

Ifugao State University College of Arts and Sciences Exploring Tourists' Perceptions of the Esthetic Value of Ifugao Rice Terraces in the Cordillera Region

A Research Study

Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management

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ENDORSEMENT

This is to certify that the research study entitled **EXPLORING TOURISTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE ESTHETIC VALUE OF IFUGAO RICE TERRACES IN THE CORDILLERA REGION** prepared and submitted by **CRISTY D. ATTAM, DESIREE G. BANITON, MICAH T. CABBIGAT, SHERLY MAE F. CADDAWAN, J. LOBHOY** and **CZENRIO U. TUMITIT** for the degree **BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN TOURISM MANAGEMENT** has been examined and is recommended for acceptance and approval for oral examination.

JAMES C. LOBHOY
Adviser

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DEDICATION

This research paper is dedicated to the parents of the researchers who gave their utmost support, and never-ending inspiration throughout the study. They are the ones who provide the resources that are needed in the making of this study.

It is also dedicated to the research adviser James C. Lobhoy who is behind in making this research possible by guiding the researchers to complete this study.

The researchers would also like to dedicate this study to Ifugao State University Tourism, BS Management Programs which gives the opportunity researchers to nurture, and test their skills, and cooperation to build this study.

We look up and dedicate this whole study to our Almighty God who gave us the strength, knowledge, wisdom, protection, and will continue and keep positive to finish this research.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the multifaceted factors that influence tourists' perceptions of the aesthetic value of Ifugao Rice Terraces, such as their cultural background, previous knowledge, and personal experiences. A randomized controlled trial was conducted with 40 participants who had already been and experienced the natural beauty of the destination.

The researchers have two instruments that are being applied interview and survey questionnaire. Results indicated that the scene and landscape of the terraces, genuineness and legibility of the terraces, and naturalness, authenticity, and integrity of the terraces are factors that are extremely influential in the perception of tourists in the aesthetic of Ifugao rice terraces.

These findings suggest that all these factors should be maintained in the area for these are the reasons why tourists love and visit Ifugao Rice Terraces. Correspondingly, these show that these factors are indeed a characteristic of Ifugao rice terraces. Findings reveal the significant role of cultural value, environmental conditions, accessibility, infrastructure, social media marketing, and personal preferences in influencing tourists' perceptions of the terraces' aesthetic value.

The study contributes to the understanding of heritage tourism management and provides insights for sustainable development strategies aimed at enhancing tourists' experience and appreciation of cultural landscapes like the Ifugao Rice Terraces.

Keywords: Aesthetic Value, Tourists' Perceptions, Conservation, Sustainable Development, Preservation.

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

➤ *Background of the Study*

The tourism industry is vibrant and ever evolving, with significant impacts on individuals and economies. For travelers, it offers lasting memories and happiness, while for businesses and destinations, it serves as a vital source of revenue and jobs. As tourism continues to expand, the academic discipline of tourism studies has also evolved to keep pace with its increasing importance (Inskon & Minnaert, 2022).

Tourist attractions are widely acknowledged as key factors influencing a destination's competitiveness. With the global tourism market becoming increasingly competitive, destinations face significant pressure to revitalize and improve their appeal to maintain competitiveness (Kresic, 2011).

In order for a destination to be successful, sustainable, and viable, it is important to identify the attributes that lead tourists to choose one destination over another. Kresic and Prebezac (2011) indicate that research on destination attractiveness is closely linked to the examination of destination image, as these concepts are closely intertwined and conceptually connected. The perception of destination attractiveness is significantly shaped by the destination image, and conversely, the destination image is influenced by the perceived attractiveness of the destination.

According to Molina et al. (2010), destination image is widely acknowledged as a crucial element in effective tourism management and destination promotion. Information regarding a particular tool for the tourism industry plays a pivotal role in shaping the destination's image.

The combined tourist destination offering shapes the tourist experience, and enhancing it aids in the growth and competitiveness of the destination. Hence, the tourist experience is deemed essential for the prosperity of the tourist destination (Pavlovic et al., 2016).

A tourist's engagement with a destination's surroundings and their personal interpretation of what they observe and perceive may influence their overall satisfaction with the trip. When individuals plan leisure travel, they look for destinations that in their view, offer the best chance for a pleasurable experience (Lue, Crompton, & Feawnmaier). One aspect contributing to this pleasure is the visual appeal of the destination. Tourism management studies recognize that aesthetic features impact tourist's experiences and contentment, thereby fostering loyalty to a destination (Lee et al., 2011).

The Banaue rice, situated in the Philippines, are remarkable feat of agricultural engineering, often dubbed the "Eight Wonder of the World". Carved into the mountains, these ancient terraces are celebrated for their cultural and aesthetic importance. Their intricate patterns seamlessly blend with the natural landscape, showcasing the craftsmanship of the Ifugao people and embodying a sustainable harmony between human culture and the environment. Thus, beyond their visual allure, they hold profound cultural significance.

➤ *Statement of the Problem*

Generally, this study aimed to identify the perceptions of local and foreign tourists regarding the aesthetic value of Batad Rice Terraces in the Ifugao Province.

