

TRAVEL PREFERENCES OF BALIWAGENO

Louise Jerome P. Cruz, John Renz A. Santos,
Glenric I. Samaniego, John Carlo Buencamino,
Marjorie D. Lansangan, Arel Zcirem B. Canimo,
Danica C. Vipinoza, John Carlo I. Viola,
Paula Carmellie A. Santos

Abstract

This study aimed to determine the travel preferences of Baliwageños. Descriptive type of research was used in this study. Through convenience sampling, one hundred (100) residents of Baliwag from Barangays Concepcion, Sabang, Tangos, San Jose, and Tibag were chosen as respondents of the study. Interview and survey questionnaire were used as research instruments. Results of the study showed that domestic/local was the preferred destination of more than half of the respondents wherein some of them have already visited some of the popular destinations in the Philippines. Leisure followed by meeting friends and relatives were the reasons for traveling by majority of the respondents with more than half of them having travelled once or twice a year. The family ranked one as the preferred companion of almost half of the respondents. Visiting resorts and hotels were the most preferred tourist destinations by almost half of the respondents. Based on the results of the study, the respondents considered price, attractions, opportunity for rest, cleanliness and orderliness, personal safety and security, activities and variety of local foods as important factors/considerations in choosing a tourist destination. The conducted research recommends that hotel and resort owners here in the Philippines should continuously upgrade their facilities and

services in order to attract more guests locally and internationally. In addition, security and safety of the guests must always be the priority of the tourists' destinations especially in resorts, hotels and event attraction.

Keywords: travel preferences, Baliwageños, tourist destination

Hospitality and tourism are two of the fastest-growing and diverse industries in the world today. It encompasses more than 15 related businesses, including lodging, food service, transportation, vendors, and tour operations. Attractions like national parks, recreational facilities, historical sites, galleries and museums are also included in the tourism industry. Different events like festivals, conventions, exhibits and the like are needed to ensure guests' complete experience (Walker, 2010).

Travel intermediaries like tour operators and travel agencies are also necessary. People travel for different reasons. Some people are born adventurers who simply enjoy new sights, sounds, and cultures. However, most people have business commitments, family occasions, or leisure time that cause them to book a plane flight or take a bus to a new town or even a foreign country. Hospitality and tourism professionals study these reasons in order to adapt products and services to their customer's needs (Bukart, 2009).

Tourism is an important sector to generate revenue and employment for the sustainable development of the economy. It provides opportunities to the local people and helps the growth of the economy. Over the decades, tourism has experienced continued growth and deepening diversification to become one of

the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. Modern tourism is closely linked to development and encompasses a growing number of new destination. These dynamics have turned tourism into a key driver for socio-economic progress (Walker, 2006).

The growth of travel and tourism, despite instability in different parts of the world, is due to many factors that affect travel trends. Today, some of these factors include trends toward dual family incomes, baby boomers that enjoy travel, health consciousness, available leisure time, new transportation options, increased internet use, niche travel markets and the growth of adventure travel (Luper, 2008).

A tourist undertakes a tour to recharge his/her energy, enjoy eternal peace and tranquility and go for an adventure in a safe and secure environment. Therefore, he/she would not go to a place affected by political upheavals and terrorist attacks. A major determinant in a traveler's decision to visit a destination is the perception of safety and security. Specific events or a series of events may undermine these perceptions of a destination. These events or circumstances, individually or in a combination have a negative impact on perceptions of safety, security or desirability of tourist destinations (Zurbito, 2013).

Cruz (2013) described a tourist attraction as a site with a specific human or natural feature, which is the focus of visitors and management attention. Destinations are different from attractions because destinations are large areas that include several individual attractions together with the support services required by tourists.

Attractions may be classified according to its features such as its core product. It can be grouped as historic houses, museums & galleries, wildlife attractions, castles, botanical garden, steam railways, visitor centers, country parks and leisure parks.

