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**SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY-BASED  
ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT MECHANISM:  
OAXACA AND PUEBLA CASES IN MEXICO**

**MECANISMO PARA EL DESARROLLO SOSTENIBLE  
DEL ECOTURISMO COMUNITARIO:  
LOS CASOS DE OAXACA Y PUEBLA, MÉXICO**

**Naotaka Hirami**  
Kagawa University, Japón

**Martha Rosa Hidalgo Morales**  
Kagawa University, Japón

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## Sustainable Community-Based Ecotourism Development Mechanism: Oaxaca and Puebla Cases in Mexico

Naotaka Hirami <sup>1</sup>

[hirami.naotaka@kagawa-u.ac.jp](mailto:hirami.naotaka@kagawa-u.ac.jp)

<https://orcid.org/0009-0007-1889-630X>

Kagawa University

Japón

Martha Rosa Hidalgo Morales

[hidalgo.martha@kagawa-u.ac.jp](mailto:hidalgo.martha@kagawa-u.ac.jp)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2526-9490>

Kagawa University

Japón

### ABSTRACT

This research intends to identify the processes and factors of Community-Based Ecotourism (CBET) development in indigenous communities, focusing specifically on the states of Oaxaca and Puebla, Mexico. Six different CBET initiatives were investigated. Two methodologies were used for data collection. One approach involves conducting in-depth interviews with community representatives to potentially refine the hypothesis from prior studies and preliminary fieldwork. The other approach uses a questionnaire for the quantitative validation of the hypothesis. The findings revealed core factors influencing CBET success, such as deep community pride, an active community-centered approach, management skills, and the integration of ecotourism with traditional lifestyles. Surprisingly, communities demonstrated a willingness to embrace government support as a pivotal catalyst in the initial phases of CBET endeavors. This openness is influenced by specific national laws that endorse and safeguard indigenous autonomy, ensuring that accrued benefits are retained within the community. This study underscores the delicate balance between heritage preservation and a thoughtful acceptance of modern progress, offering valuable insights to CBET.

**Key words:** community-based ecotourism, indigenous communities, sustainability, CBET development factors

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<sup>1</sup> Autor principal.

Correspondencia: [hirami.naotaka@kagawa-u.ac.jp](mailto:hirami.naotaka@kagawa-u.ac.jp)

# Mecanismo para el Desarrollo Sostenible del Ecoturismo Comunitario: Los Casos de Oaxaca y Puebla, México

## RESUMEN

Esta investigación tiene como objetivo identificar los procesos y factores clave en el desarrollo del Ecoturismo Comunitario (CBET) en comunidades indígenas, con un enfoque específico en los estados de Oaxaca y Puebla, México. Se analizaron seis iniciativas distintas de CBET, utilizando dos metodologías de recolección de datos. Primero, se realizaron entrevistas detalladas con representantes comunitarios para ajustar la hipótesis propuesta a partir de estudios previos y observaciones de campo. Posteriormente, se aplicó un cuestionario para validar cuantitativamente dicha hipótesis. Los resultados revelaron factores esenciales para el éxito del CBET, como un fuerte sentido de orgullo comunitario, un enfoque participativo centrado en la comunidad, habilidades de gestión eficaces y la integración del ecoturismo con el estilo de vida tradicional. De manera inesperada, las comunidades mostraron una disposición a aceptar el apoyo gubernamental como un catalizador crucial en las fases iniciales de los proyectos de CBET. Esta apertura está influenciada por leyes nacionales específicas que respaldan y protegen la autonomía indígena, asegurando que los beneficios generados permanezcan dentro de la comunidad. Este estudio subraya el delicado equilibrio entre la preservación del patrimonio y la adopción consciente del progreso moderno, ofreciendo valiosas perspectivas para el CBET.

**Palabras claves:** ecoturismo comunitario, comunidades indígenas, sostenibilidad, factores de desarrollo del CBET

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## **INTRODUCCIÓN**

The tourism industry plays a crucial role in the global economy, accounting for about 10% of the world's Gross Domestic Product. As stated by the World Travel & Tourism Council (2022), this level of participation involves 10% of the global population. These figures highlight tourism's broad impacts on society and the environment.

In recent years, there has been a noticeable shift from traditional mass tourism to more sustainable models (Baloch, et al., 2023, Mudasir, et al., 2020, Salman, et al. 2020, Lazic, S., & Gasparini, M.L., 2023). A prominent example is community-based ecotourism (CBET), which emphasizes local communities. However, CBET's growth is uneven, with some regions experiencing swift development while others lag. This disparity suggests underlying factors influencing its success.

