

# **CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT: GUIMARAS AS A TOURIST DESTINATION**

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## **ABSTRACT**

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The main purpose of the study is to assess the capability of Guimaras island as a tourist destination in Western Visayas. The descriptive survey research design was used in this study. The respondents of this study were the local LGU officials and the resort owners.

The findings of the study revealed that there were 81 major tourists' destinations in the island province of Guimaras. Out of these 81 major tourist destinations, 32 or 39.51% were accommodation establishments and 49 or 60.49% were non accommodation establishments. Results further revealed that functional out of these 32 accommodation establishment 19 or 59.38% were with overnight facilities. The 19 accommodation establishments can accommodate a total of 1,004 guests at one time. In terms of support services, respondents agreed that all the support services needed to make the stay of the visitors in Guimaras comfortable and enjoyable as assessed by the provincial officials and department heads were all in place and improvement were geared towards offering more comfort to the visitors.

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## **Introduction**

### **Background of the Study**

Between the islands of Panay and Negros and accessible by pump boat from Iloilo is the small island of Guimaras, known to Visayans as the site of the much admired Roca Encantada (Enchanted Rock), summer house of the distinguished Lopez family of Iloilo. The house is perched on a promontory overlooking Guimaras Strait. Across the promontory is a picturesque group of coral islets called Siete Pecados (Isles of the Seven Sins), a curious counterpoint to the attractions of spiritual value in Guimaras.

Near the capital town of Jordan is a Trappist Monastery, the only one in the Philippines; and Bala-an Bukid (Holy Mountain), a favorite Catholic pilgrimage site where a 30-minute climb up a stairway leads to a huge cross and chapel at the top. The town of Nueva Valencia, 20 kilometers south of Jordan, is host to Catilaran Cave, from where Ming jars have been unearthed and where on Good Friday the "pangalap" ritual is held. Hundreds of devotees recite prayers in Latin while crawling through the half-kilometer-long cave.

When in Guimaras, it would be a sin to overlook the island resort of Costa Aguada. This resort contained in the island called Inampulugan offers first class amenities and carefully developed and maintained surroundings. This island is four to five times bigger than the Nagarao Island (an island resort also), and has a vast mountain that is best for trekking and biking. Some of its attractions are the mini-zoo, the mangrove plantation and the thriving community that produces soap and other materials made from coconut. The resort, and the whole island so to speak, is self-sufficient --they grow their own vegetables and fruit trees, raise animals and even culture crabs. You will never undermine their capability to live independently when you try their ice cream made from coconut milk and meat. There are many island resorts in Guimaras, and each has its own uniqueness (and variation in accommodation costs, of course). Island hopping is favorable and will not cost you any, except for paying the boatman. Resort owners and operators are very friendly, and some of them will even tour you around their area without expecting anything in return. Exploring the coastal attractions is equally refreshing, especially if the boatman will bring you to the best snorkeling and swimming areas.

The fishery research sub-station of the SEAFDEC is also found in the island of Guimaras. It is a floating "laboratory." This sub-station takes care of the biggest bangus, lapu-lapu, red snapper and sea bass almost two to three feet long, and about four kilos. The island has also a Farm Tourism Enterprise which is being developed by the Department of Tourism. It is a kind of resort for people interested in experiencing the typical life of farmers and fishermen. Though considered a resort, this property still maintains the unspoiled natural beauty of the mountains that it looks like a typical farmer's land. Tourists will live in bamboo cottages and their everyday itinerary composed of going to the farm and planting together with the farmers or fishing together with the fishermen. After the day's work, they can refresh themselves on the cool water of Macopo falls, a small waterfall down the mountain that dumps into a lovely swimming pool.

These are only some of the tourist attractions in the island province. There are many more. This is the reason why many tourists both foreign and local flock the island province especially during the weekends. Tourism counts as one of the good source of income of the provmce. Thus, one of the aims of the province in its medium term development plan is focused on the tourism activities.

The provincial government of Guimaras considers tourism, as one of its economic thrusts considering that the Department of Tourism (DOT) had endorsed the island province as one of the "must see" destination in Southern Philippines (DOT Annual Report 2003). Aside from the tourist sites mentioned above many attractions in the island province is still worth seeing. There are various beaches and inland resorts within the island as well as in the surrounding islets that still part of the island province.

Guimaras Island has a lot to offer to the visitors in terms of natural and man-made attractions. However, all of these will not be sufficient unless support services such as resort facilities and amenities, food and beverages, hospital facilities, road network facilities, communication, banking facilities and. peace. and protection services will be available in the island province. The capability of the island province as tourist destination should be determined; hence this study Will be conducted.

