Richard S. Aquino
Brooke A. Porter   *Editors*

Tourism in the Philippines

Applied Management Perspectives

Springer

Perspectives on Asian Tourism

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While a conspicuous body of knowledge about tourism in Asia is emerging, Western academic ontologies and epistemologies still represent the dominant voice within tourism circles. This series provides a platform to support Asian scholarly production and reveals the different aspects of Asian tourism and its intricate economic and socio-cultural trends.

The books in this series are aimed to pave the way for a more integrated and multifaceted body of knowledge about Asian tourism. By doing so, they contribute to the idea that tourism, as both phenomenon and field of studies, should be more inclusive and disentangled from dominant (mainly Western) ways of knowing.

More specifically, the series will fill gaps in knowledge with regard to:

- the ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions behind Asian tourism research;
- specific segments of the Asian tourist population, such as Asian women, Asian backpackers, Asian young tourists, Asian gay tourists, etc;
- specific types of tourism in Asia, such as film-induced tourism, adventure tourism, beauty tourism, religious tourism, etc;
- Asian tourists' experiences, patterns of behaviour, and constraints to travel;
- Asian values that underpin operational, management, and marketing decisions in and/or on Asia (travel);
- external factors that add to the complexities of Asian tourism studies.

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Foreword

In 2005, the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), upon the suggestion of planners from the Department of Tourism, supported a handful of studies around the theme of sustainable tourism. The outcome of that small project became the first book of Philippine-oriented research papers (Alampay, 2005) to be published anywhere. Nearly a full generation later, the next book of research articles from and about Philippine tourism arrives in the form of Richard Aquino and Brooke Porter's *Tourism in the Philippines: Applied Management Perspectives*.

The release of this volume is important because the body of knowledge specifically focused or based on Philippine tourism issues is not yet extensive. In the almost-50 years since the creation of the Department of Tourism in 1973, Filipino researchers identified with tourism organizations have tended to be more active in training and education. Research has more typically involved project-specific studies intended only for clients or funding agencies.

Thus, the notable examples of Philippine-focused papers have come from international observers examining the Philippines as a case study of tourism for national development. Richter's (1980, 1989) pioneering work on the political dimensions of tourism development under Martial Law was followed by a handful of descriptive looks at Philippine tourism planning and policy formulation in the next two decades (Chon & Oppermann, 1996; Choy, 1991; Henderson, 2011). From the 1980s to the early 2000s, the available literature on local destinations ranges from some case studies of specific destinations (e.g., Smith, 1992; Trousdale, 1999; Wong, 1999) to studies on the economic (Arroyo & San Buenaventura, 1983), social (Estrada-Claudio, 1992), and environmental impacts of tourism development. Given the importance of sun-and-beach tourism to the Philippines, it is not surprising that research related to the management of marine and coastal systems in tourism destinations has been more robust (e.g., Christie et al., 2002; White et al., 2000).

It was in the late 2000s to the early 2010s when Philippine tourism research activity began to gain some noticeable momentum. There were a few factors that might have spurred a more promising research climate for Philippine tourism then.

First, new national policies and plans – specifically, the Tourism Act of 2009 and the 2011–2016 Philippine National Tourism Development Plan – institutionalized the critical importance of tourism as a driver of economic development in the country. More importantly, they emphasized the importance of extending the benefits of development to destinations beyond Metro Manila as a critical strategy for sustainable and inclusive growth through tourism.

This period was also an opportune time for Philippine researchers in general. It was during this period that more Philippine higher education institutions began to re-emphasize the need for greater research activity and output – even from traditionally teaching-centered faculties like tourism and hospitality. At the same time, there was also a more clear push for internationalization and collaboration with foreign counterparts. As a result, a new generation of Filipino tourism scholars benefited from increased opportunities to pursue graduate degrees in tourism and hospitality. More international scholars undertake tourism-related research in destinations around the country. However, unlike in earlier decades, more of these projects truly have tourism as the central research theme.

Thus, I believe that, in many ways, Richard Aquino, Brooke Porter, and all the contributors to this new volume exemplify the small and diverse network of tourism researchers that emerged from this happy confluence of events. Their new book also aptly represents both the current state and the future potentials of Philippine tourism research.

Tourism in the Philippines: Applied Management Perspectives offers up a broad, first look at the state of the art at this point in the development of Philippine tourism research. To be precise, the collection of chapters in this volume presents a range of issues related to the management and development of tourism. The chapters also highlight the national government's central role and influence in shaping the development of the Philippine tourism industry. Many of the management issues that the individual authors chose to address are related to policy, strategy, and program decisions of the Philippine national government, as well as some cases of local governance. There are also a couple of studies that raise questions from the frame of industry and from the micro-perspective of host communities.

The editors and authors of *Tourism in the Philippines: Applied Management Perspectives* have done a great service for current and future scholars by providing a solid foundation on which to build their research programs. The national government, not only through the Department of Tourism but also through the offices of natural resources, agriculture, social work, and related departments, will continue to define how sustainable and inclusive tourism can become in the next decades. Thus, research on the impacts and outcomes of government plans, policies, and programs will continue to be a fruitful area of tourism research moving forward. Deeper explorations of the initial themes from this book may be needed.

Future researchers should also be intrigued by this volume's initial exploration of local destination, community, and industry management issues. As the Philippines and the rest of the world try to envision what post-pandemic tourism might look like, the imperative will be to branch further out along themes of resilience, recovery, sustainability, inclusivity, and regeneration. These are global, multi-sectoral

concerns that tourism has the potential to be a significant contributor to. But they are also problems that cannot be addressed in a tourism vacuum. I see this book as a means to start conversations with colleagues from natural sciences, social sciences, and the humanities towards more inter-disciplinary tourism research in the future.

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Acknowledgments

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About the Editors

Dr. Richard S. Aquino is a Lecturer in Tourism and Marketing at the UC Business School, University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy from the Auckland University of Technology in New Zealand, where he also obtained his master's degree in international tourism management. His doctoral research focused on how the adoption of social entrepreneurship through tourism changes host communities in his home country, the Philippines. Richard also has expertise in sustainable tourism planning and development, geotourism, tourist behavior, and, recently, the application of native methodologies in tourism knowledge production. Currently, he serves as the research notes editor of *Tourism in Marine Environments* and an editor of the *Advances in Southeast Asian Studies*. Apart from academic work, he has been actively involved in tourism planning consultancy projects in the Philippines and New Zealand.

Dr. Brooke A. Porter works in knowledge management as an instructional designer with international aid agencies. Brooke holds a Doctor of Philosophy from the Auckland University of Technology in New Zealand; a master's degree in education from Chaminade University in Honolulu, Hawai'i; and a Bachelor of Science in marine biology from the Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne, Florida. Some of her current works investigate tourism as a development and conservation strategy as well as the role of gender. Her doctoral research explored marine tourism as a supplemental livelihood for fisheries-based communities in the Philippines. Brooke also serves as an honorary research fellow at Auckland University of Technology in New Zealand, and as scientific adviser to The Coral Triangle Conservancy, an NGO in the Philippines.

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Abbreviations

4IR	Fourth Industrial Revolution
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CHED	Commission on Higher Education
COMELEC	Commission on Elections
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DepEd	Department of Education
BMB	Biodiversity Management Bureau
DOT	Department of Tourism
EO	Executive Order
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HEI	Higher Educational Institution
LGU	Local Government Unit
LTFRB	Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board
MICE	Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions
MMDA	Metro Manila Development Authority
MRA	Mutual Recognition Arrangement
NEDA	National Economic and Development Authority
NES	National Ecotourism Strategy
NTDP	National Tourism Development Plan
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PHP	Philippine Peso
PSA	Philippine Statistics Authority
PTE	Private Tourism Enterprises
RA	Republic Act
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
TGDVA	Tourism Direct Gross Value Added
TIBFI	Tourism Industry Board Foundation, Inc.

UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
USA	United States of America
USD	United States Dollar

Part I
Introduction

Edge of the Philippines facing the Pacific Ocean, taken at Dilasag, Aurora. (Photograph by Giulia Erika M. Soria)

Contemporary Issues in Tourism Management in the Philippines

Richard S. Aquino and Brooke A. Porter

Abstract The Philippines is an emerging tourism destination in Asia. In the last decade, the country's tourism industry has experienced significant growth in terms of international tourist arrivals and visitor receipts. While sustainable tourism has been institutionalised as a motor for national development, several issues challenging the sustainability and inclusivity of Philippine tourism exist in many destinations in the country today. This introductory chapter provides an overview of the contemporary management issues in Philippine tourism development. The discussion of these issues then articulates the intention and position of this volume. This chapter ends by outlining the intention, parts, and contributions in this volume.

Keywords Contemporary issues · Tourism development · Tourism policy · Tourism management · Philippines

1 Introduction

The Philippines is a Southeast Asian country composed of 7641 islands. Geographically, the Philippine archipelago is divided into three main groups of islands Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Politically, it is composed of 18 regions, 81 provinces, 145 cities, 1489 municipalities, and 42,029 barangays.[1] Throughout the archipelago there are diverse economic, environmental, and socio-cultural characteristics.

As an archipelagic nation, the Philippines is popularly known for its tropical beaches and island destinations. Travel guidebooks and websites commonly highlight the country's beach resorts, world-class diving sites, and marine-based tourism

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[1] Barangay or village is the smallest political unit in the country.

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attractions (e.g., Lonely Planet, 2021). Some of its flagship destinations, such as Boracay, Cebu, and Palawan, are consistently recognized in the lists of world's best islands (e.g., Condé Nast traveller, 2020; Travel and Leisure, 2020). Located in the coral triangle, the Philippines is also known as one of the world's biodiversity hotspots housing endemic and endangered animal species, making wildlife a key tourism resource of the country (Fig. 1). Although the country is widely known as a '3S' or
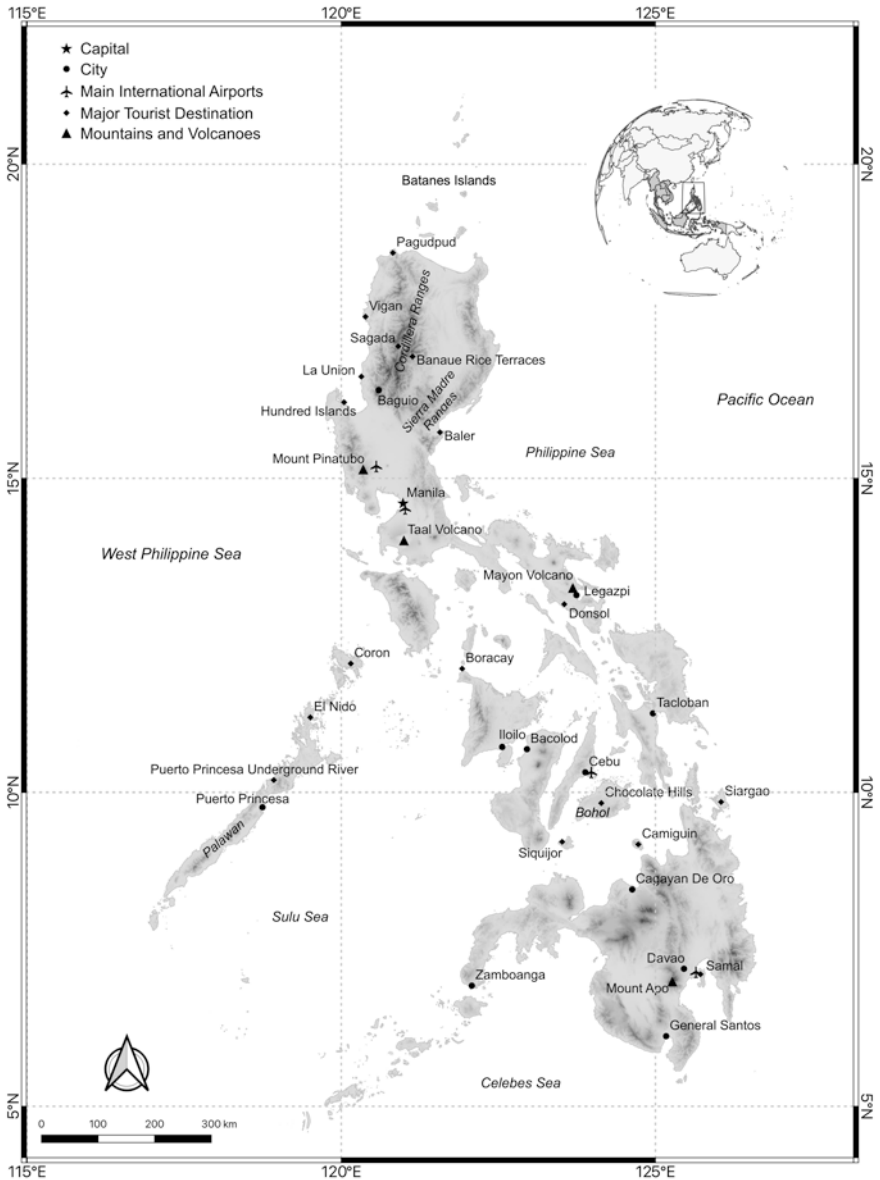
Fig. 1 Tourism map of the Philippines. (Map created by Daniel Marc dela Torre. Reprinted with permission)
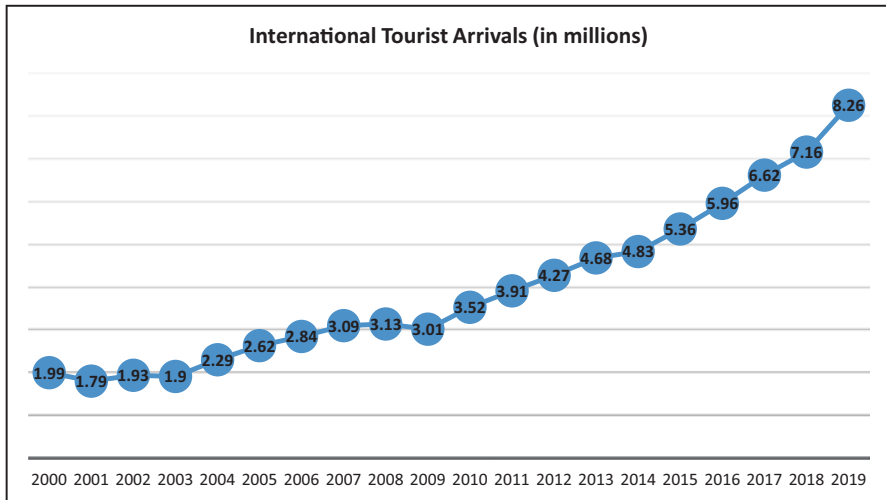
Fig. 2 The increasing international tourist arrivals to the Philippines from 2000 to 2019. (Adapted from Department of Tourism (2020))

'sun-sea-sand' tourism destination, the Philippines also offers an array of cultural attractions, festivities, and event offerings (Alejandria-Gonzalez, 2016), with influences from its diverse indigenous cultures and past colonizers, Spain and the USA.

While the Philippines has been regarded as a minor destination compared to its Southeast Asian neighbors (Boquet, 2017), the country has been steadily transitioning into an emerging international tourist hub, at least prior to the onslaught of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in early 2020. The country has experienced a significant increase in international tourist arrivals in the last decade (Fig. 2). In 2019, the Philippines received a record-breaking 8,260,913 visitor arrivals, boasting 15.24% increase from the previous year (Department of Tourism, 2020). These arrivals accounted for USD 11.4 billion visitor receipts in the same year, recording an 18.80% improvement from 2018 (World Bank, 2021; Fig. 3). These figures reflect the power of tourism as a major economic contributor, especially for developing countries like the Philippines. Indeed, tourism has become one of the pillars of the Philippine economy accounting for USD$ 90 billion (22.5%) of its GDP in 2019 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020). While these numbers seem promising for the country's tourism industry and local destinations, several management issues arising from this recent growth should be given attention.

For example, in early 2018, the Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte announced the six months-long closure of Boracay, that aimed to rehabilitate the island from the negative environmental impacts of tourism. The mass and overdevelopment of tourism in the island exposed violations of environmental and building guidelines which were predominantly spurred by the popularity of the destination (Cruz & Legaspi, 2019) and the "lack of governing policies" (Capistrano & Notorio, 2021, p. 139). This move from the National Government left many private businesses, workers, and communities dependent on tourism on the island outraged (Cruz &

Fig. 3 International visitor receipts to the Philippines showing significant increase from the year 2000. (Adapted from World Bank (2021))

Legaspi, 2019), and many tourism administrators worried that their localities would receive the same fate as Boracay's (Aquino, 2020). Arguably, the Boracay closure was a landmark decision urging the national Government and local government units (LGUs) to promote better initiatives for making tourism more sustainable and inclusive in the Philippines (Department of Tourism, 2019a; Philippine Information Agency, 2019).

While sustainability seems to be a relatively recent narrative in Philippine tourism and media, especially with a hyperfocus on the Boracay closure, sustainable tourism directions have been present in Philippine tourism policy since the 1980s (Dela Santa, 2015). The Philippines has long been involved in global initiatives with aims to make tourism more socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable (i.e., the Manila Declaration on World Tourism in 1980 and 6th International Conference on Tourism Statistics, Manila in 2017). Similarly, the scholarly discourse on sustainable tourism in the country has been present since the start of the new millennium (see Alampay, 2005). Likewise, the sustainable development of tourism in the country has been institutionalized through the ratification of the Tourism Act of 2009 (i.e., Republic Act 9593) for more than a decade ago (Dela Santa, 2015; Dela Santa & Saporsantos, 2016; Maguigad, 2013). Although sustainable tourism initiatives are strongly present in the Philippines, issues such as compliance and enforcement remain a challenge throughout the county. The causes of the recent Boracay closure are a reflection of the pressing issues in Philippine tourism destinations including, but not limited to: mass 3S tourism development, environmental degradation, un-coordinated (and lack of) planning, resource-use conflicts, weak governance, and political uncertainties (e.g., Dela Santa, 2013; Henderson, 2011; Maguigad, 2012; Majanen, 2007; Smith et al., 2011). To effectively resolve these

issues, critical investigations and research-informed strategies are necessary if key stakeholders are committed to making Philippine tourism more sustainable and beneficial for all.

This edited volume serves as the first instalment of a two-part series that provides an academic exploration of tourism in the Philippines. Having a strong geographical focus and drawn from a range of inter/multi-disciplinary approaches, this volume illuminates some of the contemporary management issues in Philippine tourism development through a largely Filipino lens. The chapters probe into 'supply-side' issues, investigating current challenges in the country's tourism development. Each contribution proposes applied strategies, drawn from the perspectives of local academic experts in the field. In doing so, this volume creates a platform for bridging academic voices, industry practitioners, and tourism policy-makers.

2 Overview of Contemporary Issues in Tourism Management

Tourism management is an inter/multi-disciplinary area of study that entails all aspects of managing and developing tourism destinations, such as planning, marketing, operations, policy-making, and governance (Hall, 2008; Wang et al., 2018). As an applied discipline, tourism management research provides insights that can be used by destination managers, marketers, entrepreneurs, and policy-makers, for making tourism better for individuals, communities, society, and most importantly, the natural environment (e.g., Buhalis, 2022). This section presents an overview of the contemporary issues in Philippine tourism management. Taking mostly macro (national) and some meso (regional) level issues, current challenges are broadly categorised through a narrative review of the academic literature on Philippine tourism published in from the year 2000 until 2020. In particular, it categorises broader issues and positions the contributions of this volume in their respective categories.

2.1 Tourism Policy and Planning

Tourism policies are integral in tourism development as they frame the visions, strategic imperatives, regulations, and guidelines that shape the development and management of destinations (Sayeda et al., 2020; Scott, 2011). At a national level, tourism policies capture how a government views the role of tourism in a country's development (e.g., economic and/or socio-cultural development), the governments' role and position in tourism development, and the tourism development initiatives set forth by governments (Dredge & Jenkins, 2007; Hall, 2008). Tourism policy and planning are strongly related, in the sense that planning informs the policies enacted by governments (Hall, 2008; Scott, 2011).

Tourism policy development in the Philippines has gone through a series of transformation. Like in most countries post-World War II, tourism in the Philippines was initially private sector-driven; the government formally intervened through the creation of the Board of Travel and Tourist Industry in 1956 (Rodolfo, 2005). Tourism policy interventions became more active only upon the establishment of the Department of Tourism (DOT), which was then a 'Ministry', in 1973 during the Ferdinand Marcos administration. The creation of this department also marked this dictator's government's priority for tourism as a tool for economic development as well as a platform for political agendas (Dela Santa, 2015). Despite several initiatives being implemented during the Marcos regime, (i.e., Four-year Philippine Development Plan [1974–1977] and Ten-Year Tourism Plan [1978–1987]), there was no unified tourism masterplan for the country, (Rodolfo, 2005).

Following this authoritarian rule, tourism planning became more open to civil participation (1986–1999), and "technical and conceptual learning" (Dela Santa, 2015, p. 156). During this period, the first national tourism plan for the Philippines was formulated with the assistance from the World Tourism Organization and the United Nations Development Programme. Launched in 1991, this 20-year period national tourism plan aimed at diffusing tourism development and benefits outside of Metro Manila, through the formation of tourism destination clusters in the Visayas and Mindanao regions (Maguigad, 2013). In the same year, tourism planning and development was decentralized as stipulated in the Local Government Code of 1991. This law promotes more participation and control of local government units (LGUs), at the municipal/city levels, towards tourism planning, policy-making and implementation, and regulations (e.g., business licensing; Rodolfo, 2005).

The more recent period (1999 to present) has been regarded as intensified "social learning" (Dela Santa, 2015, p. 156), where government institutions have deepened their tourism knowledge marking the transition to sustainable forms of tourism development predominantly through 'ecotourism' (see chapter "Implementing an Effective Ecotourism Strategy for the Philippines"). This shift was evident at the start of the new millennium upon the prioritization of the National Ecotourism Strategy (Executive Order 111) which serves as an integrated framework for protecting the natural environment and creating socio-economic benefits for local communities through tourism (see chapter "Perception and Participation of Local Residents in the Tourism Development Program for the Sampaloc Lake in San Pablo City, Laguna"). This intensified social learning period continued up to the ratification of the Tourism Act of 2009 – a law that recognizes sustainable tourism development as integral to the national economy and improvement of Filipino's quality of life (Dela Santa, 2015; Dela Santa & Saporsantos, 2016). Together with aggressive international and domestic promotional campaigns, this law is evident in current tourism plans, such as the National Tourism Development Plan for 2016–2022 (Alampay et al., 2018). This plan has two strategic directions, namely, (1) "improving competitiveness and enhancing growth," and (2) "pursuing sustainability and inclusive growth" (Department of Tourism, 2016, p. 15). In achieving the latter, there is an emphasis on supporting the creation of tourism-related micro,

small, and medium enterprises in local communities and towns. Consequently, more localities are exploring and implementing tourism as a development activity.

While the national government's visions are aligned with sustainability goals and aim to promote locally-engaged tourism development, challenges in implementation impede the achievement of these objectives. As scholars suggest, the Philippines is rich in tourism policies, yet, has weak implementation strategies (Capistrano & Notorio, 2021; Rodolfo, 2005). The above overview of tourism policy development in the Philippines shows how tourism is prioritized by the government and in the country at large.

Scholarly research on Philippine tourism has largely focused on national to local-level tourism policy and planning issues, with a particular emphasis on understanding the evolution of frameworks and issues in tourism policy implementation (e.g., Aquino, 2019). Perhaps, the academic interest on this topic is driven by the active involvement (and failures) of the government since the 1950s, and the criticisms that the public sector receives in terms of tourism development (e.g., politics and lack of program continuity). Politicizing still is a persistent problem in tourism policy implementation in the Philippines. Tourism policy imperatives change when there is a change in administration or a new tourism secretary (Dela Santa, 2013, 2015), largely drawn from the country's political instability (Henderson, 2011). This lack of continuity results in inconsistencies in implementation, and financial costs associated with tourism governance transitions. There is also the issue of decentralization. While this empowers LGUs in implementing their own initiatives delegating more local control, these units often lack the necessary human capital and skills for tourism planning, development, and management (Maguigad, 2013). Most of the contributions in this volume anchor their practical rationale in the Tourism Act of 2009. Several chapters in this volume tackle potential unification of industry accreditation and standards (see chapters "Tourism Accreditation in the Philippines: Government and Private Sector Perspectives", "The Philippines Tourism Officers' Competencies Based on Tourism Act of 2009 and Local Government Code of 1991", "Perception of Stakeholders on the Adoption of 4th Industrial Revolution Technologies in the Hospitality Industry in the Philippines", and "Challenges in Implementing the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement for Tourism Professionals in the Philippines"). Together, these chapters implicitly aim to make implementation of tourism policy consistent at all levels (national, regional, and local).

2.2 Destination Image and Branding

In the international tourism context, a destination brand should portray the uniqueness of a country's destination image and have the capacity to differentiate a country with its competitors (Qu et al., 2011). A country (as a destination) is often depicted in a destination brand consisting of a logo, name, and slogan that aims to create brand awareness and destination image (Pan, 2019). Likewise, an effective tourism

slogan not only promotes, but also enables tourists to remember a destination (Huang & Lin, 2017). Therefore, destination marketers must strive to create a competitive destination brand that could effectively position a country in an ever increasingly competitive tourism marketplace (Morgan et al., 2003).

The Philippines has always struggled in building a positive country image and destination brand. It certainly does not help building a positive image when the country is known as a disaster hotspot (both natural and man-made). Just the last 20 years, the Philippines has experienced an array of disasters and crises, such as political instabilities (e.g., people power revolution and military coups), warfare with insurgent rebels, terrorist attacks, super typhoons (e.g., Haiyan in 2013), destructive earthquakes (e.g., Bohol earthquake in 2013), and volcanic eruptions (e.g., Taal Volcano in early 2020); all of which have negative implications for Philippine destination branding (e.g., Beirman, 2003; Henderson, 2011). As Boquet (2017) reflects:

> One of the biggest problems facing tourism in the Philippines may be the incessantly negative portrayals of the country used by foreign media which have damaged the country's image, detracting many would-be tourists from even coming to the Philippines, in preference of the traditional Southeast Asian destinations (Bali, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam). (Boquet, 2017, p. 746)

There is also inconsistency in the branding of the Philippines that stems from changes in governance and politics, which was perfectly expounded by Dela Santa (2015) in stating, "When a new secretary of tourism is installed, it is almost *de rigueur* to replace the ongoing marketing program with a new one, notwithstanding the huge costs involved." From 2002 up to the present, the DOT has used six different logos and tourism slogans under five secretaries within two Presidential administrations" (Villegas, 2017, p. 76). This lack of continuing and consistent campaigns creates an ambiguous image of the Philippines as a tourist destination.

These challenges in destination branding and positive image creation have been argued to be addressed by the country's current tourism slogan, *It's More Fun in the Philippines.* Following the flak received by its predecessor – *Pilipinas Kay Ganda*[2] (How Beautiful, the Philippines) – from the Filipino people in 2010, the present tourism slogan was deemed a highly successful campaign given the boost in international tourist arrivals since it was launched in 2012 (Bosangit, 2014; Valdez et al., 2017). The mastermind of this campaign, former tourism secretary Ramon Jimenez, Jr. and his team, utilized the power of social media by inviting Filipinos to create and share their own advertisements or memes featuring the country's tourist attractions. This democratic and grassroots strategy was successful, as the campaign became trending in Twitter in its first 30 min and has generated about 12,000 user-created advertisements in weeks after its launch (Bosangit, 2014). This crowd-sourced campaign was dubbed as a form of people power, showcased the humour of

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[2] This unpopular tourism slogan was highly criticized, allegedly plagiarized from a previous Polish campaign, short-lived (Bosangit, 2014).

Fig. 4 The re-vamped *It's More Fun in the Philippines* logo and font style launched in 2019. (Downloaded free from source: Department of Tourism (2019b))

the Filipinos, and bridged the desire for an exotic destination and happiness in the Philippines (De Chavez, 2017; Valdez et al., 2017).

Yet even the popular 'more fun' campaign was almost replaced when former secretary Jimenez was replaced in 2016, drawing strong criticism from the public. The then tourism secretary Wanda Teo planned to replace *It's More Fun in the Philippines* with the slogan, *Experience the Philippines* by 2017. Fortunately for the Philippines, and in the principle of best destination branding practice, this plan did not push through as the current tourism secretary, Bernadette Romulo-Puyat, re-launched the 'more fun' campaign with re-vamped logo and custom-made font in 2019 (see https://www.itsmorefuninthephilippines.com/; Fig. 4). Given the previous success of the tourism slogan and brand, the need for a logo and font change was questionable and may have simply been an attempt for the new administration to 'put their mark' on the re-introduced campaign.

However, the new developments aim to portray a more solid and consistent national tourism brand for the Philippines with the lettering inspired by font commonly used on Jeepneys and the logo representative of locally woven textiles (Rey, 2019). This branding consistency, together with aggressive international tourism promotions in key markets (i.e., countries), has seen visitor numbers growing and surpassing targets at least prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (see Fig. 2). More recently, the concept of sustainable tourism in the image of being a fun destination has also been incorporated in this brand (Rey, 2019). One of the current challenges is how this national brand can be incorporated in sub-national tourism planning (e.g., Alampay et al., 2018) and branding Philippine regions (see chapter "Cagayan Valley: *Your Islands and Valley of Fun* – A Case of Regional Branding in the Philippines"), given the decentralized nature of tourism planning and development in the country and the often lack of relevant human capital in regional/local destination management organizations (e.g., Maguigad, 2013). Another aspect that needs to be prioritized is the creation of new tourism products, especially those featuring Filipino heritage and culture (Alejandria-Gonzalez, 2016). Compared to its Southeast Asian neighbors such as Thailand, Vietnam, and Malaysia, the Philippines is criticised for its lack of cultural identity that can be manifested in elements such as food (see chapter "Culinary Tourism as an Avenue for Tourism Development: Mapping the Flavors of the Philippines"). Some contributions in this volume offer insights on how such challenges can be tackled, serving as points of embarkation for destination managers, as the country aims to strengthen its brand identity as a fun, sustainable, and 'safe' destination (in the 'new normal' and post-pandemic).

2.3   Natural Environment and Nature-Based Tourism

The Philippines is rich in natural resources and, thus, has significant opportunities for the further development of nature-based tourism. With the upward trend in the tourism economy, there is also the great potential for expanding the role of cultural and heritage tourism within nature-based tourism offerings. What remains a challenge is the management and conservation of the existing natural resources that nature-based tourism activities are dependent upon. In many locations throughout the Philippines, communities directly depend on the natural resources for sustenance. The lack of long-term environmental planning and management has resulted in the migration of rural populations searching for more plentiful resources; it has created a situation throughout the country of ecological refugees (see Goldoftas, 2006). In addition, lack of exposure to, familiarity with and participation in tourism activities increase the challenges for transitioning into non-extractive resource use economies such as tourism (Porter & Orams, 2014). Modifying current and often convenient human behaviours is problematic making a transition away from resource overexploitation challenging.

While nature-based resources are subject to environmental disasters such as typhoons, volcanoes and changes in climate, environmental resources can also be degraded as a result of tourism (e.g., Boracay). A well known example of tourism activities impacting natural resources in the Philippines is the provisioning of whale sharks. Oslob is one of many now popular destinations for whale shark tourism in the Philippines. With unregulated growth of the industry, the potential costs have seen attention in the academic literature (e.g., Ziegler et al., 2018, 2019) as well as in popular media (e.g., Warne, 2018). The whalesharks are just one example of tourism development where short-term benefits have been prioritised over long-term sustainability of the industry and the resources. The importance of prioritizing conservation in national ecotourism development should be stressed and investigated (see chapter "Implementing an Effective Ecotourism Strategy for the Philippines"). Incorporating ideas that sustainability is a continuous process, rather than an attainable end goal (see Farrell & Twining-Ward, 2005), chapter "Implementing an Effective Ecotourism Strategy for the Philippines" emphasizes the need for improved networks and planning for tourism development in the Philippines. Chapter "Perception and Participation of Local Residents in the Tourism Development Program for the Sampaloc Lake in San Pablo City, Laguna" then illustrates the need for resilience among communities as well as such socio-ecological issues when they explore differences in perceptions between community members and tourism officers. This chapter further indicates the importance of understanding areas of resource use overlap and its potential impact on the effective implementation of community-based ecotourism (CBET). Together, these two chapters tackle both macro- and micro-perspectives associated with the development of nature-based tourism and a micro-perspective on involving communities in this process.

2.4   Human Capital

The development of competent human capital has always been a priority for the Philippine tourism industry and educational institutions. Corresponding with the emergence of policy-oriented tourism planning and the early rise of tourism in the Philippines, the first bachelor's degree program in tourism in the country was offered by the University of the Philippines in 1977 (Bosangit & Mena, 2005). This tertiary qualification in tourism is also recognised as the first offering of its kind in Asia (Julia, 2015). Since then, tourism (including hospitality management) certifications and qualifications have been offered in numerous Philippine universities, colleges, and vocational training institutes. While the exact number of tourism and hospitality management certificate and degree offerings is unavailable to date, the Commission on Higher Education (2020) reports that tourism and hospitality management are in the top 10 most enrolled programs in the country.

One reason why tourism and hospitality management programs are popular in the Philippines could be the potential of these degrees to be recognized in other countries, because of their international nature (e.g., Aquino et al., 2017). These programs are attractive given the opportunity for Filipino students to potentially gain 'overseas experience' while studying through international tourism internships, for example in the USA, Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia (Arroyo, 2011; Torres & Nagal, 2015). The skills gleaned from tourism and hospitality management degrees, together with relevant industry experience, may further enable graduates to get employment overseas, which is a popular pathway for Filipinos seeking better opportunities. The Philippines continues to be one of the top pools of migrant workers and remittances from overseas Filipino workers or OFWs are one of the pillars of the national economy (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development & Scalabrini Migration Center, 2017).

The lack of standardization of these program offerings in line with industry needs was one of the persistent issues identified in Philippine tourism education in the early 2000s (Bosangit & Mena, 2005). One relatively recent initiative aimed at unifying qualifications, in addition to the numerous national accreditations, was the implementation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) on Tourism Professionals in the Philippines (ASEAN, 2012, 2018). In line with ASEAN Economic Community envisioning Southeast Asia as one market enabling the free flow of goods and services including human capital, this MRA aims to make tourism qualifications recognizable within the ASEAN member-countries. This initiative allows tertiary educational institutions to offer a set of standardized certifications and competencies, while making tourism graduates more employable and mobile within Southeast Asia (ASEAN, 2018). The MRA on Tourism Professionals was actively promoted and implemented in the Philippine tertiary education since 2012; though has yet to be formally evaluated (see chapter "Challenges in Implementing the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement for Tourism Professionals in the Philippines"). Given also the increasingly digitalization of the tourism industry, there is also a need to explore how technology is being integrated in tourism-oriented programs and qualifications, and

how stakeholders respond to this industry requirement (see chapter "Perception of Stakeholders on the Adoption of 4th Industrial Revolution Technologies in the Hospitality Industry in the Philippines").

The standardization of certifications and competencies highlights the technical/vocational orientation of most tourism programs, at least in the pre-bachelor's and some bachelor's-level programs (e.g., ASEAN, 2018). However, postgraduate (master's and doctoral) programs have only been available since 2009. This development reflects the priority to enhance the research capabilities of tertiary educational institutions in the Philippines (Aquino, 2019), but also improving the competencies of those already working in the industry and holding tourism administrative positions (e.g., tourism officers; see chapter "The Philippines Tourism Officers' Competencies Based on Tourism Act of 2009 and Local Government Code of 1991"). Moreover, such a development can be seen as a step forward to making human capital more competent, especially for Philippine tourism governance, research, and development.

3   Intention and Structure of the Book

In the Philippines, challenges with the tourism policies, plans, and governance are continuously evolving with the country's political climate and government transitions (Dela Santa, 2015; Henderson, 2011). The Philippines has entered a new era of tourism governance, wherein the national government is taking drastic measures in managing local destinations to ensure the promise of sustainable tourism. The impacts of these initiatives on local destinations, and potential applied solutions to address tourism management issues, remain relatively unexplored. This edited book aims to investigate some of the current and developing critical management issues in Philippine tourism, and offers practical insights that can be useful for addressing such challenges moving forwards.

Building a research culture is increasingly becoming a priority among tourism and hospitality management departments in Philippine universities and colleges. Research programs are designed to address the pertinent issues and challenges faced by the industry, demonstrating the evolving nature of local institutions from being providers of vocational training to tourism knowledge producers (Aquino, 2019). This edited book serves as an inclusive platform for Filipino tourism academics (both new and seasoned) to disseminate their research works. However, it is often the case that practical suggestions and knowledge generated from the Philippine academia are not recognised by or communicated to government tourism agencies, especially during previous presidential administrations. It was only in 2018 that research grants were actively offered by the DOT to Filipino tourism academics specifically aiming to research farm and culinary tourism products (e.g., Department of Tourism, 2018). The Philippine tourism governance appears to value tourism knowledge created from the academic perspective and evidence-based tourism management decision-making. This book aims to assist the facilitation of this dialogue between academics, industry practitioners, and tourism policy-makers.

This edited book builds from the scholarly works that explored sustainable tourism challenges in the Philippines published more than a decade ago (i.e., Alampay, 2005). As the first country-focused volume in the series, *Perspectives on Asian Tourism*, this book is composed of chapters that explore a range of national, regional, and local tourism management issues in the Philippines. The contributions are drawn from the works of Filipino academics based in the Philippines and overseas institutions, and non-Filipino academics researching tourism issues in the Philippines. The contributions are informed by a diverse set of disciplines including, but not limited to tourism studies, hospitality management, economics, business management, public policy, community development, education, and environmental science. In terms of methodology, the chapters are informed by different methodologies including quantitative, qualitative, and case studies. Following this introduction (Part I) are the contributions which were thematically divided into three parts:

Part II – Nature-Based Tourism and the Natural Environment
Part III – Product Development and Branding
Part IV – Accreditation and Industry Standards

Part II investigates the issues on 'Nature-Based Tourism and the Natural Environment' in the Philippines. This part starts with John Paolo Rivera, Eylla Laire Gutierrez, Ian Bencio David, and David Newsome's exploration of the country's National Ecotourism Strategy and allied policies (chapter "Implementing an Effective Ecotourism Strategy for the Philippines"). In this chapter, Rivera and colleagues review the challenges in implementing this strategy, revealing unsustainable nature-based tourism operations and practices in the country. Peter Jerome Del Rosario and Sheerah Louise Tasico take a 'micro-level' perspective in implementing nature-based tourism, by understanding the participation and involvement of residents in community-based ecotourism in Sampaloc Lake, Laguna Province (chapter "Perception and Participation of Local Residents in the Tourism Development Program for the Sampaloc Lake in San Pablo City, Laguna"). This chapter highlights the significance of participatory approaches in nature-based tourism management, alongside effective conservation strategies.

Part III tackles marketing management perspectives on 'Product Development and Branding' at the national and regional contexts. Aiming to strengthen the identity of Filipino cuisine at the world-stage through tourism, Eylla Laire Gutierrez, John Paolo Rivera, and Fernando Martin Roxas, map the diverse culinary heritage of the Philippines (chapter "Culinary Tourism as an Avenue for Tourism Development: Mapping the Flavors of the Philippines"). Using secondary information, their contribution presents a rich database of culinary treasures across 13 cultural groups (i.e., ethno-linguistic groups) in the country. Following this chapter for national tourism product development, is Maria Criselda G. Badilla's work on regional branding in the Philippines (chapter "Cagayan Valley: *Your Islands and Valley of Fun* – A Case of Regional Branding in the Philippines"). Using the case of the Cagayan Valley Region, Badilla demonstrates best practices in regional destination branding founded on the concept of collaborative marketing. Furthermore, this chapter shows how to synergise a region's diverse tourism product features into a coherent brand.

Part IV explores 'Accreditation and Industry Standards' particularly in terms of tourism enterprise standards and human capital development. This part begins with Reil Cruz's investigation of the status and challenges of implementing the DOT's mandatory accreditation scheme for private tourism businesses (chapter "Tourism Accreditation in the Philippines: Government and Private Sector Perspectives"). This chapter reveals the low level of accreditation rate in selected locations in the country, and calls for revisiting the requirements imposed in the national accreditation scheme. Joreen Rocamora operationalizes a model that measures Filipino tourism officers' competencies (chapter "The Philippines Tourism Officers' Competencies Based on Tourism Act of 2009 and Local Government Code of 1991"). Rocamora's chapter is the first to assess the country's tourism officers' competence levels at a national scale. Pia Rhoda Pinpin-Lucero uncovers the perceptions of stakeholders on the adaptation of the Philippine hospitality industry to the '4th Industrial Revolution' or 'Industry 4.0' (chapter "Perception of Stakeholders on the Adoption of 4th Industrial Revolution Technologies in the Hospitality Industry in the Philippines"), a vital undertaking in this ever-changing digital age. Lastly, in chapter "Challenges in Implementing the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement for Tourism Professionals in the Philippines", Lilibeth Aragon and Ma. Christina Aquino proposes actions to effectively implement the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement for Tourism Professionals in the Philippines: an initiative that promotes competency-based instruction in educational institutions offering tourism and hospitality management qualifications.

This edited volume culminates with a concluding chapter that summarizes the key conceptual and practical contributions of the book (chapter "Tourism in the Philippines: Conclusions and Implications for Management"). It also collates the collective recommended actions to address the persistent and emerging issues, based on the perspectives of the contributors. While the inception of this book project occurred pre-COVID-19 pandemic, the emerging issues posed by this crisis on the Philippine tourism industry and worldwide cannot be neglected. This culminating chapter leaves suggestions for future research on issues not covered in this book, including those emerging challenges posed by the pandemic.

