

## **Study on Community Participation in Tourism Activities in Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park**

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### **Author's contribution**

*The sole author designed, analysed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.*

### **Article Information**

DOI: 10.9734/CJAST/2020/v39i1530719

#### Editor(s):

(1) Dr. Elena Lanchares Sancho, University of Zaragoza, Spain.

#### Reviewers:

(1) José Luis Angarita Alcalá, University of Zulia, Venezuela.

(2) Félix Díaz-Pompa, Universidad de Holguín, Cuba.

Complete Peer review History: <http://www.sdiarticle4.com/review-history/58024>

**Original Research Article**

**Received 06 April 2020**

**Accepted 13 June 2020**

**Published 15 June 2020**

### **ABSTRACT**

Sustainable tourism development is an indispensable trend of the world tourism industry, aiming to bring socio-economic and environmental harmony but not affect the future of the local community. In particular, the participation of the people in tourism activities plays an important role, they must be empowered in planning activities, managing tourist destinations and providing advice to management agencies. The State develops policies, manages and implements destination tourism planning. With the objective to assess the participation and factors affecting the participation of the community in tourism development, the study compares the theoretical model of Pretty (1995), Sherry Arnstein (1971) and Cevat Tosun (1999) From there choose the model of Pretty (1995) as a research base with the scale of participation is 7 steps and scales to evaluate the influencing factors according to groups: The people's awareness group on tourism has 6 criteria; group of motivating factors has 15 criteria; The barrier factor group has 11 criteria. Based on that, the study conducts the participation assessment and the factors affecting people's participation in tourism activities in Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park where is a famous tourist destination in Vietnam, twice honored by UNESCO as a world natural heritage site with outstanding geological - geomorphological criteria and biodiversity criteria with a top-valued cave system world.

**Keywords:** *Tourism development; community participation in tourism development; Phong Nha Ke Bang National Park; Quang Binh tourism.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

There have been a number of studies on participation and the factors affecting community participation in tourism activities in many different aspects.

The studies on participation community in tourism activities: The study of Claiborne applies the concept of social capital to create an understanding of how a community constructs, perceives and participates in tourism development [1]. Semi-structured interviews, focus groups and observations were conducted within a qualitative fieldwork. By comparing two different communities in Panamá findings show how one village with strong social networks and cooperation for mutual benefits has initially developed community-based tourism. Whereas, in the other community local associations and engagement in collective efforts are either poorly limited or absent. Honggang explores the development of tourism participation in two communities, Nanshan and Tangfeng, in Hainan, China [2]. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 24 villagers and secondary data was collected to supplement qualitative research. It provides for four stages of community participation in benefit sharing and decision making: Affected people, beneficiaries, customers and owners. Hulu aims to examine the participation of local people in their contribution to the development of sustainable tourism areas [3]. The method used in this study is descriptive qualitative by conducting primary and secondary data collection.

The studies of the factors affecting community participation in tourism activities: Angkyun identify the barriers to local residents' participation in the process of community-based tourism planning and development in a developing country [4]. A qualitative exploratory study was conducted by adopting in-depth interviews with the various levels of local community's members. Norlida Hanim Mohd Salleh identifies the factors which can specifically stimulate community involvement in tourism-related business [5]. To achieve these objectives, face to face interviews with local communities using questionnaire as the study instrument has been conducted. Francis Mugizi examined the socio-economic characteristics of the households in Murchison Falls Conservation Area to understand how they influence their participation in tourism and eventually enhance household welfare [6]. Using household survey and key informant interviews, data were collected on

demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and analyzed using Binomial Logit Regression in order to show the factors that influence participation of households in tourism.

While there has been a plethora of research on community participation in tourism, most has relied upon a single survey or other form of data acquisition that lacks a dynamic component. Especially, there has not been any study implementing the Pretty Model (1995) model to assess the participation and factors affecting the participation of the community in tourism development [7].

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

There are many theories models evaluate community participation, which are typically the theoretical models of 3 authors Pretty [7], Sherry Phyllis Arnstein [8], and Cevat Tosun [9]. In order to identify research facilities, the author compares three models of Pretty, Arnstein and Tosun through Table 1.