➤ *Specifically, this Study sought to Answer the following Specific Questions:*

- *How do tourists perceive the aesthetic value of Ifugao Rice Terraces in terms of:*
 - ✓ Visual appeal
 - ✓ Scenic beauty
 - ✓ Cultural value
- *What are the factors that influence tourists' perceptions of the aesthetic value of Ifugao Rice Terraces, such as their cultural background, previous knowledge, and personal experiences?*
- *How does the aesthetic value of Ifugao Rice Terraces impact tourists' overall satisfaction and likelihood of recommending the destination to others?*
- *Is there a significant correlation between the aesthetic perception of the respondents and demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and nationality?*
- *How can the promotion and preservation of the aesthetic value of Ifugao Rice Terraces be enhanced to attract and satisfy tourists while ensuring the long-term sustainability of the destination?*

➤ *Objective of the Study*

This research objective aided the study in examining tourists' perspectives on the aesthetic value of Ifugao Rice Terraces in the Cordillera Region. By addressing these objectives, the research could provide valuable insight into understanding and enhancing tourists' appreciation of the cultural and natural beauty of this renowned destination.

- To assess tourists' perception of the aesthetic value of Ifugao Rice Terraces in the Cordillera Region.
- To examine the factors that influence tourists' appreciation of the Ifugao Rice Terraces as a destination with aesthetic appeal.
- To explore the impact of the aesthetic value of Ifugao Rice Terraces on tourists' overall satisfaction and intention to revisit.
- To analyze the influence of socio-demographic factors (such as age and nationality) on tourist's perceptions of the aesthetic value of the Ifugao Rice Terraces.
- To identify the key elements and characteristics of the Ifugao Rice Terraces that contribute to their aesthetic appeal from a tourist perspective.

➤ *Significance of the Study*

The result of the study is deemed important to the following:

The **Local/Foreign Tourist** – this study might help the local and foreign tourists to express and state their perspective on the aesthetic value of Ifugao Rice terraces.

The **Community** – especially in Banaue, Ifugao would take this study to educate themselves to promote and preserve the aesthetic value of the rice terraces.

The **LGUs** might craft, create, and propose ordinances that can help in maintaining the natural resources and natural beauty of the sites. Also, to prioritize the budget for maintaining the rice terraces.

The **students** – this study might help students to know more about the aesthetic value of Ifugao Rice Terraces and the tourist perspective. It can also be used as a reference in their academic research to provide information, especially to the BSTM students.

The **Future researchers** – this study might be used by future researchers who wish to study more about the aesthetic value of Ifugao rice terraces.

➤ *Scope and Delimitation of the Study*

This study was focused solely on the municipality of Barangay Batad, Banaue, Ifugao. This was limited only to the tourists in the destination.

➤ *Theoretical Framework*

The following theoretical theories were utilized in this study.

➤ *Cultural Landscape Theory*

Cultural landscape theory examines the intricate interplay between human societies and the natural environment, recognizing that landscapes are not only shaped by physical and ecological factors but also by human activity, cultural values, and social processes. It underscores the significance of how human societies imprint cultural meanings onto the landscapes across different groups, reflecting cultural values, identities, and social norms.

This theoretical framework prevalent in disciplines such as geography, anthropology, and cultural studies, delves into the dynamic relationship between humans and their surroundings. It acknowledges landscapes as active agents in shaping human behavior, beliefs, and social structures rather than mere passive settings. Additionally, cultural landscapes theory prompts inquiries into power dynamics, the preservation of heritage, and the impacts of globalization on traditional landscapes and cultural customs.

➤ *Visual Perception and Cognitive Psychology*

Visual perception refers to the mental process of comprehending visual data received by our eyes, encompassing elements like color, shape, depth, and motion. On the other hand, cognitive psychology explores mental functions such as attention, memory, language, problem-solving, and decision-making.

These two fields, visual perception, and cognitive psychology are closely intertwined. Cognitive psychology investigates how individuals mentally handle and decipher visual data, while visual perception significantly influences various cognitive processes and behaviors. Studies in cognitive psychology have illuminated how the brain analyzes and comprehends visual input, elucidating the impact of attention, memory, and other cognitive functions on our visual perception. For instance, researchers have examined how directing attention affects visual interpretation, altering our perception and understanding of the surrounding environment.

Conversely, investigations into visual perception have enriched cognitive psychology by providing insights into human perception and comprehension. This includes understanding visual illusions, depth perception mechanisms, and the brain's organization of visual data.

In essence, the symbiotic relationship between visual perception and cognitive psychology is a pivotal interdisciplinary field. Both contribute significantly to unraveling how individuals perceive and interact with the visual realm, offering valuable insights into human behavior and cognition.

➤ *Research Paradigm*

The research paradigm shows the variables that are needed in this study. This study utilized the Input-Process-Output Method (IPO). These variables were the key points in order to produce the outcomes. In the process, data were collected through a survey questionnaire, and structured interview, and analyzed through statistical and scientific treatment.

The study hoped to help foreign and local tourist to furnish their problems and other effects needed in the future.

