

The Stakeholders' Perception on the Development of Baguio City Public Market

Eleonor B. Atipen

MPA Student, Graduate School, University of Baguio

ABSTRACT

The development of Baguio City Public Market (BCPM) is awarded to SM Prime Holdings Incorporation (SMPHI) by the City of Baguio headed by Mayor Benjamin Magalong. Thus, the researcher aimed to understand and describe the perceived awareness of the active stakeholders participating in this development. As such, the researcher attempts to establish how the different stakeholders response to the development of BCPM using qualitative content analysis. Several online publications were subjected to analysis which provided the researcher the needed data. Thus, the paper identified five active stakeholders which are BCPM Vendors/ Baguio Market Vendor Groups, The Local Citizen, Tongtongan ti umili (TTU), Media Groups and Tourists. These stakeholders all possess power, legitimacy and urgency. The stakeholders' perceived awareness revolves on the idea that there is a development undergoing in BCPM, specifically the stakeholders believe in two opposing ideas. First, the development is in good hand as the stakeholders support the action of the City Mayor. Second, the stakeholders think that the city's socio-cultural and environment aspect is again threatened because of the participation of a big corporation which is the SMPHI. It is also established that regardless of the perceived awareness of the stakeholders, the success of the PPP project for the development of BCPM depends on the participation of the different stakeholders.

Keywords: Stakeholders, Development, Baguio City, Public Market, Perceived Awareness

INTRODUCTION

If there is a place where all products meet each other and each is exchange with money, that is a market (Agius & Clancey, 2019). When part of the community is allocated for goods/services and are consumed by the public, that is a public market (Morri, 2020). In Baguio City, Philippines, its Public Market is a place where traditional small-scale vendors sell goods and their culture is cultivated.

Baguio City Public Market (BCPM) has been existing even before the city was declared as a chartered City in 1911 and was formally established as the City's official public market in 1913 (Agoot, 2020). For more than a century, BCPM centers different trading activities that greatly affect the city's socio-economic development. Accordingly, this 109-year-old market is uniquely different from any other market as it offers the region's fruits and vegetables, arts, and cultures to the rest of the country. Thus, as the city develops economically and tourism flourished, evidently, the BCPM has suffered in many levels of its development.

Furthermore, it is important to note that socio- economic development in the City of Baguio now caters large-scale developments which mainly supports mainstream businesses in implementing development/rehabilitation projects (Milgram, 2017). This is obviously in response to the growing demand

of globalization, as it seems that our society is being forced to face the western world more rapidly and frequently (Lebovic, 2022). This established the very fact that the BCPM has undergone many unsuccessful attempts of rehabilitation and development.

Before we further talk on rehabilitation and development of the City's Public Market, it necessary that the researcher continue to establish the historical background of BCPM. Interestingly, the BCPM was first called as stone market because of its historic design and foundation (De Guzman, et., al. 2015). Throughout many decades, neighboring regions would come to visit the stone market and enjoy its festive as it offers enough amount of diverse goods. The stone market survives the bombing of the Japanese forces during the Second World War in 1945. Unfortunately, as the stone market stand the bombing, it was destroyed in the 1960's and 1970's as a fire caught a large section of the market. During the year 1970, another fire causes the destruction of the dry goods section. The very last fire in the City's public market was in 2008 (Cabreza, 2021). Accordingly, these unfortunate activities including the 1990 earthquake started to change the structure of the stone market which until such time and now, the name "stone market" vanished.

On the year 1974, Baguio city council passed an ordinance which detailed the policies that govern the entirety of the city's public market. This includes the authority of the city treasurer having the direct supervision, administration and control over the BCPM (Agoot, 2020). This ordinance was revised in 1986, 2001 and 2007. At present, BCPM occupies 61, 707 sq/m. This situates almost 4,000 vendors who everyday witness the inner struggles of the once called stone market. According to the narratives of Luchi Maranan who described herself as a "*laking- palengke*" (someone who grew up in the public market) in the article of Cabreza (2021):

"the market will always be at the center of how Baguio grew as a closely knit community.... the sense of community is so interwoven that customer relations are deepened and elevated into friendships".

This perhaps represents the very sentiments of the vendors themselves on why they challenge the city government's plan of rehabilitation of the BCPM. Allowing rehabilitation but preserving the culture, history and tradition that makes the BCPM a space of multi-cultural cultivation.

