About the Journal

The aim of the journal is to promote and enhance research development and innovation in the field of hospitality and tourism. The journal seeks to provide an international platform for hospitality and tourism educators, postgraduate student and researchers, to debate and disseminate research findings, facilitate the discussion of new research areas and techniques, and highlight best practices for industry practitioners. The articles published in the journal take a multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary approach to study the marketing, finance, economics and social aspects of hospitality and tourism. Papers dealing with theoretical, conceptual and empirical aspects of the subject matter will be considered for publication.

Article Categories

• Annual review of trends
• Applied research
• Empirical research
• Techniques and innovations

• Management styles
• Methods and principles
• Short research notes
• Book reviews

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All articles are reviewed (double blind) by at least two academic experts in the particular field of the submitted paper prior to acceptance. A maximum of 45 days/1.5 months is envisaged for the completion of the blind review process.

Paper Contributors

Papers are accepted from public and private institutions of higher education, the industry, non-governmental organizations, research centres and associations.

Frequency

It is a bi-annual journal with the issues being published in March and September of each year.

Association

This journal is officially associated with ASEAN Tourism Research Association (ATRA) since 2015.

Sponsor and Publisher

The journal is sponsored by the Center for Research and Innovation in Tourism, Hospitality and Food Studies (CRIiT), School of Hospitality, Tourism and Culinary Arts, and published by Taylor’s University Sdn. Bhd.
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Asia-Pacific Journal of Innovation in Hospitality and Tourism
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Legal and Ethical Practices in Hong Kong’s Hospitality Industry

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Abstract: This study aims to explore employee perception of legal and ethical issues in Hong Kong’s hospitality industry and examine the legal and ethical emphases of different hospitality sectors. Frontline employees perceive the importance of most of the legal and ethical issues. However, they perceive that hospitality companies do not perform well on legal and ethical implications especially in terms of employment law, working with lawyers, and insurance laws. Furthermore, different hospitality sectors emphasise different legal and ethical issues in various aspects. Hotels focus on the protection of their guests; restaurants and theme parks aim for hygiene and safety; and private clubs concentrate on protecting the properties of their guests. Hospitality practitioners should provide all-around legal and ethical knowledge and training to employees to optimise performance proficiency and to reduce litigations and disputes. Meanwhile, hospitality students are encouraged to equip themselves with legal and ethical knowledge before entering the hospitality industry.

Keywords: Legal, ethical, importance–performance analysis, hospitality, Hong Kong


Introduction

The hospitality industry in Hong Kong is rapidly growing due to the increase in tourist arrivals each year. In 2014, Hong Kong received 5.3 million tourists and was ranked tenth among countries with high international tourism receipts (Hong Kong Tourism Board, 2015b; UNWTO, 2015). However, the Hong Kong hospitality market has encountered many unpleasant legal and regulatory incidents. Recent
incidents include a notice from the China National Tourism Administration to travel agencies to stop organising Hong Kong-bound tours because of political protests (Chiu, Ho & Osawa, 2014), the operation of thousands of illegal guesthouses in Hong Kong (Kao & Nip, 2014), food poisoning outbreaks, purchase of rotten food or plants, and the protests of flight attendants. Moreover, 2,258 complaints from tourists have been received in relation to food and entertainment services and travel arrangements, such as inappropriate sales practices, poor product quality, and price disputes (Consumer Council, 2014). These cases challenge business practices and affect the legal liability and ethical responsibility of hospitality organisations towards the relevant stakeholders.

Legal and ethical responsibility is a corporate citizenship component that enhances the moral values of stakeholders (Maignan & Ferrell, 2001). Some common legal and ethical liabilities in the hospitality industry are discrimination, theft of company property by employees, job-related sexual harassment, protection of guests and their properties, duties of innkeepers and restaurants, employment laws, tipping, bribery, and business code ethics (McConnell & Rutherford, 1988; Sherwyn, 2010; Yeh, 2012; Yeung, 2004). The market and society are becoming more complex, and McConnell and Rutherford (1988) argued that legal knowledge is essential for hospitality operators because this knowledge would assist them in properly planning and collaborating with stakeholders in optimal ways and in reducing potential litigations. Tsai, Tsang, and Cheng (2012) argued that if a hotel is ethically responsible, then the willingness of customers to use its services again is high.

Thus far, no study has been conducted on the ethics in hospitality educational programs and on the discourse of business ethics (Yeh, 2012). Different practices are implemented even within the same business sector. For instance, hotels can have a wide range of liability policies to protect guests and their belongings. This notion causes employees and customers to misunderstand their obligations and rights, which may later cause disputes.

This study aimed to (1) investigate the importance and performance gaps of legal and ethical issues in Hong Kong’s hospitality industry from the employees’ perspective and (2) explore the most common legal and ethical issues that employees have encountered in the Hong Kong hospitality market. The contribution of this study would be useful for hospitality organisations and practitioners, particularly with regard to legal and ethical issues, to minimise risks and liabilities and to optimise society’s benefits and needs (Yeung, 2004). Some innovative hospitality applications could include offering training courses, developing a legal and ethical code of ethics, and establishing company policies for employees to adhere to.
Legal and Ethical Practices in Hong Kong’s Hospitality Industry

Literature Review

Legal and Ethical Issues in the Hospitality Industry

Many scholars have provided the definition for law and ethics. Law is defined as “a collection of rules proposed by the government, enacted by the legislature with any breaches remedied by the courts” (Srivastava, 2012, p.20). Hall (1992, p.12) explained ethics as “knowing what ought to be done, and having the will to do it”, and Lieberman and Nissen (2008, p.3) stated that ethics is the study of moral principles concerning rightful conducts based on the most deeply held values. The nature of hospitality organisations and the legal and ethical working environments are interrelated with each other. This study explored the different parts of the hospitality industry such as hotels, restaurants, retailers and theme parks. These sectors belong to the tourism industry, which is a major economic pillar of Hong Kong and generates 5% of Hong Kong’s GDP (Hong Kong Tourism Board, 2015a). The organisations that uphold legal and ethical practices benefit from employee-affective organisational commitment, organisational innovation, and customer loyalty (Wang, 2014). As indicated by Yeh’s study (2012), a positive ethical working attitude and environment can enhance customer service performance and customer satisfaction. An ethical culture at work can also influence work-related ethical practices amongst students in hospitality businesses (Ma, Ma, Wu & Ma, 2013).

Many scholars and practitioners are well aware of legal and ethical liabilities in the hospitality industry. Yeung (2004) found five major legal issues in the hospitality industry: theft of company property by employees, job-related sexual harassment, disposal of hazardous wastes, acceptance of bribes or gifts by employees, and provision of false–safe quality products or services. With regard to e-technology applications, terms and conditions of online contracts for product and service bookings are a major issue. Wilson (2011) looked at some legal procedures of online contracts. The click-wrap agreement can be enforced by courts to determine types of damages, liquidated damages, and restrictions on legal fees. Therefore, hotels should adopt this practice for their online booking systems. Potential guests should be able to read and understand all terms and conditions before accepting them. This practice protects both the guest and the hotel against lawsuits (Wilson, 2011). In addition, employment law, which covers sexual harassment, discrimination, civil rights, and wages and hours, has become a major issue in hotel operations (Sherwyn, 2010). Human rights and proper working conditions are necessary for work environments in the hospitality industry (Shani, Belhassen & Soskolne, 2013).

Travel agencies commonly charge excessive commissions, falsify or mislead tour packages, and employ unqualified staff (King, Dwyer & Prideaux, 2006). Nelson (2014) advised travel enterprises to formulate strategies to prevent any legal litigation and liability. For example, a travel company should obtain an insurance policy and
implement bonds. An insurance policy can protect a business against losses, whereas bonds can protect consumers from breaching contracts. If travel operators have insurance policies or bond coverage, then legal liability will be limited and protected. In many cases, a tour operator is liable for any negligence claim of a staff member. However, the tour operator is not answerable for the negligent acts of third-party providers; instead, he or she is responsible for monitoring the operation of the third party. Therefore, tour companies can create a good strategy to minimise risks and limit the liability of tour leaders or any wrongdoing by a third party.

McConnell and Rutherford (1988) examined the law component of various hospitality curricula in the US and studied whether differences among the programs reflect basic differences in perceptions about the legal knowledge necessary to meet the requirements of the hospitality industry. The most important areas of law for students were found to be related to “the protection of guests and their properties” and to “the legal duties and responsibilities of innkeepers and restaurants” (McConnell & Rutherford, 1988). Employment law was also highly regarded in their study. The rights and responsibilities of restaurants were also explained by McConnell (1982). Restaurateurs are liable for any quality issues in the food and drinks served, for personal injuries sustained by a customer at the hands of an employee, for intoxication after consuming alcoholic beverages, and for accuracy in the menu. Restaurateurs should be able to apply knowledge and use common sense in avoiding legal liabilities (Shani et al., 2013).

From an ethical perspective, values such as honesty, respect for others, fairness, and integrity are important for the hospitality industry. However, some hotels fail to provide training on business ethics for their employees (Yeh, 2012). Ethical issues in the food and beverage industry encompass pollution, fair trade, human rights, work conditions, safety and health issues, waste management and recycling (Steger, Ionescu-Somers & Salzmann, 2007). Some other issues that Hjalager (2008) identified are the illegal and unethical practices of tax manipulation, hiring of illegal workers, and import of illegal supplies in restaurant businesses.

According to the aforementioned studies, employees and employers perceive the importance of legal and ethical issues differently, thereby reflecting the operational and managerial implementations of hospitality companies. These gaps in the perceptions of these two groups of stakeholders are expected. Therefore, the following research question is proposed:

Research question 1: Does any difference exist between the importance and performance of legal and ethical issues from the perspective of employees?

Each sector has varied approaches in analysing legal and ethical issues because of the differences among hospitality sectors. Hence, the next question that is raised:

Research question 2: How do hospitality sectors analyse these legal and ethical issues?
Legal and Ethical Practices in Hong Kong’s Hospitality Industry

Methodology

Survey Design and Sampling Approach

This research is an exploratory study that examines the perception of employees on the importance and performance of legal and ethical issues in hospitality sectors in Hong Kong.

The research employed a questionnaire that comprised two sections. In Section I, respondents were asked to rate their perception of 16 legal and ethical items by using a five-point Likert-type scale, with 1 being the least important and 5 being the most important. The importance of the 16 items was also measured by using a five-point Likert-type scale, with 1 indicating very low and 5 indicating very high. These legal and ethical items were adopted from the study of McConnell and Rutherford (1988) and from the business laws and ethics subject offered in the undergraduate hospitality management program in Hong Kong. Section II collected the profiles and backgrounds of the respondents and the company that they work for. Seven close-ended questions were used to obtain data on the respondents’ age, gender, position, nature of business, duration of work, company branding, and company affiliation.

The target population of this study consisted of Hong Kong employees in the hospitality industry, particularly hotels, restaurants, private clubs and theme parks. Hong Kong is a destination hub in East Asia. Hong Kong’s hospitality businesses face more challenges in dealing with customer-related business issues because of the high number of tourists visiting Hong Kong. This aspect could be a useful insight that can be used to explore the possibility of legal and ethical issues in this destination. The study utilised the convenience sampling approach. The study’s respondents were students who were pursuing a bachelor’s degree in hospitality and tourism in a Hong Kong university. George (2008) suggested that ethics-related issues should be addressed before graduating students enter the hospitality industry. Their reflections on legal and ethical issues would be beneficial in broadening their industrial and academic perspectives. The following criteria were used in selecting the respondents: (1) They must be in their senior year and have studied at least one business law or similar legal and ethical subject, and (2) they must have work experience in the hospitality and tourism sector. Students who did not meet these criteria were excluded.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

The questionnaires were distributed to the selected students after they had finished the required course(s) as indicated in the criteria and after they had obtained work experience. The survey was conducted by the researchers inside the classroom. Data screening procedures were performed on the responses of a total of 410 junior year students.
students. Only 318 were found to be usable, thereby indicating a 77.56% response rate. Descriptive analysis was conducted to explore the characteristics, perceptions, and importance of the respondents. The study also used paired sample t-test analysis to compare the mean differences of respondents’ perceptions between the importance and performance of legal and ethical issues. This importance-performance analysis was adopted to improve the legal and ethical contents of the hospitality industry (Martilla & James, 1977). This approach is useful for managerial applications. Finally, the mean was applied to present the major legal and ethical emphases of hospitality sectors.

**Results**

**Profiles of Respondents and Hospitality Companies**

Table 1 shows the descriptive profile of the respondents and the characteristics of the hospitality companies that they had worked in. Among the 318 respondents, 26.10% were male and 73.90% were female. A total of 84.30% of the respondents were in the age group of 18–22 year olds, and 15.70% were in the age group of 23–27 year olds. Among the respondents, 95.90% worked as part-time staff, 43.40% had worked for more than a year, 16.00% had worked for 6–12 months, 23.60% had worked for 3–6 months, and 17.00% had worked for less than 3 months in their current positions.

In terms of the characteristics of the companies where the respondents worked, 29.60% of the respondents worked in hotels, 21.40% in restaurants, 17.30% in the retail sector, 10.10% in clubhouses, and 10.10% in theme parks and travel agencies. Among these companies, 37.10% were independently managed, whereas 62.90% were chain-managed. Lastly, 56.90% were international enterprises, whereas 43.10% were local companies.

| Table 1. Characteristics of respondents and the company they worked for |
|---------------------------------|-------|--------|-------|--------|
| **Gender**                      | n     | %      | n     | %      |
| Male                            | 83    | 26.10  | 94    | 29.60  |
| Female                          | 235   | 73.90  | 68    | 21.40  |
| **Age**                         |       |        |       |        |
| 18–22                           | 268   | 84.30  | 55    | 17.30  |
| 23–27                           | 50    | 15.70  | 32    | 10.10  |
| **Job Status**                  |       |        |       |        |
| Part-time                       | 305   | 95.90  | 118   | 37.10  |
| Full-time                       | 13    | 4.10   | 200   | 62.90  |

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Table 1 (con’t)

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<th>Duration of Work</th>
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<td>Less than 3 months</td>
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<td>3–6 months</td>
<td>75, 23.60, International, 181, 56.90</td>
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<td>6–12 months</td>
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<td>More than 1 year</td>
<td>138, 43.40</td>
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Table 2. Mean differences between importance and performance of legal and ethical issues

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<td>1. Duty to protect guests</td>
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<td>2. Duty to protect guest’s property/belongings</td>
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Importance and Performance of Legal and Ethical Issues

Table 2 presents the mean differences of legal and ethical items, which is related to the first research question. Based on the responses on importance, employment law was regarded as the most important legal issue (mean = 4.38, standard deviation (SD) = 0.73), followed by hygiene and safety (mean = 4.13, SD = 0.90), and duty to protect guests (mean = 4.10, SD = 0.75). Meanwhile, the respondents perceived working with lawyers (mean = 3.18, SD = 0.87), tourism regulation in China (mean = 3.23, SD = 1.00), and company law (mean = 3.48, SD = 0.89) as the least important legal and ethical issues. In terms of performance, respondents perceived that hospitality and tourism companies perform highly on the following legal issues: protecting guests (mean = 3.97, SD = 0.93), hygiene and safety (mean = 3.95, SD = 0.98), and protecting the property and belongings of guests (mean = 3.86, SD = 0.96). By contrast, respondents perceived that hospitality companies placed the least emphasis on the following legal issues: working with lawyers (mean = 2.80, SD = 1.02), tourism regulation in China (mean = 2.94, SD = 1.20), and company law (mean = 3.20, SD = 1.02).

In answering the first research question, the mean values were examined to identify any significant differences among the legal and ethical issues. The results show that the mean differences between importance and performance of all 16 legal and ethical issues were statistically significant at p < 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Employment law had the most significant difference (t-value = 11.31, p < 0.01), followed by torts (t-value = 7.16, p < 0.01) and working with lawyers (t-value = 6.88, p < 0.01). Meanwhile, the least significant mean differences were for protecting property and belongings of guests (t-value = 1.99, p < 0.05) and protecting guests (t-value = 2.25, p < 0.05).
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*p < .05, **p < .01

Importance and Performance Grid Analysis

Figure 1 describes the importance–performance grid analysis of all the legal and ethical issues. The median scores of importance (3.79) and performance (3.51) items represent the x-axis and y-axis scales respectively, as recommended by Lynch et al. (1996) and Martilla and James (1977). The mean of each item was plotted and presented. Only item 6 (contract of sales of goods) appears in Quadrant A, in which the items were considered extremely important and had fair performance. This indicates that employees sense the importance of this item, which was adequately emphasised by the company. Items 1 (duty to protect guests), 2 (duty to protect the property of guests), 3 (liability of hotel/restaurant), 4 (employment law), 7 (breach of business contract), 9 (crime and criminal responsibility), and 12 (hygiene and safety) appear in Quadrant B, in which the items were considered extremely important and had excellent performance. For the issues in this quadrant, both employees and hospitality companies had the same level of focus. Quadrant C categorise items as low priority (slightly important, fair performance). Items 5 (torts), 8 (business ethics), 10 (agency relationship), 13 (intellectual property), 14 (tourism regulation in China), 15 (working with lawyers), and 16 (company law) appear in this quadrant. Both employees and companies indicate these items as the least priority. Lastly, only Item 11 (insurance law) appears in Quadrant D, thereby denoting a “possible overkill”
(slightly important, excellent performance). This indicates that employees sense that this item was the least important, but the company chose to focus on this issue.

Extremely Important

A. Concentrate Here

B. Keep up the Good Work

Fair

Performance

C. Low Priority

D. Possible Overkill

Slightly Important

Figure 1. Importance–performance grid of legal and ethical issues

Legal and Ethical Emphases

Table 3 highlights the legal and ethical issue emphases of the hospitality sectors, thereby answering the second research question. For the hotel sector, duty to protect guests (mean = 4.24), duty to protect the property of guests (mean = 4.12), and hygiene and safety (mean = 4.00) were the top three major issues. Meanwhile, hygiene and safety (mean = 4.19), duty to protect guests (mean = 3.82), and liability of the restaurants (mean = 3.76) were found to be critical for restaurant businesses. Retail businesses focused more on the areas of employment law (mean = 3.85), contract of sales of goods (mean = 3.85), and breach of business contract (mean = 3.70). In the club sector, duty to protect the property of guests (mean = 4.15) was very high, followed by duty to protect guests (mean = 4.12) and crime and criminal responsibility (mean = 3.96). Lastly, theme park businesses focused on hygiene and safety (mean = 4.25), duty to protect guests (mean = 4.15), and crime and criminal responsibility (mean = 4.03).
By contrast, employees in all sectors shared that their least emphasis is on working with lawyers (mean = 2.54–3.31), tourism regulation in China (mean = 2.55–3.46), and company law (mean = 3.00–3.53).

Table 3. Legal and ethical emphasis by hospitality sectors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Hotel (n=94)</th>
<th>Restaurant (n=68)</th>
<th>Retail (n=55)</th>
<th>Club (n=32)</th>
<th>Theme Park (n=32)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duty to protect guests</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duty to protect guest’s property/belongings</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>3.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liability of the hotel/restaurant/shop</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment law</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torts</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>3.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract of sales of goods</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breach of business contract</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business ethics</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>3.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime and criminal responsibility</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>4.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency relationship</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>3.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance law</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hygiene and safety</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual property</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism regulation related to China</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>3.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with lawyers</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company law</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>3.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Mean ranges from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high).

Discussion and Implications

This study attempted to answer two research questions: 1) Does any difference exist between the importance and performance of legal and ethical issues from the employees’ perspectives? and 2) how do hospitality sectors analyse these legal and ethical issues? The results show that employees have different perceptions on the importance and performance of legal and ethical issues in the hospitality industry. The importance-performance analysis was performed to determine managerial implications. Moreover, individual sectors in the hospitality industry place different emphases on legal and ethical issues.
The study looked at how hospitality employees perceive differently the importance and performance of various legal and ethical issues. Among the 16 legal and ethical issues, employment law presented the most significant difference, which supports Sherwyn’s (2010) findings. This item is followed by the following: working with lawyers, breach of business contract, and insurance law. Employment law involves many issues, such as compensation, benefits, working condition and equality, harassment, and discrimination. Employees emphasise the importance of these legal and ethical issues, but they perceive that their respective companies do not share the same common interest. It is only expected that employees are given proper compensation and benefits in return for their commitment towards a company. However, hospitality companies do not provide satisfactory benefits to their employees. As some respondents were part-time employees, thus their compensation and benefits were lower than those of full-time employees. Any disagreement with regard to the provision of these benefits or unfair treatment by the company can create conflict between employees and their employers (Shani et al., 2013; Sherwyn, 2010).

The second significant difference is working with lawyers. Frontline staff members make direct contact with customers; hence, they prefer to receive prompt information on legal responsibilities from company lawyers. However, frontline staff may not have the opportunity to meet with these lawyers because these lawyers are not based at the branch office. Furthermore, staff members understand the importance of the breach of business contracts. It shows the negative perceptions by some companies exercising malpractice or implementing unethical policies. These unethical actions may have brought about the gap in the importance and performance of this legal and ethical issue.

The importance-performance analysis also presented the management analysis of the hospitality industry in Hong Kong. Most of the legal and ethical concepts (14 out of 16 items) are well developed and understood by employees and companies. Items that include employment law and duty to protect guests (Quadrant B) are perceived by employees as important and are emphasised by companies. By contrast, legal and ethical issues, such as working with lawyers and the tourism regulation in China (Quadrant C), receive less attention from employees and companies. Surprisingly, while legal issue of contract of sales of goods is important, companies however pay little attention to educating their staff (Quadrant A). Hospitality companies should educate their staff on providing sufficient information with regard to the contract of sales of goods to customers and on protecting the rights of the customers and the company. Insurance law is another issue that the company focuses more on but which employees do not regard as important (Quadrant D). Employers consider insurance law as essential in minimising all potential risks in business management (Nelson, 2014). Given that this concept is decided and paid for by the company, employees tend to ignore its importance.
The Hong Kong hospitality sector places different emphases on legal and ethical issues. This notion is reasonable in the world of business operations and management. Hotel organisations focus on protecting hotel guests and their properties, as revealed by McConnell and Rutherford (1988). Installing a proper security system and maintaining the privacy of guests would assist hotels in reducing crime occurrences and increasing the safety of guests. Hotels can adopt advanced technologies to secure their property. Hotel staff can also be trained to be alert and to prioritise the protection of guests through methods such as observing and training.

In the same way, restaurant businesses prioritise hygiene and customer safety, which concurs with the findings of MacLaurin and MacLaurin (2001). Hong Kong is known as a tourist food paradise because of its local and international food offerings. Restaurants are required to ensure the quality of the food served. Some common issues related to food include food handling, food-borne illnesses, food-borne infection, food-borne intoxication, and physical hazards. Many food poisoning cases have been recorded in Hong Kong, including in restaurants operated by hotels. Poor inventory procedures, ordering products from unreliable suppliers, and failure to follow proper hygiene procedures can become problems. It is highly imperative that restaurants maintain cleanliness in their cooking and purchase of raw materials to ensure consumers are protected.

The retail sector lists contract of sales of goods and employment law as major legal and ethical issues. Most retail businesses in Hong Kong purchase their goods directly. Hence, pricing methods as well as quality and after-service of goods are major issues. Employment law relates to staffing compensation and commission for sales achieved per person or staff member. The commission agreement is subject to the policy of the retail company. Setting an attractive and fair commission package would reduce any conflict between employees and retail shop owners.

Private clubs in Hong Kong focus on protecting the property or belongings of customers, which include sports equipment and locker contents, by ensuring a functional security system. Lastly, theme parks also emphasise the importance of hygiene and safety and the duty to protect guests. Theme parks offer activities that can create high chances of risk and security issues. Workplace safety for customers and employees is a must in the operations of theme parks. A clear regulation and policy should be provided to all involved parties, such as staff members and customers. If the rights of customers and employees in theme parks are made clear, then certain liabilities can be reduced when accidents occur.

Companies involved in the hospitality sector exhibit the lowest performance for the following legal and ethical issues: working with lawyers, tourism regulation in China, and company law. Issues of working with lawyers and company law have the least effect on the duties and responsibilities of employees because most employees
are junior-level frontline staff members. The majority of the responsibility are usually shouldered by middle- and top-level managers. Surprisingly, Hong Kong hospitality companies do not focus on tourism regulation in China, although 77.6% of tourist arrivals are from mainland China (Tourism Commission, 2014). The lack of legal and ethical knowledge in China can lead to disputes. Moreover, the Hong Kong government frequently revises legal rules and regulations, such as limiting entry to Hong Kong, to suit specific social situations (Beijing pledges to 2015). Hospitality operators should update their knowledge on these legal changes so that they can manage these companies profitably and sustainably.

