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"Designing Tourism Research For Practical Applications"

26 JULY 2008, PENANG, MALAYSIA

Editors:
Prof. Muhamad Jantan
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Organised by:
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PREFACE

The aim of this symposium is to provide a platform for discussing and sharing of tourism research topics, methodology and sharing of research findings. The symposium also aims at stimulating inter-disciplinary discussions and networking to further enhance and enrich the knowledge of academicians, practitioners, and professionals on tourism.

This national conference covers a broad range of topics and themes related to tourism development such as Destination Planning, MICE, Accommodation Sector, Product Development, Training and Employment, Sustainable Tourism, Service Industry, Information Technology, Education, Human Resource Development, Impacts of Tourism Development, the Businesses of Tourism, Special Interest Tourism, Marketing and other related topics.

Planned initially as a discussion intensive gathering on tourism research methods, this symposium targets 20 papers. However, we received good responses and about 30 papers were submitted. Nevertheless, only 24 papers were selected based on a double-blind review by a panel of experts.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all paper presenters, paper reviewers as well as chair sessions who have kindly agreed to share their knowledge and experience at this national conference. Special thanks also go to members of Tourism Research Circle (HBP) and to the organizing committee members for their tremendous cooperation and dedication to make this event successful.

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The Effects of CPI and GDP on International Tourist Arrivals: The Case of Malaysia

Nanthakumar Loganathan[1*] and Yahaya Ibrahim[2]
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Most studies focused on the importance of tourism industry towards enhancement trades performance and economic development. This study examined the hypothesis of 'economic-driven' tourism growth in Malaysia by using econometrics modeling. To generate the specifically empirical analysis, this study used annual data from 1980-2007 to analyze the economic-driven tourism growth by using vector autoregressive (VAR) estimation. The long-run relationships between specified variables are considered using the Johansen and Juselius co-integration analysis. Finally, Granger-causality results have implies causal relationship of economic-driven tourism growth in Malaysia.

Key words: tourism, economic growth, consumer price index

Introduction

Nowadays, many people search for special destinations for their traveling, leisure activities, shopping etc. The main reason of traveling among the travelers are leisure, visiting , businesses, conventions and seminar, meetings, study abroad, religion purposes as well sports or games activities. Tourism activities will involve both of the consumption such as purchase of goods and services among the travelers and it impacts reflected in several sectors of the national economy. In the Malaysian context, most travelers desire to visit this countries because to experience wildlife, scenery, forests, beaches, scenery and exotic panoramas. The most frequent travelers continue their climbing activities at the Malaysia National Park and Kinabalu Park, where the numbers have climbed has been increase by the years for over the past 30 years.

The tourism industry has remained strong despite the economic slowdown in the first half of the Eight Malaysia Plan, whereby, the industry continued to be a key foreign exchange earner, contributing to growth, investment and employment as well as strengthening the services account of the balance of payments. The resilience of the industry was largely attributed to the active participation of both the public and

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private sectors in undertaking vigorous promotion and marketing, diversifying target markets, as well as improving competitiveness of tourism products and services to sustain interest among tourists to visit Malaysia. With the increases in tourist arrivals, foreign exchange earnings from tourism increased at an average annual growth rate at 12.4%, from RM17.3 billion in 2000 to RM31 billion in 2005.

Literature Reviews

Many studies have shown the importance of tourism to economic growth performance and economic development. Basically, most of previous studies employed methodology based on economic theory, and co-integration analysis which has recently become popularized in applied econometrics studies. It is difficult to measure and account for all the reasons of international tourist travels which are needed to set up an exact model. However, there are three specific determinant variables for tourism demands modeling, namely real per capita income of tourist generating countries, exchange rate and relative prices (Sheldon, 1993). These variables are generally thought to be significant in explaining tourism demand for various countries. But, much of the policy debate in Europe concerning tourism has focused on its possible contribution to solving the increasing unemployment problem, not least because of its potential for creating jobs for manual workers displaced from manufacturing or the primary sector.

Greenidge (2001) has utilized Structural Time Series Modeling (STM) to explain and forecast tourist arrivals to Barbados from its major generating markets. The procedure will allow one to extract the maximum amount of information contained in the series on tourist arrivals while at the same time to include any other information relevant to forecasting arrivals. Greenidge finds that these models offered valuable insights into the stylized facts of tourism behavior and provided reliable out-of the sample forecasts. In another study on tourism demand by Uysal and Crompton (1984), real per capita income in countries that receive many tourists, relative exchange rates, transportation costs and promotional expenses are found to be significant for international tourist arrivals to Turkey. The economic multivariate cause-effect model explains international tourism demands and tourism receipts with a high degree of accuracy.

Meanwhile, Oh (2005) investigates the causal relations between growth and economic expansion for the Korean economy by using Engel and Granger two-stage approach and a bi-variate vector autoregressive model. Two principal results emerge from the study. First, the results of a co-integration test indicate that there is no long-run equilibrium relation between the two series. Secondly, the outcomes of Granger-causality test imply one-way causal relationship of economic-driven tourism growth. The hypothesis of tourism-led economic growth is not accepted in Korea. This consequence is supported by testing the sensitivity of causality test under different lag selection along with the optimal lag.

Chan et al. (2005) model the conditional mean and conditional variance of the logarithm of the monthly tourist arrival rate from the leading tourism source countries to Australia, namely Japan, New Zealand, United Kingdom and USA, using three multivariate static or constant conditional correlation volatility models, specifically the symmetric CCC-MGARCH model, symmetric vector ARMA-GARCH model, and symmetric vector ARMA-AGARCH model. Monthly data from July 1975 to 2000 were used in the empirical analysis. The results suggest the presence of interdependent effects in the conditional variances between four leading countries, and asymmetric effects of shocks in two of the four countries. This is an important result as it emphasizes interdependencies between major tourism source countries, as well as the asymmetric effects of positive and negative shocks in tourism demand. The estimated CCC matrices for the three models are not substantially different from each other which confirm the robustness of the estimates to alternative specifications of the multivariate conditional variance.

On the other hand, Seddighi and Shearing (1997) examined the trends of tourism in North East England. In particular, the study focuses on the area of Northumbria to show the potential of tourism for economic development. This study concentrate on the long-run relationship between domestic tourism demand, and a number of economic factors affecting the demand for tourism by using the Johansen and Juselius co-integration test and multivariate co-integration analysis. Finally, an error-correction model was proposed for short-run forecasting of domestic demand for tourism in Northumbria. Mustafa Akal (2004) applied Auto regression Moving Average Cause Effect (ARMAX) model to forecast international tourism revenue for Turkey for the post-2001 economic crisis. International tourist arrivals were seasonally dependable on earlier arrivals at lagged period one, two and four. Through the ARMAX model, future international tourist arrivals are forecasted for the 2002-2007 period to determine possible revenues for that same period. The estimated models and these forecasts may be important for the economy of Turkey which is currently recovering from the economic crisis. Once US dollar expenditure per tourist is forecasted the gap between forecasts and needs can be defined more rationally to overcome economic crises. In short, discrepancy analysis may aid marketing promotion to increase arrivals and tourist expenditures.

Data, Research Methodology and Findings

Data were collected from the Immigration Department of Malaysia and Tourism Development Corporation (TDC). The particular data used in this study are yearly observations and the estimation period is 1980-2007. The variables are then transformed through the use of natural logarithm to ease interpretation of coefficients. Coefficients in log function are interpreted as elasticities representing a percentage changes in a dependent variable given a 1% change in an independent variable. The variables used in this study are symbolized and described as follows:

Tour : Total tourist arrivals to Malaysia
GDP : Real domestic product
CPI : Consumer price index

a) Unit root tests

The stationarity test is important to set up the specification and estimation of the correct model. Therefore, the first step is to test the order of integration (I) of the variables. Integration means that past shocks remain undiluted affects the future realizations of the series and a series has theoretically infinite variance and a time-dependent mean. For the purpose of testing the stationarity, Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) and Phillip-Perrons (PP) tests were employed in this paper. All of the series are non-stationary in levels, and were stationary in first difference with the same level of lags. Results of the unit root tests are presented in Table 1:

Table 1: Unit Root Tests

Variables	ADF Test (τ)		PP Test (Z_τ)	
	Level	**First Differences**	**Level**	**First Differences**
Tour	-1.90(0)	-3.49(0)**	-1.71[1]	-3.49[1]**
GDP	-1.41(6)	-3.15(6)**	-2.56[0]	-5.01[0]*
CPI	-1.51(0)	-5.33(0)*	-1.64[2]	-5.33[2]*

Note: Lag length in ( ) and Newey-West value using Bartlett kernel in [ ]
Asterisks (*) and (**) denote statistically significant at 1% and 5% significance levels

b) Co-integration tests

The results for the co-integration test are presented in Table 2 with significant level at 1% and 5% for λ_{Trace} and $\lambda_{Max-Eigen}$ value tests for lag 1. The co-integration results in Table 2 are obtained using a VAR specification where the variables and the co-integration space contain linear trends and the results does not indicate any co-integrating vectors either by using λ_{Trace} or $\lambda_{Max-Eigen}$ tests at both the 5% and 1% significance levels. In order to examine the long-run causal relationship, we test for Granger-causality using block exogeneity Wald test.

Table 2: Johansen's Co-Integration Tests

Null Hypotheses	**Maximum Eigenvalue**	λ_{Trace} **[k=0,r=0]**	**Critical Value (5%)**	**Critical Value (1%)**
r=0	0.54	28.23	29.68	35.65
r≤1	0.19	8.78	15.41	20.04
r≤2	0.12	3.45	3.76	6.65
Null Hypotheses	**Maximum Eigenvalue**	$\lambda_{Max-Eigen}$ **[k=0,r=0]**	**Critical Value (5%)**	**Critical Value (1%)**
r=0	0.54	19.45	20.97	25.52
r≤1	0.19	5.33	14.07	18.63
r≤2	0.12	3.45	3.76	6.65

Note: Asterisks (*) and (**) denote statistically significant at 1% and 5% significance levels

c) Granger-causality tests

The Granger-causality tests are conducted using a joint F-statistic for the exclusion of variable from one equation as illustrated in a simple matrix form. The results of these tests indicate that Granger-causality is running in both directions between CPI and tourist arrivals, and between CPI and GDP in Malaysia. Table 3 clearly shows the Granger-causality directions between the specified variables:

Table 3: VAR Granger-Causality

	Tour	GDP	CPI
Tour	_	3.83 [0.05]	2.43 [0.11]
GDP	0.16 [0.68]	_	0.53 [0.46]
CPI	6.13** [0.01]	8.32* [0.00]	_

Note: Asterisks (*) and (**) denote statistical significance at the 1% and 5%
Figure in [ ] stands for probability value

Conclusion

This study was motivated by the need for an empirical analysis of the contribution of tourism development, policy and strategic alliances to economic growth for Malaysia. The findings of this study suggests that the economic factor has become a main factor driving the Malaysia's tourism sector; and therefore policy and strategies should concentrate on those factors to increase tourist arrivals to Malaysia in the future. Furthermore, the results of this study are not consistent with Oh (2005) and Mustafa Akal (2004) who has found bi-variate causality running between GDP to tourist arrivals.

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Critical Success Factors of Small and Medium Tourism Enterprises (SMTEs) in Tourism Industry

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Tourism is a significant industry in Malaysia. Small and medium tourism enterprises (SMTEs) play a significant role to support the success of the tourism industry. Thus, this article explores the critical success factors (CSFs) and performance of SMTEs in tourism industry. Few studies have been conducted to access the CSFs of small hotels in other countries. It was found that CSFs of SMTEs refer to the efficiency of different department for example front office, leisure operations, back of house, accounting and control, guest accommodation, food and beverage and conference and banquets.

Key words: small and medium tourism enterprises, critical success factors and tourism Industry

Introduction

The tourism industry is largely dominated by small and medium tourism enterprises (SMTEs). Tourism can contribute a significant income to the country. The Tanzanian tourism sector contributes 5.5-8 percent of National Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (MIGA, 2002). The tourism industry represents an important segment of the Malaysian economy. According to Tourism Malaysia, the number of tourists arrivals to Malaysia in 2002 was 13.29 million and increased to 17.55 million in 2006 (Tourism Malaysia, 2007). Furthermore, many of these SMTEs operate in urban areas. This article explores the critical success factors (CSFs) of SMTEs in Malaysia.

A few explanations can be used to explain why the CSFs concpet is important to the tourism industry. According to Brotherton and Shaw (1996), considerable amount of attention has been given to the CSFs approach by both academics and practitioners. The literature reveals only one CSFs study in the context of hospitality industry. However, in the US hotel industry, the study focused on the application of the CSFs approach to the design of hotel information systems (Geller, 1985a, b, c). With the exception of Brotherton and Shaw (1996), Croston (1995), Peacock (1995) and Ingram et al. (2000) all the other hospitality-based CSFs studies referred to the

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above were conducted either in the USA or Asia-Pacific region. Therefore it is interesting for us to explore the CSFs of SMTEs in Malaysian.

This study is conducted to identify those factors regarded as critical for the success of SMTEs. The CSFs, could be contextually contingent or generic in nature. This article will discuss CSFs such as front office, leisure operations, back of house, accounting and control, guest accommodation, food and beverage and conference and banquets.

Critical Success Factors (CSFs)

CSFs are the factors that must be achieved if the company's overall goals are to be attained (Brottherton, 2004). Features of both, company internal and external operating environment, may arise from a wide variety of events, circumstances, condition of activities which require the special attention of the company management (Dickinson et al., 1984). CSFs may be derived from the features of a particular company's internal environment such as products, processes, people and possibly structure (Berry et al., 1997; Duchessi et al., 1989; Van der Meer and Calori, 1989). More recently, the CSFs approach has been linked with core competency (Hooley and Saunders, 1993; Lowes et al., 1994), value chain (Johnson and Scholes, 1993), and business process perspectives (Ward, 1992; Watson, 1993). CSFs for any given company will also be determined by the nature of the external environment faces. CSFs may also be viewed in terms of their generality. Some situations or contexts are specific while others are generic to a given combination of industrial, market, broader environment condition (Geller, 1985a). Any factor which is critical is likely to be the greatest importance and have a very high priority. Therefore, not every factor will be of equal importance to a company. But only relatively limited number of factors will be critically important to the competitive survival or success of a company. Consequently, a combination of activities and processes which are designed to support the achievement of such desired outcomes specified by the company objectives or goals are important contribution to the company performance (Brotherton and Shaw, 1996).

The front office emphasises on the maximization of room occupancy, revenue, yield, and profitability, besides the provision of an efficient and smooth reservations service to customers. Among the criteria for front office environment are customer care, staff attitude, reservation systems and revenue management. The most critical source of measurement used to assess the achievement of this efficiency is customer feedback (Brotherton and Shaw, 1996).

The leisure operation generates a strong contribution the hotel operating revenue. The measurements of leisure operation are provision of a safe, hygienic and relaxing environment for guest, enhancing the guest experience and meeting their expectations (Brotherton and Shaw, 1996). The leisure side of hotel operations has historically been seen by many hotel operators as a desirable addition to the core product offer. The leisure operations objective identified above reflect this issue in terms of the emphasis on the revenue contribution and an enhancement of guest experience. The general quality of facility provision and associated staffing should be a major concern in hotel operations.

Brotherton and Shaw (1996) look at back-of-house as a provision of a clean, safe, secure environment to maximize customer care for guest and the support provided for front-line an efficient and effective provision of facilities/services. These elements assure cleanliness, safety and security for guests.

The objective of accounting and control is to produce an accurate and speedy billing/account system, achievement of full and prompt payment from customers, efficient control of expenditure/expenses and the monitoring of sales and budgets according to targets (Brotherton and Shaw, 1996). In this department, emphasis is on the importance of cash flow and budgetary management.

The guest accommodation objective is to maintain the standard of accommodation provision of cleanliness and safety, meeting customer demand and exceeding expectations wherever possible and exceeding competitors' standards of provision (Brotherton and Shaw, 1996). The hotel needs to extend and maintain high standard of guest accommodation with rising customer expectations and relative competitive advantage imperatives. These CSFs in terms of an adequate quality and variety of provision. It is believed that the listed factors are important to measure satisfaction of the customer.

Food and beverage services focus on the achievement of gross profit and sales targets, implementation of effective cost controls, generation of increased and repeated businesses (Brotherton and Shaw, 1996). In the food and beverage production, these themes indicate a primary emphasis upon efficiency and profitability in the food and beverage production function.

Traditionally the basic nature of conference and banqueting business has been viewed as significantly different to that of a hotel's ongoing food and beverage operation (Brotherton and Shaw, 1996). Given such view, it is not difficult to envisage that the attention and effort given to the qualitative aspects would be lessened in favour of maximizing the return from the business which actually exists. Table 1 shows the finding from Brotherton and Shaw (1996) and Brotherton (2004) about CSFs factors in tourism industry.

Table 1: CSFs in Tourism Industry

DEPARTMENT	CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS (CSFs)
Front Office	- Operation of an accurate and efficient reservation system - Effective staff sales skills - Provision of high levels of customer care - Maximization of occupancy levels - Development of appropriate staff attitudes - Effective revenue/yield management - Choice of room type - Warmth of guest welcome - Recognition of returning guest
Leisure Operations	- Providing qualities facilities - Operating an appropriate range of Facilities - Improving the attractiveness of facilities - Ensuring high quality staff - Achieving high levels of cleanliness and Hygiene - Provision of smoking and non-smoking room
Back of House	- Operating clear programmer of planned Maintenance - Operation of effective cleaning schedules - Provision of effective security system - Maintenance of an effective laundry system - Ensuring effective inter-department liaison - Quality standards

DEPARTMENT	CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS (CSFs)
Accounting and Control	- Accurate financial reporting - Effective revenue control procedures - Appropriate budgetary control procedures - Effective bad debt control procedures - Quality audits - Prompt issue of customer bills
Guest Accommodation	- Providing consistent quality - Ensuring high levels of cleanliness - Providing a sufficient variety of rooms - Value for money accommodation - Consistent accommodation standards - Consistent service standards
Food and Beverage	- Providing a high level of service - Enhancing customer care - Inculcation of appropriate staff attitude and appearance - Providing quality of ambience and environment - Producing a consistent quality of food - Maintaining efficient purchasing practice and effective liaison with suppliers - Maintaining high standards of hygiene
Conference and Banquets	- Charging competitive prices - Providing flexible facilities - Attention to detail and specific customer Requirement - Maintaining/improving the quality of facilities

Source: Brotherton and Shaw (1996) and Brotherton (2004)

Conclusion

This article proposes a framework on CSFs and performance of SMTEs in tourism industry. It has been shown that the front office, leisure operations, back-of-house, accounting and control, guest accommodation, food and beverage and conference and banquets are among the CSFs for SMTEs in the UK tourism industry. Thus, Figure 1 shows the proposed CSFs for SMTEs in urban area in East Peninsular Malaysia.

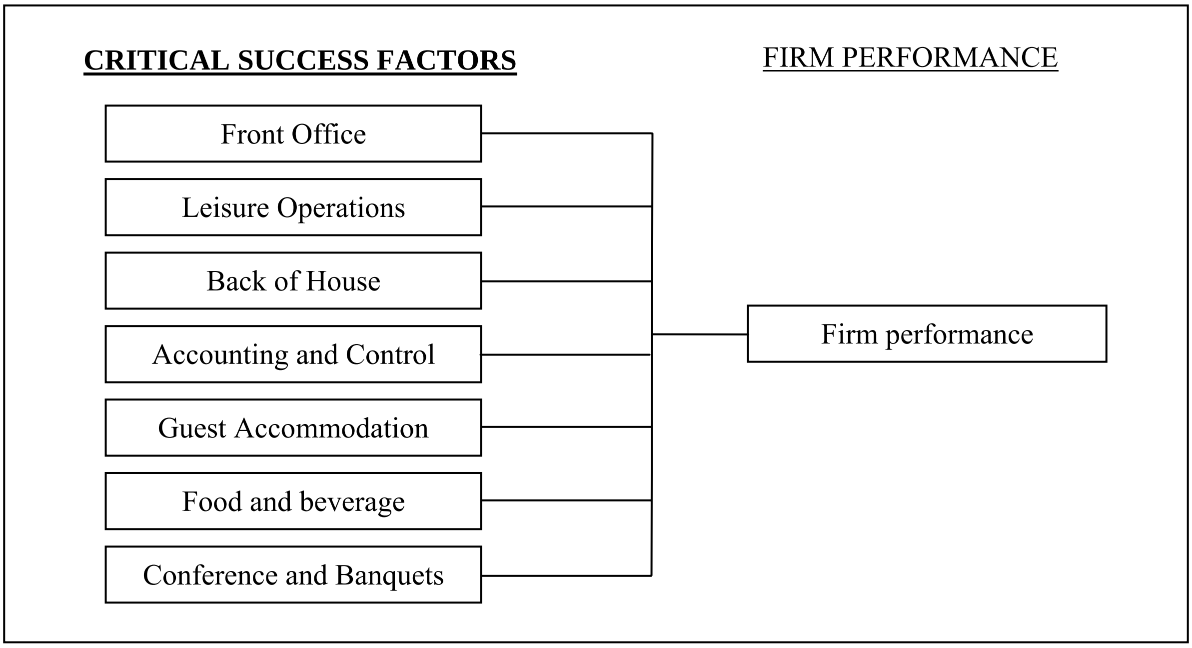

Figure 1: Proposed Framework for CSFs and Firm Performance SMTEs in urban area in East Peninsular Malaysia.

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Challenges and Opportunities for Developing Dark Tourism in Malaysia: A Pilot Study on Understanding Visitor Motivations at Jerejak Island, Penang.

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Since the advent of special interest tourism, the growing number of visitation to sites with attractions that were not purposefully built for tourism initially, have been facing an increasingly bizarre yet positive response from visitors. Who would have figured that in Malaysia, right on Jerejak Island lays a prison that once roofed the nation's hard-core criminals, is now a local attraction? The island has the potential of becoming a tourist magnet as it also shelters old graveyard sites with tombstones not only of convicts who died, some on the gallows, but also the resting place, for some WWII Russian soldiers. In tourism standards, these stories certainly qualify as 'dark dungeons' and 'dark resting places, which entails from a dark tourism spectrum. Lennon and Foley (2000), who labelled it Dark Tourism, argued that it is so easy for people to fall into the 'dark' side because most visitors happen to be around the vicinity. There has been quite a substantial amount of literature covering dark tourism; however, only one study was done on the brutal colonial days of Japanese Occupation of Sabah during WWII. Braithwaite and Yun (2003) explored, by using tourism to heal psychological wounds of war in the reconciliation efforts in peacemaking between the residents and the visitors. This raises question marks on the directions and challenges in the interpretation and presentation of such dark products in Malaysia. Universally, the audience is ever anxious to seize any opportunity to get closer psychologically and physically, to an execution site of society's repudiated persons, some, eminently been sensationalized by the media. This pilot aims to study the challenges from the supply side, investigate management responses to the range of experiences and motivations perceived by visitors and local residents in developing this 'new tourist attraction' in Malaysia.

Key words: Dark tourism, visitor motivation, facilities, interpretation, management.

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Introduction

At present, Jerejak Island still inherits the dark legacy in the form of the remains of a hard-core criminal prison building, an abandoned leper's hospital, built by the British in the late 1930s and a graveyard that had witnessed two WWII dead Russian soldiers being unloaded from ships by the Germans with tombs-dated 1914, and also a few from Chinese merchant days. The purpose of the pilot is to obtain data to assist in planning for the full study. The findings obtained, will be used as a model for our full research study that would require a larger scale sampling. Dark tourism is a totally untapped tourist product in Malaysia. We are trying to see how feasible it is to identify some sites in the country that could be used as a niche market for dark tourism. First of all, visitors' survey on motivations and perceptions are investigated. Secondly, the degree of visitors' motivations and perceptions are cross-examined between locals and non-locals of Penang Island. Finally the findings are estimated in order to explain the relationship between visitors' motivations and their expectations related to the management of service factors surrounding the 'dark products' quantitatively. The estimated results show that in order to improve any tourist product, proper ownership and management of basic service and amenities are necessary to match the visitors' motivation and expectation of the product. This research seeks to explore if motivation to visit the prison could inspire similar input to the management of other sites around the country.

Studies have been done by dark tourism experts to establish the relationship between visitor's motivations and expectations to such dark sites but not much has been given to examine the real value in the potential of developing and managing these sites, especially between state and site owners in terms of matching this perceived expectation to influence management in the tourism setting. This research will examine this problem and will also strive to propose to educate managers of dark sites in their comprehension of visitors' motivations and expectations, thus to embark guidelines on improving visitor facilities, information and services.

Literature Review

'Dark tourism is the act of travel and visitation to sites, attractions and exhibitions which has real or recreated death, suffering or the seemingly macabre as a main theme'. (Stone, 2005). For a destination to manage such thematic products however, requires an understanding of visitor's motivation, especially in their information seeking and also the sensitivity of these sites before any work can be done to tap into this new product. That understanding may be used as a good start for administrators to properly manage the stakeholders (Yuill, 2003).

Sometimes associated with morbid curiosity, dark tourism destinations also cover prisons (Strange and Kempa, 2003). The unexplainable curiosity can perhaps be fed only if we seek what we do not know enough of. Increasing visitors to Dachau concentration camp memorial in Munich was due to their immense curiosity to know how Hitler came to power (Steinmetz, 2008). History alone may not be able to fill the gaps in our minds, and what better way to fulfil that if not 'seeing history' for ourselves. This, by chance, has created a lot of museumification of historical sites as successful tourism products.

Beech (2000) discusses different types of visitor motivators in his research on Buchenwald, another German concentration camp as a tourism product. Although these camps were not built for the same reason as our prisons, they hold similar motivators amongst visitors. De Quincey mentioned murder, when tried by the principles of taste, turns out to be a very meritious performance (Seaton 1996:234).

Crompton (1979) cited seven socio-psychological motives of pleasure-seeking visitors. The first, being an escape from a perceived ordinary environment. Novelty is also a pull factor as it suggests the tourist's desire for new experiences in their selection of a destination (Lee, 1991; Bello and Etzel, 1985). A place like Jerejak already has the potential to build nice resorts on its beach that could also offer some low-to-medium adventure packages, plus the dark sites for visitors to tour on their own, as a bonus. Other beach destinations in the country may not be able to offer that many amalgamations of tourism products and uniqueness.

Collectively, the sites also offer a temporary escape from life's problems according to McIntosh and Goeldner (1986). No one likes to carry our stressful life as baggage when on holiday, and that is usually the main reason why we get away in the first place, even if it is for a short one like the day-trippers to Jerejak Island. Leisure on its own is by nature, a non-ordinary activity tourists live in, within a temporary 'borrowed' time.

People are often thrilled and excited with new unpredictable attractions; in this case the idea of seeing something one does not see everyday fulfils the thrill-seekers (Mayo and Jarvis, 1977). A new destination should also offer uncertainty and complexity in order to be able to arouse a high adventure profile (Wahlers and Etzel, 1985). In this modern urban age we live in, escape from boredom can often generate the inner child in us that wants to explore by selecting novel experiences (Nunnally and Leonard, 1973). Repetition increases boredom while novelty increases curiosity.

Other motives, far more extensively proposed in the literature are by Dann (1998) who suggested eight influences, including those already mentioned earlier: the fear of phantoms as in the thrill of overcoming our own childhood fears; the search for novelty, seek for the extra-ordinary; nostalgia, where some emotional relations can be linked to an event in history that took place on the sites; the celebration of crime or deviance, rejoicing the winning of the good over evil; basic bloodlust, the desire to 'see' punishment in any form; and, on a more practical level, 'dicing with death', that is, undertaking trips that has a 'holidays in hell' mark on it (O'Rourke 1988; Pelton 2003), that challenge tourists or heighten their sense of mortality. However, as Dann (1998) stated that these classifications may be more related to specific destinations that may already contain some of these dark attractions or related activities rather than basing on visitor's motivations.

Methodology of Survey and Analysis

Survey methods

Since it is a perceived behavioural pilot study, visitor's motivation and expectation was explored by getting 73 respondents randomly selected to fill up a self-administered questionnaire, while they were paying a visit to the old Jerejak Prison site, the Leper's hospital and the two graveyard sites nearby. This method is an effective sampling technique to achieve greater precision because it focuses on respondent from the same strata as they are similar as possible in respect of the characteristic of interest.

Outlines of the Visitor Survey

The questionnaire has been designed into three different parts. Part one consists of demographic and psychographics background of the visitor. It determines visitor's place of origin, employment status, purpose of the visit to the island, mode of transportation used, and average expenditure. The second part of the questionnaire reflects on their experience and perception of the facilities and services provided to and on the island. These covers transportation, weather, usefulness of available information provided, the friendliness of the personnel on the island, safety issues and on the general island experience. The third part of the questionnaire focuses on how they would be more satisfied with their visiting experience to the island. This comprises of the ways the visit could have been improved with a collection of suggestions they could select from, such as letting them spend a night in a prison cell and eating 'prison' food, or if there are better ways for them to learn more of the history of the prison, leper's hospital and about the old grave sites on the island. They were also asked if they agreed on the possibility of doing more to preserve those sites.

Next, a SWOT analysis was carried out to examine the current status of all three dark sites found on the island, to be able to associate and recommend improvements on the management of the sites. The analysis assessed the built environment in terms of the availability of visitor facilities, other visitor attractions on the island, accessibility and activities permissible for visitor enjoyment. The pilot also studied whether there was any difference in the motivations and expectations between local and non-local visitors. Factor analysis was employed to examine the underlying constructs of these motivations and expectations to these dark sites.

Findings and Discussion

Surprisingly only less than one percent of total respondents were unaware of the existence of any of the dark tourist attractions on Jerejak Island. The respondents who were highly motivated to visit the dark sites on the island were also driven by high expectations as evidenced in their similar weightage of wanting to know and see more. Due to the lack of available information and documentation, a large 67 percent of the respondents strongly agreed that having access to these valuable information is necessary to allow them a more comprehensive educational experience.

Figure 1 indicates that visitor motivations to the island, which mainly revolves around the prison site, have expressed morbid curiosity, as evidenced in the highest 42 percentage representation of those motivated by their curiosity; with only 10 percent of those who would rather experience the real stuff, instead of just a mere representation of it. 'Educational' came out as only 10 percent of the motivation in visiting the dark sites but it is just as well being dominated by students and academic researchers from local schools and universities. An insignificantly small 3.5 percent has been inspired by the film "Escape from Alcatraz". Jerejak Prison has been nicknamed "Malaysian Alcatraz" and somehow projected a phenomenal motivation although the insignificant number was provided totally by foreigners.

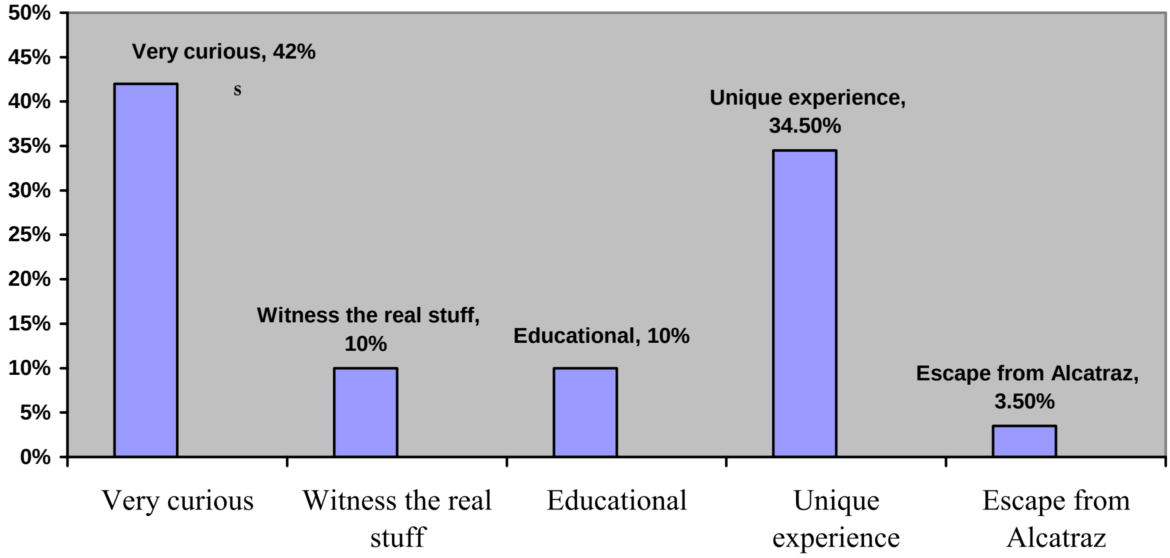

Figure 1: Dark Tourism Visitor Motivations

As expected, half of our total respondents were not satisfied with their visit to the dark sites on Jerejak Island as the experience does not meet their expectations. It costs RM24 for a six-minute return ferry ride to the island and if the visitors wish to rent a bicycle on the island would have to add another RM10 per hour. The visitors would have expected to get their money's worth the minute they paid a high price. However, after covering the 3-4km long dirt path on foot or bicycle-ride, and to find only an abandoned prison or what's left of it, left many disappointed. Table 1 highlights the colossal challenge that awaits interested tourism developers.

