

Perception of an All-Organic Farm Agritourism in Botolan, Zambales: Basis for Organic Farming Promotion and Development Plan

Recitis, K., Sardina, D., Bactad, J. E. R., Diano, J. L. S., Lopez, M. L. Manglicmot, C. J. M., Moreno, I. R., Pañares, M. J.,

Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management
Gordon College – Olongapo City

Abstract: *This study assessed the profiles of the locals' and their perceptions in the three major agritourism's positive impacts on environment, economy, and community in Danabunga, Botolan, Zambales. This also examined the significant difference between the perceptions of the respondents when grouped according to profile. The gathered data are examined using a quantitative approach. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, percentage and mean scores, and inferential statistics using ANOVA in examining the significant differences. The result showed that the respondents of has a favorable perception to the effect of an All-organic Farming when it comes to the environment, economic and community. It was revealed that there is a significant difference between the perceptions of the respondents in age profile in terms of economic, as it shows that economic inequalities impacted their moral judgments about access to opportunities. The study recommended that public institutions should be in charge of promoting agritourism in the province of Zambales.*

Keywords: *agritourism, beach farming, organic farming, environment, economy, community*

Introduction

Ching Camara founded the Sambali Beach farm in 2000 as an organic, sustainable beach farm that produces a variety of vegetables and livestock. The eight-hectare property is located in the local fishing village of Danabunga in Botolan, Zambales. A beach farm differs from a "normal" farm in several ways, one of which is the composition of the land, which allows for fewer pests. Aside from the soil, what makes the beach farm work is the farm's use of biochar or carbonized biomass, which is agricultural waste turned into charcoal. Biochar is used in the soil to trap carbon and other greenhouse gases, to house microbes that plants use to absorb nutrients, and to repel heat and cool beach sand.

Agriculture and tourism are two major industries of most economies contributing enormously towards employment and economic development of nations (Zacal, et. al 2019). The synergy between the two industries has resulted in unique enterprises that are developed on a working farm combined with a commercial tourism element (Karampela & Kizos, 2018). This synergy dates back to the early 19th century in developed countries such as Europe, United States of America and the United Kingdom. During that era people would travel to participate in planting and harvesting festivals. The art of visiting agricultural farms continued to gain popularity in the later part of the 19th century with wealthy Europeans and easterners on hunting trips and day trips paying for accommodation at farmhouses (Chase, et. al, 2018). This was referred to as tourism on farms, and it was based on a leap of faith rather than on sound market research which later transformed into farm tourism.

Since then, the relationship between agriculture and tourism has continued to strengthen up to today, and has given birth to a new tourism concept known as Agritourism (Chase

et al., 2018). The concept has been developing throughout the century with rapid growth being witnessed in the 1980s in most European countries, USA and UK. These countries today boast of a vibrant Agritourism sector (Chatterjee & Prasad, 2019). Literature shows that Agritourism is the fastest growing tourism segments in these regions (Bajgier-Kowalska, et. al, 2017). The relationships between agriculture and tourism is vital for the diversification of farm activities that tourism brings about at the farm and in turn agricultural attractions broaden the product base in the tourism industry (Yamagishi, et. al, 2021).

Agricultural attractions have continued to gain popularity mainly in the developed countries (Chatterjee & Prasad, 2019). Tremendous growth of agritourism market has started to be witnessed in the developing countries and this growth is likely to continue in the future (Paresishvili, et. al, 2017).The growth in popularity of these farm attractions has been fuelled up by the need to increase the product base of destinations (Leo, et. al, 2021). Moreover, the growing demand in farm tourism by the new tourist has also contributed to the immense growth in agritourism (Leo et al., 2021). Agritourism centers are places where tourists from urban areas can spend their weekends or holidays in an agricultural atmosphere at a low cost; it is a home away from home that provides a personal sense of harmony with rural culture. It combines agriculture and pleasure, providing tourists with the benefits of agricultural and tourism activities that provide economic benefit to concerned farmers and villagers. Agritourism is simply the redirection of tourists to rural areas with a variety of agricultural activities, services, and amenities in order to generate additional income for farmers. It is also referred to as farm tourism, Agritourism. It is a type of rural tourism that focuses on agricultural diversity,

agricultural activities, and a wide range of agricultural products.

