

LOCAL COMMUNITY'S PERCEPTION OF THE APPROPRIATENESS AND
SUCCESS OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT MODELS IN LOWER
KINABATANGAN REGION, SABAH, EAST MALAYSIA

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To All of My Family Members Particularly To my Beloved **Father** and **Mother**
Who Never Cut their True Support Towards Me

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ABSTRACT

The growth of mass tourism has led to the problems of environmental, social, and cultural degradation. In an effort to address these problems, alternative forms of tourism have been developed. This has resulted in a rapidly developing tourism industry that has already gone through different models such as Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT), Community-Based Tourism (CBT), and Community Benefit Tourism Initiatives (CBTIs). On top of that, it is found that the opinions of local communities on tourism development within their areas vary significantly depending on certain variables such as community's expectations and perception of their benefits. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the appropriateness and success level of tourism models developed in rural areas from a local community's point of view via a comparative study of CBT and CBTI in 2 villages of Lower Kinabatangan region. The first step is to determine the local community's choice of appropriate tourism paradigm in their regions and their reasons behind it and the second is to evaluate the success level of these two oft-debated tourism paradigms from a local community's perspective. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed to achieve the research goal. A decision making model based on 42 research variables as its input data was created using the Analytic Network Process (ANP) method that employed the Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) technique. The decision making model used questionnaires which are designed based on the model's regulations to determine the choices of the local communities and local operators in regard to CBT and CBTI. Furthermore, a questionnaire was used to determine the local communities' satisfaction of tourism success level. The results revealed that both local communities from the 2 villages and local operators from Batu Putih village preferred CBT as the appropriate tourism model for their region while local operators from Sukau village preferred CBTI as the appropriate tourism model in their region. The results also showed that local communities view CBT to be more successful than CBTI.

ABSTRAK

Pertumbuhan pelancongan massa mengundang kepada beberapa masalah seperti pencemaran alam sekitar, sosial dan kerosakan budaya. Oleh itu, pembangunan pelancongan alternatif sering dilihat sebagai salah satu langkah penyelesaian. Industri pelancongan yang sedang berkembang pesat telah melalui model yang berbeza seperti Pelancongan PPT, CBT dan CBTIs. Pandangan komuniti terhadap pembangunan pelancongan di kawasan mereka adalah berbeza dengan ketara berdasarkan kepada pembolehubah seperti persepsi komuniti terhadap faedah. Justeru itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji kesesuaian dan tahap kejayaan model pelancongan yang dibangunkan di kawasan luar bandar dari sudut pandangan komuniti tempatan dengan melakukan kajian perbandingan CBT dan CBTI di 2 buah kampung di kawasan Lower Kinabatangan; untuk mengenalpasti pilihan komuniti tempatan terhadap paradigma pelancongan yang bersesuaian di kawasan mereka berserta justifikasi mereka dan untuk menilai tahap kejayaan dua paradigma pelancongan yang dibahaskan ini dari perspektif komuniti tempatan. Kedua-dua kaedah kualitatif dan kuantitatif telah digunapakai untuk mencapai matlamat kajian; pertama sekali, model membuat keputusan telah dibentuk berdasarkan kepada 42 pembolehubah kajian sebagai data input dengan menggunakan kaedah Proses Jaringan Analisis (ANP) melalui teknik Permodelan Struktur Interpretasi (ISM). Model membuat keputusan mengukur pilihan komuniti dan operator tempatan terhadap CBT dan CBTI melalui soal selidik direka berdasarkan perundangan model manakala kepuasan komuniti tempatan terhadap tahap kejayaan pelancongan diukur. Tambahan lagi, soal selidik telah digunakan untuk menentukan kepuasan masyarakat tempatan terhadap kejayaan pelancongan. Hasil keputusan telah mendapati bahawa kedua-dua komuniti tempatan daripada 2 buah kampung dan operator tempatan di Kampung Batu Putih memilih CBT sebagai model pelancongan yang sesuai untuk kawasan mereka manakala komuniti tempatan di Kampung Sukau lebih memilih CBTI sebagai model pelancongan yang sesuai untuk kawasan ini. Keputusan juga telah menunjukkan bahawa CBT lebih berjaya berbanding CBTI dari perspektif komuniti tempatan.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AHP	-	Analytical Hierarchy Process
AITO	-	Association of Independent Tour Operators
ANP	-	Analytic Network Process Method
APEC	-	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
CBT	-	Community Based Tourism
CBTI	-	Community Benefit Tourism Initiative
CBT-I	-	Thailand Community Based Tourism Institute
CDD	-	Community Driven Development
CPTD	-	Community Participation in the Tourism Development Process
CULT	-	Cultural Category Variable
DFID	-	Department for International Development
ECON	-	Economic Category Variable
ENV	-	Environmental Category Variable
F & B	-	Food and Beverage
FOBISSEA	-	The Federation of British International Schools in South East Asia
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product

