
SOCIO-CULTURAL MAGNETISM: INVESTIGATING THE ALLURE OF HERITAGE TOURISM IN PANGASINAN, PHILIPPINES

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ABSTRACT

This study "Socio-Cultural Magnetism: Exploring the Lure of Heritage Tourism in Pangasinan, Philippines" investigated the socio-cultural influences of heritage tourism in Pangasinan in the local community's perspective. The analysis considered the demographics of respondents, their importance of the advantages and disadvantages of tourism and the effects of exposure to tourism on their community and way of living. The participants were local residents who completed surveys about different dimensions of tourism, such as infrastructure, economic opportunities, and social implications, for a total of 400 questionnaires completed. The findings also showed that heritage tourism in Pangasinan is highly favored by young adults, but there is no significant difference between the male and female respondents. Most of the participants were in agreement that infrastructure has improved, employment opportunities are there for everyone and region also got popularized through tourism. But there were worries too over the risk that tourism might lead to moral decline and job insecurity. In addition, there was significant enthusiasm and positive framing about the growth of tourism and welcoming of visitors, with an obvious nod to challenges associated with overcrowding during peak times. The research highlights the significance of sustainable tourism that combines economic incentives with conservation of local culture and community welfare. The findings conclude that heritage tourism in Pangasinan tends to be advantageous so long as solutions are developed to solve the adverse impacts of tourism.

Keywords: Cultural identity, cultural integrity, heritage tourism, socio-cultural impact

INTRODUCTION

Pangasinan, a province celebrated for its rich cultural heritage and historical significance, presents a fascinating opportunity for a thorough examination of the socio-cultural allure inherent in its legacy. Historical sites and traditional villages all provide important traces of cultural identity of the province. It is through these sites that the researcher hopes to uncover methodologies of maintaining and transmitting cultural values, practices and traditions between generations. An understanding about the roots of Pangasinan's world of meaning may shed more light on our understanding of the socio-cultural terrain in the province. There are numerous heritage sites in Pangasinan of historical importance, including the ones that trace their origins back in the World War II and Spanish colonial period. Making sense of these stories, we take a critical look at history and culture, and see how Pangasinan, a province in the Philippines, is being marketed based on its rich cultural history, historical narratives and diverse nature formations thus making it an

interesting site for heritage tourism. The historic sites of the province, rich with national monuments and functioning traditional villages among other testaments of its long history, remain timeless showcases of how their past has crafted their current way of life and in turn afford its visitors an equally rare opportunity to embrace and appreciate the unique cultural traditions and norms that they have been bequeathed. The appeal of these places lies not only in their historical value, but in the ability to carry you between the past and present and create a fuller, more dynamic and culturally rich sense of content.

Pangasinan is a prime example of how heritage tourism has become an important driver of economic development in many areas. Pangasinan heritage sites have grown to be important tourist destinations as tourists' desire for authentic cultural experiences grows. These locations highlight the province's historic churches and monuments, customary celebrations, regional handicrafts, and unique culinary customs, all of which contribute to its distinct identity. The sociocultural aspects of heritage tourism, such as traditions, celebrations, and the characteristics of the local populace, play a crucial role in shaping the entire travel experience. To improve the province's tourism initiatives and preserve its cultural heritage for future generations, it is essential to analyze the specific factors that attract tourists to Pangasinan's heritage sites and how these elements relate to different demographic groups.

This study examined the sociocultural aspects of heritage tourism in Pangasinan, focusing on respondents' perceptions of the effects of tourism, the effects of exposure to tourist activities, and respondents' perceptions of seasonality, host-guest cultural differences, tourist types, and the specific stage of Pangasinan tourism development. The study's objectives were to identify the demographic traits of locals or locals who benefit from the tourist attractions, investigate the sociocultural elements they take away from the location, and assess how these elements affect visitors' overall experiences. The study also looked into how demographics affect visitors' perceptions and offered a sustainable tourism development that balances protecting the province's cultural heritage with attracting tourists. Insights into the sociocultural dynamics of Pangasinan heritage tourism were provided by this study, which advanced knowledge of how heritage sites can be used to support sustainable travel while maintaining cultural integrity for coming generations.

