

The Role of the Host in Visiting Friends and or Relatives (VFR) Trips to the Phillippines.

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Abstract

In the Philippines, tourism marketers and operators want to determine what can be done to increase the number of tourist arrivals. It has become increasingly apparent that visiting friends and/or relatives is a significant travel market within both domestic and international tourism. It is therefore important to understand the role of the hosting resident in influencing and advocating for the local tourism product. According to Crompton (1981), the influence of friends and relatives become important when examining the dynamic of group decision-making processes for travel.

Hosting friends and relatives is one of the key sources of information for both the international and domestic travellers. In this study, a questionnaire survey was carried out to around 563 respondents from 20 districts of Tacloban City, Leyte, Philippines. Personal interviews of 15 respondents from each district were conducted. A 73 % response rate was achieved from the survey and a number of exploratory findings were gathered. The research highlights the role of the host in planning the activities of their visiting friends and relatives. Hosts were found to choose attractions and activities for their guests based upon their knowledge of their region's tourism resources. The results suggest the need for the government to play a greater part in the development and improvement of the attractions in the area. Furthermore, hosts must be able to easily tap into tourism information sources in order to obtain current and accurate travel information. Tourism marketers and authorities must implement a program that allow local residents who act as hosts to be updated on the latest tourism developments in their respective areas.