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Dimensions of Public Participation in Planning for Sustainable Tourism in Sungkai Wildlife Reserve: the Stakeholders' Perspectives

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Abstract

Public participation can be any process that directly engages the public in decision-making and gives full consideration to public input in making that decision. This study determines the stakeholders' opinions on public participation and dimensions of public participation for sustainable tourism planning in Sungkai Wildlife Reserve from the stakeholders' perspectives. This study uses descriptive research design that employs cross-sectional study. Questionnaires were distributed to 90 respondents that were from PERHILITAN Kuala Lumpur, PERHILITAN Sungkai Wildlife Reserve Perak, Sungkai Villages Committee Members and few academicians using the cluster sampling process. The overall public participation in Sungkai Wildlife Reserve is moderate and expected to improve in years to come. In addition to that, there are four dimensions that contributed to the success of public participation such as process, product, situational and institutional. The study suggests that the collaboration between stakeholders is highly needed for sustainable planning and development decision-making process.

Keywords: Public participation, Sustainable Tourism, Sustainable Planning and Development, Sungkai Wildlife Reserve

Introduction

Sustainable tourism aims to ensure that development brings a positive experience for local people, tourism companies and the tourists themselves (Yazdi, 2012). According to Moberg (2016), participation in power. Participation is a power that group of people possessed towards successful, hence they need to have a cooperation which it is really important to highlight how their relationships and interactions shape the participatory process and its outcomes. The purpose of the study is to investigate stakeholders' perspectives on the dimensions of public participation in planning for sustainable tourism in Sungkai Wildlife Reserve.

As stated by Moberg (2016), the increase in participation highlights the connections between the degree of power, inclusion in decision-making depending on the empowerment is seen as an individual or in a collective process. The scope of power and capacity to make good decisions also use of the influence are the abilities that connected to the effectiveness of the cooperation. Thus, the goal for the participatory process is not only empowerment but comes in many shapes and not all of them lead to empowerment.

Participation in the planning of wildlife resources to design new policies or sustainable conservation strategies needs comprehension towards stakeholders' attitudes towards conservation and existing policies (Arpacik & Sari, 2017). According to Dangi & Jamal (2016), it is challenging to accomplish a capacity building which is to empower the stakeholders in governance matters, long-term environmental conservation and community well-being towards wider sustainability.□

Sustainable tourism is alike with ecotourism in terms of objectives, goals, economic and rural development (Norajlin, Nazrin & Mohd Salleh, 2012). According to Nair & Thomas (2013), tourism development plans for economic and sustainable tourism are one of the current challenges of tourism development in developing countries. Many management and government around in the world is now adopting the principle of sustainable development and tourism planning as their goal (Arni, Khairil Wahidin and Zaiton, 2015). The absence of practicing sustainable guidelines will affect the environment due to lack of proper sustainable practice (Norajlin, Nazrin & Mohd Salleh, 2012). According to Moberg (2016), the main concern of conservation and management is that whether the participatory process reaches their goals.

