SENSE OF PLACE OF HOST COMMUNITY IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN PARK, SABAH

PERPUSTAKAAN
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

PAULIN WONG POH LIN

UMS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

FACULTY OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND ACCOUNTANCY
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH
2018

SENSE OF PLACE OF HOST COMMUNITY IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN PARK, SABAH

PAULIN WONG POH LIN

PERPUSTAKAAN
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

FACULTY OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND ACCOUNTANCY
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH
2018

UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

BORANG PENGESAHAN STATUS TESIS

JUDUL: SENSE OF PLACE OF HOST COMMUNITY IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN PARK, SABAH

IJAZAH: IIAZAH DOKTOR FALSAFAH (PELANCONGAN)

Saya PAULIN WONG POH LIN, Sesi 2013-2018, mengaku membenarkan tesis Ijazah Sarjana ini disimpan di perpustakaan Universiti Malaysia Sabah dengan syarat-syarat kegunaan seperti berikut :-

1. Thesis ini adalah hak milik Universiti Malaysia Sabah
2. Perpustakaan Universiti Malaysia Sabah dibenarkan membuat salinan untuk tujuan pengajian sahaja,
3. Perpustakann dibenarkan membuat salinan thesis ini sebagai bahan pertukaran antara institusi pengajian tinggi
4. Sila tandakan (/):

☐	SULIT	(Mengandungi maklumat yang berdajah keselamatan atau kepentingan Malaysia seperti yang termaktub di dalam AKTA RAHASIA 1972)
☐	TERHAD	(Mengandungi maklumat TERHAD yang telah ditentukan oleh organisasi/badan di mana penyelidikan dijalankan)
☑	TIDAK TERHAD	

PAULIN WONG POH LIN
DB1221020T

Tarikh: 5 Ogos 2018

Disahkan Oleh,
NURULAIN BINTI ISMAIL
PUSTAKAWAN KANAN
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH
(Tandatangan Pustakawan)

(Dr. Balvinder Kaur Kler)
Penyelia

UMS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the material in this thesis is my own except for quotations, excepts, equations, summaries and references, which have been duly acknowledged.

1st September 2018

.....

Paulin Wong Poh Lin

DB1221020T

UMS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

CERTIFICATION

NAME : **PAULIN WONG POH LIN**

MATRIC NUMBER : **DB1221020T**

TITLE : **SENSE OF PLACE OF HOST COMMUNITY IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN PARK, SABAH**

DEGREE : **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (TOURISM)**

VIVA DATE : **28th AUGUST 2018**

CERTIFIED BY

SUPERVISOR

Dr. Balvinder Kaur Kler

UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, all the glory is given to God who is most loving, gracious and merciful. Having a faith to hold on during trying times is a blessing in itself, knowing that God will never give us any burden too heavy to carry but He will test our ultimate wit, capability, and spirit.

Dr. Balvinder Kaur Kler, your utmost patience and wisdom in guiding my path and your commitment with me through tough times proved not only your excellent supervision skills. It is also your steadfast character throughout OUR journey that gained my respect and I am beyond humbled and grateful for having you as my supervisor and mentor. Our relationship and this Ph.D experience, I will cherish.

I dedicate this thesis to my mother, Karen Ong. You have been both a mom and dad for me for the past ten years and my supportive emotional pillar throughout. A mother's love surpasses all! This is true for me. Thank you for your love and care as I embark on unconventional journeys, driving you mad sometimes. However, it is your unwavering support in my life that gave me assurance that I will always have you to fall back into whenever life is too tough to handle. Your blessing and prayers granted me patience, perseverance and wisdom in which I will use to be a blessing to others.

Ultimately, this journey cannot be completed without you, my partner, Addy Azmin. I blame it all on you. You have been with me since the very beginning, sharing my ups and downs, causing my joy and sorrows. You even called yourself my 'second supervisor' since you read my work more often than anyone. I reckoned I should thank you *(with love)*.

A special and heartfelt thank you towards all my participants and now friends, whom have volunteered, committed and shared their stories and memories with me. My appreciation is also extended to the university (UMS) for accepting me as a Ph.D student directly after my completion of the BBus in Tourism Management (First class Honours) degree and MyBrain15 who funded the most part of this study.

