

Tourist Attraction in the CALABARZON Region, Philippines: Basis for Strategic Planning

Dr. Mark Irvin Celis, Engr. Evangeline Mendoza & Mrs. Michelle Baruc

College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management, Lyceum of the Philippines
University, Batangas City 4200, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

The study determined the prospects of developing a strategic planning framework of the tourism business in the CALABARZON region as basis for designing a development plan. The study analyzed the realities of the tourism attraction businesses in the CALABARZON Region in quantitative and qualitative terms. It used research triangulation approach through survey, interview and documentary analysis to gather the data and information needed for the study. Results revealed that tourism industry at the Southern Tagalog Region in the Philippines is stable in terms of types of tourist attractions, trends of tourist arrivals, business linkages, and services offered. The chances of the tourism attraction business operators to maintain their position in the industry is high due to their prudent use of eight marketing mix constructs such as place, product, price, promotion, programming, partnership among others. This study also found out that the problems in the operation of the tourism business are similar with those in other businesses as they all center on employees and management. Likewise, this study showed that the prospect for development of the tourism attraction business is high since people's love for travel and tours remains a part of their psyche.

Keywords: Tourism, Tourist attraction, Strategic Planning, Marketing, Business

Introduction

Tourism plays a major role in the development of a third world country like the Philippines. It serves as contributor, provider and savior of the state, especially for a country that is gifted with different provinces and regions that possess wonderful sceneries and picturesque views like Region IV. The region is renowned in the entire archipelago but it is in need for more effective promotions and marketing strategies in the international tourism market. The government should focus their attention more on improving international promotion to attract more foreign visitors because they are the great spender when it comes to the consumption of goods and services in travel and tourism industry.

The study of Beckendorff (2000) on the assessment of tourist attraction in Australia revealed that despite the recognition that attractions include an element of managements there has been little attempt to integrate managerial considerations into tourist attraction

frameworks. Limited research has been carried out to identify the managerial and organizational characteristics of tourist attractions. The tourism industry and the attraction sector specifically will be faced with an increasingly competitive marketplace requiring greater emphasis on planning for future survival. While the strategic planning literature is well advanced in terms of generic findings, there has been little research into industry specific planning practices. There has been no attempt to assess the planning practices or long-range strategies of tourist attraction businesses. It is unclear whether the planning processes developed in the traditional planning literature are widely applicable to the attraction sector or whether a less formal approach is needed.

Roberts (2006) claimed that the structure of today's tourism industry was in part an outcome of the relation between the operators and their markets. Marketing and sales activities reflected the structure of the market, which in turn affected the manner in which such activities take place. Marketing strategies must be properly employed by the tourist attraction operators to reach the market and at the same time create awareness on the existence of the business. Every tourist attraction business uses different marketing practices that will catch the attention of prospective clients. The use of varied effective marketing and sales strategies assists in achieving the success of the tourist attraction business. They have to adapt these marketing practices or strategies to capture a larger market potential. They should not just depend on arrivals because the trend may change due to some factors beyond the control of business owners depending on how the industry in the region would appraise the situation. Just like any kind of businesses, tourism also faced some uncertainties brought about by market behavior. This makes the tourism industry susceptible to the challenge of uncertainty. Like any business, tourism attraction also is no exception. This study utilizes the 4 P's of the marketing mix structure of Morrison (2002), namely: are product, price, place, and people. This four-element approach forms for many the central focus for all marketing and sales activity.

The challenge of business uncertainty can be addressed with the use of marketing mix. Kotler (2000) believes that there may be no single formula to combat the elements of uncertainty. According to him, all of these depend on prudent planning and management of the firm's marketing plan as long as it is anchored on the marketing mix model of strategies on product, price, place of distribution, and promotion. Several authors have supported the notion that attractions are the primary reason for the existence of the tourism industry. At a more holistic level, tourist attractions play an increasingly vital role in triggering opportunities for regional employment and economic growth (Steven, 2003).

Tourism attractions are essential pull factor, and destination like CALABARZON should therefore benefit from having a diversity of such resources. With this, the study sought to assess the status and prospects for future developments of tourist attraction business in CALABARZON to ensure its full tourism potentials. These are the reasons why the researcher is pursuing to conduct the study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aimed to determine the prospects of developing a strategic planning framework of the tourism business in the CALABARZON region as basis for designing a development plan. Specifically, the study determined the status of the tourist attraction business in the CALABARZON region with regard to: types of tourist attraction business, average of tourist arrivals per year, business linkages, and services offered; to determine the marketing practices of the tourist attraction establishments; to identify problems met in the management and operation of the tourist attraction business; to determine the prospects of tourism business in terms of: status of the business, tourist arrivals, marketing practices, and logistics; and to propose a strategic planning framework to enhance the prospects and sustainability of tourism attraction business in the CALABARZON region.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study uses a qualitative research that can be initially defined as a mode of research that does not place its emphasis on statistics or statistical analysis; that is, on the objective measurement and analysis of data collected (Goodson & Phillimore 2004).

To attain the qualitative nature of the study and to describe current realities in a particular situation, which is the status of tourism attraction business in CALABARZON, the researcher utilized a survey questionnaire and focused group discussion.

The researcher utilized of a researcher-made survey questionnaire instrument that generates information and data on the status of the tourism attraction business, types of tourism attraction and the number of tourist arrivals, services rendered, business linkages, the management and operations and problems encountered in the tourism attraction business in CALABARZON region, some part of the survey questionnaire, specifically the questions that pertains to the management and operation of the business was generated from the existing survey forms of the establishments. A focused group discussion were scheduled by the researcher with the managers/owners and employees to come up with a good information and data on how the tourism attraction business carries out its responsiveness and social responsibilities and its prospects for development. The focused group discussion was guided by structured questions.

The study used three groups of research participants. The first group was composed of 11 owner-managers of establishments that cater to tourism attraction business, 100 employees of the said establishments and another group composed of 100 visitors of the different firms.

