

# Pro-poor tourism concept in the context of selected destinations in Ilocos region, Philippines

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## Abstract

In recent years, poverty has been growing continuously throughout the parts of the world, most notably in developing countries like the Philippines. The purpose of this study is to assess the contributions of the tourism industry in selected destinations of Ilocos Region to successfully alleviate poverty and bring the country into inclusive growth. The assessment of poverty threshold is based on the economic benefits, non-cash livelihood benefits, tourism policies, government processes and participation of the community. Using a quantitative approach and Structural Equation Modeling, survey questionnaires were utilized to gather data from 250 household respondents in selected destinations of Ilocos Region, namely: Laoag in Ilocos Norte; Vigan in Ilocos Sur; San Fernando in La Union; and Alaminos in Pangasinan. In addition, interviews were conducted to the local government units, private sectors, and local community to support the collected information. Based on the results, the Local Government Unit's tourism

initiatives lead to Pro-Poor Tourism, which is perceived to contribute in alleviating impoverished households in the region of Ilocos.

**Keywords:**

Pro-Poor Tourism, Poor, Structural Equation Modeling, Ilocos Region, Sustainable Tourism

**1 Introduction**

Throughout the years, tourism has experienced continuous development and increasing variation to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. Tourism can be associated with development and it involves a growing number of new and emerging destinations. These changing aspects have directed tourism into an important driver for socio-economic progress. Tourism has virtually displayed its undisturbed growth overtime and its representation of 7% in the world's exports in terms of goods and services, making it to the top export category in many developing countries. In 2017, international tourist arrivals boosted by a remarkable 7% which is above the consistent trend of 4% and brought about a higher growth since 2010. This has shown the strongest results in seven years based on the report from the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) World Tourism Barometer and Statistical Annex 2018. This global expansion of tourism has produced economic and employment benefits in many related sectors such as agriculture, food and beverage, and transportation. The tourism industry, thus causes generous economic benefits to the host countries, tourists' home countries and developing countries.

According to the Department of Tourism, international tourist arrivals in the Philippines in 2018 reached 3.706 million for the first half-year. However, despite having tourism industry as a major engine of growth in some countries, 90% of people in Southeast Asian countries, particularly in Indonesia and Philippines, still live below the international poverty line. Poverty in the Philippines remains as a challenge that the government and the people of the country have been incessantly seeking to eradicate for the past several years. According to the poverty data of the Philippines in the year 2015, 21.6% of the country's population lives under the national poverty line. This data implies that extreme poverty still continues to exist in the Philippines in spite of having tourism as a contributor to economic development. According to the director of National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Regional Office 1, Mr. Nelson Rillon (2018), the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) of Ilocos Region increased by 5.77 percent from 2011 to 2016 based on the data of Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). However, despite the continuous growth of tourism in Ilocos Region, Pangasinan and Ilocos Norte of the region consistently belong to the top 20 poorest provinces in the Philippines since 2004 (Robredo, 2018).

This study aims to identify the ways in which the tourism industry in Ilocos Region contributes to the economic growth and benefits for the locals. The study aims to answer the following research questions:

- i. How can pro-poor tourism be used as a mean of poverty alleviation and economic development in Ilocos Region?
- ii. Is there a significant difference in the contributions of pro-poor tourism in Ilocos Region in terms of Local Economy, Non-cash Livelihood of the area, Tourism Policies, Government Processes, and Community Participation?
- iii. How will the linkages between poor communities and tourism businesses be enhanced by the local government for effective participation in tourism development?

The study aims to propose strategies and suggestions in the context of pro-poor tourism in Ilocos Region. The study will recommend different strategies and suggestions for the improvement of the tourism industry that will be beneficial for the Local Government Unit, Local Communities, and Private Sectors in Ilocos Region. These strategies and suggestions will guide the formulation of plans and policies that can be implemented by each city and private establishments in the city to address poverty by means of providing livelihood opportunities for the poor in the tourism industry and it will also be concentrated on providing benefits for the poor members of the community.

### 1.1 Conceptual Framework

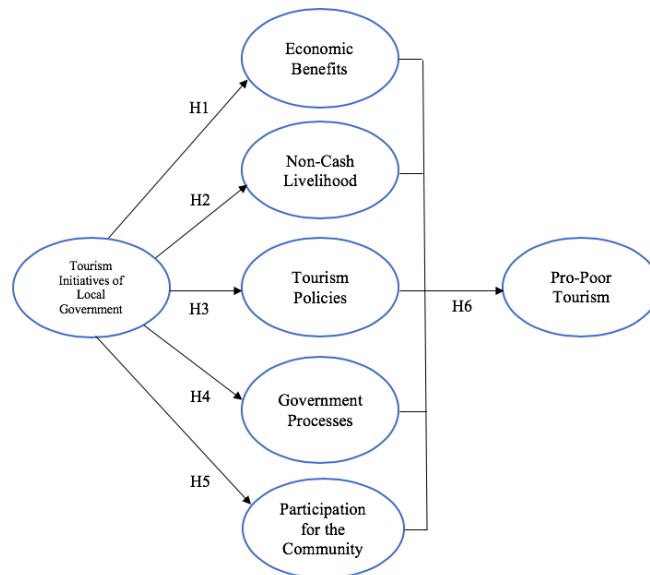


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between Local Economy, Non-Cash Livelihood Benefits, Tourism Policies, Government Processes, and Participation for the Community, and how they interconnect collectively through

tourism initiatives of the local government in the research locale, which might lead to pro-poor Tourism.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Sustainable Tourism and Its Relation to Pro-Poor Tourism**

