

Implementation of Republic Act 9593 (National Tourist Act) as Perceived by the Selected Residents of Dipolog City, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Tourism has provided some essential benefits to the local community as an economic development tool which paved the way for employment and investment, cultural attraction, festivals and outdoor recreation opportunities (Anderek & Vogt, 2000). The study was conducted to assess the implementation of Republic Act 9593 (National Tourist Act) as perceived by the selected residents of Dipolog City. Specifically, it determined: 1) the awareness of the residents of Dipolog City on the implementation of RA 9593; 2) the roles of the LGUs of Dipolog City on the implementation of RA 9593; and 3) the perceptions of the residents of Dipolog City on the effects of implementation of RA 9593 in terms of benefits and satisfaction. There are 100 respondents of this study from the five

communities of Dipolog with 6 key informant officials. Frequency and percentage were used in the presentation and analysis of data collected through survey and interviews with key informants. Using descriptive method, results revealed that by implementing the policy of Tourism Act of 2009 in Dipolog, positive effects on the city economic, social and environmental development occurred. The awareness of the residents contributed successful implementation of Tourism Act of 2009, by formulating their own policies in the form of ordinances, resolutions, plans and programs of LGU units.

Keywords — Social Science, Tourism Act of 2009, descriptive design, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one the world's largest economic sectors and one that continues to expand rapidly. Promoting and developing tourism can be a powerful tool for economic growth, poverty reduction, and the conservation of natural and cultural resources. Further, tourism could be a source of revenue (foreign exchange earnings, tax revenue) to the government and because of its multiple effects, it could also provide opportunities for local government (Alvia, Libosada, 2009). However, it has been noted that the benefits of tourism accruing specially to developing countries depend, to a large extent, on the critical role played by the state, such as state agencies and institutions that have mandated to govern and regulate the tourism sector. The character, role, function and influence of the state determine the location and nature of tourism development activities; who participates in these activities and how the benefits are distributed (Hall, 1998).

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), tourism is widely perceived as the major industry on the global scale, contributing to about 9% of the total employment rate in 2012 (WTTC, 2013). Different empirical studies showed that tourism is a whole that enables the improvement in the socio-economic status of the people (Fayissa, Nsiah & Tadasse, 2008; Rosentraub & Joo, 2009; Sanchez-Rivero, Pulido Fernandez & Cardenas-Garcia, 2012). According to a report, tourism does not require high qualification in terms of technology and labor, and it has significant indirect economic impacts. These impacts have resulted in sustained and attractive growth over the last few decades (Anderek & Vogt, 2000). Hence, the industry has great potential to affect the life of community residents (Mason & Cheyne, 2000).

Community leaders and economic development specialists considered tourism as a vital industry that can augment local employment opportunities, tax revenues, and economic diversity (Park & Stokowski, 2009). It is also beneficial in terms of addressing issues of extreme poverty and hunger, gender equality, environmental sustainability, and global partnership (WTTC, 2013). Thus, it is a smokeless industry that generates social, cultural, environmental, and economic impacts, some of which are permanent and irreversible (do Rosário Partidário & Jesus, 2003).

In Iran, studies conducted on community perceptions of tourism impacts and planning revealed that community's attitude to tourism is crucial for a successful and sustainable tourism development because understanding community perceptions and how these perceptions are formed regarding tourism development would be valuable for decision makers (Eshliki & Kaboudi, 2011). The community is the primary sector which will be most affected either positively or negatively by tourism planning and development. Therefore, by ascertaining the attitudes of local population, special intervention can be formulated to lessen friction between tourists and residents. Zhang and Lai Lei (2009) stressed that the difference between development community environmental attitudes and behavioral intention of tourism development suggests that promoting community environmental attitudes can help in tourism development, which may be a fundamental necessity for sustainable tourism development.

