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Rural Tourism and Destination Image: Community Perception in Tourism Planning

May-Chiun Lo, Peter Songan, Abang Azlan Mohamad and Alvin W. Yeo

Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, 94300 Sarawak, Malaysia, Email: mclo@feb.unimas.my

Abstract

Many studies on tourism have demonstrated that tourists and tourism industry players are the major contributors to a destination image in tourism industry. Considering the potential cascading effect that local communities can have on their destinations, previous researches may have underestimated the impact of communities' power on destination image. The main objective of this paper is to hypothesize the impact of tourism on the local communities and destination image. Tourism impacts were conceptualized as five dimensional constructs to destination image. 297 respondents comprising of local communities from 34 rural tourism sites in Malaysia took part voluntarily in this study. Five hypotheses comprising the dimensions of social, economics, environment, cultural and communities' value on destination image were developed. SmartPLS 2.0 (M3) was applied to test the hypotheses that comprised both tourism impact and destination image and subsequently bootstrapping was conducted to investigate the standard error of the estimate and t-values. Interestingly, the findings suggested that local communities were most concerned on the social impact and communities' values on upholding their destination image. Implications of the findings, limitations of the study, and directions for future research were discussed further.

Keywords: Rural tourism, Local Communities, Economics, Environment, Social, Cultural, Communities' Value, Destination Image, Malaysia

1. Introduction

Rural tourism is broadly defined by past researchers as tourism which takes place in rural areas, and is run by small firms own by families of the local communities which are often related to production of local agricultural products and local cultural activities (Dimitrovski, Todorovic, & Valjarević, 2012; Ghaderi & Henderson, 2012; Lane, 1994). Researchers in the past (e.g., Ghaderi & Henderson, 2012) have also defined rural tourism as consisting of certain common attributes such as the areas are of low population densities and only a small proportion of land are used and hence provide the tourists with an impression of space. The term rural tourism has been used interchangeably and synonymously with some other terms, e.g. eco-tourism, green tourism, agro tourism, and many others by researchers in the past.

Rural tourism in Malaysia is commonly perceived as having large number of rural communities, in which each rural area is equipped with distinct and varied assets. Rural tourism

destinations are famous among tourists who enjoy unique travel experiences, such as peaceful relaxation, inspiration, recreation, education and local cultural and entertainment. Tourism helps to energize the rural economy and, in particular, plays an important role in creating a value added commercial channel for local produce (Liu, 2006) and also generating extra income for the rural residents. In Malaysia, the Ministry of Tourism has been actively involved in promoting homestay program under the Rural Tourism Master Plan where the purpose is to promote a community-based tourism and encourage rural dwellers to open up their homes to the tourists for tourists to experience the lifestyle of local communities and increase the concern about conservation of destination environment. The plan has received overwhelming responses from local communities as they do not have to leave their villages to seek fortune in the cities. As stated in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Tourism Charter, Community Based Tourism will be able to generate more employment opportunities and increase the levels of income while, reduce the poverty in the rural community (Razzaq et al., 2011).

Past studies (e.g., Thongma, Leelapattana, & Hung, 2012) have envisaged that the involvement of local communities are instrumental to the success in rural tourism development given the fact that they are the ones who will build up familiarity with the tourists and impressed the visitors with their local cultural activities. It is proven that satisfied visitors who have wonderful experience during their visits will revisit the same destinations in the future (Schmitt, 1999; Lin, 2012). Hence, it is vital to gain the commitment and support from local communities when promoting rural tourism destination for long-term success in tourism development (Chandralal, 2010).

To achieve the objectives, the study is designed as follows. Based on previous research, the section on hypotheses proposes a series of hypotheses on the impact of tourism namely, economics, social, cultural, environment and communities values on subordinates' perceived of destination image. The methodology section presents the data and the method used to analyze empirically the hypotheses developed in rural tourism sites in Malaysia. The section on the results presented the findings while the last section, which is on conclusions and future research discusses the results and points out some of the limitations of this study. It is not known whether there exist any concrete relationships between the perceived impact of tourism and destination image. If certain connections are discovered, it would be desirable to pursue the study in the future research.

