



# SWOT Analysis as a Strategic Tool for Local Tourism Development Planning: A Destination Review of a Municipality in the Philippines

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## Abstract

This study is a preparation phase under the Tourism Assessment Process (TAP) in the Local Government Unit (LGU) of San Jose, Philippines, which gathered data on the destination's internal and external environments using SWOT analysis. The collection of data was done through rapid rural appraisal where all concerned stakeholders were involved in the process of decision-making from analyzing problems and conditions, setting-up objectives, and identifying strategies to plan implementation. It was analyzed that San Jose's tourism advantages were revealed by the significant presence of six tourism components such as tourist attractions and activities, accommodation, transportation, institutional elements, other tourist facilities and services, and other infrastructure. The development opportunities for tourism were also identified on different levels from global, national, and regional down to local perspectives. On the downside of the analysis, several issues were determined and considered as disadvantageous that may hamper potential development if not properly addressed. These are the weaknesses of the internal environment which are mainly observed in the human and institutional incapacity for tourism product development and service provision; also, threats posed by external environments which highlighted the safety and security issues, economic recession, social conflicts, natural disasters, and unstable new normal. The novelty of this research is the incorporation of the global aspect in determining the external environments for tourism development and the integration of actions in the existing SWOT models such as strengths require utilization (S → U), weaknesses require solution (W → S), opportunities provide direction (O → D), and threats requires prevention (T → P) which are deemed all relevant towards local destination's tourism planning and development.

## Subject Areas

Business Management, General Management, Project Management and

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Strategy, Public Administration, Rural Planning, Strategic Management

## Keywords

Local Government Unit, Philippines, SWOT Analysis, Strategic Management, Tourism Development

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## 1. Introduction

Tourism development provides various economic, social, cultural, and environmental changes in the host destination, particularly in the host community's life (Stylidis *et al.*, 2014) [1]. The effort to develop and promote the tourism industry among developing countries has become one of the vital growth mechanisms of many local destinations (Thetsane, 2019) [2]. In the Philippines, Local Government Units (LGUs) under the Local Government Code of 1991 of Republic Act (RA) 7160 are mandated for tourism promotion and development, while the National Tourism Act of 2009 (RA 9593) encourages LGUs to prepare and implement a tourism development plan, enforce standards, and collect statistical data for tourism purposes.

Nowadays, local government units are taking advantage of their tourism potential in boosting economic growth and dispersing employment opportunities for their residents. However, problems with planning and development have become significant issues among local authorities due to a lack of technical expertise and other associated restraining factors for development. In the case of LGU San Jose in the province of Camarines Sur alone, one of the biggest concerns for its local tourism as identified by key officials of the municipality is the lack of expert human resources to power the development of the industry. Therefore, partnering with state universities within the service area is an alternative option to assist the LGU in formulating a local tourism development plan.

Hence, this study utilizes the SWOT analysis as a strategic tool for local tourism development planning in San Jose, Philippines, wherein authorities can specifically identify areas subject to SWOT analysis and effectively position appropriate strategies toward desired outcomes. Rastegar *et al.* (2011) [3] also state that SWOT introduces the reality of tourism by investigating its associated internal and external forces and finally identifying the superior advantages by evaluating the current performance and resources and calculation of tourism capability within a given destination area or region.

As cited by Goranczewski and Puciato (2010) [4], the application of SWOT analysis will assist the tourism authorities and concerned stakeholders to position tourism in the overall and general strategic planning. While considering that local government units are mandated by the law to initiate and lead their own respective tourism development plan, SWOT analysis can be an instrument to carry out planning, coordination, monitoring, control, and promotion activities. SWOT analysis is also helpful in terms of place marketing by the local gov-

ernments to stimulate processes related to the development and other tourism-related business endeavours (Szromnik, 2008) [5]. Ghanbari *et al.* (2012) [6] also stressed that SWOT could be a valuable tool in the travel and tourism industry for sustainable development and attracting tourists at the international level.

In evaluating tourism potential, Collins-Kreiner and Wall (2007) [7] have introduced a three-level SWOT analysis, which will begin on the national level, down to the regional, and will conclude at a selected site usually represented by the local government units in this study. The refined framework was presented in three dimensions where **Dimension 1** is composed of SWOT analysis; **Dimension 2**, the levels of research which are national, regional, and local; and **Dimension 3** covers the aspects such as social, cultural, economic, geographical, political, environmental, planning, psychological, and infrastructural. However, it was found that the global level was not covered under the second dimension of the model. Hence, this gap which the present study has incorporated the global perspectives in determining a destination's SWOT analysis, particularly on the external forces under opportunities and threats that may directly or indirectly affect the local planning towards the strategic formulation of local tourism development. Global analysis was mainly considered external opportunities, which are considered an avenue for further destination advancement. Many works of literature argue that SWOT analysis is sometimes confined within a specific site or localized within a particular geographic area where sometimes the generated information from the community residents and stakeholders is considered fragmented to provide a holistic basis to planning.

## 2. Literature and Conceptual Review

### 2.1. Local Government Unit for Tourism Development

One of the strategies for expanding socio-economic benefits for communities is to capitalize on tourism. In this aspect, the local government units play a vital role in providing the ideal development of their potentials and resources as intermediaries in channeling the national framework of the government to each locality or community in creating more beneficial outcomes (Javier & Elazigue, 2011) [8]. The Tourism Act of 2010 states that the local government plays a crucial role in the growth of its local tourism industry and the conservation of its resources. This idea is also expected in the National Tourism Act of 2009, which mandates LGU to prepare and implement a tourism development plan, enforce guidelines, standards, and accreditation, and collect tourism statistical data.

As a developing country, the national government of the Philippines realizes the need to invest in tourism that could propel and disperse the economic benefits for communities. As the Republic Act (RA) 9593, also known as the Tourism Act of 2009, recognizes tourism as an engine of socio-economic growth and cultural preservation that generates investment, employment, and foreign exchange, promoting national pride for all Filipinos. Hence, the current 2016-2022 National

Tourism Development Plan adheres to its vision towards competitiveness, sustainability, and inclusive growth.

Under RA No. 7160 of 1991, The Local Government Code (Section 17) provides LGU with a responsibility to provide basic facilities and services, including tourism development. Moreover, to ensure responsive action, the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) issued a Memorandum Circular (DILG-MC 2010-113), which encourages provinces and cities to create Local Economic and Investments Promotions Officer (LEIPO), whose function is to facilitate the preparation, coordination, and execution of the local economy and investment projects and programs including promotion of policies of the provincial or city government (Javier, 2010) [9].

In the context of rural tourism development, Mustika and Aditya (2018) [10] said that rural tourism could play an influential role in regional development and diversification of the national economy through the appropriate identification of advantages and systematic planning of resources. It is also a valuable strategy for employment and income generation towards socio-economic development in rural communities, and in order to promote rural economic growth, local governments should initiate and lead the development of the rural tourism industry (Shang *et al.*, 2020) [11].

