

PROPOSED TOURISM STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF GENERAL MARIANO ALVAREZ

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Abstract: The study, Proposed Strategic Action Plan for the Municipality of General Mariano Alvarez, assessed the resources found in the municipality and created an action plan that would open the opportunity for development in the area. The researchers identified that the area lacked in strategic action plan that will help boost tourism in the area. The study was important as it helped aid the growth of the city by mapping and assessing its attractions that helped create a strategic action plan. The concept used was the standard symbols provided in the DOT-JICA Guidebook on evaluation tool for tourism attraction and sites as its concept (Cruz, 2014). This concept was effective in this study as it provided a guide in assessing and mapping the different attractions in the Municipality of GMA. For the methodology, the research design used was Descriptive Qualitative Research, specifically; Expert Sampling that helped determined the expert's views and opinion about the study. The researchers made use of the Observational Checklist from the DOT-JICA Guidebook on evaluation tool for tourism attraction and sites. The analytical method used is Deductive Data Analysis furthermore the researchers concluded that GMA has 3 major tourism resources. The data gathered helped to determine the current status of the known tourism sites; based on these findings the researchers came up with a Strategic Action Plan that will help to promote and develop the attraction sites in its full potential. The researchers concluded that the Municipality of General Mariano Alvarez had three tourism resources which were festivals, feasts and products. The resources listed below were based on the data gathered at the municipality of GMA.

Keywords: tourism circuit, festival, tourism products, feast, tourism attractions.

1. INTRODUCTION

This study, Proposed Strategic Action Plan for the Municipality of General Mariano Alvarez, assessed the tourism resources in the area that helped create a strategic plan that helped GMA grow in terms of socio-economic data, infrastructure, land use, tourist attractions, visitors, and existing programs. GMA was a small town that was filled with rich culture and history but tourism in the area was low due to the absence of tourist attraction. The researchers

Identified that the area lacked in strategic action plan that would help boost tourism in the area. The study was important as it helped aid the growth of the city by mapping and assessing its attractions that helped create a strategic action plan.

According to Palafox, Jr. (2018). Tourism brings in tremendous benefits in terms of economic stability, especially for small islands and provinces. With the Philippines being an archipelago, many of our islands rely on tourism for livelihood.

Tourism is a growth industry, offering communities of all shapes and sizes a unique development of opportunity according to Binns and Nel (2002). The promotion of tourism in South Africa has been identified as a key strategy that can lead to economic upliftment, community development and poverty relief in the developing world.

Another study by Angeles and Antonio (2018) showed that developing the municipality of Silang as a tourism destination will generate jobs and profit for the local livelihood. It can provide needed development strategies for the city and also other municipalities or areas that are still undeveloped or not developed at all.

The Municipality of General Mariano Alvarez (GMA), the youngest town in the Province of Cavite, was formerly one of the barangays of the Municipality of Carmona. The municipality has been named after General Mariano Alvarez, one of the revolutionary generals who hailed from the town of Noveleta. (gmacavite.ph, 2020)

General Mariano Alvarez has a total land area of 962 hectares, more or less, as per “Batasang Pambansa Bilang 76” dated June 13, 1980, which created the municipality. These areas are currently occupied by twenty-seven barangays of which five are considered Poblacion barangays and twenty-two others are regular barangays. The Municipality of General Mariano Alvarez (GMA) is geographically located at the north-eastern boundaries of Cavite Province with Laguna Province. It is bounded on the

north by the Municipality of San Pedro, Laguna on the east by the Municipality of Carmona, on the west by the Municipality of Dasmarinas and on the south by the Municipality of Silang. General Mariano Alvarez is approximately forty-two kilometres south of the City of Manila, the premier city of the country and seventeen kilometres east of Trece Martirez City, the capital of the province. It is also approximate to the National Capital Region (NCR) of Metro Manila, the primate region of the country.