As Table 1 shows, all three models of the authors have similarities in the level of community participation. However, if Arnstein's scale is selected, the assessment of community participation at levels 7 and 8 will not be clear and confusing. For Tosun's 3-level scale, studying the level of participation of local communities will be difficult to classify and identify in detail. For Pretty's scale, the evaluation is favorable, limiting the disadvantages of the two models above. From that, the author determined to use Pretty's model as a basis to study the level of participation of local communities and the influencing factors in Phong Nha – Ke Bang National Park.

Scale for assessing the participation of the community in tourism activities: Including 7 levels:

- *Level 1 (Self Mobilization - SM)*: The community is informed about tourism development, the locality will switch livelihoods with tourism services.

- *Level 2 (Participation in Information Giving - PIG)*: The community has the ability to provide information or answer questions related to the development of local tourism services.

- *Level 3 (Participation by consultation - PBC)*: The community participates in meetings related to the development of local tourism services.

**Table 1. Comparison of models to assess community participation in tourism activities**

Model of Pretty (1995)	Active participation	Model of Sherry Arnstein (1971)	Power level of citizens	Model of Cevat Tosun (1999)
7. Passive participation	Active participation	8. Controlling	Power level of citizens	Spontaneous Participation Bottom up; participate directly; peer to peer in decision making; true participation; self-planning
6. Interactive participation		7. Empowering		
		6. Partner		
5. Functional participation	Active participation	5. Placation	Tokenism	Induced Participation From the top down; passive; official; mostly indirectly; group level is not representative or manipulative; engage in fake; participate in implementation and benefit sharing; Alternatives and feedback.
4. Participation for material		4. Consulting		
3. Participation by consultation		3. notifying		
2. Participation in Information Giving	Passive participation	2. Therapy	Not engaged	Coercive Participation From top to bottom, passive; mainly indirectly, formally; participate in implementation, but not necessarily benefit sharing; Limited or no choice alternative; imposition, non-participation, high qualification of minority groups and advocacy / manipulation.
1. Self Mobilisation		1. manipulation		
<b>Model of Pretty (1995)</b>		<b>Model of Sherry Arnstein (1971)</b>		<b>Model of Cevat Tosun (1999)</b>

**Table 2. Scale of factors affecting people's participation in tourism activities**

<b>Variable code</b>	<b>Observed variables</b>
<b>People's awareness of tourism resources and tourism activities (NTND/NT) (There are 6 variables)</b>	
NT1	Value of local tourism resources
NT2	Possibility of participating in tourism services business
NT3	Tourism as a household livelihood
NT4	Job opportunities from tourism
NT5	Income opportunities from local tourism activities
NT6	Tourism promotes local economic development
<b>Promotion factors</b>	
<b>Policy mechanisms (CCCS/ CS) (There are 6 variables)</b>	
CS1	Tourism development policies are in line with local practical conditions
CS2	Physical facilities and infrastructure of the locality
CS3	Management mechanism, administrative procedures
CS4	Fair and transparent about sharing benefits
CS5	Dialogue between stakeholders
CS6	A mechanism for dealing with conflicts of interest
<b>Household characteristics (ĐĐHGĐ/ HGD) (There are 5 variables)</b>	
HGD1	Natural capital (forest, land, water surface ...)
HGD2	Social capital (kinship, familiar relationships with influential individuals, suppliers ...)
HGD3	Finance
HGD4	Human resources of the household (number of employees, knowledge, skills, foreign languages)
HGD5	Facilities, equipment and facilities of the household
<b>Benefit of economic (LIKT/ KT) (There are 4 variables)</b>	
KT1	Tourism as a sustainable livelihood of households
KT2	Job opportunities from tourism
KT3	Income opportunities from local tourism activities
KT4	Tourism promotes local economic development
<b>Barrier factors (NTRC/RC) (There are 11 variables)</b>	
RC1	Local tourism development policies are incomplete and inappropriate
RC2	Lack of a legal framework for co-management and benefit sharing
RC3	Limited preferential social capital
RC4	Household resources are not eligible (number of employees, knowledge, skills, foreign languages, capital)
RC5	Lack of dialogue and cohesion among stakeholders
RC6	Conflicts of interest and no mechanism for conflict resolution
RC7	Infrastructure, physical facilities for tourism activities are not guaranteed
RC8	Income from tourism activities is low
RC9	The negative impact of local tourism seasonality leads to precarious incomes and unsustainable livelihoods
RC10	Lack of information, advice on markets, tourism products and tourism projects
RC11	Administrative and business procedures have not been simplified yet

- *Level 4 (Participation for material - PFM):* The community participates in working in tourism businesses; spontaneously provide goods, food and provide travel services.