Statement of the Problem

This study was conducted to determine the socio-cultural aspects of heritage tourism that attract tourists to visit Pangasinan. More specifically, this study aims to answer the questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender, civil status, educational attainment, and respondents according to their areas of residence;
2. What is the assessment of the socio-cultural aspects of heritage tourism that attract tourists to Pangasinan in terms of the perception of the respondents toward the impact of tourism, perceptions of respondents towards the impacts of exposure of tourist activities, and perceptions of the respondents according to seasonality, cultural differences between hosts and guests, type of tourists and the particular stage of tourism development in Pangasinan;

3. What is the significant difference between the profile of the respondents and the socio-cultural aspects of heritage tourism that attract tourists to Pangasinan;
4. What policy brief will be proposed for sustainable tourism development that balances tourist appeal with the preservation of socio-cultural heritage; and lastly
5. What practical recommendations will be proposed for policymakers, local authorities, and stakeholders, emphasizing strategies for sustainable tourism

Scope and Delimitations

This study examined the social and cultural dimensions of heritage tourism in the province of Pangasinan, Philippines, with an emphasis on the perspectives and experiences of those who profit from the sale of goods or services to visitors to heritage sites. It examined how the province's cultural identity which is reflected in its historical landmarks, customs, and interpersonal relationships adapts to its growing appeal as a destination for heritage tourists.

The study's scope was restricted to specific parameters in order to maintain its focus and depth. Only residents who directly dealt with tourists by offering services like housing, food, transportation, handicrafts, or guided tours were asked to respond. Geographically, the study concentrated on a few Pangasinan heritage sites that are well-liked by visitors and support locally owned tourism enterprises. It made no attempt to cover every historical or cultural site in the province.

The social and cultural aspects of tourism, including cultural preservation, local customs, and interactions between residents and visitors, were the main focus of the study. This study did not address the natural and economic aspects, despite their perceived importance. Additionally, the results are accurate for the time period in which the data were collected because the study was conducted within a specific time frame.

Review of Related Literatures

Few studies explicitly address the socio-cultural aspects of tourism in Pangasinan, despite the fact that heritage tourism has been the subject of much research worldwide. Research that explores the distinctive cultural attractions of this province is needed, as the literature that is currently available is typically more generalized.

It can be difficult to match sustainable development goals with historic tourism, claims Castillo, R.C. (2015). This means preserving cultural resources, accurately interpreting the past, and using responsible and thoughtful ways to make money. The impact that historical tourism has on both the local population and the actual sites should be a top concern for stakeholders. Considering the many variables that influence the principles of prudent heritage use. Achieving a balance between revenue generation, responsible cultural space and heritage site maintenance, and community involvement in heritage tourism requires the collaboration of all stakeholders.

Furthermore, heritage tourism is necessary to guarantee that tourists leave with a lasting impression and a reasonable level of satisfaction, according to Asmelash and Kumar (2019). In

order to prevent the industry's sustainability from being seriously questioned, it should also promote sustainable tourism practices among them and make them more sensitive to sustainability issues. Only a small body of literature has been written about satisfaction and the development of sustainable heritage tourism. The relationship between visitor satisfaction and the expansion of sustainable heritage tourism is still not well understood, and there is a dearth of research on the subject.

