


Cultivating stakeholders' willingness to participate in sustainable tourism development: A research proposition



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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to evaluate the role of community stakeholders in fostering sustainability within tourism development, with a focus on Langkawi, Malaysia. It seeks to propose a comprehensive model that highlights the influence of residents' perceptions (as key stakeholders) of community empowerment, political trust, and place attachment on their support for sustainable tourism. This study proposes a conceptual framework based on stakeholder theory and conducts a thorough examination of stakeholders' perspectives on tourism development, considering both positive and negative impacts. A comprehensive literature review is adopted in this research. The study reveals nuanced insights into stakeholders' attitudes towards tourism development and sustainability. It identifies the intricate interplay between perceptions of community empowerment, political trust, place attachment, and support for sustainable tourism initiatives, contributing to a deeper understanding of the dynamics surrounding sustainable tourism. Findings indicate that positive perceptions of benefits encourage active resident engagement in STD. Practical implications suggest that local authorities, destination managers, and policymakers should prioritize involving residents in tourism planning, building trust, and empowering communities. By addressing both social and environmental concerns, sustainable tourism can ensure long-term success and balance development with conservation. The proposed model lays the groundwork for future empirical analyses to yield meaningful insights for governments and tourism planners, facilitating informed policy-making and decision-making processes regarding residents and tourism development in developing nations.

Contribution/ Originality: The article contributes to sustainable tourism literature by integrating place attachment, political trust, community empowerment and perceived benefits within a unified model to examine local engagement in tourism development in a developing country context. Using Langkawi, Malaysia, as a case study, it offers a conceptual framework for enhancing resident participation and collaboration in sustainable tourism initiatives.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable tourism aims to balance the positive economic, environmental, and social impacts of tourism development with the associated costs to tourist destinations (Falatoonitoosi, Schaffer, & Kerr, 2022). These strategies focus on improving community life standards while preserving the environment and local resources for future generations (Hashemi, Mohammed, Rasoolimanesh, Kiumarsi, & Singh, 2022; Rasoolimanesh, Ramakrishna,

Hall, Esfandiari, & Seyfi, 2023). Local communities may experience both advantages and disadvantages from tourism. While tourism can offer several benefits (Andereck, Valentine, Knopf, & Vogt, 2005; Deery, Jago, & Fredline, 2012; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2023) it is also important to recognize that residents might face certain drawbacks (Deery et al., 2012; Haralambopoulos & Pizam, 1996; Hashemi et al., 2022). Therefore, the sustainability and success of the tourism industry in a destination are contingent on how local residents perceive its impacts on their community (Hashemi et al., 2022).

This is why sustainable tourism has become increasingly important in the tourism industry. For example, since the Eighth Malaysia Plan (2001–2005), there has been a lot of attention given towards sustainable tourism in this country (Peeters, Çakmak, & Guiver, 2024). The main objectives of developing sustainable tourism in our country are to ensure long-term growth and create economic opportunities at the national, state, and local levels (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2023).

It's worth noting that there has been a clear focus on environmental aspects in tourism development in Malaysia, starting from the Eighth Malaysia Plan all the way up to the Eleventh Malaysia Plan. The government has played a significant role in promoting sustainable tourism, with a primary emphasis on preserving and conserving destinations. This commitment is evident in the existence of national ecotourism policies. So, it's safe to say that in Malaysia, tourism development is especially geared towards protecting the environment, particularly in ecotourism destinations (Bagheri et al., 2022). In the world of sustainable tourism, it's crucial to get residents involved as key players in any tourist destination. However, there's a lack of research when it comes to understanding what exactly motivates residents to actively take part in sustainable tourism initiatives (Cheng, Wu, Wang, & Wu, 2019; Hsu, Chen, & Yang, 2019; Wang, Wang, Li, & Yang, 2020).

