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## **Sustainability Of Community-Based Tourism: Inputs For Improvement Of The Tourism Industry In Northern Samar**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The sustainability of community-based tourism has become one of the most important crucial concerns in the modern world since the tourist sectors are considered as the direct users and beneficiaries of not only the economic environment but also the environmental and social environment. This study used descriptive-correlational method and stratified random sampling wherein respondents were the owners and employees of community-based tourism establishments, the community and tourism officers of Lavezares, Capul and Biri Northern Samar. The findings revealed that among the 371 respondents there are more male than female who were middle-aged adult, high school graduate, married, fishermen and had a family income below the poverty threshold. The success factors of community-based tourism in Northern Samar in terms of community participation such as decision making, legal aspect, implementation, and evaluation; as well as the benefit community organization; government support; and awareness on natural resources were “very successful”. The level of sustainability of community-based tourism in terms of economic; socio-cultural and environmental were “sustainable”. There was a positive correlation between socio-economic profile and success factors affecting the sustainability of community based tourism. There was also a significant relationship between the success factors and the sustainability of community-based tourism in Northern Samar. Among the problems encountered in the sustainability of CBT, first in rank was the item that states there is no safety and security of the tourists in the destination area.

**Keywords:** Sustainability, Community-Based Tourism, Tourism Industry

### **INTRODUCTION**

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. It has become a global financial power which is incomparable to any other industries. In the Philippines, it is one of the major contributors to its economy. Philippines is considered one of the world’s biologically rich countries (conservation International, 2005). Samar Island, being the third largest island in the Philippines is also one of the largest unfragmented tracts of lowland rainforest (United Nations Development Programme, 2012). However, despite its abundance in Natural resources, Northern Samar is still one of the poorest provinces in the country (NEDA 8, 2012). Despite the existing tourism laws and programs of the provincial tourism industry, the province still needs strategic, sustainable community-based tourism to attract more tourists. This means managing tourism that would meet the needs of the present tourists and the province while protecting and enhancing the opportunity for the future (UNDO, 2004).

The Philippines archipelago is endowed with a tropical environment and a landmass that, when effectively managed and utilized, holds tremendous potential as valuable tourism assets that would greatly help in the Philippine economy. Potential tourism development would also help improve the livelihood of the community while addressing its social and environmental well-being. (Briones et. al, 2017). Sustainable tourism development is built upon community-based ecotourism, which ensures that essential resources are provided to communities, improving their standard of living, preserving their natural and cultural heritage, and offering economic opportunities. This approach promotes both sustainable economic growth and the environmental health of the community, allowing them to own and operate ecotourism activities within their own homes. By implementing community-based projects, it is possible to mitigate social and economic challenges, prevent the misuse of resources, minimize financial leaks, and alleviate related issues (Masud et al., 2017).

Community-based Tourism is a crucial component of tourism wherein local community are involved on the development process of the industry. Gutierrez (2019). The core idea of community-based tourism is allowing the community to have control over a tourism enterprise. Community-owned and/or community-managed tourism aims to generate broader benefits for the community (Cruz, 2014). It is concerned on the involvement of

the community in planning and maintaining tourism destination to develop a more sustainable industry. The key players in the community-based tourism in Northern Samar are the community, the owners and employees of community-based tourism establishments, as well as the tourism officers. Given the abundant natural resources in Northern Samar, understanding the key factors that influence the success of sustainable community-based tourism in the province is crucial. Therefore, this study was conducted to provide valuable insights on the matter.

