The Sustainable Tourism Potential Of The "1000 STEPS" In Sitio Natipunan, Ifugao: An ASEAN Standard Community-Based Tourism Assessment

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Abstract: *Community-based tourism (CBT) has emerged as a sustainable alternative to mass tourism, prioritizing local empowerment, environmental preservation, and cultural integrity. The "1,000 Steps" in Sitio Nagtipunan, Sto. Domingo, Alfonso Lista, Ifugao, represents an emerging tourism destination that embodies these principles by promoting community engagement and environmental stewardship. Despite its natural beauty and cultural richness, the site's viability as a CBT destination remains underassessed. Determining its alignment with the ASEAN Community-Based Tourism (CBT) Standard is essential to establish a sustainable tourism framework that enhances local livelihoods, fosters effective governance, and strengthens environmental management. The study aimed to assess the potential of the "1,000 Steps" as a CBT site by evaluating its performance based on ASEAN CBT dimensions. Employing a descriptive research design, data were gathered from 218 respondents, including residents, tourists, and local officials, through a structured and patterned questionnaire. Statistical tools, including mean, frequency, and percentage, were utilized in the data analysis. Results revealed strong community participation and transparent governance, high partnership effectiveness, and solid contributions to social well-being. Environmental conservation practices were positively rated, while tour and guiding services achieved the highest rating, reflecting both cultural sensitivity and visitor satisfaction. However, food and beverage services and management showed moderate adherence to standards, highlighting areas for improvement in hygiene and training. Findings confirm that active community involvement enhances the sustainability of tourism. Practically, the study provides an evidence-based framework for policymakers and planners to integrate ASEAN CBT standards into rural destinations, promoting inclusive, culturally grounded, and environmentally sustainable tourism development in the Philippines.*
Keywords: 1000 Steps, Community-Based Tourism, ASEAN CBT Standards, Sustainable Tourism, Ifugao, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Community-based tourism (CBT) has gained popularity as a sustainable tourism strategy. It offers a means of achieving equitable development, environmental preservation, and cultural preservation. Unlike traditional mass tourism, CBT places a strong emphasis on empowering local

communities by involving them in the planning, management, and decision-making processes associated with tourism (Simpson,2015). The foundation of this model is the notion that tourism should help local communities, promote social and economic advancement, and aid in the conservation of natural and cultural resources. Therefore, community-based tourism has become a real alternative to the mass tourism as an approach to eliminating the negative effects of the phenomenon and its adverse nature (Tosun, 2016).

CBT is known and recognized for its potential to mitigate and curb problems specifically cultural commodification and environmental degradation, which are usually often associated with mainstream tourism (Tosun, 2015). The ability and capability of CBT to give local communities an involvement and a serious interest in their cultural and environmental resources is among its main strengths (Gössling, 2012). By encouraging community participation, CBT boosting to encourages a sense of ownership and responsibility that may lead to more sustainable tourism practices and better outcomes for both the community and tourists (Su & Wall, 2014).

According to Nyaupane and Poudel (2011) The shift towards move to CBT is based on the key asset concept of sustainable tourism, which seeks and aim to reduce negative impacts while improving the quality of life of local people. Through the empowerment of local communities to manage and own tourism activities, CBT minimizes the reliance on external players and enhances the equitable distribution of tourism revenues (Tosun, 2015). Further, CBT encourages environmental responsibility as local communities may have a direct stake in conserving their surrounding environment, which is central to their way of life and tourist attraction (Gössling, 2012). As the international tourism sector keeps on expanding, embracing sustainable methods via CBT is a way of addressing the dilemma of overtourism and unsustainable growth. The emergence of CBT has been stimulated by the growing need for genuine and culturally authentic experiences of tourism, where visitors interact immediately with local communities and ecosystems (Bramwell & Lane, 2011). This is part of the greater tendency towards more sustainable tourism, where economic development is matched by concern for the protection of the environment and the preservation of culture. Therefore, CBT is a paradigm shift in tourism, with an emphasis on long-term sustainability over short-term gains, and thus a major contributor to the future of the international tourism sector (Scheyvens, 2015).

The main ways in which CBT empowers local communities are through the creation of economic opportunities. In most rural or poor communities, tourism is an important source of foreign exchange, generating employment and stimulating local enterprises like accommodations, dining, and crafts production (Tosun, 2016). Yet for CBT to be empowering, it should provide a guarantee that these economic opportunities are extended to a wide section of the community, including poor groups like women, youth, and indigenous groups (Dolezal et al., 2017). According to Boley and Green (2016) economic empowerment, CBT has a crucial role in the development of social capital through building community cohesion, local governance, and the capacity of community members to oversee tourism-related projects.

