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A CASE STUDY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF KAMPUNG TANJUNG ARU LAMA AS A POST COVID-19 RESILIENT COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM DESTINATION IN KOTA KINABALU, SABAH

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Abstract:

This research explores strategies to enhance post-COVID-19 resilience and promote sustainable growth in community-based tourism (CBT) in Kampung Tanjung Aru Lama, Sabah. In order to guarantee long-term sustainability and profitability, the study assesses the impact of CBT on local communities, looks into the challenges they encounter, and suggests a conceptual framework for CBT. The results of a quantitative approach that includes questionnaire surveys, with field observations and literature review highlight important issues such limited marketing, skill gaps, environmental concerns, and unstable finances. However, the study also identifies possibilities for CBT progress in the community, including a high interest in tourism business, rich cultural assets, and natural coastal resources. To improve local involvement and promote long-term resilience, the suggested approaches include collaborative networking models, financial management systems, and capacity-building initiatives. According to the study's findings, Kampung Tanjung Aru Lama has the potential to develop into a viable CBT model for Tanjung Aru and entire state of Sabah with the right institutional support and community involvement.

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Community-Based Tourism, Community Participation, Local Empowerment, Post Covid-19 Resilience, Tourism Challenges, Tourism Conceptual Framework



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Introduction

In Sabah, Malaysia, tourism is still a major driver of economic and social development, with a reported Gross Value Added of Tourism Industries (GVATI) of RM13.5 billion as of 2023 (Regional Tourism Statistics of ASEAN [RTSA], 2023) and 10.9% of Sabah’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) coming from the tourism sector. Sabah's reputation as a top ecotourism destination is strengthened by its diverse natural ecosystems, from Mount Kinabalu to pristine marine parks, and its culturally rich multi-ethnic communities (Sabah Tourism Board, 2023). In this context, community-based tourism (CBT) has gained attraction as a sustainable tourism model that helps local communities to benefit from and safeguard their natural and cultural resources (Tolkach & King, 2015).

Sabah's tourism industry was severely disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As Figure 1 demonstrates, travel restrictions and Movement Control Orders caused a sharp decline in tourist arrivals in 2020–2021, which resulted in business closures and income losses, particularly in community-based destinations (Idris et al., 2022). In order to maintain long-term sustainability, this crisis highlighted the urgent need for more robust and adaptable tourist models and revealed structural vulnerabilities (Nordin et al., 2023).



Figure 1: Sabah Tourist Arrival from Year 2013 -2023

(Source: Sabah Tourism Board, 2023)

Kampung Tanjung Aru Lama, a historic coastal community close to Kota Kinabalu International Airport and located at southwest of Kota Kinabalu, is one location of growing popularity. Kg. Tanjung Aru Lama, a fishing village by tradition, is now a more urbanized yet culturally preserved community with a strong Malay and Bajau background. This village has mostly stayed off the conventional tourist circuit, even though it is close to Tanjung Aru Beach, one of Sabah's most popular tourist destinations. However, it is an ideal site for creating a scalable CBT model because of its close proximity to popular tourist destinations, existing residential-mixed land use, lively cultural traditions, and scenic coastline setting. Previous interactions with local leadership, including interviews with the Kapitan of the region, revealed that the community was very interested in turning Kg. Tanjung Aru Lama into a tourist destination that promotes the preservation of cultural heritage and the creation of local revenue.

Critical research gaps still exist even though the advantages of CBT, including job creation, empowerment, and community pride, have been extensively demonstrated (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009; Kontogeorgopoulos, 2019). Sabah has limited site-specific information on how CBT initiatives might overcome post-pandemic obstacles, especially with regard to strategic planning, resource access, and local preparedness. There are currently unclear strategies to convert the potential of CBT into tangible, long-lasting action plans in many communities, including Kg. Tanjung Aru Lama.

Furthermore, there are two primary steps in the research. It starts with a literature mapping procedure that highlights significant problems, strategies, and findings from previous CBT research. Particularly in a post-COVID-19 context, that stage contributes to establish a clear picture of what aspects of CBT efforts are effective and what require improvement. Five main areas of concentration were determined from this review: financial assistance, community cooperation, local business, education and skill development, and environmental preservation. These domains subsequently influenced the subsequent formation of the questionnaire survey.

