

Agri-Tourism Destinations in the Province of Iloilo: The Quality of Tourism Experience and Competitiveness

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ABSTRACT

This study is a survey-correlational research aimed to determine the relationship between quality of tourism experience and competitiveness of agri-tourism destinations in the Province of Iloilo. This study was conducted among the 397 local visitors who presently visited the DOT accredited agri-tourism destinations in the Province of Iloilo. These destinations has a DOT accreditation from the year 2022-2025. The validated and reliability-tested survey questionnaires developed by the researcher were used to collect the data. Data analysis was done using frequency count, percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, Pearson's r, point-biserial correlation, eta correlation, and one-way ANOVA all set at 5% level of significance. Results revealed that local visitors assessed the quality of tourism experience as very good and in terms of pre-trip planning phase and en-route phase. Excellent tourism experience was revealed in terms of destination on-site phase and after trip phase. Local visitors rated the competitiveness as extremely competitive regarding the environment and strategies, and highly competitive when it comes to resources and attractions. In addition, quality of tourism experience and competitiveness across all categories revealed a negative and significant relationship when grouped according to age and marital status. For the quality of tourism experience, when grouped according to place of residence and educational attainment in terms of the pre-trip planning phase, significant relationship existed. Positive and significant relationship existed between the quality of tourism experience and competitiveness of agri-tourism destinations across all categories wherein visitors exceptional experiences positively influences perceptions of destination competitiveness.

Keywords: Agri-tourism destination, quality of tourism experience, competitiveness

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has been acknowledged as one of the fastest growing sectors in the world for the past decade. It is growing and people have more discretionary income to spend on travel and tourism plans (Kumar & Dhir, 2020). Agritourism, as a specialized niche in the broader tourism industry is likewise growing rapidly. It blends tourism and agriculture, allowing visitors to experience farm life and participate in agricultural activities. Consequently, it gives farmers and their communities livelihood income and helps the local economy grow and sustain. As such, the community that are involved in agritourism are thought to have the potential to create a food system that enhance and protects the region's economic growth. Agritourism attractions are important and can benefit both developed and developing countries.

Lamie, et. al. (2021) further explained that Agritourism, also known as farm tourism, involves people visiting farms and rural areas to participate in farming activities. It offers a wide range of experiences, from selling produce in shops to personalized activities like farm tours, wine tasting seminars, or even staying overnight in farmhouses. Agritourism helps increase income and supports sustainable local development (Streifeneder, 2016; Chiodo, Fantini, et al., 2019). As travelers increasingly seek authentic and personalized experiences, they look to connect with environment, local cultures, and communities (Palmi and Lezzi, 2020), driving the demand for authenticity (Andéhn and L'Espoir Decosta, 2021; Martinus et al., 2024). This growing interest has also led to a significant rise in agritourism farms across Europe in recent years (Streifeneder and Dax, 2020). For example, in Italy, over 25,000 working farms offered agritourism services in 2021, a 40% increase since 2007

(Agritourism census, ISTAT, 2022). Globally, the agritourism market was valued at nearly USD 6 billion in 2021 and is expected to grow at an average annual rate of 11% through 2030 (Grand View Research, 2022).

The National Agriculture Law Center stressed that agritourism is a unique way to link tourism and agriculture industries that allows tourists, suppliers, and communities to benefit in financial, educational, and social aspects. Agri-tourism lets suppliers make money through marketing and selling of their goods directly to customers. It helps the tourism industry by bringing more tourists and motivating them stay longer at the destination. Agri-tourism also teaches people, helps to protect farmland, and build businesses. Republic Act 10816, or the Farm Tourism Development Act of 2016, plays a crucial role in shaping the visitor experience and enhancing the competitiveness of agritourism destinations in the Philippines. By providing a legal framework that supports the development and promotion of farm tourism, the Act ensures that visitors receive authentic, educational, and immersive experiences that deepen their connection to rural life and agriculture. These experiences include farm tours, hands-on agricultural activities, local food tasting, and cultural interactions, all of which contribute to visitor satisfaction and loyalty.

Moreover, with the passage of RA 10816, it enhances destination competitiveness by standardizing quality through accreditation, building capacity among farmers and tourism operators, improving infrastructure, and supporting marketing efforts. These initiatives help agritourism sites differentiate themselves in a competitive tourism market, attract more visitors, and encourage repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth. Also, Yamagishi et al., (2024) and Salarda (2021) explained that the Act's emphasis on entrepreneurship, training, and sustainable practices is vital for overcoming challenges faced by farm tourism operators, such as limited skills and capital. By fostering a supportive environment, RA 10816 not only benefits visitors but also empowers local communities, contributing to sustainable rural development and economic diversification.

According to Darroca (2020), the nation is formulating a tourist development strategy that mandates each town to construct a minimum of one farm tourism destination. The concept seems quite feasible and appealing, particularly as this alternative tourism activity offers equally enticing amenities that enhance the sand and beach experiences. Western Visayas, designated as the agricultural capital of the south, is a region that promotes farm or agri-tourism. Agricultural tourism draws visitors to rural communities for educational and leisure activities that stimulate economic development. Recent initiatives in Western Visayas focus on promoting agrobiodiversity and sustainable rural tourism.

Marin (2016) also explained that the Iloilo Provincial Tourism Office wants farm or agri-tourism in the countryside to be a major attraction for visitors as the province grows its tourism market. An agricultural-tourism-circuit was recently launched and special tour packages for visitors are now being planned. Evidently, the province is geared towards agri-tourism and the tourism office will be working with local government units to develop potential sites. This will be possible if these agri-tourism destinations will be known through its competitiveness and provides visitors a total experience.

As a result, the competitiveness of agritourism destinations is connected to the quality of the tourist experience. Agri-tourism is a possible place for tourists to go, and it will show how competitive they are as a new "sunshine industry" in the Province. This opportunity creates a new way for farmers to make money and for tourists to have fun on vacation. This is especially true since the province's economy is based on agriculture, and it will help us learn more about the different ways that tourists can enjoy agritourism attractions. The results of this study will help agritourism managers and farmers make plans to make their agritourism more appealing by making the visitor experience better. There is a necessity for further research due to the scarcity of studies on agri-tourism; hence, this study will determine the relationship between quality of tourism experience and competitiveness of agri-tourism destinations in the Province of Iloilo.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to determine the quality of tourism experience and competitiveness of agri-tourism destinations in the Province of Iloilo.

Specifically, it aims to:

1. determine the profile of the respondents in terms of sex, age, marital status, educational attainment, average monthly income, place of residence, and type of visitor.
2. determine the quality of tourism experience in agri-tourism destinations in terms of pre-trip planning phase, en-route phase, destination on-site phase, after trip phase.
3. determine the competitiveness of agri-tourism destinations in terms of resources and attraction, environment, and strategies.
4. determine the relationship between the quality of tourism experience in terms of pre-trip planning phase, en-route phase, destination on-site phase, after trip phase and personal factors when respondents are grouped according to sex, age, marital status, educational attainment, average monthly income, place of residence, and type of visitor.
5. determine the relationship between the competitiveness of agri-tourism destinations in terms of resources and attraction, environment, and strategies and personal factors when respondents are grouped according to sex, age, marital status, educational attainment, average monthly income, place of residence, and type of visitor.
6. determine the relationship between the quality of tourism experience in terms of pre-trip planning phase, en-route phase, destination on-site phase, after trip phase and the competitiveness of agri-tourism destinations in terms of resources and attraction, environment, and strategies.

Hypotheses

1. There are no significant relationship between the quality of tourism experience in terms of pre-trip planning phase, en-route phase, destination on-site phase, after trip phase and personal factors when respondents are grouped according to sex, age, marital status, educational attainment, average monthly income, place of residence, and type of visitor.
2. There are no significant relationship between the competitiveness of agri-tourism destinations in terms of resources and attraction, environment, and strategies and personal factors when respondents are grouped according to sex, age, marital status, educational attainment, average monthly income, place of residence, and type of visitor.
3. There are no significant relationship between the quality of tourism experience in terms of pre-trip planning phase, en-route phase, destination on-site phase, after trip phase and the competitiveness of agri-tourism destinations in terms of resources and attraction, environment, and strategies.

