

EXPLORING THE IMPACTS AND CHALLENGES OF MOUNTAIN CLIMBING AS PERCEIVED BY THE LOCAL TOUR GUIDES

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ABSTRACT--- Mountain climbing as part of tourism industry is one of the fastest growing opportunities that create jobs, provide services and products to support visitors and the local community. This study ascertained the impact and challenges of mountain Climbing encountered by the local tour guides. Descriptive method of research was employed in the study. Using researcher-made questionnaire in data gathering and simple random sampling technique, the study involved 170 local tour guides in Brgy. San Rafael, Rizal, Philippines. Frequency, weighted mean, percentage, t-test, and one-way ANOVA were the statistical tools employed in analysing all gathered data. Results revealed that the local tour guides have greater positive perception of the economic and socio-cultural impacts of mountain climbing. On the other hand, most of the respondents disagree that mountain climbing may results to soil degradation, can cause natural hazards, causes pollution, and can cause destruction of natural vegetation. Findings also showed that the most common challenges experienced by the local tour guides were maintaining the cleanliness of the community and preservation of their own culture and traditions. There is a significant difference on the perception of the respondents on the economic impact of mountain climbing when grouped according to sex and number of tour guiding years. In terms of ecological impact, respondent's perception also varies significantly when grouped according to age. It is suggested that the tour guide association develop community-based mountain climbing tourism program that will strengthen the economic impact without sacrificing socio-cultural and ecological development of the community.

Keywords--- challenges, impacts, local tour guides, mountain climbing

I. INTRODUCTION

Through the years, tourism has been regarded as a massive contributor in stimulating the development of various regions and lessening poor communities in unindustrialized countries (Sharpley et al., 2014). It is an essential sector for it promises remarkable visions of development and has definitely aided many deprived rural area populations to improve their living standards (Henderson, 2011). It has the ability to reduce poverty and provide alternative livelihoods for the community. (Debarbieux et al., 2014). It is very significant and challenging to keep the stability and sustainability of ecological, economic, and socio-cultural essentials. Tourism sustainability refers to the principles and practices of establishing suitable balance among the various components of the environment and socio-cultural dimensions of the industry as well (Korez-Vide, 2013). It encompasses the

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interactions among economic, environment, and equity concerns. Sustainable tourism development is attainable when equity, economic, and ecological sustainability is seriously considered in all facets of tourism initiatives (Abocejo, 2016).

For a long time, mountains have become the source of food for living and survival, mountaineering has become a vehicle for the conservation of these land forms (Fernandez-Morales, 2016). Mountain regions are often very successful in attracting visitors with their soft and recreational tourism that is commonly done while visiting unique cultural and natural monuments (Keller, 2014). People visit to witness the unspoiled natural environment, experience clean and cool air, and see how culture and tradition living in harmony with nature (Silva et al., 2011). Covering almost one-third of the world's designated protected areas, mountains are considered global treasure (Moscardo & Murphy, 2014). They are natural wonders, with fresh air, cool weather, beautiful landscapes and rich cultural heritage which really provide an escape from our toxic and stressful city. Ranked as second, mountains are one of the most popular tourist destinations which generate 15-20% of yearly global tourism (Richins et al., 2016).

Along with the thousands of local and foreign tourists visiting the beautiful beaches in the Philippines, a growing number of outdoor enthusiasts are now looking for extra-ordinary adventures such as climbing, trekking, and camping in mountainous regions. Such manifestation is likely since the Philippines is considered as a very mountainous country which are geological developments from volcanic actions and is said to be a part of the Western-Pacific "Ring of Fire".