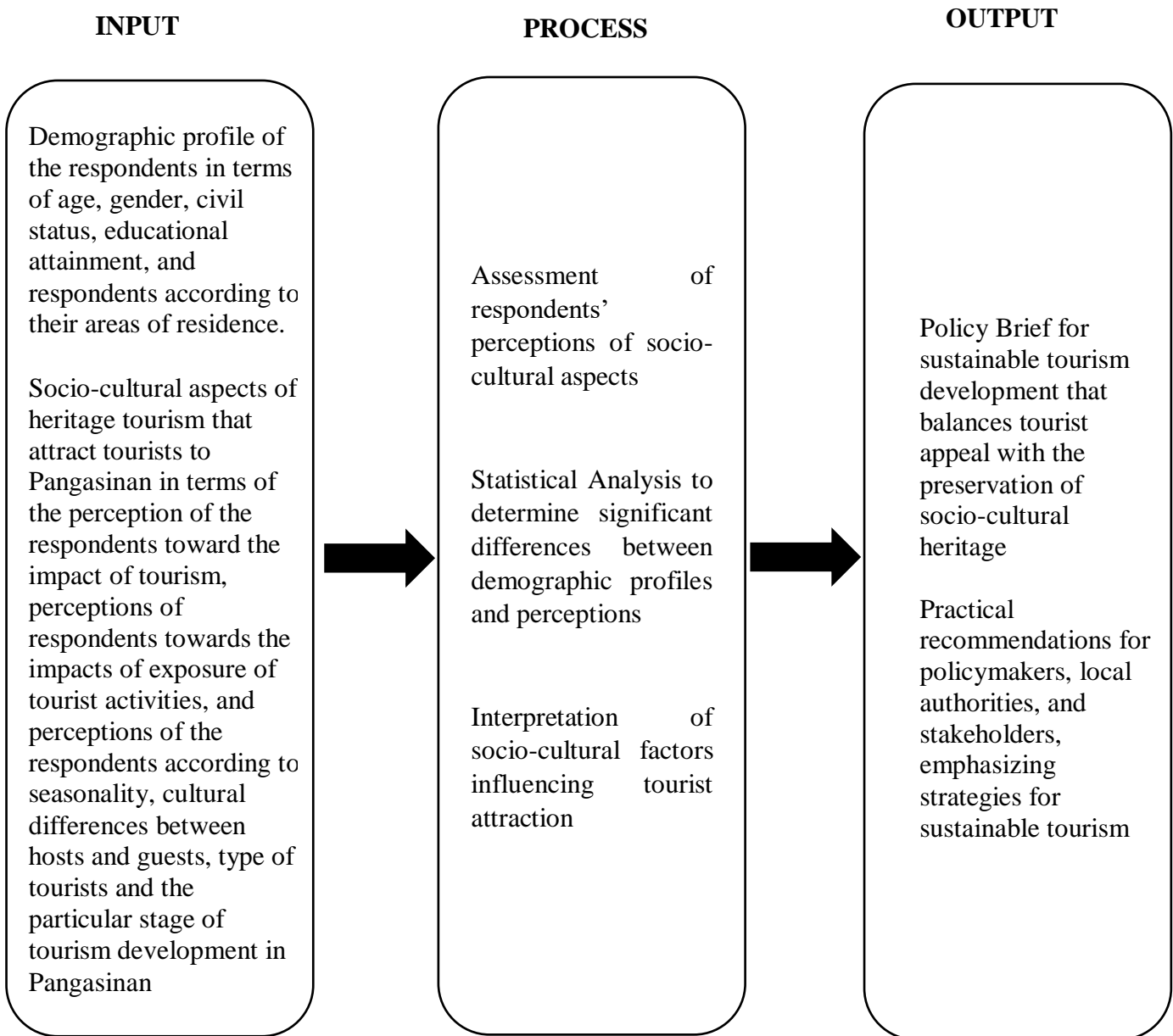
The fact that no comparable study has been done to date on this problem is another strong argument in favor of the current one. In addition to advancing scholarly knowledge of heritage tourism, filling these gaps will provide useful suggestions for stakeholders and policymakers engaged in the sustainable growth of Pangasinan tourism.

Theoretical Framework

George Doxey created the Irridex Model in 1975, and it offers a useful theoretical framework for comprehending how host communities react to the expansion of tourism over time. Four progressive stages of local attitudes toward tourism are described by the model: euphoria, apathy, irritation, and antagonism. Residents are typically ebullient and hospitable during the early stages of euphoria, and they value the financial opportunities that tourism provides. However, interactions become routine as tourism grows, which breeds apathy. Residents may eventually become irritated as problems like overcrowding, cultural intrusion, and growing living expenses arise. If these problems continue and locals feel taken advantage of or excluded in their own communities, this can turn into hostility. (Doxey, 1975)

This model is especially useful for examining the viewpoints of locals who profit financially from tourism by providing goods or services, particularly in places known for their rich cultural heritage. It contributes to the explanation of these people's shifting perspectives as they manage the difficult balancing act between cultural preservation and financial gain. The framework also clarifies cultural exchanges, social tensions, and the possible loss or alteration of cultural identity brought on by prolonged exposure to tourists. In general, the Irridex Model highlights the significance of inclusive and sustainable tourism development and offers crucial insight into the sociocultural effects of tourism on local communities.

Conceptual Framework



METHODOLOGY

The goal of the study "Socio-Cultural Magnetism: Investigating the Allure of Heritage Tourism in Pangasinan, Philippines" was to find out how locals perceived the sociocultural and economic effects of Pangasinan's heritage tourism. The population, research design, data collection techniques, and analysis processes utilized to meet the study's goals are described in this section.

Research Design

A descriptive research design was used in this study to evaluate the appeal of Pangasinan heritage tourism. Individual perspectives and experiences are best captured by descriptive research, which provides a clear understanding of how tourism affects the sociocultural dynamics and local economy. An extensive investigation of local perceptions of the impact of heritage tourism, with an emphasis on community viewpoints, was made possible by the design.

