



Community-based tourism as social entrepreneurship promoting sustainable development in coastal communities: a study in Thua Thien Hue province, Central Vietnam

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Abstract

Community-based tourism (CBT) has been considered a popular approach to sustainable development, especially in rural areas of developing countries. However, the different trajectories of the CBT approach and mixed empirical evidence have led to a vague understanding of the impacts of CBT on sustainability. This study employs a social entrepreneurship perspective to explore CBT practices and their relationship with sustainable development in coastal communities in Thua Thien Hue, Central Vietnam. A survey collected data on 297 households in nine villages along the provincial coast. As a collective entrepreneurial initiative, tourism appears to have reconfigured the natural and sociocultural capitals of the coastal communities. CBT had different impacts on social, economic, and environmental sustainability. Although CBT brought considerable improvements to the landscape, environment, and natural resources, it caused unexpected impacts on culture preservation. Meanwhile, CBT did not provide many local household income enhancement or job creation opportunities. The study has implications for managers and policy maker to develop CBT in developing countries.

Keywords Community based · Tourism · Coastal · Social entrepreneurship · Sustainable development · Vietnam

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Introduction

Community-based tourism (CBT) has been considered a strategy to foster the development of underserved communities (Dung et al. 2021; Juma and Khademi-Vidra 2019; Fabinyi 2020). It can provide a means for sustainable community mobilization and social transformation (Jorgensen et al. 2021) by offering alternative products and services and forcing traditional tourism enterprises to practice responsible tourism (de Lange and Dodds 2017). This type of tourism creates a foundation for other local entrepreneurial initiatives and encourages political and institutional changes that simultaneously support positive social and environmental outcomes and promote local economies.

CBT is positively related to fundamental pillars of sustainable development, including social, economic, and environmental sustainability (Dangi and Jamal 2016). It can improve income and career opportunities for community members (Keyim 2015; Lee and Jan 2019; Zapata et al. 2011). Tourism service provision creates new sources of income for local people besides traditional farming or fishery activities. Moreover, CBT can provide an institutional

mechanism that improves the sustainability of the region's economy. In particular, the tourism business might contribute to economic disparity reduction (Lyons 2015), micro-credit development (Dangi and Jamal 2016), and poverty alleviation (Manyara and Jones 2007).

Next to monetary benefits, CBT can also bring improvements to local social-cultural well-being (Kim et al. 2013). It is an effective means of raising funds for local educational programs (Aquino et al. 2018). When implementing a CBT project, governments and not-for-profit organizations often conduct training for community members. Hence, CBT develops the knowledge and skills of local people who used to be conventional fishers or farmers (Laeis and Lemke 2016). This knowledge expansion might improve community resilience, mobilization, and transformation in the future (Jorgensen et al. 2021). Also, the development of CBT might reduce criminal experiences in host destinations (Sheldon and Daniele 2017).

Finally, CBT can contribute to environmental sustainability by improving the natural surroundings where the community is located (Musavengane and Kloppers 2020). By changing residents' livelihoods toward an eco-friendlier way, CBT can reduce the conflicts in exploiting natural resources that commonly lead to overexploitation (Curcija et al. 2019). Furthermore, residents' environmental awareness is enhanced when community members need to ensure a high-quality recreational experience for visitors (Lee et al. 2017, 2013).

Nevertheless, a CBT project might also negatively affect community well-being, especially when poorly managed. Weaver (2009) criticized the financial sustainability of CBT projects. He stated that it is challenging for heterogeneous communities to manage the business, especially in incubation. Once the project fails, it might have adverse effects on community development. Lepp (2007) reported that some Ugandan people had experienced increased living costs in local communes caused by tourists' visits. Teh and Cabanban (2007) warned of water pollution and biodiversity loss at tourism destinations when natural resources are over-used to serve tourists. Alam and Paramati (2016) said that CBT could contribute to income inequalities when tourism revenue is unequally distributed among the community, whereas Archer et al. (2005) were concerned about cultural degradation caused by tourists. Therefore, the possible drawbacks should not be neglected despite the potential positive impacts.

This study employs the lens of social entrepreneurship to examine CBT's impacts on community development. Social entrepreneurship is an approach that combines entrepreneurs' business acumen and social value (Zahra et al. 2014). Social problems often create business opportunities because they reflect market demands. Social entrepreneurs who recognize and successfully exploit those opportunities

can simultaneously fulfill their social missions and make profits. As mentioned above, the different trajectories of the CBT approach and mixed empirical evidence have led to a vague understanding of the impacts of CBT on sustainability. However, the parallels between the goals and benefits of social entrepreneurship, CBT, and sustainable development might bring clearer insights into this nexus.

From the social entrepreneurship perspective, CBT can be seen as a social venture addressing community development issues through tourist activities (Ellis and Sheridan 2014). It is commonly initiated to improve the sustainability of community development (Juma and Khademi-Vidra 2019; Lee and Jan 2019; Ngo et al. 2018; Okazaki 2008). CBT can mobilize community capabilities to address the destination's social, environmental, and economic problems (Sheldon and Daniele 2017). It aims to reconfigure community resources (e.g., human, financial, and natural) and institutions to exploit business opportunities in the tourism industry.