Mountaineering or mountain climbing has become a popular form of adventure tourism (Tsaur et al., 2013). People nowadays want to escape the noise, pollution, crime, and stress coming from the urban places they're in through the tranquility, calmness, and beauty that the mountains could offer (Apollo, 2017). It is a sport or recreational activity to be taken seriously. It's very important that a hiker plans with his/her guide. It is also important to take note of the perennial reminder, "take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints, kill nothing but time." It is imperative to observe cleanliness and respect all existing life forms in the place at all times. Sadly, some mountains are now being closed to mountaineering activities because of people's negligence (Philippine Primer Magazine, 2016). Nowadays, a lot of groups have been experts not only in camping, but also in climbing mountains. Thus, different mountaineering organizations emerged to offer short training courses to upgrade climbers' skills, enjoin them in various outreach programs, and be part of sustainable environmental protection activities.

Mountaineering tourism, in association with sheltered natural areas, affords the opportunity to improve the deprived regional economies and protect our nature. Since most of the population nowadays are living and working in fast-paced urban areas, they see mountains as places for potential escape and adventure. Hence, the beginning of mountain-based adventure tourism (Pomfret, 2011). There are activities that led for change in tourism amplifying leisure and recreation that brings income to the people. During holidays, they spend more money and these mountain ranges provide options for variety of activities (Calaretu, 2011). Several practitioners and researchers claim that the local residents should be part of the tourism program for the development of their community. Thus, the program is essential for providing their necessities, since it has a significant effect on their local economy. Mountains cover a significant share of territorial space, the development of mountain-based tourism and mountaineering may positively impact the development of adventure tourism (Bayramov, 2016).

However, an increasing number of mountain climbers mark the mountain setting as it affects both local people and natural environment (Apollo, 2011). It may affect the community either in a positive or negative way.

Various positive economic impact of tourism have been identified by different studies most of which include having direct and indirect employment opportunities (Jalani, 2012; Simpsons 2008); funding of the improvement of non-profit enterprises; invigorating and developing local economies (Meyer, 2014); altering traditional businesses; and escalating prices of lands (Simpsons, 2008). Likewise, diversification in income source entrepreneurship development in local people (Mensah, 2017; Rai, 2017); improvement of life standard; beginning of high value cash crops; development of infrastructures, and increase in settlements and market municipalities (Rai, 2017). One of the few sources of income which alleviates rural households' livelihood is employment as a porter or guide which contributes to community welfare (Steinicke & Neuburger, 2012). It also provides financial welfare and empowerment to the locals (Reimer & Walter, 2013). On the other hand, negative economic impacts are also found. These are basic and seasonal unemployment, financial dependence of tourism industry, absence of workforce in agronomic division, over reliant on imported merchandises, growing expensiveness, inflation, and dependency (Simpsons, 2008; Rai 2017).

Tourism also provides significant impact on socio-cultural development of the community. Several positive socio-cultural impact may be gained from tourism such as: provision and stimulation of infrastructure development; increase in safety and security; facilitation of workforce development; generating opportunities; raising of cultural understanding; conservation of local and unique crafts, skills; better cross institutional understanding (Reimer & Walter 2012); appreciation of cross take holder plans and goals; cultural exchange between local people and tourists (Jamal & Stronza, 2008); and preservation of cultural landscapes (Meyer, 2014). Even if there are several positive impact of tourism to local community, unfortunately, there are also negative impact that may exist such as destruction on the traditional social structures, alteration in local culture, commercialization of local heritage and art, decline in local cultural traditions and values, social problems between those profiting and not profiting, and work-related problems involving gender issues. Also, by providing price to traditional products, it becomes simple commodities in the eyes of the consumers (Leung et al., 2015; Barna, et al., 2011).

Huge impact on mountain environments is likewise visible, as caused by tourism. It includes different levels of environmental degradation and damage in ecological connectivity due to the expansion of major infrastructures and projects. In addition, climate change further worsened the situation forcing the reinvention of tourism and developing of alternative solutions (Debarbieux et al., 2014). Several negative impacts are also enumerated by several authors. According to them, tourism may bring destruction to the fragile environment, the disruption of local flora and fauna, air, noise and water pollution, deforestation and unjustifiable use of land, like hood of natural dangers, and contamination by garbage and excrements (Debarbieux et al., 2014; Das & Chatterjee, 2015). Furthermore, disturbance of the natural site by tourist infrastructure is another possible ecological impact of tourism (Apollo, 2014).

