

Assessing the Needs, Demands, and Perceptions of Tourists in the Municipality of Kabayan, Benguet Province

Fernan A. Bangonan

Benguet State University-Bokod Campus, Daclan, Bokod Benguet, Philippines

Publication history: Received: May 13, 2026; Revised: June 5, 2026; Accepted: June 8, 2026

Email of Corresponding Author: fernabangonan441@gmail.com

Abstract

This study assessed the needs, demands, and perceptions of tourists in Kabayan, Benguet to provide evidence-based inputs for sustainable tourism planning and destination management. Anchored on tourism sustainability concepts, destination image theory, Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory, Equity Theory, and the Input-Process-Output (IPO) Model, the study examined tourists' needs in terms of facilities, services, safety, accessibility, and environmental quality, as well as their cognitive, affective, and conative perceptions of the destination. A descriptive-survey research design employing a quantitative approach was utilized. Data were collected from 150 domestic tourists aged 18 years and above through a structured survey questionnaire administered at the Mount Pulag Protected Landscape and the National Museum of the Philippines-Kabayan Branch. Descriptive statistics, weighted mean, Mann-Whitney U Test, and Kruskal-Wallis H Test were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that tourists highly valued quality accommodations, responsive services, visible security personnel, safe road conditions, and the protection of natural heritage. Tourists demonstrated positive cognitive, affective, and conative perceptions, characterized by appreciation for cultural authenticity, emotional attachment to natural landscapes, and strong intentions to revisit and recommend the destination. Significant differences in needs, demands, and perceptions were observed across age, educational attainment, and occupation, while no significant differences were found based on gender. The study concludes that maintaining high standards of tourism services, infrastructure, safety, environmental conservation, and cultural preservation is essential for sustaining visitor satisfaction and destination loyalty. It recommends strengthening accommodation standards, tourism support services, guide training, road safety, security visibility, and carrying-capacity management while adopting inclusive tourism strategies responsive to diverse visitor profiles. The study aligns with SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) by supporting sustainable tourism development, cultural heritage preservation, and responsible resource management. Its sustainability contribution lies in providing evidence-based information that supports tourism governance, community development, environmental stewardship, and local economic sustainability in Kabayan, Benguet.

Keywords: Accessibility, Cognitive Image, Destination Image, Environmental Quality, Kabayan Benguet, Sustainable Tourism, Tourist Demands, Tourist Needs, Tourist Perceptions

1. Introduction

Tourism destinations increasingly compete not only through their natural and cultural attractions but also through the quality of visitor experiences, service delivery, accessibility, safety, and sustainability. As tourism governance shifts from mass tourism toward quality and resilience, understanding tourists' needs, demands, and perceptions has become essential for sustainable destination development. Kabayan, Benguet, known for its centuries-old mummies, Mount Pulag, and rich cultural heritage, faces growing tourism opportunities and challenges associated with infrastructure, resource management, and visitor expectations. This study assesses the needs, demands, and perceptions of tourists visiting Kabayan to support evidence-based tourism planning and sustainable local development.

1.1 Background of Tourists' Needs, Demands, and Perceptions in Kabayan, Benguet

In the contemporary tourism industry, destination success depends largely on how visitors perceive and experience a place rather than solely on its natural or cultural attributes. Destination image is shaped by tourists' beliefs, impressions, and experiences before and during travel (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Lopes, 2011). Sustainable tourism governance emphasizes quality visitor experiences and resilience over mass tourism, as reflected in the ASEAN Tourism Sectoral Plan 2026–2030 cited in Sunstar (2026). Positive destination images are formed when tourism infrastructure, services, and cultural experiences align with visitor expectations, resulting in higher satisfaction and repeat visitation. In the Philippines, the Department of Tourism promotes service excellence through the Filipino Brand of Service Excellence (FBSE), which is anchored on the Filipino core values of *Malikhain*, *Makatao*, *Makakalikasan*, *Makabansa*, *Masayahin*, *May Bayanihan*, and *May Pag Asa*. These values aim to enhance tourism service quality and strengthen the country's competitiveness in the global tourism market. Kabayan, Benguet serves as an important eco-cultural destination because

of its historical, cultural, and ecological significance. However, increasing tourist arrivals have created challenges related to infrastructure adequacy, accessibility, accommodation quality, and tourism service delivery. The growth of social media and digital marketing has also elevated visitor expectations. Tourism marketing information and destination branding increasingly influence travelers' expectations and destination evaluations (Molina et al., 2010; Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Pike, 2008). Studies in neighboring municipalities indicate continuing infrastructure concerns, particularly regarding waste management and road safety, which may not always meet visitor expectations generated online (Carantes, 2025). Understanding tourists' actual needs, demands, and perceptions is therefore essential for aligning destination offerings with visitor experiences and promoting sustainable tourism development.