Table 1: Observation analysis of dark sites on Jerejak Island

Facilities	Jerejak Prison	Leprosy Hospital	Russian Cemetery	Ancient Graveyard
Signage	5	5	5	5
Information	4	4	4	5
Accessibility (Road)	4	5	5	4
Preservation effort	5	5	5	5
Information/service on dark tourism sites	5	5	5	5

1 = Very good, 2 = Good, 3 = Average, 4 = Poor, 5 = Very poor

Respondents were expecting better planned and at least properly maintained attractions, to enhance the wealth the island has as the only dark tourist destination in Malaysia, and also to enhance visitor experience. Only less than half of the respondents fully met their expectations of Jerejak Island and its dark side. This maybe because they were also participating in eco-tourism and adventure activities planned by a resort on the island, so the interest in visiting the dark side may not come into their holiday agenda in the first place. Nevertheless, their interest to visit the sites has shown a strong weight. Most of the prison has crumbled. However, despite the poorly maintained and abandoned state of the prison, the leper's hospital and the cemeteries, frequent visitorship to these sites during the week-long observation of the pilot, indicated a potential niche market to tap into. A representation of 59.1 percent of the respondents strongly agreed for the prison and the other two buildings to be properly maintained and preserved in order for their visit to be far more enjoyable.

Conclusion

Consistent with previous research, our pilot further indicates that without previous experience with dark tourism product or service could have evidenced a higher perceived motivation and expectation levels. The respondent origins, whether local or non-local, examined in this study were distinct in terms of their motivations and expectations. This may be due to the fact that the locals have visited the sites at least once and in their current status, one visit would be deemed as enough. The island appears to be rich in terms of its core and augmented offers; its flora and fauna must be well-preserved as well as its stretch of beach, kept clean. In totality, it is able to fulfil visitor's relaxation motives; whilst the island's old Jerejak Prison site can draw the strongest novelty motives amongst all its other dark sites. This calls for an amalgamation of conceptualised dark tourism product package that could be easily and creatively designed. Perhaps through walking tours to more preserved sites, short shopping for local goods, fishing along its natural bays, and swimming on its beachfront would suffice a higher level of satisfaction amongst its visitors. And perhaps the local authorities are able to capitalise on this new product in their conservation effort to turn the prison into a museum. Monuments must be erected in all the above-mentioned sites first as memorials and then as tourist attractions (Lukaz, n.d.). And for Jerejak prison, the fact that it is situated on an isolated island would have been the perfect setting to offer visitors that eerie experience.

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The Development of Urban Tourism Products: A Comparative Study of Major Cities in Malaysia

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This research on urban tourism products focuses on the comparative analysis among cities in Malaysia. It reviews methodologies in urban tourism research used in assessing urban tourist perception and satisfaction towards elements that make up urban tourist product. The aim of this research is to come out with general framework of relationship within the urban tourism system applicable to cities and towns in Malaysia. It will benefit local authorities, local tourism authorities plan proper infrastructure that would support the system.

Key words: urban tourism, tourism product, urban studies.

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Promoting Sustainable Cultural Tourism: Piloting Creative Ways to Document the Multicultural Traditions of Penang

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Cultural tourism refers to travel directed towards experiencing the arts, heritage and special character of a place. Cultural tourist experiences would include watching the performing arts, visiting historic sites and monuments, museums, natural heritage sites and taking part in religious festivals. Providing accurate and substantial information and interpretation of the heritage and the living traditions mark the initial phase of development of a cultural tourist destination. It is thus important to map, interpret, document and devise creative ways to disseminate the multicultural traditions of Penang which include the performing arts, crafts, and festivals. This paper looks at the methods involved in the creation of a pilot video on the lion and dragon dances of Penang and how the video product can help to promote sustainability of the cultural forms.

Key words: cultural tourism, Penang

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Planning for Sustainable Tourism in Pulau Gaya, Sabah: Preliminary Assessment of Natural Resources, Community, Culture and Their Implications for Future Tourism Development

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This paper set forth a preliminary assessment of natural resources, community, culture and tourism in Pulau Gaya, located on the west coast of Sabah and their implications for future tourism development. A baseline study on the natural resources and survey on community profile were conducted to gauge a better understanding of Pulau Gaya natural resources and the eccentric characteristics of the community; thus ensuring potential unfavorable impacts of tourism can be prevented. The findings of the research show that Pulau Gaya boast natural qualities that are appealing for ecotourism, marine-based as well as community-based tourism, hence, steps must be taken to conserve its resources and community that can be potentially destroyed if no effort is carried out to protect these attractions. Financial institution, NGOs and government agencies must provide support that will facilitate local participation and awareness in the environmental protection. The findings suggest that Pulau Gaya provides a remarkable sustainable tourism environment for the future.

Key words: sustainable tourism, natural resources, community, culture, Pulau Gaya, Sabah

Introduction

Pulau Gaya is a heavenly destination that most people would like to go, and escape the hectic lifestyle in the cities. Located on the west coast of Sabah, just 10 minutes off Kota Kinabalu with an area of about 1,465 acres of land, Pulau Gaya has a lot to offer visitors with its beauty and charms of the marine coastal shores. The west coast of Pulau Gaya has been gazetted as Tuanku Abdul Rahman (TAR) Marine Park since 1974. With an area of 12,185 acres of surrounding sea water and islands of Pulau Gaya, Pulau Mamutik, Pulau Sapi, Pulau Suluk and Pulau Manukan, these islands are famous for its coral reefs and calm turquoise water. Pulau Gaya is the largest island in TAR Marine Park. Sabah Parks conserve and maintain marine park resources, thus,

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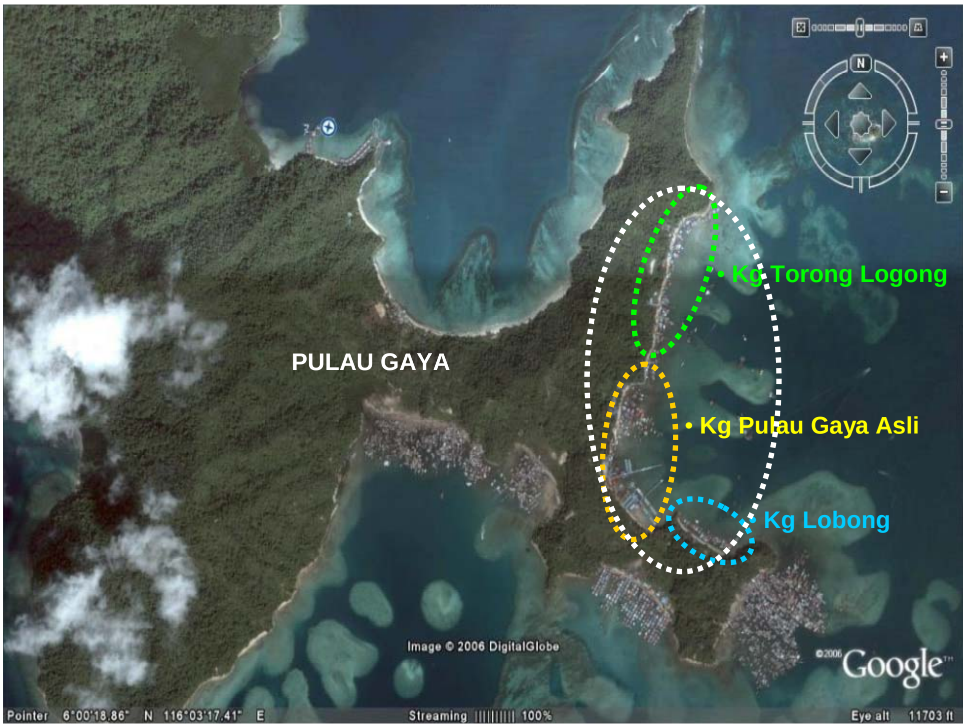
promote marine based tourism and coastal activities such as diving, snorkeling, island hopping, deep sea fishing and beach activities within the area. Surrounded by the sea, it provides a good location for marine life habitants in its crystal clear waters.



Source: Google earth

The eastern shores of Pulau Gaya comprise of villages namely Kampong Lok Malom, Kampung Lok Urai, Kampung Lok Baru, Kampung Lobong, Kampung Kasuapan, Kampung Selamat, Kampung Ubian, Kampung Lok Parru, Kampung Simalak, Kampung Pondo and Kampung Pulau Gaya. Pulau Gaya derived its name from the Bajau word "Gayo" which means big land. Pulau Gaya hosts a very large and growing number of stilt villages that can be seen from Kota Kinabalu waterfront. This village is occupied by illegal immigrants from Philippines and considered a dangerous high crime area by the Kota Kinabalu locals as well as government officials. Nevertheless the natural charm has brought us to appreciate Pulau Gaya from a different perspective. These villages are made of stilt houses line-up along the beaches, some are located directly above the sea and fronting the South China Sea. These islands has 6,000 floating population of largely Bajau, Suluks, Ubian and Filipinos who provide Kota Kinabalu with cheap labor. The houses are linked by walkways of worn-out planks and the houses are arranged side by side in a peculiar manner. The research only covers the area of Kampung Torong Logong, Kampung Lobong and Kampung Pulau Gaya Asli. The area is predominantly occupied by Bajau Laut or known by the locals as "sea gypsies" for their skills in seafaring.

Methodology

The research design for this study is the combination of exploratory and descriptive designs. It is designed to investigate the sites, beachfront, shore area and island areas to determine resources, community-related activities and land-use patterns. Primary data will be collected via non-participative observation exercise using resource analysis checklist in particular looking into the natural resources and environment resources at the site. Face to face interviews were carried out with local community to collect a population profile of Pulau Gaya community. Unstructured survey questions were used asked during interview with key school personnel, village headman and religious head. Secondary data such as published information were collated from internet medium and local authorities in Sabah. A qualitative analysis has been used to examine the information derived from the various resources.

Research Findings

Natural Resources

Beaches and Sea Water

The major beach in Pulau Gaya is Police Bay and Malohom Bay. The white sandy beach stretches half a mile and it makes its way to the crystal clear water. Not many tourists visit this hidden paradise. The coral reefs here are in excellent condition. The longest stretch of beach is along Kampung Torong Logong. However, the area where the wooden stilt houses are located, the beach there is unclean due to rubbish along the shore. The water quality is bad due to improper sewerage system. Some sign of coastal erosion due to heavy traffic of passenger boats near Kampung Pulau Gaya asli, where the main jetty that connects Pulau Gaya to Kota Kinabalu is located. Here the water pollution is evidence by the biodegradable rubbish floating and laying on the beach. The rubbish is believed coming from Kota Kinabalu.

Land Area

Pulau Gaya occupies an area of 3,700 acres and elevates at 300meters high from the sea level. There are several ridges, rising more than 600 feet and peaks at 1,000 feet where it forms the backbone of Pulau Gaya. The area is mostly covered with dense virgin tropical forest covering some parts of the hilly area, village area and stretches of beaches. There are monkeys, monitor lizards, wild birds sighted in the forest area. There are about 20 kilometers hiking trails and resorts located north-central of the island. Some parts of Pulau Gaya are uninhibited due to thick forest. Mostly, the land areas are not used at maximum and lack maintaining effort by the villagers. The road path or trail are left unattended with overgrowing of jungle plants and makes it a little difficult to access the other village through land. Electricity is available in Pulau Gaya, a service provided by Sabah Electric Sdn Bhd.

Some parts near the beach area, small scale farming done by individual families on tapioca, banana and roots vegetables are evident. The areas are sometimes cleared to make recreation grounds for village children. In many instances herbs trees can be seen grown freely in the bushes e.g. tongkat ali. A sizeable natural lake behind Kampung Pulau Gaya asli can be sighted where there are trail to go down to this lake. The view from above the hill is breathtaking and this can be a tourism spot.

Environment Resources

Marine biodiversity

Based on a recent survey done by researcher on the marine diversity of islands in Sabah, Pulau Gaya has the highest diversity of marine invertebrates due to higher coral cover (Fatimawati et. al., 2007). The marine life in Pulau Gaya boasts a diversity of coral reefs, fishes and clear blue waters with long stretch of white sandy beach, peaceful and harmonious conditions.

Water Resources

Fresh and clean water are not available in Pulau Gaya and the village people are very dependent on their fresh water supply from Kota Kinabalu. The clean water is for cooking and drinking, while other daily usage of water for cleaning are available from the seawater beneath their homes or rainwater. Everyday Kota Kinabalu-based suppliers will deliver fresh water in barrels to villagers in Pulau Gaya. The fresh water is priced at RM4 per barrel. Sekolah Kebangsaan Gaya has, with assistance from state government, installed a water treatment facility to cater to the needs of the school community. There are wells built inlands but most of them have dried out. Clean water shortage is common in Pulau Gaya as the price for clean water becomes a burden to the villagers. The availability of fresh and clean water is a vital condition for planning a sustainable tourism destination.

Waste Management

Garbage are disposed by way of burning them on the open grounds or burry underneath the soil. Currently, there is neither proper sewerage and disposable system nor a facility to treat waste in Pulau Gaya. The villagers address these issues at individual level; most unwanted things go back to the sea. At the school compound (Sekolah Kebangsaan Gaya and Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Gaya), the garbage are collected and burnt at the rear of the school compound. The garbage are sometimes collected and put on a bamboo raft. During high tide the garbage will float and until the authorities from Kota Kinabalu arrives to transfer the garbage onto their boat and ferried it back to Kota Kinabalu to be disposed, during low tide the garbage in particular non-biodegradable waste such as plastics, food wrappers, containers etc. will float and left lying on the beach and becomes feed for roaming goats and when the tides come in again, it will carry the garbage back to the sea. There are no modern toilets in Pulau Gaya, even the modern school toilet flushes human waste back to the sea. A proper waste management system is critical to ensure the sewage pollution in the surrounding waters do not halt the breeding of marine population in the waters of Pulau Gaya. The presence of garbage and human waste are major deterrents for tourists (Shafer and Inglis, 2000), therefore a proper waste treatment facilities need to be installed and is a necessity for tourism development.

Community

The Majority of the villagers at Pulau Gaya are Muslims and lagely are Bajau Ubian, with minorities' ethnic groups such as Bajau asli, Melayu, Bisaya, Kagayan, Rungus and Chinese. Most of the locals has originated from Bajau Ubian from Kudat, Semporna, and Philippines and has been living in Pulau Gaya since 40 years ago. The younger age group goes to government schools located at the Kampung Pulau Gaya. The elderly are not educated even though some claimed that they go to informal religious teachings. Immediate families and extended families stay together in one house. It is a common sight to see more than 7 people living in one house. The adults from Pulau Gaya are major source of labor in Kota Kinabalu. The villagers main source of income are not fixed and the locals depends heavily on fishing or extraction from marine resources such as sea cucumber, clams, shells etc., boat making, and boat transport businesses. Some work as boat drivers, resorts workers at Pulau Gaya, hotels and eateries in Kota Kinabalu. Most adult women are home makers, they do some mat weaving, craft from shells and drying of sea produce to make ends meet. Local villagers would sell their products at Tamu (farmer's market) or Pilipino market at Kota Kinabalu town.

Employment opportunities are limited in Pulau Gaya, thus encouraging the younger generation to leave the village in the quest for better jobs outside. Bajau people have high regards for the sea, and only goes inland for burials or if they are ill. Now they are closer to the lands as they do small scale farming and cattle breeding (goat). There are better housing settlement inlands which were built with some assistance by state government. Boat is the main mode of transportation. Traditions and rituals are still kept and preserved, evidence by the ceremonies that they still celebrate among them. They speak their mother-tongue Bajau Ubian language which is sometimes can be mistaken as Bajau-Indonesia language.

Based on the questionnaires, we found that most locals are receptive to the idea of tourism development in Pulau Gaya. However, the older generations, who are less approachable, are concern with the site to be developed since their houses are situated along the shores of Pulau Gaya.

They worry that the development of the site will block the view of the sea surrounding it. We also found that despite one or two individuals who are against the future tourism development project in Pulau Gaya, almost all villagers are ready and receptive towards working together with government to undertake the development program. They feel that the project will benefit the local community economically, thus improving on their quality of life especially the needs of their younger generations in education and wealth.

Culture

Bajau people are rich in culture and heritage. Pulau Gaya has its own myths and legends. The stories are brought down from one generation to another. Folklores are part of their daily life. Customs are still carried out and can be seen in their traditional costumes and dances e.g. igal igal and daling daling and during wedding ceremonies. Bajau people enjoy tapioca-based food such as putu, pollol, kalleng, tinompek etc. other than fish. Seafood is a delicacy that can be popularized among tourist.

Issues and Challenges for Sustainable Tourism in Pulau Gaya

Government Support

The locals do not have a steady source of income, and most of the elderly have no formal education, whilst the younger generations go to the nearest school on the island. Employment opportunities are marine based that are available in the island.

Government plays an important role to provide equipment and the know-how so that the community can participate in the development. E.g the bajau laut community in Pulau Bodgaya seaweed culture project, is a viable income generator for locals and is turning Semporna district into the leading seaweed producer in Sabah (Gaffor, 2008). This has transformed the lives of the villagers and they are no longer left out of development.

Enforcement on policies

The high number of tourist arrival to marine parks will pressure marine resources. In the year 2000, TAR received 197,000 tourists and is expected to increase (Spait, 2001). With the increase in tourist arrivals, there would be impact on the environment such as damage to the coral reef, increase litter, water shortage, congestion on the island etc. In order to ensure the right number of tourist at one time, state government need to monitor the distribution of tourist on each island. Tour operators, boat drivers, travel guides need to play their part in making sure that the natural resources are preserved from human interference. Communication on such policies and regulations must be carried out effectively.

Financial Support from private sector

In order to maintain and preserve the marine resources, a lot of effort is needed. The education and awareness programs among locals as well as tourists need financial assistance. Obtaining the co-operation and support of resource users (e.g. tourist, local community, operators, state government etc.) in managing local resources is important (Teh & Cabanban, 2007). NGOs and environment-related companies are the main supporters for such eco tourism projects.

Community Awareness and Education

Bajau people are skilled sea divers, and they can tolerate the sea condition and bad storms. They believe that the environment (land and sea) are most sacred and need to be respected. Rituals are performed to ensure that they are blessed with the gift of nature. Thus, awareness on preservation and conservation of resources for the next generation can be quite easily cultivated. Education on how to protect marine diversity that will become the main attraction for tourist and its impact are detrimental for tourism development.

Proper waste management need to be introduced so that solid waste pollution will be reduced at a manageable level. Locals and tourist need to be aware of the consequences of littering. Pollution will destroy the growth of the marine life.

Conclusion

This study is identified the factors and resources which might be barriers to planning of a sustainable tourism destination. It is hoped that state government or NGOs would consider these research findings in planning out strategies for a sustainable tourism destination in Pulau Gaya.

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Sustaining Traditional Food: Malaysia's High-Protein Snack 'Keropok Lekor'

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Traditional food of a country is a representation of its people's cultural identity. In Malaysia, every region has its own unique traditional food. For example, keropok lekor or high-protein 'fish sausage' is a popular traditional food on the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia, namely Terengganu. Keropok Lekor is made of fish meat, sago flour, salt, and flavor enhancer (monosodium glutamate). It is a favorite snacks for most of the multi-racial communities living in Malaysia. For people living in the coastal area of Terengganu, keropok lekor has been like a staple food to them. Although it was now widely available throughout Malaysia, there is still a lot of improvisation can be made to this snack. Furthermore, keropok lekor which produced outside Terengganu have been altered and have less fish taste in order to suit the palate of the west coast people. Innovation of keropok lekor makes it one of the highly potential foods to represents Malaysia. Image of keropok lekor have to be elevate as a delicious and nutritious snack from Malaysia to be marketed worldwide.

Key words: *Keropok lekor*, traditional food, food tourism

Introduction

Traditional foods are a food from olden times that has become inherent in a local culture. Many of these traditional foods were most palatable with retained originality if were tasted in place where those abundantly produced. Rich sources of specific ingredients needed and expertise among the people in ways of producing certain traditional food are something that is unique and hard to imitate. This uniqueness should be made accessible to the tourist as a way to promote country.

Looking at the definition, traditional foods are typically produced and consumed in certain local areas where they have great acceptance due to their characteristic color, flavor and texture (Fito and Toldra, 2006). In Malaysia, there are varieties of traditional foods based on locality. From dips like *sambal belacan*, to local marinated salads like *kerabu*, to main dishes like *nasi lemak*, to desserts like *kuih koci* and snacks like *keropok lekor*; all these are Malaysian's all-time favorites.

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Keropok lekor is a favorite snack for most of the multi-racial communities living in Malaysia. For people living in the coastal area of Terengganu, *keropok lekor* has been like a staple food to them. It is closely associated with the fishermen and fishing villages to the extent that they consumed it nearly everyday as every meal as a tidbits as well as side dishes. A lot of people generally accepted *keropok lekor* as a food on-the-go or snack because it was convenience and acceptable to be eaten at all time, for example during breakfast, lunch, teatime, dinner as well as supper.

Using simple, readily available and cheap local ingredients such as fresh fish, sago flour, and flavor enhancer (monosodium glutamate), *keropok lekor* had not just be consumed as a snack but favored as it relief hunger. According to the *keropok lekor* producer and local people in Terengganu, the best fish to be used for making *keropok lekor* was 'ikan selayang'. This is because the taste of this fish is sweet and has less bones. The flesh is dark because the hamoglobin is high as well as oxygen. However, fish like 'ikan tamban' were also use to make this snack. It all depends on the availability of the raw ingredients.

The important elements that contribute to the deliciousness of *keropok lekor* in Terengganu are the higher fish content rather than flour. In addition, in Terengganu they use sago flour for making *keropok lekor*. The uniqueness of *keropok lekor* found in Terengganu has attracted a lot of local tourist to visit the country and grab the opportunity to savor freshly made *keropok lekor*.

As a pioneer in *keropok lekor* business, Terengganu has introduced *keropok lekor* to the national level. There are numerous *keropok lekor* stalls in Terengganu. Among them, Losong is the most popular place producing *keropok lekor*. Losong became popular because previous years, a long time ago, Losong was the only place where people can find good quality of *keropok lekor*. In other words, Losong was the place where *keropok lekor* production was first started and sold to customer. And at present, *keropok lekor* stall still mushrooming throughout Terengganu as family business.

Although Losong is the most well-known place in Terengganu, it does not mean that it produces the most tasty *keropok lekor*. Overall, those producers in Terengganu still maintain the traditional way of preparing *keropok lekor* and the ratio of fish and flour, thus we might conclude that the taste of *keropok lekor* there was highly satisfying. The recognition had made the state government gazette Losong as the center for *keropok lekor* in Terengganu.

Keropok lekor popularity had inspired many entrepreneurs to venture into *keropok lekor* business in west coast area for example in Klang Valley which was now becoming increasingly popular. Some of these businesses were expanding as results of assistance provided by Department of Fisheries Malaysia in terms of technology and machineries. It was successfully penetrates the Malaysia's market widely available throughout the nation. However, these *keropok lekor*'s characteristics were often said to be incomparable to those made in Terengganu.

For tourist, one tip to know the good taste of *keropok lekor* is by asking the local Terengganu people. Another indicator of the stall selling good taste of *keropok lekor* is by looking at the local Terengganu people crowding the stall. What being referred to as good *keropok lekor* here are the one with most concentrated fish taste, the sweetness taste of fresh fish being used in the ingredients. These fresh fish fleshes were coarsely minced and sometimes shiny fish skin appear inside or outside the *keropok lekor*.

Although the fish content gives a dark and dull color which may not be very attractive to some tourist, but the taste is very good and the high protein inside the *keropok lekor* will benefit and satisfies consumers. On the other hand, the traditional process of making *keropok lekor* might be something interesting for them to explore. However, more publicity on this should be made to make it widely known by international tourists.

Latest program named 'Keropok Village' was planned by Terengganu state government to enhance and sustain *keropok lekor* in Losong. Losong were again selected because it was the place where most local tourists from outside Terengganu found flocking to acquire this traditional snack especially during school holiday seasons. This is proved by Foskett (2008) who stated that the tourist who visits a location, country or region usually wants to sample the real produce, the local specialties which reflect the people and history of the area. Similarly, Ryu and Jang (2006) noted that there is a strong predictive ability for tourist intentions to experience local cuisine. Tourists will be easily fascinated with the local cuisine they encounter.

As Malaysia has varieties of traditional food which have the potential to be further developed to become a major attraction for tourist. These traditional foods can help improve the social life of Malaysian citizen at the same time boost the tourism sector in the country. Past study illustrated that heritage characteristic more specifically food and gastronomy is an element of tourism development at local level (Bessiere, 1998). This is known as food tourism, where a tourist visits a specific location with the intention of tasting the local food at a particular destination (Mitchell and Hall, 2003). Hence, food is one of the most influential factors for travel.

Wilson et al. (2001) noted that cooperation and collaboration between rural tourism entrepreneurs as well as participation of the local government is a major factor in successful tourism development lends support to the community approach to tourism. In Terengganu, the State Economy Planning Unit (*Unit Perancangan Ekonomi Negeri*) works closely with the Terengganu Entrepreneur Development Foundation (*Yayasan Pembangunan Usahawan Terengganu)* to introduce *keropok lekor* to international tourists during Monsoon Cup in Duyong Island as means to promote it. The initiatives were intended to develop the tourism industry as well as improve the economy of the people living in fishermen village in that area.

To make *keropok lekor* more acceptable among the tourists, some improvisations to keropok lekor have to be done. This will not just help to get better perception from consumers towards *keropok lekor* but at the same time will elevate the image of this traditional food product. Innovating process should aim to achieve higher standard of *keropok lekor* in order to capture the international market. By sustaining Malaysian traditional snack and presenting it to a higher level in terms of its image, *keropok lekor* will remain a local favorites for years to come and can be enjoyed by future generation.

Moreover, the preservation of culinary traditions such as *keropok lekor* will also be advantageous for Malaysia in the future. It can become one of the product that represents Malaysia and be promoted as a major attraction for tourists. Future generations will be able to appreciate this traditional food. Lopez and Martin (2006) reported that improvement of image of certain agro-food tourism can contribute to the social development.

Keropok lekor may be considered as agro-food product which is based on salt-water fish. Examples of the contributions made to the social development by agro-food tourism are new work opportunities for young people, increases in family incomes, attraction of foreign investment, promotion of territory board, attracting tourists, recovering people culture, promotion of the unique products and gastronomy and increase in the prices of land and housing.

Conclusion

With such advantages mentioned above, we have to ensure our traditional food is well known, and able to penetrate the global market. For example in Europe, the registration of traditional foods possibly will motivate their small-scale production throughout the region and expand their export potential to countries outside the ones in which they originate (Tregear *et al.,* 2007). Malaysia has to do the same and declare to the world that *keropok lekor* is our signature dish.

Continuous efforts have to be made to sustain and develop the *keropok lekor* as it represents Malaysia's identity. Producers and entrepreneurs of *keropok lekor* have to work hard to achieve a consistent and standard quality while meeting consumer demands for safety, quality and nutritional value of this food.

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Measuring Visitors' Satisfaction and Behavioural Intentions of the Museums in Malaysia

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In recent decades, competitive phenomenon is increasing in the tourism industry. Museum, as one of the niche products of Malaysia heritage tourism attraction, is one of the factors that could affect the tourism industry in our country. This research intents to assess the correlation between the service quality and visitors overall satisfaction as well as the behavioral intentions of the visitors of the museums in Malaysia. In order to measure the service quality and tourists satisfaction, the modified version of SERVPERF model will be used in this study.

Key words: satisfaction, behavioural intention, museum,

Introduction

Cultural and heritage tourism has become a 'new' area of tourism demand, which recognized as offering new and more varied experiences to tourists. (Jin, 2002; Boyd, 2002). However, as one of the sectors in service industry, quality issues have been a challenge of cultural/heritage tourism. Quality has recently been associated with service and heritage management, whereby quality is a process that requires implementation (Boyd, 2002).

Museum, as part of the cultural/heritage attractions is selected as the main focus of this study. Recently, museums throughout the world realized that entertainment, leisure and education are the legitimate parts of their repertoire. Public museums and galleries are under pressured to act more like businesses (Mason & McCarthy, 2006). In the highly competitive world of leisure and tourist attractions, museums need to focus sharply on visitor satisfaction, in which might leads returning visitors (Rowley, 1999). There is pressure on attraction operators to seize new opportunities and to focus greater attention on changing visitors with new needs and demands (Sterry, 2004). According to Rowley (1999), visitor satisfaction depends on the total experience from the moment that the visitor seeks for car park or purchase entrance ticket to the moment the visitor leaves the museum with information or leisure experience provided by the museum. Edvardsson (1996) mentioned that the concept of service should be approached from the customer's point of view, since it is his/her perception of the outcome. Customers may have different values and different

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grounds for assessment. There is a tendency that, they may perceive the same service in different ways (Edvardsson, 1996; Rowley, 1999).

Although the measurement of quality in service industries began as early as the 1980s with the development of SERVQUAL model, there has not been any systematic study of how museums measure service quality (Caldwell, 2002). Goulding (2000) also stated that there is little research that takes into account the perspective of the visitors to museums. Even though some museum operators and related official bodies have attempted to collect data of the visitors, much of those researches have been criticised for their lack of attempt to integrate the results into a coherent framework and fail to use the results to advance and improve the understanding of the nature of the visit.

As one of the niche products of Malaysia tourism industry (Ahmad & Badarulzaman, 2005), cultural/heritage attraction is one of the factors that could affect the tourism industry in our country. The purpose of this study is therefore to assess the perceptions of service quality, satisfaction levels, and behavioral intentions towards Malaysia's museums, from the visitors' perspective, by applying the modified version of the SERVPERF model (Cronin & Taylor, 1992).

Literature Review

Measurement Methods

A number of popular measurement methods of service quality and customer satisfaction include, Disconfirmation Model, SERVQUAL, and SERVPERF. According to Andreassen and Lindestad (1997), one of the dominant theories of service quality and customer satisfaction research is disconfirmation of expectation. Disconfirmation theory focused on cognation of transaction specific experiences as a foundation for customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction and the subsequent consumer behaviour. Johns and Howard (1998) noted that numerous studies on service quality and customer satisfaction a rooted in expectancy-disconfirmation theory, which holds that customers perceived service quality as the difference between the actual service performance that exceeds expectations, and negative when the opposite is the case.

On the other hand, SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988) was developed to measure service quality across different industries. Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) defined the service quality in five dimensions – reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles, which consisted of 22 pairs of items to identify and measure the gaps between customers' expectations and perceptions of service quality. The model suggested service quality as a gap between customer's expectations (E) and their perceptions of the service provider's performance (P).

However, Cronin and Taylor (1992) found that little if any theoretical or empirical evidence supports the expectations-performance gap as the basis for measuring service quality, and the superiority of simple performance-based measures of service quality is noticeably supported by marketing literature. Due to the criticisms and disagreements towards the SERVUAL model, Cronin and Taylor (1992) developed a performance-based model to measure service quality, which they named SERVPERF.

The SERVPERF model is the unweighted perception of SERQUAL model, whereby the 22 expectation items of the SERVQUAL model were excluded. By testing on the four service industries namely, banking, pest control, dry cleaning, and fast food, they revealed that the unweighted SERVPERF model provides better results compare to other service quality measurements and has greater predictive power. At the same time, the empirical study of Cronin and Taylor (1992) also found that service quality is an antecedent of consumer satisfaction. Similar conclusion has been made by Lee, Lee and Yoo (2000), and Parker and Mathew (2001). However, the consumer satisfaction has stronger influence on behavioural intentions than service quality does (Cronin & Taylor, 1992).

Museum Attributes

For a museum, the effectiveness of communicating historical information, the essential product, relies on the ability to construct images, convey information, and engage the visitor, through either social exchange or more traditional textual and visual methods (Goulding, 2000).

