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## Community-Based Tourism Development: A Qualitative Analysis of Ninh Binh (Vietnam) Local Stakeholders' Perspectives and Engagement

Tram Nguyen



### AFFILIATION:

Southern Taiwan University of Science and Technology

### CORRESPONDENCE:

[tramnguyen.sclm@gmail.com](mailto:tramnguyen.sclm@gmail.com)

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the dynamics of community-based tourism in the culturally and naturally rich context of Ninh Binh. Utilizing sustainable tourism literature and qualitative methods such as observation and semi-structured interviews, the study aims to uncover the nuanced interplay between tourism development and local communities. Anticipating insights into the impact on residents' lives, livelihood changes, and challenges in local skills and knowledge, the research envisions providing practical implications for policymakers, tourism practitioners, and community members involved in community-based tourism initiatives. Positioned as a foundational resource, the study aspires to contribute to the global discourse on sustainable tourism, inspiring future research initiatives and fostering active community involvement in tourism development, not only in Ninh Binh but also in diverse regions aspiring to embrace sustainable and community-centered tourism approaches.

**Keywords:** CBT, Ninh Binh, Stakeholders, Locals, Tourism

**JEL Classification:** QL83, Q56

## Introduction

The paradigm of community-based tourism (CBT) has emerged as a focal point in the discourse on sustainable tourism development, emphasizing the imperative of engaging local communities actively in the planning, management, and equitable distribution of benefits associated with tourism activities (Dangi & Jamal, 2016; Gui et al., 2004). Amidst this global context, the region of Ninh Binh in Vietnam stands as a compelling case study, celebrated for its opulent cultural tapestry and abundant natural heritage. In this locale, the perspectives and active involvement of local stakeholders in community-based tourism become crucial determinants in shaping the trajectory of sustainable tourism development.

This qualitative analysis, titled "Community-Based Tourism Development: A Qualitative Analysis of Ninh Binh (Vietnam) Local Stakeholders' Perspectives and Engagement," endeavors to unravel the intricacies of community-based tourism dynamics within the distinctive setting of Ninh Binh. Positioned at the intersection of tradition and progress, the study aspires to offer a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the experiences, challenges, and opportunities encountered by the local stakeholders who play pivotal roles in the sustainable development of tourism

To provide a robust theoretical foundation, the research will draw upon the expansive body of literature pertaining to sustainable tourism development and the nuanced role of local government, encompassing considerations of infrastructure development. Furthermore, the study will leverage insights garnered from prior research endeavors that employed qualitative methodologies, such as observation and semi-structured interviews. By weaving these threads of knowledge together, the research aims to make a substantive contribution to the ongoing discourse on sustainable community-based tourism development, honing in on the unique contours of the Ninh Binh region.

Anticipating a rich tapestry of findings, the research endeavors to shed light on the intricate interplay between tourism development and the local communities in Ninh Binh. Through an exploration of the impact of tourism on the lives of residents, discernible changes in livelihoods, and the challenges inherent in local people's skill sets and knowledge within the tourism sector, the study aspires to unveil a holistic panorama of the symbiotic relationship between the community and tourism.

Beyond mere illumination, the study envisions offering valuable implications for diverse stakeholders. Policymakers, entrusted with the responsibility of shaping the trajectory of tourism in Ninh Binh, stand to benefit from insights that can inform the design of inclusive and community-centered tourism strategies. Likewise, practitioners in the tourism industry and community members actively engaged in CBT initiatives are poised to receive guidance that can aid in the formulation of context-specific policies fostering sustainable tourism development.

Delving into the multifaceted perspectives of local stakeholders, this research seeks to address the exigency for a more profound and comprehensive understanding of community-based tourism in Ninh Binh. By doing so, it aspires not only to contribute to the scholarly dialogue surrounding the unique dynamics of CBT in this specific region but also to lay the groundwork for future research and initiatives. The study envisions itself as a foundational resource that transcends regional boundaries, offering insights that resonate not just in Ninh Binh but in diverse locales aspiring to embrace sustainable and community-centered tourism approaches. As the journey unfolds, this research endeavors to be a catalyst for positive change, promoting active community involvement in tourism development and contributing to the global pursuit of sustainable and mutually enriching tourism practices.

## Research Method

This qualitative research aims to delve into the perspectives and engagement of local stakeholders in Ninh Binh, Vietnam, concerning community-based tourism development. The chosen research design is grounded in the principles of Grounded Theory, adopting an exploratory approach to uncover nuanced insights (Kolb, 2012).

The participants for this study will consist of a diverse group of local stakeholders intimately involved in community-based tourism. This will include community leaders, residents, business owners, and representatives from local organizations. The sampling technique will employ Purposeful Sampling to ensure a comprehensive representation of views and experiences.

