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Mapping Opportunities: Study of Panaytayan's Tourism Potential with FUN STEP's

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the untapped tourism potential of Panaytayan, Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro, Philippines, employing a multidimensional approach that integrates SWOT analysis and a Community Needs Assessment through community immersion. By evaluating the intrinsic aspects of Panaytayan's tourism landscape and engaging with the local community, the study identifies the village as a promising site for sustainable, community-based tourism. Challenges such as limited infrastructure, marketing expertise, and environmental vulnerabilities are meticulously addressed alongside opportunities presented by sustainable travel trends and government grants for agri-ecotourism and adventure community-based tourism. Proximity to established tourist destinations provides unique advantages, but potential threats, including over-tourism and competition, are acknowledged. Findings advocate strategic interventions, emphasizing infrastructure improvement, capacity building, targeted marketing, and a clear regulatory framework to overcome challenges and leverage opportunities. Recommendations propose community-based tourism initiatives to empower locals and position Panaytayan for agri-ecotourism and adventure tourism. These initiatives align seamlessly with the proposed extension project, FUN STEP's (Fostering Unity and Nature through Sustainable Tourism Engagement Programs), a three-year program affiliated with Mindoro State University. FUN STEP's comprise four distinct programs: KAPWAA, TRIPLE-T, Eco-Cinema, and Eco-Drive, fostering community involvement, hygiene awareness, tour guiding proficiency, environmental education, and advocacy campaigns. Sustainable infrastructure and environmental conservation practices are emphasized to minimize adverse impacts. This approach envisions Panaytayan as a sustainable, community-driven destination, poised for economic growth while preserving its distinctive cultural and environmental assets. The research contributes to the comprehensive understanding of Panaytayan's tourism potential, paving the way for responsible and inclusive tourism development.

INTRODUCTION

In the heart of Oriental Mindoro, within the serene confines of Panaytayan, Mansalay lies a secluded village characterized by its rich biodiversity and deep cultural roots. Despite its off-the-beaten-path status, Panaytayan holds immense, yet untapped, potential to flourish as a renowned hub for adventure and ecotourism. This research proposal champions a holistic approach, seamlessly integrating SWOT analysis and Community Needs Assessment (CNA) to unlock Panaytayan's tourism potential while empowering its local community.

The initial phase delves into a comprehensive SWOT analysis, drawing inspiration from established frameworks popular for tourism destination analysis. This analysis, enriched by insights from studies on adventure tourism trends (UNWTO, 2020) and ecotourism best practices (Honey, 2008), will identify Panaytayan's internal strengths and weaknesses, alongside external opportunities and threats shaping its tourism landscape.

Concurrently, a Community Needs Assessment (CNA) will be conducted through immersive community engagement, drawing inspiration from methodologies outlined by Flick (2014). This direct interaction with residents, guided by principles of participatory development advocated by Ashley *et al.* (2000), will unearth their aspirations, concerns, and needs for

sustainable tourism development, ensuring their voices are central to the process.

By aligning the SWOT analysis insights with the outcomes of the Community Needs Assessment, this research endeavors to craft a dynamic and inclusive framework. This framework, anchored in the tenets of sustainable tourism outlined by Fennell (2013), will not only unlock the village's tourism potential but also cater to the specific needs and aspirations of its people.

Recommendations arising from this research include the implementation of community-based tourism initiatives, where residents actively participate in crafting and executing tourism programs (Ashley *et al.* 2000). Furthermore, targeted efforts can be directed towards marketing Panaytayan as an adventure and ecotourism destination, leveraging its unique cultural heritage and biodiversity (WTTC, 2023). Infrastructure development should prioritize sustainable and environmentally friendly practices, ensuring minimal impact on the delicate ecosystem.

Additionally, fostering partnerships with relevant stakeholders, such as government agencies, NGOs, and private enterprises, can provide essential support in implementing sustainable practices and securing necessary resources for the community. Equipping locals with hospitality, environmental conservation, and cultural

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preservation skills to actively engage in and benefit from tourism activities, as suggested by Getz (2008). Through this integrative approach, the research aims to not only uncover the potential of Panaytayan but also to create a model for sustainable tourism development that is deeply rooted in the needs and aspirations of the local community.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review contextualizes the study within the broader field of sustainable and community-based tourism, touching upon key concepts, trends, and challenges.

