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AN ANALYSIS OF THE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION OF BIMP-EAGA TOURISTS ON PUERTO PRINCESA CITY AS A DESTINATION: A BASIS FOR STRATEGIC NICHE MARKETING

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BUSINESS RESEARCH

Abstract

*This is a descriptive study that aims to look into BIMP-EAGA tourism as a new niche market for the Puerto Princesa City destination. Puerto Princesa City, the so called “City in the Forest” and the “Cleanest and Greenest City” tucked in a beautiful island cove littered with islands with pristine powdery white sand beaches and cradling within its bosom ‘One of the World’s New Seven Wonders of Nature’ which is also a UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site, the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park (PPSRNP), has tourism as its main industry. The recent tourism boom has triggered a development boom in the City which resulted into a large glut in supply of tourist products and services. The **only** acceptable solution to this problem is clear: the City has to bring in more tourists. Tourism from the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA) has come to the fore as a market that has a potential to be a niche market. In order to get a decent share of this fast-growing market, the destination needs to know what these tourist want and how satisfied they are of what they have seen so far in Puerto Princesa City. Findings of the study shows that the BIMP-EAGA tourists who have been motivated to visit the Puerto Princesa City destination are young male Malaysian professionals who makes short but frequent travels to different destinations, is technology oriented and likes to make his own travel plans and bookings. He usually mixes work and pleasure in travelling.*

That's why friends and co-workers are his usual travel companions. He usually plans his trips a month ahead at a budget of less than P10,000. Though capable of spending more, he makes sure that every expense is worth its value.

He considers all elements of a tourist destination as IMPORTANT particularly PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AMENITIES, HUMAN RESOURCES, IMAGE and CHARACTER, and PRICE which he rated as VERY IMPORTANT. While ATTRACTIONS and ACCESSIBILITY were considered as IMPORTANT. In his recent experience, he rated only the element of IMAGE and CHARACTER as VERY SATISFACTORY. ATTRACTIONS, HUMAN RESOURCES, and PRICE were rated as SATISFACTORY. While PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AMENITIES, and ACCESSIBILITY were rated UNSATISFACTORY. Further, only IMAGE and CHARACTER was classified as STRENGTH. The rest were WEAKNESSES. Recommendations are herein proposed to improve the weaknesses and to maintain the strengths.

1. Introduction

Tourism has been acknowledged time and time again as a major contributor to the economies of local communities through direct revenue, employment, upgraded infrastructure and development of communities. More so for the Philippines (Yu, 2011), whose archipelagic nature and a culture enriched by its colonial experiences, showcases a wealth of scenic views that attracts tourists of every kind. The Philippine National Statistical Coordination Board (2013) declared that tourism remains one of the country's key drivers for sustainable economic growth, as one of the three largest industries of the country accounting for an average of 6.7% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). For Puerto Princesa City, the so called "City in the Forest" and the "Cleanest and Greenest City" tucked in a beautiful island cove littered with islands with pristine powdery white sand beaches and cradling within its bosom 'One of the World's New Seven Wonders of Nature' which is also a UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site, the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park (PPSRNP), it is but natural for tourism to be its main industry. Moreover, Puerto Princesa City Mayor Lucilo R. Bayron has recently referred to the City as the "Gateway to the World's Best Island" since it houses the Puerto Princesa International Airport, the entry way to the island of Palawan, which was named the World's Best Island for 2013 by Travel+Leisure Magazine. As such, tourists who want to visit Palawan which also harbors another UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Tubbataha Reef, necessarily becomes, first, a visitor of Puerto Princesa City. Such endowments undoubtedly gives Puerto Princesa City due confidence as a

tourist destination. Today, however, tourism is riddled by cut-throat competition. Tourist spots abound everywhere. Everybody is out there proverbially waving the tourist to ‘come hither’. Thus, a destination should not just be beautiful to attract visitors, but must encompass what the tourists wish to see and experience in their dream vacation. Satisfied customers are also the best marketing tools to invite more tourists into the destination. Customer satisfaction is the key for destination success and for sustainability of tourism growth.

High level competition is in fact prevalent in the entire business arena that it has become a showdown of marketing strategies. Niche marketing (Thilmany, 2008) is one very effective way of getting ahead of competition by being able to specialize on a certain set of customers. It allows managers to use new and untapped resources and create new revenue streams in addition to what it already has. Applying niche marketing to tourism (Ali-Knight, 2011), involves the clustering of tourists into groups characterized by specific travel motivations in choosing the destinations to visit. This focuses marketing strategy on key products and services that attract the prospective tourists of the particular niche market. Chris Anderson (2004) correctly observed this global trend declaring that “increasingly, the mass marketing is turning into a mass of niches.”

This clustering into niches has also been used by developing countries who find themselves powerless in the face of super powers reigning in the global economy. Such countries sought leverage in economic cooperation. They consolidate their forces; help each other and work together to get ahead of competition as a group. This is exactly why the countries of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Philippines banded together to be the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area or what is commonly known as BIMP-EAGA.

Research Objectives

The following objectives served as a guide in the conduct of the study.

1. To determine the profile of the BIMP-EAGA tourists of Puerto Princesa City;
2. To know what the BIMP-EAGA tourists find most important in the different elements of a tourist destination;
3. To make recommendations on what strategies the City could implement in order to attract more tourists and maximize gains from the BIMP-EAGA niche market.

Statement of the Problem

The tourism boom in Puerto Princesa City has triggered a development boom. Tourism related businesses, from hotels, inns and pension houses, travel and tour agencies, and tourism transport services, have rapidly sprouted up all over the City and existing ones rapidly expanded. So rapid has been the response of the tourism industry investors, that it has quite surpassed the increase in tourism arrivals, producing a large glut in supply of tourist products and services. In the accommodation sector alone, data taken from the City Engineering Office shows that from the existing 3,821 room capacity of the city, 1,022 additional rooms are under construction within this year such that by 2014, the city shall have a total of 4,843 rooms, more than double that of only 1,896 in 2011. This can house more than 3.5 million tourists a year; a far cry from the present tourism level of six hundred thousand.

Tourism, just as all the other industries, has been forced to shift from mass to niche marketing in order to sustain growth and maximize profits. Niche marketing entails the focus of marketing strategies towards the preferences of a specific market.

In the case of Puerto Princesa City, BIMP-EAGA tourism has presented itself as a new niche market now accessible to the City's tourism industry. In the pursuit of this new opportunity, an analysis of its current position relative to this particular market is necessary.

This study aimed to examine the strengths and weaknesses of Puerto Princesa as a tourist destination in catering to the BIMP-EAGA tourists by determining the gap between the market's preferences and current level of satisfaction. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the BIMP-EAGA tourists in terms of:
 - a. Socio-Demographic: nationality, employment status, age, gender;
 - b. Travel Information: connectivity option, source of travel information, booking preferences, frequency of travel, purposes, duration, usual travel companions, planned amount of expense, planning time frame;
2. What are the most important elements of a tourist destination for the BIMP-EAGA tourists?
3. What is the present level of satisfaction of the BIMP-EAGA tourists on Puerto Princesa as a tourist destination?
4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of Puerto Princesa City as a tourist destination relative to the BIMP-EAGA niche market?
5. What recommendations can be made for the destination to be able to gain a greater share of the BIMP-EAGA niche market?

Significance of the Study

The Tourism industry is very important to the economy of Puerto Princesa City. It provides income and employment to many of its citizens. Thus, its sustainable growth and the maximization of receipts from this industry is one of the most significant goals of the City Government. This significance of the industry itself makes a study aimed at analyzing its current situation and recommending concrete steps towards strengthening the industry just as significant.

BIMP-EAGA tourism is a jewel of an opportunity for Puerto Princesa City especially with the opening of the flight route connecting the City to the rest of the EAGA member countries in the Island of Borneo. The efforts of the BIMP-EAGA Tourism Council to extend its efforts to the City now have a way of reaching it. The City must immediately grab the opportunity. Said opportunity could be gone if taken for granted. Connectivity is what gives the City access to the BIMP-EAGA niche market: a market that could provide significant benefits to the City's tourism industry due to the ongoing efforts of the whole BIMP-EAGA organization. But the continuance of the flight route would of course depend on passenger volume that would stem from tourism traffic which will be the airline's source of profit.

The opportunity is already here. The clock is ticking. No time can be wasted. Puerto Princesa City must be able to usher in more BIMP-EAGA tourists NOW.

Scope and Delimitations of the Study

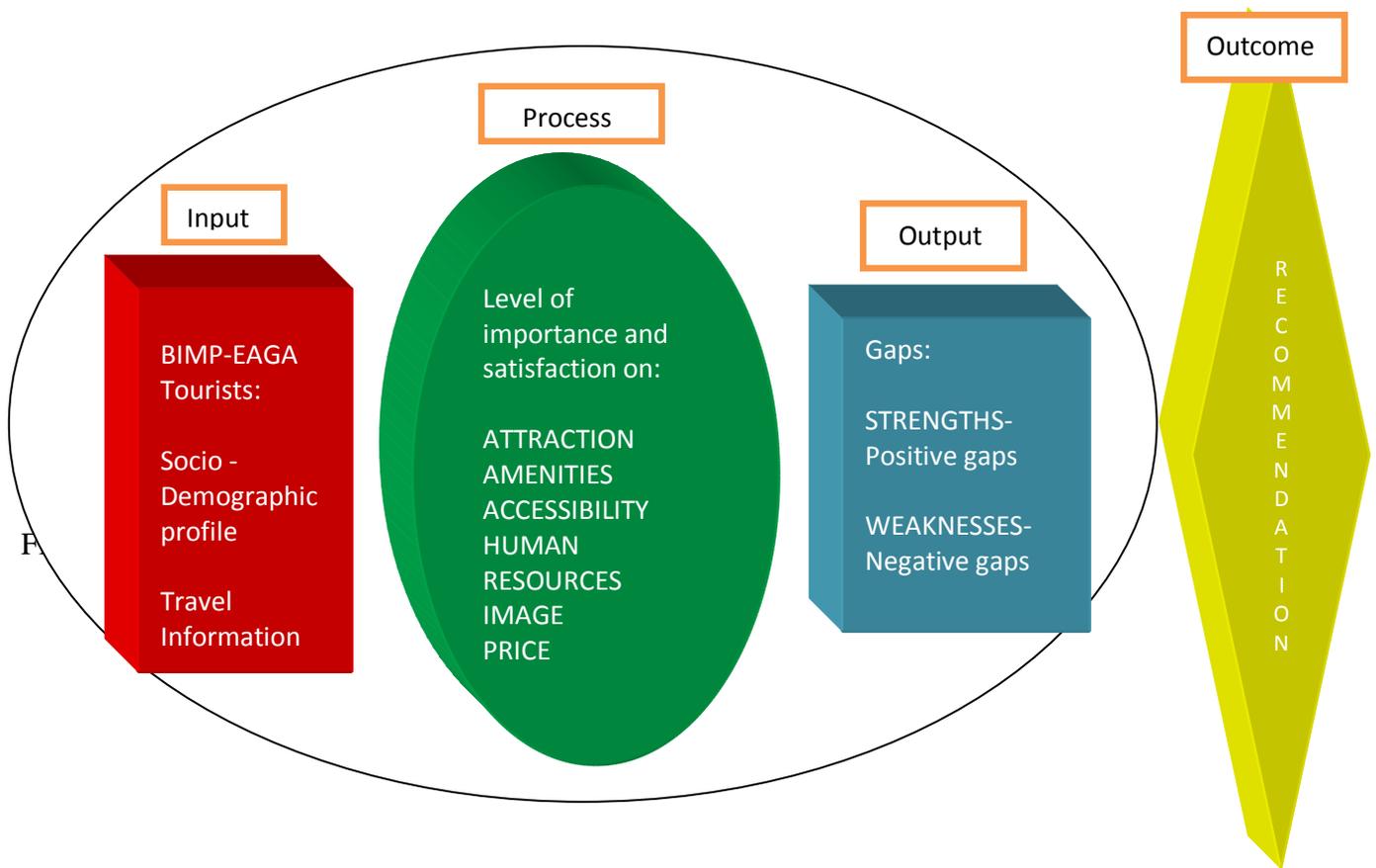
The scope of the study focused on presenting the baseline picture of Puerto Princesa City as a destination as of May 15, 2014 to June 15, 2014, which is within the period when the City has gained air connectivity with the rest of BIMP-EAGA via MASwings. Customer satisfaction of the BIMP-EAGA tourism niche market is the main tool of analysis.