Goulding (2000) revealed that for a city museum, service experience could be mediated by a number of socio-cultural, cognitive, psychological orientation, and physical and environment conditions. All those factors need to be seen as interrelated if a quality experience is to be provided by a museum.

Gilmore and Rentschler (2002) suggested three important elements of service delivery in a museum context, such as education, accessibility, and communication. Besides that, the relevance and frequency of special exhibitions are also important to generate repeat visits by local or regular visitors.

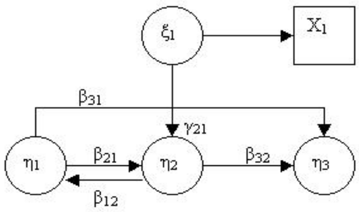
By comparing the expectations and perceptions of the visitors to Robben Island Museum, Phaswana-Mafuya and Haydam (2005) suggested that service quality of the museum should be focused on accessibility, safety, cleanliness, and information provision. They further explained that toilets, sitting places, gift shops, and coffee shop/restaurant facilities should be provided and well managed. Besides that, information and history of the site/building, free maps and pamphlets of the site, and personalized tour for small groups should also be given. Furthermore, all the staff of the site should wear uniform for the ease of identification and ease of seeking help by visitors when needed.

On the other hand, Goodall, Pottinger, Dixon and Russell (2004) concerned about disabled visitors. So, understanding the factors (e.g. physical environment, type of interpretive information, availability of staff that able to help and communicate with disabled visitors, etc.) which constrain or prevent disabled people from participating in visiting to historic sites is essential if the heritage tourism property managers are to implement plans to improve access for disabled visitors.

*For more detailed literature review, please refer to Lau, P. M.& Mohamed, B. (2007).

Research Methods

The conceptual framework (Figure 1.0) explains the underlying process, which was adapted to guide this study. As discussed above, the SERVPERF model tends to conform more closely to the implications of the customer satisfaction literature of attitudes (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). Therefore, SERVPERF model is proposed to be used in this research. The model suggests that perceived service quality or performance-only form is included in the measurement. However, Abdullah (2005) suggested that, SERVPERF as a generic measure of service quality may not be completely adequate instrument to assess perceived quality in a specific sector, in this case museums. Besides that, Cronin and Taylor (1992) also stated that adjustment and consideration of scale items and service quality dimension should be done carefully when making cross-sectional comparison. So, in this research, the initial 22-items SERVPERF scale items are modified to 38-items scale that grouped into six dimensions, to measure the perceived service quality of the museums.



ξ_1 = SERVPERF

η_1 = Visitor Satisfaction

η_2 = Overall Service Quality

η_3 = [Behavioural] Intentions

Figure 1.0: The Conceptual Framework
Adapted from: Cronin & Taylor, 1992

After that, the perceived service quality-satisfaction relationship is examined. Some researchers suggested that customer satisfaction is an antecedent of service quality (β_{21}), however, some researchers argued that customer satisfaction is the outcome of the service quality (β_{12}). Both of these paths are examined in this research to assess the causal order of this relationship. Besides that, the relationships between customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions, and the relationships between perceived service quality and behavioural intentions are examined as well.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

The data for this study will be collected in two stages. The first stage will involve collecting data from pilot test. This test will involve distribution of questionnaire to about 40 visitors randomly chosen in a selected museum.

Subsequently, adjustments will be made to the layout and wording of the questionnaire. The final version of questionnaire will be used in the actual research. The questionnaire will be divided into three parts. The first section will assess the performance/perceived quality on specific services of the particular museum the respondent visit. A seven-point Likert scale will be adopted. The second section aims to examine visitors' overall level of satisfaction with museum the respondent visit and their intention of revisit the museum. Respondents were asked to rate on a seven-point scale. The final section will collect the demographic information on the respondents.

Letter of invitation to participate will be sent to the state museums according to the list of state museums stated in the Directory of Museums in Malaysia (Department of Museums and Antiques, Malaysia, no date). Questionnaire will then be distributed to the state museums that willing to participate in this research. The sample of respondents will be the visitors visited the selected museums. Total of 400 questionnaires will be distributed to those selected museums. Systematic sampling approach will be employed, and every third visitors who come out from the entrance of the cultural and heritage site will be surveyed.

The completed forms will be transcribed into Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS) for statistical processing. The reliability and correlation coefficients will be tested. Besides that, a factor analysis, multiple regression analysis and the paired t-test will be performed.

Conclusions

This proposed research intents to assess the visitors' perceived service quality, satisfaction levels, and behavioral intentions towards Malaysia's museums by applying the modified version of the SERVPERF model. It is hoped that the findings of this proposed study will contribute to the setting of a foundation for future quality development for the museums in Malaysia.

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Evaluation of Tourist Information Infrastructure in Penang Island

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The distribution of information resources has recently received particular attention in the tourism industry. Various types of information infrastructures are prepared for tourists to gain and expand their knowledge of a destination e.g. internet, brochure, signage, travel agent, media, and tourism information centre. This study attempts to evaluate the existing information infrastructure in Penang Island, since many tourists come to Penang required more attention in terms of information facilities provided. A combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques were used in this research. At the same time exploratory approach has been used through observation of case study areas. Result shows that although some of the tourists managed to find accurate information and efficiently, yet there is a lack of information infrastructure needed by tourists. It is suggested that tourism related agencies need to put more emphasis on promotion as well as information facilities in the Island.

Key words: Penang, information infrastructure, international tourist.

Introduction

Penang is the most established beach holiday destinations in Malaysia. Regardless of its small size, Penang was famous far its beaches and heritage buildings. At the same time, for many years, the tourism industry in Penang has focused on attracting more tourists to the Island; however, little has been done to improve information infrastructures to provide the information needed by visitors. There are only modest facilities regarding both pre-trip and in-trip information for tourists. As tourist information infrastructure is an important element to increase the quality of visitors' experience, the absence of simple and basic amenities at the destinations will spoil their enjoyment. In fact, sufficient information is not only vital to provide accurate information to tourists, but also significant to promote the destinations.

To promote Penang, a medium to long term communication and marketing plan is needed. Accurate and timely information will spread effectively through a well-designed and well maintained website. Furthermore, when tourists arrive in Penang, it is hypothesized that there is a lack of information infrastructure for them to

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access tourist's facilities, attractions, and accommodations. In addition, there are other existing issues such as poor maintenance of infrastructures and facilities, lack of publicity and unattractive tourism events. Therefore, it is timely for Penang to review the issues to evaluate the availability of information infrastructure for tourists, as well as to identify the way it can be enhanced.

Penang's tourism scenario

The tourism industry in Penang was badly affected by the tsunami tragedy in terms of hotel occupancy rates, tourist arrivals and the performance of tourism related businesses during the 1st quarter of 2005. However, signs of recovery have been observed in the second and third quarter of that year. Figure 1 shows some gradual increases of total visitor arrivals to Penang from January to September 2005. According to the Penang Progress Report 2008, the number of aircraft movements (domestic & international) at Bayan Lepas International Airport in Penang has increased to 31,111 in 2005. Total numbers of passengers (domestic & international) increased from 2.17 million in January 2005 to 2.83 per annum by December 2005.

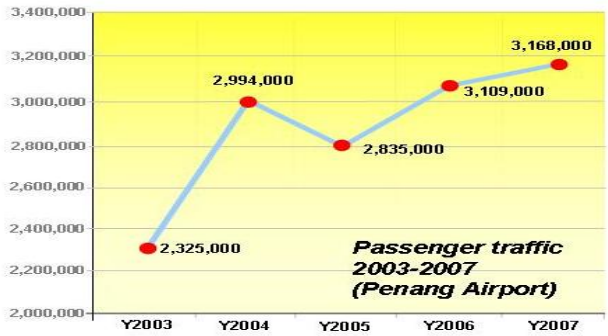

Figure 1: Gradual Increase in Visitor Arrivals to Penang
Source: Penang Progress Report 2008

Background

Tourism infrastructure is one of the key elements for the success of the tourism industry. Roads, airports, information centers, signages and accommodation facilities are the main infrastructures needed by tourists. Mohammed and Omar (2005) mentioned that tourism infrastructure is an important element to the quality of the tourists' services and the absence or inadequate of simple and basic amenities at the destinations will make spoil the visitors' enjoyment. Even, tourism infrastructure comprises of soft and hard infrastructures, the scope of tourist infrastructure discussed in this paper is confined to hard tourism infrastructures.

The main purpose of the information infrastructure is to deliver the information and knowledge needed by tourists or visitors. Since, most of the visitors are new with the destination; the information infrastructures are required as guidance.

Gronflaten (2005) mentioned that information is needed by travelers at different times and different places. Pre-trip information in the planning phase of a trip is required in the traveler's home region or prior destination. In-trip information is sought either at en route or at the destination.

One of the most relevant criteria to understand the information usage is the effectiveness of the information because it reflects how information influences the decision to purchase (Murray, 1991). The most significant characteristics of effective information are:

- Accuracy of information
- Continuity of information
- Consistency
- Timeliness (up-to-dateness)

There are two types of information sources. 1. Non-media (e.g. brochures, travel agents, signage, maps, and internet). Tourism organizations produce non-media information sources at local level. 2. Mass media information sources (advertising and reports in broadcast media). Mass media refers to information sources that broadcast at national scale through television, press or radio. It is based on the assumption that consumers can reach the information in two ways: active and non-active (Midgley, Dowling, & Morrison, 1989). It is essential for tourism marketers to make sure that the right information is available at the right place and at the right time (Gronflaten, 2005). Finally, the function of promotion is to inform, persuade, and influence potential customers and to make them aware of the products on offer and to stimulate their interest in buying action. The amount on advertisement and its importance in promotion will depend on the market needs and customers' demands for information or their vulnerability to persuasion (Rogers & Slinn, 1993).

Research process

The research process for this study involves five (5) main phases:

1. Preliminary investigation and overview
2. Data collection (Site Observation & Analysis, Interview & Questionnaires)
3. Data Analysis
4. Research Findings
5. Proposal and Conclusion

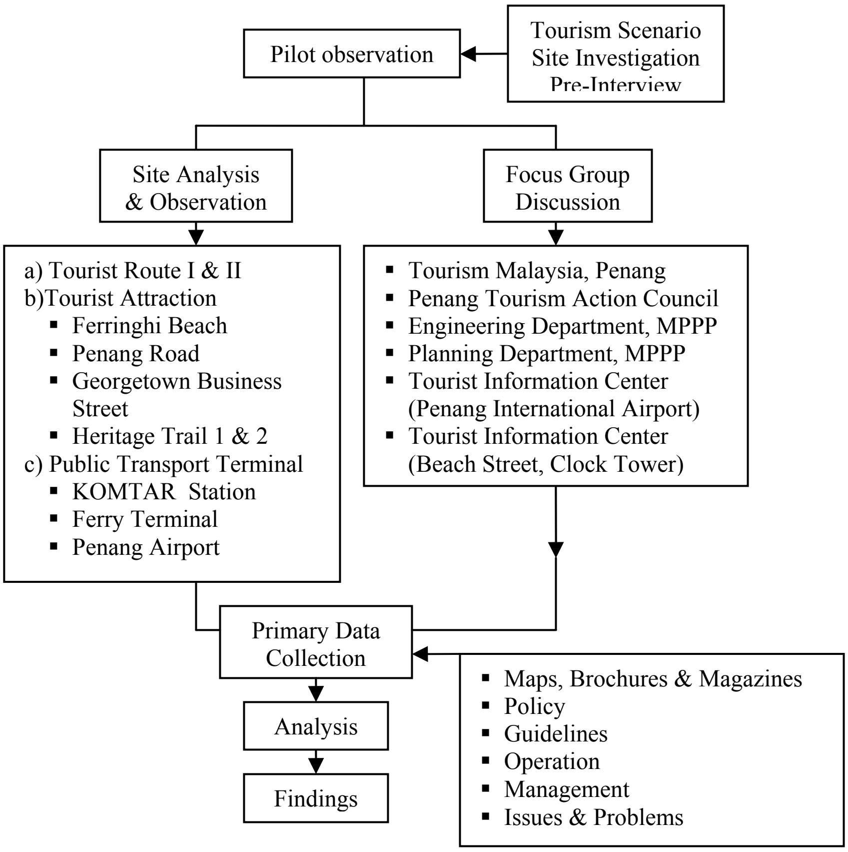

Figure 2: Site investigation process

Site observation and interview

Selected case study areas and tourism related agencies for interview are:

Site selection (Selected case study area)

1.**Route I** : Airport–Scotland Road–Jalan Masjid Negeri–Jalan Botanical Garden – Roundabout Gurney–Tanjong Tokong–Tanjong Bungah–Batu Ferringghi

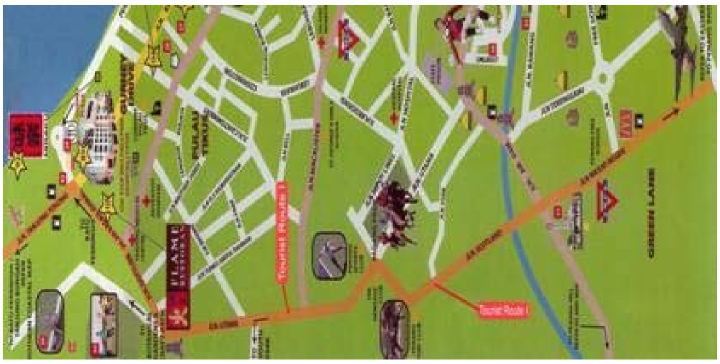

Figure 3: Location of Tourist Route 1; Airport – Georgetown - Ferringghi Beach

2. **Route 2** : Penang Road : From Light Street to Burmah Road
3. **Tourist attraction**
   i) Heritage Trail (George Town I)
      - Jalan Masjid Kapitan Kling
      - Acheh Street

    - Beach Street

    Heritage Trail (George Town II)

    - Padang Kota Lama
    - Fort Cornwallis
    - Light Street
    - Chulia Street

  ii) KOMTAR Business Area

4. **Public Transport Terminal**
  i) Penang International Airport
  ii) Ferry Bus Terminal
  iii) KOMTAR Bus Terminal

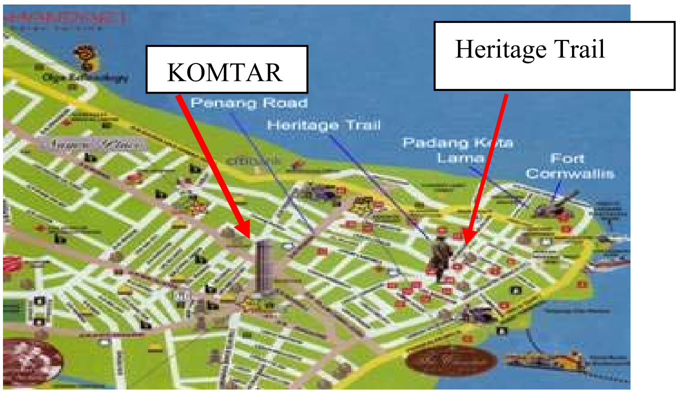

Figure 4: Location Map of Heritage Trail and KOMTAR Business Area

The selected tourism related agencies for interview

i) Town Planning & Development Control Department, Penang City Council (MPPP)
ii) Engineering Department, Penang City Council (MPPP)
iii) Tourism Malaysia, Penang Branch, KOMTAR
iv) Penang Tourism Action Council (PTAC), KOMTAR

Respondent's survey

The respondents of survey include international tourists traveled to Penang, regardless of their nationality, age, and gender. Since it is impossible to study the whole population of international tourists, certain percentages of them have been selected as target groups. The target groups are:

i) International Tourists staying in Beach Resorts of Penang (Grand Plaza Park Royal Beach Resort, Holiday Beach Resort, and Rasa Sayang Beach Resort)
ii) International tourists who visited an established tourist destination in Penang
iii) First time and returning international tourists.

This research have targeted 200 respondents but only managed to get 172 respondents; 105 were tourists who stayed in beach resorts in Batu Ferringhi, 12 city hotels' guests, and 55 tourists who were encountered in shopping complexes. The questionnaires have been distributed personally at selected research area. The research area has been chosen from the most visited locations by tourists. These locations are:

i) Penang International Airport
ii) Beach Resorts at Batu Ferringghi
iii) Shopping Complexes (Gurney Plaza & KOMTAR)
iv) City Hotels
v) George Town Business District

Findings

Findings of this study is based on site observations, interviews with tourism related agencies, and analysis of the questionnaires.

Information about Penang from over sea's perspective

Even though there should be various types of information resources to promote Penang in other countries, 40% of respondents are encouraged to travel to Penang according to word-of-mouth. Besides, internet and tourist leaflets also play significant role in promoting Penang as a tourist destination. Hearing about this Island, respondents who intend to travel to Penang tend to find some basic information about it. At this stage, brochure with 13.5% and asking a friend with 13%, are the most used sources to access pre-trip information among 13 available resources. Since most of the respondents heard about Penang from their friends or relatives, they again prefer to ask them to share their experience about their trip to Penang. As well, respondents who found Penang in internet, keep on searching other information from the same resource. Therefore, most of the respondents are self informed before start traveling to Penang and the promotion through media is not as effective as it should be.

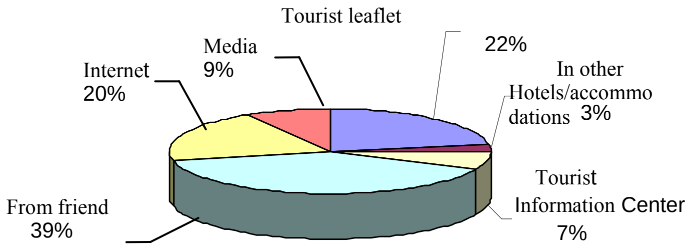

Figure 5: Information Sources from Which Tourists Heard about Penang

Information at public transport terminals

A study on the three main public transport terminals in Penang, including Penang Airport, Ferry bus terminal, and KOMTAR bus station show that there are some weaknesses in these locations in terms of information infrastructures. The only reliable source is the information centre in the Penang Airport which provides all kinds of information through maps, brochures and a fulltime tourist officer. Other public transport terminals, especially Ferry bus terminal are very poor in terms of information infrastructures. Neither significant signage nor information centre exists in these locations.

Information along tourist routes

Findings show that although there are many issues related to information directory and tourist signage along tourist routes, almost 75% of the respondents did not complain. The main issues are: the signage being blocked by trees or other boards, lack of English information, inconsistent information or direction and poor design. It seems that these issues did not disturb the visitors since most of them use taxi or bus for transportation.

Information at tourist attractions

Site investigation has been done at George Town Heritage Trail, which is considered as one of the main tourist attractions in Penang. Although it is unbelievable but the startling fact is that there is no eye catching information source in this area. The evident issue in the Heritage Trail is the dominance of commercial boards. It seems that tourists are provided with information from other places rather than the information presented in the Heritage Trail.

Planning, design and implementation of information

Information gathered from the related technical agencies related to planning and design of the physical information infrastructure shows that most of the tourist information did not follow the proper design guidelines or planning procedures. Most of these agencies did not have the capability and lack of expert to design tourist information board. Nevertheless, they are given the authority to supply most of the tourism information facilities such as directional signage, digital information bill boards, and even tourist attraction landmarks.

Tourist satisfaction about Penang's tourist information system

Although observation shows that the information infrastructures in case studies of Penang are insufficient, tourists are generally satisfied with the range of provided information. The most significant issues which tourists mentioned about information infrastructures of Penang were difficulty to understand the Malay language and lack of clear and sharp images. Through personal observation, the lack of enough English information can be considered as the main reason why tourists did not understand the available information. In the case of internet usage, most of the visitors were successful to find their expectation to be come true but they believed it should be more accurate and up-to-date. As mentioned by tourism information center's officer, the majority of respondents were satisfied with information from TIC. However, another observation showed that the information officers are only doing their traditional role to give information and did not promote the tourism industry in Penang.

Organization, management and tourism policy in Penang

The main issues highlighted by the related tourism agencies are:
The information in the Internet is not up-dated. Since Internet represents the image of the destination in the decision making stage, it should be up-dated and provides accurate information. However the most up-dated website is carried out by the NGO

or private tourist guides. Additionally, tourists need information about other countries, but these agencies can not provide accurate and enough information for them. What they can offer is the promotion of domestic packages and some services of additional information. As example, since Penang is famous for food and most of the agencies provide information on gastronomy, but tourists are get this information from Media. In addition, heritage buildings in the Heritage Trail corridors are also being highlighted through Media. The wrong information given to the tourists by taxi drivers and illegal travel agents was also the main problem. In fact, some tourist agents distribute wrong maps full of advertisements which make tourists confused. As the expenses of such maps are provided by commercial companies and it is free for these agents, they did not concern about the accuracy of the information.

Conclusion

Information infrastructure is one of the main components in the tourism industry. These infrastructures supply required information for tourists, either before trip or at destination. Yet, information infrastructure facilities in Penang Island are considered inadequate compared with the international standards. Despite the fact that this Island faces a variety of issues on information infrastructure, tourists are satisfied with the range of information given. However, their fulfillment of need should not result in neglecting the issue. Information system in Penang needs more aggressive changes in terms of provision, marketing, and promotion to bring more tourists to the potential destination. Since international tourists are still considered the main contributors to the tourism industry in Penang compared to domestic tourists, sufficient and effective tourism information infrastructures are essential to assist them in searching information about Penang, either in preparation for the trip or guiding them during stay.

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Developing a Penang Cultural Tourism Website Prototype: a User-Centred Design Approach

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A survey of Malaysia tourism website designs shows that most of these websites are text-heavy and loaded with information but have little regard for usability. Malaysian web designers and developers are unaware of the importance of user-centred web designs which can attract tourists and promote the sustainability of cultural tourism. This paper illustrates an attempt to develop a Penang cultural tourism website employing the user-centred design approach. The website aims to disseminate the multicultural traditions of Penang which include the performing arts, crafts and festivals. Through task analysis and usability testing methods, the research seeks to examine the effectiveness and functionality of specific web design features and subsequently develop a Penang cultural tourism website prototype.

Key words: tourism website, Penang

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Community Awareness and Perception of Cultural Heritage in Innercity George Town

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Much advocacy and research related to heritage conservation and promotion in innercity George Town was originally focused on the built heritage. This is most obvious from the types of inventories and conservation efforts conducted between 1980-2000. In the last ten years, mainly through the educational efforts of international bodies such as UNESCO, the notion of heritage has expanded beyond the built and natural environment to include living culture. More importantly, conservation efforts are being focused more on the sustainability link between built and living culture. In innercity George Town, although the communities and their products become a 'showcase' when promoting living cultural heritage , the tourism industry is slow to involve the community in policies related to interpretation, promotion, management and marketing. Only a selection of endangered crafts and trades, foods and festivals have benefited and developed from being given recognition (awards and press articles, promotional trails and brochures and academic documentation). There is a lack of documentation of community cultural assets which results in ignorance on the part of stakeholders involved in tourism as well as the community itself who may not perceive of the assets as having heritage or cultural value.This lack of awareness among community and stakeholders is an obstacle to the development of sustainable cultural tourism, where we see destruction/sale of valuble assets, and often development and promotion of products not authentic to the community or space.While promotion of heritage is traditionally in the hands of state authorities and commercial stakeholders, awareness raising and conservation efforts are more often then not spearheaded by NGO's and tertiary institutions. However, much of this education and advocacy is targeted at the educated elite, policy makers and tertiary students. Very little has been done to educate and engage the trader, resident and itinerant working population on heritage awareness, conservation and promotion and even less has been done to document the community's cultural assets. This research is divided into two phases, firstly to gauge awareness level of heritage among community and secondly to create inventory tools and sample inventories of cultural and social assets in a heritage community that can be used by stakeholders to develop community driven tourism and the development of the community's existing resources and creativity.This paper will present data from Phase 1 of the research which measures community's awareness and perception of cultural

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heritage assets in a potential tourist site in innercity Georgetown. The first phase of the research was carried out from Dec 2007- June 2008 and involved the following activities in the sample site:

(i) ***Livable City Index*** **-** *to gauge if cultural assets play a role in making a site livable for the community.*
(ii) ***Preliminary Survey*** **-** *to gauge the extent of community's knowledge of cultural assets in their immediate neighbourhood*
(iii) ***Perception survey*** *– to gauge community's perception of heritage value of own residence/workplace, trade and neighbourhood*

Key words: community, cultural heritage

Analysing Impacts from Tourism Development: A Framework Method

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Tourism is always regarded as an important means to benefit local communities. The success of the developed countries in expanding tourism industry has inspired many developing countries including Malaysia to give due recognition to the industry as the main driver in the nation's economic development. Based on a case study conducted in Langkawi Island, this article attempts to track the progress of tourism development of the island since 1986 until year 2004. The main focus of the study is to explore and identify economic, environmental and socio-cultural impacts of tourism development in Langkawi Island. Forty semi-structured interviews with local stakeholders involving hotel managers, government and non-government organizations representatives, resort and tourism developers and community leaders were conducted and analysed using Ritchie and Spencer's 'framework method' involving five stages of: Familiarisation; Identifying a thematic framework; Indexing; Charting; and, Mapping and interpretation. *Two key issues were identified and discussed further. These are: (1) the benefits of tourism development; and (2) the costs of tourism development. The analysis also found that despite the limitation and development issues, the benefits of tourism development in Langkawi far outweighed the costs accrued to the local populace.*

Key words: Langkawi Islands, tourism impacts, framework method

Introduction

In Malaysia, government involvement in tourism development began in the 1970s following an economic downturn and the decline in popularity and demand for commodity products. This resulted in the establishment of the Tourism Development Corporation (TDC) in 1972, following the Pacific Association of Travel Agencies (PATA) conference in Kuala Lumpur. Following the establishment of the TDC, the first Tourism Master Plan was completed in 1975. The Tourism Master Plan has provided a detailed explanation of the policies for tourism planning in Malaysia. However, the implementation of the plan met with resistance from local residents, because of perceived negative social and cultural impacts that tourism could have on

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the local society. But, by the end of the 1970s, continuous efforts by the government and subsequent economic benefits resulting from tourism development has changed the residents' perceptions of the industry from a negative to a positive stance (Wells, 1982; Sharif, 2002).

Apart from the 1975 Tourism Master Plan, the federal government's national Five Year Plan is also important in formulating the strategy for tourism planning and forecasting the progress of tourism development in Malaysia. The plan is used purposely for socio-economic planning, covering all economic sectors in the country. It also provides statistics and budget allocations for tourism development in every state in Malaysia, and outlines government policies and strategies for tourism planning. The government also promotes Malaysia as a tourist destination for international visitors, by emphasising the country's political stability, diverse cultures and abundant natural resources. For example, the focus in the Second Five Year Plan (1971-1975) and the Third Five Year Plan (1976-1980) has emphasised in details the importance of sharing economic from tourism development. This progress has been shown in term of allocation provided by the government for tourism development in the country (Table 1).

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).

Tourism Development in the Langkawi Islands

When the 1975 Tourism Master Plan identified Langkawi as a potential tourist destination in Northern Peninsular Malaysia, the Federal Government ordered the Malaysian Tourism Promotion Board to prepare a tourism master plan for Langkawi. The plan was completed by Peat, Marwick Mitchell & Company in 1977 (Sharif, 2002). But, none of the proposals from the plan were implemented (Bird, 1989).

In 1984, the first tourism development in the Langkawi Islands was launched. The State Government leased 405 hectares of land in Tanjung Rhu to Promet Berhad[†] to develop seven international hotels with 2500 rooms, but only 135 rooms were completed. Because of economic recession at the end of 1980s, Promet Berhad fell into financial difficulties and was sold to TRI Berhad. TRI Berhad failed to develop the whole 405 hectares of land leased from the State Government except one luxury hotel known as Tanjung Rhu Resort.

From 1988 to 1992, about 106 projects by private companies valued at more than MYR$ 1 billion won approval from authorities, relating to the development of hotels and resorts (54), marina (1), commercial projects (22), residential (15),

[†] In 1980s, Promet Berhad was one of the biggest public listed companies in Malaysia.

recreational (2), tourism products (9), and others (3) (Langkawi District Council, 1992). In the 1990 Langkawi Structure Plan, the government target was to have 7500 hotel rooms by the end of 2005 (Langkawi District Council, 1992) to accommodate the influx of domestic and international arrivals in Langkawi. This has resulted in a tremendous increase in hotels and resorts' rooms, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Hotel rooms in the Langkawi Islands

Year	Hotel rooms
1988	859
2001	6632
2005	7072‡

Source: Langkawi District Council (1992), Langkawi Municipal Council (2005) and LADA (2006).

Impacts from Tourism Development in the Langkawi Islands

Before 1987, 67% of employment in the Langkawi Islands was in the agriculture and fisheries sectors (Langkawi District Council, 1992). However, the declaration of a duty free island in 1987 has changed the socio-economic patterns in the Langkawi Islands. By the middle of the 1990s, about 32.3% of the working population were involved in the wholesaling and retailing sector, 21% in social services and only 17.3% were employed in the agriculture and fisheries sector (Langkawi Municipal Council, 2005).

By 1999, 68.1% of the working population received a monthly income between MYR$ 501 to MYR$ 2000; 4.1% received more than MYR$ 2001; and another 27.8% received less than MYR$ 500 a month compared to before 1987, when the majority of the working population (79%) received only MYR$ 500 or less a month (Langkawi District Council, 1992, LADA, 1999). Indicative of the trend of tourism development, the unemployment rate in Langkawi decreased from 9.7% in 1980, to 9.2% in 1990, and 8.7% in 2000 (Langkawi Municipal Council, 2005).

On the other hand, rapid development as a tourism destination has also had an impact on the local population, beaches and coastal area (Wong, 1991), and placed pressure on natural resources and environmental quality. Since 1995, there has been some erosion especially on the West Coast that receives swells generated in the Andaman Sea and on the spit at Tanjung Rhu (Teh & Ong, 1998).

Many developments were not properly carried out (Bird, 1989) and have damaged the sustainability and aesthetic appeal of the islands (Langley, 2002). Various issues and conflicts arising from tourism development were documented in the Langkawi Structure Plan in 1990 and the Langkawi Local Plan in 2005. The Structure Plan indicated several types of development along the coastal areas have had a negative impact on the natural environment, such as coastal erosion and sedimentation. A lot of land reclamation in coastal areas for commercial and infrastructure development has changed the landscape of the islands. The Langkawi Structure Plan also identified no special areas reserved for nature lovers and the public to study or enjoy the wildlife, such as birds, but the disturbance to the natural environment has affected the stability of the ecosystem.

Nevertheless, Sharif (2000) suggests that local residents accepted tourism development in Langkawi positively due to an improvement in basic infrastructure

‡ Four hundred and twenty eight rooms short of government target in the 1990 Langkawi Structure Plan, of 7500 rooms.

and public facilities. Local residents' perceptions are strongly influenced by the benefits and costs of tourism development (Kayat, 2002). Those who received benefit from tourism stated that they are dependent on tourism or vice versa.

Research methodology

Stakeholder interviews were used to identify the benefits and costs of tourism development in the Langkawi islands. The stakeholders were defined as *'those who have an interest in, or who are affected by tourism. They include travel and tourism companies, governments, and host communities'* (Richardson & Fluker, 2004: 383).

Sampling design

Based on Richardson and Fluker (2004) definition, tourism stakeholders were selected based on their associations with the tourism industry in Langkawi, and were categorised into four groups: (1) government departments, (2) private companies, (3) community leaders, and (4) interested groups such as non-government organisations (NGOs). They were grouped for two purposes: to avoid a homogeneous group of representatives; and, to have different perspectives about impacts from tourism development in the study area. In total, 40 respondents were selected to be involved in this study. Fourteen of those respondents represented government agencies; 16 were from private companies; 5 were from non government organisations; while the other 5 respondents were community leaders.

No sampling was needed in the selection of community leaders and NGO groups. All six community leaders from each division were involved in the interviews except one, due to the retirement of the leader. All NGOs identified from the list provided by Langkawi District Office and LADA. The purposive sampling only applied to government agencies and private companies. Three respondents were from the state and federal departments based in Alor Setar, Kedah. Another 11 respondents were from government agencies based in the Langkawi Islands. All 16 respondents from private companies were from various types of businesses ranging from hotels and chalets, construction companies, travel agencies to duty free businesses.

Data collection

The data collection was done from March to July 2004 in the Langkawi Islands using in depth interview. The interviews with open-ended questions were recorded by tapes and notes, and lasted between 45 minutes to 75 minutes. An appointment was made with each respondent two weeks prior to actual interview. Most of the interviews were held at the interviewees' office, although some preferred to be interviewed in their homes. The interviewees were free to decide whether to do the interviews in English or Malay, but most preferred to talk in Malay. However, the themes of the interviews were generally the same because all of the interviews followed a list of issues decided by the researcher.

