

Cottage Tourism for Rural Development

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Abstract. Cottage Tourism is a concept conditionally defined as activities involving culture and heritage, traditional food, handicraft, homestay and chalet for tourist attraction. Cottage tourism is usually small scale, managed by rural households to serve as an additional income source. With structured implementation and promotion, cottage tourism is a sustainable concept for rural development. This paper discusses the structured implementation of cottage tourism activities using the cottage tourism chained networking. The study concludes that the success of cottage tourism as an alternative source of income depends on central development of the area, promotion of the activities to the tourists, active governing body and continuous community involvement.

Keywords: cottage tourism, alternative source of income, chained networking model.

1. Introduction

Cottage tourism is a concept adapted from cottage industry; an industry where the creation of products and services is often home-based, unique, distinctive and usually not mass-produced. While the concept of cottage tourism is rarely used in tourism, small-scale tourism, rural tourism and community-based tourism are the common names in tourism industry. Small-scale tourism, as its name implied, is tourism activities conducted in small scale, done especially in the rural area. Rural tourism includes any form of tourism that showcases the rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations, thereby benefiting the local community economically and socially as well as enabling interaction between the tourists and the locals for a more enriching tourism experience (Scheme of rural tourism 2007). Community based tourism is used to describe a variety of activities that encourage and support a wide range of objectives in economic and social development and conservation (Mountain Institute 2000). A community based tourism destination may be viewed by adopting an ecosystem approach, where visitors interact with local people and ecosystem to experience a tourism product (Murphy 1985). Cottage tourism is used in this paper as an alternative concept as it combines the concept of small scale, rural and community based tourism and provides a clearer representation of; activities related to culture and heritage, traditional good, handicraft, Homestay and chalet operated in small scale in the rural areas by a group of community intended for tourists attraction.

Cottage tourism in actual fact falls under the definition of New Tourism (Hampton 2005, Mowforth & Munt 2003). Mowforth & Munt (2003) argued that new tourism tends to be small-scale and often niche and could be differentiated from conventional tourism in the area of accommodation, catering, souvenirs and transportation as shown in Table 1. All the products classified under New Tourism fit well in our definition of cottage tourism industry. The products promoted under cottage tourism depict the originality and tradition of a community. Hence, commercialisation of the tourism products is limited to marketing the products to potential tourists without harming or changing the traditional structure of a community.

The decline of traditional rural industries such as in agriculture, mining, and forestry over the past three decades has required many rural communities to explore alternative means to strengthen their economic base (Allen, Hafer, Long, & Perdue 1993; Gilbert 1989; Long, Perdue, & Allen 1990). Liu (2006) indicates that tourism is an option to enhance rural lifestyles and to induce positive changes in the distribution of income in underprivileged regions given the fact that tourism has comparative advantage effects in income and employment generation.

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Table 1 Key Difference between New and Conventional Tourism

Sector	New Tourism	Conventional Tourism
Accommodation	<i>Losmen</i> (guesthouses), lodges, homestays	International hotels
Catering	<i>Warung</i> (food stalls or small restaurants), local foods and specialities	International standard restaurants, international food
Souvenirs	Crafted work, small business, local craftspeople	Mass production
Transport	<i>Bemo</i> (mini bus), <i>beca</i> (cycle rickshaws)	Air conditioned coaches, rental cars

Source: Hampton 2005, Mowforth and Munt 2003

This paper seeks to investigate the potential of cottage tourism industry as an alternative source of income to replace or to serve as an additional economic activity to the existing traditional rural industries. A model of cottage tourism using the concept of chained networking is presented here. The model identifies the key elements for the success of cottage tourism industry, which include the community values, income-sharing (IS) activities, income-generating (IG) activities and outer layer.

2. Model of Cottage Tourism

A successful tourism development must be planned and managed responsibly (De Oliveira, 2003; Inskip, 1991; Southgate & Sharpley, 2002; Yuksel, Bramwell & Yuksel, 1999). There are several ways in which cottage tourism could assist in generating incomes to the local community. One important element identified is complementing an existing rural economy (Butler and Clark 1992 as cited in Liu 2006) rather than a competing agent for resources. As a complement to the existing rural industry, cottage tourism operates in small scale, requires a minimum sum of capital and ease of entry to local community. An independent industry requires a larger amount of capital, proper packaging and branding and intensive marketing strategies. Unstable demand and market uncertainty do not allow for cottage tourism industry to be independent.

While dependence could serve as a short-term measure for cottage tourism, proper commercialisation of the products allows the industry to be developed independently to generate even a higher income for the players. Nevertheless, there are some products of the cottage tourism that does not fit in the line of commercialisation to sustain its traditional values as an integral part of attracting tourists.

The success of cottage tourism as an alternative source of income depends on the central development of the area, active governing body, continuous community development, commercialisation of cottage tourism and promotion of the activities to the tourists. The first three elements fall under the term 'collaboration' following the definition by Gary (1989). Expanding the definition to fit community based tourism concept, Jamal and Getz (1995:188) posit that 'collaboration for community based tourism planning is a process of joint decision making among autonomous, key stakeholders of an inter-organisational, community tourism domain and or to manage issues related to the planning and development of the domain'. This could be translated into the idea of chained networking of cottage tourism.

An important part of networking and linkages for cottage tourism is the community values. It is ubiquitous that tourists are drawn to any tourist sites for its community values. Community values is defined to include any tourism product that has the highest valuation by the people in a community and / or any tourism product that is valued to generate high income to the community, allowing the concept of cottage tourism to be implemented. Following the chained networking concept, one main tourism product should be promoted in a community that allow other cottage tourism industry to co-exist with the main product.

As shown in Figure 1, the chained networking model has three layers. The core (inner) area is the community values, second layer is the dependent cottage tourism activities co existing with the core activity and outer layer is the external force that will ensure the success of the industry.

The community values in the core range from one product to an activity that entails the commitment of many parties. For example, the Black Country Living Museum is a community value of the Dudley, England

community. Tourists are able to discover the life style of old village in addition to purchasing the goods sold in the area, which exist in the IG and IS activities. The IG and IS activities should co exist in the middle layer. All tourism products that could be sold directly as a product to tourists are considered as the IG category. Meanwhile, tourism products that could not be sold to tourists but their existence are important for the success of the cottage tourism industry is considered, as IS category. The activities by IS should be more to IG as payment by tourists to experience the community values include benefits offered by the IS activities. Income earned is shared by the community based on contributions and / or to be reinvested for the betterment of the community. The IG activities are the activities that directly provide additional income to individuals. This includes income generated from the selling of a product, entrance fee to a heritage area, or purchase of 'hands-on' handicraft. Taking Homestay as the community values, the IS category, paid by tourists in the package they chose are community involvement activities such as rubber tapping, paddy harvesting and *mengkuang* weave. Products such as traditional food, handicraft and night market could be categorised into the IG category.



Fig. 1: Cottage Tourism Chained Networking

3. Conclusion

Cottage tourism, being part of the New Tourism concept has the potential to be promoted as one of the main tourism activities. It operates on a small-scale, mostly in the rural areas, concentrating on the various tourism products such as heritage, culture, food and handicraft. The important elements to be addressed in ensuring the success of cottage tourism industry were thoroughly discussed. Following the chained networking model, three layers of networking - the community values, income-sharing and income-generating activities and outer layer of the involved parties - were identified.

4. References

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