

A Conceptual Paper on the Role of Local Champion in Rural Tourism Destination in Malaysia

Siti Aisah Abas, Norhazliza Abd Halim

Abstract: *The prosperous of rural tourism development is rely not only on the local community participation but, it is depending on the effectiveness of leader to navigate the group and the followers to achieve certain objectives. However, there is a little empirical study has been done on this area by the scholars. Thus, this conceptual research undertaking on exploring the roles and characteristics of local champion in rural tourism destination in Malaysia. A review of literatures and documents from the Malaysia Plan, Rural Tourism Master Plan and handbook on the Community-Based Tourism has been presented as source of data collection. This study analyses literature on the emergence concept and roles of local champion particularly in rural tourism destination. Therefore, there is a vital need to study on the role of leadership and concept of local champion in rural tourism in order to sustain the tourism industry.*

Index Terms: *Keywords: Leadership; Local Champion; Rural Tourism Destination.*

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Rural tourism destination is not only contributing significantly to the rural economy, but it's become a medium to the diversification of local products, creating job, promotion of local product and community cohesion (Tang & Jones, 2012). Undeniably, tourism is seen as a driver to the economy of local community in rural area. Rural tourism development should become a grassroots platform to enhance the local community engagement and willingness to participate, a medium to small-scale business enterprises and promoting preservation and conservation of culture. Obviously, the participation among local community are crucial in rural tourism development's blueprint in order to ensure that the collective decision by stakeholders and local community can be achieved. Most of the previous approach was introduced from top-down in the sense of providing benefits for both stakeholders and local community. Therefore, rural tourism planning and approaches should consider the performance of tourism industry as the economic contributor and vehicle for the local community to upgrade their standard of living (Tang & Jones, 2012).

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Siti Aisah Abas, Kulliyah of Languages and Management, International Islamic University Malaysia, sitiaisah@iiu.edu.my

Norhazliza Abd Halim, Faculty of Built Environment and Surveying, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.

Towards the mid-20th century, rural tourism persisted as the small-scale business, inactive offering tourist activity and traditionally involve agriculture sector. Over the years, this area has been changed eventually and help local people to empowered themselves and raising their standard of living. The rapid changes finally contributed to the mass development of rural tourism and at the same time influences the local community in terms of economic, social and environmental. Rural tourism is no longer seen as the platform to generating an extra income by the local people, but it is more to diverse activity which directly and indirectly support a range of rural industries and other business. However, the challenges derived when the development of rural tourism prerequisite to the leader who are responsible to planning and managing the tourist arrival and activity. The local leadership should represent the whole community that involves the process, influence and common goals.

Recently, leadership has become a buzzword among the scholars in the literature, or even the professionals whereby this part not been explored to understand the inter-relationship between the characteristics and behaviors of the local leaders who are play a pivotal role in community development (Beer, 2014). This demonstrate lack responsiveness about the importance of putting effective strategies that contribute to the destination. among leader, local community and stakeholders. Similar with the outcome for World Tourism Issues (2012) that summarized the need to increased national or local leadership in tourism planning and policy. Leadership is a crucial element in rural tourism development and to ensure the local community participation in the process (George, 2009).

Research concentrating on local leadership in the sense of providing economic benefits, streamlining the significant of leadership that leads to sustaining the environment. The emergence concept of leadership become a starting point to the community development and tourism industry as a whole.

B. Problem Statements

The first problem to be highlighted in this research is lack of leadership as one of the limitation that leads to barriers for local community to involve in tourism activities. Most of the other areas has been discussed, however leadership context in the rural and community development still not been explored yet. This is unexpected as leadership

subject should be given a priority as this area has proven that significant to the development of rural tourism industry. Kayat (2009), discovered most of the factors that leads to failure of homestay programme are because of the lacking interest among local community to involve, the incompetent skills and knowledge of local leaders in managing the resources. Thus, capable and committed local leaders is required to ensure local community participation and support to the tourism activities. Partaking a decent local leader and success to persuades community involvement is an enabling local community to improve and developed standard of living, enhance knowledge on tourism and participate in decision making in which very crucial to ensure the successful of Community-Based Tourism (CBT).