CBT is distinguishable from other types of tourism, such as mass tourism and ecotourism. While the others focus on financial and ecological benefits, CBT emphasizes the community's well-being (Mtapuri and Giampiccoli 2019). CBT benefits a broad group of local people by providing business opportunities and empowering the host community (Nicholas et al. 2009; Tamir 2015). It considers economic, social, environmental, and cultural sustainability by improving visitors' experience of the local landscape, culture, and customs (Mtapuri and Giampiccoli 2019). This venture focuses on creating a more sustainable tourism industry for local people (Blackstock 2005).

CBT can only be successful when community members cooperatively take actions that tackle complex and deep-rooting issues (Child 2018). Therefore, it emphasizes the participation of the community in management, operation, ownership, and benefit distribution. For instance, Burgos and Mertens (2017) highlighted the importance of participatory management for CBT success. Meanwhile, Zielinski et al. (2020) indicated that a CBT project must be within a community and implemented, owned, and managed by community members. In Vietnam, CBT encompasses commercial tourist services collectively provided by local people while maintaining respect for natural resources and local culture (WWF Vietnam 2013). This definition is appropriate in developing countries where CBT is often at an early stage of development. CBT in these countries is mainly considered an entrepreneurial initiative for rural communities to cope with natural resource depletion (Dung et al. 2021).

Because of CBT's great potential to provide an alternative sustainable livelihood for local people whose lives mainly rely on the exploitation of deteriorating natural resources (Idrobo and Johnson 2019), it is often promoted in rural communities facing resource limitations (Aquino et al.

2018). For instance, indigenous people in Peru, India, Brazil, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Bhutan have provided tourist accommodations (Sloan et al. 2014). Meanwhile, an impoverished community in Takana, Bolivia, has established a community tourism enterprise to generate employment, increase income, and conserve local biodiversity at the same time (Peredo and Wurzelmann 2015).

This study considers CBT as a social entrepreneurship in which community members use their business acumen to exploit tourism opportunities in Thua Thien Hue, Vietnam. This coastal province has tremendous potential for tourism with Tam Giang Lagoon — the most extensive lagoon system in South East Asia, and Lang Co, one of the most beautiful bays globally. Local community residents have been facing uncertainty in their future lives because of the significant ecological decline and livelihood constraints (Armitage and Marschke 2013). Over the last two decades, resource deterioration and climate change are creating pressing needs for mobilization and transformation toward the sustainability of coastal communities in this province (Thao et al. 2014). The local authorities have pointed out and supported CBT as an alternative development thrust for coastal villages (Thua Thien Hue people committee 2019). However, no study examines CBT's impacts on the community's sustainable development, leaving a dearth of evidence for

policy-makers. This shortage possibly leads to poor management and implementation of CBT programs that might exacerbate existing problems such as environmental pollution, decreased biodiversity, or local culture deterioration (Teh and Cabanban 2007).

The study aims at understanding the practices of the CBT venture and its impacts on sustainability in Thua Thien Hue coastal communities. Specifically, it explores current tourism resources and activities in coastal communities and examines the residents' perception of CBT impacts on community sustainability. The paper starts with a review of the literature. Research context and methods are then described, followed by the presentation of the results. Finally, theoretical and managerial implications are shown along with the conclusion and future research suggestions.

Research context and methods

Thua Thien Hue province

Thua Thien Hue, located in Central Vietnam, has a coastline of 128 km (Fig. 1). This province has extensive fishery resources, a diverse marine landscape, and aquatic species. These resources have provided livelihoods, mainly fishing

