

# Determinants of Sustainability among Beach Resorts

Journal of Tourism, Hospitality & Culinary Arts (JTHCA)  
2022, Vol. 14 (3) pp 90-104  
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UITM Press  
Submit date: 21<sup>st</sup> October 2022  
Accept date: 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022  
Publish date: 30<sup>th</sup> December 2022

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## Proposed citation:

Soriano, J.M.G. (2022). Determinants of Sustainability among Beach Resorts. *Journal of Tourism, Hospitality & Culinary Arts*, 14(3), 90-104.

## Abstract

The overwhelming influx of tourists in the beautiful and pristine beaches has brought enormous contribution to both economic and social development of local communities, however, it does not come without any cost to the environment. As such, beach resort owners were confronted with pressing issues relating to sustainability design and implementation. Hence, this study was initiated to understand the determinants of the sustainability of beach resorts in Davao Region as well as provide an implication on the sustainability framework for local policy development. A mixed methods research design utilizing convergent parallel approach was employed in which a total of 215 beach resort owners participated in this study. Results of the quantitative portion revealed that corporate social responsibility and tourism promotion services are the significant determinants of sustainable tourism in Davao Region and the qualitative insights of the beach resort owners revealed the there is a necessity to promote the tourism activities, products, and services; trainings and orientation needs to be initiated, and CSR awareness may be promoted and strengthened. As to the corroboration of the quantitative and qualitative findings, merging confirmation was noted for all of the constructs denoting a parallel results of both qualitative and quantitative strands of the study.

## Keywords:

Sustainability, Tourism Promotion Services, Corporate Social Responsibility, Beach Resorts

## 1 Introduction

Over the course of time, the natural environment and vivid beauty of a tourist destination has gradually degraded with the sustained development of beach resort operations. Further, the huge influx of tourists in a particular destination have contributed to this adverse impact thereby affecting sustainable operations of beach resorts. Since tourism can be associated with natural attractions like beach resorts, it is

deemed as one of the prime issues in the context of biodiversity and natural resources on a global scale. In the Philippines, the data of the Department of Tourism (2018), a total of 3.7 million tourist arrivals has been recorded with an increase of 10.4% compared to the previous year. The top three tourist arrivals recorded are from Korea, China, and the USA. Recently, there has been an alarming issue in the national setting. Initially, forced closure in some beach resorts in the provinces have been issued due to the damaged brought about by this tourism-related activities relating to inadequate garbage disposal, illegal structures affecting the natural tourism attraction and tourist congestion where tourist arrival is more than the carrying capacity of the area (Newsweek, 2018).

Kasim (2009) maintained the idea that tourism as an environmentally benign industry has led to as low integration of responsible environmental considerations into tourism-related activities yet some scholars like Petrovic et al., (2017) posited and specifically pointed out that sustainable tourism can enhance the identity of the entire country because it is strongly related to ways of local production, local life, cultural celebration, heritage, and natural attractions in rural or urban settings. Upon looking into the present situation in the region, there appears to be some pressing issues and challenges which were apparently ignored, for instance, some beach resorts do not evidently practice corporate social responsibility especially in preserving the natural attractions of the area. More so, the sustainability concept is rarely acknowledged by the beach resort owners and it is not in the priority of their operations since most beach resort operators/owners have a very limited knowledge about creating activities that may promote environmental protection. Third, there seems to be dearth of empirical evidence that holistically (employed mixed methods research) looked into the sustainable operations of beach resorts in developing states such as the Philippines.