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Part II
Nature-Based Tourism
and the Natural Environment

Diving in Anilao, Batangas. (Photograph by Giulia Erika M. Soria)

Implementing an Effective Ecotourism Strategy for the Philippines

John Paolo R. Rivera, Eylla Laire M. Gutierrez, Ian Bencio M. David, and David Newsome

Abstract Ecotourism is of increasing importance in the Philippines and this chapter provides an account of the National Ecotourism Strategy and allied policy frameworks. Such undertakings emphasize the importance of natural destinations where ecotourism can lead to economic growth, environmental conservation, and development of local communities. In this chapter, we highlight the significance of the threatened biodiversity in the Philippines. Effective conservation needs to precede tourism development and we posit that if the natural environment is neglected, there cannot be any ecotourism; therefore, an effective conservation strategy must be part of tourism development. Thus, it is vital for the government and stakeholders in the travel and tourism industry to engage in and objectively define ecotourism when implementing the National Ecotourism Strategy. We call for regional planning and the application of national standards to avoid on-going damage and the unsustainable nature of some of the current ecotourism ventures currently operating in the Philippines. We emphasize that effective conservation is vital for sustainable tourism development as without conservation there can be no ecotourism.

Keywords Biodiversity · Conservation · Ecotourism strategy · Natural environment · Tourism policy

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1 Introduction

The Philippine travel and tourism industry has emerged as one of the key development pillars of the country's economy. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA, 2019), "as measured by the share of Tourism Direct Gross Value Added (TDGVA) to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the contribution of tourism industries to the Philippine economy was estimated at 12.7 percent in 2018" (par. 1). Moreover, the TDGVA has increased by as much as 14.3% compared to 2018, an increase from PHP 1.9 trillion (approximately USD 38 billion) to PHP 2.2 trillion (approximately USD 44 billion) (PSA, 2019). In 2019, as reported by Adel (2020), the Philippines posted an all-time high of 8.2 million international tourist arrivals contributing PHP 482.15 billion (approximately USD 9.31 billion) in visitor receipts. Furthermore, according to Padin (2016) and Rey (2019), tourists from opportunity markets continued to visit the country to experience what the Philippines has to offer. This growth translates to an increasing number of tourism establishments that help sustain activities at various tourism destinations. Furthermore, this continuous growth, as observed in recent years, has generated significant economic gains through the creation of livelihood opportunities across different localities in the Philippines (Roxas et al., 2018).

Nature-based attractions have been a major focus for the travel and tourism industry (Lagman, 2008; Philippine Tarsier Foundation [PTF], 2016). Although beach-based and adventure tourism remain key components, terrestrial and marine-based ecotourism operations are increasing in importance. While still debated in the literature, ecotourism takes place in the natural environment and central to its core definition is biodiversity as expressed through the presence of wildlife. Authentic ecotourism is also educative and ecologically sustainable (e.g., Newsome et al., 2013). As per Cobbinah (2015) and Björk (2000), ecotourism is a subset of sustainable tourism, where natural resources are conserved, environmental education and ethics are observed, local communities are involved, natural resources are preserved and conserved, cultures are respected, and economic benefits are distributed for the development of communities and the satisfaction of tourists (Lim, 2017). Meanwhile, Farrell and Twining-Ward (2005) took a non-linear approach to tourism by presenting seven steps to understanding sustainable tourism via complex system dynamics. That is, to enable an effective transition to sustainability, it should be seen as a dynamic concept rather than an end goal.

In many parts of the world, and also in the Philippines, ecotourism also embraces hiking, sightseeing and general visitation to volcanic landforms and other geological attractions. It is important to note that the Philippines has many endemic species and the Philippine National Ecotourism Strategy (NES) aims to capitalize on a rich biodiversity comprising 12,000 species of plants, which include species of tourism interest such as *Rafflesia* and *Nepenthes*, and 5832 endemic plant species. Faunal components include 1100 terrestrial vertebrates, including 600 species of birds (Panopio & Pajaro, 2014; Hays, 2015).

The Philippines is recognized as a world centre of marine biodiversity because the coastlines of its 7641 islands are located within the coral triangle (Go et al., 2015). Marine biodiversity comprises approximately 500 species in 90 genera of

reef-forming corals and some 2500 species of fish (Carpenter & Springer, 2005). In addition, there are at least 5000 species of clams, snails, and molluscs (Springsteen & Leobrera, 1986), 488 species of corals (Licuanan & Capili, 2004), and 981 species of bottom-living algae (Silva et al., 1987).

Notwithstanding the natural assets described above, the Philippines is fraught with environmental problems caused by resource exploitation and commercialization associated with in-migration or the movement of people into a new area to live there permanently, and an rapidly growing population (1.35% growth rate) which are compromising the conservation of biodiversity (de Sherbinin et al., 2007; Roxas et al., 2020). The *Fifth National Report on the Convention of Biological Diversity* recognizes habitat loss, pollution, the spread of exotic species, exploitation of native species and climate change as threats to biodiversity in the Philippines (Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Biodiversity Management Bureau [DENR-BMB], 2014). Hays (2015) noted that the Philippines is one of the most deforested landscapes in the world with remaining forests existing as fragmented patches in the landscape. Additionally, it is reported that only 4% of coral reefs are in a pristine condition, and continue to decline, with damage to this important ecosystem attributed to deleterious land practices impacting reef systems and destructive fishing practices (Licuanan & Gomez, 2000; Dalabajan, 2009; Licuanan et al., 2017).

The significance of the Philippines as a biodiversity hotspot and the rising interest in ecotourism experiences sought by travelers, sets the scene to further develop available ecotourism products (Catibog-Sinha, 2010), and as espoused in the NES and Action Plan (2001–2012; 2013–2022) as prepared by the National Ecotourism Steering Committee and Ecotourism Technical Working Group (2014). Given the importance of tourism to the Philippine economy, the currently available natural resources for ecotourism development, coupled with an increasing population and high levels of environmental degradation, calls for an overview of the current ecotourism situation in the Philippines (Ignacio, 2019; Yu, 2020).

Based on our belief that effective conservation precedes tourism development as without conservation there can be no ecotourism, a review of relevant policies and a consideration of the constraints to implementation of an effective ecotourism strategy is therefore timely, and subsequently documented in this chapter.

2   Current Ecotourism Practices and Relevant Policy Directives

Nature-based tourism in the Philippines includes, but is not limited to, sightseeing, visiting volcanic landforms, hiking, cycling, boat rides, kayaking, cave visits and wildlife tourism (Goldsmith, 2018; Deyro, 2019; Rocamora, 2019). Key ecotourism products focusing on wildlife include diving and snorkeling in coral reef environments, swimming with whalesharks, bird watching and tarsier watching (Holopainen, 2018; Saikim, 2018). Ecotourism in the Philippines, however, can be multifaceted and also include elements of cultural tourism and aspects of adventure tourism (Alampay & Libosada, 2005). As such, in this chapter, we provide an overview of various

development plans and other pertinent documents while presenting a brief account of major ecotourism attractions. In doing so, we will provide an overview of the initiatives and policy directions in promoting and advancing ecotourism in the Philippines.

Previous interest in ecotourism in the Philippines has led to identification of potential sites and development of ecotourism projects and programs by various tourism organizations. Alampay and Libosada (2005) classified these ecotourism sites and activities according to the available natural resource base and this has been adapted to provide a summary of ecotourism sites and activities in the Philippines (see Table 1). This list has also been updated with emerging ecotourism sites identified in the NES and Action Plan (2001–2012; 2013–2022) to reflect on-going efforts to develop and manage ecotourism development in the Philippines.

2.1   National Ecotourism Strategy

The continuously developing catalogue of ecotourism sites indicated in Table 1 necessitates an ecotourism strategy and action plan. This need was previously addressed by the formulation of the NES and Action Plan (2001–2012; 2013–2022), by virtue of Executive Order (EO) 111 (1999). The NES was formulated after the issuance of Executive Order (EO) 111 (1999) that established a formal organizational and institutional structure for developing ecotourism in the Philippines (Javier, 2009). By recognizing issues and problems related to fostering sustainable development and in recommending plausible approaches in addressing these issues, the NES establishes a comprehensive direction for the future of ecotourism in the country. It adheres to the definition of ecotourism as a vital tool for sustainable development, management, protection and conservation of the country's environment, natural resources, and cultural heritage (Kiper, 2013). Hence, it serves as a framework for sustainable ecotourism development in the Philippines.

The NES employs a top-down and bottom-up approach to the establishment of a network of ecotourism sites and products, whereby the national government takes charge of developing, managing, regulating, and promoting key ecotourism sites and projects and local communities (DENR-BMB, 2014). Tourism enterprises, authorities, local communities, tourists, non-government organizations (NGOs), and other stakeholders actively participate in the protection and management of ecotourism destinations and projects (Björk, 2000; Rivera & Gutierrez, 2019; Gutierrez, 2019). Through this approach, a communication network that facilitates exchange of information and experiences among stakeholders is established (Cortez & Rivera, 2016; Gutierrez, 2019).

According to Calanog et al. (2012) and NEDA (2017), complementing the implementation of the NES is a National Ecotourism Program that includes selection of key ecotourism sites; product development; marketing and promotions; education and advocacy; establishment of an ecotourism fund; and support programs and monitoring. Specific action plans have been categorized into short term (2002–2004), medium term (2002–2007), long term (2002–2012), and the NES and Action Plan (2001–2012 and 2013–2022) (United Nations Development Program

Table 1 Ecotourism sites in the Philippines based on ecological resources

Resource base[a]	Example of ecotourism sites and programs
Marine Ecosystems	El Nido Protected Areas, Palawan
	Whaleshark watching, Donsol, Sorsogon
	Boracay Island, Aklan
	Danjugan Island and reef system, Negros Oriental
	Agoo-Damortis Seashore, La Union
	Apo Island and Negros Oriental Marine Conservation Park, Negros Oriental
	Apo Reef Natural Park, Occidental Mindoro
	Balicasag Island and Pamilacan Island, Bohol
	Coron Island, Palawan
	Siargao Island, Surigao del Norte
	Tanon Strait, between Cebu and Negros Island
	Turtle Island Wildlife Sanctuary, Tawi-Tawi
	Tubbataha National Marine Park, Palawan
	Hundred Islands National Park, Pangasinan
Terrestrial Ecosystems	Mt Pinatubo, Pampanga/Tarlac/Zambales
	Calbiga Caves, Samar
	Chocolate Hills, Bohol
	Mt. Apo, Davao
	Provinces of Camiguin and Bukidnon
	Mt. Guiting-Guiting, Sibuyan Island
	Mt. Isarog, Camarines Sur
	Mt. Kanlaon, Negros Island
	Mt. Kitanglad, Cagayan, Tagoloan and Pulanguri Rivers
	Mt. Makiling, Laguna
	Mt. Mayon, Albay
	Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park
	Mt. Pulag, Benguet, Ifugao, Nueva Vizcaya
	Taal Volacano, Batangas
	Penablanca Protected Landscape, Cagayan
	Puerto Prinsesa Underground River, Palawan
	Sohoton Cave, Samar
	Raja Sikatuna Protected Landscape, Bohol
	Masungi Georeserve, Rizal
Freshwater Ecosystems	Paoay Lake, Ilocos Norte
	Tinago Falls, Iligan City
	Governor's Rapids, Quirino
	Siraan Hot Spring, Antique
	Provinces of Camiguin and Bukidnon
	Agusan Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary, Agusan del Sur
	Lake Danao, Leyte
	Olango Island, Cebu
	Sapang Bato, Pampanga
Human-made/Novel Ecosystems	San Jose Ecotourism Park, Tarlac
	Bucari-Aganan Reforestation, Iloilo

[a]Categories: Marine – marine-protected areas, coral reefs, islands, beaches, bays; Terrestrial – mountains, forest areas and various geo-attractions such as karst landscapes and volcanoes. Freshwater – lakes, rivers, hot and cold springs, waterfalls; human-made – urban parks, reforestation sites

[UNDP], 2009). Thus, according to Javier (2009), by recognizing the constraints of pursuing sustainable development, the NES sets an integrated management plan for a comprehensive direction for the future of ecotourism. Similarly, it is important to underscore that the formulation of the NES and Action Plan (2001–2012) was part of the National Ecotourism Project, funded by the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID) and implemented by the DOT[1] and the DENR,[2] which also came in two phases: NEP I and NEP II. The accomplishments of NEP I included "*the strengthening of the EO 111 bodies, the development of ecotourism products in four pilot sites, assessment of all key ecotourism sites identified in the NES, development of an ecotourism website, publication of quarterly newsletters on ecotourism and the ecotourism fund study.*" The NEP underwent a second phase (NEP II) from 2004 to 2009 achieving the following outcomes (DENR-BMB, 2014):

- establishment of income-generating projects among disadvantaged groups;
- expansion of employment opportunities and community income generation;
- improvements in sustainable resource management and reduction in unsustainable activities;
- development of training modules in ecotourism;
- development of the DOT Ecotourism Standards; and
- implementation of several ecotourism-focused marketing initiatives by DOT.

Following the NEP II process, the Philippines launched the NES and Action Plan (2013–2022) in line with the strategic directions of the National Tourism Development Plan (NTDP). This latest version of the NES focuses on the contribution of ecotourism to inclusive growth. Of relevance is participation from the private sector with an increasing number of businesses moving towards incorporating sustainability principles in their operations. In the Philippines such examples are, *El Nido Resorts*[3] and *Daluyon Beach and Mountain Resort*[4] both in Palawan. The former espoused a quadruple bottom line approach– striking the balance among economic, social, and environmental benefits in achieving sustainability (Roxas & Rivera, 2015; Arquiza & Yabes, 2017). The latter is a pioneer member of the Zero Carbon Resorts group, whose operations are based on eco-friendly initiatives (Aquino, 2013; Thiebault, 2019).

In terms of translating the NES into concrete actions, Aujero-Blanza (2020) explicated that because the NES is within the national level perspective, there is still a need to localize it in the planning process at the regional levels. The localization of the NES is constrained by the following:

- According to Alampay and Libosada (2016), as cited by Aujero-Blanza (2020), "due to undeniable conflict in political agenda of the some of the leaders, the investors, the local people, and other stakeholders are discouraged from support-

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[1] https://tourism.gov.ph/

[2] https://www.denr.gov.ph/

[3] https://www.elnidoresorts.com

[4] https://daluyonbeachandmountainresort.com

ing the NES. This, therefore, has become a challenge for the development of ecotourism in some areas of the Philippines, particularly in Region VI or Western Visayas area" (p. 307).

- According to Cortum (2015), as cited by Aujero-Blanza (2020), "another challenge to the implementation of the NES are the absence of a regional ecotourism development plan in [certain regions] in such a way that the strategies set for the national level are adopted for compliance of the mandates for implementation of the NES" (p. 307).

The problem of applicability remains to be the constraint affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of the NES. Hence, there is still a need to supplement the NES with a customized roadmap of ecotourism development designed for specific regions while benchmarking on the implementation the existing NES among various ecotourism sites in the region and in the country. When these constraints are addressed, the NES can be easily applied to specific and selected ecotourism sites.

3   Policies, Plans, and Projects Relevant to the Ecotourism Strategy

Following the discussion of the NES in the previous section, we provide a more detailed account of the policy and institutional settings in Philippine tourism development. A short discussion on each policy instrument's relevance to the NES was also underscored. Specifically, we highlighted the design, content, objectives, and implementation mechanisms of national and regional policies and plans, as well as international projects relevant in pursuing ecotourism development in the country. These policies, plans, and projects are summarized in Table 2 and are discussed subsequently.

3.1   Republic Act 9593 (Tourism Act of 2009)

The Republic Act (RA) 9593, also known as the Tourism Act of 2009, declares a national policy that recognizes the role of tourism as a critical pillar of the macroeconomy, which can stimulate socioeconomic growth, with a goal of creating and inviting investments, foreign exchange and employment for the economy. At the same time, it can enhance the citizenry's sense of national pride. Likewise, it sets the scene for both domestic and international investments in tourism by providing a national blueprint for tourism development. In doing this, a set of objectives have been crafted to ensure the industry's continuous development. Furthermore, it also establishes an institutional and organizational structure for tourism development that assigns the DOT as the "*primary planning, programming, implementing and regulatory government agency in the development and promotion of the tourism*

Table 2 Relevant policies, plans and projects in the Philippine tourism industry

Tourism policies, plans, and projects	Years	Objective(s)
National Ecotourism Strategy (NES)	2001–2012; 2013–2022	To establish a comprehensive national strategy pursuing ecotourism development in the Philippines
Tourism Act	2009–present	To provide the institutional and organizational structure in pursuing national tourism development in the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Administrative Order No. 2013-19	2013–present	To provide guidelines in ecotourism planning and management in protected areas
Philippine National Tourism Development Plan (NTDP)	2011–2016; 2017–2022	To ensure the competitiveness of the Philippine travel and tourism industry by emphasizing on marketing diverse and high-quality destinations, improving international and domestic connectivity, augmenting destination infrastructure, initiating policy and institutional reforms, and capacitating tourism human resources.
ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (ATSP)	2011–2015; 2016–2025	To achieve the ASEAN goal for tourism by 2025 of becoming a quality tourism destination offering a unique, diverse ASEAN experience, and commitment to responsible, sustainable, inclusive and balanced tourism development, that contributes significantly to the socioeconomic well-being of ASEAN people.
Philippine Development Plan	2017–2022	To provide a medium-term framework to achieve development, anchored in the collective goals of the country
Zero Carbon Resorts (ZCR) Project	2009–2014	To enable tourism small and medium enterprises (SMEs), such as those managing hotels and resorts, to provide their energy services in an energy efficient, cost effective, and environmentally sound fashion.
Transforming Tourism Value Chains (TVC) project	2017–2020	To support recipient countries in reducing Green House Gas (GHG) emissions while improving resource efficiency in tourism value chains with high resource use (accommodation, food and beverage, and meetings, incentives, conferences, and events [MICE] sectors)
United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) International Conference on Measuring Sustainable Tourism (MST)	2017	To develop an international statistical framework for measuring the role of travel and tourism in sustainable development that encompasses economic, environmental, and social dimensions, also known as the triple bottom line espoused by Elkington (1997).

industry." The Tourism Promotions Board (TPB)[5] and Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA)[6] are identified as important agencies in supporting the mandates of the DOT.

In relation to the country's ecotourism strategy, the Tourism Act serves as the foundation where national and local strategies on ecotourism management and development rests. By formally acknowledging the significant role of tourism in the country's economy, efforts to develop and manage ecotourism destinations are further strengthened and justified.

3.2   DENR Administrative Order No. 2013-19

The Administrative Order (DAO) No. 2013-19, issued by the DENR, outlines a set of guidelines for planning and managing ecotourism activities in destinations across the Philippines. Signed in 2013, the DAO acknowledged the need to support conservation efforts to ensure the sustainable use of natural areas for ecotourism to flourish in the country. Similarly, the DAO provides an overview of the various phases required in ecotourism planning, as well as, in identifying whether ecotourism development is the most suitable strategy to develop in a particular protected area. In line with this, the Ecotourism Management Plan (EMP) was created to guide tourism stakeholders in their management efforts. Outlined in this plan are processes such as site assessment, tourism zoning, visitor site planning, use of carrying capacity and harmonization of facilities and infrastructure that stakeholders are expected to implement in destinations. By institutionalizing a process of developing ecotourism in protected areas, the DAO calls for building capacities of concerned implementers from the community to national level (DENR, 2013).

The DAO no. 2013-19 serves as a critical institutional framework that complements the existing NEP I, II, and NES by providing specific implementing guidelines to develop and manage protected areas and ecotourism destinations in the country from the national level down to the community level. Through the established guidelines, tourism stakeholders have become better informed of the mechanisms that are expected to be in place in line with ecotourism management and development.

3.3   The Philippine National Tourism Development Plan

The Philippine National Tourism Development Plan (NTDP) serves as "*a strategic framework and outline action plan to guide the DOT and other stakeholders in the development of the tourism sector*" (NEDA, 2017, p. 1). The NTDP identifies a

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[5] https://www.tpb.gov.ph/marketing-and-promotions

[6] https://traveltax.tieza.gov.ph

tourism vision and goal, accompanied by strategic plans focused on marketing the country's diverse and high-quality destinations and products, improving international and domestic connectivity, augmenting infrastructure, crafting policy and institutional reforms, and capacitating tourism human resources (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2010). The plan utilizes a cluster destination strategy that serves as the spatial development concept in the development of tourism sites, products, and activities (Liamzon, 2014). Prior to the creation of the NTDP, the national medium-term development plans (MTDP), the 10-Year Tourism Plan (1978–1987), and the 20-Year Tourism Master Plan (TMP) in 1991 served as blueprints for Philippine tourism development (Pilapil-Añasco & Lizada, 2014). As a strategic framework aimed at guiding tourism stakeholders, the NTDP serves as the baseline in crafting destination and activity-specific (e.g. ecotourism) guidelines for better development and management, thereby complementing the country's NES.

3.4   ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan

As a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Philippines also commits to a regional framework fostering tourism development that is encapsulated in the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (ATSP) (ASEAN Secretariat, 2019). It serves as a strategic approach to addressing issues faced by the region in transforming itself into a competitive, sustainable, and more socioeconomically inclusive and integrated tourism destination. This comprises single destination marketing, quality standards, human resource development, connectivity, investment, community participation, safety and security and natural and cultural heritage conservation (ASEAN Secretariat, 2015). It is geared towards enabling ASEAN countries to be premiere tourism destinations that offer a unique and diverse ASEAN experience. That is, by 2025, ASEAN will be committed to foster responsible, sustainable, inclusive and balanced tourism development – all of which significantly contributes to the socioeconomic well-being of the ASEAN population (The ASEAN Post Team, 2018).

Two main strategic directions are identified in the plan, namely: (1) to enhance the competitiveness of ASEAN as a single tourism destination, and (2) to ensure that ASEAN tourism is sustainable and inclusive (Shamasundari, 2017). Thus, by establishing regional plans to enhance tourism experiences in every Member State, the ATSP provides regional guidelines on how tourism destinations can be developed and managed by respective Member States in relation to the region's development. Complementing national initiatives and pursuing ecotourism development is the product development planning initiative of developing ecotourism destinations under the ASEAN Ecotourism Strategic Plan (AESP) (2011–2015 and 2016–2022). While regional-wide policy frameworks ensuring sustainable tourism development exist, there is no regional ecotourism measure that supports conservation, management of protected areas and sites, and community-based income generation (Cruz, 2003).

Similarly, the Philippines' NES further echoes the objectives of the ATSP and AESP by aligning the country's strategy to the aims of the regional plans—specifically by ensuring that the development of ecotourism destinations and activities allows for the involvement of local communities and the conservation of both natural and cultural heritage.

3.5 Philippine Development Plan

The Philippine Development Plan (PDP) is the first medium-term development plan (MTDP) anchored on a national long-term and collective vision for the country. It contains the following major sections: (1) enhancing the social fabric or system of societies, (2) inequality-reducing transformation, (3) increasing growth potential, (4) enabling and supportive environment and (5) foundations for sustainable development; to which all other strategic plans are underscored (National Economic and Development Authority [NEDA], 2017). The PDP identifies tourism as one of the priority sectors that will help boost service exports in the global value chain.[7]

In expanding the development of sustainable resource-based industries, the development of ecotourism products and services is pursued, specifically by doing the following: (a) identification of ecotourism and cultural tourism destinations and products and promoting them in the domestic and international markets; (b) diversification of existing destinations and the creation of new tourism areas and products; (c) encouraging development tourism-related products and services using community-based approaches and (d) creating an environment conducive for ecotourism investment (see NES and Action Plan 2013–2022). The PDP also recognizes the importance of ensuring the proper management and protection of tourism destinations in the Philippines as highlighted in the section on sustainable development (Alampay, 2005). The PDP, as a medium-term development plan, therefore, recognizes not only the importance of tourism as a driver of economic growth, but also the significance of sustainable development of the industry. This encompasses the conservation and sustainable use of natural areas, especially in protected areas.

3.6 Zero Carbon Resorts Project

Achieving sustainability is a huge challenge for the tourism industry (Budeanu et al., 2016). Moreover, the hospitality industry is particularly challenged to introduce measures designed to lessen the impact of their operations and practices on the environment (Jones et al., 2016), since the Climate Change Vulnerability Index ranked the Philippines as the 9th most vulnerable, under the "extreme" category (Romero, 2013).

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[7] http://www.neda.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Abridged-PDP-2017-2022_Final.pdf

Hence, the *Zero Carbon Resorts* (ZCR)[8] contribution towards Sustainable Development of the Tourism Sector in the Philippines and Thailand project was focused on providing energy efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally sound energy services options for small and medium-sized tourism enterprises (SMEs) such as hotels while focusing on the period 2009–2014 (Kaiwa, 2017). According to the GrAT Center for Appropriate Technology (2017), the ZCR project started in November 2009 and lasted until April 2014 with a total budget of approximately PHP 121 million (USD 2 million), of which 80% was contributed by the European Union (EU). It has helped create linkages among SMEs in sharing energy-saving measures and green technologies. The project applied the 3R strategy (Reduce-Replace-Redesign) (Manalo, 2019).

In the Philippines, the project focused on a tourism enterprise located in Palawan – the *Daluyon Beach and Mountain Resort* (DBMR) (Manalo, 2019). DBMR is a pioneer member of the ZCR group which incorporates cost-effective, energy efficient, and environment-friendly technologies in their daily operations (i.e., energy-efficient lighting and air-conditioning, environmentally friendly insulation materials, and low-flow showers). Likewise, one of the challenges of hotels in Palawan was to find a source of energy that can meet expected consumption as a result of building operations and conform to a standard tropical building design comprising passive lighting and cooling systems. With aid from ZCR, DBMR was able to develop economical ways of conserving energy and water. Commencing in 2009, DBMR now provides 24-hour generated power and consumes an average of 5000 litres of fuel to operate the resort with eight villas, a conference room, swimming pool, restaurant and bars, equipped with air-conditioner units, ceiling fan, solar hot water, mini-bars and multimedia equipment. The project was successful in improving environmental performance of hotels and resorts, building capacities of local engineers, showcasing replicable sustainable building concepts, and raising awareness among consumers (Manalo, 2019).

3.7   Transforming Tourism Value Chains Project

The Transforming Tourism Value Chains (TVC) in Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to Accelerate More Resilient, Resource Efficient, Low Carbon Development project was implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in partnership with the DOT and the Philippine Center for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development Inc. (PCEPSDI)[9] and applicable for the period 2017–2020 (Thiebault, 2019). Its main objective is to support recipient countries in reducing Green House Gas (GHG) emissions while improving resource efficiency in tourism value chains with high resource use in the accommodation, food, beverage and organised meetings and conferences as well as

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[8] https://www.switch-asia.eu/projects/zero-carbon-resorts

[9] http://pcepsdi.org.ph

events (MICE) sectors (Rey, 2017). In achieving this, it utilized a five-step approach as enumerated by Thiebault (2019):

- establish and analyze the sector's inventory of GHG emissions and sustainable products and services in the tourism value chains;
- establish an integrated emissions reduction and resource efficiency action framework based on life cycle approaches, with specific indicators for mitigation/adaptation priorities;
- build local institutional and networking capacities;
- support national implementation and results reporting; and
- enhance regional tourism networking, lessons and learning.

3.8   United Nations World Tourism Organization International Conference on Measuring Sustainable Tourism

The celebration of the *International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development* in 2017 paved the way for the organization of the 6th International Conference on Tourism Statistics in Manila in June 2017 (United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2017). The conference aimed to address the issue of measuring sustainable tourism and recognizes the increasing relevance of the concept of sustainable tourism in the national agendas of countries, as well as, tourism's role in sustainable development. It presented a new monitoring framework for tourism that incorporates the economic, environmental, and social dimensions of sustainable tourism across global, national and subnational levels. This conference led to the finalization of the *Manila Call for Action on Measuring Sustainable Tourism Report* where it was acknowledged that sustainable tourism contributes to economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, as well as to all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UNWTO, 2017). Likewise, it also recognized that sustainable tourism drives inclusive economic growth and social development by promoting entrepreneurship, generating jobs, and combating poverty (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2019; Roxas et al., 2020). It also encouraged environmental protection, concerns and mitigative action concerned with climate and heritage preservation. Further benefits include stronger peace and mutual understanding around the world while addressing poverty and inequality (Alejandria-Gonzales, 2016; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2017). Most importantly, it emphasizes that the development and implementation of an MST Framework is a strategic and ongoing effort that necessitates wide and consistent stakeholder engagement, collaboration, inter-institutional coordination and political leadership (Fathimath, 2015).

The conference served as a significant platform which reiterated the need to establish mechanisms in measuring sustainable tourism. More than a qualitative characteristic that destinations must achieve, sustainability should be quantified and measured to be better understood and implemented (Park & Yoon, 2011;

Twining-Ward, 2007). Similarly, the development of ecotourism in the country should be hinged on the MST framework or any other measurable mechanisms for better monitoring and management.

4 Obstacles to an Effective Ecotourism Strategy for the Philippines

We have emphasized that the resources for ecotourism are derived from the natural environment (Hüttche et al., 2002). Likewise, we have also underscored that the Philippine archipelago and associated marine ecosystems comprise a centre of mega-diversity (Carpenter & Springer, 2005; Cousteau, 2017). Tropical forests are a key ecotourism resource in the Philippines and contain considerable biodiversity (La Viña et al., 2011). Overall, the Philippine group of islands contain a wide range of natural assets that can potentially serve as ecotourism resources and products.

Because the Philippines is a biodiversity hotspot (Myers et al., 2000; Rickart et al., 2007; Marchese, 2015), deforestation, quarrying, global warming, climate change, and extinctions of endemic species have been and remain major problems (Malcolm et al., 2006). In 1996, it was reported that there was only 6% of primary forest habitat remaining in the Philippines (Primack & Corlett, 2006; Corlett, 2009). More recent estimates stand at 2.8% (or 11.6% of total primary forest cover remaining) (Butler, 2014). Birdwatching, and especially in relation to the presence of endemic species, has great potential as a source of tourism revenue (Sekercioglu, 2002; Moss 2009; Kjølsrød 2019). However, it is disappointing to note that many currently identified and visited bird watching sites are subject to degradation in the form of illegal logging, agricultural expansion, cultivation, hunting, disturbance caused by the harvesting of forest products and in some situations, are compromised due to improved access and associated tourism development (Li & Wen, 2016).

Ambal et al. (2012) reported on the need for further increases in the protected area network and identified 228 Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs). KBAs are important habitats for 855 different species of flora and fauna (Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, 2015–2028). Unfortunately, a significant number of KBA's are only partially protected (41) or not protected (137) at all. The Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan acknowledged that, despite increases in the protected area network and actions implemented to address the decline of certain species, the loss of biodiversity has not been adequately addressed (Mallari et al., 2016). Furthermore, the continued loss of forest, conversion to agricultural land, harvesting of forest resources, the poaching of wildlife (e.g., doves, parrots, and hornbills), the presence of human settlements in protected areas and unregulated tourism activities all compromise protected area management effectiveness (Mallari et al., 2016). This situation is also exacerbated by political intervention over land use decisions and protected area management regimes that have been poorly funded and resourced (Pressey et al., 2015).

Whaleshark tourism at Donsol and Oslob have become high profile and very profitable 'ecotourism' operations that have largely replaced unsustainable local community fishing practices (e.g. Summers, 2018; Ziegler et al., 2018). The Oslob programme involves feeding whalesharks and the area was originally designated as a marine sanctuary and viewing of whalesharks was designed to represent 'authentic ecotourism' (Quiros, 2005). While beneficial in terms of the creation of marine protected areas and income for local communities, losing sight of what authentic ecotourism represents has resulted in problems. Over the last 20 years whaleshark tourism at Oslob has become a famous example of what can go wrong in terms of over-tourism, crowding and potential negative impacts on the whalesharks (Schleimer et al., 2015; Warne, 2018; Snow, 2020). Negative aspects of the Oslob case emphasizes the need for decision makers to revisit relevant policies and plans.

By virtue of the Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2015–2028), a Protected Area Master Plan is currently being developed with the objective of addressing problems that are hindering effective protected area management. In conjunction with this, a vision of how ecotourism will be practiced is required. Villegas (2017) pointed out that it is encouraging that the Philippine Tourism Master Plan and the NES both aim to develop national parks and marine sanctuaries for low density recreation and tourism activities with the aid of private sector investment. The presence of these plans reflect the intention towards environmental protection and climate change responses. However, tourism planners and developers are likely to be cautious given the experience of Boracay which has led to congestion, inadequate waste disposal and environmental degradation (Ong et al., 2011).

The Oslob example demonstrated that implementing the NES and ecotourism development need to be quality controlled and viewed from an evidenced-based lens so that no further mistakes can be made and that authentic ecotourism can be fostered. Recent observations and criticisms of ecotourism practices in Sri Lanka where, congestion, poor management, a lack of interpretation and environmental degradation are occurring at a major ecotourism destination, provides for a useful discussion point as to how ecotourism should be evaluated and practiced (see Newsome, 2013; Prakash et al., 2019). In line with this, a readily understandable definition of ecotourism needs to be applied. Central tenets of such a definition include environmental conservation, effective management, learning as a core aspect and appropriate levels of visitor satisfaction (Newsome, 2013; Newsome et al., 2013).

In addition, tourism planners should be mindful of the risk of over development which can occur in the absence of a regional tourism strategy (Newsome et al., 2019). Moreover, an audit of current 'ecotourism' practices is necessary as evidenced by poorly managed and declining visitor satisfaction associated with whaleshark tourism in the Philippines (Warne, 2018; Snow, 2020; Ziegler et al., 2018). Furthermore, additional problems have also been identified at an unofficial tarsier viewing site where it is reported that tarsiers are held captive in poor conditions, handled daily and likely to be stressed (Salazar, 2011; Adalid, 2016). Following series of complaints against mishandling of tarsiers while in captivity, a consultation meeting with stakeholders (i.e., wildlife permit holders, local government units,

and other stakeholders), the DENR-Region VII (where the province of Bohol is situated) acted together with the Protected Areas for Wildlife Bureau (PAWB) by revoking permits, freeing 113 tarsiers, and transferring them to their natural habitat in a 5.9-hectare conservation area in Candabong, Loboc (Obedencio & Palaubsanon, 2011). Meanwhile, the provincial government also approved an ordinance stopping the issuance of permits to possess tarsiers. Indeed, when stakeholders cooperate in conservation and preservation, protecting wildlife is very much plausible. Likewise, this should be accompanied by national standards that are based on international best practice, and appropriate training and licensing are urgently required for stakeholders (Sparapani et al., 2014).

As such, a national ecotourism strategy is certainly the policy instrument that can address the lack of national standards, or poor-quality ecotourism, as described above. However, ecotourism also needs to be planned and implemented within a wider tourism context so that conservation can occur and that different and conflicting tourist activities do not occur at sites designated as ecotourism products (Newsome & Hughes, 2018). To achieve quality ecotourism, as considered above, requires an understanding as to its core characteristics, adequate funding, appropriate government support to ensure effective environmental conservation, authentic ecolodge design and operation, capacity building, research, training (managers, rangers and guides) and monitoring for sustainability (Buckley, 2003; Leverington et al., 2010; Buckley et al., 2012; Newsome et al., 2013; Hockings et al., 2019).

Nonetheless, to materialize the provisions of the abovementioned policies through proper implementation, Aujero-Blanza (2020) and Castillo et al. (2014) emphasized a requirement to alleviate the problems encountered by ecotourism sites. The success of any ecotourism policy is anchored on a strong cohesion and seamless collaborative governance among ecotourism stakeholders to pursue inclusive growth in the development of ecotourism sites and destinations. Moreover, according to Tariella (2014) as cited by Aujero-Blanza (2020), with the linkage among stakeholders, strategy formulation can be hinged on the current and future needs of ecotourism development of ecotourism in the country.

5 Conclusions

With the recent performance of the travel and tourism industry, it cannot be denied that it has become one of the economic pillars of the Philippines. In harnessing the benefits from the growth of tourism, a significant emphasis is placed on the utilization of natural resources as ecotourism attractions. At the same time, natural resources, such as forests, have been damaged from previous use and are currently under threat from illegal logging, agricultural expansion, cultivation, hunting, disturbance caused by the harvesting of forest products and tourism development. Furthermore, to add value and livelihoods for local communities, market-based approaches have been identified for ecotourism development to occur alongside conservation. For example, learning from the case of the Tarsier Conservation in

Bohol, despite the cancellation of permits to own tarsiers, the local government and DENR housed all privately owned tarsiers in the conservation area where they can still be viewed by tourists and allow for ecotourism activities to flourish while the tarsiers are safe in a more forested and naturally controlled sanctuary. Moreover, learning from the case of Masungi Georeserve in Rizal, it was recognized by the UNDP, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the World Commission on Protected Areas, and WildArk for its innovative approach to ecotourism hinged on conservation, education, research, sustainable development, and engineering tourism infrastructure that mimics nature (for detailed case discussions, see Aquino & Rivera, 2018 and Dumaliang et al., 2018). Hence, such good practices motivated this chapter to review existing tourism development policies and to analyze complementary documentations that emphasize the importance of ecotourism. This is critical in establishing a direct link between ecotourism and the need for conservation.

In doing so, we have explained that continuously augmenting the NES and accompanying it with complementary policies, initiatives, and programs would enable it to become a policy instrument that can set national standards, identify indicators, and evaluate sustainable tourism. With these in place, the planning, implementation, and delivery of ecotourism products and services are within an encompassing tourism context where conservation can still be implemented despite tourism activities. However, to achieve quality ecotourism, as discussed above, it requires an understanding of its core characteristics as well as access to adequate funding and appropriate government support to ensure effective environmental conservation, authentic ecolodge design and operation, capacity building, research, training (for destination managers, rangers, and guides) and monitoring for sustainability (Buckley, 2003; Leverington et al., 2010; Buckley et al., 2012; Newsome et al., 2013; Hockings et al., 2019).

Threats to Philippine biodiversity and some potential solutions (e.g., creating guidelines in ecotourism planning and managing protected areas, identifying indicators and metrics, improving connectivity, augmenting destination infrastructure, improving resource efficiency in tourism value chains, capacitating tourism stakeholders, initiating policy and institutional reforms, among others) that need to be applied in conjunction with the NES and its allied documents have been highlighted in this chapter. As what we have emphasized from the beginning, effective conservation precedes tourism development as without conservation there can be no ecotourism. Hence, we recognize that sustainable tourism can drive economic growth and social development by promoting entrepreneurship, generating employment and combating poverty (Mondino & Beery, 2019). However, if the environment is neglected it is not possible to realise ecotourism (Lim, 2017; Cobbinah, 2015; Björk, 2000), which by definition, has sustainability (Roxas et al., 2020; Farrell & Twining-Ward, 2005; Elkington, 1997) as a vital characteristic. Taking on board the core message from the sustainability literature and in augmenting the country's ecotourism strategy, it is vital for the government and the various stakeholders in the tourism and travel industry to engage with and understand the dependence of ecotourism on natural and preferably intact ecosystems.

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Perception and Participation of Local Residents in the Tourism Development Program for the Sampaloc Lake in San Pablo City, Laguna

Sheerah Louise C. Tasico and Peter Jerome B. Del Rosario

Abstract Community-based ecotourism (CBET) sets the direction of management approaches in different mangrove sites, coastal areas, and wetlands in the Philippines. Among the best practices for CBET are concepts of self-mobilization and project ownership. However, not all tourism programs follow a participatory approach in management as local governments mostly rely on professionals in developing their tourism master plans. This chapter analyzes the tourism development in Sampaloc Lake in San Pablo, Laguna. Interviews with 21 local residents and 2 tourism officers were performed to better understand community participation and the LGU's community involvement strategies. The data revealed the residents' concerns regarding tourism development projects which conflicted with the LGU's perceptions of tourism development. Results were then interpreted using Arnstein's (*Journal of the American Institute of Planners, 35*(4), 216–224, 1969) and Pretty's (*World Development, 23*(8), 1247–1263, 1995) typologies for community participation. Findings suggest a discord in perceived levels of participation in Sampaloc Lake tourism programs between the community and the LGU. Hence, options for achieving the principles associated with CBET are explored in the context of meeting tourism development, sustainable livelihoods, and environmental management goals.

Keywords Sampaloc Lake · Community development · Participation · Resident perceptions · Tourism · Community-based ecotourism

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1 Introduction

Community-based ecotourism (CBET) is being used by local government units (LGUs) in the Philippines to provide additional sources of livelihood opportunities to the local people. CBET is viewed as more sustainable than conventional mass tourism as it focuses on protecting the natural environment while using the concept of participatory development to allow various stakeholders to participate in planning and implementation of local programs (Alburo et al., 2015). Some CBET principles include encouraging local community participation, capacity building, and people empowerment (Gutierrez, 2019). In planning for CBET, LGUs can either view the local community equipped with ideational factors (e.g., ideas, narratives, discourses, cultures, ideologies, leadership) which are important in natural resource management, or lacking the essential characteristics (e.g., technology, market ties, and human resources) needed to govern the natural resources (Ruzol et al., 2020).

Unfortunately, most local communities may lack awareness of what tourism is, especially CBET. For example, in the study of Porter and Orams (2014) on an artisanal fishing community in Bolinao, Pangasinan, it was revealed that fisher folk usually associate tourism with the way of showcasing the locality's food, culture, and sometimes the environment; the fisher folk also seemed to misconstrue tourism with hospitality by saying that they wanted to receive tourists with their warm personality and character. Porter et al. (2018) suggest that when the awareness of tourism by local communities is minimal, eliciting meaningful participation in tourism development projects becomes challenging. Similar outcomes were reported by Ruzol et al. (2020) who noted that during the incipient stages of the mangrove rehabilitation project, the residents of Leganes were only utilized for labor provision. To increase the participation of residents, the Leganes, Iloilo LGU transferred their ecotourism program to the Community-based Mangrove Growers' Association in Katunggan Ecopark; this change appealed to the local people who put significant trust in the People's Organization (PO) leader (Ruzol et al., 2020). The LGU and Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office (MENRO) gradually became less involved in the activity and the people began to plan and act on themselves since they realized the positive impacts of the proposed mangrove rehabilitation (Ruzol et al., 2020). Another example of CBET implementation was the case of the Bojo Aloguinsan Ecotourism Association (BAETAS), a people's organization run by members of fishing community, which helps the Cebu provincial government to promote its Suroy-suroy Sugbu (Travel Cebu) Program (Alburo et al., 2015). With sufficient funding from the LGU, the localities were trained in bird identification, naming of mangrove species, hospitality, and creating souvenir items. Since its inception, BAETAS has received international recognition for CBET while gainfully employing more than 50 individuals as tour guides (Gutierrez, 2019; Lacamiento, 2013). Thus, in cases where tourism awareness within local communities is low, it becomes necessary for LGUs, or outsiders, to help communities successfully understand and participate in CBET. Examples from the Philippines further suggest the potential role of POs in accomplishing these efforts.

