

Cultural Tourism in Kilicao, Daraga, Albay, Philippines for Community Development

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ABSTRACT

Cultural tourism has a significant contribution to the economic growth of the community. The study aimed to (1) Establish the residents' awareness of cultural tourism for community development in terms of (a) arts, (b) customs, and (c) traditions 2.) Determine the benefits of cultural tourism in Kilicao along the variables mentioned above (3) analyze the challenges encountered by the residents in developing the cultural tourism in the community, and 4.) Recommend programs to promote and develop cultural tourism in the community. The study employed the qualitative research method, and the focused-group discussion and interview were used to understand the fundamental reasons, opinions, and motivations. The findings revealed that the residents have expressed enthusiasm to actively participate and cooperate to promote the cultural tourism in the community; there were benefits to the residents; the residents have encountered challenges, such as lack of knowledge, financial constraints, and accessibility issues; and programs were being offered towards community development. As recommended, tourism planning for the promotion should be done through community awareness programs. The local government unit should also allocate funds with the help of the different agencies for its sustainability.

Keywords — Social science, cultural tourism, promotion, sustainability, community

INTRODUCTION

Cultural tourism is widely perceived as an economic development tool for the local community, providing factors that may improve quality of life such as employment and investment opportunities, tax revenues, restaurants, accommodation services, natural and cultural attractions, festivals, and outdoor recreation opportunities. Also, cultural tourism is international travel directed towards experiencing local arts, heritage, landscapes, traditions, and lifestyles.

Cultural tourism research has also grown rapidly, particularly in fields such as cultural consumption, cultural motivations, heritage conservation, cultural tourism economics, anthropology, and the relationship with the creative economy. Thus, promotion is the tool for informing potential consumers about the qualities of the products offered that will help achieve and secure greater sales (Richards, 2018). It is designed to inform the target market about the offered product through advertisements online and commercials on television.

Bicol region is a famous haven for tourist destinations. With bountiful beach resorts and other eye-catching locations, it has been a constant pick for travelers worldwide. Even local tourists and trekkers are still curious and attracted to the variety of tourist destinations in Bicol. There are beaches, natural parks, and other historical, religious, and archeological sites.

Among the provinces in the Bicol region, Albay is one of the most pleasing and popular. From festivals to spicy cuisines, attractions, and the nearly perfect cone-shaped active Mayon Volcano, and culture make Albay a top tourist destination. The Province of Albay has fifteen municipalities, each and every municipality offers an aesthetic site and rich resources. However, there is still a quite unexplored area in the said province, which is the Barangay Kilicao that has a rich cultural heritage and scenic spots. The researcher chooses Kilicao in Daraga, Albay so that the community would benefit through sustainable cultural tourism. Likewise, the researcher wants to turn the natural resources that abound in the community to enhance a tourist destination by developing the diversity and uniqueness offered by the Municipality of Daraga.

Based on the Census of Population (2015), Daraga is a first-class municipality in Albay. It is located in the southern part of Mayon Volcano bounded by the towns of Camalig, Guinobatan, and Legazpi City. Kilicao is the nearest barangay

to the foot of the active volcano. The barangay has seven zones with an adjacent area, which is the Sitio Matagbac. It has a total land area of 2, 088 hectares. As of 2007, there is a total population of 10, 319 who widely speak Daraganon, a Bicol sub-dialect. The barangay tourism and cultural officer of Kilicao has been promoting the area as a place with its unique cuisines, delicacies, such as the famous “suman sa ibus,” customs and traditions, forests, rivers, and hills and ATV for the sports enthusiasts. The barangay’s major industries are agriculture, handicrafts, such as, ‘sinamay’ derived from banana fiber.

The researcher selects this concept of tourism because, as tourism enthusiasts, it is also significant to look for a credible tourist site that has the potential to introduce to the local and foreign visitors. It is worthy of being promoted, and since it has the potentials and qualifications to be developed. The researcher undoubtedly believes that its rich culture and beliefs, and also the mesmerizing natural view will surely satisfy tourists on its high possibility. The slopes of Mount Mayon would also be the best and ideal place to adventure and let tourists feel the stunning essence of nature they commonly look for. The researcher looks forward to its success due to its capability to become a perfect tourist destination worthy of development.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this study was to create awareness of cultural tourism among the residents in Kilicao, Daraga, Albay as the basis for community development. Specifically, it aimed to establish the residents’ awareness on cultural tourism for community development in terms of arts, customs, and traditions; determine the benefits of cultural tourism in Kilicao along with the aforementioned variables; analyze the challenges encountered by the residents in developing the cultural tourism in the community, and recommend programs to promote and develop the cultural tourism in the community.