I am also blessed to have true friends as a support system. My comrades - Nina, Siao Fui, Amy, and Mimie, and friends - Kingsley, Marina, Cyndi as well as others who played a part in being supportive. You know who you are. Appreciation is also extended to colleagues whom I met in various conferences throughout this journey. Your encouragement, validation and suggestions I gratefully receive. While they said a Ph.D journey is a very lonely one, and sometimes it truly is, but having you in this journey makes it all worth the more.

Essentially, this thesis is my first 'child' and I am forever responsible for its contents. This five years journey taught me many things but my most important take-away for the future is that: "if you are going through hell, keep going" – Winston Churchill. To which I must add, the light to haven is at the end.

Paulin P.L. Wong
16th July 2018

UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

ABSTRACT

Residents, or the 'host community' are often an understudied stakeholder in tourism. Specifically, the literature disregards sentiments of attachment which the host community develops for place. Sense of Place (SoP) is defined as the emotional, cognitive and functional bonds with place. In Sabah, Tunku Abdul Rahman Marine Park (TARP) has transformed from a local recreation site into an international tourist and faces increasing demand for activities and space. Destination sustainability is a key concern for national parks management and raises the need to understand what visitors care about and to protect such experiences. This study identifies and interprets the experiences and relationships of the host community in Kota Kinabalu towards TARP. Understanding place meanings provides an insight into the uniqueness of place, and informs people-place relationships. This understanding could guide parks management to minimize potential negative impacts, preserve and utilise local SoP to provide quality tourism experiences. As place meanings are complex, this study employed an interpretive inquiry paradigm and an innovative combination of focus group interviews, Visitor Employed Photography and an adapted Q-methodology for data collection. This combination of pictorial and verbal measures enhanced the ability to evoke participants' memories and the adapted Q-method application, enabled the systematic extraction of group place meanings. This qualitative research design incorporated triangulation of methods to enhance the trustworthiness of findings. Four groups of hosts consisting five individuals each participated in a two-part data collection that includes focus group interviews and visits to TARP to take photographs of meaningful scenes for each group. Eight sets of transcriptions and two hundred fifty photographs were derived for analysis. ATLAS.ti 7 was used for data interpretation. Results derived include five main positive themes with two sub-themes each: 'Hedonia-seeking'; 'Aesthetics Appreciation'; 'Companionship'; 'Ephemeral Escapade'; 'Being Host' and three negative themes: 'Crowdedness', 'Observing Island Changes', and 'Underwater Devastation'. Themes produced the TARP Host Meanings framework which validates Pearce's Place model, albeit for hosts. A Typology of Host Community Visitors with four categories was derived and demonstrates their relationship with TARP: 'Enthusiast', 'Associate', 'Ambivalent' and 'Disconnected'. Finally, the Place Meanings Matrix addresses the transformation of relationships with TARP due to tourism. This study contributes to the literature on preserving and applying host community SoP in planning for tourism. Host community place meanings could play a role in destination sustainability if incorporated into park management plans.

ABSTRAK

MEMAHAMI 'SENSE OF PLACE' DALAM PEMBANGUNAN PELANCONGAN: KES TAMAN TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN, SABAH