Research Steps

In order to identify knowledge gaps, the research started with a thorough review of related literature. The creation of a structured survey questionnaire in line with the study's objectives and the establishment of research objectives came next. Sampling of Pangasinan locals who interact directly with tourists by providing goods or services at particular heritage sites was the next step. Surveys were used to collect the data, guaranteeing that the answers reflected the sociocultural perspectives of these residents. To find trends and discrepancies between demographic profiles and attitudes toward heritage tourism, the collected data was subsequently encoded, arranged, and examined using statistical software.

Data Collection and Sample Selection

Local Pangasinan residents who have either experienced or are impacted by heritage tourism made up the target population. To represent a cross-section of the local community, 400 respondents in all were chosen. In order to guarantee that the participants had firsthand experience with heritage tourism and could offer pertinent insights into the sociocultural and economic effects of tourism in the area, purposeful sampling was used.

A self-administered questionnaire served as the main tool for gathering data. The purpose of the survey was to find out how respondents experienced about the influence of heritage tourism on different facets of Pangasinan life. There were multiple sections to the questionnaire:

The respondents' demographic data was the main focus of the first section. Basic data like the respondents' age, gender, civil status, educational background, and place of residence were collected in this section. The remaining sections of the instrument were adapted from the studies of Alhasanat & Hyasat, (2011), entitled, "Sociocultural impacts of tourism on the local community at Petra, Jordan" published in *Jordan Journal of Social Sciences* and from the study of Zaidi, et al., (2017) entitled, "Indigenous Resident's Attitude Towards Tourism Development and Perceived Socio-cultural Impacts in Carey Island published in the *World Applied Sciences Journal*. Perceptions of the sociocultural effects of tourism were the main topic of the second section. This section addressed the social, cultural, and economic effects of Pangasinan heritage tourism, including how it affects crime rates, social behaviors, economic opportunities, and infrastructure improvements. The exposure to tourist activities was the main topic of the third section which. The survey meant to discover more about the ways in which locals profit from tourism on a personal level, how they engage with visitors, and how tourism has affected their way of life and the neighborhood. The final section concentrated on the development of tourism, cultural differences,

and seasonality. This section examined the cultural exchanges between visitors and locals, the seasonal difficulties of tourism, and the opinions of locals regarding the growth and sustainability of Pangasinan tourism.

Respondents were asked to rate how much they agreed with each statement on a Likert scale, which ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Data Analysis Methods

The data obtained from the questionnaires was analyzed using descriptive statistics and weighted mean scores. Frequencies and percentages were used to summarize the demographic profile of the respondents, providing a clear understanding of the participants' backgrounds. A weighted mean was calculated for each statement in the survey, allowing the study to determine the degree of agreement or disagreement with each perception. This provided a quantitative measure of how strongly residents feel about the impact of heritage tourism in their community. For the ranking of statements, based on the weighted mean scores, the study ranked the statements to identify the most and least significant perceptions of heritage tourism's impact, highlighting the socio-cultural and economic aspects that resonated most with the local residents.

Ethical considerations

No specific identities were disclosed in the report in order to preserve the high level of confidentiality of the survey. The identities of the respondents were kept concealed. The results of the study were not applied in any way that could endanger the research subjects. The researcher only presented facts and findings derived from the data collected; no personal opinions were expressed. Prior to the study, the participant's consent was obtained, and the study will place a high priority on respecting the dignity of research. In compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012, this study also protected the respondents' privacy. Additionally, all authors mentioned throughout the paper were appropriately acknowledged and cited in the references.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Result of the Demographic Profile of the respondents

Demographic Characteristics	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	18-20	56	14%
	21-35	232	58%
	36-50	88	22%
	51 and above	24	6%
Gender	Male	196	49%
	Female	204	51%

Civil Status	Single	160	40%
	Married	228	57%
	Widowed/Widower/Separated	12	3%
Educational Attainment	Primary graduate	24	6%
	Secondary graduate	120	30%
	Vocational/Technical course graduate	104	26%
	College graduate	136	34%
	Postgraduate	16	4%
Respondents According to their Areas of Residence	Local (residents)	400	100%

The demographic profile of the respondents, categorized by age, gender, civil status, educational attainment, and place of residence, is shown in Table 1 to give an idea of the community's composition and possible involvement in tourism-related activities.