While tourism can be a poverty-alleviating tool, the equitable distribution of tourism benefits especially for the poor members of the society remains a challenge (Dwyer & Thomas, 2012; Gutierrez, 2019). Research has shown that tourist destinations often favor and benefit the elite capitalists at the expense of the local community (Roxas et al., 2018), especially when tourism development follows a capitalist approach (Aquino et al., 2018). Thus, in addition to the inequitable distribution of economic benefits, the poor members of the society also bear the social and cultural costs of tourism (Zemla, 2020).

Such issues relating to the distribution of wealth and benefits were intended to be addressed through the Philippines' Tourism Act of 2009. This act declares that LGUs are expected to use tourism for national socioeconomic development and improvement of the peoples' lives; however, many issues surrounding benefits at the community level remain (Aquino et al., 2018). Moreover, the economic benefits resulting from tourism development can be outnumbered by associated negative impacts if pursued without an adequate management plan and long-term planning (Stange et al., 2011). For example, Hall (2001) revealed that coral reef damage and fisheries depletion are the usual results of resort construction in coastal areas. More recently, for example, Boracay, one of the country's top destinations, was closed to tourism due to damaged waterways and contaminated water. These issues were attributed to exceeding carrying capacities, illegal settlements, lack of law enforcement, and the LGU's reactive response to tourism problems (Cruz & Legazpi, 2019; Goldsmith, 2018). Currently, in the Philippines, CBET draws a fine line between socio-ecological conservation benefits and costs. To better understand the socioeconomic and socio-environmental issues associated with tourism development, this chapter explores the dynamics between local residents and the LGU regarding their perspective on tourism planning and implementation activities concerning the Sampaloc Lake in San Pablo, Laguna, Philippines. Following Arnstein's (1969) and Pretty's (1995) frameworks, this chapter analyzes the forms of community participation in the CBET initiatives in Sampaloc Lake.

2   Policies Concerning Philippine Wetlands and Tourism Development

The Philippines is known for its rich and diverse natural resources that provide goods and ecosystem services not only to the Filipinos, but also to the world. Among these resources is a myriad of wetlands categorized as either human-made, coastal, or inland, with the latter deemed as the most threatened of all ecosystem types. The Atlas of Inland Wetlands in mainland Luzon, Philippines, includes 756 inland wetlands, approximately 11% of which are lakes (BMB, 2014). In recent years, Philippine wetlands have faced environmental challenges such as land use conversion, resource use overexploitation, and domestic and industrial pollution (Sespeñe et al., 2016). In particular, wetlands are often converted into aquaculture farms, while marshlands are converted into rice paddies (Pöyry IDP Consult, Inc., 2011;

Table 1 Policies and legislations related to Philippine wetlands

Year	Policy	Title/description
1975	Presidential Decree No. 825	Providing Penalty for Improper Disposal of Garbage and Other Forms of Uncleanliness and for Other Purposes
1975	Presidential Decree No. 856	Code on Sanitation of the Philippines
1976	Presidential Decree No. 1067	Water Code of the Philippines
1976	Presidential Decree No. 984	National Pollution Control Decree
1990	DENR Administrative Order No. 34	Revised Water Usage and Classification / Water Quality Criteria
1990	Republic Act No. 6969	Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Wastes Control Act
1991	Republic Act No. 7160 Chapter I Section 131	Local Government Code (General Provisions – Municipal Waters)
1998	Republic Act No. 8550	Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998
1999	Executive Order No. 11	Establishing the Guidelines for Ecotourism Development in the Philippines
2000	Republic Act No. 9003	Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000
2004	Republic Act No. 9275	Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004
2004	Republic Act No. 4850	An Act Creating the Laguna Lake Development Authority, Prescribing its Powers, Functions and Duties, Providing Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes
2006	Executive Order No. 578	Establishing the Policy on Biological Diversity, Prescribing its Implementation Throughout the Country, Particularly in the Sulu Sulawesi Marine Ecosystem and Verde Island Passage Marine Corridor
2009	Republic Act No. 9593	Tourism Act of 2009
2009	Republic Act No. 9729	Climate Change Act of 2009

Sespeñe et al., 2016). External factors such as logging, mining, and commercial farming in the vicinity also impact watersheds (Pöyry IDP Consult, Inc., 2011). Previous research has shown that land conversion problems are often associated with a lack of coordination between the LGU and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in identifying which part of a watershed is fit for urban-mixed development and ecotourism (see De Leon & Kim, 2017). Management policies concerning the Philippine wetlands are therefore necessary to reduce the pressure on wetlands, particularly on the lakes (see Table 1).

Among the policies described in Table 1, the most instrumental to the development of the Sampaloc Lake into a tourism site are the Local Government Code of 1991 and the Tourism Act of 2009. The Local Government Code of 1991 gives the LGU the main duty, responsibility, and accountability in managing water bodies under its jurisdiction (RA 7160, Art. 2, Section 149). With the implementation of the Tourism Act of 2009, LGUs are also expected to strategically use tourism as an engine for socioeconomic growth, cultural affirmation, and countryside development (RA 9593, Chapter 1, Section 2). The impact of the relevant policies is discussed in the next section.

3   Case Study: Sampaloc Lake in San Pablo, Laguna

San Pablo City is popularly known as the "City of Seven Lakes" and is categorized as a first-class[1] municipality. It is one of the oldest cities in the Philippines with a land area of 21,400 ha with 80 barangays, and a total population of 266,068 as of 2015 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2016). Its seven lakes serve as settlement sites and livelihood sources for residents and as tourist attractions for outsiders. One of the most visited among the seven lakes is the Sampaloc Lake because of its accessibility (Fig. 1). With an area of 99.21 ha, Sampaloc Lake is considered the biggest lake of San Pablo City (Fig. 2). It is of volcanic origin and has a maximum depth of 27 m (Seven Lakes San Pablo City International, 2002; Sta. Ana et al., 2006). Native fish species (e.g., snakehead murrel or *bakuli*; and tank gobi or *biya*) as well as non-native species (e.g., tilapia, bighead carp, and catfish) are found in Sampaloc Lake and provide both subsistence and livelihood opportunities (Briones et al., 2016). In addition to providing a natural or green space, Sampaloc Lake offers other tourist attractions such as mini-parks,[2] San Pablo City museum, and the famous monument of Andres Bonifacio, a national hero.

With the help of the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), the principal agency tasked to govern the Laguna de Bay and its watershed area, the LGU of San Pablo City, was able to identify the problems and concerns within its seven crater lakes and address them accordingly (Brillo, 2017a). Aquaculture is the main activity on the seven lakes which provides livelihood opportunities for the local fishing communities; however, it has seen rapid growth and overexpansion. To lessen the impact of the rapidly growing aquaculture, tourism activities were promoted as an alternative (Brillo, 2017b); although currently, the right to establish and develop tourism facilities and attractions over water bodies is dependent on the LGUs.

The historical development of the Sampaloc Lake into a tourism spot is shown in Table 2. In the early 1980s, fish pens and fish cages covered only about 6 ha (5.6%) of Sampaloc Lake's surface area, increasing rapidly to 28 ha (27%) in the late 1980s, and reaching 70% in 1990 (Global Nature Fund, 2014a). This rapid increase resulted from the influx of tilapia investors on the lake (Brillo, 2017a) which gave the local people a livelihood opportunity. Despite the 10% area limit for building aquaculture structures, as mandated by the Philippine Fisheries Code, the rapid growth of fish cages went unchecked (Brillo, 2017b; Global Nature Fund, 2014b). This led to problems in the lake such as overpopulation and overfeeding of tilapia, which caused stench and water pollution in the Sampaloc Lake (Global Nature Fund, 2014b). In 2000, illegal settlements and establishments around the lake were

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[1] Based on the Department Order No. 23-08 of the Department of Finance, a first-class municipality has an average annual income tantamount to 55 million pesos or more (1,143,003.85 USD – as per November 28, 2020 Philippine Peso to US Dollar Conversion).

[2] Also known as pocket park; Defined by the National Recreation and Park Association (n.d.) as a small open space circumscribed with commercial and residential buildings on small plots with several spaces for people to meet, unwind, or relish the outdoors. As such, these areas are commonly found in urban settings.
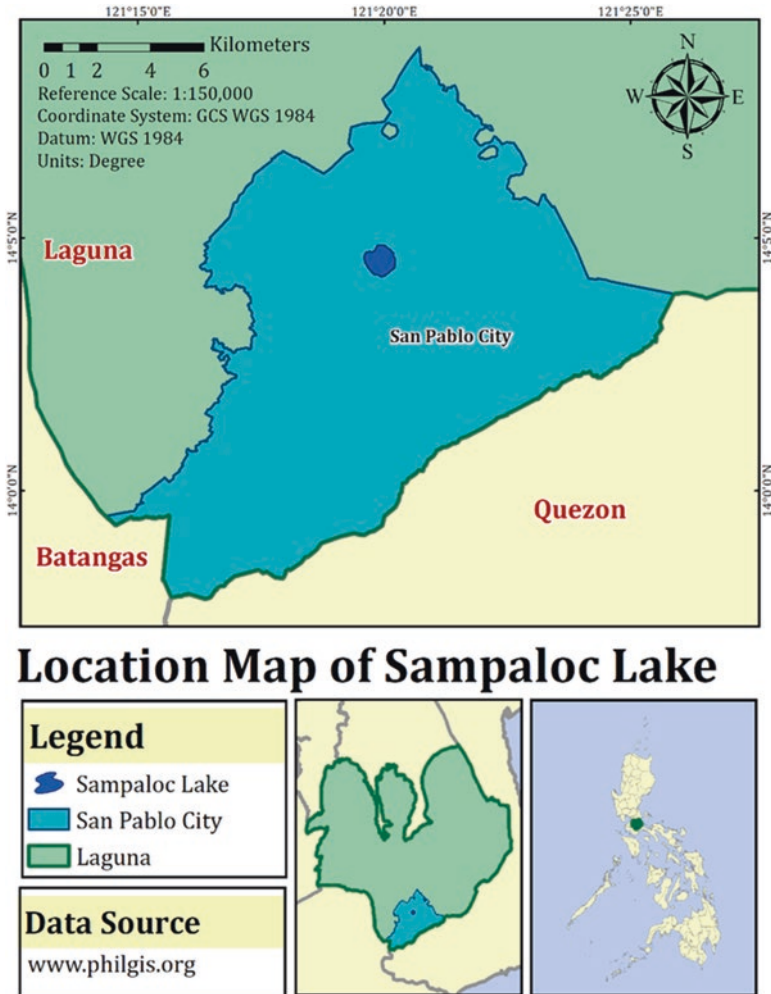
Fig. 1 Location map of Sampaloc Lake in San Pablo, Laguna, Philippines. (Generated from www.philgis.org)

demolished by the local government although the lack of funds for the relocation of the illegal settlers in the Sampaloc Lake soon made the efforts ineffective (Brillo, 2017a). More than a decade since the cleanup, a third of the Sampaloc Lake is still occupied by illegal settlers and fish structures (Brillo, 2017a).

Following the clearing of the settlements in 2000, one strategy employed by the San Pablo LGU was to transform the demolished sites into ecology parks (Sta. Ana et al., 2006). From 2003 to 2008, various efforts were made to transform the Sampaloc Lake area and its vicinity. These included developments, many of which were sponsored by external donors. Also, during this time, environmental efforts such as the reduction of fish pens and cages worked to improve dissolved oxygen

Fig. 2 Fish cages in the Sampaloc Lake (**a**) and (**b**) and a panoramic landscape view (**c**). (Photographs by Sheerah Tasico)

Table 2 Important dates concerning tourism-related events with the Sampaloc Lake

Year	Event
2000	Illegal settlements and establishments around the lake are removed upon the protest of concerned stakeholders (Brillo, 2017a)
2002	Sampaloc Lake is regarded as an area for research and conservation (Ong et al., 2002)
2005	Inauguration of the Tilapia Monument which was built in honor of Mr. Jose C. Agahan who donated the first fingerlings in San Pablo City in 1995 (Taningco, 2008)
2007	Establishment of a mini-park donated by the Seven Lakes Association of Northern California, Inc. (as indicated on the Seven Lakes Association of Northern California, Inc. Plaque). This serves as their organization's viewing deck in Sampaloc Lake.
2008	Establishment of the Junior Chamber International (JCI) Friendship Garden which symbolizes the brotherhood between JCI San Pablo Chapter and Seonsan Chapter. It also serves as the organization's viewing deck in Sampaloc Lake (JCI Friendship Garden Plaque; JCI San Pablo 7 Lakes, 2011)
2015	Urban Greening and Rehabilitation Project and Zone Development Plan was made by the San Pablo LGU (Municipality of San Pablo, 2015)

levels (Zapanta et al., 2008). By 2012, the coverage of fish pens and cages was reduced to 40% coverage of the lake, though this is still in excess of the mandated 10% surface area allotment (Global Nature Fund, 2014a).

3.1 The Tourism Master Plan in Sampaloc Lake

In the Philippines, master development plans regarding tourism projects for water bodies are expected to be developed by the local governments. Ideally, the planning of such projects should include the local residents who become community

development stakeholders in the process (Jamal & Getz, 1995). However, previous research in the Philippines suggests that a lack of tourism awareness may limit the ability of residents in participating in the planning of LGU-led tourism projects (Porter & Orams, 2014; Porter et al., 2018).

San Pablo's planning exercises for tourism development involved fishermen organizations, such as the Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management Council (FARMC), in a series of meetings about the zoning and management plan for the seven lakes, with a special emphasis on the Sampaloc Lake for tourism development (Municipality of San Pablo, 2015). The municipality also conducted small group meetings with other concerned groups in San Pablo in order to include their perspectives in making the tourism master plan (TMP) for the city (Municipality of San Pablo, 2015). The LGU also revealed that secondary data gathering and site visits were done to triangulate the primary information gathered from the concerned stakeholders for the development of the TMP.

San Pablo City's TMP proposes a system for effective management of the lake in terms of livelihood and tourism development. The TMP envisions the city as "a premier eco-adventure *cum* histo-cultural destination in the CALABARZON region" (Municipality of San Pablo, 2015, p. i). For Sampaloc Lake, the Municipality of San Pablo (2015) proposed three strategies to transform the area into a tourism destination. The first strategy is the zoning of the Sampaloc Lake where agricultural tourism zones are identified and legitimate fish cage operators were targeted to be placed in a managed aquaculture zone. The second strategy includes the resettlement of informal settlers into a new housing area and involving them in education opportunities for tourism-related livelihood activities and environmental conservation training and workshops. The third tourism strategy for the Sampaloc Lake is the construction and installation of facilities and infrastructures, such as the proposed establishment of the 1.3 km zipline. In addition, the Municipality of San Pablo (2015) planned to renovate the Doña Leonila Park and establish a visitor center and tourism office. The construction of 20 mini-parks was also planned along the Dagatan Boulevard. Lastly, hotels and other types of accommodations will be built along the area (Municipality of San Pablo, 2015).

4   Research Design

This research follows a case study design, a type of research involving an in-depth data collection using multiple sources to understand a case over a particular period (Creswell et al., 2007). To gain an understanding of the interactions occurring between residents and the Sampaloc Lake, as well as between residents and the LGU regarding tourism development, various data gathering methods were used. First, secondary data were gathered from previous studies on Sampaloc Lake as well as printed and online news reports. The data underwent historical analysis which is commonly used by historians to understand a social phenomenon (Wyche et al., 2006). This type of qualitative research method involves critique of historical

texts, triangulation of information with other sources, and situating the historical texts within other texts for a deeper understanding of the social phenomenon being studied (Kipping et al., 2014).

To begin, the San Pablo City's Tourism Master Plan (TMP) 2014–2020 was first examined in terms of its tourism strategies and plans for community involvement. Data were then gathered from a series of 23 semi-structured interviews, 21 of which were from local residents who fish, own small businesses, or operate as stall vendors in and around Sampaloc Lake, while 2 were from the LGU Tourism Office. Interviews were conducted and transcribed in Tagalog and then translated into English. The interview data underwent manual thematic analysis, with resultant themes pertaining to the following: (1) the residents' perception and participation in tourism (Sect. 5); and (2) the LGU's perspective on tourism development (Sect. 6). The participants' responses and the findings from the TMP were later analyzed using Arnstein's (1969) and Pretty's (1995) typologies for community participation to explore perceptions of the residents' and the LGU's feelings on community involvement.

5 Resident Perceptions and Participation in Tourism Development at in Sampaloc Lake

The analysis revealed that the residents expected the tourism development interventions to contribute to natural resource conservation and poverty alleviation. Specifically, residents expected the TMP to include plans for supporting local entrepreneurs, providing opportunities for low-income residents, uplifting marginalized sectors of the city, and partnering with private entrepreneurs, social organizations, and tourist-related business owners. To contribute to the environmental protection and conservation of natural resources, the TMP contained specific strategies such as tree planting, shoreline rehabilitation and stabilization through riprapping, proper waste management, and lake cleanups. Among these strategies, the residents interviewed in this study participated the most in cleaning the lake. The residents also revealed that numerous participatory cleaning operations were initiated by the LGU, Laguna Lake Development Authority, and Department of Tourism. They were paid in cash for work programs for 10 days of cleaning operations, with each individual earning PhP 250 per day (~5 USD) which is slightly lower than the average wage of unskilled laborers in the Philippines (PSA, 2017). This activity was seen by the residents as a welcome economic opportunity. Interestingly, some of the interviewees clarified that they still conduct voluntary cleaning operations. One resident said that she initiates the removal of large amounts of water lilies while others usually sweep along the lakeside to remove the trash brought by outsiders. Some participants stated that if the lake and the lakeside get dirty, a voluntary cleanup is expected. In particular, residents highlighted the program "Operasyon Linis" (Cleanup Operation) wherein available residents and associated organizations volunteer to

clean the lake during an appointed date. Such actions are considered as noble duties which give a sense of achievement to the residents. As one respondent indicated, "*everyone here becomes a hero when it concerns the cleanliness of the lake*". Moreover, one resident emphasized that those from outside the Sampaloc Lake also participate in the cleanup:

> *Whenever there are cleaning operations, residents from outside the Sampaloc Lake come to help us. LLDA talked with various organizations to send representatives to help us in cleaning the lake. Likewise, we also visit them when they have cleaning operations so that we could help. We call that Operasyon Linis.*

While the majority of participants indicated feelings of pride associated with maintaining a clean lake environment, participants' sentiments were mixed regarding the transformation of parts of Sampaloc Lake from fishing areas to tourism areas. For example, some participants were pleased with the efforts of the LGU to relocate illegal settlers into the houses provided by the Gawad Kalinga Foundation. However, others were not in support of the relocation, some noting that the move separated them from their fish cages:

> *But how do we cope with the difficulty of manually rowing the boat while it contains the heavy harvest of at most 60 kilograms? It will be difficult for the fishermen. We felt that they should prioritize the native fisherfolk. It is easier if we live near our fish cages. We do not even have a problem with their taxation of one peso per kilo of harvest.*

The LGU's removal of the small nipa huts (Fig. 3) to improve aesthetics was also opposed by the fish cage owners. According to participants identifying as fishers, such places were essential rest places during work hours. The fish cage owners were also required to register their existing fish cages and acquire permits from the Laguna Lake Development Authority, if they plan to construct new ones. Prior to the implementation of the tourism plan, fish cage owners were not required to pay annual fees for registration. Participant responses indicated that residents did not see the actual benefits of these registrations:

> *The place was transformed into a tourist park. Nowadays, the government earns profit from it and LLDA has also hopped in, taxing the locals. It did not use to be this way before, but today, we pay them annually.* (Sampaloc Lake resident)

Fig. 3 Nipa huts which serve as resting places of fishermen in Sampaloc Lake. (Photographs by Sheerah Tasico)

Likewise, other participants felt that the tourism development only benefited the local officials. Three participants who earned their livelihoods as local vendors stated that they were now being required to register annually for PhP 2000.00 (~42 USD) to sell snacks. In addition to the annual registration, they were also being asked to move around, even though most tourists stay around a particular area most of the time. Participants viewed such restrictions as imposing on and/or damaging to their livelihoods. As one resident narrated:

> They (government) will be the only ones who can survive, and the residents will be stripped of their rights to live here. It is because everything is now prohibited, for example, no one is allowed to sell food around the vicinity. Would they want to tax those who only have menial jobs? One is not even allowed to stay in one place to sell goods since we ought to register for rolling stores. But where should we sell our food then when the people are here? Not everyone is capable; we only live on a daily basis. That is how tourism gets a hold on us.

In general, participants felt that the associated tourism programs and policies had not been well explained to the residents. For example, one resident commented:

> Tourism plans just happened. The way others see it, in their opinion, the goal is to improve the aesthetics. That is all. But the other details of the plan were not explained to us at all.

Multiple responses from residents indicate that they were informed about the tourism development plans yet had no choice but to follow the LGU:

> The plans were implemented without consultation. What we understood from them is they will make the lake beautiful, but they did not explain how this will be done, specifically.

> That is why we were asking them not to remove the motored boats. How are we going to manually row the boat with tons of fish? If we are to harvest six hundred kilograms of fish, which is equal to a ton, we must manually row the boat from both ends. This situation would be pathetic. We hoped that they prioritized the locales.

> We regret what has happened. If we only knew what was planned, we wished that our houses were rather not removed from the lakeside. We do not even pollute the water since we all have our own toilet rooms, and yet they say that we dump human wastes on the lake. How would that happen when we have a proper drainage system? But anyway, we just agreed with what they wanted so we would not hear anything more against us.

Collectively, participant responses suggested feelings of exclusion in the planning processes, stating that they were not involved in planning and implementation of such activities which led to their inability to understand such policies and programs.

6   The LGU's Perspectives on Tourism Development

The data showed some discord in the perspectives on Sampaloc Lake tourism development between the LGU and the residents. One key informant stated that the LGU's decision to relocate 55 families who have lived for more than 30 years around Sampaloc Lake was necessary to protect the area. This key informant also emphasized that the relocation was done with the help of other government agencies. In relation to tourism development in Sampaloc Lake, key informant

interviews revealed that a series of meetings were held to inform the residents about the city's tourism development plans; and that, although some residents disagreed with the proposal, the majority of the residents expressed full support. The second key informant further clarified such consultations, specifically with the fishermen, prior to implementing the tourism plans:

> There was consultation with the FARMC which was composed of mostly fishermen around the Sampaloc Lake. It was not done hastily, especially that the lake will undergo zoning. Therefore, a series of consultations was done since some fish cages will be transferred far away from their original place. It should be done in coordination with the fishermen. (Tourism Officer)

Key informant responses, therefore, suggest that the formulation of the TMP required to hold a series of consultation meetings with the fishermen groups of the seven lakes were met. However, detailed reports of such meetings were not included in the annex section of the TMP. Thus, it is difficult to compare the LGU's statements with those of the residents regarding community involvement. Issues of vandalism on the first mini-parks were also revealed by a key informant, describing instances of stolen solar lamps and destruction of concrete trash bins and vendor stalls, some of which were thrown in the lake. In addition, windows and doors of vendor stalls were broken and some were said to have used the vendor stalls as bathrooms; however, it was unclear if such vandalisms were done by tourists or residents. The interviews with key informants showed notable discrepancies between resident perceptions.

7 Community Participation and Engagement in Sampaloc Lake's Tourism Development

The management strategies in the San Pablo Tourism Master Plan were intended for attracting tourists. Thus, while the LGU plans to construct tourism attractions such as ziplines, rides, floating restaurants and other attractions on the lake, the construction of these new facilities could be seen as environmentally counterintuitive. Originally the purpose of removing the illegal houses was to reduce environmental pressure on the lake and it remains unclear how the proposed new activities would compare. Given that this study focused on understanding the perspectives of the residents and the LGU on tourism development in Sampaloc Lake, the data on their sentiments regarding the implementation of the initial activities in the master plan (i.e., relocation of illegal settlers, demolishing of their houses near the lake, and regulations on livelihood activities along the lake and its vicinity) are further discussed and evaluated using Arnstein's (1969) and Pretty's (1995) typologies of community participation. Arnstein's (1969) typology is a well-known framework for community participation composed of eight stages (from low to high), namely (1) manipulation; (2) therapy; (3) informing; (4); consultation; (5) placation; (6) partnership; (7) delegated power; and (8) citizen control. Also ordered from low to

high levels of participation, Pretty's (1995) typology suggests seven stages: (1) manipulative participation; (2) passive participation; (3) participation by consultation; (4) participation for material incentives; (5) functional participation; (6) interactive participation; and (7) self-mobilization. The notable overlap between the models of Arnstein (1969) and Pretty (1995) is depicted in Fig. 4 (see Amoako-Atta et al., 2020); in addition, the levels of community participation using the data from this study have been added in the framework.

The narratives of the local residents indicated that they have reached the fourth stage in Pretty's (1995) typology (participation for material incentives) where people work by providing human resources in exchange for food, money, or shelter. To date, Sampaloc Lake residents' involvement in the tourism development program has been limited to the cash-for-work incentive of the LGU, as earlier reported (see Sect. 6). Framed in Arnstein's (1969) typology, the residents' responses revealed that community participation in Sampaloc Lake has reached the 'informing' (stage 3) and 'consultation' (stage 4) levels.

Interestingly, the perspectives shared by the tourist officers and the LGU through the TMP suggest higher levels of community participation than perceived by the participants. Compared to Pretty's (1995) typology, the LGU seemed to have engaged the locals in functional participation where people are organized into social groups for consultation. Similarly, when charted on Arnstein's (1969) typology, key informant responses suggested a level higher (consultation) than indicated by residents. When compared using the typologies of community participation in Fig. 4, the inconsistencies between LGU and resident perceptions are of concern. Previous research has shown that a perceived exclusion by residents will lead to fragmentation and distrust among community stakeholders (Brillo, 2017b). This must, therefore, be regarded by the LGU as the main organization mandated by law to oversee and manage tourism developments in Sampaloc Lake.
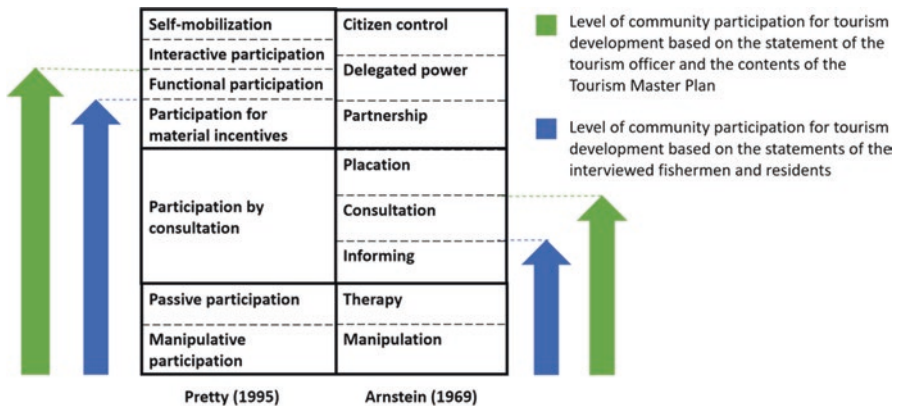
Fig. 4 Levels of community participation involved in tourism development in Sampaloc Lake. (Framework adapted from Amoako-Atta et al. (2020))

8   Conclusions and Recommendations

Our findings demonstrated the importance of employing community participation in CBET development in Sampaloc Lake, San Pablo, Laguna. Results showed that the local government believes that they have employed a higher level of community participation than was perceived by community stakeholders. The findings also support previous community participation typologies (e.g., Arnstein, 1969; Pretty, 1995) showing that consultation does not necessarily equate to meaningful participation. According to Muganda (2009) and Nagarjuna (2015), meaningful participation in tourism requires involvement of the local people in the decision-making process and equitable sharing of benefits. In addition, the local residents' needs, aspirations, insights, and attitudes are essential for public participation in tourism (Sherpa, 2011). In situations such as that of the Sampaloc Lake, it is likely that the local people would need tourism awareness education to ensure that in the future, they could share control over such development initiatives that will affect them (Porter & Orams, 2014; Sherpa, 2011).

Both Arnstein's (1969) and Pretty's (1995) typologies indicate that self-mobilization and citizen control are the end goals of community participation. When the local residents are given the opportunity to own and facilitate tourism activities and establishments, it gives them a sense of ownership and responsibility (Muganda, 2009). The results from this study, therefore, suggest that the local residents are still far from self-mobilization and ownership of tourism programs considering that their level of involvement in the Sampaloc Lake is only within consultation and cash-for-work activities. A continuous series of consultations coupled with capacity building among the local residents as the tourism plans are being implemented may be beneficial.

This study highlighted differences in perspectives between residents and the LGUs regarding tourism development strategy at Sampaloc Lake. The results showed that the LGU's focus on tourism development resulted in oversight of the complexity of the residents' experiences and material conditions which also needed to be immediately addressed. To engage residents in participatory tourism development, the LGU must build trust among the residents. This may be achieved through the provision of livelihood opportunities, open communication channels, and a transparent tourism development strategy. While Sampaloc Lake is still far from the success story of other CBET sites in the Philippines (e.g., Katunggan Ecopark in Leganes, Iloilo), the adoption of a more participatory tourism development strategy following the principles of CBET may lead and help the LGU of San Pablo to achieve more sustainable and inclusive community development through tourism.

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Part III
Product Development and Branding

White sand beach in Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte. (Photograph by Giulia Erika M. Soria)

Culinary Tourism as an Avenue for Tourism Development: Mapping the Flavors of the Philippines

Eylla Laire M. Gutierrez, John Paolo R. Rivera, and Fernando Martin Y. Roxas

Abstract Culinary tourism has emerged globally at a rapid pace. Food has become a deciding factor in choosing a destination and a central part of a travel experience. The Philippines is brimming with heirloom recipes, food-centric festivals, olden cooking practices, and home to world-class homegrown culinary talents that contribute to the emerging popularity of Filipino food. Likewise, in the Philippine National Tourism Development Plan, Filipino cuisine is identified as a key tourism product. However, many culinary experts deem that Filipino cuisine still lacks the kind of identity and branding needed for it to be sought by travellers. Hence, this chapter provided an overview of Filipino cuisine through culinary mapping, to gain a better understanding on how it can develop a strong identity against the backdrop of global cuisines. Our analysis contributes to furthering the identity of Filipino food, strengthening the culinary tourism industry, and improving the understanding of Filipino cultural heritage through cuisines.

Keywords Culinary tourism · Filipino cuisine · Food tourism · Culinary heritage · Culinary mapping · Gastronomy

1 Introduction

Culinary tourism, also referred to as 'food' or 'gastronomic' tourism (De Vera, 2019), has emerged as a major theme in recent tourism studies (Ellis et al., 2018). The experiential potential that food entails has stimulated a growing interest in food tourism among stakeholders (Andersson et al., 2017). Likewise, it has become a deciding factor in selecting a destination to visit and a critical part of the tourism experience (du Rand et al., 2016; Johns & Clarke, 2001; Johns & Kivela, 2001; Gonzáles et al., 2019; Talavera, 2019) as it enhances tourist satisfaction (Au & Law, 2002; Rimmington & Yuksel, 1998; Ryan, 1997).

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Culinary tourism may also be considered a combination of food and cultural tourism, which emphasizes the unique cuisine from a culture of a destination (Long, 2004). It is considered a subset of cultural tourism wherein food is positioned as an expression of one's culture (Green & Dougherty, 2008), and is associated with nationalities that distinguish identities (Prat Forga & Cànoves Valiente, 2012; Hjalager & Richards, 2002). Thus, food consumption creates place-identity through engagement in a destination's culture (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Bell & Valentine, 1997). Culinary tourism, therefore, has the potential to benefit the entire tourism industry by boosting the national economy (Andersson et al., 2017) and building national pride (Bourdieu, 1984). Similarly, cuisine is seen as a dynamic and creative segment of the travel and tourism industry that can reinforce and diversify local economies by supporting the local food culture (Skift, Inc., 2015).

The Philippines is rich with heirloom recipes, food-centric festivals, olden cooking practices, traditional eating customs; all of these attributes are outcomes of the country's multiple influences reflecting its long pre-colonial and colonial history (Fernandez 2015a; Civitello, 2011; Alejandro, 1985). Similar historical attributes are shared by many Central American countries (e.g., Mexico, Honduras, Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Panama) that have cuisines influenced by their diverse history, geography, and traditions (Matwick & Matwick; 2017). Resulting from this rich cultural food-history, the Philippines is now home to world-class homegrown culinary talents who contribute to the global popularity that Filipino food already has (De Vera, 2019).

Filipino cuisine has become a unique product of centuries-worth of intercultural exchange and adaptation; making "fusion" the best word "to capture the essence of Asia's most unique, idiosyncratic, and underrated culinary tradition" (Lazor, 2014, para. 1). In defining fusion, we subscribe to McNeilly (2017) wherein "Filipino food is an intricate pattern of Spanish, Western, Chinese, Japanese, and Pacific Islander flavors that serve as living proof of the country's rich cultural history" (para. 3). Similarly, Lantrip (2017), Fernandez (2015b), and Palanca (2015) described Filipino cuisine as infused with Spanish, Chinese, and American influences. For years, Filipino cuisine had incorporated the military culture of "boodle fighting"[1] as a form of collective culinary nationalism (Bender & De Leon, 2018), and fast food culture (Matejowsky, 2015), among others. Because of the varying cultures influencing its identity, it is challenging to describe what Filipino cuisine is (Halpern & McKibben, 2015). Yana Gilbuena, founder of *The Salo Project*, provided an answer to this inquiry: "the simplest way to put it is [that] our food reflects our history" (Lazor, 2014, para. 1). Sta. Maria (2019) offered an encompassing definition of Filipino cuisine – it is the world's cuisine that seeks to bring a smile to the stomach. As reported by Rocamora (2019), "the Department of Tourism (DOT) is seeking to accentuate attention on unique Filipino cuisine and the experience that

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[1] Boodle Fight is traditionally a military practice of eating a meal which dispenses with dishes and cutlery. In Filipino culture, it is offten understood as "Philippine fine dining" where diners practice kamayan or "eating with the hands" on food that is placed on top of a long banana leaf-lined table. To date, boodle fight is commonly practiced in social gatherings, cultural parties, even as part of tour packages (e.g. island hopping activities) (Dumdum, 2012).

goes along with it to attract more visitors to the country" (para. 1). Thus, there is a need to further re-establish what Filipino cuisine means to the country and its people.

Food has been attracting tourists in destinations across the globe such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, Italy, France, and Thailand among others (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010; Fox, 2007; Henderson, 2004; Nelson, 2016; Okumus et al., 2007; Pilcher, 2004). The success of these culinary destinations has been attributed to the respective cuisines' abilities to reflect a country's national identity, culture, and lifestyle (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010). For instance, Japan is popularly known for its sushi, sashimi, and ramen; Mexico for its tacos and enchiladas; Italy for its pizza and pasta; and Thailand for its tom yum goong and pad thai. With the success of these culinary destinations, expectations on the types of flavors and cuisines are established prior to visiting (Gonzales, 2018). Often, success in the field of gastronomy tourism requires a unifying characteristic that binds the variety of dishes found in a country (Gérard, 1983). Philippine cuisine needs to improve its identity and branding for it to be sought by travellers (Arnaldo, 2018). Past research suggests that Filipino cuisine has not taken off because of inadequate emphasis on narratives and images accompanying the cuisines (Krich, 2000). According to Fulton (2016), Filipino cuisine has been slowly catching up with its neighboring countries in Southeast Asia that have successfully established their cuisine in the international stage. The slow pace might be due to the country's difficulty in selecting a national dish (Gonzales, 2018). Defining Philippine cuisine as a melting pot of cultures seems unpalatable given that food is presumed to represent a unified national identity (Halpern & McKibben, 2015).

Historically, food consumption in the Philippines primarily relied on ancestral experience – the availability of sources, distinct topographies (mostly coastal and volcanic, mountains and plains in the north, archipelagic in the central, and mountains in the south), and the overall characteristics of a place (Wernstedt & Spencer, 1967). According to Fernandez (2015b), dishes across the country have varied from the very beginning, from the ingredients and cooking processes to variations in which food is prepared by individual cooks, households, towns, and regions. For example, *adobo* has long been given the status of the Philippines' unofficial national dish (Arnaldo, 2020; Herrera, 2014; Tayag, 2012), that is prepared over the archipelago using pork and/or chicken, vinegar, and soy sauce. Every cook and family are said to have their own unique versions by adding ingredients such as coconut milk, burnt coconut meat, turmeric, liver, bay leaf, pineapple, and chilies (Sta. Maria, 2015). Thus, the challenge is to create a defining identity for a dish, such as *adobo*, and for the rest of the Philippine cuisine.

Given such backdrop, we have seen that the discussion regarding culinary tourism has been dominated by five themes, namely: (1) motivation, (2) culture, (3) authenticity, (4) management and marketing, and (5) destination orientation (Ellis et al., 2018). As such, in this chapter, we endeavor to explore how we can better understand Filipino cuisine. In addressing this overarching research goal, our objective is to create a culinary map that identifies unifying characteristics among all cuisines from different areas in the country that best captures the attributes, history, and practices that the Philippines is special for. Through this improved understanding of Filipino cuisine, we also aim to better define, describe, and identify it, thus enabling Filipinos to get closer to understanding their country's culture and identity.

2   Literature Review

2.1   *Culinary Mapping*

Mapping is used as an approach to visualize complex economic, social, and environmental systems with respect to a specific subject (Sweeney et al., 2016). Culinary mapping is a tool used by stakeholders in promoting, marketing, and showcasing food as well as the people and places where it belongs (Ecovue, 2011; Lubbe 2003). The success of the culinary cultures of Thailand, Spain, Japan, South Korea, among others has been attributed to the presence of an effective culinary mapping (Zhang, 2015). Lubbe (2003) similarly suggested that culinary mapping can be more effective if combined with the conduct of cultural mapping. As suggested by the Philippines' National Commission for Culture and Arts (NCCA) (2019), culinary mapping is considered as an exercise conducted alongside cultural mapping.

Varju et al. (2014) suggested that a culinary mapping exercise involves data recording, collection, and analysis with the goal of describing culinary networks, patterns of usage, and resources in a specific area. As a result, it creates a systematic approach to identifying culinary resources and translating these findings into an evidence-based approach to culinary tourism planning and development. Successful culinary mapping may result in the creation of a culinary itinerary or map for the construction of food tourism in a region or destination (du Rand et al., 2016). Charreire et al. (2010) conducted a comprehensive methodological review and food mapping literature that expanded to issues including food sovereignty, food justice, food choice, among others. As such, food mapping in relation to culinary tourism is yet to be tackled.

In identifying and mapping out the cuisines in renowned culinary destinations, several initiatives have been made such as: the creation of tourism government websites dedicated to building culinary image (Matwick & Matwick, 2017), mapping out culinary destinations as complements to the existing produce and sources in a locality, thereby simultaneously fostering agritourism (Green & Dougherty, 2008), promotion of destination images incorporating destination cuisines and food-related activities (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010), and utilizing public and private partnerships (i.e., producers, restaurants, hotels, chefs) in supporting culinary initiatives (Prat Forga & Cànoves Valiente, 2012). Hence, it is essential to have a direct and active approach in establishing a culinary tourism destination that is founded on a unique and unified identity.

Studies have been conducted in developing culinary maps across regions and countries. Wardani et al. (2018) proposed a model for culinary tourism development in Surakata, Indonesia by identifying potential local foods, creating a culinary map in every district, and designing a tour package for the area. Wijaya (2019) created a food culture map which portrays how Indonesian food culture has been developed and shaped by the cultural and geographic diversity of the country; this study emphasized the value of identifying the socio-cultural values attached to traditional food in promoting culinary tourism. Sweeney et al. (2016) provided a

comprehensive review of the existing mapping methodologies done in the United States of America (USA) since 2008 using geographic information systems (GIS) mapping. Similarly, du Rand et al. (2016) used GIS to examine the Karoo Region in South Africa creating a culinary map that showcases the unique offerings of Karoo to promote regional tourism development.

Culinary mapping may also come in the form of organizing a culinary system for a specific destination or country. King (2019), using the case of Chinese food in the People's Republic of China (PRC), suggested the need to establish a culinary system which organizes the cuisine of PRC according to its historical development. In doing so, the concept of culinary regionalism in the country was expanded to cover not only the traditional food but also the cultural and historical intricacies attached to it. Alternatively, mapping can also be done for a specific type of food, such as street food. Gelormini et al. (2015) explored the street food environment in Maputo, Mozambique by identifying and mapping the types of food, food vendors. Conversely, mapping potential consumers can also be done. In the case of halal food, Mostafa (2018) mapped out halal food consumers through geo-located Twitter posts documenting the demand for halal food in social media and in specific geographical locations, which in turn, contribute to an improved marketing approach for food.

In reviewing the existing literature on culinary tourism, the process of culinary mapping may be observed as a widely used methodology that aims to better the understanding of the peculiarities, characteristics, and identities of a cuisine. As shown in the cases of established culinary destinations such as the USA and PRC, and even emerging ones such as Mozambique, South Africa, an academic and systematic mapping approach is crucial in influencing the development of a culinary tourism destination. The previously mentioned studies are critical in our pursuit of mapping the flavors of the Philippines. These studies provide the necessary frameworks that motivated us to understand the relationship, similarities, and differences between and among types of cuisines in the Philippines. Likewise, applying their methodologies allows us to explain the extent to which the country's unique cuisine reflects not only history but also lifestyle, values, and beliefs. Ultimately, its application to the local setting allows for a more informed discourse on the importance of signature dishes to a nation's identity and on how food serves as a gateway into culture.