## 2.2. SWOT Analysis as Instrument for Strategic Management of Tourism Destinations

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, also known as SWOT analysis, have been popularly used to analyze an organization's environment and attain goals through a systematic approach supporting decision-making (Wheelen & Hunter, 1995) [12]. According to Gürel and Tat (2017) [13], SWOT analysis is as old as the concept of strategic planning that emerged in the literature in the 1960's with a concept strategy being used in business management. It is employed to build an overall development strategy concerning a function being performed by a state, local government unit, or individual organizations and enterprises (Gierszewska & Romanowska, 2002) [14]. Therefore, it is not a new technique, but has been widely used to assess the status and prospects of businesses and organizations.

Today, most organizations, be it private or public, are engaged in strategic planning to understand their business condition and productivity and guide them regarding allocating resources to achieve desired goals. Strategic management is a continuous and systematic process of creating, implementing, and evaluating decisions against organizational objectives. It allows an organization to shape its future and control its destiny (David, 2003) [15].

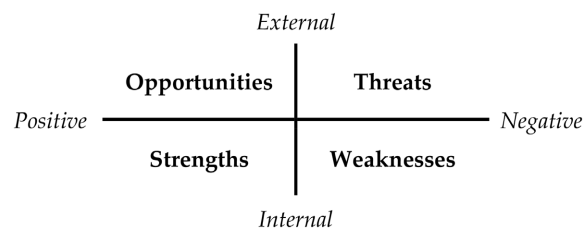
Strategic management begins with a vision that describes the desired future of an organization in the long term. This is supported by a mission that details actions to be undertaken and objectives that provide specific strategies to be executed. An objective is considered crucial as it sets the ground for the attainment of organizational goals.

The subsequent phases of the strategic management process are the internal and external analysis called SWOT analysis. The internal factors are focused on strength and weakness points which allows an organization to understand which of its resources and capabilities are likely to be sources of competitive advantage and which are less likely to be sources of such advantages (Gürel & Tat, 2017) [13]; while external factors are centred on the opportunities and threats which are offered by the competitive environment (Wehrich, 1982) [16]. According to Gierszewska and Romanowska (2002) [14], this method is wide-ranging because it concerns micro and macro environments, which lead to four categories: external positive opportunities; external negative threats; internal positive strengths; and internal negative weaknesses (see **Figure 1**).

**Strengths** are a competitive advantage. It is a characteristic that adds value, favourable, and separates the organization from others. These may include unique tourism advantages such as natural, cultural, heritage, and man-made attractions, well-established recreational facilities and infrastructure, competent human resources and professional service providers, and other distinct attributes of the destination area in the tourism destination. Conversely, **weaknesses** are the factors which regarded as something disadvantageous to operation. It is therefore characterized as negative and unfavourable. In tourism, these are the factors that hinder development that may include but not limited to poor financial standing and government support, poorly developed tourism-related infrastructure, incompetent human resources, and absence of technical experts and community participation.

**Opportunities** can be viewed as an opportunity and driving force. It is positive and favourable in characteristic. These are factors that would yield positive results. Examples of these are the positive changes in tourism legislation, accelerated pace of economic growth, improved situation on the tourism market, better transport connections, technological advancement, and increased investments. On the other hand, **threats** are a disadvantageous situation that may risk the actualization of the activity. These are something that can impede organizational efficiency and effectiveness. In tourism, these are like changes in tourist preferences, economic recession, pandemic, cross border traffic, travel restrictions, climate change and pollution, natural disasters, and other adverse unpredictable events.

Ghanbari *et al.* (2012) [6] also distinguished SWOT analysis in the tourism system, which according to from them, the strengths in tourism system refer to



**Figure 1.** Four categories of SWOT Analysis.

the considerable point and the preserver of the system, such as the existence of tourism institutes, welfare facilities, commercial banks and suitable investment in tourism economy; while weaknesses are regarded as the deficiencies existing in tourism system which can be linked undesirable performance. The lack of medical facilities, poor access to tourism information resources, and insufficient quality accommodation are among the manifestations in this category. The opportunities refer to the system's environmental situations, such as geographical location, international relations, and infra development. While threats are deficiencies and limitations of the tourism system that usually caused the decline in tourism growth, the solution is always necessary to overcome challenges in this category.

Wehrich (1982) [16] likewise distinguished a combination of internal and external factors into four strategic model variants. These are **SO (Strengths-Opportunities)**, a maxi (expansive) strategy. This concerns internal organization advantages and competitiveness, and opportunities in its environment that could improve productivity. In tourism destination, for example, the fast-growing of specialized tourism interest (e.g. ecotourism, nature-based adventure, etc.) may carry out an aggressive strategy of market penetration through providing more experiential, participatory product offerings and improving recreational facilities and services; **WO (Weaknesses-Opportunities)** situation, a mini-maxi (competitive) strategy. It is a situation where an organization should take advantage of its opportunities while eliminating weaknesses in the system. In tourism, considering the growing tourism demand, a destination with outstanding tourism physical attributes, however, accommodation operators offer poor services which do not complement to overall desired experience of the visitor, may take an opportunity by improving its services through professional seminars, trainings, and workshops or finding some strategic partners for cooperation rather than competition. **ST (Strength-Threats)** situation, a maxi-mini (conservative) strategy. In this situation, the organization has great internal potential but operates in adverse external conditions. It is where the organization needs to overcome the threats through maximizing its strengths. In tourism, for instance, the declining of international tourist arrivals brought by pandemic and travel restrictions, a specific region may offer specialized tourism products that will maximize its resources. For example, in the Philippines, it can focus on ecotourism and rural tourism, which are more attractive to urban tourists and facilitate domestic tourism. The last category is the **WT (Weaknesses-Threats)**, a mini-mini (defensive) strategy. This is regarded as something negative and unfavourable for business organizations. It is likewise considered as the worst scenario an organization or tourism destination has to overcome. For example, in tourism, the threat of pandemic and poor tourism product offerings in the destination could negatively affect its industry operation. Hence, the role of government and private sectors in this aspect is necessary to combat its organizational and environmental challenges, therefore recognizing the importance of policy in this concern.

In addition to the abovementioned arguments, Collins-Kreiner and Wall (2007) [7] have introduced a three-level SWOT analysis in evaluating tourism potential, which will begin on the national level, down to regional, and will conclude at a selected site usually represented by the local government units in this study. The refined framework was presented in three dimensions where Dimension 1 is composed of SWOT analysis; Dimension 2, the levels of research which are national, regional, and local; and Dimension 3 covers the aspects such as social, cultural, economic, geographical, political, environmental, planning, psychological, and infrastructural. However, it was found that the global level was not covered under the second dimension of the model. Likewise, it was also observed that the literatures only discuss the nature of SWOT analysis and its application to a certain organization but none of the models have suggested and incorporated actions across the four dimensions of SWOT. Therefore, the novelty of this research which looked into the global aspects and suggested actions related to problems analyzed using SWOT analysis method.

### 2.3. Study Objective

This study is composed of Phase 1 (preparation), destination review under the Tourism Assessment Process (TAP) in the local government unit of San Jose, Camarines Sur, Philippines. It is generally designed to produce initial recommendations to progress further to Phase 2 (assessment) towards developing the local tourism development plan.