## METHODOLOGY

Descriptive-correlational method was used in this study. The data was gathered through distribution of survey questionnaire in the three identified municipalities that have community-based tourism in Northern Samar particularly Lavezares, Capul and Biri Northern Samar. The respondents were the owners and employees of community-based tourism establishments, as well as the community and tourism officers of these three municipalities. A stratified random sampling was used to get the 371 respondents out of the total population of 5,150 using the Slovin's formula at .05 margin of error. The socio-economic profile was scored and categorized using the frequency counts, percentage and weighted mean. A five-point Likert scale interpreted as "Not successful" to "Highly Successful" was used to find out the success factors in sustainability of community-based tourism in Northern Samar. The level of sustainability of CBT was also scored and interpreted using the 5-point Likert scale from "Not Sustainable" to "Highly Sustainable". The statistical tool used to determine the relationship among variables was multiple regression, and the problems encountered was ranked and interpreted as "Not Serious" to "Very Much Serious" problems encountered in sustainability of the community-based tourism in Northern Samar.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 showed the socio-economic profile of respondents. Out of 371 respondents 186 or 50.1 % were male while 185 or 49.9 % were female. It was found out that there were more male members of organizations in the community-based tourism of Northern Samar which implies that being the head of the family, they are also involved in the Community-based tourism in their barangay. However, although there are more males respondents, the data also showed that female are also participating in CBT. It affirmed the study of Safari et. al. (2015) that men are generally predisposed to participating in development processes especially in tourism activities. In terms of age, 183 or 49.33 % of the respondents were 40-59 years old. The data implies that almost half of the age of the respondents belong to middle-aged adults. It implies that the people who comprise the workforce in the Community-based tourism in Northern Samar are middle-aged adults. In terms of educational attainment, 118 or 31.8 % were high school graduate. This implies that most of the tourism key players in Northern Samar have low educational attainment which refutes the study of Masud, et. al. (2017) and Guzman, L. et. al. (2011) where most of the tourism key players had primary education. Out of 371 respondents, 254 or 68.5% were married, 111 or 30% were fishermen and 342 or 92% have a monthly income below P 10,957.00. This implies that respondents were below the poverty threshold level. According to the findings of the Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES) in 2021, 18.10% of Filipinos were considered to be living in poverty, which is defined as the percentage of people whose per capita income is insufficient to cover their basic dietary and non-food needs. This indicates that 19.99 million Filipinos were living below the poverty line, which is set at around P 12,030 per month for a household of five. (PSA, 2022), and the result of this study also affirmed that Northern Samar is still one of the poorest provinces in the country.

**Table 1: Distribution of Socio-economic Profile of Respondents**

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	186	50.10 %
Female	185	49.90 %
Total	371	100 %
Age	Frequency	Percentage
40 – 59 years old	183	49.33 %
20 – 39 years old	149	40.16 %
60 Years old and Above	34	9.16 %
Below 19 years old	5	1.35 %
Total	371	100 %
Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage
High School Graduate	118	31.80 %
High School Level	80	21.60 %
College Level	67	18.10 %
College Graduate	48	12.90 %

Elementary :Level	27	7.30 %
Elementary Graduate	23	6.20 %
Post Graduate	5	1.30 %
TESDA Graduate	3	.80 %
Total	371	100 %
Civil Status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	254	68.50 %
Single	102	27.50 %
Widow/Widower	10	2.70 %
Separated	5	1.30 %
Total	371	100 %
Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Fishermen	111	30.00 %
Farmer	63	17.00 %
BHW	52	14.00 %
Government Official/Employee	44	11.90 %
WAID Member	42	11.30 %
Habal-habal Driver	28	7.50 %
Housewife	19	5.10 %
Motorboat Driver	12	3.20 %
Total	371	100%
Monthly Family Income	Frequency	Percentage
Below P 10,957.00	342	92.00 %
P 10, 957.00 - P 21,914.00	14	3.80 %
P 21, 914.00 – P 43,828.00	14	3.80 %
Above P 43,828.00	1	.40 %
Total	371	100 %

