

Strategic Development and Sustainability of the Tourism Industry

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ABSTRACT: This study used random sampling to select over 400 respondents who have experienced the strategic development and sustainability efforts in Davao City. The researcher applied Pearson's r , T-test, and Mean test to analyze the data. Pearson's r assessed the strength and significance of the relationship between strategic development and sustainability. The T-test was used to explore differences in perceptions based on demographics, while the Mean test helped determine if the data supported or rejected the hypothesis on sustainable tourism. The results underscore the importance of sustainable tourism in preserving local culture, biodiversity, natural resources, and the environment. Sustainable practices are essential for the long-term success of the tourism industry. The study recommends that stakeholders, including policymakers and businesses, adopt strategies that ensure the resilience of tourism sectors. It also highlights the need for tourism models that can adapt to global changes while promoting the well-being of both destinations and their communities.

KEYWORDS: Innovation in tourism, Stakeholder engagement, Recommendation, Information, recommendation, commitment, SGD 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is a major driver of global economic activity, contributing significantly to job creation, economic diversification, and cultural exchange. However, as tourism continues to expand globally, the challenges of sustainable development and environmental preservation have become increasingly prominent. This is particularly evident in regions like Davao City, Philippines, which has experienced rapid growth in its tourism sector over recent years. While Davao is celebrated for its rich biodiversity, natural landscapes, and cultural heritage, the rapid development of its tourism sector has raised concerns about sustainability, environmental impacts, and the equitable distribution of economic benefits.

Strategic development and sustainability are critical factors that can either drive or hinder the long-term viability of the tourism industry in destinations such as Davao City. Strategic development involves long-term planning that aligns economic, environmental, and social goals, while sustainability focuses on minimizing negative impacts on the environment and local communities. The interplay between these two factors is complex, as tourism growth can be both an economic boon and a source of stress on natural resources. As such, sustainable tourism practices that integrate environmental conservation, community development, and responsible consumption are essential to ensure that tourism contributes positively to the region's long-term well-being.



Despite Davao City's recognition as a rising tourism hub in the Philippines, there is a significant gap in research that addresses the relationship between strategic development and sustainability in the context of the city's tourism industry. Existing studies have examined sustainable tourism in global contexts (Aithal, 2019; Alamir, 2019) and focused on specific aspects of tourism development in the Philippines, but few have investigated how strategic development can be optimized for sustainability in a rapidly growing regional market like Davao. This study aims to bridge this gap by examining the complex dynamics between strategic tourism development and sustainability in Davao City.

The primary objective of this research is to assess the relationship between strategic development and sustainability within the tourism sector of Davao City. The study aims to:

1. Evaluate the overall level of strategic development in Davao City's tourism industry, examining the key factors that drive its growth and competitiveness.
2. Assess the level of sustainability within the tourism sector, considering how sustainable practices are integrated into tourism planning and management in Davao City.
3. Examine the correlation between strategic development and sustainability in the tourism industry, focusing on how strategies implemented for tourism development contribute to or hinder sustainable practices.

Despite the growing body of research on sustainable tourism, there remains a gap in understanding how strategic development practices can be harmonized with sustainability goals in the specific context of Davao City. While sustainable tourism frameworks exist, many are generalized and do not address the local realities, challenges, and opportunities faced by destinations with rapidly expanding tourism sectors. Davao City's unique combination of natural resources, cultural assets, and economic dynamics calls for a more tailored approach that integrates strategic development and sustainability in a region-specific manner. This study will fill this gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of Davao's tourism industry and the relationship between its strategic development and sustainability efforts.

This research is significant for several reasons. First, it will provide valuable insights for policymakers and industry stakeholders seeking to create sustainable tourism policies and strategies. By understanding the relationship between strategic development and sustainability, this study will help guide future tourism planning in Davao City, ensuring that growth is balanced with environmental and social considerations. Second, the findings will be relevant to other rapidly growing tourism destinations in the Philippines and around the world, offering a framework for integrating sustainability into tourism development processes. Finally, the study will contribute to the broader discourse on sustainable tourism, highlighting the importance of responsible development practices in maintaining the long-term health of both the tourism sector and the local communities that rely on it.

By addressing the relationship between strategic development and sustainability, this study aims to provide actionable recommendations that will not only benefit Davao City but also serve as a reference for other destinations facing similar

challenges in managing tourism growth while safeguarding their environmental and cultural heritage.

METHODO

This study employs a quantitative research design, utilizing a questionnaire as the primary data collection tool. Quantitative research focuses on the systematic and objective observation of variables within a defined environment, aiming to establish measurable relationships between independent and dependent variables. In this case, the independent variables pertain to strategic development activities, while the dependent variable concerns sustainability outcomes, specifically in the context of tourism in Davao City (Misra & Aloc, 2023). The main objective of quantitative research is to study specific phenomena or events, and the collected data are typically expressed in numerical terms for analysis.

The study sample consists of 400 local tourists, selected from the total population of 1.8 million local tourists in Davao City as of 2023. To determine an appropriate sample size, the researchers used the Raosoft Sample Size Calculator, applying a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. This sampling method ensures statistical reliability while accurately representing the population of local tourists. The central goal of the research is to examine the impact of strategic development activities on tourists' perceptions of sustainability in Davao City's tourism industry.

