

Sustainability of Community Based Rural Tourism

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this research was to look for probable linkages between socio-cultural amenities, natural amenities, recreational activities, and climatic attribute interrelationships. The proposed research will investigate China's policy on rural tourism, identify the strengths and weaknesses in existing rural tourism destinations within China provinces, explore mechanisms available to enhance and promote this product globally, identify initiatives that can be taken to attract international tourist segments and recommend lasting policies to government agencies on rural tourism sustainability. Considering the five objectives of this research, this research framework is developed to study how the community development process takes place in those villages that are involved in rural tourism development. Adopting Input-Throughput-Output Model which was introduced by Deacon and Firebaugh (1988).

Keywords: *Sustainability, Rural Tourism, China*

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a form of globalization of the economy and, at the same time, a very difficult one to assess (Stukalo et al., 2018). Tourism must be viewed from both an economic and a cultural perspective. While independent travel is relatively widespread, all tourists traveling abroad have to use the services of numerous companies, large and small, domestic and international, which organize and coordinate travel and tourism. The growing importance of geographical mobility of goods, services and people is directly related to the dynamics of internationalization and globalization (Bryson et al., 2020; Williams & Shaw, 2011).

Rural tourism is also part of the anthropic tourist resources, but in the establishment of the rural tourism product also adds other specific rural elements, which are part of the daily life of locals in rural areas (Evgrafova, Ismailova & Kalinichev, 2020). Preserving the rural world together with everything that is significant from an economic, social, cultural point of view, implies the initiation and development of rural tourism (Fang, 2020). At the same time, tourism can actively participate in maintaining the viability and stability of rural localities, given that the phenomenon of depopulation is increasingly evident, by the departure of young people to urban areas, by abandoning old households and land.

Sustainable tourism through the development of its many forms of concrete manifestation such as tourism management and marketing, ensures the natural and economic integrity of the environment and rationally capitalizes on natural and cultural resources, but retains the necessary potential for future generations and is practically identified with a dynamic equilibrium of supply and demand, which outlines any modern tourist market (Khartishvili et al., 2019).

Revenues from tourism can help finance the protection of natural areas and increase their economic importance. Due to their attractiveness, protected areas are the main motivations for visitors for many categories of tourists. One of the factors that have contributed to the loss in sustainability of rural tourism is the homogenous nature of the Chinese rural tourism products. Croes (2006) pointed out that homogeneity of tourism product offerings could be a problem for small competing rural tourism destinations. According to him another factor could be their lack of scale economies.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Rural Tourism

There are a variety of terms used to describe tourism in rural areas, including farm tourism, agri-tourism, soft tourism and even ecotourism (Page & Getz 1997). Some groups, including Australia's Department of Tourism, have decided that rural tourism is 'a country experience' (DOT 1994, p. 1). However, not all tourism that occurs in country areas can be considered a rural experience, such as some of the resort-based tourism and theme parks that may only be in a rural area due to the cost and availability of land.

One of the primary concerns in rural areas is that of social exclusion, which comes from a combination of linked problems including unemployment, poor skills, low income, poor housing, high crime, bad health and family breakdown. These issues are often seen as occurring more in urban areas, particularly in inner-city neighbourhoods and urban public-housing, however they are prevalent in rural areas and are often compounded due to their low profile. They are not easy to identify in rural areas due to the spatial scattering of socially excluded households, distance, isolation and poor access to facilities. In addition, rural people's traditional attitudes of self-sufficiency can mask socially excluded groups or individuals (Roberts & Hall 2001).

B. Rural Tourism and Sustainable Development

Community support is a major critical success factor in rural tourism. Our guests travel through and interact with our community, so it is important that the community is pleased to deal with the tourists. We need to identify the critical community groups by assessing who is impacted (both positively and negatively) by tourism, and who has the power in the community.

An important means for tourism operators and government employees to gain real community input and support for an enterprise is to become directly involved in the local community. This should be done strategically, utilising the particular skills you have to their benefit. For example, if you run a successful small business you may be able to speak at the local Chamber of Commerce meetings, local school groups about future careers, or even assist in developing a business plan for a local charity. By volunteering for positions on local boards and committees you are also demonstrating your commitment to the community. Now, of course much of this will be dependent on the amount of time you have to devote to such activities, but even speaking once or twice a year at events that are well publicised will earn you community standing.

