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## Research Article

### Assessment of Sustainable Tourism in Region 7 and Its Implication

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#### ABSTRACT

The tourism industry is one of the most forward-looking and dynamic in the world. It is critical to plan and grow tourism in a way that balances the needs of the environment, the economy, and society as a whole. Based on the findings it can be noted that the tourism industry cannot sustain itself without the help of community and local government units, which were mentioned in the interpretations of sustainable tourism by many local citizens and barangay officials. Hence, ensuring the sustainability of tourism development implies keeping high level of awareness and strong commitment among stakeholders regarding crucial issues like quality assurance and sustainable practices. The local government may support the development of tourism by allotting adequate budget that can be used for promotion and maintenance of the tourist destination. The participation of the local residents in the implementation of the tourism development plan may be solicited as with their local government.

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### Introduction

In light of the increasing quantity and complexity of tourism services, it has become necessary to approach the sector as a separate branch of the rising global economy (Sofronov, 2018; Gunn, 2020). The rise of tourism has gotten a lot of attention recently because of how quickly it has risen. Many economic sectors have turned to tourism as a key goal because of its good influence on residents' well-being (Amore, 1988; Liburd & Edwards, 2010), job creation, and economic growth (Blancas et al., 2015; Franzoni, 2015). (Blancas et al. 2010; Perez et al., 2010).

International visitor arrivals totaled 1186 million in 2015, up 52 million from the previous year, according to prior data. This represents an increase of nearly 5 percent. The number of overseas immigrants has increased by 4% or more year since 2010 despite the worldwide economic crisis that began in 2009. (UNWTO, 2016). International tourist arrivals are accounted for by 14 percent of business tourism, just over half of all international tourist arrivals (53 percent) are for holidays, recreation, and other forms of leisure, and 27 percent are for other reasons such as visiting friends and relatives (VFR), religious reasons, and medical

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treatment. By definition, tourism is a complicated phenomenon with far-reaching social, political, cultural, and economic repercussions. To a greater extent than other service industries, the tourist industry depends on the progress made in other parts of the global economy at any given time (Sofronov, 2018).

For a sustainable tourism model to be successful, it must make use of relevant techniques for quantifying and grading changes in tourist sustainability over time (Blancas et al., 2017; Cernat & Gourdon, 2012; Poudel et al., 2016). As a result, sophisticated indicators, self-governing groups and interconnected networks are required. Stakeholder requirements are critical in tourist planning to make it sustainable, and indicators serve as a yardstick by which enterprises may assess their progress toward achieving specific goals (Liburd & Edwards, 2010; Caiado et al., 2018; Budeanu et al., 2016). After the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) published the Brundtland Report in 1987, sustainable development became one of the primary goals in many economic sectors. It took the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro five years later to try to solidify a global strategy based on sustainable development models. The Earth Summit was held in Rio de Janeiro (Blancas et al., 2010).

The economic impact of business tourism on regional economies is significant, and the industry is one with significant growth potential (UNWTO, 2011). Business tourism has a positive influence on the local and regional economies, as well as a positive growth outlook (UNWTO, 2011). Also, according to UNWTO (2018), tourism is one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world because of its steady expansion and diversification over the years. Tourism in the modern era is intimately tied to growth and includes an increasing number of new locations. As a result of these forces, tourism has emerged as a crucial engine of social and economic advancement. Tourism, according to Holloway and Humphreys (2019), is concerned with the planning of trips from home and the manner visitors are greeted and catered to in the nations where they will be staying. Travel sector employees will be held accountable for making sure that trips, whether

domestic or worldwide in scope, result in maximum pleasure for visitors.

As Aguila and Ragot (2014) pointed out, the government recognizes the tourist industry as an essential source of foreign money, investment, and income as well as a way to create jobs and boost the country's overall production. For the following reasons, it deserves to be a top priority for national development: it is a powerful and efficient industry; its impact on social development is broad and deep; it generates strong peripheral benefits; the Philippines can compete and win; and it contributes to the preservation of cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life-support systems. and. As a result of its growth as a major industry across the world, tourism is becoming increasingly significant.