This report aims to clarify the position of CBET through an overview of prior studies. Later, we address the research question: "What factors drive local community members to form successful CBET?" Our approach involved field research focusing on specific regions of Oaxaca and Puebla, Mexico, chosen for their blend of indigenous communities, cultural heritage, and abundant natural resources. We performed qualitative interviews with community coordinators and quantitative questionnaires directed at community members involved in local ecotourism.

### **Legal Protection of Indigenous Rights**

Examining Mexico as an example, indigenous rights are stipulated at both the federal and state levels. At the federal level, there exists the "National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples Act" (Ley de la Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas, 2003). At the state level, for instance, the "Law on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Communities of the State of Oaxaca" (Ley de Derechos de los Pueblos y Comunidades Indígenas del Estado de Oaxaca, 1998) can be cited. These laws address self-determination, autonomy, and socio-economic development for indigenous peoples. Specifically, in the case of Oaxaca, each indigenous community is recognized to have its own "internal normative system". These internal norms, related to family relationships, civil life, community life, and conflict resolution, are valid as long as they do not contradict state or federal laws.

Local governments must fairly distribute funds and other revenues among municipality communities. Development plans and programs are formulated and evaluated in agreement with indigenous communities, with activities and services executed transparently and efficiently, including budget allocations.

### **Important factors applicable to CBET**

Rodrigues and Prideaux (2017) conducted interviews on Marajó Island in the Brazilian Amazon to build a model based on an action pathway approach. Their findings indicated that participation, partnerships, encouragement, and the acquisition of skills are important elements in developing CBT, which is a core component of CBET, stating:

“...transfer of ownership from an external actor to the community will only be successful if the community has the required management skills necessary to run the project as a commercial business.”

Fletcher C, et al (2018), on the other hand, discusses the factors influencing successful indigenous tourism development through literature review of selected cases and interviews with key government & non-government organizations, indigenous tourism organizations and operators. A detailed technical development process has been summarized with detailed enabling factors, concluding:

“...the effectiveness of governance structure and the level of involvement of Indigenous stakeholders as well as the selection of legislative and policy instruments are key to ensure a more sustainable approach to Indigenous tourism development, ...”

Sartika, I. and Wargadinata, E. (2019) attempted to clarify the specific requirements by identifying CBT success factors in Indonesia, highlighting six key determinants: ownership, participation, responsibility, sharing of resources, leadership and partnership based on the simple Yes/No survey of stakeholders involved in CBT management. They concluded that the first three factors—ownership, participation and responsibility are the important factors.

The prior researches mentioned above indicate that involvement of indigenous stakeholders to CBT development with required management skills is essential for CBT development, and a number of factors play an important role; however, simpler explanation of the development process with enabling factors, which can be applicable to general cases, is yet to be addressed.

Successful Cooperative Association case for CBET



Takeda (2017) studied the effectiveness of a CBET case in Costa Rica, focusing on the cooperative association Coopesilencio R.L., established by the residents of the wildlife-rich El Silencio region. After a national wildlife conservation center was closed due to government policy, Coopesilencio R.L. received authorization to operate at the intersection of conservation and tourism initiatives. Consequently, El Silencio emerged as a popular tourist destination, with the sustainability of its tourism operations tied to environmental conservation efforts. This case suggests that the cooperative association involving local community members would be effective for sustainable CBET development. It is assumed that such associations empower communities by enabling input at every decision-making stage concerning managements of local operation, touristic activities, environmental preservations (Toko, 2014).

These cases demonstrate that local cooperatives often oversee successful CBET initiatives rather than individual stakeholders or external entities. Also, these cooperatives can sustainably and equitably tackle poverty and conservation challenges in unison. By providing essential services and educational opportunities, CBET can have positive effects beyond tourism, fostering broader economic development and societal well-being.

### **Research Question**

While there has been extensive research on CBET establishments, the factors identified so far span across different stages or provide specific explanations, making them partial and unclear in illustrating the overall connections. This research aims to uncover the variables that shape the entire CBET journey, from its inception to its evolution into a sustainable industry. By adopting a stage-oriented approach, this study addresses the earlier research question: “What factors drive local community members to form successful CBET?”

### **Pride and its Impact on Cooperative Formation**

The term “pride” consistently emerges in various prior studies. Having pride in the place where one is born and/or lives naturally motivates the preservation of its nature and culture. Based on an extensive review of the literature, Guerrero-Moreno, M.A. and Oliveira-Junior, J.M.B. (2024) describe CBT as follows:

“CBT constitutes a type of tourism that focuses on environmental, social, and cultural sustainability. ... used as a tool for rural growth .... As a result of these incentives, many CBT programs in developed countries have evolved into community-based enterprise development.”

