

The Cultural Impact of Tourism Development in a Dong Hoa Hiep Local Community, Cai Be District, Vietnam

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Abstract

This study determined local residents' attitudes towards the cultural impact of tourism development on a local community at Dong Hoa Hiep village, Tien Giang Province, Vietnam, by using questionnaires and in depth interviews. According to 400 surveyed respondents and people interviewed, the results indicate positive attitudes towards the cultural impact of tourism. The findings reveal that the residents' heighten pride and appreciation of their community identities and tourism helps the village preserve traditional festivals, and local cuisines. Besides, Tran Van Kiet and Phan Van Duc ancient houses were restored authentically originally by JICA project. Nevertheless, some negative impact should be noted such as the breakdown of the traditional, extended family structure. Due to the high cost of original wood and skilled craftsmen those home owners not involved in tourism often restore buildings using inappropriate materials. Although tourism doesn't have a direct impact on milk crackers (a type of traditional cake handicrafts), this craft is currently vulnerable due to the high price of raw materials and lack of consumer markets and shortage of tourists. The knowledge of how to make milk crackers may be forgotten by young generations.

Keywords: Dong Hoa Hiep village, cultural impacts, local community, tourism development

1. Introduction

Tourism is a crucial industry, not only for developed countries, but also for developing ones. Tourism is a tool to improve local economy, reduce poverty and protect local cultural values. By the year 2012, it is estimated that the industry will have contributed greatly to the economic growth by generating 6.6 trillion US dollar in gross output, creating employment for 260 million people, producing 9 percent of total economy GDP, investing US\$760 million (World Travel Tourism Council, 2013). However, the significant growth of tourism has been reflected by increasing concerns about the cultural impact and the effect of tourism on a community's cultural values. Implementing tourism development is a long term process so the cultural impact of tourism is inevitable. Hence, it is important to determine the impact of tourism on local people before developing any tourism projects for communities. In Vietnam, some researchers have studied the impact of tourism on ethnic groups or famous destinations. However, such cultural impact research on ancient villages is still a new concept in Viet Nam. Dong Hoa Hiep village is one of three traditional, ancient villages in Vietnam that incorporates a special cultural identity of Southern Vietnam. It is critical to research the cultural impact of tourism development on Dong Hoa Hiep. This research will produce evidence to address the negative impact of tourism and help this community generate more sustainable developments in the future.

This study investigated resident's attitudes towards the cultural impact of tourism at Dong Hoa Hiep village, Cai Be district, Tien Giang Province, Vietnam with two objectives:

- (i) To determine what positive and negative effects tourism has on the cultural values of Dong Hoa Hiep's local community
- (ii) To suggest precise recommendations to deal with the negative cultural impact of tourism development on Dong Hoa Hiep's local community.

Previous research on the alarming issue of the impact of tourism has been divided into three aspects: economic, environment and socio-cultural dimensions. These divisions were created by the many authors who investigated

the host perceptions of the impact of tourism development on their communities. The authors referenced are included in the references section of this paper. Tourism offers not only positive outcomes, but also negative impacts for local communities. (Landford, 1994). As regards to social and cultural perspectives, the rapid growth of tourism falls into two categories. The first section is that tourism is as a vehicle for economic modernization which changes the structure of society in welcoming ways. The second aspect is that traditional society and family values may be transformed gradually (Sharpley, 1994). The changes in structure and cohesion of local communities result from the development of tourism which include increased rural - urban migration and the shortage of younger labors to continue working in traditional agricultural businesses. This study shows that tourism seems to emphasize class differences, the younger generation is less traditional in their approach than the older generation, (Sharpley, 1994). A fact emerged that members of the family move out their home to establish tourism businesses and immigrate to the central towns of communities has caused the breakdown of traditional structures and lack of agricultural labor forces. Similarly, it is stated that the out migration of young generations and literate people are likely to be unsatisfied with job opportunities in their community (Paul & Paul, 1999).

The study of the impact of tourism on ethnic minority inhabitants of Sa Pa, Viet Nam reveals a damage of the traditional structure of H'mong families when young girls leave home to permanently live in the town center. This research also considers the loss of family instruction and the women's work of embroidering by the breakdown of tradition family structures (Hoa & Lan, 1999) . It is indicated that tourism influences local activities where local communities start to adapt their cultural values in an attempt to emulate those of tourists or cultural homogenization (Paul & Paul, 1999), (Rothman, 1978), and (Sharpley, 1994). This is called demonstration effects which are manifested by adopted Western styles of dresses and the polarization between the older and the younger. It is found that a large number of people perceive the cultural impact of tourism influences the way of life in local communities, (Paul & Paul, 1999). However, local residents have a good opportunity to feel proud of introducing their culture and hospitality to tourists so that local communities are more appreciative of local cultural identities of their community (Lindberg, Anderson, & Dellaert, 2001) and (Liu, 2003). Also, this study states that local people could establish relationships to exchange cultures or gain various solutions for their problems among local residents as well as tourists. On the other side, heightened tension and community diversity may happen by the development of tourism. The over expansion of cultural traits to satisfy tourists' demands can create fake cultures.

