

Malico, Nueva Vizcaya as a Sustainable Tourism Destination

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is one of the world's largest industries that drives economic growth. Many tourism destinations and projects suffer from "ningas cogon" syndrome, wherein they tend to experience a rapid and bust cycle. They become hot destinations for a few years, then decline rapidly because of unable to adopt the triple-bottom-line approach that considers tourism's economic, environmental, and social dimensions. The barangay of Malico is an emerging "Gateway to the Cagayan Valley"; thus, it is a booming destination. Tourism activities can negatively affect the current status of Malico, and the impact may be irreversible. Through quantitative analysis, the study assessed the existence/observance of sustainability in Malico in three dimensions: economic, environmental, and socio-cultural. Data was gathered and analyzed using survey questionnaires. The study included twenty (20) key informants, including residents, barangay officials, and business owners. The findings revealed that Malico performed in those three dimensions from the respondents' perspective. However, there were areas in the three dimensions where the mean score was low such as appropriate measures in tourism receipts and volume, water quality, and rules and regulations on the proper sale and trade. The study recommends maintaining their sustainable prosperity by balancing the three dimensions: economic, environmental, and socio-cultural sustainability. Given that the three dimensions of sustainability in Malico are not far apart, it should be in an equilibrium state to guarantee its long-term sustainability.

Keywords: Community-based sustainable tourism, economic, environmental, socio-cultural

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the world's largest industries that drives economic growth. Through constant growth and diversification in the span of years, the tourism sector has developed into among the world's booming industries with the most rapid expansion rates. According to UNWTO (2017), the tourism industry makes a prominent contribution to expanding of a nation's economy, especially in the GDP of one's country and employment opportunities. In Southeast Asian countries, tourism is significant in economic expansion and GDP growth. The sector has been recognized as one of the driving forces that promote sustained development and inclusive growth in recognition of the substantial contribution that tourism has made to the expansion and development of the global economy. Businesses in the tourist sector are embracing environmentally responsible travel strategies, such as ecotourism, green tourism, and alternative travel (Nyahunzvi, 2013). According to Idemudia et al. (2007), the tourist sector should demonstrate suitable business behavioral standards, such as enhancing the employees' lives, supporting local communities, and protecting the environment.

According to Youell (1998), maintaining the resources that draw tourists is crucial for the tourism business to thrive. According to Chilufya et al. (2019), tourism has the potential to be both a social and

environmental peril as well as an economic engine. Promoting sites without putting the locals or the environment in danger while having a good impact on the country's social, economic, and ecology is the aim of sustainable tourism. Ayeni et. al. (2012) investigated how sustainable tourism was developing in Nigeria. The authors claim that tourism has evolved into a tool for diversifying the economies of numerous nations. Encouraging new employment opportunities and generating new revenue sources, has helped the service sector and significantly impacted Nigeria's economy.

Sustainable tourism is currently gaining importance all around the world. Most countries—if not all—join forces to advance sustainable tourism as a replacement for safeguarding the environment and our natural resources.

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (2019) has developed several criteria standards for assessing different destinations and tourism establishments in committing to the sustainability standard. One of the criteria they created is the Destination Criteria which assesses the destination in four major areas: Sustainable Management, Socio-Economic Sustainability, Cultural Sustainability, and Environmental Sustainability.

Several factors have been done in the Philippines to ensure the sustainability of the tourist destination. In fact, research from 2020 ranked the Philippines 94th out of 99 countries in terms of promoting environmentally friendly travel. The restoration of Boracay Island, Batanes conservation initiatives, Masungi Georeserve (Rizal), and in Cagayan the Palau Island are a few examples.

As part of the ongoing provincial tourism development plan, the local administration of Nueva Vizcaya has been actively promoting sustainable tourism. They provided policy recommendations for community-based management, the expansion of protected areas, and ecotourism endeavors in 2022. These initiatives included the Lower Magat Ecotourism Park, the Palali-Mamparang Mountain Ranges Co-Management Agreement, and the Cave Protection Act (CPA).

A barangay in the municipality of Sta. Fe will gain advantages from continuing infrastructural development between that Pangasinan and Nueva Vizcaya. A rising “Gateway to the Cagayan Valley” is the barangay Malico because of the Villa Verde Trail, this region is well-known for its high elevation, chilly climate, lush greenery, and rich cultural past. Malico, Sta. has the potential to rank among the most popular tourist spots in the municipality of Sta. Fe is a travel destination that teaches sustainability. The researcher will assess Malico using the three areas of sustainability: economic- socio-cultural, and environmental sustainability and identify appropriate measures to establish a sustainable tourism destination to guarantee its long-term sustainability.

The Emerging Popularity of Sustainable Tourism

In many countries, the tourism industry continues to be a substantial source of revenue generation for both the official and unofficial sectors. In particular, Hwang and Lee (2019) claimed that an increase in senior travel accelerates Korea's economic expansion and progress. This development shows that vacationers feel internally fulfilled, positively influencing long-term behavior objectives. Tourism can assist underdeveloped countries in creating sizable quantities of foreign cash, much like it can for affluent countries, which could aid in achieving sustainable growth and development. It is the main engine and foundation of GDP growth and development in emerging countries. The money earned from trade worldwide in goods and services is supplemented by tourism. Furthermore, by providing finance for capital goods imports, this sector contributes to the expansion of the industrial component of the economy. In contrast, business travel (i.e., abroad visits) is impacted by economic growth in industrialized nations, which can boost a nation's foreign exchange reserves.

Ayeni et al. (2012), investigated how sustainable tourism was developing in Nigeria. The authors claim that tourism has evolved into a tool for diversifying the economies of numerous nations. Encouraging new employment opportunities and generating new revenue sources, has helped the service sector and significantly impacted Nigeria’s economy. There are numerous opportunities for less developed countries to maximize their gains from this business. However, developed countries have a more global tourism than less developed ones. The impact of tourism on

Nigeria’s economy revealed that this sector has enormous potential but has not yet been fully exploited. They believed that tourism could significantly contribute to the government’s efforts to combat poverty and diversify the economy.

Some central thoughts and main points on what would be eventually termed as “sustainability” were released by the Rio de Janeiro Conference (1992) and the Bruntland Report (1987). It is interesting to note that major political parties embraced the notion of sustainable development. It made sense to align economics and ecological, and this, among other things, sparked technological advancements. These three early movements rarely involved any tourism at all. The global growth of tourism had minimal effect on the preservation of nature. In the 1960s and 1970s, the environmental controversy did not impact tourism, which was still regarded as a good and green industry. Tourism was only brought up in the biodiversity discussion around the end of the 1990s. As part of the 2001 Convention on Biological Diversity, guidelines for biological diversity and sustainable tourism were established. The Year of Ecotourism was proclaimed by the UN in 2002. In this context, it is crucial to remember that grassroots initiatives were already heavily relying on sustainable development ideas in the travel industry. While the global conversation on sustainability has somewhat stalled, many action groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and environmental organizations have a significant role in the sustainable tourism development. The Marrakech Process in the year 2003 was launched as a plan for 10 years wherein to promote regional and national initiatives, task forces would examine the problems of producing and consuming responsibly (SCP). On these problems, the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development provides some fresh insight.

With that, the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) Criteria were created to provide a common understanding of sustainable tourism. The GSTC Destinations Criteria – known informally also as “GSTC-D” – are the minimum any tourism destination should aspire to reach. They are organized around four main themes: sustainable management; socio-economic impacts; cultural impacts; and environmental impacts. They have applicability to the entire tourism sector.

The GSTC-D has been designed for destinations. The criteria do not relate to a single body but rather to a named place that can be uniquely identified. The criteria simply require that the condition described pertains to that destination, irrespective of what body may be responsible for it or how or by whom any related action is implemented. The scope of the GSTC-D is broad and the criteria can be applied to a wide range of destinations. They may be in any part of the world and of any type (e.g. urban, rural, mountain, coastal or mixed). The criteria can relate to large destinations (e.g. sizeable cities or regions) and to small ones (e.g. national parks, clusters of local communities, etc.).

The criteria are in four sections, each with two or three sub-sections, as shown below. The researchers only included the study’s three sections (Sections B, C, and D). Since the study concerns the sustainability of Malico as a booming destination, the three sections are the important pillars to be tackled.