This study tackles the issue by looking at how people feel connected to a place, trust the local authorities, and feel empowered in their community. We propose that strong place attachment fosters a deeper connection to the community and its resources, potentially increasing residents' investment in sustainable practices (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001). Trusting the local authorities is also important because it makes residents believe that their opinions matter and can make a difference (Scheyvens, Banks, & Hughes, 2016). Moreover, when residents feel like they have a say in decision-making, it boosts their sense of community empowerment. This, in turn, greatly influences their attitude and willingness to participate in sustainable tourism initiatives.

We suggest that those factors will lead residents to perceive greater benefits from sustainable tourism development. These perceived benefits, in turn, will influence residents' attitudes and willingness to participate positively in the sustainable tourism practices of Mbaiwa and Stronza (2010). The proposed conceptual framework allows for nuanced understandings of resident engagement in sustainable tourism, moving well beyond simple perceptions of impacts to the factors that would promote active participation with practical implications in finding ways to improve the involvement and participation of residents in the development of sustainable tourism by local authorities, policy makers, and destination managers. We suggest that these factors will lead residents to perceive greater benefits from sustainable tourism development. These perceived benefits, in turn, will positively influence residents' attitudes and willingness to participate in sustainable tourism practices (Mbaiwa & Stronza, 2010). It is hoped that the proposed conceptual framework offers a more nuanced understanding of resident engagement in sustainable tourism, moving beyond simple perceptions of impacts to factors that foster active participation while providing practical implications to local authorities, policy makers and destination managers in finding ways to improve residents' involvement and participation in sustainable tourism development.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Most studies on locals' attitudes toward tourism development have primarily been conducted in developed countries such as the US, UK, Australia, and New Zealand (Andereck et al., 2005; Brunt & Courtney, 1999; Gursoy,

Chi, & Dyer, 2009; Gursoy, Jurowski, & Uysal, 2002; Sharma, Dyer, Carter, & Gursoy, 2008). Conversely, there is limited research of this kind in developing nations (Jaafar, Noor, & Rasoolimanesh, 2015; Ko & Stewart, 2002; Tosun, 2002). In developing countries, how locals feel about tourism development and their willingness to get involved and support these efforts can be quite different compared to those in more developed countries (Jaafar et al., 2015; Sharpley, 2014). According to Sharpley (2014) when locals see the positive benefits of tourism, they're more likely to back tourism development and get involved in related activities. On the other hand, if they notice negative impacts, it tends to discourage their support for tourism. Previous research, such as studies by Byrd (2007); Manwa (2003) and Nicholas, Thapa, and Ko (2009) has explored how residents' viewpoints, their support for tourism development, and their community involvement are interconnected, using stakeholder theory as a framework. Moreover, designating a place as an island destination can draw in tourists, boosting the local economy and residents' incomes (Peeters et al., 2024). Even though these economic and social advantages can improve nearby communities, the environment and coastal areas are also at risk. The conflict between this quandary and the imperative to protect coastal regions and advance island conservation initiatives, especially in island destinations, contrasts with the benefits that tourism development brings in terms of the economy and society (Nicholas et al., 2009; Salman, Jaafar, Mohamad, Ebekoziem, & Rasul, 2024; Spenceley & Snyman, 2017).

As a consequence, after reviewing the existing resident perception literature, Sharpley (2014) argued that there was a need for case-by-case research to determine the relevance of established models of tourism when applied to residents. In the light of this gap in the literature, this study has developed a number of hypotheses about Langkawi, an archipelago located in the state of Kedah in North Malaysia. Langkawi, a famous tourist resort as one of the top islands in Malaysia, known for its white sand beaches, dramatic jungle and craggy mountain peaks. This study has a conceptual model with four suggested hypotheses for future research. Fourth, it attempts to understand the relationship between residents' attachment with their place (consisting of four dimensions: identity, dependency, social bonding, and affect) and perceived benefits. Attention is also paid to the mediating effect of residents' political trust on perceived benefits. Third, it seeks to examine how factors contribute to community empowerment (eg. confidence, inclusivity, organization, cooperation, and influence) relate with perceived benefits associated with sustainable tourism development (STD) among residents. The final goal is to investigate the associations between perceived benefits and residents' desires to participate in sustainable tourism development.