United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) introduced the ST-EP (Sustainable Tourism - Eliminating Poverty) program which aims to use sustainable tourism to alleviate poverty through seven mechanisms : to give tax on tourism income with earnings that will benefit the community, to invest in infrastructure stimulated by tourism that will benefit the host community as well, to build establishment and tourism enterprises that will be run by locals, to come up with non-mandatory giving of support and help by the tourists and tourism enterprises, to have direct sales of services and goods from the locals to visitors, to have services and supply of goods to locally owned tourism enterprises or by enterprises that gives employment to the locals, and to provide the locals with livelihood and employment (Simpson, 2017). Rafai (2016) claimed that the massive tourism of Languedoc-Roussillon, a region that has the third highest regional poverty rate in Switzerland, does not benefit wholly or optimally for the local population therefore using sustainable tourism also as growth lever through involvement of residents in tourism with local products and services, and creation of small or medium-sized enterprises in the sector of sustainable tourism and hence jobs.

### **2.2 General Context of Community-Based Tourism**

Overall, the commonality of definition from different perspectives about community-based tourism (CBT) is the creation of tourist products spearheaded by the locals in order to establish an interrelationship between the local communities and tourists. This phenomenon will lead in alleviating the negative impacts on developing countries and contributing to a better standard of living most notably for the impoverished society. CBT has transpired as a community organization strategy for achieving better living conditions and a conceivable resolution to the adverse impacts of mass tourism in developing countries. A study by Anuar (2017) shows that, CBT can be characterized as a tourism industry operated by the community with the purpose of delivering community benefits. On the other hand, CBT is about involving the locals, and delegating the control to the community which will lead to more livelihood benefits (Anuar, 2017).

### **2.3 Community-based Tourism in the Context of Poverty Alleviation**

Jugmohan (2015) raised questions as to whether tourism can really reduce poverty or not. Simultaneously, the disappointment with the current improvement in the industry, which change the attention of the developmental plan to poverty alleviation

which occurs during late 1990s had led to the beginning of pro-poor tourism (Martokusumo, 2015). In line with this concept, Briones et al. (2017) discussed that CBT is considered as a tool which lead to the development of sustainable tourism wherein the local community will be able to enhance livelihood while referring to the social well-being and environmental preservation in the community. In the study of Briones et al. (2017), the industry is continuously being successful in enhancing the economy of the country which results to improved quality of lives of many Filipinos. Briones et al. (2017) also pointed out that considering the poverty present in the Philippines, the capacity of the development of sustainable tourism in CBT must be standardized especially its ability as a way for poverty alleviation and creating livelihood.

#### **2.4 Implications of Community-Based Tourism**

According to Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, CBT supports the local community to generate income, diversify local economies, preserve the culture, safeguard the environment, and provide educational opportunities (Anuar, 2017). As stated in the *Community Based Tourism: Principle and Meaning* (2012), despite the fact that the tourism industry has been emerging and developing worldwide through time, it does not contribute in alleviating the poverty and provide beneficiaries for the local community but instead it deteriorates the resources present in the area which causes the social and cultural aspects to change. Another problem is lack of methodologies to appraise the pre-conditions for CBT, poor planning, gaps existing between the planning and practical implementation stage, other than guidelines (Jugmohan, 2015).

#### **2.5 Various Frames of References in Pro-Poor Tourism**

The pro-poor tourism perspective revolves around the notion that recognizes the tourism industry as a net welfare generator to alleviate poverty for the poor, seeing as it produces more sources of revenue and further employment openings to the local people; consequently, the sustainability of development and continuous community involvement must be given great importance to avoid predominant detrimental effects of the industry growth in socio-cultural and environmental aspect. The impact of tourism development in societies will be evident to the locals through the improvements of shelter access, urban agriculture assistance, and access to other social services. Development of the industry could, likewise, result in resources increase and enhancement concerning local roads, water supplies, transportation and traffic controlling, that would progress the situation of communities. The industry also gives equal employment opportunities and job security for all, especially for women and unskilled workers subsisting in poverty.

The pro-poor tourism method received many criticisms despite its growth in the tourism industry. First, pro-poor tourism is believed to be a way for the businesses to make profit in the tourism sector. In this regard, pro-poor tourism creates unnecessary expectancies concerning the ability of tourism to solve economic deficiencies without

considering the capacity of the region (Nawijn et al., 2008; Spenceley & Meyer, 2012; Trau, 2012). Since the aim of pro-poor tourism is to generate income to the impoverished communities, in some cases, it allows businesses to operate despite its threat to the local economy, community, and the natural environment (Chok et al., 2007). Likewise, the negative impressions regarding pro-poor tourism are not predominantly vital. Therefore, Pro-Poor Tourism still has the opportunity to improve its image in the tourism industry.

Duttagupta (2016) explained that the scope and methods of the Pro-Poor Tourism does not only involves the local communities setting their own goals and making their own decisions but in the “integration of the industry into other sectors as well, such as agriculture, industry, transportation, and social services”. Pro-Poor Tourism relies on the contribution and involvement of different stakeholders such as the local government, private sector, and the members of the community themselves. It is a concept that encourages tourism to be viewed positively, in this response to censures that lean towards exaggeration of the manipulative and exploitative nature or image of tourism in general.

## **2.6 The One Step Project**

The idea of One-Step Project is to evaluate poor areas that contain outstanding potential for success in the industry. It will focus on areas in clusters of tourism that gain over 21 million tourists both internationally and domestically. Subsequently, these areas will be registered in tourism enterprises, either sharing a fragment as a supplier community or a destination community. The program aims to produce more open involvement of poor communities in the tourism industry to improve impoverished conditions. The One-Step Project drives tourism development processes forward to encourage community participation, including DSWD’s Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) as one of their beneficiaries in the tourism value chain.

