

The Status and Prospects of Tourist Attractions and Local Products in Lucban, Quezon

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the status and prospects of tourist attractions and local products of Lucban. Specifically, it aimed to describe the profile of the respondents; to distinguish the problems encountered in the development of local products in Lucban; and to associate the significant difference on the problem encountered with the profile of the respondents. This research was done through the use of descriptive method, with sixty (60) respondents composed of tourists, host community and the businesses catering tourist goods and services. Survey questionnaire was the main instrument used in gathering data. The researchers concluded that lack of security, product innovation, and presentation were the problems most encountered in terms of tourist attractions and local products. The researchers also found out that the problems in the promotion of tourist attractions and local products do not differ when grouped according to profile variables. Also, the problems encountered in the promotion of Lucban as a tourist attraction vary according to sex and group.

I. INTRODUCTION

Philippines is yet to fulfill its considerable potential and establish itself as a premier tourist destination and one of which is Quezon, specifically, Lucban. The exquisite place considered suitable site for the moments of relaxation and for the momentum of livelihood found in Southern Luzon is no other than the lovely town of Lucban located in the Province of Quezon. The town is bestowed the title "Summer Capital of Quezon". It is also known for the significant event held every 15th day of May, the Pahiyas Festival. Presently, it has become the pride not only of Lucbanins but all Quezonians for consistently keeping their culture and religion alive (Provincial Information and Community Office, Quezon Province, 2011). Another important site for pilgrims is the 'Kamay ni Hesus' Shrine, a serene place for a spiritual journey where Catholic pilgrims experience a peaceful and tranquil environment while praying and meditating (Ahab, 2012). According to Magallanes (2012), Mount Banahaw has been the center of mystical beliefs in southern Luzon which sees a flock of visiting witch doctors climbing the mountains to commune with nature and some "supernatural" forces.

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(Buaron, 2009). Lucban is also known for its delectable delicacies that make the stomachs filled with savory goodies that only Quezon has to offer that makes the town a good culinary destination for those who long for dishes with that deep Tagalog touch. Pancit “Hab-hab” is the queen of all delicacies - a tasty noodle dish that is made from egg noodles that are sautéed with vegetables, pork, pork liver, and shrimps and is wrapped and eaten on banana leaves. Hardinera, Lucban’s version of meatloaf, has a curious delicate taste and it does add a perfect balance to the lustier flavor of Pancit “Hab-hab”. Another crowd favorite would have to be the sausage which is popularly called Lucban Langgonisa (Buaron, 2009, Wong 2011 & Ahab, 2012).

Tourism is one of the possible trajectories for the integration of places into global sphere. Therefore, the researchers want to develop a place that will significantly contribute to the country’s tourism industry and be known internationally. The researchers believed that if the problem encounter in the promotion of tourist attractions and local products will be identified and resolved, the tourism industry will flourish. Since Lucban is a second-class municipality, the researchers wanted to make it a first-class municipality through innovation by tourist attractions and local products, assessment, and development.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study generally endeavored to identify tourist attractions and local products of Lucban. Specifically, it described the profile of the respondents; distinguished the problems encountered in the development of local products in Lucban; and associated the significant difference on the problems encountered with the profile of the respondents.

III. MATERIALS AND METHOD

In order to gather the needed information regarding the status and prospects of tourist attractions and local products in Lucban, Quezon, a descriptive method of research was used. Descriptive method is a fact finding that explains the present condition of what is happening or what is going on in the time of the study (Shutterworth, 2008). The study was conducted in Lucban, Quezon. There were 60 respondents which include the tourists, host community and businesses catering tourist goods and services. The chosen respondents are aware of the present status and problems of the destination and local products and their answers were based on their experiences.

Survey questionnaire was the main instrument used in gathering data which is composed of four parts that would be answered by the tourist, host community and businesses catering tourist goods and services. This is divided into four parts: Part I is the list of most visited tourist attractions in Lucban. Part II is the list of most delectable delicacies in Lucban. Part III is the list of the attractions and local products in Lucban that is most recommended by the respondents.

The preliminary forms of the questionnaires are referred to the adviser for comments and suggestions regarding the format and item content. The suggestions served as guidelines for the revisions of questionnaires. The questionnaires were created using suitable questions modified from related research and

individual questions formed by the researcher. It comprised questions which are related to the participant's perception regarding the status and prospects of tourist attractions and local products in Lucban, Quezon. Respondents were given time to answer and the researchers collected the surveys. A second refinement based on the feedback was made. This was followed by writing of the final draft of the data gathering instrument of the study.

The data were interpreted and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, weighted mean and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The mentioned statistical tools used are based on the objectives of the study. All retrieved data were computed using SPSS version 18 with an alpha value of 0.05 to further analyze the obtained results.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The most visited attractions in Lucban are Kamay Ni Hesus and Pahiyas Festival with 3.59 mean value. Lucban is known as a religious site for pilgrims and Kamay Ni Hesus Shrine features the biggest Christ the Redeemer statue (50 feet) in Northern Hemisphere, considered the third biggest in the world. Transformed into a picturesque Via Dolorosa Grotto of Healing and Purification, one has to climb all of 292 steps to reach the top passing along life-size statues of the 14 Stations of the Cross. That is why every year especially during holy week millions of tourists are visiting the place. From the article of Delfin Mallari Jr. of Inquirer Southern Luzon, Fr. Joey Faller, a renowned healer and founder of the shrine, said that based on the estimate of police and the shrine's own security guards a total of 1.5 million shrine guests came for Holy Week. On the other hand, Lucban is much synonymous with the famous Pahiyas Festival, celebrated every 15th day of May and it is this Philippines festival that made Lucban a must-see destination for those exploring the decadently multicultural and multifaceted country that is the Philippines. Pahiyas Festival is perhaps one of the most festive, most significant and most colorful of all the festivals in the world (Buaron, 2009). The annual festival is frequented by foreigners and visitors from nearby provinces every year.

