

ASSESSING THE EXECUTIVE SUCCESS OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN IMPLEMENTING COMMUNITY-BASED ECOTOURISM PROJECTS: A CASE STUDY OF MALAYSIAN NATURE SOCIETY (MNS) WITHIN ORANG ASLI COMMUNITY AT ULU GEROH VILLAGE, GOPENG, MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

Many Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been participating in ecotourism development with their own agenda, especially where tourism is linked with local communities and the environment. Community-Based Ecotourism (CBET) considers not only environmental but also economic and social goals. This study assumes that NGOs focus more on environmental conservation rather than other aspects of CBET while implementing CBET projects for rural communities. To this end, the aim of the study is to assess the success and shortcomings of NGOs in executing CBET projects by performing an inclusive research on the performance of the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) as the main NGO implemented the CBET project for Orang Asli community at Ulu Geroh village using the triangulation method. Considering all aspects of CBET is the best way to distinguish and implement it; therefore, it is essential to recognize the indicators forming CBET. Regarding literature review, 63 tentative CBET indicators under 6 main criteria were established following the Delphi technique to solicit expert opinion on the most essential indicators for CBET to succeed. The Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) was subsequently applied to rank the 6 main CBET criteria which emphasized the importance of other CBET aspects over environmental aspect. However, the findings from fieldwork proved the basic assumption of this study by demonstrating that environmental conservation dimension has been given greater emphasis since other CBET dimensions have been restricted.

Key words: Community-Based Ecotourism (CBET), Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), CBET indicators, implementation, executive success, Delphi technique, Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP)

INTRODUCTION

Ecotourism has been proposed as a venture by which we can respond to increasing numbers of visitors who are looking for a pure environmental tourism experience, while minimizing the bad effects and improving the benefits linked with natural area tourism (Boo, 1990; Cater and Lowman, 1994). As such, ecotourism is being proposed as a sustainable alternative to mass tourism by governments and the tourism industry (Gale and Hill, 2009). The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) defines ecotourism as responsible travel to natural areas that protects the environment and provides local people with sustainable well-beings. This definition indicates that besides positive support for the protection of natural resources both by host community and visitors, there is an essential social dimension to ecotourism which inaugurates the concept of 'community-based ecotourism' (TIES, 2001).

Denman (2001) defines Community-based ecotourism as a type of ecotourism in which the local community has strong control over management of ecotourism activities, as a result, some benefits remain within the community (Denman, 2001). A community-based

approach to ecotourism identifies the need to enhance both the quality of life of local communities and the conservation of their resources (Scheyvens, 1999). The best way to distinguish responsible community-based ecotourism is to look at it from a development viewpoint, which considers social, environmental and economic goals (Carter, 1993, p.85-6).

One of the organizations involved in community-based ecotourism is Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). NGOs are not a new concept; they were an emergent phenomenon in the 19th century (Holden & Mason, 2005). NGOs have often been involved in tourism related environmental issues such as the creation of golf courses in developing world locations where it exploits available land and water for local communities, NGOs have also paid attention to the stream of equitable distribution of tourism revenue (Holden & Mason, 2005).

Many NGOs have been participating in tourism industry based on their different aims, particularly within the area where tourism is linked with local community and environment; however, little attention has been given to the executive success of NGOs' in implementing community-based ecotourism projects. Therefore, the aim of this study is to conduct a comprehensive study that evaluates the executive success of MNS as the NGO involved in Ulu Geroh ecotourism project in context of community-based ecotourism which is an economical and conservational asset for local community.

STUDY BACKGROUND

According to the goal of this study, the phenomenon of community-based ecotourism should be studied thoroughly to identify all its dimensions and indicators since it helps us to discern CBET well. Hence, the main dimensions of community-based ecotourism phenomenon have been explored in the related literature which are presented and elaborated in the following sections.

1) Local Community Education

Local community education is considered as one of the major tools for capacity building in all of community-based projects as this education and training make local community ready and aware towards tourism or ecotourism projects before its implementation in their region.