Specifically, it gathered data on the destination's external and internal environments (physical, biodiversity, social context, economic climate, existing tourism industry) using SWOT analysis model.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Research Design

The study employed the SWOT Analysis method in the earlier discussed literatures. It is a planning framework in which communities are the primary respondents and informants. In this way, the involved community can freely articulate their socio-economic priorities, interest in tourism undertakings and express their opinions and concerns towards tourism development. As a research methodology for a comprehensive assessment for development, the SWOT model is an effective tool in establishing a realistic examination of a destination's internal and external environments (Goranczewski & Puciato, 2010 [4]; Miandehi & Masrouri, 2013 [17]); and SWOT analysis have been applied for so many years since 1990s to the field of tourism planning, strategic analysis and evaluation, and formulations of tourism development plans and goals (Yan & Wang, 2021) [18]. Moreover, Collins-Kreiner and Wall (2007) [7] stated that SWOT analysis integrates existing data with primary data obtained in the actual setting, a facilitating and effective way to identify future development directions. Thus, Gutierrez *et al.* (2005) [19] recommended that SWOT analysis be conducted first before

proceeding with assessments.

### 3.2. Data Collection Procedure

The collection of data was done through rapid rural appraisal. It is a starting point for understanding the local situation from the multidisciplinary team, where data is gathered and discussed through workshops, focused group discussions, direct observations, and interviews usually conducted at least four days but not more than several weeks (Beebe, 1995) [20]. It is a collaborative approach to research that involves all concerned stakeholders in decision-making, from analyzing problems and conditions, setting up objectives, identifying strategies, and planning implementation.

Data were likewise gathered through primary and secondary data collections. In the primary collection, data were obtained from the annual exploratory conferences and focused group discussions conducted by the Municipal Tourism Office, Local Government Unit of San Jose to local community (private and public) tourism stakeholders. Likewise, research information was also produced during field observation and direct interviews with key informants. Moreover, secondary data were collected through related literatures provided by the local tourism office and concerned tourism-related organizations and private entities within the site, such as local tourism annual reports, tourism-related statistics, and the existing Partido tourism master plan. Furthermore, to provide broader information and discussion of findings, data were also established due to careful review and analysis of related scientific literatures and present studies.

### 3.3. Study Setting

The study was conducted in the fourth-class municipality of San Jose, Camarines Sur, Philippines. It is situated in the southern part of the province with coordinates of 13°42' north and 123°31' east and is approximately 520 kilometres south of the country's capital, Manila City. It also has a distance of about 55 kilometres from Naga City, where the Bicol Central Station and the province's major domestic airport are located.

San Jose is bounded by three other municipalities and one water body; North by the municipality of Lagonoy, west by the municipality of Goa, south by the municipality of Tigaon, and east by Lagonoy Gulf. It has a land area of approximately 43.07 square kilometres and comprises 29 barangays, with 7 of which are considered coastal.

Being considered a coastal municipality, San Jose has an 11.30-kilometre shoreline length along Lagonoy Gulf. The fine beach sands in this area are used for harbours and recreational purposes. Furthermore, various marine life and species are abundant in the municipal waters, providing food and livelihood to residents. Barangay Calalahan is rich in aquatic resources such as sailfish, blue marlin, and anchovy. Being the tip of the municipality's shoreline, Barangay Sabang is frequented by tourists and travellers bound to Caramoan Peninsula. On



the other hand, Barangay Adiangao, being the only coastal barangay separated from mainland San Jose, boasts several falls and caves.

## 4. Findings

The presentation of results was derived from the SWOT analysis models discussed in the earlier literature review. In addition, the determination of SWOT (internal and external) in the given destination were analyzed under the following aspects: social, cultural, economic, geographic, political, environmental, planning, psychology, and infrastructure (Collins-Kreiner & Wall, 2007) [7] within its concerning levels (see **Table 1**). It employed the SWOT Analysis method in the earlier discussed literatures. It is a planning framework in which communities are the primary respondents and informants. In this way, the involved community can freely articulate their socio-economic priorities, interest in tourism undertakings.

### 4.1. Opportunities

In the context of external environments, the tourism opportunities were seen from various levels such as global, national, regional and local. From the *global perspective*, development and advancement prospects are linked with automation and digitalization, emphasizing business and leisure travel, sustainability and sustainable-oriented segments, growing interest in specialized tourism, and de-escalation phases towards “new normal”.

**Automation and digitalization** are transforming and reshaping tourism, enabling consumers to travel within their means and unprecedented number, providing tourism businesses immediate access to global markets. Its significant impact on the tourism and travel sector in transforming the process of communicating, marketing, and an opportunity to innovate the delivery of tourism products and services is emerging. According to OECD (2010) [21], tourism businesses that do not invest in digitalization will struggle to attract a new market, as the industry has led to a rise of online bookings (Nyorani, 2020) [22], virtual and augmented reality tourism trends, robots and chatbots, artificial intelligence, and other technology recognition which drives to a more significant industry competition as Generation Y or Millennials is foreseen to dominate the travel industry by 2040 (OECD, 2010) [21]. Hence, it is a wide avenue for tourism businesses to create smart tourism destinations and manage tourism more advance.

Another opportunity is the **increasing emphasis on business and leisure travel**; this business-leisure trip is rising since clients are now shifting to schedule their vacation within the same period of a job-related trip. This is called Bleisure Travel, combining leisure in their profession (Lichy & McLeay, 2018) [23]. In addition, many hotels are now offering all-inclusive facilities for conferences and conventions; even more, destinations are now promoting MICE business as other means of attracting business travellers. With this trend, managers

**Table 1.** Integrated destination review and SWOT analysis.

Factor	Characteristics	Required Action
Opportunities (External Factor, Positive Attribute)	<p><i>Global</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Automation and digitalization</li> <li>Increasing emphasis on business and leisure travel</li> <li>Sustainability and sustainable-oriented segments (e.g. rural, nature, and health)</li> <li>Growing interest in specialized tourism such as wellness and experience tourism, solo and transformative travel</li> <li>De-escalation phases towards the “new normal”</li> </ul> <p><i>National</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rising recreation and gaming industry</li> <li>Rising of medical tourism and ecotourism</li> <li>Increasing domestic travel</li> <li>Increasing air route and hotel group investment</li> <li>Innovating destination’s marketing and branding</li> <li>Growing MICE events</li> <li>Funding support for tourism infra and other tourism-related development</li> </ul> <p><i>Regional and Local</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing agritourism products and destinations, and nature-based tourism</li> <li>Increasing pilgrimage tourism</li> <li>Rising of local travel</li> <li>Continuing regional tourism development areas</li> <li>Conservation of natural and historical sites</li> <li>Increasing SMEs and regional employment</li> <li>Growing recognition and viability of local products such as handicrafts and delicacies</li> <li>Presence of free trade zone within the region</li> <li>Established networks of tourism associations and organizations</li> </ul>	Direction
Threats (External Factor, Negative Attribute)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safety and security issues (e.g. pandemic and terrorism)</li> <li>Globalization and changing markets</li> <li>Economy-wide impact tourism</li> <li>Climate change and sustainability</li> <li>Human resources’ productivity and competitiveness</li> <li>Economic environment (e.g. world recession, rising unemployment and jobs at risk, closure and bankruptcy of SMEs, etc.)</li> <li>Social environment (e.g. crimes, pick-pockets, loss or degradation of local/indigenous values)</li> <li>Extent of lockdowns and travel restrictions</li> <li>Unstable “new normal”</li> <li>Disasters</li> <li>Air, water, land, light and noise pollutions</li> <li>Overtourism</li> </ul>	Prevention
Strengths (Internal Factor, Positive Attribute)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presence of natural attractions (cave, waterfall, beach, mangrove farm, agrifarm)</li> <li>Presence of cultural and religious attractions/activities (festivals, military and civic parades, passion play, fluvial procession)</li> <li>Presence of historic and heritage attractions (churches, ancestral houses, ancient ruins, old structures, monuments)</li> <li>Presence of primary tourism support facilities and services (accommodation: hotels, resorts, home stays, tourist inns; food and beverage service: restaurants, cafeterias; transportation: ground terminals, seaports; recreational/commercial: eco-park, beach and inland resorts, public sports complex, souvenirs and shops, banks, public markets)</li> <li>Presence of tourism support institutions (local government and tourism office, medical service facilities, law enforcement agency, academic institutions)</li> <li>Accessibility of road networks to major destinations and gateways</li> <li>Reliable and stable mobile and internet connectivity</li> <li>Hospitable community residents and front-line service providers</li> </ul>	Utilization

