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Socio-cultural Aspects of Heritage Tourism that Attracts Tourists and Travelers to Visit Taal, Batangas, Philippines

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Abstract

This study determines and analyzes the socio-cultural aspects of heritage tourism that attracts tourists and travelers to visit Taal Heritage Town in Batangas, Philippines. It is a descriptive-survey type of research participated by 346 Taal visitors. The respondents assessed and expressed their agreement or disagreement on each statement presented regarding Taal's identity or distinctiveness, traditions and festivities, and its people's traits or characteristics. The gathered data were statistically analyzed using the SPSS. Results show that tourists and travelers visit Taal Heritage Town because it is known for *Barong Tagalog* (national costume of male Filipinos) and gowns with *burdang Taal* (embroidery), well-preserved ancestral houses and historical sites, *balisong* knives, and the Basilica of St.

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Martin of Tours, along with food products and delicacies like *tapa*, *longanisa*, *empanada*, *tawilis* and *panutsa* that can be bought in the place. Further, visitors like Taal because of its exceptional traditions and festivities such as *Mutya ng Taal*, *El Pasubat* Festival, devotion to Our Lady of Caysasay, recitation of *luwa* (chant) to honour the Virgin Mary and the saints, and water fetching and drinking from the miraculous Well of Sta. Lucia; and also because Taaleños are kind and hospitable, responsive and cooperative, humble but proud of their part in Philippine history, and with good oral communication skills, aside from being predominantly devoted Catholics Christians.

Typical visitors to Taal Heritage Town are male and female Filipino young adults who had at least high school education and had visited Taal more than once or twice. Tests of differences further reveal that the older the visitors, the more they are attracted to visit the town and to appreciate its heritage tourism; females like or appreciate Taal's traditions and festivities more than the males do; high school graduates like or appreciate the distinctiveness of Taal less than those who had higher, and even those who had lower, level of educational attainment; Filipinos like or appreciate Taal's traditions and festivities more than foreigners do while foreigners like or appreciate Taaleños traits or characteristics more than fellow Filipinos do; and the higher the frequency of visits to Taal, the more they like or appreciate the town. It is recommended that the town and people of Taal should continue to preserve their heritage sites and houses, produce unique products, practice exceptional traditions and festivities, and exhibit good traits or characteristics to attract more tourists and travelers of the present and succeeding generations; to make more efforts to promote Taal heritage tourism to different age groups, especially to old age or senior citizens, and to different nationalities; and to give more emphasis on information dissemination regarding Taal's traditions and festivities for such to be understood and more appreciated by tourists and travelers, especially by males and foreigners.

Keywords: ancestral or heritage houses; cultural heritage; heritage sites; heritage tourism; socio-cultural attractions; Taal Heritage Town

1. Introduction

One of the main reasons why people travel is to have new experiences. Many tourists are looking to experience the culture of people in the place they want to visit. It is now a given fact that most communities around the world are heading to showcase their cultural attractions and cultural identities.

Cultural attractions play an important role in tourism at all levels, from the global highlights of world culture to attractions that underpin local identities [1]. These attractions lure visitors who want to experience the places and activities that represent the stories and people of the past and the present. The cultural heritage experience is a broad one: from sites, buildings and artefacts to people's values, attitudes and ways of life including food, clothing, handicrafts, dance and events [2].

Because of people's inclination to seek out traditional cultures, heritage tourism has become a major area of tourism demand, which almost all policy-makers are aware of and anxious to develop. Heritage tourism, as a part of the broader category of cultural tourism, is now a major pillar of the emerging tourism strategy of many

countries. These tourism strategies in various countries have in common that they are a major growth area, that they can be used to boost local culture, and that they can aid the seasonal and geographic spread of tourism [1].

