

An Empirical Study on the Tourist and Local People Perspectives of Destination Competitiveness for Rural Tourism

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to probe the impact of marketing of rural tourism in Kuala Selangor, rural tourism can help in shaping our society. It can have both positive and negative impacts on rural tourism as well as village communities. There is a scope of rural tourism in Kuala Selangor. The government should encourage private enterprises such as the villager community itself to promote tourism in rural areas. For developing the rural tourism, we need to understand the rural environment, demography, socio culture, economic and political background of the place. How we can involve the rural people to enhance their socio-economic condition. To develop a strategic marketing plan for rural tourism. This also to ensure the economic for the community inside the Kuala Selangor is going well when they promote their Village to tourist. We must understand the target customer needs and wants and how to match it with our rural infrastructure. Rural tourism can develop a win-win situation for both the rural and tourist communities.

Keywords: *destination competitiveness, tourist and local people perspective, rural tourism, culture, environment*

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is ever becoming one of the rapidly growing industries in the world (Sharpley J & Sharpley R, 1997), and act as a vehicle to enhance the long-term economic growth and giving indirect and direct impact to the infrastructure and improve the urban and the local economy. In addition to other tourism products, rural tourism, in particular, has recently been gaining the recognition that is accelerating it into a growing segment of the tourism industry (Bramwell B & Lane B, 1994). Culture, environment, gastronomy, sports, and wildlife are examples of rural tourism products. Despite the thousands of the rural tourism products available, it would not be possible to successfully promote rural tourism without collaboration from all parties that directly involve in promoting those products, such as government authorities, public agencies and tour operators.

As intermediaries between tourists and tourism service providers, tour operators can influence the choices, the practices of suppliers and the development patterns of destinations among tourists (Fleischer A & Pizam A, 1997). This unique role means that tour operators play a key role and are a catalyst to the tourism development. In other words, their action can make an important contribution to furthering the goals of sustainable tourism development and protecting the environmental and cultural resources on which the tourism industry depends for its existence and growth.

Kuala Selangor is a town in Selangor State. Literally, Kuala means river mouth in the Malay language, and thus this is a small town where the Selangor River (Sungai Selangor) meets the sea. It was the old royal capital of Selangor prior to moving to Klang, and finally to Kuala Lumpur. This small town was conquered by the Dutch when they invaded Selangor in 1784. It is located well off the normal tourism route and hence, still maintains its traditional "kampung" (village) atmosphere.

In Kuala Selangor, tourist can enjoy the varieties of seafood. Tourist also can choose many seafood restaurants because they have so many restaurant to choose from. The price of seafood also are very reasonable and the quality of the seafood is fresh. For example, tourist can go to Pasir Penambang, just minutes by car from Kuala Selangor town, is famous for seafood. Some restaurants are on the water, just by the river, and make for a good meal while watching the sun set. Expect to pay around RM15-50 per person, depending on what you order.

Next, Tourist also can visit to Bukit Melawati, known as Bukit Selangor to the locals, has an indelible mark in the history of Selangor. The locals built a fortress on top of the hill in the 19th century to defend Selangor from enemy attacks at the river mouth and provide a vantage point to monitor ships entering and leaving the straights of Malacca. Tourist also can enjoy feeding the monkeys on top of the Bukit Melawati while watching the view of the Kuala Selangor from the Bukit Melawati. The price also are very reasonable for the tourist who are looking for a budget trip.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Various studies have focused on developing sustainable tourism strategies for different communities (Gannon A & Bramwell B, 1994). Despite the extensive nature of these works, there is still a need to design community tourism strategies to orchestrate sustainable development in townships. The imperative for such a strategy is prompted by the high.

Next, the researcher wants to investigate what is the other attraction activity that they can suggest to the villagers. For example, the researcher can suggest to the villager's activity that suitable for the tourist and can increase the village economy and income (Eqbali N & Bakhshandea N, 2011). This will make the local people in the village has a sustainable income when they have their own business such as restaurant that provides special local food to their tourist.

Next, the researcher wanted to protect the natural and built heritage and provide a high quality of experience for visitors ((Ali Pour & S Kitchin R, 2011). For example, the researcher will give an option what kind of attraction activity that the villagers can do inside their village to ensure that they can attract more tourist and increase their village economy and income.

