

RELEVANCE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWORMENT AND CONSERVATION EDUCATION IN ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL WEST JAVA, INDONESIA

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Ecotourism success would depend on the community readiness to welcome and participate in tourism in terms of their attitudes towards tourism development, commitment, and capacity. These are related with expanding access to natural resources which are determined by the availability of local networks, collective actions, mutual trust, and social norms, which constitute social capital. Therefore, ecotourism as a tool of rural economic diversification requires social capital for its development. This study attempts to identify the relevance of social capital in empowering rural communities of West Java and enhancing conservation education for ecotourism development. The research was conducted in the Districts of Bogor, Sukabumi and Cianjur of West Java, Indonesia. The study employed a mixed method with predominantly qualitative approach to obtain data. Findings indicated that communities with higher social capital have higher potentials to induce ecotourism development through empowering community and minimize risks of environmental degradation through conservation education.

social capital, ecotourism, sustainability, community empowerment, conservation education

INTRODUCTION

It is apparent that in many developing countries, rural-urban migration to the cities has eroded the function of agriculture as the driving force of rural growth (Kamarudin, 2014; Sunkar, 2008; Anríquez & Stamoulis, 2007). In Indonesia, it is indicated by the declining traditional farming-related activities and landuse practices in rural areas (BPS, 2013), suggesting that agricultural sector alone cannot hold the key to rural development, hence, diversification of rural economic activities must be encouraged.

Rural economic diversification brought with it an interest in tourism as a tool to revitalize the countryside and rural communities (Pourtaheri et al., 2012). Tourism has become a major agent of transformation in many rural societies as it has been at the forefront of stimulating socio-economic development in many rural areas (Liburd et al., 2012; Aref, 2011; Delibasic et al., 2008) and helping to conserve the natural environment (Rabbany et al., 2013). Liu et al., (2014) and Mbaiwa (2011) find that the economic benefits from tourism can drive the emergence of residents' positive environment behaviour. On the other hand, tourism also brings with it the possibility of disruption of the original lifestyle and damage to the environment (Rabbany et al., 2013). These are indicative of the importance and relevance of local social attributes in tourism development. In fact, many resource-use problems can be traced in part to ethics, cultural diversity, religion and social institutions (Berkes & Folke, 1992). Milic et al., (2008) go further to conclude that community is the local driver in tourism activities. Therefore planning and development

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of ecotourism should focus on the power of the people to withhold negative changes and alterations on their life and surroundings.

Sunlu (2003) concludes in his research that the quality of the environment, both natural and man-made, is essential to tourism. Furthermore, the use of local resources has proven able to grow a sense of belonging among the people, change their mindset, behaviour and even create a sense of shared responsibility. Many researchers (Lee 2011; Miller et al 2008; Walker & Ryan 2008; Manzo and Perkins, 2006; Carr 2002; Vaske and Kobrin 2001; Pooley & O'Connor, 2000) state that people who are tied to a certain place and have an attachment to local resources (place attachment), show environment behaviour. The emotional and cognitive bonds that individuals form with a place foster a sense of stewardship or desire to protect and care for that place (Halpenny, 2010). These are related with the expanding access to natural resources which are determined by the availability of local networks, collective actions, mutual trust, and social norms. These elements make up the working definition of social capital, in addition to cooperation, relationships, and social interaction (Pawar 2006). This is in line with the research results conducted by Liu et al (2014), Mbaiwa (2011), Thoyre (2008), which confirm, that a high level of social capital encourage community's behaviour in environmental protection. All of these findings suggested the potential of social capital in enhancing community participation in ecotourism development.

The whole domain of social and knowledge is a critical, yet undervalued and unmeasured dimension of sustainability. The success of sustainable tourism will therefore depend on the readiness of the local community to welcome tourism in their area. Therefore, there needs to be a new framework to identify the community social relationship and behaviour that condition such success. This is what the paper sets out to address. The research was done based on the premise that ecotourism has the potential to reconcile conservation with development by creating positive synergies between rural communities, tourism, and conservation. The paper explored social capital elements that motivate communities to support ecotourism development within their areas. It examines the existing elements of social relationship within the communities and how it relates to community empowerment and conservation education as getaway to sustainable tourism.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was designed as a research survey by analyzing problems and social phenomena. The research is directed to ward finding facts on the basis of factual phenomena of social capital that will be considered as supporting the development of tourism.

