



## Application of Co-Creation of Experience in Community-Based Tourism

---

Mohammad Shahidul Islam

EasyChair preprints are intended for rapid dissemination of research results and are integrated with the rest of EasyChair.

December 29, 2020

# APPLICATION OF CO-CREATION OF EXPERIENCE IN COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM

Mohammad Shahidul Islam, PhD\*

\*Head of Research and Development,  
National Hotel and Tourism Training Institute  
Dhaka, Bangladesh: [shahidbpc@gmail.com](mailto:shahidbpc@gmail.com)

## ABSTRACT:

*For decades, community-based tourism (CBT) has contributed to poverty alleviation and community development where local people are empowered. It has also been remarked that community development through tourism eventually brings new opportunities for local individuals' better future. Besides getting benefits for the community, CBT has also been facing many challenges to sustain its practical implementations in different corners of the world. Research, especially on product design, presentation, interaction, value creation, and sustainable destination management strategies, is inadequately present. The buzzword in sustainable and creative business phenomena "co-creation of experience" could be leveraged to add to the strategic strength, which is still limited to exercise in sustainable CBT development in easy understanding as a handy tool for developing countries. The paper aims to propose a practice guideline for co-creation CBT experiences. For CBT stakeholders and small and medium entrepreneurs who have enormous limitations in human resources and research.*

**Keywords:** *Co-creation of experience, community-based tourism, sustainability, systematic guideline*

## Introduction

Co-creation of experience is a management initiative, or a business approach focuses on creating a customer experience. Co-creation practice helps business organizations sustain interactive relationships between customers and organizations; for example, it jointly produces a mutually valued outcome and creates a rich experience (Iglesias et al., 2020). In effect, customers' involvement in the co-creation process is an imperative strategy for companies competing to encounter personalized demands and obtain competitive benefits (González-Mansilla, Berenguer-Contrí, & Serra-Cantalops, 2019). Surprisingly, the most significant experience generator tourism does not fully utilize *co-creation of experience* to create value creation (Boukas & Ioannou, 2020).

The principle of co-creation of experience (e.g., value in exchange to promote guest-host engagement) is inadequately observed in both applications and research in the tourism domain. For many people in the developed world, time spent on leisure and tourism has become an essential part of their quality of life (Rihova, Buhalis., Gouthro, & Moital, 2018). Mainly during their free time, people express their quest for unique experiences reflecting their own stories. This is called the culture of tourism (McIntosh & Zahra, 2007). The developing countries are also trying to move forward in the competitive tourism market following the developed countries. But the problems exist within the boundary of missing creative and effective strategic management (Bornhorst, Ritchie & Sheehan, 2010). Across the globe, especially in developing countries, lack of research and strategic planning, unskilled human resources and finally insufficiency in the creative experiment from small and medium entrepreneurs and other stakeholders, community development and its best production local people empowerment tourism have not yet found a meaningful ground (Wood & Bischoff, 2020). Therefore, this paper aims to bring many significant aspects by applying "co-creation of experience" as a useful tool for sustainable community-based tourism (CBT). The article is determined to assist the entrepreneurs and other interested groups of the local community who need the constant guidelines and the holistic application of "co-creation of experiences" in their limited planning resources (Fernandes & Almeida, 2020).

### **Co-creation of Community-based Tourism Experience (CCBTE)**

Tourism is an increasingly crucial alternative activity for communal territories, gradually losing their traditional productive function. Understanding how tourism experiences may be supplied and managed at communal destinations, based on both market and destination knowledge, is vital to help communities successfully design and manage community-based tourism destinations (Dodds, & Galaski, 2018). This understanding is also essential to ensure sustainable tourism development by benefitting all stakeholders involved.

Community-based development is a strategic instrument utilized by tourism planners to mobilize communities into action to broaden the industry's scope of offerings. The goal is the socio-economic empowerment and a value-added experience for local and foreign visitors (Karabati, Dogan, Pinar & Celik, 2009). CBT is often considered a development tool for some structurally disadvantaged rural areas, where alternatives are needed to create/ sustain an economic, social and cultural structure and where highly valued heritage resources abound. CBT's aim can be fostered in the following articulations (Boukas & Ioannou, 2020; McKercher, 2003).