Hamzah, A. and Khalifah, Z. (2009) have revealed the details of local community education in APEC handbook on community-based tourism where they mention: "... Once a community decides to embrace tourism, educating and preparing the community are crucial. While it is a fact that most rural communities are by nature hospitable, tourism as a business presents greater challenges. It is essential that the local community should be well informed and educated about the many facets of tourism prior to the construction of any form of tourism physical development or activity. The education process should take a longer time for relatively remote society with low levels of education."

2) Local Community Empowerment

Community-based ecotourism is a type of ecotourism where local communities have control over ecotourism venture in their area where the control and management are vital in CBET. Akama (1996) has proposed that alternative ecotourism initiatives which aim to empower local people are required to enable the community to examine their benefits, and have some control over ecotourism occurring in their area. "...[T]he local community need to be

empowered to decide what forms of tourism facilities and wildlife conservation programs they want to be developed in their respective communities, and how tourism costs and benefits are to be shared among different stakeholders". Four aspects have been identified for local community empowerment dimension namely; psychological, social, political and economic which are elaborated below.

2.1) Economic Empowerment

Opportunities which are made in terms of both formal and informal sector employment and business occasions should be taken into account while studying economic empowerment status of a community in an ecotourism project. Some researchers advocate that community-based efforts are often dominated by local elites particularly men, thereby monopolizing the economic benefits of tourism (Liu, 1994; Akama, 1996; Mansperger, 1995). Furthermore, economic empowerment of local community also refers to local people's access to productive resources in their region now targeted by ecotourism venture. As a result, environmentalists should be aware that local communities would only keep supporting the environmental conservation activities when these conservation activities help them to develop their community (Sindiga, 1995).

2.2) Psychological Empowerment

A local community is considered to be psychologically powerful when the people of this community are optimistic towards the future and have confidence in their capabilities, this community is self-confident and the residents take pride in their culture and traditions. Moreover, it is claimed that conservation of culture and tradition is very noteworthy in terms of keeping a group's sense of self-esteem and well-being particularly in small societies which are not industrialized, (Mansperger, 1995).

2.3) Social Empowerment

Social empowerment refers to a local community which has cohesion and integrity or its unity has been enhanced by a project such as ecotourism. Strong community groups, such as youth groups, religious groups and women's groups can be found within socially empowered communities. Additionally, Scheyvens (1999) believes that social empowerment emerges from ecotourism projects where benefits are spent on social development projects in the local area; such as water supply systems or health clinics. On the other hand, Mansperger (1995) has declared the social disempowerment which may occur if tourism venture causes crime, begging, perception of crowding, displacement from traditional lands, loss of authenticity or prostitution.

2.4) Political Empowerment

Decentralization of power from the national level to the community level is required to empower local communities to exert some control over ecotourism activities. This route should involve grass root organizations, local religious groups and local institutions in decision-making procedures (Akama,

1996). Moreover, The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) has noted that local people need to set up more community associations in order to deal with ecotourism projects from the larger regional perspective (Maclaren, 2001).

3) Environmental and Cultural Conservation

In CBET projects, the focus is on improving the quality of natural and cultural resources of the region by tourism venture while negative impacts on the natural resources should be minimized and the culture of indigenous communities should not be endangered at the same time (Denman, 2001). It is also mentioned that communities should decide on the level of tourism they wish to see. As a result, planners should refer to local communities during the process of drawing up an ecotourism strategy in order to notify the types of changes that might be reflected positively or negatively by local people. Accordingly, planners would be able to help local communities to understand the numbers and types of visitors that they look for, and they can also elucidate other terms such as suitable time for attracting visitors and their length of stay to the community (Denman, 2001). Furthermore, in TIES strategic guidelines for CBET (TIES, 2001), it is specified that aboriginal local communities should realize the uniqueness of their traditional culture in order to participate in cultural conservation.

4) Ensuring Market Realism and Effective Promotion

It is proven that attracting insufficient number of visitors is the main reason why many community-based ecotourism projects have failed. Moreover, unrealistic and not research-based assumptions made about the marketability of a particular location have misdirected promotional activities which is due to lack of tourism knowledge among local communities. However, in some locations, the national visitor market may offer more potential rather than international market. Additionally, it should be acknowledged the level and nature of marketing should also consider the natural and cultural integrity of the area and implications for visitor numbers. Finally, a marketing plan should be prepared for all projects to relate market research with a promotional program (Denman, 2001).