As time goes by General Mariano Alvarez continued to grow, not only in their services but also in terms of its fiscal and cultural clauses. Tourism can was considered as one of GMA’s sources of income after it was developed and promoted continually; knowing GMA’s identity helped prosper and attract global market while trading with them. Also, having an identity aided it to be distinct and unique, through it the city was promoted in a right way; such places like Tagaytay which is considered as the second summer capital of the Philippines and Roxas City as the seafood capital of the Philippines.

It cannot be denied that the Municipality of GMA played an important role in promoting of the City and helped with innovation of ideas for the continuous development of the tourism industry in the place. As Leonard and Jenkins (2007) have said; there is considerable debate about the role of government in the tourism industry. One proposition is that, in most developed countries, government has tended to play the role of supporting tourism development, as mentioned above, by providing infrastructure and a representative national tourism authority.

The study was unique because of its contribution to the complete growth and development of the Municipality of General Mariano Alvarez and its tourism industry by building its own brand value, image and identity.

City image construction is not only the new way of thinking and new method of developing economy and improving the soft environment of investment in a city, but also the important means to promote the development of district tourism (Xia Xue Ying, 2005) Thus, it is important to know a City’s identity as it provides a harmony between the constant and changing elements such as its people and events; which was integrated by a reciprocal link that made GMA stand out and be extraordinary.

2. LEGAL BASIS

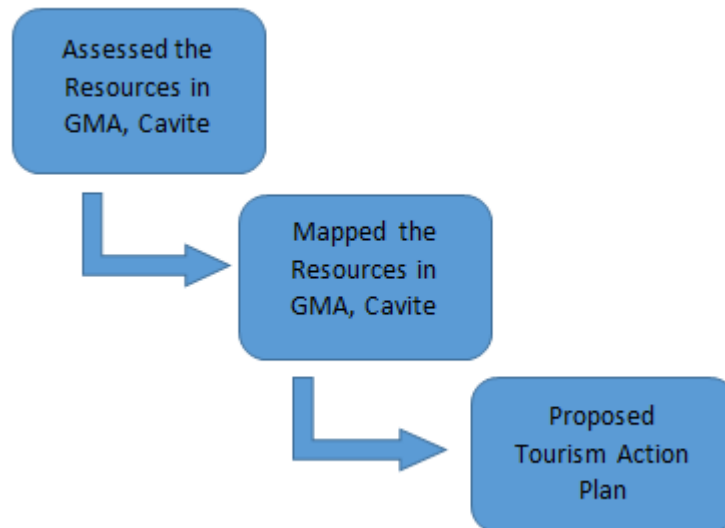
PRESIDENTIAL DECREE No. 564 October 2, 1974. Aim of the government to promote Philippine tourism and work for its accelerated and balanced growth as well as for the economy and expediency in the development of the tourism of the country.

SECTION 34. Tourism Infrastructure Program. – The Department, in accordance with the National Tourism Development Plan and local government initiatives, shall coordinate with the Department of Public Works and Highways and the Department of Transportation and Communications in the establishment of a tourism infrastructure program in the respective work programs of said agencies, identifying therein vital access roads, airports, seaports and other infrastructure requirement in identified tourism areas. The said agencies and the DBM shall accord priority status to the funding of this tourism infrastructure program. (tourism.gov.ph, 2010)

The study used the standard symbols provided in the DOT-JICA Guidebook on evaluation tool for tourism attraction and sites as its concept (Cruz, 2014). This concept was effective in this study as it provided a guide in assessing and mapping the different attractions in the Municipality of GMA.

RESEARCH PARADIGM

The figure showed the researchers paradigm consist of three stages. In stage 1, the researchers conducted an observation checklist assessment of the resources in GMA, Cavite. In the second stage, the researchers mapped the resources in GMA by using its photographic map. Lastly, is the proposed tourism strategic action plan?



This study examined the tourism attractions in General Mariano Alvarez, Cavite. Furthermore, this study sought answer to the following:

1. How did the respondents evaluate the tourist appeal criteria of the following categories of attractions in GMA, Cavite? In terms of:
 - a. Festivals
 - b. Feast
 - c. Products
2. How did the researchers mapped the tourism attractions in General Mariano Alvarez, Cavite?
3. What was the proposed strategic action plan?