1.2 Themes and Insights on Tourists' Needs, Demands, and Perceptions from Related Literature

1.2.1 Tourist Needs, Demands, and Sustainable Tourism

Tourism sustainability depends on a destination's ability to satisfy visitor needs (Pearce, 1988). Contemporary tourism requirements extend beyond basic travel motivations and increasingly include digital connectivity, environmental hygiene, and safety considerations (Lalicic, 2023). Tourist motivations continue to evolve from traditional push-and-pull travel factors toward more experience-oriented and value-driven preferences (Dann, 1977; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994; Kozak, 2002). The SunStar (2026) further emphasizes quality experiences and sustainable tourism outcomes over visitor volume. In tourism destinations such as Kabayan, essential needs include clean sanitation facilities, accessible trails, quality accommodations, and reliable tourism services. Service quality remains a critical determinant of tourist satisfaction and destination competitiveness (Parasuraman et al., 1988). These functional requirements significantly influence visitor satisfaction and overall destination evaluation.

1.2.2 Infrastructure, Accessibility, and Safety

Infrastructure remains a fundamental component of tourism development, particularly transportation systems and accessibility (Prideaux, 2000). While improvements in transportation networks have enhanced tourism mobility, the development of tourism infrastructure must continuously keep pace with increasing visitor demand to ensure accessibility, resilience, and destination competitiveness. OECD (2024) emphasizes that sustainable tourism development requires investments in resilient transport systems, visitor infrastructure, and evidence-based destination planning to support long-term competitiveness and visitor satisfaction. Accessibility now encompasses both convenience and safe mobility. OECD (2024) likewise emphasizes the importance of resilient transport systems and sustainable tourism infrastructure in enhancing destination accessibility and competitiveness. The International Transport Forum (2025) highlights the importance of safety in rural tourism destinations, while Carantes (2025) notes that service quality and tourism-support facilities significantly influence visitor return intentions in Benguet.

1.2.3 Service Quality and Cultural Experiences

The shift toward experiential tourism has increased tourists' demand for authentic cultural interactions (Smith, 2015). Travelers increasingly seek transformative experiences that promote learning, cultural exchange, and meaningful engagement (Martiny, 2023; Revfine, 2026). Heritage tourism enables visitors to engage with cultural resources while fostering appreciation of local traditions and identity (Timothy & Boyd, 2003; McKercher & du Cros, 2002). Within sustainable ecotourism, high-quality interpretation and storytelling by local guides can enhance visitor experiences even when physical infrastructure is limited (Fennell, 2020). Meaningful cultural exchange and local livelihood contributions have become important indicators of service quality in rural tourism destinations.

1.2.4 Safety and Psychological Dimensions of Travel

Perceived safety strongly influences tourism behavior. Chen et al. (2024) identify physical safety concerns in high-altitude destinations as barriers to repeat visitation. Similarly, Li and Batra (2026) emphasize the importance of visible security personnel in increasing tourists' willingness to revisit mountain destinations. Despite perceived risks, authentic ecological and cultural experiences can provide significant psychological benefits. Ecological authenticity has been associated with restorative and emotional experiences among travelers. Nature-based tourism experiences have been associated with psychological restoration, reduced stress, and enhanced visitor well-being (Gentle, 2025; He et al., 2026). Likewise, heritage tourists tend to be less sensitive to travel costs when authenticity is highly valued (Grand View Research, 2026).

1.2.5 Tourist Demographics and Consumer Values

Tourist preferences increasingly reflect concerns for safety, environmental stewardship, cultural preservation, and social responsibility. Travel decisions and destination evaluations often vary according to age, occupation, educational attainment, and previous travel experiences (Pasaco-Gonzales et al., 2023; Bagus & Rai, 2025). UN Tourism (2026) reports convergence in travel preferences across demographic groups. Tourism Cares (2025) found that highly educated tourists are more likely to support ecological and heritage conservation, while Internova (2026) highlights younger travelers' growing interest in authenticity and social impact. Generational differences also influence destination choice and travel behavior, particularly among younger tourists seeking meaningful experiences (Pranatasari & Diva, 2024).

1.3 Local, National, and Global Context of Tourism Development and Visitor Experiences in Kabayan, Benguet

Globally, tourism policies are increasingly oriented toward sustainability, resilience, and visitor-centered experiences, as reflected in the SunStar (2026) cited in Sunstar (2026). Nationally, the Philippines advances tourism competitiveness through the Filipino Brand of Service Excellence, emphasizing quality service and cultural hospitality. The National Tourism Development Plan 2023–2028 highlights sustainable tourism development, destination competitiveness, and visitor satisfaction as key priorities of the Philippine tourism sector (Department of Tourism, 2023). Locally, Kabayan possesses unique tourism resources, including cultural heritage sites, indigenous traditions, and mountain tourism attractions. Rural tourism development in the Philippines requires balancing economic benefits with ecological and socio-cultural sustainability (Supera et al., 2024). However, increasing tourist arrivals place pressure on existing infrastructure, environmental resources, and tourism services. Addressing these challenges requires understanding visitor expectations and experiences to support sustainable destination planning and management.

