MAPPING OF TOURISTIC ASSETS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN RURAL TOURISM OF BERIAH VALLEY, MALAYSIA

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Abstract

The tourism sector has become one of the fastest growing economies in both developed and developing countries. As such, tourism is also a key driver of rural development, especially in a marginalized yet endowed with huge potentials for tourism development. In Malaysia, the Beriah Valley has been identified for rural tourism development. However, as of 2016, there is still little effort made in exploring the availability of touristic assets and community involvement in tourism of the entire valley. Taking the perspective of touristic assets comprising nature and cultural factors, this study aims at uncovering the touristic assets and community involvement in making the rural tourism a practical action among the villagers. With a survey carried out in 9 villages and 300 village members of Beriah Valley, this study found that many touristic assets have yet to be developed. The findings revealed that the overall attraction is deemed at the village-sphere of Beriah Valley. The natural touristic asset dominated several villages whereby paddy fields, landscape, scenic hills, lakes and streams of rivers are across villages. Apart from that, the cultural touristic assets comprised the traditional baby crading, 'berpokong bayi' and 'silat'. In fact many of their SME products have been dominating in the tourism circuit of rural gastronomic without their actual consent, and these include 'ikan pekasam', 'kuih tradisional bahulu' and Banjar traditional foods such as 'wadai kiping', 'kalakatar' and 'dodol'. The community's involvement in planning, developing and implementing of tourism-related programme or activities was however, moderate. The findings suggest that bottom-up approach should act as the platform of advancing the touristic assets for the community involvement at the village level. This is because the touristic assets is felt at and as the 'community or village wealth' and should become their strength of offering the 'village-sphere attraction' compared to an 'individual attraction'. The development of tourism sector in the Beriah Valley is perceived to give positive impacts to the villages in terms of revenue, jobs and development, hence, the village-sphere of touristic assets is crucial for rural tourism development.

Keyword: bottom-up approach, community, mapping, touristic assets, village-sphere, rural tourism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today rural tourism is one of the initiatives deployed to resolve problems of poverty, marginalised community, as well as to spearheading the under-developed areas in developing countries. Based on the existing literature, most stakeholders agreed that community involvement will be best based on their willingness to participate and have their consent on resources available within their capacity of control, assess and benefit (Lepp 2010; Sebele 2010; Williams & Lawson 2001, Butler & Clark 1992; Tsung Hung, 2012). In fact, the most recent studies have called for an alternative of such community-based tourism. This is because most of the previous initiatives have utilised the needs analysis approaches. The current perspective instead, is deemed favourable in seeking existence of assets in and within the community capacity. In a simple word, the task of identifying the touristic asset has become the basis of practising rural tourism.

Among the academia, several approaches have been opted to map the touristic assets. The resource-based asset mapping was used to chart the strength of the natural. On a similar vein, the ABCD asset mapping was a popular one as the tools is interactive and often involved local community (Satovuori 2016; Green and Haines 2008; Zekeri 2013). On practicality, the mapping of touristic asset has been used in community-based tourism (Thomas 2007; Butler & Clark, G. 1992). The shifts from the needs analysis to the capacity evaluation of the local community during the asset mapping, thus, bring about this intensification of the methods in rural tourism. This is because the community is not perceived negatively and problematic, but is positively perceived with full of potentials, including natural, cultural and environmental capitals. In fact, with the asset mapping approach, the existing and potentials of the community become the central force for a holistic and sustainable rural tourism.

In Malaysia, although rural tourism has reached to a state of successful and wide spreading phenomenon, there exist certain rural areas that are under-developed (Azizan et al. 2010; Siow May-Ling et al. 2012, Cheuk et al. 2015; Hanafiah et al. 2013; Lo et al. 2012). One of these areas is the Beriah Valley, situated in the Northern Region of Perak. While Perak tourism displays many attractions including heritage tourism, island, marine and historical tourism, little attempt is made to uncover the touristic assets of natural and cultural tourism in the BV. As such, the valley becomes one of the poorest areas, as there is no diversification of financial resources in the villages of Kg. Parit Haji Lebai Kadir, Kg. Parit Haji Ali, Kg. Parit Haji Taib, Kg. Parit Haji Kassim and Kg. Simpang Lima.

Of recent development, Beriah Valley (BV) has been visioned to become one of the progressive areas which tourism becomes one of the four major sectors of development impetus. The plan has set that tourism activities should rely on the local capacity whether it is based on natural, cultural or combinations of these attractions. Based on the aspiration that this Valley should become one of the rural tourism sites, it is pertinent that the mapping of touristic asset for

community involvement is attempted. This article aims to uncover the touristic assets of the Beriah Valley and further suggest the alternative for local involvement.

This study is as follows. First, the literature review of touristic asset mapping and, community involvement is discussed. This is followed by the overview of the study area and method used. The results of the study elaborated the mapping on touristic asset, followed by the community involvement. The final part of the paper contributes the recommendations for the stakeholders of the BV.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature of touristic asset, mapping of touristic asset, community involvement, and rural tourism helps to strengthen the understanding of the topic and suggest the methodology and theoretical perspective of the study.

Touristic asset

There are copies of studies concerning what comprised the touristic assets among tourism scholars. Touristic asset in its simplest word refers to the identification of asset be they a natural, cultural, or resources for tourism attraction, tourism product in potential site or existing destination. It is often refers to the existing tourist resources within the knowledge of the community. It is generally characterised as the natural and cultural aspect of tourism. The touristic asset has its value perceived, and preferred by the 'owners' at all level of community, region and locality. Furthermore, according to the Canadian Rural Partnership, Assets are what we want to keep, build upon, and sustain for future generations. Assets can be physical things like a building, a local swimming pool or a 150-year-old tree in the town square; assets can also be intangible, like the work that volunteer groups do to beautify the main street or raise funds for the food bank."

