Assessing the Relevance of Community Participation in Local Tourism Activities

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*Abstract-***This research attempt to find the level of community participation in the tourism industry at the micro level. Due to the sensitive nature of the research mixed method was used since each correct the anomaly of the other to make it a whole. The analysis was conducted by using descriptive statistics and mean for quantitative method whilst individuals who were opinion leaders were interviewed through recording and later transcribed. The results of the study revealed that as the tourism industry of Ghana becomes more formalized and institutionalized, more local community members gain exposure and proper insights to develop an in-depth understanding of its economic base and potentials. Alsothe results demonstrate that governance and local community's participation are important component of the tourism development in every community.**

*Keywords***: Community, Tourism, Participation, Government and People**

I.   INTRODUCTION

The importance of Tourism has been highlighted by lots of researchers and academicians all around the world.World Travel & Tourism Council(WTTC, 2019)affirms domestic tourism as the key catalyst for action, accounted for about 73 percent of total global Travel and Tourism spending in 2017 (WTTC, 2019).

Recent studies have revealed that efficiently managed, domestic travels can significantly help address seasonality in tourist's flows and help disperse prospective tourists to less-visited areas, which are almost always overlooked by foreign visitors (Rogerson, 2015a and 2015b).

It may also serve as a catalyst for community upliftment, and foster community pride (Godfrey & Clarke, 2000; Weaver & Lawton, 2010), or even increasing income for residents (Sharma , Dyer , Carter & Gursoy, 2008) and encouraging the creation of more infrastructure to accommodate the number of visitors (Simpson, 2008; Godfrey & Clarke, 2000)

Alternatively, when poorly managed, the industry can induce adverse outcomes such as a decline in traditions and values (Cooper & Hall, 2008), materialism (Godfrey & Clarke,2000), as well as increasing crime rates (Kim &Petrick, 2005; Godfrey & Clarke, 2000), and social conflict (Andereck, Valentine., Knopf & Vogt 2005).

The industry's ability to generate positive developmental impulses on decision making is dependent on its numerous stakeholder in different sectors of the tourism industry with different interests. Such intricacies have made the benefits of tourism become a subject of continuous debates, particularly in the global south, where the more impoverished communities are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation (Kreag, 2001).

II.   STATEMENT PROBLEM

Tourism is one particular industry that is doing well at the national (macro) level and having most academicians and researchers concentrating in this sector while almost ignoring the more laudable sector such as local communities (micro)level where most indigenes operate.Importance of tourism in the service industry is obvious as it greatly influencestourist intensions whereasnon involvelment of local indigines in tourism decision making has been seen as a primary reason for low tourism paticipation. Satisfied local tourist are most likely to share their experiences with other five or six peoplearound them.Equally well, dissatisfied local tourist are more likely to tell another ten people about their unfortunate experienceswith a particular tourism activities. In order to achieve high tourism participation, local communities must play a role in tourism development. Although, previous research has attempted to examine the link between (a) local communities and tourism development and (b) local communitiesand people intensions to patronize tourism services but there are still lack of research in tourism industry to investigate this relationship especially in thecontext of Ghana.Therefore, current research study attempts to examine the relevance of community participation in local tourisms activities.

III. OBJECTIVES

To examine whether the effect of communityparticipation in local tourism activities is influenced by Government, management, metro assembly, regulations, and local authorities.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Community Participation in Tourism Development

Undoubtedly, one core element of local tourism development is encouraging local participation since it is central to its sustainability. Put differently, sustainable tourism development strives for a viable, long-term economical operation. It must provide socioeconomic benefits that are fairly distributed to all stakeholders. These include stable employment and income-

earning opportunities and social services to host communities, all of which may contribute to poverty alleviation. Although community participation in tourism development in developed economies has been well-discussed (Sharpley, 2002; Tosun, 2006), the literature suggests that little emphasis is given to how local communities themselves participate and feel about their role in tourism development. There is also little evidence, especially from the grassroots, on what their role(s) are in the industry. Yet, some studies (see Timothy, 1999) had shown that community participation in tourism concentrate on their involvement in the decision-making process and how the accruing benefits can be shared and enjoyed by them.

