THE READINESS OF IMPLEMENTATION ISO/TC 228 WG 7 ADVENTURE TOURISM: TOURISM PROVIDER PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Adventure Tourism was a growing market internationally. However, the implementation and the lack of study concerning of ISO Adventure Tourism was shown the gap of knowledge in this field. Therefore, the aim of this study is identify the willingness of adventure tourism provider to implement the ISO Adventure Tourism. The study covers two objectives: i) to determine the readiness of adventure tourism provider to implement ISO Adventure Tourism, and ii) to evaluate the challenges for adventure tourism provider to implement ISO Adventure Tourism. The study used qualitative approach with five (5) adventure tourism providers are selected as respondents. The information collected was analysis using ATLAS.ti software. The findings show that the providers were agreed that they were ready to implement ISO Adventure Tourism, but the cost becomes a main challenge for them since they were only SMEs. In addition, the study shows that the respondents have similar views towards ISO certification which gives high value for the market and quality of services. The knowledge on ISO certifications would surely give significant benefits for the providers. Hence, the study has come out with recommendations for adventure tourism providers to overcome the challenges such as engage more with government or local authorities regarding ISO certifications.

Keywords: Adventure Tourism, Certification, ISO, Tourism Provider, Qualitative Approach

INTRODUCTION

International Organization for Standardization (ISO) was an organization that was known for establishing international standards that get things going especially for manufacturing or products. The organization gives world-class product, service, and system specifications to ensure quality, safety, and efficiency (ISO, 1995). International standards of ISO were, in general, technical requirements for the architecture, measurements, interoperability, efficiency of products and processes of how something should be operated or interact (Heires, 2014). ISO has issued 23037 International Standards and related documents covering almost every field, from technology to food safety, agriculture, healthcare since 1946 until the current (ISO, 1995). One of the International Standards in ISO was ISO/TC 228 – Tourism and related services. ISO/TC 228 was divided into several working groups related to tourism and services, such as ISO/TC

228 WG 7 – Adventure Tourism. This research will focus on ISO/TC 228 WG 7 – Adventure Tourism.

Many countries have been implementing ISO/TC WG 7 – Adventure Tourism especially the Europe region. Some associations provide certification for the members such as Aventure Écotourisme Québec in Québec, The Brazilian Adventure and Ecotourism Association (ABETA) in Brazil, Tour and Safari Association (TASA), The Mexican Association for Adventure Travel and Ecotourism (AMTAVE) in Mexico and an organization that famously recognized all around the world, Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA). The organizations focus on providing, regulating the quality and safety of adventure tourism offered around the area (UNWTO, 2014). ISO for adventure tourism has been established since 2013; ISO/TR 21102:2013 - Adventure tourism — Leaders — Personnel competence.

Due to an increase of demand for adventure tourism activities and providers, customer satisfaction requirements can relate to product design, manufacture, supply, service and support, QMS, communication, financial requirements, etc. (Biswas, 2018). This shows that the quality of services would be best evaluated through ISO certification and implementation of ISO standards would affect the quality management of services in adventure tourism. Thus, the gap of knowledge shows that the readiness and challenges faced by adventure tourism providers may affect them to implement the ISO Adventure Tourism. Adventure tourism needs to have a professional guide to provide technical support and equipment (Buckley, 2007). This was the reason ISO/TC 228 WG 7 – Adventure Tourism has been established to provide a guideline for adventure tourism operators to be used in their companies' activities in the future. Therefore, this research would help in evaluating the willingness and challenges of the adventure tourism provider to implement ISO/TC 228 WG 7 - Adventure Tourism. It was crucial to identify how ready the adventure tourism providers were as the demand for adventure tourism increase to assess the readiness of the adventure tourism provider to implement ISO/TC 228 WG 7 - Adventure Tourism.

What was promising was that the certification programs made it possible for businesses to minimize costs, primarily related to the environment (water, waste and energy savings). The cost-saving advantage or training assist has helped to strengthen management strategies and procedures, but there was little reason to be part of the credential label because there was no proven marketing value. In addition, certification programs were expensive to administer and most of them were funded by governments or foreign funding agencies. They were also expensive to undertake for individual activities, and so far have struggled to deliver on expected marketing benefits and customer awareness (Joppe, 2005).