Data analysis

The interview data analysis used a framework method, developed for applied policy research by Ritchie and Spencer (1994). A framework method involves a systematic process with five stages of data analysis:

Familiarisation

All recorded interviews were transcribed into data transcripts. The interview tape was listened to more than once to ensure the validity of the transcripts. The transcripts were sent to the interviewees for a comment for interpretation validity. Then, all key ideas and recurrent themes from interviews were placed on a list and were later used at the thematic framework stage.

Identifying a thematic framework

The thematic framework was developed from the transcribing and text reading during the familiarisation stage. The process of thematic framework involves *'both logical and intuitive thinking ...making judgements about meaning, the relevance and importance of issues, and implicit connections about ideas'* to ensure that the research questions are fully addressed (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994: 180). The thematic framework developed for this study is shown in Figure 1.

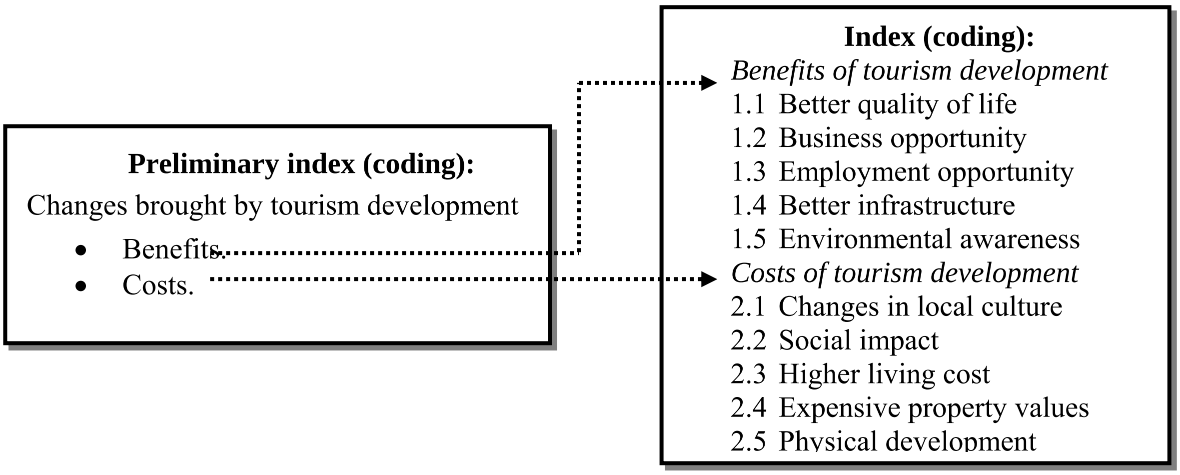

Figure 1: A thematic framework for this study

Indexing

From the thematic framework the interview transcripts were interpreted with numerical codes using the qualitative software NVivo 2.0 and supported by short text descriptors to elaborate index headings (Figure 2).

Index frame of key themes:

Benefits of tourism development

1.1 Better quality of life
1.2 Business opportunity
1.3 Employment opportunity
1.4 Better infrastructure
1.5 Environmental awareness

Costs of tourism development

2.1 Changes in local culture
2.2 Social impact
2.3 Higher living cost
2.4 Expensive property values
2.5 Impact from physical development

Interview transcript:

1.1 "...tourism has improved the quality of life of local residents by providing them with better jobs, business opportunities and other benefits."
1.2 "...the tourism industry is more profitable compared to agriculture. It offers a lot of opportunities and does not have as much risk as agriculture."
1.4 "…the standard of infrastructure is much better compared to certain areas in the mainland."
2.2 "…even though a Muslim is prohibited from drinking liquor, it is so difficult to prevent this problem since the price is cheap."
2.3 "the cost of living in Langkawi is higher since the price of certain goods is more expensive than certain places in the mainland".
2.5 "…the quality of environment has decreased … because of too much physical development in Langkawi".

Figure 2: Index (coding) from interview transcript

Charting

The charting stage is used to develop a visualization of data by considering the familiarity of themes (Ritchie & Spencer 1994). Charts are set up with headings and subheadings in two ways: (1) thematic framework and (2) research consideration. The arrangement of charts however, depends on whether the data analysis is *'to be thematic (for each theme across all respondents) or by case (for each respondent across all themes)'* (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994: 182-183) (Table 3).

Table 3: Example of themes from indexes

	Theme 1	**Theme 2**
Respondent	Benefits of tourism	Costs of tourism
33	"...a lot of positive impacts especially with regards to the quality of life among local residents."	"the cost of living in Langkawi is higher since the price of certain goods is more expensive than certain places in the mainland"
4	"...tourism has improved the quality of life of local residents by providing them with better jobs, business opportunities and other benefits.	"…local land owners always sell their land without having a long term plan...they just want instant money."

Mapping and interpretation

Ritchie and Spencer (1994) outlined six techniques to be used for interpretation as follows: (1) defining concept; (2) mapping range and nature of phenomena; (3) creating typologies; (4) finding associations; (5) providing explanations; and (6) developing strategies. But, the analysis should be guided by the research questions and the themes from the data, and focus on the structure of evidence rather than the numbers. By reviewing the charts, key dimensions of issues from tourism impacts have been illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Example of mapping on the issues of tourism impact

Research notes of the issues of impacts from tourism development	
Benefits of tourism	*Costs of tourism*
• Better quality of life	• Changes in local culture
• Business opportunity	• Social impact
• Employment opportunity	• Higher living cost
• Better infrastructure	• Expensive property values
• Environmental awareness	• Impact from physical development

Key dimensions identified

Economic Impacts
- Business opportunity
- Employment opportunity
- Higher living cost
- Expensive property values

Social Impacts
- Better quality of life
- Better infrastructure
- Changes in local culture
- Social impact

Environmental Impacts
- Environmental awareness
- Impact from physical development

Discussion on Tourism Impacts in the Langkawi Islands

Findings from the stakeholder interviews are explained in economic, social and environmental perspectives.

Economic impacts of tourism

According to the stakeholders, tourism development in Langkawi has created positive impacts with more prospects for local residents to be involved in business and opportunities for employment in the hotel industry. However, tourism also has increased negative impacts on the cost of living and the value of property and land. But, the interviews found different views on the issue of land value, some respondents were happy with the increment of land price as they could make more money by selling their land. However, other respondents were worried that a higher land price could become a constraint for future generations to buy land.

Social impacts of tourism

Since more employment and business opportunities were created by tourism, local residents' quality of life has also increased, as well as the quality of infrastructure and facilities. However, in a different scenario, the younger generation seems to have negative impacts from foreign culture in addition to some other issues on social problems, such as alcoholism, drug use and HIV cases.

Environmental impacts of tourism

Many interviewees suggested that tourism development in Langkawi has increased positive impacts on local residents' awareness on environment conservation. Nevertheless, rapid development also contributed to negative impacts on environmental degradation. The limitations of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations raised some concerns from the interviewees. Various projects were done without a proper study on EIA. Although some development projects went through EIA processes, it was not involved with the participation process because of the weaknesses in EIA regulations.

Conclusion

Findings from stakeholders' interviews suggested that tourism development in Langkawi has brought more benefits than costs to local residents. The findings also found that tourism development in Langkawi has improved the residents' quality of life. Despite that, several issues also arise regarding to social and environmental impacts from the progress of the tourism industry. Both issues request more significant measures to be done to ensure the development of the tourism industry in Langkawi will not harm the environment and should be well perceived by local residents. It is also found that the application 'framework method' in analysing qualitative data is useful to investigate the dimensions of impacts from tourism development in detail to achieve the objective of this study.

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Impact of Tourism Development on the Coastal Zone of North Pulau Langkawi

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Habitat destruction is a huge problem in the coastal and marine environment. The coastal and marine resources of Pulau Langkawi have suffered major impacts by human actions particularly related to tourism development since nearly three decades ago. Besides forest habitat fragmentation, tourism impacts are especially seen in the marine environment where the fringing reefs are in north Pulau Langkawi. The small fringing reefs once packed with healthy diverse corals are now left with mainly remnants of the coastal development aftermath. Although tourism and recreation-related development are major factors shaping the use and management of our coastal and marine resources, this sector has not fully plan and manage the resources in a sustainable manner without degrading the water quality and destroying the habitats that are the main attractions of our coastal and marine zone. Perhaps we have inadequate monitoring and assessment systems to understand what is really happening in the first place. This paper reveals the impact of tourism-related coastal development on the reefs of Teluk Datai (7.07 ha.) and Teluk Dedap (0.37 ha.) in north Langkawi from pre-development period (1985) to post-development as at present. The long term impact is seen on its deteriorating live coral coverage and its increasing coral debris.

Key words: impact, coastal, Pulau Langkawi

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The Physical Impact of Development around the Heritage Site in Urban Area. Case Study: The Colonial – Deli Malay Corridor in Medan

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According to UNWTO (United Nation World Tourism Organization) the number of cities around the world with increasing numbers of tourists will cause the problems on the tourism sector in the Asia countries. The improvement on the tourism sector is related to the great economic impact as a result of tourism development. A negative impact of tourism will occur when the capacity of tourists is higher than a limit capacity that can be accommodated by environment. Uncontrolled tourism development can be potentially damaged the environment like air pollution, land erosion, garbage disposal, the extinction of rare animals, forest fires and other damages to nature. The city environment is not immune to the impact generated by the tourism development. The tourism contributes to the impacts including the ecology and hydrology changes, an over infrastructure development, the change of landuse, visual, architectural and socio-culture elements of the city. In the historical areas of the city, tourism is having an impact on both sides; on one side the tourism enhances preservation of historical areas; on the other side, the tourism is create a commercial atmosphere through new retail activities, landuse changed, and caused the change on the community settlement and zones of the city. Colonial corridor - Malay of Deli which is located among the street of Brigjen.Katamso, Pemuda, A. Yani and "Merdeka" esplanade area is a historical corridor in Medan. Due to the existence of historical buildings, this Corridor is one of heritage tourism place in Medan. However, as impact of the city growth and a strong enthusiasm of tourists to visit this place, many of historical buildings were destroyed and changed by the modern buildings. This matter is deeply regretted whether taking into account the historical potential that can be felt along this corridor. Therefore, tourism needs planning and management concept that can manage the physical damages along this historical corridor. One of development concept which is receiving attention to a sustainable of environmental element (ecology) is the sustainable development concept.

Key words: ecology sustainability, Medan heritage tourism

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Introduction

Tourism is an industry which develops rapidly and constitutes one of the biggest income generators in developing countries nowadays. According to *The World Travel and Tourism Council* (WTTC, 2006 in UNWTO, 2007), tourism provides 234 millions jobs all over the world, which means 8.7 % from the total of existinnnnnnnnnn opportunity for employment (WTTC, 2006 in Ucer,2006). In 2007, tourism world has already got high position (UNWTO, 2007). From January-February 2007, it is noted that there is an increasing in tourism trips at 6% which reach 252 millions trips all over the world (UNWTO, 2007). The rapid growth tourism industry underlies the income progress in a region. Therefore, there are many tourism developments are executed in many various region recently.

In order to obtain economic benefit, many tourism developments were undertaken without considering socio - cultural of community surrounding and especially without considering the physical impact of the environment. Consequently, most of the tourism developments do not consider its future sustainability in the future. As a result, a-physical exploitation affected environmental degradation everywhere.

Brief Theory of Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable Tourism

Like other industry, tourism also competes for limited sources. Tourism depends on transportation, materials such as infrastructure, food for tourists, fund and human resources as well. Besides the above reason, most of existed tourism development is not sustainable (McKercher, Bob, 2003) for the following reasons:

- Tourism competes with local community in exploiting available resources
- Tourism needs differ with the needs of local community, therefore, the accomplishment of tourism needs are not appropriate for the needs of local community
- Only small number of community who understand the meaning of tourism and how to provide tourism products properly, resulting in imprudent tourism investment.
- Tourism often clashes with local community, particularly with outlying and minority community

For these reason, a concept which is able to improve the tourism and preserve them at once is required. One of development concept focusing on the future is Sustainable Tourism. The principles of sustainable tourism are appropriate due to reasons, such as tourism provide vacancies in reducing poverty, job vacancies for local community and stimulate regional development and preserve culture (McKercher, Bob, 2003).

Sustainable Tourism is defined as the management of all tourism resources in ways that fulfill the economic purposes, social and beauty purposes and maintain the culture integrity, ecology processes and life circles (Murphy, 1995, *cited by Savage; Huang; Chang, 2004*).

WTO describes the definition of sustainable tourism as follow:

‘Tourism which could accomplish the needs of tourist, local community, protects and improves the opportunities in the future ’

Sustainable tourism (German NGO Forum, 1998) is a tourism type which has the following:

- Provide economic benefit, particularly direct benefit for local community,
- Responsible to social and cultural stability,
- Pay more attention to environment, and
- High quality product and tourism experience

Ecology Sustainability

According to WTO (McKercher,2003) *Ecological Sustainability* is the development which in compliance with preservation of ecological process, biological diversity and others natural resources, WTO stated that to reach e*cological sustainability* , the following matters are required:

- Identify tourist attitude which can be accepted,
- Monitoring and conducting a research for the physical effect of sightseeing,
- Guaranteeing that design, planning and construction of sightseeing facility in accordance with sustainable development principles,
- Guaranteeing the conservation of protected areas such as national parks, including in sightseeing management planning published policies such as :
- Written guidance for all actors in sightseeing world
- Guidance for the implementation of sightseeing, effect of sightseeing development and sightseeing monitoring
- Formulate policies start from national, regional and local scale consistently by purpose of sustainable development

The Colonial – Deli Malay Corridor as Heritage Tourism Object of Medan CIty

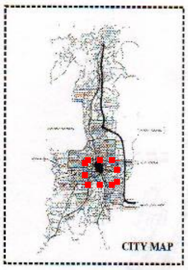
Urban Tourism of Medan

Indonesia is one country which develops the tourism sector. Tourism sector for the last five years is the fourth after oil, textile and plywood in providing dividend to the country (Siregar, 2004). Tourists which comes Indonesia through 13 entrance door achieves the highest arrival in 2002 of 400,000 persons/month. It is estimated that the target tourist arrival of 5.4 millions people in the end of 2002 (Siregar, 2004). For Medan itself, the serious intention of the regional government in facing the rapid development in tourism sector is by liquidating big fund in 2007. This year, regional government of Medan focuses on the improvement of tourism which reflected from the increase in budget on APBD 2007 which reach Rp.29 millions or 50 times compared with 2005 which reach Rp.690 millions (Harian Berita Sore ,2007).

One of urban tourism in Medan which is constantly visited by tourist is corridor of Brigjen.Katamso, Ahmad Yani, Pemuda and Balai Kota (Lapangan Merdeka areas). This area has many historical heritages of Dutch colonization and Deli Malay inheritance.

Initial condition of The Colonial – Deli Malay Corridor

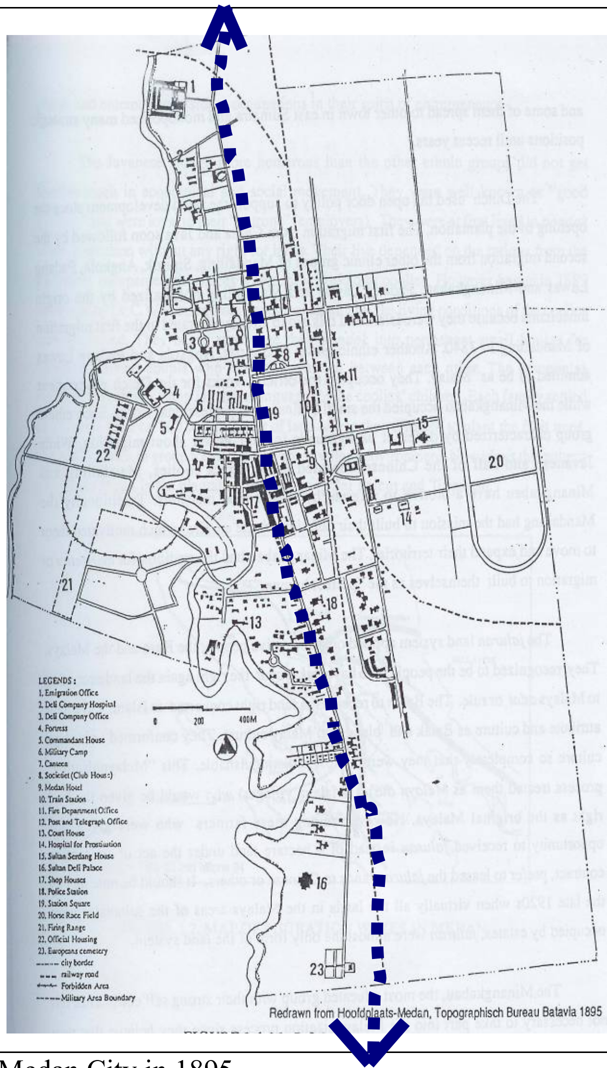
The research areas are jalan Brigjen.Katamso, A.Yani, Pemuda and Balai Kota as main circulation row since previous colonialism. Along this corridor there are many historical buildings such as Balai Kota, Post office, Railway Station, Deli Palace and many others historical buildings. The following map is the condition of research corridor in 1895:



City Map

1. Immigration office
2. Deli Hospital Company
3. Deli Company Office
4. Fortress
5. Commander house
6. Military complexs
7. Canteen
8. Club house
9. Hotel Medan
10. Railway station
11. Fire Company office
12. Post office and telegraph
13. Court office
14. Prostitution hospital
15. Sultan Serdang house
16. Palace of Deli kingdom
17. Stores
18. Police station
19. City open space
20. Field of race horse
21. Field of fire company
22. Official house
23. European cemetary

(Sources : Ellisa,1996)



Picture 1 Map of Medan City in 1895

Besides the historical building, there is Esplanade in this research area which is called Lapangan Merdeka. The Esplanade existed since Dutch colonialism. Initially, this Esplanade function as open space in the inner city. In 1923 this Esplanade held annual exhibitions and other annual big events. On the festival event, this space will be filled by many peoples who conduct theirs social activity, culture or economic activity (Nasution, 2006).

Current condition of The Collonial – Deli Malay Corridor

Recently, there are many historical heritage which come from Malay kingdom until the Dutch colonialism. Although there are many efforts to replace or to destroy the historical building by various parties, there are lots of heritage building which were destroyed through the years. They were replaced by modern buildings. Consequently, this place has lost its identity as a heritage area of the city of Medan.

The government has initiated some effort of protection by making enacting regulations which protect the existence of the historical heritage buildings. Although there are some regulations which protect heritage building, there are many other buildings which are not provided any protection.

Following the condition recently of research area:

Ecology Sustainability in The Colonial – Deli Malay Corridor

Ecological sustainability

In maintaining the ecological sustainability, some matters should be considered that guarantees the conservation areas and publishing policies which protect the ecology. Therefore, in maintaining the ecological sustainability in this research area, there are some matters to be implemented:

- *Maintaining the physical sustainability of heritage building.*
  This can be done through law protection and regional regulation, providing tax assistance or government assistance cost; to motivate the owners of the building to maintain their building. For some heritage buildings, some protection regulation already published such as decree of Medan Major No.188.342/3017/SK/2000 about the perfection of decree of Medan Major No.188.342/382/SK/1989 about the Implementation of Regional Regulation of Medan City No.06 1988 about the conservation of heritance building and environment of the architectural heritance and reforestation in Medan city which mention names of buildings protected by government (Magister Arsitektur USU, 2003)
- *Plan and build comfortable facilities for visitors in line with ecological sustainability* such as comfortable and safe pedestrian walkways, rubbish bin, the

use of environment friendly materials or vegetation grow as protection and estetica

Conclusion

Tourism is the biggest income generator, and as the result, the scale of tourism development tends to be massive, and focus on the financial benefits without considering other ecological issues. Therefore, development concepts which consider all the above sector is required to guarantee the ecological sustainability for the future. One method which has the above mention goal is sustainable tourism.

Medan is one city which has the potential in tourism sector; some of them are in Brigjen.Katamso, Ahmad Yani, Pemuda and Balai Kota (Lapangan Merdeka area), here are research areas. These areas are well known with many heritage buildings, such as Maimoon palace and city culiner activity. As one of tourism destinations, this area has the potential to be developed and preserved for the future.

To maintain its sustainability, therefore, many steps should be implemented in managing tourism in this area especially in ecological sector. The very important thing that should be done in this area is the conservation of heritage buildings along this research area, either through regional regulation such as decree of major, or other ways which attract owners of the heritage building to sustain their building, such as by providing tax assistance or assistance cost**.**

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Sustainable Tourism Initiatives and Environmental Certifications: An International Review

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The issue of sustainability is one of the major forces that drive change in the hotel industry. Increasing demand for environmental friendly (eco-friendly) accommodation together with more stringent government regulations have further pushed the hotel industry to become more environmental friendly. Some of the surveys and research undertaken have shown that the environmental friendly practice is one of the factors used by tourism consumers in selecting their accommodation and making their travel plans. Consequently, environment-friendly hotel operations may be the wave of the future. However, in Malaysia, the industry as a whole has not been very active in ensuring self-regulation. Benchmarking of the environmental indicators is needed to determine the current status of the local hotel industry in terms of their environmental management. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to review the existing standards and certification for eco-friendly practices in the region of South East Asia, New Zealand and Australia. In so doing, the current tourism strategy within the countries involved will be reviewed. Finally, the potential indicators for the development of the environmental management indexes in the Malaysian context will be discussed.

Key words: hotel industry, sustainability, environmental management, indicator

Introduction

Travel and tourism is one of the world largest industries. It has contributed about 3.6% of the world GDP in 2006 and created about 10% of the world employment (UNWTO, 2006). In 2007, about 842 million people engage in international travel and more than 2,000 million are travels within national border. Despite the benefits offered by the tourism industry, it could bring negative environmental and social impact if no proper planning is carried out. Protection of the environment is vital and needs to be addressed to ensure the sustainability of the industry.

The hotel industry, being one of the largest sectors of the tourism industry, needs to play a role in ensuring environmental conservations. As of 1997, the industry

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consists of 301,400 hotels which consist of 13 million rooms and USD 202 billion of revenues generated (WTTC, IFTO, IH&RA and ICCL, 2002). The hotel industry has key interest in protecting the environment since the environment is one of the dominant tourist attractions. Consequently environmental-friendly hotel operations are the way forward for the hotel industry.

Moreover, there is an increasing demand for environmental friendly accommodation as illustrated from various survey results. For example, a TripAdvisor 20007 survey of more than 1,000 travellers worldwide found that 34% of the respondents are willing to pay more to stay at an environmentally friendly hotel while 38% said that they had already stayed at environmentally hotel. Furthermore 25% of the respondents are willing to pay 5-10% premium and 12% would pay a 10-20% premium to stay at an environmentally hotel.

Even though governments worldwide have formulated various environmental regulations, their enforcement and monitoring are very costly and time consuming. Self regulation is a more viable option for the industry. This could be done either through self self-audit or through gaining environmentally friendly certification (WTTC, IFO, IH&RA and ICCL report, 2002).

Currently, there are over 100 certification programmes available internationally. Thus, it is crucial to have a proper standard or best environmental management practices for the hotel industry that is in line with the needs and context of a specific country. This is also in line with the actions proposed by UNEP (2003) that noted that ensuring sustainable tourism can be done through using appropriate certification schemes. Having certification or benchmarking or the environmental indicators are useful for looking at current status of the local hotel industry in terms of their environmental management

As such, the purpose of this paper is to review and document the current tourism strategy within the region of SEA, Australia and New Zealand. In so doing, any sources of activities that could provide indicators for best practices will also be reviewed. Finally, the potential indicators for the development of the environmental management indexes will be discussed. Thus, this paper attempt to contribute by offering some literature review on the existing available best practice and standards and subsequently identified the relevant indicators that are applicable to the Malaysian context.

Southeast Asia and Tourism

Experiences among the SEA countries show that there is a socio-economic rationale for them to strongly support tourism as a key player in the national development. This is supported by Jenkin (1997) who states that tourism has a historical record of being a growth sector helping developing countries to: (i) earn foreign exchange with “hard” currencies; (ii) create jobs to meet their paramount employment needs (iii) generate regional economic development (iv) generate both personal and business incomes and (v) contribute to government revenues through taxation. Given the current trend and attractive promotional exercise, the tourism industry is expected to continue growing.

Based on the UNWTO figures, tourist arrivals for the Asia Pacific region was recorded at 167 million. There is an increase of 7.6% over the previous year. In terms of the international tourism receipt, the SEA share approximately 20% of the world 842 million tourists. The trend is expected to continue if there is no drastic change on the world economic climate.

Such trend helps SEA to develop their economies. Such trend if uncontrolled would also help to destroy the environment of the country. The latest development in tourism has seen that countries started to exploit their natural environment for tourism attraction. This new development would have an adverse impact to the environment if there is no proper planning.

Environmental policy within the Tourism Master Plan among SEA Countries

This section reviews the environmental management policy for the tourism industry among selected SEA countries namely Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Singapore and Vietnam. The concept of sustainable development had a great influence in the development of environmental policy among the SEA countries as most of these countries have agreed to abide with this principle in formulating their codes of ethics, guidelines and master plans. Even tough the concept of sustainable development comprises more than just environment, for the purpose of this study, it focuses only on the environmental matters.

The following discussion will be based on the countries named above and followed by the overall conclusion.

Malaysia

The Malaysia National Tourism Policy was first proclaimed in the Sixth Malaysian Plan (1991-1995) and updated in the subsequent Malaysia Plans. The broad policy for environmental management includes among other the following aspects:

- Developing environmental-friendly tourism products, promotion of cultural and natural heritage.
- Provision of soft loans for small to medium size tourism related projects.
- Adoption of an integrated approach for planning, preservation and beautification of tourism and historical sites.

Philippine

The Philippine Tourism Master Plan outlines on the environmental policies among other include the following aspects:

- Promoting sustainable tourism products by developing a spread of differentiated tourism clusters.
- Encouraging domestic tourism as a means to improve the people's quality of life, conserve and promote national heritage and enhance their sense of national identity and unity.
- Promotion of environmental conservation by adhering to development guidelines and caring of the locale where tourism development would take place, and adopting an integrated approach in planning taking into consideration the country 's natural, historic and architectural heritage; and supporting the conservation movement.

The Philippine Department of Tourism with the help of the Philippine Council on Sustainable Development had conducted a series of technical workshops to upgrade its tourism policy. The process follows closely the guideline outlined by the sustainable development concept where it involves a multi stakeholders dialogue.

Thailand

In Thailand the sustainable tourism policy of Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) emanates from Thailand's constitution itself, which provides for the people to protect their resources, trades and culture (Wanaporn, 2002). Sustainable tourism which comprises the environmental policy for Tourism was made into a national agenda in the National Tourism Development Plan. The following highlight Thailand tourism policies which are related to environment:

- Conservation of mangrove forests, coral reefs, and marine park resources assets that are vital to the tourism industry
- Multi stakeholder participation
- Improvement of integration of related tourism laws

Singapore

Singapore is a small country which does not have any natural environment based product to offer. Review on the current Tourism Master Plan called Tourism 21 indicates that basically it is a marketing planning with no direct references to sustainable development. Therefore none of the policy discuss about the environment.

Vietnam

Vietnam which is now adopting an open economy has shown a great potential to be one of the favourite tourist destination given the peculiarity in her history. Vietnam has been regarded as land of leisure with many beautiful natural features to visit (Rakthammachat, 1993). However there is difficulty to locate any Tourism Master Plan for Vietnam if there is any. Thus discussion on the Vietnam environmental policy is left unexplored.

What / Who are SEA main references?

Even though each of the above countries may have their own environmental policy which would than influence the environmental management practices but the whole policy is seen to rely on the sustainable development concept. The concept applied was interpreted based on their local context which is normally aligned with the country's national agenda.

The above countries policy is very broad and most of it was made mandatory in many sub laws or legislations in order to ensure that the above policy is achievable. Therefore, it is also important to explore what is required by the law in regard to preserving the environment. It is also wise to include some of the mandatory requirement as part of the indicators for the environmental indexes.

Beside the mandatory requirements, some governments like Malaysia do provide tax incentives for the company to get involve in the environmental activities. This could be another source of reference for the development of future environmental index. Such effort will definitely be the motivating factors for the company to adopt the practices.

Beside all of the above mentioned sources, WTO (2002) stated that voluntary initiatives also play an increasing role in influencing tourisms operations. The voluntary scheme in this context cover ecolabels and certification schemes, prizes and awards, environmental management systems, codes of conduct and charters for sustainable tourism. Each of these voluntary initiatives could also be an important source that influences how company is operating. Each of these initiatives provides a set of criteria which could also be used in the development of the environmental index. For example Eco labels provide a review and update of environmental criteria and categories and meantime the codes of conduct refer to a voluntary set of guidelines. Some of the widely known Voluntary initiatives in the SEA countries are:

- PATA Green Leaf Program/ APEC-PATA Code for Sustainable Tourism – This is eco label for all types of tourism companies. The goal is to improve environmental quality, conserve energy and preserve natural resources in the hotel business.
- Green Globe – This ecolabel translates the principles of Agenda 21 into practical actions for accommodations, tour operators and destinations around the world.
- International Hotel Environment Initiative (IHEI) – This is consortium of chief executives from multinational hotel groups and they normally reward hoteliers for their efforts to improve environmental performance

All of the above voluntary initiatives however do not originate internally within the SEA context; however it does have its own followers. For example, 1 percent of the 64 hotels in Bangkok have applied for Green Leaf accreditation in 2000 (Cruz, 2003). The following are the criteria which were evaluated on initiatives and activities undertaken by an individual properties.

- Policy and Standards on Environmental Practice
- Waste management
- Efficient use of energy and water
- Environmentally-friendly products purchase
  - The preference for purchasing products and services from equally committed environmentally-friendly companies
- In-door air quality
- Air pollution
- Noise Pollution
- Water Quality
- Recycling
- The storage and management of fuel, gas, and toxic waste
- Ecological impact
- Cooperation with Community and Local Organizations/Community relations
- Communication
- Management support
- Training

In addition to the above initiatives, some of the SEA countries have also come up with their own tourism award in order to encourage the adoption of best practices. Thailand, Singapore and the Philippines have initiated KALAKBAY AWARD which is meant to recognize the best hotels, resorts, travel agencies, tour operators, tourism frontline workers, and local tourism council and ecotourism product. Environmental practices are part of the criteria for the selection of the best hotels and resorts but the weights assigned to them are low (Cruz, 2003). Malaysia has also come out with its own award but there is no mention about the criteria for evaluation.

In general all of the above discussion can somehow be related to the concept of sustainable development. The above environmental practices and criteria are based on the sustainable development. Such a trend is a positive indicator as all the SEA countries are signatories to Agenda 21, and therefore obliged to follow the guidelines spell out under the sustainable development concept. The following section will discuss the possible indicators for environmental practices which originated from the concept of sustainable development.

Review on the indicators used in SEA

To incorporate all previously cited indicators will be very complicated indeed. This paper will start with sustainable tourism index developed by the French NGO Group which is then pilot tested in the Phuket, Thailand. This paper will only focus on the environment index. The indicators are as follows:

- Physical impact (damaged area, expressed as percentage of tourist facility to total surface area; percent share of primitive plants in vegetation cover; number of specifies and population per species of animals and plants)
- Sewage treatment (percentage of treated to total sewage, and what kind of treatment)
- Garbage treatment (percentage of treated to total garbage, and what kind of treatment)
- Water consumption (water consumption per room; cost of water supply per tourist; percent of total water consumption to total available supply)
- Visual impact (maximum building height)

The above indicators provide objective measures of the environmental items. Each of the indicators is easily measured and users can easily understand the information disclosed.

New Zealand and Australia and Tourism

Tourism industry is one of the largest industries and contributors to the economies of New Zealand and Australia. It is the largest export earner for New Zealand representing 19.2% of the total export and employing 5.9% of the total workforce (Tourism New Zealand Annual Report 2006/2007). International and domestic tourists together contributed about $1.3 in goods and services tax revenue (Tourism New Zealand Annual Report 2006/2007). The industry is also growing. Over the 10 years period from 1996 to 2006, tourist arrivals to New Zealand increased by 48% as compared to 23% for Australia, US 7% and Canada decreased by 9%. Tourism is one of the largest industries in Australia with a total economic value of $81.5 billion (Tourism Australia website). There were 5.6 million visitor arrivals during the year ended 30 April 2008, an increase of 1 per cent relative to the previous year (Tourism Australia website)

Nature and environment is a strong selling point in both countries. It is not surprising that there are coordinated efforts between the two countries to work on conservation and environmental management. The Australian and New Zealand Environment Conservation Council (ANZECC), a ministerial level council operating since 1991, provided the platform for both countries to coordinate policies regarding environmental and conservation issues (Australian Dept of Environment, Water Heritage and the Arts' website).