The protection of cultural heritage via CBT targets both material and immaterial elements of culture, such as architecture, indigenous crafts, rituals, languages, and local knowledge (Tolkach & King, 2015) By presenting these elements to tourists, communities not only maintain their identity but also foster intercultural respect and understanding. despite this cultural protection via CBT is not problem-free. One of the major biggest barriers and challenges is commodification, where cultural traditions can be changed or distorted to meet tourist expectations and lose their authenticity (Dolezal et al., 2017) Additionally, bringing together tourist demand with the necessity of safeguarding cultural heritage sites and traditions can be must present tensions, particularly noteworthy in the absence of strategic planning or the means of addressing visitor effects (McLennan & Du Plessis, 2018)

According to Simpson (2015) CBT promotes active engagement and local ownership, facilitating possibilities for local communities to generate revenue from tourism without compromising their cultural and natural assets. Such an approach is likely to reap economic and social advantages, thus contributing to sustainable outcomes in the long term as well as the enhancement of the host communities' well-being (Tosun, 2016) Economic gains from CBT are noted in the creation of direct and indirect revenues arising from tourism (Tourism Management and Research (UK), n.d.). Local businesspeople have the potential to gain from more demand for commodities and services such as accommodation, food, transportation, and craft (Dolezal et al., 2017).

According to Tolkach and King (2015) Local authorities and other stakeholders play a critical role in ensuring the success of CBT programs since communities increasingly take part in tourist development, particularly in the preservation of traditional practices, rituals, and ways of life. Local government, here, means the policies and actions of local authorities to direct and facilitate CBT, while stakeholders from local residents and businesses to NGOs and tourists are involved in planning, management, and overall success of CBT programs. Local governance is also vital in the formulation of CBT by creating an environment that equilibrates the interests of the government, the community, and other parties. Local authorities are tasked with ensuring that activities of CBT do not commodify or exploit local traditions but instead sustain them by establishing right policies, rules, and observation systems. In addition, local governance promotes collaboration among stakeholders, which is vital for the implementation of sustainable practices and protection of cultural heritage (Mahony & van Zyl, 2017).

A unique context for assessing the impact of CBT programs is the Province of Ifugao, which is famous for its unique rice terraces and rich indigenous culture. These programs seek to local communities which number one involved in other hand the primary participant in tourism development so that they can exercise control over the management of their natural and cultural resources while economically benefiting and maintaining their traditions (Scheyvens, 2015). But CBT success is may dependent on several domain, such as local community participation, governance systems, sustainability of the environment, and a balance between cultural preservation and tourism development (Tolkach & King, 2015). Ifugao's tourism sector, specifically around the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Banaue Rice Terraces, presents a case study on how CBT can be utilized to support cultural preservation and economic growth. Although the tourism has been able to highlight Ifugao's vast cultural heritage, it has also caused worry regarding the possible adverse effects of mass tourism on the environment as well as the local culture (Mahony & van Zyl, 2017). CBT models in Ifugao try to counter such risks through ensuring equitable distribution of tourism benefits and that the local communities have control and ownership of the tourism procedures (Simón & Ramírez, 2018). Assesses the effectiveness of CBT programs in Ifugao, specifically their ability to advance cultural preservation, offer economic gains, and ensure environmental sustainability. Through case studies and literature review, this

study will determine the most important factors that make or break the success of CBT in Ifugao. Also, the paper will discuss the challenges that the local stakeholders and communities experience in terms of maintaining such programs and provide suggestions for improving the sustainability of CBT in the region (Saarinen & Rogerson, 2017).

According to Kim, et al., (2025 The ASEAN CBT Standard was adopted by ten ASEAN member states, namely, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, during the 19th meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers in the Philippines held in January 2016. It was initially intended to provide direction to communities for keeping the quality of services for tourists at a consistent level across the ASEAN. The study is limited in that it focuses on a single ASEAN member state. The researcher suggested future research could attempt to examine the implementation status of other ASEAN member states.

METHOD

### Research Design

This study assesses the 1000 Steps program's potential as a community-based tourism (CBT) initiative using a quantitative research design. By use of the quantitative method's ability to collect and analyze numerical data, the sustainability and effectiveness of the effort can be clearly assessed using quantifiable criteria. In order to build a strong resource for future initiative improvement, the design will also assist in identifying the main areas that require improvement.

