

Tourism Social Entrepreneurship for Community Development and Resilience: A Research Agenda

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Abstract. Studies have recognised the need for further enhancements in the Malaysian community development approaches. The good from community development initiatives may become undone due to disruptions that occur due to various hazards, natural or man-made. Especially so if the community lacks resilience. Severity of the impacts from the hazards can be significant and protracted. Arguably the community development agenda in Malaysia may not only need enhancements but a move towards ensuring resilience should also be addressed. This is definitely has become more pertinent due to Covid-19 and its wide-ranging impacts. It is proposed that Tourism Social Entrepreneurship (TSE) has the potential to be a viable segment of the tourism sector generally and for addressing community development needs as well as affecting resilience that is beyond government subsidies and incentives. TSE may allow for higher levels of engagement and ownership amongst the communities for their own development which may lead to resilience. However, the extent of TSE in Malaysia is not yet fully explored and understood, including the relationship it has towards community development, and the impact it may have on affecting community resilience. Furthermore, the implications of Covid-19 (emergence of variants, being endemic, etc.) on the matter must be explored and factored. This paper argues the merit for works in this area, proposed a conceptual framework and discuss possible research approaches. It is envisioned that this research agenda will; generate new findings on TSE and its relationship with community development and community resilience; generate findings of the dynamics that shape TSE in Malaysia; and ultimately inform policies as well as practice.

 $\textbf{Keywords:} \ \ \textbf{Tourism Social Entrepreneurship} \cdot \textbf{Community Development} \cdot \textbf{Community Resilience}$

1 Introduction

[1] (p.89) in their review of the community development landscape in Malaysia had identified that the "philosophy and principals of Malaysian community development

programmes concentrate mainly on upgrading living standards and tackling poverty, especially among rural Malays. It is assumed by the government that by providing basic amenities and other social programmes, people could cooperatively contribute by participating in those activities towards achieving the community goals which leads to economic growth and national progress." They then further concluded that "the process of mobilizing people through the responsive strategy advocated by the government to promote and enhance community participation in development programmes was not thoroughly successful." This suggests further enhancements in the Malaysian community development approaches are needed. A search on Lens.org for scholarly works with search string "Community Development in Malaysia" was then conducted (https://link. lens.org/8LOME3LPsd) and a total of 44 journal articles were identified by the search. where most of the works were post [1], reaching a peak in 2017 where 7 journal articles were published. However, the majority of the works tend to focus on specific areas of community development such as employment of persons with disabilities [2], children with special needs [3], marine and coast conservation [4], indigenous community [5], etc. The benefits of using Lens.org platform are increasingly recognised by researchers [6, 7]. The limited number of researches in the area of tourism social enterprises and focusing on the Malaysian context suggest that more work still need to be done to address this research gap.

Meanwhile, [8] have stressed the importance of community resilience and high-lighted how the infrastructures and frameworks for societal well-being are often fragile and vulnerable to various hazards both natural and man-made. Furthermore, they recognised that impacts from the hazards often are not limited to the direct aftermath but can be protracted. Thus, it is argued that the community development agenda in Malaysia may not only need enhancements but a move towards ensuring resilience should also be addressed. This is definitely has become more pertinent given the world is currently gripped by the Covid-19 pandemic with impacts on the world's economy is severe and forecasted to be far-reaching.

According to [9], "The Covid-19 pandemic is unprecedented in its global reach and impact, posing formidable challenges to policymakers and to the empirical analysis of its direct and indirect effects within the interconnected global economy. "And they concluded that "results of the analysis show that the global recession will be long lasting, with no country escaping its impact regardless of their mitigation strategy." The severity of the damage the Pandemic is causing on the global economy is at such unprecedented scale as observed by Statista¹; "The economic damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is largely driven by a fall in demand, meaning that there are no consumers to purchase the goods and services available in the global economy." The report² identified tourism as one the most severely affected sectors – "This dynamic can be clearly seen in heavily affected industries such as travel and tourism." The agency further reported that the sector "is predicted to see a loss of 810.7 billion U.S. dollars in revenue in 2020. Business travel spending in China, the origin country of the virus, is projected to see the biggest loss from COVID-19, decreasing by a total of 404.1 billion U.S. dollars." A