Furthermore, the concept that indigenous pride associated with a desire to preserve environmental, social, and cultural sustainability drives cooperative organization is generally supported in community-based tourism (Usmonova, et al., 2022)."

#### Participation of Local Community Members in the Management of CBET

Building on the understanding of pride and motivation as central themes in the previous section, we focus on another critical element in CBET – the participation of local community members. To explore this aspect further, one of the authors, Hiramí, N., visited Uakari Lodge in the Mamirauá Reserve, Brazil, and conducted a preliminary study (Hiramí, N., 2021). The findings are summarized as follows:

Uakari Lodge is famous for the presence of red-faced "Uakari" monkeys exclusive to this region. This unique establishment, which floats on the Amazon River, offers many activities like trekking, bird watching. Guests can also visit the indigenous communities within the Mamirauá Sustainable Development Reserve, gaining insights into their way of life. The indigenous inhabitants are encouraged by the opportunity to host tourists and are invariably warm and welcoming with a pride of their community.

Ecotourism activities at Uakari Lodge seemed well-established and managed. Much of this success can be attributed to the Mamirauá Project, initiated in 1992 to promote ecotourism. While funded by the national government, the organization operates autonomously, positioning it as a quasi-governmental agency.

Building upon the establishment and management of Uakari Lodge, there is a strong emphasis on its relationship with the local community. As mentioned on their homepage (Uakari Lodge, n.d.):

“Most of the employees are from the riverside communities, from management to local guides, housekeepers, cooks and assistants. The Lodge's team works on a rotating basis - each person works an average of 10 days a month and then returns home. The objective is that there is no dependence on tourism and that they can continue to exercise their traditional activities.”

This policy shows Uakari Lodge's commitment to balance. While the lodge requires varied roles, it ensures that community members can maintain their regular lifestyles. This approach supports local employment, strengthens the community's economy, and preserves traditional activities. It also provides a buffer against the unpredictability of tourism, as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic. This adaptable employment model emerges as a cornerstone for the lodge's sustainable operations.

With these practices in place, further insights were sought. A semi-structured interview was conducted on-site with the lodge manager on October 22, 2019, highlighting the following key strategies:

**Incentive Program for Local Communities:** For every overnight guest at the lodge, 60 Reais (October 22, 2019) is accrued throughout the year. This amount is later distributed to the communities based on their contribution, which are measured in points. This system encourages community members to collaborate, fostering unity and pride within the community.

**Transfer of Operating Entity:** Currently, eight non-indigenous staff employed by the Mamirauá Institute for Sustainable Development run the lodge. In addition, more than 20 employees from the local community work in three rotating shifts. Remarkably, nearly 90% of the lodge's operations are already managed by indigenous locals. By 2022, the goal was to transition 100% of the lodge's operations from the institute to the local community<sup>(†1)</sup>.

This strategic incentive program provides practical education and training to local community members, equipping them with a sense of ownership, responsibility, and the necessary skills. It also instills pride in their heritage, encouraging them to actively engage in ecotourism, which in turn strengthens community bonds.

Given these insights, Uakari Lodge's approach to ecotourism emerges as a potent model for establishing CBET that fosters active local community involvement.

#### Development Factors and Their Relationship

Based on the observation mentioned above, one of the authors, Hirami, N., hypothesized specific development factors (Factors 1 to 4) and their interrelations for the sustainable CBET, as illustrated in Figure 1<sup>(†2)</sup>. Recognizing and understanding these factors may make replicating and expanding CBET models in various communities feasible. Each factor is characterized as follows:



Factor 1: Community pride/Motivation for the maintenance of nature and culture – driving the community to establish local cooperative associations.

Factor 2: Cooperative association establishment – providing an avenue for members to be actively involved in all decision-making and operational phases.

