Beach Tourism Growth And Its Implications Towards The Local Communities In Sarawak, Malaysia.

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Abstract
This paper tries to analyse and explore the beach tourism growth and its implications towards the local communities in the state of Sarawak, situated in Malaysia. The main areas focused in this research are the degree of local communities’ involvement in beach tourism, community perception, the impact of beach tourism towards the communities, level of satisfaction of communities and the effect of beach tourism in the Damai and Santubong beach destinations. Mixed methodology used in this research consisted of survey method, interview and observation was conducted to gain reliable information. The findings of the study showed that majority of the ethnic tribal communities are directly or indirectly involved in the beach tourism activities and tourism has contributed positively to their socio-economic development. The beach tourism is in the apathy stage (Doxey) and the communities are welcoming the growth. The analysis of community perception pinpoint the positive impacts are exceeding the negative impacts. In addition to that, occupational shift is visible. The community satisfaction is in the areas of infrastructure development, cultural-heritage preservation and rejuvenation, and conservation of biodiversity. The significance of this research findings give valuable guidance to the planners and policy makers to the state to develop a sustainable tourism strategy for the beach tourism at Damai and Santubong in Sarawak.

Keywords: Beach tourism, local community, community participation, socio-cultural impact, Sarawak.

1. Introduction

Beach tourism is one of the fastest growing tourism where people can experience and enjoy the 3S (Sea, Sun and Sand). There is a close connection between the development of beach tourism and the participation of local communities in beach tourism activities. The effects of beach tourism towards the communities have both positive and negative were it brings benefits to the local communities at the same time it has created devastating influence to the communities. This research was focused on the community involvement in beach tourism and effects of beach tourism towards the communities. The study was conducted in Sarawak statesituated in Borneo Island. Sarawak, the largest state in Malaysia, has longcoastal line. It is a land of tropical rainforests and rugged mountains, mighty rivers and mangrove forests, white sandy beaches and pristine islands; known as “The Land of Hornbills” and enjoys a warm tropical climate. Kuching is the capital city of Sarawak, known as the City of Unity where all multi-religious people living harmoniously and is one of the largest cities in Borneo Island. The state is the home of 30 indigenous communities with a land area of 125,000kmsquare (David Bowden, 2011). Wonderful natural attractions, diverse culture, rich flora and fauna, national parks, mountains and enchanting rivers contributed Sarawak an incredible tourism destination.

The state population can be divided into those that are indigenous, known as Bumiputra, and those that are immigrants referred to as non-Bumiputra. The Bumiputra includes Iban, Malay, Melanau, Bidayuh and various groups collectively known as Orang Ulu (upriver people). The non-bumiputras includes the various dialect groups of Chinese, Indians, Arabs and Eurasians. (Sarawak Year Book, 2001). The main attractions in Sarawak are Sarawak Cultural Village (SCV) reflecting different communities’ culture and heritage, Sarawak Museum, Fort Margarita, Kuching Waterfront, Mulu Caves (UNESCO heritage site), Bako National Park and Kubah National Park.

The state consists of nice beaches and some are considered as golden beaches. Damai beach located in the Santubong Peninsula at the west mouth of the Sarawak River. The village near by this coastal area are mainly fishing villages. When beach tourism emerged there are international hotels and lodge facilities developed to contribute accommodation for visitors in this area. Analysis of the
state economy revealed that, the highest GDP contribution is from service sector, 32.7% (State Planning Unit, 2015). The total number of visitors the state received on 2016 was, 4,661,100 (Immigration Department Sarawak, 2016) and the total receipts generated from tourism was around RM8.374billion (State Planning Unit, 2016). The visitor arrivals to Sarawak from the top five European countries are, UK, Netherlands, France, Italy and Germany. The top five tourists’ arrivals from the Asian countries are, Brunei, Indonesia, China, Singapore and India (Sarawak Visitor Exit Survey, 2016). The survey report revealed that an age group between 20-40 are very interested to visit Sarawak and a significant number of people are leisure travelers (62.9%).

Statement of the Problem:-

Tourism as a channel for meeting different people, exchanging ideas and promoting cultural values and beliefs. On the one hand tourism can contribute to develop infrastructure facilities, upgrade the quality of life of local people, promote integration between host and guest. However, it might have negative impacts such as language and cultural conflicts, demonstration effects, health issues, increase crime, traffic congestion, overcrowding, stress, annoyance, host-guest conflict, sustainability issues etc. The displacement of residents for expansion of tourism facilities, negligence of non-touristic areas when the development is focused on one area are some other issues.

