

Perceptions of Community-Based Tourism Among Locals at Al Kasfah Hot Spring, Oman

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of the study was to examine the benefits that community-based tourism (CBT) can bring to Ain Al Kasfah Hot Spring; to investigate locals' perception of implementing community-based tourism at Ain Al Kasfah Hot Spring and to identify the factors influencing locals' perception of community-based tourism at Ain Al Kasfah Hot Spring.

Design/methodology/approach: Primary data was collected for the research through questionnaire surveys. A sample of 50 locals from the community of Ain Al Kasfah hot spring was collected. The sampling method chosen was random probability sampling.

Findings: It was found that community-based tourism provides locals with sources of income, creates jobs, brings authentic experiences to tourists, aids infrastructural development, and protects the environment. CBT contributes to the 'three pillars of sustainability', generating economic, environmental, and social benefits, and locals generally hold positive attitudes towards it, which can help the governmental bodies to support community-based tourism in rural areas. Further, results show that 'Awareness of CBT by the community' is the only factor that has influenced the 'Perception of the community towards CBT'.

Research Implications: This study will help the community in Al Kasfah Hot Spring understand the potential of CBT. Furthermore, planners that want to develop tourism at Omani hot springs can also use the results of the study to understand the community's perception and follow more sustainable approaches to tourism development. This research will assist governmental bodies in finding methods of tourism development that will overcome the concerns of locals regarding water distribution.

Originality / Value: This study contributes to CBT research by exploring the perceptions of residents in Al Kasfah Hot Spring, Oman—an under-researched destination. Unlike previous studies that focus on tourists or economic impacts, this research highlights local perspectives, ensuring alignment with community aspirations for sustainable tourism development.

Keywords: Community-based tourism (CBT), Infrastructure development, Perception of Community towards CBT, Hot Spring Tourism, Awareness of CBT by the community, Mass Tourism.

Introduction

Undeniably tourism is one of the most profitable and fastest-growing industries around the world. In 2023, tourism contributed to the overall global GDP by 9.1% with an increase of 23.2% from 2022, and accounted for 9.1% of the total employment, supporting 27 million new jobs around the world (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2023). Tourism is a part

of the major economic sectors worldwide. Coming after fuels and chemicals, it is the third-largest export category ([UN Tourism, 2020](#)). However, the same industry has negative impacts including communities' displacement and relocation as well as the disruption of destinations' economic systems ([Giampiccoli et al., 2022](#)). According to [Greslikova \(2024\)](#), the traditional model of tourism divides income between the agency, the mediator, and the locals. The locals, who possess the skills and knowledge to provide tourists with an authentic experience, often receive the least benefits.

[Scheyvens \(2002\)](#) stated that due to mass and luxury tourism, large-scale leakage occurs. It often happens when companies that are tourism-related are based in a country outside the destination or owned by a foreign country. As a result, income coming from economic activities is not available for reinvestment within the same destination. [UN Atlas of the Oceans \(2016\)](#) adds that usually, the least developed countries do not get benefits from tourism despite their need for employment and income. 80% of travelers' expenditure does not go to local workers and businesses but to hotels, airlines, and other international companies. In Thailand, 70% of tourists' money is leaked outside through airlines, hotels, and tour operators. The same occurred in the Caribbean with 80% of leakage and 40% in India. In addition, out of every US\$ 100 spent on a vacation tour by a developed country tourist, US\$ 5 only remains in the economy of a developing-country destination. [Giampiccoli et al. \(2022\)](#) acknowledged that growing economically is not enough to fight poverty and inequality. There must be strategies that address local people, especially the disadvantaged ones. Here is where the role of Community-based tourism (CBT) comes into play.