2. Literature Review

Community-based tourism (CBT) provides an avenue for the participation of local community in managing tourism resources effectively, whereby communities could sustain their living environment without a long-term negative impact on the environment (Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2011). Furthermore, CBT development enable local communities to highlight and promote economic, social and cultural aspects of tourism (Brohman, 1996). According to Razzaq, Hadi, Mustafa, Hamzah, Khalifah, and Mohamad, (2011), CBT facilitates a "balanced and harmonious" development style between tourism and other dimensions of the local economy; the cultural and environmental quality of development and to cater to the various requirements, welfare and potentials of the local communities.

It is believed that by implementing rural communities tourism, it exposes the community of the commercial and social viability and the potential of their natural and cultural heritage. These social benefits are knowledge exchange, moral contribution to the overall community experience, and economic contribution to the whole community, enhances structure, increase materialism and raised expectations. Apart from financial and inter-cultural exchanges, other benefits are in the form of experiences for guests, hosts and families. Moreover, Goodwin and Santilli, (2009) opined that CBT supply benefits to the community as a whole by giving back to the community in the form of revenues and profits for the development of schools and clinics. CBT also creates employment opportunities in tourism-based enterprises and microenterprise.

2.1 *Economics Impact*

From the economic impact, tourism has the capability to enhance the quality of local communities' life through attractions, recreational opportunities and services on offerings at the destinations (Eshliki & Kabousi, 2012). Dolnicar, Yanamandram, and Cliff, (2012) posited that in the eyes of the society, tourism is beneficial to them as it is able to raise their quality of life. Tourism, according to Eshliki and Kabousi, (2012), benefits the local communities from the economic standpoint. Razzaq et al., (2011) considered tourism as the catalyst for the economic development as the Malaysian tourism industry is listed as the second major economic contributor to the Malaysian economy, after manufacturing sector. The arrival of tourists in the Malaysian shores reached 22.05 million and this adds RM49.6 billion (USD13.4 billion) in revenues for the year 2008 (Razzaq et al., 2011). Furthermore, revenues collected from taxes, employment, and other sources of income are the spilled over of economic benefits from tourism activities.

Tourism also provides other forms of economic benefits to the local communities which depended on the type and degree of tourism activities that are involved. Tourism provides infrastructure development such as airports, roads, water supply and other forms of utilities that are needed in support of tourism and these developments have also benefited other industries in the economy as well. Besides infrastructure, tourism facilities such as hotels, national parks, public transportation system, museums and restaurants are being enjoyed not only by foreign tourists but local tourists, businesses and the local communities as well. Arrival of tourists in local destinations also contribute to the economy in the form of sales tax as well as other indirect forms such as property, profits and incomes taxes (Turtureanu, 2005). In summary, tourism activities enhance employment opportunities and the financial health for the local communities, which in turn intensify the competition between local industry players and their international rivals (Schubert et al., 2011). The competition from foreign players encourages local entrepreneurs to increase their product offerings and expand the economy (Ghaderi & Henderson, 2012).

2.2 *Cultural Impact*

The demand by tourists has spurred the growth of arts and crafts in local tourism industry and had impacted the local communities on the magnitude of conserving local culture and tradition which may have been endangered. Tourism is embraced by majority of the local communities as tourism makes it possible for the local residence to meet new people, practice

their cultures and enjoy the facilities which have been brought by the tourists (Ghaderi & Henderson, 2012).

2.3 *Social Impact*

In examining the social impact of tourism on the local communities, the social problem that stem from tourism activities in the local communities are that tourists are basically strangers at a destination, as their dressing styles and behaviours are different from that of the residents and how they behave when they are at their own home. Tourism may lead to problems of vandalism, gambling, drugs as well as prostitution. Tourists, who are vacationing, are subjected to robbery and crimes which are instigated by the local communities who are seeking to 'redress the balance'. According to George, (2010), tourists are most subjected to dishonesty and automobile theft and they are most vulnerable to crimes in the afternoon and early evening.

Tourism can also impact the moral standards of the local residences in a tourist destination and in some cases, crime, gambling, prostitution and drugs are being introduced to the destination. When tourists are vacationing, they are likely to behave differently as their social behavioural norms are absent and this could result in the deterioration of their moral behaviour. The consequences of this is that local residences of the destinations may meet to the demands of the visitors' needs as this provides an opportunity to better their financial standings (Archer et al., 2005). As such it is imperative for the government to stem these "unhealthy" activities so as to reduce any criticism against tourism (Deery, Jago, & Fredline, 2012).

