

The effects of support on coastal tourism planning towards well-being of the community

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Abstract | Residents' support and their engagement in coastal tourism development play an important role in enhancing community wellbeing. There have many efforts by the local authority and the government in planning coastal tourism attractions at Pantai Senok, including the planting of coastal rhu trees and white trees along the coast since 2009. This study examined how the community's welcoming nature, emotional closeness, sympathetic understanding, attitudes and community commitment impact the support for coastal tourism planning, which ultimately describes the community well-being. To test the research model, survey data were collected from 150 residents living at Pantai Senok, Malaysia. Findings revealed that emotional closeness, welcoming nature, sympathetic understanding, community commitment and attitudes have significant effects on local community support for coastal tourism planning. These supports have also improved the quality of life and well-being of the local community.

Keywords | Coastal tourism planning, community development, Pantai Senok Malaysia, support, well-being

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1. Introduction

The tourism sector in Malaysia is growing rapidly, contributing to reduced unemployment and poverty rate (Chor & Md. Darit, 2015). This industry provides competitive advantages and supports economic growth, particularly within the tourism sites. As announced by the government, the tourism revenue in Malaysia had grown to 16.9%, which reached RM 21.4 billion in the first quarter of 2019 alone (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2019).

There are approximately 40% of the world's population that resides on the coast or within the coastal zone (Burke et al., 2001). The majority of them are involved in coastal tourism while many of them work in fisheries and agriculture sectors as a way of earning. In realising the significance of coastal tourism to the economy globally and its impact on the physical, socio-economic and cultural environments of the coastal communities, there is a need to consider sustainable tourism (Ghosh, 2011).

The East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia is popular with coastal tourism as its states are covered by many beautiful beaches. Besides, coastal areas are among the primary attractions where many tourism activities are carried out. Activities such as fishing, collecting shells, swimming, diving, picnic and surfing are among the famous consumptive and non-consumptive activities among tourists (Zulkifli, Ibrahim & Zakariya, 2020). Like many other coastal tourism places, Pantai Senok is also one of the tourism products of Kelantan state crowded with tourists from time to time.

There have been many efforts done by the local authority and federal government to plan tourism attractions at Pantai Senok, including the planting of coastal rhu trees (*Casuarina Equisetifolia*) and white trees (*Eucalyptus*) along the coast since 2009. Originally, the planting of these trees was one of the state government's initiatives in preserving the environment as well as intensifying ef-

forts to overcome the issue of forest encroachment (Alias, 2019). However, with the beautiful tree's scenery, this place has become a potential area to be developed as a tourism product a few years later. Until now, the government has maintained this area, which is currently famous with the name Nami Island of Malaysia. Nowadays, many tourists come to Pantai Senok for photography activities, picnics and recreational fishing activities.

In achieving sustainable coastal tourism planning and development, solid support from the local community is vital, which contributes to the improvement of people's well-being. As coastal tourism activities can give many benefits to the industry, the involvement of local communities with these activities will surely help them improve their income and quality of life. As mentioned by Ghosh (2011), a sustainable tourism activity should improve local community livelihood and fair distribution of profit and resources. Another study by Harun, Chiciudean, Sirwan, Arion and Muresan (2018) found that the willingness to support tourism planning increases employment opportunities and the well-being of the community.

A current study on regional tourism planning and development has been carried out focusing on the level of community participation from the perspective of Arnstein's theory (Singgalen, Sasongko & Wiloso, 2019). Their study found positive community participation and support in planning, implementation and evaluation stages of tourism development in which there was no impact of this support on the community well-being. Another study by Hanafiah, Jamaluddin and Zulkifly (2013) indicated that the community in Tioman Island supported the future coastal tourism planning at their place. The study also suggested that prospective research is needed to study the effects of community support on their quality of life.