Next, the notion of local leadership is still not being clearly discussed in literature specifically on community development, participation and community support. Furthermore, most of the tourism research and practices, community involvement has been regards as one of the tool to promote tourism development through their voice in decision making, protect the resources, and uplifting the economic benefit from tourism activities. However, the direction and organization of local community is depending on strong leadership qualities. The local leader can be described as government appointed project manager, a dedicated volunteer hired by an NGO or a self-appointed spokesperson for the community. In addition, the relationship between local leadership, community participation and community support are crucial elements in harnessing the empowerment of rural tourism destination. In order to achieving the objectives of rural tourism development, local leader is needed and required to fulfill the multiple roles competently and must possess skills to initiate the participation from local community, communication skill and knowledge about tourism.

C. Research Objectives and Research Questions

This conceptual paper attempt to identify development concept of local leadership in rural destination and to determine the role of leadership

- 1) *What are the rural development in Malaysia?*
- 2) *What are the role of local champion in in rural tourism destination in Malaysia?*

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Rural Tourism Development in Malaysia

The development of the rural areas in Malaysia has begun way before Malaysia secured its independence in 1957. The Federal Government has been set up National Five Years Plan and the Ministry of Tourism prepared National Rural Tourism Master Plan in 2001. The development of rural tourism in Malaysia has been started 1950 through inception of Malaya Development Plan in 1950 and later changed to Five-Year Malaysian Plan. Back then in 1950s, where the focus was concern on providing infrastructure and improving accessibilities, the government strategies has evolved to not only focus on the agriculture productivity but also start to improve social services, providing settlements and employment for rural communities.

However, the dramatic changes happened in the late of 1990s where the Malaysian Government put a lot of effort to tab all resources, including rural tourism products. Rural tourism product and services seen as the most viable development strategies and aims to achieved sustainable tourism growth through providing employment opportunities as income-generation capabilities at the level national, state and locals. Since then, tourism development direction was focused on maximizing the resources available. In order to achieve sustainable tourism development, it is required equal distribution of needs between tourist, the environment and the local community (Murphy, 1991). The development of rural tourism is sometimes will impact tourism resources, however, most of the impact considered minimal as most of the tourist interested in the local cultures and tradition. As the rural tourism development become the vehicle to the economy activities and has been known as medium to stimulate local community through employment opportunities, farm support nature resource conservation, promoting arts and craft and preservation for heritage products (Marzuki, Ali & Othman, 2010).

In addition, the most impactful and rigorous tourism development strategies have been documented in the Eight Malaysia Plan (2001-2005) whereby the main objectives are emphasizing sustainable tourism development and focusing on holistic strategies. This integrated approach involved rural tourism, recreational tourism and agro tourism whereby these forms of tourism has the potential to revive the rural economy and restructure to involve the local community participation as whole. Having precisely strategies the rural development, the National Rural Tourism Master Plan has been introduced in 2001 converging on agro-tourism and homestay programme whereby through this platform local community have the opportunities to generate extra possible source of income. Throughout the Seventh Malaysia Plan (1996-2000), number of agro-tourism destination increasing to 19 locations that offers day trips, farm stay visits and agro-tourism packages. This activity was involved the farmers and fisherman in the country. Finally, in the late of 2000, there are 612 homestay providers in 31 villages were registered with Tourism Malaysia and offered accommodation services provided with the local cuisine, culture, beautiful geography landscape and architectural sites.

Since then, government seen that tourism industry become the country economy contributor, through the Ninth Malaysia Plan, the government has allocated RM1847.9 Million to boost up the tourism activities. During this period, the government focus on maintaining and upgrading infrastructure, tourism-related amenities and facilities adequately. Government still strive for the sustainable tourism development as the top priority whereby the enforcement of protection and preservation of natural habitats and environmental concern take placed. As a result, more tourism products have been promoted such as agricultural parks, research station, local involvement in pottery making have been introduced under the homestay programme.

The rational of the Rural Tourism Master Plan (RTMP)

in 2001 is to boost up the total visitor's spending for the socio-economic profit of local community. Based on Hamzah (2004), rural tourism development in Malaysia is required to transform for the massive growth throughout the country. In line with Ninth Malaysia Plan, the objective of RTMP is to be improving the standard of accommodations, enhance visitor facilities and to ensure the sustainability of products and services that been promoted to the tourist. The government very committed to developing new rural tourism products with the integrated approach on how the destination is promoted and managed. Previous research discovered that most of the local operator and small enterprises are unexperienced to cater the tourist need, thus RTMP start to implement a selective number of destination and the operators where the standards are promoted can be delivered. Table I below provides a summary of Malaysian Development Policies