Numerous researches have been conducted to discover the elements that contribute to the global tourist business. Ecotourism, according to Green (2018), has a substantial impact on the local tourism business. An additional economic benefit of ecotourism is employment creation in the local community. Workers at ecotourism sites not only get paid, but they may also learn valuable skills that they can use in other fields of work and even improve their nutrition by receiving meals while on the job. When people have extra money, they may invest it in their own enterprises or give it to others in the community by purchasing local products and paying for child care and other services. Providing training in relevant skills is another way ecotourism firms may benefit the community. Additionally, ecotourism benefits tourists on a personal level, but has far-reaching implications. Travelers might gain a better understanding of the value of preserving resources and reducing waste by seeing places of outstanding natural beauty, seeing animals in their natural habitats, and meeting people of local communities. As a result, they are motivated to live more sustainably at home and may broaden their horizons in terms of cultural awareness. Travelers also learn how to assist other communities by buying local items and avoiding giving out free presents like toys and stationery. When ecotourists get back home, they tell their friends, family, and coworkers about their experience.

### **Sustainable Tourism**

The tourism industry is one of the most forward-looking and dynamic in the world. It is critical to plan and grow tourism in a way that balances the needs of society's environmental, economic, and social goals in order to achieve maximum benefit. Managing the growth of sustainable tourism means maintaining high levels of satisfaction for visitors while also providing meaningful experiences for customers, raising their awareness of sustainability concerns, and spreading sustainable tourism practices (Streimikiene et al., 2021). Sustainable tourism indicators have been produced since the early 1990s by a variety of academic institutions, international organizations, governments, and commercial companies. Accordingly, sustainable tourism indicators are described as "the collection of measurements that offer the required information to better understand the linkages and impacts that tourism has on the cultural and ecological settings in which it takes place and on which it is highly dependent" (World Tourism Organization, 1996). The WTO's 1992 and later indicators are particularly useful. A practical guide for the development and use of indicators was created from these findings in 1996. (World Tourism Organization, 1996). Workshops were organized at the regional level using this book as a springboard, and case studies were examined by applying various indicator systems to specific locations (Dymond, 1997; Coccossis et al., 2001; Cottrell and Duim, 2003). Finally, the WTO issued a guide on sustainable development indicators for tourism destinations based on the lessons learned from these case studies and other institutions' efforts (World Tourism Organization, 2004).

Many scientific research, notably in tourist studies, have concentrated on sustainable tourism growth, and it has been one of the tourism studies' fastest-growing study topics since the late 1980s. According to Buckley, sustainable tourism has been around for around two decades (2012). First-decade research focused on foundational concepts from tourism, economics, and environmental management backgrounds. Many reconceptualizations and criticisms emerged in the second decade, including those by Sharpley (2000), Go (2002), Liu

(2003, Saarinen 2006), and Lane (2009b) (2013). According to Bramwell and Lane, two of the industry's brightest pioneers, sustainable tourism originated largely as a negative and reactive concept in response to multiple tourism issues, such as environmental destruction and devastating implications for society and traditional cultures (Bramwell & Lane, 1993). Tourism development has come to be considered as a solution that may bring about positive change by using sustainable tourism practices. As well as the known techniques to regulation and development management, sustainable tourism has played a significant role in discovering strategies to provide good advantages (Bramwell & Lane, 2012).

When studying tourist development, it's important to apply the notion of sustainability to the existing tourism system at a location. People who have an interest in a destination fall into three categories: national government, the place they live, and industry or the tourism business that operates there. The DOT and its linked agencies frequently represent the interests of the national government in tourism. Sustainable tourism development has developed, and other resource-oriented ministries, such as Agrarian Reform, and DENR, are strengthening their involvement in national policy tourism development.

There are several stakeholders at the local level. Additionally, local members of civil society, mainly non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or community-based organizations (CBOs), are represented by LGUs, including the barangays. Park, museum and historic site managers would also be involved in the promotion of tourism locally.