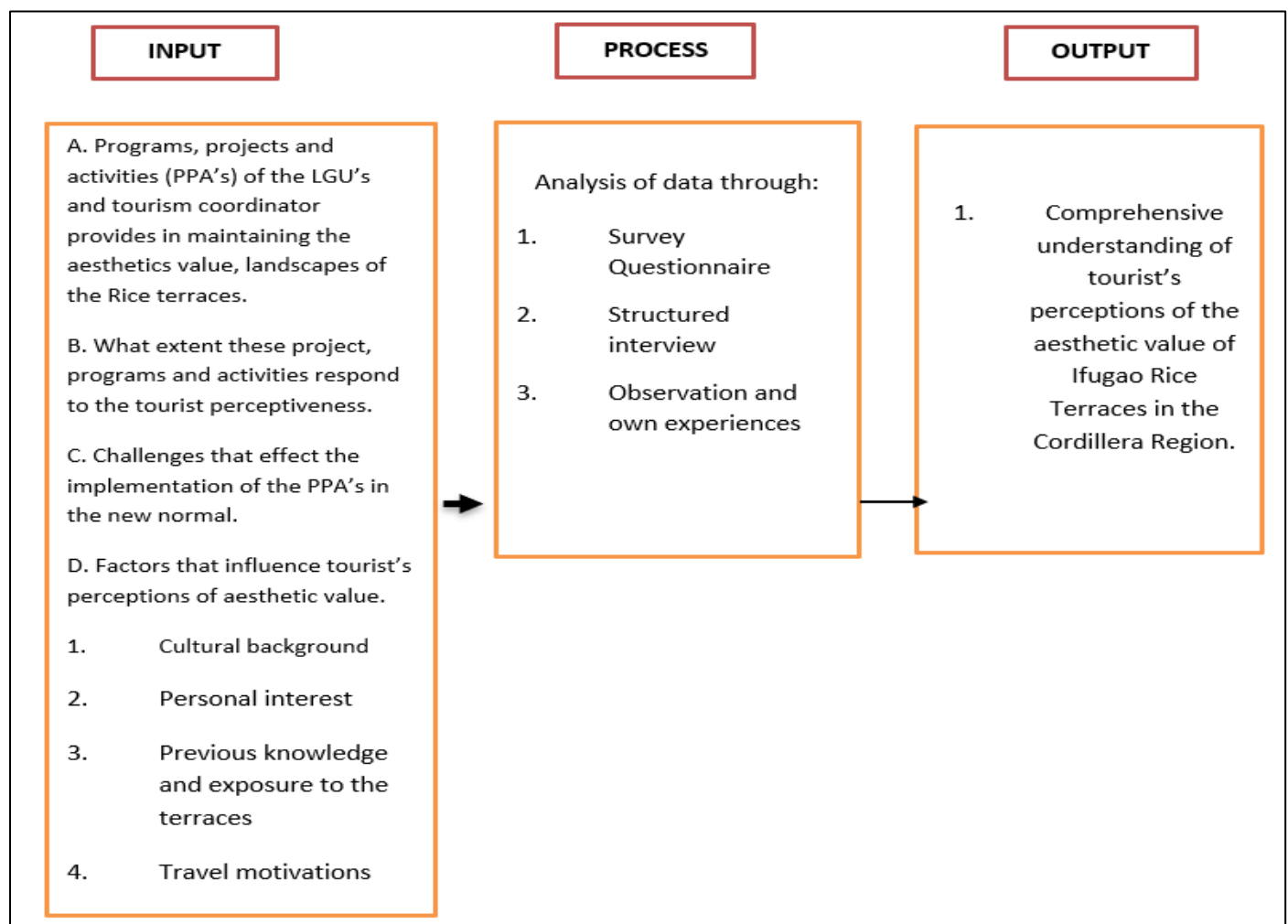


Fig 1 A Research Paradigm of the Study

➤ *Definition of Terms*

- **Aesthetic** – concerned with beauty or the appreciation of beauty in nature.
- **Destination** – the place visited that is central to the decision to take the trip.
- **Foreign** – they are individuals who visit other countries for various purposes such as leisure, sightseeing, entertainment, and knowledge.
- **Local** – travel within one's own neighborhood or region.
- **Perception** – the process by which an individual gives meaning to the environment.
- **Tourist** – a person who travels or visits a place for pleasure.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

➤ *Southeast Asia:*

A region revealed, conveyed that Ifugao Rice Terraces is a World Heritage Site on the southern edge of Luzon's Cordillera Central Mountains is home to a network of 500 years old terraced rice fields that climb steeply up the mountainsides (Bowden et al., 2015). Irrigated by a complex system of water channels, most of the terraces are still farmed by the Ifugao people, descendants of the terrace's ancient builders.

The aesthetic value of the Ifugao Rice Terraces lies not only in their breathtaking beauty but also in the cultural and historical significance they hold. The intricate engineering techniques used by the indigenous Ifugao people to create these terraces over 2,000 years ago showcase their deep connection with the land and their sustainable farming practices. The terraces' harmonious integration into the natural landscape creates a visually stunning panorama that captivates the imagination of visitors.

According to a study by Niu and colleagues (2018), tourists perceive the rice terraces as having high aesthetic value due to their unique and picturesque landscape. The study found that tourists appreciate the terraces for their natural beauty, cultural significance, and the sense of tranquility they provide. Tourists also view the rice terraces as an important and rare cultural landscape, which adds to their aesthetic value.

In another study by Chou and Tsai (2019), they discovered that the beauty of the rice terraces is intricately linked to the indigenous culture and age-old farming methods. Visitors are drawn to these landscapes not solely for their visual allure but also for the cultural significance they embody. Additionally, the study unveiled that tourists view the terraces as emblematic of a symbiotic relationship between humanity and the environment, further enhancing their aesthetic appeal.

Furthermore, Wang and Chen (2017) conducted research underscoring how tourism development influences tourists' perceptions of the aesthetic merit of rice terraces. Their findings indicated that while some visitors esteemed the terraces for their natural and cultural importance, others primarily regarded them as tourist attractions, impacting their assessment of their aesthetic worth.