5) Quality of Ecotourism Products

A second common reason for ecotourism products failure concerns the quality of operation of the project both in terms of what is offered and proper business planning (Denman, 2001). Denman from WWF (2001) describes 'Quality' as delivering an experience which fulfill or exceeds visitor expectations. Hence, regarding this definition of quality, visitor expectations differ due to the type of coming visitors, which designates a crucial need for effective market research. Although luxury and sophistication may not be sought, an important section of the ecotourism market - often handled by tour operators - is looking for a rich wildlife experience, comfortable and reliable accommodation and efficient business handling.

6) Partnership (Working Together on an Agreed Strategy)

It is required that all CBET projects should be grounded on a clear strategy which is agreed and understood by the local community and other stakeholders that are interested in tourism and conservation to achieve successful community-based ecotourism projects

(Denman, 2001). Besides, it is debated that Partnerships between CBET stakeholders such as local communities, governmental bodies, NGOs and the private sector should be improved. MacLaren from TIES believes that a better harmonization between the partners is necessary so that partners can utilize their power in a more efficient way. TIES also argues that the private sector role is to launch the CBET projects to the market and clarify the consumer expectations. Finally, it has been emphasized that NGOs should provide local community with training events and also performs as intermediary for communities in business negotiations while the governmental body should provide appropriate regulation and guidelines (TIES, 2001).

NGOs AND ECOTOURISM

NGOs linked with conservation have a prominent role in ecotourism management and its development in both developed and developing countries due to their two main aims. NGOs take part in ecotourism projects because they believe that it is the best way to conserve biodiversity and environment and it is also a good asset to implement sustainable development in local areas (Epler, 2002). Drumm and Moore (2005) believe that conservational NGOs participate in ecotourism projects because there are some positive conservational elements which are vital ecotourism characteristics; decreasing negative effects on natural resources, boosting both visitors' and ecotourism stakeholders' awareness about the conservation of natural and cultural resources, and a significant source of income for local communities and conservational activities (Drumm and Moore, 2005).

Wearing (2002) elaborates on the importance of NGOs in implementation of tourism projects while NGOs firstly put much emphasis on tourism projects where local communities as the host are involved since it can improve the quality of tourism interaction with host communities, secondly NGOs have shown a great interest and appreciation in the consequences of human action on nature and local economies. Moreover, he explains that NGOs make efforts to empower local communities to manage and retain sustainable approaches to industries (McDonald & Wearing, 2002: 155–70; Wearing, 2001: 15–18; Wearing & McDonald, 2002: 191–206).

Thomas A. (2003) identified the main and most important activities of NGOs within the CBET area as to be: outlining environmental issues as an international subject; mobilizing local communities and enabling their participation; and providing independent technical expertise among local communities. However, some researchers believe that within the policy area, NGOs cannot be simply seen either as flexible, participatory and democratic organizational systems which are always applied to accomplish any and all developmental tasks, or as a substitute for corrupted governments (Clark, 1991; Korten, 1990). Therefore, it has been concluded that NGOs should be equally seen as unaccountable, non-participatory, and even unsustainable agents who only waste donor funds (Mitlin et al., 2007; Rooy, 2000).

BACKGROUND OF CASE STUDY

1) Kampung Ulu Geroh (Ulu Geroh village)

Kampung Ulu Geroh is located within the 68,565-hectare Kinta Forest Reserve in the state of Perak. The village is unique as it is located very close to habitats for both the rare Rafflesia Cantleyi and the Rajah Brooke's bird wing butterfly. Kampung Ulu Geroh is located about 12 kilometers east of Gopeng, an old mining town some 16

kilometers south of Ipoh, the state capital of Perak. Figure 1 shows the location of Ulu Geroh in Perak state.



