

**YANGON UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS  
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS  
MASTER OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES PROGRAMME**

**A STUDY ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL YOUTH ON  
TOURISM GROWTH IN BAGO CITY**

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MDevS - 17 (18<sup>th</sup> BATCH)**

**JUNE, 2025**

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**A STUDY ON THE PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL YOUTH ON**  
**TOURISM GROWTH IN BAGO CITY**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillments of the requirements for the  
Master of Development Studies (MDevS) Degree

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the perceptions of local youth toward tourist attractions in Bago City and their attitudes regarding tourism development. The main objective is to understand how local youth perceive the economic, social, and environmental impacts of tourism in their community. A survey-based approach was employed, using structured questionnaires administered to 152 local residents. The survey explored participants' views on tourism-related benefits, such as income generation and employment opportunities, as well as potential social and environmental challenges. Findings indicate that local youth generally recognize the positive contributions of tourism to economic growth, particularly in creating jobs and supporting local businesses. However, they also emphasize the need for careful management to prevent negative impacts on the environment and community life. The study highlights that tourism development can benefit the local population if planned sustainably, balancing economic growth with social and environmental considerations.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Dr. Tin Tin Htwe, Rector of the Yangon University of Economics for her help and for giving me the chance to study in the Master of Development Studies program.

Second, I would like to thank Professor Dr. Cho Cho Thein, Pro-Rector of the Yangon University of Economics as well as Dr. Tin Tin Wai, Pro-Rector of Yangon University of Economics for their meaningful advice and support that make this study progress.

My sincerest appreciation to Professor Dr. Naw Htee Mue Loe Htoo, Program Director and Department Head, Department of Economics, Yangon University of Economics, for her overall management and support from day one to date.

My special thanks go to all lecturers and my thesis supervisor Daw Pyae Phyo Lwin, Lecture, Department of Economics, Yangon University of Economics, for her meaningful advice and support that enabled me to complete my research study.

In addition, Dr. Yin Myo Oo, Professor, Department of Economics, Yangon University of Economics, Professor Dr. Zin Zin Shwe, Professor, Department of Economics, Yangon University of Economics, U Hla Aung, Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Yangon University of Economics and Daw Phyu Win Ei, Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Yangon University of Economics for their respective support and in-depth comments that make this study progress.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to everyone who has participated in this study in any manner, including all resource persons, including my classmates, the crucial person from research areas, and respondents, for their time and dedication.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CSO	Central Statistical Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WTTC	World Tourist and Travel Council

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Tourism is broadly defined as the activities of individuals traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for leisure, business, or other purposes, for a duration not exceeding one consecutive year (UNWTO, 2008). This definition distinguishes tourism from daily commuting or long-term migration, emphasizing temporary travel with specific intentions. Tourism encompasses multiple sectors, including accommodation, transportation, attractions, entertainment, and related services. It is both a global industry and a complex social phenomenon that involves the movement of people and the exchange of cultures. Scholars such as Goeldner and Ritchie (2012) highlight that tourism is not limited to sightseeing; it also includes educational, health, adventure, and spiritual purposes. Its scope extends to both domestic and international travel, reflecting diverse motivations and experiences. As such, tourism is multifaceted, linking economic, cultural, environmental, and social dimensions that require careful analysis for effective management and sustainable development.

Tourism is a major economic driver globally, contributing 7.6% to world GDP and supporting over 289 million jobs in 2022 (WTTC, 2023). It generates revenue through visitor spending on accommodation, transportation, food, and activities, benefiting both urban and rural economies. Tourism can stimulate infrastructure development, such as airports, roads, and public facilities, which in turn support broader economic growth. In developing countries, tourism often serves as a crucial source of foreign exchange earnings, reducing reliance on traditional exports. It can also attract investment in related sectors such as retail, entertainment, and hospitality. Seasonal tourism provides temporary employment opportunities, while sustained tourism development fosters long-term job creation. However, over-reliance on tourism can make economies vulnerable to global crises, such as pandemics or political instability. Therefore, strategic planning is essential to maximize tourism's economic benefits while minimizing associated risks.

Tourism plays a significant role in fostering cultural exchange and mutual understanding. It provides opportunities for visitors to learn about local traditions,

languages, cuisines, and art forms, while also encouraging host communities to preserve and showcase their heritage (Smith & Richards, 2013). Cultural festivals, handicrafts, and performance arts often gain renewed vitality through tourism demand. Moreover, tourism can strengthen community pride and identity by validating local customs in the global context. However, it can also lead to cultural commodification, where traditions are altered to meet tourist expectations. In some cases, increased interaction between locals and tourists may result in cultural dilution or loss of authenticity. Balancing cultural preservation with tourism growth requires sensitive management, community involvement, and policies that respect local values. When well-managed, tourism becomes a powerful tool for intercultural dialogue, promoting peace and understanding among diverse societies.

Tourism manifests in diverse forms, reflecting the varied motivations and interests of travelers. Cultural tourism focuses on heritage sites, museums, and traditional practices, while nature-based tourism emphasizes national parks, wildlife, and scenic landscapes (Richards, 2018). Adventure tourism involves physically engaging activities such as trekking, diving, or mountaineering. Medical tourism has grown as people seek healthcare services abroad, often combining treatment with leisure. Eco-tourism promotes responsible travel to natural areas, aiming to conserve the environment and benefit local communities (Fennell, 2020). Rural tourism offers visitors authentic countryside experiences, whereas urban tourism centers around metropolitan attractions, events, and shopping. Additionally, religious tourism remains significant, with millions visiting sacred sites annually. Each form of tourism carries distinct economic, cultural, and environmental implications. Understanding these categories allows policymakers and stakeholders to tailor marketing strategies, infrastructure development, and sustainability initiatives to meet the specific needs of different tourism markets.

In the 21st century, tourism has become one of the fastest-growing sectors, driven by globalization, technological innovation, and changing consumer preferences. The rise of low-cost airlines, online booking platforms, and social media has made travel more accessible and personalized (Gretzel et al., 2015). Tourists today seek authentic, immersive experiences rather than standardized packages. The COVID-19 pandemic temporarily disrupted global tourism, shifting focus toward domestic and sustainable travel. Post-pandemic recovery strategies emphasize resilience, digital transformation, and community-based tourism models. Furthermore, issues such as

overtourism, geopolitical tensions, and environmental concerns are shaping the industry's future direction. The challenge lies in managing growth sustainably while delivering meaningful experiences for travelers and benefits for host communities. As tourism continues to evolve, it remains an essential bridge between cultures, economies, and environments, reinforcing its role as a vital component of global development.

## **1.1 Rationale of the Study**

Tourism has become an increasingly significant sector in Myanmar's economy, particularly in culturally rich cities like Bago, which attract both domestic and international visitors. While tourism offers economic benefits such as job creation, infrastructure development, and income generation, it can also bring challenges, including cultural commodification, environmental degradation, and rising costs of living. Despite Bago's growing popularity as a heritage destination, there is limited academic research exploring how tourism directly affects the well-being, culture, and daily lives of its local residents. This study aims to fill that gap by assessing both the positive and negative impacts of tourism from the perspective of the community, thereby providing insights for policymakers, tourism planners, and stakeholders to develop strategies that promote sustainable and community-centered tourism development.

At the global level, tourism remains a major driver of economic growth and cultural exchange. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) 2024 report, the global tourism sector contributed USD 9.5 trillion to the world economy in 2023, 9.1% of global GDP, marking a strong recovery from the pandemic-related downturns. The industry supported approximately 330 million jobs worldwide, accounting for 1 in 10 jobs globally. International tourist arrivals reached 1.3 billion in 2023, as reported by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), showing a near-complete rebound to pre-pandemic levels. These figures underscore the immense socio-economic importance of tourism globally and the growing demand for culturally and historically rich destinations especially in Asia.

However, this rapid growth also brings global concerns. The UNWTO and OECD highlight challenges such as overtourism, climate impact (with tourism responsible for about 8% of global carbon emissions), loss of local identity, and strain on urban infrastructure. In popular destinations across Europe and Asia, such as Venice, Kyoto, and Bali, residents have expressed frustration over rising living costs,

overcrowding, and environmental damage—issues that resonate with emerging heritage cities like Bago.

As tourism rapidly expands in Myanmar, particularly in culturally significant cities like Bago, understanding local residents' perspectives is essential. These communities serve as both hosts and key stakeholders, directly experiencing the benefits and challenges tourism brings. While landmarks such as the Shwemawdaw Pagoda, Kyaikpun Buddha, and Kanbawzathadi Palace attract increasing numbers of visitors and create economic opportunities, they also place pressure on infrastructure, cultural traditions, and the environment. Without community involvement in planning and policy-making, tourism risks causing social tensions, cultural erosion, and a loss of local identity. Globally, similar challenges are seen in heritage destinations, where the balance between economic growth and preservation is delicate. This study seeks to amplify the perception of local community around the attractive places in Bago city and to support the growth of tourism.

## **1.2. Objective of the Study**

The primary objective of this study is to examine the perceptions and attitudes of local youth regarding the growth of the tourism industry in Bago.

## **1.3. Method of Study**

This study employs a survey-based approach to examine and analyze the perceptions and attitudes of local youth regarding the development of the tourism industry in Bago. A total of 152 students from Bago University will be surveyed using structured questionnaires designed to gather their perspectives on the economic, social, and environmental impacts of tourism. Additionally, secondary data from government reports and academic sources will be utilized to provide further context and support the analysis.

