

Gastronomic Tourism of Sebuyau, Malaysia: An Ecosystem for Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT

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Sebuyau is a fishing village located an-hour drive from Kuching town of Sarawak, Malaysia. As a fishing village, Sebuyau is rich in seafood resources and local culinary experience that can be a stepping stone for gastronomic tourism. However, the local Sebuyau stakeholders has yet to leverage on this opportunity as there is a lack of promotion of the town for its culinary experiences. As such, the premise of the paper is based on two objectives which are to identify the community's local gastronomy, and to propose the gastronomic tourism ecosystem based on the feedback given by the local community. The methodology employed is qualitative approach by conducting personal interviews with the local food service operators, contestants and local resident attending a community cooking competition in Sebuyau. During the competition, the culinary menus generated from the events were recorded to determine the cuisine of Sebuyau. The findings identified 54 types of localized cuisines. The challenges identified in developing gastronomic tourism in Sebuyau include the lack of knowledge among the local community on starting a business including financial management, loans and licencing application, and knowledge on food handling. In conclusion, six components have been identified as the ecosystem for Sebuyau's stakeholders which include training, financial and assistance advisory, infrastructure development, license and permit, innovation programs, and leadership. These ecosystems can serve as guidelines for stakeholders in planning for development of Sebuyau's gastronomic tourism and contribution towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 8 and 9.

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1. INTRODUCTION

For many years now researchers have acknowledged the importance of gastronomic tourism towards tourism development of a destination (Aydin, 2019; Hall & Mitchell, 2006; Horng & Tsai; Pavlidis & Markantonatou, 2020). A year prior to Covid-19 pandemic, Malaysia's tourism industry had total revenue receipt of MYR86.14 billion in which food and beverage expenditure contributed MYR11.46 billion (Mohd Sanip et al., 2021). Gastronomy and tourism industry are complimentary to one another as seeking local food during travel is a product of tourism activities. A popular definition by Hall and Mitchell (2006) refers to gastronomic tourism as tourist visiting primary and secondary producers, restaurant, or specific locations of a region to taste the specialty of food. It goes by other names in the industry including culinary, gourmet, and food tourism. Long (2004), as cited in Kalenjuk et al., 2015, defines gastronomic tourism based on the characteristic of the food which is an authentic traditional food that uses local spices and ingredients, prepared using traditional cooking methods and servings, which in turn intrigue tourists. It can be seen here that local food plays important role in tourism experiences. Smith and Xiao (2008) posited gastronomy tourism as any travel experience where traveller learns, appreciates, and enjoy local gastronomy product. Therefore the primary motivation for gastronomic tourism is to taste the national food and beverages that reflects the local culture of a country (Kalenjuk et al., 2015).

The tourist activities within this context are varied. Ignatov and Smith (2006) and Smith and Xiao (2008), as cited in Horng and Tsai, 2012, had grouped the culinary tourism based on individual groups namely the facilities, activities, events, and organizations. Hong Kong and Singapore primarily promotes food tourism through food festivals and dining at local restaurants (Horng and Tsai, 2012). Cappadocia of Turkey arranges wine tours, wine tasting, wine conferences, and local food competition for gastronomic tourism (Aydin, 2019). One can also acquire gastronomic experiences by tasting *poikilia* of food in a local market in Greece (Pavlidis and Markantonatou, 2020). In the Penang state of Malaysia, the destination offers various cooking class for tourists that are interested to cook traditional dishes with the local hosts. Food tourism can also be part of tour packages where shopping and side-trips to sample local food are included in the itinerary, which is common for countries like Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, China, and India (Zain et al., 2018). As such, gastronomic tourism is an attraction itself that involves the "unique pursuit of eating and drinking" as it does not only satisfy the sense of taste but stimulate other senses such as sense of sights and touch (Pavlidis and Markantonatou, 2020; Sormaz et al., 2016). Tourists tasting the traditional food and beverage while delving in a foreign environment allows them to learn the local culture which creates emotional bonds (Stone et al., 2018). It is these gastronomic experiences that entails the importance of gastronomy as one of the primary activities in tourism.