Figure 1. Location of Ulu Geroh village in Perak state

2) Malaysian Nature Society (MNS)

The Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) is Established in 1940 as the oldest and largest membership-based environmental NGO, with some 4,000 members in 12 branches across the country, and some international members. The branches cater for the needs of the membership, and form the focal point for conservation activities in each State. MNS as a membership-based organization has been the reason behind the protection of many key habitats as well as national and state parks in Malaysia.

METHODOLOGY

According to the research principles, triangulation method, which is a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches, has been selected for this study. Both primary and secondary data are used in this study; In terms of primary data, the survey method including quantitative questionnaire for Ulu Geroh community as the main source of primary data is used while a descriptive survey method including; semi structured interviews with NGOs (MNS), local community representatives (SEMAI) with open-ended questions and Participatory observation is employed as the qualitative part of triangulation method by which the researcher validates the results of the quantitative research. The secondary data consists of theoretical and practical literature review including some case studies of similar NGOs' participation in ecotourism projects.

The sampling procedure used in this research is a non-probability sampling method known as purposive sampling which is based on the researcher judgment and purpose of the study. For quantitative research, 30 people of Ulu Geroh community were chosen among elderly, women, and youths groups who could read and write, and for qualitative research, 3

interviewees from MNS and also 3 interviewees from SEMAI group (a local group made by MNS to run and control CBET project at Ulu Geroh) were chosen.

STUDY INDICATORS

Theoretical literature related to CBET and also some CBET NGO's best practices literatures were reviewed to extract tentative CBET variables. 63 tentative CBET variables were extracted under 6 main criteria. After that, Analytical Hierarchy Process method (AHP) was used to rank and finalize the CBET variables through a Delphi technique process. Delphi panel members were chosen among ecotourism experts during 2010 World Ecotourism Conference (WEC 2010) at Kuala Lumpur. Delphi panel members reached the consensus on 42 final CBET indicators after 3 rounds which are presented in Table1.

Table1. Final Community-Based Ecotourism Indicators

1. Local community empowerment
1.1. Economic empowerment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level of local community's access to productive resources in their area which is now targeted by ecotourism - Number of local men and women entrepreneurs - Level of difference in local community brought income due to ecotourism - Percent of income leakage out of the community - Numbers of employment and business opportunities created by ecotourism venture - Amount of equitable distribution of ecotourism economic benefits
1.2. Social empowerment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existence of social development infrastructures in the area, such as; water supply systems, health clinics - Level of community's sense of cohesion and integrity - Existence of strong community groups like; youth groups, religious groups, and women groups - Number of workshop / meeting/ activity in a year - Local community health
1.3. Psychological empowerment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level of local community's pride in their culture and traditions - Local community satisfaction toward tourism development - Level of self confidence among members of the local community - Number of optimistic people in the community
1.4. Political empowerment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local community power to influence decision making procedures in their area - Local community's control and management over ecotourism venture in their region - Presence of tourism authority or planner among local community
2. Local community education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of trained local tour guides - Type of educational programs - Level of local community readiness towards ecotourism venture in their area as a result of special educational programs - Level of local community understanding of ecotourism business in their region as a result of special educational programs - Number of people participating self/ co-financing training program
3. Environmental and Cultural conservation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improvement of natural resources by ecotourism in the region - Improvement of cultural resources by ecotourism in the region - Conservation of endangered /threatened plants

- Indigenous species preservation
- Local communities' awareness about the uniqueness of their culture
- Cultural sites maintenance level
- Frequency of environmental accidents related to tourism

4. Partnership (working together on an agreed strategy)

- Existence of a clear strategy for ecotourism; understandable to local community and all other ecotourism stakeholders
- Links between local community representatives and relevant NGOs, conservation agencies, local entrepreneurs, tour operators and regional or national government bodies
- Level of cooperation among stakeholder groups

5. Quality of ecotourism products

- Quality of ecotourism products in the region
- A mix of natural and cultural products
- Safety and security of tourist while consuming ecotourism products
- Authenticity, originality and uniqueness of ecotourism product
- Tourists feedback and their satisfaction with the product
- Quality of accommodation services in the area
- Quality of food services