Community-Based Tourism (CBT)

According to [CBI \(2023\)](#), CBT is the tourism activities that local communities manage and host. Such activities and experiences generate direct economic advantages and are often sustainable. The purpose of CBT is to allow visitors to learn about the lifestyle and culture of locals. Such tourism allows communities to establish small-scale businesses. CBT's goal is to reach sustainable economic, environmental, cultural, and social development, thus improving the overall living conditions of the locals. [Denman \(2001\)](#) defined CBT as the kind of tourism that the community has a hand in and is involved in its development and management. A large proportion of its benefits stays in the community. [De Oliveira & de Castro Cardoso \(2021\)](#) acknowledged that CBT is a democratic type of tourism that places local communities at the center of tourist activities' planning, implementation, and monitoring. CBT often takes place in rural areas, away from the exploitation of natural resources ([Ahmad et al., 2015](#)). [Muganda et al. \(2013\)](#) argued that CBT will reduce poverty, and create job opportunities and better living conditions for locals. CBT will also make the community much more supportive of the development of tourism. Other advantages include the reduction of migration to cities; minimizing the negative impacts of tourism on the environment; educating tourists about nature and culture; and local women empowerment ([Asker et al., 2010](#)).

Thanks to their natural beauty and mineral-rich waters, hot springs have become popular tourist destinations. For thousands of years, people have been using hot springs for wellness and relaxation. Hot springs can help alleviate joint pain, aches, and stress, ultimately improving overall physical and mental health. Several studies have confirmed the positive health benefits of hot springs. Every hot spring temperature is different, and the types of minerals in each hot spring vary.

Springs in Oman are used for domestic, agricultural, and healing purposes. The country has both hot and cold springs, along with mineral springs and freshwater springs used for drinking. Sulphur springs such as Ain Al Kasfah are widely known for their healing properties and are used to relieve bone and joint pain, including conditions such as arthritis and rheumatism ([Bouji, 2011](#)). Hot springs offer tourists a rich experience through relaxation, cultural engagement, and traditional treatments while also helping to alleviate poverty in rural areas.

According to [Yoichi \(2020\)](#), unlike in the past, people can no longer take long holidays, leading to more frequent short-term stays, known as 'modern hot spring healing.' Today, travelers seek to enjoy the natural environment, healthy food, and hot springs, which are increasingly promoted as 'health tourism.' [Cetin & Erdil \(2021\)](#) defined health tourism as tourism that takes place when people travel to different countries in order to improve their quality of life and enhance their mental and physical health.

Integration of CBT into Hot Spring Tourism Worldwide

There are numerous examples worldwide where CBT is integrated into hot spring tourism.

Kinosaki Onsen, Japan

It is both a destination and residential area in which community and tourism work side by side; locals benefit from tourism to improve their businesses while the success of tourism requires the existence of local businesses, including restaurants and accommodation. Everything from menus in Ryokans (Traditional inns) to Onsen (hot spring) operations are managed by locals. The centralized hot spring management was established in the 1950s when the town decided to focus on the seven hot spring bathhouses rather than the smaller individually owned Ryokans. The menus of many facilities in the town include local fresh ingredients supplied by the neighborhood fishermen and farmers ([Visit Kinosaki](#), 2022). In common Onsen resorts, the endless entertainment and amenities options have overshadowed the authenticity and historic value provided by traditional Onsen villages such as Kinosaki. The focal point of advertisement in Kinosaki consists of the quality of hot spring waters and the authentic experience offered by locals. Kinosaki has always managed to stay untouched by Japanese social modernization, resulting in the traditional preservation advantage in comparison to its competitors, thus allowing the village to develop and prosper economically ([Merry](#), 2013).

Batur Hot Spring, Bali

On the slopes of Mount Batur in Bali, Indonesia, the Batur Hot Spring waters have been designated by the village head as a source of income to benefit the local community, without outside involvement. Such a management model aims to generate income for locals and enhance the overall prosperity of traditional village authorities ([Subadra](#), 2019). CBT in Batur traditional village has decreased poverty by providing locals with employment opportunities. In the hot spring site, a spa treatment at an affordable price is provided by locals. There are also restaurants owned and managed by locals. The establishment of new businesses that are related to tourism created new job opportunities for the community. For example, Seked Batur Water Park which is located close to the Batur Natural Hot Spring Water has provided 34 locals with jobs. From this tourism site, none of the revenues are shared with the government except for the obligatory taxes ([Subadra](#), 2019).

