

CONFLICT RESOLUTION BETWEEN HETEROGENEOUS LOCAL
COMMUNITIES INVOLVED IN RURAL TOURISM IN GOPENG, PERAK

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ABSTRACT

Local communities, particularly in rural tourism destinations, play an important part in managing tourism resources. Contrary to common perception, local communities in rural areas are not homogenous but heterogeneous in nature, and therefore strong cooperation and integration is crucial. The study area, which is located in Gopeng, Perak, has the potential to be Malaysia's premier eco-adventure destination. The key stakeholders are the Rawa-Malay community, the Malay and Chinese chalet operators, and the Orang Asli community. However, conflicts among the local stakeholders are impeding its growth and the equal distribution of economic benefits. The main objectives of this study are to investigate the main conflict, to understand factors that contribute to the conflicts as well as to measure the level of conflict and their implications. Data were collected by combining quantitative and qualitative approaches and analysed using SPSS and Nvivo statistical software. The analysis was based on three (3) main constructs, which are main conflicts, conflict sources, and barriers against cooperation and integration. The research findings show that the internal conflict within the Rawa-Malay community is insignificant. In contrast, external conflicts in tourism management between the different stakeholders were more prevalent due to the disparities, low levels of unity, lack of intervention from the Government, and negative competition. Plus, the external conflict has entered Phase 4 of the conflict model, which means that the conflict has reached a level that can only be reduced but not totally eradicated. The approach for handling this phase is by sacrificing interpersonal or intergroup relationship to achieve mutually acceptable solutions. Thus, a new management structure needed as a good negotiation platform. Moreover, the Government has the potential to be the intermediary between the parties in strengthening ties and mitigating conflicts. Efforts to attract more young people are vital so that old rivalries could be eradicated.

ABSTRAK

Penduduk tempatan terutamanya di sekitar destinasi pelancongan luar bandar memainkan peranan yang penting dalam menguruskan sumber pelancongan sedia ada. Lazimnya, terdapat tanggapan umum bahawa penduduk tempatan ini adalah bersifat homogen tetapi pada hakikatnya adalah heterogen atau pelbagai. Bagi menjalankan kajian ini, lokasi yang telah dipilih adalah terletak di Gopeng, Perak yang berpotensi untuk menjadi destinasi utama eko-pelancongan di negara ini. Pada umumnya, terdapat beberapa pihak-pihak berkepentingan yang perlu diberi perhatian iaitu komuniti Melayu Rawa, pengusaha chalet berbangsa Melayu dan Cina serta penduduk Orang Asli. Walaupun begitu, konflik yang berlaku akan menjejaskan pertumbuhan dan pengagihan faedah ekonomi secara bersama. Objektif utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji konflik utama yang berlaku, punca yang mendorong berlakunya konflik dan mengukur tahap konflik berdasarkan hubungan kerjasama dan integrasi. Data dikumpulkan melalui pendekatan kuantitatif dan kualitatif menggunakan SPSS dan Nvivo. Analisis kajian ini melibatkan tiga aspek utama iaitu konflik utama, sumber konflik dan halangan mencapai kerjasama dan integrasi. Hasil kajian menunjukkan konflik dalaman di kalangan komuniti Melayu Rawa masih terkawal. Sebaliknya, konflik luaran di dalam pengurusan pelancongan lebih ketara. Antara isu dikenalpasti adalah jurang perbezaan, tahap rendah untuk bersatu, kurang bantuan daripada pihak kerajaan dan persaingan negatif. Konflik luaran ini telah mencapai tahap 4 di dalam model konflik yang membawa maksud boleh dikurangkan kesannya tetapi sukar dimusnahkan sepenuhnya. Pendekatan penyelesaian yang perlu diberi penekanan adalah mencapai tahap persetujuan kesemua pihak ke arah situasi menang-menang. Oleh itu, struktur pengurusan yang lebih efisien diperlukan untuk membuat rundingan. Selain itu, pihak kerajaan dilihat berpotensi untuk menjadi pihak pendamai dalam menyatukan perpecahan yang berlaku. Usaha bagi menarik generasi muda juga penting supaya persaingan tidak sihat yang lama wujud dapat dihapuskan.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| CHAPTER | TITLE | PAGE |
|----------|---|----------|
| | TITLE PAGE | i |
| | DECLARATION OF ORIGINAILITY | ii |
| | DEDICATION | iii |
| | ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | iv |
| | ABSTRACT (ENGLISH) | v |
| | <i>ABSTRAK</i> (MALAY) | vi |
| | TABLE OF CONTENTS | vii |
| | LIST OF TABLES | xiii |
| | LIST OF FIGURES | xvi |
| 1 | INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1 | Introduction | 1 |
| 1.2 | Problem Statement | 2 |
| | 1.2.1 Poor Business Relationship Conflict | 3 |
| | Among and Between Communities | |