This was supported by Bosque (2014), where understanding towards the environment and sustainable development still remains poor. Not many SMEs were convinced that obtaining an ISO certificate as an important business decision. For instance, very little empirical information exists on systematic experiences from the implementation processes and only some survey studies were performed on the ISO 14001-certified companies (Bozena Poksinska, 2003). Basak Manders (2015) stated that the companies implement different quality management practices to extend quality, but ISO 9001 being the foremost commonly used. Companies also expect to extend their innovation performance by implementing ISO 9001. Implementing International Standards should be easy for companies to give their best services. Therefore, this research focuses to identify the willingness of adventure tourism provider to implement ISO Adventure Tourism. The objectives of the study were as follows: i) to determine the readiness of adventure

tourism provider to implement ISO Adventure Tourism, and ii) to evaluate the challenges for adventure tourism provider to implement ISO Adventure Tourism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Best practice for adventure tourism have been discussed in the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) covering the risk reduction and safety, cultural and environmental. International standards were usually endorsed or/and accepted by an organization of the industry but were also often established from within the market and adhered to on a voluntary basis. Compliance with the standards was not always followed, but over time it can become apparent to business owners that adopting the standards was in their best interest. UNWTO emphasizes adventure guiding standards will also evolve aligned with the adventure tourism standards. Many standards and training programs were done to show how to lead various types of adventure activities from a technical aspect.

This will need an effective, responsible, and secure adventure tourism activity to require a more comprehensive collection of skills and processes than a strictly technical one. Thus, only one officially recognized standard specific to adventure tourism was the Adventure Tourism Safety Standard: ISO/TC 228 WG 7 – Adventure tourism, due to the increasing demands of adventure tourism with the increase in technical activity standards and tourism quality assurance systems (UNWTO, 2014). Destinations that have emphasized active and adventure tourism often establish regional associations that control the quality and safety of this type of tourism offered in their region. Many of these associations offer certificates to members who meet with environmental or safety requirements (O`ROURKE, 2018).

Research by Susan Houge Mackenzie and John Kerr (2013) offers rulings for 'healthy' or appropriate tour guidelines and defines problems of professionalism in particular destinations (e.g. Ap & Wong, 2001; Black & Ham, 2005). Since these factors may influence team-leading experiences, they were worth examined briefly. Characteristics of, for example, a well-guided driving trip include effective leadership and teamwork, readiness, effectiveness, time and group management, customer engagement, and the provision of adequate safety and travel guidance. Many of these characteristics were expressed in the published guidelines outlining the consistency of 'nice' tour guides (Susan Houge Mackenzie, 2013). Several standards to provide a better guideline regarding types of tourism were established by ISO/TC 228 – Tourism and related services. Standards such as environmental standards, diving standards, river activities' standards, also adventure tourism standards. ISO/TC 228 – Tourism and related services have come out with ISO/TC 228 WG 7 – Adventure Tourism. Under the ISO 228/TC 228 WG 7, there were four standards have been published (Table 1):

No.	Label	Document Name	Year
**Table 1** **LISTS OF ADVENTURE TOURISM'S ISO/TC 228 WG 7 – ADVENTURE TOURISM**		
1	ISO 20611:2018	Adventure tourism — Good practices for sustainability — Requirements and recommendations	2018
2	ISO 21101:2014	Adventure tourism — Safety management systems — Requirements	2014
3	ISO 21103:2014	Adventure tourism — Information for participants	2014
4	ISO/TR 21102:2013	Adventure tourism — Leaders — Personnel competence	2013

Implementation of ISO Standard

A vast variety of best practices has been developed around the world that can be implemented to improve environmental pollution issues. Examples of good practice involve a broad approach to the production of facilities and training courses for operators and visitors by charging for the activities, commercialized fund-raising activities, photograph, and clothing. For example, a case study at Mount Kinabalu where the park charges entry fees, charges for shelters in the mountains, monitors the number of people climbing per day, and charges for a local guide to accompany per team climbing on the "No guide, no climb" principle.

The guide ensures that operators and visitors follow the rules of the park, share on sustainable practices, and teach visitors about the natural environment (Soutar, 2005). Khatri (2018) stated that there was a rise in demand as well as the availability of adventure tourism. In emerging and developed markets, the growth of the sector was attractive, with increasing growth of income in those markets. Countries such as Czech, Israel, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Chile, Romania, etc. were some of the developing markets that already implement standards for adventure tourism. On the other hand, the supply of adventure tourism was increasing, with the growth of qualified and experienced adventure providers and the promotion of destinations based on brand identity (Khatri, 2018). Thus, it can be concluded that standards for adventure tourism need to be established and some already established such as the diving standards, adventure tourism standards and others. Countries such as Quebec, Brazil, Australia and New Zealand have already implementing adventure tourism standards (UNWTO, 2014).