## **3 Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Design**

The researchers used quantitative method to gather data about how pro-poor tourism can be used as means of poverty alleviation and economic development in the selected destinations of Ilocos Region.

### **3.2 Subjects**

The study was conducted with the participation of the local residents in Ilocos Region. Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used to gather participants. The study involved 250 participants from the selected tourist destinations; 62 from Alaminos, 82 from San Fernando, 34 from Vigan and, 72 from Laoag. Participants were both men and women of legal age and well-aware and informed about

the tourism in the region including selected members of the Local Government Unit to provide sufficient data to the researchers. To determine the division of population and acquire the total number of samples in the study, stratified sampling under probability theory was used for the survey and purposive sampling under the non-probability theory was applied considering that the selected members of the Local Government Units were chosen because of their knowledge and credibility to address the in-depth interview questions.

### **3.3 Study Site**

The research involves four destinations in the region of Ilocos, Philippines, namely: Laoag in Ilocos Norte; Vigan in Ilocos Sur; San Fernando in La Union; and Alaminos in Pangasinan. The respondents of the survey were local communities, whereas interview was conducted with the local government as to collect supporting data needed for the research. The place was chosen due to its continuous tourist influx, wherein from 2016, the tourist arrivals have increased by 11.39 percent in 2017.

### **3.4 Instruments**

The researchers used Likert scale-based questions as the research instrument to allow the respondents to express their level of agreement and disagreement. Moreover, a semi-structured interview with tourism officers and government officials of these destinations was conducted in order to gather comprehensive supporting data.

### **3.5 Data Collection Procedure**

The researchers created a letter of approval addressed to the mayor or the tourism officer of each city stating that there will be surveys and interviews to be conducted within the area. The letters of permission were initially given to the barangay (administrative district) officials prior to the survey and interviews for the formality of procedures. After that, the research instruments were validated by panel of experts (Tourism and Hospitality professors and a statistician). Pilot testing was then conducted involving a small sample from each destination. Cronbach Alpha procedure was performed to estimate the uniformity, accuracy, and reliability of the survey questionnaire. After receiving approval from the Local Government Units of each province, the researchers initiated the distribution of questionnaires to the households in Alaminos, San Fernando, Vigan, and Laoag. Lastly, the data gathered were analyzed and interpreted through statistical analysis.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

Since the researchers used a 4-point Likert scale questions, Cronbach's Alpha was used in order to measure the consistency and reliability of the research instruments. For the statistical analysis, weighted mean was used to measure the degree of importance of each variable, and standard deviation to quantify the dispersion amount of set per data values. Lastly, Structural Equation Modeling was used to analyze the structural relationship between tourism initiatives and the variables.

### 3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were granted throughout the study with account for access, privacy, and informed consent. No data were collected in the research locale before the approval and authorization of the local government. The research activities brought no harm or any form of obstruction to the participants and to the image of the areas selected. The information gathered will be kept confidential and be utilized exclusively for educational purposes.

## 4 Results

### 4.1 The Effects of Tourism Initiatives

#### 4.1.1 Local Economy

The table shows descriptive results on the perspective of the locals related to the economic aspect of tourism. The weighted mean is 3.19 or “Agree”. The result indicates that tourism contributes to the growing economy of the region through jobs opportunities and livelihood. Hence, the tourism initiatives of the local government lead to economic benefits.

Table 1: Economic Aspects of Tourism Result

I. Perspectives in the Economic Aspects of Tourism	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	MEAN	RANK	INTERPRETATION
1. Tourism provides additional jobs/livelihood for the community	128	105	13	4	3.43	2	Strongly Agree
2. Benefits and Economic Income for tourism laborers	90	138	21	2	3.26	4	Strongly Agree
3. Development and Promotion of local products	174	68	6	2	3.66	1	Strongly Agree
4. Infrastructure and Superstructure developments	140	83	18	9	3.42	3	Strongly Agree
5. Price increase of the goods and local products	67	98	59	26	2.18	5	Disagree
TOTAL					3.19		AGREE

Legend: Strongly Agree (3.25-4.00); Agree (2.50 – 3.24); Disagree (1.75 – 2.49);

Strongly Disagree (1.00 – 1.74)

#### 4.1.2 Non-cash Livelihood

The table shows descriptive results on the perspective of the locals in terms of Non-Cash Livelihood. The weighted mean is 2.95 or “Agree”. The result indicates that there were livelihood programs and trainings conducted by the Local Government Unit and TESDA to assist the community in starting a business or to look for a job. Moreover, it implies that the locals were interested and willing to participate in seminars related



to entrepreneurship and skills for tourism. Hence, the tourism initiatives of the Local Government Unit lead to Non-cash Livelihood benefits.