In addition, a study on the effects of community attitudes toward tourism planning discovered that the welcoming nature and sympathetic understanding were the most significant factors in-

fluencing residents' support on tourism planning (Moghavvemi, Woosnam, Paramanathan, Musa & Hamzah, 2017). Yet, the study did not include any effect on community well-being. Considering these gaps, the main aim of this study is to investigate how welcoming nature, emotional closeness, sympathetic understanding, community commitment and attitude influence residents' support on coastal tourism planning. Furthermore, this study attempts to observe the effects of community support on the well-being of the local community at Pantai Senok, Kelantan.

2. Literature review and hypothesis development

Residents' Support towards Tourism Development and Community Well-being

Based on the Theory of Social Exchange, "people evaluate an exchange based on the resulting benefits and costs of that exchange" (Pham and Kayat, 2011). Generally, tourism development creates positive and negative impacts on the local community. In many past studies regarding community support on tourism planning and development, positive social-economic impacts on the residents were observed. The most significant contributions included the increase in employment and level of income, public infrastructures and facilities, preservation of cultural heritage, investment and sustainable social lives (Alrwajfah, Almeida-García & Cortés-Macías, 2019; Hancer & Mancı, 2017; Lee & Hsieh, 2016). Residents would support any tourism development activities planned by the local authority when they feel that these activities could bring more benefits over the related costs. Real support can be seen through the non-apathetic behaviour and attitude towards tourism activities. The local community would be helpful by providing related information to tourists and

kindly sharing the local culture and tradition with them (Del Chiappa, Atzeni, & Ghasemi, 2018).

Community supports are vital to ensure sustainable coastal tourism planning and development. A study has been conducted to examine the locals' support for tourism planning and found social-cultural benefits perceived by the local community (Meimand et al., 2017). Based on the four independent variables tested, impact on economic well-being was among the most influential determinants of perceived socio-cultural benefits from community support. In a most recent study by Daskin, Tiril and Bozkurt (2020), the effects of coastal tourism planning were explored towards the local economic, socio-cultural and environment of a local community in Turkey. The study found positive support by the local community in all these aspects. In a way, the coastal tourism planning made by the local authority has improved their quality of life and well-being.

Hong Long (2012) noted that the local community in Ha Long Bay, Vietnam viewed tourism planning positively. The full support given to tourism development initiatives taken by the government contributed to the improvement in their socio-cultural and economic. Another study analysed the relationship between the effects of coastal tourism development on the residents' quality of life and the level of community participation (Eshliki & Kaboudi, 2012). The result indicated that the coastal tourism planning made in the Beach of Ramsar, Iran had influenced the local community well-being and quality of life. Apart from that, the analysis also revealed a significant relationship between the level of community participation and quality of life. Hence, the following hypothesis is put forth:

H6. Residents' support towards coastal tourism planning has a significant effect on their well-being.

Welcoming nature

The emotional solidarity scale developed by Woosnam and Norman (2010) contains three factors that affect community support: welcoming nature, sympathetic understanding and emotional closeness. A community that is friendly and welcome tourists will likely possess personal interests in the tourism sector and appreciate any benefits gained from tourism planning and development made by local authorities or the government (Woosnam, 2012). The welcoming nature presented by the residents describes that they are proud of their community and grateful for the socio-economic impacts brought by tourists to their place. According to Hasani et al. (2016), welcoming nature has become the strongest factor that could influence community support for tourism planning and development. The welcoming nature will bring much happiness to them as they realise that their place has something to offer to the tourists.

