsoon Cup Terengganu Official Website* (Best Events Sdn. Bhd., 2005) and the *Lima 2009 – Langkawai International Maritime & Aerospace*

Exhibition (HW Lima Sdn. Bhd., 2009) also include exclusive video clips to update users with rich content. This comes to show that local tourism websites increasingly use video as its content to attract and update current events and cultural habits.

Case Study: The Making of Thaipusam Video Documentary

Looking at how favourable video is as a digital media content to promote and sustain the tourism industry online, a series of video documentaries were proposed to package and promote cultural tourism in Penang. One particular event of interest and importance was the culturally rich and extravagant Thaipusam festival. This documentary will contribute towards a collaborative effort to create an online archive to package and sustain Penang's performing arts, crafts, food and cultural events using digital media tools.

This proposed video documentary will serve the three components - video as a rich media content, archive material for future reference cultural practices and performing arts as well as highlight of special event. The common issue present in existing online video clip or documentary is that by large most of its contents are random recordings, advertisements, broadcasts or coverage of opening ceremonies. Often these documentaries scrape the surface of the real cultural experience. Alternatively, this Thaipusam video documentary aims to elevate the essence people's point of view as the integral narrative component, instead of *plainly* documenting for the sake of archiving the festival. This narrative approach will give body and structure to the documentary as well as represent an enriched and holistic cultural perspective to the benefit of the tourism industry.

Narrative Structure

Typically a written literature or film encompasses a basic narrative structure – a beginning, middle and an end. The beginning presents the problem or where the story starts, then leading to how the problem is tackled and the end how the problem is solved. A good narrative will deliver a strong documentary. It will drive the film forward, creating and motivating curiosity and exposition. (Bell, 2004 & Bernard, 2007)

The Thaipusam festival is grand celebration that attracts thousands of devotees and tourist - local and foreign. The celebration spans over 3 days and 4 nights, covering significant routes and locations from Lebuh Penang in Georgetown to Jalan Kebun Bunga or popularly known as the Waterfall Road. There were some physical and conceptual challenges undertaking the documentary, the first being locative. Several events took place concurrently in different places. The second was isolated events were depended on each other and were managed by different organisations. To tie it all in I grounded the narrative to a common theme, which was experience and fulfilment.

The approach was to present several unrelated characters as narrators. Devotees share their spiritual fulfilment; priests explain the significance of ritual and performing arts; the organising committee members share the rich history of temples and current issues and finally tourist describe the unique multi cultural community and festival. This eventually creates a wholesome feel towards the festival. Furthermore, the video documentary will not only serve as a recording of event but as a rich media content that is capable of sustaining the music, performing arts, ritual significance and rich cultural values.

Conclusion & Future Work

The study shows increasing number of official and non official Malaysia tourism websites use rich digital media such as video to promote its colourful and multicultural community. Recordings and documentaries presented in various sites capture the process and relives the moment, memory and experience in time but would create greater impact for the tourism industry if narrative components were considered. A good narrative presents a good documentary. People's point view is one way of looking into enriching the tourism experience online.

Additionally, issue of sustainability can be tackled by combining the forces of Internet, Web and rich media. Video as online content poses great future, looking into existing successful example such as Youtube.com. Free online archives could be created to encourage and engage the notion of knowledge sharing and generate awareness amongst younger Malaysians, whilst operating as an online promotional and marketing tool to sustain cultural tourism in Malaysia.

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Leisure Constraints and Negotiation Strategies in Sport Tourism: Gaining Insight into the Malaysian Women's Participation

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Research on women and leisure constraints in the past twenty five years has expanded in various disciplines and findings suggested that constraints existed within many aspects of women's lives which manifested in varied forms. Unfortunately, research on women's leisure constraints and negotiation strategies in sport tourism pursuits has been overlooked. The primary goal of this study was to identify the leisure constraints perceived and the negotiation strategies adopted by Malaysian women in overcoming the leisure constraints' influences in creating positive sport tourism pursuits. Crawford, Godbey, and Jackson (1991) constraints model was chosen as reference theory and cultural constraints was added to determine the leisure constraints perceived and negotiation strategies adopted by Malaysian women in sport tourism participations. Findings confirmed earlier papers that women are particularly susceptible to experience many constraints in leisure participation, and they are able to negotiate through to maintain their involvements. Majority of Malaysian women were inhibited to pursue their leisure preferences in sport tourism pursuit by the combination of interpersonal constraints, structural constraints, intrapersonal constraints, and cultural constraints. Interpersonal coordination, skill acquisition, financial resources, and time management strategies do place some Malaysian women in a better position than others to negotiate constraints that inhibited leisure sport tourism participation.

Key words: sport tourism, leisure constraints, woman participation

Introduction

Today, sport tourism is believed to be among the world's most popular leisure experiences (Ritchie & Adair, 2004). Standeven and DeKnop, (1999) defines sport tourism as all forms of active and passive involvement in sporting activity, participated in casually or in an organized way for noncommercial, business or commercial reasons that necessitate travel away from home and work locality. Indirectly, sport is the prime motivation to travel, though the touristic element may act to reinforce the overall experience.

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As Malaysian women moved into the 21st century, their opportunities for education and earning equitable incomes through employment had improved (Ninth Malaysia Plan). Traditional ideologies of the family in general have shifted, so that social expectations of marriage and the production of children do not yield as much power as they once did (Chick & Dong, 2005). As so, it is assumed that Malaysian women have a wider range of resources and opportunities with which to access an ever-increasing array of sport tourism choices. Besides that, sport tourism plays the most important part in tourism, contributing about 20 percent of the billions annual tourism earning with yearly growth of eight to ten percent (Tourism Malaysia, 2007). Hence research into this domain is extremely critical and timely.

For the past two decades, research on women's leisure constraints in various disciplines has increasingly expanded but research focusing on women's leisure constraints and negotiation strategies in sport tourism was overlooked. Local compilation of literatures revealed that Malaysian researchers (e.g. Aminuddin Yusof & Mohd Soffian Omar Fauzee, 2001; Chee, 2001; Lim, 2004; Rubiah, 1993) had largely focused on leisure constraints of the general population without much attention on the women. Even though much is known about the leisure constraints of the general population, nothing is known about the leisure constraints of the Malaysian women in sport tourism. So, this study focuses on Malaysian women, specifically on their perception of leisure constraints and adoption of negotiation strategies in sport tourism pursuits.

Research Question

a. Which category of leisure constraints (intrapersonal, interpersonal, structural, and cultural) is highly perceived by Malaysian women in sport tourism participation?

b. Which dimension of negotiation strategies (financial resources, skill acquisition, interpersonal coordination, and time management) is highly adopted by Malaysian women in sport tourism participation?

Literature Review

Sport Tourism

The term "sport tourism" has permeated into the tourism industry over the past years as a lucrative segment of the tourism business. Sport oriented vacations are nothing new. So is traveling to take part in sport or to watch sporting events. History wrote that since 900 BC the Greeks were traveling to watch and take part in the Ancient Greek Games. Therefore, the present sport tourism is merely a new adaptation on the old theme.

The concept of sport tourism has become more prominent in the last few years both as an academic field of study and an increasingly popular tourism product (Gibson, 1998). More and more people are participating, observing and involving in the various sports pursuits as part of leisure and tourism events. The increased availability of golf courses in resorts is one example of increased demand in sport tourism. Similarly, promotion of sports vacation destinations in Malaysia are advertised daily, either through the media or during the tourism fair. There are five reasons for this sudden interest (Kurtzman & Zauhar, 1995). Firstly, the popularity of international and national sporting events has increased significantly, such as the Olympic Games, and World Cups. Secondly, there is a wider understanding of the health related benefits achieved through active participation in many sports. Thirdly, governments and leaders begin to appreciate the value of sport with regard to both the economy and national and international relations. Fourthly, there is a wider and well organized variety of sporting events on offer throughout the year, facilitating spectator and participant alike. Lastly, sport minded individuals are not only more mobile, but they are also able to communicate more effectively due to improvements in technology and global infrastructure.

Leisure Constraints

Leisure constraints are the inhibitors of leisure pursuits (Crawford & Godbey, 1987). In sport tourism scenario, leisure constraints are defined as factors which hinder one's ability to participate in desired leisure sports activities, to spend more time in those activities, or to attain anticipated levels of satisfaction and benefit. Studies have revealed that constraints are not absolute (Jackson, Crawford, & Godbey, 1993) as they can potentially be overcome or reduced.

Leisure constraints research focuses on investigating barriers that inhibit participation in leisure activities (Jackson, 2000) and the reasons underlying the final decision to participate. This investigation of barriers to leisure has attracted interest since the 1950s and began to be systematically investigated in the 1980s (Jackson, 1991). Formerly, leisure constraints were closely related to participation, presenting "barriers" that existed between a person's desire to participate actively in a leisure activity and his/her actual participation (Jackson, 2005). The optic angle changed greatly throughout the 1980s and 1990s where discussion on inhibiting and limiting factors that constrain people from participating in desired leisure activities and from taking advantage of provided leisure services have been the hot topic of empirical studies (Jackson & Scott, 1999).

In 1987, Crawford and Godbey suggested that the prevailing conceptualization of leisure barriers addressed only one of the ways in which constraints might be associated with preferences and participation. Their model proposed that constraints fall into three discrete categories such as intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural. This model has been well supported by subsequent researches (Backman, 1991; Hultsman, 1995; Jackson, 1991). Later, Jackson et al. (1993) together with Crawford and others (1991) proposed that constraints are "nested" in a single model composed of a hierarchy among these three categories. Individuals experience the three categories of constraint hierarchically through the participation decision-making process. Individuals may, however, negotiate their way through constraints, finding ways to participate in the face of them.

Chick and Dong's (2003) study on leisure constraints across culture indicated that constraints in other societies (Japan and Cina) differed from those found in North America. Results also suggested that the categories of leisure constraints must be refined on the basis of cross-cultural research and new constraint categories be added to the hierarchical model. Also, culture is a constraint category that may substantially enhance the validity of the constraints model when it is applied to other societies. This research began a movement toward an expanded conceptualization of leisure constraints.

Sports tourism is a specific form of tourism that tends to be physically and mentally challenging. It is predominantly accessed in isolated natural environments, like the sea, mountain, sky, space, and earth. Traditionally it had been perceived to be a male dominated arena requiring "masculine" qualities of strength and risk taking which subsequently denying access to many women (Humberstone, 2000). Besides that, women are expected to perform their traditional role as caregiver of the family (Tsai, 2006). These sex roles structure imposed on women from a male-dominated society and also from culture concerns that women portray feminine traits that inhibit them from participating in sports activities.

Time and money remained the most common constraints women felt toward pursuing their favorite sport leisure activities (Jackson, 2000; Trail, Robinson & Yu, 2008) as they are dependent financially on their spouses or lower wages. Study on local undergraduates revealed that females were more constrained by lack of funds (Chee, 2001), availability of time (Lim, 2004), ignorant of the availability of leisure activities, transport and convenient facilities (Aminuddin Yusof & Mohd Soffian Omar Fauzee, 2001; Chee, 2001; Lim, 2004). Findings also identified that they were most likely to be constrained by intrapersonal and structural leisure constraints (family's acceptance of the activity, uncomfortable with the activity, activity is keeping with religious belief, transportation, and ignorance about the available activity) compared to interpersonal constraints.

Negotiation Strategies

Negotiation strategies are strategies that allow for new or continued leisure participation (Jackson, Crawford & Godbey, 1993). Since early 1990s, researchers began to look at constraints theory from a new perspective by challenging the assumption that leisure constraints necessarily restrict participation. It was found that people can and often do engage in leisure activity in spite of obvious obstacles. Studies began to suggest that some barriers to participation might be overcome and that through negotiation, constraints actively shape individual leisure expression by interacting with preferences and patterns of behaviors (Jackson et al., 1993; Jackson & Rucks, 1995; Nadirova & Jackson, 2000).

Negotiation of leisure constraints to pursue sport tourism refers to the successful navigation of barriers. Some leisure researchers managed to identify strategies that enabled women to maintain, continue, or create participation in adventurous sports activities. These strategies were believed to stem from women's resources, perspectives, and interpretation of leisure constraints, and their motivations and opportunities for participation. Among the key techniques for negotiating participation listed by Little (2002) were prioritize, compromise, creative adventure, and anticipate. The negotiating strategies identified in literatures included generating interests, becoming better informed, changing interpersonal relations, enhancing the awareness of opportunities, adjusting schedules, revising priorities in use of time, money, and energy and so on. Henderson and Bialeschki's (1993) study on women proved that women succeeded in continuing or stay involved in leisure activities based on the use of negotiation strategies that allowed them to resist gender role expectations, respond actively rather than passively to constraints, and balance the benefits and costs of participation.

Research Method

Research Design

A self-administered questionnaire based on Crawford et al.'s (1991) constraint theory and Hubbard and Mannell's (2001) Negotiation Strategies Scale was developed for this study. Section A consisted of multiple demographic factors. Section B determined the leisure constraints perceived, while Section C determined the negotiation strategies adopted in sports tourism participation. Data from the questionnaire were coded and analyzed using SPSS-PC.

Instrumentation

In this study, Stehr-Green, Stehr-Green, and Nelson's (2003) "Steps in Creating a Questionnaire" was referred in developing the study questionnaire.

Identify the leading hypotheses about the source of the problem in this study.

Identify the information needed to test these hypotheses.

Review of existing literatures.

Pooling of questionnaire items.

Generate the questionnaire.

Translate the questionnaire into Bahasa Melayu version.

Administer pre-test on questionnaire of both versions. (Pilot study)

Revise the questionnaire.

Develop the questionnaire for the study.

Train research assistants to administer the questionnaire.

Figure 1: Steps in creating the questionnaire for this study.
Source: "Developing a Questionnaire" by Stehr-Green, Stehr-Green, and Nelson's, 2003, Focus on Field Epidemiology, 2(2), 1-7.

Population and Sample

This study consisted of 636 respondents. Overall, respondents to this survey approximated a cross-section of the population of Malaysian women in terms of demographic characteristics. Malays comprised 51% of the respondents while the Chinese, Indians, and other races comprised of 23%, 8%, and 18% of total respondents respectively.

The two main criteria in selecting appropriate samples are the selected sample's representativeness of the population and the importance of obtaining an adequate sample size. In this study, the target population was the full-time undergraduates at the four selected universities (Universiti Utara Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Universiti Malaya, and Universiti Sains Malaysia) and their female family members. The female family members of the university undergraduates were included as samples, as a Malaysian family usually consisted of members of different marital status, age, and occupation (Second Malaysian Family Life Survey, 1988). Multistage cluster random sampling with proportion design was used to draw samples. Multistage samples were produced by separating non-overlapping element, known as strata, before simple random sampling are applied on each stratum chosen. The number of samples chosen from each population stratum was proportional to its percentage of the total women population in Malaysia.

Referring to the table for determining sample size developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a number of 384 respondents were considered adequate for a population of 12,600,000. As such, a total of 636 respondents involved in this study were considered adequate to represent the population of 12,600,000 Malaysian's women.

Results

Leisure Constraints Perceived by Malaysian Women in Sport Tourism Participation

In this study, four components of leisure constraints were identified by Malaysian women as barriers in sport tourism participation, namely structural constraints, cultural constraints, interpersonal constraints, and intrapersonal constraints. These components were not mutually exclusive and interaction occurred between constraints in different components. In general, Malaysian women perceived high interpersonal constraints in sport tourism participation. The two interpersonal factors identified as main barriers to sport tourism pursuits were namely "I am too busy with other activities", and "I do not have information about existing sport program", while the seven structural factors perceived were namely, "There is a lack of public transport to the sport tourism destination", "I do not have the opportunity to participate", "I have no personal transportation to the destination", "I do not have enough money to participate", "I do not have enough time to involve in sport tourism activities", "The activities are too crowded", and "Poor weather stops me from participating". Also perceived were two intrapersonal factors, namely "I have to work hard to save for my children's future", and "I do not have the skills to participate". Specifically, the cultural factor reading "I am obliged to visit my parents/grandparents when I have holidays" was highlighted as the main overall factor perceived by Malaysian women in sport tourism participation.

Negotiation Strategies Adopted by Malaysian Women in Sport Tourism Participation

Majorities of Malaysian women acquired interpersonal coordination strategies as the prime negotiation component in overcoming barriers in sport tourism pursuits. Specifically, Malaysian women adopted negotiation strategies that allowed them to focus mainly on activities suitable with their skills, besides preference to participate along with people who shared the same interest and of similar gender. Among the skill acquisition strategies adopted was participating in activities suitable to their age, doing the best in order to participate in sport tourism activities, or asking for assistance in acquiring skills needed to engage in the desired activities in sport tourism. Also adopted was financial resources strategies, such as participating according to their means, use the equipments and attires available to them, or budget their money to save for sport tourism engagement, while the time management strategies adopted were sharing family commitments with their family members, taking part in sport tourism during the school holidays, allocating at least one week in a year to participate in sport tourism, and stop temporarily until their children were able to look after themselves.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study indicates that identifying the leisure constraints and negotiation strategies by Malaysian women in sport tourism participation, using the hierarchical model of leisure constraint proposed by Crawford et al. (1991), can improve understanding of these determinants towards Malaysian women decision making process in sport tourism participation. It is important to ensure strategies for maintaining involvement in leisure sport tourism throughout women lifespan are to be successful as physical activities is essential for promoting active lifestyles and the health benefits they offer. While majority of Malaysian women would like to participate in sport tourism activities, they are inhibited in their ability to act out their leisure preferences by a combination of interpersonal constraints, structural constraints, intrapersonal constraints, and cultural constraints. Interpersonal coordination, skill acquisition, financial resources, and time management put some women in a better position than others to negotiate constraints that inhibit their leisure sport tourism participation.

Taken together, several recommendations can be made to increase participation of Malaysian women in sport tourism. As interpersonal constraints were the main barriers for women participating in sport tourism, the result of this study provides guidance for the planners and operators of sport tourism in formulating strategies to maintain or enhance their competitiveness. Creative planners or operators may be able to create images regarding participation expectations and outcomes that would be perceived as less threatening, or more inviting, to individuals with interpersonal constraints. For social marketing campaigns, the promotion of sport tourism should not only confine to printing materials only. Many resorts have the services that women require but do not promote them adequately or target them specifically enough to women. Good and attractive promotion should be able to catch the eyes of women, especially in making leisure, recreation or holidays choices.

In addition, sport tourism managers and operators should overcome the structural constraints perceived highly by women through provision of quality service such as providing convenient transportations, affordable sport tourism packages, convenient activities location, female staff or facilitators, multi-skill activities to cater women of all ages, and women sport activities. Creative planners or operators can establish the sense of value and purchasing power in the minds of potential customers by planning different promotional strategies. Sport tourism operators should show Malaysian women that they really care about them by catering to their concerns. In order to create effective marketing strategies for hassle-free products and services in the Malaysian sport tourism market, greater understanding of leisure constraints perceived by Malaysian women in sport tourism participation and the negotiation strategies adopted is necessary as it has the potential to provide important insights into the planning, implementation and evaluation of sport tourism activities.

Despite some limitations, this study provides a general picture of the leisure constraints perceived and negotiation strategies adopted by Malaysian women in sport tourism participation. Future research should proceed in two directions. First, in understanding precisely the relationship demographically, more attention needs to be directed towards the investigation of relationship between leisure constraints perceived and negotiation strategies adopted by each demographic characteristic individually. Second, studies should be applied to other minority groups using a similar research method so that a competitive analysis in different groups can be explored. All these possible quantitative and qualitative future studies is apparent in helping sport tourism researchers to understand better women leisure constraints and for planners and operators of sport tourism to provide desired leisure opportunities for women.

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Sport and Recreation Programme in Hotels and Resorts: Towards Enhancing Greater Customer Participation

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Managing sport and recreation programming is essential for the success of leisure services for people of all ages and backgrounds. One instance of good programming is how well an organization manages its resources and organizes activities to meet the wants and needs of different customers. In this conceptual paper, I will examine the fundamentals of sport and recreation management in hotels and resorts by focusing on a programming model derived from available literature. Apart from describing the model, this paper discusses the application of marketing strategies for sport and recreation programmes which are regarded as one of the effective triggers and anchors of hospitality operations. I will also outline of the issues and challenges in programming such activities to be followed by recommendations on how to encourage greater customer participation in these activities, while making sure that they are satisfied with the services offered.

Key words: sport and recreation, management, programming, marketing, hospitality industry

Introduction

Sport and recreation is now seen as an important part of the general holidays. More and more people are participating, observing and involving in the various sports pursuits than ever before. Today, vast numbers of people participate in sport and recreation activities and almost everyone aspires to a holiday (Standeven & De Knop, 1998). People do not simply sit around on the beach on holiday any more, but increasingly engage in a wide range of recreational and sporting activities. This interest in recreation and sport has also been fuelled by the increasing emphasis of individuals on their health, well being and weight control, a movement which continues to grow in the beginning of the twenty-first century. Thus, recreational sport activities are acknowledged as an important and potentially health-enhancing activity for which tourism can be the catalyst (Glyptis, 1991), and hence, health care and providing services for physical activities have become an important part of the tourism industry.

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This paper is designed to examine the fundamentals of sport and recreation management in hotels and resorts by focusing on a programming model derived from available literature. Specifically, a benefit driven approach model by Kraus (1998) and its programming process was discussed in this paper. This paper also emphasized on the application of marketing strategies in sport and recreation which are regarded as one of the effective triggers and anchors of hospitality operations. In addition, several issues and challenges pertaining to the sport and recreation programme to be followed by suggestions on how to encourage greater customer participation in sport and recreation programmes and activities in hotels and resorts are discussed.

Sport and Recreation in Tourism Industry

Sport and recreation as part of business hospitality is big, profitable, and growing, with most of the clients are sports' enthusiast. Hotels and travel agents are always on the lookout for new markets as a way of broadening their business. This is because fitness and health conscious among the tourists who travel as part of their leisure or business have made a significant impact on all forms of travel and entertainment (Hudson, 2003; Standeven & De Knop, 1998). As a result, more hotels and resorts are offering sporting facilities to attract tourists. The increased availability of golf courses in resorts and hotels is one example of increased demand in sport tourism. Nowadays, most sport tourists chose resorts or hotels with golf course as their holiday destination (Water, 1990). Thus, due to this factor, the majority of the hotels and resorts in Malaysia are using sports as marketing weapons to promote their products and services.

There has been a growth in the number of recreational sport activities that people can engage in whether they are in the home or away from the home as more free time has become available to them (Cordes & Ibrahim, 2003). Thus, there has been a growth of private leisure centers, for example people can engage in recreational sport or health and fitness programmes. As far as the provision of out-of-home leisure is concerned, two very important sectors of the total leisure sector are tourism and hospitality. Tourism is defined as a short-term movement of people to places some distance from their normal place of residence to indulge in pleasurable experiences and activities. Tourism is an activity serviced by a number of other industries such as hospitality and transport. Hospitality involves looking after guest well. In other words, the sector also involves all the organizations that are involved in providing services for guests (hotels, resorts, inns, restaurants and other recreational activities).

In the twenty-first century, the fitness-and health-conscious baby boomers who travel as part of their business have made a significant impact on all forms of travel and entertainment. For example, hotels and resorts designed to market the business travel are expanding to provide fitness facilities (Grantham, Patton, York, & Winick, 1998). Historically, the four or five stars hotels provided only a pool to accommodate family recreation needs. Now, hotels with fully equipped exercise facilities are becoming commonplace. The upscale hotels with an affluent guest market and convention trade are frequently developed full-scale spa services to supplement their fitness facilities. Some are even attempting to become destination resorts where they provide golf, tennis, and spa services. Hotels without direct access to such services as golf and tennis frequently develop joint ventures with clubs where guests may use their golf and tennis facilities on a preferred or reduced-cost basis.

Most hotel-based facilities combine a membership programme comprised of local residents and nearby business professionals to complement the hotel resort clientele. In short, the traveling publics are expecting no compromise to their lifestyle when away from home on business or for pleasure. This trend will probably continue for the foreseeable future.

Sport and Recreation Programming

The sport and recreation programme concept may have different meanings for different people. Rossman (1995) writes that "a programme is a designed opportunity for a leisure experience to occur" (p. 3). Therefore, programmes can be thought of as the raison d'etre of any leisure service organization. Programmes are created to deliver something of value –a benefit or the expectation of a benefit to a customer or group of customers (Edgington, Jordan, Degraaf & Edginton, 1995). In this paper, sport and recreation programme refers to the full range of organized and structured leisure experiences offer by hotels and resorts, as well as the unstructured or unsupervised used of play areas, sports facilities, and other indoor or outdoor recreation settings. It may refer to activities carried on throughout the year, during a specific season, for a limited term, or on a single occasion.

Programming is important in leisure management. It is a complex process requiring excellent management. Programming must achieve optimal use of existing resources – facilities, personnel and finance in order to meet the goals of the organization and the needs of people (Torkildsen, 2000). Although many benefits can be gained from participation in leisure and recreation programmes and services, numerous leisure professionals and educators (e.g. Dieser, 2002; Dustin, McAvoy, and Goodale, 1999; Moore, 2002; Wearing, 1998) wisely posited that leisure services also provide negative experiences if they lack proper or competent programming. For example, a poorly designed outdoor recreation trip (e.g. lack of a risk management plan) can cause physical harm to participants. In additional, a sport and recreation facilities and equipments that is not accessible to customers who use wheelchairs can cause these customers psychological harm, such as feeling of exclusion and isolation.

In this case, it is helpful to identify the most influential sport and recreation programme planning approaches today, in terms that are as simple and realistic as possible. Three influential contemporary approaches are the quality-of-life, human-service, and marketing models of leisure-service programming. However, in an effort to synthesize the key features of each of the preceding three approaches to sport and recreation-programme planning, a growing number of professionals and educators have begun to present a benefit-driven model of programming (Kraus, 1997). While this is a relatively new approach, it has been widely featured at professional conferences and in publications, and it seems probable that it will be adopted more widely in the years ahead (Edginton et al., 2004).

The benefit-driven approach model (Kraus, 1997) consists of seven-step in the leisure and recreation programming. Each of the seven steps of the process for sport and recreation development is briefly described here, to provide a preliminary understanding of the sequence.

Established Agency's Mission or Philosophical Base

The mission's is made explicit in a constitution or set of bylaws, charter, enabling legislation or other formal statement of purpose pertinent to the sport and recreation programmes and activities of the organization

Assess Participant and Community Needs and Interests

A systematic assessment of customers'/consumers' needs. This assessment may be done through a variety of techniques (e.g. environmental scans) that examine the views and leisure-related wishes of customers/consumers of the organization.

Identify Specific Programme Goals and Objectives

Identify the goals and objectives that organization should strive to meet in its programme offerings. Goals are broad statements of purpose, while objectives are concrete, short-term, measurable statements of projected accomplishments or programme outcomes.

Explore Full Range of Programme Possibilities

It may include different types of sports and games, outdoor recreation pursuits, cultural arts, and social programmes and hobbies. Four questions should be considered by managers or professionals are:

- Will this activity be of interest to customers/consumers?
- Does it fulfills to the organization goals and objectives?
- Does it meet the needs of various groups of consumers?
- Are other organizations already offering such activities? If so, is there a need to do so?

Formulate Detailed Programme Plan

It involves decision making ranging from authoritarian action to a shared participative approach to outline a detailed programme structure. The programme plan may includes activities, with a designation of their locations, schedules, formats, and the populations to be served; a time frame; staff and facility assignments, and fiscal projection.

Programme Implementation

This is the action-oriented, service-delivery phase of the programming process. It includes publicity, registration, and ongoing supervision.

Programme Monitoring and Evaluation

Evaluate programme, with continuing feedback for programme modifications, and recommendations for future action.

The benefit-driven model emphasizes the need to define clearly the goals, purposes, and positive outcomes of programmes, to focus sharply on achieving these benefits, and to systematically measure the degree to which they have been achieved.

This approach to programme delivery has been used to guide recreational policy planning and management, advance leisure theory and research, and contribute to agency operation (Kraus, 1997).

However, the effective and efficient management of the sport and recreation in hotels and resorts is crucial, so that correct choices of programmes and activities are made to match consumer demands in the first place as well as both the consumers and the organization can prosper in the long term to bring positive benefits to all.

Management is the process of achieving organizational goals by engaging in the functions of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling (Grantham et al., 1998; Park & Quarterman, 2003). Although these functions form the basis of the managerial process, several other elements contribute to an understanding of how sport and recreation managers operate. In relation to the above functions, the sport and recreation managers should have some knowledge of management theories. By understanding historical viewpoints (classical, behaviour, quantitative), modern managers not only can learn valuable lessons, but also can avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.

Likewise, managing sport and recreation programming requires skillful management. Therefore, it is important that the manager of the organizations to familiarize and practice effective management process in sport and recreation. Programming that is professionally planned and implemented will keep the consumers active in a facility long and participating in the activities that has been designed by the organizations. Quality programming that offers opportunities for fun and social interaction, while enhancing the probability of meeting personal fitness and wellness goal, will keep the consumers in the organizations to repeat their usage of the facilities or activities provided. Furthermore, innovative programming that is professionally delivered is a powerful weapon in the ongoing battle for consumer retention (Grantham et al., 1998).

Marketing Sport and Recreation Programme

One of the key aspects of the management activity in the twenty-first century is the development of effective marketing functions so that the correct services can be provided and its benefits can be communicated to prospective consumers (Watt, 1998). This is vital in the private sector where profitability is a central force. It is equally important in the public sector where the organization is trying to attract certain market segments to partake in their leisure activities. The best programme will not succeed if nobody knows they exist (Horner & Swarbrooke, 2005; Edginton et al., 2004).

Marketing is more than just selling or promoting. Kotler (1982) has suggested that selling finds on organization focusing inwardly on its programmes and services. Its primary goals are to achieve large number in terms of participation. The marketing orientation, on the other hand, is focused on consumer needs, wants, and desires. The work of the organization using a marketing orientation is directed towards producing customer satisfaction. Edginton, Hudson, Dieser and Edginton (2004) suggest that the marketing orientation (marketing mix) in leisure and recreation is a process that involves integrating five components as follows:

- Product – refers to the type of service that is produced by the leisure service organization. There are five types of products –areas and facilities, activities, information, leadership, and equipment and supplies.

- Price – The value of a service is often related to its price. There are multiple approaches to pricing.
- Place – The time and location of a service is a critical factor in the marketing mix. Convenience is extremely important.
- Promotion – promotion is a process of communication between the organization and the customer. Promotional efforts let people know what is available and its cost, location, time, and benefits.
- Package – Different programmes and services can be packaged in different ways. This is referred to as the programme format. The form can vary, yet the content remains the same.

In addition, Watt (1998) has identified the following "P's" that are relevant to sport and recreation. These new concepts being: People; Physical evidence, Process, Programming, and Presentation.

Basically, the task of marketing is to show clients what you have. Therefore, design promotional efforts to reveal the main features of your services and products. Make the theme of your organization evident in your marketing materials. Illustrate the quality of your staff, programmes, facilities, and equipment in your promotional information. Marketing involves projecting the image of how you want the clients to perceive your programme or organization. In spite of that, when promoting a new programme, the sport and recreation manager and professional should consider doing an in-house pilot project to provide the staff with opportunity to become familiar with the new programme before promoting and delivering it to consumers (Grantham et al., 1998).

Issues and Challenges in Sport and Recreation Management

Many issues and challenges face the managers and professionals in sport and recreation today. However, the issues and challenges in managing sport and recreation particularly in hotels and resorts is more focused on service quality provided by the organizations. Service quality is recognized as one of the most important area in the field of service management and marketing (Gronroos, 1990). As related literatures indicated that providing quality service is not only the most important factor for customer satisfaction (Berry, Parasuraman, & Zeithaml, 1994; Gronroos, 1990), but it is the principal criterion that measures the competitiveness of a service organization (Lengnick-Hall, 1996). Thus, marketer and managers are now focusing on the process of service production and consumption as it governs consumer behaviour in the service industry where services are produced and consumed simultaneously (Gronroos, 1990). In other words, the success of managing sport and recreation programmes may depend on the degree to which the hotels and resorts can satisfy their customers with quality services.

However, in managing sport and recreation programmes in hotels and resorts, service quality should be defined by the customer's overall impression about the service performance, service delivery systems, and overall consumption experiences (Yong Jae Ko & Pastore, 2004). According to Yong Jae Ko and Pastore (2004), the managers and professionals in the sport organizations are likely to encounter three distinct challenges in the management of services quality in the recreational sport. First, managers are faced with the challenge of designing the service products such as programme and activities to be offered or organized. Second challenge is designing the service environment with emphasized on the importance of facility and other elements of physical surrounding (e.g. equipment), and third challenge is delivery of service with the main focus on organizations' personnel and staff (Rust & Oliver, 1994).

In addition, the effort to enhance customers' participation in sport and recreation, the managers are faced with the challenge of promoting daily high-quality sport and recreation programmes and activities in their hotels and resorts. In this case, sport and recreation managers must market their programmes, providing leisure experiences that improve the quality of life of their sport and recreation consumers, and contribute to the development of their emotional, physical, social, and cognitive lives. At the same time, the sport and recreation managers need to be aware of special societal needs related to race and ethnicity, sex and gender roles, disability, age, and related factors, with emphasis on recreation's important role as a health-related form of experience and social service (Cordes & Ibrahim, 2003).

Recommendation and Conclusion

Understanding the customer is essential to creating successful sport and recreation programmes. Knowledge of customer behaviour can assist the sport and recreation managers in successfully meeting their needs. Perhaps first and most important is the need for the organization to position itself towards service with a foundation of the knowledge of customer behaviour (Edginton et al., 2004). In this regard, the focus of marketing activities in the hotel and resort should determine which benefits individual customers or consumers perceive to be desirable.

Generally speaking, the awareness for physical activity and fitness is at an all-time high in most of the societies today and will continue to increase in the future (Cordes & Ibrahim, 2003; Edginton et al., 2004). Therefore, the managers will certainly have to stay abreast of the changes. If they are to deal with them, sport and recreation managers must be knowledgeable about the field of sport and recreation, and be willing to assume leadership positions. Sport and recreation managers must understand these societal changes and plan their programmes and facilities in the organization. This will assist the organization in attracting and retaining customers because of the increased services offered.

In conclusion, the success of hotels and resorts in providing sport and recreation service may depend on the degree to which the organization can satisfy their customers with quality service. Thus, if the sport and recreation managers are to design leisure experiences pertaining to recreational sport programmes and activities, l would suggest that the current conceptualization of service quality model by Yong Jae Ko and Pastore (2004) could be used as implementation guidelines. This multidimensional and hierarchical model of service quality consists of four primary dimensions, that is, programme quality, interaction quality, outcome quality, and physical environment. This proposed model may contribute to the development of designing and managing effective recreational sport programmes in hotels and resorts.

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Experiential Learning in Informal Education through Tourism Club Activities

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Travel has always been regarded as an experiential learning activity that can lead to children's improved psychological well-being, and past research has studied the relationship between learning styles and experiential learning in nonformal education. Realizing this potential, the Ministry of Tourism and Education Ministry of Malaysia co-jointly launched 3P Programme (3P stands for Students' Tourism Programme) in 2001, with the main objectives to encourage domestic tourism activities, to inculcate traveling culture among students, to minimize social problems among them, and to promote racial integrity among the various races in the country. In achieving the above objectives, the Ministry of Education has encouraged the establishment of Tourism Clubs in secondary schools with specific aims to enhance their knowledge in the tourism industry as well as to expose them to tourist destinations in the country. This paper attempts to evaluate the effectiveness of the clubs, in terms of their activities, and to determine their constraints and potential, based on interviews' preliminary findings.

Key words: tourism, club, learning, nonformal, education

Introduction

Nonformal education is any organized educational activity outside the established formal system that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives (Combs, Prosser and Ahmed, 1973, cited in Smith 1996). Activities that are part of this definition include planned events organized by schools, universities, community groups and voluntary associations. Travel is one example of nonformal education that can impact a person's life through experiential learning.

Learning through travel can be placed in the category of experiential learning as well as leisure and enrichment education. Experiential learning has been identified by Rogers (1969) as applied knowledge that addresses the needs and wants of the learner. He further recognizes four aspects of experiential learning: personal involvement, learner-initiated, evaluated by learner, and pervasive effects on learner as the qualities of experiential learning. Thus, experiential learning can be comparable to personal change and growth.

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Meanwhile, Kolb's (1984) argues that experiential learning style is founded on the idea that learning is grounded in experience. It places learners in a model characterized by a four-step process. The first step is feeling or sensing which represents learning that relies on feeling based judgements. This is followed by watching that reflects a tentative, impartial and reflective style of learning. The third step is thinking that describes learners who are analytical, and their conceptual approach to learning is based on logical thinking and rational evaluation. The final step is doing that involves heavily on active experimentation. Thus, one might speculate that doers and feelers are more likely to participate in learning experiences through travel due to their interest in concrete experience and active experimentation.