Gastronomic tourism contributes towards the local economies. When food is carefully integrated into tourism through effective strategies such as marketing and policymaking, it can enhance local economic development (Hall et al., 2003). World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2019) attest gastronomic tourism contributes to Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) where it is a driver to assist various areas in economy such as rural development, job creation, economic growth, and responsible consumption and production.

Durkin Baduria et al., (2023), Mguni and Giampiccoli (2020), and Sosa et al., (2021) sees gastronomic tourism as a make-way for rural developments. For homestay and community-based tourism that operates in rural regions, indigenous food and beverage becomes an important cultural resource for the host community and tourist. The cultural resources for the award winning Panauti Community Homestay in Nepal mainly revolves around domestic

sources such as serving tourists with local meals, tourists participating in cooking class, and visiting farms (Chitrakar et al., 2022). In Jordan, the Covid-19 pandemic had surprisingly pushed many small-time entrepreneurs in rural villages to open traditional cafes and restaurants as more people travelled locally due to closing of international borders (Obeidat, 2023). These traditional cafes make-use of villages' cultural resources such as serving hookahs, use traditional tables and tribal carpets. A study in Sabah, Malaysia (Zain et al., 2018) shows international tourists had high interests in ethnic restaurants, food court and street stalls which reckoned the states to consider food tourism as its cultural tourism resources.

The food business also creates job opportunity and diversify people's source of income. In the case of food stalls business at Amphawa Floating Market, it managed to stimulate job opportunity for the local people, create primary and secondary income through food trade, and encouraged more SMEs (Lunchaprasith, 2017). For the Jordanian rural community, many local people garnered permanent jobs in running the traditional café and restaurants once the destination grew in tourism (Obeidat, 2023). Raji et al., (2018) and Pratt (2013) concurred that food business at rural destination help reduce food miles. Food miles refers to the distance food travels from its production sites which is the farms to the final consumer (Pratt, 2013). Consequently, creating large carbon footprints as the food travels between the value chains. Hence, the nearer the food are consumed from the farm, the lesser the food miles. This in turn encourages tourists to buy locally produced food and help preserve the farmland. Though gastronomic tourism brings positive values towards the rural economy, the grassroot of its success comes from its important players which is the stakeholders.

1.1 Identifying Local Gastronomy and Gastronomic Tourism Ecosystem in Sebuyau, Sarawak

Sebuyau currently posed great potential for rural tourism as the local government is investing on major road redevelopment that will make Sebuyau a gateway to other destinations in Sarawak (Jee, 2023). Based on observation, Sebuyau town currently has food establishment owned by independent small-scale entrepreneurs who are living in the area. It also has local market where visitors can purchase seafood and send it to nearby stalls to cook the dishes. However, the food sectors in Sebuyau only attracts residents living nearby that comes in to dine. Some of the outlook of food establishments found in Sebuyau looks old and the infrastructure require upgrades. Defining the attributes of local food and cuisine identity is crucial when planning for attractive food image at destination (Lai et al., 2018). Conversely, internet search shows there is a limited coverage and promotion on Sebuyau's culinary offerings from formal websites and social media where only two blogs were found to cover on Sebuyau's gastronomy. For social media, there is limited video on YouTube that covers Sebuyau's food where the vlogger only speaks local dialect, which may deter potential English-speaking tourist. The observation unfolds two limitations on Sebuyau. Although Sebuyau is well known among the locals for *ikan terobok* (herring fish), there is lack of formal documentation on gastronomic dishes of Sebuyau that can be used to market food identity. The second is for Sebuyau to be developed as gastronomic destination, it requires a framework to model its gastronomic tourism ecosystem. Okumus et al. (2007), as cited in Mguni and Giampiccoli (2019) postulated the problem with destination is that not all capitalize on opportunities, and not all attempts to use food in marketing activities are done efficiently. Therefore, this paper examines the requirement needed by the community of Sebuyau to invest in gastronomic tourism, focusing from the viewpoints of the stakeholders. By defining the food identity and limitation faced by the stakeholders, a gastronomic tourism ecosystem can be formulated to lead economic enhancement and community development. Hence, the objectives of the paper are:

- i) To identify the local gastronomy associated with Sebuyau.
- ii) To investigate the requirements of the stakeholders for gastronomic tourism so that a comprehensive ecosystem model can be developed.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Stakeholders in Rural Tourism Destinations

The driving force behind gastronomic tourism at rural destinations are the stakeholders who are directly and indirectly links with the provision of gastronomic experience. Freeman (1984) describes stakeholder as any “individuals that affect the achievement of organizational objectives”, which include public bodies such as destination marketing organization (DMO), agricultural producers, entrepreneurs or associations, small shops, restaurants, local community residents through formal and non-formal associations, tour operators and travel agencies (Durkin Badurina et al., 2023; Hribar et al., 2021).

Identifying the different stakeholder’s perspective are intrinsically valuable, as they play significant role in implementing effective development strategies on communities that are dependent upon food products as means of economic gains (Londoño, 2015). As such, different regions and communities modelled different perspectives on what makes gastronomic tourism works for them. However past research has commonly concluded that coordinated efforts and networking by internal and external stakeholders as the main approach for a successful gastronomic tourism among the rural communities (Diaconescu et al., 2016; Durkin Badurina et al., 2023; Horng & Tsai, 2010; Londoño, 2015; Mguni & Giampiccolli, 2019; Quaranta et al., 2016; Sosa et al., 2021). This is due to rural tourism destinations that are located remotely and away from urban areas which is a disadvantage in terms of entrepreneurial opportunities, competitive advantages, and depopulation of residents as the young ones move away to the cities (Quaranta et al., 2016). On the other hand, culinary tourism mainly needs the support from travel agencies and government agencies as small entrepreneurs and farmers do not have the financial means to promote their product using expensive public relations and advertising (Diaconescu et al., 2016). The communities then require strong collaboration between the parties to allow for product development, marketing, and supply chains into the areas. Whereas farmers do not necessarily sell their own products but establish partnership with entrepreneurs to help sell the local produce. Synergies between those who has high knowledge on “know-how” and those with lack of experience (Hribar et al., 2021) should be encouraged where the former can provide guidance to the latter. The sharing of experience is imperative for the community as some of the residents lack exposure and competent knowledge on managing the products. Thus, networking help improves the marketability of tourism regions (Dougherty et al., 2013).

The human resource capital is also a key to sustainable rural tourism. Human capital refers to skills, knowledge, and capabilities of individuals (Becker (1964) as cited in Dougherty et al., 2013). For rural tourism, residents require special knowledge, skills, and motivation to manage and operate gastronomic experience (Durkin Badurina et al., 2023). Stakeholders such as enterprises may have the resources to support gastronomic tourism, however they also require adequate knowledge and skills to utilize those resources (Aydın, 2020). Hence, policies and planning for rural tourism development can be aimed at training to create valuable human resources that can deliver high level of service quality (Nylsuander and Hall, 2005). China’s less-developed destination faced with problem of knowledge on management and marketing due to the resident’s lack of education (Su, 2011). Human capital is crucial for community

economic development because it is low cost and high-impact resource that is transferrable among individuals (Flora and Flora, 1992 as cited in Dougherty et al., 2013). Such the case of Amphawa Floating Market that possess rich resources on ingredients, culinary knowledge and skills by the local people that are rightly used for the development of the floating market (Lunchaprasith, 2017). Therefore, culinary tourism organizations must cultivate professional talent and effectively use human resources to ensure all strategies are implemented properly. (Hornig & Tsai, 2010).

There are also challenges faced by stakeholders, particularly the local community in their effort to be involved in gastronomic tourism. Durkin Badurina and Klapan (2022) shares general classification and barriers towards development of gastronomic tourism in rural areas. Though stakeholder collaboration is a success factor towards rural tourism, it is also one of the challenges that negate the development (Diaconescu et al., 2016). Poor governance, lack of trust, poor collaboration culture, and resource constraint are some of the factors that led to poor collaboration in an ecotourism, or else in rural destination (Wondirad et al., 2018).