The study focused on the profile and elements of a tourist destination which the BIMP-EAGA tourists considered as important and the present level of satisfaction that they have on Puerto Princesa City as a destination. The elements rated as most important are noted as the preferences of the BIMP-EAGA niche market. While their present level of satisfaction in each element and on Puerto Princesa City, in general, as a tourist destination, establishes its present position relative to the said niche market. From these information is derived the strengths and weaknesses of Puerto Princesa City as a destination to this particular niche market. Such information was gleaned from the BIMP-EAGA tourists who have stayed in Puerto Princesa City for at least a day and have taken the MASwings flight out of Puerto Princesa City

during the tourist season in May to June 2014. Thus, the outbound passengers of MASwings at the Puerto Princesa City airport in the stated period are the ones represented here. This should not be construed as an overall view of the entire BIMP-EAGA market, but instead only representative of the niche market who have access to Puerto Princesa City through MASwings.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the views of the BIMP-EAGA tourist respondents on their stay at the Puerto Princesa City destination, more specifically on the known elements of tourist destinations: Attraction, Public and Private Amenities, Accessibility, Human Resources, Image and Character and Price. This has pointed to the gaps between what they want in a tourist destination and what they have actually experienced here. Such gaps make solid bases for recommendations on how the destination could better attract BIMP-EAGA tourists. Theoretical framework is represented by the following diagram:



2. Review of Literature

Much has been written about Puerto Princesa City's tourist spots. At center stage is the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River Park especially when it was recognized as one of the New 7 Wonders of Nature in 2011. Several articles and blogs also gush about its white sand beaches and scenic views. However, there is a notable dearth of writings on Puerto Princesa City as a tourist destination in its entirety. This section contains related studies and materials that have a bearing on the study conducted.

Economic contributions of Tourism

Tourism is a major, and increasing, source of revenue for all countries all around the world (Dawes et.al., 2008) (Franceschetti, 2011) (Francioni, 2012) (Pankaew, 2003) (Kipchillat, 2005) (Siriphanich, 2007). In 2003, travel and tourism was reported to already account for approximately 10% of world GDP. The WITC as cited by Dawes et. al. (2008) reported that the industry earns in excess of US\$1.3 per day, and is the biggest export earner worldwide. Travel and tourism, together with suppliers to the industry, employs over 200 million people.

It is definitely an economic, environmental, and social force of global proportions (Kipchillat, 2005) that has been facilitated by efficient transportation and communications. Growth of the industry can be attributed to improved technology, rising disposable income, changing work patterns and consumer lifestyles.

Developing countries (Pankaew, 2003), such as the Philippines, are more dependent on income streams from tourism industry than developed countries. According to the Department of Tourism (2011) as cited by Yu (2012), tourism is one of the three largest industries in the Philippines, where most of the visitors came from East Asia. What Yu (2012) has aptly pinpointed is that international tourism reduces the country's balance of payments deficit as it brings in foreign currency from the tourists. Other sectors also benefit from tourism through forward and backward linkages. This is a very significant economic impact since the import-dominated and heavily indebted Philippine economy needs foreign earnings very badly.

3 Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research design, methods and procedures used in the conduct of this study. It also includes, among others, methods of study, sources of data, population, data gathering instrument and procedures and statistical treatment.

Research Design

This research made use of the descriptive method. This approach in tourism research is used for the purpose of basic inventory and description of the current situation in a particular aspect of the hospitality industry. This kind of research is especially useful where the gathering of tourism knowledge is just starting. The tourism research is, in general, still in such a stage of infancy that descriptive researches are valuable and necessary (Yang, 2001 p.14).

The descriptive data established by this study was the profile of the BIMP-EAGA tourists, their preferences among the elements of a tourist destination and the level of satisfaction that they had of the Puerto Princesa City Destination. From this data, the strengths and weaknesses of the said destination were deduced.

Survey methodology was chosen because this study involved the assessment of attitudes (Pankaew, 2003). Moreover, a variant of the personal interview method was used, in which participants completed a printed survey rather than verbally responded to the researcher and her assistants who personally approached prospective participants. The respondents answered the questionnaire with the researcher in attendance.

Questionnaire Design

The survey questionnaire used was the standard tourism destination questionnaire used by the Republic of Slovenia. It was cited by the UNWTO Practical Guide to Tourism Destination Management (2007) as a model survey instrument to measure tourist destination satisfaction. Its method of questioning was such that it was not too inquisitive for the tender sensibilities of tourists, yet effectively asked all the right questions that would allow the measurement of the respondents' profile, preferences and satisfaction in a tourist destination. It was general enough to be applicable for any kind of tourist destination.

Then, recognizing that customer satisfaction is a key basis for successful destination marketing, the researcher saw it to be imperative to establish the level of satisfaction of tourists in the elements of Puerto

Princesa City destination. But, in order for the information on tourist satisfaction to have any significance to marketing efforts, it should be compared with the respondent tourist's perception of what he thinks is important or ideal in a destination. When such ideals or expectations are actualized in experience, then satisfaction is felt; if not, then dissatisfaction occurs.

The Population and Sample Size of the Study

The niche market that is being targeted is the BIMP-EAGA tourists. In order to reach this particular cluster of tourists to the Puerto Princesa City destination, the researcher chose to survey the tourists from the Puerto Princesa destination who were en route to Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia after their visit to the destination during the period from May 15, 2014 to June 14, 2014. These were the passengers of MASwings flight from Puerto Princesa to Kota Kinabalu for this period. The period was chosen to capture the peak season tourism in Puerto Princesa and in the EAGA member states.

However, not all the passengers could be used as respondents. Since only the tourists to Puerto Princesa City were the target respondents, passengers who were permanent citizens of Palawan, who were on their way to visit Kota Kinabalu, were excluded from the survey. Children aged 12 and below were also excluded as the questionnaire was deemed too advanced for them. Of the 414 passengers, 114 were citizens of Palawan and 51 were children. The total sample size was, thus, a total of 249 respondents.

Data Collection Method

The researcher wrote a letter to Datuk Captain Nawawi Awang, Chief Executive Officer of MASwings, to get permission to administer the questionnaire to their passengers. Upon obtaining approval, we were referred to the Station Officer for Puerto Princesa Ms. Jonaline Chan for proper coordination.

The researcher personally administered the questionnaire at the MASwings Passengers' Waiting Lounge at the Puerto Princesa International Airport with the aid of two research assistants. Upon entry of the passengers into the Waiting Lounge, one of the research assistants sorted out the respondents from the non-respondents when they presented their passports and boarding passes to the MASwings ground crew in charge. The pinpointed respondents were then approached by the researcher and requested to participate in the survey. With at least one hour to while away at the lounge waiting for the arrival of their aircraft, the respondents had ample time to answer the 8-page questionnaire. A total of 249 questionnaires were distributed. And all the questionnaires were retrieved right after they were fully accomplished.

Data Analysis

All data gathered from the questionnaires were encoded in MS Excel. All responses were analyzed descriptively, with either frequency distributions, percentages or means and standard deviations. Research question one pertaining to the demographic profile and travel information of the respondents focused on the responses to questions 1 to 15. Frequency of responses per option was tallied and the answer with the highest frequency percentage was used to establish the overall profile of the population. Research question two and three were answered by summarizing the responses to the 43 Likert scale items in question number 16 and 17 of the survey questionnaire. Means and standard deviations were calculated for the responses so that items could be combined as appropriate to provide an average rating for importance and satisfaction for each of the elements of a tourist destination. Research question four highlighted the mean differences between the derived means for importance and satisfaction. The resulting difference is studied using gap analysis to establish the destination's strengths and weaknesses for the niche market under study. With the strengths and weaknesses identified, recommendations and prioritization is clear and easily drawn to answer research question five.

Research Diagram

The research procedure detailed above can be summed up in the following diagram:

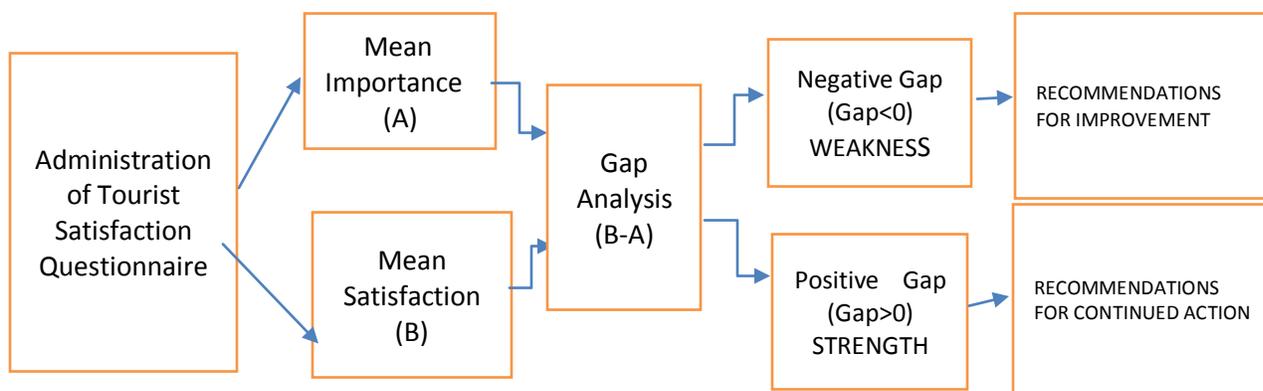


Figure 1 Research Diagram for the Analysis of Customer Satisfaction of BIMP-EAGA Tourists on the Elements of Puerto Princesa as a Tourist Destination

4 Presentation, Analysis And Interpretation of Data

This section discusses the detailed analyses of the data gathered and interpretation of findings which are presented in consonance with the research problems posed in this study.

4.1 Profile of BIMP-EAGA Tourists

Table 4.1.1 Demographic Profile of BIMP-EAGA Tourists

Demographic Category	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1. Country of Residence		
Malaysia	180	72.29
European	42	16.87
Philippines	18	7.23
Brunei	9	3.61
2. Employment Status		
Employed	144	57.83
Self-Employed	48	19.28
Unemployed	18	7.23
Retired	0	0
Student/Pupil	36	14.46
Other	3	1.20
3. Age		
under 15	6	2.41
15-24	39	15.66
25-54	168	67.47
55-74	30	12.05
75 and older	6	2.41
4. Gender		
Male	141	56.63
Female	108	43.37

Table 4.1.1 shows that the BIMP-EAGA tourists who have come to Puerto Princesa City are mostly Malaysian (72.29%), employed (57.83%), aged 25-54 (67.47%) and male (56.63%).

It is logical that the predominant nationality of our BIMP-EAGA visitors is Malaysian since this is the country which has direct connectivity with this City via MASwings flight direct from Kota Kinabalu. It is also the nearest country to this destination with similar physical features and culture that Malaysian citizens feel quite safer to venture to. The tripartite efforts of the Palawan State University BIMP-EAGA Unit, the Provincial Government of Palawan and the City Government of Puerto Princesa City in

organizing trade missions to and from Kota Kinabalu since 2011 has served as a stimulus to this tourist inflow. Those who have been able to join said cross-visits between the two states have fostered friendships and generated reasons for their return; bringing with them more visitors.

The age bracket of between 25 to 54 years old is the age when most people are usually already gainfully employed and able to decide for themselves. Hence, they are the most financially and psychologically able to venture to other places. This is also the age when most career people desire to travel as a reward or as a break or breather for a long period of hard work.

Males also dominate Puerto Princesa tourists as it does with the rest of Philippine tourism. An article by Richard S. Ehlrich in CNN Travel (February 2012) provides obvious explanations to this. First is the fact that the Philippines is a very risky country to go to (risks of terrorism and natural disasters) such that only the more adventurous males could have the guts to venture to. Moreover, being an archipelago, too much travel is needed where infrastructure is inadequate. Such travel is simply offensive to feminine sensibilities. Various blogs also suggest that the Philippines just doesn't have enough of what interests women like shopping and beauty enhancing activities.

Table 4.1.2 Travel Information of BIMP-EAGA Tourists

Tourist Information Category	Frequency	Percentage
1. Connectivity Option		
Via MASwings direct flight	201	80.72
Charter plane	0	0
Via Manila	33	13.25
Via other Philippine destination	15	6.02
Other	0	0
2. Source of Destination Information		
Already know	24	9.64
Internet	132	53.01
Friends/relatives	72	28.92
Media	24	9.64
Books and guides	27	10.84
Travel agency	6	2.41
Fairs/exhibitions	0	0
Travel package	3	1.20
Others	3	1.20
3. Frequency of Travel		
Every few years	57	22.89
Once a year	93	37.35
Several times (2-4 times) a year	51	20.48
More than 4 times a year	48	19.28
4. Booking of Tour		
Through tour organizer	114	45.78

Self-Booking	135	54.22
5. Number of Visits		
First	204	81.93
Second	18	7.23
Third and more	27	10.84
6. Planning Time		
Less than one month	129	51.81
1-3 months	111	44.58
More than 3 months	9	3.61
7. Last Minute Offer		
Yes	39	15.66
No	210	84.34

Continuation of Table 4.1.2: Travel Information of BIMP-EAGA Tourists

Tourist Information Category	Frequency	Percentage
8. Purpose of Visit		
Rest and relaxation	63	37.35
Visit friends and relatives	27	10.84
Business	33	13.25
Conference	66	38.55
Culture	18	7.23
Fun	24	9.64
Sports and recreation	3	1.20
Health	0	0
Religious	0	0
Others: Exit	18	7.23
9. Travel Companion		
None	27	10.84
Partner	27	10.84
Friends	69	27.71
Co-worker	75	30.12
Family	42	16.87
Business Partner	9	3.61
10. Duration of Visit		
Overnight	24	9.64
2 nights	135	54.22
3 nights	36	14.46
4 nights	24	9.64
More than 4 nights	30	12.05
11. Planned Travel Expense		
Less than P10,000	105	42.17
P10,000 and more	72	28.92
P20,000 and more	33	13.25
P30,000 and more	21	8.43
More than P30,000	18	7.23

Table 4.1.2 reveals the considerations of the BIMP-EAGA tourists when making their travel plans.