Oman Tourism Strategy and CBT

In Oman's Ninth Five-Year Development Plan, tourism is identified as one of the five priority sectors, alongside fisheries, transport, manufacturing, logistic services, and mining. Furthermore, tourism plays a key role in another initiative in the Sultanate – the Oman Tourism Strategy (2016-2040) (OTS). Launched in 2016, the strategy aims 'to diversify Oman's economy and create jobs by offering the world enriching tourism experiences with a distinct Omani character.' Its goal is to establish Oman as a leading destination for meetings, exploration, and vacation by 2040, attracting 11 million tourists and increasing tourism's contribution to the GDP by 6%. Throughout Oman's tourism development, the Oman Tourism Strategy (OTS) follows a sustainable approach, based on 3 guiding principles: Preserving Omani traditions and culture; protecting the environment and natural resources; and providing tourists with unforgettable authentic experiences while enhancing the quality of life for Omanis ([UNCTAD](#), 2018). All these principles align with the core elements of CBT.

CBT at Misfat Al Abryeen, Oman

A project at Misfat Al Abryeen, Al Hamra, was implemented through a partnership between the government and the local community, resulting in mutual economic, cultural, and social benefits for both parties. A heritage house in the village was converted into an accommodation facility, a traditional restaurant, a visitor center, and a souvenir shop. Furthermore, a trekking center was transformed into a center for camping, rest, events, and trekking equipped with essential amenities. At least, forty members of the local community benefitted economically from the project, using tourism as a source of income after participating in various training programs that enhanced their overall tourism-related and personal skills and knowledge. The overall benefits also include cultural interaction, job creation, providing additional income sources, and increasing the appreciation of the country's heritage ([Flores Jr. & da Costa](#), 2019).

Ain Al Kasfah, Oman

According to the [Ministry of Heritage & Tourism](#) (2023), Ain Al Kasfah is a hot spring located in Al Rustaq, Al Batinah, known for its healing properties and available bath facilities. [Al Shuhi](#) (2014) identified Ain Al Kasfah as one of the Sultanate's major hot springs, with temperatures reaching 43 degrees Celsius and a discharge rate of approximately 80 liters per second. Situated along a major fault in the Al Hajar limestone formation, the hot spring originates from an underground water source.

According to [Muscat Daily](#) (2022), swimming is not permitted in Ain al Kasfah; however, the spring is frequently visited for its therapeutic sulphur content. As part of the Governorate's development program, under 10th five-year plan (2021-2025) South Batinah Municipality has initiated the first phase of developing Ain Al Kasfah in order to revitalize tourism in the area. The development plans include expanding the parking

area to 22 slots; establishing a park, constructing a swimming pool, adding children's rides and installing umbrellas for shade.

According to [Stephenson & Al-Hamarneh](#) (2017), the lack of tourism facilities in some rural areas of Oman prevents local communities from benefiting from tourism. For example, there are no local accommodation units, handicraft small shops or local guides. Additionally, the Omani government faced resistance from citizens regarding tourism development in Ain Al Kasfah. The disagreement primarily centered on the distribution and shared use of the spring's waters.

Statement of problem

CBT can be developed at Ain Al Kasfah Hot Spring in Al Rustaq, Al Batinah. For CBT to succeed, it is essential to acknowledge and understand locals' perceptions. According to [Nagarjuna](#) (2015), communities enhance the tourism experience through their local culture, cuisine, and festivals. Additionally, locals provide tourists with authentic experiences while contributing to environmental and cultural conservation through their indigenous knowledge. [Muganda et al.](#) (2013) further emphasized that local communities, as moral and legitimate stakeholders, play a crucial role in tourism development. To improve service delivery and gain the trust of locals, their involvement in decision-making and policy formulation is essential.