This study moves further by outlining the methodology, evaluating the questionnaire survey data, and developing a workable conceptual framework to improve the implementation of community-based tourism. The goal is to provide support in the development of a flexible and scalable CBT framework, one that not only supports Kampung Tanjung Aru Lama's goals for sustainable tourism but also provides transferable techniques for similar communities in Sabah looking to achieve inclusive growth and post-pandemic resilience

Literature Review

The Fundamentals of Sustainable and Community-Based Tourism

The growth of sustainable tourism depends on establishing a balance between three pillars: economic gain, sociocultural preservation, and environmental protection. Teodorov et al. (2020) stress the growing importance of adding cultural heritage as a fourth pillar, while Dangi et al. (2016) assert that neglecting any of them makes it challenging to achieve long-term sustainability. These ideas are especially pertinent in Sabah because of the state's distinct natural and cultural diversity.

According to Honey (2008), ecotourism, a significant subcategory of sustainable tourism, is responsible travel to natural places with the intention of conserving, educating, and respecting local cultures. Kinabalu Park and Tunku Abdul Rahman Marine Park are two well-known

ecotourism attractions in Sabah that draw tourists with an interest in biodiversity and conservation. Marine trips, forest treks, and birdwatching are examples of ecotourism activities. Six traits of ecotourism were defined by Chesworth (1995), including respecting cultural values, helping local businesses, and visiting unspoiled locations.

In contrast, Community-Based Tourism (CBT) places a direct emphasis on community benefit and control. CBT is defined by Tolkach and King (2015) as tourism that is run by locals and that reinvests profits back into the community. Crafts, cultural performances, and homestays are examples of projects. In addition to producing revenue, CBT improves social ties and cultural identity (Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2013; Trejos & Chiang, 2009). It has its roots in local ownership and is frequently small-scale (Asker et al., 2010). Although ecotourism and CBT frequently overlap, their primary distinction is that ecotourism emphasizes natural settings, whereas CBT places more value on people and culture. Both are essential to Sabah's efforts to promote responsible tourism.

Strategies and Challenges After COVID-19

The tourism industry in Sabah was significantly hit by the COVID-19 outbreak. Local CBT operators saw decreased revenue, company closures, and dwindling visitor numbers, particularly in small villages (Kaur & Bansal, 2021; Dasan et al., 2022). Many lacked crisis management training, financial reserves, and digital marketing tools. Limited market access and uneven government agency support made small-scale businesses especially vulnerable.

Key recovery measures have been identified by recent research as diversifying tourism offerings, improving cooperation with tourism boards, and developing financial management skills (Jennifer et al., 2022; Hussin et al., 2022). Furthermore, NGOs' assistance and public-private partnerships have been crucial in supporting post-pandemic resilience. It is strongly advised to enroll in programs that provide microfinance, training in tourism management, and mentorship (Ismail & Daud, 2020). Furthermore, Goh (2021) highlights that the COVID-19 pandemic is a chance to reconsider pre-existing flaws in tourism systems, particularly the over-reliance on international travel. Product diversification, inclusive planning procedures, and community resilience should be the main focuses of post-pandemic recovery plans.

Despite advancements, there is still little study that is especially suited to Sabah. Data-driven tactics and workable models that communities can embrace and modify are desperately needed. Clear guidelines on how to start and expand CBT ventures after COVID-19 are lacking in many localities, especially Kg. Tanjung Aru Lama.

Hence, to tackle this, the present study conducts a structured community survey after establishing a literature-based foundation for analyzing current issues. A conceptual CBT framework that is appropriate for local implementation in Sabah is built upon five essential domains: education and skills, financial management, social collaboration, entrepreneurship, and environmental awareness.