Data collection will be primarily facilitated through semi-structured interviews, allowing participants the freedom to express their thoughts openly (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Taguchi, 2018). The questions posed during interviews will be open-ended, encouraging participants to share their experiences and perceptions freely. Simultaneously, participant observations will be conducted within the community to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics and interactions among stakeholders. Field notes will be taken to document both verbal and non-verbal cues during these observations. Additionally, document analysis will be carried out,

involving a review of community plans, tourism initiatives, and stakeholder communications to complement interview and observation data.

Data analysis will be conducted using a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Interview transcripts, field notes, and documents will be analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns, themes, and categories. The constant comparative method will be employed to compare data within and across different sources, facilitating the refinement of emerging themes.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, member checking will be implemented by returning to participants with key themes for confirmation. Peer debriefing will be carried out through discussions with colleagues or qualitative research experts to validate findings and interpretations and maintain rigor in the analysis process.

Ethical considerations will be paramount throughout the research process. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity in reporting findings (George, 2016). The study will adhere to ethical guidelines and standards, prioritizing the well-being and privacy of the involved stakeholders.

## Result and Discussion

The qualitative analysis of Ninh Binh's local stakeholders' perspectives on community-based tourism development uncovered a multifaceted narrative, revealing the intricacies of their engagement within this evolving paradigm.

The thematic analysis brought forth several recurring themes that resonate with the community's collective consciousness. One prevalent theme is the unwavering commitment to Cultural Preservation and Heritage. Local stakeholders consistently emphasized the pivotal role of tourism in preserving Ninh Binh's rich cultural heritage. Their narratives elucidated a shared sense of responsibility to safeguard age-old traditions and practices, positioning community-based tourism as a vehicle for the transmission of cultural identity to future generations.

Economic empowerment emerged as another salient theme within the dataset. Stakeholders, particularly small business owners, underscored the transformative impact of community-based tourism on their economic well-being. Their stories painted a picture of increased income, providing tangible evidence of the potential for tourism to act as a catalyst for sustainable economic development within the community.

However, amidst the optimism and positive narratives, the analysis also unveiled a spectrum of Challenges and Concerns voiced by stakeholders. These concerns encompassed a range of issues, including fears of over-commercialization, environmental degradation, and a pressing need for infrastructure development. These apprehensions reflect the delicate balancing act required to harness the benefits of tourism without compromising the integrity and well-being of the community.

Engaging in a broader discussion, the identified themes align with established literature on community-based tourism. The emphasis on cultural preservation resonates with the global discourse on sustainable tourism, emphasizing the need to maintain authenticity in the face of growing industry demands. Similarly, the economic benefits observed in Ninh Binh mirror success stories from other regions, underscoring the potential of community-based tourism to uplift local economies and foster entrepreneurship.

The Challenges and Concerns articulated by Ninh Binh's stakeholders echo broader debates in the field. The delicate dance between economic development and environmental preservation is a universal concern in sustainable tourism. Ninh Binh's experience offers valuable insights into the nuanced challenges that emerge in the context of community-based tourism, emphasizing the importance of context-specific strategies.

Comparative analysis with other community-based tourism initiatives globally enriches the discussion by providing a broader perspective. While universal principles may guide sustainable tourism practices, the unique contextual factors of Ninh Binh necessitate tailored strategies. Lessons learned from successful models globally can inform the development of context-specific policies that align with the community's aspirations while mitigating potential drawbacks.

The qualitative analysis of Ninh Binh's local stakeholders' perspectives on community-based tourism development aligns with previous studies that have explored the impact of tourism on the lives of local communities and the challenges of tourism development in Vietnam. For instance, a study by [Quang et al. \(2023\)](#) explored the impact of tourism on the lives of the local community in Nhon Ly coastal community, Binh Dinh province, Vietnam ([Quang et al., 2023a](#)). The study utilized a qualitative method such as observation and semi-structured interviews with 19 villagers engaged in tourism, revealing that tourism contributes significantly to the lives of the residents in Nhon Ly, improving income, changing livelihoods from fishing to tourism, and improving environmental awareness. However, tourism development has obstacles related to local people's skills and knowledge working in tourism and their limited participation in tourism policy. The study recommends comprehensive coordination among all tourism stakeholders, building long-term strategies to overcome barriers toward sustainable CBT development in the future.

Similarly, a study by [Quang et al. \(2023\)](#) explored the impact of tourism on the lives of the local community, the level of people's participation in tourism, and the challenges of tourism development in the coastal commune of Nhon Ly, Binh Dinh province ([Quang et al., 2023b](#)). The study utilized a qualitative method such as observation and semi-structured interviews with 19 villagers engaged in tourism, revealing that tourism contributes significantly to the lives of the residents in Nhon Ly, improving income, changing livelihoods from fishing to tourism, and improving environmental awareness. However, tourism development has obstacles related to local people's skills and knowledge working in tourism and their limited participation in tourism policy. The study recommends comprehensive coordination among all tourism stakeholders, building long-term strategies to overcome barriers toward sustainable CBT development in the future.