Thus, this study aims to explore locals' perceptions of CBT at Al Kasfah Hot Spring. The objectives of this research seek to discuss the benefits community-based tourism can bring to Al Kasfah Hot Spring, investigate locals' perception towards the use of community-based tourism at Al Kasfah Hot Spring, and discover the factors affecting locals' perception towards the use of community-based tourism at Al Kasfah Hot Spring.

This study will help the community in Al Kasfah Hot Spring understand the potential of CBT. Furthermore, Planners who want to develop tourism at Omani hot springs can also use this research to understand the community's perception and follow more sustainable approaches to tourism development. This research will also assist governmental bodies in finding methods of tourism development that will overcome the concerns of locals regarding water distribution.

Research Questions

1. What are the benefits community-based tourism can bring to Al Kasfah Hot Spring?
2. What is the perception of locals towards the use of community-based tourism at Al Kasfah Hot Spring?
3. What are the factors affecting locals' perception regarding the use of community-based tourism at Al Kasfah Hot Spring?

Research Objectives

1. To Examine the benefits that community-based tourism can bring to Ain Al Kasfah Hot Spring.
2. To investigate locals' perception of implementing community-based tourism at Ain Al Kasfah Hot Spring.
3. To identify the factors influencing locals' perception of community-based tourism at Ain Al Kasfah Hot Spring.

Literature Review

Benefits of community-based tourism

According to [Elkington](#) (1998), if CBT is managed effectively, it can evolve into a self-sustaining business that generates income without relying on aid agencies or government control. Moreover, the concept aligns with the 'three pillars of sustainability', providing economic, environmental, and social benefits. The advantages of CBT include the equitable distribution of economic benefits across the community. [López-Guzmán et al.](#) (2011) stated that locals had a positive perception towards CBT, and thus can be used as a tool to generate economic benefits and create employment opportunities. Even those not directly involved in homestays can benefit indirectly by supplying goods, providing food, working as guides, or engaging in other tourism-related jobs ([Gallagher](#), 2021). The overall benefits also include cultural interaction, job creation, providing additional income sources, and increasing the appreciation of the country's heritage ([Flores Jr. & da Costa](#), 2019).

[Sebele](#) (2010) argued that rural areas in developing countries often lack essential facilities, and their residents are among the poorest in society. Therefore, income from CBT can serve as 'an alternative means of survival for locals' helping improve their living conditions. The wages earned can be used for necessities such as clothing, food, school fees, and constructing traditional dwellings. [Greslikova](#) (2024) further emphasized that in CBT, 100% of the revenue remains within the community, with a portion often allocated to training new members or funding future projects. He also claimed that CBT provides tourists with an authentic experience, in which interactions with locals happen naturally, and because new cultures are perceived as equal and not

exotic, cultural and social differences would decrease through conceiving the traditional activities sensibly and respectfully.

Infrastructure Development

According to [Marsh \(2022\)](#), natural assets are the key attractions for tourists. Tourists were accommodated in the existing local homes, while available boats were utilized for river cruises and boatman services ([Goh, 2015](#)). As a result, locals are motivated to protect and preserve the environment through the destinations' biodiversity ([Marsh, 2022](#)). Infrastructure can increase tourist arrivals due to better accessibility to the destination, thus ensuring more benefits from tourism development ([Soshkin, 2019](#)). It is also a factor that may impact locals' perception of the development of tourism ([Hardyansah et al., 2021](#)). With no sufficient infrastructure, it would be harder for tourists to reach the destination and for locals to benefit from tourism ([Setokoe & Ramukumba, 2020](#)). [Bhuiyan \(2019\)](#) stated that CBT promotes infrastructure development, including healthcare, roads, communication networks, public transportation, education, and access to food supplies and clean drinking water. In eastern Malaysia, the CBT initiatives led by the KOPEL cooperative have contributed to forest restoration programs, planting 300,000 trees. Additionally, KOPEL has funded other environmental projects, including the restoration of Tungog Lake ([Bimp-Eaga, 2020](#)).

[Marsh \(2022\)](#) stated that in countries with inequality and high unemployment, say for example in Nepal, CBT provides women with job opportunities.