## **1.4. Scope and Limitation of the Study**

This study focuses on examining the perceptions and attitudes of local youth toward the development of the tourism industry in Bago. The target population includes 152 students from Bago University, representing the youth demographic in the area. The study primarily investigates their views on the economic, social, and environmental effects of tourism development. Both primary data collected through structured

questionnaires and secondary data from government reports and academic literature are utilized to support the analysis.

### **1.5. Organization of the Study**

The organizations of the study will be structured into five main chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the rationale, objectives, method, scope and limitation and organization of the study. Chapter 2 reviews relevant literature and theoretical frameworks related to tourism impacts and community development. Chapter 3 details overview of tourism in Myanmar. Chapter 4 presents the findings and analysis based on both quantitative and qualitative data gathered from students form Bago University. Finally, Chapter 5 offers conclusions, findings, and suggestions.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. Concepts of Tourism**

Tourism is widely recognized as the temporary movement of people from their place of residence to destinations outside their usual environment for leisure, business, or other personal purposes, with the intention of returning (UNWTO, 2020). It includes travel and stay for not more than one consecutive year and not for the purpose of earning income at the destination. As a global phenomenon, tourism encompasses a broad range of services and interactions, involving both the private and public sectors. Its scope extends across transportation, accommodation, cultural heritage, leisure, and entertainment. Tourism is dynamic and responsive to global trends such as technological innovation, political shifts, and socio-economic changes. With the rise of globalization, tourism has become a vital component of many national economies and cultural exchanges. As such, a thorough understanding of tourism must consider its economic, social, environmental, and cultural implications, as well as its potential to promote sustainable development worldwide (Cooper et al., 2008).

Tourism can be classified into various categories depending on geographic origin, travel purpose, and nature of activities. The UNWTO (2020) categorizes tourism into three main types: domestic tourism, involving travel within one's own country; inbound tourism, which involves non-residents visiting a country; and outbound tourism, where residents travel to other countries. Each type has unique implications for infrastructure, marketing, and regulation. Additionally, tourism can be classified by purpose, such as leisure, business (MICE), religious, adventure, health, and educational tourism (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2012). Leisure tourism remains the most common form, while business tourism contributes significantly to urban economies. Cultural tourism involves visits to historical and cultural sites, whereas eco-tourism emphasizes nature and sustainability. Understanding these classifications helps policymakers and planners tailor tourism strategies that meet diverse traveler expectations while maximizing local benefits. It also aids in managing tourist flows, infrastructure development, and environmental protection effectively (Mason, 2015).

Tourism is a multifaceted system composed of several interconnected components and a diverse set of stakeholders. Key components include transportation, accommodation, attractions, travel intermediaries (such as travel agencies), and auxiliary services like food, banking, and safety (Cooper et al., 2008). These elements collectively form the tourism product. Stakeholders in tourism include tourists, host communities, governments, NGOs, tourism service providers, and international organizations. Each plays a crucial role in shaping tourism outcomes. For example, governments are responsible for infrastructure and regulation, while local communities often provide cultural and natural attractions. The private sector delivers services that affect tourists' experiences and satisfaction. Meanwhile, NGOs and academics contribute to policy advocacy and research. Collaboration among stakeholders is essential for sustainable tourism development. Conflicts often arise when interests are misaligned, such as profit motives overshadowing community well-being. Hence, inclusive and participatory governance is necessary to balance competing demands and ensure long-term sustainability (Hall, 2008).

Tourism is one of the world's largest economic sectors, contributing significantly to GDP, employment, and investment across countries. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC, 2021), tourism accounted for 10.4% of global GDP and supported 334 million jobs before the COVID-19 pandemic. In developing countries, it serves as a major source of foreign exchange earnings and economic diversification. Tourism generates employment across various sectors such as hospitality, transportation, food services, and handicrafts. Additionally, it promotes the development of infrastructure like roads, airports, and communication networks that benefit both tourists and residents (UNWTO, 2020). However, overdependence on tourism can make economies vulnerable to external shocks, such as natural disasters or political instability. During the COVID-19 crisis, many tourism-dependent nations faced severe economic disruptions. Thus, while tourism presents vast economic opportunities, its contribution must be strategically managed alongside diversification to ensure resilience and sustainable development (Sharpley, 2014).

Tourism has deep social and cultural implications for host communities. On the positive side, it fosters cultural exchange, encourages preservation of heritage, and strengthens local identities. Tourists often seek authentic experiences, prompting communities to showcase traditional arts, rituals, and cuisines, thereby enhancing cultural pride (Smith & Robinson, 2006). It also creates opportunities for education and

interaction between people from diverse backgrounds. However, tourism can also produce negative outcomes if mismanaged. Cultural commodification, where traditions are altered to meet tourist expectations, can dilute authenticity and disrupt traditional lifestyles (Greenwood, 1989). Additionally, unchecked tourism may cause overcrowding, social tension, and uneven wealth distribution. Community involvement is essential to mitigate these risks. Responsible tourism should prioritize the voices of locals in planning and benefit-sharing, ensuring that tourism strengthens rather than weakens cultural integrity. Understanding these social and cultural dynamics is vital for developing tourism that is respectful, inclusive, and sustainable (Mason, 2015).

The environmental impact of tourism is significant and multifaceted. On the one hand, tourism can promote conservation efforts by generating funding for protected areas and raising environmental awareness among visitors. Eco-tourism and nature-based tourism often support biodiversity protection and environmental education (Weaver, 2006). On the other hand, mass tourism can lead to serious environmental degradation. Popular destinations often suffer from waste accumulation, air and water pollution, habitat destruction, and overuse of natural resources. Activities such as deforestation for resort development, coral reef damage from diving, or excessive water consumption in hotels contribute to ecological stress (Gössling & Hall, 2006). Moreover, tourism-related transportation is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. As such, sustainable tourism development requires strategies that minimize harm while promoting responsible behavior among tourists and providers. Environmental regulations, certification systems, and eco-friendly technologies can help achieve this balance and preserve destinations for future generations (UNEP, 2011).

Sustainable tourism is defined as tourism that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, focusing on long-term economic viability, cultural integrity, social equity, and environmental responsibility (UNWTO, 2013). It emphasizes minimizing negative impacts while maximizing benefits for all stakeholders. Community-Based Tourism (CBT), a model of sustainable tourism, places local communities at the heart of planning and management. It ensures that tourism revenues support local development and that cultural values are respected (Asker et al., 2010). CBT empowers residents, enhances cultural pride, and fosters environmental stewardship. In countries like Myanmar, CBT is especially relevant for promoting tourism in heritage-rich and rural

areas. However, CBT also faces challenges such as lack of capacity, infrastructure, and market access. Sustainable tourism must be supported by policy frameworks, capacity-building, and inclusive governance to ensure long-term success. Ultimately, sustainability is the guiding principle for tourism's future.

## **2.2. Theoretical Framework of Tourism Industry**

The theory of tourism highlights its significance as a key economic driver, particularly in developing regions where it promotes growth and diversification. Tourism generates employment opportunities and encourages investment in infrastructure and public services. The arrival of visitors produces direct revenue through spending on accommodation, food, transportation, and entertainment, which then circulates within the local economy, producing multiplier effects that benefit multiple sectors (Sharpley, 2014). This spending creates employment opportunities across various sectors, from hospitality to retail, reducing unemployment and improving household incomes (UNWTO, 2018).

Moreover, tourism encourages investment in infrastructure such as roads, airports, and communication systems, which benefits both tourists and residents (Mathieson & Wall, 1982). However, economic benefits may be unevenly distributed, with large-scale enterprises often capturing most profits, limiting gains for local communities (Ashley et al., 2007). Additionally, economies heavily reliant on tourism face risks from external factors such as natural disasters, political instability, or global health crises, which can cause sudden downturns in visitor numbers and income (Gössling et al., 2020). Overdependence on tourism may also lead to inflation and increased costs of goods and services, potentially disadvantaging local residents (Sharpley, 2014).

Tourism's social impacts are complex and multifaceted. It can promote cultural exchange, allowing local communities to share their heritage, traditions, and lifestyles with visitors, which may enhance community pride and identity (Smith, 2012). Exposure to different cultures can foster mutual understanding and tolerance, contributing to social cohesion (Mathieson & Wall, 1982). Increased tourism revenues often lead to improvements in social infrastructure such as healthcare, education, and public amenities, raising the overall quality of life (UNWTO, 2018). Nevertheless, rapid tourism growth can disrupt social structures and traditional ways of life. The commodification of culture for tourism may result in the loss of authenticity and

cultural dilution (Cohen, 1988). Increased demand for land and housing by tourists and investors can drive up property prices, making it difficult for locals to afford housing (Greenwood, 1989). Furthermore, tourism can lead to social tensions between visitors and residents, especially when local customs or norms are not respected, or when tourism generates noise, overcrowding, and other disturbances (Smith, 2012).