Table 1: Summary of Literature Review Finding

Theme	Key Literature Highlight	Implication for this research
Sustainable Tourism & Community-Based Tourism	CBT places a higher priority on local control and benefit; Sustainable Tourism involves economic, social, environmental and cultural balance.	It supports a community-led, comprehensive strategy for CBT.
Benefits of Community-Based Tourism	CBT involves social connection, cultural belonging and livelihood.	The study verifies if CBT is appropriate for Kg. Tanjung Aru Lama.
Post COVID-19 challenges	CBT operators deal with poor resilience, skills gap and financial instability.	The study emphasizes on the necessity of post-pandemic resilience plans.
CBT Recovery Strategies	CBT recovery is enhanced through collaboration, capacity expansion and product diversification.	It demonstrates the value of the research and the significance of a locally-based CBT framework.

Research Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology used to investigate the post COVID-19 impacts and challenges of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) in Kampung Tanjung Aru Lama, Sabah. The objective was to establish a conceptual framework that supports sustainable Community-based tourism (CBT) development and post-pandemic resilience. The selection of quantitative questionnaire survey allowed reliable assessment of cultural values, community preparedness and CBT participation by gathering quantifiable data from a sizable and varied sample of respondents. Stratified sampling and close-ended questions improve data accuracy and aid in the development of evidence-based frameworks (Fowler, 2014). The following provides a detailed description of the reasoning, sampling method, data collection procedure, and analytical approaches.

Research Design

The study used structured questionnaire surveys as part of a quantitative research technique. This method made it possible to gather and analyze data from a sizable sample of respondents in a methodical manner, which helped in determining patterns, connections, and community preparedness for Community-based Tourism (CBT). A quantitative design is suitable for examining trends, interpreting findings, and reaching well-informed conclusions based on statistical data, as suggested by Creswell and Plano Clark (2017). Measurable insights into the community's demographics, cultural heritage, entrepreneurial interest, financial capability, and commitment to the environment were offered by the quantitative data.

Site Selection and Justification

Kampung Tanjung Aru Lama was selected as the case study site due to its strategic location, cultural diversity, and proximity to Kota Kinabalu International Airport (Figure 2). Despite being close to the popular Tanjung Aru Beach, the village's tourism industry remains underdeveloped. In addition, particularly among the Bajau, Malay, and Chinese communities in Tanjung Aru and broader scope of Kota Kinabalu, the community maintains a strong sense of cultural identity and shows clear promise for tourism-related ventures in the selected site. According to interviews with the Tanjung Aru Kapitan and other local officials, there is a common goal of transforming the town into a Community-based Tourism destination. The above factors supported the choice of Kampung Tanjung Aru Lama as an ideal model to study the growth of Community-based Tourism in a post-pandemic setting.



Figure 2: Location of Kampung Tanjung Aru Lama

(Source: Google Earth, 2024)

Sampling Method and Population

The study's target group included Kampung Tanjung Aru Lama residents as well as individuals who have an interest in or understanding of tourism from adjacent districts such Kota Kinabalu, Putatan, Petagas, and Penampang. Stratified sampling was used in the study to ensure equal representation from a variety of regional and demographic groups. The survey was completed by 104 people in total. Due to the sample's diversity in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, occupation, and level of education, a more comprehensive understanding of the community's opinions and capabilities was made feasible.

Questionnaire Development

The questionnaire was developed based on a thorough literature review, with a focus on the opportunities and challenges in CBT in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009; Tolkach & King, 2015; Kunjuraman, 2020). A literature mapping exercise was conducted in order to identify the five theme elements that are crucial to the CBT development—education and capacity building, financial management, social networks and collaboration, entrepreneurial drive, and environmental awareness. These topics helped to align data collection with the research aim of the study and impacted the questionnaire design.

Both closed-ended and open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire, enabling respondents to offer both qualitative and structured responses. There were three primary sections to it:

Section A: Community Demographics and Cultural Heritage

Section B: CBT Challenges and Community Readiness

Section C: Future CBT Potential and Entrepreneurial Drive

For the purposes of inclusivity and clarity, the questionnaire was created in both Malay and English. Face-to-face explanations were given to respondents who were less fluent in either language to guarantee proper comprehension and response.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection was carried out over a period of four weeks. Researchers visited the site and administered the survey in person. Where necessary, informal interviews were conducted to facilitate the questionnaire for respondents with limited literacy. This hybrid approach ensured inclusivity and improved the accuracy of data collected. Ethical considerations were also adhered to; participants were informed about the purpose of the study and assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses.