Heritage tourism is important for various reasons: it has a positive economic and social impact, it establishes and reinforces identity, it helps preserve the cultural heritage, with culture as an instrument it facilitates harmony and understanding among people, it supports culture and helps renew tourism [1]. This tourism has a number of objectives that must be met within the context of sustainable development such as the conservation of cultural resources, accurate interpretation of resources, authentic visitors' experience and the stimulation of the earned revenues of cultural resources. Therefore, this is not only concerned with identification, management and protection of the heritage values but it must also be involved in understanding the impact of tourism on communities, achieving economic and social benefits, providing financial resources for protection, as well as marketing and promotion [3].

The popularity of heritage tourism proves to be a sign of the widening appreciation of the diversity of global cultures, history and traditions. All over the world, heritage tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors of tourism as a whole. However, it is worth mentioning that the tourism industry benefits a country and society at large beyond monetary gain as perceived by business people and the general public. As heritage facilitates cohesion and understanding among a certain group of people, heritage tourism helps reinforce identity through the preservation of cultural heritage. With the growing popularity of heritage tourism, however, some of its negative repercussions have been observed as well. Environmental degradation and loss of traditions and habits have been documented, making the preservation and proper management of cultural heritage not only important but also extremely imperative. Tourism must not destroy the very heritage that attracts visitors in the first place [2].

With a number of prominent World Heritage Sites in the region, and the overall vibrancy of its cultures, traditions and histories, Southeast Asia is no doubt one of the top heritage destinations in the world. As an industry, heritage tourism keeps raking in income, provide jobs, stimulate sub-industries, and develop infrastructure, among other economic contributions to the countries in the region. Beyond these monetary benefits, however, some consequences of heritage tourism are considered counter-productive. It is criticized for destroying the very resource that attracts tourists, to begin with. Some of the negative effects cited are: sites are reaching over-capacity, culture is commodified and communities are being left out in managing their own heritage. Thus, there is a strong demand for heritage tourism to be managed sustainably and with sensitivity to the local community's values and goals. The overall picture does not look grim, though. There is a wealth of examples of stakeholders innovatively managing their heritage resources, with emphasis on balancing the commercial, economic, and social benefits of tourism [4].

The challenge now is to align heritage tourism with the goals of sustainable development. This involves the conservation of cultural resources, accurate interpretation of heritage, and sensitive and responsible ways of revenue generation. The impact of heritage tourism, not only on the actual sites themselves but the local people as well, should also be a key focus of stakeholders. With the myriad of considerations involved in heritage tourism, the challenge for those involved in this sector is to appreciate the needs of the local community and the

principles of wise-use of heritage. To achieve a balance between income-generation, sound management of heritage sites and cultural spaces, and community involvement in heritage tourism, the collaboration of all stakeholders is paramount [2].

1.1. Background of the study

The Philippines has two known heritage tourism villages: the first and more popular is the Heritage City of Vigan in the Ilocos Region, north of the Capital City of Manila; and the second is the Taal Heritage Town in the Southern Tagalog – Calabarzon Region, south of Manila.

Taal is a second class municipality in the Province of Batangas. According to the latest census, it has a population of 51,459 people in 8,451 households. It is dubbed as the *Balisong and Barong Tagalog Capital of the Philippines* [5]. It is a town with a glorious historical past. During the struggle for freedom, Taal was the stage where great men and women plotted and played out their various roles in pursuit of independence and national identity. The town has well-preserved and magnificent colonial-era houses and boasts of what can be called ecclesiastical heritage sites, e.g. the Basilica of St. Martin de Tours, the Shrine of Our Lady of Caysasay, and the ruins of an old Taal church [6].

Taal had aimed to tell the world its story and to showcase its century-old houses to visitors. A group of Taaleños (people of Taal) formed the Taal Active Alliance League (TAAL), which aims to showcase Taal's historical and architectural treasures. The league is comprised of committees on tourism, cultural mapping, a citizen watchdog, a technical working group, legal, finance and special projects, and media relations, and a secretariat. With the Heritage City of Vigan as its model, their project is to restore Taal to its rightful place in Philippine history. The ultimate aim is to once again transform Taal into a quaint, interesting town with many historical sites and insights to offer to students and local tourists and giving the Filipinos a glimpse of their own proud history [6].