Managerial and Educational Implications

The implications of knowing about legal and ethical issues allow hospitality employees to incorporate their moral values in the decision-making process (Yeung, 2004). If employees are better-trained and more knowledgeable on business laws and ethics, then they can handle disputes professionally and plan for their long-term career advancement (Yeh, Martin, Moreo, Ryan, & Perry, 2005). Hospitality companies that emphasise on legal and ethical practices create better legally ethical managerial policies and practices. Their employees, especially new hires, are provided with regular trainings or seminars. As a result, employees have at their disposal more tools to enable them to make decisions in a more legal and ethical manner (Yeh, 2012). Moreover, updates on laws and regulations, such as the tourism policy in Hong Kong, safety and hygiene practices, and consumer rights, should be relayed by the relevant organisations to their constituents. Clear work ethics should also be interpreted and communicated to employees to ensure the same level of understanding on particular issues (Ma et al., 2013). These employees can also inform customers about certain legal liabilities, thereby allowing customers to acknowledge the legal responsibilities of hospitality companies and to bear their own risks on certain issues. This practice will help both parties in avoiding potential risks.

From an educational perspective, educators can formulate a quality curriculum to meet the industry’s expectations and to enhance customer satisfaction (Yeung, 2004). An elective business ethics class should be introduced, in which students study ethics from various aspects, such as food ethics (Shani et al., 2013). Not many hospitality programs incorporate legal and ethical education into their curricula (Yeh et al., 2005). Therefore, the curriculum design of hospitality programs may need to be revised. In addition, internship can be utilised to develop the legal and ethical competencies of students. When students have more working experience, they can make better decisions on ethical practices (Ma et al., 2013).
Limitations and Future Research

Taking into account the limitations of this study, future research directions are discussed here. First, this study only focused on the perspectives of part-time employees and not those of employers. Future research can explore and compare findings of legal and ethical issues from the perspectives of other stakeholders. Second, most of the students are junior-level frontline staff members. Therefore, their exposure to legal and ethical issues in the workplace is limited due to the nature of their work. Perceptions on the emphases of employers may differ from reality. Lastly, this study focused on only one particular institute in Hong Kong. Future research can cover additional institutions that offer law courses in their hospitality programs. A large sample size with diverse backgrounds of respondents can provide further insights into the effectiveness of the law subject in hospitality programs.

Acknowledgement

This research was fully supported by a grant from the College of Professional and Continuing Education, an affiliate of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

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Research Paper

Craftourism: Moderating Emotional-Bonding with Destination and its Loyalty

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Abstract: Traditional crafts play a major role in enhancing the attractiveness of a destination. Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs) have embraced this phenomenon and associate crafts with visitors’ cognitive self. The recently coined term “Craftourism” further illustrates this growing integration of visitors with the conceptualisation and production process of various local crafts. This paper examines the impact of emotional bonding on destination loyalty from the visitors’ perspective with craftourism as a possible moderator. Surveying destinations with rich traditions of handmade crafts and using appropriate statistical tools to assess the relationship between variables, the findings reveal that craftourism plays a significant moderating role in enhancing destination loyalty of visitors by strengthening their emotional bond with the said destination.

Keywords: Craft, destination loyalty, emotional bonding, visitor


Introduction

Experiential travelling is on the rise with participative learning emerging as a critical element of travel focusing on the “practice and display of local traditional crafts” (Shushma, 2012). Destination marketing organisations (DMOs) rely heavily on the bouquet of local traditions and events to lure and ensure a steady flow of visitors (Pike, 2008). As an element of cultural celebration, handicrafts can be used to enhance the attractiveness of the destination for foreign visitors, develop community image, raise funds for civic or charitable projects, provide opportunities
for the visiting community to deal with fine arts, help to preserve and revitalise local cultures and traditions, provide important leisure activity outlets, build social cohesion and provide opportunities for family members to strengthen their societal bonds (Weaver & Robinson, 1989; Janiskee, 1980; Getz 1991; Liang, Illum & Cole, 2008; Getz, 2008). Long and Perdue (1990) argued that rural communities strive hard to enhance the local tourism industry by attracting visitors with the expectation of boosting the economy.

Past research has shown that visitors are involved in the promotion of destinations, namely via positive referrals if they are satisfied with the destination they visited (Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 2010). Therefore, it becomes imperative for the destination marketer to ensure visitor satisfaction by improving visitors’ experience at the destination visited (Pike, 2008). Researchers have also pointed out that destination bonding can be a useful input in understanding the criticality of the satisfaction-loyalty relationship (Yuksel, Yuksel & Bilim, 2010). There is plenty of research on the relationship between emotional bonding with destination and destination loyalty. In contrast, local craft and its probable direct and moderating impacts on visitors’ cognitive aspects and consequent behavioural manifestations has not been explored at all.

The present study aims to identify characteristics that best define the practice of craftourism and the underlying dimensional structure of the same. Further to this, the study focuses on examining the relationship between craftourism, emotional bonding with destination and destination loyalty. Finally, the study seeks to assess the role of craftourism towards influencing the relationship between emotional bonding with destination and destination loyalty.

**Literature Review**

Research that focus on emotional bonding of visitors with destinations has been observed in contemporary tourism literature. Researchers identified the bases of emotional bonding of visitors with destinations, namely festivals (Grappi & Montanari, 2011; Lee, Lee, Lee and Babin, 2008), shopping (Yuksel, 2007), dining facilities (Han & Jeong, 2013), theme parks (Ma, Gao, Scott & Ding, 2013), recreation and leisure (Nawijn, 2011), and adventure tourism (Faullant, Matzler, Mooradian, 2011). These studies revealed that emotional bonding has a significant antecedent effect on travel motivation (Goossens, 2000) and destination preference (Chuang, 2007). Emotional bonding was also found to influence positively tourist satisfaction (Faullant et al., 2011), trust and commitment (Han & Jeong, 2013) and other behavioural patterns, namely destination preference, revisit intention and destination loyalty (Grappi & Montanari, 2011).
Tourism literature has often highlighted congruence between emotional alignment of visitors and destination bonding. Destination-visitor relationship displays an array of positive emotions such as love, pride, joy, positive surprises and contentment (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Over the years, researchers have introduced a number of tools for measuring human emotions (Diener, 2000; Parrott & Hertel, 1999; Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988; Izard, 1977; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Similarly, Schoefer and Diamantopoulos (2008) measured customer emotions during service encounters using the Service Recovery Encounters (ESRE) concept to identify emotional response styles. Although it is widely accepted that human beings display emotions towards their immediate physical and social environment (Farber & Hall, 2007), measuring these emotional responses remains scarce. Most of the scales that were designed to capture human emotions in the marketing context prove to be inadequate although they do capture the dynamism of destination and destination-visitor interaction. Hosany and Gilbert (2010) developed a parsimonious three-dimensional (joy, love, and positive surprise), 15-item measurement tool called Destination Emotion Scale. The scale meaningfully predicts tourist satisfaction and behavioural intentions (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Hosany & Prayag, 2013; Prayag, Hosany & Odeh, 2013).

Emotional bonding with destination often reveals visitors’ perception about the physical landscape and cultural insights (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Kyle, Graefe, Manning & Bacon, 2004a). The spatial attitude of visitors is responsible for these perceptual insights which has specific behavioural consequences, namely intention to revisit, positive referrals, destination loyalty, etc. (Lee, Graefe & Burns, 2007; Kyle, Graefe, Manning & Bacon, 2004b). Emotional bonding with destination is attribute-specific and the degree to which this bond exerts influence on positive behavioural pattern depends on the experiential bliss derived from destination attributes (Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck & Watson, 1992). Researchers have verified the relationship that exists between tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty (Baksi & Parida, 2014; Baksi, 2013; Baksi & Parida, 2013; Chi & Qu, 2008; Yoon & Uysal, 2005) in terms of revisit intention and also promotion (Bigne, Sanchez & Andreu, 2009; Murray & Howat, 2002; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Destination loyalty is one of the most important subjects in tourism research. In many studies, revisit intention and positive word-of-mouth recommendation are noted as indicators of loyalty (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Chi & Qu, 2008). Several studies have attempted to identify major antecedents of revisit intention including satisfaction (Petrick, Morais & Norman, 2001; Kozak, 2001), novelty-seeking (Jang & Feng, 2007), image (Chi & Qu, 2008), motivation and satisfaction (Yoon & Usal, 2005), safety (Chen & Gursoy, 2001), overall satisfaction (Campo-Martinez, VGarau-Vadell & Martinez-Ruiz, 2010), cultural difference (Chen & Gursoy, 2001), perceived value (Petrick et al., 2001), past vacation experience (Kozak, 2001), and the like. In this regard,
Jang and Feng (2007) notably asserted that while these research findings focus on determinants of repeat visit intention, understanding tourists’ revisit intention and their behaviour remains elusive. Revisit intention is also considered an important issue from the economic perspective in tourism studies (Darnell & Johnson, 2001). Hsu et al., (2008) observed that preserving the loyalty of established customers is a crucial contributor to the achievement and profitability of any business. Accordingly, researchers should concentrate on revisit intention due to the fact that “globalisation of markets, competitive pressure, brand multiplication and, above all, the ever-changing lifestyles and consumer behaviour have forced companies to develop strategies to keep their clients and create consumer loyalty programs” (Flambard-Ruaud, 2005), particularly in the tourism industry. Grunwell, Ha and Martin (2008) observed that most of the visitors of Asheville Film Festival and BeleChere-Street Festival were willing to revisit the festival the following year. Yuksel et al. (2010) observed that destination bonding is an effective antecedent to destination loyalty. They found that the three dimensions of destination-bonding, namely destination dependence, affective attachment and destination identity influenced cognitive and affective aspects through the overall satisfaction of visitors.

The economic implications of tourism-craft linkage depends on the effectiveness of the subsectors of tourism such as retailing and leisure services to effectively incorporate locally produced crafts and artefacts into the tourism market (Saji & Narayanaswamy, 2011). Today, craftsmen of various trade are adopting an evolved way of thinking and behaving in order to adapt themselves into this current trend and create products that meet present market demands (Shariff, 2005). John (2014) conducted an extensive study to identify the revival issues of Channapatna toys, a specialty handicraft product, of Karnataka, India and found that awareness and integration of visitor with the production process can play a pivotal role in its revival process.

There has been no study to date that identified specific measurable dimensions of handicraft tourism and the term craftourism was constructed by the researcher to emphasis on a specific pattern of tourism. A review of literature did not reveal substantial research that focus on the relationship between visitors’ emotional bonding with destination and destination loyalty, although, there has been sporadic evidences that human emotions do play an antecedent role to their behavioural intentions. The inclusion of craftourism as an intervening variable will be an absolute novel one as the researcher presumes similar substantial mediating impact for the relationship between emotional bonding with destination and destination loyalty.

**Conceptual Model**

The researcher intended to test a conceptual model as shown in Figure 1 to understand the direct and moderating impacts of the variables being studied.
Formulation of Hypotheses

Based on the literature review and the focal objectives of the study undertaken, the researcher has framed the following hypotheses to be tested:

H1: Emotional bonding with destination has an impact on destination loyalty.
H2: Craftourism initiatives have an impact on emotional bonding with destination.
H3: Craftourism initiatives have an impact on destination loyalty.
H4: Craftourism moderates the relationship between emotional bonding with destination and destination loyalty.

Methodology

The district of Birbhum in the state of West Bengal, India was chosen as the site to carry out this research work. Birbhum is traditionally recognised as a hub for indigenous artisans who engage in producing pottery items, leather goods, bamboo products, textile weaving and dying, brass and bronze works (known as Dokra), terracotta works and many traditional arts. Age-old crafts like kantha stitch (needlework), batik tie-dye, macramé, continue to be the primary purchase of millions of visitors that flock Bolpur-Santiniketan, the central marketplace of the district. A structured questionnaire was used as the survey instrument. The questionnaire was refined after a pilot study involving focus group interview (FGI) was conducted to assess the content for ambiguity. The FGI panel consisted of 22 researchers, academicians,
practitioners in the field of tourism and visitors to ensure a broad spectrum of views. The researcher decided not to assign any pre-existing construct for these items to avoid biasness of response and to allow free analysis.

The final survey used systematic random sampling for the visitors as the databases were accessed from different hotels and residences (with prior permission) frequented by visitors. Every seventh (7th) visitor, on the basis of availability, was interviewed. Correspondingly, 1545 visitors were approached and this produced a total of 987 (63.88%) acceptable responses (questionnaire completed in all aspects).

**Factor Construct Measurement**

To examine Craftourism, the researcher modified a 25-item survey to a 27-item after the FGI. To measure the respondents’ emotional bonding with destination, 14 items were adapted from Mehrabian and Russell (1974), Hosany and Gilbert (2010). Destination loyalty was measured using 12 items representative of destination preference, positive referrals, share of wallet and revisit intention. The present researcher referred to studies conducted by Lee, Kyle and Scott (2012), Jones and Taylor (2007) and Crompton, Lee and Shuster (2001) for adequate and justifiable modifications. A 7-point Likert scale was used to generate responses.

**Data Analysis**

The raw data was tested for outliers or missing data. The missing data was replaced using the robust multiple imputation method, LISREL 9.1. The validity of the model was tested using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in LISREL 9.1. This process adequately determines the extent to which the items being studied represent their latent construct (Byrne, 1998). The goodness of fit indices from CFA (Table 1) of the hypothesised model indicates a reasonable fit to the data as shown in Table 2. 22 items of craftourism were significantly loaded (factor loading with <.600 were discarded) while emotional bonding with destination was loaded in 11 items. Destination loyalty was loaded significantly in all the 12 items initially used to obtain responses from visitors.

**Table 1. Results of CFA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>λ</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional bonding with destination (EBD)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My personal values are reflected in the destination [EBD-1]</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>14.25</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I identify myself strongly with this town [EBD-2]</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>14.11</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 (con't)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value1</th>
<th>Value2</th>
<th>Value3</th>
<th>Value4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel attracted to the destination [EBD-3]</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>18.21</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>2.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel a strong sense of belonging to this town [EBD-4]</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>18.79</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a lot of fond memories of this destination [EBD-5]</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>15.67</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel connected with the visitors visiting this destination [EBD-6]</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>15.98</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel connected with the local culture, ethnicity and tradition of the destination [EBD-7]</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>19.03</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>2.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I recon the festivals of this destination as the best [EBD-8]</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>16.55</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>1.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer this destination to others for recreation/leisure [EBD-9]</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>17.99</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>2.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I choose this destination even when alternatives are recommended to me [EBD-10]</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>18.66</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I cannot compare other destinations with this one [EBD-11]</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>17.81</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Craftourism (CRAFTOUR)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel proud to learn the techniques of the crafts [CFT-1]</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>18.09</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>4.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel proud to learn the history behind the crafts [CFT-2]</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>12.34</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>3.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel proud to produce crafts hands-on [CFT-3]</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>17.33</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>4.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel proud to be a part in crafts production [CFT-4]</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>11.76</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>3.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel proud to see my products on display for sale [CFT-5]</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>16.98</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>4.31</td>
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<td>I feel proud to learn the techniques behind production of crafts [CFT-6]</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>16.09</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>4.87</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel proud about the experience of being a craftsman [CFT-7]</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>15.89</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>4.43</td>
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<td>I had the scope to impart my own design in the craft [CFT-8]</td>
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<td>13.98</td>
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<td>0.63</td>
<td>13.71</td>
<td>3.44</td>
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Table 1 (con’t)

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<th>CFT Score</th>
<th>Rating Score</th>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>DL Score</th>
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<td>I had opportunity to manifest my creative self</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>15.76</td>
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<td>4.09</td>
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<td>[CFT-10]</td>
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<td>I had the opportunity to create new designs</td>
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<td>I got a chance, as a craftsman, to interact with buyers</td>
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<td>[CFT-14]</td>
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<td>The places of production of local crafts are easy to access</td>
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<td>4.41</td>
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<td>[CFT-15]</td>
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<td>[CFT-16]</td>
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<td>14.01</td>
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<td>[CFT-17]</td>
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<td>The local craftsmen provide satisfactory hospitality</td>
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<td>13.72</td>
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<td>16.58</td>
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<td>The local craftsmen are happy to share their selling platform to sell</td>
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<tr>
<td>I would prefer visiting this destination to visiting other places</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>14.78</td>
<td>3.48</td>
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<td>[DL-1]</td>
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<td>I consider this destination as the most preferred one compared to others</td>
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<td>14.18</td>
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<td>[DL-2]</td>
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<td>0.93</td>
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<tr>
<td>I derive maximum satisfaction by visiting this destination</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>14.81</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>4.31</td>
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<tr>
<td>[DL-3]</td>
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APJIHT Vol. 4 No. 2 September 2015
Craftourism: Moderating Emotional-Bonding with Destination and its Loyalty

Table 1 (con’t)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Factor Load</th>
<th>t-Value</th>
<th>AVE</th>
<th>CFI</th>
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<tr>
<td>I shall be investing more money in visiting this destination in immediate future [DL-4]</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>14.78</td>
<td>3.48</td>
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<tr>
<td>I shall be doing more business (purchase) in this destination in immediate future [DL-5]</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>14.18</td>
<td>4.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>I shall be recommending my friends and relatives to invest money in visiting this destination [DL-6]</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>14.81</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>4.31</td>
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<td>I shall say positive things about this destination to other people [DL-7]</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>15.45</td>
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<td>I shall recommend this destination to visitors [DL-8]</td>
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<td>16.11</td>
<td>4.18</td>
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<tr>
<td>I shall encourage my friends and relatives to visit this destination [DL-9]</td>
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<td>14.55</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.229</td>
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<tr>
<td>I would have visited this destination within one year time had I not come to join this festival this year [DL-10]</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>14.65</td>
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<td>3.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>I would visit this destination even without festivals associated with it [DL-11]</td>
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<td>14.09</td>
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<td>4.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>I shall visit this destination again in next year [DL-12]</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>13.87</td>
<td>3.54</td>
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Table 2. Goodness-of-fit measures

<table>
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<td>NNFI</td>
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The researcher further assessed the construct validity of the variables being studied for the conceptual model as depicted in Figure 1. Convergent validity showed that indicators which are theoretically overlapping, strongly correlate (Byrne, 1998). The factor loadings were found to be statistically significant (Table 3). Average variance explained (AVEs) showed >0.50. Thus convergent validity was established. The squared correlations between the latent constructs are significantly lesser compared to the AVEs, thereby, supporting discriminant validity.
Table 3. Construct reliability and multiple squared factor correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Dimensions identified</th>
<th>Items</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Emotional bonding with destination</td>
<td>Cognitive bonding with destination (CBD)</td>
<td>EBD-1 to EBD-5</td>
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<td>Affective bonding with destination (ABD)</td>
<td>EBD-6 to EBD-11</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Craftourism</td>
<td>Experiential learning (EL)</td>
<td>CFT-1 to CFT-7</td>
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<td>Creative novelty (CN)</td>
<td>CFT-8 to CFT-11</td>
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<td>Role reversal (RR)</td>
<td>CFT-12 to CFT-14</td>
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<td>Accessibility (ACC)</td>
<td>CFT-15 to CFT-17</td>
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<td>Amicability (AMI)</td>
<td>CFT-18 to CFT-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Destination loyalty</td>
<td>Destination preference (DP)</td>
<td>DL-1 to DL-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Share of wallet (SOW)</td>
<td>DL-4 to DL-6</td>
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<td>Positive referrals (PR)</td>
<td>DL-7 to DL-9</td>
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<td>Revisit intention (RI)</td>
<td>DL-10 to DL12</td>
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</table>

Bivariate correlation was deployed to check the dimensional relationship between the variables. The results are summarised in Table 5. The results show that dimensional correlation exists between emotional bonding with destination and Craftourism as EL (r = .215**, p<.005; r = .545**, p<.001), CN (r = .162*, p<.005; r = .634**, p<.001), RR (r = .273**, p<.001; r = .677**, p<.001), ACC (r = .344**, p<.001; r = .532**, p<.001) and AMI (r = .312**, p<.001; r = .117*, p<.005) was found to be positively correlated with CBD and ABD.

CBD was found to have a positive relation with most of the dimensions of destination loyalty, namely DP (r = .313**, p<.001), SOW (r = .194*, p<.005) and PR (r = .294**, p<.001). ABD shared a positive relation with only PR (r = .431**, p<.001) and RI (r = .556**, p<.001). Finally, dimensional correlation existed between Craftourism and destination loyalty as EL was positively correlated with DP (r = .192*, p<.005), PR (r = .206**, p<.001) and RI (r = .394**, p<.005). CN correlated with RI only (r = .376**, p<.001). RR correlated with DP (r = .202*, p<.005) and RI (r = .531**, p<.001) while ACC shared a relationship with DP (r = .210*, p<.005), PR (r = .206**, p<.001) and RI (r = .244**, p<.001). Finally, AMI correlated with DP (r = .136*, p<.005), SOW (r = .06**, p<.001) and RI (r = .404**, p<.001). The analysis provided partial support to H1, H2 and H3.
### Table 5. Correlations

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<th>CBD</th>
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<th>EL</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: *: Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), **: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
Hierarchical multiple regression analysis (HMRA) was used to understand the moderating effect of Craftourism (CRAFTOUR) on the relationship between emotional bonding (EBD) and destination loyalty (DL). The results of the HMRA were tabulated in Table 6, Table 7 and Table 8.

**Table 6. Model Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>Change Statistics</th>
<th>F Change</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>Sig. F Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>.268</td>
<td>.42478</td>
<td>.269</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.291</td>
<td>.289</td>
<td>.41839</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>22.855</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>985</td>
<td>.000</td>
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</table>

Note: a: Predictors: (Constant), EBD  
  b: Predictors: (Constant), EBD, CRAFTOUR  
  c: Dependent Variable: DL

**Table 7. ANOVA**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>47.060</td>
<td>260.807</td>
<td>.000b</td>
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<td>Residual</td>
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<td>986</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>Regression</td>
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<td>25.530</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Residual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>175.171</td>
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</table>

Note: a: Dependent Variable: DL, b: Predictors: (Constant), EBD, c: Predictors: (Constant), EBD, CRAFTOUR

**Table 8. Coefficients**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardised Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardised Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
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<td>(Constant)</td>
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<td>.125</td>
<td>23.175</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.024</td>
<td>.518</td>
<td>16.150</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
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<td>23.888</td>
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<td>CRAFTOUR</td>
<td>.060</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.151</td>
<td>4.781</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: a: Dependent Variable: DL
Model-1 is significant without interaction term whereby $F(1, 986) = 260.807, p<.001$
Model-2 is significant with interaction term whereby $F(2, 985) = 145.845, p<.001$

Model-2 accounted for significantly more variance than Model-1. Model-2 with the interaction effect of EBD and CRAFTOUR accounted for significantly more variance than EBD as a standalone variable. $R^2$ change = .023, $p=.000$, indicates that there is potentially significant and positive moderation of craftourism initiatives on the relationship between emotional bonding with destination and subsequent destination loyalty. The interaction term between EBD and CRAFTOUR was added to the regression model, which accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in visitors’ DL, $\Delta R^2 = .023, \Delta F(1, 985) = 22.855, p=.000, \beta=.151, t= 4.781, p<.01$.

Since the results produced potentially significant and positive moderating effects, a regression was conducted on centered terms to examine the effect. To avoid potentially problematic high multicollinearity with the interaction term, the variables were centered and an interaction term between EBD and CRAFTOUR was created (Aiken & West, 1991). An examination of the interaction plot showed an enhancing effect whereby when perceived service quality and destination marketing initiatives increased, visitors’ satisfaction increased. At low perceived service quality, child visitors’ satisfaction was almost uniform for low, average, or high destination marketing initiatives.

To assess the effects, we deployed the ‘PROCESS’ method in SPSS package. The results are as follows:
Model = 1
Y = DL
X = EBD
M = CRAFTOUR

Sample size: 987
Outcome: VS

Model Summary

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<th>R-sq</th>
<th>MSE</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>p</th>
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<td>.00</td>
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<td>.46</td>
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<tr>
<td>EBD</td>
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<td>13.99</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.46</td>
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<td>.02</td>
<td>-1.37</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.01</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Interactions:
\( \text{int}_1 \quad \text{EBD} \quad \text{X} \quad \text{CRAFTOUR} \)

Conditional effect of X on Y at values of the moderator(s):

<table>
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<th>CRAFTOUR</th>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>se</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>LLCI</th>
<th>ULCI</th>
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<td>-1.25</td>
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<td>1.25</td>
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<td>.04</td>
<td>8.37</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.45</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Values for quantitative moderators are the mean and plus/minus one SD from mean. Values for dichotomous moderators are the two values of the moderator.

Data for visualising conditional effect of X on Y
Paste text below into a SPSS syntax window and execute to produce plot.

```
EBD  CRAFTOUR  yhat
-.65  -1.25  4.70
 .00   -1.25  5.00
 .65   -1.25  5.29
-.65   .00  4.65
 .00    .00  4.92
 .65    .00  5.18
-.65   1.25  4.60
 .00    1.25  4.84
 .65    1.25  5.08
```

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output: 95.00
NOTE: The following variables were mean centered prior to analysis:
EBD  CRAFTOUR
NOTE: All standard errors for continuous outcome models are based on the HC3 estimator

The ‘Interaction plot’ (Figure 2) using MS Excel is depicted below (Table 9) using the values from (yhat) regression analysis on centred terms:

**Table 9. Interaction matrix on centred terms**

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High CRAFTOUR</th>
<th>Avg. CRAFTOUR</th>
<th>Low CRAFTOUR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low EBD</td>
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<td>4.65</td>
<td>4.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avg. EBD</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>4.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High EBD</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>5.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results of hierarchical multiple regression analysis support \( H_1, \ H_2, \ H_3 \) and \( H_4 \).

