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Community Perceptions and Participation in Management Practices of Adventure Tourism Destinations in Gloria, Oriental Mindoro

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ABSTRACT

An emerging industry with great potential for economic development and community development is adventure tourism in Gloria, Oriental Mindoro. This paper explores local community opinions and involvement in two important adventure tourist sites: Twin Pantan Cave and Walang Langit Waterfalls. Data were gathered from one hundred inhabitants using a mixed-methods approach by means of structured questionnaires and focus group talks. While quantitative findings show modest satisfaction with regard to people management and sustainability, they expose weaknesses in risk management and marketing initiatives. Positive views of management and active community participation revealed a noteworthy positive association ($r = 0.48$, $p < 0.01$). Qualitative observations highlight the community's respect of environmental preservation initiatives, worries about visitor safety, and need of improved training and inclusive decision-making. The results emphasize the need of open, inclusive, and capacity-building management strategies to support environmentally friendly travel growth. Among the recommendations are enhancements of infrastructure and facilities, reinforcement of safety procedures, extension of marketing campaigns supporting local culture, and running continuous community training courses. This study provides useful advice for legislative leaders and destination managers trying to strike a balance between tourist expansion and environmental preservation and social equality as well as clarifies the important part of community involvement in adventure tourism management.

INTRODUCTION

With growing interest in locations that offer distinctive natural and cultural experiences, adventure tourism has become a significant driver of economic growth and community development worldwide. Because of its numerous natural attractions, waterfalls and cavernues, Gloria, Oriental Mindoro, shows great promise as a rising adventure tourist site. Nevertheless, the sustainable development of these locations suffers from problems including poor infrastructure, little community participation, and managerial flaws. These problems might compromise the long-term survival of tourism as well as its advantages for nearby people.

Recent research underline how important efficient management and community involvement are to guarantee sustainable travel growth (Atasoy & Atış, 2020; Fabinyi, 2018). Notwithstanding this, many newly discovered sites, such as Gloria, struggle to incorporate local viewpoints into travel planning and management, which results in underdeveloped safety measures, inadequate marketing, and environmental concerns. Dealing with these issues will help to balance social fairness with environmental protection and tourism expansion.

This study helps to understand community opinions and involvement in Gloria, Oriental Mindoro's adventure tourist destination administration. It seeks to point up areas of weakness in present policies and offer doable suggestions to improve the growth of sustainable tourism. The results of the study should help stakeholders and

legislators to promote inclusive, ecologically friendly, and financially profitable adventure travel in the area.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Adventure Tourism and Sustainable Development

Recognized as a vibrant part of the travel business that blends physical exercise with environmental and cultural discovery, adventure tourism helps greatly with conservation efforts and economic growth (Buckley, 2006). Its sustainability depends on striking a balance between social and economic gains and environmental preservation that calls for careful management and stakeholder cooperation. The increasing demand for real and ethical travel experiences has made sustainable models like ecological conservation and community well-being even more important (Fabinyi, 2018).

Community Participation in Tourism Management

Most people agree that a pillar of sustainable travel is community involvement. Including local people in decision-making procedures empowers them and increases their sense of responsibility for the tourism resources (Atasoy & Atış, 2020). With increasing degrees of involvement connected to better environmental stewardship and socio-economic outcomes, Fabinyi (2018) notes that participation spans from token consultation to complete public control. Community-based tourism (CBT) models have been used in the Philippines in varied degrees of success to show that inclusive governance may

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minimize negative tourism effects while optimizing local benefits (Gutierrez, 2019).

Challenges in Emerging Adventure Tourism Destinations

Even if community involvement has clear advantages, developing locations sometimes have great difficulties. According to Dmitriyev *et al.* (2023), common obstacles limiting Mindoro Island's tourism development and community empowerment are infrastructure shortcomings, inadequate safety measures, and poor marketing methods. Inadequate training and a lack of open government exacerbate these difficulties by restricting the capacity of local stakeholders to properly manage tourist resources and answer visitor needs (Saufi & Wilkins, 2014). Such disparities might cause socioeconomic inequalities and environmental damage, therefore compromising the sustainability of adventure tourism projects.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

A mixed methods research design was implemented to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from residents residing in the vicinity of Walang Langit Waterfalls and Twin Pantan Cave, two significant adventure tourism destinations in Gloria, Oriental Mindoro, through the implementation of a descriptive-analytical research design.