IIED	-	International Institute for Environment and Development
ISM	-	Interpretive Structural Modelling
JICA	-	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KOPEL	-	Koperasi Pelancongan Mukim Batu Puteh Kinabatangan Berhad
LDC	-	Least Developed Country
LEAP	-	Land Empowerment Animals People
MESCOT	-	Model Ecologically Sustainable Community Conservation and Tourism
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organization
ODI	-	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	-	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
POL	-	Political Category Variable
PPT	-	Pro-Poor Tourism
RM	-	Malaysian Ringgit
SC	-	Steering Committee
SFD	-	Sabah Forest Department
SKM	-	Suruhanjaya Koperasi Malaysia (Malaysia Cooperative Societies Commission)
SME	-	Small and Medium Enterprises
SOC	-	Social Category Variable

SPSS	-	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TIES	-	The International Ecotourism Society
TREC	-	Tungog Rainforest Eco Camp
TRF	-	Thailand Research Fund
UN	-	United Nations
UNCTAD	-	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNEP	-	United Nations Environment Program
UNWTO	-	United Nations World Tourism Organization
WTTC	-	World Travel and Tourism Council
WWF	-	World Wide Fund for Nature

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Tourism means the temporary movement of people to other places outside of their resident territory to do some specific activities, which meet their needs (Bhatia, 2002). Tourism has become the world's largest and fastest growing industry and has been a vital part of economic development policies in developing countries for over half a century (Torres and Momsen, 2004). Arrival of tourists to tourist destinations is a very important component of the tourism industry since it generates income, which then boosts a country's economic growth. Based on UNWTO statistics, the tourism sector has experienced a growth rate of 5 percent in 2013; this includes international tourist arrivals (overnight visitors) of 1087 million tourists amounting to a total income of US\$1159 billion worldwide with Asia and the Pacific recording the strongest growth that of a 6 percent increase in arrivals (UNWTO, 2014).

The first fifty years of the twentieth century saw tourism emerge as a major industry worldwide. The emergence of middle class Europe in line with technological, social and political movements pushed the tourism industry sharply forward resulting in a vast number of people travelling out of their customary places to other destinations for both leisure and business purposes. Over the second half of the twentieth century, the demand for tourism experienced a sharp growth all over the world, particularly in advanced countries, due to the rapid growth of their technological, social and economic sectors. This, alongside a rise in their GDP, forms what is now known as modern mass tourism (Bhatia, 2002).

However, the growth of mass tourism has led to the problem of environmental, social, and cultural degradation besides causing unequal distribution of financial benefits, all of which have been well publicized by various researchers (Bugincourt, 1977; Harrison, 1979; Hong, 1985; Krippendorf, 2010; Lea, 2006). Recent works suggest that the growth and development of the middle class are comprehensively associated with the growth of consumer capitalism with an emphasis on lifestyle (Crompton, 2008). The applicability of these ideas in regard to the changes in tourism has been slowly recognized due to the growing emergence of small group tourism activities and new alternatives in comparison to mass tourism. Therefore, the development of alternative forms of tourism is claimed to be a response to these problems since the main foundation of these alternative models of tourism is centered on the concept of sustainability. The new forms of tourism are truly contested ideas and tourism literature is peppered with claim and counter-claim, with mainly academics and interest groups advocating and defending particular terms and definitions. Protagonists consider the new forms of tourism as ‘sustainable’, ‘no-impact’, ‘responsible’, ‘green’, and ‘environmentally friendly’ forms of tourism (Mowforth and Munt, 2008).

