

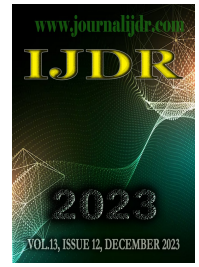


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REVIEW ARTICLE

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LOCAL PERSPECTIVES: UNDERSTANDING AND OVERCOMING BARRIERS IN COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a comprehensive examination of the global tourism industry, exploring its economic, social, and environmental dimensions. It addresses challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, environmental degradation, and cultural commodification, emphasizing the industry's shift toward sustainable practices and the pivotal role of community participation. The interconnection between community involvement and sustainable tourism is scrutinized, highlighting their mutual benefits and existing barriers. The discourse extends to tourism development, encompassing diverse definitions from prominent authors. The text underscores the crucial role of community participation in successful tourism projects and its linkage to sustainable outcomes. Resident attitudes are explored as integral to the sustainability paradigm. The paper concludes by delving into barriers hindering community participation, drawing insights from case studies and proposing strategies for governments and sustainable tourism operators. Overall, the paper contributes valuable insights into fostering sustainable and inclusive tourism development in a global context.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism industry is renowned for being an economically impactful global activity. It encompasses various dimensions, including environmental, economic, and social aspects, thereby rendering it a multifaceted industry (Lickorish & Jenkins, 2007). The rapid and transformative rise of tourism has emerged as a central and influential influence shaping the economies, societies, and cultures on a global scale. This progression has played a substantial role in fostering employment opportunities and bolstering the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of nations. A multitude of factors, including capital investments, shifts in employment patterns, and the unparalleled consequences of external occurrences like the COVID-19 pandemic, have exerted an indelible impact on this development. (Cvijanović & Pantić, 2021; Suriadi & Sutanto, 2023; Ananchenkova & Ogursova, 2022). The advancement of tourism on an international scale is a notable driver of economic growth, wherein the tourism industry plays a pivotal function in fostering global economic progress. It has been noted that tourism stands as a lucrative domain that enhances investments, entrepreneurial endeavours, and the promotion of innovative practices (Kulak, 2019). The tourism industry, however, has encountered difficulties due to the COVID-19 pandemic and external sanctions, which have resulted in a decrease in international

tourism and hindered economic progress. (Levchenko & Levchenko, 2022). The exponential growth of the tourism industry is not only evident in its economic impact but also extends to its influence on community dynamics and cultural landscapes. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), international tourist arrivals reached a remarkable 1.5 billion in 2019, highlighting the significant contribution of this sector to global GDP and employment opportunities. Nevertheless, the industry faces challenges related to environmental degradation, the commodification of culture, and the unequal distribution of economic benefits. As a response, there is a noticeable shift towards the adoption of sustainable and responsible tourism practices, with community participation playing a crucial role. This paper aims to delve into the intricate dynamics of community involvement in tourism development, with a specific focus on the barriers that hinder local engagement and proposes strategies to overcome them. By examining local perspectives, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by communities in actively participating in and benefiting from tourism initiatives. Moreover, it underscores the importance of aligning tourism development with the values, needs, and aspirations of local communities in order to foster sustainable and inclusive growth. Recognizing the increasing significance of community engagement, this paper highlights its role in shaping responsible tourism practices and ensuring the long-term

sustainability of tourism destinations. Gurung & Biswakarma (2018) argue that the participation of the community plays a crucial role in achieving a balance between the economic benefits of tourism and the social and environmental aspects. In addition, Dangi & Jamal (2016) emphasize the importance of collaborative methodologies that enable local communities and foster significant engagement in the decision-making processes. Sustainable tourism is the deliberate and conscientious administration of the economic, social, and environmental repercussions, with the ultimate objective of safeguarding the well-being of visitors, the industry, the environment, and local communities. Its aim is to meet economic, social, and aesthetic necessities while simultaneously conserving cultural authenticity, ecological mechanisms, biological diversity, and life support systems. The involvement of the community enhances this process by advocating local culture, employing local inhabitants, and utilizing local commodities, thereby aligning with the objectives of sustainability and fostering a mutually beneficial connection between tourism and communities.