Physical motivators include those related to physical rest, sports participation, beach recreation, relaxing entertainment, and other motivations directly connected with health. Cultural motivators include the desire to know about other countries – their music, art, folklore, dances paintings and religion. Interpersonal motivators pertain to the desire to meet other people, visit friends or relatives, escape from routine, from family and neighbors. Status and prestige motivators are concerned with ego needs and personal development. Included in this group are trips related to business, conventions, study and pursuit of hobbies and education. Travel would enhance one's recognition and good reputation (Cruz, 2013).

Price is defined to be successful in the marketplace. A product must be priced accurately and competitively. This requires a clear understanding of the individual costs of all product components and their impact on total product price. Operating costs include general overheads, promotion and labor costs which can vary, depending on business peaks and troughs. Competition also influences the maximum price for which a product can be sold (Reyes, 2015)

People from different cultures tend to have different ways of making decisions, based on the emphasis they place on different phases of the decision making process. People from divergent national cultures use different negotiation approaches

because their perceptions of the decision making situation are conditioned by the characteristics of the national culture in which they come from (Zurbito, 2013).

Travel Preferences

Strategically important tourism destinations and attractions can contribute significantly to regional and national economies, and provide new opportunities for economic growth and diversification. Economic growth can be further enhanced when destinations and attractions are developed through a disciplined and integrated plan, and are located where there is an established cluster of activities and experiences that encourage longer stays and incremental spending. These locations should have sufficient space for expansion and to accommodate additional infrastructure development. Additionally, greater levels of economic growth can be achieved by offering a variety of experiences that meet the needs of a large and diverse visitor and by enhancing the uniqueness of the destination or attraction with high quality interpretation, positioning and marketing (Mendez, 2010).

The purpose of travel is connected with building social relationships, opportunities to learn and grow, and commitment. It gives us the chance to be truly engaged in an activity, to develop new skills and to discover new cultures. It brings us closer to ourselves and others. (Buhals, 2010)

Special interest tourism (SIT) is the provision of customized tourism activities that caters to the specific interests of groups and individuals. In this case, tourism is undertaken to satisfy a particular interest or need. It has been proposed that SIT

consists of four main experiences: Rewarding, Enriching, Adventuresome, Experiences, Learning Experiences. Clients engaged with SIT are seeking to learn more, enrich their awareness, and express themselves. They expect high standards of service and individualized focus. Many wish to travel in an environmentally sound manner and to have authentic experiences whether it is cultural, social or environmental, in which they have a positive engagement with the host community (Egger, 2013).

Consumers may find it difficult to decide where to travel due to the increasing destination choices offered. Word of mouth and personal experiences have much more impact in selecting tourism destinations. Nowadays, a channel is necessary when looking for personal experiences of certain people to different destinations. Destinations need to make sure they delight visitors today to recruit more visitors via a trust based viral effect (Toposophy, 2011).

People travel to study and other academic institutions modify their curriculum based on the preferences of international students. The enrolment of international student mobility not only raises revenues from higher education, but also contributes to the local economy. The international student population is one of factors that contributes to the educational development of host institutions and host destinations, for instance institutions need to adapt and improve the curriculum and teaching methods to a culturally and linguistically diverse student body and to offer programs that stand out among competitors. Moreover, the international student proportion serves as an indicator of an institution's international attractiveness affecting the world university rankings, which helps promote an institution and its reputation internationally (Williams, 2008).

According to Ganga (2011), preferred time/ season, companion, kind of activities and personal characteristics of tourists should be considered before travelling to tourist destinations.

With all the beautiful places in the world, ranging from game reserves, bird watching sites, skiing sites to the beaches, it can be very challenging to choose a travel destination. Even limiting the sites to visit, does not make the job of choosing a destination site easier. The convincing ways that hotels and even travel companies use to market tourist destination even complicates the process more. There are number of factors that are needed to be considered in making the whole process of choosing a great travel destination much simpler. First, one must consider trip duration, second is means to be used, third is safety, fourth is activities during the trip, fifth is budget and last whom to travel with. A holiday is great opportunity to relax, unwind and break away from daily routines and considering all these factors may assure of a superb vacation (Luce, 2015).