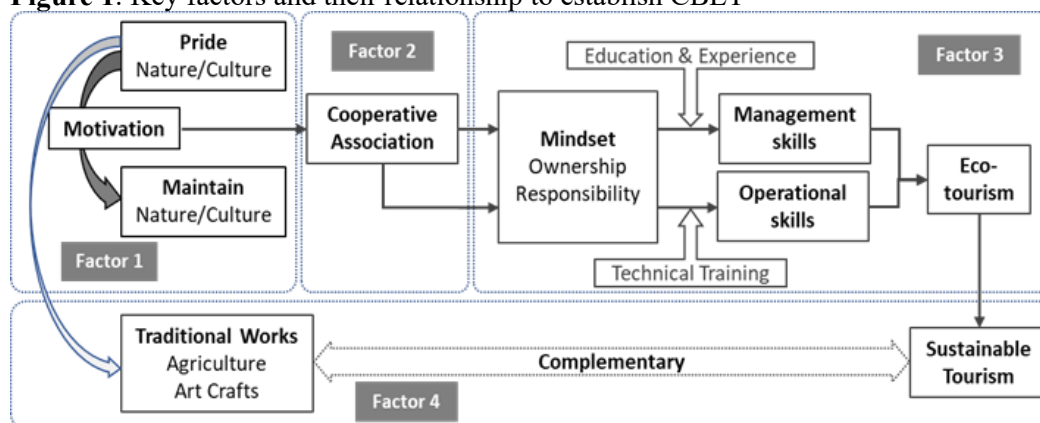
Factor 3: CBET management and operational skills – ensuring ecotourism is operated and overseen by community members.

Factor 4: Ecotourism as a complementary activity – preserving traditional occupations and lifestyles while integrating them with ecotourism initiatives

( † 1) Due to the pandemic, tourism activity seems to have stopped for a few years, and the transition plan.

( † 2) The concept of Factors 1 to 4 was originally presented in the “Second Trilateral Symposium on SDGs” at Kagawa University on 30 August 2023 by one of the authors, Hiramí, N., and have been updated.

**Figure 1:** Key factors and their relationship to establish CBET



## METHODOLOGY

To validate the hypothesis presented earlier, we selected the states of Oaxaca and Puebla in Mexico as our investigation sites for CBET, searching for a compelling combination of factors. These states harbor a substantial part of Mexico's indigenous population, with 14.4% residing in Oaxaca and 9.1% in Puebla (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía [INEGI], 2020), hosting three major indigenous groups: Nahuas, Mixtecs, and Zapotecs (Instituto Nacional de los Pueblos Indígenas [INPI], 2020). Moreover, Oaxaca and Puebla rank among the top 5 states recognized for their high biodiversity, prompting conservation efforts by the Mexican government to safeguard their rich ecosystems (Comisión Nacional para el Conocimiento y Uso de la Biodiversidad [CONABIO], 2011, 2022).

We examined six distinct CBET initiatives, three in each state, as outlined below. Notably, communities

① to ⑤ are situated along the Sierra Norte mountain region in Oaxaca, and all are affiliated with the "Pueblos Mancomunados" (PM) initiative.

Locations visited in Oaxaca includes:

- ① Cuajimoloyas (PM initiative)
- ② Benito Juárez (PM initiative)
- ③ La Nevería (PM initiative)
- ④ Latuvi (PM initiative)
- ⑤ Capulalpam (PM initiative)
- ⑥ El Almacén Mujeres Milenarias
- ⑦ Apoala

Locations visited in Puebla:

- ⑧ Taselotzin Hotel
- ⑨ Cuetzalan Ecoturismo Rural
- ⑩ Tosepan Kali Cooperative

### **Two Separate Methodologies**

In this research, two complementary methodologies were simultaneously conducted, one being in-depth interview to a representative of each community, and the other being face-to-face questionnaire survey to the people involved in the local CBET on-site. The first methodology aims to investigate the potential update of the hypothesis presented earlier with representatives such as community coordinators or their equivalents in a semi-structured style wherever they are available during our visits.

The second one is to validate the hypothesis quantitatively. We distributed questionnaires to actively engaged CBET members, such as tour guides, tourist information staff, transport drivers, restaurant workers, and housekeepers. We used a quantitative approach with a 5-point Likert scale to gather valuable insights about their perspectives. For further details on the questionnaire content, refer to [Q.1] to [Q.32] described in Figures. 2 to 10.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The interviews with community representatives revealed valuable insights into motivations, cooperative characteristics, and CBET activities in five selected projects. We delve into the distinctive dynamics of each project below, providing a deeper understanding through the coordinators' perspective.

### **Pueblos Mancomunados**

*Pueblos Mancomunados*, a project comprising eight Zapotec communities, is a remarkable model of regional development and CBET (Palomino et al., 2016, Rosas-Baños et al., 2016).

*Benito Juárez*, a pioneer in CBET activities since 1994, provides tourists with nature, adventure, and rich social and cultural experiences. Coordinator Mr. Nelson Ceballos, highlights the project's commitment to preserving nature and traditions by intertwining communal activities with responsible tourism. As the project expands, Mr. Nelson plans to reinvest profits for service enhancements. Notably, despite receiving government funding for cabin construction, the community autonomously managed funds. They have been self-sufficient for over two decades and have received environmental certifications.