Thus, it is in this respect that that the researcher was prompted to conduct a research on this field in consideration of the following reasons: the researcher encountered only a few studies involving beach resort operations and some other studies about CSR in tourism have focused on the different settings instead of rural settings that are more appropriate in terms of CSR and TPS practices. Second, this present study desires to have a holistic approach in the investigation of the problem by employing mixed method design to give equal weights in quantitative and qualitative phases. Hence, the researcher is interested in evaluating the status of the corporate social responsibility and tourism promotion services and determine if these two constructs predict the sustainability of beach resorts in the region using the mixed methods approach.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility.**

Tourism, in itself, is a field where the implementation of CSR policies is particularly important since the success of tourism depends on the preservation of the place it is situated (Bader, 2005). There are a number of tourism organizations that include CSR in their business organization, among different issues such as: trying to develop the environment, help assist the residents' lives and upgrade the welfare of the workers. While there is progress, there are also concerns about protecting the environment (Kasin & Scarlat, 2007). Although the literature on CSR in the sector is scarce, it has grown recently (Kang, Lee, & Huh, 2010). Some researchers have decided to reduce the cost of expenditure sources in the tourism sector (Ayuso, 2006). The main motivation is the reduction of cost to have the organizational advantage.

Kasim (2009) argued that there is a different meaning of CSR from the business operations perspective and this refers to the term BESR - Business Environmental and Social Responsibility to complete the range that includes connecting the economical, societal, and ecological presentation of the organization and its charitable extension. However, Font, Walmsley, Cogotti, McCombes, and Häusler (2012) argued that the widely used standards are corporate social responsibility practices. In a similar tone, Booyens and Rogerson (2016) argued that local policy initiatives are needed to strengthen innovation for responsible business practices in tourism, thereby enhancing environmental and social change on a larger scale. Since the beach resorts in Davao Region do not have a clearer guideline regarding responsible tourism practices in the area. It is high time for the local government to formulate a policy that will somehow strengthen and enhance the environmental and marketable policies and practices of the beach resort operators. Related studies show that operating a beach resort as a tourism destination greatly affects the natural environment of the area and thus this needs to be considered by the Local Government Unit to monitor the progress and status of the CSR practices of the establishment if it has been practiced and implemented.

## **2.2 Beach Sustainability**

Beach Resort operations has been the most preferred tourism destination for tourist who prefers a long drive while enjoying the coastal view and breeze. This is the reason why there is a quick growth of tourism in Southeast Asia, as a result amongst other attractive sandy beaches and nature, beach resorts have been on the receiving end of attention and focus by the tourist (Chin & Lim, 2018). Prior studies claimed that these resorts were not properly managed, and further actions are needed to be taken to ensure their sustainability and examine the performance management of beach resorts in ensuring the sustainability of beach resorts. This is so since most of the beach resort operations are operated by owners themselves who have only limited knowledge of operating a beach resort as a tourism business. In most cases, they are only registered at the barangay level and or municipal level, thus one of the reasons for the lack of support from the Department of Tourism as a National Agency.

Today, coastal and marine tourism is the largest segment of the travel tourism industry (Sahoo, 2014). More Tourists are attracted to nature-based tourism like beach destinations known for the sand, sun, and beach tourism destination. Moreover, according to the data of the Department of Tourism Davao Region, more tourists prefer beaches located along the coastal areas because of the scenic view of sunrise or sunset and the long drive along the coastal areas while enjoying bonding with family and friends. In 2012, tourist arrival increased by more than 100% increase in the number of tourists arrival recorded in destinations along the coastal areas and gradually damaging the environment because of a lack of management in the operations.

## **2.3 Tourism Promotion Services**

In terms of the Tourism Promotion Services, the beach resort owners lacks the competencies/knowledge required in promoting the beach as a tourism destination due to a lack of training. although the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) (2015) provides training on Tourism Promotion Services, this training is not given yet to small-time resort players in the Region.

In 2015, TESDA extended this TPS training to the grassroots area including the resort operators (TESDA, 2015). This training is given to bridge the gap that resort operators must possess to deliver the quality customer services expected in the resort operation. this is the process of enhancing the skills, capabilities, and knowledge of employees for doing a particular task (Baum & Devine, 2007). The training process shapes the thinking of employees, thereby leading toward the desired quality performance of employees and owners of beach resorts in the Davao Region. An employee is believed to become more efficient and productive if he is trained well, (Woods, 2004).