Nevertheless many scholars proposed alternatives when referring to touristic asset. The first perspective views the existence of touristic asset in a continuum; one side favours the physical assets while on the other side of the continuum, favours the man-made touristic asset. The natural asset is considered as the resources, and it will become an asset once the community utilised it economically and socially. The second perspective took the touristic asset as the wholesome of tourism product or destination. In order tourism to become a productive sector, touristic asset should be utilised as tourism product or destination. Hence, touristic asset comprised the core, secondary and tertiary components of tourism products. In fact, the touristic asset would be in a higher values and appreciation when it is in the closest contact with the community and it would be a vice versa if the touristic asset is farther apart of the community.

The third perspective is that touristic asset may be seen in various resources, capital and attraction. In this circumstances, Buhalis (2000) who proposed 6 A in assessing tourism resources is relevant. He proposed that touristic asset can be operationalised in the following

aspects, comprising a set of attraction. However, as Table 1 shows, there are multi-perspective of touristic asset comprising the physical and man-made assets. Further more physical asset ranges the capitals of land, flora and fauna and the environment of a region.

Table 1. Defining Asset					
Natural capital	Natural capital includes land, minerals and fossil fuels, solar energy, water, living organisms, and the services provided by the interactions of all these elements in ecological systems (A UNEP (2012).				
Cultural asset	A cultural asset is something that has value because of its contribution to a community's creativity, knowledge, traditions, culture, meaning, and vitality. They can be the places you visit to express your cultural identity, and/or the resources one uses to pursue a creative practice. They can be tangible assets such as cultural facilities, specific buildings, or physical works of art. They can even intangible and temporal things such as annual events, shared cultural stories, or cultural landmarks and icons that no longer exist.				
Natural Resources-based asset	The resource-based asset is based on using and enjoying the natural environment and resources on lands and waters. The basis of the resource-based asset development is that successful operation will find their future competitiveness on the development of distinctive and unique capabilities, which may often be implicit or intangible in nature.				
Community Capital Asset	Community capitals resources in rural communities might best be conceptualized as a variety of forms of capital. Flora (2004) incorporated seven forms of capital: financial, human, built, natural, cultural, political, and social. Financial capital includes opportunities for loans and credit, numerous investment opportunities, and the existence of tax credits and other business-friendly structures. Human capital includes numerous opportunities for professional and educational growth and skill-building. Built capital includes the physical structures of a community, for example, buildings, road and highway systems, mass transit, and public facilities. Natural capital includes diversity of plant and animal life, opportunities for interaction with nature, and high quality of air and water. Cultural capital includes the preservation of local stories, history, art and craft forms, and traditional foods and ways of preparation. Social capital includes goodwill, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individuals and families within a community. Political capital includes accessibility to power through channels of local, regional, state, and federal government.				

Source: Fuller et al. 2002; Dickson et al. (2014).

With the above-mentioned aspects can be considered to analyse touristic asset, in this research the touristic asset used in the asset mapping is carried out together with community who are surveyed via face to face approach. These touristic assets are further categorised as the natural, cultural attraction and man-made assets.

Mapping of touristic assets

Mapping of touristic asset is not a new agenda in tourism development. From a need analysis perspective to an Asset-based approach and community development (ABCD), mapping of touristic asset is an alternative to ensure the community participation and comprehensive information on existing and potential assets (Bruursema, 2015). Asset mapping, on the other hand, inventories a community's natural, cultural, historical, scenic, forestry and agricultural resources. It sets the stage for deliberate planning to: 1) preserve and protect resources, 2) identify assets, and 3) sustainably use the resources for community improvement strategies such as ecotourism or heritage tourism development as well as local business development and creation of jobs built around the local resource base.

There are several ways on setting mapping of touristic asset. The simplest is based on a touristic information of suggested item comprising what is the asset, when, where and who owns the asset. Next is the Asset-Based approach to Community Development (ABCD) that examines the resources from the community perspectives. It envisions the identification and mobilization of assets as being central to all community development processes. Initially concentrating on assets as the gifts, skills and capacities inherent in individuals, citizens' associations, local institutions, and the physical environment (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993), the ABCD has shifted toward examining the seven assets that can be found in the SL literature: human, social, environmental, financial, physical, political, and cultural capitals (Green & Haines, 2008).

ABCD is described as a more sustainable model of community development than needs-based community development, because needs-based approaches may perpetuate community problems by emphasizing deficiencies and the necessity for reliance on outside assistance. By contrast, ABCD aims to build capacity within communities by expanding their social capital. In comparison, asset mapping begins with the philosophy that all local residents, regardless of age, gender, race, ethnic background, place of residence, or other characteristics, can play an effective role in addressing important local matters.

Asset mapping serves as an effective tool for understanding the wealth of talent and resources that exists in each community even those with small populations or suffering from poverty and economic distress (Bennett et al., 2012). The long term development of a community rests on its ability to uncover and build on the strengths and assets of its people, institutions, and informal organizations. Included are creative strategies to identify and tap the wealth of leadership potential available in every community. However, to be truly effective, asset mapping must take the essential step of linking these various talents and resources together. In isolation, these assets are likely to realize (at best) only modest advancements in the well-being of local people and their communities. Integration of these assets, however, provides the foundation for genuine improvements in the welfare of these people and their localities.