Relevant Standard Implementation

Implementation ISO standards for adventure tourism provider or professionals do not necessarily follow specifically on adventure tourism, but may also participate in other ISO that was relevant for them. The certificates that validate the quality such as Hospitality and guest service standards which was ISO 9001: 2008, quality of attractions and venues such as Malta Tourism Authority that offers a "Quality Assured Seal", and quality of interpretation provided by guides such as Field Guides Association of Southern Africa (UNWTO, 2014). Certifications were seen as a way to tells about the quality to consumers, showing that the service provider was a professional.

Certifications may be awarded by the government or certification bodies that responsible for validating the companies or providers was following to particular standards or guidelines (UNWTO, 2014). Standards such as ISO 14001 – Environmental Management and ISO 9001 – Quality Management have been popular around the world to be implemented by organizations as a strategic approach to remain competitive (Hung Chung Su, Suvrat Dhanorkar & Kevin Linderman, 2015).

The scholars believe that competitive advantage derives from a firm variety. However, ISO norms promote a certain degree of similarity or isomorphism between companies. For example, customers may require their suppliers to obtain ISO 9001 certification to ensure a certain level of quality service. ISO 9001 certification reduces the variability of quality output between suppliers (Hung Chung Su et al., 2015). Many researchers highlighted the need and significance of policies promoted and enforced at the level of tourist destinations, particular systems, manipulation of tourist resources, individual and collective human acts (Daniela Firoiu, 2019).

Challenges to Implement ISO Adventure Tourism

The implementation of certification and eco-labeling has been inconsistent and, while there were advantages to setting basic requirements for these programs, the programs were not global and there was no critical mass of certified goods (Joppe, 2005). ISO was the key for the society to ensure the quality and safety met the requirements and demands in the international level. Any business would benefit from ISO standards as it will help cut costs by improving systems and procedures.

Furthermore, environmental effects can be lessened and new markets and consumers will be available. This, for example, guarantees quality and safety concerning to processes and goods by applying ISO 9001, the quality management standard, as a result of which customer loyalty may be improved due to the confidence generated by ISO standards. This leads to why ISO requirements were good for customer trust. Products and services that follow specified specifications will offer consumers trust (Approachable certification, 2016).

ISO 9001 has been used worldwide to promote better quality management systems. It was a norm that helps the organization deliver consistent results and continually enhances the process. Karolina et al. (2016) stated that introducing ISO 9001 can cause a lot of problems in the organization, people can even say that in every field of the organization, people can identify flaws with the certification standard. Based on their research, four main categories of problems were identified. The factors were the management factor, financial factors, human factors, and process factor.

The factors comprises different parts of explanations of why it was a problem. There were several issues that may occur during the implementation of ISO 9001 or any other ISO standard (Karolina et al., 2016). Hussein et al. (2017) stated that after a close look at the weaknesses and strengths of the higher education agencies, seven major issues have prevailed; the main problems have been illustrated as regards which were the obstacles to the implementation of ISO 9001. The seven challenges identified were lack of awareness, conflict to change, the existence of certification, the commitment of top management, time management, and resource accessibility. This can be seen that the challenges to implement ISO varies even though it was the same as ISO 9001 standards. Thus, the challenges identified to implementing ISO Adventure Tourism was then identified and categorized into three factors based on Karolina, Aneta, & Magdalena (2016) are: management factor, process factor and financial factor.

METHODOLOGY

This study would go through all four standards of ISO/TC 228 WG – Adventure Tourism; the uses and relation for adventure providers and services to identify the readiness and evaluate challenges for adventure tourism providers to use and implement the International Standards. The study would be done in Perak, Malaysia as it was a state with vast nature surrounding and suitable for adventure tourism activities. Five (5) different adventure tourism companies in Perak, Malaysia were chosen to be interviewed to assess the readiness and challenges faced by adventure tourism provider to implement ISO/TC WG 7 – Adventure Tourism. This companies

were chosen as they serving adventure tourism services in Perak, Malaysia and making them suitable as the respondents for this research.

