

PERSPECTIVES OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT ON SEX TOURISM IN ANGELES, PAMPANGA

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify the acceptance of the local government unit of Angeles, Pampanga on sex tourism in their area through assessing the significant difference when measured in terms of demographic profile of the respondents and different factors concerning sex tourism. This research was utilized using the descriptive design and the quantitative approach. In this paper, the results reflected that the local government officers of Angeles, Pampanga accepts that economic, social, and health as significant factors on sex tourism. The respondents' demographic information such as sex, office (barangay or municipality), and years of residency are essential in determining their level of acceptance. This paper also presents the contradictions between the statements of the respondents on how they address the issue of sex tourism in Angeles, Pampanga depending on their position and office in the government.

Keywords: *sex tourism, prostitution, sexual exploitation, trafficking, Pampanga, local government unit*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism, as usually defined by society, is a practice of people traveling for leisure purposes. Commonly, it is about going to different places beyond their usual environment and staying there for recreational activities. However, tourism has different and complex forms such as leisure tourism, medical tourism (health tourism), religious tourism (pilgrimage tourism), cultural tourism (heritage tourism), educational tourism, business tourism, sports tourism, and alternative tourism (special tourism).

In the Philippines, the tourism industry has been identified as one of the powerful engines in sustaining the strong economic growth of the country (Añasco & Lizada, 2014). In fact, in the field of service sector, it is the third growth engine next to the remittances from the overseas Filipino workers (OFW) and the BPO-IT sector (Villegas, 2017). The broad field of the industry offers a huge number of possible employment as well as a profitable field for businesses both for the Filipinos and the foreign investors. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), the tourism industry has contributed an estimated eight point six percent (8.6%) to the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country in 2016 as measured by the Tourism Direct Gross Value Added (TDGVA), compared to the eight point two percent (8.2%) in 2015 (Shead, 2017).

Sex tourism, on the other hand, takes place when tourists visit a particular country or area to engage in sexual activity, usually with the residing prostitutes within the destination. According to Lovelock and Lovelock (2013), the sex tourism involves a confluence between prostitution and tourism. Also, both the production and consumption of this type of services are locally and globally sustained. The sex tourism form of the industry is actually similar to the tourism itself generally. The tourists consume what the country has promoted while the hosts provide what they think will be consumed by the tourists.

The Philippines, like some other Southeast Asian countries, has a reputation for prostitution and sex tourism. According to Rough Guides (n.d.), sex tourism is a huge industry in the Philippines. The international image of the country as a sex destination was a result of the military presence of the United States in the Philippines during the second world war when "go go" or "girly" bars started to flourish around the bases at Clark and Subic Bay. However, the trade of sex still operates in the country even though it is considered illegal. The sex workers are employed as waitresses, dancers, singers, or "guest relations officers" in clubs and bars where they leave with the client who pays an additional fee. Also, there are workers who are dubbed as "freelancers"; they are the prostitutes that lures from bars independently and look for customers who are willing to pay. The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women stated that there are around fifteen thousand (15,000) Australian men that visit Angeles, Pampanga

annually for reason of sex tours. Along with the Australian men are Americans, Brits and Europeans. The Taiwanese, Chinese, and Koreans developed businesses that are usually karaoke bars based, as well as restaurants.

In Pampanga, the Angeles City has been internationally tagged as “Sin City” for being known as the center of the red light district and bar scene in the Philippines (Malabanan, 2014). The city is popular to tourists who wish to engage in cheap sex with the local prostitutes. Particularly, the Fields Avenue in Balibago area is considered as the center of the sex tourism industry for this is where the center of the “night entertainment” is located. The Fields Avenue emerged originally into service at the Clark US Air Force Base that closed in 1991. The typical nights at Field’s Avenue are filled with nightclubs, girls, and tourists from different countries. According to Tacon (2015), majority of the arrivals in the present date at Clark, Airport (which is a former military base), are male travelers from Asia, United States of America, Australia, Europe, and Middle East. They are also the main guests being served at the nightclubs and bars located at Fields Avenue. Although it is considered illegal in the Philippines, it is a booming trade where an estimated number of five hundred thousand (500,000) are sex workers and five percent (5%) of the said figures are minors.