2.2   Research on Philippine Cuisine

Existing research on Philippine cuisine has primarily focused on establishing its cultural and historical linkages. Using a historical lens, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Fernandez (2003) and Fernandez (1988), found that Filipino dishes, the ways they are prepared and served, are reflective of the country's colonial roots. In other words, the dishes reserved for special occasions tend to symbolize Filipinos' relationship with their colonizers. Similarly, Sta. Maria (2015) found Filipino flavor to

have been deepened by its colonial history. In the 1500s during the Spanish conquest, several ingredients were introduced such as cinnamon, black pepper, and new cooking techniques were integrated such as the processes of marinating and sautéing. In 1565–1815, the galleon trade facilitated these exchanges of ingredients between the Philippines and Mexico. Through this trade, Chinese influences penetrated the culinary scene by introducing the use of noodles, soya products, and baking. Even after the declaration of Philippine Independence in 1898, Hispanic, Mexican, and Chinese influences have been adopted as part of the country's culinary heritage. American influence introduced the value of speed and convenience in terms of food preparation (Sta. Maria, 2015). Evolution and modification came about as a necessity to adapt to changing lifestyle patterns, international influences and trends, mixture of indigenous and imported food, religious beliefs and health, and use of technologies (Fernandez, 2015b).

Arguably, despite this culinary diversity, there remains a common ground that binds Filipino dishes together – the similarity of landscapes and cultures and the treatment of food as a communal activity, a social gathering. In general, Filipino cuisine and taste principles are deemed to comprise a blend of sweet and sour with rice as a staple, and being absent of the need for preservation by refrigeration (Fernandez, 2015b). Similar description resulted from the gastronomic systems research (GSR) of Cuevas et al. (2017) which highlighted the significance of rice in the meals of Filipino households and described the culture-specific consumer food choice in relation to the market potential of selected rice varieties in the Philippines.

The relationship between globalization and Philippine cuisine was explored by Montefrio et al. (2020). Their study of Philippine cuisine observed that the country's food localism, also termed as *locavorism*, manifests a combination of a local and global discourse. Meanwhile, Montefrio et al. (2020) defined locavorism specific to Manila, stating it "constitutes several assemblages that involve not just restaurants, but also increasingly other market spaces (e.g., farmer's markets and community supported agriculture) that facilitate preparation and consumption of local food in the comfort of the private home" (p. 124). Past research suggests that locavorism emerged because of consumers' increasing preference to seek out food products that are grown on local farms than those delivered to supermarkets from distant areas (Safire, 2008). Similarly, Matejowsky (2015) explored the ways in which the Philippines adopt and at the same time localize global cuisines. In examining the trend of SPAM consumption of Filipinos, it was found that while considered a product of globalization, SPAM is being used and altered to fit into the Philippine palate by many households in the country. For example, a variety of *SPAM Tocino* has been introduced to pay homage to the famous Filipino breakfast, *tocino,*[2] thereby incorporating a sweetened version of the product (Cortez, 2019). When combined, the work of these various scholars suggest that the current state of culinary culture can be attributed to the colonial history of the country and its cuisine, as well as, its effort to compete with existing cuisines outside the country.

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[2] *Tocino* is a sweetened and cured pork belly. It is considered a Filipino breakfast staple.

Several studies have also explored Philippine cuisine's defining flavors, dishes, and meals. In exploring the *umami* tastes of Asian food, Hajeb and Jinap (2014), cited the unique sauces and pastes in the Philippines. Accordingly, *patis* (fish sauce), *bagoong alamang* (fermented shrimp), and *toyo* (soy sauce) are considered the most popular tasting features of Philippine cuisine given its salty and appetite-stimulating aroma (Hajeb & Jinap, 2014). These sauces are fermented and could preserve food. To an extent, the features of these widely-used umami tasting products define the type of flavor characterizing Philippine cuisine. In examining the meaning of *balut* (English translation) in Philippine society, Matejowsky (2015) suggested that apart from it comprising the cultural tapestry of the country, *balut*[3] also serves as a rite of passage that Filipinos consciously and unconsciously impose on foreign visitors. While not considered the national dish, *balut* symbolizes Filipinos' established culture of interaction with others due to its distinct and eccentric characteristics (Alejandria et al., 2019; Magat, 2002).

Several studies have also explored the context of various Filipino dishes in relation to the concept of diaspora. Reflecting on the cultural implications of *lechon* (roasted pig) on the growing Filipino-American population in the USA, Singson (2006), suggested that the dish symbolizes Filipino culture and identity, representing extravagance, wealth, and generosity of Filipinos towards others. In this context, Lechon serves as a cultural outpost for Filipinos on a foreign land and also for non-Filipinos who would like to learn more about the Philippine cuisine. Bender and De Leon (2018), in examining the Filipino food establishments in Toronto, Canada, found that Filipino food in this context is entangled with narratives of militarism and the country's experience with diaspora, which reflects the common practice of boodle fight. Similarly, the findings of Mercado and Andalecio (2020) suggest that Filipino dishes, with all of their varieties, are rooted in a local cultural value and a specific community story. Just like the dish *pancit,*[4] Filipino food has been influenced by factors such as indigenization, regionalism, and significance.

The review of the existing literature suggests that there is a gap in research specific to Philippine cuisine and its role in the country's tourism development. More specifically, while deemed a significant component to tourism development in several studies, a rigorous culinary map for Philippine cuisine had not yet fully developed. Although Villareal (2018) and other platforms utilized food mapping (e.g., https://www.tasteatlas.com/philippines), applying it has not yet been applied to culinary tourism. Likewise, the existing data on the various defining dishes found in regions and localities have not been organized to reflect geography, food occasions, main ingredients, primary food preparation methods, and enduring tourism products.

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[3] *Balut*, a common street food in the Philippines, is a fertilized duck egg that is boiled and eaten from the shell. It is commonly sold as street food all over the country.

[4] Also known as *pancit,* this is a Filipino version of a noodle dish that is a mix of noodle (bihon, canton, miki, etc.), vegetables, meat then seasoned with soy sauce and pepper.

3 Framework and Methodology

In addressing our research question and objectives of understanding Filipino cuisine through the creation of a culinary map, we refer to the culinary mapping framework developed by Sackett and Haynes (2012), du Rand et al. (2016), and Cuevas et al. (2017). Ecovue (2011), Lubbe (2003), and du Rand et al. (2016) defined culinary mapping as a tool that tourism stakeholders can utilize to market and showcase a destination's competitive advantage (i.e., products, places, and people). For Varju et al. (2014), the implementation of culinary mapping requires collecting, recording, analyzing, and synthesizing information to describe the culinary resources, networks, and patterns of usage of a specific group in a specific area. Following the conventions of regional culinary identity mapping of Sackett and Haynes (2012), as illustrated in Fig. 1, there are five factors required in creating a local food identity – (1) geography (i.e., characteristics of the land), (2) food culture of the indigenous people, (3) food culture of the first settlers, (4) foods and cooking techniques brought by later immigrants, and (5) economic viability of a regional cuisine.

Relative to Sackett and Haynes (2012) and du Rand et al. (2016), a culinary map has four main categories that identify a place's culinary assets – (1) geography, (2) food, (3) culture, and (4) tourism, which are subject to continuous recalibrations over time. We have recreated the culinary resource framework of du Rand et al. (2016), as seen in Fig. 2. As emphasized by du Rand et al. (2016), the mapping of the tangible assets is a systematic, descriptive, and visual approach to classifying a region's culinary resources. In visualizing and mapping the culinary information, locational information is matched to each asset.

Meanwhile, Cuevas et al. (2017) proposed a GSR framework, as seen in Fig. 3, which suggests that cuisine shapes the demand for food ingredients with certain nutritional attributes, cooking methods, and eating qualities. All these eventually influence the dietary outcomes of consumers. These factors are further influenced by a specific occasion and the culture and socio-economic status of the household preparing the dish. Highlighted in this framework are five key components in a

Fig. 1 Regional culinary identity mapping framework. (Adapted from Sackett and Haynes (2012))
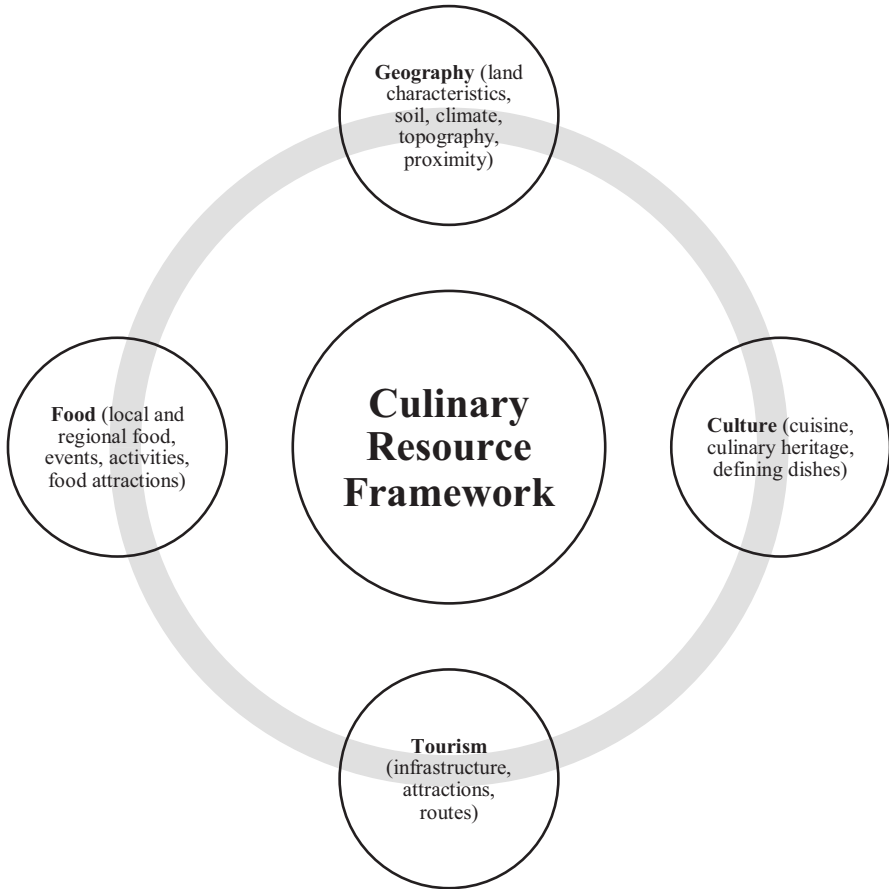
Fig. 2 Culinary resource framework. (Adapted from du Rand et al. (2016))

cuisine, namely: culture and socio-economic status, occasions, dishes, preparation methods, and ingredient attributes.

As Fernandez (1988) noted, Filipino cuisine is diverse as it is attributed to the country's complex history and culture – "…often hard put to say just what Philippine food is." (p. 20). With this, the above frameworks were combined by selecting the factors, categories, and attributes that are applicable and available in the Philippine setting:

- geography (i.e., topography and climate);
- defining occasions (i.e., major events, fiestas);
- major ingredients;
- preparation methods;
- defining dishes; and
- tourism infrastructure (i.e., routes, facilities, attractions).
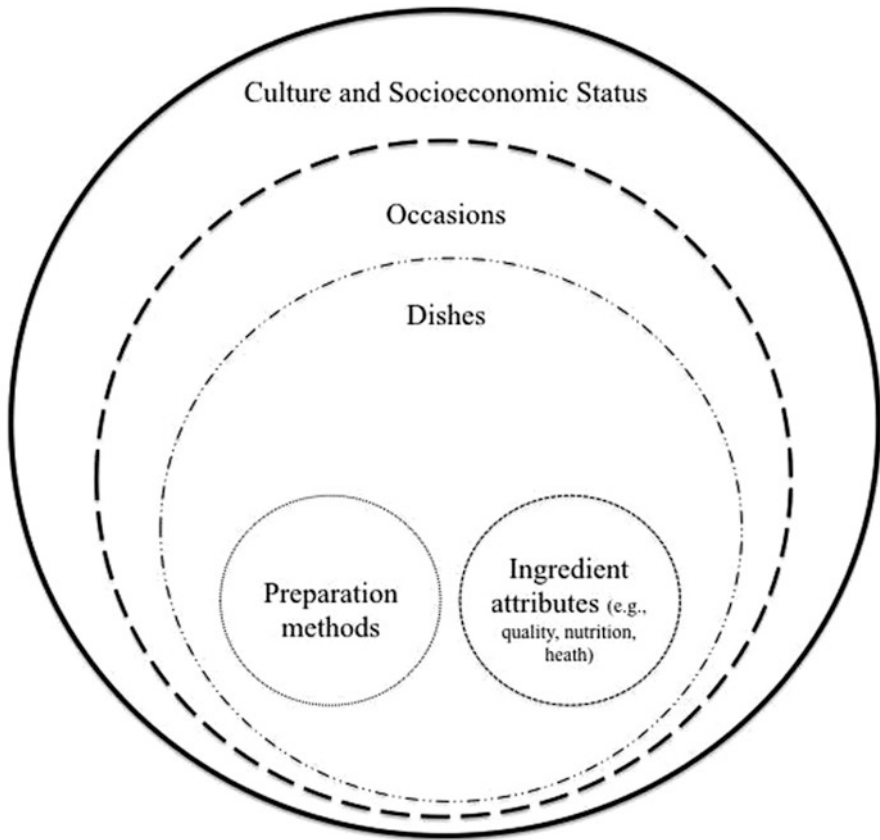
Fig. 3 Gastronomic Systems Research (GSR) framework. (Adapted from Cuevas et al. (2017))

As emphasized earlier, information generated from the culinary mapping were used to lay the foundations for understanding Filipino cuisine. These can serve as inputs towards both national and regional tourism development that can empower tourism stakeholders and policymakers to make better informed planning and policy decisions. Developing such plans must involve the local communities of a region in promoting their culinary resources.

In conducting a culinary mapping, the authors employed a qualitative literature review of Filipino cuisine. A total of 33 materials such as online magazines, articles, and blogs among others, were reviewed (Appendix 1) following the work of De Jong et al. (2018). We segmented the Philippines according to cultural groups, as seen in Fig. 4, Tables 1 and 2. rather than regions (i.e., administrative and political divisions) or major island groupings (i.e., Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao). This was done to emphasize geography, topography, and history rather than administrative and political divisions. The regional geographic reference is indicated to point

Fig. 4 *Conceptualized* cultural groups of the Philippines. Note: (A) Ivatan; (B) Ilocano; (C) Cagayanos, Ibanag; (D) Igorot; (E) Tagalog – Central Luzon; (F) Tagalog – Southern Luzon; (G) Bicolano; (H) Ilonggo; (I) Visaya; (J) Waray; (K) Zamboangeño; (L) T'boli; and (M) Maranao. (Map by Authors, adapted from: https://aseanup.com/free-maps-philippines/)
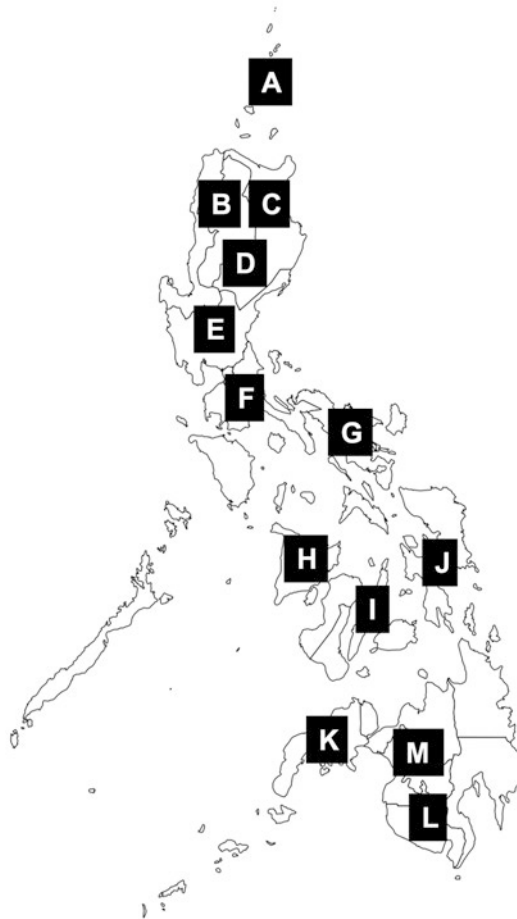
where these cultures originated in the Philippines. The data reflected in our map were sourced from various materials listed in Appendix 1.

4   Mapping and Discussion

Figure 4 is best understood together with Tables 1 and 2 (adapted from Sackett & Haynes, 2012; du Rand et al., 2016; Cuevas et al., 2017). These tables provide the geographic references and cultural details contained in the markers indicated in conceptualized culinary clusters (Fig. 4). In mapping Filipino cuisine, Table 1 highlights geography, culture, primary ingredients, and primary preparation methods. Meanwhile, Table 2 highlights defining food occasions, defining dishes, and potential tourism products.

Table 1 Baseline culinary map of the Philippines (see Fig. 4 for actual map)

Label	Regional reference	Primary cultural reference	Geography topography	Primary ingredients	Primary preparation methods
A	Northern Luzon	Ivatan	Archipelago Hills Mountains	Freshly caught seafood, grass-fed cows, organic pork, root crops, and vegetables	Ivatan-style cooking can be described as bland, using only salt, soy sauce, and vinegar as condiments Cooking method is simple; vegetables are usually steamed or boiled. There is a preference for locally grown vegetables (e.g., *saluyot*, a leafy green that looks like spinach but turns slippery like *okra* when cooked).
B	Northern Luzon	Ilocano	Seaside plains Mountains	Ilocanos use ingredients that are abundant in their environment. Agriculture (rice, corn, garlic, legumes, root crops, tobacco, and other fruits and vegetables) Fishery (*tilapia* and assorted fishes) Livestock (swine and cattle) Condiments (salt, *bagoong*, *patis*, *basi*, vinegar)	Ilocano cuisine is very reflective of the four foundation cooking methods of Filipino cuisine – boiling, grilling, roasting, and steaming – all of which are basic cooking methods of Filipinos before colonization Cooking method is simple; vegetables are usually steamed or boiled. There is a preference for locally grown vegetables (e.g., *saluyot*, a leafy green that looks like spinach but turns slippery like *okra* when cooked).

Table 1 (continued)

Label	Regional reference	Primary cultural reference	Geography topography	Primary ingredients	Primary preparation methods
C	Northern Luzon	Cagayanos, Ibanag	Valley Mountains	Cagayan is also known as the country's *tilapia* capital (species of cichlid fishes from the tilapine cichlid tribe), and the country's rice and corn granary because of its fertile lands. Does not require many other ingredients other than garlic, onions, spinach leaves (for garnishing), crabs, coconut milk.	Pursues straightforward cooking techniques like marinating, boiling, steaming, simmering, and sautéing. Cooking method is simple; vegetables are usually steamed or boiled. There is a preference for locally grown vegetables (e.g., *saluyot*, a leafy green that looks like spinach but turns slippery like *okra* when cooked).
D	Northern Luzon	Igorot	Mountains	Vegetables and meat (Cordillera supplies 80% of the Philippines' daily vegetable requirements)	The people of Cordillera prefer to eat meat – smoked, boiled, grilled – using the simplest cooking techniques with long preparation times. Cooking method is simple; vegetables are usually steamed or boiled. There is a preference for locally grown vegetables (e.g., *saluyot*, a leafy green that looks like spinach but turns slippery like *okra* when cooked).

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Label	Regional reference	Primary cultural reference	Geography topography	Primary ingredients	Primary preparation methods
E	Central Luzon	Tagalog	Plains	Central Luzon is the rice granary of the Philippines due to its vast lands that are dedicated to the production of rice. Most dishes are made with rice, pork, and poultry. Vegetables are usually sautéed in garlic, onions, and tomatoes with pork and shrimps.	Grilling, stewing, frying, and sautéing. Marked by elaborate preparation and clever combination of many different ingredients in a single dish.
F	Southern Luzon	Tagalog	Plains Mountains Seaside	Strong preference for fresh water fish, which are abundant in rivers and streams. Vinegar seasoned with garlic, salt, and pepper is used as a marinade for fish before frying or as a dip. Notable for their generous use of coconut milk, chilies, vinegar, and tamarind.	Most dishes are stewed, sautéed, broiled, braised or fried.
G	Southeast Luzon	Bicolano	Plains Mountains Volcano Forest Peninsula	Subject to availability of the ingredients and its supply. Unique combination of coconuts, coconut milk, chili, peppers, and taro. Notable for generous use of coconut milk, chilies, vinegar, and tamarind.	Bicolano's regular use of *gata* (coconut milk, cream, and chilis in almost all its dishes marks the regions uniqueness relative to the rest of the country). The use of gata gives its cuisine an authentic Malay touch. Chili and coconut cream go best with rice.

Table 1 (continued)

Label	Regional reference	Primary cultural reference	Geography topography	Primary ingredients	Primary preparation methods
H	Western Visayas	Ilonggo	Coastal Mountains	Use of fresh ingredients found in the area such as poultry, seafood, and agricultural products (farm to table approach)	Slow cooking process primarily characterizes this region's cuisine.
I	Central Visayas	Visayan	Mountains Coastal	Visayan cuisine generally uses what is made available in the area, which include poultry, pork, and other agricultural products.	Dishes primarily involve roasting and boiling techniques.
J	Eastern Visayas	Waray	Coastal Forest	Utilizes its rich sources of salt and freshwater fish and other marine products. Characterized by its affinity towards coconut while rendering a sweet, savory flavor instead of spicy.	Usual cooking methods include: *sugba* (grilling), *sinabawan* (in soup), *pinamara* or *hinatukan* (in coconut milk), *paksiw* (in vinegar), *inadobo*, and *escabeche* (pickled with vinegar and turmeric).
K	Western Mindanao	Zamboangeño	Coastal Mountain	Use of spices often resembling flavors of Malayan neighbors (Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, and Thailand) Use of coconut and seafood	Usual methods of cooking include roasting and sautéing with sauce.
L	Caraga	T'boli	Mountain Coast	Use of coconut and seafood	Usual methods of cooking include roasting and sautéing with sauce.
M	BARMM	Maranao	Marshland Lake Rainforest	Use of spices often resembling flavors of Malayan neighbors (Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, and Thailand) Use of coconut and seafood	Usual methods of cooking include roasting and sautéing with sauce and spices.

Note: The contents of this table were culled from various sources. This table is not exhaustive and serves as a baseline culinary map that is subject to continuous revisions

Table 2 Baseline culinary map of the Philippines (see Fig. 1 for actual map)

Label/regional reference/ cultural reference	Defining food occasions	Defining dishes	Potential tourism product
A Northern Luzon Ivatan	**Kulay Festival** (Means, *anything dried*; highlights the simple and colorful Ivatan food heritage; features locally manufactured and processed food products – dried products such as onion, garlic, rice, corn, and fish to tourists)	**Bagun a yuyunu** (local anchovies) **Vunes** (dried young gabi stalk chopped in fish, beef, pork, or fowl) **Lataven** (raw fish mixed with minced ginger and onions, *calamansi* juice, hot pepper, and blanched with boiling fish broth) **Lunyis** (salted pork fried in its own lard) **Chinavules** (steamed young *gabi* leaves mixed with diced ginger, garlic, onions and salt) **Uved** (called *Tabtab* in Sabtang Island; grated banana corm mixed with minced fish or ground pork or beef) **Yellow rice** (sticky rice cooked in turmeric extract and pork)	Ecotourism Heritage Tourism
B Northern Luzon Ilocano	**Longganisa Festival** (Promotes identity of Ilocos as a major producer of *longganisa* – plump, brown links of spicy meat, distinctly flavored with garlic and *Ilocano* sugar cane vinegar) **Sinait Garlic Festival** (Celebrates garlic as staple ingredient) **Pinakbet Festival** (Celebrates Ilocanos' favorite and unique dish – pinakbet – through street dances and cooking competitions; a day to honor farmers and housewives cooking skills) **Dulang Food Festival** (Celebrates culinary skills of Ilocanos by reviving typical Ilocano cuisines like *pinakbet*, *bagnet*, and *tinodok*, and Ilocano wine – *basi*)	**Pinakbet** (vegetable dish created with almost any vegetable boiled until cooked and then seasoned with the region's signature fish sauce and pink shrimp paste; others add pork belly) **Dinengdeng** (vegetable soup dish that use a variety of vegetables but tends to use green or yellow ones like *malunggay* leaves, squash, and *alakon* blossoms, among others; can also be tossed in grilled pieces of fish or meat) **Pinapaitan** (*pait* is a Filipino word for *bitter*; *pinapaitan* roughly translates to *make bitter*; sums up the taste of this dish; made with very thin strips tender beef, ox tripe, small intestines, heart, bile, and large green chilies)	Ecotourism Heritage Tourism

C Northern Luzon Cagayanos, Ibanag	**Bambanti Festival** (Mother of all festivals that showcases agricultural abundance; pays tribute to *Bambanti*, who watch over the fields) **Ammungan Festival** (Celebrates native food and furniture)	**Pansit Batil Patong** (noodle dish topped with poached eggs, sautéed meat, and vegetables; an egg is cracked open and mixed with the simmering beef stock that is poured into a bowl along with special sauce, chopped onions, and vinegar dip) **Other delicacies** (include rice cakes, *pinakbet, pansit Cabagan, tapang baka, ginisa nga agurong, Tuguegarao longganisa*, and delicacies in coconut milk)	Ecotourism Heritage Tourism
D Northern Luzon Igorot	**Mangan Tako Cordillera Food Festival** (Highlights Cordillera cuisine and delicacies; boost culinary tourism that has evolved as a vital component of the overall tourism experience of local and foreign visitors; features cuisine and heirloom dishes from the Cordilleras, including preparation techniques by chefs from the different provinces)	**Pinikpikan** (chicken dish rooted in the native ritual of reading signals from the gods to determine one's course of action; humorously called *Battered Chicken* – native chickens are beaten with a wooden stick and grilled over open fire) **Itag** (salted meat, cured and aged underground in an earthen jar; flavor is comparable to blue cheese but is oilier and flavorful after it is cooked; used as an ingredient to flavor the *pinkpikan*) **Pinuneg** (native blood sausage composed of minced pork and innards mixed with cooked rice, usually the red variety known as *kintoman*, salt, vinegar, garlic and other flavors and then stuffed into clean animal intestines) **Sabusab** (mixed dish using fermented rice, sliced meat, green onions, ginger and moistened with *tapuey*)	Ecotourism Heritage Tourism
E Central Luzon Tagalog	**Sisig Festival** (Features the *best pork dish in the world* to safeguard the recipe as part of culinary history. Sisig has been declared as an Intangible Heritage)	**Sisig** (made of ground pig's head and liver soaked in vinegar and then seasoned with *calamansi* and chili) **Longganisa** (equivalent of sausages, which varies per region) **Tocino** (cured pork that is usually sweet) **Kare-kare** (stew consisting of meat such as tripe, pork leg, ox tail, goat, or chicken with vegetables and a thick, savory peanut sauce flavored with annatto seeds; shrimp paste is served on the side to enhance the flavor)	Ecotourism Heritage Tourism Pilgrimage Tourism Sports Tourism Culinary Tourism

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

Label/regional reference/ cultural reference	Defining food occasions	Defining dishes	Potential tourism product
F Southern Luzon Tagalog	**Lechon Festival** (Honors St. John the Baptist where whole dressed up roasted pigs, *lechon*, are paraded along with water splashing by town folks)	**Lechon** (whole roasted pig that is central to *fiestas* and celebrations; golden brown pig stuffed with lemongrass, garlic, onions and other local herbs and spices) **Bulaló** (traditional soup prepared by cooking beef shanks and marrow bones until the fat and collagen dissolve into the broth, resulting in a robust flavor of the dish) **Menudong Gulay** (vegetable Menudo) (made of various vegetables and tripe cooked in a peanut-based sauce). **Pinaniki** (offal in coconut milk) (made of various offal like heart and lungs and cooked in coconut milk and green chili and a town favorite to pair with alcoholic beverages). **Adobo sa Gatang Kalabaw** (water buffalo stewed in coconut milk and vinegar) (buffalo is cooked for at least 5 h using coal making it tender and gives a smoky taste) **Ginataang Langka** (jackfruit coconut milk stew) (made from unripe jackfruit cooked in coconut milk with garlic) **Kilawin** (pork liver sour stew) (prepared with liver sauce, radish, pork liver, and roasted pork) **Dinuguang Baboy** (pork blood stew) (meat and innards, green chili, and mustard leaves are stewed in pork's blood) **Batchoy** (pork intestines soup) (made out of intestines and offal mixed with chili leaves and chayote) **Lenchong Kawali** (crispy pan fried pork cutlets) (pork meat is boiled, air-dried, and fried for crispy skin and tender meat)	Ecotourism Geotourism Heritage Tourism Pilgrimage Tourism Culinary Tourism

G Southeast Luzon Bicolano	**Bicol Food Festival** (Showcases Bicolano cuisine and cooking techniques to prepare signature dishes like *pinangat, laing, Bicol Express, tinotongan, inolokan* or *tinolmok, pecadillo, cocido.* among others)	**Bicol Express** (named after a passenger train service from Manila to Bicol; made from pork, coconut milk, and chilies; one of the spiciest meals in the country) **Laing** (made out of dried taro leaves, simmered in coconut milk, and added with chili peppers; varies according to how the chef wants to cook it and the toppings included) **Kinunot na Pagi** (made of shredded sting ray and *malunggay* leaves cooked in coconut milk)	Ecotourism Geotourism Heritage Tourism Pilgrimage Tourism Culinary Tourism
H Western Visayas Ilonggo	**Dinagyang Food Festival (Kaon 'Ta, Iloilo)** (Exhibits Ilonggo's faith, culture, and food by featuring a range of choices of bread and pastries, delicacies, seafood, drinks, street food, among others that characterizes Ilonggo cuisine)	**Pancit Molo** (dumpling soup containing minced chicken, ground pork, and chopped prawn) **Lumpiang Ubod** (vegetable dish with palm heart strips, shrimp and pork bits, wrapped in a wrapper made with cornstarch and eggs, drenched in a sweet sauce and infused with garlic and peanuts) **Batchoy** (noodle soup containing sliced pork, pig's guts, and *miki* noodles) **Binakol** (chicken dish similar to *tinolang manok*, except that coconut milk and meat are used) **Inasal na Manok** (chicken barbecue marinated in *calamansi*, pepper, *sinamak*, and annatto; grilled over hot coals) **Inubarang manok** (chicken cooked in coconut milk, ginger, lemongrass, and *ubad* –tender inner portion of banana stalk)	Ecotourism Geotourism Heritage Tourism Pilgrimage Tourism Culinary Tourism
I Central Visayas Visaya	**Cebu Lechon Festival** (Showcases the country's best tasting roasted pig – *lechon*)	**Lechon** (roasted suckling pig) **Utan** (clear vegetable soup, which includes a wide variety of root vegetables and leafy greens cooked in salted water; can be enriched with chunks of meat or fried fish)	Ecotourism Heritage Tourism Culinary Tourism
J Eastern Visayas Waray	**Manaragat Festival (Samar Food Festival)** (Pays homage to the heritage, food, and delicacies of the Catbalogans)	**Humba** (braised pork cooked in soy sauce, vinegar, and brown sugar) **Hinatukan nga Manok** (chicken boiled in coconut milk) **Lumo** (stewed carabao meat in coconut milk)	Ecotourism Geotourism Heritage Tourism

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

Label/regional reference/ cultural reference	Defining food occasions	Defining dishes	Potential tourism product
K Western Mindanao Zamboangeño	**Zamboanga Hermosa Festival** (Pays tribute to the Nuestra Senora del Pilar while showcasing variety of grilled dishes the region offers)	**Curacha** (a spanner crab or red frog crab cooked with sauce or steamed) **Satti** (breakfast food comprised of three small bits of meat (beef and chicken liver) grilled in a stick; served along with rice balls in sweet spicy sauce)	Ecotourism Heritage Tourism Culinary Tourism
L Caraga T'boli	**Balanghai/Balangay Festival** (Commemorates the coming of the early migrants that settled the Philippines, on board the *balangay* boats)	**Poot-Poot Ginamos** (fermented fish sauce) **Nilusak** (a cassava mashed with sugar and margarine, sprinkled with grated coconut, and rolled into small-sized balls) **Binaga** (roasted mudfish) **Sahang** (sea snail cooked *adobo* style, with bell pepper)	Ecotourism Heritage Tourism
M BARMM Maranao	**Pakaradjaan Food Festival** (Showcases authentic Moro dishes from the provinces of Basilan, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, and Marawi City)	**Pastil** (rice wrapped in banana leaves; contain chicken sautéed in vinegar and soy sauce, topped with chicken flakes) **Inaluban a Haruan** (grilled snakehead fish (*dalag*) simmered in white coconut milk with ginger, leeks, turmeric, and sweet potato leaves (*kamote* tops)) **Rendang** (Maranaoan dish prepared by crushing the spices before frying and cooking it with beef and coconut milk; also described as caramelized curry) **Pyanggang** (Tausug chicken barbecue marinated in burnt coconut meat that is grounded and combined with other spices) **Tayula itum** (Tausug beef dish marinated and cooked with burnt coconut milk)	Ecotourism Heritage Tourism

Note: The contents of this table were culled from various sources. This table is not exhaustive and serves as a baseline culinary map that is subject to continuous revisions

While we agree that Filipino cuisine is multi-faceted and is the most representative in the culinary world for food where 'East meets West' (Kunkel, 2019), a majority of mainstream Filipino dishes are from the cuisines of the various ethnolinguistic groups and tribes of the archipelago. These tribes include, but were not limited to, the Ivatan, Ilocano, Cagayanos, Bicolano, Visayan, and Maranao ethno-linguistic groups. Food preparation techniques and the cuisines have evolved over many centuries from their Malaysian and Indonesian origins (i.e., Austronesian) to a mixed cuisine of Indian, Chinese, Spanish, Hispanic, and American influences. This confluence is a by-product of the major waves of influence that had enriched the cultures of the archipelago, as well as others adapted to indigenous ingredients and the local palate.

Filipino cuisine may be confusing to some people due to it being hard to determine what is actually Filipino. Confusion occurs due to the dynamic Filipino culture. Influences from PRC, India, the Middle East, and many other countries are seen throughout Filipino food and culture, due to its history of agricultural trading with these countries. Influences from Spain and America are seen through past colonization of the country. Further, the rest of the world has influenced Filipinos due to globalization. Filipino food can be defined by its history of being indigenized throughout centuries. Hence, allowing inter-mixing with other areas' cuisines, foods, and ingredients gave way to a variety of the cuisines we have today.

From Table 1, we can also surmise that Filipino cuisine cannot be defined through an iconic dish unlike in other countries wherein their food can be instantaneously attributed to their identity. That is, Filipino cuisine goes beyond culinary icons. It is defined by the environment, the processes, and the interpretation that goes in preparing and consuming it (e.g., Mercado & Andalecio, 2020). Hence, despite being comprised by more than a hundred distinct ethno-linguistic groups found throughout the archipelago, our research indicates Filipino cuisine is defined by the geography where the dish can be found, the primary ingredients bountiful in the place where the dish originated, and the food festival or occasion that collectively celebrate and showcase the cuisine (e.g., in Southern Luzon, the *Lechon Festival* is celebrated in Balayan, Batangas to showcase roasted pigs in conjunction with the feast day of St. John the Baptist – the town's patron saint). Abundant harvests of root crops like potatoes, carrots, taro, cassava, purple yam, and sweet potato are main ingredients in many Filipino dishes. A variety of fruits and vegetables are often used in cooking. Likewise, the combination of tomatoes, garlic, and onions is found in many dishes (e.g., dishes from agricultural areas such as Northern Luzon, Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog, Western Visayas utilize these ingredients). Meat staples include chicken, pork, beef, and fish whereas seafood dishes are more in coastal areas. Furthermore, we can also interpret that Filipino cuisine is united by methods of food preparation: using the simplest cooking techniques such as boiling, grilling, roasting, and steaming (all of which are basic cooking methods of Filipinos before colonization) with slow cooked dishes being commonplace (Villareal, 2020). It is also important to emphasize that in terms of form, Filipino dishes are the outcome of pre-cut, or bite size, ingredients prior to cooking. In fact, there are no big

slabs of meat because traditional Filipinos ate with their hands similar to their Malay, Indian, and Muslim brothers.

Table 1 shows that Filipino cuisine is centered around the combination of sweet, sour, salty, and to some extent spicy, particularly in the Cordilleras, Bicol, and Mindanao. Across all regions, vinegar was reported as a common ingredient for its ability to improve flavor and preserve food. Given the tropical climate of the country and limited access to refrigeration and preservation processes play a critical role. Although many techniques and ingredients found in Filipino cuisine are prevalent in other cultures, it is the convergence of elements such as the sourcing of ingredients, preparation, consumption, and narration of food experience which makes Filipino cuisine unique. Sta. Maria (2019) best described this convergence as a salute to the high interpersonal intelligence characterizing the Philippines.

It is also important to underscore that ingredients change through time. As a result, the recipes of dishes also change. For instance, the 'original' tomato introduced from Mexico was the size of what we now refer to as a cherry tomato; however, the taste was more sour (Sta. Maria, 2019). Even the tastes of tomato pastes and tomato sauces have continued to evolve (Kasper, 1999). As a result of evolving ingredients and changing tastes, Filipino cuisine is constantly changing, gathering influences from various cultures. However, the emphasis on heritage remains unchanged. Filipino food continues to be widely shaped by individual traditions and customs. The same dish may and will differ between households (i.e., there are as many recipes for adobo as there are Philippine islands; Sifton, 2011).

It can be construed from our map (Fig. 4, Tables 1 and 2) that regardless of where you are in the country, the following are the common elements: (1) preparing Filipino food employs the simplest cooking techniques; (2) defining dishes per region require long preparation times; (3) Filipino food is centered around the combination of sweet, sour, salty, and spicy. Most importantly, (4) Filipino food satisfies a desire for person-to-person experiences and interactions – it gathers everyone together in fellowship centered around the family kitchen. That is, the other attribute of Filipino food that was not discussed in the literature is that it is meant to be shared – family style, rather than the concept of individual entrees.

5 Conclusions

This research constructed a culinary map that identified the unifying characteristic of all cuisines from different areas in the country that best captures the attributes, history, and practices that the Philippines is special for. This culinary map serves as a baseline reference in further exploring and understanding Filipino cuisine. In constructing our culinary map (Sackett & Haynes, 2012; du Rand et al., 2016; Cuevas et al., 2017), we underscored (1) geography; (2) defining occasions; (3) major ingredients; (4) preparation methods; (5) defining dishes; and (6) tourism infrastructure as factors, categories, and attributes important to Filipino cuisine. We found (as seen in Table 1 and Fig. 4) that the archipelagic nature of the country, diversified

topographies, varying cultures, and different resource abundance result in a diverse set of cuisine emanating from specific geographical areas; however, these differences also reveal similarities. From Tables 1 and 2, we can surmise that it is not the dish per se that defines Philippine cuisine. Instead, it is the preparation method, taste, and the culture of eating that unites all the distinct dishes in the Philippines.

Our research has demonstrated Filipino cuisine as a unified reflection of the country's culture, heritage, and traditions. Findings from the culinary mapping can contribute to better informed policy decisions and planning by creating an empirical database for regions or destinations. This information can be used as a tool for regional or cluster tourism development that encourages the engagement of community in promoting both culinary experiences and resources. Furthermore, outcomes can serve as preliminary inputs for the DOT and other policymakers to reinforce culinary tourism as a tourism product and use it as a vehicle to enhance tourists' experience. Consequently, we would be able to effectively promote the Philippines through culinary tourism. There is a need to continuously strengthen the tourism industry's relevance, which can be done through the promotion of culinary tourism (Prat Forga & Cànoves Valiente, 2012). Hence, as we create a solid identity for Philippine gastronomy, we strengthen the culinary tourism industry, and foster a renewed understanding of Filipino cultural heritage through cuisines. In proposing this, we emphasize our culinary map that should be subject to continuous revisions.

Given the unifying characteristics of Filipino food, we have seen in our baseline culinary map, further studies can dig deeper into creating a brand for Filipino cuisine. Above being the 'happier meal,' we can construe that there are other plausible brands that may arise. Once a brand for Filipino cuisine has been developed, a target market can be identified, which will serve as an important input to DOT in strategizing on how to promote the Philippines as a culinary tourism hotspot. From the potential tourism products we have indicated in Table 2, augmenting existing tourism products with a compelling narrative on defining cuisines per geographic area would provide more value added for the tourists. Hence, we echo that travelling in the Philippines is more than the tangible photos and souvenirs a tourist will take but also an immersion in the country's culture through gastronomy resulting in an engraved memory of the destination not only in the brain but also in the stomach.

In moving forward, there is a need to know and understand how the history of Filipino food can influence the types of strategies that will be utilized to position the country as a prime culinary destination. To do this, it is critical to understand the core identity of Filipino cuisine. Finally, the study has further emphasized the value of culinary tourism in the face of pandemics and other natural disasters which pose direct impact to tourism activities. Culinary tourism in the country, when developed and subjected to innovation, may be positioned as an alternative to traditional forms of activities which often require physical interaction. Filipino cuisine may therefore be re-introduced to the international market using technology and other innovative mechanisms (e.g., online cooking, virtual tours).