Sarawak has nice coastal line but the beach tourism is not full-fledged yet. However, it can be seen that Damai and Santubong coastal areas are still trying to develop to reach an international beach destination. The state has rich natural and cultural-heritage attractions and it’s well known for the eco-and adventure tourism. The tourism marketing, promotion, product development and planning from the part of Government is more focused on the natural flora, fauna, heritage, culture and adventure. The tour operators and travel agents also focused on these main products. So that beach is considered as a secondary product. One of the main reason is the neighbouring state of Sabah has a very famous international beach tourism destination so Sarawak still not so confident to compete with Sabah. However, some private land owners and business entrepreneurs started to promote the beach tourism in these area. The research focused on the perspectives of communities regarding these aspects.

Beach tourism is bestowed for socio-economic development of local communities in and around the destination. However, the main issue of beach tourism which needs to be solved is the argument between the profits of tourism provides for the economy as a whole and the socio-environmental tensions emerged due to the exponential growth of beach tourism in a destination. The impacts on natural flora and fauna, cultural identity and values, the production of waste have heavy implications to both host and guest in the coastal destinations. It would create problems for those who depend on their beaches for livelihood, fishing, accommodation and other coastal activities for income. Many coastal towns depend on their immediacy to the ocean to attract tourists that bring along a large amount of yearly income. A vast majority of the local communities in beach destinations played an important role in the growth and development of beach tourism. This research focused on the involvement of local communities in the beach tourism activities and the impact of beach tourism towards the communities in positive and negative ways. According to Taylor, western scholars have directed most attention to the relationship between tourism development and community and the functions of community for local tourism (Taylor, 1995). Damai and Santubong beaches in Kuching has been chosen for this study because there have been no studies related to the growth of beach tourism and the involvement of local communities conducted in this region.

Sarawak economic survey report showed that, there had been a highest GDP contribution from service sector and the agriculture sector contribution is very limited. So that the study investigate the occupational shift of communities from agriculture to service sector. In addition to that, the degree of local community involvement in beach tourism, their satisfaction and the impacts of beach tourism towards the community. The research try to explore and analyse the relationship between the effects of
Tourism on the quality of the life of these local communities. The major objectives of this study pinpoint,

- To identify the degree of community involvement in beach tourism
- To find out the positive and negative impacts of beach tourism among local communities and their society.
- To analyse the effect of beach tourism in the tourism sector of Sarawak.
- To investigate the degree of community satisfaction towards beach tourism

Theoretical Framework

There are a lot of theories adopted in tourism research from various disciplines like Sociology, Psychology or Anthropology. Most of these theories analyzed the human interaction, social exchange, economic change and human behavior. These are very relevant to analyzing tourism impacts and tourists behavior. Social exchange theory is perhaps the best-known interaction-based theory in tourism (Ap, 1992; Deccio and Baloglu, 2002; Jurowski and Gursoy, 2004; McGehee and Andereck, 2004). Social Exchange Theory (SET), is a derivative of sociology and social psychology (Alexander, 1990). SET conceptualizes the exchange of resources between individuals and groups in an interaction situation (Brinberg and Castell, 1982), and thus provides a framework for understanding tourism relationships, interactions and transactions. Long et al. (1990) first introduced the theory into tourism to harness its potential to explain residents’ differing perceptions towards impacts.

George Homan’s social exchange theory, he mentioned social behavior as an exchange process. Homan’s argued that people continue to do what they have found to be rewarding in the past. Conversely they cease doing what has proved to be costly in the past. According to Homans, this theory “envisages social behavior as an exchange of activity, tangible or intangible, and more or less rewarding or costly between at least two persons” (Social Behaviour; Its Elementary Forms, 1961). The model of social exchange theory in tourism visitor-host interactions used by Ap (1992), the basic premise of social exchange theory is that in order to sustain interaction at least a two-way flow of material, social and or psychological resources between individual actors or groups of individuals must be present (Ap, 1992). He outlines four key stages: the initiation of an exchange, the exchange formation, the exchange transaction evaluation, and the evaluation of exchange consequences (Ap, 1992). The initiation stage: the first stage of exchange process. The initiation of an actor begins the process of interaction. SET posits that during this period satisfaction of an actor’s needs motivates an exchange relationship; without a need to satisfy there is no reason to seek interaction. The exchange formation: it is the second stage, encompasses three interconnected components: antecedents, the exchange relation, and the form of the exchange relation. The final two stages of the exchange process are the exchange transaction evaluation and the evaluation of exchange consequences. Both stages form the overall post-exchange, when each actor enacts a process to evaluate the transaction of resources, and identifies the consequences of the exchange. The evaluation also includes the actors to identifying whether the exchange is positive or negative for the other actor(s) involved in the process (Ap, 1992).