In promoting Tourism Products and Services, according to Kumra (2008), competitive business environment, effective marketing is an essential activity of successful travel and tourism organizations. Classified as the most difficult “products and services” to market, tourist destinations involve large numbers of guests and a

brand image. More so from the TESDA Training Regulation (2015), Tourism products are muller over as what a destination can offer. Primary tourism products and services are key draw cards that attract tourists to the service industry.

Benur and Bramwell (2015) added that diversification, intensification, and linkage of these products could be crucial for the competitiveness and sustainable development of destinations. Likewise, tourism promotion can be useful in preserving natural environments, sustaining historical archaeological and religious monuments, and encouraging the practice of local cultures, and cuisine. Certainly, tourism touches on every aspect of the economy (Hanna, Scarles, Cohen, & Adams, 2016). Other promotional material includes brochures, leaflets, and flyers.

Corporate Social Responsibility and Tourism Promotion Services are two very important determinants of beach resort operations. The association of corporate social responsibility and sustainability is some of the research questions in the tourism industry. CSR shows a positive correlation with sustainability, the CSR implementation of the company is focused on sustainability in the operations that require attention on three dependent scales namely: environmental, social, and economic sustainability. (Matteson, 2017). These factors are discussed to further explain their relation to beach resort operations. Development of beach resorts greatly affects the natural environment and vibrant beauty of a tourism destination (Kasim & Scarlat, 2007).

In parallel, CSR initiative of sustainable tourism enhances the identity of the entire country, because it is strongly related to social activities in ways of local production, local's life, cultural celebration, heritage, and natural attraction in rural and urban settings (Petrović, Vujko, Gajić, Vuković, Radovanović, Jovanović, & Vuković, 2017).

Also, the significant relationship between the CSR has a good impact in improving employees perception of the importance of CSR, thereby improving the company's social environmental performance (Voegtlin, Patzer & Scherer, 2012). In Comparison with tourism promotion services and sustainability, the training program will capacitate the employees and resort owner's in running the business in terms of the competencies needed in promoting natural tourism destinations. Consequently, the promotion of tourism greatly affects environmental sustainability. Further, the lived experiences of the beach resort owners and employees in the beach resort operation will deepen the study specifically on the issues of sustainable environmental activities, social activities, and economic activities in the natural tourism destination. The carrying capacity of a tourism destination greatly affects the physical environment. owners should design environmental activities that would somehow promote natural activities to protect the environment.

### 3 Methodology

The researcher utilized the mixed method approach specifically, a convergent parallel approach was employed as one of the mixed methods designs, this design will involve both quantitative and qualitative data by Tashakkori and Creswell (2007). The researcher wants to converge and hopes to establish consistency in both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This design was assumed to provide a complete understanding of the CSR and tourism promotion services as elements of sustainability of beach resort operations in the Davao Region. In the quantitative method, the researcher disseminated questionnaires to the participants. Under this approach, regression analysis was used to focus more on the variables that are deemed significant in determining what predicts the sustainability of beach resorts in the region.

Concurrently, in the qualitative approach, phenomenology was used by the researcher to explore the lived experiences of the participants as they engage in activities that promote sustainable operation within the context of corporate social responsibility and tourism promotion services of beach resort operations through the conduct of in-depth interview and focus group discussion. In this design, both the quantitative and qualitative data (as shown in figure 1), analysis was compared and contrasted with each other, and interpretations are given equal emphasis and that is why this design is more appropriate in this study.

This study was conducted in Davao Region (7.3042° N, 126.0893° E) specifically in the following provinces: Davao del Sur, Davao del Norte, Davao Oriental, and Davao de Oro. The total number of respondents is 215; 200 respondents participated in the quantitative strand and the other 15 served as informants in the qualitative portion. In determining the number of respondents, a stratified random sampling method and the criteria used in identifying the respondents were: they were registered in the business bureau, located along the coastal areas in Davao Region; and must have been operating for at least 5 years.