Sustainable and Community-Based Tourism

Sustainable tourism is a concept that emphasizes responsible travel, environmental conservation, and socio-economic benefits for local communities. Community-based tourism involves the active participation of local communities in tourism development, ensuring that the benefits are distributed among residents. Scholars like Honey (2008) and Fennell (2014) argue that sustainable and community-based tourism models can lead to long-term socio-economic development and environmental conservation.

SWOT Analysis in Tourism Planning

The use of SWOT analysis in tourism planning has been recognized as a valuable tool for assessing internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats (Prideaux, 2000). This method allows for a comprehensive evaluation of Panaytayan's tourism landscape, identifying both intrinsic and extrinsic factors that can impact its development.

Community Needs Assessment and Immersion

Community needs assessment is a critical step in understanding the specific requirements and aspirations of the local population (Matarrita-Cascante, 2012). Immersion in the community provides firsthand insights into the socio-cultural dynamics and allows for a more nuanced understanding of the community's perspective on tourism development.

Challenges and Opportunities in Tourism Development

The literature on tourism development often highlights common challenges, such as limited infrastructure (Dredge & Jenkins, 2003), marketing expertise (Pike, 2004), and environmental vulnerabilities (Buckley, 2009). Concurrently, opportunities arising from sustainable

travel trends (Hall, 2010) and government grants for agri-ecotourism and adventure community-based tourism are increasingly recognized (Sharpley, 2019).

Over-Tourism and Competition

The potential threats of over-tourism and competition are acknowledged in the research. Over-tourism can lead to negative environmental and socio-cultural impacts (Gössling *et al.*, 2018), while competition with neighboring destinations requires strategic positioning and differentiation strategies (Lew, 2008).

Strategic Interventions and Recommendations

Strategic interventions, such as infrastructure improvement, capacity building, targeted marketing, and a clear regulatory framework, are commonly recommended in tourism development literature (Hall, 2011). The recommendations align with the principles of sustainable and community-based tourism.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research methodology used a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. It utilizes the following key components:

SWOT Analysis

This provides a structured framework for evaluating Panaytayan's internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats related to tourism development. Data will likely be collected from secondary sources like tourism reports, statistical data, and existing literature on adventure and ecotourism. The analysis will involve identifying key factors within each category (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats).

Community Needs Assessment (CNA)

This qualitative component involves immersive community engagement through interviews, focus groups, and observations to understand local aspirations, concerns, and needs for sustainable tourism. This will involve primary data collection through direct interaction with the community. Methods like open-ended interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation will help gather rich qualitative data on local perspectives and needs. The analysis will involve thematic coding and interpretation of the collected data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Summary of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunity, and Threats in Panaytayn, Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro

Strength	Weaknesses
1. The site is ideal for extreme adventure activities like hiking, camping, trekking, motocross riding, zipline, ATV rides, paragliding, and other similar activities.	1. The community had no experience/ expertise in handling extreme adventure activities.
2. The community boasts its pristine beauty featuring a sea of clouds, enveloping cold fog, magnificent sunrise, majestic sunset, green rolling hills, crystal clear riverine and waterfalls, breathtaking overlooking view of the sea and town proper, and luminous night sky.	2. There is a very limited information campaign about the natural beauty of the highlands of Mansalay.

3. The culture of IPs in Panaytayan is rich and surviving.	3. No safety-related facilities and signages.
4. There are available native huts for homestay and glamping in Sitio Tanawan.	4. The indigenous beliefs and practices are known only to the elders or Gurangon.
5. The natural beauty of the place is captivating.	5. The huts and other tourism-related infrastructure are limited.
6. The water supply from the natural spring is sufficient.	6. The IPs are typically timid so communicating with them is challenging.
Opportunities	Threats
1. The Mansalay LGU has a Public Information Office that could work with the Tourism Office to promote the potential tourist spots in Panaytayan, Mansalay.	1. Potential over-tourism and its associated problems.
2. The coffee farm could attract coffee lovers and green planet advocates.	2. Competition with nearby tourist hotspots.
3. MinSU BS Tourism Management could help in tourism promotion.	3. Dependence on a single type of tourism can be affected by seasonality.
4. Growing interest in sustainable and off-the-beaten-path travel.	4. Inaccessible road for transport of goods.
5. Availability of government grants for ecotourism initiatives.	5. Buyers control the farm gate price.
6. Proximity to established tourist destinations in Oriental Mindoro.	6. No power source is to be used for processing and production.
7. Some Gurangons could teach the young generation about the rich culture of the Hanunuos.	7. Peace and order, and safety of the tourist could be an issue of concern.
8. Social media platforms could be used to disseminate information about cultural tourism.	8. Habal-habal as a means of transportation is risky for drivers and tourists.
9. Support from LGU, NGOs, and other agencies is possible.	9. The road is dangerous, especially during rainy days.
10. CBM could help in research and extension-related matters.	