Appendix 1 Data Sources for Tables 1 and 2

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Cagayan Valley: *Your Islands and Valley of Fun* – A Case of Regional Branding in the Philippines

Maria Criselda G. Badilla

Abstract With the launch of its regional brand, *Your Islands and Valley of Fun*, in 2019 and the increasing development of tourism attractions, access points and infrastructure within the region, the Cagayan Valley Region is positioning itself to be a formidable destination in the Northern Philippines. This chapter uses the case of the Cagayan Valley Region in further understanding the concept of collaborative marketing within the context of regional destination branding. Key informant interviews were used to explore the synergistic outcomes of collaboration by the different industry stakeholders from the various provinces and relevant agencies. Findings suggest that the regional brand aims to promote the region as an adventure tourism and ecotourism destination, and may help the provinces in attracting tourist attention, lengthening tourist's stay and increasing expenditures in the destination. This chapter also reports on current best practices being applied at the regional level to create, launch and implement a successful destination brand. This research suggests that concerted efforts have the ability to create synergy and unity among similar but differently positioned tourism products and services.

Keywords Regional branding · Cagayan Valley · Collaborative marketing · Ecotourism · Destination marketing organizations · Regional tourism organizations

1 Introduction

In December 2017, the Tourism Promotions Board embarked on the task of creating regional destination brands. This large effort involved various activities that included a training program for tourism officers from the provinces and workshops with Department of Tourism (DOT) regional offices to create and/or modify their regional tourism brands. Similar to other regions throughout the Philippines, the Cagayan Valley Region (Region 2) participated in this endeavor. Provincial tourism officers

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and tourism promotions officers from the DOT Region 2 participated in these programs and workshops; together, they crafted their regional brand – *Your Islands and Valley of Fun*. Prior to this workshop, the region did not have a regional brand but carries the national brand in their promotional efforts. This chapter describes the case of Cagayan Valley tourism stakeholders' participation in the regional destination branding exercise.

The Cagayan Valley Region consists of the provinces of Batanes, Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino. In 2018, visitor arrivals to the region grew by 10% from the previous year. It accommodated 1,179,699 tourists with a mix of 56% domestic tourists and 44% international tourists (DOT Region 2, 2019). The Province of Cagayan, being the regional center, accounts for a dominant share of 96% of all foreign visitors and 37% of all domestic tourists. Tourist receipts have also grown by 6% from 2017 at Php7.7 billion (US$154 million) including the PhP 2.8 billion (US$56 million) same day visitor expenditures (DOT Region 2, 2019). The regional destination brand seeks to grow these numbers by 7%, increasing not only visitor arrivals but creating strategies to lengthen the stay of tourists. More importantly, the regional tourism office aims to disperse tourist influx into the other provinces throughout the region.

The Cagayan Valley Region is known for its natural resources such as the mountain ranges of Sierra Madre; white sand beaches of Sta. Ana, Cagayan; limestone caves in Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya; the tropical rainforests in Isabela; and the rolling landscapes in Batanes. In addition, the region produces corn and rice with integrated agritourism sites in many areas. The region also boasts of its rich culture with the ethnicities of the *Itawes*, *Ilokano*, *Ibanag* and *Gaddang*. Though the region is not currently among top local destinations in the Philippines, it offers unique tourist attractions frequented by both foreign and domestic tourists.

The coastal towns of Calayan and Sta. Ana boast fine white sand beaches that are comparable to popular destinations such as Boracay, Philippines. Palaui Island is an ecotourism destination, declared a protected national park by the Government through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (Fig. 1). Peñablanca, Cagayan is also home to more than 300 caves which has made it attractive to spelunkers. Points of interest include the Callao caves and its seven limestone chambers, the 12 km-long Odessa-Tumbali cave and 115-m deep Jackpot Cave and the Sierra Cave which can only be traversed by crawling (Fig. 2). Further, the Cagayan Valley region is also home to unique gastronomy and centuries-old churches. Recently, archeologists reported the discovery of ancient human bones and teeth of a species called *Homo luzonensis*, dating to as far back as 50,000–67,000 years ago (Greshko & Wei-Haas, 2019). With the launch of Cagayan Valley's regional brand and increasing development of tourism attractions, access points and infrastructure, the region is ably positioning itself to be a formidable destination in the Northern Philippines.

This research explores the concept of collaborative marketing within the context of the destination branding case of the Cagayan Valley Region. It also seeks to better understand synergistic outcomes of collaboration by the different industry stakeholders from the various provinces and relevant agencies. The succeeding parts of

Fig. 1 Cape Engano, Palaui Island. (Photo used with permission from DOT Region 2)

Fig. 2 One of the chambers of the Callao Caves. (Photo used with permission from DOT Region 2)

this chapter discusses collaborative marketing in relation to crafting a regional brand, brand identity development, brand campaign launch and implementation, and monitoring, evaluation and review. The key components of the collaborative process integrate the findings of the study into a cohesive framework. The chapter ends with an elucidation of the key recommendations which can bring forward the need for regional branding in the Philippines.

2   Collaborative Marketing and Regional Branding

Collaboration and collaborative marketing have been practiced by successful tourism destinations in many countries such as the USA (see Wang et al., 2013 for example on Central Florida) and Botswana (Pansiri, 2013). Collaboration and collaborative marketing can play significant roles in the successful planning, development, management and marketing of tourism businesses and destinations (Gursoy et al., 2015). Such efforts serve as ways to increase the attractiveness of a destination by pooling resources with other nearby destinations. Thus, the importance of collaborative marketing, though in its early stages, is increasingly recognized as an area of research (Margarisova & Vokacova, 2016).

In the literature, there is a focus on the components of general collaboration. For example, Gray (1989, p. 5) focused on solutions-oriented aspects, defining collaboration as a "process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible". Alternatively, d'Angella and Go (2009, p. 430) simply define the structure of collaborations as being a "formal institutionalized relationships among existing networks of institutions". More specific to this body of research, St. Hill and Lewis (2015) apply collaboration in tourism marketing, defining it as voluntary arrangements between tourism organizations involved in marketing and promoting the destination in a collective way. A collaborative marketing approach, according to Fyall & Garrod (2005), increases the attractiveness of a region as a tourist destination, by either offering the same benefits and targeting the same markets or providing complementary products, that results in an increase in the consumption value of consumers. Further, previous research findings suggest that collaboration among destination marketing organizations (DMOs) is beneficial in terms of cost reduction and market penetration (Wang et al., 2013), as well as to increase a destination's competitive advantage (Pansiri, 2013). However, Wang et al. (2013) note that several issues emerge as inhibiting factors to collaborative destination marketing efforts such as the lack of adequate resources (e.g., financial resources, human capital).

Garrod and Fyall (2017) advocate that the creation of bundling strategies to sell packages highly benefits the members leveraging on the strong social capital among its key stakeholders. Similarly, other research has shown the benefits of intensifying planning and marketing activities at the destination level to promote collaboration and partnerships among local organizations (Pansiri, 2013). Cox and Wray (2011) highlight the need for destination stakeholders to foster a cooperative and strategic approach and ensure consistent design and delivery of a destination brand image supported by strategies to support the brand and image to target appropriate visitor markets. Developing a regional destination brand has the ability to reinforce the destination's unique image and personality, differentiate it from competition and elevate its performance standards (Morrison, 2019).

Destination branding may not yet be an exact science, but it has gained significant attention in the past 15–20 years (Morrison, 2019). In simple terms, destination

brands create differentiation, a promise to the tourist, an expectation of a set of experiences, and a mark of integrity and reputation (Travis, 2000). Morgan and Pritchard (2014) advocate that the DMO has a key role in supporting and facilitating brand management, not only to the consumer but to the entire tourism system. Thus, regional tourism organizations have the responsibility of steering tourism activity in the region as they represent the member nations in the critical task of marketing (St. Hill & Lewis, 2015).

As such, a regional tourism organization should be able to create and administer tourism programs that can market the destination to achieve heightened inflows, provide market intelligence, build capability for its members, and develop and coordinate major marketing activities (St. Hill & Lewis, 2015). There remains a lack of empirical research that investigates the role of organizations and activities in fostering destination partnerships especially in destinations where governments play a major role in fostering partnerships (Pansiri, 2013). In addition, Wang et al. (2013) outlined the need for more studies exploring collaboration among DMOs (Wang et al., 2013). To add to the body of literature on regional branding, a thorough examination on the Cagayan Valley Region as a case on regional branding aims to shed light into more aspects of the DMO's role in the collaboration of tourism stakeholders in creating successful destination brands.

3   Research Design and Approach

This chapter used the case study approach as a strategy to assess collaborative marketing efforts using Cagayan Valley Region as the specific locale of the study. The research used semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis, methods that were used in collaborative marketing studies, such as investigating the collaborative relations among different CVBs in Central Florida (Wang et al., 2013), best practices in Australia (Cox & Wray, 2011), collaborative marketing strategies of Caribbean Tourism organizations (St. Hill & Lewis 2015), and comparing Barcelona and Vienna's marketing performance (d'Angella & Go, 2009).

The use of interviews in qualitative research has been widely used in marketing research. Key informant in-depth interviews allow researchers to understand the informant's point of view in a detailed manner (Baxter & Babbie, 2004). Qualitative interviews focus on a deeper understanding of the experience. It was semi-structured, allowing the researcher to ask follow-up questions making it flexible, iterative and continuous (Baxter & Babbie, 2004). Seven key informant interviews with various stakeholders (e.g., regional tourism offices, provincial tourism officers, and Cagayan Valley Regional Tourism Council [CVRTC] representatives) were conducted to look into the processes of creating the regional brand as well as the synergistic outcomes of the collaboration demonstrated by individual campaigns. Interviews were conducted from December 2019 to April 2020. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with the exception of a few online interviews due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions The interviews probed into the building of a collective and

collaborative marketing campaign for Cagayan Valley Region investigating on the perceived benefits of respective provinces, challenges of regional branding, extent of buy-in of respective areas, degree of independence and interdependence of each area and the evidence of cooperation and collaboration during the initial process of regional branding. In terms of analysis, this study used thematic analysis to make sense of the data.

Deductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was applied on the data, by adopting a pre-defined framework composed of Morgan et al.'s (2004) five phases in destination branding, namely (1) market investigation, analysis and strategic recommendations (decision to craft the regional brand), (2) brand identity development, (3) brand launch and introduction: communicating the vision, (4) brand implementation, and (5) monitoring, evaluation and review. Further deductive analyses were applied following the model of the key components of the collaborative process proposed by Gray (1989).

4 Findings

4.1 Crafting a Regional Brand

In December 2017, the Tourism Promotions Board organized a Tourism Branding Seminar for Regional Offices in the Philippines. This seminar was well represented by the Provincial Tourism Officers of the Cagayan Valley Region. The collective efforts of the provincial tourism officers, regional tourism office and private sector representatives from Cagayan Valley Region who attended the seminar specifically described the synergies formed during the workshop. The CVTRC recalled that, "*We were not led to a pre-set brand, we were given the freedom to think and decide for the regional brand, with our collective efforts were all the provinces were reflected (sama-sama) including the valley and the islands.*" Thus, the participants felt that Cagayan Valley Region representatives displayed synergy and teamwork that led them to working on a unified regional brand with passion and creativity. He further stated "*not being limited to what the regional director wants nor of a single stakeholder's preference*". The regional tourism promotions officer and some provincial tourism officers also reiterated that there was a genuine collaboration on putting together the concept with islands and valley to include all the major attractions of Cagayan Valley into one cohesive theme.

Further, participants consistently described the seminar as a unified effort of bringing everyone together. The same private sector representative reiterated, "*We were there as a region, not as a province. We wanted to reflect all the provinces into the brand. With the right brand, we can be part of a major move for the regional brand, with which we are anchored in. We can move as one.*" Similarly, another tourism officer, referred to the seminar as "*a turning point for productive collaboration among the five provinces and DOT because there was consensus, there was a*

need to revisit the brand and it was a product of all the people present in the work-shop". Statements like these demonstrate the premise of collaboration. There was no evidence in the data of a single province dominating the discussion, rather the results suggested a collective awareness of the benefits of collaboration to amplify the assets of the region.

Although the spirit of collaborative work was evident in participant responses, it was also noted that agreeing on a regional brand was not necessarily a simple task. As described by a provincial tourism officer, the group was confronted with the "*big challenge of creating and profiling an identity from diverse values that are not always intangible and that may represent different interests of various social groups in place*". Despite the level of this challenge, participants recalled the efficiency of process with the regional tourism promotions officer noting, "*there has been very little resistance in the process of replacing the former branding as the process has been efficient, methodical, participatory, with the necessary support from the Tourism Promotions Board, from the 18-month process that it took to produce the brand*". The participants displayed collaboration in the process of creating a regional brand for the Cagayan Valley Region and that the need for consensus building was well understood. For example, one tourism officer implied that the overall responsi-bility of pushing the brand forward lies with the DOT Region 2 office: "*but the bigger work is with the regional office, DOT Region 2 should follow through for it to be successful*". This response indicated the collective acknowledgement of the DOT Region 2 as the lead organization in pushing the brand campaign forward.

4.2   Brand Identity Development

Given the diverse offerings of the Cagayan Valley Region, the goal according to a regional tourism officer, was to create "a regional brand that encompasses and rep-resents the shared identity of the mainland valley provinces together with its island geography brings with it a cohesive imagery of the highlands to valley to islands nature of tourism". The output of the collaborative branding exercise was the brand strategy "Your Islands and Valley of FUN". Participants described this slogan as encapsulating the unique geographical location of the region with its valley and islands which provides the pre-requisites of a perfect holiday. Participants further explained that "FUN" was further identified as an acronym for "Fun Up North". The branding slogan "Your islands and valley of FUN" and accompanying logo high-lights the many tourism products of the region (Fig. 3).

The representations of the features of the logo were explained in the DOT Region 2 Brand Primer. The presence of the mountain, the lighthouse, the river and the waves and the sun signifying the geographical location of the region. The colors green, blue and yellow were described as representing the vibrant colors of the region's land and waters, while the nine rays of the sun symbolize the five provinces and four cities. Participants explained that the waves were made to appear like the letters 'C' and 'V' representing the Cagayan Valley Region.

Fig. 3 Cagayan Valley regional brand logo. (Image used with permission of the DOT Regional Office)

In an attempt to unify with the national brand, the *Barbara* font used for the national tourism slogan (see chapter "Contemporary Issues in Tourism Management in the Philippines"), *It's More Fun in the Philippines*, was also utilised for the Cagayan Valley Region brand logo (DOT Region 2, 2019). A regional tourism officer declares that "*The regional brand allows a further deepening of sub-brands: one for the mainland and another for its islands. It also allows respective provinces to piggyback on the regional brand and possibly develop their own respective campaigns*". Another tourism officer described the cohesiveness of the regional destinations represented by the branding: "*The Cagayan Valley Region will have a unified and solid identity and character to which our province will benefit also as we will become more familiar to potential tourists as we brand ourselves as fun up north*", also noting the power of the regional brand stating, "*It is best to unite under a common symbol.*"

The tourism products of Cagayan Valley Region were developed and created into tourism circuits (Table 1). A tourism circuit consists of two or three major tourism attractions/sites that are located close to each other. These are grouped together thematically for both development and marketing purposes. These circuits complement the regional branding efforts of Cagayan Valley Region by linking attractions in cities and municipalities. These tourism circuits enable the private sector especially the tour operators to create themed routes and itineraries to sell the destination.

4.3   Brand Campaign Launch and Implementation

The initial stage of the branding process was launched by the Tourism Promotions Board with technical support from the academe in December 2017. In July 2019, the branding campaign was launched in partnership with the Department of Trade

Table 1 Cagayan Valley tourism circuits

Circuit number	Tourism circuit	Tourism sites	Nature of tourism products	Municipalities
1	Batanes District Tourism Circuit	Mt. Iraya, Radar Tukon, Basco Port, Chadpidan Bay, Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Naidi Hills, Valugan Bay, Pacita Abad Museum/Fundacion Pacita Batanes Nature Lodge, Japanese Tunnel	Nature and Cultural Tourism	Basco, Ivana, Uyugan, Sabtang, Itbayat
2	East Coast Cagayan	Lussok Cave, Batalaw Falls, Kumana Bank, Caniwara Beach, Cababaan Beach/Puraw Rock Formation, Sibang Beach and Nangudungan Hills/Calayan Lighthouse, Minanga Sand Dunes Park, Buguey Lagoon, Oyster Farm Nipa Processing Farm and Seaweeds Farm, Tabaco Cave, Laguna De Cagayana (Bangalao Lake), Bakong Production Center, Pineapple Plantation, Buacag Falls, Siwangag Cove, Cape Engaño Cove/Lighthouse, Balatubot Falls and Punta Verde, Tallag Beach, Matara Marine Protected Area/Beach, Wangag River	Nature, Cultural and Sun and Beach Tourism	Calayan, Buguey, Sta. Teresita, Sta. Ana/ Palaui, and Gonzaga
3	Isabela 1st to 3rd District Tourism Circuit	Bonifacio Park, Ilagan Sanctuary, Japanese Tunnel, Pinsal Waterfalls, San Pablo Church and Ruins, Square Park, Pancit Cabagan, Balay San Jose, Rancho Agripino, St. Matthias Church, Camp Samal Leisure Park and Resort, Regional Science High School, Tumauini Watershed Natural Park, Mini Chocolate Hills, OTOP Center, Bangkarera, Dipudo Beach, Sierra Madre Mountains, St. Michael Cathedral, St. Rose of Lima Parish, Shrine of Our Lady of the Visitation, Poor Clare Monastery and San Lorenzo Ruiz de Manila Chapel, Our Lady of Atocha Parish Church	Nature, Cultural and Sun and Beach Tourism	Ilagan City, San Pablo, Cabagan, Sta. Maria, Tamauini, Delfin Albano, Divilacan, Gamu, Alicia

Table 1 (continued)

Circuit number	Tourism circuit	Tourism sites	Nature of tourism products	Municipalities
4	Isabela 3rd and 4th District Tourism Circuit	Hacienda de San Luis Ecotourism Demo Farm, Our Lady of the Pillar, La Kusina, Tourist Information Center, Lado del Rio Resort Dragon Fruit Farm, Pasalubong Center, Dairy Farm, Weaving Industry, Wood Art and Corn Husk Weaving Center, Paseo de Paraiso Resort and Mini Zoo, Calamansi Plantation, San Francisco 7 Falls, OTOP/OBOP Center, Dibulo Falls, Dairy Farms, Madadamian Falls, Ganano River	Nature and Cultural Tourism	Cauayan City, San Mateo, San Manuel, Roxas, Mallig, Quezon, Quirino, Burgos, Aurora, San Guillermo, Luna, Dinapique, San Agustin, Echague, San Isidro
5	Nueva Vizcaya Circuit	Lower Magat Ecotourism Park, Imugan Falls, St. Dominic Cathedral, People's Museum and Library, St. Vincent Ferrer Church	Nature and Cultural Tourism	Diadi, Sta. Fe, Bayombong, Dupax del Sur
6	Quirino	Governor's Rapids, Maddela Ecotourism Park, Sitan Nature Park, Quirino Watersports ad Tourism Complex, Aglipay Caves and Campsites	Nature Tourism	Maddela, Nagtipunan, Cabarroguis, Aglipay
7	South Western Cagayan	Basilica Minore of Our Lady of Piat, St. Raymund de Peñafort, Casilly Lake & Resort, St. Peter's Cathedral, Callao Caves Tourist Zone, Iguig Calvary Hills, St. Philomena Church	Nature and Cultural Tourism	Piat, Tuao, Sto. Niño Rizal, Tuguegarao City, Peñablanca, Iguig, Alcala
8	West Coast Cagayan	Dragon Fruit Farm, St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Church, Harp Making Industry, Taggat Lagoon, Nipa Wine Distillery, Nagtupakan River, St. Peter the Martyr and St. John Nepomuceno Church, Raptor Watching (Grey-faced Buzzard/"Sawi" Bird)	Nature and Cultural	Abulug, Ballesteros, Claveria, Pamplano, Sanchez Mira

and Industry. Key informant interviews revealed that members of the provinces within the Cagayan Valley Region were optimistic that the regional branding campaign will have a positive impact on their specific province. For example, a provincial tourism officer stated, "*napansin kami ng Manila, kawawa naman kami (we were noticed by Manila, and our pitiful situation)*" Further, the private sector representative mentioned that, "*with the right marketing brand, will be part of the move upwards of our region, together as we push each other up (sabay –sabay – hatakan pataas)*".

Participant responses demonstrated a deep level of commitment from the stakeholders. For example, a tourism officer stated, "*The LGU, tourism practitioners; primary and secondary tourism enterprises and inter-agency groups assume responsibility for the success of the regional branding efforts*". A regional tourism promotions officer described the determined efforts to sustain the regional branding efforts as it cascades to all the municipalities of the provinces within the region. Another regional tourism promotions officer explained that, "*We will not stop until we get the support we need from them. We will not stop inviting them for opportunities for training and workshops, except that they may have their own priorities*". To support these efforts, it was further noted that, "*The Region 2 brand is very much designed to allow flexibility in the development of sub-brands to further deepen and broaden the scale of positioning of each geographical area*" (Regional tourism officer).

DOT, as the lead organization in the regional branding, expects the LGUs and private sector to embrace the brand in their promotional activities and to create tourism products, circuits aligned to the brand because the purpose of the brand is to unite the provinces. All participants acknowledged this organisational structure. A regional tourism officer stressed that regarding governance, "*the main responsibility still lies with the regional office as it has the network already as part of the DOT/ TPB marketing network*". Similarly, a tourism officer commented, "*DOT Regional Office is the prime factor and decision-maker led by the regional director*". Local government units often place different levels of emphasis on tourism and may adopt different approaches to tourism development in their respective locales. It is the regional office which brings the provinces together as the brand champion to ensure that collaboration is maximized on a regional level.

The need for reciprocity and collegiality in growing the regional brand were demonstrated in the participants' responses. A tourism officer explained that the "*biggest obligation of the provinces and private sector is to spread the brand; even up to the spiel of the tour guides*". Participants also recognised that different provinces have varying levels of similarity and differences among the destinations. For example, a tourism officer described the provinces as having "*their own strengths and weaknesses*". Further, she went on to explain the opportunities in the regional effort: "*The regional marketing branding approach where we could maintain the strengths and reinforce each other's weaknesses by complementing each other to be able to enhance the exquisite beauty of the Cagayan Valley Region.*" Some participants commented on the potential downsides of competition; a tourism officer acknowledged the fact that "*their destinations offer similar attractions and there could somehow be competition among the provinces within the region, and this cannot be avoided*". In addition, another tourism officer noted the difficulties stating, "*it will be hard to market all eighty-one provinces and 16 regions, there has to be something that unites the regions*". Despite these concerns, participants also commented on the potential of a regional brand with comments from a tourism officer, "*tourists who go to Cagayan Valley Region will be a potential market for the provinces because we have a complementary and uniform brand region-wide*". Thus, the tourism officers were aware of the benefits and opportunities of the collaborative

efforts as evidenced by their comments. The results indicate that cooperation and complementarity can help make the region more visible to tourists and provide more benefits to the region as a whole.

Unlike many collaborative marketing tourism organizations where membership fees are collected, the Cagayan Valley regional branding currently operates from funding from the DOT regional office. Financial constraints were described by some participants. A regional tourism officer reiterated that "*There is also no financial commitment except for cost-sharing in travel trade expo expenses where the provinces could participate*". It was also noted by a tourism officer that there was "*no clear financial commitment agreed upon by the provinces*". Despite these challenges with funding, participants were aware of the benefits resulting from the regional brand. As an example, a tourism officer validated that, "*the inclusion of projects, plans and activities in their Annual Investment Plan are incorporated in support of the regional brand*". Further, another tourism officer infers that future appeals for financial share from the provinces will not encounter objections as long as this is requested and justified in writing. The willingness of the tourism officers from the provinces to collaborate using their individual resources validates their confidence and willingness to work together to strengthen the brand.

4.4   Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Since the launch of the *Your Islands and Valley of Fun* branding slogan, the DOT Regional Office has asked LGUs and private sectors to embrace and carry the brand in their own marketing campaigns. All participants reported a level of optimism regarding the success of the brand. As one participant stated, there seems to be an, "*unwritten agreement that the branding slogan is to be used*" by the public and private sector through the CVRTC. Another participant stated that it was already being used by "*other regional government agencies* [Department of Agriculture and Department of Trade and Industry] *in their campaigns with a tourism orientation*".

The findings demonstrated that all provincial tourism officers interviewed expressed their support for the regional brand. However, participants reported some confusion regarding the next steps in the regional branding process, suggesting the importance of communication for collaboration to be truly embraced by all stakeholders.

5   Key Components of the Collaborative Process Adopted in Cagayan Valley Regional Branding

The regional brand seeks to promote the five provinces as a single comprehensive brand. Thus, destinations will no longer be just Cagayan or Isabela which are the more popular areas, but rather an entire region. Gray's (1989) model for
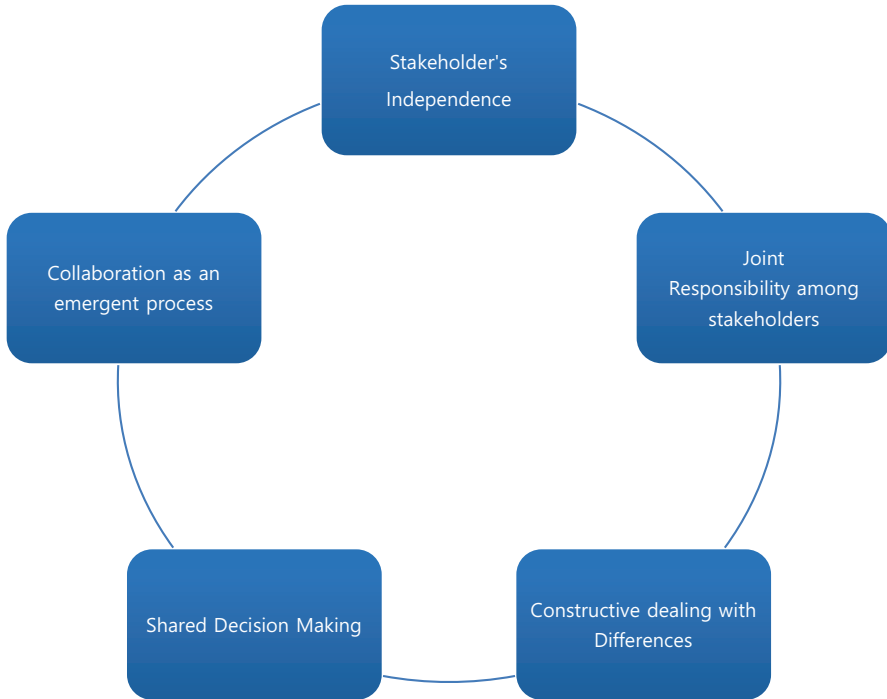
Fig. 4 Key components of the Collaborative Process (Gray 1989) as adapted in this study

collaborative process was used to elucidate the process of regional branding of CVR. He advocates five key components of the collaborative process namely, (1) stakeholders' independence, (2) assumption of joint responsibility by stakeholders, (3) constructive dealing with differences among stakeholders to provide solutions to challenges, (4) shared decision-making and (5) collaboration is seen as an emergent process (Gray, 1989).

Figure 4 shows how collaboration takes place in regional destination branding. As stakeholders hold on to their independence as individual stakeholders but moving forward to jointly take responsibility for the collaboration. Further, no collaboration proceeds without differences and challenges especially since shared decision making needs to happen. Lastly, collaboration emerges. The next section of this chapter looks into how the Cagayan Valley regional campaign went through the collaborative process using Gray's framework with five key components.

First, collaboration happens when stakeholders are assured of their independence in the collaborative process. A regional tourism promotions officer recalls that the provinces were "*very cooperative in extending their efforts to contribute to the building of the brand*". The provinces have embraced the regional brand by "*incorporating it to their promotional campaigns such as that of Quirino during the Philtoa Caravan and Isabela during the Bambati Festival*". Because the provinces are independently run, some main players like the provincial LGUs have not aligned

their tourism development plans to the regional brand since the TDPs (Tourism Development Plan) have been prepared before the brand was launched. Also, each province would have their own tourism marketing goals depending on their capability and marketing priorities. However, a regional tourism officer mentioned that "*the use of the regional brand as the umbrella brand for the different provinces would vary, as most would prioritize the use of their provincial brands when they go alone for marketing events outside the region*".

Second, joint responsibility was shared by the public sector represented by the LGU and the private sector represented by the CVRTC. It was desired that the "*CVRTC will actively adopt and use the regional brand so as to reach out to the private sector*" as elucidated by the CVTR Chairperson. Also, a tourism officer foresees that LGUs should "*actively participate in the branding efforts by adopting the brand in local promotional materials used such as brochures and social media posts*", since "*the different provinces have been on board since the beginning of the process and it is one of the key reasons why the brand continues to be used as the unifying brand for the region*" (Regional tourism officer). Further, the important role that stakeholders play in the processes was reiterated: "*where DOT serves as the brand champion, with support of LGUs, the private sector through the CVRTC and the Regional Development Council*" (Tourism Officer).

The participants acknowledged the strong role of DOT Region 2 as the lead organization in pushing the brand campaign forward. However, a regional tourism officer also accepted the independence of each province from contributing to the campaign. DOT Region 2's leadership and governance need to be reinforced by the setting up of goals, targets and commitment to ensure the deepening and broadening of the brand. The LGUs and private sector collaboration can be strengthened through the creation of tangible contributions in the form of goals and targets. With the areas committing to contribute to the end goals of the Cagayan Valley regional campaign, the areas regarded the leadership of DOT Region 2. The campaign was designed with flexibility in the development of sub-brands by the LGUs. This acknowledged the fact that even when DOT Region 2 is seen as the brand champion, the individual provinces can still practice their independence by creating sub-brands. According to a regional tourism officer:

> In fact, marketing is now split in two: Breathtaking Batanes (as a carry-over of its own branding exercises) and The Valley of FUN for the mainland Cagayan Valley region. Both fit perfectly into the "Your Islands and Valley of FUN". There is no loss of independence on the part of LGUs as most have their own campaigns, but since there is already involvement by the various provinces in the new brand, the YIAVF still serves as an anchor/ umbrella brand.

This statement from the regional office implies this agency's respect for each stakeholder's independence.

Third, was how the region deals with differences and challenges among the stakeholders in a constructive and professional manner. Conflicts are normal and may be experienced at any point during the implementation of the regional brand, however, provincial tourism officers had not seen major resistance to implementing the brand. In terms of buy-in of all the stakeholders, the regional office exerts effort

"*to meet and make them understand that the brand is a product of all the provinces and not just the region's idea*" (Regional Tourism Officer). They recognized a long-term positive engagement:

…differences are smoothed-over through consensus decision-making and LGUs can always opt not participate in some marketing events as the regional office recognizes that each LGU would have their own circumstances to consider. (Regional Tourism Officer)

…challenges and conflicts naturally come in every endeavor. Stakeholders are ready to face it by extending utmost cooperation and readiness to contribute in the formulation of solutions to address possible challenge and concern. (Provincial tourism officer)

These quotes are representative of constructive approaches to dealing with differences among stakeholders and the abilities to provide solutions to challenges. Coming from the major stakeholders, these statements provided an assurance that when differences arise, these can be resolved with proper discussion to reach collaboration. DOT Region 2 has displayed leadership in this collaborative process; hence, the LGUs have expressed their confidence in the agency as an authority in this process. Whatever the challenges are, these are "*resolved in the presence of the DOT being the lead agency and also by way of endorsement of the CVRTC to the membership and officers*" (provincial tourism officer). In the same light, she mentioned that the "*channeling of the brand was done correctly with credible technical assistance from the academe.*"

Since the LGUs and private sector are not required to give a monetary contribution to the brand campaign, the burden of its sustainability relies on government funding. DOT Region 2 acknowledges that since they are at the bottom heap of tourist arrivals, funding support from the national government is minimal. The LGUs have given their openness to providing financial contributions as long as these are properly documented. Creative ways need to be thought of to implement the brand campaign. Similar to the brand launch that was held in partnership with other government agencies such as the Department of Trade and Industry, promotional efforts can be made in partnership with other agencies and the private sector. The provinces should also be able to initiate activities that will carry the brand alongside their individual promotional activities to increase collaborative efforts.

Fourth, shared decision making was also evident in this regional branding collaborative process. As noted by one provincial tourism officer, "*our top leaders handle the management strategies of planning, budgeting, organizing and addressing the challenges then ideas are elicited for best results*" (Provincial tourism officer). Further, the same tourism officer reiterated the consensus approach, "*most of the time, stakeholders are consulted before the decision is rendered*". The provinces are consulted before the DOT makes a decision, this gives the stakeholders a share in the decision-making. A regional tourism promotions officer explained that since there is already an agreed regional brand, how this is used in campaigns jointly or separately is usually decided through consensus together with the CVRTC especially if the brand is used by the private sector though the council:

After the regional brand workshop in General Santos, it was not clear whether the output was already final or still for refinement. The regional brand was launched in Tuguegarao, I

am not aware of the next steps, maybe there are, but I am just not aware. (Provincial tourism officer)

The consensus approach can be achieved through constant communication among stakeholders. Participatory decision making was arrived at by the DOT after consultation with various stakeholders, the most common way government agencies engage stakeholders to share in the decision-making process.

Fifth, collaboration was seen as an emergent process. Data showed that the provincial tourism officers were thankful to DOT for the leadership and technical assistance. The brand was conceptualized in December 2017 and launched in 2019. The "*expertise of others (provided by external partners) to make the brand fly and capture the interest of others, in the hope that something good will happen*" (private sector representative). The stakeholders were hopeful that good things can happen once the campaign is fully implemented. The Regional Tourism Officer iterates that:

> *deeper collaboration on the use of the brand still remains to be elusive but remains to be one of the targets of the DOT. While LGUs are already on-board, collaboration with other agencies that could further provide synergy* [with other government agencies such as the Department of Trade and Industry and Department of Agriculture] *is still in the developmental stages.*

There are still areas of collaboration with other players that can be tapped and maximized. Communication among the stakeholders needs to be reinforced. All provincial tourism officers expressed their support to the regional brand having been on board since the beginning of the campaign but have confided having been unaware of the next steps in the regional branding process.

5.1 Challenges

The data revealed two major challenges that confront the collaborative process. First is the limited funding support:

> *Although the DOT Region 2 office has always been near the bottom of the heap in terms of regional budgets, the focus on having a brand refresh was always the end goal. Lack of funding is also one of the reasons why it took so long for the brand to be officially launched. The official brand launch in itself was a result of a convergence project with the Department of Agriculture.* (Regional tourism officer)

The second major challenge was the lack of political support from the provincial local chief executives and private stakeholders due to other priorities especially during crisis and natural calamities. While the DOT regional office provides strong leadership support for the regional brand, some challenges occur in the implementation at the local level wherein the local chief executives (i.e., mayors) may have other priorities to consider aside from tourism. As elucidated by a provincial tourism officer, "*change in political leadership, uncooperative, non participation or* walang pakialam *(no concern) attitude of private stakeholders. Destruction of*

natural assets like mining, quarrying, man-made or natural like earthquakes, pandemics, etc." However, the same provincial tourism officer mentions that even if "*there is no clear financial commitment agreed upon as to amount, scope etc per province….however in our AIP, tourism promotion PPAs in support to the regional brand are incorporated in the annual budget*". Also, for financial considerations, in the regional branding, DOT is still there to refine the running of the brand.

6 Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The regional branding of the Cagayan Valley Region has already been launched. With Cagayan Valley's quest to promote the region as an adventure and eco-tourism destination, the regional brand aims to help the provinces carry on concerted efforts in attracting tourist attention, lengthening tourist's stay and increasing expenditures in the destination. This chapter discussed the process that occurred in the Cagayan Valley Region to create, launch and implement a destination brand, though at this point is still too early to measure its success. The branding goes beyond the use of the regional brand logo but is a proof that collaborative efforts can create synergy and unity among similar but differently positioned tourism products and services.

6.1 Discussion

The findings from this research imply that the strong points of the Cagayan Valley Region collaborative process include: (1) leadership and governance, with respect to DOT Region 2 as brand champion who respects the independence of stakeholders, (2) constructive resolution of challenges and differences, and (3) shared decision making through consultation. The key components in Gray's (1989) model were evident in the collaborative process in the case of Cagayan Valley Region. These findings align with previous research that has underscored the importance of tourism marketing and a greater appreciation of destination collaboration and partnerships that include government support, community participation and private sector partnership (Pansiri, 2013). Motives for collaboration among regional destinations include cost-sharing and reduction, regional product enhancement and knowledge sharing and learning as the primary motives for collaboration (Wang et al., 2013). These benefits may manifest in the Cagayan Valley Region once the brand is fully implemented. The findings are also consistent with St. Hill and Acolla's (2015) identified considerations for successful collaboration: level of commitment, governance style, reciprocity, collegiality, level of similarity of destinations, financial constraints and proximity.

6.2 Conclusion

This case of destination branding on the regional level has shown how stakeholders maintained independence but took a joint responsibility for collaboration. Evident too was the role of DOT Region 2 as the lead organization in pushing the brand campaign with respect to the provinces having flexibility with their sub-brands. Also, findings have shown that no resistance was experienced in the implementation of the brand since shared decision-making through a consensus approach was evident. While the five provinces fully embraced the brand, collaboration with other government agencies and the private sector through the CVRTC needs to be cultivated and developed. Collaboration was seen as an emergent process. Aside from the promotional aspect of the brand campaign, developing the tourism circuits and its support facilities should also be prioritized to fully capitalize on the gains of the collaborative marketing process. As the tourism industry is beset with supply fragmentation and an all-in-one experience demand paradox, the creation of circuits convinces tourists to visit a region and particular destinations (d'Angella & Go, 2009). The results from this research identified funding support and political agenda of local chief executives as major challenges that need to be overcome. Previous studies validate financial constraints (St. Hill & Lewis, 2015) and self-interests of territories (Wang et al., 2013). Collaboration will not succeed if partners remain focused on their own self-interests, and unable to move beyond their narrow territorial interests. Local chief executives in the Cagayan Valley Region may have their own territorial interests which can become a hindrance for genuine collaboration to happen. Mechanisms to establish long term partnerships among the participating destinations will be necessary to ensure collaborative growth in the Cagayan Valley Region.

Through an elucidation of the steps undertaken in the regional branding process, the synergistic outcomes of collaboration became evident. Continuing collaboration of stakeholders will enable the Cagayan Valley Region's Brand to be recognized and used effectively.

6.3 Recommendations

Moving forward, the results from this research suggest the following potential strategies to strengthen the regional brand through collaborative marketing:

- reinforce leadership and governance
- improve communication among stakeholders, and
- address issues on funding.

On leadership and governance, the DOT Region 2 as the lead agency should maintain its leadership and governance in the brand implementation. Since this is a major campaign worked on by the DOT Region 2, a competent staff needs to oversee the

entire process to ensure its consistent delivery and future success. As the brand champion, DOT Region 2 can provide the leadership and governance necessary for the region to achieve its tourism goals. Its leadership and governance need to be reinforced by the setting up of goals, targets and commitment to ensure the deepening and broadening of the brand. Long-term strategies and initiatives can be developed facilitated by the regional office to ensure the success of the collaborative efforts. The LGUs and private sector collaboration can be strengthened through the creation of tangible contributions in the form of goals and targets. With the areas committing to its contributing to the end goals of the Cagayan Valley regional campaign, the areas acknowledge the leadership of DOT R2.

On improving communication among stakeholders, an organized system of communication needs to be developed within the stakeholders by employing various online and offline communication channels to ensure that all sectors are properly informed and updated on the progress of the brand. Information flow should be seamless from top to bottom and vice versa for proper monitoring and evaluation. As the benefits of regional branding may become evident in the coming years, funding and resources may be easier to source out. In the meantime, stakeholders should consciously include the regional brand in all its in-house and existing campaigns. Also, digital efforts need to be heavily employed due to its minimal costs but high impact.

On issues on funding, the DOT regional office provides the main funding contribution. Partnerships with other government agencies, private sector groups and non-governmental organizations can be initiated as well as digital marketing efforts may be intensified. In this time of pandemic where domestic, regional travel is encouraged, the DOT calls for a revisiting of all regional branding efforts of all 16 regions. The current challenges faced by the tourism industry reiterate the importance of regional branding in the Philippines. With the regional branding initiative, the Cagayan Valley Region gets a head start with its *Your Islands and Valley of Fun* campaign.

The findings demonstrated that stakeholders were optimistic that success can be achieved when they work hard together. With the observed synergy, cooperation and mutual trust prevailing among the stakeholders, the brand creation demonstrated the possibility of overcoming challenges in the process. With the lack of regional branding campaigns in the Philippines' other regions, this chapter provides the stages, benefits and challenges of regional destination marketing and management which other regions may refer to for future brand development. Future research should focus on the effect of the brand on another key stakeholder not considered in this study, the tourist. Studies on messaging can also be taken into consideration. Ultimately, the brand's success will be measured in its effectiveness to its target market in the form of an increase in tourist arrivals who will stay longer and spend more in the Cagayan Valley Region, and qualitative measures such as place attachment and positive destination image formation.

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Part IV
Accreditation and Industry Standards

Fishermen in Dilasag, Aurora fixing their nets at sunset. (Photograph by Giulia Erika M. Soria)

Tourism Accreditation in the Philippines: Government and Private Sector Perspectives

Reil Cruz

Abstract This chapter describes the status of the mandatory accreditation system for primary tourism enterprises (PTEs) in the Philippines and identifies issues surrounding its implementation. A multi-method case study was utilized, including content analysis of online news articles, and focus group discussion data. Results indicated that while accreditation rates have increased, adoption has generally been lacking across the tourism sub-sectors. In addition, the imposition of additional requirements, inconsistent enforcement, DOT's expansion of the scope of accredited establishments, high cost of compliance, inability of the DOT to protect the accredited PTEs from unfair competition, and private sector's creativity in circumventing accreditation, were seen as the major challenges in the implementation of the mandatory accreditation system. Based on the results from this study, policy recommendations and future research directions are suggested.

