

## HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF FESTIVALS IN GUIMARAS ISLAND, PHILIPPINES: ITS IMPLICATION TO TOURISM INDUSTRY GROWTH

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### Abstract

This study was conducted to determine the different festivals in Guimaras and their significant contributions to the tourism industry through a qualitative-quantitative research design. The data were gathered from the people in the tourism industry in the province of Guimaras and in five municipalities in the province for the past five years using focused group discussion. Result of the study showed that there were festivals in the provincial, municipal and barangay levels. It also revealed that festivals in this island province contributed to its visitors' arrival. Thus, tremendous increase in the number of local excursionists which ranked first is noted for the past five years. Local tourists ranked second, foreign excursionist ranked third and foreign tourists ranked fourth. When monthly arrivals are taken into consideration, the month of May ranked first, March ranked second, and April ranked third. Another contribution of festivals in the province was evident in its notably increasing agri-trade and tourism fair sales for the past five years.

**Key words:** festivals, evolution, excursionists, tourists

### Introduction

A festival is known to most people as a day of celebration or festivities. There are many festivals celebrated throughout the world and the Philippines is no exception. Often, a province, town, or municipality celebrates a festival in the Philippines. A festival is viewed by the researcher as a means of sharing the history, identity and values of the place and people to others and the younger generations. A festival is also a way to attract visitors to come to the province, town, or municipality therefore a festival has an impact on the hosting place. Since festivals are celebrated throughout the world it is very important to learn, understand, and measure its impacts on the hosting community. Falassi (1987) defines a festival as an event, a social phenomenon, encountered in virtually all human cultures. The colorful variety and dramatic intensity of its dynamic choreographic and aesthetic aspects, the signs of deep meaning underlying them, its historical roots and the involvement of the "natives" have always attracted the attention of casual visitors, have consumed travelers and men of letters alike. Furthermore, Falassi explained that festivals in the social sciences are simply taken from common language, where the term covers a constellation of very different events, sacred and profane, private and public, sanctioning tradition and introducing innovation, proposing nostalgic revivals, providing the expressive means for the survival of the most archaic folk customs, and celebrating the highly speculative and experimental avant-gardes of the elite fine arts. Etymologically the term festival derives ultimately from the Latin festum. But originally Latin had two terms for festive events: festum, for "public joy, merriment, revelry." And feria, meaning "abstinence from work in honor of the gods. Both terms were used in the plural form, festa and feriae, which indicates that at that time festivals lasted for many days and included many events. In classical Latin, the two terms tended to become synonyms, as the two types of events tended to merge (Luna, 2015).

Guimaras Island is known for many of its festivals which were celebrated by the people in the community. These festivals portray religion, practices, norms and even attitudes of the people in the province. There are many sources of the idea of celebrating the festivals. Some focus on food associated with harvests which are blended with the festivals. Festivals create more opportunity for people to earn a living for it can be a source of fund or income generating projects of the province. These celebrations offer a sense of belongingness for religion, social, and many more.

This study was anchored to the Attribution Theory which explain the world and to determine the cause of an event or behavior (e.g. why people do what they do).

The researchers as witnesses of how valuable festivals for people are, were inspired to conduct this study in order to determine the effects of festivals to economic way of life of the people in Guimaras.

## Material and methods

Guimaras Island is considered one of the exotic islands in the Philippines. It is located in the northwest part of the Philippines archipelago called Visayas. The original name was Himal-us but was changed to Guimaras after the folktale of the ill-fated lovers named Princess Guima and the slave Aras, who defied tradition for their romance. The island was once a sub-province of Iloilo but by virtue of R.A. 7160 it was proclaimed a regular province on May 22, 1992.

The province is basically agricultural, with palay, coconut, mango, vegetables, livestock, poultry, and fishing as major products. Likewise, the major industries in the island are tourism, fruit processing, coconut processing, handicrafts making, mining, and lime production (<http://www.tourism.gov.ph/SitePages/InteractiveSitesPage.aspx?siteID=36>, retrieved August 2016).

Qualitative-quantitative research design utilizing the data that were taken as a result of focus group discussion with tourism officers in the tourism industry in addition to the secondary data obtained from the provincial tourism office and five Municipalities of the province of Guimaras who served as the respondents of the study.

Objectives of the study have been as follows:

1. To determine the different festivals in Guimaras.
2. To identify the proponents of the festivals.
3. To evaluate the implications of the festivals in the Island of Guimaras to the Tourism Industry growth of the province.

## Results

### A. Festivals on Guimaras

Next table (table 1) presents the overview of all the festivals held on Guimaras over year.