On the other hand, the Municipality of Lucban introduced a new tradition of "buhusan", the Lucban Water World Festival last 2011 celebrated every Easter Sunday. This festival means people gets wet by running around town with pales of water and bath every people on the streets, consequently it got the lowest rank among others.

The researchers found out that there are three problems encountered in the promotion of tourist attractions in Lucban Quezon. The number one problem is lack of security. The safety of tourists is among the primary factors for any tourism industry, but many tourism sectors had failed to do this task and this is one of the problems that are being encountered by Lucban, Quezon. Lack of cooperation between the tourism industry and its other main partners such as the government, law enforcement agencies and the wider community is the main reason while security in a destination failed (Dabour, 2013). According to Rose (2013), in the absence of an adequate provision of official state police protection, or as supplementary security measures, the tourist industry should take various private security initiatives that may include private security for resort compounds and extending to a collective and more systematic form of policing entire precincts, such as neighborhood watches.

Lack of accommodation establishment is another problem. There are only three hotels situated in Lucban, Quezon; the Patio Rizal hotel and Restaurant, Batis Aramin Resort and Hotel and Summer Capital Inn. With millions of tourist arriving in Lucban especially during Pahiyas Festival this accommodation for sure could not able to occupy the mass arrival of tourist.

Problems Encountered in the Promotion of Local Products

The researchers found out that there a lot of problems encountered in the promotion of local products in Lucban Quezon. The number one problem is product innovation and presentation, which Lucbanins are just contented on the aesthetic value of their products not realizing that continuous improvement is very essential to meet not just the customer satisfaction but most especially the customer delight. Another one is limited advertisement during Lucban festivals, according to the Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator Mr. Danilo F. Oblefias, Lucbans website are not being updated for two years that is why a lot of tourist and host community are not informed by the programs and activities being implemented. Advertisement has gained a great value in the modern age. Lack of manpower to sustain the production of local products is the same in the fifth problem which is farm income is low and decreasing number of farmers since it both pertains to problems about labor shortage. The researchers found out that youth nowadays want to engage in a work for which they can earn a big salary like going to abroad, so it has a great effect on the local business because they are not able to finish the products on time because of lack of workers. Lack of budget for product improvement and sustainability is also a problem encountered in the promotion of tourism products.

Table 3

Difference of Responses on the Problems Encountered in the Promotions of Tourist Attractions and Local products When Grouped According to Profile Variables

Problems Encountered with regards to:	Tourist Attractions			Local Products		
	F _c	p-value	I	F _c	p-value	I
Sex	4.634	.036	S	6.199	.016	S
Age	.586	.627	NS	.165	.919	NS
Group of Respondents	2.910	.063	NS	4.922	.011	S

Legend: Significant at p -value < 0.05; HS = Highly Significant; S = Significant; NS = Not Significant

Based on the table, the computed p -values of tourists attraction (0.036) when grouped according to sex and local products (0.016, 0.011) when grouped according to sex and group of respondents were all less than 0.05 level of significance, thus the hypothesis of no significant difference on the problems encountered when grouped according to profile variables (sex and group of respondents) is rejected. This means that the problems they experienced in the promotion of tourist attractions and local products differ as to their sex as well as their position in the community, because the problem rooted directly from the one who manages the attraction and the production of local products which is the government.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Most of the respondents are females and are relatively young. Lack of Security, product innovation, and presentation were the problems most encountered in terms of tourist attraction and local products. The problems encountered in the promotion of tourist attractions and local products do not differ when grouped according to profile variables. The problems encountered in the promotion of Lucban as a tourist attraction varies according to sex and group.

The local government of Lucban may create a “Chamber of Commerce” wherein it can establish well-organized hotels, restaurants, and other businesses related to tourism. With that, they can encourage stakeholders to invest with them and be involved in the tourism activities of Lucban for the development of the place’s tourism industry. The LGU must ensure an open communication with other jurisdictions and organizations through continuous participation in the provincial and national tourism meetings. They can also organize trade fairs that will showcase the local products of Lucban. The Department of Tourism of Lucban may upgrade marketing and promotion of tourism by developing a logo and branding “It’s More Fun in Lucban!”, preparing a tourism Lucban website and link it to the LGU website by considering social media – Facebook, twitter, etc. In addition, Lucban shall pursue mutually beneficial partnership arrangements with nearby LGU’s and other tourist agencies in the region.

The government of Lucban may improve transportation by creating tourist zones such as walkable tourist zone, no vehicles in core zone, vehicles use streets to go around the periphery of zone, emergency of delivery vehicles only on core zone streets, core transition zone, expansion of the main core tourist zone in future, and tourist zone in the Diversion road. Future researchers may conduct similar studies using other variables not covered in this paper.

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