Structural equation modeling was applied to estimate the CFA models. A number of goodness-of-fit statistics were obtained. The GFI (0.984) and AGFI (0.979) scores (Table.10) for all the constructs were found to be >.900 indicating a good fit has been achieved (Hair et al., 1998). The CFI (0.962) and RMSEA (0.057) confirmed adequate model fit (Bentler, 1992). The Chi-square ($\chi^2=1765.16$, df=973, \( p=0.000 \)) is significant at \( p<0.001 \).

The final structural model with regression coefficients is depicted in Figure 3.

**Table 10.** Goodness-of-fit indices

<table>
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**Figure 2.** Interaction plot

**Figure 3.** Final structural model showing the direct and moderating effects
Craftourism: Moderating Emotional-Bonding with Destination and its Loyalty

Discussion and Conclusion

The concept of craftourism was introduced by the researcher in response to the prolific usage of indigenous and traditional handicraft industry as an element of destination marketing. Craftourism as a moderating variable was measured using a set of 22 items. Dimensional correlation was found between the three major variables studied. Emotional bonding with the destination was found to be a significant determinant of destination loyalty. The identified dimensions, namely affective and cognitive bonding, exhibited moderate to strong correlation with the elements of destination loyalty. The findings empirically establish that both aspects of affective and cognitive bonding with destination have a strong relationship with destination preference and positive referrals. Experiential learning, creative novelty, role reversal and accessibility were observed to have significant and positive impact on affective and cognitive bonding. These results indicate that emotional bonding with destination could be nurtured through opportunities provided by the destination that integrate them with the local tradition and allow them to be a part of it. Role-reversal and experiential learning are critical factors for emotional attachment with destination. Further to this, the dimensions of craftourism were also found to be instrumental in influencing behavioural intentions, namely destination preference, positive referrals and intention to revisit.

The moderating effect of craftourism on the relationship between festival satisfaction and destination loyalty was tested as an empirical case. The findings support the notion that craftourism plays a significant moderating role towards influencing the relationship between emotional bonding with destination and destination loyalty. The results allowed the researcher to interpret that visitors’ cognitive and affective bonding with the destination strengthens in the presence of opportunities to participate in local traditions. Consequently, this augments destination loyalty intentions that are manifested through franchising destination choice, spending more, positive advocacy and intention to revisit.

Based on the present study findings, it is advisable that destination marketers should focus on highlighting destination-specific attributes that act as differentials, namely avenues for visitors to be an integral part of local traditions. The DMOs should target to enhance visitors’ emotional attachment not only with the fundamental perspectives of craftourism alone but to also integrate spatial context in which it is enjoyed to ensure a pro-destination behavioural intention.

The study had certain limitations. It has been restricted to a specific geospatial location, which, in future can be expanded to have a more generalised view. Other existing critical variables, namely motivation to travel, ambience and destination character, festival involvement, social bonding, carrying capacity, relationship management, etc. which could significantly impact the constructs that were studied in this were not included and opens up possible future directions for study.
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References


Local Residents’ Participation in Rural Tourism: The case of KOPEL in Kinabatangan, Sabah, Malaysia

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Abstract: This paper focuses on the participation of local residents in rural tourism development in Lower Kinabatangan, Sabah, Malaysia. The relationship between community participation and rural tourism development has not been extensively researched in the context of developing countries. In an attempt to fill this gap, this study examines the role played by a specific community-based cooperative, KOPEL, in the development of tourism in a Malaysian rural community. Hence, an in-depth analysis of the local residents’ participation in KOPEL’s tourism activities and its impacts is deemed relevant. Driven by an interpretivist approach to research, qualitative in-depth interviews and participant observation were the main data collection methods employed to address the research questions. The findings are themed into four categories: (1) planning and empowerment, (2) awareness and training, (3) collaboration with other stakeholders and (4) impacts of rural tourism. The paper’s contribution to knowledge is threefold: First, this paper provides an insight into rural tourism development from a non-Western perspective; second, this study advances our understanding of highly debated concepts, such as community and community participation; finally, this paper contributes to shed light on the role played by cooperatives in enhancing community participation in tourism.

Keywords: Rural tourism, community, community participation, cooperative, Malaysia


Introduction

Community participation is acknowledged as a critical factor in the development of community-based tourism (CBT) (Lee, 2012). CBT is a popular alternative to mass tourism (Lopez-Guzman, Sanchez-Canizares & Pavon, 2011) and is also...
regarded as being more appropriate in improving rural economies (Johnson, 2010). One way to realise active community participation is through the formation of cooperatives. Cooperatives are community-based and mutually-controlled socio-economic enterprises that fulfill the needs of a specific community (Johnson, 2010). The Malaysian government acknowledges cooperatives as a viable tool to uplift the standard of living of local people through empowerment, particularly in rural areas.

Community participation in the development of tourism has been discussed extensively in the context of developed countries (Tosun, 2000; Wang, Yang, Chen, Yang & Li, 2010). However, Tosun (2000) and recently, Saufi, O’Brian & Wilkins (2014) established that this concept has not been studied in detail in developing countries. In Malaysia, although community participation is considered an important tool for rural tourism development by the government, it faces some of the constraints mentioned by Tosun (2000) such as lack of financial resources, lack of expertise and trained human resources as well as lack of awareness amongst local communities towards tourism. As published literature highlights the low level of community participation specifically in developing countries (Aref and Gill, 2010; Wang et al., 2010; Li, 2006), an in-depth analysis of local resident participation in Malaysian tourism and its impacts is deemed relevant.

A well-known example of a cooperative engaged in community-based tourism in Malaysia is the Batu Puteh Community Ecotourism Co-operative (KOPEL) in Kinabatangan, Sabah. This paper therefore, explores the form of local community participation in tourism development by focusing on the following two research questions:

i. How does the local community participate in the tourism projects and products initiated by KOPEL?

ii. What are the impacts of tourism on the local community?

**Community and Community Participation**

A review of literature indicates that community is generally defined based on three characteristics, descriptive, value and active, as identified by Butcher, Glen, Henderson & Smith (1993). Descriptive refers to a group of people who share something in common, either a geographical location or common interest such as occupation, ethnicity or religion. In addition to the descriptive meaning, the term community also has an evaluative meaning and Butcher’s three community values are solidarity, participation and coherence (Banks, Butcher, Henderson & Robertson, 2003). Butcher integrates the descriptive and value meanings to define the meaning of an active community. Hence, community refers to members of common groups who act collectively towards achieving change by embracing solidarity, participation and/or coherence (Banks et al., 2003).
The most common definition of community in literature is based on the descriptive definition. For the purpose of this study, the concept of community is viewed from the descriptive perspective because no definition has been specifically developed in the context of Malaysia. Moreover, prior tourism studies in Malaysia have explicitly used or assumed the terminology developed for the western context.

Community participation is imperative for any community to achieve the desired change in their livelihood. Despite the importance of community participation in tourism development, there is no agreement on its definition (Tosun, 2005). Haywood (1988, p.106) defined community participation as “a process of involving all stakeholders (local government officials, local citizens, architects, developers, business people and planners) in such a way decision making is shared”. The United Nations Economic and Social Council resolution 1929 (LVIII) (as cited by Tosun, 2005, p.336) defined “participation as voluntary and democratic involvement of people in (a) contributing to the development effort (b) sharing equitably in the benefits derived and (c) decision-making in respect of setting goals, formulating policies and planning and implementing economic and social development programs”. In addition, Sproule (1996, p.236) defined participation as “giving people more opportunities to participate effectively in development activities, empowering people to mobilise their own capacities, be social actors rather than passive subjects, manage resources, make decisions and control the activities that affect their lives”.

The three definitions of community participation encompass active involvement, empowerment, equitable distribution of benefits derived from tourism activities and the need for coordination amongst various stakeholders. These concepts can be best described using Tosun’s typology of community participation specifically developed for tourism (2006). According to this typology, there are three main types of community participation: coercive participation, induced participation and spontaneous participation. Coercive participation is the lowest form of participation where the host community is manipulated by authorities in tourism to meet their needs. This form of community participation is passive and uses a top-down approach. The community is not given an opportunity to be heard nor involved in decision-making or share benefits accrued from tourism. Induced community participation enables the host community to have a voice in the tourism development process and share the benefits; however, they do not possess decision-making authority. Lastly, spontaneous participation, the ideal type of participation, enables the host community to be actively involved in tourism and have full decision-making authority. Tosun (2006) further stated that of the three forms of community participation, induced participation is the most common in developing countries due to the operational, structural and cultural constraints encountered (Tosun, 2000). This paper focuses on community participation based on Tosun’s typology.
The form of participation by the local community is determined by the specific nature of their participation. The specific nature of participation includes local employment in tourism activities and venture ownership (Ashley & Roe, 1998). Active participation is achieved through cooperatives (Teodosio, 2009) since participation is embedded as one of the cooperative principles. This principle states that cooperatives are democratic organisations controlled by their members who actively participate in setting the policies and making decisions (Skurnik, 2002). In fact, cooperatives have been recognised as a mechanism that can effectively encourage local community participation and provide socioeconomic benefits as opposed to private or public enterprises because cooperatives are community-based and mutually-controlled enterprises (Johnson, 2010). For this reason too, the cooperative system has been acknowledged as an effective approach to developing rural tourism (George, 2007).

The philosophy of cooperatives and reviewed literature in the western context suggest that it is vital for the local community to be involved in the tourism planning and decision making process in order to benefit from tourism development. On the contrary, literature from developing countries (Li, 2006) reveals that local residents also benefit sufficiently from being employees or entrepreneurs despite their lack of participation in tourism-related decision making. This finding is also supported by Tosun (2006). It can be inferred that empowerment of the local community in developing countries need not necessarily be achieved through direct participation in decision making but even as employees and entrepreneurs in tourism ventures. As a result of being empowered, the community in tourism destinations would be able to benefit economically, socially and culturally. In the context of developing countries however, benefits reaped may be limited due to the community’s lack of awareness on tourism potential at their locality.

The level of awareness can be enhanced by making information accessible and comprehensible to the community. In addition, appropriate educational and training programs should be strengthened. An informed and trained community would ensure that the benefits accrued from tourism will not be siphoned away. Tosun (2000) stressed that training is essential and must cater appropriately to the needs of the local people to promote their active participation. The key skills required for meaningful local community participation can be classified into skills relevant to the owner/operator, supervisory staff and ordinary staff. Hence, training should focus on the following skills: product development, handling visitors, customer care and hospitality, marketing and communication, environmental and cultural management, leadership, legal issues and financial control, guide training and basic language (Asker, Boronyak, Carrard & Paddon, 2010).

However, merely being informed, educated and trained alone will not ensure the community’s effective participation in rural tourism. As rural tourism is an assortment of services, products and facilities, it is crucial to secure the collaboration
of multiple stakeholders (Jamal & Getz, 1995; Okazaki, 2008). Stakeholders are “people identified as potentially being directly and indirectly involved or affected by the CBT venture, and they need to be identified and involved in some way …” (Asker et al., 2010, p.12). The main stakeholder groups in tourism are residents, entrepreneurs, tourists, government officials (Byrd, Bosley & Dronberger, 2009), educational institutions, researchers and NGOs (Asker et al, 2010; Sproule, 1996). It is crucial to have effective collaboration among the various stakeholders to enhance the understanding of common goals and help resolve problems in the tourism development processes (Jamal & Getz, 1995). However, effective collaboration may be complicated and difficult to achieve due to the different perceptions of tourism between the various stakeholder groups (Byrd et al., 2009).

As one of the key stakeholders, the local community’s support for tourism development will be influenced by their evaluation of actual and perceived outcomes of tourism for their destinations (Byrd et al., 2009). This view is in line with the social exchange theory that suggests “people evaluate or exchange based on the costs and benefits incurred as a result of that exchange” (Andereck, Valentine, Knopf & Vogt, 2005).

Literature classifies benefits or positive impacts into three main areas: economic impacts, sociocultural impacts and environmental impacts (Faulkner & Tideswell, 1997; Long, Perdue & Allen, 1990; Mitchell & Eagles, 2001; Poitras & Getz, 2006). Interestingly, Scheyvens (1999) identified four dimensions of tourism impacts in her empowerment framework: psychological, social, political and economic empowerment. In psychological empowerment, the self-esteem of the local community is enhanced due to external recognition of the uniqueness of their culture, natural resources and their traditional knowledge. Social empowerment involves improving community cohesion as the community members work together to build a successful ecotourism venture. In political empowerment, the community’s voices and concern should guide the development of any ecotourism project from the feasibility stage through to its implementation. Economic empowerment brings lasting economic gains to the local community. On the contrary, if tourism initiatives are not properly planned and implemented, it may lead to negative consequences such as adverse environmental effects (e.g. damage to the natural environment, traffic congestion and pollution), adverse sociocultural effects (e.g. increased levels of crime, social decay and cultural erosion) and adverse economic effects (leakages) (Faulkner & Tideswell 1997; Long et al., 1990; Mitchell & Eagles, 2001; Scheyvens, 1999).

**Background of Batu Puteh Community Ecotourism Cooperative (KOPEL)**

The Batu Puteh district is located in Lower Kinabatangan which is a site of mega-biodiversity and contains a high concentration of lowland wildlife (WWF, 2007).
Batu Puteh is made up of five villages – Mengaris, Perpaduan, Paris, Singga Mata, and Batu Puteh proper (Figure 1) and has a total population of 1,780 (KOPEL, 2010).

![Figure 1. Batu Puteh village along the Lower Kinabatangan river. (Source: WWF, 2009)](image)

The Kinabatangan River is located in the mountainous region of Borneo in Sabah, Malaysia (Figure 2). As the second largest river in Malaysia (560 kilometres in length), it is known for its amazing wildlife and mesmerising habitats. This includes the limestone caves at Gomantong hill, dryland dipterocarp forests, riverine forests, freshwater swamp forests, oxbow lakes and salty mangrove swamps near the coast.
In 1996, the state government in its effort towards biodiversity conservation in Lower Kinabatangan gazetted this area as a Wildlife Sanctuary. Although this move improved biodiversity conservation, the restrictions imposed by the state government in this area affected the local community’s source of livelihood and revenue. To help the local community, Model Ecologically Sustainable Conservation and Tourism (MESCOT) was introduced in 1997 by the Norwegian World Wildlife Fund through World Wildlife Fund Malaysia (WWFM). MESCOT’s objective was to enhance the socioeconomic status of the local community through sustainable tourism and conservation activities. To achieve this objective, MESCOT carried out several initiatives such as gathering and documenting information about the biodiversity, cultural history and tourism potential of the area, conducting study trips to various tourist attractions and providing basic skills training to enable the local community to carry out tourism activities.

MESCOT was instrumental in building the local community’s capacity to operate a homestay programme (Miso Walai Homestay) that was linked to the ecotourism resources in Lower Kinabatangan. Initially, MESCOT’s organisational structure was sufficient to coordinate the tourism activities. However, this structure was later deemed to be inadequate in obtaining financial assistance from the government and to manage conflict arising from the community due to perceived unequal distribution of income.
Since a cooperative is recognised as a more transparent and democratic organisation, it was put forward as a more suitable alternative. Hence, the Batu Puteh Community Ecotourism Cooperative (KOPEL) was formed in 2003 to continue the community-based ecotourism activities initiated by MESCOT. KOPEL has 260 members who represent 14% of the total population (1,780) of Batu Puteh and the membership is open to all Malaysian citizens residing in the Batu Puteh district (KOPEL, 2010). To ensure continuous sustainable tourism growth, KOPEL collaborates with various government agencies, local and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and private organisations. These collaborations have fostered good relationship with various tourism stakeholders which are evident through the increased tourist arrivals from 170 visitors staying approximately 760 nights in 2000 to 2,544 visitors staying more than 6,763 nights in September 2012. As a result, the income generated rose from RM38,000 (USD12,000) in 2000 to RM1.6 million (USD500,000) in 2012. KOPEL’s organisation chart is displayed in Figure 3.

![Organisation chart of KOPEL](Source: KOPEL Annual Report 2009/2010)

**Figure 3.** Organisation chart of KOPEL
(Source: KOPEL Annual Report 2009/2010)
Methodology

Based on an interpretative paradigmatic stance, this paper employs a qualitative approach to research. The main method of empirical material collection consisted of qualitative interviews. More specifically, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were carried out with residents from the local community of Batu Puteh. For the purpose of this study, the term “local community” refers to residents. KOPEL was selected for the study as it is regarded as the most successful model of community-based tourism in Malaysia.

However, interviews were not the only instruments utilised to collect data. The researchers also conducted a detailed review of documents concerning tourism activities in the community, such as the annual report published by KOPEL in 2010. Furthermore, the researchers kept a diary during the interviews to take note of personal observations concerning respondents’ perceptions and the context in which the interviews and observations were carried out.

There was no pre-determined number of interviews to be carried out. Rather, the interviews were conducted until "theoretical saturation" was achieved, as suggested by Jennings (2010). More specifically, theoretical saturation is reached when “there is redundancy in information being identified in the empirical materials and no new information is being found” (Jennings, 2010, p. 205). In this study, this was achieved with 14 in-depth interviews with key respondents from the Batu Puteh district carried out over a period of 5 days. The respondents were all Malaysians and included those involved in various capacities of tourism development, such as homestay operators, small business operators, transport providers, suppliers of tourism products and equipment.

The interviews were conducted in *Babasa Melayu* (Malay language) and then translated into English. The researchers acknowledge the issue concerning the translation of concepts from one language to another (Temple, 1997; Wong & Poon, 2010). However, the interviews could not be conducted in English as the respondents were not fluent enough in this language. The interviews, which lasted between 45 and 120 minutes, were all digitally recorded, transcribed verbatim, and translated.

Ethical procedures were followed during the data collection process. In particular, an Information Sheet was provided by the researchers to all the respondents before any interview was conducted. The Information Sheet included an overview of the research project as well as information concerning how the data would be collected and treated throughout the research process. The researchers emphasised the importance of anonymity and that the results would only be used for the purpose of this study. This was crucial to establish a relationship of trust with the respondents, as many participants were expressing personal opinions and feelings.
The analyses of the empirical material occurred at different stages. A preliminary analysis of the data collected was conducted during the fieldwork as in qualitative research, empirical material collection and analysis usually occur concurrently (Lofland & Lofland, 1994). This preliminary analysis was necessary to determine whether theoretical saturation was reached. A more detailed analysis of the data was conducted by the researchers after the fieldwork. This led to the identification of codes and themes, which were then explored and discussed in relation to the existing literature on the topic. Pseudonyms were assigned to the various interviewees in order to guarantee anonymity and confidentiality. The themes identified by the researcher were a result of both inductive (data-driven) and deductive (theory-driven) reasoning based on the recognition that “researchers cannot free themselves of their theoretical and epistemological commitments, and data are not coded in an epistemological vacuum” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84).

Results

The findings on local residents’ involvement are themed into four categories: (1) planning and empowerment, (2) awareness and training, (3) collaboration with other stakeholders and (4) impacts of rural tourism.

Planning and Empowerment

The following excerpts reveal local residents’ involvement through participation in the planning process via their membership in the cooperative (KOPEL). The finding asserts the importance of local residents’ participation in the planning process to generate positive outcomes.

To succeed, I think, there must be proper planning. For us luckily the community did the planning. Secondly, it must involve the community. They must be involved and get benefits. (R1, male 38).

Local residents’ involvement in the development and implementation of tourism policies and programs is also evident from the review of KOPEL’s annual report. Firstly, they are involved as committee members in KOPEL’s administration which is organised into eight bureaus. Secondly, they participate in regular meetings to plan, implement and monitor all tourism-related activities (KOPEL, 2010).

Involvement enables the local residents to be empowered. So, when asked how they participate in tourism activities, the respondents replied that they participate as owners, employees and entrepreneurs of tourism facilities and services. The responses below were from KOPEL’s employees:
I am the homestay coordinator. I look after the quality of accommodation in Eco-camp, Supu-camp and the Miso Walai homestays... I also ensure the equipment in the camps are in working condition... Before this I was not working (R2, 26, female).

My main job is tour guiding for KOPEL. I also play traditional musical instruments for the tourists' as part of the cultural troupe here... before I was just doing odd jobs (R3, 28, male).

As a conservation project manager my main duties are to identify areas in the jungle that require planting trees, treatments, to monitor the smooth running of the planting activities and to prepare reports to KOPEL and other agencies that have provided funding for this project... (R4, 46, male).

The following responses were obtained from entrepreneurs:

I stitch hammock, leech stockings, flags and prepare crisps to be sold at the KOPEL cafeteria... (R5, 32, female).

I have been operating homestay since 2010. We provide food and accommodation. The homestay is only a side income for me; my main job is managing my oil palm small holding. I also plant other vegetables which I use to feed the tourists in my house and supply to KOPEL... (R6, 43, male).

My main job is farming. I also make boat for KOPEL for the river cruise activity... (R7, 45, male).

Actually I work for a tour operator. But at the same time I help KOPEL if they need transport services for their tourists... I have two vans. I also provide homestay facilities since 2000 (R8, 49, male).

KOPEL has empowered the local residents and added great value to the local economy by creating new jobs, increasing income and providing entrepreneurial opportunities. This finding conforms with Scheyvens (1999, p. 246) who stated that the rationale behind the empowerment framework is to “promote the well-being of both local people and their environments”.

Awareness and Training
KOPEL’s executive manager stressed that awareness among the local residents on the potential for tourism development and benefits began in 1997 with the establishment of Model Ecologically Sustainable Conservation and Tourism (MESCOT), a non-
governmental organisation. This awareness influenced the local residents’ involvement in tourism activities:

Rural tourism means activities of the cooperative especially river cruise, homestay, and stay in the jungle, forest conservation activity and culture …. Before tourism this place was not interesting. But after got Cooperative in here, Batu Puteh district has become popular in Sabah whereby tourism activity is so important to local community here… (R4, 46, male).

There are many places to visit in Kinabatangan, such as Batu Tulug cave, birds nest in Supu. There is a cave which can be explored by normal route or by rope. There is Kampung Bilit, Kampung Sukau which is open to tourists just like Kampung. In terms of the community the food, traditions, dances, customs are all unique…(R7, 45, male).

Tosun (2000, p. 624) claimed that “for active participation of local people in tourism, training is an essential element, which must be outfitted to the needs of the community”. However, the findings show that the local residents lack the appropriate skills to manage tourism activities efficiently. The interview excerpts below support the notion that the development of knowledge and skills is pertinent in ensuring successful tourism development.

I cannot bravely say we are successful because still there are a lot of things that need to be done. For example training for staff, we only have a few who are educated. Our problem to expand our programs is lack of skilled manpower… in terms of management skills (R9, 44, male).

From the aspect of management and KOPEL employee they need training, need sufficient coaching, and good discipline because we take in visitors (R7, 45, male).

When KOPEL employees were probed further on the type of training received, the following responses were obtained:

I have yet to attend training on tourism management and I am still waiting for an opportunity to attend one (R2, 26, female).

There is some training done by the cooperative (KOPEL) itself but the training is general… to learn to be a tour guide. I have learned a lot from senior guides here. Later I also attended a course. This course was provided by a private institution in Tawau… I attended this course for three weeks to get the guide’s license… (R3, 28, male)
Local Residents’ Participation in Rural Tourism: The case of KOPEL in Kinabatangan, Sabah, Malaysia

The above responses show that the level of training received by the employees is rather low and not emphasised by KOPEL. Hence, there is a need for a systematically designed training plan to enhance KOPEL employees’ efficiency and effectiveness in developing and implementing tourism activities.

Collaboration with Other Stakeholders
Collaborations between KOPEL and other stakeholders have provided funding, training, technical assistance and infrastructure development, as observed from these respondents’ replies:

- It cannot be denied that we have received assistance from the government... grants, infrastructure, maintenance for our camp, jetty and so on. This is from the Ministry of Tourism. Training is given by SKM (Cooperatives Commission of Malaysia). But we collaborate a lot with a Japanese University. They have a 4 year project with us to provide basic training in rural community development and environment. It is funded by JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency). Every year we send 3 staffs for training on environment. The Forestry Department and Sabah Wildlife department help us in forest restoration. The MOTOUR, starting from last year has conducted English tuition for homestay operators (R9, 44, male)

  As far as I know KOPEL cooperates with forestry department, WWF and if I am not mistaken with SHELL also (R10, 30 female).

The above findings point out that a certain degree of effective collaboration has been established between KOPEL and other stakeholders, namely, government agencies, local and international NGOs and private organisations.

