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Transformative Tourism: Exploring the Dynamics of Peace Promotion through Butuan City's Hospitality Sector

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ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this article is to investigate the intricate relationship between tourism and peace, aiming to either affirm or debunk this connection. The study focuses on two key variables: the proliferation of tourism-related establishments and incidents of adversity involving tourists. Notably, despite unfortunate occurrences affecting tourists in Butuan City, there has been a noteworthy surge in the establishment of tourism-related ventures. The research endeavors to shed light on whether this burgeoning tourism sector exerts a positive or negative influence on destinations like Butuan City. Utilizing secondary data sourced from various local government entities, including the Butuan City Tourism Office, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), and the Philippine National Police (PNP), the study meticulously examines trends over a span of seven years from 2010 to 2017. By scrutinizing the growth trajectories of tourism enterprises juxtaposed with the incidence rates of tourism-related mishaps, this investigation seeks to unravel the dynamic interplay between tourism development and its impact on peace and security in the locale. Through rigorous analysis and interpretation of these datasets, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the implications of tourism growth on the overall well-being and tranquility of Butuan City and similar tourist destinations.

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry stands as a beacon of socioeconomic progress, enriching the lives of millions globally through its contributions to growth, employment, poverty alleviation, and societal development (UNWTO, 2017). In the Philippines, where international tourist arrivals reached 5,360,682 in 2017, tourism emerges as a pivotal force propelling economic development and national advancement (Butuan, 2017). Collaborative efforts between organizations such as the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) and the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) underscore the vital nexus between tourism and peace, highlighting the role of travel in fostering cultural exchange and societal prosperity (WTTC, 2017). Despite the challenges posed by global peace indexes, such as the Philippines' position at 138th out of 163 countries in the IEP's Global Peace Index Survey 2017, tourism remains a bright spot in the nation's socioeconomic landscape (IEP, 2017). The Philippines' tourism revenues surged to Php 222.30 billion from July 2016 to May 2017, a testament to the industry's resilience and the government's robust response to security threats, which bolstered tourist confidence. Notably, regions like Caraga play a pivotal role in this narrative, boasting a growing number of accommodation and food service establishments, contributing significantly to the nation's tourism infrastructure (DOT, 2017).

Among Caraga's provinces, Butuan City emerges as a vibrant economic hub, tracing its roots back to the illustrious Kingdom of Butuan renowned for its

metallurgical prowess and maritime heritage (Losenara, 2015). The city's evolution into a modern cosmopolitan center reflects its economic dynamism, with thriving sectors in finance, commerce, and real estate augmenting its tourism potential. Butuan's rich cultural tapestry, epitomized by archaeological marvels and ancient artifacts, serves as a magnet for tourists, presenting ample opportunities for industry growth (Losenara, 2015).

Recognizing tourism as a catalyst for fostering empathy and transcending societal divisions, this thesis explores the intertwined dynamics of tourism development and peace in Butuan City. Drawing upon secondary data from the Butuan City tourism office and the Philippine National Police – Caraga Regional Office, this study aims to elucidate the relationship between tourism growth and peace status in the region. Through a comprehensive review of existing literature and rigorous data analysis, this research seeks to unravel the transformative potential of tourism as a force for peace, underscoring its imperative in shaping secure and harmonious societies (Castaneda & Burtner, 2010).

The subsequent sections of this thesis delve into a detailed exploration of relevant literature, methodological approaches, empirical findings, and concluding reflections, aimed at shedding light on the intricate interplay between tourism and peace in Butuan City.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism Development

The landmark adoption of the 17 Sustainable

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Development Goals (SDGs) within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015 marked a pivotal moment for inclusive global development (UNWTO, 2017). The United Nations underscored the imperative for both governmental and private sector engagement in realizing these goals, recognizing the tourism and hospitality industries as pivotal players in this endeavour (Jones, Hillier, & Comfort, 2017). With their significant economic footprint and diverse social and environmental impacts, tourism and hospitality sectors stand as potent catalysts for progress (Ibid). Indeed, tourism stands as a multifaceted tool capable of contributing directly or indirectly to all SDGs (UNWTO, 2017). This paper focuses on the pivotal roles of tourism in fostering inclusive economic growth and nurturing stable, inclusive communities, aligning with Goals 8 and 16 of the SDGs. Tourism stands as a cornerstone of global economic development, accounting for a substantial share of global employment opportunities (Ibid). By bringing together individuals from diverse backgrounds, tourism fosters multicultural harmony and interfaith acceptance, laying the groundwork for more resilient and prosperous societies. Sustainable tourism practices that prioritize local community involvement can serve as a vital source of income, bolster cultural identities, and spur entrepreneurial endeavors, thus mitigating the risk of conflict and promoting stability, particularly in post-conflict regions (Ibid).

