



**STIMULATING SDGS IN RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT- THE
MEDIATION EFFECT OF MOTIVATION, OPPORTUNITY AND
ABILITY IN THE RELATIONSHIP OF PERCEPTION FOR TOURISM
DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

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Abstract

Tourism is increasingly becoming a strategic tool for rural areas worldwide to achieve sustainability and stimulate economic growth. This research explores the application of the motivation, opportunity, and ability (MOA) model in rural tourism development in Kampung Kuala Juru, a fishing village in Bukit Tengah, Seberang Prai, Penang, to promote sustainability and economic opportunities for the B40 communities. A mixed-methods approach was utilised, including the distribution of 100 questionnaires to the local community to assess the impact of the MOA model on their participation in rural tourism development. Interviews with key informants were conducted to corroborate the findings. The research revealed that motivation and opportunity do not mediate the relationship between the community's perception of tourism development and their participation; however, ability does. This indicates that the community in Kampung Kuala Juru is more likely to participate irrespective of their motivation or opportunities. Furthermore, the results from the mixed methods suggest that tourism products and activities in Kampung Kuala Juru have the potential to enhance rural tourism development with the support of local residents and relevant tourism stakeholders, thereby contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and creating economic opportunities for the B40 community in the study area.

Keywords: Community Participation, MOA Model, Perception of Tourism Development, Rural Tourism, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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INTRODUCTION

Penang, a northern state in Malaysia, was ranked the second-best travel destination, with development predominantly concentrated on Penang Island (Penang State Government, 2019). To address the issue of tourist concentration, Dr. Neil Khor, Think City's chief operating officer, proposed displacing crowds to Butterworth (Mok, 2016). The Penang Tourism Master Plan 2021-2030 emphasises the need for balanced tourism development between Penang Island and Seberang Perai, advocating for civil participation to ensure the sustainability of tourism development (Penang State Government, 2019). The plan endorses community empowerment and locals' acquisition of managerial skills to align with the state's Structure Plan 2030 goals (Penang State Government, 2019). This research supports state government objectives, contributing to the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030's emphasis on the social well-being of the B40 group (Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2019). The study aims to uplift the B40 community, potentially contributing to national progress and social welfare.

In rural tourism development, stakeholders must actively involve communities in decision-making and planning processes. Residents possess valuable local knowledge (Lo & Janta, 2020), which enhances their sense of ownership and enables autonomous management. Community participation in decision-making has been shown to improve the success of tourism planning (Roxas et al., 2020; Purnomo et al., 2020). This research examines the influence of motivation, opportunity, and ability (MOA) on the relationship between the perception of tourism development and participation in Kampung Kuala Juru, located in Bukit Tengah. The initiative aims to promote sustainability and economic opportunities for the B40 communities, aligning with the state's objective to expand tourism in Seberang Perai. The MOA model evaluates community interest, ensuring active participation and successful planning, which are crucial for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Rural Tourism Development

Rural tourism is increasingly recognised as a catalyst for global economic development, contributing to a country's overall prosperity (Shahbaz et al., 2019). Focusing on rural areas inhabited by local communities improves living standards and boosts the economy through increased Foreign Exchange Earnings (An & Alarcon, 2020; Fong et al., 2014). Achieving these objectives requires the sustainable use of tourism resources and active community participation. Tourism development should effectively harness resources while ensuring that local communities benefit socioeconomically and environmentally (Nguyen et al., 2020). Emphasising civil participation in planning and implementation is a core principle of the Tourism Master Plan, aligning with the Penang Structure Plan

2030's emphasis on empowering local populations (Penang State Government, 2019). The relationship between rural tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is well-established, promoting economic growth, poverty alleviation, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability (UNWTO, 2019).

Park and Yoon (2011) emphasise that local residents are key to sustainable rural tourism development. Their knowledge of the region is paramount (Wijijayanti et al., 2020; Tseng et al., 2019). Effective community involvement enables locals to promote their culture, secure economic gains, and protect the environment (Masud et al., 2017). Community perspectives significantly influence the success of rural tourism (Ryu et al., 2020; Falak et al., 2014), enhancing tolerance towards tourism among developers and policymakers (Setokoe & Ramukumba, 2019).

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Motivation-Opportunity-Ability (MOA) Model

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established by the United Nations address global challenges such as poverty and environmental sustainability. This review examines the intersection of the SDGs with the Motivation-Opportunity-Ability (MOA) framework, which is crucial for promoting sustainable behavior within organisations. The SDGs provide a roadmap for aligning organisational strategies with global priorities (United Nations, 2015), while the MOA framework emphasises that behavior change depends on motivation, opportunity, and ability (Fogg, 2009).