Table 2: Non-cash Livelihood Aspect Result

II. Perspective in Non-cash Livelihood Aspect	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	MEAN	RANK	INTERPRETATION
1. Contribution of livelihood programs in job generation	111	118	14	7	3.28	2	Strongly Agree
2. TESDA tourism trainings for local residents	120	116	13	1	3.42	1	Strongly Agree
3. Entrepreneurship seminars for tourism jobs	93	119	32	6	3.00	3	Agree
4. Inefficiency of non-cash livelihood programs	28	89	92	41	2.39	5	Agree
5. Negative effects of tourism projects to livelihood programs' sustainability	27	68	113	42	2.68	4	Agree
TOTAL					2.954		AGREE

*Legend: Strongly Agree (3.25-4.00); Agree (2.50 – 3.24); Disagree (1.75 – 2.49); Strongly Disagree (1.00 – 1.74)*

#### 4.1.3 Tourism Policies

The results in Table 3 support the hypothesis that tourism initiatives of the Local Government Unit lead to tourism policies. The weighted mean of the perspective of the locals in the Tourism Policies is 3.12 or “Agree”. The results indicate that the presence of tourism policies in Ilocos Region holds accuracy which sustains effectiveness as perceived by the locals. Also, the locals claimed that the environmental sustainability was given importance. Hence, this finding implies that tourism initiatives of the local government unit lead to effective tourism policies.

Table 3: Tourism Policies Result

III. Perspectives in the Tourism Policies Aspect	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	MEAN	RANK	INTERPRETATION
1. Environmental friendly tourism policies	156	79	12	3	3.55	1	Strongly Agree
2. Transportation regulations	115	101	28	6	3.30	2	Strongly Agree
3. Sustainability of tourism policies	79	150	18	3	3.22	3	Agree
4. Impracticality of tourism programs	28	51	115	56	2.80	4	Agree
5. Ineffectiveness of tourism policies existing	21	72	115	42	2.71	5	Agree
TOTAL					3.116		AGREE

*Legend: Strongly Agree (3.25-4.00); Agree (2.50 – 3.24); Disagree (1.75 – 2.49); Strongly Disagree (1.00 – 1.74)*

#### 4.1.4 Tourism Policies Government Processes

The results in Table 4 support the hypothesis that tourism initiatives of the Local Government Unit lead to government processes. The weighted mean in terms of the perspective of the locals in Government Processes Aspect is 3.16 or “Agree”. The results indicate that there was a good relationship between the Local Government Unit, Institutions, Organizations, and the Local Communities in Region 1. Furthermore, it denotes that the locals believed that their officials were effective and efficient in improving the tourism industry in the region. Hence, it can be implied that the tourism initiatives of the Local Government Unit lead to effective Government Processes.

Table 4: Government Processes Result

IV. Perspective in Government Processes Aspect	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	MEAN	RANK	INTERPRETATION
1. Influence of institutions and organizations	87	140	17	6	3.22	2.5	Agree
2. Convenience of local documents and permit processing	67	128	45	10	3.00	5	Agree
3. Involvement of institutions and organizations with local tourism governance structures.	61	164	19	6	3.12	4	Agree
4. Effectiveness of the local officials	92	128	24	6	3.22	2.5	Agree
5. Skill and experience sufficiency of tourism officials	88	138	20	4	3.26	1	Strongly Agree
TOTAL					3.164		AGREE

Legend: Strongly Agree (3.25-4.00); Agree (2.50 – 3.24); Disagree (1.75 – 2.49); Strongly Disagree (1.00 – 1.74)

#### 4.1.5 Community Participation

The results in Table 4 support the hypothesis that tourism initiatives of the Local Government Unit lead to participation for the community. The weighted mean in terms of the perspective of the locals in the Community Participation is 3.13 or “Agree”. The results indicate that the involvement of the local community was being empowered and effectively managed leading to the success of the tourism industry in the region. Moreover, it implies that the locals were well-motivated in developing their own community. Hence, it can be concluded that the tourism initiatives of the local government unit lead to participation for the local community.

Table 5: Community Participation Result

V. Perspective in Community Participation Aspects	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	MEAN	RANK	INTERPRETATION
1. Equal livelihood participation and opportunities	77	129	35	9	3.09	4	Agree
2. Positive attitude of local residents in community participation	84	146	16	4	3.24	1.5	Agree
3. Cooperation of tourism stakeholders	83	142	20	5	3.21	3	Agree
4. Involvement of local residents in tourism activities	55	119	61	15	2.86	5	Agree
5. Motivation of local residents in community development	87	140	13	4	3.24	1.5	Agree
TOTAL					3.128		AGREE

Legend: Strongly Agree (3.25-4.00); Agree (2.50 – 3.24); Disagree (1.75 – 2.49); Strongly Disagree (1.00 – 1.74)