Sampling Design

Non-probability samples with purposive sampling would be used in the research. Purposive sampling strategy was chosen as it were non-random ways of ensuring that individual categories of cases within a sampling universe were represented within the final sample of a project. The rationale for employing a purposive strategy was that the researcher assumes, supported their prior theoretical understanding of the subject being studied, that certain categories of people may have a novel, different or important perspective on the phenomenon in question and their presence within the sample should be ensured. The sample size for a qualitative experiment was determined by theoretical and practical considerations. Robinson (2013) stated that researchers using International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) were presented with a guideline of 3–16 participants for a single sample, with the lower end of the scope recommended for undergraduate projects and the upper end for large-scale sponsored projects. Thus, five (5) adventure tourism providers were chosen as respondents for this research.

Semi Structure Interview Session and Data Analysis

The interview would be the primary data for this research. Before questions were released, the researcher should get clear aspects of the interview statement. Also, consent from respondents would be asked to ensure the formality and confidentiality of the companies' information since the interview would be recorded for the data collection. This also included a description of the research study, the research procedures, the risks and benefits of participating in the study, the rights of participants and the protection of confidentiality.

The interview session took place on June until October 2020 and conducted in two sessions; i) 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m. and ii) 2.00 pm. to 4.00 p.m. The respondents were responsive and active during the interview sessions.

The researcher gained the new knowledge in the adventure tourism sector after the interview. After collect the data from interview session, the data from the interview was classified into 4 themes covering the general questions, company profile, readiness to implement, and challenges faced to implement ISO Adventure Tourism. Thus, ATLAS.ti qualitative software was used in this study to analyze the interview data. The method of qualitative data analysis mainly includes the coding or categorization of data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents Profile

The study involved five (5) adventure tourism providers with each provider represented by the different individuals. The general questions were asked to try engaging with the adventure tourism provider so that they would feel comfortable before starting the main interview questions. Table 2 shows the findings on the respondent profiles

Code	Adventure Tourism Provider
	Respondent 1	**Respondent 2**	**Respondent 3**	**Respondent 4**	**Respondent 5**
Job rank	Director	-General Manager -Main shareholder	General Manager	Owner	Manager
Branch	No	No, but provide nationwide activities	No, but provide nationwide activities	No	No
Adventure Services	Hiking and Trekking	Adventure tourism packages	No specific adventure tourism activities but collaboration with local guide to provide adventure services	No specific adventure tourism activities but collaboration with local guide to provide adventure services	No specific adventure tourism activities but collaboration with local guide to provide adventure services
Qualifications	Ensure the partner consultant has guide with outdoor certification	Outdoor certification of guides were important to ensure quality	Ensure the local guide has outdoor certification	Ensure the local guide has outdoor certification	Ensure the local guide has outdoor certification
Motivation to start company	Owned a land	Hobby	Conservation but then merged with adventure activities	As a job	Interested to tourism
Duration for company establishment	2015 to current	2008 to current	2005 to current	2012 to current	2018 to current
Number of employees	14 permanent	-5 permanent workers -24 freelance guides	10 permanents	4 permanents	5 permanents
Collaboration with homestay/ other place	No	Surrounding villages in Kuala Kangsar (i.e: Kampung Peng, etc...)	Pulau Redang, Taman Negara Merapoh and Ipoh	Yes	Villages in Kampar, Batu Gajah

Table 2
THE SUMMARIZED FINDINGS OF THE RESPONDENTS' PROFILE

Implementation of ISO/TC 228 WG7-Adventure Tourism

After the data was collected, the researcher managed to obtain the respondents' point of view regarding their readiness to implement ISO Adventure Tourism. All five (5) respondents were to be seen ready to implement ISO Adventure Tourism. This sub-chapter would be

answering the first objective: to determine the readiness of adventure tourism providers to implement ISO Adventure Tourism in Malaysia.

Relevant Standard Implementation:

Relevancy:

Several questions were asked in this section to indicate the relevancy of ISO Adventure Tourism implementation among the providers. Based on the interviews with the respondents, most of them were quoting that ISO implementation was relevant due to the high quality and market value internationally.