Community involvement

Ensuring local community participation in rural tourism is both a growing concern and a priority in developing countries. Based on the existing literature in rural tourism, the following points may be discerned with regard to the rural community: i) inclusion of the rural community is bound to both exogenous and indigenous factors; ii) consideration of indigenous knowledge as a means of rural enhancement would allow community inclusion to grow; and iii) formulating

alternative solutions that build upon the reservoir of community's own knowledge and insights on the problems at hand is pertinent to solving the community issues (Lepp 2007, Bengi & Gulsen 2012 2012; Po-Hsin, Lai 2003).

There is a growing realization that "community based" and localized cooperation approaches are central to many rural tourism development plans where trust and networking are the essential ingredients in providing the right mix for successful tourism-development outcomes (Ying and Zhou 2007, Sebele 2010). These ideas sit well within the contemporary framework of community inclusion as opposed to their treatment as the "other" throughout the history of tourism-planning frameworks. Tourism academicians, by and large, seem to have agreed on the view that active involvement of local community in local tourism development process will only be conducive to making it more sustainable (Po-Hsin, Lai 2003, Tosun 2007, Lee 2012). Furthermore, several authors stressed on the community involvement includes sharing knowledge, gaining commitment from the communities, and participation in decision making process and these will in turn achieve tourist satisfaction and sustainable rural tourism development (Fong and Lo, 2015; Marzuki 2008).

The community involvement is regard as key to success in much tourism developed, especially with regard to rural based tourism. It has a long standing point in tourism as many refer to the seminal work of Pretty (1997) on community involvement. While there are ladder of involvement, the three stages of involvement are crucial. As such, community involvement is pertinent at planning, development and on service or on site. The three stage involved community and shown differing behaviour on tourism. However, community involvement of the rural tourism is argued to work within the premise of equal involvement or fragmented roles by the community. Michael et al. (2013) suggest the sites of the rural tourism is not necessary homogenous, but is heterogeneity should provide more opportunities of utilising local assets. Thus, making community involvement plays a pivotal role in sustaining rural tourism development.

Rural tourism

Rural tourism has a long history of establishment. Ezeuduji and Rid (2011) define rural tourism as encompassing visits by tourists to rural areas to experience the cultural and natural environment of the local populations as part of the strategies within the management portfolio of sustainable rural development. According to Briedenhann and Wickens (2004), rural tourism was presented as the catalyst for development in rural areas to promote development and increase job creation opportunities. Rural tourism generates complementary income source for peasants and farmers who have depended mainly on their primary activities and further ensure sustainable livelihood (Albacete et al., 2007, Bengi & Gulsen 2012, Kheiri & Nasihatkon, 2016). However, Bennett (2009) cautions that those rural communities that rely on their natural resources for subsistence-based and income generating activities have had declining economies as a result of out-migration of younger working-age groups. In fact scholars argue that rural areas that sustain their economies with natural resources help in boosting the tax base that helps sustain local businesses (Okech et al. 2012).

In rural tourism, the focus tends to be on natural and cultural-based tourism products or assets (Cawley and Gilmor 2008; Blaine et al. 1993). In terms of activities, it may be based on the understanding of travel to remote areas for the purpose of resting, relaxing, and personal

development (Dernoi, 1991). Within rural tourism, Sasu & Epuran (2006) and Drăgulănescu and Druţu (2012) assert on different types of activities can be distinguished, such as ecotourism, gastronomic workshops, preparation and use of traditional medicine, language and dialectical learning, artisanal workshops, rural photography, agro tourism and environmental interpretation.

Rural tourism permits the revalorization of local natural and cultural resources; it has, in turn, a local social basis for its implementation. In addition, rural tourism should be grounded in the sustainability principle of not degrading the resource base (Gerritsen, 2014, Sebele 2010; Page & Getz 1997). This last reason is why the term sustainable rural tourism is being used in this article; we refer to the development of rural touristic activities that have minimum impacts on the local cultural, ecological, economic and social environments (Gutiérrez & Gerritsen, 2011, Kheiri & Nasihatkon, 2016; Ezeuduji & Rid 2011; Lo et al. 2012).

3. METHODOLOGY

The study site

The Beriah Valley (BV) is located in Kerian District of the northern state of Perak. The Beriah Valley is a settlement of 918.83 km square. It has a strategic position, as it is adjacent to the two areas of the central growth of the Northern Region of Peninsular Malaysia, comprising Penang and Kedah. In the east and south, the area is bordered by the Larut district, Matang and Selama and on the west side of this area is the Malacca Strait. This study area is blessed with the Kerian River, acting as a boundary of the three states Penang, Kedah and Perak. The Beriah Valley comprised 9 villages, shown in Table 2. In terms of economic sector, most of the population work in agriculture, mainly in paddy farming and small-scale oil palm plantation. According to key respondents, most population are the elderly, working as the traditional paddy farmers as well as the small-scale oil palm planters, land and sea fishermen. Only a small numbers of the villagers, work in the public sector, business, and services. The villages are accessible to the neighbouring towns such as Parit Buntar and Bagan Serai, hence there are only limited services and retails shop in and within the BV.

In the late 2015, the BV has been proposed as a technopolis which the following key roles and sectors acting as the catalyst of the area. As depicted in Figure 1, the Beriah Valley possesses potential resources to become the future growth centre of the Northern region of Perak State.

