

Exploring Tourism Products for Kampung Sungai Dua Besar, Kuala Pilah, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to identify the possible tourism products of Kampung Sungai Dua Besar specifically the culture, heritage and community resources. Tourism could play a role in developing the area and provide its community with the opportunity to improve their standard of living through their participation in tourism-related economic activities. Data and information for the study was collected via observation on the resources and through open-ended interviews with the local community and community leaders. Findings from the study had revealed that there were some interesting natural and cultural products, but preservation and conservation efforts had to be carried out so that they could be considered viable and attractive products. Kampung Sungai Dua Besar had the potential to be promoted as small scaled rural tourism.

Keywords

Tourism Products, Community Resources, Conservation.

Introduction

Many tourism destinations in Malaysia had contributed significantly towards developing the economies of the local communities in various parts of the country. According to Kuala Pilah District Council, the district of Kuala Pilah in the state of Negeri Sembilan had also benefitted from such development, but it remained concentrated within the township. Kuala Pilah is one of the seven districts in Negeri Sembilan and it covers an area of 109,039.58 hectares. The town of Kuala Pilah is located about 5 to 6 km from Kampung Sungai Dua Besar. Kuala Pilah had three types of villages: traditional villages,

new villages, and indigenous villages. The population of the traditional villages was mainly the Malays while the new villages consisted of the Malays, the Malaysian Chinese and the Malaysian Indians. These rural areas had not been part of the major thrust for tourism development. The indigenous village of Sungai Dua Besar (which literary means Village of the Two Big River), even with its rich natural and cultural resources, had been one of those areas. The indigenous people did not seemed to have the interest, nor the ability and capability to organize themselves as a community, since their community are scattered in small groups, to enable them to participate in the development of touristic economies (Butler & Hinch, 2007). In other countries, the indigenous community were able to offer such tourism products that relate to local arts and crafts, music and festivals, and to showcase the spiritual aspects of the indigenous community (Holder & Ruhanen, 2017). The hilly landscape of Kampung Sungai Dua Besar, with its extensive secondary forest/jungle areas had vast potential to be developed into environment-related tourist attractions for both domestic and foreign tourist who seek nature-based adventure activities.

Research Issue

Kampung Sungai Dua Besar had the rich heritage and cultural resources and had the potential to be developed as tourism products. However, the potentials of these resources had not been closely considered as such due to their poor conditions and the lack of traffic flow to the area. However, efforts to upgrade, conserve and preserve those resources into tourism products could vastly contributes towards improving the standard of living of the indigenous community. Community in the context of tourism planning and development would be defined from a geographical perspective, but to continue considering the notion of community and its need would necessitate to subsume the variety of community groups as a distinct group in one community, especially when it referred to the population of indigenous within the community (Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2016).

Purpose of Study

The main purpose of this study was to identify the potential tourism products of Kampung Sungai Dua Besar and to explore the conditions of those resources. The study had also included an investigation into the community, the site and the infrastructure available. After the assessment of the resources, the potential target domestic and foreign tourists would be identified, and tourism packages would be suggested for development.

Research Process

The research process was according to the following phases:

- Analysis of the natural resources.
- Analysis of the cultural resources.
- Analysis of the community.
- Analysis of the site.
- Analysis of environment.
- Analysis of the tourism and facilities.
- Assessment of potential tourism products and packages.

The following conceptual framework depicted the flow of research activities which began with a situational analysis and ended with the identification of potential target tourists market segments.