Importance, Impact & Influence of Local Perception on CBT Development

Perception is defined as 'how people interpret the elements that surround them' ([Sánchez-Fernández & Cardona, 2017](#)). In the context of CBT, understanding and analyzing the local perceptions is essential, as there is often a disparity between the views of community members and those of management. These differences are primarily linked to welfare concerns, with locals frequently perceiving that CBT initiatives do not align with their community's actual needs ([Dewi et al., 2019](#)). Perception plays a significant role in shaping behavior and can be instrumental in predicting community responses. Understanding local perceptions can assist community leaders in effectively engaging residents in CBT initiatives. When community awareness and perceptions are negative, there is a higher likelihood of resistance or destructive activities that may hinder the success of CBT programs. Therefore, fostering positive perceptions is crucial for sustainable community participation and development ([Ayorekire et al., 2022](#)). Negative community perceptions can lead to behaviors that obstruct the success of CBT initiatives. For instance, [Tamir \(2015\)](#) highlighted that a poor attitude toward CBT programs may result in locals allowing their livestock to roam freely in restricted development areas, causing disruptions. Furthermore, [Breugel \(2013\)](#) emphasized that the aspirations and capabilities of the local community must align with tourism development and planning to fully realize the industry's potential.

Challenges of Community-Based Tourism (CBT)

One of the main challenges is the lack of understanding and awareness among locals about the concept of CBT, which leads to limited community participation in tourism development. Locals fear that tourists arriving through CBT development, coming from diverse religious backgrounds, may not respect their traditions ([Tamir, 2015](#)). At the initial stages of CBT project implementation, a lack of awareness about its value can lead to resistance from the local community. Similarly, negative perceptions and attitudes toward CBT present another challenge. Another challenge is the lack of capacity, which can affect service quality, which includes outdated financial management systems and ineffective methods for monitoring service quality and customer satisfaction ([Tamir, 2015](#)). In some villages, low literacy and education levels, along with a lack of English proficiency, hinder locals from effectively communicating with visiting tourists ([Setokoe & Ramukumba, 2020](#)). Other challenges include inadequate infrastructure, such as poor road conditions, electricity shortages, insufficient telecommunication networks, and limited accessibility ([Setokoe & Ramukumba, 2020](#)).

The gap in the Research of Local community perceptions of CBT

Despite extensive research on CBT, there remains a gap in understanding local perceptions toward this form of tourism. [Er et al. \(2012\)](#) highlighted that local communities are often overlooked or considered secondary in research on CBT. However, findings from existing studies vary. For instance, [Er et al. \(2012\)](#) found that the majority of locals near Lata Jarum held a neutral perception of CBT, primarily due to a lack of awareness about the concept. While both positive and negative attitudes existed as minority perspectives, the number of individuals with a favorable view of CBT was slightly higher than those with negative perceptions.

Individuals with a positive perception of community-based tourism (CBT) believe that it offers several advantages, including increased income, job creation, improved quality of life, and a higher demand for local

handicrafts (Er et al., 2012). Furthermore, this group perceives CBT as a non-disruptive initiative that does not pose any significant issues to the community. Their support highlights the potential benefits of well-planned CBT programs in fostering economic and social development.

Case Study: Community Perception of CAMPFIRE in Zimbabwe

A study conducted in Zimbabwe examined community perceptions of CAMPFIRE, a community initiative aimed at benefiting rural villages surrounding Hwange National Park through CBT (Tichaawa & Mhlanga, 2015). The findings revealed that while most respondents acknowledged CAMPFIRE’s contribution to infrastructural development—such as the increase in the number of schools funded by program proceeds—they largely felt that they did not benefit economically from CBT initiatives. Many believed that the financial gains from CAMPFIRE were allocated elsewhere, leading to skepticism about its direct economic impact on their community.

