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An investigation of the appropriateness of tourism development paradigms in rural areas from main tourism stakeholders' point of view

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Abstract

Rural tourism or tourism in rural areas is a new form of activity that can bring economic and social benefits to the society. It will not only generate employment for the people but it can also develop social, cultural and educational values; therefore, rural tourism has attracted increasing attention from governments, NGOs and other organizations. Economic regime change from Fordism to post-Fordism and cultural regime change from Modernism to post-Modernism resulted in the emergence of new forms of tourism such as Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT), Community-Based Tourism (CBT), and Community Benefit Tourism Initiative (CBTI). Moreover, it should be considered that stakeholders' views such as local communities' and local operators' opinions on tourism development within their region vary significantly based on some variables such as their perception of benefits, and their expectations. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the appropriateness of tourism paradigms developed in rural areas from main stakeholders' point of view by doing a comparative study of CBT and CBTI in 2 villages of Lower Kinabatangan region to find out the main stakeholders' choice of appropriate tourism paradigm in their regions as well as their reasons. The local communities of Mukim Batu Puteh village and Sukau village alongside the homestay operators from Batu Puteh village and eco-lodge operators from Sukau village have been considered as the main stakeholders in the region. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed to achieve the research goals; first of all, a Decision Support System (DSS) model was created based on the 42 research variables as its input data by undertaking Cybernetic Analytic Network Process (CANP) method. The DSS model which was verified through a Delphi technique, measured the local communities' and local operators' choices of CBT and CBTI through specific questionnaires. The results of the first on-the-ground study revealed that both local communities from the 2 villages together with the homestay operators from Batu Puteh village preferred CBT as the appropriate tourism paradigm for their region while eco-lodge operators from Sukau village preferred CBTI as the appropriate tourism paradigm in the region. Finally, it should be emphasized that the result of qualitative survey validates the result of quantitative study; therefore, there is no doubt about their choices. Consequently, the research goals

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are met totally since the researcher concludes that the main reason for the difference in eco-lodge operators' choice with others' choice refers to the fact that these eco-lodge operators are totally outsiders and non-indigenous people while other three groups of our respondents are totally locals and indigenous people of the region. Therefore, this research article recommends that outsiders who want to bring and develop new forms of tourism such as CBTI for rural people should consider locals' perceptions and expectations of tourism venture in their village while listening to their voices.

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1. Introduction

Tourism is currently the world's largest industry and the fastest growing sector of the market. Tourism is usually viewed as being multidimensional, possessing physical, social, cultural, economic and political characteristics. Tourism is the fastest growing industry in the world. Travel and Tourism is one of the world's leading industries or economic sectors, representing a major source of GDP, employment, exports and taxes. In 2011, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) expects it to contribute almost US\$6 trillion to the global economy, or 9% of global GDP (WTTC, 2011). Worldwide tourism is ranked second highest revenue-generating industry next to the oil industry.

Mowforth and Munt (2003) believe that the concept of globalization should be considered in the analysis of tourism due to the general ubiquity of tourists and tourism. McGrew (1992) contends that globalization make the politics and social activities stretched across the globe while it also entails an intensification in the level of interaction, interconnectedness, and interdependence between societies and states which form the world community. Moreover, in line with this stretching, there goes a deepening of the impact of the processes on national and local communities (McGrew, 1992). Therefore, Mowforth and Munt (2003) conclude that this intensity and deepening is endorsed in the way that the Third World countries and their communities are progressively drawn into tourism. It has been argued that global economic change and development are the relevant features in the study of globalization while it is necessary to solicit the main features of global economic change to find out how these changes have affected the contemporary tourism and to see how these changes are reflected in the existing tourism development. Three main features have been identified as the main features of global economic change where the first feature is rapid growth in world market which resulted in the emergence of world economic system, the second feature is the rapid First World de-industrialization with an equally a rapid growth in service sector which helps us to understand the development in the First World consumption of tourism, the third feature is that capitalism has progressively entered the Third World and combined these countries into a global capital system which in return has increased the number of countries which are implicated in capitalist production (Mowforth and Munt, 2003).

Mass production and mass consumption had formed the basic characteristic of Fordism economic regime among capitalist economies since post-Fordism economic regime emerged with a qualitative shift from mass production and consumption to more flexible system of production and organization in a way that it makes links to the changes how these goods and services are consumed. The applicability of these ideas to the changes in tourism has been recognized due to the growing emergence of small group tourism activities and new alternatives in comparison to mass tourism. Moreover, Crompton (1993) contends that recent works done on the growth and development of the middle class are comprehensively associated with the growth of consumer capitalism and an emphasis on lifestyle. The new middle classes are not only considered as cultural mediators but they also reflect the political alignments or socio-environmental organizations; they are concerned with various issues; however, their engagement in assessing environmental politics and the term of sustainable lifestyle movement is linked with the development of new Third World tourism; Crompton's statement encompass the cultural regime change from modernism to post-modernism style of life which resulted in the emergence of new tourism alternatives against mass tourism (Mowforth and Munt, 2003).

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