## **The Problem**

### **The Statement of the Problem**

The main purpose of the study is to assess the capability of Guimaras Island as a tourist destination in Western Visayas;

Specifically, this study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the major tourist destinations in the island of guimaras categorized by municipalities?
2. What are the accommodation facilities of each tourist destination?
3. What are the perceptions of the local provincial officials of Guimaras Province in terms of support services available in the island?

## Theoretical Framework

This study was founded on Abraham Maslow's Theory of Hierarchy of needs. According to Maslow (Cruz human needs arrange themselves in a hierarchy of prepotency, that is, according to the dominant needs at the time. The appearance of needs are classified become dominant usually after the satisfaction of a next lower need The needs of people are unending in the ascending

Maslow found that physiological needs are the most fundamental. Once these physiological needs are reasonably satisfied, the next level, which is the need for safety, follows. Stability and security become predominant in a person's attention. The third in the hierarchy is the belongingness and love needs. The fourth is the need for self- esteem, the esteem for others and ego status. The need for self-actualization selfrealization and self-accomplishment comes at the highest need in the hierarchy (Sison, 1991 ).

Those who say that they travel to "escape" or to "relieve tensions" are satisfying the basic physiological needs. Traveling for health and recreation attempts to satisfy one's safety needs. By taking care of his body and/or mind, the traveler is protecting himself by assuring his own longevity. The motivation may be for physical or mental relaxation. The need for belonging and love pertains to the desire for affection, for giving and receiving love.

Maslow's concept of the need for self-esteem is for self and others. The need for self-esteem is shown in the desire to exhibit achievement, competence and independence. Esteem for others is explained by the concepts of prestige, status and recognition. Travel can also boost one's ego, since travel may provide the tourist with a feeling of superiority. Self-actualization can be regarded as the goal of leisure. Leisure is the state of being free from the urgent demands of the lower-level needs. Vacation offers an opportunity to reevaluate and discover more about oneself (Cruz, ).

When people will be motivated to travel to satisfy one's need, they would surely look for a place where they can relax and enjoy, places with beautiful or scenic spot that is inviting to their senses. These places will now enjoy the indirect effect of tourism, which is income.

## Conceptual Framework

Tourism in the Philippines is a sector with a considerable untapped potential. It is a source of foreign exchange, as well as providing employment opportunities in a labor surplus economy. The estimated tourist arrival in 2004 was 2,299 million with estimated international tourist receipts of US\$ 1,809,000 and consumer expenditures (hotels and recreations) of US\$ 2,899,000 (www.Tourism.gov.ph).

Despite the promotional push to attract visitors to the 7,000 islands of the Philippines, the primary destination is the capital Manila and Cebu. Other attraction includes Boracay for its beaches and the seas around Palawan, which are particularly popular with the divers.

Guimaras Island has a lot to offer in terms of natural and man-made tourist attraction. Guimaras tourism information revealed that there are twenty five (25) natural tourist attractions, three (3) man-made island resort (1 class AA and 3 class A), fourteen (14) beach resorts, three (3) religious sites, three (3) historical sites, 10 events/festivals and twelve (12) Agrotourism destinations (DOT Profile, 2004)

However, these attractions were not an indication that it could sustain the influx of tourist in the island. Many factors will affect the attraction of a tourist area such as facilities and amenities available in the place, presence of good road network, transportation, banking and communication, and peace and order situation. Absence of one or two factors will have an immense effect on the tourism industry of the province.