6. Ensuring market realism and effective promotion

- Existence of a marketing plan for the ecotourism product in the area
- Establishment of relationships with specialist tour operators

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The secondary data consists of theoretical and practical literature review including case studies of similar NGOs' participation in ecotourism projects for extracting CBET indicators which follows AHP method for ranking and finalizing these indicators through a Delphi technique. The survey technique (quantitative questionnaire) and the descriptive survey techniques (semi structured interviews and participant observation) employed in primary research completing the secondary data collection. In terms of primary data, the assessment of MNS' executive success in community-based ecotourism project at Ulu Geroh is based on evaluation of the local community questionnaire data and aggregated interview data. SPSS software has been used to analyze the quantitative data. Then, the results of interviews and participatory observation validated the SPSS outcome.

DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS

The result of data analysis is ranked according to the importance of each CBET dimension in the following. Each question in local community quantitative questionnaire was defined as an indicator in SPSS software which was evaluated based on a '1 – 6' scale where scale '1' means '0%' and scale '6' is '100%'; therefore, scale '4' means '60%'. Then, according to the '1 – 6' scale, there would be 3 conditions:

- i. The mean of answers to the question (indicator) ≤ 3.9 , in this case, we conclude that the CBET indicator is not implemented successfully.
- ii. The mean of answers to the question (indicator) ≥ 4.1 , in this status, MNS has implemented this indicator successfully.
- iii. $3.9 < \text{the mean of answers to the question (indicator)} < 4.1$, this case is considered as critical condition, therefore, the result of qualitative data would be taken into consideration to decide on MNS' success in implementation of the indicator.

1) Local Community Empowerment Dimension

1.1) Economic Empowerment Category

There are 6 indicators in this category which are analyzed separately based on both quantitative and qualitative data results. For all indicators the results of quantitative and qualitative data are the same except one indicator (ECOEMV4) where local community data result indicates that the income leakage is not much but the participant observation result showed that income leakage is so much in the area.

The total result for economic empowerment is illustrated in figure 2. as it is seen in this diagram all economic empowerment indicators scores lower than "3.9" which means that MNS has not been successful in economic empowerment.

1.2) Social Empowerment Category

There are 5 indicators in this category which are analyzed separately based on both quantitative and qualitative data results. For 3 indicators, the results of quantitative and qualitative data were the same but for another two (SOCIOEMV2, SOCIOEMV5) were not the same, so the researcher had to trust on the interview results and participant observation data. According to figure 2, it can be seen just 2 social empowerment indicators score higher than '4.1' while both indicators have not been in the focus point of MNS directly. Therefore, we can conclude that MNS has not been successful in social empowerment category.

1.3) Psychological Empowerment Category

There are 4 indicators in this category which are analyzed separately based on both quantitative and qualitative data results. The results for these indicators indicate that the success of all psychological indicators have been achieved while MNS did not recognize the importance of psychological empowerment and its components in CBET but they did some programs which have improved local community's psychological power (PSYCOEMV2, PSYCOEMV3). As it can be seen figure 2 all psychological empowerment indicators achieve higher than '4.1'.

1.4) Political Empowerment Category

There are 3 indicators in this category which are analyzed separately based on both quantitative and qualitative data results. For 2 indicators, the results of quantitative and qualitative data were the same but for one (POLITICEMV2) was not the same, so the researcher had to trust on community result. As it can be seen in figure 2 all political empowerment indicators score lower than '3.9', therefore, it is concluded that MNS has not implemented political empowerment successfully.

1.5) Synthesis for Local Community Empowerment Dimension

There are 4 major categories in the most important CBET dimension. Indicators of each category are analyzed separately based on both quantitative and qualitative data results and at the end, each category and the executive success of MNS in implementing the category is assessed. As it is verified in local community empowerment categories analysis, just psychological empowerment indicators are fulfilled while MNS did not recognize it in the CBET project. Other empowerment categories are not implemented successfully particularly economic and political empowerments which are so important in local community

empowerment dimension.