3. METHODOLOGY

The study used qualitative, specifically, descriptive qualitative research. The researchers decided to apply non-probability sampling, specifically, purposive expert sampling. The researchers gathered information and knowledge from the individuals that have comprehensive authoritative knowledge or skill on a particular area or expertise. The respondents were identified experts by the researchers, which were the following:

1. Local Government Unit Employees
2. Government unit that concerns Tourism

There were 10 respondents for the study which the researchers determined as the sample size. The respondents were homogenous.

The sampling method was appropriate for this study because it determined the expert's views and opinions about the study, which was the major source of information that was needed to be gathered. The respondents met at least 2 criteria:

- A. The respondents must have a 3-year residency in GMA or currently working in by the supervision of the Municipality of General Mariano Alvarez.
- B. Must be Knowledgeable of the operations and implications of programs in the town.

C. Knowledgeable with the existing plans and programs in GMA.

The researchers used observational checklist. The inventory of tourism attractions and also the lists of establishments were taken from the Municipality of GMA. Observational Checklist was derived from the technique as an evaluation tool for tourism attractions and sites of the book Tourism Planning and Development by Reil Cruz.

For the data collection the researchers utilized the observational checklist. All the data required in the checklist was based on the tourism attraction of General Mariano Alvarez, Cavite found in their official website. For the data gathering process, there was an observational checklist given to the respondents for them to answer. The researchers personally went to the offices of the respondents.

Ethical considerations can be specified as one of the most important parts of the research. The study required handing out checklist in the Municipality Hall of GMA. In order to address the ethical considerations aspect of the study in an effective manner, the researchers provided letter of consent to the respondents and ask for approval.

The study used content validity. The research study was validated by the researcher's thesis adviser, Dr. Jimford Tabuyo, a professional in the Tourism Industry.

Data gathering started on the second week of January. The researchers conducted the data gathering during the weekdays which was the operating days of the municipality of GMA. The availability of the researchers and respondents also affected the schedule for survey answering.

The study used Deductive Data Analysis. After the results were analyzed, the researchers assessed, map and proposed a strategic action plan for the Municipality of GMA.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first objective of the study was to find respondents under the local government unit and evaluate the resources found in General Mariano Alvarez. The researchers provided an observational checklist for the respondents as criteria for grading for the gathered resources. The second objective was mapping the resources in General Mariano Alvarez. The following table shows the results of the evaluation of the respondents of the resources in General Mariano Alvarez.

The researchers applied weighted mean and ranking to analyze the result of the gathered data. The observational checklist was checked and approved by the researchers' thesis adviser. Hence, content validity.

Figure 1 shows the different tourism resources found in General Mariano Alvarez, Cavite. "A tourism map conveys information to us about places and it represents a particular way of socially and spatially organizing places of consumptions by tourist and

Non-tourist alike." (Stephen H.&Vincent D.C.,2003)