2.4 *Environment Impact*

In assessing the environmental impact, it is vital that the cultural perspectives are not to be ignored as it contributes in increasing the financial stand of the local community. Furthermore, it promotes conservation of diversity whereby, the local communities would have to appreciate the preciousness of eco diversity and should be sheltered (Lossau, 2008 as cited in Said et al., 2012).

In developing tourism industry, sustaining and augmenting the environment of a destination is dependent on the availability of natural and social/cultural perspectives of the destination. The development of tourism that is not well planned may result in both positive and negative consequences such as employment opportunities and enhancement of destination image on the positive side; with environmental pollution on the negative aspect. Hence, it is imperative for practitioners and scholars to carefully investigate the environmental impact of tourism (Zhong, Deng, Song, & Ding, 2011).

The environment of the destination is the main attraction for tourists to visit and the product offerings should include bona fide natural and structured cultural elements, which also consists of historical or natural attraction. Furthermore, a good public transportation system is necessary for any good tourism destination as tourism will be a failure if there is a lack of accessibility to the destination. Besides the product offerings available at the destination, basic amenities such as accommodation and food services should not be ignored and the foremost important criteria in managing tourism is there must be a support from the local community (Said et al., 2012)

2.5 *Community Value*

The local communities' quality of life is likely to be better by offering more attractions, recreational activities and quality of services. As such the development of tourism industry will not be successful without the involvement of the local communities as their perception and attitudes are precious for the decision makers (Eshliki & Kaboudi, 2012). This is supported by Nzama (2008) who found that there is a strong link between community involvement in tourism development and their perception towards the growth in tourism industry expansion (Eshliki & Kabousi, 2012).

Community involvement is defined as the magnitude to which the residents are involved in the daily activities within the communities the live in (Lee, 2012) and their participation is crucial for a sustainable management of tourism in their destination (Zhang & Lei, 2012).

2.6 *Destination Image*

Studies in the past pointed that branding and positioning are crucial in any businesses as they have an impact on customers' choices (Lopes, 2011) and tourism positioning is considered as a tool to set one destination apart from other destinations in tandem with its own distinctiveness. This has led to governments in directing to fund tourism sites to augment the image of the destination and its appeal in making the destination more attractive to tourists (Sumaco & Richardson, 2011).

However, tourism development should take into account the opinions of local communities in understanding their perceptions, attitudes and values in order to make up for the possibility of any negative social and cultural impact that tourism may have caused despite the economic benefits of it. Tourism industry can be considered as the core industry that offers income to the local community (Lo, Mohamad, Songan & Yeo, 2012b), and it also presents environmental and socio-cultural advantages to the local communities (Kuvan & Akan, 2005).

3. **Methodology**

With an aim to generalize the findings on communities' perception on tourism in Malaysia, the population of the present study consists of communities currently residing in rural tourism areas in Malaysia. A total of 700 questionnaires were distributed and explained to the local communities in 34 sites of rural tourism destinations in Malaysia, nonetheless only 297 sets were usable.

The first section was designed to measure the impact of tourism from the five main perspectives, which were economics, social, cultural, environment and communities' values. Section 2 required communities to rate the destination image of their rural sites on how they expect their rural sites to be transformed and lastly, Section 3 was used to collect the personal profile and demographic data of the respondents. For Section 1 to 3, the items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale.

