

THE IMPACT OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ON THE QUALITY OF LIFE (QOL) AMONG FISHING COMMUNITY IN LANGKAWI

Norizan Abdul Ghani^{*}, Fadzli Adam, Berhanundin Abdullah, Izah Mohd Tahir, Yendo Afgani and Dara Aisyah S.M Ali Puteh

Abstract: Fishing has been the traditional job for many islanders whether in Redang, Perhentian or Langkawi Island, Malaysia. This study focuses on the challenges faced by the fishermen in improving their quality of life (QoL) in one of Malaysia's most advanced tourism islands namely Langkawi Island. With a total of approximately 2,172 people in the fishing community, fishermen on Langkawi Island have benefited significantly from the declaration of the island tax free port and major tourist destination in 1987. The objective of this study is to identify the challenges faced by the fishermen in Langkawi by the tourism industry and its impact on their QoL. This study used qualitative methods and data were collected through unstructured interviews, focus group discussion (FGD) and observation. The findings show that the quality of life of fishermen in Langkawi Island is at an intermediate level despite some challenges in the effort to improve it. Overall, the monthly income of the fishermen in Langkawi Island is between RM1000 to RM2000 per month. The tourism industry is found to have helped improve the QoL of many fishermen as it provides part time jobs for them after returning from the sea. Although they only do part time jobs such as tour guides, hotel or chalet workers, the income earned is quite rewarding. The role of agencies such as the Fisheries Development Authority of Malaysia (LKIM) has effectively helps fishermen to improve their QoL. From the findings of this study, it is expected that some related authorised bodies in the Federal and state Government namely Langkawi Development Authority (LADA) and Langkawi Municipal Council will continue assisting the fishing community, including their spouses and children, by offering skills training and continuously preparing them to survive in the challenging island life.

INTRODUCTION

Fishermen are arguably the most important group of people in a community, but they are often linked to poverty and need adequate protection. On average, they struggled to make a living as larger profits are being made by the middlemen. This situation regularly receives the attention of the government through various responsible agencies and departments. Many structured programmes have been and will continue to be implemented through government agencies and departments, to help this community to improve their quality of life (QoL).

In 2014, the government, through its agencies, the Fisheries Development Authority of Malaysia (LKIM) declared *jihad* war against manipulations by middlemen who have been profiting from the hard work of the fishermen. The fishermen's hard work does not equate with their income. Thus, *jihad* war in this

^{*} *Address for Communication (Corresponding Author):* Norizan Abdul Ghani, Associate Professor in Community Development, Faculty of Applied Social Sciences, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Terengganu, Malaysia. *E-mail:* norizabd@unisza.edu.my

context is one of the government's initiatives to help and protect the welfare of local Langkawi fishermen.

LKIM will continue to strengthen and streamline the role of fishermen through the National Fishermen's Association of Malaysia (NEKMAT), the Fisheries Development Authority of Malaysia (PNN) and the Fishermen Association (PNK). One hundred fish-markets will be built and established to allow fishermen to directly sell their catch to consumers. With these built-in markets, fishermen will get results commensurate in line with their efforts and the public will get a supply of fresh fish. This effort by LKIM is meant to help local fishermen to stand on their own feet without relying on the middlemen who then monopolized the market and the country's agro-food industrial chain (LKIM Head of Director, 2014).

For fishermen who live and work in a tourism environment such as in Langkawi Island, the survival of continuing to work as a fisherman is different. Life is more challenging because they are competing with the rapid development of the tourism industry. They have to follow certain rules and regulations that affect their source of income. For example, they cannot simply fish in areas gazetted for tourism activities. Developments made on Langkawi Island are managed by the Langkawi Development Authority (LADA). LADA was established by the Federal Government to design and implement development in Langkawi Island. LADA was established on the 15th of March 1990 under the Langkawi Development Authority Act, 1990 (Act 423) and placed under the Ministry of Finance.

A detailed plan to make Langkawi one of the top 10 islands and eco-tourism destinations in the world by 2015 was launched by the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak. The Langkawi Tourism Blueprint contains 14 initiatives designed to cover three specific themes namely (i) products which describes the point of contact for all tourists from basic necessities such as accommodation and restaurants to fun and entertainment offered by the destinations. The second theme is (ii) infrastructures offering tourists the experiences they have from day one up to the day they go home and the third theme covers all three initiatives (i, ii and iii) which is to put a solid foundation for the tourism industry through the local community's development and marketing.

