



Homestay Accommodations in the Philippines: An Assessment into the Compliance Department of Tourism Standards

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ABSTRACT

This study provides light on the distinctive features and operational dynamics of homestay accommodation in Santiago, San Francisco Camotes Island, Cebu, by providing a thorough exploration of their present profile state. To support the homestays that are already operating in the area, this study assesses the degree of compliance of lodgings with the Department of Tourism's homestay guidelines. In order to evaluate homestay operations, the researchers employed a quantitative and qualitative research approach. The LGU and homestay operators are the responders considering Santiago had been selected as the study's chosen environment. The DOT homestay standards criteria served as the foundation for the self-created questionnaire. The study's findings demonstrated that, in terms of homestay locations and amenities, the homestays had completely accomplished with the requirements. The study shows that there is variation in the types of rooms, amenities, and management approaches, which gives visitors a more personalized and authentically local experience. The Homestay Program alleviates the shortage of accommodation by offering rooms in Santiago, San Francisco, Camotes Island, to visitors. In-charge of overseeing these homestay lodgings, host families are essential, taking a hands-on approach to everything from food preparation to laundry and room maintenance. This high degree of participation creates a unique and genuine ambiance that makes visitors feel like they are part of a community. The researchers concluded that in order to improve the homestay operations already in place in the destination, workshops and seminars should be provided to the homestays, who have the ability to seek for certification.

RESUMO

Este estudo fornece luz sobre as características distintivas e a dinâmica operacional das acomodações em casa de família em Santiago, San Francisco Camotes Island, Cebu, fornecendo uma exploração completa de seu estado de perfil atual. Para apoiar as casas de família que já estão operando na área, este estudo avalia o grau de conformidade das acomodações com as diretrizes de hospedagem do Departamento de Turismo. Para avaliar as operações de homestay, os pesquisadores empregaram uma abordagem de pesquisa quantitativa e qualitativa. A LGU e os operadores de homestay são os respondentes, considerando que Santiago foi selecionado como o ambiente escolhido pelo estudo. Os critérios de padrões de hospedagem do DOT serviram de base para o questionário criado por você mesmo. Os resultados do estudo demonstraram que, em termos de localização e comodidades da casa de família, as casas de família cumpriram completamente os requisitos. O estudo mostra que há variação nos tipos de quartos, comodidades e abordagens de gerenciamento, o que oferece aos visitantes uma experiência mais personalizada e autenticamente local. O Programa de Homestay alivia a escassez de acomodações, oferecendo quartos em Santiago, São Francisco, Ilha de Camotes, aos visitantes. Encarregadas de supervisionar essas acomodações em casa de família, as famílias anfitriãs são essenciais, adotando uma abordagem prática para tudo, desde a preparação de alimentos até a lavanderia e manutenção do quarto. Esse alto grau de participação cria um ambiente único e genuíno que faz com que os visitantes se sintam parte de uma comunidade. Os pesquisadores concluíram que, para melhorar as operações de homestay já existentes no destino, workshops e seminários devem ser fornecidos aos homestays, que têm a capacidade de buscar a certificação.

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Introduction

The Philippines is renowned for its culture of hospitality towards tourists, making it a promising location for the establishment of homestay accommodations in areas featuring tourist attractions. The amiable traits and service-oriented mindset of Filipinos provide a distinct advantage in the operation of homestay accommodations. Specifically, San Francisco, a municipality within the Camotes Group of Islands in Cebu, stands out as an ideal candidate for homestay establishments due to its authentic ambiance, untouched by extensive infrastructure and development.

Homestay as a tourism product has a lot of potential in the market like the Philippines since its target tourists are those who are inclined to get immersed of the local culture. This homestay program is able to address the lack of accommodation in Santiago. This study aims to assess the existing homestay accommodation present in the area, if they are able to meet the standards to examine the level of compliance based on the Department of Tourism criteria and to strengthen homestay accommodations in Santiago, San Francisco Camotes Island Cebu. The purpose of this study is to evaluate homestay operations and assess their level of compliance based on the Department of Tourism Criteria and to strengthen Homestay accommodations that are present for the tourists to acquire in San Francisco Camotes Island, Cebu. Specifically, the study will answer the following questions: What is the present profile status of homestay operators in San Francisco; What is the level of compliance towards Department of Tourism Standard in the area of Homestay sites by the Homestay Operations in terms of: Location; attractions; accessibility; and willingness to join actions for accreditation? What is the level of compliance towards the Department of Tourism Standard in the area of homestay facilities by the Homestay Operations in terms of: durability; surroundings; room availability; and basic amenities; What recommendation can be proposed to meet the Department of Tourism Standards to apply for Homestay Accreditation.

