

## Factors, Challenges, and Prospects of Sustainable Tourism and Hospitality Development in a Regional Context: The Case of Lanao del Sur Province

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to grasp an in-depth understanding of the existing factors, challenges, and prospects of sustainable tourism and hospitality development in Lanao del Sur, which can be used by the local governing bodies of the province to formulate an effective, sustainable tourism development plan. This study used a descriptive-exploratory approach in presenting, interpreting, and analyzing the gathered data. As such, the researchers sought the views and insights of local tourism officers or administrators as respondents of this study. After a thorough exploration of the needed facts and data in this paper, this study concluded that there are varying factors for sustainable tourism and hospitality development in the Province of Lanao del Sur, in terms of accommodation, accessibility, activities, and amenities sectors. Nonetheless, despite these existing factors, there are still challenges faced by the respondents that range from economic, socio-cultural, and environmental challenges. Finally, the study also found that given the existing factors and challenges of sustainable tourism and hospitality development in Lanao del Sur, there were some prospective recommendations of the respondents to the Local Government Units toward the sustainable growth and development of the industry in the locale.

**Keywords:** Tourism, Hospitality, Factors, Challenges, Prospects, Sustainable Development.

### I. INTRODUCTION

The industries of tourism and hospitality are two separate yet interconnected and interdependent industries, which is why professionals and organizers in the field often considered them as one large industry – the Tourism and Hospitality industry.

The province of Lanao del Sur has been home to potential sustainable tourism and hospitality developments, just waiting to be unveiled. It is also home to the second largest lake in the country, Lake Lanao, surrounded by the province's 39 municipalities and its capital city – the city of Marawi. Its people trace back their origin to the royalties of the Southern Mindanao Region, which denotes its richness in culture and heritage.

This evidence signifies the abundance of natural, man-made, and cultural resources in the province – all essential factors in every region's sustainable tourism and hospitality development. However, while the province of Lanao del Sur boasts its wealth in potential tourist destinations across each municipality, its development has been gradual, which may be brought by several factors or challenges that hamper its growth. Furthermore, despite the existence and availability of various tourist attractions, products, and services offered in the province, there is an evident lack of sustainability in their operations. Hence, the researchers embarked on this study and grasped a more in-depth understanding of the factors, challenges, and prospective recommendations that could change and improve the condition and status of sustainable tourism and hospitality development in the province of Lanao del Sur for its betterment.

Understanding the idea of tourism is essential as it has shaped both the social and economic development of its host communities. In fact, in modern times, the tourism industry's business volume surpasses oil exportations, food products, and even vehicle trade (Adillón, 2019). Like the tourism industry, the hospitality industry is also as important to society since it goes hand in hand with the former. In reality, in the hospitality business, a principle on the essence of clientele and meeting their expectations is essential in ensuring its prosperity (Hassanien, Dale, Clarke, and Herriott, 2010). In this context, tourism and hospitality are valued more when these two industries are synchronized.

As such, this paper explored the variables of sustainable tourism and hospitality development in the province of Lanao del Sur and aims to pave the way for the Local and National Government units in their aspiration to have sustainable tourism and hospitality development in the Lanao del Sur Province, by grounding the study with the principles of 2 theories. First is *John Elkington's Triple Bottom Line Theory (1994)*, which advances the objective of sustainability in every business operation, in which an organization in the field of tourism and hospitality in this context should put equal emphasis and importance on the social and environmental problems in addition to its earnings to accurately calculate the total cost of doing business (Kenton, 2022). Another theory employed in this study is the *Theory of Change*, which, according to Twining-ward, Messerli, Sharma, and Villascusa Cerezo (2018), is concerned with understanding how and why change occurs so that development strategies can maximize the industry's growth potential. In development planning and assessment, the theory of change is widely used to fully understand the difficulties, assumptions, solutions, and indicators for the tourism and hospitality industry (Twining-Ward, Messerli, Sharma, and Villascusa Cerezo, 2018).

Having laid down these theoretical frameworks, the researchers considered these principles in undertaking this study which she believes supported the data gathering, presentation, and analysis needed to complete her endeavor.