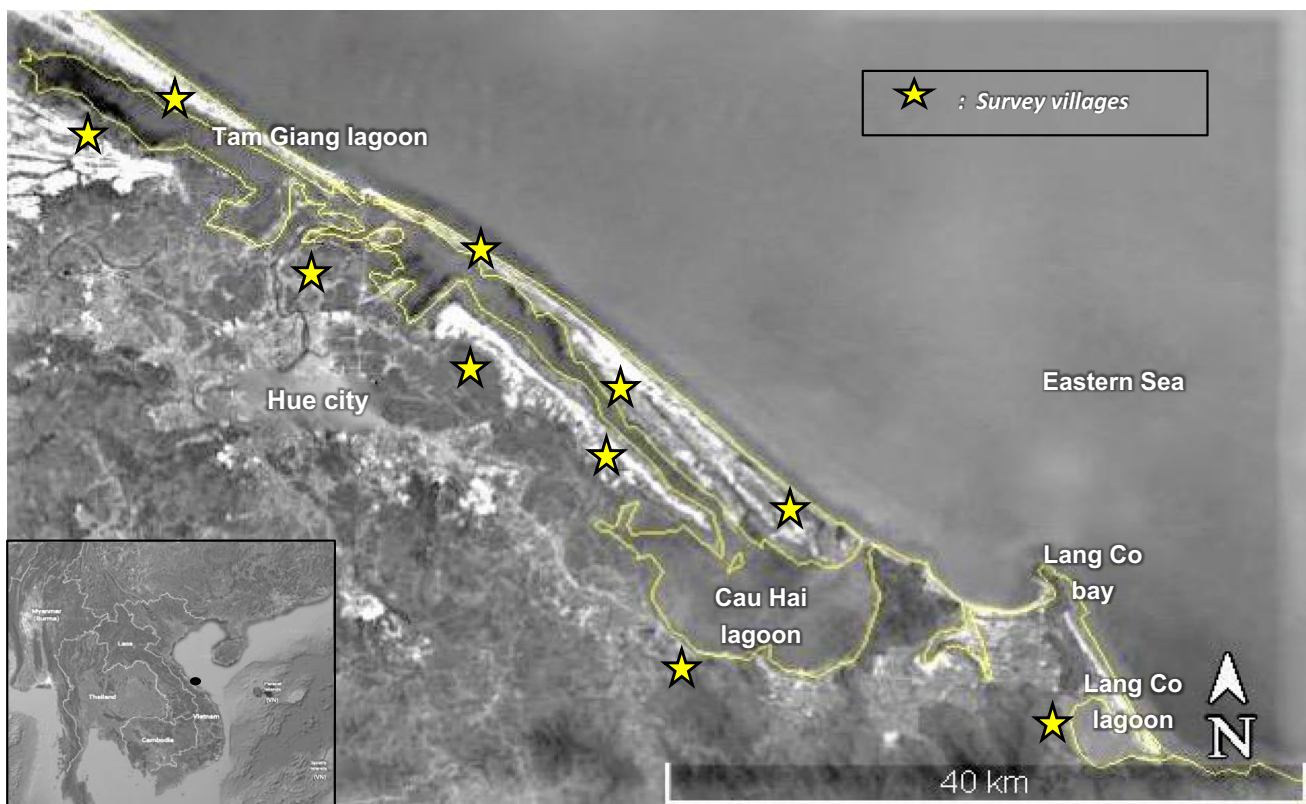


Fig. 1 Coastal lagoons in Thua Thien Hue province of Central Vietnam

and aquaculture, for more than 300,000 people. However, fishery resources are being degraded rapidly due to overexploitation, posing critical challenges to community livelihoods (Armitage and Marschke 2013). Thus, residents are in a pressing need to transform their livelihood in a more sustainable way (Armitage and Marschke 2013).

Coastal destinations in Thua Thien Hue demonstrate potential ecotourism development with rich biodiversity and majestic landscape. In this area, tourists can observe the migration of millions of birds during winter or visit mangrove forests. Furthermore, large wetland areas and beaches offer several entertainment activities such as fishing, boating, and windsurfing. Tam Giang Lagoon and Lang Co bay attract food tourists because of their seafood specialties, such as tiger shrimps, crabs, and brackish water fishes. Another advantage of coastal tourism destinations is their closeness to Hue city, a famous historical architecture and cultural value site. This geographical connection allows the development of a tourism ecosystem that can bring multiple values to tourists.

Survey villages

Data for this study were collected in nine tourism locations categorized into two groups (Table 1). The nine surveyed sites were located along the provincial coast, which ensured data comparability in this study regarding geographical distribution. The “tourism-developed” village group encompassed “Lang Co,” “Phu An,” “Huong Phong,” “Thuan An,” and “Quang Loi,” where CBT is relatively better developed on the coast. Villages in this group have about 10 years of experience in providing tourism services. The number of households involved in tourism service provision in these villages ranges from 50 to 200. Some of these households have partnerships with tourism companies and are marked on tourist maps. They have also undertaken much training in developing CBT during the last decade. Each site in this group hosted more than 150 tourists daily in 2019.

The “tourism-beginning” village group consisted of “Loc Binh,” “Phu Loc,” “Vinh Thanh,” and “Quang Ngan,” where CBT was recently triggered. Tourism in these villages started about 5 years ago. Each village has around 30 households that provide tourism services. Compared to the “tourism-developed” villages, the “tourism-beginning” villages are much less popular destinations, only hosting around 40 tourists per day in 2019.

Sampling, data collection, and analysis

This study employed the stratified random sampling technique. Geographical strata encompassed nine areas described above. In each region, a list of households providing tourism services was made with the help of the local authority. Then the study randomly selected and invited at least 20 households from the list and 20 households who still maintained fishing livelihoods to a questionnaire-based, face-to-face survey in each village. In total, 385 households were invited, and 297 agreed to attend the survey in the nine villages.

CBT’s impacts on sustainability have been assessed via several indicators, including community members’ perceptions (e.g., Diedrich and Garcia-Buades 2009; Almeida-Garcia et al. 2016; Lee and Jan 2019). Once local people are aware of the benefit surplus of CBT, they will support its development (Lee 2013). Local people directly interact with tourists so that positively minded residents can provide a pleasant experience. Hence, benefits that are perceivable to residents have been at the core of CBT planning and management (Lundberg 2015). This study measured the impacts of CBT via people’s awareness of the impacts.