80.72% of respondents opted to get to Puerto Princesa City via the MASwings direct flight from Kota Kinabalu. This is explained by the fact that majority of respondents are Malaysians. MASwings, being Malaysia's national carrier, is of course the airline most trusted by the Malaysians, the one most accessible hence entails less travel time. Though Air Asia, another Malaysian commercial airline, is within its price range or sometimes even cheaper, it takes up too much effort and travel since it passes through Clark before flying to Puerto Princesa City. Europeans revealed that they prefer to exit the Philippines through Puerto Princesa simply because they don't want to pass through Manila anymore. Overseas Filipino workers in Malaysia have also found the direct flight to Puerto Princesa a cheaper way to "Exit" Malaysia. They need to "exit" even for just a day or two before their working visa expires so that their employers may be able to process their visa renewals.

Data supports what Vega (2008) has cited that the "new tourist" takes shorter but more frequent vacations throughout the year. 39.76% of respondents said they took at least two vacations a year. 19.28% even travelled more than four times a year. Still, a large number (37.85%) travelled only once a year and 22.89% travelled once every few years.

The BIMP-EAGA tourist traveler mainly gets information about possible destinations to visit from the internet (53.01%). And since 54.22% prefer to make their own bookings instead of enlisting a travel organizer, it follows that as he obtains information enough to make a travel decision from the internet, the internet is also his preferred booking mechanism. This is probably because data also shows that 51.81% only allots less than a month, in between his work hours, in the planning of his trip. But the fact that 84.34% of respondents said that their trip to Puerto Princesa City was *not* a last minute offer, means that he puts much thought in making his travel plans.

This is despite the fact that majority or 81.93% of respondents were first time travelers to the City.

38.55% of respondents said that the purpose of their visit was for conference or other educative value. But a close second among the purposes is rest and relaxation which was ticked off by 37.35% of respondents. It brings us to conclude that our visitors see the City as a perfect way to mix business and pleasure. But a small percentage come for fun or recreation. This could be because the City does not project an image of being a place for fun and recreation or lacks facilities for such pursuits.

Since the main purpose for the visit is aligned with work, it is but logical that the majority of travel companions of our respondents were their co-workers (30.12%) and/or their friends (27.71%) and family (16.87%). It is a normal option to bring friends and family with you when you go to a conference cum R&R activity in order to maximize the trip or to ride with the economies of scale offered by group or

institutional bookings. Duration of visit is limited by the thrice weekly schedule of the MASwings flights. Thus, 54.22% commonly stayed only for two nights. Moreover, common feedback of the respondents was that two days stay was more than enough time to tour the Underground River and the rest of the City. There was not much left to keep them in the destination. This also connected to the planned travel expense which 42.17% said to be only less than P10,000.00. Since they plan to stay for only two nights, they have allotted a budget that's just right for that duration and for the offers that they expect to take on in the destination. More interesting offers at the destination would surely increase the tourists' travel duration and commensurately their budget.

4.2 Importance of Elements of a Tourist Destination

The next tables analyze the elements of this tourist destination in the eyes of the respondents. Table 4.3 shows the specific preferences of the BIMP-EAGA tourists in each of the elements. Meanwhile, Table 4.4 records the level of satisfaction they had in each of the elements during their just concluded visit to the City. A mean of more than 3.0 denotes that the element is important to the BIMP-EAGA tourist. The higher the mean, the more important it is to the respondent. Table 4.5 combines Tables 4.3 and 4.4 and shows the gap between the means of their preferred elements and their satisfaction in said elements. The smaller the gap on a preferred element signifies its strength for the destination, while a bigger gap denotes a weakness.

Table 4.2.1 Level of Importance of Attractions of a Tourist Destination
to the BIMP-EAGA Tourist

Classifications of Attractions	Mean	Rank	Descriptive Rating
1. Natural(beaches, falls, caves, parks, etc)	4.77	1	Very Important
2. Iconic/Religious/Heritage buildings	3.39	3	Important
3. Cultural(museum, theaters, art galleries)	3.43	2	Important
4. Events(conference, festivals,pilgrimage)	3.20	4	Important
MEAN IMPORTANCE OF ATTRACTIONS	3.70		Important

Table 4.2.1 shows that in terms of attractions, natural wonders still have the strongest pull on BIMP-EAGA tourists recording a mean of 4.77 and the only attraction classification rated as VERY IMPORTANT, with other attractions lagging behind but still IMPORTANT for our tourist respondents

with means below 4.0 but greater than 3.0. This is an advantage for Puerto Princesa City since it is blessed with many natural sights, foremost of which is the Underground River, on record as one of the World's Seven Wonders of Nature. However, if this is the only come-on that the destination could rely on, then tourist arrivals will not be expected to have the desired increase to push the destination's economic development. It must be borne in mind that natural attractions will always be limited by their carrying capacities and weather conditions. This is already being experienced in Puerto Princesa City as many tourists, especially during the peak season and the rainy season, are unable to get entry permits to the Subterranean Park as capacities get maximized or tide and weather makes the caves inaccessible. This has been recognized by the Philippine Department of Tourism as it shifted the national tourism thrust towards man-made tourism such as golf, health and wellness, cruise, yachting, marinas, conference and incentives etc. (www.tourism.gov.ph/DestinationStrategy). Cultivation of these man-made attractions hold a high potential for tourist attention since their means are still on the high side above 3.0. A little inspired marketing could surely drum up more interest in the City's unique Festivals and cultural showcases. Festivals (Franceschetti, 2011), though not primary drivers of tourism, provide an additional attraction for tourist as they are able to enjoy a wide variety of sensory experiences: food, music, performances and visual arts. These also fit flexibly into the tourists' itinerary as they often span days or weeks.

Attractions, as an element of a tourist destination, was rated IMPORTANT. Even if natural attractions were highly preferred, the average ratings of the other attractions pulled down the overall mean to 3.70.

Table 4.2.2 Level of Importance of Public and Private Amenities of a Tourist Destination to the BIMP-EAGA Tourist

Classifications of Amenities	Mean	Rank	Descriptive Rating
1. Accommodations (hotels, inns, etc)	4.69	3	Very Important
2. adventure activities (zipline, bungee etc)	4.01	10	Very Important
3. water activities (scuba, snorkeling etc)	4.28	8	Very Important
4. recreational facilities (golf, casino, ktv, shopping malls, carnivals etc)	3.83	11	Important
5. nightlife/entertainment	4.07	9	Very Important
6. conference facilities	3.53	13	Important
7. worship facilities (church/temple)	3.72		

		12	Important
8. food venues (restaurants, markets etc)	4.48	5	Very Important
9. Halal certified menus/restaurants	3.49	14	Important
10. visitor information (maps, road signs)	4.35	6.5	Very Important
11. Accessible tour packages	4.51	4	Very Important
12. Basic utilities(water,electricity,wifi,etc)	4.82	1	Very Important
13. emergency/medical assistance facilities	4.70	2	Very Important
14. financial facilities(ATMs, credit cards)	4.35	6.5	Very Important
MEAN IMPORTANCE OF AMENITIES	4.20		Very Important

Public and private amenities posted a VERY IMPORTANT rating with an overall mean of 4.20 on Table 4.2.2. This is but logical as tourists require accommodations, activities to do and other logistical support systems while away from home.

Highest ranking of the fourteen (14) classifications of amenities were of course among the basic living needs of humans food, shelter, water and money which is necessary to buy these and other luxuries he may want. It was thus no wonder that the following garnered high scores: basic utilities (4.82, rank 1), emergency or medical capabilities and facilities (4.70, rank 2), accommodations (4.69, rank 3), food venues (4.48, rank 5), and financial facilities (4.35, rank 6.5). It is worth noting also that the basic utilities classification include wireless internet service. This has indeed become a natural requirement for our technology savvy tourist. Moreover, amenities that provide ease in touring the destination also recorded high means on our table with tour packages at 4.51 and visitor information at 4.35. All of these were deemed by the respondent tourists as VERY IMPORTANT amenities that a destination should have.

Other VERY IMPORTANT tourist facilities were activities that they wanted available in the destination such as water, nightlife/entertainment, and adventure activities which all also had means above 4.0. Tourist interest in these activities could be another solution to the noted limitation of natural activities. These also encourage tourists to spend more time and money in the destination.

The rest of the amenities were still considered IMPORTANT by our respondents. Facilities related to religion, particularly worship facilities and Halal-certified food for our Muslim visitors had means of

3.72 and 3.49, respectively. It should be noted that our BIMP-EAGA tourists are predominantly Malaysian, who are in turn predominantly Muslim.

Conference facilities were also deemed IMPORTANT with a mean of 3.43. This is to be expected of a set of respondents whose majority's purpose was their participation in a conference. This would include function halls and presentation equipment.

Table 4.2.3 Level of Importance of Accessibility of a Tourist Destination to the BIMP-EAGA Tourist

Classifications of Accessibility	Mean	Rank	Descriptive Rating
1. Direct commercial flight	4.40	2	Very Important
2. Roads in good condition	4.18	6	Very Important
3. Airport facilities	4.06	7	Very Important
4. Public transport	4.37	3	Very Important
5. Specialized tourist transport	3.86	8	Important
6. PWD access	3.46	10	Important
7. Hike or bike trails	2.48	12	Unimportant
8. Sea access and port facilities	2.86	11	Unimportant
9. Website for tourist purposes	4.25	5	Very Important
10. Online access for bookings and inquiries	4.27	4	Very Important
11. Immigration policies	4.57	1	Very Important
12. Proximity of attractions to town proper	3.71	9	Important
MEAN IMPORTANCE OF ACCESSIBILITY	3.87		Important

In terms of accessibility, Table 4.2.3 reveals that our respondents gave highest credence to immigration policies and air access as essential entry requirements into the destination. These had the highest means at 4.57 and 4.40, respectively, versus sea access which was, though still considered as IMPORTANT, second to the last among all accessibility classifications at a mean of 2.86. Having given such

importance to air access, airport facilities, with a mean of 4.06 was, as a matter of course, also considered very essential by our tourist respondents.

Within the destination, road conditions and public transport were given next significance, ranking 3rd and 6th respectively, at means of 4.37 and 4.18. It is worthy to note that public transport was given higher importance than specialized tourist transport which was only rated 3.86. This is corollary to this study's earlier finding that our tourist respondents are independent minded do-it-yourself kind of people, and thus want to find their own way into the thoroughfares of the destination by themselves. But, independent and nature loving as he is, our tourist respondents considered hike and bike trails UNIMPORTANT at a mean of 2.48.

Our new age techno-savvy tourists naturally put the destination website and on-line access on his list of VERY IMPORTANT accessibility requirements with means of 4.25 and 4.27, respectively. The website is his major information guide before and during his trip, while on-line access is his communication tool to show-off his vacation experiences via the various social media, or keep tabs on home and business even while on travel.

Access for people with disabilities (PWD) and proximity of attractions were also considered IMPORTANT. Provisions for the disabled and differently abled are established requirements worldwide as empathy for this sector has grown in the recent years. PWDs also want to travel and their families, who also want them with them in family vacations, would choose destinations which give them access to buildings, transport and such facilities. Meanwhile, proximity of attractions simply means that tourist sites are within one hour travel to and from the town proper where the tourists are usually checked in. Long trips to the attractions naturally dampen tourists' enthusiasm.

Overall, with only two components rated as unimportant, the element of ACCESSIBILITY was rated IMPORTANT with a mean of 3.87.

Table 4.2.4 Level of Importance of Human Resources of a Tourist Destination to the BIMP-EAGA Tourist

Classifications of Human Resources	Mean	Rank	Descriptive Rating
1. Technically well-versed	3.94	4	Important
2. Able to converse in mother tongue	3.81	5	Important
3. Communicate well in English	4.36	2	Very Important
4. Friendly, approachable, accommodating	4.61	1	Very Important
5. Always put guests first	4.29	3	Very Important
MEAN IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN RESOURCES	4.20		Very Important

Table 4.2.4 shows that a destinations HUMAN RESOURCES are VERY IMPORTANT to them, giving this element an overall mean of 4.20. Being in a foreign place, tourists rely mainly on the assistance of tourist personnel for assistance. Hospitality is what they appreciate as something above the mere service that they pay for.

Respondents required the destination's service personnel to be, first and foremost, attentive to guests. Being friendly, approachable and accommodating had the highest mean of 4.61, while putting guest first was also high at 4.20. While still posted as important at 3.94, technical training of personnel was not a priority for the respondents. In terms of communication, respondents wanted to make sure that the service personnel were able to communicate well in the universal language, English, as seen in its 4.36 rating. They would, however, appreciate the extra-effort of service personnel to converse in their mother tongue as something of an unexpected surprise, giving this element a rating of 3.81 putting it still on the important side of the scale above 3.0.