| | | |
|--------|---|----|
| 2.2.4 | Attitudes in Conflict | 28 |
| 2.2.5 | Behaviour in Conflict | 29 |
| 2.2.6 | Type of Conflict | 31 |
| 2.2.7 | Source of Conflict | 33 |
| 2.2.8 | Social Conflict and The Theory of Social Change | 35 |
| 2.2.9 | Factors of Competitiveness | 35 |
| 2.2.10 | Consequences of Conflict | 36 |
| 2.2.11 | Conflict Outcomes | 39 |
| 2.3 | Conflict Resolution Model | 43 |
| 2.3.1 | Definition of Conflict Resolution | 43 |
| 2.3.2 | Conflict Resolution Framework | 44 |
| 2.4 | Conflict Cycle | 46 |
| 2.5 | Conflict Negotiation | 49 |
| 2.6 | Trust | 50 |
| 2.6.1 | Measurement of Interpersonal Trust | 51 |
| 2.7 | Resolving an Interest-Based Conflict | 51 |
| 2.8 | Case Study : Conflict Resolution in Tourism Destination | 53 |
| 2.8.1 | Taman Negara, Pahang | 53 |
| 2.8.2 | The El Nido Marine Reserve, Palawan, Philippines | 57 |
| 2.8.3 | Fiji and Papua New Guinea | 60 |
| 2.9 | Conclusion | 62 |

| | | |
|----------|--|-----------|
| 3 | METHODOLOGY | 63 |
| 3.1 | Introduction | 63 |
| 3.2 | Research Method | 64 |
| 3.2.1 | Quantitative Research Method | 64 |
| 3.2.2 | Qualitative Research Method | 64 |
| 3.2.3 | Comparison of Quantitative and Qualitative | 65 |
| 3.2.4 | Research Approach Selection | 67 |
| 3.3 | Structure of Questionnaire Survey (Quantitative Data) | 69 |
| 3.3.1 | Development of Questionnaire Survey | 70 |
| 3.4 | Structure of Interview Session (Qualitative Data) | 76 |
| 3.4.1 | Development of Interview Questions (Qualitative Data) | 76 |
| 3.5 | Sampling Method (<i>Snowball Sampling</i>) | 80 |
| 3.6 | Sample Size | 83 |
| 3.7 | Duration of Data Collection | 84 |
| 3.8 | Analysis Technique | 85 |
| 3.8.1 | SPSS Software | 86 |
| 3.8.2 | NVivo Software | 86 |
| 3.9 | Conclusion | 87 |

| | | |
|----------|---|-----------|
| 4 | RESEARCH ANALYSIS | 88 |
| 4.1 | Introduction | 88 |
| 4.2 | Research Findings Approach | 89 |
| 4.3 | The Respondents Profile Analysis (Quantitative Data) | 90 |
| 4.4 | Variables Analysis for Quantitative Data | 93 |
| | 4.4.1 Objective 1 : To Identify Main Conflict | 93 |
| | 4.4.2 Objective 2 : To Recognize The Main Factors Contributing To Conflict | 99 |
| | 4.4.3 Objective 3 : To Measure The Level of Conflict | 108 |
| 4.5 | The Respondents Profile (Qualitative Data) | 114 |
| 4.6 | Variable Analysis for Qualitative Data | 116 |
| | 4.6.1 Objective 1 : To Identify Tourism Key Players | 116 |
| | 4.6.2 Objective 2 : To Recognize The Main Factors Contributing To Conflict | 123 |
| | 4.6.3 Objective 3 : To Measure The Level of Conflict Between Stakeholders | 126 |
| 4.7 | Conclusion | 133 |

| | | |
|----------|--|------------|
| 5 | RECOMMENDATION & CONCLUSION | 135 |
| 5.1 | Introduction | 135 |
| 5.2 | Identification of Conflict | 136 |
| 5.3 | Application of Conflict Resolution Model | 137 |
| 5.4 | Strategies for Managing Conflict | 140 |
| 5.5 | Conclusion | 143 |
| | REFERENCES | 145 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| FIGURE NO. | TITLE | PAGE |
|-------------------|--|-------------|
| 1.1 | Data Needed in Research | 12 |
| 2.1 | Summary of Conflict Definition | 24 |
| 2.2 | Type of Issues in Conflict | 27 |
| 2.3 | Sources of Conflict | 32 |
| 2.4 | Elaboration of Conflict Resolution Model | 30 |
| 2.5 | Continuum of conflict management and resolution approaches | 32 |
| 2.6 | List of Project Areas in Fiji and Papua New Guinea | 60 |
| 3.1 | Qualitative Research Functions | 65 |
| 3.2 | Comparison of Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods | 63 |
| 3.2 | Fractional Sections of Questionnaire | 66 |
| 3.3 | Comparison of Quantitative, Qualitative, and Triangulation Approaches to Research | 68 |
| 3.4 | Part A Questionnaire Setting | 71 |
| 3.5 | Part B Questionnaire Setting | 72 |
| 3.6 | Part C Questionnaire Setting | 73 |

| | | |
|------|---|-----|
| 3.9 | Part A Questionnaire Setting | 77 |
| 3.10 | Part B Questionnaire Setting | 78 |
| 3.11 | Part C Questionnaire Setting | 79 |
| 3.12 | Advantages and Disadvantages of the Snowball Method | 81 |
| 3.13 | The Targeted Group Selection in the Study Area | 82 |
| 3.14 | Total Number of Gopeng Homestay Providers | 83 |
| 3.15 | Total Number of Employees | 84 |
| 3.16 | Likert Scale Analysis | 86 |
| 4.1 | Method To Obtain in Research Findings | 89 |
| 4.2 | Respondents Demographic Background I | 91 |
| 4.3 | Respondents Demographic Background II | 92 |
| 4.4 | Indicators To Achieve in Variable 1 | 94 |
| 4.5 | Recognises All Residents | 94 |
| 4.6 | Recognises Tour Operators | 95 |
| 4.7 | Indicators To Achieve in Variable 2 | 100 |
| 4.8 | The Main Factors Lead To Personal Conflict | 102 |
| 4.9 | The Main Factors Lead To Family Relationship Conflict | 103 |
| 4.10 | The Main Factors Lead To Tourism Management Conflict | 105 |
| 4.10 | Likert Scale Analysis | 106 |
| 4.11 | Indicators To Achieve in Variable 3 | 108 |
| 4.12 | The Main Factors of Unity and Social Function | 109 |