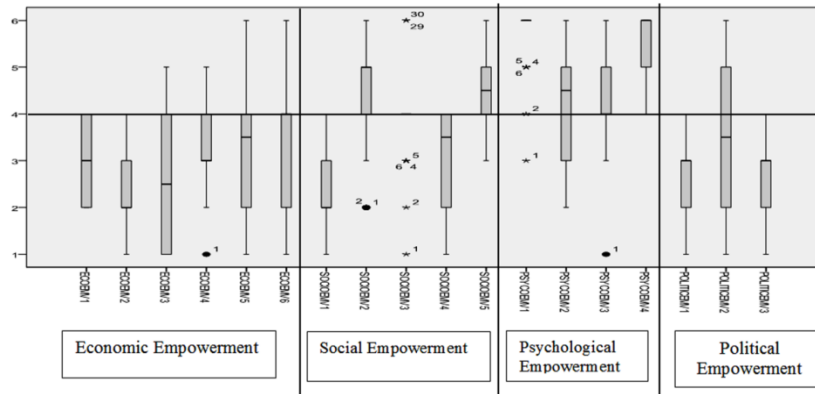


Figure 2. Box Plot Diagram for Local Community Empowerment Categories

2) Local Community Education Dimension

There are 5 indicators in this dimension which are analyzed separately based on both quantitative and qualitative data results. For all indicators, the results of quantitative and qualitative data were the same. Two indicators had critical condition (LCEDUV3, LCEDUV4). The total result for local community education dimension is illustrated in figure 3 where just one of local community education indicators achieve higher than '4.1'.

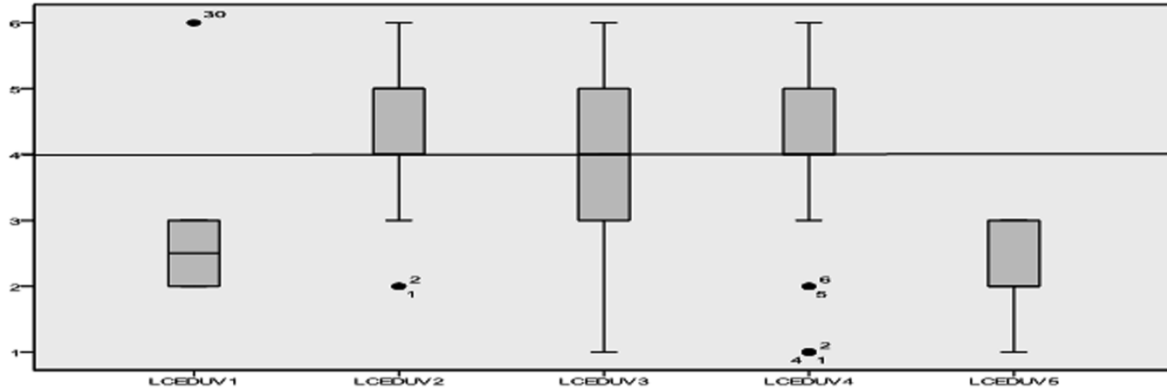


Figure 3. Box plot diagram for local community education dimension

3) Environmental and Cultural Conservation Dimension

There are 7 indicators in this dimension where 6 indicators are analyzed separately based on both quantitative and qualitative data results while one indicator is analyzed according to qualitative data only. For all 6 indicators, the results of quantitative and qualitative data were the same except one indicator (ENVCULTCONV5) so we trusted local community outcome for this case and one indicator had critical condition (ENVCULTCONV4). As it can be seen in figure 4, all 6 indicators of environmental and cultural conservation have managed to score higher than '4.1' while indicator 7 has not got satisfactory result. Therefore, we conclude that MNS has performed very well in this dimension because it has

been the main focus point of MNS at Ulu Geroh CBET project.