Theoretical Framework

The ambiguous definition of the term "tourism experience," and the many ways to measure it, have shown in the literature on leisure and tourism. A major part of the assessment is looking at the several stages of the tourist experience including before, during, and after the trip in terms of time and order, as Neal, Sirgy, and Uysal (2004) did.

This research will employ the three-stage model of service consumption, which identifies three key phases customers experience: the pre-purchase stage, the service encounter stage, and the post-encounter stage, as outlined by Lovelock and Wirtz (2011). In the search phase, tourists create their shortlist, gather information about important service features, and set expectations about how well each option will meet those features (Lovelock and Wirtz 2011). Multi-attribute models are widely used to mimic how consumers make decisions. These models show that visitors assess and compare different places based on service criteria they find important, like quality, price, and ease of use. Each attribute is given a weight depending on its importance.

This study used the Destination Competitiveness Integrated Model (IM) created by Dwyer and Kim (2003), which blends elements from Porter's (1990) "diamond" framework and Ritchie and Crouch's (1993) "Calgary Model of Competitiveness." According to Dwyer and Kim, four main factors shape a destination's

competitiveness: resources, tourism destination management, situational variables, and demand conditions. The resources factor covers what makes a place appealing to visitors. Situational variables include external influences like politics, economics, and technology that impact a destination's competitiveness. Destination management involves two key players: the tourism industry and the government. Demand conditions focus on three key aspects: identity, perception, and preferences. Dwyer and Kim (2003) argue that these dimensions of tourism destination competitiveness come from discussions with those who have experience in the field. Since tourists ultimately decide where to go, this model will be evaluated based on their choices.

One relevant theory is the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991), which explains how consumers' intentions to engage in a behavior (such as visiting or revisiting an agritourism destination) are influenced by their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In agritourism, the quality of the visitor experience shapes their attitudes and intentions, which directly impacts the destination's competitiveness by fostering loyalty and positive word-of-mouth.

Positive experiences during agritourism visits, such as engaging with farm activities, learning about sustainable agriculture, or enjoying local food, foster favorable attitudes toward the destination. These positive attitudes increase the likelihood of repeat visits and recommendations. Social influences, including recommendations from family, friends, or community members, play a significant role in shaping visitors' intentions. If agritourism is valued within a social group, individuals are more likely to participate. This refers to the perceived ease or difficulty of visiting an agritourism site, including factors like accessibility, cost, and personal ability. Higher perceived control enhances the intention to engage in agritourism activities.

The relationship between the needs and resources shows that visitors travel or go on vacation because of the different motivations of travelers and the traits of the places they visit. Vacationers look for a place to go that has a better quality of tourism experience during the planning stage of their trip. How they plan their travel and where they stay will affect their overall experience as a tourist. Tourists need good tourism goods and services while they are traveling and staying at their destination. This affects how they rate the whole experience and how they see the place after they leave. Also, a tourist destination must focus on its competitive advantages in tourism resources to be more competitive than other places. The competitiveness of a destination and how it compares to its competitors depend on how many destination attributes are available. This study will evaluate the relationship between visitors' quality of experience and exchange dynamics in their agri-tourism destinations interactions. This study will examine the correlation between the visitor's quality of the tourism experience and destination competitiveness, and its effect on visitors' intentions to revisit the farm.

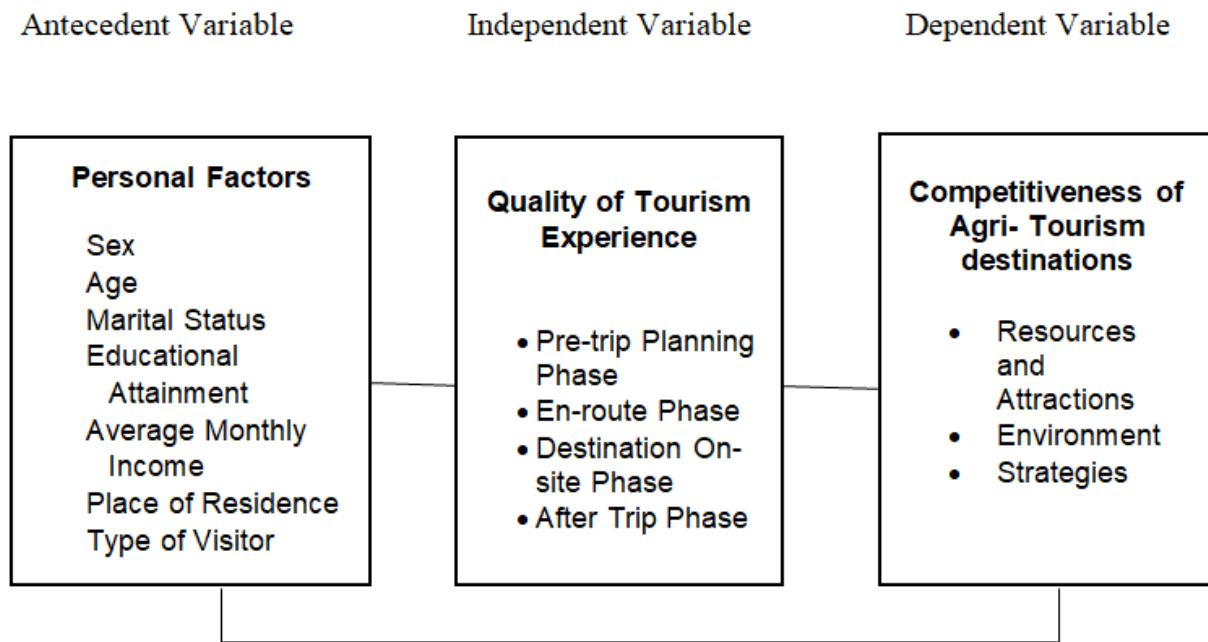
Conceptual Framework

To obtain conceptual background for this study, the researcher reviewed existing theories that might be useful in determining the quality of tourism experience and competitiveness of agri-tourism destinations in the Province of Iloilo.

This study assumes that various tourist profiles—including gender, age, marital status, education, income, residence, and visitor type—influence their perceptions of agri-tourism competitiveness. It posits that these factors affect the quality of tourism experiences and, consequently, the perceived competitiveness of destinations. Additionally, the study assumes a positive correlation between the quality of tourism experiences and competitiveness perceptions, with different phases of the tourism journey (pre-planning to post-trip) also playing a role in shaping these perceptions.

These possible relationships and differences are summarized by the following schematic diagram:

Figure 1 Agri-Tourism Destinations In The Province Of Iloilo: The Quality Of Tourism Experience And Competitiveness



Definition of Terms

For better understanding of the terms used in this study, the operational definitions are hereby given.

Age. Age referred to the number of years a person has lived, marking the time from birth to death. While age is a straightforward measure, it also carries personal and social meanings that can vary depending on context (Statistics Canada, 2024). In this study, these are the actual age of respondent on his or her last birthday.

Agri-tourism Destinations. Agritourism, which combines agriculture and tourism, has become a powerful force driving economic growth and rural development across many regions worldwide. It's gained popularity as a way to diversify rural economies, promote sustainable farming practices, and offer tourists unique, authentic experiences that connect them with rural life (Arru et al., 2021). In this study, it referred to those recreation-related enterprises incorporated into the activities of a working farm or other settings for tourism purposes. These will include DOT accredited agri-tourism destinations in the Province of Iloilo from 2022 to 2025.

Educational attainment. Referred to the level of education that an individual has completed (Kannan Subramaniam, 2020). In this study, the term referred to the highest level of education completed by the respondent if they are a high school graduate, college level, college graduate, and post-graduate studies.

Marital status. Marital status refers to an individual's legal relationship status according to the marriage laws or customs of their country (Central Statistics Office, 2025). In this study, this status indicates whether the respondents is married or single.

Monthly Income. Income is the remuneration obtained in return for one's work or goods. The interpretation of income can vary depending on the circumstances, such as taxation, financial reporting, or economic assessment. (Scott, 2023). In this study, this refers to average monthly income the tourist receives.

Place of Residence. It refers to the location where an individual resides at any given point in time (MCHP, 2015). In this study, this is where the tourists reside in the Province of Iloilo and classified to first, second, third, fourth, and fifth districts.