Keywords Accreditation · Certification · Mandatory · Tourism · Philippines

1 Introduction

The Philippines considers tourism an industry of national interest, and a vehicle for attaining rapid economic growth, affirming cultural identity, and fostering national pride. As such, the Tourism Act of 2009 (Republic Act 9593) mandated the accreditation of primary tourism enterprises (PTEs) with the avowed goals of attaining global competitiveness, encouraging tourism research, and promoting individual tourism enterprises and the industry as a whole. While tourism accreditation has been a primary policy instrument of the Philippines for almost 50 years, the topic has received very little interest among researchers. This study provides an overview of the mandatory accreditation of PTEs and identifies issues surrounding its implementation. The chapter is organized as follows: a literature review of tourism

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accreditation in the international context down to the Philippine setting, explanation of the research methodology, presentation of results and discussion, and finally, the chapter's conclusion and recommendation.

2 Tourism Accreditation and Certification

Dragomir et al. (2018) define certification as the process for verifying that an organization, product, or service meets a specific standard that helps organizations to develop and manage processes, products, services, and systems. Closely related to the concept of certification is the process of accreditation. The main difference being that while certification is an endorsement of an organization's systems or products, accreditation is an independent third-party endorsement of a certification (Murthy, 2017). Accreditation is, therefore, a layer above certification. However, Bergin-Seers and Mair (2008) and the Philippines' Department of Tourism (DOT, 2019) use the two terms synonymously.

Early research on tourism certifications focused on ecolabels (e.g., Font 2002; Font & Harris, 2004; Griffin & DeLacy, 2002; Sasidharan et al., 2002). Well-known examples of these include initiatives such as the Voluntary Initiatives for Sustainability in Tourism (VISIT), European Centre for Ecological and Agricultural Tourism (ECEAT), Green Globe, Rainforest Alliance, and the Blue Flag Campaign (Sustaining Tourism, n.d.). These certifications prescribe codes of conduct and criteria for the sustainable operations and management of tourist destinations, attractions and private establishments.

One of the most famous accreditation organizations is the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), accrediting tourism certification bodies and certifying tourism establishments and destinations (www.gstcouncil.org). In Southeast Asia, studies on certification have been mainly about halal tourism (Henderson, 2016; Mohsin et al., 2016; Nurdiansyah, 2018; Suharko et al., 2018; Wahyono & Razak, 2020). For other types of tourism, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) developed the ASEAN Tourism Standard (ATS) for green hotels, spas, tourist cities, community-based tourism, homestay, public toilet, meeting room, exhibition venue, and sustainable tourism. The blueprint for these standards is in the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2011–2015 (Chheang, 2013). Individual ASEAN member-countries, besides the Philippines, have also developed their tourism accreditation or certification schemes. For example, Thailand has Community Based Tourism Standard (CBTS) (GSTC, 2018a) and the Sustainable Tourism Management Standard (STMS) (Devex, n.d.; GSTC, 2018b). Indonesia requires hotels to be certified by the ASRICERT, an accredited organization by the *Komite Akreditasi Nasional* or KAN) (*ASRICERT Indonesia*, 2019). Further, Indonesia has the Sustainable Tourism Destination Standard (STDS) (GSTC, 2016). Singapore certifies tourist guides, workers in hotel and accommodation, attractions, MICE and events, spa services, casino gaming, and training providers through the Workforce Skills Qualifications (SkillsFuture Singapore, 2020). Malaysia's Ministry of

Tourism and Culture requires tourism operators to be registered or licensed before beginning tourism-related business activities (Tourism Malaysia, 2021). These examples demonstrate the role of accreditation and certification within Southeast Asia.

2.1   Benefits of Tourism Certifications and Accreditation

According to previous research, tourism certifications and accreditation offer several advantages. For example, accreditation was found to increase tourist arrivals and receipts in Chinese tourist attractions, albeit at a diminishing rate for 4 years (Gao et al., 2020). Certifications can also provide a competitive advantage for tourism enterprises (Dragomir et al., 2018). Namely, a green certification can help hotels increase sales through premium pricing and repeat guest bookings (Lee et al., 2019; Nelson et al., 2021; Ponnapureddy et al., 2017). In addition, certifications promote product quality and create an image of trustworthiness or credibility (Karlsson & Dolnicar, 2016; Mic, 2021; Ponnapureddy et al., 2017; Slabbert & Du Preez, 2017). Finally, certifications can strengthen brand recognition by customers (Dragomir et al., 2018). If implemented efficiently, tourism certifications and accreditation schemes work to enhance the overall competitiveness of tourism products, services, and destinations at large.

2.2   Factors Influencing Outcomes of Tourism Certifications and Accreditations

The successful outcomes of tourism certifications depend on several factors. First, a certification program should offer tangible and relevant benefits while demonstrating transparent, fair, and participatory processes (Haaland & Aas, 2010; Klintman, 2012; Mic, 2021; Rattan, 2015). In addition, a good certification must combine local and international standards while supporting community participation (Klintman, 2012). Furthermore, a sustainable certification program should be supported by governments and adequate tourism policies (Font & McCabe, 2017).

Just as there are many factors impacting the success of tourism certification programs, multiple factors hinder the adoption or retention of tourism certifications. These include factors such as costs and elite governance of the accreditation process (Margaryan & Stensland, 2017; Montefrio & Sin, 2019). Perceived cost-effectiveness and return on investments also determine whether accredited enterprises stay or leave the program (Dunk et al., 2016). The diversity of political, environmental, and socio-economic conditions in destinations may thwart efforts to adopt uniform tourism certification standards (see Novelli et al., 2017 for an SE Asia example and Gkoumas, 2019 for an example from Southern Europe). In addition to the

aforementioned factors, the lack of engagement between the regulators and the regulated (Klintman, 2012), bureaucratic procedures (Margaryan & Stensland, 2017; Mzembe et al., 2020), and a lack of awareness by the target markets are other stumbling blocks to the success of tourism certifications (Dunk et al., 2016; Heras-Saizarbitoria et al., 2015).

2.3   Studies on Tourism Accreditation in the Philippines

Limited studies have delved into tourism certification and accreditation in the Philippines. One of the earlier studies explored accreditation among the beach resorts in Laiya, Batangas Province; findings revealed that almost all the resorts shun accreditation due to the high cost of meeting the standards, the intricate procedures, lack of awareness about the mandatory accreditation law, and the leniency of the LGU in implementing the law (Aberin, 2014). Concerning the supposed benefits of tourism accreditation, Ylagan (2018) found it to be an insignificant determinant of competitiveness among resorts in Batangas. Other research on agritourism certification in the Philippines showed that the high cost of compliance coupled with the required facilities excluded small farmers (Montefrio & Sin, 2019). Another study found that low accreditation rates were caused by the imposition of non-standardized and/or vague requirements, slow processing times, inconsistent enforcement, and a lack of tangible benefits (Cruz et al., 2018). Concerning the qualification of applicants, Rocamora and Aguiling (2020) found that local tourism officers tended to be lenient with requirements to enable applicants to more easily qualify (Rocamora & Aguiling, 2020). In summary, poor implementation, inadequate communication, coordination, and regulatory capacities are some of the inhibiting factors to the success of tourism accreditation in the country (Dela Santa, 2018; Dela Santa & Melosantos, 2016).

3   Overview of the Philippine Mandatory Accreditation System

The regulation of tourism in the Philippines has evolved over the past 50 years (Cruz et al., 2018). From 1973 to 1991, the DOT was entirely in charge of classifying and licensing the tourism industry. However, with the passage of the Local Government Code in 1991 (RA 7160), the licensing of tourism establishments was devolved to the local government units (cities and towns), and the DOT shifted to the issuance of voluntary accreditation. The Tourism Act of 2009 introduced the mandatory accreditation of PTEs and voluntary accreditation of secondary tourism enterprises. PTEs cover hotels, resorts, apartment hotels, Mabuhay accommodation (e.g., motels, tourist inns, pensions), homestays, tourist transport (e.g., land, water,

and air), travel and tour agencies (e.g., brick and mortar, online), MICE organizers, and venues, and tour guides. PTEs must first be DOT-accredited before the LGU can issue its license to operate.

The objectives of accreditation are to foster global competitiveness, promote data gathering for tourism research, and promote individual tourism enterprises and the tourism industry (Republic of the Philippines, 2009). The Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA 9593 discuss the provisions pertinent to accreditation. In that document, accreditation is defined as "a certification issued by the DOT to a tourism enterprise that [has] complied with the minimum standards for the operation of tourism facilities and services" (Republic of the Philippines, 2009, p. 49). The primary benefits of tourism accreditation in the Philippines are endorsements to the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) for exemption from liquor ban during election-related events of hotels and restaurants; to embassies and travel trade associations for utilization of establishment's facilities and services; to international and domestic airports for the issuance of access passes to qualified personnel of tour operators and hotels; to Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) for issuance of franchise for tourist land transport; prioritization to DOT training programs; and qualification for exemption from once-a-week driving ban of the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) for tourist land transport (see https://beta.tourism.gov.ph)(DOT, n.d.).

3.1 Administration of the DOT Accreditation

The Office of Tourism Standards and Regulations (DOT OTSR) under the Undersecretary for Tourism Regulation, Coordination, and Resource Generation formulates the accreditation standards. The DOT regional offices, headed by regional directors, monitor and enforce the accreditation standards (RA 9593, Section 17, a). The enforcement of the requirement for a DOT accreditation to issue a local business license requires the coordination and cooperation between the DOT and the LGUs. The full implementation of the accreditation program may also be entrusted to the LGUs by the DOT under certain conditions. The accreditation process, in general, entails the following steps:

1. self-assessment,
2. filing of application,
3. submission of documentary requirements,
4. inspection by DOT-designated inspectors, and
5. receipt of accreditation.

The accreditation requirements for specific PTEs vary by type classification under the Progressive Accreditation System (PAS) (DOT OTSR, 2018). The PAS has three levels of accreditation: basic registration, regular accreditation, and premium accreditation.

All PTEs, except for online travel and tour agencies, need only to present a valid mayor's permit or local license to operate at the basic registration level. For regular registration, the submission of general liability insurance with coverage of between PHP 200,000 and PHP 500,000 (around USD 4000 to USD 10,000) and audited financial statements showing a paid capital of at least P500,000 are standard requirements. Specific requirements include attendance to accredited training for homestays, 3 years of managerial experience or attendance to a DOT-accredited course for travel and tour agency managers and MICE organizers; contract of lease for online travel agencies, and certifications from the LTFRB and Land Transport Office for land tourist transport. To qualify for premium accreditation, a PTE must present proof of awards from recognized organizations and that its staff hold national certifications. The fees also vary by level of accreditation and type of PTE. At the level of basic registration, most PTEs do not have to pay anything, except for the Mabuhay accommodation which is PHP 600 pesos (about USD 12). Tour guides, water, and air tourist transport pay a uniform amount at all levels of accreditation (PHP 150 or USD 3 for tour guides, and PHP 1400 or about USD 28 for the latter two). Regular accreditation fees can be as high as PHP 5000 (about USD 100) for travel and tour agencies. The fees go up to a minimum of PHP 900 for homestay and PHP 8500 for five-star hotels for premium accreditation. The DOT accreditation seal sticker and plaque fees are separate (PHP 300 and PHP 2500, respectively). The complete set of requirements and fees are available at the DOT website (see https://philippines.travel/accreditation).

4   Methodology

This exploratory research adopted a multi-method case study research design (Rashid et al., 2019; Yin, 2003), with the Philippines as the unit of analysis. The methods involved a manual count of accredited PTEs, content analysis of news articles, personal communication with key informants, and thematic analysis of raw focus group discussion (FGD) transcripts.

Data for the accreditation statistics were collected from the DOT website. The accredited PTEs from the DOT database were then manually counted. The DOT keeps a running list of the accredited PTEs; thus, the counts were valid only on the dates they were retrieved (Table 1).

While news forms part of grey literature, which is considered to be less robust than peer-reviewed journal articles (Adams et al., 2016), it is often relevant to research. This study is similar to that of Montefrio and Sin (2019) who also utilized news articles as a data source. For the purposes of this research, sources were limited to the online platforms of the largest newspaper organizations in the Philippines, including, the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, *Manila Bulletin*, *Business Mirror*, the *Philippine Star*. In addition, news published on the websites of *ABS-CBN News*, the country's biggest broadcasting companies at the time of data collection, and the *Philippine News Agency*, the country's official news agency, were also used.

Table 1   Date of data collection of accreditation statistics per Philippine region

Region	Date of data collection
Metro Manila	February 27, 2020
Cordillera	February 27, 2020
Ilocos	February 26, 2020
Cagayan Valley	February 7, 2020
Central Luzon	January 27, 2020
Calabarzon	February 10, 2020
Mimaropa	December 31, 2019
Bicol	February 14, 2020
Western Visayas	February 4, 2020
Central Visayas	February 26, 2020
Eastern Visayas	January 31, 2020
Zamboanga Peninsula	November 20, 2019
Northern Mindanao	January 31, 2020
Davao	February 12, 2020
Soccsksargen	January 31, 2020
Caraga	December 31, 2019

Statistics were extracted from news articles to approximate the level of tourism accreditation in the country.

The author also gathered information through personal correspondence from three DOT regional officers, two provincial tourism officers, three travel and tour operators, and one tour guide. The informants were identified using pseudonyms. The informants have about 50 years of combined work experience, ranging from 2 to 16 years. Finally, the author revisited the raw transcription of a FGD held in Pasig City, Metro Manila, in June 2018 to draw primary data that were not used in a related previous study (Cruz et al., 2018). The participants in the FGD included a local tourism officer, two local tourism office staff, two travel and tour operators, and one tour guiding practitioner/assessor. The identities of these participants were concealed using pseudonyms. The FGD was part of the research activities funded by the Development Academy of the Philippines through the Modernizing Government Regulations Project.

5   Results

5.1   *Status of DOT Accreditation*

The number of DOT-accredited PTEs was 7166 as of February 2020 (see Table 2). Of this number, accommodation was the biggest group of accredited PTEs (*n* = 2300, 32.1%), closely followed by tour guides (*n* = 2138, 29.84%) and the

Table 2 DOT-accredited private tourism enterprises as of February 2020

Type	*n*	Share within type	Share within total
Accommodation			
Apartment hotel	29	1.26%	0.40%
Homestay	291	12.65%	4.06%
Hotel	614	26.70%	8.57%
Mabuhay accommodation	902	**39.22%**	12.59%
Motel	5	0.22%	0.07%
Pension house	70	3.04%	0.98%
Resort	354	15.39%	4.94%
Tourist inn	35	1.52%	0.49%
Subtotal	2300	100.00%	**32.10%**
MICE			
MICE facility	5	19.23%	0.07%
MICE organizer	21	80.77%	0.29%
Subtotal	26	100.00%	0.36%
Ecotourism			
Ecolodge	4	57.14%	0.06%
Ecotour operator	2	28.57%	0.03%
Eco-guide	1	14.28%	0.01%
Subtotal	7	100.00%	0.10%
Tour guides			
Community guides	740	34.61%	10.33%
Regional tour guides	1398	**65.39%**	19.51%
Subtotal	2138	100.00%	29.84%
Tourist transport operators			
Tourist air transport operator	3	0.44%	0.04%
Tourist land transport operator	514	**74.60%**	7.17%
Tourist water transport operator	92	13.35%	1.28%
Motorized Banca	80	11.61%	1.12%
Subtotal	689	100.00%	9.61%
Travel and tour agencies			
Online travel agency	6	0.30%	0.08%
Travel agency	64	3.19%	0.89%
Travel and tour agencies	1490	**74.28%**	20.79%
Tour operator	446	22.23%	6.22%
Subtotal	2006	100.00%	27.99%
Grand Total (N)	**7166**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**

Source of raw data: Department of Tourism (tourism.gov.ph)

travel and tour sector (*n* = 2006, 27.99%). The remaining 10% was composed of tourist transport operators, MICE, and ecotourism sub-sectors.

Figure 1 depicts the distribution of the accredited PTEs as of February 2020. Metro Manila holds 20% of the accredited PTEs in the country, followed by Central Visayas (13.2%) and Mimaropa (10%). Soccsksargen, Zamboanga Peninsula, and Northern Mindanao had the smallest number of DOT-accredited PTEs.
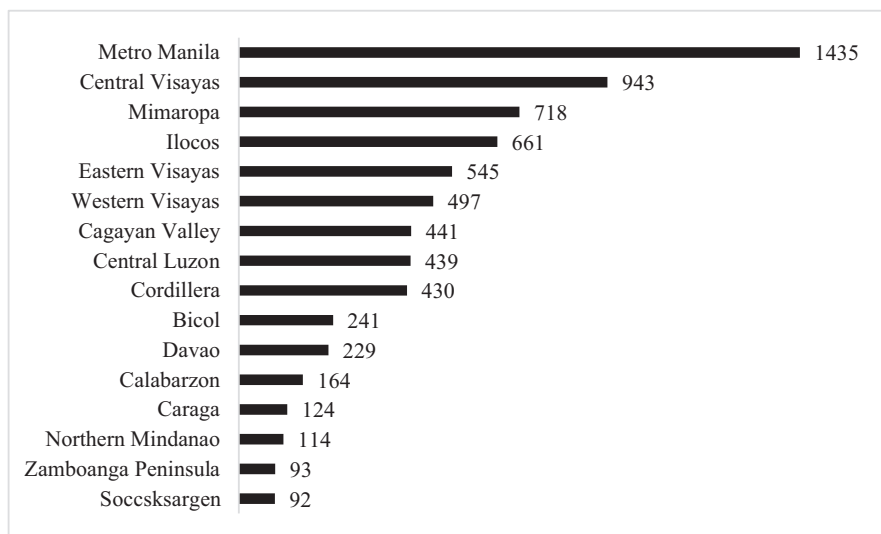
Fig. 1 Regional distribution of DOT-accredited PTEs in the Philippines. (Source of raw data: DOT (tourism.gov.ph))
Mimaropa: Oriental Mindoro, Occidental Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, Palawan
Calabarzon: Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon
Soccsksargen: South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, and General Santos City

Table 3 Estimates of accreditation rates among PTEs based on news reports

Sector	Province or region	Accreditation rate	Sources
All sectors	Sipalay City, Western Visayas	60% (N = 20)	Nicavera (2016)
All sectors	Puerto Galera, Mimaropa	6.6% (N = 350)	Alcayde (2019)
Accommodation	Boracay, Western Visayas	95% (N = 374)	Momblan (2019)
Accommodation	Puerto Galera, Mimaropa	28.6% (N = 250)	Lineses (2019)
Accommodation	Eastern Visayas	16% (N = 31)	Meniano (2020)
Travel and tour agencies	National	51% (N = 2995)	Arnaldo (2017)
Island-hopping pump boats	Central Visayas	3.5% (N = 2000)	Bajenting (2019)
Spas	Calamba City, Calabarzon	0.23% (N = 888)	Pa-a (2019)

5.2 Accreditation Rates

The estimates of DOT accreditation rates were constructed from content analysis of available news articles, as shown in Table 3. The accreditation rates of PTEs were generally low. Across all sectors, the accreditation rate ranges from 6.6% in Puerto Galera (Alcayde, 2019) to 60% in Sipalay City (Nicavera, 2016). The

accommodation sector's accreditation rate ranged from 16% in Eastern Visayas (Meniano, 2020) to 95% in Boracay (Momblan, 2019). The spas (hot spring resorts) in Calamba City at 0.23% (Pa-a, 2019) and the island-hopping pump boats in Central Visayas (3.5%) had the lowest accreditation rates. However, comparability was not possible due to differences in the year of publication and locations of the PTEs.

5.3 Issues and Challenges in the Implementation of Accreditation

The analysis of personal correspondences and the FGD transcript revealed several issues concerning the DOT accreditation scheme. Table 4 shows these issues and challenges, categorized as (1) the imposition of additional requirements for PTEs, (2) inconsistent enforcement, (3) DOT's expansion of the scope of accredited establishments, (4) high cost of compliance, (5) inability of the DOT to protect the accredited PTEs from unfair competition, and (6) private sector's creativity in circumventing accreditation.

Imposition of Additional Requirements P1 noted that the documentation stipulated by the DOT for PTEs (see Sect. 3), government agencies like the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Department of Education (DepEd), and the Department of Foreign Affairs require separate accreditation documents. The same participant explained that DOT-accredited tour guides also need to present separate accreditations identification (ID) cards when practicing their profession in the different provinces and municipalities. Even an industry association issues separate accreditation IDs. P3 stated that on top of the DOT requirements, LGUs may further require PTEs to attend tourism awareness seminars, while the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) requires that tour guides be at least college graduates. According to P3 and P4, the educational requirement may result in the exclusion of Indigenous People, like the Dumagat tribe in Quezon. Another issue raised by P1, included the lack of consistency in dress policies; this participant

Table 4 Issues in DOT Accreditation revealed by key informants

Issue	FGD participants	Personal correspondence
Imposition of additional requirements	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5	
Inconsistent enforcement by LGUs	P1, P2, P3	R2, R3
DOT expanding the scope of accredited establishments	P5	R4, R7, R8
High cost of compliance	P1	R1, R2, R3, R5
The inability of the DOT to protect the accredited PTEs from unfair competition	P1	R6
Private sector creativity	P1	

note that even within the DOT itself, two offices may have different policies regarding cross-dressing among the members of LGBTQI community trainees. Participant P2 challenged that the absence of a standard checklist of requirements makes PTEs prone to this burden.

Inconsistent Enforcement Two participants described factors that contribute to LGUs' allowing PTEs to operate without the clearances from regulatory agencies. P3 described the difficulties of compliance with the Citizens Charter to process the application for permits within a day, while P6 noted the challenges associated with an LGU's need to generate income. P3 explained the processing time for tour guides by TESDA can take months, and obtaining an environmental clearance certificate from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) could take up to a year. Key informant P6 reiterated that DOT does not follow-up with applicant PTEs even though these businesses have complete documents. P5 suggested that this situation sometimes forces some PTEs to use bribery to expedite the process. Similarly, P6 explained that sometimes, LGUs allow non-accredited PTEs to operate even if they have just the licensing fee receipt. Similar sentiments were stressed by key informants R2, R3, and R9 who suggested that LGUs may allow non-accredited PTEs to operate in cases when the province is hosting a big event and there is an insufficient number of accredited PTEs. P3 described the pressure from PTEs on LGUs to report inaccurate tourist arrivals to avoid paying higher taxes.

DOT Is Expanding the Scope of Accreditable Tourism Enterprises The DOT has included online travel agencies and even community guides in the list of establishments needing accreditation. P5 noted that this decision is problematic because there is no DOT presence at the local level (e.g., towns and cities), and the DOT cannot manage its current tasks. Every DOT regional office has only about five staff in charge of accreditation (R4, R7, R8), which means each staff at the time of writing has to handle between 88 and 109 PTEs located across five to seven provinces. Based on this data, it is expected that expansion of the scope of accreditable PTEs would only make the implementation of the accreditation scheme more inconsistent, if not inefficient.

High Cost of Compliance In general, complying with the DOT accreditation is costly, given that most PTEs are small-to-medium enterprises. The most significant expenditures for PTEs go to paying for environmental mitigation, office rentals, and paid-up capital requirements. As one key informant stressed, the DOT cannot expect small-sized enterprises to comply with demanding requirements such as 'sewage treatment plants,' especially if they cannot meet the basic requirements (R2). Spending for a physical office of at least $18m^2$ is challenging not just for home-based agencies but even with successful travel agencies (R1, R5). A travel and tour agent said it took 3 years to save the equivalent of USD 10,000 to get a bank certificate as proof of working capital (R1).

Inability to Protect the Industry from Unfair Competition The FGD partici-
pants noted that the DOT could not protect them from unfair competition from
home-based agencies and foreign tour guides and tour operators (P1). They were
supposed to partner with local agencies, but they go solo because, for example
Japanese tourists, prefer to transact business with their countrymen (P2). Moreover,
contrary to the supposed benefits of accreditation, accredited tour guides do not
always enjoy preferential employment, even by DOT-accredited travel and tour
agencies (R6).

Private Sector Creativity Just as the DOT has been trying to place more PTEs
under their radar, tourism business owners have also been very creative in evading
it. One way to do this is by organizing joiner tours. For example, this modus can be
done by a transport operator advertising a trip to a particular destination on Facebook
or other online platforms, establishing a meeting place and time. Because the opera-
tor has no insurance coverage, the joiners can save money. If they get flagged down
by the police, the driver would just say it was "barkadahan" or a trip among close
friends (P1). According to P2, another way is to register a business under another
category like a ticketing office instead of travel and tour. Sometimes, DOT-accredited
travel agents would render training services for people interested in having their
own agencies. The travel agencies would typically charge thousands of pesos for the
course, which is illegal as travel agencies are not authorized to conduct such pro-
grams. At the end of the training, these agencies would simply allow their trainees
to use their accounts on a global distribution system for the latter to start their opera-
tions (P1). As pointed out by R3, clients are not keen on accreditation as long as
they can save money.

6 Discussion

The number of accredited PTEs in the Philippines has increased by 142% between
2015 and February 2020. However, the data obtained from the news articles showed
that there still were low accreditation rates in many locations. The high proportion
of accredited establishments in Boracay suggests that accreditation rates could go
high when government agencies collaborate to monitor compliance. Boracay was at
the focus of attention after its closure in 2018 to restore its environmental quality.
However, it should be noted that the presented accreditation rates in this study (i.e.,
proportion of DOT-accredited PTEs over the total number of accreditable PTEs) are
estimates, because the total number of establishments that qualify for accreditation
is unknown (Cruz et al., 2018). This is because only the LGUs keep a registry of
tourism-related establishments, and that the DOT does not maintain a list and count
of all PTEs, accredited or not. However, there were no published official reports
about the number of DOT-accredited PTEs on the Internet, given that this is a cen-
tral tourism policy instrument in the Philippines. Thus, in the absence of official
reports, the figures taken from the news reports are considered only estimates.

This study also identified six issues that surround the implementation of accreditation. Four of these issues, namely, imposition of additional requirements, inconsistent enforcement, DOT's expansion of the scope of accredited establishments, high cost of compliance, are consistent with the findings of previous research (e.g., Aberin, 2014; Dela Santa, 2018; Dela Santa & Melosantos, 2016). Inconsistent enforcement and the DOT's broadening the scope of coverage, could be reviewed, reformed, and controlled by the DOT. However, the imposition of new requirements and inability of the Department to protect the accredited PTEs from unfair competition, will require a collaborative effort between the DOT and other government agencies.

The remaining issues, high compliance cost and private sector creativity, require the DOT to review its requirements and procedures, and to consider further refining the levels of accreditation to open more participation by a broader range of PTEs, including micro and small-scale enterprises and those located in the disadvantaged areas. The DOT could also consider reducing the criteria for accreditation to things that are within its control (e.g., service quality in hotels). However, such a shift would require collaboration with outside agencies such as the DENR. Such a shift may contribute to a less costly and faster accreditation process, lightening the burden for the PTEs.

This study showed that PTEs did not mention withdrawing their accredited status, even in cases where they did not benefit from accreditation. The main reason for compliance provided by PTEs was that they simply had to as it is the law (e.g., Cruz et al., 2018). Previous research on elitist governance suggests that larger operators may be influencing policy changes towards more stringent criteria, ultimately contributing to the demise of micro and small PTEs (Montefrio & Sin, 2019).

7   Conclusion and Recommendations

The aims of this chapter were to describe the status of DOT accreditation of PTEs in the Philippines and identify issues and challenges in its implementation. The main findings showed that the proportion of DOT-accredited PTEs has increased over the past few years, albeit with a generally low accreditation rate showing great variability across the tourism sub-sectors in different locations. The study also identified six key issues or challenges in the implementation of the accreditation program. Four issues – redundant requirements, inconsistent enforcement, DOT expanding the scope of accredited establishments, and high cost of compliance had already been identified in previous research. The inability of the DOT to protect the accredited PTEs from unfair competition, and private-sector creativity in circumventing DOT accreditation, were something novel to this study.

From a policy perspective, the DOT should consider conducting a thorough review of the mandatory accreditation system. It will likely become necessary for the DOT to invest in the procurement of more personnel in the regional office to be able to monitor all PTEs in the country. Alternatively, the DOT could consider

focusing on PTEs that require more guidance to reach an acceptable level of quality; e.g., micro-to-small sized PTEs. For example, the Department could consider providing some level of autonomy to the five-star hotels, large transport operators, and travel and tour companies.

The findings also support the decentralization of tasks for those outside of DOT's control (e.g., environmental standards). To make enforcement more consistent, the DOT could shift to online processing of accreditation, including financial transactions. The DOT may consider tailoring the accreditation criteria to have more classifications, and without obligatory requirements to accommodate a wider spectrum of PTEs. As a central database of accredited PTEs is not available, the DOT could also improve its data management system to be able to monitor accreditation rates more effectively. To protect local operators, it is encouraged that the private sector lobby for legislation to ban/control foreign tour operators, for example, those that do not enter into partnerships with their local counterparts.

There were some limitations posed by the mostly secondary data used in this study, emphasizing the need for official and updated reports from the DOT. Future studies may also benefit from exploring the views of various PTEs, accreditation enforcers as well as the owners and managers of non-accredited PTEs.

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The Philippines Tourism Officers' Competencies Based on Tourism Act of 2009 and Local Government Code of 1991

Joreen T. Rocamora

Abstract Tourism officers are in charge of managing destinations and making sure that development plans are implemented in their locality. Their role is to ensure that there is a proper implementation of tourism laws according to the Tourism Act of 2009 and Local Government Code of 1991. The Tourism Act of 2009 is the national policy for developing and promoting tourism in the Philippines, while the Local Government Code of 1991 of the Philippines defines the powers and responsibilities of tourism officers. This study aims to assess the competency level of tourism officers based on the developed Competence Model of Philippine Tourism Officers in accordance to the Tourism Act of 2009 and Local Government Code of 1991. This study adopted a descriptive-correlational design which used 335 survey questionnaires filled out by tourism officers. The study revealed consistencies in competence levels throughout the archipelago, with the average competence level of tourism officers being moderately extensive, except for soft skills which were rated highly extensive. The findings of the study identify the training needs for tourism officers, especially for capability building and assisting the Government in managing tourism destinations.

Keywords Tourism · Destination management · Competence model · Tourism officers · Public governance

1 Introduction

The Tourism Act of 2009 is the Philippines' national policy delegated as the principal implementing agency of the Government in developing and promoting the tourism industry in the country. It indicates the functions and responsibilities of tourism officers. Tourism officers are in charge of managing destinations and making sure

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that development plans are implemented in their locality. Their role is to ensure that there is a proper implementation of tourism laws according to the Tourism Act of 2009. The Local Government Code of 1991 from the Department of Interior and Local Government indicates the duties and powers of a tourism officer. This code establishes the system and defines powers of the tourism officers in the provincial, city, and municipal government levels in the Philippines. Moreover, it aims to provide a more responsive local government structure in which local government units are delegated with authority and responsibilities.

The overwhelming success of the tourism industry has created a demand and an increasing rise of professionals in the field (Gupta & Kashmir, 2011). One way to remain competitive in the arena of globalization is to have an improvement of human capital through continuous learning and development (Kunjiapua & Yasnib, 2010). Pechlaner et al. (2014) argue that skills development through continuing professional education, as well as manpower training could lead to the destinations' competitiveness and provision of quality tourism experiences. Qualified human capital is, thus, a vital resource in the development of destinations (Andrades & Dimanche, 2017).

Research has shown that national tourism organizations have limited roles in creating destination managers (Adeyinka-Ojo, 2018). In general, the governance of tourism destinations remains a challenge (Islam et al., 2017) and is underexplored in the literature (Guccio et al., 2018). A tourist destination is considered a combination of places serving to store meanings, generate experiences and capture values within a set of expectations (Snepenger et al., 2007). To competently manage a tourist destination, Gupta and Kashmir (2011) suggest that managers must have high quality education, professional qualifications, and destination management competencies.

Competence, as defined by the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) on Tourism Professionals (2018), is a set of skill, knowledge, and attitude that are needed to perform a task or job within an expected standard in a given workplace. More specifically, in the context of career, competence can be defined as superior work performance and the capability of a person to deliver desired or expected results aligned with target goals while performing the expected work requirements (Gupta & Kashmir, 2011). Thus, the development of a competency model establishes the identification of training needs, developing training programs and certification. Further, a competence model serves as a framework to define the competencies required for successful performance of a job.

As defined by Cheese et al. (2009), distinct capabilities in successfully managing tourism destinations is the heart of the destination's competitiveness as it fosters customer value, due to the differentiation and cost effectiveness it brings. This is of noted concern, considering the efforts of the Philippine Government to boost international visitors, who tend to be more experienced and have higher levels of expectations compared with the previous generations (Michalko et al., 2016). Inadequate managerial skills for tourism development (Ayikoru, 2015), and development of new competencies in local regions to meet global competition (Lemmetyinen & Go, 2009), continues to be a concern in the Philippines. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to assess the distinct capabilities and specific skills, knowledge, and attitudes of tourism officers to manage destinations in the Philippines.

1.1 Conceptual Framework

This study adopted a previously developed Competence Model of Philippine Tourism Officers (Rocamora & Aguiling, 2020) as the guiding framework. This model proposed seven aspects to measure the competence of Philippine tourism officers, namely:

- Planning and policy implementation;
- Product development;
- Marketing and promotions;
- Network management;
- Supervision and training;
- Statistics, Research and Office Administration; and
- Social maturity.

The competence model was created to identify the skills, knowledge, and attitude required for the effective performance of the managerial tasks; set clear expectations and reveal skill needs; and reveal behaviors that should be encouraged, developed and rewarded (Fig. 1).

The first aspect, planning and policy implementation, consists of skills related to the implementation of tourism development plan. It aims to help tourism related establishments in coordinating with and securing accreditation from DOT. The second aspect focuses on general product development consists of skills on destination performance management, impact assessment and inventory and monitoring of assets. Aspect three includes marketing and promotions, while aspect four encompasses network management. While marketing and promotions focus on advertising and promotion, network management emphasizes the ability to communicate necessary tourism-related information across different agencies. The fifth aspect, supervision and training, includes the training and mentoring needed to provide tourism-related skills. Aspect six, statistics, research and office administration, encompasses a broader approach to analysis on the industry (e.g., tourism destinations, budgets, demographics and comprehensive industry reports). Lastly, aspect seven social maturity or soft skills focuses on fostering a positive and visitor friendly mindset for industry employees.

1.2 Research Objectives

Building from the previously established competency model (Rocamora & Aguiling, 2020), this study aims to assess the competencies in terms of skill, knowledge, and attitudes of tourism officers in the Philippines, in accordance with the Tourism Act of 2009 and the Local Government Code of 1991. The study is significant for the development of training programs to enhance competencies of tourism officers. The study seeks to answer the following research questions:
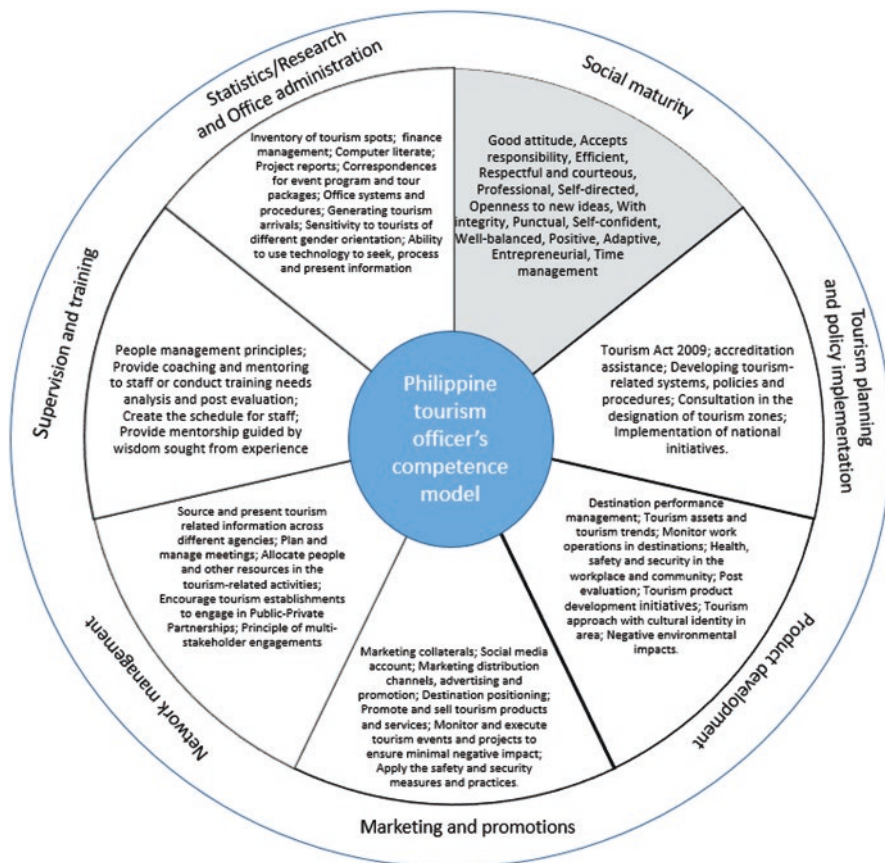
Fig. 1 Philippine Tourism officers' Competence model in accordance with Tourism Act of 2009 and Local Government Code of 1991. (Adapted from Rocamora and Aguiling (2020))

1. How do Philippine tourism officers perceive their acquired competencies in terms of skill, knowledge, and attitude in accordance with the Tourism Act of 2009 and the Local Government Code of 1991?
2. What is the relationship between tourism officers' years of service and their perceived acquired level of competencies?
3. Is there a significant difference in the acquired level of competencies of tourism officers based on the island group of the Philippines where they belong?

2   Methods

This study of the level of competency of Philippine tourism officers followed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design. Participants included tourism officers from various government levels (e.g., municipal and provincial). Tourism officers from municipalities, cities and provincial tourism offices in the Philippines were asked to accomplish a self-assessment survey questionnaire, which measured the skills, knowledge and attitude from the developed Competence Model of Philippine Tourism Officers (Rocamora & Aguiling, 2020).

The instrument consisted of three sections. The first section collected the respondents' demographic profile, and the second section consisted of a four-point likert scale self-assessment questionnaire that included 73 skills, knowledge and attitude (SKA) items. Based on the existing competence model (Rocamora & Aguiling, 2020), these SKA items were categorized into Planning and policy implementation; Product development; Marketing and promotions; Network management; Supervision and training; Statistics, Research and Office Administration and Social maturity. The third section asked an open-ended question that asked of the respondent's suggestions to enhance competencies. Prior to administering the questionnaires, the instrument was externally reviewed by experts composed of a national government's tourism planner, academics and a tourism officer. In addition to this external review of the survey, 20 pilot surveys were administered to tourism officers. Based on the response of the experts and the results of the pilot study, the questionnaire was amended accordingly.

The database, provided by the Association of Tourism Officers of the Philippines (ATOP), shows there was a total of 1120 tourism officers in the country as of November 2019: 716 in Luzon; 249 in Visayas; and 155 in Mindanao. The questionnaire was distributed to all tourism officers present at the ATOP National Convention on November 3–5, 2019 held in Ilocos Norte province. Likewise, it was distributed online through the email database of all tourism officers. A total of 335 tourism officers responded to the survey, in line with the total enumeration method, and the sample size recommendation of Valdez et al. (2013).

This chapter presents the quantitative findings from the survey using a descriptive-correlational research design. The collected data was analyzed with descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and analysis of variance (ANOVA), using the Statistical Package from Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. To derive the sum of deviations of all dimensions on the extent of competencies, overall mean scores were calculated.

Table 1 shows the range and values description for the likert scale:

To determine if there was a relationship between the level of acquired competencies and years of service, a Pearson correlation analysis for independent samples was used. To identify if there was a significant difference in the competency level of tourism officers based on the three island groups of the Philippines, a one-way ANOVA was used. A 5% margin of error at a 95% confidence level was applied.

Table 1 Range and values description for the likert scale

Range	Level
1.00–1.74	Not extensive
1.75–2.49	Extensive to some extent
2.50–3.24	Moderately extensive
3.25–4.00	Highly extensive

Adopted from Vigas (2006)

Table 2 Level of competency on 'Tourism Planning and Policy Implementation'

Competencies	M	SD	Level
Awareness of the Tourism Act 2009 and other tourism related policies	2.95	0.1380	Moderately extensive
Ability to help tourism related establishments in securing accreditation from DOT	2.94	0.1890	Moderately extensive
Ability to recommend tourism related establishments upon assessment for accreditation	2.93	0.1361	Moderately extensive
Ability to coordinate with the association, government officials and council in developing tourism-related systems, policies and procedures	2.93	0.1153	Moderately extensive
Ability to consult in the designation of tourism zones	2.84	0.1193	Moderately extensive
Ability to implement national initiatives under the Department of Tourism	2.81	0.2227	Moderately extensive
Overall mean score	**2.90**	**0.1442**	**Moderately extensive**

3   Findings and Discussion

Among the 335 respondents, 160 (47.8%) were male, while 175 (52.2%) were female. Regarding the level of educational attainment, more than half of the tourism officers surveyed were college graduates, with 168 (50.2%) holding bachelor's degrees or higher. With regard to regional representation of tourism officers, 199 (59.0%) were from Luzon; 84 (25.1%) were from Visayas; and 52 (15.5%) were from Mindanao. The following discusses the findings on the level of competencies of tourism officers based on the order of aspects articulated in the Competence Model of Philippine Tourism Officers (Rocamora & Aguiling, 2020).

The competencies of Philippine tourism officers in terms of tourism planning and policy implementation were described as moderately extensive with a 2.90 weighted mean score (SD = 0.1442) (Table 2). Thus, although the national level is responsible for strategic functions and the local level is accountable for the operational roles, the findings suggest that initiatives coming from the city, municipality, and province can be strengthened (see Mazilu & Sitnikov, 2010).