The Philippines has one of the fastest growing economies in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region, with an average growth rate of 6.3% (ie. 2010-2016 coverage) and a 6.7% growth rate in 2017, as reported in the ASEAN Economic Integration Brief (2019). As an agricultural country, 47% of its land area is intended for agriculture OECD (2017) with a recent reported sectoral growth of 2.87% in the third quarter of 2019 comprising primarily of crops and livestock, poultry and fisheries (PSA 2019).

Farm tourism, as defined by the law, is the practice of attracting visitors and tourists to farm areas for production, educational, and recreational purposes which involves any agricultural or fishery-based operation or activity and may also provide a venue for outdoor recreation and accessible family outings (Fuentes, 2018). Farm owners have identified their perceived best practices in their Agritourism business. Being a family-run farm, commitment of farm owners and hands on management to what they are doing are the common best practices of all the respondent farms in terms of organization and management which is consistent with the best practices identified by the visitors (Esguerra, 2020). The tourism and natural resource management literature are starting to take an interest in farm tourism because of its capability to provide potential benefits to local development (Karampela and Kizos, 2018).

In the Philippines, almost half of the population resides in rural areas that depend on agriculture as their primary source of income; among them are the indigenous people, landless farmers and fishermen (Briones et al., 2017). With the Department of Tourism (DOT) data, the country's tourism policy and implementation arm, more than 170 farm sites were accredited (Talavera, 2019) and are mostly concentrated in the Luzon area, the Philippines' largest island in its northern part. Most travel agencies and tour operators in the country are not offering stand-alone farm tours but merely include one to two farm visits in their usual itinerary. As most of the tourism destination sites in the provinces are sun-sea-sand attractions, the country is less known for its agricultural sites. However, as roughly 40% of the land use is devoted to agriculture (Talavera, 2019). The Philippines is on the top Agritourism destinations because of its world class beach, diving, and surfing destinations. The Philippines tourism sites have been boosted its ranking as among its top destinations in the world (Aguiba, 2019). Despite such efforts of the Philippine Government for developing the farm tourism sector, several challenges remain roadblocks to development, and some directions seem to be counterintuitive. For instance, Montefrio and Sin (2019) noted that agritourism in the Philippines is driven by a “complex elite network” of state and private entities which, along with uneven power dynamics, allows conditions favoring old and new landed elites while keeping marginalized small farmers at a distance.

Addressing these challenges and attempting to offer possible strategies to overcome them require a country-level discussion that thoroughly provides an in-depth inquiry and analysis of the sector's current status and performance, along with managerial and policy insights on ways forward. Initiatives of this kind have been reported in the literature for decades. Nematpour and Khodadadi (2020) examined the potential socioeconomic development of Iran with farm tourism as the driving force. However, despite such importance of conducting this report, such an initiative in the Philippines is lacking and presenting a rigorous discussion of the country's challenges and possible directions for developing the farm tourism sector becomes an imperative.

In view of this, the researchers carried out this study to determine the strengths and limitation of All-Organic farm to Agritourism in Botolan, Zambales. Use for the next research to decide how to expand and improve the Agritourism industry in Botolan, Zambales. The study aimed was to determine the perceptions of the respondents on the impact of an All-Organic Agritourism Farm located in Botolan, Zambales. Specifically, the study sought to find answers to the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of;
 - a. Age
 - b. Sex
 - c. Educational Attainment
 - d. Occupation
2. What are the respondents' perceptions on the impact of an all-organic farm in agritourism of Barangay Danacbunga, Botolan, Zambales in terms of:
 - a. Environment
 - b. Economic
 - c. Community
3. Is there a significant difference between the perceptions of the respondents when grouped according to people?
4. What plan may be put out as a result of the research's findings?