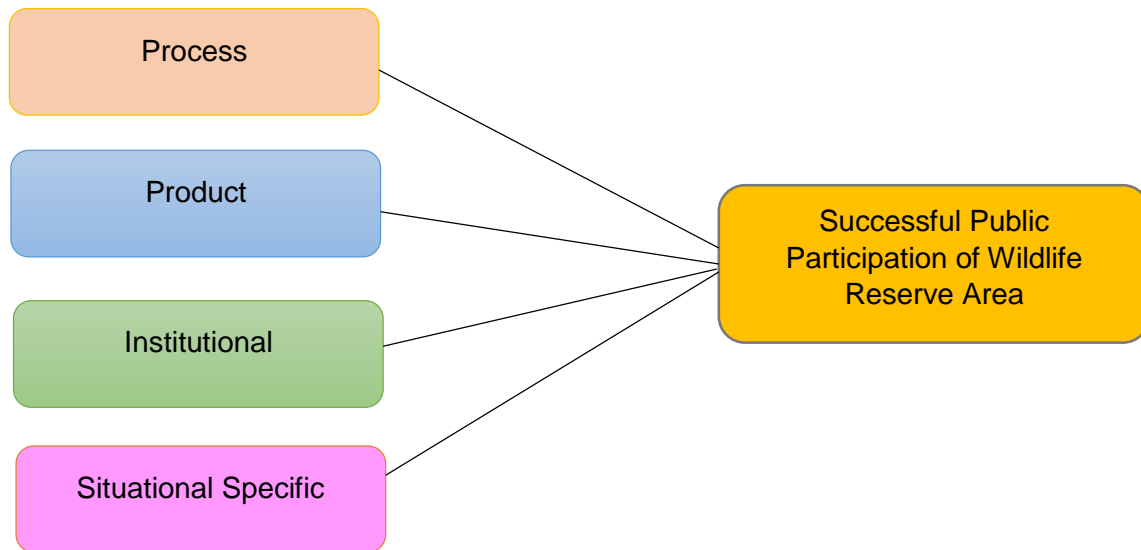
Most of the previous researchers have focused on the causes and effects of sustainable development in the protected areas which is very general. However, it is found that there were not many kinds of literature specifically on sustainable planning, approaches from stakeholders' perspectives themselves. In the past of three decades, there is a growing literature on sustainable tourism and community-based tourism in tourism field studies, however, there is no attempt to comprehensively consider to the overall goal of sustainability in tourism development that looks toward management-level responsibilities (Dangi & Tazim, 2016). The in-depth understanding of sustainable tourism planning from stakeholders' perspectives is still infancy, thus further research should have been explored and discovered. Indirectly, this research will help the certain organization in tourism industry or authorities in Malaysia to understand the sustainable planning in protected areas and how to improve for the better industry in the future. □

It is evident from the foregoing enumeration of the gaps in the studies conducted so far that there are a lot of research studies mainly focusing on the general investigation of sustainable tourism, ecotourism, and cultural heritage tourism in Malaysia. However, this present study conducted differs from this backdrop. It includes the empirical study on the stakeholders' perspectives towards the planning to sustain the protected areas, which is specific to a case study of Sungkai Wildlife Reserve. This research attempts to achieve specific objectives as follows:

- i. To determine the stakeholders' opinions on public participation in Sungkai Wildlife Reserve

- ii. To identify the factors and dimensions of successful public participation in Sungkai Wildlife Reserve according to stakeholders' perspective

Framework of the Research



Dimensions of Public Participation

Figure 1: Framework of the Dimensions of Public Participation in Planning for Sustainable Tourism in Sungkai Wildlife Reserve: The Stakeholders' Perspectives
Adapted from Factors that Promote and Constraint Bridging: A Summary and Analysis of The Literature by Steven L. Yaffee, Julia M. Wondolleck and Steven Lippman (1997)

Significance of the Study

The primordial purpose of this study will be covered in three perspectives which are towards the industry, organization, and academican. It is believed that the findings of this proposed study will contribute to a better understanding of sustainable tourism in stakeholders' perspectives. This knowledge is important as it examines the opinions on planning, the factors, and dimensions of successful stakeholders' participation of protected areas in Malaysia. ☐

Knowledge Generation

Theoretically, this study will help organizations and learning institutions, especially in the tourism industry to understand better sustainable planning as a part of their learning. In addition, the learning institutions, students and lecturers globally can use this study as references for their future researches on sustainable tourism and development. Apart from that, this study will assist the

tourism stakeholder such as tourists and the local community to increase their knowledge and to know what the stakeholders' views towards the particular protected areas.☐

Professional Application

The outcome from this study will be practically beneficial to help the government and the authorities in Malaysia to decide where to allocate resources and to develop the protected areas, especially in a tourism destination. Furthermore, the protected area's authorities such as Federal Department of Wildlife and National Parks, Johor National Parks Corporation, Perak State Parks Corporation, and state forestry departments can enforce better planning and management towards sustainable tourism especially to all protected areas in Malaysia. Moreover, Sungkai Wildlife Reserve will be made aware and recognition of their importance in public participation in the future.

