



Comparative Analysis on Tourism Impacts as Experienced by Agritourists and Host Communities

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Abstract

This research is a comparative analysis of the perceived impacts of agritourism by agritourists on the one hand, and the host community on the other. Out of the 31 Department of Tourism-accredited sites, three were chosen based on proximity and popularity. These were the GK Enchanted Farm, Costales Nature Farm, and Duran Farm. Quantitative method was used in conducting this research. The study found that there is a significant relationship between the respondents' perceived contribution of agritourism to tourism development, and their perceived contribution of agritourism to their quality of life. Several recommendations were made to enhance the management and development of agritourism sites, including conducting more activities inside the site, creating more interactions with the local people, and delivering additional lectures on agritourism.

Keywords

agritourism, agritourists, tourism impacts, host community, Philippines

1 Introduction

Tourism is very dynamic, it has evolved into several niches depending on the needs and wants of the tourists. Examples of popular types of tourism are dark tourism, ethnic tourism, ecotourism, religious tourism, halal tourism, agritourism, among others. As tourism expands in the Philippines, it is very crucial that its development and potential challenges are investigated extensively to ensure its sustainability.

Agriculture and tourism play a major role in the country's economic and cultural development (Samonte, 2014). Samonte (2014) reiterated the responsibility of the state to promote awareness and understanding of the benefits of agriculture, promote sustainable farm practices, and generate job opportunities especially in the sector. These two industries were identified by the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) as industries that would drive inclusive growth in the Philippines.

One of the challenges facing the implementation of agritourism in the Philippines is to ensure that it contributes to the improvement of the quality of life of the farmers themselves. With the introduction of agritourism, the researcher thought of conducting a study of its perceived impacts

by the agritourists, and by the host residents on their quality of life. Out of the 31 agritourism sites that are accredited by the Department of Tourism (DOT), the researcher chose three: Gawad Kalinga (GK) Enchanted Farm, Costales Nature Farm and Duran Farm. The criteria used for choosing them were proximity and popularity. These sites were accredited by virtue of Republic Act. No. 10816, also known as the Farm Tourism Development Act of 2016. This law provides for the development and promotion of farm tourism in the Philippines.

At present, there are limited researches that tackle the direct impact of agritourism to different stakeholders most especially to the tourists and the host community in terms of socio-cultural, economic and environment. The premise of this study is to address those gaps in the literature.

Also, the main goal of this study was to compare the perceived impacts of agritourism by the tourists, and by the host community. The specific objectives were: (1) to assess agritourism's impacts on the economy, society and culture, and the environment by the tourists and community residents; (2) to compare the perceived impacts of agritourism to tourism development, and quality of life by the tourists and community residents; and (3) to solicit recommendations from the respondents on how to enhance agritourism in the country.

The framework used for this study was patterned after the social exchange theory. Ap (1992) suggests that "residents evaluate tourism in terms of social exchange, that is, in terms of expected benefits or costs obtained in return for the services they supply." Social exchange theory suggests people evaluate an exchange based on the costs and benefits incurred as a result of that exchange. An individual that perceives benefits from an exchange is likely to evaluate it positively; one that perceives costs is likely to evaluate it negatively. If locals perceive that the benefits are greater than the costs, they are inclined to be involved in the exchange and, thus endorse future development in their community (Scott, 2009).

2 Literature Review

Defining Agritourism

Hsu (2005) in his study explains, "Existing for more than 100 years, agritourism, also known as agricultural tourism, farm tourism or farm-based tourism, has become a fast growing component of the tourism industry. Prof. Eli Paolo Fresnoza of the University of the Philippines Asian Institute of Tourism (2011) explained that agritourism is a hybrid concept fusing the elements of the tourism and agriculture industries. It can be harnessed as a form of special interest tourism focusing on the unique travel experiences and activities that people can have in agricultural settings. Fresnoza (2011) explained further that agritourism has the potential to be sustainable as it marries the concept of enjoyment with resource management, community empowerment, cooperation, fair trade and diversification. Moreover, agritourism does not need large capital investment outlay because many existing farm sites just need to be enhanced. In 2012, the Scottish Enterprises defined agritourism as "tourism on a working farm in which visitors can experience a direct

