

**THE EFFECT OF COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM IN BATU PUTEH
KINABATANGAN BORNEO BASED ON VALUE CO-CREATION ON SUBJECTIVE
WELLBEING**

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effect of community-based tourism in Batu Puteh, Kinabatangan, Borneo based on a new study gap variable known as value co-creation on subjective wellbeing. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in community-based tourism as a sustainable development approach that empowers local communities and fosters social responsibility. The problem statement of this study lies in the need for evaluation and understanding of the impact of community-based tourism in Batu Puteh, Kinabatangan, Borneo, on wellbeing, specifically in terms of value co-creation. Specifically, there is a need to assess how community-based tourism contributes to the overall wellbeing of the local community by examining the co-creation of values between tourists and community members. The sample size of this study consists of 284 respondents from the community at Batu Puteh Village. The research method used in this study is quantitative, which involves collecting and analyzing numerical data. Analysis using SEM Amos to examine the relationship between community-based tourism benefited the perceived costs, value co-creation, and subjective wellbeing. The findings of this study contribute to the existing body of knowledge on community-based tourism and its impact on wellbeing. The perceived costs were found not significant in influencing the value co-creation process between tourists and community members in Batu Puteh, Kinabatangan, Borneo. However, overall findings found that community-based tourism in Batu Puteh, Kinabatangan, Borneo, has a positive impact on the wellbeing of the local community.

Keywords: Community-Based Tourism; Value Co-Creation; Community-Based Tourism Subjective Wellbeing; Tourism Impact

Introduction

Community-based tourism in Batu Puteh, Kinabatangan, Borneo, is an approach to sustainable tourism that aims to engage the local community in the decision-making process and management of tourism activities. This strategy places importance on preserving local cultures and biodiversity while ensuring that benefits from tourism are distributed equitably among the residents (Muehlenbein et al., 2012). Additionally, community-based ecotourism in this area focuses on combining nature-focused travel with conservation efforts, education initiatives, support for rural livelihoods, and active involvement of the local population (Sukmana, 2022). Located within the Kinabatangan District along Malaysia's East Coast Sabah region, Batu Puteh Village is overseen by a cooperative known as Batu Puteh Community Tourism Cooperative Limited. The village offers a diverse range of village tourism programs, which encompass various activities related to the conservation of habitats and nature as well as community work (Chan et al., 2021). Volunteer tourists are actively engaged in several projects that aim to conserve nature, such as collecting seeds, restoring trails, cutting trails, building trails, restoring forest habitats, planting trees, restoring lakes, and working in nurseries. In Batu Puteh, Kinabatangan, on Borneo Island, community-based tourism is implemented as a distinctive, sustainable approach that promotes a harmonious coexistence between nature preservation efforts, cultural heritage, and the local community's wellbeing. This strategy prioritizes attaining an optimal blend of immersive experiences within natural environments, relevance towards environmental protection, and educational opportunities while actively involving all members at the site. By promoting conscious visitor behaviour and minimizing negative impacts, such as reducing carbon footprints and practising responsible waste management, community-based tourism aims to create a low-impact and environmentally sensitive form of tourism that benefits both the natural environment and the local community.

Literature Review

Community-based tourism

The issue of community-based tourism is often overshadowed by the emphasis on environmental issues in sustainable tourism (Cole, 2006). The report emphasizes the significance of environmental issues and highlights the prominent role of the natural environment in sustainable development and sustainable tourism. However, it is worth noting that sociocultural issues in tourism have yet to receive proportional attention compared to environmental concerns. These sociocultural aspects are occasionally mentioned or given less emphasis and are often considered less significant or overlooked altogether. For instance, a study of seven edited collections focusing on sustainable tourism during the 1990s reveals that only about 17% of articles were dedicated to community-related issues (Cole, 2006). Community-based tourism entails the active engagement of local communities in in-tourist activities, intending to benefit the community and promote sustainable development (Rosilawati et al., 2021). It is closely tied to community development, capacity building, local empowerment, and fostering local businesses (Rosilawati et al., 2021). The main aim of community-based tourism is to achieve sustainable tourism by incorporating community participation as a fundamental component. This aligns with the principles of sustainable tourism that strive for a balanced approach encompassing economic, social, and environmental dimensions.