The welcoming nature sense is also related to the openness to experience. In a study by Kuo, Cheng, Chiu and Cho (2015), it was found that a community with a high degree of welcoming nature would be likely to demonstrate a high level of openness to experience. This refers to the receptiveness of the community to learn and adapt to any changes that happen. It clearly shows that people in a community who are always welcoming tourists to their place will be likely open to new ideas and learn something from the tourists. It can be anything like a new language or culture. Hence, the following hypothesis is put forth:

H1. Residents' level of welcoming nature towards tourists has a significant effect on their support towards coastal tourism planning

Emotional Closeness

Positive interaction between the community

and tourists is vital to ensure that both parties feel at ease and comfortable. From the tourists' perspective, they want to feel accepted by the residents. At the same time, the community should have a good feeling towards the tourists. This will create a degree of emotional closeness and that physical space can be transcended (Woosnam and Norman, 2010). Good interaction with tourists will also build a good relationship between both parties. It involves sharing behaviours and beliefs (Woosnam et al., 2009). Frequent positive interaction among the community and tourists will help foster emotional closeness and finally, thus make the community realise the effects of this interaction in improving their well-being.

However, the level of emotional closeness between community and tourist depends on the community self-perception as well as the tourists' behaviour during their visit (Wang and Zu, 2015). This relationship setting is important as it will determine the degree of emotional closeness among the community and tourists. When it involves the local community at a place, they will strongly hold on to their culture and beliefs. If the tourist can respect their culture, it will be easier for them to get along with residents and forge a good interaction. Hence, the following hypothesis is put forth:

H2. Residents' level of emotional closeness with tourists has a significant effect on their support towards coastal tourism planning

Sympathetic understanding

As described by Woosnam et al. (2009), sympathetic understanding is defined by how 'community and tourists putting themselves in each other's shoes. This perspective was purposed to minimise the "othering" as referred by Caton and Santos (2008). During the tourists' stay, some of the community demonstrated a high level of empathy towards them. This was due to the extensive in-

teraction built between them. In the end, many of the residents realised that most of the tourists truly want to preserve the local's way of life besides learning the local culture (Besculides et al., 2002). The sympathetic understanding will help them to respect the beliefs and practices of the locals. Among all the three emotional solidarity factors, the sympathetic understanding has been identified as the strongest factor to describe the community perception on tourism development impact (Woosnam, 2012). According to Ying and Norman (2014), communities with a high level of agreeableness possess sympathetic understanding toward tourists since they tend to be more considerate, helpful, friendly, courteous, accommodating and able to avoid conflict. They are more eager and sympathetic toward others. The community with a high degree of agreeableness will also have positive perceptions of any visitors they met. Hence, the following hypothesis is put forth:

H3. Residents' level of sympathetic understanding of tourists has a significant effect on their support towards coastal tourism planning.

Community commitment

Grzeskowiak, Sirgy, and Widgery (2003) define community commitment as a way of how the community consider themselves as part of the community, loyal and never seek to move to other places at any cost. Commitment is about the desire to sustain a valued relationship among the residents. Community commitment is present when every member of the community feels a sense of belonging, comfort to exchange opinions with members of other communities, psychological attachment among members and always keep engaging and participating in activities conducted by the community (Kang, Lee, Lee & Choi, 2007).

Hibbard and Karle (2002) noted that residents

with a high degree of commitment towards their community would be able to address opportunities, bolster community responses and able to find solutions for problems. Through this strong tie among community members, everybody will be aware of any opportunities and problems, hence finding the best solutions. From the perspective of coastal tourism planning, community commitment and participation greatly enhance the success of the tourism sector (Liu, Tzeng and Lee, 2012). In fact, in achieving sustainable coastal tourism planning and development, the government or local authorities have emphasised community commitment to ensure that they will receive the maximum benefits from the initiatives. Ghasemi (2019) in his study found that community commitment and participation are crucial in any tourism development planning. In ensuring that the development plan is successfully implemented, public education is important as the residents will directly influence the tourists' experience. Hence, the following hypothesis is put forth:

H4. Residents' level of community commitment has a significant effect on their support towards coastal tourism planning.