Province of Iloilo. Iloilo is a province located in the center of the Philippines archipelago, covering the southeastern part of Panay Island with the island province of Guimaras situated just offshore. Iloilo City, known

as the "Heart of the Philippines," is a major urban center and the capital of Iloilo province (Iloilo Provincial Government, 2021). In this study, this refers to the research locale and where you can find these DOT accredited agri-tourism destinations.

Sex. The concept of sex pertains to the biological variances observed among individuals categorized as male, female, or intersex. An individual sex is generally determined at birth through the analysis of physiological attributes, such as genitalia and chromosomal makeup (Newman, 2023). In this study, this refers to respondent biological status which is either male or female.

Type of Visitor. Tourist typologies are descriptions of specific types of consumer behavior shown by tourists. They represent the many travel styles, interests, and motives of tourist visitors. (Żegleń & Grzywacz, 2016). In this study, this refers to the tourists' length of stay in these identified agri-tourism destinations in the Province of Iloilo classified to tourist (stays more than 24 hours) and excursionist (stays less than 24 hours).

Quality of Tourism Experience

Quality of tourism experience. It refers to a broad range of perspectives over service quality. The term is often linked to the importance of product quality, exploring how quality relates to customer satisfaction and environmental concerns across various settings (Jennings et al., 2009). In this study, it refers to the tourists' perception of the degree of quality of their tourism experience on the selected DOT accredited agri-tourism destination in terms of pre-trip planning phase, en-route phase, destination on-site phase, and after-trip phase. There were 31 questions that assessed the quality of tourism experience and used a 5-point Likert scale with mean score and interpretation ranging from excellent tourism experience if it scored 4.21-5.00, very good tourism experience if the mean score is 3.41-4.20, good tourism experience if its score 2.61-3.40, fair tourism experience if the score is from 1.81-2.60 and poor tourism experience if from 1.00-1.80.

Pre-trip Planning Phase. The pre-trip planning phase refers to the preparatory stage before the actual journey begins, involving activities such as itinerary preparation, resource gathering, and decision-making to ensure a smooth travel experience. (Wisdom Library, 2021). In this study, this phase is refers to the completion of all planning activities including accessing information of different agritourism destinations, booking arrangements, and resource allocation prior to the start of the trip.

En-route Phase. The en-route phase is the segment of the travel occurring between departure and arrival, characterized by the actual transit from origin going to the destination. It involves navigation, keeping on track, and managing travel conditions during the trip (Aviation File, 2021). In this study, this involves all activities related to transit such as accessibility, availability of transportation, comfort and visibility of signages that visitors experience going to the destination.

Destination On-site Phase. The destination on-site phase encompasses the period when the traveler has arrived at the destination, engaging in activities and products offered. It focuses on the entire experience and management of the destination environment (Studocu, 2021). In this study, this phase is wherein the visitors availed the products, facilities, amenities, food and beverage services, and experience hospitality and safety on their entire stay.

After trip Phase. The after trip phase refers to the period following the post-trip, including activities such as reflection, sharing experiences, and evaluating their experiences. It is important provide feedback for the future travel planning (Aviation File, 2021). In this study, this phase begins once the traveler completed their travel journey and provides assessment or feedback on the destination they have visited.

Competitiveness

Competitiveness. Derived from the Latin word "competer," meaning engagement in business rivalry for markets (Happ, E. 2021). In this study, it refers to the destination's ability and supremacy in its performance with regard to offering quality tourism experience competitively and categorized to resources and attractions, environment, and strategies. There were 26 questions that assessed the competitiveness and used a 5-point Likert scale with

mean score and interpretation as extremely competitive if it scored 4.21-5.00, highly competitive if the mean score is 3.41-4.20, somewhat competitive if its score 2.61-3.40, fairly competitive if the score is from 1.81-2.60 and not at all competitive if from 1.00-1.80.

Resources and Attractions. This dimension encompasses the natural, human, and infrastructural assets that add to the attractiveness and productive capacity of a destination (Smith & Lee, 2021). In this study, it is measured by the availability of the natural and human resources, facilities, infrastructure, agri-trainings, and attractions they can find in the agri-tourism destination.

Environment. Refers to the regulatory, economic, and socio-cultural conditions that influence the competitive scenery and operational sustainability (Johnson & Wang, 2021). In this study, it refers to the general condition of the agri destination that could prolong their stay, the safety and security, and availability of products and services that increase their spending.

Strategies. Involves the planning, innovation, and operational plans of that organizations use to gain and sustain competitive advantage (Garcia & Patel, 2021). In this study, it refers to the approaches used by the agri-tourism destination to provide an overall experience with their visitors and their sustainable practices.

Significance of the Study

The results of the study may be beneficial to certain groups of people in the subsequent context:

Agri-tourism Operators. The results of this study may help improve their agri-tourism destination and contribute to the socio-economic status of the local community. By understanding visitor preferences and expectations, operators can tailor their services and offerings to enhance visitor satisfaction and increase repeat visits, ultimately boosting their income and business sustainability.

Agri-tourism Employees. The results of this study may be used to provide more agri-tourism activities to visitors. This will benefit employees by creating more diverse job opportunities, enhancing their skills, and increasing their engagement with visitors, which can lead to improved service quality and job satisfaction.

Provincial Tourism Officer. The findings of this study will be beneficial to formulate plans and programs for the development and promotion of agri-tourism within the Province of Iloilo. This will help officers design targeted marketing strategies and sustainable tourism policies that attract more visitors while preserving local culture and environment.

Municipal Tourism Officer. The results of this study may be used to develop, improve and promote the agri-tourist site to increase visitors' arrivals and promote employment opportunities in the municipality. This can lead to economic growth at the local level and improved infrastructure and services that benefit both tourists and residents.

Tourists. This study may widen the knowledge of tourists on agri-tourism and may encourage them to continue to visit and promote the destination. Increased awareness can enhance their appreciation of agricultural practices and rural life, enriching their travel experience.

Local community. The results of this study may contribute to the socio-economic welfare of the locality with agri-tourism and disseminate the value of agriculture to sustain and enhance human life. This can foster community pride, encourage local participation in tourism activities, and support sustainable development initiatives.

Future researchers. The results of this study may provide insights to future researchers who wish used this as their reference for their future research undertaking.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study aimed to determine the relationship between quality of tourism experience and competitiveness of agri-tourism destinations in the Province of Iloilo.

This study was conducted among the local visitors who have presently visited the selected nine DOT accredited agri-tourism destinations from in the Province of Iloilo. This study focused on the respondents' assessment who have visited at least three of the agri-tourism destinations in the Province of Iloilo. These destinations has a DOT accreditation from the year 2022-2025. The duration of the study started in June 2022 until April of 2026.

A quantitative methodology, specifically descriptive-correlational research was used. A one-shot survey research design was employed. This study used a simple random sampling method and utilized a researcher-made data gathering instrument.

The respondents of this study were 397 local visitors that were randomly selected based on the total number of tourists visited these agri-tourism destinations. The sample size then was divided to nine DOT-accredited agri-tourism destinations. The researcher count and assign number to the tourists visiting these destinations over a specified period. Then, the researcher draw lots or use the wheel of names in picking the respondents based on the desired number for each site where every member of a population has an equal, independent chance of being selected, ensuring an unbiased, representative sample.

Frequency count, percentage analysis, mean, and standard deviation will be employed in the descriptive analysis. For the inferential analysis data, it will use Pearson's r , point-biserial correlation, eta correlation, and one-way ANOVA all set at .05 alpha level.

METHODOLOGY

This Chapter presents the research design, participants of the study, research instrument, and the procedures for data gathering, data processing, and data analysis.

Research Design

This study determined the quality of tourism experience and competitiveness of agri-tourism destinations in the Province of Iloilo as assessed among the local visitors.

This study used a quantitative research design that aimed to quantify the data and generalize findings from a sample of a study from varied perspectives. This method is one of the easiest and most common ways to collect data because it ensures a fair representation of the group (Ghanad, 2023). In this study, local visitors were selected randomly and assessed the competitiveness of agri-tourism destinations and their quality of tourism experience.

A survey-correlational method of research was employed in this study. These methods combined both descriptive and correlational designs.