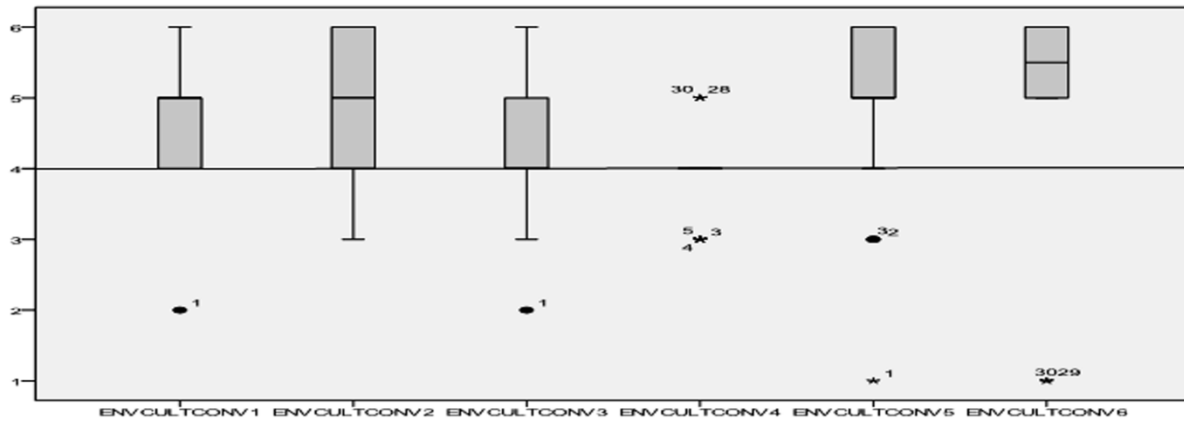


Figure 4. Box plot diagram for environmental and cultural conservation dimension

4) Partnership Dimension (Working on an Agreed Strategy)

There are 3 indicators in this dimension where just one indicator is analyzed based on both quantitative and qualitative data results while other two indicators are analyzed according to qualitative data only. The quantitative indicator has got the mean scale near to '4', so the researcher had to consider his observation and the results of interview data so according to qualitative data, it was concluded that partnership is very weak at Ulu Geroh. Regarding the qualitative data results, indicator 2 and indicator 3 are not satisfactory; therefore, MNS has not performed successfully in partnership dimension.

5) Quality of Ecotourism Products Dimension

As this dimension was not related to local community, so, it was not included in quantitative questionnaire. There are 7 indicators in this dimension which were measured by qualitative data collection tools such as interview and participant observation. The results of qualitative analysis for indicators of this dimension are presented in Table 2 in the following.

Table 2. The result of analysis for Quality of ecotourism products dimension

Quality of ecotourism products dimension
Indicator 1: Quality of ecotourism products in the region
- Quality ecotourism products cannot be seen in Ulu Geroh - The quality is quite basic - But all in all, the quality is ok
Indicator 2: A mix of natural and cultural products
- The researcher did not see the mix of culture in ecotourism products - MNS and SEMAI said that if any tourist wants it, local community can perform some cultural dances for them - The researcher trusted on interview data
Indicator 3: Safety and security of tourist while consuming ecotourism products
- Tour guides have been trained to ensure the safety and security of tourists - Tour guides try much to care about safety and security of tourist
Indicator 4: Authenticity, originality and uniqueness of ecotourism product
- Ulu Geroh ecotourism products are original , and unique
Indicator 5: Tourists feedback and their satisfaction with the product
- They have a tourist's notebook where tourists write their comments in it - as they said most of tourist are satisfied

Indicator 6: Quality of accommodation services in the area
- There is no good accommodation service at Ulu Geroh
Indicator 7: Quality of food services
- There is no food service at Ulu Geroh

According to Table 2, only the last 2 indicators were not satisfactory while other 5 have been implemented successfully; consequently, it is decided that MNS has succeeded in implementing this dimension.

6) Ensuring market realism and effective promotion dimension

There are two (2) indicators in this dimension which were measured by qualitative data collection tools such as interview and participant observation. The results of Qualitative Analysis for indicators are presented in table 3 below. None of the 2 indicators were satisfactory; consequently, it is concluded that MNS has not succeeded in implementing this dimension.