## Research Paradigm

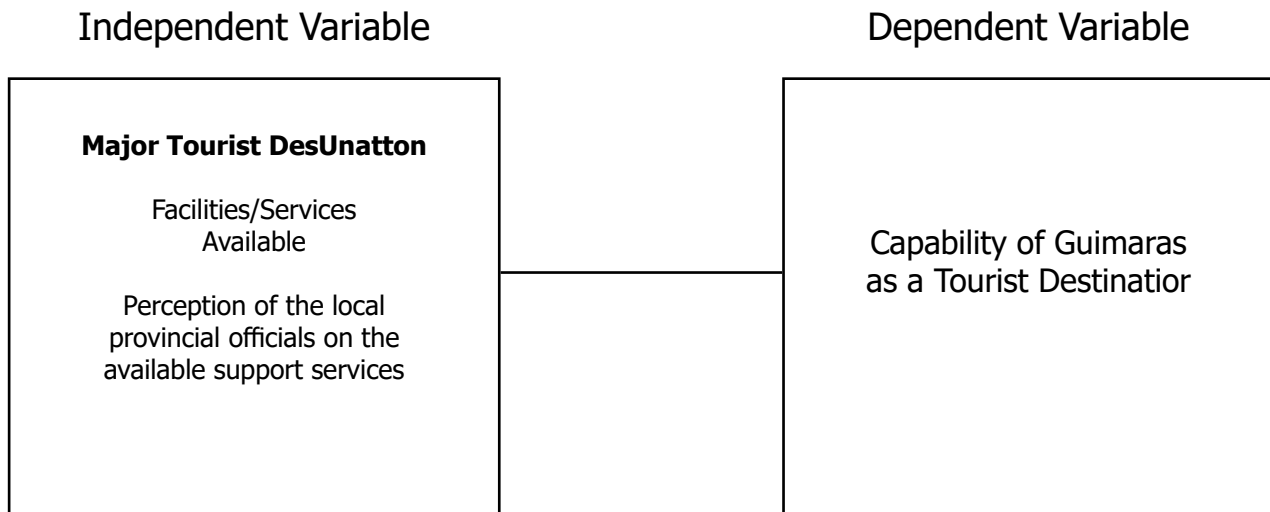


Fig. 1. Research Paradigm of the Study, Capability Assessment: Gurmaras As a Tourist Destination

## Methodology

The descriptive survey research designed was used in this study. The respondents of this study were composed of the provincial officials and the heads of the different departments in the provincial government office of the province of Guimaras and the owners of the resorts/accommodation establishments.

The data needed in this study were gathered using a researcher prepared questionnaire. Province. The researcher made questionnaire was distributed to the respondents. The questionnaires were distributed simultaneously to the local government officials in the province of Guimaras and to the resort owners. The respondents were given one week to answer the questions and after which the filled-up questionnaires were collected.

The data gathered were analyzed by using the frequency counts, percentages, and ranking. The discussion was based on the result of these statistical tools.

## **Results and Discussions**

### **A. Profile of the Major Tourist Destination in Guimaras**

Data in table 1 presents the summary of the major tourist destination in the Province of Guimaras classified into accommodation and nonaccommodation establishments. Results revealed that there are 19 major destinations in Jordan contributing 23.46% to the total major destinations in the island of Guimaras. Out of this 19 tourist destinations, 6 or 31.58% are accommodation establishments and 13 or 68.42% are non accommodation establishments. There are 21 major destinations in the town of Buenavista contributing 25.92% to the total major destinations in the island of Guimaras. Of these 21-tourist destinations, 7 or 33.33% are accommodation establishments and 14 or 66.67% are non-accommodation establishments. In the municipality of Nueva Valencia, there 26 tourist destinations contributing 32.10% to the total major destinations in the province of Guimaras. Out of this 26 tourist destinations, 13 or 50% are accommodation establishments and 13 or 50% are non-accommodation.

**Table 1**

Frequency and Percentages of the Major Tourist Destination in the Province of Guimaras Classified Into Accommodation and Non-Accommodation Establishments

Major Destination	FREQUENCY					Total	%
	JOR-DAN	BTA	NVA VAL	SAN LOR	SIB		
<b>A. Accommodation Establishment</b>							
Mountain Resorts	1	3	0	0	1	5	6.17
Beach Resorts	1	4	10	1	1	17	20.99
Island Resorts	1	0	3	0	3	7	8.64
Agro-tourism	1	0	0	0	0	1	1.24
Special point of interest	1	0	0	0	0	1	1.24
Religious sites	1	0	0	0	0	1	1.23
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>39.51</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>31.6</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>55.6</b>		
<b>B. Non-accom. Establishment</b>							
Theme Parks	1	0	0	0	0	1	1.23
Religious Sites	1	1	0	0	0	2	2.47
Historical Sites	0	3	1	0	0	4	4.94
Natural Attractions	9	55	9	2	2	27	33.33
Agro-Tourism	1	2	1	3	2	9	11.11
Special Point of Interest	1	3	2	0	0	6	7.41
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>60.49</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>68.4</b>	<b>66.7</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>83.3</b>	<b>44.4</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100.0</b>
% Based from the total tourist attractions in Guimaras	<b>23.5</b>	<b>25.9</b>	<b>32.1</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>100.</b>	

Data in table 2 presents the total number of functional accommodation establishments in the province of Guimaras. Out of the 32 accommodation establishments (table 7) only 19 were functional with overnight accommodation. There were five (5) each for Buenavista, Sibunag and Nueva Valencia or 26.32% and four (4) for Jordan (21.04%).