These investigations indicate that tourists perceive rice terraces as possessing considerable aesthetic value attributed to their natural splendor, cultural significance, and representation of harmonious human-nature coexistence. Moreover, the role of tourism development significantly shapes tourists' views regarding the aesthetic appeal of these terraces.

The research uncovered that tourists highly value the aesthetic appeal of the rice terraces. The intricate design and architectural elegance of the terraces were identified as key elements contributing to their aesthetic charm. Additionally, the cultural and historical significance of the terraces significantly influenced tourists' perceptions of their aesthetic value.

Furthermore, tourists expressed a profound emotional attachment to the rice terraces, describing them as visually mesmerizing and inspiring. The distinctive natural landscape and scenic allure of the terraces were perceived as unparalleled, further enhancing their overall aesthetic value.

In summary, this research offers valuable perspectives on the aesthetic worth of rice terraces through the eyes of tourists, emphasizing the importance of cultural, historical, and natural elements in influencing their perceptions. The findings from this study could contribute to the enhancement of conservation and management initiatives for rice terraces designated as UNESCO World Heritage sites.

CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology used in the study concluded. It contains the research design, research instrument, data gathering procedure, locale of study, respondent of the study, and research instrument.

➤ *Research Design*

The research design fell under the mixed research methods. The qualitative-quantitative study aimed to provide rich data on Ifugao Rice terraces in order to understand and state all the tourist perspectives on the destination. The study assessed the destination's aesthetic value of Rice terraces as perceived by foreign tourists and local tourists. A destination-based survey was conducted employing a structured questionnaire, and interviews. The questionnaire included close-ended and open-ended questions.

➤ *Locale of the Study*

This study was conducted in Barangay Batad, Banaue, Ifugao, one of the eighteen barangays in the municipality of Banaue. It was widely known as the site of the UNESCO World Heritage site, the Batad Rice Terraces which was the main focus of the researchers.

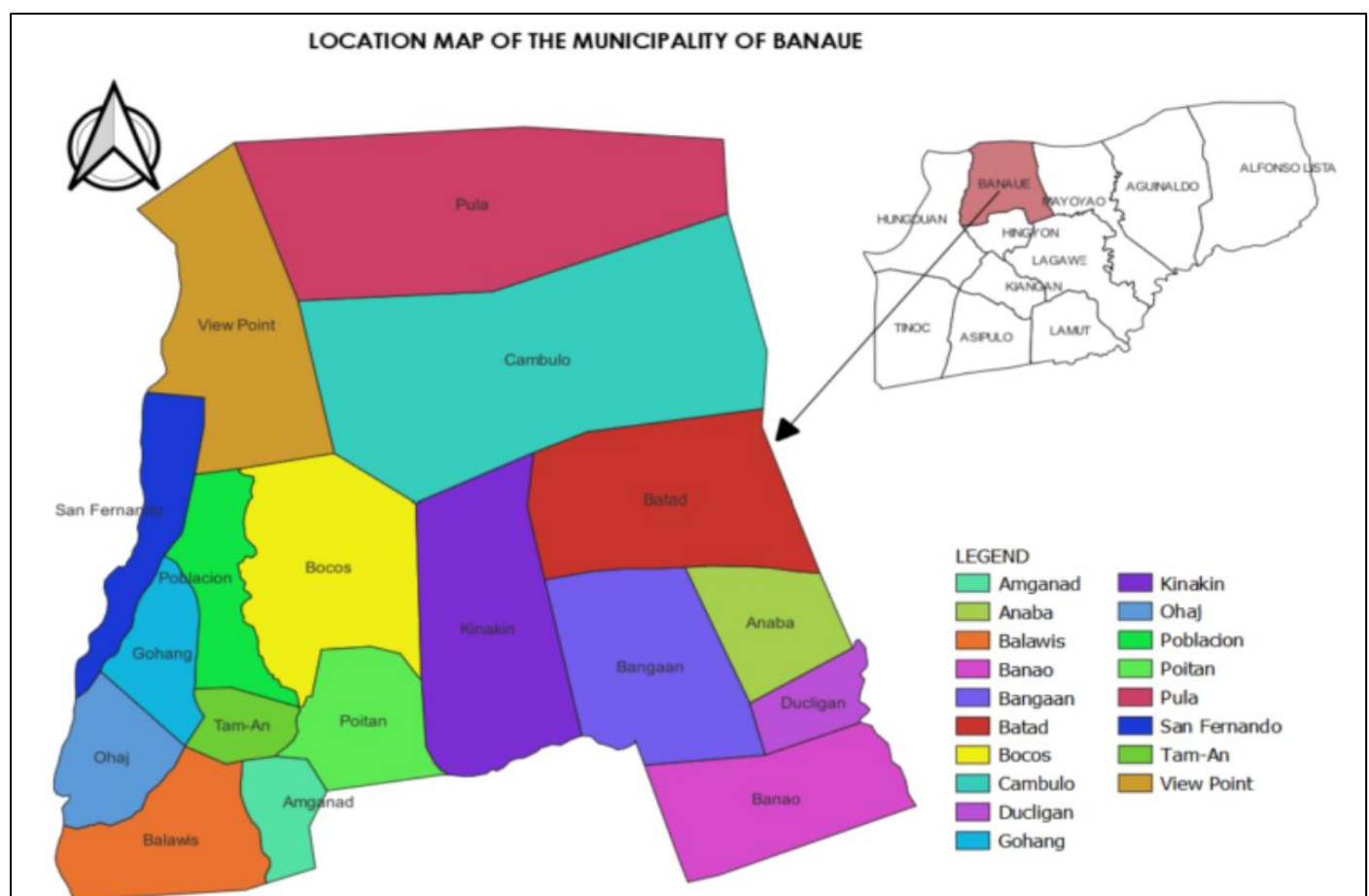


Fig 2 Banaue Ifugao map

➤ *Respondents of the Study*

The research participants and possible respondents were the foreign and local tourists of Ifugao Rice Terraces in Banaue, Ifugao, and other qualified respondents/participants from the research area and those who had already been and experienced the natural beauty of the destination.