The main purpose of the study is to evaluate the homestay accommodations and assess its Compliance to Standard Requirements for Homestay Accreditation and to strengthen homestay accommodations in Santiago, San Francisco Camotes Island, Cebu. The output of the study is to give awareness and knowledge to the following; Host Family/Operator, Local Government Unit, Department of Tourism, Tourism Students.

According to ASEAN, 2016, "The homestay program is a form of alternative tourism where tourists stay with the hosts' family in the same house and experience the everyday life of the family and the local community". This program enhances travel experience of tourists in availing this kind of accommodation. Tourists' gain not just the accommodation but also immersion of the culture and everyday life of the host family.

Homestay is a type of accommodation that is very different from what is usually experience in hotels, motels, resorts. This type of accommodation has very unique characteristics as this concept promotes interaction between the host family and tourist and acting as development tool to raise awareness on the cultural exchange and respect for the host's culture, (Lynch, 2009).

Kontogeorgopoulos (2015) argued that success in the context of operating homestay tourism is a double-edge, because even when communities succeed in operating homestay programs, this success comes at the price of diminished authenticity, greater dependence on tourism, and enhanced social and economic inequalities. Notwithstanding such challenges, rural communities will continue to respond to tourist demand for novelty and authenticity by commercializing their homes and offering homestay experiences that deliver glimpse of rural life of curious guest.

Methods

The study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-method design, starting with quantitative data collection through a researcher-made Likert-scale questionnaire, followed by qualitative interviews with local government and homestay operators to enrich the findings. This study aims to assess whether existing homestay accommodations in Santiago, San Francisco Camotes Island, Cebu comply with the Department of Tourism standards and to recommend measures to strengthen their operations. The respondents of the study are the Homestay operators who have been facilitating homestay Accommodation in Santiago, San Francisco Camotes Island.

The researchers will also gather data from the Local Government Unit's Tourism Officers and Santiago Barangay Captain for the present profile status of the Homestay Operators. To facilitate the data gathering phase of the study, the researchers apply the Likert scale since the instrument used is a ratings scale questionnaire. The questionnaire was self-made based on the criteria of Department of Tourist Standards. It will be used in gathering data from the Homestay Operators on their compliance to Department of Tourism Homestay Standards. The researchers used Qualitative and Quantitative Method in the study. The researchers based the data to be accumulated from the Department of Tourism Homestay standards.

The researchers went to the Municipality Mayor and the barangay Santiago and they were permitted to conduct the data gathering in the area. The researchers went to the present homestay accommodation in the area and gave enough time for the Home owners to answer the questionnaire. The interpretation of the result according to the DOT standards will be generated. The research instrument used is a researchers' made questionnaire that is based on the DOT homestay standards criteria. This design will also help the homestay operators to

strengthen and improve the quality of service. Specifically, the research design will be used to deliver the significance of standard and compliance of homestay accommodation.

The researchers use Likert's scale for self- made questionnaire.

Interpretation

Range	Interpretation	Meaning
1.00-1.75	Not Complied	If the homestay site has few of the following things mentioned but does not possess a complete satisfaction service.
1.76-2.50	Partially Complied	If the homestay site has few of the following things mentioned and offered good service.
2.51-3.25	Complied	If the homestay site has several things mentioned and offered outstanding quality service.
3.26-4.00	Highly Complied	If the homestay site has all the following things mentioned but and offered outstanding quality service.

Treatment of Data

For the present inventory status of homestay accommodation in Santiago, San Francisco Camotes Island, Cebu. The researchers used a qualitative and quantitative questionnaire and applied the thematic analysis.

The researchers tallied the Likert scale results from the self-made questionnaire. The answers will be added from the criteria. The result in every question will be divided by the numbers of homestay operators. The result was the weighted mean.