**Table 2**

Summary of the Functional Establishments with Overnight Accommodation In Guimaras Province

Municipality	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Buenavista	5	26.32
San Lorenzo	0	0.00
Slbunag	5	26.32
Nueva Valencia	5	26.32
Jordan	4	21.04
Total	19	100.00

Data in table 3 presents the summary of the available facilities offered by the 19 functional establishments with overnight accommodation in the island of Guimaras. Common among these establishments were the availability of cottages for overnight stay, which numbered to 17 (89.47%). Among the different accommodation establishments only 7 or 36.84% have the hotel type building as part of accommodation facilities offered to visitors. There were nine (9) or 47.37% establishments, which have restaurants, only 3 (three) or 15.79% have coffee shops and 11 or 57.89% have bars. In terms of sports and recreational activities, study further revealed that 11 or 57.89% of the establishments have these facilities and 14 or 73.68% have available conference or convention amenities. There were 11 or 57.89% each that offers housekeeping services and car park facilities for the visitors. However, only 1 or 5.26% has medical services available in establishment in the form of a registered nurse on duty 24 hours a day.

**Table 3**

Summary of Available Facilities Present in the Different  
Accommodation Establishments in the Province of  
Guimaras ( N= 19)

Facilities	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Hotel Type Building/Accommodation	7	36.84
Cottages	17	89.47
Restaurants	9	47.37
Coffee Shops	3	15.79
Bar	11	57.89
Sports and Recreational Facilities	11	57.89
Conference and Convention Facilities	14	73.68
Housekeeping	11	57.89
Precautionary Measures	10	52.63
Car Park	11	57.89
Medical Services	1	5.26

### Support Services Available

Data in table 4 presents the perception of the local government officials and department heads in the provincial office and the owners of the resorts and accommodation establishments in the province in terms of support services available outside resorts. Result revealed that the respondents agreed that the services offered by the restaurants and bars outside the resorts the transport facilities, road network facilities, health and related facilities, peace and order situation and emergency response can cater to the needs of the tourists. However, result also revealed that the respondents did not agree that banking and communication facilities in the province can best serve the needs of the tourists visiting the island.

**Table 4**

Summary of Assessment of the respondents as the support services available in Guimaras island

<b>Services</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Description</b>
Services offered by the reataurants and bars outside the resorts	1.69	Agree
Transport service facilities	1.83	Agree
Road Network Facilities	1.80	Agree
Banking Facilities	1.64	Disagree
Communication facilities	1.48	Disagree
Health and related facilities outside the resorts	2.06	Agree
Peace and order situation and emergency response	1.98	Agree

## **Conclusions**

In view of the findings of the study, the researcher drew the following conclusions:

1. That Guimaras Island has a lot to offer to the visitors/tourists both of manmade and natural attractions. However, not all accommodation establishments can offer services suited to the sensitive taste of foreign visitors. However, as a weekend hideaway for the local people from the nearby places especially from Iloilo City then Guimaras is a perfect place
2. That all the support services needed to make the stay of the visitors in the island province as assessed by the department heads of the local government were all in place and improvement were geared towards offering more comfort to the visitors.

3. That as per observation during the actual survey, among the constraint of the visitors Visiting Guimaras Island was the distance of one resort or accommodation establishment to the other which dampens the enthusiasms of some visitors and the condition of the road network in the island wherein the percentage of unpaved to paved road network is higher.
4. That to visitors who wanted rest, serenity and nearness to nature Guimaras Island is the Perfect hideaway because there are less nightlife offered in the different resorts/accommodation establishments except for the usual night swimming and a little drinking to spend the night through.

### **Recommendations**

1. That the Local Government and the department of tourism should encourage accommodation establishment/resorts to improve their facilities/amenities aside from what is available in their respective establishment so as to encourage more tourist to come to the Guimaras Island.
2. Those establishments that already have accreditations from the Department of Tourism should aim more for a higher accreditation rating by improving further their amenities and facilities and also convince their clients that really they are accredited by giving the best services and everything to the costumers/clients. While for those who do not have any accreditation, they have to apply for such so that more tourists will be encouraged to visit the island.
3. That the Local Government Units (LGU's) should assist the tourism industry of the province by improving the support services within the island especially the improvement of the road network, communication and banking and related facilities and the services offered by the transport sector. The Guimaras LGU should lobby with other LGUs all over the country to visit or hold their conferences in the island as well as by advertising the island worldwide.

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