Table I: The Policies Development History of Malaysia

Year	Name of Policy	Main Development Area
Before 1950	Colonial phase	Focus on the Production of crucial commodities
1951 – 1955	Draft Development Plan	The development of infrastructure started and deliberate economic growth on main commodities
1956 – 1960	First Malaya Plan	The infrastructure and Economic progress was increased in 1957 where Malaysia approaching the independent
1961 – 1965	Second Malaya Plan	Still progressing on the infrastructure and growing of economy
1966 – 1970	First Malaysia Plan	Focus on poverty reduction
1971 – 1975	Second Malaysia Plan (NEP begins)	Start focus on rural development
1976 – 1980	Third Malaysia Plan	Actively promoting the participation among Malaysians in the planning, implementation and distribution of benefits
1981 – 1985	Fourth Malaysia Plan	Integrated the needs of education, health and housing
1986 – 1990	Fifth Malaysia Plan	Offering more job opportunity in public and private sector The establishment of agency based on focus commodities to help to increase the production
1991 – 1995	Sixth Malaysia Plan	Promote the commodities to the investor and open new dimension in job distribution
1996 – 2000	Seventh Malaysia Plan	The focus was diverting on the other niche of tourism product such as sports, shopping, conventions and water-based activities. The marketing and promotional of

		tourism was in the large scale promoting the innovative project to the private investor Started the small-scale entrepreneurs and encourage local community participation.
2001 – 2005	Eighth Malaysia Plan	The equal distribution on economic, environmental, cultural and social in tourism planning Introducing tool for conservation and preservation of nature, heritage and culture
2006 – 2010	Ninth Malaysian Plan	Focus more on sustainable and innovative Revive and strategies agro-tourism, eco-tourism and start to introduce other form of tourism such as educational tourism, meeting and exhibition, sport and recreational activities and Malaysia My Second Home
		Every state focus on promoting their unique destination that involve nine core subjects such as heritage tourism, eco-tourism, homestay, sport, coastal and islands, meeting and exhibition, food tourism, golf tourism, shopping and health tourism Introduce large-scale of events and exhibition and enhance the facilities and infrastructure Focus on service quality, training and talent management
2011 – 2015	Tenth Malaysia Plan	

B. Homestay Programme in Malaysia

Historically, Homestay programme in Malaysia has been started way back in early 1970s by Mak Long who are the local people of Kampung Cherating Lama in Pahang received long stay tourist and provided them full board service like breakfast, dinner and accommodation in her house (Hamzah, 1997). The influx of tourist has influence the other small villages or better known as *Kampungs* followed the same arrangement as Mak Long did because the benefit gained especially tourist that looking for culture experience. Since then, the Homestay experienced has growth as tourist arrival, Desa Murni Homestay has been developed by Shariman Hamdan integrated five villages in Temerloh, Pahang together with the local community. The dramatic changes in terms of local community economy, standard of living become a success factor of homestay programme (Kayat, 2007;2009).

The success of the programme become an eye opener to the government as this promising sector has involved the local community participation and empowerment. Hence, the initiatives to provide funds assistance by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture to all homestay providers seen as platform to the development of Homestay programme in Malaysia. In addition, the Government

aggressively concentrate on the growth of Homestay programmes as this programmes way to promote the country indirectly in the same time way to reduce poverty in the rural area.

The homestay programme in Malaysia is quite unique and different from other as the commitment from local community promoting the culture and way of daily life to tourist. Through the homestay programme also regarded as one of the rural development success factor whereby the government invested to improve the infrastructure and facilities to enhance and to attract more tourist to come. The homestay programme not only catalyst to local community empowerment, it also drives the national growth through the massive promotion internationally. The revenue generated from this programme not only help the local community to improve their economy, in the same time become a medium to job and business opportunities.

Previous research discovered that, through homestay programme, most of the providers gained persona and collective benefit whereby the government really helps them to become a moderator to other facilities. The Community Based Rural Homestay (CBRH) is believed a vehicle to economic booster and a focal point to the rural tourism destination in Malaysia. Most of the local community motivated to participate in this programme due to income and economic benefit (Abdul Razzaq, Hadi & Mustafa, 2011).

However, the development of Community-Based Rural Homestay strongly depends on the ability of homestay providers to diversify the tourism product offers to the tourist and should concentrate on the leadership skills by the local champion who are responsible to bring the community out of their comfort zones. Table II below are the summary of homestay programme performance in Malaysia.