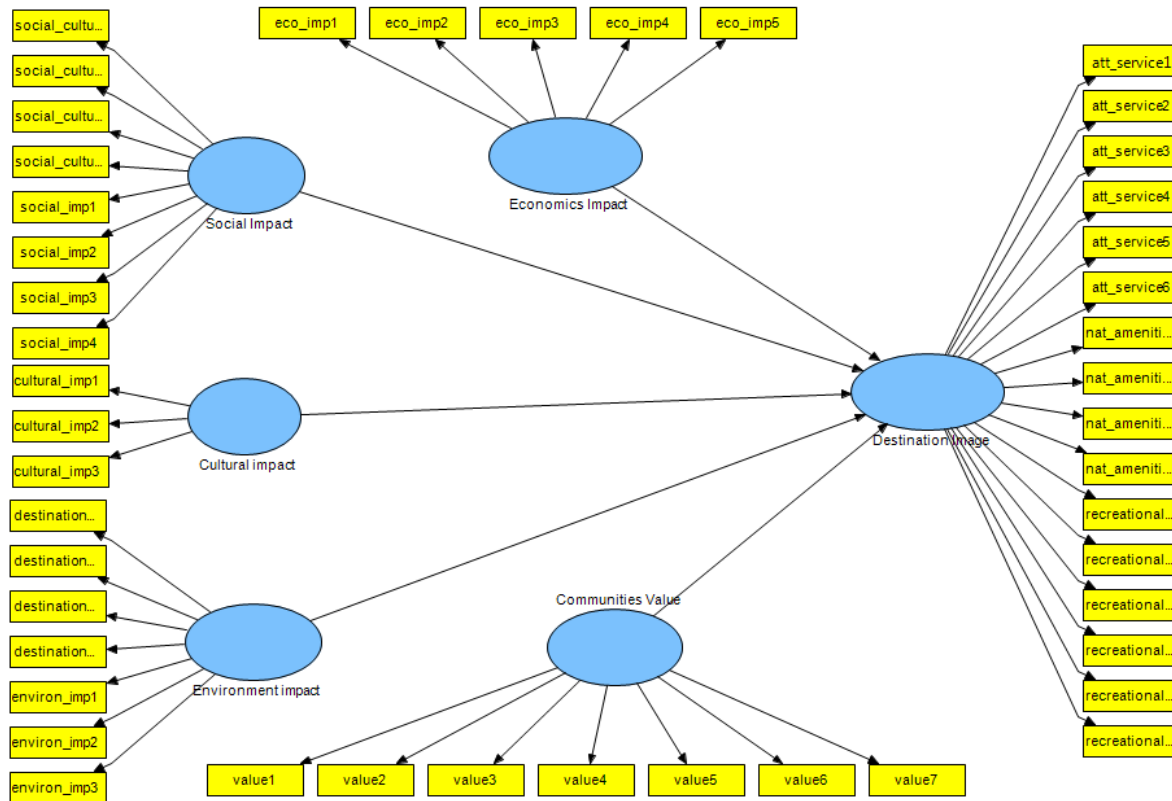


Figure 1. Research Model

4.0 Findings

This section presents the main research results. To assess the model developed as shown in Figure 1, SmartPLS 2.0 (M3) was applied based on path modelling and then the bootstrapping (Chin 1998; Tenenhaus et al, 2005; and Wetzels et al., 2009). 200 re-samples were used to generate the standard error of the estimate and t-values.

4.1 Assessment of the Measurement Model

Firstly, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to test the reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the scales. As indicated in the Table 1 and 2, most item loadings were larger than 0.5 (significant at $p < 0.01$). As shown in Table 2, all Average Variance Extracted (AVEs) exceeded 0.5 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). The composite Reliability (CRs) for all the variables exceeded 0.7 (Gefen, Straub, & Boudreau, 2000) while the Cronbach alpha values were either close to or exceeded 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978). It was noted that all the indicators loaded much higher on their hypothesized factor than on other factors (own loading are higher than cross loadings (Chin, 1998b, 2010), hence convergent validity is confirmed. In addition, as indicated in Table 4, the square root of the AVE was tested against the

intercorrelations of the construct with the other constructs in the model to ensure discriminant validity (Chin, 2010, 1998b; Fornell&Larcker, 1981) and all the square root of the AVE exceeded the correlations with other variables. Thus, the measurement model was considered satisfactory with the evidence of adequate reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