1.4 Theoretical and Conceptual Basis of Tourists' Needs, Demands, and Perceptions

This study is anchored on tourism sustainability concepts, destination image theory, Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory, Equity Theory, and the Input-Process-Output (IPO) Model. Tourism sustainability emphasizes meeting visitor needs while preserving environmental and cultural resources for future generations (Pearce, 1988). Destination image theory recognizes the importance of cognitive, affective, and conative evaluations in shaping tourist behavior and destination choice. Destination image consists of cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions that collectively influence travel behavior and destination choice (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Yilmaz et al., 2009; Chen, Chen, & Lee, 2011). Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory explains that tourists evaluate destinations by comparing actual experiences with prior expectations (Oliver, 1980). Positive disconfirmation occurs when experiences exceed expectations, whereas negative disconfirmation results when expectations are unmet. Trisakti et al. (2025) identified employee expertise as a key contributor to positive visitor experiences in heritage tourism. However, digital engagement and social media increasingly influence tourist expectations before and during travel (Bautista and Nguyen, 2026). Equity Theory suggests that tourists evaluate satisfaction by comparing the effort invested in travel with the benefits received. In destinations requiring substantial physical effort, dissatisfaction may be greater when service quality and visitor rewards fail to meet expectations. The study also adopts the Input-Process-Output (IPO) framework. Destination image has likewise been viewed as a knowledge-creation process wherein tourists construct meanings from their travel experiences (Zouni & Kouremenos, 2008). Inputs include tourists' demographic profiles, needs, demands, and destination image perceptions. The process involves data collection, statistical analysis, and interpretation of findings. The output consists of evidence-based recommendations and planning inputs for sustainable tourism development in Kabayan, Benguet.

1.5 Research Gaps and Rationale for Assessing Tourists' Needs, Demands, and Perceptions in Kabayan, Benguet

Although previous studies have examined tourism infrastructure, accessibility, safety, destination image, and visitor satisfaction, limited research has specifically assessed the combined needs, demands, and perceptions of tourists visiting Kabayan, Benguet. Existing studies have also highlighted infrastructure and service gaps in neighboring tourism destinations (Carantes, 2025), indicating the need for localized evidence to guide tourism planning. Previous studies have examined tourism motivations, destination image formation, and visitor satisfaction in various tourism settings, but limited research has integrated these dimensions within the context of Kabayan, Benguet (Antari, 2023; Reichel & Uriely, 2005). This study addresses this gap by examining tourists' needs and demands in terms of facilities, services, safety, accessibility, and environmental quality, as well as their perceptions through cognitive, affective, and conative destination image dimensions. The findings are expected to support data-driven tourism management and sustainable local development.

1.6 Alignment of the Assessment of Tourists' Needs, Demands, and Perceptions with Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

This study aligns primarily with:

SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth, by supporting sustainable tourism development that generates livelihood opportunities for local tour guides, accommodation providers, artisans, and other tourism stakeholders.

SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities, by promoting sustainable management of cultural heritage resources, tourism infrastructure, and community-based tourism development.

SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production, by encouraging responsible tourism practices and sustainable resource management in response to increasing visitor arrivals.

The study contributes to these goals by providing evidence-based information that can guide tourism planning, improve visitor experiences, and support sustainable economic growth while preserving cultural and environmental resources.

1.7 Importance of Assessing Tourists' Needs, Demands, and Perceptions to Multidisciplinary Sustainability

The study contributes to multiple dimensions of sustainability. Sustainable rural tourism contributes to community development, environmental protection, and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (López-Sanz et al., 2021). From a socio-economic sustainability perspective, it supports local livelihood generation through tourism-related enterprises and services. From a community sustainability perspective, it helps strengthen tourism planning that benefits

local residents while preserving cultural identity and heritage. The study also contributes to environmental sustainability by identifying visitor needs and perceptions that can inform responsible resource management and environmental protection strategies. In terms of policy and governance sustainability, the findings provide local government officials with evidence-based inputs for tourism development plans and destination management initiatives. Overall, the study supports sustainable tourism governance by balancing visitor satisfaction, cultural preservation, environmental stewardship, and local economic development in Kabayan, Benguet.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive-survey research design to assess the perceptions, needs, and demands of tourists in Kabayan, Benguet at the time of the investigation. Using a quantitative approach, the study identified patterns and trends across respondents from diverse demographic backgrounds. The collected data provided a comprehensive description of the prevailing conditions and characteristics of the local tourism market.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in the Municipality of Kabayan, Benguet, a destination known for its natural attractions and cultural heritage sites. The research focused on major tourist destinations, including Mount Pulag, Mount Al-Al, Mount Tabayoc, the Four Lakes, the National Museum of the Philippines–Kabayan Branch, Tinongchol Burial Rock, and Timbac Rock Shelters. Data collection was undertaken in the municipality's primary tourism hubs to capture perspectives from visitors experiencing both natural and cultural attractions.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents consisted of domestic tourists aged 18 years and above who visited or stayed in Kabayan during the conduct of the study. These individuals were selected because they had firsthand experience with the municipality's tourism facilities, services, accessibility, safety conditions, environmental quality, and cultural attractions, making them suitable sources of information regarding tourist needs, demands, and perceptions.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

A total of 150 respondents participated in the study. To ensure balanced representation of Kabayan's major tourism sectors, 75 respondents were surveyed at the Mount Pulag Protected Landscape and 75 respondents at the National Museum of the Philippines–Kabayan Branch. Random sampling was employed to select participants who met the study requirements and were present in Kabayan during the data collection period. This approach enabled the researcher to obtain a diverse and representative profile of the municipality's tourist population.

