

The Management Practices of Selected Natural Area Tourism Sites in Cebu Province

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the extent of sustainable tourism management practices in socio-cultural sustainability as assessed by administrators, policy formulators, policy implementers, and civic organizations of selected natural area tourism sites in Cebu Philippines. The results reveal that the four groups of respondents practiced sustainable tourism management in their respective eco-sites; thus, from administrators to civic organizations, there is consistency in their plans that reflect the same practices. Effective approaches to achieve sustainability means implementing a combined focus in the areas of social equity and community well-being. There is then a significant consideration to provide alternative livelihoods for the disadvantaged by applying strategies that address this particular concern. Supporting an adherence to the community-based tourism approach, this study recommends that further studies on community participation be conducted to achieve socio-cultural sustainability.

Introduction

Tourism does not only provide jobs; it creates opportunities that allow a community to bring out its best while at the same time protecting and preserving both the community's tangible and intangible resources. The increasing economic importance of tourism has attracted the attention of many countries, which poses a substantial threat to cultural and biological diversity. When naturally sensitive zones are utilized for tourism purposes it is often accompanied by economic, environmental, and social problems.

Edgell (2006) pointed out that to achieve quality tourism where there is only limited or no degradation at all, a sustainable tourism management system must be in place. The choice of an appropriate management approach can be complicated as it requires the evaluation of policies intended to safeguard the environmental, cultural, heritage, social assets, and the economic benefits in a community. Persistent challenges also continue to haunt not only the eco-site operators but also the municipalities concerned on how to plan, develop, and manage their tourism activities to assure local communities of their socio-cultural sustainability. Thus, the

concept of sustainable tourism management became known through the development of acceptable infrastructures, visitor management, and the generation of financial resources all these can be allocated for the conservation of the environment.

The rise of mass tourism development has caused negative impacts as in the case of *Sagada* where there has been destruction of the stalactites and stalagmites in their caves and burial grounds. Vandalism exists, and visitors who do not seem to care about nature's beauty and its cultural significance, which have become a major challenge to sustainable tourism development (Catibog-Sinha, 2012).

Constantly, several issues surfaced brought about by the shift of travel preference to natural area has increased significantly in Cebu. For instance overcrowding in Kawasan Falls of Badian Cebu consequently limited the space intended for the local people and shadowed the natural beauty of the falls. In Tumalog Falls of Oslob, visible litters left behind by the visitors and the locals posed significant signs of management issues; an obnoxious sight for a remarkable wonder.

To keep the tourism activity sustainable and continuously satisfying to tourists, local people involvement may be tapped. The concern and support coming from the local people makes tourism sites worth visiting. However, sustainability concerns seemed to be elusive. In fact, visitor satisfaction seemed to be far from reach, unless local people are to provide a site that will provide worthy experience to each and every visitor.

This study tries to ascertain if tourism management practices in social-cultural sustainability are in place among selected natural area tourism sites in Cebu province as assessed by the administrators, policy formulators, policy implementers, and civic organizations with the end in view of making proposals for improvements. It is hoped that results of the study may be relayed to management subjects as case studies or for

further studies. Hospitality management courses can refer to this study in relation to ecotourism, environmental conservation, tourism planning, and development and other major subjects.

Literature Review

As Bramwell (1998) noted, there can only be sustainable tourism development if it operates with the given natural capacities that allow the rebirth and future yield of natural resources. Moreover, there must be an emphasis on local involvement that provides economic benefits as well as create worthy tourism experiences by incorporating the customs and lifestyles of the host community.

Sustaining Tourism Development

Catibog-Sinha (2012) already disclosed that sustainable tourism in the Philippines is aimed at contributing to the economic development, environmental sustainability, and social and cultural well-being of destination areas. Such sustainability is also the underlying truth behind the Tourism Act of 2010. Furthermore, Philippine APEC study center network in alliance with Philippine Institute for Development Studies, specified that the Philippine Tourism Master Plan of 1990 outlines policies which the Department of Tourism (DOT) believes is the source of sustainable tourism development. Apparently, this development programs includes sustainability pillars:

Pillars of Sustainability

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, 2005) "Making Tourism More Sustainable" discusses the three recognized dimensions or "pillars" of sustainable development where these are in multiple ways inter-reliant, reinforcing the other to create a mutual relationship; or in some cases, a reason for competition. Such situations may become a deterrent to achieving balance among the three pillars.