In specific, a questionnaire encompassing 41 semi-structured questions was used in the survey. The questions included tourism services provided in respondents’ villages, community and household resources used for tourism activities, impacts of CBT on community well-being, and their socio-demographical characteristics. The impacts of CBT on

Table 1 Characteristics of tourist destinations

| Destination | Tourism development level | #Tourist service HHs (2019) | #Tourist (person/day) | #Tours/year |
|-------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Lang Co | “Tourism-developed villages” | 200 | 450 | 50 |
| Phu An | | 50 | 500 | 1000 |
| Huong Phong | | 50 | 150 | 65 |
| Thuan An | | 90 | 450 | 50 |
| Quang Loi | | 65 | 150 | 300 |
| Loc Binh | “Tourism-beginning villages” | 30 | 40 | 10 |
| Phu Loc | | 30 | 40 | 5 |
| Vinh Thanh | | 35 | 40 | 5 |
| Quang Ngan | | 35 | 20 | 5 |

Source: Survey site statistics

sustainable development were assessed by respondents’ level of agreement on given statements. Specifically, respondents were asked to evaluate whether CBT had had positive, negative, or neutral impacts on each aspect of sustainable development. Further explanations for their choices were asked to validate the answers.

Data were analyzed by descriptive statistics and nonparametric tests for differences. In particular, the study used a randomization test (aka a permutation test) with 1000 permutations to examine the differences between two household groups, namely “fishing” and “tourism.” The former group consisted of households that earned money solely from fishery livelihoods such as fishing and aquaculture, while the latter included households with income from tourism services. We conducted chi-square tests to examine the difference in respondents’ perceptions by location and occupation. R programming language was used to conduct the data analysis.

Results

Characteristics of surveyed households

Table 2 describes the demographical characteristics of the studied households. On average, households consisted of four people, of which three were working. Most primary income earners were in early middle age, with an average of 47 years old. Variations in households’ human resources were significant when the range of household size was from 2 to 10 people, and the number of income earners was from 1 to 6. Also, the youngest household head was only 23 years old, whereas the oldest was 84. The majority of household heads were men, while women ran few families. Regarding education level, most household heads completed secondary

school, fewer finished high school, and only five respondents entered universities. A household participating in the survey earned, on average, 236 million VND (approx. US \$10,000) per year and had facilities valued at about 1 billion VND (approx. US \$40,000).

It appears that the “fishing” and “tourism” groups were significantly different regarding the number of income earners (p -value = 0.011), head’s education level (p -value = 0.039), and household facility value (p -value < 0.001). Compared to conventional fishing households, households that had adopted a tourism livelihood had fewer income earners. Heads of these households also had higher educational attainment and owned more expensive working facilities. Nonetheless, there was no difference between the groups regarding household income. Adopting CBT required households to invest in facilities such as motorbikes or accommodation buildings, but it had not yet influenced household income in the coastal communities.

Tourism-related entrepreneurship in the coastal communities

It appears that residents started to be providers of many tourism services, including accommodation, food, and entertainment (Table 3). Specifically, they started accommodating tourists (mostly in their own homes) and served local dishes to guests. Local people also toured visitors to do sightseeing and explore the local nature. Besides, they were the organizers of cultural performances or crafting tours that brought an experience of local daily lives to tourists.

However, the involvement of local people in tourism activities was diversified. Selling local foods to tourists was the most common service provided by community members. This activity required little investment and was not too away from their traditional fishery livelihoods. Meanwhile,

Table 2 Characteristics of studied households

| Characteristic | Unit | Fishing HH ($n=118$) | Tourism HH ($n=179$) | Total | Permutation (1000) p -value |
|--|------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Household size (mean, range) | People | 4 | 4 | 4 (2–10) | 0.501 |
| Income earner (mean, range) | People | 3 | 2 | 3 (1–6) | 0.011 |
| Age of the primary labor (mean, range) | Years old | 48.8 | 46.9 | 47.7 (23–84) | 0.107 |
| Gender of HH head (count) | Male | 84 | 145 | 229 | 0.039 |
| | Female | 34 | 33 | 67 | |
| Education level of HH head (count) | Primary school (years 1–5) | 57 | 42 | 99 | <0.001 |
| | Secondary school (years 6–9) | 38 | 66 | 104 | |
| | High school (years 10–12) | 19 | 70 | 89 | |
| | Higher education | 4 | 1 | 5 | |
| HH annual income (mean, range) | mil VND | 219.31 | 248 | 236.6 (50–1500) | 0.165 |
| HH facility value (mean, range) | mil VND | 644.83 | 1367.52 | 1080.39 (178–3015) | <0.001 |