Impacts of Tourism
From the interview excerpts, it is evident that there are economic benefits as seen from job creation, prevention of rural-urban migration among the youths and increase in net income and wealth. Social cohesion can be observed when the local residents and tourists work together to build successful ecotourism ventures. Moreover, the involvement in tourism activities has boosted the community’s self-confidence and pride in its traditions and culture:

- Firstly, economically it provides income. Minimum our members get RM400 – RM3000 a month, RM3000 during the peak season. All members are involved in different activities... such as tour guiding, tree planting, operating homestay, operating as boat man and the lowest income is RM425 a month. That’s in terms of economy.
Secondly, in terms of job opportunities, we have created at least 200 jobs now. Thirdly, the impact is on youths now working with us...they have learnt how to run tourism activity and learnt English, especially the guides. We have now almost 290 people as members of cooperative working together. In terms of culture, not only the old people can play the traditional music, the young also can play. Yeah, that’s the impact. Preserve the local tradition by showcasing to the tourists…(R1, 38, male).

The good thing is we can improve the command of the language. Only in terms of culture is bad. They mix around freely and their way of dressing... There are do’s and don’ts but these tourist don’t follow. From economic aspect it increases our income. In terms of environment it increases awareness of environmental protection. At one time before the villagers will throw rubbish into the river but tourists encourage us not to throw but to leave it in one place to be collected by the Kinabatangan District council. We were also forbidden to burn rubbish. We felt shame. They were also involved in wildlife conservation (R8, 49, male).

Got good impact. They teach English. Sometimes they give tuition for the kids here. The good thing is sometimes these tourists help the villagers. They stay here one or two months... they help us to do the plan and build the house. They go to school to help painting… they participate in forest restoration activities (R6, 43, male).

Largely, the tourism activities carried out have positively impacted the residents economically, socially and psychologically.

Discussion and Conclusion
KOPEL’s administration plays an important role in the decision-making process. The responses from the interviews and the analysis of the KOPEL’s annual report show that the local residents are the primary feature of community involvement and their participation has directly influenced tourism development in their area. Li (2006) confirmed the importance of village administration in planning and decision-making.

The setting up of eight bureaus with specific objectives and job functions to administer the tourism projects clearly indicates a structured approach to planning and is manifested through various mechanisms. Elected representatives of the resident community sit on the board of directors and on the management team of KOPEL. These representatives are responsible for tourism development planning, making decisions and educating other members of the community. As not all local community members can be directly involved in decision-making, certain community representatives are selected to make decisions pertaining to tourism development (Sproule, 1996). The existence of community planning is also evident through the
annual general meeting and regular board meetings held by the management team. This finding supports Tosun's spontaneous participation typology and Simmons' finding (1994) that participation in planning is necessary to ensure that benefits are shared.

However, active involvement may be confined to the 260 members of the cooperative only. Furthermore, the extent of their participation during the annual general meeting is also questionable because the majority of the community in this area lack formal education and training to make informed decisions.

The structured administration of KOPEL has also benefitted minority groups (women and youth) by providing gainful employment in various tourism activities despite their low educational qualifications. The local employment and development of small enterprises promoted a multiplier effect which spurred local economic development and a better quality of life. The perceived economic benefits from being involved may have further motivated their involvement. Thus this involvement changed the local residents’ attitudes from being submissive to being active participants. As Liu and Wall (2006) pointed out, an important driving force for pursuing tourism is always the expectation of positive economic benefits. While the positive benefits accrued cannot be denied, on the other hand, the opportunity cost of the women's involvement cannot be ignored. Their active involvement as suppliers of tourism products and services may result in the women continuously shouldering heavier responsibilities in household duties to fulfill tourists’ needs and expectations. This may be predominant in developing countries where gender stereotyping and hierarchies are pronounced.

The study explored the level of awareness of the local residents and their involvement in tourism activities. Awareness amongst the resident community on the potential for tourism development and benefits began in 1997 with MESCOT’s initiatives and continued with the establishment of KOPEL in 2003. Indeed, community awareness is considered a critical factor for community integration in tourism planning and management (Mitchell & Eagles, 2001). Therefore MESCOT and KOPEL can be viewed as the primary catalyst that motivated the local residents to achieve self-reliance and empowerment in the tourism development process. However, this higher level of awareness may be confined to KOPEL members who only constitute 14% of the Batu Puteh district population. One reason for the low level of involvement in tourism activities is probably due to the fact that agriculture is still the mainstay and constitutes 69% of the local economy (KOPEL, 2010). This limited involvement may result in less support for sustainable tourism development as pointed out by Lee (2012), who argues that community involvement is a critical factor affecting the level of community support for sustainable tourism development.

The findings also reveal that KOPEL employees do not have the technical expertise and skills in place to carry out their responsibilities effectively. This may
pose a challenge to KOPEL as a tourism regulator and planner. Liu and Wall (2006) pointed out that in developing the economy, deficiencies in human capital is often a major obstacle preventing the host population from participating effectively in tourism development. To realise maximum economic benefits and to retain it locally, the development of local human resources is therefore crucial for KOPEL.

Haywood (1988) stated that community participation is a “process involving all stakeholders in such a way decision making is shared”. It is obvious from the responses obtained and the annual report that KOPEL has collaborated with various stakeholders, namely government agencies, NGOs, tourists, local community and other private enterprises for tourism development. This finding is consistent with literature which emphasises the need for stakeholders’ collaboration for a viable tourism sector to exist (Jamal & Getz, 1995; Jamal & Stronza, 2009). An in-depth analysis of the findings highlights the different forms of involvement by the stakeholders. The government and the community collaborated in infrastructural development, providing tourism education and training as well as forest restoration and conservation efforts. The lack of necessary infrastructure, education and skills may hinder the promotion of the destination as a desirable tourist attraction. The findings also highlight the rising need for biodiversity conservation in the Batu Puteh district. This has fostered collaboration amongst local and international NGOs, tourists, residents and private enterprises.

The above findings indicate that stakeholder involvement depends on specific types of stakeholders and their respective interests or objectives. This finding is in line with Lepineux (2004) who stated that stakeholder collaboration depends on a combination of economic, social and moral interests and the proportions of these interests may vary according to the type of stakeholders. Therefore, this study shows that KOPEL is aware of the importance and the need to involve multiple stakeholders in the tourism planning process; yet, the degree of successful collaboration with each stakeholder type would require further study.

Based on this study, tourism in Batu Puteh district has generated an array of economic benefits for the local residents. Tourism has created the potential for employment opportunities, business opportunities, linkages with agriculture activities and the development of infrastructure. The employment opportunities and income generation through tourism projects act as an stimulus for local development in terms of skills, diversity of livelihoods and pride. Additionally, this study also shows that the community has benefitted from tourism through an improvement of their environment. The benefits the local residents receive from tourists who visit their area has encouraged them to utilise their natural resources wisely and sustainably through forest restoration, wildlife conservation and environmental protection initiatives. As Scheyvens (1999, p. 246) stated “a community-based approach to ecotourism recognises the need to promote both the quality of life of people and the
Local Residents’ Participation in Rural Tourism: The case of KOPEL in Kinabatangan, Sabah, Malaysia

The presentation by the KOPEL’s executive manager and an analysis of KOPEL’s annual report for 2010 indicates that the level of social capital amongst the local residents is high. The local residents through their membership in KOPEL have agreed that some of the income generated from KOPEL’s tourism activities be used to fund social and community development projects such as funeral expenses, education expenses and house repair/ refurbishment expenses. The ability of local residents to agree on how to use the income generated from tourism indicates enhanced social capital (Mbaiwa & Stronza, 2010). Despite the high level of social capital among the KOPEL members, conflicts could arise amongst them due to perceived unequal distribution of tourism income. This occurs when tourists request to stay with certain families based on recommendations or prior experiences. In addition, based on the philosophy and principles of cooperatives, non-members are not involved in setting policies, making decisions and receiving direct benefits from tourism. This could lead to unbalanced social capital in the form of resentment, envy and conflict within the local community. In spite of not having the decision-making authority, non-members have benefited indirectly as entrepreneurs/suppliers of tourism products (such as boats and food products).

The other intangible benefits derived from tourism activities are improved communication skills in English and increased self-confidence which has led the local residents to embark in tourism ventures more earnestly. The benefits derived from tourism have improved the self-esteem of the once traditionally low-status sector of society. Furthermore, rural tourism development and conservation initiatives by KOPEL have succeeded in retaining youth, develop tourism entrepreneurship skills and foster harmonious relationships with tourists, government agencies and NGOs. Lastly, the findings indicate that the local residents’ participation has enabled the rejuvenation and preservation of local culture and traditions which were almost forgotten.

This paper identified and discussed the nature of local residents’ participation in rural tourism and its impacts in Lower Kinabatangan, Malaysia. The study found that active participation of the local residents is confined only to 260 members of KOPEL who represent a mere 14% of the total population (1,780) of Batu Puteh. However, KOPEL’s success does not reflect the success of the whole community in Batu Puteh district. It is proposed that KOPEL should carry out more membership campaigns to recruit new members from the whole population of Batu Puteh, undertake more skills training to enhance expertise and develop innovative and quality tourism products. It is also recommended that KOPEL foster greater collaborations among the existing stakeholder partners to benefit further from the tourism potential in the area. As rural tourism is a relatively new phenomenon in this area, the KOPEL members seem more concerned with the economic benefits to improve their standard of living.
and may not realise the negative consequences that could arise in the long term.

The study attempted to fill a gap in the literature by examining community participation in rural tourism through a cooperative in a developing country. Contrary to Tosun (2006) who suggested that induced participation is the most common form of community participation in developing countries, in the case of KOPEL, spontaneous participation is evident. This form of participation is consistent with cooperative principles that advocate active involvement based on the bottom-up approach. As such, this study is innovative as it showcases a successful grassroots approach in developing rural community participation using the cooperative mechanism. Furthermore, this study took a qualitative approach which required intensive and prolonged fieldwork. As most prior studies in tourism in the region have been driven by quantitative approaches (Mura & Sharif, 2015), this study provides an innovative perspective from the methodological point of view.

More research, however, needs to be conducted to strengthen the study’s trustworthiness. Future studies for example, should focus on local residents who are not directly involved in tourism activities as this will provide more comprehensive perspectives on tourism and community participation in developing countries. Lastly, to achieve a more balanced discussion on the impacts of community-based tourism, future studies could investigate further the negative consequences on the community.

Acknowledgement

The funding for this project was made possible through the research grant obtained from the Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia under the Long Term Research Grant Scheme 2011 [LRGS grant no: JPT.S (BPKI)2000/09/01/015Jld.4(67)].

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Local Residents’ Participation in Rural Tourism: The case of KOPEL in Kinabatangan, Sabah, Malaysia


Local Residents’ Participation in Rural Tourism: 
The case of KOPEL in Kinabatangan, Sabah, Malaysia


Research Paper

An Assessment of International Training Programs for Hospitality Students

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**Abstract:** The purpose of the study is to examine the perceptions of the Filipino baccalaureate students namely, students pursuing Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management and Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management on the effectiveness of the international training programs being offered in institutions. A web-based survey of 11-items which included ranking items and reflective questions was used to identify students’ perceptions of the program offered by HEIs and their ability in providing their training and/or exposure needs, aside from its educational significance to them. Furthermore, the study evaluated the implementation of the training programs and the students’ experiences as they went through the program. Findings of the research reveal that the students placed high value on the internship component of their program, acknowledging its importance to their education and enrichment for the future, and indicating its significance to their academic and professional improvement. A majority of the student respondents claim to have their expectations met by the training host/partner, further implying that the students’ perceptions were not affected by the actual venue of the training program, but instead was more affected by the amount of learnings and experiences they garnered while undergoing the program.

**Keywords:** International training program, training, hospitality, student, practicum


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Introduction

Experiential education in the form of internships or on-the-job training has long been a part of the numerous requirements for higher education students who hope to complete their baccalaureate degrees. This concept of training has been defined as a process of facilitating new, present, or future employees with the basic skills and competencies needed to perform their jobs or improve their ability to perform on the job (Ogbeide, 2008; Dessler, 2008; Decenzo & Robbins, 2007). However, training at the baccalaureate level, though similar in concept, aims to ensure that fresh graduates will be able to comply with the industry’s skill requirements for job vacancies, and, if possible, be capable of competing with the current labour market upon graduation. It also aims to provide the students with an opportunity to learn through first-hand experiences and practice of activities which are related to one’s application of knowledge (Beggs, Ross, & Goodwin, 2008).

As such, internships form an important component of any undergraduate program because they are instrumental in imparting the key competencies required from graduates as they apply for work (Singh & Dutta, 2010), allowing them to experience real job situations and realistic expectations about their careers while they are still in school (Chen, Ku, Shyr, Chen, & Chou, 2009; Lam & Ching, 2007). Such importance, have been well documented over the years as cited in the studies of Singh & Dutta (2010), Beggs et al. (2008), & Arif (2007), focusing mainly on the development of a student’s professional and personal profile, making it critical to any academic program’s curriculum (Beggs et al., 2008; Cho, 2006; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2006; Kay & De Veau, 2003).

Hospitality and Tourism programs in higher education institutions (HEIs) are some of the programs that require internships to provide experience that can benefit stakeholders of the industry, emphasising the importance of practical training for students (Chen, et al., 2009; Lam & Ching, 2007). Successful programs have been known to produce “graduates with high quality learning, knowledge, skills, and the ability to meet the needs of the industry” (Beggs et al., 2008; Chen, et al., 2009; Teng, 2008; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2006; Harris & Zhao, 2004), which have always been attributed to students gaining practical know-how through internships, and to providing an opportunity to close the gap between college-learned theory and practical reality, in attempts to make students more “marketable” (Chen et al., 2009; Knouse & Fontenot, 2008; Ko, 2007; Lee, 2007).

Similarly, in two separate studies by Tam (2009) and Knouse & Fontenot (2008), the effectiveness of the internship experience on a graduate’s marketability, issues on enhanced employment opportunities, realistic expectations of interns, satisfaction with the internship experience, internship prerequisites, and internship mentoring, were discussed and were concluded to be very beneficial for students. Aside from these issues, both studies also highlighted that the internship process provided
highly beneficial experiences for students which later aided in the facilitation of their transition from student life into the real world of business.

In this competitive world, several ongoing concerns remain evident in today’s workforce and industries, starting from globalisation, the constant the constant pressure to maintain superiority in the marketplace to the upcoming ASEAN integration and ongoing outcome-based teaching and learning applications. In an attempt to keep abreast with these trends and issues, the internship training programmes of HEIs for hospitality and tourism students in the Philippines remains to be an integral requirement of the curriculum that students adhere to. Although the minimum requirements set by the country’s Commission on Higher Education (CHED) require local internship training for a certain duration, HEIs constantly attempt to provide their students with the best international internship/training program(s) they can avail to, with the belief that such programs will be able to equip their students with better exposure, skills, and knowledge that are not provided by local partners.

In today’s overly-competitive tourism and hospitality industries, the production of top hospitality and tourism graduates who are highly marketable are positive outcomes of benchmarks such as competence-based learning and best international internship programmes. However, as there no fool-proof internship program, the effectiveness of such practice may be based on several factors, such as student demographics, the training locale, the parties involved, and the perceptions and biases of both the student and the partner, amongst many others.

While there are many researches regarding the importance of internship and training programs, very few were observed to focus on determining the satisfaction of student interns on the internship program (D’Abate, Youndt, & Wenzel, 2009), especially those associated with tourism and hospitality education in the Philippines. As such, considering the increasing demand for highly-skilled practitioners for both local and international markets within the hospitality and tourism industries, this study focuses first, on gathering and discussing information on the different international internship programs being offered by selected HEIs in Manila. Secondly, to identify a constructive approach as to how HEIs in the Philippines can effectively evaluate the effectiveness of their overseas training programs’ in relation to the students’ experiential learnings during their internship.

**Literature Review**

Training has been defined as a process of facilitating new, present, or future employees with the basic skills and competencies needed to perform their jobs or improve their ability to perform on the job (Ogbeide, 2008; Dessler, 2008; Beggs, et al., 2008; Decenzo & Robbins, 2007). However, under the context of academic application, training has been identified as experiential education, as identified in Beggs et al’s...
study (2008), which “provides the opportunity and the learning landscape for students to experience, first hand, professional practice activities which directly relate to the application of knowledge.”

Trainings and internships provide opportunities for trainees (the students) to acquire transferrable skills and the specific detailed knowledge necessary in today’s workplace (Busby, 2003 as cited in Beggs et al., 2008). It is also “an opportunity to have an intensive, work-based exposure to a broad range of operations within a company,” under both academic and practitioner supervision (Beggs et al., 2008; Crossley et al., 2007). It has also been identified as a platform where students can build on the skills they already have and help them with their transition from student to full-time employee, and has been said to support several purposes – including networking with professionals and developing professionalism; demonstrating, refining, and acquiring competencies; preparing to secure an entry-level position; and bridging the gap between theory and practice within the context of three perspectives: the academic institution, the student, and the training partner (Beggs & Hurd, 2010).

For a student, the internship can serve as a means to finding a job or career advancement, whilst for the university or academic institution, its purpose would be for learning. The training or industry partner, however, uses the internship program as a means to find a qualified student who can contribute to the company while also learning about the field and one, who may also have great potential to become an asset to the industry (Beggs & Hurd, 2010).

As internships have proven to be an effective means of learning through training, it has become a critical element that needs to be included in an academic institution’s study program, or curriculum (Beggs et al., 2008; Cho, 2006; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2006; Kay & DeVeau, 2003). Such importance have been well documented over the years and cited in several studies worldwide. For instance, Davies (1990) as cited in Wan and Yang (2010) stated that internships are purposely a venue for students to apply theory to real-work practices, and to allow them to integrate thinking into action. In two separate studies by Callanan and Benzing (2004) and by Mihail (2006), internships have been noted as the most credible means for students to experience work reality. In another study by D’Abate et al. (2009), the need for internships was highlighted as they cited numerous authors (Bisoux, 2007; Posner, 2008; Navarro, 2008), stating that “practical, experiential-learning activities are necessary to give students first-hand skill development, insights, and knowledge they cannot get through the classroom alone” and that “experiential learning activities which force students to engage in real-world problem solving” is very much needed.

Other studies by Singh & Dutta (2010), Beggs et al. (2008), Dodge & McKeough (2003), Zopiatis (2007), and Arif (2007), indicate that internships not only allow its participants to receive valuable training along with hands-on experience, it
also provides opportunity for growth and for students to explore their individual potential within the industry. In addition, it also prepares students for the reality of their future work as part of the industry, reducing “reality shock” as they land their first jobs after graduation. Further benefits of internships are not only confined for students looking for full-time employment after graduation, but also as useful tools for employers which provide a means of screening and recruiting potential hires (Hurst, 2008; D’Abate et al., 2009).

Although there are numerous literature supporting the importance of internships in higher education programs, the application and implementation of the internship program does not always happen as planned. Certain critical issues have been collectively cited in the study of Wan & Yang (2010), such as the possibility of interns quitting the profession if they have had a bad or uncomfortable experience during the internship (Fox, 2001); the presence of a “gap” between expectations and the actual experience of interns which may influence their employment decisions later on (Lam & Ching, 2007); and the possibility that the interns have not been given or offered job rotation or swapping during the internship (Harris & Zhao, 2004).

As most interns have ideal perceptions of internship programs, and since internships are characterised as temporary positions where interns are typically tasked with functions of limited autonomy, high levels of monotony, limited decision-making influence, and limited co-worker or superior support (D’Abate et al., 2009; De Cuyper, de Jong, De White, Isaksson, Rigotti, & Schalk, 2008; Parker, Griffin, Sprigg, & Wall, 2002; Aronsson, Gustafsson, & Dallner, 2002), a majority tend to have lesser satisfaction with their internship experiences, which eventually affects their employment decisions upon graduation.

With several theories linking between job satisfaction and job stress, organisational commitment, absenteeism, turnover and intent to leave (D’Abate et al, 2009), this further reveals that intern satisfaction and preference is also a critical issue in internship. As the majority would prefer to have challenging tasks and involvement in decision-making activities (Charles as cited in Wan & Yang) and job rotation (Busby et al. as cited in Wan & Yang, 2010) during their internship, the theory is that increasing the job satisfaction of student interns may not only provide a better developmental experience for the student but may also present other important outcomes for the sponsoring organisation (D’Abate et al., 2009).

**Methodology**

This study conducted a web-based survey with 11 questions comprising evaluations and reflective questions. The research explored the effectiveness of the international training programs based on students’ perceptions on how much skill or knowledge they learned; the probability of the program meeting their training and/or exposure
needs; their perception on the educational significance of the program to their college education, and their perception of the training partner's performance in the implementation of the training program.

Respondents were selected through purposive random sampling, whereby students of selected HEIs who had undergone the international internship programs were asked to answer the online survey through links provided on the Internet and social media. Information on the profiles of the respondents were also gathered but were limited to the host country of their chosen international training, their respective academic institution (HEI), and the degree program they are enrolled in. Analysis on the gathered information, namely percentage and frequency counts were utilised to determine the segmentation of the respondents’ profiles with regard to their academic institution, academic program, and country of internship. The single factor ANOVA test was used to further analyse the data and to identify the significance or any relation of the location of training to the students’ perception of the training and/or the training program.

Discussions included in the paper also looked at citations of the narrative statements from the students to support their evaluations and support data that may determine whether their training had significant effect on their perception of their academic program and institution as well. As such, the paper is limited only to three participating academic institutions and their hospitality (hotel and restaurant management, tourism management) students. Profiles of the students involved in the discussion no longer included age, as part of the minimum requirement for internship requires intern applicants to be at least 18 and above, as stipulated under the CHED Memorandum Order No. 19, s2000. (Commission on Higher Education Aronsson [CHED], 2000, p.4). The discussion did not also delve into specifics such as the training and program particulars, duration, the partner agency or training provider, and/or the baccalaureate programs of the participating institutions.

Findings

Profile of Respondents

The respondents of this research mainly comprised of hospitality and tourism students from 3 HEIs in Manila, Philippines who have undergone internship training programs abroad made available to them by their institutions. Based on the data presented in Table 1, the majority of the respondents, approximately 47.52%, underwent training programs offered in Thailand, while 22.77% attended programs offered in Malaysia, 16.83% in Singapore, and the remaining 12.87% went to the United States. Furthermore, the majority of those who participated in the international internship programs were students of Far Eastern University (FEU), comprising of 79.21% of the total respondents, followed by students of the
University of Santo Tomas (UST) (17.82%), and St. Jude College (SJC) comprising the remaining 2.97%.

In terms of the respondents’ academic programs, a majority of them were students pursuing the BS Hotel and Restaurant Management program (75.25%), while the remaining were students pursuing the BS Tourism Management program (24.75%).

**Table 1.** Respondent profiles and corresponding frequencies and distribution according to country of internship, academic institution, and academic program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent Profile</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country of Training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.87</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16.83</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>47.52</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22.77</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Institution (HEI)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SJC</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UST</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17.82</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEU</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>79.21</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>101.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Program (Degree)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotel and Restaurant Management</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>75.25</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Management</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24.75</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>101.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evaluation of the Training Program’s Effectiveness in terms of Students’ Perceptions**

The respondents were asked to rank 7 questions that focused on determining their perceptions on the international internship programs they had embarked on at their institutions. Using a ranking scale of 1 to 5 whereby 1 is interpreted as very unimportant/unsatisfactory and 5 as very important/satisfactory, the respondents’ overall responses were analysed and interpreted as follows.
Table 2. Summary of findings on ranking questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>USA N=14</th>
<th>Thai N=47</th>
<th>Malay N=23</th>
<th>Sing N=17</th>
<th>Total N=101</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WM</td>
<td>WM</td>
<td>WM</td>
<td>WM</td>
<td>WM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge/skill</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>4.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure needs</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>4.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>4.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>4.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitation</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>4.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training accommodation</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>4.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety practices</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>4.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall mean</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>4.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the summarised data shown in Table 2, the respondents’ general perceptions on the amount of skills and knowledge they gained from the experience garnered a weighted mean of 4.52 which meant that the students were highly satisfied and valued their learnings from the internship programs, acknowledging that their skills and knowledge have improved as a result thereof. In support of this data, one of the excerpts from the respondent interviewed is as follows:

“…not just a training in the academic area but for the whole self. You get to put out what you’ve learned from the institution, practice it, and try to make it better. Then, there’s another aspect as to train yourself how to be an adult... It’s a taste of adulthood, like a warm-up of some sort before you graduate and be set off to the real world.”

As to the students’ perception on how the training program provided them their expected training exposure needs, the majority again rated the program satisfactorily, with an overall mean of 4.23. Further probing with the respondents revealed that the internship program:

“…gives you the bird’s eye view of what the industry is and (it would be) is a good preparation in joining the industry since you have the privilege to work with companies that help you enhance your skills and widen your networks and horizons…”

On another note, the collective perceptions of the students on the internship program’s significance to their education was rated as very important (weighted mean of 4.62), supported further by statements which indicated that the internship not
only enhanced their skills, increased their knowledge, and helped them build their networks, but that it also helped with their “personal improvement” by increasing their state of maturity, and improving their personality and views on responsibility and autonomy.

Subsequently, their perceptions on the internship partners’ implementation of the program garnered an average weighted mean of 4.22 (average of items 4, 5, 6 and 7) which meant that the students viewed the partner’s participation as satisfactory, with one student further stating that:

“…it (the training establishment), opened many doors of new discoveries which I never learned in school, or to be honest, will not learn if given in an OJT (on-the-job training) back in Manila...”