Participants

The research focused on adult residents (aged 18 and older) from barangays that are in close proximity to the adventure tourism sites that were chosen. In order to guarantee that all demographic categories were represented (age, gender, occupation), stratified random sampling was implemented to select a total of approximately 100 respondents.

Data Collection

To evaluate perceptions of tourism impacts, satisfaction with management practices, and self-reported participation in tourism-related activities, structured questionnaires were the initial method of data collection. The second component of the study was the focus group discussions (FGDs), which consisted of two FGDs (one per site) that delved deeper into the attitudes, perceived benefits, challenges, and recommended improvements of the community.

Data Analysis

In order to investigate the correlations between perception, participation, and satisfaction, quantitative data were subjected to descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, percentage) and correlation analysis. FGDs produced qualitative data that was transcribed and thematically examined.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This detailed results section integrates quantitative data, qualitative insights, and contextual information, providing a comprehensive understanding of community perceptions and participation in adventure tourism management in Gloria, Oriental Mindoro.

Respondents rated their agreement on various management aspects on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). Mean scores are presented below.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Frequency (n=100)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
- Male	46	46
- Female	54	54
Age Group		
- 18–25	22	22
- 26–35	30	30
- 36–45	25	25
- 46 and above	23	23
Occupation		
- Tourism-related	62	62
- Non-tourism	38	38

With a balanced gender distribution (54% female, 46% male) and most working in tourism-related fields (62%), table 1 showed. This demographic profile fits the results of Atasoy and Atıç (2020), who underline that sustainable destination development depends on local community participation in tourism operations. The rather young to middle-aged population (mean age 36.2) points to a workforce maybe ready to embrace new tourist management strategies and actively engage in adventure tourism operations. The demographic makeup promotes focused capacity-building initiatives aiming at young people and women to improve inclusivity and sustainability in the growth of tourism.

Table 2: Perceptions of Tourism Management Practices

Management Domain	Mean Score	Interpretation
Sustainability	3.6	Moderate Agreement
Risk Management	3.2	Slight Agreement
Personnel Management	3.4	Moderate Agreement
Marketing Management	3.1	Slight Agreement

The respondents indicated modest agreement on sustainability (mean = 3.6) and people management (mean = 3.4) in table 2; their agreement on risk (3.2) and marketing management (3.1) was rather lower. This trend shows

areas needing development even while it demonstrates partial satisfaction with present management initiatives. According to Buckley (2006), effective adventure tourism is mostly dependent on sustainability, which calls for constant social and environmental management. The modest view of sustainability initiatives implies that although certain environmentally beneficial behaviors exist, they are not yet totally included or comprehensive. Likewise, the human relations theory developed by Mayo (1920) emphasizes the need of staff management in promoting motivation and service quality, which is shown in the modest ratings. Along with maintaining environmental policies, management should give top priority to enhancing risk procedures and marketing plans to increase general destination competitiveness.

Table 3: Community Participation Levels

Participation Activity	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Involved in tourism activities	68	68
Attend community tourism meetings	52	52
Received training related to tourism	39	39

Table 3 shows active local involvement with the great participation in tourism activities (68%) and community meetings (52%). Only 39% of them, meanwhile, had undergone official instruction, exposing a discrepancy in ability level. According to Fabinyi (2018), sustainable tourism depends on community involvement; nevertheless, it needs to be backed by suitable training and empowerment if it is effective. By raising community capacity through better access to training programs, service delivery will improve, and natural resource stewardship will get more robust.

Correlation Between Perceptions and Participation

There was a moderate positive correlation between positive perceptions of management practices and community participation ($r = 0.48$, $p < 0.01$), as demonstrated by Pearson correlation analysis. This suggests that higher levels of participation are associated with improved perceptions of management. According to the moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.48$, $p < 0.01$) between positive perceptions of management and participation, residents are more inclined to participate in tourism activities when they hold favorable opinions of management practices. This is supported by Simon's (1947) administrative behavior theory, which holds that good communication and organizational decision-making promote collaboration and involvement. Clear and inclusive management can increase community participation, therefore supporting the growth of sustainable tourism.