Figure 1. Convergent Parallel Design

## 4 Findings

### 4.1 Status of the Corporate Social Responsibility of Beach Resorts

Table 1. presents the status of the corporate social responsibility across selected beach resorts in Davao Region beach resorts in Davao Region. The overall mean of the status Corporate Social Responsibility of beach resorts is ( $\bar{x} = 4.07$ ) with a descriptive rating of high, this indicates that the CSR practices of beach resorts is evident.

Looking at the previous studies, employees value the organization that promotes honesty and credibility in the conduct of business (Manente, Minghetti, & Mingotto, 2014). Employees value organizations whose CSR activities aimed at nurturing communities as a whole. By participating in local community activities sponsored by their respective organizations, employee commitment increases, Kang, Lee & Huh, 2010). Furthermore, Ali, Jiménez-Zarco, and Bicho (2015) suggested that corporate social responsibility increases employee commitment level with the organization, because CSR interventions also included activities for the welfare of employees and their families.

Table 1. Status of the Corporate Responsibility of Beach Resorts

Indicator	Category Mean	SD	Interpretation
Workplace Policies	4.11	0.62	High
Environmental Policies	4.08	0.65	High
Marketplace Policies	3.98	0.73	High
Company Values	4.07	0.71	High
<b>Overall Mean</b>	4.07	0.60	High

### 4.2 Tourism Promotion Services of Beach Resort

Table 2 shows the the category and overall mean of the Tourism Promotion Services of beach resorts ( $\bar{x} = 4.10$ ) which is described as high, this means that tourists were able to access information about the destination, product or services and beach resorts owners has also provided tourism products and services to the prospective tourist who visits the area. Also, in light of the technological innovation and availability of platforms to promote brands, tourism services can now be readily available through Facebook, twitter, and even Instagram.

Data storage proved crucial in serving returning customers, and data updating the retrieval is done using company-approved procedures and processes thereby guaranteeing the security of customer information as well as its relevance. Internet-mediated communication is becoming more important as a means of communication today and awareness of its functionality and resources is truly required.

The prevailing features, along with the customer feedback on existing tourist product and service offerings, helps companies come up with better and more relevant offerings, helps beach resorts to come up with a better and more relevant offering that are properly attuned with the destination itself. The information retrieved can then be utilized to improve the prevailing tourism products and service offerings, and in improving their sales choosing techniques involving new and returning customers (Pacoy, 2014).

Table 2. Status of the Tourism Promotion Services of Beach Resorts

Indicator	Category Mean	SD	Interpretation
Provide Information Services of Beach Resorts	4.07	0.64	High
Provide information and advise on destination, products or services	4.12	0.68	High
Provide tourism products and services	4.10	0.68	High
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.10</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>High</b>

### 4.3 Sustainability of Beach Resorts

As revealed in Table 3, the respondents have agreed on the role of environmental, social, and economic activities in attaining the sustainability of beach resorts. This means that, as stewards, beach resorts see to it that its surrounding environment is well taken care of and the resort management encourages its new and returning customers to be more environmentally conscious of the environment within and outside of the resorts. I can also infer that the resort owners encouraged its new and returning customers to contribute, if not participate, in the social projects and charitable efforts.

Based on the interview conducted, it was learned that beach resorts value the protection of its surrounding natural environment since it was indicated well in their policy on energy conservation. The findings support the study of Kasim (2009) stating that the responsibility of business irrespective of size towards environmental issues relevant to its operation. Hu, Fong, Zhang, Chan, Lam, Chu, & Yang, (2016) also indicated that this is especially true with regards to addressing concerns such as the recyclability of waste, pollution generation, energy usage, among others. In this way, environmental stewardship is hereby promoted and employees are protected at the same time from speculation or discrimination in the workplace due to gender and ethnic orientation among others (Butler & Daly, 2009).