Age-wise, the table showed that the majority of respondents (58%) were between the ages of 21 and 35, with those between the ages of 36 and 50 coming in second (22%). According to this finding, the bulk of respondents are young to middle-aged adults who are probably actively involved in business endeavors, employment, or locally driven tourism projects. In contrast, 14% of the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 20, suggesting that there are younger people out there who might still be in school or just starting their careers. Those 51 and older made up the smallest percentage (6%) of the population, indicating a low representation of senior citizens who might be less actively involved in tourism-related economic activities.

The community's workforce potential is highlighted by the preponderance of younger and middle-aged people. Their participation in tourism-related businesses, such as regional companies, services, or jobs in the sector, may be essential to optimizing the local economy's gains from tourism.

The community's workforce potential is highlighted by a large proportion of younger and middle-aged people. Their participation in tourism-related businesses, such as regional companies, services, or jobs in the sector, may be essential to optimizing the local economy's gains from tourism. This is consistent with research by Almeida-García et al. (2016), who found that because of the jobs that come with tourism, younger locals frequently view it more favorably.

With 51% of the respondents being female and 49% being male, the respondents were split almost evenly by gender. This balance implies that there are comparable opportunities for men and women to participate in tourism-related activities, whether through direct employment, starting their own business, or other ways to profit from the sector.

Near-equal representation of the sexes could suggest that tourism offers inclusive economic opportunities for the local community. In local businesses, handicrafts, hospitality, and service-oriented industries related to tourism, women may hold important positions. Men can also help by building infrastructure, providing transportation, or starting businesses that serve tourists.

Near-equal representation of the sexes could suggest that tourism offers inclusive economic opportunities for the local community. In local businesses, handicrafts, hospitality, and service-oriented industries related to tourism, women may hold important positions. Men can also help by building infrastructure, providing transportation, or starting businesses that serve tourists. According to Mensah (2016), men frequently play different roles than women when it comes to community-based tourism, and gender can have a big impact on participation.

The majority of respondents (57%) were married, suggesting that many of the local tourism industry's beneficiaries are family members. Just 3% of the respondents said they were widowed, widower, or separated, compared to 40% who said they were single.

Given the high proportion of married people, it is possible that many families rely on jobs and businesses related to tourism to support them. The participation of unmarried people also emphasizes the tourism industry's potential for youth employment and entrepreneurship.

According to the study, college graduates made up the largest percentage of respondents (34%) in terms of educational attainment, followed by secondary graduates (30%). Furthermore, 6% had only completed primary school, whereas 26% had finished a technical or vocational course. Just 4% had completed a postgraduate program.

According to these results, most residents have completed at least secondary school, and many have college or vocational degrees. The presence of graduates from technical and vocational courses is especially noteworthy because it shows that there is a pool of talented people who can support the tourism sector by working in trades like hospitality, culinary arts, tour guiding, and craftsmanship. However, the comparatively small proportion of postgraduate degree holders may suggest that obtaining a higher level of education is not always necessary to take advantage of the region's tourism-related economic activity. According to Huh and Vogt (2008), residents who have more education are more likely to support the growth of the tourism industry because education increases awareness of the potential advantages.

All of the respondents (100%) were locals, guaranteeing that the study fairly represents the viewpoints of people who are directly affected by the social and economic effects of tourism in their community. These locals have direct knowledge of how tourism affects their standard of living, employment prospects, and local economy because they reside close to the tourist destination.

Table 2. Perception of the Respondents toward the Impact of Tourism

Statement	Frequency	Weighted Mean	Rank
1. Tourism has improved the image of Pangasinan	400	4.4	3
2. Due to tourism, infrastructure in Pangasinan has been enhanced such as roads, hospitals, schools, parks, restaurants, etc.	400	4.5	2
3. Tourism increases the level of education in Pangasinan	400	4	5

4. Tourism improved my behavior with my family and society	400	3.9	6
5. Tourism creates opportunities for people in Pangasinan such as employment and investment	400	4.5	2
6. Tourism encourages some immoral behaviors of some people in Pangasinan	400	2.1	9
7. Tourism has increased crime in the local community in Pangasinan	400	2	10
8. Working in tourism makes me feel insecure about my future employment	400	2.1	9
9. Tourism is the reason for some youngsters misbehaving	400	1.9	10
10. Benefits of tourism in Pangasinan outweigh its costs	400	4.6	1

The respondents' perceptions of the impact of tourism are shown in Table 2. According to the study's findings, most respondents emphasized the benefits of tourism in Pangasinan, including how it can improve the province's infrastructure, reputation, and economic prospects. There is broad agreement that tourism has significantly raised Pangasinan's profile internationally, as evidenced by the statement "Tourism has improved the image of Pangasinan" receiving a weighted mean of 4.4. This is consistent with previous studies that emphasize the role of tourism in improving a destination's image since it attracts attention from around the world and fosters a sense of pride among locals (Mowforth & Munt, 2019). Similarly, the claim regarding improvements to roads, schools, and hospitals received a weighted mean of 4.5, suggesting a strong conviction that tourism has been essential to the development of these essential services. This is in line with global trends, since tourism development often leads to infrastructure improvements that benefit both locals and visitors (Dwyer et al., 2018).

