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SUNGAI BUMBUN: EMPOWERING INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE LOCAL TOURISM

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates various approaches aimed at enhancing the capability of the Orang Asli community residing in Sungai Bumbun to engage in and derive advantages from the sustainable development of local tourism. The primary focus of this study pertains to the potential adverse effects of tourism on indigenous cultures and habitats. This study aims to investigate the design of local tourism programmed that can effectively empower the Orang Asli community, while also safeguarding its cultural legacy and natural resources. A qualitative methodology was utilized to conduct in-depth interviews with key stakeholders engaged in community empowerment and local tourist initiatives. The significance of collaboration among the Orang Asli community, government entities, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) was unveiled through data analysis. Education has become a crucial element, providing the community with the necessary skills and information to efficiently handle tourism. The results underscore the importance of incorporating cultural preservation into tourism endeavors and advocating for sustainable methods in order to mitigate environmental consequences. The findings of this study hold substantial significance for the advancement of sustainable tourism in indigenous communities. Local tourism in Sungai Bumbun can enhance the economic and social welfare of the Orang Asli people by promoting cooperation, empowering communities via education, and giving priority to cultural and environmental sustainability. This approach also ensures the protection of their distinct identity and environment.

ARTICLE INFO

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Tourism is the world's leading and largest industry, with governments recognizing its potential to be a major issue on social, environmental, and economic fronts. It plays an important role in economic development, contributing differently to different countries. For example, many third-world countries rely heavily on tourism to generate foreign exchange, while Malaysia acknowledges it as the second engine of national growth.

Governments at all levels have become more involved in tourism destination planning and sustainable development, with a more interventionist approach compared to other service sectors. This approach has been justified by capitalizing on taxes paid by businesses and visitors, as well as job opportunities created. Local governments and authorities bear primary responsibility for steering this process. Sustainable development has recently emerged as a critical issue on the development agenda of many developing countries' tourism industries.

Community-based tourism has the potential to address financial, social, historical, and environmental challenges faced by indigenous people. The concept of community-based tourism has been widely adopted worldwide to encourage community participation in tourism development. Indigenous peoples have a diverse set of living legacies, including behaviors, representations, gestures, expertise, abilities, and a distinct way of life.

Indigenous culture's uniqueness opens up a plethora of options for local communities, leading to the promotion of tourism as a means of supporting cultural rebirth, intercultural awareness, and economic growth. This expansion creates occupation and career opportunities for people of all skill levels in the community, and helps indigenous peoples become financially self-sufficient.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The preservation of cultural history and biodiversity is of significant importance to indigenous communities, exemplified as the Orang Asli of Malaysia. Enabling small communities to actively foster local tourism can yield a plethora of advantages for both the towns themselves and the broader society. The implementation of sustainable tourism techniques that uphold indigenous traditions and values can enable local communities to create revenue, safeguard their cultural identity, and make valuable contributions to the conservation of natural resources. (Alshboul, 2016) claimed that the collaboration between the government, NGOs, and stakeholders is vital for the sustained expansion of tourism. (Bramwell, 2011) asserts that the topic of collaboration among tourism stakeholders is gaining prominence among researchers and managers due to its significance in the realms of public administration and the formulation of tourist policies. (Bordas Rubies, 2001) underscored the imperative of non-governmental organization (NGO) and government engagement in the advancement of tourism, with the aim of improving the social and economic conditions of tourist destinations. Prior studies (Dola and Mijan, 2006; Eshliki and Kaboudi, 2012) have indicated that the involvement of local communities in tourism operations is limited in economically disadvantaged countries. In their study, (Saarinen and Lenao 2014) identified several limitations associated with collaboration, including conflicts related to quality and cost.

The concept of empowerment can be delineated into four distinct dimensions, namely economic, psychological, social, and political. These dimensions underscore the significance of local populations exerting influence over and benefiting from the development of tourism. According to (Boley et al.

2017), economic empowerment facilitates the community's ability to obtain the economic advantages associated with tourism in a certain geographical area. According to (Knight and Cottrell, 2016) and (Sutawa, 2012), community empowerment plays a crucial role in fostering the development of community welfare by means of tourism, hence offering the possibility of mitigating individual poverty. The purpose of community involvement in tourist activities is to generate economic and social advantages that contribute to a gratifying lifestyle (Boley et al., 2017; Sutawa, 2012). The community empowerment mechanism aims to transform individuals into proactive individuals who possess the ability to make and implement decisions, either independently or collectively, utilizing local resources to enhance their well-being and economic success (Sutawa, 2012). According to (Knight and Cottrell, 2016), community empowerment facilitates individuals in improving their overall well-being and providing educational opportunities for their children.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

For this study, a qualitative methodology was employed, focusing on conducting in-depth interviews with key stakeholders involved in empowering the indigenous community for sustainable local tourism in Sungai Bumbun. The objective was to understand the strategies and initiatives aimed at empowering the indigenous community to engage in and benefit from local tourism activities.

