Development of Cultural Heritage Tourism: Issues and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

Development in tourism industry brings along its benefits in support our country’s economy. Efforts given in maintaining and generating for new tourism resources is no other than to fulfill the tourist’s demands and offer valuable experiences which having reciprocal effect on the tourism performance. Attention gained in homestay tourism gives tourists an opportunity to explore and experience more the distinctiveness of a place and community. The objective of this study is to review on three main issues spotted in current tourism industry regarding to the inconsistence of tourism experience, ambiguous of value experience evaluation and crisis on perceived landscape values. Content analysis is applied for examining those issues and challenges from past studies. As a conclusion, the findings may be useful in future research which benefit in help to recognise the landscape potential and performance of tourist experience.

INTRODUCTION

Consistently growing in tourism development offers an opportunity on getting world’s attention to introducing our country where at the same time has contributed to the country’s economic development. In tourism, both local and international tourists are beneficial and important and it seems that the number of visitors from outside of Malaysia rising year by year. However, parallel to this achievement it comes together with pros and cons where sometimes it may raises bad impacts to our nature and nation. Thus, in attempts to please the tourists we should firstly ensure to do it in a sustainable way to avoid any misleading and misspend especially when comes to offer a precious tourism moments.

Rural areas are well known as destinations developed with traditional character by their traditional occupants who live in full of traditions. Homestay at the rural areas which connected to the well preserved cultural landscapes have higher potential as a tourism destination and currently they are slowly catch attention among the tourists. An integration of physical, psychological and social elements of cultural landscapes with inherent cultural heritage values is the main tourist’s motivation. However, those precious elements and values are seems to become degraded whereas they actually shape the heritage tourism destination [5] and when incorporated with an integration of the traditional community and its landscapes, they offers tourists a destination with cultural heritage tourism.

In the past time, landscapes had been used as a symbolic subject matter which comes with deep meanings in expressing ones thinking and emotion as well as in conveying a massage. Here is where the identity of individual and community is stored and emerge feelings of curiosity and desirous among the tourists to experience it personally. Positive value experience will determine on current and future tourism performance where high positive feedback contributes in tourism sustainability. Therefore, it is crucial to gives attention on developing quality value of experience where further results on satisfying tourism experience. Satisfaction is a ‘psychological outcome derived from experience’ [3], hence, required facilities and amenities as to support in developing the experience are required.

Multifunctional data is a great referral resource to change the way of destinations are presented as fit to the user’s perspective and the destination adaptability. Scholars have acknowledged on the multi-branches of landscape assessments and researches depend on particular disciplinary interest and preference landscape issues [6,7]. This is allows for having broad perspective research and perceive things from different angles. There are

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some research fields which have includes landscape as their subject interest such as natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and the arts [7]. Disciplinary differences forms various landscape points of view which further determine on what kinds of methodology to be performed and what types of variable to be valued.

Discussions above gives an overview of the tourism industry towards an effort to built environment (for this study, cultural landscapes) as to support tourist’s desired tourism experience. However, researcher spotted three significant issues raised in tourism industry which are regarding to the inconsistency of tourism experience, ambiguous of value experience evaluation and crisis on perceived landscape values.

Analysis and Discussion:
1) Experience gained by the tourist is not corresponding to the tourism advertisements:
A good tourism advertisement should be able to attract potential tourists without exaggerating on the destination’s ability while highlighted on its offers. However, it is vice versa; currently some tourism advertisements seem to be created in way of makes the tourists are pleased visually yet not when comes to the actual site. Complains received regarding to the feeling of deception due to the way of the tourism destinations or assets presented which is different and sometimes far beyond of what had been advertised. The value experience gained by the tourists is somehow makes them disappointed where hunting for cultural heritage experiences ended with just a normal visit to a location, with no attachment of knowledgeable and memorable experiences.

Normally, when tourists go through tourism advertisements they start to set for a standard or benchmark at the early stage and overstate in tourism advertisements higher the tourist’s expectation. Promises staged through advance tourism advertisements develop a prediction on what kinds of experience that they might gain. Unfortunately, it is certainly not a guaranty of the destination’s successfulness in offering the tourists with high tourism experience. Intellectual, experienced and knowledgeable tourists always clear with what they eager for and expect more in their trip.