Section A	Sustainable Management
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management Structure and Framework • Stakeholder Engagement

Section B	Socio-Economic Sustainability
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering Socio-Economic Benefits • Social Well-Being and Impacts
Section C	Cultural Sustainability
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting cultural heritage • Visiting cultural sites
Section D	Environmental Sustainability
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation of natural heritage • Resource Management • Management of waste and emissions

Sustainable Tourism in the Philippines

One of the Philippines’ primary sources of income is tourism, which benefits from the country’s abundance of flora and fauna which is a pleasant natural place. It also has a lot of stunning, undiscovered islands that might one day become popular destinations for tourists. With more than 7,000 islands, the Philippines has several natural attractions, exquisite islands, white sand beaches, astonishing mountains, and distinctive indigenous wildlife. These are just a few of the many things to experience. Every year, millions of tourists come to the Philippines, which is great for the economy but could damage the environment if the travelers are not responsible enough in their actions and do not conform to sustainable travel practices.

In the study by Ashley et al. (2007), the tourism industry has seen a noticeable increase in the contributions provided by most countries. This is according to business executives, administrators, and development specialists. The Philippine tourism industry has equitably accepted the increasing number of arrival of both domestic and foreign tourists as one of the major revenue sources.

As we get closer to a more sustainable future, the Philippines is creating and promoting an increasing number of eco-friendly vacation destinations. These places offer adventure and a way to help local communities get in touch with the environment and wildlife. Tourism is one of the industries that supports the Philippines’ thriving economy. This was enhanced further in 2012 during the New Seven Wonders of Nature as the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park (PPSRNP) was listed (Rosero, 2012). Tourism in the Philippines’ unexpectedly recognized increased in both domestic and foreign visitors. Some environmentalism experts visited the country to present their propound laws and strategies for promoting sustainable travel.

The Philippines is 94th out of 99 in a report from 2020 in terms of promoting environmentally friendly travel. The well-known Philippine Island of Boracay was off-limits to visitors for six months in 2018 while it underwent renovation. The Philippine Department of Tourism (DOT) promotes Boracay by emphasizing the island’s laid-back atmosphere: “During the day, vacationers receiving a relaxing massage beneath a coconut tree next to the shoreline is a regular sight. And Boracay transforms into a huge party location where anyone is welcome to participate from sunset till dawn (DOT, n.d).” Boracay was renowned in 2017

for its exceptionally fine sandy and immaculate waters. Adapted in distinction to “Boracay Island to Open 26th October” by Helen Coffey, 2 million tourists visited there, setting a new record for visitors in the Philippines. It brought in more than one billion dollars (Haynes, 2018). The Boracay island, regarded as the Philippines’ pride destination, primarily controls the country’s increased tourism arrivals.

Apart from the most popular tourist locations in the country, the Philippines is also home to some ecotourism hotspots and attractions, such as Batanes, Masungi Georeserve located in Rizal, Palau Island of Cagayan, and in Negros Oriental the Apo Island. It is undeniable that the stakeholders and local people adhere to the guidelines and methods in sustainable tourism. These locations provide incredible immersions/experiences and present tourists with the significance of engaging in superintend travel.

The Tourism Act of 2009 (Republic Act of 9593), states that “In order to generate investment, foreign exchange, and employment as well as to continue to foster an increased sense of national pride among all Filipinos, tourism must be utilized as an essential component of the economy and a sector of national interest and significance. (Chapter 1, Section 2).”

To accomplish the goals mentioned above, the country acknowledged “sustainable tourism development is essential to the country’s socioeconomic development efforts to raise the standard of living for Filipinos and to promote morally and socially just tourism for local communities.”

Nueva Vizcaya Tourism

The landlocked province of Nueva Vizcaya is home to some of the most remarkable destinations in the country. The Sierra Madre on the eastern side, the Cordillera on the west side, and the Caraballo on the south surround the province. Nueva Vizcaya is also a popular ecotourism destination. From waterfalls that cascade and beautiful mountains to undiscovered caves, clear rivers and brooks and old churches and holy places. Nueva Vizcaya provides

a once-in-a-lifetime adventure. It strives to achieve the ideal harmony in the environment between natural resources on one hand as well as humans and other living things.

The Government of the Province of Nueva Vizcaya’s (PGNV) direction in terms of policy toward management and development centered in the community of designated locations, and the development of nature-based tourism operations within them was raised. Other existing policy that enhances the “right of individuals to a harmonious ecology” is the goal of both national and local legislation and regulations that include the CPA – Cave Protection Act, the LGC of 1991 (Local Government Code), and Agreements for Local Co-Management about specific preservation zones such as the Mountain Ranges of Palali-Mamparang. In Diadi, the Lower Magat Ecotourism Park was created in 1990 through the rule of former Governor Rodolfo Suarez.

The underlying idea of community-based underground system protection and eco-tourism management provides a blueprint and approach to ensuring authentic collaborative development that is sustainable itself, that draws on broad advantages of residents’ sense of inclusivity in the program being owned. Its suggested management framework, consisting of a Cave Protection Plan, along with a Protection Site Control Plan that takes into account environmental practices and other upstream moneymaking possibilities that is bound to shift from the current state of significant PGNV participation leading to a centralized condition in which LGU authorities serve an even greater part.

Nueva Vizcaya is a province in Cagayan Valley known for its mouthwatering citrus fruits and unique tourist destinations. It is called the “Citrus Capital of the Philippines” because it manufactures the country’s primary citrus crop. Given its abundance of outstanding waterfalls, underground spaces, mountaintops, and

eco-parks, the province is a great option for anyone who loves outdoor activities and nature. The Capisaan Cave System, one of Nueva Vizcaya's finest tourist attractions, is the best exploring the spot in the province. The average exploring tour lasts four hours, and it is the Philippines' fifth-longest cave system, measuring a total of 4.2 kilometers in length. The Lion and Alayan Caverns are the main entry and exit points, and there are eight interrelated caves in overall. There are interesting columns and formations of rock, rare calcite, exquisite stalactites, and the stalagmites and rare calcite within the cave. The cave system is recognized as one of the finest in the country and has been dubbed a "geologist's paradise."

The 1120-hectare Lower Magat Eco-Tourism Park, located near the starting point of the Magat River, is a popular spot for travelers in the province of Nueva Vizcaya. It is adorned with lovely scenery, plants, and blossoming flowers. Swimming in the massive swimming pool, boating on the small lake, recreational fishing in the pond, and visiting the animal area are merely a few of the activities offered by the park. A hiking trail leading to the nearby hills can be utilized to discover the area and see the wildlife there. There is also a large camping area, but there are multiple choices for overnight lodging.

Malico is situated in blissful seclusion in the Caraballo Mountain range, near Nueva Vizcaya's remote border with Pangasinan the ideal haven for tired souls seeking comfort in this hurried world. The proposed Pangasinan-Nueva Vizcaya Road will greatly benefit Sta Fe and the city of San Nicolas. Malico will be referred to as the "Gateway to Cagayan Valley." Malico, with its elevation, abundant vegetation, and distinct cold weather, has the potential to develop into the Summer Capital of Nueva Vizcaya. The Villa Verde Trail will enhance tourist attraction due to its historical significance as a battlefield for the US Army 32nd (Red Arrow) Division and the Japanese army during World War II. Presently, Barangay Malico in Nueva Vizcaya has all three sitios namely Centro, Maliit, and Pacalbo, which is also recognized for its viewpoint. It has become into a popular spot for travelers due to its pleasant temperatures and breathtaking views. Because of its closeness to Pangasinan, the province is a popular destination for day trips and short visits. Short hikes, viewpoints, and other forms of recreation are popular in the province. Malico emerged as a tourist destination within the year 2015.

The province's tourist industry is expanding in certain areas, especially in Sta. Fe where barangay Malico is situated. Furthermore, according to the province of Sta. Fe, the effect of tourism in the province has not been researched. Several towns and cities have expressed a desire to develop their economy. Considering these conditions, the province's tourism development must adhere to its guiding principles of long-term viability.

In the study of Neto (2003), natural resources will be under pressure due to the tourism industry's exceptional growth, and the resources that are at risk are water, electricity, and food. This implies that there is an urgent need to control water management or land use in a specific area with high tourism intensity. More specifically, any tourism development has the potential to harm forests, exacerbate detrition, and reduce clear water supply. To some extent, with the growth within the tourism sector, water resources could be at risk, significantly damaging residents' access to water. Perhaps another is the overconsumption behavior of tourists, which is then catered to by capitalists, such as hotel resorts and golf courses.

Developing countries that may not sufficiently maintain and plan for Tourism development can have crucial repercussions. This effect could have two components: first, a strain on natural resources, and second, ecosystem harm (Neto, 2003). Tourism-related activities may suffer from eco-system deterioration in a vicious cycle.