Furthermore, social sustainability (UNEP, 2005; United Nations World Tourism Organizations [UNWTO], 1993) identified the significance of respect for human rights as well as providing equal opportunities for everyone. To achieve this, there must be a fair distribution of benefits by concentrating on how to alleviate poverty where host communities maintain and solidify their livelihood, identify and respect their cultures by not allowing any form of abuse.

UNWTO's 12 agenda for sustainable tourism created by UNEP and WTO (UNEP/WTO, 2005) center on results to which the social sustainability outcomes focus on social equity, visitor fulfillment, local control, and community well-being.

Sustainability in Practice

To achieve equitable distribution, Harris (2000) explained that there must be enough social services, political responsibility, and community involvement in the practice of social sustainability. In fact, WTO (1993) defines social sustainability as the process of taking into account the interests of the local population, involving regional actors in relevant projects, creating good working conditions, and training staff by taking into account their local identity. Apparently, Eagles (2002) pointed out that tourism based on protected areas should support the conservation of the natural and cultural heritage. UNEP (2005) also further explains that if social equity is to help the disadvantaged, it must provide them with ways to gain economic and social benefits.

Sustainability in Business

Carlsen, Getz, and Knight (2001) claimed to put emphasis on tourist enterprises, elaborating the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) that often allow business returns by practicing unsustainable operating methods, which can affect the present institutional arrangements as well as acceptable management practices. Such

unwanted practices are generally unable to create real responses from the tourism business. However, Bui (2009) clarified that these SMEs are also constrained to respond towards sustainable tourism due to financial resources, limited knowledge, highly competitive marketplace where the implementation of sustainable practices is not only costly but has a weak execution of government policies.

Localizing Sustainability

UNEP (2005), resounded that in order to have a positive influence on the community, tourism site must be located closer to the disadvantaged so as to create an accessible venue for the conduct of relevant education and training, and apply an open hiring policy. Trainings, as posited by Eagles (2002), should be geared toward developing specific awareness, skills, and attitudes on how to care for protected areas, where according to Holden (2008), such opportunity is aimed at improving one's life or capabilities.

Sustainability as Service

Visitor fulfillment is another important factor in attaining social sustainability. UNWTO claimed that the service from the community should create venue for local communities to provide a satisfying, and fulfilling experience; and a safe stay for visitors. Furthermore, developments that take place must also be available to everyone regardless of gender, culture, and incapacity. Consequently, UNEP (2005) explained that the aim of tourism is not just visitor satisfaction but is more of an economic benefit to the community. Thus, whatever benefits tourism may bring, either recreational or educational, it must be respected and should be made as widely available to everyone in the community.

To sustain the tourism industry, Briones, Cueto, Ocampo, Aballa, and Festijo (2013) emphasized the role of local residents who satisfy the visitors by offering additional services and products,

maintaining the quality of their services, and possessing a positive attitude towards tourism. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN, 1999), stated that protected areas should be able to create jobs or increase the community's income and should also be used to support the host communities' needs such as improvement of roads for tourism access, education, training, and health care.

Improving access for all as explained by UNEP (2005) means having better infrastructure and providing access to tourism facilities by everyone even people with disabilities, good physical access for families with small children, visible design and layout of the place; easy access by public transportation, and an effective information system to tourists. In addition, Diamantes (2012) pointed out that when interpretation is part of the service, it has an effect on the behavior of tourists in local communities—motivating them by appealing to their emotions can be used as a visitor management tool.

UNEP (2005) further explained that tourism enterprises are also responsible for the safety and security of visitors while they are in their locality. Furthermore, UNEP encouraged that there should be clear procedures on how to register guests, handle complains and the problems they may encounter.

Thus, the local community plays a major role in sustaining tourism. As mentioned by UNWTO, local participation can be done by allowing the local people to join the planning and decision-making activities on how tourism can be managed and what future developments should take place. Consequently, UNEP (2005) explained that tourism projects which are likely to be successful in providing local benefits and sustainability if local communities are directly involved in the planning and implementation of all projects. It must be emphasized too, that local communities and indigenous peoples are the most often

exploited by tourism; thus, community participation must be allowed.