It is agreed that the good points of tourism on host communities could be seen by the conservation and revitalization of traditional festivals, handicrafts, customs, and the ways of life, (Grahm, 1991), (Kelly & Dixon, 1991), (Unwin, 1966), (Cohen, 2001), (Lindberg et al., 2001), (Besculides, Lee, & Cormick, 2002), and (Leila & Vikneswaran, 2011). However, commercialization of culture has resulted through developing tourism. (Hoa & Lan, 1999). The development of tourism has made the traditional way of life in the ethnic community in Sa Pa disappear. An illustration for this disappearance is the "Love market" where young, old, unmarried or married residents meet and commune with each other to share their feelings, emotions, news or folksongs.

From the above review of literature, it is obvious that tourism development can have a cultural impact on local communities. This is seen in the changes in lifestyles, community identification, and the preservation of cultural values. However, the impact of tourism can lead to the commodification and loss of authenticity of traditional cultural values.

Dong Hoa Hiep is an ancient village situated in the Cai Be District of Tien Giang province, in Southern Vietnam, (See Figure 1). It has an advantageous location of being approximately 100km away from Ho Chi Minh City, and is the first gate from Ho Chi Minh City to the Mekong Delta region. Therefore, Dong Hoa Hiep village welcomes about 100,000 tourists annually, according to statistics of Tien Giang Department of Cultural, Sport and Tourism. Dong Hoa Hiep was formed in the 18th century when Cai Be was unitized into the Vietnamese administrative body and expanded between the Nguyen dynasty in the beginning 19th century and French Colonial Era. At that time, the canals in this area were excavated for flood control and exploited for boat transportation. During the rainy season the Mekong River over-flowed, causing inconveniences for agriculture and habitation. Thanks to canal excavations, Cai Be became a large rice cultivation area and established the Cai Be Floating Market which became one of the biggest wholesale floating markets at that time. In the 25 years of belonging to the district's headquarters' town of Long Ho, the village attracted landlords and local mandarins who in turn made the area rich. At that time, there were two greatly reputed clans who were wealthy and powerful, namely the Phan and Tran families. Many of the ancient, large and solid buildings that can be seen today were built by them.

Currently, Dong Hoa Hiep village is called Dong Hoa Hiep commune which is considered as one of the three ancient villages of Viet Nam along with Duong Lam village in Hanoi city and Phuoc Tich village in Hue city.

Dong Hoa Hiep includes six hamlets with around 3,617 households whose resources are gained primarily from the orchards of southern tropical fruits; Hoa Loc mangos, oranges, green-shell grapefruits, longans, Vinh Kim star fruits. Additionally this village has branches of traditional handicrafts where green rice flakes, rice papers, coconut candies, milk crackers are well - known. Along with this strength, Dong Hoa Hiep has many Southern ancient houses where tourists can experience regional architectural characteristics carved on paintings diaphragms, artifacts, and truss columns. It means that this is a typical traditional style of Southerner houses which was carved pillars and doors by refined patterns of “pine trees, daisy flowers, ivory bamboo and apricot trees”. There are approximately 10 ancient houses with the old patterns of architectures over 100 years old that are famous home stays attracting foreign tourists. Because it is affected by its plain topography, the houses are designed with many components, gardens, and tree fences in Dong Hoa Hiep Village which makes them different from other ancient villages. The significant tourism activities in this village based on water – based tourism and heritage tourism which are consisted of ancient houses, floating market, traditional handicrafts, cultural values and orchard gardens.

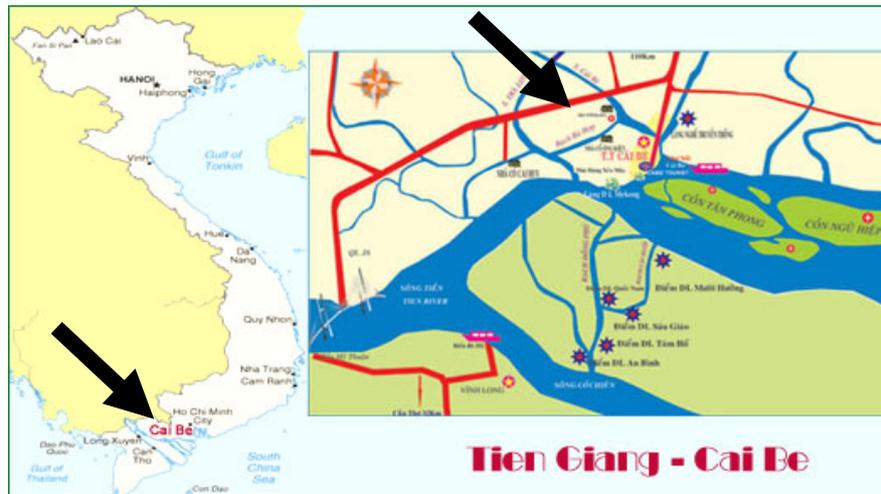


Figure 1. Dong Hoa Hiep village map

Source: Dong Hoa Hiep map. Retrieved September 23, 2013, from <http://wikimapia.org>