Research Environment

The 1,000 Steps in Sitio Nagtipunan Sto. Domingo Alfonso Lista, Ifugao where this study is being carried out. This rural village is well-known for its natural surroundings, long-standing customs, and close-knit society. Because of the 1,000 Steps initiative's location, the study is possible to integrate sustainable tourist promotion with historic conservation. The Sitio Nagtipunan Sto. Domingo, Alfonso Lista, Ifugao. are the site of this Study located in the Philippines. There is a rare chance to look into the possibilities of community-based tourism in the area because of the high environmental and cultural potential.
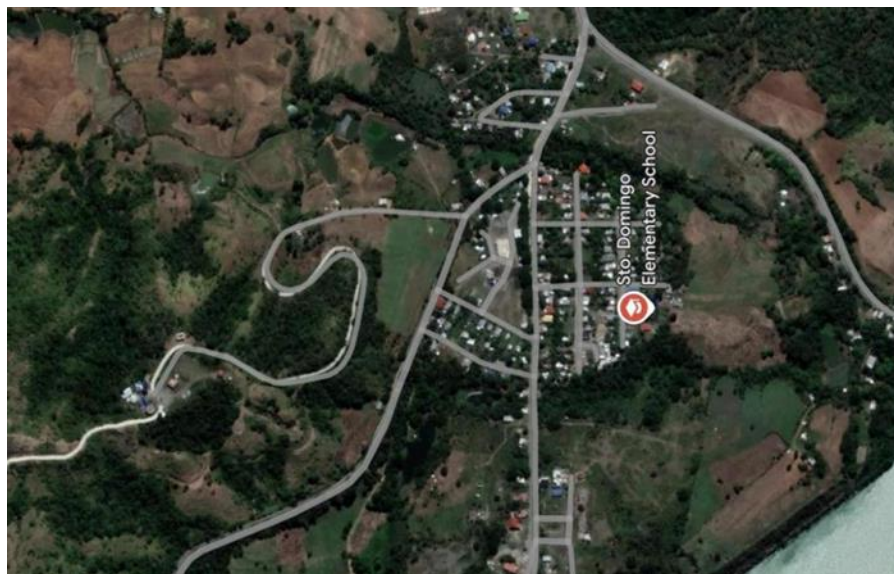
Figure 1: *1,000 Steps Map of Alfonso Lista, Ifugao*

Research Respondents

The study looks forward to including a wide array of respondents in the 1,000 steps project, all who are necessary for the viability of the community-based tourism (CBT) initiative. These included those who are affected by tourism in the area directly, among them the members of the local community and tourists visiting the area. The study categorized respondents into three groups Residents, Tourists/Visitors and Officials. Random sampling method are employed to ensure that the sample is representative of the different stakeholder groups involved in the 1,000 Steps initiative. This method makes it possible to get comprehensive information about the various opinions and experiences of the respondents from the three groups. A total of 218 respondents participated in the study.

Research Instrument

The main research tool for this study is a patterned questionnaire, which is based on established, validated models or patterns from previous studies. The survey questionnaire is adapted from the ASEAN Community-Based Tourism (CBT) Standard. The questionnaire has gone through a validation process and expert pooling, a step in this process where a group of experts examined and commented on the questions' precision, applicability, and clarity. Their suggestions were integrated into the completed questionnaire to enhance of its content validity.

Pilot test conducted to 30 people in Kalipkip Tourism Site Located Busilac, Alfonso Lista, Ifugao to ensure the clarity and relevance of the questions. This process helped to refine the questionnaire and ensure that it would effectively capture the necessary dataThis helped to improve the questionnaire, these will be the results of our Cronbach Alpha from our questionnaire during pilot test. The reliability analysis of the research instrument, as measured by Cronbach's Alpha, indicated high internal consistency across all parts of the questionnaire. The coefficients ranged from 0.739 to 0.912, exceeding the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70, thereby confirming that the instrument is reliable.

Data Analysis

Data were processed and analyzed using the statistical methods of mean, percentage, frequency, and standard deviation. Additionally, basic descriptive statistical techniques were used to analyze the data. The mean, or average score, are computed to see the overall responses of all the participants to each question on the Likert Scale from 1 – Strongly Disagree to – Strongly Agree. This was being used to show the general opinion of respondents about different areas of the CBT standards. Standard Deviation. The standard deviation will be used to check how spread out or close the answers are from the average. A low standard deviation means most people answered similarly, while a high standard deviation means there were many different opinions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Standard for community ownership and management

Standards for effective and transparent governance	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1. The tourist spot is managed by community members through a committee elected for a maximum 5-year term.	3.38	.751	SA
2. The tourist spot has a clear management structure with agreed roles and responsibilities.	3.56	.759	SA
3. Tourist staff provide specific tourism products and services (e.g. guiding, accommodation, food and beverage services) is conducted fairly by the tourist spot Committee based on gender equity and social inclusion principles.	3.38	.660	SA

	Mean	Std.	Interpretation
4. Tourist staff appointments (and revocation of appointments) are approved by the tourist spot Committee.	3.13	.708	SA
Overall Mean	3.36	.568	Strongly Agree

Table 1. Standards for effective and transparent governance

This table presents data on the management practices in the tourist spot, strongly focusing on the committee's roles, responsibilities, and management of staff. The table are including four items with their mean scores, standard deviations, and lastly interpretations. The mean scores range from 3.13 to 3.56, indicating that respondents strongly agree with the statements regarding management practices at the tourist spot. The items include aspects such as community management, a clear management structure, the fairness of staff appointments, and the promotion of gender equity and social inclusion principles. and the overall mean score are 3.36, which is falling under the category of "Strongly Agree".

The table are suggesting that the tourist spot is effectively are properly managed, with the community involvement through the respectively elected committee and clear organizational structures in place. The high mean scores are ranging from 3.13 to 3.56 and consistent interpretation of "Strongly Agree" that are imply respondents perceive the management practices positively. These practice7s seek to foster a very well-organized environment where roles and responsibilities are well-defined, and the decisions related to tourism services and staff appointments are made equitably and inclusively. The honesty that the overall mean score is 3.36 reinforces the impression that the community management structure is functioning well and social inclusion principles are being adhered to in the staffing practices. This are indicated that local communities are strongly actively in engaged in tourism management, and contributing to the sustainability and inclusiveness of tourism operations.

