

Local Governance Of Tourism Programs In Bulacan: Input To An Action Plan

Aimee Grace M. Madlangbayan

College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Bulacan State University, City of Malolos, Bulacan

Abstract: This study strived to measure the level of implementation of tourism programs as indicated in the Tourism Act of 2009 and evaluate the governance in selected tourism offices to further verify the basis for tourism programs in the province of Bulacan. The governance of the local tourism offices in the search for further analysis on the level of implementation of tourism programs in their respective municipalities or cities, the evaluation of the practiced governance were based on the following components: 1) Human Resources Management; 2) Strategic Leadership and 3) Organizational Development which would help some up the background of why and how the tourism programs are implemented in the local government offices in Bulacan have their current state. The level of implementation of tourism programs were stratified into three basic functions: 1) Tourism Development Planning; 2) Tourism Promotions and 3) Tourism Standards implementation. There were a number of implications specified in the findings and were analyzed and were given solutions through the action plan recommended in Chapter 5. First, local government offices should be able to review the national policies in the tourism industry to come up with more viable and significant programs for their municipalities or cities. Tourism policy is necessary before any planning activity should be facilitated which magnifies the need to align any project or plan to the policies mandated by the governing bodies, which is the Department of Tourism in our country. This is especially useful in the province of Bulacan as the tourism officers do not have tourism as their educational background. Good governance can only be exercised if the right people are in the right position (Manento, 2010) whether or not, tourism offices' heads or staff are tourism graduates, the ultimate challenge of tourism is to have a paradigm shift on the attitude on service. Tourism is a service-oriented sector (UNWTO), it exists to be of service and not only on the value of investment returns. Tourism programs should be implemented with basis and not on the basis of giving a good name to the local government office management. Thus, the creation of an action plan to alleviate the tourism industry situation in the province is truly found necessary and was given light in this study.

Keywords: Local Governance, Tourism Governance, Tourism Policy

Introduction

Republic Act (RA) 9593 also known as the Tourism Act of 2009 was enacted in May 12, 2009 under the leadership of Sen. Richard Gordon. The law is considered as the Omnibus Tourism Code. Its general provision stated in Section 1 is to harness its potentials “as an engine of socio-economic growth and cultural affirmation to generate investment, foreign exchange and employment and to continue to mold an enhanced sense of national pride for all Filipinos”. The state’s perspective of tourism, as with the rest of the other country’s experience and plans, is seen through the direct contributions on job creation, foreign exchange generation and stimulation of large and usually foreign investments.

Tourism is considered as the driver of World Economy in the 21st century. It is also called the lifeblood of the economy. Changing paradigms in the economy with the service sector made more contributions to the world and national economy and

within the tourism industry itself. Tourism has become more and more significant that it led all countries to shift their priority in policy formulation and planning processes with more concern for the tourism industry. (Kastarlak, 2012)

In the Philippine context of economy, despite its middle-income status, with per capita income of almost \$1,000.00, shares some problems of low income countries, including high poverty incidence. Secondly, it has also very skewed regional disparity in economical and infrastructure development. The National Capital Region (NCR) has 1/7th population and has an average per capita income of Php 28,899.00 being the highest in the country and which has invited socio-economic problems too. (Bulacan website, 2012)

Bulacan, with its 2.26 million population, is highly proximate to Metro Manila and has registered very high and unusual population growth rate of 4.93%. It is a highly urbanized province with 75% of its population living in the urban area.

Because of its proximity to the National Capital Region, urban character and its central location in the region, Bulacan has satisfactorily developed infrastructure and capacity, possibility and expectation for further economic growth in the province. It is poised to further population increase because of migration from nearby provinces as well as far-flung areas. This necessitates a stable and satisfactory economic and social development of the province in terms of its industries, tourism being one of the economic factors that maintain the quality of life in the province.

In realization of these strengths, the researcher tried to fuse these two sectors to arrive with the best strategy that Bulacan Tourism Offices can use for its tourism development and promotion primarily towards their intervention programs. Being in the tourism industry for 11 years, the researcher also once became part of the provincial tourism office specifically the Provincial tourism office of the Province of Bulacan. The researcher was able to see the evolution of the Provincial Tourism Office from its changing goals and perspectives from being dribbled from one Department to another mainly for the reason that the administration cannot make up their mind whether they would like to channel the programs of the tourism office to bring about economic impacts or focus on its cultural development. It is obvious, that the tourism industry in Bulacan still has not found its niche. This is the same reason why the industry has not flourished in the province despite the tangible treasures and attractions it has as mentioned.

In the course of the study, the researcher explored the governance of local tourism offices or organizations underlying the tourism industry in the province, their tasks, functions and program and its congruency to the vision set by the Tourism Act of 2009 and the Bulacan Tourism Code (2012), which serves as the governing policy of the tourism industry of the province. The Local Tourism Offices' composition, including profile of its employees or staff members and its programs will be in great focus. The quality of the human resource as they say eventually lead to the kind of service they provide, or in the case of Local Government Units (LGUs) specifically the Local Tourism Offices (LTOs), the programs they administer for their stakeholders. The researcher believes that with an in depth analysis of these factors, together with the perception of the tourism stakeholders and guests, the dilemma on the positioning of the tourism industry in the province of Bulacan will be put in a new light.