Determining the factors that influence people's choice of destination is essential in developing appropriate marketing strategies. Age, income, gender, personality, education, cost, distance, nationality, risk, and motivation, etc., are factors that affect one's choice of destination. Of these factors, travel motivation has been an important area of study in the tourism literature for decades. As motivation is a dynamic concept, it may vary from one person to another, from one market segment to another, from one destination to another, as well as from one decision-making process to the next (Lam and Hsu, 2015).

Travel motivation is a multi-motive dimension. Tourists

often have more than one motive for choosing a certain destination. People can choose one destination with a motive of relaxation in a pleasant safe place combined with visiting a local historical heritage. Motivation is also a dynamic and flexible variable. The design of a motivation list must be flexible enough to incorporate individual changes across the life-span and consider the effects of broad cultural force on tourist motivation. A person may change his travel preferences as he moves through the family life cycle from a single-career person to a more family-oriented person, his motives for choosing destinations may be changed accordingly (Pearce, 2000).

Given the abovementioned information, this research study sought to determine the travel preferences of selected Baliwagenos. Specifically, the researchers sought to answer the following sub-problems:

1. How may the target respondents be described in terms of:
 - 1.1 gender;
 - 1.2 age;
 - 1.3 status?
2. How may the travel preferences of the target respondents be described in terms of:
 - 2.1 tourist destination;
 - 2.2 reason/s for travel;
 - 2.3 frequency of travel;
 - 2.4 preferred time of travel;
 - 2.5 companion;
 - 2.6 preferred tourist attraction?
3. How may the target respondents assess the personal/ psychological factors in choosing a tourist destination?

This study can help the students specifically the BSHM and BSTM students of Baliuag University in understanding the travel preferences of selected Baliwageños that will further enhance their knowledge in the development and planning of tourist destinations

Conceptual Framework and Model of the Study

The factors that determine the travel preferences of the respondents include their preferred tourist destination, reason for travel, frequency, preferred time, companion, preferred attraction and the personal/psychological considerations.

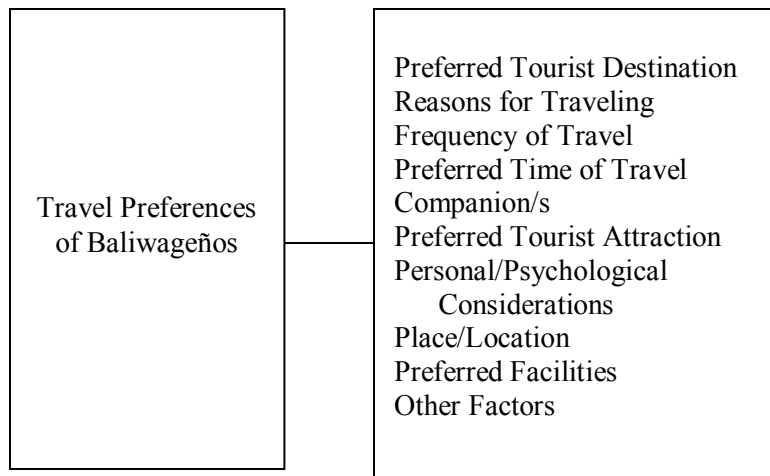


Figure 1. Model showing the travel preferences of Baliwageños

Method

Descriptive type of research was utilized in this study with questionnaire as the main instrument. The first part of the instrument included the demographic profile of the respondents

such as gender, age and status and questions which revealed the factors that influence the travel preferences of Baliwageños. The second part of the instrument measured the respondents' level of preferences on site attractions and event and the level of importance of the different factors when choosing tourist destinations. Survey questionnaires were distributed to the selected 100 respondents from Barangays Concepcion (27), Sabang (31), Tangos (16), San Jose (18), and Tibag (8) using convenience sampling technique.