Table 3 The involvement of respondents in tourism activities

| Activities | % respondents | | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| | <i>Very limited</i> | <i>Limited</i> | <i>Average</i> | <i>Popular</i> | <i>Very popular</i> |
| Food service | 0 | 16.7 | 23.3 | 46.7 | 13.3 |
| Cultural performance | 3.3 | 23.3 | 30.0 | 36.7 | 3.3 |
| Camping and nature exploring | 3.3 | 16.7 | 36.7 | 30.0 | 13.3 |
| Visiting floating market | 3.3 | 46.7 | 20.0 | 26.7 | 6.7 |
| Accommodation | 0 | 43.4 | 30.0 | 23.3 | 3.3 |
| Fishing | 6.7 | 20.0 | 30.0 | 23.3 | 20.0 |
| Handmade craft | 0 | 23.3 | 50.0 | 20.0 | 6.7 |
| Boat racing | 10.0 | 23.3 | 46.7 | 16.7 | 3.3 |
| Swimming and diving | 13.4 | 50.0 | 23.3 | 10.0 | 3.3 |

services that needed sizeable financial investment or professional knowledge, such as boat racing or sea-diving tours, were organized mainly by external tourism companies.

Several community capitals including landscape, flora, fauna, local human resources, fishery activities, and cultural heritage were used to deliver the tourism services (Table 4). However, respondents indicated the different extent to which these capitals were utilized. Specifically, natural resources were reported to contribute significantly to developing tourism in coastal destinations. Meanwhile, the contribution of human and cultural factors was less critical according to respondents' perspectives. Therefore, it was revealed that tourism in the studied villages is being developed toward an ecotourism orientation. Leisure activities in this area were mainly based on natural resources, whereas the cultural heritages were being used to a relatively limited extent.

Respondents' perceptions about CBT impacts on sustainable development

Figure 2 demonstrates the perceived impacts of CBT on sustainable development in the village groups. Most positive impacts were perceived in environmental aspects, while those in social-cultural and economic conditions seemed ambiguous. Specifically, about half of respondents reported that CBT had led to significant improvements in landscape (53%), environment (40%), fishery resources (44%), and resource management planning (45%). This improvement

includes reductions in fishing vessels, construction of new buildings, and decoration of village sights. The transformation of residents' livelihoods toward tourism reduced environmental and resource pressure when fewer people captured or grew fish. Additionally, infrastructure building (e.g., new hotels, new roads) and public decoration considerably improved the landscape. However, some residents also reported harm to local environments caused by CBT. Nearly one-third of respondents said tourism deteriorated coastal environments and fishery resources. Increases in garbage and demand for seafood were the two main explanations for their statements.

The differences in environmental impacts were significant between "tourism-beginning" and "tourism-developed" villages (Fig. 2). People who lived in the former destinations perceived more ecological benefits of CBT than those who lived in the latter places. In specific, 62.8% and 40.9% of respondents in the "tourism-beginning" villages identified improvements in the local scenery and coastal nature, whereas only 56.9% and 33.1% of respondents in the "tourism-developed" villages made that identification, respectively. By contrast, residents living in the "tourism-developed" destinations perceived a more significant decline in fishery resources (40.6%) than people in the "tourism-beginning" villages (32.1%). Nonetheless, there was no difference between "fishing" and "tourism" households in perceiving CBT environmental impacts except for management planning (Table 5). It appears that CBT had immediate

Table 4 Tourism capitals in coastal communities

| Resources | % respondents | | | | | |
|-----------|----------------------|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| | | <i>Strongly disagree</i> | <i>Little</i> | <i>Neutral</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Strongly agree</i> |
| 1 | Landscape | 10.0 | 6.6 | 16.7 | 46.7 | 20.0 |
| 2 | Flora | 3.3 | 13.3 | 33.4 | 36.7 | 13.3 |
| 3 | Fauna | 3.3 | 10.0 | 36.7 | 33.3 | 16.7 |
| 4 | Local human resource | 3.3 | 10.0 | 53.3 | 23.4 | 10.0 |
| 5 | Fishery activities | 0 | 17.2 | 55.2 | 20.7 | 6.9 |
| 6 | Cultural heritages | 7.2 | 32.1 | 32.1 | 14.3 | 14.3 |