Sitio La Presa, also known as Sitio Pungayan at Mount Sto, is one case that is associated with sustainability. After the hit ABS-CBN telenovela "Forevermore" wrapped up in the summer of 2015, Tomas in Cabuyao, Tuba, Benguet, became a popular tourist destination. La Presa, the name of the community in "Forevermore," was enticed by thousands of tourists during the 2014 season's height of the show's success,

leading to congestion and trash buildup. In September 2014, the Supreme Court issued a Temporary Environmental Protection Order (TEPO) in response to the damage being done to the environment. The Court of Appeals issued a Permanent Environmental Protection Order (PEPO) in March 2015, two months before the end of the period. The public has been reminded that Sitio Pungayan, the fictional strawberry farm Sitio La Presa in a well-known television series that was broadcast several years ago, is still off-limits to visitors by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) (Interaksyon, 2017). It develops a tourism economy with the help of La Presa Strawberries, La Presa Vegetables, La Presa Jam, and La Presa Souvenirs. Although this resulted in a significant economic revenue stream for the local farmers, unrestrained commercialization endangers the region's natural charm, appeal, and smell, endangering Baguio's water catchment area. Due to a lack of planning, proper visitor management, and sustainability measures, the tourist destination was forced to close and it is now a protected area.

It is stated by UNWTO (n.d.) that it will encompass economic development in line with the needs of ecological balance and human development, involving people's ties with the environment and the present generation's obligation to the next, pushing the idea of sustainable tourism. Finding out how sustainable a place is sustainable development's goal, often known as sustainable tourism. Furthermore, it has been established and is promoted to manage all resources to serve an area's needs for the economy, society, and artistic endeavors while protecting its cultural affinity, crucial environmental factors, variety of organisms, and systems that sustain life. Particularly, in a way that concerns thinking and acting that has long-term effects is sustainable tourism.

A further investigation by Revfine (2021) states that implementing sustainability will maximize tourism's beneficial effects while reducing its adverse consequences on the area's attractions. As the area grows over the coming years, the current tourism practices that negatively impact the natural assets of the world, residents, and ecological health will decline. Therefore, ethical travel is vital for the tourist sector to remain viable over the long term. Sustainable tourism's ultimate objective is to mitigate the damaging effects of travel on the local population and nature. It comprises of conserving commodities judiciously to prevent overindulgence helping to safeguard the natural environment, and to work towards an effort to uphold and respect custom and practices in the community. Making the long-term viability of travel is the foremost objective associated with sustainable travel- achieved by educating people and behavioral changes. Moreover, sustainable tourism seeks to provide financial and social support to areas of need, fostering greater mutually beneficial "give and take" action or reciprocity.

Joo et al. (2019) list the benefits for society from tourism, including a greater sense of communal worth and fulfillment, the interaction between cultures, public involvement, and sharing of cultural information. The Edinburgh Tourism Strategy 2030 clarifies that both locals and tourists are proud of the city. As a result, tourism-related projects have strengthened local communities and improved local services. Apart from that, tourism growth in underdeveloped nations enhances the social climate of the host communities. Based on the study of Ramos, H. et al (2016), the sociocultural benefits of tourism may include enhanced senses of environmental connectedness and communal identification, and a rise in visits as an outcome of capital from society.

In economic sustainability, a key component of sustainable tourism is giving locals employment possibilities while limiting repercussions regarding natural assets and indigenous customs. It strives to ensure that the mobility of tourists is a positive endeavor for all parties concerned, both tourists and those who authentically engage with and embrace local culture while traveling. Sustainable tourism is crucial because it reduces unfavorable environmental, social, and economic effects while allowing travel to affect a region positively. Nonetheless, grows the economic benefits for people, enhances the standard of living in the communities where it is implemented, and boosts industry accessibility while also enhancing conditions

for employees. Includes residents in decision-making that affect their quality of life and opportunities for success (Cape Town Declaration, 2002). Sustainable tourism’s objective, according to UNWTO, is to retain the traveling industry’s beneficial economic and social advantages whilst decreasing or eliminating its detrimental impact on the environment, historical, cultural, or social environment. By balancing the three dimensions, this is accomplished.

Many tourists have recently recognized Malico, Nueva Vizcaya, because of its solace, cold climate, scenic view, and captivating natural landscape. Many tourism destinations and activities deteriorate emanate “ningas cogon” condition, frequently going through quick and boom cycles. Throughout a while, they are popular travel locations before falling off quickly because they cannot adopt the triple-bottom-line approach that considers tourism’s economic, environmental, and social dimensions. Thus, the study wants to determine the existence/observance of sustainability in Malico. With this, appropriate measures can be taken to guarantee its long-term sustainability and to carry on its tourism growth in the long run.

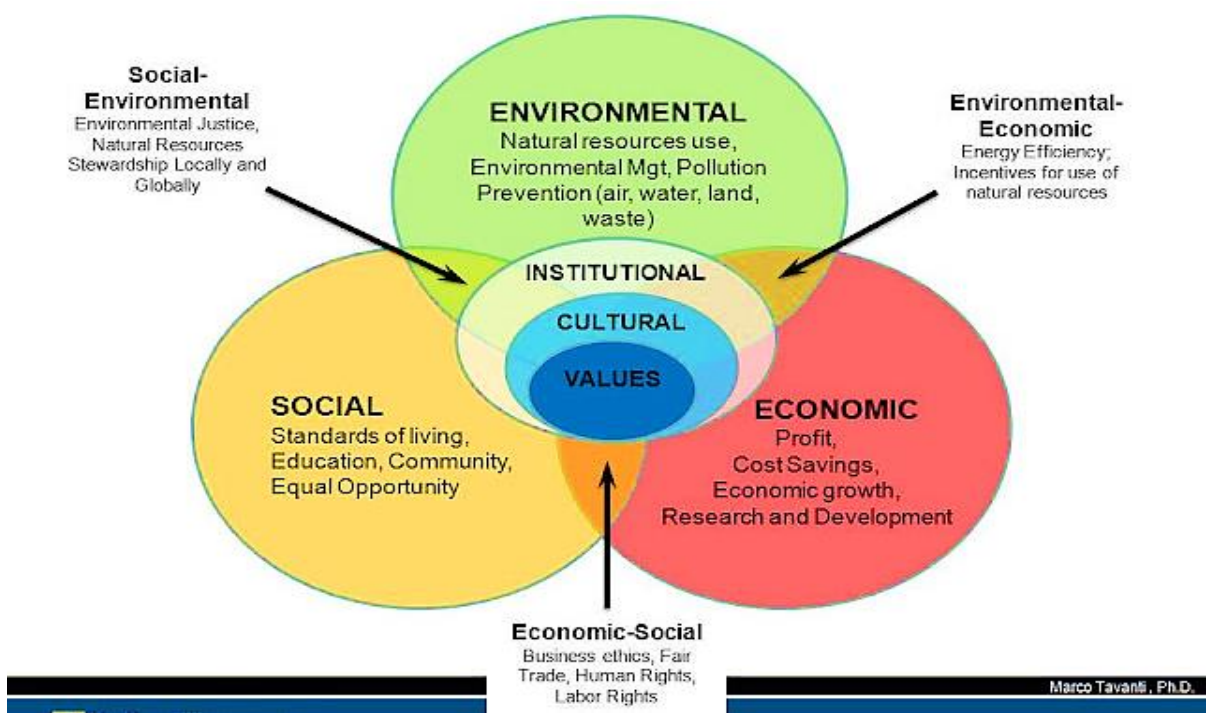
CONCEPTUAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

According to UNESCO, sustainable tourism is ” that respects both local people and the traveler, cultural heritage and the environment.” In other words, it aims to give tourists a fun and instructive experience that also helps the area’s residents.

The four major areas of destination management, socioeconomic sustainability, cultural sustainability, and environmental sustainability are all assessed by the GSTC Destination Criteria. However, the study made a few adjustments, including: 1) disregarding the destination management standards because Malico is still developing as a travel destination and instead concentrating on the three dimensions of sustainability. 2) to consider the economic and socio-cultural variables used by the researchers, the socio-economic and cultural sustainability questions were reorganized.

The three dimensions of the sustainable tourism framework—environmental, economic, and sociocultural tourism development—are established on sustainability principles.

Figure 1 Sustainable Tourism Framework



Environmental sustainability requires responsibility for safeguarding the world’s ecosystems and preserving nature’s resources to promote well-being and prosperity today and in future generations.

Economic sustainability alludes to practices that foster permanent economic growth without jeopardizing the local area’s cultural, social, and environmental facets.

Social and cultural sustainability concerns challenges relating to people’s chances to reach their full potential. Our needs vary depending on where in the world we reside and where in our life we are. It might have to do with religious liberty or living a balanced existence in a developed society.