The performance of Community-Based Rural Homestay (CBRH) in Malaysia is successfully achieved their objectives to improve the local community standard of living, enhance the infrastructure and facilities however, some of homestay operator are failed to capture the market due to monopolizing by the local elites. The personal interest among the local champion and local elites become a factor that contribute to the unsuccessful community-based tourism project. This is due to the local elites who have a capital power as well as the political advantage (Kayat & Mohd Nor, 2005)

Table II: Homestay Performance from 2015 until August 2018

YEAR	2015	2016	2017	2018 (From Jan. until Aug.)
Registered Homestay	3653	3800	3994	4005
Domestic Tourist Arrival on Homestay Programme	296,439	353,344	321,115	165,655
International Tourist Arrival on Homestay Programme	71,034	57,178	61,846	48,750

Total Revenue (RM)	28,392, 933.50	27,714, 894.10	30,124, 466.06	15,480,443
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(Source: Ministry of Tourism and Culture, 2018)

C. The Emergence Concept of Local Leadership in Rural Tourism Community

Leadership are focused on the finding direction and purpose in the face of critical challenge not only from internal but also concerned on the external factor as well. Moreover, leadership within the rural tourism destination should be placed within the accountability framework which represents all the stakeholders interest and concern (Pedler, Burgoyne & Boydell, 2010). Definitely, the co-operation among tourism operators and local leadership become a success factor in rural tourism development. Dwyer and Edwards (2010) explained that, local leaders should have the qualities in terms of strong, committed and effective leadership that required in all destinations across all level includes governments, business operators, entrepreneurs and local communities.

The local leadership concept is one that has not been clearly defined in the literature on community engagement or community development. Based on the previous study, they classified the term of local leadership into several names. Table III below summarize the emergence concept of local leadership that represented the rural tourism.

Table III: The Emergence Concept of Local Leadership in Rural Tourism Destination

Authors	Year	Term	Country	Definition
Luke. J. S	1997	Sparkplug	United States	The one who are responsible to ensure the goal built the trust among local community and gained support for collaborative work
McKnight J. L	2003	Assets of Citizen Democracy	Canada	Outlined four crucial indicators to achieve the democracy.
Hamzah & Khalifah	2009	Local Champion	Malaysia	Preliminary of leadership context might involve individual or group that able to arrange community in tourism development

Grisham V. L	2010	Catalyst	United States	The one who are willing and responsible to initiate project for community's benefit.
Onyx, J & Leonard R. J	2011	Emergent or generative Leaders	United States	Voluntarily represent the community, not appointed and networking over the years makes the leader get supported by local community
Tang & Jones	2012	Local Leader	United Kingdom	Individual that have power to lead the community
Bowers & Hamby	2013	Volunteer Leader	United States	Well-trained volunteers and responsible to empowered and facilitate local community
McKnight J. L	2013	Four Leg Stool	Canada	It can be from business, government, civil society or group that voluntarily, able to solve the problems
Kontogeorgopoulos et al	2014	<i>Poo Yai Baan</i> (Village Headman)	Thailand	Individual champion is an individual who are willing and committed to step forward, create and initiate the project, developed and manage the community.
Worthy et al	2016	Community Champion	United States	It might be one-person, multiple people or groups or association in community
Xu, Zhang & Tian	2017	Community Leader	China	Those who can influence policy, opinion or action in a community because of their roles and position in the community

previous research that facilitator or leader is the one who are take the initiative to step forward and make sure local community will participate to meet goals, build trust and support collaborative efforts. Similarly, Grisham (2010) classified leader as 'catalyst' that represent the community to ensure that the project could be done and meet the objectives on time. In addition, these individuals very capable to persuades other to participate and get involved. Leader focused on getting and achieving the goals and objective of project.

In another study that relevant to leadership in community development, McKnight (2003), outlined four most crucial indicators of good leader. The first indicators explained on the participation among citizen and stressed on community ability to engage to achieve a vision. Next indicator is described as the leaders must have the ability to fabricate the direction of citizen. However, the citizen is required not to depends on the leaders too much and they must have an initiative to move forward. The third indicator, leaders will provide a platform to the citizen in terms opportunity to develop themselves. Last indicators explained that, citizen should use the power that they have to help others as the voluntary association not profit oriented organization.