Finally, this study explored the existing factors of the sustainable development of tourism and hospitality in Lanao del Sur according to the Municipal/City Tourism Officers or Local Administrators, in terms of accommodation, accessibility (that includes transportation, access, and security), activities, amenities, and attractions; the challenges faced by the Municipal/City Tourism Officers or Local Administrators in the province of Lanao del Sur in the sustainable advancement of its tourism and hospitality industry in terms of its economic, socio-cultural, and environmental aspects; and the prospective recommendations for sustainable tourism and hospitality development in the province of Lanao del Sur.

## II. METHODS

This study employed a descriptive-exploratory method and explored the factors, challenges, and prospective recommendations for the sustainable tourism and hospitality industry in Lanao del Sur as viewed by the Municipal/City Tourism Officers or Local Administrators. It also utilized a naturalistic approach for a more in-depth understanding and outcome of this undertaking. The study was conducted in the Province of Lanao del Sur, a province in the Philippines that is part of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), which encompasses the Sulu Archipelago as well as the provinces of Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao in central Mindanao.

The chosen respondents of this study were the Municipal/City Tourism Officer or the Local Administrator of each of the selected municipalities and the city of the Province of Lanao del Sur, who are knowledgeable enough about the status and operational management of the tourism and hospitality management under their authority.

The population involved the whole of Lanao del Sur province, hence the need for a systematic and organized procedure to come up with a sample size. The researchers employed the purposive sampling method, whereby she visited the Provincial Philippine National Police Office as part of her mapping procedure in identifying safe and secured municipalities to conduct the study. The ten municipalities and the city of Marawi that were identified as safe were communicated with by the researchers for an in-depth interview, which was utilized as the instrument of this study. An interview guide was employed, but follow-up questions arose based on the answers of the respondents on each interview question item.

The researchers also employed thematic analysis after a thorough gathering of the needed data for this study. With this data analysis method, the researchers grouped the responses of the respondents based on the common themes that emerged during her in-depth interview sessions with each of the local tourism officers or local administrators.

The respondents' participation in this study was strictly confidential. Any information related to this study and identified with the respondents will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with their permission or as required by law. Their names did not appear in the results and discussion of this undertaking. The researchers only used pseudonyms in the case of direct quotations.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section dealt with the information and data gathered during the in-depth interview sessions of the researchers with the municipal tourism officer/local administrator of the eleven (11) selected localities in the province of Lanao del Sur, who have ample knowledge and information on the factors, challenges, and prospects of the sustainable tourism and hospitality development in their locale.

Specifically, this study determined the existing factors of sustainable tourism and hospitality development in Lanao del Sur, in terms of accommodation, accessibility, activities, amenities, and attractions sector; the challenges faced by the Municipal Tourism Officers or Local Administrators in the sustainable advancement of the tourism and hospitality industry in the locale; and their prospective recommendations towards the sustainable tourism and hospitality development in the province of Lanao del Sur, given the existing factors and challenges mentioned by the respondents.

The responses of the respondents were analyzed based on common themes that emerged during the in-depth interviews, which were led by the researchers with the aid of interview guide questions to stay on track during the discussion. However, follow-up questions arose based on the respondents' answers to each question.

#### **Existing Factors of Sustainable Tourism and Hospitality Development**

This section presents the findings on the existing factors of sustainable tourism and hospitality development in the province of Lanao del Sur, particularly in the aspects of accommodation, accessibility, activities, amenities, and attractions.

##### ***Accommodation Sector***

The findings of this study emphasize the significance of the accommodation sector in attracting tourist influx, extending their duration of stay in the province, and promoting repeat visits.

The respondents of this study were asked what types of accommodation services are available in their locality that provide their visitors/tourists a place to stay. Their responses revolved around common themes – those who responded with the existence of accommodation establishment in their locale, those who offer homestay/makeshift accommodations in place of a proper accommodation establishment in their locale, and those which do not have or provide proper or alternative accommodation services within their locality.

Out of eleven (11) respondents of this study, three (3) of them said that they have available accommodation establishments in their locality; two (2) of them responded that they offer homestay or makeshift accommodation services to the tourists in their locality due to the absence of accommodation establishments in the area; and six (6) expressed that there are no accommodation establishments in their area, which compels them to lead their visitors to other nearby localities for their accommodations.

