

IMPACT OF RURAL TOURISM PRODUCTS DEVELOPMENT ON TOURIST SPENDING IN POVERTY ALLEVIATION: A CASE STUDY OF TADOM HILL

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Abstract: *This study is about the poverty alleviation through pro-poor tourism development and activities. The qualitative approach will be applied by conducting the in-depth and open ended interview sessions. The interview will be done with the key informants that working and living surround Tadom Hill Resort. This resort has been chosen as the research setting due to the characteristic that they owned which rightfully reflects on the objective of our study. The objectives of this study which (i) to explore the roles of rural tourism development in poverty alleviation and (ii) examine the impact of tourist spending on the local people in Tadom Hill. This study also intends to examine the monetary and non-monetary impact among local people towards poverty alleviation.*

Keywords: *Rural Tourism, Poverty Alleviation, Indigenous Community*

Introduction

Hospitality and tourism industry has emerged themselves from an unknown and unrecognized economic sector to the potential creator for employment opportunities, contributor to the country's economic growth and development by produce consistent multiplier effect (Dollar & Kraay, 2002). According to the report by United Nations World Tourism Organization or UNWTO (2017), tourism industry is just more than providing pleasure vacation or spread of food feast. It providing one tenth of total employment opportunities, contributing to the preservation of culture and world heritage, boosting the economic and development growth especially for the tourism-depending-countries.

Tourism development are consist of social, economics, cultural and also can be environmental threats for countries which has develop well and is an productive tools for

poverty alleviation and increasing the quality of livelihood, particularly on a long-term basis through the usage of tourism resources such as culture, nature, wildlife and rural (Scheyvens, 2012). Furthermore, the multidimensional concepts consists in poverty includes issues such as lacking basic needs, unsuffiecient earnings, inadequate of access to education, ineligible credit facilities, poor healthcare, insecurity, inferiority complex, a sense of helplessness, the lack of development and human right (Holden, 2013).

However, development of tourism destinations may not necessarily benefit the local indigenous community. The local community also experienced the negative impacts of tourism product development such as culture degradation, exploitation of the local indigenous community, minimal interaction between tourists and the people from the community and limited material improvement for the local indigenous community (Dyer et al., 2003). Regardless numerous benefits present with tourism, this industry often operates by foreign and private sector interest which has little consideration in helping to eliminate poverty (Roe and Urquhart, 2001). Moreover, tourism may have a huge effect in increasing local costs, loss of resources as well as consequences on social and culture disruption that has a huge impact on the poor. Therefore, this study intends to address the discussions in tourism development especially on the impact it has on the local community, in this case, the Orang Asli community who lives close to Tadam Hill Resorts.

Tadam Hill is an Orang Asli settlement near Banting, Selangor, Malaysia. The area was recently developed by a private resort management company named Tadam Hill Resorts in November 2015. The resort management advertised that their resort development had considered the involvement of the local Orang Asli community in the development of the resort by utilizing their skills in craft-making to build the resort from forest resources. Therefore, such effort has provided employment opportunities among the Orang Asli community. Tourism researchers have discussed that employment opportunities by tourism development operators, in this case, the Tadam Hill Resorts management is one example of benefits that Orang Asli community experience when their area is developed (Fletcher, Pforr, & Brueckner, 2016; Dyer, Aberdeen & Schuler, 2003).

As proven by Department of Orang Asli Development (2018) as of 2010, the poverty rate among the Orang Asli community in Peninsular Malaysia had been decreased in 2008 to 2009 amounting of 9,004 to 4,307. However, in year 2010 the number of hardcore poor of household among Orang Asli had been increased to 7,321. The increasing number of hardcore poor among Orang Asli offers an interesting platform for the study to investigate on the impact of rural tourism product among Orang Asli (Wasudawan & Ab-Rahim, 2017).

So far, no research has been found that surveyed the impact of Tadam Hill Resorts development on the nearby Orang Asli community. Therefore, this research seeks to explore the extent of rural tourism products development in poverty alleviation in Tadam Hill. The outcomes of the research is expected to contribute for a major impact on the pro-poor tourism in economic empowerment of Orang Asli communities.

Literature Review

Rural Tourism Development

Allowing the outsiders or tourists to visit the indigenous people resident's area and experience their routine being called as indigenous tourism (Kunasekaran, Gill, Talib & Redzuan, 2013). Indigenous tourism or in specifically mention, the Orang Asli related-tourism is the focus of this study, since the development of the tourism industry most likely to give significant impact on the routine and activity in Orang Asli or indigenous people life. Carr, Ruhanen and Whitford (2016) stated that this kind of tourism mostly referred as ethno-tourism. Ethno tourism is defined as an activity that focuses on human-based works rather than nature to provide tourist an understanding about the lifestyles of the local community

In addition, ethno-tourism provides cultural exchange activities with the local community. According to Dangi and Jamal (2016), agreements, involvement and founded interest among the local indigenous community is important to ensure that any development of tourism plan will be successful carried out. A study done by Korir, Muchiri and Kamwea (2018) simplified that the local community involvement can actively influence the success in tourism development. As an overall, it can be said that the well-being of a country especially Malaysia recognizes tourism industry as one of the main booster for economic.