It is for this reason that a careful study on the governance of the tourism programs of the province be made with the end of maximizing the province's tourism industry. Thus by feeling the pulse of the tourism stakeholders, the perceptions and needs, these may be made valuable inputs to the general programs and activities to maximize the potentials of Bulacan's industries. Transforming the industry, observe is as it is now into a robust and sustainable industry for the development of the province, while bearing in mind that the local government's avid capacity to bring about successful intervention programs is influenced by various

factors such as individual competence and knowledge, community acceptance and involvement, resources whether physical or financial and the governance through which these goals of the tourism offices are established.

Statement of the Problem

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following specific questions:

1. How may the existing governance of the selected Local Government Units in Bulacan be described in terms of:
 - 1.1 Human Resource Management;
 - 1.2 Strategic Leadership; and
 - 1.3 Organizational Development?
2. How may the level of implementation of the mandated tourism programs from the Department of Tourism among local government units in Bulacan be measured in terms of:
 - 2.1 Tourism Development Planning;
 - 2.2 Tourism Promotions; and
 - 2.3 Tourism Standards?
3. What plan of action may be proposed to the local tourism offices to achieve the goals of the Tourism Act of 2009 and attain desired tourism growth in the Province of Bulacan based on the findings of the study?

Literature Review

According to both the World Tourism Organization (WTO), and the World Travel Tourism Council (WTTC) the travel and tourism industry is the largest industry and employer in the world. This only proves that the development of tourism programs leads to a greater good not only to businesses but to the society in general. It is at the same time vital to analyze what the local government offices are doing to maximize these benefits of tourism development.

The researcher focused on the liberal theories and their varying degrees on government intervention, examined the different components of these theories and see how they can help us to understand the need or lack thereof for government intervention.

One of the central questions that economic theorists have been debating for decades is how much intervention should governments impose on the economic activities of society? The spectrum is broad with classical liberalism theorists such as Fredrich Heyek believing that markets and markets alone should make economic decisions and interventionist liberals such as John Maynard Keynes who believe that it is necessary for governments to intervene in spheres that were not adequately addressed by the markets.

Adam Smith who is normally seen as the matriarch of the classical liberal approach to the political economy argued that markets operating under complete freedom and based on the division of labor to focus on the maximum efficiency would yield gains that would be of a positive sum type, meaning that every unit would gain even if the different units gained at different levels (Cohn, 2003). What was stated is very true in the tourism industry as well. Economists use the term “multiplier effect” to describe this multiple benefits to different stakeholders or service providers.

In his work “*The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money*”, Keynes stated;” The central controls necessary to ensure full employment will of course involve a large extension of traditional functions of government” (Keynes, pp.378-379).

Thus in situations of unemployment the governments should step in and intervene. How they should intervene according to Keynes was through the management of aggregate demand. Unemployment would bring about obviously a drop in demand since wage earners would have less money to consume goods, a reduction in production from this loss of demand and a lack of investment. Governments could implement policies then in turn to increase demand, production and even investment by changing fiscal and monetary policies as well as investing in public projects to stimulate the economy. Keynes was also concerned with capital being completely unregulated in certain states. This was due to variables that could be subject to sudden variations like interest rates and inflation which could very quickly create heightened uncertainty in the market and cause capital to move in and out of the region altering instantly the value of crucial assets (Kirshner, 1999)

Intervention theory is a term used in social studies and social policy to refer to the decision-making problems of intervening effectively in a situation in order to secure desired outcomes. Intervention theory addresses the question of when it is desirable not to intervene and when it is appropriate to do so. It also examines the effectiveness of different types of intervention. The term is used across a range of social and medical practices, including health care, child protection and law enforcement. It is also used in business studies. In *Intervention Theory and Method* Chris Argyris argues that in organization development effective intervention depends on appropriate and useful knowledge that offers a range of clearly defined choices and that the target should be for as many people as possible to be committed to the option chosen and to feel responsibility for it. Overall, interventions should generate a situation in which actors believe that they are working to internal rather than external influences on decisions. (Adison-Wesley 1970). As government plays a supporting role that may be limited to the establishment of laws, regulation and standards (Katarlak, 2012), so does the effect of their interventions towards the industry is maternal in nature. Governing bodies should guide, protect and provide tourism investments and enterprises opportunities for growth, hence to promote excellence and national pride (RA 9593, 2009)

Theoretical Approach to Governance. According to Noferini (2010), good governance may be defined as a set of concepts that were developed as guiding principles to focus attention on the best practices of governments or simply of good government since they are decisive factors on economic growth and development. With this, it is affluent to say that good governance refers to a stable political environment and system which is capable to respond to the needs of its stakeholders and of its citizens in general in a democratic and transparent manner.