**Continued**

Weaknesses (Internal Factor, Negative Attribute)	Solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-accreditation of tourism-related establishments such as hotels and resorts</li> <li>• Unestablished local tourism/hospitality organizations and/or collaborations</li> <li>• Lack of skilled tourism personnel</li> <li>• Coterminous appointment of office head for local tourism</li> <li>• Lack of comprehensive tourism development plan</li> <li>• Lack of trained and experienced workforce for tourism services</li> <li>• Lack of general knowledge on developing tourism product and community support</li> <li>• Inadequate funding for conservation of natural and heritage resources</li> <li>• Shorter length of stay due to inadequate management of tourist spots and hotels</li> <li>• Tourism marketing and supply chain is not yet developed</li> <li>• Lack of Private-Public Partnership (PPP) towards local tourism development</li> <li>• Absence of regular monitoring of tourism statistics (tourist arrivals, per capita expenditure)</li> <li>• Absence of tourism information centers</li> <li>• Lack of commercial establishments like shopping and convention centers</li> </ul>	

should understand this traveller's motivations to adapt recreational innovations within the professional market. Bleisure can be a lucrative and sustainable activity if understood and managed properly (Hovhannisyan & Keller, 2015) [24].

**Sustainability and sustainable-oriented** is also emerging opportunity in the tourism industry. More attention is now given to the sustainability of tourism destinations which call for responsible travel among tourists and sustainable tourism development for businesses and developers. Laaroussi, Rjoub, and Wong (2020) [25] cited those pro-environmental concerns and the intention of the tourist towards green tourism have significantly impacted environmentally responsible tourism. The APEC (2014) [26] also argued that sustainable tourism is making all types of tourism sustainable. It should be accompanied by guidelines and management practices applicable to balance the dimensions of sustainability (environmental, social, economic) and a continuous process that requires monitoring of impacts and introducing appropriate actions. One of these practices is the assessment of tourism sustainability and carrying capacity of a given destination which may include preventive actions, such as implementing a tourist limit during peak season, enforcing solid waste management, improving visitor management, and institutionalizing policies, and other related measures to ensure sustainable management of tourism resources (De Luna, 2021) [27]. Achieving sustainability in one's tourism destination may provide more beneficial effects within the industry and community in which it operates.

The **growing interest in specialized tourism** such as wellness, nature-based and experience tourism and solo and transformative travel also poses a big opportunity in the tourism industry. With the stresses caused by urban society, living a healthy lifestyle is becoming more important and concern of every individual. Therefore, tourists from the urban society tend to travel to more remote areas to find escape and solitude, experience the rural way of living, and actively participate to activities offered in the natural setting (Rebuya, 2020 [28]; Wolf, Croft, & Green, 2019 [29]). This type of traveller is commonly categorized as allocentric in personality (Plog, 1995) [30], seeking more adventure and challeng-

ing activities found in exotic destinations. In fact, according to Wachyuni and Kusumaningrum (2020) [31] the shifting trends in tourists' travel plans after COVID-19 pandemic is primarily to natural destinations; and the desires for eco-adventure tour, as well as the quality of service and facilities offered by the destination are considered main factors that influence the visitors to set out on journey (Lasarte, 2020) [32]. Hence, this kind is becoming more popular in tourism.

Although, travel and tourism at present is among the most affected sectors by the COVID-19 pandemic which resulted to sudden decline of international visitors and economic crisis across the world (UNWTO, 2020) [33], **de-escalation phases towards "new normal"** is still an opportunity for the industry as tourists tend to travel more domestic and local, therefore, an opportunity for the local destinations to increase their profit and innovation of tourism products. It is a good time of reinventing its resources and services to meet the present demands of the "new normal tourist".

On the *national level*, industry opportunities are regarded to rising recreation and gaming industry; rising medical and ecotourism; increasing domestic travel; increasing air route and hotel group investment; innovating destination's marketing and branding; growing MICE events; and funding support for tourism infra and other tourism-related development.

The **rising of recreation and gaming industry** in the Philippines is becoming more developed in spite the growing supply and competition across the neighbouring regions (Shead, 2017) [34]. The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) said that the casino industry will continue to grow over years based from its previous growth rates. The establishment of big hotels and resorts alliances in the country are amongst the manifestations of the growing sector.

The **rising of medical or wellness tourism, agri/farm, and ecotourism** in the country also calls a big opportunity for rural tourism development. The International Trade Center (2014) [35] stressed that developing countries, like the Philippines, have a clear competitive advantage to wellness tourism. As a matter of fact, in 2015, the country ranked eight from the top medical tourism destination globally according from International Healthcare Research Centre and the Medical Tourism Association (MTA). In support to this advantage, the Department of Tourism (DoT), Department of Health (DoH), Department of Trade and Industry-Board of Investments (DTI-BoIs) has delivered several joint programmes to promote the industry in domestic and international levels. On the other hand, ecotourism is also one of the major economic drivers for national tourism industry and is continuously rising despite pandemic. Based from the discussions of experts in the 2020 Ecotourism Philippines Webinar, ecotourism is poised to dominate the Philippines' travel industry transition to the "new normal" (Ocampo, 2020) [36]. These kinds of tourism will support on the identified global opportunities for sustainability and specialized tourism, and the shifting of market trends from international to domestic, considering that environmentally responsible travel is a now a growing industry that provides benefi-

cial effects to local economy and conservation of natural environments (Yu, 2020) [37]. Agritourism, also plays a significant opportunity as the country considered this sector as the fast-growing segment and has recently joined the ranks of the world's top eight agritourism destinations (Asia Research, 2013) [38]. Brščić (2006) [39] cited that the development of agritourism services changes the image of the rural areas and alleviate the standard of living among farmer and the family. It also provides a multiplier effect within destinations through commerce, food services, traditional handicrafts, and other related tourism services (Ciolac *et al.*, 2019) [40]; and urges the rural residents' initiative and encourages them to be more creative (Phillip *et al.*, 2010 [41]; Gil Arroyo *et al.*, 2013 [42]). Today, an opportunity for agritourism development be offered by various innovations (Sundbo *et al.*, 2007) [43] depending on the destination management and local supports.