"Relevant but not all the provider knows about ISO Adventure Tourism. Also, the overall content of ISO Adventure Tourism should be analysed whether it suits the Malaysia environment since the development of ISO was done internationally, and does it follow the standard that was suitable for all company worldwide to implement it" – Respondent 1

"It is relevant due to the quality and high market value for the ISO certification." – Respondent 2

"It is relevant but never really heard of ISO Adventure Tourism." – Respondent 3

"Relevant, but need to do some marketing for introduce of ISO." – Respondent 4

"Relevant, but its costly to get and maintain." – Respondent 5

This was supported by Joppe (2005), stated that certification schemes, even though growing in number and scale over the last ten years, but it does not possible for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to have greater exposure to business opportunities, nor have they substantially advanced the tourism sector towards sustainability. The guidelines and policies were actively set up by each countries yet the implementation and evaluation was still weak. The positive side was that the certification programs have made it possible for businesses to minimize costs, primarily related to the environment (water, waste and energy savings). A cost-saving benefit or training assist has helped to strengthen management strategies and procedures but there was little reason to be part of the certificate label because there was no proven marketing value.

Process or Steps Taken to Implement ISO Adventure Tourism

Asking on the process or steps to apply ISO certification, all five providers were agreeing that they did not know about the process. Also, the qualification to apply and contents of ISO Adventure tourism were asked, and they were all agree they did not know at all since the process and steps also does not known. But, all three providers were interested to know more about ISO Adventure Tourism since they first heard about it.

"No." – Respondent 1

"No idea. First time heard of ISO Adventure Tourism but interested to know about ISO Adventure tourism." – Respondent 2

"No idea." – Respondent 3

"No idea." – Respondent 4

"No, first time heard this ISO." – Respondent 5

Joppe (2005) in their report stated that several requirements were required if certification was to be continued and successful. First, there was a need for an international body to set and track the implementation of specific industry standards. Second, there need to be more business-to- business marketing over business-to-consumer marketing, as customer knowledge and interest were extremely weak. Third, demand needs to be generated among customers through increased reporting on industry accountability and awareness campaigns. Fourth, if certification is to be effective, critical mass needs to be reached. Today, there were less than 1% of companies around the world that have acquired certification and so even those tour operators interviewed who will be able to endorse these programs do not have enough product to choose from in the will not alter their cost of capital, as tour operators were still predominantly price-driven (Joppe, 2005).

Motivation to Implement ISO Adventure Tourism

The respondents were asked on their motivation to implement ISO Adventure Tourism in future and they stated that the quality and ISO certification value as their motivation. They target to be a company that can provide a safe and quality adventure tourism services for their customers.

"The quality of the ISO certification that will surely increase the market of Adventure Tourism Company. People around the world will acknowledge the company since they implement ISO certification" – Respondent 1

"The quality and value of the ISO certificate" –Respondent 2

"The market since ISO was known internationally" – Respondent 3

"It's for marketing internationally." – Respondent 4

"The tourist or visitors will be confidence with our company" – Respondent 5

Motivation of the respondents to implement ISO Adventure Tourism was influenced by the value of international standards that famous not only in Malaysia but worldwide. It would be a good start for adventure tourism providers to start doing research regarding the contents and qualifications for them to implement ISO in the company if they were interested in future.

Quality Evaluation

The next question was asked on the importance of ISO certificate to evaluate the quality of a company. The respondents stated that it was vital. Such requirements make a significant role in the achievement of better product efficiency. For instance, the authorizations to the ISO 9000 standards have risen steadily in recent years, with 343 643 certificates in 150 countries at the beginning of 2000, a rise of 71 769 over the previous year, of which 23 900 were in Europe (Bhuiyan & Alam, 2004).

"Yes." – Respondent 1

"Yes" – Respondent 2

"Yes. I have seen companies such as Production companies that apply ISO 14001 and ISO 9001. I believe with ISO certificate; people will build trust with the provider because they were certified with international standards." – Respondent 3

"Yes, good for international recognition" – Respondent 4

"Yes" – Respondent 5

Respondents were also asked about their opinion regarding the process to implement ISO Adventure Tourism, whether it was hard to implement ISO, and all agreed that the process was hard since the documentation process took quite some time and also the assessment before certified by ISO bodies.

MaTEX to ISO Certification

MaTex and ISO certification were both different from the value to the guidelines applied. The respondents answer the quite similar but different in their vision to apply both certifications. From the interviews, it can be concluded that all providers were up-to-date with the new trend of certification in Malaysia.