### **Methodology**

The descriptive method of research will be used in this study, which will be describing the descriptive response of the respondent's group and the characteristics of the population under study. It focuses on the current state of relationships, behaviors, attitudes, and processes, as well as the impacts and trends that are emerging. Data collection and analysis are only the beginning of descriptive research. What is described has aspects or interpretation of its importance.

Cebu City is composed of 80 Barangays; 50 of which are classified as Urban Barangays while 30 are classified as Rural. This study will conduct the assessment on its 10 rural Barangays and the instrument of the study was adopted from the tourism guide book for Local Government Units revised edition (2017). The development of this Tourism Guidebook would not have been possible without the initiative and collaboration of the Department of Tourism, Department of the Interior and Local

Government, and Department of Environment and Natural Resources, with vital funding support provided by the Government of Canada thru the Local Governance Support Program for Local Economic Development (LGSP-LED) project and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) thru the Biodiversity Partnership Project (BPP) (DAP). The researcher utilized a 5-point Likert scale to assessed the perception of the respondents relating to STD of the identified locale of the study.

## Results and Discussions

### Results

Table 1. Uniqueness and Natural Beauty

Uniqueness and Natural Beauty	Barangay Officials		Community Representative	
Unique Attractions	4.68	SS	4.12	S
Beauty (nice to see, hear, feel, smell, taste)	4.48	SS	4.20	S
Natural/ Undisturbed	4.27	SS	4.16	S
Recognized tourist attraction by DOT	4.62	SS	4.23	SS
Peaceful	4.46	SS	4.12	S
GRAND MEAN	4.50	SS	4.17	S

Table 1 shows the descriptive results of the perceptions of the respondent groups on the uniqueness and natural beauty of tourist spots. Data shows that all the indicators were rated by the barangay officials with strongly satisfied with an overall weighted mean of 4.50. Recognized tourist attraction by DOT got the highest weighted mean of 4.62 which verbally described as strongly satisfied, while natural/ undisturbed got the lowest weighted mean of 4.27 which verbally described also as strongly satisfied. Community respondents on the other hand, uniqueness and natural beauty got a final overall mean of 4.17 which verbally described as satisfied. Recognized tourist attraction by DOT got garnered the highest weighted mean of 4.23 which verbally described as strongly satisfied, while peaceful and unique attractions got the lowest weighted mean of 4.12 which verbally described as satisfied. This indicates that community representative was satisfied in

terms of the uniqueness and natural beauty of local tourism spot, while barangay officials were strongly satisfied. Cebu has diverse and unique products and services to offer, beautiful tourist attractions, and at the same time, provides a great opportunity to investors. There are hundreds of places you can visit if seeking adventure in the Queen City of the South. The island itself has more than 90 discovered waterfalls, hundreds of mountains, and several other tourist attractions that can certainly entice any traveler. Previous study of Erislan (2016) aimed to assess the condition of tourist attraction and uniqueness of resources. Stated that all kinds of unique resources both tangible and intangible represent a basis for the creation of economic value. Thus, this indicates that there is a need to treasure these natural resources because this also creates profit to our country.

Table 2. Historical / Cultural Value

Historical / cultural value	Barangay Officials		Community Representative	
Built heritage	4.25	SS	4.12	S
Festivals	4.32	SS	4.10	S
Culinary experience	4.42	SS	4.05	S
Museum	4.26	SS	4.03	S
Native historical sites	4.52	SS	4.09	S
GRAND MEAN	4.35	SS	4.08	S

Table 2 shows the results of the perceptions of the respondent groups in terms of historical/cultural value of local tourist spots. Data shows that all the indicators were rated by the barangay officials with strongly satisfied with an overall weighted mean of 4.35. Native historical sites got the highest weighted mean of 4.52 which verbally described as strongly satisfied, while Built heritage got the lowest weighted mean of 4.25 which verbally described also as strongly satisfied. Community respondents on the other hand, historical / cultural value of local tourist spots got a final overall mean of 4.17 which verbally described as satisfied. Built heritage garnered the highest weighted mean of 4.12 which verbally described as satisfied, while museum got the lowest weighted mean of

4.03 which verbally described as satisfied. This indicates that community representative was satisfied in terms of the historical and cultural value of local tourism spot, while barangay officials were strongly satisfied. According to Andreu (2017).