Motivation is linked to the alignment of individual and organisational values with SDG principles (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Opportunity encompasses external factors that facilitate sustainable behavior (Michie et al., 2020). Ability emphasises the importance of empowering individuals with the necessary skills for sustainable practices (Bandura, 1986).

This research aligns with several SDGs: creating economic opportunities (SDG 1), promoting decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), enhancing quality education (SDG 4), and developing sustainable communities (SDG 11). Improving the status of the B40 community can significantly boost the economy, ensuring that residents' needs are met while conserving the environment (SDG 9).

Community's Perception towards Tourism Development

Community perception of tourism development is essential for its success (Nguyen & Rahman, 2023). Sustainable tourism must balance current needs with the preservation of resources, environmental protection, and respect for socio-cultural aspects. Positive perceptions, shaped by benefits such as cultural

preservation and improved living standards, foster community support, as social exchange theory suggests (Pimid et al., 2023). Understanding these perceptions enables authorities to prioritise strategies that empower communities, ensuring sustainability and minimising conflicts (Gannon et al., 2021).

Motivation, Opportunity and Ability in the Development of Rural Tourism Development

The Motivation, Opportunity, and Ability (MOA) framework, originally proposed by MacInnis et al. (1991), is applied to rural tourism development to assess how these factors influence community engagement (Hung et al., 2011). Motivation drives interest, opportunity reflects external factors, and ability reflects knowledge and competence. In tourism, these elements shape community involvement by emphasising the benefits, opportunities, and capabilities for participation. Incorporating additional factors, as suggested by Latip et al. (2018), ensures a comprehensive approach to sustainable tourism development.

Motivation in Community Participation

Whether intrinsic or extrinsic, motivation propels individuals toward goals, as Tang et al. (2022) noted. Latip et al. (2018) proposed that community motivation fosters support for tourism development when perceived benefits outweigh costs. This support hinges on the community's perception of positive impacts (Chang, 2018). Xu et al. (2022) view motivation as a mental stimulus directing behavior. Similarly, Rogos et al. (2021) and Jepson et al. (2014) regard motivation as a significant force driving behavior. Motivation precedes decision-making in participation (Jepson et al., 2014), and encouragement from tourism planners is also vital (Jepson et al., 2014).

Opportunity in Community Participation

The literature on community participation emphasises the significance of opportunity, which entails creating circumstances for community involvement in tourism development (Latip et al., 2018; Rogos et al., 2021). Rogos et al. (2021) highlight the role of political affiliation and social standards in providing such opportunities. Initiatives by tourism planners to create platforms for community involvement are crucial (Jepson et al., 2014; Rogos et al., 2021). However, Ahn and Bessiere (2022), Gohori and van der Merwe (2022), Tian et al. (2023), and Wang and Wall (2005) suggest a tradition of top-down decision-making, particularly in developing countries, which disempowers indigenous communities and restricts their access to opportunities and empowerment (Jepson et al., 2014; Zielinski et al., 2018).

Ability in Community Participation

The ability component of the MOA model depicts the awareness, knowledge, and access to necessary information related to tourism development (Lubis et al., 2020). Lee and Jan (2019) reported that communities could benefit from the tourism industry by increasing their awareness and improving their capabilities. However, the participation of indigenous communities may be obstructed by a lack of awareness and knowledge. This issue has been discussed extensively in the literature (Aref, 2011; Cardenas et al., 2015; Chili & Ngxongo, 2017; Kala & Bagri, 2018; Rasoolimanesh & Jaafar, 2016; Setokoe & Ramukumba, 2022). Productive participation by the community, leading to extraordinary results, can only be accomplished with improved education on tourism development mechanisms. Consequently, the community will be prepared and ready to participate in tourism projects (Latip et al., 2018). Otherwise stated, the community may still lack the ability to participate, even if motivated by available opportunities.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

This multidimensional study investigates the mechanisms and relationships between key variables in tourism development and community engagement. The framework synthesises concepts from social psychology, tourism studies, and community development, with a focus on the Perception of Tourism Development (PoTD) and Community Participation (CP). Motivation (MOT) drives individual participation, opportunity (OPP) represents external conditions, and ability (ABLTY) encompasses skills and knowledge. The research hypothesises the following:

- H1: Positive perceptions of tourism development enhance motivation to participate, whereas negative perceptions necessitate stronger motivations.
- H2: Motivation alone is insufficient without opportunities; a lack of infrastructure or information impedes participation.
- H3: Even with opportunities, participation is constrained without the requisite skills or knowledge; high ability facilitates participation regardless of motivation or opportunities.