The effectiveness of CBT cannot solely rely on a single factor, indicating the existence of other factors deemed crucial by respondents for the successful implementation of CBT in their community. Table 2 showed the result of the data that has been collected in the success factors of community-based tourism in Northern Samar which had a grand mean of 3.89 interpreted as “very successful”. This implies that the implementation of government laws/legal aspects related to environmental aspect as well as the community participation contributed as the success factors of Community-based tourism in Northern Samar. In terms of community participation such as decision making, had a weighted mean of 3.99 interpreted as “very successful”, which means community members of CBT participated and worked hand in hand with government officials in Northern Samar in the decision making process of tourism activities. The result showed a 4.04 weighted mean for legal aspect interpreted as “very successful”, 4.04 for implementation and 3.83 for evaluation all interpreted as “very successful” which means that members were willing to participate in assigned tourism activities and in terms of evaluation of the community organizations, tourism officers and tourism establishment owners had division of labor regarding the CBT evaluation. There are assigned committee to monitor and evaluate their tourist activities. The result of this study affirmed the study of Ballicud, et.al (2019) which showed that community members participate in all stages from planning, decision making, monitoring and evaluation of tourism activities and worked for the common vision on how the locals should be governed.

In terms of benefits, the result showed a weighted mean of 3.82 interpreted as “very successful” wherein members were satisfied with tourism benefits that they receive. This inferred that economic benefits inspired the local community to take part in tourism activities. It affirmed the study of Liu, et.al. (2014) and Guzman, et. al (2017), that showed social and economic benefits played a vital role to improve cooperation and coordination of the local community. In terms of community organization, a weighted mean of 3.85 interpreted as “very successful” which means that the community organization are operated successfully and effectively. In terms of government support, had a weighted mean of 3.86 interpreted as “very successful” which implies that CBT in Northern Samar receives government support from LGU and provincial tourism. Lastly, in terms of awareness on natural resource, it had a weighted mean of 3.71 also interpreted as “very successful” which implies that Community-Based Tourism was very successful in raising awareness, promoting local destinations and creating policies to preserve and protect the natural resources.

**Table 2: Success Factors of Community-based Tourism**

Community Participation	Mean	Interpretation
Decision Making		
Weighted Mean	3.99	Very Successful
Legal Aspect	MEAN	INTERPRETATION
Weighted Mean	4.04	Very Successful
Implementation		
Weighted Mean	4.04	Very Successful
Evaluation		
Weighted Mean	3.83	Very Successful
BENEFITS		
Weighted Mean	3.82	Very Successful
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION		
Weighted Mean	3.85	Very Successful
GOVERNMENT SUPPORT		
Weighted Mean	3.86	Very Successful
AWARENESS ON NATURAL RESOURCES		
Weighted Mean	3.71	Very Successful
Grand Weighted Mean	3.89	Very Successful

Table 3 showed that in terms of economic sustainability, 3.69 weighted mean interpreted as “sustainable”, which implies that CBT there are additional commercial opportunities and services related to tourism that are available to local tourist. This means that in terms of economic sustainability, CBT in Northern Samar seeks to ensure the long-term survival. In terms of socio-cultural, result showed a weighted mean of 3.90 interpreted as “sustainable” wherein local people from all ages are proud of their unique culture.CBT allows the local community to preserve their cultural heritage. It affirmed the study of Eshun and Tonto (2014), where CBT helped preserve culture and helped the local population recognize and cherish their own history and culture. Lastly, in terms of environmental aspect, weighted mean of 3.64 interpreted a “sustainable” wherein it has an impact to make community members have an interest and willingness to protect the environment. It affirms the study of Dangi and Jamal (2016) which revealed that environmental sustainability and responsible use and management of environmental goods are generally seen as dominant priorities. The Grand mean of 3.74 interpreted as “sustainable” implies that the overall findings revealed a substantial interaction between the local community's desire to engage in CBT for sustainable development and social, economic, and cultural implications on CBT management.