Doxey’s Irridex Index Model: - “Irritation Index Model” proposed by George Doxey (1975). In this theory he postulated that, how “hosts” and “guests” cooperate and suggested an index of resident irritation to describe the process of gradual development of local community attitudes to visitors. The main idea in Doxey’s Index is that hosts in a tourist area would change their attitudes towards visitors eventually. He suggested a number of steps to be taken to modify their attitudes. According to Doxey, when tourists arrive for the first time, they will be greeted with Euphoria and then after a while, this attitude changes to Apathy, Annoyance and finally Antagonism. At the final stage, tourism growth has both positive and negative impacts on the host community’s lifestyle and standard of living as well. Hosts will no longer treat tourists as individuals so they are worried, troubled, mocked or even robbed (Burns & Holden, 1995). Doxey treats a local community as the same kind of nature. But in actuality,
any community is prone to show a collection of reactions to tourism development (Weaver & Opperman 2000). The level of reaction relies on the involvement of the community in the industry. If the local community gains benefits from tourism, their attitude towards tourists can be positive.

2. Literature Review:

The local community participation in beach tourism activities are essential to the development of tourism, better tourist-host relationship and the preservation of the natural beauty of that destination. The development of tourism in coastal areas are related to the socio-economic features of the receiving environment such as local community interests, health and security conditions, political factors like exchange rate fluctuations, unpredictable crises and less effective marketing. The environmental conditions such as unpredictable climate conditions, algae blooms, winds and the associated risk of forest fires, tsunami, storms and floods, as well as many other constant features or unexpected events, affect tourism development in coastal areas (A.K. Sanyal, 2011).

Community participation in tourism development process can support and uphold local culture, tradition, knowledge, skill and create pride in community heritage (Lacy et.al. 2002). Nampila (2005) stated that, the goal of community participation is to improve communication between stakeholders in the interest of facilitating better decision-making and sustainable development. The benefits of community participation is to increases people’s sense of control over issues that affect their lives and also promotes self-confidence and self-awareness. Lack of community participation in decision making and to implement tourism development can lead to failure in the community development (Miranda, 2007). Community participation can play an important role in national unity and social stability. Pretty (1995), developed a typology that, how people participate in development programme. He identifies seven levels of participation, with manipulative participation at one end of the spectrum and self-mobilization at the other end. In between there is passive participation, participation by consultant, participation for material incentives, functional participation, interactive participation.

The residents’ attitude and perception revealed that the local communities are more favorable to the growth of tourism even though it bring changes in social, cultural, environmental and economic sectors because tourism activity has had a close link with the community and society (Beeton, 2006; Richards & Hall, 2000). Ap and Crompton (1998) indicated that community attitude domains may be expressed as a dimension of social and cultural impact. Tax domain may be perceived as part of generic economic impacts. As Harrill (2004) suggested that, there is a growing need to assess residents attitudes in places that are beginning the tourism development process (eg:-Latin America, Africa and Asia). The study about the community perceptions at Sunshine Coast indicated that the people who understand the impacts of tourism such as; create more jobs, attract more investment, provide more business for local people, create additional tax for local governments, encourage development of a variety of cultural activities by the local residents, provide an incentive for the restoration of historical buildings, create positive impact on the cultural identity of the community, provide an incentive for the preservation of the local culture, maintain high standards of roads and public facilities (Sujie Wang, Marinanne, Rich Harrill, 2010).