4.1.6 Structural Equation Modelling Result

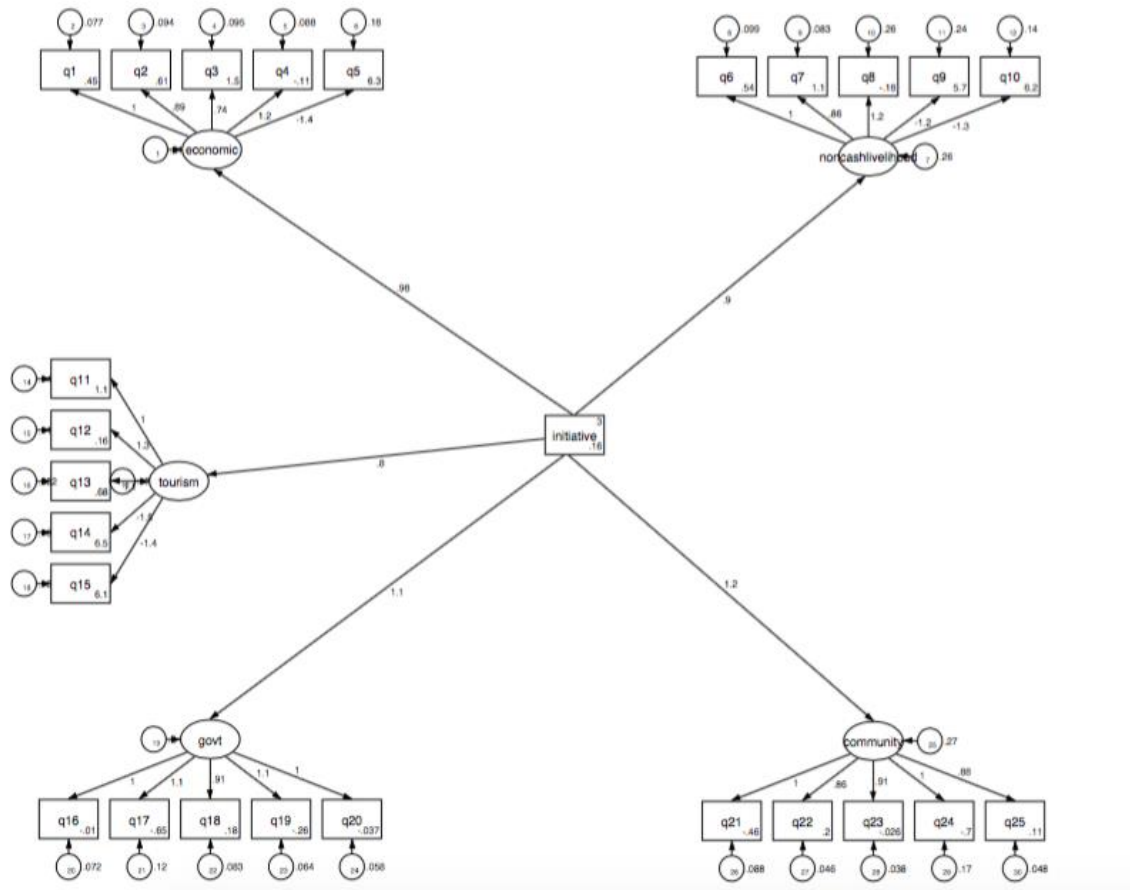


Figure 2: Structural Equation Modelling Framework

Figure 2 shows the Structural Equation Model derived from the Social Exchange Theory between tourism and the locals of the selected destinations in Ilocos Region. The result showed that all hypotheses were supported; therefore, tourism initiatives of local government unit lead to economic benefits, non-cash livelihood benefits, effective tourism policies, efficient government processes, and community participation. Based on these results, it can be implied that tourism initiatives of local government unit lead to pro-poor tourism in Ilocos Region. The management and practices of the tourism industry in the region was deemed effective. Evidently, the locals accept and acknowledge the benefits and contributions of the tourism industry toward the progression of their livelihood and employment and in alleviating impoverished households.

#### **4.2 How can the local government enhance the linkages between tourism businesses and poor communities for effective participation in tourism development?**

The local government in the province of Alaminos, Pangasinan were able to provide linkages among the tourism businesses and poor communities by giving them opportunities to start their own businesses like souvenir shops and boat service providers. Department of Labor and Employment, is also associated in helping the local communities of Alaminos, Pangasinan by financing and giving a million for the city government to propose projects for the community. The connection between tourism businesses and poor communities in the province of San Fernando, Pangasinan were established through Tourism Development Plan geared towards community participation. The tourism unit visits each barangay where tourist sites are located in order to obtain suggestions and recommendations from the community prior to the formulation of policy. Furthermore, the tourism unit chooses their tour guides from the locals especially the out-of-school youths. They were required to attend to training sessions offered by Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) to enhance their skills and abilities.

As for the province of Vigan, Ilocos Sur, the city government maintains the relationship with tourism businesses and poor communities by conducting regular meetings so that they can voice out their concerns and find ways to resolve issues (e.g. financial and technical support). Furthermore, the government monitors each barangay to make sure that tourism equally benefits the community and tourism businesses. The locals were treated as part of the primary stakeholders of the city. Lastly, the private sector and the poor communities in the city of Laoag has a strong convergence. The local community were involved in tourism development in their city through seminars conducted by travel agencies, which cater not only to those individuals who are knowledgeable or expert in the field of tourism, or those individuals who have a degree in tourism, but as well as for those locals who are interested on partaking in the tourism industry. Moreover, the provincial government strongly acknowledges the opinions and insights of the locals regarding their tourism development.

### **4.3 What safeguarding policies should be implemented as perceived by the following stakeholders:**

#### *4.3.1 Local Government*

The province of Alaminos, Pangasinan have tourism code, which compose of various ordinances and policies dealing with environmental protection, locals benefits, and tourism guidelines. There was a lack of coherency and apprehension related to safety and security regulations in the province of San Fernando, La union. Hence, the provincial government is planning to craft new amendments by highly considering the impacts toward the local community and to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of the policies implemented. Furthermore, the tourism unit establishes public hearing regularly to inform the stakeholders about policies implementation considering that their projects and activities could directly affect them.

In view of Vigan, Ilocos Sur, they adapted Tourism Code from National Tourism Act in addition to their own conservations laws. The city government also continues to formulate better policies regarding waste management and traffic congestion since they are part of the city's major problems. As for the province of Laoag, Ilocos, the city's airport security policies were lacking in terms of effectiveness. Therefore, there is a need for policy enhancement. Moreover, the mayor suggested to have a safeguarding policy that prevents discrimination against Chinese businessmen because most businesses in Laoag are operated by the Chinese community. Through this, it could motivate Chinese businessmen to continue the operation of their businesses that contribute to the growth of tourism industry in Laoag.

