
Comparative Study on Academia, Local Government, and International Organization's Work Interest with the Local Community Tourism Development

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Abstract

Community-based tourism (CBT) is a strategy that can be used by a community to manage its resources and control its development through the use of tourism [1,2]. Often there are cases where CBT experts are requested to help community to improve its livelihood while sustaining its resources [3,4]. But during the transformation process, at times the local community would consider the external assistance as a problem than a solution to their development process, causing undesirable conflict. This research investigate the work interest of the following CBT developers: academia, non-government organization (NGO), local government, and international organization with the local community. This article helps compare and measure developers' understanding of the local community, their collaboration and assistance to that community, each group's evaluation of other developers' work productivity, and the possible benefits for developers from their taking part in CBT development.

Keywords: Community-Based Tourism; Local Communities; Community Development; NGOs; International Organization.

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1. Introduction

The concept of merging tourism with community development has seen sets of CBT developers arise as they develop ways to operate a community-based tourism plan [5]. These CBT developers can be separated into four categories: 1) academia; 2) local government, 3) non-government organizations; and 4) international organizations. These groups have different standards, procedures, and target audiences [6, 7, 8]. Although the difference between academia, government, NGO, and international organization is already been known in the discipline, but regardless their strategies and instructions makes it difficult for communities to decide which strategy is suitable for the locals. From the community's point of view, these external CBT developers have the experience and resources to assist with the community's transformation, but it is natural for different community to have their own preference on which CBT developer would be most suitable for their situation. For instance, a community would tend to avoid the assistance from the local government for its managerial methods. Yet from the local government perspective, their methods is the most cost efficient way to achieve CBT goals. Having the involvement of CBT developers help speed up the process of community recognition, tourism exposure, and media platforms. The community then gains a sense of pride, empowerment, achievement, responsibility, and motivation in working for a better development environment. But the work interest between the community and CBT developers are limited in the literature. On surface, the CBT developers appear to speak the same language, but their concepts and ideology may emphasize different aspects of the same concept and thus affect the task of community resource management. This article investigate CBT developers' work interest level with the community from each stakeholder's perspective.

2. Differences between CBT Developers

The difference between CBT developers can be observed from their definition of CBT. In terms of the vocabulary definition of 'community resource management', 'community-based governance' and 'tourism' there have been several different voices in the literature. To clarify the real world in this context, the United Nations provided its own definition and argued that the terminology should be limited to prevent generalization and confusion. The UN's definition of 'community development and community resource management' is: "A process designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community with its active participation and the fullest possible reliance upon the community's initiative." [9]. This terminology allows the UN and other responsible organizations and government to clearly understand, execute, and deliver specific tasks [10]. As the CBT definition continues to evolve and be debated there are various voices stating their know-how of the principles of achieving successful community-based tourism. These claimants can be divided into four parties:

1) Academics, 2) Non-government organizations (NGOs), 3) local government, and 4) International organizations. In the academic literature for example, the key to becoming self-sustaining is based on avoiding the mistakes (as determined by academics) of failed community development programs, as well as in analyzing the case studies of communities that are able to become independent and sustainable for others to use in the future. However, because each community is unique in its own way, following the trail of previous successful academic case studies of CBT does not guarantee that the same result can be delivered in other situations [11] .

In the works by NGOs and local governments the guidelines of community-based tourism development are more down to earth, tailored to contemporary issues, and usually easily accessed by local residents. Their publication often comes in instruction manuals or reports. For international organizations such as the United Nations do not have a terminology for CBT, but instead address their aims and agendas on improving the livelihoods of communities (especially those in poverty) through externally derived development and tourism. Nevertheless, without their examples of previous successful cases and theories, it would be difficult to make international CBT guidelines [11]. On one hand, academics have put forward several definitions and counter arguments to each other, on the other, local government and third party (NGO) sectors tend to use their own definitions to fit their organization's purposes rather than the community's. The academic journals use or criticize the material put out by government and international organizations, and occasionally, in their acknowledgement sections, a brief statement of the sources is made, but other than that little regarding their partnership or agenda with other CBT developers in jointly developing integrated policies and actions is found. Meanwhile, NGOs, local government and international organizations use a few models selected from academia to support their practices and policies. The overall research aim to explain the different major approaches towards CBT in practice and their impact on communities to increase their ability to apply CBT guidelines. This research aimed to bridge the relationships between them so they can better facilitate the development of local communities using tourism. Since, the community are important, and CBT ventures can take up to five years to see the progress [7], this research could help investors in their decision making to see whether or not the community is worth investing in, as such the following research questions are as follow: What are the difference between CBT developers' work interest level with the community from each stakeholders' perspective?

