

# Livability of Cebu City as Perceived by the Foreign Tourist

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**Abstract**— This study is conducted to assess the livability of Cebu City as perceived by the foreign tourists. The aim of this paper is to understand quantitative concept of the livability of Cebu City, a metropolitan city that serves as the tourist gateway for the Central and Southern part of the Philippines is selected for the study. This study utilizes the standardized questionnaire to support the research and recognize the factors that affect the foreign tourist stay in the city and along with these are the specific interpretations of the said information. About 80 foreign respondents that are visiting Cebu were asked answer the questionnaires. The observations and statements made by respondents were recorded and later transcribed. A descriptive research approach was used to analyze these responses. In profiling the respondents, the method of simple percentage is used while the method of weighted mean and average weighted mean was used on the livability factors. Overall five factors of responses were identified as livability attributes which summarizes the concept of livability as understood by respondents and were describe as Average to Good. The government has weak implementation on its policies and ordinances which affects the livability of the city. It must have programs that shall have a comprehensive analysis with the trends of urban environmental livability improvements.

**Keywords**— livability, urban cities, sustainable, community

## I. INTRODUCTION

Livability, as defined by Partners for Livable communities, is the sum of the factors which sums up to the quality of life of the community which includes the man-made and natural environments, economic prosperity, social stability and equity, educational opportunity, and cultural, entertainment and recreation possibilities existing in the area. Livability refers to the state of living environment, which would offer an acceptable quality of life to the residents of a particular locale. Livability has develop into a global need for health, economic and social survival of the people (Brenner, P & Brenner, L, 2007). The term “livable cities” was first coined back in the 1980s to describe quality of life and the characteristics that makes the city livable, the International Making Cities Livable has seen that the term used in countless ways to describe standard of living, rather than quality of life. Presently, there are numerous rankings of “most livable cities” that came out from various articles of the Economist, Forbes.com, and Monocle which are based on the rankings using data such crime rates, health statistics, sanitation standards, and expenditures on city services. These type of articles enable people especially retirees and new families to carefully assess the place which are suited for them to live. In order to have a healthy and livable city, it should first be livable for children since if cities are unhealthy it is the

children that are the first to suffer. Making cities worthy of a child’s affection, in which children can feel at home it, should be possible for children to get to know their city inside out, to “hold their city in the palm of their hand. Children, after all, the ones will inherit the city, and become responsible for its future (Lennard, S &Lennard, H, 2004).

In the Philippines, Metro Manila is growing by 60 persons per hour and is identified to be one of the fastest growing cities in the world in terms of population, according to a Harvard study in 2000. People opt to live in urban areas is not considered to be a poor choice in fact it would help the country more by utilizing the land efficiently in the rural areas to improve food security, preserve the natural environment and put up other necessary facilities. By 2020, Manila Megalopolis will have at least 20 million people (Palafox Jr., 2015). He even stated that there are three concepts (livable, resilient, and sustainable cities) to be founded on the common ground that people are at the center of the city and that going green and sustainable are essential. This idea has embraced the three themes as the country develops its cities and rebuilds new ones. In their essay, “The Neighborhood, the District, and the Corridor” for Peter Katz’s pivotal book *The New Urbanism: Toward an Architecture of Community* (McGraw-Hill, 1994), Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk quotes that the choice is ours. It is either a society of homogenous pieces isolated from one another in often fortified enclaves or a society of diverse and memorable neighborhoods organized into mutually supportive towns, cities, and regions. Cebu placed 26th of 28 APEC cities in the *Building Better Cities: Competitive, Sustainable, and Livable Metropolises*. According to the 61-page report released stated that the report will inspire cities within APEC to collaborate, to borrow best ideas and seek advice on tenacious problems. The report said the Philippines needs to encourage more investments on renewable energy for its environmental sustainability. Guillermo Luz, co-chairman of the National Competitiveness Council said the report should be used to address the needs of the cities (Magtulis, 2015).

