



# Community participation in World Heritage Site conservation and tourism development



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## H I G H L I G H T S

- Applying MOA model to investigate the effects of contributing factors on three levels of community participation.
- Motivation had the greatest positive effect on the low level of community participation.
- Opportunity had the greatest effect on the high level of community participation.
- More aware residents were more interested in low level of community participation.
- The residents with more knowledge were more interested in high level of community participation.

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## A B S T R A C T

This study investigates the factors contributing to community participation in a World Heritage Site (WHS) using Motivation, Opportunity, and Ability (MOA) model. We examined the effects of these factors on three levels of community participation. The findings showed that motivation had the greatest positive effect on the low level of community participation. Among the dimensions of ability, namely awareness and knowledge, the findings showed that more aware residents were more interested in low level of community participation, whereas residents with more knowledge were more interested in high level of community participation. This study contributes to the tourism development and WHS conservation and management literature by examining the effects of MOA factors on three levels of community participation. Moreover, this study has a number of practical implications for local authorities in terms of community participation.

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## 1. Introduction

A number of studies have focused on community participation in the conservation of World Heritage Site (WHS) and the development of heritage tourism (Su & Wall, 2014; Tosun, 2002). Community participation in WHS conservation and tourism development is essential to the sustainable development of future tourism destinations (Nicholas, Thapa, & Ko, 2009; Rasoolimanesh & Jaafar, 2016; Yung & Chan, 2011). Local communities play a significant role in reviving and sustaining a WHS (Nicholas et al., 2009). The participation of local residents in WHS heritage

management and tourism development makes a positive contribution to the quality of life of local residents and makes heritage site conservation programs more sustainable (Nicholas et al., 2009; Sirisrisak, 2009). In addition, community participation in local WHSs improves residents' sense of belonging, facilitates the development of social networks, and inculcates a greater appreciation and understanding of the value of the local area (Gursoy, Jurowski, & Uysal, 2002; McCool & Martin, 1994; Tosun, 2002).

Various types of community participation have been identified in the tourism development and heritage management literature (Arnstein, 1969; Pretty, 1995; Tosun, 2006). The three major forms of community participation that have been discussed include coercive participation, induced participation, and spontaneous participation (Tosun, 2006; Zhang, Cole, & Chancellor, 2013). Coercive community participation refers to the lowest level of participation in which residents lack the power of self-determination over their degree of participation; their role in

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tourism promotion and subsequent economic benefits are all decided for them by outside agencies (Tosun, 2006). Induced or midlevel community participation affords local residents a voice in the process of heritage management and tourism development, however, they have no actual power or control over the decision-making process (Tosun, 1999, 2006). The highest level of participation is spontaneous participation, in which local residents have the power to make decisions and control the process of development (Marzuki, Hay, & James, 2012; Zhang et al., 2013).

With this in mind, what is the process for successfully implementing community participation in heritage management and tourism development? Several studies have aimed to investigate the factors influencing the implementation of community participation in the context of tourism by using the Motivation, Opportunity, and Ability (MOA) model (Hung, Sirakaya-Turk, & Ingram, 2011; Jepson, Clarke, & Ragsdell, 2014). Hung et al. (2011) used the MOA model to explain the antecedents of community participation in tourism development. Nonetheless, the MOA model lacks sufficient empirical support, there being a paucity of literature attesting to its predictive power for investigating community participation in different contexts; in particular, in heritage tourism and heritage management. In light of this gap in the literature, the current study seeks to examine the effects of motivation, opportunity, and ability on the three aforementioned levels of community participation in the context of WHS management and tourism development.

This study has been conducted in Malaysia's George Town WHS, inscribed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2008 because of its outstanding universal values. Thus, the aim of this paper is to describe an integrated model of factors influencing community participation in heritage conservation and management, as well as tourism development, based on MOA model and examine this model in the context of a Malaysian WHS. This study uses partial least squares-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), an advanced multivariate analysis technique that is recommended for theory development (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011).