The purpose of descriptive-correlational research was to clarify the understanding of important phenomena by identifying relationships among variables. Data are gathered from multiple variables, and correlational statistical techniques are then applied to the data. A correlational design was employed to investigate the associations between multiple variables within a single group, manifesting across various levels. This non- experimental design focused on analyzing the connections between two or more variables (Devi B. & Lepcha N., 2023). This determined the demographics of the local visitors and their evaluations towards the DOT-accredited agri-tourism destinations in the Province of Iloilo. The researcher also explored whether significant relationships existed in the assessment of quality of tourism experiences in terms of pre-planning phase, en-route phase, destination on-site phase and after trip phase and competitiveness in terms of resources and attractions, environment, and strategies grouped according to sex, age, marital status, educational attainment, average monthly income, place of residence, and type of visitor.

Participants of the Study

The respondents of this study were 397 local visitors who have presently visited the selected nine DOT accredited agri- tourism destinations from the Province of Iloilo. These destinations has a DOT accreditation from the year 2022-2025. The duration of the study started in June 2022 until April of 2026.

The number of tourists was taken from those who have visited the identified agri-tourism destinations. After identifying the total number, it was computed to get the desired sample size. The sample size then was divided to nine DOT-accredited agri-tourism destinations. The researcher count and assign number to the tourists visiting these destinations over a specified period. Then, the researcher draw lots or used the wheel of names in picking the respondents based on the desired number for each site.

This study employed simple random sampling to selected participants. Simple random sampling is a method where every member of a population has an equal opportunity to be chosen through a fair and unbiased process. During a specified timeframe, each participant was given an assigned number, and samples are randomly selected until the required number of respondents for each agri-tourism destination was reached. This approach is one of the most straightforward and widely used techniques for data collection, as it ensures an impartial representation of the group. The randomly chosen subset reflects the characteristics of the entire population. The purpose of simple random sampling is to form a manageable and balanced group that accurately represents a larger population, which might otherwise be difficult to sample. (Simkus, 2023).

Table 1 Number of Participants per DOT-accredited Agri-tourism Destination for the year 2022-2025

Farm	<i>N</i>	%	<i>n</i>
1	2,668	5%	18
2	8,051	14%	55
3	15,437	27%	106
4	483	1%	3
5	1,874	3%	13
6	6,444	11%	44
7	427	1%	3
8	21,630	37%	149
9	810	1%	6
Total	57,823	100%	397

Research Instrument

This study used a researcher-made data-gathering instruments. Each instrument is made up of two parts. Part I-A - pertains to the screening question of the researcher to determine if the data gathered from the tourist can be used in the study. Part I-B of the research instrument will be about the tourists socio-demographics, namely: sex, age, status, educational attainment, average monthly income, place of residence and type of visitor.

In the second part of the questionnaire proper, part II-A Quality of Tourism Experience, this researcher-made questionnaire is composed of 31 questions that determined the quality of tourism experience on selected agri-tourism destinations in the Province of Iloilo.

Part II-B, Destination Competitiveness survey questionnaire, consists of items to find out the competitiveness of agri-tourism destinations in the Province of Iloilo. This researcher-made questionnaire is composed of 26 questions that determined the competitiveness on selected agri-tourism destinations in the Province of Iloilo.

The researcher used a five-point Likert scale and the participants were given five (5) choices that will range from 1 as strongly disagree and 5 as strongly agree.

Validity of the Questionnaire

A researcher-made data-gathering instruments were initially crafted. To validate the survey questionnaire's accuracy, the researcher needed additional authentication from the Research Adviser and three validators. The researcher send a letter of request for validators, together with the validation form. As noted by Nikolopoulou (2022), content validity is a vital role in confirming that the instrument effectively reflects the intended concept or construct. By assessing the inclusion of all pertinent elements, researchers can trust that the instrument measures what it is meant to, thereby improving the reliability and validity of the research outcomes and resulting in more significant conclusions.

Reliability of the Questionnaire

To determine if the research methods of this study produced reliable results, the researcher assessed the reliability of the data-gathering instrument. This means that the questionnaire was pretested to thirty (30) randomly selected participants. To further measure the reliability of the questionnaire, the Chronbach alpha was used. The questionnaire will be considered valid if the reliability coefficient is between .70 to 1.0 (Franekel & Wallen, 2010).

The pilot testing was conducted in the DOT accredited agri-tourism destinations in the Province of Guimaras to know the reliability and importance of the given data-gathering instruments. The proposed respondents to participate in the pilot testing was no longer be included in the final survey. The researcher sees to it to provide an Informed Consent Form (ICF) from the respondents to participate in the study.

The results revealed that the rating scales for quality of tourism experience and competitiveness were reliable with the alpha coefficients of .982, and .975, respectively. The reliability coefficients for each subscale of the rating scales were also determined and the reliability coefficients for the subscale were higher than 0.70 (see Appendix F).

Ethical Considerations

In securing the ethical and technical components of this research endeavor, the following were observed.

Informed Consent Process. To assess the ethical and technical dimensions of the study, the researcher will formally request approval from the Research Ethics Review Board (CPU-RERB) of Central Philippine University. The researcher will also seek permission from relevant government agencies concerned prior to the conduct of the study. Prior to the giving of the survey questionnaires, the researcher will discuss the information sheet and consent form. Once the information sheet and consent form were filled out, the researcher will conduct the actual study. The respondents will be given an ample time to fill out the questionnaire. The researcher is available to clarify any questions if needed during the survey. After the respondents completed the survey, the researcher will collect the questionnaire.

Risk Assessment. The researcher has identified only a negligible to low risk in the conduct of the study. The study will only determine the tourists assessment on the quality of tourism experience and destination competitiveness of agri-tourism sites in the Province of Iloilo. The respondents has the right to decline to answer any questions, and the researcher will respect their decision.

Benefits Assessment. The study's finding will have potential benefits for various stakeholders. The study will help Agri-tourism operator improve their agri-tourism destination and contribute to the socio-economic status of the local community. The Agri-tourism employees will ought to provide more agri-tourism activities to

visitors. The findings of this study may benefit the Provincial Tourism Officer and can use these to formulate plans and programs for the development and promotion of agri-tourism within the Province of Iloilo. The findings of the study will help Municipal Tourism Officer to develop, improve and promote the agri-tourist site to increase visitors' arrivals and increase the employment opportunities in the municipality. The tourists may widen the knowledge of tourists on agri-tourism and may continue to visit and promote the destination. The Local community wherein the results of this study may contribute to the socio-economic welfare of the locality with agri-tourism and disseminate the value of agriculture to sustain and enhance human life.

Withdrawal of participants/ respondents from the study. Any participant is free to leave the study at any point during the conduct of the survey if he or she is feel uncomfortable. In this case, the data gathered from the withdrawn respondent will not be included.

Anonymity and Confidentiality of Participants/Respondents. The respondents' names and personal records that will be shared will be kept in utmost confidential. To ensure the confidentiality and security of the information, the data shall be anonymized. All information gathered will be kept confidential and will be stored in a secure location, such as password-protected folders on a computer or locked storage spaces.

Voluntary, non-coercive recruitment of participant/respondents. Participation in the study is voluntary, and if respondents decide to discontinue their involvement, they are free to withdraw and no penalties are imposed.

Disclosure or declaration of potential of conflict of interest. In the course of doing this work, the researcher declares no apparent conflict of interest, which means that the researcher has no personal, financial, or professional interests that could influence or bias the research outcomes. It assures that the study is conducted objectively and without external influences that could affect the results.

Contribution to local capacity building and benefits to local communities. The agri-tourism destinations will improve their facilities, amenities, management, services and enhance their offered agri-tourism activities to visitors for a quality tourism experience. It will promote the significance of agriculture to sustain and improve human life. Government authorities can devise strategies and initiatives for the advancement and promotion of agri-tourism in the Province of Iloilo. It will boost visitor arrivals and expand employment opportunities within the Province. The greater possibility of sustainable tourists experience that may enhance their understanding of agri-tourism and may persist in visiting and promoting the destination.

Incentives/tokens/compensation for participants/respondents. The researcher will not give any tokens or incentives to the respondents.