connection with the host form, rural life and/or the local environment." Valdivia and Barbieri (2014) defined agritourism as visiting a working agricultural setting (such as farm, ranch) for leisure, recreation and educational purposes. Topcu (2007) presented that agritourism is a new type of rural tourism, which is generally implemented in disadvantaged agricultural lands. It is developed as a development instrument for local people who are dependent on agricultural production and for sustaining agricultural lands. Many types of activities offered on farms are typified as agritourism, including those related to the appreciation of nature and agriculture (e.g., orchard tours, wildlife observations), educational activities (e.g., school tours, culinary lessons), recreational harvest (e.g., pick-your-own, fishing for a fee), and general outdoor recreational activities. As discussed by Ingavale (2015), agritourism includes opening up farms to tourists and letting them experience rural life. Srivastava (2016) pointed out that agritourism is a concept of developing and preparing villagers for creating an alternative source of earning and sustaining their heritage. This kind of tourism develops where agricultural activities and tourist interact. It involves various agricultural activities, animal rides, and stay at rural surroundings with natural and fresh cuisines.

Benefits of Agritourism

Arroyo (2012) stated that the main role of agriculture is to provide food and fiber. However, when farmers face difficulties to generate enough income through agriculture, they look for different alternatives to sustain themselves; they can opt for alternative crop farming, selling out part of their land; and or looking for other sources of income such as off-farm employment. Another alternative is the diversification of their activities and enterprises, including agritourism.

Opportunities for Agriourism

Based on the study conducted by Tuzon, et al. (2014), agritourism is a form of tourism where tourists experience traditional rural hospitality, nature and cultural experiences while helping the local community maintain their agricultural viability and diversify economically. The development of agritourism varies in particular places. Considered as a new form of tourism it provides a supplementary commercial activity on local farms. In countries like Indonesia, rural tourism developed in the plantation areas of Sumatra and Java. In Korea, farm tourism was developed through cooperative actions by households. In Malaysia, government funding supports agritourism centers for recreation and education. In New Zealand, short stay volunteering on organic farms results in improved care and concern for the natural environment, support for organic movement and self-development among visitors.

Agritourism Impacts

Kline (2007) researched the impacts brought about by agritourism. Based on her study, these impacts could be classified as economic, socio-cultural and environmental. According to her study,

there is only a small body of research literature on agritourism. In the rare instance that agritourism research is conducted, it is often focused only on the economic sector.

Agritourism in the Philippines

Samonte (2014) in his briefer on farm tourism, declared that agritourism had been initiated in different parts of the country since the 1990s. Farming is considered a vital part of Filipino culture, thus it can easily be cultivated into a tourism activity. In 2016, the Philippines created an estimated 14.6 million jobs in agriculture and tourism sectors.

Accreditation of Agritourism Sites in the Philippines

Republic Act No. 10816, otherwise known as the "Farm Tourism Development Act of 2016," recognizes the importance of agriculture in making available food and other products necessary to sustain and enhance human life, and in providing a livelihood to a major portion of the population. This act further recognizes that tourism, coupled with agriculture extension services, can disseminate the value of agriculture in the economic and cultural development of the country; serve as a catalyst for the development of agriculture and fishery communities; and provide additional income for farmers, farmworkers, and fisherfolk. Padin (2016) of the Philippine Star reported that owners of agritourism sites aiming for accreditation need to submit to the DOT documentary requirements which include a business permit, business name certificate and notarized list of names of all officials and employees. The implementing rules and regulations released by the DOT also provide that prospective farm tourism sites meet minimum standards to be accredited. Such farm sites should be in safe and peaceful locations with support infrastructure facilities –such as roads, electricity, water – have sufficient facilities and amenities – including a reception center, parking space, dining or multipurpose area, souvenir shops, accommodation and restaurants – and have tour guides.