In 2001, ANZECC was replaced with the two other councils, namely (i) the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council (NRMMC) which deals with natural resource management, and (ii) the Environment Protection and Heritage Council (EPHC), which deals with environmental protection. The following section will discuss the tourism strategy in New Zealand and Australia, to be followed by the discussion of the certification programs and indicators used for reference point in both countries.

New Zealand

New Zealand is a country that enjoys a high level of environmental quality. This is due the low population density which resulted in less environmental pressures. New Zealand also enjoys a clean green image which has estimated value of millions or billions of dollars (Ministry of Environment, 2001). However, the New Zealand government is concern with the sustainability of this "green image". In their new Tourism Policy and Strategy 2010, new vision based on the principles of sustainable tourism is formulated. The new mission, is to welcome visitors, protect the environment and celebrate the culture, is underpinned by four objectives that are

(i) Securing and conserving a long term future,
(ii) Marketing and managing a world class visitor experience,
(iii) Working smarter, and
(iv) Being financially and economically prosperous.

Among the actions plans for securing and conserving a long term future is to develop environmental standards. New Zealand Ministry of environment, Ministry of Tourism and Tourism Industry Association are to develop and promote the use of environmental management system.

Currently there is no environmental management ratings used in evaluating New Zealand hotels. The existing rating system, i.e. Qualmark™, represent New Zealand tourism official mark of quality. Hotel that gained this certification was assessed as professional and trustworthy based on quality, service and cost (Qualmark website) Ratings are based on one to five stars. Thus, sustainable business practices are currently not evaluated in New Zealand.

However, there is an industry driven effort to go for environmental certification for the hotel industry. The move is driven by the Tourism Industry of New Zealand, that represents the organisations in the tourism industry. Among TIANZ roles are developing programs and quality tourism standards. Tourism Industry Association of New Zealand (TIANZ) is currently developing the Green Globe certification program for sustainable tourism.

Australia

Tourism attractions in Australia greatly relied on the country's natural environment. The move towards sustainable tourism is done through the effort of the local, state and federal governments. At the local level, there is effort towards 'green planning' (Buhrs & Aplin, 1999). In Australia, there are various strategies and working group that worked on sustainable tourism such the Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) Working Group on tourism (Anon, 1991) and the National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development (Commonwealth of Australia, 1992). The purpose of these strategies and working group is to:

(1) Integrating ESD principles into tourism strategies at all levels,

(2) Developing industry codes of environmental practice,
(3) Examining regulatory mechanisms for achieving good environmental outcomes
(4) Conducting research into environmental and economic impacts.

At the state level, for example, the Queensland government introduced the Eco-tourism Plan in 1997 which aimed for better environmental practice by promoting the Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Program (NEAP). However, no localised accreditation schemes, or national green tourism labels has been developed for hospitality industry (Buckley, 2001).

What / Who are the main references?

Green Globe is an independent certified program and used as reference point in New Zealand. The criteria used for the certification program is explained below.
International reference: Green Globe 21 (www.greenglobe21.com)

Green Globe, a global benchmarking, certification and improvement system for sustainable travel and tourism. The objective of Green Globe is to be the main international environmental standard by the travel and tourism industry.

Green Globe was initiated by the World Travel and Tourism Organisation in 1994 (WTTO and IHRA, 1999) It is developed based on Agenda 21 and principles of sustainable development and endorsed by 182 Heads of Government at the UN Rio Janeiro Earth Summit (Global Futures and Foresight,). The Green Globe also gained the support of 20 industry organisation, World Tourism Organisation, United Nations Environment Program and the Earth Council (WTTO and IHRA, 1999). In 1999, Green Globe became an independent body and it provides support for its members. (WTTC 2002). The Green Globe standards were introduced in 1999.

For assessment, annual data for such areas as energy usage and waste removal needs to be collected. However, the range and types of data collected and monitored depends on the type of operation. The data collected helps when formulating the environmental management system. The annual benchmark report provides an overview of the operational achievements and progress towards industry best practices. The areas covered are:

- Waste minimisation, reuse, recycling;
- Energy efficiency, conservation, management;
- Management of freshwater resources;
- Waste water management;
- Hazardous substances;
- Transport;
- Land-use planning and management;
- Involvement of staff, customers, communities in environmental issues;
- Design for sustainability; and
- Partnerships for sustainable development

The first certified hotel in New Zealand is Langham Hotel Auckland. The hotel best practices is in the area of water saving initiatives, using low flow aerators on showers and taps and generating a small portion of their own energy with a heat exchange unit. The hotel also employed a full time Environmental Projects Supervisor, As a result of good practice, the hotel has gained reduction in Water

Consumption which is 36% above Best Practice. Their achievement on all other indicators is above Baseline which means that they are operating above average.

Australia: Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Program (NEAP)

In Australia, there is a locally produced certification program which is the Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Program (NEAP). Initiated in 1996, it is currently is the leading international accreditation program (EAA, 2001). NEAP is exported internationally as International Eco-tourism Standard. NEAP provides certification for tours, attractions and accommodations. Thus, NEAP certified accommodations shows its "commitment to best practice ecological sustainability, natural area management and the provision of quality ecotourism experiences". Three types of certification are available, includes, (i) nature tourism, (ii) eco-tourism and (iii) advanced eco-tourism. The differences between nature tourism and eco-tourism are illustrated below:

Triple bottom line	The nature tourism or ecotourism product principles:	Nature Tourism	Ecotourism/Advanced Ecotourism
Economic Sustainability	1. Business Management and Operational Planning	✓	✓
	2. Business Ethics	✓	✓
	3. Responsible Marketing	✓	✓
	4. Customer Satisfaction	✓	✓
Environmental Sustainability	5. Natural Area Focus	✓	✓
	6. Environmental Sustainability	✓	✓
	7. Interpretation and Education	N/A	✓
	8. Contribution to Conservation	N/A	✓
Social Sustainability	9. Working with Local Communities	N/A	✓
	10. Cultural Respect and Sensitivity	N/A	✓

Source: eco-certification program: Eco-tourism Australia (http://www.ecotourism.org.au/eco_certification.asp)

The criteria are comprehensive. For example, the environmental indicators consists of the following:

- Environmental planning and impact assessment
- Environmental management
- Location: nature tourism and eco-tourism is an appropriate use and impacts are minimised
- Construction methods and materials - maximise use of renewable and recyclable materials has involved practices to minimize environmental impacts
- Site disturbances, landscaping and rehabilitation
- Visual impacts – nature and eco-tourism operations are not visually dominant
- Biodiversity conservation – nature and eco-tourism products biodiversity impacts have been minimized
- Water supply and conservation – minimal use of ecologically sustainable water supply
- Waste water : sewage effluent is minimized, no significant environmental impact
- Air quality –minimal air pollution

- Waste minimization and management – reduce, reuse and recycle underpins the operations of the product
- Energy use and mininimisation: buildings – minimal use of energy
- Energy use and minimization- transport
- Minimal disturbances to wildlife

The criteria are reviewed every three years to incorporate emerging best practices.

Discussion

As mentioned earlier, there are numerous certification schemes available. What is common among these indicators is that they build upon the concept of sustainable development. Thus, environmental certification is not only solely about the environmental sustainability but is also concern about the social and economic impact of tourism to the host community besides being concerned about economic sustainability. As we can see from the previous sections, some countries build their own indicators and certification schemes while others look at international standards as reference points. In New Zealand, for example, the move towards green practices is very much an industry initiative.

However, in Malaysia, the industry as a whole has not been very active in ensuring self-regulation either through developing industry codes of best practices or moving towards getting environmental certifications. The hotels are still rated by the normal rating criteria based on their qualitative and artistic and bedroom requirements, common areas, services, safety and hygiene standards and staff (Star, July 24, 2007). Even when the government tighten the rating criteria, they are still based quality hotel service and facilities. In addition, sustainable tourism initiatives are not seriously taken up at the planning stage at the local level. Comprehensive sustainable tourism strategies and actions are not being considered by the local authorities.

Thus, how do we know whether the hotels and other accommodation providers are operating in an environmentally sustainable manner? Preserving the environment is the responsibility of all involved especially the hospitality industry since it is one of the sub-sectors that have been criticized because of its potential impact on the natural and cultural environment (Haley and Haley, 1997). Thus, it is time that environmental evaluation needs to be done on the hospitality industry. To overcome resistance, incentives should be given to hotels that have environmental management system put in place and operate based on sustainable environmental practices. But first, appropriate indicators suitable for the Malaysian context need to be developed.

In view of the numerous standards available, the challenge is to determine the best indicators suitable to the needs to the country while taking into account the social-political context of the country. The starting point for reference could be the Practical Guide for the Development and Application of Indicators of Sustainable Tourism which is published by the WTO in 1996. Since than WTO have published several guidelines and best practices for Sustainable Tourism which is also beneficial for this study. There are several set of core indicators highlighted in the above guideline for example: Site protection, stress, and use intensity, social impact, and development control, waste management, planning process, critical ecosystems, consumer satisfaction and local satisfaction.

Study conducted by Cruz (2003), had successfully summarize some of the potential indicators which was gathered from the UNEP, South Africa's Responsible

Tourism, Fair Trade in Tourism, English Tourism Council, Green Globe, WSSD, Trousdale and Gentoral, and many others. The following are the environmental indicators taken from the Cruz (2003) checklist.

Environmental indicators

- Presence of infrastructure to manage and minimize solid and liquid wastes
- Water quality index for fresh water and marine/beach water
- Air quality index
- Percent of population exposed to noise and light pollution
- Percent of population exposed to foul odours
- Amount of water consumed, percentage of leakage
- Amount of fossil fuels used
- Speed of motor vehicles during rush hour
- Amount of packaging purchased with supplies
- Adherence to codes of behaviour that respect natural heritage
- Compliance with best practice guidelines in designing, planning and construction of buildings
- Adoption of technologies that reduce consumption of natural resources, production of wastes and incidence of pollution (sustainable energy like solar power)
- Use of local materials (where sustainable) and local architecture on a scale that does not create a negative aesthetic impact
- Extent of use of soft transport (cycle routes, walking trails)
- Use of sustainable trails, hides and interpretation
- Use of sustainable materials (souvenirs not made from parts of endangered animal and plant species)
- Use of environmental-friendly chemicals
- Park fess used to manage habitat and species
- Percentage of profits invested in nature conservation
- Average annual frequency and severity of natural disasters

The above checklist provides a very useful guide for future development of the environmental index for evaluating environmental management practices of the hotel industry in Malaysia. The above checklist also parallels with the standards discussed in the earlier parts of this article. The core indicators common among the various certification schemes discusses are those related to energy, water, waste, community, use of pesticides etc.

However further work need to be done in contextualize the whole checklist to Malaysian environment. The suitability to the Malaysian context needs to be determined. The measurement method for some of the indicators must also be think of before the whole checklist is ready for use.

Conclusion

This paper attempts to review the SEA, New Zealand and Australia experiences in terms of the best practices or standard that is available. Findings on the review conducted indicates that sources for the environment index varies from the law and incentives to the company voluntary initiatives such as award criteria, eco label criteria and other sources of accreditation. The sources could provide a valuable input.

Interestingly the whole sources are actually originated from one concept that is sustainable development.

Reviews from other international tourism body have also provided important sources for the development of the environmental indicators. However further work need to be carried out for example the development of the measurement method before the whole checklist can be operationalised. In general this study provides a good background for the future development of the environmental index for the hotel industry in Malaysia.

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Green Indicators in Hospitality Industry: Identification of Common Attributes Applied by Hotels in American and Latin American Continents

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The article describes common practices applied by hotels in America and Latin America continents to achieve sustainable tourism development. Through a review selected hotels in the two continents, the authors managed to identify a number of attributes of the green practices by the management of the hotels. Of the 25 attributes, 13 of them were considered as the common ones applied. The most common include the efforts to save energy, conserve water, minimize waste, source local food and undertake recycling. The identification of the green attributes of the hotels is important as the hotel industry in the two continents have been acknowledged to be amongst the forerunners of the sustainable tourism campaign. The effort in trying to identify the common practices of hotels throughout the world is one alternative of how we can set the green indicators for all hotels globally. Discussions of the hotels involved and the need for the green indicators will follow.

Key words: hotel, green attributes

Introduction

Tourism is one of the activities that depend heavily on the environment. It impacts the environment in both ways – either positively (e.g. to help the economy) or negatively (e.g. destroy the environment). Over the years, there have been increasing evidences on the demands of tourists requesting those in the hospitality industry to seriously care for the environment that they are visiting. For example, Moffitt and Engeldrum (1997) noted the result of the 1996 Conde Nast Travellers' magazine readers' poll where 95% of travelers were found to be concerned with the environmental conditions of their destinations (c.f. Mensah 2006). Similar concern has been voiced by governments, local residents, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the tourism industry itself demanding for industry players to apply more sustainable tourism practices.

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Following the increased concerns and calls by all parties, there have been efforts by the hotel sector to show their seriousness about being ‘green’. These include the hotels’ efforts to recycle waste, better management of waste, clean air, energy and water conservation, environmental health, maintenance of permits such as building permits and compliance with legislation, purchasing policy and environmental education (Forte 1994; Middleton and Hawkins 1998). However, the efforts as applied by the hoteliers vary in nature where some are seen to have put in very serious effort whereas the others only superficially. In Hong Kong for example, a 1992 survey found that about 30% of hotels have launched environmental programs although the success rate vary amongst them (Bartlett 1992). The wide variation amongst hoteliers in their green practice is proof that there is a need to apply an environmental index or green indicators for hoteliers to achieve sustainable tourism development. The index or indicator will serve as a basis for setting a standard that every player within the sector or industry to comply with as to show what it takes to be considered ‘green’.

It is in this light that the authors of this paper seek to find out the environmental management practices (EMPs) amongst hoteliers, in specific, within the America and Latin America continents to allow us to seek the common green attributes applied by them. Although the effort should be to try to identify what are the common practices of hotels throughout the world as one alternative of how we can set the green indicators for all hotels globally, however for this article, the common attributes of hoteliers within the two continents are chosen as a start since these are the continents which produced serious hoteliers that serve as forerunners to achieve sustainable tourism development. The review of the common practices can be used to draw inferences on hotels in other continents and serve as green indicators for hotels. The results may give an overview of the level of adoption and implementation of EMPs amongst hotels in the continents.

Literature Review

Environmental management emerges in the 1980s. It was considered a new and vital aspect of management which was supposed to be adopted by an increasing number of firms by the 1990s (Worcester 1994 c.f. Mensah 2006). Many researchers defined environmental management from the standpoint of environmental management systems (EMC). Hunter and Green (1995) for instance considers environmental management as a corporate approach usually based upon auditing procedures that includes the objectives setting, targets measure, detailed programs and monitoring and evaluation process. Middleton and Hawkins (1998) extends this definition through a description of EMC as the ‘how’ conduct of day- to- day business operations of an organization (can be either public or private sector organization) and considers it as a useful label for the range of programs undertaken by that organization in its efforts to protect, enhance or reduce its impact on the environment. Combining the two definitions, Mensah (2006) whose work also focuses on hotels, defines environmental management 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 impacts” (p.418).

Waste management and energy savings have been critical concerns in environmental management in hotels. It is estimated that 75% of all environmental impacts created by the hotel industry can be attributed to the excessive consumption of local and imported non-durable goods, energy and water, followed by emissions released to air, water and soil (APAT, 2002 c.f Bohdanowicz 2006). A survey carried out by the American Hotel and Motel Association (AH&MA) further revealed that hotel managers rated reduction of energy consumption and waste management through recycling as their most important concerns (Stipanuk 1996). Hence the effort by hotels like Statler Hotels in installing a refuse chute to deposit trash directly into a refuse room in which the refuse will be then separated, and the paper balanced and sold (Stipanuk 1996).

Following the 1992 Rio Earth Summit which identified tourism as one of the priority areas for sustainable development, the green movements within the hotel industry started to gain momentum and recognition (Bohdanowicz 2006). Mensah (2006) noted how environmental management in hotels started in the form of initiatives by various associations and activities which begun when the Prince of Wales launched the International Hotels Environment Initiative (IHEI) in 1993. Today, many individual hotels like Novotel, Ibis Homebush, Grecotel, Ramada Renaissance Hotel, Fairmont Hotels and Resorts are amongst hotels that are aggressive in pursuing environmental initiatives. One of the Novotel and Hotel Ibis Homebush Bay in Sydney, Australia managed to reduce its portable water consumption by 50% through a dual-piping system (Hotel Online 2002). The cost savings resulted from EMPs like the energy and water saving effort has influence them to be adopted by hoteliers (Forte 1994; Hotel Online 2002). For instance, the 2008 American Hotel and Lodging Association (AH&LA) Lodging Survey that was carried out on more than 10,000 U.S. properties in more than 100 areas of hotels (include types of in-room amenities, security and technology features, food and beverage options, number of beds, guest services, and property offerings) unveils the latest trends in technology, health and eco-conscious travel. The green initiative (first time ever to be conducted) results of this survey show that 68% of properties reported using energy-efficient lighting, and that 21% of respondents reported of their plan to incorporate Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) standards into their properties within the next 12 months. In addition, another 20% respondents reported that they have already incorporated LEED elements in their properties during the past 12 months (Hotel News Resource, http://www.hotelnewsresources.com/article33067.html).

The Impact of Green Hotels Association (GHA) in America and Latin America Continent's hotel industry

Green Hotels Association (GHA) is a popular association and is considered the forerunner of the green movement for the hospitality industry presided by Patricia Griffin in America since the 1990s. The association's purpose is "to bring together hotels who are interested in environmental issues" as" the association encourages, promotes and supports the "greening" of the lodging industry" (http://www.greenhotels.com). Since 1993, GHA offers membership to hoteliers through their creation of towel and sheet cards. Members of GHA are known as green hotels-- which indicate that the hotels are eager to institute programs to save water, energy and reduce solid waste while saving money to help protect "our one and only earth".

In 1994, GHA released the first of its kind "Catalog of Environmental Products for the Lodging Industry" on which as Ray Hankamer, Jr., CHA and Managing General Partner of Southwest Hotel Management, Holiday Inn owner and environmentalist is quoted to say, "…a catalog of environmental products and ideas that make choosing "green" an easy option for the hotelier" (August 29, 1994 press release, http://www.greenhotels.com). The catalog is an outcome of a "Green" Hotels survey that was carried out on owners and managers at a Days Inn Convention asking them to indicate what their properties were doing to help the environment at that time and what their plans are in the future. The survey found that most respondents felt that they had "done everything they can" once they change the showerheads in the bathroom or use fluorescent lighting in the lobby as they were not aware that they can in fact do much more. The catalog includes both products specific to the needs of the lodging industry (e.g. from cards asking guests to use bath and bed linens more than once, to water saving devices, to dispensers for hair and skin care products, to pencils made from recycled cardboard, to environmental handbooks) as well as "Green Ideas" that offer suggestions and ideas for further savings (e.g. to offer a small soap bars that just the right size for children's hands, and that to donate leftover bars to local daycare centers and schools).

By 1996, GHA celebrated its success by managing to achieve 100 hoteliers as its first 100 Charter Members. Hoteliers were impressed with all the extra benefits they can get through conservation. The Colony Hotel in Maine for example noted the 15% increase in its business since it joined GHA in 1994. At this time, 75% of GHA members came from United States whereas international properties were located in Canada, Mexico, Costa Rica, Guyana, Germany and eleven islands in the Caribbean. The properties range in size from 4 to 1820 guestrooms. The hotel chains include Best Western, Clarion, Colony Hotels, Comfort Inn and Suites, Days Inn, DoubleTree, Econo Lodge, Hilton, Holiday Inn, Hyatt, Quality Hotels and Inns, Radisson, Sleep Inns, Super 8 Lodges, SuperClubs, Travelodge and Wyndham. These first 100 Charter Member properties represent 15,338 guestrooms in 25 states of the US plus members in the Caribbean and around the world (September 30 1996 press release, http://www.greenhotels.com).

By the new millennium, GHA secured more than 26,000 members worldwide. In the US alone, it has more than 200 plus members with 18,500+ guestrooms (January 5, 2002 press release, http://www.greenhotels.com). GHA's impact on the hospitality industry is without doubt as it can be clearly seen how it manages to move the massive hospitality industry toward environmentalism. Guests are made aware of the environmental impact and empowering them to make a choice. The hoteliers on the other hand are presented with enough money saving ideas to prove that conservation saves money. In short, the players within the hospitality industry are made aware that conservation is wanted and expected by hotel guests. The success of GHA is acknowledged when Jeff Hiatt, author of "Change Management: The People side of Change" includes it as one case study in his book of management. Quoting him, "GHA's success demonstrates what one person can do when they are passionate about change and use good techniques to manage that change. Prior to 1993 you rarely saw the cards suggesting that hotel guests have a choice about towel reuse. Now, some 12 years later, it is rare that you do not see these conservation reminders in nearly every hotel. What a win-win for both hotel and the environment" (December 20 2005 press release, http://www.greenhotels.com).

Methodology

Data for this pilot study was collected from secondary sources of hotels within the America and Latin America continents who are members of the Green Hotels Association (GHA). The choice of GHA is based upon its status as the forerunner of hotels' association in the world (see earlier section). It has received many environmental related awards, including the "E" for Excellence Environmental Award from The Executive Board of the Travel Council of the World in 1996 (January 10 1996 press release, http://www.greenhotels.com) and ASTA's 2001 Environmental Award from The American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA), the world's largest and most prestigious association of travel professionals (January 5 2002 press release, http://www.greenhotels.com).

From the website of GHA, a string of 16 hotels within the American continent and 6 within the Latin American continent were chosen to see what their EMPs are like (please refer the list of hotels involved for this study in the legends below Table 1 and Table 3). Each hotel's website was visited and every green attribute (efforts/practices) applied were noted and listed.

It is important to note that as this is only a preview of hotels' green initiatives or efforts, for the purpose of this study, the authors focus only on EMPs carried out by the hotels rather than the emphasis on the nature of the hotel's background facility, like the hotel classification, ownership type, services offered and staff strength. Collection of common attributes is analyzed through descriptive analysis.

Findings

Table 1 lists the 23 common green credentials found to be applied by 16 reviewed hotels within the American continent.

As can be seen from the review results in Table 2, all of the 16 hotels were found to conserve water and install eco-friendly lighting at their premises. Most hotels (14-15 hotels) were found to recycle wherever possible, use biodegradable cleaning agents in their cleaning operations, source food locally, compost waste food, cares for available wildlife, and to give specific instructions to their staff about green practices.

Table 1: List of Common Green Attributes of Hotels in American Continent

Green Attribute (GA)
1. Conserve heat e.g. use solar
2. Conserve water
3. Install eco-friendly lighting e.g skylites and skytubes installed to conserve energy
4. Reduce oil/gas carbon emissions
5. Use bio degradable cleaning agents e.g non toxic/biodegradable laundry and cleaning supplies and soaps, use only natural homemade cleaning products.
6. Source food locally
7. Mention green/eco issues on our Web site
8. Conserve/care for wildlife in our area.
9. Compost waste food
10. Recycle wherever possible e.g recycle lake water on our lawns for natural fertilization and moisture.
11. Use renewable natural furnishings e.g reused thrift/vintage furnishings, eco-conscious interior designer decorated each room
12. Offer local employment
13. Instruct staff in green practices

Green Attribute (GA)
14. Property is totally organic/ surrounded by organic properties e.g. eco education center, sustainable materials were used in the building itself and the items in the rooms, have an organic garden, environmentally friendly and ecologically sustainable, Natural health products. Iridology, nutritional, herbal consultations available
15. Fresh fruit, flowers and eggs from the property.
16. No VOC paint
17. Fans installed in room and windows open for fresh air.
18. Use reclamation building materials
19. Include green room info packs
20.Certification e.g US Green Building Council L.E.E.D Certified Hotel / Award e.g top 10 eco-destination in North America EPA Small Business Award-recipient / Accredited by Saskatchewan Nature and Ecotourism Association
21. Alternative Energy Resources e.g Solar, Wind
22. Special low flush composting toilets e.g constructed wetlands for grey water.
23. No smoking in the cottage. No pets allowed. Absolutely No Fishing, Hunting, Motorboats, Snowmobiles or ATVs.

Table 2: Application of Common Green Attributes in Hotels in American Continent

GA	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**	**Total**
1	X			X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	12
2	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	16
3	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	16
4	X			X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	12
5	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	14
6	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	14
7	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X		X	11
8	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	14
9		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	14
10		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	15
11		X			X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	10
12		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	14
13		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	14
14		X				X	X			X							4
15		X															1
16			X														1
17			X														1
18					X	X		X		X		X	X				6
19					X	X			X	X	X				X	X	7
20						X			X			X					3
21							X				X			X		X	4
22											X						1
23															X		1

Legends:

1. = Alaska's Ridgewood Wilderness Lodge, Alaska, United States
2. = Huelo Point Lookout, Huelo, Hawaii
3. = Los Feliz Lodge – Cottage, Los Angeles, California
4. = Willow Pond Bed & Breakfast - B&B, Grand Junction, Colorado.
5. = Crow Wing Crest Lodge – Resort, Akeley, Minnesota.
6. = Hotel Terra Jackson Hole, Teton Village, Wyoming
7. = Hotel Mono Azul, Manuel Antonio, Costa Rica
8. = Zahra – Resort, Tulum, Mexico

9. = Inn Serendipity, Browntown, Wisconsin, United States
10. = The Lodge at Swan's Cay – Resort, Bocas del Toro, Panama
11. = Balamku Inn on the Beach, Mahahual, Mexico
12. = Eastview Wilderness Ranch, Arborfield Saskatchewan, Canada
13. = Downtown Bed & Breakfast & Spa, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
14. = Trout Point Lodge of Nova Scotia, Inn Kemptville, Canada
15. = The Pinecone Forest Nature Sanctuary, Boulter , Ontario, Canada
16. = Retallack, Nelson, British Columbia, Canada

X = application of attribute

Table 3 lists out all 24 common attributes practiced by 6 hotels in the Latin America continent.

Of these common attributes, as displayed in the results in Table 4, it is found that some attributes like sourcing of the local food, conserve/care for wildlife, compost waste food, recycling, instruct staff of green practices and the offer of employment to locals to be adopted by all the 6 hotels reviewed in this study. There are some attributes that are not taken up by them, i.e. to ensure that their property is entirely organic, to grow fresh fruits and flowers in that property, to use VOC paint, to install fans in rooms and to ensure windows are open for fresh air, and to use reclamation building materials (i.e. common green attributes14-18).

Table 3: List of Common Green Attributes of Hotels in Latin American Continent

Green Attribute (GA)
1. Conserve heat e.g use solar
2. Conserve water
3. Install eco-friendly lighting e.g skylites and skytubes installed to conserve energy
4. Reduce oil/gas carbon emissions
5. Use bio degradable cleaning agents e.g non toxic/biodegradable laundry and cleaning supplies and soaps, use only natural homemade cleaning products.
6. Source food locally
7. Mention green/eco issues on our Web site
8. Conserve/care for wildlife in our area.
9. Compost waste food
10. Recycle wherever possible e.g recycle lake water on our lawns for natural fertilization and moisture.
11. Use renewable natural furnishings e.g reused thrift/vintage furnishings, eco-conscious interior designer decorated each room
12. Offer local employment
13. Iinstruct staff in green practices
14. Property is totally organic/ surrounded by organic properties e.g. eco education center, sustainable materials were used in the building itself and the items in the rooms, have an organic garden, environmentally friendly and ecologically sustainable.
15. Fresh fruit, flowers and eggs from the property.
16. No VOC paint
17. Fans installed in room and windows open for fresh air.
18. Use reclamation building materials
19. Include green room info packs

Green Attribute (GA)
20.Certification e.g US Green Building Council L.E.E.D Certified Hotel, Eco-Certified by Ministry of Tourism and Ecuadorian Ecotourism Society / Award e.g top 10 eco-destination in North America EPA Small Business Award-recipient, , International Award Winning Ecolodge
21. Alternative Energy Resources e.g Solar, Wind
22. 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
23. Nursery of endemic trees, herbs, flowers
24. Promotion of ecological slow-food farming and consumption

Table 4: Application of Common Green Attributes in Hotels in Latin American Continent

GA	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
1		X		X	X		3
2	X	X	X	X	X		5
3	X	X	X	X	X	X	6
4			X	X	X	X	4
5		X	X		X	X	4
6	X	X	X	X	X	X	6
7		X	X	X	X	X	5
8	X	X	X	X	X	X	6
9	X	X	X	X	X	X	6
10	X	X	X	X	X	X	6
11	X	X	X		X		4
12	X	X	X	X	X	X	6
13	X	X	X	X	X	X	6
14							0
15							0
16							0
17							0
18			X	X	X		3
19		X	X				2
20			X				1
21							0
22			X				1
23						X	1
24						X	1

Legend:

1. Ariau Amazon Towers Hotel, Manaus, Brazil
2. Fazenda Barranco Alto - Pantanal Lodge, Aquidauana, Brazil
3. Black Sheep Inn, Chugchilan, Cotopaxi, Ecuador
4. Estancia Los Potreros Hotel, Provincia de Cordoba, Argentina
5. Chalalan Ecolodge, La Paz, Bolivia
6. Finca "La Víspera", Samaipata, Bolivia

X = application of attribute

To ensure a better overview of the green practices by hotels in different continents, the authors have combined the lists of common attributes identified in both America and Latin America continents. The results are displayed in Table 5 and Table 6.

The results in Tables 5 and 6 indicate that of the 25 common attributes listed as practiced by the 22 hotels within the two continents; some green attributes seemed to be in trend and are popular. Amongst these are: water conservation, eco-friendly lighting installation, wildlife care, waste food compost, local employment offer and instruction to staff about green practices. Again, as can be seen, some attributes are not popular such as the installation of ecopermaculture features, and slow food farming and consumption.

Table 5: List of Common Green Attributes of Hotels in the American and Latin American Continent

Green Attribute (GA)
1. Conserve heat e.g use solar
2. Conserve water e.g special low flush composting toilets e.g constructed wetlands for grey water.
3. Install eco-friendly lighting e.g skylites and skytubes installed to conserve energy
4. Reduce oil/gas carbon emissions
5. Use bio degradable cleaning agents e.g non toxic/biodegradable laundry and cleaning supplies and soaps, use only natural homemade cleaning products.
6. Source food locally
7. Mention green/eco issues on our Web site
8. Conserve/care for wildlife in our area.
9. Compost waste food
10. Recycle wherever possible e.g recycle lake water on our lawns for natural fertilization and moisture.
11. Use renewable natural furnishings e.g reused thrift/vintage furnishings, eco-conscious interior designer decorated each room
12. Offer local employment
13. Instruct staff in green practices
14. Property is totally organic/ surrounded by organic properties e.g. eco education center, sustainable materials were used in the building itself and the items in the rooms, have an organic garden, environmentally friendly and ecologically sustainable, Natural health products. Iridology, nutritional, herbal consultations available
15. Fresh fruit, flowers and eggs from the property.
16. No VOC paint
17. Fans installed in room and windows open for fresh air.
18. Use reclamation building materials
19. Include green room info packs
20.Certification e.g US Green Building Council L.E.E.D Certified Hotel, Eco-Certified by Ministry of Tourism and Ecuadorian Ecotourism Society / Accredited by Saskatchewan Nature and Ecotourism Association / Award e.g top 10 eco-destination in North America EPA Small Business Award-recipient, top 10 eco-destination in North America EPA Small Business Award-recipient, , International Award Winning Ecolodge
21. Alternative Energy Resources e.g Solar, Wind
22. No smoking in the cottage. No pets allowed. Absolutely No Fishing, Hunting, Motorboats, Snowmobiles or ATVs.
23. 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
24. Nursery of endemic trees, herbs, flowers

25. Promotion of ecological slow-food farming and consumption

Table 6: Application of Common Green Attributes in Hotels in Merican and Latin American Continents

	American Continent (16 hotels)																**American Latin Continent (6 hotels)**						**Total**
GA	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	
1	X			X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		**15**
2	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		**21**
3	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	**22**
4	X			X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	**16**
5	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	**18**
6	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	**20**
7	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X		X		X	X	X	X	X	**16**
8	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	**20**
9		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	**20**
10		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	**21**
11		X			X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X		X		**14**
12		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	**20**
13		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	**20**
14		X				X	X			X													**4**
15		X																					**1**
16			X																				**1**
17			X																				**1**
18					X	X		X		X		X	X						X	X	X		**9**
19					X	X			X	X	X				X	X		X	X				**9**
20						X			X			X							X				**4**
21							X				X			X		X							**4**
22															X								**1**
23																			X				**1**
24																						X	**1**
25																						X	**1**

Discussion

Conventional tourism is often associated with the availability of a clean natural environment, while all sectors of this global industry create pressure on the environment. The hotel industry, due to its very specific function, operating characteristics and services provided, consumes substantial quantities of energy, water and non-durable products. The resulting environmental impacts of hotel facilities are thus characteristically greater than those caused by other types of buildings of similar size. Thus, the efforts by hoteliers to be at the forefront of “green” should be applauded by all parties; i.e. consumers, governments, NGOs, etc. and the moves to be firmly supported.