While formal leader, such as the village headman, are competent in overseeing a community's cohesion and welfare based on traditional knowledge system, they might not have a capacity to lead a tourism business. capacity building is therefore a major challenge to help to ensure the initial success of CBT effort. Longer term success, however requires a transition from a local leader to a more diversified management model (Moeurn et al, 2008).

In the Malaysian context, the term of local champion has been introduced by Hamzah and Khalifah (2009) that represent the local community to be empowered in tourism development through their participation and support. In a nutshell, local champion very significant in rural development in Malaysia, consists of a person or a small group, helps to push forward within the community that engage in tourism activities. Furthermore, local champion is considered as one of the crucial elements in Community-Based Tourism setting. Initially, it is difficult to persuades the local community to participate in tourism activities, lacking in terms of assets or limited market access to start with, however the commitment of local champion become the essential driving force for the development of community-based tourism. Fostering change and leading the community even more tough especially involve on the community-large scale. Therefore, the roles of local champion in community development is very significant to the success of community development in rural destination. However, Bowers and Hamby (2013) discovered contradict where volunteer leader and champion are not exactly related. Local champion is the one who have the emergent qualities to lead local community, but the volunteer leader is regards as well-trained to organize programme and events. Furthermore, volunteer leader always relatable to reward and

Initially, Luke (1997) described leadership as parallel with

recognition upon the good performance, enhance community motivation to engage and encourage them sincerely.

In 2011, Onyx and Leonard discovered leaders as people with ability to organize community even though there are lacking on human resources, training and social capital to nurturing local community in tourism development. Through an observation on case study found that most of the leaders were embedded and participated by formal and informal network but not holding any position in the government. Next, emergent leaders implementing a top-down decision whereby most of the decision are based on collective opinion. Most of the leaders determined by open system that aims to bridging link with other stakeholders and people are required to have resources, knowledge and skill. In order to achieve a vision and direction in the community development, the emergent leaders should be able to encourage and motivate local community along the decision process.

In Thailand, the local leaders are called as *Poo Yai Baan* or village headman who are responsible to initiate, develop and manage community-based tourism activities. As the village headman with the little power, authority and respect, it is difficult to work with external factors in the sense of benefiting the local community (Kontogeorgopoulos et al, 2014). The head village must have a good working relationship with external parties which includes entertaining the academicians who are researching the community-based tourism, working closely with the NGOs to officials at all level of governments. The efforts that has been laid by the head village as the local leaders become a critical indicator to the success of rural tourism destination in Thailand.

D. The Role of Local Champion in Rural Tourism Destination in Malaysia

Hamzah and Khalifah (2009) discovered term of "Local Champion" that represent the leaders who are involved in Community-Based Tourism (CBT). The local champion concept is one that has not been clearly defined in the literature especially in community engagement and participation. The leader can be a government appointed project manager, a dedicated volunteer hired by an NGO or a self-appointed spokesperson for the community. To be exact, the leader should be termed as the local champion, and many of the local community activities are driven by local champion (Hamzah & Khalifah, 2009). Similarly, research finding done by Worthy et al (2016) discovered local champion may have been one-person, multiple people, groups or association in a community. On the other hand, study on official role and leadership attributes of local champion is remain understudied. To date, the "local champion" concept is one that has not been well defined in the literature on community engagement or community development.

Local Champion is proved as one of the driven factors that influence the performance Community Based Tourism and community development in rural tourism destination (Mohamad, Hamzah & Khalifah, 2013). Initially, in the beginning process of set up the local community participation in tourism project, most of the common issues and problem facing are lacking tourism resources and limited capital to start with however, the ability of local champion to provide

platform to facilitate can be powerful force for CBT. Furthermore, Hamzah and Khalifah has outlined ten prominent indicators that represent the local champion leadership qualities which are trustworthiness, perseverance, selflessness, patience, good communicator, disciplined, resourceful, visionary, proactive, courageous and sensible. All the qualities of local champion have presented the principles and abilities that leads to the successful performance of CBT.

The concept of local champion has been started in line with the development of Homestay Programme in Malaysia as Shariman Hamdan who a pensioner school teacher was, passionately initiate the Desa Murni Homestay in Pahang. Through his networking with international relations, he managed to attract Japanese tourist to come to Pahang and experience the Malaysia Homestay Programme. Having vast experienced managing and operating homestay programme, Shariman considered as a pioneer local champion in Malaysia who are drive forward the culture and quality experience of the local community to other level.

