

## Sustainable Tourism Development Needs in the Province of Cavite, Philippines

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**Abstract:** This study aims to create a sustainable tourism development plan for the province of Cavite. The province has an established tourism industry in few areas but there is no tourism development plan to guide this development. This study explored the tourism development needs of the province through interviews, literature review and observation. The study revealed the need to develop identified areas of infrastructure and socio-economic dimension. Results indicates the need to develop the support services for tourism, first, before developing the tourism industry itself. A research process framework was also recommend to direct succeeding studies in the area.

**Key words:** Tourism planning, tourism development, sustainable tourism, needs assessment, Cavite

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### INTRODUCTION

The province of Cavite is a province located south of Metro Manila. The province is notable in the areas of history, culture, culinary, leisure, wellness, sports, adventure, ecotourism and agritourism. In 2013, the province received 1,775,531 foreign and domestic tourists. Most of these tourists visit the city of Tagaytay while some tourists visit the municipality of Kawit. The province's proximity to Metro Manila provides an opportunity to attract big numbers of visitors. On the other hand, the province's proximity to Metro Manila means most tourists stay <24 h.

The tourism industry of the province is highly developed in few areas while other areas are underdeveloped. The most developed destination is the City of Tagaytay where most of the accommodation establishments, restaurants and attractions are found. Other major attractions are found in other cities and municipalities, but their distance to other tourist attractions and tourism facilities makes it difficult to establish a good tourism circuit.

The researchers have observed that the more developed sites receive more share of the positive and negative impacts. This is true especially in the case of Tagaytay who recently experienced a tremendous increase in tourism infrastructure development and tourist arrival. However, the city has suffered increase in heavy traffic, increased pressure on natural resources, leakage of expenditure and increased influence of non-locals.

Presently, no tourism development plan exists in the region and the province of Cavite which echoes the previous studies (Notorio, 2010). Initial literature review revealed that there are tourism-related development plans in the province such as the Cavite Tourism Plan and the CALABARZON Regional Development Plan. However, these plans lack the details needed in a tourism development plan. Also, these plans do not identify its main thrust based on the inclusive destination concept (Department of Tourism, 2011). Furthermore, these plans do not emphasize sustainability.

This study was commissioned, by the institution where the researchers work. This study is the first phase of a multi-stage research to create a tourism development plan for the province.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to create a tourism development plan, a baseline data must be present. An exploratory research design was adapted for this purpose. Exploratory research helps to identify the gaps and formulate research questions needed for the succeeding phases of this research. The study utilized triangulation method to achieve this purpose. Specifically, interview, secondary literature review and observation were the methods used. The interview respondents were seven informants, determined using purposive sampling. These informants are regional, provincial, city and municipal tourism officers of the region and the province. Both developed and

underdeveloped tourism areas were represented. The secondary literature examined two documents: the Cavite Socio-Economic and Physical Profile 1 and the Tourism Code of the Province of Cavite 5. These two documents are the only legal and public documents that contain baseline data that is of use to this study. The observation was conducted to validate the findings from the two methods used. Participant observation was used and observed phenomenon was noted accordingly.

The data obtained from the three methods were analyzed using open coding, axial coding and selective coding. The result of the coding was further ranked based on its importance and implication to the tourism development of the province of Cavite. This was achieved using a pragmatic approach of focus group discussion among the researchers. Each researcher represents a specialization in one of the following areas: tourism development, tourism legislation, marketing, heritage tourism and events management.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results of the interview revealed that tourism is not part of the comprehensive land use plan of the province. However, a small portion of the province in the south and southwestern part were designated as protected area. Interviews also revealed that tourism development is not among the top priority of the provincial government. This is evidenced by the lower budget allocation to tourism, as compared to some of the neighboring provinces and the budget from the previous political administration.

Another, major problem is the failure of the provincial tourism office to regularly convene the tourism officers among the different cities and municipalities of the province. This problem is due to difference in political affiliations. In fact, the intended methodology for this study is to conduct a focus group discussion among the tourism officers. But the provincial tourism office has difficulty in convening them which prompted the change in methodology.

Another problem is the monitoring of the tourism statistics of the province. Many of the tourism establishments fail to submit a report to its respective tourism office. Other identified needs of the province are infrastructure, especially clean toilets near and enroute to the tourist destination. It was said that tourists have complained on the poor sanitation in some toilets areas among tourist sites in the province.

Meanwhile, the literature review revealed several needs. Solid waste disposal is one of the greatest challenges that the province faces. The municipality of

Silang has no clear manner of waste disposal and the municipality of Magallanes does not collect garbage. Presently, Cavite has no sanitary landfill. Instead, the province has several dump sites and material recovery facilities. However, these dump sites and facilities are not enough given the volume of waste produced in the province. This is aggravated by the solid waste coming from Metro Manila. These findings reflect the low ranking of the Philippines in terms of access to improved sanitation 8.

Safety and security is also an important concern of the province. The province has a shortage of 1,603 personnel based on a 1:1000 police to population ratio. There is also a shortage in firemen with a deficiency of 1,548 based on a 1:2000 firemen ratio. In terms of crime, the province has experienced a gradual increase of crime that coincides with the increase in population. This means that, should the cities and municipalities begin attracting tourists, there will be an additional pressure on the limited human resources for safety and security. This finding also reflects ranking of the Philippines (Ennifer and Chiesa, 2013) in the area of business cost on crime and violence (103rd) and reliability of police services (97th).

