# TOURISM SAFETY AND SECURITY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF SAN AGUSTIN, SURIGAO DEL SUR, PHILIPPINES

**CLARA G. ERLINA**

Surigao del Sur State University

**Abstract** - The study assessed the tourist safety and security in the municipality of San Agustin, Surigao del Sur. Particularly, it investigated the importance of tourist safety and security; and the awareness on the peace and order situation of San Agustin, Surigao del Sur. The study used a descriptive –survey research design using an adopted survey questionnaire to 28 tourists, 1 owners/operator of tourist facility and 334 local residents. The findings revealed that the respondents associated tourism safety and security to the protection of the tourism environment or the tourist destinations. The key players responsible for providing tourist safety and security were the Local Government Unit (LGU). The vital means of improving tourism safety and security was through education and training of people and the greatest factor that contributed to the decline or failure of tourism safety and security was the overcrowding of tourism facility.

**Keywords** - Tourist, Security, Community, Safety, Destination, Policies

## I. INTRODUCTION

People have always been travelling from one place to another. However, the issue of safety and security is important not only for the community at large, but also for the tourists as well, since safety security are vital to providing quality in tourism. More than any other economic activity, the success or failure of a tourism destination depends on being able to provide a safe and secure environment for visitors (WTO). The study assessed the tourist safety and security in the Municipality of San Agustin, Surigao del Sur, Philippines.

The safety and security in tourism industry have been identified as one of the forces causing changes in the tourism sector (Hall et.al, 2003; Breda and Costa, 2006; Freyer and Schroder, 2007; Edgell et al, 2008; Tarlow, 2009). Crime, terrorism, food safety, health issues and natural disasters are the main areas of concern (Costa, 2006). Simultaneously, the patterns of global safety and security have evolved tremendously in the past two decades with the increasing number of terrorist attacks, epidemics and natural disasters, for instance, tsunami struck in Phuket, Thailand in 2004 (Kim & Phetvaroon, 2008) while Bali was threatened by terrorist attacks twice in 2002 and 2005 respectively (Ascauer, 2009). Thus, it raises the necessity to revise the understanding on the relationship between tourism, safety and security. The cited studies manifested a means of improving safety and security to tourists. This study attempted to give awareness of peace and order situation in San Agustin, Surigao del Sur, Philippines. The main interest of the study is to determine that the municipality of San Agustin as a tourist destination in the province of Surigao del Sur promoted safe environment and that it would improve its history as a place deserving to be visited by the local and international tourist.

## II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

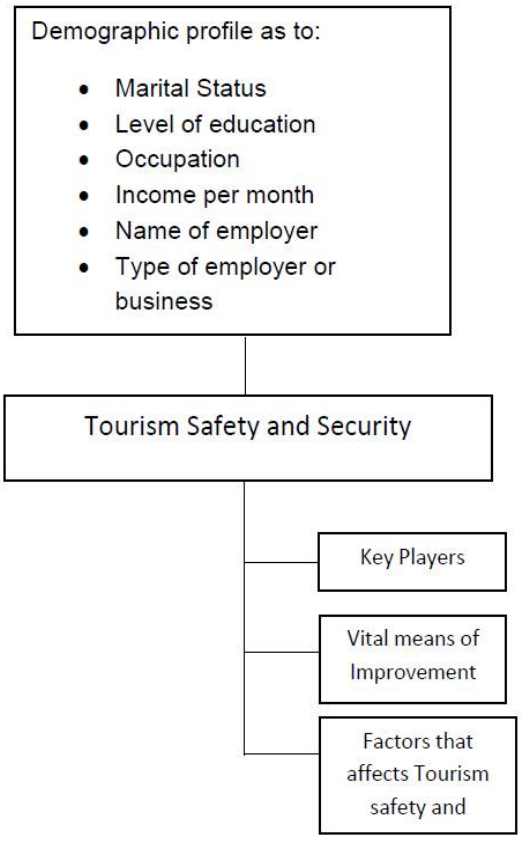



**Figure. 1 Schematic Diagram of the Study**

Safety and security in toursim are on top concerns especially with reports of terrorism and conflict. Many travelers would still think twice about visiting our shores if they think safety is at risk. Security issues must be addressed to avoid bad publicity and travel advisories in the future. The conceptual framework of the study is summarized in the research Schematics Diagram as shown in the Figure 1. It shows the existing relationship among variables being

studied. The concept of the study focuses on the tourism safety and security of Britania Group of Islands in San Agustin, Surigao del Sur. The three boxes showed the interaction of the dependent and independent variables and the possible output of the study. As schematically presented, the demographic profile which includes the marital status, level of education, occupation, income per month, name of employer, type of employer or business are presented in the first box. On the other hand, the dependent variables in the second box are the key players who are responsible in providing tourist safety and security in the municipality of San Agustine. In the third box are vital means of improvement tourist safety and security. And the last box contains the factors that affect tourist safety and security.