From these results, the researchers found that there is a provision of accommodation services in certain locales, although it is limited in number. Some areas offer homestay services or host tourists and visitors in improvised lodgings instead, which can offer them the chance to directly encounter the community's culture and engage with the distinctive hospitality of the local community. Still, these practices may not be favorable to the yet-to-be-developed tourism and hospitality industry in the area, given its significant dependence on the presence of the host and the absence of revenue.

There are also other localities that suffer from the absence of established lodging facilities and are compelled to bring visitors to nearby locales that offer accommodation services instead, which could also impede the advancement of the tourism and hospitality industry in the area. Moreover, the fluctuating electricity supply in the area could also potentially hinder the growth of the tourism and hospitality industry, thereby discouraging potential visitors from engaging in overnight stays, hence the need for intensified investment in the accommodation sector of the tourism and hospitality industry within the province of Lanao del Sur.

These results imply that the tourism and hospitality industry in the province of Lanao del Sur is still in its initial stages, and as such, there is a need to fast-track the development process in the locale to attract more tourist arrivals to the province.

##### ***Accessibility Sector***

The accessibility sector in the province of Lanao del Sur also plays a crucial role in its sustainable tourism and hospitality development. The respondents of this study were asked to describe the accessibility of their locale. Their responses also revolved around common themes, such as the access routes, modes of transportation, terminals, and safe access.

All eleven (11) respondents affirmed the accessibility of their access routes, although some have a few parts of their roads that are not well-paved yet. Most respondents further elaborated their responses linking the access routes to the modes of transportation in their municipality/city.

With the respondents having linked the modes of transportation to the overall accessibility of the locale to the visitors/tourists, a follow-up question arose - whether these public transport vehicles have designated terminals or not, since improper baying of vehicles may cause inconvenience to the supposed accessibility of the place. They also affirmed safe access in their areas, although some have also expressed minor concerns on this aspect.

These results imply that the level of accessibility in the province of Lanao del Sur shows variability across different locations, although a majority of the areas feature well-constructed and passable access routes. The major modes of transportation within the province are tricycles and multi-cabs, which may have both favorable and unfavorable effects on the advancement of tourism and hospitality in the area. The prevalence of tricycles as the major mode of transportation suggests that the area is underdeveloped and does not receive a significant influx of tourists, potentially due to the restricted availability of transportation alternatives in the locale.

The limited availability of designated terminals within the study locale may also have potential impacts, both positive and negative, on the province's tourism and hospitality industry. The inadequacy of transportation infrastructures in the area could pose challenges to tourists and visitors in terms of accessing and communicating with transportation services, potentially leading to a decrease in repeat visits. However, this may also imply that tourists and visitors can engage in a genuine cultural encounter by fully engaging in the customary lifestyle of the local community. Still, the presence of a conveniently located and efficiently managed transportation terminal is crucial in attracting a greater number of tourists and visitors to the area.

Furthermore, the majority of respondents also expressed confidence in the safety and security of the area, indicating a positive outlook for the province's potential for growth in the tourism and hospitality industries. The contribution of Local Government Units and relevant stakeholders toward the preservation of peace and order within the community is also a significant factor in its progress and advancement.

Thus, the provision of ease of access and the growth of the transportation system may lead to the potential development and expansion of various tourism and hospitality offerings, amenities, and facilities within the province as they become more easily accessible to tourists.

#### ***Activities Sector***

The respondents were further asked what the available, observed, and celebrated activities in their locales are, whereby their answers also led the researchers to ask how affordable these activities to the audience and participants were.

Out of eleven (11) localities, four (4) mentioned the availability of leisure activities in their area. Seven (7) of them also mentioned that they observe religious activities in their area, especially during the month of fasting – the Ramadhan.

Meanwhile, all eleven (11) respondents appeared to be observing or celebrating various local and/or cultural activities in their locale, where additional responses from the respondents on the affordability of activities that they observe and celebrate in their locality were also drawn.

As such, this study also found that outdoor leisure activities, including mountain climbing, trekking, and biking, hold significant potential for the tourism and hospitality industry in Lanao del Sur. Even so, prioritizing safety and security concerns, along with implementing regulatory measures in mountainous regions, is imperative to ensure the well-being of tourists and visitors.

Results also show that the Local Government Units in Lanao del Sur not only implement measures to promote leisure activities through close coordination with relevant authorities but also commit to promoting peaceful coexistence within the community through the consistent implementation and encouragement of religious activities. This suggests a possible rise in the prospect of halal tourism within the locality, thereby drawing the attention of travelers who are curious about the religious customs and beliefs of the local community.

