

Tourist Attraction Preference and Travel Confidence of Local Tourist during Pandemic in Davao City, Philippines

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Abstract: The Tourism Industry is one of the most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic impacting tourist attractions and tourist activity. This study aimed to examine the preferred tourist attractions during the pandemic in Davao City and determine the significant relationship between tourist preference and travel confidence. The study obtained a result that corresponds to the null hypothesis. Thus, entail no significant relationship between tourist attraction preference and travel confidence as it shows a low correlation. The findings' implications will have a significant enhancement to their overall tour and travel experience, as well as the availability of options from which to choose based on their interests and preferences, allowing for the development of more effective marketing strategies in destination management and local government. Apart from that, it will help people make decisions while traveling. It supplies tourists with crucial information on Davao City's most popular future destinations. On the other hand, local governments can assess the defects or distracting aspects of lesser-known destinations and plan and encourage development and promotional initiatives to enhance visitor numbers.

Keywords: Man-made tourist attractions, Natural tourist attractions, Tourist attraction preference, Travel confidence, Davao City

I. INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry and its activities provide for the development of the countries; hence this also experiences weaknesses as it is a sensitive and vulnerable sector whether in internal or external issues. Undeniably, the current situation now brought by the COVID-19 Pandemic clogged the world economy. These affect all tourism sectors and the leisure of tourists, thus, changing tourist travel intentions (Chebli and Ben Said, 2020). Tourist arrivals from foreign countries fell by 22% during the Pandemic, resulting in approximately Us\$80 billion in global export earnings. Ninety-seven places have completely closed their borders to tourists, 65 have delayed practically all international flights, and 39 have implemented border closures prohibiting visitors from certain countries (PwC Philippines, 2020). A survey conducted by Bloom Consulting shows that many participants may choose not to travel in this pandemic time for leisure purposes. 35 to 45 percent of tourists will not travel unless Covid-19 is wiped out. However, 15 percent respond not to travel at all.

Each tourist who answered the survey stated "feeling unsafe" was the main reason they would not cross. The fear of being infected takes an example over their urge to travel. Approximately half of all who answered the survey stated to select a different destination, not the one they had planned out before the COVID-19 outbreak (PWC Philippines, 2020). The interactions with mass and social media influence the intentions of tourists to visit destinations. These brought negative perceptions and may affect the tourist's thinking. Thus, they feel that they risk their safety upon visiting a destination. Trending News in various online mass media outlets regarding the virus's global spread would undoubtedly alter visitor perceptions of travel (Wachyuni, S. S., & Kusumaningrum, D. A., 2020). Since September, Malaysia has been held in the third wave of infections, stifling the recovery of the tourism and hotel industries. Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 Pandemic, Melaka has been dependent on domestic tourism. The decline in domestic tourist

arrivals has also impacted budget hotels (Samford, 2020). The Hotel Industry is facing yet another setback in its path to recovery, as the introduction of the CMCO, also known as Conditional Movement Control Order, resulted in massive cancellations of hotel bookings (Malek, 2020).

Additionally, Yap Lip Seng, CEO of the Malaysian Association of Hotels (2020), said that the surge of COVID-19 instances resulted in cancellations at almost all domestic tourism sites. It is also expected to drop further with the introduction of CMCO in Kuala Lumpur, Sabah, Selangor, and Putrajaya. Additionally, according to Socso CEO Mohammed Azman Aziz (2020), As of October 22, the association had received 89,596 notifications of lost jobs, claiming that this represented a rise of 278 percent compared to 2019. He also reported that more than 100,000 Malaysians could be out of employment by the end of the year in the worst-case scenario.

Furthermore, according to MATTA's chief executive, Phua Tai Neng, the increase in COVID-19 cases caused businesses and organizations to close or restrict working hours. He also added that fear of traveling could be the main challenge for the tourism industry, considering that there has been a rise in cases recently. Also, due to the spike in COVID-19 cases, Melaka International Airport, including Penang, will remain closed and is unlikely to resume operation soon (Ahmad, 2020).