Literature Review

Public Participation in Sustainable Tourism

Public participation is a process that directly engages the public in decision-making and gives full consideration to public input in making that decision (the United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2018). According to annual reports of Malaysia's Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP), there is an increasing number of visitors to the protected areas in Malaysia in the past 10 years which proves that nature-based tourism such as the need for facilities and infrastructure are greatly demanded. The efforts to develop a best practice that evaluates the environmental and social impacts of travel rises as there are increasing of the conservation issues. Thus, a lot of efforts is carried out by the government and stakeholders to intensify ecotourism value by improving the planning, management and marketing techniques (Norajlin et al., 2012). King & Nair (2013) stated that there is large-scale habitat transformation in Malaysia to amplify the ecotourism experience which leads to conservation projects, local community's involvement, protection of extinct species, non-consumptive use of wildlife and further effective planning and management. Public views or public participation is important in sustainable development. According to Sara et al. (2015), providing services that can regulate both ecological conservation and income generation from parks is an effective approach to interpret and integrate conservation goals, tourist' preferences of nature, infrastructure and other attributes of protected areas. Thus, Malaysia's park authorities can minimize any possible contradiction with conservation goals such as enhance facilities for visitors.☐

According to Mak, Cheung & Hui (2017), for the element of sustainable tourism, it is important to include local communities' opinions and views in tourism planning and development. The concept of public participation act as root ineffective developments since early 1950 (De Kadt,1982, in Marzuki, Hay & James 2012). The involvement and participation of stakeholders in a community is considered the one key to sustainable development of tourism, therefore it is crucial to have a clear understanding of stakeholders' attitudes and interests to the planning and management of sustainable tourism (Byrd, Bosley, & Dronberger, 2009, as cited in Mak, Cheung & Hui, 2017). To improve the quality of tourism plans, protecting tourism resources and balancing the multiple benefits from tourism, the implementation of effective public participation processes is a very important element (Tosun & Timothy, 2003, as cited in De Kadt,1982, in Marzuki, Hay & James 2012). The processes and outcomes of planning, policy, and decision-making are expected to be more

efficient, equitable, and sustainable when there is an effective public participation (Krishnaswamy, 2005).

Factors and Dimensions towards Successful Public Participation

Based on the website United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), described that people who want to develop sustainable tourism or to make tourism in a region more sustainable, therefore they need to realize and accept that they are acting against the background of market mechanisms and profit-driven entrepreneurship, especially those who have their main focus of work on non-profit activities, such as protected area managers, government institutions or NGOs, and that want to actively participate in the development of tourism.

Planning for sustainable tourism development actually means to environmental conservation planning and as such involving a mix of research activities and analysis initially to the decision for deciding the orientation of the development (Najdeska & Rakicevik, 2012). It is said that approaches for integrating protected areas with their surroundings should be categorized within two main approaches which are area-oriented and process-oriented approaches (Du, Penabaz-Wiley, Njeru, & Kinoshita, 2015). When introducing new concepts in a national legal framework such as the participatory approach, broad principles and general obligations may have a highly innovative impact on the design of legal frameworks on sustainable wildlife management (Morgera & Wingard, 2009).

Contributing to the local economies and carrying natural sources into the next generations is one of the important responsibilities of wildlife areas (Arpacik, Sari & Baskaya, 2017). According to Morgera & Wingard (2009), the law is an essential tool to attain sustainable wildlife management. Thus, to have principles for developing sustainable management is necessary. There are 4 dimensions or factors that are identified by Steven L. Yaffee, Julia M. Wondolleck and Steven Lippman (1997).

Process Dimension

According to Yaffee, Wondolleck & Lippman (1997), process dimensions or process-related factors play a critical role in explains how collaborations are structured and conducted to foster successful outcomes which the related factors are an inclusive problem-solving process, information sharing, joint, and process management. As stated Yaffee, Wondolleck & Lippman (1997), collaborative processes need to go through several stages of decision making which are problem-setting, direction-setting, and implementation. Problem-setting involves participants in the addressed common problem of the issue. Direction setting is where participants contributing their understanding of their common interests or purposes that allow them to have an agreement such as options by participants, the suggestion by outside experts and facilitator or third parties' drafts. For implementation, participants must get support for the agreement and it is challenging as other constituents that did not participate did not have the same understanding. Through the process, participants' collaboration has the chances to share information, conduct joint fact-finding and develop shared understanding. Other than that, having trained staffs in the management and have cooperative efforts in process management significantly facilitates the management' success.□

Product Dimension

In accordance with Yaffee, Wondolleck & Lippman (1997), the product dimension is closely related to the process, qualities of the management are the product factor of collaboration such as individual leadership and dedication, early small success and lastly a sense of fairness, equity and burden sharing. Individual leadership and dedications are important once collaborative efforts are established. Dedication of individuals significantly helps to make the collaboration successful with the strength of personalities and energies and sometimes considerable personal cost. Project leaders, community leaders, agency field staff, landowners and also officials play an important role that portrays leadership in various projects and keep projects alive even though they have lack of resources, political support or agency direction in Ecosystem management cases. As for early small success factor, it helps in building trust and confidence among each other which will lead the group to address the more complex issue in the future. Lastly, collaboration needs a process with the stakeholders that are considered as fair and not biased for collaboration to take places.☐