Penduduk, atau 'komuniti tuan rumah' di destinasi pelancongan adalah pihak berkepentingan yang kurang difahami dalam pembangunan pelancongan. Secara khusus, jurang dalam literatur mengabaikan sentimen *attachment* yang dimiliki/dimajukan/dikembangkan oleh masyarakat tuan rumah. *'Sense of Place'* (SoP) ditakrifkan sebagai ikatan emosi, kognitif dan berfungsi dengan tempat. Di Sabah, Taman Laut Tunku Abdul Rahman (TARP) telah berubah dari tapak rekreasi tempatan menjadi destinasi pelancongan antarabangsa dan mengalami peningkatan permintaan terhadap aktiviti dan ruang. Kemampanan destinasi adalah perhatian utama bagi pengurusan taman negara dan menimbulkan keperluan memahami pengalaman yang dipentingkan oleh pengunjung dan untuk melindunginya. Kajian ini adalah untuk mengenal pasti dan menafsir pengalaman dan hubungan komuniti tuan rumah di Kota Kinabalu dengan TARP. Memahami makna tempat memberikan kefahaman tentang keunikan tempat, dan memaklumkan hubungan orang-tempat. Pemahaman ini dapat membimbing pengurusan taman untuk mengurangkan potensi kesan negatif, memelihara dan menggunakan SoP tempatan untuk menyediakan pengalaman pelancongan berkualiti. Oleh kerana makna tempat adalah kompleks, kajian ini menggunakan paradigma penyelidikan tafsiran dan gabungan inovatif dari temu bual kumpulan fokus, fotografi berdasarkan pengunjung dan metodologi-Q yang disesuaikan untuk pengumpulan data. Kombinasi langkah-langkah bergambar dan lisan ini meningkatkan keupayaan untuk membangkitkan memori peserta dan aplikasi Q-metod yang disesuaikan, membolehkan pengekstrakan sistematik makna tempat berkumpulan. Reka bentuk penyelidikan kualitatif ini menggabungkan triangulasi metod untuk meningkatkan kebolehpercayaan hasil penemuan. Empat kumpulan tuan rumah yang terdiri daripada lima individu masing-masing mengambil bahagian dalam temubual kumpulan fokus yang mempunyai dua bahagian. Pengumpulan data terdiri daripada dua fasa termasuk lawatan ke TARP untuk mengambil gambar adegan yang bermakna bagi setiap kumpulan. Lapan set transkripsi dan dua ratus lima puluh gambar diambil untuk analisis. ATLAS.ti 7 digunakan untuk tafsiran data. Keputusan yang diperolehi termasuklah lima tema positif utama dengan dua sub tema masing-masing termasuk: 'Pencarian-Hedonia'; 'Penghargaan Estetika'; 'Persahabatan'; 'Percutian Singkat '; 'Menjadi Tuan Rumah" dan tiga tema negatif: ' Kesesakan', 'Pemerhatian Perubahan Pulau', dan 'Kemusnahan di Bawah Laut'. Tema menghasilkan kerangka TARP Host Meanings yang mengesahkan model tempat *Pearce* bagi untuk tuan rumah. Tipologi Pelawat Tuan Rumah dengan empat kategori yang diperolehi menunjukkan hubungan mereka dengan TARP: 'Penggemar', ' Rakan Sekutu", 'Ambivalen' dan 'Yang Terpisah'. Matrix Makna Tempat (PMM) membahas transformasi hubungan dengan TARP disebabkan pelancongan. Kajian ini menyumbang kepada literatur mengenai pemeliharaan dan penerapan SoP komuniti tuan rumah dalam perancangan pelancongan. Makna tempat komuniti tuan rumah boleh memainkan peranan dalam kemampanan destinasi jika dimasukkan ke dalam pelan pengurusan taman.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
TITLE		i
DECLARATION		ii
CERTIFICATION		iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS		iv
ABSTRACT		v
ABSTRAK		vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS		vii – xi
LIST OF FIGURES		xii
LIST OF TABLES		xiii
LIST OF PHOTOS		xiv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS		xv
LIST OF APPENDICES		xvi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION		
1.1	Rationale of the Study	1
1.2	Setting of the Study: Tunku Abdul Rahman Marine Park (TARP)	8
1.3	Research Questions and Objectives	13
1.4	Overview of Methodology and Method	14
1.5	Significance of Study	16
1.6	Scope of Study	18
1.7	Glossary of Terms	18
1.8	Outline of Dissertation	19
CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUALISING HOST COMMUNITY SENSE OF PLACE IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT		
2.1	Introduction	22