Misunderstanding emerged when assets that implied high in cultural heritage values are failed to be push forward as an attraction as publicized. Although destinations consist of strong inherent value of physical and cultural attributes their value experience may be too low [2]. Sometimes, what is perceived as a core may perceived as supporting by others even though it is significant and valuable to the local community and their stakeholders. Besides that, the ignorance attitude of the destination managers who advertise on the unready-to-market destinations and assets potentially raise arguments [1] where includes for unsuitable and fragile tourism products as just to longer the list of attractions is unhelpful to satisfy the tourists. Therefore, in promoting destinations, destination managers should firstly aware on the potential of the destination and its assets also their ability to serve tourist with memorable experiences.

2) Inappropriate tool for evaluating value experience in cultural heritage tourism:
Experience has a dynamic nature and continuously changed accordance to the changed way of seeing/perceive, thinking, feeling and reacting towards the cultural landscapes. Even previous scholars had emerged diverse opinions in attempt to find for the best way to achieve a desired tourist experience [2], operationally in cultural landscapes. Current landscape assessment mechanism, which in reality is the common method applied into national legislation and being institutionalised, are seems to be failed in managing landscapes with justice as compatible to their dynamic quality (eg; diversity, overlapping, spread irregularly) of values [6] as to enable them to be experienced by its users. Additionally, lack of research done concern to the aim for having clear and deep understanding of how experience is actually perceived and valued [2] has limit the effort towards having a proper evaluation method.

Currently, monetary-data is mostly used as references and it is frequently reviewed as basic information for evaluate performance in most of the industries, national and international, normally underlain through profit base. However, the results produced are limited, inflexible and usually in form of numeral records which incompatible to the nature of landscape experience that attached with tangible appeal and intangible value content. Besides that, monetary-data is incapable to make use multiple data and information to works together as a whole in produce high reliable results for future planning.

In measuring value experience, the involvement of elements such as perceptions, interpretations, preferences and other related influenced factors are required. The main issue emerged when cultural landscapes are managed using fragmented system which is through observation by separate expertise in diverse fields and all those ‘thought’ are integrated to forms cultural landscapes which build synthetically [4], the unreal nature of cultural landscapes. Different expertise have different focus interests and preferences, therefore, keep practicing on this kind of method merely lead to the overlapping of diverse opinions and decision taken. Cultural landscapes consist of physical, mental, social, and cultural which are comes together [7], therefore, assessment on the cultural landscapes basically need for interdisciplinary fields of research instead of being researched individually and combined.
3) Legibility issue of tangible and intangible landscape values toward the alteration of rural traditional landscapes:

Fragmented planning of our environment especially for traditional landscapes higher the probability of improper manages. At this moment, world has started to highlights on the cultural landscape depletion especially in the rural areas where an excessive development impacts on the image, functions even their values content. Inappropriate alterations on cultural landscapes might fail to impress tourists with their physical appeal in the first place, right after tourists reach to the destination. Hence, what can be expected more when the foundation of the tourist experience, which is a cognitive experience, is already at the low level. Unattractive and incomprehensive environment has probability to overshadow the coming experiences especially in perceive available cultural and heritage assets.

Cultural landscapes are created and shaped with culture and tradition which reflects on an ideology and notion. Each and every single element of cultural landscapes has potential to conveying knowledge and presents their inherent values to the tourists, directly or indirectly. However, when landscapes are changed those precious values are hindered and difficult to be interpreted where further reduce the tourist’s ability to understand the cultural heritage especially for them who unfamiliar. It becomes worse when cultural landscapes currently had been injected and some cases may be fully transformed into a recent modern design as suit to the latest preferences and advanced technologies. These transitions definitely would not represent our identity and further may have possibility to create an issue of ’identity confusion’. Local peoples especially are unaware of losing cultural heritage values simultaneously accordance to their actions when neglecting on the cultural landscapes preservation.

For tourism purposes, development is not fully precluded whereby reasonable degree of development seems helpful in enhance knowledge transfer and assist tourists in perceive related tourism values. Through added cultural activities tourist’s senses are stimulated and increase their comprehension. However, the problems rose due to misuse and misspend on unnecessary or less functional modification. The unavailable of required facilities and amenities influence on perceive ability and understanding process since it limits the tourist’s exploration where further lower the value experience gained. On the other hand, fail to get the community’s support on any development will leads to the community’s ignorance to continuously maintain and sustain the developed tourism destination. As consequences, the destinations are neglected and loss their potential tourism values.

Conclusion:

Based on reviews of those three issues in current tourism industry which are regarding to the inconsistency of tourism experience, ambiguous of value experience evaluation and crisis on perceived landscape values, we can conclude that it is essential for tourism providers to pay attention on the external issues that potentially influence the development of tourism experience and take actions to improve the condition. The findings may be useful in future research which benefit in help to recognise the landscape potential and performance of tourist experience.

REFERENCES