Economic Impact of Tourism

The argument that tourism can be a force for poverty reduction in term of notable support of development agencies towards international tourism is based on two central assumptions (Gartner 2008). The first assumption is that tourism development leads to economic growth. The second is that economic growth can effectively reduce poverty. The supporters of the previous tend to support the debate that a liberalized free market global economy is the optimal environment to facilitate economic growth, and that tourism can strengthen the economies of developing countries (Sharpley & Telfer, 2002).

Tourism is embraced for its potential to create employment, contribute to the national balance of payments, provide capital needed for investments in infrastructure, help to create inter-sectoral linkages within the economy, and produce multiplier effects (Dollar & Kraay, 2002). More specifically, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (2006) promotes tourism as a suitable economic growth sector based on the arguments that tourism is consumed at the point of production, is a labour intensive and diverse industry that can potentially support other economic activities and tourism can provide community infrastructure and opportunities for small enterprise creation. Moreover, it is believed that tourisms have a comparative advantage over the countries, possessing a wealth of cultural and natural assets such as art, music, wildlife, and favourable climates. As a result, tourism can provide more than material benefits for the poor, but also cultural pride.

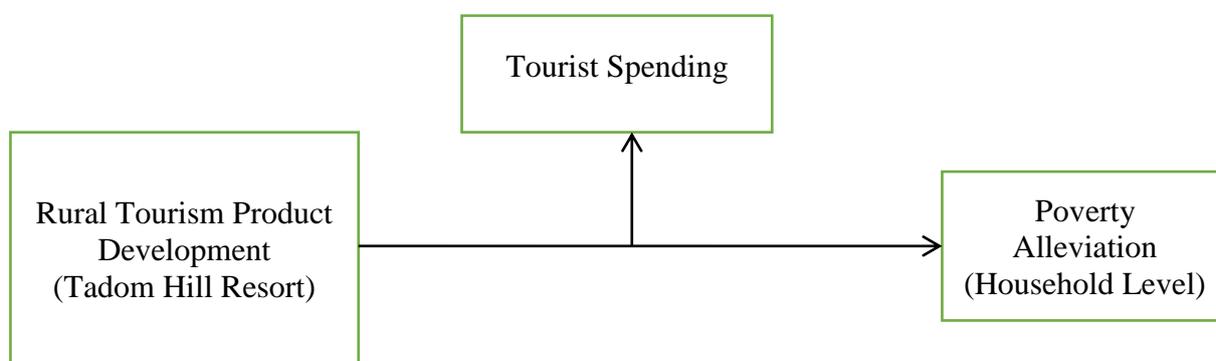
Poverty Alleviation Among Orang Asli

In Peninsular Malaysia, Orang Asli is the indigenous minority peoples (Asian Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Network, 2008) which comprise of 0.5% of the national population or total of 141 230 people in 2008. They are among the group that still left behind the mainstream development and do not have the opportunity to enjoy the fruits of national developments over the years. Poverty is common and prevalent among the indigenous people around the world (Damman, Eide, & Kuhnlein, 2008). As in Malaysian, Orang Asli has been identified as one of the poorest group where 17.75% of them are still under poverty and approximately

one third of them were in the hardcore poverty which is much higher if compared to the national poverty rate of 3.8% (Kamarudin & Osman, 2008).

Studied by Cheng, Chong, Kiew & Bahari (2014) has discovered that most of the Orang Asli worked as rubber tappers with low income. This finding is comparable to a study conducted by Anita et al. which revealed that the majority of Orang Asli in Peninsular Malaysia (72.7%) had a household income of RM 500 (USD 152.88) and below per month (Anita, Zahir, & Sa'iah., 2007). On top of that, these findings supported the data's from JHEOA where it has discovered that 80% of the Orang Asli live below the poverty line compared with 8.5% nationally and that 50% are among the very poor as compared with 2.5% nationally (The Star, 1997).

Theoretical Framework



Conceptual framework of poverty alleviation through rural tourism products development, adapted from Anwar (2012).

Research Methodology

The overall design for this study, will use qualitative approach whereby formal, objective, systematic process which data are utilized to test the research questions. To understand the objectives, a preliminary data gathering technique will be used. Naturalistic inquiry is thought appropriate by using in-depth and open-ended interview sessions. This tool is selected to gain new and unexpected responses from the respondents which prevents the interviewer from assuming potential variables.

Nevertheless, a questionnaire guide will be developed and used throughout the interviewing session to obtain the pattern of answers that are appropriate to the objectives of the study. Therefore, an interview guide will be designed, to guide through during the interview. The main reason that the interview guide is selected, which is to help the researcher stay on track while helping to maintain consistency across interviews with different respondents.

In terms of sampling technique, the researchers will be using purposive sampling by targeting informants from the management of Tadom Hill Resorts, employees of Tadom Hill Resorts, informants from their family members and also individuals who live nearby Tadom Hill Resorts. Overall, fifteen (15) key informants will be interviewed to answer the research questions. This number is sufficient for qualitative study as noted by Miles and Huberman (1994). The qualitative data will be transcribed to verbatim. A data software management,

NVivo will be used to facilitate the coding process. The data will be coded and analysed using thematic analyses to answer the proposed research questions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study is a basic research. The qualitative method will be applied soon as to complete the study. As being state in the methodology part, in-depth and open ended interview will be conducted. Purposive sampling will be used targeting the key informants from the Tadom Hill Resort. To generate the findings, the responds will later be analysed using the stated technique.

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