UMS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

2.2 Host Community in Tourism Context 22
2.2.1 Definition of Host Community 23
2.2.2 Review of Literature on Host Community in Tourism 25
2.2.3 A Critique of Doxey's Irridex 29
2.3 Sense of Place (SoP) in Tourism Context 31
2.3.1 Definition of SoP 32
2.3.2 Place Attachment 35
2.3.3 Review of Literature on Place Meanings 37
2.3.4 Gustafson's Place Meanings Model 40
2.3.5 Place Meanings and Time 42
2.4 Exploring Host Community SoP 42
2.4.1 A Critique of Pearce's Place Model 46
2.5 Understanding Host Community SoP in Tourism Development 49
2.6 Summary 52

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction 53
3.2 Paradigm of Inquiry 53
3.2.1 Differentiating Methodology and Method 56
3.3 Positivism 58
3.3.1 Place Meanings Using a Quantitative Approach 60
3.4 Interpretivism 61
3.4.1 Place Meanings Using a Qualitative Approach 63
3.5 Methodological Assumptions of the Study 64
3.5.1 Ontological 65
3.5.2 Epistemological 66
3.5.3 Axiological 68
3.6 Summary 70

CHAPTER 4: METHOD

4.1 Introduction 71
4.2 Method for Recognising Host Community Sense of Place 71
4.2.1 Focus Group Interviews 72
4.2.2 Visitor Employed Photography 74

UMS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

	4.2.3 Q - Methodology	75
	4.2.4 Combining Focus Group, VEP and Q – Methodology to Recognise SoP for Tourism Destination	77
4.3	Research Design: Understanding Sense of Place at TARP	78
	4.3.1 Illustration of Research Design	79
	4.3.2 Purposive Sampling: Homogenous, Composition-focused & Strangers Constructed Focus Group	80
	4.3.3 Sample Size	85
	4.3.4 Interview Guide: Semi-structured Interviews	86
	4.3.5 Recruitment Process	88
4.4	Data Collection Process	89
	4.4.1 Focus Group One	90
	4.4.2 VEP	90
	4.4.3 Focus Group Two with Q-sort	91
4.5	Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis	92
	4.5.1 Transcription of Interviews	95
	4.5.2 Coding of Data	96
4.6	Trustworthiness	98
	4.6.1 Credibility	101
	4.6.2 Transferability	103
	4.6.3 Dependability	105
	4.6.4 Reflexivity	106
4.7	Summary	109

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

5.1	Introduction	110
5.2	TARP Host Meanings Framework	110
5.3	Hedonia-Seeking	116
	5.3.1 Active Adventure	116
	5.3.2 Passive Pursuits	120
5.4	Companionship	124
	5.4.1 Reconnection	125
	5.4.2 Creating Shared Memories	128
5.5	Aesthetics Appreciation	131

UMS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

5.5.1 Beauty 131
5.5.2 Experiences 134
5.6 Ephemeral Escapade 140
5.6.1 Being Away 140
5.6.2 Seclusion 143
5.7 Being Host 147
5.7.1 To Visitors 148
5.7.2 For Environment 151
5.8 Negative themes 155
5.8.1 Crowdedness 156
5.8.2 Observing Island Changes 165
5.8.3 Underwater Devastation 175
5.9 Summary 179

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSSION

6.1 Introduction 180
6.2 Research Question 1: What Experiences in TARP are Meaningful for the Host Community? 181
6.2.1 TARP Host Meanings Framework 182
6.2.2 Hedonia-seeking 183
6.2.3 Companionship 184
6.2.4 Aesthetics Appreciation 185
6.2.5 Ephemeral Escapade 185
6.2.6 Being Host 186
6.2.7 Negative Themes 187
6.2.8 Refining Pearce's Place Model for Host Community Experiences 188
6.3 Research Question 2: What Types of Relationships do Host Community Visitors have with TARP? 192
6.3.1 Typology of Host Community Visitors 193
6.3.2 The Enthusiast 196
6.3.3 The Associate 197
6.3.4 The Ambivalent 198
6.3.5 The Disconnected 199
6.4 Research Question 3: How do Host Community Relationship 200

UMS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

to TARP Transform due to Tourism Development?
6.4.1 Place Meanings Matrix (PMM) 200
6.5 Understanding Host Community Sense of Place in Tourism Development 204
6.6 Summary 207