2. Methodology

The research was conducted through both questionnaires and in-depth interviews which were used to gather information and data. The sample groups of questionnaires were local households which are living in Dong Hoa Hiep village. Dong Hoa Hiep comprises 3,617 households which are divided into seven hamlets. The researcher used the formula of Taro Yamane in order to determine 400 questionnaire samples. The next step was a random sampling technique in which 400 family samples were identified randomly by computer from the alphabetic lists of all households in the community. In each household only one person was surveyed to represent the household's attitudes towards tourism. At the time of delivering questionnaires to households, if nobody was present at an intended home, the questionnaire would be delivered to the neighboring one. Twenty pilot questionnaires were tested to determine the validity before the final questionnaire surveys were made.

The questionnaires are surveyed by Likert scale which the researcher adopted and compiled from previous studies of the following sources: (Brian, 1993), (Paul & Paul, 1999), (Enemuo & Oduntan, 2012) and (Long, 2012). Respondents answered questionnaires by five Likert scale which is divided: Strongly disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; Not sure = 3; Agree = 4; Strongly agree = 5. The information and data obtained from questionnaires was analyzed by SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 19 to determine positive and negative socio cultural impacts of tourism development on local community of Dong Hoa Hiep village by a descriptive analytical study.

With the in-depth interview questions, the researcher's goal was to determine the cultural impact of tourism development on the local community at Dong Hoa Hiep village by interviewing local tourist authorities, community leaders, and local residents. The researcher directly conducted in-depth interviews with the head of Cai Be's Office of Culture and Information and the Vice President of Dong Hoa Hiep Committee's People who is responsible for cultural and social activities in the village. Additionally, the researcher also talked with three local people who are the community's head and common residents to understand the perceptions of local residents towards cultural impacts of tourism development.

3. Scope and Limitations

This research is a descriptive design analysis which has the low strength in research methodology. However, this kind of study is acceptable to find out what are the positive and negative cultural impacts of tourism on a local community. Another limitation is simple statistics technique which was not concerned with multivariable regression and factor analysis. The scope of the research only included Dong Hoa Hiep village, so that the findings cannot be applied to all tourist destinations in the Tien Giang province or other cities in Viet Nam. Besides, due to limited time and budgets, the research only focuses on cultural impacts on the local community.

4. Results

4.1 Results from Surveyed Questionnaires

The demographic respondent characteristics consisted of 12 variables which were classified as sex, marital status, age group, ethnic group, educational background, occupation, years of living, immigrated status, number of people in family, income, and characteristic respondents. According to the surveyed questionnaires' statistics, the majorities of respondents (78.7 %) were married; whereas gender were closely equal (47.3 male and 52.7 female). In terms of age 48.5 % respondents were 30 - 49 years old and 25.8 % were 40 - 50 years old. The Kinh people (98.5%) exceedingly outweighed other ethnic people. About 72.5 % of surveyed indicated that they earned secondary school or high school degrees while college/university and post-graduate school variables occupied only 8%. As regards to occupation, 60.5 % of people stated that they were farmers or gardeners, whereas 17.8 % were involved in tourism-related jobs. Respondents who have lived for 20 - 39 and 40 - 59 years in Dong Hoa Hiep village constituted 48.5 % and 25.8 % respectively. The immigration status of the largest group (89.2 %) was native of Dong Hoa Hiep village and more than half of respondents (56.2%) had 4 - 6 people in their family. In terms of monthly household income, the majority of respondents (48.1%) earned 2,000,000 – 3,000,000 (VND) and 20 % answerers were 3,00,000 – 4,000,000 (VND). 68.5 % people answered that no one in the family was involved in tourist business while only 16.2 % indicated that they were involved in tourism business.

From the demographic table, it can be seen that the highest percentage of farmers or gardeners were the older people in Dong Hoa Hiep. A high proportion of respondents have a Secondary/ high school educational background. Most of the people surveyed live in an extended family with 4 - 6 people in a house. The majority of respondents have a low income of approximately 100 -150 USD/month and are native residents. If local residents have low educational backgrounds, they will lack professional skills to work in tourism activities or not know how to manage tourism effectively. Native residents feel tourism has a negative impact on cultural values while the young people do not agree with that premise. With low income, local residents often leave their village to move to another city to find jobs, this movement can cause a breakdown in traditional family structures. Therefore these demographic profiles indicate that cultural changes can inevitably affect local lifestyles.