A travel study was done in the Philippines from May 15 to 24, 2020, with 732 participants from all 81 provinces. The result of the preferred travel destinations of Filipino travelers is to travel to destinations not far from their homes when quarantine restraints uplift. It shows that 77% of the participants will travel in the domestic area, even with the lack of vaccines. Also, 48% are supposed to travel in the domestic area within six months upon the disappearance of travel restrictions. There are also 26% who want to travel outside the Philippines in this period. 37% of travel preferences indicated travel in nearby countries in China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hongkong, and Macau. In the ASEAN area, namely Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Laos, Indonesia, Cambodia, and Brunei, 30% of residents want to travel once travel restrictions are lifted. While most participants prefer travel activities with less face-to-face interaction, these are beach and road trips and staycations. Does their urge to travel during this period or after the lift of quarantine measures lie with their health and safety concerns? On the other side, the study revealed that respondents adhered to health and safety requirements, such as conducting fast COVID-19 testing before departure and presenting a medical certificate before travel (Tabios, 2020).

Another survey conducted by the agency of DOT cites that most Filipino tourists are willing to have an out-of-town adventure amidst the widespread Covid-19 virus. It reveals that 77% of participants elected to travel despite the absence of vaccination, whereas 48% chose to go within six months following the abolition of travel restrictions. Furthermore, the data gathered proposed that domestic tourists contribute most to our industry. Despite this situation, Filipino still save money for leisure and will continue to travel when destinations may open. Moreover, the survey shows that traveling with a small group or having less contact with other tourists is much preferred (Galvez, 2020). Tourists may choose minimal risk to stay just around their countries since Covid-19 is around the corner. Somehow, the urge to travel remains, and their priority is to obey the lockdown guidelines (Collins, Kennard, Broady, & Davey, 2020).

Local Tourism has seen a massive tourism arrival in the past few years. International and domestic airlines were encouraged to open new routes. The city recorded about 2,573,990 tourist arrivals last year; in 2019, it increased by 7.55 percent from 2,393,384 in 2018 (Manila Bulletin, 2020). However, in 2020, there will be a massive outbreak of the COVID-19 virus worldwide, and the tourism industry will be one of the most affected industries during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Pandemic affected businesses, tourists, and especially employees. Many establishments have been closed due to a decline of tourist bookings. Marco Polo Davao, an icon of Davao, officially closed the hotel on June 15, 2020, and there was a significant impact of this closure to the employees (Business Mirror, 2020). However, according to the City Tourism Office head Generose Tecson in a conference on May 4, 2020, the Tourism Stakeholders in Davao City tackled the drafting of recovery plan since there is a considerable drop happening in present worldwide caused by COVID-19 pandemic (Manila Bulletin, 2020).

There is a need to know the tourist preference in choosing tourist attractions to provide information from the tourist that is helpful in the recovery of the tourism industry in the future. Tourist motives and behaviors are changeable due to the socio-economic changes (Mihajlović&Koncul, 2016). Thus, there is an urge to know the tourists' needs and wants or preferences during the Pandemic.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive research design. The term "descriptive research" refers to the gathering of data to try to characterize phenomena or populations under investigation (McCombes, 2019). Additionally, as stated on the Luman learning site (2020), a descriptive research strategy is not concerned with establishing causal links between variables or comparing two or more variables. The research's objective is to analyze and quantify the findings compared to some established or postulated criteria (Hubbard, 2015). In this study, the data were collected through an online survey research design enabling the researchers to have an in-depth understanding of the different tourist preferences during Pandemic. This study was quantitative since the research questions seek to gather tourist's attraction preference during this Pandemic. Specifically, an online survey research design was used to determine the preferred tourist attractions of tourists during Pandemic. The research instrument used in this study was a self-made questionnaire since quarantine and technology provides the means for communication. This decision made it possible to conduct a survey with a large number of respondents in a short duration of time. The process of dissemination was through Google Forms.

Scale for Travel Confidence			
Scale	Range	Description	Interpretation
5	0.9-0.99	Very High	This means that the respondents strongly agree with the level of travel confidence.
4	0.7- .89	High	This means that the respondents agree with the level of travel confidence.
3	0.5-0.69	Neutral	This means that the respondents moderately agree with the level of travel confidence.
2	0.3-0.49	Low	This means that the respondents disagree with the level of travel confidence.
1	Below 0.3	Very Low	This means that the respondents strongly disagree with the level of travel confidence.