The development of the City's public market was introduced in 1995 and in 1996, Uni-wide Sales and Realty Development Corporation (Uniwide) was awarded as the main developer of the said market. However, the vendors of the BCPM question the constitutionality of the contract between Uniwide and the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Baguio. All courts, from the Regional trial Court, the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court ruled with finality that the market development ordinance and the contract were valid and constitutional (See, 2017).

Literature Review

The LGU of Baguio City headed by Mayor Benjamin Magalong signed Memorandum 433 series of 2020 which awards the Original Proponent Status (OPS) to SM Prime Holdings Incorporated (SMHPI) for the development of the public market (Catajan, 2020). This would mean that the BCPM development and rehabilitation is on the hand of a giant company which may deliver the complete realization of the 1995 vision of the LGU of Baguio City with regards to the City's Public Market - this is the actual development of BCPM.

However, it is important to note that this step is not final. The participation of SMPHI serves as the first step in a very long process. According to the mayor himself as posted in the official page of Baguio City Public Information Office (2020):

(The awarding of OPS to SMPHI) It is just the start and not the end of the process. It simply paves the way for direct negotiations between the City and SM to get the project elevated to the next stage.

This implies that public consultations and other important process will come to the picture. As according to Mayor Magalong as cited by Comanda (2022): “The city government and SM Prime Holdings, the company that was given by the city’s Public-Private Partnership for the People – Selection Committee (P4-SC) the Original Proponent Status (OPS) for the project, need to tackle the 18-point financial terms and 16-point technical terms for both parties to agree on the final terms of reference (TOR). After the TOR is published, other interested proponents may participate in the SwissChallenge.”

Thus, in the Swiss challenge, any interested party including the Robinsons Land Corporation (RLC) which was given a certificate of non-acceptance because of lacking documents and the vendors group can challenge the outcome of the TOR. Moreover, the mayor asked the SMPHI to listen to Baguio people on BCPM development (ABN, 2021).

The totality of BCPM development is a product of Public- Private Partnership (PPP). According to National Economic and Development Authority or NEDA (2022), PPP is defined as a contractual agreement between the Government and a private firm targeted towards financing, designing, implementing and operating infrastructure facilities and services that were traditionally provided by the public sector. This implies that in the case of BCPM, SMPHI will finance, design, and develop the BCPM. Wegrzyn and Wojewnik- Filipkowska (2022) established that the development of a wide range of infrastructure projects from the idea of collaboration between the public and private sector, known as PPPs, contributes to fulfilling social and economic needs, rises the quality of life, and supports sustainable development. Evidently, PPP is a tool to national development.

It is reiterated that with the presence of SMPHI, the city’s public market will remain as Baguio City’s property and the choice to enter into PPP is the best option as it will not cost any amount to the city (PIO-Baguio City, 2020). Furthermore, Baguio City Mayor Magalong as cited from Baguio City News (2020) states that: When the negotiation proceeds, rest assured that it will be our uncompromising position that the market stallholders are allotted the first two floors of the facility, are properly relocated during the building period, and will occupy stalls at reasonably agreed upon rates and will still be under the management of the city government.

This position is certainly an action that caters the clamors of the BCPM vendors of the uncertainties of this development phase towards their future. The assurance from the city government of Baguio towards the vendors is important as they are main recipient of the effects of this development. Moreover, the BCPM vendors are the one serving the public in Baguio City and the rest of the region’s products to the public. However, for some groups, this move of the LGU is a threat to the local market cooperatives. As cited by Catajan (2020), while the development of the city market still goes a long process, this latest news only show this take-over of this big corporate to the city’s market is real which is already plagued with problems brought about by the entry of large-scale, destructive, profit-centric development. The local market cooperatives are even challenged with this proposed development. Their voice to this matter is as important to the other stakeholders affected by this development.

The need for the city public market development and rehabilitation is necessary because it serves as the city’s show window (Domogan as cited by See (2017)). This means that the BCPM is the heart of the city’s economy because it is where economic activities transpired. More so, it attracts more tourists and more economic activities. In addition, insurance of the BCPM is not granted by Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) because it is not safe, as described it is fire hazard especially the building along

Magsaysay Avenue.

Being the most important and historic site of the City's development, BCPM deserves a makeover that needs to consider many factors. This development and rehabilitation must be participated by the different stakeholders. However, this kind of participation is crucial in the success of this PPP project. As established by Pirozzi (2019), one of the main reasons of failure in several PPP around the world is because of stakeholder opposition.