- Community-based tourism is a profitable and sustainable activity that enhances the environment while adding value to locals and visitors' experience.
- It directly engages the community – providing both economic and social benefits.
- Its ultimate objective is to satisfy consumer expectations to enhance the experience.
- It is market-driven and has to meet high standards to remain sustainable.
- Community groups and private entrepreneurs or organizations may own it.
- It should aim to train, educate, develop, encourage and utilize any skills and human potential within the community to deliver professional service.

- It should have functioned within a business structure that abide by government regulations, financial obligations, good labour relations and comprehensive management systems.
- All business strategies must be scrutinized to ensure owners or organizations understand the opportunities, pitfalls, and risks and show the project's long-term viability.
- Environmental awareness and sustainability should be the top priority.
- It is the responsibility of the community to maintain clean, healthy surroundings.
- Members of the community are expected to show friendliness, honesty and professionalism amongst themselves and their dealings and rates with the visitor to ensure the project's integrity.

However, CBT is an overstressed development project across the world mainly for poverty alleviation, local empowerment and the conservation of nature and heritage. It has been crying needs to come out from traditional market fashion where customers are outside the firm (consumption) and value creation occur inside the firm (production) (Ross, & Saxena, 2019).

In a traditional market, firms decide the products and services they may produce. They determine what is of value to the customer and are in charge of the overall experience. Consumers have little or no role to play in value creation. This system mars the progress and sustainability of CBT. In this circumstance of tourists' psychographics and social changes, CBT should realize the following (Minkiewicz, Evans, & Bridson, 2014; Ramaswamy, & Ozcan, 2018)

- Consumers become more knowledgeable and increasingly aware of their negotiation clout
- They look for psychological needs such as inspiration authenticity, belonging to a meaningful community, value and meaning in general
- They are moving towards playing an active role in the co-creation of their own experiences and value
- They seek a balance between control by the experience stager and self-determined activity with its spontaneity, freedom and self-expression and self-development

Accordingly, to interact the above for effective outcomes of co-creation of experience, application of the three distinct principles may be useful for CBT stakeholders, for example (1) personalization (e.g., to entertain the esteem of tourists), (2) engagement (e.g., to involve tourists in core-activities) and (3) co-production (e.g., to instigate service experience) (Minkiewicz, Evans, & Bridson, 2014). Thus, small and medium CBT entrepreneurs should pay heed on the ground of letting tourists be actively involved and contribute to the design, delivery and creation of tourist experience. To achieve the co-created experience, they need to allow the tourist to interact with the service provider and perhaps other relevant factors in the experience network to enable the co-construction of the experience, for examples (Ek, Larsen, Hornskov, & Mansfeldt, 2008; Prahalad, & Ramaswamy, 2004):

- Co-creation between consumers and consumers
- Co-creation between different suppliers or between suppliers and consumers
- Co-creation between visitors and locals and

- Customers-activated services network needs to be at a particular destination.

## **Conclusion and recommendations**

"Co-creation experiences" into Sustainable Community-Based Tourism (SCBT) can be a unique measure to highlight the originality of tourism along with the sustainable economy mobility in the community. Thus, tourism may be no longer only a tool of economy generation but also a cultural exchange tool and awareness of the significance of communal uniqueness with memorable tourism experience. Since, the distance between a company and its stakeholders has reduced to such an extent that boundary lines demarcating suppliers, partners, customers, and employees have almost disappeared. Understanding the prospect of co-creation experience mingled with CBT for sustainability as a practice case, the paper offers an entrance of it by recommending the following for SCBT in the developing countries where hardcore research is not always open:

- CBT entrepreneurs need to have an open mind and be creative about whom they bring in as a possible co-creator.
- Co-creation works best when CBT firms may establish a strong community. Consumers share ideas, build on each other's work, praise, critique and compete.
- It considers more than financial rewards to keep smart, creative consumers engaged. They need compliment, appreciation for ideas, and to see the difference that they are making.
- If CBT firms run a global co-creation community online, they can quickly get top creators together every year. They will feel like they have been invited to the charms of a specialized community. They will network, they will inspire each other, and they will love the community all the more. The particular community will become an elite brand, all for the price of a few destinations.