With the nature of the research were the subject of the study is a tourism attraction business were employees' works by shift and the visitors come and go it will be hard and resource consuming on the part of the researcher. With this, the researcher decided to use the convenience sampling technique in selecting employee and visitor respondents from the tourism attraction business sector. The 100 employees and visitors were conveniently selected from the 11 establishments. On the other hand, the researcher also used the purposive sampling technique as it was the purpose of the study to involve only 11 tourism attraction

operators as they are the only ones at the CALABARZON region who are active in providing tourism services to visitors.

The research participants involved in the focus group discussion and in the interviews were the owners/managers of the tourism attraction business. However, these owners and managers also sent their own representatives in the focused group discussion and sometime in the interview.

In order to obtain the necessary data, the researcher uses a constructed survey questionnaire. Part I covers the details on the status of tourism attraction business in CALABARZON region. Part II focuses on the marketing practices of the tourist attraction business. Part III includes the query on the problems encountered in the management and operation of the tourism attractions. Part IV covers the structured questions on prospect for development of tourist. The researcher also prepared survey questionnaires to be answered by the guest/visitors of the tourism business that pertains to its marketing practices.

The draft of the questionnaire was submitted for both external and internal validation. To fully determine the questionnaire items' clarity, relevance and appropriateness, the researcher submitted the questionnaire for external validation by experts in research and tourism marketing.

The questionnaires were distributed personally to the attraction managers/owners, employees, and guest/visitors. They were informed about the purpose of the study and told them that all gathered information will be treated with confidentiality. The administrations of questionnaires were followed by an interview. The responses that were gathered from the focused group discussion were utilized in the study.

The responses in the survey questionnaires particularly the marketing practices and problems encountered in the tourism attraction business were scored using weighted mean. Furthermore, the other parts of the survey questionnaire were scored using frequency count and its percentage equivalent.

In the process of data gathering, the researcher first mapped out how the work will be done systematically. The researcher asked the permission of the respondents of the study. The questionnaires were distributed personally. They were informed about the purpose of the study and that all gathered information will be treated with confidentiality. The administration of questionnaires was followed by an interview. The responses gathered from the interview were utilized in the study. The researcher also asked the permission of taking some pictures that were utilized for the study. The focused group discussion was also used as one of the major data gathering tools. The researcher invited all the owners/managers of the tourism attraction business for a tourism forum held at the Lyceum of the Philippines University where they presented their business profile, marketing practices, problems encountered in the operation, corporate social responsibilities and future plans of their business. The said tourism forum was participated by the tourism students and faculty members of the said institution.

The participants were tasked to ask questions that pertain to the forum topic. The event was immediately followed by a luncheon meeting that serves as a focused group discussion.

The said event contributed a lot in the attainment of necessary data for the research study. The frequency count which was used to determine the number of responses by item that concerned with the profile, prospects for development, and social responsiveness of the tourism attraction business. Moreover, the percentage showed the magnitude of the frequency in relation to the whole or total of responses.

The researcher also computed the weighted mean by giving the different weights to choices in order to have clear and better interpretation. This was used to measure the typicality of the assessment on the marketing practices and problems encountered by the managers, employees and visitors of the tourism attraction business.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Status of Tourist Attraction Business at the CALABARZON Region

The study aimed to determine the prospects for development of the tourism attraction business at the CALABARZON region as basis for designing a development plan. Thus, the first problem is concerned with determining the status of tourism attraction business in terms of types of tourism attraction business, trends of tourist arrivals, business linkages, and services offered.

Table 1 presents the tourism attraction business of different establishments. Tourism attractions include spa, theme park, resort spa, recreational club, and zoological park and others. As shown in Table 1, none among the 11 establishments that offer tourism services offered all of the identified tourism attractions. What appears prominent in the table is that resort spa and plain spa were provided for tourists in three or 27.27 percent of the firms or establishments involved in the study. This means that spa of whatever type is rather popular in firms that offer such services in the CALABARZON Region. The rest did not seem to offer such attractions services.

Table 1
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Tourist Attraction Business

Type of Tourist Attraction Business	Percentage
Spa	27.27
Theme park	9.09
Museum	9.09
Resort spa	27.27
Recreational club	18.18
Zoological park	9.10
Total	100.00

Two or 18.18 percent of the 11 establishments also offer tourism services like recreational clubs. This recreational clubs consist of golf links, swimming pools, gyms, and all sorts of recreation types to the delight of tourists. In other words, it is not spa alone they offer but also recreations that promote sports development. This includes the *KidzWorld and Manila South Woods Golf and Country Club*.

The *KidzWorld* is a wholesome, all-in-one sports and recreational club, golf resort, country club, amusement and entertainment center, where everyone can enjoy having multiple club memberships, all for just a price of one. The *Manila South Woods Golf and Country Club* brands itself as a perfect getaway for those visitors coming from Manila. This is a perfect place for total recreational activities from golfing to different sports activities. One or 9.09 percent of the 11 establishments involved in the study offered tourism attraction in the form of the so-called theme park. The same observation was noted in another establishment that promotes museum in Cavite City, the *GBR Museum* which invites or attracts visitors to view the collection of the establishment in its desire to preserve and promote cultural heritage. The *Geronimo Berenguer De Los Reyes, Jr Museum* is devoted to a variety of Philanthropic activities addressing poverty, community development and education. A major museum endeavor has been the acquisition, preservation and exhibition of rare materials pertaining to Philippine and world history, culture and the arts. Occasionally, the museum may exhibit other objects, materials or items related to a segment of a specific industry such as that which is being shown today in two pavilions; the air transportation, from its inception in the 19th century to the present. These are depicted in the paintings, prints and scale models of aircrafts and rockets from the invention of the "flying machine" by the Wright brothers and today's advanced jets of which some are the "Concorde" and the "Space shuttle" bringing its significant payload over land and space for a multitude of applications beneficial to man. Air transportation and its multi-shaped vehicles foretells of man's quest to seek out and discover new frontiers in the universe and the ultimate desire of possibly uncovering other forms of life in space. Man's insatiable pursuit for discovery has catalyzed the impetus to explore in greater measure the vastness of the universe and what lies in store for us. This museum further embodies a mission of history with its presentation of Philippine antiquarian 19th and 20th century photographs and the most dramatic image taken of the execution of our National Hero, Dr. Jose P. Rizal at the old Bagumbayan, now called Rizal Park. Photographs of the old Manila, its environs and many of our national heroes are shown in two pavilions. Additional photographs covering the Philippine-American War and the beginning of the American period will soon be exhibited according to the manager of the museum.