On this paper, the researcher inclusively described stakeholders as individuals, groups or organizations that can affect or be affected by the performance or completion of a project (Freeman 1984; PMBOK 2008 as cited from Amadi, et al., 2019). This can be any member of the community, be an individual or a group whose existence is affected by a project. Moreover, stakeholder are not simply a group of individuals who are affected, it is important to understand that the existence of stakeholders are interdependent with the project. As explained by Harrison (2019), stakeholders are groups and individuals that have an interest and participation in the actions and outcomes of an organization's projects. At the same time, the organization relies to these groups or individuals to achieve its own objectives. By this definition, there is a two-way interdependent relationship. As such, a stakeholder are group or individuals who either can contribute to the success of a project or undermine the same. More so, this exclude other groups who do not have a direct participation and effect in whatsoever to the main topic of this paper.

This means that identifying, capturing and addressing of stakeholder inputs is crucial to the success of PPP projects. This makes the stakeholders in the case of the rehabilitation and development of the city's public market important.

Furthermore, the stakeholder's participation to PPP needs to be understood in order to avoid risks in the implementation of the rehabilitation and development of BCPM. This paper specifically aimed to identify the active stakeholders in the undertakings of the city government towards BCPM. After identifying, the researcher explores the perception of these different stakeholders to the Baguio City's project on developing the City Public Market. As established above, the mere existence of the opinions of the stakeholders towards this development is crucial to the success of the PPP of Baguio City.

In Nigeria and Poland, the participation of the stakeholders must be acknowledged in the whole process of the PPP (Amadi, et al., 2019). This shows that the stakeholders' mere opinion on the matter of a wide range infrastructure that directly affect their lives is so important as it serves as a main indicator of the project's success.

This all leads the researcher to its main objective which is to lay down possible consideration for the city government of Baguio and the SMPHI in crafting their agreements in developing the City's Public Market.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

This paper is anchored on the theory of stakeholder management and social constructivism. The stakeholders' different level of awareness, reality and learning towards the development of Baguio City Public Market is constructed based on their experiences as a member of the community.

Stakeholder Management Theory

According to Harrison, et al., (2019), the main point of the stakeholder management theory is that an organization's effectiveness is measured by its ability to satisfy not only the shareholders, but also those agents who have a stake in the organization. This means that the stakeholder's satisfaction directly affect the success of the organization's projects. In this case, it is important that the researcher identify the

stakeholders in the city government's project with regards to BCPM. In order to facilitate this, the researcher anchor this paper to Stakeholder Management theory which guides the researcher in identifying the active actors to the issue at hand.

The researcher further employ the three attributes of identifying stakeholders by Mitchell et al. as cited in the research of Bahadorestani et al., (2019) which are power, legitimacy and urgency. These concepts are discussed as follows:

- 1. Power.** The power of stakeholders refers to their ability to mobilize social and political forces as well as their ability to withdraw resources from the organization (Yang et al., 2017). Power is the capacity of someone to carry and bring out the outcomes they desire by influencing and demanding others. Thus, an individual, group or party possess power can somehow affect the decisions of an organization. In relation to stakeholders, power is important as it identifies the intensity of a group's actions.
- 2. Legitimacy.** Legitimacy refers to the perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within a socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions (Bahadorestani et al., 2019). This means that an action or an activity of any groups or individuals are correct and accepted by the community. Thus, a stakeholder's existence and actions are bound with in accepted norms, beliefs and policies of the community.
- 3. Urgency.** Urgency is defined as "the degree to which stakeholder claims call for immediate attention" by Mitchell et al., as cited in the research of Yang, et al., (2017). When a stakeholder's demand over a project must be dealt with seriously and in an observed period of time then that situation implies urgency.

These attributes are the basis and criteria of the researcher in identifying the different stakeholder participating in the development of the BCPM.

Development

BCPM's development is a project of the City government for decades now. The development in the context of this paper refers to a total change with in BCPM. As according to Sumner & Tribe (2007), development is a process of structural change. He added that, development is a structural transformation and a long-term change that affects the members of the community including the economy. This leads to the anticipation that the development within BCPM will affect the socio- economic and cultural aspect of the community. On this paper, the researcher wanted to analyze the awareness of the stakeholders of this development. How far does the stakeholders hold knowledge and truth on this development?