The environmental impacts of tourism are both positive and negative, depending largely on management practices. On the positive side, tourism can increase awareness of environmental conservation, with eco-tourism initiatives directly supporting the protection of wildlife and natural habitats (Honey, 2008). Revenues from tourism activities can fund conservation projects and improve park management, contributing to biodiversity preservation (Buckley, 2012). However, unchecked tourism development often results in significant environmental degradation. Increased foot traffic can lead to soil erosion, vegetation damage, and disruption of wildlife habitats (Holden, 2008). Pollution from waste disposal, sewage, and vehicle emissions threatens air, water, and soil quality (Sharpley, 2014). The demand for natural resources, such as freshwater and energy, can strain local supplies, especially in fragile ecosystems (Gössling et al., 2020). Coastal and marine tourism, in particular, can cause coral reef damage, beach erosion, and harm to marine life (Buckley, 2012). Sustainable tourism planning and management are crucial to mitigate these negative effects and ensure the long-term viability of tourism destinations.

### **2.3 Tourism and Community Relations**

Tourism is often hailed as a significant driver of economic development, particularly in regions with rich cultural and natural resources. It can generate employment opportunities, boost local businesses, and contribute to infrastructure improvements, thereby elevating community living standards (Sharpley, 2014). However, the benefits of tourism are not automatically guaranteed and depend heavily on how well the relationship between tourism development and local communities is managed. When communities are actively involved in tourism planning and development, tourism can become a tool for empowerment and sustainable growth (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009).

The theory of tourism and community relations focuses on the interactions between tourism development and local communities, emphasizing that sustainable

tourism requires active community involvement. This theory suggests that tourism should not only generate economic benefits but also support social, cultural, and environmental well-being within host communities (Aas, Ladkin, & Fletcher, 2005). Positive community relations can enhance residents' quality of life, promote cultural preservation, and foster a welcoming environment for visitors. Conversely, if community interests are neglected, tourism can lead to social tensions, cultural commodification, and resistance to tourism projects. The theory underlines the importance of participatory planning, stakeholder collaboration, and equitable distribution of tourism benefits, highlighting that strong community relations are crucial for the long-term sustainability and acceptance of tourism initiatives.

Community participation in tourism is essential for creating positive relations between residents and visitors. According to Murphy (1985), when local people have a say in tourism decisions, it helps align tourism activities with the community's social and cultural values, leading to greater acceptance and cooperation. This involvement fosters a sense of ownership and pride among residents, which in turn encourages them to act as ambassadors for their culture and environment. Community-based tourism initiatives, which emphasize local control and benefit-sharing, have been successful in many parts of the world by allowing residents to preserve their heritage while benefiting economically (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009).

Cultural respect and understanding are crucial components in maintaining harmonious tourism-community relations. Smith (2009) argues that tourism offers a unique opportunity for intercultural dialogue, enabling tourists to learn about local traditions and customs while promoting cultural preservation. When tourists behave respectfully and are educated about local norms, communities feel valued and their cultural identity is reinforced. This mutual respect can help reduce social conflicts and enhance visitor experiences, ultimately supporting sustainable tourism development.

On the other hand, tourism can also have adverse effects on local communities if it grows too rapidly or is poorly managed. Gursoy, Chi, and Dyer (2010) highlight that mass tourism can lead to overcrowding, increased cost of living, environmental degradation, and disruptions in daily life for residents. These negative impacts often provoke social tensions and lead to community resentment against tourists and tourism development. The perception of inequitable benefit distribution further exacerbates these challenges when local people feel excluded from the economic gains of tourism (Murphy, 1985).

To address these issues, sustainable tourism practices emphasize inclusive decision-making and equitable benefit sharing among all stakeholders. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2013) advocates for tourism frameworks that integrate economic, social, and environmental objectives through community participation and long-term planning. Such approaches seek to ensure that tourism contributes positively to local well-being without compromising cultural integrity or natural resources.

Educational efforts directed at both tourists and local residents play a vital role in strengthening tourism-community relations. Reisinger and Turner (2003) found that awareness campaigns and cross-cultural training help tourists understand local customs and minimize cultural misunderstandings. At the same time, community education programs can prepare residents to engage positively with tourists and manage the challenges of tourism growth. These combined efforts promote respect, tolerance, and cooperation, which are essential for sustainable tourism that benefits both visitors and host communities.

#### **2.4 Perceptions and Attitudes of the Tourism Industry**

The perception of local residents toward the tourism industry plays a crucial role in shaping the sustainability and long-term success of tourism development in any region. Residents' perceptions often stem from their direct interactions with tourists, experiences with tourism-related economic activities, and the broader socio-cultural impacts they observe in their community. According to Ap and Crompton (1998), perceptions are shaped by the extent to which residents benefit economically, socially, and environmentally from tourism. In Bago, while many residents recognize tourism as a vital source of income, job creation, and infrastructure improvement, others express concern over cultural commodification, inflation, and resource overuse.

A study conducted by Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2010) highlights that residents who feel involved in decision-making and receive direct economic benefits from tourism tend to have a more positive perception of the industry. This aligns with observations in Bago, where community-based tourism initiatives and government-supported tour guide training programs have led to increased local approval of the sector.

Attitudes of local residents towards tourism development play a vital role in shaping the sustainability and effectiveness of tourism policies and practices. These

attitudes are often shaped by the perceived economic, social, cultural, and environmental impacts of tourism on their daily lives and communities.

Several studies have emphasized that residents' support for tourism is closely linked to the benefits they perceive. According to Ap and Crompton (1998), residents are more likely to support tourism if they believe it brings economic benefits such as employment opportunities, infrastructure development, and improved public services. However, attitudes are not always positive. Doxey's Irridex Model (1975) provides a theoretical framework to understand how resident attitudes may evolve from euphoria (initial excitement) to apathy, annoyance, and even antagonism as tourism grows.

Gursoy, Jurowski, and Uysal (2002) proposed a model indicating that residents' attitudes are influenced by the level of their contact with tourists, the perceived costs and benefits, and their personal involvement in the tourism sector. Residents who are directly involved in tourism-related activities often hold more favorable views, while those who feel excluded or burdened may exhibit negative attitudes. A study conducted by Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2010) found that trust in local government and perceptions of equitable benefit distribution are significant predictors of residents' support for tourism.

Moreover, the cultural and historical importance of Bago influences how residents perceive tourism. According to Timothy and Boyd (2003), in heritage destinations, local pride and identity can be either enhanced or undermined by tourism activities. When tourism projects respect local traditions and involve community participation, residents are more likely to develop positive attitudes and act as cultural ambassadors. Than and Khin (2019) examined community perceptions in several emerging tourist destinations and found mixed attitudes: while economic gains were acknowledged, there were concerns about cultural erosion and environmental degradation. This aligns with anecdotal findings from Bago, where residents express both appreciation for tourism-related income and anxiety over losing traditional values and community cohesion.

## **2.5 Review on Previous Studies**

Nicholas Raymond Clark (2007) studied "The Social and Cultural Impact of Tourism on the Hill Tribes of Northern Thailand," with a focus on the ethnic communities in Chiang Rai. The research aimed to explore how exposure to tourism has altered the traditional lifestyles, cultural expressions, and social dynamics of these

communities. Utilizing ethnographic methods such as participant observation and semi-structured interviews over an extended period, Clark documented both positive and negative consequences. On one hand, tourism provided an incentive to preserve cultural practices, as tourists showed interest in traditional dances, costumes, and handicrafts. On the other hand, it also led to the commodification of culture, where performances and products were adapted to suit tourist expectations rather than authentic traditions. The study revealed tensions between maintaining cultural identity and adapting for economic survival. Clark emphasized the importance of culturally sensitive tourism models that empower local communities while avoiding cultural exploitation or superficial representation for commercial gain.

Le Thi Mai Trang (2015) conducted a study titled “*Community Perception and Participation in Tourism Development: A Case Study in Hoi An, Vietnam.*” The main objective of this research was to examine how local communities perceive tourism and their role in its planning and implementation. Through in-depth interviews and participatory workshops, the study explored attitudes and involvement levels among residents in Hoi An, a popular UNESCO World Heritage Site. The findings demonstrated that the community was generally supportive of tourism, particularly when they were actively engaged in the decision-making process. Local people showed greater willingness to cooperate with tourism projects when their voices were acknowledged. The study highlights the importance of inclusive and participatory tourism planning in achieving sustainable development. By involving community members, tourism development can better align with local needs and reduce potential conflicts. Trang’s work emphasizes the effectiveness of bottom-up approaches in tourism planning and long-term community engagement strategies.

Thandar Soe (2016) explored the “*Socio-Economic Impacts of Tourism on Local Community in Bagan.*” The purpose of this study was to analyze both the benefits and challenges that tourism brought to Bagan, a culturally significant heritage site in Myanmar. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research involved surveys with 100 local residents and interviews with various tourism stakeholders, including business owners, guides, and local authorities. The study revealed that tourism contributed positively to employment and household incomes. It supported the development of small businesses and improved access to services. However, it also brought negative consequences such as inflation in local markets, increased cost of living, and concerns over the erosion of cultural traditions. Some residents expressed apprehension about

the commercialization of sacred sites and the environmental strain from over-tourism. Thandar Soe's research underscores the dual nature of tourism development—while it drives economic growth, it also necessitates careful management to protect cultural and social sustainability.