Tab. 1: Overview of all the festivals held on Guimaras over year

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>A. The province of Guimaras festivals</b> |   |
| 1.   | Manggahan Festival - gives emphasis on the promotion of Guimaras Mango            |
| 2.   | Pagtatal sa Bala-an Bukid - country's religious festival                          |
| 3.   | Padyak Kaligtasan – sport (biking) festival                                       |
| 4.   | Kasadyahan sa Kabukiran – environmental festival focused on greening of Guimaras  |
| <b>B. Municipal Festivals</b>                |   |
| 5.   | Palayag Festival (Buenavista) - in honor of the town's Patron Saint Sr. Sto. Nino |
| 6.   | Mangggahan sa Kabanwahanan (Buenavista)   |
| 7.   | Sadsaran Festival (Nueva Valencia) – dancing festival                             |
| 8.   | Manggahan sa Kabanwahanan (Nueva Valencia)  |
| 9.   | Balsahan Festival (Sibunag) - the foundation day of the Municipality              |
| 10.  | Manggahan sa Kabanwahanan (Sibunag)   |
| 11.  | Bulantihan Festival (Jordan) – celebration of harvest                             |
| 12.  | Manggahan sa Kabanwahanan (Jordan)  |
| 13.  | Asinan Festival (San Lorenzo) – food festival                                     |
| 14.  | Manggahan sa Kabanwahanan (San Lorenzo)   |
| <b>C. Barangay Festivals</b>                 |   |
| 15.  | Pamalandong sa Tamborong (Tamborong) - religious festival                         |
| 16.  | Banigan Festival (Sapal) – local products promotional festival                    |
| 17.  | Harvest Festival Suclaran   |
| 18.  | Saranggola Festival (San Roque) - kite flying festival                            |
| 19.  | Mini Paraw Festival (Rizal)   |
| 20.  | Fluvial Procession (Sto. Rosario) – religious festival                            |
| 21.  | Worship Festival sa Semana Santa sa Buenavista – religious festival               |
| 22.  | Ambolong Festival (Salvacion) – healing and treatment festival                    |
| 23.  | Paskwa sa Barangay in Salvacion – pre-Christmas festival                          |
| 24.  | Buena Paskwa (Buenavista) - municipality's Christmas celebrations                 |
| 25.  | Binagtong Festival (Cabalagnan)   |
| 26.  | Pangasi Festival (Lanipe) – farming and spiritual festival                        |
| 27.  | Sibiran Festival (Dolores) – fishing festival                                     |
| 28.  | Bayuhan Festival (Salvacion) - rice and food processing festival                  |

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| 29. | Niyogyogan Festival (Oracon) – agricultural and farming festival   |
| 30. | Karosahan Festival (Napandong) - agricultural festival             |
| 31. | Manokan Festival (Concordia) – agricultural and livestock festival |
| 32. | Kadagatan Festival (San Roque) - fishing and marine festival       |
| 33. | Panakayon Festival (La Paz) - fishing and marine festival          |
| 34. | RARA Festival (Calaya) – local products promoting festival         |
| 35. | Sinulog Festival in Oracon   |
| 36. | Patubas Festival (San Isidro) –                                    |
| 37. | Panginhas Festival (Alegria) – marine harvest celebrating festival |

### **B. Implications of Festivals on Tourism Industry Growth of the Province**

Figure 1 shows the visitors arrival in the province of Guimaras for the period 2012 - 2016.

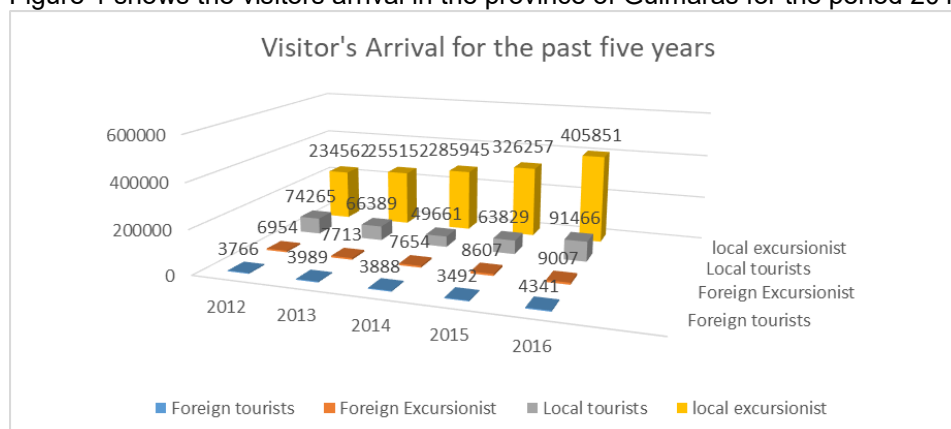


Fig. 1: Visitors' arrival in the province of Guimaras for the period 2012 - 2016

Figure 2 shows the visitor's arrival in 2016 per month in comparison with festivals running in adequate month.