2.1. Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholders play a critical role in the tourism process as also in the growth and management of tourism. Based on Bagheri et al. (2022) the increasing environmental effect of tourism on the one hand and more balancing among stakeholder interests on the other side, it is worthwhile examining whether current 'sustainable' in services in tourism interventions are effective, and to what extent tools research method should be adjusted. Sustainable development, management policies, and effective planning could help mitigate these impacts more effectively (Hanafiah et al., 2022). Stakeholder involvement had its genesis in the business management and public administration literature. In management literature, what resonates most soundly with the concept of stakeholder participation did not appear until 1984, when Freeman published this book in under the title "Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach." Freeman (1984) the term "stakeholder" has been defined as "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives." This definition has since become a foundational assumption in nearly all subsequent research on social issues. Subsequently, Donaldson and Preston (1995) clarified this definition, highlighting that for a group or individual to be considered a stakeholder, they must have a genuine interest in the organization. Legal stakeholders frequently disagree about which interests are most important, and Freeman (2001) states that parties or legal entities engage in an organization's operations in order to obtain particular benefits (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). In the tourism industry, stakeholder theory

adoption is still relatively new and has been applied sparingly (Attanasio, Preghenella, De Toni, & Battistella, 2022; Wu et al., 2023). In their investigation into the role of locals as stakeholders in sustainable development, Attanasio et al. (2022) looked at the complex relationships that exist between locals' perceptions, community involvement, and the growth of sustainable tourism. Furthermore, according to Stakeholder Theory, consideration of stakeholders' interests and viewpoints is necessary in order to meet the requirements for successful development (Peeters et al., 2024). Thus, the utilization of Stakeholder Theory in this research will facilitate the assessment of stakeholders' perspectives and actions pertaining to endorsing sustainable management in Langkawi.

2.2. Case in Point: Langkawi Island, Malaysia

The study is situated on the island of Langkawi, which is in Malaysia's northwest. Reputed for its varied natural features, including an abundance of flora and fauna, multiple beaches, and a tropical climate, Langkawi has been a popular tourist destination for years, as Kayat (2002) highlights. The 99 islands that make up the archipelago of Langkawi, which spans 478 square kilometers, are located off the coast of Kedah State in the Malaysian Peninsula. Asia's top ecotourism destination, Langkawi is renowned for its astounding biological and geological diversity (Azman, Halim, Liu, & Komoo, 2011).

The island saw a sharp increase in tourism in 1987 when the Malaysian government designated it as a duty-free area. When the archipelago was designated as a UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) Geopark in 2007, it reached yet another noteworthy milestone. Tourism is an important part of Langkawi's economy, employing thirty percent of the local workforce, with a significant influx of over 1.5 million visitors in 2012 (Omar, Ghapar Othman, & Mohamed, 2014). Azman et al. (2011).

The tourism sector in Langkawi is varied, with many well-known businesses offering diving and snorkeling, water sports, and nature tours. The Kedah State created the Langkawi Development Authority (LADA) in 1990 after realizing the importance of tourism. With an emphasis on encouraging local businesses to actively participate in the tourism economy, LADA is essential in supervising tourism development and management (Azman et al., 2011).

3. INTERRELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTS

3.1. Place Attachment and Perceived Benefits

Giuliani (2003) introduced the term "ideational or attitudinal expressions of solidarity or rates of participation in community social networks" (p. 477). Additionally, McCool and Martin (1994) described community attachment as the "extent and pattern of social participation and integration into community life, along with the sentiment or affect toward the community" (p. 30). Gannon, Rasoolimanesh, and Taheri (2020) found that locals' support for tourism development is closely tied to their sense of community connectedness.

Man, So, and Nang Fong (2022) also concluded that residents are more likely to support tourism when they perceive positive outcomes. Furthermore, for residents with strong community attachment, perceived benefits play a vital role in fostering support for tourism growth. Past studies have shown that community attachment significantly influences residents' perceptions of tourism development, in line with concepts such as group gain and status consistency rules in Sustainable Tourism (ST) (Hashemi et al., 2022).

These principles help clarify and justify the positive link between community attachment, perceived benefits, and support for tourism development. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated.