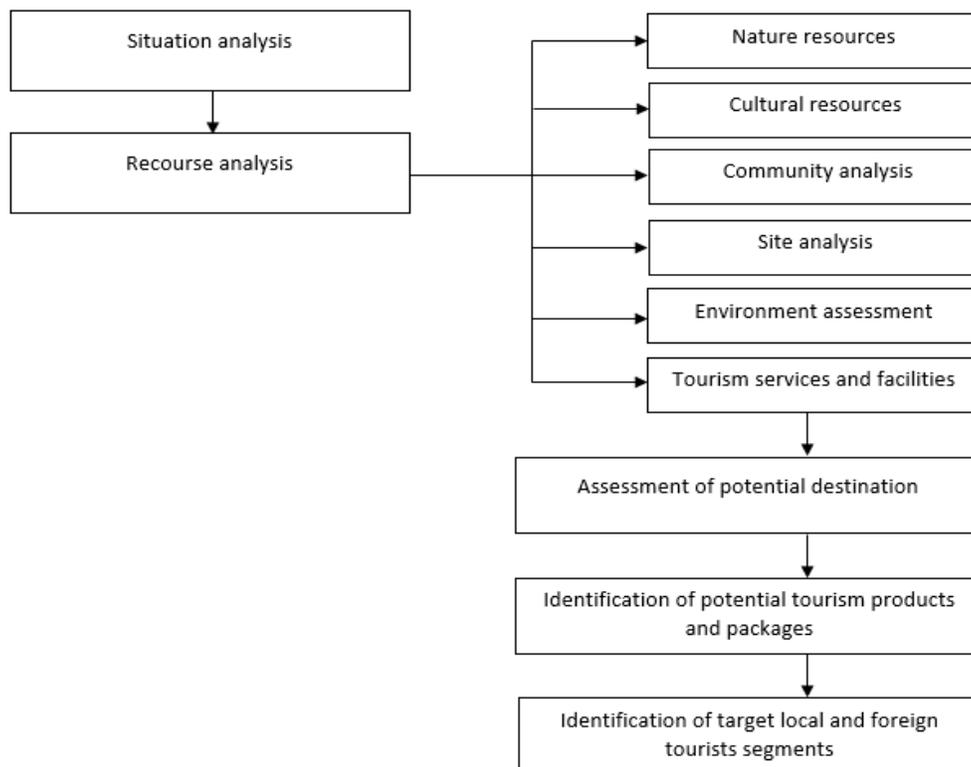


Illustration: Conceptual Frameworks and Situational Analysis

Literature Overview

According to Jovicic (2016), cultural tourism implied the tourism industry that is owned, controlled, acceptable and desired by the local people as well as meeting their social cultural and economic needs. Littrell (1997) indicated that culture could be viewed as comprised of the peoples' attitudes, belief, ideas and values; and what they did that relate

to their normative behaviour patterns or way of life as reflected in their artworks, artefacts, and cultural products. Despite the availability of cultural heritage attractions as a base from which to initiate and develop cultural tourism, other elements of tourism organization and infrastructure were also deemed as necessary (Boniface, 2013). They could be described as the existence of a wholesome system of local policies and governance that would be the basis for a specific 'cultural environment'. These according to Singh (2008), together with local cultural heritage could create a destination which could attract tourists. Kumral and Onder (2009) elaborated that the environment had been the backdrop that had boosted tourism in the last few decades. Chevrier (2011) stated that it had generally being accepted also that the culinary tradition would be part of the local and national culture as it constituted a cultural system that signified a real marker of identity that represented a symbolic and identity form of the culture.

Boyd & Butler (1996), in their study of the desert aboriginal heritage, found it to be ancient and unique and in recent decades, it had become a commodity for touristic purpose which had been included in international destination marketing. According to Carson et al. (2009), developing heritage products for tourism consumption had been suggested as a strategy for increasing tourist interest to encourage visitation to those desert tourism destinations.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The exploratory design guided the methods of enquiry since the investigation would extend into a relatively unknown area while the descriptive design would present the findings by focusing and explaining on each of the resources examined. Primary data was collected from observations and interviewing sessions at the Kampung Sungai Dua Besar with community leaders and community members with the used of guided instruments. The secondary data and information were extracted from published article in academic journals, from download articles from the internet, exacted excerpts from book, from published documents from the local government and from brochures published and distributed by the state tourism offices. The data collection period extended over four month with two visits to the site.

Instrument Development

The four instruments had been used for collecting data primary and secondary data were as follows:

1. Site Analysis

Site Analysis checklist is made up of 13 dimensions referring to area economics, physical characteristics, size and shape, land costs, availability of utilities, street patterns, positional characteristics, traffic information, people traffic information, visibility of the area, pollution, local labour, other services (i.e. police station, fire brigade, court house, hospital, post office, bank, money changer and business association).

