



A Comparative Study on the Efficiency of Stakeholder Involvement in Community-Based Tourism (CBT) Development

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ABSTRACT: Community-based tourism (CBT) is a development strategy for the community to manage its resources through the use of tourism as a medium. For CBT to operate, communities may rely on the external assistance in their development project. These stakeholders are academia, local government, and international organizations. This paper compares the work efficiency of these stakeholders' and their involvement in operating CBT strategies. A total of 535 online respondents with work experience as different stakeholders are gathered and compared. The results shows that local government involvement is ranked the most attentive by the community, followed by the assistance of academia, the community itself, and international organizations (where appropriate). This outcome supports the idea in the literature where government is the most crucial external stakeholder to reach out to during the planning stage of CBT development, but it also suggests that the involvement of academics is more efficient than that of international organizations, possibly due to the fact that academics are from a smaller set of individuals or group with theories and consultancy expertise in the field of CBT rather than the international organizations that are more general with the power and resources they could offer. In future study, in-depth interviews with different stakeholder members would allow further explanation and observation of these relationships.

KEYWORDS: Academia; Community; Involvement; Community Based-Tourism; International organization; Local government; Stakeholders

1. INTRODUCTION

Community-based tourism (CBT) is a development strategy that can be used to upgrade community resource management and development through the attraction of tourism. CBT allows the community to govern the tourism market by themselves, providing ownership, empowerment, and awareness (Lukes, 2004; Kretzmann & McKnight 1993). Since every community is unique, the resulting large number of CBT strategies have been continuously revised and debated in the literature. From the literature it has been observed that there are at least three types of stakeholders that contribute to CBT development strategies, these are: 1) academia, 2) local government, and 3) international organizations. As each party has their own specialty, and claims to know how to correctly develop community-based tourism (Lukes, 2004; Arnstein, 1969; Yotsumoto & Vafadari, 2020) this paper aims to examine the stakeholders' concept ideas of CBT as a whole based on the existing literature, and their actual involvement in CBT from a survey of the perception of 535 respondents with basic understanding of CBT.

The literature structure of this study compares the CBT strategy flow of each stakeholder. In summary, for academia, CBT development strategies are based on testing theories. Local government can work together with local non-government organizations (NGO) and focuses on the practicality of the resources and evaluations of the community they plan to transform. Lastly, the international organizations tend to focus on stating their mission, beliefs, and action plans. Although each of these parties may speak the same language, context and content wise their emphasis on CBT development are different.

This study used an online survey from 40 different countries to examine respondents' perception of which stakeholders' involvement is the most favored by the community in CBT development. The outcome of the study contributes to our understanding of the decision-making factors for communities to decide their priority on which stakeholder to reach out to in the CBT planning stage. The 2nd section set out a literature review of CBT transformation, the 3rd section provides the methodology and research design, the 4th section presents the outcome results and discussion, with the final part as the conclusion.

2. THE CBT LITERATURE AND OBSERVATION

CBT is discussed by stakeholders; academia, government, and international organizations. Although their strategies differ, these



differences can be traced back to their concept of CBT as a whole and the reasons they have for being involved. This section discusses these points.

2.1 Academia's Emphasis on CBT

From the academic perspective, the terminology of CBT could be as detailed as to the debate and philosophy from what is a community (Lukes, 2004) to how does one identify with this as a community member (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). CBT according to academia consists of different theories, but more importantly what they cover in common is the importance of community participation.

The driving force of community participation is based on how each individual member sees themselves in the theory of citizen participation for example, eight layers of citizen power are scaled to show individual's ability to acknowledge their presence and influence in the community to their ability to provide the administrative ideas for others to take part in actions (Arnstein, 1969). Although tourism management can be achieved by an external conservation agency, the interactive participation of the local community and their knowledge of skills and custom brings better advantage in forming action plans to manage the community resources more efficiently (Yotsumoto & Vafadari, 2020). The purpose of participation is to enable people to address the problems and the layers of authority that affect community members' livelihood, starting from the local level (Braden & Mayo, 1999). Participation and involvement according to Mayaka et al. (2019) is the initial step for community development or later CBT. Because local participants are involved with people that are in the same income level and have little to no involvement with the government (Lea, 1988), it is critical for the group to motivate themselves and clarify their status, problem, needs, and future as they are the ones that know more about what should be suitable for them than outsiders.

2.2 Governments' Emphasis on CBT

The literature from government is usually associated with their partnership with the local NGOs. The works of this group focus on building a practical CBT plan for particular communities. The CBT strategy of government and NGOs are unique from other stakeholders as their target audiences are mainly for the community members, and their publication focuses more on product development.