As a heritage village destination, Taal reigns as one of the most culturally preserved sites of the country's four-century Spanish and forty-year American colonial eras. Visitors to Taal may have a whole day experience that will bring them back to the 1880s up to the 1950s. Tour packages usually include a tour of ancestral houses that are now transformed into museums, art galleries, gift shops, coffee shops or accommodation establishments. Some of these were homes of historical figures like Felipe Agoncillo, the first Filipino diplomat; Marcela Mariño de Agoncillo, maker of the first Philippine national flag; Galicano Apacible, patriot and propagandist; and Gliceria Marella de Villavicencio, godmother of the Philippine Revolution, among others. Each of these ancestral homes evokes its own sense of history, culture, tradition, and the arts [7].

A visit to the town of Taal is an experience that takes one to a Spanish colonial town in the early 17th to early 20th century in the Philippines. The town has enough traces of a rich cultural heritage of an illustrious past which has been preserved despite the pressures of modernization that has overtaken other towns in the country. The magnificent Basilica of St. Martin of Tours and the numerous Spanish era houses all over the town, for instance, are living markers of its rich cultural grandeur. It also holds a prestigious place in Philippine history with many of its prominent townfolk contributing to the success of the revolution against Spain. Although Taaleños were

prominently involved in the rebellion to gain independence against Spain from 1896-1898, the town itself remained intact [8].

The Taal heritage houses serve as concrete proofs of the rich cultural heritage passed on from one generation to succeeding generations. These include Marcella Agoncillo Museum, Gregorio Agoncillo Mansion, Goco House, Don Apacible Museum, Villa Tortuga, Villa Severina, Estacio Ancestral House, Orosa House, Galleria Taal, Casa Dela Rosa, Villavicencio House, Ylagan-Dela Rosa House, Casa Ofelia, La Casa de Dimaano, Casa Conchita, Villavicencio Wedding Gift House, Okada-Barrion Salazar House, Casa Punzalan, Cabrera House, Gen. Ananias Diokno House, Casa Gahol, Dela Vega House, Taaleñas Antique Shop, and Bazaar de Taal. Other sites that tourists need to discover and explore in Taal are the following: Our Lady of Caysasay Shrine, Old Taal Church Ruins, Escuela Pia, Well of Sta. Lucia, Balay Hilot, Casa Real (Municipal Hall) and MGM Farms [9].

Tourists may be delighted with Taaleño's recital of a traditional *luwa*, a declamation in the vernacular (Tagalog) as prayer or tribute to the saints. They will be guided inside and around Asia's largest Catholic Church, the Basilica de San Martin de Tours which was originally built in 1575, destroyed by volcanic eruption and earthquake, and then rebuilt in 1856. Although grandiose in Baroque design, the Basilica's interior has a very simple fusion of styles and combination of patriotic, religious and artistic influences. At its bell tower, tourists can have a good view of Taal Lake and Taal Volcano [7].

Another tourist attraction in the heritage town is the EL PASUBAT Festival, which is celebrated annually during the month of April and is the conglomeration of the trademarks of Taal. *EL PASUBAT* stands for *empanada* (small pie with chicken, pork or vegetable filling), *longganisa* (sausage made of ground pork, stuffed in pig intestine), *panutsa* (sweet delicacy made of peanuts and caramelized sugar in circular shape), *suman* (sticky rice cake wrapped in banana leaves shaped into tube), *balisong* (folded pocket knife, a.k.a. butterfly knife), *Barong Tagalog* (Filipino's national costume and formal wear with *burdang Taal* or hand-embroidered patterns), *tapang Taal* (pork marinated in soy sauce, garlic and calamansi), *tamales* (milled glutinous rice cake with pork, egg and peanut butter), *tawilis* (a fish that is unique and endemic in Taal Lake), and *sinaing na tulingan* (a famous fish dish in Taal and nearby towns) – the delicacies and crafts that Taal is known. The festival is one grandiose way of highlighting the products of Taal in a celebration made to ignite Taaleños' pride of the things that contributed to the economic growth of the town and the unity that strengthens its people [9].

