

A Case Study of Local Revitalization in Taiwan, China: Taking Macaran as an Example

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Abstract: The main purpose of this study is to analyze the local revitalization plan of indigenous peoples in Taiwan, China in respect to Macaran in Southern Taiwan, China by qualitative research methods. Based on this study, the actions that are necessary in order to revitalize indigenous tribes are as follows: (1) tribal leaders should create local revitalization teams and establish counselor mechanisms; (2) build ethnic consciousness and set clear revitalization goals; (3) identify the DNA of local revitalization development region; (4) collaborate with external enterprises and universities for joint development; (5) provide employment opportunities to attract young people or talents to return to their hometowns to work after the maturation of the plan.

Keywords: Local revitalization; Regional planning; Community construction; Aboriginal tourism

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1. Introduction

The term “local revitalization” originated from a major policy, as proposed by the late Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2014, emphasizing on the revitalization of local economies, which encourages young people to build towns “overflowing with individuality and charm,” solves the problem of reduced rural population, and creates more job opportunities. As Taiwan, China faces the same problems as Japan, Taiwan, China’s government designed a plan for local revitalization in 2017 after considering Japan’s ideas and successful cases. The main strategies of the “design overturn, local revitalization” plan include conducting a thorough inquiry of the existing local resource advantages of “land, production, and people” as well as establishing the unique characteristics and core values of the region. Land, production, and people are the basic elements in the promotion. The design overturn and guidance mechanism of “creativity + innovation + entrepreneurship” links the creation of local “works, products, and commodities” to “design power, productivity, and marketing power”, in order to achieve the goal of “local revitalization” [1]. The “national strategic plan of local revitalization” aims to maintain Taiwan, China’s total population at no less than 20 million in the future and hopes to achieve equal number of immigration and emigration by 2022 and that local people will return by 2030, in order to gradually promote immigration, ease capital-circle centralization, and achieve the goal of “balanced Taiwan, China.” The promotion plan puts people first and places the region as the main body of development. Thus, the local DNA and characteristics of resources are collected and used. The local revitalization plan is put forward through the cross-field integration of

five things; namely, “enterprise investment in hometown,” “technology introduction,” “integration of some revitalization resources,” “social participation,” and “brand establishment” [2]. According to research data [3], the local revitalization plan of Macaran in Southern Taiwan, China has achieved success. Therefore, through literature review, field observations, and interviews, this study analyzed the strategies for the implementation of the local revitalization plan, so as to provide reference for tribal planning and local revitalization through qualitative research methods.

2. Literature review

In a study [4], Dai analyzed the local revitalization of Ksunu’ (Dragonfly) Tribe and found out that the local development of indigenous tribes does not depend on condensing ethnic consciousness and making specific goals alone, but rather utilizing counseling mechanism for companionship and achieving unity. Moreover, through the development of cultural tourism, bamboo arts creation, and marketing platforms for agricultural products, more employment opportunities are created to attract youth to return to their hometowns.

Fu [5] took Bulaubulau Tribe as the research subject and analyzed how to develop local products. The results showed that the development axis of Bulaubulau Tribe was from leisure farm and in-depth tourism to the establishment of Root Vocational School. These transformation factors were found to be correlated with market competitiveness, market preferences, and structural problems. Whenever there are difficulties or conflicts, the tribe will discuss the next step of action through tribal meetings. Bulaubulau Tribe integrates many different concepts, such as social enterprise, local revitalization, symbiotic community, integration of industry and learning, and so on. It is like a hybrid, reflecting the characteristics of mobility and flexibility of a postmodern society. Jang [6] studied local revitalization in SaySiyat Pakasan Indigenous Community. Based on the SWOT analysis results, the study suggests specific strategies as a reference for the future development of Pakasan Tribe: (1) the cooperative shall establish a support mechanism to assist young people in returning to their hometowns; (2) expand the cooperative business projects to control the leading power of local development; (3) combine education and promotion to familiarize the next generation with the local industry and future development; (4) encourage young people to return to their hometowns through part-time work; (5) establish a local counseling team to implement local revitalization. Kuo [7] studied local revitalization among the Atolan Tribe, in which the result shows that there is a competition act inside central agencies. The local government has been forced to amend the proposal indefinitely due to inaccurate cognition. The Tribe lacks professionals, and the township office frequently interferes. Yang [8] studied the local products of Dashanbei and Paskwaran Tribe and provided opportunities for tribal development of forest tourism from the perspective of forest restoration. These are the following findings: (1) local residents can encourage the outflow population to return to their hometown and live in another place or provide short-term employment and accommodation exchange opportunities, so that people who want to experience local rural life can also make contributions; (2) academic and professional units as well as the government should consider the local needs and respect ethnic culture when guiding local productions; (3) local entrepreneurs also need the support of relevant laws and regulations, and it is necessary to remove the obstacles of relevant laws and regulations or assist in legalization; (4) the implementation of education related to local entrepreneurship should be accelerated, local entrepreneurship should be popularized, and young talents should be cultivated and given opportunities to develop their talents in local areas.

