ABSTRACT

Purpose: the purpose of this paper is to present solutions to preserve cuc phuong national park from tourism view

Methods: The study employs qualitative methods including synthesis, inductive and explanatory methods. The overall purpose of this study is to obtain the understanding of Cuc Phuong National Park residents’ perceptions and satisfaction toward tourism impacts as well as their attitudes for tourism development. Besides that, this study also points out the main issues of current ecotourism strategies in Cuc Phuong National Park. Based on the results, ecotourism strategies were proposed to response to ecotourism criteria. The interview questions and questionnaire were developed in English To gain an in-depth understanding of local householders’ perceptions on ecotourism and the current ecotourism strategies in Cuc Phuong National Park.

Results and Discussion: to improve the efficiency of conservation activity, Cuc Phuong National Park should give more power for local people in implementing and managing activities. Besides that, the law enforcement about illegal activities must to enhance in order to catch of the current context. Based on the practical observation of researcher, the current law is too weak to prevent the illegal activities. Therefore, stronger law policies are very necessary to promulgate soon and implement in strict and opened ways.

Originality/Value: the results of study and the author’s proposed strategies will help Cuc Phuong National Park improve tourism activities in a sustainable way, harmony among benefits, especially focus on community and conservation. Besides that, it also helps the local government, tour-operators and tourism promoters be aware of real concerns, issues of current tourism activities in Cuc Phuong National Park and then have appropriate program designs and actions to be effective, satisfying community benefits and minimizing the problems for the natural environment.

Keywords: Ecotourism, Economic Impact, Local Income, National Parks.
presquisadora, a lei atual é fraca demais para impedir as atividades ilegais. Por conseguinte, são muito necessárias políticas legislativas mais fortes para a sua rápida promulgação e aplicação de forma rigorosa e aberta.

Originalidade/valor: os resultados do estudo e as estratégias propostas pelo autor ajudarão o Parque Nacional Cuc Phuong a melhorar as atividades turísticas de forma sustentável, harmonizando os benefícios, com foco especial na comunidade e na conservação. Além disso, também ajuda o governo local, operadores turísticos e promotores de turismo a estar ciente de preocupações reais, questões de atividades turísticas atuais no Parque Nacional Cuc Phuong e, em seguida, ter projetos de programas e ações adequadas para ser eficaz, satisfazendo os benefícios da comunidade e minimizando os problemas para o ambiente natural.


SOLUCIONES DE PRESERVACIÓN PARA EL PARQUE NACIONAL CUC PHUONG DESDE UNA PERSPECTIVA TURÍSTICA

RESUMEN

Propósito: el propósito de este artículo es presentar soluciones para preservar el parque nacional de cuc phuong de la vista del turismo.

Métodos: El estudio emplea métodos cualitativos que incluyen síntesis, inductivos y explicativos. El propósito general de este estudio es obtener la comprensión de las percepciones y la satisfacción de los residentes del Parque Nacional Cuc Phuong hacia los impactos del turismo, así como sus actitudes para el desarrollo turístico. Además de eso, este estudio también señala los principales problemas de las estrategias actuales de ecoturismo en el Parque Nacional Cuc Phuong. A partir de los resultados, se propusieron estrategias de ecoturismo para responder a los criterios de ecoturismo. Las preguntas de la entrevista y el cuestionario se desarrollaron en inglés para obtener una comprensión profunda de las percepciones de los propietarios locales sobre el ecoturismo y las estrategias actuales de ecoturismo en el Parque Nacional Cuc Phuong.

Resultados y discusión: para mejorar la eficiencia de la actividad de conservación, el Parque Nacional Cuc Phuong debería dar más poder a la población local en la implementación y gestión de actividades. Además de eso, la aplicación de la ley sobre actividades ilegales debe mejorar para captar el contexto actual. Sobre la base de la observación práctica del investigador, la ley actual es demasiado débil para prevenir las actividades ilegales. Por lo tanto, es muy necesario contar con políticas legales más fuertes para promulgarlas pronto y aplicarlas de manera estricta y abierta.