Table 4.2.5 Level of Importance of Image and Character of a Tourist Destination to the BIMP-EAGA Tourist

Classifications of Image and Character	Mean	Rank	Descriptive Rating
1. Positive opinion	4.11	5	Very Important
2. Friendly towards the guests	4.35	2	Very Important
3. Unique image	4.21	4	Very Important
4. Popular	4.03	6	Very Important
5. Peaceful, safe and secure	4.29	3	Very Important
6. Respects the natural environment	4.33	1	Very Important
MEAN IMPORTANCE OF IMAGE AND CHARACTER	4.22		Very Important

The IMAGE AND CHARACTER of the destination is shown on Table 4.2.5 as VERY IMPORTANT with all of its components rated a hundred percent VERY IMPORTANT. Right at the

point of choosing which destination to go to, tourists first find out what the place is known for.

The “new tourist” who is nature loving and environment conscious finds an image of a destination that respects the natural environment as most important with a mean of 4.33. Next in rank is the friendliness of the people of the destination towards guests. Guests want to go where they are welcome. This is proven by the mean rating of 4.35 given to this component. And this does not only pertain to the hospitality of service personnel, but that of the local community living in the destination. With friendly people where guests feel welcome, the image of a peaceful, safe and secure place for them is corollary. Our respondents value their safety and security highly as seen in the mean rating of this component at 4.29.

Our tourist respondents also value what other people say about a destination. They want to go to a place that they can brag about to be unique, popular and one that others have a positive opinion about. These characteristics were rated VERY IMPORTANT with means of 4.21, 4.03 and 4.11 respectively.

Table 4.2.6 Level of Importance of Price of a Tourist Destination to the BIMP-EAGA Tourist

Classifications of Price	Mean	Rank	Descriptive Rating
1. Price of B&B is reasonable	4.51	1	Very Important
2. Prices of additional offers are favorable	4.48	2	Very Important
MEAN IMPORTANCE OF PRICE	4.50		Very Important

All these tourist offers would only be accessible to the tourist “If the price is right!” Thus, it is a primary consideration for our tourist respondents. This is revealed by Table 4.2.6 which recorded a mean rating for PRICE at 4.50. The most basic tourist amenity of “bed and breakfast” or B&B is first on the list with a mean of 4.51. Prices of additional offers like tour packages for attractions and activities, souvenirs, food and other amenities, was considered equally VERY IMPORTANT at a mean of 4.48. It should be noted that the respondents rate price relative to prices of these products in their own place or in comparison with other destinations. Thus, a high importance rating for this element means that they want prices that are competitive and within their planned expense for their vacation.

In summary, the following table shows the level of importance that the BIMP-EAGA tourists gave to the six elements of a tourist destination.

Table 4.2.7 Level of Importance of the Elements of a Tourist Destination to the BIMP-EAGA Tourist

Elements of a Tourist Destination	Mean	Rank	Descriptive Rating
1. ATTRACTIONS	3.70	6	Important
2. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AMENITIES	4.20	3.5	Very Important
3. ACCESSIBILITY	3.87	5	Important
4. HUMAN RESOURCES	4.20	3.5	Very Important
5. IMAGE AND CHARACTER	4.22	2	Very Important
6. PRICE	4.50	1	Very Important

Table 4.2.7 clearly indicates that for the BIMP-EAGA tourist, four elements are VERY IMPORTANT. Most important is the economic consideration of PRICE with a mean of 4.50. Indeed, no matter what a destination has to offer, if the tourist is not able to afford it or does not find value for money to be spent in visiting it, then he will not go there. Next in rank is IMAGE AND CHARACTER with a mean of 4.22. As stated, people value others' opinion. Moreover, reputation is the only information one can have of a destination that he has not yet experienced. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AMENITIES and HUMAN RESOURCES are tied at third rank, both with means of 4.2. Quality of what is found in the destination adds value for money. Thus, it is a definite incentive to tourists.

IMPORTANT elements, but surprisingly low on the list of priorities of our respondents, are ACCESSIBILITY and ATTRACTIONS with a mean of 3.87 and 3.70. This could be explained by the low ratings on some components of these elements which have pulled down their overall means. For example in attractions, though natural attractions was rated highly, the other kinds of attractions lagged behind. On the amenities side, two components were rated as UNIMPORTANT.

The next set of tables will show the level of satisfaction of our tourist respondents on the elements of the Puerto Princesa City destination.

4.3 Overall Assessment of BIMP-EAGA Tourists

Table 4.3.1 Overall Assessment of BIMP-EAGA Tourists on Puerto Princesa City as a Tourist Destination

Overall Category	Mean		
1. General Quality of destination offers	3.54		
2. Value of Stay at this tourist destination	3.75		
Valuable	4.05		
Gained a lot	3.92		
Worth every peso paid	3.29		
3. Pleased with decision to visit	3.87		
4. Exceeded expectations	3.36		
5. Return Value	3.71		
Will speak highly	3.58		
Would choose the destination again	3.91		
Will recommend the destination	4.05		
Will return to this destination	3.86		
Feel at home at this tourist destination	3.17		
6. Overall satisfaction of visit to the destination	3.77		
7. Had reason to complain?	YES		NO
	Expressed	Not expressed	
	6.02%	14.46%	79.52%
8. Had reason to praise?	YES		NO
	expressed	Not expressed	
	40.96%	42.17	16.87%

Table 4.3.1 validates the findings that have been discussed so far. Customer satisfaction of this tourist destination could be discussed as average at best. This is seen in the mean for overall satisfaction of 3.77. General quality of offers was barely over the median at 3.54 and aptly seconded by the rating of 3.36 on exceeding expectations. This again validates the negative gaps that pervaded the analysis of the elements of a tourist destination made above; meaning that the destination has barely come up to its customers' expectations.

Still, in general our respondents found their experiences in the destination quite valuable posting a mean of 3.75 and were quite pleased with their visit at a mean of 3.87. Majority (79.52%) did not find cause to complain about anything. While those who did were not bothered enough to express their concern. Meanwhile, 83.13% found reason to praise the destination, so much that almost half of them could not help but express their praise. Some respondents indicated that this was especially true for the service personnel of the destination who delighted them so much so that they gave generous praises and tips.

Thus, return value was still good at 3.71. And this could be the point where the destination can find an incentive for improving itself: the fact that the tourists still want to come back and/or invite friends and relatives here. Hopefully, upon their return, they will find more attractions, better amenities and accessibility, and a better destination as a whole.

5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Based on the study the following conclusions are drawn:

PROFILE

The BIMP-EAGA tourists who have been motivated to visit the Puerto Princesa City destination have the following profile:

- a. He is a young male Malaysian professional;
- b. He makes short (3 days, 2 nights) but frequent travels to different destinations, is technology oriented and likes to make his own travel plans and bookings. He usually mixes work and pleasure in travelling. That’s why friends and co-workers are his usual travel companions. He usually plans his trips a month ahead at a budget of less than P10,000. Though capable of spending more, he makes sure that every expense is worth its value.

IMPORTANCE

The BIMP-EAGA tourists who have come to Puerto Princesa rated the elements of PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AMENITIES, HUMAN RESOURCES, IMAGE and CHARACTER, and PRICE as VERY IMPORTANT to them. While ATTRACTIONS and ACCESSIBILITY were considered as IMPORTANT. No element was seen as UNIMPORTANT.

Table 5.1 shows the specific categories rated as VERY IMPORTANT.

Table 5.1: Elements of a Tourist Destination Rated Very Important

ELEMENTS OF A TOURIST DESTINATION	VERY IMPORTANT categories
1. Attractions	Natural
2. Public and Private Amenities	Accommodations Activities: (adventure, water, recreational and entertainment) Food venues Tour Assistance: Visitor information and Tour packages Basic Utilities Facilities: emergency/medical and financial
3. Accessibility	Entry: direct commercial flight, airport facilities and visitor friendly immigration policies

	Public transport Internet Access: website and on-line access
4. Human Resources	English speaking, friendly, approachable, accommodating and always puts guests first
5. Image and Character	positive, friendly, unique, popular, peaceful, environment friendly
6. Price	reasonable B&B prices and favorable prices of additional offers

Table 5.2 shows the specific categories rated as IMPORTANT.

Table 5.2: Elements of a Tourist Destination Rated as Important

ELEMENTS OF A TOURIST DESTINATION	IMPORTANT categories
1. Attractions	Iconic, Cultural, Events
2. Public and Private Amenities	Facilities: Recreational, Worship Activities: water Halal certified food
3. Accessibility	Specialized tourist transport PWD access Proximity to town proper
4. Human Resources	Technically well-versed Able to converse in mother tongue

Table 5.3 shows the categories rated as UNIMPORTANT:

Table 5.3: Elements of a Destination Rated as Unimportant

ELEMENTS OF A TOURIST DESTINATION	UNIMPORTANT categories
1. Accessibility	Hike/Bike trails Sea access and port facilities

SATISFACTION

The BIMP-EAGA tourists who have come to Puerto Princesa rated only the element of IMAGE and CHARACTER as VERY SATISFACTORY.

ATTRACTIONS, HUMAN RESOURCES, and PRICE were rated as SATISFACTORY. While PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AMENITIES, and ACCESSIBILITY were rated UNSATISFACTORY.

Table 5.4.1 shows the specific categories rated VERY SATISFACTORY.

Table 5.4.1: Elements of a Tourist Destination Rated Very Satisfactory

ELEMENTS OF A TOURIST DESTINATION	VERY SATISFACTORY categories
1. Attractions	Natural
2. Public and Private Amenities	None
3. Accessibility	None
4. Human Resources	English proficiency, friendly and always puts guests first
5. Image and Character	Positive, friendly, unique, peaceful and respect for environment
6. Price	Price of B&B

Table 5.4.1 shows the specific categories rated as SATISFACTORY:

Table 5.4.2: Elements of a Destination Rated Satisfactory

ELEMENTS OF A TOURIST DESTINATION	SATISFACTORY categories
1. Attractions	Iconic and Cultural
2. Public and Private Amenities	Accommodations Accessible tour packages Food venues Basic utilities Financial facilities
3. Accessibility	Direct commercial flight Specialized tourist transport Immigration policies Proximity to town proper
4. Human Resources	Technically well-versed
5. Image and Character	Popular
6. Price	Prices of additional offers

Table 5.4.2 shows the specific categories rated as UNSATISFACTORY:

Table 5.4.3: Elements of a Destination Rated as Unsatisfactory

ELEMENTS OF A TOURIST DESTINATION	UNSATISFACTORY categories
1. Attractions	Events
2. Public and Private Amenities	Activities: adventure, water, entertainment Facilities: recreational, conference, worship, financial Visitor information
3. Accessibility	Road condition Airport facilities Public transport PWD access

	Hike/Bike trails Sea access and port facilities Internet access: website and on-line access
4. Human Resources	Able to converse in mother tongue
5. Image and Character	None
6. Price	None

And the category on Halal food was the only one rated VERY UNSATISFACTORY.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Of the elements of a tourist destination, only IMAGE and CHARACTER was classified as a STRENGTH. The rest were WEAKNESSES.

Specifically, only the categories of positive opinion, friendliness, peacefulness and uniqueness were considered as STRENGTHS. The rest of the categories were classified as WEAKNESSES.

Conclusion

Puerto Princesa City as a tourist destination has projected a very good image and character to the BIMP-EAGA niche market. The BIMP-EAGA tourists are so convinced by this projected image that they have ventured into the destination as soon as connectivity was established. However, based on the findings of this study, this destination is not prepared to service this particular market. Those who have ventured in still managed to have a fairly satisfactory trip in general but in retrospect, they have found the destination lacking in many of the elements that they deemed important in a tourist destination.

This should then be a wake-up call to the destination. It has to raise the bar on its attractions, public and private amenities, accessibility, human resources and price in order for it to better service the large international market out there; beginning with its nearest neighbors in the BIMP-EAGA sub-region.

The destination should put renewed focus on tourism, its main industry. The prevalence of negative gaps in the destination elements points to a macro problem and connotes a need for action by destination management. This leads to the conclusion that the destination requires a more focused management: a team of tourism marketing experts that will serve as an umbrella management to oversee the whole destination's plans and strategies. This team must be separate from government, though empowered by it so as to create and implement the necessary policies that benefit the whole industry and all its stakeholders in the long run.

At the time of this writing, MASwings has *temporarily suspended* its flight route to Puerto Princesa City due to *“commercial reasons”* beginning September 2014. This is an additional “temporary” obstacle in the accessibility of this destination to the BIMP-EAGA niche market. It has surely dampened the interest of the said market to choose this destination. But it should all the more “raise the alarm” for Puerto

Princesa City. While the suspension is temporary, it should make the necessary improvements so that consumer demand could force the resumption of the flight operation. Or better yet, the tourists could be so motivated to visit the destination to find other entry routes reach it. Where there is customer satisfaction in product quality, coupled with good marketing, there the customers surely will be.