Still another one offers zoological park like one in Montalban, Rizal, the *Avilon Zoo* that features rare species of animals that delight children and adult viewers. The **Avilon Montalban Zoological Park** is the largest zoological park in the Philippines to date. **Avilon** is a perfect place to know more about wildlife and nature. Guided tours and educational fieldtrips offer guests and visitors a privilege to observe and know more about the ecology and behavior of the animals, and how we can help conserve and protect the threatened and endangered species, and also on how to help save and protect our environment.

Indeed, there was a variety of attractions offered in tourist establishments in Region IV-A which have gained the patronage of tourists from the region, nearby regions and even other countries. In fact, there is a tourist spot in Lipa City, Batangas known as *The Farm* which offers a variety of attractions to the delight of foreign tourists. They have assembled a team of experts in various healing modalities, from medical doctors, massage and bodywork therapists, living food chefs, fitness consultants, colonic therapists, meditation teachers, organic gardeners, visiting experts in a variety of holistic fields, and other specialized practitioners to help the visitors on their healing journey.

The *Golden Sunset Resort* in Calatagan, Batangas which offers fine sand beach. **Golden Sunset** is a world-class beach resort just two-and-a-half-hour drive south of Metro Manila. Located in the historic town of Calatagan, Batangas, it is fast becoming the destination for vacationers and beachgoers alike. **Golden Sunset** offers a *Serendipity Spa* where one can relax and unwind, a *Butterfly Sanctuary* where your kids can learn more about butterflies and various restaurants where your whole family can wine and dine to different types of cuisines.

For spa vacation, *Nurture Spa*, *Maya Maya Spa* and *Callospa* in Tagaytay City, Nasugbu, Batangas, and Antipolo, Rizal respectively. *Nurture Spa* is a Department of Tourism accredited destination spa located in Tagaytay City offering international standard spa treatments, Filipino, Asian and continental cuisine and comfortable overnight accommodations. Nurture Spa is proudly Filipino, offering a distinctly Filipino spa menu and unique Filipino accommodations in authentic native Ifugao huts.

The *Sanctuary Spa at Maya-Maya* seeks to provide pleasurable use of leisure facilities associated with its resort & marina properties in Bo. Natipuan, Nasugbu, Batangas. Through Maya-Maya Yacht Club they seek to ensure that boat ownership is a continuing pleasure and that appropriate professional services are available at competitive rates for both domestic and visiting vessels.

The *Callospa* as a getaway place in Antipolo, it has full service spa with signature massages, body and facial treatment and steam and sauna booths, massage treatment and body detoxification treatment are easily affordable and coupled with the nice services rendered by the Callospa staff, are certainly worth the money the visitors have to pay. Entering the *Callospa* and seeing its lush green surrounding is a pleasure in itself.

When it comes to theme parks, Sta. Rosa, Laguna offers an amusement park with a good collection of fun rides and games. This includes *Enchanted Kingdom*, thousands of people head south of Manila to spend a day of fun-filled relaxation and adventurous excitement within the American-style walls of the *Enchanted Kingdom*, a 17-hectare theme park located in the outskirts of Sta. Rosa, Laguna (south of Manila). Enchanted Kingdom, a short five-minute ride from the Sta. Rosa Tollgate of South Luzon Expressway, brings the closest version of Disney-type leisure in the country. The theme park, managed and operated by Amtrust Leisure Corporation (ALC), offers thrilling rides like Grand Carousel, Flying Fiesta, Rialto, Space Shuttle,

Log Jam, Wheel of Fate, Condor, Up Up and Away, Roller Coaster, Anchors Away, Dodgem, Stone Eggs, Air Pterodactyl, Swan boats, and Bump n Splash.

The forgoing finding shows that the CALABARZON region offers an array of tourism attraction business that will best suit to the different tastes of visitors.

Business linkages

In the tourism business, linkages with hotels, travel agencies, transportation companies, schools, restaurants and other agencies appear very important if, the tourist operators would like to stay long in the business. It seems that being alone in the business without any linkage with other establishments would not mean much in terms of survival. In other words, establishing linkages with other types of business firms help tourist operators maintain their position in the market.

The foregoing views find support in the data treated in Table 3 which shows the frequency and percentage distributions of tourism operators that have established linkages with other agencies. For instance, all or 100 percent of the subject tourism establishments have linkages with travel agencies. This seems to explain the comfort of going to far away destinations like CALABARZON through the assistance of travel agencies. It is the travel agency that makes the necessary arrangement for hotel accommodations, tours, and other activities that have something to do with tourism attractions. It is the travel agency that takes care of the itineraries of tourists while in the destination.

The Department of Tourism (DOT) is one government agency that offers voluntary accreditation to various tourism businesses that comply with the set requirements and standards. DOT also monitors if the tourism attraction business follows or adheres the minimum requirements and standards issued by the agency. DOT also helps so much the accredited tourism attraction business in facilitating tourist travel and tours especially for foreigners. DOT also helps the accredited tourism attraction business in facilitating tourist travel and tours mostly for foreigners. This impression was perceived from the responses of all operators who seemed to trust DOT sub-agencies in facilitating the travel and tours of tourists especially in places that offer good attractions.

