

# Impacts of Social Capital on Community-Based Tourism Development: A Case Study in Binh Dinh Province, Vietnam

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## **Abstract**

The study analyzes the effects of social capital on community-based tourism development in Binh Dinh province. A survey of 302 locals living in community tourism destinations was conducted. The study used exploratory factor analysis and multivariate regression model. The results show that four variables, including trust, reciprocity, norms, and cooperation, have a positive effect on community-based tourism development. Networking negatively affects community-based tourism development in Binh Dinh province. Additionally, trust is the factor that has the greatest impact on the growth of community-based tourism.

**Keywords:** community-based tourism, community, social capital, effects

## **1. Introduction**

In recent years, community-based tourism (CBT) has become one of the typical types of tourism to ensure sustainable tourism development. Community-based tourism not only contributes to improving local people's livelihoods but also helps preserve and promote indigenous cultural values and the natural tourism resources associated with the destination community. According to the 2017 Law on Tourism, community-based tourism is a type of tourism developed based on the typical cultural values of the community, and managed, exploited, and benefited from by the community. For the sustainable development of community-based tourism, social capital plays an important role, enabling people to directly

manage resources, develop tourism products, and increase people's awareness of participating in tourism activities. There have been many studies showing that social capital positively affects tourism development (Jones, 2005; Okazaki, 2008; Ha, 2010; Zahara & McGehee, 2013; Flora, 1998; Liu et al., 2014). Studies show that social capital generally consists of three characteristics: trust, reciprocity, and cooperation. When these three factors combine to create strong social capital, local people are more likely to take advantage of economic opportunities and enhance community capacity. In addition, factors such as social belonging, social networks, trust, and norms have an important influence on tourism development (Pongponrat & Chantradoan, 2012). Park et al. (2012) studied the impact of social culture on the participation of local people in community tourism development. The results showed that people actively participate in resource conservation activities related to tourist destinations to maintain economic benefits. Besides, other studies show that beyond economic benefits such as employment and income growth, social benefits from CBT development also encourage local people to act for the environment (Jones, 2005; Pretty & Smith, 2003).

Empirical evidence shows the influence of social capital in promoting CBT by encouraging the behavior of local people towards the environment (Jones, 2005; Liu et al., 2014); creating a more attractive environment for tourists. Therefore, it contributes to improving the destination image of community tourism projects (Kencan & Mertha, 2014); mechanisms to encourage people to participate in local tourism development (Pongponrat & Chantradoan, 2012). However, there are also conflicting conclusions about the economic benefits of CBT that may not lead to residents advocating for resource conservation or taking relevant actions (Kiss, 2004). The additional income from CBT is not sufficient for nature conservation (Stronza & Gordillo, 2008) or can even promote faster resource extraction (Ferraro, 2001). Based on conflicting perspectives, it is necessary to examine different aspects of social capital in CBT development.

In addition, studies on the impact of social capital on CBT development in Vietnam are quite new, mainly focusing on assessing the participation of local people in community-based tourism development (Nghì et al., 2012; Phung Thi Hang, 2018; Dung & Ha, 2019; Thu et al., 2019). Based on these gaps, this study aims to explore the role of social capital in developing community-based tourism in Binh Dinh Province, Vietnam.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1 Social Capital*

At the end of the twentieth century, the concept of social capital has attracted the attention of many researchers, and more and more studies have mentioned the role of social capital in socio-economic issues. However, Social capital is a rather broad concept due to different approaches in defining what is social capital. Therefore, there have been many different definitions and interpretations of social capital (Baker, 1990; Bourdieu and Richardson, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Portes, 1998; Putnam, 2000). Bourdieu và Richardson (1986), Coleman (1988), và Putnam (2000) share the view that social capital is viewed as a multidimensional

construct that includes cognition (i.e., mutual trust) as well as structural factors (social networks). More specifically, Social Capital is the trust between individuals, the compliance with the standards of the community, and the network of social relations. While Putnam (2000) shows that social capital can be divided into three groups: cohesive social capital (family relationships, clans), bridging social capital (friends, colleagues, neighbors) and associated social capital (network of organizations, groups). In addition, Lin (2001) argued that social capital is a set of sociological characteristics capable of enhancing the economic well-being of residents in an area.

Alston (2002), Boyd et al. (2008), social capital is formed based on the development cooperation of local people and the “asset” that people bring to exchange, cooperate and bond in their relationship is “trust”. Social capital is seen as a resource, an “asset” of the community in order to increase the power to lead to the growth of other sources of capital. Hence, Social capital brings benefits to the community, especially social capital is very necessary for communities with developing economies or other sources of capital that are not yet strong. With “abundant” social capital, the community can increase other types of capital that are still “weak” through the process of building trust to develop relationships of cooperation and linkage within and outside the community (Homan, 2011). Enhancing social capital through building the trust, close networking and establishing long-term cooperative relationships which are the “key” to community development (Alston, 2002).