Originalidad/Valor: los resultados del estudio y las estrategias propuestas por el autor ayudarán al Parque Nacional Cuc Phuong a mejorar las actividades turísticas de manera sostenible, en armonía entre los beneficios, especialmente el enfoque en la comunidad y la conservación. Además de eso, también ayuda al gobierno local, operadores turísticos y promotores turísticos a estar al tanto de las preocupaciones reales, los problemas de las actividades turísticas actuales en el Parque Nacional Cuc Phuong y luego tener diseños de programas y acciones adecuados para ser efectivos, satisfaciendo los beneficios de la comunidad y minimizando los problemas para el medio ambiente natural.

Palabras clave: Ecoturismo, Impacto Económico, Ingresos Locales, Parques Nacionales.

1 INTRODUCTION

With plenty and diverse ecotourism resources, Cuc Phuong National Park seems the best destination for ecotourism in Vietnam with over 60,000 visitors annually. With the benefit
derives from ecotourism; the local community has a great change with improved infrastructural and social economic condition. Besides that, revenues derived from ecotourism are utilized into conservation activities. However, with the observation of the author and the report of Cuc Phuong National Park (Cuc Phuong National Park, 2012), Cuc Phuong National Park does not seems to have the ecotourism development strategy, but it has ecotourism management strategy, however, the current ecotourism activities of management strategy are not equivalent with the inherent ecotourism resource. Hence we choose this topic: “SOLUTIONS TO PRESERVE CUC PHUONG NATIONAL PARK FROM TOURISM VIEW”.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

First, The satisfaction of local people seems a strong dynamic to maintain tourism development. Allen et al. (1993) depicted that relationships between satisfaction of various dimensions of community life and tourism development were generally nonlinear with citizen involvement, public services, and the environment being most sensitive to tourism development. The satisfaction of local people was showed by their attitude toward tourism development, in the context of Cuc Phuong National Park, tourism activity really affected to native people in economic, social culture and environment, and most of them have positive attitudes toward tourism development, especially with young people earning high income and educated people.

Stuart Crispin and Mark Wickham in the article titled as "Ecotourism and Strategic Management" emphasize on the link between strategic management research and issues such as environmental impacts, government policy and destination planning and marketing (Crispin and Wickham, 2010) and the MA European Tourism Management in an article titled as "Ecotourism in Laos: an alternative or a marketing ecotourism operators?" states that host communities tend to prefer ecotourism to mass tourism for different ecotourism is supposed to not overpower the most of the revenues stay in the area and economic diversity tries to avoid communities basing their on a single product like tourism (MA European Tourism Management, 2006).

In Jordan National Tourism Strategy (2004-2010) proposed by Jordan Ministry of Travel and Tourism, key community, reasons, tools for economy assessing economic impact on the basis of visitor expenditure. Prioritizing concerns related to preservation and conservation of the environment antiquities, as they are tourism underlying resources.
Improving disconnect between tourism marketing and product development auditing existing statistics system (Jordan Ministry of Travel and Tourism, 2004).

There is no doubt that all these ecotourism plans should guarantee sustainable development of ecotourism and protection of local cultures and custom and decreasing travel expenses for ecotourists and improve their security in none-urban and remote areas. Improving transportation system for easy access to natural attractions located in remote areas and providing health and medical services and accommodation to ecotourists are the most important pre-requisites. Prevention from deterioration of environment and preparation of protective laws and removing cultural and communicative barriers which impede contact of ecotourists with local communities through changing negative attitudes of government authorities, policy makers and people are the other pre-requisites to overcome problems of this sector of tourism.

One of the most commonly used model is the one that presents the development of an organization is determined by its relationships with various groups and individuals consisting of employees, customers, suppliers, governments, and members of the communities, is named as stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984). It is clearly understood from Freeman’s definition on a stakeholder as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives” (Freeman, 1984). The model asserts that stakeholders possibly and necessarily have the direct impacts on making any decision relating to management (Jones, 1995). As noted by Freeman (1984), “to be an effective strategist you must deal with those groups that can affect you, while to be responsive (and effective in the long run) you must deal with those groups that you can affect”.