Table 1: Loading and Cross Loading

	Economics Impact	Social Impact	Cultural Impact	Environment Impact	Communities Value	Destination Image
Eco_imp1	0.752	0.118	0.149	0.136	0.096	0.161
Eco_imp2	0.802	0.306	0.143	0.145	0.108	0.204
Eco_imp4	0.517	0.085	0.358	0.152	-0.010	0.020
Eco_imp5	0.613	-0.045	0.149	0.195	0.001	0.117
Social_cultural1	0.230	0.789	0.092	0.167	0.502	0.530
Social_cultural2	0.217	0.701	0.090	0.208	0.372	0.449
Social_cultural3	0.233	0.732	0.030	0.207	0.348	0.384
Social_cultural4	0.228	0.830	-0.021	0.151	0.540	0.593
Cultural_imp1	0.125	-0.041	0.917	0.251	-0.206	-0.110
Cultural_imp2	0.159	0.003	0.856	0.223	-0.092	-0.082
Cultural_imp3	0.244	-0.029	0.701	0.242	-0.041	-0.013
Destination_environ1	0.135	0.083	0.133	0.762	0.145	0.286
Destination_environ2	0.117	0.176	0.181	0.820	0.242	0.236
Destination_environ3	0.113	0.183	0.249	0.774	0.211	0.190
Destination_environ4	0.122	0.031	0.298	0.521	-0.038	0.054
Value1	0.079	0.529	-0.165	0.200	0.792	0.610
Value2	0.089	0.573	-0.124	0.121	0.788	0.627
Value3	0.103	0.544	-0.134	0.035	0.803	0.656
Value4	0.202	0.504	-0.183	0.287	0.835	0.683
Value5	0.145	0.368	-0.111	0.202	0.745	0.616
Value6	-0.001	0.321	-0.118	0.207	0.710	0.591
Value7	0.172	0.386	-0.061	0.203	0.619	0.558
Att_service1	0.136	0.372	0.029	0.202	0.559	0.589
Att_service3	0.081	0.433	-0.001	0.218	0.604	0.672
Att_service4	0.076	0.359	-0.153	0.184	0.608	0.684
Att_service5	0.141	0.483	0.024	0.162	0.388	0.546
Att_service6	0.112	0.448	0.054	0.139	0.487	0.610
Nat_amenities1	0.297	0.566	-0.140	0.127	0.659	0.752
Nat_amenities2	0.188	0.347	-0.255	0.129	0.606	0.679
Recreational_entertain2	0.102	0.293	-0.083	0.196	0.418	0.514
Recreational_entertain3	0.220	0.477	-0.131	0.265	0.519	0.648
Recreational_entertain4	0.142	0.367	-0.179	0.194	0.448	0.647
Recreational_entertain5	0.225	0.472	-0.005	0.226	0.504	0.671
Recreational_entertain6	0.159	0.566	-0.076	0.250	0.582	0.737

Table 2: Results of Measurement Model

Model Construct	Measurement Item	Loading	CR ^a	AVE ^b
Economics Impact	Eco_imp1	0.752	0.750	0.693
	Eco_imp2	0.802		
	Eco_imp4	0.517		
	Eco_imp5	0.613		
Social Impact	Social_cultural1	0.789	0.672	0.599
	Social_cultural2	0.701		
	Social_cultural3	0.732		
	Social_cultural4	0.830		
Cultural Impact	Cultural_imp1	0.917	0.868	0.688
	Cultural_imp2	0.856		
	Cultural_imp3	0.701		
Environment Impact	Destination_environ1	0.762	0.668	0.640
	Destination_environ2	0.820		
	Destination_environ3	0.774		
	Destination_environ4	0.521		
Communities Value	Value1	0.792	0.904	0.576
	Value2	0.788		
	Value3	0.803		
	Value4	0.835		
	Value5	0.745		
	Value6	0.710		
	Value7	0.619		
Destination Image	Att_service1	0.589	0.892	0.654
	Att_service3	0.672		
	Att_service4	0.684		
	Att_service5	0.546		
	Att_service6	0.610		
	Nat_amenities1	0.752		
	Nat_amenities2	0.679		
	Recreational_entertain2	0.514		
	Recreational_entertain3	0.648		
	Recreational_entertain4	0.647		
	Recreational_entertain5	0.671		
	Recreational_entertain6	0.737		

Note: ^a Composite Reliability (**CR**) = (square of the summation of the factor loadings)/{(square of the summation of the factor loadings) + (square of the summation of the error variances)}

^b Average Variance Extracted (**AVE**) = (summation of the square of the factor loadings)/{(summation of the square of the factor loadings) + (summation of the error variances)}

Table 3: Summary Results of the Model Constructs

Model Construct	Measurement Item	Standardized estimate	t-value
Economics Impact	Eco_imp1	0.752	2.911
	Eco_imp2	0.802	3.055
	Eco_imp4	0.517	1.754
	Eco_imp5	0.613	2.082
Social Impact	Social_cultural1	0.789	12.122
	Social_cultural2	0.701	5.851
	Social_cultural3	0.732	7.335
	Social_cultural4	0.830	11.841
Cultural Impact	Cultural_imp1	0.917	2.106
	Cultural_imp2	0.856	2.058
	Cultural_imp3	0.701	1.995
Environment Impact	Destination_environ1	0.762	2.678
	Destination_environ2	0.820	2.304
	Destination_environ3	0.774	2.154
	Destination_environ4	0.521	1.599
Communities Value	Value1	0.792	18.531
	Value2	0.788	15.274
	Value3	0.803	13.592
	Value4	0.835	18.073
	Value5	0.745	10.922
	Value6	0.710	9.554
	Value7	0.619	6.330
Destination Image	Att_service1	0.589	6.554
	Att_service3	0.672	8.569
	Att_service4	0.684	10.936
	Att_service5	0.546	5.206
	Att_service6	0.610	6.321
	Nat_amenities1	0.752	10.405
	Nat_amenities2	0.679	9.155
	Nat_amenities3	0.470	3.287
	Nat_amenities4	0.175	1.101
	Recreational_entertain2	0.514	4.270
	Recreational_entertain3	0.648	6.646
	Recreational_entertain4	0.647	8.276
	Recreational_entertain5	0.671	10.847
	Recreational_entertain6	0.737	14.794