The observation and celebration of local and cultural events within a region is also a vital aspect in the decision-making process of tourists because this suggests that the locality possesses sufficient unique cultural products to present to potential tourists and visitors, thereby enabling the display of their local customs and heritage. Nonetheless, the lack of local and cultural activities in some areas may not hinder the progress of community development, provided that the promotion and marketing of tourism and hospitality are effectively redirected towards alternative activities and services.

Moreover, the majority of recreational, religious, community, and cultural events within the area are supported and funded by their respective Local Government Units. This may yield both favorable and unfavorable effects on the growth and development of tourism and hospitality in Lanao del Sur. First, it suggests a limited degree of private sector engagement in the organization and celebration of said events, which may raise concerns because it would seem the community is overly dependent on the local government's endeavors for their advancement. Second, this approach may also suggest that the Local Government Unit possesses the ability to regulate and uphold the standard of said undertakings, as well as advance the locality by means of disseminating information about these activities to a diverse group of individuals.

#### ***Amenities Sector***

The respondents were further asked what amenities and facilities are available in their locality. Their responses revolved around common themes, which include parking areas, signages, banking institutions, medical and healthcare facilities, marketplaces, and restaurants, among others.

Results show that some localities in the province of Lanao del Sur have parking spaces or areas in their locality, whereas some parts of the province also see the absence of parking areas in the locality as a crucial issue for its sustainable tourism and hospitality development.

Another common theme that emerged during the data-gathering procedure was the mention of the use of signage, either directional or restrictive. Responses indicate that although a larger number of localities in the province have existing directional and restrictive signages in their areas, there are still some localities in the province of Lanao del Sur that are still in the process of producing them.

Among the eleven (11) respondents, five (5) further expressed the availability of markets or restaurants in their locality. In addition, few respondents expressed the availability of ATMs in their area, a larger portion mentioned the availability of over-the-counter remittance centers in place of ATMs or banking institutions, while all of the respondents acknowledged the prominent use of e-money centers and services in their locality.

Results also show five (5) respondents expressed the availability of an RHU in their locale, but they do not have hospitals to cater to more critical medical emergencies; three (3) had the same responses, having mentioned that they also have an RHU in their locale and that despite the absence of a hospital in their locale, they have ambulance and/or rescue cars ready to transport medical patients to nearby hospitals.

In addition, out of eleven (11) respondents, eight (8) of them acknowledged the visibility of security outposts in their locality, while few further mentioned that they also have programs for PWDs sponsored by the LGU.

In this connection, this study found that several localities have established designated parking zones, which improve the charm of the location and offer convenience to visitors, particularly those with private vehicles. However, some areas lack designated parking facilities which can present a difficulty for both residents and visitors/tourists.

The absence of adequate signage in certain areas of the province may also potentially deter tourists from revisiting. However, there are still certain areas that continue to strictly adhere to the implementation of these signages, thereby promoting the development of the sustainable tourism and hospitality industry in the locale.

Moreover, the presence of markets, shopping malls, and restaurants in some areas of the province holds substantial effects on its overall sustainable tourism and hospitality development, as well as the success of its socio-economic growth. The limited availability of banking and ATM facilities in certain locales may also potentially cause inconvenience for tourists in the province. However, the alternative options for remittance centers and e-money services have the potential to alleviate the adverse consequences of the former.

There are also available and accessible medical establishments and emergency services in the study locales, which have the potential to enhance the development of tourism and hospitality industries in the province. This is in addition to the presence and visibility of security checkpoints in the locality that connotes an enhanced perception of safety for the visitors and tourists within the province.

The implementation of programs and assistance initiatives for Persons with Disabilities (PWD) and people with special needs by the local government also presents a prospect to advance the locality as an all-inclusive and accessible environment, thereby potentially increasing the influx of tourists in the region. More so, there are also places within the province of Lanao del Sur that provide a greater range of amenities and facilities to accommodate the requirements of both the local community and tourists/visitors.

#### ***Attractions Sector***

The findings of this study also include that Lanao del Sur province certainly possesses a substantial number of attractions that have the potential to be promoted and marketed to potential tourists and visitors. This facet denotes the various attractions available in the locality, ranging from natural, cultural, industrial, special events, and gastronomic attractions, among others.