Data Analysis Techniques

The study employed descriptive statistics to analyze quantitative data in order to find trends and connections (Figure 2). Respondent demographics and responses to theme components were presented using percentages and frequencies. Moreover, Babbie (2016) states that descriptive statistical techniques work well for condensing big datasets and emphasizing important discoveries. Both narrative and visual styles, such as tables and bar charts, were used to present the tabulated data.

Each section of the questionnaire was examined in relation to the research objectives:

- i) Section A captured essential demographic characteristics and documented the community's cultural identity and heritage resources.
- ii) Section B revealed key barriers and levels of readiness among community members in Kampung Tanjung Aru Lama, Sabah, to participate in CBT initiatives.
- iii) Section C highlighted the entrepreneurial aspirations of community members and their general support needs.

The final conceptual framework intended to improve CBT practices in the community was developed with input from these findings through questionnaire survey.

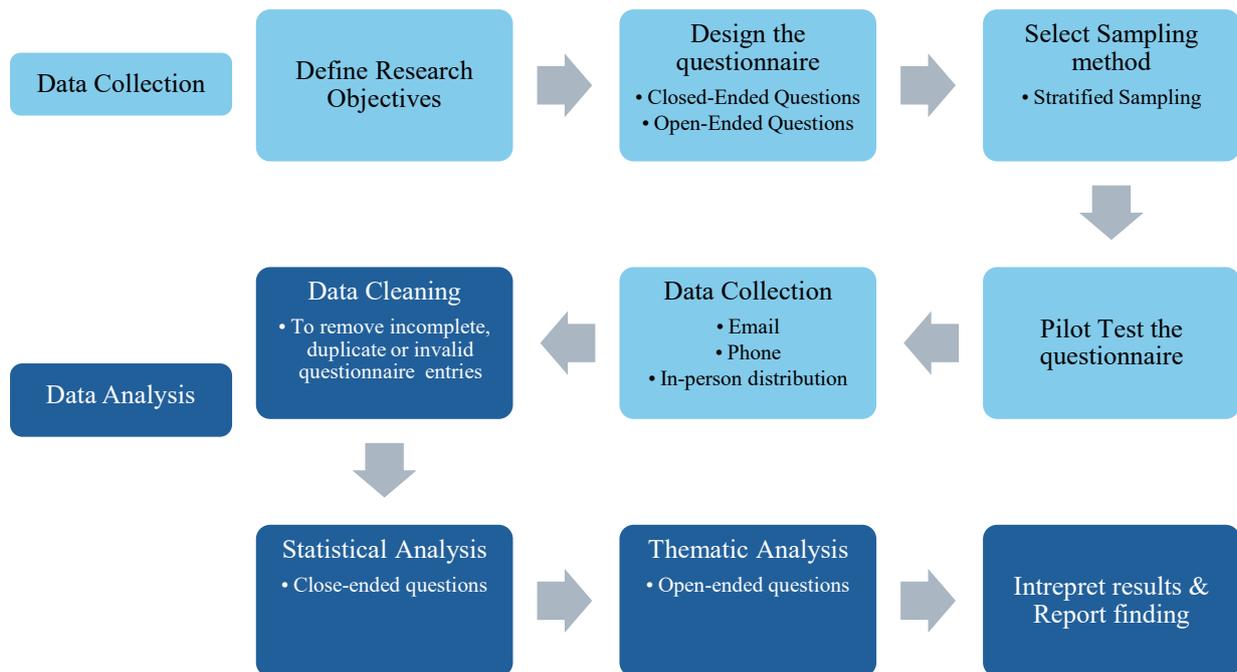


Figure 3: Summary Diagram for Stages of Data Collection & Analysis for Quantitative Questionnaire Survey

(Source: Babbie, 2016; Creswell & Clark, 2017; Fowler, 2014; Bhandari, 2020)

Result

Cultural Heritage and Community Demographics

Table 2: Respondent's Origin (n=104)

Item	Percentage (%)
Respondent Origin	
Tanjung Aru Residents	51
External respondents from KK or beyond	49

From Table 2, Out of 104 respondents, 51% lived in Tanjung Aru, while 49% came from nearby districts in greater Kota Kinabalu, including Putatan, Penampang, Likas, Damai, and Luyang. Most respondents were between the ages of 21 and 30 (37.5%), followed by those aged 31 to 40 (19.2%), indicating a youthful population that may adapt more easily to new tourism-related skills and opportunities. Ethnically, 69.5% of respondents identified as Bumiputera (including Malay and Bajau), 27.9% were Chinese, and 2.6% belonged to other ethnic groups. This diversity highlights the potential to establish multicultural tourism narratives rooted in Sabah's ethnic heritage.