3. Methodology

To forge a bridge between academia, local government, NGOs, and international organizations, and the local community to establish ways to work better together in CBT development, this study evaluated these CBT practitioners' understanding of local people and their performance and involvement in CBT. With questionnaires survey of 535 respondents with work experience in academia, government & NGOs, international organizations, or local communities. Along with, inviting (focus group) experts in the field to add on their insights and opinion of the gather online survey. The members consisted of five experts in the field of tourism and community development. The focus group held in June 18th 2021 through Google Meet, an online video platform which lasted 1.5 hours. Focus on the question: What are you opinions on the relationship among CBT developers and the community? The purpose of participation is to enable people to speak out on the problems and the authorities that are affect community members' livelihoods. In theory, there are levels of citizen participation, and we need to understand that participation without demonstration or communication often makes the whole operation meaningless. Therefore, to maximize CBT startup productivity, the core of a development is heavily dependent on the local people's participation and involvement, but also needs support from other potential developers. This research has taken the initiative in pointing out the differences in CBT guidelines among the major groups of developers that can mean different policy recommendations, that there is a benefits related motivation for CBT developers if they do jointly get involved, and that it is possible to bridge the gaps between academia, local government, NGOs, and international organizations, and the local community so they can better understand each other when seeking to develop and/or operate CBT development projects.

4. Discussion

The figures below shows the frequency and percentage of each item and their corresponding category. To get more accuracy for each group to represent themselves for further analysis, the category is selected based on the respondents' work experience with CBT developers. The distribution method was through social media and posting survey forms to online forums and groups with an interest in communities' development or CBT. And the following analysis is designed to see if international organizations can work well with other CBT developers. Figure 1, represent the willingness of international organization when working with the local people for CBT. Overall rating shows an approval rate of 64%-75%, 16%-19% uncertainty, and 6%-9% disapproval rate. The self-Respondents with international organization work experience evaluated the international organization to have a 2.89 interest in working with the local people. The academia groups rated 2.93, whereas the government & NGOs and local communities gave a close score of 2.88 and 2.89.

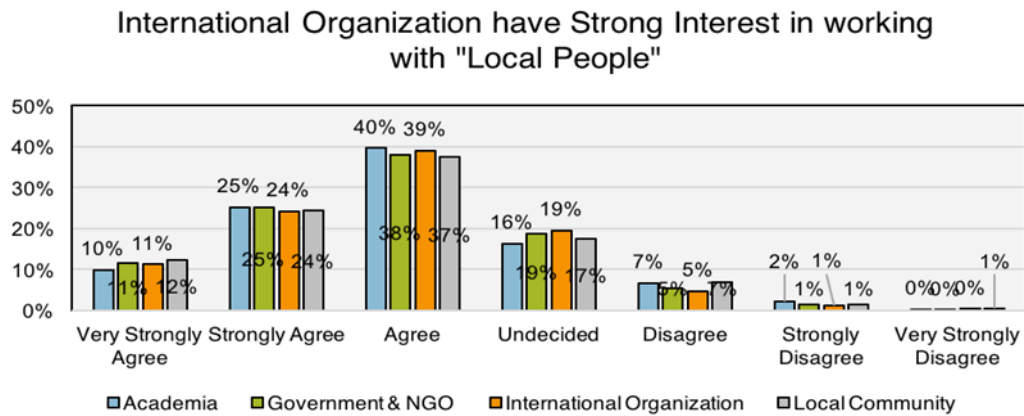


Figure 1: International Organization's Interest in Working with Local People on CBT Development

Figure 2, government & NGOs' interest in working with local people in CBT development projects shows an approval rate of 72%-76%, 18%-23% uncertainty, and a 5%-7% disapproval rate. The mean score from the local communities shows 2.83, but the government & NGOs value of 2.76 indicates more willingness to work together. Academia and international organizations provided a mean score of 2.77 and 2.68, respectively.