3. Research method

3.1. Research scope

Macaranzuo, which is an Amis fishing Tribe with hills behind and the sea in front, is located on the easternmost side of Mudan Township, Pingtung County, with the lowest elevation and close to the Pacific

Ocean. The village, which is known by its former name, Mudanwan, and called “Macaren” in Paiwanic, is the only coastal tribe in the township. The Seqalu ethnic group from Hengchun Peninsula first developed and settled in Macaran; then, other ethnic groups, such as the Hengchun Amis, Pingpu Makatao, Minnan, and Hakka, came to reclaim the land. Finally, a natural ethnic settlement was formed, which is the tribe with the most distinctive characteristics of ethnic integration in the township ^[9]. According to the demographic statistics of the Mudan Township Household Registration Office in July 2021, Macaran has a total of 203 households, including 205 males (including 157 aborigines) and 191 females (153 aborigines) ^[10].

3.2. Data collection

3.2.1. Document analysis method

In order to understand the relationship between local revitalization and tribal development, it is necessary to first understand the development context of local revitalization in Japan, and then analyze the various policies and plans of local revitalization in Taiwan, China.

3.2.2. Observation method

After analyzing the environmental resources of the tribes, the summarized resources were investigated to understand the authenticity of these resources. In addition to the tribes in this case study, the actual observation sites also include various environmental and cultural heritage resources in adjacent areas.

3.2.3. Interview method

In the third stage of this study, interviews were conducted with indigenous people of local tribes (tribal residents, Development Association personnel, as well as homestay and hospitality operators). The key points of the interview include the following:

- (1) “community participation” focuses on how to form local consensus and how to maintain local development awareness;
- (2) “operation and management” focuses on the business objectives and vision of local development, local revitalization, and ecotourism;
- (3) “education promotion” focuses on how to cultivate local creative and ecotourism talents.

After the interview, this study first converts the interview data into verbatim form and then analyzes the comprehensive literature analysis and practical observation results. In order to prevent subjective judgment of the researchers, the joint analysis method was adopted, so as to obtain a consistent consensus during SWOT. Following that, the analysis results were written out.

4. Result

4.1. DNA analysis of revitalization in Macaran

The local revitalization plan puts people first and places the region as the main body for development; the local DNA and characteristics of resources are collected and used. In this study, the DNA of revitalization in Macaran is summarized in **Table 1**.

Table 1. DNA and characteristics of resources of revitalization in Macaran

Natural ecology and environmental resources	Aboriginal cultural heritage resources
(1) Alangyi Ancient Trail (from Ansu to Hsuhai section) (See Figure 1)	(1) Stream fishing culture
(2) Hsuhai Guanyinbi Natural Reserve	(2) Culture of catching milkfish fries and flying fish
(3) Hsuhai Prairie (See Figure 2)	(3) Bamboo raft production process and culture
(4) Mudan Bay Coast (Pacific Ocean view)	(4) Traditional craft of alpinia weaving Hsuhai Fishermen Festival (August 15 every year)
(5) Hsuhai Hot Spring	
(6) A unique global environment with temperate, cold zone, tropical, and subtropical ecosystems	
(7) Sunrise Tour	
(8) Ginger Lily Season from July to October	



Figure 1. Alangyi Ancient Trail (from Ansu to Hsuhai section)



Figure 2. Hsuhai Prairie

The difference between local revitalization and holistic tribal construction is that “holistic tribal construction” emphasizes on the key development of a tribe, whereas local revitalization emphasizes on regional integration. According to the data from the Mudan Township Office, the following sightseeing resources are available near Macaran (village): Mudan Park, Mudanchi Mountain, Mudan Reservoir, Silinge Mountain Recreational Area, Dongyuan Forest Recreational Area, Dongyuan Wetlands, Shimen Ancient Battlefield, Mudanshe Memorial Park, Cacevakan relics, Kuskus Tribe, and historical trails.

4.2. Analysis of local revitalization practices in Macaran

4.2.1. Community participation

- (1) The sponsors of the local revitalization plan are indigenous people who returned to the land; however, the plan was initially questioned by many people in the tribe. The returned indigenous people’s rejection of Alangyi Ancient Trail road construction was also rebuffed by the residents. The returned people gradually became familiar with the village head and some key figures in the village through donations for schools and compulsory education for tribal children. Because the plan sponsor aided the local revitalization development of Macaran without purpose nor receiving any benefit, after the ideas for local revitalization were put forward, they were accepted by the residents.
- (2) The success of the local revitalization plan in Macaran is attributable to the residents’ consensus and cooperation system. The plan executor stressed that the starting point is to put the interests of the village first and to establish a Macaran public fund for future development.
- (3) A certain percentage of the revenue from scenic locations in the Hsuhai Prairie must be returned to the residents of Macaran, and these tourism locations must employ local people to manage the stalls. The

focus of this plan is to create job opportunities for Macaran residents that will attract young people to return their hometown and increase local sources of income.

