

## A FESTIVAL'S IMPACT: THE CASE OF THE BAÑAMOS FESTIVAL

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### ABSTRACT

This paper dwells on the perceived effects of the Bañamos festival on the economy and tourism industry of Los Baños, Laguna. The respondents of this study were the festival organizers and participants, barangay officials, as well as, the local businessmen. They were selected through non-purposive sampling. The researcher employed a descriptive method and content analysis. Data obtained from the respondents were analysed using frequency and percentage. Moreover, an adapted survey questionnaire was utilized in this research. Results of the study revealed that most respondents believed that the festival had an impact on the economy of the municipality. They claimed that the festival seemed to have led to an increase in the economic activity of the municipality such as the expansion and improvement of local products and services which help generate more income for the locals. The respondents also believed that the festival had an impact on the tourism industry of the municipality, as it seemed to have resulted to an increase in the variety of entertainment in the municipality where the locals were able to showcase their talents.

**Keywords:** Stakeholders, festivals, economic impact, tourism impact, Bañamos festival.

## **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. The impact may be good or bad but none the less a festival has an impact. 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 (Falassi, 1987).

Raj(2003) found out in his study that festivals add tourism attraction and influence the cultural and economic growth of the place where the festival is held. Festivals provide the local population with opportunities to share its culture, exchange information, and experience, and help tourists to see how inhabitants of a country celebrate their holidays, and follow traditions and customs. They also help in decreasing the level of unemployment and at the same time in increasing income opportunities in a country. According to Kenyon (2002), festivals are determinants that cause people to travel to other countries to learn their local art, culture, and history. The development of local festivals has increased cultural tourism and provides tourist destinations with economic and cultural benefit. Festivals and events have been part of a wider range of new 'cultural strategies'. Gotham (2005) explained that festivals are events that regenerate and orient post-production economies towards consumption. Festivals offer tourists glimpses of local uniqueness and diverse cultural experiences (Getz, 1989). Very often there are religious underpinnings, as in many of the festivals that were celebrated during the middle ages. Historical research demonstrates how festival and events have a long history of acting as tourist attractions and of effecting the reproduction of places as tourism destinations (Gotham, 2005)

## **IMPACT OF FESTIVALS:**

Decco and Baloglu cited Ritchie and Smith (1991), who argued that festivals have a huge impact on tourism. Many studies have documented positive outcomes. Jeong and Faulkner as cited by Lee, Lee and Lee (2005) found out that a strong theme in a festival is the enhancement of the international image of the host community, and the generation of short and long term visitor flows. With respect to the former, considerable attention has been paid to how events can re-shape a city's image although. Boo and Busser (2006) claimed that few studies have empirically examined the role of festivals in destination image improvement and call for longitudinal research on this question. Derrett (2003) noted that residents have also been central in the research that has explored how festivals and events are associated with enhanced community wellbeing, improved social cohesion, enhanced pride in place, building of community cohesion and identity, all of which have been investigated in festival and event settings. Garcia (2004) mentioned that large events have come to be seen as catalysts for urban regeneration. Hallas cited by Getz (2010) said that governments have different strategies to finance the festivals mainly by entrepreneurship, investments, incentives, and subsidies. They also play an important role at a planning level by regulating and coordinating the efforts with the local actors. The monetary intervention made by government bodies is returned in most of the cases as taxes but the people are also beneficiaries of the improvement of the infrastructures made because of the needs of the festival this improvement is greater in cases where festivals are considered hallmarks, mega events or institutions to the local community. Sometimes there is a great investment made by the public sector, but always with the aim of

getting higher revenues or benefits back, both in the economic and social sides.

According to Quinn (2006), festivals create a demand of arts in the local destination at the same time animating the local life, and sometimes help enhance the self-image of the local population. Domingo (1996) found that the respondents in his study about the ‘Ati-atihan’ festival believed that the festival had an impact on the economy of the town by bringing about the expansion and improvement of local products and in increasing the economic activity in the town. Furthermore, it had an impact on the tourism industry by attracting tourists both locally and internationally. Usually, events have positive economic impacts that facilitate the development of the area by increasing tourist demand and consequently, the increase of cash flow; however, the concept of social sustainability is often forgotten. According to Boo and Busser (2006), festivals cause major impacts on the local community and that these events have important economic impact, where tourists’ expenditures increase significantly compared to the periods where no festivals are available on the destination, mainly because it also increases the number of visitors to the particular area. Park (2002) mentioned in his study that festivals have always been well attended and thus have brought about significant economic profit. Business and tourism are not the only industry fields, which benefit from festivals, but the host cities and municipalities themselves benefit. A festival demands infrastructure, such as transportation, accommodation, stadiums, and necessary construction. Public facilities improve the quality of residents’ lives in the host community.