This research is designed for the benefit of broadening the vision of the students, professionals, and officers under the tourism and hospitality industry in order to have a better perspective of what is the current state of the Philippine sex industry. This study will also benefit the researchers in developing a deeper understanding of the environment around them through experiencing the reality of life in this industry first hand. Lastly, the results of this research could be used for the policy recommendation on the subject of legalization or banning of prostitution in the Philippines as well as for the further development of the local policies and regulations for the protection and welfare of the youth and society.

METHODOLOGY

The researchers utilized a descriptive method of research with quantitative approach to describe and interpret the data collected. A descriptive design was used to seek and describe the present status of a variable or phenomenon. In this design, the researchers did not begin with a constructed hypothesis, but developed one after the data were gathered (Center for Innovation in Research and Teaching, n.d.). On the other hand, quantitative approach focuses on describing the state of the phenomenon in a larger number of participants. In gathering information, the characteristics across groups and the relationships are summarized. This type of approach surveys a large number of individuals and applies statistical techniques to recognize the patterns in the relationship of the processes (Rhodes, 2014).

Out of thirty-three (33) *barangays* of the city, the researchers gathered the information used for the research study from the municipality of Angeles City and from two other *barangay*, *Barangay Amsic* and *Barangay Balibago*. Twenty-two (22) of the respondents came from the said *barangays* and the remaining forty-nine (49) came from the city municipality.

Convenience sampling was used as the sampling method since it was practical for the researchers to conduct the study in certain areas of the locale rather than randomly selecting areas in an extensively broad city. The researchers used the G Power software to determine the sampling size of 71 where the effect size is 0.4, alpha error is 0.05 and power is 0.95.

The researchers used a self-made survey questionnaire in a four-point Likert Scale as an instrument to collect and gather data for the study. The survey questionnaire was composed of two parts. The first part of the questionnaire was the demographic profile of the respondents that includes the age, sex, socioeconomic status, office, and years of residency of the respondents. The second part of the questionnaire was the survey part where their personal views regarding the factors in sex tourism in Angeles, Pampanga was gathered. These factors were economic, legal, social, and health.

Permission to conduct the study was secured by the researchers from the College Dean and Adviser of the College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management of Lyceum of the Philippines University-Laguna. After which, the researchers went to the city proper of Angeles, Pampanga to personally distribute the questionnaires to the local government unit employees of the chosen municipality and *barangay*. The questionnaires were then scored, tallied, and tabulated. The results of the gathered data were interpreted for the better understanding of the study.

Since the research focused on sensitive issue of sex tourism and prostitution, the researchers ensured that the data were handled with utmost care and confidentiality. The researchers started their survey and interview by explaining precautionary measures and by ensuring the anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents. The respondents' personal information as well as the contents of the surveys and interviews were not shared with others. Personal details were also not disclosed.

The following statistical tools were used for the tabulation, analysis and interpretation of data:

Frequency Percentage was used to present the demographic profile of the respondents. It was obtained by dividing the ratio of the frequency of responses (f) and total number of respondents (n).

Range	Scale	Verbal Interpretation	Verbal Description
4	3.50-4.00	Strongly Agree	Highly Acceptable
3	2.50-3.49	Agree	Acceptable
2	1.50-2.49	Disagree	Unacceptable
1	1.00-1.49	Strongly Disagree	Highly Unacceptable

Weighted mean was used to determine the responses using likert as the scaling approach about the views of the LGU employees towards the sex tourism in Angeles, Pampanga. The following range and scale were used to interpret the data using the weighted mean.

Table 1. Verbal interpretation of weighted mean according to their range

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine the significant difference between the measured factors when respondents are grouped by profile and the views of the respondents towards sex tourism at Angeles City, Pampanga.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Factors in the sex tourism industry in Angeles, Pampanga

Table 2 in the next page shows the perspective of the LGU officials on sex tourism in terms of the factors presented in general. Among the factors given, the legal factor got a composite mean of 2.49 which means that most of the respondents disagreed on the presented indicators under this factor. The following statements are the indicators under the legal factor in the questionnaire that the researchers distributed to the respondents. The indicators are as follows: laws regarding sex tourism in the Philippines are adequate; prostitution should be legalized in the Philippines; sex tourism depends on local authority's consent; and local government officers are well-trained on the enforcement of Anti-trafficking in Persons Act. Generally, the respondents disagree to these statements. However, it needs to be emphasized that the result of the composite mean is .1 which is closer to the range under the agree interpretation. It means that there was a close association between the perspectives of the respondents whether they agree or disagree to the presented indicators in terms of legal factors.