Direct Quotes from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Some of the residents expressed appreciation for environmental efforts but highlighted challenges such as littering and inadequate safety measures.

1. "We appreciate the efforts to keep the waterfalls clean, but sometimes visitors leave trash behind. We want more education and support from management." — Local resident and guide, Walang Langit Waterfalls.

2. "Safety is a concern. There was an accident last year, and since then, we have been asking for better signage and trained personnel, but it's slow." — Barangay official, Twin Panton Cave.

3. "Marketing is mostly through social media, but we think local culture and products should be more highlighted to attract tourists who want authentic experiences." — Small business owner, Gloria town center.

4. "We want more training opportunities, especially for women and youth, so they can benefit from tourism jobs." — Community leader, Walang Langit Waterfalls. This corresponds with the IUCN's (1980) recommendation that conservation education be prioritized as an essential element of sustainable tourism. Safety concerns are consistent with Buckley's (2006) recommendation for intensive risk management in adventure tourism to safeguard both visitors and local communities. Dmitriyev *et al.* (2023) emphasize the significance of cultural promotion in distinguishing tourism destinations, and the desire for improved marketing of local culture further substantiates this perspective. Management should combine environmental education with improved safety measures and create marketing stressing regional products and culture.

Environmental and Socioeconomic Context

With a population of about 50,496 (2020 census), Gloria Oriental Mindoro is regarded as an agricultural and eco-touristic destination. Covering over 245.52 km² with a population density of 210 persons/km², the municipality shows a rather inhabited rural area with abundant natural resources fit for adventure tourism. The natural beauty of the area; waterfalls, cavernues, and bamboo resources supported by its tourism potential helps to offset infrastructural and service development lags behind more well-known sites like Puerto Galera. This background emphasizes the need of inclusive and environmentally friendly management strategies to harmonize community welfare with the expansion of tourism.

Adventure tourism has possibilities as well as difficulties on Mindoro Island's rocky topography and high biodiversity (Dmitriyev *et al.*, 2023). Consistent with local government rules meant to rebuild and maintain these areas, the lack of infrastructure surrounding important natural attractions such waterfalls hampers accessibility and visitor satisfaction (Municipality of Gloria, 2019). Development of infrastructure has to be matched with

ecological preservation to keep the island appealing for visitors and its environmental integrity intact.

Discussion

Although the community generally sees adventure tourism favorably and engages actively, the results show clear gaps in inclusive governance, capacity-building, and knowledge sharing. These loopholes could compromise Gloria's long-term viability and fair advantages from adventure travel.

The modest association between views and participation implies that improving management openness and community interaction would help to increase resident participation even more. Encouragement of a feeling of responsibility and stewardship among residents depends on removing obstacles including inadequate training and exclusion from decision-making. Emphasizing the value of community-based management and participatory techniques, the results support and expand the suggestions of the original study. Including local voices into tourism development can result in durable adventure tourism sites, more ecologically friendly, culturally rich places.

CONCLUSION

The effectiveness of adventure tourism management in Gloria, Oriental Mindoro depends much on community opinions and involvement. Policymakers and destination managers should give inclusive policies, capacity-building, and open communication top priority so that the growth of tourism fits both environmental sustainability and community welfare. It is recommended that the local government and tourism partners improve visitor amenities and places to stay so that they better meet the needs of tourists and make their overall experience better. Development of transportation infrastructure and clear signage to enable safe and easy transit to adventure destinations can help to increase access. Strengthening safety and risk management has to be given top priority by means of thorough policies and regular training for staff members and members of communities engaged in tourism. Stronger policies to safeguard natural resources and active participation of the local community in environmental preservation activities help to support sustainability projects. Using digital channels and working with nearby businesses will help marketing plans to properly highlight Gloria's special features, culture, and products grow more expensive. Furthermore, continuous capacity-building initiatives should be started to provide citizens with the required knowledge in customer service, safety, and tourism management, thereby guaranteeing inclusive participation and fair division of profits. In Gloria, Oriental Mindoro, these steps are crucial to build

a resilient, community-centered, and environmentally friendly adventure tourism industry.

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