



Manila Tourism:

Maximizing the Capital City's Culture and Heritage Potential

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Abstract

The Philippines is a country abundant with natural resources and attractions, diverse cultural traditions and practices of ethnolinguistic groups and colonial period heritage sites. Cultural Tourism is one of the critical areas for development identified to achieve sustainability and inclusive growth in the Philippine Tourism Development Plan 2016-2022. While endowed with heritage sites and cultural traditions, this potential is rarely maximized in tourism development plans and relegated to ancillary attractions of the destination due to the complicated relationship between heritage and tourism development policies, heritage groups, and tourism stakeholders, and the lesser status of heritage conservation in national priorities. This paper looks at the nexus and the possible collaboration between heritage management stakeholders and tourism advocates in Manila to enhance cultural tourism and promote heritage conservation. Using resource-based approach and secondary data analysis, this research aims to create an inventory and product/resource map of Manila heritage sites and cultural attractions, assess Manila's competitiveness as an ASEAN cultural tourism destination, examine the existing heritage management and cultural tourism context and opportunities for improvement, and identify specific marketing strategies and indicators to boost competitiveness to fully utilize the cultural tourism potential of our country, there is a need to develop a Cultural Tourism Vision and Development Framework for Manila that is clearly rooted in the heritage context of our country, guided by heritage preservation and sustainable tourism practices, and highlights the unique brand of Manila as cultural tourism destination and its competitive advantage. The researchers move forward by recommending opportunities for improvement and marketing strategies to further enhance Manila's competitiveness as a culture and heritage destination.

Keywords:

City of Manila, culture, and heritage, cultural tourism, destination competitiveness

1 Introduction

People have always been interested in traveling to experience temporarily other societies' ways of life and achievements. Cultural tourism is a form of tourism that relies on a destination's cultural heritage assets and transforms them into products that can be consumed by tourists (McKercher & du Cros, 2005: 211-212). It was formalized into a distinct product category only in the 1970s, the period when a global management perspective with nation-states as primary actors was starting to be adopted among tourism planners and marketers (Naveenchandra, 2015; Tighe, 1989). Prior to 1980s, it was regarded as a specialist, niche activity that was popularly perceived to cater to a few educated and affluent tourists who were a bit more adventurous and were looking for something other than sand, sun, and sea holidays (Naveenchandra, 2015; Towner & Hall, 1991; du Cros & McKercher, 2015). In the Philippines, national tourism managers in the government held the same view during the entire Marcos presidency (Richter, 1980). From that niche market view of Martial Law-era tourism, cultural tourism became a mainstream, mass produced in the country's tourism portfolio as the global tourism market became more competitive in the early 1990s (Naveenchandra, 2015). It is seen as a destination's unique competitive advantage over other destinations (Dwyer & Kim, 2003).

Cultural tourism has been identified as a core tourism product of the country ever since tourism planning had been institutionalized within the Philippine government system, with the creation of the Ministry of Tourism in 1973. It is among the critical areas for development identified to achieve sustainability and inclusive growth in the National Tourism Development Plan 2016-2022. In this paper, the authors used Ashworth's definition of heritage as the "contemporary use of the past" (2003). Heritage is a crucial component of culture. Cultural heritage management here is defined as the systematic care taken to maintain cultural heritage assets for the appreciation of present and future generation.

This paper looks at the nexus and the possible collaboration between heritage management stakeholders and tourism advocates in Manila to promote heritage conservation and enhance cultural tourism and make it responsive and responsible to all stakeholders. The specific research objectives of this paper are:

- (1) To examine the City of Manila's existing heritage management and cultural tourism conditions and find opportunities for improvement to make it more responsible and competitive; and
- (2) To identify specific development and marketing strategies to boost Manila's destination competitiveness.

2 Methods

The paper examines the existing policies and stakeholder perceptions gathered through key informant interviews and participant observation during a tourism marketing seminar and secondary data analysis of documents to understand the complicated relationship between heritage management and cultural tourism governance in the City of Manila. The study will utilize

SWOT and secondary data analysis to assess Manila's competitiveness and sustainability as a Cultural Tourism Destination. The researchers also propose specific development and marketing strategies to boost destination competitiveness based on the public documents gathered from the City of Manila's Tourism Office, National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), and heritage groups.

To be competitive, a destination has to have a far-reaching appeal and offer a highly satisfying tourism experience that is 'superior' to alternative destinations, increasing the motivation to visit the destination (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). Dwyer and Kim propose a destination competitiveness model that looks at inter-relationship of endowed resources and its supporting structures, destination management system, situational conditions, and demand.