Analysis on the Significance of the Location of Training to the Students’ Perception of the Training and/or the Training Program

Using the single factor ANOVA test to further analyse whether the country of training had a significant effect on the students’ perceptions of the internship program they availed of, and with a 5% level of significance, the researchers found that the venue or locale of the training program offered no significant effect on the students’ perceptions of the training program in general. As recorded in Tables 3 and 4, the data summarises that the content of the program itself and the perceived learnings and other benefits that the students were able to gather were thought to be more important to students who availed of the international internships. This finding complements the fact that since the training program was conducted overseas, the students naturally viewed it as a better option, as opposed to what may have been viewed if it were a local training program. In supporting this finding, one student even stated that:

“Overseas OJT program is a binding mechanism wherein a student should gather both the input from the classroom and the workplace and process it in such a way that would nurture not only his intellectual capabilities but also his skills needed for his post-graduate work. Things learned both from the classroom and overseas OJT program will most likely to have an additional credential over a regular graduate...”

Table 3. Summary statistics per country of program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Sum</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>63.71428571</td>
<td>4.551020408</td>
<td>0.285265755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>205.5714286</td>
<td>4.373860182</td>
<td>0.359851989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>93.28571429</td>
<td>4.055900621</td>
<td>0.465193192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>4.294117647</td>
<td>0.455282113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4. Single factor ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P-value</th>
<th>F crit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

** Level of significance: 5%

Summary and Conclusions

In summary, findings of the research revealed that Filipino students pursuing hospitality and tourism programs value highly the internship component of their programs, and agree to the fact that it is essential for their education and enrichment of their future profession. These results support the works of Beggs, et al. (2008), Crossley, et al. (2007), Beggs and Hurd (2010), Cho (2006), Kay and DeVeau (2003), and many others. Citing one of respondents’ claim to the importance of internship for students, coupled with classroom learning, the student (she) mentioned that:

“It is but proper for student to go under numerous training and seminars to broaden one's horizon on a chosen field of expertise. Prior to graduation, a student should feel confident that he has fulfilled the curriculum by empowering himself with the teachings absorbed from the classroom and the field, in which the time comes for a job opportunity arises, he is ready to face the real world of his chosen field.”

As internships, or practicum, for hospitality programs are essentially a period of employment within the tourism and hospitality industry which may be as little as 4 weeks in duration to as long as a year or 14 to 18 months, and can be locally (domestic) or internationally-based (Busby & Gibson, 2010; Inui, Wheeler and Lankford, 2006; Busby, 2003), it ideally bridges the gap between the academe and the industry. As one of the respondents also put it:

“Classroom teaching is mostly based on a theoretic approach until you are placed in the real workplace wherein you get to experience first-hand the essence of the classroom teachings. Not all things taught in the classroom can be applied in the workplace and same goes also for the workplace wherein you learn things that were not taught in the classroom.”
These findings also indicate that Filipino hospitality and tourism management students generally acknowledge the significance of internship training abroad for their academic and professional improvement, and that a majority of them claim that their training needs and expectations of the internship program are met by the training host/partner. Furthermore, the study’s findings also indicate that the perceptions of the students were not affected by the locality or venue of the training program abroad, as they deemed that the content of the learnings and the total experiences they had were more important than anything else – further noting that the programs being offered by their institutions should be made available for future generations of students.

As this research mainly focused on students’ perceptions on international training programmes, other areas of internship may be considered for future research, such as the comparison of students’ perceptions on both local and international internships, and the comparison of Filipino interns versus other interns with different nationality(ies). Further research can delve into whether current international training programs match the curriculum needs of local HEIs which may include comparisons between and among other HEIs all over the Philippines and the quality of student interns from these institutions in future research outputs. Further in-depth researches on how internships impact the effectiveness of learning in HEIs may also be looked into, including further improvements on the tools and measures used in this study.

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References


An Assessment of International Training Programs for Hospitality Students


The Relevance of Occupational Health and Safety Training in Hospitality Education: A Malaysian Perspective

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Abstract: This article examines students’ perceptions towards occupational health and safety training in their hospitality education in Malaysia. The findings suggest that the majority considered such training to be relevant to their actual working environment. However, many students knowingly neglected safety precautions while working as interns. Further, the majority of students were not very aware about their rights to a safe work environment – many did not know the health and safety policies of the relevant hotels. They were also not aware of the appropriate channel of recompense in the event that they sustained work-related injuries. In short, the occupational health and safety training that the students had undergone did not lead to strong awareness regarding employees’ rights in terms of occupational health and safety. Moreover, personal security at work was not sufficiently emphasised in occupational health and safety training. This study highlights the need for hospitality education to address violence at work.

Keywords: Employer’s duties, occupational hazards, occupational health and safety, work-related injuries, violence at work


Introduction

Occupational health and safety is a major concern in the hospitality industry. Work-related injuries apart, hospitality workers risk psychological or emotional stresses. Moreover, violence at work has become an occupational health and safety concern. Work-related injuries and non-fatal injuries sustained due to violence at work in turn lead to an increase in compensation payments and consequently, rising insurance costs.
(Montross, 2013). In addition, hotels and restaurants suffer from lost productivity due to absenteeism attributable to such injuries, not to mention higher turnover and negative impact on the establishment’s image (Hobson, 1996).

Occupational health and safety training may play a role in lowering the occurrences of injuries. It is generally agreed that training in the use of equipment, the appropriate techniques, the nature of hazards and preventive measures, and knowledge concerning health and safety regulations are helpful in lowering occupational injuries (Pine, 1989; Acton, 2008). Training hospitality workers in dealing with threats of violence (e.g. robbery) may lower the risk of fatal injuries (Hobson, 1996). The purpose of this research is to examine hospitality students’ perceptions and attitudes towards such trainings; in particular, whether students are likely to perform their jobs with health and safety warnings in mind, and whether they are likely to put into practice what they learned during the relevant courses. In light of this objective, the research questions are as follows:

- Do hospitality students consider the occupational health and safety training received during their courses relevant to their internships?
- Do hospitality students apply the occupational health and safety training received during their courses in performing their work during internships?

In light of the cost of occupational injuries to the hospitality industry, it is important that hotel schools equip future hospitality workers with the appropriate health and safety knowledge and know-how. The findings can assist hospitality educators to assess the effectiveness of similar trainings, in relation to the curriculum design. The hospitality industry also plays an important role in ensuring that workers take health and safety measures seriously. In this regard, it is important that hotels and restaurants know the extent to which theory is put into practice when it comes to health and safety training.

**Literature Review**

**Occupational Health and Safety Threats in the Hospitality Industry**

There are many risks antecedent in the work of a hospitality worker, some of which are highlighted here. To begin with, the labour-intensive nature of hospitality employment often causes musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) in employees. MSDs are injuries or illnesses affecting muscles, nerves, tendons and ligaments. Depending on the physical movements required of a job or the mechanical designs of a task, MSDs can affect the back, neck, upper limbs or other parts of the body (Kuorinka & Forcier, 1997). Chyuan's (2007) study on the prevalence of MSDs among commissary foodservice workers in Taiwan found that many workers claimed to suffer numbness, soreness or discomfort in their shoulders (41.1%), hands/wrists (38.2%) and lower backs (40.1%). Scherzer, Rugulies and Krause’s (2005) study on
work-related pain and injury among Las Vegas hotel room cleaners showed that 75% of the respondents reported to have suffered from work-related pain.

There are multiple causes of MSDs among hotel workers. First, the performance of tasks involving repetitive motions can cause MSDs in the long run. Using the laundry processing line as an example, workers are invariably assigned distinct tasks, which they perform repetitively. Workers operating the washers, dryers, folding machines, flatwork ironers and pressers become expert in their respective tasks through sheer repetitions. Unfortunately, such efficiency is often achieved at the expense of increased MSDs among hospitality workers. Proper ergonomics is important in order to minimise MSDs among laundry workers (Acton, 2008). Ergonomics is fundamentally concerned with improving a workplace to facilitate efficiency or to minimise injuries. In the hospitality industry, ergonomics may involve job rotation, redesigning tools or workstations, training workers in MSD prevention techniques, utilisation of supports, taking short/routine breaks and regular exercise (Chyuan, 2007).

Another factor that contributes to MSDs is the heavy weight of equipment/furniture that a hospitality worker commonly handles. For example, Montross (2013) pointed out that in the US, the weight and thickness of hotel mattresses have almost doubled over the last 10 years. This was the indirect consequence of increasing the standard of accommodation luxury in premier hotels. The average mattress in a hotel exceeds 115 pounds, whereas luxury mattresses weigh in excess of 250 pounds. The awkward lifting, twisting and holding up the mattress while tucking in linens put pressure on a worker’s back, thus it is not surprising that bed-making duties put housekeepers at higher risks of suffering MSDs.

The prevalence of MSDs in the hospitality industry may be higher than acknowledged. Scherzer et al. (2005) pointed out the problem of under-reporting among hotel workers who suffer from work-related injuries, in which an estimated 69% of medical costs were shifted from employers to the workers. In the US, language barrier and immigrant status could affect a hospitality worker’s recourse to compensation for work-related injuries. A study by Premji and Krause (2010) showed that Hispanic and hotel workers with English as a second language were disadvantaged in terms of seeking workers’ compensation or treatment, although they were not necessarily disadvantaged in reporting the injuries to the employers and seeking time off from work as a consequence of the injuries.

The cost of work-related injuries to the hospitality industry is significant. Lost productivity due to absenteeism, staff turnover, imposition of overtime on other workers at higher overtime rates, time and cost involved in the recruitment and training of replacement staff, and the reassigning of remaining workloads to other workers, are some of the indirect effects that hotels encounter as a result of the work-related injuries (Montross, 2013). According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics
(2013a), as many as 89,480 lost workdays in the leisure and hospitality industry were attributable to MSDs.

Hospitality workers also face violence at work, namely threats, verbal assaults and physical harm, from members of the public and co-workers. This issue has come to the forefront as an occupational safety and health threat (Hobson, 1996; Pitt, 2007). In the UK, the problem has yet to become acute. The *Crime Survey for England and Wales: Violence at Work 2012/13* reported that workers in the leisure, travel and related personal service occupations have a 2.1% risk of encountering violence at work (Health and Safety Executive, 2013). While this percentage was higher than the national average of 1.4%, a hospitality worker faces less risk of violence at work compared to protective service workers (e.g. police officers), health professionals and social care professionals. By contrast, hospitality workers in the US seem to be at greater risk of violence at work. Data from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics show that in 2012, homicide accounted for 34% of the fatal injuries suffered by workers in food preparation and service related occupations; whereas falls, slips and trips only caused 19% of fatal injuries among this category of workers (US Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2013b). This means that in the US, violence at work is a greater threat to workers in the food and beverage industry compared to accidents.

Fire risk is another occupational hazard in the hospitality industry. Hotels are categorised as high fire risk buildings as hotel operations involve a substantial use of highly flammable substances – mattresses, pillows, interior wall covering, upholstered furniture, cabinetry - all of which that pose fire risks (Hassanain, 2009). The high concentration of occupants in a hotel building, especially in banquet halls and conference centres, means that in the event of a fire, the flow capacity of escape routes are sorely tested. A panicked crowd increases the probability of injuries or fatalities in fire emergencies (Furness & Muckett, 2007). The kitchen is a prime fire risk area in a hotel. Almost 50% of all accidental fires in hotels and restaurants start in kitchens, and most of the incidents involve liquid cooking oil or fat fires (Liu, Kim, Carpenter, Kanabus-Kaminska & Yen, 2004). Although fire risk is commonly assessed in relation to guests, it is also necessary to address the occupational hazard that fire emergencies pose to hotel workers.

The above are just some of the occupational health and safety issues that can be found in the hospitality industry. The psychological stress that hospitality workers are subjected to, health hazards posed by chemicals in cleaning work and the exposure to contagious diseases from high frequencies of human contact (Kilic & Selvi, 2009) are not discussed here. Suffice to note that employee health and safety is an aspect of operational risk that affects the business activities of a hotel (Bharwani & Mathews, 2012). A hotel operator should therefore address occupational health and safety issues as a matter of risk management.
The Relevance of Occupational Health and Safety Training in Hospitality Education: A Malaysian Perspective

Employers’ Duties to Safeguard Workers from Occupational Hazards

As a general rule, an employer has a duty to provide a safe workplace for his employees. In Malaysia, this common principle has been codified and is now a statutory duty by virtue of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 1994. In addition, an employer owes his employees a duty of care to safeguard them from harm that is reasonably foreseeable. An employer can be liable in negligence for failing to take measures or precautions that minimise the occurrence of foreseeable harm (Gan & Goh, 2014). Similar duties are imposed on employers in other parts of the world, though the common law or statutory expression of the duties may be slightly different. In the US, for example, the Occupational Health and Safety Act 1970 imposes on employers the duty to provide safe and healthful workplaces to their employees. Employers are required to ensure that their workplaces are free from serious recognised hazards (US Department of Labor, 2014). In the UK, the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 seeks to achieve similar objectives (Health and Safety Executive, 2014).

In order to minimise the occupational hazards faced by hospitality workers, it is imperative that hotels implement risk mitigation measures that encapsulate several aspects: eliminating risks, reducing the negative effect or probability of risks, planning for risks, transferring risks to another party (e.g. through the purchase of insurance), or as a last resort, accepting risks (Stoneburner, Goguen & Feringa, 2002; Bharwani & Mathews, 2012).

To minimise MSDs among hospitality workers, hotels can implement various measures with the aim of reducing task-repetitiveness or reducing the workload or improving the ergonomics of the workplace. A hotel can rotate cleaning duties among the housekeepers such that each housekeeper is given a different task with each rotation. In this regard, housekeepers can be organised into teams to facilitate speed and rotation. A hotel should provide training to workers on how to properly lift and move items, and how to reduce awkward movements and bending (Stanislaw, 2005). With regard to the increased weight of mattresses, the option of replacing the bottom flat sheets with fitted sheets can be considered as a means to reduce the awkward lifting required in bed-making duties. However, Montross (2013) pointed out that this option might be considered costly and that very little research has been done to verify whether fitted sheets can reduce bed-making triggered MSDs. Thus, the development and implementation of effective ergonomic systems seem to be the better alternative.

Reducing violence at work requires proactive measures on the part of hotels and restaurants. Recognising that threats of abuse (verbal or physical) on a hospitality worker can come from a co-worker or a member of the public, Hobson (1996) recommended that the problem be addressed in terms of internal threats and external threats. Internally, an employer should review its employee screening procedures, and where necessary, use pre-employment psychological tests that can help identify
individuals prone to violence; maintain records of threats to workers and incidents reports (in the event of legal challenges); and handle termination of workers carefully to avoid triggering potentially violent employees. In dealing with external threats, an employer can, where possible, keep out of high-risk crime areas; limit operation hours or offer a drive-through service only during late opening hours; work with other hospitality businesses to cooperate on security issues; increase the number of workers on duty to prevent the ‘lone worker’ situation; and train managers and supervisors to respond to threats of violence, including awareness and hostage training.

To mitigate fire risk in hotels, fire safety inspections and formal audits are important in order to identify and eliminate fire hazards, and meet the requirements of relevant legislation (Della-Giustina, 2003). At the same time, such fire risk assessment should be complemented with a fire safety program that incorporates staff training. This includes developing an emergency plan that is rehearsed by the hospitality workers. Regular fire drills and full scale emergency simulations should be implemented. Fire wardens or fire safety coordinators should be appointed to carry out the preventive measures and to ensure effective communication with emergency services in the event of a real fire emergency (Hassanain, 2009).

**Staff Training and Risk Mitigation**

It can be surmised from the above that while staff training is not the only risk mitigation strategy, it is an important aspect in addressing occupational health and safety threats. Training hospitality workers in proper ergonomic systems may reduce the prevalence of MSDs. Training managers, supervisors and frontline workers in responding to threats of violence may well avert fatal injuries; whereas training hotel employees in fire safety precautions may lower fire risks as well as improving workers’ responses in the event of a real fire emergency.

However, staff training in the hospitality industry is often hindered by high turnover – training is either interrupted or incomplete when workers leave an establishment. In the UK, it is estimated that labour turnover results in over £33 million annually in terms of wasted recruitment and training efforts (People 1st report, 2011). Further, formalised and intensive training invariably requires an establishment to have sufficient staff so that training can take place outside the pressure of normal business. Since many hotels and restaurants constantly face staff shortage and rely on part-time workers, formalised training is often not possible (Pine, 1989). It should also be noted that many business owners and managers might not have formal training themselves, and consequently, they might not place sufficient emphasis on training. The challenges of solving immediate operational problems might affect the time and resources allocated to training (Boella & Goss-Turner, 2013). Yet, health and safety training is highly important in lowering work-
related injuries, and indirectly, enhances employee job satisfaction in the hospitality industry (Kilic & Selvi, 2009). Some hospitality workers receive “on-the-job” training, learning from existing workers in “sitting next to Nellie” situations. In other words, a new worker is placed side-by-side an experienced worker with the expectation that the former will learn from the latter as he progresses in the job. However, if the existing workers have no formalised training, this calls into question the effectiveness of such training (Pine, 1989).

In light of this, training hospitality students in health and safety precautions can overcome the problem of time and resource constraints in conducting formalised training in hotels and restaurants. This is provided that health and safety education in hotel schools caters to the requirements of the hospitality industry. In short, such training in structured education is only useful if it meets the expectations of the industry.

Methodology

This research was conducted using a survey questionnaire. Most survey questions were presented with dichotomous answers of ‘Yes/No’ or ‘Agree/Disagree’ whereas some questions required the respondent to choose an answer from several options. The questions were prepared in relation to the occupational health and safety education currently incorporated in the hospitality management and culinary arts courses (diploma and degree level) of a university in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The research was an exploratory study to assess the effectiveness of the prevailing occupational health and safety education at the institution concerned. It should be noted that at the time the study was conducted, there was no specific module on occupational health and safety for courses conducted at hospitality schools. Students were taught/trained specific elements of occupational health and safety issues in relevant modules. For example, the Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Points (HACCP) practices were taught in related food and beverage courses. Although there is no specific module on occupational health and safety, components of modules on housekeeping, food & beverage preparation and foodservice, restaurant design, as well as tourism and hospitality law instruct/train hospitality students on the following aspects of occupational health and safety:

- Proper ergonomics in the performance of housekeeping duties, especially in bed-making;
- The safe handling of cleaning agents and corrosive chemicals used in housekeeping;
- Basic safety regulations pertaining to commercial kitchens, including the safe handling of kitchen equipment and appropriate techniques for lifting heavy utensils and appliances;
- Fire risks in commercial kitchens, different kinds of flammable or combustible substances and the appropriate types of fire extinguisher necessary to extinguish fire;
• Basic restaurant layout and design, with emphasis on functional aesthetic that meets safety concerns;
• Basic tort of negligence which emphasises the employer’s common law duty of care to safeguard his employees against reasonably foreseeable harm; and
• Basic employment law which emphasises the employer’s statutory duty to ensure a safe workplace for his employees; and the employer’s vicarious liability for the employee’s acts/omissions during the course of employment that results in harm to a guest/customer or co-employee.

Notably, instruction/training concerning violence at work was missing from the taught subjects. Thus, the questionnaire also sought to assess the respondents’ opinion concerning the importance of personal security at the workplace.

A purposive sampling technique was used to approach potential respondents who have undergone the relevant modules. This means that the sample population would have to be the students of the hotel school. The authors were familiar with the nature/extent of occupational health and safety training in the relevant modules, and sought to assess the students’ perception concerning the relevancy of such training. At both the diploma and degree level, students need to complete the relevant courses with occupational health and safety components before commencing their internships. Thus the sample pool was deliberately narrowed down, so that the survey questionnaire could be designed with the specific hotel school’s occupational health and safety training in mind.

Therefore, the respondents of the sample are required to fulfill two criteria. First, the respondent must be a student of the hotel school, as the validity of a sample depends on the respondent’s knowledge or familiarity with the occupational health and safety training at the hotel school. Secondly, the sample is only valid if the respondent has undergone internship as part of his/her hospitality education. This is because the validity of the sample also depends on the respondent’s exposure to the hospitality industry – without actual working experience in a hotel or restaurant, a respondent will not be able to respond constructively regarding the relevancy of such training in preparing a worker for health and safety threats in the workplace.

To ensure the appropriateness of the sample for this research, only existing students of the hotel school were contacted via email or other social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. The potential respondents were informed of the purpose of the research and the reason why they were specifically approached. The survey was conducted online – potential respondents were given the Google Doc link of the survey questionnaire, and responses were recorded online. The responses to the survey were collected between March and October 2014. The rate of responses was quite small because the sample population was contacted after they had completed the relevant taught module containing components of occupational health and safety as well as undergone internship and some had graduated and joined the workforce. The
lack of regular contact between the authors and the sample population constituted an obstacle to data collection.

The data was analysed in the same sequence as the survey questions were posed. The respondents’ perceptions towards occupational health and safety training were examined first. This was followed by an analysis of their attitudes towards adopting preventive measures. The respondents’ attitudes towards adopting these precautions might have directly or indirectly affected the type/frequency of work-related injuries that they were exposed to during internship. Thus, this factor was examined upon assessing the respondents’ attitudes towards precautionary measures. The respondents’ perception concerning workplace security was examined last, as employees’ safety from (internal or external) threats of violence was considered as a broad, all encompassing issue in the hospitality industry.

Findings and Discussion

Sample Demographics

A total of 202 samples were collected, out of which, 189 of the respondents were below 25 years old. This is expected as the sample population consisted of young adults in tertiary education. More females (127) responded to the questionnaire compared to males (75). This gender ratio in the responses is not surprising as women take up over two-third of jobs in the hospitality industry (Lucas, 1995). The significant presence of women in the hospitality workforce could have been reflected at an earlier stage in the hotel school. This would explain the high proportion of female respondents in the survey.

Table 1 shows the number of internships that the respondents completed, which is indicative of their work experience. Eighty-four respondents (42%) stated that they had undergone internship at least three times. This finding could be explained with reference to the structure of hospitality courses in the hotel school. In a diploma course, a student is required to undergo an internship for a duration of 12 weeks’. By contrast, a student enrolled in a degree course is required to undergo two internships of 12 weeks each at different stages of the course. The degree course consists of six semesters – students go for internship after completing semester 3 and the final semester. By this point, a respondent from the hotel school’s degree course would have undergone sufficient occupational health and safety training or completed such training entirely.

Respondents who progressed from diploma courses to degree courses would have completed at least three internships by the final semester of their degree courses. Interestingly, 35 respondents (17%) stated that they had completed four internships. This can take place when a respondent is terminated from an internship (due to high absenteeism or other disciplinary issues) and therefore required to repeat an
entire internship. Alternatively, a respondent could have transferred from another institution of higher learning and the transfer was subject to the respondent repeating an internship afresh.

Most importantly, all respondents had worked in hotels or restaurants, and 59% of them had completed 36 weeks or more of internship period. Consequently, we could infer that the respondents were reasonably familiar with the operational aspects of a hotel or restaurant, and therefore able to respond meaningfully to the survey.

Table 1. Number of internships completed by respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of internships</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Responses in percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>56</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Application of Classroom Knowledge to Internship

The majority of the respondents (80%) agreed that their courses prepared them with occupational health and safety knowledge that were useful during their internship. However, only 65% of respondents purportedly applied this knowledge during internship. One inference is that some respondents who considered occupational health and safety instructions as beneficial nevertheless disregarded them in the actual working environment. If this is indicative of a wider trend, it means that students may not apply their training in proper ergonomics in the performance of housekeeping duties, fire safety precautions, safe practices in the kitchen and safe handling of kitchen equipment, etc. to their work during internships.

The research could have been supplemented by interviews, which might have revealed the reasons behind the ambivalent attitude of certain respondents towards occupational hazards despite their classroom knowledge on the causes, effects and precautionary measures. Admittedly, this is a limitation of the research.

Health and Safety Awareness during Internship

Fifty nine percent (59%) of the respondents claimed that they were aware of the written occupational health and safety policies and procedures of the hotels where they trained as interns. However, such awareness might not necessarily be the result of formal training or briefing of interns at the relevant hotels. This was because only 47% of the respondents stated that they had received formal training/briefing on occupational health and safety at the inception of their internships. Some respondents might have become aware of such policies and procedures through other
sources. For example, some health and safety warnings might be posted in certain work areas, such as laundry room, kitchen and storeroom. Instruction manuals on the use of equipment might be available in the vicinity of the equipment concerned. These might have afforded the respondents some knowledge on the hotels’ health and safety policies and procedures. The respondents might also have learned of these policies and procedures from existing workers through the “sitting next to Nellie” approach.

As discussed above, time constraints and cost factors often inhibit proper health and safety training of hospitality workers (Pine, 1989). Further, high turnover renders such training more difficult. When a hotel accepts interns, the completion of an internship cycle is similar to turnover in terms of consequence – a worker leaves. The hotel sector also has to deal with repeated or overlapping cycles of internships and the coming and leaving of a high number of interns from different institutions. This means that hotels face similar problems of time and cost constraints, as well as high turnover, in trying to implement occupational health and safety training for interns.