2. Community Analysis

The instrument comprised of an analysis community, size population density, major types of residence, condition, cluster resident, community, surrounding, ethnic background, social status of community, recreation activities and major household/family size, average age of head of household, major source of household income, economic activity around residence, social status of community, recreational activities around residence and major household transportation mode.

3. Cultural and Heritage Resources

Cultural resources checklist focused on resources such as historical buildings, historical sites, monuments, archaeological sites and collection, folklore and traditions, handicrafts, museums, visual performing and fine arts and research centre.

4. Natural Resources

Checklist focused on resources such as the beaches, coral reefs, mountains, forest reserves, waterfalls, lakes, rivers, caves, wildlife and springs. The relevant items were assessed on the overall condition of the resources, the area size, the types of activities carried out, types of tourist who visited the area and the economic or business activities carried out at the site.

Study Findings

Site Resources Analysis

Fifty percent of Kampung Sungai Dua Besar is used as residential area and only 15 % was designated as public areas such as school, police stations, and health clinic. Transportation available to Kampung Sungai Dua Besar from other places were public buses, taxis and car rental. The distance from Kampung Sungai Dua Besar was about 20 minutes to central business Kuala Pilah town. The area was supplied with electricity and

water to all the house. One main trunk road ran through Kampung Sungai Dua Besar and road signage were strategically placed to indicate main infrastructure and public facilities. The road map within and around Kampung Sungai Dua Besar are readily available in the internet.

Community Resources Analysis

The resident of Kampung Sungai Dua Besar were 60% Malays and the 20% indigenous community that were made up of various clans with varying culture and traditional practice. The Malays were all Muslim and speak mainly in Malay language with the distinct Negeri Sembilan dialect. Ten percent were Malaysian Chinese and another 10% were Malaysian Indians. The Chinese and Indians converse in their own language, but Malay language were used to communicate with other ethnic groups.

The major types of houses in Kampung Sungai Dua Besar were wooden houses, and 5% were with the distinct Negeri Sembilan traditional architectural design. In Kampung Sungai Dua Besar, 65% were paddy planters, 15% worked in the public sector and another 20 % worked as small scale farmers or operate their own small business such as food stalls or handicraft stall at the roadside. The major mode of transportation was the public bus and only 20 % had cars or motorcycles. The elderly Malay community would began their morning by going to the mosque for their dawn prayers, while the teenagers and children would be preparing to go to school. Some other ethnic groups were seen to go for morning walks. A lit later in the morning the folks were seen having their breakfast which comprised of roti canai or nasi lemak and teh tarik at the various food stalls.

Cultural and Heritage Resources Analysis

Kampung Sungai Dua Besar is a small village. The main evening activities for the local elderly folks were seen meeting and chatting with friends, for the male at the food stall while the female in the shady areas in the compound of their houses. The elderly female group would usually sit with a tray of evening fried banana fritters or *cekoduk* and a pot of tea. The young adults would be riding their bicycles or motorcycles in groups of 2 to 4 riding around the village roads or along the bunds in the paddy fields. Not much formal sports activities like football or futsal were seen. The very young kids would be seen in groups playing kampong games in the vicinity of their kampong houses. Some ladies could be seen sweeping the dried fallen leaves around the compound of their houses and gathering them into heaps before burning them.

The traditional ceremonies or 'adat' that were still in practice were (1) the the "cukur jambul" (shaving off all the hair/or cutting off a very small amount of the newborn hair) with an organized female community group chanting the "Marhaban", "Doa Selamat", "Tahlil", all these represent reciting religious verses which pray and thank for good life for the baby and those in attendance, and (2) engagement ceremonies which were carried out as rituals according to traditions. It would began by communal cooking at the bride-to-be house, and the food would be served to the guests where almost all the community members would be invited, the wedding ceremony would be more elaborated with local music accompanied by local instruments such as the flute, gamelan, and the angling. The community would be involved in helping out their neighbours in the preparation and in organizing the wedding reception or "Kenduri" function. In some occasions, there would be a "berbalas pantun session or a bersilat show (Malay art of self-defence). For the school children, there would be some formal sporting events such as the marathon and co-curriculum activities. Kampong Sungai Dua Besar mainly become the host for the event. The indigenous community had their own rituals and traditions which are unique, and they also had their rattan handicrafts that could be sold to tourists and could help to improve their earnings.