## *2.2 The Role of Social Capital in Community-Based Tourism Development*

Many studies show that social capital plays an important role in tourism development (Jones, 2005; Okazaki, 2008; Ha, 2010; Zahara and McGehee, 2013; Flora, 1998). Studies show that social capital generally consists of three characteristics: trust, social network and cooperation. When these factors combine to create strong social capital, local people are more likely to take advantage of economic opportunities and enhance community capacity. If the social capital in the local community is strong, people tend to cooperate and help each other to develop tourism (Zhao et al., 2011). Grootaert (1998) also argues that social capital plays as a key to develop successful community based tourism through information sharing, coordination of activities and collective decision-making. Besides, Macbeth et al. (2004) emphasize the power, trust, cooperation and participation of community members in decision making as important aspects of social capital necessary for tourism development. In addition, some factors such as location familiarity, social cohesion, trust and norms have an important influence on people’s motivation to participate in tourism development (Pongponrat and Chantradoan, 2012).

Choo and Jamal (2009), Jones (2005) and Nunkoo (2017) showed that social capital is an important component of community-based tourism development. Jones (2005) asserted that a high level of social capital, which is reflected through people’s commitment to collective action, is a tool to develop community-based tourism. According to Putnam (1993), social capital includes “trust”, “rule of reciprocity” and “network of people's participation”. These components are important community characteristics that help to encourage community

participation in tourism development. For example, social capital can bring a sense of well-being to the community, facilitate the exchange of information within the community, and facilitate cooperation that allows people to solve problems collectively (Macbeth và cộng sự, 2004). Furthermore, Kannapa Pongponrat and Naphawan Jane Chantradoan (2012) also showed that the important role of social capital in contributing to the successful development of the tourism model with the participation of the community. The social capital component promotes the participation of local people who have a deep understanding of their hometown, creating favorable conditions for the development of local tourism. Social capital acts as a key mechanism to promote and pull people to participate in local tourism development. Moreover, social capital acts as a driving force in different stages such as decision-making, implementation and monitoring and evaluation stages. It can be seen as the core mechanism for the success of local tourism activity planning.

Zhao et al (2011), Park et al (2012) advocate the positive role of social capital in community tourism development. Research results show that social capital can improve the ability of communities to sustainably manage natural resources through the creation of appropriate norms and rules, fostering trust and reciprocal support. Residents tend to trust others in the community to be willing to participate in collective problem solving. Through social capital, it is possible to create a more tourism-friendly environment, thereby improving the image of the destination. In the long run, this can promote the sustainability of community-based tourism projects. In addition, Liu et al (2014) found that social capital enhances understanding of environmental behaviors, helping to restore and maintain ecosystems in communities. Research affirmed that social capital drives resident behavior through community norms, rules and values, as a means of achieving long-term sustainability and mutual benefit for residents.

Therefore, social capital plays a role in promoting community-based tourism development through aspects such as: influencing the behavior of local people towards the environment (Jones, 2005; Liu et al, 2014); creating a more attractive environment for tourists, thereby improving the destination image of community tourism projects (Kencan and Mertha, 2014); motivating people to participate in local tourism development (Kannapa Pongponrat and Naphawan Jane Chantradoan, 2012). In Viet Nam, studies mainly focus on the participation of local people in community tourism development. Social capital is a factor that has a positive impact on community-based tourism development through people's awareness and attitudes about tourism development, the trust of stakeholders, the relationship with local authorities and other organizations (Nghị et al, 2012; 2018; Dung and Ha, 2019; Thu et al., 2019).

Based on the literature review and theoretical framework on social capital, this study focuses on explored trust, norms, reciprocity, cooperative and networking as major components in community-based tourism development in Binh Dinh Province. Therefore, the following hypotheses will be tested:

H0: Trust has a positive effect on community-based tourism development

H1: Norms put a positive impact on community-based tourism development

H2: Reciprocity fosters community-based tourism development

H3: Cooperative betters on community-based tourism development

H4: Networking leads to community-based tourism development.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Data Collection and Sample

The study was conducted in areas in Binh Dinh Province that are operating community-based tourism models such as Nhon Hai commune, Nhon Ly commune, Bai Xep, Ghenh Rang ward, Bau Da wine (An Nhon), Phu Gia horse hat (Phu Cat), squash village (Phu My). The questionnaire used in this study had five latent variables: trust, norm, reciprocity, cooperation, networking, and community-based tourism development. The survey used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 for "strongly disagree" to 5 for "strongly agree." According to Hair et al. (1980), a sample size of at least five times the total number of observed variables is suitable for exploratory factor analysis. With a total scale of 30, the minimum sample size is 150 observations. To carry out this study, the questionnaire was distributed to 310 respondents in Binh Dinh province. After the processing data, there were 302 eligible respondents. In every latent variable, authors developed more-detailed questions related to the main latent variable (Table 1).