Fifty five percent (55%) of the respondents did not know the person or the department to approach in the event that they suffered work-related injuries. While none of the respondents reported suffering from life-threatening or serious work-related injuries during their internships, the majority did sustain some form of work-related injuries (see Table 2). The extent of a worker’s knowledge concerning the reporting channel/procedure in the event of sustaining a work-related injury will affect his decision to pursue reimbursement of medical costs or compensation. Thus it was not surprising that immigrant workers, who were less aware of their rights as employees, were not very effective in pursuing reimbursement and compensation (Premji & Krause, 2010).

Surely the problem should not occur among hospitality workers with formal training? As far as interns from the hotel school were concerned, they would have been taught that a hotel-employer has a duty to provide a safe workplace for the employees. Such duty include, where relevant, providing medical recompense to the worker. However, it was uncertain whether the respondents knew the practical steps required to make a claim for work-related injuries from the relevant hotels. Since a high percentage of respondents were not aware of the reporting and claims procedure for work-related injuries, many of them might not know how to pursue reimbursement or compensation effectively. The findings as stated in Table 2 highlight the need to design hospitality courses with the aim of raising greater student awareness concerning employee right to compensation for work-related injuries and the actions required to make such claims.
Table 2. Types of injuries sustained by respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of injury</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Responses in percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Back pain</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burn (kitchen tasks)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burn (chemical)</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuts</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falls</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slips</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interns’ Attitude towards Specific Safety Warnings

The research also sought to discover whether, in the event written safety warnings were available, interns were likely to read the warnings and follow the instructions so as to safeguard themselves against injuries. In this regard, the survey questionnaire specifically used the handling of chemicals or cleaning agents as example. This was based on the assumption that instructions on usage and safety warnings were readily available on the labels of the product containers, such that a respondent could read them prior to using the products. For example, the labels of laundry products might caution the user to wear gloves and protective glasses to prevent burns, or that the products should not be mixed with consumer product bleach (Sisson, 2003).

A significant proportion of the respondents (63%) admitted to not having read safety warnings before using the chemicals or cleaning agents concerned. Further, these respondents agreed that they had knowingly ignored precautionary measures (e.g. wearing gloves) when handling chemicals or cleaning agents. This seriously calls into question the effectiveness of health and safety training, be it in hospitality courses or at the workplace. Table 3 presents the findings concerning the respondents’ attitudes towards occupational health and safety training and the adoption of preventive measures. It can be seen that, overall, the respondents evinced a rather lackadaisical attitude towards precautionary measures. Ultimately, hotel workers have a shared responsibility in establishing safe workplace conditions and they should perform their jobs in a safe manner according to their training and safety procedures (Acton, 2008). This finding shows that more has to be done by hotel schools and the hospitality industry to inculcate a culture where occupational health and safety precautions are taken seriously.

Workers’ Safety against Violence at Work

Violence at work, be it from a co-worker or a member of the public, certainly constitutes a threat to hospitality workers. Unfortunately, the occupational health and safety training in the hotel school does not address this issue directly. Instead, the
The Relevance of Occupational Health and Safety Training in Hospitality Education: A Malaysian Perspective

problem is broached indirectly through the topic of “Vicarious Liability” in the law module. Basically, a hotel employer may be vicariously liable when a person suffers harm as a result of a worker’s act omission committed in the course of employment. Thus, if worker (A) physically attacks a co-worker (B) during work and causes injuries to B, their common employer may be liable to B in failing to protect him from violence at work. Unfortunately, an employer’s vicarious liability is unhelpful when the agent of violence is a guest/customer or robber.

An overwhelming majority of the respondents (90%) agreed that their personal security at the workplace was crucial to the effective performance of their jobs (see Table 3). Yet violence at work has yet to be treated as a significant aspect of occupational safety in the hotel school’s courses. Arguably, hospitality students would benefit more if violence at work is addressed in terms of preventive measures.

Table 3. Interns’ perceptions and attitudes towards occupational health and safety training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Yes/ Agree (%)</th>
<th>No/ Disagree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Occupational health and safety training in my course was relevant for my internship.</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I applied the occupational health and safety knowledge gained from my course and took necessary precautions to safeguard myself from injuries during internship.</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I was aware of the written occupational health and safety policies and procedures of the hotel during my internship.</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I received occupational health and safety briefing/training during my internship.</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I know the person or the department to approach if I suffer work-related injury at the hotel during internship.</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I read instructions/safety warnings on the labels and took precautions (e.g. wearing gloves) before using chemicals.</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Personal security at the workplace was important to the performance of my work during internship.</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I sustained physical injury at the workplace during internship.</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

The research shows that the majority of the respondents considered occupational health and safety training at the hotel school to be relevant (research question 1). Unfortunately, only a smaller percentage of them actually applied occupational health and safety knowledge gained in the classroom during their internships (research question 2). It should be noted that almost all of the respondents (98%) reported to have suffered some form of work-related injuries. While the research cannot establish a link between the respondents’ work-related injuries and their failure to apply the occupational health and safety knowledge learned at the hotel school, the probability of this causal relationship cannot be ruled out.

The majority of the respondents were aware of the written occupational health and safety policy and procedures of their respective hotels. However, it would seem that this knowledge might not necessarily be attributable to formal occupational health and safety briefing/training conduction by the hotels. This is because only a smaller percentage of the respondents claimed to have undergone such briefing/training at the inception of their internships. Further, many respondents did not know who or which department to approach in the event that they suffer work-related injuries. The lack of awareness concerning the appropriate channel of recompense puts a worker at a disadvantage in terms of seeking treatment, reimbursement or compensation. A reasonable inference from the finding is that hospitality education does not necessarily improve an intern’s awareness concerning the channel of recompense in a hotel. The implication is that briefing/training by the hotel employer remains very important in minimising the unjust transference of medical cost (for work-related injuries) from the employer to the employee. At the same time, more has to be done in hospitality education in Malaysia to raise student awareness concerning employees’ rights in terms of occupational health and safety.

It is a cause for concern that so many respondents neglected safety warnings and precautions despite the emphasis given to safe handling of chemicals and cleaning agents in the relevant courses. If we assume that the problem is not confined to the student-respondents of the hotel school only, then hospitality educators in Malaysia face a wider challenge of inculcating positive attitudes towards occupational health and safety among would-be entrants to the hospitality workforce.

The scope/focus of occupational health and safety training in hospitality education should also be reviewed. The literature indicates that violence at work has become an occupational safety issue in the hospitality industry. At the same time, the findings show that most respondents consider personal security at work to be vital to the performance of their jobs during internship. This raises the issue of curriculum design. Educators in this field should be strategic and forward thinking (as opposed to being reactive) in planning hospitality programs and courses (Dredge, Benckendorff, Day, Gross, Walo, Weeks & Whitelaw, 2013). Rather than react to
the escalating violence at work in the future, hospitality educators should address the issue of violence at work in the curriculum now, as this will help the industry in managing the problem. In this regard, students should be alerted to the risk of violence from members of the public and co-workers, and at the very least, be briefed on the basic measures in creating a safe work environment, e.g. the avoidance of “lone employee” situation. Herein lies the challenge for innovation in hospitality education: How to design hospitality courses that address the occupational health and safety concerns of the industry, including the rising risk of violence at work?

Ideally, with enhanced module or training in occupational health and safety, students who join the hospitality industry are more likely to take precautionary measures. However, other factors may also affect the adoption of preventive measures. Arguably, personal attitudes, habits, cultural influences and the work culture of an organisation also determine whether hospitality workers take precaution at work.

Limitations of this research include the small size of the sample. It should also be noted that the sample population was confined to the students of one hotel school. Further studies involving larger and more diverse sample population are required in order to ascertain the validity of the findings. Moreover, supplementing the questionnaire with interviews would have enabled the authors to examine the reasons behind some respondents’ neglect in taking safety precautions despite their knowledge of occupational health and safety. With a qualitative approach, the authors would also be able to assess the impact of personal attitudes, habits, cultural influences and work culture on an intern/hospitality worker’s willingness to adopt MSD preventive measures. Future studies could adopt a mixed method to address this limitation.

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References


Review Paper

Community Capacity for Conserving Natural Resources in Ecotourist Destinations: A Review of the Concept

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Taylor’s University, Malaysia

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Abstract: This study presents a review and discussion of the concept and measurement of community capacity. Conceptual aspects of community capacity and its measurement are reviewed based on existing literature. This study proposed a conceptual framework of measuring community capacity for conserving natural resources in ecotourist destinations. In addition, the findings of this study provide an inclusive list of practical dimensions. The paper hopes to help researchers appraise and build community capacity construct for further development in ecotourist destinations.

Keywords: Community capacity, domains of community capacity, sustainable tourism development, natural resources, conservation, ecotourist destinations


Introduction

According to Moscardo (2008b), ecotourism has been proposed to reduce and minimise the negative impacts of tourism industry reported in many case studies. However, the results of critical analyses of the ecotourism approach have not shown any better outcomes for the residents of these destinations. Holden (2000) stated that the development of the tourism industry puts a lot of pressure on natural resources. It also forces locals to compete for the use of critical resources. Tourism development

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needs natural resources to facilitate its expansion. However, excessive depletion or deterioration of resources damages residents’ living environment and lowers tourists’ willingness to revisit. In order to enhance the livelihood of local people, tourism should incorporate some initiatives to reduce its diverse negative effects. Ecotourist destinations can achieve sustainable development and conservation of its natural status with the help of the local community. In other words, locals can act as stewards of natural resources to effectively protect the natural environment.

On the other hand, greater emphasis is often placed on the destination rather than the host community, despite their value for tourism development. A number of scholars have discussed the significance of measuring and building community capacity for tourism development (Eagles & McCool, 2002; Nepal, 2000). However, there is a lack of credible information about this concept and its different aspects. It should be noted that the concept of community capacity has only received limited attention in the tourism literature (Bourke & Luloff, 2010; Moscardo, 2008a; Reid, Mair & George, 2004). This lapse has caused some problems in local communities, particularly in remote or developing areas since various types of changes happen as tourism evolves (Moscardo, 2008b). The significance of community capacity is universally acknowledged, as it involves assets, abilities and opportunities within a community that enable individuals to take action and leading roles to improve their quality of life (Chaskin, Brown, Venktesh & Vidal, 2001; Forstner, 2004; Goodman et al., 1998; Laverack, 2005). The development of community capacity enables locals to make decisions and act effectively in their home areas (Laverack & Thangphet, 2009), while protecting their desired community attributes (Murphy, 1985). It also helps community members to enhance their living conditions and prevents them from migrating to overcrowded cities from rural areas. Therefore, in order to study sustainable tourism development in ecotourist destinations, the concept of community capacity and its related aspects should be given extra attention and support.

Research Method

The current study was conducted using literature survey and secondary information. To this purpose, various academic papers in highly ranked journals and books which detail a theoretical approach to the concept of community capacity building were examined. These resources were found through a process of snowballing (i.e. references of references). Bennett, Lemelin, Koster & Budke’s (2012) work which presented a comprehensive approach to measure community capacity for tourism development in protected areas was selected as the starting point of the snowballing process. Working back chronologically, numerous varied approaches were identified.
as tools for measuring/building community capacity (Bopp et al., 2000; Chaskin et al., 2001; Laverack & Thangphet, 2009; MacLellan-Wright et al., 2007; Thompson, Dorsey, Parrott & Miller, 2003). There are many possible approaches to studying community capacity. This formation has many implications for community development as seen through disciplines such as health promotion (Goodman et al., 1998; Laverack, 2005) and rural community development (Atkinson & Willis, 2006; Marre & Weber, 2007) with respect to understanding community capacity for tourism development.

Several works from theoretical and empirical studies were reviewed and subsequently, those most related to the research objective were chosen. Some related topics were judged to be beyond the scope of this paper, but some other topics such as studies on health or rural community development were also included. Each reference was summarised in terms of its objectives and dimensions. In reviewing these references, 25 different models and 11 attributes were identified which will be presented and discussed in the following section.

Findings

Approaches to studying community capacity and its related aspects are vast. Table 1 shows the works which were examined for the purpose of this study. It presents an overview of the stream of research on community capacity which can be examined by topics and authors. Selected comments on each topic are presented as insights into the purpose of the paper.

Table 1. Literature review on community capacity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic covered</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community and community capacity</td>
<td>Atkinson &amp; Willis, 2006; Balint, 2006; Bokor, 2001; Comello, 2005; Goodman et al., 1998; Hounslow, 2002; Laverack, 2005; Mattessich, Monsey, Roy &amp; Foundation, 1997; Moscardo, 2008c; Simpson, Wood &amp; Daws, 2003; Smith, Littlejohns &amp; Thompson, 2001; Verity, 2007; Williams &amp; Lawson, 2001; Woodhouse, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions of community capacity</td>
<td>Bennett et al., 2012; Goodman et al., 1998; Labonte &amp; Laverack, 2010; Laverack, 2005; MacLellan-Wright et al., 2007; Thompson et al., 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement of community capacity</td>
<td>Bennett et al., 2012; Bopp et al., 2000; Ebbesen, Heath, Naylor &amp; Anderson, 2004; Hawe, King, Noort, Jordens &amp; Lloyd, 2000; Kwan, Frankish, Quantz &amp; Flores, 2003; Laverack, 2005; Laverack &amp; Thangphet, 2009; MacLellan-Wright et al., 2007; Smith, Littlejohns &amp; Roy, 2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community and Community Capacity

Community is defined as a group of people who share common goals or interest (Williams & Lawson, 2001). In other words, people who live within a geographically defined area exercising a degree of independence, sharing the same aspirations and desires to participate in daily life, together with a sense of belonging and are closely related to in all aspects of life are considered as a community (Mattessich et al., 1997; Verity, 2007). Community capacity is defined as the ability to work collectively to maintain changes (Hounslow, 2002; Howe, Cleary & Ayres-Wearne, 2001). It can also be defined as the qualities of a capable community (Labonte & Laverack, 2010) that include “the attributes that a community is able to draw upon in order to improve their lives” (Laverack, 2005, p. 267). Smith et al. (2001) described community capacity as the “essence of development”. Development of community capacity is essential for improving the process of sustainable development and long-term growth (Paronen & Oja, 1998). According to McLeroy (1996), characteristics of communities have a strong influence on an individual's abilities to identify, mobilise, and address social and public problems. The development and use of transferable knowledge, skills, and resources help both a community and an individual to change accordingly with their desired public goals and objectives (Rogers, Howard-Pitney & Lee, 1995). According to Moscardo (2008b, p. 9), “two key factors are common to all the definitions of community capacity: first, community capacity is about collective knowledge and ability within the community itself; and second, this knowledge and ability is used to define problems and options from within the community”. Hence, community capacity assessment is a prerequisite for any development activity.

According to Chaskin (2001), community capacity can be engaged at three levels of social agency: individual, organisational, and network as shown in Figure 1. The individual level consists of human capital and leadership, skills, knowledge, awareness, training, education and participation in community-development
activities which allow individuals to increase the level of control they have over relevant aspects of their lives (Bennett et al., 2010; Chaskin, 2001). At the organisational level, community capacity building requires significant changes to help professionals deliver their services (Aref & Redzuan, 2009). At the network level, local capacity building for tourism requires strengthening of advocacy, decision making and changing community attributes toward the tourism industry (Bennett et al., 2010). According to Chaskin (2001), the network level concerns social structure patterns of relations among individuals and organisations.

![Levels of capacity diagram](image)

**Figure 1.** Levels of capacity (UNDP, 1998, p. 7)

Table 2 shows the features and elements found at the three levels of community capacity.

**Table 2.** Key capacity features and elements at the three levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of capacity</th>
<th>Definition of capacity</th>
<th>Elements on which capacity is based</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>The will and ability to set objectives and achieve them using one's own knowledge and skills.</td>
<td>Knowledge, skills, value, attitude, health, awareness, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Anything that will influence an organisation's performance.</td>
<td>Human resources (capacities of individuals in organisations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Physical resources (facilities, equipment, materials, etc) and capital</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 (con’t)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Network</th>
<th>Intellectual resources (organisational strategy, strategic planning, business know-how, production technology, program management, process management, inter-institutional linkage, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organisational structure and management methods which affect the utilisation of the resources (human, physical intellectual assets) such as organisational culture, incentive and reward system, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership of managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The network and conditions necessary for demonstrating capacity at the individual and organisational levels. It includes: systems and frameworks necessary for the formation / implementation of policies and strategies beyond an individual organisation. It includes administrative, legal, technological, political, economic, social and cultural environments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Formal institutions (laws, policies, decrees, ordinances, membership rules, etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informal institutions (customs, cultures, norms, etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social capital, social infrastructure, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capacities of individuals and organisations under the environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Lusthaus, Adrien & Perstinger (1999)

**Dimensions of Community Capacity**

Many scholars developed a set of dimensions for the construct of community capacity. Table 3 shows 25 research models and their related dimensions.

Table 3. Selected models of community capacity dimensions (1976-2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cottrell (1976)</td>
<td>Community participation, commitment, community understanding of its own and others’ issues, articulateness of the community in expressing its needs, effectiveness in communicating information and achieving consensus within a community, conflict management, management of relations within the community including the use of outside resources, and representative decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robinson and Silvis (1993)</td>
<td>A state of collective identity, collective belonging by residents, a sense of community solidarity, shared pride in the community, a sense of achievement among community residents, a feeling of fulfilment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easterling et al. (1998)</td>
<td>Skills and knowledge, leadership, sense of efficacy, social capital, culture of learning and openness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodman et al. (1998)</td>
<td>Citizen participation, leadership, skills, resources, social and inter-organisational networks, sense of community, understanding of community history, community power, community values and critical reflection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank and Smith (1999)</td>
<td>Involvement, skills, knowledge and abilities, wellness and community health, ability to identify and access opportunities, motivation and the wherewithal to carry out initiatives, infrastructure, supportive institutions and physical resources, leadership and the structures needed for participation, economic and financial resources, enabling policies and systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bopp et al. (2000)</td>
<td>Shared vision, sense of community, community participation, community leadership, resources, skill and knowledge, communication and ongoing learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaskin (2001)</td>
<td>A sense of community, a level of commitment among community members, the ability to solve problems, and access to resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stokols et al. (2003)</td>
<td>Mobilisation of existing resources, empowerment of community members to sustain health improvement efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwan et al. (2003)</td>
<td>Knowledge and skill, participation, sense of community, awareness, perceptions about health sys, demographics, networks, shared vision, resource mobilization, infrastructure, information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thompson et al. (2003)</td>
<td>Participation, leadership, community resources, social network and community power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebbesen et al. (2004)</td>
<td>Knowledge, skills, commitment and resources, infrastructure, collaboration, evidence-base, policies and technical expertise, leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laverack (2005)</td>
<td>Participation, problem assessment capacities, equitable relationship with external agents, organizational stature, resource mobilization, links to other resources and people, leadership, asking why, and control over program management.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 (con’t)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Concept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinman et al. (2005)</td>
<td>Skill, resources, power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comello (2005)</td>
<td>Community efforts, knowledge of efforts, leadership, community climate, knowledge of issue, resources to issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atkinson and Willis (2006)</td>
<td>Trust, connectedness, resilience and enterprise, civic engagement, local networks, pride of place and self-worth, community leaders, community facilities, public amenities and open spaces, respecting difference, political advocacy and conflict resolution, willingness of those better off to assist those who are worse off or in crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balint (2006)</td>
<td>Individual and institutional competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith et al. (2006)</td>
<td>Knowledge, skills, commitment, partnership, leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MacLellan et al. (2007)</td>
<td>Community participation, community leadership, community structures, asking why, resource mobilization, link with others, external support, skill and knowledge and sense of community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bushell and Eagles (2007)</td>
<td>Human resources training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koutra (2007)</td>
<td>Human resource training and education, social, human, physical, and financial capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laverack and Thangphet (2009)</td>
<td>Participation, leadership, organisational structures, resource mobilisation, external linkage, problem assessment, project management, critical assessment, outside agents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aref (2011)</td>
<td>Participation, knowledge, skills, resources, education, sense of community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bennett et al. (2012)</td>
<td>Human capital, natural capital, financial capital, cultural capital, social capital</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Measurement of Community Capacity

Based on reviewed literature, a vast number of different concepts have been used to evaluate the capacity of communities. These include measuring different community attributes such as positive attitude, knowledge, skills, education and training, resource mobilisation, positive partnerships and collaborative arrangements between NGOs or
the private sector, coordination, participation, leadership, awareness, infrastructure, local cultural heritage and capital assets (Bennett et al., 2012; Chaskin et al., 2001; Forstner, 2004; Frank & Smith, 1999; Hiwasaki, 2006; Koutra, 2007; MacLellan-Wright et al., 2007; Murray & Dunn, 1995; Notzke, 2004; Williams & O’Neil, 2007a). Table 4 lists the most common attributes of community capacity selected based on three rules. One, only the more general dimensions were considered and those that correspond to a particular field of study (such as perceptions about health system) were excluded. Two, dimensions that were not mentioned frequently were not considered in Table 4. Three, in homogenising the dimension names, similar dimensions such as participation, civic engagement and involvement were grouped into one category (for example, participation). Therefore, a total of 11 attributes were considered as shown in Table 4. Authors’ names are also provided for a more complete overview of the community capacity dimensions.

Table 4. Most common attributes of community capacity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>References</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Aref, 2011; Balint, 2006; Bennett et al., 2012; Bopp et al., 2000; Bushell &amp; Eagles, 2007; Comello, 2005; Cottrell, 1976; Easterling et al., 1998; Ebbesen et al., 2004; Frank &amp; Smith, 1999; Kwan et al., 2003; Mabudafhasi, 2002; MacLellan-Wright et al., 2007; Moscardo, 2008a; Smith et al., 2006</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>Aref, 2011; Atkinson &amp; Willis, 2006; Balint, 2006; Bennett et al., 2012; Bopp et al., 2000; Bushell &amp; Eagles, 2007; Chaskin, 2001; Chinman et al., 2005; Cottrell, 1976; Easterling et al., 1998; Ebbesen et al., 2004; Frank &amp; Smith, 1999; Goodman et al., 1998; Kwan et al., 2003; Labonte &amp; Laverack, 2010; Laverack, 2005; Laverack &amp; Thangphet, 2009; MacLellan-Wright et al., 2007; Smith et al., 2006; Victurine, 2000</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifelong learning</td>
<td>Aref, 2011; Bopp et al., 2000; Budke, 2000; Bushell &amp; Eagles, 2007; Cole, 2006; Safari, 1990; Koutra, 2007; Kwan et al., 2003; Weiler &amp; Ham, 2002</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of community</td>
<td>Aref, 2011; Bopp et al., 2000; Chaskin, 2001; Goodman et al., 1998; Kwan et al., 2003; MacLellan-Wright et al., 2007; Pooley, Cohen &amp; Pike, 2005; Robinson &amp; Silvis, 1993</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Atkinson &amp; Willis, 2006; Blackman, 2008; Bopp et al., 2000; Comello, 2005; Easterling et al., 1998; Ebbesen et al., 2004; Frank &amp; Smith, 1999; Goodman et al., 1998; Labonte &amp; Laverack, 2010; Laverack, 2005; Laverack &amp; Thangphet, 2009; MacLellan-Wright et al., 2007; Smith et al., 2006; Thompson et al., 2003</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 (con’t)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shared vision</td>
<td>Bopp et al., 2000; Ebbesen et al., 2004; Frank &amp; Smith, 1999; Kwan et al., 2003; Murray &amp; Dunn, 1995; Robinson &amp; Silvis, 1993</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Aref, 2011; Atkinson &amp; Willis, 2006; Bopp et al., 2000; Chaskin, 2001; Comello, 2005; Cottrell, 1976; Ebbesen et al., 2004; Frank &amp; Smith, 1999; Goodman et al., 1998; Kwan et al., 2003; Labonte &amp; Laverack, 2010; Laverack, 2005; Laverack &amp; Thangphet, 2009; MacLellan-Wright et al., 2007; Malik &amp; Wagle, 2012; Skinner, 2006; Smith et al., 2006; Thompson et al., 2003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource mobilisation</td>
<td>Hough, 2012; Kwan et al., 2003; Labonte &amp; Laverack, 2010; Laverack, 2005; Laverack &amp; Thangphet, 2009; MacLellan-Wright et al., 2007; Skinner, 2006; Smith et al., 2006</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership</td>
<td>Budke, 2000; Chaskin et al., 2001; Eagles &amp; McCool, 2002; Forrest, 2008; Hiwasaki, 2006; Labonte &amp; Laverack, 2010; Laverack, 2005; Laverack &amp; Thangphet, 2009; MacLellan-Wright et al., 2007; Monypenny, 2008; Moscardo, 2008a; Notzke, 2004; Williams &amp; O’Neil, 2007b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social network</td>
<td>Bennett et al., 2012; Budke, 2000; Chaskin et al., 2001; Eagles &amp; McCool, 2002; Easterling et al., 1998; Koutra, 2007; Kwan et al., 2003; Monypenny, 2008</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>Aref, 2011; Bopp et al., 2000; Chaskin, 2001; Chinman et al., 2005; Comello, 2005; Goodman et al., 1998; Hough, 2012; Koster, 2008; Skinner, 2006; Thompson et al., 2003; Ebbesen et al., 2004; Frank &amp; Smith, 1999; Hiwasaki, 2006; Kwan et al., 2003; Moscardo, 2008a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Community Capacity Building

The term “community” in reference to community capacity building, is usually referred to (i) a specific geographical (spatial) community, (ii) a community of similar identity or (iii) groups of people with a common interest or issue (non-spatial) (Chapman & Kirk, 2001; Craig, 2007; Kwan et al., 2003). “Capacity building is a term which has become pervasive in the development terminology. Yet, to define capacity building invites a myriad of statements, definitions, theory and practice ranging from technical skill development to institutional development of civil society. The capacity building debate is dynamic and widespread, yet it lacks clarity, holds many ambiguities and has mixed and ultimately conflicting agendas” (O’Shaughnessy, 1999, p. 7). Community capacity building is a process aimed at strengthening the capacity of individuals and organisations to develop and sustain conditions that support all aspects of community life (Blackwell & Colmenar, 2000).
One of the most important aspects of community capacity building is clarifying the roles of various organisations to ensure their effective functioning in supporting community development efforts (Bennett et al., 2010). According to Simmons et al. (2011), the definitions of community capacity building have three common features: (1) community capacity building is a process/an approach; (2) capacity building is a collection of domains often referred to characteristics, aspects, capabilities or dimensions; and (3) incorporate an outcome or the rationale for building capacity. Moreover, there is agreement that community capacity building is contextual (Banks & Shenton, 2001). Hence, community capacity building is defined as the combined influence of a community’s commitment, resource mobilisation, and skills which can be deployed to build community strengths and address community problems (Mattessich et al., 1997). Community capacity building refers to the development of skills or competencies with the acknowledgement of historical and sociocultural backgrounds (Lemelin & Johnston, 2008). Goodman et al. (1998) described it “as a process as well as an outcome; it includes supportive organisational structures and processes; it is multi-dimensional and ecological in operating at the individual, group, organisational, community and policy levels; and it is context-specific”. According to Simmons et al. (2011), community capacity building is a process on a set of characteristics for a certain outcome. Generally, these characteristics are capabilities, abilities, knowledge, technical expertise, skills, and leadership, partnerships and capital assets (Simmons et al., 2011). The focus on leading the community to self-awareness (Freire, 2000) and attention to the current and potential assets that a community has access to (Frank & Smith, 1999), leads the community in undertaking further projects with independence and skill (Mitchell & Reid, 2001).