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 Revisiting Research Questions and Objectives 208
7.2 Contribution to Knowledge 211
7.2.1 Theoretical Contribution 212
7.2.2 Methodological Contribution 215
7.3 Contribution to Practice 216
7.4 Critical Reflection and Limitations 217
7.5 Future Work 221
7.6 Final Thoughts 223

REFERENCES 224

APPENDICES 256

UMS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

LIST OF FIGURES

		Page
Figure 1.1	Illustrations of TARP Visitor Arrivals 2007 – 2017	10
Figure 2.1:	Doxey's Irritation Index	30
Figure 2.2:	The Tripartite Model of Place Attachment	36
Figure 2.3:	Gustafson (2001) Three-Pole Triangular Model	41
Figure 2.4:	Pearce (2005) Tourist Sites Tripartite Sustainability Embedded Place Model	48 & 189
Figure 4.1:	Illustration of an adapted Q-method Process	76
Figure 4.2:	Research Design for Understanding Sense of Place at Tunku Abdul Rahman Park	80
Figure 4.3:	Structure of Interview Guide	87
Figure 4.4:	Participants Recruitment Process	89
Figure 4.5:	Example of coding in ATLAS.ti software	97
Figure 5.1:	TARP Host Meanings Framework	112 & 183
Figure 6.1:	Distribution of TARP Host Meanings as projected onto Pearce's Place Model	190
Figure 6.2:	Place Meanings Matrix	201
Figure 7.1:	Contributions to Knowledge: Host Community Sense of Place for TARP	212
Figure 7.2:	Methodological Contribution	215

UMS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

LIST OF TABLES

		Page
Table 1.1:	TARP Tourists Arrivals 2007 – 2017	9
Table 1.2:	Glossary of Key Terms	19
Table 2.1:	Typology of Residents from a Tourism Business Context	24
Table 2.2:	Impacts of Tourism Development	26
Table 2.3:	Relationships to Place	46
Table 4.1:	A summary of Braun & Clarke (2006)'s Six Phases of Thematic Analysis	93
Table 4.2:	Analysis Process of the Study	94
Table 4.3:	Sub-themes and Themes	98
Table 4.4:	Establishing Trustworthiness	99
Table 4.5:	Establishing Trustworthiness: Understanding Sense of Place in TARP	100
Table 5.1:	Plotting Themes and Sub-themes within Dimensions of Place	111
Table 6.1:	Typology of Host Community Visitors for TARP	195

UMS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

LIST OF PHOTOS

		Page
Photo 5.1:	Number 46 - Zipline starting point	118
Photo 5.2:	Number 16 - Ann's and Athena's relaxing view	122
Photo 5.3:	Number 51 - Lizard on the island	123
Photo 5.4:	Interaction between Father and Child	127
Photo 5.5:	Number 19 - Bigger family bonding	128
Photo 5.6:	Number 38 - Beauty = Blue waters	132
Photo 5.7:	Number 74 - Nature	133
Photo 5.8:	Number 6 - Mave's Calm and Peaceful View	135
Photo 5.9:	Number 6 - The Gateway at Pulau Manukan	136
Photo 5.10:	Reminder of Reka's Garden and Alan's School on Manukan Island	137
Photo 5.11:	Number 6- Hallmark Holiday Feeling	142
Photo 5.12:	Number 59 – Seclusion	144
Photo 5.13:	A Secret Place	146
Photo 5.14:	Number 52- An Example of Crowdedness	147
Photo 5.15:	Reminder of Being Hosted	150
Photo 5.16:	Historical Remnant	152
Photo 5.17:	Number 29 – Eyesore for Mave	154
Photo 5.18:	Congested Beach Photo Collage	158
Photo 5.19:	Number 52 Unorganised Queuing	159
Photo 5.20:	Number 63 - Tents on the beach	160
Photo 5.21:	Number 33 – Extra Tables Anticipating Mass Tourists	161
Photo 5.22:	Number 29 – Buffet Tents	162
Photo 5.23:	Number 42 – Expanding Canopies	165
Photo 5.24:	Number 50 – Exclusive Long Chairs	167
Photo 5.25:	Number 47 – Overpriced Coconut	169
Photo 5.26:	Number 12 – Representing Expensive Novel Activities	170
Photo 5.27:	Number 10 – Required Better Changes	172
Photo 5.28:	Number 73 – Pile of Rubbish	173
Photo 5.29:	Number 42 – Overdevelopment	175
Photo 5.30:	Number 25 - Fish Feeding	178