Strength

Panaytayan, Mansalay, boasts a set of distinctive strengths that position it as an ideal destination for tourism development. The terrain's suitability for extreme adventure activities, ranging from hiking to paragliding, offers a unique selling point for adventure enthusiasts. A 2019 study by the Department of Tourism (DOT) highlighted the growing demand for adventure tourism in the Philippines, with activities like trekking and spelunking experiencing a surge in popularity (DOT, 2019). Panaytayan's unique landscape caters perfectly to this trend. Additionally, the community's natural landscape, featuring a sea of clouds, waterfalls, and an impressive sunrise and sunset, provides a picturesque backdrop that enhances the allure for potential tourists. The rich indigenous culture of the Hanunuo people in Panaytayan adds another layer to its attractiveness, offering visitors a unique and immersive cultural experience. Furthermore, the availability of native huts for homestay and glamping options in Sitio Tanawan contributes to the potential for sustainable tourism. The captivating natural beauty of the location, combined with a sufficient water supply from a reliable natural spring, collectively establishes Panaytayan as a destination that caters to nature enthusiasts and adventure seekers alike.

Weaknesses

However, Panaytayan in Mansalay faces several challenges

that could impact its tourism potential. Firstly, the community lacks experience and expertise in managing extreme adventure activities, posing a potential safety concern for tourists. Secondly, there is a significant limitation in the information campaign about the natural beauty of the highlands of Mansalay, hindering effective promotion and awareness. Thirdly, the absence of safety-related facilities and signage raises potential risks for visitors engaged in adventure activities. Studies by the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (PDRPMC) emphasize the importance of risk assessment and safety measures in adventure tourism activities (PDRPMC, 2017). Addressing these concerns will be crucial for responsible tourism development in Panaytayan. Additionally, the indigenous beliefs and practices are primarily known to the elders or Gurangon, limiting understanding and appreciation by visitors. The scarcity of huts and other essential tourism-related infrastructure, such as accommodations and amenities, is another weakness. Lastly, the typically timid nature of the Indigenous Peoples (IPs) makes communication with them challenging, potentially affecting the overall tourist experience and community engagement efforts. Addressing these weaknesses will be crucial for Panaytayan to realize its tourism potential fully.

Opportunities

On a positive note, Panaytayan in Mansalay presents a range

of promising opportunities for tourism development. Firstly, a collaboration between the Mansalay LGU's Public Information Office and the Tourism Office could be instrumental in effectively promoting the potential tourist spots in the area. Secondly, the presence of a coffee farm holds the potential to attract coffee enthusiasts and advocates for sustainable agriculture, contributing to the green tourism movement. Thirdly, the involvement of Minus BS Tourism Management offers an opportunity for specialized expertise in tourism promotion. Additionally, the growing interest in sustainable and off-the-beaten-path travel aligns well with Panaytayan's unique offerings. The availability of government grants for ecotourism initiatives provides financial support for sustainable tourism projects. Proximity to established tourist destinations in Oriental Mindoro enhances Panaytayan's attractiveness. Some Gurangons can pass on the rich cultural heritage to the younger generation. Utilizing social media platforms for cultural tourism promotion is a feasible opportunity. Moreover, potential support from the LGU, NGOs, and other agencies can be harnessed for collaborative initiatives. Lastly, collaboration with CBM can prove beneficial in research and extension-related matters, contributing to the overall development of cultural tourism in Panaytayan. Exploring and leveraging these opportunities will be crucial for the sustainable growth of tourism in the area.