Recommendations:

At the height of being the world's best golfer, Tiger Woods said, "No matter how good you get, you can always get better, and that's the exciting part. There's always stuff to work on. You're never there."

This study does not intend to portray Puerto Princesa City as a lesser kind of destination. As it cradles one of the world declared "Wonders of Nature" it already occupies a high seat in the world of tourism. Instead, this study shares the excitement that Tiger Woods talks about in finding the path towards getting better or the pursuit of being the best. Seeking improvement should not be negatively construed as fault finding or problem solving but as the constant search for the better way of doing even the things that we are already good at. It must be kept in mind that the stimulus in making this study is growth; specifically an increase in tourist arrivals. This was why the desire to penetrate the BIMP-EAGA niche market came about. The respondents who have painstakingly participated in this study have lighted the way towards becoming a better destination; a destination more able to service a new market and developing an untapped potential. The findings and conclusions collated herein have detailed where to go first. And the following recommendations propose the steps that need to be made.

Profile of the Target Niche Market

In the making of the destination's strategic plan towards the BIMP-EAGA niche market, the customer profile outlined in this study's findings would be a solid basis for developing strategies in marketing, service delivery, and environment creation.

Findings of the study in the profile of the respondents show that majority of the BIMP-EAGA tourists' main source of travel information is the internet and that they do self-booking. Ratings of VERY IMPORTANT were also given by respondents for basic utilities including wifi, website and on line access. This shows that they are very technology oriented. Thus, first strategy recommendation is the creation of a fully interactive website which will be an inviting visual gallery of attractions and destination offers that the customers could purchase instantly with just a tap on his tablet or smartphone. Moreover, Wifi should be as available as food, water and electricity, wherever the tourists are being lured to. The destination's brand must pop up in internet sites which the Malaysian male young professional

usually opens for work or for personal purposes. This will ensure a total “cut-through” of the marketing message and will result in immediate sales.

Findings on profile also show that majority of the BIMP-EAGA tourists are Malaysian. Since Sabah, Malaysia is Palawan’s gateway to Malaysia and the rest of the EAGA sub-region, it is then recommended that the destination must have a presence in Kota Kinabalu. A facilitation center there would serve a significant purpose for the destination. It can coordinate with the BIMP-EAGA Tourism Council based in Malaysia so that the destination may be able to participate in the events that they stage periodically. It shall also be tasked with the creation of intra-EAGA tour circuit packages and other marketing activities. It could be the face of the destination in Malaysia; a friend, so that Puerto Princesa is not as foreign to the prospective tourist anymore. After all, a “friend” has arranged everything for his visit to his home and so he is sure everything will be all right for him there.

Other findings on profile could point planners of the destination’s strategy to more specific details on how this niche market could be reached. For example, the fact that majority are young professionals, could specify the look of the website or of advertisements which would appeal to this particular customer group.

Recommendations from Analysis of the Elements of a Destination

In the development of marketing strategies, the analyses made on the elements of a tourist destination provide cues for enhancing each area to better cater to the niche market in focus.

Specific recommendations are as follows:

1. On attractions:

Since natural attractions received the highest rating for level of importance for the respondents, the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River Park remains the star attraction of the destination. Its unique beauty must be maintained and set-off by facilities that would ensure the tourists’ enjoyment of the attraction. Every moment of the experience must be memorable and enjoyable for the guests. Booking for an entry permit should be easy and on-line. The trip from the City proper can be made enjoyable with interesting stopover venues: perhaps one with a view of the sunrise or of fishermen coming in with the day’s catch or of an ethnic tribe performing a ceremonial blessing for the journey. The entrance permit should be packaged in such a way that it becomes a souvenir in itself. Service personnel must be the most hospitable. Each group of tourists must have a guide to attend to them from entry to exit from the site. The wharf must have things to do or see while the guest is waiting for a boat to take him to the entrance. A simple complimentary drink while watching a destination film clip will be a welcome surprise. The boat ride could be made fun with sights to see along the way: a dolphin or a school of flying fish; a

mermaid fountain shooting colorful water spurts, and any other what not. A lovable bat mascot to welcome them at the cave entrance would afford a wonderful photo opportunity along with the animals roaming the site.

However, in order not to endanger its carrying capacity, other non-nature or pseudo-nature attractions must be developed in the destination. Note that findings of this study showed that respondents also rated the other categories of ATTRACTIONS, namely iconic, cultural and events as IMPORTANT. Thus, it is recommended that the destination channel new investments in this area. Theme parks, theaters, galleries, man-made showpieces like artistic buildings, historical churches or mosques, ethnic exhibits and the like could be alternative tourist venues. Events are also strong come-ons if the destination capitalizes on it by creating them with tourists, not only locals, as the target audience and bombarding the market with promotional activities for the event. All kinds of festivals could be created around food, wine, culture, music, religious, agro-industry and so many other possible themes. The destination must go around the market bidding to be the venue for sports or dance competitions, various international conventions and assemblies, and the sort. It is recommended that events be staged monthly. The destination must never think that events are made only during the times when tourists are expected to be in the destination. Instead, the mindset should be that when there are events, tourists come to the destination.

Tourists also clamor for a waterfront venue to just sit and relax. So, the plans to upgrade the Baywalk is something to look forward to.

2. On public and private amenities:

Findings of the study also showed that ACCOMMODATIONS also scored high in the respondents' ratings of importance. Though the City's inns and hotels are aesthetically laudable, the negative gap it got when compared with satisfaction showed this aspect as a WEAKNESS. This stemmed from the fact that these most of these venues are showing signs of wear. Like any icon of beauty, they need to be well maintained, constantly upgraded in terms of modernizing capabilities and offerings, and must not ever lose their charisma. A periodic face lift, some new additions here and there, will surely keep the guests gushing. This is underscored by Franceschetti (2011) who observed tourism as a search for the "photogenic". Thus, cities which want to vie for the tourists' attention must "beautify" itself so as to always look good in pictures. Photographs preserve memories and proof of having been to places or seeing amazing or unique things in other places. The opportunity for instantly sharing such beauty in a

photograph through social media only serves to magnify such an important concern for the tourist destination.

Providing state-of-the-art conference facilities and providing a prayer room for our Muslim brothers to pray in privacy would surely complete the experience for the BIMP-EAGA tourist. Fortunately, the service personnel manning these hotels and inns make the most difference since human resources scored high among our respondents. What they may lack in structure could most certainly be made up for by exemplary and personalized service.

Additional activities in the destination should be encouraged since this category was also high on the importance rating but had come up as a WEAKNESS as it posted large negative gaps in comparison with satisfaction. Parks could offer new adventure activities like ATV or go-cart races, amusement rides, or paint-ball shooting challenges. Indoor rock climbing, target shooting or casino gaming could also be offered right at the town center. Wakeboarding, white water rafting, dolphin or whale watching and other unique water activities could supplement the usual kayaking, scuba diving and snorkeling when at the beach or while island hopping. There is also a clamor for more shopping adventures. A night market could be a possible answer to this demand. The more creative the activity, the better.

Food venues were rated by respondents as VERY IMPORTANT. But though they abound in the destination, a substantial negative gap was still posted for this element adding this aspect in the destination's list of WEAKNESSES. Respondents say they have no way of knowing about these food venues. Though the more popular food venues have websites of their own, it would still be easier if these websites are linked to the destination website. The destination website must have a section on food venues, complete with specialty menu, price ranges and location map.

Note also that the aspect of Halal food was rated by respondents as IMPORTANT but VERY UNSATISFACTORY in the Puerto Princesa destination. The clamor of this market for Halal menus must be complied with, or restaurants must at least properly label pork and non-pork dishes to guide them in ordering their food.

Upgrading visitor information is another element considered by respondents as VERY IMPORTANT, but came up as UNSATISFACTORY in the Puerto Princesa destination for the respondents showing it as a major WEAKNESS. Thus, this tourist aid must be given due improvement. Doing so shoots two birds with one stone: it assists the tourist in maximizing his experience at the destination, and it also serves as a marketing tool for him to go to more tourist sites in the destination, stay longer and spend more. In short, there is no other purpose but to benefit the destination. So let us litter every corner that the tourist goes to or stops at with colorful and inviting maps, flyers, brochures and posters, as well as TV monitors or LED

boards showing film clips about the destination: starting from the airport, all tourist sites, hotel rooms and lobbies, tour agency shops, and all information desks. These marketing paraphernalia should promote various tour packages that could help them maximize their 3day-2night visit. A toll free tourist hotline and help desk must then be made available for someone to be able to help them create their own tour combinations and ever ready to resolve any complaints or problems they may have.

Findings also show a large negative gap on financial facilities and emergency/ medical facilities thus showing these as WEAKNESSES. Respondents rated financial facilities as VERY IMPORTANT and yet barely SATISFACTORY in the destination. It is thus recommended that mre financial facilities must be opened at strategic areas especially at the airport, in tourist sites, and any store or shop where the visitor is expected to spend money in, in order to improve satisfaction ratings on this highly important element for the respondents. The more money he has, the more he can spend, the more the destination earns. This should be incentive enough for the destination to ensure the putting up of more ATMs, money changers and merchants that accept credit cards at the tourists' every turn.

Emergency/medical facilities, on the other hand, was also rated by respondents as VERY IMPORTANT but UNSATISFACTORY in Puerto Princesa City. Thus, it is recommended that more medical facilities must also be established in the destination especially in tourist areas. An investment in this area could even bring about medical or cosmetic tourism where tourists go to the destination in the guise of a vacation but has actually undergone a medical or cosmetic procedure. Either way, he comes out more beautiful, slim and healthy looking, all attributable to his vacation in Puerto Princesa City. Moreover, tour guides will have to be given more extensive training in life saving, not just first aid. And emergency/medical information and procedures provided by the destination must be included in briefings that commence every tour; much like safety procedures are given before plane flights take-off.

On accessibility, with the temporary suspension of the operations of MASwings, the destination just lost out on the most important access category. It has, thus, become urgent for destination management to find alternative connectivity options for the City. It should be noted that this study found that respondents scored access via direct commercial flight as VERY IMPORTANT but only SATISFACTORY for the destination. It is recommended that destination management lobby for other commercial airlines to service the destination via direct or connecting flights to and from Malaysia. And, since an upgraded international airport is coming up, the destination just needs to focus on improving public transport and road conditions, elements which were also found to be high on the respondents' importance list but UNSATISFACTORY in the experience of the respondents in the destination. It is recommended that legislation be lobbied for the establishment of metered e-tricycles for tourist use. This

would surely maintain the novelty of public transport for our environment conscious visitors since these are environment friendly and have standard fares. It is also recommended that roads be given periodic face lifts and maintenance works to have a clean and safe look. They must have clear street signs for traffic management, tourist information and directional purposes.

Findings also show that HUMAN RESOURCES is still an area of WEAKNESS for the Puerto Princesa City destination despite the renowned Filipino hospitality to visitors. Re-training of service personnel is thus recommended on technical expertise, friendliness, guest accommodation and English proficiency which respondents rated VERY IMPORTANT and at the same time VERY SATISFACTORY but still resulted in small negative gaps signaling some WEAKNESS in these aspects.

Further, findings show that the area in the element of HUMAN RESOURCES with the biggest negative gap is in the ability of service personnel to converse in the respondents' mother tongue which, in the case of the BIMP-EAGA tourist, is Bahasa Malaysia. Based on this finding, it is thus recommended that higher education institutions in the City include the said language in the curricula of their hospitality courses. Moreover, training institutions should offer short courses in the said language for those who are already in the industry. Government legislation may also be set up to ensure that this is instituted and complied with.

The study's findings show that IMAGE and STRENGTH is the only STRENGTH of the destination from the point of view of the respondents. Thus, it is recommended that the destination continue showcasing the positive, unique, friendly and peaceful image of the Puerto Princesa destination, as well as continue all the efforts in place that have satisfied the respondents in these areas. One of these efforts is the securing presence of the City's Tourist Police force around the Town Center and in all tourist sites. Police visibility gives tourists the feeling of security and protection in the destination.

However, the study also found two areas under the element of IMAGE and CHARACTER which respondents rated as WEAKNESSES namely popularity and respect for environment due to lack of visible ecological initiatives which tourists could participate in such as waste segregation bins, souvenirs made of recycled and native materials and the like. It is therefore recommended that these ecological initiatives be provided in the destination. Destination management should come up with more unique ways of involving our new ecology and society-sensitive tourists in its sustainability efforts. Moreover, these initiatives have to be showcased in the website, in posters and brochures, signs in hotels, restaurants and tourist sites, in order to not only increase popularity and tourist attention, but more importantly, preserve the natural endowments of the destination.

Findings on the aspect of PRICE show that respondents rated the element VERY IMPORTANT and yet

only SATISFACTORY in the Puerto Princesa City destination. Though prices of basic bed and breakfast was rated by respondents as VERY SATISFACTORY, a small negative gap still pulled it into a WEAKNESS, along with prices of additional offers which was rated only as SATISFACTORY.