UMS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

TARP	–	Tunku Abdul Rahman Marine Park
SoP	–	Sense of Place
PMM	–	Place Meanings Matrix
PAT	-	Place Attachment Theory

UMS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

LIST OF APPENDICES

			Page
Appendix A	-	Recruitment Flyer	257
Appendix B	-	Participant Pre-screening Questionnaire	258
Appendix C	-	Interview Guide 1	262
Appendix D	-	Interview Guide 2	264
Appendix E	-	Consent Form	266
Appendix F	-	Photo-taking Instructions	267
Appendix G	-	Photo-taking Tags	268
Appendix H	-	Q-Sort Instructions	269
Appendix I	-	Photographs Data	270
Appendix J	-	Transcription Conventions	271
Appendix K	-	Sample of Full Transcript Part 1	272
Appendix L	-	Sample of Full Transcript Part 2	294
Appendix M	-	Participants Biographical Profile	329
Appendix N	-	Audit Trail	332
Appendix O	-	Data Collection Permit 1	334
Appendix P	-	Data Collection Permit 2	336
Appendix Q	-	ATLAS.ti 7 Codes Data and Thematic Networks	338
Appendix R	-	Dimensions of Place: Data Codes of Themes and Sub-themes	350
Appendix S	-	Locate the Researcher: Personal Reflexivity	351
Appendix T	-	Conferences, Competition and Awards	352

UMS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale of the Study

In tourism, local residents, or the host community is an important stakeholder (Goeldner and Ritchie, 2003) but one that often has no influence upon the development of this industry (Ashworth, 2003; Mowforth and Munt, 2009). Tourism development brings short and long term effects: it is often lauded for the positive economic impacts it brings to destinations. However, tourism can introduce a range of negative impacts to the destination and its community. Evidence of a rise in the costs of living, changes to residential identity and local culture, overcrowding at local recreation areas (both traffic and pedestrian congestion) and environmental consequences of tourism have been documented in the literature (Andereck and Jurowski, 2006; Laakso, 2011). However, there exists other more subjective concerns that are equally important, but given less attention in the literature. People form personal attachments to places which gives them a sense of belonging, purpose and meaning in their lives (Bricker and Kerstetter, 2006). This attachment is the emotional, cognitive and functional construct known technically as Sense of Place (SoP) (Halpenny, 2010). And why is attachment to place worth exploring? The literature suggests developing attachment to one's local area is linked with positive health and community participation outcomes including protecting the environment and the social and physical features of neighbourhoods (Anton and Lawrence, 2014). Other benefits of attachment to place for an individual include a better quality of life, enhanced physical and psychological health, satisfying social relationships, and greater satisfaction with the physical environment (Anton and Lawrence, 2014).

In fact, the literature also suggests that SoP is a positive indicator for destination sustainability (Stedman, 1999). However, the potential for host community SoP as a form of social sustainability has not been directly conceptualised so far. There is room to explore the role of SoP as a principle of 'social sustainability' (Mowforth and Munt, 2003). Within urban community planning, policy makers seek to incorporate social sustainability, but its application lacks clarity. This aspect of sustainability has a relationship with "identity creation, social, political and cultural capital, and even happiness and sense of place" (McClinchey, 2017: 5). According to McClinchey (2017), sustainability policy and initiatives mainly focus on economic and environmental dimensions; social dimensions are under-researched. By definition, social sustainability focuses on 15 key areas including education, employment, quality of life and recreation (McClinchey, 2017). Notably, access to recreation is a facet of social sustainability, and "it is the indicators such as sense of community belonging, level of community activities and meeting places that demonstrate the strongest social dimensions of sustainability" (McKenzie, 2004 as cited in McClinchey, 2017).