The local community supports tourism development, as tourism activities will lead to the economic development such as providing investment opportunities and as new source for income generation (Gursoy and Rutherford, 2004). Local community gains the opportunities to interact personally with people from diverse background via tourism activities, widening their mindset and enhancing their pride and spirit via traditional ceremonies (Kreag, 2001). According to Jurowskietal., 1997, based on social exchange theory local community support tourism activities and development is acknowledged as the inclination to enter exchange. Communities’ willingness to participate in tourism activities and involvement in decision-making processes of tourism development are the indicators of community support toward the tourism industry (Long, 2011). The foundation of tourism development had formed and extremely important when community participation in terms of...
natural resources preservation, waste management, infrastructure, facilities development, tourism programs and tour packages (Vitasurya, 2016). According to the cost-benefit analysis, the local community is more favourable toward tourism development when the expected benefits exceed the costs of tourism development (Gursoy et al., 2010). Murphy stressed the importance of the involvement of local community in tourism development. He pointed out that the success of tourism depends on the goodwill and cooperation of local people because they are part of the tourism product. He argues that if tourism development and planning does not match with the local ambitions and abilities, this can destroy the potential of industries.

Impact of beach tourism among community and society

The study about Economic Impacts of Beach Tourism at Florida and Palm Beach County, the research revealed that almost 50 billion USD in sales added Florida economy. It was higher compared to the previous year, 40 billion USD (2011). The number of jobs created in 2012 was increased, the state investment in beaches has an excellent economic recovery strategy and the beach tourism is more popular in 2011 and 2012. 73.0million USD is the direct spending from beach visitors in Florida State. The state generated 3.3 million USD in state sales tax revenues (William B. Stronge, 2013). The socio-cultural impacts of tourism is on two dimensions-one is on positive impacts which includes increasing job opportunities and supporting the development of basic facilities but on the other hand it brings negative influence on society and culture. It can encourage the commercialization of local customs and traditions, cause stress between those socio-economic groups benefiting from tourism and those not involved and in some cases, come up with a rise in crime levels (Telfer and Sharpley, 2008). The study regarding residents’ attitude towards tourism development in Shandong, China the results showed that, tourism development was considered to have an overall positive influence on social and cultural life in Shandong Province, including services and sense of community. The residents acknowledged tourism’s positive social benefits such as better shopping facilities, while at the same time recognizing the negative impact of tourism on the natural environment. In Shandong, residents believed that social and cultural life had improved but were negative toward crowding and congestion caused by tourism and urban growth that may be stimulated by tourism (Sujie Wang, Marinanne, Rich Harrill, 2010).

The tourism development in many rural and remote areas are escalating, where indigenous traditions, habits and local culture hold longstanding meaning and values over generations, such transformations are becoming increasingly apparent. A community’s inherited culture (tangible and intangible cultural heritage) should provide a community with a competitive advantage and uniqueness, one that differentiates it from all other communities. However, with increasing commodification of intangible cultural heritage to provide new and unique products in efforts to satisfy the needs and whims of modern tourist markets, many smaller rural and remote communities face new concerns and issues formerly considered outside their local domain. The intellectual property, traditional knowledge, copyrights and forms of protection relating to a community’s intangible cultural heritage are unresolved issues in the commodification process (E. Wanda George, 2010).

3. Research Methodology

This research used both quantitative and qualitative method (Mix-method). The samples were selected based on purposive sampling. The data collection tools were prepared based on survey method (questionnaire) and interview method (interview guide). In addition to that, observation method was used to gather more empirical information. The questionnaire comprises three parts. The first part refers to the respondents’ demographic characteristics, based on gender, occupation, age and marital status. The second part consisted of participation of local communities in beach tourism, impacts of beach tourism among local communities and the effects of beach tourism in the tourism sector of Sarawak. Each major categories further divided into sub-segments. The segments are based on the direct and indirect involvement of local people in the beach tourism. The foremost areas are occupation, participation in beach tourism, the channels to promote Sarawak, benefits achieved from
tourism and positive and negative impacts. The final section refers to the respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction on a five-point scale (strongly dissatisfy to strongly satisfy).

Interview guide was another tool used for data collection. The interview was done by the respondents’ workplace (after working time) and their residence. 18 respondents were interviewed and they were selected randomly based on their willingness to give more in-depth information. This subjective analysis helped to understand the community’s life style and behavior, the employee’s attitude towards beach tourism and local community participation in the tourism activities and preserving the area in a sustainable way. Instead of that, observation was used for identifying local communities’ attitude and behaviour towards the growth of tourism and to understand the standard of living of the people.