The framework proposes interventions targeting motivation, opportunity, and ability, such as awareness campaigns, skills development, infrastructure improvements, and policy reforms. These insights are intended to promote sustainable and inclusive tourism development for policymakers, local communities, and developers.

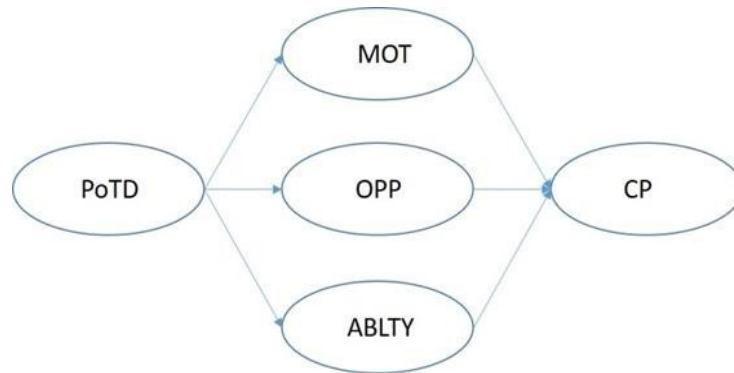


Figure 1: Proposed Research Model – Mediation Effect of MOA in the Relationship of Perception of Tourism Development and Community Participation
Source: Researcher (2024)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A survey was conducted in Kampung Kuala Juru, Bukit Tengah, to assess the potential for rural tourism. Although the area is rich in resources, it has been underexplored in tourism studies. The survey aimed to examine the relationship between the community's perception of tourism development and their participation, with motivation, opportunity, and ability acting as mediators. Out of a population of 400, 100 questionnaires were distributed, employing a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). This scale was selected for its efficiency and its capacity to minimise bias (Chyung et al., 2017). Additionally, interviews with key stakeholders in tourism provided further insights, offering an extended understanding of the survey questions. Descriptive analysis was employed to summarise the data, utilising measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode) and variability (standard deviation, minimum, maximum, kurtosis, skewness). Mediation analysis using the Hayes Process Macro was conducted to investigate the mediating effects of motivation, opportunity, and ability on the relationship between community perception and participation in tourism development.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents' Demographic Background

Table 1: Demographic Data of Respondents

Demographic Profile		Frequency	Percent	Mode Class
Gender	Male	45	45	Female
	Female	55	55	
Age Group	18 - 24 years old	19	19	45-54 years old
	25 - 34 years old	20	20	
	35 - 44 years old	20	20	
	45 - 54 years old	22	22	
	55 - 64 years old	15	15	
	65 years old and above	4	4	
Race	Malay	100	100	Malay
Occupation	Student	12	12	Factory
	Fisherman	20	20	Worker and
	Factory Worker	22	22	Unemployed
	Civil Servant	7	7	
	Self-employed	7	7	
	Unemployed	22	22	
	Retired	7	7	
	Others	3	3	
Average Monthly Income	Less than RM 2,500	81	81	Less than
	RM 2,500 - RM 3,169	4	4	RM 2,500
	RM 3,170 - RM 3,696	2	2	
	RM 3,970 - RM 4,849	2	2	
	Others	11	11	

Mediation Analysis Results

This study employed mediation analysis using Hayes Process Macro. Table 1 presents the summary of the analysis of this research.

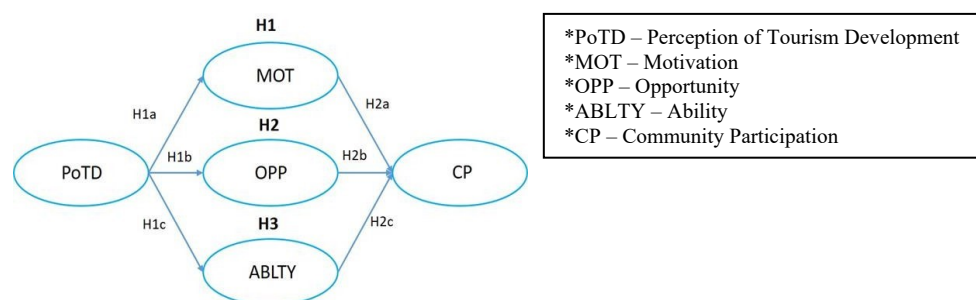


Figure 2: Conceptual Diagram

Table 2: Coefficient Analysis Summary

Relationship	Coefficient	S.E	t-statistics	p-value	Conclusion
PoTD -> MOT	0.2347	0.0709	3.3096	0.0013	Significant relationship H1a is supported
PoTD -> OPP	0.2917	0.0839	3.4756	0.0008	Significant relationship H1b is supported
PoTD -> ABLTY	0.3936	0.0775	5.0803	0.0000	Significant relationship H1c is supported
MOT -> CP	0.0549	0.1529	0.3595	0.7200	Not significant relationship H2a is not supported
OPP -> CP	0.3126	0.1267	2.4661	0.0155	Significant relationship H2b is supported
ABLTY -> CP	0.3516	0.1298	2.7092	0.0080	Significant relationship H2c is supported
PoTD -> CP	0.3021	0.0940	3.2143	0.0018	Significant relationship H3 is supported