Disposal of research materials/data. When the study's finding have been made public, the research materials will be shredded.

Dissemination Plan. The research report will be presented to the panel of experts or to any colloquium, local, national, or international, or may be published in a respectable journal. As to the respondents, they will be informed that the research findings will be shared more broadly through publications and conferences.

Data-gathering Procedure

Researcher-made survey questionnaires was used to collect data on the competitiveness and quality of tourism experiences of local visitors on the agri-tourism destinations in the Province of Iloilo.

The researcher obtained an approval letter from the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies and Research Ethics Review Board (RERB) committee before starting a study, ensuring it aligns with the university's academic standards and ethical principles like informed consent and confidentiality.

The researcher also collaborated with the Provincial Tourism Office to obtained the list of DOT-accredited agri-tourism destinations in the Province of Iloilo. Letters of requests, scheduled visits, and coordination with management to gather data was given to participating destinations.

Before the data collection, the researcher finalized and prepared the research instruments for the survey. The questionnaire was designed based on the objectives of the study and reviewed by experts and assigned adviser to ensure its validity and clarity. It was pre-tested on a small sample size to assess the effectiveness of the questions and to make any necessary adjustments.

Prior to distribution, the researcher coordinated with the management of these identified DOT-accredited agri-tourism destinations in the Province of Iloilo. This involved setting appointments to distribute the questionnaires to the respondents during their operation and making sure it will not hinder their business.

On the day of distribution, the researcher met the participants and gave a brief introduction of the study and oriented them on the informed consent. The researcher explained the purpose of the survey, emphasizing its voluntary nature, and hand out the informed consent forms. The participants were asked to read and sign the consent forms before completing the questionnaire.

The questionnaires were distributed to the participants within the agri-tourism destinations. The researcher ensured that the participants have ample time to fill out the forms. In this time, the researcher is readily available to clarify any questions or aid if needed.

After the respondents have completed the questionnaire, the researcher collected the forms on-site, ensuring that all responses are gathered in a timely and organized manner. If any questionnaires were incomplete or unclear, the researcher will follow up with the participants to resolve any issues.

The researcher maintained a record of distributed and collected questionnaires to ensure that no responses are missed. Any unreturned questionnaires will be followed up on, and replacements will be distributed if necessary.

All completed questionnaires will be securely stored to maintain confidentiality and privacy of respondents. Only the researcher and authorized personnel have access to the collected data.

Data Processing Procedure

After all the questionnaires were retrieved, it was checked to ensure completeness of the responses. The data gathered were coded, tabulated, and encoded in the computer and processed and analyzed using the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

Data- Analysis Procedure

To determine the competitiveness and quality of tourism experiences of local visitors in the agri-tourism destinations in the Province of Iloilo, the underlying statistical tools were used in the interpretation and data analysis:

Descriptive Statistics

Mean, frequency count, percentage analysis, standard deviation were used for descriptive analysis.

Mean. The mean was used to determine the quality of tourism experience and competitiveness of agri-destinations in the Province of Iloilo as assessed by the tourists.

Frequency count. Frequency count determined the total number of the respondents in the study that have been classified by according to different factors.

Percentage analysis. Percentage analysis was employed to determine the ratio of the subjects who responded to the items and to the total number of respondents.

Standard deviation. Standard deviation was used to determine homogeneity and heterogeneity of the scores.

Inferential Statistics

Pearson's r , point-biserial correlation, eta correlation, and one-way ANOVA all set at .05 alpha level were used for the inferential analysis.

Pearson's r . Pearson's product moment of coefficient correlation (Pearson's r) was used to determine whether or not there are significant relationships on the quality of tourism experience in terms of pre-trip planning phases, en-route phase, destination on-site phase and after trip phase and competitiveness in terms of resources and attractions, environment, and strategies of agri-destinations in the Province of Iloilo as assessed by the tourists.

Point-Biserial correlation. Point-Biserial correlation was used to determine the relationship between sex and marital status to the quality of tourism experience and competitiveness. This is technically a correlation coefficient used when one variable is continuous and the other is binary (a form of nominal data). It is a special case of the Pearson correlation.

eta correlation. eta correlation was used to determine the relationship between educational attainment and place of residence to the to the quality of tourism experience and competitiveness. The nominal variable with three or more categories and the continuous variable was assessed using eta (η). One way ANOVA (one factor ANOVA) tests was used to test whether the observed association was statistically significant.

The .05 alpha level was set as the basis whether or not to reject null hypothesis.

Table 2 Description Rating Scale for Quality of Tourism Experience

Rating Scale	Mean Score Range Interval	Descriptive Level	Interpretation
5	4.21-5.00	Excellent tourism experience	The participant conforms to a great extent that the agri-tourism destinations offers quality of tourism experience from pre-trip planning, enroute, onsite, and after trip phase.
4	3.41-4.20	Very good tourism experience	The participant conforms that the agri-tourism destinations offers quality of tourism experience from pre-trip planning, enroute, onsite, and after trip phase.
3	2.61-3.40	Good tourism experience	The participant slightly conforms that the agri-tourism destinations offers quality of tourism experience from pre-trip planning, enroute, onsite, and after trip phase.
2	1.81-2.60	Fair tourism experience	The participant dissents with that the agri-tourism destinations offers quality of tourism experience from pre-trip planning, enroute, onsite, and after trip phase.
1	1.00-1.80	Poor tourism experience	The participant dissents to a great extent that the agri-tourism destinations offers quality of tourism experience from pre-trip planning, enroute, onsite, and after trip phase.

Table 3 Description Rating Scale for Destination Competitiveness

Rating Scale	Mean Score Range Interval	Descriptive Level	Interpretation
5	4.21-5.00	Extremely competitive	The participant conforms to a great extent that the agri-tourism destination offers competitive resources and attractions, environment and strategies for it visitors.

4	3.41-4.20	Highly competitive	The participant conforms that the agri-tourism destination offers competitive resources and attractions, environment and strategies for it visitors.
3	2.61-3.40	Somewhat competitive	The participant slightly conforms that the agri-tourism destination offers competitive resources and attractions, environment and strategies for it visitors.
2	1.81-2.60	Fairly competitive	The participant dissents that the agri-tourism destination offers competitive resources and attractions, environment and strategies for it visitors.
1	1.00-1.80	Not at all competitive	The participant dissents to a great extent that the agri-tourism destination offers competitive resources and attractions, environment and strategies for it visitors.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of this findings which analyze the quality of tourism experience and competitiveness of Agri-tourism destinations in the Province of Iloilo.

Respondents Profile

Table 4 presents the profile of the 397 local visitors in terms of sex, age, marital status, educational attainment, average monthly income, place of residence, and type of visitor.

Majority of the visitors of the agri-tourism destinations in the Province of Iloilo are female, with large numbers belonging to ages 18-29 years old, single, college graduate, earning between Php10, 957- Php21,914, mostly residing in the second district and are excursionists.

Table 4 Respondents Profile

Category (n = 397)	<i>f</i>	%
Entire Group	397	100
Sex		
Male	181	46
Female	216	54
Age		
18-29 years old	187	47
30-39 years old	105	26
40-49 years old	62	16
50-59 years old	24	6
60 years old and above	19	5
Marital Status		

Single	234	59
Married	163	41
Educational Attainment		
High School Graduate	46	12
College Level	87	22
College Graduate	240	60
Post- Graduate	24	6
Average Monthly Income		
Less Than 10,957	87	22
10,957-21,914	177	45
21,915- 43,828	99	25
Above 43,828	34	8
Place of Residence		
First District	70	18
Second District	77	19
Third District	74	19
Fourth District	66	17
Fifth District	29	7
Iloilo City	63	16
Others	18	4
Type of Visitor		
Excursionist	248	62
Tourist	149	38

Quality of Tourism Experience in Agri-tourism Destinations in the Province of Iloilo

Table 5 presents the quality of tourism experience categorized to pre-trip planning phase, en-route phase, destination on-site phase, after trip phase when grouped according to respondent's profile.

Majority of the local visitors assessed the quality of tourism experience as *very good* in terms of pre-trip planning phase and en-route phase. *Excellent tourism experience* was revealed in terms of destination on-site phase, after trip phase.