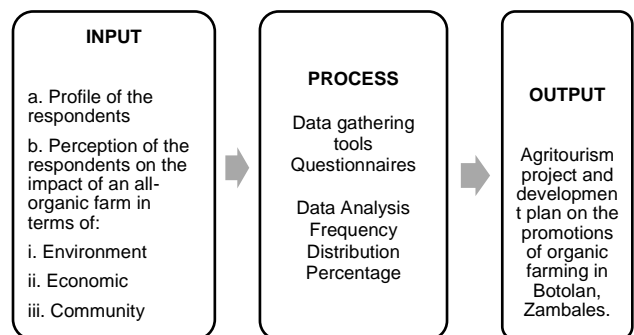


Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study

Methodology

The study utilized quantitative and descriptive research. Quantitative research is defined by Bhandari the process of collecting and analyzing numerical data. It can be

used to find patterns and averages, make predictions, test causal relationships, and generalize results to wider populations. Quantitative research is widely used in the natural and social sciences: biology, chemistry, psychology, economics, sociology, marketing, etc. (Bhandari, 2020). Descriptive research is usually defined as a type of quantitative research aims to accurately and systematically describe a population, situation or phenomenon. A descriptive research design can use a wide variety of research methods to investigate one or more variables (McCombes, 2019). The researcher has decided to choose quantitative because it is the most appropriate for the study since it is going to investigate the perception of an all-organic farm agritourism in Botolan, Zambales, it is gathered through data collection survey questionnaire. Using this particular design, the researchers would be able to achieve the aim of the study.

This study was conducted at Sambali Beach Farm in the Fishing Village of Brgy. Danacbunga Botolan, Zambales. The researchers selected the place of implementation, because it will provide the needed information from the community of Botolan, Zambales. The study was conducted in the first semester of the academic year 2022-2023.

Questionnaires are prepared by researchers and are printed and sent to respondents. The survey questionnaire was composed of two sets. The first set of the questionnaire is the profiles of the respondents. The second set is the Likert Scale about the perception of respondents in Sambali Beach Farm, every questions have a set of choices which indicates the respondent's level of agreement with the provided question.

The researcher-created questionnaire was validated in order to be tested for validity and reliability. The researcher is then tasked with presenting the questionnaire to the panel of experts. Every statement is scrutinized for the words used. Similarly, they investigate the relevance of each statement to the current study. To achieve the expected results of the research work, statements must be aligned with the goal. Copies of the questionnaire was distributed to four (4) College professors during the validation process.

The researchers determined the respondents' demographic profile, and the researchers employed frequency and percentage. It is a particularly helpful approach for expressing other statistics, such as the relative frequency of survey replies showed to be a useful tool for assessing the efficacy of a given set of data. The perception of an all-organic farm in Botolan, Zambales, assessed using data that revealed and provided light on respondents' opinions, views, experiences, and motivations as an individual participant. The analysis for this study used a summary of the information gathered from the questionnaire. Based on the respondent's perspective on the study questions, the data was examined. We determined, analyzed and interpreted the data gathered on statement of the problem 1 using frequency and percentage.

The responses of respondents to a certain topic or statement are gauged using Likert items. The Likert scale is employed in this study to categorize the frequency interval. Strongly agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1) are the scales that will be utilized.

Results and Discussion

The age group of 36 years old and above was represented by 159 respondents, or approximately 44.9 percent of the total number of respondents. 108 (30.5%) were between the ages of 30-35 years old whilst 44 of the respondents, or approximately 12.4 percent were between the ages of 24-29 years old. Lastly, the age group of 18-23 years old was represented by 43 respondents, or 12.1 percent, having the least frequency. Majority of respondents are male having a highest frequency of 190 or 53.7 percent, while the least frequency of 164 or 46.3 percent was female. 44.9 percent of respondents were tertiary level graduates, 35 percent were secondary level graduates, 18.1 percent had vocational course and lastly, having the least frequency of 2.0 percent were primary level graduates.

By tallying the survey results, the researchers found out that a general weighted mean of 3.76, which indicates a strong agreement of the respondents' perceptions on the influence of an all-organic farm in the agritourism of Barangay Danacbunga, Botolan, Zambales in terms of environment. Additionally, respondents emphasized that visiting an agritourism farm can promote awareness to maintain natural resources.

Moreover, a general weighted mean of 3.81, which indicates a strong agreement of the respondents' perceptions on the economic impact of an all-organic farm in the agritourism of Barangay Danacbunga, Botolan, Zambales in terms of Economic, as shown in the table above. Additionally, respondents emphasized that agritourism increases local revenues.