3 Methods and Data

The researcher adopted a quantitative research design with a survey as a method. The instrument used was the questionnaire, which was used to examine the perceived economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts of agritourism. The questionnaire consisted of four parts. Part I is about the demographic profile of the respondents. Part II assessed the perception of agritourism impacts. Part III measured the contribution of agritourism to tourism development and quality of life. Part IV asked for recommendations by the respondents on how to enhance agritourism in the country.

The questionnaire adopted the TIAS (Tourism Impact Attitude Scale) which was developed by Lankford and Howard (1994). Statements that were not applicable in the Philippine setting were

disregarded. TIAS is composed of 20 statements and from these, a 5-point Likert-type response format was used. The interpretation of the values are presented below:

Likert Scale

Score	Value	Symbol	Interpretation
5	4.50-5.00	Strongly Agree	SA
4	3.50-4.49	Agree	A
3	2.50-3.49	Neutral	N
2	1.50-2.49	Disagree	D
1	1.00-1.49	Strongly Disagree	SD

The study covered three agritourism sites: GK Enchanted Farm in Pandi, Bulacan; Costales Nature Farm in Majayjay, Laguna; and Duran Farm in San Ildefonso, Bulacan. The researcher used convenience sampling to obtain respondents. The criteria that the researcher used in order to select the place of the survey were: (1) the site must be accredited by the DOT; (2) proximity/accessibility to the researcher; and (3) number of tourist arrivals.

Out of the 385 questionnaires distributed, a response rate of 91% (350) was obtained. There were 150 respondents for each group of agritourists and host community from GK Enchanted Farm that were surveyed and interviewed in February 2017. In the case of Costales Nature Farm and Duran Farm, a total of 50 respondents for each group of agritourists and host communities were also surveyed and interviewed in March 2017.

Due to the moratorium on school tours issued by the Commission on Higher Education in February 2017 under CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 17 series of 2012, there was a sudden decrease in the tourism arrivals in agritourism sites so the researcher had difficulty in getting a 100% response rate.

4 Results and Discussion

Table 1 provides the comparative analysis of perceptions of agritourists to the impacts brought about by tourism. Data showed that overall, agritourists that were surveyed and interviewed at GK and Costales Farms believed that agritourism created a high positive impact on the destination. Respondents at the Duran Farm rated the impacts at just moderately positive. GK got the highest overall mean (4.76) followed by Costales (4.55) and Duran (4.20).

Although the three sites have a high overall mean, looking at it separately by category of impact, it can be seen that both Costales and Duran garnered an assessment of moderately positive impact. This means that unlike at GK, the agritourists have not yet experienced some of the benefits, especially in the category of socio-cultural and environmental impacts. Although Costales was the first DOT-accredited agritourism site in the Philippines, it only garnered a moderately positive impact in terms of socio-cultural aspect. Foreign visitors who were interviewed at the site revealed that they expected more social interactions from the locals. Duran Farm had an overall assessment of moderately positive impact simply because the site is only in the development stage

unlike GK Enchanted Farm that is now fully-developed and has best practices in management with the help of Gawad Kalinga and foreign interns.

Table 1. Comparison of Perceived Tourism Impacts of Agritourists

Impact Variable	GK Enchanted Farm		Costales Nature Farm		Duran Farm	
	GM	I	GM	I	GM	I
Economic	4.87	HPI	4.58	HPI	4.15	MPI
Socio-cultural	4.64	HPI	4.37	MPI	4.11	MPI
Environmental	4.77	HPI	4.69	HPI	4.34	MPI
TOTAL	4.76	HPI	4.55	HPI	4.20	MPI

Legend: High Positive Impact (HPI) = 4.50 to 5.00; Moderately Positive Impact (MPI) = 3.50 to 4.49; Not Make Any Difference (NMAD) = 2.50 to 3.49; Moderately Negative Impact (MNI) = 1.50 to 2.49; High Negative Impact (HNI) = 1.00 to 1.49.