Recent studies applying Social Exchange Theory (SET) in tourism contexts support these findings, emphasizing that visitors' positive evaluations during pre-trip planning are influenced by perceived benefits outweighing

costs, fostering reciprocal trust and satisfaction (Kattiyapornpong et al., 2021). However, some contemporary research challenges the traditional SET assumptions by highlighting that visitor support and satisfaction can persist even when perceived costs are high, due to factors such as tolerance, cultural attachment, or intrinsic motivations beyond rational cost-benefit analysis (Qin et al., 2025). This suggests that while positive pre-trip assessments generally enhance visitor experience, complex psychological and social factors may also shape visitor attitudes and behaviors in nuanced ways.

Table 5Quality of Tourism Experience in Agri-tourism Destinations in the Province of Iloilo

	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	Description
Pre-trip Planning Phase			
1. There is sufficient time to plan the trip on the agri-tourist sites.	.96	4.09	Very good tourism experience
2. Information on the agri-tourism destinations are easily accessible.	.89	4.14	Very good tourism experience
3. There are a lot of information about the products and services offered by the agri-tourism destinations.	.88	4.11	Very good tourism experience
4. There is high quality services from professionals (travel agents, reservation staff, visitor center staff, etc.) when planning a vacation in agri-tourism destinations.	.94	4.02	Very good tourism experience
5. Booking arrangements (transportation, rooms, etc.) in agri-tourism destinations are problem-free.	.95	4.04	Very good tourism experience
6. The prices are reasonable for a vacation in agri-tourism destination.	.89	4.07	Very good tourism experience
En-route Phase			
7. The agri-tourism destination is accessible from the main road.	.95	3.98	Very good tourism experience
8. There is an available and safe transportation to and from the destination.	.94	4.03	Very good tourism experience
9. The transportation to and from the destination is comfortable.	.98	4.03	Very good tourism experience
10. There are of signages going to the destination.	.94	4.18	Very good tourism experience
11. There is high quality services in transit to and from the agri-tourism destination.	.88	4.05	Very good tourism experience
12. There is hassle-free travel to and from the destination.	.87	4.07	Very good tourism experience
Destination On-site Phase			
13. There is natural beauty in the destination (natural scenery, historic/cultural/heritage site, etc.).	.78	4.37	Excellent tourism experience
14. Accommodation is available at the destination.	.89	4.26	Excellent tourism experience
15. There is a variety of food choices at the destination.	.82	4.20	Very good tourism experience

16. There are good facilities at the destination.	.77	4.26	Excellent tourism experience
17. There is a variety of agri/farm activities to choose from at the destination	.85	4.18	Very good tourism experience
18. The prices at the destination are very reasonable.	.83	4.13	Very good tourism experience
19. There is high quality service at the destination.	.81	4.21	Excellent tourism experience
20. There is a tranquil and relaxing ambiance at the destination.	.78	4.44	Excellent tourism experience
21. The staff/employees are very approachable and communicative.	.80	4.32	Excellent tourism experience
22. There are user-friendly information at the destination (brochures, fliers, signage's, etc.).	.87	4.16	Very good tourism experience
23. The safety and security of the tourists at the site is ensured.	.83	4.26	Excellent tourism experience
24. The service personnel are very welcoming.	.79	4.36	Excellent tourism experience
After-trip Phase			
25. Memorable items to bring back home (photographs, souvenirs, etc.) are available.	.87	4.13	Very good tourism experience
26. The money is worth paying for the overall experience.	.81	4.26	Excellent tourism experience
27. There are agri-tourism/farm activities learned during the vacation.	.84	4.15	Very good tourism experience
28. There is a relaxed and refreshed feeling after the vacation.	.76	4.44	Excellent tourism experience
29. There is a feeling of fulfillment after with family and friends at the destination site.	.70	4.41	Excellent tourism experience
30. There is a sense of life-enrichment after the vacation.	.80	4.32	Excellent tourism experience
31. The visit/ vacation at the agri-tourism destination is a rewarding experience.	.75	4.40	Excellent tourism experience

Competitiveness of Agri-tourism Destinations in the Province of Iloilo

Table 6 presents the competitiveness of Agri-tourism destinations in the Province of Iloilo categorized to resources and attractions, environment, and strategies when grouped according to respondent's profile.

Majority of local visitors assessed the competitiveness of agri-tourism destinations as *extremely competitive* in terms of environment, and strategies. It is also noted that in terms of resources and attractions, results showed it as a *highly competitive*.

Mendaña and Apritado (2021) analyzed destination competitiveness and marketing strategies among resorts in Occidental Mindoro, Philippines. They found that key competitiveness factors include physiography and climate, awareness and image, cost/value, mix of activities, special events, and infrastructure. Marketing strategies focused on product, price, place, and promotion, with differences by age group. Mior Shariffuddin et al. (2023) conducted a comprehensive review of tourism destination competitiveness literature and highlighted that no universal set of indicators exists to measure competitiveness due to its multi-faceted nature. They also noted a lack of studies addressing the relationship between destination image, tourism experience, and loyalty,

suggesting that current models may overlook important demand-side factors, which could lead to strategic drift in competitiveness concepts.

It now thoroughly explains how environmental sustainability and visitor satisfaction interplay to create a strong competitive advantage, emphasizing sustainable practices, authentic experiences, and positive visitor feedback as key drivers. Recent studies have highlighted the positive relationship between sustainability practices and visitor satisfaction in tourism. Palacios-Florencio et al. (2021) emphasize that sustainable tourism, particularly through managing overcrowding and promoting less massified destinations, enhances tourist attitudes and motivations, thereby increasing their intention to engage in sustainable tourism. While many studies support the positive link between sustainability and visitor satisfaction, some research points to challenges and complexities. Li et al. (2024) argue that sustainable tourist behavior is influenced by diverse factors, including cultural and behavioral dimensions, which may not always align with sustainability goals.

Table 6 Competitiveness of Agri-tourism Destinations in the Province of Iloilo

	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	Description
Agri-tourism Destination Resources and Attractions			
1. unique tourism resources (natural scenery, historic/cultural/heritage site, local culture, customs, etc.).	.79	4.21	Extremely competitive
2. year-round agri-tourism activities.	.83	4.05	Highly competitive
3. authentic accommodation experiences.	.82	4.19	Highly competitive
4. variety of food dishes to offer.	.79	4.22	Extremely competitive
5. well-organized transportation service.	.87	4.01	Highly competitive
6. ample parking space for the visitors.	.79	4.29	Extremely competitive
7. safety and secure tourism activities and facilities.	.81	4.22	Extremely competitive
8. attractive on-site course offerings.	.77	4.24	Extremely competitive
9. availability of information about the agri-tourism destination (brochures, flyers, signage's, etc.)	.86	4.14	Highly competitive
Agri-Tourism Destinations Environment			
1. The destination's commitment to provide a safe and secure environment.	.78	4.29	Extremely competitive
2. The overall destination experience "fits" the needs of every visitor.	.81	4.26	Extremely competitive
3. Increase tourists' length of stay.	.79	4.18	Highly competitive
4. Increase tourists' spending	.86	4.03	Highly competitive
5. The hospitality and friendliness of residents towards tourists	.75	4.32	Extremely competitive
Agri-Tourism Destinations Strategies			
1. The destination's commitment to provide an overall vacation experience.	.77	4.26	Extremely competitive

2. Tourism promotion and operation for targeting international tourists and visitors.	.78	4.21	Extremely competitive
3. The destination's commitment to promote a positive image.	.78	4.32	Extremely competitive
4. Environmental considerations in the marketing of tourism.	.81	4.27	Extremely competitive
5. Environmental training of tourism staff.	.87	4.17	Highly competitive
6. Properly designed and construction of new and existing environmental-friendly facilities.	.82	4.26	Extremely competitive
7. Maintaining high quality facilities and equipment.	.82	4.20	Highly competitive
8. Technical competence and good interpersonal skills of service staffs.	.78	4.25	Extremely competitive
9. Expanding educational opportunities for the visiting public in terms of natural/environmental quality and protection.	.81	4.24	Extremely competitive
10. Promoting ethical responsibility towards the natural environment.	.83	4.27	Extremely competitive
11. Sensible use of natural resources.	.84	4.32	Extremely competitive
12. Ensuring value for money in destination tourism experience	.84	4.32	Extremely competitive

Relationship between Quality of Tourism Experience and Profile in Terms of Age and Average Monthly Income

The data presented in Table 7 revealed that the age ($r = -.153, p = .002$) are significantly related to the overall quality of tourism experience and to all the four phases namely pre-trip planning phase, en-route phase, destination on-site phase and after trip phase.