| | | |
|----------|--|-----------|
| 1.2.2 | Conflict Arising From Restriction on Right of Access | 4 |
| 1.2.3 | Conflict Power Between Older and Younger Generations | 7 |
| 1.2.4 | Political Conflict | 9 |
| 1.3 | Research Goal | 9 |
| 1.4 | Research Objectives | 10 |
| 1.5 | Research Questions | 10 |
| 1.6 | Research Scope | 10 |
| 1.7 | Research Significance | 14 |
| 1.8 | Background of the Study Area | 15 |
| 1.9 | Study Flow Chart | 18 |
| 1.10 | Conceptual Framework | 20 |
| 1.11 | Conclusion | 21 |
| 2 | CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN RURAL TOURISM DESTINATIONS | 22 |
| 2.1 | Introduction | 22 |
| 2.2 | Conflict | 23 |
| 2.2.1 | Definition of Conflict | 23 |
| 2.2.2 | Parties in Conflict | 25 |
| 2.2.3 | Issues in Conflict | 26 |

| | | |
|------|---|-----|
| 4.13 | The Main Factors of Trust | 111 |
| 4.14 | The Main Factors of Competition Level | 112 |
| 4.15 | List of Tourism Key Players Interviewed | 115 |
| 4.16 | Indicators To Achieve in Variable 1 | 116 |
| 4.17 | Type of Community Activities Involved | 127 |
| 4.18 | Summary According to Objectives | 134 |

LIST OF TABLES

| TABLE NO. | TITLE | PAGE |
|------------------|--|-------------|
| 1.1 | Data Needed in Research | 12 |
| 2.1 | Summary of Conflict Definition | 24 |
| 2.2 | Type of Issues in Conflict | 27 |
| 2.3 | Sources of Conflict | 32 |
| 2.4 | Elaboration of Conflict Resolution Model | 30 |
| 2.5 | Continuum of conflict management and resolution approaches | 32 |
| 2.6 | List of Project Areas in Fiji and Papua New Guinea | 60 |
| 3.1 | Qualitative Research Functions | 65 |
| 3.2 | Comparison of Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods | 63 |
| 3.2 | Fractional Sections of Questionnaire | 66 |
| 3.3 | Comparison of Quantitative, Qualitative, and Triangulation Approaches to Research | 68 |
| 3.4 | Part A Questionnaire Setting | 71 |
| 3.5 | Part B Questionnaire Setting | 72 |
| 3.6 | Part C Questionnaire Setting | 73 |
| 3.7 | Part D Questionnaire Setting | 74 |
| 3.8 | The Targeted Group Selection in the Study Area | 76 |

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Empowerment of key stakeholders and local communities in the tourism sector is very important. Each group in a tourism destination cannot escape from being interdependent when it comes to advancing the industry locally. Both integration and participation are required to ensure the success of a rural tourism destination. According to Gunn (1988), tourism management requires the integration of all parties, so that economic and social development benefits can be fully utilised by all. In addition, this step should be carried out in the planning process by emphasising each group's needs and how they could be integrated towards a common vision. The introduction of the concept of "Responsible Tourism" encourages local people to get involved in the decision-making process to better improve their quality of life. The term itself may be defined as one of the measures to reduce the impact of economic, environmental, and social conditions in which the tourists interact with locals, and harbour a mutual respect for each other. In general, the concept provides an opportunity for stakeholders in the tourism industry such as the local community, employees, the Government, competitors, tourists, activist groups, and private sector stakeholders, to take responsibility for their work in helping to improve the economy of the local industry. Their sensitivity towards certain local context should be viewed as a process of integration for measuring the sustainability of rural tourism in particular.

Furthermore, private parties carrying out any business activity in a rural area are also seen as key players in the success of tourism development. The private sector should not only focus purely on profit; at the same time, they should also respect the socio-cultural aspect, lifestyle, and environment of the rural tourism destination. Cooperation should achieve the stated objectives as well as foster mutual assistance with one another. Government agencies are also seen as the main party that can integrate all stakeholders in the tourism development process. The Government has to set the vision, strategies, and initiatives that are appropriate in driving the development and cooperation between these entities. Plus, assistance such as incentives, as well as relevant training, will reduce burdens and foster engaged communities to participate in current tourism activities. Competition usually occurs among groups within a heterogeneous local community, especially in rural areas, where people positively perceive the act of offering services and facilities for tourists. However, negative competition could still occur in the form of personal problems, family relationships, tourism management, the environment, or from the point of identity (including ethnic, racial, or religious conflicts). This situation, if not addressed, will result in poor tourism management. Normally, conflicts often arise because none of these parties truly understand the mission that they must achieve, leading to unhealthy competition. Also, none opt for mutual assistance, which is only resorted to at a particular time only. Rural tourism is supposed to be a catalyst to strengthening the unity among stakeholders rather than just for profit.

1.2 Problem Statement

During the study, several issues of conflict were identified among the locals and even the tour operators involved in the study area. This situation was found to occur when there is a high increase in the number of domestic and international tourist arrivals in Gopeng. The conflicts that occur are further elaborated upon in the next sub-sections.