Rural tourism is increasingly becoming an important complementary service sector of major Chinese cities operating at their immediate adjacent suburban or rural zones. By promoting a green economy, such zones of rural–urban interactions attract more and more public investments, business investors, and leisure seeker. China is rich in rural tourism resources. In recent years, rural tourism has been the focus of tourism development in various regions, which has greatly promoted the development of rural economy.

Since the boom of popular tourism in China, “rural tourism” became a nation-wide popular phenomenon. With rising affluence and busier routine working schedules, Chinese residents find that the natural ambience and aesthetic views in their neighbouring mountainous areas, rural way of life, and farm guesthouses provide them with nostalgic sentiments of familial intimacy and relaxing leisure times. Their demand prompted local peasants to organize or to reorganize the hospitality packages to attract the potentially very large source of city guests.

China's rural development must be supported by industry, and the industry must give play to the comparative advantages of the countryside. The industry featuring agriculture and rural areas is suitable for the development of China's rural industry at this stage. Therefore, the development of rural tourism is the revitalization of China's rural.

At present, there are two types of rural tourism in China: urban support and scenic support and urban support is represented by Chengdu “farmhouse” (mainly serving local citizens, characterized by high revisit rate) The scenic area relies on the “village tour” in Guizhou (mainly serving foreign tourists, characterized by high initial rate).

III. METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted in April 2021 until May 2021 to analyse 125 tourists's perceptions of the destination image using a questionnaire sample method. The results suggest that socio-cultural amenities, such as providing basic infrastructure on the island, are rated low, while natural amenities, such as providing spectacular natural wonders, are rated high.

C. Research Design

This study used the Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA), a method developed by Martilla and James (1977), as an instrument to assess the performance and happiness of recent visitors. This is a quantitative study. Quantitative research is the process of gathering and analysing numerical data. It is commonly used to detect patterns, averages, predictions, and probable relationships between the variables analysed. The information was gathered using Google Forms, the programme we used to create our questionnaire. We just gather the results from the Google Forms app because they will conduct the analysis. We will present and discuss our findings utilising percentage and frequency methodologies in accordance with the study purpose. The required sample size was calculated to be 125 answers. Individuals above the age of 18 are submitted to a unit analysis. The

requirements for a one-night stay were set in place to ensure that guests had exposure to and familiarity with the island's attractions, services, and inhabitants. This was indicated as a screening question in the survey. Four competitiveness indicators, each with 30 amenities, were presented to responders.

D. Variables and Measurement (Items on the Questionnaire)

We collected data by conducting a survey utilising questionnaires as the tool. Our questionnaire is divided into three components, the first of which is a demographic profile. The second and third sections are for our research question, which includes both closed-ended and open-ended questions.

The demographic profile is for the first part. In this area, we question our respondents about themselves, such as their gender, age range, educational background, work status, monthly income, how often they go on vacation each year, and when they plan to go on vacation.

E. Data Collection Technique

The face-to-face study approach cannot be utilised to perform this research due to Covid-19 that is plaguing the world. The traits were questioned twice in the questionnaire to measure importance-performance, once for each scale. As a result, an online questionnaire was deemed the best technique of reaching all tourists who had visited rural tourism places in China. The respondents were asked to remark on the ambiguity as well as the readability of the concept. This technique revealed that a few small instructional changes were necessary. According to the pre-test, the survey took no more than 10 minutes to complete. Prior to the real data collection, a pilot study was conducted, and the findings of internal consistency of items yielded a favourable outcome. This signifies that all of the variables in this study are internally consistent. The survey was done online for one month, from the end of March to the end of April 2021, utilising platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. The data was collected thru online starting March 24 and ending April 31, 2021. The researcher notified respondents at the start of the survey that their participation was voluntary, not required. There were brief descriptions of the research background, aims, and goal, as well as recommendations for filling out the questionnaires. The researcher had little touch with the survey participants during the questionnaire distribution process.

F. Hypothesis Testing

To examine the associations between the independent factors and the dependent variable, multiple regression analysis is used. Customers' overall pleasure and intent to return are regarded as dependent factors in the conceptual framework, whereas sociocultural amenities, natural amenities, recreational activities, and climatic attribute interaction are considered as independent variables. The results indicate that both natural amenities score high to both customers overall satisfaction ($\beta = 0.815$) and customer intention to return to the Island ($\beta = 0.645$).