2.5 Research Instrument

The primary data collection instrument was a structured quantitative survey questionnaire consisting of three sections. The first section gathered demographic information, including age, gender, educational attainment, occupation, residency, and frequency of visits. The second section utilized a Likert-scale format to assess tourists' needs, demands, and perceptions regarding the destination. The measurement of perceived service quality was conceptually informed by established service quality assessment frameworks in tourism and hospitality research (Parasuraman et al., 1988). The final section examined the relationship between respondents' demographic characteristics and their identified needs, demands, and perceptions. Prior to implementation, the instrument underwent pilot testing in Bokod, Benguet, a neighboring municipality with similar environmental and cultural characteristics. Reliability testing and face and content validity assessments were conducted to ensure the instrument's effectiveness and appropriateness for data collection. The interpretation of tourists' needs and demands was based on mean scores, where higher values indicated stronger demand and agreement, while lower values indicated lesser demand and disagreement. Similarly, tourists' perceptions were interpreted according to corresponding mean ranges, with higher scores reflecting stronger and more favorable perceptions. Statistical significance was determined using a 0.05 level of significance, wherein values less than or equal to 0.05 indicated significant relationships or differences, while values greater than or equal to 0.05 indicated no significant relationships or differences.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection commenced after obtaining official authorization from the Municipal Mayor's Office. Following the pilot testing and validation of the instrument, the researcher personally administered the questionnaires at key tourist locations, including the Protected Area Management Office–DENR and the National Museum of the Philippines–Kabayan Branch. Before participation, respondents received written and verbal explanations regarding the purpose, procedures, and expected duration of the study. Informed consent was secured prior to the administration of the questionnaire. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage of the study without penalty. To ensure confidentiality, respondents' identities remained anonymous and all collected information was used solely for academic purposes. The researcher remained available throughout the survey administration to address participant inquiries and

ensure accurate responses. Upon completion of data collection, all responses were encoded, organized, and prepared for statistical analysis.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were employed to analyze the collected data. Frequency counts and percentage distributions were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Weighted mean was utilized to determine the level of tourists' needs, demands, and perceptions. To examine differences among respondent groups, inferential statistical techniques were applied. The Mann-Whitney U Test was used to determine differences based on gender, while the Kruskal-Wallis H Test was employed for variables with more than two categories, including age, educational attainment, and occupation. These statistical procedures enabled the identification of significant relationships and differences among respondents' profiles, needs, demands, and perceptions. The results provided evidence-based information to support tourism planning and heritage conservation initiatives in Kabayan, Benguet.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical standards throughout the research process. The researchers declared no personal, financial, or professional conflicts of interest that could influence the study's outcomes (Horner and Minifie, 2011). To maintain objectivity, researchers were excluded from the respondent pool, and the study was conducted solely for academic and developmental purposes. Confidentiality and data protection measures were implemented in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Participants were informed about the nature of the study through an information letter prior to data collection (Santos et.al., 2024). No identifying personal information was recorded; instead, respondents were assigned numerical codes. All collected data were securely stored and were accessible only to the research team, with plans for proper disposal after the completion of the study (Santos et.al., 2024). The study involved adult tourists and therefore presented minimal vulnerability concerns (Sreelakshmi et al., 2023). Consideration was likewise given to participants' vulnerability, autonomy, and agency during the research process (Greer et al., 2023). Participation was voluntary, and data collection was conducted respectfully, particularly in areas associated with sacred ancestral domains, to avoid cultural or psychological discomfort among respondents (Reyes, 2020). Participation posed no known physical, psychological, or legal risks. The study followed the principle of beneficence by generating information intended to assist the Local Government Unit and the Department of Tourism in improving tourism infrastructure and service quality (Tsoka-Gwegweni and Wassenaar, 2014). The findings are expected to contribute to sustainable tourism development and benefit local communities, guides, and tourism service providers (Horner and Minifie, 2011). A transparent informed consent process was implemented to ensure that respondents fully understood the study's objectives, procedures, and duration (Subedi and Khanal, 2025). Written and verbal explanations were provided in appropriate languages, and participation proceeded only after respondents voluntarily expressed their willingness to participate. This process complied with the ethical standards prescribed by the Philippine National Health Research System (2016) and the principles outlined by Subedi and Khanal (2025).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Needs and Demands of Tourists in Kabayan, Benguet

3.1.1 Facilities

The results revealed that tourists highly demanded quality and comfort in local accommodation facilities, which obtained the highest mean scores. Adequate parking spaces and the presence of souvenir shops showcasing local products were also highly valued. Tourist information centers and public restrooms received comparatively lower ratings, indicating concerns regarding facility standardization and functionality. These findings suggest that visitors prioritize comfortable accommodations and convenient support facilities, particularly in a destination associated with physically demanding activities. The results support the observations of Carantes (2025), who emphasized accommodation quality as a strong predictor of destination loyalty. These findings are also consistent with George (2008), who emphasized the role of tourism facilities in shaping overall destination satisfaction. They also align with the SunStar (2026), which highlights quality experiences as a fundamental requirement for sustainable ecotourism. The lower ratings for restroom facilities highlight the importance of adequate sanitation facilities in shaping visitor satisfaction and supporting sustainable destination management. Previous tourism studies have emphasized that the availability, cleanliness, and accessibility of sanitation facilities are critical components of overall destination quality and visitor experience.