Cultural and Educational Perceptions of CBT

Lusby & Eow (2015) found that locals perceived community-based tourism (CBT) as an opportunity to engage with tourists, providing a platform to showcase traditional music and dances while sharing their culture with foreigners. Additionally, some respondents believed that CBT could serve as an educational tool, allowing locals to learn about different countries and cultures. However, it is noteworthy that several participants lacked a clear understanding of CBT but still maintained a positive attitude toward it. Despite their limited knowledge, these individuals viewed CBT as a means to benefit the community economically and were eager to participate in its initiatives.

Research Methodology

Since public and private entities in the tourism industry rely on quantified data for decision-making, questionnaire surveys serve as an ideal method. Further, questionnaire surveys ensure transparency in research procedures, as the data collection, analysis, and interpretation processes are documented. Through comparable methodology, questionnaire surveys can provide an overview of changes over time (Veal, 2017). Hence, online surveys were adopted using a questionnaire. Primary data was collected for the research through questionnaire surveys. A sample of 50 locals from the community of Ain Al Kasfah hot spring was collected. The participants were between the ages of 21 and 45. Random probability sampling method was adopted, as probability sampling, the chance of being included in the sample would be equal for every member of the population (Westfall, 2009).

The data was analyzed using Excel & SPSS which enabled the researchers to visualize, filter, and organize quantitative data. Secondary data was also used to draw comparisons and reach conclusions about locals’ attitudes.

Findings

Demographics

Table 1 Demographics of the respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	%
Gender		
Female	32	64%
Male	18	36%
Ability to speak Arabic and English		
Can	44	88%
Cannot	6	12%
Education Level		
Secondary education	19	38%
Bachelor’s degree	24	48%
Master’s degree	3	6%
Other	4	8%

Awareness

Table 2 Awareness

	SD	D	N	A	SA	K-S value	p-value
1. It is known that CBT is sustainable	1 2%	0 0%	4 6%	32 64%	14 28%	0.369	.000
2. CBT's core existence is for the community, and it favors the local suppliers and service providers	0 0%	2 4%	11 22%	20 40%	17 34%	0.245	
3. The community is involved in CBT's management and development	0 0%	2 4%	9 18%	28 56%	11 22%	0.339	

Null hypothesis: There is no relationship between the awareness of CBT and the choices of the respondents.

From Table No.2, it is observed that the p-value was less than 0.05 i.e. the null hypothesis gets rejected. Therefore, comparing the K-S values obtained from the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, it was observed that 'It is known that CBT is sustainable' (0.369) ranked first, followed by 'The community is involved in CBT's management and development' (0.339) and 'CBT's core existence is for the community, and it favors the local suppliers and service providers'.

Infrastructure

Table 3 Infrastructure

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	K.S-Value	p-value
1. There are roads in the CBT-based destinations	1 2%	1 2%	15 30%	13 26%	20 40%	0.222	.000
2. Electricity is available in most places of CBT	3 6%	2 4%	9 18%	21 42%	15 30%	0.232	
3. CBT-related places have adequate telecommunication facilities	3 6%	4 8%	10 20%	14 28%	19 38%	0.215	
4. Overall, the destination is accessible	3 6%	9 18%	10 20%	13 26%	15 30%	0.211	

Null hypothesis: There is no relationship between the Infrastructure of CBT and the choices of the respondents.

From Table No.3, it is observed that the p-value was less than 0.05 i.e. the null hypothesis gets rejected. Therefore, comparing the K-S values obtained from the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, it was observed that 'Electricity is available in most of the places of CBT' (0.232) ranked first, followed by 'There are roads in the CBT-based destinations' (0.222) and 'CBT- related places have adequate telecommunication facilities' (0.215).

Community's Perception towards CBT

Table 4 Perception of the Community towards CBT

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	K.S value	p-value
1. CBT can bring economic benefits and enhance the living conditions of the community	0 0%	1 2%	4 8%	31 62%	14 28%	0.372	.000
2. CBT can stimulate the development of the infrastructure	1 2%	1 2%	4 8%	34 68%	10 20%	0.394	
3. CBT is an effective tool to protect the environment	0 0%	2 4%	6 12%	30 60%	12 24%	0.358	
4. CBT won't take away the destination's cultural identity	2 4%	2 4%	8 16%	27 54%	11 22%	0.312	
5. Overall, I am with the development of CBT at Al Kasfah Hot Spring	1 2%	0 0%	1 2%	42 84%	6 12%	0.477	

Null hypothesis: There is no relationship between the Perception of the community towards CBT and the choices of the respondents.