**Table 3: Sustainability of Community-based Tourism**

Sustainability Of Cummunity-Based Tourism In Northern Samar	Mean	Interpretation
Economic		
Weighted Mean	3.69	Sustainable
Socio-Cultural		
Weighted Mean	3.90	Sustainable
Environmental		
Weighted Mean	3.64	Sustainable
Grand Weighted Mean	3.74	Sustainable

To test the relationship between the profile of tourism players and the success factors affecting the sustainability of community based tourism, multiple regression analysis was applied. Overall relationship shown in Table 4 has R-value of .225 which considered weak relationship. The r-square value of .051 means that the 5.1 percent of the variance in the success factors can be attributed to the profile of tourism players. The result of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showed that an F-value of 3.237 with a significant value of .004 is lesser than the margin of error level of 0.05. The null hypothesis that there is no correlation between profile of the tourism players and the success factors affecting the sustainability of community-based tourism was therefore rejected. This means that there is a significant correlation between profile of tourism players and success factors affecting the sustainability of community based tourism in Northern Samar. Particularly, only monthly family income, has a significant correlation to the factors affecting sustainability. It implies that the higher the monthly income of the family, the higher it affects the success factors of Community-based tourism.



**Table 4: Correlation Between Profile of Tourism Players and Success Factors**

R	R Square	F-value	Significant Value	Interpretation
.225 <sup>a</sup>	.051	3.237	.004	Significant
Model	Beta	P-Value	Sig.	Interpretation
SEX	.051	.984	.326	Not Significant
AGE	-.112	-1.948	.052	Not Significant
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	-.068	-1.260	.208	Not Significant
CIVIL STATUS	-.069	-1.237	.217	Not Significant
OCCUPATION	.092	1.535	.126	Not Significant
MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME	-.138	-2.305	.022	Significant

\*0.05 level of Significance

To test if there is a significant relationship between the success factors and the sustainability of community-based tourism in Northern Samar, multiple regression was also applied. Overall relationship shown in Table of Model Summary resulted to an R-value of .769 which considered high relationship. The R-square value of .591 means that 60 percent of the variance in the sustainability can be attributed to the success factors. Result of the Analysis of variance (ANOVA) with an F-value of 105.309 with a significant value of .000 which is less than the margin of error level 0.05. The null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the success factors and sustainability of community-based tourism therefore, is rejected. The result showed that there is a significant relationship between the success factors and sustainability of community-based tourism in Northern Samar and among the success factors of tourism, in terms of community participation, community organization, government support and awareness has a significant relationship with the sustainability affecting community-based tourism in Northern Samar, only the benefits does not have a significant relationship with the sustainability of community-based tourism which means that community engagement is really an important factor in the sustainability of community-based tourism in Northern Samar. However, the data implied that whether the community are benefited or not, it does not affect the sustainability of Community-based tourism as a whole.

**Table 5: Relationship Between Success Factors and Sustainability of Community-based Tourism**

R	R Square	F-value	Significant Value	Interpretation
.769 <sup>a</sup>	.591	105.309	.000	Significant
Model	Beta	P - Value	Sig.	Interpretation
Community Participation	.268	3.936	.000	Significant
Benefits	.070	1.252	.211	Not Significant
Community Organization	-.120	-2.017	.044	Significant
Government Support	.312	4.907	.000	Significant
Awareness	.300	5.513	.000	Significant

\*05 level of Significance

Table 6 showed problems encountered in the sustainability of Community-based tourism has the weighted mean of 2.89 interpreted as “serious”. First in rank is the item that states “there is no safety and security of the tourist in the destination area”, interpreted as “serious”. Ranked 2.5<sup>th</sup> are the items that states “tourist sites have no available Wi-Fi/internet/mobile service/signal and connection” and “the residence do not participate in programs that can sustain the Community-Based Tourism” with the mean of 2.99 interpreted as “serious” problem. Ranked 13<sup>th</sup> or the lowest item was natural scenery is damaged by many constructions related to CBT with the mean of 2.78 interpreted as “serious”. This implies that the problems identified needs to be given more attention in order to sustain the community-based tourism in Northern Samar.