Unlike academic or international organizations' contributions, local government portrays the process in a non-academic manner. Templates, worksheets and questionnaires are provided in this publication to cut down the workload of the practitioner. The process is to identify and develop a tourist product that can be created through local skills, resources, knowledge, and the lessons of tradition (Baryamujura & Bibangambah, 2015). These CBT products could be broadened based on the types of available resources, including entertainment & relaxation, cultural, natural, and adventure based products (ESRT & WWF Vietnam, 2013). Product placement can be scout based and survey the market trends for the community to find its own place (World Wildlife Fund, 2001). As CBT product placement is crucial for CBT to work, these products need to be tailored to satisfy both the customers' and local community's needs and capacity (Suansri, 2003). The government and NGO's CBT policies emphasize that through product development, the community can work together and benefit from the fruit of the CBT enterprise.

2.3 International Organizations' Emphasis on CBT

The international organizations provide their own terminology for CBT as a whole to prevent confusion in the other stakeholders and the community. This group provides evidence, statistics, future agenda for CBT projects. In their works, they emphasize stating their development goals.

These development goals could be brief or detailed depending on the organization. The earliest strategies of community development were by the United Nations in the 1950s, 10 development goals were designed based on the trial and errors of previous communities. In general, the United Nations development goals were to ensure that the activities need to correspond to community's basic needs, install training programs, ensuring that local government takes part in implementing community development programs on a national scale (United Nations, 1955). The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) has set four CBT development goals for local communities in: identifying funding resources, marketing, and building relationship with stakeholders (Asker et al., 2010). World Trade Organization (WTO) has developed 17 sustainable development goals for community developers in general (UNWTO, 2013), while the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS) focuses on the preservation of agricultural biodiversity, ecosystems, and local cultural heritage. CBT to GIAHS involves the balance between the community and its ecosystem, their development goals are for the community and other stakeholders to work on the issue with locals and tourists and determine their



satisfaction level with tourism, the effects of tourism, water availability, water and waste treatment, and capacity control (Vafadari, 2012).

2.4 Relations among the Stakeholders in the Literature

Academic journals mention the international organizations when scholars are referencing terminology as a standard, while utilizing the statistics, forecasts, and agendas provided by international databases (Ferguson, 2007). The academic analysis case studies often attract local government and international organizations attention to the importance of CBT development (Wearing & McDonald, 2002). Local government may collaborate with local NGOs and together make contact with international organizations in further assistance to local development while incorporating the international organizations' development goals (Ministry of Tourism & Creative Economy, 2012). Together these three CBT stakeholders are able to work together to ensure that the community's transition to CBT is sustainable in the long run.

3. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to measure the efficiency of the involvement of academics, local government, international organizations, and local communities in CBT projects. Efficiency in this context could be associated with useful, helpful, beneficial, or productivity-based assistance to the local community, in terms of time or resources.

Online questionnaires were designed using the web based application Google Forms and IBM SPSS Statistics 21 for data refinement and analysis. Reliability and validity test results are in the acceptable range of the standard P-value 0.05 and Cronbach Alpha 0.70 (Cochran, 1977; Templeton, 2011). A total of 535 online respondents from 40 different countries with at least one year of work experience in either academia, local government, international organization, or local community were collected during the Spring of 2021. They were preferred because these group of respondents have at least some basic understanding and background of how community development and CBT are related.

The CBT literature shows how different groups of practitioners manage CBT development. Therefore, it is important to evaluate all CBT practitioners including the local community themselves, to find out if their individual involvement with the community would benefit the community as a whole during the operation. For a CBT enterprise to operate properly, communication is necessary in order to understand the demands of the local community (Jamieson, 1993; McGregor et al., 2009) Failures of CBT projects vary according to each community case, for instance the collision about too much expertise on CBT practice (Witt, 2001; Hamzah & Khalifah, 2009). Thus this survey asked the respondent's opinion about the overall efficiency of each stakeholders' involvement in CBT.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Of the 535 online respondents collected from online groups in the field of CBT, those who had at least a year of experience with one or multiple stakeholders is as followed: academia (374), government (422), international organization (339), and local community (385). It is possible for respondents to be categorized in more than one group, this would make it more authentic to know the nature of each sector. The overall average of efficiency in CBT development is displayed in Table 1.



Table 1: The Overall Efficiency of Stakeholders Involvement in CBT Development (n=535).

Involvement of Stakeholders	Academia	Government	International organization	Local community	Total
Efficiency of academia's involvement in CBT	2.75	2.76	2.74	2.75	2.8
Efficiency of government's involvement in CBT	2.6	2.64	2.6	2.57	2.64
Efficiency of international organizations' involvement in CBT	2.96	2.95	2.98	2.95	2.97
Efficiency of local communities' involvement in CBT	2.8	2.64	2.97	2.65	2.65

Table 1 displays the mean score of each stakeholder according to different groups of respondents on a 7-point Likert scale (1-Positive, 7-Negative). The evaluation of the effect of academia's involvement in CBT is as follows: from the academia group (2.75), government group (2.76), international organization (2.74), and local communities (2.75). From the results each group rated positively academic performance overall in CBT projects, with 10% from each group stating the academia was most efficient (Lukes, 2004). This supports the existing literature on how these experts are capable of diagnosing the situation of the current community, and provides an in-depth research assessment analysis which could be utilized by the community or other stakeholders.