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Table 4: Discriminant validity of constructs

	Economics Impact	Social Impact	Cultural Impact	Environment Impact	Communities Value	Destination Image
Economics Impact	0.627					
Social Impact	0.256	0.547				
Cultural Impact	0.166	-0.025	0.829			
Environment Impact	0.200	0.175	0.272	0.583		
Communities Value	0.150	0.611	-0.171	0.235	0.759	
Destination Image	0.248	0.658	-0.105	0.303	0.819	0.595

Note: Diagonals represent the square root of the average variance extracted while the other entries represent the correlations.

4.2 *Assessment of the Structural Model*

Secondly, Table 6 and Figure 3 present the results of the hypotheses testing. It was found that two hypotheses were found to be significantly related to the destination image. The results have shown that two hypotheses, namely, H2 and H5 were supported whereas, H1, H3, and H4 were not supported.

We also conducted a global fit measure (GoF) assessment for PLS path modelling, which is defined as geometric mean of the average communality and average R^2 (for endogenous constructs; Tenenhaus et al., 2005) following the procedure used by Akter et al. (2011). Following the guidelines of Wetzels et al. (2009), we estimated the GoF values (**see formula**), which may serve as cut-off values for global validation of PLS models. The GoF value of 0.57 (average R^2 was 0.728, average AVE was 0.442) for the (main effects) model, which exceeds the cut-off value of 0.36 for large effect sizes of R^2 . As such, it allows us to conclude that our model has better explaining power in comparison with the baseline values ($GoF_{small}=0.1$, $GoF_{medium}=0.25$, $GoF_{large}=0.36$) (Akter et al., 2011). It also provides adequate support to validate the PLS model globally (Wetzels et al., 2005).

$$GoF = \sqrt{AVE \times \overline{R^2}}$$

Table 5: Result of Reliability Test

Model Construct	Measurement Item	Cronbach's α	Loading range
Economics Impact	Eco_imp1 Eco_imp2 Eco_imp4 Eco_imp5	0.781	0.738 - 0.802
Social Impact	Social_cultural1 Social_cultural2 Social_cultural3 Social_cultural4	0.789	0.657 - 0.830
Cultural Impact	Cultural_imp1 Cultural_imp2 Cultural_imp3	0.812	0.701 - 0.917
Environment Impact	Destination_environ1 Destination_environ2 Destination_environ3 Destination_environ4	0.788	0.745 - 0.820
Communities Value	Value2 Value3 Value4 Value5 Value6 Value7	0.875	0.619 - 0.835
Destination Image	Att_service1 Att_service3 Att_service4 Att_service5 Att_service6 Nat_amenities1 Nat_amenities2 Recreational_entertain2 Recreational_entertain3 Recreational_entertain4 Recreational_entertain5 Recreational_entertain6	0.7370	0.715 - 0.752
Initial items numbers (final numbers)			