4. Data analysis and results

Demographic profile

The sample is relatively balanced between genders. Men comprises 58 percent of the sample and females comprise 42 percent of the sample. Majority of the respondents (84 percent) are between the ages of 18 to 50. Single (48%) and married people (49%) are working in this field as a similar percent. The educational standard is average and a significant percent (81%) have completed the secondary education. Very few (11%) completed degree or masters (8%). The racial categories represent most ethnic tribal communities are Bumiputeras. On the basis of occupation, majority of the respondents are working in restaurants/restaurant owners or selling their own ethnic handicrafts and it’s very unique cultural product, resembles their ethnic tribal identity.

Involvement of local communities in beach tourism

The local people involved in tourism related activities in these areas having their own small and medium sized businesses. A significant number of local people (93%) participated in the Rainforest World Music Festival (RWMF), which is held once in every year located near the Damai beach. The culture, art forms and music are very unique among these tribal population and they showcase it in front of tourists. This benefited a lot for them financially and socially to support the preservation of traditional culture, art forms and music. At the beginning of beach tourism growth these communities are anxious about the tourism growth and slowly they adapt the changes and they can experience the benefits from tourism especially economic benefits. It can be evident from their responses (Table.No:1) that they are fully enjoying the benefits from tourism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table No4.1 Local Community Involvement in Beach Tourism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local community Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide services to private operators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work as tour operator/tour guide/drivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant owners/ workers/running small lodges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handicraft business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selling local cuisines and beverages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batik (local cloth) shops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps to operate tourism related events</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Impacts of beach tourism towards local communities
The occupational shift, the high impact of internet, the use of social media and the joint venture of public-private partnerships has contributed to the development of beach tourism in a moderate level. However, the major benefits of beach tourism received by the local communities are, efficient transportation and communication, infrastructure development, better roads and telecommunication facilities. On the other hand, due to beach tourism growth Santubong and Damai beaches are popular in Sarawak compared to other beaches in this state (Table No:2).

Table.No. 4.2. Local Community benefits from beach tourism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social and communal benefits from beach tourism</th>
<th>Opinion of local people (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase job opportunities &amp; standard of living</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preserve and rejuvenate local culture, protect ethnic tribal communities values and customs</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve infrastructure and road conditions</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better hospitality services</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protect beach, natural flora &amp; fauna</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase transportation &amp; communication</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of local cuisines &amp; increase its popularity</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular the destination outside world</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase community solidarity</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public-private partnerships in tourism development programmes</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved communication skills and knowledge of different culture</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other community benefits include, the local people are able to understand other languages, culture and habits. This helped the tribal community to know about outside culture, customs and traditions. The beach tourism is flourishing in a moderate level in this village which directly and indirectly increases the income of the local communities and consequently their standard of living. In addition to that, other benefits from beach tourism is, the indigenous tribal communities in these areas realized that the tourism growth is a major gift for their life, upbringing the children, develop their community; expose their culture into outside world.

**We demonstrate to the tourists about our ethnic tribal costumes and showed them how to make our traditional handicrafts. We treated our guest as our host. We would like to prepare our traditional food “Lemang” to the tourists (explanation from a respondent).**

The respondents involved in beach tourism industry much benefited from beach tourism and they welcome beach tourism development. Their perceptions may show that Damai as a beach tourism destination has in apathy stage and has not evolved into its annoyance-antagonism stage (Doxey, 1975). In addition to this, the respondents involved in beach tourism are more insights on positive impacts rather than negative tourism impacts. The study about community’s experiential knowledge on the development of rural tourism competitive advantage at Semandang village in Borneo Heights, the findings showed that the impacts of tourism (economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts) have a significant and positive impact of rural tourism at Semandang village. There is an evidence of awareness among local community on the benefits of the economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts. These positive impacts are important and contribute to the development of better competitive advantage of tourism destination (Chee Hua Chin et.al, 2017).
Any type of tourism can bring both positive and negative impacts in the destinations. It can spearhead all dimensions of social structure such as economic, environmental and socio-cultural aspects. The community faced inflation, price rise, socio-cultural issues and environmental degradation. The role of beach tourism is not in a dominating role in the tourism development of Sarawak, but the local communities have a lot of expectations in its future growth and development. At the same time they are conscious about the negative impacts of beach tourism growth in Damai and nearby areas. Almost all respondents (100%) have opined that the growth of beach tourism, directly and indirectly rise the prices of things and increase land prices as well (78%). Most of the ethnic communities are depending on farming and the agricultural land is used for tourism purposes. So the people are very much anxious about the growth of beach tourism.