Indeed, the stakeholder theory is considered as a normative tourism planning model which can be applied to promote the alignment among key players in the sustainable tourism development efforts in the era in which tourism is regarded as an economic industry having great power in the development of community-based market. More specifically, tourism authorities are directed to proactively identify the best way to manage the tourism activity in a way that considers the needs as well as the interests of all various stakeholder groups in the planning process.

Implicitly or explicitly, social exchange theory has been considered as framework for many studies in order to develop and understand residents’ perceptions of tourism development and its impacts (Allen et al., 1993; Andereck et al., 2005; Andriotis, 2005; Andriotis and Vaughan, 2003; Chen, 2000; Chen, 2001; Kayat, 2000; Kayat, 2002; McGehee and Andereck, 2004; McGehee et al., 2002). Social exchange theory is “a general sociological theory
concerned with understanding the exchange of resources between individual and groups in an interaction of situation” (Ap, 1992:668). This theory refers to voluntary actions that are motivated by expected returns (Easterling, 2004). People engage in an interaction process where they seek for “valued resources”. Resources can be any item, concrete or symbolic and may be material, social or psychological in nature. Individuals choose to engage in an exchange as: (1) the resulting rewards are valued, (2) the exchange is likely to produce valued rewards, and (3) perceived costs do not exceed perceived rewards (Jurowski et al., 1997).

According to Andereck at al., (2005), from the tourism perspective, social exchange theory postulates that an individual’s attitudes towards this industry and subsequent level of support for its development will be influenced by his or her evaluation of resulting outcomes in the community. Exchanges must occur to have tourism in community. Residents must develop and promote tourism and then serve the needs of tourists. Some community residents reap the benefits, while the others may get negative impacts (Andereck et al., 2005). Social exchange theory suggests people evaluate an exchange based on costs and benefits incurred as a result of that exchange. An individual that perceives benefits from an exchange is likely to evaluate it positively; one that perceives costs is likely to evaluate it negatively. Thus, residents who find that the exchange benefits for their well-being are likely to support tourism development and therefore have positive reactions to tourist, whereas, residents who find out that the exchange as problematic will oppose tourism development.

To sum up, the above sections have discussed namely some of the most common theories regarding as examination residents’ perceptions, attitudes towards tourism, tourism impacts and residents' support for tourism development. While the investigation of resident attitudes has benefited from the application of these theoretical perspectives, it is necessary to have further examination and application of theoretical perspectives.

If any conclusion can be drawn about the theoretical perspectives at this point, possibly, the most valuable and popular contribution to the development of a theoretical analysis of variations in the response to tourism within communities, however, has come from Ap (1992) adaptation of social exchange theory and Freeman (1984) suggestion of stakeholder theory. Social exchange theory as proposed by Ap (1992) offers an underlying framework for understanding resident’s attitudes towards tourism because it deals with how residents evaluate the costs and benefits of tourism (Kayat, 2000). Additionally, stakeholder theory as claimed by Freeman promotes the alignment among key players in the sustainable tourism development efforts in which tourism authorities are directed to proactively identify the best way to manage.
the tourism activity in a way that considers the needs as well as the interests of all various stakeholder groups in the planning process.

For the purpose of this study, social exchange theory and stakeholder theory are used to investigate residents’ perceptions of tourism impacts and their support for tourism development in the case of Cuc Phuong National Park. The reason for that is due to the fact that residents’ perceptions towards the impacts of tourism development are partially based on the socio-cultural, economic and environmental trade-offs and they, in turn, may influence to residents’ support for tourism development. And it is a logically and intuitively appealing theory to formulate the basic of an investigation of the residents’ perceptions of tourism impact and their support for tourism development in the case of Cuc Phuong National Park.

3 METHODOLOGY

This study mainly use qualitative methods including synthesis, inductive and explanatory methods.

