

Sustainability of Government-Managed Tourism Sites in Tagaytay City in the Era of Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: This study will examine the practices and strategies of government-managed tourism sites in Tagaytay City towards a more sustainable tourism during the era of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: sustainability, pandemic, tourism.

I. INTRODUCTION

It is well-recognized that tourism is one of the most important sectors in terms of the success of many countries around the world and one of the most significant employers globally as UNWTO estimates that one in ten jobs worldwide are directly related to tourism (UNWTO, 2020). With the COVID-19 crisis, tourism is one of the most affected sectors of the economy due to massive decline in international tourist demand, global travel restrictions, social distancing, and massive unemployment (UNWTO, 2020). It is generally recognized that the COVID-19 has not just created a new normal but has brought a new reality into being. The complexity of current tourism challenges brought about by the pandemic requires much more than restoring to normality (OECD, 2020) but to use this crisis as a transformative opportunity (Jamal & Budke, 2020; Sigala, 2020).

Given the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, there will be new tourist profile with new tourist behaviour and new tourism practices arising from the pandemic that can be shifted towards more sustainable and inclusive tourism (Pardo, & Ladeiras, 2020). It is indeed this crossing of the COVID-19 crisis that there is an urgent need for more inclusive and sustainable development which presents tourism operators with a new opportunity to rethink and modify their tourism practices. In fact, this is the best opportune time to find a new way forward and to highlight how inclusive and sustainable tourism may uplift the dwindling tourism sector as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With this background, the aim of this research is to investigate the practices and strategies of two (2) government-managed tourism sites in Tagaytay City towards a more sustainable tourism. The goal is to put forward a strategic action plan that will enable government-managed tourism sites in Tagaytay City to become more sustainable. Thus, this research will examine a range of evidence relating to the impact of COVID-19 on government-managed tourism sites in Tagaytay City; assess the current practices and strategies of LGUs towards a more sustainable and inclusive tourism aligned with ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2025; and develop a strategic action plan for sustainable and inclusive tourism in government-managed tourism sites.

II. THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this study is conceptualized based on the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2025 where it envisions “a quality tourism destination offering a unique, diverse ASEAN experience, and will be committed to responsible, sustainable, inclusive and balanced tourism development, so as to contribute significantly to the socio-

economic well-being of ASEAN people.” There are two strategic directions put forward in order to attain the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan. The first strategic direction is “SD 1- Enhance competitiveness of ASEAN as a single tourism destination” while the second is: “SD 2 - Ensure that ASEAN tourism is sustainable and inclusive”.

In line with the objectives of the current study, this research will only focus on strategic direction 2 (SD 2), with three strategic action programs, namely: 1) Upgrade Local Communities and Public-Private Sector Participation in the Tourism Value Chain; 2) Ensure Safety and Security, Prioritize Protection and Management of Heritage Sites; and 3) Increase Responsiveness to Environmental Protection and Climate Change.

The conceptual framework of the study shown in Figure 1 which illustrates the relationship between the independent variables (IVs) and the dependent variable (DV) The IV1 is the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on government- managed tourism sites in Tagaytay City while the IV2 is the current practices and strategies implemented in government-managed tourism sites towards a more sustainable and inclusive tourism aligned with the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2025. The dependent variable (DV) is the challenges faced by tourism sites arising from COVID-19 crisis. The ultimate goal or output of the study is to propose a strategic action plan for sustainable and inclusive tourism in government managed-tourism sites.

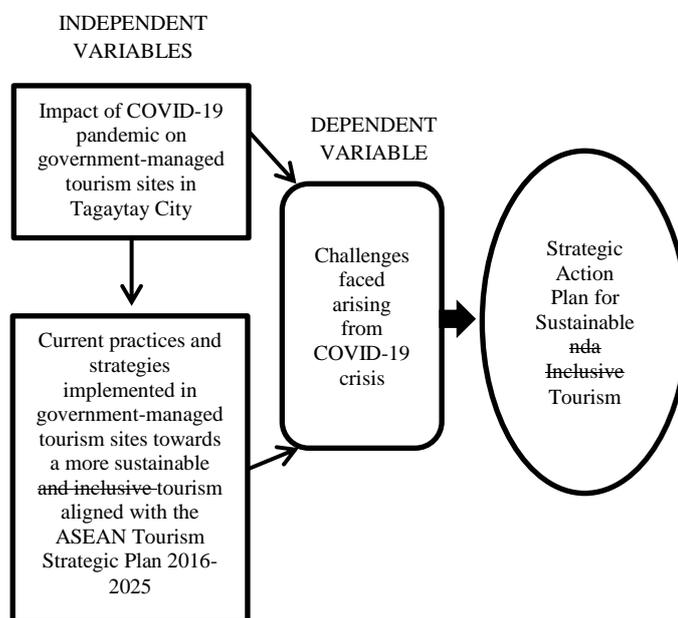


Figure 1: The Research Paradigm

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The main research problem that will be addressed in this study is: What are the practices and strategies of government-managed tourism sites in Tagaytay City towards a more sustainable tourism during the era of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Specifically, this will address the following research questions:

1. What is the impact of COVID 19 pandemic on government-managed tourism sites in Tagaytay City as perceived by LGU officials, employees, and local community?
2. What are the current practices and strategies implemented in government-managed tourism sites towards a more sustainable tourism aligned with the ASEAN Tourism Standards as rated by employees?
3. What challenges arising from COVID-19 crisis are faced in government-managed tourism sites towards a more sustainable tourism?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the perceived impact of COVID 19 on government-managed tourism sites and the challenges arising from COVID-19 crisis in government-managed tourism sites towards a more sustainable tourism?

5. Is there a significant relationship between the current practices and strategies implemented in government-managed tourism sites and the challenges arising from COVID-19 crisis towards a more sustainable tourism?
6. Based on the findings, what strategic action plan can be proposed for sustainable and inclusive tourism in government-managed tourism sites?

In line with the research questions raised in this study, the following hypotheses will be tested:

Ho₁. There is no significant relationship between the perceived impact of COVID 19 on government-managed tourism sites and the challenges arising from COVID-19 crisis in government-managed tourism sites towards a more sustainable tourism.

Ho₂. There is no significant relationship between the current practices and strategies implemented in government-managed tourism sites and the challenges arising from COVID-19 crisis towards a more sustainable tourism.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Lozano-Oyola, Blancas, González and Caballero (2012) explained that sustainable tourism is supported at the international level as an approach that should be used to make all forms of tourism more environmentally, socially and economically useful or beneficial. One of the common practices applied is the use of an indicator system for designing and implementing tourism models that focuses on the sustainability approach.

Generally, crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic can cause tourist destinations and tourism organizations many losses such as significantly reducing the number of visitors and consequently their expenditures and can damage a tourist destination's overall reputation and safety (Gursoy et al., 2020; Sigala, 2020). The pandemic as a serious event has a potential to ruin the ability of operating normally, affecting long-term confidence in a destination, tourism or hospitality organization or a product (Abd El-Jalil, 2013 cited in Jurdana, Frleta, & Agbaba, 2020; Jian, Yu, Yang, & Zeng, 2020; Sigala, 2020; Yan-Kai, 2020).

Moreover, the report of PwC Philippines (2020) on the impact of COVID-19 on the Philippine tourism industry comprising of respondents from the tourism services sector and from the accommodations sector indicated that tourism-related businesses and tourism services sector and accommodation sector experienced productivity loss due to remote working accompanied by employee layoffs and changes in staffing. To help recover from the pandemic, majority of the respondents say that they need additional funding to help normalize their operations use these funds for working capital requirements, marketing fund to rebuild their brands, and refinancing.

With regards to the practices and strategies implemented to address the impacts of pandemic towards a more sustainable tourism, several researchers emphasize the role of technology tools for paperless communication, managing tourism movements and shaping visitors' behaviors (Trunfio & Pasquinelli, 2021;

V. METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the methods that will applied in this study which include research design, research locale, participants of the study sampling techniques that will be used, research instrument, data gathering procedures, and data treatment and analysis.

Research Design

This study will utilize a descriptive quantitative research design to achieve the aims of the study. A quantitative study focuses on gathering numerical data and generalizing it across groups of people or to explain a particular phenomenon. For the current study, information will be gathered by the researcher through the use of a survey questionnaire which is designed to gather quantitative data. The survey method will be used to collect descriptive data from LGU officials, employees of tourism sites and the local residents.

Research Locale

The locale of this study is the City of Tagaytay. It is selected as the locale of the study since it is one of the major tourist destinations in the country and the centre of tourism in the province of Cavite (www.tagaytay.gov.ph)

Based on the records provided by the City Tourism Office, there two (2) tourism sites managed by the City Government of Tagaytay, namely: The People's Park in the Sky and Tagaytay Picnic Grove. These two tourism sites will be the

primary study areas. As of writing, Tagaytay City is currently under Alert Level 2 where visitor or tourist attractions libraries, archives, museums, galleries, and cultural shows and exhibits as well as amusement parks or theme parks are allowed with maximum of 50% indoor venue capacity (except for unvaccinated individuals over 65 years old) and 70% outdoor venue capacity subject to reasonable restrictions by the local government unit.