 $^{^{1}\} https://www.statista.com/topics/6139/covid-19-impact-on-the-global-economy/.$

² https://www.statista.com/statistics/1103930/coronavirus-business-travel-revenue-loss/.

report by UNCTAD³ projected "the crash in international tourism due to the coronavirus pandemic could cause a loss of more than \$4 trillion to the global GDP for the years 2020 and 2021". The report forecasted for 2021 loss of between \$1.7 trillion and \$2.4 trillion. The report also identified South-East Asia as one of the most-affected regions.

Locally, it was reported⁴ that the "Malaysian economy contracted 17.1 per cent in the second quarter of 2020 from a 0.7 per cent growth in the first quarter due to unprecedented impact of the stringent containment measures to control the Covid-19 pandemic globally and domestically." This has led to many predicting⁵ that the road for recovery for Malaysia will not be an easy or smooth path. The Malaysian government reported⁶ the country recorded RM135 billion losses in 2020 from tourists' expenditure and a further RM165 billion was projected for 2021. A report by DW Akademie⁷ warned of the possible collapse of the Malaysian tourism sector due to the Pandemic.

Blessed with rich natural, cultural and historical heritage, Malaysian tourism sector has a lot to offer the global tourism consumers. It is proposed that Tourism Social Entrepreneurship (TSE) has the potential to be a viable segment of the tourism sector generally and for the possible surge of the global travel philanthropy when travel restrictions due to the Pandemic are lifted across the globe. The increase in travel philanthropy can be expected as many may want to reach back out to society after the imposed isolation because of Covid-19 and give assistance to communities severely affected by the Pandemic. Furthermore, since TSE was seen as centred around impact visions aligned with the fundamental principles of community development; a vibrant TSE sector would help towards sustainable community development agenda that is beyond government subsidies and incentives. TSE may allow for higher levels of engagement and ownership amongst the communities for their own development which may lead to resilience.

However, the extent of TSE in Malaysia is not yet fully explored and understood yet. A simple search via Lens.org returned 0 scholarly works for "Tourism Social Entrepreneurship in Malaysia" (https://link.lens.org/7whX8RyLDYj). However, when searching for "Tourism Social Entrepreneurship" a total of 15 journal articles were found on Lens.org (https://link.lens.org/JbKgbn5a0bc) with an increasing trend seen from 2017 and peaked in 2021. This can be seen as an indication that this is an emerging research area that is gaining interest with a clear gap for works on Malaysian contexts.

Thus, there is a need to really understand the dynamics that shape the Malaysian TSE landscape; the relationship it has towards community development, and the impact it may have towards affecting community resilience. Furthermore, in order to produce recommendations that can promise desirable impacts, the implications of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the matter must be explored and factored in. Therefore, this paper argues the

³ https://unctad.org/news/global-economy-could-lose-over-4-trillion-due-covid-19-impact-tou rism.

⁴ https://www.nst.com.my/business/2020/08/616534/malaysias-economy-shrinks-171pct-covid-19-impact.

⁵ https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/what-experts-are-saying-about-road-ahead-malays ias-economic-recovery.

⁶ https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2021/10/734463/malaysia-estimates-rm165bil-losses-tourist-expenditure-year.

⁷ https://www.dw.com/en/covid-malaysias-tourism-sector-faces-collapse/a-60030897.

merit for works in this area, propose a conceptual framework, discuss possible research approaches and highlight the potential benefits from this recommended research agenda.