Infrastructure and financial constraints are two challenges faced by the local community. Both are related as rural community require the financial viability to invest in the infrastructure for their business or at destination (Su, 2011). Cooperations among community is necessary as they require financial support. During the initial opening of agrotourism in Cyprus, the elderly community could not secure bank loans due to their old age and could not cope with the renovation costs on their property (Sharpley, 2002). Furthermore, it is easier if the rural community to have pre-existing infrastructure and food culture as it requires less investment as compared to regions that do not possess infrastructure or culinary offerings at all (Diaconescu et al., 2016).

2.2 Gastronomic Tourism in Sarawak

The state of Sarawak, Malaysia has gained a reputation for gastronomic tourism. In 2021, the capital city of Kuching was honoured with the title ‘Creative City of Gastronomy’ by UNESCO, while also joining the members of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Creative Cities Network (CCN).

Sarawak’s delicacies are characterized by indigenous food that is passed from generation (Sarawak Tourism Board, 2019). The local flavours are taken from natural resources of Sarawak’s rainforests where each ethnicity owns different delicacies (Langgat et al., 2011). Travel is also an integral part of culinary change. In the past, when people travel (whether for migration, pilgrimage, or trade), they influence both the food environment they travel in as well as foodways of those they interact with (Hall & Mitchell, 2006). Hence, the historical years of Chinese migration into Sarawak have blended the tastes of Sarawak’s delicacies creating a fusion between native and Chinese food (Majlis Bandaraya Kuching Selatan, 2023). Such as one can see the infamous *Mee Kolok* and *Laksa Sarawak* that are both identified as a Sarawak and Chinese-Sarawak delicacies. *Laksa Sarawak* once gained international attention when it was featured in a travel program hosted by the late television host Anthony Bourdain who commended the dish; and it ranked number 1 in Asia by TasteAtlas.com (Sarawak Tourism Board, 2019). This dish is one of the featured stories told on the Kuching Creative Cities website in addressing Sarawak’s cultural heritage in gastronomy.

The recognition of Kuching City as the ‘Creative City of Gastronomy’ presents an opportunity for other regions in Sarawak to benefit from and leverage the potential of gastronomic tourism.

This is seen by the government's support when it encouraged hawkers' business at Ramadhan bazaar (a street market that sells food during Muslim Ramadhan month) to present array of Sarawak's gastronomy in accord with the state's recognition as a 'Creative City of Gastronomy' (C, 2023).

2.3 Sebuyau as Potential for Gastronomic Tourism

The case study focuses on rural town of Sebuyau, where Universiti Teknologi MARA in Sarawak has implemented a project called eTourP. eTourP is a Malaysian government-funded project that involves knowledge-transfer program for the community to develop sustainable tourism in areas of ecotourism, homestay, and gastronomic tourism. The project conduct trainings session to equip residents with fundamental business and information technology skills enabling them to venture on tourism business using local resources.

Sebuyau is a one-hour drive away from Kuching city surrounded by fishing villages with direct access to the seas. The population is about 20,000 people (Chiam, 2021) which consists of communities from different ethnic groups from Sarawak-Malay, Chinese, and Iban. These communities mainly work as fishermen, government servants, farmers, small-medium entrepreneurs, and others. The town's position is slightly rural as it is away from the main city where a single-trunk road connects the town with other parts of the Kuching-Samarahan area. During the festive season, the road will be full of vehicles that travel to other regions in Sarawak via ferry in Sebuyau.