The results shown in Tables 1-6 seem to support the reports from the literature on the increased popularity of ecological initiatives amongst hoteliers (e.g. Mensah 2006; Bohdanowicz 2006; Forte 1994; Stipanuk 1996). The review on a list of selected hotels in the two continents by the authors managed to identify a number of attributes of the green practices by the management of the hotels. Of the 25 common green attributes, 13 were considered as the most common ones applied. These include the efforts to save energy, conserve water, minimize waste, source local food and undertake recycling. As stated earlier, the efforts are seen as a ‘win-win’ situation since apart from saving the environment, hoteliers are also saving in terms of their operational costs.

The proactive green measures taken by the hoteliers show the world about their concerns for the environmental degradation and what they are doing in line with the green movement within the hotel and tourism industry. By doing so, they are sending the message and educating travelers about the need to care and protect the environment. This can result in the travelers to become increasingly aware of the need for more effective measures to protect the environment as well. They now know that they have a choice, e.g. to reuse towels given to them more than once during their stay in hotels to show support for environment conservation rather than keep on changing them.

In order to achieve noticeable improvement, as fairly noted and acted upon by GHA, hotel managers and operators must be willing to act in an environmentally responsible manner. Before they can do this however, they need to have adequate knowledge of the environmental issues pertinent to their activities, and sufficient funds to implement state-of-the-art environmentally sound practices. As such, providing a handbook or catalog that lists out the do's and the don'ts or more ideas helped in spreading more knowledge about methods that can be applied by hoteliers alike. Being a charter member of GHA for example is one way of how this can be achieved. As shown in the review, many of the common green attributes or practices are shared by the hoteliers themselves. Although this is so, the identification of the green attributes of these hotels comes only from the two continents which limit its applicability.

Sustainable tourism campaign needed more than that as there are thousands of hotels worldwide. Many hotels are on the bandwagon to be green but there should be a way of how one can justify the hotel's qualification to be a 'green' hotel. The wide variation amongst hoteliers in their green practice is proof that there is a need to apply an environmental index or green indicators for hoteliers to achieve sustainable tourism development. In short, there is a need for an integrative effort to try to identify what are the common practices of hotels throughout the world as one alternative to set the global green hotel indicators. If succeeded, the global green indicators will be the only one measuring tool used by all industry players in setting a benchmark or standard that all players within the sector or industry will comply with.

Conclusion

The review of the common practices carried out in this study can be used to draw inferences on hotels in other continents and serve as green indicators for other hotels. The results may give an overview of the level of adoption and implementation of EMPs amongst hotels in the continents and pave the way for the one global green indicators to be applied by all hoteliers. The pressure for improved environmental performance within hotels as can be seen in the trend today can be seen as driven by the need to preserve the local environment, the opportunity to reduce operating costs, the enforcement by authorities of environmental regulations and a growing demand for environmentally friendly hotels from customers alike.

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Entrepreneur Characteristics on Small and Medium Hotel Operator

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The tourism industry in Malaysia is one of the important sectors contributing to national growth. In 2002, the number of tourist arrivals in Malaysia increased from 13.29 million in 2002 to 17.55 million in 2006. This stimulated the emergence of many small and medium hotels, resorts and chalets in Malaysia. Small and medium hotels are an extension from entrepreneurship criteria possessed by the owner/manager of the hotel. An entrepreneur is someone who dares to take risk, possesses higher need achievement motivation, is innovative, self-confident and possesses many other characteristics not displayed by an ordinary person. This paper reviews the demographic profiles and entrepreneur characteristics of the small and medium hotel operators that influence the performance of small and medium businesses in tourism industry.

Key words: Small and medium hotel operators, entrepreneur, demographic profile and entrepreneur characteristic

Introduction

Tourism is traditionally a small and medium sized enterprise industry. According to Morrison (1998), Page et al. (1999), DTI (2003) and Bastakis et al. (2004), small firms dominate the tourism and hospitality industry. For example according to DTI (2003), small hotel and restaurant with less than 50 employees represent 83.5 per cent of the businesses in the sector in the UK. A similar pattern appears in every European country (Bastakis et al. 2004). It also applies to Malaysia, where Ahmad and Morrison (2004) found that 65 per cent of all hotels are small.

According to Morrison (1996), traditionally there are four factors that lead to the higher number of small hotels. Firstly, is the characteristic of the industry. It is understood that the initial capital to start up a small accommodation business is lower than in other industries. Furthermore, even specific qualifications and professional requirements related to the sector are necessary but not compulsory (Quinn et al., 1992; Lerner and Haber 2000; Szivas, 2001).

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Secondly, the market demand for small hotel accommodation is high at a variety of locations and not subjected to fulfilling standardized corporate rules. Therefore, small accommodation providers can offer a wide quality range of products, facilities and special services to a niche market. Thirdly, the nature of a small firm allows owner-managers to respond quickly to customer needs and expectations. This is because customer satisfaction can be achieved through personal encounters with guests.

Finally, a small hotel often owned and managed by a family, can be economically viable. The market seems to be limited and specialized and suited to firms with low overhead costs and does not require the high level of profits required by larger enterprises. This arises from the economic advantage of using family labour (Andriotis, 2002; Getz and Carlsen, 2000; Lowe, 1988). Furthermore, a small hotel owner is likely to to accept a compromised profit to experience some quality of life (Szivas 20001).

However, the hotel size classification differs from country to country. Thus, it may be difficult to define the size of businesses precisely. Normally, researchers define size of the hotel in terms of number of workers and rooms. According to Middleton (1998), approximately 99 percent of all tourism businesses are small and medium sized enterprises employing less than 250 people. However, Moutinho (1990), Wong (1991) and Buhalis and Main (1998) define small and medium hotel enterprises (SMHEs) as enterprises offering less than 50 rooms and employing fewer than ten staff.

Wood (2001) classifies businesses with less than 50 employees as small and those with more than 50 but less than 250 as medium sized. According to the common definition of the European Commission, “small enterprises” employ between 10 and 49 people while “medium sized enterprises” employ more than 50 but fewer than 250 (CEC, 1996). On the other hand, according to Ingram et al., (2000), a small hotel is one that has up to 50 rooms, a medium sized hotel between 51-100 rooms and a large hotel over 100 rooms. According to KOSGEB (small and medium industry development organisation), a public agency in Turkey, enterprises with 1 to 50 employees are defined as small enterprises and those with 51 to 150 employees are defined as medium ones.

Many researchers have found different findings about demographic profile of the owner managers across different industries and countries. In the tourism industry, according to Dewhurst and Horobin (1998) there has been limited research on tourism entrepreneurship and small businesses. They noticed that the entrepreneur is not motivated by a desire to maximise economic gain, operates businesses often with low levels of employment and their managerial decisions are often based on highly personalised criteria.

Due to that limitation, the objective of this study is to explore the demographic profile and entrepreneur characteristics of small and medium hotel operator in East Peninsular Malaysia.

Literature review

Demographic Profiles

Demographic profile commonly refers to sex or gender, age, race or ethnicity, education, work experience, religion, marital status, income and such like. Generally, it is understood that most small tourism and hospitality businesses are owner operated

(Ateljevic et al., 1999). A study in Australia by Getz and Carlsen (2000) find that more than 96 percent of their respondents were the owner of tourism businesses, while the remainders were managers. In Malaysia, according to Ghazali Ahmad (2005), 59.5 percent of the small chalets are owned and managed by the same person.

The profile of the owner manager that are frequently discussed are; age and sex (Ateljevic et. al., 1999; Carlsen, 2000; Getz and Carlsen, 2000; Szi Ves, 2001; Ghazali Ahmad, 2005; Sharma 2005), education (Gent and Carlsen 2000; Szivas, 2001; Sharma, 2005), and work experience (Alteljevic et. al., 1999; Szivas, 2001; Szivas, 2001). The dominant age of small business owner-managers is in the category of middle-age. In Australia, more than 40 percent of them are aged between 45 and 54 years old (Getz and Carlsen, 2000), and in UK, about 77 percent were slightly older than 45 years old (Szi Ves, 2001).

Generally, small firms are owned and managed by men, but increasingly more women owner-managers are detected in the tourism and hospitality industry (Ghazali Ahmad, 2005). For example, more than 80 percent of small firm owner-managers across several industries in Australia were male (Morrison et al., 2003). However, in the tourism and hospitality industry, approximately 60 percent were female (Gent and Carlsen, 2000). According to Ghazali Ahamad (2005), 81.1 percent male owner-managers dominate the small industry. Gent and Carlsen (2000) views the reason for the higher number of men as owner-managers is because they are the family decision-makers.

Most of the owner-managers in UK were reported to have higher education - 70 per cent had college certification or higher and only 24.5 percent had only secondary level of education (Szivas, 2001). According to Sharma (2005), in Tanzania almost 36.4 percent of the owner had no industry training or education beyond basic schooling. Only 22.7 percent of the owner had industry certificates, 9 percent had some other vocational training and 31.8 percent has non-technical undergraduate or graduate degrees.

Due the ease of entry into this industry, many owner-managers are reported to have various types of occupation and experience prior to venturing into this sector (Szivas, 2001, and Alteljevic et. al., 1999). For example in UK, about one-third of owner-managers had work experience in the tourism and hospitality industry, while the others were from agriculture, retail, education, and various sectors (Szivas, 2001). In New Zealand, however, previous job experience in tourism and hospitality was not particularly represented, but the most common experience they had are related to farming activities, teaching, marketing, building, and carpentry (Atlejevic et al., 1999). Since previous occupation and experience are not the compulsory requirement to enter into the tourism and hospitality businesses, owner-managers learned the needed skills while on the job (Szivas, 2001).

Entrepreneur Characteristics

Bolton and Thompson (2000) define an entrepreneur as “a person who habitually creates and innovates to build something of recognised value around perceived opportunities”. Timmons (1994) defines entrepreneurship as creating and building something of value from practically nothing. It is the process of creating or seizing on opportunity, and pursuing it regardless of the resources currently personally controlled.

Entrepreneurship is the dynamic process of creating incremental wealth. The wealth is created by individuals who assume the major risks in terms of equity, time and or career commitment or provide value for some product or service. The product or service may or may not be new or unique, but value must somehow be infused by the entrepreneur by receiving and locating the necessary skills and resources (Hisrich et al, 2005).

Hisrich *et al.,* (2005) sees the entrepreneur from three different aspects. To an economist, the entrepreneur is one who bring resources, labour, materials and other assets into combinations that make their value greater than before, and also one who introduces changes, innovations, and a new order. To a psychologist, such a person is typically driven by certain forces of the need to obtain or attain something, to experiment, to accomplish, or perhaps to escape the authority of others. To one businessman, an entrepreneur might appear as a threat, an aggressive competitor, whereas to another businessman, the same entrepreneur might be perceived as an ally, a source of supply, a customer, or someone who creates wealth for others, as well as finds better ways to utilize resources, reduce waste, and produce jobs others are glad to get.

Every entrepreneur is unique with his or her own particular set of strengths, weaknesses, talents and abilities. However, entrepreneurs who have stood the test of time and have made a difference in their communities and industries do share common characteristics like the need for achievement motivation, risk-taking propensity, innovativeness, self confidence, ability to learn from failure, pro-activeness, independence and others.

Need for achievement motivation

Need for achievement motivation is one of the most popular theory used to measure entrepreneurial characteristics. McClelland (1961) was the first person to establish this theory and his research on need of achievement initiated many studies in characteristic on the entrepreneur. Achievement motivation is defined as the need to achieve success in competition with some standards of excellence (Elias and Pihie, 1995). Studies by previous scholars initially indicate that successful entrepreneurs have high need for achievement (McClelland, 1961; Koh, 1996; Jaafar et. al., 2004) and are more entrepreneurially inclined than the non-entrepreneurs (Robinson et al., 1991a; Robinson et al., 1991b).

Risk-taking propensity

Risk-taking propensity is defined as the perceived probability of receiving rewards associated with the success of a proposed situation, which is required by an individual before subjecting himself to the consequences associated with failure, the alternative situation providing less reward as well as severe consequences than the proposed situation (Brockhaus, 1980:513). Such a definition might best describe the situation that faces the potential entrepreneur when he decides to establish a new business venture.

Innovativeness

Schumpeters (1934) describes entrepreneurial innovation in terms of introducing new product or methods of productions, opening new markets or new sources of supply, or reorganising industries. Gartner (1990) in his paper characterizes innovation as doing something new such as an idea, product, service, market or technology in a new or established organisation.

Self-confidence

Ho and Koh (1992) suggest that self-confidence is a necessary entrepreneurial characteristic and is related to other psychological characteristics, e.g. locus of control, tolerance of ambiguity and propensity to take risk. Entrepreneurs need to have this quality since they are expected to possess a sense of self-esteem and competence in conjunction with their business affairs.

Ability to learn from failure

Innovation and venture always go hand-in-hand with failure, but failure is the mother of success. Learning from failure is a significant source of innovation and new business (Chen et al., 2005). Result from Chen et al. (2005) indicates that the ability to learn from failure is one of the important traits that should be cultivated in entrepreneurs.

Pro-activeness

Jun et al. (undated) define pro-activeness as the ability to take initiative whenever the situation demands. Proactive behaviour refers to the relationship between individuals and the environment, whereby the result from their behaviour will influence their own environment.

Independence

Independence means bringing new ideas and undertaking risks. Without independence, there will be no innovation or improvement (Chen et al., 2005). An entrepreneur needs creative and independent thinking to bring new ideas and undertakes risks.

Finding from Gideon Nieman and Cecile Nieuwenhuizen (1997) suggest that the need for achievement and need of independence is the motivation factor of female entrepreneurs involved in tourism industry in South Africa.

Conclusion

This paper reviews the demographic profiles and entrepreneur’s characteristic of the small and medium hotel operators that influence the performance of small and medium businesses in the tourism industry. Among the variables includes are: See figure 1

DEMOGRAPHICS PROFILES	ENTREPRENEUR CHARACTERISTICS
• Age • Sex • Education • Work experience	• Need of achievement motivation • Risk-taking propensity • Innovativeness • Self confidence • Ability to learn from failure • Pro-activeness • Independent

Figure 1: Variables on demographic profiles and entrepreneur's characteristic of small and medium businesses in tourism industry.

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A Proposed Organizational Culture Evaluation Framework for Resorts in Eco-tourism Industry

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There is increasing competition in eco-tourism destination marketing. Malaysia has the opportunity to benefit from this industry. Despite the overwhelming attention given, little is known about tourists' needs and expectations of the eco-tourism destinations. This should be the subject for further investigation. In the same vein, organizational culture has been regarded as one of the biggest challenges in the management of service industries. The organizational culture in the eco-tourism resort operators helps to sustain competitiveness and retain customers. There are voluminous literature that suggest that it is an essential task for any resort operators in eco-tourism industry to direct, behave, maintain and sustain their organizational culture regardless of the products or services they provide. This study attempts to develop an organizational culture evaluation framework for resort based services. It further attempts to identify the characteristics associated with the organizational culture in the resort operators' organizations, which seems important to the eco-tourism industry. The proposed framework provides a good reference for evaluating and assessing resort performance; with regards to their organizational culture.

Key words: organizational culture framework, resort, eco-tourism

Introduction

The World Tourism Organization regards Ecotourism as one of the fastest growing market in the tourism industry that contributes 5% to the annual growth worldwide and 6% of the world gross domestic product, and 11.4% of all consumers spending. It suggests that ecotourism caters to a huge market and impacts the world's economy. However, there seems contributions of the Malaysian Ecotourism to the economic shares is minimal largely from islands situated in the South China Sea with most activities limited to diving, snorkeling and eco-adventure. Ecotourism areas on the mainland of Peninsular Malaysia seem to be unpopular and limited.

Ecotourism has unique characteristics that need special management in order for tourists to enjoy their stay, while at the same time maintaining the natural

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environment. There are four characteristics common to ecotourism. These are: 1) the development must be able to attract tourist to its nature-based setting which is unique and accessible (Cater and Lowman, 1994), 2) it must have educational value and encourages conservation awareness (Herbig and O'hara, 1997), 3) the development includes local participation and gives benefits to the community (Groniger, *et al.*, 2002), 4) ecotourism development must be sensitive to the environment and be able to minimize the impact of tourist activities (Mehmet and Kashif, 2005). Thus, the success of any eco-tourism resort operators is depends on providing the needs of the customers. In doing so, a good organizational culture among resort operators helps in many ways to enhance better quality of services and facilities to the customers. The best marketing device is no other than a good word from a satisfied customer that raises the number of guests (Crosby, 1993; Soderlund, 1998).

It seems clear from the literature that the concept of organizational culture and working culture in ecotourism industry has not been the focus of many scientific discussions over the last years. Therefore, this paper developed a framework for organizational culture and working culture for resort-based services. It begins with a definition of organizational culture and working culture. Then it identifies the factors influencing organizational culture and working culture. At the end of the paper it outlines a framework to organizational culture and working culture that affect the performance of resort operators. The framework drawn from the discussion is expected to benefit resort managers in assessing their organizational culture, working culture and business performance of the resort operators in Ecotourism.

Organizational Culture Framework & Evaluation Model

This research argues that the framework, concept and approaches of resort operators in Malaysia are affected by social, economic and environment due to the cultural diversity among the resort operators. Therefore, a research on modelling resort operators organizational culture is necessary to provide framework/s of the Malaysian resort operators. The research questions are posed as follows:

1. Resort Operators and Ethnicity
   Are resort operators in Malaysia different in terms of ethincity? If so how can the resort operators be different?
2. Ethnicity and Performance of Resort Operators
   Are resort operators of different ethnicity perform differently? If so to what extent the differences would be?
3. Organizational Culture and Tourism Industry
   Is organizational culture helps the tourism industry to prosper? If so how can organizational culture helps to enhance the performance of the resort operators.
4. Organizational Culture and Working Culture
   Is Organizational culture afftects the working culture of resort operators? If so how can organizational culture affects the working culture of the resort operators.

The main objective of this research is to study the organizational culture and differences among the resort operators in Malaysia; specifically:

1. To investigate the organizational culture and working culture among the resort operators in Malaysia.
2. To assess the performance of resort operatos based on their organizational culture and cultural differences.

3. To investigate the influence of cultural differences and working culture to the management approach of the resort operators.
4. To make recommendation based on the organizational culture and working culture to the resort operators in Malaysia for future research.

Summary of Literature Reviews

The purpose of this research is to review and investigate the organizational culture of resort operators and to systematically bring up different views put forward regarding this issue. Therefore, this research attempt to review the 'diversity management' different views about the effective organizational culture in the Ecotourism industry, i.e. among the resort operators, and their working culture. The outcomes of this research; Resort Operators Organizational Framework is hoped to give answers to the question of how organizational culture, cultural diversity and performance should be managed by the resort operators.

Research oriented to the unified cooperation between managers and other workers in organisations, the people coming from different cultures and the struggles to understand the similarities and differences between one another have rapidly increased (Iles, 1995; Spector et al., 2001; Smith et al., Chang, 2002:2/9). On the basis of this development, the fact that most countries now have a multicultural makeup in terms of demographical structure (Loo, 1999), the fact that the world market is integrating through globalisation and the fact that multinational corporations are becoming commonplace (Bhadury et al., 2000) are some underlying reasons. Attempts to cross border implementations of these businesses, the gradual increase of more and more businesses coming face to face with a gradual increase of more and more businesses (McGuire et al., 2002) coming face to face with a multicultural workforce structure by departing from national boundaries and their requirements to challenge cultural ostacles in order to obtain competitive advantage are other fundamental reasons (Canen and Canen, 1999).

As the world is shrinking through globalisation, more and more people live and work in foreign countries and thus they continually come into contact with the people coming from very diversified cultural origins, involving language, norms, lifestyles, etc (Zakaria, 2000; Montaglini and Giacalone, 1998:1/9).

On this point, it can be said that the fact of cultural diversity in all organisations, ignoring national boundaries in aspect of the field of activity, possesses greater significance and meaning in comparison with domestic organisations that finally become their working culture. On the other hand, it has seen that a lot of research has been conducted, particularly on recent years, related to the dimensions of values involving business and the need to know how cultural variety brings in the organisational concept should be managed. However, the research brings in the different perspectives apart from each other and hence a lack of implicit agreement.

Conclusion

It should be noted that the Eco-resort management is not entirely responsible for fulfilling all of guest needs and ensuring better performance, but also need to ensure an environment within which they can be addressed by the guest or other relevant parties. The objective of organizational culture of resort operators should be understood in the context of an eco resort management of the natural areas. The objective is not to maximize but to manage the resort appropriately. Proper choice of the measures of organizational characteristic and the fair interpretation of the result will enable the eco resort management to satisfy its own multiple objectives connected with the management of the protected natural areas.

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A Proposed Guest Satisfaction Evaluation Model for Resorts in Eco-tourism Industry

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Customer satisfaction has been noted as one of the biggest challenges of management in service industries. Understanding, delivering and maintaining customer satisfaction is very much needed to sustain competitiveness and for retaining customers. There is no doubt that making guest (customer) satisfied is an essential task for any resort operator in eco-tourism industry regardless of the products or services they provide. This study developed a guest satisfaction evaluation model for resort based services. It will identify the characteristics associated with the choice that is important to the eco-tourists. The developed model provides a good reference for evaluating and assessing resort performance.

Key words: guest satisfaction evaluation model, resort, eco-tourism

Introduction

Ecotourism has become one of the fastest growing sectors of the tourism industry growing annual 10-15% worldwide (Miller, 2007). Ideally, ecotourism satisfies several general criteria, including the conservation of biological diversity and cultural diversity through ecosystem protection, promotion of sustainable use of biodiversity, share of socio-economic benefits with local communities through informed consent and participation, increase in environmental and cultural knowledge, affordability and reduced waste, and minimization of its own environmental impact.

The effect of globalization and the development of information technology have enabled tourists to seek a destination that satisfies their requirements and thus have made their satisfaction more important than ever. The best marketing device is not more than a good word from a satisfied customer's mouth that raises the number of guests (Crosby, 1993; Soderlund, 1998). Thus, the success of any ecotourism destination is dependent on giving the customers what they desire. The importance of guests' satisfaction means that it should be explored and measured in a reliable way.

There seems to be a consensus among scholars and people in the tourism industry as to what ecotourism is and should be. According to the definition and

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principles of ecotourism established by The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) in 1990, ecotourism is "Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people." (TIES, 1990). Ecotourism should attract visitors to natural environments which are unique and accessible, should be used to improve the nature conservation through education, should lead to changing the attitudes of local people and governments, and should provide employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for local people (Cater and Lowman, 1994). The attention to achieve the points mentioned above will eventually subdue the accomplishment of guests' satisfaction objective. The tendency to place conserving natural environment as a priority has lead many resort managers to neglect and ignore their needs. Indeed, the number of complaints about substandard services, deficient facilities and lackluster attractions is increasing in each year in many eco-tourism areas. These complaints, obviously, need to be addressed if the industry is to continue to thrive.

The heated debate regarding what should be protected from the environment and what should be provided to the guests has transpired a new development philosophy concerning the issues of guests' satisfaction along with natural environment protection. The concept recognizes the unique characteristics of ecotourism and emphasizes the need for special management in order for tourists to enjoy their stay. However, the natural environment has to be maintained at the same time. The new philosophy of guests' satisfaction point out that it is necessary to undertake a satisfaction assessment for every guest to develop strategies or policies for a better management of resorts in addition to achieving the overall aim of ecotourism development. Under this concept, assessment is an integral and inevitable feature of all aspects of resort management. An assessment that is properly commissioned, conducted, disseminated, and used help improves resort management in general, and specific services, products, and tourism activities in particular. Besides, assessment standards can play a vital role in upgrading and ensuring the quality of services and management of resorts in ecotourism areas.

This paper has developed a guest satisfaction assessment model proposed for resort-based services. It has also identified the need to measure guest satisfaction and has drawn the challenge faced in assessing guest satisfaction in eco-tourism industry. At the end of the paper, a framework has been outlined to measure guest satisfaction in resorts. The framework drawn from the discussion is expected to benefit resort managers to evaluate the level of guest satisfaction with the quality of service that is being provided and to identify the main attributes which influence the overall guest satisfaction.

Guest Satisfaction and Model

As defined by Oliver (1997, p. 13), satisfaction is "a judgement that a product, or service feature, or the product or service itself, provides a pleasurable level of consumption—related fulfilment, including levels of under or over fulfilment''. In the context of customer or guest, guest satisfaction is a guest's evaluation of a product or a service after consumption. It means that guest satisfaction is the effect of the interaction of before and after experience (Engel et al., 1990).

Guests have different needs, objectives, and experiences that affect their expectations. The same hospitality experience will not provide everyone the same satisfaction (Pizam and Ellis, 1999). However, guests are able to evaluate the services only subsequent to experience. Therefore, offering a high-quality service and thereby improving customer satisfaction has been identified as the most important challenge facing businesses (Barsky and Labagh, 1992). Similarly Kandampully (2000) pointed out that services are in actual fact an intangible experience.

The benefit of focusing on guest satisfaction assessment is due to the fact that it is a cheapest means of promotion (see Knutson, 1988, p. 17; Naumann, 1995, p. 22). Guest satisfaction has also a direct effect on guest retention market share; it improves a company's market share and profits (Gilbert and Horsnell, 1998; Chon, et. al., 1995). The starting point to achieve guest satisfaction is by providing the preferable services to them (Su, 2004). This can be done by having a proactive plan to avoid guest service difficulties in the future (Vukmir, 2006). Another benefit of guest satisfaction assessment is that it plays an important role for determining the quality delivered to guests through the product or service and the accompanying services (Vavra, 1997). Through guest satisfaction assessment, the quality of management practices can be assessed in an effort to improve the quality of the provided services (Cravens et al., 1988; Garvin, 1991).

Although the need to encourage guest satisfaction assessment for resort managements has been recognized by many scholars, recent research has highlighted the difficulties faced in undertaking such work (Seth, et al., 2005; Mohammed, 2006). A number of factors have worked against the development of a robust guest satisfaction assessment suitable for resorts operating in ecotourism areas. The demands of monitoring require considerable time, which in most cases is insufficient in number. This diverts the staff from providing essential services. Moreover, most resorts in ecotourism areas are small whereas most measures are designed for larger resorts. Likewise, ecotourism tourists contain a large diversity of needs due to a mixture of age range, gender, and culture. Therefore, they present a big challenge for resort management to come out with an appropriate assessment. More importantly, many resort management lacks expertise and skills in monitoring and evaluation.

Many scholars have developed multi-attribute scales for measuring guest satisfaction in the tourism industry. Parasuraman et al. (1988) introduced SERVQUAL model that revealed five generic dimensions of service quality. These dimensions are reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. SERVQUAL model ranked quality of service and food ; it also helped the attitude of the employees highly in eliciting both complaints and compliments. SERVQUAL is a popular instrument to measure service quality. Although widely used, it has been criticized for its reliability and validity (Landrum et al., 2007).

One of the critiques of SERVQUAL is the work of Cronin and Taylor (1992) who argued on the framework of Parasuraman et al. (1985), with respect to measurement of service quality. They only developed a measurement of service quality called SERVPERF. They pointed out that the service quality is a form of consumer attitude and the performance of the service quality measure is an enhanced means of measuring service quality. They argued that SERVQUAL confounds satisfaction and attitude. They stated that service quality can be conceptualized as "similar to an attitude", and can be operationalized by the adequacy-importance model. In particular, they maintained that Performance instead of "Performance-Expectation" determines service quality.

The difference between SERVQUAL and SERPERF is the focus of the latter on customer satisfaction as the result of service quality. Both models introduced rigorous measurement, not suitable for smaller organisations, which makes up the majority in eco-tourism industry. The benefits of satisfaction assessment depend on how well the organization is able to implement the survey process and integrate it with the organizations technical core (Kujala and Ahola, 2005). Both models focused on the organisations as the unit of assessment; the quality of service, food and attitude of the employee, but failed to incorporate satisfaction assessment for the attraction offered in the areas; which is external to the organisations and becomes the main reason for the guests vacation in ecotourism industry. These arguments however do not render the models as inappropriate for measuring guest satisfaction in ecotourism areas. SERVQUAL model in particular can still be used if modification and additional attributes related to ecotourism are taken into consideration. Past researchers have identified some attributes related to guest satisfaction and suitable for ecotourism. Latu and Everett (2000) have listed down 5 factors that affect guest satisfaction. They categorized them according to a hierarchy of needs: physical, security, social, psychological and self-actualization. Ahmed and Kangari (1995) considered time, cost, quality, guest orientation such as communication skills and response to complaints of a great importance to guest satisfaction. Goodall and Bergsma (1990) proposed attributes related to attractions, facilities/services, accessibility, image and cost. Similarly, Mills and Morrison (1992) proposed attributes related to attractions, facilities, infrastructure, transportation and hospitality. Figure 1 demonstrates a guest satisfaction assessment model developed based on the identified attributes ; facilities and services, infrastructure, hospitality, cost , and attractions.

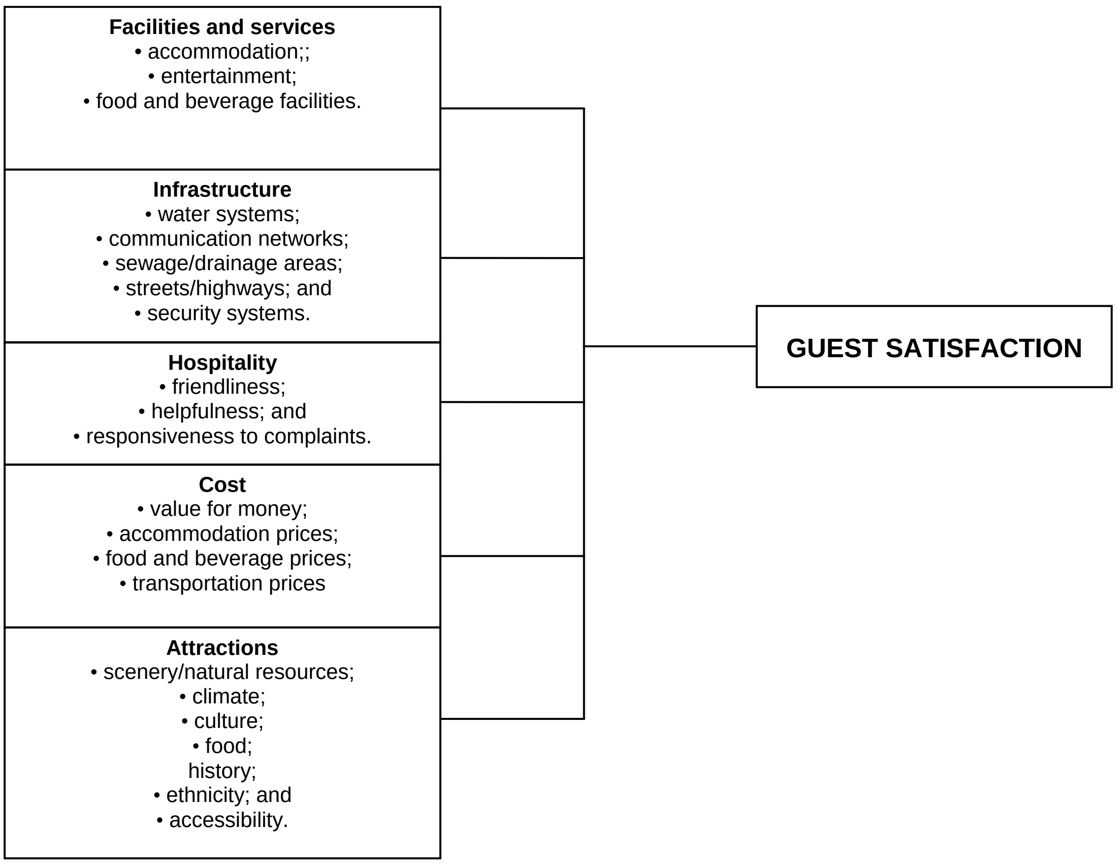

Figure 1 : Proposed Framework for Guest Satisfaction Assessment

Conclusion

It should be noted that the Eco-resort management is not entirely responsible for fulfilling all of guests' needs. However, they need at least to ensure an environment within which they can be addressed by the guests or other relevant parties. The objective of guest satisfaction measurement should be understood in the context of an eco-resort management of the natural areas. The objective is not to maximize, but rather to manage guest satisfaction. Proper choice of the measures of guest satisfaction and the fair interpretation of the result will enable the eco-resort management to satisfy its own multiple objectives connected with the management of the protected natural areas.