Table 3: Respondents Educational Level & Languages (n=104)

Item	Percentage (%)	
Languages	Malay	94.2
	English	74
	Chinese	34.6
	Native Language / Dialect	42.3
	Others: Korean	4.8
Highest Education Attained	Primary School	15.4
	SPM	27.9
	Diploma / STPM	23.1
	Degree	29.8
	Master / PHD	3.8
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After that, language proficiency, which is crucial in the tourism industry, was reported as follows in Table 3: Malay (94.2%), English (74%), native dialects (42.3%), and Chinese (34.6%). This multilingual capability supports the community's ability to interact with both domestic and foreign visitors.

According to the survey findings (Table 3) on the respondents' education, 29.8% had earned a university degree, 27.9% had earned an SPM, and 15.4% of the respondents finished primary school. Interestingly, the majority of degree holders were under 40, indicating a younger, more educated population ready to help improve CBT. However, a sizable section of the older age lacked college education, including those running family businesses or working in services related to tourism. Since many people lack formal training in areas like investment planning, profit forecasting, and budgeting, this has led to financial issues. Furthermore, 34.6% of

respondents made less than RM2000, while 48.1% of respondents reported household incomes between RM2001 and RM4000, highlighting the need to look into CBT as an alternative way to increase income.

Table 4: Areas Of Contribution In Community-Based Tourism In Kg.Tg.Aru Lama

Item	Percentage (%)	
Areas of contribution in Community-based tourism venture	Hospitality Skills	50
	Local culture & practices	27.9
	Marketing	24
	Fishing Heritage	20.2
	Business Management	15.4
	Not Interested	24

Cultural heritages are still prevalent in the neighbourhood. Data findings from Table 4 shows 50% of respondents raised the interest to participate in community-based tourism for hospitality services, while 27.9% said they could highlight local culture sharing and educational programmes, 24% said they could support in marketing, 20.2% said they could help preserve fishing tradition, and 15.4% for business management. This demonstrates a significant preference for locally based cultural and experiential tourism.

In summary, Kampung Tanjung Aru Lama's demographic and cultural background provide a solid basis for the advancement of CBT. The young, bilingual, and culturally diverse community is ready to contribute, but in order to realize their full potential, financial constraints and educational inequalities must be resolved.

CBT Financial Challenges and Community Readiness

A significant obstacle to the growth of CBT was found to be financial. Low returns from seasonal tourism were noted by 43.3% of respondents as a major issue, followed by a lack of start-up capital by 35.6% and inadequate financial planning abilities by 31.7%, according to the questionnaire survey. Given that just 29.8% of respondents have a university degree, a sizable fraction (27.9%) has only passed SPM, and 15.4% have only completed primary school, these financial constraints are probably influenced by the educational background of the population. The lack of formal financial education among many elderly business owners, in particular, makes it difficult to control expenses and make long-term sustainability plans. Financial assistance, such as grants or loans from the government or tourism board, would also boost community participation in CBT, according to 67.3% of respondents.

In terms of social capital, 75% of respondents emphasized the importance of local collaboration, while 60% viewed collaboration with government stakeholders as a crucial initial step in establishing a CBT venture. However, only 30% expressed confidence in current leadership capabilities, indicating a potential leadership gap. Additionally, 55% supported partnerships with external tourism operators or NGOs, showing a readiness to collaborate and learn from broader networks. These results highlight the critical need for focused financial aid and capacity-building initiatives to promote community financial management and literacy.