This study is conducted to assess the livability of Cebu City as perceived by the foreign tourists. This study is to be conducted in consideration of Cebu City’s establishment of a sustainable community. This study contains questionnaires to support the research and recognize the factors that can be very influential in the life of the city and indeed to the building of community in and of itself. Along with these are the specific interpretations of the said information. Using these data, the researchers shall be pinpointing the strong points of the city’s situation and specify the reasons of Cebu City’s livability. Moreover, the study shall be a potent tool in providing foreign tourists the quality of life in its pursuit in attaining excellence through the city’s sustainable community. This study could be used as a benchmark for developing and accessing the city’s standards. This also stresses that the research is a potent tool in improving the level of Cebu City’s economic well-being.

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Pattern, complexity, and harmony in the built environment can stimulate curiosity, discovery, and a sense that the world is meaningful, but a city may have to aim higher than to be placed top in their rankings to be truly livable. Such rankings can be a powerful tool for economic development, and there is competition by world cities to be ranked high.

## II. OBJECTIVES

The study aims to assess the perception of the foreign tourist with regards to the livability of Cebu. It also intends to determine the strong points of the city that makes it livable as well as its weak points. The study aims to be a potent tool in providing foreign tourists the quality environment in its pursuit in attaining as a sustainable community and a benchmark for developing and accessing the city's standards.

## III. METHODOLOGY

### A. Method Used

The study used the descriptive method and supplemented with the adopted questionnaire with a 5 point Likert scale.

In profiling the foreign respondents, the method used is by getting the simple percentage where:

$$f = \text{frequency (number of respondents)}$$

$$\% = \text{percentage}$$

The method used in livability factors is by weighted mean where:

$$W = \frac{(N*5)+(N*4)+(N*3)+(N*2)+(N*1)}{80}$$

To get N:

*N = number of respondents who rated the following:*

- 5 = Excellent
- 4 = Good
- 3 = Average
- 2 = Fair
- 1 = Poor

### B. Sources of Data

The population of interest in this study is the foreign tourists. The 80 foreign respondents should be at least stayed for three days in the City. The foreign tourists are best to assess the livability of the city with their given standard of living as basis.

### C. Data-gathering Procedure

The study involves construction of the questionnaire with the letter of consent. The data were gathered through the questionnaire method in a convenient sampling method. The researcher distributed the questionnaires supplemented with interviews to gather information from the representative random sampling manner.

## IV. FINDINGS

### *Respondent's Profile:*

The age and gender of the respondents are mostly male which comprises about 67.50 percent of the total number of respondents and the rest of the 32.50 percent is from the female category. The highest percentage composing the total number of male foreign respondents is from the age bracket of 21 – 30 years old while the age bracket for female containing its highest percentage is from 15 – 20 years old obtaining 13.75 percent from it. While within the age of 21 – 30 years old, most of these respondents are single and has more disposable income who still wants to enjoy life through traveling. These respondents are starting to earn income and have a stressful work environment, thus, traveling is one of the solutions to lessen the stress. The least percentage from the male category is 15 – 20 years old age bracket which are still minors and still rely and seek approval with regards to traveling on their own. At this age, they are likely to travel with their parents or guardians. As for 60 and above, most of these respondents are retirees and although they have the money yet has lesser energy and motivation to travel. These respondents tend to be less active and prefer passive and physically comfortable travels. Health restrictions and the lack of safety and security in public places hinder these respondents to travel.

The occupation of the respondents may hold one of the reasons why they are visiting Cebu City. From the results, most of the respondents are students which obtain about 41.25 percent of the total number of respondents, following by 36.25 percent from the businessmen and the occupation that has the least percentage is the environmentalist which consists of 1.25 percent. According to Cebu Hub for English Learning Excellence's Dr. Milagros Espina, Philippines specifically Cebu has a competitive advantage in our high literacy rate, our strong educational tourism program, our cultural diversity, affordability in cost of living and education, and the diverse activities available for rest and recreation, among others. Majority of the long staying foreigners are students since Cebu City has numerous English schools that are affordable and most efficient schools. Businessmen travel in the city for the purpose of attending meetings, conventions or congresses and in some cases, incentive trips. Businessmen can also have sightseeing in their destination after their work and most prefer for downtown accommodation facilities closer to work.