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Factors Affecting the Halal Pursuit in Foodservice Industry

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With the increasing political and economical power, and the growing population of the Muslim community in the world, producing and serving foods meeting the religious obligation – Halal has become an important business objective among many food companies. In Malaysia, approximately two thirds of the population is Muslim. While the food companies produce a wide array of foods for consumer daily consumption, food service industry is the one directly involves in providing final consumable food to consumers. Food service industry includes food retailers, restaurants, and institutional food providers. As consumers consume their foods directly from food service establishments, Halal seems an important issue to food service industry in Malaysia. This paper presents a theoretical framework of the factors motivate food service companies to adopt Halal food practices in Malaysia. We proposed a three-factor model which comprises organizational factor, motivational factor (benefits) and resource and environment constraints factors (barriers) in the decision making of foodservice companies to attain Halal certification and implement it subsequently.

Key words: halal requirement, foodservice industry, adoption of Halal certification, organizational factor, motivational factor (benefit), resource and environment factor (barrier)

Introduction

Nowadays, Halal has become integral part in human life, especially products that associates with food and beverages. Businesses for Halal products keep booming from time to time, with the estimated market of food products worth billion of dollars. Halal products have received world wide recognition and fast acceptance from the

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consumers, not only from the Muslim, but also from other religion. The concept of Halal which not only cover wholesomeness, as being preached by Islam, it also includes other important aspects such as hygiene, safety and sanitation. With the acceptance from worldwide consumers for Halal foods products, the industries certainly have enough potential to further develop and thus, can meet the consumer demand for the products.

In order to fulfill the ambition of expanding business in Halal market, the Malaysian government has launched its own Halal certification in 2004, which has become the standard for certifying Halal products. In Malaysia alone, it is estimated that two third of the population are Muslim. So, the demand for Halal food product is very high and the markets are monopolized by the food manufactures. In this research, it focuses more on the foodservice industry, including the hotels, restaurants and others, which serve food products to the customers. Foodservice industry represents the hospitality, which offer services to their customers, yet also can become the source of tourism for the country. Tourists come from all over the world to Malaysia, and indulge in its special cuisine and enjoy the hospitality in the country. Tourists from the Middle East often visit Malaysia, and they will search for foodservice industry that provided Halal cuisines to satisfy their taste buds. The Halal markets, should not be focused only for the Malaysian consumers, but, can also be expanded to tourists, and be a form of hospitality in the country.

Since there are many opportunities and incentives for the foodservice industry, to develop their market in Halal products and services, but, the Halal segment is still lack behind especially the participation from foodservice provider and operators. This conceptual paper will investigate the factors that affecting the Halal adoption from the foodservice industry point of view. This will determine the factors that make the foodservice operators not hasten their interest in Halal adoption in their business.

Literature Review

In this section, it discusses on the factors that contributes to the adoption of Halal certification by the foodservice industry in Malaysia. It focuses on three factors that are the organizational factors, the motivational factors and the resource and environment constrains factors.

Halal Background in Malaysia

The Malaysia government, through the help of JAKIM, SIRIM and other influential personnel regarding of Halal, have created Malaysia own Halal standard that is Halal Malaysian Standard MS 1500:2004 Halal Food, which focused on the general guidelines for production, preparation, handling and storage on the food products. From 2003, the government has streamlined the process of certifying the Halal certification, which JAKIM being the lead agency that involve in authorized the Halal certificates and labels, both at federal and state level (Hakimah, 2004). The process of Halal certification involves inspecting and examining the process in preparation, slaughtering, cleaning, processing, handling, disinfecting, storing, transportation and management practices, which mean, the process starts “from farm to table”. Halal also is incorporated with other certification, especially the HACCP, GMP and GHP (Zainori, 2004).

Organizational Factors

The organizational factors are based on the research form Salleh and Goh (2001) and Herath, Hassan and Henson (2007). Salleh and Goh (2001) have emphasis on the organizational factors because it plays important part for the companies to adopt certification. It covers the company size (number of employee), type of ownership, operating years, and business capital. Herath et al (2007) also indicates that, the organizational factors have significant influences whether the company wish to adopt the certification in their business, and stated that, the factors involves such as the size of company, the ownership and control of the company, and the sector of business that the company involved in. For the foodservice industry, this factor can be used especially on the hospitality segment such as hotels, resorts and etc.

Motivational Factors

The motivational factors are based on journal from Juan Llopis and Juan Jose Tari (2002) and Bozena Poksinska, Jens Jorn Dahlgaard and Jorgen A.E. Eklund (2002). From the Llopis and Tari (2002), the author stated that, for the company or business to adopt certain certification, it is based on three factors, which are internal reasons, external reasons and customers' requirements. In the internal reasons, it totally focused on the business itself, which means, the factors that motivated the owner to adopt certification such as improving the quality of the products and services, want to start quality business and gaining the control over the firm. While the external reasons are purely based on the markets, especially gaining market share, improving the company image and also as an added advantage for the company, among its competitors. Customer's requirements are based on the need of the customers, having specific certification on the company before they enter business.

Poksinska et al (2002) also emphasis on three factors for the implement certification, that are internal performance motives, external marketing motives and regulatory motives. The internal performance motives is based on the company itself, with the attributes such as quality improvements, enhance workers knowledge, reductions of costs, and benefits from other company which have adopted the system. The external marketing motives focus more on the marketing of the company, such as enhance corporate image, as a form of marketing advantage, customer pressure or demand and competitors pressure. The regulatory motives involves mainly with the relations with the authorities and communities, and avoiding potential business barriers. In relating with Halal, the research by Shahidan Shafie and Osman Mohamad (2002) stated that, Halal also have relationships with marketing of product and services. So, the religious factors also can be included in both external and internal factors, since it affect the owner of the company, to adopt Halal in their business.

Resource and Environment Constraints Factors

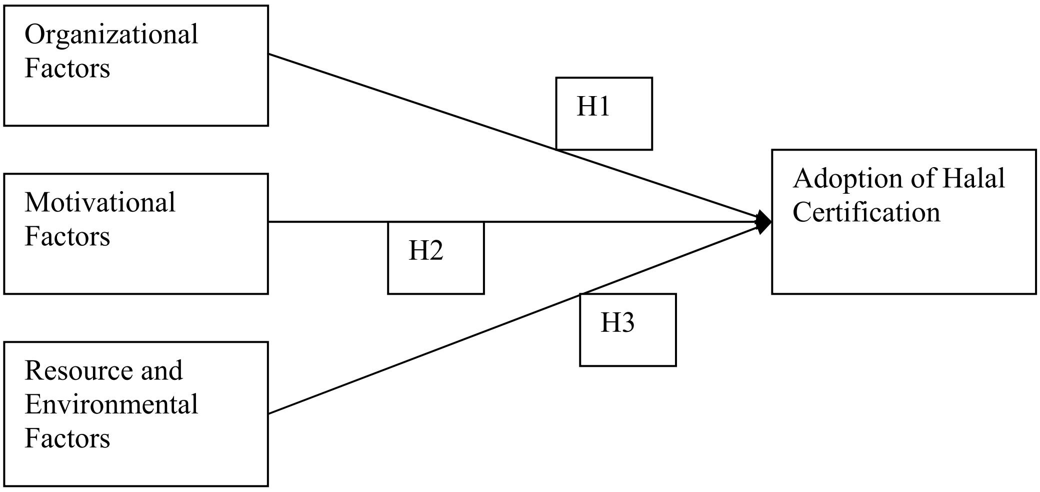
In this section, there are four journals that being referred with, which are from Yeo Soo Wee and Hesan A. Quazi (2005), Kifayah Amar and Zuraidah Mohd Zain (2002), Bonnie F. Daily and Su-chun Huang (2001) and Shams-ur Rahman (2000). In their research, Wee and Quazi discuss about three factors that will influence the adoption of certification, from the view point of personnel factors, knowledge and information factors and technical factors. In the personnel factors, Wee and Quazi studied about the role of top management in making decisions to adopt certification and also, the employee participation in the process of adopting. They also stress the important of knowledge and information, in order for the company to adopt the certification, which certainly bring affects to the employees especially. The technical factors also being discusses because, the role of suppliers which supply resource, will manipulate the company desire to adopt certification. This is because; the supplier also must adhere to the company requirement for the needs of specific resource, which can be changed after the adopting of certification.

Amar and Zuraidah (2002) also identify the same factors, but with certain additional factors, such as the support quality of the company, the internal communication among the staff, quality resources, competent personnel, quality infrastructure and purchasing process. Daily and Huang (2001) added some category that differs from other research that are the teamwork in the company and the rewards for the employee. Research from Rahman (2000) also highlight the same factors, but with the additional factors of the process, product and services.

Based on all of these researches, the variables can be categorized in to four different groups, which are the personnel factors, financial factors, knowledge and information factors and technical and infrastructure factors. In personnel factors, it will discuss two criteria which are top management factors (the decision making, the leadership, support from staff, commitment towards certification and communication with employees) and employee factors (job empowerment, involvement in business, decision making, and commitment towards business. The second factor is the financial factor which covers the funds to support adoption of the certification and profitability or revenue before and after adopting the certification. In knowledge and information factors, it covers the training and development aspects such as improving skills, give education and training, also creating awareness of the changes that happens in the company especially after implementing certification. The fourth factor is the technical and infrastructure factors which involved 5 segments; the infrastructure (plan layout for the company, machinery), equipment and machines (compatible to the business requirement and easy access to spare part), raw material (correct specification and delivery process), suppliers (communication and partnership) and also the production or service process.

Research Framework

The critical factors identified for the development of theoretical framework are based on the literature review. The independent variables are as follows: organizational factors, motivational factors and resource and environmental constraints. The dependent variable is adoption of Halal certification.



Hypotheses of the research are:

- H1: The organizational factors have positive relationship with the decision of adopting and implementing certification
- H2: The motivational factors have positive relationship with the decision of adopting and implementing certification
- H3: The resource and environmental constraints have negative relationship with the decision of adopting and implementing certification

Developed by the main hypotheses, there will be segregated to each of the specific hypotheses, based on each constructs that being studied in the research. From these, it will make easier what factors that affecting the hospitality sectors in adopting the Halal certification in their business.

Research Methodology

Sampling Design, Data Collection Method

The population of research comprises of all foodservice industry segments such as hotels, restaurants, and others, which have registered under their respected organization, for example, the Malaysian Association of Hotel, The Malaysian Food and Beverage Executive Association, Chef Association of Malaysia and MATRADE. The sample will be selected using stratified random technique from the list in those organizations. After acquiring the sample, each of the selected participants will receive mail questionnaire, as a source of collecting the data. The questionnaire is developed based on the literatures, using the theoretical framework as guidance.

Expected Result

From this research, it is expected that, the resource and environmental constraints will play major part in delaying or refusing to adopt Halal certification, based on the owners' perspective. Based on several interviews with the personnel in Halal segment, most of the business owner, whether from the manufacturing or services business, tends to think that the cost of applying Halal will give extra burden to the company. But, in reality, the cost of applying Halal is much cheaper, compared to applying other types of certificates, such as HACCP, ISO and so on. Halal also practices good hygiene, sanitation, processing, which also covers the portion in HACCP and ISO. Because of the cost, business owner doesn't want to invest in

Halal, thus will make the Halal industry especially in the foodservice sectors lack of certified Halal business.

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The Knowledge and Exposure of Career Opportunities in MICE and Event Management for Tourism Students –A Study on Tourism Students at Sunway University College, A Local Private University.

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Our tourism industry has been booming for the last couple of years and with the tremendous support from the government through its various tourism campaigns. It has also created abundant job opportunities for different sectors in the industry. One of the sectors that had benefited from this tourism growth is MICE and event management sector, a sector which is steadily providing a bulk of career opportunities to hospitality and tourism students. This paper aims to study the knowledge and exposure of tourism students to the career opportunities available to them in MICE and event management sector. With the rising popularity of this sector, more institutions of higher learning are offering MICE and event management academic programmes where contents of these courses are usually included as an integral part of the learning syllabus for tourism students. However, there is an inclination for these tourism students to pursue their careers in tourism related sectors such as tour and ticketing agents rather than in MICE and event management sector. Applying a more qualitative method, focus groups and in-depth interviews will be carried out with final year tourism students from Sunway's private university, where questions will be tailored to assess the students' knowledge and exposure to the career opportunities available to them in MICE and event management sector. This paper shall contribute in making recommendations on how local universities can better enlighten and prepare their students for more diversified career opportunities in the colourful tourism industry.

Key words: Tourism education, MICE, event management, career development

Introduction

The tourism industry has always been an avid contributor to the booming economics in many countries, Malaysia included. A press released by Tourism Malaysia last June reported over 1.8 million tourists in May 2008, a 3.1% increase from the same

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period last year. The country has also recorded a steady increase of tourists into Malaysia, rising comparatively with the receipts brought in as seen in Table1.

Table 1: Tourist Arrivals and Receipts to Malaysia

Year	Arrivals	Receipts in Ringgit
2003	10.58 million	21,291.1 million
2004	15.70 million	29,651.4 million
2005	16.43 million	31,954.1 million
2006	17.55 million	36,271.7 million
2007	20.97 million	46,094.0 million

Source: www.tourism.gov.my

Tourists flock to Malaysia for many reasons, which includes shopping and many events and MICE activities ongoing at various venues in Malaysia. In their website, Tourism Malaysia listed more than 500 MICE events ranging from conferences, exhibitions as well as special events. Also due to this factor, many institutes of higher learning Sunway University College are taking up the race to offer academic programmes in Tourism and in Hospitality. This is to ensure talents and interests of the youngsters are nurtured and groomed to fill the job requirements of this booming industry. Malaysia in particular, the increasing number of events and activities listed by Tourism Malaysia clearly indicates that there is demand for semi-skilled and qualified graduates with a range of attributes and skills.

Thus, this paper aims to study the level of knowledge and exposure of tourism students to the various careers available in tourism industry, particularly in the MICE and events management. As MICE is an integral part of the education in tourism, it is hoped that the outcome of this research will serve as a simple platform to better prepare tourism students for career opportunities in the MICE and events management.

Literature Review

MICE in the Tourism Industry

Tourism is one of the industries that offer diversified and colourful choices of career opportunities. There are no specific definition for the tourism industry and whilst there had been numerous attempts to find a universal applicable definition for tourism, tourism is a multiproduct industry with strong linkages to other economic sectors (Ladkin, Riley, and Szivas, 2002). However, it is further noted that the tourism industry is inclusive of transport and tour operators as well as MICE and events businesses. In general, it has been shown that estimated 10 percent of the global workforce is in tourism and its associated sectors including MICE and events management (Ibrahim and Wason, 2002). Worldwide, the MICE sector is regarded as one of the most optimistic sectors of the tourism industry as this sector is the least responsive to price changes besides helping reduce “peak-trough” seasonal patterns (Weber and Chon, 2002). The MICE sector is also seen as a sector that attracts visitors carrying spending powers where they are most likely to stay longer in the tourism destinations as well as make repeat visits to these destinations. Be it MICE or events, both activities contribute greatly to the development of tourism industry as a whole. An event is usually defined as a one-time or infrequent occurrence outside the normal range of activities, be it commercial or not while MICE is more tailored towards the category of business and trade events (Jenkins and Pigram, 2003). Either way, MICE and events are products of tourism and are significantly growing in their roles and contributions.

Tourism and MICE education

In Malaysia, tourism education has been mushrooming against the nation's support and encouragement to help deliver a steady supply of labour to the country's second biggest industry sector. Private institutes of higher learning have been opening doors to offer tourism programmes at varying levels as they seem to draw significant number of high school-leavers. These programmes are also relatively cheap for institutes to take off from (Busby, 2001). Simultaneously, there is a also a general concern that lays not just in the academic credibility, but according to Airey (1997), of some doubts that the fast and furious growth in these programmes may not only lack rigour, but often face undisputed claims of superficiality and unchallenging. Many institutions like ours, pay a lot of attention in the structure of the design in our delivery of the curriculum as seen vital in ensuring a wholesome quality, and in line with that, MQA Inspectorate (2001 and 2007) advised all tourism institutes to run 'well-designed programmes, which are industry-oriented, provide a good balance of theory and practice and offer students some good academic challenge' (Airey, 1999). A vast amount of literature exists on the issues and emphases in tourism education, but there are not many that are able to thoroughly deal with career opportunities in event management that could stem out naturally from tourism.

Event management is a relatively new field in the academic world, globally even though it was conceptualised within the discipline of tourism. As Hawkins and Goldblatt's (1995) claimed in their proposition that as more and more research studies been done for the event management industry, institutions like ours really need to relook in our curriculum development and answers questions of: should event management be infused within a tourism curriculum or should it be developed as a stand alone programme; can the disparate areas of event management be successfully incorporated into a cohesive curriculum; how does a programme balance the tension between the practical, technical and theoretical aspects of event management? These questions remain in the context of tourism education of event management modules.

Course content

The content of tourism courses should at least be deliberated and reviewed on a more regular basis. Middleton and Ladkin (1996) had commented that a key issue for tourism studies over the next decade 'is likely to focus on how far the subject not only retain but also develop its rationality against powerful pressures for diversification and fragmentation'. For instance, in a new area of study such as Event management, in which its delivery approaches has to constantly keep up with the faster pace of the industry it now serves, naturally there is a inclination for educators to use their own approaches in teaching the course (Airey, 1997). Cooper et al. (1992) and Wells (1996) also assured that a tourism programme usually takes the character of certain expertise within the faculty, whilst Koh (1994) observed that most tourism curriculum were designed by academicians with little or no experience from the industry.

In Malaysia, at a diploma or degree level, very few institutions have a generic event management course that incorporates most types of event, while at Sunway covers only a few types of events. Within our tourism programme at Sunway, the focus is generally not on congresses and conferences, nor is there much focus on special events. However, it should be noted that these modules constitute only a small proportion of the courses taken as part of a tourism student's education. Our tourism programme, like any other across the country, has a strong business component, marking only 40 to 60 percent of the entire programme, with the event specific module is a minor part of these.

The idea is to inculcate transferable skills in tourism curriculum so that students will be better prepared for other careers such as in event management should they choose to.

Tourism Career Opportunities

Whether we are ready or not, a sector in the tourism industry that has been experiencing rapid growth almost in every destination city (Mules, 2004) is the events industry, and it is not stopping. This industry magnifies the challenges faced by educators in their capacity and ability to prepare tourism graduates for a surge of employment remunerated from the event sector. Our focus group at Sunway University College had indicated a lot of avenues for further research. But the findings have also shown us the cause for the lack of enthusiasm in career seeking behaviour amongst tourism graduates. The literature suggests three ways in which tourism management students might get closer to the events industry. They are:

i. Manage or facilitate opportunities for volunteering at events. The nature of events is such that their delivery often depends on volunteer participation (Elstad, 1996).
ii. Bringing event management professionals into the classroom, as guest lecturers. Barron and Whitford (2004) found that specific event management courses that utilised guest lecturers for at least one-third of the delivery were well received by students, who stated that such an approach provided 'real life' examples, and contacts for part-time and future careers.
iii. Various work experience: work placements and the traditional internships commonly offered within tourism programmes (Busby, 2005).

As with tourism and hospitality careers, event management career paths are also often not well defined. Evidence has shown that many event managers started their careers in the hotel sectors (McCabe, 2001). Perhaps the industry evolved 'by chance' and at an alarming rate that left a lot of tourism and event educators hot on their toes, in their curricula preparatorations. In a study done on UK events employers' attitudes towards graduates, a suggestion was for the curricula to go beyond Yorke's (2003) advocacy of 'knowing that' and 'knowing how' content but instead to include more elements of 'doing that' or perhaps 'done that and reflected upon it' if our graduates are to effectively seek employment.

Demand for event management skilling is increasing, yet the education system appears slow in recognising this need in its tourism programmes. While this is not unique to the rest of Malaysia alone, highlighting the case at Sunway provides some preliminary insights into why this situation has arisen.

Careers in MICE and Events Management

The MICE industry is extensive and rapidly growing and is largely associated with travel for business purposes (Ladkin and Szivas, 2002). In an interview with Oxford Business Group (2006), YAB Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor the former Minister of Tourism spoke very specifically about developing the MICE sector. According to Tengku Adnan, Tourism Malaysia sees a big market in the convention business, where out of RM22 billion Malaysia is only obtaining less than 1%. The variety of MICE and convention centres and facilities available in almost every state in Malaysia indicate that Malaysia is more than eager and ready to aggressively promote MICE and events in Malaysia. In his interview, Tengku Adnan also mentioned the series of events and tourism activities to woo tourists to Malaysia. As event management planning is a relatively new business opportunity in the industry, it encompasses a range of possible employment because the term itself describes a wide, open and growing field (Cameson, 2003). Only when professional associations started to form, event management planning was recognized more widely as a professional sector of the industry, including offers on education and certification by various educational institutions. According to Cameson (2003), the convention industry employs more than a million and a half people, including employees of hotels, convention and conference centres and these recorded statistics shows a healthy field for the tourism industry as a whole.

Research Methods

The sample and setting for this research were through focus group which consists of six final year undergraduate students from the Diploma in Tourism & Hospitality Management, at the Sunway University College. All these students have undergone supervised work experience, where they were placed with various tourism related business for a period of five months. The students were coded according to gender, age and the status of nationality. The coding is as per Table 1.

Table 1: Coding if Focus Group Respondents

No	Focus Group Respondent	Allocated Code
1.	Male, XX, Domestic	MD1
2.	Male, XX, Domestic	MD2
3.	Male, XX, Domestic	MD3
4.	Male, XX, International	MI4
5.	Female, XX, Domestic	FD1
6.	Female, XX, Domestic	FD2

The research data was collected through focus group, where the participants were guided through a number of themes. The primary questions were asked about their knowledge of the MICE and event management as a whole and the career opportunities available to them, as tourism based students. Data and information obtained during the focus group were analysed and discussed in the following section.

The findings and discussion of this study is limited and applicable to educational institutes offering courses on Tourism Management and shall not be generalized across other industries and purposes. The findings and discussion are also limited to the available number of final year Tourism students at Sunway University College.

Findings and Discussions

In the first section of the discussion, all participants were asked about their career choices upon graduation. Out of six, four respondents said that they will venture into tourism related business such as airline companies and travel and tour agents, whereas MD2 respondent recorded an interest to join the customer service in the banking industry. Only MD1 respondent indicated a slight interest to join the MICE department of a tour operator. When queried about the lack of interest in MICE career opportunities, all respondents recorded almost a similar answer where they felt that MICE is too specialized whereas tourism itself offers a lot more opportunities. However, they do agree that MICE are a big part of tourism industry. The group were further asked on their views and disinterest in working in the MICE and event management, even though they realized that the MICE and event management is steadily booming in the tourism industry. In general, all respondents felt that MICE and event management employees must possess certain qualities and characteristics such as creative, outgoing, PR oriented and must be able to work long and taxing hours. One comment was recorded as below:

Working in the MICE and event management sector is taxing and requires a more active social life, which will also mean less family and personal time. They are also more creative and outgoing. Tourism industry as a whole is more relaxing (MD2). The labels on event management employees are viewed as a negative stigma and all respondents felt that they are not suitable for that kind of work environment.

In the second segment, respondents were asked about the syllabus contents of their diploma course with regards to the MICE and event management. It was noted that the most significant exposure of the MICE and event management in their course of study is a subject known as "MICE Management". When asked about the contents of the subject, all six respondents recalled the subject as learning to organize events and there were not much connection between MICE and tourism in the lessons. Respondent FD1 commented that she is unaware that MICE and event management is actually the same subject until she has more exposure during her internship. MI4 also commented that he does not see the relevant of event management to tourism if the term MICE is not mentioned. MD1 said that if more exposure is given in the course syllabus, they might have a different perspective of the MICE and event management. MD2 added that the brief exposure in the MICE Management module has not prepared them fully for the MICE and event management jobs in the real industry. Furthermore, all respondents suggested that the syllabus for the MICE Management to be more attractive and relevant to the tourism industry instead of portraying the MICE and event management as two separate sectors. However, all respondents are aware that Tourism Malaysia has a MICE department in their organization.

At the end of the discussion, respondents were asked whether they would consider a career in the MICE sector if it is the only job available for them in the tourism industry. All six respondents said that they would only leave the industry if MICE are the only career opportunities available for them.

I would rather switch to another industry because I do not think that I'm prepared for the MICE and event management. The working hours are too taxing and I'm not comfortable with the negative stigma such as active social life and outgoing lifestyle of event management people (MD2)

Moreover, FD2 commented that the training received in their tourism course has not prepared them for the MICE and event management sector and that is also one of the reasons why they lack interest in that sector.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings discussed above, conclusions can be made as follows:

- Tourism students at the Sunway University College are not interested to pursue their careers in MICE and event management.
- One of the main reasons that caused this is due to the inadequacy of training and exposure during their study to prepare them for the challenges in the MICE and event management. Students feel inadequate and does not have the qualities required to be in that sector.
- Another reason for the lack of interest is the unattractive features of working in the MICE and event management such as long working hours, negative social stigma and labels such as hyperactive social life and activities.

Therefore, the following are recommendations to rectify issues raised by the Tourism students:

- Increase more exposure in the MICE and event management within the diploma course contents and relate the contents to the Tourism industry.
- Include practical training of the MICE and event management for Tourism students to better prepare them for the sector.
- Lecturers must also play an active role in encouraging Tourism students to broaden their perspectives and options to ensure these students are geared up to grab career opportunities in the MICE and event management.

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Case Study Method in Tourism Research

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In general, researchers have used the case study method for many years across a variety of disciplines. Social scientists have made wide use of this method to investigate contemporary real-life situations and provide the basis for the application of ideas and extension of methods. In tourism research, case studies are used mainly to describe the evolution of several variables supposedly due to the implementation of specific tourism developments. Some researchers strongly contend that case study research is predominantly qualitative rather than quantitative in nature, while others take a more balanced perspective in claiming that there is no a priori reason to characterise and classify case study research as one or the other. This conceptual paper attempts to define case study and identify the different categories of case study, discuss its significance, application as well as limitations in tourism research.

Key words: case study, research, method, tourism

Introduction

In general, researchers have used the case study method for many years across a variety of disciplines. Social scientists have made wide use of this method to investigate contemporary real-life situations and provide the basis for the application of ideas and extension of methods. The case study has been used very frequently in the general tourism literature (Ryan, 1995), and it is also the most frequently used qualitative method in the ecotourism literature (Backman and Morais, 2001). In tourism research, case studies are used mainly to describe the evolution of several variables supposedly due to the implementation of specific tourism developments. This conceptual paper attempts to define case study and identify the different categories of case study, discuss its significance, application as well as limitations in tourism research.

Definition of a Case Study

Defining 'case studies' is not necessarily as simple as it may appear because many authors and researchers tend to use the terms 'cases' and 'case studies' somewhat

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interchangeably. Cases and case studies are not synonymous (Robson, 1993). Some authors refer to case studies as a 'strategy' (Robson, 1993; Hartley, 1994; Eisenhardt, 1995), an 'approach' (Rose, 1991; Hamel *et al.*, 1993), or a 'method' (Merriam, 1988; Smith, 1991) for undertaking research. Some researchers strongly contend that case study research is predominantly qualitative rather than quantitative in nature (Smith, 1991), while others take a more balanced perspective in claiming that there is no *a priori* reason to characterise and classify case study research as one or the other (Hartley, 1994).

For simplicity purposes, this research adopts Bromley's (1986, p. 7,8) definition of a case study as 'a general term widely used in the social and behavioural sciences to refer to the description and analysis of a particular entity [which are] natural occurrences within definable boundaries'. In other words, a case study is a discrete, bounded entity within which the phenomenon and context are inseparable facets of the study. Creswell (1998) refers to a case study as an exploration of a 'bounded system', which is bounded by time and place. In principle, once the issue or problem or area of interest has been defined, the parameters of the unit of analysis – the case study – should be quite clear (Clark *et al.*, 1998).

Significance and Typology of Case Studies

Case studies are selected because they exist and function within a dynamic context of surrounding circumstances. With data collected over a period of time, the aim of the research is to develop a wider understanding and provide an analysis of the context and processes involved in the phenomenon under study. As Hartley (1994, p. 208,209) points out 'the phenomenon is not isolated from its context but is of interest precisely because it is in relation to its context'. Thus, if the phenomenon-context is central to the definition of what constitutes a case study, it can be argued that the ability to satisfactorily identify and bound both the phenomenon, or subject, and its context is the key issue (Abbott, 1992). According to Gummesson (1991), the inseparability of phenomenon and context in case study research presents a 'natural' opportunity to obtain holistic synergies. Where phenomenon and context are conceived as a single entity, the case becomes a 'whole' from the outset. Nevertheless, the process of 'bounding' a case study is not without problems. Abbott (1992) suggests the researcher's ontological stance will have a fundamental impact upon how case studies are conceived and defined. The positivist position requires rigidly delimitable cases and assigns them properties with trans-case meanings, while the phenomenological perspective assumes cases with fuzzy boundaries and takes all properties to have case-specific meanings (Abbott, 1992).

In the literature, case studies can be categorised in a number of different ways, which are not mutually exclusive. They can be differentiated according to their primary disciplinary base, assuming that they have not been explicitly designed as interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary ventures (Brotherton, 1999). Case studies can also be classified according to their theoretical orientation (Hartley, 1994) – deductive versus inductive in nature, as discussed in the previous section. Stake (1995) makes the typological distinction between case studies on the basis of the purpose of the study. The *intrinsic* type of case is undertaken because of an interest in, or the need to know about its specifics, the case itself is of interest. On the other hand, the *instrumental* case is studied as a means to develop a wider understanding of a particular issue or to redraw generalisation, the case is of secondary interest. It is also possible to dichotomise cases into 'typical' and 'atypical' instances of a given phenomenon: average, extreme, unique or replication.

Additionally, Merriam (1988) suggests that case studies can be classified according to the objective of the research and the nature of the final report. A *descriptive* case study presents a detailed account of the particular phenomenon being studied. An *interpretative* case study also contains detailed descriptive materials, but is characterised by a greater extent and degree of abstraction and conceptualisation. This may range from suggesting possible, emergent relationships, categories, and typologies to the construction of a more formalised theoretical framework. An *evaluative* case study embraces not only those elements of description and explanation found in descriptive and interpretative case studies, but it also incorporates the element of judgement.

Jensen and Rodgers (2001) offer another typology of case studies:

- *Snapshot case studies* - detailed, objective studies of one research at one point in time.
- *Longitudinal case studies* - studies of one research entity at multiple time points.
- *Pre-post case studies* - studies of one research at two time points separated by a critical event. A critical event is one that on the basis of a theory under study would be expected to impact on case observations significantly.
- *Patchwork case studies* - a set of multiple case studies of the same research entity, using snapshot, longitudinal and/or pre-post designs. This multi-design approach is intended to provide a more holistic view of the dynamics of the research subject.
- *Comparative case studies* - set of multiple case studies of multiple research entities for the purpose of cross-unit comparison.

	Single cases	Multiple cases
Holistic	TYPE 1	TYPE 3
Embedded	TYPE 2	TYPE 4

Figure 1: Case study research design

Source: Yin (1994: 39)

Finally, Yin (1994) subdivides case studies into single or multiples studies, with holistic or embedded units of analysis. This combination produces a 2 x 2 matrix which Yin uses to suggest a fourfold typology, as illustrated in Figure 1. With reference to Yin's typology, the case study design of Type 3, for example, is two holistic units of analysis, and each case becomes subordinate to the overall scope of the study. Obviously, the multiple case study, whereby a number of individual situations are investigated, may be far more powerful and fruitful because of the ability to compare and contrast findings (Clark *et al.*, 1998).