#### *4.3.2 Local Community*

The local community in the province of Alaminos, Pangasinan suggested to strengthen the policies that help in the preservation of the city since they were concerned about the carrying capacity of the wharf, wherein crowded island during summer and littering problem during peak season. The locals also suggested to create a regulation that would limit the access of vehicles to the Lucap Wharf. The local residents in the province of San Fernando, La Union stated that there were no implications regarding the regulations, for the Local Government Unit to fulfill their sense of responsibilities imminently through providing efficient and effective policies for the society. Meanwhile, those locals in Vigan, whether they involved or not involved in policy formulation, think that the established policies were good enough for the city. However, the locals suggested that the policies should be focused on balancing both, the environment and economic growth, as well as to consider the welfare of small businesses such as charging reasonable fee for ice cream vendors. On the other hand, the local residents in the province of Laoag, Ilocos Norte were highly satisfied with the existing policies in their city because of the effectiveness and efficiency of the provincial government in implementing the policies as well as solving issues in the community.

### 4.3.3 Private Sector

The private sectors in Alaminos specifically the souvenir shops owners, suggested that the local government to provide a specific and permanent area for business stalls as this would be more convenient and conducive for them. Meanwhile, the business owners in San Fernando were satisfied with the output of tourism policies and programs focusing on the beneficiaries of the city since it consists of well-managed administration. The private sectors of Vigan suggested that the authorities should focus on the formulation of policies on road construction in order to minimize traffic congestions, as well as reduce the non-biodegradable wastes especially during special events. With regards to Laoag, private sectors suggested that the government should establish a policy that protects local travel agencies and prevent unregistered travel agencies to operate in the city.

### 4.4 What evidence-based policy can be proposed to advance the Pro-Poor Tourism in Ilocos Region?

CITY	THEMATIC AREA	RESEARCH FINDINGS	GOAL	PEOPLE INVOLVED	PROPOSED PROGRAM	SPECIFIC PLANS OF ACTION
Alaminos, Pangasinan	Government tourism policy, and tourism planning	The researchers found out that there are tourism policies existing in Alaminos. However, local communities are not directly involved in safeguarding policies formulation.	To involve the local communities in the formulation of safeguarding policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayor</li> <li>• Sangguniang Bayan representatives</li> <li>• Municipal Tourism officer</li> <li>• DENR Representative</li> <li>• Barangay Representatives</li> </ul>	Establish a consistent communication between the local government officials and the local community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a meeting among the local government officials involved in tourism planning</li> <li>• Conceptualize a more effective safeguarding policy</li> <li>• Consult with the local community the proposed tourism policies and involve them on policy making to further address the problems of their city</li> </ul>
		The researchers found out that due to the influx of tourists, carrying capacity is neglected which leads to environmental degradation.	To observe the carrying capacity and protection of the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local</li> </ul>	Strengthen the tourism policies and regulations that cover environmental protection, and strictly observe the carrying capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the proposed tourism safeguarding policies on an agreed scheduled date</li> <li>• Evaluate and monitor if the tourism policies are efficient</li> </ul>
	Tourism regulations / standards	The researchers found out that there is traffic congestion in the access areas to the wharfs	To limit the access of vehicles in the wharf area to avoid traffic congestion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayor</li> <li>• Sangguniang Bayan representative</li> <li>• Tourism officers/coordinators</li> <li>• DENR representative</li> <li>• Barangay representative</li> <li>• Local community</li> </ul>	Create a regulation that would limit the access of vehicles to the Lucap Wharf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a meeting among the local government units and the stakeholders involved in the development</li> <li>• Check if there are available places to set an area for visitors' parking use</li> <li>• Propose the construction of parking area that is far from the Wharf</li> <li>• Consult with the municipal engineer and the local community regarding the construction of the visitors' parking area</li> </ul>

						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss within the local government and stakeholders the possible expenses that will rise from the construction plan.</li> <li>• Proceed with the construction of the visitor's parking area</li> <li>• Monitor regularly</li> </ul>
	Land-use planning	The researchers found out that there are several small businesses operating at the wharf. However, they do not have permanent area stalls, which indicates poor long-term planning for the land use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide permanent stalls for the operation of small businesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayor</li> <li>• Sangguniang Bayan representatives</li> <li>• Municipal Tourism officer</li> </ul>	Assign a specific place and construct permanent area stalls for the businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a meeting among the local government units and the stakeholders involved in the development</li> <li>• Consult the local community about the construction of permanent stalls</li> <li>• Implement the proposed policy regarding the construction of permanent stalls for the businesses on an agreed scheduled date.</li> <li>• Execute a frequent assessment on the feedback of the small business owners for further suggestions.</li> <li>• Monitor and evaluate the outcome of the tourism plan and policies operated on a regular basis.</li> </ul>