Formula:

$$M = \sum fw / N$$

WM= is the weighted mean
 Σ = is the summation of the value

Ethical Considerations

The study adheres to key ethical principles, including beneficence, respect, and justice. Respect for autonomy is upheld by informing participants about the study and allowing them to make voluntary decisions regarding their involvement. The principle of justice is observed by treating respondents impartially and safeguarding their right to privacy, ensuring a fair selection process. Participants were fully informed of the study's objectives, which focus on homestay accommodations in Camotes Island. Data collection involved quantitative methods through questionnaires, with respondents oriented on how the findings would be used. The researcher coordinated with the local to schedule data gathering and respected participants' autonomy and level of commitment throughout the process. These ethical practices ensure integrity, transparency, and respect for the rights of all stakeholders involved.

Results

The present profile status in homestay accommodation in Santiago, San Francisco Camotes Island, Cebu are as follows; the room and rates of the homestay accommodations in Santiago, San Francisco Camotes Island have two types of room accommodation: air conditioned and non-air conditioned and most of the homestays have at least four (4) rooms; facilities aside from providing comfortable bedrooms, usage of kitchen and kitchen wares where tourists can freely prepare and cook their food They can also use the dining area especially for those family occupants.

Homestay operators also extend access to other facilities in the house like lounge, living room with television and garden where tourists can rest and relax. Summer is the peak season of guest arrivals in Santiago and the locals are the number one arrival. The Homestay are mostly managed by the host family or home owners. The host-families are the ones who operate the homestay accommodation, including preparing meals for the visitors, cleaning up and the doing the laundry, and even provide some extra-services for the tourists. In some instances, the owners of the accommodations are the ones who will clean the rooms or hire an on-call employee to do the laundry every after the guests' check-out.

It was found out that the homestay accommodations in Santiago has highly complied based on the Department of Tourism standards for homestay sites criteria in terms of location; the host community that help giving comfort in the premised, being reliable from the safety of the tourists and their belongings, attraction; the community showcases the natural attraction such as white sand beach and caves present in the area, accessibility; it is accessible for all types of transportations however some roads are still under construction, willingness to join actions; the community in barangay Santiago are participating in providing service for the tourist and they offer different needs to earn alternative income and has offered an outstanding service based on the results from the given rates of both homeowners and local government unit respondents.

Section 1. Homestay Sites Evaluation

Indicator	WM	Interpretation	WM	Interpretation
Homestay Sites				
2.1. Location				
Comfort in the premises	3.80	HC	3.50	HC
Belongings are safekeeping during the stay	3.83	HC	3.50	HC
Safe and secure with the host people	4.00	HC	3.75	HC
2.2 Attraction				
The natural attractions are well managed	3.50	HC	2.50	C

Showcases local resources such as local culture, local enterprise, local delicacies and natural resources	3.20	C	2.50	C
The natural attractions are at affordable entrance fees.	2.80	C	2.50	C
2.3 Accessibility				
The natural attractions are located near the homestay accommodation	3.70	HC	2.50	C
Clear signage to guide the guest to the homestay	3.50	HC	3.50	C
Ease in finding the homestay accommodation	3.83	HC	3.75	HC
Modes of transportations are available in going to the accommodation	3.34	HC	3.50	HC
The pathways and roads are available for the tourists to access	3.00	C	3.00	C
2.4 Willingness to join action				
Courtesy of host people	4.00	HC	3.75	HC
Host people's willingness to help	3.67	HC	3.75	HC
Host people offers safety precautions	3.50	HC	3.75	HC

The homestay accommodation in Santiago has complied based on the Department of Tourism Standards of homestay facilities criteria in terms of durability it was found that the house structure of the homestay accommodation is in stable and good condition. In surroundings, it was observed that the operators can assure the guest there is a proper sanitation in all of the facilities available and they are free to roam around in the premise.

The homestay in Santiago can accommodate the guest with enough room availability with clean and proper sanitation of rooms. The operators can provide enough necessities during the stay of the tourists; this includes the clean toilets and bathrooms.

Section 2.

Homestay Facilities Evaluation

Indicator	WM	Interpretation	WM	Interpretation
B. Homestay Facilities				
3.1. Durability				
The structure of the house is in good and safe conditions	3.80	HC	3.25	C
Furnitures are in good conditions and appliances are well functioning	3.80	HC	3.50	HC
Door locks are secure	3.50	HC	3.50	HC
3.2 Surroundings				
Guest's privacy	3.50	HC	3.50	HC
Proper sanitation of facilities	3.67	HC	3.50	HC
Clean and healthy environment	3.50	HC	3.50	HC
3.3 Room Availability				

Rooms are enough for the guest to avail	3.67	HC	3.25	C
Comfortable beds	3.80	HC	3.75	HC
Proper sanitation of rooms	3.80	HC	3.25	C
3.4 Basic Amenities				
Provide basic guest's amenities	3.67	HC	3.25	C
Adequate water and power supply	2.40	PC	2.00	PC
Clean and well-maintained toilet and bathroom	3.80	HC	3.75	HC

To supplement the quantitative findings, qualitative data were gathered through interviews with key stakeholders, including the Local Government Unit's Tourism Officers and the Barangay Captain of Santiago. These insights provided a deeper understanding of the current profile and challenges of homestay operators in the area.