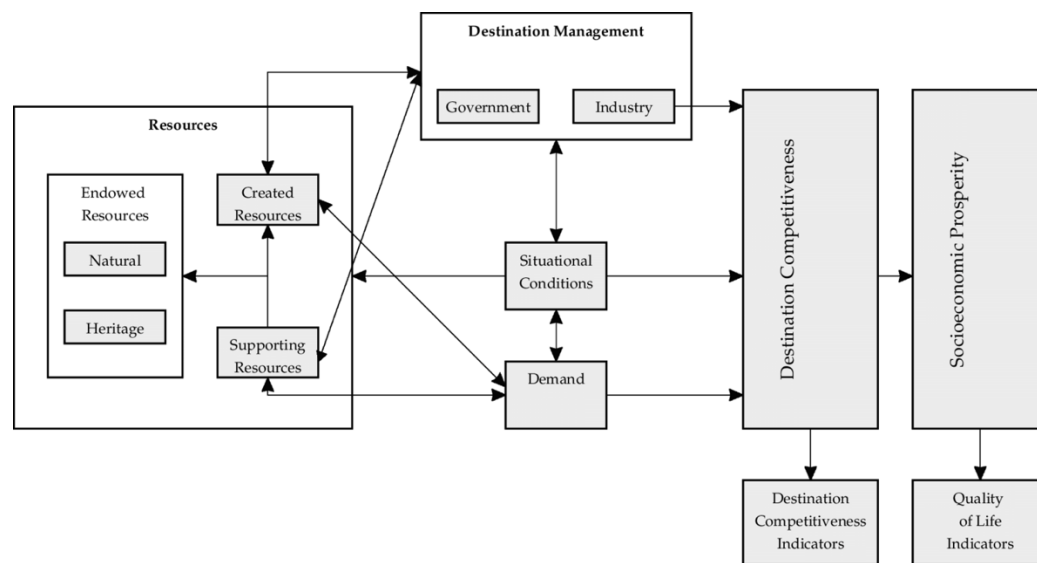


Figure 1. Dwyer and Kim's Tourism Destination Competitiveness Model (2003: 378)

3 Findings

Cultural Tourism is a neglected part of many local communities' tourism portfolio (Alejandria-Gonzalez, 2016). Cultural heritage sites are expected to be ready-made tourism products, but the local government tourism and cultural offices lack policy, administrative, and financial resources to maintain its local cultural heritage. Cultural heritage management policy-making began during in 1970 even before the passage of Republic Act (RA) 10066, the Heritage Act of 2009 (NCCA, 2001). The adoption of RA 9593, also known as the Tourism Act of 2009, establishes the rationale of Philippine tourism as a mechanism for nation-building along with its essential place in the nation's economic development. Through the Tourism Act of 2009, tourism development has been decentralized to local government units (LGUs), empowering LGUs and local communities in developing their natural, cultural, and human-made resources for inclusive growth.

As the second oldest city and the capital of the Philippines, the City of Manila is endowed with a significant number of cultural heritage sites, museums and libraries, and venues for artistic

performances. But while given with numerous heritage sites, educational sites, and cultural practices, this potential is rarely maximized in tourism development planning and relegated to ancillary attractions of the destination due to the dysfunctional relationship between heritage and tourism development policies, heritage groups, and tourism stakeholders, and the lesser status of heritage conservation in national and local priorities. The protection and promotion of culture are not given due importance as it is currently not part of the city government's 10-Point Agenda (City Government of Manila, n.d). At present, the City of Manila is still crafting its tourism development plan from its practical framework.

Manila's development as a Cultural Tourism Destination is now under the initiative and control of the local government unit of the City of Manila. The researchers conducted an inventory of cultural products within the city based on the documents sourced from the Philippine Registry of Cultural Property (PRECUP), a total of 371 cultural properties were identified from various districts of Manila, with the most numerous being located in Intramuros, Ermita, Sta Cruz, Binondo, and Sampaloc.

Table 1. Inventory of Cultural Products for Tourism Development in the City of Manila

District	Registered Cultural Properties
Intramuros	70
Ermita	66
Binondo	27
Santa Cruz	32
Tondo	20
Paco	17
Quiapo	16
Malate	47
Santa Ana	9
Pandacan	7
Port Area	9
San Miguel	10
San Nicolas	10
Sta. Mesa	4
Sampaloc	27

The initial list of cultural products was narrowed down based on an assessment of each property based on its touristic appeal (Department of Tourism, 2012: 30-31), cultural significance, tourist access and modern amenities available. Three tourism product circuits are proposed through geographic clusters in (1) Intramuros-Ermita; (2) Binondo-Santa Cruz-Tondo; (3) Paco-Santa Ana.

The Intramuros-Ermita circuit is the most developed cluster within Manila. This cluster has the most advanced set of cultural tourist attractions and a significant amount of support facilities, tourist amenities, and accommodations. The Binondo-Santa Cruz-Tondo circuit combines the

Manila suburban culture, commercial places, and the Chinese Filipino heritage. Lastly, the Paco-Santa Ana circuit will revolve around churches and private houses with cultural significance.