The higher the number of tourists visiting a particular site resulted in serious negative impacts like damage to the flora and fauna, footpaths and vegetation, excessive garbage, increase waste disposal and dumping of inappropriate items in and around the site. This will affect the carrying capacity of that particular tourist spot. Seasonality is another major issue faced by the local community. Natural seasonality is the main cause affected in these beach destinations. Anti-social activities like drinking excessive alcohol; consuming drugs, gambling, pick-pocketing and other types of crimes increase in the beach area. The land price increased and the local communities can’t afford to buy land for agriculture and farming.

During off season period (December-February) there is a slowdown in beach tourism, because of heavy rain and bad weather conditions which affect the tourism industry. The beach become muddy and the tourists can’t enjoy the nature and climate. There is no alternative facilities arranged for the tourists. Hence the tourists’ number decreased dramatically. This situation created hardships for the local communities, because some are unemployed, can’t operate their business because of the bad weather conditions. Most of the tourist attractions are facing a lot of problems during the off season. Problems of unemployment increased during the time of off season whereas skilled labourrequirements are high during the peak season. This may sometimes affect the employer recruitment strategy and it leads to the scarcity of skilled employees. In Damai and Santubong beach resorts recruited the skilled employees, who are from outside the village working in managerial positions. Meanwhile, some local people worked in the agricultural sector during off season period. The seasonal change have created problems in the service sector as well as in the destination as a whole. There can be a loss in the profits and high maintenance costs of the infrastructure facilities due to the bad weather conditions. Overall, the problem of seasonality affects no only the destination but also the number of bed nights (accommodation sector); it affect the tourists length of stay in the resorts nearby Damai and Santubong, their spending habits and the flow of visitors in this beach destination.

Community satisfaction towards beach tourism growth

Beach tourism in Damai and Santubong is still in the growing stage and the local communities have expressed their level of satisfaction in some of the important tourism attributes. A higher percent (95%) are satisfied with the safeguard of beach and nearby areas. The local communities and the private business people are very much concerned about the environmental protection in these areas. They keep the beach away from all kinds of pollution and almost all kinds of environmental hazardous activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tourism Attributes</th>
<th>Level of Satisfaction (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase local community participation in tourism activities</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preserve local cultures &amp; traditions</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase standard of living &amp; income</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve conditions of roads &amp; basic infrastructure</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Effective transportation system, automobiles and airplanes increase connectivity which can escalate the growth of tourism. The geographical location of Damai and Santubong beach is near the rainforests and the government take initiative to build good roads and telecommunication facilities in the area. This have benefited the local communities a lot because they can connect with the people outside their village, tourists and to build up customer relations. Once the local people identify the economic and social benefits from tourism, their involvement in this sector increased considerably. As a result, it can be visible that the occupational shift from agriculture to tourism industry; those who involved in traditional farming realized the income generation from tourism. So that, they turned to tourism related jobs and gave up agriculture. 96% are satisfied in working with the tourism activities and they have experienced the economic benefits from the tourism sector. The community provide better hospitality services and good customer relations (91%) and in return they gain money. There is a social exchange in both parties and they have mutually benefited. SET theory is applicable in this context.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the direct and indirect community involvement, the job creation and the new outlook brought by beach tourism can contribute to the social and communal upliftment in Sarawak. Because of the tourism growth the communities gain the insights of preserving their traditional culture and customs and it give added value to the growth of beach tourism. The ethnic communities in Damai and Santubong are in APATHY stage and the local communities are welcoming the tourists in a very hospitable way. The communities’ satisfaction are in the areas of infrastructure development, improved transportation and communication facilities, preservation of traditional culture and heritage and conservation of biodiversity.

The higher negative impacts of beach tourism towards the local communities are, increase prices of goods and land. Pollution and soil contamination is another notable negative impacts. Public-private partnerships in beach tourism development programs are in a moderate level, because Sarawak’s beach tourism is still in growing stage and the Government still not take much initiative to develop beach tourism. This research revealed that in future it can become a competitive beach tourism destination in Malaysia. The communities’ anxiety about the beach tourism growth is more towards the high prices and increased land prices. The transformation of their occupation from agriculture -to-service sector because of the motivation of more economic gain, less physical labour and better quality of life. In a nutshell, Sarawak have the potentials to develop beach tourism in an international standard.

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