The perceived economic benefits of tourism are an important finding. With a mean score of 4.5, respondents indicated strong agreement with the statement, "Tourism creates opportunities for people in Pangasinan such as employment and investment," underscoring the important role that tourism plays in creating economic opportunities. In addition to attracting investment into regional businesses and services, tourism has the potential to create job opportunities in sectors like hospitality, retail, and transportation, supporting the province's economic growth (Smith & Robinson, 2023). However, the results were more diverse when the social effects of tourism were examined. With a low mean score of 2.1, the statement "Tourism encourages some immoral behaviors of some people in Pangasinan" indicates that most respondents did not think that tourism was a factor in moral degradation. Similarly, the claim that "Tourism has increased crime in the local community in Pangasinan" received a score of 2.0, suggesting that people do not believe that tourism has significantly contributed to the rise in crime rates. These results cast doubt on the notion that, as seen in various contexts, tourism always has a negative social impact (Li & Ryan, 2020). According to many respondents, tourism has a positive influence on local behavior and

culture.

A weighted mean of 4.6 for the statement "Benefits of tourism in Pangasinan outweigh its costs" shows that, despite some concerns, such as job instability in the tourism sector and the potential for youth misconduct, the general consensus is that the benefits of Pangasinan tourism outweigh the disadvantages. This suggests that both visitors and locals are quite satisfied with the positive impacts of tourism. This result supports the idea that, with careful management, tourism can benefit a region in long-term socioeconomic and cultural ways (McKercher & Du Cros, 2018). Furthermore, even though tourism was not thought to be the main cause of juvenile misbehavior or an increase in crime, it is clear that participants believe the long-term benefits such as improved infrastructure, economic growth, and cross-cultural interaction are more significant.

Table 3. Perceptions of Respondents towards the Impacts of Exposure to Tourist Activities

Statement	Frequency	Weighted Mean	Rank
1. I benefit from tourism in Pangasinan	400	4.4	3
2. Tourism in Pangasinan improves my lifestyle	400	4.3	4
3. I support tourism and welcome tourists to come to my community	400	4.6	1
4. Women should be encouraged to work in tourism industry	400	4.5	2
5. Tourism weakens the social bonds and family structure in Pangasinan	400	2.1	9
6. The closer my residency to the tourist site the more I benefit from tourism in Pangasinan	400	4.1	6
7. Tourism increased the cost of living in Pangasinan	400	3	7
8. I have more money to spend because of my work in tourism in Pangasinan	400	4.2	5
9. I deal with tourists almost every day	400	3.5	8
10. Earnings from tourism lure children in my community to drop out of school at an early age	400	2.2	10

The perceptions of respondents towards the impacts of exposure to tourist activities are shown in table 3. The results of the survey's second section show how Pangasinan residents perceive

tourism's sociocultural effects, particularly with regard to its impact on community interactions, lifestyle changes, and economic benefits. The findings provide valuable insights into how the province's citizens view the benefits and drawbacks of tourism.

With the highest weighted mean of 4.6, the statement "I support tourism and welcome tourists to come to my community" indicates that the majority of respondents strongly agree with the idea of welcoming tourists to their localities. This result shows that the locals are generally welcoming to tourists, demonstrating a high level of community involvement and a positive attitude toward visitors. This result is consistent with research demonstrating that locals typically view tourism as a way to obtain social and economic benefits, which helps to foster goodwill between locals and visitors (Mowforth & Munt, 2019).

"Women should be encouraged to work in the tourism industry," a noteworthy statement, came in second place with a weighted mean of 4.5. Results show that the majority of respondents support women working in the tourism sector, which is consistent with the growing recognition of tourism as a means of empowering women through employment opportunities in hospitality, guiding, and related fields (Smith & Robinson, 2023). The economic and social standing of women in rural or developing regions is improved by promoting gender equality in the tourism industry, which is a potent catalyst for broader societal advancement.