Table 1. Residents' attitude towards tourism impact on cultural values

Rank ¹	Surveyed questionnaires instrument	Mean ²	S.D ³
Positive impact on cultural values			
1	Local people heighten pride and appreciation of their community identify	4,3	0,6
2	Traditional festivals are preserved and revitalized by tourism development	4,09	0,5
3	Tourism promotes cultural exchanges in local community	4,02	0,5
4	Traditional cuisine culture of Dong Hiep village is conserved by tourism development	4,01	0,6
5	The community gets aids from local authorities and international organizations to help cultural tourism activities and preserve cultural values	3,95	0,5
6	The traditional authenticity values of ancient houses involved in tourism business are maintained to serve tourism.	3,94	0,4
7	Traditional way of life is revitalized by tourism development.	3,5	0,8
Negative impact on cultural values			
1.	The younger generation tends to move away from their families to live in town to work in the tourism industry or move to Ho Chi Minh city to work in factories causing the breakdown of traditional structures and lack of agricultural labor forces.	3,9	0,3
2.	Traditional local family's structures are changed by tourism development.	3,8	0,4
3.	Milk crackers are vulnerable to extinction in the future because of high cost of raw materials and lack of distribution outlets.	3,5	0,7

4.	A few ancient houses without tourism business are restored with inappropriate materials by owners due to the high prices of original woods and the cost of craftsmen's labor.	3,3	0,7
5.	Comodification cultural values are seen by tourism.	2,89	0,8
6.	Southerner amateur music performance is commercialized by tourism development.	2,81	0,8
7.	Tourism leads to community tension by the tourist's demands	2,09	0,6
8.	Women lose traditional household's works in their families.	2,02	0,6
9.	Tourism damages to the local cultures	1,9	0,6

¹ Questions are ranked by mean values, ² Scale from 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Not sure, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree, ³ standard deviation.

As can be seen in Table 1, tourism development has created both positive and negative impact on local cultural values. A significant positive impact is that the respondents agreed that tourism offered benefits for cultural values such as heightening pride and appreciation of their community identity, preserving traditional festivals, promoting cultural exchange in local community, conserving traditional cuisine culture, getting aid from local authorities and international organizations to support cultural tourism activities and preserve cultural values and to revitalize traditional way of life with 4.3, 4.09, 4.02, 4.01, 3.95, 3.94, 3.5 means respectively. Meanwhile, tourism has also created negative impacts on cultural values which respondents perceived as the breakdown of traditional structures and lack of agricultural labor forces (3.9), the change of local family's structures (3.8), the vulnerable extinction of milk crackers (3.5) and the restoration of some ancient houses using inappropriate materials by owners who are not involved in tourism due to the high price of original woods and the cost of craftsmen (3.3). The rest of the replies to questions revealed that people did not perceive any negative impact from tourism.

4.2 Results from In-Depth - Interviews

4.2.1 Community Identities

Dong Hoa Hiep village is one of three ancient villages in Viet Name which was founded 18th century. The community has a long history of cultural identity in Mekong Delta area where a banyan tree and water station icon has been maintained until now. That is one reason why Dong Hoa Hiep's villagers heightened their appreciation their community identity. According to the head of Cai Be office of culture and information and Vice President of Dong Hoa Hiep People's Committee, indicated that "*Local people were proud of cultural identities of Dong Hoa Hiep community with around 200 ancient history years which passed from ancestors to current generations*". As regards to Lindburg and Liu, local residents had a good opportunity to feel proud of introducing their culture to others as well as being more appreciative of their local community cultural identities (Lindberg et al., 2001) and (Liu, 2003). Also, the Vice President of the Dong Hoa Hiep people's committee' Duong Van Phuong suggested, "*People feel and preserve identities from their ancestors with a banyan tree and water station icon, genealogical books were recorded and preserved through generation to generation, and the customs of temple worship ceremonies always maintained annually*". Similarly, Nguyen Van Hai, a resident at An Hiep village, stated that, "*Most of local people really are proud of their cultural identities of community and preserved the traditions of ancestor's worships, temple or shrines worships*". It can be surmised from both of the local authority's opinions and local residents' attitudes, that most of residents heighten their appreciation of and felt proud of Dong Hoa Hiep's cultural community identities. Thanks to tourism, people are currently preserving their cultural identities from their ancestors to current generations for the village. In fact, local communities feel and preserve identities from their ancestors with a banyan tree and water station icon, genealogical books were recorded and preserved from generation to generation, and the customs of temple worship ceremonies are always maintained annually.

4.2.2 The Way of Life

By developing tourism local, daily lives have improved in positive ways; local people are more polite, are more appropriately dressed and are adapting social developments to their daily lifestyle. Materialistically life has significantly improved; rural people have a chance to access internet, and have satellite televisions. Additionally, some of the traditional ways of life were revitalized through developing tours. For example, local people created "Fishing Men or One Day becoming Farmer tours" showing the traditional way of catching fishes by using bamboo tools. This tour allows tourists to enjoy a traditional way of life. To this development Mr Duong Van Phuong indicates, "*Traditional ways of life changed in positive way which is revitalized for tourism development*". Another similar view point is from Nguyen Van Truong, who is the leader of Phu Hoa hamlet. He stated that "*Traditional ways of life of local people is maintained for tourism development. For instance,*

catching fishes by using bamboo tools was a traditional way of local people in the past time when residents catch fish to support their daily life in every flood year[sic]". Meanwhile, Nguyen Van Tai adds, "*Older people still maintained traditional ways of life of the community whereas some young people changed into adapt[sic] modern lifestyles. Local authority attempted to revitalize some traditional ways of life for tourism development and make young generation learn (about) their cultural community.*"