1.2.1 Poor Business Relationship Conflict Among and Between Communities

There is an undeniable internal conflict among the Malay tourism key players in Gopeng. This conflict involves a few of the sub-groups i.e. the Gopeng Tourism Co-operative (KopelGo) and the Gopeng Homestay Association (linked with the management of PCB Transportation & Tours). In 2006, KopelGo was established, with its members consisting of the Rawa-Malay villagers from Kampung Sungai Iték, Kampung Jelintoh, and Kampung Pintu Padang. Internal disunited conflict started to arise in the homestay booking management when both parties became dis-united in governing the homestay programme. This is because KopelGo was established under the Malaysia Co-operative Societies Commission (MCSC) whereas the Gopeng Homestay Association also claim that they are responsible for managing the homestay as they are registered with the Homestay Unit, Ministry of Tourism, Malaysia. This has resulted in biasness when it comes to selecting the houses for homestay accommodations, where not all the registered participants are involved. From this, it can be observed that there is an obvious injustice in the existing management system, and this has caused both parties to fight over tourists among themselves.

Besides that, conflict in business management also occurs when the boat operators for the white water rafting activities are charged for landing their boats at certain locations. This new regulation is strongly opposed by all the boat operators. The rate that must be paid is between RM3-5 per boat. This is because the management claims that the locations are their family heritage lands, which is why the external parties are charging the boat operators that use these locations. This situation shows that there is no unanimity or positive relationship between the existing tourism businesses in Gopeng.

1.2.2 Conflict Arising From Restriction on Right of Access

The conflict on access restriction can be divided into two (2) types i.e. existing road access and land ownership. The increase in international and domestic tourist arrivals to Gopeng's tourist areas has affected the local physical infrastructure. The Rawa-Malay community are dismayed by the damage to village road access because of the sudden entry of lorries and four-wheel drive vehicles that bring all the tourists to the chalets, resorts, waterfalls, and to the checkpoints for white water rafting activities. Therefore, the local residents have unanimously agreed to impose a 'toll' to all entries of heavy vehicles belonging to the tourism operators. The residents will use the payment from these 'tolls' to maintain the affected infrastructure. However, this restriction to access has caused discomfort among the operators, not to mention the fact that not all parties were included in the discussion to set the 'toll' rates.



Figure 1.1 & 1.2 Current road access to the centre of activity
(Source : www.radakadventure.com)

Besides the 'toll' rates, access restriction on the roads are in the form of purposefully built road humps, which are many, from the old town of Gopeng heading towards the three main villages and ending at the Orang Asli villages of Ulu Geroh and Ulu Geruntum . The provision of these speed humps that are too frequently placed (every 100 meter) has not only caused difficulties to the tourism operators and tourists, but has also hindered the locals from going in and out of the area. The initial objective of the humps was to control the speed limit of the vehicles involved. However, this issue has led to complaints from all other parties. Additionally, limited parking

provisions have also caused disruptions to the local's access of the roads. This is because the constricted spaces and land ownership have restricted the provision of space for parking.

There are also issues in regard to the access of land ownership that must be focused on. Currently, there are access restrictions on entering and using the natural tourism attractions such as the caves and forests. For example, according to the management party of Kandu Eco Adventure, their families are the absolute, rightful land owners of the Kandu Cave area, so they do not readily allow outsiders to conduct activities without their permission. Because of this, some tourists are forced to take the package that Kandu Eco Adventure offers over other operators' packages. Other tourism operators also face problems when managing the tourism package activities in Kandu Cave (refer Figure 1.3 & 1.4) as there is an internal conflict in terms of cooperation that has never existed between them.



Figure 1.3 & 1.4 Kandu Cave, Gopeng

(Source : www.kanduecoadventure.com)

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Besides the cave, the forest areas also have usage access restrictions that have been set by the Orang Asli community. Prior to this, the Orang Asli had participated in special guidance training concerning preservation and conservation provided by the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) as part of their initiative to become guides for the forest areas. In line with this, other tourism operators that provide tourism package activities such as jungle trekking, watching the rafflesia flower, and water abseiling, would have to gain the permission of the Orang Asli community before conducting said activities. Besides that, each of these activities must be led by a guide only from the Orang Asli. This restriction has introduced usage limitations on other operators even though tourism resources should be harmoniously shared with each other.

1.2.3 Conflict Power Between Older and Younger Generations

The importance of human capital in advancing the tourism sector cannot be overlooked. In the case of Gopeng, most of its younger generation believe that there is no sustainability in terms of the job offered in the area. The conflict that must be focused on is the one that pertains to the youth's aspiration to become the drivers of the local tourism industry for the present and in the future. This situation has arisen due to the low socio-economic status attached to this industry, often associated with minimum and transient pay. Besides that, the youth perception of the older generation who are facing social relationships full of conflict has deterred them from working under the this party's purview. Old issues are often raised time and again with no end in sight. This is due to the status quo that each party wants to defend.

At the moment, it can be observed that the Generation Y involved in the tourism industry does not have a clear objective in their career plans. For example, they are unsure whether to work indefinitely until their old age or to build their own tourism business after having gained enough experience and capital. To surmise there is a power conflict between the older generation who would create employment

opportunities for the youth but restrict this to menial jobs. On the other hand, the younger generation aspire to become rural entrepreneur but felt that the older generation are holding them back.