In another study, the pioneering work of Wall and Mathieson (2006), the impact of tourism can be analyzed from different perspectives: economic, social, cultural and environmental. The economic impact of tourism has commonly been viewed as a positive economic force, although it can be both positive and negative. With respect to the positive economic impact, tourism helps improve the standard of living (Tosun, 2002) and increase in investment, as well as business activities. As regards the negative impact of tourism, the evidence suggests that property taxes tend to increase as well as the price of goods and services and the land value (Weaver & Lawton, 2001).

The Philippine State declares tourism as an indispensable element of the national economy and an industry of national interest and importance, which must be harnessed as an engine of socioeconomic growth and cultural affirmation to generate investment, foreign exchange and employment, and to continue to mold an enhanced sense of national pride for all Filipinos (Chapter 1, Section 2 of RA 9503). To this end, RA 9593 sponsored by Senator Richard Gordon under consolidate Senate Bill No 2213 and House Bill No. 5229 signed by Former

President Gloria on May 12, 2009 grants fiscal and non-fiscal incentives to tourism business (National Tourism Act of 2009 Question and Answer). The Act provides the development of a national tourism action plan for the implementation of national and local government enlisting the participation of local communities, including indigenous peoples, non-government organizations (NGOs), people's organizations (POS) and the private sectors. It also emphasizes capability building of LGUs, in partnership with private sectors, in the management of local Tourism Enterprise Zones (TEZs) (Aser, 2010).

The LGUs, in discussion with the stakeholders, are encouraged to use their authorities under the Local Government Code to ensure the preparation and implementation of a tourism development plan, the execution of standards, and the collection of statistical data for tourism purposes. The plan should integrate zoning, land use, infrastructure development, national system standards for tourism enterprise, heritage and environmental protection imperatives in a manner that encourages sustainable tourism development (RA 9593, Section 3).

As mandated to craft their plan which sets out the priorities over the medium to long-term goals and contribute to community well-being, the Local Government of Dipolog established tourism as one of its focal points together with its twin city: Dapitan and other municipalities of Zamboanga del Norte. As a result, many businessmen, business ventures, establishments and firms have sprouted. Tourism in Dipolog is seen as a development strategy due to its potential for employment and income, infrastructural development and overall community welfare. By promoting tourism effectively, the 1444,6309 tourist arrivals in the city on 2011 increased to 300,000 by 2015, and the Php 5,000,000.00 investment of 2011, increased to Php 18,000,000.00 by the year 2015 (Department of Tourism Awareness, 2012).

After the Tourism Act of 2009 was implemented, the study was conducted to determine its status and achievements as perceived by the local government units and its benefits gained by the communities.

FRAMEWORK

The study is anchored on the public policy approach, particularly, the analysis of the implementation process. The concepts of policy, RA 9593, local government code of 1991, participatory governance and political support are also discussed.

Policy is defined by Nicolaidis (1960) as a rule for action, manifesting or clarifying specific organization goals, objectives, values or ideals and

often prescribing the obligatory or most desirable ways and means for their accomplishment. Such a rule for action established for the purpose of framing, guiding or directing organizational activities including decision making intends to provide relative stability, consistency, uniformity and continuity in the operations of the organization.

Thus, it refers to an overall, high-level plan that includes goals and procedures. Policies are generally found in formal statements such as laws and official documents and statements that are shaped by the organization's values and ideals which are directed to provide a relative stability of the government.

Policy is defined by Lawrence and Dredge, (2007) as a position, strategy, action or product adopted by government and from the context between different ideas, values and interest. Policy then, involves conscious choice that leads to deliberate action-the passage of a law, the spending of money, an official speech or gesture, or some other observable factors in action (Jenkins & Hall, 2004).