Out of eleven (11) respondents in this study, ten (10) mentioned the availability of natural attractions in their locality. There are also relative portions of Lanao del Sur that offer cultural and historical attractions that could be promoted and marketed to its prospective tourists and visitors.

Nine (9) out of eleven (11) respondents further mentioned the availability of man-made attractions in their locale, while all eleven (11) respondents expressed their distinct local products in their area. The responses further demonstrated that there are localities that do not impose or only impose the minimum amount of entrance and maintenance fees at the available attractions in the community.

These findings show that the province of Lanao del Sur boasts a variety of cultural and historical attractions that may be effectively promoted and marketed to tourists with a profound interest in exploring diverse cultures and heritage. However, it is imperative to exercise caution in preserving and monitoring these sites to avoid any issues that may arise from excessive commercialization and exploitation.

The province also possesses a significant number of man-made attractions, and strategies for development have been established to enhance these establishments. The production and distribution of food and cultural products within the locality of Lanao del Sur also hold significant implications for the province's broader sustainable tourism and hospitality development. This is because the integration of these products into tourism and hospitality services can aid in the livelihood of local producers and manufacturers, as well as the preservation of the culture and heritage of the locality.

However, the lack of entrance fees or the implementation of minimal fees in certain tourist attractions of the locale may have both advantageous and disadvantageous effects on the advancement of tourism and hospitality in the region.

Therefore, although the availability and implementation of tourist attractions and products have the potential to generate additional employment prospects and economic advantages for the local community, careful planning and monitoring of these locations are still necessary to ensure sustainable practices and prevent economic, ecological, and socio-cultural harm.

### **Challenges Faced by the Respondents in Sustainable Tourism and Hospitality Development**

This section discusses the challenges faced by the respondents of this study on sustainable tourism and hospitality development in the province of Lanao del Sur. The respondents were asked, in general, what challenges do they face in their efforts to stimulate the growth and development of the tourism and hospitality industry in the locale.

Their responses mainly revolved around three areas – economic, socio-cultural, and environmental challenges – which also had themes that commonly emerged during the in-depth interview sessions.

#### ***Economic Challenges***

This sub-section discusses the economic challenges commonly faced by the respondents, which include income generation, government funding, and budget allocation, job and livelihood opportunities, and permits and taxes.

The responses of the respondents show that of the eleven (11) localities, ten (10) expressed the challenges they face on government funding and budget allocation. They also expressed that the income generation of the tourism and hospitality industry in the province of Lanao del Sur is little to none and that the issues that hinder the growth and development of the locale may not be properly addressed.

Moreover, there are currently no job opportunities and livelihood potential in the province of Lanao del Sur with respect to its tourism and hospitality industry, but the majority of the study locale are successful in having the various business establishments comply with the permit and tax requirements in their jurisdictions, although there is still a significant number of locales that face challenges in imposing the tax and permit compliance within their community.

As such, in terms of its economic aspect, the tourism and hospitality industry in the province is generating minimal income revenue, highlighting the necessity to expand the variety of tourism and hospitality products and enhance the promotion of existing yet lesser-known attractions.

Insufficient budget allocation and funding assistance also pose a significant hindrance to the capacity of the local government to invest in and construct essential infrastructures for its socioeconomic advancement, thereby constraining its competitiveness vis-à-vis neighboring provinces that boast more developed tourism and hospitality products and services.

The lack of employment prospects and economic opportunities within the tourism and hospitality industry of the province may also result in a phenomenon known as brain drain, whereby members of the community may relocate elsewhere.

Furthermore, there exists a significant number of localities that encounter difficulties in enforcing tax and permit compliance among their community suggests a decrease in income for the local government, which would have been allocated towards the development and growth of tourism and hospitality infrastructure, as well as other essential initiatives vital to its advancement.

Hence, to address these challenges, it is imperative to adopt an integrated approach that involves close collaboration with the local community and relevant stakeholders.

#### ***Socio-Cultural Challenges***

This sub-section further discusses the responses of the respondents on the sociocultural challenges they face toward the advancement of the tourism and hospitality industry in their locale. The common themes that emerged that aligned in this aspect include political issues, safety and security, and awareness and acceptability.