In fact, Nance and Ortolam (2007) cited that local communities' participation in the planning process often involves activities which are geared towards ensuring that there is a widespread knowledge about the project in order to foster community support. Self (2010) also reiterated that for employment, improvement of infrastructures, and the increase of local business to happen, local communities must become part of the management and operations and that local partnerships must be developed.

The Cornerstone of Tourism

For a community to gain from tourism development, local participation is essential in order to achieve maximum benefits. The following are the basic principles:

Tourism as a Community Undertaking

Although laden with problems, Swarbrooke (2000) discussed that community involvement is the cornerstone of sustainable tourism. Additionally, White (2002) presented cases where an agency had instead been an interruption to achieving sustainability—like his recollection of a resort in Balicasag Island, Bohol, which the Philippine Tourism Authority or PTA pointed out as having undermined the local community when it took over the management of the marine sanctuary instead of giving it to the local people.

Scheyvens (1999) also posited that through community-based tourism (CBT), local communities gained significant control over tourism development and management, thus, greater proportions of the benefits stayed in the community. Moreover, CBT is believed to strengthen local control; thereby addressing the rights of indigenous people and traditional communities.

Understanding the well-being of the local community leads to a more positive

support from them. UNWTO (2014) described community well-being as a means to keep and strengthen the way of living of the local communities. These processes include its social structures and availability of resources, services and life support methods, and staying away from any form of social degradation or mistreatment. As cited by Murphy (1985) that “the success of tourism relies on the goodwill and cooperation of local people because they are part of the tourism product.”

The development of natural area tourism in the community, according to Diamantes (2012), encourages the local community to take pride in their heritage; thereby pushing them to value their assets both natural and cultural.

Academe and Sustainable Tourism

UNEP mentioned that education is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of the people to address environment and development issues. Moreover, UNEP emphasized that environment and development education should deal with the dynamics of both the physical/biological and socio-economic environment and human (which may include spiritual) development, these components should be integrated in all disciplines, and should employ formal and non-formal methods and effective means of communication.

As emphasized by Deale (2013) hospitality and tourism education covers a great deal of geography when it comes to sustainability. Tourists need to know the difference between sustainable tourism and ecotourism and to understand the significant impact of their travel decisions (Ecotourism vs. Sustainable Tourism, 2012). Degree-level tourism programs, according to Morgan (2004) enables students to think critically about the future of the industry, as well as to train them for required skills and knowledge. Academic subjects closely related to specific

needs in the field such as: marketing; finance; management; and human resources; improve student development and competence Busby (2003).

It is therefore important to balance all three pillars of sustainability to achieve sustainable tourism development as stipulated in the Tourism Act of 2010. To realize social sustainability the community must be involved. The host community has a major role to play in the attainment of sustainable tourism. The local people are to be part in the management as well as in the crafting future development plans to make tourism sustainable. Doing so, social sustainability must take into consideration the areas of social equity, visitor fulfillment, local control and community well-being.

Purposes of the Research

The main purpose of this study is to assess the tourism management practices in the area of social-cultural sustainability among the selected natural area tourism sites in Cebu Province as assessed by the administrators, policy formulators, policy implementers and civic organization with the end view of making proposals for improvements.

Specifically, this study seeks answers to these research questions:

1. What is the extent of manifestation in the practice of socio-cultural sustainability as assessed by administrators, policy formulators, policy implementers, and civic organizations?
2. What is the extent to which socio-cultural sustainability is manifested in social equity, community well-being, local control, and visitor fulfillment?
3. Are there significant differences between the respondents' assessments on the extent to which socio-cultural