In addition, development is also defined as a short to medium outcome of desirable targets. This applies to the physical structure of BCPM. As far as this paper is concerned, development of BCPM is describe as short to long term outcome of a progressing plan. From the physical structure to the effect of the outcome to the stakeholders.

Social Constructivism

Social constructivism is a theory about the development of awareness through the interactions that individuals have with each other.

It looks at the learning that an individual person gains from their interaction within the environment (Taylor, 2018).

Furthermore, from the social constructivist point of view, culture and context has an essential role in understanding in order to construct awareness through this understanding according to Derry as cited by

Bozkurt (2017). This is attained through social interaction which serves as the foundation of socio-psychological constructivism. In the context of the study, the socio-economic status of the city of Baguio with its existing diverse culture has a great effect on the perception of the different stakeholders on the development of Baguio City Public Market. This helps the researcher understand how the different stakeholders make sense with the on-going development of the City's Public Market. The awareness on this is constructed based from their learnings, experiences and reality. In addition, Louvigne, et al., (2018) stated that social constructivism also highlights the important role of culture, learning attitude and behavior in the cognitive process. This reveals how the human world is not simply natural but rather the human world is artifice, it is constructed. This implies that human creates or construct its own awareness of his world. Highlighting this, paves way to how the different stakeholders of the City of Baguio make sense of the development of BCPM. Similarly, Social constructionism is a philosophy that attempts to make sense of reality (Allen, 2017).

Significance of the study

This study investigates the perceptions of active stakeholders and their critical importance of inclusive in urban development projects. It reveals that stakeholder support or opposition significantly influences the success of public-private partnerships. It also emphasizes the need for transparent communication and the integration of local insights to ensure developments are both beneficial and culturally respectful. This approach strengthens community bonds and preserves socio-cultural heritage in addition to the promise of socio-economic prosperity.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to understand the perceived awareness of the different identified stakeholders on the development of the City's Public Market. Specifically, it seeks to achieve the following:

1. To identify the active stakeholders participating on the Development of Baguio City Public Market.
2. To analyze the perceived awareness of the stakeholders on the Development of Baguio City Public Market.
3. To describe the insights of the different stakeholders on the status quo of the Development of Baguio City Public Market.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design of this study is qualitative design specifically using content analysis and descriptive design in particular because the researcher analyzed and described the existing phenomena on perceptions of the different stakeholder of Baguio City to the BCPM development. Bailey (2019) states that descriptive design is used to explore information and to describe phenomena in details. Descriptive design was employed because the researcher explored the gathered data through its instrument, subjected the same to analyze and describe the results.

Sample/Population and Locale of the Study

The key informants of the researcher were four individuals who are members of the different stakeholders. They are all residents of Baguio City. The selection of the participants was based mainly on the inclusion

criteria which is a resident of Baguio City for more than 20 years. This is the inclusion criteria because the years of residency is an important determinant of the awareness of the stakeholders towards the development of BCPM and the City itself. Convenient Sampling was used to identify the participants of the study. In addition, the researcher also analyze data from legitimate online sources.

Data Collection Instruments

The primary tool used by the researcher in this study is content analysis whereby the researcher critically analyzed data from online articles specifically news articles and legitimate Facebook page. The researcher identified criteria to make sure that the data and sets of information that was analyzed were not hearsays but are coming from institutionalized agencies and are not bias. Thus, the online forum must be verified, active and managed by the city government of Baguio or any government agency; and by an existing active media page.

According to Roller and Lavrakas as cited by Roller (2019), content analysis is defined as “the systematic reduction of content, analyzed with special attention to the context in which it was created, to identify themes and extract meaningful interpretations of the data”. In addition, content analysis became an efficient alternative to public opinion research. It was also used to understand how institutions establish themselves in the texts they produce and explore the mind of individuals through what they said or wrote (Krippendorf, 2018).

Thus, the researcher employed content analysis to gather data from an existing content or information. From here, the data was analyzed and interpreted in a qualitative manner. In addition, Key Informant Interview (KII) was also used by the researcher to supplement the needed data. According to Ruane (2020), an interview is based on an interview guide which is a relatively unstructured tool that lists the general topics or issues to be covered in an interview. This aims to gather data from the participants who have direct awareness about the topic being researched. In this case, the researcher interviewed stakeholders who have awareness and experiences with regards to the development of the Baguio City Public Market.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher secured pertinent data from legitimate online forums. The set criteria were used to make sure that the online forums are not bias. In addition, opinions and comments to these online forums was subjected to critical evaluation before undergoing to content analysis. In such manner, the profiles of the different accounts were checked as they can be assessed without compromising consent of the owners.