Messner (1997) on the other hand believes on the theory that governance takes place when the State and private actors intervene selectively in policy-making. He further emphasized that both State and private actors create functional systems through various patterns of coordinated actions. Of which was supported by the shared functions and responsibilities among national government and local government units set by the national policy on tourism in the Philippines or the Tourism Act of 2009. This further proves that governance take place in synergy among actors in the industry and may only lead to coordinated actions towards the achievement of the set goals by the governing bodies of the tourism industry.

In Bulacan, the creation of certain organizations pertaining to the group of stakeholders with a specific purpose just like the Bulacan Association of Resort Owners (BARO), Bulacan Association of Travel Agencies (BATA), Fashion Designers Association of Bulacan (FDAB) and GABA Y (Bulacan Tour Guides Association) are among the strong organizations that were initiated by the Provincial Tourism Office, but eventually were left to stand on their own where they found themselves getting stronger as they

continually indulge with self-organized programs and established networks that has proved to be very useful in the development and promotion of their own businesses inside the organizations.

Human Resource Governance .According to the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM, 2009), human resource planning and management is a key to the overall growth and effectiveness of the public service, and broadly, national development. The organization believes that HR plans should be aligned with the organization's objectives as well as the interests of those within. The concern of human resource management is integral in the success of any organization, as well as its overall governance especially in public service. From recruitment to retention strategies, public service should be able to develop flexible and efficient staffing processes.

Strategic Leadership in Governance. Leadership function in the public sector is crucial. It has to deal with complex problems while at the same time recognizing future technology will have a profound impact to governance. (Ali, 2004) Ali also mentioned that in the practice of leadership, local governments must learn to grasp and adapt on problems of how governments can remain credible and focused when significant resources are not in their control or when organizations or people with limited ability to carry out tasks confront accountability. He further stressed that leadership through good governance is able to manage diversity and be able to establish partnerships for favorable outcomes towards productivity.

Organization Development towards Governance. Another critical component of governance is the organizational development procedures and activities that tend to increase accountability towards actions and decisions of employees and stakeholders in the concerted effort to achieve organizational goals. Credible and trust worthy organizations gain the both political and financial support from its constituents which in turn facilitates effectiveness in service delivery and legitimized other components of governance. According to the Urban Institute Center on International Development and Governance (2014), organizational development measures are instituted strategies to support good governance and build trust in institutions where performance management and citizen engagement are keys to shape proper interventions.

Thus, it is necessary for organizations to establish understanding of purposes of aims among its members, together with consultations with stakeholders and support from organized groups that could further enhance the capability of an organization to achieve its goals.

The Tourism Act of 2009 or the Republic Act 9593, poses a great challenge to both national and local government units with the integration of shared responsibilities among the two agencies. It further states that tourism is an indispensable element of the economy of the nation and an industry that is utilized and is important to the Philippine society in general.

Tourism Development Planning. The concept of tourism planning and development has evolved through the years. It is primarily concerned with the formulation, implementation and monitoring of tourism master plan, coordination with national agencies, stakeholders and local community (RA 9593). The tourism act encourages LGUs to have regular consultation with its stakeholders thereby utilizing their powers according to the prescribed authority by the Local Government Code of 1991 also known as the RA 7160. This function also includes zoning, land use, infrastructure development and establishment of standards to be imposed among tourism enterprises. Such practices are envisioned to uphold heritage and environmental protection. (Section 37)

Tourism Standards. To encourage global competitiveness, strengthen data gathering, research on tourism, facilitate promotion of individual attractions and the industry as a whole, the Department of Tourism shall impose prescriptive and regulatory standards which shall aid its daily operations. These standard measures pertain to programs such as registration would

entail strict compliance towards accreditation with regular consultation with the department. Local Governments, beside their responsibility under the Local Government Code pertaining to the issuance of business permits, licenses and the like, will also have to take action whether the enforcement of the system of accreditation are adopted and successfully implemented in their tourism development plans. (RA 9593, 2012 section 39)

The implementation of capability buildings and efforts to evaluate tourism development projects are some of the shared responsibilities of local government units, with regards tourism standards. (Javier, et al, 2011)

On the shared responsibilities between the National Government and LGUs. According to Javier, et.al (2011), local government units provide the ideal, authority, infrastructure, policy and planning procedures to maximize the benefit for its communities. LGUs play a major role in a community's development, provide the links between the people and government, address its community's problems and concerns, enforce policies and hold influence over its communities. The LGUs are also intermediaries in channeling the frame work of government into each individual community in order to create a beneficial outcome. In the context of sustainable tourism, local government units form part of the local community of an area play a role as main actors in the development and preservation of tourism destinations as well as its resources. (Kastarlak, 2012) It is also vital to this approach that the contribution of full range of stakeholders and the community (residents of an area) be involved in planning and decision-making in order to maintain their interest and enable them to reap benefits in the long run. It is therefore an imperative to establish the influence of the local government units over the tourism industry, which may be the very asset to which the future of the industry depends.

