

The Potential of San Carlos City, Negros Occidental as Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions Destination

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Introduction. The Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions (MICE) tourism is a niche segment in the tourism market that has abundant potential and is gaining significance worldwide due to the growth of business tourism. In San Carlos City, the MICE industry is not yet fully developed. The assessment of San Carlos City's potential as a MICE destination is still necessary to determine if the city has met all the essential requirements. However, the city can accommodate small local events. Hence, the paper assesses the potential of San Carlos City, Negros Occidental as Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions destination. The paper also determines the stakeholders' perceived demands of San Carlos City, Negros Occidental as MICE destination in terms of business and trade, educational and scientific, sports and entertainment, and arts and cultural. Furthermore, the paper also determines the challenges and opportunities of San Carlos City as a MICE destination.

Methods. A descriptive research design was used to assess the potential of San Carlos City, Negros Occidental as a MICE destination. The stakeholders perceived demands in terms of business and trade, educational and scientific, sports and entertainment, arts and culture, and the challenges and opportunities of San Carlos City, Negros Occidental as MICE destination. Using quota and convenience sampling, 404 tourism key players participated in the study. The data was gathered using a researcher-made checklist questionnaire. Descriptive analysis through frequency count and distribution percentage were used to analyze the data.

Results. Based on the findings, majority of the respondents believed that the city could become a MICE destination as evaluated using the Five A's of tourism. The findings indicated that from the stakeholders' perceived demands, San Carlos City should offer services and facilities in business and trade, educational and scientific activities, sports and entertainment, and arts and culture to meet the needs of potential MICE participants. Also, there is a challenge in terms of offering support facilities and amenities. Almost half of the respondents believed that it would be a challenge for the city to manage accommodation contracts because there are not enough accommodation and facilities. However, the data presented that almost all of the respondents believed that San Carlos City could promote the city's unique culture and history, help generate MICE-related jobs that will benefit the locals, and encourage the practice and promotion of ecotourism among the natural attractions of the city.

Conclusion. Given the findings of the stakeholders' perceived demands and the challenges and opportunities of San Carlos City as a MICE destination, the development of the facilities and enhancement of tourist services to become a MICE destination is crucial for San Carlos City, Negros Occidental. Therefore, the LGU and concerned tourism key players in the city should rethink how they will implement and develop quality tourist products and services to ensure that they are ready to become a MICE destination. The findings basically implied that San Carlos City, Negros Occidental, can be a MICE destination when viewed according to the five A's of tourism. Furthermore, the findings indicated that from the stakeholders' point of view, San Carlos City should offer services and facilities in business and trade, educational and scientific activities, sports and entertainment, and arts and culture for it to accommodate MICE participants with different travel motivations and social backgrounds. The findings further implied that the main challenge of San Carlos City, Negros

Occidental as a MICE destination, is having convention centers that cater at least 1,500 delegates. On the other hand, almost all of the respondents believe that San Carlos City has opportunities to promote its unique culture and history to help generate MICE-related jobs that will benefit the locals and encourage the practice and promotion of ecotourism among the natural attractions of the city.

Practical Value of the Paper. The research contributes to the dearth of studies on a city's potential to become a MICE destination like San Carlos City, Negros Occidental. Also, the findings of the study may provide a basis for designing a proposed three-year MICE Tourism Development Plan of San Carlos City, Negros Occidental.

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