Table 1. Detailed latent variable analysis

Variables	Description
Trust (LT)	I believe people in our community are honest and can be trusted (LT1)
	I feel comfortable when I ask my neighbors for help with something (LT2)
	I often consult the people in the community before making an important decision (LT3)
	I trust the local authorities (LT4)
	I do not discuss adverse information related to local government (LT5)
Norms (CM)	I respect the rules and regulations in the community (CM1)
	I strive to preserve local traditions and protect resources (CM2)
	I always obey the law (CM3)
	There are a few conflicts in our community (CM4)
	Violations will be penalized according to local regulations (CM5)
Reciprocity (TD)	I am willing to help local people to develop community tourism (TD1)
	I was helped by other people when I was in trouble (TD2)
	I am willing to contribute money/economics to community tourism development activities (TD3)
	I am willing to take the time to contribute to discussions or constructive suggestions in CBT planning and management (TD4)
	I am willing to share resources (houses, vehicles...) in community tourism activities (TD5)
Cooperative (HT)	Local people cooperate for operating tourism (HT1)
	Local people cooperate with tourism companies to provide tourism services (HT2)
	Local people cooperate with local authorities to set rules, share benefits in CBT (HT3)
	Local people cooperate with NGOs to improve tourism skills (HT4)
Networking (ML)	I have many friends in other localities (ML1)
	I am a member of local organizations (clubs, associations, ...) (ML2)
	I actively establish networks in the community to support each other (ML3)
	I often participate in local and international events and festivals (ML4)
	I have a good relationship with local government, local CBT development management board (ML5)

Community-based tourism Development (DLCD)	CBT helps improve basic infrastructure in the community (DLCD1)
	CBT helps to increase income for local people (DLCD2)
	CBT creates more jobs for local people (DLCD3)
	CBT increases learning opportunities and improves qualifications for local people (DLCD4)
	CBT helps to preserve traditional values, customs and practices (DLCD5)
	CBT helps to protect the local environment (DLCD6)

Source: Developed by authors based on Macbeth.et.al (2004), Jones (2005), Baksh.et.al (2013), Zhang.et.al (2020)

### 3.2 Methodology

In this study, Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and multivariate regression methods are used to analyze the effects of social capital on community-based tourism development through SPSS 20.0 software.

## 4. Research Results

### 4.1 Explore Factor Analysis

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient

Variables	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Trust (LT)	LT1, LT2, LT3, LT4, LT5	0.911
Norms (CM)	CM1, CM2, CM3, CM4, CM5	0.899
Reciprocity (TD)	TD1, TD2, TD3, TD4, TD5	0.922
Cooperative (HT)	HT1, HT2, HT3, HT4	0.892
Networking (ML)	ML1, ML2, ML3, ML4, ML5	0.809
Community-based tourism Development (DLCD)	DLCD1, DLCD2, DLCD3, DLCD4, DLCD5, DLCD6	0.877

Source: Authors's computation with SPSS 20.0

Cronbach's Alpha values larger than 0.6 are acceptable and 0.8 or greater is considered as a good variable (Peterson, 1994). The reliability test results reveal that all variables have an overall Cronbach Alpha coefficient better than 0.6 (see table 2). Therefore, these scales are accepted.

### Factor analysis for the independent variable

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's Test for independent variables

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.856	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5149.774
	df	276
	Sig.	.000

Source: Authors's computation with SPSS 20.0

The estimated of KMO = 0.856 is greater than 0.5 and Bartlett test with Sig = 0.000 (< 0.05) show that EFA analysis is suitable.

Table 4. Rotated component matrix

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
CM3	.834				
CM5	.812				
CM4	.763				
CM1	.763				
CM2	.705				
TD3		.940			
TD4		.852			
TD2		.852			
TD5		.832			
TD1		.827			
LT3			.865		
LT2			.845		
LT5			.836		
LT4			.825		
LT1			.780		
HT4				.923	
HT2				.857	
HT3				.839	
HT1				.802	
ML5					.814
ML1					.788
ML2					.780
ML3					.751

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Source: Authors's computation with SPSS 20.0

Table 4 shows that item ML4 is removed from the model because the load factor is less than 0.5. The factor loading coefficients are all higher than 0.5. In order to achieve convergence and discriminant validity when analysing EFA, the factors are used.

#### *Factor analysis for the dependent variable*

Table 5. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.801
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1264.941
	Df	21
	Sig.	.000

Source: Authors's computation with SPSS 20.0

The estimated KMO = 0.801 is greater than 0.5 and Barlett test with Sig = 0.000 (< 0.05) show that EFA analysis is stable.