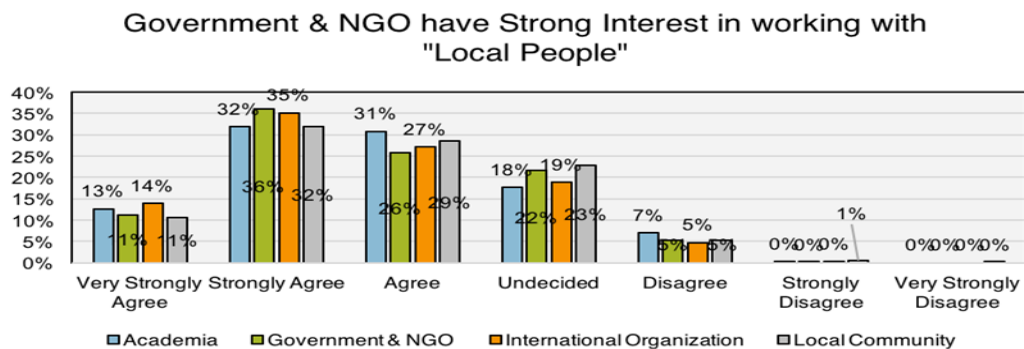


Figure 2: Government & NGO Interest in Working with Local People in CBT Development.

Figure 3, in terms of academia’s interest with local people in CBT development, shows the willingness of academia to undertake such a role with a mean score of 3.06. The local communities rated 3.09, government & NGOs 3.14, and the international organizations rated this at 2.94. The approval percentages show a range of 65%-69%, an uncertainty rate of 19%-25%, and a disagreement rate of 10%-16%.

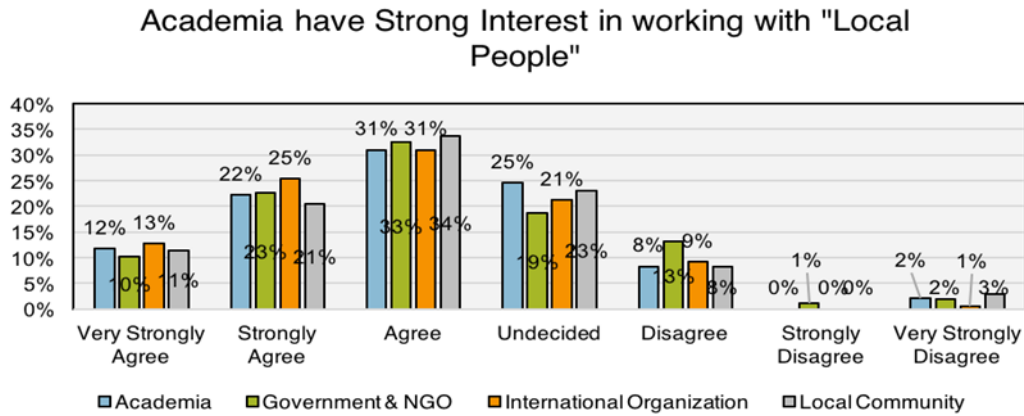


Figure 3: Academia’s Interest in Working with Local People in CBT Development.

Although the 535 online respondents were filtered and selected accordingly to their background and experience in working with the CBT developers or with local community, it would be still be preferable to have a follow up questions to ask the motives of the respondents. One of the limitation to quantitative data is the researcher’s inability to control the research environment, and thus relies on open-ended questions [12]. The following respondents are contacted in between the period of June 2nd-June 17th 2021, they where briefly told about the nature of the research, and upon agreement, a focus group study was scheduled in June 18th 2021. All interviews are conducted in Mandarin, and took place online in Taipei, Taiwan with Google Meet software. Question that focus on: What are you opinions on the relationship among CBT developers and the community?

The entire focus group meeting took approximately 1.5 hours to conclude. The participants for the focus group are:

Table 1

Focus Group Participants	Expert Field in:
Dr. Zheng Li Yuan, National Tsing Hua University	Aboriginal Community, Silver Tourism, Sports Management, Marketing
Dr. Xiong Dao Tian, National Chengchi University	International Organization Studies, Economic Management, Organizational Governance Studies, Community Development
Dr. Huang Zhen Hong, Dean of St. John's University	Leisure and Recreation Management , Leisure Sports Industry, Silver Tourism, Aging Society
Dr. Xiong Hong Jun, Former Chairman of National Taiwan Normal University	Aging Society, Community Development
Mr. Allen Huang, lecturer of National Taiwan Normal University	Leisure Tourism, Elderly Care

Participants with work experience with academia, local government & NGOs, international organization, or the local community were added so they could help represent their groups, providing better representation of the data. Helping a local community to develop can be a form of investment for its environment (Brooks and Kurtz, 2016). Investment in a community’s infrastructure allows quick transformation and industrial development [13].The researcher opens with a self-introduction, purpose of study, brief introduction of attending focus group members, and a 25min presentation of the research core findings. The following discussion took nearly an hours. are translated from Mandarin or local Taiwanese dialect.