Frequency counts and weighted means were used to determine the respondents' preferences on site and event attractions. The weighted mean was obtained by dividing the total weighted product (WP) by the total frequency (f). The weighted product was obtained by multiplying the total number of responses by the degree of response, which was 1 for Not Like At All, 2 for Not very like, 3 for Neither Like or Unlike, 4 for Somewhat Like and 5 for Mostly Like. The sum total of the weighted product was divided by the frequency and the result was rounded off to the nearest hundredths. The mean average was interpreted using the following.

4.21 – 5.00	=	Mostly like
3.41 – 4.20	=	Somewhat like
2.61 – 3.40	=	Neither like or unlike
1.81 – 2.60	=	Not very like
1.00 – 1.80	=	Not like at all

The level of importance of the different factors that influence the respondents in choosing tourist destinations were also assessed. The mean responses were tabulated and interpreted using the following scale:

4.21 – 5.00	=	Most important
3.41 – 4.20	=	Important
2.61 – 3.40	=	Neutral
1.81 – 2.60	=	Not important
1.00 – 1.80	=	Not important at

Results, Discussions and Conclusions

Table 1

Gender

Gender	<i>f</i>	%
Male	51	51
Female	49	49
Total	100	100

As presented in Table 1, 49% of the respondents were females while the remaining 51% were males.

Table 2

Age of Respondents

Age	<i>f</i>	%
Under 18	12	12
18-29	55	55
40-45	27	27
56-65	6	6
Above 65	0	0
Total	100	100

As shown in Table 2, 55% of the respondents were ages 18-29, 27% were ages 40-45 years old, 12% were under 18 years of age, and 6% were ages 56-65 years old.

Table 3

Status of the Respondents

Status	<i>f</i>	%
Employed	54	54
Unemployed	28	28
Student	18	18
Total	100	100

As revealed in Table 3, more than half of the respondents (54%) were employed while 28% were unemployed, and the remaining 18% were students.

Table 4

Respondents' Preferred Destination

Destination	<i>f</i>	%
International/ Abroad	42	42
Domestic/ Local	58	58
Total	100	100

Table 4 revealed that more than half (58%) of the respondents answered that they preferred to travel in domestic/ local destinations while the remaining 42% chose to travel internationally.

Table 5

Local Destinations Visited by the Respondents

Local Destinations	<i>f</i>	Rank
Cebu	9	1.5
Palawan	9	1.5
Baguio	8	3.5
Boracay	8	3.5
Davao	4	5
Bataan	3	6
Other Destinations (Baler, Ilocos, Laguna, Zambales, Sagada, Siargao, Batanes, Batangas, Bicol, Cotobato, Vigan, Bohol, Tagaytay, Ilo-Ilo and Cagayan De Oro	1 each	7

As shown in Table 5, most of the respondents who traveled in domestic destinations had been to Palawan and Cebu having nine (9) respondents each. Baguio and Boracay followed with eight (8) respondents each. Four respondents had been to Davao while, three (3) of them visited Bataan already. Other destinations like Baler, Ilocos, Laguna, Zambales, Sagada, Siargao, Batanes, Batangas, Bicol, Cotobato, Vigan, Bohol, Tagaytay, Ilo-Ilo and Cagayan De Oro were visited already by one (1) respondent each.

Table 6

International Destinations Visited by the Respondents

Local Destinations	<i>f</i>	Rank
Singapore	7	1.5
Hong kong	7	1.5
U.S.A.	6	3
Japan	4	4
Malaysia	2	5.5
Thailand	2	5.5
Other Countries (Macau, New Jersey, New York, London, U.A.E., Germany, Korea, France, Italy and Cambodia	1 each	7

Based on the results of the survey, among the international tourist destinations that were already visited by the respondents, Singapore and Hong kong had the highest frequency with seven (7) responses for each country. Six and four (4) respondents had been to United States of America and Japan respectively. Malaysia and Thailand had two (2) respondents each while others have been to Macau, New Jersey, New York, London, U.A.E., Germany, Korea, France, Italy and Cambodia with one (1) respondent each.