Research Instrument, Data Collection and Analysis

This study combines qualitative and quantitative approach of data collection. The qualitative data involves interviews with key respondents of each village. The quantitative data collection was utilised with the questionnaire and face-to-face interview. In terms of sample size and sampling technique, since the data regarding the population size has not been recently updated, it was decided that the representative sample size would comprise approximately 220 - 300 residents, or equal to 10% of the total population of the study area (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). A total 300 respondents comprising the head of the household were collected during the survey.

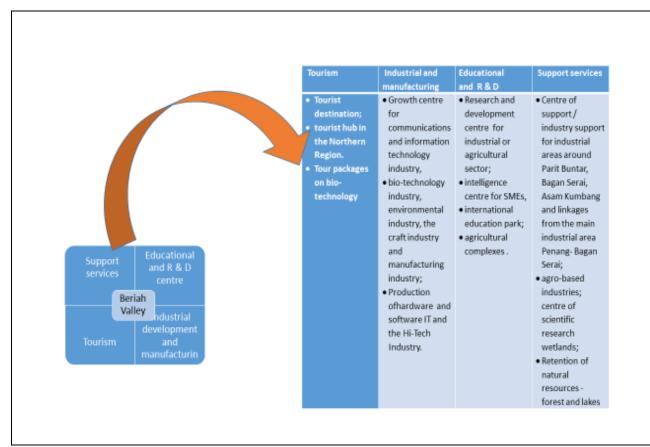


Figure 1 The Beriah Valley Development Impetus

To collect the quantitative data, a questionnaire is designed, consisting five main parts. The first part inquired about the social demographic, the second part gave the respondents opportunities to map their asset of tourism resources and the third part provides space for community involvement and suggestion of preference of tourism ventures according to their individual and community level. The touristic mapping was captured through the survey carried out in 9 villages shown in Table 1. The survey used the questionnaire which aims to gauge the touristic assets, involvement of the local as well as their intention of joining tourism programmes initiated by the local community.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The community profiles

The respondents were from the nine villages, shown in Table 2. Of all the villages, four villages provide respondents more than 12.0 percent of the total respondents. Most of them were from the age group of 18-30 years old, 41-50 years old and 51-60 years, of which the percentage were 21.7%, 27.3% and 21.3% respectively. On gender perspective, male respondents are more than females. Further, the respondents were asked about their livelihood at the village. The

respondents claimed that they are the 'locals' whereby their families are the pioneers of the community, stay for a substantive length of years in the villages. As shown in Table 2, most villagers originated from the Northern region of Peninsular Malaysia. Mostly the villagers stayed there for quite sometimes inherited most of the local culture of the Northern Perak. While their occupational attainment shown in Table 2, confirm on their dependency on the paddy field, oil palm plantation. Of the total, 36.3 percent were involved in agriculture, 18.7 in services and 22.7 percent in manufacturing. However, it was in the manufacturing that the villagers were the migrants and commuters of the Penang Island and Seberang Perai.

Mapping of the Overall Touristic Asset of Beriah Valley

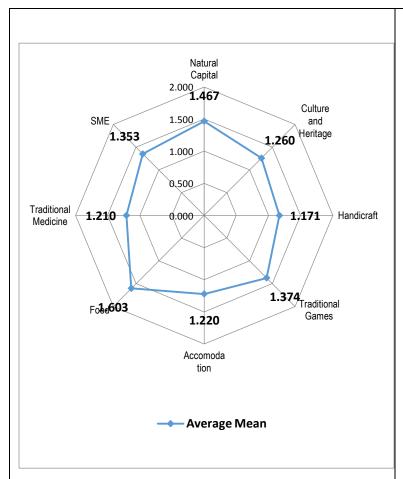
The study collected data regarding the touristic asset in the BV. From the villagers' point of views, the overall existence of touristic asset is shown in Figure 1. From the eight category of touristic asset, the natural and cultural assets were the highest.

The rank of the touristic asset is as follows. The five top sectors are the food, natural, traditional games and SMES. These touristic assets are higher than the average mean 1.315, with food achieving 1.603, natural capital 1.467, traditional games 1,374 and SME product 1.353 respectively. The second category was below the average means, comprised the accommodation, traditional medicine and handicraft. The above-mentioned touristic asset rank showed that the BV is perceived as a localised tourism destination. This denotes that the BV it is only recognised in a limited influential of promotional campaign and tourists attraction. From the results, the food and natural has the highest perceived touristic asset among the villagers. The natural and food were rated high as these are perceived among the dominant touristic asset available. The food was often mentioned, as they are assured the local gastronomy was among the special attraction that this Valley had.

Meanwhile the handicraft, accommodation, and traditional medicine had the lowest recognition among villages when they were asked about these touristic asset. The handicrafts and traditional medicine however, were among the popular local products yet it has not being considered to be influenced directly with tourism. As for the accommodation, only a small numbers of village members offered their home as 'homestay'.