Technically, that tourism creates employment and income for the local community and serves as a tool for conserving the environment, heritage, and building infrastructure has been long articulated. The challenge however is how to conceptualize a community in developing a tourist destination (Scherer 1972). Thus, Scherer (1972:1) opines that "despite constant usage, the 'word' community remains an untidy, confusing, and difficult term." With its antecedent from the Latin word communitas, Mitchell (1968:32) defines community to comprise of people who occupy a geographical area, engage in economic and political activities, and virtually constitute a self-governing social unit with common values and experiencing feelings of belonging to one another.

Borrowing from Mitchell's definition, a community can be conceptualised as a group of people endowed with demographic, geographic, economic, and political dimensions, creating an autonomous, self-rule social unit, strengthened by shared values and experienced feelings of belongingness. In the words of Poplin (1979: 8), a "community refers to the places where people maintain their homes, earn their livings, rear their children, and carry on most of their life activities." According to Lewis and Lewis (1979: 30), a community as "a place where individuals interact with one another and receive the greater part of their physiological, psychological and social needs." On their part, Singh et al. (2003:7) see a community as: "a set of people living together, symbiotically bound to each other and their habitat, thereby rendering themselves a distinct collective personality."

Over the years, the concept of community has been researched in the form of case studies in most tourism literature (see Price, 1996) rather than being defined. In most cases, the tourism field researchers refer to communities as locals, natives, residents, indigenous people, destination people, and hosts. They place much emphasis on the term host and its complexity within the tourism context. Swarbrooke (1999) suggests that the term involves geography, ethnicity, demography, governance, stakeholders, and the community's power structure. Tosun (2006:19) defines a community as: "… an area of the common territory where the aggregation of individuals intends to their whole life, rear their children, share the basic condition of life, have almost no choice to live in an alternative territorial unit and thus, have to live with whatever the outcomes may be of tourism development". Thus, from a tourism perspective, a tourist destination community bears all the characteristics of a community. However, one significant difference is that it has to accept tourism activities' impacts since it provides tourism services to tourists.

As noted by Jones and Tang (2005: 3), tourism as a business model has "unique [products] characteristics differentiating them from manufactured products." These characteristics include but are not limited to intangibility, perishability, inseparability of production and consumption, heterogeneity, and interdependence. From the tourist industry perspective, all consumers enjoy the place's offerings or consume its products and services. Depending on how these are managed, these unique features can positively and negatively impact the local community (Adu-Ampong, 2017). Thus, if policymakers want to use tourism as a development tool, local community participation must be indispensable.

In the words of Midgley et al., (1986:13), "the idea of participation is an ancient one finding expression in the cultural traditions and practices of small preliterate societies and the writing of ancient sages and philosophers." Arnstein (1969: 216) further remarks: "it is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future. It is the strategy by which the have-nots join in determining how information is shared, goals and policies are set, tax resources are allocated, programs are operated, and benefits like contracts and patronage are parceled out".

Per his definition, Arnstein advocated for the have-nots to be included in the political and economic process and have the power to allocate resources and distribute benefits. The feasibility of this, Arnstein acknowledges, is contingent on instituting social reform and the ruling elites' political willingness. In practice, this is a challenging feat to achieve in developing economies because, in those countries, power lies with a few groups of people who may resist any significant change regarding redistributing power

(also see, Adu-Ampong, 2017; Obeng, 2018).

Different arguments have emerged regarding the scale and scope of community participation in tourism (Dei, 2000. Murphy (1985:165) argues that the local community who live in the tourism destination bear the main impacts of the industry (whether positive or negative), adding; "the industry uses the community as a resource, sell it as a product, and in the process affects the lives of everyone". Contributing, Inskeep (1991) opines that the host community's maximum involvement would maximize their socioeconomic benefits and limit its negative social impacts (Pearce, 1994). In Dei (2000) opinion, community involvement in tourism development helps create entrepreneurial opportunities for the residents. It engages them in development related decision-making processes, including the socio-cultural and environmental consequences associated with tourism.

Tosun (2006) outline seven arguments to support the necessity of community participation in tourism. First, they argue that community participation is a crucial component in implementing tourism plans and strategies. Second, that, sustainable tourism development can be achieved; Third, that, tourists' satisfaction can be increased; Fourth, that, better tourism plans by tourism professionals can be facilitated; Fifth, that, fair distribution of costs and benefits among community members; Sixth, local identity needs can be satisfied; and Finally, that, the democratization process can be strengthened in tourist areas. In most cases, community participation tends to be erroneously assumed as homogenous by nature, but empirical studies have shown that there is heterogeneity within communities, resulting in various attitudes towards tourism (Mason and Cheyne, 2000; Iroegbu and Chen, 2001).