Before collecting the data, the protocol in conducting research work was strictly followed: following the panel members' and research adviser's outline presentation and approval of the study questionnaire, the researchers requested authorization to conduct the research. A letter was submitted to the Dean of the College of Hospitality Education by the researchers. After receiving approval from the research committee to conduct the study, the researchers distributed questionnaires to respondents through Facebook and Google mail. Following the dissemination of the questionnaire, data were collected, tabulated, and statistically analyzed. To summarize, analyze, and exhibit the collected data, the researchers used descriptive statistics. It uses presentation techniques such as tables and charts to emphasize the patterns and relationships discovered while analyzing raw data.

In the analysis and interpretation of data, the researchers used the following statistical tools Descriptive Statistics, Percentage and Frequency Count, Weighted Mean, Correlation, and Pearson R to produce valid results for the main and sub-problems of this study. Moreover, the researchers tested the formulated null hypothesis statistically at a 0.5% significance level.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 shows the level of tourist preference on attraction during Pandemic in terms of natural attractions at 4.24 (Very High) and man-made attractions at 4.13 (High), thus collectively obtaining an overall mean of 4.25 or described as very high level. The findings also observed a very high level of preference in terms of man-made attractions according to mean scores in coastal areas, mountains, forest, hot springs, and falls. Thus, a high level of preference according to mean scores in caves, lakes, and rivers. On the other hand, the findings also observed a very high level of appreciation in terms of man-made attractions according to mean scores in resorts, museums, and heritage sites. Hence, a high level of preference according to mean scores in sporting venues, parks, souvenir shops, and malls. Overall, the results show that the 503 respondents very strongly prefer visiting both natural and man-made attractions during the Pandemic. This further means that the respondents prefer natural attractions more than man-made attractions.

The same result was observed in the study conducted by Chieh Lu-Li (2016), which shows that most tourists prefer Nature-based Tourist Attractions. In addition, the findings of this research study provide implications for research in nature-based tourism. Further, the result was also in consonance with the survey conducted by An, Markowski, Bartos, Rzenca, and Namiecinski (2019), wherein their findings show that majority of tourists prefer nature-based tourist attractions, so they offer intelligent tourism marketing and management strategies for nature-based tourism destinations.

Table 2. Level of tourist preference on attraction during pandemic

Indicators	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
Natural Attractions			
Mountain	4.38	0.75	Very High
Falls	4.31	0.84	Very High
River	4.08	0.97	High
Forest	4.37	0.83	Very High
Cave	3.80	1.07	High
Lakes	4.19	0.93	High
Coastal Areas	4.45	0.79	Very High
Hot Springs	4.36	0.83	Very High
Total	4.24	0.63	Very High
Man-made Attraction			
Museum	4.38	0.83	Very High
Resort	4.42	0.80	Very High
Mall	3.86	1.07	High
Park	4.04	0.99	High
Heritage Sites	4.31	0.89	Very High
Souvenir Shops	3.90	1.05	High
Sporting Venues	4.09	2.48	High
Others	4.02	1.08	High
Total	4.13	0.77	High
Overall	4.25	0.56	Very High

The tourist preference is more inclined toward natural attractions. This has implications for the academe, professionals, and future scholars to better understand visitor preferences and the local tourism business. They might look for relevant information in Davao City and other parts of the Philippines to help broaden their horizons and focus. Other characteristics, such as age and gender, may be considered. They may also investigate whether the tourists' gender has a substantial impact or influence on their choice of tourist attraction. Hence, its practical implications will result in significant improvements that will improve and enhance their entire tour and travel experience, as well as the availability of options to choose from based on their scope of preference.

Overall, these findings can aid in a better understanding of how tourists view and pick their locations, allowing for more successful marketing tactics to be developed. Aside from that, this research can help people make judgments throughout their trips. It supplies tourists with vital information on the most popular destinations in Davao City in the future. Contrastingly, local governments can examine the defects or distracting characteristics of less famous places and devise and encourage development and promotional activities to increase the number of visitors. As a result, future researchers can study and expand on this research by considering external and pull variables, such as the preference for tourist attractions over travel confidence.

Table 3 exhibited the level of travel confidence (TC) of domestic travelers with an overall mean of 4.25 or a very high level. This indicates that there is a very high probability that respondents are confident to tour a tourist destination in Davao City that is not seriously affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. The same result was observed from the study by Newfoundland Labrador (2021), a successful vaccine roll-out has been touted by many as the key to re-engaging

consumers with travel, and research suggests that the COVID-19 vaccine appears to be the ultimate confidence builder when it comes to traveling again.