*La Nevería*, the smallest town among Pueblos Mancomunados, is also in a strengthening phase. Coordinator Engineer Gaudencio Yescas pointed to preventing migration and cultural loss as the original motivation of the project. The main attractions and the infrastructure were carefully planned to reduce environmental impact. He underscored the success of Pueblos Mancomunados, highlighting the project's uniqueness rooted in preserved Zapotec traditions. This aligns with previous reports on the influence that pre-existing experiences of collective organizing in rural communities have on the success of CBET (Kieffer, 2019). We noted that this feeling is widespread. Therefore, community pride comes from their cultural and historical roots as a Zapotec people and is reinforced by sharing CBET responsibilities.

We also spoke with the general manager of *Expediciones Sierra Norte*, the tour operator owned by the communities and led by Lic. Angelina Martínez Pérez. She shared insights into the project's foundation, organization, cooperative structure, benefit distribution, activities, and statistics, affirming the motivations stated by Eng. Gaudencio. The cooperative encourages community involvement through rotating jobs (*tequio*), enhancing training and administrative capability. This structure ensures efficient

profits return to the communities and supports reinvestment. Lic. Angelina emphasized autonomy and internal governance, even with early government support, reflecting a preference for limited external intervention.

### **Mujeres Milenarias**

Mujeres Milenarias is a women's cooperative positively impacts 40 Mixtec families devoted to pulque production across three municipalities and six towns in Nochixtlán, Oaxaca. Focusing on guided tours, pulque production and palm handicraft workshops, they also implement soil and biodiversity conservation measures.

Tourism activities began in 2019, but today, they face challenges such as a lack of basic infrastructure, setbacks related to the pandemic, and continued development needs. Although they received government funds for pulque production equipment, CBET activities lack direct financial support. Their long-term plans include 1) seeking governmental funding to construct lodges and a pulque museum and 2) using their collaboration with tour operator *Rutopia* (González, R.O., et al., 2023) for promotion. They aspire to carve a niche as a destination preserving pulque traditions, adding a distinctive layer to their CBET activity.

### **Hotel Taselotzin**

In Cuetzalan, *Hotel Taselotzin* embodies the synergy between cultural preservation and economic sustainability. This hotel is managed by the artisanal women's cooperative, "*Mujeres tejiendo nuestra historia*," comprising 55 female members from six Nahuatl communities to preserve culture, language, and handicrafts. This cooperative exemplifies profit-sharing and reinvestment practices, ensuring standard salaries for their members, training support, and emergency reserves.

The cooperative received early financing (1995-1997), a loan from the federal government (now repaid), and the UN World Food Program. Moreover, they underwent training from the INPI, acquiring expertise in cooperative administration and indigenous rights, which they, in turn, shared across generations. The cooperative owns the land, and much of the profit is reinvested. Hotel Taselotzin offers diverse experiences embracing ecotourism to preserve and share cultural richness.

## **Cuetzalan Ecoturismo Rural**

Shifting our focus to the emerging neighborhood project led by Mr. Miguel Ayala Rosario, we encounter a nascent initiative in the highlands of Cuetzalan. This agrotourism-centric endeavor aims to provide unique experiences through themed routes dedicated to coffee, native bees, artisanal cane sugar (piloncillo), and culinary immersion.

Mr. Miguel underlines the project's educational essence and holistic approach to sustainable tourism, exemplified by the implementation of dry toilets and the attainment of certifications as cultural ecotourism interpreters by their guides. Their target audience primarily includes adults and young adults, aligning with the goal of raising awareness about nature and local Nahua culture. They intend to create a cooperative and build lodging zones, underscoring the long-term vision of this emerging CBET initiative.

## **Tosepan Kali**

*Tosepan Kali*, a branch of the broader *Tosepan* cooperative, specializes in bioscaping, agrotourism, guided tours, spa services, and conservation initiatives. Stemming from the necessity to provide accommodation during cooperative meetings, this initiative comprises 16 members and operates with five rotational staff members annually through the traditional practice of “collective community service” (*tequios*). Initial financing from INPI and bank loans facilitated its creation, leading to financial independence.

A cooperative representative provided insights into their well-organized structure, challenges, and future aspirations, aiming for community survival. Despite robust organization and better infrastructure, ongoing challenges persist in management, marketing, promotion, and sales. Their strategy involves decentralizing services and establishing an ecotourism network with central hubs in nearby municipalities.