The growth of the Community-Based Rural Homestay (CBRH) is seen as new dimension and direction to the local community in rural area. The roles of local champion are very crucial to facilitate local community to participation in tourism development. Local champion is considered as one of the internal success factor of CBRH in Malaysia. However, the leadership problem has affect the performance of homestay programme and tourist arrival as well (Kayat & Mohd nor, 2010). Therefore, the role of local champion in very pertinent to shape the local community development to the right direction.

Having discussed on the definition and leadership qualities of local champion, however, there is limitation on providing further information on the characteristics of local champion. Thus, future research should consider looking into to the overall characteristics, leadership qualities, knowledge, training that local champion should focus on.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Method for Collecting and Analyzing Literature

This conceptual paper is solely based on secondary data in which gathered from journal, articles, research project and manual. Fin et all (2000) explained that secondary data will facilitate researchers to familiarize theoretical and substantive issue of the study. Content analysis is performed from the previous research finding and interpreted to enhance the understanding on local leadership in rural tourism development. In addition, this research also reviewing the documents on the Malaysia Plan, Rural Tourism Master Plan (2001) and research project by Asia Economic Cooperation (APEC) Tourism Chapter.

IV. DISCUSSION

Malaysia has experienced the rapid changes in rural tourism development whereby this area has been started a way back before the independent day. The Government of Malaysia very

committed to develop and enhance the local community standard of living, source of income, job opportunity since then. The Ministry of Tourism and Culture put a lot of efforts and initiatives on empowering local community in rural areas through tourism activities. The local community involvement and participation in tourism planning and development is crucial and should be taken into consideration by the stakeholders and local authority. However, the participation by local community is strongly dependent on the leaders or local champion who are responsible to provide information, medium and direction towards the development of rural community.

Local leadership is clearly as one of the critical internal factor that boost up the rural tourism development. Research on leadership become a notion among scholars, consultants and practitioners whereby this term refers to the ability of leader to explore, initiative, and facilitate the local community to achieve community development particularly in rural tourism destination. The effectiveness of leader is always associated with local community participation and support to promote tourism development. Longer term success, however requires a transition from a local leader to a more diversified management model (Moern et al, 2008).

Local Champion might involve individual, a small group, volunteer, village headman or even NGO who put an initiative to step forward, willing and committed to represent their communities. In addition, local champion is competent in overseeing a community's cohesion and welfare based on traditional knowledge system, they might not have a capacity to lead a tourism business. Capacity building is therefore a major challenge to help to ensure the initial success of CBT effort. The emerging concept of local champion in Malaysia is very significant and on the right time as the Community-Based Rural Homestay progressing very well for the past few years. However, most of the Homestay Programme in Malaysia facing a problem to sustaining their product and services due to lack of support and participation from local community, incompetent local champion to facilitate and coordinate them, poor planning and training. Thus, competent and committed local champion is required to ensure community development as they are pertinent in the decision making process.

The homestay operators, local community, local champion and local government are inter-dependent to each other particularly in the process of tourism planning and development. These quadruple stakeholders are responsible to ensure the equal distribution of tourism benefits. Having said that, the homestay operators and local community cannot rely on the government initiatives itself however, they must have a proper planning on products and service distribution channels to ensure the sustainability of homestay programme. All homestay operators must have a self-reliant and local champion should have strategy on getting funding to improve their products and service delivery.

V. CONCLUSION

Rural tourism development in Malaysia through Community-Based Rural Homestay (CBRH) Programme has

a promising prospective to be promoted as one of the greatest and marketable tourism products. The uniqueness of culture and lifestyle become a main attraction for tourist to experience the Malaysian way of life and at the same time promoting culture conservation and preservation for future generation. Based on the current trends, number of homestay operators' registration is keep on increasing as the participants realized that homestay programme could be a value added to their main source of income. This is considered as a good sign of development rural tourism through homestay programme whereby its can lead to bridging rural economic as well. In order to preparing for massive tourist arrival by 2020, the projection of homestay programme will be a good platform to cater tourist needs in the future. Hence, to achieve this mission, the role of local champion become crucial in providing strategies and direction to enhance local community preparedness to receive influx of tourist.

Nonetheless, the role of local champion as initiator to tourism projects have to be seen as significant implication to ensure local community participation and support towards tourism development in rural areas. Thus, it is recommended that future research should embark on the leadership approach for local champion as the time progression, there are changes might happened as result to the new approach in local leadership for a better direction in rural tourism development. Nevertheless, the conjectures have yet to be further investigated.

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