Due to issues in safety and security, **increasing domestic travel** is more likely to give a huge impact to national and local tourism industries boosting local economies brought by travel restrictions and safety protocols. With the present COVID-19 pandemic, experts consider travel restrictions are the main barrier to international tourism (UNWTO, 2020) [33], however seen as opportunity for domestic tourism.

An **increasing air route and hotel group investments** is also predicted as national opportunity. One of the main focuses of the current National Tourism Development Plan (NTDP) is the increasing transport infrastructure, and international and domestic air traffic. With this, interconnectivity of destinations will be more accessible and efficient for tourist to reach destinations. On the hospitality side, hotels segment is currently undergoing expansion. In Metro Manila alone, for example, there were 2700 new hotel rooms were finished in 2018 and an additional of 1800 rooms are expected to be completed between years 2019-2021 (Oxford Business Group, 2020) [44].

With the global trend on digitalization and automation, **innovating destination's marketing and branding** is another opportunity for destinations and business stakeholders in the tourism industry. Gone are the days that paper advertisement and other traditional marketing strategies are effective enough to attract travellers. Now, at present, the relationship between travel and technology is closer than ever. The emergence of social media channels (consumer control) has already overtaken the traditional media channels (institutional control) through smart tourism, where traveller can customize his /her own travel plan. A consumer can now personally tailor-made his/her itinerary through available social media platforms and other convenient online means. Pai *et al.* (2020) [45] said that accessibility is the most important factor in smart tourism. The technology experience has shown to have a significant relationship with travel experience satisfaction and revisit intention. It is therefore necessary that local destinations should prioritize a technology-based marketing and product branding for a wider market reach and economic opportunities. In the Philippine tourism industry, marketing innovation has already been in placed to strengthen both

domestic and international market with highlights on sustainable tourism. However, it should always be in mind, that marketing by any means, is vital as it determines the success and existence of businesses within the industry.

The growing of **Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions (MICEs)** event sector in the tourism industry is also projected to impact tourism industry since business travel is an important sector of tourism. Business travel includes MICE which increases the attractiveness of a tourism destination and provided economic multiplier effects to the local destination by extended stay of visitors (Trišić & Arsenov-Bojović, 2018) [46]. Swarbrooke and Horner (2001) [47] have illustrated the impact created by MICE on destinations. These are: the tendency to visit off-peak season; relatively high per head per day expenditure; help justify fund infra developments that will give benefit to host community; ensure viability of common leisure facilities; and bring indirect tourism opportunities for SMEs and freelancers. On the other hand, Disimulacion (2021) [48] revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic opens a unique opportunity to innovate and transform MICE tourism where Philippines can capital on its human resources, authentic tourism products, and strong partnership.

Tourism industry's additional opportunity is the **funding support for tourism infra and other tourism, related development**. In the country, tourism development is joint venture between the public and private sectors. The public sector is primarily concerned with the implementation of tourism policies, guidelines, accreditation and standardization, as well as promotion of the tourism industry for domestic and international market. Whilst, the private sector which are mainly composed of accommodation, transportation, hospitality, and other related establishments are expected on the delivery and innovation of tourism products and services to the travelling public. On the government side, the Tourism Act of 2009 emphasizes that tourism development is a shared responsibility of both national and local governments. Thus, the Departments of Tourism and Interior and Local Government, along with Local Government Units shall integrate and coordinate local and national development plans for tourism development. The role of Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) and Tourism Infrastructure and Economic Zone Authority (TIEZA) is also vital that they are mandated to promote and assist LGUs which successfully adopt and implement their tourism development plans (Department of Tourism *et al.*, 2017) [49].

Along with **regional and local levels**, advantage opportunities are projected to increasing agritourism products and destinations, and nature-based tourism; growing pilgrimage tourism; rising of local travel; continuing regional tourism development areas; conservation of natural and historical sites; increasing SME's and regional employment; growing recognition and viability of locally produced products; presence of free trade zone within the region; and established networks of tourism associations and organizations.

Bicol region also capitalizes for the **increasing agritourism destinations and nature-based tourism**. The Department of Tourism—Region V, said that to re-

cover the multi-million loss from local tourism industry brought by COVID-19 pandemic, promotion of agritourism has been intensified. Currently, the region has 16 well established farm sites which highlight agricultural products, research development, farm exhibits, farmers' training, and farm tours (Serrano, 2020) [50]. Agritourism is amongst the top priority areas for tourism in the region as part of the ten-point socio-economic agenda of the present Philippine administration, to promote rural and value chain development towards increasing agricultural and rural enterprise productivity and rural tourism. The opportunities in developing agritourism could help the agriculture sector in alleviating income and economic viability of small farmers and rural communities. Relatively, Lago (2017) [51] cited that promoting agritourism requires a strong linkage between the tourism and agriculture sectors. Linking tourism to agriculture may strengthen the potential to alleviate poverty by matching in-demand labor-intensive products and services with the capacities of the marginalized communities. It will give more resilient local economy through local produce, employment generation, transfer of technology, and fostering other socio-economic opportunities along with development (International Trade Center, 2014) [35]. Thus, various studies have reiterated that agritourism plays a significant role that positively impacts cultural, social, and economic growth of the local farmers, tourism, and community (Samonte, 2011 [52]; Williams *et al.*, 2001 [53]; Taleska, 2015 [54]; Howell, 2004 [55]). Similarly, ecotourism also opened a wide opportunity as one of the regional priorities for tourism. The presence of protected areas and natural parks, as well as, diverse biodiversity and natural resources in the region makes more significant in developing nature-based activities. The natural and cultural heritage assets of the region support an extensive range of tourism activities including: beach and island resort experiences, cultural participation, nature-based adventures, and others. In the Philippines, in general, is maximizing the abundance of natural resources through ecotourism in boosting local economy (Goldsmith, 2018) [56].

As the Philippines proudly boasts to be the only Christian nation in Asia, where more than 86 percent of the population is Roman Catholic (Miller, 1981) [57], **increasing pilgrimage tourism** is another opportunity to boost local travel industry. In 2015, about 93.6 percent or 5,425,409 persons of the total population in Bicol region reported Roman Catholic in religious affiliation (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2015) [58]. As cited by Rebuya *et al.* (2020) [59], pilgrimage although considered as an ancient form of travel still continue to dominate the region's tourism industry with the presence of numerous religious sites and activities. Bicol region has been leading of pilgrim destinations due to its rich religious beliefs and traditions. It is the home of Ina (mother) popularly known as Our Lady of Virgin Peñafrancia where influx of local and domestic visitors and even international tourists are coming together to celebrate its festivity in the event of Peñafrancia festival every third week of September.