1.2. Objectives of the study

This study was conducted to determine the socio-cultural aspects of heritage tourism that attract tourists and travelers to visit Taal Heritage Town. Tourist, here, refers to a visitor who spent at least a day and an overnight stay in Taal while traveler refers to a visitor who spent a day or portion of a day in touring Taal heritage sites. Collectively, they are oftentimes referred to, in this study, as Taal visitors or simply visitors.

To be more specific, the objectives of the study are as follows:

- To typify or characterize Taal visitors as to age, sex, educational attainment, place of origin, and number of times of visit to Taal;
- To assess the socio-cultural aspects of heritage tourism that attract tourists and travelers to visit Taal vis-à-vis Taal's identity or distinctiveness, its traditions and festivities, and its people's traits or characteristics; and
- To analyze the differences on the responses of visitors regarding the socio-cultural aspects of heritage tourism presented to them for assessment.

2. Research Methodology

The study employs a descriptive design of research utilizing survey approach. A survey questionnaire prepared by the researchers was used in data gathering. The questionnaire has two parts: the first part determines the type or characteristics of the respondent tourists or travelers as to their age, sex, educational attainment, place of origin, and frequency of visits to Taal Heritage Town; while the second part assesses the socio-cultural aspects of heritage tourism that attracts them to visit Taal in terms of the town's identity or distinctiveness, its traditions and festivities, and its people's traits or characteristics. The questionnaire uses a four-point Likert scale. Faculty and research experts of Batangas State University and industry experts in the field of tourism management in the area participated in the validation process for the questionnaire. A trial run for the validated questionnaire was conducted and participated by 30 respondents who had visited Taal few months ago and the reliability analysis resulted to a reliability coefficient or Cronbach's alpha of .8551. Before the actual data gathering, permission for the conduct of the survey was sought from the Municipal Mayor of Taal.

The respondents for this study were tourists and travelers who visited the Taal Heritage Town. The survey was conducted on four weekends (Saturdays and Sundays) during day time at the most visited sites in Taal; particularly the Basilica of San Martin de Tours, Taal Municipal Hall, and public market. Respondents were approached and informed about the purpose of the survey in advance before they were given the questionnaire. Taal visitors younger than 13 years old were automatically excluded as respondents. No particular attempt was made to apply random sampling or to select particular segments. However, they were selected at different times of the day and at different places. A total sample size of 346 was completed. No effort was also made to distinguish which of the 346 accomplished questionnaires came from tourists and which came from travelers simply because they are to be treated in this study equally and collectively as Taal visitors.

The SPSS was utilized in the analysis of the data gathered. The interpretation of the mean is based on the following scale:

Mean	Interpretation
3.50 – 4.00	Strongly Agree
2.50 – 3.49	Fairly Agree
1.50 – 2.49	Fairly Disagree
1.00 – 1.49	Strongly Disagree

Implications drawn here were, however, subject to several limitations. First, the attributes chosen could be a limitation because attributes that are not used here could also be important factors. Second, the sample obtained through the survey questionnaire presented some challenges due to not so sufficient information. This limitation resulted from a one-time measurement for data collection, a limited questionnaire, and the timing of the survey. Third, the study did not obtain longitudinal data (data collected at different points in time) but relied on a cross sectional data (data collected at one point in time). Nevertheless, it is hoped that such limitations could suggest and encourage additional directions and guidelines for future study.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Typifying or characterizing Taal visitors

Table 1 shows the distribution of the respondent tourists or travelers by age, sex, educational attainment, place of origin, and number of times of visit to Taal Heritage Town.