## III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study investigated the tourist's safety and security in the municipality of San Agustin, Surigao del Sur during the fiscal year 2015-2016 with special reference to policy and its practice.

It has the following specific objectives:

[1] Establish the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of gender, age, marital status, level of education, occupation and income per month;
[2] Determine the respondents' understanding of tourism safety and security;
[3] Identify the key players responsible for providing tourist safety and security in the municipality of San Agustin;
[4] Assess the vital means of improving the tourist safety and security in the municipality of San Agustin; and
[5] Determine the factors that contribute to the decline or failure of tourist safety and security in the tourist areas of San Agustin?

## IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used descriptive –survey design. Descriptive- survey is designed to depict the participants in an accurate way. This design is used to describe the present behavior or characteristics of a particular population (Padua, 2000 as cited by Soniel, 2010). The study attempted to assess tourist's safety and security in the municipality of San Agustin, Surigao del Sur. The study was conducted at San Agustin, Surigao del Sur. San Agustin is a small town in Surigao del Sur composed of 13 Brgys. San Agustin is blessed with tourism attraction which is the Britania Group of Islands located at Brgy. Britania. Britania group of islands a group of 24 islands with white sandbar beaches scattered across waters of the Lianga Bay, overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Britania Group of Islands is situated in Barangay Britania of San Agustin in the central region of Surigao del Sur. From Davao City, San Agustin can be reached by passenger bus or private vehicle approximately 6 hours away. The road trip going there may be dull but rest assured these Islets re worth the long travel. Composed of 24 Islets, this group of islands varies from shape and sizes scattered magnificently in the open sea. There were adjacent islets spherical in shape and some of them were partially surrounded with pristine white sands so pure and refined. The respondents in this study were the tourists, owners and/ or operators of the tourist facility, residents, and officials ofLGU- San Agustin. The respondents of the study were determined by the use of Sloven formula. To identify the sample to each sub-group, random sampling was used as a process of selecting the sample in the study.

| Group | Population | Sample |
|---|---|---|
| Tourists | 300 | 28 |
| Owners/Operator of Tourist Facility | 6 | 1 |
| Local Residents | 3580 | 334 |
| Total | 3886 | 363 |

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents**

A survey questionnaire was the prime tool used in eliciting the needed information for the study. The questionnaire is adopted from the study of Mthembu, (2009) titled Tourism Crime, Safey and Security in the Umhlathuze district Municipality Kwazulu-natal. The survey questionnaire was composed of two parts. Part 1 was on the personal data of the tourist respondents considering their sex, age, civil status, educational attainment. Part 2 concentrated on the Tourist understanding and make-up in terms of tourist safety and security. The gathered data were treated using frequency counting, percentage and ranking. The statistical tools used were the following:

## V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings are presented in tabular forms and details are organized based on the objectives of the study.

| Variables | Sub-Variables | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 200 | 54.35% |
| | Female | 168 | 45.65% |
| | **Total** | 368 | 100 |
| Age | 18-21 | 50 | 13.59% |
| | 22-35 | 152 | 41.30% |
| | 36-55 | 104 | 28.26% |
| | 56 and over | 62 | 16.85% |
| | **Total** | 368 | 100 |
| Marital Status | Single | 114 | 30.98% |
| | Married | 194 | 52.72% |
| | Separated | 34 | 9.24% |
| | widowed | 26 | 7.07% |
| | **Total** | 368 | 100 |
| Level of Education | Primary Education | 82 | 22.28% |
| | Secondary Education | 182 | 49.46% |
| | College Degree | 46 | 12.5% |
| | Masters' Degree | 38 | 10.33% |
| | Post-Graduate Degree | 20 | 5.43% |
| | **Total** | 360 | 100 |
| Occupation | Unskilled | 46 | 12.5% |
| | Semi-skilled | 132 | 35.87% |
| | Skilled | 78 | 21.20% |
| | Professional | 54 | 14.67% |
| | Retired | 28 | 7.61% |
| | unemployed | 30 | 8.15% |
| | **Total** | 368 | 100 |
| Income Per Month | Less Than R2000 | 80 | 21.74% |
| | R2001-R5000 | | |
| | R5001-R8000 | 148 | 40.22% |
| | R8001-R10,000 | 80 | 21.74% |
| | R10,000- | 30 | 8.15% |
| | R20,000 | 24 | 6.52% |
| | More than R20,00 | 6 | 1.63% |
| **Total** | | 836 | 100 |