Tourism advocates believe that the most noteworthy activity has been the definitional battle between the seemingly endless list of new forms of tourism in defining them as the most ethical way to take a holiday. Some of the front runners of alternative tourism models, which are seeking to define themselves in relation to development and sustainability include: ‘Ecotourism’, which has been defined by First World proponents as a means of conserving valuable Third World destination environments. It is considered by Third World protagonists as an elite form of western defined pleasure. The next form of alternative tourism is ‘Sustainable Tourism’, which mainly focuses on environmental issues relabelled from ecotourism and does not endeavour to reduce poverty. However, development of sustainable tourism may well result in poverty reduction. ‘Fair Trade and Ethical Tourism’ emphasizes on making social, cultural and economic profits for local communities in their regions by establishing solid First World/Third World consultation structures while minimizing leakages. Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT) puts the poor at its focus point and seeks to capture the emerging development consensus on poverty reduction by providing net profits for them. Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is all about

increasing people's participation and ownership in tourism at their regions while Community Benefit Tourism Initiatives (CBTIs) as yet another form of new alternative tourism model seeks to transfer benefits to a community regardless of location, instigation, size, level of wealth, and their involvement (Ashley *et al.*, 2000; Cleverdon and Kalisch, 2000; Mann, 2014; Simpson, 2008). All in all, this discussion has established that there are various types of new tourism models but this study will mainly focus on two of them i.e. Community-Based Tourism (CBT), and Community Benefit Tourism Initiatives (CBTIs).

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) has emerged in recent years due to increasing attention from community involvement in tourism ventures that aim to develop the community's area and the industry itself, as well as conserve resources. It is no wonder then that recent research efforts have increasingly been focusing on this issue. New findings suggest that approaches to community-based tourism, especially in rural areas, should consider the importance of public participation in tourism and bring the grass-root members of the community on board so they are involved in the decision making process in their region, particularly because tourism has triggered rapid growth and evolution of CBT around the world: especially in developing countries (Murphy, 2013; Scheyvens, 1999; Tosun, 2005).

CBT takes the initiative in empowering local communities, enabling them to take control of their land and resources, whilst also obtaining skills that they can use to develop themselves. The importance of involving communities in tourism development has been also highlighted since it plays a vital role in empowering communities besides reducing the negative impacts of mass tourism (Mearns, 2003; Timothy *et al.*, 2002). Moreover, other researchers believe that the chief profits of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) have a direct economic impact on families, socioeconomic improvements, and sustainable diversification of lifestyles (Manyara and Jones, 2007; Rastegar, 2009).

On the other hand, the major challenges associated with CBT have been identified through interviews and focus group discussions at Khama Rhino Sanctuary Trust, Central District, Botswana. These include the loss of benefits from the land,

lack of tangible benefits and employment creation, lack of community involvement and participation, poor management, marketing and entrepreneurial skills, no sense of ownership of the project among the community members and the heavy reliance on foreign donors (Sebele, 2010). It is argued that the key restrictions, which local communities have to encounter while implementing CBT projects within their region include: lack of infrastructure and enough capacity, lack of financial resources, types of cultural limitations and potential conflicts between the different public organizations (López-Guzmán *et al.*, 2011). Moreover, in terms of community partnerships in CBT projects, it has been highlighted that balancing different interests would slow down the decision-making process and, in fact, without ‘passionate drivers’, this balance will be hard to sustain (Cotter and Australia, 1999).

Furthermore, this way of tourism becomes unsustainable when the local community is the one to pay for the cost of tourism development i.e. degradation of environmental resources, commercialization of landscape and congestion. Also, the the local community do not benefit fully from the main economic benefits. Therefore, some researchers have come up with a Community Benefit Tourism Initiative (CBTI) model to achieve a truly sustainable form of tourism development via partnership of multiple stakeholders. Community Benefit Tourism Initiative (CBTI) relies on transfer of benefits to a community regardless of location, instigation, size, level of wealth, involvement, and their ownership or control. Therefore, in this model, Stakeholders in a partnership aim at ensuring the delivery of benefits to the community whilst achieving sustainable tourism development (Batta and Pathak, 2009).

However, it should be considered that local communities’ opinions on tourism development within their areas vary significantly based on certain variables such as community’s perception of benefits, and their expectations (Jamal and Getz, 1995). Also, in line with their perceptions and expectations, people possess specific values, which are the beliefs upon which they act by preferences; the impacts of these values can make people consider the surrounding environment and things positively or negatively (Rokeach, 1973). Therefore, the goal of this thesis is to address this issue as a gap in the development literature and also in practice by

conducting a comprehensive study that investigates the appropriateness and the success level of the two rural tourism development models, CBT and CBTIs, based on the local community's perspective.