Experiential Learning in Nonformal Education

The nexus between tourism and education is an enduring one, and education has been an important travel motivation in the history of tourism (Pearce and Foster, 2007). Educational travel motives and tourism products promoting learning persist today, not only in the western countries but increasingly as factors affecting youth markets in Asia (Lew, Lu, Ap & Guangrui, 2003). The experiences and knowledge gained through travel represent a kind of parallel to formal education in school or at university. de Botton (2002) has drawn attention to the way in which tours of cities, for example, comprises a chaotic curriculum, which facts and information about different spheres of life juxtaposed across different time periods. The curriculum may not be well organized but there is plenty of information to process. Travelers are likely to acquire new skills and perspectives.

Kuh (1995) also noted that travel was a powerful contributor to generic skill development for students. He further argued that the skills required in out of class experiences were those required in an increasing number of jobs including leadership. The values of travel-related experiences as a precursor to corporate and political leadership have been emphasized by Hunt (2000) and Oddou, Mendenhall and Ritchie (2000). In this context, the increasing globalization of commerce calls for a greater sensitivity to other cultures, and the benefits of travel as described in these studies may also prove to be of value in the expanding world of international business.

The literature on the learning of generic skills through travel also describes the contextual conditions necessary for skill building to take place (Pearce and Foster, 2007). Factors of importance in fostering experiential learning include internal motivation, self-initiated activity, involvement in the experience, and the experience of novelty and opportunities to reflect on the experience with others (Boud, Keogh & Walker, 1985; Foley, 2000; Gmelch, 1997; Mohsin & Christie, 2000). These conditions for learning are very applicable to backpackers and the types of experiential travel they pursue (Buchanan & Rossetto, 1997; Murphy, 2001; Pearce, 1990).

Tourism Clubs in School

As mentioned earlier, the Ministry of Tourism and Education Ministry of Malaysia co-jointly launched 3P Programme (3P stands for Students' Tourism Programme) in 2001, with the main objectives to encourage domestic tourism activities, to inculcate traveling culture among students, to minimize social problems among them, and to promote racial integrity among the various races in the country. In achieving the above objectives, the Ministry of Education has encouraged the establishment of

Tourism Clubs as part of co-curriculum activities in secondary schools throughout the country. Tourism Club is specifically aimed at enhancing their knowledge in the tourism industry as well as exposing them to touristic destinations in the country. Various tourism-related activities are arranged at school and state levels, and students are given opportunities to pre-plan trips outside their home states with the cooperation of local travel agencies.

The establishment of Tourism Club is subject to *Education Act (School Club) 1998.* At present, Tourism Clubs are set up at secondary level although the passage of the act allows primary and secondary schools to do so. Through planned activities for educational purposes, it is expected that teachers' teaching and students' learning are fostered. This is important as students gain learning experiences which fit their characteristics and produce expected educational, under the constraints of national goals, school goals and subject content.

By combining studying and traveling away from their home environment, students can realize their need for recreation or diversion. It provides students, what Cohen (1979) called a peek into the 'back' regions of the host society, thereby facilitating experiential, experimental or existential modes of touristic experiences. Moreover, the literature argues that significant learning can exist when unlearning takes place, which often happens when students experience periods away from the usual environment.

Of particular importance is the assumption that travel results in more cross-cultural understanding. This is particularly important in countries like Malaysia, which is multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religion. In studying inter-racial interactions, social psychologists find that face-to-face interactions between members of different groups reduce prejudices, although not under all conditions (Pettigrew, 1998). Research also shows that, as a result of travel, students are more adaptable, more independent in their thinking, more aware of their home country and culture, and better able to communicate with others (Klooster *et al*., 2008), although the situations are more applicable to exchange students.

Research Methodology

In-depth interviews were conducted among teacher's coordinators of Tourism Clubs at selected secondary schools in Penang Island to evaluate the effectiveness of the clubs, in terms of their activities, and to determine their constraints and potential. The qualitative approach of interview technique was utilized to allow for rich and in-depth data to be collected, and interviews were able to identify multiple realities of the phenomenon being investigated.

Preliminary Findings

The preliminary findings indicated that Tourism Club was among the popular clubs to be enrolled by students. To a certain extent, some schools had to limit the membership number in Tourism Club to allow for fair distribution of membership in other co-curriculum clubs. Generally, there are over 25 clubs and uniform units in secondary schools, which students can select based on their preference and interest. The membership is open to Form 1 to Form 6 (lower secondary to upper secondary) students but active members are generally from Form 3 and above.

The types of activities organized by the club depend on its budget, which is sourced primarily from co-curriculum fund, school cooperative and parent teacher's association. In addition, clubs registered with State Tourism Action Council receive annual funding. But, those unregistered did not receive the funding. Hotels and restaurants occasionally provide discount vouchers to club members when they visit their premises, and travel agencies also offer special packages when they organize tours.

Among the activities organized by the clubs at school level and the Council include tourism quiz, tourism seminar, career talk, designing photo and logo. Some schools prepare inventories of touristic destinations, which are then displayed on the information board. Members are also involved in outdoor activities such as camping, homestay, treasure hunt and study trips to interesting tourism destinations, which most of them are eager to participate.

Availability of time is the main constraint of the club operation. Many planned activities did not materialize due to time constraint as students were also involved in other co-curriculum and sports activities. Some parents were reluctant to let their children join trips away from home. To many extents, club activities were also dependent upon club leadership and teacher's coordinators. But teachers were not to blame for being inactive as they were burden with heavy teaching workload and administrative responsibilities.

Conclusion

Linking learning styles and experiential learning with nonformal education settings can provide new insights to the practice of continuing education when developing travel-related activities. Co-curriculum activities, such as organized by Tourism Clubs, for example, also foster teachers' teaching and students' learning. Students can gain learning experiences which fit their characteristics and learning environment. As a result of travel, students are more adaptable, more independent in their thinking, more aware of their home country and culture, and better able to communicate with others. In the context of Malaysia, travel results in more cross-cultural understanding. To enhance the effectiveness of Tourism Clubs, co-curriculum activities shall be prioritized and evaluated similar to academic subjects. This will result in change of content and activities and development of teacher and student competence.

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Issues and Challenges of Managing Natural Heritage in Penang National Park, Malaysia

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The Penang National Park (PNP), 1200 ha, is a small natural heritage area sensitive to environmental change. It has attractive natural attributes such as pristine rainforest, rich biodiversity, beautiful beaches, crystal clear seas, clean rivers, a meromictic lake and other natural attractions. It has all the potentials to be a major natural heritage destination, notably for ecotourism. However, the threats identified are encroachment from farming, infra-structure development, pollution, over-collection of plants and animals, poor enforcement and a narrow top-down approach. These threats can be reduced via careful planning and expert guidance, strict monitoring of development and enforcement, prudent planning and involvement of all stakeholders via empowerment. The PNP can be effectively monitored and managed in specific development zones. While Government agencies have the mandate to manage the park, they should invite NGOs, industry, businesses and the public to work together to manage the park. NGOs can run public awareness programmes on biodiversity, flora and fauna, public education activities on catchment, river and water conservation, and "Save Wildlife" camps. The private sector's CSR programmes can be tapped into to provide funding. Industry and businesses can also team up with NGOs to run various environmental activities in the park. Tour operators and hotels in Penang should also start to market the PNP more aggressively by offering tour packages (especially ecotourism) into the PNP. All stakeholders should be involved actively in the park. Study tours should be a top priority of tour operators. There should also be avenues for tourists to take part in meaningful environmental conservation activities in the park. For school children there should also be a "schools' programme" in the park. The park can also be used for research and education. Proper planning and management of the PNP will make it into a lasting natural heritage area.

Key words: national park, management, issues and challenges

Introduction

Traditionally, Penang has always had a vibrant civil society that is concerned with the well-being of community, economy and the environment. In the area of heritage, civil society has created much awareness and there is a strong movement to conserve the state's heritage. However, much of what is heritage conservation is largely focused

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on the conservation of cultural heritage. This is more evident when Georgetown was awarded the listing as a UNESCO World Heritage Site on 7 July 2008 (Khor, 2008). This listing and award was largely based on Georgetown's history and rich cultural heritage including the clan jetties, its fort, old buildings and other cultural heritage. Without taking away Penang's glamour and deserved award as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it has to be stressed that Penang has equally attractive natural heritage, despite the fact that it is one of the country's most rapidly developing states. Penang is in fact Peninsular Malaysia's northern growth pole, the state being one of the most rapidly industrializing, urbanizing and affluent in the country. Such development has brought about negative effects on its environment and natural heritage. Over the past half a century or so, Penang, especially the island, has undergone phenomenal changes. In terms of land use, very little natural vegetation is left as they have been replaced by urban, industrial, commercial, housing and agricultural land use (Chan, et al., 1998). While such changes have brought development, improvement in income levels and standards of living, urbanization and industrialization to the state, they have not come without cost. In fact, development has brought about high environmental costs in terms of loss of natural natural heritage, habitats and drop in quality of life. Haphazard development has also exacerbated environmental hazards and brought about general degradation of the living environment (Chan et al., 2003). Air pollution caused by the ever increasing number of motorized vehicles, industries, commercial businesses and homes has also given rise to bad air quality, increased frequencies of haze episodes and the urban heat island effect (Sin and Chan, 2004). Consequently, very few natural forested areas are left on the island. Currently, only 6,406 ha of land (6 % of total land area) is gazetted as Permanent Forest Reserve (PFR) in which the administration, management and conservation of forest and forestry departments are provided in the National Forestry Act 1984. This forested area is small in comparison to other states as the national policy proposes maintaining at least 50 % coverage of forest (Kerajaan Negeri Pulau Pinang, 1999:7).

In terms of climate change, an issue that is gripping the global community, Chan et al. (2003) have found that the micro-climate within Penang State is changing, but more importantly, it was found that the city of Georgetown experiences significantly higher temperatures compared to forested areas. The study found that the cooling effect of trees and their canopies have reduced temperatures in the forest, which is cooler by a degree or so compared to the city. The relative humidities inside the forest are also significantly higher, due to high and abundant evapotranspiration. .Evapotranspiration also takes away a significant amount of heat from the forest, transporting the heat into the atmosphere.. Hence, the forest remains much cool even during mid-day. Naturally, solar radiation hardly reaches the forest floor due to the closed canopy. The dense forest trees also form a barrier against wind, reducing wind speed due to friction. There is hardly any wind inside the forest even during the daytime when the sea breeze is constantly blowing. The forest also fogs up easily during the early mornings and at night. Because of its unique micro-climatic characteristics, the forest should be protected from encroachment and deforestation of all forms. On a global perspective the forest forms a green lung as gives out oxygen and it is a carbon sink, absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere during photosynthesis. Hence, the forest acts as a regulating agent to maintain the air quality of the place. Sin and Chan (2004) has demonstrated that rapid urbanization in Penang island, a process that reduces forested land and green areas into urban built-up areas, has resulted in Georgetown, Bayan Baru, Air Itam and other townships experiencing the "Urban Heat island Effect". Consequently, the average temperatures, both daytime and night-time, are one to three degrees Celsius higher than forested areas such as the Penang Botanic Gardens and the Penang National Park. Over the years, the rate of urbanization in Penang island has increased rapidly from 75 % in 1991 to about 86.1 % in 2000 (Chan et al, 1998). As a result of development pressures on hill land and forest land, more and more of such areas are targets for development and since such areas are environmentally sensitive, not only are forest and biodiversity lost but also hazards such as soil erosion, landslides, water pollution and flooding are increasing. In the light of the above scenario, Penang National Park (PNP), located in the northwest, and covering about 1,265ha of primarily coastal hill dipterocarp forests, coastal mangrove forests, beaches and rocky shores has been gazetted as a Permanent Forest Reserve under the Forestry Ordinance 1928. It is managed by the Penang Forestry Department and the PNP represents one of the few remaining significant forested areas in Penang State. The significance of the area as a natural heritage was recognized early by nature lovers in the 1950s who pushed for it to be gazetted as a state park. However, it was only after more than half a century that the area was declared and gazetted as Penang National Park on April 2003. Thereafter, the PNP was put under the management of the Department of Wildlife (http://www.wildlife.gov.my/tnpp/biindex.htm 5/6/09).

As one of the most urbanized states in the country, much of the forest in Penang has been cleared. Hence, the PNP is one of the few remaining forested areas on the island, and is an area rich natural heritage as manifested by the many species of flora and fauna (Chan et al., 2003). Many expeditions have been carried out in the PNP over the years. In 1978, MNS Penang Branch in collaboration with the School of Biological Sciences Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) carried out a natural resources survey in PNP and found that species diversity was high with 25 species of mammals, 53 species of butterflies, 46 species of birds and a considerable variety of marine life (such as sea anemones, corals, mollusks, crustaceans, echinoderms and sea turtles). In 1985, the MNS Penang Branch again sent a memorandum to the Penang State Structure Plan Unit advocating that PNP be designated as a national park in the Penang Island Structure Plan. The Penang State Government has also commissioned two comprehensive studies, “The Penang Environmental Conservation Strategy” and “The Balik Pulau Drainage Study”, both of which recognize the importance of conserving the PNP (Kerajaan Negeri Pulau Pinang, 1999). In 2000, the MNS and USM jointly organized a scientific expedition to study the PNP and this culminated in a seminar titled “Penang National Park: The Case for a State Park”. The seminar paved the way for the then Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon to announce that the State Government was committed and had set as the target for turning PNP into a conservation park. Finally, in April 2003, the area was declared a national park (Kumar, 2004).

Materials and Methods

This study is based on both primary as well as secondary data. The analysis on the geography, topography and geomorphology was based on existing aerial photographs and topography maps (1:50,000 scale). Interpretation of aerial photographs, topographic maps and existing research reports were carried out in the map library of the School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia. Description of the geography, topography, land use and geomorphic features were based on these interpretations. Field survey to verify the data was carried out. Primary data on the physical aspects of the study area was also collected. Recording and interpretation of the topography (altitude, slopes, hill peaks, lowlands etc), geomorphology (promontories, bays, beaches, etc), hydrological features (the meromictic lake, streams, wetlands, etc), land use (vegetation, crops, orchards, mangroves, etc), soils and other geographic features was documented with digital camera and on-sight mapping via land survey methods. Basic chain and compass survey methodology was used in mapping the physical features. Secondary data on climate, land use, geology and other features was also obtained from various sources. The final paper is written based on data collected from various other secondary sources including Chan et al (2003).

Results and Discussion

The PNP is located in the north-western portion of Penang Island covering an area of more than 1,265ha, i.e. less than 4.2% of the total area in Penang Island. Other than the Penang Hill area, it is currently the only sizable forest reserve left on Penang Island. Because it is forested, the micro-climate is markedly different from that of Georgetown, with slightly cooler temperatures ranging from 23 ^{o} C in the early mornings to 30 ^{o} C in the afternoons. Inside the dense cover of the forest canopy, temperatures seldom exceed 28 ^{o} C. Humidity is high, up to 80%, usually reaching saturation in the early mornings and hence giving rise to fog and mist. Annual rainfall is also high, averaging more than 2,600mm. Penang State is located close to the Equator but far enough north to experience some monsoon effects. Therefore, it has an equatorial climate with minor monsoon characteristics. Hence, the climate of PNP is hot and humid, typically equatorial, but under the influence of the southwest monsoon winds and the presence of a distinct short dry season. Temperatures in the PNP are generally high all year round with slightly lower temperatures of between 0.5 to 1.0 ^{o} C in the hill peaks and inside the forested areas. Because of this uniform temperature all year round, the seasons in PNP are distinguished not by temperature but by rainfall. Basically (although there are small variations between regions), the year is divided into four seasons: (1) the Northeast Monsoon Season (November - March); (2) the Southwest Monsoon Season (May - September); (3) the First Inter-monsoon Season (April/May); and (4) the Second Inter-monsoon Season (October). Monsoon winds play an important role in determining the climate of the island. Due to its maritime nature and high rainfall, the humidity is constantly high (averages about 90 % but can reach saturation in the early mornings and in areas of high altitudes. Due to the high temperatures, a high rate of evaporation occurs.

Natural Heritage Attractions of Penang National Park

The PNP is a rich natural heritage area as discovered by Chan et al (2003). Despite its designation as a forest reserve, the PNP is not a virgin forest as timber extraction has been variously carried out between the late 1910s and the late 1930s. Despite being logged previously, however, there are currently about some 72 ha of virgin jungle reserve left in the PNP and these areas are floristically rich. Other unique characteristics of the PNP are: its diversity of ecologically sensitive habitats; rich fauna; the sandy beaches some of which are Pantai Kerachut, Pantai Mas and Pantai Acheh; a number of trekking trails suitable for ecotourism; the Universiti Sains Malaysia biological station at Muka Head; many natural streams which possesses potential water resources; its unique climatic characteristics which differ significantly from its developed fringes; and other biological traits. All these combine to make the PNP an invaluable natural laboratory for scientific study (Chan, 2000). In terms of flora, the major flora of the PNP corresponds closely with that which is characteristic of the vegetation of Peninsular Malaysia, viz. the coastal mangrove forest, lowland dipterocarp forest and some hill dipterocarp forests near the peaks of some of the hills in the PNP. The main families in the dipterocarp forest found are *Dipterocarpaceae, Leguminosae, Apocynaceae, Burseraceae, Dillenaceae, Palmae* and others. Herbaceous plants in the forest include *Araceae, Marantaceae, Gesneriaceae, Zingiberaceae* and *Commelinaceae*. However, some of the commercially important species are Balau (*Shorea materiales*), Seraya (*Shorea curtisi*), Meranti (*Shorea sp.*), Resak (*Hopea sp.*), Merawan (*Hopea sp.*) and *Damar Laut*. The Seraya, in particular, is easy to sight as it has a distinct greyish green foliage emerging from the canopy. The Damar Minyak (*Agathis dammara*) is also easy to identify with its distinctive flaky bark which oozes a resin when cut. Another common tree is the fig tree belonging to the family *Moraceae*. This tree produces a fruit that has a hole in the butt. Ferns and fern-allies are also growing in abundance in the PNP. One unique species is the Stag Horn's Fern (*Platycerium coronarium*). Another is the Bird's Nest Fern (*Asplenium nidus*) which is usually found on tree trunks and branches. The Oak Leaf Fern (*Drynaria spp.*) has nest-like leaves that appear brownish and dehydrated. In higher areas in the forest, the sun loving ferns such as *Dipteris conjugata* and *Dicranopteris linearis* grow well (Chan, 2004). Wild orchids are also found in the PNP. The Slipper Orchid (*Paphiopedium barbatum*), with its slipper-like lip, was once the pride of Penang. The flower of this orchid is purplish with green stripes. However, this species is now endangered because of over-collection and encroachment of its habitat by farmers. It has not been seen for a long time. Other more common wild orchids are the *Bromhedia finlaysoniana* with white flowers and mauve lips, the *Arundina graminifolia* with bamboo-like leaves, and the Jewel Orchids, i.e. species from the *Anaectochilus, Ludisia* and *Goodyera*. Due to their sensitivities to environmental change, it is rare to encounter wild orchids in the forest. One would have to trek deep into the forest, especially in more remote areas to see them. The forests of the PNP are also the home of many species of wild ginger. The more common ones are the *Hedychium longicornitum*, an epiphytic form, but most are terrestrials such as *Alpinia javanica, Amomum biflorum, Amomum uliginosum*, and *Globba pendula*. The *Achasma* has scarlet flowers protruding from the ground. Other gingers are the torch gingers, bunga kantan (now commercially cultivated) and lengkuas (*Alpinia galanga*). The pitcher plant perhaps the most recognisable flora in the PNP because of its unique features. Some common ones are the *Nepenthes albomarginata* recognised by the white ring below the pitcher's mouth and the *Nepenthes ampullaria*.

The PNP also has mangrove forests which are found in small pockets in the coastal zones, both in the northern as well as the western and southern coasts. The major species of mangroves are the *Avicennia-Sonneratia* zone (furthest seaward) usually colonised by *api api* (*Avicennia alba* and *Avicennia marina*) and *perepat* (*Sonneratia alba*). Further inland is the *Bruguiera-Rhizophora* zone, largely dominated by *berus* (*Bruguiera cylindrica*), *tumu* (*Bruguiera gymnorrhiza*) and *bakau kurap* (*Rhizophora mucronata*). Most of the mangroves in the PNP are found on the muddy parts of the western coast along Pantai Mas and towards the south near Kg Pantai Acheh. Some mangroves can also be seen on the north coast just as one enters the PNP after the End of the World restaurant in Teluk Bahang town. *Gelam* trees (*Eugennia spp.*) are found in the meromictic lake in the Pantai Keracut area. Other coastal vegetation include the colourful Sea Morning Glory (*Ipomoea pes-caprae*) on sandy shores with its prominent purple coloured flowers, Leguminosae (*Canavalia microcarpa*), and some grasses of the Graminae type such as *Ischaemum muticum,* *Spinifex littoreus* and *Zoysia matrella*. In particular, the *Ipomoea pes-caprae* are found in large colonies on the sandy beaches of Pantai Keracut. In other sandy areas, the *Barringtonia* association found in areas flooded during high tide thrives. In drier areas, the *Barringtonia* association is colonised by trees, shrubs and tall herbs such as the Lecythidaceae (*Barringtonia asiatica* or *putat laut*) and Clusiaceae (*Calophyllum inophyllum* or *bintangor laut*). Another coastal plant is the Sea Lettuce (*Scaevola frutescens*), a shrub. This plant produces white flowers which appear split. The Sea Hibiscus (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*) has bright yellow flowers with a maroon coloured heart.

In terms of fauna, the PNP is also quite rich as it has been documented that there are at least 25 species of mammals, 53 species of butterflies, 46 species of birds (including a significant number of migrants) and a considerable variety of marine life in the adjacent seas (including sea anemones, corals, molluscs, crustaceans, schinoderms, sea turtles etc.). There are also many species of land and sea snakes, the python being most commonly found. Other fauna that have been sighted in the PNP include the common tree shrew (*Tupaia glis*), slow loris, flying lemur (*Gynocephalus veriegatus*), sea otters (Pantai Mas area), pangolin or scaly ant-eater, leopard cat and civet cat. Of course, wild boars and mouse deer are common. There are also many species of bats in the PNP. Campers are often treated to the flight of giant Flying Foxes or Giant Fruit Bats, i.e. the largest of all the bats. In the swampy areas of the PNP, monitor lizards are abundant. The common ones are the Black Jungle Monitor, the Water Monitor and the Tree Monitor (Chan, 2000). Tourists and nature lovers can see the green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) which usually arrive in the beaches of the PNP between April to August. They are then followed by the Olive-Ridley (*Lepidochelys olivaceae*) from September to February. The green turtles get their name from the colour of its fat content as a mature turtle can grow to a size of about 1 metre in length weighing more than 150 kg. The Olive-Ridley, however, are one of the world's smallest turtles weighing around 40 kg. The PNP is only one of two known breeding sites of the Olive-Ridley in the whole country (the other being in Terengganu). Most of the above two types of turtles lay their eggs in the Pantai Keracut sandy beaches though they are also found in the Pantai Mas, Teluk Kampi, Teluk Ketapang and other beaches. The Hawkbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), though less common, is also found. As a form of protection and conservation for these turtles, a hatchery has been set up by the Wildlife Department in 1995 in Pantai Keracut. According to Kumar (2004b), Penang island, especially the PNP is a haven for birdwatchers. Penang island has a recorded total of about 200 species of birds, and the majority of them can be found in the forests of Pantai Acheh. Bulbuls is a common forest bird which is resident in the PNP. Most forest birds are insect-eaters and they include flycatchers, warblers and babblers. The Grey-throated Babbler and Fluffy-backed Tit-Babbler are two of the more commonly found babblers. The sunbird is another common species found. Kingfishgers such as the small Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher or the large Stork-billed Kingfisher are also commonly sighted. In the mudflats of Pantai Mas, one can often see many migrants such as the Japanese Sparrowhawk, Crested Honey-buzzard and the Black Baza. There are also some eagle families in the PNP, particularly in the peaks near the lighthouse on Mukah Head, notably the white-bellied sea eagle. The PNP is also home to many species of monkeys. The most common is the Long-tailed Macaque and the Dusky Leaf Monkey. Though the monkeys roam the entire length of the forest, they are increasingly found in fruit orchards and human-inhabited areas for obvious reasons. In the campsite in Pantai Keracut, for example, these monkeys can be a nuisance as they steal foodstuff, bags and other belongings of campers.

In terms of geomorphic natural heritage, Ibrahim Jaafar and Chang (2003) have documented a unique lake in the PNP. In the PNP at the Pantai Keracut area lies a unique seasonal lake known as the *Meromictic Lake* (Ibrahim Jaafar and Chang, 2003). This lake is only apparent and visible during the wet season between the months of March to August. Many small streams flow through the lake into the sea via a narrow "bottle-neck" channel on the right side (north) of Pantai Keracut. Firstly, during the mentioned months, the water flowing through this bottleneck is partially blocked when the rough seas deposits large quantities of sand and other wave sediments there. Hence, instead of flowing into the sea, the stream water floods the lake. Secondly, the rough seas sends sea water gushing into the lake. The most intriguing and unique feature of the lake, however, is that the sea water and fresh water layers somehow remain unmixed. Hence, the lake has two distinct layers with the layer of warmer sea water underlying the cooler layer of fresh water on top. Hence, the scientific name "meromictic lake". This is one of the few known meromictic lakes in the whole country. The beaches of PNP are also pristine. Some examples are Pantai Kerachut and Pantai Duyung.

Threats to the Natural Heritage of Penang National Park

Chan (2003) has highlighted many potential threats to the PNP if a stringent park management plan is not put into place. To substantiate this point, Chan et al. (2004) has documented and modeled environmental change as a result of land use change and shown that environmental degradation can be serious if development is unplanned and uncontrolled in the PNP. For many decades, despite its forest reserve status, the PNP has been encroached upon by various developments. It is increasingly being encroached upon by squatters, illegal farmers, collectors of traditional plants and other environmentally damaging activities. Increasingly too, due to Penang Island's small size but the unproportionally high demand for housing and other amenities, the State Government may be under pressure to degazette part of the reserve for development purposes. This has happened elsewhere in the Paya Terubong hills and is a distinct possibility as land starved developers are casting a covetous eye on any available tract of land for development. This is what both the MNS and the Penang public do not want, but that does not mean both these parties do not want to see the PNP developed. The word "Development" can be stretched to mean a lot of things, including the widely used term "Sustainable Development" which basically means the management of our natural resources at a rate that does not jeopardise the needs of future generations. MNS (Penang Branch) and the Penang public want to make sure that this last bastion of nature housing biodiversity and the natural environment be protected, sustainably developed and managed properly so as to minimise any chance of large scale environmental degradation and biological destruction. Hence, MNS (Penang Branch) wants the State Government to come up with a comprehensive management plan to manage the PNP. The PNP can be sub-divided into various zones for various controlled activities.

Institutional and Management Challenges

Originally, the push and proposal to gazette the PAFR as a state or national park came from a balanced participation between government, private sector and NGO (civil society). However, when the PNP was gazetted, the Wildlife Department was given the sole jurisdiction to manage the park. While this is not necessarily a bad thing, as the department has the expertise and resources to do so, however, other parties who were involved in the push for the park felt marginalized. Some were even of the opinion that they were "sacrificed" as they were left out of the decision-making process for the park. This includes not only the NGOs but also various government departments, statutory bodies and local communities. More importantly, as the park is a national park, it now comes under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government which is located far away in Kuala Lumpur. Inevitably, there is disagreement and some friction between federal and state governments. This became more evident when Penang State fell to the opposition parties in the last general elections. As a result, one of the biggest challenge for PNP is that of poor coordination, poor enforcement, poor cooperation and institutional competition and dispute. This challenge needs to be quickly resolved if the PNP hopes to be managed in an efficient manner. Not withstanding political differences, the various levels of government from federal to local need to put aside these differences and work together for the sake of the park. Additionally, the Wildlife Department, now the lead agency, should invite other government departments and NGOs to work with it for the sake of the park. Funding received from the Federal Government should be used efficiently for park development and conservation.

Agricultural and Other Encroachment

The land use of the area surrounding the PNP is mixed. On one side is the Teluk Bahang Dam. On another is the Teluk Bahang town, an urbanized area. And on other sides are the forest of the park, orchards and fishing villages. Similarly, farming, whether legal or illegal is an activity which is closely related to the development of hill land. In states where land is scarce such as Penang, farmers often resort to illegal farming of vegetables, flowers and fruit trees. Currently, many hill slopes in the Penang Hill area and in the Teluk Bahang Hill area are illegally farmed. These activities, though not as bad as completely exposing soil surfaces as in construction and deforestation, nevertheless involve clearing dense forests and replacing them with sparsely spaced crops. Soil erosion can increase many folds because of farming on hill slopes, often leading to landslides (Chan, 1998). For example, Daniel and Kulasingham (1974) found that erosion rates in forested and planted (vegetable) areas are 25 m^3 km^{-2} yr^{-1} and 732 m^3 km^{-2} yr^{-1} respectively. This is an increase of more than 29 times. In the current study, soil loss data collected between June 1995 and June 1996 on Penang island and computed based on the Universal Soil Loss Equation produced a soil loss of about 19,000 tonnes/hectare/year in freshly deforested land with slopes between 20 to 30 degrees. Given the high intensity of equatorial rainfall in Malaysia, the steep terrain and the resulting high rate of soil loss, landslides are the inevitably results. In comparison, soil loss in a forested catchment in the Air Itam water catchment in the Penang hills is only about 0.01 to 1.3 tonnes/hectare/year. Vegetable farming on hill slopes which recorded a soil loss of between 30 to 90 tonnes/hectare/year is already regarded by the authorities with concern (Penang State Government, 1993).

Infrastructure Construction

As the PNP is relatively new, much needs to be done to make it attractive as a tourist destination and as a recreational spot. Since its gazettement, the PNP has undergone a face lift in the sense that many new facilities and structures have been constructed to make it accessible and attractive to visitors. At the entrance is now a huge building complete with a visitor centre and other facilities. This is good for the promotion of the

PNP and the enhancement of its image as a well-run park. A road has also been constructed to make it more accessible to cars. This is where NGOs and environmentalists have voiced their discontent. In the past, all visitors had to trek into the park as there were no access roads for vehicles. Even motor cycles were not allowed into the park previously. The difficult terrain made it impossible even for motor cycles to pass. In a way, this inaccessibility to vehicles had indirectly protected the park from an avalanche of visitors, tourism operators and vendors. Accommodation facilities were also limited in the past as there were only a few chalets located near the entrance of the park. Once inside the park, one had to camp if one intended to spend a night or so. Hence, there are camping facilities and piped water from springs provided by the Forestry Department in the past at Pantai Kerachut. Critics now calimed that the infrastructure development may increase arrivals and the onslaught of motorized vehicles will not only disturb the natural tranquility but also cause pollution and traffic accidents. All these may also overtax the park as its carrying capacity may be exceeded. Here, the challenge is to built conservatively and all facilities built should be environmentally friendly. Trees should not be cut unnecessarily but structures should be built round trees.

Other Challenges in Penang National Park

Ecotourism has not really taken off in the PNP. It remains a big challenge to develop and make the PNP a viable ecotourism destination. Gazetting the PAFR as the PNP is not the end of the story. In fact, now that Penang has a national park, it is time to start working hard to plan and manage the park sustainably and profitably. Recent developments in Penang illustrate the Penang State Government's foresight and desire to create a balance between development and conservation. One is the launching of the Sustainable Penang Initiative (SPI) under the Socio-Economic & Environmental Institute (SERI) of Penang. This is the people's response to monitor and map out Penang's current development trends into a sort of "People's Report on Penang" (Socio-Economic & Environmental Research Institute, 1997). Another is the completion of The Penang Environmental Conservation Strategy (PECS) by a group of consultants in December 1998 (DCT Consultancy Services Sdn. Bhd., 1998). All these also culminated in the gazettement of the Penang National Park in April 2003. The PNP has been variously studied and documented. USM, Forestry Department, Wildlife Department, the Malaysian Nature Society (Penang Branch) and others have documented the physical geography (climate, geology, soil, vegetation and hydrology), the biodiversity of its flora and fauna, and other environmental characteristics of the PNP. However, the environment and its attributes are dynamic and are always changing. Hence, there should be periodic expeditions to continuously document and update existing data. For example, Universiti Sains Malaysia is currently using the PNP as an outdoor laboratory whereby students conduct their field work in fields such as biology, ecology, forestry, hydrology, fisheries, plants, insects, etc. Other universities can also be invited/allowed to carry out research and fieldtrips for their students. One potentially viable project is to entice foreign universities to bring their students to conduct summer field courses in the PNP. Already, Universiti Sains Malaysia has a research station at Mukah Head. The State Government can facilitate this and Universiti Sains Malaysia can link up with foreign universities in its push towards internationalization. Areas and fields of studies, that can also include volunteers from tourists, include but are not limited to the following: Climatology, hydrology and environmental studies; Marine biology; Biology, biodiversity and study of unique endemic species of flora (both land and aquatic); Study of tropical species of fauna (land and aquatic); Study of insects and invertebrate; Study on the recreational, eco-tourism potentials and aesthetic aspects of the area; Study on sustainable development of the area into: forest reserves & water catchment, a nature education centre for school children, a natural laboratory for scientific research, and a viable site for eco-tourism, recreation and outdoor activities; and Other Studies.

As a national park, the PNP now has federal funding and there is no question that it should be managed effectively and sustainably. However, not all parts of the park should be developed for tourism or any one single focus. Chan (2000) argues that the PNP needs to be subdivided into management zones with different objectives and functions. Some of these zones should be allocated for public use. Such an area called Public Recreation Zone (PRZ), within the designated park area can be both existing recreation areas or newly created ones. These zones should be freely open to the public. Many existing areas that are considered degraded or altered beyond recovery to their original native states can be designated as PRZs. Such areas include orchards and farmed plots within the area. An example of such a zone is the present Forestry Recreation Park. The thrust of all activities here will be education towards awareness of nature coupled with recreation. There will be picnic spots, camping areas, bird watching activities, walking and jogging trails, trekking and hiking trails and mountain biking trails. However, one strict enforcement is that of prohibiting all petroleum powered vehicles (including motorcycles) in the zone. Such environmentally friendly activities will have an appeal for both the local as well as foreign tourists. Robust Recreational Zones (RRZs) are disturbed areas with some chance of recovery and will be available for a range of restricted activities such as trekking, camping and character building and health promoting activities normally associated with wilderness and leadership training. The Outward Bound Society may be one of the main users in these zones as would the Malaysian Nature Society. For instance, rock climbing and apsailing activities can be permitted on some of the cliff structures located within these zones. A further example is the Pantai Kerachut area which for long has been unofficially a robust recreational zone although the completion of a concrete trail to it will soon make it freely accessible to the public. The nature of such a zone shall be similar to the Taman Negara concept. By the nature of the wilderness and the specialised knowledge required, the robust recreational area will remain unattractive to the casual visitor unless they make a genuine effort to learn the necessary skills. It is hoped that the host of such clubs and associations in these activities will be encouraged to use the zones and then openly offer their training to the general public. Environmentally conscious and sympathetic tourists who shall be making up the bulk of foreign tourists (as a result of awareness programmes in the West) will appreciate such zones. Hopefully, this may rub off on local tourists who will eventually embrace, practise and support environmental conservation programmes. Environmental NGOs such as MNS, Water Watch Penang (WWP), WWF Malaysia and others can play an increasingly important and active role in these areas. Exclusion Zones (EZs) are areas from which unauthorised people are excluded. They are undisturbed sites with native fauna and flora. They include breeding areas or areas for scientific research. These areas will run programmes for local school children or the public and use them as accessories in the study of the geography, environment, ecosystem and wildlife to inculcate awareness, appreciation and love for the natural world. An example of a possible type of programme can be typified by the Huemel Survey conducted by participants in a Rayleigh Project in Chile recently or Water Watch Australia's Community River Quality Monitoring network which involves thousands of local inhabitants. In this respect, MNS Penang Branch can collaborate with Water Watch Penang to conduct water monitoring using school children and volunteers from the general public. Such a project not only involves the public in terms of community character building but also gives the MNS and WWP a chance to create greater environmental awareness in environmental education (Chan, 1998). Scientific studies can focus on documenting the physical geography of the PNP, and the conservation and maintenance of refuges (nesting sites for birds etc.) for the native wildlife and flora. In cooperation with the proper bodies, the exclusion zones may also be used for the re-introduction of species previously extinct in the area. Approved research on wildlife should also be allowed (turtle breeding etc.). A small part of such zones may be opened by controlled entry for paying visitors to observe animal in their natural habitats. This can be done through the provisions of observation hides under very close supervision by rangers or appointed staff. The Coastal Zone (CZ) will be considered a public recreation area because of the difficulty of policing the entire coastline within the PNP. However, no one will be permitted to land from here to the exclusion zones if they are located on the land side (e.g. mangrove swamps). It is expected though that if a breeding area extends out to the sea, the marine extension should be part of the exclusion zone. Currently, some coastal areas are already developed for tourism such as the chalets near the mouth of the Sg Tukun.