The sustainable tourism framework served as the foundation for the study’s framework. According to Landorf (2009), while the Brundtland Report concentrated on defining sustainable development, Agenda 21 made specific implementation recommendations. According to Bramwell and Lane 1993 (quoted in Landorf 2009), this can only be accomplished by “integrating and interlinking” the various aspects in the related fields, including the economic, environmental, and social pillars. Therefore, the interaction between these three dimensions is therefore the most crucial issue. Basiago 1999, mentioned in Landorf 2009, is illustrated here to show how interlinking happens.

Figure 2 Research Paradigm

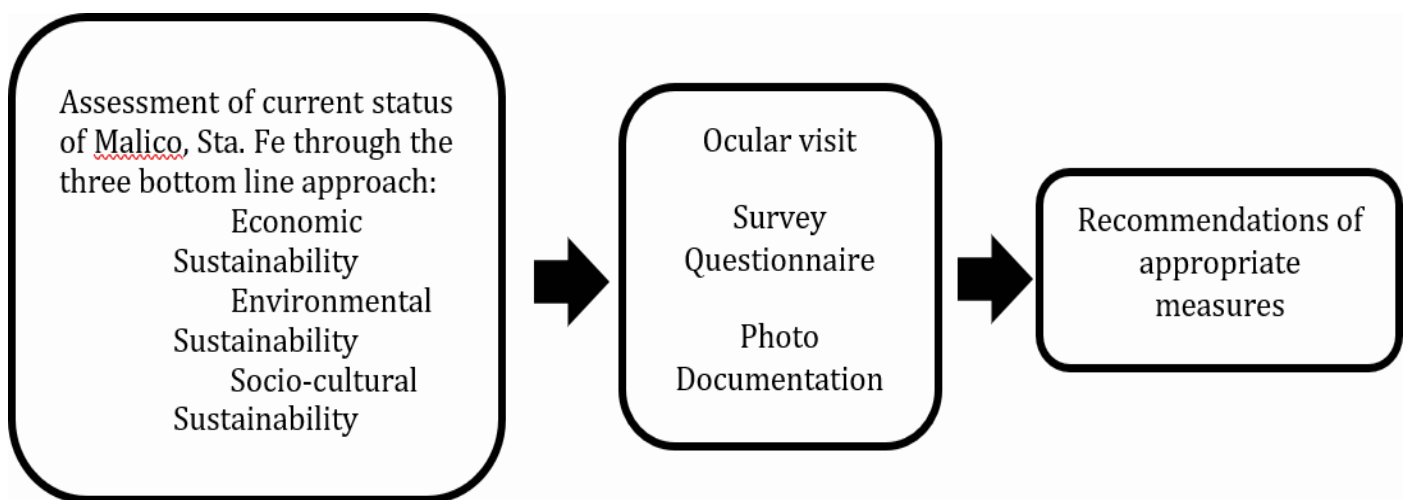


Figure 2 illustrates the flow of the variables involved in the study.

The *first box* contains the inputs of the study which are the Respondents Profile, the Evaluation of Malico, Sta. Fe as a Sustainable Tourism Destination under the three important areas of sustainable development: Economic, Environmental, and Socio- cultural Sustainability, and the respondents’ recommendations for Malico, Sta. Fe as a sustainable tourism destination.

The second box involves a formal interview, survey questionnaire, and ocular visit of Malico, Sta. Fe, and analysis of the gathered information.

The last box, or the study’s outcome, is recommendations of appropriate measures for implementing a sustainable tourism system in Malico as a Sustainable Tourism Destination.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to assess the current status of Malico, Sta. Fe in the academic year 2022 – 2023 as a sustainable tourism with its current status. Specifically, it sought to give answers to the following:

1. What is the profile of the research participants in terms of their:

1.1 Residence (Sitio) location;

1.2 Type of occupation; and

1.3 Educational Attainment?

2. What is the current status of Malico as a sustainable performing tourism destination in Sta. Fe, Nueva Vizcaya:

2.1 Economic Sustainability;

2.2 Environmental Sustainability; and

2.3 Socio-cultural Sustainability?

3. What appropriate recommendations can be identified to make Malico, Sta. Fe a robust sustainable tourism destination?

METHODS

This part briefly discusses the different methods and procedures used by the researchers. It consists of the research design, research locale, research participants, research instrument, data gathering procedure, treatment of data, and ethical considerations.

Research Design

The researchers will utilize the descriptive method. To illustrate the level of awareness, current practices, and challenges with sustainable tourism in Malico, Sta. Fe, Nueva Vizcaya, descriptive methods will be used. The researchers will assess Fe, Nueva Vizcaya, as a sustainable tourism destination in terms of its economic, environmental, and socio-cultural sustainability using quantitative research analysis. According to Calderon (2006), descriptive research is the systematic method of gathering, analyzing, classifying, and tabulating data about current conditions, practices, trends, and cause-and-effect relationships in order to make an adequate and accurate interpretation of the data with or without, or occasionally with only minimal assistance from statistical methods.

Furthermore, this approach produces actual data about a group under study. It yields conclusions that may describe the population's general characteristics in qualitative, quantitative, or both ways. The researchers will give the questionnaire to the chosen respondents to gather the data required for the study. The outcome will be examined to ascertain the respondents' responses.

Research Locale

The study will take place in Malico, Sta. Fe, Nueva Vizcaya. It is located at the isolated border of Nueva Vizcaya and Pangasinan in stunning seclusion above the untamed Caraballo Mountain range. The researchers chose the study's location because it is a developing and booming region that could easily draw many visitors to start a local tourism industry. After all, it is rich in history, tribal culture, and the natural

environment. The researchers predict that it would considerably benefit a community, protect the local population and natural resources, and have other beneficial outcomes. Sustainable tourism is necessary to ensure that the destination will develop and expand as a way to manage and grow tourism. Malico first became known as a tourist attraction in 2015. Still, on June 30, 2022, the House of Representatives passed House Bill No. 1062, designating Malico, Sta. Fe as a place for ecotourism. Malico has no yet effective department, committee, group, or institution in charge of a coordinated strategy for sustainable tourism that includes participation from the corporate sector, governmental sector, and civil society.

Research Participants

The respondents of the study were the community members of Malico, Sta. Fe, which will include the barangay officials, business owners, and residents aged 18 and above and 60 and below, may be deemed beneficial in assessing the status of Malico as a sustainable tourism destination. They will be the ones who will provide the best information about the destination and situation of tourism in Malico. There are 298 total population of Malico, Sta. Fe recorded in 2019. Sitio Centro has a prominent number of populations that comprise of 179. Second is Sitio Maliit with 72, and Sitio Pacalbo with 47. Individuals who lack of knowledge about the place, are not residents of Malico, Santa Fe, have non-fluency in English, and no reference to community participation are excluded from study. The researchers conducted an initial interview with the tourism officer of Sta. Fe and the Barangay officials to request the list of applicable respondents to be interviewed and surveyed.

Table 1 Research Participants

Sitio	Population as of 2019	Participants
Centro	179	16
Maliit	72	1
Pacalbo	47	3
Total	298	20

The respondents answered the survey questionnaire with the help of the researchers in translation. The researchers used purposive sampling to collect data from the study's chosen respondents. The respondents are determined in line with the nature and objectives of the study by their occupation, educational attainment, and residence. Barangay Malico is a small barangay in Sta. Fe and according to the demographic profile of Malico there are 49 residents whose age ranges from 18-30 and 96 residents whose age ranges from 30-59 which is the target respondents of the study, but is selected (based on the exclusion and inclusion criteria) to participate in the study through answering survey questionnaire. Upon our ocular visit to Malico, few business establishments are in the destination. Considering it is a small barangay, only selected barangay officials will be the respondents. The researchers conducted the study with 20 respondents representing each important sustainable development sector. The researchers are expecting to conduct the study in December 2022 – July 2023.

Research Instrument

The researchers used a survey questionnaire as a primary instrument in gathering data from the respondents. Based on the respondents' prior observations and personal experiences, the questionnaire aimed to assess Malico's status as a sustainable tourism destination. The research instrument is made up of three sections. The first section of the questionnaire will address the profile of the respondents, which includes the respondents' sitio of residence and sector/areas of work. The second section deals with the respondents'

level of assessment of Malico as a Sustainable Tourism Destination. The third section is for the recommendation of the respondents to make Malico, Sta. Fe a Sustainable Tourism Destination.

The researchers used the recognized standards for destinations by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) Version 2.0 (2019) that assesses destinations on sustainability. The GSTC Destination Criteria assesses four major areas: Destination Management, Socio-Economic Sustainability, Cultural Sustainability, and Environmental Sustainability. Although, the research made some changes which are: 1) disregarding the destination management criteria as Malico is still in the start-up stage as a destination and the researchers will focus on the three areas of sustainability. 2) The socio-economic and cultural sustainability questions were rearranged to cater to the variables used by the researchers, which are economic and socio-cultural. The experts will validate the research instrument: the Adviser-Promoter, the Panelists, and the Research Chair.