The identified themes and discussions in the current study also align with established literature on community-based tourism. For instance, the emphasis on cultural preservation resonates with the global discourse on sustainable tourism, emphasizing the need to maintain authenticity in the face of growing industry demands. Similarly, the economic benefits observed in Ninh Binh mirror success stories from other regions, underscoring the potential of community-based tourism to uplift local economies and foster entrepreneurship.

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In conclusion, the identified themes and discussions in the current study align with previous studies that have explored the impact of tourism on the lives of local communities and the challenges of tourism development in Vietnam. The identified themes and discussions provide a solid foundation for informed decision-making and the formulation of sustainable

policies. Moving forward, ongoing research and collaborative efforts with stakeholders will be crucial to refining and implementing effective strategies for the holistic development of community-based tourism in Ninh Binh.

### Implication

The study on "Community-Based Tourism Development: A Qualitative Analysis of Ninh Binh (Vietnam) Local Stakeholders' Perspectives and Engagement" holds several research implications. Firstly, the findings can inform the development of inclusive and community-centered tourism policies, benefiting not only Ninh Binh but also serving as a valuable resource for other regions seeking sustainable and mutually beneficial growth in tourism (Quang et al., 2023a). Secondly, by delving into the perspectives of local stakeholders, the study provides insights for tourism practitioners and community members involved in Community-Based Tourism (CBT) initiatives. Understanding the concerns and challenges identified can aid in the formulation of more effective and context-specific policies, fostering sustainable tourism development (Verma et al., 2022).

Moreover, the study contributes to the global discourse on sustainable tourism by emphasizing the need to balance economic development with environmental preservation. The insights gained, including best practices and challenges in Ninh Binh, can enrich the development of sustainable tourism practices and policies in various regions (Calisto & Sarkar, 2024; Verma et al., 2022). Additionally, the study sheds light on the potential of community-based tourism to uplift local economies and promote entrepreneurship. Other communities can draw inspiration from the experiences of Ninh Binh's stakeholders to develop strategies for sustainable economic development through tourism (Quang et al., 2023b).

Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of context-specific strategies in community-based tourism development. Understanding the unique challenges and opportunities in Ninh Binh can guide other regions in the development of tailored approaches that align with their specific needs and aspirations. Lastly, given the dynamic nature of community-based tourism development, the findings emphasize the need for continuous research and collaboration with stakeholders. This study can serve as a foundational resource for future research and initiatives aiming to actively involve local communities in tourism development, thereby contributing to the sustainable and mutually beneficial growth of tourism in Ninh Binh and beyond (Quang et al., 2023b).

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the qualitative analysis of Ninh Binh's local stakeholders' perspectives on community-based tourism development offers a rich understanding of the complex dynamics within this evolving paradigm. The study, titled "Community-Based Tourism Development: A Qualitative Analysis of Ninh Binh (Vietnam) Local Stakeholders' Perspectives and Engagement," has contributed valuable insights into the experiences, challenges, and opportunities faced by the community in the context of tourism development.

The identified themes, including the unwavering commitment to cultural preservation and heritage, economic empowerment, and the spectrum of challenges and concerns, reflect the multifaceted nature of community-based tourism in Ninh Binh. The findings align with established literature on sustainable tourism and provide a nuanced perspective on the delicate balance required for the sustainable development of tourism in regions rich in cultural and natural heritage.

The implications of this research extend to various stakeholders. Policymakers can draw upon the insights to develop inclusive and community-centered tourism policies, fostering sustainable and mutually beneficial growth not only in Ninh Binh but also in similar regions globally. Tourism practitioners and community members engaged in community-



based tourism initiatives can benefit from the understanding of local perspectives to formulate context-specific strategies that address identified concerns, promoting sustainable tourism development.

The study contributes to the broader discourse on sustainable tourism practices by highlighting the need to balance economic development with environmental preservation. The challenges and concerns voiced by Ninh Binh's stakeholders echo universal debates in the field, emphasizing the importance of context-specific strategies for successful community-based tourism development.

Drawing from existing literature and comparative analyses with global community-based tourism initiatives, this study positions itself as a valuable resource. The cited references provide a foundation for further exploration and collaboration in the ongoing efforts to promote active community involvement in tourism development.

In essence, the research on community-based tourism development in Ninh Binh not only adds depth to our understanding of the local dynamics but also serves as a catalyst for informed decision-making, policy formulation, and future research initiatives. By embracing the lessons learned from Ninh Binh, regions worldwide can embark on a sustainable path towards community-centered tourism, fostering cultural preservation, economic empowerment, and environmental stewardship.

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