Figure 1.6 & 1.7 Activities handled by young people
(Source : www.radakadventure.com)

Besides that, the issue of fighting over employees for boat guides in white water rafting between the KopelGo party and the private operators has become a pressing one. The private operators have committed substantial expenses for the cost of obtaining the “Rescue 3 International Swift Water Rescue Technician” Qualification Certificate amounting to RM1700-3000 for each individual. Nevertheless, since KopelGo has a limited budget, they are forced to illicitly employ workers from the private operators albeit with lower pay. This situation should not have occurred, as it would lead to management conflict. Therefore, it can be conclusively said that the growth of the local tourism industry has still not succeeded in attracting the youth to return from the cities to work in the tourism sector in Gopeng.

1.2.4 Political Conflict

The role of politics in promoting local tourism products is crucial. However, efforts undertaken by the local community to elicit cooperation from local politicians have failed. These efforts include enlisting the politicians' help in promoting tourism activities and the importance of the industry for a few days. These were, however, turned down with the excuse that there are no attractive products to be offered. Besides that, the State management level through the State Government Exco in the tourism sector, who also come from the Gopeng area, are remarkably non-aggressive in pursuing better quality improvements for the industry. The Lembah Tempurung Tourism Operators Association that was established by the Exco are failed to attract the interest of other operators to register with them as members. Because of this, the intention to unite all parties in the decision-making process has not been realised. The provided financial assistance is also seen to be biased. The allocation to widen the roads has only been focused on certain areas that have received political backing. Therefore, there is a very obvious gap that can be seen in the physical aspects of the study area. This situation should be improved holistically at the affected areas so that all parties would benefit. As a result, tourism operators have had to resort to the media (newspapers) to express their discontent with the situation. This is because their voices have not been heard by the politicians who are supposed to help advance the development of local tourism especially in rural areas.

1.3 Research Goal

This study aims to identify and measure the factors that have led to the escalating conflict among tourism stakeholders in Gopeng to be eradicated and ensure that the destination achieves full potential as one of the top eco-adventure destinations in Malaysia.

1.4 Research Objectives

To achieve the outlined goal, three main objectives were identified. The objectives are described below:

- (i) To identify the types of tourism conflict in the study area
- (ii) To recognise the main factors contributing to internal and external conflict
- (iii) To measure the level of existing conflict and their implications on the performance of destination area

1.5 Research Questions

- (i) What is the main tourism conflict in the study area internally and externally ?
- (ii) What are the main factors that contribute to these conflict ?
- (iii) What is the magnitude and severity of the conflicts from the perspective of the different communities ?

1.6 Research Scope

This study will focus on understanding the basic concepts and definitions of a conflict, identification of the category of conflicts that exist, and the implementation of conflict resolution as a tool in other countries. Next, in-depth research on the main variables of the study area will be conducted through quantitative and qualitative

methods. At the end of this study, a proposal towards a win-win solution will be suggested, which includes relevant strategies. To achieve the outlined goals and objectives, the scope of this study will focus on three variables, namely:

- i. Main Conflict**
- ii. Conflict Sources**
- iii. Barriers Against Cooperation and Integration**

The data and information required for (i), (ii) to (iii) are based on the literature review, which is essentially the backbone of this study. The data is derived from questionnaires and interview sessions (*Refer to Table 1.1*). In determining the relationship between the indicator variables and data required, references to the literature review is necessary. For the first variable, the main conflict is divided into three (3) key elements that need to be considered. The data needed include the relationship between key tourism players, tourism interest and exchange of views, as well as communication aspects. According to the theory, conflicts usually occur overtly and covertly. Overt conflict is focused on the needs of individuals whereas covert conflict is related to the rights of individuals and groups. Therefore, the aspects listed will identify the main conflicts based on the initial perception of the respondents regarding current social relationships.

To determine the sources of conflict (Variable 2), the researcher has divided conflict into three (3) main elements, namely personal, family relationship, and tourism management, which consists of internal and external conflict. These elements have been summarised from the literature review, which mentioned conflict sources as inter micro-micro (personal conflict), intra micro-micro (family relationship and working environment) and micro-macro, the last one of which occurs between community groups, different management organisations, political parties, and other groups. Thus, this method will help to assess the conflict factor that has arisen in the study area.

Variable 3 elaborates further on the level of conflict and implications on destination area. The data required is related to the barrier against cooperation and integration. Based on the literature review, every social system has the potential to create conflict after which the pattern of the current relationship could be changed. In addition, the level of social trust towards society will be emphasised. Factors of competitiveness will also be linked to the differences between other individuals, dimension relevance, similarity, and relationship closeness. Therefore, the level of cooperation and integration will yield the real picture of the seriousness of the conflict whether it could still be improved or not.