The statement "I benefit from tourism in Pangasinan" came in third place with a weighted mean of 4.4, indicating that participants believe they personally gain from the social and economic opportunities brought about by tourism. This is in line with data from around the world showing that tourism significantly boosts local economies by generating revenue from a variety of tourism-related activities and creating jobs (Dwyer et al., 2018). Similar to this, the statement "Tourism in Pangasinan improves my lifestyle" (mean score 4.3) shows that locals believe that tourism can improve their quality of life by giving them better access to goods and services as well as chances for cross-cultural interaction.

On the contrary, the claim that "Tourism weakens the social bonds and family structure in Pangasinan" received a low mean score of 2.1, indicating a strong disagreement with the idea that tourism has a negative impact on local social structures. According to the results, participants did not believe that tourism threatened their ties to their families and communities. Instead, they seem to see it as a catalyst for cultural and social interaction. According to research, tourism can improve ties within the community, especially when locals engage in cultural activities with tourists (Li & Ryan, 2020).

With a mean score of 3.0, the statement "Tourism increased the cost of living in Pangasinan" demonstrated a neutral viewpoint on the idea that tourism raises living costs. This finding suggests that while some respondents may have noticed price increases for tourism-related goods and services, others may not have experienced significant changes in their daily costs. According to earlier research, while tourism may lead to price increases, particularly in industries like housing and retail, it can also have positive effects that offset these costs, such as improved infrastructure and more job opportunities (McKercher & Du Cros, 2018).

The statement "I have more money to spend because of my work in tourism in Pangasinan" received a moderate amount of agreement from participants (mean score of 4.2), indicating that employment in the tourism industry has a positive impact on personal income. This supports the

idea that tourism is an important source of income for many families, providing both direct and indirect employment opportunities. It is further supported by the claim that "The closer my residency to the tourist site the more I benefit from tourism in Pangasinan" (mean score 4.1), which shows that people who live closer to tourist attractions benefit more from tourism in the form of better business opportunities and more interaction with tourists.

Finally, with the lowest weighted mean of 2.2, the statement "Earnings from tourism lure children in my community to drop out of school at an early age" showed a significant disagreement with the notion that tourism contributes to early school dropout rates. This suggests that participants did not consider tourism to be a significant factor in young people's decisions to drop out of school early. This finding is important because it implies that the economic opportunities brought about by tourism may not be seen as detrimental to Pangasinan youths' aspirations for education.

Table 4. Perceptions of the Respondents According to Seasonality, Cultural Differences between Hosts and Guests, Type of Tourists and the Particular Stage of Tourism Development in Pangasinan

Statement	Frequency	Weighted Mean	Rank
1. Tourism during the high season contributes to issues such as crowding, inflation, etc.	400	3.9	1
2. Working in tourism during the high season is feasible, though I prefer having a more permanent job in another sector	400	3.4	6
3. I interact with individual tourists more than I do with tourists in groups	400	3.8	2
4. Tourists show respect to our culture and traditions	400	4.2	4
5. Tourism made me understand other cultures better	400	4.1	5
6. Tourism increased my pride in our national culture	400	4.3	3
7. I support tourism development in Pangasinan concerning more marketing and in-site infrastructure	400	4.5	7
8. Community representatives in Pangasinan are involved in development decisions concerning Pangasinan	400	4	8

9. Negative impacts of tourism may drive me to leave Pangasinan	400	2.3	9
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The perceptions of the respondents according to seasonality, cultural differences between hosts and guests, type of tourists and the particular stage of tourism development in Pangasinan are depicted in Table 4. The study's conclusions show how Pangasinan locals view the precautions associated with tourism, particularly during the busiest times of the year, and how they view the influence of tourism in general on their community. Respondents provided opinions on the benefits and challenges they face as they evaluated the effects of tourism on the local economy, environment, and culture in a number of statements.

With the highest weighted mean of 3.9, the claim that "Tourism during the high season contributes to issues such as crowding, inflation, etc." indicates that participants are aware of the challenges associated with high season travel, particularly with regard to crowding and inflation. These issues are commonly faced in popular tourist destinations, where the peak season can put a strain on local resources, raise living costs, and result in a sharp increase in the number of visitors (Mowforth & Munt, 2019). This research suggests that while tourism has significant economic advantages, it also creates tensions between meeting the high demand for tourism and preserving a sustainable standard of living for locals.

The second-highest ranked statement, "I interact with individual tourists more than I do with tourists in groups" (mean score 3.8), suggests that respondents feel a closer personal bond with lone travelers than with larger groups. This research raises the possibility of cultural exchange by indicating that locals may prefer more intimate tourist encounters in which visitors may show a greater interest in Pangasinan customs and culture (Li & Ryan, 2020).

