



Tuburan Coffee Farmers: Its Impact on Regional Eco-Tourism

Monifel S. Galagar*, Alden Q. Gabuya, Jr.

College of Technology, Cebu Technological University- Tuburan Campus, Tuburan, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Rural tourism has been widely encouraged, promoted and relied on as a useful means of tackling the social and economic challenges faced by those rural areas associated with the decline of traditional agrarian. This study aimed to analyses the importance of local agricultural flora in the promotion of Tourism in Tuburan, Cebu. The study used the ethnography method that identified the agricultural resources found in Tuburan, Cebu. Furthermore, it also identified the benefits of a community's local resources in the promotion of tourism as well as the challenges encountered which hinder the growth of tourism. The study was conducted in Tuburan, Cebu. There were 20 informants who were chosen through judgmental sampling to provide their personal experiences as to their visit of the place. Simple percentage was used to summarize, analyze and interpret the data. The findings revealed that coffee, banana, cacao, coconut, and corn are the major agricultural floras in Tuburan, Cebu and coffee was found to

have the biggest land area among all the other major floras giving a distinct identity of the municipality, thus coffee has been the motivating factor of the tourist in visiting Tuburan. It was also found that agricultural floras are greatly beneficial to the community and its people by opening job opportunities, empowering the people, building social relationships, and uplifting people's morale. Lastly, the major challenges encountered by the informants in visiting and promoting tourism are poor facilities and services in the coffee farms, transportation, communication and manpower.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism nowadays is an important industry that is growing. The development of travel and tourism industry is reflected in an increasing demand of the population for an ever-increasing range of consumer goods and services (Hermawan, 2017; Maturbongs, 2020; Pajriah, 2018). There a demand that stimulates the manufacturing and service sectors, leading to an increase in economic activity and consumption, independent of the normal evolution of market trends (Chassagne & Everingham, 2019; Milano et al., 2018; Sofronov, 2018). Moreover, there are tourism have been diversified towards eco and rural tourism. Tourism activities in rural areas have increased markedly in all the developed countries worldwide, and this has played a key role in their development both economically and socially (Abdullah, 2017; Hermawan, 2017; Vitasurya, 2016). Rural tourism has been widely encouraged, promoted and relied on as a useful means of tackling the social and economic challenges faced by those rural areas associated with the decline of traditional agrarian (Hitchcock & Dann, 1998; Wang et al., 2013). This has created opportunities that make the new demands from tourists coincide with rural communities' need for economic development (An & Alarcón, 2020; Mili, 2012; Todorović & Bjeljic, 2009).

The Philippines is indisputably a perfect destination for tourism industry to flourish due to its abundant, enormous natural resources and fertile lands. Moreover, as an archipelago, it is surrounded with waters providing with beaches comparable and commendable to the world (Fabinyi, 2010; Techera & Klein, 2013). In fact, with these gifts bestowed to our land, tourism industry has significantly contributed to the booming economy of our country (Cañete, 2003; Gallato et al., 2012). However, some potential tourist areas in the country are still behind due to some encumbrances that should be heeded by the government particularly the local government unit. A primary challenge of local governance, both today and in decades ahead, is to steer increasingly external, global forces on local development so that the development achieves the shared vision of the local population (Acanto, 2016; Sacramento & Geges, 2020). In cities, towns and villages throughout the world, the primary responsibility for this steering process rests with the institution of local government and its diverse local authorities.

In the northwest part of Cebu particularly in the municipality of Tuburan, coffee, cacao, and banana are the local floras that are found to be potential factors that would contribute to the continual development

*Corresponding author.

E-mail: monifel.galagar@ctu.edu.ph (Monifel S. Galagar)

of its local tourism industry (Rojas et al., 2021; Tombo et al., 2020; Wikle, 2021). Tuburan is a second municipal income class municipality in the Province of Cebu, Philippines. The municipality has a land area of 224.50 square kilometers or 86.68 square miles which constitute 4.54% of Cebu's total area. Its population as determined by the 2015 Census was 63,866. This represented 2.17% of the total population of Cebu province, or 0.86% of the overall population of the Central Visayas region (Alcazar et al., 2020; Hakizimana & Aupal, 2020).