Conclusion

The Penang National Park (PNP) is one of the smallest national parks in the world. However, it is a rich natural heritage area that is sensitive to development and environmental change. The PNP has rich natural attributes such as pristine rainforest, rich biodiversity, crystal clear seas, and geomorphic heritage in pristine beaches and a meromictic lake. All in, it has all the potentials to be a major natural heritage destination. Hence, there is no reason why ecotourism cannot be developed for the PNP. Currently, ecotourism is not properly promoted to foreign and local tourists. Infrastructure construction has affected the natural heritages in the park. The many threats identified are encroachment from farming, infrastructure development, pollution, over-collection of plants and animals, poor enforcement, poor cooperation between institutions and erosion of biodiversity. These threats can be reduced via careful planning and expert guidance, strict monitoring of development and enforcement, prudent planning and involvement of all stakeholders via empowerment. The PNP can be effectively monitored and managed in specific development zones. While Government agencies have the mandate to manage the park, they should invite NGOs, industry, businesses and the public to work together to manage the park. NGOs can run public awareness programmes on biodiversity, flora and fauna, public education activities on catchment, river and water conservation, and “Save Wildlife” camps. The private sector’s CSR programmes can be tapped into to provide funding. Industry and businesses can also team up with NGOs to run various environmental activities in the park. Tour operators and hotels in Penang should also start to market the PNP more aggressively by offering tour packages (especially ecotourism) into the PNP. All stakeholders should be involved actively in the park. Study tours should be a top priority of tour operators. There should also be avenues for tourists to take part in meaningful environmental conservation activities in the park. For school children there should also be a “schools’ programme” in the park. The park can also be used for research and education. Proper planning and management of the PNP will make it into a lasting natural heritage area.

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A Review on Tourism Development in Malaysia

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Tourism development in Malaysia began since 1960s. Embarking on the strategy to develop rural areas and provide diversity in national economy, tourism industry drastically become as the second most important sector after petroleum. Therefore, the aim of this article is to discuss the progress of tourism development in Malaysia from the period of the First Malaysian Plan (1966-1970) until the Ninth Malaysian Plan (2006-2010). This paper is also reviewed several approaches related to tourism administration and policy taken by the federal government as stated in National Economic Plan (1970) and the National Tourism Master Plan (1975). Further elaboration is then centred on the growth of tourism industry in Malaysia from 1987 to 2005.

Key words: Tourism development, Malaysia Plan, international arrival, tourism growth.

Introduction

Malaysia covers a land area of 329,758 square kilometers. The country comprises 14 states and is divided into two regions: Peninsular Malaysia which consists of 11 states - Perlis, Kedah, Penang, Perak, Pahang, Selangor, Kelantan, Trengganu, Negeri Sembilan, Malacca, Federal Territory and Johor – and East Malaysia, situated on the Island of Borneo, which consists of another two states, Sabah and Sarawak. As a tropical country, the average temperature of Malaysia is 26 degrees Celsius throughout the year, but several parts of the country have an average temperature of 18 degree Celsius up to 27 degree Celsius. Currently, Malaysia has a population of over 25 million consisting of three main ethnic groups; the Malays, the Chinese and the Indians (Langkawi Municipal Council, 2005). It also includes the indigenous people of Sabah and Sarawak, Eurasians, Arabs and Europeans. With its multi-racial societies and geographical factors with a long coastal area surrounding the country, Malaysia has a lot to offer in terms of tourist attractions. Figure 1 showed major tourist attraction areas in Peninsular Malaysia.

Tourism Development in Malaysia

Although leisure and tourism activities in Malaysia began since the colonial era,

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government involvement in tourism development only started in 1953 when the Cultural Department officially opened and in 1964, the Ministry of Cultural, Sport and Youth was muted (Mohamed, 2001). Since that time, the tourism industry has grown considerably, but the tourism industry only captures one aspect of the economic diversity since economic activities are still based on the traditional sector, such as, rubber and tin (Wells, 1982).

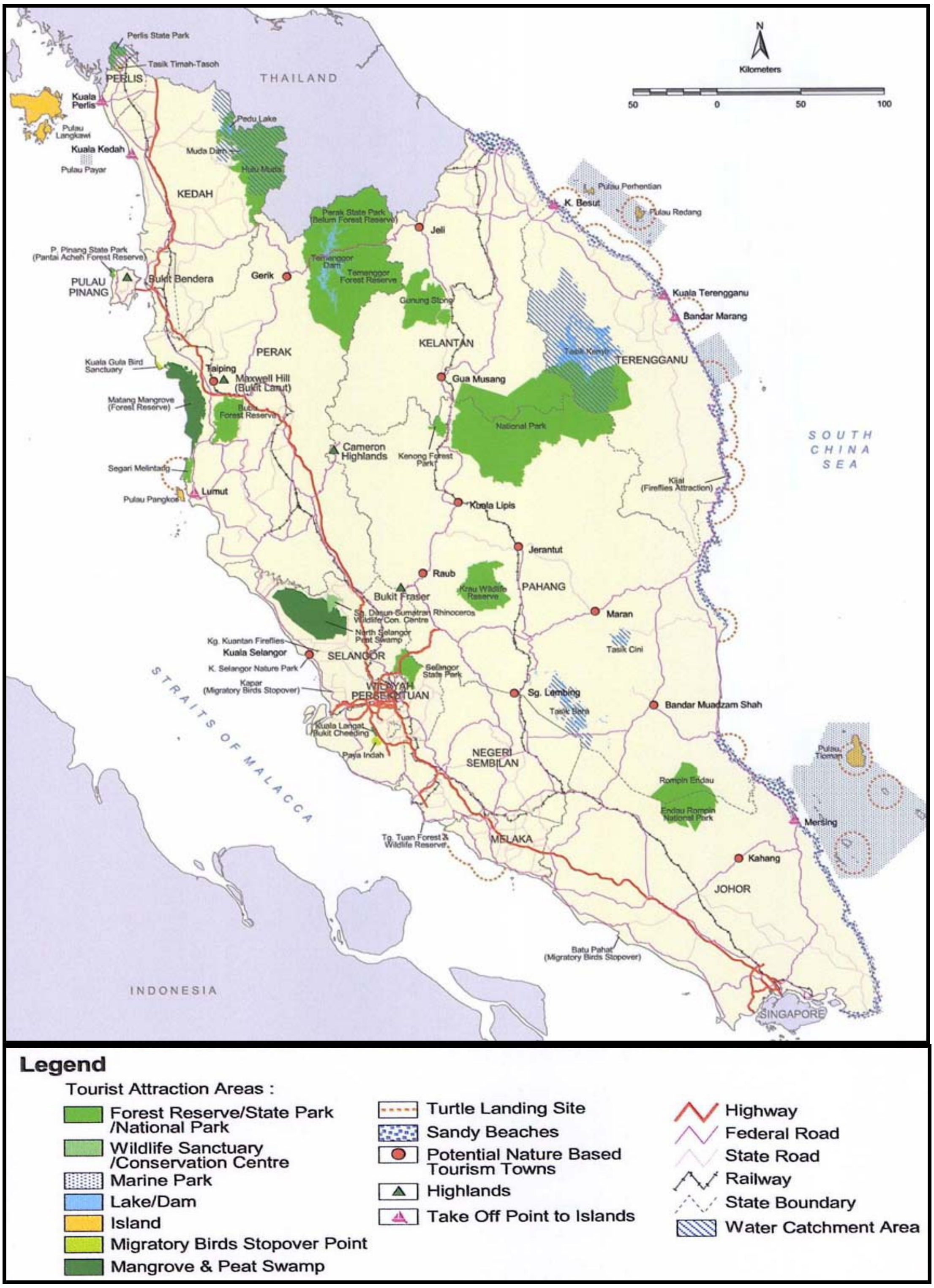

Figure 1: Tourism area in Peninsular Malaysia
Source: Federal Department of Town and Country Planning (2005).

The momentum for tourism development only began in the 1970s, after the 1972 Conference of the Pacific Areas Travel Association (PATA) in Kuala Lumpur. That conference was significant as it provided information to the government and people in Malaysia about opportunities in the tourism industry. Following that event, the government granted more recognition to the tourism industry by creating the Tourism Development Corporation (TDC) in 1972 and continued with the completion of the National Tourism Master Plan in 1975 (Sirat, 1993).

In the 1980's, the tourism industry received more attention from the government when a separate Ministry of Culture and Tourism was created in 1987. In 1990, the government expanded the ministry into the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism (MOCAT), with an objective (Sharif, 2002: 66):

> *"...to expand and diversify the tourism base and to reduce country's dependency on a narrow range of activities and markets"*

In achieving that objective, MOCAT was responsible for (Sharif, 2002: 66):

- assisting the states to create and promote distinctive identities so as to be more attractive to domestic tourists, and,
- encouraging states to promote their tourist attractions and destinations and assist through joint promotions and the provision of promotional expertise at the state level.

Later, the Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB) or 'Tourism Malaysia' was created in 1992 to replace the Tourism Development Corporation (TDC) and was placed under MOCAT's wing, and it is currently under the Ministry of Tourism. MTPB has several roles and responsibilities including implementing tourism policy and promoting tourism overseas and within Malaysia (Sharif, 2002). MTPB is also involved in developing and coordinating tourism facilities and amenities. An MTPB objective is:

> *"to promote Malaysia as an outstanding tourist destination...,to increase awareness of Malaysia's unique wonders, attractions and cultures...to increase the number of foreign tourists...and extend the average length of their stay and,...increase Malaysia's tourism revenue...to develop domestic tourism and enhance Malaysia's share of the market for meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions* (MTPB, 1975: 4*)."*

MTPB has promoted Malaysia aggressively as a tourism destination to the overseas market. A brand of *Malaysia Truly Asia* was introduced and several overseas branches of MTPB were opened such as in London, Amsterdam and Dubai. Nevertheless, although the Ministry of Tourism controls tourism administration in Malaysia, the implementation of tourism destination planning, and infrastructure development comes under the Federal Government. Figure 2 shows some important ministries and departments engaged with planning, maintaining and controlling tourism activities in Malaysia.

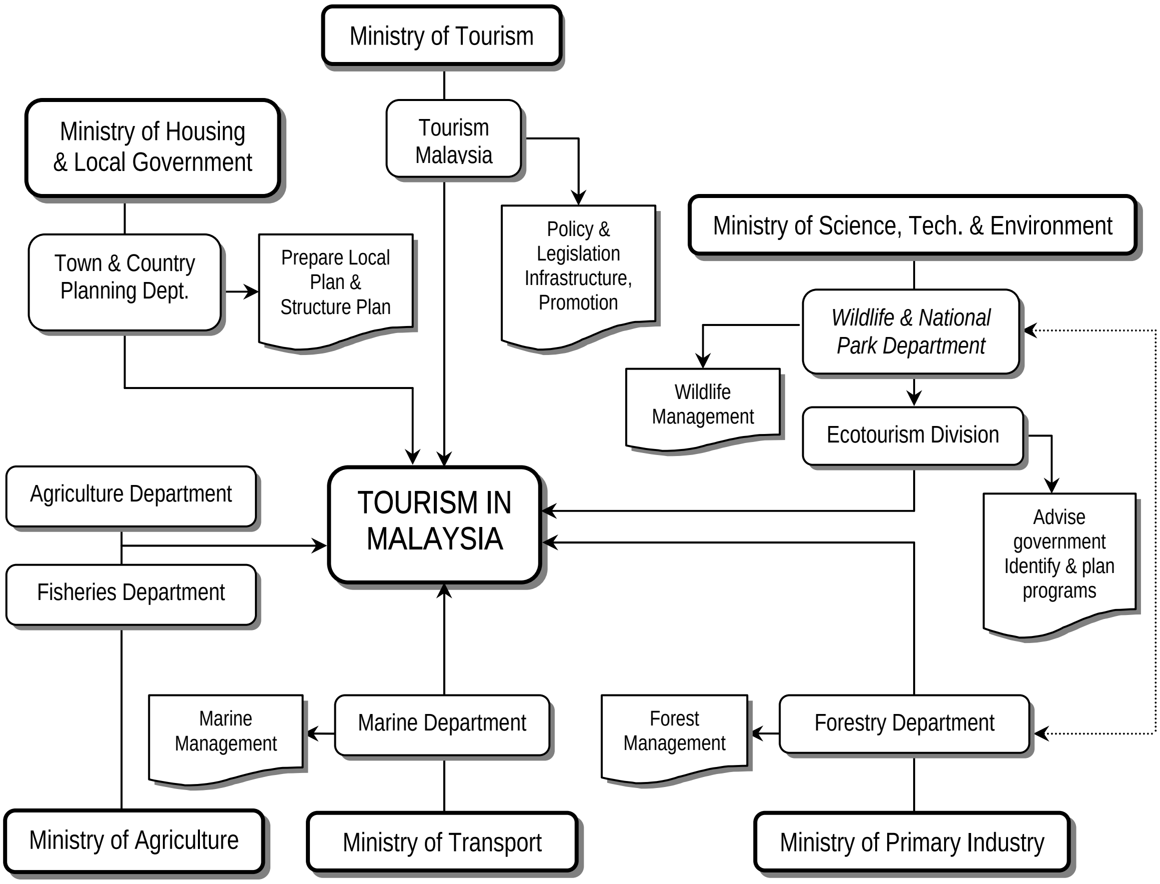

Figure 2:Government departments involve tourism development in Malaysia to 2005
Source: Modified from Mohamed (2002).

Government Involvement in Tourism Development

Although the First Malaysia Plan (1966-1970) has not provide any significant policy towards tourism industry, major impact on the tourism industry happened during the Second Malaysia Plan (1971-1974), especially after the Pacific Asian Travel Associations (PATA) conference in 1972. The Malaysia Airline Company was set up by the government to provide direct communication within the ASEAN region and other countries to attract international visitors. The federal government proposed four strategies to encourage tourism development as follows (GOM, 1971):

- To propose more destinations and tourism infrastructure in every state to encourage more interstate tourists.
- To develop more tourist destinations and tourism infrastructures along the main road[20] for domestic and foreign tourists[21].
- The development for tourist destinations and infrastructures will focus on the Northern and Southern Peninsular Malaysia.
- Air transport development for Sabah and Sarawak.

Moreover, tourism development policies were also set out in the 1970 National Economic Plan (NEP). The NEP was developed by the Federal Government to provide economic equity and to foster national unity amongst all races in the

[20] Within this period, there were still no highways in Malaysia except the federal road or main road.

[21] The foreign tourists according to this plan referred to tourists from ASEAN region and transit tourist from Australia, New Zealand and United States.

country. It's also aimed to encourage *Bumiputera* involvement in the tourism sector through economic and business activities (Din, 1982), and was realised by the Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB).

Significantly, *Bumiputeras'* involvement in the tourism sector reached 30% during the Third Malaysia Plan (1976-1980) (Din, 1982), and about 14,800 were employed in the hotel industry by the time of the Forth Malaysia Plan (1981-1985) (Sharif, 2002). The progress was continued by the completion of the National Tourism Master Plan (NTMP) in 1975 with objectives that included (MTPB, 1975: 4):

- to outline the programme of tourism development that will fully utilise the natural attraction, potential and social attributes of Malaysia as they relate to the requirements of domestic, regional and international tourism.
- to provide a basis upon which Malaysia may develop tourist potential in an orderly and balanced manner within the framework of the national development plan and the new economic policy.
- to provide income and employment potential for the principal areas selected.

The NTMP suggested the development of eight integrated tourist regions in county involving Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak (see Figure 3 & 4).

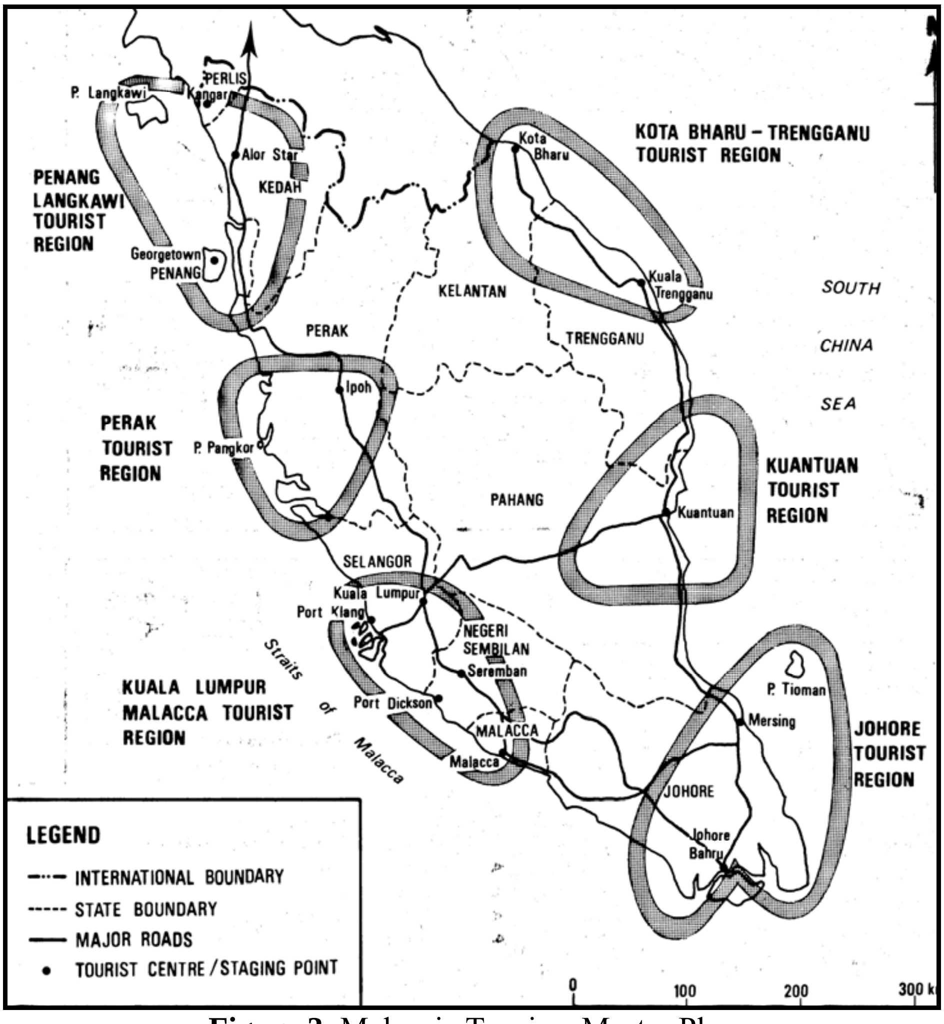

Figure 3: Malaysia Tourism Master Plan
Source: Tourism Development Corporation (1975: 183).

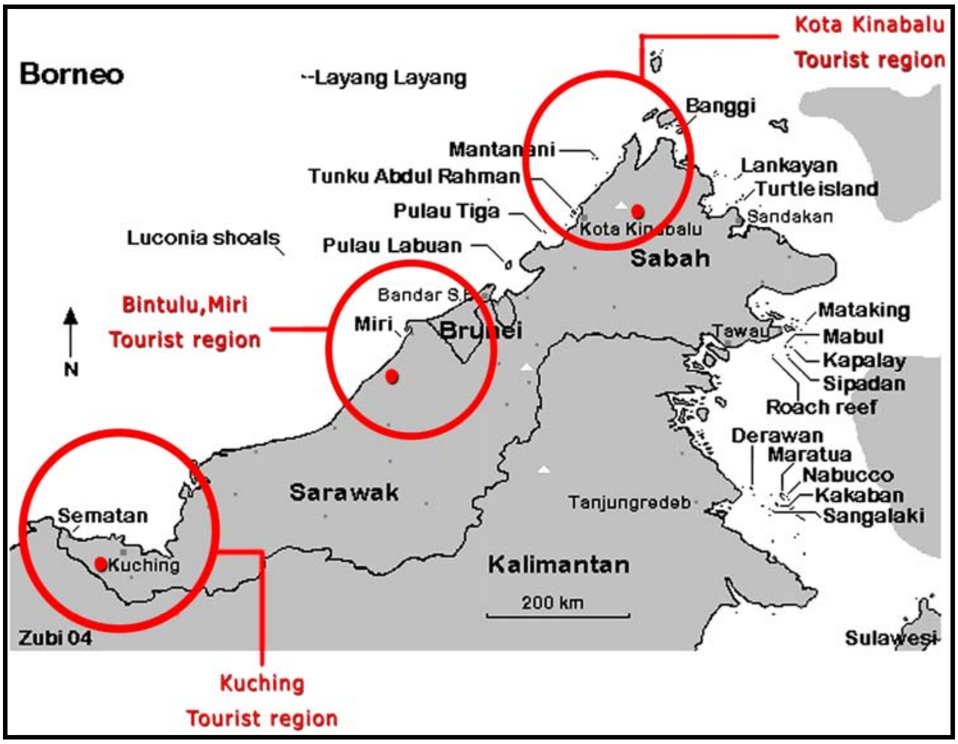

Figure 4: Tourism Master Plan: Sabah and Sarawak
Source: Tourism Development Corporation (1975: 184).

Tourist regions were aimed to spread tourism development within rural areas to provide diversity for international tourists, and as a strategy to distribute the economic benefits from tourism development to the whole country. The NTMP suggested a development programme as follows:

> *"…as a basis by the government and Tourist Development Corporation in determining the areas for potential Bumiputera participation in line with the government's policy of increasing the involvement of Bumiputera in commerce and industry as well as the restructuring of society."* (TDC, 1975: 5)

However, based on his study on international tourists flow in Malaysia, Opperman (1992) claimed that until 1990, after 15 years of implementation of the Tourism Master Plan, tourism development was still unequally distributed amongst the region as suggested by the plan. More rapid development occurred on the West Coast of Peninsular Malaysia than on the East Coast. Sabah and Sarawak however were far behind Peninsular Malaysia in attracting tourists (King, 1993). Leong (1997) claimed that the disparity of tourism development among tourist regions was caused by lack of promotion. Din (1982) also noted that the plan only has a small reference to the NEP in terms of suggesting how the government agencies can play their role to encourage *Bumiputeras'* involvement in the tourism industry.

In a response to the criticism, federal government launched the National Development Policy (NDP) in 1990. The first phase of NDP implementation was included in the Sixth Malaysia Plan (1991-1995) and continued in the Seventh Malaysia Plan (1996-2000). The NDP also stressed the importance of nationally integrated development. Those strategies were brought from the NEP objectives to eradicate poverty and restructure national society, and are outlined as follows (GOM, 1991: 5):

- Promoting and strengthening national integration by reducing the wide disparities in economic development between states, rural and urban areas.

- Developing a progressive society in which all citizens enjoy greater material welfare, while simultaneously imbued with positive social and spiritual values, and an increased sense of national pride and consciousness.

In addition, the National Tourism Policy was developed in 1991 to create a unique image of Malaysia with its diversity of culture and natural resources. The policies aimed to have an international infrastructure and tourism product and several strategies were created as follows (Langkawi Municipal Council, 2005):

- Diversify tourism products and services in order to fulfil tourists' needs.
- Promote and identify national and international markets.
- Private sector involvement in innovative tourism products through investment.
- Local community involvement especially to develop their perception through tourism activities and promotions.
- Development of communication systems for local and foreign tourist arrivals.

The 1991 National Tourism Policy stressed on product development and investment, and aimed for support from local residents. To assist the government in attaining broad objectives through the adoption and establishment of tourism objectives, policy guidelines aimed to:

- Establish a political, economic and social environment conducive to the development of the tourism industry.
- Identify and designate tourism development areas and establish detailed controls for these areas.
- Establish development priorities with respect to location, type, scale and timing of investment.

In addition, the domestic and international private sectors received an extension of investment incentives for development in designated tourism zones. Related policies are created to generate a compatible tourism product, increase citizens awareness of tourism and employment opportunities (Langkawi Municipal Council 2005).

During the Sixth Malaysia Plan (1991-1995), and partly due to large outflows from Malaysians travelling abroad, the plan proposed a two-pronged strategy of tourism development to increase foreign tourist inflows, and to promote domestic tourism to reduce foreign exchange outflows on account of foreign travel by Malaysians. Those strategies were continued further during the Seventh Malaysia Plan (1996-2000) by focusing more on domestic tourism through local residents' involvement in entrepreneurship in product development and services. By the Eighth Malaysia Plan (2001-2005), basic strategies and policies of tourism development aimed to achieve sustainable growth, and to realise potential income at national, state and local levels. Sustainable tourism strategies were used to protect a balance between environment, economy, social and cultural issues in all tourism activities, and planning and was structured as follows:

- Priority on sustainable tourism development.
- Focus on holistic approach for tourism development.
- Promote Malaysia as an attractive destination with events and carnivals.
- Improve human resource development.
- Prepare and upgrade communication network.
- Improve strategic agreement and international cooperation.
- Improve tourist hospitality and safety.
- Develop strategic alliances and international cooperation.

Subsequently, the Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006-2010) also stressed the importance of sustainable tourism development. The plan suggested product development, human resources improvement, and develops domestic tourism through marketing and promotion activities. The national tourism committee will act as coordinator between the private and public sectors. State tourism and cultural authorities will be created in every state for an effective strategy for tourism development. A focus will be given to eco-tourism development through agriculture and rural product development.

Tourism Growth

The tourism industry received an allocation of MYR$ 8.59 million for destination development in the Second Malaysia Plan (1971-1975), compared with no allocation during the First Malaysia Plan (1965-1970) (Table 1). The Second Malaysia Plan (1971-1975) also estimated about 170,000 international tourists would visit Malaysia by 1975, which was an increase of about 17 % a year in the period 1971-1975, compared to 13.7 % a year increase in the First Malaysia Plan (1966-1970) (GOM, 1971). Accommodation rooms rose from 1,900 in 1965 to 6,000 in 1970, and workers in the hotel industry also increased from 2,700 to 8,000 during that period.

Table 1: Government allocation for tourism development

Five years plan	Allocation (MYR million)
1st Malaysia Plan (1965- 1970)	No allocation
2nd Malaysia Plan (1971-1975)	8.59
3rd Malaysia Plan (1976-1980)	27.19
4th Malaysia Plan (1981-1985)	40.00
5th Malaysia Plan (1981-1985)	140.50
6th Malaysia Plan (1986-1990)	533.90
7th Malaysia Plan (1996-2000)	605.50
8th Malaysia Plan (2001-2005)	1009.00

Source: Tan (1991), GOM (2001, 2006).

The government hoped that the incentives would encourage the private sector to invest more in accommodation sector, especially for international hotels. However, according to Mohd Saad (1998) the progress of tourism development in Malaysia during the 1970s was still considered moderate until the end of the 1980s, when the government began to promote tourism aggressively overseas. The allocation for tourism development in the five years plan was raised from MYR$ 27.19 million in the Third Malaysia Plan (1976-1980), to MYR$ 40 million in the Forth Malaysia Plan (1981-1985).

A cabinet committee for tourism development was set up in 1985, and was headed by the Deputy Prime Minister, before it was transferred to the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism in 1987. The committee was responsible to monitor all aspects of tourism development in the country (Tan, 1991). By 1989, about 24% from Malaysia's GDP (Gross Domestic Product) came from the tourism industry and tourism was the second largest contributor to the country's service account (Sirat 1993). Statistical data in the Fifth Malaysia Plan (1981-1985) and the Sixth Malaysia Plan (1986-1990) reported that tourist arrivals rose from 22.5 million to 33.5 million. Income grew to MYR$ 31.2 billion from 1986 to 1990, up from MYR$ 12.8 billion from 1980 to 1985 (Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board, 1999).

In addition, during the Sixth Malaysia Plan, more funds were allocated to the tourism sector compared with the Fifth Malaysia Plan (from MYR$ 140.5 million to MYR$ 533.9 million). According to Walton (1993), federal government initiative was urged by the success of neighbouring countries, Singapore, Thailand and Indonesia. For example, Singapore received MYR$ 3.9 billion from the tourism industry in 1980, and this figure tripled to MYR$ 11.55 billion in 1990, but Thailand was the biggest earner in the ASEAN region, receiving MYR$ 12.1 billion in 1990 compared to MYR$ 2.38 billion in 1980. Indonesia however, achieved the highest increase from MYR$ 795 million in 1980 to MYR$ 5.12 billion in 1990.

Malaysia's aggressive initiatives paid off when the number of overseas visitors increased dramatically from 2.2 million in 1980 to 7.4 million in 1990 (Figure 5). Although Malaysia's revenues increased to MYR$ 4.18 billion in 1990 compared to MYR$ 729 million in 1980, the total receipt from tourists' expenditure was still lower than Thailand, Singapore and Indonesia (Walton, 1993). This may have been because the majority of foreign travellers into Malaysia were from Singapore, and most of these were day trippers or weekend travellers who spent their time staying with friends or relatives (Mohd Saad, 1998). In 1995, however, Malaysia recorded total tourist receipts of MYR$ 9.9 billion from the arrival of 7.5 million tourists (Sadi & Bartels, 1997). Interestingly, in 1995, it was the Singaporeans, who became the biggest spenders in Malaysia with a total of MYR$ 4.68 billion. That amount was more than what was spent by travellers from Japan, Taiwan and Thailand (Sadi & Bartels, 1997).

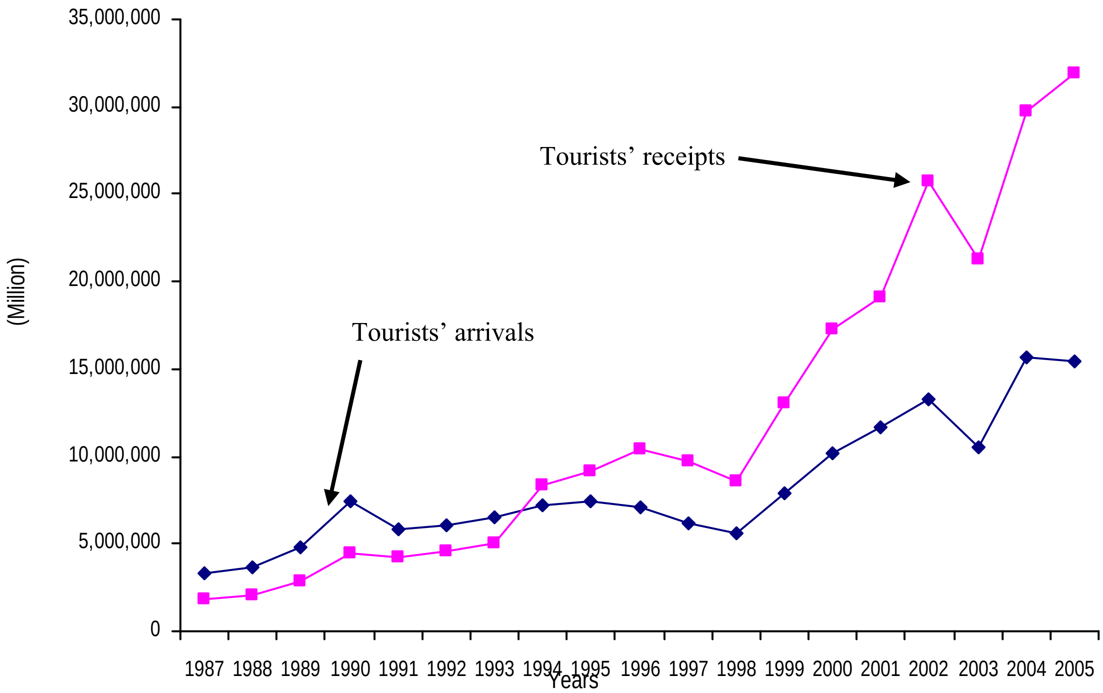

Figure 5: Malaysia's international tourist arrivals and receipts (1987-2005)
Source: Sharif (2002), GOM (2001, 2006).

This significant achievement in tourism development in Malaysia during the 1990s can be attributed to the government's involvement in developing the industry. In the 1990s, the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism (MOCAT) was set up and the first international 'Visit Malaysia Year' campaign was launched in 1990. This successful campaign for the tourism industry was followed by another ‘Visit Malaysia Year’ campaign in 1994. The 1994 campaign included the added initiative to encourage the growth of domestic tourism (Mohd Saad, 1998). During the 1996 national budget, the government provided MYR$ 294.5 million worth of incentives in the form of investment tax allowances (Sadi & Bartels, 1997).

However, the economic recession in 1990s delayed tourism development. International arrivals had decreased for the two years from 1997 until 1998. Despite the set back, the statistical data for the seventh Malaysia Plan (1996-2000) showed that tourist arrivals increased from 7.5 million in 1995 to 10.2 million in 2000. Income from the tourism industry also doubled from MYR$ 9.9 billion in 1995 to MYR$ 18.8 billion. Hotel rooms increased dramatically from 76,373 rooms to 134,503 rooms, but the room occupancy decreased from 65% to 55%, because of the economic recession. The budget for the tourism sector in the Seventh Malaysia Plan (1996-2000) was increased to MYR$ 605.5 million, with most of the allocation going to infrastructure and destination development.

The Eighth Malaysia Plan (2001-2005) provided a MYR$1 billion allocation, with the priority on environment protection and infrastructure development, conservation and national monument protection (Government of Malaysia, 2001). Numbers of hotel rooms increased from 124,413 rooms in 2000 to 170,813 rooms in 2005. The government also allocated about MYR$ 2.4 billion for tourism infrastructure and development fund. Most of the allocations went to tourist destination development and Pangkor, Redang, Tioman and Langkawi Islands received the priority.

Conclusion

Since the 1970s, tourism development in Malaysia had steadily grown from an alternative sector to become a major component in the national economic structure. It was undeniable that the driving factor for the success of tourism industry was caused by its contribution to the local economy and therefore, the tourism industry became an agent for development especially to local tourist destination. In fact, an example from the 1970s shows how the potential of the tourism industry had influenced the government’s decision to create the Malaysian Airline to provide means of access for foreign visitors. This was support by several actions taken by the government to strengthen the administration of tourism planning in Malaysia.

In fact, the Malaysian government has defined the policy for tourism development to stimulate the domestic economy by generating foreign exchange, employment opportunities and encouraging equitable economic and social development. Almost all policies support the government strategies to use the tourism industry as a catalyst for economic and social development. The government also wanted to use tourism to develop rural areas by promoting rural enterprise and accelerating rural-urban integration and cultural exchange. Nevertheless, the progress of the tourism industry in Malaysia shows the important of government role in developing the industry. Looking back to 1970s, when the first initiative was taken for tourism development, the aim was to foster national unity and develop the nation. However, with an effective strategy, those aims has turned tourism to become as one of the biggest sector in the country which far above than earlier aims and expectations.

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Tourism Product and Activity in East Peninsular Malaysia

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Environment related products and activities in tourism industry such as ecotourism, combination tour and island hopping are popular among the tourists who visit Malaysia. Off the coast of Peninsular Malaysia, there are several coral islands which offer various ecotourism attracting activities for tourists. The crystal clear sea, fine sandy beaches and untouched jungle are the attractions on the islands such as Perhentian, Kapas, Tioman and Redang Island. A study was conducted to examine the tourism product and activities offered in these four islands. Finding revealed that environment related products such as island hopping and combination tour had been ranked as the highest important while snorkelling, round island and diving were the most important ecotourism related activities. However, based on the significant difference of various tourism products and activities offered in these islands, a tourist can experience different tourism product and activities offered by the chalet operators.

Key words: Tourism product, tourism activity, small and medium island resort operators and East Peninsular Malaysia

Introduction

After seriously embarked on tourism industry in 1970s, this industry has contributed significant amount of income to the country. Based on the record for the period of eleven years i.e., from 1998 to 2008, the number of tourist arrivals in Malaysia shows an increment of 280% (from 5.5 million to 22.0 million) and tourist receipt of 478% (from 8580.5 million in 1998 to 49561.2 million in 2008). In terms of number of hotels and rooms in Malaysia, the increment for ten years period shows an increment of 66.3% (from 1,419 hotels in 1998 to 2,360 hotels in 2007) and number of rooms of 49% (from 107,791 rooms in 1998 to 160,327 rooms in 2007).

One of the significant factors contributing to the success of tourism industry is the development of marine ecotourism in Malaysia. The unique attraction of these islands offered various tourism product and activities to be explored by the tourist. In general, tourist will expect to experience different activities when visiting these islands. Knowing this, many chalet operators take the opportunity to make use the

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uniqueness of marine ecotourism in each island to offer different tourism activities for the tourists.

In East Peninsular Malaysia, the marine parks were primarily established to conserve and conduct research on the rich biodiversity contained in Marine Park waters. There are many islands that have been gazetted under marine parks such as Redang Island, Perhentian Besar and Kecil, Kapas, Tenggol in Terengganu, Pulau Tioman, Sembilang, Sepoi in Pahang and many other islands in the state of Kedah, Johor, Labuan, Sabah dan Sarawak. However, due to heavy tourism activities conducted in these marine parks, there is uneasy balance between conservation and tourism activities (Kaur, 2006). Looking at the various tourism product and activities available on these islands, the objective of this study is to identify and rank the importance of tourism product and activities offered on these islands. This research will also compare among the different tourism product and activities offered in these islands.