The overall purpose of this study is to obtain the understanding of Cuc Phuong National Park residents’ perceptions and satisfaction toward tourism impacts as well as their attitudes for tourism development. Besides that, this study also points out the main issues of current ecotourism strategies in Cuc Phuong National Park. Based on the results, ecotourism strategies were proposed to response to ecotourism criteria.

The interview questions and questionnaire were developed in English.

3.1 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

To gain an in-depth understanding of local householders’ perceptions on ecotourism and the current ecotourism strategies in Cuc Phuong National Park, the researcher adopted the method of structuring a qualitative interview from Rubin and Herbet (1995). And the following variables are utilized to measure residents’ perception of tourism impacts and their satisfaction toward and their attitude for additional tourism development in Cuc Phuong National Park: (1) Residents’ socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, level of education, monthly household income; job status; size of family); (2) Residents’ perceptions of economic impacts of tourism (perceive positive and negative impacts); (3) Residents’ perceptions of socio-cultural impacts of tourism (perceive positive and negative impacts); (4) Residents’ perceptions of
environmental impacts of tourism (perceive positive and negative impacts); (5) Community satisfaction (public service, environment, economics, medical and recreation); (6) Attitude for additional tourism development

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 SOME PROBLEMS IN MANAGEMENT

With the labor organization and recruitment strategy, Cuc Phuong National Park authority employed many laborers that come from outside of Cuc Phuong National Park areas in producing ecotourism products and services. However, the management in all divisions of ecotourism belongs to Cuc Phuong National Park. The activities to attract local people in ecotourism in Cuc Phuong National Park have not been clear and popular. Local people do not really seem to be the core actors in ecotourism development, since their appearance and participation in ecotourism is limited. Therefore, they still heavily depend on traditional cultivation coupled with the habit of exploiting forest resources for their livelihood (Bui, 2010). Illegal activities on forest resources are still in existence and it proves too difficult to have the trend abated. Turning to ecotourism service strategy, Cuc Phuong National park has many tours for visiting special historical and natural spots and may traditional performances, however, most visitors only focus on some specific ecotourism services, because the typical and attractive services are not really outstanding. One reason for this issue is the using and managing local people in site not really appropriated. The attention of visitor to only some ecotourism spots causes damage to the environment by destroying the ecotourism natural resource especially where Cuc Phuong National Park does not have the right solution timely.

Nowadays, Cuc Phuong National Park has plenty of tourism products for sale to visitors like apricot wine, honey bee, spotted deer horns and other souvenirs. Most current tourism products are produced by the local people with pure traditional technology and the others, Cuc Phuong National Park produces by themselves or outsources from other provinces. From the observation of the author, although these tourism products are very simple and few, they still attract many local households taking part in producing them, because these products can make for off season production. In addition, lack of management and organization system, product quality and distribution method also are very low and inefficient. Therefore, the benefits that the local people obtain from ecotourism development are not high and thus not enough to convince them fully take part in doing ecotourism.
The current ecotourism strategies discussed above partly reveals the limitations in ecotourism development in Cuc Phuong National Park. These issues cause the obstacles in conservation activities in Cuc Phuong National Park. It also proves that illegal activities still happen and do not show a decreasing trend. (Cuc Phuong National Park, 2012). Therefore, Cuc Phuong National Park requires effective ecotourism strategies, with policies, plan and programs that are feasible, practical and reasonable for the current context.

Consequently, a systematic policies, plans and programs by ecotourism strategy is very necessary for Cuc Phuong National Park to develop ecotourism in sustainable way for the long term. The objective of this study is to revisit the current ecotourism strategies in Cuc Phuong National Park and then proposal ecotourism strategies that reflect the residents’ perception and attitudes toward ecotourism impacts, with the main purposes of improving local community living condition, preserving the local culture and increasing the natural resource conservation in a sustainable manner.

Next some following issues must be noted:

The first, the conflicts between traditional institutions and the requirements of business management are easily raised. Therefore, it is necessary to take into account the difference between community and landholder interests; especially, not only stakeholders but also a lot of interested parties show their concerns with ecotourism.

The second, remarkably, to each ecotourism business activity, the application of management models should be more flexible and adaptive. Since ecotourism projects have not been commercially realistic. Moreover, ecotourism development is often suffered from the obstacle of transport and road conditions.