The role of government in tourism: The critical "how". This is why it is fundamentally believed that to enable the tourism sector to truly work for the destination, clear, visionary, focused leadership by government is vital. When a government takes the strategic decision to embrace tourism as a key driver of social and economic growth something very interesting starts to happen. With this decision a nation makes a pledge to open its doors to the world, hosting curious minds and hearts of people of all walks of life on its home soil. Citizens become ambassadors, culture becomes national character, places become pride-filled attractions, experiences become stories, and strangers become friends. Hoebel (1976), an anthropologist, defined culture as an integrated system of learned behavior which as result of social invention is transmitted only through communication and learning.

As it is true that tourism brings about social change, it also communicates the value of cultural harmony, one of the core issues of sustainable tourism. Governments should be able to maintain that harmony and understanding of cultures to aid the cultural diffusion that is happening around.

Opportunities and Challenges in Tourism Development Roles of Local Government Units in the Philippines. The role of local government is to promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of their communities and their involvement in tourism must be related to that. The LGUs have the mandate to formulate their own tourism plans which sets out the priorities over the medium to longer term and how the local authority intends to contribute to community well-being. The plan must set out the following the community outcomes as a result of tourism development, how these have been identified and how the local authority will contribute to these. The Local Government Tourism Strategy may contribute to economic development strategies and or regional as well as national tourism strategies and serve as the basis of the role of LGUs.

In the study by Chheang (2009), he relates that the State, being the government both in national and local levels are catalysts in tourism planning not just for the reason of development and poverty alleviation, but is towards a renewed national

image and cultural identity. Nine factors were identified by the study involving perspectives on security and safety of tourists; infrastructure and tourism facilities development; stakeholders' collaboration; cultural heritage preservation; environmental conservation; human resource development; tourism products promotion; simplification of travel procedures and regional cooperation. All of which are represented in this study as the shared functions and responsibilities of the local government towards the development and growth for the tourism industry. Each function was tasked to be carried out in the regular tourism programs of the local government units through the local tourism offices.

In the same light, in the paper of Fuentes (2013), she defined the vital role of governance in the tourism industry. She reiterated in her research how the practice of good governance may lead to the improvement of tourism information systems where needs maybe transformed into solutions and even opportunities in improving and developing the industry. It is tantamount to say that Fuentes' research on governance is embodied by the concept of sustainable development as well as one of the ideal factors on tourism development which is community and management participation and involvement. Both parties (management and local community) must work together in cognizance of the goal of bringing about positive improvement towards the tourism industry.

Politicization of Tourism. In Linda Richter's study (1989), she looked into the facets of tourism which are well utilized in the political sciences. The growth of tourism has brought increased importance throughout the years although political scientists find tourism too multifaceted, too shallow and is unlikely to advance individual career. This is with the perception that the industry is highly privatized and is concerned with businesses mostly in the private sector.

This maybe the same reason why governments do not take the tourism industry seriously in terms of prioritization, many in fact largely ignored tourism. Nonetheless, what Richter is trying to say in her study is that Tourism is highly a political phenomenon and its implications were not frequently perceived and even almost nowhere to be fully understood. Although many governments around the world have shown themselves to be entrepreneurs in tourism development (Hall, 1994:27), many still argue that tourism activities are mainly sustained through private sector initiatives ignoring the truth that governments still has a big hand in tourism development (WTO,1996).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is an IPOO model, where the Inputs of the researcher was to review documents related to the study both literature and studies made. To add substance and factual information, interviews and surveys with concerned agencies and personnel were done while the governance of local government units are evaluated as practiced. Figure 1 below, shows the paradigm of the study.

The process of the study went about the evaluation and analysis of the following: profile of the respondents of the study wherein the age, gender, highest educational attainment, position, years of service and relevant trainings were taken in consideration to come up with an in-depth analysis of the research topic.

Also, the process included the evaluation of the level of implementation of the tourism programs according to the factors identified in the tourism act of 2009 and other documents that in effect served as valuable inputs to the study.

The Output was an overall evaluation of implemented tourism programs according to the kind of governance applied and the Outcome is the proposed tourism development program of the researcher for local government units in their application of the findings and recommendations of this study

Methodology

The study attempted to analyze the tourism programs implemented by the Local Government Offices in selected municipalities and cities of Bulacan based on the extent of implementation and the effective governance as applied by the local government units assigned in the tourism of the respective municipalities and cities. The researcher used a descriptive research method to effectively describe the nature of a situation at the time of the study, thus a particular phenomenon could be explored further (Traverse, 2000). This method seeks to determine the prevailing conditions of certain practices and attitudes as it unveils accurate narratives of activities, processes, objects and persons as explained by Best (2003). It involves obtaining of information that concerns the current status, and conditions of situations as Key (1997) would put it his way.