Table 1. Distribution of respondent tourists and travelers to Taal Heritage Town

Profile	Frequency	Percent
Age		
13 to 17 years old	34	9.8
18 to 29 years old	106	30.6
30 to 39 years old	118	34.1
40 to 49 years old	48	13.9
50 to 59 years old	22	6.4
60 years old or older	18	5.2
Sex		
Male	152	43.9
Female	194	56.1
Educational Attainment		
Elementary	13	3.8
Secondary or High School	101	29.2
Technical or Vocational	98	28.3
Tertiary or College	134	38.7
Place of Origin		
From within the country	329	95.1
From foreign countries	17	4.9
Number of Times of Visit		
1 to 2 times	97	28.0
3 to 4 times	110	31.8
5 times or more	139	40.2

As seen in Table 1, majority of visitors to Taal are aged 18-29 and 30-39 years old with almost equal number of males and females. Most are college graduates, followed by almost equal number of high school and vocational graduates, and only about 4% are elementary graduates. A great majority of the visitors came from within the Philippines and only 5% are foreigners. Finally, more than 70% of the visitors had visited the place for three times or more.

This, now, characterizes the typical tourists and travelers to Taal Heritage Town: male and female Filipino young adults who had at least high school education and had visited Taal more than once or twice.

3.2. Assessment on socio-cultural aspects of Taal heritage tourism

Table 2 shows the mean of the assessments given by the respondents as to the identity or distinctiveness of Taal that attracts them to visit the heritage town.

Table 2. Identity or distinctiveness of Taal that attracts visitors to visit the heritage town, n = 346

Identity or Distinctiveness	Mean	Interpretation
I like to visit Taal Heritage Town because ...		
1. The town has the biggest Catholic Church in Asia, the Basilica of St. Martin of Tours.	3.75	Strongly Agree
2. The town has well-preserved ancestral houses and historical sites.	3.79	Strongly Agree
3. The town is known for <i>Barong Tagalog</i> and gowns with <i>burda</i> (embroidery).	3.80	Strongly Agree
4. The town manufactures and sells unique folded pocket knives known as <i>balisong</i> .	3.78	Strongly Agree
5. The town offers distinctive food products and delicacies like <i>tapa</i> , <i>longanisa</i> , <i>empanada</i> , <i>tawilis</i> and <i>panutsa</i> .	3.61	Strongly Agree
Overall	3.75	Strongly Agree

Overall, the visitors strongly agree that they like to visit Taal Heritage Town because of its own identity that is distinct from the rests of the world. With almost equal mean assessments are the attractions of Taal that is, as a town known for *Barong Tagalog* (the official national costume of the Philippines for male Filipinos) and uniquely embroidered (i.e. *burdang Taal*) gowns; with well-preserved ancestral houses and historical sites; manufacturer of unique folded *balisong* knives; and the site of *Basilica de San Martin de Tours*, the biggest Catholic Church in Asia, built in 1856. Last, but also elicit attractions for the town, are the food products and delicacies that can be bought when you visit the place.

Table 3 shows the mean of the assessments given by the respondents as to the traditions and festivities in Taal that attracts them to visit the heritage town.

Table 3. Traditions and festivities in Taal that attracts visitors to visit the heritage town, n = 346

Traditions and Festivities	Mean	Interpretation
I like to visit Taal Heritage Town because ...		
1. The people of Taal celebrate the annual <i>El Pasubat</i> Festival.	3.67	Strongly Agree
2. The people of Taal conduct the annual search for <i>Mutya ng Taal</i> .	3.70	Strongly Agree
3. The people of Taal honor the Virgin Mary, St. Martin of Tours, and other saints through the recitation of <i>luwa</i> .	3.63	Strongly Agree
4. The people of Taal have a unique devotion to the Our Lady of Caysasay.	3.64	Strongly Agree
5. The people of Taal often fetch water from the miraculous Sta. Lucia Well.	3.58	Strongly Agree
Overall	3.64	Strongly Agree

The visitors also strongly agree that they like to visit Taal Heritage Town because of some traditions and festivities that only Taal has. First and foremost is the annual search for *Mutya ng Taal*, which features the exceptional beauty of a Taaleña. This is followed by Taaleños celebration of *El Pasubat* Festival; distinctive devotion to Our Lady of Caysasay, with its own unique history; recitation of *luwa* (chant) to honour the Virgin Mary and the saints; and fetching and drinking water from the believed to be miraculous Well of Sta. Lucia.