Henceforth, the findings have practical implications for the local community and tourism industry. When choosing a tourist attraction during a pandemic will help in determining the level of confidence that travelers have in their trip arrangements. As a result, it will increase the visibility of the tourist attraction in the community, which will attract more visitors.

Table 3. Level of travel confidence of travelers

Travel Confidence	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
1. I am fully confident that I can tour to a tourist destination in Davao City that is not seriously affected by the COVID-19 outbreak if I really want to.	4.0	0.854	High
2. After this pandemic end, I will travel to Davao City.	4.38	0.790	Very High
3. I will continue to minimize the duration of face-to-face meetings and teamwork activities even after Covid-19 pandemic.	4.09	0.904	High
4. I am willing to travel to the tourist destinations in Davao City when the pandemic has ceased.	4.54	0.667	Very High

Table 4 shows tourists' preference and travel confidence of tourists with an overall result of 0.340, which interprets a low correlation since natural attractions correlate with 0.322, which interprets a low correlation, while man-made attractions are 0.265, which is a very low correlation. Further, the result shows that there is a low correlation between Tourist Attraction Preference and Travel Confidence.

Table 4. Correlation Matrix of the preference and travel confidence of tourists

		Correlation	Description
	Natural Attractions	0.322*	Low Correlation
Overall	Man-made Attractions	0.265*	Very Low Correlation

*p<0.05

Further, it shows the correlation between natural attractions, man-made attractions, and tourist preference when analyzed according to a level of confidence. The overall p-value of 0.05 showed that no significant relationship existed. Thus, the null hypothesis of the study was accepted. Concerning the level of confidence, the indicators natural Attractions (0.322), man-made Attractions (0.265), and tourist preference (0.340) show there is no significant relationship existing that accepts the null hypothesis of the study. This further means that the tourists' preference for tourist attractions does not affect their travel confidence.

Similar to the study of Chebli & Ben Said (2020), Tourist preferences, perceptions, and attitudes to leisure are changing. Interest in activities emerges in the effect of social distancing like walking and biking. Their study, relatively, is not significant since it presents tourists' hesitance to travel because of the risk of getting infected. In their conclusion, the disease influences tourists' intention to travel and travel with a group. Hygiene & health also play a vital factor in tourist travel choices. Lastly, health standards and the health system destination performance; play a significant role in applying travel choices. More careful tourists tend to focus on overseeing the health status or condition of a destination before planning for a trip. When tourists' preferences are compared prior to and after the COVID-19 Pandemic, hygiene practices of lodging facilities have been critical all through time. Tourists place a premium on the cleanliness of lodging establishments, the surrounding environment, and establishments.

Furthermore, social connection has become the most crucial component in determining local tourists' location choices. It turns out that, among other considerations, the tourist goal of visiting is through their friends and relatives, which is the most significant aspect. The data indicate that the two most essential factors influencing their travel confidence are seeing friends and family and obtaining some rest (Jovanović et al., 2015).

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings in tourist attraction preferences during the Pandemic were valued at 4.25, indicating that the 503 respondents preferred to visit both natural and man-made attractions during the Pandemic. As the implications for destination management and local government, there will be major enhancements that will improve and enrich their overall tour and travel experience, as well as the availability of options from which to choose depending on their scope of interest and preferences, allowing for the development of more effective marketing strategies. Aside from that, this research can assist people in making decisions during their travels. It provides tourists with vital information on the most highly regarded future destinations in Davao City. Local governments, on the other hand, can examine the flaws or distracting characteristics of less well-known locations and devise and encourage development and promotional activities to increase the number of visitors.

The findings in travel confidence during the Pandemic have practical implications for the local community as well as for the tourism industry in general. When selecting a tourist attraction during a pandemic will aid in determining the level of confidence that travelers have in their trip plans. As a result, it will increase the visibility of the tourist attraction in the community, which will, in turn, attract more visitors. In terms of tourist attraction preference and travel confidence, the results reveal that there is a low correlation between the two. As the implications, future researchers can explore and build on this research by taking external and pull variables into account, such as a preference for tourism attractions over travel confidence. This further means that the tourists' preference for tourist attractions does not affect their travel confidence.

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