As a whole, according to Salmorin (2006), this descriptive research is without a doubt very useful in first, describing the variables of this study and second, interrelating them as such that it will present the policy versus actual implementation of tourism programs in the local level and relate this program implementation to the kind of governance that the local government offices exemplify to come up with basis on effective plans of action to uplift the tourism industry of the province of Bulacan.

Results and Discussion

Analysis of Governance: Human Resource Management Aspect

Table 1 shows the level of governance of the Local Tourism offices in terms of Human Resource Management. Shown in the table is the level of governance of the Local Tourism Office with respect to human resource management. The highest average mean of 3.18 rated as moderate level is on the criteria, “being a tourism graduate is an advantage in applying as a tourism officer” and 3.08 on the criteria, “the salaries of LTO officer/staff are in accordance with existing policies and guidelines”, since they are supposed to be plantilla positions then they have to follow the salaries set by the Budget and Management office. A low mean of 2.51 is on the criterion, “a system of promotion in rank and salary-based incentives are implemented”.

Even according to the RA 9593 (2009), local government units, pertaining to cities, municipalities and provincial governments should have a designated Tourism Officer, who has a permanent position.

Tourism Officers are in-charge of the preparing, implementing and updating local tourism development plans, enforcing tourism laws, rules and regulations> in the carrying out of his functions, the tourism officer must have close coordination with the Department of tourism and other national agencies to have constant support and communication of his or her programs as well as to gain proper support in funding and promotion. (section 42)

In review of the findings, it may be said that it is surprising to see that although the enumerated variables pertains to regular activities inside local government offices, many of them still fail to adhere to set rules and policies set on the governance of human resource management.

Table 1. Analysis of Governance of Local Tourism Offices in terms of Human Resource Management

Items	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
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1	Hiring system adopts open competition, which is published and well disseminated through the Civil Service Commission and various media outlets	2.54	Sometimes
2	Recruitment is a participative process involving the concerned officials, department heads and administrators	2.84	Sometimes
3	Being a tourism graduate is an advantage in applying as a tourism officer	3.18	Sometimes
4	LTO officer/staff are properly oriented on their job descriptions in their respective office	2.81	Sometimes
5	LTO office/staff are oriented on the role of the office to the locality	3	Sometimes
6	LTO officer/staff are oriented on the tourism policies and regulations as mandated by the Tourism Act of 2009	2.84	Sometimes
7	Salaries of LTO officer/staff are in accordance with existing policies and guidelines	3.08	Sometimes
8	TO and staff are given trainings to improve job performance	2.97	Sometimes
9	Professional growth is encouraged through attendance in lectures, symposia, conferences and workshops, etc.	3.03	Sometimes
10	A system of promotion in rank and salary-based incentives are implemented	2.51	Sometimes
		$\bar{X} = 2.88$ (Sometimes)	

As Hun Sen (July 2002) have said, “the important work is the training of human resources to a level of high knowledge and with sufficient capability in both national and international standards”. Consequently, “tourism vocational training schools were established, technical staff and employees have been trained both home and abroad (Hun Sen, 2003). Chheang (2008) who has devoted his study on the tourism speeches of Hun Sen, Cambodian Prime Minister, stressed that that was the case then in Cambodia, which until now seems to be unrealized in the Philippines. He further implies that the tourism industry sometimes being used as an instrument of corruption, where it only serves to show a positive front of the administration of corrupt leaders, such as where mentioned the Marcos’ regime.

Analysis of Governance: Strategic Leadership Aspect

Table 2 shows the level of governance of the Local Tourism offices in terms of Strategic Leadership. The respondents evaluated the strategic leadership practices on governance of the selected local tourism offices. On the leadership component of governance specified in the table above stipulates that the existing tourism officers and staff by their own judgment and by the assessment of the members from their tourism council believes that their leadership capabilities are not consistent and thus the overall impression of Sometimes was given with an average mean of 3.15 which still analyzed as moderate level.

Table 2. Analysis of Governance of Local Tourism Offices in terms of Strategic Leadership

	Items	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1	Tourism Officer/s (TO) shows competency to lead	2.89	Sometimes
2	Tourism Officer/s (TO) has background in tourism, management, public administration or other related fields	2.97	Sometimes
3	TO has proficient knowledge on tourism and its aspects	3.24	Sometimes
4	Personality and temperament of TO matches the industry	3.03	Sometimes
5	TO is motivated, has emotional intelligence pertaining to the development of tourism in your area	3.03	Sometimes
6	TO has the capacity to manage and solve problems in the office	3.14	Sometimes

7	TO shows sense of responsibility in the implementation of projects	3.27	Sometimes
8	TO shows commitment and loyalty to the mission of the office	3.43	Sometimes
9	TO demonstrates harmonious interpersonal relations with superiors, associates, students, parents and the community	3.38	Sometimes

$\bar{x} = 3.15$ (Sometimes)

Although most of them are working for more than 5 years in the government, their leadership capacity especially in terms of tourism management and relationship with their constituents still has to be improved. Item 8, which states, “tourism officers shows commitment and loyalty to the mission of the office” is a validation on the concept of human resource management as well as leadership in governance. Leaders must be able to align their actions according to the aims and purposes of their organization to assure control and proper implementation of plans.