Overall, Dong Hoa Hiep local residents still maintain traditional ways of life from past generations to the present because these values are the special identities of the Dong Hoa Hiep community. Through tourism development, the traditional way of catching fish by using bamboo tools was revitalized by offering fishing tours for tourists who lodge in home stays. By doing this, tourists can learn traditional values of families or local norms during visits at Dong Hoa Hiep village. However, young people adapted modern lifestyle because young residents are more likely to be involved in fashionable lifestyles and internet accessibilities. Currently, according to local peoples' opinion, the adaption modern lifestyles of the younger generation is not a negative impact, since people need to cope with the social development and convenient working conditions. Otherwise, it should be noted how to maintain a traditional way of life in the long term development of the village.

Another concern is that the Cai Be floating market is famous in Mekong delta area. It involves all the characteristics of the local's way of life in the western region as well as the local people. All the goods, fruits, and vegetables of farmers from the region are transported to the market by rafts and boats. That is a typical way of life for past generations when the area developed more waterways and its topography area is covered by many canals and rivers. However, now roads are more developed, so the main means of transportation for local people is motorbikes instead of boats. This also led to a change in the traditional way of life in which the majority of people used a waterway as their main transportation in the past. Currently, every house has a motorbike as their main vehicle; they rarely use boats to go the markets or elsewhere. From the perspective of this researcher, this is problem for the life of the floating market to survive in near future. Because if local people don't use boat as means to carry fruits or products to markets, the village will lose the traditional sales of the traders who lived on boats.

4.2.3 Family Structures

Dong Hoa Hiep had 3617 families living in seven hamlets. In the past, most households were extended families in that more than two generations lived together. Within the seven hamlets, only Phu Hoa, An Loi, An Ninh, An Hiep, An Binh Dong had developed extra tourism activities based on their ancient houses, orchards and traditional handicrafts which supplemented the adjacent main garden economy. This differs from the others hamlets whose only main income is from agricultural activities. However, unexpected disasters of weather or market trends, agricultural harvests offered without profits, as well as bankruptcy for some villagers leads to a breakdown in traditional families' structures. Rather than working in agricultural sections, young labor forces move to Ho Chi Minh City to work in factories and let the elderly and children stay at the village. In addition, tourism activities cannot provide enough jobs for all local residents. Similarly, as regards to Sharpley, transformation of the traditional family structures resulted from tourism development which lead to the shortage of younger labors to continue working in traditional agricultural businesses, (Sharpley, 1994). According to Tran Thi Dau, who is an owner of a house that makes rice flakes in An Ninh hamlet, "*Traditional extended family structures were changed significantly when young generation tended to move out of their family to stay at central town for doing tourism business or moved to Ho Chi Minh City working at factories[sic]*". As regards to Duong Van Phuong, "...it caused the breakdown of traditional structures and lacked of agricultural labor forces". Nguyen Van Tai stated "*Most households in the village still keep traditional family structures which extended families were favorable of local people[sic]. However, in some hamlets, traditional extended family structures were breakdown when young generations tended to move out their family to stay at central town for doing tourism business or moved to Ho Chi Minh City working at factories*".

4.2.4 Traditional Festivals and Cuisines

Traditional festivals were preserved through tourism development. For instance, the Dong Hoa Hiep temple ceremony was organized annually for local people to send their thanks to God for helping with their life. The village also gained support from The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) that cooperated with local authorities to investigate local cuisine, traditional festivals, traditional amateur music performance clubs, and proposed plans to re-establish forgotten customs. Local authorities made plans to revitalize the disappearing heritages and preserve the customs of temple worship ceremonies that were always maintained annually. Local people still maintain the authentic values of traditional local cuisine, handicrafts, and festivals. Local cuisines are well preserved by villagers when local traditional foods are cooked daily in addition to being cooked for festivals,

ceremonies, and parties. As Duong Van Phuong said, *“Local cuisines still maintained from generation to generation, for instance, grilled snakehead fish, elephant ear deep-fried fish, hot and sour soup, and pancakes.”* Tourists are served local cuisines during visiting and staying at the village. In general, traditional festivals and cuisines are well maintained in Dong Hoa Hiep village. It is thanks to these things that distinguish cultural values for its community.