Like the travel agencies, transportation companies are other good agencies that can be a good linkage for tourism. For instance, going to Boracay may need the services of water transportation aside from the services of an air travel agency. The same may be said of establishing linkages with land transportation companies in going to Tagaytay City, to the hot springs of Los Baños in Laguna, and other far flung places that are easily accessible to land transportations. Thus, linkages with transportation companies are a must if the tourism establishments would like to offer the best services to local and foreign tourists.

Schools, especially higher education institutions, are reliable sources of linkage to tourism business houses. This seems to be the experience of seven or 63.64 percent of the

operators of firms that cater to tourism services. This holds true especially when students of the schools would go on educational tours to places that feature animals, fishes, and historical spots or places like for instance, going to zoological parks, museums, theme parks, and resort beaches. Tourism attraction business provides a perfect place for different schools to conduct outside the classroom learning, by exposing the students with the actual place. This kind of tour manifests the importance of tourism attractions as well as its educational significance.

There are few other firms that provide tourism services which offer good linkage services like hotels and restaurants. All that the operators do is to offer their services to hotels and restaurant managers who would provide travel and tour advisories in order to entice guests to go to tourist spots.

Services offered

Tourists usually experience some difficulty in getting room accommodations, transportation services, and other types of convenience services to really enjoy the travel. This is one area of hospitality management that necessitates careful choices of hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, and the like to make travel and tours enjoyable.

For instance, if a group of tourists need good food services, safe places for shopping, and good entertainment facilities and services, the leader of the group can always get the services of a tour and travel agency that could get the services of agencies. A case in point is the services of firms that can offer to tourists who desire for good food services which 11 or all of them offered. The same services are offered by all the tourism firms that offer good entertainment facilities and services, and souvenir shopping which all the respondent tourism establishments provide.

In like manner, 10 or 90.91 percent of the tourism establishments involved in the study offer sports facilities, medical treatment and services, and park tours. This is a healthy sign that tourism attractions are available in these firms as indicated in the responses of the owner-managers of the firms involved in the study. This goes to show that they were ready to respond to the needs of guests in case they ask for sports facilities, sightseeing in parks and even medical treatment in case of emergencies.

As to the need for prayer room or chapel, health and recreation, and spa and wellness services, all these services are provided by nine or 81.82 percent of the tourism establishments involved in the study. This goes to show that most of the respondent firms are ready to respond to the needs of the guests. In fact, such services are already tourist attractions as they are featured services of the firms.

Of the 11 firms involved in the study, eight or 72.73 percent of them respond to request for cottage accommodations. These firms offer this kind of service facilities to provide alternatives for the tourists, usually the cottage accommodation is cheaper than the regular accommodation offered by the tourism attraction business and it is part of their operating

strategy. The establishments want to let guests feel that they can relax with nature. This explains the presence of cottages at The Farm in San Benito, at Golden Sunset Resort and Spa in Calatagan, Batangas, Nurture Spa in Tagaytay City and other tourism attraction business in the region. It was also noted in the table that some tourism firms avail the services of function and/or banquet rooms, transportation services, sightseeing tours in museums and rides. All these services are offered in few firms that cater tourism attraction business.

It should be noted that all the services indicated in the table are tourism attractions as they offer different opportunities to make tourism an enjoyable experience. The continuous development and expansion of the services will help the establishments to be more stable and successful.

Marketing Practices

Tourism as a service type of business that is not easy to manage as it involves behavior of people with idiosyncrasies and moods. Tourists usually go into travel and tours as a means of respite from boredom from work. Thus, a travel to a place that offers a variety of attractions can be an occasion to rejuvenate worn out spirit from work.

Table 2 shows the responses of the three respondents such as the visitors, employees and managers with regards to the marketing practices in terms of place. With regards to the visitors point of view, they are attracted with the tourist attraction because of its location which obtained the highest weighted mean of 3.89, while there are certain products or features that can be found in this place and the tourism attraction is not difficult to visit got second and third rank with a weighted mean of 3.56 and 3.42 respectively.

Table 2

Assessment on the Marketing Practices of Tourism Attraction Business in terms of Place

Items	Visitors			Owners / Managers			Employees		
	WM	VI	R	WM	VI	R	WM	VI	R
1. Attracted with the tourist attraction because of its location.	3.89	A	1	3.72	A	4	3.61	A	5
2. The tourist attraction is not difficult to visit.	3.42	O	3	3.72	A	4	2.96	O	10
3. The tourist attraction is strategically located.	3.13	O	7	3.45	O	8	3.34	O	8
4. The place of establishment place is known for its beautiful sceneries and ambiance.	3.18	O	6	3.72	A	4	4.00	A	1
5. The location of the tourist attraction has never been identified with scandals like	2.91	O	10	3.45	O	8	3.13	O	9

kidnapping, shoot out, or any untoward or scandalous incidents.									
6. Insist to visit the tourist attraction because it is featured in magazines or newspaper for its goods and services.	2.94	O	9	3.54	A	6	3.89	A	2.5
7. The place of the tourist attraction is known for a particular delicacy, products, etc.	3.40	O	4	3.45	O	8	3.68	A	4
8. The location of the tourist attraction is accessible to different types of transportation.	2.98	O	8	3.82	A	2	3.54	A	6
9. Feel secure while under the care of the tourist attraction.	3.26	O	5	3.91	A	1	3.89	A	2.5
10. There are certain products or features that can be found in this place.	3.56	A	2	3.27	O	10	3.42	O	7
Composite Mean	3.27	O		3.61	A		3.55	A	2

This implies that the visitors put into consideration its locations, features, product it offers and its accessibility when visiting a particular tourism attraction. This was supported by the notion that the place or distribution contributes not just with the physical location of the unit or product, but its accessibility and convenience for the customer. The concept of the place refers to where the product will be physically available, and the process which creates awareness to customers and channeled to make a purchase.

