





PRO-POOR TOURISM AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN SARAWAK



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ABSTRACT

Article History

Received: 7 June 2018

Revised: 17 July 2018

Accepted: 22 August 2018

Published: 8 October 2018

Keywords

Pro-poor tourism
Capacity building
Stakeholders' support
Infrastructure development
Poverty alleviation
Tourism development
Human development theory.

JEL Classification

A14; I32; L83.

This paper aims to investigate the pro-poor tourism impact of the capacity building, stakeholders' support and infrastructure development on poverty alleviation. This study focused on Malay, Iban, Bidayuh, Chinese, Kelabit, Penan, Berawan and others local communities; draws upon a sample of 520 from the Kuching and Miri division of Sarawak, Malaysia. Quantitative primary data method is used, and the data analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) software. The findings showed the positive effect for capacity building on poverty alleviation (H1), stakeholders' support on poverty alleviation (H2) and infrastructure development on poverty alleviation (H3). This study makes a significant theoretical contribution to human development theory by investigating how pro-poor tourism impact rise wage, food, education, healthcare, voice and securities in humans' daily life. Furthermore, this study discussed several practical solutions for the local communities to benefit from pro-poor tourism. Especially on the formal and informal way of regular communication among the local government, private tourism organizations and semi-government tourism departments with local communities to increase the livelihood benefits.

Contribution/ Originality: This study is one of few studies which have investigated pro-poor tourism along with Human Development theory. The empirical results show the capacity building, stakeholders' support and infrastructure development improves the well-being of local communities.

1. INTRODUCTION

The definition of pro-poor tourism is referred as positioning of tourism growth to produce livelihood opportunities between tourism and impoverished people (Mowforth and Munt, 2016). Pro-poor tourism is an approach and it is not a type of tourism or product (Ashley *et al.*, 2000). However, any type and size of tourism business such as volunteer tourism, philanthropic tourism, community-based tourism, cultural tourism, eco-tourism, rural tourism, responsible tourism, urban tourism, sustainable tourism, homestay, bed and breakfast, an urban hotel, tour operator, food and beverage provider, souvenir outlet and infrastructure developer can be categorized under pro-poor tourism (Mitchell and Ashley, 2010). Even though there are several types of tourism under the pro-poor tourism approach, the only objective pro-poor tourism has is to contribute the benefits perceived through tourism to the local community at any tourist destination. Therefore, capacity building, stakeholders' support, and infrastructure development plays an important role in increasing local peoples' well-being.