Tourism Impacts

The impact of tourism has emerged as a central focus within academic discourse, revealing a nuanced yet intriguing paradox (Jones, Hillier, & Comfort, 2017). This paradox underscores the tension between the potential benefits of economic growth, including poverty alleviation and job creation, and the adverse effects on natural resources and traditional ways of life, particularly in less developed regions (WTTC, 2017). As both foreign and local visitors traverse tourist destinations, they inject capital into local economies, paving the way for infrastructural enhancements and the expansion of services that enhance local quality of life (Nwokorie, 2016). The revenue generated from tourism expenditures creates opportunities for existing and nascent businesses, thereby stimulating employment growth, a vital component in accommodating burgeoning populations (Ibid). Nevertheless, the impacts of tourism extend beyond economic dimensions, encompassing infrastructure, land use, environmental sustainability, and social dynamics (Hengky, 2014). These multifaceted effects underscore the importance of integrating community perspectives into tourism planning processes to mitigate potential negative consequences. While tourism engenders visible improvements in various city services and fosters community interest in sustainable practices (Afthanorhan, Awang, & Fazella, 2017), it also presents challenges. These include the displacement of traditional societies, erosion of cultural heritage, and the

proliferation of negative phenomena such as petty crime and exploitation (Hengky, 2014). Moreover, tourism can modify culture, incite conflicts over land use, and engender inappropriate tourist behaviors, underscoring the need for holistic approaches to address its complex impacts (WTTC, 2017).

Tourism and Peace

While the tourism industry often touts its role as a force for good, empirical evidence supporting this assertion remains sparse (Becken & Carmignani, 2016). Tourism, while capable of fostering unity and understanding between cultures, is also susceptible to disruption from governmental crises, security threats, economic downturns, and natural disasters, which can destabilize regions and impede tourism flows (Hengky, 2014). Peace, a multifaceted concept, encompasses notions of harmony, absence of violence, and positive intergroup relations (Galtung, 1967). Tourism intersects with peace in complex ways, as evidenced by travel advisories cautioning against visiting certain destinations due to safety concerns (Castaneda & Burtner, 2010). Despite its potential to promote cross-cultural understanding and tolerance, tourism's susceptibility to external disruptions underscores the need for comprehensive strategies to safeguard stability and mitigate conflicts within tourist destinations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

From 2010 to 2017, this comprehensive study meticulously tracked the dynamic interplay between the proliferation of tourism-related establishments (TRE) and the occurrences of crime incidents involving tourists (CIIT) within the urban landscape of Butuan City. The acquisition of TRE data was initially sourced from the city tourism office (CTO); however, due to the limited scope of this dataset, the authors conscientiously conducted supplementary desk research utilizing Google's expansive resources. This meticulous approach aimed to augment the dataset, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of the evolving TRE landscape within the city.

Conversely, data pertaining to CIIT was meticulously sourced from the Caraga Regional Office of the Philippine National Police, providing a robust foundation for analyzing the safety and security dynamics concerning tourists visiting Butuan City during the stipulated timeframe.

Augmenting primary data, secondary data was meticulously gathered from reputable sources such as the Philippine Statistics Authority, the Department of Tourism (DOT, 2017), and the United Nations World Tourism Organization's websites. This multifaceted approach not only enriched the study's dataset but also ensured a rigorous analysis by incorporating diverse perspectives and methodologies.

A thorough literature review was conducted utilizing Google Scholar and other scholarly databases to delve into existing research, theories, and empirical studies

related to tourism dynamics and crime incidents. Relevant articles and monographs were meticulously curated and analyzed to contextualize the findings within the broader academic discourse.

Quantitative data analysis was conducted using MS Excel, a robust tool for processing and analyzing complex datasets (Castro Jr & Romano, 2022). Leveraging the software's data analysis functions, the collected data underwent meticulous scrutiny, facilitating the extraction of meaningful insights and the synthesis of comprehensive descriptions of factual information and statistical trends (Romano, Castro Jr, Lozano, Sitones, & Borbon, 2022).