Managers/owners agreed that their customers feel secure while under the care of the tourist attraction with a weighted mean of 3.91. The location of the tourist attraction is accessible to different types of transportation obtained 3.82 while items which got a weighted mean of 3.72 are attracted with the tourist attraction because of its location, the tourist attraction is not difficult to visit and the place of establishment place is known for its beautiful sceneries and ambiance, all are verbally interpreted as agree. This deduces that the operators of the tourism attraction business in the CALABARZON region takes into consideration the location and accessibility of their business. Moreover, they give also an emphasis on the security of the visitors of their business. It is important to understand the particular roles that the 'place' play in marketing and sales activity.

The place or distribution is concerned not just with the physical location of the unit or product, but its accessibility and convenience for the customer. The concept of the place refers

to where the product will be physically available, and the process by which customers are made aware and channeled into making a purchase.

The selection of physical location is important, although some operators utilize remoteness of location and inaccessibility to a great effect. The location of a unit is dependent on a variety of factors such as accessibility for customers, existence of other competitors, existence of other units from a group of company, costs, and sites and services available. Accessibility can also dictate the standing of a tourism attraction. A tourist attraction's accessibility can be measured in terms of space, time and affordability. Another dimension of an attraction's accessibility is how well it is identified on roadmaps and in road signage. Temporal accessibility can be seasonal or accessed on a daily basis or weekly basis (hours and days of operation).

The operator will seek to locate the premises where the aspect of physical accessibility will attract the appropriate level of business. In the employees' perceptions, the place of establishment is known for its beautiful sceneries and ambiance, insist to visit the tourist attraction because it is featured in magazines or newspaper for its goods and services, feel secure while under the care of the tourist attraction got the top three highest weighted mean values of 4.00 and 3.89. This implies that employees believe that the main reason why many visitors visit their business is because of the beautiful sceneries and ambiance as well as the security it offers. Furthermore, the employees also perceive that many visitors favor to visit their tourism attraction because it is featured in different mode of media like newspapers and magazines.

Tourism operators need to ensure their products are available and that customer can purchase and utilize them. Despite competition, the products are readily accessible. This factor should also be considered when setting certain facilities within a unit, for instance, the entrance to the hotel bar can attract or dissuade non-resident users. Having identified the best physical location of a unit or facility, the operator then has to consider other aspects of accessibility and availability.

As it is in other types of service business, location or place is a most important factor in business operation especially if it concerns tourism wherein people go to a place because of its popularity. In Region IV-A or the CALABARZON region, the most important and popular places are beaches of Calatagan, San Juan, and Mabini Batangas because of its sea which entices scuba divers to savor the beauty under water, Tagaytay City which is very popular place to go to because of its weather, fresh food, and scenic spots overlooking Taal Volcano at the center of a lake and other places that are worth visiting for.

An increasingly important concept in marketing mix is sense of place, which in a tourism context can be defined as the package of natural and cultural characteristics that distinguishes a particular tourism attraction from any other attraction in the region. The tourism attraction businesses must be in essence branding the attraction as a unique product that is offered nowhere else, thereby enhancing its competitive advantage by positioning it at the unique pole.

In tourism attraction business, services are often equated as product. As such, the services offered may be primary services like accommodation and secondary services like entertainment or other similar services and facilities.

Table 3 shows the marketing practices of different firms in terms of their product. The over-all composite mean of marketing practices in terms of product was 3.41 and verbally interpreted as often. The item that was rated agree by the visitors was the tourist attraction business offers an array of goods and services that will suit to the different tastes of its guests with a weighted mean of 3.51. While highest three items that were rated often were the business of this tourist attraction is service, the tourist attraction establishment itself is the main attraction of this business and visited this tourism attraction because it is known for quality services. This only indicates that the visitors prioritize the value for their money, because they give emphasis on the goods and services offered by the tourism attraction business.

Table 3
Assessment on the Marketing Practices of Tourist Attraction Business in terms of Product

Items	Visitors			Owners / Managers			Employees		
	WM	VI	R	WM	VI	R	WM	VI	R
1. The tourist attraction business pays attention to the quality of its goods and services	3.32	O	5.5	4.00	A	2	3.81	A	2
2. The tourist attraction business offers an array of goods and services that will suit to the different tastes of its guests.	3.51	A	1	3.45	O	7	3.32	O	5
3. The tourist attraction business offers primary and secondary services like accommodation (primary) and entertainment facilities (secondary) or other similar services and facilities.	3.19	O	7	3.91	A	4	4.00	A	1
4. The business of this tourist attraction is Service.	3.45	O	2	3.18	O	8.5	3.70	A	3
5. Goods and services that the place is known for are available in the tourist attraction business.	2.78	O	8	3.18	O	8.5	3.04	O	7

6. Visited this tourist attraction because it is known for quality services	3.35	O	4	4.00	A	2	3.43	O	4
7. The services and goods of the tourist attraction can speak well of there business.	2.56	O	9	4.00	A	2	3.19	O	6
8. The tourist attraction establishment itself is the main attraction of this business.	3.38	O	3	3.54	A	5.5	2.90	O	9
9. Visited this tourist attraction because its services are known throughout the region for the quality and price.	3.32	O	5.5	3.54	A	5.5	2.96	O	8
Composite Mean	3.21	O		3.64	A		3.37	O	
Over-all Composite Mean	3.41			Often					

The tourist attraction business offers an array of goods and services that will suit to the different tastes of its guests (3.45), the business of this tourist attraction is service (3.18) and goods and services that the place is known for are available in the tourist attraction business (3.18) were rated as often.

To identify the type of product to which particular market segments will be attracted, tourism attraction operators need to identify and forecast the amount of demand for a particular product; identify whether they can satisfy this product especially during weekend breaks or conference facilities; and identify other elements or characteristics of the demand in order to set a price level that will achieve a profit. Almost all items were rated always by the owners/managers of the different tourist attraction.