## **Common Observation from In-depth Interview**

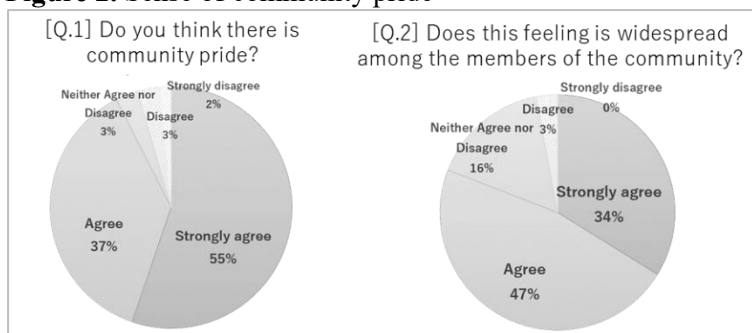
We observed common elements contributing to the success of the studied CBET projects. State laws ensuring autonomy in fund management, decision-making through periodic assemblies, and fair task distribution via *tequios* are consistent practices. Significantly, CBET activities align with the communities' primary economic activities, emphasizing a harmonious balance. Unity and cultural pride

emerge as crucial factors, with indigenous traditions playing a pivotal role in CBET's success. This interconnectedness underscores the delicate balance between tradition and progress in indigenous communities' pursuit of sustainable ecotourism.

### Insights from the Questionnaire with Community Members

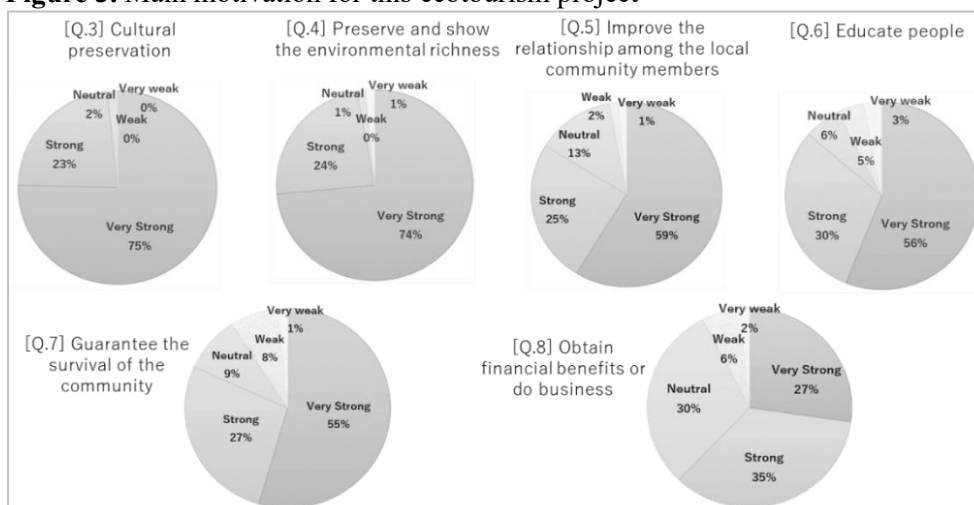
The questionnaire consisting of 32 questions for community members revealed valuable insights, which are summarized in Figures 2 to 10 (The questions are described in each figure, which presents a common theme). These findings shed light on factors contributing to community pride, motivations for participation, and the effectiveness of management and operational practices within the CBET initiatives.

**Figure 2.** Sense of community pride



Regarding pride and motivation, which are among the proposed key factors for establishing CBET, responses to Questions 1 and 2 (abbreviated as [Q.1] and [Q.2] in Figure 2) indicate that most respondents believe there is a sense of community pride. This sentiment is widespread among community members.

**Figure 3.** Main motivation for this ecotourism project

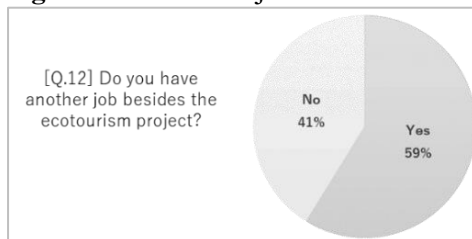


Meanwhile, responses to [Q.3] to [Q.8] in Figure 3 suggest that various motivations exist for CBET. The primary motivations are the preservation of environmental richness (response to [Q.3]) and cultural heritage (response to [Q.4]), followed by ensuring the community's relationship, education and survival (responses to [Q.5] to [Q.7]). Notably, financial benefits and business considerations [Q.8] are less valued as motivations. The responses to [Q.9] and [Q.10] (Figure 4) indicate that community members are involved in ecotourism development and decision-making processes. The response to [Q.11] further confirms that community members are empowered in the management and operation of CBET.