Table 1.1 Data Needed for the Research

| Scope | Main Criteria | Data Needed | Source |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|---|--|
| | Respondent Profiles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender • Age • Race • Education Level • Occupation • Income (RM) • Origin • Length of stay (year) • Number of households • Number of households involved in the tourism sector • Tourism sector involvement | Information regarding the socio-demographic and socio-economic background of respondents |
| CONSTRUCTS / VARIABLES | | | |
| 1 | Main Conflict | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relationship between tourism key players • Interest and exchange of tourism views • Communication | <p>Type of Conflict by Katz & Lawyer (1993) : Chapter 2 – 2.2.6</p> <p>i. Conflict emerges from two primary types: overt (refers to individual needs) & covert (within the individual and/or groups).</p> |

| Scope | Main Criteria | Data Needed | Source |
|-------|---|--|---|
| | | | ii. Problems related to the perception of individuals or groups. |
| 2 | Conflict Sources (Internal and External Conflicts) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal (Internal) • Family Relationship (Internal) • Tourism Management (External) | <p>Source of Conflict by Grimble & Wellard (1997) : Chapter 2 - 2.2.7</p> <p>i. Inter Micro-Micro Occurs as a personal conflict and psychologically (emotionally) affects other individuals/parties.</p> <p>ii. Intra Micro-Micro Involves conflicts in family relationships and the working environment.</p> <p>iii. Micro-Macro Occurs between community groups, different management organisations, political parties, and other groups.</p> |
| 3 | Barriers Against Cooperation and Integration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation and social functions | <p>Social Conflict and The Theory of Social Change by Coser (2007) : Chapter 2 - 2.2.8</p> <p>Each social system contains elements of strain and potential conflict, hence leading to the rise of a new social system governed by different patterns of social relationships.</p> <p>Measurements of Interpersonal Trust by Evans & Revelle : Chapter 2 - 2.6.1</p> <p>First: rate how much they trust social objects (other people)</p> |

| Scope | Main Criteria | Data Needed | Source |
|-------|---------------|-------------|---|
| | | | <p>Second: rate general optimism towards society.</p> <p>Factors of Competitiveness by Gracia (2013) : Chapter 2 - 2.2.9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual differences - Dimension relevance - Similarity - Relationship closeness |

1.7 Research Significance

This study is crucial towards helping certain parties increase revenue and tourism development in rural areas. In terms of the local community, local residents would be able to improve their socio-economic well-being without relying on Government assistance. Local youngsters can gain knowledge and experience from the resorts nearby and can potentially run their own business. In addition, the community will also become competitive in a healthy way and help each other to attract more foreign tourist arrivals. For homestay and resort operators, cooperation between them would increase profitability among various parties involved in the tourism industry. Good relationships can be fostered via sharing of their experiences and expertise, which can further upgrade the industry. As a result, the rural tourism industry could become better known among local and foreign tourists. The Governmental agencies have the potential to be the intermediary in strengthening ties among tourism key players. In addition, they may also be seen as advisors who can provide specific assistance such as the provision of training, incentives, and financial grants.

1.8 Background of the Study Area

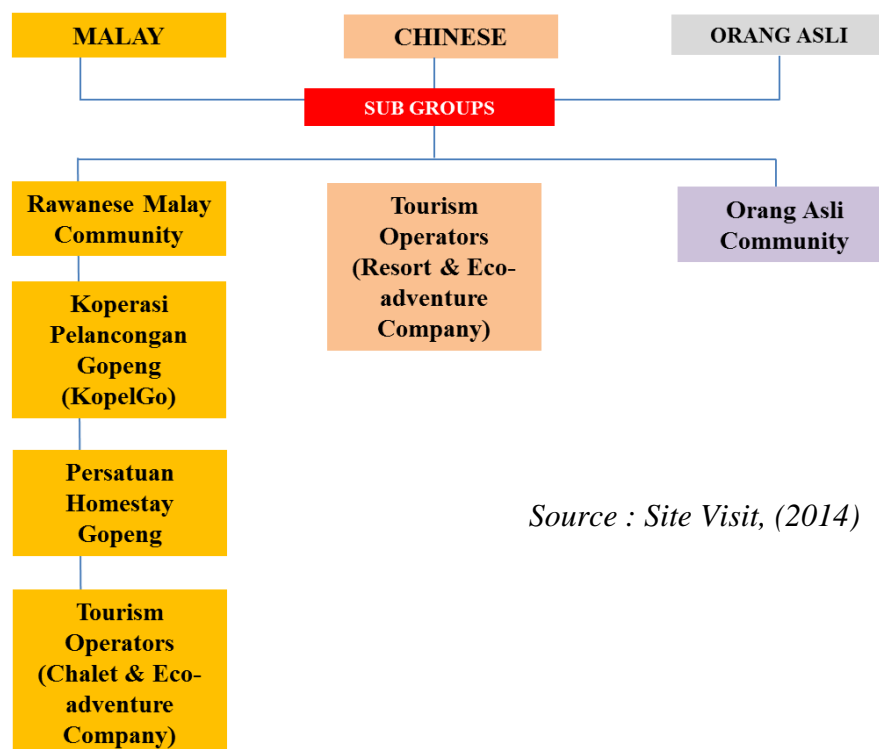
Gopeng is located in the Kampar district and is about 20 km from Ipoh. The location is strategic because it is located on the west side of the highly accessible North-South Expressway. It is also near to three other small cities, namely Batu Gajah, Kampar, and Simpang Pulai. The study area is located in Mukim Teja, under the administration of the Gopeng District Council. In the beginning, Gopeng town was famous for its tin mining industry. However, this activity was officially stopped in 1980. Nevertheless, Gopeng is blessed with natural sceneries such as limestone hills, rivers, and waterfalls. Hence, it has successfully captured the hearts of nature lovers and has attracted them to experience the uniqueness of the eco-tourism it offers.