Ritchie (1984), economic impact is the most common at the time of evaluating the success or failure of particular event. Special importance is addressed to the economical aspect since it is the most evident impact affecting the local community in terms of creation of local employment or increased revenues, and it is an important factor related to the ability of these events to fight against seasonality. However, it is important to emphasize that not every event has a positive economic impact (Janeczko, Mules & Ritchie, 2002). Dwyer, Mellor, Mistilis & Mules (2001) stated that in some cases, the rise of prices is present on the area where they did not exist before the event, as well as, underutilized infrastructure.

### BAÑAMOS FESTIVAL IN LOS BAÑOS:

Festivals are new to the municipality of Los Baños. The first bañamos festival was celebrated in 2002 in conjunction with the municipality’s foundation day through the efforts of Los Baños Tourism Council headed by Dr. Francisco Peñalba. The local government believed that the municipality was founded on September 17, 1615, through municipal ordinance no. 89-05. However, it was mentioned in the document by Felix de Huerta (1865) that Los Baños did not become a town until 1640.

Los Baños is a municipality of the province of Laguna. In August 2000, it was declared as a special Science and Nature City of the Philippines through Presidential Proclamation No. 349, which recognizes the town as the center for science and technology and for agricultural development and environmental preservation. The municipality is 63 km. south of Manila and situated on the northern slopes of the dormant volcano Mount Makiling and is widely known for its hot springs resorts. It has a total land area of 5,650 hectares and is bordered on the south and southwest by mount Makiling—which dominates the municipality, on the north by Laguna de Bay On the northwest by Calamba City and on the east by the town of Bay. It has 14 Barangays (Barker, 1975)



Figure 1. Map of Los Baños, [http:// googlemaps.com](http://googlemaps.com)

The theme of the festival changes every year but there are events which remain year after year namely the civic parade, the beauty pageant, and the street dance (Maningas, 2014). The festival has been celebrated for more than ten years now but there is no known literature about the festival. There is a need therefore to come up with a study that looks into the nature and characteristics of the Bañamos festival and present and analyze the perceived effects of this festival to the town.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:**

This study aimed to present the impacts of the Bañamos festival to the municipality of Los Baños. It specifically sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the perceived effects of the festival on the economy of Los Baños?
2. What are the perceived effects of the festival on the tourism industry of Los Baños?

**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:**

The researcher adapted the Stakeholder’s Theory approach in studying the Bañamos festival. Freeman (1984, p. 46) defined a stakeholder as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives”. Thus, a group qualifies as a stakeholder if it has a legitimate interest in aspects of the organization’s activities and thus, according to Freeman, has either the power to affect the firm’s performance and/or has a stake in the firm’s performance. To implement the stakeholder theory, the first of Freeman’s (1984) key concepts requires the organization to have a full appreciation of all the persons or groups who have interests in planning, processes, delivery and/or outcomes of the product or service. This process of identifying and classifying stakeholders has led to the development of stakeholder mapping. According to Freeman, the purpose of the stakeholder map is to identify all the ‘generic stakeholders’, that is, those categories of groups who can affect the organization as well as their perceived stakes.

In the Philippines, Calopez et al., (2011) and his study “The Ati-Atihan Festival: Its Impact to the Economy and Tourism Industry in Kalibo, Aklan” aimed to assess the impact of the Ati-Atihan festival to the municipality of Kalibo, Aklan, by using the stakeholders theory although Calopez did not mention the stakeholders theory directly. The stakeholders in his study are the residents or locals, businessmen and local government officials all of which are the same stakeholders and same areas that the researcher of this study used and looked into that is why this study was highly influenced by the study of Calopez et al., (2011).