Figure 1: Map showing the road and distance from Kuching to Sebuyau
Source: Google Map

Of late, the Sarawak Government has devised plan to construct the new Batang Sadong Bridge that connects with Sebuyau. The bridge is expected to reduce the travelling time between destinations in Sarawak and is expected to complete by 2025 (Jee, 2023). The improvement in infrastructure will result in increased traffic through Sebuyau. As a result, there will be opportunities for the town's residents to provide food and beverage services, or to create a distinctive marketing strategy to attract visitors to dine in Sebuyau. Raising the standards of living of the Sebuyau residents through road development programs has always been an endeavour by the government as the opening of the road will create positive impacts on the surrounding areas (Jee, 2023). Proximity to urban areas is important in developing food tourism at rural destinations (Dougherty et. al, 2013) as it can attract day tripper. Although rural, Sebuyau has the advantages of the road and locating not far away from Kuching city that can attract day-trip tourists.

Like other locales in Sarawak, Sebuyau's communities are known to serve dishes that are obtained from local resources. Sebuyau is known among the locals for its signature food including the *ikan terubok*, *botok*, *umai obor-obor* dan *sayur umbut nipah* (Majlis Daerah

Simunjan, n.d.) However, having distinctive gastronomy is insufficient for an economic growth as the community must first develop, and market their gastronomic products (Aydın, 2020; Su, 2011).

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed qualitative approach by interviewing six (6) respondents consisting of a local foodservice operator, participant from a knowledge-transfer community program called eTourP, cooking competition contestant and local visitor attending the community cooking competition in Sebuyau. The respondents chosen are local residents and based on their ability to communicate with the interviewer to give feedback on their perspective of gastronomic tourism in Sebuyau. During the local cooking competition, the researcher systematically records the dishes menu generated from the events to determine the traditional cuisine of Sebuyau. The cooking competition event was chosen due to the convenience of obtaining the information directly from the contestants. Some of the contestants consisted of local food operators in Sebuyau while others are local community.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Gastronomy of Sebuyau, Malaysia

The traditional dishes cooked during the cooking competition was documented and analyzed. The results identified a total of 54 traditional dishes belonging Sebuyau. The menu is separated into breakfast (15 menus), lunch (31 menus) and afternoon tea (8 menus) (table 1). For analysis, the food is grouped into separate categories to determine its nature including rice, *kueh* (dessert or savoury snacks), dishes or *lauk*, vegetable, and fruit-based dishes. Fried rice or *nasi goreng* is mainly served for breakfast menu where the unique fried rice identified is the *nasi goreng dabei* that uses geographically exclusive fruit of Sarawak called Dabai (*Canarium odontophyllum*). While the *kueh* or snacks mainly use ingredients found in Sarawak including coconut, banana, *pandan* leaf, shrimp, and gourd. In general, Malaysian heritage dishes are rice-based, agro-food, seafood, leave-wrapping with combinations of tastes (Omar and Omar, 2018). The dishes or *lauk* cooked during the events are side dishes that is commonly consumed with rice. Apart from the bamboo chicken of *pansuh ayam kampung lada hitam* and *pansuh manok buluh perindu* that uses meat, the rest of the dishes are seafood-based which are the main economies of Sebuyau, such as *ikan terubok* (herring), *ikan panjang* (long fish), blowfish, *ikan pirang* (gold-colored fish), mud crab, shrimp, and jellyfish. The menu indicates the main staple of Sebuyau is seafood cooked into traditional dishes, which can be promoted as an identity of Sebuyau’s gastronomic tourism. The vegetable and fruit-dishes cooked in the competition is banana-based such as the banana fruit, *jantung pisang* (banana heart) and *umbut pisang* (banana shoots). The difference for fruit-based dishes is that two of the dishes served is to be eaten alone without rice. Some of the menu names are common in Sarawak (e.g *nasi aruk*, *umai*), while other menu names were adjusted using localized resources such as wild food found in Sebuyau.