In reality, divisions of class, status, and power within the community exist, and these differences do create difficulties in integrating the community into tourism activities.

In this regard, Tosun (2006) claims that it is sometimes challenging to implement community involvement in tourism development in developing economies. It stands to reason that local community participation in tourism development is a pre-requisite if communities want to gain benefits. However, the meaning and goal of the participants might vary according to the socio-political and economic structure. Midgley et al. (1986: viii) say that "community participation is not a simple matter of faith but a complex issue involving different ideological beliefs, political forces, administrative arrangement and varying perceptions of what is possible."

In most developing countries, the tourism industry is mostly developed and controlled by multinational companies, including chain hotels and tour operators who usually have little interest in local socio-cultural and economic conditions (Adu-Ampong, 2017; Obeng, 2018). The developing countries tend to depend on the wealth and expertise from developed economies to build their local tourist industry (Obeng, 2018). Consequently, the developed economies do enjoy control over the industry in the global south. In this regard, Mitchell and Reid (2001:114) argue that "local people and their communities have become the objects of development but not the subjects." Timothy (1999) points out that where an autocratic power system prevails, grassroots involvement in tourism activities is discouraged.

Conclusively, ignoring the local community and its condition might delay and even demise many central government policies and projects (Oteng-Ababio, 2018; OtengAbabio et al., 2020). Murphy (1985:153) also says that tourism "relies on local people's goodwill and cooperation because they are part of its product. Where development and planning do not fit in with local aspirations and capacity, resistance and hostility can destroy the industry's potential altogether". Liu (2003) points out that the more benefits communities gain from tourism, the more they will be interested in preserving destination resources and supporting tourism activities. Swarbrooke (1999) opines

that increased local participation in tourism planning facilitates raising the voice of those affected by impending developments and helps policymakers use local knowledge in decision-making to reduce potential conflicts between tourists and the host community. All forms of local participation might not help achieve the community's expected benefits, and it can take many forms ranging from autocratic participation to citizen power (Arnstein, 1969).

Arnstein (1969) offers a typology of citizen participation, which includes eight participation levels classified among three categories relative to the extent of citizen's power. The lowest category represents non-participation; the highest refers to citizen power, and the middle indicates degrees of citizen tokenism. The lowest category includes two rungs of the ladder: manipulation and therapy. In the manipulation and therapy participation process, people are not encouraged to participate. The main objectives are to educate, cure, and get support from the participants about the project. Arnstein (1969:218) says: instead of genuine citizen participation, the bottom rung of the ladder signifies the distortion of participation into a public relations vehicle by power-holders.

The middle category includes three rungs of the ladder: informing, consultation, and placation. In the informing process, people receive information about their rights, duties, and opportunities from the power-holders. Most of the time, communication occurs from the power-holders at a later stage in the planning process. The process of communication is one way, and people usually do not have the opportunity to convey their thoughts and views. In the consultation process, power-holders consult with people through attitude surveys, neighborhood meetings, and public hearings.

In the placation process, power-holders nominate or choose a few people from the community to participate in the decision-making process. They want to show that the local community can influence planning and decision-making processes and demonstrate that local community participation has been addressed. The extent to which people are placated depends on two factors: their ability to articulate their priorities and the extent to which the community puts pressure on those priorities. In most cases, people incorporated in the decision-making process do not have the required qualities to influence the process, or the power-holders outnumber them.

The highest category represents degrees of citizen power, including three rungs of the ladder: partnership, delegated power, and citizen control. In the partnership process, power is redistributed between power-holders and the community through negotiation, and both parties share planning and decision-making responsibilities. In the delegated power process rungs, the community wants to play a dominant role in decision-making over a project. In contrast, in the citizen control process, they enjoy full power to run a project. In the latter case, no other authority interferes with the decision-making process, and the community possesses the rights and responsibilities to operate a project. Arnstein's (1969)

typology of community participation is developed in development studies, and these are not related to any particular sector of the economy.