On the other hand, while tourism may have numerous negative environmental impact, the following are some of the benefits: improves environment, boosts awareness and appreciation by the local community of natural resources on which tourism relies, enriches management of natural resources, establishes site for environmental

protection (Jalani, 2012); reduces hunting, encourages villagers to clean up (to attract more tourists), forms environmental awareness, (Reimer & Walter, 2012);and protects the forest (Mensah, 2017).

In certain cases, especially in the Philippines, there are places and mountains which are also classified as occasional venues for conflicts involving the military and armed insurgents. Thus, in an exploration of the social dynamics of any location that encloses physical danger and security issues, the role of the mountain guide is very vital. While tour guides are expected to perform responsibilities as ambassador of responsible tourism practice, it is very apparent that a lot of difficulties and challenges are being experienced by them. Five broad problem areas are found in facilitation of guests and tourists such as local authorities, general framework and tour guiding environment, employment relationship or engagement with tour operators and travel companies, handling of both domestic and foreign customers, and working conditions (Chowdhary & Prakash, 2008).

Such occurrence may also be happening in Rodriguez (formerly known as Montalban) which is considered as a first class municipality in the province of Rizal, Philippines. It is politically subdivided into 11 barangays which has recorded that there is huge number of hikers visiting their numerous mountains, which reach 1,000 plus of hikers during weekends for each mountain. Among its popular mountainous barangays is San Rafael (Wawa), the place where the respondents of this study were found. This place has various local tour guides who rely on their mountains' natural resources. There are three popular and most-visited mountains, known as "Version 1", where mountaineers usually visit with local guides rendering them services. These are Mount Binacayan, Mount Pamitinan, and Mount Hapunang Banoi which officially opened last 2014. Mt. Binacayan has an agricultural terrain, followed by rock and bamboo ascent. Mt. Pamitinan has a more established trail with a forested first part, passing through some attractions such as an ancient Balete and the rock climbing while Mt. Hapunang Banoi is connected to Mt. Pamitinan. With the influx of massive number of tourists visiting the area of San Rafael, Rizal, it is highly important to determine the current status of the community exploring the results of the possible mass mountain climbing tourism.

Though several researches has been conducted internationally exploring the impacts of tourism in the community, scarcity of published research studies related to mountain climbing activities was evident in the local setting. Hence, exploring the impacts of mountain climbing as perceived by the local tour guides, as well as the challenges in facilitating mountain climbing was not yet been explored. Thus, it is for these given conditions that this paper endeavored to explore the respondents' evaluation of the impacts of mountain climbing, challenges being experienced by the local tour guides in the community, and significant difference in the respondents' assessment of the impact of mountain climbing by Profile. Moreover, this study intended to help the local guides in Barangay San Rafael to have a sustainable development in their livelihood and other related activities through suggested programs, and support policies without making their community suffer from its negative impacts.

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study used the descriptive method research design. This method gathered information on the impacts and challenges that the local tour guides are experiencing during mountain climbing activity. Using Slovin's formula, there were one hundred seventy (170) respondents who participated in the study out of two hundred ninety six (296) residents who are local guides of Brgy. San Rafael, Montalban Rodriguez, Rizal who have been living in the

area for at least two years. Availability of the respondents was the primary consideration of the researcher due to the nature of their work. Simple random sampling technique was also utilized in the administration of the survey questionnaires.

Participants

Table 1 : shows the participants' profile.