Significant path coefficients and correlations acceptable r-square values, and strong construct dependability are all indicators of a solid model fit in PLS. Figure 1 depicts the whole set of findings for the proposed model. The values of r-square, which is one of the most critical factors of the model, may be anticipated. Table 1 shows the results of the investigation, which included reliability, composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), Cronbach alpha, and communality. Because composite reliability does not assume that all indications are equally weighted, it is a better way to assess dependability. The dependability of the composite should be larger than 0.7. Convergent validity is the ability of the items in a scale to get loaded together as a single construct for the first-order factor. Any factor loading lower than 0.5 will automatically be eliminated.

The factor loading for question number 4 in independent variable 1.4 (natural amenities)was eliminated with 0.356. Followed by independent variable 1.5 with only -0.021. Also the independent variable from X2.4 (socio-cultural amenities) has been eliminated with 0.0268 and lastly independent variable 3 from X3.4 with 0.451

G. Data Analysis

For data analysis, we utilise SPSS and SmartPLS. SmartPLS is an application that allows you to model (graphically) latent variable routes (LVP). The partial least squares (PLS) method is used in this software's LVP analysis. The following collection of tools is SPSS. SPSS is a statistical analysis software programme. The name of the programme has been changed to "IBM SPSS Statistics."

IV. FINDINGS

The findings and analyses are given in accordance with the research goals. The study's overarching goals were to identify the most influential variables. We reviewed the literature on the variables that influence customer overall satisfaction and intent to return based on socio-cultural amenities, natural amenities, recreational activity participation, and climate attribute interrelationships that can influence destination image in tourist preference, particularly in rural tourism. According to the preceding chapter, a sample of 125 respondents was chosen for the survey. Questionnaires were utilised extensively to collect data; for example, some respondents were unwilling to participate in research, particularly in filling out questionnaires. The questionnaire data was compiled and handled.

The respondents' ages ranged from eighteen to sixty-seven years old. Most of the respondents have income more than RM 1200 (45.6%) and most of them get highest in education from a degree holder (53.6%).

As for the question on "frequency of holiday respondents per year", 48% of the respondents state that they go on holiday more than one in a year, while 26.4% respondents go on holiday three to five in a year and 25.6% respondents go on holiday more than six times in a year. Most of the respondents who went on holiday were those who work as students (52%), staff in the private sector (28.8%) and also work as government staff (12%). 37.6% respondents always go for holiday during school holiday, 34.4% respondents always go for holiday on festive holidays, while 20% respondents always go for holiday on weekends and 8% respondents always go for holiday on weekdays.

The cross tabulation data is shown the representative is well for the new generation. Out of a total 125 respondents listed for analysis, a large number of respondents were female respondents (62.4%) than male respondents (37.6%). The sample included people of various ages, with 88.0% of respondents aged 21-30 reflecting students as a whole. In this regard, the sample profile reveals that, according to the majority survey responses, the student is the primary role of the shared accommodation product.

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CONCLUSION

Customers who are satisfied are more likely to return and tell their friends and family about their excellent experience. Customers are satisfied when the service offered exceeds the expectations of the guest. When service is less than expected, it is due to one or more of several factors, such as management not knowing what is important to the customer, management knowing what is important but failing to set quality standards in the areas that are important, standards are set but employees fail to deliver on them, and promises are made to guests that are not kept.

Even if management understands what is important to the visitor, they may be unwilling or unable to implement solutions that meet or exceed customer expectations. It is possible that there is insufficient commitment to service quality, which is a measure of how seriously management takes service quality. Finally, even if service quality targets are established, they may be based on company rather than consumer norms and expectations.

Management begins to control consumer expectations by aligning service promises with what is already being supplied. Following that, research must be undertaken to determine what is significant to the guest. Based on what is discovered, service quality standards are established. Finally, a human resource system is created that hires individuals with service performer qualities, teaches them in customer-satisfying behaviours, and structures their roles so that they – the employees – are motivated to perform.

Finally, the State Government of China must be strategically prepared to handle future challenges and dangers in a global economy. The next frontier in sustainable development management would entail addressing certain new social, political, and environmental challenges. We hope that with good marketing efforts and clearly defined tourism plans.

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