Attitudes

Ajzen and Fishbein (2002) through the theory of reason action described the relationship between attitudes and support. This theory suggests that people are rational individuals who can process information for making a decision. Apart from that, it also displays attitude as a psychological tendency resulting from assessing a specific 'object' with the possibility of approval or disapproval. This kind of behaviour is a function of an individual's attitude. According to Lepp (2007), promoting positive attitudes towards tourism planning could lead to pro-tourism behaviours among the local community. Another study found a positive relationship

between community attitude and the development of tourism products (Kwon & Vogt, 2010).

However, Prayag et al. (2013) in their study argued much ambiguity identified on the relationship between overall attitudes and support. Among the main problems were measurement issues and the interchangeable use of the words attitude and support. Snaith and Haley (1999) measured local community support towards tourism planning through their willingness to pay local tax. In the

study, attitudes were referred to the community perceptions on having tourists visiting their place and their view about the tourism activity developed around them. It was also about their opinion on having tourists in the coastal area. Hence, the following hypothesis is put forth:

H5. Residents' attitudes towards coastal tourism development have a significant effect on their supports towards coastal tourism planning.

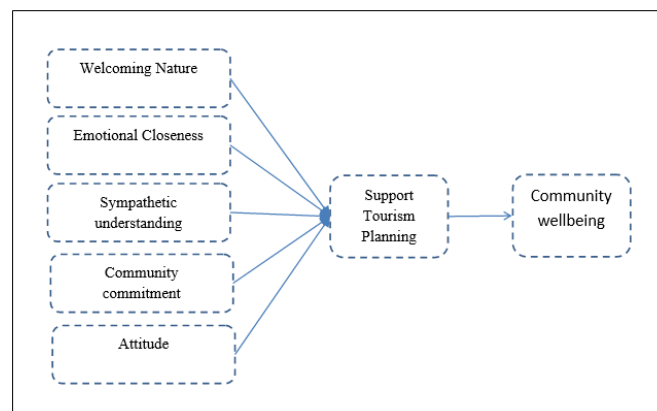


Figure 1 | Research model

3. Methodology

This study involved a community living in a coastal tourism development area in Kelantan, Malaysia. It comprised the population nearby Pantai Senok. There were three villages participated: Kampung Cherang Laut, Kampung Pantai Senok and Kampung Senok. The convenience sampling strategy used involved an on-site self-administered questionnaire distributed to over 300 respondents (between March and June 2018). A total of 205 questionnaires were returned, of which only 150 were usable for analysis. Respondents from Kampung Pantai Senok dominated the study (74%). The majority of the respondents (83%) were male. Most of them (82%) were married while 15% were divorced. The average age of respondents was between 50 and 59 years old.

As for the measurement, this study utilised the existing empirical research. In measuring welcoming nature (four items), sympathetic understanding (three items) and emotional closeness (four items), a work by Woosnam and Norman's Emotional Solidarity Scale (2010) was used. As for community commitment (five items), it was taken from Kang et al. (2007). For attitudes (six items) and support on coastal tourism development (six items), this study referred to Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2011) as well as Ajzen's (1991) works. A 5-point Likert Scale was used (1=strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree). Meanwhile, SPSS software was used to analyse the findings. Apart from that, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to assess factor structures. Table 3 summarises the script of the questionnaire used in this study.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1 | Current Job and Income Level

Item	No. (N=150)	Percentage (%)
Job title		
Fisherman	20	13.3
Administration	9	6.0
Businessman	14	9.3
Self Employed	22	14.7
Labour	55	36.7
Unemployed	30	20.0
Income level		
RM 500 and below	36	24.0
RM 500 – RM 1000	72	48.0
RM 1000 – RM 2000	35	23.3
RM 2000 and above	7	4.7