The **rising of local travel and continuing regional tourism development**

**areas** also provides greater economic opportunities in local tourism destinations. Recently, the Pacific Asia Travel Association has reported that consumer behaviours in the region have shifted becoming more domestic and local. The sudden shift was due to health and safety precautions which are now a significant factor influencing consumer's travel choice and decision. As reported by the World Economic Forum (2020) [60], there were 72% of travellers in the region have responded that they are more conscious of destination's culture of social responsibility towards preventing the spread of virus, and 73% preferred isolated or not crowded places when travelling. COVID-19 pandemic has been a serious disadvantage affecting international travel and tourism industry, and now, experts are encouraging travellers to more domestic and local consumption which is likewise seen to improve local economy and revive SME's operations. In the case of Bicol, the aggressive tourism promotion has been effective in increasing visitor arrival to 5.4 M in 2016 compared to 4.5 M in 2015. Further, for more efficient implementation of the National (Philippine) Tourism Development Plan (NTDP), the region's Tourism Development Areas (TDAs) were divided into two, namely ALMASOR (consisting of Albay, Masbate, and Sorsogon provinces) and Triple C (provinces composed of Camarines Sur, Catanduanes, and Camarines Norte). These are the regional tourism circuit offering a unique tourism products and services based on geographic destinations and cultural attributes (Supetran, 2018) [61].

With a call for sustainable tourism development, **conservation of natural and historical resources** is amongst the top priorities under the NTDP of the Philippines where regional and local governments are encouraged to implement and lead sustainable development among tourism destinations and enterprises while taking advantage to its natural and cultural assets. Robinson and Picard (2006) [62], the negative impact of tourism is inevitable. However, if properly managed, tourism can have positive lasting effects to cultural and natural heritage on creativity and cultural diversity, and on the environment and balance of societies. Raising awareness, educating and training the staff concerned, is essential in involving communities in the process of conserving and enhancing their heritage. Tourism and conservation should live to be improved and reduced poverty in every community.

Regional and local opportunities are also expected on **increasing SMEs and regional employment, growing recognition and viability of local products such as handicrafts and delicacies, and presence of free trade zone within the region**. In developing countries like the Philippines, tourism is one of the major industries that promotes Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) and offer fast dispersion of economic opportunities across regions and localities. Tourism is a part of the economic system and plays a significant role in the national and regional economy through encouraging other economic activities (Trebicka, 2016) [63]. Tourist spending gives multiplier effects to host destination's economy through direct revenues for tourism businesses, indirect benefits to purchase of necessary goods and other commodities, and the direct and indirect beneficiaries



of tourist spending creates induced multiplier effect to host destination (Khan *et al.*, 1995) [64]. In other words, with existence of tourism in single destination business opportunities is feasible. When tourist arrives at the destination it already provides direct expenditures to primary sectors of the industry such as transportation, accommodation, food and beverage services, travel trade, entertainment, etc., then its multiplier effects take down to the smallest sectors of the industry usually dominated by SMEs. Thus, agencies concerned should give more attention on this aspect as one of the opportunities towards economic and poverty alleviation among rural communities. Gumba (2020) [65] suggested that local government units have to intervene aggressively to ensure that small entrepreneurs and locals will benefit from the tourism industry. A comprehensive destination tourism development plan and sound policy actions are crucial to attain inclusive growth.

The presence of **established networks of tourism associations and organizations** in the region is also an opportunity for local tourism development. According to Glen and Mearn (2018) [66], tourism association provides shared marketing services and act as a link between governments and industry towards sharing of important information with tourism businesses and other industry concerns, therefore, recognizing its vital role in supporting a sustainable tourism development. In Bicol region, there are number of existing established tourism and hospitality related organizations that are under the umbrella of the Department of Tourism which provides assistance and consultancy to tourism related projects and programs, LGUs only need to tap these instrumentalities to help and assist them with their local tourism development.

## 4.2. Threats

Tourism in general, its competitiveness is never saved from challenges posed by the industry's external environments. These are considered threats which are detrimental for the physical, social, economic, and cultural environments of the destination, as well as, for both public and private businesses and institutions; and if not properly handled, it may result to serious damage and deterioration of its very own resources. In this study, several challenges were identified from the respondents and as a result of careful analysis and review of findings from the current research literatures within the context of tourism development. These are: safety and security issues (e.g. pandemic and terrorism); globalization and changing markets; economy-wide impact tourism; climate change and sustainability; human resources' productivity and competitiveness; economic environment (e.g. world recession, rising unemployment and jobs at risk, closure and bankruptcy of SMEs, etc.); social environment (e.g. crimes, pick-pockets, loss or degradation of local/indigenous values; extent of lockdowns and travel restrictions; unstable "new normal"; natural disasters; air, water, land, light and noise pollutions; and overtourism.

At present time, the world is facing a serious problem to global health, social and economic emergency brought by COVID-19 pandemic which intensely af-

fect the travel and tourism industry. As reported by the UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, international tourism arrivals fell by 72 percent in January to October 2020 due to current pandemic, and Asia and Pacific regions alone have experienced in the same period a decreased of 82 percent in arrivals (UNWTO, 2020) [33]. With this scenario, **safety and security issues** is one of the major threats of the industry which significantly contributed to sudden decline of domestic and international tourism. As cited by Kóvári and Zimányi (2011) [67], safety and security are indispensable condition for travel and tourism industry. It has become a complex multidimensional notion with a wide range of components belonging to political security, public safety, health and sanitation, personal data privacy, tourist and consumer legal protection, disaster protection and environmental security, quality assurance of services, and other related associated factors. The safety and security of travellers is critical for the growth of global tourism and security has become a key for traveller's choice (OECD, 2010) [21].

**Globalization and changing markets** also pose a big threat to travel and tourism industry most particularly to local destinations. The concept of globalization occurs in the process by which economic markets, information and communication technologies, and product consumption become borderless over time. As cited by Trunina *et al.* (2020) [68], globalization are manifested through change of technologies, modernization of transport infrastructure, internationalization of business activities, and international tourism regulations. Relatively, Čerović *et al.* (2015) [69], also argued that global changes are through neutralization of practically every barrier, resulting to liberalization of international trade, wide range of competition, free movement of capital workforce and investments. Tourism as an increasing industry greatly influences globalization, especially mass tourism which can be observed in all aspects of global changes. The changing behaviour of international market demands for a competitive and more advanced marketing as well as product offerings affecting mostly local industry sectors. Indeed, globalization is the new economic and social reality within which tourism industry has to operate (OECD, 2010) [21]. Therefore, globalization processes deserve a special attention and the right adoption of strategies.

Even though tourism industry is regarded as a major economic driver, **its economy-wide impact tourism** (OECD, 2010) [21] is also becoming a big challenge for policy makers within destinations. The high dependence in tourism activities of a certain destination is sometimes resulting to social issues that affect the host and visitor relationship. These issues can be linked to unjustifiable leakage, loss of potential economic benefits, and economic and employment distortion, which likewise resulted to negative social effects in destination area such as crime, health, congestion, land and other prices, and urban amenities. Although developing countries is using tourism for economic advantage which is usually held to balance economic benefits, negative economic impact should also not be

ignored (Kumar *et al.*, 2015) [70]. Therefore, governments are recognizing the need for policy and planning decisions to extract maximum economic and social benefits from the tourism industry while minimizing socio-economic issues attached to it.