Results show that politics is not a major issue in the province of Lanao del Sur, in relation to its sustainable tourism and hospitality development. Nonetheless, there are reasonable areas in the province of Lanao del Sur that are still struggling with the safety and security issues in their locality.

The responses also show that there were mixed responses on the acceptability of sustainable tourism and hospitality development from the viewpoints of the host community.

In this context, the study found that the political situation in the province is perceived to be stable and is not considered a significant hindrance to the growth and development of the industry and that the industry only faces a trivial challenge with regard to safety and security in some areas of the province, owing to its past conflicts.

The study also suggests that the local community's perception of sustainable tourism and hospitality development is varied and inconclusive. Certain communities exhibit enthusiasm towards welcoming tourists and visitors, whereas others express reservations regarding the potential adverse effects on their cultural identity and heritage. Hence, it is imperative for the local government entities to involve the local community in the formulation and evaluation procedures of the industry and to address their concerns.

It is also implied that the success of the tourism and hospitality industry in Lanao del Sur province is dependent on the level of support provided by the local government units, the collaboration and coordination among the relevant stakeholders, and the continuing implementation of safety and security procedures in the area.

#### ***Environmental Challenges***

This sub-section presents the commonly emerging themes on the environmental challenges that the respondents face towards the advancement of the sustainable tourism and hospitality industry in their locale. These themes range from solid waste management, sewage management, and illegal logging activities.

The responses of the respondents show that there may be areas in the province that have designated Sanitary Landfills (SLFs), and other parts may utilize Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs), but there are still areas in the province that do not strictly adhere to these practices and even irresponsibly dispose of waste materials through burning and burying.

The Local Government Unit of each locale also needs to address concerns on sewage management that could impact the flooding issues in some areas of the province of Lanao del Sur. In addition, Out of eleven (11) respondents to the study, three (3) of them further expressed their challenges with illegal logging activities.

Hence, this study found that the implementation of effective solid waste management strategies in Lanao del Sur is necessary to maintain the cleanliness of the locality and to prevent the pollution of nearby waterbodies, which may potentially deter tourist arrivals. The same goes for the prioritization of sufficient sewage management, which is also vital in addressing potential flooding concerns that may affect the safety of the community and potentially discourage tourist arrivals.

Furthermore, the continuity of illegal logging activities in certain localities of the province poses a threat to the visual appeal of ecological areas and has the potential to hinder the development of the tourism and hospitality industry.

Thus, there is a perceived need for local governing bodies to strictly enforce regulatory and monitoring protocols and collaborate with military forces to prevent the recurrence of illegal logging activities and preserve the natural environment.

The study also found that addressing the environmental issues and the enhancement of waste management practices are fundamental measures in the development of a sustainable tourism and hospitality industry in Lanao del Sur.

#### **Prospects of Sustainable Tourism and Hospitality Development in the Province of Lanao del Sur**

This section analyzes the prospective recommendations of the respondents upon laying down the existing factors and challenges toward the advancement of a sustainable tourism and hospitality industry in the study locale. Their responses mainly revolved around four commonly occurring themes – funding and investment opportunities, local government efforts, technological advancements, and information dissemination.

The respondents of this study described that the province of Lanao del Sur has both prospects and limitations in its sustainable tourism and hospitality development, particularly with the locality's funding and investment opportunities.

The responses also suggest that there is a remarkable interest of the Local Government Units and relevant stakeholders in the province of Lanao del Sur to develop its tourism and hospitality industry and that the local governing bodies of the sub-localities in the province are enthusiastically taking appropriate measures towards the overall development of their locale.

In addition, the respondents further described that the transportation sector and connectivity in the province of Lanao del Sur play a relatively crucial role in the sustainable tourism and hospitality development of the province and that the growth and development of the tourism and hospitality industry essentially rely on the participation and cooperation among the Local Government Units, relevant stakeholders, and the community in general.

As such, this study finds that the presence of funding and investment prospects in select areas of the province has facilitated the negotiating of development initiatives and plans for the industry, along with the existence and availability of tourist destinations, amenities, and infrastructure. Nevertheless, certain areas continue to encounter challenges stemming from financial and investment limitations, hindering the growth and development of the tourism and hospitality industry in the province.