As shown in Table 1, the majority of respondents work as contract labour. The coastal tourism planning and developments have brought a positive impact to the current job and income of the residents. Fourteen (9.3%) respondents were currently involved in doing business. Many of them open small shops selling groceries and tourist needs. Apart from that, there were also few street

vendors selling foods as there are many local and foreign visitors coming to Pantai Senok. The residents, particularly housewives, took this job as their source of income. Indirectly, it can help them to improve their quality of life. In terms of income, most of the respondents (48%) are earning monthly income from RM 500 and RM 1000. Some of them (4.7%) managed to earn above RM 2000 monthly. This is a good sign of improvement in the socio-economic status of the local community in Pantai Senok. The coastal tourism products in the area have opened many opportunities for the local community to improve their standard of living. This is also consistent with the finding of a study by Rodrigues, Liberato and Melo (2021), which found that tourism activities can improve the socio-economic of rural communities. In this study, the development facilities built by the government has provided them with a new source of income and job opportunities. These facilities could also avoid the migration of the residents to the big cities due to the lack of employment opportunities.

Table 2 | Hypothesis testing on community support for coastal tourism planning towards well-being

Hypothesis		B	SE	CR	P	Result
H1	Emotional Closeness ↔ Support Tourism Development	0.354	0.041	8.643	0.000**	Yes
H2	Sympathetic Understanding ↔ Support Tourism Development	0.287	0.049	5.842	0.000**	Yes
H3	Community Commitment ↔ Support Tourism Development	0.654	0.057	11.512	0.000**	Yes
H4	Attitude ↔ Support Tourism Development	0.901	0.045	19.847	0.000**	Yes
H5	Welcoming nature ↔ Support Tourism Development	0.502	0.062	8.148	0.000**	Yes
H6	Support Tourism Development ↔ Well-being	0.17	0.075	2.257	0.025**	Yes

*Note: B: Standardised Regression Weight S.E.: Standardised Error; C.R.: Critical Ratio; ** significant at $p < 0.01$ level.

Table 2 displays the result of hypothesis testing on community support for coastal tourism planning towards the well-being of the local community at Pantai Senok. The result demonstrated a significant effect of emotional closeness, sympathetic understanding, community commitment, attitude and welcoming nature on their support towards coastal tourism planning ($P=0.000$). Hence, H1, H2,

H3, H4, and H5 were accepted.

In the aspect of welcoming nature in explaining community support on coastal tourism planning, it makes intuitive sense that communities that appreciate the visitors' contribution would perceive positive impacts of coastal tourism development on their well-being. If the finding from Hasani et al. (2016) revealed that welcoming nature will

bring much happiness to the local community as their place has something to offer to outsiders, this study discovered that the community believed that they should treat tourists well as they will receive benefits from them, particularly in providing new job opportunities.

The sympathetic understanding found in Woosnam (2012) study could help the tourists to respect the practice and beliefs of the locals. Contrary to the finding, this study result revealed that not tourists but the community at Pantai Senok felt the affection towards tourists. They viewed that they should understand tourists to ensure all the visitors feel comfortable and happy during their stay. They also have a lot in common with the tourists as the tourists made them learn new things. In addition, they were open to any new experience as it could benefit their standard of living.

In terms of community commitment, the findings from this study supported Liu, Tzeng and Lee (2012) study, which noted that community participation and commitment will contribute to the success of coastal tourism development. The residents in this study felt that the community is part of them and agreed that exchanging opinions between community members is important in achieving a better life. They always share new information among them and stay together in supporting any development initiatives by the local authority or any other parties. As long it could benefit them, the local community at Pantai Senok would be very supportive and ready to participate.

Regarding emotional closeness, Wang and Zu (2015) discussed that the level of emotion depends on the self-perception of the local community and visitors' behaviour during their stay. This study revealed that the residents felt close to the tourists they met and enjoyed interacting with them. This proved that the local community at Pantai Senok have a positive perception towards the tourists and even some of them have also made friends with the visitors, which would make the visits more meaningful.

This study also supported the finding from Kwon and Vogt (2010), which found a positive relationship between local community attitude and the development of tourism products. The result from this study demonstrated a positive attitude of the community towards the arrival of tourists to their place. They thought that having tourists to their place was a good idea as the initiatives made positively affected them, particularly in making their life better. The idea of having more tourists automatically opened many opportunities for the local community.