- *Level 5 (Functional participation - FP):* The community participates in tourism function groups (management group, entertainment group, culinary group, guide group, local specialty production group) under supervision of governments or external organizations.

- *Level 6 (Interactive participation - IP):* The community owns the tourism business enterprise, participates in the process of analysis, planning, and contributes in making decisions related to the development of tourism services in local.

- *Level 7 (passive participation - PP):* The community comes up with initiative and proactively contacts for external assistance, keeps control, decisions, self-invests and expands tourism business.

Based on the evaluation questionnaire with specific criteria with the Likert scale to group the level of community participation in each specific tourism activity.

Scale of factors affecting household participation in tourism activities. The qualitative research results identify the factors affecting people's participation: People's awareness of tourism resources & activities; mechanisms and policies of the state management agency in charge of tourism; household characteristics and economic benefits.

On that basis, determining the scale and evaluation criteria in Table 2.

To carry out the study, the author uses the Likert scale - 5 steps: (1) Absolutely not important, (2) Not important, (3) Relatively important, (4) Important, (5) Very important.

### 2.1 Sample and Data Collection

Survey methods: The study identifies the survey subjects, the survey locations, the sample size and creates the questionnaire. Specifically, to identify the surveyed people who are 6 communes of PNKB National Park, the sample size is determined by the formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

With the confidence of 95% and P = 0.5, the sample size with permissible error ± 5%, the study identified the sample to be investigated n = 180 and the author determined the number of households surveyed was 180 households in 6 communes (Son Trach, Phuc Trach, Xuan Trach, Hung Trach, Tan Trach, and Cu Nam in the buffer zone of Phong Nha Ke Bang National Park).

### 2.2 Methods of Data Analysis

Study data using SPSS 22.0 software for analysis. The data analysis steps are as follows: Descriptive statistical method: In order to

understand the characteristics of the research subject as well as measurement and measurement measures, the author uses statistical description method to express the average value and deviation of each measurement.

Anova one-factor analysis (One-way ANOVA) and Hypothesis test of the means of two independent populations (Independent Samples T-test): Used to see if there are specific differences between groups and groups about problems those are statistically significant?

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Assessment of community participation in tourism activities: Survey results, calculations and aggregated according to Pretty's model with 7 criteria are shown in Table 3.

The results in Table 3 show that community participation in strategic planning and development planning at level 6 - interaction and level 7 - initiative is lowest, followed by level 3 - advice; At level 4, incentive and level 5 - the function with the highest level of citizen participation, because at level 4, people participate in tourism when seeing benefits and at level 5 The manifestation of this level is that the community participates in functional groups to meet the partial goals related to the project, in particular the local resident community participates in rowing, porter, photography, homestay business with the support and guidance of PNKB NP Management Board.

Regarding community participation in tourism project activities, the lowest is still level 7 - Active, level 6 - interactive and level 1 - passive, followed by Level 2 and Level 3; The highest level is still at level 4 and level 5. In summary, the participation of the community in tourism activities in PNKB NP is only formal, passive and not commensurate with the role of people in tourism resources. There is a risk that local tourism industry will not develop in a sustainable manner.

**Table 3. Results of community participation in tourism activities in Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park**

Evaluation criteria	SM	PIG	PBC	PFM	FP	IP	PP
Community participation in tourism development strategies and planning	10,5	12,7	5,3	33,4	35,2	1,5	1,4
Community participation in tourism project activities	3,7	9,2	6,5	34,5	40,5	3,8	1,8

Source: Survey data and author's calculations in 2019

Assessment of factors affecting community participation in tourism activities.