2 Literature Review

The practice to solve social problems has existed for decades [10–13]. According to [11], thousands of lives have been transformed due to such initiatives. Recently, social entrepreneurship has become a highlight in such discourse and has captured the attention of parties including policymakers, businesses, civil society groups, academics as well as financial institutions [14]. Resolving social objectives via entrepreneurial means [15–18] came into picture in the year 1980s from the effort of Bill Drayton at Ashoka Foundation, which gives support in term of funding to social innovators around the world and Ed Skloot of New Ventures that assist the non-profits organisations to scope for new means of income generation [13, 19–24]. According to [25] social entrepreneurship leads an organization to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage that enables it to fulfil its social mission. Social entrepreneurs in social enterprises provide innovative or exceptional leadership [26] that treats complex social problems [27] while at the same time has the ability to create community wealth [28].

Social entrepreneurship has become a global phenomenon [29, 30]. [31] categorized two types of social enterprises; l. market-based with examples largely from Africa and North America; ll. Hybrid-based with examples from Europe and Latin America. In general, there are three reasons that led to the social entrepreneurship emergence. First, the interest to solve social issues via innovative and sustainable solutions has been growing [11, 27, 32–35]. Secondly, some of the concern or issues raised are not addressed by the public sector but at the same time failed to attract private sector philanthropic attention [36–39]. Thirdly, commercial entrepreneurs have contributed in social sector with the intention for wealth creation that at the same time create both social and economic impact to their community [28, 40, 41]. In effect, there is overlapping of social enterprise activities amongst the key actors from the public, private and voluntary sectors [42].

Furthermore, the move for addressing social issues away from non-profit organizations had been driven largely by two main factors;

- Public dissatisfaction with the way how the organizations manage the social services leading to the call for improving the practices in more business-like efficiency and effectiveness [13, 38].
- The need to find a more sustainable mode of sourcing funds and resources [13, 27].

As a result, many have highlight and recognised social entrepreneurship as the answer to address the above [43–45].

2.1 Community Development and Resilience

Often there are pockets in society that are excluded and marginalised. Thus, community development agenda are the policy, programmes and initiatives that aim to address the situation and work towards guaranteeing equality to all people. According to [46]

(p.77), "Changes in lifestyle, increase in awareness on individual rights and also the realisation of collective power has begun to change the social and political aspect of society. In all the changes undergone, it is quite often that the rural and urban poor who are marginalised and lag behind in economic advancement. Community development is an important element in pursuing economic progress and also in encouraging active participation of the capable and potential members of society." [47] described "community development" as a holistic approach grounded in principles of empowerment, human rights, inclusion, social justice, self-determination and collective action. Through community development initiatives, community members can become more empowered, such that they can increasingly recognise and challenge conditions and structures which are leading to their disempowerment or negatively impacting their wellbeing [48].

[49] have recognised the increasing importance of community resilience as a research field. [50] (p.401) defined community resilience as "the existence, development, and engagement of community resources by community members to thrive in an environment characterized by change, uncertainty, unpredictability, and surprise." [51] called for the importance to improve general resilience of communities. [52] have highlighted the strong relationship between community development and community resilience. Community development can be seen as the prerequisite towards building community resilience. Meanwhile [53], have recognised the roles players from the private sector can contribute towards community development agenda.

2.2 Tourism Social Entrepreneurship and Community Development

Social Entrepreneurship implemented in tourism has the ability to enhance the community development by generating social value and creating social change [54]. According to [55], TSE is able to address social problems, optimize the benefits from tourism and ensure the negative impacts to the local communities are kept low. [54] also credited the entrepreneurs driving the TSEs as individuals who take their idea, innovations and strategies to tackle the social problem and transform the tourist destination.

Prior research suggests that communities in need often have the requisite tourism resources that in turn can be offered as tourism products for tourists looking for authentic local travel experiences [56]. However, to effectively commercialize the products the sector needs businesses to drive the initiatives in strategic and organized manner [57]. Arguably this points to the need for TSEs. The increasing popularity of travel philanthropy [58] is another factor that suggest the positive potential of TSE. [55] proposed a framework for TSE (see Fig. 1). The framework suggest that TSE is resulting from the systemic interplay between the actors (the entrepreneur, the community, agency), contextual factors, processes, necessary resources, use of community capitals (natural, social, cultural, built, human, financial, and political), and the fundamental principles of community development.