3.1.2 Services

Tourists reported high demand for informative pre-tour orientations, responsive tour organizers, knowledgeable local guides, and clear explanations of cultural practices and safety procedures. Similar findings were reported by International Interdisciplinary Applied Research Institute (2024), which highlighted the importance of meaningful visitor engagement in mountain and cave tourism systems. Food services and public transportation were also rated positively, although they received lower scores than human-centered service components. The findings indicate that tourists value direct interaction with service providers and local experts. This supports the Sustainable Ecotourism Framework of Fennell (2020), which

emphasizes the importance of human interpretation in enhancing visitor experiences. Similarly, Rural Tourism (2024) highlights that authentic cultural interactions and local engagement have become central indicators of service quality in rural tourism destinations. Heritage destinations that successfully manage their cultural tourism products often generate stronger visitor attachment and destination loyalty (Gumede & Ezeuduji, 2021).

3.1.3 Safety

The visible presence of security personnel, including TOPCOP and local Tanods, emerged as the highest safety-related demand among tourists. The availability of first-aid kits and emergency response services was also considered important, although it received a lower rating. The results indicate that tourists associate safety primarily with the visible presence of authorities and preventive security measures. This supports the findings of Li and Batra (2026), who identified visible law enforcement presence as a major predictor of tourists' willingness to revisit destinations.

3.1.4 Accessibility

The quality and safety of roads leading to tourism sites received the highest accessibility rating, followed closely by the clarity of signage and trail markers. These findings demonstrate the importance of safe and convenient mobility within the destination. The results support the International Transport Forum (2025), which argues that accessibility in rural destinations has evolved beyond physical reachability and now includes transportation safety and resilience. For mountain destinations such as Kabayan, safe road conditions and effective navigation systems significantly influence visitor experiences.

3.1.5 Environmental Quality

Protection of natural heritage obtained the highest rating among environmental quality indicators, followed by crowd management and carrying capacity measures. Maintenance of cleanliness and waste management also received positive ratings but ranked lower than the preservation of natural resources. These findings indicate that tourists place strong value on environmental conservation and responsible destination management. The results indicate that modern travelers increasingly prioritize ethical stewardship and sustainability. The importance of visitor management also supports the Mansueto-Sarmiento-Sabado Carrying Capacity Model (2025), which emphasizes collaborative approaches to sustainable tourism management.

3.2 Tourists' Perceptions of Kabayan, Benguet

3.2.1 Cognitive Image

The findings revealed a high level of cognitive perception, with cultural authenticity receiving the highest rating. Perceptions of safety and value for money were likewise positive, resulting in an overall favorable cognitive image of the destination. The results indicate that Kabayan is recognized as a culturally rich and authentic destination. Heritage interpretation and destination branding significantly contribute to the formation of positive destination images (Kotler & Gertner, 2002; Pike, 2008). This supports the growing demand for immersive and indigenous tourism experiences identified by Revfine (2026).

3.2.2 Affective Image

Tourists reported a high affective image of Kabayan. The strongest emotional responses were excitement and inspiration from the natural landscape, followed by feelings of peace, relaxation, belongingness, and satisfaction with cultural immersion. Positive perceptions of guide professionalism and orientation programs also contributed to tourists' emotional experiences. These findings suggest that Kabayan provides meaningful emotional and psychological benefits to visitors. Emotional responses generated by tourism experiences can strengthen visitor satisfaction and attachment to destinations (Wilson et al., 2026). The results support Qiu et al. (2025), who emphasized the restorative effects of ecological authenticity in high-altitude tourism. They are also consistent with findings highlighting tourists' growing preference for peaceful and nature-based experiences. The role of guide professionalism further highlights the contribution of quality service delivery to positive emotional outcomes among tourists.

3.2.3 Conative Image

The results demonstrated a very high conative image, reflected in tourists' strong intentions to revisit Kabayan, recommend it to others, and express overall satisfaction with their experiences. Positive destination experiences often translate into stronger behavioral intentions and recommendation behaviors (Mejia & Abad, 2026). These findings indicate the development of behavioral loyalty among visitors. The willingness to revisit and recommend the destination supports the conclusions of United Nations Tourism (2026), which identifies word-of-mouth promotion as a major driver of sustainable tourism growth. The results further suggest that culturally and environmentally significant destinations foster deeper emotional connections and long-term visitor commitment.