The evaluation of local government involvement in CBT shows a positive rating from the academia group (2.6), government group (2.64), international organization group (2.6), and local community group (2.57). Its overall performance from each group surpassed the rating of academia's involvement. One possible explanation could be because from the literature the government is the most practical external stakeholder to reach out for, as they provide funding, and share mutual goals in development with the community they represent. If the community manages to earn tourism income this also improves the local government's economy as a whole. Thus making the government sector more motivated in changing/supporting its community's livelihood through tourism.

Evaluation of the international organizations' involvement in CBT shows an average of 2.97, from academia group (2.96), government group (2.95), international organization (2.98), and local community group (2.95). Although positive, but with the international organization's reputation for its resources and experience in assisting with foreign affairs, the reason this stakeholder did not surpass the others might be due to its lack of in-depth understanding of the local communities.

Since a CBT venture is heavily depended on local participation and involvement for it to be possible, while other external sectors can provide methods and tools to guide local residents, for CBT to be sustainable the result is still dependent on the local people themselves. Table 1 shows how the evaluation of local community members' involvement in CBT as positive from academia group (2.68), government group (2.61), international organization group (2.65), and local community group (2.64). This outcome may reinforce the existing literature on the importance of community member participation, where no amount of external support could sustain CBT if the community members lack the will to operate CBT on its own, this would defeat the purpose of CBT to become independently sustainable on its own.

The overall efficiency of involvement ranking most to least efficient group in CBT involvement are government (2.64), local community (2.65), academia (2.8), and international organization (2.97). From the academic group point of view, government sectors are the most efficient in CBT involvement, with a mean score of 2.6. The government group was rated by the local communities with the highest CBT efficiency mean score of 2.61. The international organization group viewed the government as the most efficient CBT stakeholder at 2.6. The local community group gave the highest ratings to the government for 2.57. From



these data, among the CBT stakeholders, the academics, government, and the local community groups view government as the most efficient group for CBT involvement. In contrast all groups gave international organizations the lowest but yet positive mean score ranging from 2.95-2.98. From these findings, it is understood that there are existing differences between stakeholders and their level of involvement with the community, but that local arrangements are the most important.

5. CONCLUSIONS

From the literature review, it seen that CBT strategies are written by three types of stakeholders: academia, government, and international organizations. Each have their own core and emphasis on CBT development strategy.

To examine the stakeholder's level of involvement in CBT, this paper first observed the material from each stakeholder to provide evidence of existing differences among different stakeholders in the literature. The academics emphasized more on theories and the concept of 'community participation'. The government would work together with the local NGOs and tailor their strategy based on specific communities, they emphasized the concept of 'product development and placement'. The international organizations are independent bodies with members around the world, they are known for their reputation in attending to foreign affairs, in their strategies, they emphasized 'development goals' for the other stakeholders, these development goals varies accordingly to each organizations' value.

The results of this study are from the perspective of 535 online respondents with a CBT background and experience with at least one of the the CBT stakeholders. The respondents are then categorized into four groups to rate the efficiency of CBT involvement to provide better understanding on which stakeholder group is more efficient than the others. The outcomes suggest the involvement of all stakeholders is positive, with an average rating of academia (2.8), government (2.64), international organization (2.97), and local community (2.65). The difference between each group's evaluation reflects on the relationship among stakeholders.

The relationships among the three stakeholders in CBT suggest that the government (2.64) is rated the most valued stakeholder by each group. This is as the literature suggested and shows how the local government and its communities share a mutual interest in upgrading their livelihood through tourism revenue. The academia are the second most valued stakeholder (2.8) as they are experts in theories and can also provide in-depth field research for the community and the other stakeholders. Academics may construct workshop and training programs for the local communities with support funding and resources from the government or international organizations. The international organizations (2.97) scored the lowest among the stakeholders, due to their relationship with local communities being not as close as with other parties. From the literature the international organizations would provide existing data and statistics which would be useful for academia to analyze and predict which CBT strategies the community should use. The international organizations have their set of values and implement their development goals for each project; hence they might not be as effective for the local communities as they appear to be since these goals might contradict the interests of local people. The local communities (2.65) from the outcome are more effective in being involved with CBT project than the international organizations, this provides evidential results where the important of community participation from the will and activity of the people is the driving force for the transformation of CBT. The local community is ranked third, possibly due to the realistic problem of securing proper management from academia, and funding from the government in the initial stage of CBT development.

This study contributes to the pool of literature on CBT where comparison between different stakeholders are limited. It further provides the community information on which CBT stakeholder and strategy would be more suitable for them. Different stakeholders may use the result of this paper to better understand the perspective of the 535 respondents that have worked with them, to better improve their overall performance in CBT development. It may also show how possibly bridging the relations among each of the stakeholders could contribute to more efficient collaboration with each other to build a better community.

6. LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER STUDY

Although the survey provides information on the general view of each different group's point of view on CBT involvement, further study could make use of interviews to investigate the reasons for such data. Our recommendation is for research on other factors affecting stakeholder interest in CBT.



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