Evaluate factors that promote community participation in tourism activities.

Table 4 shows: Regarding the assessment of community awareness about the value of tourism resources and tourism activities, with the average NT1 criterion (GTTB) of 4.65, the community assesses. The high value of tourism resources in PNKB NP region in tourism development is a driving force for them to participate in local tourism activities. However, the criteria NT2, NT3, NT4 have low evaluation, only in the range of 3.25 - 3.5 due to the low ability of livelihoods from tourism and tourism development but job opportunities from tourism and community tourism services are still low. The criteria NT5 and NT6 have a rating of 4.0 or higher, suggesting that the tourism development here has created opportunities for increasing community income and promoting local economic development at a high level. Besides, the survey results of the community on the current exploitation of tourism resources in the PNKB NP region are not really commensurate with the potential. The main form of exploitation is ticket sales, additional services are still few. At present, there is only a small group of people who are qualified in terms of qualifications, capital, experience and social relationship of investment ownership (in a certain period of time) and exploitation of tourism resources in the locality.

According to the results of the Independent Sample T-test and One-way ANOVA analysis, there is almost no statistically significant difference between the factors related to people's perception of gender, age, and level of education and career. However, the NT6 criterion has a statistically significant and high difference between the awareness level of people of different sexes, ages, levels and occupations. At NT5 expenditure, there was a statistically significant difference between gender and occupation in terms of awareness level. The factors NT1, NT2, NT3 have statistically significant differences, respectively, by level of awareness about occupation, gender and qualification.

The results of CS factor analysis, CS1 and CS4 criteria are the highest rated and lowest CS3. However, all criteria in this group of factors are evaluated from level 4 - Important to level 5 - Very important.

According to the results of the Independent Sample T-test and One-way ANOVA analysis, there is no significant statistical difference between the factors related to the evaluation of the importance of CS factor among groups, community about gender, age, education and occupation. However, by gender, there are differences in people's assessments with respect to CS4, CS5 and CS6 criteria. This is due to the difference in educational attainment, perceptions and specific jobs between men and women surveyed.

The results of the household characteristics group analysis show that the criteria of G4 and G2 have the highest and lowest rating, that of G5. However, the family criteria are rated from 4 - Important upwards.

The results of economic benefit group analysis show that all three criteria KT1, KT2 and KT3 are evaluated at levels above 4.5 close to level 5 - very important, only KT4 criteria rated at 4 - Important. This shows that the economic benefits that tourism brings to the community play a decisive role in participation in tourism, becoming a driving force for economic development - society.

Thus, the results of all three groups of factors affect the participation of the community in tourism activities with different levels of influence. In particular, the group of economic factors has the largest impact on the value of social insurance, followed by the group of mechanism and policy factors and finally the group of household characteristics.

According to the results of the Independent Sample T-test and One-way ANOVA analysis, there is almost no statistically significant difference between the factors related to the assessment of the importance of the economic factor of the people by gender, age, qualification and occupation. There was only a statistically significant difference in people's assessments of KT2 of people with different genders. Thus, people have the same assessment of the importance of the economic factor regardless of gender, age, education and occupation. This shows that people are well aware and very interested in the economic benefits of participating in tourism. Economic benefits are the leading motivation of people to participate in tourism activities in the locality. The requirement is that mechanisms and policies are needed to encourage and support people to participate

more deeply and broadly. In addition, businesses and governments in general need to improve the effectiveness of tourism business to create more benefits for people (including income). At the same time, there is a need for a clear legal framework to share the benefits of tourism among stakeholders.

Assessment of barriers preventing community participation in tourism activities.

The results of the people's assessment of barriers to restrict community participation in tourism activities are shown in Table 5.