From Table No.4, it is observed that the p-value was less than 0.05 i.e. the null hypothesis gets rejected. Therefore, comparing the K-S values obtained from the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, it is observed that 'I am with the development of CBT at Al Kasfah Hot Spring' (0.477) ranked first, followed by 'CBT can stimulate the development of the infrastructure' (0.394) and 'CBT can bring economic benefits and enhance the living conditions of the community' (0.372).

Table 5. (a), (b), (c) and (d) Regression Variables Entered/Removed^a

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Gender, Bilingual ability, Awareness, Infrastructure ^b	...	Enter

^aDependent variable: Perception of Community towards CBT

^bAll requested variables entered

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	.630 ^a	.397	.343	2.829

^aPredictors: (Constant), Gender, Bilingual ability, Awareness, Infrastructure

ANOVA^a

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	237.076	4	52.269	7.406	.000 ^b
Residual	360.144	45	8.003		
Total	597.220	49			

^aDependent variable: Perception of Community towards CBT

^bPredictors: (Constant), Awareness, Infrastructure

Coefficients^a

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	6.780	3.637	0.159	1.864	.069
Gender	1.146	0.867	-0.085	1.322	.193
Bilingual Ability	0.146	1.245	0.014	0.117	.907
Infrastructure	-0.043	.121	-0.046	-0.360	.721
Awareness	1.097	.213	0.641	5.158	.000

Dependent variable: Perception of Community towards CBT

From the above co-efficient table, it can be seen that the p-values of Gender, Bilingual ability, and Infrastructure are > .05. Therefore, eliminating these variables, the linear regression analysis was done again and we got the results as follows:

Table 6. (a), (b), (c), and (d) Regression - REVISED Variables Entered/Removed^a

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Awareness ^b	...	Enter

^aDependent variable: Perception of Community towards CBT

^bAll requested variables entered

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	.606 ^a	.367	.354	2.806

^aPredictors: (Constant), Awareness, Infrastructure

ANOVA^a

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	219.330	1	219.330	27.859	.000 ^b
Residual	377.890	48	7.873		
Total	597.220	49			

^aDependent variable: Perception of Community towards CBT

^bPredictors: (Constant), Awareness, Infrastructure

Coefficients^a

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	8.933	2.571		3.475	.001
Awareness	1.038	.197	0.606	5.278	.000

Dependent variable: Perception of Community towards CBT

The R² value of .367 shows that 36.7 % of the samples are influenced by the linear regression. From F-table, it is clear that the p-value is .000 < .05 which confirms that there is a linear relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Therefore, the obtained linear regression is as follows:

$$P^{CBT} = 8.933 + 1.038 A$$

where A is the Awareness of CBT and P^{CBT} is the Perception of Community of the CBT.

Thus, it can be seen that the 'Perception of Community towards CBT' is influenced by the Awareness of CBT by the community. i.e. the claimed hypothesis is proved.

Results

Among the awareness of CBT factors, 'CBT is sustainable' ranked first, followed by 'The community is involved in CBT's management and development' and 'CBT's core existence is for the community, and it favors the local suppliers and service providers' i.e., the majority of the respondents have a high level of awareness and their perception was positive. This is similar to the findings by [Er et al. \(2012\)](#) that the respondents had a positive understanding regarding CBT. In contrast, [Tamir \(2015\)](#) stated that a lack of knowledge about CBT values can create resistance from the local community towards CBT.

