

THE IMPACT OF LOCAL AUTONOMY ON THE WASTE MANAGEMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN PUERTO PRINCESA CITY

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ABSTRACT

The City of Puerto Princesa is known to be a recipient hall of fame award for the Cleanest and Greenest component City in the Philippines. In the past, the presence of environmental disturbances through various forms of irresponsible land conversions is manifested. Inefficient implementation of solid waste management, lack of cooperation from the concerned communities and the absence of Comprehensive Land Use Plan are become drivers to review waste management campaign of the City. In this paper, the contribution of Solid Waste Management initiatives for sustainable tourism of the City is defined following the policy analysis framework of Patton & Sawicki (1993). Data correspondence and key informant interviews were conducted on 2015. Results showed that in 1992, the local government of Puerto Princesa have put forward the strict implementation of the City Ordinance No. 163-91 or otherwise known as the Anti-Littering Campaign. The continued inevitable drives of general public have significantly changed the social behavior of the City's populace. This has made its way for the inclusion in the Special Zone of Peace and Development by virtue of Executive Order No. 371 and achieved numerous environmental development recognitions. The contribution for sustainable tourism development is likewise presented.

Keywords: Sustainable tourism, policy implementation, solid waste management, anti-littering, governance.

INTRODUCTION

The Island of Palawan as the "*Country's Last Frontier*" cradles the "*City in a Forest*," the City of Puerto Princesa (Jayagoda, 2015). With the implementation of the Republic Act 7160 or the Local Government Code of 1991, the City was able to gain local autonomy in formulating policies and programs for the development of the City. The enactment of the Republic Act 7611 or the Strategic Environmental Plan (SEP) Law granted the city to implement ordinances that will suffice the needs of its people. One of the ordinances that were implemented in the City is in relation to waste management The City council implemented the City Ordinance No. 163-91 otherwise known as the Anti-Littering Ordinance on June 25, 1991. SEP Law also gave the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) to mandate the Republic Act 9003 or "Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000."

In 1992, the city has suffered environmental degradation and abuse of natural resources because of self-interest and uncooperative communities. This prompted the Local

Government to provide proper management and implement policies that will help conserve its natural resources which made the City to a model for Sustainable Development.

Jayagoda (2015) considered ecotourism as major soft-impact activities and economic upliftment of the local government while taking care of their rich natural resources, The spark on tourism was launch the autonomy of the local government to manage the famous Puerto Princesa Underground River (PPUR) of the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park (PPSRNP), a United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization UNESCO heritage site declared in 1999. The PPSRNP was also declared as one of the New Seven Wonders of Nature by the New 7 Wonders Foundation (Rosero, 2012).

The Anti-Littering ordinance forms the legal framework of the Local Government to create the Oplan Linis Program. The program became successful in terms of promoting cleanliness in the city because of the practices that were done and the cooperation of the citizens resulting to the attraction of tourists in the city because of its cleanliness. Thus, it is in line of reference that this paper considers promoting in dissemination of the solid waste management campaign impact on sustainable tourism development in the Country.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted through literature review on the progress of the City of Puerto Princesa from the date that the City Ordinance No. 163-91 was implemented. Online publications, related articles, and previous studies about the history of the City's waste management system were reviewed and analyzed in relation to public policy. The implementation of City Ordinance No. 163-91 will be the sole basis of public policy. Policy analysis process, according to Patton & Sawicki (1993), is done in a more basic way that it is justified for a one-time local problem where the cost of a large-scale study would exceed the benefit from the precise solution or where for political reasons the best technical alternative has little chance of being adopted. This defines that the study focused only to the City Ordinance No. 163-91 which gave birth to the City Ordinance No. 640 which implements the effects of the latter to the tourism establishments in the City of Puerto Princesa.

Study Site

The Puerto Princesa is located at the heart of Palawan comprising of 35 urban and 31 rural barangays. It is part of the Tourism Development Areas (TDA) identified by the Department of Tourism (DOT).