1.2 The Statement of Research

The tourism industry is a major source of income for many countries particularly in the developing ones. It is also amongst the most rapidly growing economic sectors in the world. Nowadays, tourism influences the lives of poor, rural people across the world in such a way that it can often be considered as a tool for development (Harrison and Campus, 2004; Neto, 1990). For example, in rural regions, the industrialization of agriculture has prompted the decrease of farm income, which, in turn, threatens the survival of rural farming families resulting in poverty and other problems such as rural depopulation in the rural farming areas. Amidst all this, rural tourism has emerged as a movement that could really help rural people in these farming areas to diversify their economy and use it as a tool for alleviating poverty and its other associated problems (Chanchani, 2006).

The problems caused by modern mass tourism have paved the way for emerging new forms of tourism alternatives such as Ecotourism and Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT). In a similar vein, tourism researchers such as Murphy, Scheyvens, and Tosun concluded that local community participation increases their level of control, ownership or influence in a tourism venture resulting in the derivation of livelihood and other benefits from the tourism venture to that community (Murphy, 2013; Scheyvens, 1999; Tosun, 2005). This growing emphasis on local community involvement in their region's tourism venture is the basis for another new tourism model called Community-Based Tourism (CBT). CBT has brought many benefits to local communities including increases in household income, improvements in consumption, and improvements in social investment related to basic infrastructure, such as schools, roads and health posts while CBT is not without its own problems, lack of community participation and the need for high initial investment in a tourism

venture has deprived the local communities of tourism benefits following a CBT venture.

However, Batta and Pathak (2009) have a different view on local community's practical involvement in tourism, stating that it is instead one of the central, critical issues of the tourism industry. They argue that there are no clearly defined work specifications in tourism. Other related debates around this issue include unclear definitions of typologies of participation, development and planning paradigms, role of stakeholders and tourism initiative ownership. Their review of tourism literature and host communities helped them to conclude that the local community's participation in tourism ventures is not the central issue for some researchers since it may not always be possible to ensure community ownership of a tourism initiative. In certain cases, it may even end up creating internal conflicts. Therefore, they conclude that what is considered more relevant, is a sort of partnership where there is a role for all tourism stakeholders, such as private operators (SMEs and bigger hotels), governments, and NGOs, in managing tourism in various forms. Thus, managing and addressing the need of communities in all situations. Following this, tourism scholars and organizations introduced a new tourism model in which the local communities could receive economic benefits from tourism regardless of their participation in it. Hence, the Community Benefit Tourism Initiatives (CBTIs) was proposed as the more appropriate type of tourism model (Simpson, 2008).

Again, it is important to note that the opinions of local communities on tourism development within their areas vary significantly based on certain variables such as community's perception of benefits, and their expectations (Jamal and Getz, 1995). Also, in line with their perceptions and expectations, people possess certain values, which are the beliefs upon which they act by preferences; the impacts of these values can make people consider the surrounding environment and things in a positive or negative way (Rokeach, 1973). In conclusion, the local community's perception of benefits alongside their expectations and values dominate their choice of appropriate tourism development models in their region. As cited earlier, the growth of new tourism models in rural areas has been the focus point of recent

research. In light of these studies, this study aims to investigate the appropriateness and the success level of tourism models developed in rural areas from the local community's point of view by doing a comparative study of CBT and CBTI in 2 villages of Lower Kinabatangan region.

1.3 Research Questions

In this research, the researcher attempts to investigate five questions;

- i. What are the fundamental characteristics of CBT and CBTI?
- ii. Which tourism model do local rural people prefer as the appropriate tourism model in their region? And why?
- iii. Which tourism model do local operators prefer as the appropriate tourism model in their region? And why?
- iv. What is opinion of the two local communities about the successfulness of CBT and CBTI models in their area?
- v. What is the state of tourism stakeholders' partnership and cooperation in the region's tourism activities?