"Both certifications were different from each other. ISO certification was a high level of certification and known worldwide. Client would be choosing an adventure tourism company that has the ISO certification for they know the assurance of safety and quality of the company. As MaTex certified company, and as accessory of the certification, MaTex was focusing on the business core for three different types which are the adventure tourism, attractions and something. Also, Matex was easier to be implemented than ISO." – Respondent 1

"ISO is a high level certificate known worldwide. But never heard of MaTex and never wanted to apply for the certificate. Also, ISO adventure tourism may not focus on worldwide context, but only following the United State condition." – Respondent 2

"Both were good certifications but with different level of market price. MaTex will benefit the company locally while ISO will benefit the company internationally and in local. I am now applying for some travel certification and educational certification since we focus on conservation, but MaTex will be an additional value for me to then proceed with ISO to go further." – Respondent 3

"I will follow if have a requirement." – Respondent 4

"No comments – Respondent 5

From the responses, it can be seen that the two of five adventure tourism providers do acknowledge on the value of MaTex and ISO certification. All were agreeing they would implement MaTex first, and then ISO certification since MaTex was well-known in adventure tourism sector in Malaysia while ISO certification was not really well-known in Malaysia especially ISO Adventure Tourism.

Challenges to Implement ISO Adventure Tourism

The second objective of the study illustrates the challenges faced by adventure tourism providers to implement ISO Adventure Tourism. No previous study regarding implementation, as well as the challenges faced in ISO Adventure Tourism in Malaysia. These challenges may seem as common but it was the main reason why adventure tourism providers never try to implement ISO Adventure Tourism.

Management Factor

Management auditing:

The question asked receive consensus where two of the three companies thought that the audit of the ISO certification was one of the challenge faced by them since they did not know about the process and the content of ISO Adventure Tourism. Respondent 2 was positive that auditing was not part of their challenges since they already have their own management team to prepare any documentation.
"Yes" – Respondent 1

"No. Since we have set up management team that will work on their specific tasks" – Respondent 2
"Maybe yes if the audit involves too much cost for the company to support it every year." – Respondent 3
"Yes" – Respondent 4
"Yes" – Respondent 5

Awareness of Employees

The respondents were all saying that not all of their employees aware of ISO certification especially ISO Adventure Tourism since the employer also does not know about the certification.
 "No" – Respondent 1
"Not everyone knows about it." – Respondent 2
"Maybe yes, but not ISO Adventure Tourism. I think the only company I ever heard to implement ISO was the Nomad Adventure company. The only adventure tourism provider that implement ISO even though it was ISO 9001." – Respondent 3
"No" – Respondent 4
"Others ISO yes, if ISO Adventure Tourism, I didn't know about that – Respondent 5
From this point, it can be concluded that adventure tourism providers in Malaysia were still not aware of ISO Adventure Tourism but many were aware of MaTex certification. The management department should provide information regarding ISO certification or any other certificate to their staff so that they were all aware of the current issues and can be well prepared for anything. This refers to the specifications of the specification and the method of its implementation quality, as described by many parties, was not a concept or a philosophy that can be learned; it was a culture that needs to be carried out and it has been shown that the level of knowledge improves trust in organizations (Pradhan & Kothari, 2011). This aspect was considered to be the second most crucial because it was the main focus for quality management standards.

Process Factor

Duration of documentation:

The respondents were asked on their opinion regarding duration to do the ISO documentation.

"Yes, since it involves the assessment of the adventure tourism activity." – Respondent 1

"Yes. The documentation will take some time to be prepared as ISO Adventure Tourism has the TC code that indicates it was all about technical. Thus, thorough assessments need to be done for a company to be certified with ISO Adventure Tourism certification." – Respondent 2

"Yes, documentation needs to be done particularly and the SOP took quite some time to be done." – Respondent 3

"Yes, need to do a survey and prepare the documentation." – Respondent 4

"Yes, it's take a long time." – Respondent 5

From the responses during interview, all was agreeing that the documentation for ISO would take quite some time for a company to obtain the ISO certification especially for technicality of an activity.

Documentation readiness:

The answers to this question depicts from each provider since it involves the current state of the companies.

"Do it themselves since it can cut some cost." – Respondent 1

"Do it on our own since hiring the consultant will require more cost." – Respondent 2

"If it was the Pre- Covic19 seasons, I will surely hire any consultant companies because we will be busy since there were so many events. But since it is Post- Covic19, we will do it ourselves to cut cost to pay for the consultation." – Respondent 3

"Better doing itself, however maybe take time." – Respondent 4

"We are the small company, better doing our own rather hired the consultant which expensive." – Respondent 5.