Table 3. Status of the Sustainability of Beach Resorts

Indicator	Category Mean	SD	Interpretation
Environmental Activities	4.13	0.73	High
Social Activities	4.22	0.71	Very High
Economic Activities	4.16	0.74	High
<b>Overall Mean</b>	4.17	0.67	High

#### 4.4 CSR and Tourism Promotion Services as the Determinants Sustainability of Beach Resorts

The sustainability of beach resorts was significantly predicted by both corporate social responsibility ( $\beta=.446$ , Sig.=.000) and tourism promotion services ( $\beta=.423$ , Sig.=.000) and both variables were deemed significant in relation to the sustainability of beach resorts. This means that as long as resort owners practice CSR, they will be able to manage its operations with relative ease and sustain its pace in the long run. Hence, greater priority should be given in the observance and implementation of CSR-related activities within and in surrounding beach resorts, furthermore, the resort owner should be mindful of the current tourism promotion services as these attract tourists in the process. Therefore, management initiatives and activities should account for the prevailing tourism promotion services and make the most of it consistent with their strategies and activities in place.

Table 4. Significance of the influence of CSR and TPS on the Sustainability Beach Resorts

Predictors	Beta Coefficient	P Value	t	Interpretation
Corporate Social Responsibility	.399	.000	4.646	S
Tourism Promotion	.399	.000	4.649	S

R<sup>2</sup> = 0.587  
F-stat = 140.157  
p-value = .000

#### 4.5 Qualitative insights of Beach Resort Owners on Sustainability

Presented in the following table is the qualitative insights of the respondents in shaping their beliefs, attitudes, commitment and aspirations as they engaged in sustainability efforts of beach resort operations. Findings suggested that resort owners may undergo training in tourism promotion services that will be initiated by the local government unit and consider the staff to contribute in the preservation of the area's local culture.

The more promotion, the more tourists will come and visit the place and tourists are seeking a high quality experience in safe and attractive environments. However, Al-Saad, Al-Orainat, Al-Badarneh, and Al-Makhadmeh, (2018) suggested that for a

tourism-based economy to sustain itself in local communities, the residents must be willing partners in the process. Their attitudes toward tourism and perceptions of its impact on community life must be continually assessed. In fact, UNEP (2005) provides that Tourism must allow people (visitors and hosts) to become more conscious of environmental issues and finally, the private sector must commit to conduct the capability training program to improve in promoting tourism products and services in the area. Help the beach resort owner’s craft unique tourism products that are potential and or improve tourism products available in the area.

Table 5. Role of Experience in shaping their beliefs, Attitudes, Commitment and Aspirations on sustainability of Beach Resorts

Issue Probe	Core Ideas	Essential Themes
Beliefs/ Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The more promotion, the more tourist will come and visit the place</li> <li>● Proud of preserving the environment</li> <li>● Increased economic activities</li> <li>● Always make sure the area is clean and well managed</li> <li>● Economic growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tourism promotion of beach resorts in the region</li> </ul>
Attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Patience in dealing with tourist</li> <li>● Friendly staff</li> <li>● Engaged in barangay-initiated training</li> <li>● Observe local barangay ordinance</li> <li>● Hire local staff and tour guide</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Training and orientation</li> </ul>
Aspiration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Orientation before the guest can enjoy the place</li> <li>● Visible signages as a reminder, the more awareness to tourist</li> <li>● Sustain beach resort operations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● CSR awareness</li> </ul>

#### 4.6 Joint Display of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Table 6 reflects the data integration of salient quantitative and qualitative findings. This table explains the connection of the results of the quantitative data and the qualitative data presented using themes. The results suggest that the quantitative data

corroborates with the qualitative insights of the respondents as evidenced by merging-confirmation as the nature of integration.