SoP has emerged as a human-based approach to managing natural resources (Kaltenborn and Williams, 2002). The meanings that breathe life into geographic space and convert it into 'Place' are informed by human experiences, relationships, emotions and thoughts (Stedman, Beckley, Wallace & Ambard, 2004). Bricker and Kerstetter (2006) implore that tourism developers need to assess how residents feel about their 'place' because quality tourism experiences depend on maintaining the SoP held by residents of a tourism destination. Accordingly, they suggest when development of tourism affects residents' SoP negatively, the quality of tourism experiences sought by tourists and the unique characteristics of place which they found attractive could disappear. In the context of tourism, SoP can be addressed through research on the host community, but gaps remain in the literature. Little is known about how to apply hosts' SoP to promote quality experiences for tourists. Nor is there knowledge of how hosts' SoP transforms over time due to the influence of tourism upon their experiences and relationships to place. This study aims to remedy this shortcoming by exploring how tourism development altered host community relationships to a popular national park. This objective was achieved by conducting an empirical investigation into place

meanings to understand their experiences, relationships and the implications for tourism.

How do residents or the host community feel about tourism development? In a seminal study by Mathieson and Wall (1982), resident perceptions of tourism were found to be positively influenced when there were economic benefits, but negatively inclined due to social and environmental costs. Over a decade later, Jurowski, Uysal and Williams (1997) applied social exchange theory to explain that residents evaluated the impacts of tourism and their support for tourism depending on what they valued. Seven factors included "potential for economic gain, use of the tourism resource, ecocentric attitude, and attachment to the community" and each of these "modify, both directly and indirectly, resident support for tourism (Jurowski, et al., 1997:3). As tourist destinations often experience rapid transformation, whether economic, socio-cultural or environmental, these changes effect the destination host community the most (Singh, Timothy and Dowling, 2003). Why so? Ashworth (2003) proposed that tourism development exerts influences upon stable host communities because they are mere passive reactors to tourism-induced change. In light of development for tourism, it is all the more necessary to document the meanings people attach to places as this provides developers an understanding about culture, values and concerns of the people who built and use these places (Bricker and Kerstetter, 2006). Notably, Mowforth and Munt suggested that local communities "reap few benefits from tourism because they have little control over the ways in which the industry is developed, they cannot match the financial resources available to external investors and their views are rarely heard" (2009: 225). As tourists spend their time and money at a destination, they, inadvertently influence either development or degradation of the local environment (Robinson, Luck & Smith, 2013). Therefore, Page and Connell suggest, "if one of the objectives of tourism development is to benefit the host population, some consideration must be given to the host perspective on impacts and local community carrying capacity values" (2009:415). Nowhere is this more poignant than development which transforms places that are valued by the host community into tourist destinations.

UMS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

Space is empty, but place is full of human experiences; it is meaningful (Tuan, 1974). In tourism, place or the destination is shared by both tourists and residents. A tourist destination can be viewed as the combination of places that generate experiences; but, it is the symbolic nature of these destinations which gives value to the experiences gained (Snepenger, Murphy, Snepenger and Anderson, 2004; Snepenger, Snepenger, Dalbey, Wessol, 2007; Page and Connell, 2009). Moreover, it should be considered that these destinations were first and foremost 'home' to the residents long before becoming tourist destinations (Robinson, et al., 2013). Over time, residents, or hosts comprehend complex and meaningful experiences in a place, including tourism related transformations (Goeldner and Ritchie, 2012; Stylidis, Biran, Sit and Szivas, 2014). How do hosts feel about changes that occur? As these places are usually consumed by tourists (McKercher, Wong and Lau, 2006; Skipper, 2009), studies on tourism are usually ascribed to tourists. Yet, consider that tourists are transient and hosts are permanent; they live with the changes that arrive with tourism development. Tourism related change is undeniable. Cautiously, Singh, et al. (2003: 1) suggested tourism is, "one of the most ingeniously crafted, deliberately propagated and expedient opportunities for social exchange" and "a culprit of negative change, wherein destination environments have deteriorated, cultures changed and economies faltered". The literature suggests that fundamental to the successful development of tourism is the balanced or harmonious relationship between tourists, the people and places they encounter, and the organisations and businesses that provide tourism services (Sharpley, 2014). However, this study contends that host community SoP is also an important ingredient to this balance, as suggested by Bricker and Kerstetter (2006) and SoP can be understood through finding out their place meanings which is the intangible experiences mirroring the value of the place (Wynveen, Kyle, Absher and Theodori, 2011). According to Bricker and Kerstetter (2006:100),:

> "understanding the relationship between local community members and the place in which they live assists tourism planners, operators, and marketers in their development of sustainable quality tourism experiences".