Table 1: Profile of the respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	132	77.6
Female	38	22.4
Age		
17 years old and below	14	8.2
18 – 35 years old	113	66.5
36 – 55 years old	43	25.3
Years of Experience as Tour Guide		
5 – 20 years	58	34.1
Below 5 years	112	65.9
Monthly Income		
Above P11,000	9	5.3
P8,001 – P11,000	15	8.8
P5,001 – P8,000	65	38.3
P5,000 and below	81	47.6

While the rigidity of the task, being tour guides to climbers, generally appeals to males, the researcher has found several female tour guides. These people would earn around 5,000 to over 11,000, and have been working as tour guides for more or less five years.

Instrument

A four-point Likert Scale researcher-made questionnaire was used in the study. The survey questionnaire underwent content validation from these experts (Chief of the Research Support Center, Associate Dean of the Graduate School, and faculty member of the College of Human Kinetics) who lent their time to evaluate and help improve the instrument. The research instrument also passed the reliability test with reliability coefficient .830. It has also undergone pilot testing where twenty mountain climbing tour guides in Mt. Talamitam, Batangas City were utilized as respondents during the test.

The instrument is composed of three parts. Part one covered the profile of the local tour guides such as; age, sex, years of experience, and monthly income. Part two consisted of information on the economic, socio-cultural, and ecological impacts of mountain climbing activities. Part three entailed the difficulties or challenges in mountain climbing that the respondents encountered. The responses/interpretations, scale values, and range of weighted means were used to interpret the extent to which the respondents agree or disagree on their participation, perceived impacts, and challenges they usually encounter during the mountain climbing activity of their guests. The responses/interpretations included “Strongly Agree,” “Agree,” “Disagree,” and “Strongly Disagree.”

III. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS / STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The researcher has met with the current president of the tour guide association to discuss the purpose of the study. A letter of permission was forwarded to the Local Government office of Rodriguez through the Brgy. Captain of San Rafael to secure consent in the conduct of the survey among the respondents. Upon the approval of the barangay captain of the local community, selected field researchers took charge for the distribution of the questionnaires to the local tour guides of the community. Distribution of questionnaires was done during the available time of the respondents, since they are very busy because the peak season for mountain climbing in the area has just begun. The questionnaires were administered personally by the field researchers and after 2 weeks, all the questionnaires were accomplished and retrieved. The retrieved data were then prepared for tallying, computation presentation, analysis, and interpretation.

Using weighted mean with verbal interpretation, findings show that local tour guides perceived that mountain climbing bring positive impact on the economy and socio-cultural development of the community more than the negative impact it may bring to the environment. Frequency and percent distribution were used to present the challenges of the local tour guides such as; cleanliness of the community, preservation of our own culture and traditions, and communication difficulties between locals and guests due to telecommunication signals. Lastly, using T-Test and One-way ANOVA findings revealed that there is significant difference on the economic impact of mountain climbing when grouped according to sex and number of tour guiding years, while there is also significant difference on the ecological impact when grouped according to age of the individual.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. *Impact of Mountain Climbing Activities*

As shown in the table, the entire sample strongly agrees that mountain climbing diversifies the local economy, creates new markets for local products, and provides employment opportunities to the locals. These data only reveal that mountain climbing brings positive impact on the economy of the local community as perceived by the local guides.

At the local community, the most important economic benefit is income generation. It provides income from any individual or business that provides goods or services for tourist (Breugel, 2013; Mensah, 2017; Rai, 2017; Steinicke & Neuburger, 2012). This might also explain the importance of the economic impacts to the residents, as they expect to gain economic advantage from mountain climbing since most of them are earning a monthly income below the minimum wage and much more less than the ideal monthly income of a Filipino family that lives comfortably. According to the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), to survive living for a family of five, a gross monthly income of P42,000 is needed (The Philippine Star, 2018).