According to Poria et al. (2015) argue that community-based management models improve the both sustainability and local acceptance of tourism, aligning with the findings of this table. According to Saarinen (2016) also supports this view, suggesting that clear roles and responsibilities are very essential for effective CBT management, as also reflected in the respondents' strong agreement on having a well-defined management structure.

Standards for recognition of legitimate tourist spot	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation

1.	The tourist spot is recognized by provincial and/or national level authorities.	3.37	.609	SA
2.	The tourist spot is recognized by, and has the support of, any customary or legally recognized community-level governing body (e.g., community council).	3.26	.631	SA
	Overall Mean	3.32	.564	SA

Table 2. Standards For Recognition Of Legitimate Tourist Spot

This table presents data related to the standards for the recognition of legitimate tourist spots, specifically focusing on recognition by various authorities. The table are included two items. The recognition of the tourist spot by provincial and/or national authorities, and the recognition and support from a customary or legally recognized community-level governing body (e.g., community council). Each item consists mean score, standard deviation, and an interpretation. The items had both received high mean scores of 3.37 and 3.26, respectively, which are interpreted as "Strongly Agree." in the category and the overall mean score is 3.31, also categorized as "Strongly Agree." This suggests that respondents are agreed that the tourist spot is recognized by the both higher-level (provincial/national) and community-level authorities.

The table are indicated that the tourist spot is globally regarded as legitimate by both higher provincial or national authorities and local community governing bodies. The high mean scores are suggested that respondents perceive the spot as meeting the necessary criteria for formal recognition, which is very crucial for its sustainability and development. The fact that the overall mean score is 3.31 further implies that the tourist spot has the support and recognition of the both governmental and local community, which is likely enhances its credibility, legal standing, and ability to attract tourism. Noticed from both levels of authority could facilitate access to funding, promotion, and governance, so that contributing to the overall success and sustainability of the tourist destination.

According to Harrison and Schipani (2016) emphasize that governmental recognition is a critical factor in the establishment and long-term sustainability of tourist spots. Such recognition can open doors to support, funding, and to access to tourism networks, which are very crucial for growth. Research on the legitimacy and recognition of tourist destinations are supported the importance of official recognition from both national and local authorities for the sustainability of tourism**.**

Standards for effective transparent management	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1. The tourist spot builds the capacity of the community to provide products, goods and services to visiting tourists.	3.69	.535	SA
2. The tourist spot maximizes use of goods and services provided by the community.	3.41	.560	SA
3. A clear financial management system exists and is accessible to community members.	3.19	.535	A
4. An annual action plan is documented and is accessible to community members.	3.50	.508	SA
5. Long-term goals and objectives are documented and accessible to the community members.	3.31	.592	SA
6. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms exist to assess the sustainability performance of individual and collective tourist spot activities.	3.34	.483	SA
Overall Mean	3.41	.311	SA

Table 3*. Standards For Effective Transparent Management*

This table presents data on the capacity-building and management practices in the tourist spot, which is focuses on community involvement, financial management, planning, and sustainability. The table includes six items, each item evaluated based on the mean score, standard deviation, and the interpretation. Each item shows a high mean score, with the majority of items falling within the "Strongly Agree" category, except for item 3, which falls under the "Agree" mean score of 3.19. The overall average score of 3.41 is categorized as "Strongly Agree."

The table suggests that the tourist spot are demonstrates the effectiveness of community involvement in tourism activities and robust management systems. The high mean scores are indicated that respondents generally agree that the community is actively engaged in providing products, goods, and services to tourists, and that the management systems such as financial transparency, planning, and sustainability monitoring are well-established and accessible to the community. The item with the highest mean score of 3.69 are indicates a very strong capacity-building approach, that are emphasizing the tourist spot's role in enhancing and improving the community's ability to contribute to the tourism sector. Moreover, the presence of clear action plans, long-term goals, and monitoring mechanisms are suggesting that the tourist spot are prioritizes the strategic planning and the performance evaluation, further reinforcing its assurance to long-term sustainability. The item having a slightly lower mean score 3.19 on financial

management systems, despite still rated as "Agree," may suggest that while the system is functional and accessible, there might be areas for improvement in clarity or accessibility for all community members. The overall high scores are across the other items imply that the financial system and other management practices are still effective in supporting the community engagement and sustainability.

According to Mowforth and Munt (2016) are argued that building community capacity is very critical for the creating sustainable tourism practices, as it enhances the community's ability to manage, and the tourism benefit of it. The high score for the first item aligns with this perspective, showing that the tourist spot is contributing to the community's capacity. According to McLaren (2017) also emphasizes the significance of the utilizing local resources and goods to maximize the benefits of tourism for the community. This concept is supported by the high mean score for the second item, which shows the tourist destination's attempts to use locally produced goods and services.