There are two ways that this weakness is recommended to be addressed. One is by increasing value for money for tourist products: from bed and breakfast, tour packages, up to the least souvenir or food item. Nothing is considered expensive if its value and quality is perceived by the consumer to be more than its price. Secondly, prices may be reduced to make them competitive in comparison to other destinations. One sure way that prices in the destination can be reduced is by removing the dealer/referral commissions slapped by merchandisers on the prices of tourist offers. Tips and commissions abound in the hospitality industry. Tourists voluntarily give extra for products and services that delight them. But to add it on to price takes out its voluntary feature. It becomes an imposition that many tourists feel is unfair. Destination management must stop this disadvantageous practice. If legislation is needed, then government must abide.

Roles of Tourism Stakeholders

The Role of Public and Private Sector:

The enormity of the work that needs to be done and the urgency of improvements laid out by this study's findings of weaknesses in five out of six elements necessitates a recommendation for concerted efforts of all stakeholders in the industry.

Tourism is usually private-sector led (Hamzah, 2004). Government is primarily relied on to provide 'hard' (ie. roads, airports) and 'soft' (ie. organizing special events) infrastructure to encourage private investments. Thus, the private sector has a larger role in the destination's growth. However, government must initiate the move by making the necessary investments in infrastructure and by providing policies and regulations conducive to private sector participation in the industry such as the organization of destination management, collection of data, passing of necessary legislation and providing for initial funding. Investments in the many of the recommended improvements will have to be fuelled by private money. And so it should be, since profits largely go into private coffers, too. If every investment is relied on from government, improvement will be limited and will take longer time. Businesses need to recognize that they need to invest in order for the destination to grow and that they will be the ones who will surely reap the profits from such growth. On the other hand, if each business acts on his own in pursuit of only his profits, resources will be strained and growth will be limited.

As public and private investments flow in, all stakeholders need to move in synergy towards a common

destination vision. Organizational alignment is paramount. All businesses and sectors directly and indirectly servicing the tourism industry must work closely with government or with destination management in order to synchronize activities and plans. This will minimize the duplication of efforts such that resources are expended in a manner that will maximize benefits to all stakeholders.

The Role of the Academe

Industry relies on the academe for two important tasks: human resource training and research. Findings of the study shows that HUMAN RESOURCES is an element which is very high on the respondents' priority list. This is understandable since tourism is mainly a service industry. Service quality in this industry makes a significant difference or may become a destination's competitive edge.

It is recommended that the academe urgently address this. It must be abreast with what the destination's target customers require in hospitality personnel so that they may produce aptly trained human resources for the industry. Personality development must bring out the friendly, approachable and accommodating service personnel that the customers are clamoring for. They must communicate well in English and must be conversant in Bahasa. Customer orientation must be such that guests always come first. They must also be technologically well versed and knowledgeable in the interests of young professionals. Emergency assistance and lifesaving training should also be made an essential part of their education.

The industry also needs the academe's assistance in the researches that would assist in market analysis, product development, assessments and generally, with coming up with new ways of doing things in the destination. These studies are important in helping this destination keep up with other destinations as competition grows tighter and tighter in the industry. There has to be a continued review of the internal and external environs so as it is not left lagging behind.

The Role of the Community

In recognition of the importance of the tourism industry in the economy of the City, the community has to be supportive of the destinations plans and strategies. Sharing the destination to guests should be looked on positively as a welcome occurrence and not a disturbance. Citizens should trust that destination management is ensuring sustainable development of its natural resources and must do his share in maintaining the health and beauty of the destination. Common courtesy and hospitality from the people in general could go a long way in raising the positive image of the destination and in letting the guests feel comfortable in going around.

In order to achieve this frame of mind in the community, destination management must conduct an information drive. The people must know their role and the advantage that their contributions could

achieve for them and for the City as a whole.

Future researches corollary to this study are also recommended. As previously mentioned, there is a glut in studies about this destination considering that tourism is its main industry. For example, a closer look on the effects of tourism in the socio-economic aspects of local communities could help zoom in on whether tourism remains a boon or is becoming a bane to the people living in the destination. Service quality studies on the industry will clarify the aspects of service that need to be improved. And many more significant studies can branch out from this research to aid the development of the Puerto Princesa City destination and the industry in a way that it contributes inclusive growth to its people.

The time to move up to the next level is NOW. The opportunity and the necessity has been well established in this study. BIMP-EAGA is fast moving into the ASEAN integration. And there lies OPPORTUNITY. The Puerto Princesa City destination is poised for growth, but the tourist market that has opened to it has higher expectations. There lies NECESSITY. There is no other way but to change and become better.

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ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR TOWARDS SELECTED WHITE GOODS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MODAKKURICHI BLOCK, ERODE DISTRICT

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Abstract

Consumer durable industries in India has an increasingly affluent middle class population that, on the back of rapid economic growth, The industry has been witnessing significant growth in recent years due to several factors, such as retail boom, growing disposable income and availability of easy finance schemes. But still, the consumer durable goods, like refrigerators, microwave and washing machines have low penetration in the country, representing vast room for future growth The main aim of a market is to understand the needs and wants of the target consumers and satisfies them effectively. For understanding the needs and wants of the consumers a marketer has to study consumer's behavior. It is only after the detailed study of consumer behavior that a marketer is able to predict how consumers would react to the marketing strategies and promotional messages.

Key words: Consumer Behavior, Marketing strategy, Customer satisfaction, White goods

1. INTRODUCTION

The decision making of the consumer is determined by the pre purchase behavior, which is preceded by the intention to buy/consume and a host of other antecedent factors. Some of these factors are intrinsic to the consumer like the personal aspects –beliefs/evaluation based attitude towards the act(purchase),while the extrinsic variables like social aspects- subjective norms and the perceived/actual behavioral control etc., conditioned within the situational construct, influence the consumer's behavioral intention. Attitude–behavior consistency has been of great interest to researchers since the 1930s. In the early 1970s, a number of researchers developed attitude–behavior models that focused on the causal relationship between attitudes and behavior. According to Kashyap, behavior is a function of behavioral intentions, which are themselves a function of attitudes and subjective norms.

The Theory of Reasoned Action stipulates that beliefs underlie a person's attitudes and subjective norms, which ultimately determine intentions and behavior. Researchers have drawn on attitude-behavior relationship, namely the theory of planned behavior, to explain consumer

behavior. The extrinsic aspects also condition the attitude dimension, and the attitude functions (consumption motive) thus influencing the final purchase decision of the consumer. The purchasing decision of the consumer is an individual one and the complexity of the decision depends on the consumer's degree of information search, the evaluation of alternatives and the choice of products. The consumer decision-making process is a sequential and repetitive series of psychological and physical activities ranging from problem recognition to post-purchase behavior. Market dominated variables (such as the environment and advertising) and consumer-dominated variables (such as needs, motives, personality and perception) simultaneously interact to influence the consumer's purchasing decision.

1.1 CONSUMER INSIGHTS

The study of consumers helps firms and organizations improve their marketing strategies by understanding issues such as the psychology of

- How consumers think, feel, reason, and select between different alternatives (e.g., brands, products);
- How the psychology of how the consumer is influenced by his or her environment (e.g., culture, family, signs, media);
- How the behavior of consumers while shopping or making other marketing decisions;
- Limitations in consumer knowledge or information processing abilities influence decisions and marketing outcome;
- How consumer motivation and decision strategies differ between products that differ in their level of importance or interest that they entail for the consumer; and
- How marketers can adapt and improve their marketing campaigns and marketing strategies to more effectively reach the consumer.

One "official" definition of consumer behavior is "The study of individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, use, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society."

1.2 WHITE GOODS

Home appliances are divided into **White goods** and **Brown goods**.

White Goods- it's were typically painted or enameled white, and many of them still are white. The color white represented such as values of cleanliness, warmth, grace, and perfection. And

the Original manufacturers wanted their products that are mostly used in the kitchen or the Living room to portray these qualities.

This is the British English definition of white goods “These are large pieces of electrical equipment used in people’s homes, for example Washing machine and Fridges”. White goods include household appliances such as Refrigerator, Air Conditioner, Washing machine, and Microwave Oven. In the modern period, these products are available in a variety of decorator color. White goods not include the entertainment appliances such as, Television, Home Theater, CD and DVD Player. These products are called Brown goods.

1.2.1 Refrigerator

In India, refrigerator production commenced in early 1960s, mostly the conventional single door (Direct cool) Models with glass wood insulation and external condenser coils at the back. The frost free models came into existence in 1994-95. Videocon was the first company which introduced frost free models in India (Rao 2011). The direct cool segment accounts for 58% of the market while the frost free models cover the rest. The refrigerators are going to be an essential home appliance with rising urban as well as rural incomes.

The entry of foreign players with innovative products has provided momentum to the growth of the industry. The report estimates the refrigerator market is set to register a CARG of 25.7 per cent during the year 2012-15.

1.2.2 Washing machine

The washing machine segment is basically divided into two categories; Semi-Automatic (SA) and Fully Automatic (FA). The SA was the first one to be introduced in India and comprises 80% of the market with FA occupying the rest. The market can also be segmented in the Top Load (TL) with TL comprising 95% of the industry while Front Load (FL) constituting just 5%. Videocon was the first player to enter the washing machine industry followed by BPL. Now the consumer has a choice of more than 10 brands with over 80 models SSSSSSsto choose from. The product range too improved after the entry of MNCs such as LG, Samsung, Whirlpool, etc. LG electronics continued to be the leading player in home laundry appliances in India with a share of 25% in 2013, followed closely by Samsung Electronics (23.2%).

1.2.3 Air conditioner

Air conditioners can be segmented into non-ducted. The non-ducted products are further divided into two parts: Windows Air Conditioners (WAC) and Split Air Conditioners (SAC). On the basic of capacity, the market can be divided into 0.75 tonne, 1 tonne, 1.5 tonne and 2 tonne and

above. Of these, 1.5 tonne capacity accounts for more than 75% of the window air conditioners market. With the rising demand from the house hold segment 1.0 tonne and lower capacity air conditioners are increasing.

Air conditioners are perceived as high-end products; current penetration stands at 6.8 percent including window and split air conditioner. The segment had a 13.0 per cent share in the year of 2013 in the consumer appliances market. High income growth and rising demand for split air conditioners are the key growth drivers. The room air conditioning market represents approximately 50% of the total market, with the other 50% comprised of central and specialist air conditioning systems.

As per National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) report, the number of middle-class households which is presently 31.4 million is expected to reach 53.3 million by 2015. As only 52 per cent of the present middle class uses Air Conditioners (ACs), the report foresees a spurt in demand for the product. Sale of a split ACs is higher among room air conditioners sold in the country.

1.3 MAJOR PLAYER IN INDIA

Samsung India

Samsung India started its operation in India December 1995, Samsung design centers are located in London, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Tokyo, Shanghai, Rome. Samsung India has its headquarter in New Delhi. The Samsung complex which has manufacturing facilities for White goods is located at Noida, near Delhi

Whirlpool India

Whirlpool was established in 1911 as the first commercial manufacturer of motorized washer to the current market position of being World number one manufacturer and marketer of major home appliances. The Parent company is headquartered at Benton Harbor, Michigan, USA with a global presence in over 170 countries and manufacturing operation in 13 countries with 11 major brand names such as Whirlpool, Kitchen Aid, Roper Estate, Bauknecht, Laden, Ignis etc. Today Whirlpool is the recognized brand in home appliances in India and holds a market size of over 25%.

LG India

LG Electronics was established on October 1, 1958 (as a Private company) and in 1959. Now it has operating 77 subsidiaries around the world with cover 72,000 employees worldwide. It is the one of the major giants in the consumer durable Product. and the Company has as many as 27 R

& D center and 5 design center.

Voltas Limited

Voltas in India's Largest air Conditioning company, and of the world premier engineering solution providers and project specialist. Founded in India 1954. Voltas limited solution for a wide spectrum of industries in areas such as heating , ventilation, air conditioning, refrigeration, electro-mechanical project, textile machinery, meaning and construction equipment, water management and treatment, Building management System, indoor air Quality etc.

Videocon Industries Limited

A Videocon industry Limited is a large diversified India company headquartered in Gurgaon, Haryana. The group has 17 manufacturing sites in India. The company has sell consumer product through a multi-brand strategy with the largest sales and service network in India.

Sony India

Sony Corporation Japan, established its India operation in November 1994, in India. Sony has its distribution network comprising over 7000 channel partner. 215 Sony world and Sony Exclusive outlets and 21 direct branch location. The company also has presence across the country with 21 companies Owned and 172 authorized service center.

Hitachi India

Hitachi India Ltd (HIL) was established in June 1998 and engaged I marketing and sell a wide range of products ranging from power and Industrial System, Industrial Components & Equipment and White goods Some of HIL's product range includes semiconductors and Display components. Its is support the sales of TVs, LCD TVs, LCD projectors, Smart Boards and DVD camcorders.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The specific objectives of this study are.

- To analyze the consumer behavior towards select household appliances Erode District.
- To identify the impact of factors influencing consumer purchase decisions of household appliances in Erode District.
- To study the awareness and impact on behavior of various brands, impact of brand and seller's reputation of the selected white goods in consumer durables product
- To give findings, suggestions and conclusion

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this study is Descriptive Research.