Study Sites

Three districts within the Province of West Java were selected, namely the Districts of Cianjur, Bogor and Sukabumi. Selections of the study sites within each district were made on the basis of the uniqueness and specific tourism sites as follows:

Table 1. Location of Study Sites

<i>District</i>	<i>Object of Tourism Development</i>	<i>Study Location</i>
Bogor	Cibalay Archaeological Site, camping grounds, conservation village, Gunung Halimun Salak National Park	Tapos 1 Village, Tenjolaya Sub-district
Cianjur Sukabumi	Gudawang Cave Complex	Argapura Village, Cigudeg Sub-district
	Gunung Padang Archaeological Site	Karyamukti Village, Campaka Sub-district
	Buffer zones of Gunung Gede Pangrango National Park	Ginjar and Ambar Jaya Villages of Ciambar Sub-district

Data Collection Method and Analysis

This research is descriptive in nature. Data collected covered the elements of social capital, general condition of the location and tourism objects (Table 2). The elements of social capital that were studied, were selected based on the scope of social capital at the micro (community) level as given by Grootaert and Bastelaer (2001), namely trust, local norms and value, local institutions (collective actions and coordination) and networks.

Table 2. Data and Information Collected

<i>No.</i>	<i>Data – Element of Social Capital</i>	<i>Source of Data</i>
1.	Trust: within established relationships and social networks; trust extended to strangers (often on the basis of expectations of behaviour or a sense of shared norms); trust in the institutions of governance (including fairness of rules, official procedures, dispute resolution and resource allocation)	Head of sub-districts, village government, local figures and local people
2.	Networks: density of membership, diversity of membership, extent of connections to other groups	Head of sub-districts, village government, local figures and local people
3.	Social norms and value; implementation of norms, politeness, obscenity, religion, culture, and government regulation	Head of sub-districts, village government, local figures and local people
4.	Collective action and cooperation: participation in social organization and decision making, frequency of attendance in social organization, motivation to assist others, motivation to care and preserve environment	Head of sub-districts, village government, local figures and local people
General information of the sites and tourism objects		Village monographs, documents and other literatures, field observation

Triangulation method for social-related data and information was used, and consisted of interviews, observation and literature studies. Interviews were conducted on every weekend between August 18th and October 4th of 2014, with key informants and respondents from member of communities. The information gained through these interviews was supplemented by literature research in areas related to tourism, social capital, human behaviour and conservation education. Data and information collected were analyzed descriptively.

Limitation of the Study

There are limitations to the study with regard to measuring social capital. This research did not use any quantitative measurement to determine the level of social capital condition within each village. Rather it used a qualitative approach, based on the analysis of other evidences on field.

Elements of Social Capital for Tourism Development

Despite a plethora of definitions, social capital focuses on at least three major elements, namely trust, social networking, and social norms (Coleman 1998). Other researchers (Dahal and Adhkari 2008; Ostrom 2007; Pinto 2006) add the elements of collective actions. Social capital differs from human capital. Human capital refers to the power and expertise possessed by an individual. Social capital puts more emphasis on the potential of a group and the patterns of relationships between individuals within a group and between groups (Harpham et al., 2002 in Jones 2005). It is generally defined as a network that encourages the development of resources and the benefits that can be used to improve the quality of the individual and society (Pretty 2003; Pretty & Smith 2003; Pretty and Ward 2001; Portes, 1998; and Woolcock, 1998) and similar organizations (Nahapiet & Ghosal 1998) as a reflection of the strength of the community (Inayah, 2012). In fact, Jones (2005) and Grootaert (1998) add that social capital is the 'missing link' in development and therefore should form the focus of policy, action, and research.

Indeed various research showed that people who have social networks and community organizations were in a better position to deal with poverty (Moser, 1996; Narayan, 1995), resolving disputes (Varshney 2000), to manage natural resources sustainably (Pretty, 2003; Pretty & Smith 2003; Pretty & Ward, 2001) and to take advantage of new opportunities (Isham et al., 1995).