LANGKAWI IN 2015

Langkawi in 2015 hosted many tourists from multiple countries offering them amazing experiences through warm hospitality and services with spectacular attractions and accommodation. Besides being proud to be one of the top ten islands in the world like Bali and Maldives, through the plan, Langkawi islanders also benefited in terms of their economic standpoint.

By 2015, the country's gross income in tourism as well as tourism-related industries in Langkawi was expected to double, from RM0.8 billion in 2010 to RM1.9 billion in 2015. A total of 4,200 new career opportunities were expected to

be offered by the existence of more inclusive and luxurious hotels, with a higher ratio of employee to guests and new attractions offering high quality services.

This plan will make Langkawi a compelling and luxurious attraction providing better accommodation, infrastructure and seamless transportation network in addition to increasing higher tourism and non-tourism revenue target.

FISHERMEN'S BACKGROUND IN LANGKAWI

In Langkawi, a total of 1,160 fishermen receive RM300.00 per person as their monthly subsistence allowance. It was found that 97 percent of the fishermen are Malays while another 3 percent are Chinese. However, in terms of anchovies' boat ownership, most of the boats (47 boats) are owned by the Chinese and only two boats are owned by the Malay fishermen. The fishing zones are divided into three namely; Zone A (5 nautical miles where fishermen can use purse sein fishing for anchovies), Zone B (5-8 nautical miles) and Zone C (8 nautical miles).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mohammad Raduan et.al (2007) in their study on 'The Problems Faced by Traditional Fishermen in Peninsular Malaysia: Solution without Sequels' done in Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang found that poverty is the major, long-lasting problem faced by traditional fishermen in Peninsular Malaysia. The extinction of fishery resources in coastal waters due to uncontrolled overfishing and trawling are causing many fishermen difficulties to get favorable results. This situation worsened when the operating costs of fishing such as gasoline, increases. During monsoon season, the worse becomes worst as fishermen are unable to go to sea to earn a living. Failure to compete with the commercial fishermen badly affects the traditional fishermen that they end up their career as one (Mohammad Raduan et al., 2007).

A study on 'The Potential Impact of Climate Change Environmental Hazards on Quality of Life of Fishermen Community in Malaysia' found that climate change does impact the fishermen's quality of life. This qualitative study collected their data through literature reviews and document analysis. Based on the analysis done, it can be concluded that climate change will obstruct fishermen from doing their routine tasks and bring damage to their belongings, reduce the quantity and quality of the sea faunas which will then affect their productivity and expose them to diseases related to malaria, skin problems, fever, flu, cough and other health problems. It is recommended that the fishermen in Malaysia must be socially and economically prepared so that they can face the impacts brought by climate change (Hayrol Azril & Mohamed Shaffril, 2011).

Augustine J. Udoh (2008) in his study; 'Assessment of quality of life of fishing settlement in Ibaka and James Town communities in Nigeria' found that the fishing

settlements were subdivided into three zones with a population of 16,981 per zone. Forty six settlements were randomly selected from a total 138. Finally, 87 heads of households were randomly selected from the first two zones and 86 from the third zone making a sample population of 260. Both primary and secondary sources were used for data collection. It was found that over 60 percent of respondents depended mainly on fishing while 38.5 percent were engaged in fishing, sales of fuel wood, boat making and engine repairs. A significant proportion of household heads (55.3%) lived in thatched roof with mud walls while 25.6 percent lived in thatched roof with thatched walls. It was also found that the only source of drinkable water in the study area was seasonal rain water and polluted streams. Besides that, a lack of electricity in the area also affected the acquisition of luxury goods. However, the study shows that there is a significant difference between the infra structural facilities available in the settlement 20 years ago and now. A regression analysis shows an insignificant relationship between the socio-economic characteristic and the quality of life at the fishing settlement. The study suggests building blocks to be adopted in improve the QoL in the settlements.

Dzuhailmi Dahlan et al., (2012) conducted their research study entitled 'Fishermen Muslim Community: Analysis of Importance from the Perspective of Religious Life,' in a Muslim fishing community in Selangor, Malaysia, with a total of 172 respondents and majority of the respondents did not make their hectic life as an excuse to perform their daily duties as a Muslim. From the respondents' point of view, it is important for the family as well as the local community to practice a religious life (Dzuhailmi Dahlan et al., 2012).