Table 3 shows the results of the perceptions of the respondent groups in terms of accessibility of local tourist spots. Finding shows that barangay officials rated accessibility with an overall weighted mean of 4.35 which verbally described as strongly satisfied. Distance from town center got the highest weighted mean of 4.46 which verbally described as strongly satisfied, while distance from service center got the lowest weighted mean of 4.20 which verbally described also as satisfied.

Table 3. Accessibility

Accessibility	Barangay Officials		Community Representative	
Accessible all year	4.28	SS	4.20	S
Regular/commercial transport service available	4.42	SS	4.00	S
Distance from service center	4.20	S	4.12	S
Distance from town center	4.46	SS	4.10	S
Using modern transport	4.26	SS	4.06	S
GRAND MEAN	4.35	SS	4.10	S

Community respondents on the other hand, accessibility of local tourist spots got a final overall mean of 4.10 which verbally described as satisfied. Accessible all year garnered the highest weighted mean of 4.20 which verbally described as satisfied, while regular/commercial transport service available got the lowest weighted mean of 4.00 which verbally described as satisfied. This indicates that community representative was satisfied in terms of the

accessibility of local tourism spot, while barangay officials were strongly satisfied. According to Beethena (2021) the public works and highways secretary Mark Villar said the that there is a lot of tourism road project is in convergence with the Department of Tourism to enhance accessibility of our local tourist spot. This implied that local and international tourists could now easily access the beauty of mother nature.

Table 4. Availability of basic utilities

Availability of Basic Utilities	Barangay Officials		Community Representative	
Clean water supply	4.35	SS	4.22	SS
Sufficient power supply	4.28	SS	4.16	S
Communications	4.40	SS	4.25	SS
Drainage/sewerage system	3.61	S	3.10	MS
Solid waste management system	3.28	MS	3.19	MS
GRAND MEAN	3.98	S	3.78	S

Table 4 shows the results of the perceptions of the respondent groups in terms of the availability of basic utilities. Finding shows that barangay officials rated availability of basic utilities with an overall weighted mean of 3.98 which verbally described as satisfied. Communications got the highest weighted mean of 4.40 which verbally described as strongly satisfied, while solid waste management got the lowest weighted mean of 3.28 which verbally described as moderately satisfied. Community respondents on the other hand, availability of basic utilities got a final overall mean of 3.78 which verbally described as satisfied.

Communications garnered the highest weighted mean of 4.22 which verbally described as satisfied, while drainage/sewerage system got the lowest weighted mean of 3.10 which verbally described as moderately satisfied. This indicates that respondent groups recognized the drainage problem in the local tourists' spots.

Table 5 shows the results of the perceptions of the respondent groups in terms of the availability of onsite utilities. Finding shows that barangay officials rated availability of onsite utilities with an overall weighted mean of 4.50 which verbally described as strongly satisfied.

Table 5. Availability of onsite utilities

Availability of Onsite Facilities	Barangay Officials		Community Representative	
Clean and safe restrooms for women and men	4.68	SS	4.38	SS
Good accommodation facilities	4.48	SS	4.41	SS
Clean and quality food service	4.27	SS	4.36	SS
Other activity facilities (picnic huts, pools, sports facilities, etc.)	4.62	SS	4.43	SS
Directional and information signage	4.46	SS	4.27	SS
GRAND MEAN	4.50	SS	4.37	SS

Clean and safe restrooms from women and men got the highest weighted mean of 4.68 which verbally described as strongly satisfied, while clean and quality food service got the lowest weighted mean of 4.27 which also verbally described as strongly satisfied. Community respondents on the other hand, availability of onsite utilities got a final overall mean of 4.37 which verbally described as strongly satisfied. Other activity facilities (picnic huts, pools,

sports facilities, etc.) garnered the highest weighted mean of 4.43 which verbally described as strongly satisfied, while Directional and information signage got the lowest weighted mean of 4.27 which verbally described as strongly satisfied. This indicates that local tourism spots were following standard operating procedure especially to health and safety.