**Table 6: Problems Encountered in Sustainability of CBT**

Problems Encountered	Rank	Mean	Interpretation
There is no safety and security of the tourist in the destination area.	1	3.00	Serious
Tourist sites have no available Wi-Fi/internet/mobile services signal and connection.	2.5	2.99	Serious
The residence do not participate in programs that can sustain the Community-Based Tourism.	2.5	2.99	Serious
There is no adequate parking space with security.	4.5	2.91	Serious
There is water shortage in the tourist site.	4.5	2.91	Serious
Provision for electricity is insufficient.	6	2.89	Serious
There is no sufficient number of accommodation available for tourists.	7	2.88	Serious
Tourism sites are not yet accessible.	9	2.84	Serious
Lack of cooperation between private and public sector is evident.	9	2.84	Serious
The overall cost of living is higher because of Community-Based Tourism.	9	2.84	Serious
There is lack of government support in tourism sector	12	2.83	Serious
Natural scenery is damaged by many constructions related to CBT.	13	2.78	Serious
Weighted Mean		2.89	Serious

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings revealed that among the 371 respondents there are more male than female who were middle-aged adult, high school graduate, married, fishermen and had a family income below the poverty threshold. The success factors of community-based tourism in Northern Samar in terms of community participation such as decision making, legal aspect, implementation, and evaluation; as well as the benefit community organization; government support; and awareness on natural resources were “very successful”. The level of sustainability of community-based tourism in terms of economic; socio-cultural and environmental were “sustainable”. There is a no correlation between socio-economic profile and success factors affecting the sustainability of community based tourism. However, there is a significant relationship between success factors and sustainability of community-based tourism in Northern Samar. Among the problems encountered in the sustainability of CBT, first in rank is the item that states the residence do not participate in programs that can sustain the Community-Based Tourism.

In the light of the major findings the following conclusions were drawn: As to socio-economic profile, it can be concluded that most of the tourism players are mature enough to do their responsibilities; however, most of them have low educational attainment and might have lack technical skills in managing the CBT for it to be very sustainable as well as alleviate their monthly family income to be above the poverty threshold. The data on success factors affecting community-based tourism showed “very successful”, however, the factor on awareness on natural resources got the lowest weighted mean of 3.71, it can be concluded that community as well as tourists were not fully aware of the programs that create awareness of the natural resources. Although the level of sustainability of community-based tourism in Northern Samar is “sustainable”, it can be concluded that there is still room for improvement for it to be “very sustainable”. It can be concluded young generations or the youth are not that participative in CBT. It can also be concluded that the socio-economic profile of tourism players, such as monthly family income, significantly correlates to the success of community-based tourism; and the level of sustainability of community-based tourism in Northern Samar greatly depends on the success factors affecting CBT. However, whether the community are benefited or not, it does not affect the sustainability of Community-based tourism as a whole.

Relative to the findings of the study, the following recommendations are hereby proposed:

1. Since most of the tourism players are high school graduate, it is highly recommended that tourism officials give trainings to enhance their knowledge and technical skills in managing CBT, youth should also be involved in CBT who could produce innovative tourism products and create ways to increase profit to augment their monthly family income at least above the poverty threshold.
2. Provincial tourism should coordinate with the Local Government Unit and CBT players to create programs, ordinances rules and guidelines on the awareness of natural resources.
3. CBT players can innovate locally made products that could marketed to tourists.
4. Community members should participate and engage in all tourism activities from, planning, organizing, managing, decision making, monitoring and evaluation.
5. Government should continuously create programs and support the CBT.
6. Programs on awareness on natural resources should be implemented in order for better sustainability of community-based tourism in Northern Samar.
7. CBT players should consider hiring security guards to make sure that the safety and security of tourists in the area.

8. Related studies should be conducted to provide data or more information that will be relevant to the sustainability of community-based tourism.

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