The objective research question is intended to recognize the related questionnaire done in connection to the study. The point of this section is to investigate the writing accessible on tourism, especially rustic tourism. Prior

questionnaire for the most part spotlights on the effects of tourism by and large monetary interests of tourism were given significance. In any case, with the progression of time and the changing tourism situation, research has been done to think about the effects of provincial tourism on the general public and society too. There can be both positive and also negative effects of tourism. The present study has utilized different contextual investigations identified with tourism, its effects and specifically provincial tourism.

The theory that we are used in this research is a theory reasoned action from Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen that are published in 1960s. The theory is more focused on the analysis on importance of the pre-existing attitudes in the decision-making process by the consumers. The core of this theory is about making decision and consumers act on behaviour based on their intention to create a particular outcome. In this theory, the consumers who are the players who choose to act in their best interest. Specificity in decision-making method is important according to the theory. A customer only takes a particular action when the predicted outcome is similarly similar. Moreover, this theory are connected with the variables in this research is when the customer maintains the right to change his or her mind and agree on a different of variables because course of action from the moment the customer chooses to act to the time the action is complete.

Environmental conservation is defined as a long-established approach to environmental protection based on (Chin et al., 2014). The term conservation is referred to managing the resources of the environment such as water, air, soil, mineral resources and living species to gain the highest sustainable quality of life, as cited by (Jafari,2000). Environmental conservation is related to ‘ecotourism’ according to (Zhang & Lei, 2012)). Based on the idea of ecotourism, it defined as the activity to promote of environmental conservation or ecological sustainable ((Zhang & Lei, 2012) Ecotourism is also can define as a form of tourism developed in natural areas, whose purpose in knowledge and appropriate the nature and local culture, which requires conservation and ensure activity involvement, generating benefits for the local population (Dorobantu & Nistoreanu, 2012).

According to Law and Lo (2016), natural resources of destination is including cleanliness, unspoilt nature, richness of flora and fauna and comfortable climate which is the main attraction to gain tourists and tourism satisfaction in their ways. (Lindberg and Mc Kerchey,1997) said that the community will increase the nature area as potential resources to attract more tourists to visit rural area to maintain economic decline in other natural resources sector and protect their natural areas. Natural based tourism is related with the natural resources because the definition of natural based tourism is activity that generate by the existence of natural preserves, parks and refuges. The activity of the tourist can do and enjoy it without disturbing natural environments (Weaver et al., 1999).

The definition of a range of activities is any activity that conducted in the destination area to attract more tourists by an event organiser or management to gain more (Law & Lo, 2016). According to (Law & Lo, 2016) the important things that can attract more tourists are include recreation and sports facilities, facilities for special interest visitors such as adventure, ecotourism, cultural tourism and biking trails. Furthermore, mostly outdoor activity was conducted for tourists together with local people to increase the relationship between them. The local people create

the activity for tourists to make tourists more aware about the place and destination branding also. According to (Nezakati, 2014)), there are an activities or events were created in order to fulfil the demands of tourists who are looking for adventure for their experience during visit the place. Next, these types of activities or events will attract more tourists to visit rural place and also can increase destination competitiveness ((Ching et al., 2019).

Accessibility can be defined as a quality of the services that usable to the customers, and making sure that it can be used and convenience by the customers to their destination because it is a key elements destination that links tourist to destinations to be accessed such as traffic light, car parks, local transportation, availability of destination information and easy connections from the destinations to airports, public transport and freeways. (Vengesai et al., 2009) Accessibility is becoming an important in rural destinations issue, previous observational studies have shown that accessibility extremely important factors to persuade the tourist to make a decision for travel as cited by Aguila and Ragot, (2014). Furthermore, rural tourism destination in Kuala Selangor can be very success if they have availability, convenience and affordability of the transportation for the tourist to get into a popular location and can ease their visitation, it has the potential to raise the destination's capacity to attract new market and can enhance the tourist experience towards the destination and even can encourage a more sustainable travel (Loureiro & Miranda, 2008) (Chin et al., 2018).