Hartley (1994) argues that there are instances where the case study is likely to be the appropriate choice:

- satisfactory answers to the research question are contingent upon developing an understanding within a context (be that historical or contemporary);
- the phenomenon is new or little understood at present;
- the intention is to explore extreme or atypical incidence of the phenomenon and/or its emergent properties [the discovery of unanticipated findings and the openness to surprise are the real strengths of case studies (Platt, 1988)];
- the dynamics of the phenomenon need to be incorporated;
- a detailed understanding of meanings is required in comparative research.

Conclusion

Although case study is a distinctive form of empirical inquiry, many research investigators have prejudices against a case study strategy. Critics of this method claim that the study of a small number of cases offers no grounds for establishing reliability or scientific generalisability of findings; it is obviously not possible to make inferences about all 'cases' on the basis of empirical data collected from a sample of one. Others argue that it takes too long, and intense exposure to study of the case biases the findings. Some dismiss case study research as useful only as an exploratory tool.

However, according to Brotherton (1999), the case study method is capable of providing valid theoretical generalisation beyond the specific case(s) considered in the study, especially if the results can be compared against existing studies to strengthen the validity of theories or to suggest refinement of theories (Clark *et al.*, 1998). Generalisations are closely related to theory, the difference being that theory specifies the relationship among a set of variables while generalisations concern the extent to which whatever relationships are uncovered in a particular situation can be expected to hold true for every situation (Patton, 1980). Yin (1994) argues that the case study, like the experiment, does not represent a 'sample', and the invesigator's goal is to expand and generalise theories (analytic generalisation) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalisation). Additionally, Bassey (1981, p. 85,86) points out that 'the relatability of a case study is important if they are relatable, and if by publication of the findings, they extend beyond the boundaries of existing knowledge, then they are valid'. It is reasonable to suggest that the selection of case study research, as a preferred method, is far more likely in research studies having a qualitative orientation. Some authors justify this largely on the basis that studies with a qualitative orientation are concerned with the uniqueness of the particular, rather than the universality of the general. Furthermore, case study research facilitates logical rather than statistical inferences (Brotherton, 1999).

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The Role of a Public Relations Agency in Promoting Malaysia as Tourist Attraction in China

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China's economy has grown tremendously since early 1990s. Between 1992 and 2004, the number of Chinese outbound tourists jumped to an estimated 28.8 million. (The China Business Review, March – April 2005). It is forecasted that China would have 100 million outbound travelers and become the fourth largest source of outbound travel in the world by the year 2020 (World Trade Organization, 2003). Other parts of the world are trying to tap the Chinese market. Malaysia is among those countries trying to get more Chinese to travel here. One of the methods employed by these countries is hiring public relations agency to plan, organize and implement promotional activities to attract tourists to visit the country. This paper will address the roles and performance of a public relations agency in promoting tourist destinations. Based on this premise a framework will be drawn to evaluate the roles and performance of a public relations agency in China. The framework comprises five functions of public relations operations, namely planning, media relations, event management, crisis management and monitoring and research. The performance of the public relations agency chosen in this study is evaluated by information from its staff, national tourism organisation's key officers, media personnel and travel agents or tour operators. In-depth interview were conducted with these four groups of respondents in major cities of China, Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. Secondary data analysis of documents like press releases, media information and feature articles were also conducted. Result indicate that although public relations agency acted as publicist providing publicity during event and activity, they tend to be more reactive than proactive and did not fully discharge the role as consultant.

Key words: public relation agency, China

Introduction

Between 1992 and 2004, the number of Chinese outbound tourists jumped from 2.93 to an estimated 28.8 million (*The China Business Review*, March-April 2005). The World Tourism Organization, 2003 reported that the number of Chinese outbound travelers has experienced an annual increase of one million from 1998 to 2001 and it

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forecasted China to have 100 million outbound travelers and become the fourth largest source of outbound travel in the world by the year 2020.

Currently, China is the fourth major market of Malaysian inbound tourism, which accounted for 3.5% of the market share in 2004 (Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board, 2003). Recognizing the huge potential of the China inbound travel to Malaysia, extensive marketing and promotion has been conducted since Malaysia was granted with Approved Destination Status, the fifth country to receive permission by the People's Republic of China (PRC) government for their citizens to visit.

Other part of the world is also trying to tap the Chinese market. Malaysia is among those countries trying to get more Chinese to travel here. One of the methods employed by these countries is by hiring public relations agency to plan, organize and implement promotional activities to attract tourists to visit the country.

Having made the move to tap the large Chinese market, the government has set up offices in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou and appointed a marketing representative in Chengdu. A public relations agency was appointed to better promote Malaysia to the Chinese market. With the fluctuations number of tourist arrival from China, it is important to evaluate the performance of the public relations agency.

Public Relations and Tourism Industry

Bringing tourism into the centre of public relations study is necessary. Public relations (PR) is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics (Jefkins, 1994). In tourism, public relations is about how people who matter to tourism firm, travel company or destination think about it, and how their perceptions, behavior can be kept or made positive (Sheldon, 1994).

In the context of tourism in the China market, public relations plays bigger role in winning support from the public to create a conducive environment for tourism promotion. Having systematic public relations operations in tourism include understanding the market, identifying appropriate publics, preparing communication programs that meet organizational objectives, and developing appropriate messages for dissemination through the strategic media and methods are vital. How did the appointed public relations agency, assist the national tourism organization (NTO) in realizing a systematic PR promotion in China? This paper was designed to answer the following two research objectives:

1. To evaluate the appointed public relations agency's performance
2. To examine the extent, nature and conduct of promotional efforts of the appointed public relations agency's to generate publicity for stimulating the outbound Chinese market to Malaysia.

Methodology

An in-depth interview was carried out with 58 key personnel at Guangzhou, Shanghai and Beijing. A total of 58 participants were selected which included tourism officers, media personnel, travel agents or tour operators and appointed public relations agency (Table 1). A secondary analysis of media reports was also undertaken to gauge the extent of media exposure given to Malaysia by the Chinese media.

Table 1 shows the profile of the participants

	Guangzhou	Shanghai	Beijing	Total
Tourism Officers	1	1	1	3
PR Agency	1	1	1	3
Media Personnel	10	11	17	38
Travel agents/ tour operators	3	4	7	14
Total	15	17	26	58

Findings

Both research questions were meant to explore the performance and conduct of the public relations agency in creating activity to establish mutual understanding between the organization and its publics. It was identified that public relations activity must not be done on an ad-hoc basis and how public relations agency communicates might affect their relationship and reputation with the stakeholders.

A framework comprises of five functions of public relations operations was drawn up to evaluate the roles and performance of the appointed PR Agency namely; planning, media relations, event management, crisis management and monitoring and research (Figure 1 and 2).

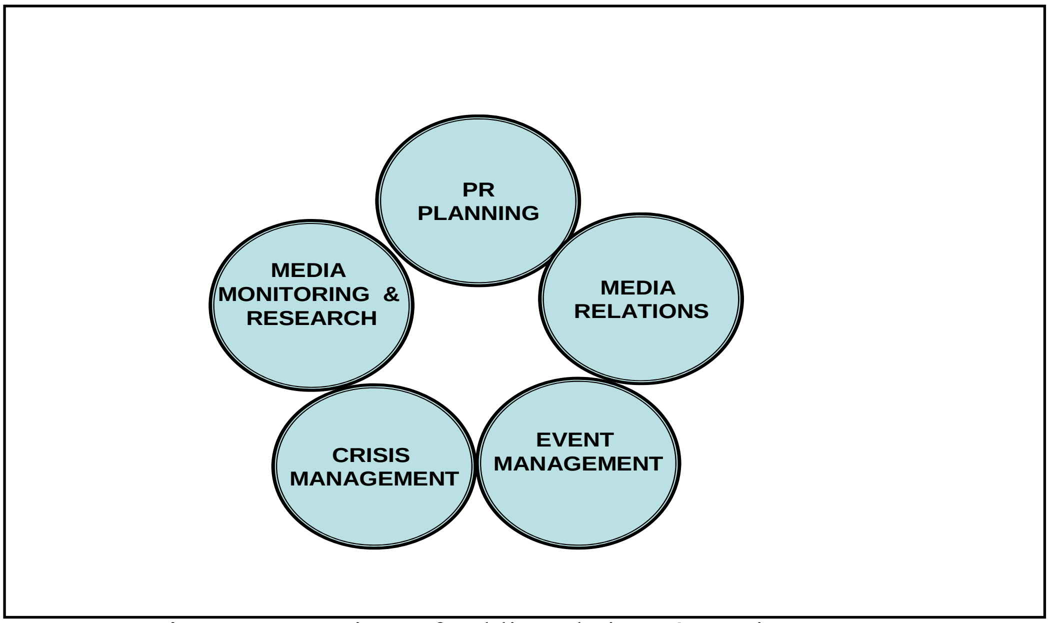

Figure 1: Functions of Public Relations Operations

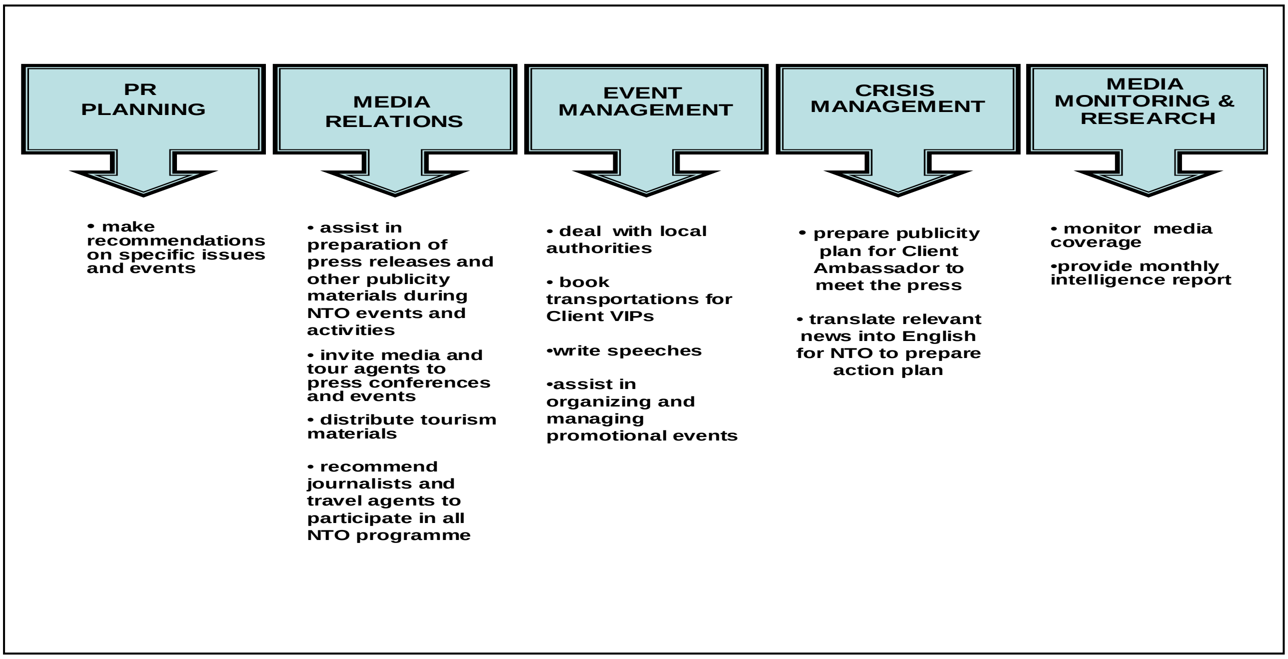

Figure 2: Key Roles of an Appointed PR Agency in China

This study found that the appointed PR Agency in China involvement in public relations planning was very limited. Overall, planning was carried out by the national tourism organization, most PR agency sent public relations proposals to national tourism organization (NTO) but these activities were largely done on an ad-hoc basis. Participants recommended that PR Agency should be informed that their role is not to initiate promotional events but to assist in organizing these events whenever necessary. PR Agency should act as an environment "scanner" to provide feed forward information to NTO for planning of appropriate activities. The feed forward information based on their media monitoring and analysis on issues pertaining to Malaysian tourism as compared with the competitors.

Under media relations, most PR Agency practices are to produce press releases, invite media and tour agents to press conference and events organized by national tourism organization. The PR Agency also assists in the preparation of other publicity materials during tourism events and promotional activities. It distributes tourism materials to media and tour agents as well as recommending media personnel and tour agents to participate in the familiarization program. The study found that PR Agency fulfilled the requirement of producing at least three press releases a month. However the press releases were often short and not informative enough. In addition, to ensure maximum coverage, press releases on the event should be supplemented by other relevant publicity materials so that journalists have sufficient information to make in-depth coverage.

When it comes to event management it is apparent that the PR Agency had been reasonably active in event management as well as getting publicity for the activities and events planned by national tourism organization. Interviews with key officers of NTO overseas offices (China) showed that they were satisfied with the assistance rendered by the PR Agency in event management. Likewise most respondents from the media said they received invitations to attend NTO events through the appointed PR Agency. The PR Agency had been resourceful in liaising with the local authorities and various ground handling tasks needed to organize an event. It is obvious that assisting NTO in organizing event was the strength of the appointed PR Agency.

For the questions related to role of the PR Agency in crisis management, it was discovered that very limited task was given to PR agency. Most of the task given involves translating relevant news into English for NTO to prepare its action plan as well as to organize press conferences and other publicity activities for NTO to address the issue or crisis.

One of the major roles that the appointed PR Agency needs to perform as per the contract is media monitoring and research. To fulfill this role, the Agency submits a monthly report of media coverage on Malaysia as well as its competitors. Based on our evaluation, the monthly reports were compilation of news clippings. It seemed more like documentation of evidences of work done by the public relations consultant. Given the state of the current report, it was not useful as input to planning and hence not utilized by NTO. Based on the reports, it was also difficult to know the types of media analyzed.

This study has also outlined several recommendations for PR Agency. This study suggests that the appointed PR Agency should play a more active role in building the reputation of Malaysian tourism. Secondly, the PR Agency should not be limited to producing press releases only but also other informational and promotional articles about Malaysia. The PR Agency should further improve the quality of press releases and promotional articles by providing an in-depth and varied subject matter including visual materials to the media. This is to ensure news coverage of its articles by all types of media, particularly those with regional and national coverage. It is also recommended for the agency to provide more analytical monthly intelligence report. In addition to the monthly report, a quarterly summary report should also be submitted to track the media coverage of Malaysian tourism and its competitors.

In order to handle matters effectively during critical situation it is a must for both NTO and PR Agency to have a good coordination strategy such as establishing a crisis management team that is coordinated by the Communications Unit. Developing a crisis management manual to show a clear information flow and chain of command during crisis situation can further extend this strategy. Lastly, the PR Agency should monitor the media information needs during crisis situation, as feed forward information to the crisis management team.

Conclusions

The study was undertaken with the main aim of understanding the role of a public relations agency in promoting Malaysia as tourist attraction in China. Findings of the two research objectives show that first, public relations as conducted by the PR Agency resembled “fire- fighting”; more reactive than proactive; providing publicity whenever there was an event or activity. Secondly, PR Agency did not play its overall role of a public relations agency because most of its activities focused on dissemination of materials and event management only. Looking at the dissemination of press articles to Chinese media, it only concentrating in the three areas where the Agency’s offices were located; neglecting coverage to the rest of China market.

The media articles written by the PR agency are very much lacking of in-depth information, the same with the monthly media reports prepared by the agency was lacked of detail analysis. There's a need for a crisis management manual and protocol so that all parties were clear on their roles. Lastly, media personnel and travel agents rated the PR Agency as doing well in areas of professionalism, responsiveness and communication but lacking in the area of efficiency of service or advice. The study conclude that although the appointed public relations agency acted as publicist and play their role in providing publicity during event and activity to promote Malaysia, they tend to be more reactive and did not fully discharge the role as consultant.

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The Positioning of Malaysian Tourism Destinations: An Exploratory Approach

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This paper presents a method of examining the competitiveness of 15 selected Malaysian tourism destinations among domestic and international tourists, and the positioning among them. The data was collected from online and group administered survey using questionnaire instrument, based on 40 destination competitiveness attributes. The main analytical techniques used were multidimensional scaling and factor analysis. This study also attempts to evaluate the satisfaction level of tourists towards the destinations they visited by using rating scale. It is hoped that the results generated from this study will represent a useful contribution in assisting tourism managers, marketers and travel agencies to promote and market the competing Malaysian destinations accordingly.

Key words: tourism destination, positioning**,** competitiveness

Introduction

Tourists travel to destinations for many reasons. Tourists will not visit destinations that have nothing to offer. Therefore, every destination competes to each other to attract travelers by emphasizing the experience they have to offer. The experience, however, is difficult to produce and manage compared to other products because it involves many different elements and because the participation or role of the tourist in the experience is so critical (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003).

Apart from that, Laws (1995) revealed that consumers are likely to make comparisons between facilities, attractions and service standards of other destinations. In general, "the choice of a particular good or service is the result of a comparison of its perceived attributes with the person's set of preferences" (Fishbein and Ahjen, 1975 in Laws, 1995, p. 113). Pritchard and Havitz (2006) later claimed that tourists were more likely to give positive ratings to destinations they visited when their expectations were met. Mayo and Jarvis (1981) argued that a consumer selects a destination amongst alternatives and evaluates each alternative considering its potential to serve the benefits he looks for. However, Laws (1991) has stressed that each tourist has the opportunity and freedom to choose amongst a set of destinations. Different factors may have an influence on destination choice. Because of this

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reason, it is important that destinations must be able to measure their competitiveness in order to identify their strengths and weaknesses and thereby develop their future marketing and positioning strategies to meet the tourists' expectation.

In every industry and business, many tourist destinations are in competition with each other (Heath and Wall 1992). Bordas (1992) has emphasized that the competitiveness is established between destinations and tourism organizations rather than countries because of the different aspects and features of the destinations in a country. Ritchie and Crouch (2003, p. 2) asserted that the true ability of a tourism destination to become competitive is "*its ability to increase tourism expenditure, to increasingly attract visitors while providing them with satisfying, memorable experiences and to do so on a profitable way, while enhancing the well-being of destination residents and preserving the natural capital of the destination for future generations*".

It is the intent of this paper to analyze the competitiveness of 15 selected Malaysian tourism destinations among international and domestic tourists. This paper will discuss the methods and approaches utilized in identifying the destinations' position relative to each other. The paper also attempt to measure tourists' overall satisfaction level towards the quality and image of tourism products offered at the destinations.

Destination Positioning

Many tourism experts believe that tourism sector has become highly competitive market since these recent years. Because of this reason, many researches have been conducted around the globe dealing with the topic of competitiveness of tourism destinations either at the regional/national or international level. There are number of studies that have been published in major tourism journals explored positioning by comparing competitive destinations (Goodrich 1978; Haahti 1986; Calantone, Bendetto, Hakam and Bojanic 1989; Gartner 1989; Crompton, Fakeye and Lue 1992; Kim 1998; Botha, Crompton and Kim 1999; Kozak and Rimmington 1999; Andre, Bigne and Cooper 2000; Uysal, Chen and Williams 2000; Chen and Uysal 2002; Kim and Agrusa 2005; Omerzel 2006).

Haahti (1986) investigated the relative status of Finland as a summer destination in comparison with 10 European countries namely Holland, Gemany, Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark Norway and etc. using multidimensional scaling techniques. He also conducted positioning analysis using four different national groups. The outcomes of the study found that the Dutch respondents tended to perceive Germany and Holland to be similar destinations and they also believe that these two countries have a higher level of cultural experience and accessible attributes. The results also indicated that Finland scored higher than its nine competitors in terms of different experience dimension but scored lower for the ease and economy dimension.

A study by Gartner (1989) aimed to examine the competitiveness of four US states namely Montana, Wyoming, Colorado and Utah. He employed MDS analysis to determine the tourism and recreation attributes. The analysis started with clustering the states with similar inherent attributes. The MDS results produced two dimensions that demonstrated the features linking group of people together. The first dimension was called in-group social/out-group social because it was appeared to represent social interaction. While, the second dimension was called the cultural resource-based/natural resource-based. As examples, Colorado was perceived as having more nightlife activities and opportunities than the other states. Montana and Wyoming were viewed as having outdoor recreation areas with characteristics related to natural resources.

A study by Kim (1998) examined five Korean destination images in terms of its psychological/perceptual attributes as well as its potential tourism-oriented activities and attractions. He conducted a survey on 287 respondents and required the respondents to rate their perception of 20 attributes for Cheju Island, Gyeongju, Sulak Mountain, Haeundae Beach, and the Yusung area. Kim employed correspondence analyses to examine the destinations' positions for different kinds of seasonal preference. The results confirmed that each destination had a correlatory relationship with a specific season during which the tourists were most likely to visit it. Further, the results of a MDS analysis were portrayed on the spatial configuration of six attribute vectors and five locations. As an example, Haeundae Beach was perceived to have a high level of entertainment and recreational opportunities, but was rated low on the accessibility and reputation and yet ranked very low on the other four attributes.

Uysal et al. (2000) evaluated the competitiveness of Virginia as tourism destination in compared to 10 other states by creating a perceptual map revealing the similarities and differences. The respondents were required to rate these destinations based on 48 geographical and cultural characteristics. The result revealed that Virginia was perceived to be most competitive with Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and West Virginia in natural features and with Pennsylvania, Maryland, South Carolina, and Georgia in historic and cultural heritage. The researchers suggested that destination promotional activities should be established based on the results of their positioning analysis.

Further, Chen and Uysal (2002) have conducted a similar study to identify the competitive market position of Virginia in compared to eight other states and Washington DC. The main analytical technique used was correspondence analysis. The outcomes indicated that Pennsylvania and Virginia were found to be the best states for mountains, quaint towns, and beautiful countryside. The researchers also employed logit analysis to identify cognitive differences in images of 14 activities within Virginia and Pennsylvania. The result revealed Virginia to have stronger images for 12 activities while Pennsylvania scored higher on the other two activities.

Kim and Agrusa (2005) investigated the competitiveness of seven overseas honeymoon destinations among potential Korean tourists and their position related to each other using multidimensional scaling and correspondence analysis. The honeymoon destinations involved Guam, Thailand, Australia, China, Hawaii, Japan and Europe. The sample included 393 potential overseas honeymooners who were attending wedding exhibitions and planning their honeymoon trip in the fall of 2004. The respondents were required to rank the destinations based on their preferences of eight attributes namely good scenery, comfortable place, safety, romantic place, appropriate tourism cost, good weather, good place for shopping and historical and cultural resources. The result revealed that Australia was found to be the ideal place for honeymoon with regards to good scenery, comfortable place, romantic place, and good weather. Guam and Hawaii were perceived as active tourism activity-oriented location whereas Japan and China were perceived as experiencing passive tourism activities, such as visiting cultural or historical sites.

Omerzel (2006) has conducted a study to determine the competitiveness of Slovenia as a tourist destination using descriptive analysis. He surveyed 118 tourism stakeholders of the supply side that were among tourism industry stakeholders, government officials, tourism school academics and postgraduate students on tourism courses. In order to identify the weak points in Slovenia's tourism industry, the survey required respondents to give a rating (on 5 point Likert scale, for each of the 85 competitiveness indicators) for Slovenia compared to its major competitor destinations. The indicators were grouped into six categories namely inherited resources, created resources, supporting factors, situational conditions, management, and demand. The findings indicated that a majority of 85 factors were evaluated below 4 and only a few of them were rated well above average. The destination management factors have been evaluated the worst. Omerzel concluded that Slovenia should make many improvements in the area of created resources, management and demand.

In summary, there are many criteria/characteristics that can be employed to assess for the performance of tourist destinations. These criteria may be found similar to or different from other locations. As stated by Dwyer et al. (2003) earlier, there are no single or unique indicators that apply to all destinations at all times. The previous research studies have utilized a variety of tangible and intangible features to determining destination position and competitiveness, potential and actual demand, levels of satisfaction and intentions to revisit, and positive word-of-mouth advertising.

Methodology

Destination competitiveness attributes

Since previous studies pertaining to competitiveness and positioning of Malaysian tourism destinations are found limited, a set of destination competitiveness attributes was developed. The identification of the attributes were based on a review of tourism literature on competitiveness model by Hassan (2000), Ritchie and Crouch (1993), Evans and Johnson (1995), Kozak (2001), De Keyser and Vanhove (1994) and Dwyer et al. (2003). As a result of the review, a group of 40 attributes was identified and be categorized in five themes namely attractions, facilities and services, infrastructure, cost and hospitality (Table 1). These attributes were included in the survey instruments and being presented on 5 point Likert scale where 1 was offers very little, 4 offers neither little nor much and 5 offers very much.

Table 1: Competitiveness attributes

Theme	Attributes
1. Tourist attractions	Scenery/natural resources, weather, culture and ethnicity, food/cuisine, history, accessibility of attractions, nightlife and entertainment, variety of tourist attractions, well-known landmarks, special events and festivals, local way of life, interesting architecture, safety at attractions.
2. Facilities and services	Accommodation, local transport services, sport facilities and activities, entertainment, shopping centers, food and beverage facilities, conference facilities, signage and direction to attractions, parking facilities at attractions, facilities at the airport, quality of destination information, quality of restaurants and bars, facilities for children.
3. Infrastructure	Telecommunication networks for tourists, health/medical facilities to serve tourists, streets/highways, security systems, hygiene and sanitation.

Theme	Attributes
4. Cost	Value for money, accommodation prices, food and beverage prices, transportation prices, shopping prices.
5. Hospitality	Friendliness and helpfulness of local people, efficiency of staff at the airport/port/bus terminal, responsiveness to customer complaints, attitude of custom/immigration officials

The instrument

Questions and variables used in the questionnaire are derived from past research especially Dwyer et al. (2003), Go and Govers (1999), Kozak and Rimmington (1998), Mill and Morrison (1992), Laws (1995), Goodall and Bergsma (1990), McLellan and Fousher (1983), Pyo et al. (1989), Selby and Morgan (1996) and Sirakaya et al. (1996). The questionnaire consists of three sections. The first section discovered the respondent's demographic background such as age, gender, employment and main transportation. The second section measured respondents' perceptions of competitiveness attributes of destination visited. The third section required respondents to state their level of agreement on destination image on a five-point Likert scale, ranginf from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with a neutral position in the middle. Respondents were asked to rank their visit on a scale of 10 (from poor to excellent). The questionnaire was prepared in both Malay and English, and each questionnaire took about 8 to 10 minutes to be completed.

Study areas

As time and financial are become major constraints, the selection of study areas are being limited to only 15 destinations. The destinations of choice were determined by the popularity of the places as top and potential tourist spots among domestic and international travelers. These destinations are well represents all region in peninsular Malaysia and east Malaysia (Table 2).

Table 2: The selection of study areas

Region		Towns and cities
West Malaysia	North	Kuala Kangsar, Taiping, Lumut, Penang, Ipoh, Kangar
	West/Center	Port Dickson, Kuala Lumpur and Seremban
	South	Malacca
	East	Cameron Highland, Kota Bahru, Kuala Terengganu
East Malaysia		Kota Kinabalu, Kuching

Sample and data collection

The survey was conducted between October 2007 to April 2008 (seven months duration) and the sample involved respondents aged above 18 years old from the groups of tourists (both local and international), visitors and tourism stakeholders. The group of stakeholders consists of tourism industry stakeholders, government officials, tourism school academics, and postgraduate students on tourism courses. The researchers undertook two methods in distributing the questionnaire forms. First, the researchers delivered hundreds of questionnaire forms to selected tourism schools in Malaysia and requested the assigned lecturers to distribute the forms among their students. The completed forms were mailed back to researchers once the task completed. The second method was by using online questionnaire. As to ensure high response rates, the researchers employed snowball techniques. Email message was first sent to all possible contact of researchers. Respondents were required to answer the online questionnaire that can be accessed at http://www.hbp.usm.my/tourism/mtc. Then, they were requested to forward the URL to all their contacts. Most returned questionnaires were usable, only 5.3% were incomplete and therefore were discarded.

Data analysis

The data were entered and coded onto SPSS program. Data cleaning and crosschecks were performed during the data entry process. Responses from open-ended questions were recoded to allowed meaningful descriptive analysis to be performed. As the first step of analysis, the reliability test was performed on 40-item destination competitiveness scale using Cronbach Alpha. The reliability value found was 0.943, which is an indication of strong item homogeneity. All items appeared to be worthy of retention: the greatest increase in alpha would come from deleting item 1 (scenery/natural resources) and item 2 (weather), but removal of these items would increase alpha only by 0.001. On the next stage, the 40 attributes were factor-analyzed using principal component method and Varimax rotation, to determine the underlying dimension or destination competitiveness factors. The researchers also intended to employ multidimensional scaling analysis to produce perceptual maps indicating the study areas and respondents' perception of their destination competitiveness attributes.

Initial Findings

Profile of respondents

As presented in Table 3, the respondents consist of 42.14% male and 57.86% female, with an average age of 32 years old. The biggest age group was respondents with age below 25 years old (34.58%), followed by group at the age between 26-35 years old (32.5%). Majority of them are Malaysian (94.6%). They mainly worked in public sector (69.48%), 23.97% worked in the private sector, while another 6.55% were self-employed. Sixty three percents of the respondents were Malays, followed by Chinese (23.21%), Indian (1.93%), Bumiputera (4.97%) and others (6.48%). The majority of the respondents were single (52.97%).

Identification of destination competitiveness factors

Respondents perceived the destinations to be competitive on accommodation (mean = 3.87), scenery/natural resources (mean = 3.84), food and beverage facilities (mean = 3.75), food/cuisine (mean = 3.74) and variety of tourist attractions (mean = 3.72). The responses were measured on the 5-point Likert-type scale.

Table 3: Demographic profile of the respondents

Demographic variable	N	Value	Percentage (%)		
			Malaysian	Non-Malaysian	Total
Nationality	757		94.60	5.40	100.00
Age (years)	757	18 – 25	33.06	1.52	34.58
		26 – 35	31.12	1.38	32.50
		36 – 45	17.15	1.52	18.67
		46 – 55	11.62	0.83	12.45
		56 and older	1.52	0.28	1.80
Gender	757	Male	38.97	3.17	42.14
		Female	55.61	2.25	57.86
Race	757	Malay	62.85	0.55	63.40
		Chinese	23.07	0.14	23.21
		Indian	1.93	0.00	1.93
		Bumiputera	4.97	0.00	4.97
		Others	1.93	4.55	6.48
Marital status	757	Single	50.33	2.64	52.97
		Married	43.33	2.64	45.97
		Divorcee/ Widowed	0.93	0.13	1.06
Employment sector	757	Government	66.55	2.93	69.48
		Private	21.38	2.59	23.97
		Self-employed	5.34	1.21	6.55

Measuring respondents' overall satisfaction level

As indicated in Table 4, majority or respondents have high positive overall satisfaction levels with the 8 destinations listed below (Mean > 6.5). They also show high tendency to revisit the destination in the near future and recommend the destination to family members and friends.

Table 4: Respondents' overall satisfaction level towards destination visited

Destination**	N	Overall satisfaction level*		Willing to revisit the destination (%)	Will recommend the destination to others (%)
		Mean	Mode		
1. Cameron Highland	214	6.77	7	91.6	91.9
2. Kota Kinabalu	100	7.00	7	96.0	95.0
3. Kuala Lumpur	92	6.79	7	96.7	91.2
4. Penang	81	6.86	7	93.8	95.0
5. Kuala Terengganu	70	6.94	7	90.0	95.0
6. Kuching	50	7.16	7	90.0	96.0
7. Malacca	46	6.89	7	87.0	93.5
8. Kota Bahru	39	7.08	7	87.2	89.7

**Based on 10-point rating scale; 1 = poor and 10 = excellent*
***Destination who have N<30, is not included in the table*

Concluding Remarks

Towns and cities are regarded as macro level tourism products that attract visitors. This research is hopes to come out with ranking and clusters of destinations according to their performance level on destination competitiveness attributes and images perceived by customers (tourists and tourism stakeholders). The classifications of these tourism destinations (towns and cities) will help tourism planners and authority to be able to plan the physical development as well as to allocate appropriate budget and to direct policies pertaining the development. It is also hoped that the results generated from this research will represent a useful contribution in assisting tourism marketers to promote and position the destinations accordingly

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