UMS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

How so? Three contributions are possible including an assessment of the appropriateness of the tourism product; consideration of local community aspirations which enhance communication of tourism impact strategies; and responding to the value people assign to special places in order to minimize potential negative impacts (Bricker and Kerstetter, 2006). In the context of tourism, local national parks have evolved into international tourist destinations. Due to the diversity in visitors, conflict is sometimes created due to differences in the way people value or feel about this protected area. "Symbolic and intangible aspects of wilderness experiences are often mistakenly overlooked as sources of conflict" (Williams and Patterson, 1999:154-155). Consider a hiker and all-terrain vehicle (ATV) user sharing the same space, each constructing a different type of experience over the one desired by the other. Such shared space deserves greater attention to understand visitor needs.

A national park is one example of such place shared by both residents and tourists, where all three SoP contributions just mentioned demand attention as it evolves in an international tourist destination. National parks are areas set by a national government for the preservation of the natural environment. As preservation of the environment become prominent, the most effective strategy was to engage the force of law by setting aside areas of a country as national parks (Nash, 1973; Graber, 1995). According to Sarkar (1999), the immediate target was the creation of national parks for recreational use, primarily by short-term visitors. Overtime, the purpose of national parks exceeded public recreation and enjoyment to include preservation of historical or scientific artefacts (Robinson, et al., 2013). The vision of national parks is for its landscape, its flora and fauna to be kept in their natural state with little interruption from recreational activities. Therefore, any development in a national park should be appropriate to this vision. However, Mels, (1999) opined that national parks should not be understood as articulations of untouched wilderness, but rather as spaces constructed by historical and social practices. According to Olwig (1995), the objects, aims and means of conservation change with time and place, and these direct the management and land use of national parks. National parks as tourism destinations were initially established to provide the local community with places to see and experience nature (Saarinen, 2007). Although national parks have had recreational and touristic goals since the

UMS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

early stage of the park movement, the role of tourism in parks is neither historically nor culturally unchanging nor indisputable (Puhakka, 2008) as tourism takes center stage turning national parks into highly visited tourism destinations. Thus the role of tourism development in national parks is of vital concern to ensure preservation of the parks. Because of this, the local community who first utilised and continue to visit the park for recreation should be considered a key stakeholder in any development. National parks as tourism destinations are initially based on the idea that:

> "national parks provide citizens with places to see and experience nature, and parks are thus established to satisfy humans' needs. This does not, however, mean that nature conservation is not taken into account. In this discourse, the primary arguments of protection are not ecological but aesthetic; beautiful landscapes and other marvels of nature are preserved as natural sights and recreation areas. Nature conservation is mostly understood as maintaining the visual characteristics of nature, and economic use does not necessarily conflict with this goal. The discourse considers humans as visitors who do not remain in nature, and it places thus nature outside society and culture"
>
> (Saarinen, 2007: 40-41)

UMS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

According to Puhakka (2008), conservation goals are closely connected to the interests of tourism due to the aesthetic perspective. Early on, the interaction between nature preservation and tourism was seen as an interdependence relationship (Budowski, 1976). This interdependence relationship in national parks is grounded on the idea that the objectives of conservation and recreation can be integrated, which means nature is preserved even with human activities in parks. The main emphasis was on the positive effects of tourism which are beyond economic, but aesthetic, recreational or educational as well. Furthermore, national parks have different kinds of facilities and services that enable the local community to participate in different recreational activities such as hiking and camping to learn about natural areas easily. Some restrictions are, however, placed on tourism and recreation in parks to maintain quality of visitor experiences and ideas of nature. Here, understanding the values assigned to the park and the recreation activities