Table 2 Table of Specifications of the Questionnaire

Statement of the Problem	Item Location in the Survey Questionnaire	Reference
<p>1. What is the profile of the research participants in terms of their:</p> <p>1.1. Residence (Sitio) location;</p> <p>1.2. Type of occupation; and</p> <p>1.3. Educational Attainment?</p>	Section I	
<p>2. What is the current status of Malico as a sustainable performing tourism destination in Sta. Fe, Nueva Vizcaya as experienced by the research participants along:</p> <p>2.1. Economic Sustainability;</p> <p>2.2. Environmental Sustainability; and</p> <p>2.3. Socio-cultural Sustainability?</p>	Section II	<p>Global Sustainable Tourism Council- Recognized Standards for Destinations (2019)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-Economic Sustainability • Cultural Sustainability • Environmental Sustainability
<p>3. What appropriate recommendations can be identified to make Malico, Sta. Fe a robust sustainable tourism destination?</p>	Section III	

Data Gathering Procedure

A data gathering strategy was developed to meet the study’s objectives, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4 Data Gathering Procedure

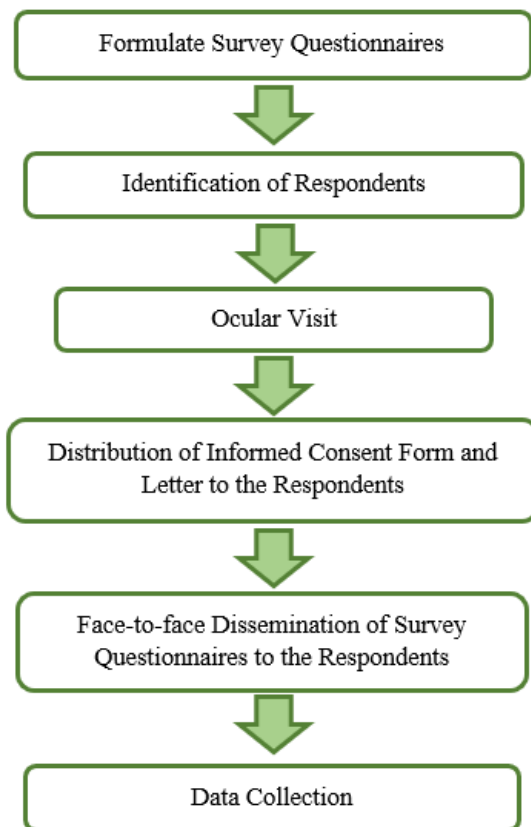


Figure 4 depicts a data-gathering process designed to meet the study's objective. The first process of the study was to formulate a survey questionnaire, which was presented to the adviser, instructor, panel members, and university statistician for validation. This was followed by identifying respondents in our chosen barangay, Malico, Santa Fe, Nueva Vizcaya. Hence, the researchers prepared an informed consent form and letter to the respondent which was discussed with the respondents before data collection. Simultaneously, the researchers conducted their ocular visit in Malico as part of their methods. In gathering the data, the LGU officer in Malico gathered all the qualified residents to be the respondents in the Malico in one place for easier dispersal of the data gathering tool and data collection.

Regarding barangay officials, the researchers went to the respective offices of the officials and asked their permission to be our respondents. For the business owners, the researchers went to their business establishments. Also, they asked their permission to be our respondents for the study. Subsequently, the researchers had face-to-face dissemination of survey questionnaires to the respondents, explaining or clarifying any confusing parts. Moreover, the survey questionnaires that were collected and the information gathered from the respondents were analyzed and summarized by the researchers.

Treatment of Data

To assess the area's sustainability, the researchers employed a quantitative analysis wherein responses from the survey questionnaires were recorded and reviewed. Responses made by the residents will be presented based on their answers regarding to the destination's economic, environmental, and socio-cultural sustainability.

To assess the profile distribution of officials, business owners, and residents for statement number one (1), the researchers employed frequency counts and percentages to show the profile of the respondents (i.e. sitio, occupation, and educational attainment). For the statement of problem number two (2), the researchers

employed a mean and standard deviation and was determined using the scale below (table 3). To interpret the data effectively for statement number three (3), the recommendations were listed according to the data provided by the respondents.

Table 3 Frequency and Percentage of Respondents Profile

Sitio	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Occupation	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Educational Attainment	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)

This will determine the respondents' frequency counts and percentage distribution of personal-related variables.

Formula: $\% = \frac{f}{N} \times 100$ % is the percentage, F is the Frequency, N is the total number of respondents, and 100 is a constant value.

Table 4 Mean Scale for Sustainable Tourism Destination in Malico, Sta. Fe

Mean Scale Range	Response	Quantitative Description
5 (4.50 – 5.00)	Strongly Agree	The given indicator is greatly performed in Malico, Nueva Vizcaya
4 (3.50 – 4.49)	Agree	The given indicator is performed in Malico, Nueva Vizcaya
3 (2.50-3.49)	Neutral	The given indicator is moderately performed in Malico, Nueva Vzcaya
2 (1.50-2.49)	Disagree	The given indicator is slightly performed in Malico, Nueva Vizcaya
1 (1-1.49)	Strongly Disagree	The given indicator is not peformed in Malico, Nueva Vizcaya

This table shows the descriptive interpretation of the answered survey questionnaire of the respondents. Using the scale above, we can easily compute and determine the performance level of a sustainable tourism destination in Malico.

RESULTS

Section 1: Profile of the Research Participants

This section of the study presents the profile of the research participants in Malico regarding their residence (sitio) location, type of occupation, and educational attainment.

Table 5. Profile of the Research Participants

Profile	Cluster	Frequency	Percentage
Sitio	Centro	16	80.0
	Maliit	1	5.0
	Pacalbo	3	15.0
	Total	20	100.0
Occupation	BLGU Official	9	45.0
	Business Owner	6	30.0

	Farmer	3	15.0
	Others (daycare, laborer)	2	10.0
	Total	20	100.0
Highest Educational Attainment	Elem Graduate	2	10.0
	High School Grad	8	40.0
	College Grad	10	50.0
	Total	20	100.0

Section 2: Current status of Malico as a sustainable performing tourism destination

This section of the study presents the current status of Malico as a sustainable performing tourism destination in Sta. Fe, Nueva Vizcaya as experienced by the research participants in Economic Sustainability, Environmental Sustainability and Socio-cultural Sustainability.

Table 6. Current Status of Malico as as a Sustainable Performing Tourism Destination in Terms of Economic Sustainability

Descriptive Statistics				
Items	N	Mean	SD	QD
Appropriate measures such as visitor arrival, visitor receipts, employment, and investment are monitored and reported.	20	3.95	0.826	Performed
Malico encourages and supports careers and jobs in tourism to provide opportunities for local employment, training, and a living wage for all residents.	20	4.15	0.875	Performed
Malico encourages the retention of tourism spending in local business and enterprises. To purchase of sustainable products of Malico including food, beverages, crafts, agricultural products, and others.	20	4.25	0.716	Performed
Malico has a system to encourage business, visitors, and the public to responsibly contribute to community and sustainability initiatives.	20	4.15	0.671	Performed
Mean for Economic Sustainability	20	4.13	0.661	Performed

*Legend: 1-1.49 – Level of performance is not performed; 1.50-2.49 – slightly performed; 2.50-3.49 – moderately performed; 3.50-4.49 – performed; 4.50-5.00 – greatly performed

Table 7 Current Status of Malico as a Sustainable Performing Tourism Destination in Terms of Environmental Sustainability

Descriptive Statistics				
Items	N	Mean	SD	QD
Malico has a system to monitor, measure, and respond to the impacts of tourism on the natural environment, conserve ecosystems, habitats and species, and prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species.	20	4.20	0.696	Performed
Malico has a system for managing of visitors within and around natural sites. Guidelines for visitor behavior in sensitive areas.	20	4.25	0.550	Performed
Malico has a system to ensure compliance with local, national, and international laws and standards for wildlife interactions.	20	4.25	0.639	Performed