Source: Researcher (2024)

Table 3: Mediation Analysis Summary

Total Effect (PoTD -> CP)	Direct Effect (PoTD -> CP)	Relationship	Indirect Effect	Confidence Interval		t-statistics	Conclusion
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
0.3021 (p=0.018)	0.0597 (p=0.5188)	H1: PoTD ->MOT ->CP	0.0129	-0.0900	0.1189	0.2549	No mediation H1 is not supported
		H2: PoTD ->OPP ->CP	0.0912	-0.0060	0.2399	1.4227	No mediation H2 is not supported
		H3: PoTD ->ABTY ->CP	0.1384	0.0264	0.2866	2.0906	Full mediation H3 is supported

Source: Researcher (2024)

Table 2 summarises the coefficient analysis of the relationships between Perception of Tourism Development (PoTD), Motivation (MOT), Opportunity (OPP), Ability (ABTY), and Community Participation (CP). Most relationships are significant ($p < .05$), except for the relationship between motivation and community participation. Table 3 presents the mediation analysis, showing that Hypotheses 1 and 2 are not supported, while Hypothesis 3 is fully supported, indicating that ABTY mediates the relationship between PoTD and CP.

Hypothesis 1 is rejected, revealing a lack of motivation among locals for engaging in tourism development, despite its potential for sustainable income. Interviews highlighted concerns regarding business expansion, hiring, and potential financial losses, with some entrepreneurs expressing contentment with their current situation. Additionally, reliance on government aid contributed to

the reluctance to participate. This finding contrasts with Jepson et al.'s (2013) research, which links motivation to awareness of tourism's benefits.

Hypothesis 2, which proposed that opportunity mediates the PoTD-CP relationship, is also rejected. Locals perceive inadequate support from authorities and view their village as unsuitable for large tourist groups due to cramped conditions and river pollution, which negatively impacts local products. Furthermore, they noted a lack of necessary infrastructure and facilities.

Hypothesis 3 is supported, indicating that ability mediates the PoTD-CP relationship. Positive perceptions of tourism can enhance the community's abilities, thereby driving active participation. Interviews revealed that tourism development could improve access to resources, training, and education, facilitating skill development and increasing preparedness for tourism involvement. Additionally, social expectations were found to reinforce participation.

Insights from the Stakeholders

This study engaged key stakeholders in tourism development in Kuala Juru, including the state assemblyman, district councillor, village representatives, local entrepreneurs, and the community. Stakeholders emphasised the significance of community involvement in tourism planning to highlight the area's uniqueness and preserve its character. They stressed that locals should serve as tour guides to uphold the area's distinctive identity and foster responsible, community-driven development. One respondent noted, "Community participation in the development of tourism products is crucial to prepare the community to accept the presence of outsiders (tourists) and to promote local tourism products to them."

Table 2 presents detailed offences under relevant sections and the enforcement actions taken during the year 2020. This table reveals that the four highest numbers of enforcements are related to the collected sums and account matters. Therefore, the conclusion for 2020 is that issues related to fee collection and its accounts exhibited the highest rate of non-compliance, leading to the enforcement actions taken.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the evaluation of the MOA model in the context of rural tourism development in Kampung Kuala Juru, Bukit Tengah, Seberang Prai, Penang, offers valuable insights into community participation and sustainability within B40 communities. The study elucidates critical factors influencing participation, identifying motivation as a key determinant. The findings suggest a potential lack of motivation among local communities, emphasising the need to address underlying factors that hinder their engagement in tourism initiatives.

Furthermore, the rejection of the second hypothesis indicates limitations in current opportunities for the community, requiring a comprehensive assessment and enhancement aligned with community aspirations. On a positive note, the support for the third hypothesis underscores the role of ability in mediating the relationship between perceptions of tourism development and community participation. Positive perceptions can enhance local abilities, highlighting the potential for capacity-building programs to empower communities. This research advocates for a holistic approach to address motivation, ability, and opportunities to promote inclusive, sustainable, and economically rewarding rural tourism development in B40 communities.

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DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

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