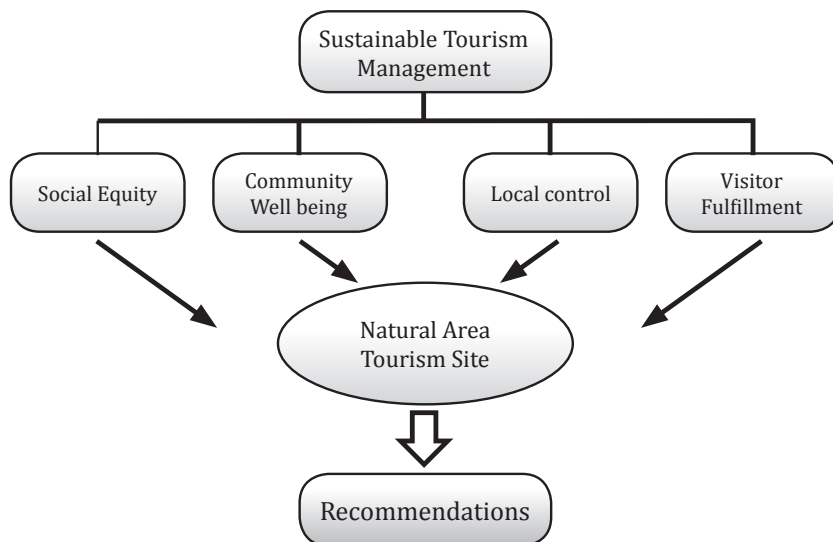


Figure 1. Socio-cultural Sustainability Framework

sustainability are manifested among the selected natural area tourism sites in Cebu Province?

Framework of the Study

This study is anchored on the policy of sustainable tourism management from the Brundtland Report “Our Common Future” which centered on a global agenda for change, where the satisfaction of human needs and aspirations in the major objective of development are spelled out. Sustainable development requires meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunity to satisfy their aspirations for a better life. As coined by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), sustainable tourism management is practice that respects both the local people and the traveler, cultural heritage, and the environment. At the same time, sustainable tourism management preserves in the long term the natural and cultural resources. Such preservation makes it socially and economically durable as well as equitable for all.

The study covered the socio-cultural dimension particularly the areas of social

equity, community well-being, local control and community well-being. The study focused on assessing three identified tourism sites, specifically the natural area tourism sites. Respondents for this study are categorized as: administrators, policy formulators, policy implementers, and civic organizations. Each tourism site was also assessed according to the manifestations of tourism management practices for socio-cultural sustainability: social equity, community well-being, local control, and visitor fulfillment.

Methodology

The descriptive survey method was used in the study. Based on the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) policy and guidelines, a self-made questionnaire was utilized as the primary instrument for the data collection. Unstructured interviews were also conducted to verify some of the answers given by the respondents and to answer queries raised by them.

Data collection focused on the three major natural area tourism sites in Cebu. The sites that are considered in this study are coded as: Eco-Site A coded as ES-A; Eco-

Site B coded as ES-B; and Eco-Site C coded as ES-C.

Participants

A total of 91 were considered in the data collection consisting of the four groups of respondents: six administrators (mayors, Vice mayors, DENR Region VII Director, Regional Technical Director); 22 policy formulators (municipal councilors, *barangay* captains); thirty policy implementers (*barangay* councilors, heads of people's organizations); 33 members of non-government and civic organizations.

Table 1.

Research Respondents (N = 91).

Designation	Frequency	Percentage
Administrators	6	7%
Policy Formulators	22	24%
Policy Implementers	33	36%
Civic Organizations	30	33%
Total	91	100%

The Research Instrument

With five parts, there is only one questionnaire for the four different stakeholder groups. Each part represents one indicator of socio-cultural sustainability; while corresponding to each indicator are the qualitative scales.

Reliability and validity.

To test its reliability and validity, the questionnaire was administered to 15 contractual employees of the LGU, one consultant and three staff of DENR. Thereafter, the tests of incidence of response and non-response for the statements were noted and the questionnaire was then finalized for administration.

Prior to the collection of data, permission to conduct the study was obtained from among the selected Local Government Units (LGUs). After approval, meetings with the respondents were arranged. The questionnaire was administered after the proponent explained the nature and purpose of each set of questions. To answer queries and clarify terms in the instrument, the researcher was present when the questionnaire was administered.

Data analysis

The results of the study were tallied, interpreted and analyzed. To arrive at a definite interpretation of the scale, a hypothetical mean range was assigned as follows:

Table 2.