Among the infrastructure of CBT factors, 'Electricity is available in most places of CBT' ranked first, followed by 'There are roads in the CBT-based destinations' and 'CBT-related places have adequate telecommunication facilities' i.e., the results of the current research show that CBT can stimulate the development of infrastructure. This is similar to the finding by [Bhuiyan. \(2019\)](#) & [Tichaawa & Mhlanga \(2015\)](#) that CBT can stimulate the development of infrastructure, including healthcare, roads, communications, public transport, education, and access to food supplies and drinking water.

Among the perceptions of the community-based CBT factors, 'I am with the development of CBT at Al Kasfah Hot Spring' ranked first, followed by 'CBT can stimulate the development of the infrastructure' and 'CBT can bring economic benefits and enhance the living conditions of the community' i.e. most of the respondents strongly agreed that they are with the development of CBT at Al Kasfah hot spring. This is similar to the findings by [Er et al. \(2012\)](#) that most of the locals in the vicinity of Lata Jarum had similar perceptions towards CBT. However, this was contrary to the findings by [Tichaawa & Mhlanga \(2015\)](#) in which the respondents believed that they did not benefit economically from CBT initiatives, as they presumed that the money gained was used somewhere else.

Further, it was also found that the 'Perception of Community towards CBT' is influenced by the Awareness of CBT by the community i.e. among the selected factors that affect locals' perception towards community-based tourism viz. 'Gender', 'Ability to speak Arabic and English' (bilingual), 'Awareness', and 'Infrastructure', it was found that only - 'Awareness of CBT by the community' influenced the 'Perception of the community towards CBT'. This is contrary to the findings by [Abellan Calvet et al. \(2022\)](#) that gender can impact locals' perception towards tourism development as women were more prone to environmental protection policies and the avoidance of tourism development. This is because when it comes to water scarcity due to tourism, women were more sensitive as the lack of water increased the burden on their daily routine. Also, in many cases, community-based tourism empowers women. For instance, In Nepal, a group of women took advantage of the increase in tourist arrivals and charged for hospitality services and meals.

Conclusion

It can be summarized that CBT provides locals with sources of income, creates jobs, brings authentic experiences to tourists, aids infrastructure development, and protects the environment. Therefore, community-based tourism contributes to the 'three pillars of sustainability', generating economic, environmental, and social benefits.

As clearly pointed out by [Er et al. \(2012\)](#) the locals with awareness about CBT held positive attitudes, our findings confirmed the same i.e. the locals have a positive perception regarding the development of community-based tourism at Al Kasfah hot spring. It is also confirmed that CBT will bring economic benefits and enhance the living conditions of the community while enhancing the infrastructure, and will be an effective tool to protect the environment. Although lack of adequate infrastructure may be a challenge in developing community-based tourism, this element-infrastructure does not influence perception.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings and conclusion, here are some actionable recommendations:

- **Enhance Community Awareness Programs**
 Conduct regular workshops and campaigns to educate the local community about the benefits and principles of CBT, ensuring they understand its sustainability and community-centric nature.
- **Empower Local Stakeholders**
 Involve local residents actively in planning, decision-making, and management of CBT initiatives to reinforce their sense of ownership and ensure long-term sustainability.

- **Strengthen Multilingual Communication Skills**
 Provide language training (especially Arabic and English) to community members to improve communication with tourists and enhance service quality.
- **Focus on Community-Oriented Tourism Policies**
 Design tourism policies that prioritize local suppliers, artisans, and service providers, ensuring that economic benefits are retained within the community.
- **Invest Strategically in Infrastructure**
 While infrastructure doesn't directly influence perception, it is vital for long-term CBT success. Improve roads, electricity, and telecommunication facilities at CBT sites.
- **Promote CBT as a Tool for Sustainable Development**
 Highlight and market CBT's contribution to the environment, economy, and social wellbeing to attract eco-conscious tourists and development partners.
- **Monitor and Evaluate CBT Impact**
 Establish mechanisms to regularly assess the economic, environmental, and social impacts of CBT on the community to inform ongoing improvements.
- **Create CBT Awareness Among Policymakers and Investors**
 Advocate CBT's benefits to government agencies and potential investors to secure funding and policy support.

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