According to Harun et al. (2018), the local community is a group of people who share borders in a tourism region, the favourable attitude of the community towards the development of rural tourism will enhance the destination's success, although negative experiences will continue give bad impression for the visitors. Local communities' opinions consider as important roles in tourism development and they are the sole service providers for rural tourism destinations that can influence the tourists to come (Coghlan & Coghlan, 2019) From the past studies, local communities have become one of the most important factors that will influence visitors to return to a destination or to recommend that destination to others (Law & Lo, 2016). Hospitality relates to the perceived friendliness of the community towards tourists whereby it consists of the warmth of reception by local residents; the willingness of residents to provide information to tourism; their attitudes towards tourists and the tourism industry (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). Furthermore, these tourists may promote their impressions, feelings and attitudes of the destination among to their families, friends and colleagues by sharing their travel experiences with them. All these are likely to affect the destination's ability to attract return visitors as well as to generate new visitors (Pappas, 2016).

According to (Vengesai, 2013) describing destination competitiveness as natural resources, events, festival, range of activities, destination accessibility and communities which are attractive for tourist to come. Destination competitiveness is a part of ability on how to increase tourism expenditure in the market and to increasingly attract many visitors by serve a satisfying goods and services that perform better that other destinations and also can improve the availability time to tim(et al., 2018) activity and the implementation of the good marketing strategies for destinations is very important to gain the competitiveness ((C.-H. Chin et al., 2014) In addition, as explained by (Noemi Kulscar; 2009) competitiveness is a wide range that can be viewed from various points of view that can be

look in the short term or the long term through goods, industries, sectors of the economy or national economies. Competitiveness between services in tourism businesses such as travel organizers, hotels, transportation and other tourist services is determined by the tourist's preference between directions (Angelkova et al., 2012).

Rural is define as the place that have population is low in intensity, and the economy is generally agricultural-based, and social facilities are not sufficiently developed. Rural areas are classified according to socio-economic and population density. Based on the definition, places that have population density is less than 150 per km² can be considered as rural ((Dijkstra & Poelman, 2014) While the definition of tourism is the activities, leisure time that people are leaving the place where they live and taking advantage of the services of touristic and commercial enterprises in a temporary destination for a short period. Based on the definition, tourism is when tourists go to vocation to get air change and resting needs, to see the beauties of nature and art, which is the belief that nature can create happiness to people and make the relationship with each other (Kozak, 2001). According to (OECD, 1994) the definition of rural tourism is when there are countryside that take place for tourism. Rural tourism should be located at rural areas, sustainability, the rural area with the special features and a little open space for enterprise.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Population and Sampling

The methodology used in this study was a quantitative analysis that was based on descriptive surveying. The questionnaire was distributed in using google form. The data from this study were collected from the questioner distribute o the tourist and local people in Kuala Selangor through online survey. There are 75 correspondent's respondents to the questionnaires. All the data were transformed into useable statistic. The technique that researcher uses in choosing people to answer the survey is convenience sampling because of the pandemic issue us the researcher cannot go through with the specific respondents. The researcher has limited resources to conduct the survey in that area to know about the population. The reason why the researcher used online survey method because it easy to collect the data, have limited transportation and it can avoid researchers to be affected by the COVID19 virus. This sampling technique were not considered whether the respondent can be representing the entire population or not.

B. Data Collection and Analysis

Partial least square (PLS) or Smart PLS are being used to analyse and calculate the data and to test the hypothesis. Smart PLS focuses on the destination competitiveness among the tourists and local people in Kuala Selangor. Measuring the contents validity means that all items are measuring the core concepts of the construct it has been used for (Alaeddin,2018). The questionnaire consisted of two parts:

Part A: Background of Respondent including gender, age, education level, occupation and income

Part B: Research Questions including 30 question that measured using a five-point Likert scale that range from 1 “Strongly Agree” to 5 “Strongly Disagree”.

The data were obtained and analysed descriptively and inferentially by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Version 20.0 (SPSS) software. All items in Section A were analysed based on frequencies and percentage. Meanwhile, data from Section B were analysed by using mean score and percentage.