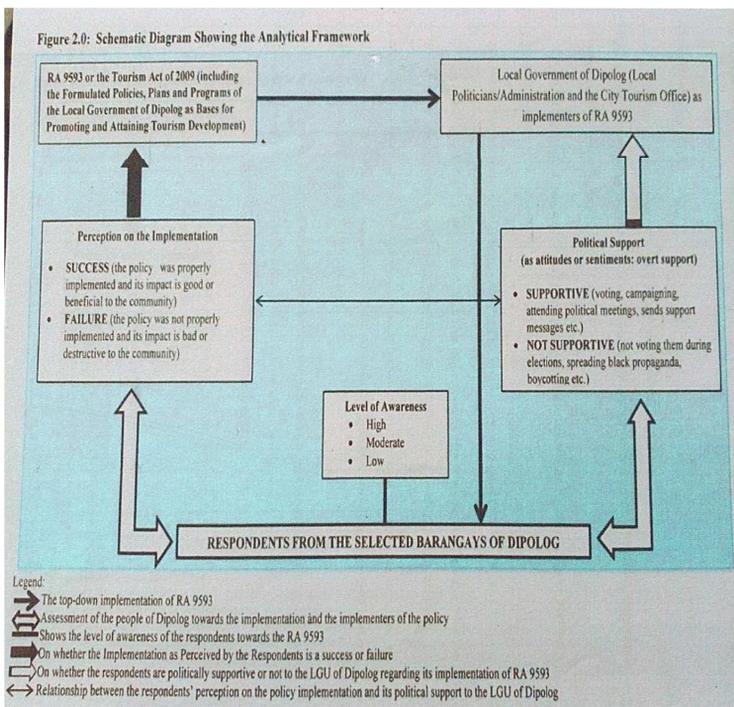


Figure 1. Schematic diagram showing the relationship between the variables of the study

The figure shows the top-down implementation of the national policy until it reaches to the local community of Dipolog (respondents from the selected communities of Cogon, Diwan, Miputak, Dicyas, and Sicayab). Thus, it focuses on the community level of the participatory governance. Once that RA 9593 will be implemented, the people of Dipolog will start expecting positive changes in the community. That is, the expectation behind the implementation of this policy is to harness potential socio-economic growth and cultural affirmation to generate investment and to continue to mold the national pride of all Filipinos.

Finally, these perceptions are then evaluated to find out if there is a significant relationship between the respondents' political support towards the Local Government of Dipolog. Political support is defined by David (1965) as follows: We say A supports B either when A acts on behalf of B or when he orients himself favorably toward B. B may be a person or a group, it may be a goal, idea, or institution. I shall designate supportive action as overt support and supportive attitudes or sentiments as covert support.

Boniface and Cooper (2006) explained that one of the most important tests of a sustainable tourism destination is the level of involvement of the local community in planning and tourism development. While there is a concern that residents have a lack of knowledge about tourism, new techniques such as destination visioning (where the locals determine the future of tourism), and limits to acceptable change where they determine levels of future development, are increasingly being adopted and a form of capacity management. They further explained that tourism planning must be centered to these issues and that such planning shall evolve from an inflexible, physical planning approach to a flexible process which seeks to maximize the benefits and minimize the costs of tourism, while at the same time recognizing the 'holistic' nature of tourism.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study sought to find out the perceptions of the selected residents of Dipolog City as to the implementation of RA 9593. Specifically, it determined: 1) the awareness of residents of Dipolog on the implementation of RA 9593; 2) the roles of the local government played in the implementation of RA 9593; and 3) the perceptions of the residents of Dipolog on the effects of this republic act in terms of benefits and satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study utilized the descriptive method to describe the perceptions of the respondents towards the implementation of RA 9593 and relational method to find out the relationship of the respondents' perception on the implementation of this act and their political support towards the Local Government of Dipolog City.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in Dipolog City and Zamboanga del Norte. There are 21 communities in the City, namely, Barra, Biasong, Central, Cogon, Dicayas, Diwan, Estaka, Galas, Gulayon, Lugdungan, Minaog, Miputak, Olingan, Punta, Sangkol, San Jose, Sicayab, Sinaman, Sta Felomina, Sta Isabel and Turno.