Table 2. Respondents Background

		Frequency	Percentage
	Kg Batu 38	36	12
	Kg Changkat Lobak	26	8.7
	Kg Bukit Merah	31	10.3
	Kg Parit Lebai Kadir	38	12.7
Villages	Kg Permatang Pasir	26 8.7 31 10.3 38 12.7 30 10 32 10.7 48 16 34 11.3 25 8.3 65 21.7 47 15.7 82 27.3 64 21.3 29 9.7 13 4.3 213 71 87 29 209 69.7 24 8 67 22.3 32 10.7 74 24.7 57 19 41 13.7 52 17.3 44 14.7 275 91.8 25 7.2 109 36.3 35 11.7 15 5 13 4.3 56 18.7	10
	Kg. Simpang 5	32	10.7
	Kg. Parit Haji Kassim	48	16
	Kg. Parit Haji Ali	34	11.3
	Kg. Parit Haji Taib	25	8.3
	18-30	65	21.7
	31-40	47	15.7
A	41-50	angkat Lobak kit Merah rit Lebai Kadir rmatang Pasir 30 mpang 5 32 urit Haji Kassim 48 urit Haji Ali 34 urit Haji Taib 25 65 47 82 64 29 rs above 13 e 87 ed 209 ee 24 / unmarried 67 0 years years years years years years years 15 rs and above 44 Valley 1Valley 275 years	27.3
Age group	51-60		21.3
	61-70	29	9.7
	71 years above	13	4.3
G 1	Male	213	71
Gender	Female	87	29
	Married	209	69.7
Marital Status	Divorce	24	8
	Single/ unmarried	67	22.3
	Less 10 years	32	10.7
	11-20 years	74	24.7
Years stayed in Beriah	21-30 years	57	19
Valley	31-40 years	41	13.7
	41-50 years	52	17.3
	51 years and above	44	14.7
Origin	Beriah Valley	275	91.8
C	Kedah, Perak, Selangor and Johor	25	7.2
	Agriculture	109	36.3
Occupational sector	Manufacturing	209 69.7 24 8 67 22.3 32 10.7 74 24.7 57 19 41 13.7 52 17.3 44 14.7 275 91.8 25 7.2 109 36.3 35 11.7 15 5	11.7
	Business	15	5
	Construction/ Carpenters	13	4.3
	Services	56	18.7
	Others	72	24



	Average	
Asset	Mean	Rank
Natural Capital	1.467	2
Culture and		
Heritage	1.260	5
Handicraft	1.171	8
Traditional		
Games	1.374	3
Accommodation	1.220	6
Food	1.603	1
Traditional		
Medicine	1.210	7
SME	1.353	4
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Figure 2. Touristic Asset from the Villagers' Perspectives

The rank of the touristic asset is as follows. The five top sectors are the food, natural, traditional games and SMEs. These touristic assets are higher than the average mean 1.315, with food achieving 1.603, natural capital 1.467, traditional games 1,374 and SME product 1.353 respectively. The second category was below the average means, comprised the accommodation, traditional medicine and handicraft. The above-mentioned touristic asset rank showed that the BV is perceived as a localised tourism destination. This denotes that the BV is only recognised in a limited influential of promotional campaign and tourists attraction. From the results, the food and natural has the highest perceived touristic asset among the villagers. The natural and food were rated high as these are perceived among the dominant among the touristic asset available. The food was often mentioned, as they are assured the local gastronomy was among the special attraction that this Valley had.

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Mapping of Natural Touristic Asset

The respondents were asked to state the natural touristic asset available in their own village. Of the given answers, many respondents confidently stating what are available locally. Table 3 depicts the natural asset for each village. Of the 9 natural asset stated, three natural assets were rated as highly available at both individual and community level. Paddy field, oil palm and stream and rivers are their natural assets as they have stayed in the surrounding ecosystem for a long time. Meanwhile forest, hills and lake were spotted as the common natural asset. The mean values of the natural asset are shown in Figure 3.

Also from Figure 3, it can be observed that more than 77% respondents were confident with the paddy field attraction. It is because most of the villages comprising Kg. Parit Haji Lebai Kadir, Kg. Parit Haji Ali, Kg. Parit Haji Taib, Kg. Parit Haji Kassim dan Kg. Simpang Lima are paddy farmers. The small-scale oil palm plantation is mentioned by most of the villagers' members. With 86.7% respondents assured that the oil palm provides originality of the village attraction whereby most of them can offer, the scenic landscape across villagers is perhaps a community touristic asset.

From this scenario, the natural asset has a close relation with the community. Being the locals, many mentioned that they have the capacity to offering such natural asset as 'tourism asset'. On the modern entry of modernization and agricultural related industries, only a small number of members stated that they have the capacity of offering the modern fishing industry. This is evidence as the village is one of the most suitable areas for Arowana farming, the natural setting endowed as the BV natural specialities.

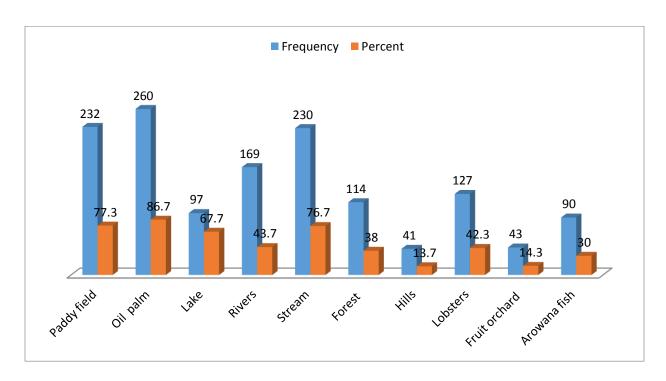


Figure 3. Natural Assets of Beriah Valley

Total 32.4% respondents mentioned that the lake of BV provides economic resources for the anglers. In addition, some of them provided tour boat to fish anglers, thus taking most of the opportunities that lake can offer. Meanwhile half of the total respondents mentioned rivers as attraction. Most villagers highlighted that the Kerian River crossing throughout various villages of Kampung Simpang Lima, Kampung Parit Haji Kassim dan Kampung Permatang Pasir, provides a scenic river attraction naturally. Added to this attraction, the anglers richly enjoyed lobsters, and fresh-water fish including kaloi, carp, and catfish.