Table 2 : Impact of Mountain Climbing Activities

Economic Impact	Weighted	Verbal
	Mean	
Interpretation		

<i>Mountain climbing...</i>		
brings in the major revenue to the community	3.25	Agree
benefits other local businesses in my community	3.41	Agree
diversifies the local economy	3.55	Strongly Agree
creates new markets for our local products	3.53	Strongly Agree
provides employment opportunities to the locals	3.50	Strongly Agree
increases land values and rates	2.75	Agree
may lead to economic dependence	2.91	Agree
may result to lower prices of products and services	2.83	Agree
may promote structural and seasonal employment	2.91	Agree
may not create business conflicts among locals	3.00	Agree
Grand Mean	2.78	Agree
Socio-Cultural Impact	Weighted	Verbal
Interpretation	Mean	
<i>Mountain climbing...</i>		
promotes cultural restoration and conservation	3.61	Strongly Agree
unites various groups inside the community to work together	3.63	Strongly Agree
promotes pride of their way of life and cultures among community members	3.58	Strongly Agree
makes the community well known to outsiders	3.53	Strongly Agree
provides avenue to learn a lot from interaction with tourists	3.54	Strongly Agree
is another form of education for tourists to understand and appreciate way of life of the host community	3.55	Strongly Agree
becomes a platform for skill training and learning new ideas for the community	3.57	Strongly Agree
invites other organizations to assist the community	3.56	Strongly Agree
makes our community stronger	3.54	Strongly Agree
makes our community independent on people outside of the community	3.50	Strongly Agree
Grand Mean	3.56	Strongly Agree
Ecological Impact		
<i>Mountain climbing...</i>		
in my community causes pollution	1.74	Disagree
may cause environment deterioration	1.62	Disagree
results to intensified or unsustainable use of land	1.66	Disagree
destroys wildlife	1.70	Disagree
may results to soil degradation	1.78	Disagree
can cause natural hazards	1.75	Disagree
can cause destruction of natural vegetation	1.74	Disagree
does not encourages awareness and appreciation of the community's	1.69	Disagree

natural assets		
may lessen management and stewardship of natural resources	1.69	Disagree
may increase deforestation (e.g “kaingin method”)	1.68	Disagree
Grand Mean	1.70	Disagree
<i>Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 Strongly Agree (SA), 2.50 – 3.49 Agree (A), 1.50 – 2.49 Disagree (D), 1.00 – 1.49 Strongly Disagree (SD)</i>		

On the extent of socio-cultural impact, most of the respondents strongly agree that mountain climbing unites various groups inside the community to work together which has the highest weighted mean, followed by promotes cultural restoration and conservation, and promotes pride of their way of life and cultures among community members. These findings are consistent with those of (Reimer and Walter 2012; Meyer, 2014) that several positive socio-cultural impacts may be gained from tourism such as: raising of cultural understanding; conservation of local and unique crafts, skills; better cross institutional understanding; and preservation of cultural landscapes.

It also run parallel to the studies of Bin and colleagues (2008) and Schellhorn (2010) that ecotourism strengthens traditional culture, increases mobility of people, social harmony stability and stability; hospitality and folkway; and reduces political conflicts. It seems that they perceived mountain climbing as one way of promoting positive socio-cultural development for the whole community. Since most of the local tour guides belongs to the indigenous community, they value their culture and traditions the way they value their way of living.

Though the usual connotation in developing mountain tourism is a negative impact on the environment, the data reveal that the local tour guides disagree that mountain climbing may results to soil degradation; causes pollution; and can cause destruction of natural vegetation. These findings contradicted those of Apollo (2014) who states that tourism damages or destroys the fragile environment, causes environment degradation, brings forth solid waste and littering, results to deforestation and intensified or unsustainable use of land, causes natural hazards, disrupts flora and fauna, brings garbage and excrements pollution, and disrupts the natural landscape by tourist infrastructure. It only signifies that the locals better recognize to the positive economic advantage of mountain climbing than the negative impact that it may bring the community. Since they are residents with a high level of community involvement as local guides in the area, they are more positive about the perceived positive socio-cultural and ecological impacts of tourism compared than those who are less attached (Látková & Vogt, 2012).