Nayomi and Gnanapala (2015) pointed out that tourism was considered as one of the largest and fastest developing sectors of the world. Its high growth and development rates brought considerable volumes of foreign currency inflows, infrastructure development, employment generation, regional development, economic multiplier effects, and introduction of new management and educational experience actively affect various sectors of the economy, which could positively be affected to the social and economic development of the country. However, the industry also generated a number of other negative socio-economic

and cultural impacts on local communities. Therefore, the study considered the main social and economic impacts on the local community through tourism development in the Kandalama area of Sri Lanka. The study identified that the community had developed positive attitudes about tourism development, and the community was accepted tourism as a major income source through active and passive participation.

According to Alshboul (2016), research on community involvement in development had shifted from a conventional to a more sustainable form of tourism. Sustainable tourism aimed to engage the local communities in its planning, development, and management. Thus, various efforts had been made to promote community participation and cooperation and translate it from concept to practice for community development.

On the other hand, Croes and Semrad (2015) applied the cultural tourism typology of McKercher and estimated the economic relevance of cultural tourism to the context of a small island destination tourist market. The authors viewed that small island destinations could be confronted with environmental constraints that restrained the traditional small island tourism development model based on sun, sand, and sea. The results of the study indicated that McKercher's typology could provide more refined results when incorporating the purpose of a trip, and those cultural tourists could be a lucrative market for destinations to pursue given the results of an economic input-output model.

Likewise, Aref, Gill, and Aref (2009) made the case on the role of local communities for tourism development. This study attempted to highlight the role of tourism development and how communities could develop tourism in the local area. The concepts of community and community development had been important for local tourism development. The implication of this study arose from the fact that little research was carried out on the interaction between communities and local tourism. Theoretically, the findings of this study enriched knowledge concerning the local tourism industry.

Likewise, Brida, Disegna, and Osti (2011) made the case on the residents' perceptions of tourism impacts and how they affected their attitudes towards local tourism policies. The findings revealed that residents' perceptions of economic, environmental, and socio-cultural impacts affected their support of local tourism policies. Residents who perceived tourism impacts positively were more willing to support future tourism development policies.

Chang et al. (2018) also made a point to what extent tourism impacts affected indigenous hosts' support of alternatives for tourism plans. The authors ranked the effects of socio-culture, economic, and environmental tourism impacts. The

findings suggested that culture-related impacts most improve indigenous residents' tourism development support. The residents expected economic impacts on both the regional and local scales. Hence, this study contributed essential information to the understanding of tourism impacts from an indigenous perspective.

On one of the aspects of cultural tourism, Eringa and Zhou (2015) investigated how a relatively unknown town that was elected as the cultural capital of Europe to attract more tourists from around the world. It was found that visual material could help to frame the experience in all three stages. For that reason, destinations should have employed some kind of visual identity system management to package the city's image into a clear brand.

On the aspect of eco-tourism, Jalani (2012) examined the local community's views on its impact and importance on the natural resources to the tourism industry. The result of the study revealed that undoubtedly the tourism industry in the area had been a source of income for most of the householders due to the growing number of visitors in the area. Furthermore, it led to the change of livelihood among local people due to higher compensation offered by the tourism industry. However, environmental protection was seen as least of the enumerated positive impacts against work opportunity and city development. Nevertheless, residents had a high level of awareness and involvement in the protection of the environment. Thus, the concept of ecotourism was very evident from the local government and park coordinators but did not entirely transcend to all sectors in the community.

Filipinos had a strong spirituality as manifested in the study conducted by Resurreccion and Mansukhani (2009) that Filipino adolescents defined spirituality in terms of faith, personal relationship with God, and positive character, and describe spiritual persons as having faith in God, morality, positive personal qualities, a positive sense of self, spiritual connectedness, transcendent and relational sources of happiness, ability to solve problems, and a sense of well-being.

Likewise, according to International Academic Forum (2010), the profound sense of piety and religiosity in the Bicol region could be seen in the way people viewed the roles and functions of the Catholic faith in their lives. Thus, people performed rituals and devoutly showed their faith by practicing penance to evoke pity and sympathy from God. Such a platform served as the ground for devotion to Christ and saints.

According to Gonzales (2017) proposed a feasible action plan that could be taken to address the identified challenges that center on inauthentic and unsustainable tourism products. The author examined the challenges that the

cultural tourism sector faced in relation to the growing eco-tourism capital. It further argued that the Government Tourism Policies had a direct impact on the level of Cultural Tourism Development of a region. Also, it affected the Tourism Orientations of both the tourist and the service provider.

Brolan et al. (2014) showed how families sought a folk healer before seeking primary healthcare across the Philippines. Intellectual impairment was perceived by some Filipinos to be caused by supernatural forces, and that socio-cultural constructs of intellectual disability probably influenced the health outcomes in the area.