➤ *Data Gathering Procedure*

In data gathering, a letter of request to conduct the study was prepared. The researcher then developed their survey questionnaire and interview questions that were validated by their adviser Mr. James C. Lobhoy, Mr. Jude C. Baggo, GIAHS Director, and Miss Eulalie D. Dulnuan. After the questionnaires were approved, the researchers then started their data gathering. The researchers conducted the research in Batad, Banaue, Ifugao. The researchers explained some terms that the respondents couldn't understand so that they would answer with honesty. After the respondents answered the questionnaires and interviews, the researcher collected and tallied the data for interpretation and likewise with the interview. The researchers sought help from the

statistician in determining the appropriate statistical tools to be used in interpreting the data. Based on the data, the researchers came up with conclusions and recommendations for this study. Data gathering for qualitative-quantitative research questions like the tourist perspective on destination aesthetic value on the site, and activities, programs, and projects that the LGUs and under tourism employees implemented to maintain the natural resource and aesthetic value of the rice terraces.

➤ *Data Gathering Tool*

Two instruments were applied interviews and survey questionnaires. The structured interview that is to be prepared by the researchers will be in English and Tagalog validated by the research adviser. Moreover, survey questionnaires were also provided by the researchers in order to distinguish the satisfaction rate of the respondents in Batad Rice terraces.

➤ *Data Analysis – Treatment of Data*

After the data was gathered, the researchers tallied and tabulated it for interpretation. Data were assessed using description statistics such as mean and percentage, to find out the tourists' perception of the aesthetic value of Ifugao Rice Terraces in the Cordillera Region.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

➤ *Profile of the Respondents*

Table 1 presents the frequency and percentage of the profile of respondents in terms of gender, age, and nationality.

Table 1 Profile of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
I. Gender		
Female	18	45 %
Male	22	55%
Total	40	100%
II. Age		
16-30	11	27.5%
31-45	16	40%
46-60	10	25%
61-75	3	7.5%
Total	40	100%
III. Nationality		
Foreign	24	60%
Local	16	40%
Total	40	100%

There are a total of 40 randomly selected respondents for the study. There are 18 females which is 45% of the sample, and 22 male respondents which is also 55% of the respondents. In terms of age, the range is from 16-75. Most of the respondents are in the 31-45 age bracket which is 40% of the sample. There are also 11 respondents in the age bracket of 16-30 which is 27.5% of the sample. There are 10 respondents aged from 46-60 which is 25% of the respondents and 3 respondents aged from 61-75, which is 7.5% of the sample.

The nationality of the respondents is categorized into 2 foreign and local tourists. Foreign tourists are those from different countries whereas local are Filipino tourists from the different provinces of the Philippines. There are a total of 24 foreign respondents which comprises 60% of the sample and 16 local tourists' respondents which is 40% of the sample.

➤ *Correlation of Aesthetic Perception to the Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents*

Table 2 shows the correlation of the overall aesthetic perception to the demographic characteristics such as gender, nationality, and age of the respondents.

Table 2 Correlation of aesthetic perception to the demographic characteristics

Correlations				
		Gender	Nationality	Age
Aesthetic Perception	Pearson Correlation	-.327	-.233	-.156
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.059	.186	.378
	N	40	40	40

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Legend: Perfect: near ± 1 , High degree: $\pm 0.50 - \pm 1$, Moderate degree: ± 0.30 and ± 0.49 , Low degree: below $\pm .29$, No correlation: 0

The above figures indicate a significantly low degree of negative correlation of the respondents' gender ($r = -.327$, $p = .059$) to the aesthetic perception of tourists of Ifugao Rice terraces while nationality ($r = -.233$, $p = .186$) is negatively correlated to the aesthetic perception of tourists of Ifugao Rice Terraces but in a low degree of correlation. Age ($r = -.156$, $p = .378$) on the other hand, has a significant low degree of negative correlation to the aesthetic perception of tourists of Ifugao Rice terraces.

This implies that gender and nationality do not really matter in the aesthetic perception of Ifugao Rice Terraces no matter what your gender and nationality are the aesthetic perception of Ifugao Rice Terraces would still be outstanding. This actually supports the No Discrimination Act. that gender and nationality do not really matter. Also, there were perceptions that millennials don't appreciate nature because they are much more entertained and engaged in shopping malls and gadgets, while adults are wiser and appreciate nature more than the young ones. It is important to note that no matter the age both still appreciate the beauty of Ifugao Rice Terraces.

Gender and Aesthetic perception have a moderate negative correlation which signifies that they have an inverse relationship. It can also be deduced that the perceptions of males and females are indeed different.

➤ *Aesthetic Perception of Ifugao Rice Terraces*

Table 3 presents how tourists perceive the aesthetic value of Ifugao rice terraces in terms of a) visual appeal, b) scenic beauty, and c) Cultural Significance.