Table 6. Component Matrix

Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>	
	Component 1
DLCD2	.933
DLCD1	.863
DLCD3	.811
DLCD5	.728
DLCD6	.695
DLCD4	.653

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 components extracted.

Source: Authors's computation with SPSS 20.0

As can be seen, only one factor can be derived from the input items, and all of the factor weights' values are higher than 0.5. The Community-based tourism development (DLCD) variable's items converge pretty well.

#### 4.2 Regression Analysis

Table 7. Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.717 <sup>a</sup>	.514	.506	.38646044

a. Predictors: (Constant), LT, TD, CM, HT, ML

(Source: Compiled from the research results of authors)

The findings demonstrate that the model has an adjusted R square of 0.506. As a result, the model accounts for 50.6% of the dependent variable's variance. It indicates that five separate factors related to social capital account for 50.6% of the growth of locally based tourism.

The multiple linear regression model is appropriate for the data set, according to the findings of evaluating the F. statistic with sig = 0.000 ( 0.05) from the ANOVA study.

Table 8. ANOVA test

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	46.761	5	9.352	62.619	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	44.208	296	.149		
	Total	90.969	301			

a. Dependent Variable: DLCD



b. Predictors: (Constant), LT, TD, CM, HT, ML

Source: Authors's computation with SPSS 20.0

Table 9. Regression results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Coefficients <sup>a</sup>			Collinearity Statistics		
	B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF	
1	(Constant)	.990	.201		4.919	.000		
	FLT	.248	.035	.327	7.133	.000	.782	1.278
	FTD	.226	.033	.295	6.834	.000	.881	1.135
	FCM	.178	.035	.234	5.060	.000	.766	1.305
	FHT	.199	.034	.249	5.843	.000	.902	1.109
	FML	-.258	.040	-.280	-6.505	.000	.888	1.126

a. Dependent Variable: DLCD

Source: Authors's computation with SPSS 20.0

The final regression model is estimated as follows:

$$DLCD = 0.327*LT + 0.295*TD + 0.234*CM + 0.249*HT - 0.258*ML$$

The findings demonstrate that four factors foster the growth of community-based tourism, in which trust has a significant impact on the growth of community-based tourism. Locals are more likely to cooperate in community tourist business activities when they have faith in local government and community members, which leads to creating more employment, higher incomes, and higher living standards (Similar to Thammaji, 2013; Kortana. et.al, 2022). Additionally, as trust is improved, people are willing to participate in resource conservation, culture, and environmental protection activities. This result is similar to the study of Jones (2005).

Second, reciprocity has a positive impact on the development of community tourism. Local people are willing to share resources among individuals and collectives will allow them to help each other and develop cooperation to increase income and create jobs for local people in CBT development (Similar to Zhao. et.al, 2020).

The following two variables are cooperation and norms that positively affect community tourism development. The participation of stakeholders in mutually beneficial activities, facilitation of the execution of tourist business operations, and provision of tourism services are likely to address shared community issues. In addition, local people comply with the laws and principles set out to help people raise their awareness in resource conservation, preserving traditional local cultural values, to help sustain community tourism development.

Unlike previous studies such as Zhao. et.al (2011), Baksh. et.al (2013), networking harms the development of CBT. This can be explained as follows: Networking can be developed by many different channels such as family, friends, and other external relationships. However, in the context of developing CBT in Binh Dinh is still new and spontaneous, encouragement of

family, friends, and relatives to take part in tourism-related activities as a means of information sharing and support was the key networking strategy, while the network can cause exclusion in the society, i.e. it only benefits people with previous acquaintances and people from outside the community who are difficult to join to benefit from tourism development.

## 5. Conclusion

In recent years, community-based tourism in Binh Dinh province, which has just begun to develop, has faced some obstacles in resource mobilization and people's participation in developing tourism activities. The study found that social capital plays a significant role in community-based tourism development by raising people's awareness of resource conservation activities and encouraging them to participate in tourism business activities that bring income and sustainable tourism development. Based on the findings, trust is considered the strongest variable that affects the development of community-based tourism in Binh Dinh province. Next, the components of social capital that lead to community-based tourism in Binh Dinh, such as reciprocity, cooperation, and norms, are discussed. Finally, networking has a negative influence on community-based tourism development. Research results show the importance of mutual trust between local people, and trust with local authorities in encouraging people to participate in community tourism. In addition, there should be coordination between local people and stakeholders, and encouragement of shared resources so that local people feel comfortable and supported when participating in CBT development. When people in the community have a positive attitude towards tourism development, willing to participate in ownership, and participating in all jobs to satisfy needs and benefits for economic growth, CBT develops sustainably

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