Table 2. Perspective of the LGU officials on sex tourism in terms of the factors

Factors	Composite Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Economic	2.79	Agree
Legal	2.49	Disagree
Social	2.69	Agree
Health	3.27	Agree
General Mean	2.81	Agree

Legend: 3.50 - 4 – Strongly agree; 2.50 – 3.49 – Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 – Disagree; 1.00 – 1.49 – Strongly Disagree

Table 3 below shows the difference in the measured factors according to sex. Among the factors measured, the social factor appeared to be significant to sex of the respondents with an f-value of 9.848, and p-value of .003.

It appears that the sex of the respondents has a significant effect in this study. Majority of the respondents were women. According to Rand, Brescoll, Everett, Capraro and Barcelo (2016), it is a social expectation for women to behave altruistically and it is not acceptable if they fail to do so. Due to this matter, it is evident that women use this factor of internalized altruism as an intuitive response for whatever external factor they are dealing with compared to men who are less extensive in showing altruism towards things. The social factor in this study appeared to be significant since majority of the respondents are women. It is known that women are more expressive in disclosing their personal feelings and thoughts regarding the things happening around them (Aquino, Donato & Fandino, 2011). It is more than just the sex of the respondent that has contributed to the significance of it in the presented social factors but the underlying behavior of women and men regarding the things happening within and around their environments. Although both genders are within the same environment of exposure in the society, men and women have different approaches on how to deal and react with the things happening around them.

Table 3. Difference in the measured factors according to sex

Factors	f-value	p-value	Interpretation
Economic	2.673	.107	Not Significant
Legal	1.107	.269	Not Significant
Social	9.848	.003	Significant
Health	2.960	.090	Not Significant

If p-value is < .05, then there is significant difference between the factors when grouped according to sex.

Table 4 shows the difference in the measured factors according to office. Based on the results, the economic and social factors are both significant to the office of the respondents. The economic factor has an f-value of 11.236 and a p-value of .001 while the social factor has an f-value of 7.406 and a p-value of .008.

The economic factor appears to have significance to the office of the respondents since these two are well connected with each other. According to Rappler (2015), the local government unit of the Philippines has a vital role for the country in terms of the economy specially that it has joined the neighbouring countries in the ASEAN Economic Community. It has also been highlighted that the local officials need to ensure that their office and their area of localities are well competitive for the benefit of enjoying a full economic integration. The local offices and the people working in it cannot be separated for this is the area where the economy of a certain place are being controlled based on the decisions of the people in power for the implementation of the policies, regulations, and laws that affect the circulation of money and business in places.

On the other hand, the office also appeared to be significant to the indicators presented under the social factor. This is relatively true since the offices of the respondents were dealing with the welfare of the society and the people of their city. The respondents must have their own significant point of views regarding the sex tourism in their area. Moreover, Schipani, Milliken & Dworkin (2017) stated that the opportunity to voice out what they have been linked to their area based on the health and well-being results and enhanced justice

understanding because they live in the said place. However, elimination of voice can bring to agony and losing of senses. Unluckily, the environment in terms of legality together with the different supplies to the contracts of employees may harm their workers eagerness to express themselves in the workplace.

Table 4. Difference in the measured factors according to office

Factors	f-value	p-value	Interpretation
Economic	11.236	.001	Significant
Legal	1.038	.312	Not Significant
Social	7.406	.008	Significant
Health	.791	.377	Not Significant

If p-value is < .05, then there is significant difference between the factors when grouped according to office.

Table 5 in the next page shows the difference in the measured factors according to monthly income. Based on the results, none of the given factors appeared to be significant with the monthly income of the respondents. The salary of the respondents did not necessarily dictate their views in terms of economic, legal, social, or health factors in sex tourism in Angeles, Pampanga.

