

Telecentre, Tourism and Their Impacts on Bario, Malaysia

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Abstract: It is undeniable that ICTs play an important role in alleviating poverty as it has the capacity to generate more income for the local communities and subsequently increase their standard of living. Past researchers have evidenced that ICTs, in the form of telecasters, have contributed to tourism development in rural destinations. In our study, we examine the impact of the telecaster on tourism, as well as tourism's impact on the community in a rural destination from the economic, socio-cultural and environmental perspective. We also examine the community's attitude towards tourism seasonality and future tourism development policies. 231 respondents comprising of residents of a rural tourism destination in Sarawak, Malaysia took part voluntarily in this study. To assess the developed model, *SmartPLS 2.0 (M3)* was applied based on path modelling and then bootstrapping with 200 re-samples was applied to generate the standard error of the estimate and t-values. The findings suggested that the telecaster has had a positive impact on the tourism development in Bario, which subsequently yielded positive economic, social and environmental impacts to the said destination. It was also noted that residents preferred that tourism season ability be reduced and more tourism development be implemented, in Bario. Implications of these findings were further discussed.

Key words: We also examine the community's attitude towards tourism seasonality and future tourism development policies

INTRODUCTION

It is a well-documented fact that ICT plays an important role in to ease poverty in rural communities (e.g. [1-3]). In particular, the role of the telecaster in tourism development, in rural destinations, has been noted. For example, [4] proposed a concept of e-commerce, using a telecaster, to promote community-based tourism. Likewise, [5] conducted an investigation into the contribution of ICT to the development of eco-cultural practices in Central Kazakhstan by carrying out semi-structured interviews with different stakeholders involved with community-based tourism. [6] Investigated the impact of a telecaster on tourism at a rural telecaster from the community's perspective, using quantitative methods.

The above research indicates a link between the telecaster/ICT and tourism development, but the impact of the said development has to be visible and experienced, particularly by the community in the destination involved. Hence, this study will sequentially examine and

quantitatively measure the role of the telecaster in tourism development, the latter's impact on the community and destination from the economic, social and environmental perspective. This study will also attempt to examine the community's attitude towards tourism seasonality and future tourism development policies.

To assess the developed model, *SmartPLS 2.0 (M3)* was applied based on path modelling and then bootstrapping with 200 re-samples was applied to generate the standard error of the estimate and t-values. Partial Least Squares (PLS) path modelling was used as it is a robust Structured Equation Modelling technique which is flexible in handling.

Literature Review

Telecasters at Rural Areas: The information (or digital) age came into its own with the invention of the World Wide Web (WWW) in 1989 and shortly after, the internet transformed into a global network. Today the internet is widely recognized as a global platform for accelerating the flow of information. Because of the internet, people are