In the context of human development, social capital has a great influence because some dimensions of human development is strongly influenced by social capital such as the ability to solve problems together, raise collective consciousness to improve the quality of life and looking for opportunities to improve welfare. The existence of strong social ties will lead to an increase in welfare. This situation will increase the possibility of accelerating the development of individuals and groups within the community. The social capital elements of the communities within the study sites are tabulated below in Table 3.

Table 3. Elements of Social Capital of the Communities in The Study Areas

<i>Location</i>	<i>Trust</i>	<i>Social Norms</i>	<i>Collective Actions & Cooperation</i>	<i>Networks</i>	<i>Tourism Development</i>
Village: <i>Tapos 1</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High trusts towards village government, fellow communities, local figures, outsiders & tourists. - Low trust toward people involved in Cibalay archaeological site management and related tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social and religious norms are still implemented - Sanctions given to those breaking local norms - Social envy toward people involved in Cibalay Site management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High frequency of attendance on social organization - High participation in decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existing various social organizations - There is an initiator in establishing networking - Open to tourism development collaboration. - Communities still require facilitator in establishing social networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tourism is developing as the village government took interest in the management and established a local organization under the village government that is responsible for tourism development of Tapos 1 Village
Village: <i>Karyamukti</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High towards local tourism organization, community figures, visitors, local government although not toward the Head of Village (due to breaking local norms), tourism managers - Low toward local tourism organization who has not shown any real activities, and outsiders managing tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social norms are still implemented; - Implementation of government regulation - Low impact of tourism on local behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High environmental awareness and proactive actions - High participation in social organization - High tolerance among community members and towards visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High collaboration with government, tourism management, local organizations - Open to establishing networks with outsiders - Active in managing and maintaining social networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The cultural site tourism has been receiving an increasing number of tourists and increasing popularity among the people of West Java
Village: <i>Argapura</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High trust the local art and religious figures, members of communities and those with higher economic status - Low trust in village government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social and religious norms are implemented over village regulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High concern for others but low collective actions - Jealousy toward cave tourism employments, although no conflict - Low concern for Gudawang tourism development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No established networks. - Low participation - Low efforts in establishing networks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not too much progress on the development of Gudawang cave tourism and in fact is currently facing a decreasing number of tourists.

<i>Location</i>	<i>Trust</i>	<i>Social Norms</i>	<i>Collective Actions & Cooperation</i>	<i>Networks</i>	<i>Tourism Development</i>
Village: <i>Ginanjara</i>	-High trusts towards religious figures and government. -Low trust toward leader of farmer group	-Religious norms and government regulations are still implemented	-High participation in religious gathering -High concerns for others -Concern for environment is limited around the vicinity of their home. -Voluntary action on rehabilitation conducted only within the village vicinity	-Farmers groups collaboration with national park -Passive in decision-making	-Despite receiving some visitors, this village has yet been managed as a tourism area. There is a future plan from the National Park to develop this village as a tourism village
Village: <i>Ambarjaya</i>	-High trusts towards religious figures, government and members of conservation farmers group.	-Religious norms and government regulations are implemented -Implementation of customary norms. -Implementation of government sanction.	-High concerns for others -Concern for environment is limited around the vicinity of their home -Voluntary rehabilitation action within village vicinity only	-Various social organizations -High participation in local organizations.	-Similar to Ginanjara Village, although Ambarjaya has yet been managed as a tourism area, but there is a future plan from the National Park to develop this village as a tourism village

Trust

The informal and subjective elements of interpersonal behaviour shaped people's minds and attitudes about interacting with others. When members within communities trust each other and the institutions that operated among them, they should have easier access to reach agreements and conduct collective actions and cooperation resulting in networks. Networking, in addition to institution and institution building, was one of the most critical factor in tourism development (Erkus-Öztürk, 2008). Although, all villages that comprised the study sites showed greater respect and trust towards their art and religious figures, however, the level of collective actions and cooperation for networks varied. However, it has the tendency to show better collective actions and concerns for others and the environment under such trust.