Malico has a system to ensure compliance with local, national, and international laws and standards for welfare and species conservation.	20	4.15	0.671	Performed
Malico has targets to reduce energy consumption, improve efficiency in its use, and increase the use of renewable energy.	20	3.90	0.852	Performed
Malico encourages businesses to measure, monitor publicly report and manage water usage. A water stewardship goal is to identify and actively ensure tourism use does not conflict with the local use and ecosystem.	20	3.95	0.826	Performed
Using quality standards, Malico monitors water quality for drinking, recreational, and ecological purposes.	20	3.80	0.894	Performed
Malico ensures that water wastes are properly treated, reused, or released safely without adversely impacting the local population and the environment.	20	4.15	0.745	Performed
Malico ensures solid waste is properly treated and diverted from landfills, providing a multiple-stream collection and recycling system that effectively separates waste types.	20	4.20	0.768	Performed
Malico encouraged to measure, reduce and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions from all aspects.	20	4.05	0.759	Performed
Malico targets to reduce transport emissions and increase the use of sustainable, low-emissions vehicles and public transportation.	20	4.15	0.813	Performed
Malico has guidelines and regulations to minimize light and noise pollution.	20	4.25	0.786	Performed
Mean for Environmental Sustainability	20	4.11	0.540	Performed

*Legend: 1-1.49 – Level of performance is not performed; 1.50-2.49 – slightly performed; 2.50-3.49 – moderately performed; 3.50-4.49 – performed; 4.50-5.00 – greatly performed

Table 8 Current Status of Malico as a Sustainable Performing Tourism Destination in Terms of Socio-Cultural Sustainability

Descriptive Statistics				
Items	N	Mean	SD	QD
Malico has a system to monitor, measure, and respond to the impacts of tourism on the natural environment, conserve ecosystems, habitats and species, and prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species.	20	4.20	0.696	Performed
Malico has rules and regulations on the proper sale and trade. Display or gift historical and archaeological artifacts.	20	3.90	1.071	Performed
Malico supports celebrating and protecting intangible cultural heritage like traditions, arts, music, language, and gastronomy.	20	3.95	0.945	Performed
Malico monitors, protects, and rehabilitates or restores local community aces to natural and cultural sites when necessary.	20	4.10	0.788	Performed
Malico has a system to contribute to protecting and preserving the intellectual property rights of communities and individuals.	20	3.95	0.887	Performed
Malico has a system for managing of visitors within and around cultural sites. Guidelines for visitor behavior at sensitive sites and cultural events are made available to visitors, tour operators, and guides before and during the visit.	20	4.10	0.852	Performed

Accurate interpretative material is provided which informs visitors of the significance of the cultural and natural aspects of the sites they visit.	20	4.35	0.745	Performed
Malico upholds laws, practices, and standards on human rights. To prevent human trafficking, modern slavery, sexual harassment, and discrimination against LGBT women, children, and others.	20	4.30	0.733	Performed
Malico has rules and regulations on property rights and acquisitions. It complies with communal and indigenous rights, public consultation and access rights to key resources.	20	4.20	0.768	Performed
Malico has a system to monitor, prevent, publicly report, and respond to crime, safety, and health hazards that addresses the needs of both visitors and residents.	20	4.00	0.918	Performed
Sites, facilities, and services, including those of natural and cultural importance, are accessible to all, including PWDs and those with specific special needs requirements.	20	4.15	0.813	Performed
Mean for Socio-cultural Sustainability	20	4.11	0.633	Performed

*Legend: 1-1.49 – Level of performance is not performed; 1.50-2.49 – slightly performed; 2.50-3.49 – moderately performed; 3.50-4.49 – performed; 4.50-5.00 – greatly performed

DISCUSSION

The following presents the data gathered, and discussion of data as processed. These are presented in tabular forms following the sequence of the specific research problem regarding Malico, Nueva Vizcaya as a Sustainable Tourism Destination.

Section 1: Profile of the Research Participants

This section of the study presents the profile of the research participants in Malico regarding their residence (sitio) location, type of occupation, and educational attainment.

Table 5. Profile of the Research Participants

Profile	Cluster	Frequency	Percentage
Sitio	Centro	16	80.0
	Maliit	1	5.0
	Pacalbo	3	15.0
	Total	20	100.0
Occupation	BLGU Official	9	45.0
	Business Owner	6	30.0
	Farmer	3	15.0
	Others (daycare, laborer)	2	10.0
	Total	20	100.0
Highest Educational Attainment	Elem Graduate	2	10.0
	High School Grad	8	40.0
	College Grad	10	50.0
	Total	20	100.0

The table shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents according to their profiles. It shows that most of the respondents were from Sitio Centro (80.0%), followed by Sitio Pacolbo (15.0%), and Sitio Maliit (5.0). With a percentage of 45%, BLGU officials compose the majority of the responders, business owners come in second with 30%. In comparison, the farmer comes in third with a rate of 15%. Daycare teachers and laborers are among the others. The majority of respondents are college graduates at their highest level of education (50.0%), high school graduates (40.0%), and elementary graduates (10.0%). With the results above, the profile of the participants indicates great variations. Centro got the highest percentage because it is the sitio where most of the locals reside and where most of the attractions are located. Farmers are a few of the respondents' occupations because agriculture is the main source of income in Malico.

Section 2: Current status of Malico as a sustainable performing tourism destination

This section of the study presents the current status of Malico as a sustainable performing tourism destination in Sta. Fe, Nueva Vizcaya as experienced by the research participants in Economic Sustainability, Environmental Sustainability and Socio-cultural Sustainability.

Table 6. Current Status of Malico as as a Sustainable Performing Tourism Destination in Terms of Economic Sustainability

Descriptive Statistics				
Items	N	Mean	SD	QD
Appropriate measures such as visitor arrival, visitor receipts, employment, and investment are monitored and reported.	20	3.95	0.826	Performed
Malico encourages and supports careers and jobs in tourism to provide opportunities for local employment, training, and a living wage for all residents.	20	4.15	0.875	Performed
Malico encourages the retention of tourism spending in local business and enterprises. To purchase of sustainable products of Malico including food, beverages, crafts, agricultural products, and others.	20	4.25	0.716	Performed
Malico has a system to encourage business, visitors, and the public to responsibly contribute to community and sustainability initiatives.	20	4.15	0.671	Performed
Mean for Economic Sustainability	20	4.13	0.661	Performed

*Legend: 1-1.49 – Level of performance is not performed; 1.50-2.49 – slightly performed; 2.50-3.49 – moderately performed; 3.50-4.49 – performed; 4.50-5.00 – greatly performed

Table 6 shows the level of performance as a sustainable tourism destination of Malico, Nueva Vizcaya in terms of economic sustainability. All the items were rated with mean scores ranging from 3.95 to 4.45, described as performed.

The highest mean score was on the third item: “Malico encourages the retention of tourism spending in local business and enterprises. To purchase sustainable products of Malico including food, beverages, crafts, agricultural products, and others”, with the mean score of 4.25. This could mean that the respondents perceived the local business and products are being given concern. The lowest mean score was on the first item, “Appropriate measures such as visitor arrival, visitor receipts, employment, and investment are monitored and reported,” with a mean score of 3.95. According to the respondents, Malico performed

economic sustainability programs based on the GSTC Destination Criteria with an overall mean of 4.13. This implies that Malico is a potential sustainable tourism destination.

Greater economic benefits for locals are produced by sustainable tourism, which also improves working conditions and access to the industry while improving the welfare of host communities. Involves locals in decisions that impact on their quality of life and opportunities for success (Cape Town Declaration, 2002).

Promoting locations without putting the locals or the environment in danger while having a good impact on the country's society, economy, and ecology is the primary objective of sustainable tourism. The development of sustainable tourism has benefited many places, including Nigeria. By fostering employment opportunities and generating new sources of income, the tourism industry has evolved into an instrument for the economy's diversification (Ayeni et al., 2012).

Consequently, in this study, Malico, Sta Fe has immense possibilities to grow and develop into a sustainable performing tourism destination in the area of economics, where appropriate measures to increase tourist arrival, employment and investments opportunities could happen, including an increase in production of local goods, commodities and improvement in services. Appropriate measures such as encouraging small businesses in the area, supporting and maintaining agricultural activities, optimizing the contribution of tourist arrivals to employment and GDP, strengthening their approach in acquiring visitors (marketing strategy through social media), and enhancing its appeal to both locals and visitors to provide consumers with high-quality, innovative, and appealing (e.g. providing good value for money) tourism services.

Figure 5 Strawberry Farm



The figure above shows one of the latest attractions in Malico that provides income to the local farmers. The strawberry farm is open for tourists who want to pick them fresh and buy them by the kilo. Tourists may also buy their other product, the strawberry jam that the farmers pick at the farm and make into a jam.

Figures 6 Vegetable stalls



The figures above are the farm fresh vegetables cultivated by the local farmers and vendors directly sell them at their stalls where tourists may conveniently buy them just beside the road in Sitio Centro, Malico. It encourages the local to sell the harvested vegetables in the community straightforwardly.

Figure 7 Scenery Café



The figure above is a newly added must-visit coffee shop in Malico. Scenery Café provides diners with a majestic view of nature that is good for tourists looking for a chill and scenic place.