	Standards for effective partnership	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1.	Guidelines exist for inbound tour operator interaction with the community.	3.47	.507	SA
2.	In conducting activities, the tourist spot initiative avoids impacts on neighboring communities.	3.47	.507	SA
3.	Relevant tourist spot stakeholders are identified and their roles in contributing to tourist spot initiatives are documented.	3.41	.560	SA
4.	An established procedure exists for regular consultation with stakeholders.	3.53	.507	SA
5.	Cooperation exists with neighboring communities	3.38	.492	SA
	Overall Mean	3.45	.332	SA

Table 4. Standards For Effective Partnership

The table presents survey results which assessing the various sustainable practices of the inbound tour operators and tourist spots, specifically regarding their interactions with local communities. Each statement is show and evaluated on a Likert scale, with mean scores ranging from 3.38 to 3.53, indicating strong agreement among respondents. The standard deviations are all relatively low, reflecting a strong consensus regarding the practices in question. The statements assessed include the presence of guidelines for community interaction, efforts to avoid negative

impacts on neighboring communities, the identification and documentation of relevant stakeholders, established procedures for consultation, and cooperation with local communities.

The data reveals that respondents are strongly agree with the sustainable practices being evaluated, suggesting that inbound tour operators and tourist spots are very actively engaged in responsible tourism practices. The high mean scores ranging from 3.38 to 3.53 and the low standard deviations showing widespread recognition and consensus about the positive role of these practices in minimizing negative impacts on local communities and ensuring active engagement with stakeholders. However, the slightly lower mean score for "Cooperation with neighboring communities" 3.38 implies there may be room for improvement in fostering even stronger cooperation with local populations. Supports the idea that these practices are not only in place but are generally perceived as effective in promoting sustainable tourism according to the overall mean of 3.439

According to Manyara and Jones (2015), the success of community-based tourism (CBT) initiatives heavily relies on establishing clear guidelines for stakeholder interaction, ensuring inclusive participation, and minimizing negative impacts on neighboring communities. Their research highlights how regular consultation and role identification are essential in building trust and sustaining partnerships closely reflected in the high agreement scores in this table regarding stakeholder engagement and community cooperation.

Standards for contribution to social well-being

Standards for maintaining human dignity	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1. Sex tourism, drug trafficking, human trafficking, and exploitation of child labor are not tolerated or supported explicitly or implicitly.	3.42	.807	SA
2. Tourist spot activities promote gender equity and social inclusion.	3.55	.675	SA
3. Tourist spot, build the capacity for disadvantaged members of the community to appropriately benefit from tourism (this includes identifying roles for youth and the aged).	3.32	.599	SA
4. Tourist spot activities contribute to improving community access to basic services (water, sanitation, energy, education, health).	3.23	.425	A

5.	Clear and agreed benefit sharing arrangements exist.	3.26	.514	SA
6.	A community development fund exists that is used for initiatives benefiting the whole community.	3.29	.461	SA
7.	Standards for linking with regional economies	3.39	.495	SA
8.	Local community members dominate employment in tourist spot.	3.35	.661	SA
9.	Local/regional sourcing of products and services dominate tourist spot	3.35	.608	SA
10.	Practices ensure that all rules, regulations and laws relevant to protection of culture and heritage are followed.	3.55	.675	SA
11.	Tourist spot management supports the retention of traditional livelihoods and initiatives that create alternative livelihoods.	3.42	.502	SA
12.	A code of visitor behavior exists to inform visitors of appropriate behavior within communities.	3.55	.506	SA
13.	A community decision-making process exists that identifies what cultural assets and traditions will be shared with visitors.	3.52	.508	SA
	Overall Mean	3.40	.287	SA

Table 5*. Standards For Maintaining Human Dignity*

The table are presents survey results which are assessing some several practices and standards for the promoting to the social well-being in the context of tourism. It evaluates 13 with different factors, each with a mean score and standard deviation. The statements are address some issues such as the prevention of the exploitative practices, promoting gender equity, building community capacity, improving access to basic services, ensuring benefit-sharing, supporting cultural heritage, and the fostering local employment. The majority mean scores for all items are ranging from 3.23 to 3.55, with most of them falling to the category of "Strongly Agree". The overall mean score is 3.40, which are indicating the strong agreement to the all items. Standard deviations are generally low, suggesting strong consensus among respondents.

The table reflects a strong commitment to social well-being within the practices of the assessed tourist spots. Most respondents strongly agree with the statements, which indicates that these spots are seen as responsible and committed. The highest mean scores 3.55 indicate strong support for practices related to promoting gender equity, ensuring cultural protection, and encouraging appropriate visitor behavior. Community-focused initiatives, such as building

capacity for disadvantaged groups and ensuring benefit-sharing, are looked good and positive, with the lower mean scores which are 3.23. It says that while these initiatives are very important, there are some areas where further work is needed for assurance for the broader benefits for the community. the tourist attractions have the strong beneficial and favorable impact on the social well-being of local communities' base to the overall mean score 3.40.

According to Bramwell and Lane (2015) point out the influence of tourism planning that combine social equity and community well-being. In addition to environmental sustainability, they claim that social concerns like gender equality and economic empowerment for marginalized communities should be addressed in the development of the tourism industry.