In relation to this study, the stakeholders are the festival organizers and the barangay officials are the facilitators. The businessmen can be considered as the allies and collaborators and/or co-producer and the participants as the impacted and/or co-producer. The respondents can provide their insights on the Bañamos festival. The participants who come from the business sector, the educational institutions, and local Barangay officials are rich sources of information. The other set of respondents are festival organizers who have better knowledge on the objectives, goals, plans and implementation of the festival.

**METHODOLOGY:**

**RESEARCH DESIGN:**

The researcher employed the descriptive method to determine the perceived effects of the festival to the economy and tourism industry of Los Baños. The researcher utilized a survey questionnaire. A one-shot survey was conducted by the researcher to gather pertinent data and was treated using descriptive and inferential statistics. To further enrich the study, the researcher conducted an interview with Dr. Francisco Peñalba and Mr. Maningas, the former considered “father” of the Bañamos festival, and tourism council consultant during the inaugural Bañamos festival and the latter the current tourism officer of the municipality.

**SAMPLING DESIGN:**

The researcher made use of a non-purposive convenience sampling in obtaining the participants in this study. This was done to determine the perceptions of the respondents on the impact of the Bañamos festival to the municipality of Los Banos. In obtaining the respondents of this study criteria were set. The respondents of this research are the participants who should have at least participated and/or watched the festival for at least 2 times, organizers of the festival, local businessmen and local government officials.

**PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS:**

Based on gender, majority of the respondents were male. There were 20 (62.50%) males and 12 females (37.50%)

**Table 1: Respondent’s Profile on Age**

Category	No. of respondents	Percentage
17 years old and below	2	6.25%
18-25 years old	15	46.88%
26-35 years old	10	31.25%
36-50 years old	4	12.63%
51 years old and above	1	3.13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	

According to age, majority of the respondents came from the age bracket 26-35 years old followed by the age bracket 18-25 years old. This shows that majority of the respondents of the study who participated in the festival were the young adults.

According to occupation, majority of the respondents were employed. The start of the festival is September 17 of every year. Ever since the inaugural Bañamos festival, September 17 was an official local holiday that is why those who are employed are able to participate in the events of the festival.

Further categorization of the respondents reveals that there were three businessmen, 15 local people, 12 participants, and two barangay officials

**RESEARCH INSTRUMENT:**

The researcher adapted the survey instrument by Calopez et al., (2012).The survey questionnaire was later modified by the researcher and validated by an expert. It consisted of two parts: the first part of the questionnaire was about the demographic profile of the respondents, the second part dealt with the impact of the festival. The first part of the questionnaire dwelt on information on the occupational status, civil status, gender, age, monthly income, and the participation in the Bañamos festival were included. The second part of the questionnaire contained different items such as items regarding the economic and tourism impact of the festival. The instrument was a combination of likert questions with *strongly disagree* as the lowest, *strongly agree* as the highest and *not sure* as neutral. The items were evaluated on a five-point likert scale. Other variables of the questionnaire were answerable by *not at all* having a value of 1 and *very much* having a value of 5 and a one yes or no question and an open-ended question. The data on the accomplished survey forms were statistically treated by the researcher using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences or SPSS software which was later validated by a statistician.

**DATA GATHERING PROCEDURE:**

Upon validation of the said instrument and the approval of the municipal mayor, the researcher visited the Los Baños municipal hall to personally conduct the survey to the Bañamos Festival organizers and other officials involved in the festival. In addition, an interview was also conducted by the researcher with the late Dr. Francisco Peñalba, who was the tourism officer/adviser to Mayor Caesar Perez, the mayor during the inaugural Bañamos festival and the current tourism officer of the municipality, Mr.Maningas. Dr.Peñalba is known to be the “Father of Bañamos Festival” in recognition for his efforts in conceptualizing the said festival. The interview with Dr.Peñalba was done using a voice recorder and was transcribed by the researcher.

The researcher also went to some local establishments to conduct the survey with the business owners. In the case of the festival participants, the researcher asked his students, co-workers, colleagues and relatives who reside in Los Baños, if they had participated in any of the events of the Bañamos Festival. Those who did were asked to answer the survey. In answering the questionnaire the researcher assisted the respondents one by one, he explained in Filipino the items that needed to be answered and even the possible responses were explained in Filipino.