Table 1: Sebuyau’s Traditional Cuisine Identified from Local Cooking Competition

Category of dishes/meal	Breakfast menu	Lunch menu	Teatime menu
Rice	1. Nasi goreng pedas, 2. Nasi goreng dabei,	1. Nasi goreng Urang Buyo	

	3. Nasi aruk ikan semperit		
	4. Nasi aruk Kampung Sri Ru		
Kueh (snacks or dessert)	5. Buah bandung seribu rasa	2. Kalok nyiur muda	1. Anak raja mandi,
	6. Cucur labu manis	3. Udang kering masak manis	2. Arak-arak bandung
	7. Kuih chang pandan wangi	4. Pais udang kelapa parut	3. Cucur udang
	8. Kuih penyaram	5. Otok-otok	4. Cucur payak kekasih hatiku,
	9. Lepat pulut pisang		5. Hati yuk bonda,
	10. Putu mayang kelapa parut		6. Jabang goreng cheese,
	11. Takey pandan wangi		7. Kuih melaka uwais
	12. Tumpik lemantak madu		
	13. Lempeng tepung gandum		
Dishes or Lauk		6. Asam pedas ikan buntal	8. Bandung perisa kari
		7. Ikan terubok masak lemak	
		8. Ikan terubok pulau pucuk ubi	
		9. Ikan terubok rempah asam pedas	
		10. Ketam lemak tempoyak	
		11. Lumek salei masak lemak cabik Geronong	
		12. Asam pedas ikan buntal (blowfish)	
		13. Steamed ikan terubok pucuk ubi	
		14. Ikan panjang masak lemak	
		15. Botok	
		16. Ikan pedas rempah rasa pedas	
		17. Pansuh ayam kampung lada hitam	
		18. Pansuh manok buluh pengrindu	
		19. Udang cincang masak pedas,	
		20. Udang masak cili padi	
		21. Umei ikan pirang	
		22. Umei obor-obor	
		23. Urap bandung	
Vegetable		24. Sayur umbut pisang bumbu pedas	
		25. Sayur umbut pisang masak lemak	
		26. Bumbu pedas	
		27. Jantung pisang sambal belacan	

		28. Jantung pisang masak lemak
		29. Kerabu jantung pisang
Fruit dishes	14. Pisang tanduk	30. Pisang oten masak lemak
	15. Jagung rebus nyiur parut	31. Pisang masak lemak

Source: author's own compilation



Source: Author's own collection

Figure 2: Local delicacies of Sebuyau presented during the cooking competition

4.2 Findings based on Personal Interview with Stakeholders

The proposed gastronomy tourism ecosystem for Sebuyau is the outcome of personal interviews conducted with Sebuyau community members and food service providers. Based on the interview, six (6) components were identified as the areas that need to be developed for the model. The table 2 presents the components for Sebuyau's model to capitalize their gastronomic tourism including training, financial assistance, infrastructure, license and permits, innovation programs, and leaderships. Thus, government agencies and other stakeholders should investigate these components when planning further gastronomic tourism.

Table 2: Components for gastronomic tourism ecosystem

Component	Verbatim
Training on business such as product development, finance and marketing, food handling and halal awareness	"...problem in differentiating product offering...need training to know how to manage resources. The training is important to make others see the opportunity to make money and upgrade standard of living and income generation" (R1).
	"...need to know how to handle food so that it is hygienic and fit for market requirements" (R2)
	"Our food here is suitable for Muslim. We also do not consume pork in our daily food". (R3)
Financial assistance and advisory	"We need help in the knowledge of starting a business". (R1)
	We need someone to guide us on how to apply for loans so that we can open the business" (R5)

Infrastructure development	<p><i>"I think I need a proper shop for me if I need to operate a restaurant". (R4)</i></p> <p><i>"...should be an attractive site with proper amenities provided so people can sell their food" (R2)</i></p> <p><i>"...the road needs electric...sometimes it's too dark...signage for visitors...also the dispensary important" (R1)</i></p>
License and permits	<p><i>"...We need some ideas on how to get permits...grants...license too" (R1)</i></p>
Innovation programs	<p><i>"We should do the competition every now and then so that we can initiate something new for our gastronomy". (R5)</i></p> <p><i>"This competition has a storytelling session...when we do a presentation, we have to talk about the food like how to eat, when to eat and maybe some background of the food". (R6)</i></p> <p><i>"For this competition, we use only local resources for cooking and decorations. Such as coconuts from farms are used as decoration, we use local fish caught by our fishermen". (R6)</i></p>
Leadership	<p><i>"We feel leader can bring us together to the vision of a project" (R1)</i></p> <p><i>"...a leader can motivate us...when we are feeling down" (R4).</i></p>