4.2.5 Traditional Handicraft

Dong Hoa Hiep has many traditional handicrafts such as Milk Crackers, rice papers, coconuts candies, bees raising, and pop rice. These are made using traditional knowledge from old generations who passed the knowledge to new generations. In the 1940s the Milk Crackers handicraft was established and became a distinguished craft in An Hiep hamlet. At first this craft was produced for Vietnamese New Year, the Tet holiday, because milk cracker cakes were one of the important foods for the new year holiday. Making Milk Crackers was a signal and symbol of the Tet holiday. Later, this craft was expanded in scale to cope with market demands. Currently, Milk Cracker crafts has decreased in the number of household who are making the crackers as Duong Van Phuong has said, *“Older people still keep their own traditional handicrafts as the way of earning and maintaining cultural values. However, cracker milk is vulnerable to extinct in future because the number of milk crackers crafts has being decreased significantly, with figure reducing from 140 households to 40 households”*. In fact, local people have been giving up this craft, due to the high price of raw materials, lack consumer outlets and the low profits generated for the very hard work that is usually from midnight to late afternoon to make sure enough sunlight drying the cakes. Another reason for concern is that makers of this craft rarely welcome tourists to visit the manufactures to see the processes and buy products. Unlike An Ninh’ pop rice, coconut candies and bee raising crafts, the milk crackers craft industry is not located on any convenient tourist routes. In fact, An Ninh is situated near Cai Be floating market where tourists can enjoy charming landscapes of river. Meanwhile, An Hiep’s Milk Crackers craft is in the other direction. The houses in which the milk crackers are made are locate far away from the sub-highway as well, tourists take time to walk into these crafts. That is reason some tourists hesitate to visit this village. Because of the distance they don’t have enough time so they choose to be dropped off in An Ninh’s hamlet to enjoy various crafts. Currently rice papers, coconut candies, bee raising, and pop rice are seen as potential products to develop for tourism. Thanks to these crafts, An Ninh’s residents create activities for tourists thus gaining extra income.

Regarding these drawbacks Melker discusses that the negative cultural impact of tourism can be manifested in change or loss of traditional values which commodified traditional handicrafts, (Melker, 2006). *According to surveyed respondents of 400 local Dong Hoa Hiep villagers, those interviewed in or the village, “...agreed that milk crackers are vulnerable to [become] forget in future because high cost of raw material and lack of consumption outputs. In fact, most of [the] local people import raw ingredients from retailers who will consume milk crackers products finishing. The prices of raw ingredients are always higher than [in the] markets and [the] finished product costs [to] consume are cheaper. Since local people do not have enough money to buy raw materials villagers are depend on retailers or the retailers don’t buy milk crackers if local people don’t import [the] retailer’s ingredients.”* Similarly, Nguyen Van Sanh, who is living at this hamlet answered, *“Milk Crackers craft seem to be forgotten of (sic) local people because some people could not maintain it as[a] traditional craft for [a] family due to high price of raw materials and lack consumption outputs”*. Local people have work very hard to make milk crackers because it requires many extremely hard steps that require hand labor. One house hold with 3 - 5 members can earn around 200,000 VND (10 USD) for one day working long hours. It is clear that local authorities need to help An Hiep hamlet to boost and maintain their traditional knowledge; wisdom is very necessary.

There are three negative factors that directly affect the Milk Cracker crafts to further develop and survive. The first disadvantage is proximity which is not conveniently along tourist routes. Along the sub-highway, there are small scaled Milk Crackers produces. These craft houses are located far away main roadway, and tourists must walk into these destinations. Visitors cannot find the manufacturers without tourist operators. The second factor is the methods of production, one that is based on labor forces. The owners must work very hard to finish the whole process resulting in inefficient productivity. Additionally, local people are depending on middle retailers to provide raw materials and distributing finished products. Another concern is that the craft owners don’t have enough knowledge to enhance various potential tourism products. Local authorities should help local communities in the marketing management of commune outputs.

4.2.6 Ancient Houses

There are approximately ten ancient dwellings in Dong Hoa Hiep village where wooden houses and French architectural styles were harmonically blended. Tran Tuan Kiet house at Phu Hoa hamlet and Phan Van Duc residence at An Loi hamlet are two unique beautiful architectural blends that contain features which attract tourists for day visits and enjoying home stays. Besides, Nguyen Van Vo is also a famous place for tourists to enjoy serviced home stays and Southern traditional wooden style structures. As Duong Van Phuong stated, “*The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) coordinated with Showa Women’s University has been restored originally Tran Tuan Kiet, Phan Van Duc and Nguyen Van Vo ancient house which has been attracting more tourist to visit unique architectures and enjoy home stay services*”[sic]. These houses were restored by JICA support that helped to preserve authentic, aesthetic values as original samples. However, with limited funds for restoration, some residents, who are living in ancient houses without participating in tourism, have been using cement and concrete to repair damaged wall parts because they could not afford to buy original woods and hire craftsmen. In fact, iron wood is very expensive, more expensive than cement. They cannot afford to buy wood with their main income from low garden economies; whereas local authorities have a limited budget which cannot support restoration for all ancient houses in the village. As Nguyen Van Tai indicates, “*Some ancient houses of local owners didn’t receive support from JICA the owners restored their house by themselves using cements or concretes because of the high price original wood and craftsmen ships*”[sic]. In addition, local people get little benefits other than the owners of tourist destinations and owners of the Tran Tuan Kiet house and the Phan Van Duc residence. The conservation of Dong Hoa Hiep ancient houses is conducted by JICA Japan, particularly to help efficiently exploit available the potential tourism resources and implement community – based tourism project in the village. The cooperation between Vietnam National Administration of Tourism and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) supports the project “Supporting and promoting the role of communities in sustainable development in Vietnam through heritage tourism”. This project is organized in Duong Lam village in Hanoi city, Phuoc Tich village in Hue city, and Dong Hoa Hiep village, was implemented in three years from February, 2011 to February, 2014. Thanks to this project, Tran Tuan Kiet, Phan Van Duc and Nguyen Van Vo residences are well preserved and still maintain authentic, original ancient houses’ aesthetic values.