Table 6. Role of Experience in shaping their beliefs, Attitudes, Commitment and Aspirations on sustainability of Beach Resorts

Aspect of Focal Point	Nature of Data Integration/Function in Integration	Axiological Implications
Motivation for CSR Advocacy	Merging/Converging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Beach resort owners and local tourism office should motivate employees and encourage tourist in preserving the area through a familiarization tour highlighting the protected areas</li> <li>● Beach resort owners also employs local residents an engaged them in related training and activities initiated by the local tourism office</li> </ul>
Tourism Promotion Services	Merging/Converging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Local tourism office will have to intensify related trainings in terms of tourism promotion crafting unique tourism related activities and environmental preservation and awareness in the municipality</li> <li>● Local tourism officer and beach resort owners promote tourism products and awareness – local tourism office will orient the local and foreign tourist of the tourism destination in the area, this is done to lessen damage due to increased tourist arrival in the area</li> </ul>

Sustainability of beach resorts	Merging/Converging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beach resort owners and local tourism officer in the municipality closely coordinate in terms of CSR and TPS to contribute in the sustainability of beach resort operations</li> </ul>
Significance of CST on sustainability	Merging/Converging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainability of beach resorts can be significantly predicted by CSR, this means that so as long as beach resort owners practice CSR, they will be able to manage its operation with relative ease and sustain it is pace in the long run</li> </ul>
Significance of TPS on sustainability	Merging/Converging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tourism promotion of products and services highlighting unique tourist activities of beaches to increase sustainability of resort is essential</li> </ul>

## 5 Implications for Practice

The pivotal role of corporate social responsibility and tourism promotion service in the sustainability of the operation among beach resorts suggests to me some compelling reasons to design sustainable efforts in the tourism industry particularly with efforts to save, protect, and preserve the environment. Truly, this study recognizes the economic contribution and social development brought about by the tourism sector in the region, however, I would like to point out that these benefits must not be at the expense of the environment as we are banking on its beauty to be economically independent and socially satisfied. Perhaps, with the current efforts of the government and private entities which help ensure the protection of our environment is one of the surest ways to underwrite the preservation for the next generation to enjoy and exploit some economic benefits. Second, with the promising benefits of industry 4.0 or internet of things, I think beach resort owners can take advantage of this opportunity to promote their products and services which is also a way of promoting competitiveness. With the existing good practices and competitiveness of the tourism industry in the region, I think this is worth including in attracting tourists to experience the beauty of the beaches and most importantly, appreciate and describe themselves through engagement with the locals and owners. Finally, tourism promotion services do not just mean marketing the unique value proposition of the beach resort, perhaps, we need to reshape our

understanding and appreciation of this topic. One best ways that beach resort owners can do is: with the unique and world class services that the resort can offer, I think it also a good idea to sell to the tourists and the local stakeholders that while we make money out from pristine beauty of our beaches, we highly advocated for sustainable tourism by way of preserving the economic, cultural, social and environmental components of our business. This, therefore, creates an impression that tourists may holistically contribute to the long-term sustainability of the beach resorts.

## 6 About the author

Dr. Ma. Joy G. Soriano has more than 24 years of professional experience in both the industry and the academe. She obtained her Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management (BSHRM) from the Philippine Women's College of Davao in 1997 and her Master of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management (MSHRM) from The Philippine Women's University, Manila in 2011. She finally obtained her Doctor of Business Management (DBM) degree from the University of Immaculate Conception in 2019.

As an academican, she is an active member and officer of the Council of Hotels and Restaurant Educators of the Philippines (COHREP), Region XI Chapter, A Scholar and active member of the elite Les' Toque Blanches of the Philippines, where she got her culinary scholarship in Manila. A certified Philippine Master Trainer in Housekeeping by TESDA, Accredited Assessor, Trainer and NTTC holder of National Certifications under Tourism Sector. Represented Region X1 in various capability building and Regional Lead Assessors by TESDA. She is designated as the Associate Dean of the College of Business Administration, University of Southeastern Philippines, Main Campus.

As an industry practitioner, she is the consultant in one of the Beach Resorts in Region X1.

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