Tourism Product and Activities

Medlik and Middleton (1973) define tourism product as all services and interest activities those related with tourism. Kotler (1984) relate tourism product with all activities that involves marketing. Lewis and Chamber (1989) divide tourism product into three stages; formal product (what tourist believe design purchase); main product (what tourist should purchase); and additional product (major product combination and value-added). However, Gunn (1994) has come out with clearer definition on tourism product which refers to a key component demand angle-of. This involves the relationship among different components such as attractiveness, promotion, information, transport and service which can be bred and managed to attract tourists. There are several tourism product and activities offered in these island parks such as island hopping, ecotourism, combination tour, turtle watching and many more.

Island hopping is a term that has several different definitions as it is applied in various fields. Generally, the term refers to the means of crossing an ocean by a series of shorter journeys between islands, as opposed to a single journey directly across the ocean to the destination. Island hopping has been associated with tourism on island or coastal areas. Nowadays, island destinations have become more competitive and this has led to the development of variety of tourism product and activities using the attraction of available sun, sea and sand. The main contribution to island hopping is the natural resources that create fun to local boat operators and tourists (Mohd Nor & Mohd Shariff, 2006). There are two reasons for this emerging trend, firstly tourists have changed their tastes from plain holiday to more adventurous type of tourism, responsible tourism or green tourism and secondly, island is the almost ‘homogeneous’ in nature, such as the beaches. However, it needs more than the beaches to become more competitive. This is done through developing new product such as hill and mountain sites, the mangrove, the marina and special events to attract more tourists (Mohd Noor and Mohd Shariff, 2006)

In Malaysia, ecotourism is defined as ‘travel and visitation that is environmentally responsible to relatively undisturbed natural areas in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (including any accompanying cultural features: both past and present), promotes conservation, has low visitor impact and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations (The National Ecotourism Plan, 1997). In relation to ecotourism in marine park, Mike (1999) has defined it as ‘ecotourism that takes place in coastal and marine setting’. As for Malaysia, Kaur

(2006) argues that ecotourism is exceptionally important as Malaysia is blessed with breathtaking islands along with white sandy beaches and clear waters.

Family holiday is no more new activity (Butcher, 1979; David et al., 1989; Ahmad and Hadi, 2006; Ahmad, 2002a, 2002b and 2004). The tourism activities (Range from the easiest activities such as family visiting in village, kindred and associate fellow and picnic by the seaside to the tough activities such as holiday and expedition with family) form a part of family holiday certified by International Tourism Nation. Family holiday is one activity that commits outside working hours, filled with activity and various motives, with involving all or part of family members (Ahmad 2002, 2004).

Combination tour is a similar concept with package tour. According to Beaver (2005), the associated definition of a package tour is "A prearranged combination of not fewer than two of the following tourism services when sold or offered for sale at an inclusive price and when the service covers a period of more than 24 hour or includes overnight accommodation, transport, other tourism services not ancillary to transport or accommodation and accounting for a significant proportion of the package tour".

Round island activity is referring to a round island trip to expose tourist to the attractive and historic scene surrounding the island. The resort operators will hire a boat to take tourist on the boat ride. Normally the journey will take 1-3 hours depending on the number of places that need to be visited.

Methodology

Quantitative methods of data analysis had been applied for this study. From 45 questionnaires, only 38 were returned back but only 33 were useable for this research, representing 73.3% response rate. The research covers small and medium island resort operators in East Peninsular Malaysia i.e Perhentian Island, Redang Island, Kapas Island and Tioman Island. The lists of island resorts were gathered from various sources such as internet search, Travel Guide Book 2007 published by Ministry of Tourism, pamphlet and researcher's observation when conducting the field survey. The respondents were owners who also involved in managing their firms.

The questions used to measure tourism products and activities were adapted from Butcher, (1979), David Ng, Muzaffar and Tate, (1989), Wong (2000), Ahmad, (2002a and 2002b), Hj Md Nor, (2004), Mohd Noor and Mohd Shariff, (2006), Maria Abdul Rahman et al, (2006) and Ahmad and Abdul Samad Hadi, (2006).

Analysis

From the survey of 33 respondents, 4 or 12.1% were from Kapas and Redang respectively, 11 or 33.3% were from Perhentian and 14 or 42.5% were from Tioman. According to the classification based on number of room, 87.9% can be categorized as small sizes.

The most popular tourist categories visiting their premises were family vacation groups (87.9%), students on school trips (57.6%) followed by seminar participants and business people (24.2%). Short term and long term vacations were among the popular purposes of their visit such as day trips with the percentage of 97.0% and 78.8% respectively. In terms of the ratio of international and local tourist, 14 or 42.2% of the respondents said that the percentage of foreign tourist was high (67-100%).

Table 1: Non Parametric Test on the tourist attraction in terms of products and activities offered

Product	Mean	Rank
Island Hopping	3.55	1
Combination Tour	3.21	2
Shopping entertainment	3.11	3
Family Vacation	2.67	4
Ecotourism	2.47	5
Activities	**Mean**	**Rank**
Snorkelling	15	1
Round Island	13.47	2
Diving	11.61	4
Fishing Trip	11.03	5
Canoe	10.17	6
Beach Volleyball	10.03	7
Turtle Trip	9.2	8
Jungle Trekking	8.83	9
Banana Boat Rides	7	11
Spa and massage	6.85	12
Surfing	5.73	17

Scale: 1-Most unpopular, 2-Either most unpopular/most popular, 3-Most popular

The above table showed the ranking on the tourist attraction in terms of product and activities offered on these islands. In terms of product, island hopping was the main attraction followed by combination tour and shopping entertainment. In terms of activities, the top 5 activities were snorkelling, round island, diving and fishing trip and canoe. This result showed the significant of ecotourism activities in these islands.

Table 2: One-way Anova on the product and activities offered between the islands

Product	Kapas Island (Means)	Redang Island (Means)	Perhentian Island (Means)	Tioman Island (Means)	F
Island Hopping	2.25	0.50	1.27	2.36	*3.058**
Combination Tour	2.50	1.00	1.82	1.00	1.753
Eco tourism	1.25	0.50	0.91	0.50	*0.717*
Family Vacation	2.25	0.75	1.09	0.36	*3.055**
Shopping entertainment	0.50	0.50	0.45	2.86	35.586**

Activities	Kapas Island (Means)	Redang Island (Means)	Perhentian Island (Means)	Tioman Island (Means)	F
Snorkelling	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.79	0.428
Diving	2.25	3.00	2.18	1.21	2.433
Canoe	2.50	2.25	1.55	0.64	3.528**
Round island	2.75	0.75	2.64	2.71	5.155***
Fishing	2.00	0.50	1.73	2.00	2.283
Beach volley ball	2.00	2.00	1.10	1.14	0.977
Banana boat rides	1.00	1.00	0.91	0.00	2.822
Jungle tracking	1.75	0.50	1.10	1.07	0.767
Surfing	0.75	0.25	0.27	0.00	4.813***
Turtle trip	2.75	0.75	2.00	0.14	10.929***

*Level of significant: ** Significant at 0.01 and *Significant at 0.05*

Table 2 explains the result of one-way anova in comparing different product and activities available on these islands. For tourism product, the strong significant different were found on the shopping entertainment (p<.001) while less significant on island hopping and family vacation (p<0.05).

In comparing the islands, Tioman Island (mean= 2.86) was the only popular place for shopping where it offers free tax area. Tourists are able to obtain many imported items with lower price. This is different with the other three islands where tourist can only buy specific items or souvenirs such as batik, sarung, key chains, T-shirts and food. Meanwhile, Tioman Island and Kapas Island were important for island hopping with the mean value of 2.36 and 2.25 respectively. While for Kapas Island, due to its geographical factors that is located nearer to the mainland; provides useful daily family vacation trip (mean=2.25). Kapas Island also is a place where tourist can have a piece mind with natural beauty without any development taken place.

In comparing the activities between the islands, round island, turtle trip and surfing showed the most significant activities (p<0.01) while canoe only significant at p<0.05. Round island was actively offered and getting good response from tourist who visited Pulau Kapas (mean=2.75) and Pulau Tioman (mean=2.71) followed by Perhentian Island (mean=2.64). This result can support the higher mean value for island hopping for these islands. Surfing was not been offered in Pulau Tioman (mean=0) but less offered in Pulau Kapas (mean=0.75). Watching turtle was a popular activity in Pulau Kapas (mean=2.75) and Pulau Perhentian (mean = 2.0). These two islands were the popular destination for turtle laying their eggs. Canoe was popular in Pulau Kapas (mean=2.50) and Pulau Redang (mean=2.25).

Conclusion

The above result shows that the ecotourism related product and activities were popular in these islands. The most popular product was island hopping followed by combination tour and shopping entertainment. Snorkelling, round island and diving were among the top three popular categories of tourism activities. Unlike other activities, snorkelling was rank as the most popular activity for all the islands.

Different islands were popular for different tourism products and activities. The significance difference placed on shopping entertainment where Tioman Island was known for shopping paradise among the tourists and local visitors. Island Hopping was popular in Pulau Kapas and Pulau Tioman while location factors influence the higher ranking on Pulau Kapas as a popular destination for family vacation. In terms of activities, the strong significant value was found for round island, surfing and turtle trip while canoe was moderate significant among the islands. These findings can help to provide a significant guidance to the visitors who wish to experience different ecotourism activities offered in these islands.

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The Impact of Interactive Traffic Congestion Simulation in the Tourism Industry: A Pilot Study of the Kuching Waterfront

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Nowadays, tourists that visit Kuching area especially area around Kuching Waterfront tend to loss their way easily because they are not familiar, especially for the first time visit. There are several existing map application in the real world such as Putrajaya Interactive Map, Map of Northern Michigan, Metrorail System Map, TriMet Interactive system Map and Collin Country Interactive Map. Most of these maps do not help tourist find shortest path. Therefore an Interactive SVG Map is proposed to find shortest path. Furthermore, when tourists notice that there is/are traffic path(s) along the shortest path, tourists able to set the traffic path(s) and find second shortest path which will avoid the traffic path(s). This simulation implemented Single Source Shortest Path algorithm (Dijkstra's algorithm). The result for usability testing is mean of 4.76 and standard deviation of 0.45

Key words: interactive traffic simulation congestion, Kuching

Introduction

There are several problems occur when tourists visit Kuching Waterfront. First of all, tourists are not familiar with Kuching waterfront. Tourists will easily loss their way at Kuching waterfront. Besides that, tourists do not know how to go to their desire destination at Kuching waterfront. Tourists also do not know which is the shortest path to their desire destination at Kuching Waterfront. If there is traffic occur along the path where tourists will need it to go to their destination, tourist also do not know the second shortest path that will bring them to their destination. Therefore, a system is implemented using dijkstra's algorithm to help tourist to find second shortest path in Kuching waterfront area if there is/are traffic occur along the path that tourist will need it to go to their destination.

The objectives of this system are enable tourist to get familiar with Kuching waterfront. Besides that, it also provides an interactive SVG Map for tourist as a guide. It will guide tourist to their desire destination in waterfront using interactive SVG Map by showing second shortest path inside the SVG Map if there is/are traffic(s) occur.

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Literature Review

The similar and existing interactive maps that implement in the real world had been explored and studied.

Metrorail System Map

Metrorail system map is the third studied and explored existing interactive map system. This is a pure bus and rail map and it does not contain any navigation function for user such as move through the map and zoom-in zoom-out function. Every single node on the map is the station of the bus and railway. When user clicks on these nodes, it will bring user to the other webpage which give a details information about that station. Overall, this is just a map which gives information about the paths of the bus and railway and provides information of each station by linking to other webpage as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Metrorail System Map

TriMet Interactive System Map

The next Figure 2 shows the TriMet Interactive System Map. This map do include navigation function such as zoom-in and zoom-out function, and the move through the map in eight direction which are North, North-east, east, east-south, south, south-west, west, and west-north.

Figure 2: TriMet Interactive System Map

The special about this map is that it includes a search function which can help user to find a specific location. When user selects a place from a drop down list at the left panel, the map system will show the information of the location using popup window.

This map also includes print function which allow user to print the map. Besides that, the map is design with scale. This map also provides legend to ease the user to know the places in the map.

Collin Country Interactive Map

Figure 3 shows the Collin Country Interactive Map. Collin County Interactive Map. This map is regarding all the places in Collin Country. The map includes general map (Roads, Major Roads, Cities, Streams, lakes and so on), land records, public safety, County Precincts, Polling Location, State Districts, and some imagery.

Figure 3: Collin Country Interactive Map

Similar with other map system studied previously, this map system also provides navigation function such as move the map, zoom-in and zoom-out function. The method of zoom-in and zoom-out function of this map is almost the same with the Putrajaya Interactive map. This is the special part of this map. When user want to zoom-in and zoom-out the map, user can draw a rectangular inside the map and the area inside the rectangular will be zoom-in or zoom-out. Besides, this system also provides print function for user to print the map.

Algorithm to Find Shortest Path

The main objective of the purposed interactive SVG map is finding the shortest path. There are several existing algorithm that can find shortest path. Therefore, algorithms which are A* Pathfinding Algorithm, Euclidean shortest path algorithm and Single source shortest path algorithm (Dijkstra's algorithm) are studied. From these algorithms, the most suitable algorithm that can be used for the purposed interactive SVG map will be chosen.

A Pathfinding Algorithm*

The first algorithm studied is A* Pathfinding algorithm. Using the example mentioned by Lester, P. in his article "A* Pathfinding for Beginners", this algorithm can be demonstrate as follow.

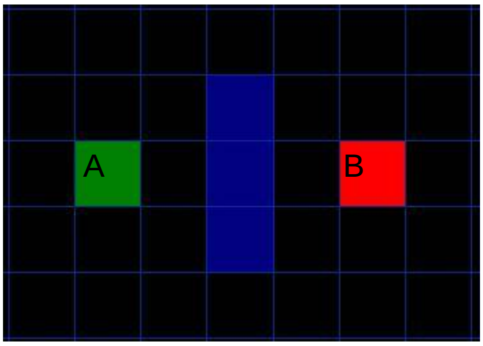


Figure 4: Point A and Point B

First of all, there are point A and point B where green square represent point A, red square represent point B and the blue block square represent obstacle. The walkable area are represent by the square grid surrounding point A, point B and obstacle. Figure 4 shows the point A and point B.

When the algorithm is run, it will first add point A in the open list where open list is the list for square that need to be checked out (Kapoor & Maheshwari,1988). Then all the adjacent square of point A are added to the open list to be checked while point A is save as parent square, drop it from open list and add into the closed list where closed list is all the square list which we don't want to look at it currently (Kapoor & Maheshwari,1988). After that calculate the value F for each square in the open list according to the formula below (Kapoor & Maheshwari,1988):

$F = G + H$ where

- G = the movement cost to move from the starting point A to a given square on the grid, following the path generated to get there.
- H = the estimated movement cost to move from that given square on the grid to the final destination, point B (Kapoor & Maheshwari,1988).

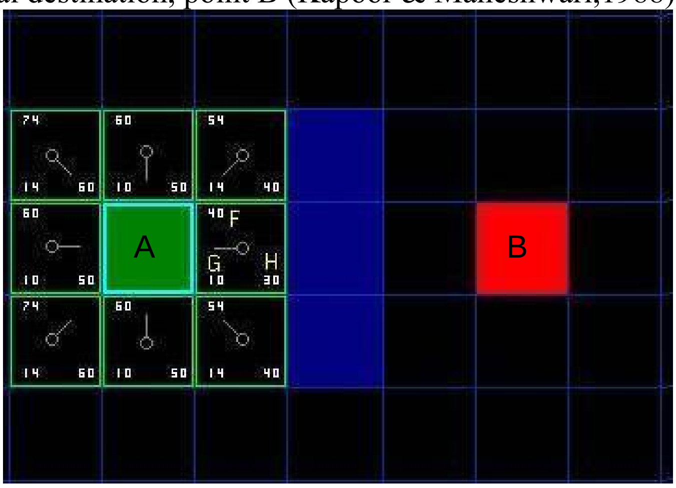


Figure 5: Value of F, G and H

As shown in above Figure 5, all the value of F, G, and H had been calculated. Therefore the square with the lowest value of F will be chosen as new Current Square and it will drop from open list and add into the closed list.

According to Lester, P., it will then check all the adjacent square of the new current square except for the square which already inside the closed list and the obstacle. If the adjacent square isn't on the open list yet, add it to the open list and make the new current square the parent square of these square (Kapoor & Maheshwari,1988). All the F, G, and H costs of the square then will be recorded. If the adjacent square is on the open list already, check to see if this path to that square is better using G cost as the measure (Kapoor & Maheshwari,1988). The lower the G cost the better a path. If it is in this condition, then change the parent of the square to the current square and recalculate the G and F scores of those square (Kapoor & Maheshwari,1988). The list need to resort to make the changes take effect if open list is keep sorted by F score.

This process is repeated until the point B is added into the closed list, which means path has been found or open list is empty which means that fail to find the target square of there is no path (Kapoor & Maheshwari,1988). If point B is added in the closed list, working backwards from point B to its parent squares until reach the starting square (Kapoor & Maheshwari,1988). Then this will be the shortest path. Figure 6 shows that the path had been found.

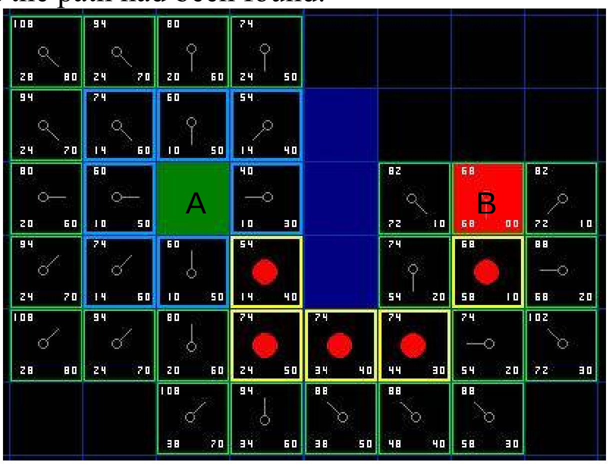


Figure 6: Final path

Euclidean Shortest Path Algorithm

The second algorithm studied is Euclidean shortest path algorithm. Table 1 shows the details of the algorithm.

```
While there are active nodes do
  begin
  A: Choose some u from the list of active nodes;
  Repeat
  B: if top(u) is nearer than bottom(u)
      or LIST2 of bottom(u) is complete
    then increment LIST1 of u;
      if w in LIST1 of top(u)
        angle utop(u)w is acute
      then
        set top(u) to w with the largest acute angle
        else if LIST1 of top(u) is not complete
         then make u inactive ;
            make active all w inactive at u with angle
            wutop(u) acute
        else make active all w inactive at u
        else if bottom(u) is nearer
            top(u) or LIST1 of top(u)is complete
              then
              ...
    C:
      if LIST1 and LIST2 of u are both complete
      then
        begin
            make u inactive;
            make active all w inactive at u;
        end
      until u is inactive ;
   end
```

Table 1: Euclidean Shortest Path Algorithm

The correctness of the algorithm can be seen from the stated claim inside the journal. Claim 1: At any stage LIST1 and LIST2 contain the visibility lists at a node in the sorted order (Harlan, 1991). Claim 2: No nodes which lie between top(u) (bottom(u)) and the last node in LIST1 (LIST2) of u can be visible from u (Harlan, 1991). Claim 3: When all nodes are inactive, then all the visibility edges have been determined (Harlan, 1991).

The journal discuss about the problem of finding a visible path with the exists of obstacles. This paper focus on solving shortest path problem in a simple polygon with m polygonal holes. From the research, this problem can be solved in o(E+T+nlogn) time where E is bounded by $o(m^2)$ and T is the time for triangulating the simple polygons with holes (Harlan, 1991).

Single Source Shortest Path algorithm (Dijkstra's algorithm)

Next algorithm studied is Single Source Shortest path algorithm. This is one of a version of Dijkstra's shortest path algorithm which enables the distances between a source and all vertices of a graph to be determined in $O(N^2)$ time on one processor and $O(N \log_2 N)$ on N processor (Harlan, 1991). This algorithm will be studied and discuss whether it can be used in the proposed map system to find the shortest path. In this research, the search function which starting from an initial state and terminating at some goal state or states will be discussed (Harlan, 1991). Single Source Shortest Path (SSP) algorithm is a modification from breadth first search (Harlan, 1991). It improves the effectiveness of the breadth first search. In breadth first search, the algorithm needs to search every vertex as shown in the Figure 7 below.

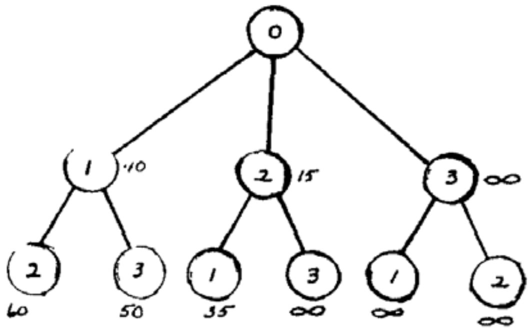


Figure 7: First breath search

Therefore, it will spend more time which is $O(N^2)$ for each cycle, and N-1 vertices must be examined and possibly expanded, and each vertex can have up to N-1 connections. N-1 iterations will be taken for the shortest distance to all vertices to be established (Harlan, 1991).

However, Single Source Shortest Path algorithm is done with different approach. It makes the running time $O(N^2)$ by selecting the vertex with the minimum distance determined (Harlan, 1991). Then all the unknown vertices are examined on the next cycle to see if there is a shorter path to them via the most recently marked vertex as shown in the Figure 8.

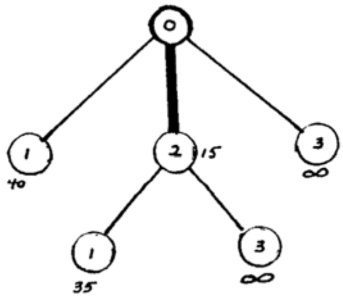


Figure 8: Recent marked vertex

By using this algorithm, the running time is reduced to $O(N^2)$ since N-1 vertices are examined on each cycle where N-1 cycles still required to determine the minimum distances. The following Table 2 shows the details of the algorithm:

```
Begin
  For i:=O to N-1
    Known [i] : =(i=O)
            /* only source vertex is known
    For i:= O to N-1
        D[i] :=GIO, i]
          /* initial distance of source to vertex
    LastKnown: =0
    I* Only source i.s known
    KnownCount:= 1

  While KnownCount < N
    MinVertex:=O
      For i:=l to N-1
        I* check for shorter route
        I* via last marked vertex
            if Not Known[i.]
              D[i]:=Min(D[i], DILastKnown]
                + GILastKnown,i])
      End For
        I* select next vertex to mark known
            MinVertex:=MinV (Minvertex,i.)
        LastKnown:=MinVert ex
        KnownCount++
    End While
End
```

Table 2: Dijkstra's Algorithm

Algorithm Comparison

From the review of these algorithms, it is obvious that all algorithms are able to find shortest paths. Basically, A* Pathfinding algorithm is more suitable if implement in game application (Lester, 2005). Euclidean shortest path algorithm does have the pseudocode and it is ready to implement in any programming language. However, it only focuses on solving shortest path problem in a simple polygon with m polygonal holes (Kapoor & Maheshwari, 1988).

For Single Source Source Shortest Path algorithm (Dijkstra's algorithm), from the journal of Searching in Parallel: a case study with the single-source shortest path algorithm, it is normally used to find shortest path in a graph and find the shortest path more faster as it search the shortest path in parallel.

Lastly, for the Calculate Shortest distance algorithm, it compares the pre-drawn paths from one place to another place then finds the paths which have the shortest length. However, it is not as flexible as Single Source Shortest Path algorithm (Dijkstra's algorithm) as it needs to pre-drawn all the paths from one place to all other places.

Suggested Algorithm in Proposed System

Based from the comparison of both algorithms at previous section, we found that Single Source Shortest Path algorithm (Dijkstra's algorithm) is more suitable in mapping application because it is able to determine and calculate distance from start position to destination and fast in searching.

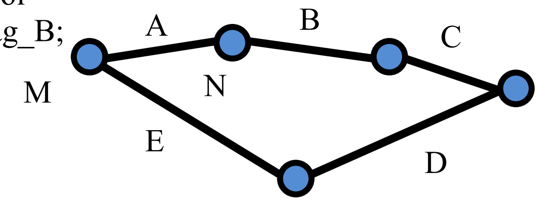
By implement this algorithm, the nodes inside the algorithm will be representing the places which can be selected by user as origin and destination. Figure 9 shows the screen shot of the shortest path simulation in Kuching Waterfront SVG map application.

Figure 9: http://www.svgwaterfront.co.cc/

Let algorithm avoid traffic path

To let algorithm able to avoid traffic path, there is a need to declare a flag that determine whether there is traffic occur. Below is the pseudocode that can make the algorithm to avoid traffic path.

bool
flag_B;

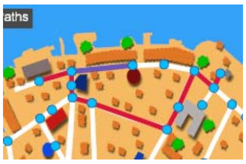



```
If user select a path(eg : path B), then
     set flag_B to true
else set flag_B to false.
 Re-run dijkstra's algorithm
        If flag_B is true
             set the selected path B's length to infinity
        else
               do nothing
```

After set the flag to true and the selected path's length to infinity, then the algorithm will not consider that infinity path and make it no connection between it's nodes. Therefore, when user find a shortest path from node M to node N with path B is a traffic path, it will choose M,E,D,N as the second shortest path because there is no more path B. Below is the example in the implemented system:

Shortest path without traffic

Traffic (blue line) on shortest path



Second shortest path avoid traffic path

Where all the path(s) that can go to tourist's destination had been block as in the figure below, the system will tell tourist that there is no shortest path available to go to their destination.

All the path(s) to the destination had been blocked by traffic

System will let tourists know there is no shortest path available

Result

The usability of the map application is important because it determine whether the map application whether it is easy to use and accepted by user. The results of the evaluation of map usability had been converted into mean and standard deviation as in the following Table 3.

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of usability heuristic evaluation

*	**	***	****	*****
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree

				Percentages of student select (%)				
No	**Usability Heuristic**	**Mean**	**S.D.**	*****	******	*******	********	*********
1	Instruction	4.6	0.59	0	0	5	30	65
2	Act based on instruction	4.8	0.40	0	0	0	20	80
3	Dynamic	4.85	0.36	0	0	0	15	85
4	Readability	4.7	0.56	0	0	5	20	75
5	Interactive	4.9	0.30	0	0	0	10	90
6	Response as expected	4.85	0.36	0	0	0	15	85
7	Consistency and standard	4.65	0.58	0	0	5	25	70
	Average	4.76	0.45					

Future Work

The limitations about the plug-in and browser's type are not able to improve through the map application. As the browser will always upgrade, browser may support SVG in future. That's mean user no longer need to install SVG plug-in in order to view and use the map application or any other SVG application.

To improve the flexibility of the map application, the map application should develop in the way that it is able to bring to anywhere(Sidi & Kheak, 2006). This can be achieved by design and develop the map application which can support by mobile device such as smart phone or PDA. By using mobile device, tourist able to find the other shortest path when there is traffic in the current shortest path.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the interactive traffic congestion simulation successfully helps tourists to select appropriate traffic path and tackle the traffic congestion, thus smoother their journey and save time.

Acknowledgements

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Middle East Tourists' Motivations for Vacationing Across Malaysia

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Humans have specific reasons for what they do that are motivated by driving forces which make them to act in a certain way. Tourism industry, due to its global nature, is not an exception to this rule. Furthermore, this industry may involve motivational forces compared to other industries that could vary from one nation to another nation. This study was carried out to identify push & pull factors that inspire Middle East tourists to choose Malaysia as a global tourist destination for vacations. SPSS windows were used to analyze the data. The results showed that some push and pull factors were more important than the other factors among Middle East tourists. For instance, "Novelty and Prestige" got the highest scores among the push factors. Among the pull factors, "Natural, Historical, and Environment" attracted the highest score. If these issues are adequately addressed, the Malaysian tourism marketers can secure more tourists from the Middle Eastern countries.

Key words: Malaysia, Middle East tourists, tourism motivation

Introduction

The tourism industry in Malaysia, over the past several decades, has become one of the fastest growing industries within the services sector especially as the economy transits into a post-industrial society. Backed by a steady rise in the number of tourists flocking into the country, especially travelers from countries like Singapore, Thailand, China, India and Middle East countries; the tourism industry has rapidly become one of the prime sectors in the Malaysian economy. This commitment to development of a modern, democratic and multicultural society is also what makes Malaysia such a distinctive tourist destination. This is a country that really does have something for everyone – pristine sandy beaches, cool mountain resorts, romantic island getaways, scuba diving, shopping and golf. All these come with the traditional Malaysian warmth as one of the region's key tourist destinations. Over the past decade, geopolitical developments have pushed Malaysia higher up in the rankings. By the last decade, Malaysia has become a favorite destination for the Middle East tourists especially the Arab travelers. They prefer to travel to an Asian country like

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Malaysia, whereas, they get disturbance, inconvenience, and harassment across the US and European countries, especially after 11th September 2001 (al-Jazeera, 2002).

Despite the fact that Middle East tourists prefer Malaysia as a travel destination, the Malaysian tourism is seeing a downhill trend in the number of tourists arriving from the Middle Eastern countries during the last two years (2007 and 2008) making it pertinent to know the motivational factors that affect their decision making to visit Malaysia (Figure 1).

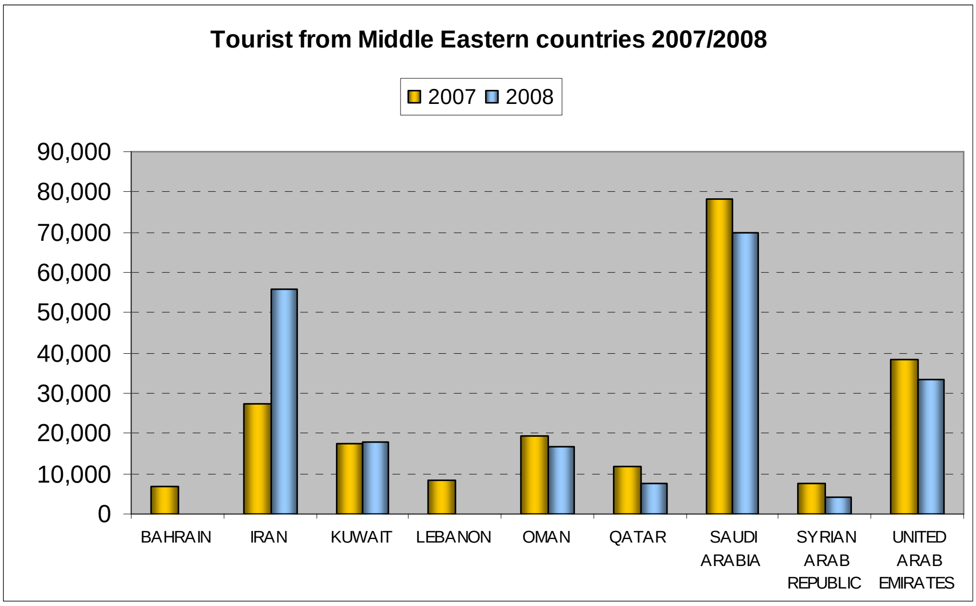

Figure 1. Tourists from Middle Eastern countries.
Source: www.tourismmalaysia.gov.my

Studies on travel intentions have been one of the focal points of tourism research for years and motivation for travel has been an important area of study in the tourism literature for decades. Understanding why people travel and what factors influence their behavioral intention of choosing a particular travel destination is beneficial to tourism planning and marketing. During last decades tourism has emerged as one of the major industries in the world economy and is considered as a growing source of foreign exchange for many nations across the world. Furthermore, the tourism industry generates jobs and spurs economic growth (Dann, 1977).

Tourism Motivation (Push and Pull Theory)

Motivational research gives an explanation about tourists' consumer behaviors (Thomas, 1998). The term motive has been used to refer to internal and external forces that guide, direct, and integrate a person's behavior for future potential satisfaction (Iso-Ahola, 1982; Pyo and Uysal, 1990). From an anthropological point of view, tourists are motivated to escape the routine of everyday life, seeking authentic experiences (McConnell, 1977). From socio-psychological points of view, motivation is classified as seeking experiences to satisfy urges, wants and desires (Iso-Ahola, 1982).

Choosing a destination revolves around the concept of push and pull factors, that explains why people travel because they are pushed and pulled by some sort of inherent forces. These forces describe how individuals are pushed by internal variables, and how they are pulled by a travel destination (Uysal and Hagan, 1993). Push factors include cognitive processes and socio-psychological motivations that predispose people to travel. Most push factors originate from intangible or intrinsic desires of human beings, including the desire for escape, novelty seeking, adventure seeking, dream fulfillment, rest and relaxation, health and fitness, prestige, and socialization (Chon, 1989). Pull motivations are those that are inspired by a destination's attractiveness, such as beaches, recreation facilities, cultural attractions, entertainment, natural scenery, shopping, and parks. These destinations' attributes may stimulate and reinforce inherent push motivations (McGhee et al., 1996).

In tourism destination management, maximizing travel satisfaction is crucial for a successful business. The evaluation of the physical products of destination (instrumental performance) as well as the psychological interpretation of a destination product (expressive attributes) is necessary for human actions, which could be represented as travel satisfaction and destination loyalty (Swan & Combs, 1976; Uysal and Noe, 2003).

Asian Tourist Motivation

Most studies about Asian tourists examine Japanese, Chinese and Korean tourists who have been traveling across the world for decades. As Gilbert and Terrata (2001) puts it, frequent factors that inspire Japanese tourists to visit UK were the purpose of appreciating nature and scenery, rest and relaxation, cuisine and favorite foods, shopping, self-examination, different experiences, and self-enhancement. According to Heung, Qu, and Chu (2000), five vacation factors affected Hong Kong-bound Japanese travelers and they were dream fulfillment, attractions and climate, cosmopolitan city, and exploration.

According to Hanqin and Lam (1999) for Mainland Chinese, tourists visiting Hong Kong; the most significant motivation factors were knowledge, prestige, and enhancement of human relationship as push factors and Hi-tech image, expenditure, and accessibility as pull factors. Cai, et al. (1999) stated that Mainland Chinese tourists visit Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand (SMT) for the purpose of sightseeing, visiting friends and relatives, attending meetings/exhibitions, business/academic exchange, and visiting partners/colleagues.

Middle East Tourists Travel Behavior

According to Wong (2001), tourists from Middle East countries visiting Malaysia mostly stayed in five stars hotels and engaged in sightseeing in cities, shopping and visiting beaches.

Research Methodology

Motivational studies undertaken by world-class scholars such as (Lam & Hush, 2006, Parik & Yoon, 2008) were replicated by this study. Self-Administered Written Questionnaire was used to Survey Middle East Tourists Visiting Malaysia. Our questionnaire had three parts: (1) Demographic Profile; (2) Travel Characteristics Profile; and (3) Motivational Profile.

Initial questionnaire was Pre-Tested to determine its validity among 20 respondents across Penang. The sample for our study consisted of Middle East tourists visiting Malaysia. Israel (1992) postulates that a sample size of 150 for our study is appropriate; and a study by (Hanqin & Lam, 1999) used a sample of less than 200 to identify Chinese Tourists' Motivations to Visit Hong Kong. Out of 150 distributed surveys; 130 surveys was returned and 118 surveys were found useable. Cluster Sampling was used for dividing sample group based on the percentage of each country's contribution to the entire population. Factor Analysis was selected because of its wide usage among segmentation studies (Hanqin & Lam. 1999, Lam & Cathy. 2006, Park & Yoon. 2008).

Results

Out of 118 respondents, 91 were found to be males and the 27 respondents were females. 48 tourists were in the 18-25 years old group (representing 40.7% of the total respondents). The next highest group was the 26-32 years old group with 45 respondents who accounted for 38.1%. In terms of marital status, there were 67 single respondents representing 56.8% of our sample and the rest were married and belonged to other categories. 67 of the respondents accounting for 56.8% of the respondents reported less than USD $2,500 monthly income. 57 of them (48.3% of the respondents) had Diploma/Bachelor degrees. The respondents of this survey were mostly Saudi Arabian tourists with 39 respondents and the Iranian tourists formed the second largest number of respondents with 31 responses followed by 19 respondents from UAE and 29 respondents hailed from other countries.

Most of the respondents (50.8%) visited Malaysia for the first time. The most important key factor for Middle East tourists to get information about Malaysia was 'by word of mouth'. 46.6%. 46 of the respondents) forming 39% of our sample) preferred to stay in an apartment. Most of the respondents were on holidays across Malaysia and an equal number of them were students studying across Malaysia (representing 36.4% of our sample).

Table 2: Demographic Variable.