The population density is computed at 284 inhabitants per square kilometer or 737 inhabitants per square mile. In the 2016 electoral roll, it has 42,647 registered voters (Cortes et al., 2022; Lillo et al., 2019; Ruiz & Matildo, 2022). Through the efforts of the municipal mayor of Tuburan, Democrito Diamante, Jr., he was commended in making the breakthrough of developing a homegrown coffee product for Cebu with the assistance of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Agriculture and the Department of Science and Technology (Amper et al., 2018; Casio et al., 2020; Pascual et al., 2022).

The researcher, who is into hospitality management, an advocate and a teacher of tourism management, would like to share her expertise to help promote the local floras of Tuburan through this study. This is to determine the extent of contribution of these floras to the local tourism industry of the municipality of Tuburan is the main thrust of this study. This study aimed to analyses the importance of local agricultural flora in the promotion of Tourism in Tuburan, Cebu.

2. METHODS

This study employed the ethnography method that explained the interview process on how the data were gathered. It also presented the research environment that described the atmosphere of the place where the study was conducted and the Informants were likewise described. The municipality of Tuburan is located at the northwest part of Cebu Province. It is about 106 kilometers from the city of Cebu via Toledo route, about 78 kilometers via Trans Central Highway and 96 kilometers via Lugo. About 1000 farmers in Tuburan, Cebu are now enjoying the fruits of the government assisted coffee plantation that covers 2,850 in 16 barangays namely: Amatugan, Bangkito, Gaang, Kabangkalan, Kalunsing, Kamansi, Kansi, Kaorasan, Kan-An, Mag Antoy, Mag Atubang, Montealegre, Tomugpa, Kalangahan, Bakyawan, and Mag-Alwa.

The ethnography method of research was used in this study to determine the role of local agricultural flora in the promotion of tourism in Tuburan, Cebu. The municipality of Tuburan is located at the northwest part of Cebu Province. It is about 106 kilometers from the city of Cebu via Toledo route, about 78 kilometers via Trans Central Highway and 96 kilometers via Lugo. To provide the data needed by the researcher, there were two groups of informants. The first group was comprised of local and provincial DOT employees and provincial tourists' operators. The second group was comprised of local tourists. Data are presented in themes which is to explore and understand the role of local agricultural flora in the promotion of tourism in Tuburan, Cebu during the first and second quarter of calendar year 2018. The analytical procedure is arranged according to the sequence of specific questions. First, agricultural resources found in Tuburan, Cebu will be revealed; second, benefits of these local floras to the promotion of tourism industry will be presented and analyzed; third, the challenging experiences incurred by the informants in promoting the local tourism will be revealed.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The potential resources and tourism products that have influenced tourist to visit the municipality of Tuburan, and how these resources and products build a distinct name and promote tourism and investment in Tuburan. Likewise, reasons of the unpopularity of some agricultural resources will be presented and analyzed.

Tuburan is an agricultural municipality where tourists come and go. A research question was posed regarding the agricultural resources and tourism products that are found in the municipality. According to the Informant there are varieties of agricultural resources to be seen in Tuburan in order to attract tourists to visit the place. The kind of agricultural floras found in the municipality of Tuburan are coffee, banana, cacao, coconut, and corn are the commonly found floras. Coffee is the most abundant agricultural flora for it has the biggest land area being cultivated with a land size approximately 2,850 hectares. There are 16 mountain barangays in Tuburan who are engage in planting coffee. This implies that Tuburan's richest agricultural flora is coffee. Coffee can be one of the reasons or one of the motivating factors why tourists visit Tuburan according to the informants of this study. Furthermore, the municipality is one of the suppliers of coffee in Cebu and pushing the local government unit and other government agencies to inject more agricultural projects in order to boast higher production of coffee.