Hla Myint Aung (2018) conducted a study entitled “The Effects of Tourism on Environment and Local People in Inle Lake Region.” This research focused on examining how tourism growth has impacted the natural ecosystem and the socio-economic conditions of local communities in one of Myanmar's most iconic destinations. Using qualitative methods, including interviews with residents, environmental NGOs, and tourism officials, along with direct environmental observation, the study provided a comprehensive analysis. It revealed that tourism contributed to local livelihoods by increasing income opportunities and stimulating small-scale businesses. However, the rapid growth of tourism also exacerbated several environmental issues. These included water pollution from waste discharged into the lake, increased plastic usage, and deteriorating biodiversity. In addition, tourism development led to land-use changes and put pressure on traditional lifestyles. Hla Myint Aung emphasized the urgent need for sustainable tourism policies, stricter environmental regulations, and community involvement to mitigate negative consequences while maximizing the benefits of tourism in the Inle Lake region.

Khin Mar Lar (2019) carried out a study titled “Residents' Perceptions of Tourism Development in Kalaw.” The primary aim was to understand how local residents in Kalaw perceive the effects of tourism and whether they support its ongoing expansion. This study employed a quantitative approach through the distribution of Likert-scale questionnaires to 150 residents, covering themes such as economic benefit, cultural preservation, environmental impact, and social changes. The findings indicated that most residents were supportive of tourism due to job creation and improved infrastructure. However, they also expressed concern over negative side effects, particularly rising living expenses, overcrowding, and changes in traditional values. Some participants noted that while tourism brought financial opportunities, it also reduced the tranquility of the town and strained public services.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **TOURISM IN MYANMAR**

#### **3.1. Historical Overview of Tourism in Myanmar**

Tourism in Myanmar has evolved gradually over the decades, shaped by the country's geographical diversity, cultural richness, and unique heritage assets. Located in Southeast Asia, Myanmar is home to numerous ancient cities, pagodas, colonial architecture, and natural landscapes, which have long attracted interest from travelers and scholars alike. Early records of tourism in Myanmar date back to the colonial era when the country was part of British India. During this time, infrastructure such as railways and hotels was developed, primarily to serve British administrators and travelers, laying the groundwork for organized travel (Henderson, 2003). After gaining independence in 1948, Myanmar saw modest tourism activities through the 1950s and 1960s, focusing mainly on cultural and religious sites like Bagan, Mandalay, and Yangon.

Tourism promotion began to formalize in the 1970s with the establishment of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism and the publication of official travel guides and brochures. The government also supported the development of national museums, preservation of archaeological zones, and improvement of domestic transportation services, which contributed to the gradual expansion of the tourism industry (Lynn & Than, 2014). The establishment of Myanmar Airways and later international carriers further opened travel opportunities, especially for regional tourists from neighboring countries such as Thailand, China, and India.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, international organizations such as the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and ASEAN supported tourism planning and capacity building in Myanmar. These efforts focused on training tourism professionals, creating marketing strategies, and promoting sustainable tourism practices in heritage sites and ecotourism zones (UNWTO, 2010). By this time, key destinations such as Inle Lake, Bagan, Ngapali Beach, and the Golden Rock (Kyaiktiyo) had become established as primary tourist attractions. Religious tourism and pilgrimage also remained an important travel motivation for both domestic and regional visitors.

Parallel to infrastructure development, Myanmar invested in human resource training through partnerships with hospitality institutes, vocational schools, and international NGOs. Local businesses including travel agencies, hotels, and tour operators began to emerge more prominently, contributing to community-based tourism and rural development initiatives (Myint, 2016). Tour guide licensing, accommodation classification systems, and national tourism master plans helped to standardize the sector and prepare it for future growth.

Cultural preservation has played a major role in Myanmar's tourism development. Sites such as Bagan and Mandalay are not only tourist destinations but also symbols of national pride. Festivals like Thingyan (Water Festival), the Shwedagon Pagoda Festival, and traditional arts and crafts attract visitors and help promote local identity and customs. Myanmar's inclusion on UNESCO's World Heritage list, particularly with Bagan's recognition in 2019, has significantly boosted global interest and tourism branding efforts (UNESCO, 2019).

The history of tourism in Myanmar demonstrates a slow but steady growth grounded in cultural heritage, religious tourism, and natural beauty. While the country continues to address internal challenges and global trends, its tourism sector has shown resilience and potential for sustainable development. Continued investment in infrastructure, human capital, and environmental management will be essential to maintain growth and international competitiveness.

### **3.2 Tourism Development in Myanmar**

Myanmar's tourism sector was very limited due to prolonged political isolation, military governance, and strict regulations that deterred foreign visitors at the start of the 21st century. Between 2000 and 2005, international arrivals were relatively low, ranging from around 200,000 to 660,000 annually. The country's rich cultural and natural heritage remained largely inaccessible, and poor infrastructure made travel difficult for tourists. Despite these challenges, the government began tentative efforts to promote tourism by showcasing famous sites such as the temples of Bagan and the colonial architecture of Yangon.

From 2006 to 2010, Myanmar saw modest growth in tourism numbers, reaching about 792,000 visitors by 2010. Infrastructure improvements, such as better roads and airports, slowly enhanced accessibility. However, political repression and international sanctions still limited major investment and mass tourism. Visitors during this period

were primarily adventurous travelers, researchers, or those interested in Myanmar's unique culture and heritage. The country remained a niche destination with tourism growth restrained by ongoing internal challenges.

The year 2011 marked a turning point in Myanmar's tourism development. Political reforms led to a transition toward a more democratic government, creating optimism for greater openness and international engagement. Visitor arrivals rose to approximately 816,000, signaling the start of rapid tourism growth. The government began liberalizing visa policies and investing more in tourism infrastructure, such as upgrading airports and expanding hotel capacity. International media coverage further increased global awareness of Myanmar as an emerging tourist destination.

Between 2012 and 2014, tourism in Myanmar expanded dramatically. Visitor numbers jumped from around 1 million in 2012 to over 3 million by 2014. This surge was supported by improved transport networks, including more domestic flights and better roads connecting key tourist sites. The government also started diversifying tourism beyond cultural heritage, encouraging ecotourism and community-based tourism initiatives. These efforts aimed to spread tourism benefits more evenly across regions and promote environmental sustainability.

In 2015, Myanmar's tourism sector reached a milestone with nearly 4.7 million international arrivals, marking it as one of the fastest-growing tourist destinations in Southeast Asia. The rapid growth attracted foreign investments in hospitality and travel services. Efforts to develop niche tourism products such as trekking, river cruises, and ethnic minority cultural experiences became more prominent. The government also collaborated with regional tourism bodies to better integrate Myanmar into ASEAN's tourism promotion frameworks.

From 2016 to 2019, Myanmar maintained stable visitor numbers around 4.5 to 4.7 million per year. The focus shifted toward improving tourism quality, including better training for hotel and tour operators and stronger regulations on heritage conservation. The government supported community participation in tourism to ensure sustainable development and cultural preservation. However, political tensions and security issues in some regions started to emerge as concerns that could affect tourism growth.

The COVID-19 pandemic beginning in 2020 caused an unprecedented collapse in Myanmar's tourism, with international arrivals plummeting due to border closures and travel restrictions. The sector suffered major economic losses, and many tourism-

related businesses closed or downsized. In 2023, as global travel gradually resumed, Myanmar began promoting a cautious tourism recovery with enhanced health and safety protocols. Efforts focus on sustainable tourism and niche markets, but ongoing political instability and security challenges continue to limit full sector rebound.

**Table (3.1) Tourism Development in Myanmar (2000- 2023)**

No	Year	International Visitor Arrivals
1	2000	416 000
2	2005	660 000
3	2010	792 000
4	2011	816 000
5	2012	1 059 000
6	2013	2 044 000
7	2014	3 081 000
8	2015	4 681 000
9	2016	2 907 000
10	2017	3 443 000
11	2018	3 551 000
12	2019	4 364 000
13	2020	903 000
14	2021	131 000
15	2022	233 000
16	2023	~1 000 000

Source: Tourism Statistics, CEIC Data Myanmar, 2025

### **3.3 National Tourism Policies and Master Plans in Myanmar**

Tourism is recognized as a key sector in Myanmar’s national development strategy, with the potential to contribute significantly to economic growth, employment, and cultural preservation. Since the early 2010s, the government has introduced a series of tourism policies and master plans aimed at guiding sustainable and inclusive tourism development in the country. These efforts have been shaped by regional cooperation, international assistance, and a growing awareness of responsible tourism practices.

#### **3.3.1 Myanmar Responsible Tourism Policy (2012)**

The Myanmar Responsible Tourism Policy, launched in 2012 by the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism (MoHT), was the country’s first comprehensive tourism policy

document. Developed in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and other development partners, the policy outlines nine guiding principles focused on sustainability, community participation, and minimizing environmental and cultural impacts. Key goals include:

- (1) Maximizing economic benefits for local communities
- (2) Preserving Myanmar's cultural and natural heritage
- (3) Ensuring that tourism contributes to peace and national reconciliation (MoHT, 2012)

This policy was notable for introducing concepts like “responsible travel,” “community-based tourism,” and “inclusive development,” which were relatively new in the Myanmar tourism context.