Although there are leadership and financial obstacles, the community has a strong sense of teamwork, environmental awareness, and a desire to learn new skills. Kg. Tanjung Aru Lama has a great chance to develop a robust and community-driven tourism model with proper training interventions and funding.

Additionally, respondents showed an understanding of the environment, with 60% supporting marine conservation education and 65% voicing concern about environmental deterioration caused by tourism. However, there is a need for community training as just 30% of respondents expressed confidence in putting environmental conservation strategies into practice.

Table 5: Community Skill Development for Community-Based Tourism in Kg.Tg.Aru Lama (n=104)

Item	Percentage (%)	
CBT Skills development preferences	Hands-on training / mentorship	65.4
	Peer-to-peer learning from other CBT Venture	37.5
	In-person workshops / seminar	30.8
	Government-organised programme	11.5
	NGO sponsored education initiatives	11.5
	Online courses / webinars	1.9

From Table 5, The community's interest in experiential learning is reflected in the preferred training methods, which include in-person workshops (30.8%), peer-to-peer learning (37.5%), and hands-on training and mentorship (65.4%). These preferences imply that experiential and locally relevant approaches should be used in capacity-building initiatives.

Future Community-Based Tourism Potential and Entrepreneurial Drive

Additionally, the survey data indicates that Kg. Tanjung Aru Lama has a great deal of entrepreneurial potential. The questionnaire survey results in Table 6 highlights 48.1% of respondents expressed interest in selling craft-related goods and souvenirs, 43.3% in providing guided tours, and 41.3% in promoting local cuisine and F&B services when inquired about their desired CBT-related business endeavours. These numbers demonstrate a clear preference for tourism experiences that prioritize genuine local interaction and cultural immersion. Nevertheless, only 17.3% of respondents were interested in managing homestays, whilst 12.5% were interested in selling seafood products. This could be due to operational capacity issues or current housing and fishing limitations.

Table 6: Entrepreneurial Opportunities and Support Initiatives for Community-Based Tourism in Kg.Tg.Aru Lama (n=104)

Item	Percentage (%)	
Viable entrepreneurial opportunities in Kg.Tg.Aru Lama	Crafts related product/ souvenirs	48.1
	Guided Tour	43.3
	Local cuisine and F&B	41.3
	Homestay	17.3
	Seafood products	12.5
Entrepreneurial support initiatives	Mentorship from experienced tourism operators	39.4
	Partnerships with international or national tourism agencies	39.4
	Training & workshops on tourism management	34.6
	Financial support / subsidies for new business	15.4
	Networking opportunities with other entrepreneurs	13.5
	Access to government incentives or tax breaks	12.5

There are still a number of obstacles in the way of this anticipation. Due to a lack of market access, financial resources, and business experience, confidence in launching a tourism business is still low. The fact that just 20.2% of respondents chose business management as their anticipated contribution to CBT suggests that there is a lack of local capability for organizing and running tourism-related businesses.

Other than that, results in Table 6 shows 39.4% of respondents recognized the value of forming alliances with travel agencies, while 39.4% of respondents underlined the necessity of receiving mentorship from seasoned operators as an entrepreneurial support mechanism. 34.6% of participants preferred training and workshops on tourism management, indicating that the community is willing to participate in capacity building given the appropriate tools. Furthermore, although they were not as preferred as mentorship and institutional relationships, support structures including financial subsidies (15.4%), access to tax benefits (12.5%), and networking with other entrepreneurs (13.5%) were also seen as helpful.

Notably, younger respondents showed the strongest entrepreneurial motivation, especially those between the ages of 31 and 40. Additionally, this demographic is the most educated and tech-savvy, which may help with creative company concepts and tech-savvy tourism strategies like online reservations and promotion.

In summary, Kg. Tanjung Aru Lama possesses strong entrepreneurial potential, especially among its young people, and it is focused on cultural crafts, curated tours and food-based experience. More extensive support systems, particularly in the areas of partnerships, business

training, and mentoring, are necessary to help ambitious entrepreneurs create resilient and successful tourism businesses if this potential is to be fulfilled.