Table1. Demographic Profile of Respondents.

<i>Profile Variables</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Sex	Male	194	48.5
	Female	206	51.5
Age	18 below	13	3.3
	18-24	188	47.0
	25-34	122	30.5
	35-44	51	12.8
	45-54	16	4.0
	55-64	7	1.8
	65 above	3	.8
Civil status	Single	280	70.0
	Married	104	26.0
	Widow	16	4.0
Educational Attainment	College Level	193	48.3
	Bachelor's Degree	172	43.0
	Master's Degree	29	7.2
	Doctorate	6	1.5

The researcher adapted a questionnaire from Ekundayo (2014) to assess the strategic development of local tourists in Davao City. The original instrument was modified to better suit the context of this study, ensuring its relevance to the local tourism setting. The adapted questionnaire was subsequently presented to a panel of experts for validation. This process ensured that the instrument met the necessary standards of reliability and content validity for the research context. The questionnaire employed a 5-point Likert scale to measure respondents' perceptions and attitudes toward strategic development and sustainability in the tourism industry.

The data collection process was conducted in a structured manner, beginning with the modification of the research instrument. The researchers collaborated with their research adviser to refine the adapted questionnaire, ensuring it was suitable for the local setting. This revision was then reviewed by a panel of experts within the College of Hospitality Education at the University of Mindanao. Following this, the researchers obtained formal approval from the Dean of the College, facilitated by a letter of permission signed by the research adviser.

Once permission was granted, the researchers distributed the finalized questionnaire to the selected respondents. Data collection was followed by data analysis, where the responses were tabulated and analyzed using appropriate statistical methods. The analysis aimed to derive meaningful insights into the relationship between strategic development and sustainability within Davao's tourism industry. To assess the research hypotheses, the following statistical methods were employed: Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (Pearson's r) was used to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between strategic development and sustainability. T-tests were employed to explore differences in responses based on demographic variables, and Mean tests were applied to assess the central tendency of responses and determine whether sufficient data existed to reject or accept the hypotheses. The significance level for all tests was set at 0.05.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Strategic Development

The level of strategic development among local tourists in the tourism industry is presented in Table 2. The overall mean score for strategic development is 4.11, with a standard deviation of 0.321, indicating a consensus among respondents that the strategic development efforts in the tourism industry are largely observed and appreciated. A mean score of 4.11, which falls within the "Agree" category of the 5-point Likert scale, suggests that local tourists perceive the strategies implemented in the tourism sector as being effectively executed. The relatively low standard deviation (0.321) further supports the consistency of these perceptions across the sample, indicating a high degree of agreement among the respondents regarding the observed strategic growth in the tourism industry.

Table 2. Level of importance of strategic development in Tourism of Davao City, n=400.

<i>Items</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Descriptive Level</i>
1. There is a need to create more awareness of the country's tourism potential.	4.34	0.492	Strongly Agree
2. The tourism industry has contributed significantly to the workforce.	4.14	0.486	Agree
3. screens promoting tourist destinations at the airport influence your decision on traveling.	4.11	0.529	Agree
4. Having a tour office in another place will provide access to information about tourism potential.	4.16	0.733	Agree
5. The transportation system needs to be more encouraging to tourists.	3.90	0.741	Agree
6. Designated bodies should monitor and ensure accountability in the tourism sector.	4.02	0.632	Agree
7. Crises in the northern part are not a threat to tourism.	3.94	0.705	Agree
8. The government needs to review the policies of tourism industries to encourage more investors.	4.32	0.619	Strongly Agree
Overall	4.11	0.321	Agree

The findings of this study align with previous research suggesting that strategic development in the tourism industry is most effective when there is strong collaboration between government bodies and other key stakeholders. Government involvement is crucial for crafting strategies that drive the sustainable growth of tourism destinations. As highlighted by Khan (2021), the potential for increasing state revenue from tourism is closely linked to proactive governmental actions and policies. Furthermore, effective strategic planning in tourism not only facilitates access to essential resources, knowledge, and support, but also ensures the long-term success and sustainability of tourism initiatives (Mtapuri, 2021). It is imperative that these strategies prioritize sustainable and ethical tourism practices that mitigate the environmental impacts of the industry, equitably distribute the economic benefits, and safeguard cultural heritage (Villegas, 2020). By fostering such strategies, tourism can continue to contribute positively to both the economy and society while maintaining the integrity of the environment and local cultures.

Sustainability

Table 3 presents the level of sustainability observed among local tourists in the tourism industry. The overall mean score for sustainability is 4.13, with a standard deviation of 0.335, indicating a strong agreement among respondents. This suggests that sustainability is highly valued and actively observed in the local

tourism practices, reflecting a significant awareness and commitment to sustainable tourism within the industry.

Table 3. Level of significance of Sustainability on the Tourism of Davao City, n=400.