The product component encompasses the range of available goods and services, their quality, and warranty and after sales service. The concepts of quality and warranty must be approached differently when comparing a tourism attraction with a specific operator. In the case of a specific operator, the manager of the tourism attraction business exercises considerable control in ensuring that the visitors receives certain specific services in a satisfactory way, and that some kind of restitution is available if the visitors are unsatisfied . In a tourism attraction, however, there is a relatively less control that the manager can do about litter-strewn streets, unfriendly residents and the persistence of rainy weather during a tourist’s entire visit. This is because much of the tourism attraction product consists of generic, public goods over which the manager and operator has minimal control and no scope or direct obligation to provide any warranties for unsatisfactory quality. Similarly, the notion of after sales service is difficult to apply in tourism services and attractions, and is mainly restricted to determining visitors’ post-trip attitudes about their tourism attraction experience.

The tourist attraction business offers primary and secondary services like accommodation (primary) and entertainment facilities (secondary) or other similar services and facilities obtained the highest weighted mean of perfect 4.00 as rated by the employees while the tourist attraction business pays attention to the quality of its goods and services and the business of this tourist attraction is Service got 3.81 and 3.70 weighted mean values, respectively.

The tourism industry has no one product rather a range of products which are aimed at attracting different customers at different times and for different reasons. The hospitality product is both a set of primary products, that is, food, drink and accommodation, and a set of secondary products, such as convenience and quality. (Weaver & Lawton, 2006)

A product is made up of the core product – the problem-solving services or benefits obtained by consumers; the actual product or secondary service – the product's parts, styling, features, brand name, packaging and other attributes that combine to deliver the core product benefits; the augmented product – the additional consumer services and benefits built around the core and actual products.

Having identified the product or products the customer may purchase, the operator needs to look for more details at the packaging of the product, its price, place and promotion to apply the most appropriate marketing strategy and that is where the product identification works.

Marketing practices on price

Table 4 presents the assessments of the respondents with focus on pricing strategies. Marketing practices of tourism attraction business in terms of price was rated always with a weighted mean of 3.68. The three respondents rated the price as always since all composite means are 3.72, 3.78 and 3.57. This proves that the tourism attraction pricing is a critical marketing mix element of this business, since affordability constitutes an important pull factor in drawing visitors to the tourism attraction.

In terms of the visitors, almost all items were rated as always except the item that the prices of the services of the tourist attraction vary according to season which obtained the lowest value of 3.30 and verbally interpreted as often only. This infers that the visitors are aware of the important role of prices in the operation of the tourism attraction business. With regards to the lowest mean value on the marketing practices in terms of price, many visitors of tourism attraction businesses only come and visit the place in a particular time, during their leisure time. Because of this reason, many visitors cannot experience the changes in prices of the business which is dictated by the business' seasonality.

Managers are also practicing almost all items excluding low prices of the tourist attraction services and commodities are comparable with other firms in the industry since it obtained the lowest weighted mean value of 3.45. The tourist attraction business issued me an

official receipts to services rendered and goods bought, inclusive of tax, the prices of the services of the tourist attraction vary according to season and the prices of the tourist attraction services and commodities are comparable with other firms in the industry got first, second and third rank with 4.00, 3.74 and 3.55 values. The tourism attraction business must be abreast with the competitors pricing strategy, for example the different resorts in Laguna or the spas in Tagaytay must be aware of the range of prices of their competitors. The pricing considerations will determine the price band that will best attract purchases, the price to be charged to take into account the related costs and the need for return or profit.

Table 4
Assessment on the Marketing Practices of Tourist Attraction Business in terms of Price

Items	Visitors			Owners / Managers			Employees		
	WM	VI	R	WM	VI	R	WM	VI	R
1. The price of the tourist attraction services is not far from the prices and/or rates of other tourist attraction business.	3.55	A	4	4.00	A	1.5	3.09	O	5
2. Observed that the tourist attraction business offer discounts to group tourists.	3.90	A	2	3.91	A	3	3.45	O	4
3. The prices of the services of the tourist attraction vary according to season.	3.30	O	5	3.54	A	4	3.74	A	2
4. The tourist attraction business issued me an official receipts to services rendered and goods bought, inclusive of tax	4.00	A	1	4.00	A	1.5	4.00	A	1
5. The prices of the tourist attraction services and commodities are comparable with other firms in the industry.	3.85	A	3	3.45	O	5	3.55	A	3
Composite Mean	3.72	A		3.78	A		3.57	A	

Affordability is important in determining likely markets and visitation levels. All these should be assessed continually as aspects of an attraction that can be manipulated as part of an effective management strategy (Weaver & Lawton, 2006).

In analyzing the price, it would appear that the marketer is concentrating on a single, easily defined aspect, that is, the charge to the customer. It is certainly true that the industry attempts to promote and increase sales by utilizing display price banners. This approach in several hotels, restaurants and travel accommodation if price is the satisfaction element or

benefit the customer requires, then this strategy can be deemed having relevance. However, the actual price or charge to the customer is often not as important as other considerations. Highly priced products may sell more than low-priced products possessing the same characteristics.

The pricing strategy an operator decides upon can be quite varied. While the considerations listed above provide the basis for product pricing, the operator may decide to adapt a particular pricing due to other market considerations.

Identified Problems in the Management and Operation of Tourism Attraction Business

The problems met are many, but they can be clustered into two such as problems along human resource management, and problems that concern operation. Problems met in the operation of tourism attraction business are always there like in any kind of business. This holds true in service-oriented business operations where the primary concern is customer satisfaction.

With regards to the owners / managers perception, overbooking of reservation/exceeding number of guest considered as the major problems since it obtained the highest value of 3.64 and rated strongly agree. This infers that in the operation of the tourism attraction business, majority of the business respondents experience an overbooking of reservations, this problem is caused by the nature of the business were many visitors came late for the their reservation without informing the tourism attraction. In order to compensate, the many businesses accepts walk in clients and with this the problem of exceeding number of guest come into existence.