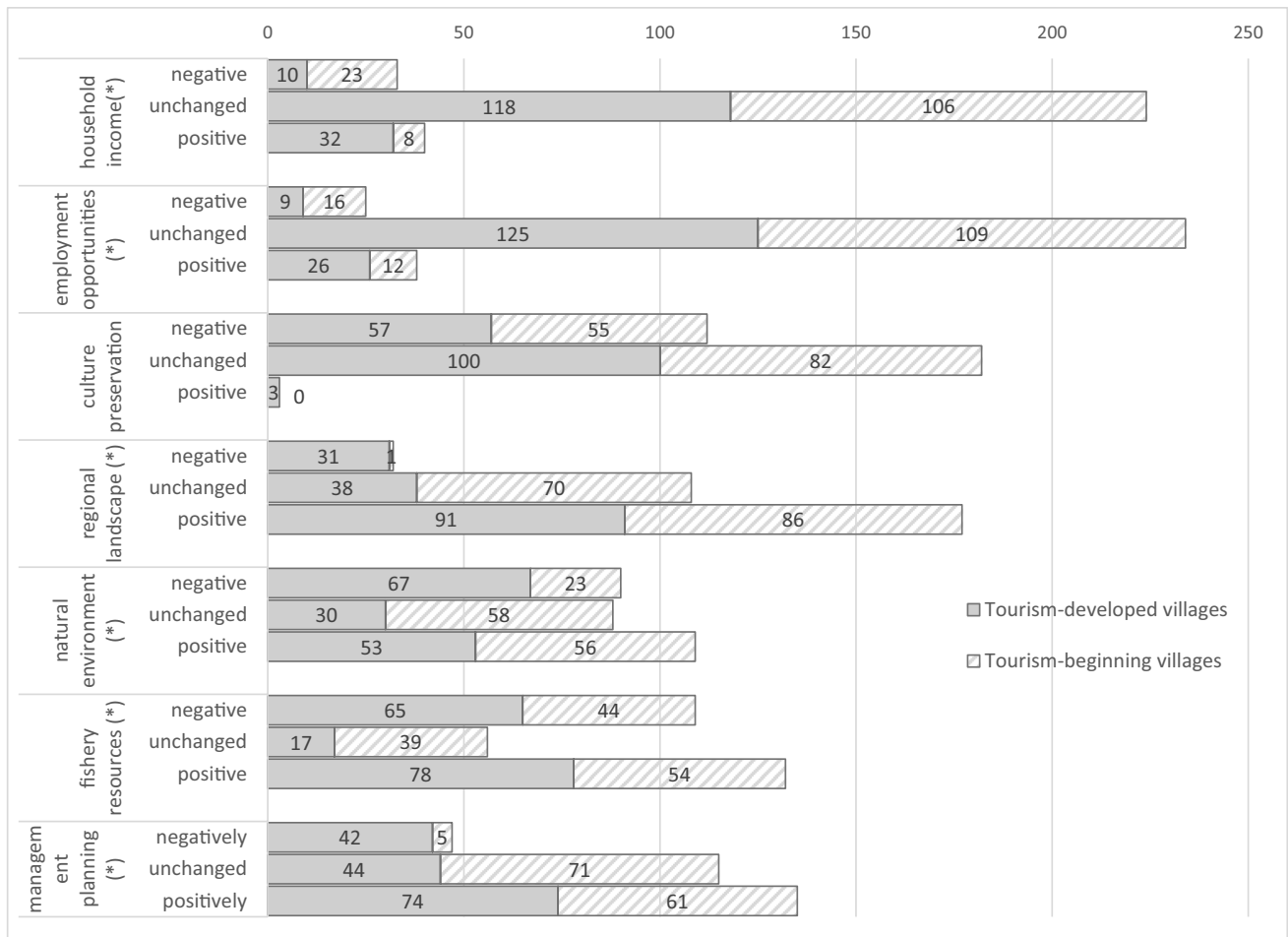


Fig. 2 Perceived impacts of CBT on sustainable development in different villages. *The chi-square test for differences between the village groups was significant at 95% confidence

positive impacts on the destination’s natural environments, but these impacts were perceived to have decreased when the tourism industry flourished, creating pressure on the ecological system.

Regarding economic impacts, most respondents denied any changes to the local economy brought by CBT. Specifically, 224 out of 297 respondents said their involvement in tourism did not change their household income. It was due to local tourism enterprises’ small size and low-profit margins. In the studied sites, local people mainly operated simple businesses such as motorbike taxis or food vendors. Tourism service provision did not bring adequate income compensation for adopted households when facing earning reductions. The chi-square test between “fishing” and “tourism” households resulted in a *p*-value of 0.007, indicating a significant difference in households’ views about CBT income potential (Table 5). While 18.4% of “fishing” households stated that CBT improved household income, only 5.9% of “tourism” households had the same perception. By contrast, 13.6% of “tourism” households and 9.5% of “fishing” households

indicated income reduction when adopting CBT. Likewise, 234 respondents said CBT did not improve their chances of finding a job, which can be explained by the early stage of development. Another reason was the lack of necessary skills to work in the tourism industry. Most of the local people in the studied villages were fishers and had minimal knowledge and skills in serving tourists.

However, people in “tourism-developed” villages perceived significantly higher economic benefits than residents of “tourism-beginning” villages. The number of respondents indicating income increases in the former village group was four times that in the latter group. People in “tourism-developed” villages also had more employment opportunities (26 respondents) than peers in “tourism-beginning” villages (12 respondents). The impacts of CBT on economic sustainability were not evident in the first place but became more visible when the tourism industry expanded.