However, only 5 communities were purposely chosen such as: Cogon, Diwa, Miputak, Sicayab and Dicayas since these are the locations of the identified and proposed tourist spots in the city. Dipolog is the capital city of Zamboanga del Norte Province located in the Southern Philippine Island of Mindanao. Geographically, Dipolog City is situated in the Northwestern part of the province of Zamboanga del Norte. It is facing Cebu and Negros provinces and sits on the tip of Western Mindanao and is known as the Gateway to Western Mindanao and Zamboanga Peninsula. It is bounded on the North by Dapitan City, on the East by the municipality of Polanco, on the South by the municipality of Katipunan and on the West by the Sulu.



Figure 2. GPS Coordinates of the Locale of the Study

Respondents

Table 1. The Distribution of Local Communities According to Population and Number of Samples

Barangay	Population of the Respondents	Number of Respondents
Diwan	3, 723	13
Miputak	9, 006	32
Sicayab	7, 234	26
Cogon	1, 430	5
Dicayas	6, 639	24
TOTAL	28, 032	100

The study has a total population of 106 individuals. The population is divided into two sets. The first set is composed of six (6) key informants. The first informant is the former mayor of Dipolog City. The second is the Vice Mayor. Then the third and fourth informants are the city councilors who at the same time belong to the city tourism committee and the fifth and the sixth key informants are the officials from the city tourism office as the implementers of the policy.

The respondents were asked how they enacted the RA 9593 and about the current state or situation of the implementation in the city. The focus of the interview is the policy analysis and they were asked to give some answers or information about how they made the public aware of RA 9593, whether they encountered some problems or difficulties while implementing the tourism policy, and if their goals in the implementation were achieved. These key informants were chosen by purposive or selective sampling. They are the ones who are the most knowledgeable in the implementation of RA 9593 and most importantly, they are the implementers of the tourism policy in the city. The second set is composed of 100 residents from the five communities of Dipolog City.

Sampling Procedure

A combination of sampling methods was utilized in determining the population sample of this study. First is the purposive sampling method. It is utilized in determining the six (6) key informants and in selecting the five communities: Cogon, Diwan, Miputak, Sicayab, and Dicayas. The interviewees were selected since they have adequate knowledge about the topic while the five

communities are the most affected places in the whole city in the implementation of RA 9593. Out of the 28,032 people living in these five communities, only 100 respondents were selected. Such number is chosen due to consideration of the researcher's time and financial constraints.

Second, in getting the 100 respondents from the five communities, stratified random sampling was utilized, specifically, proportional allocation. This is to ensure that the randomly selected population are proportionally represented based on the number of population of the residents in each local community.

Research Instrument

Two instruments were utilized in gathering primary data and information of the study: semi-structured interview schedule and the questionnaires. The interview schedule was utilized to keep the discussion on track with the key informants. It is a semi-structured interview, a form of guided interview where only some of the questions are predetermined so that the researcher may have flexibility in getting the necessary information and the answers of respondents, so as to obtain the essence of their answers.

The questionnaires were utilized for gathering data from the one hundred (100) selected respondents. Moreover, the secondary data/sources were taken from studies and researches related to the topic, also from newspapers, articles and other printed materials that are relevant to the study. Some documentary sources utilized are government documents like city ordinances and resolutions from the Sangguniang Panlungsod, and other materials like brochures, gazettes, pamphlets, and articles coming from the City Mayor's Office and City Tourism office.

Data Gathering

Pre-test of the questionnaires was conducted by the researcher distributed to ten (10) respondents. The respondents were asked on the deficiencies and problems they have noted on the questionnaires. Their comments and recommendations have helped improve the instrument.

Questionnaires were distributed to the selected respondents from the five communities of Dipolog City, namely, Cogon, Diwan, Miputak, Sicayab and Dicayas after the permission was sought to conduct the survey. The researcher got the data through house-to-house. The households were also asked to fill-out the questionnaires distributed to them. The researcher always stayed with the respondents to assist them in answering the questionnaires properly for further clarification and validation of their responses. During the interview of these

administrators, in most cases it was possible to hold a relaxed discussion with the subject, even with the most senior politician or administrator.