Figure 1.8 Location of Gopeng

(Source : <http://my.malaxi.com/p/perak-map.html>)

Gopeng is also well known for its Rawa-Malay community and is believed to be the central hub for Rawanese people in Malaysia. This community originated from Pagar Ruyung, Indonesia. There are three (3) villages involved in this research, namely Kampung Sungai Itek, Kampung Jelintoh, and Kampung Pintu Padang. The key stakeholders are the Rawa-Malay community (and its different sub-groups), the Malay chalet operators, the Chinese resort operators, and the Orang Asli community. Despite the variety of sub-groups, the social inter-relationship is weak; the groups rarely interact with each other to discuss any tourism management matters. There are two entities responsible for the management and execution of the homestay programme, namely the Gopeng Tourism Co-operative and Gopeng Homestay Association. This situation sometimes involves misunderstandings and disagreements. However, the scenario still has the potential to improve as both entities are from the Rawa-Malay community.



Source : Site Visit, (2014)

Figure 1.9 The Division of Tourism Key Players in the Study Area

"Gopeng Homestay" was introduced in 2006 with the aim of introducing tourism in the area. It received its first participants in 2007. In the beginning, only 33 houses participated in this programme, however, this number increased to 49 houses with 51 rooms after local residents began to realise its benefits. Basically, the homestay participants are introduced to the customs of the Rawa-Malay community such as the demonstration of "Adat Berjojak " (a traditional ritual practice) and tasting of "Kelamai" (a traditional cuisine). Moreover, the Gopeng Tourism Cooperative (KoPelGo) was established to generate economic growth via product generation. It now boasts 100 registered members.



Figure 1.10 & 1.11 Activities offered by Gopeng Homestay
(Source : www.kopelgo.blogspot.my)

Apart from the homestay programme, there are also a variety of adventure-based activities offered in this area. The natural geographical elements such as the forests, limestone caves, and the river has opened up opportunities for the tourism industry to focus on eco-adventure-based activities for tourists. The activities offered include white water rafting, caving at Gua Tempurung, and jungle trekking near Semai Aboriginal Village, all of which successfully attract more people to come visit. Nowadays, instead of homestays, Gopeng is now opening more chalets for tourists.



Figure 1.12 White Water Rafting, Orang Asli cultural demonstration, and caving
 (Source : www.radakadventure.com)

1.9 Study Flow Chart

The flow chart for this study is illustrated in Figure 1.13, the research process starts from the selection of research topics to be studied. The flow is important in drawing up the study process until completed. The conflict resolution between heterogeneous local communities involved in rural tourism in Gopeng, Perak, was chosen as the main title of this research. This title is relevant in tourism planning which trying to deepen the real conflict in rural tourist destination. Once the topic is selected, the determination of issues and problems involved are listed. Four (4) issues and problems were identified, which are poor business relationship conflict among and between communities, conflict arising from restriction no right of access, conflict power between older and younger generations, and political conflict. This issues are the result of site study and even still continues without any constructive solution. Therefore, the three (3) main objectives of this study are; (1) to identify the types of conflict among tourism players, (2) to recognise the main factors contributing to internal and external conflicts, and lastly (3) to measure the level of conflicts and the implications on the performance of the destination area. The main scopes are based on a detailed literature review. This is followed with sessions of conducting surveys and interviews using questionnaires and via in-depth interviews among key stakeholders. Respondents involve for questionnaire survey session are homestay providers,

villagers and employees of the local tourism industry, Meanwhile, in depth interview are more focusing on chalet or resort owner, association chairman and leader among community. Data collected will be analyzed by SPSS (quantitative data) and NVivo for qualitative data. Each analysis will follow the indicator variables are set before. Determination of the main conflicts occurred will be identified as well as conflict factors can be understood. In addition, the level of cooperation and integration that is the backbone of an industry will be focused. Next, some of the suggestion through conflict resolution will be determined at an early stage. From the analysis findings, some recommendations will be proposed to overcome the current issues that have been identified according to the theory and planning practices.