Social entrepreneurship proposes to eliminate socioeconomic challenges and the detrimental impact of business ventures on societies by balancing social and economic objectives. Meanwhile, TSE is introduced as an alternative approach to tourism entrepreneurship. Given we are in an era where more sustainable innovative approaches to tourism are constantly studied and more calls for solutions to effect community

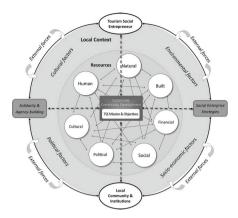


Fig. 1. Framework for TSE [55]

well-being as well as growth, TSE can be seen as a strong vehicle to achieve those needs.

3 Proposed Framework

Balance Theory [59] postulated that if an element *A* is connected to *B* with strong ties and *A* interact with *C* intensively, then *B* and *C* also interact with each other [60]. The triangular relationship is also supported by the Cognitive Dissonance Theory of [61]. According to the theory, individuals who feel dissonance among opinions, beliefs, knowledge about the environment, and knowledge about one's own action and feelings will experience discomfort and pressure to reduce or eliminate the dissonance by changing their attitude toward the target [61].

In the context of TSE in Malaysia, it is proposed that the higher tourism social entrepreneurship level, there is higher possibility for them to effect community development and with better community development engagement, higher community resilience can be achieved. In contrast, if a community has low social entrepreneurialism, they may not have the dynamism or wherewithal to change their situation. Thus, the key here is the introduction of social entrepreneurship as an intervention that can be the solution to reduce or eliminate the dissonance; community with issues and challenges that need assistance in order to achieve better quality of life or well-being, as well as to ensure resilience especially against disruptions such as a pandemic.

Balance Theory postulates that individuals tend to change their attitude toward product / service / idea / concept to maintain balance or avoid cognitive dissonance. The individuals when seen in collective forms communities. Thus, this theory is very useful in explaining how social entrepreneurship can affect communities' attitudes toward their situation. If a community develops a social enterprise, they can affect community development and ultimately resilience.

Furthermore, with higher levels of social entrepreneurship, the wider the range of social issues and challenges can be addressed, creating bigger range of benefits and public well-being. This will also reduce the dependency on government interventions.

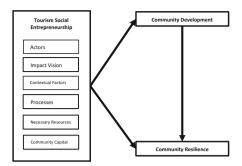


Fig. 2. Proposed Framework

Reciprocally, the feel-good factor of being able to contribute instead of receiving will tend to strengthen the importance of social entrepreneurialism, leading to more community development initiatives and leading towards community resilience. This can be seen as affecting a psychological balance.

[62] identified that literature had linked entrepreneurship and resilience. The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) posits that attitudes toward behaviour affect intentions to perform the behaviour [63]. Combining TRA and Balance Theory, the study extends the territory of balance theory to include the "Community Resilience" as a consequence of the attitudes toward the social entrepreneurship and community development. Specifically, the three dimensions in the relationship system are social entrepreneurship, community development and community resilience. When a community has high tourism social entrepreneurship, it promotes them to have high levels of community development. Active community development agenda we postulate will then pave the way towards better levels of community resilience. Thus, the work by [55] is adapted into the following proposed conceptual framework (Fig. 2).

4 Discussions

The proposed framework can be tested either by quantitative or qualitative methods. This section will discuss how the research design options can be implemented.

The first research approach recommended for this proposed study is via the quantitative approach, specifically hypothesis testing and a survey as the main data collection strategy. The survey instrument will be developed based on the proposed framework. Specifically, respondents from the actors will be approached to take part in the survey which solicits their opinion on;

- The current state and importance of the various aspects that are the dynamics of the Malaysian TSE.
- b. How significant the association between Tourism Social Entrepreneurship with community development.
- c. How significant the association between Tourism Social Entrepreneurship with community resilience.