<i>Items</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Descriptive Level</i>
1. The weather is an essential factor that promotes tourism.	4.05	0.680	Agree
2. Transportation is a primary concern to tourists' satisfaction.	4.18	0.514	Agree
3. Natural, artificial, and cultural attractions are necessities.	4.31	0.535	Strongly Agree
4. Unstable power (electricity) is a significant challenge for tourism investors.	4.17	0.646	Agree
5. The standards of tourism could be higher or more basic.	3.82	0.658	Agree
6. A more improved tourism sector will help improve the nation's core values.	4.11	0.532	Agree
7. The government should prioritize tourism in its economic development plan.	4.12	0.565	Agree
8. The government should encourage more tourism industry investors by making all basic amenities available.	4.36	0.649	Strongly Agree
Overall	4.13	0.335	Agree

According to Erin Hynes (2023), the way people feel and respond to travel can significantly influence whether its benefits outweigh the drawbacks, with sustainable tourism playing a crucial role in ensuring travel remains a positive force. Sustainable tourism practices help protect people, culture, biodiversity, languages, heritage, wildlife, natural resources, and the environment—preserving the very elements that make destinations unique. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2020) emphasizes that sustainable tourism should not only provide visitors with meaningful experiences and high levels of satisfaction but also foster an understanding of sustainability issues. By encouraging sustainable travel behaviors and promoting responsible choices, tourists can contribute to preserving the cultural and environmental integrity of destinations, ensuring that both local communities and visitors benefit from the experience.

Correlation between strategic development and Sustainability.

Table 4 presents the correlation between strategic development and sustainability, revealing a moderate positive relationship with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.520^{**}$. This indicates that as strategic development in the tourism industry increases, so does the level of sustainability, highlighting the interconnectedness of these two factors. The results underscore the importance of both strategic development and sustainability as crucial elements for the growth and long-term success of the tourism sector. Tourism plays a significant role in boosting the global economy, but when managed responsibly, it can also have a positive impact on the environment, society, and culture (Aithal, 2019). As noted by David (2021), the strategic development and sustainability of the tourism industry are vital for ensuring its continued relevance and positive influence, particularly as global tourism faces increasing environmental and social challenges.

Table 4. Correlation between strategic development and Sustainability in tourism of Davao City.

Variables Correlated	r-value	Verbal Description	df (n-2)	p-value	Decision
Strategic Development vs Sustainability in Tourism	0.520**	Moderate Positive Relationship	398	0.000	Ho is rejected

Legend: * *Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study provides valuable insights into the strategic development and sustainability of local tourism in the tourism industry. Based on the research findings,

several key conclusions can be drawn:

The level of strategic development in the tourism sector, particularly for local tourists, requires careful consideration of various factors to foster sustainable growth. Long-term planning, clear objective-setting, and determination of sustainable economic and environmental goals are fundamental to driving strategic development. Additionally, ensuring the security of tourism, planning for sustainable financial returns, and balancing the interests of both the public and private sectors are critical components of successful strategies.

Furthermore, the study indicates that sustainability within the local tourism sector is widely acknowledged and supported by local tourists. Local tourists actively promote sustainable practices, emphasizing the importance of environmental, social, and economic considerations. This suggests that local tourists recognize the need for responsible tourism practices and their vital role in maintaining the sustainability of the tourism industry.

To ensure the long-term benefits of tourism, it is crucial to focus on managing the sector in a way that supports sustainable development. By prioritizing environmental health, conserving natural resources, supporting local communities, and promoting sustainable tourism practices, the local tourism sector plays a critical role in preserving the region's natural and cultural heritage, benefiting both the destinations and the residents.

To enhance the growth and sustainability of Davao City's tourism sector, several key actions are recommended. First, ensuring the safety and security of tourists is essential for boosting the tourism industry. The government must prioritize measures to combat all forms of insecurity, such as kidnapping, robbery, and terrorism, by strengthening law enforcement and improving security infrastructure. Public safety should be a top priority to instill confidence among both domestic and international tourists. Second, infrastructure development is crucial. The government should allocate funds to improve tourism-related infrastructure, including roads, bridges, power systems, and internet access. Upgrading these facilities to international standards will increase Davao City's appeal as a travel destination. Encouraging public-private partnerships can also stimulate investment in the sector. Third, Davao City holds vast untapped tourism potential, including beautiful beaches and unique cultural attractions. However, the development of accommodation facilities and transport services, such as rail and water recreation options, is still inadequate. The government should invest in these areas to meet growing tourism demand. In addition, Davao's tourism assets should be promoted globally through social media and other platforms, with collaboration between government bodies and private sector stakeholders. Fourth, a collaborative approach to tourism marketing is essential. Both the public and private sectors should join forces to enhance the visibility of Davao's tourism offerings. Effective marketing campaigns should highlight the region's natural beauty, cultural heritage, and unique experiences, attracting tourists from around the world. Lastly, strengthening accountability in the tourism sector is critical for its sustainable development. The government should establish clear lines of oversight, ensuring that designated authorities manage all aspects of the tourism industry, from infrastructure to services, in alignment with sustainable tourism goals and high standards of quality. By taking these steps, Davao City can ensure the continued



growth and sustainability of its tourism sector, benefiting both the local community and the environment.

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