J. Hamzah et al., (2013) in his study on 'The Impact of Tourism on Urban Quality of Life: Putrajaya Residents' Perspectives,' stated that tourism positively affect and is accepted by Putrajaya residents as they are benefiting from it. This study aims to find the perceptions of residents in Putrajaya on tourism development whether they have benefited from it or not and whether it affects their QoL. It was found that emotional well-being obtained the highest average mean of 3.62 and one of the factors was welcoming tourists without compromising the locals' comfort and happiness. Material or economical welfare on the other hand obtained a mean score of 2.67 because most of the locals were not actively involved in the entrepreneurial business and tourism industries. In conclusion, this study proves that tourism significantly affects the quality of life of people living in Putrajaya.

A study done by Myrna Leticia Bravo Olivas et al., in 2014 on the quality of life and experiences of fishermen along the coast of Jalisco, Mexico found that the locals' QoL and experiences are slightly above the poverty level. This study aimed to analyse the relationship between income, size of catch and QoL as well as their fishing experiences. In 2012, 83 respondents were selected and data were collected where QoL in this study included indicators like health, income, cost of living, family, friends, holidays, education and future perspective. The QoL index

is a combination of importance and achievement rating scores where the results are indicative of an acceptable QoL for fishermen. The concept of life experiences was discussed in depth and interviews were conducted with 13 fishermen. Four dimensions of life experiences' graphical representation comprising aspects of life related to Mind, Body, Work and People of each fisherman were derived, where each person was asked on the significance and gaps between aspiration and actual situation about each dimension. In this study, it was found that the most important dimension in a fisherman's life is People. The gaps identified suggested that those that should be closed were associated to the Mind dimension, followed by Work, Body, and finally People. Responsibility for closing the gaps were identified, by frequency, as: self, government, self with the help of family members, and God or faith. An inverse moderately strong relationship between catch, marginalisation and QoL score was found, while income and QoL score were directly related. In general, future and past are not better than the present. All these and life experiences were discussed in the sustainability context (Myrna Leticia Bravo Olivás et al., 2014).

METHODOLOGY

This study used the qualitative method using two techniques in data collection; interview and observation. A number of 15 respondents were involved in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and face to face interview sessions which involved two officials from LKIM.

TABLE 1: LIST OF RESPONDENTS/INFORMANTS IN FGD AND INTERVIEW

<i>No</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Occupation/Status</i>	<i>Respondent/Informant (R)</i>
1	M	LKIM Officer	R1
2	M	LKIM Officer	R2
3	M	Fisherman (40 years old)	R3
4	M	Fisherman	R4
5	M	Fisherman	R5
6	M	Fisherman	R6
7	M	Fisherman	R7
8	M	Fisherman	R8
9	M	Community Rep	R9
10	M	Skipper (63 years old)	R10
11	M	Fisherman	R11
12	F	Community Rep	R12
13	F	Community Rep	R13
14	M	Community Rep	R14
15	M	Community Rep	R15

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are twofold; to identify the challenges faced by the fishermen in the Langkawi tourism industry and to analyse the impact of the tourism industry on their quality of life.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Challenges faced by the fishermen in the Langkawi tourism industry

Development of Tourism

Tourism development has to deal with the issue of fish landings by fishermen as well as a place to store fishing boats. Since a booming and developing tourism industry needs world class infrastructure, its development affects the location for fish landings and boat storage in Langkawi. (R1)

Out of 27 jetties, only 10 jetties were developed for the use of fishermen on Langkawi Island such as in the town of Kuah, Tuba Island and Air Hangat. The robust development of the tourism industry has gazetted some strategic fishing heavens such as Payar Island as one of the tourism destinations where local fishermen can no longer fish. Fishermen are also not allowed to fish in other areas that are gazetted such as Klebang, Kuah and Koh Beach.

LKIM, however will continue their efforts to make sure that fishermen will gain some revenue. LKIM came up with the idea of man-made bamboo levers to breed fish so that the catch of the local fishermen increases.