Table 5 shows, in terms of evaluation of RC8 criteria with the highest rating, the biggest barrier restricts household participation in tourism activities. The criteria RC2, RC4 and RC9 have a rating of 4.5 or higher, the remaining criteria have a rating of 4 - Important or more. This result shows that, besides the factors promoting tourism participation, there are many factors that hinder community participation in tourism activities. In which, there are many reasons: The reality of tourism business in PNKB NP is very high tourist season, cannot welcome visitors in the rainy season; lack of skills, business knowledge and foreign languages of the community; The legal framework for co-management and benefit-sharing is not guaranteed, local residents have long been the real owners of tourism resources, but their role and interests have not been properly cared for; Local tourism development activities are subject to top-down management and control, lack of bottom-up feedback and two-way information exchange, and the community has a lot of difficulties in identifying. Who should reach an agreement with, ask for information where and how to consult, negotiate? Or accessing and updating information on local tourism development in general and tourism projects in particular of the community face many difficulties. When the government allocates land to the project, before the project is built, the community is not informed in advance to have time to understand the information and make a decision whether or not to agree.

In fact, the development of tourism in PNKB NP is still largely conducive to the development of large-scale public and private agencies; key areas of PNKB NP are often controlled by the State (Phong Nha cave, Chay river - Dark cave, Mocc spring) or leased to private businesses

(Thien Duong cave, Son Doong cave, Hang Va, etc.). Hang En; the community is not advised much on markets, tourism products; tourism product planning activities are still limited; People seek unsuitable loans, leading to uncontrolled service price cuts, the strong someone they do, inconsistency and coordination in tourism business within the community itself [10]. In particular, conflicts between the community in the buffer zone and the core zone, between the Kinh and ethnic minority groups over land use right certificates; between long-term residents and immigrants and investors; between conservation and tourism development.

According to the results of the Independent Sample T-test and One-way ANOVA analysis, there is no significant statistical difference between factors related to assessing barriers to household participation on tourism activities of people in gender, age, qualifications and occupation. However, there are still factors with significant and significant statistical differences with criteria RC1, RC6, RC8, RC10 in order of different jobs; Different gender, different levels and occupations; gender and different levels; and different careers.

The reason makes a statistically significant difference between the factors related to the assessment of barriers that restrict household participation in tourism activities of people in gender, age, Levels and occupations are due to differences in qualifications (culture, perceptions, professional knowledge) of participants (managers and unskilled workers) in different occupational groups in the tourism industry. Calendar; degree of influence of the content of the criteria for each different job (tourism business is affected by mechanisms and policies more than the service profession). In addition, there is a high degree of differentiation of the job and its position for men and women. Men are mainly involved in porters and management work (destinations, tourism businesses and projects). While women mainly provide unskilled labor (rowing boats for passengers, serving at business establishments). Based on the above analysis, local authorities, tourism managers and PNKB NP Management Boards need to make changes to ensure that the community can actually benefit from the benefits. Current and future tourism development activities. What needs to be discussed and clarified is how and to what extent the benefits of tourism activities in PNKB NP affect indigenous communities.

**Table 4. Assessment of community on factors that promote participation in tourism activities**

Variable code	Observed variables	The average value	Compare ideas between groups			
			Gender	Age	degree	Job
<b>People's awareness of tourism resources and tourism activities (NTND/NT)</b>						
NT1	Value of local tourism resources	4,65	ns	ns	ns	*
NT2	Possibility of participating in tourism services business	3,5	*	ns	ns	ns
NT3	Tourism as a household livelihood	3,25	ns	ns	*	ns
NT4	Job opportunities from tourism	3,45	ns	ns	ns	ns
NT5	Income opportunities from local tourism activities	4,0	**	ns	ns	**
NT6	Tourism promotes local economic development	4,25	*	**	**	**
<b>Policy mechanisms (CCCS/ CS)</b>						
CS1	Tourism development policies are in line with local practical conditions	4,5	ns	ns	ns	ns
CS2	Physical facilities and infrastructure of the locality	4,05	ns	ns	ns	ns
CS3	Management mechanism, administrative procedures	4,02	ns	ns	ns	ns
CS4	Fair and transparent about sharing benefits	4,68	*	ns	ns	ns
CS5	Dialogue between stakeholders	4,3	*	ns	ns	ns
CS6	A mechanism for dealing with conflicts of interest	4,46	**	ns	ns	ns
<b>Household characteristics (ĐĐHGĐ/ GĐ)</b>						
HGĐ1	Natural capital (forest, land, water surface)	4,3	ns	ns	ns	ns
HGĐ2	Social capital (kinship, familiar relationships with influential individuals, suppliers)	4,45	*	ns	ns	ns
HGĐ3	Finance	4,18	ns	ns	ns	ns
HGĐ4	Human resources of the household (number of employees, knowledge, skills, foreign languages)	4,62	ns	ns	ns	ns
HGĐ5	Facilities, equipment and facilities of the household	4,02	ns	ns	ns	ns
<b>Benefit of economic (LIKT/ KT)</b>						
KT1	Tourism as a sustainable livelihood of households	4,62	ns	ns	ns	ns
KT2	Job opportunities from tourism	4,50	*	ns	ns	ns
KT3	Income opportunities from local tourism activities	4,52	ns	ns	ns	ns
KT4	Tourism promotes local economic development	4,0	ns	ns	ns	ns