The nonstop issue on **climate change and sustainability** is still threatening the tourism industry in the global scene. Climate change and global warming posed an intense implication for travel and tourism. According to Scott (2011) [71], tourism is currently among the economic sectors considered vulnerable to climate change. This is also congruent to Zeppel and Beaumont (2014) [72] which stated that tourism is indeed susceptible to the impacts of climate change on destinations and businesses, however, on the other side, this is one of the major industries contributes to the causes of climate change through greenhouse gas emissions from travel. OECD (2010) [21] also confirmed that tourism is directly exposed to the effects of climate change such as sea-rise level, high temperatures, changes in precipitation patterns, and frequency of extreme weather disturbances and other natural events which can lead loss of biodiversity, and destruction of natural and build environment, as well as tourism infrastructures. Other effects are also expected to manifest on health-related problems. Hence, sustainable development according to UNWTO has been widely used and continuously being encouraged within tourism industry as “...*tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities*”. Sustainability of a destination is now dependent to stakeholders, government units, business and local communities including travellers to implement sustainable actions and regulatory instruments to ensure sustainable balance of economic, environment, and social dimensions in the industry.

With the increasing competitions and demands in tourism services, **human resources' productivity and competitiveness** is considered primary challenges. Tourism as a labour-intensive market industry which requires highly skilled professionals who are equipped with advanced technical competence to technology and innovations. In developed countries, for example, labour competition in tourism showing a higher productivity growth and offer better career development opportunities. Meanwhile, in developing countries like the Philippines, education and skills development trainings are still a big challenge particularly to destination and areas experiencing the most rapid tourism growth. Hence, sometimes the loss of customers and destination's brand is also due to poor technical competence and lack of knowledge by service providers to international market resulting to decline and no repeat of visits.

**Economic environment** such as world recession, rising unemployment, and job at risk, bankruptcy of business particularly SMEs, disposable income, and uncertainty on customer and business confidence (UNWTO, 2020) [33] has been a major threat to tourism and hospitality industry. Considering the present COVID-19 pandemic which largely shock to the global tourism industry, destinations around the world were so much affected by the lockdown, travel restric-

tions resulting to freezing of international and domestic flights, non-operation of the hospitality sectors such as hotels and restaurants, natural attractions and historic sites, and other public parks and protected areas. This scenario has brought so much economic pressure between consumers and businesses in the medium to long-term conditions (PATA, 2020) [73].

Another considered industry threat is **social environment** which includes but not limited to terrorism, crimes including pick pockets and smuggling, and loss or degradation of local/indigenous values which are also tourism assets (The ASEAN Post Team, 2019) [74]. Social impacts of tourism have been widely studied by several researchers since many years ago. In fact, Shafaei and Mohamed (2015) [75] stated that social impact as one of the concerns of tourism development, has been consequently investigated from different perspectives. Several theories have explained in different ways the socio-cultural impacts of tourism. Though, the most familiar theoretical perspective on host-guest interaction is the George Doxey's Irritation Index. Doxey (1975) [76] explains the residents' irritation and attitudes of local people towards tourist inflow. His theory argued that modification of behaviour takes place in local residents towards tourists with the levels of tourism growth in the given destination. When tourists arrive the destination for the first time, local people will be greeted with positive feeling and with no irritation towards tourist activities. Residents are especially positive (Euphoria) and happy with the chiefly economic benefit. Later on the second stage, this attitude of local people changes to Apathy, where residents' accept the associated growth. But at a certain moment, they start to feel annoyance (Irritation) and the attitude of local slowly changes against the previous, and at the final stage it can be converted as Antagonism where local people no longer perceive tourists as good to the society (Shobha, 2019 [77]; Gerritsma & Vork, 2017 [78]). Instead, they are cheated, harassed, ridiculed, or even robbed (Shobha, 2019) [77]. In this regard, Weaver and Opperman (2000) [79] said that the degree of reaction depends on the community's involvement in the industry, if the local community derives benefits from tourism, its attitude towards tourists maybe positive (Iranlu, 2004) [80]. This is the same with Marzuki (2012) [81] that local people will support tourism development in their society when they are expecting benefits from tourism activities, and positive attitudes result from residents' belief that tourism creates community development, improves agricultural market, generates income, and finally, the tourism brings random good fortune (Lepp, 2007) [82]. On the other hand, if the growth of the industry does not favour with the locals it commonly results to antagonism. Sebastian and Rajagopalan (2009) [83] cited that residents perceive that tourism have increased alcoholism and immoral activities, brought undesired changes in the value orientation of children, altered community structure due to large-scale out-migration and increased the price of essential food products which will probably withdraw its support to the industry. Hence, tourism development does not only provide advantage on the socio-cultural aspects of the community, however it also threat-

ened its social and cultural fabrics as a result of tourism growth and economic expansion.

The **extent of lockdowns and travel restrictions** has brought a huge negative impact to tourism and travel industry which is likewise threatening to tourism-related businesses most particularly SMEs and destinations in the introductory phase of operation and development. With COVID-19 outbreak, the UNWTO (2020) [33] considered that travel restrictions, slow virus containments, and consumer confidence are the main barrier of international tourism. This is also congruent to Schuler (2020) [84] that the global travel sector has experienced severe disruptions as a result of travel restrictions and the closure of tourist attractions. This global health crisis according to Uğur and Akbıyık (2020) [85] has so much affect the tourism sector as travellers have cancelled their trip, and other travel plans. In the country itself, from the survey conducted on May 2020 by the PwC Philippines and Department of Tourism regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the Philippine tourism industry, 97 percent of the respondents from the tourism services sector have expressed that the current pandemic has significantly impact their business operations resulting to temporarily closure of establishments and service or product offerings, reduction of level of business operation, and reduction of employee. According to IATA (2020) [86], tourism sector expects that international tourist traffic will not return to pre-COVID-19 levels until 2024. This sudden travel interruption was powered by fear of infection, resulting tourist arrivals in free fall (OECD, 2020) [87].

In addition to this, **unstable “new normal”** also projected a serious challenge for destination managers, tourism business operators and service providers, policy makers, government bodies, and even to travellers to ensure service quality and sustainability of tourism destinations. At present, every state, market and sectors, and individual establishments have been adjusting and adopting innumerable actions most appropriate in the global crisis situation. Changes in new normal are usually experienced to security, flexibility, and hospitality. Now, travellers and guests make sure that safety and hygiene measures are priority when selecting accommodation and other related-establishments. Flexibility to the customer regarding product and service selection and accessibility is now more given emphasis through the most convenient platforms like Online Travel Agencies (OTAs).

**Natural disasters** can also hamper tourism and hospitality industry. This event negatively affects the international tourism and brings economic consequences due to damages to infrastructure, tourist attractions, and other tourism components, resulting for a destination to reduce tourism activity, undermine investment into tourism supply, loss of jobs, and reduction of destination attractiveness (Rosselló *et al.*, 2020) [88]. These devastating effects slow down the tourism sector and other associated activities in a particular destination. Hence, developing a resilient and sustainable tourism economy encounter greater challenges especially to communities that are in high-risk locations (Tsai *et al.*, 2016)

[89]. Genç (2018) [90] suggested that one of the important strategies for many tourism destinations is to establish a disaster management to ensure its readiness to unexpected events like natural disasters.