Sample Design: A sample is a representative part of the population. The Probability methods of Systematic Random sampling method was followed for study to choose the sample respondents. The researcher has decided to select a sample size of 150 household respondents have been selected from the Modakkurichi Block, such as Ganapathipalayam, Elumathur, and Sivagiri.

Sample size: This study was conducted in the three areas in Modakkurichi Block. Questionnaires were handed over to the respondents who had purchased the consumer durables and were requested to fill the same. The filled-in questionnaires were later collected from the respondents. The sample size for the study was 150. Non- probability convenience sampling was used to select the respondents.

PRODUCT SELECTION

To identify the products for the present study, the products used for the study were

- Air Conditioner
- Refrigerator
- Washing Machine

Data Collection: This study is based on primary and secondary data.

- Primary data have been collected from the respondents by using a well structured, non-disguised questionnaire.
- Secondary data for the study were collected from books, journals, research articles, magazines, reports, newspapers and websites.

Data Analyze:

Data were analyzed using statistical tool of percentage analyses.

Distribution of Respondents Based on Socio-Economic Profile

The demographic variables namely age, sex, residence, education, occupation and monthly income are the most widely employed in market segmentation. The socio economic profile of the respondents is Majority of the respondents (51%) belongs to the age group of 21-40 years. Female respondents constitute 77% and the remaining 23% were male. Majority of the respondents were married. The nuclear families were predominant with 84 %. Most of the respondents (57%) were Under graduates, Most of the respondents were in private sector

employment (35 per cent). Most of the respondents (43%) were in the Below 10,000 Of income

CONSUMERS PERCEPTION- AN ANALYSIS

The purchase decision of a product depends on the opinion of the consumer of its need at home. This opinion regarding the product is shaped by their experience, the influence of the friends and relatives and the like. The opinion differs from individual to individual. In this section the researcher has tried to find out how the opinions on the purpose of buying the selected durables differ among various lifestyle segments. The purpose of buying the selected durables has been classified as essential goods, comfort goods, or luxury goods

Cluster	Cluster Strength	Essential Product		Comfort Product		Luxury Product	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
		Need Recognition Cluster	46	34	74.91	10	21.73
Domestic Purchase Cluster	85	56	65.88	11	12.94	8	9.41
Domestic Purchase Cluster	19	9	47.3	6	31.57	4	21

Source: survey data

Table 1-Opinion Regarding the Purpose for Refrigerator at home

From the table -1 it is seen that among the Need Recognition Cluster 74.91% of the respondents feel that refrigerator is an Essential Product, whereas 21.73% of them feel it to be a Comfort Product and 4.34% feel it to be a Luxury Product. Among the Domestic Purchase Cluster 66.88% of the respondents feel that refrigerator is an essential product, whereas 12.94% of them feel it to be a Comfort Product and 9.41 % feel it to be a Luxury Product. Among the High Technology Cluster 47.3% of the respondents feel that refrigerator is an Essential Product, whereas 31.57% of them feel it to be a Comfort Product and 21% feel it to be a Luxury Product.

Cluster	Cluster Strength	Essential Product		Comfort Product		Luxury Product	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
		Need Recognition Cluster	46	23	50	9	19.5
Domestic Purchase Cluster	85	43	50.58	20	23.5	22	25.8
Domestic Purchase Cluster	19	8	42.1	5	26.31	6	12.24

Source: survey data

Table 2-Opinion Regarding the Purpose for Washing Machine at home

From the table -2 it is seen that among the Need Recognition Cluster 50% of the respondents feel that Washing Machine is an Essential Product, whereas 19.5% of them feel it to be a Comfort Product and 30.4% feel it to be a Luxury Product. Among the Domestic Purchase Cluster 50.58% of the respondents feel that Washing Machine is an essential product, whereas 23.5% of them feel it to be a Comfort Product and 25.8% feel it to be a Luxury Product. Among the High Technology Cluster 42.1% of the respondents feel that Washing Machine is an Essential Product, whereas 26.3% of them feel it to be a Comfort Product and 12.24% feel it to be a Luxury Product. From the above table it is seen that the Need recognition, Domestic purchase and the High Technology cluster members considered Washing Machine as an Essential Product.

Cluster	Cluster Strength	Essential Product		Comfort Product		Luxury Product	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Need Recognition Cluster	46	16	35.5	9	19.5	21	45.6
Domestic Purchase Cluster	85	36	42.3	16	18.8	33	38.8
Domestic Purchase Cluster	19	6	31.5	7	36.8	6	31.5

Source: survey data

Table 3-Opinion Regarding the Purpose for Air Conditioner at home

From the table -3 it is seen that among the Need Recognition Cluster 35.5% of the respondents feel that Air Conditioner is an Essential Product, whereas 19.5% of them feel it to be a Comfort Product and 45.6% feel it to be a Luxury Product. Among the Domestic Purchase Cluster 42.3% of the respondents feel that Air Conditioner is an essential product, whereas 18.8% of them feel it to be a Comfort Product and 38.8% feel it to be a Luxury Product. Among the High Technology Cluster 31.5% of the respondents feel that Air Conditioner is an Essential Product, whereas 36.8% of them feel it to be a Comfort Product and 31.2% feel it to be a Luxury Product. From the above table it is seen that the Need recognition, Domestic purchase and the High Technology cluster members considered Air Conditioner as an Essential Product.

3. FINDINGS

- The need recognition cluster members are people who are very Cost Conscious and very loyal to the near shops. They buy only from stores on which they can count on the product guarantee. This cluster is a potential segment for the market. Marketer in this

case can use promotional appeals, promotional activities like discounts credit periods and to motivate the consumers himself to buy the product

- Domestic purchase cluster members are people who are Quality Conscious and active information seekers. They tend to shop more frequently, visit variety of stores and exhibitions to compare the products, style, quality, price before they make their final choice. Marketer to understand their needs and what they are prefer.
- High technology lifestyle cluster are people who are very interested in trying new products and fashions. They always want to be the trendsetters. This would always lead to make them opinion leaders who in turn would influence the buying patterns of their peers, friends and relatives. Hence marketers must always keep this segment members abreast of the new products introduced.
- Availability of all brands at a time should be there in unorganized retail outlet. More than 60% of the respondents are preferred financial schemes to purchase the consumer durables.
- Approximately 80% of the respondents purchases consumer durables while discounts are available during festivals & promotional schemes.
- Approximately 35% are respondents which are not the brand specific if they get the promotional schemes.
- Most of the Respondents are generally not preferred the exclusive showrooms.
- Consumers who are brand conscious, they are generally do not switch over the brand for the any type of financial or the promotional scheme.
- Advertisement plays a major role for selecting home appliances. Television emerges as a major mode of media for advertisement.

4. SUGGESTIONS

Company should concentrate more on television for advertisement, as mostly people get attracted through television only. Company should offer attractive price discounts during Festivals and off seasons to attract customer in order to increase its sale. For promotional offers, company should go for free gifts rather than going for other ways. Company should make sure that there products are available with almost all the dealers so that customer will not face any difficulty in finding them. Company should also focus on after sale service and if possible try to provide extra months warranty than offer by its competitors. People are unsatisfied with the

price and quality of products so company should concentrate in this regard also.

5. CONCLUSION

This present study concluded that, the consumer behavior have a great impact on the household appliances of the clusters. In a consumption environment, a person chooses a product or a brand, which seems to possess a maximum possibility of the definition or elaboration of his life style identity. A survey of the people has been conducted to know the liking pattern of the products of Home appliances. It is observed that overall people like to purchase Samsung, LG and Whirlpool brand rather than other. It is concluded that mostly people preferred Samsung, LG due to its price, quality, technology and image and also due to the after sales service provided by the company. It is thus concluded from the facts collected that mostly people prefer to buy due to the attractive schemes and discounts given by the companies.

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EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN THROUGH SELF HELP GROUPS IN THIRUVARUR DISTRICT

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Abstract

India is one of the largest democracies in the world. The constitution of India best own equal rights and opportunities to all its citizens. But women are deprived of equal opportunity in the patriarchal society of India. In a societal situation men and women have differential access to opportunities and services for a long time women in general still have been denied their due place in economic, social and political spheres. Women are a vital parts of the Indian economy constituting one-third of the national labour force and a major contribution to the survival of the family, the poorer the family the greater its dependence on women income.

Key Words: Empowerment, Self Help Groups, Women, Entrepreneur, Manufacturing, Retail Trade.

Introduction

Since independence Government of India's policy on women's development has undertaken various shifts of emphasis. The most significant changes occurred in the mid 1980's with a move towards equality and empowerment new institutions like department of women and child development, women development corporations etc., were set up to implement the new strategy of economic development by facilitating development by facilitating access to training entrepreneurial cost, social and economic dates demonstrated that women in India development credit, technical consultancy services and marketing facilities. Eight-five years plan emphasized women as equal partners in the development process.

The promotion of entrepreneurship among women necessitates a conclusive environment, which involves removing institutional constraints, enhancing information flows, providing access to credit, skill development at programmer, trade support services, technical and business support services and marketing. In India, women are engaged in manufacturing and trading for a long time. Retail trade includes a whole gamut of activities from street-side vending to running boutiques and up-market trading activities. Since nearly 80 per cent of Indian women are in rural areas, 90 per cent of rural and 70 per cent urban working are unskilled, creating and developing their skills through skills training and entrepreneurship and improving their capacity to earn are considered not only crucial but also the need of the hour. The most desirable option to generate their own income is through self-employment, despite the

problems they face in gaining access to assets and resources. The role of NGO's producers associations, entrepreneurship development, institutions and financial institutions is vital importance in the Indian Context, to initiate the rural poor women in income-generating activities.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the social and economic factors of the Self-Help Groups in Thiruvarur District
- To study the problem faced by the Self-Help Groups in Thiruvarur District

Table No. 1 Socio-economic factors of SHG's in Thiruvarur District

Particular	No. of Respondents	Percentage	Total Respondents	Total Percentage
Age				
Up to 30	10	20	50	100
31 – 40	13	26		
41 – 50	12	24		
Above 51	15	30		
Marital Status				
Unmarried	14	28	50	100
Married	22	44		
Widows	8	16		
Separated	6	12		
Education				
Illiterate	16	32	50	100
Primary	17	34		
Secondary	11	22		
Graduates	6	12		
Size of Family				
Up to 3	22	44	50	100
4 – 6	16	32		
Above 6	12	24		
Source of Funds				
Own	21	42	50	100
Money lenders	20	40		
Friends/relations	9	18		
Training				
Yes	20	40	50	100
No	30	60		

Source: Primary Data 2016.

Above table shows that motives behind the SHGs women to enter into business activities, the most of respondents (44%) of them opined that due to the factor income motive they have entered into business and the remaining respondents were entered into business to saving motive.

The above table reveals that the managing capacity of the SHGs women respondents, the majority of

them 54 per cent have attached great importance to effective decision making and managing since, they believe in their talents to make good decision. It is also revealed from the study that 24 per cent of the sample respondents, the unmarried, widows and separates the parents took the chance of making and managing enterprises. The table shows that distribution of sample respondents on the basis of source of capital, about 42 per cent of the sample respondent depends on the own capital for forming micro enterprises.

Table No. 2 Problems faced by SHG's in Thiruvarur District

Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage	Total Respondents	Total Percentage
Motivation			50	100
Business	17	34		
Income	22	44		
Saving	11	22		
Managing Capacity			50	100
Self	27	54		
Husband	12	24		
Parents	11	22		
Problems			50	100
Raw-material	6	12		
Marketing	13	26		
Labours(skilled)	7	14		
Capital	22	44		
Lack of Co-operation	2	4		

Source: Primary Data 2016.

The above table says that the problems faced in running the enterprises, lack of finance as usual had been found to be the major problems of 44 per cent of the SHGs women respondents. The other problems are general in nature such as raw-material, marketing, labour, lack of family support; therefore women who became owners of some enterprises have to face more hardships than their counter parts. SHGs women are face the problem, labour (skilled) so, the Government provide necessary training through institution and NGOs.

Suggestions:

- As the samples of SHGs women are located in rural area, they face the problem of transport to market their product. It is suggested that transport corporation may opera.
- The seed, fertilizer and pesticides may be provided for agriculture purposes in subsidized rate to the member of SHGs women.
- There should be increased participation of government agencies. Bank and NGOs are encouraging group formation.

- Government make take steps to sell the entire product produced by SHGs through all ration shop as well as other shops at town.

Conclusion:

The Self-Help Groups plays a major role in transforming rural economy, micro finance helps the rural poor to improve their standard of living and fulfil their credit needs. Hence, Self-Help Groups are a new innovation in the field of rural development to finance the rural poor in future. The formation of Self-Help Groups will definitely exceed the economy by way of improving the economic status of each and every individual in rural areas.