However, Tosun's (2006) typology is specifically designed for tourism and, in its community participation, is classified into three headings: spontaneous, coercive, and induced community participation. Spontaneous participation represents an ideal community participation model through full managerial participation and authority from the host community side. Induced participation allows the local community to hear and be heard as they can express their voice. Yet, this level of participation does not give any assurance that their recommendations will be considered. Coercive participation is manipulative and represents the lowest participation level, where powerful interest groups try to educate the local community to minimize potential threats to tourism development.

V. METHODOLOGY

This research work was to find out community participation in tourism at the micro level to know the actual effects at that level than the already documented macro level as the 4th exchange earner for this country. The researchers adopted descriptive statistics, which used mixed method (qualitative and quantitative), quantitatively 459 respondents were interviewed based on Gary et at (2009) whilst 50 were used qualitatively. Data was obtained through selfadministered questionnaires and they were accessed on the basis of simple random sampling. Close-ended questions were used. The data collected from the questionnaires was sorted, coded, captured and edited for analysis.The researchers made use descriptive formsof simple tables for data presentation to fully give a clear picture of the trends in the data obtained from questionnaires.

VI. FINDINGSAND ANALYSIS

1.4 The Level of Community Participation in Local Tourism Industry.

The researcher examines the level of the host community's personal assessment of their direct or indirect involvement in the local tourism industry. In Accra, the Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum was the focus, while the emphasis in Cape Coast was on the Castle. These were selected due to their standings and unique significance in the Ghanaian political economy. Also, after the initial key informant interviews in the two research locations, it became evident that each of the selected tourist site was unanimously appreciated and patronized by many citizenries in these locations. These monuments were not only appreciated, but most interviewees recounted their importance, prospects and potentials for facilitating local economic development.

Figure 4.3 presents participants' assessment to their general involvement in the management or decision-making process in their communities' tourism industry and activities. From the findings, only about 30% of the respondents agreed that there is some level of local people participation in the local tourism industry. Further, about 32% of respondents on the other hand strongly disagreed that the community members were ever involved in any decision-making process regarding the tourism industry in the community. It is equally instructive to note that about 21% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. It can thus be inferred that almost half (53%) of respondents disagreed with the statement. In other words, about half of the respondents denied any community involvement in the development and management of the tourism potentials in their respective communities. It thus implies that while these respondents reckon the tourism potentials in their community, they however, do not see how the local community is involved in the development of these facilities.

Figure 4.3: Respondents' perceived level of involvement in local tourism
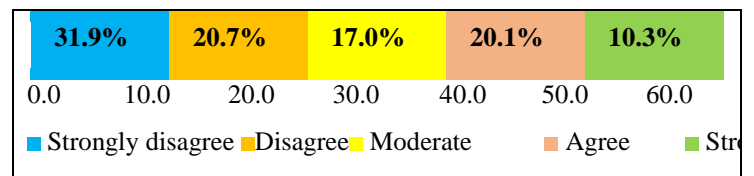
Source: Fieldwork (2018)

The above results confirm an observation made during the stakeholder interviews. From the interactions, it was noted that central to an understanding of the effects and the level of community participation in the tourism industry depends on a clear understanding of what "tourism" and "tourist" mean to people there. The interviews revealed that there are varying conceptualizations of these terms, which inevitably clouded how respondents appreciate their roles.

As discussed previously, when large-scale tourism was introduced in the 1980s, the government, through the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA), made a point of educating the public regarding what tourism and tourists were (Government of Ghana [GoG], 2012). Emphasis was placed on tourists being "guests" visiting the forts and castles, and indeed, other tourist attraction destinations in the country who "will have made friends with the local people" by the time they leave. Additionally, the tourism authority was also advised as to what they might expect the tourists to do and buy, how the tourists would behave, the effects of tourism on the host communities, and the residents' potential role in the tourism industry (Government of Ghana [GoG], 2012).

Despite this national policy initiative, the key stakeholder interviews revealed that there were many misconceptions about tourism. Substantially, most interviewees [7 out of every 10 respondents] in the two research locations continue to refer to tourists, not as a "European" or, in its more literal sense, "Whiteman - Oburoni," irrespective of the person's mission in the community, which can vary. Hence, most interviewees [8

out of every 10 respondents] in the two communities, with their wider exposure to tourists, tend to conceptualize tourists more by Western definitions (Obeng, 2018; OtengAbabio, 2018). They understood that tourists were consumers who paid for the goods and services provided, including, to a certain degree, the commercialization of interpersonal relationships. There was a perception that tourists are always "on holidays" Still, participants found it difficult to differentiate between 'holidaymakers' from other non-indigenous groups such as resident ex-patriates, volunteers, researchers, and even military personnel. As a respondent noted;

[…] tourism is nothing... In most cases, most 'White people' come here in the quest to get away from the cold weather in their country; they come and have some freedom and enjoyment.