**Air, water, land, light and noise pollutions** are considered biggest threat of the industry as usually associated to an outcome of **overtourism**. The quality of the environment is vital to existence of tourism and many destinations regarded that natural environment is key to successful tourist destinations. However, the relationship of tourism to environment is complex. Tourism utilizes environment for economic gains, but the environment itself, if not properly managed results to exploitation of its very resource leading to varied forms of pollution and deterioration of destination's products and services.

### 4.3. Strengths and Weaknesses

From the 5As (arrival, access, accommodation, attractions, and activities) framework in the strategic approach for tourism development, San Jose lies its potentials to presence of numerous attractions such natural (to mention cave, waterfall, beach, mangrove and agrifarm) cultural and religious (namely festivals, military and civic parades, passion play, fluvial procession, ethnic games), and historical sites (such as old churches, ancestral houses, ancient ruins, old structures, and monuments). These are the main motivation that draws tourist in visiting the place which are also accompanied of activities which provides tourists support in creating experience other than appreciating its aesthetics.

Accessibility to transportation and communication is also perceived as strength of the locality for tourism as established on road networks and connectivity from origin to destination and major gateways for nearby tourist destinations. This component is likewise supported with transport terminals which provide services for arrival both land and water while airport is planned to be constructed as part of the proposed local tourism and economic development plan of San Jose. Similarly, reliable internet connections and other information and communication technology are stable for business and online transactions.

Another major strength of San Jose for tourism is the presence of primary tourism support facilities and services such as hotels, resorts, tourist inns, and home stays for accommodation and food and beverage service establishments composed of restaurants, cafes, and many others. Other than this, there are also other infrastructure and institutional elements that provides support system for the local tourism. These are local government and tourism offices, medical service facilities, law enforcement agencies, academic institutions, sports complexes, souvenirs and shops, bank and money remittance institutions, public markets, and electric and water supply facilities which makes more significant towards area's local tourism development. This component is regarded to have a bigger responsibility of unifying all other components to work towards providing a high quality of tourism experience for visitors as well as ensuring that unpleasant tourism experiences are at a minimum level. On its social aspect, community residents

and frontline service providers were hospitable in welcoming visitors in general and in attending to their individual needs.

Generally, the strengths of San Jose for tourism were evident as it covered and related to Innskeep's (1991) [91] components in developing the local tourism industry and as manifested from the models discussed by Gierszewska and Romanowska (2002) [14], Ghanbari *et al.* (2012) [6], and Wehrich (1982) [16] on SWOT analysis for tourism development.

On the other hand, there are concerns that limit the full realization of local destination's tourism potential which are also termed as weaknesses and require attention and appropriate action from its direct authority and stakeholders in transforming these factors into advantages. These weaknesses as identified by the respondents are directed to the following: 1) non-accreditation of hotels and resorts due to lack of supervision and enforcement from the local government unit; 2) unestablished local tourism/hospitality organization; 3) lack of skilled tourism personnel and general knowledge on developing tourism product and community support, resulting to non-development and implementation of the local tourism development plan knowing that the ones handling the office for tourism is not even a graduate of tourism management degree or with formal training and experience to tourism-related undertakings; 4) lack of trained and experienced workforce for tourism services, since most of the frontline staff were insufficient of seminars and trainings related to customer service while some of them does not established a long term career in the industry for its seasonality in nature; 5) inadequate funding for conservation of natural and historical resources; 6) shorter length of stay by the visitors, due to inadequate management of tourist activities within destinations and hotel recreational facilities; 7) tourism marketing and supply chain is not yet developed, this is by absence of comprehensive tourism plan and management; 8) lack of private-public partnership towards local tourism development, therefore constraining economic growth; 9) absence of regular monitoring of tourism statistics; and 10) lack of commercial establishments like conference and convention centers.

## 5. Conclusions

Ideally, the local tourism industry if properly planned, implemented, evaluated, and monitored within each respective jurisdiction of the local government units may result in wide-ranging economic opportunities that can improve the quality of life of every community and boost the local economy. The development of tourism is the primary responsibility of the LGUs through formulating programs and recommendations to develop local tourism facilities, attractions, local resources, and funds; assisting the regulation and supervision of tourism-oriented establishments; monitoring of licensing of tourism establishments in the locality; and strictly enforcing sanitary standards in public facilities and services. One of the management strategies that will ensure these thrusts is through analysing the SWOT of the local destination where planning becomes more of a multi-sectoral

collaboration, involving various stakeholders in the locality. This method allows authorities to specifically identify areas that are subject to SWOT analysis and can effectively position appropriate strategies and/or actions toward desired outcomes.

In the case of San Jose, tourism advantages were revealed by the significant presence of six tourism components such as tourist attractions and activities, accommodation, transportation, institutional elements, other tourist facilities and services, and other infrastructure. The destination has these primary resources that are good foundations for local tourism development which requires utilization. Further development opportunities for tourism were also identified on different levels from global, national, and regional down to local perspectives. These factors are important to consider during the planning process of the LGU as it provides direction to decide where and how to take advantage of these tourism opportunities and in what particular aspect they will maximize their potential. On the downside of the analysis, several issues were determined and considered as disadvantageous that may hamper potential development if not properly addressed. These are the weaknesses of the internal environment which are mainly observed in the human and institutional incapacity for tourism product development and service provision; also threats posed by external environments which highlighted the safety and security issues (e.g. social and health), economic recession, social conflicts, natural disasters, and unstable new normal, which seriously requires measures for solution and prevention.

Generally, SWOT analysis to be more relevant requires specific actions to address existing problems and concerns. Therefore, this study proposes an integration of actions from the existing SWOT models and as a result of the destination's SWOT analysis, which is as follows: **strengths require utilization (S → U)**, **weaknesses require solution (W → S)**, **opportunities provide direction (O → D)**, and **threats require prevention (T → P)**.

## 6. Recommendation

In order that the formulation of a local tourism plan contributes to the overall development of LGU, the following actions are hereby recommended. From internal forces, the local government unit shall: 1) utilize its tourism strengths and potentials to develop particular tourism products and services; 2) encourage and enforce accreditation among tourism-related establishments (e.g. hotels and restaurants); 3) hire competent tourism professional(s) for tourism who are experienced to tourism planning and development, policy-making and enforcement, tourism marketing and other related works; 4) conduct capacity buildings and trainings among tourism service providers; 5) initiate the formation of local tourism and hospitality stakeholders organization and association; 6) establish a public-private partnership for tourism investments; and 7) regularly monitor the tourism statistics including tourist arrivals and per capita expenditure.

From the external forces, the local government unit of San Jose shall: 1) align



and/or make responsive the local development of the tourism potentials to identified opportunities at every level; and 2) develop a destination risk management covering threats and issues on social, cultural, health, environmental, economic, and technology.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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