### *Livability Factor:*

Based on the results, the accessibility of the city is average with a weighted of 3.22. During the interview with the respondents, the malls are the most accessible here in Cebu City because of taxi availability, provide valet parking and have daily scheduled shuttle rides to guests from their hotels to the malls. Shipping companies also provide bus shuttles for the passengers' convenience from the port to malls and vice versa. However the study found out that unnecessary rerouting and heavy traffic causes the respondents to arrive late in certain destinations and attractions during tours. Road signage must be post in one place so that they could immediately see it in one glimpse. Unfinished road

constructions make the traffic flow condition in the city worse. The traffic lights function well but usually take five minutes interval from stop to go signal. People are stubborn and do not religiously follow the traffic rules. Considering the development that are taking place in the city the roads remains narrow as it was which is one consideration in the traffic congestion. Aside from the growing population of the city, there is also an increased in tourist arrivals. GPS-based traffic app Waze named Cebu as the world's worst urban area to drive in with a 1.15 rating.

TABLE I: LIVABILITY FACTOR: ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility	WM	Description
1. Easy access:	3.96	Good
1.1 Hospitals	3.84	Good
1.2 Malls	4.43	Excellent
1.3 Airports	3.73	Good
1.4 Seaports	3.85	Good
2. Taxi cab	4.03	Good
3. Transportation facilities:	3.00	Average
3.1 Highways	3.00	Average
3.2 Sidewalks	2.89	Average
3.3 Bridges	3.11	Average
3.4 Traffic lights	3.01	Average
4. Road signages	3.01	Average
5. Traffic flow condition	2.16	Fair
6. Traffic officers	3.16	Fair
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3.22</b>	<b>Average</b>

In terms of the safety and security, the city is rated with an average weighted of 3.33. The Cebuano's trustworthiness is dubbed as the highest weighted sub-factor at 3.94. Basing on an interview, Cebuanos are generally honest and courteous to the tourist. Cebuanos, being able to understand and talk in English is an advantage and often find ways to communicate even with non-English speaker such as Koreans. Police and security guards are visible especially in touristy area. The Local government is planning to allocate more police stations in the city which will allow them to respond to situations quickly. There are pedestrian lanes and skywalks for crossing yet the respondents' notice that Cebuanos do not make use of these in crossing the streets which are causing little delays and the drivers do not often slow down when there is a pedestrian lane to allow people to cross. The emergency exits are visible in public areas but respondents' have some reservations on the functionality of the exits as well as the disaster preparedness of the Cebuanos during catastrophes and accidents. Cebu City Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office (CCDRMO) is proposing a P350.8-million budget for 2017 which will be utilize in the trainings and procurement of the necessary facilities and equipment.

Cebu's livability basing on Services is good and is weighted at 4.13. Cebuanos are very friendly and do not take advantage of tourists unlike in Manila and India through

deceiving tourist and overpricing the commodities to them. Local residents are very courteous and well-mannered towards tourists as well. Everywhere the travelers go, services are great. Most resort hotels in Cebu provide greater service with very courteous and friendly staff, clean and spacious rooms, as well as bathrooms, and serve good food and complete amenities.

TABLE II: LIVABILITY FACTOR: SAFETY AND SECURITY

Safety and Security	WM	Description
1. Strolling at nights	3.25	Average
2. Risk-free from thieves	2.76	Average
3. Condominiums and the like	3.89	Good
4. Streetlights	3.38	Average
5. Cebuanos' trustworthiness	3.94	Good
6. Police officers	3.46	Good
7. Pedestrian lanes	3.10	Average
8. Emergency exits	3.20	Average
9. Disaster preparedness	2.99	Average
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3.33</b>	<b>Average</b>

The taxis are clean and well-maintained while the drivers are well-groomed, respectful and courteous. The LTFRB or the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board implement a much stricter rule on all public vehicles due to some past tourists' complaints. All tourist vehicles and drivers, tour guides and travel agents and other tourism establishment such as souvenir shops, malls, restaurants are encourage to undergo accreditation under the Department of Tourism (DOT) to ensure the quality of service it provides to the tourists. These establishments shall undergo rigid evaluation and assessment by the department. The tourist can easily identify an accredited establishment through the logo sticker placed on the establishments.