**DATA ANALYSIS:**

The demographic profile was tabulated using frequency counts. Content analysis of the interview was done to identify what is the Bañamos festival and why was it implemented in Los Baños. Descriptive analysis was applied on the perceived effects of the festival on the economy, tourism industry of the municipality. The

respondents' views were compiled and summarized. The data on the survey was summarized in tables and frequencies. Statistical test was done using SPSS.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:  
LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:**

The study had its limitations. First, there is no known data from the festival organizers that concretely shows the festival's effect on the economy and tourism industry of Los Baños. That is why the researcher used the perception of the participants of the festival in determining the effects on the economy and tourism industry of Los Baños. Second, although the researcher was able to interview the considered father of the festival, any additional information from the source is no longer viable because, Mr.Peñalba passed away a couple of months after the researcher conducted his interview. Third, the method of choosing the respondents of the study, data gathering was done not during the actual celebration of the festival. Lastly, the study only focused on the economic and tourism impact of the festival in the municipality of Los Baños. Therefore, reapplication of the study on the actual celebration of the festival and adding more areas under the social sciences can be done in the future

**Research Problem No. 1: Perceived Effects of the Festival on the Economy of Los Baños**

Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage of the responses of the respondents on the perceived effect of the festival on the economic activity of Los Baños.

**Table 2: Perceived Effects of the Festival on the Economic Activity of Los Baños**

Perceived effects	Strongly Agree		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	raw	%	raw	%	Raw	%	raw	%	raw	%
1.) Added income for the hotel and restaurant industry	1	3 %	3	9%	21	66%	6	9%	1	3%
2.)Current and New Businesses Support the festival	0	0%	25	78%	7	22%	0	0%	0	0%
3.)Income Opportunities for the Residents	0	0%	25	81%	6	19%	0	0%	0	0%
4.)Job Opportunities for the Locals	0	0%	30	94%	2	6%	0	0%	0	0%
5.)Increase in the Sales of Local Products and Services	0	0%	27	84%	5	16%	0	0%	0	0%
6.)Increase in investments for locally Produced Products	0	0%	31	97%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%
7.)Businesses have Increased Sales and Capital Because of the Festival	0	0%	26	81%	6	19%	0	0%	0	0%
8.)Entrepreneurs Earn More During the Celebration	0	0%	23	72%	8	25%	1	3%	0	0%

**Total no. of respondents: 32**

Data shows that there are seven perceived effects of the festival that led to an increase in the economic activity of the municipality were noted by the respondents of this study. First, majority (97%) of the respondents agreed that because of the festival there was an increase in investments of locally produced products. One event of the festival aimed to showcase the products unique to the municipality. The respondents believed that there was an increase in the investments of locally produced products. Second, 94% of the respondents agreed that the festival provided job opportunities and additional job opportunities for dance choreographers for the street dance, trainers for the beauty pageant, additional staff for the maintenance of the cleanliness of the venues for the events to be held during the festival and safety martials in the venues of the different events of the festival. These are job opportunities available during the celebration of the festival. Third, 84% of the respondents agreed that because of the festival, local businesses were able to increase their sales and capital, meaning

businessmen were willing to increase their capital because of the festival and because of the festival their sales increased by attracting people to come out of their homes and join the events of the festival or by attracting people from outside the municipality and come to the municipality.

Fourth, 81% of the respondents agreed that the festival provided an opportunity for the residents to earn. The respondents saw the festival as an opportunity for the local people to earn. The festival showcased local products and this was seen as an added opportunity for the local people to earn during the festival. In addition during the events, locals operated small stalls near the venue of the events. Fifth, 81% of the respondents agreed that because of the festival, there was an increase in the sales of local products and services. The festival brought people to Los Baños and because of that the sales of local products and services increased. Sixth, 78% of the respondents agreed that the festival was supported by current and new businesses as one of the strategies of the organizers of the festival to ensure the success of the festival. For the local government to save on funds it asked for sponsorships for the different events of the festivals by tapping the local business establishments for sponsorships; thus, the local businesses support the festival and in return the organizers of the festivals market the businesses that support the events. Seventh, 72% of the respondents agreed that because of the festivals entrepreneurs could earn more when their products were featured or showcased in the events of the festival when people come to Los Baños. The entrepreneurs earn more or there is a potential of more people buying their products.

**Research Problem No. 2: Perceived Effects of the Bañamos festival on the Tourism Industry of Los Baños:**

Table 3 shows in frequency and percentage, the perceived effects of the Bañamos festival on the tourism industry of Los Baños.