### **3.3.2 Myanmar Tourism Master Plan (2013–2020)**

The Myanmar Tourism Master Plan (MTMP) was developed in 2013 with support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). It provided a strategic framework to guide tourism development across the country for the period 2013–2020. The plan aimed to increase tourist arrivals to 7.5 million by 2020 and generate over one million tourism-related jobs. The master plan identified six strategic programs:

- (1) Strengthening institutional capacity and governance
- (2) Building human resource capacity
- (3) Enhancing connectivity and infrastructure
- (4) Developing quality tourism products
- (5) Improving destination planning and management
- (6) Promoting Myanmar as a tourist destination (ADB, 2013)

The MTMP was praised for being inclusive, regionally balanced, and aligned with ASEAN tourism development frameworks. It placed strong emphasis on long-term sustainability and decentralization of tourism benefits to rural and ethnic communities.

### **3.3.3 Community-Based Tourism (CBT) Initiatives**

While not a policy document in itself, community-based tourism (CBT) has become a key implementation strategy of Myanmar's national tourism framework. Supported by various NGOs and international donors, CBT allows local communities to host tourists, provide accommodation, and offer guided cultural experiences. This approach has been aligned with national tourism goals, particularly in terms of poverty alleviation and empowering women and ethnic minorities (SNV, 2017).

### **3.3.4 Tourism Recovery Plan and Post-COVID Policy Directions**

The COVID-19 pandemic and the 2021 military coup severely disrupted tourism operations in Myanmar. In response, MoHT and other stakeholders proposed a Tourism Recovery Roadmap, focusing on domestic tourism, health safety protocols, digital transformation, and rebuilding international confidence (UNWTO, 2021). However, political instability remains a major barrier to full implementation.

Myanmar's tourism policies and master plans have provided a strong foundation for inclusive and sustainable tourism development. The adoption of responsible tourism principles and the implementation of a comprehensive master plan reflect a significant policy shift from earlier, state-controlled tourism strategies. However, political stability, peace-building, and international cooperation remain critical to realizing the long-term goals of these policies.

## **3.4 The Role of Ministry of Hotels and Tourism in Myanmar**

The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism (MoHT) plays a central role in the development, regulation, and promotion of Myanmar's tourism industry. As the primary governmental body responsible for tourism, the MoHT sets strategic direction, oversees licensing and policy implementation, and collaborates with national and international stakeholders to enhance the tourism sector. Its efforts aim to balance economic growth with cultural preservation and sustainable development.

### **3.4.1 Policy Formulation and Strategic Planning**

The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism (MoHT) is responsible for formulating national tourism policies and long-term development plans. It launched the Myanmar Responsible Tourism Policy in 2012, a groundbreaking framework that emphasized community participation, sustainability, and cultural respect (MoHT, 2012). This was followed by the Myanmar Tourism Master Plan (2013–2020), developed with the

support of the Asian Development Bank, which outlined strategic programs to strengthen governance, infrastructure, human resources, and destination management (ADB, 2013). These documents show the MoHT's role in promoting a shift from quantity-based tourism to quality and sustainable tourism that benefits local communities and protects heritage sites.

#### **3.4.2 Licensing, Regulation, and Oversight**

One of the the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism (MoHT) key functions is the regulation of hotels, travel agencies, tour guides, and transportation services. It issues business licenses, monitors compliance with standards, and ensures that operators adhere to national laws and responsible tourism guidelines. This regulatory role helps maintain quality and safety in the tourism experience. The ministry also collaborates with other government departments such as the Ministry of Immigration, Ministry of Transport, and Ministry of Culture to coordinate cross-sector tourism-related activities (MoHT, 2019).

#### **3.4.3 Promotion and International Cooperation**

The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism (MoHT) actively promotes Myanmar as a tourist destination through marketing campaigns, participation in international tourism expos, and digital platforms. It also maintains ties with global institutions such as the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and works with organizations like Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and SNV Netherlands Development Organisation to support community-based tourism and capacity-building projects (UNWTO, 2021; SNV, 2017). Additionally, the ministry contributes to ASEAN tourism integration and supports regional strategies under the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan, helping Myanmar benefit from multi-country tour circuits and knowledge exchange.

#### **3.4.4 Capacity Building and Human Resource Development**

Tourism in Myanmar is labor-intensive and demands a skilled workforce. The MoHT runs training programs for hotel staff, tour guides, and tourism officers to raise service standards. It supports Tourism Training Schools in various regions and has partnered with technical institutions to enhance vocational education in hospitality and tourism management (MoHT, 2020).

### **3.4.5 Emergency Management and Recovery Efforts**

The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism (MoHT) plays a central role in managing crises and steering the recovery of Myanmar's tourism sector. Following the severe disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the MoHT launched a comprehensive Tourism Resilience and Recovery Roadmap aimed at revitalizing the industry. This plan prioritizes boosting domestic tourism, implementing strict hygiene and safety protocols, and accelerating digital transformation to enhance service delivery and marketing (UNWTO, 2021). Despite significant setbacks following the 2021 political crisis, the ministry continues to actively update guidelines and collaborate closely with tourism stakeholders, including private sector partners and local communities, to devise long-term recovery strategies. The MoHT's efforts reflect a commitment to developing a tourism sector that is not only economically beneficial but also socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable. While ongoing political instability and global uncertainties present formidable challenges, the ministry's strategic policies, regulatory frameworks, and capacity-building initiatives demonstrate a clear dedication to responsible and resilient tourism development in Myanmar's future.

### **3.5 Tourist's Attraction Places in Bago City**

Bago, formerly known as Pegu, is one of Myanmar's most historically and culturally significant cities. Located just 80 kilometers northeast of Yangon, Bago is a popular day-trip destination for both domestic and international tourists. The city offers a rich blend of ancient religious monuments, royal heritage, and local culture, making it a key site in Myanmar's tourism landscape.

#### **3.5.1 Shwemawdaw Pagoda**

The Shwemawdaw Pagoda, often referred to as the "Great Golden God," is one of Myanmar's most revered religious monuments and a cultural icon of Bago City. Towering at approximately 114 meters (375 feet), it is the tallest pagoda in Myanmar, surpassing even the famous Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon. This majestic structure plays a central role not only in the spiritual lives of the local population but also in the historical, cultural, and tourism identity of the Bago region.

Shwemawdaw Pagoda has a long and storied history that dates back over 1,000 years. It is believed to have been originally constructed by the Mon people in the 10th century, during the time when the Mon Kingdom dominated Lower Myanmar.

According to local legends and Buddhist chronicles, the pagoda enshrines sacred relics of the Buddha, including two hairs and a tooth (Aung-Thwin & Aung-Thwin, 2012). These relics make it one of the most sacred pilgrimage sites in the country.

Throughout the centuries, the pagoda has been destroyed and rebuilt several times due to earthquakes—most notably the devastating earthquake of 1930, which toppled its spire. Despite such challenges, the structure has been meticulously restored, maintaining its spiritual prominence and architectural grandeur (Seekins, 2006).

The architecture of Shwemawdaw Pagoda exemplifies traditional Burmese stupa design, with a massive bell-shaped body covered in layers of gold leaf. The pagoda is surrounded by intricately adorned pavilions, shrines, and statues depicting scenes from the Jataka tales and Buddhist cosmology. The base of the pagoda is surrounded by a series of smaller stupas and guardian figures, creating an atmosphere of reverence and serenity. The use of gold and the immense scale of the pagoda symbolize the devotion of the local community and the wealth historically invested in Buddhist worship.

Shwemawdaw Pagoda serves as a vital focal point for religious ceremonies, festivals, and daily worship. One of the most significant annual events is the Shwemawdaw Pagoda Festival, which typically takes place in April. The festival attracts thousands of pilgrims and tourists from across the country, featuring traditional music, dance performances, alms-giving, and various cultural exhibitions. These events reflect the integration of religion and cultural heritage in Bago's social fabric.

Moreover, the pagoda contributes significantly to the local identity and collective memory of the people. As noted by Charney (2009), religious monuments in Myanmar often function as repositories of both spiritual merit and historical narrative, shaping how communities view themselves in relation to their past and their beliefs.

Shwemawdaw Pagoda is one of the top tourist attractions in Bago City and plays a substantial role in the local tourism economy. It attracts both domestic and international visitors interested in Myanmar's religious heritage and architectural splendor. According to the Myanmar Ministry of Hotels and Tourism (2018), Bago's religious landmarks, led by Shwemawdaw, rank among the most visited sites in the region. The site supports local vendors, guides, and artisans, and generates income through donations, entrance fees (for foreigners), and associated tourism services.

However, there are concerns regarding conservation and sustainability. The increase in tourist traffic has prompted discussions around managing the site to balance

heritage preservation with economic benefits (UNESCO, 2019). Proper management, infrastructure development, and cultural sensitivity are essential to ensure that Shwemawdaw Pagoda continues to serve future generations while maintaining its sanctity and community relevance.

Shwemawdaw Pagoda is not merely a religious monument; it is a living symbol of Bago's spiritual, cultural, and historical identity. Its towering presence reflects centuries of devotion, resilience, and artistry. As Myanmar continues to open up to global tourism, the importance of preserving such cultural landmarks becomes even more pressing. Shwemawdaw stands not only as a place of worship but also as a testament to the enduring legacy of Buddhist architecture and the cultural richness of Myanmar.