C. Research Framework

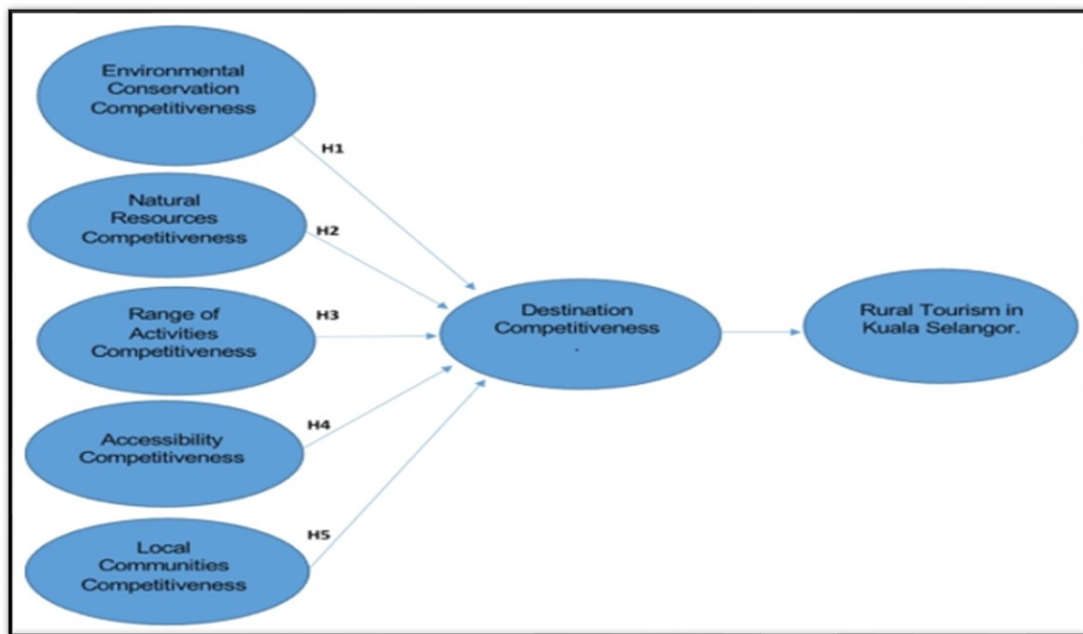


Figure 1. Research Framework

D. Hypotheses

H1: Environmental conservation competitiveness positively affect the destination competitiveness

H2: Natural resources competitiveness positively affect the destination competitiveness

H3: Range of activities competitiveness positively affect the destination competitiveness

H4: Accessibility competitiveness positively affect the destination competitiveness

H5: Local community competitiveness positively affect the destination competitiveness

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 show that our respondent was analyse and described using mean and standard deviation as summarized in table below. It is shown that most of the respondents are highly agree to the destination competitiveness affect rural tourism. Based on the Likert scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4=Agree and 5=strongly agree. The highest interpretation dimension level of destination competitiveness of Kuala Selangor is Accessibility, (average mean score =11.74). The second dimension that got very high interpretation is environmental conservation at (average mean score =11.27). In the other hand, natural resources got the lease of high interpretation at (average mean score = 10.08). The average mean score showed all variable are above 10.0 and it shows that majority of respondents are agreeable to the question they do.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Average Mean Score	Average Score Standard Deviation
Environmental Conservation	11.27	2.57
Natural Resources	10.08	2.58
Range Of Activities	10.72	2.49
Accessibility	11.74	2.93
Local Communities	10.97	2.39
Destination Competitiveness	10.92	2.71

B. Coefficient

Table 2 show the analysis explain about regression in destination competitiveness of Kuala Selangor, Selangor. To indicated from R-square 58.88% can be explained by local communities, range of activities competitiveness, environment conservation, accessibility competitiveness, natural resources

Table 2. R-Square data

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.767 ^a	.588	.558	1.79919

Table 3 show that coefficients for the Multiple Linear Regression that was performed to determine the relationship between the independent variables (environmental conservation, natural resources, range of activities competitiveness, accessibility competitiveness and local communities) and dependent variables (Destination competitiveness of Kuala Selangor) for this study.