The concepts of community participation and sustainable tourism are intertwined and highlight the importance of engaging local communities in tourism endeavours to ensure that the advantages of tourism are fairly distributed and the negative consequences are mitigated. This approach is increasingly acknowledged as imperative for the sustainable progress of tourism destinations. Community participation in tourism encompasses the active engagement of local individuals in the tourism sector. This can encompass involvement in decision-making processes, development and management, as well as the direct receipt of benefits from tourism activities. The primary objectives of community participation in tourism are to empower local communities, preserve cultural and natural heritage, and guarantee a more equitable allocation of tourism advantages. Benefits of Community Participation

1. *Economic Empowerment*: By involving local communities in tourism, income is generated and retained within the community, leading to improved living standards.
2. *Cultural Preservation*: Local communities can showcase their culture and traditions, aiding in their preservation and continuation.
3. *Environmental Protection*: Communities that have a stake in tourism are more likely to engage in conservation efforts, as they recognize the value of preserving natural resources.

Research Questions

1. What are the key barriers faced by local communities in actively participating in tourism development initiatives?
2. What strategies or interventions can be implemented to overcome the identified barriers and enhance community participation in sustainable tourism development?

Tourism Development: Tourism development is a broad concept that encompasses various aspects of creating, expanding, and managing tourist destinations and services. Different authors and experts have provided nuanced definitions of tourism development, focusing on its economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions. Inskeep, E. (1991): Edward Inskeep, in his book "Tourism Planning: An Integrated and Sustainable Development Approach," defines tourism development as the process of providing facilities and services for visitors to a destination in a way that provides economic and social benefits to the local community and minimizes negative impacts on the environment. Inskeep emphasizes the importance of integrated planning and sustainability in tourism development. Sharpley, R. (2002): Richard Sharpley, in "Tourism: A Sacred Journey," conceptualizes tourism development as the process of managing all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems. This definition focuses on the balance between fulfilling various needs and maintaining sustainability. Mathieson, A. and Wall, G. (1982): In "Tourism: Economic, Physical and Social Impacts," Alister

Mathieson and Geoffrey Wall define tourism development as the process by which a destination area provides facilities and services for tourists, including transportation, accommodation, and entertainment. Their definition highlights the physical aspects of development and the impact on the destination area. Butler, R. W. (1980): In his seminal work "The Concept of a Tourist Area Cycle of Evolution: Implications for Management of Resources," Richard W. Butler describes tourism development as a dynamic process that passes through several stages, impacting the socio-cultural, economic, and environmental conditions of the destination. Butler's model, known as the Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC), is influential in understanding how destinations change over time with tourism development. Hall, C. M. (2000): In "Tourism Planning: Policies, Processes and Relationships," Colin Michael Hall defines tourism development as a process that involves planning and policy making to manage and develop tourism in a way that it maximizes positive economic, social, and cultural benefits while minimizing negative impacts on the environment and local communities. The collective definitions provided herein offer a comprehensive understanding of the progression of tourism. They underscore its multi-dimensional essence, which encompasses the augmentation of the economy, social and cultural repercussions, preservation of the environment, and the necessity for efficacious strategizing and administration. Tourism development is of great significance to the residents, as it can enhance their quality of life (QOL) through the provision of economic advantages, namely employment prospects, tax revenue, and investments (Anumol, 2022). The success of tourism development depends on the active participation of the community. To ensure the successful establishment of tourism villages, it is essential to obtain a thorough comprehension of the various forms and degrees of community participation (Muslim *et al.*, 2023). Community participation can be demonstrated in diverse ways, including the offering of financial resources, assets, labour, and expertise (Kurniawan *et al.*, 2023). The development of sustainable tourism requires community participation in idea creation, physical exertion, competency and abilities, and property (Rustini *et al.*, 2022). Community involvement and inter-party cooperation are essential for the growth of the tourism industry (Sakawati *et al.*, 2022). Community participation in tourism areas is crucial to the industry's growth and development (Syafitri *et al.*, 2023).

Community Participation : The concept of community involvement is complex and has been defined by a number of authors and scholars, each of whom has contributed their own viewpoint to the understanding of this essential component of social, economic, and environmental progress. Various definitions from existing literature include:

Arnstein, S. R. (1969): In her seminal work "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," Sherry R. Arnstein defined community participation as a process of empowering individuals in communities to take part in decision-making processes that affect their lives. This model emphasizes the degrees of power in participation, ranging from non-participation to citizen power. Pretty, J. (1995): Jules Pretty, an expert in sustainable agriculture, offers a broader definition in "Participatory Learning and Action." He describes community participation as the process of involving community members in all stages of development projects - from planning and implementation to monitoring and evaluation. Pretty highlights the importance of knowledge and skills exchange in the participatory process. Chambers, R. (1994): In his work "Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA): Analysis of Experience," Robert Chambers defines community participation as a methodological approach that encourages the sharing of knowledge and experience between experts and community members. Chambers' approach is particularly focused on rural development and emphasizes the value of local knowledge and participatory methods. Wilcox, D. (1994): David Wilcox, in "The Guide to Effective Participation," identifies community participation as the active involvement of people from communities in projects or decisions that will have an impact on their lives. Wilcox's definition emphasizes the empowerment aspect of participation, where community members are not just consulted but are active agents in

decision-making processes. Cohen, J. M. and Uphoff, N. T. (1980): In their work "Participation's Place in Rural Development: Seeking Clarity through Specificity," John M. Cohen and Norman T. Uphoff define community participation as the involvement of a significant number of people in situations where they have substantial control over resources and decisions that affect them. One important component of participation that this definition emphasises is having control over resources. The significance of community participation in decision-making, project creation, and resource management is emphasised by these definitions taken together. They draw attention to the various perspectives and methods of community participation in a variety of domains, such as sustainable agriculture, urban planning, rural development, and community empowerment. Given its many significant advantages, community participation in tourist development is essential. First off, community participation fosters the creation of a wide range of products and services, which raises the standard and level of innovation in the travel and tourist industry (Laksmi *et al.*, 2023). Secondly, it contributes to the preservation of cultural and ecological riches for future generations (Rustini *et al.*, 2022). Additionally, engaging the community improves the well-being of nearby communities and cultivates friendly relationships between visitors and locals (Purwanto, 2023). Community involvement also makes it possible to create genuine tourism experiences that highlight regional arts, customs, and cultural assets (Muslim *et al.*, 2023). Additionally, it fosters the growth of micro, small, and employment possibilities that generate extra revenue for the community (Sakawati *et al.*, 2022). In addition, community involvement is crucial for the development of sustainable tourism since it allows the community to be involved in the stages of project design, management, and execution. All things considered, the viability and sustainability of tourism development depend heavily on community involvement.

Resident Attitudes and Community Participation: In order to be environmentally sustainable, tourism should be developed in a way that supports local economies, creates jobs for locals, and makes use of traditional skills, local materials, and local agricultural goods. Legislation and other mechanisms should be implemented to guarantee that local communities continue to profit. Tourism-related activities must to be considerate of the ecological qualities and limitations of the surrounding area. Respecting customs and traditions should be the first priority (Biodiversity and Tourism, 1997). Residents play a critical part in the sustainability paradigm, thus it's critical to comprehend and evaluate their views towards development and how they perceive it (Allen *et al.*, 1988; Johnson *et al.*, 1994; Pearce *et al.*, 1980; Sheldon & Abenoja, 2001). Getz (1994) that experiences shape people's attitudes, which are closely linked to their values and personalities. According to Gunn (1994), "development plans would bear little fruit unless those most affected are involved from the start.". Since people's attitudes do not change quickly, Long & Richardson (1989) contend that in order to sustain a level of support and involvement, it is necessary to keep an eye on locals' responses to tourists. "The potential of the local industry can be destroyed if residents fear or dislike tourism" (Murphy, 1985). Thus, one of the most important ways to plan for sustainability and gauge the growth of local tourism is to know how they view policies related to tourism. As stated by Nelson (1993), one important sign of sustainable community tourism is the participation of locals in decision-making processes. Research on sustainable tourism has brought up a number of concerns including planning, environmental sustainability, and community involvement. A lot of these problems are linked to perspectives on the growth of tourism (Choi & Murray, 2010). The participation of the community is essential to the success of sustainable tourism projects. Integrating local communities guarantees equitable distribution of tourism profits, cultural sensitivity, and reduced environmental impact. Though there is a growing focus on sustainable tourism practices, there are a number of obstacles that prevent meaningful community involvement in this area. Fostering a more responsible and inclusive approach to tourism requires an understanding of these barriers and how to overcome them.