The average weighted mean for the respondents' assessments of the effects on community aspect of an all-organic farm in the agritourism in Barangay Danacbunga, Botolan, Zambales, is 3.78, which indicates a strongly agreed respons. Additionally, respondents noted that the tourists prefer budget friendly types of Agritourism like Sambali Beach Farm.

Significant difference in the respondents' judgments when grouped by age profile using One Way ANOVA led to a significant difference in their perception in terms of economic. However, it was indicated that the decision in environment and community perception was not statistically significant. Overall findings imply that when respondents are

categorized according to age profile, there are significant differences in their assessments of the economic.

The result to rule out a significant difference in the respondents' perceptions on table 4.2 when they were grouped according to sex profile using an independent t test was confirmed by the p value of $0.093 - 0.390 > 0.05$ level of significance. Since the p value is above the 0.05 level of significance, the alternative hypothesis is rejected and the null hypothesis is accepted. Overall findings imply that when respondents are categorized by sex profile, there are no significant differences in their perceptions.

A significant difference in their perceptions led to a decision that the difference was not statistically significant, which was supported by the p value of $0.066 - 0.242 > 0.05$ level of significance. Since the p value is above the 0.05 level of significance, the alternative hypothesis is rejected and the null hypothesis is accepted. Overall findings imply that when respondents are categorized according to educational attainment profile, there are no significant differences in their perceptions.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study present the following conclusions according to the investigation of the results and summary of the findings.

1. According to the findings, the majority of respondents were in between the ages of 36 or older and male dominated which has the highest frequency. Meanwhile, the gathered results from the respondents' educational attainment and occupation was in tertiary level and are employed. This study concludes that the majority of respondents are employed given with their age and educational attainment, which suggest to have a better perception and understanding in all-organic farming.

2. The findings obtained from the respondents of Brgy. Danabunga, Botolan has a favorable perception to the effect of an All-organic Farming when it comes to the Environment. The results revealed that the most favorable perception was, an organic farming has a beneficial contribution to the environment, as well as visiting agritourism sites which promote awareness in maintaining natural resources, and one of the main attribute of organic farming is its adoption of sustainable agricultural practices like food production without endangering the ecology and environment. However, the least favorable perception was, organic farming has an expensive process.

Meanwhile, respondents' economic perceptions are also viewed favorably. Based on the results, the most favorable perception was, agritourism in Botolan, Zambales has a potential to increase its revenue and to attract investors. Organic farming is more profitable than conventional or regular farming because it uses inexpensive materials. In contrast, the least favorable perception was, Sambali Beach Farm helps locals to generate jobs.

Finally, the perception of the respondents toward the community has obtained positive results. The findings indicated that the most favorable perception was, tourists preferred more affordable agritourism site to visit in able to have an educational experience and sense of fulfillment while conserving the resources. And the least favorable perceptions was, Sambali Beach Farm can encourage people to practice use of organic fertilizers at home and also, the community would benefit from developing agritourism on Barangay Danabunga, Botolan, Zambales.

3. Findings revealed that there is a significant difference between the perceptions of the respondents in age profile in terms of economic, as it shows that economic inequalities impacted their moral judgments about access to opportunities.

4. Based on the study's data, the Sambali Beach farm should strengthen their farm by developing and improving their marketing strategy. The farm should collaborate with public institutions and develop more recreational activities for agritourism awareness.

From the forgoing conclusions, the following recommendation offered:

1. The Farm should also provide seminars for women from ages 18 years old and above. The seminars may include fundamental organic farming techniques that may be practiced at home, allowing attendees to put the skills and information they acquired there to use in their own backyards.

2. Public institutions, in particular the Local Government Unit and the Department of Tourism, should be in charge of promoting Agritourism in the province of Zambales. The management may develop some recreational activities such as tours and seminars. The Agritourism organization may encourage the locals to involve and participate in the programs that are being held for the Agritourism development and awareness that could help the locals to acquire a job within the farm, as well as help the locals to practice organic farming in their own home.

3. The management should deliver seminars to the youth and students in order for them to develop a business concept in organic farming.

4. The researchers recommend this to Agritourism farms in order to attract more tourists and visitors and generate more profit through the help of proposed development plan for promotion of organic farming

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