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Community participation in WHS conservation and tourism development

Community participation involves collaboration between community members for the purpose of achieving common goals, improving the local community, and pursuing individual benefits (McCloskey et al., 2011). Establishing connections and sustaining interactions between community members is important for creating strong bonds and relationships. Community involvement can create a sense of belonging, trust, and credibility among community members (Rasoolimanesh & Jaafar, 2016).

Several studies have highlighted the importance of community participation in the conservation of heritage sites and the development of heritage tourism (Su & Wall, 2014; Tosun, 2002; Yung & Chan, 2011, 2013). Moreover, the Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas 1987 (i.e., Washington Charter) stress the importance of public participation. (International Council on Monuments and Sites [(ICOMOS, 1987), Article 3]. In addition, the Burra Charter takes the position that community participation is what sustains heritage conservation (ICOMOS, 1999, Article 12).

Community participation in WHS management can address conflicts and assist in clarifying the concept of *heritage* among community members (Sirisrisak, 2009; Su & Wall, 2014). Several studies have attested to the role of public participation in sustaining heritage conservation programs (Nicholas et al., 2009; Yung & Chan, 2011). Local communities play a significant role in reviving

and sustaining WHSs and their participation in heritage management contributes to their economic development, and improves their overall quality of life (Sirisrisak, 2009).

Nonetheless, the symbiosis between WHS and tourism development is characterized by tension (Su & Wall, 2014). The inscription of a site by UNESCO as a WHS enhances the site's international visibility, thus attracting tourism development. The subsequent development of a WHS into a tourism destination has the potential to increase public and financial support for conserving the site's heritage (Aas, Ladkin, & Fletcher, 2005; Su & Wall, 2014). Nonetheless, tension exists in the competing priorities of site tourism development for the economic promotion of local communities and the need to preserve the integrity of the site itself, thus maintaining the very resource upon which the local community is hoping to cash in on (Jimura, 2011). Therefore, scholarly interest in community participation in the context of WHS conservation programs and tourism development is significant and meaningful.

### 2.2. Types of community participation

The literature describes several types of community participation, ranging from manipulative participation to citizen power (Arnstein, 1969; Marzuki & Hay, 2013; Pretty, 1995; Tosun, 2006). Arnstein (1969), as a pioneer in this area, suggested an eight-tier ladder of community participation categorized in three groups: manipulative participation, citizen tokenism, and citizen power. Similarly, Pretty (1995) developed a typology of community participation inclusive of three categories, namely manipulative participation, passive participation, and self-mobilization (Marzuki & Hay, 2013; Zhang et al., 2013). Synthesizing the typologies of Arnstein (1969) and Pretty (1995), Tosun (1999, 2006) described three forms of community participation in tourism development: coercive participation, induced participation, and spontaneous participation (Zhang et al., 2013).

In coercive community participation, local residents have negligible involvement in development projects, having no power to make decisions or to control the process of development (Tosun, 1999, 2006). Instead, government authorities and the private sector exert their control over the entire tourism development process (Zhang et al., 2013). Community participation is limited to local authorities simply informing the community of planned developments and of how such developments might benefit them. According to Zhang et al. (2013), power-holders only inform the local community of developments to satisfying statutory requirements and to plicate residents, thus minimizing resistance against a proposed development. The residents themselves, however, have no actual power to influence the course of the development and their input is neither sought nor heard (Tosun, 2006).

The second form of community participation based on Tosun's (2006) typology is induced community participation, which is similar to citizen tokenism in Arnstein's (1969) model, and passive participation in Petty's (1995) typology. In induced community participation, while local residents have a voice in the tourism development process and power-holders certainly listen to their input, local residents have no actual power or control in the decision-making process (Tosun, 1999, 2006). The power-holders ultimately decide whether to accept or reject the opinions of residents in the process of planning and development (Zhang et al., 2013). This type of community participation, sometimes referred to as a public hearing or community consultation (UN-Habitat, 2007), usually happens later in the planning process after having already considered most of the issues and decisions have been made.

The highest level of community participation is referred to as spontaneous participation in Tosun's (2006) model, citizen power

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