It was evidenced from the research results that economic and social motivations formed the level of trust that the communities showed toward each other, their leaders and outsiders. Within the Villages of Tapos 1, Karyamukti, Argapura and Ginanjara, the basic motivation of trust was largely economic, such as the opportunity for employment and increasing local income. In Tapos 1 Village, the local community showed some envy towards other fellow communities that were involved directly with the management of Cibalay tourism site including to those with homestays etc. This complied with Migheli's (2009) finding that trust and trustworthiness are the two fundamental factors in the everyday's economic life.

Different with other villages, trusts between fellow communities in Ambarjaya Village were formed due to various informal organizations that emerged, which allow each individual to have further interaction, resulting in growing trusts. Trust improves cooperation by reducing expenses and improving the exchange of resources, skills and knowledge (Pretty & Ward, 2001, 2003 Pretty, Pretty & Smith 2003). When trust in the social structure increases, it would enhance the individual's willingness to trust people who they were not familiar with. As a result, individuals are more likely to start and join

a local organization that aims to improve the social, economic, or local environment (Pretty & Smith, 2003). Research results indicated that trust on local figures provided the basis for the implementation of social norms and value, while trust on village government and among members of the communities provided the basis for networking.

Social Norms

Social norms played important role in controlling and shaping the behaviour that grew in the community. Formal and informal rules, norms and sanctions are instrumental in putting the interests of group over individual interests in the formation of positive attitudes and behaviours towards environment. The influence of local art and religious leaders in the villages has high effect on the implementation of social norms, while trust on the village governments determined the implementation of village government regulation. Having low trust on their village government, the communities of Argapura Village relied more on the implementation of social and religious norms. According to Hasbullah (2006), maintenance of group norms (adherence to the norms of religion, morality, and politeness) will strengthen the communities' social capital.

Collective Actions and Cooperation

Various collective action based on mutual trust would increase the participation in a variety of shapes and dimensions, especially in the context of building a common progress. The purposes of collective action within the study sites consisted on primarily community-organized activities for religious purposes and providing environmental services. Trust fostered the collective actions and cooperation within the studied villages. Argapura Village is the only village that showed low collective actions and concerns for environment. This was in line with the low trust on the village government, which validated the importance of local leadership (the village government) in empowering community.

Networks

As the phenomenon of 'bottom-up', social capital is created when individuals developed network connections. In other words, strong social capital would depend on the capacity of community groups to build its network. The research confirmed that trust provided the foundation for norms and collective actions which all together determined the level of networking. Table 3 confirmed that the higher the level of trust that the communities have towards their fellow communities, local figures, leaders and outsiders, the higher were the ability to established networks and build local organizations/associations. The high trust towards outsiders proved to enhance the openness of the communities to develop networks. Another important result was that the higher the need to improve economic condition, the higher the participation in tourism.

In social networks, there is interaction between individuals in a group, individual difference groups, individuals and groups, and between groups. The nature of negative interactions would lead to rivalry, division and competition, which often resulted in a lack of social networks. Such was the case for Argapura Village, where no networking were established.

Social Capital, Community Empowerment, Conservation Education and Tourism Development

Ecotourism in West Java faced diverse challenges and opportunities in achieving sustainable development. Ecotourism would be developed properly if the public and decision makers at the local level were equipped with sufficient social capital to develop their area as tourism attraction.

Social networks are indispensable for the success and sustainability of ecotourism development in West Java. According to Pretty & Smith (2003), strong positive relationships within and between social groups, could significantly lower the cost of tourism operations through cooperation, facilitation, collaboration, investment in collective action, reduction of the likelihood of an individual engaging in activities that generate negative impact on the group, and increase the chances of innovation.

The potential of social capital to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of conservation initiatives have been studied by several researchers. In their study on wetlands protection programs in 90 countries, La Peyre et al (2001) found that high social capital was the major predictor of effective protection of wetlands. In addition, research by Thakadu (1999) in Botswana illustrated the importance for planners and practitioners to understand the types and levels of social capital in the community in order to obtain effective participation. Jones (2005) examined the processes of social change that leads to, and as a result of the development of community-based ecotourism in Gambia. These research also indicated that while a high level of social capital played an important role in the formation of the business, poor management practices can threaten the existing social capital and harm the environment. Furthermore, research by Baksh et al. (2013) in the Village of Tambaksari, Pasuruan, East Java found that the development of ecotourism in the region was strongly influenced by the networks followed by public participation although it was not influenced by the beliefs and norms. Slightly different from the results of Baksh et al. (2013), Oktadiyani (2010) found that trust and norms were the major elements of social capital in the communities of Kutai National Park buffer zone in addition to participation, networking, and concern for others and the environment. This research of social capital of West Java rural communities have found that trust especially in village government was the most crucial element of social capital that formed the foundation for a successful ecotourism development because it led to networks that would empower the communities.