Table 4 shows the mean of the assessments given by the respondents as to the traits or characteristics of Taaleños that attracts them to visit the heritage town.

Table 4. Traits or characteristics of Taaleños that attracts visitors to visit the heritage town, n = 346

Traits or Characteristics	Mean	Interpretation
I like to visit Taal Heritage Town because ...		
1. Taaleños are devoted Catholics who go to church (Basilica of St. Martin of Tours, Shrine of Our Lady of Caysasay, etc.) every Sunday and feast day.	3.48	Fairly Agree
2. Taaleños, although proud of their ancestors' or townmates' part in Philippine history, are humble.	3.68	Strongly Agree
3. Taaleños are responsive and cooperative to their town's undertakings.	3.68	Strongly Agree
4. Taaleños are kind and hospitable especially to tourists or visitors.	3.73	Strongly Agree
5. Taaleños have good oral communication skills.	3.63	Strongly Agree
Overall	3.64	Strongly Agree

As regards the traits or characteristics of the people of Taal, some reasons why tourists and travelers like to visit Taal Heritage Town are the people's kindness and hospitality to visitors; responsiveness and cooperativeness to

the town’s undertakings; humility, but proud of their history; and oral communication skills. Although assessed fairly as to likeliness, Taaleños are predominantly devoted Catholic Christians just like most Filipinos.

Table 5 shows the general assessment of the respondents regarding the socio-cultural aspects of Taal heritage tourism that attracts them to visit the town.

Table 5. Visitors’ general assessment on the socio-cultural aspects of Taal heritage tourism, n = 346

Socio-cultural Aspects	Mean	Interpretation
Identity or distinctiveness	3.75	Strongly Agree
Traditions and festivities	3.64	Strongly Agree
Traits or characteristics	3.64	Strongly Agree
Overall	3.68	Strongly Agree

As seen in Table 5, among the three pre-identified socio-cultural aspects of Taal heritage tourism, it is the identity or distinctiveness of Taal Heritage Town that visitors like most and attracted them to visit the town. Equally likeable by the tourists and travelers are the town’s traditions and festivities and the people’s traits or characteristics.

3.3. Differences on the respondents’ assessments on socio-cultural aspects of Taal heritage tourism

Table 6 presents the mean differences on the respondents’ assessments on socio-cultural aspects of Taal heritage tourism when grouped according to age.

Table 6. Results of ANOVA on the respondents’ assessments on socio-cultural aspects of Taal heritage tourism when grouped by age, $\alpha = .05$

Socio-cultural Aspects	Age	n	Mean	F	p
Identity or distinctiveness	13 to 17 years old	34	3.64	2.055	.071
	18 to 29 years old	106	3.74		
	30 to 39 years old	118	3.77		
	40 to 49 years old	48	3.75		
	50 to 59 years old	22	3.74		
	60 years old or older	18	3.87		
Traditions and festivities	13 to 17 years old	34	3.51	1.559	.171
	18 to 29 years old	106	3.67		
	30 to 39 years old	118	3.62		
	40 to 49 years old	48	3.69		
	50 to 59 years old	22	3.69		
	60 years old or older	18	3.74		
Traits or characteristics	13 to 17 years old	34	3.54	1.655	.145

	18 to 29 years old	106	3.64		
	30 to 39 years old	118	3.63		
	40 to 49 years old	48	3.68		
	50 to 59 years old	22	3.66		
	60 years old or older	18	3.78		
Overall	13 to 17 years old	34	3.56	2.316	.043
	18 to 29 years old	106	3.68		
	30 to 39 years old	118	3.67		
	40 to 49 years old	48	3.71		
	50 to 59 years old	22	3.70		
	60 years old or older	18	3.80		

For each of the socio-cultural aspects of Taal heritage tourism, namely identity or distinctiveness, traditions and festivities, and traits or characteristics, there is no significant difference on the assessments of respondents when they are grouped according to age at .05 level of significance as indicated by p-values greater than .05 shown in Table 6. However, there are significant differences in the overall assessments of the different age groups as implied by a p-value of .043 which is lower than .05. Comparing the means for each group revealed that the old age group (60 years old and older) had the highest assessment, followed by middle age groups (40-49 and 50-59 years old), and then by young adults (18-29 and 30-39 years old), and the adolescents (13-17 years old) have the lowest assessment. This implies that the older the tourists or travelers, the more they are attracted to visit Taal Heritage Town and to appreciate heritage tourism.