Mean Range Interpretation

Weights	Qualitative Scale	Interpretation
4	Very Great Extent (VGE)	If the practices contribute to the attainment of the organization's goal of sustainable tourism management in all cases.
3	Great Extent (GE)	If the practices contribute to the attainment of the organization's goal of sustainable tourism management in majority of the cases.
2	Moderate Extent (ME)	If the practices contribute to the attainment of the organization's goal of sustainable tourism management in some of the cases.
1	Not Practice (NP)	If the practices does not contribute at all to the attainment of the organization's goal of sustainable tourism management.

Results and Discussion

Assessment from four groups of respondents on the extent of manifestation

Table 3

Stakeholders Composite Mean.

Indicators	Eco-Site A		Eco-Site B		Eco-Site C	
	(ES-A)		(ES-B)		(ES-C)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>I</i>
Administrators	3.24	GE	3.16	GE	3.82	VGE
Policy Formulators	3.13	GE	3.15	GE	3.47	VGE
Policy Implementers	2.94	GE	3.23	GE	3.76	VGE
Civic Organizations	3.14	GE	2.61	GE	3.53	VGE
Total	3.11	GE	3.04	GE	3.64	VGE

Legend: M - weighted mean; I - Interpretation

Table 3 shows that the four groups of respondents practice sustainable tourism management in their respective eco-sites. For ES-A and ES-B, the practice is only greatly manifested. ES-C has shown a very impressive outcome among the three eco-sites. Though there might be differences according to political party, they had come to terms with the reality when it comes to sustaining the image of the tourism site as well as the welfare of the community to which the site belongs. This implies that from the administrators down to policy implementers, there is consistency in their implementation of plans; thereby letting the civic organization see that the same reflection as what practice should be.

For ES-A, the policy implementers revealed ($M=2.94$) that practices of the eco-site was somehow able to contribute to the attainment of the organization's goal of sustainable tourism management. Such manifestation could be reflected to Bui's (2009) statement that operators encounter certain constraints that can affect the attainment of sustainability to which

is a sign of weak government execution, thus, the manifestation seen in ES-B, where the civic organization revealed a low score ($M=2.61$). The policy implementers must have missed to meet the expectations of the people's organization. This indicates the importance of support from top to bottom in order to meet the organization's goal.

Although, as observed, there is only a satisfactory result for ES-B, this implies a great achievement. Moreover, as this eco-site has just existed for less than five years, the community (civic organization) has already felt the positive impact of this tourism activity. For ES-A, this indicates a very poor outcome as it has been almost two decades since its creation and yet the community (civic organization) felt that the presence of this tourism activity has not had much impact on them. Eagles (2002) was right on mentioning that the local people have to be trained, develop their skills and attitudes as this will provide them an opportunity to improve their lives and capabilities (Holden, 2008). This implies that there is a need to revisit the management plan, make adjustments or changes, and pursue additional strategies so that its management conforms to what socio-cultural sustainability should be, specifically on localizing sustainability.

ES-C has shown a very impressive outcome among the three eco-sites. This eco-site has only been around since 2009 as revealed in an interview in December 2014; and yet, there has been a very clear plan on how to apply and achieve socio-cultural sustainability. This suggests that proper consultation with all stakeholders in the community, together with tourism awareness, education and training, can result to clear planning and development; thereby getting the cooperation from all levels. Also, the continuous arrival of visitors may have resulted from the consistency of product delivery as practiced by the satisfied local people—an implication of interest and support to sustain the tourism activity

as well as equitable distribution where social practice, political responsibility and community involvement is reflected (Harris 2000).

Extent of Manifestation: Dimensions of Socio-Cultural Sustainability

Table 4.
Sustainable Socio-Cultural Practices.

Indicators	Eco-Site A		Eco-Site B		Eco-Site C	
	(ES-A)		(ES-B)		(ES-C)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>I</i>
Social Equity	3.11	GE	3.32	VGE	3.77	VGE
Community Well-Being	2.92	GE	2.86	GE	3.68	VGE
Visitor Fulfillment	3.21	GE	2.88	GE	3.56	VGE
Local Control	3.24	GE	3.02	GE	3.67	VGE
Cultural Richness	3.08	GE	3.02	GE	3.53	VGE
Total	3.11	GE	3.02	GE	3.64	VGE

Legend: M - weighted mean; I - Interpretation

Table 4 shows the different indicators under socio-cultural sustainability and how these were manifested per eco-site.