Two individuals with expertise and direct involvement in community empowerment and local tourism initiatives were selected for interviews. Each interview lasted approximately two hours and was conducted either face-to-face or via video conferencing, depending on the participants' preferences and logistical considerations.

Data collection involved scheduling interviews with the selected individuals and engaging them in discussions centered on empowering the indigenous community for sustainable local tourism. Throughout the interview's, detailed notes were manually taken, capturing key insights, strategies, challenges, and recommendations discussed by the participants.

The data analysis process entailed transcribing the interview recordings and organizing the manually collected notes. A manual coding approach was employed, where the transcripts and notes were carefully reviewed to identify recurring themes, patterns, and categories relevant to empowering the indigenous community for sustainable local tourism in Sungai Bumbun. The coding process was iterative, ensuring thorough coverage of the data and refining categories and themes as needed.

Upon completion of the coding process, the data were systematically analyzed to extract meaningful insights and identify effective strategies for empowering the indigenous community in Sungai Bumbun for sustainable local tourism. The findings were interpreted within the context of existing literature on community empowerment and sustainable tourism practices, aiming to provide valuable recommendations for fostering inclusive and sustainable tourism development in the indigenous community.

Table shows the Summary of the Participants

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Code	Designation	Job Description
MR.A	Chairman	The Village Development and Safety Committee for the Orang Asli Village (JPKKOA) is responsible for managing its operations.
MR.S	Handcraft Master	Act as a custodian of indigenous cultural heritage, transmitting traditional artisanal methods to forthcoming cohorts while cultivating economic prospects for the nearby populace.

4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Chairperson's Responsibility

"I, am the Chairperson of the Village Development and Safety Committee for the Orang Asli Village (JPKKOA) responsible for administering Sungai Bumbun village".

As the Chairperson of the Village Development and Safety Committee for the Orang Asli Village (JPKKOA), you play a significant part in putting the Orang Asli community in a position of greater autonomy. This entails making certain that their concerns and needs are taken into consideration by the appropriate authorities during the decision-making process, actively campaigning for their rights, and putting into action measures that directly improve the Well-Being, Development, and Safety of the Orang Asli people who live in your village.

"I, am the Chairperson of the Village Development and Safety Committee for the Orang Asli Village (JPKKOA) responsible for administering Sungai Bumbun village"	Chairperson's responsibility	As Chairperson of the Village Development and Safety Committee for the Orang Asli Village (JPKKOA, the role involves empowering Orang Asli communities by ensuring their voices are heard in decision-making processes, advocating for their rights, and implementing initiatives that enhance their development and safety.

4.2 Education

"Education is important for introducing Orang Asli culture. Public awareness programs can also be held through exhibitions orcommunity activities to introduce Orang Asli culture to the public".

Education not only provides Orang Asli communities with the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in the contemporary world, but it also serves as an essential instrument for the preservation and dissemination of their distinctive cultural legacy. In other words, education acts as a bridge for Orang Asli communities. Education allows for the documentation of traditional knowledge, languages, and customs, which can then be passed down to subsequent generations and even shared with the larger society, so developing cultural understanding and respect.

"Education is important for introducing Orang Asli culture. Public awareness programs can also be held through exhibitions or community activities to introduce Orang Asli culture to the public"	Education	Education plays a pivotal role in empowering Orang Asli communities by serving as a conduit for preserving and sharing their rich cultural heritage.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

As a means of fostering sustainable local tourist development in Sungai Bumbun, this excerpt emphasizes the significance of collaboration between many stakeholders and the empowerment of the Orang Asli community. Interviews with key stakeholders, such as the Chairperson (who is responsible for the well-being of the community) and a Handicraft Master (who is the custodian of cultural property), were conducted as part of the qualitative methodology, which yielded useful insights. With the use of education, the Orang Asli are not only able to acquire the skills they need, but they are also

able to preserve their cultural heritage through the process of recording and passing it down to subsequent generations.

5.1 Recommendations

1. Foster Collaboration: Establish a collaborative platform involving the Orang Asli community, government agencies, and NGOs to develop and implement sustainable tourism initiatives.

2. Empowerment through Education: Develop educational programs that equip Orang Asli community members with the skills and knowledge necessary to participate effectively in tourism development and management.

3. Cultural Preservation: Integrate cultural preservation strategies into tourism activities, ensuring respect for Orang Asli traditions and heritage.

4. Sustainable Practices: Promote and implement sustainable tourism practices that minimize environmental impact and protect natural resources.

5. Capacity Building: Provide capacity-building programs to equip Orang Asli community members with hospitality and business skills to manage tourism enterprises effectively.

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