Institutional Dimension

As stated by Yaffee, Wondolleck & Lippman (1997), success collaborative problem solving by agencies and organizations can help by providing right opportunities in providing right opportunities, incentives, and resources which the factors are opportunities for interaction, incentives, resources, and technology. Firstly, opportunities for interaction which set the stage for collaborative problem solving between organizational, political and social arrangements among members of different organizations. There are few ways of incentives such as institutional or programmatic incentives, next, legitimacy from the participation of local communities, opportunity to make a difference and providing preferable alternatives. As for resources factor, the availability of resources, staffing, expertise, and funding are important as it plays role in fostering success for symbolic reasons. Last but not least, technology access plays important role in collaborative decision-making, information sharing, and bridging.☐

Situational Specific

Lastly, conforming to Yaffee, Wondolleck & Lippman (1997), situation-specific is described as the probability of successful bridging, independence of stakeholders, shared or superordinate goals, sense of crisis, sense of place, personal relationships, trust and respect, and public interest or pressure. Many of these factors might be intentionally promoted through creative efforts. A sense of interdependence is fostered through a situation where there is a strong sense of a place and common problem in protecting the place or solving problem. The stakeholders also share a common vision or have common goals thus making the collaboration is natural. Shared problem or threat to an area motivates the diverse individuals to work together and overcome the problems. In addition to that, a sense of place in which people are brought together for a limited amount of time and not expect to work together in the future can build trust and motivate parties to collaborate. Personal relationships also play important role in starting collaborative problem-solving. Lastly, public Interest and pressure is an important player in the collaboration which provides incentives for a key stakeholder to participate and provides a norm that rewards them when they are willing to collaborate (Yaffee, Wondolleck & Lippman, 1997). ☐

Protected Areas

According to International Union for Conservation of Nature (2008), the definition of a protected area is such geographical space, recognized, committed and organized, through the law or other valid means, to reach the long-term conservation of nature connected with ecosystem services and cultural values. Protected areas such as national parks, wilderness areas, community conserved areas, nature reserves are a central component of biodiversity conservation, while also furnishing and contributing to people's livelihoods, specifically at the local level. Protected areas are at the main endeavors towards conserving nature and the services it provides people with food, clean water supply, medicines and protection from the impacts of natural disasters (IUCN, 2008). According to the website, WWF Global (2014), protected areas are vital for the conservation of natural habitats, species, and genetic diversity. Some of these protected areas, even if they do not have nature conservation as their main function, can also be applied to safeguard biodiversity if they are well-planned and managed (WWF Global, 2014).²

Protected Areas in Malaysia

In accordance to Department of Wildlife and National Parks (PERHILITAN) mentioned that Malaysia, with a wealth of biological diversity in its terrestrial and marine zones, is recognized as one of 17 mega-diverse countries in the world. The rich of the flora of Malaysia is enormous and is conservatively estimated to contain about 12,500 species of flowering plants, approximately 306 species of mammals, more than 742 species of birds, and 547 species of reptiles, including a large number of endemics. To the extent, Malaysia has established networks of protected areas in order to safeguard the globally significant biodiversity. There are at least four protected areas networks in Peninsular Malaysia, covering a total area of 2.98 million ha, managed by different agencies including the Federal Department of Wildlife and National Parks, Johor National Parks Corporation, Perak State Parks Corporation, and state forestry departments. ²

According to the World Wildlife Fund (2013), it is shown in the analysis from the Master List of Protected Areas of Malaysia that there are 444 protected areas in Malaysia. With a total size of 4,125,895.1ha, these encompassed both land and sea area. Based on this, Malaysia is covered by 10.8% and 1.1% of the terrestrial and marine protected areas respectively.²

Also based on WWF (2013), Malaysia's protected areas (PA) programme is divided into two landscapes. They are i) Peninsular Malaysia and ii) Sabah and Sarawak. The vision for both Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah and Sarawak protected area programme is the establishment and maintenance of a viable, representative network of protected areas encompassing Malaysia's most threatened and biologically significant ecosystems, that contributes to human well-being and species conservation. ²