Social Equity

For two of the three co-sites was manifested at a very great extent (ES-B: $M=3.32$; ES-C $M=3.77$); while only ES-A was revealed at a great extent ($M=3.11$). Such data suggest that all three eco-sites have reached out to the disadvantaged and offered to them an opportunity to earn from the tourism activity. However, only ES-B and ES-C (very great extent) were able to maintain such opportunity due to the steady arrival of visitors; whereas for ES-A, it could be surmised that tourist arrivals were only seasonal.

Tourism is not only a dynamic activity; but also, tourist preferences can easily change within short notice. It is also the nature of human to be curious, try what is

new and thus, the demand for something different and a new concept have made ES-B and ES-C the preferred destinations. There is then a continuous but alternative source of income for the local people in tourism service areas like becoming tour guides, entertainers, and servers; while others engage in entrepreneurship by selling souvenir items, training them is therefore needed (Eagles 2002).

ES-A manifest to a great extent ($M=3.11$) the importance of maintaining its tourism activity and its economic viability. However, its local people feel that there is a need to look into allowing them to earn an extra income from tourism as this community activity is supposed to give them an alternative livelihood and therefore, should not be disregarded. Moreover, an interview with the locals revealed their need of help from the local government in selling their products and by trading these products along the area. According to Eagles (2002), tourism that is based on protected areas should support conservation of the natural and cultural heritage. The local government considers the site as protected sites, thus, restricting the locals from any form of trading.

Community well-being

Only ES-C revealed to have practiced community well-being at a very great extent ($M=3.68$); while ES-A and ES-B manifested it at great extent ($M=2.92$ and $M=2.86$, respectively). These findings indicate that all three eco-sites practice community well-being; however, there seemed to be an issue on their social carrying capacity.

The volume of tourist arrivals in ES-B and the number of liters in ES-A were also revealed to be the prevailing concerns. This implies that the eco-sites are not yet ready for these scenarios. It is also observable that in ES-B where they have implemented to extend the feeding time as their main attraction, this was disregarded as an existing tour package. Thus, the Heritage

Tour was eventually phased out due to its zero to less demand.

Overcrowding has been seen as a concern when majority of the tourists only converge in one area; thereby creating clusters of empty stalls while restaurants experience parking issues that reach the main road to also cause traffic problems. While in ES-A, "littering" by many tourists – in spite of reminders from the staff to both tourists and locals on proper disposal of garbage is also a pressing issue. This behavior suggests that the type of tourists the eco-site accepts lack the respect for the environment and the nature of tourism destination. These unwanted attitudes need immediate attention in order to sustain the destination as a sanctuary.

Visitor Fulfillment

As shown in table 3, both ES-A and ES-B ($M=3.21$; $M=2.88$) was manifested at a great extent while ES-C manifested at very great extent ($M=3.56$).

Visitor feedback and accuracy of what is marketed such as the information about the destination puts an impact on visitor satisfaction. As a manifestation of the kind of service provided, this lack of attention to guests' needs affects the experience of the visitors. On the other hand, taking care of visitors, acknowledging their complaints, addressing their comments or wants are gestures of excellent customer service, which can affect the behavior of the tourists (Diamantis 2012). Moreover, the image of the eco-site also reflects what visitors expect to see, and satisfying them creates word-of-mouth marketing, indicating on the importance of a monitoring system (UNEP 2005) in order to create a more quality experience.

Local Control

This indicator was manifested at a great extent for both ES-A ($M=3.24$) and ES-B ($M=3.02$); while ES-C manifested it

at very great extent ($M=3.67$). This means that all three eco-sites empower their local communities by influencing them on decision-making for development and the direction of tourism. This practice is seen as key ingredient that leads to the success of the tourism destination. However, there is a wide gap among the three eco-sites; suggesting that there is a need to reinforce community participation that allows the locals to take part in consultations (Nance & Ortolano, 2007, UNEP 2005) and be given the training in skills enhancement (Eagles, 2002) to enable them to fulfill the work needed in the tourism industry. Besides, it is the local people who know the culture and nature of their environment. In order to motivate them to take care of their area, there should be emphasis on their crucial role to the success of the tourism activity. Their involvement in planning is then an essential tool as they exercise local control.