Table 7

Respondents' Reasons for Travelling

Reasons for Travelling	<i>f</i>	%	Rank
Leisure	61	61	1
Meet friends and relatives	24	24	2
Business	14	14	3
Study	1	1	4
Others, Pls. Specify	0	0	
Total	100	100	

As shown in Table 7, more than half of the respondents (61%) traveled for leisure purposes while 24% traveled to meet friends and relatives. Only 14% of the respondents answered business as their reason for travel.

Table 8

Frequency of Travel

Frequency of Travel	<i>f</i>	%	Rank
Once or twice a year	64	64	1
Once or twice a month	18	18	2
More than 2-5 times a year	14	14	3
Once or twice a week	4	4	4
Others, Pls. Specify	0	0	5
Total	100	100	

As shown in Table 8, more than half (64%) of the respondents visited or traveled once or twice a year while 18% of them traveled once or twice a month. Fourteen percent (14%) of

the respondents traveled more than 2-5 times a year while only few (4%) answered once or twice a week.

Table 9

Preferred Day of Visit

Preferred Day of Visit	<i>f</i>	%
Weekdays	6	6
Weekends	36	36
Holidays	58	58
Total	100	100

Table 9 shows that 58% or more than half of the respondents preferred to travel during holidays while 36% preferred during weekends. The remaining 6% of the respondents traveled on weekdays.

Table 10

Respondents' Preferred Companion when Travelling

Companion when travelling	<i>f</i>	%	Rank
Family	57	57	1
Husband/wife	21	21	2
Friends	17	17	3
Alone	3	3	4
With colleagues	2	2	5
Others, Pls. specify	0	0	6
Total	100	100	

As shown in Table 10, 57% or more than half of the respondents preferred to travel with their families, while 21 of

them preferred to have their husband/wife as their companion when traveling. Friends were the preferred travel companions of the 17% of the respondents, while only 3% preferred to travel alone.

Table 11

Respondents' Preferences for Tourist Attractions/Destinations

Site Attraction	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Museum	3.35	Neither like or unlike
Mountains	3.38	Neither like or unlike
Resorts	4.31	Mostly like
Hotels	4.21	Mostly like
Beaches	4.14	Somewhat like
Churches	3.75	Somewhat like
Nature reserve	3.63	Somewhat like
Historical Site	3.44	Somewhat like
Zoo's	3.38	Neither like or unlike
Theme park	3.36	Neither like or unlike
Event Attraction		
Fiesta	3.65	Somewhat like
Concert	3.43	Somewhat like
Convention	3.02	Neither like or unlike

As presented in Table 11, resorts and hotels were the most preferred attractions of the respondents with 4.31 and 4.21 weighted average respectively interpreted as mostly like. Beaches, churches, nature reserves and historical site destinations garnered a weighted average of 4.14 to 3.44 interpreted as

somewhat like. For event attraction, fiesta and concert got a weighted average of 3.65 and 3.43 respectively interpreted as somewhat like as compared to conventions that neither like or unlike by the respondents.

Table 12

Respondents' Rating on the Level of Importance on the Personal/Psychological Considerations in Choosing a Tourist Destination

Factors	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Price	4.82	Most Important	1
Attractions	4.67	Most Important	2
Opportunity for Rest	4.52	Most Important	3.5
Cleanliness & Orderliness	4.52	Most Important	3.5
Personal Safety & Security	4.45	Most Important	5.5
Variety of Local Food	4.45	Most Important	5.5
Activities	4.36	Most Important	7
Climate Condition	3.97	Important	8
Cultural Events	3.95	Important	9
Historical Significance	3.88	Important	10
Recreational	3.87	Important	11
Accessibility	3.78	Important	12
Shopping Facilities	3.77	Important	13
Sports Facilities	3.61	Important	14

Based on the results of the survey, price, attractions, opportunity for rest, cleanliness and orderliness, personal safety and security, activities and variety of local foods were the most important factors that the respondents considered in choosing

travel destinations. Among the seven factors, price and attractions ranked 1 and 2 respectively. The rest of the factors that ranked from 8 to 14 were significantly important for the respondents in selecting travel destinations.