One of the main obstacles faced in developing community-based tourism is the requirement to tackle a range of issues that arise. These issues can involve concerns regarding infrastructure, marketing, and engagement with local communities. It is essential to implement strategies that guarantee the long-term viability of community-based tourism, including capacity-building initiatives, empowering local communities, and establishing collaborations

between communities and key players in the tourism industry (Sutresna et al., 2019). It is crucial to implement effective promotional tactics that emphasize the distinct cultural elements and local engagement to advocate for community-based tourism. This objective can be accomplished by organizing events and festivals that not only showcase the indigenous culture and traditions but also generate economic prospects for the community (Rosilawati et al., 2021). From the generated economic prospects, value co-creation theory was developed for the resiliency of community-based tourism (Habibi & Kohli, 2021; Sukmana, 2022)

Value co-creation theory

Value co-creation refers to the collaborative process where tourists and the local community actively participate in creating and experiencing value in tourism activities for economic resilience (Habibi & Kohli, 2021). This concept recognizes that the tourist does not solely determine the value of a tourism experience but is also influenced by the active involvement and contributions of the local community. In the context of community-based tourism in Batu Puteh, Kinabatangan, Borneo, value co-creation involves the active participation of the local community in every stage of the tourism experience, from planning and development to service provision and ongoing management. Through this collaborative approach, tourists can gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the local culture and environment, while the local community can showcase their uniqueness. The definition of value co-creation from a community perspective encompasses the idea that the local community plays a central role in creating and providing value in the tourism experience (Payne et al., 2007; Vargo, 2014). This means that the local community actively contributes their knowledge, skills, resources, and cultural heritage to enhance the overall tourism experience for visitors. By actively participating in co-creating tourism experiences, the local community in Batu Puteh, Kinabatangan, Borneo can improve their own economy and living standards (Steptoe et al., 2015). This can be achieved through various means, such as the creation of job opportunities within the tourism industry, the development of small businesses and enterprises that cater to tourists, and the promotion of cultural heritage and traditional crafts.

Subjective wellbeing

Subjective wellbeing refers to an individual's overall evaluation and perception of wellbeing, happiness, life satisfaction, and fulfilment. In the context of community-based tourism in Batu Puteh, Kinabatangan, Borneo, subjective wellbeing can be influenced by various factors related to value co-creation and community participation (Ibrahim et al., 2019). These factors include the level of community involvement and empowerment, the economic benefits generated from tourism activities, the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, and the overall quality of the tourism experience for both locals and tourists. By actively participating in the value co-creation process, the local community in Batu Puteh can enhance their subjective wellbeing. Gürsoy's subjective wellbeing theory focuses on the relationship between tourism development and the wellbeing of local communities. The sustainability of tourism development relies on public support (Yeniasır & Gökbulut, 2018). This means that the attitudes and perceptions of local people towards tourism play a crucial role in the success and sustainability of tourism initiatives. Positive attitudes are often a result of the economic benefits that tourism brings to the region and its residents. The success of tourism development, including hunting tourism, also relies on the support and positive attitudes of the local community (Matejević et al., 2022). In the context of tourism, social exchange theory has been applied to understand the relationships between tourists and local communities. Tourism development often involves interactions between tourists and residents, and these interactions can have both positive and negative impacts on the community. Social exchange theory helps

to explain how these interactions are shaped by the exchange of resources and the perceived fairness of the exchange.

One study that applied social exchange theory to tourism-community relationships is the research conducted by Andriotis (2005). The study examined the perceptions and preferences of community groups in Crete regarding tourism development. The findings of the study indicated that the perceived benefits and costs of tourism influenced the attitudes and behaviours of the community groups. The study highlighted the importance of a fair and equitable exchange of resources between tourists and the local community for positive tourism-community relationships.

Theory of value co-creation

In the context of community service, value co-creation entails the involvement of community members in the design, delivery, and evaluation of services (Zhang et al., 2022). Community members are not passive recipients of services, but active participants who contribute their knowledge, skills, and resources to address community needs and improve the wellbeing of the community. Payne et al. (2007) propose a process-based framework for managing value co-creation, which can be applied to community service. This framework recognizes the importance of customer involvement, in this case, community members, and places them at the same level of importance as the service providers in co-creating value. It provides a structure for community involvement throughout the service delivery process, ensuring that their perspectives, needs, and aspirations are considered (Ranjan & Read, 2014).