For the KII, the researcher conducted the interview by informing first the participants. When the participants agreed on the dialogue on their most convenient time, the researcher conducted the aforementioned. Before the interview proper, the researcher secured consent from the participants. The researcher observed minimum health protocol in the conduct of the interview. At the same time, ethical consideration was observed. Upon securing the needed data, the researcher subjected the gathered data into content analysis. Furthermore, proper coordination, documentation, and health protocols were observed in the conduct of the study.

Treatment of Data

Apart from content analysis the researcher employed emic perspective in treating the gathered data. According to Fetterman as cited in the research of Tomej, et. al., (2022), an emic perspective represents

the insider’s view of reality in any given community. Furthermore, the local awareness and interpretations are crucial for the emic approach (Pilarska, 2018). This sociological perspective allows individual to frame the concept, idea or situation and then elaborate on it. Adopting this perspective allows the researcher to frame the perceived awareness of the stakeholders through the analysis of the gathered data. The researcher combined content analysis and emic perspective in order to establish the perceived awareness of the stakeholders and their responses to the development of BCPM.

Ethical Considerations

To address predetermined ethical issues, the researchers provided a letter seeking permission to conduct an interview to the participants. At the same time, verbal discussion of the research was conducted in order for the participants to know the nature of the research. In addition, confidentiality of the participants was explained to them verbally. Any information obtained will remain anonymous and will not be divulged publicly. The data gathered is kept according to the according to the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (National Privacy Commission, 2012).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results and discussion of data gathered by the researcher.

The active stakeholders participating on the Development of Baguio City Public Market

Based from the criteria provided in the framework of this study, the researcher was able to identify four active stakeholders who are affected and participating on Baguio City Public Market Development. The preceding table presents the identified stakeholders.

Stakeholder/ criteria	Power	Legitimacy	Urgency
1.BCPM Vendors/ Baguio Market Vendor Groups	✓	✓	✓
2. Local Citizen	✓	✓	✓
3. Tongtongan ti umili (TTU)	✓	✓	✓
4. Media Groups	✓	✓	✓

Table 1. The BCPM Stakeholders

As shown in the table above, the four identified stakeholders in this paper possesses the three criteria which are power, legitimacy and urgency that are all needed in order for one to be an active stakeholder as discussed by Bahadorestani et al., (2019) as stated in the Theoretical Framework. These stakeholders are: BCPM Vendors/ Baguio Market Vendor Groups, The Local Citizen, Tongtongan ti umili (TTU) and the Media Groups.

1. BCPM Vendors/ Baguio Market Vendor Groups

The BCPM vendors or the Baguio Market Vendor groups are the main recipient of the development of the BCPM. These are either the vendors themselves and/or their legitimate group. Serving as stall owners in the Public Market, the BCPM vendors plays an important role as a stakeholder in the BCPM development. On this note, the data shows that the BCPM vendors is prioritized by the city government in the proceedings of this development. As according to the data: the market stallholders are allotted the first two floors of the facility, are properly relocated during the building period, and will occupy stalls... (Mayor Magalong as cited from Baguio Midland Courier, 2021)

This shows that to ensure the project will be materialized, it is important that the BCPM vendors are given enough priority and that there is a rightful relocation for them. In addition, the BCPM vendors or stall owners serve as the bloodline of the BCPM because they serve the public of the important products of the city. After vendors procure the goods, these are displayed and sold to consumers who buy goods for their families' consumption or to businesses who come to purchase for the price and the quality of the goods (Lim, 2022). This implies that the BCPM vendors serves as the most important stakeholder in the BCPM development because they run the City's public Market with their various products that satisfy not just the Baguio City local citizens but all tourists visiting the market.

In addition, a public comment states that, I speak on behalf of our vendors. If there is really need to develop the city market, and we vendors are not against it but all we appeal is that, there must be assurance that we will all be absorb after the said development. It might not be our right but it is our privilege as we are the current stall owners and that is our right, to fight for our privilege given to us by the city government of Baguio. Market modernization is not bad so long as we, stall owners are not deprived of our privilege. (Public comment accessed from Baguio City- PIO official Facebook Page, 2020)

This is a manifestation of the role of the BCPM vendors as they urge to have an assurance on the development of BCPM.