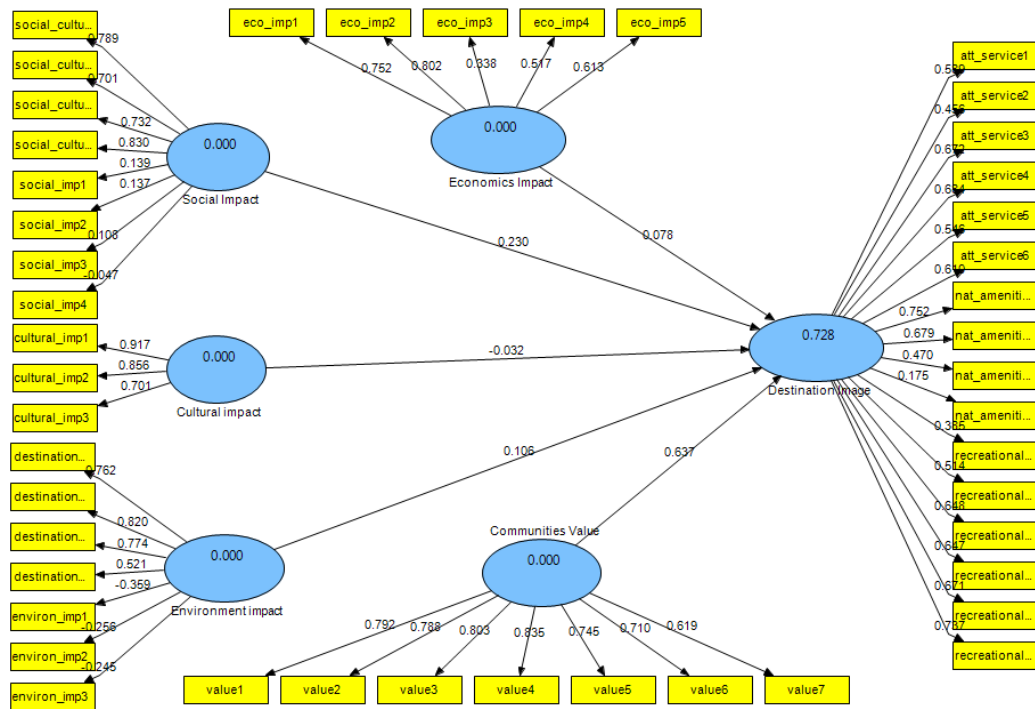


Figure 2: Research Model with Beta Values

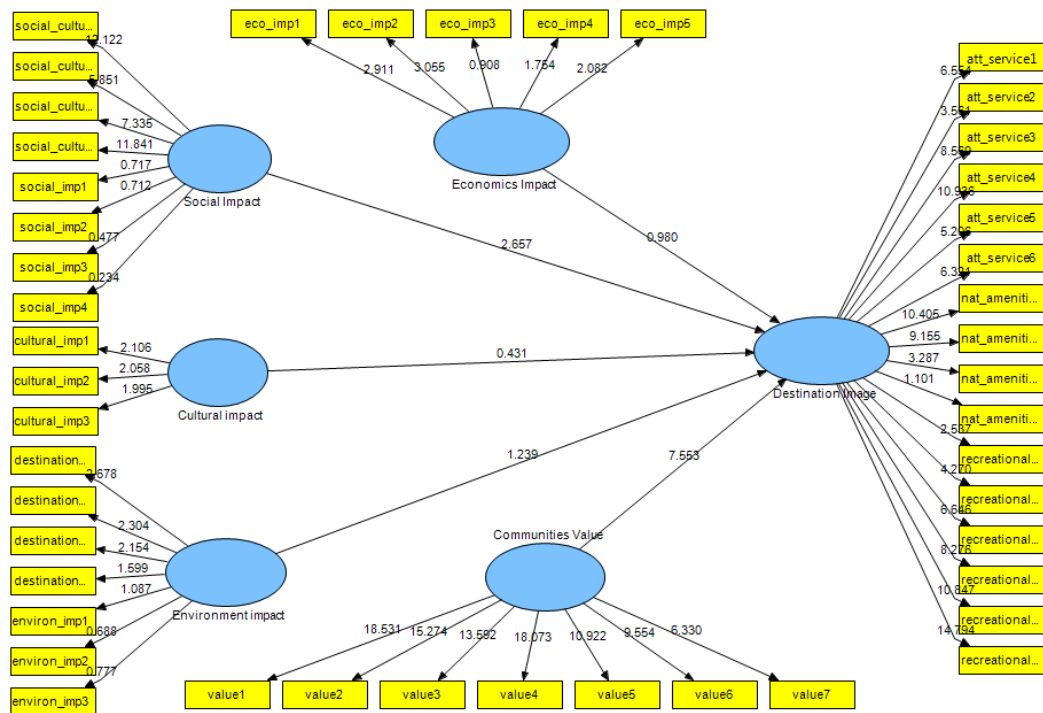


Figure 3: Research Model with t-Values

Table 6: Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Coefficient	t-value	Supported
H1	Economics Impact → Destination Image	0.078	0.980	NO
H2	Social Impact → Destination Image	0.230	2.657	YES
H3	Cultural Impact → Destination Image	0.032	0.431	NO
H4	Environment Impact → Destination Image	0.106	1.239	NO
H5	Communities Value → Destination Image	0.637	7.553	YES

**p<0.05, **p<0.01*

5. Discussion

Researches in tourism play an important role in terms of diffusion of technical knowledge, stimulation of research and development, and accumulation of human capital. In addition to that, past studies postulated that promoting tourism research would help to promote long-run economic growth for the countries and help the policy makers to improve on the rural tourism development. Past researchers have elucidated that community is a socio-anthropological concept (Ruiz-Ballesteras, 2011) and it will have significant impact on tourism planning and development (Eshliki & Kabousi, 2012).