Coffee farmers in the Municipality of Tuburan, Cebu can now produce 4,000 to 5,000 kilos of export quality coffee a month, higher than the 2,000 kilos per month they made in 2016. Tuburan Mayor Democrito Diamante noted that their projection now is to produce 20 to 30 tons of coffee every month. At present, buyers purchase unprocessed coffee beans at P35.00 per kilo from Tuburan's farmers. Aside from unprocessed coffee, other tourism products are offered by the municipality. So, Informant 2 state "The most popular product why tourists visit from time to time is the brewed coffee. However, there are also other products but not very popular such as budbud, bibingka and saksak sinagol!"

Agricultural Resources and Tourism Product: Building Distinct Label

This shows the data on labelling or branding the municipality of Tuburan with its most abundant agricultural flora and tourism product. As revealed by the informant regarding on the question knowing the specific product of building distinct name to the municipality: So, the Informant 3 state, "No other product except the Tuburan coffee which is promoted by the local government." As revealed during the interview, coffee was rated the highest agricultural flora and it is just appropriate to be the municipality's known product that serves as its distinct identity. Brewed coffee as well got the highest rating from the informants as a tourism product. This implies that coffee, as a flora and a tourism product provide Tuburan a distinct identity from its neighboring municipalities in the province of Cebu just like the City of Carcar which is known for its chicharon and ampao. Tuburan is now gradually known for its Tuburan coffee. Indeed, agricultural floras could give places a distinct identity.

Benefits of Local Agricultural Resources

The informants were interviewed as to what they think the best ways the agricultural resources and products could help promote tourism and investment in the municipality of Tuburan. According to Informant 4 state that "To promote tourism and attract other investors to buy Tuburan coffee, the only way is to improve their production." The informants' responses when they were interviewed boiled down to the concept of improving the coffee production. Informant 5 said "If the production of coffee becomes sufficient, more investors will visit and invest in coffee business." It is supported by Informant 6 that affirmed and said "The higher and good quality on the production of coffee would lead investors to come and visit."

With higher production of coffee, Tuburan could now sell coffee to other municipalities and regions. Informant 7 believe and said: "The most effective in promoting Tuburan coffee is the word of mouth and through branding the product with the name of Tuburan like the Tuburan coffee, coffee product will be patronized not only by the people of Tuburan but also by the neighboring municipalities and provinces." One of the informants was doubting why until now the agricultural resources of the municipality remain unpopular. Informant 8 said: "The local government and the private sector lack of promotion." Moreover, the following reasons the agricultural resources and products are unpopular is due to the lack of initiative in promoting, disseminating and advertising from the local tourism. However, another reason was given by Informant 9 that said: "The distance of Tuburan is one of the reasons of the aforementioned experienced while other said the lack of technology causing to a poor product quality is the reason of this unpopularity."

The promotion of the agricultural resources and products especially coffee could provide the socio-economic benefits in the promotion of tourism, in the improvement of the way living of the locals, and in the growth and development of the municipality. The informants believe that the agricultural floras of Tuburan, most especially coffee, create boundless opportunities to the community. So, Informant 10 said: "It give an identification in the place and also encourages members of the community to actively participate in the promotion of tourism which leads to improving social interactions and relationships among people in the community." People are able to hone new skills, boost their confidence as the hosts or guides, and uplift their morale as they are alleviating poverty with the job opportunities offered by tourism industry. Thus, people are empowered. With these, the Informant 11 believed and said: "All of the informants believed that it is the agricultural resources and products have a positive impact to the community's continual growth and development."