Table 3 Aesthetic Perception of Ifugao Rice Terraces

Statement	Mean – (x)	Std. Deviation (SD)	Qualitative Description
How would you rate the visual beauty of the destination	4.74	.4478	Outstanding
How would you view the scenic beauty of the destination	4.79	.4785	Outstanding
How would you assess the cultural value of the destination	4.71	.4624	Outstanding
How would you rate the natural beauty of the destination	4.82	.3869	Outstanding
How would you evaluate the landscape and harmony of the terraces	4.82	.3869	Outstanding
Overall	4.78	0.0430	Outstanding

Legend: Needs improvement: 1.00-1.80; Unsatisfactory: 1.81-2.60; Satisfactory: 2.61-3.40; Very satisfactory: 3.41-4.20; Outstanding: 4.21-5.00

Table 4 presents the aesthetic perception of tourists on Ifugao Rice Terraces in terms of a) visual appeal, b) scenic beauty, and c) cultural significance. The overall mean is $\bar{x} = 4.78$ with an overall standard deviation of 0.0430, shows that the data are clustered tightly around the mean, hence, it is highly reliable that the local and foreign tourists' aesthetic perception of Ifugao Rice terraces is outstanding, which is supplemented by an interview to the respondents. This indicates that the aesthetic of Ifugao rice terraces in a) visual appeal, b) scenic beauty, and c) cultural significance is very remarkable and impressive. The Ifugao Rice Terraces are regarded by Filipinos as the eighth wonder of the world and are almost 2,000 years old. Due to their highest point, these rice terraces in the Asia-Pacific Region are the most well-known, at 1,600 meters above sea level, and are regarded as the largest and best constructed (PHC 1940, as referenced by Gonzalez 2000).

The natural beauty of the destination and the landscape and harmony of the terraces have the highest mean of $\bar{x} = 4.82$, and qualitative description of outstanding. This implies that tourists are mostly attracted to the natural harmony of Ifugao rice terraces. Indeed, there are no artificial trees, artificial flowers, artificial rice, and the like, but purely mud that is well-built and rice that is planted properly. This is evident in the aesthetic perception of the respondents on the scenic view of rice terraces which has a mean of $\bar{x} = 4.79$ which is outstanding. Hence, the visual beauty of rice terraces has a mean of $\bar{x} = 4.74$ which is outstanding.

On the other hand, the cultural value of Ifugao rice terraces is also outstanding with the mean of $\bar{x} = 4.71$. This shows that Ifugao rice terraces is very significant in showing and preserving the culture of the Ifugao people. The terraces serve as evidence of the early Ifugaos' conventional hydraulic and engineering abilities (Dizon, 2012). According to Nozawa (2008), the Rice Terraces of the Philippines and their inhabitants embody the definition of a Category V Protected Landscape, which is defined as "a land area where natural processes and human activity have combined over time to create a distinctive area with high biological diversity, significant aesthetic, ecological, and/or cultural value." It can also be inferred that tourist visits the place not just for its aesthetic but also for its cultural significance.

This suggests that despite the old age and some changes and damages- the terraces are beset by numerous issues, including terraces that have been ruined by pest infestation, a lack of water supply, earthworms, and landslides. These have led to the departure of the terraces, endangering their ability to remain sustainable (Calderon et al.). Its aesthetic beauty is still remarkable and still appreciated by local and foreign tourists, and still attracts a lot of tourists.

➤ *Factors that influence tourist's perception*

Table 4 shows the 7 different factors that influence tourists' perception of the aesthetic of Ifugao rice terraces such as the scene, landscape, genuineness, legibility, naturalness, authenticity, and integrity of the terraces.

Table 4 Factors that Influence Tourist's Perception

Statement	Mean (\bar{x})	Std. Deviation (SD)	Qualitative Description
Scene of the terraces	4.74	.4478	Extremely Influential
Landscape of the terraces	4.76	.4305	Extremely Influential
Genuineness of the terraces	4.76	.4305	Extremely Influential
Legibility of the terraces	4.65	.5439	Extremely Influential
Naturalness of the terraces	4.82	.3869	Extremely Influential
Authenticity of the terraces	4.74	.4478	Extremely Influential
Integrity of the terraces	4.65	.4850	Extremely Influential

Overall	4.73	0.0495	Extremely Influential
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Legend: Not influential at all: 1.00-1.80; somewhat influential: 1.81-2.60; moderately influential: 2.61-3.40; very influential: 3.41-4.20; extremely influential: 4.21-5.00

The table displays the extent of influence of the different factors on the tourists' perception of the aesthetic of Ifugao rice terraces. The overall mean is $\bar{x} = 4.73$ with a qualitative description of extremely influential and a standard deviation of 0.0495 which indicates that the data is highly reliable in terms of dispersion. This implies that the scene and landscape of the terraces, genuineness and legibility of the terraces, and naturalness, authenticity, and integrity of the terraces are factors that are extremely influential in the outstanding (table 5) perception of tourists in the aesthetic of Ifugao rice terraces.

Nevertheless, the naturalness of the terraces has the highest mean which is $\bar{x} = 4.82$ – extremely influential, this implies that it is the most influential among the 6 other factors in the aesthetic perception of tourists of Ifugao rice terraces. It is followed by the landscape and genuineness of the terrace. This proves that the authentic natural beauty of the place affects the perception of the tourists of the place. The scene and authenticity of the terraces are also extremely influential, the naturalness has the greatest impact on the overall beauty of the Ifugao rice terraces.