Furthermore, published and unpublished studies and reports were consulted to obtain the necessary information related to the subject and area of concern of the study. These documents were found from the libraries and online sources. Other documents like the government drafts were browsed, downloaded, and printed from the internet while the rest of the city ordinances and resolutions, tourism programs and planning, tourism records, etc., were requested from the Sangguniang Panglungsod, City Mayor's Office and the City Tourism Office.

Research Ethics Protocol

A letter of request was prepared by the researcher addressed to all concerned agencies and respondents before the distribution of the questionnaires. The personal interview was conducted with the six (6) key informants using the semi-structured interview to gather the necessary information to clarify issues based on the questionnaires.

Treatment of Data

The study used the frequency count and percentage distribution in analyzing some of the data, especially the quantitative ones.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tourism through the eyes of the local people 'accessing the local minds'

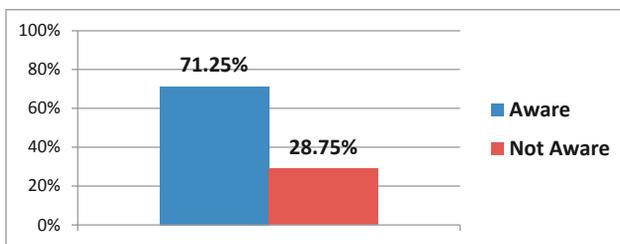


Figure 3. Summary of the Respondents' Awareness on RA9593

The use of these terms, "residents' perception" and "attitudes" in other tourism studies are often used interchangeably (Javier, 2016). However, in this study, perception was used as a term to indicate how the local people view the

implementation of RA 9593. This is the cognitive perceptions of the residents of Dipolog City, Philippines.

The overall findings revealed that the majority of the residents and officials favor and have positive view towards tourism. In the first objective of the study, data revealed that majority of the respondents are aware of the implementation of RA 9593. In addition, the level of awareness of the respondents on the formulated policies and planning of the LGUs of Dipolog to comply with the implementation of said Act was also evaluated. It appeared that they are aware of the city ordinances, resolutions, and planning and program (SWGAPORE) that support the city's promotion of tourism.

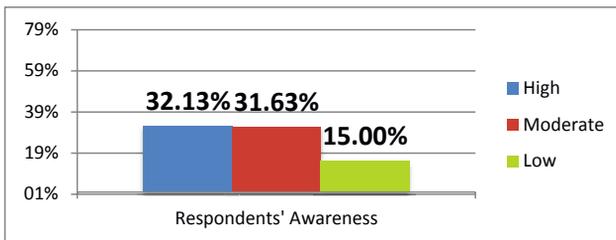


Figure 4. The Computed Average of the Awareness of Formulated City Ordinances of the Local Government of Dipolog as Bases for Promoting and Attaining Tourism Development

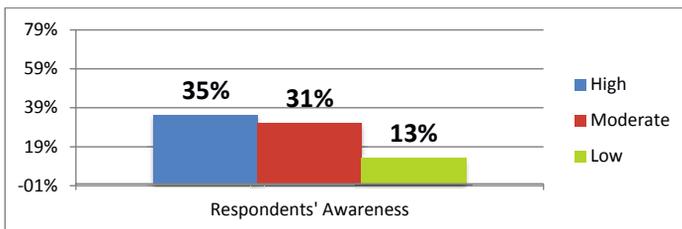


Figure 5. The Computed Average of the Awareness of Formulated City Resolutions of the Local Government of Dipolog as Bases for Promoting and Attaining Tourism Development

Moreover, among the awareness on the implementation of RA 9593, the formulated city ordinances, resolutions, and plans and programs, the respondents have the highest level of awareness on the formulated city resolutions, then next by the city ordinances. It shows that the people of Dipolog are more aware on the

formulated local policies that support tourism development in the city than the national tourism policy (RA 9593).