**Table 2: Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

The distribution of gender is important in the analysis of tourism safety and security. In the sample collected, majority of the respondents [54.36%] indicated that they were males whereas (41.30%) of the respondents belonged to the ages 22-35. Finally, the least response [13.59%] was from the 18-21 age-group. It is interesting to note that the adolescence age-group were the leading respondents. This is mainly because they more accessible than the other groups. The marital status of respondents indicated that about 52.72% of the respondents were married; and finally the least respondents (7.07%) indicated that they were widowed. It would be interesting to establish whether the responses to tourist related issues would be influenced by the respondent's material status. Majority of the respondents [49.46%] indicated that they had finished secondary education but only about 5.43% of the respondents had acquired college degree. These findings were expected to assist the investigation in determining if education played a role in responding to tourist matters as well as tourism crime, safety and security matters. It was interesting to note that majority [35.87%] of the respondents were semi-skilled, and the least response (8.15%) of the respondents was unemployed.The majority [40.22%] of respondents indicated that they

earned Php5,000 per month, and the least (1.63%) of respondents earned up to more than Php2,000 a month. Understandably, income plays a major role in people's perception and choices regarding tourism related matter.

| Indicators | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Protection of the security/tourism from locals and other visitors. | 105 | 20.63% |
| Protecting the destination reputation | 102 | 20.04% |
| Protecting the visitors/traveller from the industry itself. | 100 | 19.65% |
| Protecting the tourism environment. | 107 | 21.02% |
| Protecting destinations from risk and from possible litigation. | 95 | 18.66% |
| **Total** | **509** | **100** |

**Table 3 Respondents' Understanding of the Tourist Safety and Security**

Table 3 shows the respondents' understanding of the tourist safety and security. It can be gleaned from the table that the majority (21.01%) of the respondents' response were protecting the tourism environment whereas the least response (18.66%) of the respondents was protecting destination from risk and from possible litigation. The findings are supported by United Nation Environment Program (UNEP), (2001) state that the quality of the environment, both natural and man-made, is essential to tourism. It is a way to raise awareness of environment values and it can serve as a tool to protection of natural areas and in increase their economic importance.

| Indicators | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Protected travelling arrangement for tourist | 107 | 16.49% |
| Visible presence of police in most tourist area | 118 | 18.18% |
| Transportation of tourist in hired motor cars | 81 | 12.48% |
| Transportation in or usage of public transport by tourist | 67 | 10.32% |
| Presence of police stations in tourist areas | 104 | 16.02% |
| Visit to crowded public areas such as the beach, supermarkets. | 67 | 10.32% |
| Availability of tourist information centers. | 50 | 7.70% |
| Providing a welcoming a friendly atmosphere to visitors. | 55 | 8.47% |
| **Total** | **649** | **100** |

**Table 4: Respondents' Descriptionof a Safe and Secure Tourist Environment**

In this study, tourists were asked to describe what they perceived as a safe and secure environment. Table 4 shows that majority of tourists (118 or 18.18%)described tourism safety and security when there is a visible presence of police in most tourist area. This finding was supported on the Problem-oriented policing (POP) Conference (2016) when they cite that police representative should participate on tourism bards and work with hotel/motel, convention, and visitors bureaus to understand tourism-related problems and concerns, and to develop joint crime prevention program. Police should provide on-going information about local crime to tourism official.

| Indicators | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| National Government | 82 | 15.59% |
| Provincial Government | 70 | 13.31& |
| Local Government | 103 | 19.58% |
| Private Sector Agencies | 43 | 8.17% |
| PNP | 93 | 17.68% |
| Community Agencies | 16 | 3.04% |
| Travel and Tourism Agencies | 65 | 12.36% |
| Labor Organization | 30 | 5.70% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| General Public themselves | 24 | 4.56% |
| **Total** | **526** | **100** |

**Table 5: Key Player Responsible for Providing Tourist Safety and Security in the Municipality of San Agustin**

Table 1 shows based on the respondents' perception, the Local Government Unit (103 or 19.58%) should be the prime responsible for tourist safety and security**.** This is followed by the Philippine National Police (93 or 17.68%), National Government (82 or 15.59%), Provincial Government (70 or 13.31%), Travel and Travel Agencies (65 or 12.36%, Private Sector Agencies (43 or 8.17%), Labor Organization (30 or 5.70%), General Public (24 or 4.56%) and Community Agencies (16 or 3.04%). The findings imply that everybody has role in securing safety in tourism. Tourist arrival translates into additional local livelihood and income. This may mean better life for everyone. Hence, tourism safety and security is a general concern.