Based on the article in 2013 written by Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic entitled *Does Money Really Affect Motivation? A Review of the Research*, he stated that “money does not buy engagement.” According to him, the personalities of the employees are better predictors of their decision-making in life as well as their level of engagement to the things around their environment than the amount of their salaries from the jobs they have.

Table 5. Difference in the measured factors according to monthly income

Factors	f-value	p-value	Interpretation
Economic	.846	.501	Not Significant
Legal	2.227	.075	Not Significant
Social	.470	.758	Not Significant

Table 5
continued...

Health	.760	.555	Not Significant
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If p-value is < .05, then there is significant difference between the factors when grouped according to monthly income.

Table 6 below shows the difference in the measured factors according to age. It is shown that none of the given factors appeared to be significant with the age of the respondents. The age of the respondents did not necessarily dictates their views in terms of economic, legal, social, or health factors in sex tourism in Angeles, Pampanga. According to Sherratt & Ferron (2018), as individuals increase their age, their tendency to explore external factors has the possibility to reduce. It is likely attainable that this issue could add to the moderation of adjusting. Especially, when a thing is strange to them or just came upon recently, the way of valuing that certain material will be low.

Table 6. Difference in the measured factors according to age

Factors	f-value	p-value	Interpretation
Economic	1.191	.311	Not Significant
Legal	1.226	.282	Not Significant
Social	1.027	.474	Not Significant
Health	.915	.607	Not Significant

If p-value is < .05, then there is significant difference between the factors when grouped according to age

Table 7 below shows the difference in the measured factors according to years of residency. Among the factors presented, only the legal factors have significance to the views of the respondents when measured based on their years of residency at Angeles, Pampanga. The legal factor got an f-value of 2.131 and a p-value of .024.

Based on the study of Anton and Lawrence (2014) entitled *Home is Where the Heart Is: The Effect of Place of Residence on Place Attachment and Community Participation*, when people acquire longer time living within a specific area, they develop more knowledge about

that certain community and they become more sensible of the place that they actually develop a sense of protectiveness to their place due to the rapport that has been built throughout time.

Table 7. Difference in the measured factors according to years of residency

Factors	f-value	p-value	Interpretation
Economic	.826	.717	Not Significant
Legal	2.131	.024	Significant
Social	.600	.932	Not Significant
Health	.784	.766	Not Significant

If p-value is < .05, then there is significant difference between the factors when grouped according to years of residency.

CONCLUSION

The results of the research revealed that the responses of the local government officials to certain factors varied depending on their demographic profile. The respondents mostly agreed that the economic, social, and health factors are significant on sex tourism in Angeles, Pampanga. However, the respondents think otherwise in terms of the legal factors presented in the study.

In terms of significance of the demographic profile and assessed factors, different perceptions have been determined. These include significance to their acceptability regarding social factors when measured according to sex and office. Apparently, male and female have different levels of acceptability in terms of social factors; the same goes whether they are working under the *barangay* level or city level of the government. The respondents also had significant level of acceptability regarding economic factors when measured according to their office. It showed that the perspectives of the respondents in economic factors of sex tourism are significant with which office they work under the government. Lastly, there was also significance of their perspective to the legal factors of sex tourism when measured according to their years of residency at Angeles City. All in all, these

demographic information (sex, office, and years of residency) are essential in determining the perspectives of the local government officials in sex tourism in Angeles, Pampanga. Further research should extend this study by examining underlying factors that affect the decision-making of the local government officials.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were drawn from the results of the study. First, the local government of Angeles, Pampanga should improve the implementation of the existing laws for the enhanced protection of the locals, specially the women and children affected by this industry; second, there should be an increased generation of awareness regarding the rights of each individual within the locality; third, the local government must work on improving the level of awareness of the locals regarding the impacts and consequences of prostitution without the sense of being biased; fourth, there should be a re-assessment on the implementation of the regulations, laws, and policies in terms of protecting the rights of the people and minors since there are existing exploitation within the area; and fifth, laws regarding the protection of men should be developed since sexual exploitation is not only limited to women.

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