2. Local Citizen

The Local citizen refers to the public who serves as the main consumers and customers of the BCPM. In relation to the article of Ranchordas (2018), wherein she mentioned that "citizens are recast to consumers who select from a marketplace of options." The local citizen includes the locals of Baguio City, Benguet and those locals who buy their main products at BCPM. Similar with the BCPM vendors, the local citizens reserve important voice in the whole process of BCPM development. From the content that was analyzed, many comments from the local citizens raised concerns on this project when the city government announced that they awarded the contract to SMPHI. Some of these comments are:

While I respect the mayor and believe him that there was no corruption, the point remains that it should remain to be a public market. Emphasis on PUBLIC. (Public comment accessed from Baguio City-see PIO official Facebook Page, 2020)

This was also agreed by another public comments which states that she would rather have a Market made by the people of Baguio: I still go for a market made by the people of Baguio Public comment accessed from Baguio City- PIO official Facebook Page, 2020

This comment implies that the BCPM is owned by the public and that there must be an emphasis on the interests of the Public. The findings of Jayasuriya, et.al (2020), confirm the importance of stakeholders' engagement in mitigating the issues in PPP projects and its related strategies. Thus, in the development of BCPM, the local public is an important factor in order for the SMPHI to successfully develop the City's Public market.

3. Tongtongan ti umili (TTU)

Tongtongan ti umili (TTU) is a multi-sectoral group of progressive people and sectoral organizations in the City of Baguio and its neighboring Municipalities that advocates for people's rights and welfare, genuine social change, and a just and lasting peace (<https://www.facebook.com/ttucpa/>, 2022). This organization is asserting people's support to resist in the take-over of SMPHI of the Public Market. Accordingly, we cannot let another corporate giant stake their claim in yet another public space. In the fight to #SaveBaguioMarket, let us fully support the efforts of our local market cooperatives. Let us be vocal in resisting the corporate takeover of our city, especially in these embattling times. (Jeffrey Larua, Tongtongan ti Umili secretary-general, cited from SunStar Baguio, 2020)

This support and active call of TTU to the vendors and the local public to participate in the undertakings of this development established that they also play an important role. Though, we can analyze that their support is towards the BCPM vendors association, their presence as a support mechanism to the public market's vendors including the general public is a tool in expressing different perspectives towards this development.

4. Media Groups

Specifically, online news organizations or groups have also played an important task in the BCPM development. On this, the researcher emphasizes on the online news organizations which were also analyzed as the main source of the content of this paper. Interestingly, there were five active online news outlets that were identified by the researcher namely: Sun Star Baguio, Baguio Midland Courier, Baguio City Guide, Herald Express and Amianan Balita Ngayon Online News. These different online news outlets published various articles regarding the BCPM development. More so, the publications on their online outlets aims to inform the public in the development of BCPM. Their presence in this activity has always been necessary because they are the number one source of information of the events happening around the city. From the analysis, the different news outlets present vital information which affects the decisions and viewpoint of the general public with regards to BCPM development. This makes the media groups to be an agent of truth and genuine information towards the locality of Baguio. This is supported by Whitford (nd) stating that the goal of the media is to present the facts and report each story in a way that will help us decide for ourselves what impact it might have or what value it holds. Thus, we can see here that the role of media specifically the online news outlets is to inform the public in good faith of the undertakings of the project. It is also important to note that these news outlets are available online making it very accessible with just a click anywhere and anytime.

The perceived present situation of the stakeholders on the Development of Baguio City Public Market

Anchored from Social Constructivism theory, the researcher was able to identify an established important perception of the mentioned stakeholders on BCPM development. The perceived awareness evolves solely to the idea that there is a development plan for BCPM. This theme however needs an essential sub-theme to establish the more specific perceived awareness of the stakeholders to BCPM. The researcher identifies two sub-theme which are: 1. the development is in good hand; and 2. the development threatens the socio-cultural and environment facet of the city.