Standards for conserving and improving the environment.

Standards for conserving natural resources	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1. Natural resources and environmentally sensitive sites and their community significance are identified, planned, documented and endorsed by relevant communities.	3.42	.720	SA
2. A fund exists to support community-based conservation programs and actions (e.g., reforestation projects, wildlife protection).	3.29	.693	SA
3. Programs exist to present the value of natural resources to local community well-being (e.g., educational seminars)	3.32	.748	SA
4. Local rules and regulations exist relevant to the protection and presentation of nature (e.g., deforestation, illegal hunting, and proper waste disposal).	3.19	.543	A
5. Standards for conservation activities to improve the environment (e.g., reforestation).	3.13	.619	A
6. A fund is available to support community-based environmental improvement action (e.g., watershed management, installation of eco-friendly waste disposal systems).	3.19	.703	A
7. A locally appropriate solid waste management system exists that applies avoid, reduce, reuse, recycle principles and hygienic handling of putrescible waste (e.g., composting).	3.29	.643	SA
8. Locally appropriate wastewater management uses technologies that minimize risk to human health and environmental impact.	3.35	.608	SA

9.	**Practices ensure that all rules, regulations and laws relevant to environmental protection are followed.**	3.39	.495	SA
10.	**Environmental information and education programs are available for hosts, guests and the community (e.g., educational seminars, workshops for locals).**	3.39	.558	SA
	Overall Mean	3.30	.422	SA

Table 6. Standards For Conserving Natural Resource

The table presents survey results that assess various standards related to environmental conservation and improvement in tourism settings. It evaluates the ten practices in different context, which are ranging from identifying and conserving natural resources to the implementing of sustainable waste and wastewater management systems. The data has included the mean score and standard deviation of each statement, with scores ranging from 3.13 to 3.42. the majority items have a "Strongly Agree" interpretation, with the overall mean score being 3.297. Standard deviations are generally low, indicating a strong consensus among respondents.

The table is showing a strong support for the environmental sustainability practices, mean scores are ranging from 3.13 to 3.42, which indicating an overall agreement. High scores like 3.42 for identifying natural resources and 3.35 for wastewater management reflect effective environmental conservation efforts. Anyway, slightly lower scores, such as 3.13 for conservation activities, are suggesting room for the better improvement in some areas. The overall mean of 3.30 which are emphasizing a commitment to the environmental practices, with several areas that are still requiring attention.

According to Bramwell and Lane (2015) highlight the importance of sustainable tourism practices that integrate environmental conservation with community well-being. Their research underscores the need for tourism to actively contribute to the protection of natural resources, a point that is well-supported by the high mean scores for conservation-related practices in this table. According to Gössling (2016) discusses the necessity of sustainable waste management and wastewater practices in tourism destinations to minimize environmental impact. The positive responses regarding solid waste management and wastewater treatment in the table support this principle.

Standards for quality tour and guiding services

Standards for ensuring local guides quality and expertise	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1. Local Guides are certified under any relevant standard produced for the purposes of improving guiding services.	3.55	.568	A
2. Local Guides facilitate environmentally, socially and culturally relevant and sensitive experiences for visitors that are protective of natural and cultural resources and values.	3.29	.739	A
3. Local Guides have access to ongoing capacity building and training opportunities to increase my skills and knowledge of sustainable tourism (interpretative guiding, group management, and customer care/service)	2.23	.560	S
4. The local (interpretative) guide to visitor ratio is not greater than 1:5-10.	3.39	.558	A
Overall Mean	3.36	.432	A

Table 7. Standards For Ensuring Local Guides Quality And Expertise

The table presents a survey for assessing the quality of tours and guiding services, which comprises four statements on the certification of local guides, environmental and cultural sensitivity in navigating with them, access to continuous training, and guide-to-visitor ratio. With marks established using a Likert scale, mean scores and standard deviation results accompany each statement. An overall mean score of 3.36 suggests some degree of satisfaction of the respondents in overall quality of the tour and guidance services.

The scores mean that respondents were generally satisfied with the tour and guiding services, as the mean scores hover around the Always scale 3.25-4.00. Highest score of 3.55 shows that local guides are certified with appropriate standards, doing their jobs at best quality. About environmental and cultural sensitivity of guides mean 3.29, it implies that their guiding practices are generally responsible and sustainable. Unbelievably, the mean score at ongoing training is rather very low 2.23; this suggests that a lot could still be improved through regular capacity-building programs to enhance the guiding skills. The guide-to-visitor ratio attached to it mean 3.39 is safe concerning the adopted norms, indicating that guides can manage well with groups. In short, the mean of 3.36 suggests that the overall nature in which both tour and guiding services happen

is of good quality; however, this does not leave a lot to be desired in respect to the continuity of providing training opportunities.

According to Ap & Wong (2001) highlight how professional certification, licensing, training, and codes of conduct help ensure tour guide quality and reliability directly and echoing the importance of formal recognition. Christine Marie Oschell (2010s) emphasizes that guides act as role models, using personal interpretation to model environmentally responsible behaviors on facilitating environmentally and culturally sensitive experiences.