In addition, according to Stuart (2003), in the rural areas, by tradition and because of chronic economic constraints, the faith healers or the so-called 'albularyos' were the general practitioners of health care. As with other healers, there was usually a history of a healer in the family-line, their healing a continuum of a "calling," the power or ability bestowed by a supernatural being, often, attributed to the Holy Spirit. Years of patience and study brought the healers into a familiarity with the lore, rituals, and modalities of diagnosis and healing, the prayers, 'bulong *and* orasyon,' and the use of herbal medicinal plants.

To support the basic needs of Filipinos, they were regarded as hardworking people. Bande and Villas (2019) investigated the folk beliefs and practices of Bagong farmers of San Roque in Northern Samar. Unlike in other parts of the country where the plant was primarily utilized for pig feeding, it was served during special occasions like Christmas and New Year. These occasions were preceded by folk practices unique to the community.

In a different study, Gonzales (2017) aimed to determine the importance of conducting festivals in the different areas in Batangas Province. The study revealed that the festival helped in the preservation of local culture and traditions. Those who belonged in the high and average class, had a more positive response than those in the lower class. Festivals could help recreate the town's image to get on the tourism map, where it helped the tourism industry of the specific area like Batangas by extending the tourism season. Every development that happened in the province gave them the opportunity for life improvement. Festivals provided identity to the people that nourished the Filipino culture and strengthened the economic benefits through hard work and perseverance of the Batanguenos to be known their festivals worldwide.

Aboejo (2015) assessed the competitiveness of Cebu's tourism industry vis-a-vis the Central Visayas and the rest of the Philippines on cultural development. By examining relevant tourism indicators, the study investigated and analyzed the status, challenges, and sustainability of Cebu's tourism industry amidst the

highly competitive tourism environment in the Visayas and across the country. The findings revealed that its diverse historical and natural resources strengthened Cebu's tourism competitiveness, rich cultural milieu, established land, sea, and air transport infrastructure, presence of hotels and resorts, and a thriving industrial and manufacturing economy.

In addition, according to Nolasco and Cruz (2016), tourism had benefits not just for travelers, but also to the local economy. Since the Bicol Region had natural and cultural attractions, it was a potential travel destination. This allowed travel enthusiasts to get more information about various tourist attractions. These authors analyzed the effectiveness of delivering information sources, such as web advertisement and desktop publishing, for tourist promotion in the Bicol Region. Specifically, it determined the status of tourism and identified common forms of promotions for tourism development. Based on the findings of the total foreign visitors in the country, only 9.14% visited Bicol Region in 2014. Hence, domestic tourists showed a high percentage against foreign visitors, with 25.7%. Brochures with EZ maps are the most commonly used desktop publishing materials, websites and social media for web advertisements. Thus, there was a need to re-evaluate promotional activities by the Department of Tourism (DOT) and other agencies. Adoption suggestive features for creative desktop publishing materials and web services could be considered to increase tourist visitors.

This study would benefit the Barangay Council of Kilicao and other various sectors. The result of the study will contribute to the idea of conceptualizing plans and programs regarding the tourism destinations in this community. This will serve as an aid in making plans about developing the destination as a tourist destination. The Department of Tourism, particularly the Regional Office of Bicol (Region V) would gain insights that there are still undiscovered and undeveloped, but potential tourist destinations in Daraga, Albay other than the famous Cagsawa Ruins.

This would further benefit the tourism department as it faces structural advantages in addressing the weaknesses and even threats to tourism development. It will also help the local residents and tourists coming from different parts of the country and outside the Philippines. It will provide them information about the destination, and in addition, it will give them perceptions about this place and appreciation of the attraction. This study will not just be beneficial to the locals and tourists but also the educators and students, especially those who are taking Tourism Management as their chosen program. This will help them gain knowledge and widen their understanding of the destination.

Moreover, this will be beneficial to both the researcher and future researchers. The outcome of the study is effective to use as a source of new information. It would encourage others to conduct research on the area. Lastly, this study shall promote the tourism industry not just in Kilicao, Daraga, Albay, but also in the whole Bicol Region.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This section presents the discussion of the research design and methodology along with the procedure employed in data gathering and the process used in assessing the data to be gathered. The study employed a qualitative research design in gathering relevant information about the study. The focused-group discussion and interview were utilized in gathering vital responses.

Research Site

The study was conducted at Barangay Kilicao in the Municipality of Daraga, Albay.