The effective implementation of the local government on their formulated policies is one of the reasons that the residents of Dipolog are well aware of the policies. Also, the product of the implementation such as the development of the identified and proposed tourist spots in the city can be concretely seen by the people.

On the other hand, the moderate to low level awareness of the people of Dipolog about the city’s plans or programs showed that the efforts of the administration in information dissemination were inadequate.

Roles of the Local Government of Dipolog in the Implementation of the Tourism Act

Table 2. Role/s of the Local Government of Dipolog in the Implementation of RA 9593 Known as the Tourism Act of 2009

Items in Question No. 1	No. of Respondents	Percentage
a. The Local Government of Dipolog has formulated its own policies, plan and programs in attaining tourism development in the city	77	77 %
b. The Local Government of Dipolog ensures the preparation and implementation of a tourism development plan, the enforcement of standards and collection of statistical data for tourism purposes.	49	49 %
c. The Local Government of Dipolog have supervised and coordinated with the investment support services including access to credit financing.	53	53%
d. The Local Government of Dipolog participates in training programs to enhance their capability to monitor and administer tourism activities, and enforce tourism laws, rules and regulations in their respective jurisdiction.	50	50%
e. The Local Government of Dipolog has shared the responsibility with the national government on funding programs concerning tourism development.	46	46%
f. The Local Government of Dipolog helps administer tourism facilities and tourist attractions in the city.	69	69%
g. The Local Government of Dipolog has supervised business concession, and security services in the city.	59	59%

*multiple responses

The study revealed that the respondents' most commonly perceived role of the government is the formulation of its own tourism policies, plans and programs in attaining tourism development in the city, and these can be represented by the city ordinances, resolution, plans and programs of Dipolog. On the contrary, the respondents least perceived the role of the local government which is the sharing of responsibility with the national government on funding programs concerning tourism development. More than half of the survey population believed that the city administration is doing its roles as mandate by RA 9593.

Perception of the Residents of Dipolog on the Effects of the Implementation of RA 9593

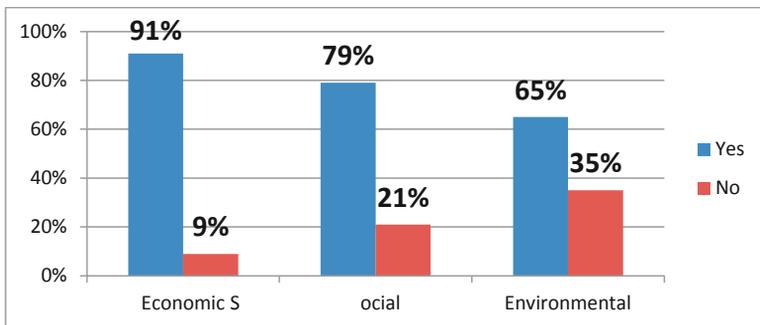


Figure 6. Respondents' Perception towards the Impact of the Implementation

Under the positive impacts, the data revealed that the most positive consequence by the respondents is the increase of the locally owned businesses related to tourism, while the least commonly perceived positive impact is the conservation of the natural area, habitats and wildlife. The researcher tabulated the responses of the respondents and got its average values; the data revealed that 68.4% of them indicated positive impact of tourism development in the city.

Under the negative impacts, the results revealed high rating on the difficulty to avoid damages towards the natural areas, habitats and wildlife, while the least commonly perceived negative consequence is that tourism results to limited energy supply and declining source of drinking water in the city. The results showed that 42.3% of the responses lead to the negative impact of the implementation of

the act. The average perception of the respondents on the positive impacts of the implementation is greater than the average value of negative impacts. This implies that the people of Dipolog believe that RA 9593 gives more benefits to the city than disadvantages.

The researcher also assessed RA 9593 on whether it is advantageous to economic, social and environmental development in Dipolog. On its effect on the economic development in the city, the data revealed that an overwhelming number of the respondents believe that the implementation of the tourism policy is advantageous to the economic development in Dipolog, giving more business and job opportunities, increase of wages and contribution to the local economic growth.