In Cape Coast, most of the stakeholders unsurprisingly had a clearer conceptualization of what tourists and tourism were, as indicated by an interviewee, a 35-year old trained teacher and a native of the town;

"...in recent years, a lot of people have caught up with the idea that tourists are paying. Most people prepare several artworks for sale to those who visit the castle. This is their main livelihood, and that has been used to keep their families floating".

The observed results and the commentary from Cape Coast are not particularly unexpected. Generally, apart from being relatively homogenous (traditional society), with limited industries and other employment-oriented activities, most people are compelled to create work for themselves. Empirically, Cape Coast is one of the poorest regions (occupying the 4th position as at 2016) in the country so those involved directly in the tourism sector, for the most part, treated it as a "hospitality industry." They had also recognized that reciprocity in this situation takes the form of payment for goods and services. They concede that there were no expectations for future reciprocity.

Another important finding was that despite the apparent Western conceptualization of tourism and tourists, there was still evident, even in Accra, that the concepts were not wholly etic, particularly amongst those not involved directly in the tourism industry. A 44-year-old female proprietress of a popular food joint in Osu (Accra), whose remark was a microcosm of others interviewees, described tourists as "visitors." She added that tourists are people who should be met, enjoyed, and be genuine recipients of the Ghanaian hospitality, with no explicit expectation of remuneration in exchange. Comments such as the following which were very common typify the lack of clear conceptualization.

Tourists are essential for the economy. It's [...] probably better to make friends with them. If you treat them humanly and with affection, some will never forget you. If you go to their land, they'll welcome you, as you've welcomed them. We must strive never to exploit them; and, even a major tourism operator, Cape Coast, also stated that,

The 'Whites' are not tourists; they're visitors [...] they're here to spend the money for enjoyment [recreational activities] and talk to some locals. In recent times, some of our people are [...] being part of the tourists' families.

From the results, it can be inferred that for the majority of the participants who are not directly involved in the tourism industry, they see "tourists" as a separate category of non-indigenous people, who are just "consumers of hospitality". To these respondents, the appreciation of overall, the results show that the tourists as "visitors" or "guests" of the community also mark their ability to fully unpack the full prospects of the industry. They indeed have basic or minimal understanding or appreciation of the consumer nature of tourism in both locations. Thus, in addition to possibly moderating the real effects of the industry on the local economy, the uncertain conceptualization may equally affect the validity of some of their responses. As the data shows, any person visiting the various research communities has deemed a tourist irrespective of the purpose.

As indicated earlier, participation comes in different forms and stages. This tendency for wrong conceptualization of tourism can also complicate attempts to determine the level of community participation in the industry and how it impacts on the local economy. Consequently, for this study, community's involvement in the tourism industry refers to the citizens' ability and capacity to engage positively in public management affairs. This involvement is not merely through participating in voting and other democratic-based processes which keep policymakers accountable to the public interest, but, more significantly, by taking part in decision-making that would ultimately respond more proactively to citizen concerns (Ricciardelli, 2018). During the data collection process, a number of Likert scale questions were asked to ascertain respondents' involvement in the local tourism development within their respective communities. Table 4.2 provides a descriptive analysis of local communities' level of participation in tourism activities in their community.

The mean score (M=1.59 SD=1.086) for that question suggests that members of the local communities disagree that the government was a distance away on matters relating to the planning of tourism activities, at the Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum and the Cape Coast Castle in Accra and Cape Coast respectively. The second question or variable indicated that respondents disagreed that they participated in tourism activities in the local community (M=2.32 SD=1.421). Further, the third question shows that the respondents had a moderate view on how well the Metro Assemblies are doing. That is to say; most respondents think that they are not doing too bad neither are they doing well (M=2.47 SD=1.325). The table further presents other interesting results. These included the "existence of regulations that allow the local communities to be part of tourism management"; that, "there are the local

communities to be part of tourism management" and that, "local authorities are involved in tourism planning".