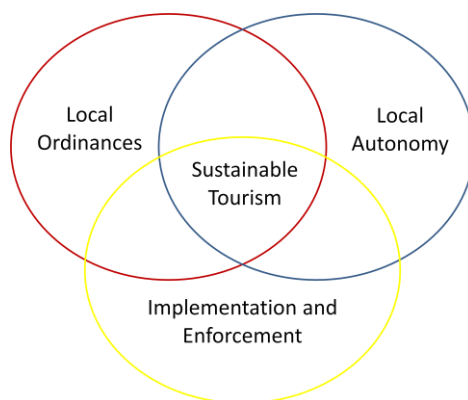


Figure 2. Study Conceptual Framework

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementing the Anti-Littering Ordinance

On June 25, 1991 the Sangguniang Panglungsod of the City drafted and initiated the implementation of the Ordinance No. 163-91 or otherwise known as “*An ordinance prohibiting the dumping of waste refuse, garbage, non-biodegradable objects and other waste materials in any place in the street and other places no otherwise designated as dumping place and providing penalties thereof.*” According to Section 3 of the ordinance, “*it shall be unlawful for any person to dump, place throw or scatter waste refuse, garbage materials, papers, cigarette butts, non-biodegradable objects and other waste materials in any public facilities such as buildings, streets, parks and other places not designed as dumping place*”. But this behavioral change was not adopted directly by the communities. It was in 1992, that the Local Government utilized the Anti-littering act as a basis to create the Oplan Linis Program, one of the most successful programs that were implemented by the City on waste management. This program was designed to promote awareness on cleanliness and proper waste disposal in classrooms and offices within the city’s jurisdiction. The Oplan Linis program started in public schools in the City, reaching younger generation on the proper garbage disposal or waste segregation in designated areas. Positive reinforcement by means of incentive system are conducted which greatly to promote and instill the knowledge on the importance of proper waste disposal. According to Baranek (1996), the use of reward-system on students helps them motivate to reach achievements and proper behavior. The solution to this lack of motivation is to create classrooms and follow practices that will enhance the improvement of its motivation.

The local officials realized that if this could be done at the early stage of academic development, the initiative can also be replicated to the entire populace of the City. As a result, the administration started to enforce the implementation of the waste management campaign with the cooperation of the citizens. The enactment of the City Ordinance No. 163-91 or the “Anti-Littering Ordinance Campaign” has put forward the utilization of waste segregation with the installation of garbage bins in the strategic places. The World Health Organization (2010) advocates the importance of having proper garbage bins and trashcans in promoting safety and cleanliness in a home or workplace. This Ordinance was approved on July 19, 1991 but was fully implemented in 1992 with the strong political will of the administration which significantly restructured the Puerto Princesa City into a model City for sustainable development.

A constant public information and policy review of the local officials makes the implementation well-built for the society. In 2014, the City Information Office built and installed signage of the Ordinances in strategically areas. This brings a direct clear reminder to the citizens about the importance and benefits of a clean city. Notwithstanding the impartiality on behavioral change, an immediate turn out of positive change was fully achieved in short period of time (Puerto Princesa, 2015). The City's commitment for the continued efforts on its strict policy to promote cleanliness have resulted to Puerto Princesa to obtain a hall of fame awards on the "Cleanest and Greenest Component City" from 1994-1996. Montegro (2012) recognized that Puerto Princesa City is the first city in the country and in Southeast Asia to be declared carbon-neutral under guidelines set by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Successful implementation of campaign now focuses on its sustainability and in promoting its alternate major source of income through the tourism industry. The residents were aware that the City is a paradise for tourists thus the maintenance of its cleanliness and natural beauty will help to sustain their source of livelihoods (Jayagoda, 2015).

Role in sustainable tourism

Since the tourism industry creates the chance to develop new opportunities for improvements and job creation that benefits not only the guests but also the local communities around it (Kreag, 2001). Because of this, the tourists were attracted for the cleanliness of the city. Aside from the fact that the Puerto Princesa Underground River is also found in the area, tourists were enjoying the view of a clean city meaning that cleanliness is a factor for tourist attraction in the city. Since sustainable tourism began in the City, the local government implemented the Ordinance No. 640 which applies the effects of the whole Ordinance No. 163-91 to all tourism establishments in the city, whether public or private. The campaign has been accompanied by increased provision of garbage receptacles and a local cleanliness competition between each Barangay. A disincentive prize is given to the dirtiest Barangay, and a monetary prize is given to the winner (Daquer, 2008).