Table 3. The Result of Qualitative Analysis for Ensuring Market Realism and Effective Promotion Dimension

Ensuring market realism and effective promotion dimension
Indicator1: Existence of a marketing plan for the ecotourism product in the area
- There is no marketing plan for Ulu Geroh ecotourism products
Indicator2: Establishment of relationships with specialist tour operators
- There is not any link with specialist tour operators in the region

TOTAL RESULT OF ALL DATA ANALYSIS

The final CBET indicators were considered as the platform of this study; consequently, for evaluating the success of MNS in CBET project at Ulu Geroh, the performance of this NGO in each CBET dimension was assessed separately and in details. Table 4 in the following illustrates the overall result of MNS performance in CBET project at Ulu Geroh.

Table 4. Overall result of MNS performance in CBET project at Ulu Geroh

Main CBET categories	No. of indicators	No. of successful indicators	Overall success of MNS
1. Local community empowerment	18	6	No
Economic empowerment	6	0	No
Social empowerment	5	2	No
Psychological empowerment	4	4	Yes
Political empowerment	3	0	No
2. Local community education	5	1	No
3. Environmental and cultural conservation	7	6	Yes
4. Partnership	3	0	No
5. Quality of ecotourism products	7	5	Yes
6. Ensuring market realism and effective promotion	2	0	No
Total	42	18	Not successful

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Since, there were quite few studies on assessment of the success of CBET projects, and in particular, considering the NGOs and evaluation of their performance in implementing CBET projects, there was a big issue for the researcher to find a way to reach the objective of the research which was to assess the executive success of NGOs in implementing CBET projects. As such, the researcher had to consider the phenomenon of CBET as the platform of the research while reviewing the literatures of NGOs participation in CBET. The researcher tried to extract CBET indicators through a wide range of literature review, but since the final objective was to assess the executive success of NGOs in CBET, he had to include some practical CBET best cases done by NGOs within the literature review resulting in extracting practical CBET indicators; therefore, a lot of CBET indicators were gathered. At this stage, the critical issue was how to trust in the importance of those indicators in CBET, thus, the researcher decided to rank and finalize the indicators according to their high level of importance in CBET by the AHP method through Delphi technique.

After adopting the appropriate method for the study, the sample selection was done quite purposive in order to get the best results; all the 42 final CBET indicators were measured quantitatively and qualitatively by the Ulu Geroh community, their representatives, and the NGO (MNS). The results of quantitative data analysis were validated by the results of qualitative data; therefore, there was no doubt about the measurement of CBET indicators. According to the final results, the researcher found a big gap between the theory and practice; local community empowerment which got the highest priority in CBET theory, was not even recognized by MNS, furthermore, local community education via CBET which is very important in CBET theory and is the main agenda of CBET players, has not been implemented truly because MNS selected a limited number of Ulu Geroh community to be trained and taught while in the theory, it is emphasized that the whole community should have the opportunity to be educated via CBET venture.

According to the study outcomes, it is concluded that community-based ecotourism has not been implemented truly at Ulu Geroh because MNS comes from environmental background and it does not have any ecotourism expert. Consequently, its main focal point has been mostly on environmental conservation and biodiversity meanwhile local community empowerment as the most important dimension of CBET has been ignored by this NGO which has caused the unsustainability and unsuccessful status to the project.

Therefore, it can be concluded that NGOs have done more than enough on environmental dimension because their specialization is mostly environmental conservation, so a crucial question pops up here; why do NGOs implement their conservational projects under the name of community based ecotourism project? The answer to this question is quite complicated but the researcher wants to consider the most challenging answer, which is, because there are not many funds on environmental conservation programs while there are so many funds for local community-oriented projects such as CBET projects. Therefore, NGOs put their conservational activities under the banner of the CBET project to get the funds, while they do not know much about CBET so they cannot perform well in implementation of these projects.

All in all, the researcher does not want to ignore the vital role of NGOs in rural areas, but the point is that NGOs which participate in implementing CBET projects should identify their essential roles in the CBET projects involved in and set their activities according to their

essential roles and the priorities of CBET in order to bring the sustainability status to the CBET projects, consequently, contributing the most benefits to the local communities.

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