Finally, with the advent of modern technologies and social media marketing, customers are demanding a more significant role in the value creation process. Social media plays substantial roles in the success or failure of a company's product instantly. CBT organizations do not need to pay some marketing agents to dispatch surveys to clients to get their feelings. People prefer to talk and do it freely – that is free. That is where the co-creation model can quickly get into SCBT. Organizations can take their input and translate that right back into creating a better product for CBT when organizations view clients as 'stakeholders' of their brand or uniqueness.

## **REFERENCES:**

- Bornhorst, T., Ritchie, J. B., & Sheehan, L. (2010). Determinants of tourism success for DMOs & destinations: An empirical examination of stakeholders' perspectives. *Tourism management*, 31(5), 572-589.
- Boukas, N., & Ioannou, M. (2020). Co-creating visitor experiences in cultural heritage museums: the avenue towards sustainable tourism development. *International Journal of Tourism Policy*, 10(2), 101-122.

- Dodds, R., Ali, A., & Galaski, K. (2018). Mobilizing knowledge: Determining key elements for success and pitfalls in developing community-based tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 21(13), 1547-1568.
- Ek, R., Larsen, J., Hornskov, S. B., & Mansfeldt, O. K. (2008). A dynamic framework of tourist experiences: Space-time and performances in the experience economy. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 8(2), 122-140.
- Fernandes, G., & Almeida, H. (2020, October). Cooperation and Competitiveness in Tourism Sustainability. Positioning of Tourist Actors in the Serra da Estrela Natural Park in Portugal. In *International Conference on Tourism, Technology and Systems* (pp. 52-65). Springer, Singapore.
- Karabati, S., Dogan, E., Pinar, M., & Celik, L. M. (2009). Socio-economic effects of agri-tourism on local communities in Turkey: The case of Aglasun. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, 10(2), 129-142.
- Iglesias, O., Markovic, S., Bagherzadeh, M., & Singh, J. J. (2020). Co-creation: A key link between corporate social responsibility, customer trust, and customer loyalty. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 163(1), 151-166.
- González-Mansilla, Ó., Berenguer-Contrí, G., & Serra-Cantalops, A. (2019). The impact of value co-creation on hotel brand equity and customer satisfaction. *Tourism Management*, 75, 51-65.
- McKercher, B. (2003, November). Sustainable tourism development-guiding principles for planning and management. In *National seminar on sustainable tourism development* (pp. 5-9).
- McIntosh, A. J., & Zahra, A. (2007). A cultural encounter through volunteer tourism: Towards the ideals of sustainable tourism?. *Journal of sustainable tourism*, 15(5), 541-556.
- Minkiewicz, J., Evans, J., & Bridson, K. (2014). How do consumers co-create their experiences? An exploration in the heritage sector. *Journal of marketing management*, 30(1-2), 30-59.
- Prahalad, C. K., & Ramaswamy, V. (2004). Co-creation experiences: The next practice in value creation. *Journal of interactive marketing*, 18(3), 5-14.
- Ramaswamy, V., & Ozcan, K. (2018). What is co-creation? An interactional creation framework and its implications for value creation. *Journal of Business Research*, 84, 196-205.
- Ross, D., & Saxena, G. (2019). Participative co-creation of archaeological heritage: Case insights on creative tourism in Alentejo, Portugal. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 79, 102790.
- Rihova, I., Buhalis, D., Gouthro, M. B., & Moital, M. (2018). Customer-to-customer co-creation practices in tourism: Lessons from Customer-Dominant logic. *Tourism Management*, 67, 362-375.
- Wood, G., & Bischoff, C. (2020). Human resource management in Africa: current research and future directions—evidence from South Africa and across the continent. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 1-28.