4.2.2. Operating management

- (1) The official Macaran Tourism Development Association has a complete organizational structure and an adequate number of service officers, and it is under the jurisdiction of the Mudan Township Office. Macaran is an indigenous autonomous reserve, and the tribal residents work together to keep the landscape beautiful, neat, and clean along the road connecting the village to the outside world.
- (2) The resource subsidies and funds received by Macaran from the government for local revitalization are managed and utilized by the Macaran Tourism Development Association; they must be written off and used according to the planned expenditure items. At present, most items in the plan focus on the construction of Macaran, such as landscape imagery, hot spring area reconstruction, and sea view trail construction. Unlike previous plans or subsidies of the government, which offered sums of money for direct use, the current plan will completely reimburse funds after being reported.
- (3) In addition to the local revitalization subsidies of the government, the National Chung-Shan Institute of Science & Technology allocates compensation to Macaran every year, in order to compensate for damages caused by missile testing. The local revitalization plan in Macaran has significantly improved the local economy and increased people's income.
- (4) Now, the tribe provides guesthouses, tourist services, aircraft shops, a Macaran visitor center, tourist information stations (at scenic locations), and restaurants and eateries for visitors.
- (5) Science and technology must be included in the local revitalization plan along with the collaboration of industries, governments, and universities. As the sunshine duration is long in Macaran and suitable for solar power generation, the tribe will expand its hot spring area, and develop, generate, and use solar power in the subsequent stage. Based on this environmental advantage, the generated solar power will provide electricity for its own use, and sell the excess electricity to Taipower to increase local revenues.
- (6) In addition, King's Town Construction purchased a piece of land in Macaran and plans to build a five-star hot spring hotel.
- (7) The current plan focuses on the construction and overall development of Macaran, and letters of intent to cooperate have been signed with local business owners.
- (8) In order to protect the beautiful coastal landscape and sand beach, the plan intends to build trails and wooden walkways.
- (9) Macaran has an ideal environment for meditation courses and is suitable as a resort for the elderly.

4.2.3. Education promotion

- (1) In order to successfully develop the local revitalization plan, it is necessary to create products with local characteristics or special agricultural products that can be managed and promoted in the long run. Macaran's products are hot springs, prairies, and the Alangyi Ancient Trail.
- (2) Rockland's hiking activities are promoted by internationally renowned companies, which attract foreign visitors to Macaran. The development of the local revitalization plan of the tourism industry in Macaran has advanced with these hiking activities, which will leave a significant impact on local revitalization efforts in Macaran.

5. Conclusion and suggestions

5.1. Conclusion

According to Shih, the key to the success of Macaran's local revitalization includes community cooperation, as based on crisis awareness, construction of autonomous and high-quality community governance, as well

as effective combinations of key local advantages with external resources ^[3]. According to the findings of the field study, the SWOT analysis results are shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2. SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
Rich in natural ecological resources	The tribe's younger population is decreasing
Aboriginal historical and cultural assets	Lack of indigenous talents for local revitalization development
The National Chung-Shan Institute of Science & Technology returns fixed funds to local people each year	Indigenous people lack technology application abilities
The public sector and the guidance team help to build the ecotourism industry	Inconvenient transportation
	Poor overall aboriginal image of the tribe
Opportunities	Threats
The area is a priority for the promotion of the local revitalization development plan	The tourism development themes of most tribes are approximately the same
External industries, governments, and universities help to promote the plan	Some residents disagree with or even oppose the plan
	Some residents still favor the idea of government subsidies

5.2. Suggestions

While Macaran's local revitalization plan is still in the development stage, based on the developments of the ecotourism industry in the tribe and the neighboring areas, it is currently developing in the planned direction. According to the concept of five arrows for development of local revitalization, Macaran shall strengthen its efforts toward "enterprise investment in hometown" in the future, in order to promote sustainable local development, increase job opportunities, and attract young people to return to their hometown to work. In terms of "technology introduction," the local advantages shall be used to develop solar power generation. The aforementioned points allow more local people to participate in the local revitalization development plan and promote further local economic development. "Brand building" is also very important. While ecotourism is the main industry in Macaran and nearby tribal and rural areas, Macaran's unique advantage is that it is the only undeveloped ancient coastal road and nature reserve in Taiwan, China. Therefore, Macaran's future local brands should be positioned in this direction.

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Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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