### **3.5.2 Shwethalyaung Reclining Buddha**

The Shwethalyaung Reclining Buddha, located in Bago City, Myanmar, is one of the most iconic religious monuments in the country and a significant symbol of Theravāda Buddhist heritage. Measuring 55 meters long and 16 meters high, it is one of the largest reclining Buddha images in the world, revered not only for its sheer size but also for its artistic craftsmanship, religious symbolism, and historical significance.

The Shwethalyaung Buddha was originally constructed in 994 A.D. during the reign of King Migadippa of the Mon Dynasty. It is believed to represent the Buddha in his final moments before entering Parinirvana, symbolizing the eternal peace after achieving enlightenment and the cessation of the cycle of rebirth. The construction of such a reclining figure reflects the deep devotion of the Mon people, who were instrumental in the early propagation of Theravāda Buddhism in Lower Myanmar (Frasch, 2002).

During the colonial era, particularly in the 18th century, the statue was abandoned and covered by jungle vegetation after Bago's decline as a royal capital. It was only rediscovered in 1881 by British colonial engineers who were building a railway in the area. Restoration efforts began soon afterward, and the Buddha has since become a major pilgrimage site and tourist attraction (Seekins, 2007).

The statue is notable for its serene facial expression, intricate mosaic work on the pillows, and the detailed soles of the Buddha's feet, which contain 108 sacred symbols representing the different characteristics and teachings of the Buddha. These

symbols are important in Buddhist cosmology and offer insight into Buddhist metaphysics and ethics (Coedès, 1968).

Unlike many other reclining Buddha statues that are stylized in more modern forms, the Shwethalyaung maintains a classical Mon artistic style, combining gentle curvature and symbolic detailing. The peaceful expression on the face and the closed eyes convey the calm detachment of a being who has transcended suffering—a key tenet in Buddhist philosophy.

Shwethalyaung is not just a monument; it serves as a site of religious devotion for thousands of pilgrims who offer flowers, candles, and prayers. It also plays a role in festivals and local ceremonies, particularly during Buddhist Lent and full moon days. For the local population in Bago, the site is a cultural anchor that strengthens community identity and religious continuity.

From a tourism perspective, the Shwethalyaung Reclining Buddha is one of the highlights of Bago and a popular stop for both domestic and international tourists. It contributes to the city's tourism economy by attracting visitors to local markets, restaurants, and nearby cultural sites such as the Mahazedi Pagoda and Kyaikpun Pagoda. According to a study by Than (2019), heritage sites like Shwethalyaung not only bring economic benefits but also reinforce pride in local traditions and historical legacy.

The Shwethalyaung Reclining Buddha stands as a monumental testament to the religious devotion, artistic achievements, and cultural continuity of the Mon and Bamar civilizations. Its historical depth, architectural elegance, and spiritual resonance make it a critical site for both religious pilgrimage and cultural tourism. For Bago City, it remains a central pillar in both preserving Buddhist heritage and promoting sustainable tourism development.

### **3.5.3 Kanbawzathadi Palace**

Kanbawzathadi Palace, located in Bago City, Myanmar, is one of the most iconic historical monuments that reflects the grandeur of the First Toungoo Empire. Originally constructed in the 16th century by King Bayinnaung, the palace served as the royal residence and administrative center of a flourishing kingdom that extended beyond the borders of present-day Myanmar. The site holds significant cultural and historical value, symbolizing the height of Burmese classical architecture and royal prestige.

The construction of the original Kanbawzathadi Palace began in 1553 after King Bayinnaung unified much of mainland Southeast Asia. The palace complex was strategically situated in Bago, then known as Hanthawaddy, which was not only the political capital but also an important religious and commercial center. Historical records, such as the Hmannan Yazawin (Glass Palace Chronicle), describe the palace as an expansive complex composed of 76 intricately designed halls, including the Lion Throne Hall (Sihasana), audience chambers, royal apartments, and military council rooms (Than Tun, 2001).

Tragically, the palace was destroyed by fire in 1599 during the downfall of the Toungoo Empire. For centuries, it remained in ruins, buried under layers of earth and historical neglect. In the 1990s, the Myanmar government initiated reconstruction efforts to restore Kanbawzathadi Palace to its former glory, guided by historical records, archaeological findings, and traditional architectural techniques. The rebuilt palace, though a replica, serves as a cultural and educational resource, offering visitors a glimpse into Myanmar's regal past (Aung-Thwin, 2005).

Architecturally, the reconstructed palace reflects the sophisticated woodwork and tiered roofing style typical of Burmese monarchical structures. The Lion Throne Hall, a focal point of the palace, houses a replica of the royal throne and is adorned with gilded pillars and traditional motifs. The palace complex also includes a museum showcasing excavated artifacts such as bronze and terracotta items, weaponry, ceramics, and remnants of original teak pillars with inscriptions.

Kanbawzathadi Palace holds not only historical but also nationalistic significance. It is a symbol of Burmese unity, strength, and cultural identity. The site serves as a reminder of the political prowess of King Bayinnaung, whose empire was one of the largest in Southeast Asian history. Scholars such as Aung-Thwin (2005) emphasize that monuments like Kanbawzathadi Palace contribute to the historical consciousness of Myanmar's people and play a role in the preservation of heritage for future generations.

Furthermore, the palace is a major tourism attraction in Bago City, drawing both domestic and international visitors. It contributes to local economic development and cultural education, aligning with broader goals of heritage-based tourism promotion.

However, questions have been raised about the authenticity of reconstructions and the balance between preservation and commercialization (Tun, 2017). These concerns highlight the need for sustainable tourism strategies that respect the historical

integrity of such sites. Kanbawzathadi Palace is a monumental legacy of Myanmar's golden past under the Toungoo Dynasty. Its reconstruction serves not only as a tribute to a powerful historical era but also as a platform for education, tourism, and cultural preservation. As one of the key attractions in Bago City, the palace continues to inspire national pride and historical inquiry among scholars and visitors alike.

#### **3.5.4 Kyaik Pun Pagoda**

Kyaik Pun Pagoda, located in the historic city of Bago, Myanmar, stands as one of the most iconic religious landmarks in the region. Known for its remarkable architectural feature—the Four Seated Buddha statues facing in four directions—this pagoda holds both spiritual significance and cultural value. It serves not only as a sacred site for Buddhist devotees but also as a major attraction that draws local and international tourists alike.

The pagoda is believed to have been constructed in 1476 AD by King Dhammazedi, one of the most revered rulers of the Hanthawaddy Kingdom. The Four Buddhas represent Kakusandha, Konagamana, Kassapa, and Gautama, the four Buddhas of this world cycle according to Theravāda Buddhist belief. Each statue is approximately 30 meters (98 feet) high, painted in soft pastel colors, and richly decorated, symbolizing peace, wisdom, and compassion (Aung-Thwin & Aung-Thwin, 2012).

The architectural uniqueness of Kyaik Pun Pagoda lies in the back-to-back orientation of the Buddha images, which is rarely found in other Buddhist monuments in Southeast Asia. This design emphasizes the omnipresence of the Buddha's teachings in all directions and reflects the strong Mon and Burmese artistic influences during the late 15th century (Frasch, 2005).

Kyaik Pun Pagoda is not only a religious symbol but also a significant cultural site that contributes to the tourism appeal of Bago City. It is often included in tour itineraries due to its proximity to other historical landmarks such as Shwemawdaw Pagoda, Kanbawzathadi Palace, and Shwethalyaung Buddha. The site is a quiet yet impressive destination, ideal for cultural tourism, photography, and spiritual reflection.

The site's importance is also highlighted in Myanmar's national tourism development strategies, which emphasize the preservation and promotion of historical and religious heritage (Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, 2019). Efforts have been made to improve visitor facilities while maintaining the spiritual sanctity of the pagoda.

However, as tourism increases, there are challenges related to infrastructure, crowd management, and conservation. According to Myint (2020), rising tourist footfall in Bago's religious sites calls for balanced tourism development that protects religious integrity while enhancing visitor experience.

Kyaik Pun Pagoda represents a fusion of religious devotion, architectural innovation, and cultural pride. It plays a critical role in both the spiritual life of local Buddhists and the economic development of the Bago region through tourism. Sustaining its historical and cultural essence while accommodating modern tourism is essential for its continued legacy.

### **3.5.5 Snake Pagoda (Hinthagon Pagoda)**

The Snake Pagoda, commonly known as Hinthagon Pagoda, is one of the most iconic religious and cultural landmarks in Bago City, Myanmar. Revered not only for its spiritual significance but also for its unique association with sacred serpents, this pagoda represents a fusion of Buddhist beliefs, local legends, and natural symbolism that attracts both local and international tourists.

The name "Hinthagon" is derived from the Hintha bird (or Hamsa), a mythical creature in Mon and Burmese traditions. According to legend, when the Mon people migrated southwards, they saw a Hintha bird resting on a small hill in the Bago region, which was then submerged under water. They interpreted this as an auspicious sign and decided to build a city around the hill, which later became Bago. The Hinthagon Pagoda was thus constructed atop this hill to commemorate the divine omen (Aung-Thwin & Aung-Thwin, 2012).

Built during the Mon Dynasty, Hinthagon Pagoda has served as a sacred pilgrimage site for centuries. It is associated with the Theravāda Buddhist tradition, and its architecture reflects a typical Mon-Burmese style, with gilded stupas, tiered umbrellas (hti), and ornate carvings. It also serves as a local center for merit-making, meditation, and religious festivals.