Standards for ensuring the quality of tours and activities	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1. Tours/activities operate within the objectives, guidelines, regulations and codes of conduct of the tourist spot.	3.52	.570	A
2. Tours/activities ensure visitors, at all times, observe tourist spot approved guidelines for interacting with the culture, natural environment and people of the community. Tours/activities have a clearly defined: • itinerary and associated price; and • documented booking system	3.42	.564	A
3. Tours/activities record the visitors on tours, including departure and return times.	3.55	.506	A
4. Visitors are informed of the tour itinerary, level of difficulty, possible hazards, safety precautions and regulations or rules that apply to their conduct on the tour	3.42	.620	A
5. Tours operate on a cost recovery basis and yield a profit to the tourist spot.	3.35	.608	A
6. A quality control and improvement system exist, including a system for visitor feedback on the tour/activity experience, and visitors are actively encouraged to participate in the feedback process.	3.55	.506	A
7. Tours/activities respect and contribute to the promotion and preservation/ conservation of local culture and natural environment and provide current and relevant cultural information.	3.52	.508	A
8. Tours/activities are designed to be enjoyable, educational, participatory, organized, relevant and thematic.	3.45	.506	A
9. Where relevant, tours/activities have clearly defined and documented agreements with inbound tour operators	3.45	.568	A
10. Tours/activities actively facilitate cross-cultural understanding and opportunities	3.39	.495	A

	for tourists to contribute to local activities alongside host community members.			
11.	Tours provide an appropriate and specialized service for identified tourist markets and attract identified tourist markets through cost-effective means.	3.55	.506	A
	Overall Mean	3.47	.244	A

***Table 8**. Standards For Ensuring The Quality Of Tours And Activities*

The table provides results from a survey that assessed the quality standards set for tours and activities in a given tourist site. It features eleven statements related to the operational guidelines of tours and activities with regard to safety, cultural sensitivity, and the feedback system. Each of these statements was rated using a Likert scale, with means scoring from 3.35 to 3.55, the overall mean being 3.47. The interpretation of all statements falls within the "Always" category 3.25-4, thus indicating strong agreement with the quality standards.

The table exhibit that respondents constantly agree with the high standards set for the tours and activities, with most mean scores sinking in the "Always" range 3.25–4.00. Operational Standards, the mean scores of 3.52 and 3.42 for assuring that tours operate within the guidelines and providing a much clear itineraries suggest that the tours adhere to well-established rules and expectations. for the Safety and Information, has a mean of 3.42 for informing the all visitors about safety precautions and tour details, it reflects that safety and transparency are priorities. the same to the 3.55 score for recording visitors and maintaining a feedback system demonstrates a strong commitment to accountability and for the continuous improvement. and for the Cultural and Environmental Sensitivity: The high mean scores for respecting local culture and environment are3.52 and promoting cross-cultural understanding has mean score of 3.39 imply that the tours are designed to encourage responsible tourism. Market Relevance: A mean of 3.55 for providing specialized services for identified tourist markets indicates that tours are effectively targeting specific audiences with relevant and cost-effective offerings. Overall, the high mean score of 3.47 suggests that the tours and activities consistently meet quality standards, with a strong focus on safety, cultural sensitivity, operational transparency, and market relevance.

According to the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (2016), tour operators should operate within local objectives, legal requirements, and cultural guidelines while also ensuring that tourists are informed of safety protocols, tour itineraries, and community rules. The GSTC emphasizes the

importance of quality control systems, visitor feedback, and cross-cultural understanding, all of which are reflected in the high mean scores for tour organization, safety, cultural respect, and feedback mechanisms in this table.

Standards for ensuring quality food and beverage services

Standards for ensuring food and beverage service provider quality	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1. Food and beverage providers are recruited based on appropriate levels of knowledge and experience in providing locally relevant food and beverage services.	2.87	.718	S
2. Food and beverage providers possess or can demonstrate commitment to hygienic food preparation and service techniques.	3.10	.597	S
3. Food and beverage providers operate within the guidelines and regulations of the tourist spot and have signed and follow the ASEAN CBT Food and Beverage Providers Code of Conduct	3.03	.657	S
4. Food and beverage providers are certified under any relevant standard produced for the purposes of improving food and beverage services.	3.16	.779	S
5. Food and beverage providers provide opportunities for knowledge exchange between hosts and visitors.	3.13	.763	S
6. Food and beverage providers have access to ongoing capacity building and training opportunities to increase their skills and knowledge of communication (including cross cultural awareness/communication and verbal and non-verbal communication)	2.97	.836	S
Overall Mean	3.04	.574	S

Table 9. *Standards For Ensuring Food And Beverage Service Provider Quality*

With particular attention to the credentials, hygienic procedures, regulatory compliance, certification, information sharing, and training of food and beverage suppliers, the table lists the prerequisites for guaranteeing quality in food and beverage services. The total mean score is 3.04, with mean values on a Likert scale ranging from 2.87 to 3.16 for each category. A modest degree of agreement is indicated by the fact that all assertions fall into the "Sometimes" category (2.50–3.24).