1.4 Research Objectives

Based on the research problem and research questions mentioned above, the researcher derives the following objectives:

- i. To identify the dominant shared indicators of community-oriented tourism development models in the context of the research.
- ii. To investigate the appropriate tourism model from local communities' viewpoint as well as the reasons behind their choice.
- iii. To explore the appropriate tourism model from local operators' perspective as well as their reasons for it.

- iv. To assess the success level of the region's two community-oriented tourism development models based on local communities' viewpoint.
- v. To investigate the status of stakeholders' partnership in the context of community-oriented tourism development models in rural areas.

1.5 Research Framework

The researcher developed a flowchart for this research to outline the procedure of this research study and to indicate how the study is going to be done. As it can be seen in this flowchart (

Figure 1.1), the study starts with the purpose of research followed by a review of related literature including 'the tourism development models in rural areas' and 'the tourism stakeholders'. This constitutes the second step, which ends in the extraction of shared indicators of community-oriented tourism development models in order to achieve the research goals. The next step is the research methodology, which is a 'mixed method research' that includes two different types of questionnaires and face-to-face interviews. Analytic Network Process method (ANP) in combination with Interpretive Structural Modeling technique (ISM) form the core part of the research method i.e. to investigate the tourism stakeholders' choices of the proper tourism model. It should be noted that a Super Decision Software has been applied to obtain the research outcome of stakeholders' choices in regard to the appropriate tourism model. The research framework is shown in

Figure 1.1.