Table 6. Quality of Surroundings

Quality of Surroundings	Barangay Officials		Community Representative	
Landfill/dumpsite	4.18	S	4.05	S
Mining Site	4.13	S	3.12	S
Informal settlements	4.10	S	3.82	S
Beautiful vista/view	4.21	SS	4.02	S
Presence of support services	4.08	S	4.21	S
GRAND MEAN	4.14	S	3.84	S

Table 6 shows the results of the perceptions of the respondent groups in terms of the quality of surroundings. Finding shows that barangay officials rated quality of surroundings with an overall weighted mean of 4.14 which verbally described as satisfied. Beautiful vista/view got the highest weighted mean of 4.21 which verbally described as strongly satisfied, while presence of support services got the lowest weighted mean of 4.08 which also verbally described as satisfied. Community respondents on the other hand, quality of surroundings got a final overall mean of 3.84 which verbally described as satisfied. Landfill/dumpsite garnered the highest weighted mean of 4.05 which verbally described as satisfied, while mining Site got the lowest weighted mean of 3.12

which verbally described as satisfied. Previous reports with UNEP (2001) The quality of the environment, both natural and man-made, is essential to tourism. However, tourism's relationship with the environment is complex. It involves many activities that can have adverse environmental effects. Many of these impacts are linked with the construction of general infrastructure such as roads and airports, and of tourism facilities, including resorts, hotels, restaurants, shops, golf courses and marinas. The negative impacts of tourism development can gradually destroy the environmental resources on which it depends. This indicates that local tourism spots were not fully maintained the quality of surroundings in the local tourist spot.

Table 7. Significant Difference

Indicators	Mean	P-value	Remarks
Residents Brgy. Officials			
Uniqueness and Natural Beauty	4.50 4.17	0.595237	not statistically significant
Historical/ Cultural Value	4.35 4.08	0.662551	not statistically significant
Accessibility	4.32 4.10	0.718474	not statistically significant
Availability of basic Utilities	3.98 3.78	0.75183	not statistically significant
Availability of Onsite Utilities	4.50 4.37	0.834674	not statistically significant
Quality of Surroundings	4.14 3.84	0.639772	not statistically significant

Table 7 shows the significant difference between the group respondents in terms of sustainable tourism development. The data shows that the p-value  $P(T \leq t)$  two tail gives us the probability that greater than the alpha. Since the p-value more than our alpha 0.05, hence the data does reject the null hypothesis and there is no significant difference between group respondents' perception.

### Discussion

Local governments, local communities, and businesses must take the lead in ensuring that destinations are developed in a sustainable manner. According to our preliminary results, this function is best filled by local communities or private developers. In many situations, the choice to promote tourism has devolved into a cost-benefit analysis including tradeoffs between predicted economic and environmental repercussions. Throughout the process, tourist planners and supporters appear to pay the least attention to the social justice goal. The Philippine tourist sector is no exception, especially considering the country's current economic and political realities, which have an impact on its development. To satisfy the country's demand for a reinvigorated tourist sector, the government must focus on more developed, historic locations that have both markets and infrastructure (Alampay, 2005). Moreover, data shows that tourism industry in the Philippines, particularly in the central Visayas is skyrocketing due to the supports of local government units and the participation of community members.

In addition, development of tourism infrastructure should be designed and tourism activities programmed in such a way as to protect the natural heritage composed of ecosystems and biodiversity and to preserve endangered species of wildlife; the stakeholders in tourism development, and especially professionals, should agree to the imposition of limitations or constraints on their activities when these are exercised in particularly sensitive areas: desert, polar or high mountain regions, coastal areas, tropical forests or wetlands, propitious to the creation of nature reserves or protected areas.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings it can be noted that the tourism industry cannot sustain itself with the help of community and local government units, which were mentioned in the interpretations of sustainable tourism by many local citizens and barangay officials. Hence, ensuring the sustainability of tourism development implies keeping high level of awareness and strong commitment among stakeholders regarding crucial issues like quality assurance and sustainable practices.

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