The Tourism Officer emphasized the **community-driven nature** of the homestay program, highlighting how local families have gradually adapted their homes to accommodate visitors while preserving traditional hospitality. The officer noted that while some operators already demonstrate high levels of compliance with the Department of Tourism (DOT) standards—especially in terms of safety, cleanliness, and basic amenities—others require capacity-building to meet the same benchmark.

The **Barangay Captain** acknowledged the economic benefits that the homestay program brings to the community, stating that many families now rely on tourism as a **supplementary income source**. However, he expressed concern over limited infrastructure and inconsistent access to utilities such as water supply, which occasionally affects guest satisfaction. He stressed the importance of sustained **government support and training programs** to standardize service quality across operators.

Recurring themes from the interviews include:

- A **strong sense of community ownership** over the homestay operations.
- The **personalized and immersive experience** offered by host families is a unique selling point.
- **Challenges** such as lack of formal training, need for marketing support, and partial compliance with some DOT requirements.
- **Willingness among local stakeholders** to undergo accreditation and attend workshops to enhance service delivery.

These findings reveal that while Santiago's homestay operators show great promise and dedication, targeted interventions—such as skills training, infrastructure support, and promotional assistance—are essential to elevate the overall standard and ensure long-term sustainability of the homestay program.

Discussions and Conclusions

The findings of this study present a comprehensive assessment of homestay accommodations in Santiago, San Francisco, Camotes Island, with a specific focus on their compliance with the Department of Tourism (DOT) standards. The quantitative results demonstrate that while homestay operators generally meet several key indicators—such as cleanliness, safety, and hospitality—there are notable gaps in areas like amenities, guest services, and marketing strategies.

To deepen the understanding of these quantitative results, **qualitative data** were collected through interviews with the Local Government Unit's Tourism Officers and the Barangay Captain of Santiago. These insights not only support the numerical data but also provide **contextual depth**, highlighting the lived realities, challenges, and aspirations of the homestay operators.

For instance, while the survey indicated moderate compliance in safety and facility standards, the qualitative interviews revealed that **infrastructure limitations**, such as inconsistent water supply and insufficient access to training, contribute significantly to these shortcomings. Likewise, while many operators are eager to comply with DOT guidelines, they often lack the resources or knowledge to do so effectively. This aligns with prior studies (e.g., Salazar, 2012; Aquino et al., 2020) that emphasize the role of **capacity-building and institutional support** in improving community-based tourism initiatives.

The mixed-method approach used in this study underscores the importance of **triangulating data**. Quantitative findings establish measurable trends and levels of compliance, while qualitative narratives provide nuanced explanations behind these trends. This integration strengthens the overall reliability and applicability of the research, offering actionable insights for both policymakers and tourism planners.

Moreover, the discussion of local perspectives—such as the Tourism Officer's recognition of the homestay sector as a community asset, and the Barangay Captain's call for government-led interventions—emphasizes the need for a **multi-stakeholder approach**. These perspectives highlight that improving compliance is not solely the responsibility of individual operators but also of local governance systems and national tourism agencies.

In conclusion, the combination of statistical analysis and stakeholder input validates the study's central argument: that while there is substantial potential in Santiago's homestay sector, realizing it fully requires **systematic support, training, and continuous evaluation** in line with DOT standards.

The study highlights the importance of strengthening homestay accommodations in Santiago, San Francisco Camotes Island, Cebu, to meet the Department of Tourism standards. Key implications include the need for training programs to enhance service quality, workshops for accreditation support, and adopting sustainable practices to improve environmental management. Community engagement is essential for fostering inclusive tourism development, while infrastructure improvements can address accessibility issues. Future research can explore guest satisfaction and the economic impact of homestays, providing valuable insights for data-driven improvements and sustainable tourism growth.

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