The existence of the development plan in BCPM

The development plan for BCPM is more than 25 years old as it was established first in 1995 (See, 2017). However, the said plan was long overdue as there is no seen improvement to BCPM which makes the

Public Market hazardous already. This perceived awareness of the stakeholders specifically the local citizens and the vendors once ignited when the city Mayor announce last 2020 when he signed the Memorandum 433 series of 2020 this week, awarding the Original Proponent Status (OPS) to SM Prime Holdings Incorporated (SMPI) for the development of the public market (Catajan, 2020). This invites many supports and criticisms to the plan of the city government in its market development. The different stakeholders express their perception to this activity through commenting in the official Facebook page of the city government. As mentioned above, this perceived awareness has a sub-theme which will establish a more specific discussion to the perception of the stakeholders branching from this main theme.

1. The BCPMs' development is in good hand

This perceived awareness is a consolidated theme that reflects the support of the public to the development of BCPM. In line with this is a support towards the action of the mayor of the said City to award the contract to SMPHI. Undeniably, the support of the Public to the said project is intertwined with the support given to Mayor Benjamin Magalong.

Go go go mayor. We support your governance. Don't mind being controversial. Officials who avoid being controversial accomplish nothing. You have to be controversial sometimes to be productive and relevant. (Stakeholder' public comment accessed from Baguio City- PIO official Facebook Page, 2020)

Another comment in support to the city mayor emphasize the track record of Mayor Magalong.

This is why I voted him. checking his track record shows I love the new Baguio that's under his care. Thank you, Mayor. (Stakeholder' public comment accessed from Baguio City- PIO official Facebook Page, 2020)

In addition, Participant C (local citizen) said: *“Oo basta si Mayor Magalong, wala tayong dapat ikabahala dahil alam naman nya ang kanyang ginagawa at hindi sya makiki kapmi sa mga korap”*. Yes, we should not be afraid of the actions of Mayor Magalong because I believe that he knows what he is doing and he is not a corrupt politician (Personal Communication with Participant C).

The support of the public in this engagement is important, thus their perception which is represented by this theme acknowledge the role of the City Mayor in pursuing the said project.

According to Participant A (Media Member), I've heard of news circulating around that our market will be developed into a much more structured design (Personal Communication with Participant A).

This idea of Participant A is anchored on this sub theme. The new market will have a new structure which will depend on the one who will develop the market.

In addition to this, since the perception is in good hand, Participant C (local Citizen) states that:

Since I can see that it is advancing in terms of its cleanliness and orderliness, maybe it can be expected that after some time, it's structures or stalls will also have an upgrade (Personal Communication with Participant C).

The upgrade on Baguio City Public Market is also the perception of the stakeholders. A local citizen, the way they see the development is an upgrade on the market itself.

Moreover, this awareness of the stakeholders revolves on the participation of the city government headed by Mayor Benjamin Magalong and SMPHI. This collaboration is also the main headlines of many publications when the city government announced that they awarded the contract to SMPHI. This announcement gathered supports which is under this umbrella of theme. It must be noted that the support of the stakeholders and their positive awareness towards this project is because of the decisions of the mayor himself. Thus, serving as the head of the city, the mayor's support on this undertaking is very much important.

2. The development threatens the socio-cultural and environment facet of the city

This theme revolves on the participation of SMPHI on the development of BCPM. According to many public comments, the SMPHI have already done enough in Luneta Hill and the BCPM should be owned by the public. According to one participant (local citizen),

Okay lang naman sa akin yang development sa market basta wag lang SM kasi baka na naman maraming masisira sa ating kultura (For me, it is okay for as long as it is not SM who will be developing market because I am sure that there would be sacrifices again to our culture) (Personal Communication with Participant D).

The participation of a big corporation on this matter might undermine the local market itself and destroy many livelihoods by the BCPM vendors. This is agreed by Andriof (2002/2017), stating that, business corporations must be responsive and responsible to their stakeholders who can affect or are affected by their purpose but sadly, this is not the case. While it is true that big corporations help in funding such projects, the city might sacrifice the uniqueness of culture and diverse trading center presently offered by the BCPM.

This threat to the socio-cultural and the environment of Baguio City can never be denied as there are many concerns of different stakeholders to SMPHI which developed SM on the top of Luneta Hill. The community also do not forget the many cutting of trees on the same hill to pave way for the development of SM's parking lot.

