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The Evolving Paradigm of Filipino Prisoners' Artistic Performance as a Tourism Product

Abstract

This is an exploratory study aimed at determining whether the artistic performance of inmates in the national penitentiary may be considered as a tourism product. The performance began to gather worldwide attention with the showing of the dancing inmates on You Tube. The research was carried further by looking at performances which have been featured and are still being shown inside the Maximum and Medium Security Compounds of the country's prison. The methodology is a comparative analysis of literature related to tourism product and the formulation of an appropriate definition of the tourism product under study, it being intrinsic to the country. Following Smith's generic tourism product definition and the tourism production process, the analysis reinforced the very nature of prisoners' performance as a tourism product indeed. As such the paper serves to enlighten both prison and tourism stakeholders on the potential of the tourism product.

Keywords: *Tourism product, Inmates, Artistic performance, National penitentiary, Rehabilitation, Remediation*

Emma Lina F. Lopez, PhD. Senior Lecturer, Asian Institute of Tourism University of the Philippines Commonwealth Avenue, Diliman. Quezon City, Metro Manila/Philippines 1101.

Email: emmah122000@yahoo.com

Landline: (632)437-40-20

Mobile: +639198261817

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1. Introduction

Just like Filipinos who dream to make it big in the global market, the Cebu dancing inmates have caught worldwide attention as their performance went viral in You Tube with their Michael Jackson dance drill moves. They sang, danced and mimicked the American idol and now, both locals and foreigners visit the provincial detention center in Cebu to witness the dance moves of the prisoners. At its peak, it averaged 300,000 views daily and watched approximately 4.5 million times on You Tube thus making it a phenomenon.

In the last quarter of 2014, a high profile inmate from the Maximum Security Compound by the name of Herbert Colangco got media attention. As featured by Belen (2014) in her column *Celebrity World*, Colangco developed his singing talent while incarcerated which earned for him the 2014 Best New Male Recording Artist of the Year award from the PMPC Star Awards for Music. His album entitled “Herbert C: Kinabukasan” is now certified platinum. “Kinabukasan” means “future” in English.

In both cases cited, inmate performers have attained success at building an audience outside the confines of their prison cells. Considering the media mileage that Filipino dancing inmates and Herbert Colangco have attracted so far, this research shall delve into an evaluation of prisoners’ artistic performance as a tourism product. The national penitentiary in Muntinlupa City, New Bilibid Prison (NBP), has formed instrument playing bands, groups of dancers, singers and stage actors. Joining them enable inmates to hone their talents and learn new skills. These activities allow them to develop self-confidence and form new relationships which they can nurture. However, said activities which result to their public performances, specifically the visitors, have not been empirically evaluated. This research is therefore undertaken with three objectives in mind. The primary objective is to review literature on the nature and characteristics of a tourism product and determine which of these could apply to the analysis of current prison-related activities, in particular artistic performances, as potential tourism product. Second, with the characteristics thus identified, the research aims to determine whether said performances will actually qualify and satisfy the components of the tourism product. Lastly, if indeed the inmates’ artistic performance is a tourism product, the research will distinguish this from the generic one.

Local literature has not been found relative to how prisoners’ artistic performance fit in any of the models or literature on tourism product and it will be the contribution of the research to fill in that gap. On the social dimension of the study, it could encourage more civilians not just to watch inmates as performers but to get themselves more involved in prison work hence transforming the way people view inmates and the prison environment. Johnson (2008) as cited in Brewster (2014) stated that performing music and theater provides inmates the chance to participate in “productive exchanges with the community before and after release”. This also counters the impression that offenders are more than just numbers assigned and should not be judged by the mere reason they were put in prison.

The research, however, was limited in two aspects. First, access and security issues were considered in the conduct of the study. Hence, primary research was done only in the Medium Security Compound known as Camp Sampaguita in Muntinlupa City, Metro Manila which is allotted for prisoners who cannot be trusted in open or less secured conditions. Relevant data and information on Herbert Colangco and events at the Maximum Security Compound were gathered from interviews with personnel also from the Medium Security Compound, newspaper articles and electronic sources.

Second, the artistic performances will refer to creative programs wherein prisoners in the Maximum and Medium Security Compounds perform via song, dance, acting in stage plays or musical dramas and instrument playing. Art works and crafts are therefore not included in the study. Also excluded are those performances wherein the prisoners are brought out of the prison compound with permission from the Department of Justice (DOJ) to perform in

schools and universities, in a television channel, in Congress, in Malacañan (Presidential) Palace and elsewhere. Only those which are done inside the prison compound are covered in this research. Before the performances as described earned the recognition that they have to this day, these went through an evolution process.

Initially, focus was on the need to protect the people and safeguard them from the influence of criminals. To Filipinos, being in prison is the most serious penalty that could be imposed on offenders. Prisoners were ostracized by society. Social stigma is attached to prison facilities and their residents. Prisoners' mindsets are fixed on punishment for their misdeeds or what is termed as retributive incarceration. As such, punitive justice ends accordingly with punishment of the offenders for crimes committed. The culture of retribution associates risks to these crimes.