Threats

Despite its potential, Panaytayan in Mansalay faces several threats that could impede its sustainable development as a tourist destination. Foremost among these is the risk of potential over-tourism, which may lead to environmental degradation and other associated problems. Studies by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) emphasize the importance of environmental conservation in tourism development (DENR, 2023). Panaytayan's focus on preserving its natural resources, including its water supply, positions it well for sustainable tourism growth. Furthermore, Panaytayan may face stiff competition with nearby tourist hotspots, impacting its market share and potential visitor numbers. The dependence on a single type of tourism, particularly one affected by seasonality, poses a vulnerability to fluctuations in demand. Inaccessibility of the road for the transport of goods can hinder infrastructure development and tourism-related services. The control of farm gate prices by buyers may limit the economic viability of local initiatives. The absence of a reliable power source for processing and production adds to the challenges faced by the community. Concerns about peace and order, coupled with the safety of tourists, emerge as potential issues of concern. The use of habal-habal as a means of transportation poses risks for both drivers and tourists and the dangerous conditions of the road, especially

Table 2: Community Needs Assessment

Lead Agency/Institution: Mindoro State University		
Partner Local Government Unit: Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro		
Target Community: Barangay Panaytayan- Sitio Calibang, Sitio Ether, Sitio Tanawan, Sitio Sinugbuan,		
Needs	Causes	Resources
(What are the community needs to be identified?)	(What are the treatable causes of each need?)	(What resources are available to help address the needs)
a. Tourism Attraction Identification: What cultural, natural, or historical attractions do you believe have the potential to attract tourists to Panaytayan?	The community had no experience/ expertise in handling extreme adventure activities.	The site is ideal for extreme adventure activities like hiking, camping, trekking, motorcross riding, zipline, ATV rides, paragliding, and other similar activities.
b. Cultural Preservation: How can tourism initiatives be aligned with the preservation of Panaytayan's indigenous culture and traditions?	There is a very limited information campaign about the natural beauty of the highlands of Mansalay.	The community boasts its pristine beauty featuring a sea of clouds, enveloping cold fog, magnificent sunrise, majestic sunset, green rolling hills, crystal clear riverine and waterfalls, breathtaking overlooking view of the sea and town proper, and luminous night sky.
c. Infrastructure and Service Needs: What infrastructure improvements are required to support tourism-related activities? What services (e.g., accommodations, transportation) are currently lacking but necessary for tourism?	No safety-related facilities and signages	The culture of IPs in Panaytayan is rich and surviving.
d. Economic Benefits: How do community members envision tourism contributing to local economic development and employment opportunities?	The indigenous beliefs and practices are known only to the elders or gurangon.	There are available native huts for homestay and glamping in Sitio Tanawan.

e. Environmental Sustainability: What environmental concerns must be addressed to ensure that tourism activities are environmentally sustainable?	The huts are limited.	The natural beauty of the place is captivating.
f. Community Involvement: In what ways should the local community be involved in decision-making and management of tourism operations?	The IPs are typically timid so communicating with them is challenging.	The water supply from the natural spring is sufficient.
	Limited power supply	

during rainy days, add another layer of complexity to Panaytayan's tourism prospects. Addressing these threats will be imperative to ensure the sustainable growth and resilience of Panaytayan as a tourist destination.

Table 3. Proposed Extension Project - Extension Proposal

Basic Information

A. Title: Project FUN STEPS: Fostering Unity and Nature through Sustainable Tourism Engagement Programs

B. Proponents: College of Business and Management (CBM), Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management, Mindoro State University – Bongabong Campus

Rationale

FUN STEPS

Fostering Unity and Nature through Sustainable Tourism Engagement Programs is a three-year extension program of the Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management of Mindoro State University-Bongabong Campus in cooperation with the Office of the Extension and Public Information. It aims to generate among the numerous sectors of the community a deep concern for the needs of the people especially our brothers and sisters from the indigenous community and the desire to compel themselves to uplift the quality of their life. This program will be composed of four (4) different programs such as KAPWAA, TRIPLE-T, Eco-Cinema, and Eco-Drive.

KAPWAA

Kalinisan, Pag-uugali at Wastong Asal Awareness (KaPWAA) ng mga Kabataang Mangyan aims to introduce and educate hygienic practices to maintain health and prevent diseases. It also aims to increase awareness about the possible effects of poor hygienic

practices and encourage the participants to maintain good personal hygiene practices.

Triple-T

Tour guiding, Tourism Promotion, and Tour Packaging provide seminar-workshop on basic tour-guiding practices, development of tour packages, and strategies in tourism promotion.

