

EFFECTS OF HERITAGE TOURISM TO THE MUNICIPALITY OF TAAL, BATANGAS, PHILIPPINES

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ABSTRACT

Tourism has grown into one of the world's major industries and has thus also become increasingly important. The study aimed to assess the effects of heritage tourism to the municipality of Taal, Batangas. It proposed a plan of action to improve the tourism industry in the municipality for the residents to maximize the benefits of tourism. The study employed the descriptive method of research. Respondents of the study were chosen from the community residents using 7% margin of error. The respondents believed that tourism has social, economic, environmental, cultural, heritage and arts effects in the Municipality of Taal. The national and local government may continue giving assistance by way of financial support in the development of tourism infrastructure. The local government and community may strictly implement the ordinance on proper waste segregation.

Keywords: Heritage Tourism, Tourist Destination, Taal Batangas, Tourism Industry

INTRODUCTION

The historic and legendary Town of Taal, Batangas is a “Heritage Village” by virtue of the declaration made by the National Historic Institute (NHI) thru its Resolution No. 02 dated September 30, 1987. The said declaration emboldens the primary objective of preserving and conserving the rich cultural heritage and structures within the Heritage Village and buffer zones, PD 1505 amending PD 260 and the article 14, Section 14 of the 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines which states. Taal as a culture heritage has been rediscovered as an important marketing tool to attract those travelers with special interest in heritage and arts. Heritage needs to be always moving forward; creatively re-defining itself, seeking engagement in critical agendas relating to conflict resolution, inter-cultural dialogue in poverty reduction. In doing so, heritage tourism can relate more to emerging generations of tourists who seek not only to passively observe the past, but to learn from it, and where appropriate, challenge and change it (MacKay and Crompton, 2008).

As such, tourism has implications on the economy, on the natural and built environment, on the local population at the destination and on the tourists themselves. Due to these multiple impacts, the wide range and variety of production factors required producing those goods and services acquired by visitors, and the wide spectrum of stakeholders’ involved or affected tourism, there is need for a holistic approach to tourism development, management and monitoring. Although heritage tourism spends money, time and other resources on a trip or visit, no there is no tangible return on their investment. What tourists receive from their investment is an experience that provides mainly psychological benefits (Kozak, 2002). Hence, the Heritage tourist product is not a measurable or quantifiable good. Rather is an experience or ‘a point of view’ (Mathieson and Wall, 2002).

“Heritage tourism is a phenomenon based on tourist motivations and perception rather than on specific site attributes. Heritage tourism is a subgroup of tourism in which the main motivation for visiting a site based on the places heritage characteristics is according to the tourist perception of their own heritage (Poria et al. in Laygo, 2007). As a heritage village destination, Taal reigns as one of the most culturally preserved sites of the country’s four-century Spanish and forty year American colonial eras. It conforms to the old town layout combining municipal hall-school-church-and-market.

“Taal Heritage Town is a fine example of the sustainable development as well as responsible and ethical promotion of cultural tourism in the Philippines. In spite of the urbanization and modernization of its neighboring towns and cities, the local person has preserved their indigenous Tagalog culture and traditions in their beloved town.” Tourism Secretary Alberto Lim enthuses. “It is of utmost importance that every Taaleño participate in the formulation of their cultural tourism policy and implementation of projects with stakeholders in the local, national and global levels. Such empowerment will ensure the increase of benefits and welfare opportunities for themselves as the host communities.

The researchers found it very advantageous to study the municipality of Taal. Investigating the place gives positive impacts to its dwellers. They became aware that their place is a potential source of National Cultural Tourism Industry due to its historical environment. Many spots in the area were tourist destinations. Through this study, they were able to take better care of their place.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore heritage tourism in the Municipality of Taal. More specifically; it aimed to present the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, civil status, socio economic status, educational attainment; to know the effects of heritage tourism to the municipality of Taal, Batangas with regard to economic, social, cultural, heritage, artistic and environmental aspects; to identify the problems encountered in preserving heritage tourism in Taal, to identify the problems encountered in the development of Taal as a tourist destination and, recommend a plan of action to improve heritage tourism in Taal, Batangas.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

This study entitled “The Effects of Heritage Tourism to the Municipality of Taal” utilized the descriptive method of research. From the total population of 12,192, 200 were selected as the participants of the study using 7% margin of error. The participants of the study were selected at randomly and represented.

In order to obtain the necessary data, the researchers used a questionnaire as the main gathering instrument. Part I, discusses the respondents’ profile in terms of age, sex, civil status, socio-economic status and educational attainment. Part II, on the other hand, discusses the assessment of the respondents in terms of the Effects of heritage tourism to the municipality of Taal. Part III discusses the problems encountered in preserving heritage tourism that affects the rapid development of Taal’s tourist attractions. Given on the questionnaire are the most common problems threatening the growth of tourism industry in Taal were based on the point of view of local residents; government officials and tourists freely expressed. Lastly, Part IV, concerns the different projects or the development actions being implemented by the officers of the local government of Taal. This is to find out if their lined up programs are truly implemented by tourism officers, local residents and tourists. In order to obtain the information about heritage tourism in Municipality of Taal, the

researchers' utilized library, resources online and data searching online, After the approval of the questionnaire, the interview was conducted.