The competencies of Philippine tourism officers in terms of tourism product development measured as moderately extensive with a 2.95 weighted mean score (SD = 0.1124) (Table 3). The results ranked destination performance management

Table 3 Level of competency on 'Tourism Product Development'

Competencies	M	SD	Level
Knowledge about destination performance management	2.69	0.2060	Moderately extensive
Awareness of the tourism assets in area	3.43	0.1054	Highly extensive
Knowledge of the current tourism trends.	3.01	0.0889	Moderately extensive
Ability to monitor the field activities and work operations in destinations	2.93	0.2011	Moderately extensive
Ability to implement workplace health, safety and security procedures in the workplace and community	2.92	0.1300	Moderately extensive
Ability to conduct a post evaluation in the implementation of tourism activities	2.75	0.2654	Moderately extensive
Ability to create tourism product development initiatives	2.86	0.1212	Moderately extensive
Knowledge of the appropriate tourism approach in dealing with cultural identity in area	2.89	0.2203	Moderately extensive
Understanding about the negative environmental impacts at a proposed tourism development site	3.26	0.1069	Highly extensive
Overall mean score	**2.95**	**0.1124**	**Moderately extensive**

as the least explored competency. This finding suggests that implementing a unified system for performance management may improve this component. The performance evaluation and impact assessment of areas in tourism development are needed to manage the destination strategically and in a sustainable way (e.g. Musil, 2018).

The competencies of Philippine tourism officers in terms of Marketing and promotions were reported as moderately extensive with a 2.96 weighted mean score (SD = 0.1266) (see Table 4) This finding suggests that creating innovative marketing strategies may improve this component. Marketing has been recognized as an integral part of retaining the popularity of the destination which makes it an important component in managing tourist destinations (Ispas, 2008). Since destination management organizations are originally created to promote tourism destinations (e.g., Dwyer et al., 2009), Philippine tourism officers' 'marketing and promotions' competence should therefore be increased.

The competencies of Philippine tourism officers in terms of network management were reported as moderately extensive, with a 2.83 weighted mean score (SD = 0.1429) (see Table 5). These results are in line with previous research which highlighted the need for collaboration and partnerships within the association of tourism officers and among other tourism-related agencies (e.g., Sheehan et al., 2016).

The competencies of Philippine tourism officers in terms of Supervision and training were described as moderately extensive with a 2.86 weighted mean score (SD = 0.1401) (see Table 6). This finding is supported by previous research that has shown the need on the provision of training as a powerful medium of change since

Table 4 Level of competency on 'Marketing and Promotions'

Competencies	M	SD	Level
Ability to coordinate the production of marketing materials as well as the maintenance of social media accounts.	2.93	0.1935	Moderately extensive
Knowledgeable about the marketing distribution channels, advertising and promotion	2.82	0.2081	Moderately extensive
Knowledgeable about destination positioning based on area's specific & unique attributes	2.96	0.1419	Moderately extensive
Ability to access and interpret product information through the internet	2.84	0.1069	Moderately extensive
Ability to answer queries about the destinations	3.18	0.1888	Moderately extensive
Ability to promote and sell tourism products and services	3.05	0.1747	Moderately extensive
Ability to monitor the execution of tourism activities, events and projects to ensure minimal negative impact	3.08	0.2593	Moderately extensive
Ability to apply the safety and security measures and practices in the implementation of tourism activities, programs and projects	3.08	0.2082	Moderately extensive
Overall mean score	**2.96**	**0.1266**	**Moderately extensive**

Table 5 Level of competency on 'Network Management'

Competencies	M	SD	Level
Ability to source and present tourism related information across different agencies	2.88	0.2750	Moderately extensive
Ability to plan and manage meetings with the tourism council and other officers	2.97	0.2369	Moderately extensive
Ability to allocate people and other resources in the tourism-related activities	2.96	0.2524	Moderately extensive
Ability to encourage tourism establishments to engage in Public-Private Partnerships	2.82	0.3213	Moderately extensive
Knowledgeable about the principle of multi-stakeholder engagements	2.88	0.3158	Moderately extensive
Overall mean score	**2.83**	**0.1429**	**Moderately extensive**

it develops capabilities and increase profitability of business (Westhead & Storey, 1996).

The competencies of Philippine tourism officers in terms of Statistics/Research and Office administration ranked as moderately extensive with a 3.08 weighted mean score (SD = 1.5736) (see Table 7). The results ranked knowledge about the concepts and principles of finance and budgeting as the least explored competency. Similarly, previous research which highlighted that there has been a growing need to understand public finance management (e.g., Mafunisa, 2014). This may explain why some participants ranked finance and budgeting lower than other social or soft skills. Moreover, the findings show that there is a strong need for tourism officers to

Table 6 Level of competency on 'Supervision and Training'

Competencies	M	SD	Level
Knowledgeable about people management principles	3.11	0.1929	Moderately extensive
Ability to provide coaching and mentoring to staff or colleagues on tourism related skills	2.84	0.2082	Moderately extensive
Ability to conduct training needs analysis and post evaluation report	2.64	0.2401	Moderately extensive
Ability to create the schedule for staff	2.94	0.2916	Moderately extensive
Ability to provide mentorship guided by wisdom sought from experience	3.01	0.2113	Moderately extensive
Overall mean score	**2.86**	**0.1401**	**Moderately extensive**

Table 7 Level of competency on 'Statistics, Research and Office Administration'

Competencies	M	SD	Level
Comprehensive inventory of tourism spots	3.22	0.1361	Moderately extensive
Ability to conduct inventory of tourism spots	3.32	0.2468	Highly extensive
Knowledgeable about the concepts and principles of finance and budgeting management	2.77	0.1724	Moderately extensive
Ability to produce documents on computer	3.25	0.1212	Highly extensive
Ability to prepare accomplishment and project reports	3.21	0.2066	Moderately extensive
Ability to perform clerical procedures such as creating correspondences for event program and tour packages	2.98	0.2307	Moderately extensive
Ability to plan and establish office systems and procedures like generating tourism arrivals	3.03	0.2272	Moderately extensive
Sensitivity to tourists of different gender orientation	3.21	0.0651	Moderately extensive
Ability to use technology to seek, process and present information	3.23	0.2108	Moderately extensive
Overall mean score	**3.08**	**1.5736**	**Moderately extensive**

develop research skills. Developing research skills is vital for tourism officers to be kept updated with recent trends and issues affecting the industry and their localities.

The overall social maturity or soft skills of tourism officers were reported as highly extensive with a mean score of 3.49 ($SD = 0.0850$) (see Table 8). In particular, Honest and Openness to new ideas, systems and ways of doing things, were rated as highly extensive soft skills. The results ranked entrepreneurship as the least explored competency. Previous research has shown the increasing need to create an entrepreneurial culture to strengthen initiatives in entrepreneurial activities (e.g., Ahmad, 2015); this may explain why some participants ranked entrepreneurial skills lower than other social or soft skills.

Table 8 Philippine Tourism Officers' 'Social Maturity' or 'Soft Skills'

Skills	M	SD	Level
Good attitude	3.52	0.0890	Highly extensive
Accepts responsibility	3.59	0.1670	Highly extensive
Efficient	3.61	0.1836	Highly extensive
Respectful and courteous	3.73	0.2101	Highly extensive
Professional	3.73	0.1997	Highly extensive
Self-directed	3.56	0.2536	Highly extensive
Openness to new ideas, systems and ways of doing things	3.77	0.2150	Highly extensive
Integrity is not compromised	3.69	0.2350	Highly extensive
Honest	3.78	0.2155	Highly extensive
Handles tourists professionally	3.65	0.2237	Highly extensive
Punctual	3.49	0.3439	Highly extensive
Self-confident	3.48	0.2829	Highly extensive
Well-balanced	3.51	0.2892	Moderately extensive
Positive	3.60	0.2554	Highly extensive
Adaptive	3.61	0.2346	Highly extensive
Entrepreneurial	3.34	0.3233	Moderately extensive
Has time management	3.42	0.2858	Highly extensive
Self-motivated	3.62	0.2425	Highly extensive
Overall mean score	**3.49**	**0.0850**	**Highly extensive**

3.1 Relationship Between Demographic Profiles of Tourism Officers and Their Years of Service

The correlation analysis between the level of competency and years of service showed a weak inverse correlation ($r = -0.013$). However, the computed Pearson's correlation coefficient, r, is not significant ($p = 0.817$). This means that there is no relationship between number of years in service and the level of competency of the tourism officer. This could be because some officers are not in permanent roles, while others change designation depending on the change in administration.

3.2 Differences in Perceived Competencies by Island Group of the Philippines

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to measure the impact of geographical regions on perceived competencies. The independent variable, island group, included three groups: Luzon ($M = 3.1348$), Visayas ($M = 3.0877$) and Mindanao ($M = 3.2862$). The ANOVA showed that geographical region was not a significant predictor of perceived competencies, [$F(2, 332) = 2.414$, p = 0.091]. In addition, the assumption of normality was evaluated using histograms and was found justifiable for all groups

indicating that the distribution across independent samples is normal. The assumption of homogeneity of variances was tested and was found acceptable using Levene's test, F (2, 332) = 0.663, p = 0.516. The results showed that there was no significant difference in tourism officers' acquired level of competency based on the island group where they belong.

4   Conclusions and Recommendations

This study aimed to assess the perceived competence levels of tourism officers by building upon the previously developed Competence Model of Philippine Tourism Officers (Rocamora & Aguiling, 2020). The results showed that, in general, the level of combined competencies of tourism officers was moderately extensive (M = 3.1). The majority of the competency clusters including, tourism planning and policy implementation, tourism product development, marketing and promotions, network management, supervision and training, and statistics/research and office administration were reported as moderately extensive. The single exception was within the social maturity/soft-skills cluster where participants reported competencies as highly extensive.

Although competencies were reported as moderately extensive, the findings suggest that there is room for improvement. There is a need for the provision of training and professional education to Philippine tourism officers throughout the island archipelago regarding financial management, impact assessment, marketing strategies, network management, planning and execution strategies, and building entrepreneurial mindsets. The results suggest that such focused efforts will seek to improve perceived competencies, thus bolstering work performance contributing to a stronger sector. Such a provision of training could be achieved through a modification of the National Tourism Development Plan to focus on a strengthening of initiatives at the local office level. This would be further supported through an exploration of opportunities for improving destination performance management and strengthening networks as well as through enhanced marketing skills training.

The role of tourism officers in managing destinations in the post-COVID-19 setting is significant as their function is aimed at enhancing the synergy of local stakeholders and ensuring the satisfaction of tourists and locals while obtaining profit in the community (Nicula & Spanu, 2017). The findings of the study provide the identification of training needs for tourism officers for capability building, hence, governments have assumed increased involvement and greater responsibility in managing tourism destinations (e.g., Ruhanen, 2013). The results from this study support the application of the Competence Model of Philippine Tourism Officers.

However, note that this competence model was developed pre-COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, there is a need to incorporate new measures and competencies in the work of a tourism officer, such as relevant knowledge on public health. Nonetheless, a national adoption of this model as a framework to define and measure the competencies for successful performance of the functions, duties and

responsibilities of tourism officers in the Philippines seeks to bolster competence levels of tourism officers.

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Perception of Stakeholders on the Adoption of 4th Industrial Revolution Technologies in the Hospitality Industry in the Philippines

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Pia Rhoda Pinpin-Lucero

Abstract Due to the recent technological leaps in innovation, the hospitality industry faces paradigm shifts with the emergence of the so-called, *4th industrial revolution* (4IR) which describes exponential changes to the way we live, work and relate to one another due to the adoption of cyber-physical systems, the internet of things and the internet of systems (Marr, *The 4th industrial revolution is here – Are you ready?* 2018). To examine the response within the hospitality sector in the Philippines, this study utilized a qualitative approach to explore the perception of stakeholders, specifically the academe, industry practitioners and government agencies in embracing changes resulting from the 4IR. Findings revealed the significant role technology has in the hotel industry in the Philippines. Participant responses indicated that although technology was perceived to be important, it cannot replace human elements necessary for hospitality. The results suggest that different stakeholders in the tourism sector such as industry professionals, academia, and members of government agencies are all willing and ready to embrace the 4IR scenario, yet not willing to let go of the human elements and interactions.

Keywords Automation · Adaptation · Technology · Hospitality industry · 4th industrial revolution · Industry 4.0

1 Introduction

The hospitality industry is one the largest, most prominent industries today. It encompasses a wide range of professions, including those related to food service and lodging, is one of the largest and fastest-growing industries around the world.

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From the seventeenth century to today, inns and hotels have been so important for travellers everywhere. They are short-term accommodations that are used for many different purposes. The industry can train hospitality professionals and it represents one of the most dynamically developing fields of the world economy today (Kostin, 2018). This rapid development is based on the utilization of scientific technical innovations and information technologies, the enhancement of the quality of education of hospitality personnel, and especially on the research and implementation of new technologies, strategies and approaches to business administration.

According to the World Economic Forum, the hospitality industry is characterized by a fusion of technologies that often blur the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres. Collectively this technological fusion is referred to as cyber-physical systems (World Economic Forum, 2018). The 4IR has offered countries the opportunity to build a more inclusive and sustainable society through technology (Mishra & Maheshwari, 2020). Due to the recent technological leaps and pace of innovation, the hospitality industry will experience changes and challenges resulting from, but not limited to mass customization, smart working, and digitalization (Shamim et al., 2017b).

According to Fwaya (2018), the 4IR, also known as Industry 4.0, is indeed here with us. Schwab (2016) defines 4IR as "technological revolution that will fundamentally alter the way we live, work and relate to one another." (p. 349). It is characterized by the emergence of technological breakthroughs in artificial intelligence, automation and robotics, connectivity with mobile devices, and access to data and knowledge. The 4IR is disrupting almost every industry in every country (Marr, 2018).

Today's tourism and hospitality industry is changing significantly with the application of information technology in its fundamental to strategic activities (Khatri, 2019; Lasi et al., 2014). The concept of 4IR is very useful for the hospitality sector in terms customer satisfaction; for example, technological applications may include offering personalized service, efficient supply chains, smart working environments, and highly customized services at lower costs (Lasi et al., 2014). Digitalization and the need of adopting online modes of interaction were frequently noted in Kaushal and Srivastava's (2021) research. Similar research recommended the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics in the industry (e.g., Ivanov & Webster, 2018; Webster & Ivanov, 2019; Yang et al., 2020). The inclusion of robotics in various tourism and hospitality operations (e.g., guidance, cleaning, kitchens, airports, hotels, deliveries) are expected to become commonplace (Ivanov & Webster, 2018).

In the era of the COVID-19 pandemic the use of digital technology has become increasingly important in minimizing human interaction in efforts to reduce the spread of the coronavirus (Lau, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has caused more businesses to turn to digital applications to enable a 'work-anywhere' economy and mitigate the risk in daily operations. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated enterprise demand for 5G technology solutions, as the combination of 5G and AI in the hotel industry can enable swift check-in and payment through facial recognition, which leads to dramatic improvement in service efficiency, security, and reduced

human contact (Lau, 2020). The pandemic is prompting several industries to adopt 'contactless' options. From preparing food and beverages, serving as waiters in hotel restaurants, delivering housekeeping items, dispensing facemasks and hand sanitizers, robots are used on the frontline to protect hotel guests and employees and prevent the spread of COVID-19. The robots not only help protect guest health and prevent the virus spread, but also enhance service quality and customer satisfaction (Lau, 2020). Shin and Kang (2020) suggested that such technological innovations serve as an essential risk-reduction strategy and are likely to play a key role in the hotel industry's recovery from the 2020 coronavirus pandemic.

The purpose of this study is to determine the perception of stakeholders on the adoption of the 4IR in the hospitality industry in the Philippines. Actively preparing and responding to the changes taking place in hospitality workplaces is critical for the different key stakeholders of the hospitality industry. The COVID-19 pandemic has also confronted the hospitality industry with an unprecedented challenge. The adoption of 4IR in the hospitality industry in the Philippines analysed through the lens of the industry experts, academe and government regulating agencies in the Philippines for hospitality and tourism is necessary in this study. Determining the perceptions of these three stakeholders is essential so they become ready to adapt to the 4IR scenario and conform to the changing landscape in hospitality industry. These stakeholders should work together in order to produce globally competitive, multi-skilled, tech savvy, environment conscious and values oriented future workforce. The use of various technologies in hospitality operations has been very useful for public safety reasons. Given these associated dynamic changes experienced in the business environment, it is, therefore, timely to examine the perception of stakeholders on the adaptation of the Philippine hospitality industry to the 4IR.

2 Review of Related Literature

2.1 The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)

The 4IR entails the exponential changes to the way we live, work and relate to one another due to the adoption of cyber-physical systems, the Internet of Things, the Internet of Systems, fifth-generation wireless technologies (5G), additive manufacturing/3D printing, and fully autonomous vehicles. (Marr, 2018). This revolution is expected to impact all disciplines, industries, and economies. The 4IR is disrupting almost every industry in every country and creating massive change in a non-linear way at unprecedented speed. The 4IR is characterized by a fusion of technologies that is blurring the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres, collectively referred to as cyber-physical systems (Marr, 2018).

As the 4IR unfolds, companies are seeking to harness new and emerging technologies to reach higher levels of efficiency of production and consumption, expand

into new markets, and compete on new products for a global consumer base composed increasingly of digital natives. Yet in order to harness the transformative potential of the 4IR, business leaders across all industries and regions will increasingly be called upon to formulate a comprehensive workforce strategy ready to meet the challenges of this new era of accelerating change and innovation (World Economic Forum, 2018). According to Dube (2019), the tourism industry is a fast-changing industry across its various sectors such as travel, hospitality and attraction sector which has been leading in technological innovation. There are well-founded fears that due to the advent of the 4IR, some sectors might lag in innovation particularly in the global south, in particular, Sub-Saharan Africa. The study of Dube (2019) argues that 4IR is going to continue to disrupt the tourism industry as we know it today, ranging from the way tourists conduct booking for accommodation, events, how transport and hospitality services are offered and experienced to the way tourists interact with service providers. Osei et al. (2020) affirmed that the economy of today has moved toward the 4IR, which is characterized by the adoption of technologies such as cyber-physical systems, internet of things, big data, artificial intelligence and robotics. These studies suggest an increasing awareness created on the influence of the 4IR on all industries, including hospitality and tourism.

According to Zhanjing et al. (2020), global economic and social life has been severely challenged since the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 disease a pandemic. Travel, tourism and hospitality, in particular, have been massively impacted by the lockdowns and social distancing measures being used to manage the disease. Robotics, AI, and human-robot interactions have gained an increased presence to help manage the spread of COVID-19 in hospitals, airports, transportation systems, recreation and scenic areas, hotels, restaurants, and communities in general (Zhanjing et al., 2020). They further explained how humanoid robots, autonomous vehicles, drones, and other intelligent robots are being used in many different ways to reduce human contact and the potential spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, including delivering materials, disinfecting and sterilizing public spaces, detecting or measuring body temperature, providing safety or security, and comforting and entertaining patients (Zhanjing et al., 2020). According to Gursoy and Christina (2020), a large proportion of restaurant customers believe that the use of various technologies in service delivery will be necessary in the COVID-19 environment in order to minimize human-to-human contact (e.g., service robots, contactless payment, digital menus that can be viewed on personal mobile devices, keyless entry, touchless elevators). Thus, this study is relevant not only as technology continues to advance, but also in the current COVID-19 pandemic where technology is being integrated into hospitality operations for public safety reasons.

2.2 The Emerging Technologies Due to the Fourth Industrial Revolution

2.2.1 Artificial Intelligence in Hospitality Industry

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is defined as the theory and development of computer systems able to perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making, and translation between languages (Porreca, 2017). AI units are designed to allow businesses and people to spend more time working on the more thoughtful and creative aspects of their job. AI platforms help companies to automate systems and business practices by capturing client information, orchestrating requests, or even being the front-line interface for customer interactions. The last decade has seen incredible breakthroughs and innovations in the portrait of digital solutions which includes the hospitality sector as well. Recent developments in social service robot technologies have enabled the use of AI technologies in service delivery and the COVID-19 pandemic may precipitate the popularity of such technology for public safety reasons (Gursoy & Christina, 2020).

Booth (2016, para 8) describes why hospitality is the perfect industry to incorporate Artificial Intelligence, stating there is "no industry better positioned to leverage AI's ability to sift through vast amounts of data and help create a unique guest experience". According to Porreca (2017), AI will be key in order to expand future businesses. Similarly, Sagar and Mohite (2020) affirmed that the hospitality industry is seen taking a good share of benefits of adopting AI. Hotels must collaborate with the right technology partner in order to identify gaps in their processes such as customer support, concierge bookings, and in-room technology that can be closed with the help of integrating AI and machine learning. It is the key to enhancing the customer experience, increasing brand recognition and loyalty along with tangible revenue gains (Sagar & Mohite, 2020). As a result, many technology companies are focused on leveraging the advancements of AI to support the hospitality industry. On the industry side, suppliers, hotels, and management companies must better understand these potential opportunities and begin undertaking evaluations of their current technology platforms to determine readiness for AI.

2.2.2 A Robots in the Hospitality Industry

Travel, tourism, and hospitality companies have started to adopt AI and service automation in the form of chatbots, delivery robots, robot-concierge, conveyor restaurants, self-service information/check-in/check-out kiosks, and many others. Tuomi et al. (2020) noted that service robots are increasingly being integrated into hospitality service encounters, posing to change traditional conventions of value creation. Such integrations call for the reconceptualization of hospitality management, particularly with regards to people management strategies. In order to stay relevant in robotized service encounters, employees delivering hospitality may

assume one of five roles: enabler, coordinator, differentiator, educator, or innovator (Tuomi et al., 2020). Such applications, among others can lead to improvements in terms of speed, cost-effectiveness, accuracy, and even public safety. The potential applications of AI within the hospitality industry are exciting; however, the applications of AI can be complex.

3   Methodology

This study used a descriptive research design following a qualitative approach. Creswell (2009) explained that a qualitative study is an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting. A qualitative research approach is well suited to address a research problem wherein the variables are underexplored (e.g., Creswell, 2009).

The study context was confined within the hospitality industry in the Philippines; this sector is becoming increasingly important to the Philippine economy. The participants of the study were groups of stakeholders in the hospitality industry, namely, industry professionals which included different department heads and staff from different hospitality establishments; the academe, which included faculty members teaching hospitality programs from different universities and colleges; and representatives from the government regulating agencies in the Philippines for hospitality and tourism (e.g., Technical Education and Skills Development Authority [TESDA] and Department of Tourism [DOT]). Key informant interviews were conducted with 18 experts. This sample included experts representing three groups: industry ($n = 6$)*;* academe ($n = 6$); government agency ($n = 6$). All participants held top and senior management positions and had at least 10 years working experience in their respective sector (Table 1).

To obtain consent, a cover letter explaining the purpose of the semi-structured interviews and assuring the respondents' confidentiality was sent to potential participants. Prior to beginning the interviews, the concept of 4IR was explained to each participant. Interview questions were designed as open-ended to discourage short 'yes' or 'no' responses. Each question led to several sub-questions, to explore relevant factors in the given context. The participants were notified that the interview was audio-recorded. Each interview lasted approximately 1 h, and the researcher took pertinent notes during the interview. Participant confidentiality was strictly maintained by assigning key informant numbers to each them, instead of using the participants' real names.

A repertory grid technique was used to analyze qualitative data. This technique was originally derived from Kelly's (1955) Personal Construct Theory (PCT). A repertory grid is an instrument designed to capture the dimensions and structure of personal meaning. Its aim is to describe the ways in which people give meaning to their experience in their own terms. The repertory grid technique is a way of carrying out an interview in a highly structured manner using the interviewee's own

Table 1 Profile of key informant interviewees

Key informant	Gender	Age	Years in service	Category
1	Male	49	20	Industry
2	Male	41	21	Industry
3	Male	40	18	Industry
4	Male	35	16	Industry
5	Male	35	10	Industry
6	Male	33	10	Industry
7	Female	68	37	Academe
8	Female	59	33	Academe
9	Male	57	36	Academe
10	Female	56	20	Academe
11	Male	43	12	Academe
12	Male	43	14	Academe
13	Female	53	30	Government Agency
14	Female	55	35	Government Agency
15	Female	57	33	Government Agency
16	Male	50	24	Government Agency
17	Female	33	11	Government Agency
18	Female	57	36	Government Agency

language and setting out their responses in the form of a grid. Correspondingly, a repertory grid technique typically involves the following key steps: element or theme selection, construct/category elicitation, element assessment thru significant statements (participants' systematic comparison of the elements in terms of the constructs elicited), data analysis and interpretation of results. These steps helped the researcher to better interpret, analyze and summarize the results of the entire qualitative data. This approach revealed the outcome of the in-depth interviews with the three groups of experts from the industry, academe and government agencies.

4   Findings and Discussion

Data were examined for consistency of responses. Interviews were collated, transcribed and were used in identifying perception of stakeholders on the adoption of the 4IR in the hospitality industry in the Philippines. The analysis of qualitative data revealed six themes including:

- digital transformation in hospitality industry;
- technological changes in hospitality industry;
- digital tools/platforms in hospitality industry;
- human touch;
- new generations of customers; and
- readiness in the fourth industrial revolution.

4.1   Digital Transformation in the Hospitality Industry

The first theme was all about the 'digital transformation in the hospitality industry'. It was composed of seven sub-themes including: technology, automation, innovation, machinery, robotics/AI, digitalization and, high technology. According to the key informants, technology plays a significant role in the hotel industry. For example, one participant from the hospitality industry stated:

> Technology has a big role in the hotel industry. We provide our guests with a high technology requirement that is why people from Manila prefer to stay here in our hotel in the province and that's how we position our hotel. (*Informant #2*)

This finding is supported by the work of Suh et al. (2012), which asserted that the new technology and innovation is one of additional future competencies needed by managers in the hospitality industry.

Although participants recognised the role of technology in simplifying some tasks, they were not convinced that technology could or should replace human beings. Multiple industry practitioners stated this sentiment during the interviews:

> Due to technology, they do things very fast now compared to the past few years. When technology enters the F&B industry, it becomes very helpful. Because it helps us to do the things fast. (*Informant #6*)

> Technology can make the task easier and faster but I don't believe that technology can replace human beings. Because of technology, manpower will be lessened but it will not totally disappear. Still, human being is important in the operation of hotel. (*Informant #4*)

According to Yadav (2020), the various traditional hotel operational tasks take place by AI. Similarly, participant comments indicated the importance of technology in remaining competitive. For example, an informant commented that:

> Artificial Intelligence can replace those 'routine work', but not all work in the hospitality industry. I think AI will be useful in countries where there is less workforce. But here in our country, we have a big population. (*Informant #13*)

These findings imply that participants perceived that digital transformation as being very important in the hospitality industry in the Philippines. The findings from this study complement the findings of Shamim et al. (2017a), showing that the concept of 4IR is very useful for the hospitality sector, as personalized service, efficient supply chain, agility, smart work environment, use of big data for up to date information of customer preferences, highly customized services at lower cost, and digital enhancement can really affect the customer satisfaction, loyalty, and the perceived service quality.

4.2   Technological Changes in Hospitality Industry

The second theme, 'technological changes in the hospitality industry', consisted of four sub-themes: online booking; mode of payment; convenience; and new systems. Based on the responses of participants, guests preferred online booking and

payments, both which are practices that have boosted industry performance. The following participant responses are representative of this:

> *Right now, online booking is very critical. Nowadays, the client does the direct booking unlike before, it's so hard to market your property. With regards to online reservation, it has a great help in the sales of our hotel.* (*Informant #1*)

> *In reservation and booking, guests preferred more on online booking.* (*Informant #3*)

> *Teachers, students, even customers are booking online reservations already and looking at reviews posted by other customers.* (*Informant #8*)

With regards to mode of payment, during the in-depth interview, a participant stated:

> *Even the payment already happens on the internet. That is why there is the internet of things, everything already happens on the internet. It has been very helpful to the tour operators and it has an impact.* (*Informant #14*)

Nowadays, guests desire convenience of service in the hospitality industry:

> *There is a great impact on the hotel industry because before, booking took a lot of time but today, it's only one-click. There are some applications in cell phones and it is very fast, very accessible and convenient. With those technologies available today, hotel industry can get accurate sales forecast.* (*Informant #1*)

4.3   Digital Tools and Platforms in Hospitality Industry

The third theme was digital tools and platforms in the hospitality industry, which refer to the websites or online resources that can make tasks easier to complete. This broader theme included four sub-themes: booking platforms, mobile platforms, social media platforms, and the internet. Various online platforms were considered helpful in advertising and selling industry products and services. Participants from the industry reported partnerships with several booking and mobile platforms. The following participant statements support this interpretation:

> *We are also in partnership with Agoda, and Travelbook. We need this, otherwise, we will not be known.* (*Informant #1*)

> *We have a lot of foreign visitors because they easily get in touch due to different booking platforms like booking.com.* (*Informant #2*)

Mobile platforms also impact the hospitality Industry. The following participant responses demonstrate the importance of mobile platforms:

> *We are in partnership with ET-Go, it's a mobile application wherein the clients can book in our restaurant at any particular time. Once they reach our restaurant, their ordered food is almost ready to serve. In our part, it has an advantage because we can easily anticipate the number of prospective customers under ET-Go. And we can forecast our manpower.* (*Informant #1*)

> *The guests are going to check-in using their mobile device, there is an application in their mobile device.* (*Informant #2*)

We launched mobile check-in, where you can check-in using your phone. You can check out using your app. You can open the door using your cell phones. (Informant #5)

In terms of mobile app, it's very useful with regards to marketing the Philippines. We want to promote the Philippines as a tourist destination and it's a great help. (Informant #13)

These findings are similar to those of Jasonos and McCormick (2017) asserting that the majority of consumers today are self-sufficient, tech-savvy travelers who are comfortable using apps or mobile websites. In addition, social media serves as a powerful marketing platform for the hotel industry. Participant responses regarding social media summarised the significant role it is now playing in the industry:

The marketing strategy nowadays is they just post it even if there is no appearance of marketing staff. All you need to do is to post it on social media. So, the hotel strategies or marketing strategies are relying so much on social media platforms and even guest feedback. Today, we don't have any comment cards. Feedbacks can be posted thru social media also. (Informant #5)

For customer satisfaction surveys, now with the use of social media, it is easier for them to track real time comments. And because of that they get to understand their customers better. So again, it's a tool that can be useful, it could be to your advantage. I think it's a matter of how you use it. (Informant #1)

Online platforms, whether tours are sold via Facebook, social media websites are so easy for people to put up this kind of advertisement and sell their services and products. (Informant #13)

If you look at the tour operators, gone are the days when tour operators promote newspapers or gone are the days when tour operators use just telephone or telex because today, they already promote with the use of social media. (Informant #14)

When it comes to promotion, with the use of social media, it is easy to promote, advertise, communicate and disseminate the information. (Informant #15)

Content on social networking sites has the potential to impact marketing strategies in both positive and negative ways. Similarly, incorporating evolving technology, such as social media, into the Philippine hospitality industry may help improve the tourist experience, from arranging travel plans to discovering new destinations with a local perspective (Nanca et al., 2019).

4.4   Human Touch

The fourth theme was 'human touch' which includes the subthemes: personalized services, human interaction and human workforce. According to participants from the industry, the provision of personalized services is very important in the hospitality industry in the Philippines because of the association of hospitality within the

Filipino culture. Despite the digital transformation era, participants still felt that the human workforce remains necessary in the hospitality industry in the Philippines:

> *For me, personalized service to your customer is still important in the hotel industry. Human touch is still necessary. Even we have high-tech facilities, still, some customers would ask for a personal assistance.* (*Informant #1*)

> *Something that will remain as a constant in tourism will be the services that we give, creating the unique experiences needed by the tourist, which will be something that a robot or something a computer will not be able to duplicate and so there is a need for us to focus on that.* (*Informant #8*)

> *When it comes to the hospitality industry, for me, new technologies are helpful, however, when it comes to interaction, still, humans are important. That's why in the department of tourism, we are developing our manpower because we need to sustain our promotions and professionalism to our service providers.* (*Informant #15*)

These findings implied that even with the digital transformation age, human touch is still perceived as important here in the Philippines. Participants, including those from the industry, felt that although the human workforce may be lessened as a result of technology, that human resources will not be totally replaceable. Findings indicated that participants felt humans would still be needed to operate technologies and remain important as managers should there be cases when the software is down or needs updating or fixing. Another factor relevant to the Philippines is the cheap cost of labor. Compared to other neighboring ASEAN countries, and developed countries, wages in the Philippines may allow for the hospitality industry to continue to invest in important technologies while maintaining a human workforce. Moreover, the Philippines is known for the hospitality of the Filipino people; therefore, human touch in hospitality encounters should remain a constant:

> *I think the direction now of the industry is to provide personal service. So, this skill that will help you provide personalized skills would be the keys to learn in the future because everything would be equal with digital technology. But the personal service that we will provide to the guest or customer would be a very big value. And personal service will not be learned in the books or anywhere else. Its roots will be coming from your character. The blending of your culture, your character and at the same time, the objective of providing good service to other people would be very valuable.* (*Informant #12*)

As pointed out by a participant from the government (Informant #15), different innovative technological platforms are being used in the tourism and hospitality industry which has the ability to improve the travel experience for tourists. Other participants felt that technology could make some jobs easier and faster, however, noting the potential for job loss. Despite the increasing role of AI in the tourism and hospitality sector, the participant responses reiterate the importance of 'human touch' in the Filipino hospitality industry. To ensure the adaptation to technologies as well as maintain the human touch, training and upskilling will be necessary.

4.5   New Generations of Customers

The fifth theme refers to the 'new generation of customers.' With each new generation, the focus seems to be more on individualised, personalised hotel experiences, stylish, yet affordable, technologically advanced but with a human touch (e.g., Sima, 2016). The following participant responses are indicative of this proposition:

> The new generations nowadays, prefer to have instant access to everything. 65% of your market were millennials. They don't want to write any more on any piece of paper to do the booking. They want instant just top up, or just touch or press. (*Informant #1*)

> Millennial customers preferred the latest and updated facilities. They want to have those things in just one click of their fingertip. (*Informant #3*)

Today's generations are commonly categorized into the following categories: The Baby Boomers, the Millennials, and the incoming Generation Z. The Baby Boomers are continuing to retire and enjoy their free time away from work, while the Millennials are young, in their prime years, about to start making a full-time salary. Sima (2016, p. 471) affirmed that each generation is more complex than the previous. Generation Z is no exception, "they're smarter than Boomers, and way more ambitious than the Millennials". Each generation generally has various levels of needs creating challenges within the hotel industry. Sima (2016) pointed out the key characteristics of the Baby Boom, Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z and Generation α as chain hotel customers. All five generations have interesting and complex profiles, where expressions such as latest technology, a stylish product, affordable, and a special customer experience are interwoven in the narratives of these generations.

4.6   Readiness in the Fourth Industrial Revolution

The final theme was the hospitality industry's readiness in the 4IR. This theme encompassed the idea of readiness to embrace digital transformation. Participants generally expressed a sentiment that if we will not ready ourselves, we will be left behind by our competitors and neighbouring countries. Statements reflecting this finding include:

> I think, partly, we are ready through proper training and proper guidance. We need to adapt to the new trends so that we will not be left behind. (*Informant #3*)

> Absolutely we are ready to embrace digital transformation. We have shown it. I mean it's happening now. (*Informant #5*)

> I think we are ready. In abroad, they are ahead when it comes to technology. If we will not make ourselves ready, we will be left behind by our competitors and neighbouring countries. (*Informant #4*)

Such responses demonstrated that participants were aware and ready to embrace the 4IR. The members have the potential to reap the benefits of the digital economy via the internet, the findings of Vora-Sittha and Chinprateep (2021) suggested that for ASEAN, Singapore was the best prepared for the 4IR and that other ASEAN countries, such as the Philippines were only moderately prepared for the world 4IR. While previous research showed the Philippines was only moderately ready for the 4IR (Vora-Sittha & Chinprateep, 2021), these findings suggested that the Philippine Hospitality Industry is actively engaging with and embracing the 4IR.

5   Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

This study used a qualitative approach to determine the adaptation and perception of 18 stakeholders in the 4IR in the hospitality industry in the Philippines. The participants of the study represented various stakeholder groups in the hospitality industry including industry professionals (e.g., department heads, hospitality staff), academe (e.g., faculty from teaching hospitality programs from different Universities and Colleges in the Philippines), and representatives from the government regulating agencies in the Philippines for hospitality and tourism.

Based on the study results, the stakeholders expressed readiness for the 4IR scenario with the caveat of maintaining a balance of human interaction. Participants noted that one of the best things that keeps guests returning is the warm, hospitable nature of the Filipino people. Participants also reported automation as proving useful in adapting to an increased quantity of work; however, the results from this study indicate that its application may impact the quality of work. Thus, the findings suggest that the human workforce remains necessary and relevant within the hospitality industry. New forms of 4IR education will prepare both students and faculty for leadership roles in a world of rapidly accelerating change, with a curriculum that develops both technical mastery and a deep awareness of ethical responsibility toward the human condition (e.g., Penprase, 2018). Results also showed that participants are prepared to be 4IR compliant and willing to embrace new technologies. It will become increasingly important for various hospitality stakeholders to maximize the effective use of technology in their workforces as well as in their training. Different interventions for faculty members will become necessary to conform to the changing landscape in hospitality management education. Continuous training and workshops, revision of curriculum and acquisition of digital educational tools are some tools suggested for the 4IR.

Without question, the hospitality industry has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. While the safety of both guests and employees has been a top priority for hotel owners and operators, the pandemic has introduced new and compulsory procedures to reduce disease transmission risks. Technology, namely in the form of contactless services, has helped to ensure the safety of hotel guests and staff during pandemic. Looking ahead, the findings from this study emphasize the importance of the development of a collective plan between the industry, academe and the

government to better equip the current and future workers in the Filipino hospitality industry and maintain industry competitiveness. While it will become increasingly important for the industry to embrace digital transformation, the industry must also ensure a cohesive vision and brand associated with the human side of the industry.

Based on the findings, the recommended priorities for 4IR adoption include the following: (1) coordination and regulation of agencies in training and maintaining a competitive workforce.; (2) the creation of a human capital development roadmap; (3) the provision of relevant infrastructures for digital transformation (e.g., reliable and high-speed internet connectivity, digital security); (4) audit of tertiary educational programs to ensure that graduating students possess the necessary technological skills to enter the workforce successfully. It was evident that the adaptation to the 4IR has had and will continue to have a significant role in the hospitality industry in the Philippines. Findings from this research emphasized that although technology is important, it cannot replace human elements necessary for hospitality in the Philippines. The industry, academe and government are all willing and ready to embrace the 4IR scenario in balance with human interaction.

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Challenges in Implementing the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement for Tourism Professionals in the Philippines

Lilibeth C. Aragon and Ma. Christina G. Aquino

Abstract This study examines the status, challenges, and implementation initiatives involving various stakeholders, of the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professionals in the Philippines. Particularly, this research determines the readiness of faculty, trainers, and the training facilities in implementing the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangements on Tourism Professionals using the Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum (CATC) standards across various recognized educational institutions of the Department of Education (DepEd), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and Commission on Higher Education (CHED). As competency-based instruction is strongly espoused in the mutual recognition arrangement, it is important to determine the challenges of implementing the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professionals in the Philippines across different levels of the academic sectors. The top three schools with the highest enrollment offering tourism and hospitality programs in the country were purposively selected and qualitative data collection techniques such as review of relevant documents, focus group discussions, interviews, and site observations were used. Results were analyzed to determine if the programs were compliant with the requirements of the Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum. Recommendations on policies and procedures were identified to facilitate the implementation nationwide through the various educational agencies.

Keywords Readiness · ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangements on Tourism Professionals · Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum · Tourism education · Hospitality education

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1 Introduction

The ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Tourism Strategic Plan's Vision for 2016–2025 was formulated to provide quality tourism destinations offering a unique diverse ASEAN experience. The strategic plan is committed to supporting responsible, sustainable, inclusive and balanced tourism development. Ultimately, this initiative aims to significantly contribute to the socio-economic well-being of ASEAN people.

ASEAN was founded in 1967 to establish regional cooperation between five countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. Brunei Darussalam joined in 1984, Vietnam in 1995, Lao PDR and Myanmar in 1997 and Cambodia in 1999, making up what is today the ten member states of ASEAN. In addition to maintaining political cooperation and peace, the goals of ASEAN focus on collaborative economic growth among various sectors, including tourism. The 2002 ASEAN Tourism Agreement pledged to upgrade tourism education, curricula, and skills training, through the formulation of competency standards and certification procedures, thereby leading to mutual recognition of skills and qualifications in the ASEAN region (ASEAN, 2002).

The ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) on Tourism Professionals was signed in November 2012 by the ASEAN Tourism Ministers, which aims to promote the mobility of tourism professionals and the exchange of information on best practices in competency-based education and training for tourism professionals and to provide opportunities for cooperation and capacity building across ASEAN member-states (ASEAN Secretariat, 2018). This MRA is the cornerstone of a skilled labor movement within ASEAN that enables workers' expertise, skills, and knowledge to be recognized throughout the region by permitting them to work outside their home countries. Also, all ASEAN MRAs are set up to improve the services sector to enable the movement of professionals and skilled workers within the ASEAN member-states (Hamanaka & Jusoh, 2018). The ASEAN MRAs for tourism professionals further aims to increase the quality of human resources and facilitate the mobility of tourism professionals within the region using the ASEAN Minimum Competency Standards for Tourism as the basis (Chheang, 2013).

The ASEAN MRA for Tourism Professionals is one of the ASEAN initiatives designed to facilitate job mobility for qualified tourism staff across the ASEAN region. Fundamental to this agreement is the recognition of the skills and qualifications of the tourism professionals of the ASEAN countries, with the ultimate aim of making ASEAN a high-quality tourism destination. The goal of this MRA is to promote the mobility of tourism professionals within ASEAN based on competence-based tourism qualifications/certificates and, at the same time, to improve the quality of services provided by tourism professionals (ASEAN, 2018). Other ASEAN member-states may recognize foreign tourism professionals' qualifications, allowing them to work in a host country if they have a valid tourism competency certificate in a specific tourism job title issued by an ASEAN member-state's Tourism Professional Certification Board (TPCB).

The Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum (CATC) supports and contributes to the establishment of a harmonized tourism education and training system within the ASEAN region. It is based on a vocational training model with the premise of' qualifications rather than courses. Therefore, it is tailored for different work environments and is focused on relevant skills for local needs rather than standard training courses (ASEAN, 2018). In Cambodia and Indonesia, MRA for tourism professionals was implemented through the establishment of tourism infrastructure, promoting laws and regulations using a website; partnership and engagement; collaboration with the industry, creating awareness of MRA, providing training institution support, and adoption of regional materials (AADCP & ASEAN Secretariat, 2012).

Tourism is a sector that requires the cooperation of multiple government departments (Wong et al., 2011). According to MRA on Tourism Professionals (2012), the facilitators and inhibitors of collaboration are dependent on three main factors:

- the level of investment of stakeholders
- the competency of the stakeholders to carry out the agenda, and
- the willingness of them to do so.

Skills acquisition for a productive workforce is critical in the tourism and hospitality industry; thus, training is essential for promoting skills improvement (Fernandez-Stark et al., 2012). Tourism professionals must be trained in an environment which closely aligns with industry best practices. To deploy quality training, institutions require facilities that have been carefully planned with strong input from tourism training professionals, and which are then professionally maintained and updated to keep pace with the advances and the expansion of the tourism industry (Hickman & Irwin, 2013). Those training tourism professionals are required to have a great depth of rich tourism industry experience coupled with the ability to deliver quality competency-based training and deliver graduates who are industry-ready (Hickman & Irwin, 2013). The tourism industry needs competent professionals who can step into jobs and meet or exceed the expectations of the market. For education and training providers, MRAs provide a clear set of standards for the development of training programs, a competency-based training and assessment system for preparing trainees for the tourism industry, a range of job-based tourism qualifications based on common labor divisions, and an opportunity to become one of the preferred education and training providers for the range of ACCSTP qualifications (Nurdin & Kartika, 2016).

The competitiveness of the tourism workforce in the Philippines relies heavily on the capabilities of training institutions to carry out competency-based delivery of instruction and assessment processes. Ideally, such protocols are a result of cohesiveness between implementing agencies involved in educating and integrating the CATC in their respective program of studies. Thus, higher education institutions in the Philippines must continue to align their curricula with the ASEAN MRA for Tourism Professionals. As the requirements for the workers in this industry continue to be standardized, higher educational institutions (HEIs) must ensure that their graduates are competent and are equipped with the skills required by the various

roles in the industry (Aquino et al., 2017). There is a need to prepare Filipino workers for the mobilization of the workforce within ASEAN; this can only be done if standards are adhered to and requirements are fulfilled. This chapter aims to explore the challenges of implementing the ASEAN MRA for Tourism Professionals in the Philippines in alignment with the CATC.

2   Background of the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professionals in the Philippines

The various agencies involved in the implementation of the ASEAN MRA on Tourism Professionals in the Philippines are the National Tourism Organization, the Department of Tourism (DOT); the Tourism Professional Certification Board, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA); the National Tourism Professional Board (NTPB), and Tourism Industry Board Foundation, Inc. (TIBFI). Collectively, these agencies work together to ensure that the ASEAN MRA on Tourism Professionals are strengthened and integrated into the training and education programs across Philippine educational and training institutions. This is to ensure that the quality of services provided in various tourism enterprises can level up to standards comparable to the other ASEAN countries, and allow for ease in mobility and comparability of the qualifications (Fig. 1).

Tullao and Rivera (2008) described the Philippine education sector as consisting of three main levels: basic, technical, and higher education. Basic education includes 12 years of schooling focused on learning communication, digitization, and literacy. Technical education provides functional skills and life-long learning, while higher education is geared towards professional growth and a higher level of inquiry.

The three regulatory bodies in the Philippine education sector are the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), for tertiary and graduate education; Department of Education (DepEd) for basic education, and TESDA for technical vocational and
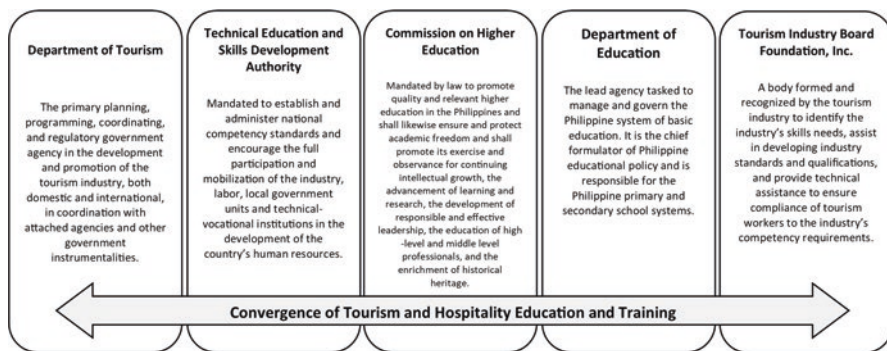

Department of Tourism	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority	Commission on Higher Education	Department of Education	Tourism Industry Board Foundation, Inc.
The primary planning, programming, coordinating, and regulatory government agency in the development and promotion of the tourism industry, both domestic and international, in coordination with attached agencies and other government instrumentalities.	Mandated to establish and administer national competency standards and encourage the full participation and mobilization of the industry, labor, local government units and technical-vocational institutions in the development of the country's human resources.	Mandated by law to promote quality and relevant higher education in the Philippines and shall likewise ensure and protect academic freedom and shall promote its exercise and observance for continuing intellectual growth, the advancement of learning and research, the development of responsible and effective leadership, the education of high-level and middle level professionals, and the enrichment of historical heritage.	The lead agency tasked to manage and govern the Philippine system of basic education. It is the chief formulator of Philippine educational policy and is responsible for the Philippine primary and secondary school systems.	A body formed and recognized by the tourism industry to identify the industry's skills needs, assist in developing industry standards and qualifications, and provide technical assistance to ensure compliance of tourism workers to the industry's competency requirements.

Convergence of Tourism and Hospitality Education and Training

Fig. 1 General mandates of the agencies adapted from the Convergence Memorandum of Agreement signed November 2020

middle-level education. These three government agencies are in charge of leveling the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF) in terms of outcomes in the areas of education and training. A synergized effort is an ideal step among DepEd, TESDA, and CHED in terms of implementing the ASEAN MRA for tourism professionals using educational hierarchies. If not done properly, this could result in gaps in training, certification, recognition, and ultimately, the competitiveness of the Filipino tourism and hospitality workforce (Wong et al., 2011).

In the Philippines, the DepEd issues curriculum guides for all their programs, including the Tourism Track of the Technical Vocational, and Livelihood Tracks. For TESDA, various training regulations are available for 18 qualifications at the Philippine Qualifications Framework Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4 in the Tourism Sector. The CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) 62 series 2017, at PQF level 6, was released to guide HEIs on the minimal requirements to offer the tourism and hospitality programs. The curriculum guides, training regulations and CHED CMO are the guiding documents outlining standards and requirements in the deployment of education and training to be followed in the Philippines.

2.1 Program Offerings and Basis of Instructional Design

For DepEd, the Technical Vocational and Livelihood track offers a curriculum that is a mix of required core courses for all senior high school courses as well as advanced hands-on courses that meet TESDA's nominal hours and competency-based evaluation as prescribed in the training regulations. For TESDA schools, the training regulations were the basis of the curriculum where instructional materials and assessment tools are also developed. Most TESDA schools in the Philippines offers combined training programs in housekeeping, front office, food and beverage services, events management, cookery, and tourism promotions. For CHED schools, the TESDA programs were embedded in various subjects in the tourism and hospitality curricula. In the case of HEIs, schools follow the minimum standard of CHED Memorandum Order 62, s. 2017.

3   Methods

This study utilized a qualitative descriptive research design to identify the challenges of implementing the ASEAN MRA on Tourism Professionals in the Philippines. Various qualitative methods were used to describe the current status and identify challenges of academic and training institutions in the implementation of the MRA, and described "what exists" concerning variables or conditions. Figure 2 illustrates the data collection processes. In total, twelve site visits were chosen within DepEd, TESDA, and CHED at each of the major island regions of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao including the National Capital Region (Table 1).
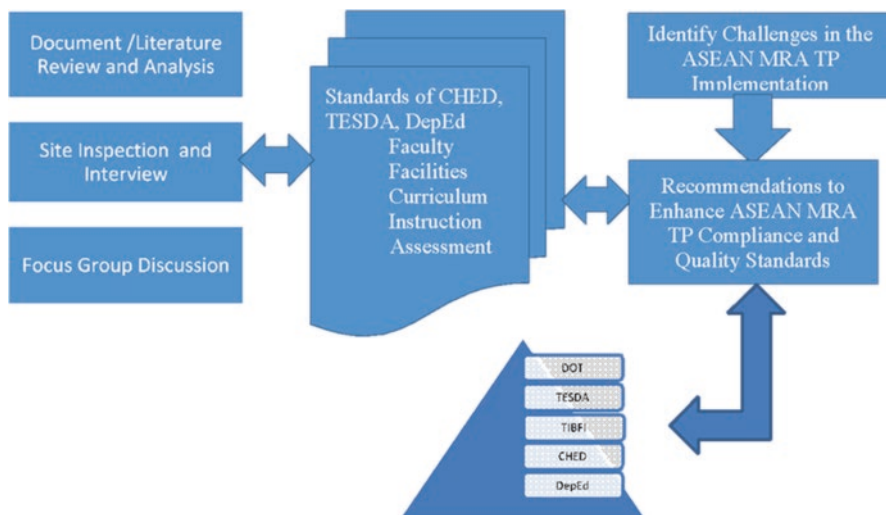
Fig. 2 Methodological framework

Table 1 Regions with the highest enrollments in various educational agencies and major islands

Agency	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao
DepEd	Region IV-A – CALABARZON	Region VII – Central Visayas (previously called *Region VI – Western Visayas*)	Region XI – Davao
TESDA	NCR	Region VII – Central Visayas	Region XI – Davao
CHED	NCR	Region VII – Central Visayas	Region XI – Davao

Table 2 Focus group discussion sites in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao

Area	Venue	Date	Number of participants	Sector
Luzon	LPU Manila	Feb 5, 2020	8	CHED, DepEd, TESDA Faculty/ Administrators
Visayas	Magsaysay Center For Hospitality & Culinary Arts Inc.	Feb 12, 2020	12	CHED, DepEd, TESDA Faculty/ Administrators
Mindanao	LPU Davao	Jan 21, 2020	12	CHED, DepEd, TESDA Faculty/ Administrators, TESDA Regional Office Representative

During site visits, the researchers conducted visual inspections of facilities. A total of 48 administrators and faculty members were interviewed. Documents were analyzed to provide context and descriptive background information about guidelines and status of ASEAN MRA implementation on Tourism Professionals in the Philippines across academic and training institutions.

Focus group discussions were conducted at the top three schools for each of the major island regions Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao (Table 2). Researchers invited

administrators and faculty members to participate to collect direct and primary information on various aspects and topics relevant to this research.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method that is widely used across a range of epistemologies; it is a method for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Further, thematic analysis is a useful method for examining the perspectives of different research participants, highlighting similarities and differences, and generating unanticipated insights (King, 2004).

4   Findings and Analysis

The results of the interviews, focus group discussions, site visits, and documents were analyzed. Findings were used to explain existing challenges in curriculum compliance, program offerings and instructional designs, awareness of faculty and trainers, faculty qualifications and experiences, use of resource materials, and other issues and concerns in the implementation of ASEAN MRA for tourism professionals in the Philippines.

4.1   Curriculum Compliance with ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangements

In developing the curricula, participants from the universities indicated using inputs from their alumni, industry partners, and faculty. Participants stated that they use their inputs to identify needs, strengths, and areas needing attention to improve student outcomes. They also made use of the current CHED Memorandum Order as minimum inputs, results of tracer studies, and feedback from the industry advisory board. One common finding was that ASEAN MRA on Tourism Professionals was not overtly mentioned in their curricula. Although the majority of the participants claimed that their respective curricula were compliant with ASEAN MRA they had no recorded evidence that curriculum mapping was undertaken. It remains unclear how the participants describe how integration was done.

4.2   Awareness of Faculty Members and Trainers of the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangements on Tourism Professionals

The findings showed that DepEd faculty members (e.g., senior high school teachers) had limited awareness of the ASEAN MRA on Tourism Professionals; although, faculty were utilizing the DepEd Curriculum Guides as the basis for their

instructional delivery. A DepED faculty member remarked that "*We have heard about the ASEAN MRA, however, we are not fully aware of the extent how it would affect instructional delivery*". It should be noted that certification for faculty members of DepEd is not mandatory. There was also limited awareness of the ASEAN MRA on Tourism Professional and how it is being deployed among TESDA trainers. Unlike DepEd teachers, TESDA trainers and assessors are required to be certified. Faculty members in higher education expressed awareness of the ASEAN MRA on Tourism Professionals; however, it was not known to them how it was integrated into the program of studies. Not all faculty members are required to have TESDA National Certification, although it is more preferred by university and college administrators.

Initiatives in the area of dissemination of ASEAN MRA on tourism professionals and the use of toolboxes are achieved through various conferences and awareness campaigns conducted nationwide through the initiatives of various academic institutions. In addition, online/virtual workshops and trainings were conducted by the DOT and its regional offices.

4.3 Requirements for Faculty Selection

For DepEd schools, the teachers' license is a critical requirement. TESDA schools require that each faculty trainer should have National Certification together with Teachers Methodology certification. For teaching at the university/college level, a Master's degree and industry experience is required. During the focus group discussion, one school administrator stressed that "*We used to put more value on academic credentials and industry experience before. But now with ASEAN integration, we appreciate that our teachers should also possess National Certificates to handle specific skill courses*". Thus, results indicated that it was advantageous for faculty members to have a National Certificate for various tourism qualifications or trades. However, this is not required by most HEIs when hiring faculty members.

4.4 Faculty Industry Experience, Industry Immersion Opportunities and Use of Learning Materials

Currently, the academe is expected to bridge the gap between traditional theories taught in schools and the application of knowledge, skills, and attitude to prepare students for the future in the industry. Faculty and trainers with rich industry experience have the potential to transform real-life experiences into classroom lessons offering students genuine insights and appreciation of what the industry looks like. They can also provide students with ideas on job challenges and solutions and help students and graduates in finding networking opportunities. In this study, the

majority of the participants had industry work experience; however, 25.4% indicated that they did not possess any work experience and most participants had less than 2 years of industry experience. A faculty participant from a university emphasized the importance of real-world experience:

> There will be a disconnect if a teacher only focuses on book theories when teaching. The lack of industry experience will surface and this will affect his credibility to handle the subject. Learning will be limited and the skillset learned may not be applicable when practiced by graduates in the actual workplace setting.

TESDA requires at least 5 years minimum industry experience as indicated in the training regulations. Most HEIs request industry experience ranging from 2 years and above in addition to academic qualifications.

Immersion opportunities are provided for faculty and trainers. However, the terms of duration, funding, and prioritization vary across institutions. For most, regular employees were only given these opportunities with a provision for return service. Participants from the DepEd and TESDA agreed on the lack of consistency in the provision of programs stating that:

> Not all faculty members are given development programs, especially industry immersion. Normally, it is only given to regular employees. There is also a need to update and upgrade prior industry experience especially if it is beyond 5 years already.

The use of learning materials from the ASEAN MRA Toolbox was limited. Although some faculty members were familiar with the ASEAN toolboxes, it was rarely used because of the longer contents and challenges with the toolbox organization. A participant shared that, "*It was difficult to use all the materials because it is so extensive that it will go beyond the number of hours to offer the subject*". A TESDA trainer explained that, "*The ASEAN toolbox is not being used but in TESDA because we have developed Competency-Based Learning Material (CBLM) based on the Training Regulations (TR)*". Another participant added that:

> We support the Outcomes Based Training (OBE) by using 80% activities and 20% lectures. Our schools develop our materials but we barely use the toolboxes because we had limited access to them. There are too many documents and the downloading period normally takes time. It is also not sorted according to subjects but competencies instead. This will require a trainer to open each module to visualize if the contents are relevant.

Among the ASEAN materials available, it was noted that there was limited utilization of the Assessors Manual and Competency Standards. The most widely used component reported by participants was the PowerPoint Presentations followed by the Trainers Guide.

4.5   Adequacy of Laboratory Facilities

DepEd schools currently use their existing facilities in their home economics departments. However, not all DepEd schools' facilities are audited for compliance with the TESDA requirements. Observations revealed that some tools and

equipment are incomplete and/or do not match those that are found in commercial establishments.

TESDA schools also function as assessment centers, thus, increasing the need for compliance with the TESDA requirements for such facilities (e.g., regulatory equipment and tools). However, participants reported that some facilities did not conform to industry standards. One TESDA assessor present during the discussion stressed that, "*While there are tools and facilities found in assessment centers, some are not compliant anymore with the industry requirements. Most equipment found are used in households instead of institutional*". Similarly, a university faculty highlighted that, "*There's a big difference if the school has enough funding to purchase tools and equipment that are similar to what's being used in the industry*". Such statements suggest that training and educational institutions must make an investment to upgrade facilities and acquire necessary tools in order to adequately train students.

CHED schools provide beyond what is required by the CHED Memorandum Order in terms of equipment and tools, especially if they are recognized assessment centers. However, participants reported a big difference in terms of provisions of tools, equipment, and materials with private and public schools and universities. As one faculty participant from a public HEI mentioned, "*Not all public schools have funding to purchase quality tools and equipment comparable with what's being used in the industry, we must remain flexible and make do with what we have*". The absence of the right tools, equipment, and materials may have an impact on the delivery of instructions and training and this must be addressed to achieve desired learning outcomes.

4.6   Assessment as a Requirement in Training and Academic Institutions

Assessment, which is a major component of ASEAN MRA for Tourism Professionals, is not a mandatory requirement for the different levels of academic sectors. A DepEd representative mentioned that, "*We highly recommend assessment of our students in coordination with our partner assessment centers though it is not a requirement*". Similarly, a TESDA assessor said that, "*For TESDA schools, assessment is mandatory. Some also conduct mobile assessments in areas where there are no assessment centers, or when there is a request from a local government unit*". A Department Head for a university noted that, "*Not all CHED schools are recognized assessment centers, thus, we send our students to partner Assessment Centers so that they can take the assessment. Assessment is not required for all tertiary schools*". As indicated by participant responses, assessment provides added value for students and graduates of Tourism and Hospitality, though it is not yet required by the DepEd and CHED. Currently, only TESDA requires all trainees to undergo assessment after training completion.

In terms of affirming graduate competencies, a participant from a university highlighted that:

> Aside from the Diploma of our graduates, we realized that it is also important to give them relevant documents to affirm competencies that they earned in the university. Thus, we require our students to take the National Certification exams for our various qualifications. We have successfully integrated them into our program of studies and our graduates can testify that it gave them an advantage especially if they plan to work overseas.

Given that certifications are not currently required, institutions view the value of assessment differently. Some have identified its importance, while others look at it as an added cost for students.

4.7   Additional Issues and Concerns

There is a current gap between the DepEd and HEI curriculum in tourism and hospitality education which impacts students' preparedness for the real world. A participant from TESDA regional office raised that:

> There is a need to coordinate among DepEd, TESDA, and CHED as there are gaps among the programs each sector offers, it is not a 'seamless progression' from level to level. There are also challenges in terms of interpreting the CHED Memorandum Order and it creates some confusion among schools, Regional Quality Assessment Team (RQAT), and Commission on Higher Education supervisors.

Participants also reported a strong concern about assessors who lacked the necessary industry experience and qualifications. For example, one participant from a university observed that, "*It seems that some assessors don't have enough industry exposure and that they interpret academic teaching/training as an industry experience*". This sentiment was supported by a university administrator who stressed that, "*Assessors should only be limited to assess in qualifications where they have relevant industry experience where they have proven expertise*".

Participants agreed that some are not being used anymore in industry settings suggesting there is a need to review the list of tools, equipment, and supplies in the Training Regulations. For example, one participating university faculty explained that, "*There are tools and equipment that are still being required in the assessment centers; however, they are not being used anymore in the hotels and restaurants*". Further, a similar issue was raised by another university faculty member that, "*There is a concern on the acceptability of National Certificates in the industry as it is not a major prerequisite for hiring in hotels, restaurants, and other tourism and hospitality enterprises. Tourism and hospitality enterprises do not also send their employees for assessment.*" A National Certificate is not being required by all tourism enterprises as a job-entry requirement in the Philippines. Most establishments have their own qualifications requirements based on educational accomplishment.

5   Discussion

This study focused on examining the status, challenges and implementation of the ASEAN MRA on Tourism Professionals in the Philippines. The results provided a clearer glimpse of the challenges in the implementation of ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professionals in the Philippines. The participant narratives highlighted the significance of policy, as well as gaps and strategies as they related to the improvement of training and assessment processes across different levels of educational sectors. Findings were used to provide recommendations and interventions aimed at improving compliance. These recommendations aim to ensure that the tourism and hospitality workforce of the Philippines will have the competencies accepted by the industry to remain competitive with other ASEAN nations.

The findings demonstrated a need to intensify ASEAN MRA on tourism professionals' awareness training across various educational and training sectors. Though several training programs had been implemented by the DOT, the results suggest that dissemination stopped with those who attended the training. A mechanism to transfer leanings should be implemented. Periodic monitoring should be instituted to measure how leanings from seminars and trainings were communicated and integrated with various educational systems. Due to the mobility restrictions caused by the pandemic, it is recommended to continue the conduct of the virtual ASEAN Awareness and Toolbox Immersion Workshop as it has a bigger reach across various regions of the Philippines. Stronger emphasis on how the ASEAN Toolbox can be accessed and utilized can be done by providing tutorials and publishing 'frequently asked questions' with answers.

CHED, TESDA, and DepEd should review and comply with the Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum. Conformity should be supported by evidence on how institutions mapped their competencies vis a vis the Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum. With the Convergence Memorandum of Agreement signed last November 2020, CHED, TESDA, DepEd and TIBFI should constantly coordinate for their programs to have a harmonized/seamless progression of the competencies from Levels 1 to 8 as part of the implementation of the Philippine Qualifications Framework.

Curriculas that are aligned with ASEAN for DepEd, TESDA, and CHED must be developed and piloted in several schools/training institutions. It would be significant to identify the Centers of Excellence for Tourism and Hospitality Education in various regions where other schools can 'consult' and 'benchmark' their programs. Specifically, the following sections are organized to the identified agencies involved in this initiative.

5.1   Technical Education Skills Development Authority

For TESDA, a stricter audit system to check all training and assessment centers periodically is needed to consistently comply with the standard tools and equipment per qualification. It is necessary to review the qualifications of assessors focusing on industry experience and assessment methods and determine the number of sectors and number of qualifications that assessors may handle based on their area of expertise and industry experience.

The training regulations and assessment packages must be regularly reviewed and updated putting into consideration the changing landscape of the tourism industry, aligning with ASEAN MRA on Tourism Professionals' assessment, and contextualizing the assessment to the enterprise type. Delisting of tools and equipment considered outdated and not being used in the industry anymore should be immediately done.

Regular calibration of TESDA trainers and assessors on all qualifications across different regions of the country to standardize delivery of training and assessment through Camp Assess. To promote inclusivity, involve more industry practitioners for the higher level of qualifications as there is a limited number of assessors in the National Certificate III and IV levels, in the various tourism qualifications. There is also a need to integrate the ASEAN Toolbox in materials and references currently in use in instruction and assessment of TESDA.

5.2   Commission on Higher Education

The Commission must review the qualifications of faculty members handling courses with defined ASEAN qualifications of the CMO. It should also invest in immersion programs for faculty members to update them on industry standards. While private institutions go beyond what is required by CHED CMO in the area of facilities, other public institutions would need funding to support the enhancement of facilities and the acquisition of tools and equipment. Aside from this, there is a need to support the National Assessment of faculty members and students in various qualifications. This may be articulated in the CMO as a requirement rather than an option for higher educational institutions. Academic institutions in the tertiary level must also integrate the ASEAN Toolbox in materials and references currently in use for instruction and assessment.

5.3   Department of Education

The DepEd should review the qualifications of teachers handling specific technical-vocational subjects to ensure delivery of instructions according to what is being required by TESDA. An intervention program for teachers with limited experiences

to handle subjects in the Tourism sector can be provided and may include immersion, training, and workshops. Improvement of facilities and completion of tools and equipment should be undertaken while integrating the ASEAN Toolbox in materials and references currently in use for instruction and assessment. Assessment of faculty members in various tourism qualifications should also be supported and funded.

5.4 Department of Tourism

For the DOT, the ASEAN awareness campaign projects must be properly documented to identify training and workshops promoting awareness, with whom and in what contexts. The measure should be driven to target groups with the least information on ASEAN MRA on tourism professionals. Indicators to suggest awareness campaign success should be clearly defined for monitoring purposes. To have a greater reach of the different regions of the Philippines, it is recommended to continuously intensify ASEAN and Toolbox Awareness virtual webinars and to mobilize the National Trainers to cascade training to their respective regions aside from the ASEAN Masters.

5.5 Tourism Industry Board Foundation, Inc.

TIBFI should consider assisting CHED, TESDA, and DepEd institutions on industry immersions by creating programs connecting them to industry partner establishments. As an industry arm, TIBFI can provide training programs that will strengthen the capacity of faculty members, industry practitioners to level up standards of service in the various types of enterprises. TIBFI should also promote recognition of National Assessment certificates by tourism enterprises as an added value in terms of hiring employees in various companies.

6 Conclusion

This chapter explored the status and challenges of implementing the ASEAN MRA for Tourism Professionals in the Philippines. Findings showed there is a strong need to harmonize tourism education and skills training toward the goal of graduating highly-skilled students ready for the demands of the industry. It will be important to address the challenges cited in implementing the ASEAN MRA on Tourism Professionals to fortify the skills and capabilities of the Filipino human capital in the areas of tourism and hospitality industry. Compliance with ASEAN MRA on

Tourism Professionals can help member-states to upgrade their educational systems, training, accreditation, certifications, licensing, and professional regulatory frameworks to enforce higher standards in the conduct of professional service (Rivera et al., 2019).

To guarantee that all sectors of the Philippines adopt the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement for Tourism Professionals, the awareness campaign for the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement for Tourism Professionals must be strengthened. This study noted current issues such as training and educational institutions' conformity with the ASEAN Tourism Curriculum, insufficient facilities, and the certification/assessment procedure. It also highlighted the difficulties in finding industry-experienced teachers to give competency-based training to students.

The results suggest the importance for educational and training institutions to utilize available toolboxes to enable standardization of resources used in instruction and training across the country. They also show how the institutions' national competency standards and curriculum may be enhanced through a retooling and upskilling program among the pool of trainers and assessors. Future research should consider the exploration and application of a framework to create a standardized and efficient procedure for identifying and addressing the training needs of professionals with skill gaps. In order to facilitate training and assessment, it will be necessary to unify government interaction and structure. Therefore, the ASEAN convergence team must work to strengthen the interaction between academia and industry while also continuing the ASEAN awareness campaign to guarantee that compliance duties are met. Continuous interactions with various stakeholders will remain necessary in order to assess ASEAN MRA compliance and its long-term implications for Philippine human capital development for tourism and hospitality.

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Tourism in the Philippines: Conclusions and Implications for Management

Richard S. Aquino and Brooke A. Porter

Abstract Tourism plays a significant role in the Philippines' socio-economic development. However, an array of management issues persists in achieving the desired sustainable and inclusive development of the tourism industry in the country. This edited book uncovered some of these contemporary tourism management issues organized under broad themes. This concluding chapter articulates the practical findings and implications of the contributions in this volume. Key findings from the contributions are discussed as they relate to the identified broad themes. Implications for applied management are considered and future research directions building from the contributions are discussed.

Keywords Tourism management · Tourism development · Implications · Management · Policy · Philippines

1 The Aim and Contributions of the Book

The pivotal role of tourism in the Philippine society and economy has been reiterated throughout this book. Given the dynamic nature of tourism as a socio-economic phenomenon, it is essential to explore the challenges impeding the successful adoption of tourism as an inclusive and sustainable development tool in the country. The aim of this edited volume was to investigate current and developing critical management issues in the Philippine tourism industry, a constantly evolving landscape. With Philippines-centric contributions from academics with varied disciplinary backgrounds, this book offers practical insights that can be useful for addressing

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challenges moving forwards. More importantly, the contributions in this book present important evidence that can help inform decisions and policy measures to address the investigated issues.

The chapters largely focused on the supply-side of tourism with some chapters exploring regional (chapter "Cagayan Valley:*Your Islands and Valley of Fun*– A Case of Regional Branding in the Philippines") and local tourism management challenges (chapter "Perception and Participation of Local Residents in the Tourism Development Program for the Sampaloc Lake in San Pablo City, Laguna"), while the remaining contributions analyzed contemporary tourism issues at a national scale. Based on the aim of each contribution, the chapters were organized under the following parts: 'Nature-Based Tourism and the Natural Environment' (Part II), 'Product Development and Branding' (Part III), and 'Accreditation and Industry Standards' (Part IV). The trans-disciplinary and pragmatic research approaches applied by the contributors revealed findings that add to the current understanding of tourism management issues in the Philippines, including tourism policy implementation, stakeholder collaboration, and the need for competent workforce and training.

1.1 Tourism Policy Implementation

Tourism in the Philippines is rich in policies that have the potential to support its development (e.g., Dela Santa, 2015). Many contributors referred to such policies, especially the Tourism Act of 2009. Some contributors specifically analyzed the status and challenges in implementing tourism policy. In chapter "Implementing an Effective Ecotourism Strategy for the Philippines", Rivera and colleagues appraised the policy frameworks that could enable a more successful implementation of ecotourism in the Philippines. While the National Ecotourism Strategy (NES), followed by allied policies and initiatives, has been in effect since the early 2000s, their chapter revealed a mixture of short-lived and long-term issues threatening key biodiversity areas where tourism takes place. Rivera and colleagues called for better planning and implementation of the NES within the wider tourism context of a destination or region, to avoid conflicting use of resources and sites designated for ecotourism.

Focusing on another national standard, Cruz delineated the challenges in implementing the accreditation scheme for private tourism enterprises in the Philippines (chapter "Tourism Accreditation in the Philippines: Government and Private Sector Perspectives"). Six interrelated issues were identified in this investigation including the redundancy of the requirements, inconsistency in enforcement, expansion of the scope of accreditable businesses, high financial cost, inability to protect accredited businesses from unfair competition, and businesses' creative ways to 'escape' mandatory accreditation. While the policy frameworks and regulations for accreditation are well intended, these findings show one of the barriers is communicating the 'value' of accreditation for tourism establishments. Overall, the findings in these chapters present an appraisal of selected tourism policies/regulations which can be helpful in re-calibrating strategies and actions to improve the latter's intended outcomes.

1.2 Stakeholder Collaboration

Regardless of the scale and setting, the tourism industry is composed of different stakeholders. Often, these stakeholders have varying levels of power over and interests in the development of tourism (Saito & Ruhanen, 2017). Placing all tourism stakeholders in a unified vision and goals is a mammoth task for destination managers. Focusing on several facets of tourism management (e.g., policy implementation, marketing, community engagement, and education and training), the contributions in this book re-emphasized the importance of collaboration amongst tourism stakeholders.

Investigating the application of collaborative marketing in a regional branding initiative for the Cagayan Valley Region, Badilla's chapter showed that strong leadership and governance, constructive resolution of challenges and differences among stakeholders, and shared decision-making can make the process of collaboration more effective (chapter "Cagayan Valley: *Your Islands and Valley of Fun*– A Case of Regional Branding in the Philippines"). These findings are highly relevant to other Philippine regions aiming to create stronger brand identities. Conversely, challenges may also emerge in this collaborative branding process, including the lack of priority and support from local officials as was the case in the Cagayan Valley Region.

One of the most important forms of collaboration is between local authorities and host communities being affected (positively or less positively) by tourism (Jamal & Getz, 1995). In chapter "Perception and Participation of Local Residents in the Tourism Development Program for the Sampaloc Lake in San Pablo City, Laguna", Del Rosario and Tasico stressed the importance of participation and involvement in community-based ecotourism development in Sampaloc Lake, Laguna. These contributors' findings revealed that residents perceived lower levels of involvement in tourism projects, compared to what has been perceived and communicated by local government unit (LGU) stakeholders. In this case study, what has been believed as 'consultative' by the local government stakeholders was perceived as merely 'informing' by the community.

1.3 The Need for Competent Workforce and Training

Some of the chapters in this book advocated for creating capable and competent workforces for Philippine tourism. Informed by human resources management and educational management perspectives, the findings of these contributions offer practical insights for enhancing human capital development. Tourism officers in the Philippines are largely criticized for lacking the necessary competencies for tourism administration, for example, because of the decentralized structure of destination management organizations giving LGUs the autonomy to appoint officers based on ambiguous bases (Maguigad, 2013). However, Rocamora's empirical findings showed that Filipino tourism officers have moderately extensive competencies in performing their roles and responsibilities (chapter "The Philippines Tourism

Officers' Competencies Based on Tourism Act of 2009 and Local Government Code of 1991"). Standing out from the set of assessed competencies were the tourism officers' 'highly extensive' social maturity and social skills. The findings of this self-administered survey indicate that Filipino tourism officers can perform their basic roles, functions, and duties competently; they also challenge earlier criticisms, and point out areas to expand skill sets to the ever-changing tourism industry landscape.

In chapter "Perception of Stakeholders on the Adoption of 4th Industrial Revolution Technologies in the Hospitality Industry in the Philippines", Lucero explored the technological readiness of different stakeholder groups in the Philippine hospitality sector. It was found that the academia, government, and industry stakeholders realize the importance of utilizing technologies in the increasingly digitalized world, and are ready to adapt technological innovations in their workforce and training. Conversely, the importance of retaining the 'human touch' despite using digital technologies was highlighted in Lucero's findings. Keeping the Filipino 'identity' and 'hospitableness' in a digitalized hospitality sector is paramount to gain competitive advantage over other destinations.

Although hospitableness is inherent in any society (e.g., Lynch et al., 2011), ensuring a competent tourism and hospitality workforce largely depends on the acquired training and accumulated industry work experiences. In chapter "Challenges in Implementing the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement for Tourism Professionals in the Philippines", Aragon and Aquino probed into the challenges that face the execution of the ASEAN initiative, the Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professional in selected training institutions in the country. These challenges included lack of industry work experience among some trainers and assessors, poor training facilities, and the absence of the right tools, equipment, and training materials. These challenges were negatively affecting the simulation of real-world scenarios in training institutions – an important aspect in the applied nature of tourism and hospitality management disciplines.

2   Emergent Strategies

Tourism is a multi-sectoral industry that requires proactive and dynamic management strategies. Throughout this volume, the importance of sound planning, policy-making, and management and implementation strategies have been highlighted to ensure tourism serves as a viable and sustainable development tool. Largely drawn from the perspectives of Filipino academics, the contributions articulated strategies that aim to address the challenges explored in this volume.

Recommendations from the contributors echo the strengthening of 'leadership and governance' in Philippine tourism. Tourism being a highly political phenomenon is not new knowledge (e.g., Burns & Novelli, 2007; Hall, 1994). However, politics and politicking have long been argued as key deterring factors for true stakeholder collaboration in Philippine tourism (e.g., Dela Santa, 2015). The

implementation of any well-intended tourism policy relies heavily on effective leadership and governance, at all levels of destination management (national, regional, municipal, and local community). As emphasized in the tourism management literature, the success and sustainability of tourism initiatives, such as accreditation frameworks, marketing campaigns, training schemes, nature-based interventions, or tourism-based livelihood projects, depend on what authorities ought to pursue or not to pursue (Hall, 2008), and the latter's political will to action upon these decisions (see chapter "Culinary Tourism as an Avenue for Tourism Development: Mapping the Flavors of the Philippines"). Local executives must realize that the continuity of strategies is vital to the sustainable development of tourism. Likewise, placing the interests of local stakeholders (e.g., host communities) and more importantly the natural environment (see chapter "Perception and Participation of Local Residents in the Tourism Development Program for the Sampaloc Lake in San Pablo City, Laguna"), must be a priority for destination leaders.

Several scholars have emphasized the relatively weak interaction among tourism stakeholders in the Philippine context, for example, between government and private enterprises (Aquino & Rivera, 2018; Cortez & Rivera, 2016). Associated with effective leadership and governance, facilitating stronger *stakeholder engagement* was espoused in the majority of the contributions (see chapters "Implementing an Effective Ecotourism Strategy for the Philippines", "Perception and Participation of Local Residents in the Tourism Development Program for the Sampaloc Lake in San Pablo City, Laguna", "Culinary Tourism as an Avenue for Tourism Development: Mapping the Flavors of the Philippines", "Perception of Stakeholders on the Adoption of 4th Industrial Revolution Technologies in the Hospitality Industry in the Philippines", and "Challenges in Implementing the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement for Tourism Professionals in the Philippines"). In stakeholder engagement, Del Rosario and Tasico (chapter "Perception and Participation of Local Residents in the Tourism Development Program for the Sampaloc Lake in San Pablo City, Laguna") highlighted the essential role of building trust among tourism actors demonstrating that through building trust and transparency, authentic collaboration can happen. Part of improving transparency requires building effective communication channels across government agencies, organizations, and communities affected by tourism (see chapter "Culinary Tourism as an Avenue for Tourism Development: Mapping the Flavors of the Philippines"). A well thought out tourism-related initiative will not be successful without making key stakeholders aware of goals and practical strategies towards achieving the desired outcomes. Another practical direction is for the tourism project proponents (e.g., local governments) to understand and consolidate the roles, power, and interests of stakeholders directly and indirectly involved in any tourism initiative.

Building on the above implications is the advocating for *community-centered tourism development* approaches throughout the country. It can be noted that the tourism initiatives explored in this volume are still largely 'top-down.' More recent actions, for example the 'militarized response' of the Government to the environmental issues caused by tourism (Canoy et al., 2020), show that local communities serve as predominantly weak players in tourism management. Forging strong

relationships with local communities especially with the marginalized sectors of society (e.g., indigenous peoples), and creating mechanisms where communities could exercise some form of control should be prioritized, not just over 'community-based tourism' interventions, but over all kinds of tourism. Together with nature conservation imperatives, it is through this direction where tourism could be a truly inclusive and sustainable development strategy.

An emergent strategy for enhancing the competitiveness of the Philippines as an international destination is the constant 'innovation of tourism products.' In this volume, Gutierrez and colleagues' work was dedicated to developing a knowledge-base for improving culinary tourism offerings in the country (chapter "Cagayan Valley:*Your Islands and Valley of Fun*– A Case of Regional Branding in the Philippines"). Complementing recent works that promote the conservation of Filipino culinary heritage, this chapter demonstrated knowledge that could be utilized in positioning Filipino cuisine in the international tourism landscape. In addition to maintaining and improving the quality of popular tourism products in the Philippines, destination marketers should consider creating and packaging alternative tourism products that could diversify the Philippine tourism experience. This imperative is timely given the disruptions that destination must adapt into in the 'new normal.'

3   Future Research Directions and Concluding Thoughts

The complex issues involved in tourism management require evidence-based strategies. This book added to the knowledge-base for managing and developing tourism in the Philippines. However, there are additional contemporary issues worthy of future exploration such as disaster risk reduction and management in tourism destinations, strategies for making tourism equitable for the local communities, and improving destination resilience post-COVID-19 pandemic.

The Philippines is known as a disaster hotspot, due to the multiple natural hazards (e.g., typhoons, earthquakes) and socio-political factors (e.g., terrorist threats, political instability) that induce disasters to occur in the country (e.g., Beirman, 2003; Gaillard, 2015). Although tourism is recognized as an industry that is vulnerable to disasters, there remains a gap in the literature on how the Philippine tourism industry responds and copes to such shocks. Tourism and disaster risk reduction and management researchers in the country are yet to explore this area. Specific topics that researchers could explore include: the integration of disaster risk reduction strategies in tourism planning, and the short-term coping and long-term adaptation strategies performed by destinations, organizations, communities, and individuals following these events. Given the complexity of these problems, multi-disciplinary research approaches combining the expertise of tourism and disaster risk reduction and management academics is encouraged in such a research undertaking.

Calls for making tourism inclusive but also equitable for the environment and local communities are becoming louder than ever (e.g., Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020;

Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019). Given the top-down tourism development models that are commonly adopted in the Philippines, there needs to be more investigation on whether or not tourism initiatives in the country are centering local communities in their agenda. Researchers may also consider exploring innovative tourism development models that advocate for authentic community participation, involvement, empowerment, and creating meaningful impact.

'Resilience' was the buzzword in the year 2020 (while this book was being edited). However, resilience is also strongly associated with the character of the Filipino people given the frequency and magnitude of natural calamities they experience and endure each year, including the present pandemic (Callueng et al., 2020). It is necessary to incorporate analyzing resilience in the future research agenda for Philippine tourism due to several factors. First, the discourse about the resilience of destinations and host communities in Philippine tourism research is almost nonexistent. There needs to be more collaboration between tourism and disaster risk reduction and management researchers. Second, understanding the destination and community resilience is a timely undertaking given this time of a pandemic. The pathway to tourism recovery for businesses and communities reliant on the industry could be challenging post-pandemic, especially for countries that are badly affected by the present crisis. Third, resilience and sustainability have a symbiotic relationship (Hall et al., 2017; Lew et al., 2016). As some academics argue, sustainable destination communities are also resilient communities (e.g. Lew et al., 2016). Therefore, a better understanding of destination and community resilience could inform sustainable tourism imperatives in the future.

Finally, it can be concluded that tourism in the Philippines remains a work in progress. The fundamental policies and initiatives that promote tourism as a viable, inclusive, and sustainable national development strategy are in place. While this book presents the milestones of some tourism initiatives in the country, the many challenges outlined in the chapter imply that there is room for improvement. We hope this book contributes to a better understanding of these issues, and that the insights presented in this scholarly work could inform future research, policy directions, and practical strategies for managing tourism in the Philippines.

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