The provincial government legislated the Tourism Code of the province of Cavite. Under the code, the Cavite Provincial Tourism Board shall be the leading legislative body while the Provincial Tourism Office shall be the highest executive body. The tourism code has a sustainable approach to tourism and tourism development with priority given to the socio-cultural and economic benefits of tourism. This reflects another study 9 stating that socio-demographic impacts of tourism are insufficiently addressed within developing economies 10. Although, it can be argued that the focus of tourism development should be based on the area with the widest context, in this case, the environmental sector because both the socio-cultural and the economic sectors are dependent of the natural environment.

The preservation of the society and culture was prioritized followed by the economic development. Infrastructure should be developed and this development should adapt to technological changes (Firoiu and Croitoru, 2013). The environmental component has the least number of sub-sections but was identified as the top priority. The tourism code also required certification and accreditation for the private sector of the tourism industry. The code has mandated the incorporation of the culture of tourism in all levels of education. Under this mandate, all field trips and tours among schools in the province shall be required to visit at least one site in Cavite. The code also discussed the long-term intention of not allowing non-Cavitenos to guide tourists within the

province. Presently, the law states that foreigners cannot guide tourists in Cavite, except when there is no available tour guides. Also, all tour guides must be accredited by the Department of Tourism. The tour operators and travel agencies, specifically the Cavite Travel and Tours Association, shall be given priority to handle the tours of the province, especially among educational institutions.

The researchers' observation confirmed the aforementioned findings. However, it has to be noted the problem in traffic was not reflected in the interview and literature analysis. Traffic is a major problem especially along Emilio Aguinaldo Highway, in the cities of Bacoor, Imus and Dasmariñas. This problem worsens during road construction, monsoon and Christmas season. Flooding is also a perennial problem, especially among the first two districts. Heavy rains will almost definitely make the major access roads impassable, halting the traffic flow. Further observation revealed the need to tourism development will almost certainly bring in more tourists in a place. This means an increase on the negative effect on the environment, especially if the host community is not prepared. More people mean more solid waste, more traffic and more consumption of water, power and other utilities. Also, tourism development contributes to the vulnerability of the destination (Calgaro *et al.*, 2014). An increase in people also means an increase in potential crime and increased safety and security concern. So depending on how much tourist a particular location will want to target, that location must be sure that it has sufficient support services that will allow tourism to flourish. The results of this study differs contradicts the findings of another study (Monterrubio *et al.*, 2012) stating that tourism does not contribute to crime. On the other hand, the same study (Calabro and Spina, 2014) points out that tourism increases traffic. The vulnerability of the resources of the province may aggravate with the increase of tourism activity. Hence, there is a need to assess the tourism impacts to guide the tourism development. The development needs of the province of Cavite may be summarized and ranked into the following:

- Management of solid waste
- Protection and management of water resources
- Management and alleviation of traffic
- Improvement of the safety and security, especially increasing manpower of policemen and firemen
- Inclusion of the Tourism Enterprise Zone in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan
- Mapping, restoration and development of tourism resources
- Infrastructure development, specifically on roads, drainage and transport terminals

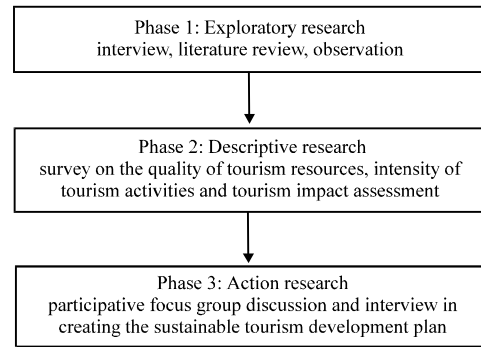


Fig. 1: Sustainable tourism development research process framework

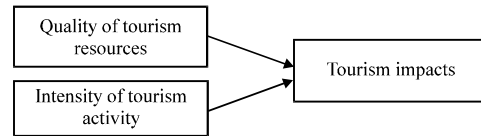


Fig. 2: Tourism impact assessment framework

- Human resource development focusing on management and tourism operational skills
- Development of new and existing attractions
- Diversification of tourism product and service offerings

The researchers also recommended a research process framework (Fig. 1) to direct the succeeding phases of the study. A conceptual framework shown in Fig. 2 is recommended for the Phase 2 of the study. This framework is recommended to conduct a regression analysis to determine how the quality of tourism resources and the level of tourism activity affect the tourism impacts. The perception of the tourism impacts may be based on the quality of tourism resources (Kreag, 2001) and the intensity of tourism activity. In determining the tourism impacts, it is important to involve the residents (Lee, 2012; Vareiro *et al.*, 2013). The framework will serve as an important input in drafting the sustainable tourism development plan.

## CONCLUSION

The tourism industry of the province of Cavite has yet to achieve its full potential, especially the municipalities with underdeveloped tourism industry. The tourism development needs are few but important. There is a need to address the support system first before developing the core tourism industry to make the tourism development sustainable. When the support system is

developed, the residents and the tourists, as well as the environment will benefit. Further researches are also needed in the areas of tourism impact. The quality of tourism resources needs to be evaluated and the intensity of tourism activity must be measured.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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