Finally, 182 out of 297 respondents did not perceive changes, while 112 indicated the negative impacts of CBT on cultural preservation. According to the respondents,

Table 5 Perception of respondents by occupations

| Impact on | | Fishing HH (% group respondents) | Tourism HH | Chi-square (p-value) |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|------------|----------------------|
| Household income | <i>Negatively</i> | 9.5 | 13.6 | 9.98 (0.007) |
| | <i>Unchanged</i> | 72.1 | 80.5 | |
| | <i>Positively</i> | 18.4 | 5.9 | |
| Employment opportunities | <i>Negatively</i> | 9.5 | 6.8 | 0.69 (0.705) |
| | <i>Unchanged</i> | 77.7 | 80.5 | |
| | <i>Positively</i> | 12.8 | 12.7 | |
| Culture preservation | <i>Negatively</i> | 42.5 | 30.5 | 4.49 (0.107) |
| | <i>Unchanged</i> | 56.4 | 68.6 | |
| | <i>Positively</i> | 1.1 | 0.8 | |
| Regional landscape | <i>Negatively</i> | 12.3 | 8.5 | 1.34 (0.511) |
| | <i>Unchanged</i> | 36.9 | 35.6 | |
| | <i>Positively</i> | 50.8 | 55.9 | |
| Natural environment | <i>Negatively</i> | 32.4 | 27.1 | 1.14 (0.565) |
| | <i>Unchanged</i> | 29.6 | 29.7 | |
| | <i>Positively</i> | 38.0 | 43.2 | |
| Fishery resource | <i>Negatively</i> | 37.4 | 35.6 | 3.16 (0.206) |
| | <i>Unchanged</i> | 15.6 | 23.7 | |
| | <i>Positively</i> | 46.9 | 40.7 | |
| Management planning | <i>Negatively</i> | 15.6 | 16.1 | 19.60 (<0.05) |
| | <i>Unchanged</i> | 41.3 | 34.7 | |
| | <i>Positively</i> | 43.0 | 49.2 | |

inappropriate tourists’ dress codes and behaviors such as prostitution, drugs, gambling, and vandalism harmed local cultural entities. In this aspect, there was no significant difference between “tourism-beginning” and “tourism-developed” villages. The risks of harming regional culture might not have been reduced or increased when CBT was developed.

Discussion

Theoretical implications

This case study explored CBT entrepreneurship and its benefits for sustainable development in Thua Thien Hue coastal communities. Individuals in the coastal communities apparently started tourism ventures out of necessity. They had been facing a long deterioration of fishery resources which significantly reduced the profitability of traditional livelihoods such as fishing or aquaculture (Armitage and Marschke 2013). Therefore, CBT started to develop in the regions as an innovative solution to regional, social, environmental, and economic problems. The development of CBT on the provincial coast was oriented to improve the ecological experience of tourists. The most common services provided by the local people included food service, accommodation, and tour guiding (Table 3). These practices

and orientations were prevalent in rural areas in developing countries (Aquino et al. 2018; Sloan et al. 2014).

Tourism entrepreneurs in Thua Thien Hue created perceivable values for hosting communities (Fig. 2). The study results reinforced previous works on the nexus of tourism entrepreneurship and sustainability (Juma and Khademi-Vidra 2019; Lee and Jan 2019). This finding, on the other hand, contrasted with other literature that community benefits are restricted (Teh and Cabanban 2007; Alam and Paramati 2016). One possible explanation is that benefits brought by CBT enterprises are more apparent at an advanced stage, but few CBT projects can reach that development (Weaver 2009). By incorporating beginning and mature CBT enterprises, this study indicates that CBT’s benefits to sustainable development outweigh its drawbacks. We corroborate with Dangi and Jamal (2016) that CBT contributes to the sustainable development of underserved communities in developing countries. However, contributions might be different for the three pillars of sustainability.

It appears that CBT had immediate and considerable positive impacts on the environment and natural resources in Thua Thien Hue. Although environmental damages were still noticeable, ecological benefits were outweighed. This finding is consistent with other studies about the instantaneous ecological benefits of CBT (Lee et al. 2013; Teh and Cabanban 2007). Tourism entrepreneurship solves regional environmental problems by slowing natural resource

depletion. The revenue of a tourism business relies more on the entrepreneur's capability of using resources than on the number of resources they have. Providing tourism services motivates local people to utilize natural resources in a novel, more sustainable way that reduces the pressure on the local natural resource base. The quest to fulfill the primary tourists' demand for natural and cultural embeddedness transformed the livelihood of coastal communities from a resource-exploitive to a knowledge-based practice. Residents are more likely to involve in sustainable natural resource management when beautiful landscapes and a clean environment become the primary sources of tourism business revenue.

Meanwhile, the benefits of CBT entrepreneurship for the local economy seem to be more delayed. The study found that residents in Thua Thien Hue had barely perceived economic benefits at an early stage of CBT. However, economic impacts became more visible when this entrepreneurship went to later development stages. The result is consistent with Lee and Jan (2019) and Zapata et al. (2011) that economic sustainability might not be achieved in the involvement stage but become more visible in the consolidation and development stages. In the involvement stage, limited services do not create enough attractions for tourists, so tourism enterprises often do not obtain sufficient turnover to improve income and generate more jobs in the area. However, when CBT is developed, these improvements will be more enjoyable.