Furthermore, Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) argue that value creation is shifting from a product- and firm-centric view to personalized consumer experiences. In the context of community service, this means that service providers should focus on creating co-creation experiences that involve community members in the design and delivery of services (Shen et al., 2018). By actively involving community members, service providers can tap into their local knowledge, cultural understanding, and social networks, leading to more effective and sustainable community service initiatives (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004).

The interaction between service providers and community members in value co-creation is not limited to a one-way exchange. It involves dialogue, access, transparency, and understanding of risks (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). This means that service providers need to establish open communication channels with community members, foster trust and mutual understanding, and actively listen to their needs and feedback (Fournier, 1998). By engaging in this dialogue, service providers can gain valuable insights and co-create solutions that are more responsive to the specific needs and aspirations of the community (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004).

Value co-creation is a concept that has gained significant attention in the fields of marketing, tourism, and consumer behaviour. It refers to the process of consumers actively participating in creating value with firms or organizations (Piccinini & Schulz, 2018; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Traditionally, value creation was seen as a product- and firm-centric process, where firms would create value and consumers would passively consume it. However, with the rise of empowered and active consumers, the focus of value creation has shifted towards the interaction between the firm and the consumer (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). One theoretical framework that explores value co-creation is the concept of SoCoMo marketing, which stands for Social, Contextual, and Mobile marketing (Buhalis & Foerste, 2015). It emphasizes the importance of leveraging social media, mobile technology, and contextual information to engage consumers in the value-creation process (Buhalis & Foerste,

2015). However, new perspectives have emerged that emphasize intangible resources, the co-creation of value, and relationships (Vargo, 2014). This shift in the dominant logic reflects the changing nature of value creation and the need for firms to engage consumers in the process.

Research hypothesis

Developing research hypotheses could explore the relationship between community-based tourism, value co-creation, and subjective wellbeing in Batu Puteh, Kinabatangan Borneo. The research objective was to understand the level of community-based tourism and value co-creation in Batu Puteh, Kinabatangan Borneo. The development of the hypotheses were as follows:

- H1a. Economic benefits are positively related to support for tourism development.
- H1b. Economic benefits are positively related to value co-creation with tourists.
- H2a. Sociocultural benefits are positively related to support for tourism development.
- H2b. Sociocultural benefits are positively related to value co-creation with tourists.
- H3a. Perceived costs are negatively related to support for tourism development.
- H3b. Perceived costs are negatively related to value co-creation with tourists.
- H4. Support for tourism development is positively related to value co-creation with tourists.
- H5a. Support for tourism development is positively related to resident subjective wellbeing.
- H5b. Participation in value co-creation with tourists is positively related to community subjective wellbeing.

Method

For the analysis, the researcher employed structural equation modelling (SEM) using the SPSS Amos software to analyze the data and test the hypotheses statistically. SPSS Amos was selected for our data analysis due to its suitability for causal-predictive analysis and its requirements for sample sizes and residual distributions. This study employed a face-to-face survey to examine the relationships in the model. Due to the slow response rate, the collection period for the study was extended by three months, making it a total of nine months. Three assistant researchers, who were degree students from UiTM Melaka resident in Melaka and student resident in Sabah at the end of year 2022, were involved in the data collection process. The researchers' assistant utilized the local community and snowball techniques to gather data from dispersed networks. Due to limitations in data collection and the inability to determine the sampling precisely, a non-probability sampling method was employed. This approach does not allow for sampling errors or bias in the research. The questionnaire used in the study was divided into five sections and consisted of 30 questions. The respondents were asked to rate their agreement on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The survey was conducted for a duration of four weeks and resulted in a total of 284 completed questionnaires. The sample in this study consisted of slightly more males (63%) than females belonging to the tribes from Lower Kinabatangan, Sabah. The respondents in the local community had work related to tourism activities. Many participants fell within the age ranges of 41-50 (47%) and 31-40 (27%).