Source: Author's own compilation

4.3 Discussion

4.3.1 Training

Training is the foremost component that is currently needed by the Sebuyau community members. Training areas varied from basic knowledge on food preparation such as food handling, processing, and culinary skills; to marketing, communication, and digital knowledge to create brand awareness and promotion of Sebuyau's gastronomic tourism. The basic culinary and food handling training is required especially for residents that are directly involved with provision of food and beverage services.

Marketing and digital skills is evident based on observations made on Sebuyau's online promotion through social media. In this age, social media has become an important communication channel by restaurants where it can influence users' decision making (Éva, et. al, 2017). As of the time of research, the exposure on Sebuyau's gastronomic tourism is still limited to personal websites and local news. Furthermore, the current YouTube contributor that discovers Sebuyau's food tourism only spoke of local Sarawak dialect, and not English. Thus, this may restrict the number of viewers to only local viewers. Digital and communication skills training should be given to empower the local villagers to use social media and leverage the marketing opportunities provided by the channel.

Sebuyau's residents also consists of Iban community which majority are non-Muslims. The Iban community's longhouses such as *Rumah Panjang Kampung Belimbing Besi* are communal longhouses that are ready to accept visitors to its homestay. Hence, when they received the guests, they will need to provide food and beverages for the guests. Despite the non-Muslim community's current awareness on Halal concept, a formal training on managing Halal food would be an added advantage. The non-Muslim community can also be trained for Halal awareness if they were to operate food service operation for tourists.

4.3.2 Financial Assistance Advisory

One of the evident challenges mentioned by the community is their financial management. It was informed by interviewees that finance is one of the barriers for the community to be involved in entrepreneurship. A workshop can be held for the community where related bodies can give advice and guidance on financial assistance available. This is especially in starting business such as guidance on how to apply for grants, loans, and start-up business. As concurred by Londoño (2015) the importance of information to those that are involved in devising strategies in gastronomic industry. Such information should be disseminated among the community members.

4.3.3 Infrastructure

The newly planned Batang Lupar Bridge that connects Sebuyau to Betong town in a few years' time will provide economic opportunities for the community. Proper infrastructure planning must be addressed to create business opportunities for Sebuyau residents to accommodate travellers that pass through Sebuyau. Therefore, the physical aspect is one of components for Sebuyau's gastronomic tourism development. Proper sites and buildings should be redeveloped at Sebuyau's main town to cater for shops and restaurants. The building can be designed with aesthetic values so that it can appear tourism-friendly and fit for food and beverage outlets. General infrastructure should also be upgraded such as signage, roadside electricity, and internet connections. This calls out for local government and town planners to meet and collaborates with the community for upgrade projects. Consideration should be given to developing rest areas where food outlets and retails can be operated by local Sebuyau community members. Thus, involuntarily promoting local delicacies and local products to the travellers.

4.3.4 License and Permits

It was revealed the community members needed guidance in applying for a business license and permits. Due to the lack of exposure, the community member does not know how and where to apply for business application. Furthermore, the distance of Sebuyau to Kuching and nearby town deter the community members to travel to do the application at respective offices. Therefore, a program should be organized for the community members to learn about applications for licenses and relevant permits from inland revenue and local authorities. Programs such as a workshop should be set up where representatives from related agencies assist the community members with the documentations needed to apply for the license and permit. It should also cover information such as terms and conditions of the license and permits, and relevant authorities and agencies they can refer to for the applications.