The data and interview with the respondents signify that all these factors should be maintained in the area for these are the reasons why tourists love and visit Ifugao Rice Terraces. Correspondingly, these show that these factors are indeed a characteristic of Ifugao rice terraces. Experts calculated that over one-third of the terraces had been abandoned, therefore in 2001 the sites were placed on the List of World Heritage Sites in Danger (UNESCO, 2008). The degraded rice terraces are still an issue even though they were removed from the List in Danger in 2012. The several generations of Ifugao who have struggled to preserve its integrity and productivity are the reason the terraces have survived to this day (Dizon et al., 2012). Dizon (2012) also stated that terrace farming is unlike typical farming. physical activity, but rather it's a deeply ingrained cultural practice that the Ifugao people alone are capable of.

➤ *The Aesthetic value of Ifugao Rice Terraces impacts the Tourist's Overall Satisfaction and Likelihood of Recommending the Destination to Others*

- *Feeling of Belongingness to the Destination*

Table 5 shows the belongingness of the tourists to the Ifugao rice terraces and its residents.

Table 5 Feeling of Belongingness to the Destination

Question	Mean (\bar{x})	Std. Deviation (SD)	Qualitative Description
Do you experience a sense of belonging or connection with the residents?	1.06	.2388	Yes
Were there moments where the aesthetics of the terraces made you feel connected to the place?	1	.00000	Yes
Would you recommend visiting the Banaue Rice Terraces to other travelers based on your experience?	1.06	.2388	Yes
Did the intricate design of the rice terraces enhance your overall sense of belongingness?	1.09	.2879	Yes
Overall	1.05	0.1296	Yes

Legend: Yes:1; No:2

Table 6 presents the emotional impact of Ifugao rice terraces and the residents near the area on the tourists, specifically their belongingness. The overall mean $\bar{x} = 1.05$ shows that the tourists have a feeling of belongingness to the place. This is evident in their outstanding perception of the visual appeal, scenic beauty, and cultural significance of Ifugao rice terraces.

Item number 1 *Do you experience a sense of belonging or connection with the residents?* Almost all of the respondents answered yes, this signifies that the respondents experience a sense of belonging or connection not just with the view of the place but even with the residents. Indeed, Filipinos are known to be hospitable and welcoming individuals. On certain occasions, the celebrants are prepared to go above and beyond means, even to the point of taking out loans for products or cash from their friends to provide warm accommodation for their guests. This shows how important for Filipinos to treat their guest well.

In addition, positive feelings of all kinds are present in the place-people relationship, including adoration, satisfaction, and pride (Scannell & Gifford, 2010).

Furthermore, all the respondents agreed on items 2 and 3 *Were there moments where the aesthetics of the terraces made you feel connected to the place?* and *did the intricate design of the rice terraces enhance your overall sense of belongingness?* suggests

that the aesthetic of rice terraces affects the feeling of belongingness and connectedness. However, attachment to the environment is not always positive (Manzo, 2005). Place aversion at the root of unhappy events is possible (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). The term "place affect" is used in environmental psychology literature to characterize visitors' feelings toward a location (Halpenny, 2010).

The respondents also agreed that they are willing to recommend the place to other travelers, these reflect the outstanding perception and the feeling of adoration and satisfaction that they have for Ifugao Rice Terraces.

- *Satisfaction and Intention*

Table 6 displays the satisfaction level of the respondents and their intention to visit the destination.

Table 6 Satisfaction level of the Respondents and Intention in Visiting the Destination.

Statement	Mean (\bar{x})	Std. Deviation (SD)	Qualitative Description
Able to meet your expectations about the rice terraces	4.85	.3594	very contented
The view of the rice terraces	4.82	.4586	very contented
The weather conditions of the destination	4.56	.6125	very contented
Clean and fresh environment	4.35	.7739	Very contented
Immersing in cultural activities with the locals	4.32	.8428	Very contented
The hospitality of the locals	4.71	.4624	Very contented
The accessibility from the roads	3.26	.9312	Very contented
The food of the destination	4.29	.9701	Very contented
Total	4.38	0.288402	Very Contented

Legend: very discontented: 1.00-1.80; discontented: 1.81-2.60; neutral: 2.61-3.40; contented: 3.41-4.20; very contented: 4.21-5.00.

This table shows the level of satisfaction and intention of the tourists in visiting the place. The overall mean is $\bar{x} = 4.38$ with a standard deviation of 0.288402, hence the data are clustered closely to the mean. On average, the respondents are content with the different things that the destination offers.

The respondents were very contented with a) the view of the rice terraces, b) the weather conditions of the destination, c) the clean and fresh environment, d) cultural activities with locals, e) the hospitality of the locals, f) accessibility from the roads, and g) food of the destination. Indeed, the landscape of the rice terraces is breathtaking and gives off a good scenic view. The weather conditions in the area are not too hot nor too cold, because it is situated at a height of 1280.69 meters (4201.74 ft) above sea level, and experiences tropical monsoon weather. Banaue (location of rice terraces) experiences an annual temperature of 22.12°C (71.82°F), which is -5.1% colder than the average for the Philippines. Every year, 261.19 days (71.56% of the total) and 199.47 millimeters (7.85 inches) of precipitation fall on Banaue (Weather and Climate PH)

There is no question in terms of the hospitality of the locals because Ifugao are very welcoming individuals. They make sure that their visitors either local or foreign are comfortable when they visit. They even do ancient traditions in welcoming the visitors. According to Remme (2014), "In Banaue, I am grateful for the hospitality shown by the people in Greenview Hotel". This is only one of the many testimonies of visitors in terms of the hospitality of the Ifugao.

