

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE VIABILITY OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS IN
THE PROVINCE OF ILOILO AS ECOTOURISM DESTINATIONS**

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of the College of Liberal Arts
GRADUATE PROGRAM
Iloilo State College of Fisheries
Barotac Nuevo, Iloilo

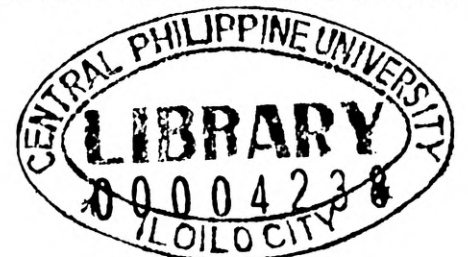
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
DOCTOR OF DEVELOPMENTAL MANAGEMENT
(ECOLOGICAL TOURISM)

by

ARMANDO M. HISUAN JR.

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study is the Marine Protected Areas in the coastal municipalities and islands in the southern and northern parts of the province of Iloilo. They are among the most popular tourist destinations, and we are losing sight of what nature conservation is all about. Our laws have become dangerously focused on protected areas, but rarely consider what they are supposed to achieve. One result is that biodiversity is declining almost everywhere while protected areas expand slowly. As a result of their distinctive environment or ecology, marine protected areas have attracted tourists but with small area, insularity and often lack of resources. The Assessment of Viability on Marine Protected Area in the Province of Iloilo as ecotourism destinations was conducted in eight (8) municipalities: Ajuy, Banate, Batad, Carles, Concepcion, Estancia, Miagao and San Joaquin. Two variants of data collection: Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Self Administered Survey [using adapted Management Evaluation



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Analysis Tool (MEAT) (SA)] were employed. The study uses Statistical (employed Descriptive Statistics using frequencies mean, ANOVA and T-test) and for Qualitative (using themes) Analysis. The study involved 1,080 respondents. In general, the Assessment of MPA's in the province scored 72.10 pts with an equivalent percentage of 86% in the management focus, though it did not meet some of the criteria in the MEAT. At least, most of the threshold had been reached with a rating of 65.8% - excellently managed MPA's which means it is viable as Ecotourism Destinations and that the management should focus on improving the Information, Education Communication (IEC) activities, monitoring and evaluation. The reasons that made MPA viable as ecotourism destinations are the following: most MPA's are established, strengthened, sustained and more are needed to be institutionalized. Also the patterns or themes that emerged in the Focus Group Discussion were the following; Passion vs. Necessity, Ideals vs. Reality, Political Will vs. Personal Interest, Sustainability vs. Viability, and Different sites unique surprises.

Keywords: Assessment, Viability, Marine Protected Areas, Ecotourism Destinations, Quantitative, Qualitative, Province Of Iloilo