Fig. 2: Visitor's arrival in 2016 per month

Figure 3 presents the Agri-trade and Tourism Fair Sales of the province of Guimaras for the past six years. Based on the gathered data, it was shown that there was a notable increase of sales from 2014 to 2017.

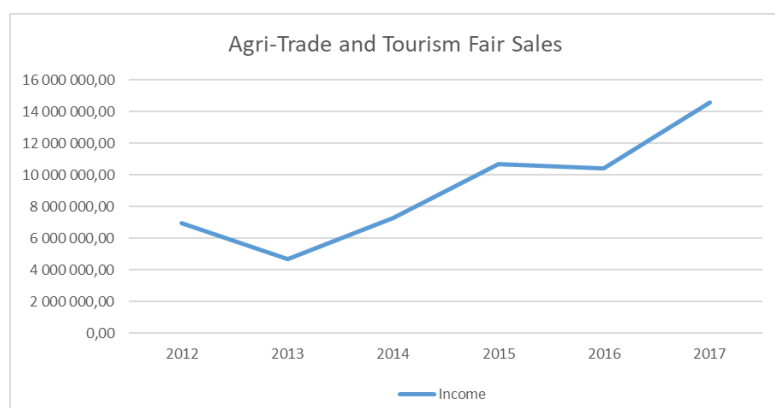


Fig. 3: Agri-trade and tourism fair sales 2012 – 2017 in thousands PHP

## Discussion

It was shown in the figure 1 chart that higher number of visitors' arrivals represented the local excursionists or those visitors coming outside Guimaras and within the Philippines and have stayed in less than 24 hours in the destination; tremendous increase in the number of local excursionists is also noted for the past five years. Local tourists ranked second in terms of arrival in the province; records showed that there was a notable increase of arrivals of local tourists from 2014 to 2016. Foreign excursionists ranked third in terms of arrival in the province; a tremendous increase of arrival is also noted from 2012 to 2016. Foreign tourists ranked 4th in terms of the number of arrivals; an increase of arrival is also noted in 2016.

It was shown in figure 2 chart that in terms of monthly monitoring of the arrival of visitors, the month of May ranked first, March ranked second, and April ranked third while in terms of the number of festivals, the month of April ranked first, January and February ranked second, and March ranked third. Hence, it was shown in this chart that the number of festivals does not contribute to the number of visitors arrival in the province.

Even though there is not obvious significant relation between the number of festivals taking place on Guimaras and the visitors coming to Guimaras, the increasing trend of visitor numbers is possible to observe within several last years. It corresponds also to the regular annual increments of agri-trade and tourism fair sales returning back to the local economy. Comparing the results given in figure 1 and 3 it seems that predominantly the local visitors have caused mentioned increasing trend.

## Conclusion

The province is rich in festivals that showcase the culture of the people in Guimaras. The festivals in the province of Guimaras contributed to the visitors' arrival when taken but the visitors' arrival is not dependent on the number of festivals when monthly monitoring is considered. In addition, festivals contributed to the increase in agri-trade and tourism fair sales for the past five years.

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## Souhrn

Na ostrově Guimaras, severozápadní Visayas, Filipíny byl zkoumán vztah mezi množstvím festivalů pořádaných na centrální, regionální a místní úrovni a počtem přijíždějících návštěvníků ostrova či turistů. Zkoumán byl rovněž potenciální přínos festivalů, které jsou většinou orientovány na propagaci domácích produktů jak zemědělských, tak rukodělných na výnosy místního turistického ruchu, resp. místních farmářů.

Výsledky ukázaly že v posuzovaném období (2012–2016, resp. 2017) se návštěvnost ostrova významně zvyšuje, nicméně festivaly jako takové nemají na tento trend významný vliv. Zdá se, že jejich význam je výrazně lokalizován do místních komunit.

Z hlediska struktury návštěvníků převažují návštěvníci či turisté z Filipín. Jejich zvyšující se počet v čase logicky přináší zvyšující se výnosy z prodeje výrobků či služeb jak v oblasti turistického ruchu, tak v oblasti místního zemědělství.

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