It suggests that the perceived quality of the tourism experience decreases as age increases, which could be due to diverse expectations, physical limitations, or differing preferences among older travelers. Meng and Uysal (2021) found that age negatively correlates with the quality of tourism experience, particularly in the destination on-site and after-trip phases, indicating aging generation tend to have lower satisfaction in these phases. Some studies (e.g., Smith & Lee, 2021) argue that age is not substantial on the quality of tourism experience, suggesting that quality of tourism experience is more influenced by individual preferences than age.

Meanwhile, average monthly income ($r = -.026, p = .610$) are not significantly related to the overall quality of tourism experience and to all four phases. This implies that average monthly income may not be a strong predictor of how tourists perceive the quality of their experience, regardless of the phase. A review by Chen and Wang (2021) emphasized that while income affects travel choices, it does not necessarily affect the overall quality of the tourism experience. Lee and Park (2021) suggested that income influences the quality pre-trip planning, with higher income tourists prefer more detailed planning, which enhances their experience.

Table 7 Relationship between Quality of Tourism Experience and Profile in Terms of Age and Income

Category ($n = 397$)	Age		Average Monthly Income	
	r	p	r	p
Pre-trip Planning Phase	-.112*	.026	-.007	.885
En-route Phase	-.151**	.003	-.052	.300

Destination On-Site	-.201**	.000	-.028	.572
After trip Phase	-.140**	.005	.000	.995
Overall Quality of Tourism Experience	-.153**	.002	-.026	.610

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

Relationship between Quality of Tourism Experience and Profile in Terms Sex, Marital Status, and Type of Visitor

The data presented in Table 8 revealed that the marital status shows a consistent negative and statistically significant correlation with the quality of tourism experience in several phases namely pre-trip planning phase, en-route phase, destination on-site phase and after trip phase. This indicates that married visitors potentially perceiving lower quality of tourism experience in all phases compared to single individuals. Therefore, the null hypothesis that no significant relationship would exist among marital status and quality of tourism experience is not accepted. Pasaco-González et al. (2023) highlighted that marital status has significant correlations in shaping tourists' experiential perceptions. Ledesma et al. (2024) found mixed results on marital status, with some travel phases showing no significant influence, challenging the consistent negative correlations found in this analysis.

The overall quality of tourism experience also shows a weak negative correlation with sex, indicating that sex does not significantly influence tourists' perceived quality of experience across all phases. Zhang and Zhang (2021) conducted a qualitative comparative analysis on tourism and gender equality, finding negligible differences in tourism experience quality based on sex, supporting the findings in this analysis.

When grouped according to type of visitor, it reveals that it has a very weak and not statistically significant across all phases and overall experience. This suggests that whether a repeat visitor, first-time, or other type does not significantly affect how they perceived quality of tourism experience. Nahak Seran et al. (2021) found visitor type less impactful.

Table 8 Relationship between Quality of Tourism Experience and Profile in Terms Sex, Marital Status, and Type of Visitor

Category ($n = 397$)	Sex		Marital Status		Type of Visitor	
	r_{pb}	p	r_{pb}	p	r_{pb}	p
Pre-trip Planning Phase	-.050	.324	-.126*	.012	.005	.919
En-route Phase	-.043	.387	-.125*	.013	-.035	.482
Destination On-Site	-.035	.485	-.187**	.000	.004	.931
After trip Phase	-.029	.570	-.176**	.000	.017	.739
Overall Quality of Tourism Experience	-.045	.376	-.169**	.001	-.004	.936

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

Relationship between Quality of Tourism Experience and Profile in Terms of Educational Attainment and Place of Residence

The data in Table 9 revealed that the place of residence shows a strong and statistically significant relationship with the quality of tourism experience in all phases. This suggests that the residence of tourists influences how they perceive quality of tourism experience, contributing factors such as accessibility, familiarity with the destination, or socio-cultural differences. Dang and Weiss (2021) conducted a systematic review highlighting the importance of place of residence in shaping behavioral intentions that has a strong link to satisfaction in tourism. Saktian Laksito (2021) found that destination image and tourist experience results to revisit intentions. Other studies (Villamor et al., 2025) highlight that tourist satisfaction across different regions varies on the place of residence.

Studies on educational tours by Lim et al. (2021) and Suarez et al. (2021) emphasize the role of educational background in shaping learning experiences, focusing more on educational tours rather than overall quality of tourism experience. Some research, such as Tus et al. (2024), suggests that obtaining higher education have a stronger influence on tourism-related outcomes than educational attainment alone, indicating a more nuanced relationship.

Table 9 Relationship between Quality of Tourism Experience and Profile in Terms of Educational Attainment and Place of Residence

Category (<i>n</i> = 397)	Educational Attainment		Place of Residence	
	η	<i>p</i>	η	<i>p</i>
Pre-trip Planning Phase	.141*	.048	.351**	.000
En-route Phase	.079	.479	.323**	.000
Destination On-Site	.091	.350	.353**	.000
After trip Phase	.108	.200	.283**	.000
Overall Quality of Tourism Experience	.109	.193	.363**	.000

**p* < .05

***p* < .01

Relationship between Competitiveness and Profile in Terms of Age and Income

The data in Table 11 revealed that the age has a significant negative correlation to the overall competitiveness (*r* = -.165, *p* = .001) and to all the three dimensions namely resources and attractions, environment, and strategies. This suggests that as age increases, perceived or actual competitiveness tends to decrease. This aligns with studies such as Horn et al. (2021), which found ageing differences in strategic influence, highlighting that younger adults tend to participate more effectively in competitive strategies than older adults. Conversely, Eber et al. (2021) found mixed results regarding age influences competitiveness.

While the relationship that exist between the age and competitiveness are negative and significant, they are found to be very weak negative as indicated by the correlation coefficients that range from -.154 to -.165.

Therefore, the null hypothesis that no significant relationship would exist among age and quality of tourism experience is not accepted.

Meanwhile, average monthly income are not significantly related to all the competitiveness dimensions. This finding is consistent with research by Shumilova et al. (2021), which suggests that while income is a factor in regional competitiveness, it has a direct impact on individual competitiveness. Contrary to other studies, such as

Melita et al. (2021), highlight that perceived competitiveness and income status may not directly translate to individual competitive behavior, indicating a complex relationship.

Table 10 Relationship between Competitiveness and Profile in Terms of Age and Income

Category (n = 397)	Age		Average Monthly Income	
	r	p	r	p
Resources and Attractions	-.160**	.002	-.016	.756
Environment	-.160**	.001	.000	.995
Strategies	-.154**	.002	-.025	.621
Overall Competitiveness	-.165**	.001	-.014	.777

**p < .01

Relationship between Competitiveness and Profile in Terms Sex, Marital Status, and Type of Visitor

The data presented in Table 12 Marital status shows a significant negative correlation with competitiveness in resources and attractions, environment, strategies, and overall competitiveness. This suggests that marital status influences competitiveness due to familial priorities. Therefore, the null hypothesis that no significant relationship would exist among marital status and competitiveness is not accepted.

Karney (2021) highlights that competitiveness has an impact on socioeconomic status, including marital status which is the result of resource management and stress. Dubey (2021) discusses particularly for women, how marital status affects work-life balance, influencing their strategic competitiveness perspective in professional and personal domains.

Meanwhile, no significant relationship existed between sex, and type of visitor and competitiveness across all dimensions. Fiacco et al. (2021) found that female intrasexual competition is influenced more by hormonal and personality factors (JSTOR, 2021).