Table 2. List of Cultural Tourism Attractions within the Proposed Tourism Products Circuits

1. INTRAMUROS-ERMITA CIRCUIT
Bagumbayan Lights and Sounds Museum Madre Ignacia Del Espiritu Santo Marker Beaterio de la Compania Carlos IV Monument Casas Consistoriales (Ayuntamiento) College of San Juan de Letran Former Palace of the Governor-General Fort Santiago Freedom Shrine (Dambana ng Kalayaan) Fort Santiago World War II Memorial In Memory of the Victims of Fort Santiago Marker Legaspi and Urdaneta Monument Minor Basilica and Metropolitan Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception of Manila Roman Catholic Cathedral of Manila Marker Andres Bonifacio Monument (Lawton) Andres Bonifacio 30 Nobyembre 1863-10 Mayo 1897 Marker Andres Bonifacio National Shrine Memorare (Centennial Marker) Kartilya Archdiocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Guidance of Ermita <i>Ang Simbahan ng</i> Nuestra Señora de Guia Marker Plaza Nuestra Señora de Guia Leon Ma. Guerrero (1915-1982) Marker; Manuel S. Guerrero (1877 - 1919) Marker Army and Navy Club Historical Landmark (Hotel) Arroceros Park <i>Bulwagang Lungsod ng Maynila</i> <i>Casino Español de Manila</i> Central United Methodist Church <i>Compañia General de Tabacos de Filipinas/ Hotel 1898</i> Cosmopolitan Church Elks Club Building Historical Landmark (now <i>Museo Pambata</i>) Freedom Triangle, Manila City Hall <i>Sa Mga Bayani ng Lungsod ng Maynila Marker</i> Girl Scouts of the Philippines Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines Juan Luna Monument Juan Luna y Novicio Marker Leon Ma. Guerrero Monument Leon Maria Guerrero 1853-1935 Marker Luneta Hotel Historical Landmark Manila Central Post Office Building and <i>Liwasang Bonifacio</i> Historical Landmark Manila Hotel Historical Landmark <i>Unang Konsulado Heneral ng Australia sa Pilipinas</i> Marker; Rotary

Club of Manila Marker; Manila Hotel Gallery & Office Space

Mehan Gardens Historical Landmark

National Museum

Philippine School of Arts and Trades (now Technological University of the Philippines) (1901-2001)

Parish Church of Saint Vincent de Paul of Ermita | Church of San Vicente de Paul Marker

Philippine Normal University | Philippine Normal College

Quirino Grandstand | Elpidio R. Quirino (1890-1958) Marker

Santa Isabel College

University of the Philippines-Manila | Rafael Palma Marker

2. BINONDO-SANTA CRUZ-TONDO-QUIAPO

Calvo Building | *Gusaling* Calvo Marker

Commercial Bank and Trust Company (now Bank of the Philippine Islands Escolta Branch)

First United Building (formerly Perez-Samanillo Building)

Juan Luna Place | Pacific Commercial Company Building Marker

Minor Basilica of Saint Lorenzo Ruiz and Parish Church of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary of

Binondo | *Ang Simbahan ng* Binondo Marker

Post-war Hamilton-Brown Shop, Natividad Building

Roman Ongpin Monument | Roman Ongpin (1847-1912) Marker

Tiong Se Academy

Amado Hernandez Tomb | Amado Hernandez y Vera Marker; Atang de la Rama Tomb | Honorata De

La Rama Marker; In Memoriam Thomasites; Cuyugan-Lichauco Tomb; Nakpil-Bautista Pylon; Hidalgo

Family; Mausoleo de los Veteranos de la Revolucion Historical Landmark; Pancho Villa Tomb |

Francisco V. Guilleto (1901-1925) Marker

Gusaling Roman R. Santos

Iglesia Filipina Independiente Chapel | Isabelo De Los Reyes Marker; Disyembre 8, 1964 Marker

Parish Church of Santa Cruz of Manila | Church of Santa Cruz (Manila) Marker; Justiniano Asuncion

Marker; Leoncio Asuncion Marker

Tutuban Railway Station and Center Mall Grounds: Andres Bonifacio Monument (Tondo) | Andres

Bonifacio 1863-1897 Marker; Philippine National Railway Executive Building; Manila Railroad

Company Marker; *Ang Pampangulong Kotse ng Tren*

Iglesia Evangelica Metodista En Las Islas Filipinas

La Liga Filipina Plaza Liga Filipina | *La Liga Filipina* Marker

Parish Church of Santo Niño de Tondo | Church of Tondo Marker

Plaza Hernandez | Amado Hernandez y Vera Marker

Plaza Moriones and Franco Street | Domingo Franco y Tuason Marker; Cry of Tondo Statue; Honorio