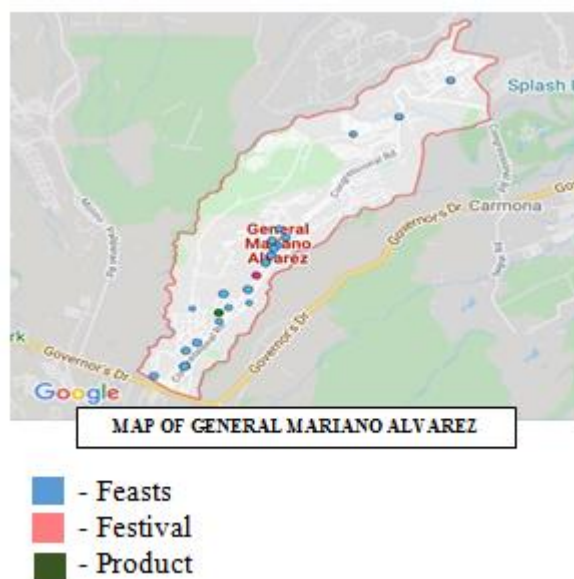


Figure 1: Map of the Tourism Resources in General Mariano Alvarez

Table 1: Feasts

Feasts	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. PanatasaKrus ng Nazareno	2.42	Fair	5
2. Sto. Niño	2.48	Fair	3
3. Holy Family	2.62	Good	2
4. San Sebastian	2.44	Fair	4
5. San Jose Manggagawa	2.66	Good	1
6. Our Lady of Miraculous Medal	2.24	Fair	11
7. Blessed Mary the Passion	2.16	Fair	14
8. Immaculate Conception	2.40	Fair	6
9. Our Mother of Perpetual Help	2.32	Fair	8.5
10. Senior San Roque	2.36	Fair	7.5
11. Peñafrancia	2.30	Fair	9.5
12. San Miguel Arc Angel	2.36	Fair	7.5
13. St. Francis	2.26	Fair	10
14. Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage	2.32	Fair	8.5
15. Virgin the Poor	2.14	Fair	15
16. St. Joseph	2.30	Fair	9.5
17. San Isidro Labrador	2.18	Fair	13
18. San Antonio De Padua	2.22	Fair	12
Total	2.34	Fair	

Legends: 1.00-1.49 Poor, 1.50-2.49 Fair, 2.50-3.49 Good, 3.50-4.00 Excellent

Table 1 showed that San Jose Manggagawa got the highest ranking under feast with the total score of 2.66. Filipinos were one of the most religious people in the world. Celebrating saints had been weaved into Filipino tradition. Historically speaking, Filipino Catholicism was shaped by local indigenous practices, and by the Spaniards who conquered it in the 16th century and ruled it until the early 20th century. “Filipinos stand out for their devotional fervor. Filipino Catholic practice is unusually material and physical, even among Catholic cultures, built especially on devotions to Mary, the suffering Christ, and the Santo Niño (Holy Child), and on powerful celebratory and penitential rituals practiced and experienced in a wide variety of Filipino vernacular forms. Feasts like the Black Nazarene, which draws millions to the streets of Manila in January, the Simbang Gabi novena that precedes Christmas, and the month-long Flores de Mayo offering to Mary illustrate distinctively Filipino forms of devotion.” (www.catholicsandcultures.org, 2019)

Table 2: Festival

Festival	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. Kabutenyo Festival	2.72	Good	1
Total	2.72	Good	

Legends: 1.00-1.49 Poor, 1.50-2.49 Fair, 2.50-3.49 Good, 3.50-4.00 Excellent

Table 2 showed that Kabutenyo Festival scored the highest (2.72), being the only Festival celebrated in the Municipality of General Mariano Alvarez. Despite being the highest, Kabutenyo Festival only scored fair in terms of the transportation and accessibility, which meant that it needed improvement for higher tourist satisfaction. Festivals attract tourist and this create festival tourism. Tourists are attracted by many elements, the most important of which seems to be interesting, sometimes exotic culture, presented during the events (Quinn, 2010). In addition, tourists wanted to attend festivals and events to experience unusual atmosphere, meet different people of similar interests, and learn more about the world.

Table 3: Product

Product	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Cultured Oyster Mushroom	2.72	Good	1
Total	2.72	Good	

Legends: 1.00-1.49 Poor, 1.50-2.49 Fair, 2.50-3.49 Good, 3.50-4.00 Excellent

Table 3 showed that Cultured Oyster Mushroom scored the highest (2.72), being the only product offered in the Municipality of General Mariano Alvarez. Cultured Oyster Mushroom got a fair score in terms of its facilities and service (2.20), and guide signs for tourist (2.40) which meant that there were still room for improvement in GMA's product. In support of DTI's One Town One Product (OTOP), General Mariano Alvarez decided to focus on their Cultured Oyster Mushroom to attract more visitors into their town. According to the Department of Trade and Industry (2004) "The One Town, One Product is a priority program of the government to promote entrepreneurship and create jobs. Through OTOP, local chief executives of each city and municipality take the lead in identifying, developing, and promoting a specific product or service, which has a competitive advantage."