Challenging Experiences

To know whether the tourists visit the coffee farm was worthwhile, the researcher asked the informants on the challenges encountered that hinder growth of tourism of the said site. Informant 12 mentioned: "There's a lot to improve in the coffee farm for tourism to flourish of the said place." The challenges experienced by the informants during their visits in Tuburan included poor facilities and services in the coffee farm. Informant 13 said: "Safety and health issues are also one of the concerns of the informants during their visit. Another problem is the transportation since the access roads going to the coffee farms are rough making it unsafe and lastly is the absence of communication signals in the mountainous places where agricultural plantations are found also impedes the tourists to visit the place)."

In order for Tuburan coffee to have a greater impact to the eco-tourism, the researcher asked the informants on their suggestions on how to improve the experiences of the tourists during their visit. The informant 14 replied: "A cooperative effort is required from the coffee farm management, local government unit and the local constituents in providing solutions to the problems encountered by the tourist during their visit in the coffee farm."

Discussion

The kind of tourism products found in the municipality are brewed coffee, budbud, bibingka and saksak sinagol. Tuburan coffee brewing is made possible through the initiative of Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Cebu is also working on packaging coffee grounds to make these more competitive in the local and global market (Alcazar et al., 2020; Casio et al., 2020; Galang et al., 2022). The DOST is currently allocating funds for the technology upgrading of the current coffee production operations and for further packaging improvement through its ASAPP counterpart program which is Community Empowerment through Science and Technology. Aside from brewed coffee as the number one popular tourism product of the municipality, "budbud" is also available in the public market. Bibingka and saksak sinagol has the least popularity of the tourism products due to lack of promotion (Cortes et al., 2022; Pascual et al., 2022).

Based on the result a marketing strategy is quite significant in promoting the agricultural resources and tourism products (Du et al., 2018; Prathap & C.C., 2020). The strategy must meet the customers' needs and demands. It must be flexible to respond to challenges in customer perceptions and demands, identify and then communicate the benefits of the products in the target market. Finally, determine and monitor the effectiveness of the strategy and make an adjustment when it is necessary. In fact, some informants believe that social media could be an effective marketing strategy in advertising the agricultural resources (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Hitchcock & Dann, 1998). Others believed that linkages of partnership with private sectors could be an effective marketing strategy. Conducting Agro-Fair or exhibits and conferences on these products could also be an effective marketing strategy according to some informants.

Based on aforementioned problems, the informants suggested that facilities and services in the coffee farms should be improved by providing advanced facilities and equipment. Previous study suggested that communication system should be improved by requesting cell towers from telecommunications companies (Risteskia et al., 2012). In order to make these destinations accessible, previous study also suggested that roads should be concretized by the local government units and people's initiative that is comprised by the locals should be created for them to act the front runners of tourism promotion (Owsianowska, 2011).

The implication of this study is implementation of the improvement of the existing facilities and the construction of other amenities in order to attract more tourist and patronization of the tourist sites. Then department of tourism to organize people's initiative in order to motivate the locals to actively participate in the promotion of tourism. And hopefully the local government unit should allocate funds to improve facilities, transportation, and communication for the continual improvement of tourism industry. This research also has limitations, therefore for further research it is hoped that it can deepen this research related to impact of agritourism on local agricultural occupation in Tuburan, Tourists' satisfaction on agritourism spots in Tuburan, Knowledge, Attitude, Practices of Local Farmers towards Agritourism, and Effectiveness of LGU Tuburan's Program towards Agro-tourism in order to complete the scope of this research.

4. CONCLUSION

It was found that coffee, banana, cacao, coconut, and corn are the major agricultural floras in Tuburan Cebu. Coffee was found to have the biggest land area among all the other major floras giving a distinct identity of the municipality. Coffee was established to be motivating factor of the tourist in visiting Tuburan. Agricultural floras are greatly beneficial to the community and to its people through job opportunities, empowering the people, building social relationships, and uplifting people's morale. Major challenges encountered by the informants in visiting and promoting tourism in Tuburan are poor facilities and services in the coffee farms, transportation, communication, and manpower.

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