Discussion

In order to promote Community-Based Tourism (CBT) in Kampung Tanjung Aru Lama, this chapter synthesizes the significant findings from the questionnaire data analysis and develops a conceptual framework. The five main themes are:

1. Education and Capacity Building
2. Financial Management
3. Social Networks and Collaboration
4. Entrepreneurial Drive
5. Environmental Awareness

The themes above were taken from the literature mapping and primary survey data served as the foundation for the framework's development. Below is a discussion of each element, backed up by a strategic intervention plan and justification from the survey data.

Summary of Key Community-Based Tourism Themes and Strategic Interventions

Table 6 provides a thorough overview of the main themes discovered through the survey and literature review, emphasizing the primary challenges the Kampung Tanjung Aru Lama community faces in creating a long-lasting CBT model. These themes reflect crucial area in Community-based Tourism which in need of calculated actions. Quantitative results from the questionnaire are compared with particular community concerns for each theme, and then suggested solutions are presented forth to deal with the problems in a realistic, locally based way.

The necessity of a multifaceted approach to CBT development that is based on a actual community needs is reaffirmed in this strategic brief. Every theme serves as a growth pillar, guaranteeing that CBT in Kg. Tanjung Aru Lama tackles innovation, sustainability, economic viability, education, and cooperative governance all at once. Effective CBT development requires a balanced, thematic approach, as the summary in Table 7 demonstrates. Simultaneously addressing sustainability, entrepreneurship, education, money, and collaboration guarantees that community initiatives are robust and realistic. Other than highlighting out the obstacles, these themes also establish the course for long-term strategic planning.

Table 7: Summary of Key Community-Based Tourism Themes and Strategic Interventions

	Theme	Key Challenges Identified	Questionnaire Survey Findings	Proposed Strategy
1.	Education & Capacity Building	Low practical tourism skills, generational gap	65.4% prefer hands-on training	Peer-to-peer workshops and practical tourism training
2.	Financial Management	Lack of capital and planning skills	43.3% cite seasonal profit loss; 67.3% request financial aid	Government grants + financial literacy programs
3.	Social Networks & Collaboration	Weak leadership and need for collaboration	75% value local teamwork; 60% prefer government partnerships	Leadership development + stakeholder engagement
4.	Entrepreneurial Drive	Low confidence in starting business	39.4% want tourism mentorship	Incubators for local food, tours, and crafts
5.	Environmental Awareness	Low conservation skills despite concern	65% worry about degradation; only 30% confident in conservation	Marine education, cleanup initiatives, eco-tourism campaigns

Conceptual Framework for CBT Development in Kg. Tanjung Aru Lama

The 5 main themes listed above are included into a detailed plan for community-based tourism conceptual framework. This concept is designed to maximize the community's strengths while addressing the main issues that have been identified. The objective is to boost capacity, promote local ownership, and create a resilient and sustainable tourism industry that can be extended to other parts of Sabah.

1. Stakeholder Engagement and Community Mobilization: Start by assembling a CBT task group composed of elders, young representatives, and local leaders. To create alliances and a governance framework, interact with the local government and tourism boards.
2. Capacity Building Programs: Use effective, hands-on techniques that the community prefers to implement focused skill-building courses on marketing, hospitality, environmental preservation, and tourism business management.
3. Financial Empowerment: Establish community-based savings plans, grants, and microfinance programs to empower regional business owners and lower capital obstacles.

4. **Product Development and Innovation:** Support the creation of distinctive tourism offerings by locals, such as craft markets, homestays, guided village tours, and cultural events.
5. **Environmental and Cultural Preservation:** To preserve natural and cultural resources, organize frequent cleanups, create marine protection zones, and spread awareness through educational initiatives.
6. **Monitoring and Feedback Loop:** To evaluate development, gather input, and improve CBT techniques over time, set up an internal monitoring system.

As a result, this conceptual framework provides a strategic blueprint that addresses current community demands while guaranteeing continuity and flexibility for future expansion. It empowers residents by emphasizing their strengths and gives them the skills and framework they need to effectively manage and improve CBT strategies.

Implementation Plan for CBT Conceptual Framework

Table 8 presents the implementation strategy, which describes how each of the CBT framework's thematic components will be converted into practical actions with quantifiable outcomes. This table helps to visualize a clear and achievable path for community-led tourism development in Kg. Tanjung Aru Lama by providing a basic timeline for each activity.