Table 7 presents the mean differences on the respondents' assessments on socio-cultural aspects of Taal heritage tourism when grouped according to sex.

Table 7. Results of t-test on the respondents' assessments on socio-cultural aspects of Taal heritage tourism when grouped by sex, $\alpha = .05$

Socio-cultural Aspects	Sex	n	Mean	t	p
Identity or distinctiveness	Male	152	3.73	-.778	.437
	Female	194	3.76		
Traditions and festivities	Male	152	3.58	-2.822	.005
	Female	194	3.69		
Traits or characteristics	Male	152	3.66	1.162	.246
	Female	194	3.62		
Overall	Male	152	3.66	-1.152	.250
	Female	194	3.69		

As the p-values presented in Table 7 indicate, there is no significant difference between the assessments of males and females in overall socio-cultural aspects and in terms of identity or distinctiveness and traits or characteristics, but there is a significant difference between the assessments of the two groups in terms of traditions and festivities. In addition, the mean assessment in traditions and festivities of females is higher than mean assessment of males which further implies that female tourists and travelers like or appreciate traditions and festivities more than the male tourists and travelers.

Table 8 presents the mean differences on the respondents' assessments on socio-cultural aspects of Taal heritage tourism when grouped according to educational attainment.

Table 8. Results of ANOVA on the respondents' assessments on socio-cultural aspects of Taal heritage tourism when grouped by educational attainment, $\alpha = .05$

Socio-cultural Aspects	Educational Attainment	n	Mean	F	p
Identity or distinctiveness	Elementary	13	3.77	2.921	.034
	Secondary or High School	101	3.69		
	Technical or Vocational	98	3.75		
	Tertiary or College	134	3.79		
Traditions and festivities	Elementary	13	3.71	1.217	.303
	Secondary or High School	101	3.59		
	Technical or Vocational	98	3.63		
	Tertiary or College	134	3.68		
Traits or characteristics	Elementary	13	3.54	.941	.421
	Secondary or High School	101	3.62		
	Technical or Vocational	98	3.68		
	Tertiary or College	134	3.63		
Overall	Elementary	13	3.67	1.377	.250
	Secondary or High School	101	3.63		
	Technical or Vocational	98	3.69		
	Tertiary or College	134	3.70		

It is only in terms of identity or distinctiveness that there are significant differences on the assessments when the respondents are grouped according to their educational attainment. In particular, as seen in the mean per group in Table 8, the group of high school graduates had lower mean assessment than the three other groups namely, elementary, technical or vocational and college graduates. This implies that tourists and travelers, who are high school graduates like or appreciate the distinctiveness of Taal Heritage Town less than those who had higher, and even those who had lower, level of educational attainment.

Table 9 presents the mean differences on the respondents' assessments on socio-cultural aspects of Taal heritage tourism when grouped according to place of origin.

Table 9. Results of t-test on the respondents’ assessments on socio-cultural aspects of Taal heritage tourism when grouped by place of origin, $\alpha = .05$

Socio-cultural Aspects	Place of Origin	n	Mean	t	p
Identity or distinctiveness	From within the country	329	3.74	-1.295	.211
	From foreign countries	17	3.81		
Traditions and festivities	From within the country	329	3.66	4.522	.000
	From foreign countries	17	3.26		
Traits or characteristics	From within the country	329	3.63	-9.164	.000
	From foreign countries	17	3.91		
Overall	From within the country	329	3.68	.287	.774
	From foreign countries	17	3.66		

In overall assessment and in terms of identity and distinctiveness, Filipino and foreign tourists and travelers had the same level assessment or likeness and appreciation of Taal Heritage Town. But with regards to traditions and festivities and traits or characteristics, they had very different assessments as indicated by the p-values of .000 shown in Table 9. Looking for details, the means per group indicate that Filipinos like or appreciate Taal’s traditions and festivities more than foreigners do, while the foreigners like or appreciate Taaleños traits or characteristics more than fellow Filipinos do.