Note: 1. On a scale of 1: Absolutely not important to 5: Very important; 2. Significance level:  $P \leq 0.05$  (\*\*);  $0.05 < P \leq 0.10$  (\*);  $\text{Sig} > 0.1$  (ns): There is no statistically significant difference. Source: Survey data and author's calculations in 2019



**Table 5. People's assessments of barriers to participation of the community into tourism activities**

Variable code	Observed variables	Compare ideas between groups				
		The average value	Gender	Age	degree	Job
RC1	Local tourism development policies are incomplete and inappropriate	4,3	ns	ns	ns	**
RC2	Lack of a legal framework for co-management and benefit sharing	4,65	ns	ns	ns	ns
RC3	Limited preferential social capital	4,1	ns	ns	ns	ns
RC4	Household resources are not eligible (number of employees, knowledge, skills, foreign languages, capital)	4,5	ns	ns	ns	ns
RC5	Lack of dialogue and cohesion among stakeholders	4,2	ns	ns	ns	ns
RC6	Conflicts of interest and no mechanism for conflict resolution	4,5	**	ns	**	**
RC7	Infrastructure, physical facilities for tourism activities are not guaranteed	4,1	ns	ns	ns	ns
RC8	Income from tourism activities is low	4,68	**	ns	*	ns
RC9	The negative impact of local tourism seasonality leads to precarious incomes and unsustainable livelihoods	4,65	ns	ns	ns	ns
RC10	Lack of information, advice on markets, tourism products and tourism projects	4,3	ns	ns	ns	**
RC11	Administrative and business procedures have not been simplified yet	4,05	ns	ns	ns	ns

Note: 1. On a scale of 1: Absolutely not important to 5: Very important; 2. Significance level:  $P \leq 0.05$  (\*\*);  $0.05 < P \leq 0.10$  (\*);  $\text{Sig} > 0.1$  (ns): There is no statistically significant difference, Source: Survey data and author's calculations in 2019

At the same time, it is necessary to have appropriate support solutions for people in market consultancy and tourism product planning. These are urgent questions that need to be addressed in the context of PNKB NP where there are small-sized communities and a large number of tourists visiting PNKB NP each year.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Research results assessing the participation and factors affecting the participation of the community in tourism activities: Case studies in PNKB NP, the author has combined qualitative research methods and Quantitatively looked at variables related to participation and influencing factors. Data were collected through a survey of 180 households in 6 communes in the buffer zone of PNKB NP. The scale of the factors affecting participation is built on a theoretical basis and is developed to suit the context of PNKB NP. The analysis results show that the participation of the community in strategic planning, tourism development planning and tourism project activities is low and not active. The cause is due to many influencing factors, including the awareness of people with 6 evaluation criteria, the motivating factor has 15 criteria and the obstructing factor has 11 criteria. In which the level of people's evaluation for each criterion has an average value of 4 - important or more. In order to increase people's participation, it is necessary to have solutions to raise the public's awareness about the value of tourism resources and tourism activities; adopt appropriate mechanisms and policies to develop tourism, improve local infrastructure, be fair and transparent about benefit sharing and the ability to resolve conflicts; improve household resources such as human resources, land, finance.; ensure economic benefits for the community from tourism activities.

#### COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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Peer-review history:

The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:  
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