H₁: There is a direct and significant relationship between place attachment and the perceived benefit to support STD in in Langkawi Island.

3.2. Residents' Political Trust and Perceived Benefits

According to Hosmer (1995) trust involves expecting an individual, group, or institution to behave in a morally justified manner. Trust may be defined in the context of developing the tourist industry from the viewpoints of institutional, political, and interpersonal trust (Lühiste, 2006; Nunkoo & Smith, 2013). Political trust is the expectation among the populace that decisions made by the government will serve their interests and that it will be held responsible for its actions (Bramwell, 2014). Most importantly, citizens' support for any policy or development project put forth by the current administration is contingent upon their level of faith in the government (Bronfman, Vázquez, & Dorantes, 2009).

Therefore, political trust can support democratic stability and act as a cornerstone for long-term, sustainable growth (Liu, 2023). According to Han, Ramkissoon, You, and Kim (2023) locals are more likely to trust the government when they gain from tourism. On the other hand, mistrust is more likely if locals do not receive these advantages. According to the principles of social exchange theory, this skepticism emerges when the costs of progress surpass the advantages for the society. According to Tichaawa, Dayour, and Nunkoo (2023) encouraging economic growth to provide jobs for locals would probably lead to a rise in public confidence in government agencies. On the other hand, distrust might arise if locals believe that government agencies are unable to promote economic development. High interpersonal trust locals tend to trust actions and decisions made by others who believe tourism development will benefit them more than it will cost them. As such, they tend to endorse the opinions and behaviors of these people (Han et al., 2023). No study has examined the relationship between the idea of political trust and perceived advantages in Malaysia, despite claims that research on stakeholders' perceived trust and benefits of sustainable tourism development is well-established (McGehee & Andereck, 2004). Webster (1990) describes this phenomenon as the use of political trust to take advantage of developing nations' resources. Therefore, based on this theoretical discourse, the following proposition is posited:

H₂: There is a direct and significant relationship between political trust and perceived benefit to support STD in Langkawi Island.

3.3. Community Empowerment and Perceived Benefits

In order to advance community empowerment, academics have suggested that meaningful procedures be put in place to enable the meaningful involvement of community stakeholder groups in empowerment opportunities. They also stress the significance of raising communities' awareness of sustainable tourism initiatives (Adebayo & Butcher, 2023; Li & Hunter, 2015; Park & Kim, 2016).

The ability of an individual or group to manage their own affairs within the confines of community development is what makes the concept of "empowerment" significant in theory (Adams, 1990). Cole (2006) describes empowerment as the top step on the participation ladder, when community members take the lead in bringing about change. They are capable of problem-solving, decision-making, action implementation, and outcome evaluation. In order to achieve autonomy, self-reliance, social justice, and a higher standard of living, local communities must first acquire the authority and capacity to gather resources, make decisions, and supervise changes. This process is known as community empowerment (Friedmann, 1992; Park & Kim, 2016; Scheyvens, 1999, 2002).

Scheyvens' four-dimensional framework is deemed suitable for the thorough examination of various tourism destination levels in this regard. Therefore, the present study's analytical framework and fundamental premise are the four elements of empowerment—economic, psychological, social, and political empowerment—as presented by Scheyvens (1999). Scheyvens (1999) and Scheyvens (2002) posits that economic empowerment entails the equitable allocation of the financial gains resulting from tourist endeavors among indigenous populations. This approach prioritizes fair distribution among underprivileged groups, such as women and those with low socioeconomic status,