2. Difficulties or Challenges Encountered by the Local Tour Guides in Facilitating Mountain Climbing in the Community

Among the difficulties or challenges experienced by the local tour guides in facilitating mountain climbing activities, it can be depicted from the data that keeping the cleanliness of the community is the most common difficulty they encounter. This can be the downside when the economic benefits outweigh other concerns especially if the source of income is the nature itself. These findings adhere to the studies of several researchers, that tourism can bring several negative impacts on the environment through water, noise and air pollution to the ecosystem, loss of authenticity, and soil and beach erosion (Poupineau & Pouzadoux, 2013; Debarbieux et al., 2014; Das & Chatterjee, 2015; and Apollo, 2014). Thus, problems in taking good care of the environment really exist in mountain climbing activity, most especially if mass tourism is being practiced by the community. Therefore, all effort must

be done to take good care of our natural environment by means of programs and support policies that the government may provide.

Another difficulty found in the study is the preservation of own culture and traditions. Though in other places cultural traits and traditions are preserved because guests find them fascinating, or because locals feel proud to show them their unique practices, loss of cultural traits or destruction of sacred places and rituals are potential harmful impacts (Hall & Lew, 2009). Given that the local tour guides provide higher perception on the economic benefit of the activities, they tend to entertain more tourist guests to visit their place that might sacrifice the socio-cultural identity of the people living within the community. The need for preserving our local culture and traditions is highly essential most specially in the Philippines were most of the indigenous people are being displaced because of tourism development.

Table 3 : Difficulties and Challenges Encountered by the Local Tour Guides in Facilitating Mountain Climbing Activities in the Community

Difficulties or Challenges	Frequency	Rank
Maintenance of the cleanliness of our community	159	1
Gender inequality as some mountaineers refer male local guide during hike.	13	10.5
Preservation of our own culture and traditions	152	2
Miscommunication and misunderstanding between local guides with regard to profit	11	12
Higher prices of products and services	76	4
Business conflicts among locals	18	8.5
Being dependent on people outside of the community	34	6
Pollution (e.g. water, air, noise, and land pollution)	8	13
Increased or unmanageable use of land	28	7
Destroys wildlife	13	10.5
Natural hazards (e.g. soil degradation, landslides)	18	8.5
Communication difficulties between locals and guests due to telecommunication signals	86	3
Language barriers	64	5
Corruption inside the organization	1	14

Some other challenges are communication difficulties between locals and guests due to telecommunication signals, higher prices of products and services and language Barriers. In view of the fact that the Philippine archipelago has mountainous terrains, the difficulty of communication signal is very evident. This makes the communication very difficult between the guests and the local tour guides, most especially when one inquires in relation with weather, security, and other significant details. Tourism development may also cause inflation. Shops and restaurants might increase their prices, and land and housing might become more expensive as well (Breugel, 2013). This shows that the high prices of some products and services must be controlled with the help of support policy so that mountain climbers and guests will promote the area as budget friendly place, since most of the mountaineers in the Philippines are at middle economic level.

Lack of English language communication skills and lack of education is a major challenge for tourism development (Schellhorn, 2010) and it is a sad truth, that some of the tour guides have difficulties in communicating in foreign visitors as they belong to the IP community.

3. Significant Difference in the Respondents' Assessment of the Impact of Mountain Climbing Activities by Profile

Based on table 4, when the respondents are grouped according to sex and years of tour guiding, their assessment on the economic impact vary significantly. It can be inferred that perception of men and women respondents on the economic impact of mountain climbing are significantly different, depending on the participation on the mountain tourism.