3.3 Relationship Between Respondents' Profiles and Their Needs, Demands, and Perceptions

3.3.1 Age and Tourist Needs, Demands, and Perceptions

The analysis revealed significant differences among age groups in terms of facilities, services, safety, environmental quality, and all perception dimensions. Accessibility was the only category that showed no significant difference across age groups. These findings indicate that age influences how tourists evaluate destination experiences. Younger and older visitors appear to prioritize different aspects of tourism, supporting previous studies that identify distinct travel motivations among generational groups (Internova, 2026; Pranatasari & Diva, 2024). However, the consistent demand for accessibility suggests that safe and reliable infrastructure is a universal requirement for all visitors.

3.3.2 Gender and Tourist Needs, Demands, and Perceptions

No significant differences were found between male and female respondents across all categories of needs, demands, and perceptions. The results suggest that tourists share similar expectations and experiences regardless of gender. This finding supports UN Tourism (2026), which reports increasing convergence in travel preferences across genders. Recent tourism geography research suggests that while gender differences remain relevant, contemporary tourism experiences increasingly exhibit converging patterns across genders (Yang & Schänzel, 2023). It also aligns with Grand View Research (2026), which notes that gender-responsive tourism facilities contribute to more uniform satisfaction levels among visitors. The findings further emphasize the importance of maintaining universal service standards.

3.3.3 Educational Attainment and Tourist Needs, Demands, and Perceptions

Significant differences were observed across educational attainment groups in all categories examined. The strongest differences were found in services, accessibility, environmental quality, and cognitive image. These findings suggest that education influences tourists' expectations and evaluations of destination attributes. Visitors with higher educational attainment tend to demonstrate greater sensitivity to information quality, infrastructure reliability, and environmental management. This supports the findings of Grand View Research (2026) and UN Tourism (2026), which identify highly educated travelers as key participants in experiential and knowledge-based tourism. The results also reflect the Conscious Consumer Trend described by Tourism Cares (2025), wherein educated travelers prioritize sustainability and heritage conservation.

3.3.4 Occupation and Tourist Needs, Demands, and Perceptions

Significant differences were found among occupational groups in facilities, services, environmental quality, and all perception dimensions. However, no significant differences were observed for safety and accessibility. The findings indicate that occupation influences how tourists perceive and evaluate destination experiences. Occupational characteristics may influence travel expectations, spending patterns, and destination evaluations (Bagus & Rai, 2025). Students, in particular, demonstrated distinct cognitive and affective perceptions compared with employed and self-employed respondents. This supports Internova (2026), which characterizes younger travelers as values-driven explorers who prioritize authenticity and social impact. The absence of significant differences in safety and accessibility supports the Universal Duty of Care Trend discussed by Fact.MR (2026), emphasizing that transport and safety expectations are shared across occupational groups.

3.4 Summary of Major Findings

The study revealed that tourists in Kabayan highly value accommodation quality, informative services, visible security measures, safe road conditions, and the protection of natural heritage. Their perceptions of the destination were generally positive, characterized by strong cognitive, affective, and conative images. Cultural authenticity, emotional connection with nature, and behavioral loyalty emerged as the strongest dimensions of destination perception. Demographic characteristics influenced several aspects of tourists' needs, demands, and perceptions. Significant differences were observed across age, educational attainment, and occupation, while gender showed no significant influence. These findings highlight the importance of maintaining high standards of infrastructure, services, safety, environmental management, and cultural preservation while developing tourism strategies that address the varying expectations of different visitor groups.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concludes that tourists in Kabayan, Benguet prioritize quality accommodations, responsive and informative services, visible security presence, safe and reliable road access, and the protection of natural heritage. Tourists hold highly positive cognitive, affective, and conative perceptions of the destination, characterized by appreciation for its cultural authenticity, emotional connection to its natural landscape, and strong intentions to revisit and recommend the municipality. Furthermore, age, educational attainment, and occupation significantly influence tourists' needs, demands, and perceptions, while gender does not, indicating that demographic characteristics shape how visitors experience and value the destination.

The Local Government Unit of Kabayan may continue improving accommodation standards, road safety, public restroom

accessibility, security visibility, guide training, standardized tour orientations, and carrying-capacity management to address tourists identified needs and demands. Tourism development initiatives may preserve the municipality's cultural authenticity and restorative environment while strengthening heritage interpretation, storytelling, and visitor experiences. The LGU may also adopt a segmented and inclusive tourism approach by developing programs and services responsive to the differing expectations of various age, educational, and occupational groups while ensuring that tourism policies remain reflective of diverse visitor needs.

The study focused on assessing the needs, demands, and perceptions of tourists visiting Kabayan, Benguet and examined their relationships with selected demographic variables, specifically age, gender, educational attainment, and occupation. The findings were limited to the respondents included in the study and to the dimensions of facilities, services, safety, accessibility, environmental quality, and destination image assessed during the conduct of the research.

Compliance with ethical standards

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical principles governing research involving human participants. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were provided with adequate information regarding the purpose and procedures of the study prior to data collection. Measures were implemented to ensure confidentiality, anonymity, data protection, and respect for participants throughout the research process. The study was conducted solely for academic purposes, and all collected information was handled responsibly and used only within the scope of the research.