5. CONCLUSION

The researchers concluded that the Municipality of General Mariano Alvarez had three tourism resources which were festivals, feasts and products. The resources listed above were based on the data gathered at the municipality of GMA.

These tourism resources were evaluated by respondents through observation checklist. Tourism attraction sites were graded individually based on different categories. The study supported the growth of the sites in Municipality of GMA that were insufficient of promotional strategies and developments to fulfil its potential to be a known tourism destination.

As mentioned above GMA had 3 major resources in terms of Tourism, they have various feasts in every Barangay to be exact they have 19 feasts; sadly, they only have one festival and one product. Though they may have different feasts, only two of them were rated to be good nonetheless Kabutenyo Festival and their product are much known this was proven by the amount of advertisement that the feast and product had received, when it came to festival and the city's product; the findings were good, this meant that they delivered great tourist experience and took great effort to please their visitors. Even so, there are always room for improvement. Other than that, the researchers came up with a strategic action plan. This plan could be adapted by the municipality and other municipality as well. The SAP would help in the constant progress of the attraction sites and its future plan for expansion. As Gunn (1988) has expressed strategic planning is predicting and "it requires some estimated perception of the future. Absence of planning of short-range planning that does not anticipate a future can result in serious malfunctions and inefficiencies".

The researchers mapped the resources of GMA based on the data that they have gathered in the municipality; they developed a circuit map for each tourism resources. To further expand the study, the researchers suggested finding or adding another aspect of tourism resource in GMA. Tourism isn't composed of beautiful places only; it can be the place's culture, history, food, and its people. For example, GMA could promote their place by famous celebrities that came from GMA. And lastly, to assess their tourism attraction sites in order to pinpoint the issues and know how it will be approached; Also, to innovate new ways to promote and develop the municipality of GMA. According to Martins (2018) the government should play a key role in tourism planning and development. They should participate actively in all stages of the planning development and implementation, including participation in the resources' assessment, in the identification of problems, and in the definition of actions to resolve and prevent problems. In addition, future researchers can add more respondents since the researchers have 10 respondents only; this study was also limited to generalize because it used expert sampling. Furthermore, this study helped aid on attraction sites, place, and or municipality that are under develop or not developed at all.

Proposed Strategic Action Plan

The researchers came up with these circuits that provided tourists an organized and satisfying tour of General Mariano Alvarez. These circuits enumerated the different feasts, festivals and product that the municipality could offer.

These circuits had four sub tourism that provided choices to tourist and potential visitors in accordance to their interests. The circuits were identified according to its color: (Green) For Products "Kabute" or Mushroom. (Pink) For Festival such as "Kabutenyo Festival" or Mushroom Festival. (Blue) for Feast of each barangay in Municipality of GMA.



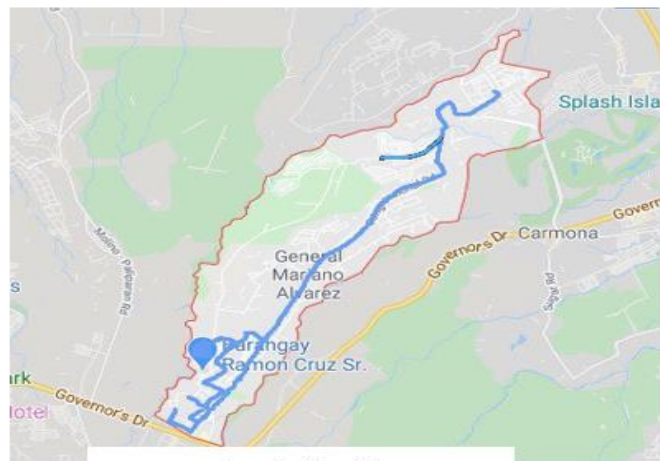
- - Festival
- - Feasts
- - Product



Festival



Product



Using that data the researchers developed a circuit map of the three tourism resources that Municipality have which are feasts, festivals and product.

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