Table 11 Relationship between Competitiveness and Profile in Terms Sex, Marital Status, and Type of Visitor

Category (n = 397)	Sex		Marital Status		Type of Visitor	
	r _{pb}	p	r _{pb}	p	r _{pb}	p
Resources and Attractions	-.041	.413	-.154**	.002	-.060	.235
Environment	-.004	.943	-.172**	.001	-.079	.117
Strategies	-.036	.475	-.181**	.000	-.017	.734
Overall Competitiveness	-.028	.571	-.179**	.000	-.055	.278

*p < .05

Relationship between Competitiveness and Profile in Terms of Educational Attainment and Place of Residence

The data in Table 13 revealed that the place of residence shows a strong and statistically significant relationship with all competitiveness dimensions, with effect sizes (η^2) ranging from .100 to .133 and p-values < .001. This

indicates that where individuals reside substantially influences their access to resources and attractions, environmental conditions, strategic opportunities, and overall competitiveness. Therefore, the hypothesis that no significant relationship would exist among place of residence and competitiveness is not accepted. The Global Urban Competitiveness Report (2020-2021) reveals the role of place of residence in shaping competitiveness, particularly through environmental and strategic dimensions.

Meanwhile, no significant relationship existed between educational attainment and competitiveness across all dimensions. This suggests that educational attainment alone does not strongly predict competitiveness in terms of resources and attractions, environment, strategies, or overall competitiveness. Chentukov, Omelchenko, Zakharova, and Nikolenko (2021) found that higher education contributes positively to socio-economic development but noted that limited direct impact on resource management and environmental strategies. Munir and Shahid (2021) argue that education influence economic growth and competitiveness.

Table 12 Relationship between Competitiveness and Profile in Terms of Educational Attainment and Place of Residence

Category (<i>n</i> = 397)	Educational Attainment		Place of Residence	
	η	<i>p</i>	η	<i>p</i>
Resources and Attractions	.054	.770	.365**	.000
Environment	.068	.612	.343**	.000
Strategies	.130	.080	.317**	.000
Overall Competitiveness	.088	.382	.356**	.000

***p* < .01

Relationship between Quality of Tourism Experiences in terms of Pre-trip Planning Phase, En-route Phase, Destination On-site Phase, and After trip Phase and Competitiveness in terms of Resources and Attractions, Environment, and Strategies

The table 10 showed that the quality of tourism experience in terms of pre-trip planning phase, en-route phase, destination on-site phase and after trip phase and competitiveness in terms of resources and attractions, environment, and strategies are significantly related. It was further noted that the overall quality of tourism experience and overall competitiveness are significantly related, too (*r* = .880, *p* = .000).

Therefore, the hypothesis that no significant relationship would exist among quality of tourism experience in terms of pre-trip planning phase, en-route phase, destination on-site phase and after trip phase and competitiveness in terms of resources and attractions, environment, and strategies is not accepted.

This phase involves preparation, itinerary development, and setting of expectation. Exceptional experiences here enhance tourists' confidence and satisfaction, which positively influences perceptions of destination competitiveness. Studies such as Smith and Lee (2021) found that effective pre-trip planning correlate strongly with perceived resource richness and positioning destination strategically. The en-route phase covers the journey going to the destination, including transportation and accessibility. During this phase, reduce travel stress and contribute to overall satisfaction. According to Johnson et al. (2021), to reinforce destination competitiveness, seamless transportation and clear signage enhance tourists' environmental perceptions. This phase is critical as it encompasses the actual experience of attractions, services, and environment and directly impact tourists' evaluations. Martinez and Chen (2021) demonstrated that the more immersive and well-managed attractions, it will significantly boost competitiveness. After-trip experiences and repeat visitation intentions form this phase that contribute to a destination's reputation and competitive advantage. Lee and Park (2021) highlighted that

effective engagement in the after-trip phase, such as through social media or digital platforms and feedback mechanisms, strengthens competitive positioning.

Abari and Malibiran (2021) argued that while destination competitiveness factors are important, external challenges can disrupt the expected positive relationship between tourism experience quality and competitiveness. Environmental and strategic factors alone may affect competitiveness during crisis periods. Contradicting to Venus et al. (2021) the uniformly strong correlations across all phases found that in some emerging destinations, the quality of pre-trip and en-route experiences had less impact on competitiveness compared to on-site experiences.

Table 13 Relationship between Quality of Tourism Experiences in terms of Pre-trip Planning Phase, En-route Phase, Destination On-site Phase, and After trip Phase and Competitiveness in terms of Resources and Attractions, Environment, and Strategies

Category (<i>n</i> = 397)	Tourism Experience									
	Pre-trip		En-route		Destination On-site		After trip		Overall Tourism Experience	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Overall Competitiveness	.756**	.000	.716**	.000	.888**	.000	.806**	.000	.880**	.000
Resources and Attractions	.738**	.000	.745**	.000	.868**	.000	.779**	.000	.872**	.000
Environment	.694**	.000	.656**	.000	.807**	.000	.728**	.000	.803**	.000
Strategies	.711**	.000	.629**	.000	.841**	.000	.778**	.000	.821**	.000

***p* < .01

CONCLUSIONS

Premised on the above findings, these are the conclusions of the study.

1. Generally, the study concludes that the demographic profile of agri-tourism visitors in Iloilo reveals notable trends that can be a basis for future development and marketing strategies. Female visitors constitute a slight majority, suggesting a gendered preference that aligns with their interest. The predominance of younger visitors aged 18 - 29 years old highlights the appeal of agri-tourism to millennials seeking sustainable and experiential travel. Singles form the largest marital status group, indicating greater leisure flexibility. Educational attainment is high, with most visitors holding a bachelor's degree, reflecting a correlation between education and their participation to agri-tourism activities. Middle-income groups shows as the primary visitors, emphasizing affordability to the products and services as a key factor. Geographically, visitors mainly come from nearby districts, underscoring the importance of accessibility and local promotion that results to repeat visits. Lastly, these agri-tourism destinations are popular to excursionists, preferring short visits over extended stays. These may suggest that agri-tourism in Iloilo thrives among educated, younger, middle-income individuals, predominantly female, who prefer accessible and brief excursions.

2. The comprehensive evaluation of visitor experiences across the pre-trip planning, en-route, and on-site phases reveals the critical role each stage plays in shaping overall satisfaction. When destinations successfully address key factors such as accessibility, service quality, natural and cultural attractions, and emotional fulfillment, they not only meet but often exceed visitor expectations. This holistic approach fosters trust, enhances perceived value, and encourages repeat visits, ultimately contributing to a destination's competitiveness and long-term success in the tourism industry.

3. The destination's strong competitiveness is deeply rooted in its commitment to sustainability, authentic experiences, and strategic innovation. By effectively balancing environmental stewardship with visitor satisfaction, the destination not only attracts diverse tourists but also ensures long-term viability and loyalty. Continuous adaptation and mindful management remain essential to sustaining this competitive edge while preserving the unique qualities that make the destination truly exceptionally.

4. The quality of tourism experience is significantly related across all phases. Those who aged above 60 years old may have lowest level of experience to these destinations due to the physical intensive activities and may seek comfort and relaxation all throughout their visit. Married ones especially those with children often focus on fulfilling family needs that divide their attention, difficulty managing their schedule, and limits their engagement to the activities offered. The findings also highlight that place of residence affects their perceptions of the quality of their tourism experience influenced by accessibility and cultural familiarity. Visitors with high educational attainment may be particular and prefer to have an established planning and preparation before travelling.

5. The findings reveal relationships between demographic factors and the competitiveness of agri-tourism destinations, as such there is a big probability that older individuals may have experience lower competitiveness, potentially due to changing priorities, reduced engagement or limited inclusive agri-tourism activities. The financial capacity alone does not drive perceptions or realities of competitiveness of a destination. Resource allocation or priorities among married individuals could influence their engagement. And lastly, residents closer to or within agri-tourism hubs may have better access to resources, environmental benefits, and strategic opportunities, enhancing competitiveness.

6. The quality of tourism experiences during the pre-trip planning, en-route, destination on-site, and after trip phases closely relates to destination competitiveness factors—resources and attractions, environment, and strategies. Tourists engage more in pre-trip planning using digital tools, with its convenience in accessing information and booking arrangements. Experienced travelers expect smooth en-route logistics, enhancing environmental perceptions. On-site experiences impact competitiveness favoring diverse offerings, innovation and environmental quality. After-trip engagement, like social sharing, boost destination strategically.

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