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A STUDY ON SOCIO ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN THROUGH KUDUMBASHREE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KOZHIKODE DISTRICT

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Abstract

Until recently, the role of women in development was all but inconspicuous and women and gender relations have been brushed aside within the theory and practice of development. In several ways, women were kept out from various aspects of development, to the extent that they were regarded as obstructions to the development. Much of the stimulus for rising interest in the role of women in development came from the UN Decade for Women (1975-85) and the events accompanied it. Women are the basic unit in the family and she shoulder almost all the responsibilities in the family. But she has to suffer inequalities and harassment in the phases of her life, from the womb to tomb. The constitutional provisions and legal measures provide a conducive atmosphere for the development of women in the society. The educational status of women improved followed by health status, race, age at marriage, permitted widow remarriage, reduced mortality rate, morbidity and improved life expectancy, but the economic development of women has become a dream, especially the women from Below Poverty Line families. The 73rd constitutional amendment gives us the power of decentralization and an opportunity for economic development.

The Kerala State Poverty Eradication Mission implemented the Kudumbasree programme by organizing the poor and creating community based structure of women below poverty line with focus on self help demands led over by available resources under the leadership of local Government. This programme covers the entire rural area. Social and economic empowerment of women have played a significant role the poverty eradication and economic development of the country. The present aim to explore various programmes that were introduced in order to enhance and empower the women of Kozhikode District of Kerala state and assess their socio economic development after their participation in Kudumbasree.

Key word: Kudumbasree, empowerment.

Introduction

Kerala has long been the highest ranked Indian State in terms of human development and has received international acclaim for its achievements. It still exhibits significant gender inequality and multiple marginalizations (along the lines of caste, ethnicity, etc.) in the social, political and economic realms. Kudumbashree was initiated by the state government twenty years ago as a the flagship programme of Kerala State Govt. for poverty extermination. It provides self-employment opportunities to women below

the poverty line, and has succeeded in making a significant eradication of poverty in the state. Kudumbasree focusses on self help demands led over by available resources under the leadership of local Government. This programme covers the entire rural area. Kudumbasree is the largest micro-finance institution in Kerala. The thrift and credit societies at the neighborhood group level motivate and facilitate the poor to save and provide them with cost effective and easy credit. The poor families bring in small sums according to their capacity, pool them together, for a corpus and take back loans to meet their immediate needs without depending on money lenders. Since then, it has developed into a unique network in which marginalized women work collectively to promote prosperity through planning and implementing programs and projects that address the root causes of their poverty. Kudumbashree groups participate in a wide range of social, educational, and economic programs, as well as actively engaging in the political realm.

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

Kudumbasree (Prosperity of the family) is the state poverty eradication mission initiated by the Government of Kerala for de-rooting absolute poverty from the state. It is a holistic, participatory, women oriented, innovative, poverty reduction approach implemented through Local Self Governments. The Mission follows a process approach rather than a project approach. 'Kudumbashree' envisages prosperity of the poor families in the state with multiple programmes that will provide them information, create awareness, build up their capability and capacity, enhance their confidence and show them opportunity for better social security and empower them physically, socially, economically and politically. Thus it works to eradicate poverty by enhancing the capabilities and entitlements of the poor people.

The present study is an attempt to address the various programmes that were introduced in order to enhance and empower the women of Kozhikode district and assess their socio-economic development after participation in Kudumbasree. For this the study was made.

Literature review

One of the basic premises of Kudumbashree from the start was that the poor needed to be active agents in their own development. While they differ in their terminology, numerous studies have documented the success that Kudumbashree has had in promoting agency (autonomy, empowerment) among its members (Prakash and Chandarsekar 2012; Oommen 2008; Alkire and Cherkov 2007). In this context, the researcher has made an attempt to identify the extent of empowerment of women through Kudumbasree.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the various programmes under Kudumbasree project in Vanimel Grampanchayath.
2. To inquire into the social development of women through Kudumbasree unit.
3. To analyze the economic enhancement of women through Kudumbasree unit.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As this study is descriptive in nature, the schedule technique was used for the collection of data from the respondents. Multi-stage sampling technique was used for data collection; firstly the district was divided into 4 revenue district. One of the revenue district, Nadapuram, was selected. The revenue district included 6 panchayaths. One punchayath, Vnimel was selected. In this punchayath 275 kudumbashree units contains 10-20 members in each unit. The researcher met 100 respondents on the work spot and collected the necessary data through interview and interaction based on schedule. Statistical tool such as measures of central tendency and dispersion have been used for this study.

MISSION OF KUDUMBASREE:

“To eradicate absolute poverty in ten years through concerted community action under the leadership of local governments, by facilitating organisation of poor for combining self help with demand led convergence of available services and resources to tackle the multiple dimensions and manifestation of poverty holistically”. Reaching out to the families through women and reaching out to the society through families.

PROGRAMMES UNDER KUDUMBASREE IN RESEARCH AREA

- *Nutrimix-* The Babyfood Products Production Project
- GRQ (Goat-Rabbit-Quail) Project
- Micro Enterprises:-hotel, pickles, tailoring, soap
- Micro Housing/ *Bhavanashree*
- Destitute Identification , Rehabilitation and Monitoring Programme/*Ashraya*
- Lease Land Farming/ *Haritashree*:- 180 unit
- Microfinance Operations
- Children’s Neighbourhoods/*Balasabha*

DISCUSSION AND RESULT

To enforce the objective and significance of the study, the collected data was analysed in the following way. For this analysis, mean value ranges from 1 to 4. ie, mean value between 3.5 to 4 represents great improvement, 2.5-3.5 represents fair improvement, 1.5-2.5 represents not fair improvement and below 0.5 represents no improvement.

Table 1

Analysis of empowerment on socio-economic attributes

Source	Attributes	Mean Value	S.D
Social	Confidence	3.05	0.97
	Social position among family members	1.98	1.29
	Skill and Ability to organize the programme	2.78	0.85
	Interest to co-ordinate the programme	3.25	0.77
	Active participation in Gramasaba and other public meeting	2.55	1.24
	Address a group	3.02	0.87
	Awareness of women right	2.55	0.99
	Combined mean	2.74	0.99
Economic	Income	2.83	0.74
	Saving	3.03	0.42
	Asset holding	1.00	0.00
	Combined mean	2.29	0.39

Source: primary data

The mean score obtained in social attributes is 2.74 with S.D 0.99. It indicate that empowerment in social context is fairly improved. But in the case of economic attributes, mean value is 2.29, which indicates not fair improvement.

The mean value of the entire variable under social empowerment shows more than 2.50, except family position. It indicates that fair improvement in social empowerment.

Under economic empowerment, the mean value of two variables such as income and saving shows more than 2.50. It means empowerment in liquidity context of economy. But in asset holding, mean value is 1.00 with SD 0.00 which indicates no change in solvency of women through Kudumbasree.

CONCLUSION

Kudumbashree became the lifeline to many of the poor women in the state of Kerala. It is a massive anti poverty programme of the Government of Kerala, aiming at eradicating poverty and salvages the destitute from the clutches of extreme deprivation. Capacity of the poor women of the state in several areas has gone up considerably. Status of women in families and community has also improved. Kudumbashree has made remarkable progress in terms of empowering social, economical status, knowledge, ability, skill, etc, but in the economic context only liquidity position was improved. The govt should make an arrangement to expand the coverage and scope of Kudumbasree programmes for enhancing solvency position of members.

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THE EFFECT OF BENEVOLENT LEADERSHIP TOWARDS ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between benevolent leadership and employees' organizational commitment. The research was conducted among hotel employees. Regression analysis was adopted to test the relationship among the variables. The data was further analyzed by employing Structural Equation Modeling to test the hypothesis proposed in this study. The empirical results show that there is a positive and significant effect of benevolent leadership towards organisational commitment.

Introduction

The elevated turnover rate in the hospitality industry is a worldwide issue. Researchers found that hospitality industry has an elevated turnover rate in developing countries and developed countries. In India, half of the total turnover rate of the tourism industry is facilitated by hoteliers. There are proofs that the turnover issue of the tourism industry has been tinted by numerous researchers since 21st century. The factors of the turnover issue in India's hospitality industry are poor working conditions, low salaries, and injustice. Previous research suggested that the turnover issue could be developed by executing suitable policies in retaining hotel employees (Okumus, 2002), improving the relationship between the leaders and employees (Abdullah et al., 2010), and offering better management to the hotel employees (Nankervis et al., 2008). However, the abovementioned problem remains unsolved until today. Kelly Services (2012) discovered that the global hospitality/travel/leisure is one of the industries that have the lowest level of satisfaction towards their management's leadership style.

Abdullah et al. (2010) recommended that the rapport between hotel employees and leader might recover the turnover situation. Benevolent leaders show individualized and holistic concern for subordinates' personal and familial well-being (Cheng et al., 2004). It has been claimed that benevolent leaders perform Confucian teachings which highlight in the mutuality in social relations (Niu et al., 2009; Wang & Cheng, 2010). As Indian workers exceedingly value the workplace interpersonal relations (Ayupp & Kong, 2010), benevolent leadership that focus on giving indisputable and genuine care to employees at both work and non-work sphere which would massively enhance the relationship between leaders and employees.

This study proposed organizational commitment as the gauge of turnover rate. Organizational commitment has been extensively recommended in past studies to forecast employees' turnover. As the amelioration of the connection between leaders and employees was claimed to facilitate in enhancing the turnover issues in hotel industry (Abdullah et al., 2010), it is foreseen that benevolent leadership would improve organizational commitment. Briefly, this study proposed to examine the effect of benevolent leadership in improving employees' commitment.

Literature Review

Benevolent leadership was projected as one of the components of the paternalistic leadership (Chen et al., 2011). It has been broadly considered in Chinese context as the mainly welcome leadership style (Chan & Mak, 2012) out of all three components under paternalistic leadership, that is, morale leadership, benevolent leadership and authoritarianism.

Researchers from diverse regions have dissimilar perspectives towards benevolent leadership. Benevolent leadership is well-established in Chinese context as a leadership style that the leaders are known to express holistic care towards subordinates' personal well-being (e.g. Cheng et al., 2004). On the other hand, western scholars have no consent on this definition. The Western scholars expressed benevolence otherwise as *"the process of creating a virtuous cycle of encouraging and initiating positive change in organizations through (a) ethical decision making; (b) creating a sense of meaning; (c) inspiring hope and fostering courage for positive action; and (d) leaving a positive impact for the larger community"* (Karakas and Sarigollu, 2012).

Karakas and Sarigollu (2012) proposed benevolent leadership as a new concept with four dimensions which emphasize on creating the common good. The four dimensions of benevolent leadership proposed are ethical sensitivity, spiritual depth, positive engagement and community. The authors argued that these four streams of principles allow employers to triumph over challenges and crisis in the competitive business world and direct the workforce to become accustomed and react beneficially to organizational changes.

This research adopted the description of benevolent leadership from Chinese context due to the individuality of leaders' benevolent behaviors. Previous literatures have experimented the relationships between benevolent leadership and 1) creativity with creative identity role and autonomy as the moderators 2) followers' performance with leader-member exchange as the mediator 3) organizational performance, affective commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors.

Hypothesis of the study

Previous literatures have confirmed various leadership styles can direct to organizational commitment. Karakas and Sarigollu (2012) identified that there is a connection between benevolent leadership and affective commitment. Erben and Güneşer (2008) claimed that benevolent behaviors facilitate organizational commitment. Benevolent behaviors of leaders motivate employees and generate an emotional friendship between leaders and employees. This emotional union discourages employees to depart the organization as they may not obtain benevolent treatment from other leaders or companies. There are still limited literature support in discovering the association between benevolent leadership and organizational commitment. This research intended to evaluate the effect of benevolent leadership on all three components of organizational commitment.

Hypothesis: *There is a positive relationship between Benevolent Leadership and Organizational Commitment*

Sample of the study

The sample of this research is the hotel employees irrespective of their position levels and departments. This study adopted a probability sampling method, which is cluster sampling. 163 employees participated in the study.

Results

The Assessment of Fitness of the Structural Model of Benevolent Leadership and Organizational Commitment

Name of the category	Name of index	Index value	Comment
Absolute Fit	RMSEA	0.072	Required level is achieved
Incremental Fit	CFI	.912	Required level is achieved
Parsimonious Fit	Chi-square	1.745	Required level is achieved

The Standardized Regression Weights and its Significance for the Path between Benevolent Leadership and Organizational Commitment

Hypothesis	Construct	Estimate	P value	Result
1	OC ²	.545	.000	Supported

Discussions

There are few studies which looked into the association between benevolent leadership and organizational commitment. Researchers have examined the above-mentioned association either by taking benevolent leadership as an element of paternalism or not considering all three elements of organizational commitment. This study investigated the association of benevolent leadership as an independent variable with the outcome construct of organizational commitment. This study conveys explanation for the turnover issues of the hotel industry by confirming the reputation of benevolent leadership. The results promote the employment of benevolent talents and cultivation of benevolent leadership behaviors. Potent strategies can be urbanized; training programs can be improved. Tourists identify India as one of their favorable long-haul destination (Salman & Hasim, 2012). The infidelity of the labor pool in the hotel industry could be holding back the growth of tourism industry. The stability of human resources can develop the conditions for the thriving and flourishing of the tourism industry of India.

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