Sungai Wildlife Reserve Area

As stated by PERHILITAN (2016), Sungai Wildlife Reserve was first founded in 1928 with an area of 1,805 hectares and later widened to 3,966 hectares in 1940 with Gazet Number (GN) 6563. Currently, there are only 2,468 hectares due to an area of 428 hectares was removed in 1957. The removed area is used for rubber plantation and other purposes. The reserve was established for Gaur protection where at the end of 1946; there were 15 Gaur spotted in the area. Currently, the breeding

programme for Gaur, Sambar deer, and pheasants were conducted at Sungkai Wildlife Conservation Centre.

Also according to PERHILITAN (2016), there are 14 wildlife reserves in Malaysia. And among the popular ones include Sungai Dusun Wildlife Reserve (Selangor), Bukit Nanas Wildlife Reserve (Kuala Lumpur), Royal Selangor Golf Club Wildlife Reserve (Kuala Lumpur) and Sungkai Wildlife Reserve Centre (Perak). The Sungkai Wildlife Reserve Centre is situated about less than 5 kilometers from Sungkai Plaza Toll while with about 96 kilometers from Ipoh, Perak and 120 kilometers from Kuala Lumpur. Sungkai Wildlife Reserve Centre was established in 1931 with the total coverage area of 1784 hectares and it gets enlarged up to 2904 hectares at present days. As its name goes, the Sungkai Wildlife Reserve Centre encompasses myriad wildlife animals covering from birds, deer, and gaur.☐

The Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) is responsible for the management of national parks and wildlife reserves in Peninsular Malaysia such as it focused on the planning and implementation of various activities which contribute to the long-term conservation of protected areas while mitigating or reducing conflicts between humans and the environment. The development of protected areas was done sustainably to ensure optimum benefit to human and prosperity to the environment for the present and future generation (PERHILITAN, 2016)☐

Methodology

Population and Sample

The population of the research would be the stakeholders of the Sungkai Wildlife Reserve Area. The stakeholders chosen for this study are the management of Perhilitan Kuala Lumpur, Perhilitan Sungkai Perak, and the committee members; the host communities of Sungkai villages. The main reason for selecting the respondents is to analyze their participation in sustainable tourism and the stakeholders' perspectives towards the development of the area. A group of academicians that have knowledge of sustainable tourism is also considered as one of the stakeholders to participate as respondents.

The sample size of this study contained 90 respondents that are from Perhilitan Kuala Lumpur, Perhilitan Sungkai Wildlife Reserve Area, Sungkai villages committee members, and the academicians. This study uses probability sampling techniques which the samples are gathered in a process that gives all the individuals in the population equal chance of being selected. ☐

Instrument

The instrumentation for this study is self-administered questionnaires. The questionnaire is made in English because the targeted groups are the individual with English understanding skills as the respondents are those with position and knowledge. The sources that are used in creating the questionnaire are from previous journals regarding public participation in Malaysia that are related to this study. The questionnaire was divided into 2 sections that are section A and section B.

Data Collection

This study was conducted based on primary and secondary data. Primary data would be based on the personal interview conducted with the respondents and self-administered questions.

PERHILITAN (HQ) in Kuala Lumpur is contacted and the appointment is then scheduled for the interview with their representative. The representatives are those who are in charge of managing the reserve area in Malaysia and generally know the place very well. The scheduling with PERHILITAN Kuala Lumpur and Perak takes about 3 weeks to confirm the date, time and the person to be interviewed. The interviews took few hours per session and were done within a few days. The interview is also recorded to make it easier to review the interview session and also as evidence for the research. The data collection of the questionnaires from PERHILITAN Kuala Lumpur and Perak takes about 2 months.

The secondary data are the sources collected from the journals and websites from the internet regarding the related case study. The other resources are the published books about Sungkai Wildlife Reserve that were given from PERHILITAN Kuala Lumpur which generally for the researcher to increase understanding about the place.

Data Analysis

After data collection, the collected data is processed and analyzed. The researcher uses Statistical Package for the social science (SPSS) software Version 20 to analyze the data gathered. From the data analysis, the researcher was able to get a clear view of the case study of Sungkai Wildlife Reserve Area towards sustainable tourism in stakeholders' perspectives.