Analysis of Governance: Organizational Development Aspect

Table 3 presents the level of governance of the LTO with respect to organizational development. Two of the criteria variables were rated high level by the respondents, e.g. “LTO have clear understanding of the mission, vision and goals of the office. This is understandable because an employee once accepted in an office should be very much aware of the VMGs set by the management of an agency for its daily operations. The other criteria was “taking of the minutes of the meetings are taken during the meeting”. This is one of the standard operating procedure in conducting a meeting, reading of the minutes of the previous meeting and so the distribution of the minutes to the different representatives.

Table 3. Analysis of Governance of Local Tourism Offices in terms of Organizational Development

	Items	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1	LTO staff have clear understanding of the vision, mission and goals of the office	3.71	Often
2	Organizational structure has clear lines of authority and duty	3.49	Sometimes
3	Meetings with staff are held regularly to monitor implemented projects	3.32	Sometimes
4	Meetings with staff are held regularly to evaluate implemented projects	3.38	Sometimes
5	Minutes of the meetings are taken during the meeting	3.51	Often
6	Minutes of the meetings are disseminated to concerned parties	3.27	Sometimes
7	Meetings with stakeholders/local community are held regularly	3.06	Sometimes
8	Councils and other private entities are established to assist LTO in the implementation of mandated programs	3.08	Sometimes
9	Councils and other private entities are supported by the LTO in the implementation of mandated programs	3.11	Sometimes
10	Community or Stakeholder Participation is encouraged in decision making	3.16	Sometimes
11	Creative and innovative ideas are encouraged in daily tasks	3.11	Sometimes

$\bar{x} = 3.2$ (Sometimes)

Those who were absent in the previous undertaking will be aware of the business discussed and also to give chance for the workers to amend or revise issues according previously taken up. All the other criteria were rated with moderate level (Sometimes), which pertains to inconsistencies in the delivery of tasks.

Level of Implementation of Tourism Development Planning Programs

Shown in Table 4 is the level of implementation of the Tourism programs under the Tourism development planning in the local government units. The average level was rated moderate by the respondents. The highest mean rating was observed on the

statement: “LTO practice principles on sustainable tourism development focused on conservation of natural endowments, preservation of cultural heritage and help value cleanliness in the community”.

This finding complements Boo (1990) who have emphasized that tourism is an excellent opportunity to promote sustainable development because it provides an economic component for cultural and environmental conservation. A high level of implementation is expected in all the categories specified in the table, however, a moderate level rating may be associated with only some effort or minimum effort was given to implement the programs pertaining to tourism development and planning among the respondent local governments.

Table 4. Level of implementation of Tourism Programs under Tourism Development Planning in Local Government Units

	Items	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1	LTO implements formulation of tourism development plans	2.97	Moderate
2	LTO Implements and monitor tourism development plans	3	Moderate
3	LTO submits tourism development plans to the Department of Tourism for integration to the national development plan	2.78	Moderate
4	LTO establishes close coordination with the Department of Tourism through regular meetings and reports	2.78	Moderate
5	LTO formulates tourism policies and enforces to its stakeholders for adherence	2.65	Moderate
6	LTO initiates collection of statistical data such as tourist arrivals and tourist receipts	2.62	Moderate
7	LTO creates of an inventory of resources or tourism enterprises for baseline data purposes	2.68	Moderate
8	LTO collects and organize data with regards the number of employed personnel	2.46	Moderate
9	LTO provides Assistance on how to increase profit	2.51	Moderate
10	LTO provides tourism enterprises support through low interest loans and other investment support	2.08	I
11	LTO develops of new tourism Infrastructure	2.51	FI
12	LTO provides motivation for community participation and development	2.64	FI
13	LTO provide motivation for Tourism investment through various investment incentives such as tax holidays and registration	2.36	FI
14	LTO practice principles on sustainable tourism development such as:	3.08	FI
14.1	• Conservation of Natural endowments	2.70	FI
14.2	• Preservation of Cultural heritage	3.03	FI
14.3	• Help value cleanliness and orderliness in the community	2.97	FI

$\bar{X} = 2.70$ (Fairly Implemented)

Support through low interest loans and other investment from the local government offices were found to be implemented in very low proportions, as well as the provision to motivate tourism investment through various incentives such as tax holidays and registration (RA. 9593.section 3-d). The same was given emphasis in the research paper of Javier and Elazigue (2011). Many of local governments now do not recognize the value of their shared responsibility and governance with the National Government to provide investment support and services which includes, yet not limited to access to credit financing for the development of tourism investments and enterprises.

The Department of Tourism in fact could provide financial support to local government units for the preparation and monitoring of such foregoing tourism development plans. The RA 9593 further provides for the Tourism Development Fund to be disbursed and administered by the DOT for the support it shall give to the LGUs.