Changing weather conditions, late arrivals of guest with respect to their reservation and security and safety problems ranked second and third but rated only as agree. Due to the nature of the business that operates in seasonality and at the same time the country is situated in the tropical region of the world. Safety, security, and health services may cause problems to the operation of the tourist attraction if not properly designed. One may view police and health services as part of an area's infrastructure, but because of the remote locations of many attractions, it may be necessary to hire and train internal security and health staff. Gartner (2000) emphasizes that rural communities may not have sufficient resources or respond quickly enough to problems occurring at the attraction complex.

Awareness and adherence with government policies and regulations, weak and inadequate promotions and lack of funds were the items with which owners do not agree. Guests who made reservation but do not show up/no show of guest rank first with the employees' perception while late arrivals of guest with respect to their reservation and accessibility of the business rank second and third. There are also items that employees'

disagree that it is not a problem such as inadequate parking space, security and safety problems, unattended customer complaints, awareness and adherence with government policies and regulations and lack of funds. This implies that the responses of the two groups of respondents with regards to the problems encountered by the tourism attraction business in relation to operation are somewhat the same. Probably one of the constraints for an attraction is sufficient financing but with the results this was not considered a problem by the owners/managers. According to Morrison (2002), an attraction must have a solid source of income to answer all the expenditures incurred by the operation of the tourist attraction and must be receiving revenue directly from the visitors through entrance fee or fees from other services from the tourist attraction.

Table 5 reveals that visitors considered that unattended customer complaints and changing weather conditions are considered a problem with regards to the business operations since both rated agree with 3.43 weighted mean. The results contradict with the study of Tingchuy (2000) which explains that the reason of some guests to visit a place is the special climate condition of the place followed by topographic advantages, natural scenic attractions, accessibility and affordability. The Philippines being a tropical country has good climate and it proves as an attraction for more tourists to come and visit. Batangas province is located in Region IV-A (CALABARZON) and is very accessible to Manila. Overbooking of reservation, exceeding number of guest, environmental concerns and poor maintenance of cleanliness and sanitation/poor custodial management was also a problem. Items that the respondents do not agree are shortage of equipment and facilities, inadequate parking space, poor maintenance of attraction facilities and weak and inadequate promotions. This means that as a whole, visitors are satisfied with the operations of the different tourist attractions.

Table 5
Problems Encountered in the Operation of the Tourist Attraction Business with Regards to the Operations (Visitors)

Items	WM	VI	Rank
1. Overbooking of reservation/Exceeding number of guest	3.19	A	4
2. Poor maintenance of attraction facilities	2.20	D	11
3. Malfunctioning of equipment and facilities	2.34	D	8
4. Shortage of equipment and facilities	2.32	D	9.5
5. Poor maintenance of cleanliness and sanitation/Poor Custodial Management	2.65	A	6
6. Environmental Concerns	2.47	D	7
7. Security and safety problems	2.80	A	5
8. Inadequate parking space	2.32	D	9.5
9. Weak and inadequate promotions	1.65	D	12
10. Unattended customer complaints	3.43	A	1.5
11. Accessibility of the business	3.34	A	3

12. Changing Weather Conditions	3.43	A	1.5
Composite Mean	2.68	Agree	

Management’s problems with employees are problems on human resource management. In this regard, the tourism attraction business operators were asked to identify problems that concern their employees, furthermore the visitors also participated in assessing the problems they encountered during their stay. The responses of the two groups of respondents were treated in Table 16.

It appears that high turnover of employees in hospitality management operation is, in itself, a serious problem. This inference was deduced from the responses of firm operators whose responses are strongly agree that this problem bothered them so much. The mean value of 3.80 tends to magnify that it was not easy to prevent the employees from resigning because of most of them are pirated by their competitors in the industry. Secondly, the attraction of foreign employment for Filipino applicants with experiences in hospitality management operations is rather attractive that their previous employers could not compete with foreign recruiters due to large differences in pay. All these were gathered with the operators during the focused group discussion with them.

Table 6
Problems Encountered in the Operation of the Tourist Attraction Business with Regards to the Employees (Visitors)

Items	WM	VI	Rank
1. Poor comprehension of employees	2.72	A	2
2. Lack of cooperation among employees	1.65	D	6
3. Lack of initiatives of employees	2.91	A	1
4. Lack of skilled manpower	2.47	D	5
5. Lack of resourcefulness of employees	2.48	D	4
6. Lack of training/knowledge in hospitality technology	2.68	A	3
Composite Mean	2.49	Disagree	

According to the recent developments in the travel and tourism trade such as liberalization, competition, concentration, drop in travel fares, growth of subcontracting; and introduction of new technologies seem to reinforce the trend towards more precarious, flexible employment conditions. For many such jobs, young children are recruited because they are cheap and flexible employees. The commercial sexual exploitation of children and young women has paralleled the growth of tourism in many parts of the world. Though tourism is not the cause of sexual exploitation, it provides easy access to it.

Based from the results, visitors agree that there is a lack of initiatives among employees since it obtained the highest value of 2.91. Followed by poor comprehension of employees (2.72) and lack of training/knowledge in hospitality technology (2.68) both interpreted as agree also. Visitors do not encounter that lack of resourcefulness of employees, lack of skilled manpower and lack of cooperation among employees a problem in performing their duties because the respondents disagree with the mentioned items. This implies that visitors only find problems with the employees of the tourism attraction business with regards to the initiatives of the employees to help them, the visitors also noticed that that some of the attraction employees has a poor comprehension.

The perception of the visitors is caused by the notion that majority of the tourism attraction business hires less qualified employees for the rank and file while they see to it the hired employees in the key position of the business are highly qualified.