The significance of tourism in fostering cultural pride and understanding was also underlined in the study. With a weighted mean of 4.2, the participants strongly agreed with the statement, "Tourists show respect to our culture and traditions." This implies that locals view visitors as generally respectful of the culture, which is a positive indication of how visitors behave in Pangasinan. This result is in line with earlier research showing that polite interactions between residents and visitors foster goodwill and lessen the chance of cultural deterioration (McKercher & Du Cros, 2018). Additionally, the statement "Tourism made me understand other cultures better" (mean score 4.1) shows that locals view tourism as a way to improve cultural awareness, supporting the idea that travel can serve as a platform for promoting respect and cross-cultural knowledge sharing (Smith & Robinson, 2023).

With a mean score of 4.3 for the statement "Tourism increased my pride in our national culture," it is clear that many locals feel that tourism has made them prouder of their heritage. This is consistent with research that highlights how properly run tourism can boost community pride by showcasing cultural heritage around the world and preserving it for coming generations (Dwyer et al., 2018).

However, concerns were raised about how tourism would affect the local population. The claim that "Negative impacts of tourism may drive me to leave Pangasinan" had the lowest weighted mean (2.3), indicating that while there are drawbacks to tourism, it is unlikely that most

locals will be forced to leave. This suggests that most participants believe the benefits of tourism such as the creation of jobs and opportunities for cross-cultural interaction outweigh the disadvantages. However, it highlights that some people may feel overpowered by the negative impacts of tourism, such as crowding and rising living expenses, which are often cited as sources of annoyance for local communities in tourist-heavy areas (Li & Ryan, 2020).

Lastly, the statement "I support tourism development in Pangasinan concerning more marketing and in-site infrastructure" received the highest weighted mean of 4.5, suggesting that the majority of the population supports continued tourism development, particularly with regard to improvements in infrastructure and marketing tactics. This is consistent with the widespread recognition that infrastructure development advances sustainable tourism by benefiting both tourists and local communities (McKercher & Du Cros, 2018).

SUMMARY

According to this study, most people have a positive opinion of Pangasinan historical tourism. Because of improved infrastructure, economic opportunities, and cultural pride, locals see tourism as beneficial. Despite the existence of issues like high living costs, juvenile behavior, and crowding during busy times, these were not considered important. Participants recognized the need to preserve cultural integrity while promoting tourism, especially those with advanced degrees. The study emphasizes the importance of a sustainable tourism strategy that balances visitor satisfaction with cultural conservation. Policymakers and stakeholders were given useful suggestions on how to enhance tourism management, promote cultural sensitivity, and increase community engagement in the preservation of Pangasinan's sociocultural past.

CONCLUSIONS

According to this study, most people have a positive opinion of Pangasinan historical tourism. Because of improved infrastructure, economic opportunities, and cultural pride, locals see tourism as beneficial. Despite the existence of issues like high living costs, juvenile behavior, and crowding during busy times, these were not considered important. Participants recognized the need to preserve cultural integrity while promoting tourism, especially those with advanced degrees. The study emphasizes the importance of a sustainable tourism strategy that balances visitor satisfaction with cultural conservation. Policymakers and stakeholders were given useful suggestions on how to enhance tourism management, promote cultural sensitivity, and increase community engagement in the preservation of Pangasinan's sociocultural past.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based from the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are suggested:

This study outlines several important recommendations aimed at maximizing the advantages of heritage tourism in Pangasinan. At the outset, it is crucial to adopt sustainable tourism strategies

to address challenges related to overcrowding and inflation during peak seasons. This can be accomplished by managing tourist numbers and promoting travel during less busy periods. Promoting community-based tourism initiatives is crucial for encouraging local involvement in decision-making and protecting cultural heritage. Moreover, improving job security in the tourism sector through the provision of training and stable employment opportunities will strengthen long-term career prospects, especially for women and marginalized communities.

Continuous efforts to improve cultural awareness are crucial, including educating visitors about regional traditions and providing training for local guides. Developing tourism experiences that are family-friendly and educational is crucial, given that many respondents emphasize the importance of these aspects. Furthermore, monitoring and addressing potential negative impacts like moral decline and crime, alongside promoting gender inclusivity in the tourism workforce, will help maintain a constructive environment. In conclusion, continuous investment in infrastructure is crucial for supporting both residents and visitors, ensuring sustainable development and long-term success of heritage tourism in the region.

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