Table 4.2: Areas of Local Community Participation

Variables	Definition	Mean	Std. Deviation
Government	Government consult community representatives in tourism planning	1.59	1.086
Management	Local communities participate and are involved in tourism management	2.32	1.421
Metro Assembly	Metro Assembly is doing an excellent job to protect the tourist attraction sites.	2.47	1.325
Regulatory	Regulations exist that guarantees local communities' participation	2.66	1.260
Local authorities	Local authorities are involved in tourism planning	3.20	1.108

Source: Fieldwork (2018)

Overall, the results indicated that respondents had moderate views on their involvement in their local tourism industry. Important insight that can be inferred from the study is that local participation in tourism activities can at best be described as poor. Put differently, the results showed that local communities are rarely allowed to be involved in tourism management and decision making. Perhaps this might be attributed to public servants' continuous erroneous insistence that most management duties require specific skills and knowledge that local communities may not have or lack the capacity to do so (Ricciardelli, 2018). This position also manifests in respondents' perception that local assemblies are rather solely responsible for managing local tourism development

(Acheampong, 2006).

The findings contradict the results of prior studies which abundantly show that the most powerful force propelling the local governance paradigm forward is citizen participation (Ricciardelli, 2018; Grant et al, 2019). Such paradigm of shared governance implies the host community has an important role to play in ensuring the sustainability of any tourism development at the local level. There are enough reasons to believe that shared values in the community influence attitudes, behaviour, and relationships between individuals (Oteng-Ababio et al, 2020).

The results make it important to consider the local as much as understanding of tourism and the pivotal role of the community. This is imperative not because of it affects the validity of the research (as discussed previously) but more importantly, the understanding of tourism may also temper perceptions of the respondents of the possible effects on the local economy as well. The lack of a proper conceptualization does not necessarily have to result in negative consequences; it may also result in quite positive outcomes in some instances. The belief that tourists are "friends" or "guests" interested in the culture and people of a destination could reinforce self-esteem and cultural identity. However, this depends on the tourist (e.g., is the tourist genuinely interested in the culture and the people or is s/he simply looking to escape or "looking for a bargain"?).

The host community need to match the intentions of the tourist, otherwise, the consequences may be negative, with the locals feeling taken advantage of or the tourist feeling imposed upon. This realization helps local communities to engage and participate in the management of tourism affairs not merely through participating in voting and other democratic-based processes but, more significantly, by taking part in decision-making that would ultimately respond more proactively to citizen concerns (Ricciardelli, 2018). This disparate situation was alluded to by the assemblyman at Osu (Accra) who stated:

The community is blessed with many attractions, which attract many people from far and near, but I am not very sure how the community participates in the management or even benefits. From the look of things, the local people will come to a stage where they will realize that there are too many take-ups and not enough to give. That can negatively affect the industry when we get to that bridge.

A tour guide at the Cape Coast Castle also had this to say about those who sell artifacts and crafts around the facility:

These people [referring to these who sell crafts and artworks at the facility] are an integral part of the industry. Their arts and artifacts, more or less, serve as the institutional memory of the history of the castle as well as the people, their culture, social transformations, and other practices. Unfortunately, they are left to operate independently as if they are not part of the industry. This is a public responsibility. The role of the local community must be properly mapped out and integrated into the whole industry.

VII. CONCLUSION

Most of the key informants interviewed related to the above observation. In their considered opinion, the stage of tourism development and the type of tourist frequenting a destination is contingent on instituting proper and efficient governance structure, which guarantees effective local community participation and the safety and comfort of all tourists. They argued that as the tourism industry becomes more formalized and institutionalized, more local community members gain exposure and proper insights to develop an in-depth understanding of its economic base and potentials. Though at the early stages the residents lacked consistent and pervasive exposure to the industry's potentials, and have as yet to acquire a clear understanding of its purposes and capacities, once that deficiency is overcome, they tend to feel marginalized and therefore tend to revolt at times violently (Acheampong, 2006). The foregoing discussions demonstrate that governance and local community's participation are important component of the tourism development in every community. This is consistent with earlier studies which have argued that local

community participation in the management of tourism must respond more proactively to citizen concerns (Ricciardelli, 2018; Oteng-Ababio et al., 2020).

In conclusion, the positives far outweigh the negatives so stakeholders and government must do more to make the industry laudable for all

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