Table 10 presents the mean differences on the respondents’ assessments on socio-cultural aspects of Taal heritage tourism when grouped according to the number of times of visit.

Table 10. Results of ANOVA on the respondents’ assessments on socio-cultural aspects of Taal heritage tourism when grouped by number of times of visit, $\alpha = .05$

Socio-cultural Aspects	Number of Times of Visit	n	Mean	F	p
Identity or distinctiveness	1 to 2 times	97	3.60	27.100	.000
	3 to 4 times	110	3.75		
	5 times or more	139	3.85		
Traditions and festivities	1 to 2 times	97	3.49	16.215	.000
	3 to 4 times	110	3.63		
	5 times or more	139	3.76		
Traits or characteristics	1 to 2 times	97	3.53	15.762	.000
	3 to 4 times	110	3.60		
	5 times or more	139	3.75		
Overall	1 to 2 times	97	3.54	30.275	.000
	3 to 4 times	110	3.66		
	5 times or more	139	3.78		

As can be expected, there are significant differences on the respondents' assessments on socio-cultural aspects of Taal heritage tourism when the respondents are grouped according to the number of their visits to Taal. As seen in Table 10, the higher the frequency of visits the more they like or appreciate Taal Heritage Town.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on findings or results of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

- The typical tourists and travelers or visitors to Taal Heritage Town can be characterized or described as male and female Filipino young adults who had at least high school education and had visited Taal more than once or twice.
- Tourists and travelers visit Taal Heritage Town because of its own identity or distinctiveness being a town known for *Barong Tagalog* and gowns with *burdang Taal*, well-preserved ancestral houses and historical sites, *balisong* knives, and *Basilica de San Martin de Tours*, along with food products and delicacies like *tapa*, *longanisa*, *empanada*, *tawilis* and *panutsa* that can be bought in the place.
- Tourists and travelers also visit Taal Heritage Town because of exceptional traditions and festivities such as *Mutya ng Taal*, *El Pasubat* Festival, devotion to Our Lady of Caysasay, recitation of *luwa*, and water fetching and drinking from the miraculous Well of Sta. Lucia.
- Tourists and travelers also visit Taal Heritage Town because Taaleños are kind and hospitable, responsive and cooperative, humble but proud of their part in history, and with good oral communication skills, aside from being predominantly devoted Catholic Christians.
- The older the tourists or travelers, the more they are attracted to visit Taal Heritage Town and to appreciate heritage tourism.
- Female tourists and travelers like or appreciate Taal traditions and festivities more than the male tourists and travelers.
- Tourists and travelers who are high school graduates like or appreciate the distinctiveness of Taal Heritage Town less than those who had higher, and even those who had lower, level of educational attainment.
- Filipino tourists and travelers like or appreciate Taal's traditions and festivities more than foreign tourists and travelers do; while the foreign tourists and travelers like or appreciate Taaleños traits or characteristics more than Filipino tourists and travelers do.
- The higher the frequency of visits of tourists and travelers to Taal Heritage Town the more they like or appreciate the town.

In view of the above findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are given:

- The town and people of Taal should continue to preserve their heritage sites and houses, produce unique products, practice exceptional traditions and festivities, and exhibit good traits or characteristics to attract more and more tourists and travelers of the present and succeeding generations.
- More efforts to promote Taal heritage tourism to different age groups, especially to old age or senior citizens, and to different nationalities should be made.

- Information dissemination regarding Taal's traditions and festivities should also be given more emphasis for such to be understood and more appreciated by tourists and travelers, especially by males and foreigners.
- Further studies on Taal heritage tourism and similar studies on other heritage sites in the Philippines and in other countries may be conducted.

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