Figures 8 Eateries in Malico



The figures above are the eateries or “small carinderias” just beside the road of Malico. These businesses served a limited menu of affordable Filipino dishes with a semblance of home-cooked meals.

Figures 9 Malico Country Inn



This accommodation is a rustic and pleasing-vacation place. It gives off the vibe of an antique gallery

digitally detached from the world – no internet connection or signal. The Malico Country Inn is good for family and friends. It includes four single beds, a living room, a balcony, a private bathroom, a kitchen, and a dining space all to itself. The cottage resembled an antique gallery due to the furnishings, decorations, and relics that adorned every room and nook. It has a grand piano, paintings, and a poster of one of the classic films, “Casablanca,” guns, lamps, wooden and stone sculptures, antiques, and memorabilia from previous wars.

The documentation above encapsulates the economic sustainability result where “*Malico encourages the retention of tourism spending in local business and enterprises. To purchase of sustainable products of Malico including food, beverages, crafts, agricultural products, and others*” got the highest mean score because Malico boost the buying behavior of the tourists by providing agricultural products, taste local foods, indulge in the new coffee shop, purchase crafts such as “walis tambo”, and encouraging tourists’ length of stay.

Figure 10 Malico Tourism Assistance Center



The tourism assistance center in Malico monitors the volume of tourist visits or arrivals by writing your personal information in a login book. Tourists must also pay 20 pesos per head to be served as their entrance fee to the different tourist sites in Malico. This determines that in the economic sustainability, where “*Appropriate measures such as visitor arrival, visitor receipts, employment, and investment are monitored and reported*” got the lowest mean score because they solely rely on the tool of login book in measuring the visitor arrivals.

Table 7 Current Status of Malico as a Sustainable Performing Tourism Destination in Terms of Environmental Sustainability

Descriptive Statistics				
Items	N	Mean	SD	QD
Malico has a system to monitor, measure, and respond to the impacts of tourism on the natural environment, conserve ecosystems, habitats and species, and prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species.	20	4.20	0.696	Performed
Malico has a system for managing of visitors within and around natural sites. Guidelines for visitor behavior in sensitive areas.	20	4.25	0.550	Performed
Malico has a system to ensure compliance with local, national, and international laws and standards for wildlife interactions.	20	4.25	0.639	Performed

Malico has a system to ensure compliance with local, national, and international laws and standards for welfare and species conservation.	20	4.15	0.671	Performed
Malico has targets to reduce energy consumption, improve efficiency in its use, and increase the use of renewable energy.	20	3.90	0.852	Performed
Malico encourages businesses to measure, monitor publicly report and manage water usage. A water stewardship goal is to identify and actively ensure tourism use does not conflict with the local use and ecosystem.	20	3.95	0.826	Performed
Using quality standards, Malico monitors water quality for drinking, recreational, and ecological purposes.	20	3.80	0.894	Performed
Malico ensures that water wastes are properly treated, reused, or released safely without adversely impacting the local population and the environment.	20	4.15	0.745	Performed
Malico ensures solid waste is properly treated and diverted from landfills, providing a multiple-stream collection and recycling system that effectively separates waste types.	20	4.20	0.768	Performed
Malico encouraged to measure, reduce and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions from all aspects.	20	4.05	0.759	Performed
Malico targets to reduce transport emissions and increase the use of sustainable, low-emissions vehicles and public transportation.	20	4.15	0.813	Performed
Malico has guidelines and regulations to minimize light and noise pollution.	20	4.25	0.786	Performed
Mean for Environmental Sustainability	20	4.11	0.540	Performed

*Legend: 1-1.49 – Level of performance is not performed; 1.50-2.49 – slightly performed; 2.50-3.49 – moderately performed; 3.50-4.49 – performed; 4.50-5.00 – greatly performed

Table 7 shows the level of performance as a sustainable tourism destination of Malico, Nueva Vizcaya in terms of environmental sustainability. It was evident that all the items were rated with mean scores from 3.80-4.50, described as performed.

The highest mean score was on the two, three, and twelve items “*Malico has a system for the management of visitors within and around natural sites. Guidelines for visitor behavior at sensitive areas*”. Malico monitors visitors’ flows and always reminds tourists not to leave their trash at every attraction site; “*Malico has a system to ensure compliance with local, national, and international laws and standards for wildlife interactions.*” Malico adheres to the Republic Act No. 9147, the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act, and “*Malico has guidelines and regulations to minimize light and noise pollution.*” Malico encourages businesses and small enterprises to use solar energy, regulating public disturbance noises that annoy the public and using *videoke* or other sound-amplifying equipment that unnecessarily endangers people’s health, safety, or tranquility. Also, Malico has mechanisms with follow-up action that allow locals to report noise and light pollution, with a mean score of 4.25. This could mean that the respondents perceived the items as being given too much concern. The lowest mean score was on the item seven “*Malico monitors water quality for drinking, recreational, and ecological purposes using quality standards*” with a mean score of 3.80. Because their water source is coming from the mountain, no water quality sampling and testing have been done to ensure that the water in Malico is safe for tourists. According to the respondents, Malico performed environmental sustainability programs based on the GSTC Destination Criteria with an overall mean of 4.11. This implies that Malico is a potential sustainable tourism destination.

Neto (2003) claims that the enormous expansion of the tourism industry will bring resources from nature

under threat, bringing food, energy, and water unsafe. This implies a need to control water management or land use in a specific area with high tourism intensity. Based on an ocular visit, the researchers saw or experienced that the location is immaculately clean and free of scattered trash. Each attraction has a trustee who ensures the location is clean and appropriate behavior is manifested for residents and visitors. Developing countries that will not sufficiently plan and have preventive measures for the environmental strike may suffer from the significant negative effects of tourist development. This effect could have two components: first, pressure on natural resources, and second, ecosystem damage.

As we get closer to a more sustainable future, the Philippines is creating and promoting an increasing number of eco-friendly travel destinations. These places offer not only a chance for adventure but also a chance to connect with nature and wildlife and a way to help the local communities (Rosero, 2012).

As a result, this study shows that Malico, Sta. Fe has a lot of potential to expand and transform into a popular performing tourism destination in the area, wherein it ensures and encourages tourists to regulate their behavior by providing instructions on how to lessen and minimize their waste and maintain the cleanliness of the tourist destinations. Furthermore, they monitor and measure how much tourism impacts the environment, protect the ecosystem, habitat, and different breeds of animals, and stop the escalation of exotic species.

Figure 11 Imugan Falls



The trailhead for the Imugan waterfalls is located on the main road of barangay Imugan, and it is a leisurely 30- minute walk down a paved route that is littered with signs and directions to get there. The waterfalls are about 1.5 kilometers away, which merits exploration due to its majesty and natural beauty.

Figure 12 Hingi Falls



A peaceful waterfall view can be found by the Hingi Falls in Barangay Malico. It is a short distance of walking required to reach the falls. It is located on the roadside where its falling water can be heard.

Figure 13 Mangili-Tindaan Heritage Park



The figure above is the other attraction in Malico, Nueva Vizcaya. The historic Valle Verde Trail, also known as Spanish Trail during World War II, is a 1945 Sherman Tank where in it is located in Malico, Imugan, Sta. Fe. The destination has a vast ground of grass and pine trees that is perfect for picnics, unwinding, and communing with nature.

The above attractions perform environmental sustainability through preserving, overseeing, and maintaining the destination.

Figures 14 Transportation Used in Malico





The locals used their jeep, motorcycle, and kolong-kolong tricycle to go to places. Some of them use their bicycles around the *Baranggay*. Since no direct public transportation will take tourists to Malico, they use their private cars to see the beauty of Malico. Malico is also promoting bicycle use, especially to visitors who ride or travel by bicycle.