Pilot Study should be conducted to test and refine the protocol and instrument developed. Target respondents can be the key actors of the TSE landscape which include entrepreneurs, agencies, NGOs, associations or community representatives and academia.

The second research approach possible for this study is via the qualitative approach, specifically by adopting the case study methodology and interviews as the main data collection strategy. Case study methodology usage can be traced back to the early 1900's when it was popularly used by the Department of Sociology, University of Chicago. [64] and [65] stated that case study is done by giving special attention to completeness in observation, reconstruction and analysis of the cases under study. Case study is done in a way that incorporates the views of the 'actors' in the case under study. Coincidentally, 'actors' is one of the main components of TSE in the proposed framework.

A case study is a research strategy used when attempting to understand complex organisation problems; in essence allowing one to focus on something which is sufficiently manageable and can be understood in all its complexity. [66] proposes that case study method is useful in describing a phenomenon in its own context and to explore an issue or a question. This definitely is well in line with the research subject proposed. As the goal of this study is to examine dynamics of TSE and the relationships with Community Development and Community Resilience, the case study method will allow us to describe the relationships within the context of the selected case.

Both of the recommended research approaches would generate insightful findings. Specifically, the findings would facilitate for the investigation of the dynamics for TSE deployment in Malaysia; investigate the determinacy of TSE on community development; investigate the determinacy of TSE on community resilience; and examine the mediating effect of community development on the association between TSE with community resilience.

The expected findings and insights to the key dynamics affecting TSE and community development will enable us to generate knowledge for initiatives designed to engage communities, inform policy, and build resilience.

5 Conclusions

This study is aligned with the 10–10 Malaysian Science, Technology, Innovation and Economy (MySTIE) Framework. Specifically, it has the potential to contribute towards the body of knowledge supporting 5 of the 10 specified Socio-Economic sectors identified in the framework. Namely, Business & Financial Services; Culture, Arts & Tourism; Water & Food – Education; and Environment & Biodiversity. This is because, the 5 sectors are the common sectors social enterprises focus on as their mission to impact and contribute. Furthermore, the study is also aligned with the Science and Technology Drivers in MySTIE as these often can be the source for innovative solutions the social enterprises leverage on. Next, this study also has the potential to contribute towards the ongoing efforts to realise the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 (SPV 2030). Specifically, the findings of the study have the potential to provide insights for the enhancement of initiatives under the SPV 2030.

The specific policy framework on social entrepreneurship was the Malaysian Social Enterprise Blueprint 2015–2018. Clearly, the blueprint can no longer be the main reference for the actors in the country to drive development of social enterprises and entrepreneurs. Since the original blueprint was launched, the country had gone through several major changes in the political landscape. Not only the country but the world also had changed because of the Pandemic. Thus, new works in the area would provide insights needed to formulate a new blueprint that can not only increase the rate of social entrepreneurship activities in Malaysia but also to affect a paradigm shift where economic development is championed by homegrown social enterprises and entrepreneurs. Another reason to motivate researchers to undertake this research is that it is also in line with MOHE's IPT Entrepreneurship Action Plan 2021–2025, and the National Entrepreneurship Policy (NEP2030).

This research agenda also has a wider appeal beyond the local needs. The research is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Firstly, given the focus, it definitely will contribute towards the 1st SDG which is 'No Poverty'. Next as the study is seeking to understand the role of social entrepreneurship in realising community development goals and effecting community resilience, this research can definitely be seen as also supporting the 3rd SDG – 'Good Health and Well-being'. The focus on community development and resilience also means that this research has the potential to contribute towards the SDG 11 – 'Sustainable Cities and Communities'.

Acknowledgments. Appreciation also to all reviewers for their constructive feedback.

Authors' Contributions. Ab Aziz, K.: Conceptualization, Supervision, Writing – Original Draft Preparation Writing – Review & Editing; Mohd Zulkifle, A.: Literature Review, Writing – Review & Editing.

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