

Potential, Challenges, and Opportunities of a Philippine State University as a Farm Tourism Destination

Maria Cristina I. Canson¹ and Merlita V. Caelian²

^{1,2}*University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos, Philippines*

Introduction: The growing popularity of campus tourism is prompting educational institutions to study the potential of farm tourism or agritourism to catalyze progress, facilitate learning, and generate income. However, limited studies were conducted on assessing the potential of agritourism in a school setting using the six As of tourism, which are attractions, accessibility, amenities, activities accommodation, and accountability, in an explanatory sequential inquiry. This study assessed the level of potential of a state university as an accredited farm tourism destination as well as its challenges and opportunities.

Methodology: The researcher used an explanatory sequential mixed methods design. The quantitative part involved 331 stakeholders with the internal ones chosen via stratified random sampling for the administration of a researcher-made survey questionnaire. Data analysis was descriptive. The qualitative part involved 8 stakeholders qualified through purposive sampling and inclusion criteria. In-depth, one-on-one semi-structured interview was conducted. Data was then coded and thematized. Trustworthiness was ensured through member checking, providing thick and rich narratives, and conducting an audit trail. Qualitative and quantitative data were integrated through a joint display, and meta inferences were drawn. Respect for persons, beneficence, and justice were observed in the process.

Results: The state university has a high potential to be accredited as a farm tourism destination due to its agriculture program, area, farm attractions and high level of the As. There are internal and external opportunities in operating agritourism on campus. But there are challenges in designing and developing the attractions as well as in addressing the inadequacies of As.

Conclusion: The university has the characteristics and resources to successfully conduct farm tourism. Its agricultural resources are attractive enough to draw people to visit. Tourism on campus offers opportunities that are beneficial to both the academe as well as to the immediate community. It, however, poses unique challenges, signaling a need for the school administration for deliberate tourism planning. The rigorous process of DOT accreditation must therefore be pursued in order that the potential of a destination may be fully realized.

Practical Value: The findings may become the basis for a Farm Tourism Development Plan that could be used to identify priority areas for improvement and development for accreditation purposes. The results of the study also validated that indeed, an agricultural state university may operate as a farm tourism destination and be accredited by the DOT. It may also inspire other academic institutions to consider developing themselves to become a farm tourism destination.

Direction for Future Research: Future researchers may expand the study to include the other campuses of the university so that the whole system may be packaged as one educational, touristic experience. Future research using the same methodology could be done on the potential for agritourism of non- and agricultural and/or non-state universities or colleges to gather more proof that would either negate or validate the findings of this study.

Keywords: tourism, agritourism, farm tourism, As of tourism, campus tourism, explanatory sequential mixed methods, Philippines, Asia

CORRESPONDENCE: teena_canson@yahoo.com

ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6590-6362>¹