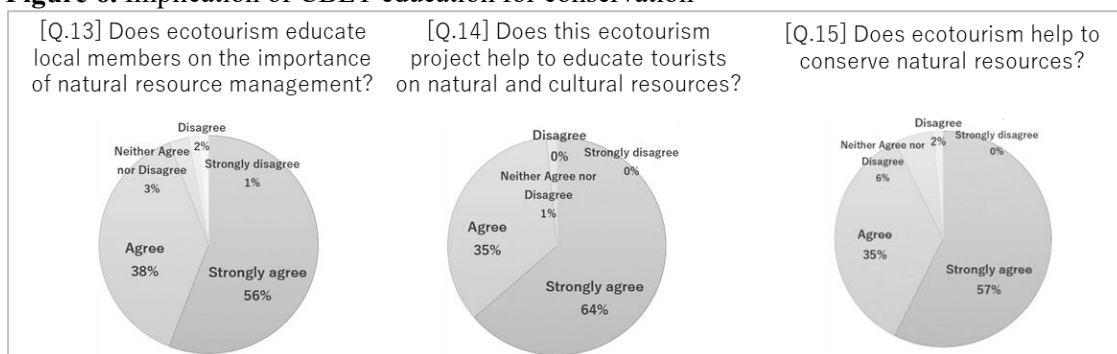
**Figure 4. Ecotourism activity empowerment**



**Figure 5. Additional jobs**



**Figure 6. Implication of CBET education for conservation**

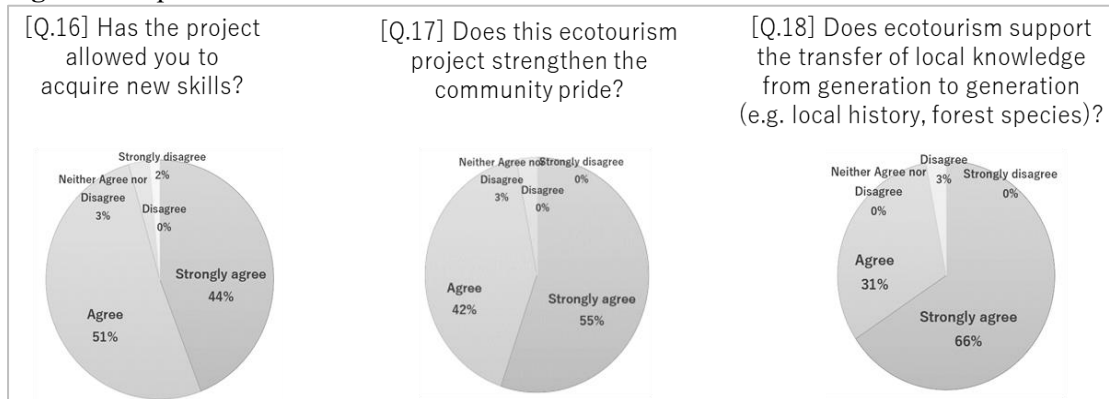


It is worth noting that approximately 60% of the community members have another job besides their involvement in the CBET project as the response to [Q.12](Figure 5) indicates.

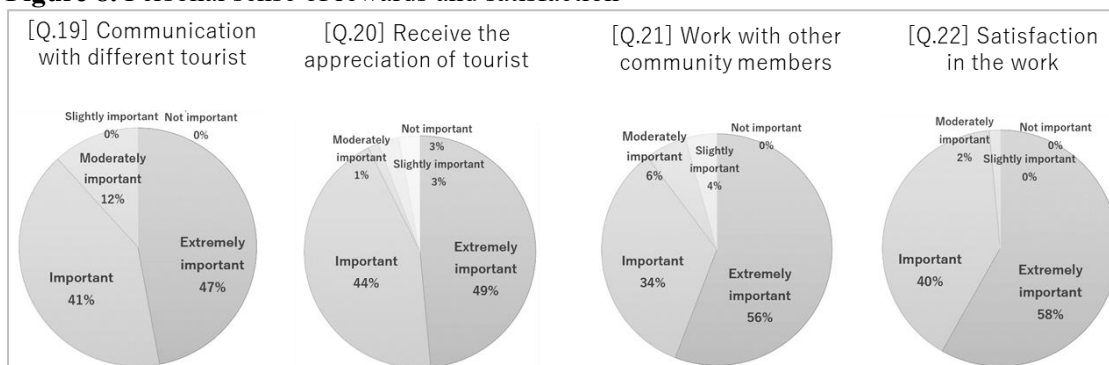
Responses to [Q.13] to [Q.15] (Figure 6) suggest that ecotourism helps educate both the local people and the tourists about the importance of natural resource conservation, contributing to its actual

conservation. Additionally, local individuals believe that acquiring new skills and reinforcing community pride are added social benefits as the responses to [Q.16] and [Q.17] in Figure 7 indicate. Specifically, they feel that this project aids in passing down local knowledge, such as local history and forest species, from one generation to the next as shown in the response to [Q.18].