Local Fishermen's Attitude

Many studies show that fishermen need to change their attitude or mentality for their own betterment. In Malaysia, the QoL of the fishing communities are intermediate or low (Norizan 2003, 2013).

Some of the fishermen often rely on the monthly allowance such as the RM300.00 subsistence allowance allotted by the local government. LKIM has provided assistance and support to members of the Fishermen's Association to improve themselves and their QoL In this regard, only a few have succeeded. Such attitude is what makes the QoL of these fishermen are low (R1, R2).

Limited Opportunities

The development of tourism has restricted fishermen's opportunities to improve their QoL. The local islanders often try to find a place or site to start their own business but they have to compete with other islanders and outsiders who come to the island for business opportunities (R12, R13). This statement by the respondents was supported by an LKIM officer, R1 stating:

“The Fishermen Association came up with a proposal to build a floating restaurant on the sea but there was a problem related to the Langkawi Municipal Council and the Marine Department. They disagreed with the proposal. We are working on other ways to help improve the QoL of these local fishermen. We are also trying to grab any opportunities to build a ‘One Stop Centre’ where fishermen can directly sell their catch to local islanders. There will also be a built-in restaurant and other facilities made for the fishing community.” (R1)

The Presence of Rohingya Community

The presence of the Rohingya Community known as the *orang bukit* is also one of the challenges to the fishing community on the island of Langkawi.

“They work hard to earn a living. Sometimes they deprive local’s opportunities especially in entrepreneurship on local government areas. During the squid jigging season, they will be flooding the beaches until there are no more strategic areas left for locals to fish. They work hard and are good in seizing opportunities.” (R1)

A female entrepreneur stated that she had to fight for a business spot in the town of Kuah. Locals were neglected by the authorities; as if the Rohingyas are local Langkawi islanders (R10, female entrepreneur).

However, a few community representatives believed that the presence of Rohingya’s community should not be taken for granted. The local community should learn from them (their efforts to survive) and they also have to make sure that the competition between them is healthy and positive.

“It is good for them to be here. Their presence will inspire the local community to work harder and compete positively with them. They work pretty hard for their own survival in another country than their own. It’s what they need and have to do.” (R15)

The Impact of Tourism Industry on Quality of Life

All the respondents on Langkawi admitted that they have better income. From the aspect of spending, the respondents spent enough for their families and themselves. Ownership of the respondents on Langkawi Island has also changed due to the increased income and expenses. Analysis from the FGD session on Langkawi Island showed that most of the respondents admitted that an increasing number of job opportunities in the tourism sector enhanced the level of the community’s QoL and well-being. The increasing jobs in the tourism industry on Langkawi Island enhanced the level of income, expenses and savings, thus enhancing the QoL and well-being of the community on the tourism island.

INCOME

The tourism industry has proven that the local communities' earning will increase if they work hard for it. One of their sources of income is through the provision of accommodation such as homestay or country homes locally known as *Inap Desa* (The Star, May 6, 2015). The Fishermen's Association (PNKL) has diversified the activities of local fishermen, especially in the tourism industry, in order to boost their source of income. 2000 PNKL members for example, provide accommodation due to the increase demands from the tourism industry.

Besides the accommodation of homestays and *Inap Desa*, other ongoing activities to help increase the income of local fishermen include selling fuel (diesel) to fishermen who want to go out fishing as well as for their own use – as in, tour packages managed by them. A fisherman's family equals to a couple (husband and wife) and their children. The whole family is encouraged to engage in activities that could help increase their household income like this (R1).

“LKIM has to make sure that the fishermen's families and the fishing communities as a whole are involved in establishing a marketing network. For example, if they go fishing, their wives sell their catch at the market with the assistance of their children and other family members. These efforts are thus able to increase their monthly income.”

(PNKL Chairman, 2015)

Generally, fishermen in Langkawi Island agreed that tourism does provide extra income to them. R7 stated that:

“Our family relies solely on the tourism industry and most fishermen make it as their secondary source of income. Fishing is a traditional career and it should be continued or it will become extinct. There is a lot of sustenance in the sea bestowed by Allah that should be benefited by all. Youth these days are no longer interested in going to sea because they believe that the result is not as satisfactory as working in the tourism industry.” (R5)

“We started our own retail business – grocery store from the income we earned from our catch and part time jobs in the tourism industry. The sales we earn from our grocery store are our second source of income. The sales are quite lucrative due to the high demand from the local communities and tourists. Our income is quite satisfactory because tourists will be flooding Langkawi during school holiday seasons. This will definitely improve our family's quality of life.” (R6)

EXPENSES

The increase of fishermen's income on Langkawi Island made it enough for them to spend although it isn't as luxurious as others. Three of the main spending spent by these local fishermen includes food, education and transportation.