Results

Opinions on Current Public Participation Approach in Malaysia

Table 1: Opinions on the effectiveness of the current practice in encouraging public participation in Malaysia

Item	Frequency Score	Percentage (%)
The effectiveness of the current practice in encouraging public participation in Malaysia		
i. The current approach is not effective	-	0.0
ii. The current approach is moderate	57	63.3
iii. The current approach failed to deliver its purpose	3	3.3
iv. The current approach was able to encourage many community leaders, NGOs, local residents to present during meetings	12	13.3
v. The current approach did not exercise true participation by the public	17	18.9
vi. The public participation is just a matter of formality as required by planning policies	1	1.1
TOTAL	90	100.0%

The result shows that the highest frequency and percentage is that the current approach is at a moderate level with a number of 57 respondents, 63.3%, this is because most of the respondents felt that the current approach is not at the best conditions. This can prove that the stakeholders still need to identify the need to undertake an integrated approach to the evaluation, determine the focus areas of improvement, the comparison of individual indicators results with their sustainability goals thus from then should they have a proper sustainable planning for protected areas in Malaysia.

Table 2: Opinions on current methods used in the public participation of Malaysia

Item	Frequency Score	Percentage (%)
Current methods used in the public participation of Malaysia		
i. The use of banners and presentations at workshops and exhibitions is not effective	2	2.2
ii. The publicity of the programs held by the management is effective	13	14.4
iii. There is a lack of technical advice to facilitate understanding of the public on information or plans presented by the management	10	11.1
iv. The organizing series of workshops is an effective method for a development plan	50	55.6
v. The workshops allow for dialogue sessions and provide feedback	15	16.7
TOTAL	90	100.0%

As from the questionnaire survey, Table 2 shows that organizing a series of workshops is proved to be one of the effective methods for a development plan. This shows that from the stakeholders' perspectives, they believed that organizing a series of workshops is the best current method to be used in encouraging public participation in Malaysia. Albeit to that statement, to acknowledge the whether the method is really effective, the stakeholders are in need to take consideration of the respondents' feedback as well, on whether the current public participation method used has successfully delivered the required information to the majority of the participants.

Table 3: Opinions on current public participation methods used has successfully delivered the required information to the majority of the participants

Item	Frequency Score	Percentage (%)
Current public participation methods used has successfully delivered the required information to the majority of the participants		
i. Information regarding future development is not enough	9	10.0
ii. Information regarding future development is not comprehensive	7	7.8
iii. There is lacking in environment quality information	12	13.3
iv. The information on the development report and at the exhibitions could not be understood	2	2.2
v. The information on development report and the exhibitions are not specific to the participants to understand	-	0.0
vi. The exhibition allows the public to view and give comments on the development plans	3	3.3
vii. The exhibition is carried out in a sufficient time	-	0.0
viii. The public education levels (usually limited education background) has become a constraint to a proper understanding of the development plans	49	54.4
ix. The government elaborate the purpose of the development plan and inform the public on benefits from the plan	8	8.9
TOTAL	90	100.0%

Table 3 shows that public education levels (usually limited education background), is the highest frequency score of the statements, considered as one of the big challenges to deliver the required information to the majority of the participants. Without planning and the public education, the incentive to protect the destination can easily degenerate into mere fruitless actions. From the stakeholders' perspectives, it is believed that the methods used fall flat to give proper understanding on the development plan to participants which then lead to the reason why the methods used are in need of improvement. The management needs to explain in details the purpose of the development plan and inform the public on benefits from the plan. This will be one of the ways to help the effectiveness of public participation.

Table 4: Opinions on current approach in public participation used to allow participants to share their views and opinions

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
The current approach in public participation used to allow participants to share their views and opinions²		
i. The current approach allows the public to voice their concern and share views ²	24	26.7
ii. The current approach helps to establish trust and credibility in the community	16	17.8
iii. The public feels that are not given equal rights and chances to share their views and opinions	4	4.4
iv. There are lacking active discussion between the government and the public ²	46	51.1
TOTAL	90	100.0%

Table 4 shows a selection of the opinions whether the current approach in public participation used to allow participants to share their views and opinions. This table shows that most respondents; (46, 51% of the total respondents) are to be equivalent to the opinion that there are lacking active discussion between the government and the public. The lacking of active discussion brings the means to some common challenges regardless of approach, which includes improving measurement, finding appropriate ways to integrate and delivering required information, gaining the attention of key decision makers, and improving the quality of the information.