Third, communities will require ongoing access to advice and support in the development, management and marketing of responsible, good quality ecotourism products. Many of the issues raised in these guidelines point to the importance of capacity building and training programs with local communities. It is important to get the level of delivery and content right. This should be carefully discussed with the communities themselves. In general, it has been found that short, technical courses have had little impact. Longer courses, including learning by doing and on the job training, have proved necessary.

Fourth, specific steps should be taken within the community to minimize the environmental impact and maximize the local benefit of ecotourism. For example, low energy technologies appropriate to the location should be applied where possible. Recycling should be encouraged and all forms of waste disposal should be carefully managed, with a principle of taking as much waste away from the site as possible. Use of environmentally friendly transport
should be positively favored, both in the planning of programs and in the information supplied. In order to minimize economic leakage, every effort should be made to use local produce and services, and to favor the employment of local people. This may require action to identify local, sustainable sources. Producers can be assisted through the formation of local groups and networks, and help with contacts, marketing and pricing. Local communities should be encouraged and helped to take account of these issues themselves without any effect on their living standards, through information, training and demonstration. Feedback to them from visitors will help. Influencing the actions taken by visitors and tour operators is very important. Some elements of good practice can be included as firm requirements in contracts with the private sector.

**Figure 1**

*Visitors (domestic) in number*

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*Note: Statistics on number of visitors from June to December of 2011 was not shown at the publishing time of report.*

Source: Prepared by Authors (2024)

4.2 SOLUTIONS SUGGESTED

First, Wearing and Larsen (1996) asserted in their study that ecotourism helps increase a sense of pride in people to preserve traditional cultures, this is obviously true because, to attract tourists in national parks, the local culture and history plays an important role to make the specific distinction to attract visitors’ curiosity to explore then. Cuc Phuong National Park was well-known not only for the natural resources but also for the culture and history, that’s
why over 60% of respondents agree that tourism has increased the demand of historical and cultural exhibits in the case of Cuc Phuong National Park. This symptom showed that the culture and history in Cuc Phuong community is quite plentiful and diversified. However, to organize this activity to tourism seemed still limited, only with very big groups of tourism this activity would be opened and sometimes the format of this performance was shrunk or distorted from the convenient ways of organizers, if this continues happening, it will step by step destroys the specific conventional culture and history of local community. Therefore, with this kind of tourism service, the local government needs to manage and control in more details and carefully when performing tourism activity.

Second, Ecotourism depends much on natural environment, Ap and Crompton (1998) mentioned that environment is an important input into tourism; therefore the maintenance of a “good” environment is essential to further growth of tourism. To keep natural environment in a sustainable way, the perception of native people is very necessary and important. In the case of Cuc Phuong National Park, people with high education, income and their job related to tourism have very good perception about natural environment, they understand that the value they get from tourism will be changed if the environment here affected. However, with the other groups rest, this is a big challenge for tourism development in Cuc Phuong, hence, a full detailed program about the education and training is very necessary to improve the awareness of local people about the vital role and benefit of natural internment in a long term perspective.