Table 3. Coefficient

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Environmental conservation	-.139	.104	-.133	-1.342	.184
Natural resources	.315	.113	.300	2.779	.007
Range of Activities Competitiveness	.152	.115	.140	1.328	.189
Accessibility Competitiveness	-.035	.092	-.038	-.380	.705
Local Communities	.627	.135	.555	4.656	.000

C. Hypotheses Testing

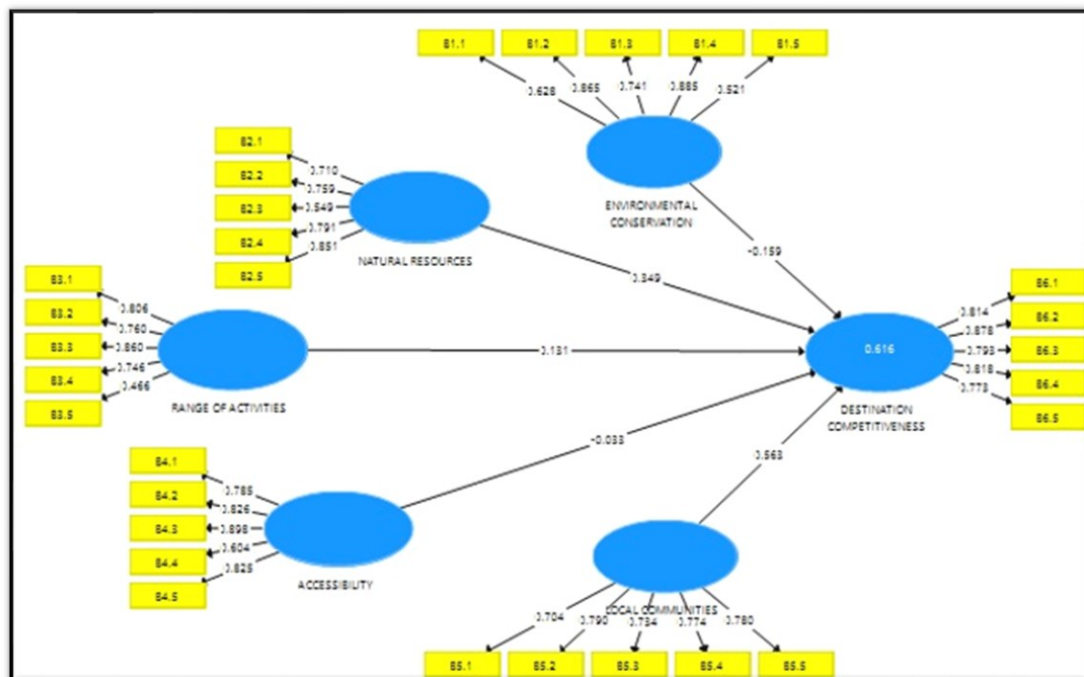


Figure 2. Hypotheses Results

Based on the Figure 2 that show the result of framework that have calculated by using Smart-PLS, which consist of destination competitiveness, path coefficients and R-Square. These results is related with the independent variable and dependent variable. Furthermore, all the numeric data are shown as the results of data collection.

V. CONCLUSION

Kuala Selangor is the tourism place for people who are looking for village life to tourists with minimum investments in tourism specific investments. The fundamental purpose behind the project is to make the Kuala Selangor self-reliant through development management.

The most important short-term challenges in building self-reliance are in destination planning, involving capacity building, product development and packaging. The long-term challenges involve exercise of controls and direction to lead Kuala Selangor to a mature tourism destination without losing identity in the long run. If and when tourism becomes a very profitable venture, how will the Kuala Selangor ensure that its people continue with their traditional lifestyle? If not, the destination loses its unique value.

With the rise in the disposable income, will the younger generation leave the village for greener pastures, and then, who will sustain the current initiatives? Finally, the perennial rural tourism worry, will the tourist gaze eventually change Kuala Selangor to an urban tourism destination? The greatest risk the project faces is the absence of a comprehensive tourism planning and is perhaps much more than what the current authorities realises. The failure or success of the Kuala Selangor model has greater implications than the failure and success of tourism experiment in a small village. It has implications on the livelihoods of several other villages that are waiting to transform their economy based on the same model. However, there is the need for significant improvement of resident participation in the planning and implementation of the tourism project in Kuala Selangor.

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