All data were tallied and interpreted using descriptive statistics. Frequency distribution was used to identify the profile of the respondents; weighted mean was used to know the effects of heritage tourism of Taal and the problems encountered in preserving heritage tourism; and ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was used to determine the difference of the effects of Heritage Tourism when grouped according to profile variables. The data were also supported using PASW version 18 to further analyse the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Respondents

The previous table presents the distribution of the respondents' profile. In terms of gender, most of the respondents are female with 102 or 51 percent while 49 percent are male. This implies that male was dominated by female in the sense that they are active when it comes to the promotion of tourism. As to age distribution, most of them fall on the age bracket of 16 to 25 years old followed by 26 to 35 years old of whom most are also single. Single respondents tend to spend most of their time in supporting the local government for the tourism progress.

With regard to educational attainment, most of the respondents' obtained a bachelor degree since college graduate got the highest frequency of 117. Also, 92 of them or 46 percent are employed. Because of these they can communicate well with people especially the foreign tourists thus can promote the culture of Taal and can encourage more tourists to visit the town. On the other hand, majority of the respondents' are Roman Catholic and belong to the middle class group. The local government coordinates with the church in promoting the tourism.

Social Effects of Heritage Tourism

The respondents' agreed on the social effects of heritage tourism in Taal. Among the items mentioned, preserves culture, heritage, arts and environment followed by promote peace and increases pride in local culture and area. Since Taal is known for having unique and well preserved landmarks, the tourists could have the chance to experience the way of living of every Taaleños. In line with this, the local government arranges activities regarding the presentation of culture, arts, heritage and environment. Through this, Taaleños and people from other town stake part in preserving peace progress.

Economic Effects of Heritage Tourism

The economic effects of heritage tourism to the municipality of Taal. A better development plan for the province followed by uplift of tourism industry in the country particularly Taal, Batangas; and lastly improvement of standard of living. Most of the respondents agreed that having a better plan would help the province to increase its tourism socially but economically as well.

Environmental Effects of Heritage Tourism

The respondents agreed that to the environmental effects of heritage tourism in Taal in terms of protection of selected natural environment or prevention of further ecological decline, improvement of the areas appearance and tourism promotes cleanliness and sanitation.

Cultural, Heritage and Arts Effects of Heritage Tourism

The respondents agreed that there are Cultural, Heritage and Arts effects of heritage tourism to the Municipality of Taal wherein the respondents agreed that the visitors are attracted and interested in history and preservation of local tradition and culture and it develops special events and festivals (chamber music, dance, arts and crafts, ethnic heritage, special holidays, modern music, ethnic music)

Possible Problems Encountered in Preserving Heritage Tourism

All problems enumerated were considered possible problems as perceived by the respondents. Among the items presented, financial support from the local government was the most observed followed by waste management and waste disposal concern and economic sustainability of heritage tourism initiatives. The local government needs financial support to be used for the development of tourism. Lack of heritage tourism development, coastal environment problem and promotional and advertising strategies for heritage site were considered the least problems

Problems Encountered in the Development of the Taal as a Tourist Destination

All problems are encountered by the development of Taal as a potential tourist destination. Financial constraints got the mean. There is a need for the local government and private entities to be coordinated. These two groups must work together in order to speed up the progress of Taal in terms of preserving heritage tourism. The respondents also agreed that accessibility of transportation is a problem. In terms of difficulties for non-motorized transport; these difficulties are either the outcome of intense traffic, where the mobility of pedestrians, bicycles and vehicles is impaired, but also because of a blatant lack of consideration for pedestrians and bicycles in the physical design of infrastructures and facilities. Many public transit systems, or parts of them, are either over or under used. During peak hours, crowdedness creates discomfort for users as the system copes with a temporary surge in demand.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Majority of the respondents are female belonging to the 16 – 25 years of age, mostly single and college graduate. Also, most of them are employed, Roman Catholic and belong to the middle class. The respondents agreed that tourism has social, economic, environmental, cultural, heritage and arts effects on the Municipality of Taal, Batangas. The level of financial support from the government and waste management and disposal concern are the problems encountered in preserving heritage tourism in Taal, Batangas. Financial constraints and accessibility of transportation are the problems encountered in the development of Taal as a tourist destination. A proposed plan of action was made to enhance Heritage Tourism in Taal.

The national and local government may continue giving assistance by way of financial support in the development of tourism infrastructure. The local government and community may strictly implement the ordinance on proper waste segregation. Active participation of the private sector may be encouraged in the development of tourism infrastructure. The local government of Taal may offer financial assistance for small entrepreneurs to produce products. Others may conduct similar study using different variables.

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