4.3.5 Innovation Programs

One of the challenges of Sebuyau's gastronomic tourism is identifying its traditional food which could be promoted as the local menu of the place. Sebuyau is well known for its *ikan terubok* (fish) seasons, but its traditional food identity is not well known in tourism. One of the means to achieve this is by organizing annual cooking festivals such as cooking competition events that taps into local traditional dishes cooked by the residents. The cooking competition event that was previously held managed to identify 54 different menus served in Sebuyau. The menu was recorded and will be published into a book as part of the heritage effort in preserving Sebuyau's gastronomic identity.

The cooking competition also sees positive outcome from the participants where innovative dishes and storytelling managed to attract the crowds. The competition should be continued to encourage more participants to promote the culinary experience and innovate the local dishes. Food festivals and events plays significant role in fostering regional development that provide advantages for producers and local business by promoting their product and services (Rinaldi, 2017). The innovation created during the competition is an opportunity for the local community to apply for intellectual property. Application for intellectual property rights on the menu cooked by the residents can be implemented so that the residents have exclusive rights to market the food to the tourists.

To add value in tourism, food storytelling should be researched and recorded. It is common for tourism attractions and destination to leverage on storytelling to captivate tourists and create authenticity (Frost et al., 2020). Mossberg and Eide (2017) studies in Nordic country shows how storytelling on meals enhances creative experiences on restaurants. Narrative interviews with village elderly, cooks, residents and even fishermen on heritage food can be conducted to gain stories on heritage and history of the food. The outcome of the story should be included to promote the food and destinations by travel agents and tour guides, which could help tourist to gain better understanding on the value of the food and the necessity to go for a trip to Sebuyau. The outcome of such innovation can contribute to the list of Kuching's UNESCO Creative City Network for gastronomic tourism.

4.3.6 Leaderships

The respondents mentioned “*we feel leader can bring us together to the vision of a project*” and “*...a leader can motivate us...when we are feeling down*” indicate the needs for strong leadership to facilitate effective collaboration in the community's project. The community required good leadership to motivate them to undertake tourism projects through local associations so that they can fulfil their visions. Leadership components has been one of the continuous elements in the success of rural communities' development towards tourism. Aydın (2020); Wondirad et al., (2020); Moscardo et al., (2017) suggested that lack of leadership is one of the obstacles in cooperations between stakeholders as leaders need to communicate with different group of stakeholders for development, training, and education. As such, for Sebuyau to instigate infrastructure development and trainings on the local people would require a leader that can communicate with different parties involved. In the context of Sebuyau, the leader's role is directed by head of community associations, head community or head village, and the local government.

Figure 3: Gastronomic Tourism Ecosystem for Sebuyau



Source: Author's own compilation

5. CONCLUSION

Sebuyau's gastronomy has been identified with local produce and seafood, local fruits and rice which can be used to promote Sebuyau's dishes in the tourism industry. The findings on the stakeholders show managerial implications that Sebuyau must consider when developing gastronomic tourism, including requirements for trainings, assistance in financing, development of infrastructure, assistance in license and permits, creation of innovative programs and leadership by village leaders of local government. Hence, the development of this model contributes to the theoretical knowledge which can be applied by communities and destinations in developing gastronomic tourism. Thus, promoting SDG 8 and 9 which are sustainable economic growth and building resilient infrastructure and promoting inclusiveness.

The food identified in the research is limited to Sarawak-Malay ethnic food whereas there are other ethnic groups living in Sebuyau. The list of food identified is based on food presented at a cooking competition. The small sample size of respondents provides limited depth of the study.

The current study can be extended into a wider background of respondents in the future. As the food identified is mainly from Sarawak-Malay ethnic, future research can identify Iban ethnic food of Sebuyau. There is an opportunity for research on heritage food of Sebuyau which can assist the different ethnic community in storytelling. Business management research can investigate the service delivery of the local food provider in terms of quality and delivery.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

AZAR led the research by initiating ideas, communicating with Sebuyau residents, and wrote the methodology and analysis. JAA sets the paper structure, writing of introduction, literature review, conclusion, and final editing. JKA contribute ideas of discussion, communicating with local communities and collecting data during competition. LYBK led discussion with local communities and data collection during competition. ZB and SAK assists in discussion of ideas and data analysis.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None declared

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