Table 5: Current approach in public participation was lacking in taking into consideration the public opinions and views

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
The current approach in public participation was lacking in taking into consideration the public opinions and views		
i. The public feels that the government did not take their opinions seriously	12	13.3
ii. The public feels that government is dominant in the meetings, workshop etc.	37	41.1
iii. The public feels they do not have any influence on the decisions made	33	36.7
iv. The public did not receive satisfactory feedback and response regarding their opinions	8	8.9
TOTAL	90	100.0%

Table 5 shows the assortment of opinions whether the current approach in public participation was lacking in taking into consideration the public opinions and views. The result shows that there is some challenge to the public participant as the government proves to be dominant in the meetings or workshop and decision-making. Public opinion also is important, considered as the collection of individual opinions, where all opinions deserve equal treatment regardless of whether the individuals expressing them are knowledgeable about an issue or not. The government really needs to keep an eye on the issue to maintain an effective public participation.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistic for Question 6 (Frequency level)

		Frequency Score	Percentage (%)
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	3.3
	Disagree	7	7.8
	Neutral	39	43.3
	Agree	37	41.1
	Strongly agree	4	4.4
	Total	90	100.0

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics for Question 6 (Mean Score)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Do you agree that public participation approach practice in Protection areas in Malaysia is a success?	90	1	5	3.36	.825
Valid N (listwise)	90				

From the result, the respondents' frequency range is neutral. Based on the findings of DeMars and Erwin (2004) mentioned that with the combined neutral or unsure option, we expect the identity levels of those choosing unsure to fall towards the lower end of the identity range. It is found that it is only slightly different in the range neutral and agrees, to the extent the approach used has not achieved the best possible condition. From the result, the researcher can prove that the stakeholders still need to identify the need to undertake an integrated approach to the evaluation, determine the focus areas of improvement and the comparison of individual indicators results with sustainability goals.

Discussion

Stakeholders' opinions on public participation in Sungkai Wildlife Reserve

With regards to the stakeholders' opinions on the effectiveness of the current practice in encouraging public participation in Malaysia, there is a majority of 63.3% of total respondents said that the current approach is moderate. From the interview with Mr. Faris from PERHILITAN Sungkai (2018), he stated that there is no problems or any issue with the local communities especially the indigenous people. They have a good relationship with the villagers and most of the villagers known them as the staffs who work there. He also stated that the stakeholders of Sungkai Wildlife Reserve did not encourage that much participation from all the villagers as long there are representatives from them attending the meeting. Other than that, they rarely have formal meetings as there is less development planning. Thus, this has supported the statement that the effectiveness of current practice in encouraging public participation is moderate.

Based on the findings, there are 55.6% of people who answered that organizing a series of workshops is an effective method for a development plan on the current methods used in Malaysia. According to Dr. Abdul Malek, Principal Assistant Director of Protected Areas Division of PERHILITAN (2018), organizing workshops and discussion is one of their approaches in taking care of the stakeholders' importance in the decision-making process.

Furthermore, based on the findings, it is shown that there are some limitations in delivering the information to the majority of the public participants as most the respondents (54.4% of total respondents) mentioned that the public education levels (usually limited education background)

have become a constraint to proper understanding on the development plans proving. As the local communities are mostly the villagers that have a limited educational background, therefore it is hard to explain the complex development plans. The management needs to explain in the simple word which is easy to understand by them. According to Dr. Abdul Malek, they usually organized workshops separately between the ethics to reach their understanding.

Moreover, regarding the stakeholders' opinions whether the current approach in public participation used to allow participants to share their views and opinions, there are 51.1% answered that there are lacking active discussion between government and the public. From the interview with Dr. Abdul Malek, he stated that one of the problems to encourage public participation is that they do not have any alternatives for the local communities such as job opportunities. Therefore, as the management, they do not have any to offer or benefits to give to the locals which leads to the lack of active discussion between them and the villagers. In addition to that, he stated that there is still no management plan for the farm landscape to provide for the villagers to do their farming activities. Thus, this leads to issues such as illegally farming on reservation and conservation area.