The conceptual framework is converted into a workable plan by the structured timeline in Table 8. It guarantees a methodical approach to each component and the assured, adaptable, and long-term community-benefit-focused implementation of the CBT vision for Kg. Tanjung Aru Lama.

All in all, the residents of Kg. Tanjung Aru Lama has the fundamental resources needed to establish a successful CBT business, as this chapter's discussion has demonstrated. The community is in a strong position to become a model of resilient and sustainable tourism in Sabah after COVID-19, provided that targeted interventions and support systems are put in place. This conceptual framework offers a clear, community-driven way forward that may be scaled and modified for use in other coastal and rural areas throughout the state of Sabah.

Table 8: Implementation Plan for CBT Conceptual Framework in Kg. Tanjung Aru Lama

Component	Proposed Actions	Expected Outcome	Estimated Time frame
1. Education & Training	Skill-based workshops, mentorship	Community gains CBT knowledge and confidence	0–6 months
2. Financial Tools	Microloans, grants, business planning	Sustainable local enterprises	3–9 months
3. Collaboration	Create CBT committees, form gov't partnerships	Improved governance and coordination	0–12 months

4.	Tourism Product Innovation	Promote homestays, tours, cultural events	Income diversification, stronger identity	6–12 months
5.	Environmental Stewardship	Eco-awareness programs, recycling	Preserved natural assets, responsible tourism	Continuous, starting from month 3

Conclusion And Recommendations

To sum up, the aim of this study was to develop tourism conceptual framework for community-based tourism's (CBT) sustainable expansion and post-COVID-19 resilience in Kampung Tanjung Aru Lama, Sabah. The research objectives were successfully achieved by assessing the socioeconomic impacts of CBT on local communities, identifying significant obstacles for the CBT operators and creating a conceptual framework tailored to the local environment to improve business profitability and sustainability in Kg.Tg.Aru Lama. The study used a thorough quantitative methodology that included literature mapping and structured questionnaire surveys to assess the impact of CBT, identify issues that local communities face, and suggest a conceptual framework that improves community involvement and tourism business viability.

According to the key findings from the study, the community of Kg. Tanjung Aru Lama has promising foundational assets, including a rich cultural heritage, coastal attractions, and a strong willingness to participate in CBT entrepreneurship. Remarkably, 70% of respondents said they would like to support tourism-related initiatives, with 50% concentrating on hospitality services, 48.1% on craft-based businesses, and 43.3% on guided tours.

However, the community also has significant obstacles to overcome. Financial issues were apparent, as 35.6% of respondents pointed out a lack of start-up money and 43.3% cited low profitability as a result of seasonal tourism. Additionally, a sizable section of the older business community did not have a higher level of education, which makes financial planning and business sustainability more challenging.

The study suggests a comprehensive, community-driven CBT framework that integrates environmental awareness, product development, financial instrument access, and capacity-building initiatives to solve these issues. This framework, which is discussed in Chapter 4, provides a detailed implementation strategy supported by mentorship opportunities, local government, and systematic monitoring methods.

The study has major implications for Sabah's community-led tourism planning, stakeholder participation, and policy development. It illustrates the importance of systematic intervention and inclusive engagement in overcoming the vulnerabilities revealed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Other rural or semi-urban towns looking to expand or revitalize existing CBT programs can use the findings as a guide.

Nevertheless, there are several limitations on this study. The depth of understanding of the lived experiences and motives of specific community members is limited by the dependence on quantitative data. Furthermore, the case study's specific focus on Kg. Tanjung Aru Lama may

limit the framework's applicability to other locations in the absence of contextual modifications. Qualitative interviews should be a part of future studies that examine the long-term effects of CBT strategies. Future studies should employ qualitative approach and long-term observation to further understand the community dynamics and evaluate the efficacy and scalability of the suggested CBT framework in other parts of Sabah.

In conclusion, Kg. Tanjung Aru Lama may act as a replicable model for the growth and expansion of CBT in Sabah. The study encourages community leaders, tourism authorities, and policymakers to support inclusive, locally tailored tourism frameworks that put shared prosperity, sustainability, and resilience first.

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