Table 1: Descriptive Result (N=284)

Category	Feature	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	179	63%
	Female	105	36%
Age	20-30	30	11%
	31-40	79	27%

Table 1 (Continued): Descriptive Result (N=284)

Category	Feature	Frequency	Percentage
Age	41-50	135	47%
	>50	39	13.7%
Education	Junior high school and below	155	54%
	Senior high school	99	34%
	Undergraduate	23	8%
	Others	7	2%
Status	Married	126	44%
	Single	98	34%
	Separated	5	2%
	Divorced	20	7%
	Others	35	12.3%
<i>Descriptive Source</i>			

Validating The Measurement Model: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Missing data occurred when some respondents chose not to answer certain questions in the questionnaires, resulting in 80 missing cases in this study. To address this, the highest probability answer given by the overall respondents was selected to fill in the missing data. Outliers were initially identified based on a mild outlier criterion of a score exceeding 1.5 times the interquartile range (IQR). The validity of each factor construct, which consisted of a total of 30 items, was then assessed. The coefficient alpha values were collected, and items with a minimum value of 0.70 were identified and presented in Table 2. In the initial stage, the data underwent a convergent validity test, which evaluates the correlation between each construct and the similarity of items within the study framework. Additional components examined during the convergent validity test included the factor loading of the indicators, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) (Hwang et al., 2010). Items with factor loadings below 0.6 were removed during the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) until the fitness indexes were achieved. The removal of items should be at most 20% of the overall items in the constructs, and a total of six items were removed.

Table 2: Properties of Construct

Constructs	Sub- Constructs Items	Loadings	AVE	CR
Economic benefits			0.83	0.87
EcO03	Tourism improves a better standard of living.	0.753		
EcO04	Tourism provides more employment opportunities.	0.766		
EcO05	Tourism is likely to provide improved business.	0.800		
EcO07	Tourism is likely to provide increased investment.	0.738		
Perceived of costs living			0.62	0.68
Cos02	Tourism results in crowding.	0.612		
Cos03	Tourism results in environmental impact.	0.603		
Cos04	Tourism results in more noise.	0.678		
Cos06	Tourism results in environmental pollution.	0.602		
Cos07	Tourism results in food cost increase.	0.578		
Resident subjective well being			0.85	0.89
RsW02	Supporting tourists enriched my life.	0.921		
RsW05	I am really glad that I support tourists.	0.818		
RsW06	I feel good about myself by helping tourists.	0.738		
Support for tourism development			0.84	0.88
StD01	I support the development of tourism in general.	0.855		
StD02	I support nature-based tourism	0.615		
StD04	I support cultural and historic based tourism	0.687		
<i>AVE = average variance extracted; CR= composite reliability</i>				

Result

Structured Model

Bringing together the structural model requires several steps. Firstly, the fitness of the measurement of all constructs needs to be estimated (refer to Figure 1). Secondly, all hypotheses developed for this study framework should be assessed. Lastly, the significance of the study framework needs to be evaluated. This study examined five main constructs and tested nine planned hypotheses. Economic benefits, social-cultural benefits, perceived cost of living, support for tourism development and co-creation value act mediating the exogenous constructs. The endogenous construct in this study is subjective wellbeing. Common fitness indexes include Chi-Square, RMSEA, and GFI. In this study, the model achieved a satisfactory fit with a Chisq/df ratio of 1.599 (less than 3.0), an RMSEA of 0.053 (less than 0.08), a CFI of 0.911 (greater than 0.90), a TLI of 0.899 (greater than 0.85), and an IFI of 0.912 (greater than 0.90). The structured model, as recommended by (Ogbuanya & Chukwuedo, 2017; Pamungkas et al., 2019) was used to examine the structural model.

The R-square values and the significance of path coefficients were analyzed. The results, presented in Figure 1, indicate that the R² values for resident subjective wellbeing, support for tourism development, and value co-creation with tourists were 66%, 26%, and 28%, respectively. These findings suggest that the model has adequate explanatory power (Swerdlow et al., 2019).