In the tourism context, capacity building is a necessary condition for sustainable development (Reid et al., 2004). It is a complex task that requires a coordinated, well-planned and long-term effort (Bennett et al., 2010) in order to empower local people to take advantage of the opportunities provided by tourism development (Laverack & Thangphet, 2009). According to Moscardo (2008b), capacity building for tourism includes components like planning, increasing knowledge and awareness, and implementing plans. Community capacity building for tourism development emphasises on a collaborative, ongoing, influential process based on relationships between people for development processes (Aref & Redzuan, 2009). Table 5 shows a summary of definitions for community capacity building (Verity, 2007).
Table 5. Summary of definitions for community capacity building

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>Building</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heterogeneous groups of individuals who share something and combine to act collectively</td>
<td>A container or base which can allow for exchange, and production</td>
<td>Assembling and constructing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Characteristics

- Based in geography-place
- Based in networks and organisations
- Based on common aspirations needs and interests
- Based on bonds and ties

- Relationships
- Commitment
- Resources
- Skills
- Knowledge
- Abilities
- Assets
- Leadership
- Infrastructure
- Supportive institutions
- Physical resources
- Participation structures
- Economic and financial resources
- Enabling policies, institutions and systems
- Links and networks between groups and systems

Processes that are:
- Dynamic
- Iterative
- Sustained
- Multiple
- Responsive
- Imaginative
- Mutually reinforcing
- Spontaneous and planned

Source: Verity (2007)

Barriers to Community Capacity Building

According to Aref (2011), one of the prerequisites for community involvement in tourism sector is understanding barriers to community capacity building. Understanding barriers to building community capacity helps governments to respond better to the priorities of local communities. The measurement of barriers to community capacity building for tourism development is a vital step in developing the community’s abilities to reach its goals (Marre & Weber, 2007). Table 6 shows the most common attributes found as barriers to community capacity studies.
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<tbody>
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<td>Limited community involvement/ support</td>
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<td>Power structure</td>
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<td>Dominance of government on local community</td>
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<td>Lack of relationship/coordination between community stakeholders and government</td>
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<td>Reliance on external agent and government</td>
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<td>Limited or no formal planning</td>
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<td>Absence/lack of capable local leadership</td>
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<td>Lack of capitals</td>
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<td>Lack of funding/financial resources</td>
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<td>Lack of human resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>False expectations of benefits and awareness of potential negative impacts</td>
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<td>Lack of skills and knowledge</td>
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<td>Lack of expertise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limited access to information</td>
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</table>
Review of Measurement Methodologies

In studies that looked at measurement of community capacity, the methodologies used were also reviewed. The findings are presented in Table 7 which shows the taxonomy of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. The table is divided into three sections encompassing qualitative, quantitative and mixed method techniques.

Table 7. A taxonomy review of different methods for measuring community capacity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Tool</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative techniques</td>
<td>46% Elicitation/open-ended questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus group discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In-depth interviews/ discussions with experts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative techniques</td>
<td>11% Questionnaire survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed method techniques</td>
<td>43% Combination of qualitative and quantitative tools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 7, approximately 46% of the reviewed articles described qualitative methods of measurement. These articles employed predominantly elicitation, focus group techniques and in-depth interviews to collect data. From the reviewed literature, in qualitative methods, researchers become more involved in trying to understand the function of capacity building programs in practice. Hence, it can be inferred that qualitative methods for community capacity studies can be a useful method for gaining an in-depth understanding of community relationships and dynamics.

As shown in Table 7, approximately 43% of the studied articles utilised a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods to measure community development. It was found that mixed methods help researchers gain actual information about what has been undertaken, information about community members’ perceptions of the process, the results achieved, and the overall benefits of the community development. In addition, the mixed method approach is found to complement data collection methods for community capacity studies.

Table 7 shows that only 11% of reviewed articles employed quantitative methods of measurement. These studies mostly utilised survey questionnaire. In community capacity studies, quantitative methods were mainly used for measuring programmatic outputs based on quantitative, narrowly-defined goals. For example, Aref (2011) used quantitative technique to find barriers to community capacity building in Shiraz/Iran. Quantitative methods offer less depth but more breadth of knowledge due to the focus on a much larger number of cases.
These methods are not appropriate or inappropriate until they are applied to a specific research problem. It is worth noting that each inquiry needs a specific method to be answered. Hence, it is important to remain open to the different ways in which community capacity may be measured as it depends on various parameters such as community, level of community, and research problems.

**Conceptual Framework of Measuring Community Capacity for Conserving Natural Resources**

Community capacity is one of the prerequisites of the development process and has a crucial role in sustaining it. The particularity of this construct creates many possible approaches to studying community capacity. As shown in the previous sections, a variety of dimensions have been identified in attempts to conceptualise community capacity building. Since some dimensions have different meanings for particular communities and the various levels within communities, a flexible approach was suggested when exploring community capacity building (Baker & Teaser-Polk, 1998). For instance, community members might have a different understanding of resource mobilisation compared to policy makers. The focus of this study was not to establish the dimensions of community capacity, but rather to explore the concept in relation to conservation of natural environment through individuals. Therefore, utilising pre-defined dimensions from the literature was assumed to be an appropriate approach. The process of finalising the dimensions adopted for this study is explained in the following steps. First, it may not be applicable to get information about some dimensions of community capacity through surveys. For example, respondents may need to have a certain degree of knowledge about their community to answer questions about community leadership. Second, some dimensions such as control over programme management also need certain assumptions regarding a community’s existing infrastructure. Third, some dimensions are too complex and complicated to be defined such as community power and social network.

In taking into account the aim of this study and based on the models of community capacity found in the literature, the work of Bopp et al. (2000) was found to be the most appropriate and useful basis to construct a research model of community capacity that conserves natural resources in ecotourist destinations. The proposed research sample for this study includes community members of ecotourist destinations who engage in tourism, and are well-versed with their community, the tourism industry and conservation of natural environment. It was noted that the most relevant dimensions for this study were shared vision, sense of community, participation, skills and knowledge and lifelong learning as shown in Figure 2. The rationale behind selecting these dimensions is avoiding using terms that might require respondents to be experts on their community and using concepts that could be applied in different community contexts or settings.
Community capacity is an important area for scholarly investigation. However, despite the importance of community capacity study for tourism development, it has received only limited attention in the tourism literature (Bourke & Luloff, 2010; Moscardo, 2008a; Reid et al., 2004). Previous studies were reviewed to help orient the stream of community capacity study in a conceptual model by following several steps. From a multidisciplinary point of view, this paper offers a review of topics focusing on community capacity and shows the importance of the conceptualisation and measurement of community capacity. It then organised and presented some of the identified measurement models of community capacity as well as the most common attributes of community capacity used for assessment or development studies and those identified as barriers to community capacity building. This study found that qualitative techniques are mainly used in measuring or building community capacity studies compared to quantitative and mixed method techniques. Finally, the conceptual framework for measuring community capacity in the conservation of natural resources in ecotourist destinations is shown in Figure 2. The lack of empirical evidence should be mentioned as a limitation of the study. The methodological procedure of reviewing could also be refined by focusing on theoretical or empirical contributions. Generally, the proposed conceptual framework can be helpful for tourism, government, operators, inside/outside developers and planners. The community capacity assessment helps them to identify weaknesses and strengths of that particular community in that particular destination. In other words, having the knowledge and information about the community will help planners and administrators to effectively control or/and reduce the negative

**Figure 2.** Conceptual framework for measuring community capacity for conserving natural resources

**Conclusion**
environmental impacts of tourism with the help of the local community. Thus, in pursuing sustainable tourism development, the capacity of the host community in conserving natural environment should receive extra attention and more support, so that tourism can directly maintain the development process and reduce the creation of negative environmental impacts.

Acknowledgement

The funding for this project is made possible through the research grant obtained from the Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia under the Long Term Research Grant Scheme 2011 [LRGS grant no: JPT.S (BPKI)2000/09/01/015Jld.4(67)].

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Industry Paper

Aligning the Stars: Quality Assurance in Tonga’s Tourism Accommodation Sector

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Abstract: Quality standards are an integral part of achieving a world-class competitive tourism industry in Tonga. Developing an accreditation framework for the accommodation business is part of a range of interventions designed to improve the outcomes for tourism in Tonga. The current minimum standards do not prepare or incentivise the accommodation business to improve, and whilst they are a useful building block, it is now timely to develop a more integrated and sustained approach to reflect and improve the quality of accommodation. After a number of individual meetings and wider stakeholder consultations with industry, the consensus made was to develop a star rating system (ranging from 1 to 5 stars). Stakeholders also highlighted that the proposed Tonga Accommodation Star Rating System should apply to all accommodation facilities once they are licensed under the Tourist Act. The introduction of this system will support the development needs of the tourism industry, whilst also providing visitors with appropriate expectations about the level of service and facility they will receive. This strategy was adopted not only to ensure integrity, and also because it can be easily understood and administered to other Pacific nations.

Keywords: Tonga, star rating system, accommodation, quality assurance, tourism


Introduction

Classification systems for accommodations are a common practice globally; however, there have not been many studies that looked at analysing these frameworks (López & Serrano, 2004). Historically, studies have explored the connection between the characteristics identified by customers when they choose an accommodation, and
the features offered by the hotel’s star rating (Callan, 1998; Callan, 1999). Israeli and Uriely (2000) and Israeli (2002) who analysed the relationship between star rating and value concluded that star rating systems are a decent indicator of value and quality. More recent research has centred on investigating different features of star rating systems including the importance of incorporating environmental features (García-Pozo, Sánchez-Ollero & Marchante-Mera, 2013), the relationship between quality and price (Abratea, Caprielloa & Fraquellia, 2011) and whether stars are actually a good indicator of quality (Núñez-Serranoa, Turrióna & Velázquez, 2014). However, there has not been much research on the development of national and regional star rating systems or whether tourism industry stakeholders support such systems.

Tourism is the largest foreign exchange earner in Tonga and Tonga relies heavily on its tourism products to attract international travellers from around the globe. A major concern for tourism development in Tonga is the growing expectations of visitors for quality accommodation. An accredited star rating system provides assurance to potential tourists travelling to Tonga that the accommodation they have booked will meet a benchmarked level of quality. The main innovative feature of this paper is the development of a star rating system template that can be applied to the tourism accommodation sector of Tonga and other Pacific nations through a regional approach. Another feature of this paper is the assessment of stakeholder perceptions towards the development of a quality assurance program in Tonga.

Literature Review

Star Rating Systems

There is a large volume of information on accommodation, facilities and services available to tourists. Tourists can access this wealth of information through a wide range of platforms including brochures, websites, guidebooks and advertisements. Therefore, the chief objective of quality assurance systems is to provide a structured resource for tourists to make informed decisions regarding tourism accommodation and facilities on the basis of value for money (World Tourism Organisation, 2015). Traditionally, quality standards accreditation programmes or star rating systems are a respectable indicator of quality, where quality is defined as sufficiently meeting customer expectations and requirements (López & Serrano, 2004). Quality standards accreditation programmes indicate a tangible obligation of businesses to specific service levels, with a high star rating indicating good quality establishment that can therefore demand a better price tag.

Accommodation providers listed in commercial guidebooks and that are high-profile are more likely to adhere to quality assurance programs, thus achieving a competitive marketing advantage in the local market (Núñez-Serranoa, Turrióna
Aligning the Stars: Quality Assurance in Tonga’s Tourism Accommodation Sector

& Velázquez, 2014). For tourism businesses, quality standard systems can help to enhance their image, function as a marketing platform, expand their networking, and may be used as a mechanism to address issues of quality and sustainability (World Tourism Organisation, 2015). Tourism stakeholders are not always supportive of rating systems as it requires a certain level commitment to innovation and time to improve practices and standards. Furthermore, implementing and maintaining a quality assurance programme requires large amounts of financial investment.

There are no international standards for accommodation star ratings, with most establishments using a rating system either managed by an industry association or developed by a tourism-related board. In Europe, there is a myriad of accommodation star rating systems with conflicting evaluation performance criteria, creating complications in quality control and comparability. The United Kingdom (UK) should be commended for their common approach to developing a universal star rating system. This has ensured that the national tourism organisations of UK and Scotland, the Wales Tourist Board and the Automobile Association of UK all use the same common standards for Hotel, Budget Hotel and Bed and Breakfast categories. Previously, different criteria were used, often resulting in the same accommodation business getting a different star rating from different classifiers. The different classifiers, however, also practice additional awards for other categories like food, comfort and service (Automobile Association, 2014).

Star Rating Systems in the South Pacific

The main tourist markets to Tonga are from New Zealand and Australia; therefore a review of the source countries’ star standards is an important consideration to the development of this programme. The Australian star rating scheme is owned and administered by the Australian Automobile Association (AAA). This system dates back to 1915 when motoring groups in Australia gave their members information on properties available for accommodation. In 1963, an official star rating system was developed, and in the 1980s and 1990s, new categories including caravan parks, bed and breakfast, serviced apartments and guest houses were added. A points-based system is used to score facilities and services. This inventory counting system is generally favoured in litigious marketplaces and is not designed to significantly build the capability of an industry. The star rating is based on scores accumulated in three areas: 1) services and facilities, 2) cleanliness, and 3) quality and condition (Australian Automotive Association, 2014). Each area has a different weighting system, and percentage bands are different for each area. A consumer importance weighting index is also applied which establishes an importance value to the different facilities. Minimum requirements were removed with the overall result determining the star rating. The AAA’s rating system was reviewed again in 2011, and the scoring system was modified based on consumer research about what consumers valued.
The New Zealand star rating scheme is administered by Qualmark New Zealand. Similar to Australia, the New Zealand Automobile Association has been publishing information about properties since the 1940s. In 1993, Qualmark New Zealand was formed as a joint venture between the Automobile Association, the New Zealand Tourism Board, and Tourism New Zealand. New categories were introduced, and in 2001, new criteria were added. In 2008, a new criteria related to the environment, responsible tourism was developed. In 2011, criteria and audit methodologies were reviewed and changed to give businesses more say on the way they were audited (Qualmark, 2012). The criteria are based on a number of statements that follow the Keno model of quality function deployment. The Keno model indicates that there are three types of needs: basic needs, performance needs and excitement needs (Liu, 2006). The Qualmark system is based on having statements divided into three columns. The more statements that are ticked, the greater the score for that area. Minimum requirements must also be met to achieve a star rating (Qualmark, 2012).

**Sustainability and Star Rating Systems**

Environmental and sustainable considerations are also an integral component for any tourism business. An increasing number of environmental certifications exist, and it is generally accepted that future tourists will increasingly look for destinations and businesses that demonstrate that they are environmentally and socially responsible. García-Pozo et al. (2013) highlighted that customers positively value the application of environmentally sustainable measures and are prepared to pay a premium price. No global standards have yet been agreed; however, considerable work has been done by United Nations that supports the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). The GSTC published their environmental-based criteria in 2008, and now operates an accreditation scheme to certify agencies that use the GSTC criteria. The GSTC has an accreditation process whereby it will accredit the certifying body, which will then assess the businesses for compliance to this standard. Costs vary and the process takes place anywhere between 9 to 18 months (Global Sustainable Tourism Council, 2010).

**Case Study: Tonga**

Tonga is located south of Western Samoa, in the South Pacific Ocean, and roughly two-thirds of the way from Hawaii to New Zealand (Figure 1). Tonga’s 176 islands attract tourists for its uncrowded beautiful natural environment and relaxed atmosphere, where visitors can enjoy an authentic mix of centuries-old culture, history and unique wildlife. Tourism is Tonga’s principal foreign exchange earner, larger than any other industry, valued at T$58 million in 2010 (Reserve Bank of Tonga, 2011). Tourism is now the chief contributor to their gross domestic product, growing from 6% in 2001 to approximately 27% in 2011 (Ministry of Finance, 2011).
Approximately two-thirds of Tonga’s total international travel market (visitors plus residents) is accounted from Australia and New Zealand. In 2013, visitors from Australia and New Zealand accounted for around 71% of arrivals and departures at Fua’amotu Airport (Figure 2). The remaining 29% visitors were from North America (12%), UK and Europe (7%), other Pacific nations (5%) and Asia (4%) (Figure 3) (Ministry of Commerce, Tourism and Labour, 2013a). The New Zealand and Australian markets have grown steadily while the North American market has decreased due to the effects of the Global Financial Crisis. The most recent international visitor survey indicated that 44% of tourists visit Tonga for seven to ten days and the median age of travellers was 42 years old (Ministry of Commerce, Tourism and Labour, 2013b).

Figure 1. Map of Tonga (Ministry of Commerce, Tourism and Labour, 2013a, p. 6)

Figure 2. Tonga tourist arrivals (Ministry of Commerce, Tourism and Labour, 2013a, p. 14)
Tonga’s tourism industry is relatively undeveloped when compared to its South Pacific neighbours of Samoa and the Cook Islands, whereby each receives roughly two and a half times more visitors per year than Tonga (Tonga Tourism Association, 2013). Tonga’s international tourist arrivals increased by 3,000 visitors between the years of 2009 and 2012; however, this growth is similar to Samoa that experienced an equally insignificant increase over the same time period (World Bank, 2014). International tourist demand for Tonga as a tourist destination has slowed over the past several years, mainly caused by the recent global recession which seems to have affected the island economies more than their larger Pacific neighbours like Australia and New Zealand (Ministry of Commerce, Tourism and Labour, 2013a). The overall number of air arrivals remains stagnant at 50,000 in the past 3 years (Figure 3).

In 2008, the Tongan government’s Strategic Development Plan highlighted the tourism sector as a priority area for the economic development of the country and identified the importance of linkages between tourism and the community (Ministry of Tourism, 2008). Despite these findings, there have been few attempts by academic researchers to investigate how these linkages could be enhanced by increasing local community participation in the tourism industry. Recent studies related to tourism in Tonga have centred on economic significance (Orams, 2013), managerial implications (Kessler & Harcourt, 2012) and the sustainability (Kessler, Harcourt & Heller, 2013) of the whale watching industry.

**Star Rating Systems in Tonga**

In 2001, the Tourism Development and Licensing unit of Tonga Visitors Bureau introduced a set of minimum standards based on work undertaken to ensure
compliance with the growing expectations of visitors (South Pacific Tourism Organisation, 2005). In particular, the European Union had passed travel directives designed to protect its citizens when travelling abroad. The World Tourism Organisation supported the development of programmes designed to improve visitor welfare and safety (World Tourism Organisation, 2005). A booklet entitled The Minimum Standards for Accommodation Facilities in Tonga was introduced in July 2001 and was made mandatory effective 1 January 2002 (South Pacific Tourism Organisation, 2005). Applications for accommodation facilities using the prescribed form must be accompanied with a Health Regulation certificate and comments from the Fire Department on fire safety equipment and training. Five personnel representing the Fire, Environmental and Tourism departments will conduct annual visits to tourist properties. Standard and optional items are identified, and each standard is scored from 1 to 5, with 1 being very poor and 5 being excellent. The scores are for the benefit of the assessed property and are not reflected in a wider rating programme. If the business meets the minimum standards, it is accredited and granted a tourism licence to operate. Unfortunately, due to resource constraints, these visits have not been undertaken in the last few years.

Methodology

Field research was conducted in three stages. Stage one consisted of stakeholder meetings undertaken between 29th April and 10th June 2011; specifically, 29th April in Nuku’alofa, after word 8th June in Neiafu, Vava’u and 10th June in Nuku’alofa. Informal meetings were selected as the most appropriate qualitative research method in Tonga as it suited Pasifika oral traditions and collective thought processes. Employing techniques that empower participants assists in identifying important issues and leads to more meaningful engagement in the research process (Vaioleti, 2006). The main objective of the meetings was to develop a quality assurance programme that can help improve the standards and quality of facilities in Tonga. The discussions focused specifically on benchmarking Tongan tourism facilities with other destinations in the South Pacific, using Qualmark in New Zealand as an industry best practice. The meetings were attended by relevant stakeholders in the Tonga’s tourism and travel industry as well as key government ministers, heads of department and senior officials. Industry stakeholders were identified through the Ministry of Tourism and Commerce database that issues tourism licenses to Tongan tourism business operators. The researchers manually recorded responses from attendees at the meetings.

In stage two, all the tourism facilities in the main centres of Tonga (Eua, Haapai, Vava’u, and Tongatapu) were surveyed. Altogether, 92 tourism facilities were inspected over a three month period. Stage three of the study comprised a follow-up consultation with the same stakeholders where the first working draft for Tonga’s star
rating system was presented. The stakeholders were asked to submit their feedback on the draft. The feedback was discussed and relevant suggestions were incorporated into the final draft. The subsequent data analysis consisted of grouping themes raised in the meetings and discussions. These themes were then investigated in more detail and integrated into the development of the Tongan tourism star rating system.

Findings

There was overwhelming support from stakeholders to implement a star rating system that would measure facilities, service and business practices, including sustainable practices. The stakeholders however, did voice concerns over the cost to each facility and the frequency of assessments. They also sought clarification on how assessments would be carried out and the criteria to be applied to each category. Ministers and key government officials were very supportive of the project and wanted to see it implemented as soon as possible. Departments such as Public Health, Police, Fire and Trading Licence Authority indicated that although they have their own legal requirements to follow and minimum standards to monitor, the main problem that they face is budget constraints, and consequently, they will be unable to embark on regular inspections. It was noted that the last inspection visit from any of these relevant departments to tourism properties was carried out more than two years ago. At the final consultation meetings, the team put forward a star rating system that may be appropriate for Tonga. There was a general consensus from all the stakeholders that this exercise be implemented urgently as they would like to see some tangible benefits.

A star rating system called “Tongan Mark” that measures facilities, service and business practices was successfully developed to support quality and standards for Tongan tourism accommodation businesses (Figure 4). The system covers four categories: hotels, resorts, apartments (includes motels) and guesthouses (includes backpacker hostel, bungalow, and fale) allowing a range of tourism accommodation providers to be included. The star rating for Tonga accommodations is determined by an annual on-site audit, conducted by trained auditors. The star rating is based on an assessment of 50 items that are scored 1 to 5: 1 = acceptable; 2 = good; 3 = very good; 4 = excellent and 5 = exceptional, with a maximum score of 250 points. The score achieved is then known as the Tonga Mark star rating. A set of minimum standards were incorporated into the one star level with a time period allocated to address the minimum requirements. If a business fails to achieve this level, then the tourism licence will not be issued. The star rating system is designed to provide written and verbal feedback to the business. This will build the proprietors’ capability and assist them with service and facility improvement.
The Tonga Mark five bands are based on best practices, and whilst many international rating systems have complex internal rules (such as marginal zones and minimum levels), the purpose of this system is to keep it simple, easy to understand and administer. An accommodation facility with one star rating would have acceptable standards of quality, basic, accommodation with limited facilities. A two star property will have a good level of accommodation with a moderate range of facilities that deliver good value. A three star property will have high-quality accommodation and a wide range of very good services and facilities that meet the comprehensive needs of their guests. A four star property will have an excellent level of accommodation, superior comfort and quality to meet the discerning needs of a wide variety of guests. The top band on the Tonga Mark rating system is five stars where accommodation will be of an exceptional level, achieving world class standards and delivery that exceed all guest expectations.