This can be concluded that the adventure tourism providers all agree that they would do the documentation on their own to save cost since it was costly. But, the documentation should be complying with the standards or guideline and if was done on their own, it would take longer time to do the documentation rather than when they hired consultants to do it.

Financial Factor

Challenges faced during application process:

From the respondents' response, all highlighted that cost was the main challenge for them to implement ISO Adventure Tourism.

"Cost was the main challenge." – Respondent 1

"The cost to implement ISO certification" – Respondent 2

"I do not know because never heard of ISO Adventure Tourism but I have heard about other ISO certification. Also I think no knowledge was the challenge for me." – Respondent 3

"Costly…is very high" – Respondent 4

"I think that is very expensive" – Respondent 5

Opinion on the cost:

The same responses were received as all agree that the cost to implement was high and maybe cannot be implemented since they were only a TSME, a tourism small medium enterprise and could not support to pay for the ISO certification.

"Yes" – Respondent 1

"Very costly but it should be worth it to be certified with ISO and acknowledge by other countries." – Respondent 2

"I do not have the idea since I never try to apply, but I think it will surely be costly. But it will be worth it since the certification was known worldwide." – Respondent 3

"Costly if give a benefits, it will consider." – Respondent 4

"If government support the cost, mostly all the tourism provider will join this ISO." – Respondent 5

From the answers, it can be seen that all agree that cost was quite high for them to implement ISO certification and some were even did not know about the ISO certification cost but they were sure it would costly since it was an international certification. This can be concluded that the cost was their main challenge since they always emphasize on costing during the interviews session.

CONCLUSION

The data obtained was analysed after the interview session with the five respondents. In summary, the study believed that the adventure tourism providers have great potential to implement ISO Adventure Tourism since the feedback during the interview was positive, despite the lack of exposure towards ISO Adventure Tourism. The research was not based on all adventure tourism providers thus it does represent the whole providers' point of view. However, with the feedback, future research can be done thoroughly considering the readiness of a bigger group of adventure tourism providers in Malaysia. Despite the growth of adventure tourism in Malaysia, it was a good opportunity for local guides, forestry department, nature and wildlife department in Malaysia to work towards the same objective to increase the adventure tourism market not only in Malaysia but in other countries. Also, results from the study indicated that the tourism industry could be increased by the adventure tourism sector, not only by tourism in general. This would significantly contribute to the structural diversifications of adventure tourism providers and stakeholders' livelihood and its resilience. Among the benefits contribute to adventure tourism sector was the positive impacts created by the adventure tourism itself; the value of experience, good technical support, improve the public facilities and services, such as proper steps to start the adventure activities until finish doing the activities, the equipment that was certified with the national or international standards and maintaining the quality of the adventure tourism provider's services.

First objective emphasizes the readiness of adventure tourism providers to implement ISO Adventure Tourism which was to be seen achieved. This explains that motivation for accreditation has a very significant and moderately strong impact on company results and a very significant and low impact on the adventure tourism market. Both factors significantly contribute to business efficiency, with the quality improvement approach being slightly stronger, although the same factor was also a primary determinant to impact towards the tourists and environment. Second objective were achieved since it provides insight into the challenges faced by adventure

tourism providers to implement ISO Adventure Tourism. There were a number of issues that occur during the implementation of ISO 9001 or any other ISO standard. Giving up the ISO standard was also the result of multiple issues that can build an obstacle that was difficult for many organizations to solve. The problems listed and many others can be overcome or bypassed if the process of implementing the ISO system was overcome by evaluating all possible problems as well as the possibility of the product. The important are the method of implementation of ISO Adventure Tourism was not fast and simple; it requires a great deal of effort on the part of management and staff.

The result of this study presents a significant view of willingness of adventure tourism provider in Malaysia to implement the ISO Adventure Tourism. Moreover, it explains further about readiness of adventure tourism provider to implement ISO Adventure Tourism and the challenges for adventure tourism provider to implement ISO Adventure Tourism. To improve and promote ISO Adventure Tourism, there have several recommendations that can be done: such as to integrated the standard of ISO Adventure Tourism, the role of government for ISO certification in adventure tourism sector and strategic approach towards ISO Adventure Tourism. Overall, this study does not push the providers to implement ISO Adventure Tourism, but to provide insight on their readiness and the challenges faced by them in their point of view.

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