Through meticulous data collection, rigorous analysis, and comprehensive literature review, this study endeavors to provide a nuanced understanding of the intricate

relationship between tourism development and safety concerns in Butuan City (Carbone, 2017). By employing a multidimensional approach encompassing primary and secondary data sources, this research seeks to contribute valuable insights to academia, policymaking, and urban planning initiatives aimed at fostering sustainable tourism development while ensuring the safety and security of both residents and visitors alike.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The period from 2010 to 2017 witnessed a consistent growth in tourism-related businesses (TREs) in Butuan City. In 2010, there were 40 TREs, primarily comprising locally based enterprises. However, due to its significant margin compared to preceding years, this particular year will be excluded from the subsequent analysis.

Tourism Related Establishments

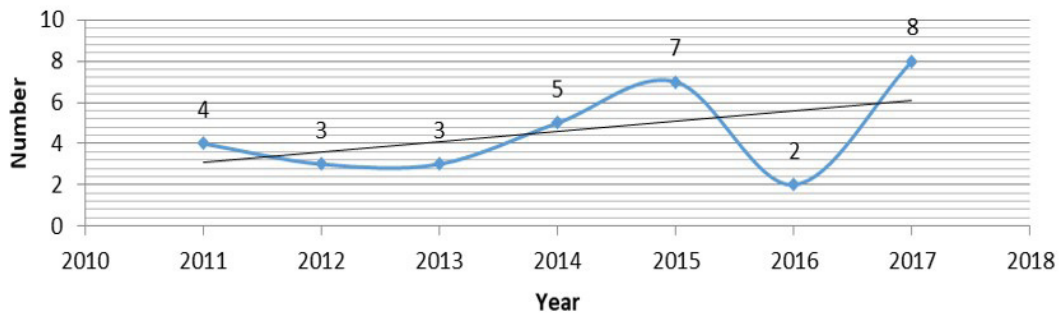


Figure 1: Tourism Related Establishments

Figure 1 depicts the trend of TREs from 2011 to 2017, showcasing the fluctuations in the numbers along with a regression line. Notably, there was an irregular drop in TREs in 2016. This coincided with a regular election year in the Philippines, involving both national and local polls, which led to a change in local government administration in Butuan City. While this political transition may only be a minor factor contributing to the decrease in TREs, it underscores the influence of political dynamics on business enterprises (Maclean, Harvey, Suddaby, & Gorman, 2017).

Crime Incidents Involving Tourists (CIIT)

Tourism is often lauded as a catalyst for fostering understanding and peace among nations, attracting investments crucial for the economic growth of destinations like Butuan City. However, alongside its positive impacts, tourism also brings about adverse effects, such as the displacement of local communities for infrastructure development, cultural clashes resulting in racism (Afthanorhan, Awang, & Fazella, 2017), and an uptick in crime and prostitution, leading to phenomena like sex tourism (Ozturk, 2015).

Table 1: Crime incidents involving tourists in Butuan City from 2010 to 2017

Tourist Type of Incident Total									
Year		Murder	Homicide		Physical Injury	Rape	Theft	Robbery	Other Crimes
2010	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
2011	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
2012	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2013	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
2014	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
2015	17	-	-	2	-	-	4	11	17
2016	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
2017	5	1		-	-	1	1	2	5
Total	30	1	-	3	-	1	5	20	30

Incidents Involving Tourists

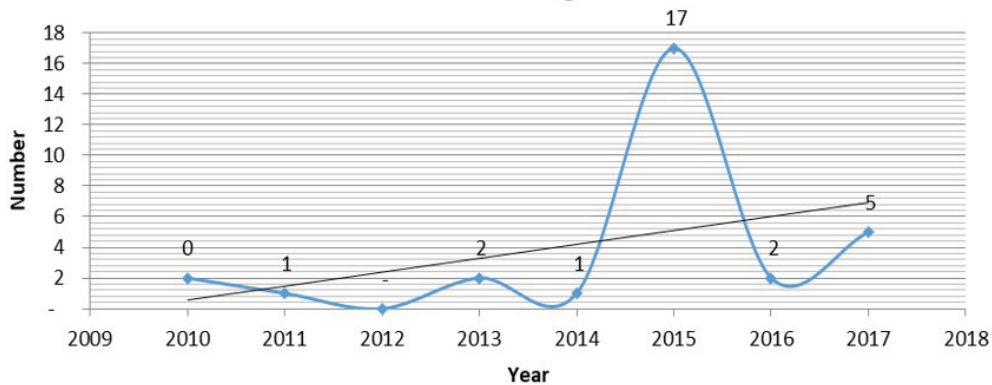


Figure 2: Incidents Involving Tourists

Table 1 outlines crime incidents involving tourists in Butuan City from 2010 to 2017, aligning with the timeframe of TRE data analysis, with 2010 omitted for consistency.