as opposed to dividing the gains between local elites and outside investors. Therefore, it is anticipated that this kind of economic empowerment would encourage the creation of small enterprises and result in long-term financial rewards for the community. Moving on to the second point, people become psychologically empowered when they feel proud of their community's cultural history and of their own self-worth. This component is particularly crucial for disadvantaged populations, as they have traditionally been less likely to feel comfortable participating in decision-making processes due to a variety of reasons, including poor socioeconomic position or a protracted colonial past (Cole, 2006). According to Scheyvens (1999) when visitors show respect and acknowledgement for indigenous culture, it may positively impact the community's self-esteem and encourage them to be more proactive in promoting their cultural heritage as a tourism attraction. Taking a look at the third dimension, social empowerment includes a number of things including women's rights, education, bolstering neighborhood groups, and creating social capital. Improved community cohesion as a result of participation in tourist activities fosters this kind of empowerment. Further connected to political empowerment is the degree to which all people of the community participate in the formulation and execution of development projects. In order to effectively acknowledge the demands of local communities and residents, Friedmann (1992) emphasizes the significance of converting social empowerment into political empowerment. Scheyvens (2002) advocates for the establishment of tourism initiatives that incorporate community voices and concerns to attain political empowerment over tourist operations. These efforts should be carried out from the feasibility stage all the way through to execution. Five characteristics are used by the Community Development Exchange, a UK-based organization committed to citizen engagement, to help organizations achieve community empowerment.

(1) *Confident*: To enable community members to acquire the necessary abilities, know-how, and confidence to participate in conversations about the organizing, financial, and day-to-day management of projects, organizations should ensure that information is clear and easily accessible to them. Members of the community are more inclined to get involved if they feel confident in their capacity to bring about change.

(2) *Inclusivity*: It is essential for organizations to recognize and value the diversity among stakeholders within a community, while also advancing fair opportunities and mutual respect. It is critical to identify and promote the involvement of every member of the community in conversations. People are more likely to work well together when they are exposed to a wide variety of viewpoints, experiences, and domain knowledge.

(3) *Organized*: To enable community members to create widely recognized procedures for dialogue and decision-making, an open, democratic, and accountable organizational structure must be in place. There is a greater chance that everyone will take ownership of the effort if there is clarity on the decision-making process, anticipated results, and workflow.

(4) *Collaborative*: It is important to devise a plan that will help stakeholder groups find common ground, build strong bonds that facilitate collaboration, and capitalize on each other's advantages.

(5) *Influential*: Organizations ought to use a bottom-up strategy, empowering and enticing community members to actively engage in and have an impact on choices and actions. This guarantees that they understand the importance of their participation in the process of transformation and take joint accountability for the project. Thus, the study makes the following hypothesis based on the above literature.

H3: There is a direct and significant relationship between Community empowerment and perceived benefit to support STD in Langkawi Island.

3.4. Perceived Benefits and Stakeholder's Willingness to Participate in STD

The phrase "perceived benefits" in the context of stakeholders describes how people or organizations with a stake in a particular project, policy, or initiative assess the benefits or favorable results associated with their involvement or support (Szromek, Kruczek, & Walas, 2023). Stakeholder attitudes, choices, and behaviors can be

greatly impacted by how these advantages are viewed (Hashemi, Mohammed, Singh, Abbasi, & Shahreki, 2023). It is a continuous and dynamic endeavor to comprehend and manage stakeholders' views of benefits (Hashemi et al., 2022). It's crucial to have proactive involvement, effective communication, and a dedication to emphasizing the concrete advantages of sustainability. Stakeholders are more likely to have a positive stance and actively support sustainability projects when they recognize the benefits of sustainability (Szromek et al., 2023).

According to Jeelani, Shah, Dar, and Rashid (2023) when institutions or organizations engage with stakeholders, they frequently seek to understand and address the advantages that stakeholders believe their presence would provide. This comprehension promotes cooperation and support. Stakeholders also frequently have expectations or goals in mind for their support or involvement. Stakeholders may see advantages like less of an influence on the environment, financial savings, or increased corporate social responsibility in the context of sustainability and the environment. Stakeholder engagement in sustainability projects might be encouraged by their views toward these perceived advantages (Szromek et al., 2023). Ahmed, Mokhtar, and Alam (2020) make the case that stakeholders in the management of water resources, including governmental bodies, environmental groups, local communities, companies, and people, may experience a range of advantages by actively supporting and participating in sustainable water management techniques. Their motivation to participate may be influenced by these alleged advantages. Furthermore, as per the research conducted by (Ding, Wang, Nie, & Wu, 2023) stakeholders' attitudes towards wastewater management are influenced by perceived advantages associated with environmental concern. Thus, the following hypothesis is put out in the context of our study:

H₁: There is a direct and significant relationship between Perceived benefit and stakeholders to support STD in Langkawai Island.