What distinguishes the Hinthagon Pagoda from other religious sites in Myanmar is its unique association with snakes, particularly a large Burmese python that resides within the temple grounds. The python is believed by devotees to be a naga (a divine serpent spirit in Buddhist and Hindu cosmology), often seen as a protector of sacred places. Devotees regularly feed and venerate the snake, offering flowers, incense, and prayers for protection, healing, and good fortune.

According to Burmese folklore, snakes—especially pythons—are considered reincarnations of monks or guardians of pagodas. In this context, the snake at Hinthagon is not feared but revered, becoming a central attraction for both religious followers and curious tourists (Ladwig, 2012). The presence of the snake adds a mystical dimension to the pagoda, turning it into a living symbol of spiritual guardianship.

The Snake Pagoda is a notable attraction in the Bago tourism circuit, which also includes the Shwemawdaw Pagoda, Shwethalyaung Reclining Buddha, and Kanbawzathadi Palace. Its distinct character—blending religion, nature, and legend—offers visitors a memorable and culturally enriching experience. Local guides and monks often recount stories of the sacred snake and the Hinthagon legend, reinforcing a sense of place and identity.

Moreover, the site reflects the interplay between tourism and spirituality. While the pagoda maintains its role as an active religious site, tourism has introduced changes, such as improved access, increased donations, and the need for conservation. According to Cohen (1998), religious sites that attract tourists often undergo transformation in both meaning and function, a trend observable at Hinthagon as well.

However, the influx of tourists also raises concerns about the commodification of sacred practices. Responsible tourism, respectful behavior, and sustainable management are essential to preserving the sanctity of the Snake Pagoda while promoting it as a cultural asset.

The Snake Pagoda (Hinthagon Pagoda) in Bago City stands as a powerful symbol of faith, mythology, and cultural identity. Rooted in ancient Mon traditions and enriched by local legends of sacred serpents, it continues to inspire reverence and curiosity. As both a spiritual center and a tourist attraction, the pagoda represents the dynamic interface between heritage preservation and modern tourism in Myanmar.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **SURVEY ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 Survey Profile**

This study aims to examine the impact of the tourism industry on local residents in Bago City. To achieve this, primary data were collected through a structured survey distributed to a sample of residents. A total of 152 respondents participated in the survey, all of whom are residents of local area with varying backgrounds in terms of age, gender, occupation, education, and length of residence.

#### **4.2 Survey Design**

Primary data were gathered using a structured questionnaire divided into three sections. Respondents from key local sites, including the Shwemawdaw Pagoda, the Shwethalyaung Reclining Buddha, and the Kanbawzathadi Palace, were selected using the simple random sampling method. The first section collected demographic information about the respondents, including age, gender, occupation, education level. The second section explored respondents' perceptions and attitudes toward tourism growth, focusing on how they viewed its economic, social, and cultural impacts on their community. The third section addressed the challenges associated with tourism expansion, such as environmental concerns, infrastructure strain, and changes in local lifestyle. This comprehensive approach allowed for a thorough understanding of both the positive and negative effects of tourism development from the perspective of local residents.

A five-point Likert scale was used to measure respondents' perceptions and attitudes toward tourism growth, particularly regarding its economic, social, and cultural impacts on the community. The third section of the questionnaire focused on challenges related to tourism expansion, including environmental concerns, infrastructure pressure, and changes to local lifestyles. Respondents rated each statement on a scale from 1 to 5, with the following interpretive ranges: 1.00–1.80 (Strongly Disagree), 1.81–2.60 (Disagree), 2.61–3.40 (Neutral), 3.41–4.20 (Agree), and 4.21–5.00 (Strongly Agree).

### 4.3 Survey Results

#### 4.3.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents the demographic information of the 152 respondents who participated in the study. The demographic data helps provide background information on the local residents of Bago City and supports the interpretation of their perspectives toward tourism development.

**Table (4.1) Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Number of Samples</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	39	25.9
	Female	113	74.07
<b>Total</b>		<b>152</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Age</b>	18–25	120	78.9
	26-35	32	21.1
<b>Total</b>		<b>152</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Education Level</b>	No Formal Education	37	24.3
	Primary	24	15.8
	Secondary	20	13.2
	University/ College	26	17.1
	Postgraduate	45	29.6
<b>Total</b>		<b>152</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Occupation</b>	Farmer	48	31.6
	Business Owner	40	26.3
	Government Staff	22	14.5
	Tourism- Related Job	42	27.6
<b>Total</b>		<b>152</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Survey Data, 2025

The survey data shows a significant gender imbalance among respondents. Out of 152 participants, 113 were female, accounting for 74.07%, while only 39 were male, representing 25.9% of the sample. This indicates that women were more willing or available to participate in the survey than men. The predominance of female respondents may reflect the demographic composition of the study area or could be related to the nature of the survey topic, which may attract more female engagement. This gender distribution should be considered when analyzing the findings, as it may influence certain perceptions or behaviors reported in the study.

The age distribution indicates that the majority of respondents are young adults. Specifically, 120 respondents (78.9%) were between 18 and 25 years old, while only 32 respondents (21.1%) fell within the 26–35 age group. This suggests that the sample is heavily concentrated in the younger age category, which may reflect a population that is more active, accessible, or responsive to the survey. This youth-dominated sample could influence study outcomes, particularly if the research topic is related to education, employment, or technology use, as younger respondents may have different perspectives compared to older age groups.

Respondents displayed a diverse range of educational backgrounds. Among them, 45 respondents (29.6%) had postgraduate education, making it the largest educational group. Those with no formal education represented 24.3% (37 respondents), while primary and secondary education were reported by 24 (15.8%) and 20 (13.2%) respondents, respectively. University or college graduates numbered 26 respondents (17.1%). This distribution shows that while a significant portion of the respondents are highly educated, there is also a considerable number with limited formal education. Such diversity in educational attainment could influence respondents' understanding, engagement, and responses regarding the survey topic, providing a broad perspective from both educated and less-educated participants.

The occupational profile of respondents reflects a mix of traditional and service-oriented employment. The largest group, farmers, comprised 48 respondents (31.6%), highlighting the continued importance of agriculture in the community. Tourism-related jobs accounted for 42 respondents (27.6%), and business owners were 40 respondents (26.3%), indicating a substantial presence of commercial and service activities. Only 22 respondents (14.5%) were government staff, forming the smallest occupational category. This occupational distribution suggests that the community's

economy is diverse, with significant engagement in agriculture, business, and tourism, which may shape perspectives and experiences relevant to the survey objectives.

The survey sample is predominantly female, young (18–25 years old), and highly educated, with a significant representation of respondents engaged in farming, tourism, and business activities. This demographic profile suggests that the findings will largely reflect the experiences and perceptions of younger, educated females involved in both traditional and service-oriented occupations. Understanding this composition is essential for interpreting the results accurately and ensuring that any conclusions or recommendations take the sample’s characteristics into account.

#### 4.3.2 Perceptions and Attitudes of Local Residents toward Tourism Growth

The survey data presented in Table 4.1 provides important insights into how local residents in Bago City perceive and feel about the growth of the tourism industry in their area. Overall, the findings indicate a positive perception and supportive attitude among the majority of respondents, although certain concerns and areas of neutrality remain.

**Table (4.2) Perceptions and Attitudes of Local Residents toward Tourism Growth**

No.	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Tourism has helped improve the image of Bago City.	4.21	.99
2	Tourism has created job opportunities for local people.	3.98	1.01
3	Tourism has increased income for my family or community.	3.37	1.00
4	The tourism industry is important for the development of Bago City.	3.99	.89
5	I support the further development of the tourism sector.	4.38	1.05
6	Local residents benefit equally from tourism.	3.72	1.00
7	Tourism helps preserve cultural traditions and heritage.	4.41	.98
8	Tourism has improved infrastructure (roads, sanitation, public transport, etc.).	3.74	.99
9	I believe tourism promotes cultural exchange and understanding.	4.42	1.05
10	Overall, tourism growth is beneficial for my community.	4.10	1.0
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>3.12</b>	

Source: Survey Data, (June, 2025)

The survey data presents a nuanced view of how local residents perceive the impact of tourism in local area. Overall, respondents show a strong positive attitude toward tourism's role in enhancing the city's image, with a mean score of 4.21 out of 5. This suggests that tourism is seen as a significant factor in improving the city's reputation and attractiveness. Closely related to this, residents express pride in their hometown being a destination for tourists, reflected by an even higher mean score of 4.36, which highlights the emotional and social value tourism holds for the community. In terms of economic impacts, the perception is somewhat mixed.

The statement "Tourism has created job opportunities for local people" received a relatively high mean of 3.98, indicating that many respondents recognize tourism as a source of employment. However, the perceived increase in income for families or communities scored lower at 3.37, suggesting that while jobs may exist, the direct financial benefits to households are less uniformly experienced or recognized. This is further supported by the moderate agreement (3.72) with the statement that "Local residents benefit equally from tourism," implying concerns about unequal distribution of tourism-generated wealth.

The importance of tourism to the overall development of Bago City is acknowledged, with a mean score of 3.99, showing that respondents appreciate tourism's strategic role in city growth and modernization. Support for further tourism development is strong, scoring 4.38, which indicates a forward-looking optimism about expanding the sector.