Figure 2 presents a time-series analysis of crime incidents involving tourists during the specified period, revealing a general upward trend, punctuated by irregular spikes such as the notable surge in 2015. While specific factors contributing to these fluctuations may be elusive, the rise in tourist arrivals in Caraga from 2014 onwards, reaching a million by 2017, could be a contributing factor (balita.ph), (news.mb.com.ph).

Tourism’s growth and urbanization also bring ethical and criminal challenges. The influx of affluent tourists becomes a magnet for criminals, increasing the prevalence of crimes like pickpocketing and robbery (Archer & Cooper, 1998). Moreover, tourism can exacerbate issues like child labor and prostitution, particularly in socially vulnerable demographics, as individuals may resort to

exploitation as a means of survival (Ibid).

Figure 3 examines the relationship between TREs and crime incidents involving tourists, employing both time-series analysis and correlation coefficient computation. The positive correlation coefficient value of 0.629969 suggests that as the number of TREs increases, so do crime incidents involving tourists, highlighting the nuanced interplay between tourism developments and associated criminal activities. This finding is corroborated by (Wan & Li, 2011) study in Macao, China, which observed a similar phenomenon of increased crime alongside tourism growth.

Contrarily, the WTTC Report Summary (WTTC, 2017) emphasizes tourism’s potential for fostering positive peace by promoting cultural exchange and community engagement. For instance, in Myanmar, the government’s policy on community participation in tourism reflects a recognition of local communities’ rights and benefits from the tourism sector.

Relationship Between TRE & CIIT

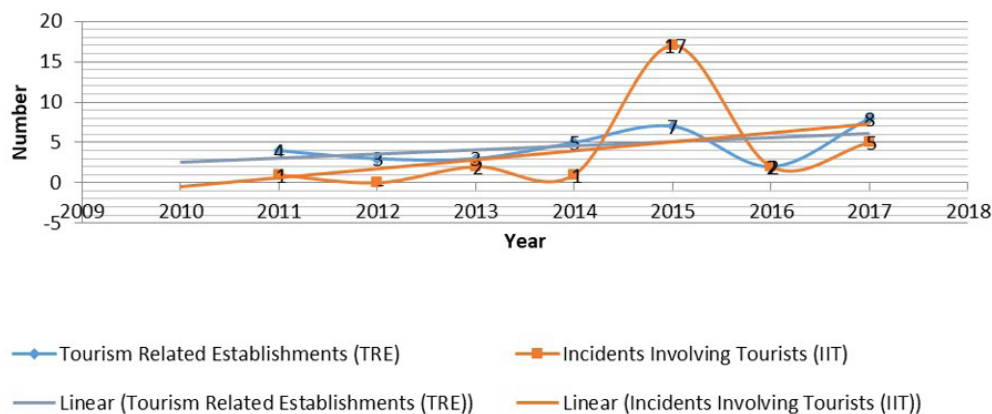


Figure 3: Relationship between TRE and CIIT

CONCLUSIONS

The burgeoning array of tourism-related establishments cropping up in Butuan City signals a promising trajectory for the local tourism industry’s development. Yet, with growth comes a corresponding surge in criminal activities

that threaten the tranquility of this burgeoning tourist destination. This phenomenon, as evidenced by literature from various countries, is manifesting in Butuan City, underscoring the complex interplay between tourism expansion and security challenges.

However, while this article sheds light on the correlation between tourism growth and crime, it is crucial to acknowledge certain overlooked factors that impose limitations on its findings. One such factor is the absence of comprehensive data on the frequency of various events such as meetings, conventions, and similar gatherings, which could exert a significant influence on the outcome of this study. Additionally, the lack of specificity regarding other unspecified incidents further compounds these limitations, leaving gaps in understanding the intricacies of the relationship between tourism development and crime.

In light of these limitations, it is imperative for local government agencies to take proactive measures. They should undertake the compilation of pertinent information pertaining to tourism developments and the prevailing peace status. This comprehensive database would serve as a valuable resource for future research endeavors akin to the present study. By systematically documenting and analyzing trends in tourism activity and corresponding crime rates, researchers can gain deeper insights into the underlying dynamics at play.

Moreover, this data-driven approach empowers policymakers and stakeholders to implement targeted interventions aimed at mitigating the adverse effects of crime on the burgeoning tourism sector. Through collaborative efforts between academia, government agencies, and industry stakeholders, Butuan City can foster a safer and more sustainable tourism environment, ensuring that its potential as a vibrant tourist destination is realized to the fullest while safeguarding the well-being of visitors and residents alike.

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