**Conclusion and Limitations**

This study examined the perceptions of multiple stakeholders on the development of a star rating system for accommodation facilities in the Tongan tourism industry. Results reveal that the majority of stakeholders believed the development of a star rating system was a positive step forward for the Tongan tourism industry and its implementation would be beneficial for local businesses. These findings contribute
to the existing body of knowledge associated with tourism and star rating systems (Israeli & Uriely, 2000; Israeli, 2002; López & Serrano, 2004; Abratea et al., 2011; García-Pozo et al., 2013; Núñez-Serranoa et al., 2014) in providing insights into the level of support local stakeholders exhibit for the development of a national quality assurance programme. A key finding of this study was that the creation of an effective national tourism quality assurance program requires input and support from a range of tourism industry stakeholders and it is crucial to have a feedback loop (as shown in Figure 4) to allow continual improvement through the experiences of local stakeholders.

A major challenge for tourism development in Tonga is in providing high-quality tourism products that satisfy international visitors’ expectations. This research demonstrates that an accredited star rating system provides indications of quality across clearly defined accommodation categories and star rating bands. The star rating system will permit prospective tourists travelling to Tonga to make informed decisions about their preferred resort, motel or guesthouse, allowing accommodation expectations to be met. Another challenge for Tonga is using the rating system in promotional materials in the hopes of attracting international tourists. The Tonga Mark provides Tonga with a competitive advantage over other Pacific Nations as prospective visitors can be assured of the quality of accommodation facilities. Unfortunately at the time of writing this paper, there has been limited buy-in from stakeholders. However, there are plans to incorporate the Tonga Mark into the official Tonga tourism website and the next edition of their promotional booklet.

This research was limited as the results could not be compared with other studies investigating industry support, the development of a star rating system or benchmarking with other Pacific nations because this study is the first of its kind undertaken in the region. Fiji, Tahiti and New Caledonia all have their own star ratings systems; however, they are imported from large global hotel chains such as Scenic Hotels and were not developed specifically for their own country. Another limitation was that the study developed star rating criteria that was appropriate for existing facilities without the consideration of new construction or building codes, customer needs and marketing objectives.

**Future Research**

Future research should assess other sectors of the tourism industry such as cafes and attractions, inclusion of sustainable criteria and the effectiveness of the current auditing process for all accommodation business. The inclusion of sustainable criteria would give Tongan tourism businesses a unique advantage over other Pacific Nations in the medium term. More specifically, there needs to be transparent and documentable application, verification and certification procedures (Font, 2002) as well as an appeal and complaints process as part of the overall star rating system.
Secondary studies are needed to assess the uptake of “Tonga Mark” by government and private sector stakeholders and whether or not the development of a star rating system was successful in producing an increase in visitor numbers to Tonga. Lastly it is hoped that other Pacific nations will employ the “Tonga Mark” template provided by this study and create their own customised star rating system with the end goal of creating a standardised Pacific-wide quality assurance program for all tourism activities and accommodations.

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References


Interdisciplinary Approach and Target in the Value-added Wine Tourism

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Abstract: “Wine is as old as the thirst of man, not the physical thirst which man can so easily slake with water, as his horse and his dog do, but the heaven-sent thirst for what will still our fears – that our mind be at peace; and stir our sense and sensibility – that we shall not ignore nor abuse God’s good gifts – wine not the least of them” (Simon et al., 1969). Wine tourism along with gastronomic tourism can give an ideal opportunity for tourism stakeholders to create unusual, essential tourism experiences. Wine and gastronomy tourism decrease the effects of an economic and social monoculture that results when tourism drive out other economic and social activities. The marriage between these two and nearby attractions also creates destinations. Tourism researchers have proved that gastronomy and wine are a critical and substantial part of any holiday, one that may even represent one third of tourist expenditure (Telfer & Wall, 2000). Some academicians, having in mind sustainability and quality, might prefer to use culinary tourism or oenogastronomic tourism by including wine as one of the main substances. Even though the significance of food and wine can be understood in these terms, the value-added characteristic of wine is missing and cannot be detected in this terminology. Nevertheless, it is extremely significant to consider sustainability and quality in the transformation of wine and gastronomic products into tourism products. Our research question is “which comes first; sustainable wine production or sustainable tourism?” Regardless of the answer, we are able to illuminate the importance of wine and gastronomy production for tourism in general and evaluate the benefits for stakeholders from these activities. Once a destination has established the meaning and appearance of its wine and gastronomic richness for potential tourists, it should be imperative to develop strategies that will focus on gastronomy and wine to market them as tourist products.

Keywords: Value-added winetourism, wine, destination, cultural and rural tourism

Introduction

Sustainability refers to an understanding that meets the needs of present without compromising the same needs of the future generation. It is a strategy for development that improves the quality of human life and at the same time, conserves the vitality and diversity of the Earth (IUCN, 1991, p. 8). This type of development also provides for basic needs without threatening the future generations’ needs. Sustainability involves entire production cycles including total logistic and packaging. Vineyard workers regard themselves as part of the social environment in vine cultivation. Sustainability is far more than a catchphrase. It is also more comprehensive than taking an ecological approach to grape growing. It basically involves the environment, the people and economic limitations.

Food means more than eating. Food relates to issues of identity, culture, production, consumption and, increasingly, issues of sustainability (Hall & Mitchell, 2000). This view is useful in analysing oenogastronomy. By eating local food and drinking local wine, the tourist also becomes an actor of that particular culture and has a direct link with that community (Poulain, 2000). Food and wine represent powerful eye-catchers and strong symbols of quality of life (Frochot, 2003).

The Term Sustainability

Foundation and Implementation

Most developments in any field are planned by taking into account immediate needs and desires. Certain activities are labeled sustainable just because it is a popular term without fully understanding the real meaning and essence behind it. Likewise social responsibilities with or without sustainability in mind might have been similarly used in tourism planning but respecting and understanding the ecosystem balance means taking account of the carrying capacity. Having a social responsibility means bringing in tourists to be in a dialogue with the places and peoples they visit so that they can think more profoundly about concepts such as tradition, culture, representation, sustainability etc. (Bruner, 2005). Economic efficiency goes beyond economic benefits; it means a correct balance between economic systems and the environmental reality. It also means utilising renewable resources, increasing quality of life, maintaining cultural identity, avoiding all kinds of meritocracy and colonialism without missing out on innovative approaches all the way through. Biodiversity should not be considered a luxury; it plays an important role in the interaction between biotic and abiotic components and is vital for future generations.

Policies that are sustainable in nature are required to minimise negative effects on tourism destinations. To achieve this, they need to be carefully researched, planned and applied and environmental changes need to be monitored. If there are any changes, then necessary actions need to be taken.
Formulating and implementing sustainability policies has not always been well-received or been easy to implement because future developments can only be estimated. In addition, it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of sustainable policies. For these reasons, it is often difficult to reach a common ground amongst stakeholders. More often than not, this often leads to arguments between stakeholders even if sustainable development is a vital agenda. Good tourism planning balances well the quality of life of the local residents and that of the visitors including future ones. It is successful only when this balance can be achieved without compromising any essentials, partially or totally. In addition, it should be a shared success for all stakeholders. All successes and failures are future references for future generations and role models are good for easy emulation and vice versa. Increased awareness, environmental strategies and a coherent theme for food and wine can be integrated for a sustainable food and wine tourism.

**Sustainability in Wine Production**

Sustainability ensures the long-term health of the culture, economy and environment. In order to enjoy quality of life, any tourism development should emphasise on long-term environmental wellbeing which includes quality of life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems. In other words, sustainable development should not weaken the environmental and/or social systems in which it operates. Many of the problems of tourism are the results of poor planning of development and management (Godfrey & Clarke, 2000). Sustainable development requires careful
planning and policies that are constructed accordingly through the social lens. Broad policy issues include land use planning and tourist access to conservation reserves, environmental impact assessment, mitigation and monitoring constraints imposed by health and hygiene law, client expectations and market demands, and the choice and effectiveness of policy instruments such as regulations, market-based measures, and education programs (Buckley, 1996). Living in a sustainable manner improves wellbeing, health, physical and mental performance as well as reduces environmental and health problems. Sustainability is related closely to the quality of life at a personal or social level. All issues that affect human life are interrelated. For this specific reason, if social, environmental and economic issues are viewed separately, the outcome will be meaningless and worthless. Likewise, a solution to one issue could jeopardise another issue in the worst-case scenario. Needless to say, understanding these issues and their mutual connections mean understanding sustainability and balance. It also requires starting from the individual level and getting to the global level to ensure that our development continues without harming the existing level of environmental quality that we all depend. Sustainable understanding puts a limit on the usage of natural resources. On the other hand, it is worthwhile to note that sustainable communities can only be created and developed by the people who are living there. It is always possible to develop some ideas and creations for the societies that you are not part of but as the saying goes, even a broken watch can show the right time twice a day. Sometimes solutions and/or proposals made by someone outside of the said society may be true by coincidence. In everyday life, we are always looking at adding value; in financial systems, there is a tax filed under the name of added-value tax which is exactly determined but in our everyday life, added-value cannot be defined. This question should be thought thoroughly, for example, which kind of value should be looked for and created, how much value and to what expense? What would be the opportunity cost and how can we create synergy between values?

Material & Methods

The implementation of sustainability programmes in six different regions/countries were examined and analysed using a qualitative research method. These regions are the most important vine producing regions around the world and are certified by internationally accepted bodies. It is necessary to consider which criteria are used to evaluate sustainability in these regions. Sustainable agriculture and legally codified agriculture have developed since the first quarter of the nineteenth century (Francis & Youngberg, 1990). Sustainable agriculture is characterised by a system that takes into perspective the stewardship of natural and human resources (Zucca, Smith & Mitry, 2009). There are clear legal requirements regarding organic viticulture although there is a lack of international agreement with regard to sustainability for wine cultivation.
In leading wine-producing countries around the world, there are well-established and ongoing sustainability programmes. The approaches used in the programmes distinctly use related measurable indicators for evaluating sustainability. While some programmes are based on existing ecological certifications, others include social and economic aspects. On the other hand, other regions such as California, Chile and South Africa have developed their own criteria. The carbon footprint feature was recently included in the Germany and Australia programs. The Old World wine producers undertake sustainable activities within the wine growing regions whereas The New World producers adapt sustainability at the national level. From the consumer point of view, it is critical to create a common understanding of sustainability in order to make reasonable comparisons between products.

People and their homes rely on biological diversity for vitality and stability. As such, initiatives on conservation and biodiversity should be made a part of sustainable development. This includes soil management, land use management, water use management, fertilisation and nutrition management as well as farming practices and other issues such as wine quality, farming costs and ecosystem quality (Ohrmart, 2008). To achieve sustainability and maintain standards, some business tools like scorecard reporting and tracking, benchmarking, efficiency, waste management and recycling management are used.

**Quality under the Light of Sustainability**

In the past, quality was commonly associated with taste, ripeness, freshness, or flavor, as defined by those involved in the production (Warner, 2007). When we speak about quality in tourism, we should consider the way tourism products respond to the sustainable needs and satisfaction of stakeholders. Of the various characteristics that distinguish tourist services from other types of services, the most prominent is its ubiquity in the environment. In other words, the strong presence of the environment in tourism is due to the conversion in the production and common use of distribution channels when it comes to the way the product is advertised and chosen by users. Motivations for consuming local food and beverages at destinations can be categorised into nine factors, namely exciting experience, escape from routine, health concern, learning knowledge, authentic experience, togetherness, prestige, sensory appeal, and physical environment (Kim, Eves & Scarles, 2009). Quality is the common thread in all these motivations and is always linked to the terroir and type of grape used to produce the wine. In trying to distinguish the quality of food and wine tourism, we ought to take into consideration a balance between product quality and environment quality.

The added value that wine tourists seek can be linked to more humanistic, experiential and educative experiences that extend beyond simply consuming wine (Williams & Dossa, 2003). Wine tourists travel to destinations defined by
two specific characteristics, namely cru and terroir, which means designated areas where wine is produced and landscape, respectively. Terroir signifies more than the relationship between soil and wine (White, 2003). Cru and terroir bring together not only the cultural but also economic aspects of wine and gastronomic tourism. For an unforgettable experience, these two factors materialise through the learning process of visitors and/or through the artistic work of tourist guide. “The agronomic and scientific meaning given to the term terroir is linked to the three physical markers of agricultural production, earth/rock-soil-atmosphere, and as a consequence, geology, geomorphology, topography, climate and so on. However, it also encapsulates the impact of human intervention (cultural, technological, etc.) on the land” (Croce & Perri, 2010, pp. 20). Certification of quality like AOC, DOC etc. looks at the origin of the product whereas a cru possesses qualities other than the geographic area. Designated landscapes are quite similar to living organisms; animated with their own values, each landscape manifests a life sample. Tourism enables visitors to enjoy multi-sensory experiences within landscapes which have a certain history, culture and a social life form. Tourists are motivated to experience this culture (McKercher, Cross & McKercher, 2002). Plus, tourism is increasingly becoming an important form of cultural consumption (Richards, 1996). In that sense, food and wine consumption is a great way to promote the identity and culture of destinations (Kim, Yuan, Goh & Antun, 2009).

![Figure 2. Sustainability & quality](image)

Source: Soil Quality for Environmental Health / soilquality.org

The travel industry is the world’s largest industry and is global in nature (Kotler & Makens, 1999). Big social movements influence community choices and the environment. Destinations face the potential of destruction if they become too commercialised and they risk facing the loss of their qualities (Butler, 2006). Eco-municipalities take into consideration the environment and tourist destinations. These municipalities take a systematic approach based on sustainability and involve community members at all levels of planning and development. In the United States, there are twelve eco-municipalities and even American Planning Association (APA)
has adopted same sustainable principles. There are five levels in the framework model for planning and decision-making in complex systems: system, success, strategy, actions and tools.

Quality is the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that influences its ability to satisfy implied or stated needs (ANSI/ASQC STD A3-1987). Whatever the description might be, we are not able to use it if it is not manageable. Without taking into account sustainability, there is little or no benefit left to be gained from quality management. In maintaining a competitive advantage, it should not just emphasise on the present but also look at the future. Quality is a journey and not a destination; in other words, quality is an ongoing process control rather than a part of a process. Stronger motivation towards set standards is associated with better outcomes. This motivation enables us to consider consequences to innovation and provide information about feasibility. Quality takes time and energy because it does not occur on its own; sometimes, it needs adaptation.

Quality and sustainability are socially defined, constructed and applied subjective terms. Quality has always been the focus for researchers due to its potential to develop bridges between various concepts. Quality is a term that can link increasing consumer demand for various products with the evolving rules and regulations for environmental protection. In dealing with these business dynamics, change towards a more common style of management or business philosophy may prove to be the most suitable management change for the benefit of all. Quality has become a major interest for both public and private emerging global markets and thus deserves a comprehensive, logical approach.

Quality Control Mechanisms

Quality and customer service records (CSR) have been merged into ISO 26000 which guides on social responsibility. Initially, ISO 9000 was launched for the first time in 1987. In 1996, it evolved into a family of environmental quality standards with ISO 14001. However, there is no framework that puts these standards together. The International Standard Organisational (ISO) provides support to various organisations by providing guidelines. Another common characteristic between CSR and quality is that the focus is on people. ISO 26000 makes a close connection between people and quality management that includes fair practices, human and labor rights. These two disciplines are also environment-friendly and opens up opportunities for possible, innovative approaches. As environment-friendly policies, wasted materials, distracted employees, dissatisfied customers and poor performances are examined under the concept of sustainability, quality and sustainability both require proactive approaches rather than reactive approaches. Furthermore, both of these depend on collaborations between stakeholders at every level.
Table 1. Definitions of sustainable development implicitly or explicitly adopted by selected indicator initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator initiative</th>
<th>Number of indicators</th>
<th>Implicit or explicit?</th>
<th>What is sustained?</th>
<th>What is developed?</th>
<th>Time period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commission on Sustainable Development\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Implicit, but informed by Agenda 21</td>
<td>Climate, clean air, land productivity, ocean productivity, fresh water, and biodiversity</td>
<td>Equity, health, education, housing, security, stabilised population</td>
<td>Sporadic references to 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultative Group on Sustainable Development Indicators\textsuperscript{b}</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
<td>Not stated; uses data from 1990 and 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellbeing Index\textsuperscript{c}</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>Explicit</td>
<td>“A condition in which the ecosystem maintains its diversity and quality—and thus its capacity to support people and the rest of life—and its potential to adapt to change and provide a wide change of choices and opportunities for the future”</td>
<td>“A condition in which all members of society are able to determine and meet their needs and have a large range of choices to meet their potential”</td>
<td>Not stated; uses data as recent as 2001 and includes some indicators of recent change (such as inflation and deforestation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Sustainability Index\textsuperscript{d}</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Explicit</td>
<td>“Vital environmental systems are maintained at healthy levels, and to the extent in which levels improve rather than Resilience to environmental disturbances (“People and social systems are not vulnerable (for basic</td>
<td>Resilience to environmental disturbances (“People and social systems are not vulnerable (for basic</td>
<td>Not stated; uses data as recent as 2002 and includes some indicators of recent change (such as deforestation) or</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 (con’t)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genuine Progress Indicator&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>26</th>
<th>Explicit</th>
<th>Clean air, land, and water</th>
<th>Economic performance, families, and security</th>
<th>predicted change (such as population in 2025)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


<sup>a</sup> United Nations (2001)
<sup>b</sup> International Institute of Sustainable Development (2007)
<sup>c</sup> Prescott-Allen (2001)

“levels of anthropogenic stress are low enough to engender no demonstrable harm to its environmental systems.” needs such as health and nutrition) to environmental disturbances; becoming less vulnerable is a sign that a society is on a track to greater sustainability”;
“institutions and underlying social patterns of skills, attitudes, and networks that foster effective responses to environmental challenges”; and cooperation among countries “to manage common environmental problems”.

Explicitly stated: Clean air, land, and water

Genuine Progress Indicator<sup>a</sup> was stated in 2000.

Not stated; computed annually from 1950–2000.
### Table 1 (cont)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator initiative</th>
<th>Number of indicators</th>
<th>Implicit or explicit?</th>
<th>What is sustained?</th>
<th>What is developed?</th>
<th>Time period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global Scenario Group</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Explicit</td>
<td>“Preserving the essential health, services, and beauty of the earth requires stabilising the climate at safe levels, sustaining energy, materials, and water resources, reducing toxic emissions, and maintaining the world’s ecosystems and habitats.”</td>
<td>Institutions that “meet human needs for food, water, and health, and provide opportunities for education, employment and participation”</td>
<td>Through 2050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecological Footprint</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Explicit</td>
<td>“Areas of biologically productive land and water required to produce the resources consumed and to assimilate the wastes produced by humanity”</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not explicitly stated; computed annually from 1961–1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Interagency Working Group on Sustainable Development Indicators</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Explicit</td>
<td>Environment, natural resources, and ecosystem services</td>
<td>Dignity, peace, equity, economy, employment, safety, health, and quality of life</td>
<td>Current and future generations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>Implicit</td>
<td>Ecosystem services, natural resources, and biodiversity</td>
<td>Economic and social development</td>
<td>Not stated; includes some time series dating back to 1950</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 1 (con't)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boston Indicator Project</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>Implicit</td>
<td>Open/green space, clean air, clean water, clean land, valued ecosystems, biodiversity, and aesthetics</td>
<td>Civil society, culture, economy, education, housing, health, safety, technology, and transportation</td>
<td>Not stated; uses most recent data as of 2000 and some indicators of recent change (such as change in poverty rates)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Failure Task Force</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>Explicit</td>
<td>Intrastate peace/security</td>
<td>Two years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Reporting Initiative</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>Implicit</td>
<td>Reduced consumption of raw materials and reduced emissions of environmental contaminants from production or product use</td>
<td>Profitability, employment, diversity of workforce, dignity of workforce, health/safety of workforce, and health/safety/ privacy of customers</td>
<td>Current reporting year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kates, Parris, & Leiserowitz (2005).  
Wackernagel et al. (2002) and Wackernagel, Monfreda & Deumling (2002)  
Ministry of National Planning and Political Economy (1998)  
Boston Foundation (2002)  
Esty et al. (1998) and Esty, Goldstone, Gurr, Surko & Unger (1995)  
Global Reporting Initiative (http://www.globalreporting.org/)
There is also a significant connection between CSR, quality and just-in-time (JIT) approaches in production. As stipulated in JIT principles, zero defect is a must. In order to design a smooth running CSR, we can use well-designed charts and diagrams to have control over the desired result. It also helps group leaders discover their distinctive ways of operating. Depending on the type of production process, different types of tools such as HR, management and risk analysis can be used to guarantee the desired quality insurance. A strict quality insurance system demands attention to quality and every aspect of the design process should be looked at in detail.

CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION

Delivering services and products in a sustainable manner includes conducting business processes in the interest of current and future generations. In other words, the needs of environment should be balanced with the needs of society which includes all stakeholders. Some terms like eco-friendly, eco-design, eco-requirements, eco-energy, eco-tourism, and eco-tourists are newly coined terms in the recent century and some of them carry varied meanings (Hall & Page, 2014). TQM (Total Quality Management) is the next step for sustainability. Sustainability drives technological innovations together with their limitations. Quality should be seen as an opportunity rather than a cost that will enable market differentiation with good leverage between competitors. Although quality is not part of the production process and is usually the end result, it should be continuously integrated in the production line (upstream and downstream) as well as R&D (research and development). As people are usually responsible for production, quality management should be integrated into behaviors and actions rather than the product itself. In other words, this process is more mental than material. Besides Deming’s TQM, the Kaizen philosophy that was invented in Japan and stipulates continuous improvement and change for the better is applied in many fields all over the world. There is a strong need to incorporate sustainable development in vine production. It is strongly connected with the quality issue in general and quality of life in specific. More research groups that look at this issue should be created and urged to compete for the benefit of all.

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References


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Appreciation is recorded to the following reviewers for the review of the articles published in APJIHT, Volume 4, Issue 2, 2015.

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1. Manuscripts submitted to APJIHT should be original contributions and should not have been previously published nor under consideration for publication elsewhere. Individual and multiple authors are welcome to contribute.

2. All manuscripts are refereed through a blind review process by at least two academic experts in the particular field of the submitted paper(s) prior to acceptance. The entire review process averages 45 days/1.5 months.

3. Manuscripts must be written in English.

4. The abstract should summarize the key points of the paper without exceeding 300 words and, with a maximum of 6 keywords that define the subject matter.

5. Research articles should normally not exceed 6,000 words, research notes should not exceed 2,500 words and book reviews should not exceed 1,500 words.

6. Research news (are welcome submission) should feature individuals who make the news with breakthrough research, are/have been involved in outstanding scientific endeavors or conferred with internally recognized awards. Categories of news are: newsmakers, science events, patents from research, commercial products from research and scientific conferences/workshops/symposia (no more than 750 words, and 1 snapshot).

7. All contributions should follow the format and style described in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA, 6th edition).

8. All manuscripts should be typed in MS WORD format, double-spaced with one-inch margins and using 12-point Times New Roman font (exception of tables 10-point Times New Roman).

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Mission and Vision

- Establishing a network of Tourism research clusters in ASEAN Universities.
- Developing links between ASAEAN researchers in tourism with common projects.
- Providing a recognized multi-site resource and expertise related to ASEAN Tourism.
- Contributing to the development of the Tourism Human capacity for ASEAN Countries.
- Supporting the ASEAN integration policies.

Objectives

1. Enhance collaboration on tourism for the academia and researchers within and outside ASEAN.
2. Offer research consultancy services to tourism decision makers.
3. Support the ASEAN integration policies through tourism research and innovation.
4. Provide ASEAN governments with research and expertise for tourism development.
5. Maintain, increase and diffuse knowledge in the field of tourism research in ASEAN.
6. Contribute to the human capacity development for tourism in ASEAN.
7. Provide a recognized resource and expertise related to sustainable tourism in ASEAN.

Scope of Activities

In pursuance of the aims and objectives defined above the Association shall:

- Carry out research related to tourism in ASEAN.
- Organize seminars, forums, symposiums, exhibitions, workshops and conferences, carry out studies, research and raise issues in accordance with the objectives of the Association.
- Integrate, publish and disseminate materials, such as books, research reports and periodicals relevant to the tourism industry in ASEAN and other activities pertaining to the promotion of the objectives stated above.
- Maintain a database of tourism research expertise with a focus on ASEAN.
- Assist members of the association to find the right expertise and clusters for research collaborations in compliance with the objectives of the association.
- Accept and raise grants, endowments and financial support from available legitimate sources in support of its programmes and activities.
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