Since imprisonment is also aimed at preparing prisoners to live again with their communities, the need came to counter the repressive characteristic of incarceration which has been the primary basis of the paradigm. From being branded as social maladies who have been meted their sentences, prisoners were taught crafts and art works which became synonymous to Bilibid. These are the ship or nipa hut inside liquor bottles and plants cut out from plastic soft drinks containers. As the country's penology system progresses, prison administration began to consider more relevant approaches to crime reduction. Hence, this was evidenced by a paradigm shift from retribution towards the correctional approach of rehabilitation and remediation. There evolved the change towards a more restorative paradigm seen in particular areas of the criminal justice system's approach towards offender rehabilitation. With this comes an attitudinal change in corrections officers and staff. They began to provide an ambience to induce not just academic, moral and values education but also functional activities. Prisoners are given responsibilities and to get them involved, they are made to participate in more purposeful and constructive activities.

Rehabilitation, therefore, became the forerunner towards the more humane treatment of prisoners. Prison environment ideally should provide basic human services while at the same time, each rehabilitation program must have as its primary objective successful future reintegration of prisoners into society. This paved the way for restorative justice which aims to transform criminals to productive members of the community.

Providing functional activities to the fullest extent possible while in confinement was meant to discourage idleness, reduce boredom or "pagka-buryong" and recidivism. These activities serve as avenues for self-expression and enable prisoners to connect with persons outside the walls of the compounds. Programs began to be presented to those on the other side of the prison fence to stimulate awareness for the inmates. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2014) as cited in Brewster (2014) stated that "the detrimental impact of imprisonment, not only on individuals but on families and communities, and economic factors also need to be taken into account when considering the need for prison reforms".

When offenders are considered as participants in productive activities, whether these are socio-economic or cultural in nature, the new paradigm evolves. Changes are emerging in prisons as opportunities arise in offenders' functional activities. Punishment began to be seen in a different light. Instead of being used as a means to 'intimidate' prisoners it became a tool to reeducate them. With the response to socio-political and cultural changes, prisoners are now experiencing a more positively enabling environment. The Cebu Provincial Detention and Rehabilitation Center (CPDRC) has its dancing inmates to speak of as earlier described. On the other hand, Herbert Colangco, a high risk inmate, organized a musical band and had weekly shows inside the Maximum Security Compound (Tesoro, 2014) until his transfer to the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) compound. His concerts can be viewed also on You Tube. He uses a music studio in prison complete with huge speakers, drum set and key board (Postrado, 2014). Colangco, while with the Ozamis Gang, was involved in a series of

bank robberies in the first half of 2000. Foremost among these was the one in Rizal Commercial and Banking Corporation (RCBC) where the employees were massacred (Jatamari, 2014).

In these two instances, music and dance have become alternative creative and productive outlets enabling prisoners to refocus and believe in their own abilities. Thus, their spirits are uplifted and they somehow recover self-respect and self-confidence which they have most likely lost for the longest time. Their performances give them a sense of achievement which they are unable to get as often while in prison. Furthermore, there is evidence according to Blacker, Watson and Beech (2008) as cited in Brewster (2014) indicating that involvement in the artistic process can provide the means to express, to give way and reckon with what could be destructive emotions like aggression and anger.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Culture in the Tourism Product

Dean MacCannell (1973) explained how Erving Goffman linked authenticity and intimate relations with the back regions of a visited place. The latter are parts of culture that are hidden from tourists like the prison environment and are entirely lacking of features that could influence its authenticity negatively. Tourists see front regions and these are described as the performance by MacCannell. These performances as the front region may be viewed via youtube.com as cultural products. These symbolize both the unique tangible and intangible aspects of travel that represent other peoples' way of life and what could be considered as society's inheritance at present. These could include traditional customs, rituals and other practices from the past. Tourists try to reach the back region to experience the culture's authenticity. There are, however, spaces in between the front and back regions which MacCannell clarifies are structured to prop tourists' belief in the authenticity of their experience. In this case, it is their experience in the prison facility with performances that may later qualify as tourism products.

Visitors take interest in a destination through their art, history and culture (Gunlu, Yagci and Pirnar, 2009). As part of the tourism product, local culture is packaged to include music, dances and crafts. These reflect the richness of Philippine culture that can be offered to visitors. In a study by Libosada and Basangit (2007), history and culture of a place are very important attractions which enhance the destination. Zeinali (2015) likewise stated that destination image is one of the main components of tourism product that affects tourist satisfaction.

Performances before audiences gave new social identities to prisoners as artistic performers. Their successful renditions helped them see their 'other' personalities and negate the antagonist identities they may have internalized. The transition is recognized in offenders from being merely subjected to punitive rehabilitation to joining artistic pursuits which become a mode of entertainment that can be seen globally through social media. In reference to prisons, Casey (2007) has noted that "They've been the subject of songs, films and TV series".