As mentioned in the article of Zurbito (2013), a major determinant in a traveler's decision to visit a destination is the perception of safety and security.

Conclusions

1. Almost half of the respondents were from ages 18-29 years old while the remaining numbers were ages 40-45 years old, below 18 years old and very few with ages 56-65. Almost half of them were employed with few number of student respondents.
2. Based on the results of the study, the following were concluded:
 - 2.1 Domestic/local was the preferred destinations of more than half of the respondents wherein some of them have already visited the popular destinations in the Philippines. However, with the international destinations, the respondents have already visited countries like Singapore, Hongkong, U.S.A., Japan, etc.
 - 2.2 Leisure followed by meeting friends and relatives were the reasons for traveling by majority of the respondents.
 - 2.3 More than half of the respondents travel once or twice a year while some travel once or twice a month or even 2-5 times a year. They prefer to travel during holidays.
 - 2.4 The family ranked one as the preferred companion of almost half of the respondents followed by traveling with husband/wife and friends.

2.5 Visiting resorts and hotels were the most preferred tourist destinations by almost half of the respondents followed by churches, beaches, historical sites and nature reserves. Moreover, they somewhat like fiesta and concert as part of event attractions.

3. Based on the results of the study, the personal/psychological considerations of the respondents in choosing a tourist destination include price, attractions, opportunity for rest, cleanliness and orderliness, personal safety and security, activities and variety of local foods interpreted as most important.

Recommendations

1. Hotel and resort owners here in the Philippines should continuously upgrade their facilities and services in order to attract more local and international guests.
2. Security and safety of the guests must always be the priority of the tourists' destinations especially in resorts, hotels and event attractions.

References

- Buhalis, D. (2010). *Tourism Distribution Channel 1st edition*. New York: Continuum Publishing House.
- Burkart, A. (2009) *Tourism: past, present, and future in London*: New Hampshire (U.S.A.): Heinemann Publishing House.
- Cruz, Z. L. (2013). *Principles of Tourism Part II*, revised edition. Manila: Rex Bookstore.
- Egger, R. (2013) *Gamification in Tourism*. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/284995062>.
- Lam, T., & Hsu, C. H. C. (2015). *Predicting behavioral intention of choosing a travel destination*. Retrieved from <http://www.presto-embedded.eu/2015/12/guide-to-choosing-your-travel-destination/>.
- Luce, M. (2015). *How to choose travel destinations*. Retrieved from <https://thetravelhack.com/travel.../how-to-choose-your-travel-destinations>.
- Luper, N. (2008) “*The Framework of Tourism: Towards a Definition of Tourism, Tourist, and the Tourist Industry*” *Annals of Tourism Research* 6, no.4.
- Mendez, M. & Galindo, N (2010). "Relationship between tourism and economic growth." *The Services Industries Journal*, 31(10), 1567–1572.
- Pearce, L. P. (2000). *Fundamentals of tourist motivation*. *Tourism Research: Critique and Challenges* (pp. 113-134). London: Routledge.
- Reyes, V.D. (2015) *Philippine Business and Transfer Taxes*, Introduction to Business Taxation. Retrieved from <https://link.springer.com>.
- The Tourism Society. (2002). Retrieved from <http://www.tourismsociety.org/page/2/what-we-do.htm>.
- Toposophy. E. (2011). *Factors influencing the choice of destination*. Retrieved from <https://abouttourism.wordpress.com/2011/10/03/top-factors-influencing-destination-choice/>.
- Walker, J. R. (2010), *Introduction to Hospitality*. 2nd edition. Manila: Merriam and Webster.
- Williams, M. R. (2008). *More college students go on study abroad programs*. Retrieved from <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=1443487121&sid=20&Fmt=3&clientId=29828&RQT=309&VName=PQD>.
- Zurbito, M. (2013). *Travel Time*. Travel Update Philippines. Bucketlist Publishing Corporation.