Figure 2. Tran Tuan Kiet house and Phan Van Tuan house were authentically restored by the JICA project
Source: Le Thi To Quyen, 17 May, 2014

However, through in-depth interviews and on site observation, it has been found that some other owners use cement or concrete to repair damaged parts which will diminish the authenticity of heritage values in ancient houses. While there are approximately ten ancient at Dong Hoa Hiep village, JICA had a limited budget to repair damaged houses. Therefore, JICA only choose those with significant and unique architectures to restore. Most ancient houses were passed from generation to generation and these houses were built by ancestors more than 100 years ago. The degradation of residences is inevitably and some local people want to change to new modern styles because of the aging of their residences. As mentioned previously, due to high price of original wood and hiring craftsmen, owners use cement or concrete to repair damaged parts. On the other hand, cement and concrete do not become infested by insects who can destroy wooden materials. Dong Hoa Hiep is noted as one of three ancient villages in Vietnam, so these Southern styled, ancient, wooden houses have architectural features that are unique, cultural values for this village. If local authorities don’t have regulations for ancient house repair and supports, not only will these houses diminish in authentic value but the village’s image will be tarnished in the long term because of using the wrong repair processes. Therefore, it is necessary to preserve the ancient image for Dong Hoa Hiep village.



Figure 3. Damaged wall part at living local house was replaced by cement
Source: Le Thi To Quyen, 17 May, 2014

In brief, according to local authority's perspectives and local resident's opinions, tourism creates both positive and negative cultural impacts on the local community, but the positive trade-offs outweigh its costs. From the local government's answers, it is concluded that tourism helps local communities to revive and preserve local cultural values. Tourism promotes cultural exchanges among local people and local people feel proud of their identities which are passed down from their ancestors. One concern mentioned above is the use of inappropriate materials to repair ancient houses not involved in the tourist trade and how this affects the authenticity of the village. Meanwhile, local authorities have a limited budget which cannot afford to support restoration for all ancient houses in the village. Another drawback to tourism is that the Milk Cracker crafts are vulnerable and could be forgotten. Especially in An Hiep, the Milk Crackers making household numbers has been gradually decreasing from 150 households to currently only 40 households. In fact, older people still keep their own traditional handicrafts as the way of earning and maintaining cultural values. However, the high price of raw materials, and lack consumption outlets people earn low profits for their very hard work from midnight to late afternoon. That is a reason why some residents have given up this craft at the present time.

5. Conclusions and Findings

Among 400 local residents at Dong Hoa Hiep village who were surveyed concerning the attitude of cultural impacts, 47.3% were males, and 52.7% were females. The research also illustrated that the majority of respondents were Kinh people, were married and had 4 - 6 people in their family. The highest percentage of those surveyed was 30 - 49 years old with the secondary school or high school educational degrees. The majority of respondents were farmers and gardeners, living in the area for 20 - 39 years, and native residents, whose income was 2,000,000 - 3,000,000 VND monthly and none employed in tourism industry. In terms of the impact on cultural values, the research findings illustrated that tourism helped local residents in the following ways: to heighten pride and appreciation of their community identity, to preserve traditional festivals, to promote cultural exchange in local community, to conserve traditional cuisine culture, to obtain aid from governments and international organizations to support cultural tourism activities and to preserve cultural values, to maintain the traditional authenticity values of ancient house involving in tourism businesses, and to revitalize traditional ways of life. However, respondents also perceived the breakdown of traditional structures and lack of agricultural labor forces, the change of local family's structures, the vulnerable extinction of milk crackers, and the restoration in some ancient houses used inappropriate materials by owner due to the high price of original woods and the cost of craftsmen.

6. Recommendations for Tourism Development Based the Impact to Cultural Values

6.1 Ancient Houses

Currently, ancient houses are a valuable, cultural history of the Dong Hoa Hiep community, so that both local governments and residents have responsibilities to preserve and maintain these values from generations to generations. Because ancient houses are located among modern houses in the village, the community should use these houses to generate an understanding of the past through to modern time. It means that tourist guides can interpret for visitors' understanding the long, historical developments of village. However, the village should have master plans to preserve around ten precise ancient houses in the village. It means that local authorities propose a master plan to upper government on the national level to gain support funds for restoring not only famous ancient houses, but also damaged local ancient residences in Dong Hoa Hiep village. In addition to local tourism, the government should call for new investments or more support from international organizations to help the community preserve the ancient houses. Basing on these investments, the village can boost tourism and

create more jobs for local people. Each hamlet leader should increase the awareness of local people the importance of ancient houses to the cultural spirit of values of Dong Hoa Hiep village. The local governments should propose safeguards and regulations to ask local people to follow new, established requirements.