Regarding social-cultural impacts, it is revealed that CBT negatively impacted local cultural preservation in Thua Thien Hue. This finding is consistent with Archer et al. (2005) that tourism development might harm local culture when tourists have unacceptable appearances and behaviors in local people's perspectives. This problem might be exacerbated when visitors come from another culture, and local people are not professional tourist service providers who are often more tolerant of cultural differences.

This study also reinforces Lee and Jan (2019), Lundberg (2015), and Ngo et al. (2018) that the impacts of CBT entrepreneurship are perceived differently at different development stages (Fig. 2). In the early stages, environmental and ecological improvements dominate residents' minds. Meanwhile, benefits relating to economic status and employment opportunities are enjoyable in the latter stages. We corroborate with Diedrich and Garcia-Buades (2009) and Lee and Jan (2019) that local perceptions are reliable indicators for CBT development. In this case, the perception of ecological benefits has been indicative of tourism-beginning villages, while perceived social and economic benefits were indicative of tourism-developed villages.

Finally, the study corroborates that social entrepreneurship is a helpful lens for investigating CBT (Aquino et al. 2018; Jorgensen et al. 2021). Adopting business acumen

helps tourism entrepreneurs tackle social problems in a more financially sustainable way. By that, CBT can be more appropriately designed and managed, create more social values, and become an effective means for community transformation and mobilization.

Management implications

Regarding management implications, this study revealed that CBT could positively contribute to the sustainable development of underserved communities facing threats of climate change and resource depletion. Whereas economic and socio-cultural benefits take time, ecological changes can be seen very early. The perceptions of ecological benefits will then evade, so capturing environmental improvements should be balanced with social and economic benefits when promoting CBT development. When few people are involved, the destination is not sufficiently attractive for visitors due to the limited services. State differently, much patience is needed until economic and social improvements become visible. People who are or plan to be involved in or develop CBT entrepreneurship must be aware of the sequence of benefits, especially the delay of economic rents. Policymakers and development practitioners must provide sufficient information to residents about the entrepreneurial process and its benefits at each stage. Establishing community entrepreneur groups and organizing workshops with successful business owners may be effective ways of facilitating information exchange and maintaining motivation. Policymakers also must have particular attention to the possible harms of CBT to community life quality that might demotivate the interest of people in this entrepreneurship. A participatory approach in designing, planning, implementing, and monitoring CBT development is needed to mitigate this risk (Nicholas et al. 2009).

The local authority could encourage community members to gradually adopt the entrepreneurial tourism initiative to leave their comfort zone. When residents understand the value and processes of CBT development, they will be motivated to join (Lee 2013). Encouragement might be seedling fund provision or helping with administrative paperwork. Not only financial obstacles but also young tourism entrepreneurs face intellectual obstacles (Dung et al. 2021). Insufficient knowledge is a significant barrier for rural residents participating in CBT. In Thua Thien Hue, households that adopted CBT had a higher education level than those that sustained fishery livelihoods. To compensate for this expertise shortage, tourism entrepreneurs often leverage the cheapness of common-pool resources (Table 4). The emphasis on family labor and free ecological resources is prevalent when CBT is developed in indigenous communities (Sloan et al. 2014; Peredo and Wurzelmann 2015). However, these resources will be more expensive when the tourism industry expands and competition increases. A business model that

excessively relies on external free-or-charge resources might expose CBT entrepreneurship to substantial risks in the long run. Therefore, the local authority could provide training to provide CBT entrepreneurs with the necessary technical and business expertise, such as understanding of tourism market demand or basic accounting skills.

Finally, given that entrepreneurship is time-consuming, tourism entrepreneurs should be aware that their success will come neither fast nor easy. Tourism entrepreneurs are likely to experience income loss, especially in early stage of business development (Table 5). However, if they have faith to make a leap, this venture can provide a more profitable and sustainable livelihood. We suggest they take a stepwise approach, especially for those with little business management experience. They can make incremental but continuous changes in their tourism business (e.g., improving decorations, adding new foods to the menu) before taking profound transformations (e.g., hiring more employees, introducing novel services).

Conclusions

This study explores the perceptions of CBT's impacts on sustainable development in coastal communities in Thua Thien Hue, Central Vietnam. Although CBT is early developed, it is perceived to have influences on the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of the studied communities. Ecological benefits are the most perceivable with improvements in the landscape, environment, and fishery resources. Meanwhile, economic impacts are not clear from the residents' point of view, and the appearance of visitors could harm cultural preservation. These findings demonstrated the potential of CBT in promoting sustainable development in vulnerable coastal communities. However, it also raises awareness of local communities, practitioners, and policymakers about the delay of economic benefits and possible harm to social-cultural well-being. Therefore, CBT in coastal areas still needs further support and management from local authorities to encourage residents' participation.

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Data availability The data IP belong to the project and will be made available for public after its completion (2022).

Code availability Not applicable.

Declarations

Conflict of interest The authors declare no competing interests.

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