Variable		Percentage
Gender	Male	77.1
	Female	22.9
Age	18-25	40.7
	26-32	38.1
	33-40	13.6
	41-48	4.2
	More than 48	3.4
Marital Status	Single	56.8
	Married	38.1
	Widowed	3.4
	Divorce	1.7
Nationality	Saudi Arabia	33.1
	Iran	26.3
Income (USD)	Less than 2500	56.8
	2501-5000	20.3
	5001-7500	10.2
	7501-10,000	3.4
	10,001-12,200	1.7
	More than 12,500	7.6
Educational level	Primary school	0.8

	Secondary school Diploma / bachelor Higher study Others	15.3 48.3 34.7 0.8
Nationality	UAE Others	16.1 24.6

Table 2: Characteristics Variables

Number of visit	**Percentage**	**Length of Stay**	**Percentage**
First Time	50.8	Less Than Two Days	2.5
Second Time	19.5	3-4 Days	7.6
Third Time	8.5	5-6 Days	5.9
More Than Three times	21.2	More Than Two weeks	83.9
Source of Data	**Percentage**	**Place of Stay**	**Percentage**
T.V	7.6	Hotels	37.3
Newspaper	1.7	Apartment	39.0
Friend	46.6	With Relevant or Friends	16.9
Internet	42.4	Unclassified Hotel	1.7
Magazine	0.8	Others	5.1
Others	0.8		
Purpose of Visit	**Percentage**	**Length of stay**	**Percentage**
Business	12.7	Less than tow days	2.5
Holiday	36.4	3-4 days	7.6
Cultural	6.8	5-6 days	5.9
Official Mission and Diplomatic	3.4	More than one week	83.9
Participation conference	4.2		
Education	36.4		

To identify motivating factors for Middle East tourists visiting Malaysia, factor analysis was performed. All motivational factors had an eigen-value greater than one. For assessing the appropriateness of running factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin was 0.722 was carried out. The reliability test was executed for push factors ranged from 0.53 to 0.87. The first ranking in the push items acquired mean values greater than 4.0. The important push items included "To see new interesting places", "To have Opportunities to increase my experience", "To See something different". The Pull factors had 17 statements overall. The mean value ranges from 4.28 to 3.45. The statement “A scenic and natural beauty” got the highest value of4.28.

Table 3: Factor Analysis for Push Motivational Factors.

Push Factors	Communality	Eigen-Value	Variance	Mean	Alpha	KMO
Social		**2.25**	**45.1**	**3.54**	**0.68**	**0.74**
To find and meet new people	0.509					
To Increase experience about community	0.516					
Friendly and hospitality people	0.497					
To Visit places my friends have been	0.409					
Relaxation		**2.01**	**50.3**	**3.69**	**0.65**	**0.53**
To feel relax	0.523					
To be away from daily life	0.650					
To act freely	0.554					
To be with family	0.288					
Knowledge		**2.48**	**62.1**	**4.14**	**0.79**	**0.73**
To See something different	0.651					
To Know more about new lifestyle	0.798					
To Know culture or traditions	0.635					
Novelty and prestige		**4.01**	**58.6**	**4.02**	**0.87**	**0.87**
To travel around the world	0.509					
To see new interesting places	0.750					
To Seek novelty	0.645					
To explore new places	0.707					
To Talk about the trip to my friends	0.535					
To have Opportunities to	0.446					

increase my experience						
To visit destination recommend my friends	0.514					

Table 4 Factor Analysis for Pull Motivational Factors

Pull Factors	**Communality**	**Eigen-Value**	**Variance**	**Mean**	**Alpha**	**KMO**
Facilities, Events and cost		**3.51**	**58.6**	**3.92**	**0.85**	**0.82**
Special events	0.437					
Multicultural place	0.639					
Tourism reserves	0.567					
An affordable place to visit	0.608					
Entertainment facilities	0.700					
Shopping malls	0.566					
Accessibility and safety		**2.17**	**54.4**	**3.72**	**0.71**	**0.69**
A healthy place with less medical problems	0.593					
Safe destinations	0.736					
Information Availability	0.612					
Natural, Historical and environment		**4.96**	**62.14**	**3.86**	**0.83**	**0.82**
Islamic and capable country	0.752					
Availability of theme parks	0.593					
Variety of culture and historical attraction	0.637					
Interesting atmosphere	0.552					
Unique and beautiful destination	0.669					
Archaeological/cultural destination	0.528					
Beaches with sunshine	0.661					
A scenic and natural beauty	0.580					

Conclusion

Our research study found many Middle East tourists visiting Malaysia as repeat tourists testifying that they liked their previous visits to Malaysia and decided to come back. These are Malaysia's golden loyal tourists and could serve as ambassadors of Malaysian tourism in their native countries and their positive experience could help build a positive image of Malaysian tourism in their respective countries and their word-of-mouth could help promote Malaysia across the Middle East. Malaysian tourism marketers should monitor their experiences via complaints and feedbacks from them. The second largest segment of Middle East tourists visits Malaysia for the purpose of education. Hence, it is essential for Malaysia education marketers to have appropriate strategies to satisfy this motivation. Islamic motivation got highest communality (0.725) among push factors. Hence, by offering Islamic products to Muslim tourists; Malaysia tourism marketers can woo more religiously minded educational tourists to Malaysia.

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The Architectural Language of Resort Design: A Critical Overview of the Tourism Industry in Malaysia

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Historically in Malaysia the idea of providing retreats or resort facilities can be traced back during the colonial era. The Hill Stations such as Frasers Hill, Penang Hill, the Cameron Highlands and the numerous rest houses set up in major towns throughout the Peninsular Malaysia. Accompany an early design examples in the hospitality industry. While, the tourism sector in Malaysia did not experience significant growth until the early 80s which resulted in considerable progress in new resort developments. As Malaysia embark upon the unending pursuit for economic prosperity, the values and heritage of its unique intellects seems to be at a lost, with the arrival of foreign architectural influences such as Colonialism, Modern International and later the Post Modernism. However in promoting the local architectural themes the industry has witnessed several distinct but similar approaches in search for local recognisable identities. These are the Traditionalism, Vernacularism and Regionalism among others, which are generally based on ethnicity, geographical and climatic consideration. This paper will examine the architectural languages used in resort designs focusing on the aptness of the various approaches in representing the country's image in the global tourism map.

Key words: tourism, architecture, resort design, heritage

Historical Background

Since the days of the Grecian Spa and the Roman Baths, resorts developments have dominated the hospitality industry throughout the western world. But yet the founding date of the inn keeping industry is still anonymous (Huffdine,2002). However it is broadly acknowledged that the forerunner of the inn started from a form of travelers' shelters or tavern. According to Rutes et.al.,(2001:7) in ancient times there were boarding houses that existed which resembles early form of resorts at natural hotsprings in Greece. Apart from that, mansions were also built along the

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Roman roads as lodging for government officials which simultaneously functions as sanctuaries for travelers. Roman Spas, in Switzerland and Middle East were known as *campona*, *caravanserais* which represent cloistered courtyards provided by the rulers.

At that time the terms such as *hospiteum, caupona, popina, thermopolium* and *tabernas* were used. *Hospiteium* and the *caupona* were the forerunners of the Inns that provided accommodation, food and wine. *Tabernas*, a forerunner of the modern day pub sometimes offered light cooking with added attractions such as gambling and prostitutes. *Thermopoliums* is like the snack bar nowadays, they sold wine while pottery jars were set into a marble table counter and held snacks such as olives, dried vegetables and pickled appetizers. While the *popina,* predecessor of the modern restaurant sold hot meals only. Hospitality[26] as a terminology owes much to the Romans. The word such as *hospitality* derives from the Latin word *hosptium.*[27]

The *pandocheion* meaning, *accepting all comers*, beginning from the first to seventh centuries, highlighted a particular prevalence in the Syrian area of the Byzantine empire up until the 13th centuries. The *funduq* (a structure in which, generally speaking, where travelers can reside, store their goods, trade and often taxed) became the familiar characteristic from Syria to Spain, where it began to serve as lodgings for pilgrims and traveling merchants (Constable,2003).

Prior to the 17th century there were basically two categories of hotels. The first is simply the hotel which includes hostel, hospice and hospital. The second category is the Resort Spa. Primarily the difference between hotel and resort, is in the functional aspect. Initially the hotel was just a temporary shelter for the weary traveler to rest before continuing their journey. Resort on the other hand were intended to provide the basic accommodation with the added pleasure, social activities and healthcare (Caprarella,et.al.,2002:8).

The Fraunces Tavern 1762 was located in New York City. It was a centrally located and easily accessible, became a popular place for social gathering during the American Revolution. Towards the end of 17th century the industrial revolution took hold and inspired hotels and resorts development not only in the United States but also throughout Europe. (Rutes,et.al.,2001) Mediterranean-style Architecture, such as Flamingo, Pancoast and Roney Plaza Hotels were developed in Miami Beach during the 20th century economic prosperity. Whilst the mixed used hotels were introduced in Statler Hotel in Boston, followed by Casino Hotel in Vegas in 1950s.

Resorts were developed in the Carribean whilst the concept of vacation village were introduce by Club Med and the Hyatt Regency in New York catering for business travellers, meanwhile the Holliday Inn comes with the larger rooms, the Hilton hotel introduce multi resort complexes at Cancun, Mexico and Maui, Hawaii.

Followed by Boutique hotel flourishing to travelers, with developer rapidly converting and building new properties as well as new chains by the originators, over 250 luxury and upscale hotels announced for development worldwide, the ultra high-rise mixed use hotels on rise in Bangkok, Shanghai, Dubai etc. (Rutes,2001;pp7-11)

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[26] Oxford Dictionary; define hospitality as *'a friendly and generous reception of guests or strangers.'* In Wikipedia; hospitality refers *'to the relationship process between a guest and a host'*, and it also refers to *'the act or practice of being hospitable'*, that is, the reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers, with liberality and goodwill. Hospitality frequently refers to the hospitality industry jobs for hotels, restaurants, casinos, catering, resorts, clubs and any other service position that deals with tourist. Hospitality is also known *'as the act of generously providing care and kindness to whom ever is in need'*.

[27] Related words are *host, hospice, hostelry*, and *hotel*.

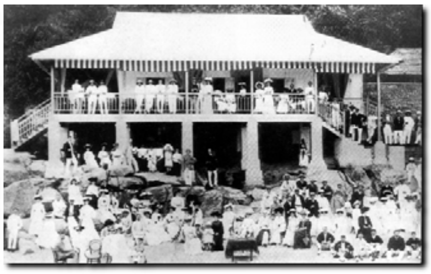
Resort Development in Malaysia – Pre Merdeka Era

In Malaysia the idea of providing retreats can be traced back during the colonial era. The Hill Stations such as Frasers Hill, Penang Hill, the Cameron Highlands the numerous rest houses set up in major towns throughout the Peninsular provide for early examples to the hospitality industry. In colonial Asia, the relatively high altitude hill station, usually at 5,000 to 8,000 feet above sea level, should be more than just a resort. It had to be a medical center of sorts to justify an officer's taking recovery leave, however flimsy the excuse or ineffectual the cure. The site had to be beyond the reach of mosquitoes, though it was not known until the end of the nineteenth century that the malaria parasite was carried by these insects. The hill station was also a proper fantasyland, a retreat from reality where the homesick colonial could be protected by the atmosphere of a European hometown, down to its familiar architecture and its cozy institutions; in addition to their offices, hospitals, country homes, churches, clubs, and libraries, at least one grand hotel or rustic lodge, boarding schools, a brewery, a lake (usually created by damming a stream), a botanical garden, wildlife sanctuaries, a golf course, hiking trails, a race course or gymkhana ground for competitive games and plenty of horses or ponies for mountain rides copied in the colonies **(**Crossette,1999:1-20).

In Malaysia the tropical hill stations were functionally specialised outposts of colony settlement that initially served as health and recreational centre for civil servant, military personnel, planter, miners and other expatriate European or as strategic bases and military cantonment during early ninetieth century. The *Ye Olde Smoke House,1930s* and the *Lakehouse,1940s* both in Cameron Highlands represent an architectural setting specifically designed to increase the nostalgia and memories of the their country, using the half timber frame houses known as Mock-Tudor style of 18th century England. The Maxwell Hill (*Bukit Larut*) was founded in 1888 and is Malaysia's oldest hill resort. Located in the district of Taiping was a beautiful basin, surrounded by lush tropical jungle and lofty hills. The cool, jungle air brought in by the morning breeze prompted Maxwell on a quest for a hill station who sourced this place for hill resort.



From the left: Chendana at Maxwell Hill, Smoke House Fraser Hill and Cameron Highland.
Source: http://www.marimari.com/hotel.



From the left Playing tennis at Tengkil, part of activity at Resthouse and Swimming Club in Batu Feringghi, Penang
Source: http://www.sabrizain.org/malaya/gallery/engravings.

Malayan Bungalow/ Mansion

The Bungalows refers to colonial style buildings during the 18th century which advocates the participation of culture and architectural tradition from the East and West. Examples are the Anglo-Indian style, a marriage between European and Asian Building tradition. The designers adopted the European style with distinctive symmetrical facades a style common during the reigns of English King George I, II and III (1714-1820) but with the adoption of local features such as deep verandah, high ceiling and full-length window with balustrades to keep the house cool. Those built in 19th century can be identified by a porch supported by imposing columns.

The upper half of the double-story bungalows were painted in lime washed yellow whilst the ground level fashioned using facing brickworks. However the upper parts were constructed using local hardwoods in black and white frames as decorative purpose. Typical Malayan bungalow emerged as a large, airy, detached, two storey, constructed of timber or brick. The main building was usually connected to the kitchen and servant quarters covered by walkway. The whole building form was the I-shaped plan set in extensive garden. Around all side of the house was a series of full length window with moulded reveals, timber shutter and balustrade rails. In the late Victorian era (1890s), the used of cast iron window rail, etching glass fanlight and stucco arabesque decoration on the facade incorporated. The building being occupied by European settlers such as government officials, planter and merchant known as Indian Muslim Merchant, Arab Trader .the sample of the house can been seen Chulia Street, Hutton Lane and Penang Road, Burmah Street and etc. (Khoo, 1998:94-95).

From the left: Syed Al-Attas Mansion, source: itravelnet.com and Chinese Residency Converted to Raffles Hotel in Penang, year 1900,
Source: Malaya 500 Early postcard, 2008

Chinese Mansions and Villas

The late 19th and early 20th century there are numbers of private Residence or Mansion who built by a wealthy Chinese traders also known as *towkay*, prospered as agent between foreign power and capital in one hand. This hybrid architecture reflect their double allegiance to the East and West, with the window screen, columns richly embellished with leaf-like motifs. Foliate designs made from wrought iron (extensively used in England for the late 18th to 19th century). Normally the building is locate near the sea, with the beautiful landscape. The latter sometimes featured two reception hall, one for fastidiously decorated with western furniture and fitting for receiving European guest, the other still decorously furnished with staid Blackwood, inlaid mother of pearl furniture for receiving Chinese guest. The mansion can be found around Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Singapore such as the Tyhe Kee Yoon;1930, Loke Yew Mansion; 1892, Hea Swee Lee Mansion;1910, Cheah Teik Soon Mansion;1880 (Chun,2005).

Post Merdeka Era

In Malaysia the hospitality industry only started to grow rapidly during the early 80s (McDonald,1994:36). Since then the Malaysian government has aggressively initiated vigorous policies in an attempt to secure a stake in the increasingly lucrative Asian tourism market. Hotels and resorts built during the 60s were very much influenced by the Modern International Style. Two early examples are the beach resorts of Rasa Sayang Hotel and the Golden Sands Hotel both in Penang, built during the late 70s early 80s are derivatives from the popularity of the International Style which was the trend architecturally during the period. It is interesting to note that perhaps the overall design of the hotels reflect to a certain extend the many hotels found in popular tourist island of Hawaii. However recognizable tropical architectural language such as verandah, terraces, deep overhangs, sun shadings, louvers etc. do form part of the design features as in the Hyatt Hotel in Kuantan, Pahang. The 1970s represent a fresh beginning for Malaysia, with many building designs showing an enthusiasm and optimism in spirit, dazzling attempt by the designers of the time to develop a new architecture of Malaysia, reflecting the corporate and commercial success. Covered with curtain walling, these towering edifices were designed to show off the bold corporate image and are located in prestigious area. Some of the later high rise buildings display more regional characters than previously, such as the use of sun shading devices.


From the left: Carcosa Seri Negara, Kuala Lumpur exterior and interior
Source: http://www.malaysiahotel.com

Malay Native Regionalism Resort Design in Malaysia

The local and regional architectural language started to be experimented in resort design recreating the indigenous rural architectural atmosphere such as the Club Med and the Tanjong Jara Beach Resort (TJBR) both in the east coast of the Peninsular. They were built during the 80s. Obviously, the outlook of TJBR is an adaptation of the traditional Malay architecture of Terengganu which can be seen through its roof design. It is also observed that they took the cue to a certain extent from the traditional Malay house forms, craftworks, material and the presume integration of the cultural and tropical expressions. TJBR incorporates the *tunjuk langit* and *peles* as one of the main features seen in the traditional Malay palaces. Extensive timber usage represents the architectural elements that dominates the whole resorts provide for the *kampong* ambience all over. The sense of place is further enhanced by the introduction of *tempayan* (pots), carvings , textile, crafts as decorations representing Malay features. Landscape elements such as water , stream, timber bridge, exposed kerosene lamps creates the traditional fishing village atmosphere, modernized. Other similar examples can be seen with the Datai Hotel and Resorts in Langkawi, Kedah. The Datai according to the editor of the Architectural Review in his editorial, mentioned it as a new resort complex on an luxuriantly forested island that owes a clear debt to the *kampong*, the traditional clustered village form, and tropical building techniques that encourage natural ventilation and harmony with the existing landscape with sensitive use of local materials and responsive place making limits the potential intrusion of a large tourist complex into a fragile ecosystem (Davey, 1994).

From the left: Terrapuri Resort, Terengganu, Tok Senik Resort, Langkawi and Tanjong Jara Resort, Terengganu
Source: http://www.malaysiaresort.com.

Other type of resort development can also be observed in the Aryani Resort and the Pura Tanjung Sabtu, both in Terengganu, that introduced a different approach in the hospitality industry. Authenticity of the Malay culture and architecture can be experienced through the form and space since the entire resorts were a collection of the original Malay traditional houses of Terengganu. Another typology of resort development seen in Malaysia that attempts to recreate the village atmosphere or *kampong* can be seen in the Kampung Tok Senik Resort in the idyllic northern island of Langkawi and the Pedu Lake Resort in Kedah. In order to achieve a subtle approach of adaptation, the present and past must be compared for differences and similarities in both in material and spiritual sense.

However, current demands towards modernism entail that regionalism be tampered with modern developments and contemporary designs in line with the emergence of various concepts of resorts designs worldwide.

Bon Ton Resort and Restaurant, Langkawi
Source: http://www.templetree.com.my

Using aesthetic elements such as carvings on the bargeboards, an ornamental design at roof eaves, screens, partitions, railings, flooring systems and decorated wall panels as well as interior furnishings. The development of decorations of these resorts have a strong similarities with the intrinsic ideas of old revival Malay palaces or the elegant lifestyle middle class Malay society.

Summary and Conclusion

The tourism industry in Malaysia currently ranks as the second largest income earner. As far as the results go, promoting its tourism industry has been one of the country's success stories (Mohd. Taiyeb, 2007:3) The growth potential of the tourism industry continue to attract a substantial amount of private sector investment. The number of hotels expanded by 51% from 1,492 in 2000 to 2,256 in 2005,While in Malaysia attracted some 17.5 million visitor, signifying a growth of 6.8%, compared to 16.4 million visitor in previous year. Table below shows the increased of tourist arrival from 2007-2008.

Table 1: Comparison of tourist arrivals to Malaysia (August 2007 and 2008)

MONTH	TOURIST ARRIVALS 2007	TOURIST ARRIVALS 2008	CHANGE %
AUGUST	1,642,899	1,839,235	12.0

Source: Immigration Department of Malaysia

Table 2: Comparison of tourist arrivals to Malaysia (January – August 2007 and 2008)

MONTHS	TOURIST ARRIVALS 2007	TOURIST ARRIVALS 2008	CHANGE %
JANUARY – AUGUST	14,047,276	14,730,437	4.9

Source: Immigration Department of Malaysia

Figure 1: Table comparisons on tourist arrivals to Malaysia

From the above literature the discussion of architectural design language can generally be summarized into three categories which are:

i. Colonialism
ii. Modern International and
iii. Traditionalism/Vernacularism/Regionalism.

Five hundred years of colonialism has made a tremendous impact to the local architectural scene. Many colonial building resorts are still in demand as a tourist accommodation even though they may not be such a popular choice. Carcosa Seri Negara[28] play the role as the country's VIP reception whilst the Ye Olde Smoke House is regularly occupied throughout the year. British architects introduced the English architectural styles locally but with several modification to suit the local climates. Hence the use of timber louvers for wall openings, deep verandahs, overhangs and sunshades. Despite the many use of the above local architectural elements the chimney was still retained to represent the British vernacular architecture.

Initially most Modern International architectural styles hotels were located in urban areas to cater for the business communities. Curtain walling and high rise glass box were clearly intended to represent images of big cities.

The vernacular /traditional and regional took a certain extent from the integration of the cultural and tropical climate by introduce of *tempayan* (pots), carvings , textile, crafts as decorations representing Malay features, by using a landscape elements such as water , stream, timber bridge, exposed kerosene lamps, the roofs, the aesthetical elements and local material creates sense of place such as *kampong* or Malay and fishing village ambience all over.

Resort development is subject to various influences. consumer demands will always plays a very important role , despite constraints such as government policies, infrastructures, economic feasibility and political attitudes. It is not the intention of this study to specifically look into the individual buildings or development as case studies but rather as an overview of the overall scenario looking at the architectural languages in tourism industry in Malaysia. The issues whether or not successfully realized by the designers themselves for they must play bigger roles in their response to the regionalist intentions. The designs are more responsive to the culture it serves, environmentally correct and be a sign of ingenuous Malaysia architectural identity.

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[28] Carcosa Seri Negara was the seat of Frank Swettenham, the Resident General of the Federal Malay States. It was built in 1898, located at Bukit Carcosa in Kuala Lumpur; has been renovated and fully refurbished into a boutique hotel.

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A Regional Planning Approach in Tourism Development: The Case of Lombok Island, Indonesia

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Tourism has been accepted as an alternative regional development strategy by many governments in developing countries. In developing countries most of development of the tourism sector is a product of central planning. Centralized approach has its limitations, particularly related to consideration of community involvement in the development process. Regional planning approach is an effort to attain the best possible spatial pattern of development. The central concern of regional planning is to solve the problems of the regions and to insert their plan into the overall national development plan of the country. It is the main contention of this conceptual paper to evaluate the centralized approaches to tourism planning in Indonesia and to examine the situation in Lombok island tourism development and planning process in the region.

Key words: tourism, planning, region, development, Lombok Island.

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Analysing the Tourist Accommodation Evolution in an Urban Setting: the Case of Kuala Terengganu

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Lodging is a fundamental element of tourism products that enhance tourist experience. In Malaysia, the lodging supply in urban areas has variety in terms of size, type, location, catering and activities offered. However, different types of accommodation appeals to different types of tourists. In order to spur the growth of accommodation sector, the government has provided enormous allocation for hotel and tourism related projects. The allocation has been used to provide lodging for different target groups ranging from high-end to more affordable accommodation. This paper attempts to identify the role of accommodation in urban areas as well as to discuss on the establishment of accommodation evolution in urban or city centre with Kuala Terengganu as the case study.

Key words: tourist accommodation, lodging evolution, urban areas

Introduction

In the year 2008, Malaysia has recorded 22.0 million of international arrivals with RM 49.6 billion of receipts (Tourism Malaysia, 2008). The arrivals are expected to grow at an average rate of 7.5% with the aim to attract more international tourists to lengthen their stay in Malaysia (National Physical Plan, 2005). To achieve the target, greater marketing and promotions are being done by Tourism Malaysia to project various fascinating destinations and events in Malaysia globally. Major events such as the Colors of Malaysia, Le Tour de Langkawi, Terengganu Monsoon Cup, Petronas Malaysian FI Grand Prix and so on.

On the other hand, the provision of efficient infrastructure and facilities also become a major agenda towards enhancing tourism development in Malaysia. Former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Abdullah Hj Ahmad Badawi, introduced few economic development corridors towards achieving a status of developed country by year 2020 which emphasizing tourism as one of the key sector. East Coast Economic Region (ECER) is one of the blueprints that guide the development of Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang and district of Mersing in Johor. The master plan focuses on the key initiatives derived from selected economic clusters namely tourism, oil, gas and petrochemical, manufacturing, agriculture and education.

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Terengganu is positioning itself as the dynamic Tourism Gateway to the ECER offering diverse and unique tourism attractions such as island tourism, ecotourism, urban tourism, and its unique cultural and heritage tourism. In addition, the development of new Kuala Terengganu City Centre (KTCC) will strengthen the image of Kuala Terengganu as a vibrant Heritage Waterfront City. Realizing the importance of Kuala Terengganu towards enhancing tourism development of that region, therefore, this study would like to analyse the tourist accommodation evolution in the particular city.

Accommodation in Urban Destination

A city offers a distinct product to its visitors, which include a variety of activities and experiences ranging from shopping, theatre, sports tournament, events, architecture and heritage sites (England Research, 2005). Besides, various functions and activities always being conducted in towns and cities making it a central place to serve the needs of visitors such as meeting places, tourist gateways, accommodation and transportation hub (Hall and Page, 2002), besides becoming a place that provides excitement and new experience (Bonita, 2006). Therefore, Hall and Page (2002) claimed that,

> *'most tourists will experience urban tourism as their trip will contain some visit to urban area such as departs from major gateway in a city, arrives at a gateway in another city-region and stays in accommodation in an urban area' (p.160)*

On the other hand, the function of capital cities as an administrative and political centre of government operations will therefore encourage for business travel (Hall and Page, 2002). Therefore, major urban centre will experience continuous business tourism for the whole year (Butler and Mao, 1997). For that reason, the provision of accommodation should reflect the needs of the city or demands of urban traveler besides taking into consideration of surrounding developments.

The Demand and Supply of Accommodation in Kuala Terengganu

As cited by Alhemoud and Armstrong (1996) in Gunn (1988), tourism exists because of attractions, which it is an anticipated and mentally visualized by a potential traveler; provide the motivation and magnetism for moving from one point to another. However, the element of attraction is not merely the reason that attract tourist to a destination. Therefore, the provision of appropriate tourist facilities should also be emphasized in order to enhance the attractions particularly in urban or city destination.

Although the quality and quantity of supply components are critical factors in determining tourism's success (Geoldner and Ritchie, 2006), the provision of those facilities, however, should comply with current supply and demand as to avoid unnecessary surplus of the market. Accommodation for instance should be provided in accordance to demand, which can be based on tourist arrival in that particular area. As shown in Table 1, the number of domestic and international tourist to Terengganu and Kuala Terengganu increased between the year 2004 until 2006. The arrivals however, decreased in 2007. Meanwhile, about 66.62% of the tourist visited the state capital of Kuala Trengganu, reflecting high concentration of tourist arrival in the capital city.

Table 1: Statistic of Tourist Arrival (Domestic and International) by locality to Terengganu and Kuala Terengganu, 1990-2007

Year	Locality	Domestic	International	Total
2004	Terengganu	697,172	113,996	811,168
	Kuala Terengganu	**484,774**	**77,051**	**564,825**
2005	Terengganu	820,941	129,326	950,267
	Kuala Terengganu	**565,226**	**78,201**	**643,427**
2006	Terengganu	1,028,265	139,422	1,167,687
	Kuala Terengganu	**696,843**	**84,526**	**781,369**
2007	Terengganu	1,018,426	150,317	1,168,743
	Kuala Terengganu	**639,950**	**87,404**	**727,354**

Source: Tourism Malaysia, 2008

The growth of tourist accommodation in Malaysia, particularly hotel, has showed an upward trend. As shown in Figure 1 and 2, the hotel supply in 1980 had increased by more than 167 percent from 833 units to 2230 units in 2008, while the number of hotel rooms increased from 27565 rooms to 154659 rooms within the same period. The growth of hotel supply in Terengganu also has showed a steady growth. In 2008, the hotel supply in Terengganu was 164 hotels (6858 rooms). This tremendous growth of hotels and hotel rooms is greatly influenced by the increase in demand for accommodation from tourists. Expenditure on the accommodation is often taken up a great portion of tourist travel expenditure worldwide. As reported by the Economic Planning Unit (2006), accommodation has remained to be the highest component, comprising 33.1 percent of the total tourist expenditure pattern in Malaysia in 2005.

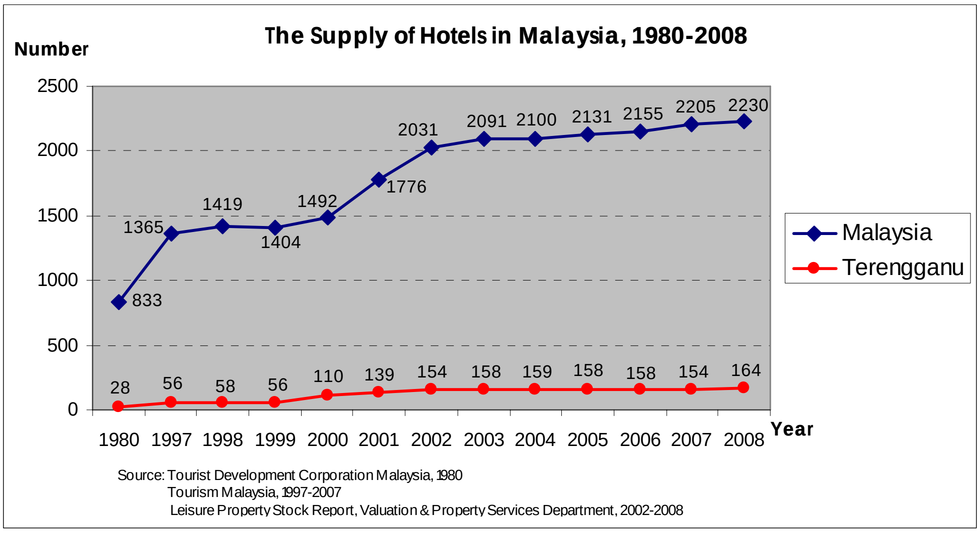


Figure 1: The supply of hotels in Malaysia and Terengganu, 1980-2008

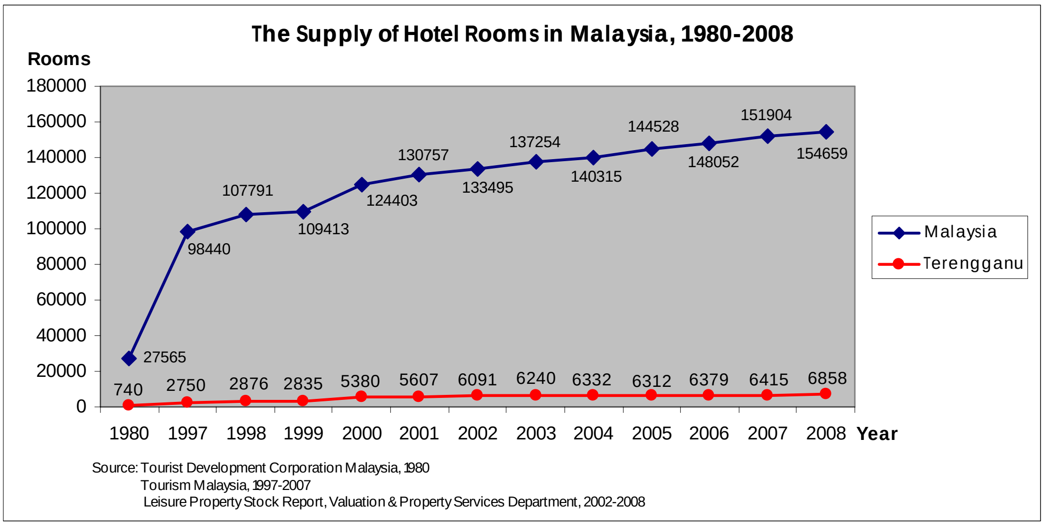


Figure 2: The supply of hotel rooms in Malaysia and Terengganu, 1980-2008

Table 2: The Classification of hotels in Terengganu based on star and orchid rating, 2002-2008

Terengganu	2002*	2003*	2004*	2005*	2006*	2007*	2008**
5 Star	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
4 Star	1	1	1	2	2	4	4
3 Star	3	3	3	4	4	4	3
2 Star	6	5	5	5	5	6	7
1 Star	2	3	3	3	3	2	2
3 Orchid	0	0	2	1	1	5	6
2 Orchid	4	4	6	5	5	14	16
1 Orchid	1	3	3	3	3	3	4
Unrated	136	138	135	133	133	114	120
Total	**154**	**158**	**159**	**158**	**158**	**154**	**164**

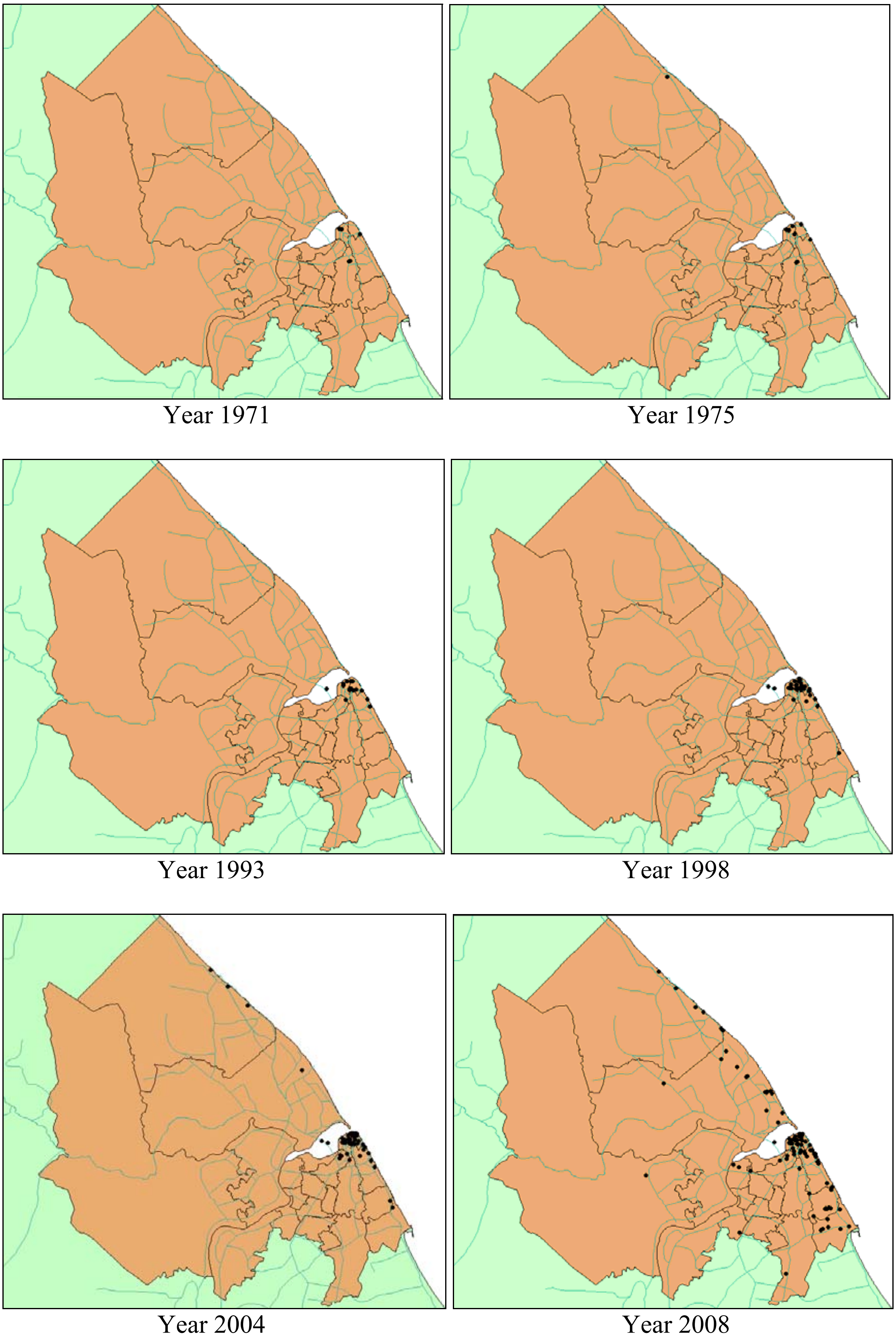
*Note:*Leisure Property Stock Report, Valuation & Property Services Department, 2002-2007*
*** Leisure Property Stock Report, Valuation & Property Services Department, Q3 2008*

Basically, hotels in Malaysia can be classified into two categories of rating which includes star and orchid. Figure 2 indicates the classification of hotels in Terengganu based on star and orchid rating from year 2002 to 2008. Most of the existing hotels in Terengganu are classified as unrated. However, the above table also indicates a slight increase in Star and Orchid hotels. This condition reveals that the facilities and services offered by hotels in Terengganu are improving.

The Evolution of Tourist Accommodation in Kuala Terengganu

As shown in Figure 3 below, the evolution of lodging development in Kuala Terengganu has started from year 1971 until present year. The lodging establishments in Terengganu are very much concentrated along the coastal areas, especially near the river mouth, whereby the accommodations are located in major cities like Kuala Terengganu. In Kuala Terengganu city centre, the development of accommodations is sprawl along the major roads. Hence, accessibility is found to be the main factor for hotel operators and entrepreneur to build and operate their businesses.