The findings from this research study evidenced that the perceptions of tourism impact by the local communities have a great potential in terms of promoting long term sustainability of the rural destinations sites. The results have indicated that social impact and communities' values are the main concern of local communities when promoting rural destination. Interestingly, the economic impact of rural tourism can bring out to the local communities are not the concern of the local communities though they are highly supportive of tourism development and which could be due to these residents are grouped as the "naïve optimism group" (Han, Fang, & Huang, 2011).

Past studies have postulated that tourism development has an effect on the social and community's values such as habits, daily routines, social lives, beliefs, and values as tourism were found to have contributed in escalating crime rates (Zamani-Farahani & Musa, 2012). These factors, when not managed properly may result in psychological tension among the local communities (Andereck et al., 2005) and subsequently leads to some of the residents concerned the potential social costs and not supportive of the tourism development (Han et al., 2011). Hence, it is important and necessary for scholars or researchers to examine the tourism impacts on the social and communities' value when it comes to enhancing the destination image of the rural sites. As stated by past researchers (e.g. Song, Lee, Kang, & Boo, 2012), environmental friendly tourism behaviours play an important role in rural tourism development. Hence, it is crucial to identify tourism impact that have affected the formation of social capital of local communities and development of rural tourism is believed to be able to be achieved if there is a close interaction between the local communities through mutual trust, networks, norms and social relations (Park, Lee, Choi, & Yoon, 2012). As past researchers have postulated, it is vital that

rural communities preserve and practice this valuable tradition as their existence are the “unique selling proposition” that pull visitors to the destination sites (Lo, Mohamad, Songan & Yeo, 2012a). Furthermore, it is important to improve and enhance on the quality of tourism environment at the rural destination as most of the rural tourism development is depended on the natural and social/cultural environments.

6. Implications for investors

This research has a number of theoretical and practical implications both for scholars and practitioners, especially in the domain of tourism research.

Firstly, this study represents the theoretical or empirical research regarding the development of tourism in the rural destination. Despite the fact that the impact of local communities could have on improving the rural destination image, there have been very few empirical researches on tourism impact could have on improving destination image, more so from communities’ perspective. Thus, the framework of this study has allowed for a better understanding of how communities’ perceptions were formed and the mechanisms linking perceived tourism impact to the choice of and effective development of rural tourism destination. Secondly, by exploring the phenomenon of tourism impact among local communities, it has certainly broadened the understanding of the impact of tourism could have on the local communities and further development and improvement on the destination from communities’ point of view. Without a doubt the research on tourism from communities’ perspectives are still limited in its ability to provide an unequivocal guideline and to advice on the best way to develop their sites.

It is believed that the interaction between local communities, tourists, and tourism industry players is needed because it is the main criteria in creating opportunities them to provide better services, help the local government to strategize tourism development and minimise the conflicts between the stakeholders. This research has presented the dynamic of tourism impact which can help investors in tourism industry to recognize factors in which communities’ value with regards to development of their areas. This would have a significant contribution to an effective rural tourism development given the fact that if investors were familiar with communities’ wants, they would be able to make accurate decisions and execute them better.

7. Conclusion

This study has provided compelling evidence for the importance of continuing the efforts to understand the impact of tourism on the local communities and the importance of involving them in rural tourism development. It is worth examining the impact of tourism on local communities and their perceptions on the development of their areas in view that identifying and developing effective strategy is principal in most of the industries. This research study claims to demonstrate the existence of tourism impact on local communities and significant link between the 2 impacts of tourism on perceived effective destination development from communities’ point of view. Hence, it is crucial to understand which tourism impact is the most effective and likeable by the local communities for the development in rural tourism destinations. Results have shown

that local communities' participation, involvement and opinion are the foremost critical elements in a rapidly changing business environment such as the tourism industry.

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