CITY	THEMATIC AREA	RESEARCH FINDINGS	GOAL	PEOPLE INVOLVED	PROPOSED PROGRAM	SPECIFIC PLANS OF ACTION
San Fernando, La Union	Government tourism policy, and tourism planning	The researchers discovered that the local government unit envisions a citizenry administration that recognizes the needs and wants of the people. However, there is an absence of tourism policy, planning and strategies in the city.	Provide and implement well-developed regulations and propose a method for the improvement of tourism industry in the city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayor</li> <li>• Sangguniang Bayan representative</li> <li>• Tourism officers/ director</li> </ul>	Formulate tourism policies and planning to attain a systematic flow of management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the issues that need attentions, in that way the government will be able to provide courses of actions</li> <li>• Create a plan that is in line with the policies of other tourism attached agencies</li> <li>• Ensure equal benefits for all</li> </ul>
	Tourism regulations / standards	The researchers found out that the local government unit relies on the imposed standards and regulations of the Department of Tourism. In contrary, the city lacks adequate regulation that will scope all the pillars of tourism industry. With that, it	To certify that the policies are carefully observed by the local community, most especially by tourism businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayor</li> <li>• Sangguniang Bayan representative</li> <li>• Tourism officers/ coordinators</li> <li>• DENR representative</li> <li>• Barangay representative</li> <li>• Local community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impose regulations that will ensure the safety and security of the stakeholders.</li> <li>• Propose programs that will meet the standards, which will be done regularly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement an attainable standard that will be carried out in the long run</li> <li>• Coordinate with the agencies related in tourism accreditation for the certification of competency and credibility</li> <li>• Conduct trainings and seminars to enlighten the stakeholders regarding with the protection for the environmental, cultural, and social resources</li> </ul>

		could lead in exposing the tourists and locals from danger.				
	Empowering local populations	The researchers determined that the tourism unit concentrates in widening the income opportunities of locals. Conversely, there is a lack of involvement among the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To maximize the community participation that will enable to prioritize the needs and wants of the locals.</li> <li>To raise awareness regarding the opportunities provided by the tourism enterprises.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mayor</li> <li>Sangguniang Bayan representative</li> <li>Provincial/ municipal tourism officers/ coordinators</li> <li>Private establishment developers</li> </ul>	Establish coordination with the locals through public hearing for suggestions and concerns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a parameter to identify to what extent the locals can participate in tourism-related livelihood</li> <li>Administer a post-evaluation form among the locals to measure the successful rate of the tourism projects and programs</li> <li>Conduct monthly meetings among the stakeholders to deliberate certain issues and problems that need decision-making process</li> </ul>

CITY	THEMATIC AREA	RESEARCH FINDINGS	GOAL	PEOPLE INVOLVED	PROPOSED PROGRAM	SPECIFIC PLANS OF ACTION
Vigan, Ilocos Sur	Tourism regulations / standards	The researchers found out that Vigan city focuses on the preservation of social, cultural, and heritage resources. However, they lack regulations in protecting the environmental resources.	To have an equal protection among the environmental, social, cultural, and heritage resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mayor</li> <li>Sangguniang Bayan representatives</li> <li>Municipal Tourism officer</li> <li>DENR Representative</li> <li>Barangay Representatives</li> <li>Local People</li> </ul>	Create tourism policies and regulations that will protect the environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a meeting with the people involved</li> <li>Set policies that will ensure the protection of the environment</li> <li>Implement the policies</li> <li>Have a regular monitoring group that shall see to it that the policies created are being followed</li> </ul>
		The researcher found out that there is traffic congestion in the center of Vigan city.	To minimize or eliminate traffic congestion in the area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mayor</li> <li>Sangguniang Bayan representatives</li> <li>Municipal Tourism officer</li> <li>Local People</li> <li>Municipal engineer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have a specific area/building where people can park their cars.</li> <li>Allow only <i>Kalesa</i> to enter the center of the City.</li> <li>Promote walking as a means of touring around the city.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a meeting with the people involved</li> <li>Look for the places that have a potential to become parking area.</li> <li>Consult the Municipal Engineer</li> <li>Start building parking areas</li> <li>Formulate regulations that would inform them that the center of the City would be a walking area</li> </ul>



	Tourism Marketing	The researchers found out that LGU includes the traditional industries as tourist attraction. However, it is not well promoted unlike Calle Crisologo.	To promote other industries as tourist attractions to have the same level of popularity as Calle Crisologo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayor</li> <li>• Sangguniang Bayan representatives</li> <li>• Municipal Tourism officer</li> <li>• Local People</li> </ul>	Create an effective marketing strategy that will promote all the tourist attractions equally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult marketing professionals for possible strategies</li> <li>• Find people with the needed skills</li> <li>• Test if it is effective in the long run</li> <li>• Encourage the locals to participate and lead the promotion</li> </ul>
	Land-use planning	The researchers found out that the LGU provides pottery clay from a specific area. However, a private businessman to use as public promenade bought it.	To find another area where there are available resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayor</li> <li>• Sangguniang Bayan representatives</li> <li>• Municipal Tourism officer</li> </ul>	Buy a land where the needed resources can be found.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look for available land that have the needed resources</li> <li>• Talk to the owner and inform them the formulate plan</li> <li>• Have an agreement and buy the land. But if no agreement was made, look for another. Then repeat process</li> </ul>
	Development of infrastructures	The researchers found out that there are road developments at the plaza and Calle Crisologo. However, there are also roads in other barangays that need work.	To improve the roads in other barangays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayor</li> <li>• Sangguniang Bayan representatives</li> <li>• Municipal Tourism officer</li> <li>• Municipal engineer/architect</li> <li>• DPWH representatives</li> </ul>	Improve the roads in all the barangays.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspect the roads in the city</li> <li>• List down specific areas/barangays that have problems with the roads</li> <li>• Consult with the Municipal engineer/architect and coordinate DPWH representatives</li> <li>• Fix the roads</li> </ul>