**Figure 7. Implication of CBET on individuals**



**Figure 8. Personal sense of rewards and satisfaction**



Regarding personal rewards for participating in CBET (Figure 8), most local members view communication with tourists (response to [Q.19]) and the appreciation they receive for their work (response to [Q.20]) as significant rewards. Also, collaborating with fellow local members (response to [Q.21]) and deriving satisfaction from their work (response to [Q.22]) are perceived as valuable rewards.

**Additional factor**

Indigenous communities often have a strong desire for independence and autonomy. As such, they prefer to avoid having government involvement in their projects, aiming to avoid external control. However, they often lack the resources to set up CBET facilities like lodges. Without these facilities, their activities could be limited, and success might be elusive. Despite these sentiments, successful CBET projects, such as Pueblos Mancomunados in Oaxaca and Taselotzin Hotel in Puebla, often receive support from local governments or equivalents, particularly in the early stages of the project, as



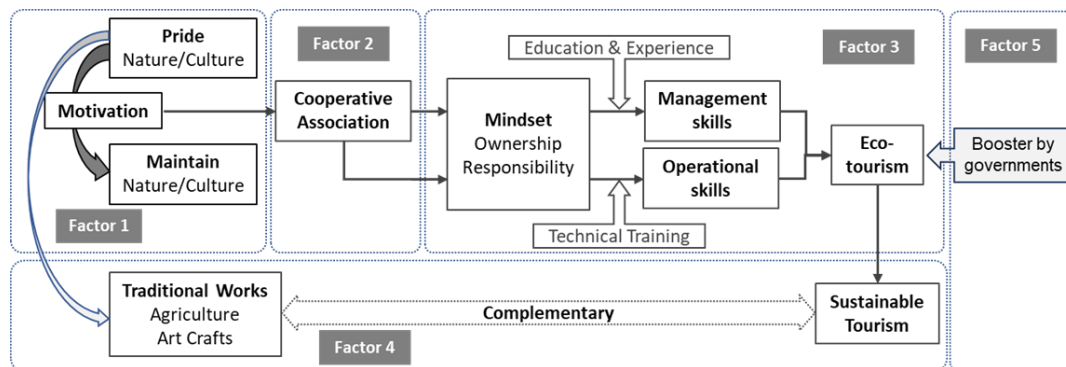


highlighted above.

This support is grounded in national and local laws that ensure indigenous communities can autonomously manage budget allocation and project implementation, aligning with their internal needs and desires.

This kind of government support is regarded as a process booster, which should be defined as the fifth factor, as depicted in Figure 9.

**Figure 9.** Factor 5 addition to the key factors for the CBET establishment



## CONCLUSIONS

This research delves into delicate dynamics in the context of CBET establishment. Initially, we conducted in-depth interviews with community representatives to potentially refine our hypothesis; then, aimed to validate the hypothesis about the key elements driving CBET through questionnaires.

One of the noteworthy findings in this research was the unexpected openness of communities to seek and receive government support, primarily economic. This contrasts with the initial assumption that such support would compromise their autonomy. Federal and state laws guaranteeing funding without sacrificing sovereignty are functioning and vital to this process. CBET projects usually receive these funds at an early stage, and as they grow, management structures are established in the community independently. Such was the case of Benito Juárez and Hotel Taselotzin. This transition enhances communal pride, fostering autonomy and self-sustainability. Indigenous communities appear to navigate the delicate balance between preserving their heritage and adapting to modern society.

Field research and data demonstrate that communities neither rush nor intend to replace ancestral

practices with tourism entirely. Instead, they seek a balance between the two activities. CBET, therefore, primarily revolves around preserving the community's environment, culture, and traditions—not merely as a business endeavor but as a means to sustain their unique way of life while guaranteeing their livelihood through conventional work.

In short, these communities are making wise choices. They are honoring their past while thoughtfully stepping into the future. It is a blend of culture, conservation, and commerce, providing insights that need to be widely remembered and applied.

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