Table 4 : Test of Significant Difference in the Respondents' Assessment of the Impact of Mountain Climbing Activities by Sex, Age, and Years of Tour Guiding Experience

Impact of Mountain Climbing Activities		
Sex	t-value	p-value
Economic	2.433	.017
Years of Tour Guiding Experience	t-value	p-value
Economic	-3.262	.001
Age	F-value	p-value
Ecological	4.970	.008
* significant at .05		

Findings imply what Nakata and Momsen (2010) found in their study, that Tourism influences social, environmental, economic, political, and cultural life of the community and gender relations are embodied in all these aspects. Depending to an individual's tasks in the industry, gendered impacts will also differ accordingly. In the Philippine tradition, women in mountain climbing activities are more involved on business services such as; sari-sari store, food preparation, and home accommodation. While on the other hand, men are tasked to serve as guide, porter, or safety and security officer.

The negative sign in the t-value indicates that the perception of those with less than 5 years of experience as tour guide were higher than those with 5 to 20 years of experience. It can be implied in the data that tour guides who are new into mountain tourism perceive more the economic impact compared to others who are into tour guiding for more than 5 years in experience. It may be true that the local guides who are in the tour guiding industry for more than 5 years are more concern on the negative socio-cultural and ecological impact of mountain climbing over the economic development, ever since they seen the changes and drastic developments through the years.

In terms of ecological impact, respondent's assessment varies significantly when grouped according to the age of the individual. Environmental attitudes and behaviors of an individual with different ages, varies to certain degrees and kinds. Older individuals seem to be more likely to be with nature, preserve and develop natural resources and raw materials, while avoiding environmental destruction (Wiernik, Ones, & Dilchert, 2013). It is

very true, that elders in the community tend to protect their family and community against negative impacts that development might bring most especially environmental damage that might worsen their livelihood and environmental safety.

V. CONCLUSIONS

This study aims to know the impacts and challenges of mountain climbing in the community. It also desires to know the challenges being experienced by the local tour guides in facilitating mountain climbing and to determine if there is a significant difference on the respondents' assessment of the impact of mountain climbing by profile.

Over-all, findings shows that local tour guides perceived that mountain climbing bring positive impact on the economy and socio-cultural development of the community. Moreover, they also disagree that mountain climbing may results to environmental destruction. Therefore, it may conclude that the local tour guides who are majority are earning below the minimum wage, perceived more the positive impacts that the mountain climbing may bring in favor of the economic opportunities. In addition, since the community is considered part of ancestral domain of indigenous people in the area, they strongly value their culture and traditions.

Although majority of the local tour guides perceived the huge positive impact of mountain climbing has brought, there are several challenges that they are encountering such as; keeping the cleanliness of the community; preservation of own culture and traditions; and higher prices of products and services. It might be caused of mass tourism being practice in the community and the lack of policy implementation to support sustainable ecotourism.

Since the community has mountainous terrains affected by poor telecommunication signals, difficulties between locals and guests are also manifested. Inquiries, concerns or confirmation in relation to weather, security, and other significant details are very important that need to be addressed before the activity. Thus, improving line of communication is highly significant.

The study also reveals that there are significant differences on the respondents' perceptions towards mountain climbing impacts. Based on the results, the perception of the respondents on the economic impact of mountain climbing when grouped according to sex and number of tour guiding years are significantly different. It depends on the services being offered or participation on the mountain climbing activities. In terms of ecological impact, respondent's perception also varies significantly when grouped according to age of the individual. It might be real that to protect their family and community the local guides who are in the tour guiding industry for more than five years or elders are more concern on the negative impacts of mountain climbing than earning more money. This study could be a basis for developing community-based mountain tourism plan and support policies for the local community.

The major limitation of the research is the sample population and the scope of the study. The study is limited nly to the local tour guides living in San. Rafael Rizal, Philippines. Future studies might enrich the sample by including mountaineers who visited the area and local residents who are not part of the tour guiding association.

For future researchers, it could be remarkable exploring a parallel study using quantitative and qualitative design in order to provide deeper and wider understanding. Exploring the relationship of impacts of mountain climbing on the quality of life of the local community might also consider.

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