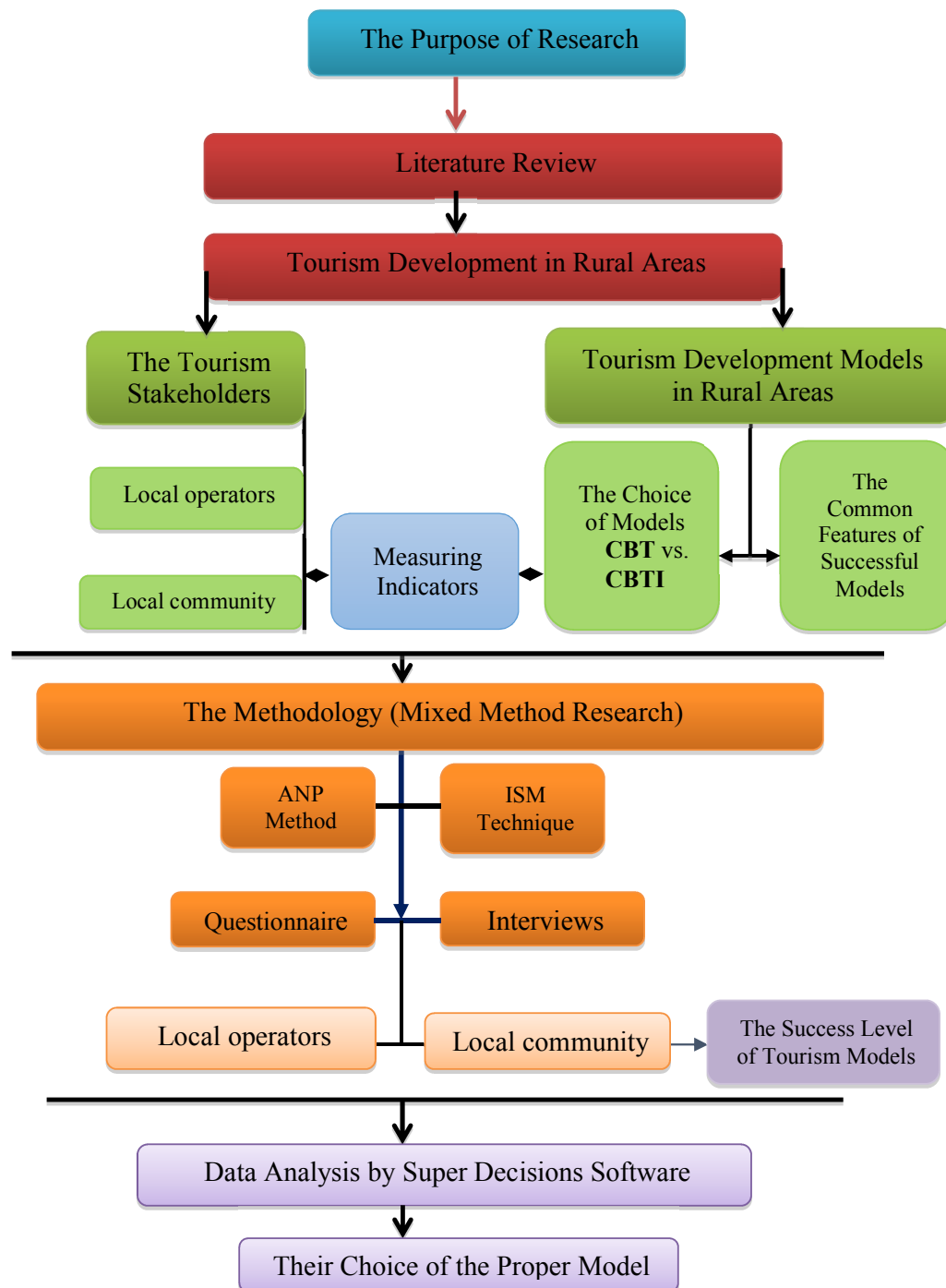


Figure 1.1 The Research Flow

1.6 Thesis Outline

This thesis is divided into five chapters including appendices. The first chapter is the introductory chapter, which delivers an overall view of the study's background, the research problem, the research questions, the research objectives, and a brief outline of the thesis structure. The second chapter provides a comprehensive literature review regarding research key terminologies particularly on the evolution of tourism development models such as ecotourism, Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT), Community-Based Tourism (CBT), and Community Benefit Tourism Initiatives (CBTIs). This is to identify the shared factors of these community-oriented tourism development models besides reviewing other issues such as partnership and the state of resilience within community-oriented tourism ventures.

The third chapter explains the philosophical and methodological choices that were made in this body of work. It also contains the discussion and justification as to why the mixed method, through case study research design, was selected for the current study. Additionally, this chapter focuses on the combination of data collection methods during fieldwork such as the design of different quantitative questionnaires alongside in-depth interviews. All other data collection and data analysis techniques and concepts are also introduced. Finally, the second part of this chapter is dedicated to a comprehensive overview of the case study's background.

Chapter Four reveals the empirical findings and research results for all the respondent groups within this thesis' two case studies. Analysis of these empirical findings and results data are also presented. The last chapter is the concluding chapter that covers the results discussion and summarizes the research findings of both case studies. In addition to this, research implications on theory and practice alongside the suggestions for further research are also presented at the end of this chapter. This thesis encompasses three appendices consisting of all the designed research questionnaires with their total results and other related data.

1.7 Chapter Summary

The first chapter as the introductory chapter of this thesis starts with a brief explanation on the formation of mass tourism in the twentieth century as a result of global economic regime changes particularly in the First World countries. The emergence of new forms of alternative tourism has been justified as a consequence of numerous problems caused by the spread of mass tourism all around the world especially in the Third World countries and within rural areas. Some issues such as environmental conservation and local community benefits through tourism were brought up after the emergence of new alternative tourism models since they were based on the ethics and the concept of sustainability. The significant emphasis on the issue of local community benefits through their participation in their region's tourism ventures have resulted in the emergence of a form of alternative tourism called Community-Based Tourism (CBT) where the local community controls and manages the tourism venture on its own.

However, some researchers (Batta and Pathak, 2009; Simpson, 2008) believe that the direct participation of local communities in tourism ventures within their area may not necessarily ensure ownership and benefit in the initiative but instead this direct involvement in management and control of the tourism venture could result in internal conflicts and jealousy amongst locals. Therefore, a newer form of the community-oriented tourism development model called Community Benefit Tourism Initiatives (CBTIs) was proposed, where the local communities could receive tourism benefits without their direct involvement and participation in decision-making and management of the tourism venture.

Nowadays, some researchers (Allen *et al.*, 1988; Ap and Crompton, 1993; Belisle and Hoy, 1980; Doxey, 1975; Maddox, 1985; Murphy, 2013) believe that the views of the host community should be taken into account if the tourism industry aims to be sustainable in the long term. As such, the main aim of this thesis is to investigate the appropriateness and the success level of community-oriented tourism development models from the local community's point of view through a comparative study of CBT and CBTIs. This is done by developing a hybrid ISM-

ANP decision making model. This model could assist tourism authorities to better channel their efforts so as to obtain the optimal outcome from the tourism venture that they will implement among local communities in the rural areas.

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