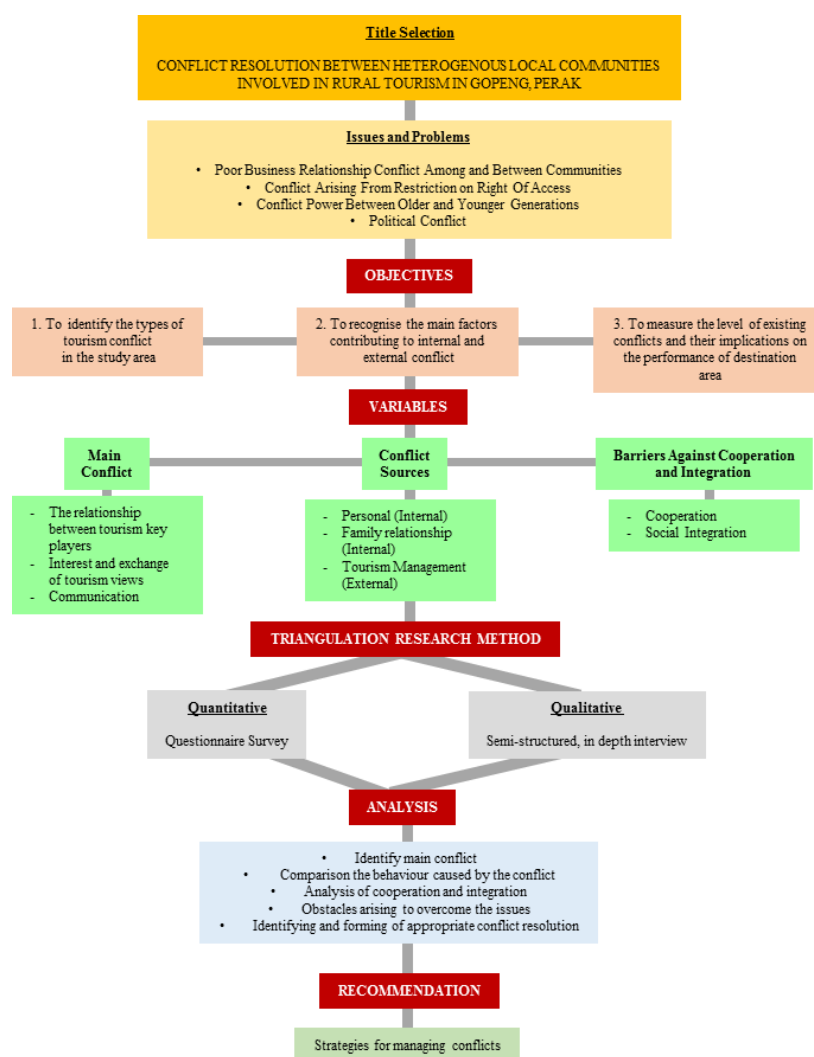


Figure 1.13 Study Flow Chart

1.10 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework, as outlined in Figure 1.14, is a combination of the study's flow chart and theory. The main goal of this framework is to solve any conflicts via an orderly process, taking into consideration the current situation of the case study as well as theoretical solutions. The conflict sources will be divided into two (2) main categories. Internal conflicts will cover any personal issues as well as family relationship matters, whereas the external conflict will be more focused on tourism management. The categories are separated because different responses were obtained when conducting the questionnaires and interviews. The next step is to determine the severity of the conflict and identify the barriers that potentially arise before implementation stage. Once this process has identified in detail, conflict resolution will be implemented which will include theory context and current planning practices.

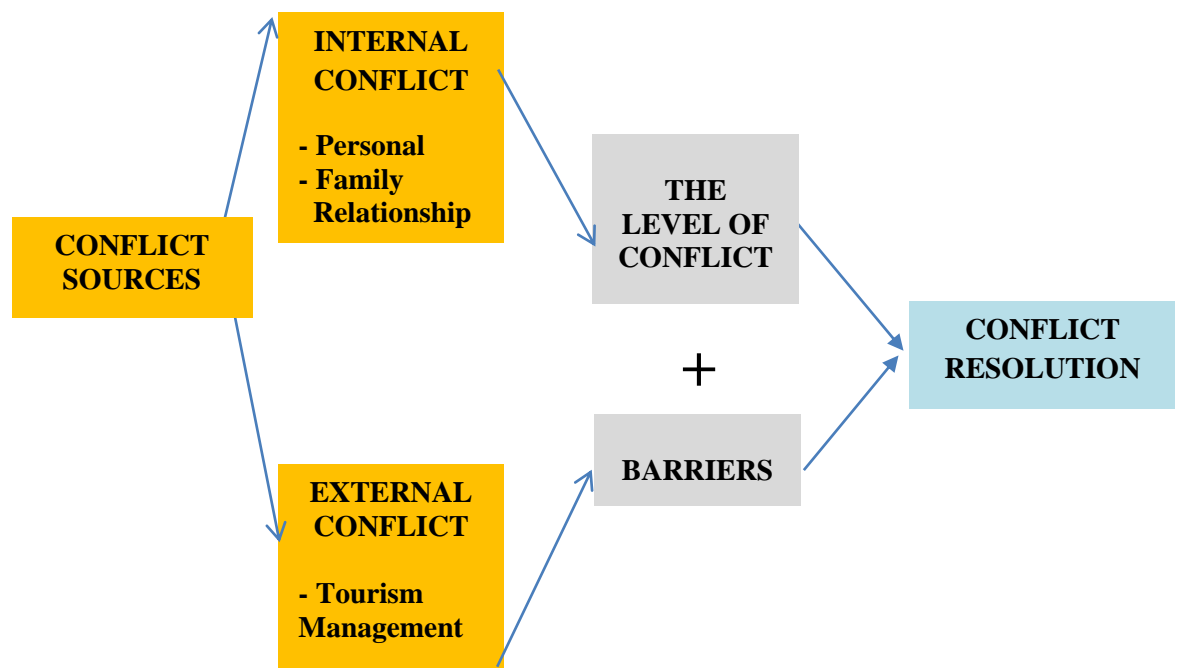


Figure 1.14 Conceptual Framework

1.11 Conclusion

Overall, the research begins with identifying current conflict issues and problems that are occurring in Gopeng. Among the issues recognised are poor business relationships conflict among and between communities. In addition, there are also conflict arising from restriction on right of access, particularly for vehicles (lorries) passing in the village inner roads and access to get into forest and cave. Next is the conflict power between older and younger generations, and lastly there is a political conflict in the industry. Therefore, three objectives were set as the focus of this study, which are; (1) to identify the type of tourism conflict in the study area, (2) recognition of the main factors contributing to internal and external conflict and then to measure the level of existing conflicts and their implications on the performance of destination area. Therefore, to achieve these objectives, three variables will be applied i.e. the main conflict, conflict sources, and barriers against cooperation and integration. The selected study area is located in Gopeng, Perak. This location was chosen because the conflict involves a number of major groups that contribute to the local tourism industry, namely the Rawa- Malay community, Malay chalet owners, the Chinese Resort Operators, and the Orang Asli. At the end of this study, these objectives will be linked with the conflict resolution with the aim of achieving a win-win situation.

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