Cultural Richness

Implementing cultural richness was manifested at a great extent for both ES-A ($M=3.08$) and ES-B ($M=3.02$); while only ES-C manifested it at very great extent ($M=3.53$). This suggests that when such practice is done, the stakeholder's knowledge of their culture as part of their tourism product creates an impact in the experience of the visitors. However, including the local community's culture must be shared before and during the tour. This practice is highly done by ES-C (very great extent) which implies a high respect for the local community and what their product is a symbol of.

Local products are symbols of the local people's culture (UNWTO, 2014). In many mass tourism destinations, these are displayed in stalls and are commonly seen lined up in their respective areas or simply traded where tourists are. Such practice needs to be stopped as this can hamper the tourists' perception of the destination affecting the current and acceptable management practices (Carlsen et al., 2001). This can however, be regulated by having a

designated area to sell such items where only those that represent the culture of community are allowed.

Of the three eco-sites, ES-B has shown a lower rating ($M=3.02$), followed by ES-A ($M=3.011$); while the highest is ES-C at ($M=3.64$).

The results among the three selected natural tourism areas showed that only ES-A has no significant differences as assessed by the groups of respondents in all the given indicators. This means that the two eco-sites as assessed by the four groups of respondents have different ideas on what a souvenir item is with a cultural value; therefore, the administrators together with the policy implementers must make a re-inventory of their local products to identify what local treasures are worth guarding from selling intrusive collateral activities. Also there has to be a limitation of how long they are allowed to stay inside the eco-site; although locals feel bad about it since it is part of their community. The policy formulators must then sit down with the local people to discuss this proposal.

Conclusion and Recommendations

As assessed by the four groups of respondents, there is evidence that they have applied the same plans on how to implement social equity and visitor fulfillment; although they may have different interpretation of how community well-being and cultural richness should be implemented. The respondents seemed to be divided on how local control is to be implemented. The theory of Murphy (1985), can be a basis for the fortification of why community involvement and cultural richness should be considered and fully implemented.

In the area of social equity, the UNEP (2005) description of what social equity is has been properly implemented. The eco-sites know that this practice brings a fair

distribution of the economic benefits as well as social benefits even to the poorest of the poor. For community well-being as a practice, it is believed that if they do aim to improve the quality of life in their community, then they only have to consider implementing this dimension.

Another key ingredient in the success of a tourism site is visitor fulfillment. The attention to what the visitors want to experience are present. As UNWTO has said, by fortifying on the importance of respect in terms of beliefs and traditions of the local people, and valuing local participation, the spirit of a welcoming environment can bring in warm hospitality; thereby resulting to a unique visitor experience. Therefore, for Eco-site B to have a better tourism result, it must consider its delivery visitor satisfaction. Local control and cultural richness can also be factors to attaining visitor fulfillment.

In order to achieve socio-cultural sustainability of natural area tourism sites, actions have to be done. The researcher has come up with several recommendations that will help natural area tourism sites attain socio-cultural sustainability.

Administrators, policy formulators, and policy implementers should consider the local people through involvement in the planning and development process of any tourism activities as well as in the preservation of a healthy environment.

That each community should practice self-responsibility as the funds to maintain and continue the conservation of the natural environment is only limited; thus, the tourism activity has to earn more. This issue can be addressed by providing an alternative livelihood for the locals like tour guiding, home staying, and other related local services. In exchange for these opportunities, locals have to understand the importance of what they can do in achieving sustainability.

Tourist behavior must be monitored.

Respect for the natural environment as well for the local people has to be given attention. Eco-sites must develop a clearer and more strict visitor briefing initiative in order to control littering and other unwanted behavior. Also, locals must participate in controlling tourist behavior.

Lastly, communities must create a strategic plan involving the local people where the greater focus is on ways to increase the level of awareness of every individual and their roles in the development of tourism. This can also lead to providing the visitors on what they want to experience thereby meeting their needs.

The academe can help improve the eco-sites. If used as case studies, the students can come up with better management plans in areas such as appropriate delivery of customer service, addressing carrying capacity and manner of showcasing culture. Activities either field work or classroom is therefore recommended.



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