Figure 3: Accommodation Establishment Available in Kuala Terengganu from year 1971-2008



The establishments of tourist accommodation that grow rapidly from the year 2004 to 2008 clearly indicates increasing demand for accommodation in Kuala Terengganu. One of the reason contributing to this phenomenon is the existing potential and attractive tourism products as well as active promotion by the government. Government has put great efforts to spur the growth of accommodation sector by providing enormous allocation for hotel and tourism related projects. For instance, the total investment approved for tourism industry has been increased more than double from RM783.6 million during the Eight Malaysia Plan (2000-2005) period to RM1847.9 million during the Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006-2010) period. In terms of tourism development allocation, about RM115 million has been allocated for accommodation sector in the Ninth Malaysia Plan compared to RM31.7 million spent in the Eight Malaysia Plan period. In short, the existing potential of tourism products in Kuala Terengganu as well as enormous effective promotion by the government has made mushrooming of lodging establishment in Kuala Terengganu.

Concluding Remark

This research hopes to provide thorough understanding on the evolution and the growth of lodging industry in the urban areas in Malaysia. The research outcomes can be useful to the Tourism Ministry, tourism planners, policy makers and hoteliers to predict the future trend of lodging in the particular areas based on present and past trend. It hopes to ensure a better integration of spatial planning and tourism development in Terengganu as well as in other part of the country.

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The Convention and Meeting Industry in Malaysia: Conference Interpreting Niche

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This article attempts to describe the niche of conference interpreting as one of the important services in the Malaysian Conventions and Meetings industry based on a study that was conducted in 2006/2007 as part of a doctoral research. It discusses the important components of the Conventions and Meetings industry that were directly and indirectly related to the field of conference interpreting in Malaysia by identifying the major players of the international conference field such as the Convention Division of Tourism Malaysia, the Malaysian Association of Convention and Exhibition Organisers and Suppliers, the International Conventions Section of the Prime Minister´s Office, host organisations, professional conference organisers, and interpreting service providers. It also looks into the functions of these players, as well as the provision of interpreting equipment available locally for conference interpreting services. The interconnection and interdependence of each player, either directly or indirectly was then mapped out in a diagrammatic representation. This article also highlights several strengths that Malaysia has as a potential conference hub in this region. The author finally proposes ways to establish conference interpreting field as a niche in the Malaysian Conventions and Meetings industry.

Key words: conference interpreting niche, conventions and meeting industry

Introduction

The establishment of conference interpreting (CI) in Malaysia is very much related to the industry of Conventions and Meetings (CM) in the country. In most international conventions, conference delegates come from all over the world. Some of these delegates have a certain language barrier, whether as speakers or as participants. Conference interpreting serves as an important tool in reducing this language barrier and increase participation in the conventions and meetings.

The CM industry started in Malaysia in 1997 with the establishment of Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) of Malaysia under the umbrella of Convention Division of Tourism Malaysia[1]. Since its establishment, it

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has seen an increase in the number of conference arrivals due to government's allocation in the improvements of infrastructure and promotional efforts in the industry. Conference arrivals or also known as MICE arrivals refers to the number of people who visit Malaysia for the purpose of attending conferences, seminars, workshops and the likes; they are not tourists on vacations in Malaysia. The figures serve as a benchmark or yardstick to measure the progress of MICE in the country. Figure 1 demonstrates the healthy growth in the number of MICE arrivals from 2001 to 2007 (King, 2007, Puvaneswary, 2006, Tourism Malaysia Media Release, 2008). These figures highlights the importance of tourism and MICE industry as "one of the most important pillars in the overall economic development" (MICE, 2003/04, p. 10).

Convention Division of Tourism Malaysia is currently known as Malaysia Convention and Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB).

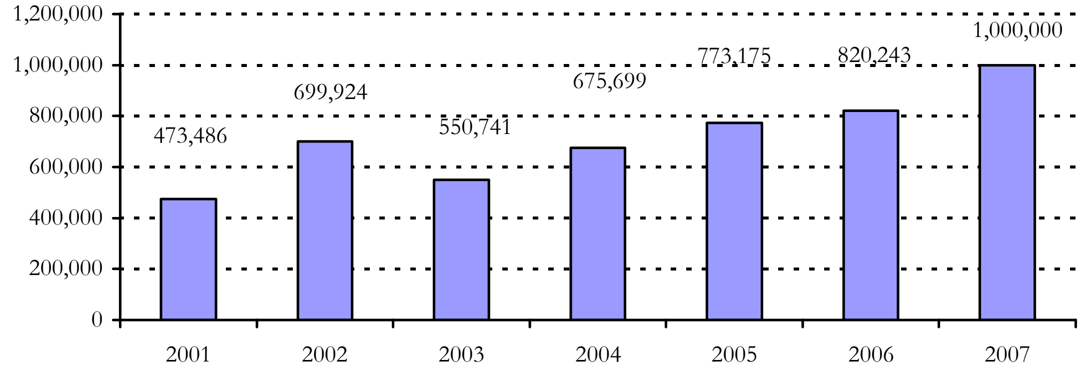

Figure 1:. Conference arrivals to Malaysia from 2001 to 2007

As for conference interpreting, it is relatively a very new field in Malaysia. The first conference which involved conference interpreting was the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in 1989, followed by the First G15 Summit Conference in 1990. In the First G15 Summit Conference 1990 in Kuala Lumpur, 18 professional interpreters from seven different countries, such as, Venezuela, Argentina, Britain, France, United States, Columbia and Egypt were brought in to work in four languages: English, French, Spanish and Arabic (Wong, 1991, p. 193). In terms of current conference market in the Asia Pacific region, Singapore held the number one position. Thailand came second, followed by Hong Kong, Malaysia, Indonesia and finally, Philippines (Ibrahim, 2008, p.194).

Players of Conference Interpreting in Malaysia

This section looks at the major players of conference interpreting which can be placed under the Malaysian CM industry.

Convention Division of Tourism Malaysia

CDTM's main objective is "to increase and expand Malaysia's share of MICE market segments" (CDTM, personal communication, January 25, 2006). The first function is to encourage industry development by planning and implementing promotional activities for MICE travel and bidding process. The second function of CDTM is to promote MICE by providing assistance and support to incentive and conference organisers. The third function of CDTM is to act as secretariat for events and travel mart organised by Tourism Malaysia, working closely with the Malaysia Association of Convention and Exhibition Organisers and Suppliers (MACEOS).

Malaysia Association of Convention and Exhibition Organisers and Suppliers

MACEOS, a non-profit body was established on 17 December 1990. It comprises conference and meeting organisers, exhibition organisers, convention and exhibition centres, logistic companies, conference and exhibition suppliers and event managers. In 2007, its total membership was 43. The main purpose of this association is to pool the convention, exhibition, events and incentive organisers in the country, providing them a platform for discussion and at the same time creating prospects for them in the industry.

International Conventions Section of the Prime Minister's Department

ICS was established in the Prime Minister's Department to ensure that international conferences are organised efficiently, systematically and with quality, according to the established regulations and practices. It offers quality convention facilities by ensuring that convention management is up to clients' expectations, providing up-to-date conference facilities and equipments and giving a prime image to the events that guarantees clients' satisfaction. ICS provides its service specifically to government and semi-government bodies. Its technical service is free, charging only a small fee for installation of booths. However, for conferences with a larger capacity or when there was a clash in the conference schedule, ICS sources out services from private equipment provider companies on behalf of the HO (ICS, personal communication, September 22, 2006).

Host Organisations

HOs are the organising bodies of conferences. Generally, HOs may come from two main sectors: (1) public: government and semigovernment bodies such as government ministries and departments, semi-government bodies, associations, and committees, (2) private sector: private companies, international and national associations.

Professional Conference Organisers

PCOs, also known as Conference Advisors are private companies who provide services to the clients in organising conferences. Their services ensure that the conferences are held effectively and efficiently, from pre-conference to post-conference details. They not only provide creative and imaginative event management solutions for international conferences, but also for conventions, meetings, road shows, incentives, special events or functions. With this minimum-fuss approach, PCOs are in-charge of assuring that every event´s detail is well-planned and smoothly executed to make sure that their clients accomplish their corporate objectives. PCO is part of MACEOS and MACEOS plays an important in bringing in together all the players in the CM industry in Malaysia such as professional exhibition organisers, stand designers and builders, convention and exhibition centres, event managers, freight forwarders and other suppliers for the convention and exhibition activities including hotels. This pool of players found in

MACEOS makes it possible for PCO to arrange a very comprehensive package for the HO and conference participants, offering is services from preconference preparations up to post-conference activities. PCO provides 18.4% of employment to the Malaysian freelance conference interpreters (Ibrahim, 2008, p.173).

Interpreting Service Providers

ISPs are bodies responsible in supplying interpreters to work in the conferences. In the Malaysian scenario, the main ISP is the Malaysian National Institute of Translation (ITNMB) providing an employment percentage of 16.9% to the Malaysian freelance conference interpreters (Ibrahim, 2008, p.173).

Interpreting-Related Conference Procedures

The procedures for organising conferences which are related to conference interpreting service are quite different depending on which sector the HO comes from (see Figure 2).

Public Sector Host Organisations

When a HO from the public sector intends to organise an event, be it a conference, seminar, workshop or meeting, it will get in touch with ICS for installation and technical support of conference audio visual facilities. If the HO requires interpreting services during the event, ICS will provide them such as SI system and equipments, portable booths, microphones and portable headsets. Though most recently built convention centres are equipped with built-in SI system and equipments, they are normally installed only in the plenary hall(s). Thus, if the event consists of plenary sessions, or is held at convention centres or hotels that do not have built-in SI system and equipments, portable booths installed with SI system and equipments are required and can be obtained from ICS. Once the event is confirmed and the necessary budget is approved by the Treasury Department, ICS and HO will work together via central organising committee and smaller working committees formed for the particular event.

In terms of interpreting services, most international entities, such as the Olympic Council, and heads of country have their own team of interpreters. They only seek services of local equipment provider, and bring their own interpreter team with them. For others who do not have their own interpreters, ICS or PCOs will direct them to ITNMB or private TI agencies or some HOs may search and recruit local freelance interpreters, who advertise their services in the Internet or through word of mouth from other HOs or other sources of contacts such as the Embassy or academic institutions.

Private Sector Host Organisations

The scenario of organising an international conference is quite different in the private sector. International and national entities who want to organise an event, be it conference, seminar, workshop or meeting, but are not sure which channel to go through, normally will contact Tourism Malaysia's MICE section which is handled by CDTM. However, because CDTM is not directly involved in organising the event, it will direct the HO to the suitable PCO. The HO may also contact PCO directly, without going through CDTM as their services are listed in the CDTM's list of MICE companies.

If an interpreting service is required, PCO will contact interpreting service providers(ISP) such as ITNMB for 'local' interpreters or CIAP for AIIC interpreters or other TIcompanies, depending on the HO's budget for interpreting service. ISP has its pool of interpreters and work closely with the PCO in making sure the success of the event. Based on the discussion above, this study maps out the connection of the players in the Conventions and Meetings industry, as stated in the specific objectives of the study.

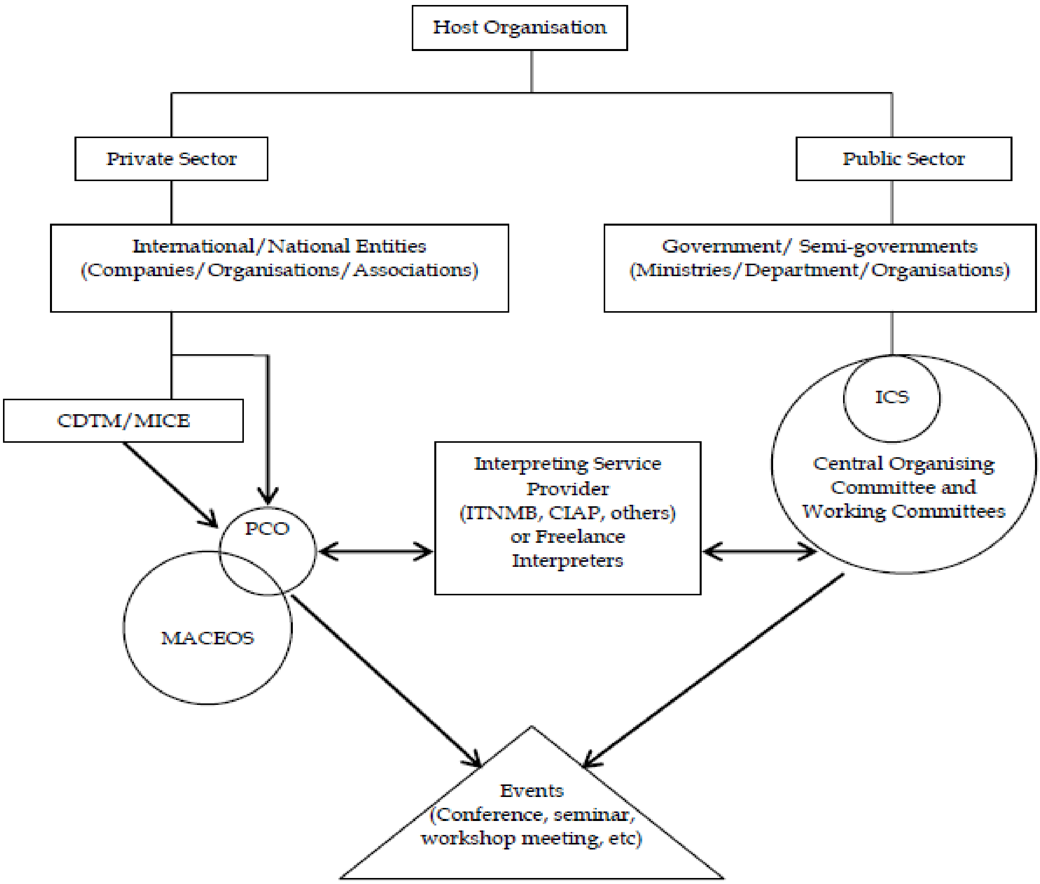

Figure 2. The connection mong players in Conventions and Meetings industry in Malaysia

Malaysia as a Potential Conference Hub

A study conducted by Ibrahim (2008) using a questionnaire-survey involving 20 Malaysian freelance interpreters and nine conference interpreters from the Asia Pacific region has pointed out that Malaysia has much potential in the Conventions and Meetings industry because of several reasons:

1. Modern conference centres with good conference facilities as well as state-of-theart built-in SI systems in certain conference centres. The portable simultaneous interpreting booths are of satisfactory.
2. The PCOs and ISPs are highly motivated and they show good organising skills.
3. Malaysia is a good location as it is easily accessible, with hotels nearby the conference centres, there is less traffic problem, safety is not an issue and Malaysian people are hospitable and friendly.

4. Malaysia also offers ecotourism which can be enjoyed by the delegates and their families. This means the delegates can take the chance attending a conference and at the same time spend a vacation with their families in the country.
5. Due to lower currency exchange between Ringgit Malaysia and other world major currencies such as US Dollar, Euros, Pounds, and Yens, as well as the good infrastructure the country has, it is a value-for-money choice of destination for organising international conferences (Ibrahim, 2008, p.211; IMA Special Report, 2004; Miceonline, 2005;

Despite the healthy growth of CM industry in Malaysia, users ignorance on what conference interpreting and interpreters job are all about still exist in the Malaysian conference interpreting scenario (Ibrahim, 2008, p.218). Because there is no solid definition of the job ´interpreter´, admission control into conference interpreting is almost non-existent (Schmitz, 1988, p. 273-274); anyone who is a fluent bilingual can advertise their services in the Internet, or by approaching Translation and Interpreting agencies, or the embassies, or through word-of-mouth among colleagues, and can expect to be given interpreting assignments at international conferences. Due to this ignorance, the quality of interpretation is questionable because quality interpretations means recruiting trained professionals interpreters, not just fluent bilinguals.

Recommendations to Players

1. Control admission into the market by not recruiting quacks for interpreting assignments, as strongly emphasised by Schmitz (1988, p. 271) through public and players education through various media such as advertisements, awareness campaigns, seminars, etc., by disseminating correct information on the importance of quality interpreting service via trained professionals at international conferences. Besides the public, it is also important to educate PCOs, ISPs as well as HOs that recruiting interpreters is a serious task and they should not take for granted the quality of the interpretations delivered by their interpreters.
2. PCOs and ISPs must work together to encourage and promote professional interpreting services to the relevant authorities of HOs, such as the directors, the managers, or the heads of department. This may be carried out by conducting seminars or workshops on profesional interpreting practice. Joint publicity campaigns with training institutions and profesional associations may function as an effective tool in achieving market control necessary (Tseng, 1992, as cited in Mikkelson, 1999/2004).
3. Proactive involvement of PCOs and ISPs in MICE in order to promote conference interpreting as part of the CM industry. With publications such as MACEOS´s MICE Directory of Malaysia, and MICE magazines, ISPs in Malaysia may work together with CDTM, MACEOS, PCOs and ICS to promote interpreting services by professional and ethical interpreters to HOs and other users. When PCOs bring in more multilingual international conferences to Malaysia, ISPs may provide more job opportunities to local interpreters. Because conference interpreting plays a part in the CM industry, it can hope to benefit from this publicity and government´s recognition with a more proactive approach on the part of ISPs and other relevant players. Besides local publicity and education of service users and providers, great efforts need to be carried out at international level as well. Most foreigners were doubtful about organising conferences here because of a misconception that being a Muslim country, Malaysia was similar to countries like

Afghanistan, which in this case was far-fetched (Ibrahim, 2008, p.197). Therefore, the relevant players in the Interpreting field in Malaysia have to be more proactive in promoting quality interpreting services as part of the attractive conference packages offered by PCOs to HOs and market the country by projecting the real image of Malaysia (Ibrahim, 2008, p. 215) With more MICE promotions and attractive conference packages, more HOs will be attracted to organise their international conferences or meetings in Malaysia (Tourism Malaysia Media Release, 2008) and conference interpreting may catch a slice of this industry. However, if the pool of local interpreters is not professional, they will not benefit from this because professional conference interpreters and interpreting service providers may look elsewhere for professional interpreting services. A pool of local professional interpreters providing professional interpreting service aids the promotion of international conferences by HOs and PCOs in the international conference market. Both Interpreting and Conventions industries may benefit from each other´s progress in Malaysia.

4. Collaborate with local training institutions such as University Science Malaysia and international professional associations of Translation and Interpreting such as the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) and International Federation of Translators (FIT) to provide opportunities of practical training to interpreter students. This will serve as an on-site experience for the students because training and professional practice must go hand in hand.

Conclusion

The Malaysian Conventions and Meetings industry is still in its infancy; it is recently established in 1997, but with visions set by these players and their devotion to work together, increasing awareness on the importance of professional interpreting service among users and players, together with the continuing Malaysian government's recognition and support to the industry, and the aspirations to make Malaysia one of the best MICE destinations will definitely push the industry forward, and bringing conference interpreting together with it.

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Factors Influencing Loyalty in Tourism Fairs Exhibitors: A Case of MATTA Fair Exhibitors (Kuala Lumpur)

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The meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibition (MICE) sector is one of the more rapidly growing market segments in tourism industry. To fulfill the achievement in this sector of tourism industry the loyalty of the exhibitor as one part of MICE tourism is important for exhibitors' disposer. The objective of this paper is to identify the factors which influence tourism exhibitor to take part in international tourism exhibition and fairs and to recognize the similar factors of tourism exhibitors' decision making and their loyalty. Moreover, empirically examine the underlying dimensions of the important factors which relate to tourism exhibitors loyalty is another objective. The last one is to propose a model of important factors affecting tourism exhibitors loyalty based on the existing literature, in particular, Oppermann and Chon's model on the convention participation decision-making process and some other factors from other literature which is particularly about exhibitors. Data will be collected during the International tourism Fair in Malaysia (Matta Fair in KL) which helds every year in March. This study employed a causal research design using a cross-sectional sample survey. More over some interview will be making with exhibitors disposer. Previous studies on customer loyalty have indicated that there is a positive relationship between loyalty and profitability. For example, customer loyalty contributes to the bottom line and a relatively small percentage of loyal customers can result in a relatively large increase in profitability. To Exhibition disposer, these studies echo the notion that distinct benefits can be derived from loyal exhibitors, therefore, how to develop, maintain, and enhance exhibitors loyalty should be the primary interests of exhibitors' organizers.

Key word: MICE Tourism, Exhibitors, Decision Making, Customer Satisfaction, Loyalty

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Factors Influencing Conference Attendees' Decision Making: A Comparative Study between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore

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Convention tourism has emerged as a significant subsection of the tourism industry both in terms of volume of travel and expenditure generated. Convention tourists are also high spending and hence the market is able to generate high levels of inward investment for cities and regions (Law, 1993). Overseas convention attendees are valuable assets for the tourism industry. Their attendance benefits both convention organizers and host locations. They bring multi-economic benefits to the host location through their expenditure on accommodation, food and beverages, local transportation and miscellaneous spending (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). This paper is going to provide an insight in the areas of participation decision-making variables of the International conference attendees in Singapore and Malaysia. By understanding the importance of factors influencing participation decision making from the customers' perspective, large convention centers will be able to design and implement service assurance programs to maintain a competitive edge in the marketplace.

Key words: Convention Industry, Decision Making, International Conference Attendees Singapore, Malaysia

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Tourists' Perceptions towards Malaysian Foods

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Understanding food factors is an important criterion for the hotel industry, restaurant and tourism marketer with regards to tourists visiting Malaysia. This study examines factors that affect tourists' perceptions towards Malaysian food. The researchers distributed 100 questionnaires to the Asian and Western tourists. The result shows that most of the Western tourists are interested in experiencing Malaysian food because of the Malaysian culture. The unique culture of Malaysian food had attracted them to have a deeper understanding of local traditional food. However, Asian travellers are most likely to enjoy Malaysian food because of social factors where they can socialize with their friends and relatives. The study concluded that both respondents; Western and Asian tourists were very satisfied with Malaysian food due to the many interesting activities involving food utilization organized in Malaysia.

Key words: perception, Malaysian food, Westerner, Asian

Introduction

Background of the Study

Tourism is defined as a unique product as it is composite in nature, an amalgam of tangibles and intangibles that includes everything that tourists experience. Tourism has become an integral component of lifestyle and it has also become a major component of the economic prosperity of almost all countries. The Hospitality industry comprises four major elements which includes accommodation, transportation, food and beverage and entertainment. Food, like other factors, such as accommodation, transportation, attraction and activities is a basic and crucial element of the tourist product (Reynold, 1994). Eating is one of our physiological needs even when outside our usual environment. In addition to our physiological needs, other needs and motivations exist with respect to food tourism (Tikkanen, 2007). The common perception that food is a mere attraction in tourism is challenged by stressing the implications and impediments experienced by tourists in the local culinary sphere in an unfamiliar destination even when attracted to the local cuisine (Cohan and Avieli, 2004). Malaysia is one of the famous countries that have varieties of food based on ethnic composition. Local food is a fundamental component of a

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destination's attributes, adding to the range of the attraction and the overall tourist experience. This makes food an essential constituent of tourism production as well as perception (Shenoy, 2005).

Problem Statement

Understanding tourists' changing desires and perceptions of food attributes may help in improving tourism and the food industry in Malaysia. Recently, as tourists are more demanding and curious about Malaysian food, it is important for service provider to identify the factors that can affect tourist perception towards Malaysian food.

Purpose of the Study

The paper aims to examine the factors that affect tourists' perception towards Malaysian food between Asian and Western tourists.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the tourists' preferences on Malaysian food
2. To identify factors that affect tourist perception towards Malaysian food

Significance of the Study

Understanding food factors is an important criterion for the hotel industry, restaurants and also for the tourism marketer with regards to tourists visiting Malaysia. It is amazing how the food industry can contribute to tourism in the country. Hence, we should suggest ways to increase or improve the tourist's perception of Malaysian food and outline the factors that can show the levels of perception and satisfaction of tourist which can encourage tourists to revisit the country.

Literature Review

Tourist Perception

According to Wikipedia, in psychology and the cognitive sciences, perception is the process of attaining awareness or understanding of sensory information. The common perception of food as mere attraction in tourism is challenged by stressing the implications and impediments experienced by tourist in the local culinary sphere in an unfamiliar destination even when attracted to the local cuisine (Cohan and Avieli, 2004). Consumers' perception of quality has received considerable interest in relation to the investigation of consumer food choices (Hansen, 2005). In fact, perceptions of food are likely to be influenced by such psychological and cultural factors rather than physiological product experiences alone (Rijswijk and Frewer, 2008). A study of consumer perception of quality must therefore aim at mapping various aspects of food products, situations and people which, taken as a whole, lead to variations in consumer perception of quality (Hansen, 2005).

Food Attributes

To explore the reasons why people choose the food they do, we need to situate food and eating in the economic and cultural environments of which they are a part. What we eat and why we eat it has always been more than a matter of nutritional value. Material factors are perhaps the most pressing. People on a low income spend proportionally more of their income on food than those on a high income. Hence, economic constraints are vital as we also need to examine the social meanings of food and eating (Keane and Willetts, 1994). In fact, Keane and Willetts, 1994 also stated that food is a marker of identity on many different levels.

Past researchers have discovered 5 factors that affect the tourists' perception on food. These are the factors which includes social (Tikkanen, 2007: Keane and Willetts, 1994), culture (Sheikh and Thomas, 1994), business (Meler and Cerovic, 2003), interest (Shenoy, 2005), and education. Thus, the factors which bear upon food choices are wide ranging. For the individual, priorities change throughout the life-cycle, while social class, ethnicity and gender are the parameters within which decisions about food are made (Keane and willetts, 1994). Such developments have spurred an interest in experiencing the unique and indigenous food, food product and cuisines of a destination, so much so that people are often travelling to a destination specifically to experience the local cuisines or to taste the dishes (Shenoy, 2005).

Methodology

In this study, the researchers used both primary and secondary data. The first primary data used is observation. The tourists and their choices of venue to dine are observed and noted. The observation sessions were done in tourist attractions around Kuala Lumpur and outside Kuala Lumpur. Questions based on the 5 factors (culture, social, interest, business and education) by the past researchers' mentioned in the literature review were used in this study. 100 questionnaires were distributed to Asian and Western tourists. Besides questionnaires, the researchers also interviewed the tourists to get extra information regarding tourists' perceptions towards Malaysia food. The interviews made were face-to-face and online.

Findings and Discussion

Demographic profiles of respondents

Table 1: Asian and Western Tourists' Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
ASIAN			
Arabian	4	4.0	4.0
Indonesian	10	10.0	14.0
Iraqi	3	3.0	17.0
Japanese	7	7.0	24.0
Malaysian	13	13.0	37.0
Nepal	3	3.0	40.0
Singaporean	7	7.0	47.0
Turkish	3	3.0	50.0
Yemeni	1	1.0	51.0
WESTERN			

Australian	9	9.0	60.0
British	10	10.0	70.0
Canadian	4	4.0	74.0
European	8	8.0	82.0
German	7	7.0	89.0
Nigerian	6	6.0	95.0
Swiss	5	5.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	

Table 2: Asian and Western Tourists' Age

Age	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<20	14	14.0	14.0
21-30	51	51.0	65.0
31-40	21	21.0	86.0
41-50	5	5.0	91.0
>50	9	9.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	

Out of 100 travellers who were asked to fill in the questionnaires during the 15 day survey period around Kuala Lumpur and other cities within Malaysia such as Perlis, Melaka, Johor, Negeri Sembilan and Perak, all were found to be usable in this study, representing a response rate of 100 percent. Out of the 100 respondents, 51 percent were of Asian origin and 49 percent were of Western origin (refer table 1). Out of 100 respondents, 59 percent were males, while females were 41 percent. The highest percentage of respondents' age is 21 to 23 which constitute 51 percent (refer table 2). Most of them are still single which accounted for 56 percent while married people were 44 percent. The majority of the Asian respondents were Malaysian (13 percent) while the majority of Western respondents were British which constitute 10 percent. 3 percent of the respondents had an annual income of less than USD$10,000.00; 25 percent had an annual income of between USD$10,001 to USD$50,000. On the other hand, 10 percent of them had an annual income of between USD$50,001 to USD$ 100 000, and 3 percent had an annual income over USD$10, 001 per year. From the survey carried out, it was identified that about 59 percent of 100 respondents did not state their annual income based on their personal reasons. Therefore, the analysis of food enjoyment based on income cannot be accurately done. However, there were 25 percent of respondents who were the middle level income earners. These respondents stated that they have tried a lot of Malaysian food because they can afford to do so. The more they earned the more food they tried. Due to the variety of food that they tried during their visit to this country, they can come up with their own perceptions regarding the type of food they prefer the most.

Tourists' Preferences on Malaysian Food

Table 3: How Ethnic Foods are being identified by the Tourists before Enjoyment

Sources of Information	Asian Traveller (percent)	Western Traveller (percent)
Friends / Relatives	33.3	38.8
Exhibitions	9.8	10.2
Television	11.8	4.1
Internet	23.5	16.3
Magazines / Newspapers	13.7	16.3
Others	7.9	14.3
Total	100	100

a. Asian Traveller

From the survey, most of the Asian respondents like Malay food compared to other Malaysian food like Chinese food and Indian food. About 76.5 percent of the respondents which is 39 people like to eat Malay food. They like to eat Nasi Lemak with sambal, Nasi Kerabu, Satay with peanut gravy, Laksa, Rendang, Curry Noodle and Soto. It was followed by Indian food with 13.7 percent or 51 respondents, Chinese with 5.9 percent and other food which include Japanese food and Thai food with 3.9 percent of the respondents. Examples of the Indian food that they like to eat are Curry, Roti Canai, Tosai, Cappatti and Chicken Tandoori. Chinese food such as Shark Fin Soup, Dim Sum, Char Koay Teow, Hainan Chicken Rice, Hokkien Fried Koay Teow and steamboat are popular.

Most of them get information about Malaysian food from their friends and relatives (33.3 percent). 23.5 percent of them get the information from the Internet, followed by magazines / newspapers with 13.7 percent, television with 11.8 percent, exhibitions with 9.8 percent and others including travel guides and brochures with 7.9 percent (refer table 3). This shows that word-of-mouth from other people does have a strong influence to promote Malaysian food. Internet also provides more information as people can easily get them through many websites that are available.

b. Western Traveller

Based on the results, there were 34 Western respondents which constituted 69.4 percent that liked Malay food. Then, it was followed by Indian food with 16.3 percent, Chinese with 10.2 percent and others include Japanese food and Thai food with 4.1 percent. They like to eat Malay food like Nasi Lemak, Laksa, Satay and Fried Rice. Examples of Indian food that they like to eat are Northern Indian Cuisine because they are not so spicy like Chicken Curry, Fish Curry, Roti Canai, Tosai and Capatti. For Chinese food, they like to eat Shark Fin Soup, Dim Sum, Hainan Chicken Rice and Char Koay Teow.

Most of 19 respondents get information about Malaysian food from their friends and relatives with 38.8 percent, from the internet with (8) 16.37 percent, magazines with 16.37 percent , followed by others that include travel guides and brochures with 14.3 percent, exhibitions with 10.2 percent and television with 4.1 percent (refer table 3). Through the survey, it can be concluded that most of the Western respondents would like to try Malaysian food at Hotel and Resorts with 53.1

percent followed by stalls, fine dining and others such as food court and fast food restaurants.

Factors That Make Tourists Interested in Malaysian Foods

The research found out that tourists are interested with Malaysian food because of social, culture, interest, business, educational and etc.

TOURISTS' PERCEPTION

What makes you interested with Malaysian foods?

Table 4: Factors That Make Tourists Interested in Malaysian Foods

Factors	Asian Traveller (percent)	Western Traveller (percent)
Social	35.3	14.3
Culture	29.4	34.6
Business	5.9	4.1
Interest	13.7	32.7
Education	5.9	6.1
Others	9.8	8.2
Total	100	100

a. Asian Traveller

From the survey, most of the Asian respondents were interested in tasting Malaysian food during their visit to Malaysia. The highest factor is social which 35.3 percent. The number of respondents that were interested in Malaysian food because of the social factor is 18. Most of them informed that they liked to mingle with their friends and relatives. They also liked to socialize with the local people and meet new friends. It is because they can eat at the restaurant with their friends and relatives. Another reason was because they would like to hang out with their friends by having dinner at the local restaurant or visiting food exhibitions together.

The second highest factor that made them interested with Malaysia food was culture which is 29.4 percent. There were 15 Asian respondents who stated that culture is the main factor that made them interested in Malaysian food. It is because they liked to learn about culture that is so unique and they are also familiar with Malaysian culture because it is similar to their culture. For example, respondents from Singapore and Indonesia that have similar culture as Malaysians. This will make them more comfortable when they travel to Malaysia and try the Malaysian food.

The third highest factor is interest which is 13.7 percent. 7 respondents from an overall of 51 Asian respondents were interested in Malaysian food because of the interest. It is because they would like to try new food that cannot be found in their own country. This creates an interest in them as they can only taste the original Malaysian food when they travel to Malaysia. Another reason is because they are influenced by their friends and relatives who had been in Malaysia to try the local food.

The fourth highest factor which is 9.8 percent pertains to other factors. They like to experience the new taste of Malaysian food which is good. This is followed by business which is 5.9 percent and education factor which constitute also of 5.9 percent. It is because business travellers who have business and meetings in Malaysia will mostly be served with the Malaysian food. This could become a factor for them to try the Malaysian food. There are few respondents who would like to try Malaysian food because of the education factor. They stated that they were interested with Malaysian food because they would like to gain general knowledge of other countries' food and collect information about food in Malaysia (refer table 4).

b. Western Traveller

From the survey (table 4), the highest factor that makes Western respondents interested in experiencing Malaysian food is culture which constituted 34.6 percent. About 17 of the Western respondents were interested in experiencing Malaysian food because of the culture. It is because they would like to know about Malaysia's unique culture. As we know, food is considered to be part of the culture. Different peoples eat different food. Thus, experiencing the local traditional food can provide knowledge about the culture of the country.

The second highest factor is interest. From the survey, there are about 32.7 percent (16) of the 49 respondents who are influenced to try Malaysian food because of their interest. The respondents said that they were influenced by their friends and relatives to taste the Malaysian food, from the internet and also from the magazines and television. This will create an interest in them to try the Malaysian food.

The third highest factor is social which constituted 14.3 percent. There are about 7 respondents who are interested in experiencing Malaysian food because of the social factor. Most of them like to have lunch or dinner with their friends. This gives them an opportunity to try Malaysian food at the local restaurants together. Besides, this will also give them a chance to mix around with the local people like the restaurant managers, waiter and waitress.

The fourth highest factor is other factors which include cleanliness as well as to experience Malaysian food with 8.2 percent followed by education with 6.1 percent and business factor with 4.1 percent. From the result, it can be concluded that most of the Western respondents are influenced with the culture to experience Malaysian food. Business is the least factor that motivates them to try Malaysian food, perhaps because they do not have any business matters in Malaysia or with Malaysian people.

Tourists overall satisfaction

Table 5: Tourists' Satisfaction towards Malaysian Foods

Tourists Satisfaction	Asian Traveller (percent)	Western Traveller (percent)
Yes	92.2	98.0
No	7.8	2.0
Total	100	100

a. Asian Traveller

The result in table 5 shows that 92.2 percent of Asian respondents were satisfied with the Malaysian food. It is because they said that Malaysian food is tasty and have a lot of varieties that include appetizers and desserts. Besides that, the prices were also reasonable and affordable. Only four of the respondents were not satisfied with the

Malaysian food. 78.4 percent of them informed that they do not encounter any problem while experiencing Malaysian food. Out of 51 respondents, only 11 of them said that they were having a problem in trying Malaysian food . It is because some of them are vegetarian and did not eat meat in their diet especially tourists from India. They also said that it is difficult to try Malaysian cuisines since it consists of meat and chicken. Besides that, they stated that the preparation of Malaysian food was not hygienic. For example, one of them said that he found hair and pineapple skin in his meal. But, luckily most of them like to try or experience Malaysian food again and would recommend the Malaysian food to other people especially to their friends, relatives and also to their colleagues in their home-town.

b. Western Traveller

Based on the result of the survey (table 5), 98 percent of the Western respondents were satisfied with the Malaysian food. Only one respondent was not satisfied with the Malaysian food. Majority of the respondents love the taste of Malaysian food that is quite spicy and some of them like to eat spicy foods. In addition, 79.6 percent of Western respondents did not encounter any problems while experiencing Malaysian food and they would like to try the food again during their next visit. But some of them complained that the Malay food and Indian food were too spicy that they cannot try to eat it. Most of them said that that they will recommend the Malaysian food to their friends and relatives in their home-town. In conclusion, it can be summarized that the Western travellers have positive and high overall satisfaction levels with the Malaysian food.