“We cannot save up our money because of food since the price of food, here is quite expensive so we have to pay them as it is.” (R6, R8, R9)

“The price of food is quite expensive here. We have to save some for hard times in the future.” (R14)

“We also have to spend more on my children's education – those who are in higher institutions as well as those who are still in school. We had to wisely manage it so that we have enough money. We're also involved in the tourism industry, bringing tourists to fish in the sea in order to gain extra income and expenses for the family.” (R7, R8, R11)

Case 2: (R4)

A number of fishermen on Langkawi Island also bring their wives with them to sea, especially when it comes to fishing. Two of the respondents stated that both of them (husband and wife) earn between RM1500.00 – RM2000.00 per month. Besides that, they also do part time jobs like becoming tour guides for tourists and earn RM450.00 – RM500.00 every time they bring tourists do what they requested to do, such as fishing. (R4)

“When our source of income increases, so does our spending. We can buy necessary goods and sometimes bring our family for a vacation or two. Our quality of lives increases from time to time.” (R4)

Saving

R9, a skipper, aged 65 years stated that he has been in the fishing line for 30 years. The income he earned out of fishing made his life better and he has more than RM10, 000.00 of savings in his bank account. In terms of ownership, he owns a boat that is used to go to sea, a car and motorcycle. Some of the fishing equipments he own includes trawlers, purse seines, gill nets and drift nets. He also has a fairly large house with five rooms and owns a business of his own in the tourism industry in order to increase his source of income as well as improve his family's quality of life.

Owning a boat, a house one can call home, and transportation such as cars and motorcycles is like a dream come true for all fishermen. In Langkawi, 50 percent of the local fishermen own a boat and all respondents interviewed own their own house.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The status of Langkawi Island as a tourism island provides opportunities to its local authorities and islanders to make a number of local fishing spots like Tuba Island as a heritage site that can be promoted internationally.

In order to improve the QoL of fishermen, the women islanders should be given space and opportunities to improve their monthly income especially through business ventures. The Women's Fishermen Group of Economic Programme (KUNITA) should play their role building built-in kiosks or fish market for islanders to sell fresh fish directly to consumers. KUNITA should also be given the opportunities to start up their own business-restaurants serving fresh seafood caught by local fishermen. These restaurants can be managed by the fishermen's wives.

The locals' QoL will also improve with the increase of household income. The children of fishermen, particularly among the youth can join tourism activities through programmes like Fisherman's Trail that would definitely attract local Malaysian and foreign tourists. Tourists can also use these youngsters' assistants to carry out activities at sea such as fishing and trawling.

Besides that, the family members of these local fishermen should also get themselves involved in the existing training provided by KUNITA where they can become more active and innovative.

The active involvement of youth from the local fishing communities known as Youth's Fishermen Group (KUBENA) should also be held, often emphasising the aspect of skills training, improving one's soft skills and increasing KUBENA's revenue. Extra educational classes should also be emphasised as this will definitely help improve the QoL of fishermen because education is one of the main indicators of QoL.

The local government's effort to introduce war against middlemen '*Jihad war*' should be continuously monitored at all times. LKIM needs to make sure that the programme is a success in the first five years of its implementation through continuous observation. This is important because middlemen are one of the factors that decrease a fisherman's household income in Malaysia.

Fishermen, on the other hand, should also take initiatives to earn extra income by venturing into the business and entrepreneurial sectors in order to increase their quality of life.

In conclusion, the community development in Langkawi Island, particularly in improving the fishing community's quality of life, needs to be addressed by related authorised agencies such as LADA and the Langkawi Municipal Council. They should practice transparency in fighting for the welfare of fishermen. Priorities should be given to local fishermen, not migrants though they also need to be helped.

Acknowledgement

This research was funded by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia (KPM) under Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS-Grant Number FRGS 0080). Special thanks to KPM and Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA), Terengganu, Malaysia.

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