REFERENCES

- Antari, K. A. A. (2023). The influence of risk perception on visit decision to tourism village: The mediating role of tourist motivation. *International Journal of School Science and Business*, 7(4), 947–956.
- Bagus, I., & Rai, I. (2025). The role of occupation and income in shaping destination image and visitor satisfaction in community-based tourism. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 23(2), 145–160.
- Bautista, L., & Nguyen, H. (2026). The changing paradigm of tourist behavior in rural tourism: Digital engagement and the social media norm. *Journal of Strategic Commerce*, 14(1), 44–49.
- Beerli, A., & Martin, J. D. (2004). Factors influencing destination image. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 31(3), 657–681. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2004.01.010>
- Carantes, J. B. (2025). Digital vs. physical reality: Assessing the infrastructure gap in the municipalities of Atok and Tuba. *Journal of Northern Luzon Development*, 12(2), 45–60.
- Chen, C. F., Chen, P. C., & Lee, A. D. (2011). The influence of internal and external factors on destination image. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 1(3), 1–15.
- Chen, L., Wang, Y., & Smith, J. (2024). Perceived risk and travel intentions in high-altitude destinations: A post-pandemic analysis. *Journal of Mountain Science & Tourism*, 19(3), 210–225.
- Dann, G. M. (1977). Anomie, ego-enhancement, and tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 4(4), 184–194. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383\(77\)90037-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(77)90037-8)
- Department of Tourism. (2023). National Tourism Development Plan (NTDP) 2023–2028: Transforming the Philippines into a tourism powerhouse. Government of the Philippines.
- Echtner, C. M., & Ritchie, J. B. (2003). The meaning and measurement of destination image. *The Journal of Tourism Studies*, 14(1), 37–48.
- Fact.MR. (2026). Tourism security market outlook (2026–2032): Trends in the universal duty of care and standardized safety protocols.
- Fennell, D. A. (2020). *Ecotourism* (5th ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429346293>
- Gentle, R. (2025). Quiet adventure and the rise of restorative tourism: Moving beyond the urban noise. *Berghahn Journals*.
- George, R. (2008). *Marketing tourism in South Africa* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Grand View Research. (2026). Cultural heritage tourism market size, share & trends analysis report by type (cultural, nature, culinary), by expenditure (premium, budget), and segment forecasts, 2026–2030.
- Greer, R. C., Kanthawang, N., Reest, J., Wangrangsimakul, T., Parker, M., Kelly, M., & Cheah, P. Y. (2023). Vulnerability and agency in research participants' daily lives and the research encounter: Research in northern Thailand. *PLOS ONE*, 18(1), e0280056. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0280056>
- Gumede, T., & Ezeuduji, I. (2021). Managing heritage tourism brand in South Africa: A synthesis of literature. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 10(4), 1302–1320.
- He, L., Gao, J., & Ma, S. (2026). Environmental experience and tourist restorativeness: The moderating role of social class. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 17, Article 12975437.
- Horner, J., & Minifie, F. D. (2011). Research ethics III: Publication practices and authorship, conflicts of interest, and research misconduct. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 54, 346–362. [https://doi.org/10.1044/1029-4388\(2010/09-0263\)](https://doi.org/10.1044/1029-4388(2010/09-0263))