Level of Implementation of Tourism Promotion Programs

Table 5 shows the level of implementation of Tourism Promotion Progress in the Local Government units. The data below shows that all of the variables were rated with moderate level. The highest mean of 2.97 was observed in variable 2, e.g. “LTO assists in developing new tourist attractions and the lowest is in 1, LTO assists in developing new tourism products.”

Back in 2007, Director Ronaldo P. Tiotuico in his presentation on the Overview of Tourism in Central Luzon accentuated that among the devolved functions of the Department of Tourism to the LGUs were licensing, infrastructure development, tourism product development and enhancement and domestic marketing.

Table 5. Level of Implementation of Tourism Promotion Programs in Local Government Units

	Items	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1	LTO assists in developing new tourism products	2.61	FI
2	LTO assists in developing new tourism attractions	2.97	FI
3	LTO provide assistance in the promotion of products	2.94	FI
4	LTO provide assistance in the promotion of attractions	2.86	FI
5	LTO initiates the creation of tourist information and assistance center	2.65	FI
6	LTO develops tourist Information materials such as brochure, maps, website, etc.	2.86	FI
7	LTO provide friendly and accessible tourist assistance and services	2.65	FI
8	LTO formulate tours and itineraries for the locality	2.78	FI
9	LTP joins promotional activities for the locality such as travel expos, travelmarts, etc.	2.95	FI
		$\bar{X} = 2.81$	(Fairly Implemented)

With support of these efforts towards product development and enhancement, technological assistance and funding of national agencies such as the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and Department of Science and Technology (DOST) were utilized. Although new tourism products may also pertain to attractions and services, the province of Bulacan still remains meek and depends on the Provincial Government’s efforts towards this cause. Many LGUs would claim they have no funding allocated for such product development and are highly dependent on private stakeholders on the development of new tourist attractions.

Level of Implementation of Tourism Standards

The level of implementation of Tourism standards among local government units is shown in Table 6. Among the seven items given, only items 2 and 3 which states “LTO Conduct staff trainings to enhance knowledge on tourism” and “LTO conduct skills training for employees of tourism enterprises to enhance capability and quality of services” were given a mean average of 2.68 and 2.70 respectively; verbally described as “Fairly Implemented.”

Table 6. Level of Implementation of Tourism Standards among Local Government Units

	Items	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1	LTO provide product enhancement seminars	2.09	I
2	LTO Conduct staff trainings to enhance knowledge on tourism	2.68	FI
3	LTO conduct skills training for employees of tourism enterprises to enhance capability and quality of services	2.70	FI
4	LTO conduct assessment of quality of tourism products	2.41	I
5	LTO enforce tourism standards for accreditation	2.32	I
6	LTO Conducts regular monitoring (visits) of tourism enterprises according to standards set by the Department of Tourism	2.11	I
7	LTO Conducts regular assessment of tourism enterprises according to standards set by the	2.19	I

The findings state that the coordination between the local government and tourism stakeholders are not yet established and monitoring of programs are yet to be improved and the system to be developed. This finding is in contrast with the theory on governance by Peters (2003), Rhodes (2005) and Norferini (2010), who all agreed that it is an act initiated from the government however, a synergy from both community (private stakeholders) and the government can only bring about effective governance that is for the common good all.

Action Plan

Table 7. Action Plan

Activities	Time Frame	Stake Holders	Source of Funding	Remarks
a. Review and Implementation of Tourism National Policies (RA 9593 or Tourism Act of 2009) or prevailing Tourism Codes in the Municipality/City/Province	August – September 2014	LGU / LTO / Tourism Stakeholders	LGU/ Provincial Government of Bulacan (PGB)	
b. Provide trainings for tourism product creation and enhancement	March 2015	LTO/Local Community/ Entrepreneurs	LGU/TPB/ DOST/DTI	*TPB and DOT can give technical and financial assistance for trainings and tourism development by virtue of (Philippine National Tourism Development Plan 2011-2016 and RA 9593)
d. Attend tourism management and development trainings, seminars and conferences	Twice every year	Tourism Officers/staff / LTO Staff	LTO	
e. Eliminate corruption through proper channeling of funds by: 1. organizing trainings on tourism development and management	Twice or Thrice a year	LGU/Tourism Enterprise Owners and staff/Local Community	LGU/PGB DOT3/ DOT/ Tourism Stakeholders	
2. renovate tourism infrastructures and facilities	April 2015 – May 2015	LTO/Tourism Enterprise Owner	LGU/Tourism Enterprises/ DOT	
3. eliminate the involvement of the government head's wife or children in the tourism councils	For immediate implementation (for next batch of tourism council members)	LTO/ LGU/ Tourism Councils/ Local Community	No cost	On the other hand would entail more returns than expenses.
e. Maximize economic benefits of tourism thru: 1. local community orientations towards entrepreneurship in the tourism industry	Once every quarter of the year	LTO/ Tourism Councils/ Tourism Stakeholders	LGU/PGB	