6.2 Traditional Handicrafts

- Local authorities should enrich its efforts in supporting budgets for local people to upgrade cooking equipment, rent labour forces, buy raw materials, and enhance milk crackers brand reputations.
- The local governments proposes plans to make OTOP products (one village, one product) for seven hamlets at Dong Hoa Hiep village, which means that one hamlet of Dong Hoa Hiep village make one unique traditional craft. In fact, Milk Crackers are not only famous in Dong Hoa Hiep village, but are also well- known in others village in Mekong Delta. This is a reason why Milk Crackers hardly find new consumer markets. Milk Cracker manufacturers in Dong Hoa Hoa Hiep should make unique milk crackers which can only be found in the An Hiep hamlet. It means that local craft makers should brainstorm how to combine Milk Crackers with special foods of Dong Hoa Hiep. Because unique products make tourist more interested in discovering destinations and entice tourists to buy.
- Local governments should help residents to find new markets for consumer outlets because right now, old consumer markets don't disburse milk crackers. Governments can highlight this craft at any trade fair exhibitions to make people aware of this product.
- Local authorities should increase an awareness in local people the need to maintain the local traditional milk crackers craft, since this craft is also a part of Dong Hoa Hiep community's cultural values.

6.3 Traditional Festivals and Cuisines

Currently, local festivals and cuisine has been well preserved by local villagers through tourism development, however, the community should also be more concerned about future preservation of traditional festivals and cuisines. Since the village has welcomed more tourists local, traditional festivals and cuisine are more vulnerable to being transformed, to be adapted to tourist's needs or to generate staged authenticity, which is also likely to happen. By spending time away from their home, the younger generations often forget authentic, traditional festivals and cuisines. They may blend new, exotic cuisines into local foods. Therefore, it is more crucial to educate local villagers and young generations about traditional festivals and cuisines as well as encourage them to learn and preserve these traditional values for Dong Hoa Hiep village. Another suggestion is that local authorities should maintain festival ceremonies and local cuisine competitions annually to remind all residents of their heritage.

6.4 Family Structures

The problem for traditional family structures at Dong Hoa Hiep village is the breakdown of structures when young people move to Ho Chi Minh City for factory work. Therefore, it is necessary to create more job opportunities for Dong Hoa Hiep villagers which encourage young people to stay at the village. One recommendation is the village should organize periodically markets for local people selling traditional products, performing Southern traditional music, or helping with cultural ceremonies. These activities would which create jobs for the local people and educate younger generations about traditional cultural values of the community. Currently, tourism activities is developed by individuals and do not offer more benefits and jobs for other local people due to simple programs of visiting ancient houses, orchards and home stay. Therefore, by developing periodical weekend markets the local people can earn extra income from sale of local products, and the market would create more entertainment activities for tourists. In addition, a tourism committee boards should be developed to manage tourism activities in this village and divide benefits from tourist fairly among local residents. This means that the village would learn how to establish a management committee board as has the Ma Kam Pong community - based tourism village of Chiang Mai city, Thailand. Dong Hoa Hiep should have its own committee board to manage and control tourism activities of the village. The committee would divide tasks for every house and distribute income fairly among local household to make sure that every family would benefit from tourism. Additionally, the community could open vocational training courses for young residents and jobless people to provide him skills to find a good job and educate young people to preserve their traditional handicrafts and cultural values.

6.5 The Way of Life

Right now, traditional ways of life at Dong Hoa Hiep are maintained by local residents from generations to generations. However characteristics of authentic trading of the Cai Be floating market are vulnerable to change from long term development of the village. Due to developed road ways the main transportation of local people

has become motorbikes instead of traditional boats. The main concern is preserving the authentic floating market; of living on boats, of using pole in front of boat to advertise their products and using boats as means to carry fruits or products to markets. Therefore, the local governments have responsibilities to help people to maintain precise cultural values of traditional life. It should establish the Cai Be floating management board that would be responsible for managing orderly anchoring and selling by boat traders. Additionally, Cai Be and Dong Hoa Hiep authorities should make a policy for low-interest loans incentives for local traders on the floating market to renew boats and expand business or to put their children to school. Another solution is for the local government to encourage residents to maintain boat transportation within the village.

6.6 Community Identities

The village should continue to preserve cultural community identities as well as reclaiming lost traditional cultural values to revitalize the local community. Local governments will continue to support and maintain traditional festivals, and ceremony temples. It will help develop programs to educate the younger generations to learn and preserve the cultural values of their village.

7. Further Research

From the results of the above study, it is suggested that additional research is needed concerning the cultural impact on other tourist destinations in different geographical areas of Vietnam. The research would find out the positive and negative impact on cultural and social values, and investigate the relationship among different groups of people. Further research would include the environmental impact of tourism development on local life.

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