Participants

The participants were the three (3) barangay officials and fifteen residents. The chairperson on the tourism council, along with the barangay captain and another councilor, participated in the study. Also, the fifteen individuals were the residents of the barangay from the different zones served as the respondents of the study.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher sought permission from the office of the barangay captain of Kilicao in Daraga, Albay, to conduct the study. Upon approval, the researcher requested the barangay secretary to get the list of the residents involved in the tourism council together with the in-charge barangay officials. The researcher conducted the focused-group discussion at a place and time convenient to the participants. The gathered information was collated and was analyzed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The barangay officials revealed that on the aspect of spirituality as part of the culture and tradition, the residents had a strong devotion to Almighty God as the giver of life. According to the accounts of the elders, “Sa pagkaka-alam naming ang mga naninirahan ditto ay may matinding pananalig sa Pong Maykapal”. (In our own understanding, the residents had a strong faith in God. As stated by the elders, “Ang Kilicao ay galling sa salitang Licao na ibig sabihin ang pamayanan ay iniligtas sa matinding baha ng Santong Michael Archangel noong unang panahon” (Kilicao came from the word ‘Licao’ The entire community was spared from the havoc of the great flood long time ago, and eventually saved the residents from its devastation in the intervention of the Saint Michael de Archangel, the barangay patron saint). They celebrated fiesta every year in the last week of September in honor of their patron saint, Flores de Mayo, and Santacruzán in honor of the Virgin Mary. These annual celebrations and festivities, as commonly practiced all over the country, were considered as a way of thanksgiving as part of the tradition, thus showcasing a unique Filipino spirit and warm hospitality. According to the participants, they were able to share the blessings they received by welcoming every visitor in their homes to be part of the celebration. Through this practice, they established rapport and eventually built friendships among individuals in the community. Hence, cooperation and camaraderie were always present in every activity.

Another statement was given by the residents, the people believed in faith healing on the extent of observance of the folk medical practices, such as, santigwar, panimbang and pag-orasyon usually performed by elders with the power to cure sick people. These forms of faith healing as part of common practices during the primitive era were still present up to the present time, especially those individuals who were able to afford medical attention due to poverty. On account of the faith healers, they could not treat an individual who sought a cure for such illness unless he or she had a strong faith in God as a giver of life. In the form of gratitude, individuals who received healing offered gifts, such as, food items, cash and other things voluntarily. Faith healers did not require people to pay any amount unless they had the willingness to share so that it violated their pledge to help people who needed healing from them.

Hon. Gerald B. Llorca, the barangay councilor who was in-charged for the tourism office, “Nakakita kami ng isang bagay na hugis palaka sa isang lugar sa barangay nag sabi ng mga matatanda ito ay nngbigay ng swerte sa kanila” (They

found a structure that formed like a big white frog the outskirts of the barangay, and through the information from the elders it brought lucks to the residents). The residents still practiced the 'tabi, tabi' when traversing roads not being frequently visited in giving respects to the unseen creatures and spirits.

As understood, cultural tourism includes the livelihood activities of the residents to sustain their daily needs. Foreign and even local tourists expressed their desire to understand the lifestyles and experience the simple life in the barrio. According to the tourism and cultural officer, the barangay's major industries were on agriculture, handicrafts, and other work activities. Majority of the residents engaged in farming such as rice, root crops, vegetables, and coconut production. Hence, the barangay council started their projects on organic vegetable production in all the seven zones of the barangay in response to the need for the scarcity of food supply. The council had created such a project in response to the booming farm tourism industry.

The residents also had ventured on the handicraft industry, such as 'sinamay' derived from banana fiber for the production of different finished products being sold to the local and even foreign markets. In the community's food production sector, the barangay council had been promoting the area as a place with its unique cuisines and delicacies, such as the famous "suman sa ibus." The council had organized the group of individuals to hold an annual festival on this unique food item as uniquely produced in the barangay.

On the other hand, according to the respondents, they believed that cultural tourism would be beneficial to the residents. These things could have led to job creation for community development. It could draw local and foreign tourists to visit the barangay and experience many good things about the cultural, spiritual, and social aspects of life in the local settings. In addition, the respondents had encountered challenges in the aspect of cultural tourism, such as lack of knowledge, financial constraints, and accessibility issues. Despite these challenges, the respondents had expressed their interest in learning and understanding all the aspects of cultural tourism through measures and intervention programs for community development. A potential tourist site was defined as a site that was possible for tourism.

In addition, tourism planning, according to the barangay officials and residents on cultural tourism, should be done by the responsible tourism personnel, meetings, and community awareness that can help, such as carrying capacity of the programs and implementation of rules and regulations concerning cultural tourism.

CONCLUSIONS

This study's general objective was to create awareness on cultural tourism among the residents as a basis for community development. Based on the findings, the residents had expressed enthusiasm to participate actively and cooperate to promote cultural tourism in the community. There were benefits to the residents from the different aspects of cultural tourism. The residents had encountered challenges, such as lack of knowledge, financial constraints, and accessibility issues, and programs that were offered towards community development.

TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

The findings of this study should be translated through a journal article for international publications or brochures.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions, tourism planning for the promotion should be done through a community awareness program. The implementation of plans and programs concerning cultural tourism should be present in the line-up plans of the barangay as well as the Local Government Unit, and the Local Government Unit should allocate funds with the help of the different agencies for its sustainability.

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