In the year 2012, the city of Puerto Princesa's major tourist spot: Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park (PPSRNP) was declared as one of the new seven wonders of nature (Rosero, 2012). In order to maintain and support the cleanliness in the tourism industry of the city, the Sangguniang Panglungsod executed the Ordinance No. 640 or referred to as the "An ordinance mandating the posting of Ordinance No. 163-91 in all tourism related establishments within the jurisdiction of the City." The role of this ordinance is to "inculcate in the hearts and minds of the visitors/tourists who sojourn in the City the discipline that the Puerto Princesans have acquired in complying with the subject Ordinance." Tourists are becoming interested in the city due to its environment that is rich, natural, and clean. Jayagoda (2015) further stated that this is the reason why they want to visit and the locals gaining a better perspective in appreciating their city's natural environment.

The Oplan Linis Program contributed for sustaining the ecotourism of Puerto Princesa City. According to Mercado (1998), the city was reinstated from a known prison-camp and mosquito-infested community into one of the major tourist destinations in the country. This transition phase of the city also changed its citizen's perspective about environmental awareness as well as conservation and preservation of natural resources of the city. The program comprises of several sub-categories that aims to promote and maintain cleanliness in

the City. It is important that the certain regulations must be implemented since tourism can also harm the environment through waste and pollution (Kreag, 2001).

Impact to the City

With the implementation of the anti-littering ordinance, the city of Puerto Princesa was able to receive prestigious awards and recognitions from both national and international organizations. During the first term of the administration it received a total of 7 awards from 1992-1995, the local government got another 5 awards on its second term. The table below reflects the awards received by the City after the implementation of the Anti-Littering Ordinance. In the Span of 7 years, the Puerto Princesa gained a total of 12 awards from 1993-1997.

Year	Award	Given By
1993	Earth Day Award	Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)
1994	Best Tourist Destination in the Philippines	Travel Mart
1994	Macli-ingDulag Environmental Achievement Award	Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation and Department of Interior and Local Government
1994-1996	Award of Excellence: Cleanest and Greenest Component City of the Philippines	H.E. Fidel V. Ramos
1995	Cleanest and Greenest City in Region IV	Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG)
1995	Cleanest Inland Body of Water, Region IV	Department of Interior and Local Government
1995	GantimpalangPanglingkod (Galing-Pook) Award For: OplanLinis Program	Asian Institute of Management in coordination with the Local Government Academy, Awarded by H.E. Fidel V. Ramos
1995	Green Banner Awardee (MIMAROPA)	Department of Interior and Local Government
1996	Hall of Fame Award – Clean and Green Program	
1996	LikasYaman Awards For Environmental Excellence	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
1996	Management Awards of Asia	Asian Institute of Management In cooperation with the Far Eastern Economic Review and Management Association of the Philippines
1996	Most Active Proponent of Coastal Clean-Up	H.E. President Fidel V. Ramos
1997	Global 500 Roll of Honour Award (United Nations Environment Programme)	UNEP Executive Director Elizabeth Dowdeswell

Source: www.puertoprincesa.ph & www.puertoprincesaphilippines.com

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Government of Puerto Princesa City was able to effectively implement its local ordinance which resulted to the recognition of the city and the different awards that the city

received. The evident practices and consistent implementation of the both City Ordinance No. 163-91 and 640 resulted to the spark of interest of the tourist to visit the City other than its ecotourism sector. The Puerto Princesa City has served as a model for a clean and green city to other cities and/or municipalities around the country. Through the use of strong implementation such as the practice of proper garbage disposal, building signage, and imposing level of penalties to those who violated the ordinance, the cleanliness of the city has been maintained. In order to promote a clean sustainable tourism in the city, the City Council implemented the City Ordinance No. 640. This implemented the practice of the anti-littering ordinance to the tourism establishments both public and private around the jurisdiction of the city.

It is recommended that the local government should continue to practice that has been done for the past two decades. Whether it is a new administration or not, the city has to be open and be consistent to implement these ordinances and if there is a need to amend it, because a clean city is a part of sustainable tourism that will attract socio-economic development for the city. The best practices should be replicated in other neighboring towns to have more resilient socio-environmental communities.

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