One of the growing potential is the Arowana fish farming. According the villagers, Beriah Valley and Bukit Merah are the only habitat for this an ornamental fish. Renown as the 'Malaysian Gold' as well as 'Dragon fish' or 'Bony-tongued Dragon among the Chinese Arowana farmers, this asset can enhance ecotourism. However, due to the fact Arowana is sensitive to the changing environment especially with the presence of the human being; it has to be further researched to make it possible to the public or for tourism purposes.

Mapping of Man-made Touristic Assets

The second perspective this study undertook was the mapping of man-made asset at the village-sphere and Beriah Valley as a whole. Figure 4 shows the values of the overall man made touristic asset. It can observed that the traditional asset varies from the high cultural to the ordinary leisure of fishing.

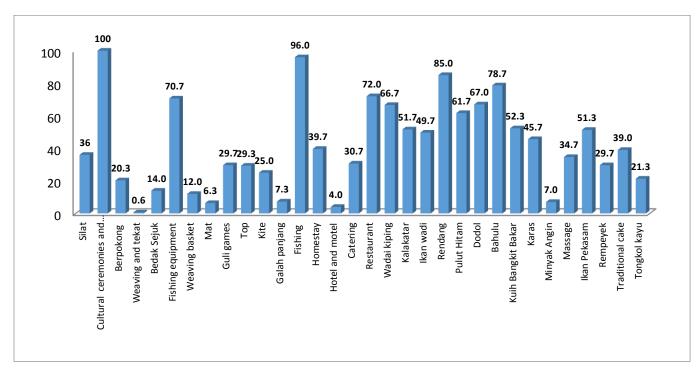


Figure 4. Man-made assets of Beriah Valley

Cultural attraction

There are selective cultural and heritage assets that can be positioned as the BV's tourism attraction; this includes the Silat or martial arts, ceremonies and Berpokong bayi. The Berpokong is a rare culture of the Banjar community. Comparatively the community emphasized on the silat or the martial arts as a dominating cultural attraction. A total 36% respondent agreed that silat or martial arts is the strength for the Kampung Batu 38, Kampung Changkat Bukit Lobak and Kg Bukit Merah. The Kumpulan Warisan Kampung Perlis, Bukit Merah has their specialties in the artistic drum beat and trumpets. The music played various rhythms, including traditional song, Arabic, modern and pop songs. This group has also performed the Bridal Silat, Reception Silat and Fire Snake performance. Because of this uniqueness the martial arts have all the potential to become the BV's tourism product.

Gastronomy

Food is frequently seen as an emblem or a symbol of local distinctiveness, and when tourists choose local food and beverage, they also taste elements of the visited area's local character (Bessière, 1998). In numerous tourism regions local gastronomy is a crucial part of the local heritage and regional food culture has been interpreted as a competitive advantage for local businesses. Gastronomy can play different roles in tourism, for example as a complementary produce, in rural tourism and as gourmet tourism (Hall and Sharples, 2003).

From the survey, it can be tracked that there are two major gastronomic specialties. One is the Banjar gastronomy and second, the Malay's gastronomy (Table 3). The Banjar food was popular among the three villagers comprising the Kampung Parit Lebai Kadir, Kampung Parit Haji Ali dan Kampung Parit Haji Taib. The food are the *wadai kiping*, *kalakatar dan wadi fish*.

Gastronomic		Available at your village					
		Yes			No		
		Freq	Percentage	Freq	Percentage		
The Banjar dominance	Wadai kiping	200	66.7	100	33.3		
	Kalakatar	155	51.7	145	48.3		
	Ikan wadi	149	49.7	151	50.3		
The Malay dominance							
-	Rendang	255	85.0	45	15.0		
	Pulut hitam	185	61.7	115	38.3		
	Dodol	201	67.0	99	33.3		
	Kuih bahulu	236	78.7	64	21.3		
	Kuih bangkit	157	52.3	143	47.7		
	Kuih karas	137	45.7	163	54.3		

Table 3. The Traditional Banjar and Malay Cuisine in Beriah Valley.

In terms of Wadai Kiping, shown in Table 3, a total 66.7% (200) respondents agreed that it is a unique feature of local cuisine of BV. Being a dessert for the Banjar tradition of serving food, all are made from the most available sources of the locals; glutinous rice, coconut milk, brown sugar and pandanus. Even though it is usually cooked on the special occasions, the provision creates a close link between the food, the place or destination and the people. Also

significant is the Kalakatar, as more than 50% of the respondents agreed it is a special cuisine made from the coconut, and highly served for gastronomic tourism. This is especially evidence in the Batu Lima, Parit Buntar as there are many coconut trees, making natural resources as the main ingredients for the cuisine.

Meanwhile for the Malay local cuisine, it is also significant among the villagers. As shown in Table 3, there exists a variety of Malay cuisines ranging from hot and spicy food - the Rendang to sweet cookies. From the villagers' responses, more than 85 percent agreed that Rendang is the speciality of BV, followed by the delicacies – Bahulu, Dodol and Kuih Bangkit with 85%, 78.7 and 67% respectively. All these specialities are no doubts related to the existence of the natural resources as paddy, coconut trees and the local ingredients. Added to this, since some of the locals are from Kedah, these gastronomic have similar traits of the northern influence. However with the combination of the Banjar community and the Kedahan, the gastronomic potentials are specially created in the locality of BV. This is definitely a unique experience that this Valley can offer to rural tourism (Figure 5).