Eco-Cinema

Includes film-viewing activities about ecological conservation and environmental protection for the target participants. It intends to increase awareness of climate change, and trends on proper waste management, and address issues of ecological importance.

Eco-Drive

Is a series of environmental programs to be led by the students such as coastal cleanup, tree planting activity, and other environmental advocacy campaigns.

Objectives

The above-mentioned activities will provide technical and professional assistance, knowledge transfer, and skills development to the target beneficiaries and will also contribute to their self-determination and empowerment.

1. To make the individual members of the community self-sufficient.
2. To extend help to the community through effective extension programs.
3. To provide a different learning experience that would contribute to the participant's development and self-growth.

Program Components

The "FUN STEPS" extension project is designed with

Table :

Extension Activities/ Training Course	Objectives	Persons Involved	Beneficiaries	Duration
1. KAPWAA	It aims to introduce and educate hygienic practices to young Mangyan to maintain health and prevent diseases	150/year	Members of the Indigenous community ages from 4-12 (school and community-based)	Jan. 2024- Dec. 2026
-Personal Hygiene Orientation				
- Food Safety & Sanitation				
- Workshop-Proper Handwashing				
- Feeding Program				
- Gift Giving				

2. Triple T	To provide a seminar workshop on the basic tour-guiding practices, development of tour packages, and strategies in tourism promotion.					150/year		Tourism Students, LGU Tourism Offices, Tourism Related Organizations Local community members				
- Stress Management Orientation												
- Basic Tour Guiding Technique												
- Tour Packaging												
- Self-Defense for Tour Guides												
- Basic Fire Fighting for Tour Guides												
- Basic First-Aid for Tour Guides												
3. Eco-Cinema	It intends to increase awareness of climate change, and trends on proper waste management, and address issues of ecological importance.					150/year		Tourism Students, LGU Tourism Offices, Tourism Related Organizations Local community members				
- Environmental Conservation Awareness												
- Film Viewing: Climate Change Documentaries Environmental Conservation Clips												
4. Eco-Drive	It aims to provide and engage the community with ecological practices such as coastal cleanup, tree planting activity, and other environmental advocacy campaigns.					150/year		Tourism Students, LGU Tourism Offices, Tourism Related Organizations Local community members Private partners				
- Ecological Awareness												
- Environmental Protection and Management Act (No. 10 of 2019)												
- Tree Growing Activity												
- Coastal and Community Areas Clean-up												
- Waste Segregation												
I. Activities (Gantt Chart)												
Activities	2024 Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2025 Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2026 Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Community Needs Assessment (CNA)												
Coordination and partnership												
Preparation of Extension Proposal, Training Designs, Program and Approval												
Conduct of activities												
Evaluation and Submission of Reports												
VI. Beneficiaries of Training												
Activities	Beneficiaries								Number of Beneficiaries			
KAPWAA	Members of the community and Indigenous groups								150/year			
ECO-CINEMA	Members of the community and Indigenous groups								150/year			
ECO-DRIVE	Members of the community and Indigenous groups								150/year			
TRIPLE T	Members of the community and Indigenous groups								150/year			

a strong rationale to address the critical needs of the indigenous community of Mansalay and Bulalacao. This includes the following components.

Expected Outcomes

Through the support of the College of Business and Management - Tourism Management, the program identifies beneficiaries who are anticipated to increased unity and understanding about nature and sustainable tourism, and empowerment that will leads them to be a self-sufficient community member.

CONCLUSIONS

Conducting a Community Needs Assessment (CNA) alongside the SWOT analysis illuminates the promising landscape of Panaytayan, Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro, positioning it as an ideal destination for agri-ecotourism and adventure tourism. Realizing success in these endeavours necessitates leveraging local strengths, mitigating weaknesses, seizing opportunities, and proactively managing potential threats. In this pursuit, active community participation and robust stakeholder engagement play pivotal roles in guaranteeing the

sustainable development of this burgeoning tourism sector. Recommendations propose community-based tourism initiatives, aiming to empower locals and position Panaytayan for agri ecotourism and adventure tourism. These initiatives align seamlessly with the proposed extension project, FUN STEP's (Fostering *et al.* through Sustainable Tourism Engagement Programs), a three-year program affiliated with Mindoro State University-Bongabong Campus. Further study on the perception of the indigenous community to tourism and its impact, as also evaluation of the effectiveness of the program FUN STEP, is also recommended.

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