As stated, the Philippines' Ifugao Rice Terraces is a living cultural landscape that bears witness to hundreds of years of peaceful coexistence between people and the natural world. The Ifugaos developed a rich body of traditional knowledge through several hundred years of trial and error. This knowledge now supports this amazing complex of terraced fields, carefully maintained forests, sophisticated irrigation systems, and villages that come together to form a unique way of life. This way of life is forged from the combination of an unforgiving terrain and the survival-minded nature of a people (Martin, 2017). These are the reasons why Ifugao Rice Terraces was able to meet the expectations of the tourists.

- *Promotion and Preservation of the Aesthetic Value of Ifugao Rice Terraces*

Based on the interview the primary suggested solution to better enhance, attract, and satisfy tourists while ensuring the long-term sustainability of the destination is by the use of social media. According to a tourist from the Czech Republic, "website is definitely the answer". Indeed, in this generation, social media works best in advertising tourist spots, it is economical and worldwide.

In terms of preservation of the aesthetic value of Ifugao Rice terraces, most of the interviewed local and foreign respondents want to maintain the naturalness of the Rice Terraces or the traditional view of the Rice Terraces. A tourist from the USA stated, "Well the terraces should be kept up and houses should not be built in the terraces." Also, a tourist from Australia said that "it should remain as the way it is; it should not be changed just because tourists said to change it or add something". A Filipino tourist also said that the reason or purpose and the value of the Rice Terraces must remain as it is, "kung bakit siya ginawa, and it is for their livelihood 'di ba?"

This may be because Ifugao Rice Terraces is degrading, the study of Nozawa et al. (2008) and Calderon et al. showed that the low yield of rice, outmigration, overcutting of woodlots, erosion, and landslides, malfunctioning irrigation systems, and the presence of pests like giant earthworms and golden snails have all contributed to the terraces' declining state over time. Other difficulties include the spread of exotic tree species and deforestation, the deterioration of customs like Mumbaki roles and ceremonies, difficulties arising from tourism, and preserving the significance of the local people's legacy on a national and worldwide scale. Historically, the primary purpose of removing wood from their woodlot or pinugo was for domestic usages, such as building fuelwood or houses. But as a result of the province's heightened economic activity, more trees are being harvested—not just to meet domestic needs but also to supply raw materials for woodcarving and expanded house building.

As seen in Table 2, all 7 different factors are extremely influential in the aesthetic perception of the respondents to the rice terraces and it is the reason why they visit Rice Terraces, hence, either local or foreign must contribute to the conservation and promotion of the destination. It must be noted that even if the destination is enhanced, all the seven factors in Table 2 must still be present.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

A. Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to examine the tourists' perspectives on the aesthetic value of Ifugao Rice Terraces in the Cordillera Region. Based on the analysis conveyed, it can be concluded that assessing the tourists' perception in terms of a) visual, b) scenic beauty, and c) cultural significance is very remarkable and impressive. Despite the old age and some changes and damages- the terraces are beset by numerous issues, including terraces that have been ruined by pest infestation, a lack of water supply, earthworms, and landslides. These have led to the departure of the terraces, endangering their ability to remain sustainable.

Moreover, examining the factors that influence tourist's perception concluded that the genuineness of the terraces has the highest mean which means extremely influential among the 6 other factors in the aesthetic perception of the tourist of Ifugao rice terraces.

On the other hand, exploring the impact of the aesthetic value of Ifugao rice terraces on tourist overall satisfaction and intention to revisit the destination concluded that the respondents were very contented with a) the view of the terraces, b) the weather conditions of the destination, c) the hospitality of locals while the respondents are contented to the following a) Clean and Fresh environment, b) Immersing in cultural activities with the locals, c) the accessibility.

The socio-demographic factors (such as age and nationality) influenced the tourist's perception and concluded that there are a total of 20 randomly selected respondents for the study. There are 50% female and 50% male respondents. In terms of age, most of the respondents are in the 31-45 age bracket while the 46-60 age bracket is the least.

Furthermore, the promotion and preservation of the aesthetic value of Ifugao rice terraces concluded that according to a tourist from the Czech Republic, he stated that website is definitely the answer -which means to better enhance, attract, and satisfy tourists while ensuring long-term sustainability of the destination is by the use of social media. In terms of preservation, a tourist from the USA stated "Well the terraces should be kept up and houses should not be built in the terraces".

B. Recommendations

Community programs and activities that will encourage the community to maintain, preserve, and promote the aesthetic value of the Ifugao rice terraces. Programs and activities will integrate different factors that will influence the tourist's perception of the aesthetic value of the rice terraces which will lead to tourists' satisfaction and intention to revisit.

LGUs and Tourism coordinators to look into the problems and concerns of our local and foreign tourists because some tourists, should have pipe handles or rail handles on the steps going to Batad rice terraces.

Local tourists, individuals, and the community should continue maintaining the aesthetic visual appeal and scenic beauty of the Batad rice terraces. According to our foreign tourists, the Batad rice terraces have their own visual appeal, scenic beauty, and cultural value that make them attract and have a big interest in visiting our rice terraces.

Foreign tourists recommend in terms of the preservation of the Batad rice terraces that it should be kept up and houses should not be built in the terraces (tourist from USA). It should remain the way it is; it should not be changed just because some tourist said to change it or add something (tourist from Australia).

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APPENDICES

➤ English Critique



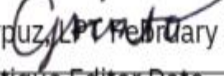
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