Prospects of Tourist Attraction Business

On the question about the expected length of time to stay in the attraction business during the focus group discussion, respondents claimed that they would stay in the business in the next 5 to 10 years. The managers / owners foresee their business positively and this was supported by the number of tourists' arrivals of the business, which was 500,000 to 1 million in a year. With a bulk of customers from the Filipino and foreign countries, the business will boost.

In fact, it is the highest figure of tourist arrivals at CALARBARZON Region considering the number of establishments that cater services to local and foreign tourists. The tourism industry continues to maintain a positive and bright outlook as DOT registered visitor arrivals during the first 10 months of the year growing by 74.25 percent to 1.84 million. Visitor receipts likewise posted double digit increase of 31.60% to \$217 million. Investment in 12 tourism projects for the first five months amounted to P222.87 million.

It was revealed that the growing traveler segments nowadays are those senior citizens and yuppies that preferred to travel and enjoy life. However, when the respondents were asked about the holding power of their business in the next 5 to 10 years, majority answered that they will be able to hold their business in the coming years.

The tourism industry in the Philippines is a growing industry, the existence of the different tourist attractions is foreseeable, and many people will travel especially those who have a disposable income.

On the issue on how the managers/owners sustain the operation of their tourist attraction business in case of capital difficulties, majority of them will seek financial institution to lend money and cut the operating cost. The eight respondents answered that they will re-organize and re-engineer the operation of their tourist attraction business. No managers/owners answered to close or sell their business. All the respondents agreed that the

holding power of the tourism attraction business will depend on the status of the tourism industry in the region. Tourism can contribute to positive developments, not just negative impacts. It has the potential to promote social development through employment creation, income redistribution and poverty alleviation.

Prospects of Tourist Attraction Business on Marketing Practices.

They claimed that the business must provide customer satisfaction, extra attention, personalized service and product innovation, for these items all received a percentage of 100. In terms of the development of their marketing strategies, all managers/owners will use innovative marketing practices to maintain their competitive advantage in the market.

The managers/owners also believed that subscribing to the idea that innovations and quality services is the key to stay long and competitive in the tourist attraction business and this was shown in the result that all the responses of the managers/owners answered yes. Furthermore, because of the changing demographics, tourism businesses like the tourism attraction will find it necessary to adjust its product/services to the changing preferences of the market.

With regards to the changes in preferences of visitors in the next five years, results reveal that travelers want to have a complete relaxation at the same time with constant activity while relaxing in a particular destination and wants to travel near their home environment than to a totally strange environment. Ten out of 11 managers/owners considered that informality on travel is a trend in traveling.

Moreover, majority of the respondents agreed with the notion that a large portion of the additional disposable income is spent on consumer goods and services, the tourism businesses like the tourism attractions will receive an important share of it. Furthermore, the respondents suggest that because of the proliferation of different tourism business, introduction of frequent guest/flyer programs will be of great help in the business to gain repeat business.

In like manner, the manager of the *The Farm* emphasizes that the improved customer relationship marketing information will be helpful in creating awareness for a tourism business like a tourism attraction.

Proposed Strategic Plan Framework

Having discussed the status of the tourism attraction business in the CALABARZON, the marketing strategies the operators utilize to maintain their position in the industry, and problems met in the operation of the business, it appears that the prospect for development of the business is **very high**, notwithstanding the problems met with employees and management operations. It is for this reason that the study proposes a strategic plan framework. Such proposed framework can be used by the regional tourism managers as model or springboard in developing the business for sustainability.

The CALABARZON has a natural competitive advantage in tourism because of the warmth of its people and its natural wonders that are yet to be fully harnessed. Tourism is also recognized as a major contributor to the generation of foreign exchange earnings, investments, and revenues, and to the growth of the CALABARZON's output. It is a catalyst for construction, manufacturing, and other economic activities, and a creator of human resource-intensive jobs.

The government will aggressively market the CALABARZON as a tourist destination and as an investment and convention site. Four tourism hubs will be further developed to promote greater accessibility to markets. The availability of tourism infrastructure and affordability and diversity of tourist products will be enhanced to further attract foreign and Filipino travelers.

Faced with the challenge of putting the CALABARZON in the growing Philippines tourism market, reforms will be implemented to meet the tourism industry's development requirements, rebuild the CALABARZON's image, strengthen its competitiveness in attracting foreign visitors, and further stimulate domestic tourism. This will be done while protecting and preserving the environment, its socio-cultural heritage, and the welfare and rights of women and children.

The proposed strategic plan framework will be presented to the Regional Tourism Council, once approved the monitoring of the implementation will be facilitated by the Regional Tourism Council in coordination with various Provincial Tourism Offices. Various reports pertinent to the tourism plan framework will be collected to ensure that the plans proposed will be realized.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The tourism industry at the CALABARZON Region is stable in terms of types of tourist attractions, trends of tourist arrivals, business linkages, and services offered. The chances of the tourism attraction business operators to maintain their position in the industry is high due to their prudent use of eight marketing mix constructs such like place, product, price, promotion, programming, partner-ship among others. The problems in the operation of the tourism business are similar with those in other businesses as they all center on employees and management. The prospect for development of the tourism attraction business is high since people's love for travel and tours will remain a part of their psyche. The proposed framework of development is so comprehensive and thorough that it assures its success on the implementers.

A focused study on the status of the tourism industry must be done in other regions to complete the information about the status of the business in nation-wide perspective. The eight marketing mix constructs may be tried out in other types of business in order to

determine their utility value toward business success. The problems met in the operation of tourism attraction business are the same as those met in other types of business. However, the tourist attraction operators may consider to come up with a thorough evaluation of its operations using a root cause analysis method. The prospects of the tourism attraction business are high. The proposed framework may be tried out on a small-scale tourism business entrepreneurship and make tourism a way of life. For future study, a replication of this study may be done in other regions of the countries. Likewise, an industry analysis may be done in a nation-wide to provide others the information and knowledge about tourism as an aspect or area of international hospitality management.

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