Table 8 Current Status of Malico as a Sustainable Performing Tourism Destination in Terms of Socio-Cultural Sustainability

Descriptive Statistics				
Items	N	Mean	SD	QD
Malico has a system to monitor, measure, and respond to the impacts of tourism on the natural environment, conserve ecosystems, habitats and species, and prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species.	20	4.20	0.696	Performed
Malico has rules and regulations on the proper sale and trade. Display or gift historical and archaeological artifacts.	20	3.90	1.071	Performed
Malico supports celebrating and protecting intangible cultural heritage like traditions, arts, music, language, and gastronomy.	20	3.95	0.945	Performed
Malico monitors, protects, and rehabilitates or restores local community aces to natural and cultural sites when necessary.	20	4.10	0.788	Performed
Malico has a system to contribute to protecting and preserving the intellectual property rights of communities and individuals.	20	3.95	0.887	Performed
Malico has a system for managing of visitors within and around cultural sites. Guidelines for visitor behavior at sensitive sites and cultural events are made available to visitors, tour operators, and guides before and during the visit.	20	4.10	0.852	Performed
Accurate interpretative material is provided which informs visitors of the significance of the cultural and natural aspects of the sites they visit.	20	4.35	0.745	Performed
Malico upholds laws, practices, and standards on human rights. To prevent human trafficking, modern slavery, sexual harassment, and discrimination against LGBT women, children, and others.	20	4.30	0.733	Performed
Malico has rules and regulations on property rights and acquisitions. It complies with communal and indigenous rights, public consultation and access rights to key resources.	20	4.20	0.768	Performed
Malico has a system to monitor, prevent, publicly report, and respond to crime, safety, and health hazards that addresses the needs of both visitors and residents.	20	4.00	0.918	Performed

Sites, facilities, and services, including those of natural and cultural importance, are accessible to all, including PWDs and those with specific special needs requirements.	20	4.15	0.813	Performed
Mean for Socio-cultural Sustainability	20	4.11	0.633	Performed

*Legend: 1-1.49 – Level of performance is not performed; 1.50-2.49 – slightly performed; 2.50-3.49 – moderately performed; 3.50-4.49 – performed; 4.50-5.00 – greatly performed

Table 8 shows the level of performance as a sustainable tourism destination of Malico, Nueva Vizcaya in terms of socio-cultural sustainability. All the items were rated with mean scores from 3.50-4.49, described as performed.

The highest mean score was on the seventh item, “Accurate interpretative material is provided which informs visitors of the significance of the cultural and natural aspects of the sites they visit, ” with a 4.35 mean score. This could mean that the respondents perceived that the exact information are given to the tourists is being given concern such as the information material (figure 16). The lowest mean score was on “*Malico has rules and regulations on the proper sale and trade. Display or gifting historical and archaeological artifacts*”. Given that Malico as a tourist destination is still rising, Malico does not have a proper outline of rules and regulations regarding on the artifacts of the place. According to the respondents, Malico performed sociocultural sustainability programs based on the GSTC Destination Criteria with an overall mean of 4.11. This implies that Malico is a potential sustainable tourism destination.

Joo et al. (2019) outline the benefits for society from tourism, including a greater sense of communal worth and fulfillment, the interaction between cultures, public involvement, and sharing of cultural information. The Edinburgh Tourism Strategy 2030 makes it clear that both locals and tourists are proud of the city. As a result, tourism-related developments have strengthened local communities and improved local services.

Additionally, tourism growth in underdeveloped nations enhances the social climate of the host communities. The sociocultural benefits of tourism may include enhanced senses of environmental connectedness and communal identification, and a rise in visits as an outcome of capital from society (Ramos, H. et al. 2016).

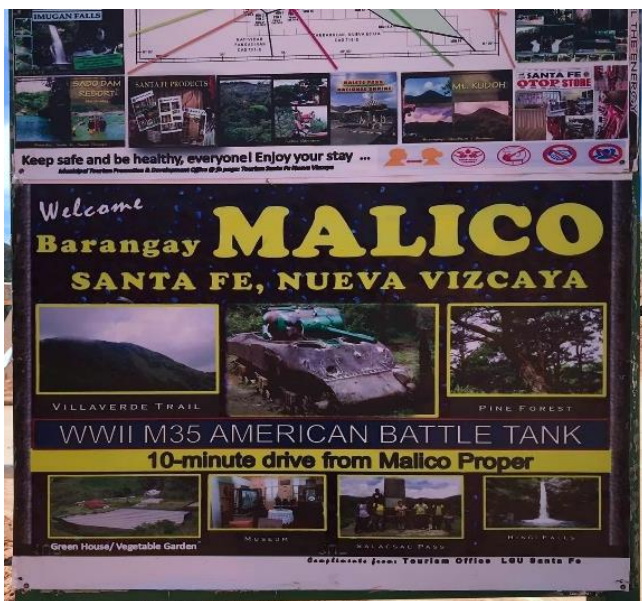
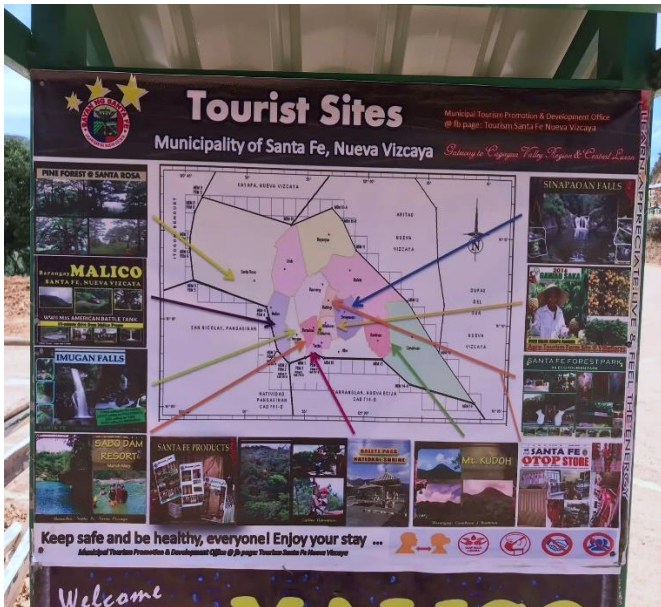
This study shows that Malico, Santa Fe has much potential to create an effective performing tourism destination that mitigates negative effects while fostering good ones, like promoting cultural interaction and preserving local traditions. Community living conditions are given the same emphasis as the growth of tourism to maintain social and cultural sustainability in the area.

Figure 15 Salacsac Pass



Malico is a historical location as well, that's why this attraction has its historical importance and tourists come to it. The figure was the scene of a major battle between American and Japanese forces during World War II. The Salacsac Pass is the current name of the site. In honor of the fallen soldiers, a monument currently stands on the highest ridge.

Figures 16 Information material



The figures above are the information material provided to tourists or visitors in Malico. The information was developed by the host community with collaborative efforts of the tourism officers in Sta. Fe, and is clearly guide tourists and residents on its cultural aspect.

Figure 17 Hunting spear



Figure 18 Akbot



The figures above are the artifacts of Malico. The left figure is a hunting spear was used for hunting wild boar and deer. The wings that protruded from the base on either side were designed to check the forward motion of a charging animal and keep it at a safe distance from a person pursuing the animal. The right figure is an “akbot”, a backpack made of animal hide (deer or goat skin). Men use the dried skin of animals to store food when they hunt or go to work.

Table 9 Summary Table of the Three Dimensions of Sustainability

Dimension	N	Mean	SD	QD
Mean for Economic Sustainability	20	4.13	0.661	Performed
Mean for Environmental Sustainability	20	4.11	0.540	Performed
Mean for Socio-cultural Sustainability	20	4.11	0.633	Performed

Table 9 shows the summary results of the current status of Malico as as a sustainable performing tourism destination in terms of the three dimensions.

Section 3: Recommendations for Malico, Sta Fe. as a Sustainable Tourism Destination

Following the tally of the respondents’ responses, the answers were divided into various groups following the study’s objective. The 20 respondents answered the survey questionnaires collectively in a group setting. In the area of economic sustainability, the respondents’ positive assessments indicate that Malico, Nueva Vizcaya, should keep enhancing and developing its tourist attractions to draw more tourists, increase revenue, and possibly open up opportunities for the development of goods/products that enhance both the visitor experience and the uniqueness of the area as a whole. In terms of environmental sustainability, it is mentioned that tourists should observe the cleanliness of the tourist spots to help create a positive first impression, which suggests that matters will be handled professionally and that the tourist attractions are being cared for and kept in excellent condition. Also, respondents recommend preserving the natural resources. Regarding socio-cultural sustainability, some indicated unity and cooperation, especially barangay councils, as they help unite the local tourism industry into a unified group that fosters the area’s development and the community’s growth. Others indicated enriching the cultural traditions as it keeps our integrity as a people by protecting our natural resources and cultural traditions, respecting tourism and tourists because, regardless of your own ideas, we willingly enter each new location you visit and its

cultures and traditions, and these cultures and traditions frequently play a significant role in the lives of the tourists, and practicing discipline if visiting the tourist attractions.

Implementing sustainability can enhance tourism's positive impacts while reducing its negative impact on tourist attractions. As the area grows over the coming years, the current tourism practices that damaged the environment, local communities, and the planet's natural resources will no longer be able to support them. Making the long-term viability of travel is the foremost objective associated with sustainable travel-achieved using educating people and behavioral changes. Moreover, sustainable tourism seeks to provide financial and social support to areas of need, fostering greater mutually beneficial "give and take" action or reciprocity (Revfine, 2021).

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