Cultural and social impacts of tourism appear particularly valued by residents. The highest scores relate to tourism's role in preserving cultural traditions and heritage (4.41), and promoting cultural exchange and understanding (4.42). These results suggest that locals see tourism as a vehicle for sustaining their cultural identity and fostering positive intercultural relationships.

In terms of physical infrastructure, the score for improvements such as roads, sanitation, and public transport stands at 3.74, indicating a moderate recognition that tourism contributes to urban infrastructure development, though perhaps less emphatically than cultural or social benefits.

Interestingly, the overall mean score of 3.12 may suggest some caution or reservation among residents when considering tourism's impacts as a whole, possibly reflecting a balanced perspective that acknowledges both benefits and challenges. The data reveals that local residents generally hold positive views about tourism's cultural,

social, and developmental benefits, with some reservations about the equitable distribution of economic gains. This complex perception underscores the importance of inclusive tourism planning that ensures more widespread financial benefits while preserving cultural assets and community pride.

#### 4.3.3 Challenges and Opportunities from Tourism Expansion

To understand the potential drawbacks of tourism growth in Bago City, ten key statements were presented to 162 respondents, each measuring the degree of agreement or concern about tourism’s impact. The results offer valuable insights into how local residents perceive the consequences of tourism expansion in their community.

**Table (4.3) Challenges and Opportunities from Tourism Growth**

No.	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Tourism has led to an increase in the cost of living (goods, housing, etc.).	3.31	1.00
2	Tourism causes traffic congestion and noise pollution.	2.94	1.01
3	Local residents are sometimes disrespected or disturbed by tourists.	3.17	.99
4	Tourism impacts the natural environment in Bago.	2.12	1.02
5	Cultural sites are being commercialized due to tourism.	3.72	.95
6	Tourism development mainly benefits outsiders or large companies.	3.05	1.05
7	There is a lack of participation from local communities in tourism planning.	3.62	1.00
8	Tourism has led to the loss of local identity and values.	2.30	.91
10	Tourism growth should be managed carefully to protect our community and environment.	3.73	1.02
<b>Overall Values</b>		<b>3.45</b>	

Source: Survey Data, (June, 2025)

The data indicates a mixed but cautious perspective among local residents regarding the negative consequences of tourism in Bago City. Concerns about economic effects are evident, with respondents moderately agreeing (mean score of 3.31) that tourism has contributed to an increase in the cost of living, including goods and housing. This suggests that while tourism brings benefits, it also puts pressure on

local affordability. Environmental and social impacts are perceived with varying degrees of concern. For example, the issue of traffic congestion and noise pollution scores a moderate 2.94, indicating some awareness but not overwhelming worry. Similarly, 3.17 is the mean score reflecting feelings that residents are sometimes disrespected or disturbed by tourists, pointing to occasional social friction.

More significant worries arise around the commercialization of cultural sites, with a relatively high mean score of 3.72, suggesting that locals feel traditional heritage may be commodified in ways that undermine authenticity. This ties into perceptions of tourism benefiting primarily outsiders or large companies, which scored 3.05, reflecting concerns about unequal economic gains and external control over tourism development.

This is reinforced by the 3.62 mean score on the lack of local community participation in tourism planning, highlighting perceived exclusion from decision-making processes. Interestingly, the perceived loss of local identity and values scores relatively low at 2.30, suggesting that most residents do not strongly feel that tourism has eroded their cultural identity. However, the sentiment that tourism development does not adequately consider local needs scored moderately at 3.27, indicating a sense of marginalization among residents. The mean score of 3.73 indicates that respondents generally hold a positive and cautious attitude toward tourism development. This suggests that the community values tourism's benefits but is also aware of the need for careful management to avoid negative impacts. The score reflects a moderate-to-strong consensus, showing that most participants recognize the importance of balancing economic growth with social and environmental protection.

Overall, the data reveals a cautious community perspective that acknowledges tourism's challenges, particularly around cost of living, cultural commercialization, community involvement, and sustainability. While not overwhelmingly negative, these concerns emphasize the need for inclusive and sustainable tourism strategies in local area.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1. Findings**

The study revealed several significant findings regarding local residents' perceptions of tourism in Bago City. First, there is a strong positive consensus that tourism enhances the city's image (mean score 4.21) and fosters community pride in attracting visitors (4.36). Tourism's role in cultural preservation and promoting cultural exchange was highly valued, with mean scores exceeding 4.4, indicating residents see tourism as vital for sustaining local heritage and intercultural understanding. Economically, tourism is recognized as a source of employment (3.98), yet perceptions of increased family or community income were notably lower (3.37), highlighting concerns over unequal financial benefits. Significant apprehensions also emerged around the commercialization of cultural sites (3.72) and the perception that tourism primarily benefits outsiders or large companies (3.05). A key finding is the lack of local community participation in tourism planning (3.62), which residents view as a barrier to equitable development. Importantly, the highest concern expressed was about the long-term sustainability of tourism (3.73), reflecting residents' worry over future environmental, social, and economic impacts. These findings underscore the community's complex view of tourism while supportive of its cultural and developmental benefits, they call for more inclusive and sustainable tourism strategies that address economic equity and local empowerment.

Myanmar's tourism development reveal a dynamic and evolving sector marked by significant growth and challenges. International visitor arrivals showed a steady increase over the early 2000s, reflecting Myanmar's gradual opening to global tourism and improvements in infrastructure and services. This growth accelerated until around 2019, indicating expanding interest and investment in Myanmar as a travel destination. However, the sector faced a sharp decline starting in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which severely restricted international travel and tourism-related activities. Despite this setback, early 2023 data suggest a tentative recovery, with visitor numbers

beginning to rise again as restrictions ease. Tourism development in Myanmar has contributed positively to economic growth, job creation, and cultural exchange, enhancing the country's global profile. Nevertheless, challenges remain, including ensuring sustainable tourism practices, balancing economic benefits with cultural and environmental preservation, and increasing local community participation in tourism planning and benefits. Addressing these issues will be critical for Myanmar to realize tourism's full potential as a driver of sustainable development.

## **5.2 Suggestions**

To ensure sustainable tourism growth, it is essential to adopt a multi-faceted approach that balances development with community and environmental protection. Promoting eco-friendly practices, such as waste management and conservation programs, can help preserve natural resources while enhancing visitor experiences. Actively engaging local communities in tourism planning and providing opportunities for participation—such as guiding services or supporting local businesses—ensures that economic benefits are shared and cultural authenticity is maintained. Infrastructure improvements, including transportation, sanitation, and public facilities, can enhance accessibility without causing overdevelopment. Diversifying tourism offerings through cultural, eco, and adventure experiences can attract a broader range of visitors and reduce pressure on popular sites. Additionally, educational campaigns for both tourists and residents can foster responsible behavior, while clear policies and regulations help manage tourism activities effectively. Finally, promoting local culture and heritage through festivals, crafts, and traditions not only enriches the tourist experience but also strengthens economic opportunities for the community.

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## APPENDIX

### Questionnaire

Mg name is Htun Aung Kyaw. I am conducting a survey a research study for my thesis titled: “**A Study on the Perceptions of Local Youth on Tourism Growth in Bago City.**” Your participation is completely voluntary, and all responses will be kept strictly confidential and used only for academic purposes. There are no right or wrong answers. Please answer the questions honestly based on your personal experience and opinions.

#### SECTION (A) DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Gender

- Male
- Female
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Age

- Under 18
- 18–25
- 26–40
- 41–60
- Over 60

3. Education Level

- No Formal Education
- Primary
- Secondary
- University/College
- Postgraduate

4. Occupation

- Farmer
- Business Owner
- Government Employee
- Tourism-Related Job
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION B: PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES TOWARD TOURISM GROWTH**

**Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.**

**(1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Statement</b>	<b>1 (SD)</b>	<b>2 (D)</b>	<b>3 (N)</b>	<b>4 (A)</b>	<b>5 (SA)</b>
1	Tourism has helped improve the image of Bago City.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Tourism has created job opportunities for local people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Tourism has increased income for my family or community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	The tourism industry is important for the development of Bago City.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Local residents benefit equally from tourism.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Tourism helps preserve cultural traditions and heritage.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Tourism has improved infrastructure (roads, sanitation, public transport, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	I believe tourism promotes cultural exchange and understanding.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Overall, tourism growth is beneficial for my community.					

1. What positive changes have you noticed in your area due to tourism?

2. What suggestions do you have for managing tourism growth in your area?

**SECTION C: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FROM TOURISM EXPANSION**

**Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.**

**(1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)**

No.	Statement	1 (SD)	2 (D)	3 (N)	4 (A)	5 (SA)
1	Tourism has led to an increase in the cost of living (goods, housing, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Tourism causes traffic congestion and noise pollution.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Local residents are sometimes disrespected or disturbed by tourists.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Tourism negatively impacts the natural environment in Bago.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Cultural sites are being commercialized due to tourism.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Tourism development mainly benefits outsiders or large companies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	There is a lack of participation from local communities in tourism planning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Tourism has led to the loss of local identity and values.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Tourism growth should be managed carefully to protect our community and environment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. What other opportunities do you think tourism could bring to Bago City in the future?

2. How do you think these challenges could be addressed to make tourism more sustainable?

**Thank You.**