Table 2 shows the comparative analysis of the three agritourism sites as experienced by its host community. Based on the results, only Duran Farm got only an assessment of moderately positive impact while both GK Enchanted Farm and Costales Nature Farm obtained high positive impact respectively. The reason why Duran Farm got only an assessment of moderately positive impact was that in terms of the socio-cultural aspect, the overall assessment was low (3.88). This assessment came mostly from the foreign tourists that visited the site. According to them, they were expecting more interaction from the locals since they were interested to learn more about the culture of the Filipinos.

Table 2. Comparison of Perceived Tourism Impacts of Host Community

Impact Variable	GK Enchanted Farm		Costales Nature Farm		Duran Farm	
	GM	I	GM	I	GM	I
Economic	4.96	HPI	4.69	HPI	4.20	MPI
Socio-cultural	4.74	HPI	4.55	HPI	3.88	MPI
Environmental	4.88	HPI	4.66	HPI	4.05	MPI
TOTAL	4.86	HPI	4.63	HPI	4.04	MPI

Table 3 shows the assessment of both agritourists and the host community have a statistically significant relationship since the significant 2-tailed value is less than the significance value of 0.01 in terms of concern for tourism development and contribution to the quality of life. This means that the null hypothesis is rejected. This suggests that there is a true relationship existing between the perception of the agritourists and the host community towards agritourism. Both the agritourists and the host community have a positive view of agritourism.

Table 3. Correlation between the Respondents' Assessment on Agritourism based on its Contribution to Tourism

		Contribution to Tourism Development	Contribution to Quality of Life
Agritourists	Pearson Correlation	1	.162 **
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	500	500
Host Community	Pearson Correlation	.162 **	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	500	500

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 4 summarized the consolidated recommendations gathered from the response of the agritourists and the host community. Since this part in the questionnaire is an open-ended question, the researcher grouped the responses according to the topic and chose the top five answers based on the highest frequencies.

The most frequent recommendation was for the agritourism sites to have more interesting activities. Although the three sites have various activities (e.g., tree planting, harvesting, animal encounters) the respondents wanted more experiences and learning.

The second recommendation of the respondents was to have additional informative lectures about agritourism on the site. Although the three sites give overviews of doing sustainable agriculture and farming, the respondents wanted thorough seminars and workshops on agritourism.

An interesting recommendation was for the agritourism sites to provide more interaction with the community. The agritourists found it very interesting to learn more about the culture of the local people, especially their contributions to sustainable development using their endemic knowledge, practices and skills.

Providing directional signages was also another recommendation of the agritourists so that they can easily find the site that they want to see.

The fifth recommendation of the respondents especially the agritourists was to improve the visitor management inside the agritourism sites. Visitor management includes satisfying the visitors and giving them quality service. Although the agritourists did not have a bad experience during the visit, they nonetheless wanted the quality of service to be improved.

Table 5. Consolidated Overall Recommendations from the Agritourists and the Host Community about Agritourism

Recommendations	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
More interesting activities inside the site	223	74.33	1
Additional lectures about agritourism	187	62.33	2
More interaction with the locals	128	42.67	3
Provide directional signages	57	19.0	4
Improve visitor management	34	11.33	5

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

In terms of tourism impacts, the most felt impact was the economic aspect followed by environmental and socio-cultural. In assessing the three categories of tourism impacts, overall, the agritourists had a higher level of agreement than the host community in terms of viewing the impacts to tourism from agritourism positively.

Finally, the consolidated recommendations of the respondents must be implemented in order to improve the management and development of agritourism sites. These proposed recommendations would help the management to have an efficient management system that would give both the visitors and the local residents satisfaction. The management of these agritourism sites must ensure that the needs and wants of the tourists are being satisfied. It should also continue to prioritize the host community in employment to have a Community-Based Sustainable Development. Farmers must also be given priority by the national government by giving them financial and infrastructural aids so that they could operate their own agritourism site and be empowered as productive citizens of our country. The agritourism sites must also come up with programs wherein there is more interaction between the tourists and the locals. This would create understanding provide opportunities to learn each other's culture.

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