Discussion

From what we have discovered, most Asian travellers prefer Malay food compared to other Malaysian food which are Chinese and Indian dishes. The respondents responded that their most likeable Malay foods are Nasi Lemak with sambal, Nasi Kerabu, Satay with peanut gravy, Laksa, Rendang, Curry Noodle and Soto. This is so because these foods are synonymous with Malay identity. The spicy taste really suits Asian people appetite. This was followed by Indian dish, where the most preferred foods are Curry, Roti Canai, Capatti, Thosai as well as Tandoori Chicken. This is due to Indian and Malay foods being quite similar in terms of the ingredients used in the food preparation as they use lots of herbs and spices. So, when the respondents had experienced the Malay food, they will automatically try Indian dishes too. Chinese food has the lowest ranking among the three main Malaysian foods which is represent 5.9 percent due to the non-spicy taste and the excessive use of oyster sauce. Moreover, the food presentation is also quite dull and unattractive. As word of mouth is known to be a very effective tool in spreading information, 33.3 percent of 51 respondents gathered information about Malaysian food from their friends and relatives. From here we can see that friends and relatives played an important role to influence other people interest.

From the survey, most of the Asian respondents declared that their most important reason for consuming Malaysian food is because of social factors. This is due to the fact that they like to mingle with their close friends and relatives and spend more time with them while having a meal. Very few of them responded that they consumed Malaysian food because of education. As known worldwide, Malaysia is a country with a variety of cultures and races. Therefore, this would be one of the factors for them to gain general knowledge about the heterogeneity of Malaysian food. Most of the Asian respondents pleasantly informed that they were all satisfied with Malaysian food because of the acceptable taste and the variability of the food, other than the reasonable and affordable price.

Very few of the respondents claimed that they were having problem experiencing Malaysian food where some of them were vegetarian. It is hard for them to consume Malaysian food since most of them contained meat and chicken which is highly restricted among the vegetarians. In addition, when one of the respondents claimed that he found hair and pineapple skin in his meal, this clearly shows that the preparation of Malaysian food is not hygienic enough and does not follow the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) standard and principles that included in the international system ISO 22000. The seven HACCP principles are the complete food safety management system incorporating the elements of prerequisite programs for food safety. Unfortunately some food providers do not monitor, verify and validate the daily work that is compliant with regulatory requirements all the time. In other words, they do not fully apply the seven HACCP principles during the food preparation.

The seven principles include conducting hazard analysis, determine the critical control points, establish critical limits and so forth. Not every food provider in Malaysia is willing to follow the seven principles and this is probably because they found it very complicated to follow every single principle outlined. Usually, the luxurious places like 5-star hotels do follow this standard. This might be because the following of the principles require full attention, additional time and cost. The cheap restaurants and many other regular places in Malaysia do not really practice this because they pay more attention to running the business than these detailed and complicated requirements. In addition, a lot of tourists love to try these cheap restaurants in our country. Thus, the circumstances where the tourists encounter unhygienic food preparation cannot be avoided so far. Fortunately, it is good to know that not many tourists complained about this matter and the respondents were still likely to promote and influence their peers and relatives back at their home about towards Malaysian food even though some of them felt dissatisfied pertaining to hygiene of the food they tried in our country.

Another group of respondent is the Western people. Just like Asian respondents, Malay food is the highest ranking likeable food among Westerners. The most preferred Malay food among the Westerners was Nasi Lemak, Laksa, Satay, and Fried Rice. The second highest ranking is Indian food with 16.3 percent, followed by Chinese food with 10.2 percent. The reasons for the data gathered from Westerners were quite similar with the Asians. Like Asian people, friends and relatives of the Westerners also played an important role to persuade them to experience Malaysian food. This reflects again that people's talk is an effective promotional tool. This research also found that, most of the Westerners have experienced Malaysian food at hotels and resorts. This is because they stay at hotels and resorts during their vacation time in Malaysia.

When talking about the factors which led them to experience Malaysian food, most of them stated that culture is the most important factor that made them to try Malaysian food. It is known that Westerner people are curious about knowledge, so they would like to enhance their knowledge about the various unique cultures, beside their own. The factors such as interest and social reflected the same idea of what the Asian people look for in Malaysian foods. Unlike the Asians, the least factor among the Western people is business factor where they consumed Malaysian food during their meeting and business activities, where they were being served with local and traditional food.

As for the overall satisfaction with Malaysian food, almost all of the Western respondents satisfied with Malaysian ethnic food, as they love the different taste from their own culture. But several of the respondents commented that Malaysian food is too spicy, thus preventing them to continue consuming the food. Maybe for the Malaysians, the spicy taste is a norm to them and it has become their food habit, but not to several people outside Malaysia. Therefore, both the Malaysian and the respondents should understand each other's culture as unique in everyone's way of life. Malaysia would be glad that these respondents will promote Malaysian food to other people, thus enhancing the positive image towards Malaysian people.

Conclusion

It is undeniable that food plays an important role in fostering tourism activities. The variety, taste and appearance of food are able to attract the tourists to try Malaysian food thus coming to our country. Many activities involving food utilization can be organized to make it more interesting and promote our cuisine to the whole world.

According to the research, Malay food is well-accepted by the tourists. The cuisine like Nasi Lemak, Nasi Kerabu, Satay, Laksa, Rendang, Curry Noodle and Soto are examples of food that tourists like most. This is something that we can be proud of. It is proven that Malaysian food is widely known not only in Asian countries but only in Western countries. Before this, Malaysian has been participating in many food exhibitions abroad to promote the food to the whole world.

Malaysia as a multi-racial country is one of the reasons why there are numerous types of food available here. Chinese and Indian food somehow is also able to attract the tourists to try the cuisine even though it is not as much as Malay food. However there are also some barriers that stop the tourists from tasting our food. One of the barriers stated by them is that most of Malay food is served spicy. Most tourists, especially Westerners cannot accept very spicy food. This barrier cannot be fully eliminated as it is the nature of Malay food to be served spicy.

Therefore, it is important for us to prepare less spicy food (for tourism purpose only) in order to attract more tourists to try Malaysian food. Besides being unique and tasty, it also must be acceptable by most people so that it will help to make more people know about our food and become regular consumers.

Recommendations and Implementations

In terms of upgrading tourists' perception regarding Malaysian food:

1) First and foremost, Malaysia should do more domestic and overseas promotions to promote our traditional foods. Not all tourists especially Westerners know much about our culture and food, or in other words, foods that portrayed our identity. This suggestion can be carried out through the involvement in Visit Malaysia Year (VMY), online publications, website portal or blog and so forth. Nowadays, electronic gadgets are highly preferred medium in seeking information. Thus, using these devices are appropriate in promoting our local foods as with only one click, people can get a host of information regarding Malaysian traditional foods.

2) Malaysian food providers should enhance their hygiene and health measures by improving the food premises cleanliness. Not just that, the food and beverages servers also should follow the hygienic standard measures being set by the Ministry of Health. This is to prevent unwanted circumstances such as food poisoning and the food being polluted by unwanted hazards. Therefore, these can be merged to give a good image to Malaysia food by serving hygienic, clean and healthy food with zero defects can improve tourists' perception towards our food.

3) Next, Malaysian food providers should also enhance the food presentation by improving more on making the food to look more attractive and appetizing . Besides that, they also should enhance the food's taste as well as improve on the ingredients used in the food preparation by following the exact healthy diet and portion. As we know, Malaysian people love to add dangerous chemicals additives or food enhancer to make the food tastier, like 'Ajinomoto' for example, which will cause undesirable health effects in the long term. Therefore, these chemicals should be avoided in our food, instead, using the natural ingredients to enhance the food flavour. Moreover, when promoting our food, we should emphasis more on promoting the natural flavour of the food without any additives added, as the foreigners really taking care of their health.

4) Malaysia can come out with a program where people or researchers from all over the world are invited to participate in a joint research program of Malaysian foods. Through this program we might increase the number of people who have an interest in learning and understanding the uniqueness and heterogeneity of Malaysian foods. From this program also, more people will have a better understanding of the culture of Malaysian foods, thus leading to an increase in the world's positive perception towards Malaysian food.

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Heritage Food Tourism: *Bahulu* Attracts?

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Bahulu is recently selected and listed as one of 100 Malaysian heritage foods. It is a popular traditional snack food for locals. To date, it is no longer considered as seasonal food with peak consumption only during festive seasons like Hari Raya. The objective of this article is to explore the possibility of making bahulu, a heritage food as an attraction on tourism in a sector of the industry i.e. food tourism. A desk and pencil analysis on bahulu will touch on the 'what' bahulu is; and on the 'how' it may impact the food tourism through industry analysis.

Key words: bahulu, heritage food, food tourism, attract

Introduction

To a layperson, the term heritage may refer to its two special characteristics i.e. ancient and respect. Thus, when one relates the term heritage to food, the food in question becomes special in itself. Muhammad Kamel Abdullah or Chef Kamel, former Chef Association of Malaysia secretary-general defines heritage food as "classical and traditional foods, which are cooked by all generations without their flavours and tastes being altered and are still common today" as has been practiced by "the French who still refer to the Le Repertoire de la Cuisine book, where the details of French cuisine for the past 300 years are recorded" and closely followed in preparing them (http://www.nst.com.my/Current_News/NST/Monday/National/2553624/Article/index_html). Prof. Datuk Zuraina Majid, Heritage Commissioner on the other hand expands this definition by dividing heritage food into two categories. The first category refers to "common foods which are part of our lives but we are unaware of their heritage value" such as nasi lemak, roti canai, teh tarik, and sambal belacan whereas the second consists of "foods that were once part of our culture but are slowly dying out" like halwa and kuih bakar (The New Straits Times, May 11 2009: p. 24).

Bahulu has been recently listed by our former Unity, Culture, Arts and Heritage Ministry as one of the 100 Malaysian local foods (e.g. nasi lemak, Penang char kuey teow, ketupat, kuih bulan) alongside 72 other items (inclusive of heritage sites, paintings, cultural dances and living heritage treasures) as the Malaysian national heritage (The New Straits Times, February 16, 2009). The implication of the foods included in this heritage listing is that since they are favored and of such status,

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steps should be taken by all parties to ensure they are preserved so that they are not forgotten and remain Malaysian food icons. A problem is that it has been observed that Malaysians in general simply "do not care" about the origin or history of the food they eat (Chef Kamel quoted in The New Straits Times, May 11 2009: p. 24). Hence the question on whether the heritage food list is usable or not may pop up. In addition is, do tourists (domestic, foreign) know about heritage foods and whether they are interested to try them. In line with this question, the aim of this article is to explore whether bahulu as a heritage food has an impact and/or could make an impact on tourism in the food tourism sector.

Analysis of Bahulu

To achieve the aim stated, I typed the word 'bahulu' in the Internet and found that it clinched 34,700 of Google search. In the websites and blogs (personal or commercial) where the word was found, the many information on 'bahulu' mainly refer to its description i.e. what it is, how it is made and how it has evolved over the years with many different recipes shared amongst netters, bahulu ads and fantastic pictures of the variation of the popular local food, fond stories related to 'bahulu' shared through the Internet, etc. Such positive responses were well expected as the food is a perennial favorite for most Malaysians. It would not be an exaggeration to state that bahulu is well recognized by the young and old.

What is Bahulu?

Bahulu is one of the many traditional Malay cakes ('kuih') that is still popularly eaten and served as snack food amongst locals especially during festive seasons like Hari Raya. It has a soft and slightly dry texture. It is delicious to be eaten hot but for many who like to keep it, it can be kept quite well in an airtight container although will harden with time. Bahulu comes in many different shapes although bahulu 'cermai' (button) and bahulu 'ikan' (goldfish) are the popular ones. The traditional way of baking the bahulu is through the use of charcoal fire where hot coals are placed on top of and under the bahulu mould. As such, it takes quite a while to cook it the traditional way. Thus, many bahulu makers today have resort to modern way i.e. using the hot oven. This method also allows the 'kuih' to be baked evenly and time taken is much lessened.

Evolution of Bahulu

The modern way of baking has enable local bahulu producers who are mainly made up of micro or small entrepreneurs to commercialize the product to be sold in the marketplace in bulks. Today, bahulu is available in most places like agro bazaar, 'pasar malam' (night market), retail shops, the super and hypermarkets. Thus, it is no longer considered as seasonal food although bahulu's consumption drastically rises during festive season like Hari Raya or school holidays.

The traditional bahulu recipe has now slowly evolved to suit the modern Malaysian people's lifestyle and taste preferences. Thus, its recipe today include the many different flavours and new tastes like bahulu pandan, bahulu pandan with choc rice, bahulu cappuccino, bahulu choc chips, bahulu strawberry, and bahulu muffin. Those sold in the hypermarkets are even referred by the name of the hypermarkets where they are sold e.g. bahulu Tesco and bahulu Carrefour.

The importance of bahulu as traditional heritage food has been acknowledged by the hotel industry where today we can find hotels serving bahulu (traditional and/or modern) on their food and beverage menu. Some even package bahulu in cute packets to be given to guests as welcoming food in the hotel rooms. Such promotions and efforts have helped the product to gain acceptance amongst locals and foreigners and thus, also helped the micro and small entrepreneurs (e.g. the cottage industry) to survive in the marketplace. However, even if the hotels are promoting the food, does it have any attraction to tourists in general?

Bahulu and Food Tourism: Can it Attracts?

Erik Wolf, president of the International Culinary Tourism Association, a non-profit group representing more than 500 tourism businesses in 19 countries observes the increase in demand for authentic experiences for holiday makers (www.airhighways.com/**food_tourism**.htm). Fiona Jeffery, Group Exhibition Director of World Travel Market who undertook an independent study on behalf of World Travel Market agrees with Erik's observation and offers this advice to the food industry:

"The industry needs to take note and use the opportunity to its advantage. Holidaymakers want a hands-on experience and food is a manifestation of a destination's culture. You can open a different door with every meal."

(www.airhighways.com/**food_tourism**.htm).

The findings of the World Travel Market's study (with samples of 2000 people throughout the UK of all ages and socio economic groups) revealed that more than half (53%) of the respondents ranked eating traditional dishes as a 'very important' or 'important' part of their holiday. In addition, 86% of the samples admitted that they enjoyed local foods when abroad. Interestingly, 83% of people who typically go on half- or full-board holidays also stated that they willingly miss meals in their hotel or resort to try out local restaurants (*ibid*).

In Canada, Travel Activities and Motivations Survey of 2006 reported 74% of all adult travelers (or 15.4 million Canadians) in 2004 and 2005 to participate in at least one type of activity associated with wine and cuisine while on an out-of-town overnight trip. More importantly, the survey found that of those who enjoyed wine or cuisine activities, 16% (or 2.5 million Canadians) reported that it was the main trip motivator (http://www.everyoneeats.org/?p=264).

Similar findings were found in USA. A study jointly carried out by Travel Industry Association of America, Gourmet magazine and other organizations found that 27 million of Americans reported to make culinary activities as part of their travel plans within the last three years. From the 160 million U.S. residents who reported that they travel for leisure, about 1 in 6 have recently taken a food tour, enrolled in a cooking class, toured a winery or otherwise participated in culinary activities as part of a vacation. To add to this, nearly half of that group took a trip or chose a destination because of the food and wine activities they would find there (http://www.usatoday.com/travel/destinations/2007-02-19-food-tourism_x.htm). In line with this finding, Cathy Keefe, the manager of media relations for the Travel Industry Association of America commented: "It's something that really took off in the past five years or so." (USAToday February 19, 2007)

This new trend of holidaying in quest of food as reported by the increased number of Americans, British, and Canadians in the surveys reported above presents the food industry movers with a golden opportunity to cater for this segment and sell their products. People go for authentic food experience like the ones offered by culinary dishes, food and wine, and many others. People are more prone to experiment with new flavours in their travel. This has expands the ranges of food they are used to or know. For instance, what is used to be 'oriental' to the British, Americans, and Canadians has now extends beyond Chinese dishes to Japanese, Malaysian and Thai foods. This is because the more people travel, the more knowledgeable they become in terms of regional trends within countries. As a result, they will be prone to buy the new flavors they were introduced to in their travels in the local supermarkets.

The World Travel Market's survey notes that 42% of respondents surveyed admitted that their travel has somehow affected their weekly shop choices. Their travels made them instead of simply wanting to taste Indian foods in the first place to a level of awareness of Goan and Keralan food (both are types of Indian foods) and lastly to a stage where they then want or desire to buy these dishes at their local supermarket (www.airhighways.com/food_tourism.htm). This process is similar to the AIDA (Aware => Interest => Desire => Action) concept described in the marketing literature. Once a person is aware of something, it may create interest of that something, followed by desire to have it, and last, to take action to have it. The question is, does bahulu and food authenticity goes hand in hand in a smart partner like what culinary food has to offer? Tourists (domestic and foreign) like the segment earlier mentioned may be attracted to visit certain destinations to find the food 'to die' for. Can bahulu can be marketed and promoted as food to 'die' for? If it is, then the food industry (and the micro entrepreneurs) will flourish. As Fiona from the World Travel Market observes, the food tourism which is still in its infancy stage has tremendous potential to grow just like what eco tourism experienced 20 years ago when it was first introduced (www.airhighways.com/**food_tourism**.htm). Can bahulu attract?

What Should Be Done by the Industry to Make Bahulu Attract?

Visitors' quest to find food authenticity and unique experience as part of their effort to be close to the host culture (Plummer, Telfer, Hashimoto and Summers, 2005) are the primary reasons for why 'food tourists' travel. Hence they will be easily attracted to food festivals that are organized to promote local commodities and differentiate rural to urban community festivals. Such festivals may add value to existing products (Getz and Brown, 2006; Quan and Wang, 2004).

Noting this, the industry (the SMEs in particular) should take the lead to strategize their market plans and map up the action plans to be followed. Amongst pertinent issues to be considered are the market trends and drivers of the food tourism industry. This is important as the understanding of the market trends can pinpoint to the basic reasons of tourists' purchase behavior of food and other products when they are holidaying in certain places. In specific, what, why, when, where, who and how they buy the products in the marketplace. Today, some tourist offices are beginning to highlight food as a way of promoting their country to foreign visitors and Malaysia should be doing the same thing. The food industry must be proactive as to ensure their products such as bahulu is easily available for instance in the local supermarkets in the targeted tourist segments (domestic, foreign markets). Government agencies such as FAMA and PERDA have been active in helping the micro and small entrepreneurs like the bahulu producers to get their products into the super and hypermarkets. In a recent discussion with FAMA officers, bahulu was said to be one of the top ten products they sell in the market today. This shows bahulu's potential in the domestic market.

The industry must also find out whether there are marketing and other issues that are in play such as health (e.g. "I am diabetic, therefore I cannot eat food that is high in sugar content"), convenience (e.g. "I am hungry, where is the nearest place that I can get food?"), cleanliness (e.g. "Do I mind eating near the landfill although the food is delicious?"), technology (e.g. "I think I can order from the Internet or phone the shop for food delivery."), and safety (e.g. "Am I safe to eat here?") with the promotion of bahulu as a tourism product. Sue Wigram (2008) in her "Futures for Food Tourism Final Report", identified the following as amongst the concerns the industry should consider:

a) health issues i.e. increased consumer awareness on health, the relation between food and health factors and how these impact the marketplace (e.g. food intolerances and allergies, food labeling and legislation).
b) market expectations i.e. increased market expectations versus the need to meet them (e.g. convenience, indulgence), and
c) packaging i.e. problem of excessive packaging versus the need to educate people about appropriate use of packaging.

To conclude, bahulu as a sample of heritage food has a potential to attract tourists, hence the promotion of the food industry. Bahulu Warisan, a well known brand of bahulu based in Melaka is a good example of a brand to 'die' for. Many local tourists visiting Melaka look for the heritage food as has been reflected in the chats amongst netters or in newspaper articles found during my Internet search. Below is the extract of one of the Kosmo Online article I found that clearly describes what I stated earlier:

"KETIKA berjalan di Dataran Pahlawan Megamall Melaka, saya terhidu bau enak yang menyusup keluar dari ruang sebuah dapur.

Dalam fikiran, saya sudah membayangkan kuih tradisi pelengkap juadah yang sentiasa terhidang di kampung halaman kala musim perayaan.

Bau enak itu terus mengembalikan nostalgia tentang kesibukan nenek setiap kali menjelang Aidilfitri. Tanpa henti untuk satu tempoh, tangan nenek memukul adunan tepung, telur dan gula berhampiran sebuah dapur arang dengan sabut kelapa yang dibakar. Pada masa yang sama, nenek begitu mahir dan sabar memasukkan campuran itu ke dalam acuan berbentuk ikan atau buah cermai untuk menghasilkan bahulu yang gebu dan enak.

Kenangan itu membuatkan saya mencari arah mana bau kuih tradisi itu muncul. Umpama mengesahkan tanggapan awal, bau itu datangnya dari sebuah kedai kecil yang terpalit percikan cat berwarna merah dan kuning menghiasi sudut dalaman kedai sekali gus menarik perhatian pengunjung yang lalu di hadapannya. Terletak berhampiran sebuah kafe antarabangsa terkemuka dan bersebelahan dengan sebuah kedai makanan segera tempatan yang terkenal, sebuah papan tanda yang tertera 'Bahulu Warisan' dengan megahnya menghiasi bahagian hadapan kedai ini. ..." (http://www.kosmo.com.my/kosmo/content.asp?y=2008&dt=0116&pub=Kosmo&sec=Rencana_Utama&pg=ru_01.htm)

Bahulu Warisan is one of the popular brands of bahulu in the market today. It was first introduced to the marketplace in 1990 by Puan Siti Zuelliah Mohammad and gained recognition especially after it won several awards such as first place for 'Anugerah Ushawan Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) Peringkat Negeri Melaka 2006' and third place for 'Anugerah Usahawan Jaya oleh Kementerian Pertanian & Industri

Asas Tani Peringkat Kebangsaan untuk tahun 2006'. Since then, several bahulu kiosk with the name Bahulu Warisan has been opened in several states in Malaysia. Since then, Bahulu Warisan's brand name has managed to influence tourists who visit Melaka to find it for their eating pleasure and/or souvenir to be brought home.

However, the industry must also prepare themselves the appropriate practices and/or technologies to enable them to deliver the wants and demands of tourists. New products may be created to help promote food tourism. For example, an alternative guide book rather than the usual guide book that links local heritage food to tourism. Where ever possible, the support and help from the government and the community is important to be gained. Better networks, training, knowledge, education, better marketing, technology to increase shelf life are amongst ideas that can be forwarded to the government for their support. Although personal action plans for implementing the strategies are crucial, ideas that are less personal to each one's business should also be considered to be included in the strategy. For instance, in terms of lobbying for an improved infrastructure and communal action plans.

Conclusion

If everything is planned and executed well, the implication of organizing special food festivals like heritage food festival or bahulu festival may see that both food and tourism industry to flourish together. This can come in terms of increased visitation in a region (Dwyer, Mellor, Mistilis, & Mules, 2000; Faulkner et. al., 2001); provided economic injection (Dwyer, Mellor, Mistilis, & Mules, 2000); increased employment (Dwyer, Mellor, Mistilis, & Mules, 2000); improvement of the image of a destination, enhanced tourism development and catalyst for development (Faulkner et al. 2001); enhanced community pride (Quan & Wang, 2004); and enhanced social and cultural benefits (Dwyer et al. 2000).

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Service Quality in the Hospitality Industry: A Study of Homestay in Selangor

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The development of homestay industry in Selangor as well as the others state in Malaysia is still new. There are lots of promotional activities that had been done by Ministry of Tourism Malaysia to introduce this homestay programme locally and internationally. This study focused on the service quality in hospitality industry by referring the homestay industry in Selangor Darul Ehsan. Four homestay were chosen include Banguris Homestay, Dorani Homestay, Sungai Sireh Homestay and Kuala Langat Homestay. The objectives of this study are to determine which factor of service quality dimension that have significant impact to the homestay industry, to identify consumer's expectation and perception of each service quality dimensions, to identify the gap between expectations and perceptions of service quality dimensions. There are two types of data collection methods that the researchers have used in this study which was by distributing 200 questionnaires to the respondent and interviewing with staff at Tourism Selangor Sdn. Bhd. Paired sample t-Test and reliability test was carried out in this study. The results also showed that the best predictor for overall service quality consist of reliability for consumers' expectation and assurance for consumers' perception. Based from various homestay, Sungai Sireh Homestay represents high expectations for responsiveness and high perceptions for empathy and assurance.

Key words: Service quality gap, homestay industry, consumer's expectation and perception

Introduction

The aims of this study are to determine which factor of service quality dimension that has significant impact to the homestay industry, to identify consumer's expectation and perception of each service quality dimensions and finally to identify the gap between expectations and perceptions of service quality dimensions**.** Nowadays tourism industry is one of the valuable assets that the country has in order to generate incomes after the trading activities. All sectors working together and incorporate in so many ways to promote the tourism industry in Malaysia. Yet it was not surprisingly be the important part to be debated of and implement in Malaysian Plan. The new Ninth Malaysian Plan also did once again mention about it. During the

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Ninth Malaysia Plan period, concerted efforts will be geared towards realizing the full potential of the tourism industry in order to enhance its contribution to the services sector in particular, and the economy in general. The prime focus will be to enhance the country's position as a leading global tourist destination as well as promote domestic tourism.

Homestay programme is one of the tourism product that being promoted by the government. Literally the homestay service was a holiday concept that started in Europe in the late 70s. Homestay is where you get to stay with a selected family from different background and culture as your foster family for duration of time. In addition, you will be experienced the way of their daily life. Meaning to say, when you go for vacation or holiday to one place, instead of staying in the hotel, you can choose to stay with foster family nearby your visited place. Conceptually homestay services is one of the new agro-tourism products in Malaysia which a combination of tourism and recreation activities. This new agro-tourism product is realized as one of potential tool for development of rural areas besides its contribution to sustainable environment. Adopted as one of the tourism niche in the Seventh Malaysia Plan, this activity enables the overseas visitor to experience the daily life of the ordinary people of this country. In our country the homestay services is operated by small-time farmers and villagers, monitored and assisted by the Federal Government of Malaysia, under the Ministry of Tourism Malaysia and normally operated under minimal fund.

The Government continued to endorse and expand the homestay activities by emphasizing it in the Ninth Malaysian Plan by stressing out the eco-tourism, agro-tourism and homestay activities. Agro-tourism and homestay activities offer an opportunity for the local people to involve in Malaysian tourism activities directly and in addition of that as a source of income. During the Seventh Plan period, a total of 19 agro-tourism locations were developed with the participation from farmers and fishermen. The products included day visits, farm stays and agro-tourism packages. More value added activities will be expanded under the agro-tourism and homestay activities such as farm stays and visits to agricultural parks and research stations.

In the service industry, definitions of service quality tend to focus on meeting customers' needs and requirements and how well the service delivered meets their expectations (Lewis and Booms, 1983). In order to deliver and maintain service quality, an organization must first identify what it is that constitutes quality to those whom it serves (Grönroos, 1984). Grönroos (1984) classified service quality into two categories: technical quality primarily focused on what consumers actually received from the service and the functional quality focused on the process of service delivery. Similarly, Klaus (1985) proposed that service quality may be explained in physical, situational and behavioral terms; that is, what is delivered, the circumstances for the delivery, and how it is delivered. He argued that service quality standards were commonly determined by providers' past experience and that they most often reflect the physical and technical aspects of a service because those were most easily measurable.

Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) identified over 200 attributes of service quality. The pool of attributes was derived from an extensive series of interviews with customers in four different commercial services. Using factor analysis five main dimensions of service quality were identified. They are:

i. Tangibles
ii. reliability;
iii. responsiveness;
iv. assurance; and

v. empathy

The importance of the above dimensions in understanding service quality cannot be underestimated. However, comparing service expectations with service perceptions has offered a more insightful perspective. Perceptions of quality by those who provide services and those who consume them often have been reported to differ (Klaus, 1985; Reynolds and Jamieson, 1954; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985). In such cases, attributes are transformed by management into service standards, which may not be consistent with consumers' perceptions and experiences (La Page, 1983). Solomon *et al.* (1985) concluded that a customer assesses quality by his or her perception of the way in which the service is performed. As a result, service quality has been defined as the outcome of a comparison between expectations of a service and what is perceived to be received (Czepiel *et al.*, 1985; Klaus, 1985; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985). The gap between expectations and perceptions of performance determines the level of service quality from a consumer's perspective.

Research Design

200 sets of questionnaire had been distributed to the respective homestays. Each homestay represents 50 respondents which are Homestay A (Banghuris Homestay), Homestay B (Dorani Homestay), Homestay C (Sungai Sireh Homestay) and Homestay D (Kuala Langat Homestay). The main purpose of this questionnaire is to know the respondents' expectations and perceptions toward service quality when they were at the homestay programme. The questionnaire comprises three sections. The first section is to measure the respondents' expectations of the service quality that they will receive in any homestay programme.

The second section is to measure the respondents' perceptions of the service quality that they received in any homestay programme. The third section captures the demographic profile of the respondents. Included were questions concerning gender, age, purpose of joining homestay programme and how many time the respondents go to homestay programme per year. The respondents are asked to rate the service quality on a seven Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) for section one and also ranging from 1 (extremely dissatisfied) to 7 (very satisfied) for section two. Likert scale is designed to examine how strongly subjects agree or disagree with statement on a 7-point scale. The responses over a number of items tapping a particular concept or variable (as per the following example) are then summated for every respondent. This is an interval scale and the differences in the responses between any two points on the scale remain the same (Uma Sekaran, 2003). This questionnaire was constructing based on five dimensions of SERVQUAL which are tangibles (9 questions), empathy (5 questions), assurance (5 questions), responsiveness (5 questions) and reliability (6 questions). The researchers were constructing this questionnaire by referring most of hospitality management journal like Dimension of Guest Service: Managers' Perceptions and Business Travelers' Expectations, A Study Of Hotel Guest Perceptions In Mauritius, Dynamic Benchmarking Of Hotel Service Quality, Perceptions Of Service Quality In North Cyprus Hotels, Analyzing Service Quality In The Hospitality Industry and some others journal.

Analysis on Research Objective

Objective 1: To determine which factor of service quality dimension that has significant impact to the homestay industry.

Table 1: Analysis on each attributes based on various homestay

Attributes For All Homestay	**Overall Mean (Expectation)**	**Overall Mean (Perception)**
Tangible	4.7578	5.0000
Empathy	4.7460	5.1390
Assurance	4.8510	5.2550
Responsiveness	4.8640	4.6840
Reliability	4.9000	4.5283
Attributes for Homestay A	**Mean (Expectation)**	**Mean (Perception)**
Tangible	4.2160	4.5560
Empathy	4.1200	4.6600
Assurance	4.2400	4.8120
Responsiveness	4.2240	4.6440
Reliability	4.1970	4.4070
Attributes for Homestay B	**Mean (Expectation)**	**Mean (Perception)**
Tangible	4.2440	4.7870
Empathy	4.2600	5.1720
Assurance	4.3680	5.1760
Responsiveness	4.4680	4.6240
Reliability	4.5500	4.4700
Attributes for Homestay C	**Mean (Expectation)**	**Mean (Perception)**
Tangible	5.6040	5.4400
Empathy	5.6400	5.6000
Assurance	5.7600	5.6000
Responsiveness	5.9500	4.6800
Reliability	5.8300	4.5200
Attributes for Homestay D	**Mean (Expectation)**	**Mean (Perception)**
Tangible	4.9670	5.2200
Empathy	4.9600	5.1200
Assurance	5.0300	5.4300
Responsiveness	4.7900	4.7900
Reliability	5.0200	5.0200

Based from table 1, the main factor of service quality dimension that have significant impact to the homestay industry are reliability for consumer expectation (Mean=4.9000) and assurance for consumer perception (Mean=5.2550). Attribute "courtesy of homestay host" represent the highest mean score for responsiveness in Sungai Sireh Homestay that is 6.02. Based from the objective research the main factor of service quality that have significant impact to the homestay industry are reliability for consumer expectation and assurance for consumer perception.

Objective 2: To identify consumer's expectation and perception of each service quality dimensions.

Based from table 1 above, consumer's expectation for every attribute are moderate which represent tangible (4.7578), empathy (4.7460), assurance (4.8510), responsiveness (4.8640) and reliability (4.9000). For every attribute indicated that the highest mean is reliability. For consumer's perception for every attribute are moderate which represent tangible (5.000), empathy (5.1390), assurance (5.2550), responsiveness (4.6840) and reliability (4.5283). For every attribute indicated that the highest mean is assurance for consumer perception. For Banghuris Homestay the highest score mean is perception for assurance, 4.812. For Dorani Homestay represent perception for attribute assurance that is 5.176. For Sg.Sireh Homestay consumer expectation represents the highest mean score that is 5.950 and for Kuala Langat Homestay for consumer perception that is assurance, 5.430.

In conclusion, based from objective the highest mean score for expectation is reliability and for consumer perception is assurance. The attribute "provide service at the time it promise to do so" represent mean score 4.95 for reliability dimension. Attribute "Instills confidence in customer about homestay host" represent mean score 5.35 for assurance dimension. Based from various homestay in Selangor, Sg. Sireh Homestay represents the highest mean score is for consumer expectation.

Objective 3: To identify the gap between expectations and perceptions of service quality dimensions

Table 2: Analysis on consumer's expectation and perception based on each service quality dimension

Attributes for all homestay	**Mean (Expectation)**	**Mean (Perception)**	**Gap (Mean)**	**P-value**
Tangible	4.7578	5.0000	-0.2422	0.00
Empathy	4.7460	5.1390	-0.3930	0.00
Assurance	4.8510	5.2550	-0.4040	0.00
Responsiveness	4.8640	4.6840	+0.1800	0.01
Reliability	4.9000	4.5283	+0.3717	0.00
Attributes for Homestay A	**Mean (Expectation)**	**Mean (Perception)**	**Gap (Mean)**	**P-value**
Tangible	4.2160	4.5560	-0.3400	0.01
Empathy	4.1200	4.6600	-0.5400	0.01
Assurance	4.2400	4.8120	-0.5720	0.01
Responsiveness	4.2240	4.6440	-0.4000	0.01
Reliability	4.1970	4.4070	-0.2100	0.73
Attributes for Homestay B	**Mean (Expectation)**	**Mean (Perception)**	**Gap (Mean)**	**P-value**
Tangible	4.2440	4.7870	-0.5420	0.04
Empathy	4.2600	5.1720	-0.9120	0.00
Assurance	4.3680	5.1760	-0.8080	0.00
Responsiveness	4.4680	4.6240	-0.1560	0.25
Reliability	4.5500	4.4700	0.8300	0.52
Attributes for	**Mean**	**Mean**	**Gap**	**P-value**

Homestay C	(Expectation)	(Perception)	(Mean)	
Tangible	5.6040	5.4400	0.1700	0.33
Empathy	5.6400	5.6000	0.0400	0.83
Assurance	5.7600	5.6000	0.1600	0.37
Responsiveness	5.9500	4.6800	1.2700	0.00
Reliability	5.8300	4.5200	1.3100	0.00
Attributes for Homestay D	**Mean (Expectation)**	**Mean (Perception)**	**Gap (Mean)**	**P-value**
Tangible	4.9670	5.2200	-0.2500	0.00
Empathy	4.9600	5.1200	-0.1600	0.04
Assurance	5.0300	5.4300	-0.4000	0.00
Responsiveness	4.7900	4.7900	0.0000	0.98
Reliability	5.0200	4.7200	0.3000	0.03

** Notes: Mean gap: A negative gap indicated that consumer's perception are exceeding consumer's expectation while a positive gap indicated that consumer's expectation are exceeding consumer's perception. The scores are measured on a seven-point scale which the higher number is the better expectation and perception. P-value ≤ 0.05 (two-tailed test).*

The determinants of service quality in hospitality and identification of gap exist between perception and expectation. From table 2, from the overall consumer's perception and expectation was found that negative gap for tangible, empathy and assurance indicated that consumer's perception was exceeding the consumer's expectation. A positive gap for responsiveness and reliability indicated that consumer's expectation was exceeding the consumer's perception. The overall mean score for each attributes represent responsiveness (+0.18000), reliability (+0.372), tangible represent -0.242, empathy -0.393 and assurance for -0.4040. The p-value for all dimensions is significance which is less than 0.05. When we compare the differences between consumer's expectation and perception, the most significance impact which consumer's perception are exceeding consumer's expectation is tangible which gap (mean) are the highest among all the dimensions. In conclusion, for overall result indicated that the biggest positive gap (mean) is reliability and negative gap (mean) are tangible.

Discussion and Managerial Implication

Discussion on Finding

From the overall findings indicated that attribute reliability for consumer's expectation contributes the highest mean score. For consumer's perception indicated that attribute assurance for consumer's perception is the highest mean score for all homestay. Attribute on "price charging is equivalent to the treatment give" which are +1.14 means that consumer's expectation are exceeding consumer's perception. The smallest gap was found on "ability to handle complaints and problem" which is -0.54 means that consumer's perception is exceeding the consumer's perception.

Based from all four homestay, homestay C represents the highest mean score for responsiveness for consumer expectation. Attribute "courtesy of homestay host" indicated the highest mean for responsiveness. For consumer perception, homestay D represent the highest mean for assurance. Attribute "Instills confidence in customer about Homestay Host" indicated the highest mean.