3.5. Stakeholder's Participation in STD

Involving local stakeholders in tourism development might assist in resolving disputes that arise from their disparate demands and interests as they work to improve their quality of life and promote economic growth (Siririsak, 2009). To include the community in tourist planning, all relevant parties must be involved in the decision-making process, including local government agencies, non-governmental groups, commercial businesses, and local citizens (Okazaki, 2008). This engagement contributes to sustainable development by giving locals more authority by involving them in issue identification, decision-making, and solution implementation (France, 1998). When it comes to their participation in tourism-related activities, especially those that impact the sustainability of tourism development, residents' opinions of the advantages and disadvantages of tourist development are critical factors (Nicholas et al., 2009).

Moreover, locals' opinions of the advantages and disadvantages of tourism influence how supportive they are of its growth in their towns (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008). When people see how tourism affects their community in a positive light, they are more likely to support tourist growth; when they see it negatively, however, they are more likely to oppose it Sharpley (2014). Stakeholder attitudes are crucial for supporting sustainability programs and have a big impact on how successful and effective they are Kim, Bonn, and Hall (2021). An increasing number of stakeholders are willing to support and actively participate in sustainability initiatives when they have a positive attitude toward sustainability, according to existing literature (Dimitrovski, Lemmetyinen, Nieminen, & Pohjola, 2021; Haldar et al., 2021; Jeelani et al., 2023; Wei, Liu, Skibniewski, & Balali, 2016).

Positive sentiments are more common among stakeholders that place a high priority on environmental preservation and sustainability. These values are often driven by the need to protect the environment, minimize ecological footprints, and encourage ethically sound practices (Jeelani et al., 2023). Many studies suggest that public attitudes and perceptions of water resources significantly influence governmental water management policies, as people's intentions play a key role in political will and decision-making (Ahmed et al., 2020; Burstein, 2010; Eck,

Wagner, Chapagain, & Joshi, 2019; Stoutenborough & Vedlitz, 2014). Consequently, when public attitudes are considered in water management initiatives, there is frequently a positive correlation between these perceptions and a willingness to engage in water resource management. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual model proposed for this research.