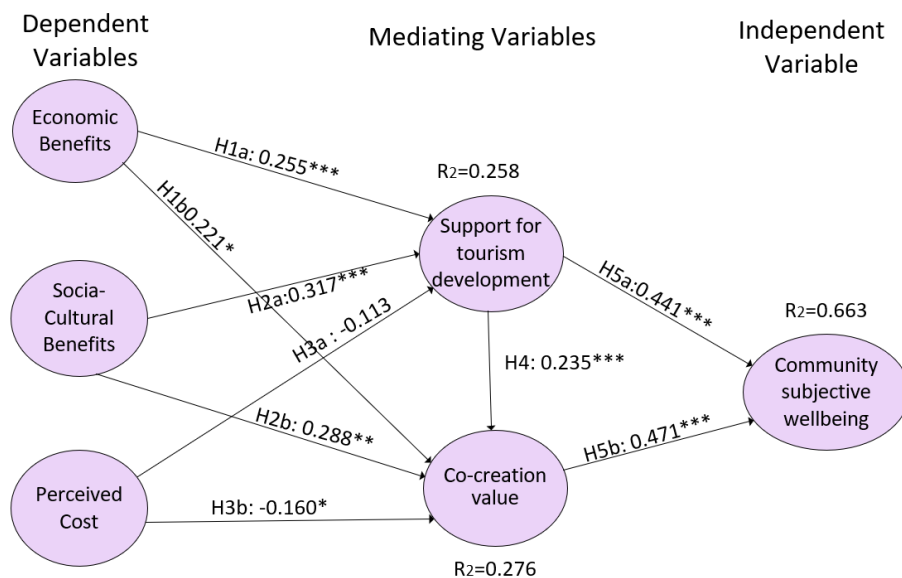


Figure 1: Result from Structured Model

The results demonstrate that economic benefits are positively associated with both support for tourism development ($\beta = 0.255$, $p < 0.001$) and value co-creation with tourists ($\beta = 0.221$, $p < 0.05$), supporting H1a and H1b. Similarly, sociocultural benefits are positively related to both support for tourism development ($\beta = 0.317$, $p < 0.001$) and value co-creation with tourists ($\beta = 0.288$, $p < 0.01$), indicating support for H2a and H2b.

Regarding the relationship between costs and support for tourism development, the results indicate that although the sign of the path coefficient was negative, its value did not reach a

significant level ($\beta = -0.113$, $p > 0.05$). Therefore, H3a, which showed a negative relationship between costs and support for tourism development, was not supported. However, the path coefficient from costs to value co-creation with tourists was negative and significant ($\beta = -0.160$, $p < 0.05$), supporting H3b, which proposed a negative relationship between costs and value co-creation with tourists. While for H4 the result ($\beta = 0.235$, $p < 0.05$) was positive and significant.

The relationship between costs and support for tourism development, the results indicate that while the sign of the path coefficient is positive, it is statistically significant. However, both costs and support for tourism development are positively related to community subjective wellbeing ($\beta = 0.441$ and 0.471 , $p < 0.001$), supporting H5a and H5b.

To assess the indirect effects of perceived tourism impacts, support from tourism, and co-creation with tourists on resident subjective wellbeing, we conducted a bootstrapping procedure with 1000 resamples using bias-corrected and accelerated 95% confidence intervals in SEM Amos. The indirect effect of costs on residents' subjective wellbeing through co-creation with tourists was significant ($p < 0.05$), suggesting that tourism development costs hinder residents' participation in value co-creation with tourists, leading to lower subjective wellbeing. Additionally, all other indirect effects were positive and significant, indicating that perceived benefits of tourism development positively influence residents' support for tourism, participation in value co-creation with tourists, and subsequently, their subjective wellbeing.

According to Figure 1, the R-square value of 0.258 showed that support for tourism development is really influenced by economic benefits, social-cultural benefits, and perceived cost for about 25.8%. R-square indicated medium effect, according to Hair et al. (2017). R-square value of 0.258 (25.8%) represents the proportion of the variance in support for tourism development that can be explained by economic benefits, social-cultural benefits, and perceived cost. The co-creation value R-square value of 0.276 showed that the economic benefits, social benefits, and perceived costs for about 27.6%. R-square indicated a medium effect. R-square value of 0.276 (27.6%) represents the proportion of the variance in support for tourism development that can be explained by economic benefits, social-cultural benefits, and perceived cost. For the result of community subjective wellbeing at Kinabatangan Sabah, between all variables, there was a significant impact with an R-square value of 0.663. This indicates that approximately 66.3% of the variance in the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variables included in the model. The remaining 33.7% of the variance is attributed to other factors not accounted for in the analysis.