Handicrafts

Handicraft was also mentioned by the villages of the BV. It is quite surprising that the Tekat as one of the special handicrafts in Perak was not mentioned as their niche activity. Instead, *Bedak Sejuk* or traditional cold powder, mat and baskets weaving are popular among visitors. A total 14% (42) respondent stated there are women who can specially prepare the traditional powder, and the productions are due to the availability of rice, rivers and swamps. The product is sold outside the Valley. As for their handicrafts, they had produced paper flowers, of which their talent and creativity help them to diversify for home decor and wedding flower gifts. In fact their unique paper flowers have received many outside orders recently.

Traditional Games

Traditional games are also seen as one of a niche tourism product in BV. Based on Figure 4, a total 29.7% (89) of respondents said their children are actively playing marble game while 29.3% (88) said there have been enjoying the top spinning as the kg traditional games. However, as for kite flying, 25% (75) of respondents agreed that there are still young people who knew and played this game. Comparatively only a small number of respondents 7.3% (22) mentioned that their children had the excitement of playing *Galah Panjang*. Nevertheless, many suggested that this game can be included in the tour package, an outdoor recreation that can savour the villagers' excitement in the past.



Figure 5. Traditional Gastronomy of Beriah Valley

Mapping of Community Involvement

In this study, the community involvement is also been asked, and of the total respondents, they opined as depicted in Table 3. Overall the community are involved in several stages of tourism development. From the three stages of tourism development, the planning stage showed the average mean value of 3.508, followed by the development and potential deliverable or service provision stage at 3.387 and 3.458. As for the planning stage, the community stated that they had their participation felt at the participation of the tourism development followed by "given a chance to participate" as well as in a higher order of planning such as blue print and action plan.

Table 3: Community responses on their existing and potential involvement in Tourism

Level of Involvement	Involvement opportunity spectrum	Mean	Std. Deviation
mvorvement	involvement opportunity spectrum	Wear	Stat Deviation
	I participated in tourism development in this area.	3.66	0.887
	I am given a chance to take part in tourism development		
	in this area.	3.64	0.906
	I have participated in the formation of blueprint for		
	tourism development in this area.	3.45	1.015
	I attended for every meeting and discussion about		
	tourism development in this area.	3.43	1.021
	I am actively participating in the development of tourism		
	strategy in this area.	2.26	0.00
		3.36	0.98
Planning	Average mean value	3.508	
	I am engaged to assess the on-going tourism		
	development.	3.44	0.929
	I have given my opinion on tourism development	3.11	0.525
	implementation in this area.		0.044
		3.41	0.944
	I am engaged in making decision for tourism	2.21	0.001
Development	development in this area.	3.31	0.981
process	Average mean value	3.387	
	I am interested to get involved in accommodation services.	3.6	0.925
	I am interested to provide offering of tourism activities	3.52	0.894
	to tourist.		
	I am interested to get involved as a transportation provider.	3.41	0.986
Potential	I am interested to get involved in catering service.	3.38	0.948
Delivering tourism	I am interested to get involved as a tourist guide.	3.38	0.973
services	Average mean value	3.458	

Meanwhile in the developmental process, the community involvements are generally felt at the second dominant roles. Among their tasks is the on-going development process as well as the opportunity of providing ideas and plan for tourism related activities and programme. The last stage is the potential provision of the tourism related activities. The villagers felt that they are interested in providing services in accommodation or homestay programme followed by the transportation providers and the least is the tour guide.

Mapping of Tourism Assets and Activities at the Village-sphere

From the above results, the study took further opportunities of venturing what should be the alternatives when the touristic assets are measured at the village's sphere. Secondly, it also assessed what would be the community involvement at the planning, development and provision of the product or services level? Table 4 displays the results of the touristic assets at the village sphere. In measuring the touristic asset, the study used the range of village's scores as 0-20 is very low; Low -21-40; Moderate -41-60; High -61-80; and Very high with the range 81-100.

From the results, three villages had shown the dominating elements comprising the combination, of natural, cultural and man-made asset. The villages are the Kg Parit Hj Kassim, Kg Bukit Merah and Kg Lebai Kadir. As for the Kg Parit Hj Kassim, there exists 9 touristic asset at the range of high to very high potentials. In fact their involvement in tourism has been perceived actively involvement in planning, development and provision of services. Meanwhile the two villages that have shown a growing potential are the Kg Bukit Merah and Kg. Lebai Kadir and, and these villagers have achieved moderate to high touristic assets. In fact both villages were ranked Very high and High in terms of participation in tourism development. Based on the preferences of the village involvement in tourism, they seemed to prefer both homestay and kampong stay compared to only providing kampong-stay. While other villages prefer kg stay as their resources seems to be viewed at both range -very low and low.

The study also viewed the touristic asset according to the activities of these three villages. From the data of Kg Parit Hj Kassim, it is proposed that this village act as the centre of rural tourism, showcasing all dimensions of natural and man – made, although, they can create diverse their attraction and involvement compared to the other villages such as Kg Lebai Kadir and Kg Bukit Merah. The activities that these villagers can offer ranged from the gastronomy, leisure and accommodation. However, it can be seen that Kg Parit Hj Kassim has many specialities of the Banjar community. As for the Kg Bukit Merah, their activities can be fine-tuned towards fishing and anglers and Malay community specialities.

However, of the three villages, the communities seem to highlight the constraints of making their villages as the dominating rural tourism. Among others are the 1) Lack of respect for the rural communities' knowledge of local nature and man-made attractions 2) Perceptions held by existing communities and industry who control tourism 3) Lack of understanding of the value of these assets in rural tourism 4) Need for education and mind set change to bring new skills to communities (and to existing state bureaucracies) 5) Need for successful pioneering 'role models' to inspire others, especially among the 3 dominating villagers.