Third, As noted in the stakeholder theory of Freeman (1984), tourism planning model should be applied to promote the alignment among key players in the sustainable tourism development efforts in the era in which tourism is regarded as an economic industry having great power in the development of community-based market; together with the social exchange theory which describes that an individual’s attitudes towards this industry and subsequent level of support for its development will be influenced by his or her evaluation of resulting outcomes in the community. Exchanges must occur to have tourism in community. Residents must develop and promote tourism and then serve the needs of tourists. Some community residents reap the benefits, while the others may get negative impacts (Andereck et al., 2005); and the findings of the research, especially the practical observations of current ecotourism strategies in Cuc Phuong National Park, the researcher realized that ecotourism strategies in Cuc Phuong National Park should be changed and adjusted to place much more focus on the vital role of local community, based on their perception and satisfaction toward tourism. With the main aim is to focus on protecting the environment, enhancing the quality of life for local communities, and improving the tourism product and service.
Fourth, Typically, the first strategy is finding the best way to involve the community. It is clear to say that effective structures are required to enable the community to influence, manage and benefit from ecotourism development and practice. Involving the community is a critically important and complex subject for successful community-based ecotourism. Opportunities and solutions will vary considerably in different areas and among communities. An important principle is to seek to work with existing social and community structures, though these can create challenges as well as opportunities. It can also help to identify potential leaders and people with drive. The main objective should be to achieve broad and equitable benefits throughout the community. Community-based ecotourism requires an understanding, and where possible a strengthening, of the legal rights and responsibilities of the community over land, resources and development. This should apply in particular to the tenure of community-held lands and to rights over tourism, conservation and other uses on these lands, enabling the community to influence activity and earn income from tourism. It should also apply to participation in land use planning and development control over private property. It is important to remember that ecotourism is a business. As well as community-led initiatives, private enterprise and investment should be encouraged where appropriate, within a structure, which enables the community to benefit, and have decision-making power over the level and nature of tourism in its area.

As for the second strategy, it is suggested that by dividing local people into groups and clearly assign the duty for each based on tourism activities, it is regarded as the essential and effective way to attract local people joining the tourism activity, sharing the benefit from tourism and improve their responsibility about tourism development and natural resource conservation. The strategy of dividing local residents into groups will possibly help the authority of Cuc Phuong National Park manage tourism activity more concisely and efficiently, especially in conservational activity and improving tourism service and product.

Final strategy, namely, conservation strategy, to increase the conservational activity, besides assigning the duty of protection natural resource for groups, Cuc Phuong National Park ought to organize educational programs and conservational projects which focus only local people especially the group of people with the low level of perception groups and recruit native residents for implementing. There were some projects for raising tree in some areas in Cuc Phuong National Park, however, this activity only hire the local people to conduct but did not give them the right to protect and get small benefit from this work. Therefore, to improve the efficiency of conservation activity, Cuc Phuong National Park should give more power for local people in implementing and managing activities. Besides that, the law enforcement about illegal
activities must to enhance in order to catch of the current context. Based on the practical observation of researcher, the current law is too weak to prevent the illegal activities. Therefore, stronger law policies are very necessary to promulgate soon and implement in strict and opened ways.

**Figure 2**

*Cuc phuong pictures and communities*

![Cuc Phuong National Park](source: authors)

**5 CONCLUSION**

Through the findings, local people has the perception about ecotourism development, many of them have understood the benefits of ecotourism, especially with local people who have the job mentioned to ecotourism and they also had effort to take part in ecotourism development. However, because of some limitations about skills and knowledge, they got many obstacles when doing ecotourism. The most popular jobs are raising honeybee, spotted deer horns and making handcraft and then selling it to visitors and middlemen. However, the buying power of these kinds of products is not really high, because most visitors in Cuc Phuong National Park are domestic and students who occupied a large number in total. Therefore, the recruiting native labor and training them is essential for tourism development. They can be taught and trained and then will become the native tourism guides or waiters in restaurants, guesthouses or in other services of tourism. Through the observation of the author, there were many projects about the improvement and conservation of Cuc Phuong National Park which attracted local people in some density time, while there are still not many of projects for native
community forces on tourism development until now. This is an important issue for the local government in managing and improving the ecotourism activity in Cuc Phuong National Park.

Besides the group had the awareness about ecotourism development, there were a volume of respondents who disagreed that tourism contributed to increasing income and standard of living and unimproved the town’s overall tax revenue. Most local people in this group had job unrelated to ecotourism, that why they had been unconcerned or ambivalent with ecotourism development, this is the relevant meaning of the social exchange theory, that has discussed in the literature review by Allen et al. (1993); Andereck et al. (2005); Andriotis (2005); Andriotis and Vaughan (2003) has proved that, local people only take part in doing tourism when they see the benefit of obtaining more than the cost, therefore, lack of benefit appearance in front of native people mind was considered the big obstacle for tourism development. This is a major defect for ecotourism management activities.

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