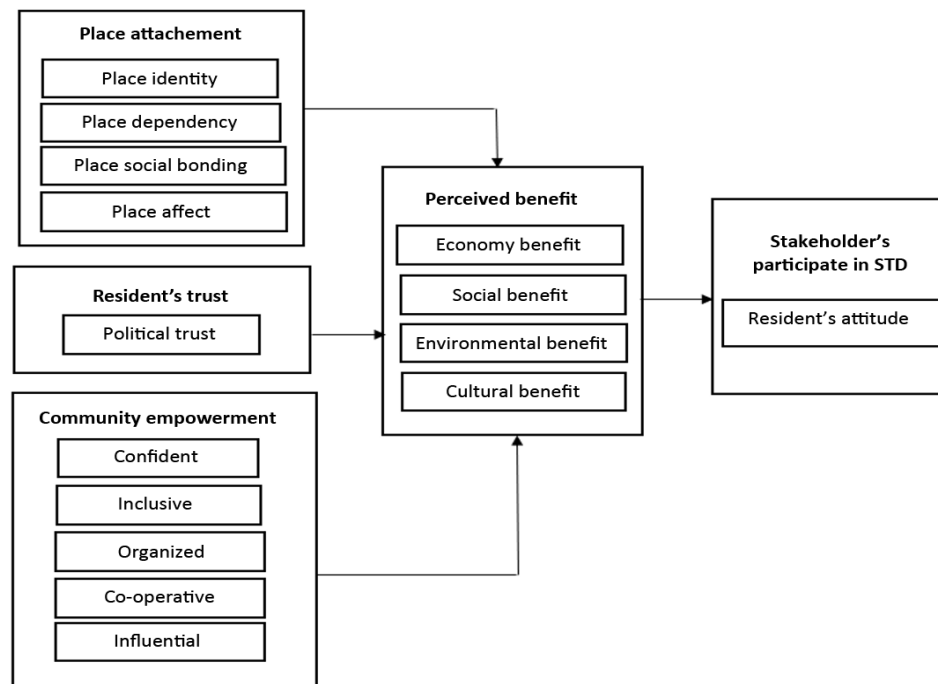


Figure 1. Proposed conceptual framework.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Langkawi is probably faced with unique sustainability issues because of its thriving tourism industry and the resulting environmental impact on Malaysia. The research puts up conjectures about stakeholders, including diverse cohorts or persons engaged in Langkawi's water resource administration.

Local governments, tourism companies, government agencies, and environmental groups are some of these stakeholders. The study has significance for addressing the environmental effects associated with tourism expansion, given Langkawi's prominence as a popular tourist destination with worries about overdevelopment. In these situations, it becomes critical to establish sustainable tourism in order to balance the rise of tourism with environmental protection. It addresses important environmental and sustainability concerns, especially in areas of travel that are rapidly developing. Policymakers, companies, local communities, and scholars doing research in Langkawi and related areas may find great value in the study's conclusions. A common way to support sustainable tourism via community empowerment is to raise awareness. By emphasizing local knowledge and experience as essential assets for community development, this tactic places the community at the center of decision-making processes targeted at enhancing quality of life across a range of social and environmental aspects. Even while Langkawi isn't naturally tourist-oriented, it has all the necessary components, especially in terms of community empowerment and involvement, for sustainable tourism growth. Although there have been few studies showing that Langkawi has the potential to be effectively governed for tourism (Chan, Selvadurai, & Aziz, 2020; Elfithri, Mokhtar, & Abdullah, 2021; Yusof, Kamarudin, Patwary, & Mohamed, 2021) their results support the idea that a locally managed Langkawi represents key components of sustainable tourism planning and development on a smaller scale.

Thus, suggestions are made to maximize Langkawi's capacity to encourage local community involvement, which would strengthen their sense of empowerment and, in turn, result in the more effective execution of

sustainable tourism projects. Future studies may thus examine the aspects of community empowerment in relation to Langkawi's potential as a travel destination. Additionally, as community empowerment's structure, underlying causes, and effects are still little understood, research is needed to better understand it. It is critical to look into how Langkawi contributes to the local community's empowerment in the context of tourist growth. Subsequent investigations ought to extend beyond the confines of wealthy nations and incorporate the stories of emerging nations and varied places worldwide.

In conclusion, putting sustainability measures into practice may spur the growth of eco-friendly travel destinations, especially when combined with the active participation and empowerment of local communities. Constant communication and cooperation between locals and the government not only increase local involvement but also mold attitudes and beliefs about how important their input is to tourist decision-making. Even if tourism is only one aspect of the larger STD idea, the process of fostering a sense of place and connecting with local resources led to the development of the essential elements and tourist attractions. This enhancement includes a range of attractions, including those that are cultural, environmental, and culinary, as demonstrated by Langkawi. As the discussion of slow tourism emphasizes, maintaining genuine components and local culture has been a key focus in providing high-quality tourism experiences. Due to the tourist-attracting nature of the community's actions as part of the Langkawi project, this area is perfect for small-scale, community-driven tourism destinations that actively embrace sustainable practices with community engagement. Because they have been able to take charge of their surroundings, claim ownership of the town, and build on Langkawi's advantages, the locals have demonstrated a great commitment to the town's benefits. As a result of their proactive involvement in planning neighbourhood events, carrying out the community garden project, and marketing the area, marketable tourism activities have grown in the area. Both local communities and tourists have profited from locals taking the lead in leading tourism activities; visitors get deeper insights about Langkawi through local-led guided tours. Langkawi's accreditation is subject to annual reviews, and to preserve it, local communities must work together and manage existing tourist programs with effectiveness. Because Langkawi's sustainable tourism is integrated with sustainable practices, it is anticipated to persist.

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Transparency: The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.

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