Apart from that, Table 2 also describes the result of the relationship between support for coastal tourism planning towards community well-being. The support for coastal tourism planning has a significant effect on residents' well-being ($P < 0.5$). This is consistent with the finding of Daskin, Tiril and Bozkurt (2020), which revealed a positive effect of support by the local community on their quality of life and well-being. This study demonstrated that the community are satisfied with their current standard of living. The coastal tourism planning and development made have improved their quality of life as they can get involved in entrepreneurship activities. As for the housewives, these developments have at least contributed something for them, particularly in helping their family earn additional income. Compared to previous years, they are now happier and satisfied with their life.

5. Conclusion

Findings from this study had revealed that emotional closeness, welcoming nature, sympathetic understanding, community commitment and attitudes have significant effects on local community support for coastal tourism planning and well-being. This study has extended and validated the model produced by Woosnam and Norman (2010)

by adding well-being as an outcome of support for coastal tourism development. It has been proven that the supports given by the local community on coastal tourism planning has contributed to the improvement in the quality of life and well-being of the residents at Pantai Senok, Kelantan. Additionally, this research helped to explain the effects of Social Exchange Theory, in which local community evaluates the coastal tourism planning and developments made by local authority positively as they could see the benefits brought by the tourists on their socio-economic status.

The findings from this study could give valuable input for the local authority to plan for other coastal tourism developments that can be implemented at Pantai Senok as the local community is very supportive and welcome tourists to visit their place. Understanding the community's feelings towards tourists and developments made in their living area can help the government to create programmes or projects that can attract more visitors to the area. Indirectly, it can help Pantai Senok in becoming the main tourist attraction for the state of Kelantan.

There were also some limitations in this study. This research was undertaken using samples at Pantai Senok only. Thus, the results cannot be generalised to all coastal tourism planning and developments in Malaysia. Similar work should be conducted in other coastal tourism destinations to examine the effects of residents' support on their well-being. It is vital to ensure that every initiative implemented by the government can benefit the local community not only for the sake of their economy but more importantly, their quality of life and well-being.

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Annexe

Table 3 | Summary of script questionnaire

Variables	Items on questionnaire
Welcoming nature	I am proud to have tourists in this area/community
	I feel the community benefits from having tourists in this area
	I appreciate tourists for the contribution they make to the local economy
	I treat tourists well in this area/community
Emotional closeness	I feel close to some tourists I met in this area/community
	I have made friends with some tourists in this area/community
	I enjoy interacting with tourists
	My interactions with tourists are positive and useful
Sympathetic understanding	I have a lot in common with the tourists in this area/community
	I feel affection towards tourists in this area/community
	I understand tourists in this area/community
Community commitment	I have a sense of belonging to this area/community
	I have psychological attachment to this area/community
	I think that exchanging opinions with other members of the area/community is important
	I expect that I will continuously participate in community activities
	I feel that this area/community is a part of me
Attitude	Having tourists in the area/community is a good idea
	Improving tourism activity in the area/community is a wise idea
	I like the idea of having more tourists in the area/community
	Having tourists in this area/community is pleasant
	The presence of tourists in this area/community is interesting
	Having tourists in this area/community is fun
Support Tourism Development	Tourism can be one of the most important industries for a community
	I support the development of community based sustainable tourism initiatives
	I support new tourism facilities that will attract new tourists to my area/community
	Additional tourism would help this community grow in the right direction
	I am happy and proud to see tourists are interested in what my community has to offer
	I believe tourism should be actively encouraged in my area/community
Well-being	How satisfied are you now with your life as a whole?
	How satisfied are you now with the quality of your life?
	How satisfied are you now with the health in your life?
	How satisfied are you with what you have achieved in your life now?

*Adapted from Woosnam (2012)