CITY	THEMATIC AREA	RESEARCH FINDINGS	GOAL	PEOPLE INVOLVED	PROPOSED PROGRAM	SPECIFIC PLANS OF ACTION
Laoag, Ilocos Norte	Understanding local populations in tourism growth areas	The researchers determined that although tourism generated more jobs for the local community, poor households do not sufficiently receive benefits from the tourism industry.	To target poorer people to ensure they benefit from growth of tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayor</li> <li>• Sangguniang Bayan representatives</li> <li>• Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator</li> <li>• Provincial/municipal tourism officer/coordinator</li> <li>• Chairmen of the Barangays</li> </ul>	Establish affirmative strategies that would highlight the benefits of poor communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a meeting among the local government officials involved in tourism planning</li> <li>• Conceptualize programs and seminars that will engage the poor communities</li> <li>• Inform the communities through announcements or meetings with them to gain feedback or suggestions for a more effective plan</li> <li>• Implement the proposed tourism plan on an agreed scheduled date</li> <li>• Evaluate the outcome of the program. If successful, proceed with</li> </ul>

						the operation of the proposed plan. If not, proceed to the first step
Tourism regulations / standards	The researchers discovered that given the strength of the present policies in the city, there is lacking policy monitoring and evaluation procedures.	To certify that the local community carefully observes the policies, most especially by tourism businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayor</li> <li>• Sangguniang Bayan representatives</li> <li>• Provincial/municipal tourism officer/coordinator</li> <li>• Barangay representatives</li> <li>• Local people</li> </ul>	Establish affirmative strategies that would highlight the benefits of poor communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a meeting among the local government officials involved in tourism planning and policy formulation</li> <li>• Conduct a consultation meeting with the tourism businessmen to gain feedback and suggestions on the current tourism policies</li> <li>• Make the policies created effective to assess their feasibility</li> <li>• Implement a monthly surprise inspection by tourism officials in tourism-related businesses in order to evaluate and monitor the actual performance of these</li> </ul>	
Empowering local populations	The researchers found out that although Laoag is successfully growing as a tourist destination in Ilocos Norte, the regulations do not significantly empower its community.	To ensure that the community participates in tourism development planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayor</li> <li>• Sangguniang Bayan representatives</li> <li>• Provincial/municipal tourism officer/coordinator</li> <li>• Private sectors</li> </ul>	Build consistent communication between the local government and the local community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initially, observe the behavior of the community with the present policies</li> <li>• Analyze the probable mistakes on the present policies based on the observation</li> <li>• Develop effective tourism policies through meetings within the government and the community to focus on community empowerment</li> <li>• Implement the agreed tourism policies conceptualized and monitor on a regular basis</li> <li>• Practice quarterly or annual meetings with the local community regarding the development of new tourism policies and regulations</li> </ul>	

The findings show that the local communities' high levels of agreement on tourism initiatives leading to economic benefits, non-cash livelihood benefits, tourism policies, government processes, and community participation. This implies that the tourism initiatives of the local government units lead to pro-poor Tourism. In the aspect of economic benefits, majority of the respondents strongly agreed that the local products in the region were sustained and that it greatly improved their livelihood. For the non-cash livelihood, most of the respondents strongly agreed that relevant agencies such as Technical Education and Skills Development (TESDA) has the capability to conduct trainings and seminars for locals who are willing to be involved in tourism programs opportunities, therefore, providing more openings on the means of support for the poor local communities. In terms of tourism policies, most of the respondents believed that the present tourism policies in their city such as waste segregation and visitors management helped in the progressive development of their city and the sustainability

of the environments. In terms of government processes, majority of the respondents agreed that the tourism initiatives of the local government units lead to effective government processes and that their government was capable of effectively serving their city. Lastly, in the aspect of community participation, most of the respondents agreed that they were willing and greatly motivated to participate in different tourism programs in the region. Grounding on the Social Exchange Theory, majority of the population accepted the tourism industry because of the opportunities that it sets to their sources of revenue and to their city.

## **5 Conclusion**

One of the main objectives of the study is to investigate the ways in which the tourism industry in Ilocos Region contributes to the economic benefit of the locals. Based on the analysis of data, hypotheses formulated for the study were supported. Therefore, it can be concluded that the tourism initiatives of the Local Government Unit lead to pro-poor tourism, which could signify that the resources were fairly distributed/shared among the members of the community. The results of the survey show the effectiveness of tourism in poverty alleviation because of the sufficient benefits and livelihood opportunities that it provides to the locals. In terms of the effectiveness in managing and initiating tourism development, the Local Government Unit of Alaminos, San Fernando, Vigan and Laoag indeed provided positive impact towards the lives of the poor communities. Moreover, majority of the local residents acknowledge tourism's potential capability to pioneer change in social, cultural, economic and environmental facets. Thus, it can be concluded that the pro-poor tourism can be used as a means of poverty alleviation and economic development in Ilocos Region. Furthermore, the Social Exchange Theory suggested that the benefits gained from the tourism industry could be used to alleviate the poverty, generate economic growth, widen income opportunities and shed light on how locals will view the present and future tourism exchanges. With that, the Social Exchange Theory demonstrated that the research locale acknowledges tourism as a beneficiary, which continuously provides positive impact on their lives.

The researchers were able to determine the viability of pro-poor tourism as a great leverage in boosting the economic and livelihood opportunities in Ilocos Region. In addition, the study was able to support the study framework which illustrates the Structural Equation Model of the Social Exchange Theory between tourism and the locals of the selected destinations in Ilocos Region. This entails that because of positive relationship between the variables, increase in tourism initiatives lead to the increase of the five aspects of pro-poor Tourism. On the other hand, the study withholds accuracy in terms of the result and data gathered and information stated by the researchers. Indeed, the study can be used as a beneficial reference for the improvement in Ilocos Region particularly the Local Government Unit, Local Community and Private Sector.

## 6 About the author

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