The responses of the different stakeholders on the status quo of the Development of Baguio City Public Market

From the analysis of data, the response of the different stakeholders revolves on their perceived awareness. This awareness is their foundation of their response and actions towards the said development. From here, the researcher identifies two responses of the stakeholders, these are the overwhelming support and oppositions of the different stakeholders and concerned citizens to the said development.

Stakeholders' support

It was established above that there is a support from the public because of the initiatives of the city government headed by Mayor Magalong. The track record of the city Mayor himself is a basis of this overwhelming support the project received. The support of the public or the stakeholders towards PPP project is a pre-requisite of the success of any PPP projects. This is agreed by Wegrzyn and Wojewnik-Filipkowska (2022) which states that the participation of the stakeholders to PPP projects is a determinant of its success. This means that if the general public will support the undertakings of this project, then development of BCPM will smoothly be executed. On the other hand, despite this support to the Mayor, there is also an oppositions to this project.

Stakeholders' opposition

As a result of the established awareness of the stakeholders specifically the threat carried by the participation of SMPHI to this project, an undeniable opposition from the stakeholders is acknowledged. Researches by various authors suggest that the major factors militating against the successful growth and development of PPP projects is the marginalization of end-user stakeholder. (Torio-Coker et. al., 2020). However, in this study, it is not established that the stakeholders are being marginalized but they hold

strong presence in the accomplishment of this project. The mere presence of SMPHI makes their oppositions strong. According to participant B (market vendor),

Sasama ako sa mga protesta pag SM na naman ang magdedevelop ng market natin. Para sa akin, ibigay na lang ang development sa locals or sa market coop kasi sila naman nakakaalam ng problema at magpapaganda ng ating market (I will join in the protest if it will be SM who will develop the market. For me, it would be better if the development will be given to the vendors cooperative because they know better in the market) (Personal Communication with Participant B).

This shows that the public supports the development of the BCPM but not with SMPHI. The city has already sacrificed its environment and culture when SM was put up on top of Baguio City. This tension needs to be acknowledged by the City government of Baguio. However, it is important to note that PPP projects is one way to attain sustainable development (Wegrzyn and Wojewnik- Filipkowska, 2022). With the help of SMPHI, the long sufferings of the BCPM can be put to end if there would be a compromise negotiation between the parties.

On the whole process of the BCPM development, the stakeholders are not denied of their right to express their oppositions nor support. The City mayor himself informed the public of the Swiss Challenge which gives opportunity for the interested parties to participate. In addition, it is in good faith that the mayor himself urged SMPHI to listen to suggestions and recommendations of the different stakeholders. As according to Mayor Magalong as cited from Amianan Balita Ngayon Online News (2021):

To SM, you won the OPS fair and square, based on merit and credibility, because you submitted a very comprehensive proposal. My appeal to you is to listen to the people and make a legacy so that the sentiments and issues against you will be deleted.

The mayor challenge SMPHI to prove that they will not abuse the city, but to make sure that they will listen to the people of Baguio City. Through this, the success of the project is a shared responsibility not just of the city government of Baguio but with SMPHI and the active participation of the stakeholders.

The researcher stress that these responses of the stakeholders are expressed in the different content that was analyzed. Thus, the limitations of these objectives revolve to the active expressions of the different stakeholders of their perceived awareness in their social media accounts.

Conclusions

The study presents the importance of and nature of stakeholder perceptions and their critical influence on urban development. These stakeholders namely, market vendors, local citizens, the advocacy group *Tongtongan ti Umili*, and media entities represents the different important sectors of a community. Thus, everyone is represented in this process community development. While there is a consensus on the ongoing development, perceptions are split. Some stakeholders place their trust in the integrity of the city's leadership and the benefits of the development, while others fear potential threats to the socio-cultural and environmental aspects of the city due to the involvement of SM Prime Holdings Inc. (SMPHI). The stakeholders' active participation, encompassing both support and opposition is essential to the successful execution of the project. The importance of their collective influence on the development's trajectory is undeniably part of the whole process.

Recommendations

In light to these undertakings, the researcher proposes several actions. The different stakeholders should continue to actively participate in the PPP project of the government especially that it is awarded to

SMPHI. SMPHI and the City government of Baguio should continue to consult, inform and engage with stakeholders for awareness and proper participation which will not deprive the public of their right to participate in the project. Furthermore, SMPHI and the City government of Baguio should conduct stakeholders management to ensure the success of PPP project. Finally, research on PPP success should be conducted to further establish the success rate of PPP projects in local communities.

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