- International Interdisciplinary Applied Research Institute. (2024). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of local travelers in Philippine cave and mountain systems. *IIARI Proceedings on Heritage Management*.
- International Transport Forum. (2025). Road safety annual report 2025: Transitioning to safe mobility infrastructure resilience. OECD Publishing.
- Internova Travel Group. (2026). The 2026 traveler profile: Decoding the safety-conscious millennial and the spontaneous Gen Z.
- Kotler, P., & Gertner, D. (2002). Country as brand, product, and beyond: A place marketing and brand management perspective. *Journal of Brand Management*, 9(4), 249–261. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.bm.2540076>
- Kozak, M. (2002). Comparative analysis of tourism motivations by nationality and destinations. *Tourism Management*, 23(3), 221–232.
- Lalicic, L. (2023). The evolution of tourist needs: From basic safety to digital belonging. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 45, 101–114.
- Li, J., & Batra, A. (2026). The role of visible law enforcement and community watchmen in mountain tourism: Predicting revisit intentions through perceived safety. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 28(1), 112–125.
- Lopes, S. D. F. (2011). Destination image: Origins, developments and implications. *PASOS: Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural*, 9(2), 305–315.
- López-Sanz, J. M., Penelas-Leguia, A., Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, P., & Cuesta-Valiño, P. (2021). Rural tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals: A study of the variables that most influence the behavior of the tourist. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 21, Article 722973.
- Mansueto, R., Sarmiento, C., & Sabado, C. (2025). Exploring the perceived carrying capacity of Cambugahay Falls: A tourist perspective. *SSRN Electronic Journal*.
- Martiny, A. (2023). Transformative tourism and educational reciprocity in indigenous landscapes. *Heritage & Society*, 16(2), 88–105.
- McKercher, B., & du Cros, H. (2002). *Cultural tourism: The partnership between tourism and cultural heritage management*. Routledge.
- Mejia, C., & Abad, R. J. (2026). International tourists' perceptions of smart tourism features in small island developing countries. *Sustainability*, 7(3), 66–82.
- Molina, A., Gomez, M., & Martin-Consuegra, D. (2010). Tourism marketing information and destination image management. *African Journal of Business Management*, 4(5), 722–728.
- OECD. (2024). *OECD tourism trends and policies 2024*. OECD Publishing.
- Oliver, R. L. (1980). A cognitive model of the antecedents and consequences of satisfaction decisions. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 17(4), 460–469. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224378001700405>
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1988). SERVQUAL: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality. *Journal of Retailing*, 64(1), 12–40.
- Pasaco-Gonzales, B. S., Campon-Cerro, A. M., Moreno-Lobato, A., & Sanchez-Vergas, E. (2023). The role of demographics and previous experience in tourists' experiential perceptions. *Sustainability*, 15(4), 3768.
- Pearce, D. G. (1988). *Tourism Today: A Geographical Analysis* (2nd ed.). Longman Scientific & Technical.
- Philippine National Health Research System. (2016). Guidelines for health research prioritization: How to set a research agenda. <https://www.healthresearch.ph>
- Pike, S. (2008). *Destination marketing: An integrated marketing communication approach*. Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Pranatasari, F. D., & Diva, A. (2024). Generation travel behavior to visit a tourism destination. *Asian Journal of Social Science and Management Technology*, 6(2), 40–53.
- Prideaux, B. (2000). The role of the transport system in destination development. *Tourism Management*, 21(1), 53–63. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177\(99\)00079-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(99)00079-5)
- Reichel, A., & Uriely, N. (2005). Predicting homeowners' attitudes toward tourism development: Case study of the Negev Desert, Israel. *Journal of Travel Research*, 43(3), 271–278.
- Revfine. (2026). 2026 hospitality and tourism trends: The rise of indigenous and immersive experiences.
- Reyes, M. (2020). The research in the time of COVID-19: Challenges of research ethics committees. *Journal of the ASEAN Federation of Endocrine Societies*, 35(1), 29–32. <https://doi.org/10.15605/jafes.035.01.07>
- Santos, R., Gatchalian, C., Handig, J. E., & Sumugat, M. G. (2024). Investigating the interplay between authentic leadership skills and second language proficiency in a higher education institution. *Cognizance Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 4(2), 113–118. <https://doi.org/10.47760/cognizance.2024.v04i02.011>
- Smith, M. K. (2015). *Issues in cultural tourism studies*. Routledge.
- Sreelakshmi, C. V., Arora, D., Palatty, P. L., Kuriachan, S., D'Souza, R., & Fernandez, R. K. (2023). Exploring the ethical concerns in vulnerability and its remediation. *Global Bioethics Enquiry Journal*, 11(1), 28–48. <https://doi.org/10.38020/gbe.11.1.2023.28-48>
- Subedi, K. R., & Khanal, P. (2025). Navigating the ethical landscape: A field reflection on the dynamics of informed consent in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 30(11), 4703–4720. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2025.7004>

- SunStar. (2026, January 15). ASEAN Tourism Sectoral Plan 2016–2030: Prioritizing quality and resilience over mass arrivals. SunStar Philippines.
- Supera, M., Guerra, E., Villamar, E., & Saranza, C. (2024). Rural tourism development in the Philippines: Balancing economic growth with ecological and socio-cultural sustainability. *Journal of Economics, Finance and Management Studies*, 7(6), 3307–3322.
- Timothy, D. J., & Boyd, S. W. (2003). *Heritage tourism*. Pearson Education.
- Tourism Cares. (2025, December 22). 2026 travel trends: Reframing sustainability for the future of travel.
- Trisakti, A., Kusuma, R., & Handayani, S. (2025). The effect of expectations disconfirmation and employee expertise on visitor satisfaction in heritage sites. *International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 10(2), 115–130.
- Tsoka-Gwegweni, J. M., & Wassenaar, D. R. (2014). Using the Emanuel et al. framework to assess ethical issues raised by the biomedical research ethics committee in South Africa. *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics*, 9(5), 36–45. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1556264614553172>
- UN Tourism. (2026). *Tourism trends and traveler preferences report 2026*.
- Uysal, M., & Jurovski, C. (1994). Testing the push and pull factors. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 21(4), 844–846. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383\(94\)90091-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(94)90091-4)
- Wilson, S., Braaten, R. F., & Coluzzi, S. J. (2026). Music and awe: Complex emotions evoked by tonal dissonance. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 17, Article 1767623.
- Yang, E. C. L., & Schänzel, H. (2023). On the gender imperative in tourism geographies research. *Tourism Geographies*, 1(11).
- Yilmaz, Y., Yilmaz, I., Icigen, E. T., Ekin, Y., & Utku, B. D. (2009). Destination image: A comparative study on pre- and post-trip image variations. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 18(5), 461–479.
- Zouni, G., & Kouremenos, A. (2008). Do destinations help the tourist to create knowledge? *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 12(5), 149.