Lopez Monument | Honorio Lopez Marker

Bahay Nakpil-Bautista Historical Landmark <i>Ang Bahay ng mga Nakpil</i> at Bautista Marker
Minor Basilica of San Sebastian of Quiapo Church of San Sebastian Marker
Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene of Quiapo Church of Quiapo Marker
Plaza Miranda "Can we defend this in Plaza Miranda?" Marker; Crispin " <i>Ka Bel</i> " Beltran Monument
3. PACO-SANTA ANA
Lord Justo Ukon Takayama Monument Lord Justo Ukon Takayama Marker
Paco Park (Cementerio Municipal De Manila y Capilla de San Pancracio); Memorare (Gomburza)
Lichauco Heritage House
Manila Boat Club
Pao Ong Hu Taoist Temple
Parish Church of Our Lady of the Abandoned of Santa Ana Church of Santa Ana Marker; <i>Camarin de la Virgen</i> ; Santa Ana Site Museum

Table 2 shows the richness of the endowed resources Manila has. These proposed circuits will help organize the tourism product development of supporting resources and facilities within Manila. However, some issues need to be addressed to harness its potential.

Issues on Tourism Cultural Development of City of Manila

The researchers have summarized some issues arising from the study of the destination competitiveness of the City of Manila in terms of its culture and heritage attractions. To date, the LGU of the City of Manila is still formulating its tourism development plan. Conditions are suitable for the development of a tourism development plan for Manila being the capital city of the Philippines. Moreover, an idea would signify a more concrete and deliberate tourism development of the town which can serve as a guide to harnessing the city's tourism potential.

Heritage conservation policies need to be enhanced more thoroughly to ensure that cultural attractions within the city are preserved. It is critical that all stakeholders, tourism advocates, the city government, and Manila residents collaborate and create and implement policies to ensure the responsible management of the cultural heritage sites and attractions. There is a need for effective advocacy and education platforms to craft and implement management programs to ensure these sites can be experienced responsibly and its preservation for the future generation.

At the core of tourism development in Manila is its cultural attractions. The adaptive reuse of cultural sites has been observed and recommended for the development and preservation of cultural places. Beyond preserving heritage for its sake, the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings is a sustainable tourism strategy that promotes the use of existing heritage buildings for other purposes than planned initially while ensuring the conservation of its cultural identity. The National

Museum of Fine Arts has been through adaptive reuse and first used as a legislative building where the 1934 Constitutional convention and the inauguration of Manuel L. Quezon as President of the Commonwealth were held. The former Department of Tourism building in Ermita has also been converted through adaptive reuse as the Museum of Natural History that opened in May 2018.

Further, cultural tourism can be highly encouraged as a tool for education. Educational tours can be developed for schools of different levels, primary education, junior and senior high school as well as collegiate levels. The cultural sites in Manila are part of the Philippines history, and actual experience of students onsite will enhance the learning process. Schools have used educational tours as a tool to reinforce theoretical concepts learned inside the classroom. Educational tours centered on culture could be a very useful tool in enhancing history, culture, and heritage concepts learned inside the classroom.

Finally, private sector involvement through the development of tour products within the proposed tourism circuits is highly recommended. Attracting private sector investments from local entrepreneurs should be prioritized highly by the City of Manila to increase economic activity within the area. This will also help generate more funds to preserve cultural attractions. With a cohesive partnership between government and industry at the core of tourism destination management, the potential of tourism development and heritage conservation may be maximized.

4 Conclusions & Recommendations

The potential of cultural tourism can be fully maximized through the collaboration of different stakeholders. Dywer and Kim's Destination Competitiveness Model emphasizes the partnership between government and the private sector. With Manila's rich cultural heritage evident in its sites and attractions and with proper destination management policies in place, it will be possible for Manila to maximize its cultural and heritage potential through a deliberate collaboration with industry stakeholders. With the private sector getting more involved in the development of tourism circuits and the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings, the endowed resources mentioned in Dywer and Kim's model will be enhanced with created and supporting resources developed. Further, destination competitiveness and socio-economic prosperity can be increased, leading to improved quality of life for the local community. Deliberate and controlled tourism development can mitigate the impacts of "over tourism" especially for a destination such as the City of Manila being the nation's capital, one of the most densely populated cities in the world and adjacent to Philippines' major international airports and seaports.

This exploratory study can be developed further into an in-depth study of the development of Manila's cultural and heritage tourism. Key informant interviews and site inspection of the heritage sites can provide more information on preparing a comprehensive tourism destination development plan. Policy recommendations can also be proposed to give more incentives to investors willing to develop tourism products related to culture and heritage.

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