Majority of the surveyed population revealed that the law helped the social development of Dipolog. Thus, people must now have better standard of living without necessarily experiencing the destruction of the local community and culture. The improving lifestyle of the residents is the effect of Dipolog's promotion of environmental protection, provision of a venue (boulevard for economic activities, and the improvement of living condition of the informal settlers).

Among the three developments that were assessed, the development of the environment received the least response from the respondents. Nevertheless, the data revealed that the survey respondents still perceived that the implementation of RA 9593 brings more advantages to the environmental development of the city. As to the perception of the respondents on whether they are satisfied with the general outcome of the implementation of RA 9593 in Dipolog, the study revealed that majority of the respondents were satisfied with the outcome.

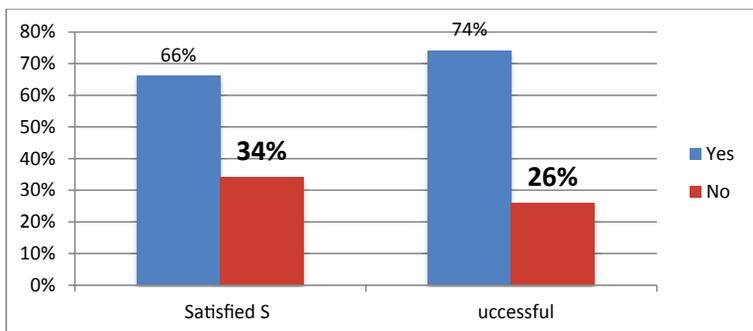


Figure 7. Respondents' Perception of the General Outcome of RA 9593

As to the perception of the respondents on the success of the implementation of the act, the data revealed that the people of Dipolog generally believe that the outcome implementation of RA 9593 of the policy was a success. The researcher determined, if there is a significant relationship between the residents' perception of the impacts of tourism to the city and their political support towards the Local Government of Dipolog.

Table 3. Summary of the Relationship between Respondents' Perception on the Impacts and General Outcome of RA 9593 vs. their Political Support towards the Local Government of Dipolog during the Administration of the Current Mayor of Dipolog (2007-2016)

Relationship Respondent's Perception		Chi-square value (Pearson chi. sq.)	p-value	Remarks
Economic Development		5.279	0.022	Significant
Social Development	Respondents' Political Support	5.026	0.025	Significant
Environmental Development		1.309	0.253	Not Significant
Satisfaction		5.624	0.018	Significant
Success		15.948	0.000	Significant

Results revealed that, all of the respondents' perceptions on the impacts of RA 9593 have significant relationship to the respondents' political support towards local government of Dipolog. On environmental development whether it is negatively or positively affected by the tourism act, data also revealed that the residents of Dipolog are politically supportive to the local city government.

CONCLUSIONS

Local people in Dipolog are involved in tourism development although some did not actively took part in the decision-making process, and wish to have a voice when decisions are made (through active participation). A well-implemented and well-managed tourism policy can make a positive economic, social and environmental contribution to destination, and thus, it could gain support from the local communities. The findings show that there is a direct

positive relationship between residents' perception on the effect of tourism in Dipolog and their political support to the local city administration.

TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

The outcome of the study had been translated into use in the local community, the office of tourism, institutions and other stakeholders by sending the information to the Local Government Units, Department of Education, Attached Agencies, and Non-Government Organizations. Among these various activities conducted by the researcher to ensure effective implementation of the Tourism Act of 9593 are: 1) program has been designed to empower local communities through participatory in the development of management of tourism resources; 2) income and livelihood opportunities to the people of Dipolog and contribute to the provincial/regional economic growth; 3) environmental protection and enhancement program; and 4) intervention programs. Above all, a designed institutional policy development program for tourism promotion and marketing program and acquired capabilities and resources to implement and manage a coordinate multi-sectoral effort for a tourism development in the area has been carried out, including encouraging private sector participation/investment in identified programs and projects.

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