The study also emphasized that the Local Government Unit is prioritizing the generation of employment prospects within the area and enhancing the capabilities of the host community, including minority groups, through the provision and planning of capacity-building programs. Moreover, the significance of transportation and connectivity in the province cannot be overstated, particularly in relation to the development of tourism and hospitality.

Moreover, the dissemination of accurate information and education of the local community through the promotion of awareness regarding the factors, challenges, and prospects of sustainable tourism and hospitality development can effectively enhance tourist arrivals in the area.

Hence, a collaborative approach is necessary among the municipalities and city of Lanao del Sur to exchange information and share resources, as well as establish strategic partnerships to support the local infrastructure, facilities, and other resources to promote the overall growth of tourism and hospitality in the province.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings presented, the following conclusions were drawn from this study:

There are existing factors of sustainable tourism and hospitality development in the province of Lanao del Sur in terms of the accommodation, accessibility, activities, amenities, and attraction sectors. The study suggested that the existing factors of the accommodation sector that could help boost the growth and development of tourism and hospitality in the province include the availability of accommodation services in some localities; accommodation as a crucial sector of sustainable tourism and hospitality development; local government initiatives; homestay services and makeshift accommodations as an alternative for accommodation services; and employment opportunities in the accommodation sector.

There are also existing factors of the accessibility sector that could help in the advancement of sustainable tourism and hospitality development in the study locale, such as well-paved access routes; availability of transportation services; safety and security in the locale; and opportunities for cultural engagement.

There are existing factors in the activities sector that contribute to the locale's sustainable tourism and hospitality development which include its potential for outdoor activities; halal tourism potential; unique cultural experiences; and local government support.

In addition, there are existing factors in the amenities sector also, which could help boost the growth and development of tourism and hospitality in the province, such as the obtainability of parking areas; development of signages; presence of markets, shopping malls, and restaurants; availability of banking, ATM facilities, remittance centers, and e-money alternatives; medical facilities and emergency services; existence of security outposts; PWD programs and assistance projects; and recreational amenities and facilities.

There are also existing factors in the attractions sector that could help in the advancement of sustainable tourism and hospitality development in the study locale, which include existing natural attractions; cultural and historical attractions; man-made attractions; local food and cultural products; and accessibility and affordability of attractions.

However, despite the existing factors of sustainable tourism and hospitality development in the province, there are still challenges faced by the respondents that range from economic, socio-cultural, and environmental challenges. The respondents face economic challenges towards the development of tourism and hospitality in their locale, particularly the lack of income revenue due to the need to diversify tourism products and services; lack of effort and strategies in promoting existing but less-known attractions; need for investment in



development projects; need for budgetary and funding assistance from external agencies; absence of job opportunities and livelihood potential; challenges in imposing tax and business permit compliance among business owners; and lack of regulation and oversight on various business establishments.

The respondents also face socio-cultural challenges towards the development of tourism and hospitality in their locale, particularly the history of cultural and civil conflicts that pose challenges in attracting tourist arrivals; skepticism of some members of the community towards sustainable tourism and hospitality development due to concerns about its negative impact on their cultural identity and heritage; lack of engagement with host communities on the LGU's planning and monitoring processes for sustainable tourism and hospitality development; lack of promotion and marketing strategies on local food and cultural products; and loss of human capital and expertise brought by the lack of employment and livelihood opportunities;

The respondents also further environmental challenges towards the development of tourism and hospitality in their locale, particularly the improper solid waste management practices; sewage management and flooding issues; and ecological damage brought by illegal logging activities.

Nonetheless, given the existing factors and challenges of sustainable tourism and hospitality development in Lanao del Sur, there were some prospective recommendations to the Local Government Units as viewed by the respondents, such as the strengthened partnership of Local Government Units with provincial, regional, and national government, as well as other external agencies in the implementation of development projects in tourism and hospitality industry; enhancement of transportation infrastructures; formulation of tourism development plan for the systematized implementation of the industry's growth and development projects; continuous and intensified Local Government Support on sustainable tourism and hospitality development; employment and livelihood opportunities; establishment of amenities and facilities that could help attract more tourist arrivals; collaborative and cooperative efforts among local governing bodies, private sectors, business establishment owners, and the host community in ensuring the growth and development of the industry in their locale; mitigation measures on the negative economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts of the industry; promotion of technological advancement in the locale; promotion of information dissemination; increased promotional and advertisement strategies; and continuing implementation of peace and order.

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