TABLE III : LIVABILITY FACTOR: SERVICES

Services	WM	Description
1. Quality and efficiency of services in the ff:		
1.1 Restaurants	4.16	Good
1.2 Hotels	4.19	Good
1.3 Resorts	4.34	Excellent
1.4 Malls	4.21	Good
1.5 Taxi cab drivers	4.08	Good
1.6 Airports, seaports, and terminals	3.78	Good
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4.13</b>	<b>Good</b>

The Health Condition and Climate factor rated is Average with a weighted mean of 3.22. According to the respondents' drainages, roads, skywalks and sidewalks are filthy due to poor maintenance and negligence of the government as well

as the local residence. People toss trash anywhere and government officers have weak action on the matter unlike in other countries. Other respondents said that government have ordinances about cleanliness but fail to implement it continuously and the locals fail to follow it and do not feel the urge to obey due to its non-strict implementation. The quality of air is deplorable due to the emission of the vehicles and the city has less greenery and does not see the importance of having greeneries in an urbanized city as Cebu. The regional Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said air quality in Metro Cebu still remains ‘good and fair’ with its four air monitoring equipment located at Barangay Banilad, Mabolo Police Station, Cebu Business Park and Naga. The dengue outbreak in the city is containable and the government with the Department of Health mobilizes the community to be aware and cautious and take active participation on environmental sanitation to eradicate dengue. The city has state of the art healthcare facilities which can cater to their needs.

TABLE IV: LIVABILITY FACTOR: HEALTH CONDITION AND CLIMATE

Health Condition and Climate	WM	Description
1. Epidemic-free city	3.90	Good
2. Safe drinking water	3.68	Good
3. Safely prepared food	3.93	Good
4. Number of hospitals	3.69	Good
5. Capacity of hospitals	3.44	Good
6. Cleanliness of:	2.48	Fair
6.1 Drainages	2.43	Fair
6.2 Roads	2.56	Fair
6.3 Skywalks	2.59	Fair
6.4 Sidewalks	2.35	Fair
7. Quality of air	2.76	Average
8. Climate comfortability	3.41	Average
9. Practice of garbage segregation	2.71	Average
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3.22</b>	<b>Average</b>

Cebu City’s Amenities and Facilities factor is one of the two factors which have been described as Good, wherein it is favorable for a livable city with a weighted mean of 3.97. The respondents are satisfied with the Amenities and Facilities available in Cebu City. When it comes to the basic needs, it can be easily found in city malls which offer an all-in-one stop-store. The hotels are also supplying what the respondents’ needs and wants and are pleased about it. The hotels and restaurants are serving clean and safe food and beverages that also offers wide array of choices for them or if not it provides them with notable suggestions of restaurants nearby the hotel that had surpass their perception of the city. There is a wide array of choices of accommodation facilities in the city from budget to luxury hotel. Respondents also enjoy taking a bath or swim outdoors because the water is not too hot or too cold. Water services and electricity supply is

efficient and have not experience any insufficiency since accommodations have its back-up supply. The internet connection is good in high-valued accommodations and restaurants in the city although, in most areas, connections can be somewhat erratic.

TABLE V: LIVABILITY FACTOR: AMENITIES AND FACILITIES

Amenities and Facilities	WM	Description
1. Availability of the basic needs	4.43	Excellent
2. Internet connection	3.41	Good
3. Water services	3.99	Good
4. Sufficiency of electricity	4.03	Good
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3.97</b>	<b>Good</b>

V. CONCLUSION

Basing on the result of the study the queen city of the south is livable on an average scale as assessed by the foreign tourists. The city has lower crime rate compared to Manila which has security issues but there is a need to improve the visibility of the police force and its response to critical situations must be improve. Cebu city also has wide English-speaking population and serve as a financial center of the Visayas which makes it fairly convenient for expats. However, the government must coordinate with other departments and conduct programs to improve environmental sanitation most especially in public areas. Traffic congestion is undeniably progressing and that the government must provide concrete solution to it to avoid economic lost and lessen social inconvenience to the tourist and to the locals. Basing on the study the locals lacks active involvement and participation in any government affairs whether cultural, social or environmental.

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