



**COVID-19 PANDEMIC STRATEGIC RESPONSE OF SELECTED
TOURISM SERVICE IN DARAGA, ALBAY**

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ABSTRACT

Tourism services are any service offered to tourists that are linked with accommodation, food, transportation, events, tour guiding and any activities offered mainly to tourists. This study aimed to determine the strategic response to Covid-19 pandemic of tourism services in the municipality of Daraga, Albay. Along with this is classifying the selected tourism services into food, accommodation, events and activities, followed by identifying the challenges encountered by the tourism services on their service and operations, economic resources and human resource. This study used qualitative research design and provide the respondents with interview questions for gathering the data needed. The findings in this research revealed that the selected seven tourism services in Daraga which are the respondents of this study, experienced identical challenges brought by the pandemic. The challenges include the loss of customer and income, closure of the establishments, decrease in number of employees that cause by either lack of financial support or mental and emotional stress and the shutdown of the operations. In addition, this study's conclusion shows that the strategic response each tourism service implemented are almost same to the others despite of their differences in service offered before and during the pandemic.

Keywords: *Strategic Response, COVID19 Pandemic, Tourism Services, Economic Resources, Human Resource*

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism services are anywhere there's tourism. As long as people travel, tourist services will be there. Considering the pandemic's global influence, many things have altered in the tourist industry's operations, economy, and people (UNWTO, 2020). How should tourist services adapt strategically to the pandemic?

Tourism services vary by what they give guests or tourists. Tourism includes hotels, restaurants, travel companies, and events (World Trade Organization, 2022). Hotels are an accommodation service. They house and care for guests throughout their stay. Some sell food and beverages, while others feature gyms and pools. Given the number of services they supply, the pandemic should have a large effect. Food tourism includes restaurants. These restaurants provide foods and drinks to tourists and consumers. Due of this, they are predicted to be most impacted by pandemic-related concerns with raw supplies and components.

Tourism services include festivals and religious events. These events may draw individuals from far away. Because to the community lockdown in various places and provinces, certain activities were postponed or canceled. Along with this, tourism activity facilities have closed, frustrating owners, operators, and tourists who wished to enjoy them.

Covid 19 weakened the world's tourist economy. Travel restrictions and community lockdown caused various sub-challenges for tourist service companies. With foreign travel prohibitions impacting 90% of the world's population and significant restrictions on public gatherings and communal mobility, tourism practically ended in March 2020. (Gossling et al., 2020).

Amid the epidemic, tourist services in the Philippines face several obstacles. Tourism demand is dropping, personnel are being laid off, online/digital transactions are expanding, guests are avoiding hotel rooms utilized as quarantine facilities, and disaster management and control

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measures are being followed. These problems reduce tourism, which hurts the country's economy.

During the pandemic's progress, individuals devised ways to survive. Tourism was severely damaged by the Covid 19 epidemic. Tourism services adapted to survive and recover. The tourist sector may grow by investigating local tourism, educating staff in digital services and security, reorganizing the organization, improving business settings, and familiarizing itself with new technology (Andulana et al., 2021). In Bicol, several tourist services and companies have challenges and are considering closing permanently. Despite this, tourist managers and owners performed their jobs.

The researchers chose this study to determine the strategic reactions of Daraga's tourist services to the obstacles they faced during the pandemic and to develop a strategy for what to do if this happens again. It will improve tourist management, the economy, and the tourism sector everywhere.

MATERIALS and METHODS

Researchers utilized a survey and interview guide to acquire data. The first section of the instrument is a questionnaire used to identify respondents and the sort of tourist service they handle, such as Name of the respondents/ participants (optional), name of the institution, designation, and type of tourism service/s. Next are interview questions based on the study's goals. Can you describe the obstacles during a pandemic in terms of services and operations, fiscal resources, and human resources? First and second objectives will be based on interview replies, while the third will be based on both interview responses and researcher evaluations.

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This research was qualitative. Qualitative research design answers how and why questions about a phenomena. The paper investigates the problems that affected Daraga's tourist services during the pandemic and identifies their strategic remedies.

The researchers employed phenomenology to detect and analyse tourist services throughout the epidemic. By employing this study approach, the researchers can analyze the phenomena, identify the issues it brought to Daraga's tourist services, and establish each service's strategic response.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this part, the findings that were acquired from the data are discussed, and they are based on the replies that were given by the respondents. The display of the data follows the sequence that was established in accordance with the problem statement. The purpose of the research will serve as the guideline for the presentation of the data. It will be divided into 4 sections, the first of which will discuss the categorization of tourist services into those pertaining to dining, lodging, events, and activities. The next section, which will come after this one, will cover the difficulties that tourist services faced at the height of the pandemic in terms of their operations, economic resources, and human resources. In the third section, information will be presented regarding the strategic measures that tourist services implemented in order to deal with and survive the effect that the Covid 19 epidemic had on them. In the last section, the researchers will provide their recommended short-term strategic plan in line with the findings of the study, which will be shown in the fourth portion.

The discussion that follows presents all of the data that was collected from the proprietors and managers of tourist services as well as from the authorities of the local government who participated in this study. In order to comply with the requisite number of respondents for the

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research technique utilized in this study, the only tourist services in the municipality of Daraga that were chosen to participate as respondents in this study are those services. In addition to this, it was based on the evaluation of the availability of other tourist service establishments as well as their unwillingness to participate in this study. In this study, the interviewees are supposed to be the owners or managers of each tourism service establishment; however, due to their hectic schedules, some of them have allowed their staffs to handle the interview provided that their staffs are knowledgeable of the things that are being asked. This study aims to investigate the relationship between tourism service establishments and customer satisfaction.

CONCLUSIONS

After analyzing the acquired data, understanding the nature of the issue and the impact it has, making use of the research methodologies and procedures, and doing a thorough assessment of the relevant articles and literature, the researchers of this study came to the findings that are presented here. The tourist services that are offered in Daraga, Albay may be divided into various categories, some of which include lodging, dining, tourism-related activities, and events. The FJ Manila Hotel and the Casa Bicolandia Suites are considered to be part of the lodging options, whilst the Red Labuyo and Balay sa Bikol are considered to be part of the dining options. The Mayon SkyDrive ATV Adventure is within the category of tourist activities, and Daraga's municipal government is responsible for organizing the festivities associated with the activity. Some of these tourist services are controlled by the owners, while others are handled by managers and others are overseen by authorities working for the government. During the peak of the pandemic, the tourism services in Daraga, Albay were faced with a number of difficulties. These included the establishments being forced to close, a drop in the number of customers and revenue, an increase in the amount of money spent, restrictions imposed as a result of the lockdown, issues regarding the behavior of employees, and mental and emotional problems among workers. Taking part in or doing other businesses to earn money, creating a strategic plan

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that can be use for the survival and recovery of the business, proper allocation of on-hand fund, looking for the best time to re-open the establishment, handling the employees' mental and emotional issues thoroughly, making a strategic plan that can be used for the survival and recovery of the business, and engaging in or doing other types of service like food deliveries for restaurants are the strategic responses that the tourism services use to cope with the challenges that they have encountered. These approaches may assist any kind of company, not only those in the tourist industry, in coping with, surviving, and recovering from the obstacles brought about by the Covid 19 epidemic.



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