Community participation in sustainable tourism is also the key to the success of conservation efforts, because many locations ecotourism activities took place within the area of conservation (Sunkar and Rachmawati, 2013). It is also supported by statements Pretty and Smith (2003) that many of the results of the study showed increased activity on the conservation of natural resources in and around the communities in the conservation area, which has a good relationship between one individual and another, in groups or networks, as well as knowledge they are used and developed in the planning and implementation of conservation and development activities. Therefore the successful development of ecotourism in the region requires a balance between environment, economic, social and culture (Goeldner & Ritchi 2008).

Measurement of social capital could indicate the weakness point of the people in relation to tourism development, as shown by the results of this research. Most of the people in the study sites had been found to have a low or limited environmental concern/care for environment. People tended to disregard the area farther from their home. Only limited people involved in activities related to the management of the tourism sites that showed higher concerns for the environment. Chiu et al. (2014) found that perceived value of an ecotour directly affected tourist environmentally responsible behaviour; thus, enhancing tourists' perceived value of an ecotourism activity should be the first step in strengthening their environmentally responsible behaviour through an increase of satisfaction level. Furthermore, Chiu et al. (2014) argue that when tourists have satisfaction toward their experience in ecotourism activities, they can sense the importance of the environment and would have a greater understanding toward the environment, and these would promote environmentally responsible behaviour.

An area manager will need the support from the surrounding community in order to provide excellent services for their visitors to increase visitors' satisfaction. And it is not simply just protecting the tourism object itself, but also protecting the surrounding area, the road taken to reach the objects, the houses pass through to get to the objects, etc. This is where the people should be involved in. And it would not be possible for people to help manage and protect the environment when they have limited environmental concern.

Conservation education (CE) is a management tool, a mean to strengthen people's environmental concern which would lead to environmentally responsible behaviour or pro-environment behaviour. Forest Service of The United States Department of Agriculture stated that CE helps people to understand and appreciate the nature and learn how to conserve the nature for future generation. Various studies had demonstrated that conservation education has a positive influence toward behavioural intention (Howe, 2009), promoted natural resources conservation and stewardships (Feldspausch, 2006), and an effective means in managing tourist interaction with wildlife and natural environment.

The statute of Republic of Indonesia number 20 of 2003 provided the opportunity for developing conservation education in formal, non formal and informal education. There are local content course available for the teacher in school to develop CE content specific to the area, and a wide array of non formal activities in the community for CE content to be integrated into, particularly in the religious activities that the people in study sites hold strongly. There are also informal ways to educate people about conservation, i.e through local organization/institution, farmers group, religious leaders, and other informal leaders. Communities within the study sites should be able to protect and conserve nature, by strengthening their environmental concerns, and most importantly changing their behaviour towards nature/environment. To increase the effectiveness of a CE effort, Schultz (2011) suggested that CE should include (1) motivational elements, which promote actions, (2) focus on specific behavioural change, and (3) adopt an approach which promote cross-discipline collaboration among scientist. The three suggestions provided opportunity of an improved effectiveness of CE efforts, and thereby improved possibility of behavioural changes.

CONCLUSION

Social capital is a concept that has significant implications for enhancing the quality, effectiveness and sustainability of tourism. Social capital rises with relative income or, in other words, declines with growing envy. Local village leadership also has significant effects on maintaining a solid rural community. The higher the social capital, the stronger is the ability of the community to resist changes on themselves and on their environment. When enhanced with conservation education, it would improve the conduct of sustainable tourism by empowering the community's capacity to work together to address their common needs, fostering greater inclusion and cohesion, and increasing transparency and accountability.

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