**Table 3: Perceived Effects of the Festival on the Tourism Industry of Los Baños**

Perceived effects	Strongly Agree		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	raw	%	raw	%	raw	%	raw	%	raw	%
1)Increase of the Variety of Entertainment in the Municipality	10	31%	21	66%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%
2)Improvement in the Infrastructures and Local Facilities	0	0%	20	63%	12	38%	0	0%	0	0%
3)Promotion of Los Baños as a Center of Tourism	5	16%	27	84%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
4)Improved Relationship between the Tourism Office and Department of Tourism	2	6%	22	69%	8	25%	0	0%	0	0%
5)Worldwide Promotion of the Festival	1	3%	21	66%	10	31%	0	0%	0	0%
6)Increase of Tourists in Los Baños (Local and/or Foreign)	1	3%	27	84%	4	13%	0	0%	0	0%
7)Organizers of the Festival Make Sure that there are enough Facilities to Accommodate the Tourists	1	3%	7	22%	15	47%	9	28%	0	0%
8)Festival Serves as a Venue for the Locals to Showcase their Talents	18	56%	10	31%	3	9%	1	3%	0	0%

Total no. of respondents: 32

Table 3 shows that there are seven perceived effects of the festival on the tourism industry of Los Baños. First, the respondents strongly agreed that the festival was a venue for the locals to showcase their talents and serve as

attraction for tourists to come to the municipality since the events of the festival included the participation of the locals such as the street dance, beauty pageant, battle of the bands and dance competition. Second, the respondents strongly agreed that because of the festival there was an increase on the variety of entertainment in the municipality. Because of the different events of the festival, more entertainment options became available in the municipality. One reason why tourists visit a place is to be entertained and because of the festival, Los Baños has provided more entertainment and the more variety of entertainment, the more chances of tourists coming to Los Baños. Third, the respondents agreed that the festival helped in the promotion of Los Baños as a center of tourism. The festival is an alternative to make people come to the municipality since one of the main aims of the festival is to promote the tourism industry of the municipality. Fourth, the respondents agreed that the festival brought tourists to Los Baños although there was no concrete way of measuring this perception but according to the assessment of one of the organizers, the festival brings every year an additional 80,000 to 100,000 people to the municipality. Fifth, the tourism office coordinates with the department of tourism office to promote the festival or to let people know about the festival this can be proven through the official website of the department of tourism, the Bañamos festival is in the official list of festival in the Philippines featured in the official website of the department of tourism. Sixth, the respondents agreed that the organizers of the festival used the World Wide Web to promote the festival to other people that could be seen in the official website of Laguna and Los Baños and the festival was also featured in different websites about festivals in the country. Seventh, the respondents agreed that there was an improvement in the infrastructures and local facilities during the festival. As seen by the respondents, during the festival, stages and arcs were setup. Beautification of the parks and improvement of the highway were observed during the festival.

#### CONCLUSION:

**Based on the above findings, the following conclusions are made:**

The respondents believed that the Bañamos festival had an impact on the tourism industry of Los Baños in that the festival was a venue to showcase the talents of the local people, not to mention the increase in entertainment that was observed in the municipality of Los Baños. The festival itself has also helped Los Baños in becoming a tourism center.

With regards to economic impact, the respondents believed that the festival had an impact on the economy of Los Baños particularly the festival in helped increased the investments of locally produced products, providing job opportunities for the residents of Los Baños, and increasing the sales and capital of the local businesses.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

**In light of the foregoing conclusions, the following recommendations are given:**

It should be understood that with such a positive outlook by the respondents, the organizers of the festival should be able to sustain the celebration of the Bañamos festival by incorporating new and innovative ideas and activities in the coming years. Increased awareness among the youth should be in the forefront as they would be the heirs of the cultural traditions and practices that had been revived and enriched in the locality.

This study maybe used by others who are engaged with the study of social sciences in doing their related studies. The Bañamos festival is just a specific event, even if you remove the Bañamos festival and applied this study in another, for example festival, the means of this study will still be very useful. Moreover, even if the event is not a festival, the methodology of this study may be used by others who are engaged in the same field. With the results of this study, the researcher will be able to help the local government of Los Banos to determine if the festival affects and economy especially the tourism industry.

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