Activities	Time Frame	Stake Holders	Source of Funding	Remarks
2. establish micro-finance loans for small and medium entrepreneurs	May 2015- June 2015	LTO/PGB	LGU/ PGB/DOT	*
f. Establish private sector and community engagement: 1. regular meetings with tourism stakeholders	Once a month	LTO/PGB/ Tourism Stakeholders	LGU/PGB/ Tourism Enterprises	
2. encourage inputs from stakeholders in decision-making	Every first quarter of the year	LTO/Local Community / Tourism Stakeholders/ Tourism Councils	LGU	
g. Establish more environmentally sustainable projects for tourism: 1. conservation of natural resources by implementing strict rules and regulations especially in ecotourism sites (public policy) 2. Cleanliness campaigns 3. Preservation of culture and history 4. Incorporation of Sustainable Development practices in the municipal/city/provincial tourism codes	January – March 2015	LTO/Tourism Stakeholders/ Local Community / LGU/ PGB	LGU/ DENR / DOT	

Conclusions

The following are derived conclusions from the findings of the study:

1. On the governance sense and practice which was analyzed using the aspects of human resource management, strategic leadership and organizational development, the researcher concludes that most LTOs follow the process of recruitment as set by the Civil Service Commission and are effective in the embodiment of the vision, mission and goals of their institutions. On the other hand, LTOs in the province lack constant and regular cooperation, collaboration and coordination with their stakeholders, most especially on the monitoring of projects and programs in the accreditation and overall standardization of the tourism industry of the province.
2. Tourism officers and staff in LTOs' understanding of their functions and their mandated functions according to the National Policies for the tourism industry of the Philippines are yet to be improved. Generally, it could be concluded that the LTOs are not very aware of the Tourism Act of 2009 or Republic Act 9593. Most tourism officers who came across the questionnaire formulated by the researcher were enamored by the information they read and were eager to ask for an extra copy for their future use.

On the implementation of tourism standards, it may be said that LTOs are good in planning for tourism development and adhere to sustainable tourism development activities, but are weak in the establishment of policies, standards and monitoring activities to maintain and assure their implementation.

3. A plan of action both for the Local Tourism Offices and the Provincial Tourism office will be very effective to achieve desired goals for each institution they embody. An action plan concerning steps to analyze the existing programs and policies is vital in both program planning and practice on good governance. This will further empower LTOs and encourage them to work accordingly to the aims and purposes of the local and national governments rather than depending their programs on the dictates of their governors and mayors. A detailed action plan would also give direction to the tourism industry at same time prevent corruption and misuse of resources in the province.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations were made:

1. With the end view of reforming the tourism industry of the province of Bulacan with regards the recruitment of qualified Tourism officers and staff LGU/LTO is recommended to review the civil service commission requirements and RA 9593 mandates (section 42, p. 19 and Section 125 p. 113) stated requirements and qualifications for Tourism officers and staff.

2. Local Government Units through their Local Tourism Offices and maybe some help with the tourism stakeholders must endorse the regularization of the plantilla position for tourism officers from the same documents.

3. Trainings related to tourism management and development must be attended by appointed tourism officers and staff to broaden their knowledge and work cohesively towards tourism growth.

4. On the tourism programs implemented towards tourism development planning, tourism promotions and tourism standards, local government units through their local tourism officers and staff are highly recommended to conduct a thorough review of the Tourism Act of 2009 (RA 9593) especially on the shared functions of the National Governments and local government units and its implementing rules (Sub Chapter IIE p. 16). Tourism planning must always take in consideration the policies involved. This technique puts the set of activities on the right direction and at the same time establishes honest and uncorrupt efforts towards an aggressive tourism industry for the province.

5. Governance and at a certain extent good governance, maybe expressed in establishing strong cooperative network among stakeholders in the industry, it is therefore suggested that regular meetings be held with constant and collaborative efforts to establish partnership with the Department of Tourism, private sectors, tourism groups such as Bulacan Association of Resort Owners (BARO), Bulacan Association of Travel Agencies (BATA), Fashion Designers' Association of Bulacan (FDAB), Bulacan Association of Tour Guides and local communities to ensure sustainable development and heightened economic returns.

Local Governments are therefore challenged to exercise the authorities brought about by governance by means of ensuring transparency, accountability and co-responsibility among public and private sectors.

1. A good action plan is integral to revitalize the tourism industry of the province of Bulacan. Such plan of action which is part of the findings of this study is amply recommended as it forms part of the initial collaboration with tourism stakeholders and community movers in the tourism industry.

2. Marketing efforts through a complete baseline data of tourism attractions by local government units should be established and updated regularly.

3. Findings of this study further suggests that an integrated tourism plan be formulated including the One Town One Product (OTOP) main products of each municipality and city.

4. Lastly, researches on other aspects of Governance in Local Government Units may be looked upon to further assess their tourism programs as well as Local Community or Stakeholder Participation towards LGU Tourism Programs to achieve Sustainable Development are recommended for future study.

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