Table 2

Focus Group Participants	Commentary (translated)
Dr. Zheng Li Yuan:	As I observed in my campus, the teachers here have enthusiasm in working with the government sector, because of the competition in obtaining funding either from the university or from the local government sector among developers, we do have to deliver proposal plans to enable for our project. But to have contact with international organization would bring more opportunity in networking.
Dr. Xiong Dao Tian:	I have been in contact with some international organization that I shall not name, their purpose for community development in general is because the local government does not have the sufficiency to manage its people. In some cases, the government branch would hire a third party such as NGOs or academicians to solve their problems.
Dr. Huang Zhen Hong:	Tourism is not about tour guides and buses, rather community tourism is a tool to promote local products. But the local people insisted on living a quiet neighborhood. I tell you, it is difficult to convince rural communities even for international organizations, these changes needed to be gradually, peacefully, and slow before they notice the change.
Dr. Xiong Hong Jun:	If you get in more contact with the local communities, interact, talk and be a part of them, you will understand that community members tend to have lesser opinion about their government.
Mr. Allen Huang:	I can see why government favors more with academia because they are individuals who are able to approach the community more friendlier, probably even maybe one of the scholar is a member of the targeted community.

Follow by the focus group’s firm belief that the international organization have their own motives to participate in CBT projects, and they do benefit from something in return. Majority of the responses from the focus group are positive upon presenting the quantitative findings. As the discussion continues, two participants believe the local community are the most helpful in CBT involvement, since they know themselves best. Another two stated the local government to be more helpful due to power and financial support. Leaving one participant believing

international organization to be the most of assistant in CBT due to the possession of experience, expertise, and resources. The collaboration relationship between CBT developers and community are accepted based on the participants' experience and performance was commented to be relatable and logical.

5. Conclusion

The goal is to identify major differences and similarities in the attitudes towards CBT and to provide a meaningful framework to fill the existing gaps in the literature. With the research question: What are the difference between CBT developers' work interest level with the community from each stakeholder's perspective?

In general, academics are collective thinkers that provide theories as guidelines for action. Government & NGOs are more practical, and their instructions are designed for specific communities to easily understand, but they are just as much concerned with power relationships and governance as community leaders. The international organizations can provide databases, forecasting resources, aims for development, and wider agendas to a community's plan for CBT development. Unlike government & NGOs and international organizations, the academic literature is not always written primarily for local residents or CBT practitioners, but rather they include guidelines designed for CBT investors or developers derived from the theory of CBT development. Meanwhile the government & NGO groups focus on eliminating local poverty and/or protecting the local environment, and merge theories and practice together. They tend to target existing problems for a particular community, design an easy handbook for the locals to access and read. Unlike academia and international organizations, CBT strategies from this group are written more for the community members than developers. The CBT developers' perspectives of each another are incorporated. From the standpoint of academia, criticism comes from their review of case studies and the responsibilities that the government or international organization fail to act upon. The government is criticized for knowing how the community is already in a deteriorating state, and assuming that CBT would fix the issue without reflecting on why it has not provided sufficient infrastructure. Academic researchers also look at the locals on the topics of resource management, socio-economic issues, and political conflicts. Yet, The topic of finding holes in the international organization's agenda and goals is usually discussed among scholars where the international organization's plan is not a perfect solution to the differing issues faced by each country and region. Overall, the findings show that there are different layers of CBT practices based on the perspectives of academia, government & NGOs, international organizations, and the local community. Each have their own opinion about the other, the self-evaluation also describes how they think others see them. From both literature review and the survey findings, the motives for each group to work in CBT projects is as follows. The local community and government & NGOs share mutual interest in launching CBT, where if the local communities CBT could become sustainable, both parties would benefit from tourism in improving their socio-economic status and other merits. The academia participates in CBT project for research purposes in studying case studies, research projects, and providing recommendations to people of interest. Throughout the three CBT stages, the international organization and community are ranked either at the first and second rank in all three stages. The evaluation of academia and local government & NGOs, although positive, does not excel over the community or international organization may suggest that these group lacks practical experience in conducting CBT development in comparison to international organization and does

not have a stronger commitment than the local community in striving for change in their livelihoods.

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