Participants of the Study

There are three groups of participants for this study: the LGU officials involved in the development and management of the mentioned government tourism sites; the employees of the two tourism sites; and selected local residents of Tagaytay City.

The inclusion criteria in selecting the local residents that will serve as respondents for this study are as follows: a) at least 18 years of age; b) a permanent resident of Tagaytay City with a at least five-years residency; c) living near or within the vicinity of the two government-managed tourism sites; and d) able to read and comprehend the English language since the questionnaire is in English format and no translation will be made available.

Research Sampling

The population that will be involved in this study include: the LGU officials, the employees of tourism sites, and the local residents living within the vicinity of the two government-managed tourism sites.

The LGU officials will be selected using purposive. Purposive sampling involves the researcher making a decision based on their knowledge about whom or what study units were involved in the study. The LGU officials of Tagaytay City that will be invited to participate in this study are those directly involved in the development and management of the two government-managed tourism sites in Tagaytay City.

With regards to the selection of employees of tourism sites, quota sampling technique will be applied. Quota sampling method is a non-probability sampling where the researcher will gather a representative data from a group. Application of quota sampling ensures that sample group represents certain characteristics of the population chosen by the researcher. For this study, 70 percent of the employees from each of the two tourism sites will be represented using quota sampling technique.

In selecting the local residents or local community that will participate in this study, the first step will be to determine the sample size using Slovin's Formula. This formula will be used to determine the ideal number of local residents that will be included in this study at five percent error tolerance. Then, stratified sampling technique will be employed to ensure the diversity of the sample size.

Research Instrument

A survey questionnaire (Appendix 1) will be utilized in this study intended for the three groups of respondents.

Part 1 will ask the profile of the participants. Part 2 pertains to questions about the Perceived Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic on the Government-Managed Tourism Sites in Tagaytay City. Part 3 (for LGU officials and employees) will ask the employee and LGU -participants about the current practices and strategies implemented in government-managed tourism sites towards a more sustainable tourism and Part 4 will ask about the challenges arising from COVID-19 crisis which are faced by employees and LGU officials in government-managed tourism sites.

Part 2 of the questionnaire will ask participants to indicate the degree / extent of their agreement or disagreement to each of the statement using a Likert-type scale with four possible responses: 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-agree, and 4-strongly agree.

Part 3 of the questionnaire will ask participants to indicate the extent or degree of implementation of some of the well-acknowledged strategies and practices towards a more sustainable tourism aligned with ASEAN tourism standards. This will use a Likert-type scale with four possible responses: 1-not implemented, 2- fairly implemented, 3-moderately implemented, and 4- highly implemented. Another added option is N/A or not applicable if the practice cannot be applied to tourism site.

The last part of the questionnaire (Part 4) will ask respondents to check all the challenges they faced arising from Covid-19 crisis in government-managed tourism sites. Blank spaces are provided for the respondents to write the additional challenges that they encountered which are not listed on the questionnaire.

Data Gathering Procedures

Before the initial data collection, the researcher will obtain permission to conduct the study from the following authorities: City Mayor of Tagaytay; Head of the Tourism and Cultural Development Office of City Government of Tagaytay; managers of the two selected tourism sites; and selected barangay captains of Tagaytay City. Once permission is granted, informed consent (with informed consent form) will be obtained from the target participants. The informed consent will contain the brief description of the study, an assurance of confidentiality and anonymity, the importance of their participation in the study, and the researchers' contact information.

The survey questionnaire that will be utilized in this study is intended for the three groups of respondents. The surveys with the three groups of respondents will be scheduled based on a prearranged and mutually agreed date and time of data collection.

To increase the response rate, the researcher decided to utilize both online survey and face to face survey. The target respondents will be given the option of choosing their preferred mode of data gathering whether online surveys or face to face survey.

Online survey option is preferred for health and safety reasons because of the current pandemic situation. Online survey will be implemented through Google Forms. For those who will choose online surveys, the researcher will obtain the respondents' email, messenger or FB account to send the survey link.

Meanwhile, face to face survey is an option given to respondents who do not have access to internet or have no access to any technological tools. Health and safety measures will be followed by the researcher when conducting the surveys at home or office following the guidelines set forth by the WHO (2020) about mandatory measures to be taken for face-to-face data collection during COVID-19.

VI. DATA TREATMENT AND ANALYSIS

In order to analyze the quantitative data that will be gathered from the survey questionnaires, descriptive statistical methods will be used. The data from the survey questionnaires will be analyzed using the Statistical Software Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software with the help of an expert statistician. Descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, percentages, weighted mean, standard deviation, chi-square tests and Pearson Product Moment correlation will be used to analyze the research questions raised in this study.

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