Based from research objective, results indicated that there is significant impact for all attributes (tangible, empathy, assurance, responsiveness and reliability) where the p-value is below 0.05. Most of the consumer's expectation rated the importance of the attributes as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, tangible and empathy while for consumer's perception ranked the importance of the attributes as assurance, empathy, tangibles, responsiveness and reliability based from mean score.

The findings indicated that there is positive impact between both consumer's expectation and perception. In this case, it shows that consumer's perceived high perception than expectation based from the finding. Attribute assurance indicated the highest mean for consumer's perception. Homestay C represents the highest mean gap indicated those negative gaps which mean consumer's perception exceeding consumer's expectation.

The result of this study shows that there is a gap between consumer's expectation and perception. This is in contrast to SERVQUAL model by Parasuraman which highlight that there is a gap between consumer's perception and expectation. It is because we do not know what are the aspects the consumer considers to be important when evaluate this programme because different people have different opinion. The largest gap is for reliability where consumer's expectation exceeding consumer's perception while for the smallest gap indicated that attribute tangible have the highest mean indicated that consumer's perceptions are exceeding consumer's expectations. Based from the four homestays, homestay B have negative impact which indicated that consumer's perceptions exceeding consumer's expectations. For the positive impact, homestay C indicated that consumer's expectations are exceeding consumer's perceptions.

From the overall findings indicated that customers are more preferred the attributes on perception but after they perceived the service they preferred more on assurance. Attribute for "provide services at the time it promises to do" indicated the highest mean for reliability for perception while for expectation, attribute "instils confidence in customer about homestay host" indicated the highest mean for assurance.

In conclusion, attribute reliability and assurance represent the highest mean from overall finding. Based from all four homestays, homestay C represents the highest mean.

Managerial Implication

As discussed earlier, homestay industry in Malaysia is still new and realized can be a potential development in the rural area. The Tourism Board in each respective state did received complaints from dissatisfied tourist. Therefore, findings from this study is hope to help homestay hosts and homestay providers in upgrading their service and quality based on five service quality dimension.

First, the findings of this study are important to homestay providers to arrange or monitor the programme. They should note that they have to monitor on price charging and activity schedule for reliability attribute because customers expect the price charge equivalent to the treatment, service delivered and also for activity schedule to the customers. Second, researchers hope that this finding can assist the homestay hosts in developing guideline. For example, from the overall result indicated the smallest mean for expectation is for empathy. Homestay A should consider item in empathy like a pleasant surroundings and promotion strategy to implement strategy for fulfilling the customer's expectation.

Third, these findings are also important for State Tourism Centre for providing some indicators that will use for this agency as a guideline. This finding also can help tourism centre to make a lot of promotions as it is one of their responsibilities to this programme. Lastly, from demography finding indicated that mostly customers are students and foreigners. Tourism centre can evaluate strategy to promote homestay for local people. Mostly they visit homestay just for university research. If they can evaluate any programme to promote homestay for local people as a place for holiday, it will expose local people to this domestic programme in Malaysia.

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Training and Employment in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry in Malaysia

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Hospitality and tourism is one of Malaysia's main foreign exchange earners that generates revenues and contributes to employment. The dynamism of a sustainable hospitality and tourism industry demands highly creative experts to lift the industry in Malaysia to a higher level. The importance of human resource development to the economic viability of Malaysian hospitality and tourism is highlighted. There should be no presumption that training will lead to reduced profits. This paper examines the employment level in hospitality and tourism in Malaysia, and assesses the link between training and employment in a sustainable hospitality and tourism. Companies that invest in human resources are expected to maintain their competitive edge in the hospitality and tourism market. The paper will first describe the methodological approach then present a brief review about hospitality and tourism employment. This paper analyses the relationship between hospitality and tourism training and employment, and finally, presents a conclusion with proposal for the development and implementation of hospitality and tourism training policy and outlines strategies for further research.

Key words: Training, Employment, Hospitality, Tourism, Sustainable

Introduction

Hospitality and tourism (H&T) industry is becoming the world's largest and fastest growing industry. The hospitality and tourism industry is among the largest economic sector and job generator in the world; contributing to 9.9% of the world's gross domestic product, and creating 1 in every 12 jobs worldwide. Hospitality and tourism industry is continually growing at 3% annually in 2008. It has generated an expected gross domestic product of US$5.9 trillion and employing 238 million people in 2008 (WTTC, 2009).

Even though Malaysia is a relatively new entrant into tourism activities as compared to its Association of South East Asian Nation (ASEAN) neighbours, the industry has grown tremendously over the years. The industry continues to an important sector because Malaysia remains a popular destination. An article in BERNAMA (January 26th, 2007) reported that in US, the country with the largest Travel & Tourism Demand based on WTTC, that a UBS poll in 2006 has cited Malaysia as the World's Best Value-for-Money Destination. Tourism Malaysia's

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media release reported that US's Global Traveller Magazine (GTM) polls for consecutive three years until 2008 have cited Malaysia as the World's Leading Destination. In 2007, the total number of tourist arrivals to Malaysia was 20.97 million, and the number increased to 22.05 million in 2008. The percentage of short-haul tourists from ASEAN region reached 75.1% in 2008. The highest number of tourist arrivals outside ASEAN was from China represented 4.3%. Total Tourist Receipts rose to RM49.6 billion in 2008 (Tourism Malaysia, 2009). Tourism industry becomes a key foreign exchange earner for Malaysia, contributing to 43.0% of the services account of the balance of payment in 2005 compared 32.7% five years before (EPU, 2006). The deficit in the services account will be reduced because of higher inflows from tourism, education, transport, finance, health and professional services.

Literature Review

Jafari (2003) discusses four tourism research platforms of thinking on tourism in chronological order, firstly on economic prospects, secondly on socio-cultural aspects, thirdly on sustainable tourism and fourthly systemic research toward the formation of a body of knowledge.

Siti-Nabiha et al (2008) discuss sustainable tourism development issues and examine policies, regulations and strategies to achieve sustainable tourism in Malaysia. Amoah and Baum (1997) advocate the development and implementation of a specific tourism education policy, to bring tourism education closer in line with British tourism policies.

Knowles, Teixeira and Egan (2003) make a comparative analysis between undergraduate level courses in tourism/hospitality in Brazil and those in the UK. Charles (1999) reviews the tourism and hospitality education and training in the Carribean. The paper concluded that there is a need to adopt a strategic approach to tourism education and training on the part of both educators and policy makers. The main findings of Airey and Johnson (1999) are that there is a range of opinion about the need for a common core body of knowledge of the British H&T courses. Dale and Robinson (2001) propose that tourism education should become more specialist in nature and forward a three-domain model of tourism education based on generic, functional, and product/market-based themed degree routes in UK.

There are related skills and training research in Commonwealth countries. Sindiga (1994) reports that Kenya has done rather well with middle level training especially for the hotel subsector. Training for high-level management of tourism enterprises has begun as well. Kaplan (2004) investigates the role of skills development in South Africa's tourism-led development strategy, and that lack of an integrated and co-ordinated approach to tourism skills development limits the potential of skills development to tourism transformation.

Research pertaining to employment in H&T industry is relatively limited. Evans (1993) found over-producing graduates in tourism and concluded that there is no strong evidence emerged to suggest that qualifications play a major part at management level within the industry. Hjalager and Andersen (2001) investigate the profiles of employees and advantages in tourism career in Denmark and they found that turnover is extremely high among the unskilled and significantly better retention rates are found among those with a professional or vocational tourism education.

Methodology

This paper uses secondary data collected from public domain such as published data from private establishments and government agencies websites from March to Jun 2009. This paper examines the magnitude of employment, and describes the relationship between training and employment in H&T. The labour market issues and the role of apprenticeship in meeting future needs for the industry are examined. This paper also examines the development of tourism education and skill training in hospitality and tourism. This paper analyses programmes and other courses with hospitality, travel or tourism and specific fields. Development of high quality, efficient education and training that match the needs of tourism professionals is examined.

Key Findings

Tourism Facilities

The development allocation for the tourism industry under the Ninth Malaysia Plan period amounting to RM1.8 billion focusing on the provision of adequate infrastructure, followed by environment, accommodation and others. The number of hotels expanded by 51.2 % from 1,492 in 2000 to 2,256 in 2005. Between 2000 and 2005, the total number of hotel rooms in Malaysia increased by 37.3% from 124,413 to 170,873 (EPU, 2006). The data shows most of the latest hotels are of the larger size category. In the KL Structural Plan 2020's for tourism, the data shows that majority of hotels in the Kuala Lumpur City are in the size category of 300 rooms and above. (DBKL, 2000).

Travel and tour agencies increased substantially from 1,021 in 2000 to 2,383 in 2005, mainly located in major gateways such as Kuala Lumpur, Pulau Langkawi and Pulau Pinang (EPU, 2006). Among the Travel and tour agencies, 2,007 agencies has joined Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA, 2009) Licences issued to tour coach and car rental operators increased to 20,610 in 2005 (EPU, 2006).

Labor Market

Employment in the tourism industry reach 451,000 in 2005 where the bulk was concentrated as direct employment in the hotel industry which stood at 91,156 in 2005 and employment by tour and travel agencies was estimated at 13,028 in 2005 (EPU, 2006). According to the Labour Force Survey, as of 2008, they were 11.122 million employed persons. The number of employed persons data shows that the hotel and restaurant sector employs 763,200 persons (7.1%) of the work force (Department of Statistics, 2009a). The labour force breakdown by education was secondary (54.9%), tertiary (22.4%), primary (18.2%) and without formal education (4.5%). (Department of Statistics, 2009c) Statistics from Immigration Department of Malaysia cited by the Department of Statistics show that the trend of foreign workers working in Malaysia continued to increase from 2001 to 2007, and the number of foreign workers recorded in 2007 was 2.045 million workers (Department of Statistics, 2009b). According to the Department of Statistics, as of Q3/2008, 9.8% of employed persons are non-citizen (Department of Statistics, 2009c).

Academic Programmes

MOHE's polytechnics provide diploma programmes in Hotel and Catering Management, and Tourism at very affordable tuition fees to the secondary school leavers. Foundation programmes available are in the specification of Hospitality, and Hospitality and Tourism. The certificate programmes in Hospitality Management provide specialisation in Front Office Management, Accommodation Practice, Hospitality Studies, Hotel Operations, Culinary Art, Bakery, Pastry, Food and Beverage Management. The certificate programmes in Tourism Management provide specialisation in Travel Operations, Travel Tourism Management, Tourism and Travel. The duration of certificate programmes is four semesters (two years). The diploma programmes in Hospitality Management provide specialisation in Hospitality Management, Hotel Management, Chef Training, Culinary Arts, Food Services, Hotel & Catering Management, and International Catering and Hospitality Management, while the programmes in Tourism Management provide specialisation Tourism & Travel Management, Hotel & Tourism Management, and Travel Tourism & Hospitality Management.

The diploma programmes are to be completed in six to seven semesters (about two years eight months and above). Industrial training such as ticketing training, industrial placement, or hotel placement is typically integral components of the diploma programmes. The focuses of bachelor degree programmes are in Hotel Management, Hospitality Management, International Hospitality Management, Entrepreneurship (Tourism), Tourism Management, International Tourism Management, Hospitality and Tourism Management, International Hotel & Tourism Management, International Tourism and Hospitality Management, Hotel & Convention Management, Food Service Management and Hotel & Restaurant Management. The duration of bachelor degree programmes is three to four years. For graduate level, (two years) MBA degree programmes are available in Hospitality Management, Tourism and Hospitality Management, while Master of Science programmes can be chosen among Hotel Management, Tourism Management, and Food Service Management. (Three years) Doctor of Philosophy degree programmes provide specialisation in Tourism and Hospitality & Tourism.

Under the Eight Malaysia Plan, RM383.8 million and RM4.4509 billion have been utilised for technical / vocational education, and training, and the allocation has been increased in Ninth Malaysia Plan to RM629.2 million and RM4.7926 billion respectively (EPU, 2006). The public universities that conduct academic and executives H&T programmes are University Malaya (UM), Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK), University Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) and Universiti Teknologi MARA Malaysia (UiTM), among which UiTM has got the widest range of programmes from certificate to up to doctorate level. Other government closely related institutions that offer H&T academic programmes are Kolej Tunku Abdul Rahman (KTAR), Open University Malaysia (OUM) and Universiti Industri Selangor (UNISEL).

Data collected shows that they are 164 H&T-related programmes, 100 is in hospitality, 32 is in tourism, and 32 is in hospitality & tourism; hospitality specialisation is overwhelmingly popular among the students. Analysed by level of studies, 55% is of diploma level, 20% is of bachelor level, 13% is of certificate level, 7% is of master level, 3% is of foundation level and 2% is of doctorate level.

Skills Training and Hotel Industry Apprenticeship Scheme (HIAS)

The effort to standardise and provide for professional service of the first-liner to the tourists i.e. the tour guide has been started earlier, followed by Tour Leading, International Travel and Tourism Management, IATA-UFTAA Foundation Diploma and Electronic Booking Tool, IATA-UFTAA International Travel and Tourism Foundation Diploma, etc. Licensed tour guides are designated to lead tours within the bound of the country for the purpose of sightseeing excursion, business, convention and education.

Among the tour guiding and related skills courses providers are Asian Tourism Institute (ATI), Global Institute of Tourism (GIT), Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA) School of Tourism (MST), Sentral Technology Institute, Taylor's University College, Travex Institute of Tourism and World-Point Academy of Tourism. Department of Skills Development (DSD) has developed a total of 71 NOSS for tourism, travel, hotel, theme park and recreational activities. By 2005, more than 2,500 tourism-related training programmes were conducted utilising RM29.2 million from the Human Resource Development Fund (HRDF) accommodating 113,139 training places. A total of 2,735 trainees were trained with the Apprenticeship Scheme in 2001 – 2005 (EPU, 2006). The Hotel Industry Apprenticeship Scheme (HIAS) programme is designed to mitigate labour market issues by increasing the market of skilled workforce in meeting needs of the hospitality industry.

Executive Certificate, Diploma, Degree and MBA Programmes

Lately they are also executive programmes offer to working adults by specialised training providers such as Asian Hospitality and Tourism Association (AHTA), Carlton International Academy (CIA), EDU ACE or private university such as Asia E-University (AEU) and Universiti Industri Selangor (UNISEL) or training units of public universities such as University Malaya, University Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) or Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). The executive certificate programmes in Hospitality Management provide specialisation in Hotel Operations, Banquet and Conference Management, Event Management, Front Office Management, Housekeeping Management, Bar and Beverage Management, Food and Beverage Cost Control, Food and Beverage Management, Food Service Management and Kitchen Management, and Tourism Management.

The executive diploma programmes in Hospitality provide specialisation in Club Management, Event Management, Front Office Management, Hospitality Management, Hotel Administration, Hotel Management, Housekeeping Operations, Resort and Club Management, Culinary Arts, Food and Beverage Management, Food Services and Entrepreneurship Management, Restaurant Management, and Tourism Management. The focuses of executive bachelor degree programmes are in Hospitality Management and Tourism Management while the professional MBA degree programme is in Tourism and Hospitality Management.

Discussion

From the data collected, there is a total of 61 education and training institutions of higher education offer different programs at varying levels, including certificates or foundation, diplomas, and bachelor's degrees, master's degrees and doctorate degrees in tourism/hospitality courses.

From all the programmes, 60% is hospitality-themed (of which one-third specialised in food services), 20% is tourism-themed and another 20% is hospitality & tourism-themed. In terms of levels of study, 71% programmes of foundation to diploma level and 29% of bachelor degree and above. Among the hospitality programmes, one third of them focus on food service management and this may have contributed to the spillover to restaurant business and improvement in service delivery especially with the emerging of cafés or *kopitiams* in recent years.

The recent trend indicates that those involved in hotel operations began to involve as education providers probably to mitigate the difficulty to source qualified local talents to fill their hotel position openings. Among these institutions are such as Berjaya University College of Hospitality (Berjaya UCH), Flamingo International College, Genting Inti International College (GIIC), Sunway University College, Taylor's University College and YTL International College.

On top of the public universities and government related education providers, most of the education providers are private colleges and the rest are a handful of private universities / university colleges such as Berjaya University College of Hospitality (Berjaya University College of Hospitality), HELP University College, Kuala Lumpur Metropolitan University College, Universiti Teknologi Legenda, Limkokwing University of Creative Technology, MSU, Nilai University College, SEGI University College, Sunway University College, Taylor's University College and Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (UNITAR).

At the diploma level, latest trend observed is the inter-disciplinary nature of new programmes. Compared conventional hotel management or tourism management, nowadays the education institutions offer more exotic programmes such as Hotel & Tourism Management, Travel Tourism & Hospitality Management, Hotel & Catering Management, and International Catering and Hospitality Management.

Generally, the aims of the H&T courses are substantially vocational and business orientated. Compared with Dale and Robinson's three domains model of tourism education, the academic and executive certificate and diploma programmes can be categorised as functional tourism in nature while bachelor degree programmes and above are generic tourism. On the other hand, tourism skill training programme such as City / Local Nature Guide, Eco Host, Mesra Malaysia, Boat Operating and Budget Accommodation Management, etc. is the thrust of Product / Market Tourism. The executive programmes also provide knowledge of product / market tourism area such as Banquet and Conference Management, Bar and Beverage Management, Event Management, Resort and Club Management.

Locally, there is still lack of cultural heritage academic programme such as that are offered by University of East Anglia in United Kingdom or Flinders University in Australia. It was found that probably due to cultural sensitiveness, exotic courses such as casino management is not available in Malaysia though it was common in other major Asian tourism destinations Hong Kong (e.g. by Hong Kong Management Association) and Singapore (e.g. by EASB Institute of Management) due to their approximate closeness to major and emerging casino operations.

There is a growing role for apprenticeship in meeting manpower needs for the industry. These programmes are able to produce knowledgeable and skilled personnel in front-end such as Food & Beverage Service or back-end such as Kitchen Practice.

The post-SARS period saw the emergence of a more professional Malaysian H&T industry. The education and training institutions have developed specialist departments that concentrate on particular themed tourism areas. Most of the executive or career programmes specialise in Hospitality and Tourism Management and the rest from Food Service Management offered by executive training arms of public universities.

Conclusion

The author found that Malaysia has already done rather well with entry-level training especially for the hotel sub-sector. Training for middle-level management of tourism enterprises has begun as well. With acceptance of more UNESCO world heritage sites, it is timely to encourage the education and training institutions to enhance on the depth and variety of Product / Market Tourism programmes in order to prepare capable manpower for creation a higher value-added and sustainable H&T industry. Malaysia will probably need more knowledgeable and skilled manpower that can contribute not only to upkeep but also to preserve the UNESCO world heritage sites of natural (in Sabah and Sarawak) or cultural (in Malacca and Penang) attributes. About specific courses such as casino management which is not available in Malaysia, related companies that required these specialists will have to train the required talents in-house, and risk the loss of experienced human resources by newer similar establishments in Macau or Singapore.

A closer partnership between the educators and the industry is crucial to improve H&T professionalism in meeting the tourists' expectation. National Tourism Human Resource Development Council (NTHRDC) can enhance its role to coordinate niche-based development of education and training institutions in meeting the national tourism policy. Sufficient local workers have to be matched to the industry demand in order to minimise dependency on foreign labour on both certificate / diploma-qualification skilled jobs that have extensive interface with tourists or degree-qualification management jobs that drive operations of H&T establishments.

This paper can be considered within the scope of Jafari's third tourism research platform. Further research needs to be done on the extent of tourism human resource requires specialist tourism skills and the demand for the themed tourism. These inputs will be able to boost efficiency of the human resource to the development of the industry, and also toward the formation of a body of knowledge as the fourth tourism research platform.

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Conceptualising Perceived Value of Low Cost Airlines

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Beginning of year 2002, the emerging of low cost airlines in Malaysia has changed the mindset of Malaysians towards air travel. Before the existence of low cost airlines in Malaysia, air travel is seen as a luxury mode of travel that only the middle upper and upper income groups can afford. With the birth of home grown low cost carriers in Malaysia such as AirAsia, AirAsia X and Firefly, air travel is made affordable to the lower income group whom can now opt for short leisure trips to neighbouring countries. Low cost airlines compete with other modes of transportation such as land and rail for leisure travellers. This paper based on review of literature delves into the definitions, meanings and types of perceived value, and its possible implications in the existing low cost airlines in Malaysia. Perceived value is being researched extensively especially for business-to-business transactions and luxury tourism and hospitality services. This is due to for business-to-business transactions, the business buyers are rational and their purchase decision is based on the economic criteria, greater benefits obtained from the amount paid is seen as of great value to the company. For luxury tourism and hospitality services, the benefits received have to exceed customer expectations in order to stay competitive in the high cost and high value industry. However, there are limited research on low cost services particularly low cost airlines and in Malaysia, there is no such research being conducted yet. The challenges present by perceived value are that different individual perceives value differently in their purchase of a similar product and service. Hence, generalisation of perceived benefits, monetary and non monetary value from the purchase of service in particular which of nature is intangible rarely exists. The paper contributes to a greater understanding of the importance and complexity of the meaning of perceived value.

Key words: perceived value, low cost airline

The Significance of Perceived Value

Value and its related issues are given considerable attention by the Marketing Science Institute, United States of America in the late 1990s (Eggert and Ulaga, 2002). Since then research concerning perceived value for the service industries has gained

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considerable interest among academics. Perceived value is identified as a measure for gaining competitive advantage for a product or service by many academics (Iglesias and Guillen, 2004, p.373; Petrick, 2004, p.397; Petrick and Backman, 2002, p.38; Kashyap and Bojanic, 2000, p.45; Stevens, 1992, p.44; Jen and Hu, 2003, p.310, Eggert and Ulaga, 2002, p.110).

There is a considerable number of academic research on perceived value focused on more luxurious leisure and tourism service industries such as cruise (Petrick, 2004; Duman, 2002), hotel (Kashyap and Bojanic, 2000), restaurant (Al-Sabbahy, Ekinchi and Riley, 2004), golf course (Petrick and Backman, 2002), tour operators (Martinez and Guillen, 2006) and business-to-business (Eggert and Ulaga, 2002). Although value is also regarded as an important aspect of airline choice, customer's evaluation of airlines services is rather neglected (Hall, AbuBakar and Oppenheim, 2001, p.2) particularly for low cost airlines where price in comparison to perceived benefits is seen as a more important factor in influencing customer's decision making. This study is significant as there is no such research in exploring perceived value of the new segment of customers created by the home grown low cost airlines in Malaysia to continuously create value to individuals in this market segment in order for the low cost airlines to remain competitive.

Definitions of Perceived Value

Perceived value is defined by many academics as a trade off between the benefits received and the sacrifices (can be in the form of monetary and non monetary) made by a consumer. The concept of perceived value was first introduced by Zeithaml (1988) in her research relating price, quality and value. Zeithaml (1988, p.13-14) in her research concludes that value can be defined as "*(1) value as low price; (2) value is whatever I want in a product; (3) value is the quality I get for the price I pay; and (4) value is what I get for what I give.*" These four definitions of value can be summarised in one overall definition: *perceived value is the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a service based on perceptions of what is received and what is given* (Zeithaml, and Bitner, 2000, p.442).

On the other hand, Lovelock (2001, p.258) uses the term net value instead of perceived value based on the value definition of "*value is what I get for what I give*" by Zeithaml (1988, p.13) which includes the sacrifice components (money, time, effort). Woodall (2003) and Lovelock (2001) define net value as "*the sum of all the perceived benefits (gross value) minus the sum of all perceived costs*." Correspondingly, Chen and Dubinsky (2003, p.326) assert that perceived value is "*a consumer's perception of the net benefits gained in exchange for the costs incurred in obtaining the desired benefits*." The net benefits state by Chen and Dubinsky (2003) in their definition of perceived value is similar to Woodall's (2003) and Lovelock's (2001) net value as perceived benefits is described as gross value.

Perceived value is the benefits customers receive in relation to total costs (which include the price paid plus other costs associated with the purchase) (McDougall and Levesque, 2000, p.394; Jen and Hu, 2003). Patterson and Spreng (1997), Iglesias and Guillen (2004, p.373) concur that perceived value is "*weighing the expected benefits and the required sacrifices*" perceive in the purchase of a product or service.

Petrick (2004, p.398) contends that perceived value required a thorough assessment on what the consumer pays and what he or she gets in return after identifying other components that may be part of consumer's definition of value. If a consumer who had experienced a service before and found the perceived benefits exceeding what they have paid, their perception of value of the service is high as the customer received much benefits in comparison to price paid.

Woodruff (1997) purports that "*a customer's perceived preference for and evaluation of those product attributes, attribute performances, and consequences arising from use that facilitate (or block) achieving the customer's goal and purposes in use situation*." Similarly, Eggert and Ulaga (2002) stated that the value concept is closely linked to the exchange theory of marketing (Kotler, 1972) The exchange theory of marketing takes place when a consumer is ready to part with their money in change for the products which meet their needs or solve their psychological or functional problems.

The Complexity of Perceived Value

Perceived value is a subjective and personal definition to the individual customer. Customer perceived value is based on consumer's subjective feeling (Tsan, Liu, and Theocharous, 2006). As different individuals have different levels of needs and experiences, thus their perceived value of a particular product or service differs. Personal factors including needs, motives, expectations, personality and social status of an individual affects his or her perceived value (Solomon, 1999). Perceived value stems from an individual's opinion thus different individuals may construct different value of similar products and services (Zeithaml, 1988; Churchill and Peter, 1998). Consumers may differ in their view of perceived benefits received from the purchase of similar products or services as the evaluation of benefits is subjective to each different individual (Kortege and Okonkwo, 1993; Kashyap and Bojanic, 2000, p.46). Perceived value is defined as consumer's evaluation of products and services that meet his or her needs and his or her perceived preference resulting from their evaluation (Woodruff, 1997). Winer (2007, p.240) describes perceived value as an amount of money that a consumer is willing to pay for a product or service and it is unique to the individual consumer thus perceived value should be refer to an average or typical value for a particular market segment.

Besides the complexity of different individual has different construct of value in their evaluation of similar products and services, benefits received from purchasing a brand is also perceived as different from another brand of the same product or service. Features of each competing brand are different therefore affecting the perception of benefits among target customers. Perceived value of service is much more complex as the perceived benefits received are not derived from what is offered, that is, the core product and features of service, but how service is being delivered, and the level of consumer's involvement in the delivery of service.

The assignment of value after weighing cost and benefits from the purchase of service is more complicated than product as service is intangible. Service attributes cannot be seen, they are "a bundle of experiences" and perceived benefits of service are based on consumer's evaluation before, during and after they have experienced the service. Perceived value can be formed either pre or post-purchase (or both) (Patterson and Spreng, 1997, p.421)..Woodall (2003) added that perceived value is created at different stages of the purchase process including pre-purchase (ex ante), during purchase (transaction), post-purchase (ex-poste) and after use/experience (disposition). Halinen and Tornroos (1995) assert that a customer's perceived value at each stage of purchase is also influence by the cultural and contextual situation. Also, if a customer repurchase a service, his perceived value of the same service purchased may be different in comparison to him purchasing the service for the first time.

Value of Services and the Value of Relationship

This research focuses on the value of services and on the value of relationship (Lindgreen and Wynstra (2005) between the low cost airlines and their customers. The aggressive advertisements of Malaysia's home grown low cost airlines such as Firefly and AirAsia stress more on price and less on services offered has created a price sensitive market that could lead to price being the only evaluative criteria to purchase of the services of low cost airlines. Perceived benefits are crucial to low cost airlines in the creation of perceived value to secure favourable behavioural intention such as repurchase among customers. This research attempts to explore the evaluation of the benefits of service received against the monetary costs and sacrifices of purchasing the services of low cost airlines among Malaysians thus focuses on the value of service. The value of relationship exists between the low cost airlines and its customers as both the service provider and its customer co-produce service. Customer of low cost airlines is highly involvement in the service delivery process, the willingness of the customer to cooperate with the service provider creates the value of relationship. Lovelock (2001) termed service that required active participation and cooperation of customer as people processing service. The identification of perceived benefits are crucial for people processing service such as low cost airlines as the high level customer involvement leads to incurrence of non monetary costs such as time, mental and physical effort and fear among customers (Lovelock, 2001, p.39-40).

Dimensions of Value Delivery

Sheth, Mittal and Newman (1999, p.772) state that value delivery has two dimensions, effectiveness and efficiency. If a firm can fulfill customer's needs with the customer spending minimal amount of money, effort, time and stress in obtaining the product or service then both effectiveness and efficiency is achieved in the delivery of value. Traveling with low cost airlines may not incurred high monetary cost and if low cost airline operators can design the service delivery process to minimize non monetary costs or sacrifices such as effort, time and stress of customers, efficiency can be achieved. Effectiveness in value delivery can also be attained by understanding types of utilities appreciated by customers.

Meanings of Value

Woodall (2003) identified value has been defined from the perspectives of philosophy, economics and business. The early definitions of value from the perspectives of economics and philosophy include intrinsic, exchange, use and utilitarian value. A product that has intrinsic value means it is valuable because of the basic characteristics of the product or the core product itself. Exchange value concerns the value of a product that is dependent to its costs and scarcity. Use value concerns value derived from results of using a product. Utilitarian value refers to the comparison of benefits and sacrifices made by customer in acquiring a product. The perceived utilitarian value is different among individual customer as each customer has different views on benefits and sacrifices involved for similar product or services purchased. Therefore, perceived value is influenced by time, situation and an individual's value system. Most of the definitions of perceived value stems from the philosophical utilitarian value developed by Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill.

From the business perspective, perceived value can be identified as (1) net value from weighing perceived benefits against perceived sacrifices; (2) marketing value which focuses only on product or service attributes such as features, quality and its benefits; (3) derived value that emphasizes on benefits derived from usage and experience that may be influence by social and human values due to different perception of value of each individual; (4) rational value relating to comparison between product attributes and objective prices of various alternatives available; and (5) sale value which concerns monetary cost, lowest price alternative is considered as good value due to the reduction of monetary sacrifice (Woodall, 2003, p.6-8).

Woodall (2003) argues that low cost airlines are operating in the context of sale value as customers purchase service of low cost airlines due to low price and not due to the service attributes. Woodall's argument is supported by Anniah (2002) and Mason and Alamdari (2007) in their research of low cost airlines in Malaysia where the trend in leisure and short haul business travelers strongly indicated that low air fare is the principal determinant in choosing to fly low cost airlines which defies marketing and positioning strategies. Anniah (2002) found that customers of low cost airlines are willing to trade off perceived risk, brand and other inconveniences for a lower fare. If price is the primary criteria influencing customer's choice to travel with low cost airline then perceived benefits may not exist at all in the minds of customers. It is worthwhile to explore if there is a minimum level of perceived benefits among customers of low cost airlines that could influence their choice of low cost airline otherwise price competition could undermine factors of non price competition.

Types of Perceived Value

Customers form their perceived value at different stages of the purchase process. Woodall (2003) through his literature review on perceived value presented a longitudinal perspective in value, stating that customer constructs value before purchase, at the point of purchase, post-purchase and after use or experience. The different types of value conceptualized from the longitudinal perspective include acquisition value, transaction value, in-use value and redemption value (Grewal, Monroe and Krishnan, 1998; Parasuraman and Grewal, 2000).

Acquisition value is perceived net gain associated with the products or services acquired in consumption which is similar to net value (Woodall, 2003). Acquisition value is the expected benefit which is the get component in exchange with the give component, that is, the amount money given up to purchase the product. Acquisition value takes into consideration the expected benefits received and the monetary cost whereas the component of non monetary costs is ignored. However, in the low cost airlines industry, customers of low cost airlines sacrifice not only monetary cost but also non monetary cost due to their involvement in the service delivery process that some individuals may perceived that they are making non monetary sacrifices with the additional effort made to board a low cost airline to the destination of their choice.

Transaction value is the comparison made by customer between their internal reference price and promotion price or a special deal price (Grewal, et al., 1998). Transaction value can be conceptualized as the psychological satisfaction or pleasure obtained from taking an advantage of the special deal price (Al-Sabbahy et al., 2004).

Grewal, et al. (1998) claims that transaction value has a significant influence on consumer's perceived value especially when customers take advantage of a special price deal. The low cost airlines launch their special price deal or price promotion for all or selected destinations frequently are able to induce customers to purchase during this special deal period due to the psychological satisfaction obtained as a result of their perception of transaction value.

In-use value is the assessment of actual benefits and costs from using of the product (Grewal, et al., 1998). In a service industry such as low cost airlines where customers are offered minimum level of service and required to involve actively in the service delivery process, the evaluation of in-use value at the post purchase stage as the outcomes or consequences from using the service is crucial to build the value of relationship between the low cost airlines and their customers. Favourable in-use value can shift customers from the perspective of sale value to derived value for low cost airlines.

Redemption value is the benefit of disposing the product or terminating of service (Grewal, et al., 1998). Redemption value does not occur in the purchase of service such as low cost airline as it did not involve the termination of service like between professional service provider such as a research firm and its client.

The longitudinal perspective in value includes horizontal time perspective, product attributes, attributes performances and consequences from using a product. However, the target market of the low cost airlines includes the middle and lower middle income leisure travelers in Malaysia who without the existence of low cost airlines may not be able to afford short distance traveling to neighbouring Asian countries may evaluate value from a multidimensional perspective instead of just taking into account perceived benefits such as service attributes, attributes performance and service outcome.

While the presence of attributes and performances of service are undoubtedly crucial in leisure traveling to achieve favourable behavioural intention but the socio-psychological aspect cannot be neglected. The multidimensional perspective is based upon the model of Sheth, Newman and Gross (1991) which broadly categorized value into functional value, emotional value, social value, epistemic value and conditional value.

Functional value is perceived utility derived from the product attributes including features, quality and performance (Sheth et al., 1991, p.160). The measurement of service attributes, its performance and outcome in the longitudinal model by Woodall (2003) is a subset of functional value. Low cost airlines' functional value attributes include their website, aircrafts, crews, food and beverages, other customers boarding the same flight and service encounter and delivery process, stresses on the value of service. Functional value is derived from pre-consumption and during consumption evaluation. Williams and Soutar (2000, p.1418) state that "*expected functional value perceptions may be more influential in customer choice behaviour for tourism services than the more socio-psychological dimensions*."

Emotional value is feelings and pleasurable affective states created by the product or service. High involvement of customers in the process of service delivery in low cost airlines will arouse positive and negative feelings depending on the customer's mindset, initiative and willingness to participate. Emotional value has a profound effect on customer's satisfaction and post-consumption value perceptions (Williams and Soutar, 2000). Positive emotional value would lead to repeat purchase.

Social value is derived from "*an alternative's association with one or more specific social groups*" (Sheth et al., 1991, p.161). Social value may be the most important perceived value to the study of low cost airlines as Malaysian leisure traveler travel in group, with family members, friends and colleagues. The social value also fulfills one's need for prestige to boost one's status in their social groups on the number destination visited (Schutte and Ciarlante, 1998, p.123).

Epistemic value is the ability of the product to arouse curiosity, offer new experience or satisfy a desire for knowledge (Sheth et al., 1991, p.162). Epistemic value can be derived from individuals who have never experience traveling by flight, the first time fliers. The lower airfare and frequent price promotion of low cost airlines has contributed to a category growth by attracting new customers. The new segment of customers created by low cost airlines are individuals who have never travel by airplane before and who would never have thought of flying if the low cost airlines do not exist as the airfare for full service airline such as Malaysia Airline in Malaysia is beyond what they could afford. Thus, air travel presents a whole new experience for individuals in the new market segment. But with the intense price competition among the low cost and full service airlines, customer retention is a challenge to the low cost airlines.

Conditional value is value derived from the situation the individual is in during the consumption of the product or service. Conditional value is dependent on the situation or circumstances (Sheth et al., 1991, p.162). Provision of services of low cost airlines occurs in the service factories such as airport and aircraft. Hence, the inseparable characteristics of service with its service provider, the behaviour of other customers and service factory present for low cost airlines. Situation at the check-in counter, departure hall, aircraft and arrival hall such as noise and behaviour of others may influence value judgment of customers.

Conclusion

Numerous research and extensive literature on perceived value indicated the importance of understanding value from customer's perspective to compete for market share in a particular industry. The different perspectives of perceived value including the philosophical utilitarian view on the tradeoff between perceived benefits and sacrifices, the business perspectives of net value, marketing value, derived value, rational value and sale value, Woodruff's (1997) product attributes, attributes performance and outcome model and Sheth et al.'s (1991) multidimensional model demonstrated the complexity of the concept. The presence of customer's characteristics, personal values and experience in influencing the perceived value of a product or service increases the level of complexity of the concept. The general perception is that customers who purchase the services of low cost airlines due to their perception of reduction of sacrifices. However, the increasing number of customers who travel with low cost airlines and the contribution of low cost airlines in generating leisure travelers indicated the significance of this study to explore the perception of value of new customers created by low cost airlines and the existing customers who are once pampered by full service airline now willing to travel with low cost airlines. The question is, is it just reduction of sacrifice or is the yet to be identified perceived value.

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