		Batu 38	Changkat Lobak	Bukit Merah	Lebai Kadir	Permatang Pasir	Pt. Hj. Kassim	Pt. Hj. Ali	Pt. Hj. Taib	Simpang Lima
Natural resources and Outdoors	Kg visits, boat ride, fishing, sightseeing, paddy planting, menggodak ikan lake, rivers and streams, forest, hills, lobsters, orchards, and Arowana fish	Low	Low	High	Moderate	Moderate	Very High	Low	Very Low	Low
Culture and heritage	Silat, traditional dance, folklore, events, berpokong bayi.	High	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Very High	Moderate	Low	Low
Handicrafts	Weaving, powder, fishing equipment, baskets and mats.	Low	Low	High	Very High	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Low
Traditional games	Guli, gasing, Kite Flying, galah panjang, fishing	Moderate	Very Low	High	Moderate	Low	Very High	Low	Very Low	Low
Accommodation	Homestay, hotel or motel	Very Low	Low	Very High	Moderate	Low	Very High	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low
Gastronomic services	Catering, food premises/ outlets	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Low	Very High	Low	Very Low	Very Low
Traditional food	Wadai kiping, kalakatar, ikan wadi, rendang, pulut hitam, dodol, kuih bahulu, kuih bangkit, kuih karas	Low	Low	Moderate	High	Low	Very High	Moderate	Very Low	Low
Traditional medicinals	Traditional aliments, traditional massage	Low	Low	Very High	Moderate	Very Low	Very High	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low
Small Scale Industries	Traditional cookies, wood stools, ikan pekasam, rempeyek	Low	Low	High	High	Low	Very High	Very Low	Very Low	Low
Local knowledge	Kg style Cooking, Rewang, Nasi Appolo and Woodcarving	Moderate	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate	Very Low	Moderate
	Overall Involvement	Moderate	Low	Very High	High	Low	Very High	Low	Very Low	Low

Table 5: Touristic Asset according Villages

Aggata		Kg. Bul	kit Merah	Kg. Lebai Kadir		Kg. Pt. Hj. Kassim		
Assets	Activities	Level of Assets	Activities	Level of Assets	Activities	Level of Assets	Activities	
Natural resources and Outdoors	Kg visits, boat ride, fishing, sightseeing, paddy planting, menggodak ikan lake, rivers and streams, forest, hills, lobsters, orchards, and Arowana fish	High	Kg visits, boat ride, fishing recreational activities, orchards	Moderate	Kg visits, fishing, sightseeing, paddy planting, anglers	Very High	Paddy field experience, oil palm, river excursion and lobsters, Kg Visit, rivers and streams	
Culture and heritage	Silat, traditional dance, folklore, events, berpokong bayi.	Moderate	Silat and kg local ceremonies	Moderate and		Very High	Wedding ceremonies, Berpokong Bayi	
Handicrafts	Weaving, powder, fishing equipment, baskets and mats.	High	Traditional powder, fishing apparatus	Very high Weaving, baskets and mats, fishing apparatus		Moderate	Fishing equipments	
Traditional games	Guli, gasing, Kite Flying, galah panjang, fishing	High	Fishing and anglers paradise	Moderate	Moderate Traditional games		Guli, gasing, Kite Flying, galah panjang, fishing	
Accommodation	Homestay, hotel or motel	Very high	Homestay	Moderate	Homestays	Very high	Homestay and kampong-stay	
Gastronomic services	Catering, food premises/ outlets	High	Food Catering, food premises/ outlets	Moderate	Food catering	Very high	Food Catering, premises/ outlets	
Traditional food	Wadai kiping, kalakatar, ikan wadi, rendang, pulut hitam, dodol, kuih bahulu, kuih bangkit, kuih karas	Moderate	Traditional Malay cuisine	High	Banjar traditional cuisine	Very high	The Banjar traditional cuisine	
Traditional medicinal	Traditional aliments, traditional massage	Very high	Traditional Massage	Moderate	Traditional Massage	Very high	Traditional Massage	
Small Scale Industries	Traditional cookies, wood stools, ikan pekasam, rempeyek	High	Kuih tradisional, Ikan pekasam	High	Kuih tradisional, Wood carving	Very high	Traditional cookies, Wood carving and Ikan Pekasam	
Local knowledge	Kg style Cooking, Rewang, Nasi Appolo and Woodcarving	Moderate	Kg style Cooking, Rewang, Nasi Appolo	Moderate	Kg style Cooking, Rewang, Nasi Appolo	High	Rewang/ memasak cara kampong, Nasi Appolo	
	Proposed Mechanism for Development	Homestay and I	Campung stay	Homestay		Homestay and Kampung stay		

5. CONCLUSION

This article proposes matters relating to natural and man-made (and infrastructures) assets in rural tourism development. Natural and cultural assets are fundamental factors in attracting tourists to specific areas and communities should be consulted at the expense of their village-sphere consent. This consensus will ensure any proposals for community based rural tourism are from the community's ideation, and they are due to the understanding of the availability and potentials of the assets. In this initiative, it is found that the locals tend to understand and accepted the collective tourism products. They can perhaps join and actively be involved as an individual and community's program level due to their assets, be they from natural attraction to the man-made attraction. In this regard the Beriah Valley can ensure that community participation will not exclude those with limited assets.

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