Theoretical implication

This study contributes to the theoretical development of resident-tourist value co-creation by proposing and testing a model that examines the effects of tourism value co-creation on residents' subjective wellbeing. Subjective wellbeing is considered part of the value for residents and is derived from their interaction and value co-creation with tourists (Diener et al., 2009). Conversely, tourists gain insider information and advice on how to improve their vacation experiences. Additionally, the perceived benefits of tourism, as explained by social exchange theory, and support for tourism development are positively related to residents' value co-creation with tourists (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). The findings reveal that residents' support for tourism development positively influences their co-creation with tourists, and both value co-creation and support for community-based tourism in Batu Puteh, Kinabatangan, Borneo tourism development impact the community' subjective wellbeing. This suggests that if residents become aware of the benefits of tourism and actively participate in developing the tourism industry, they are more likely to co-create value with tourists. This evidence suggests

that resident support for tourism development and value co-creation with tourists may be volitional. Engaging in small acts of kindness and participating in activities that support tourism development and tourists can increase the wellbeing of the community in Batu Puteh, Kinabatangan, Borneo. Furthermore, activities facilitating social interaction and relationship development, such as resident-tourist value co-creation, can enhance subjective wellbeing.

Limitations of The Study

The study had limitations regarding the sample size or demographic characteristics of the participants. Future research should conduct longitudinal studies to explore the long-term effects of resident-tourist value co-creation on subjective wellbeing. Longitudinal research can help establish causal relationships and capture changes over time. Cross-cultural comparative studies to explore how resident tourists value co-creation and its impact on subjective wellbeing vary across different cultures and communities. Comparative studies can provide valuable insights into cultural differences in tourism interactions. Future research should consider employing qualitative research methods such as interviews or focus groups to gain a deeper understanding of residents' experiences and perceptions regarding tourism development and value co-creation. Other researchers can conduct community engagement programs and propose the development of community engagement programs that educate residents about the benefits of tourism and encourage active participation. These programs can include workshops, seminars, and awareness campaigns. By addressing limitations, proposing future research directions, and outlining practical implications, the discussion section can provide a comprehensive overview of the study's significance and guide future research and real-world applications.

Conclusion

This study contributes to the theoretical development of community value co-creation and its impact on their subjective wellbeing. The findings highlight that tourism contributes more to local communities than economic benefits, as value co-creation with tourists and support for tourism development can increase subjective wellbeing. These psychological benefits are important for community-based tourism in Batu Puteh, Kinabatangan, Borneo for destination marketing and management organizations and government agendas. The findings of this study have practical implications for tourism industry operators and local authorities, who often need to justify investments in tourism development. While politicians and local authorities may prioritize industries that promise higher employment and economic wealth, such as the petrochemical industry, these industries can negatively affect community wellbeing. Therefore, the results of this study can inform decision-making and encourage the incorporation of tourism development into resident well-being-oriented policies. Inclusive policy development that involves residents in policymaking is crucial to ensure effective community integration and to address residents' views and attitudes towards tourism.

Destination marketers can collaborate with local authorities to educate stakeholders, employees, customers, and the wider population about the significant social and wellbeing benefits of interaction and value co-creation. While this study provides valuable insights, there are limitations and opportunities for further research. Future studies could examine the impact of residents' value co-creation on their subjective wellbeing and the impact of tourist activity on community needs, such as belonging or esteem. Additionally, exploring moderating factors and external variables, such as individual moral values, altruistic orientation, stage of tourism development, and the degree of the local economy's reliance on the tourism sector, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships. Replicating the findings in different contexts using rigorous sampling approaches would enhance the generalizability of

the results. Furthermore, distinguishing between helping behaviour motivated by goodwill or self-interest and conducting multi-group analyses based on the economic reliance on tourism could provide further insights into the model and related paths. To deepen the understanding of the relationship between tourism development and residents' wellbeing in Batu Puteh, Kinabatangan, Borneo, future studies can employ cross-sectional surveys to examine residents' subjective wellbeing and perceived income. Additionally, qualitative data can be collected through in-depth interviews with residents to gain further insights into their experiences and perceptions.

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