Barriers to Community Participation: Within the complex field of tourism, the idea of community involvement is essential to determining the viability and popularity of travel destinations. Numerous academics have explored the complex network of variables that either promotes or inhibits community participation in tourism-related projects. Understanding the complexities preventing community participation in decision-making processes is essential for navigating the challenging landscape of tourism development in developing nations. According to Tosun's (2000) classification, these barriers offer a framework for comprehending the difficulties communities encounter when trying to influence decision-making processes. In-depth discussion of the operational restrictions, structural obstacles, and cultural issues that obstruct active community participation is provided in this section, which also explores the impediments that have been found. This exploration intends to reveal prevalent barriers and open up opportunities for informed strategies towards supporting equitable and environmentally friendly tourism practices by synthesizing ideas from various studies undertaken across distinct geographies. Reindrawati (2023) identifies operational, institutional, and cultural barriers that impede community participation in sustainable tourism. Operational constraints include limited knowledge, ineffective decision-making processes, ineffective decision-making platforms, lack of information access, and a lack of accountability and transparency. Access to planning specialists is restricted, community development is inadequate, funding is insufficient, education is lacking, and policy and governance are inappropriate, among other structural obstacles. Cultural barriers encompass a variety of factors, including the enduring impact of colonialism, the level of community awareness, the presence of mistrust, power imbalances, the unequal distribution of costs and benefits, and conflicting interests. These formidable challenges impede the broader engagement of the community in the realm of tourism and necessitate systematic attention from both governmental bodies and sustainable tourism operators (Afenyo-Agbe & Mensah, 2022). Additional hindrances encompass various limitations in attaining benefits, which stem from a multitude of factors, including elitism, factions, avarice, and corruption, conflicts in leadership, language barriers, as well as the dearth of capacity and support from the government and funding sources (Bhandari, 2022).

In mountainous destinations that face geographical disadvantages, obstacles to community participation in the development of tourism include practical, socio-cultural, apprehensive, and institutional factors (Setokoe & Ramukumba, 2020). Further, Operational constraints in the domain of public administration are characterized by a centralized approach, compounded by a lack of coordination among stakeholders and inadequate dissemination of information to local communities. On the structural front, the inclinations of professionals towards centralized decision-making, the dominance of the elite in politics and economic activities, and the absence of a strong legal system further impede local involvement. Limited financial resources serve as an additional limitation. Cultural barriers, constituting an additional layer of difficulties, encompass the indifference and limited awareness among local communities, the limited capacity of economically disadvantaged individuals to actively participate in tourism, and a prevailing perception of unfair distribution of benefits, which contributes to discouragement. These challenges, falling under the overarching categories of operational, structural, and cultural limitations, collectively hinder the effective engagement of the community in the tourism sector.

Insights from various case studies: Tosun (2000) classified barriers into three distinct categories: operational, structural, and cultural. The focal points of concern within these categories include bureaucracy and a reluctance to share power. Aref and Redzuan (2008) pinpointed a lack of influential leadership as a primary obstacle in Iran. Omondi and Kamau (2010) corroborated Tosun's identified barriers in Kenya, leading to insufficient community involvement. Dogra and Gupta (2012) echoed Tosun's barriers in Sudh Mahadev, Jammu, emphasizing the presence of structural challenges. In the case of Tioman Island, operational barriers encompass centralized bureaucracy, hesitancy to share power, a lack of coordination, and

information gaps. Structural barriers encompass professional attitudes, domination by elites, inadequate legal systems, and limited financial resources. Cultural barriers involve apathy, limited awareness, and the constrained capacity of impoverished individuals to participate in tourism development.

DISCUSSION

These barriers hinder community participation in sustainable tourism planning in developing countries. Governments and sustainable tourism operators need to address these issues systematically to encourage broader community involvement in tourism. To augment the involvement of the community in the process of planning and development of tourism, several strategies can be implemented. Initially, it is imperative to enhance the accessibility to information and knowledge by establishing platforms for sharing information, educational programs, and advocating for transparency in the decision-making procedures. In addition, the advancement of the community can be fortified through investments in initiatives that build capacity, support local entrepreneurship, and foster collaborations between communities and those involved in the tourism industry. Enhancing policies and governance entails the formulation of all-embracing and participatory tourism policies, ensuring fair distribution of costs and benefits, and addressing power imbalances and conflicts of interest. To overcome cultural barriers, it is essential to promote an awareness within the community, encourage dialogue, and establish trust between the various stakeholders while simultaneously addressing historical legacies. By implementing these approaches, governments and sustainable tourism operators can surmount obstacles and facilitate meaningful community engagement, thereby contributing to the development of more sustainable and inclusive tourism in developing nations. It is also recommended the enhancement of education and training, establishment of partnerships, improved accessibility to information, promotion of transparency and accountability, and support for the capacity-building of the millennial community to empower them in actively contributing to the development of tourism villages.

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