The mean scores in the "Sometimes" category indicate that respondents agree to some degree with the requirements for food and beverage providers, but there is still opportunity for

improvement in each area. Qualifications and Hygiene: Although there is some attention paid to these areas, it's possible that they are not always applied consistently, as evidenced by the mean scores of 2.87 and 3.10 for hiring food and beverage providers based on their knowledge and experience as well as their dedication to hygienic practices. Compliance and Certification The scores of 3.03 and 3.16 show that food and drink providers are trying to follow rules and get certified. But not all of them are doing this in the same way some are more consistent than others. Knowledge Sharing and Training A score of 3.13 for sharing knowledge and 2.97 for training means there are some chances for workers to learn new things. However, these chances may not be the same for everyone, and some may not be using them well. Overall Summary The average score of 3.04 means that some rules and systems are being followed. Still, there is a need to improve training, help staff become more qualified, and make sure all providers follow the rules better.

According to Mensah and Julien (2015), the quality of food and beverage services in tourism greatly depends on food handlers' hygiene practices and their participation in continuous training programs. Their study highlights how regular food safety training and certification directly contribute to improved service quality and customer satisfaction. This supports the moderately high mean scores for hygiene standards, food safety certification, and training opportunities shown in this table.

Standards for managing food and beverage services for quality	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1. Meals are providing at agreed times identified in consultation between food and beverage providers and the tourist spot committee.	2.81	.910	S
2. Sufficient food is provided for visitor needs, including between-meal snacks.	2.77	.920	S
3. Menus vary daily and include at least one traditional meal at each dining period.	2.77	.956	S
4. Maximum use is made of fresh, organically grown food and local ingredients, including fresh meat and vegetables, but no bush meats prohibited by law.	2.81	.980	S
5. Dessert and/or fruit forms part of each meal.	2.68	.979	S
6. Food service providers wash their hands with soap in clean water before and regularly during food preparation.	2.94	.814	S

7.	Food is stored in clean containers, which are kept in good order.	2.97	.948	S
8.	Animals (domestic and pest) are kept out of food storage, cooking and dining areas.	3.06	.854	S
9.	A quality control and improvement system exist, including a system for visitor feedback on the dining experience, and visitors are actively encouraged to participate in the feedback process.	2.90	.746	S
	Overall Mean	2.86	.654	S

***Table 10**. Standards For Managing Food And Beverage Services For Quality*

The table shows how well certain standards are being followed in managing food and drink services. Nine standards are nine listed, such as serving meals on time, providing enough food, offering a variety of menu options, using local ingredients, following food safety rules, and using quality control systems. Each standard has a score between 2.68 and 3.06. The average overall score is 2.86. According to the Likert scale used, this score means these standards are only followed "Sometimes" a score between 2.50 and 3.24.

The scores suggest that food and beverage service standards are not always followed. For example, serving meals on time got a score of 2.81, and making sure there's enough food got 2.77. This shows that these basic needs are not always met. The variety of menu options and using fresh, local ingredients both scored 2.77 and 2.81, showing that these are only sometimes offered, even though they are important for tourist satisfaction. Food safety practices, such as staff washing hands 2.94 and storing food correctly 2.97, are followed more often, but still not always. Quality control, including getting feedback from guests, scored 2.90, which shows there are efforts to improve, but they're not consistent. Overall, the average score of 2.86 means there are several areas where services need to be better to meet quality expectations.

According to Tiwari et al. (2018), proper food handling practices including handwashing, clean storage, and exclusion of animals from food areas are critical to maintaining food safety in tourism and hospitality settings. emphasize the need for strict hygiene protocols and storage management, which directly support the moderately positive ratings in this table for cleanliness, storage standards, and safe food handling.

CONCLUSION

The study involved a mix of participants from Ifugao residents, tourists, and local officials. Most of them were women, and many were aged 44 and above. This variety of perspectives helped provide meaningful insights, especially on issues like sustainability, tourism awareness, and community involvement. Participants gave positive feedback about how the community is involved in managing the tourist destination. They appreciated the strong leadership, transparent management, and fair staffing. Still, there's room to improve when it comes to financial support and building stronger partnerships with nearby communities. The site was seen as socially responsible, especially in promoting gender equality, protecting local livelihoods, and creating job opportunities. There is a strong effort to respect cultural practices and involve locals in decision-making. However, more can be done to improve access to public services and support for vulnerable community members. There is strong support for environmentally friendly practices, such as protecting natural resources and proper waste management. While current efforts are working well, some conservation areas still need more attention to ensure long-term sustainability. Tour guides and tour operations are generally doing well, with good practices in safety, planning, and respect for local culture. However, many guides are not receiving regular training, which is important to keep the quality of services high. The food and beverage services meet some basic standards, but there are clear gaps especially in staff training, hygiene, and service quality. Improvements are needed in menu variety, cleanliness, and collecting customer feedback to ensure a better overall experience for visitors.

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