| Indicators | Frequency | Percentage | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Education and training of people | 130 | 13.24% | 1 |
| Creation of more and better jobs | 115 | 11.71% | 4 |
| Safe and secure transport facilities | 126 | 12.83% | 2 |
| Making and promotion of tourism | 104 | 10.59% | 7 |
| Improve the culture of tolerance | 120 | 12.22% | 3 |
| Increasing tourism awareness and benefits | 108 | 11.00% | 5 |
| Involvement of the community in tourism related matters | 107 | 10.90% | 6 |
| Regional co-operation in tourism related matters | 82 | 9.16% | 8 |
| Internationalization of tourism in local areas | 82 | 8.35% | 9 |
| **Total** | **982** | **100** | |

**Table 6 Vital Means of Improving the Tourism Safety and Security in the Municipality of San Agustin**

Table 6 shows the vital means of improving the tourism safety and security in the municipality of San Agustin. Majority (13.24%) of the respondents responded that "Education and training of people" is the primary vital means of improving Tourism safety and Security whereas the internationalism of tourism in local areas get the lowest response (8.35%). The results are supported by Zanzibar Tourism, (2006), the development of tourism personnel is deeply related to the educational and training levels of a country. Since problem cannot be solved overnight, it is essential to deal with the issue with a long term perspective. Establishing a tourism training, research and statistic unit within the Commission for Tourism, responsible for identifying and prioritizing training needs, formulating the curricula, standard and syllabi for tourism training at all leveling and to develop joint crime prevention programs should be prioritize. Police should provide on-going information about local crime to tourism officials.

| Indicators | Frequency | Percentage | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overcrowding in facilities | 110 | 17.24% | 1 |
| Very high cost of living | 90 | 14.11% | 4 |
| Uncontrolled crime situation | 103 | 16.14% | 3 |
| Uncontrolled unemployment | 84 | 13.17% | 5 |
| Poor publicity about tourism crime | 73 | 11.44% | 6.5 |
| Lack if good policing practice | 105 | 16.46% | 2 |
| Poor security in transport provision | 73 | 11.44% | 6.5 |
| **Total** | **638** | **100** | |

**Table 7 Important Factors that Contribute to the Decline or Failure of the Tourism Safety and Security**

The table 7 presents the most important factors that contribute to the decline or failure of the tourism safety and security. In this regard, majority (17.24%) of the respondents answered that overcrowding in facilities is the top reason while were the poor security in transport provision and poor publicity

about tourism crime gets the lowest response (11.44%). The results are supported by Ivanonic & Khunou, et.al, (2009) cited that overcrowding, misuse of natural resources, the construction of buildings and infrastructure, and other activities associated with tourism, produce impacts on the environment. These impacts may be not only physical, but also cultural.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, respondents associated tourism safety and security to the protection of the tourism environment or the tourist destinations. This response was a clear indication that the respondents seemed to be aware and understood what a safe and secure tourism environment actually meant. The key players responsible for providing tourist safety and security were the Local Government Unit (LGU). The reason for this was that, LGUs had great involvement in tourism. This indicated that LGUs were the major intermediary in channeling the framework of government into individual community, which involved the tourists, in order to create beneficial outcome. In this matter, they were more involved in sustainable tourism development which referred to the management of all resources that meet the needs of tourists such as safety and security of the environment. The vital means of improving tourism safety and security was through education and training of people. This factor indicated that education might increase awareness in promoting tourism safety and security where community involvement was ensured through policing forum, trainings and seminars in long term perspective. The greatest factor that contributed to the decline or failure of tourism safety and security was the overcrowding of tourism facility. This only indicated that the impact of tourism safety and security varied according to the number of tourists arrivals because too many tourists might reduce or to loose safety and security of tourism.

## REFERENCES

[1] Breda, (2005): " Safety and Security issues affecting Inbound Tourism in the People's Republic of china.
[2] DOT MC No. (2006_09)- Adaptation of Safety and security measures in hotels, resorts and other similar accommodation establishments. Mthembu, (2009) Tourism crime safety and security in the municipality Kwazulu-natal Security Matters, (2014) Hotel Security Tips
[3] http://www.zanzibartourism.net/docs/policystatement.pdf
[4] http://securitymatters.com.ph/accommodations-security-managers-making-it-more-safe-in-the-philippines-7861/#sthashgxfOnipm.dpuf
[5] http://ww.mindanews.com/top-stories/2014/10/24/safety-security-always-a-concern-bimp-eaga-touriam-officials
[6] http://securitymatters.com.ph/security-profession-for-the-next-generation-378#sthash.mtUxsYca.dpuf-
[7] http://www.popcenter.org/problems/crimes_agiants_tourists/3
[8] http://portals.iucn.org/library/efiles/html/tourism/section6.html
[9] https://www.google.com.ph/search?biw=1304&bih=667&g=the+role+of+government+in+tourism+development&revid=1755084154&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi0oZ6Q_InLAhUDE5QKHQa3Dq8Q1QlleigA
[10] http://www2.gsid.agoya-u.ac.jp/blog/anda/files/201108/5-rolesjaviere38080.pdf

★★★