From the findings, the stakeholders' opinions whether there is lacking in taking consideration of the public opinions and views, there are 41.1% of respondents feel that the government is dominant in the meetings and workshop. From the interview with Mr. Faris from PERHILITAN Sungkai Wildlife Reserve, he stated that locals usually are invited to join the meetings and workshop especially the indigenous people. From the programme, they usually ask for questions such as the application of the licenses which are more related to the policy and regulations. If there are complaints or issues brought up by the locals such as trespassing to their area, the stakeholders can only take precaution to increase patrolling activities as a response to the issue. As more from stakeholders' perspectives, Dr. Abdul Malek for PERHILITAN Kuala Lumpur stated that politics affect much on their decision-making process as one of the government organization. Political influences a place development plan because even if the management plan but there are no initiatives and supports from the high authority people, there will be no actions taken to implementation.☐

Lastly, regarding the stakeholders' opinions whether they agree that public participation approach practice in Malaysia is a success, there are 43.3% respondents answered neutral and 41.1% respondents answered that they agree on the current methods used. Based on the understanding from the interviews, public participation in Malaysia is still improving and there is increasing awareness of the importance of public participation among the stakeholders. It is significant that collaboration and communication from many sides can ensure a successful in planning sustainable tourism.

The factors and dimensions of successful public participation in Sungkai Wildlife Reserve according to stakeholders' perspectives

There are 4 dimensions to measure a successful public participation which are a process, product, institutional and situational. According to Dr. Abdul Malek, Principal Assistant Director of Protected Areas Division of PERHILITAN (2018) said himself admitting that some of the protected

areas in Malaysia are not properly maintained and preserved. Thus, proper planning needs to be implemented along with an effective public participation.

Based on the findings, under process dimension, it is proven that it is very important for the local community to be involved in meetings as part of their responsibility as residents in the area/town/district as they are 42.2% strongly agree with the statement. They agreed that the first inquiry for stakeholders (the resident) to consider in shaping the destination management plan is the fundamental ones, which is to be involved in meetings, contribute to the decision-making process as that should be their responsibility as residents in the area. This leads to the total mean score of 4.040 that contribute to the success of public participation in Sungkai Wildlife Reserve.

Moreover, regarding product dimension, there are two statements that share the same amount of percentage mean score which is 43.3% strongly agree to both statements; it is very important that development plans are well-implemented and it is also very important that development plan is politically acceptable. It is proved that all respondent totally agrees with the statement that a well-implementation of a plan is considered as one of the initial indicators for a successful public participation and must be done carefully not to offend or upset any group of participants and that in itself will sustain and helps further development for the destination. Product dimension total mean score is 4.348 which is the highest mean score among four of the dimensions.

As under institutional dimension, there is 97.8% (a combination of the percentage of agree and strongly agree) respondents think that it is very important to ensure enough resource availability such as enough staffing and expertise in managing the protected areas such as Sungkai Wildlife Reserve to further the development plan of the destination efficiently. It is proved from the findings that to have enough staffing and enough trained staffs in the management and have cooperative efforts in process management will significantly facilitate the management's success. To conclude from the findings, it is shown that the total mean score for the institutional dimension is 4.205 which is located in the range of agreeing to most of the statements.

Last but not least, the dimension of situational specific. There are 62.2% agree and 37.8% strongly agree that it is very important to share common visions or have common goals between managers and the public. The respondent believed that to share common visions or to have common goals between managers and the public is an important attribute that is helpful in prioritizing strategies for effective public participation. Having a common vision or common will provide a road-map that is to be followed by everyone. According to Table 13 on the descriptive statistic of the statement in situational specific shows a total mean score of 3.957. It is the lowest total mean score that contributes to the success of public participation.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to determine the opinions and dimensions of public participation on sustainable planning in Sungkai Wildlife Reserve from stakeholders' perspectives. This study is significant because it provides necessary facts about how stakeholders view their approaches and methods in sustainable planning.

At the end of the research, the researcher had completed the research objectives that are the overall view of stakeholders towards their current methods and the dimension that is the most important in successful public participation. The findings of the study give a clear view of the public participation overall is moderate which is still improving in terms of sustainable approaches. Furthermore, it is also proven that the four dimensions and factors of sustainable planning are important such as process, product, institutional and situational on successful public participation. They also agree that they need to include other participants such as from local communities towards successful public participation.

In conclusion, the successful public participation is significantly important in order to plan sustainable tourism in Sungkai Wildlife Reserve Perak. Current public participation in Malaysia needs more improvements in a few years so the stakeholders especially the local communities reach the same understanding in sustainable tourism.

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