The district of Kuala Pilah had already gained prominence as a cultural centre where the main cultural and heritage product known around the globe as the 'Adat Perpatih'. It had been the subject of many cultural anthropological studies that cantered around the unique traditions that relate to clans, women's rights and ancestral heritage that had been transmitted down for generations and it had its roots from the island of Sumatera in Indonesia. These customs is still very relevant and strongly upheld also by the Malay population in Kampung Sungai Dua Besar. The documentation on these had been extensively developed and preserved.

Situated closed by is the royal town of Sri Menanti where is situated the well-known traditional architectural design of the state museum which was formally the Palace of the rural of Negeri Sembilan. The unique designs of many minangkabau houses, with the key element of 'atap bergonjong' (ridges roofs) could be found in the area. The museum which is a four-storey timber palace was built in the late 19th century by Malay carving experts. However, Chinese influences on the woodcarvings of the palace could be found in the design and structure of the columns and beams on the exterior of the building.

Natural Resources Analysis

The natural resources found at Kampung Singai Dua Besar were mainly of two types: the cultivated area and the uncultivated area. The cultivated which occupied the low areas

was mainly the paddy fields which account for about 60% of the land used areas. Other forms of small scale farms areas were those situated within the proximity of the housing areas. Depending on the rice cultivating season cycle, the paddy field might be all bright green, or golden in colour when it would be about to be harvest. Migratory birds could be seen in some parts of the field. The other parts of the village were the hilly terrain which is covered with thick undergrowth and secondary jungle. These jungles are ‘home’ to the indigenous community and they could track expertly into the jungles to look for medicinal roots, wild orchids, bamboo and rattan or the mengkuang leaves for making the handicrafts.

Potential Tourism Products and Potential Tourist Market Segments

Kampung Sungai Dua Besar had several tourism products that could be enhanced such as the unique houses and historical buildings in Kampung Sungai Dua Besar and the extended towns that is situated nearby. The history, customs and unique traditions of the community, including those of the indigenous people could be package as tourism products. Touristic and experiential learning activities at the paddy field could be enhance to add value to the tourists experience. The village setting environment, which were very well-kept by the community could be showcase as a typical Malay village.

Kampung Sungai Dua Besar had a lot of unique tourism products for both the local and the International tourists. Both these tourists would find the way of life of the Malay and indigenous communities very interesting, but there would be a need to plan carefully because those types of tourism product offerings would be suitable for those interested in getting involved closely with the community. Thus, it would not be suitable for mass tourism.

The target market segments would be the student market, the local tourists, and the international tourists, specifically those who would be interested in learning about heritage and culture. Educational tours could be organized for them to observe and/or participate in cultural activities or just appreciating the unique designs of the Minangkabau style houses. Those who would be interested in farming might be interested in participating in the planting and harvesting of the padi plants, or to learn about the herbs and traditional plants that the community planted in the compound of their houses. The adventurous tourists who might like challenges could venture into the jungle with the indigenous people as guides. The foreign tourists might be interested to learn first-hand on the ‘Adat Perpatih’ and observed how the various ceremonies are carried out. It might

also be interested to learn on the historical aspects of the migration of the people from the island of Sumatera and the traditions and culture that they brought along.

Conclusions

During the process of interviewing the community, 99 % of those community members indicated that they would welcome tourists and would cooperate in the development and enhancement of the tourism products. The involvement of local communities in the tourism activities would be an important element in developing and in ensuring the authenticity of the cultural and heritage cultural products. This open acceptance of tourists was very encouraging, but the community had to be informed on the potential problems that could arise with the increased inflow of tourists if proper planning on carrying capacity had not been included. The community leaders would need to be included in the planned development of the tourism products so that the community's interest would be the central consideration in all aspects of development. They should be the one to benefit the most from the development in the area. An additional concern would be the source of funding for the developmental projects since tourism infrastructure and services had to be provided. The local government would have to play a strong role in the provision of initial capital and on maintenance, and also by continuously providing advisory services. The government should also help in creating the awareness among the local communities concerning the importance of their involvements in tourism activities. When they are involved in the tourism activities such as cultural performance, traditional sports, and the production of local handicrafts products, they would indirectly show that they are supporting the community's development efforts.

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