With such display of immense talent in artistic pursuits, Dostoyevski in his novel *The House of the Dead* as cited by Vygotsky (1926) commented that people will discover in correctional institutions offenders who are abundantly gifted. The sad part is that they may have been corrupted and utilized for the wrong reasons.

2.2. Tourism Product to Fill in a Want or Need

Kotler and Armstrong (2006) expound that a product is practically anything that can be offered in the market for acquisition, use or consumption, or simply for attention which could satisfy a want or answer a need. The product may be a good or service or a combination of

both that an enterprise may offer its target market. Kotler and Armstrong (1989) as cited by Loka (2013) stated that tourism products are included in the physical objects, services, human resources in the organization and breakthroughs or new ideas offered to the consumer market in response to its desires. Kotler (1984) went beyond products as merely physical objects. He defines the product concept as “anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use, or consumption that might satisfy a want or need. It includes physical objects, services, persons, places, organizations and ideas”.

Turtureanu (2005) stated that a tourism product is the aggregate of the physical and psychological satisfaction provided to tourists during their travel *en route* to the destination. The product lends focus on facilities and services designed to answer needs of tourists. It can be viewed as a composite product representing the sum total of a country’s tourist attractions, transportation means, accommodations and entertainment which redound to customer satisfaction.

2.3. Tourism Product as Tangible or Intangible

Cooper and Hall (2012) explained that tourism products can be either tangible or intangible (e.g., services and ideas) or come as a combination of both. They further elaborated by saying that “*tourism products package together utilities and benefits for the consumer and, in tourism, exchange takes place at a destination and within a particular socio-political, environmental, technological, and economic setting*” (Cooper and Hall, 2012). Gilbert (1990) extended the view that tourism product lies in a continuum between a bundle of both tangible and intangible attributes. It can be viewed in another continuum from being a sole component through a package of composite of components to the whole destination product itself.

2.4. Tourism Product as the Total Experience

As cited in Cooper and Hall (2012), Gilbert (1990) described a tourism product as an amalgam of various goods and services offered to the tourist as an activity experience. Gilbert stated that the tourism product is the total experience. He defines it as ‘An amalgam of different goods and services offered as an activity experience to the tourist’. The experience, therefore, that a tourist obtains from the destination becomes the principal tourism product. Pine/Gilmore (1999) presented the idea of experience-as-product paradigm wherein experiences become the final products wanted by tourists. Aho (2001) describes tourism experiences as emotional and learning experiences which are recorded on *mental imprints*. The actual experience may be preceded by experience emotions which create expectations and may leave as lifetime memories through souvenirs and photos as tangibles. Urry’s work in 1992 entitled *The Tourist Gaze “Revisited”* best describes the tourist experience. Urry emphasized that sight is not the only sense stimulated in the tourist experience. He further explained by stating (p. 172): Obviously, tourists do all sorts of things while “away,” and it was never my intention to suggest that various other senses are not stimulated on holiday. Tourists experience extremes of heat, taste unexpected dishes, experience heightened passions, hear unusual sounds, encounter new smells, and so on.”

2.5. Composition of the Tourism Product

Burkat and Medlik (in Yoeti, 1986) as cited by Loka (2013) described the structure of the tourism product as “an array of integrated products consisting of objects and attractions, transportation, accommodation and entertainment where each element of the tourism product is prepared by individual companies and are offered separately to consumers or tourists”. Loka (2013) cited Medlik and Middleton (1973) with the definition as “the tourism product consists of a variety of elements which is a package that is not integral to each other and meet the needs of tourists from leaving his residence to the place of destination and back again to

the place of origin". They further viewed tourism products as a bundle of activities, services and benefits that compose the whole tourism experience. Five components, namely, destination attractions and facilities, accessibility, images and price constitute the bundle. Suwanto (2007) as cited by Loka (2013) stated the understanding of tourism products "is obtained and the overall service felt or enjoyed by tourists since he left his residence to the tourist destination of his choice and to return home where he originally departed". Loka (2013) also cited Yoeti (2002) who stated that tourism products consist of three main elements. These are: attractiveness of tourist destinations to include its image as envisioned by tourists; facilities of tourist destination, namely accommodation, transportation, parking, recreation, food business and others; and lastly, the ease to reach these destinations. Mason (2000) and Poerwanto (1998) cited by Loka (2013) identified the components of tourism products as attractions, whether natural, cultural or man-made such as festivals or performing arts; accessibility; amenities to obtain pleasure like accommodation, hospitality and cleanliness; and networking relating to products offered by local, national or international markets.

2.6. Components Model of the Tourism Product

Authors Wahab, Crampon and Rothfield (1976), Schmoll (1977) Gunn (1988) ascribed to what has been described and called by Middleton (1989) as the "components model". The latter is synonymous to the "total level" which Middleton mentioned as one of two different levels where the term "tourist product" is used. It is the whole experience of the tourist from the time he leaves his home to the time he returns. The other one is the "specific" level which is a discrete product offered by a single business like sightseeing tours or airline seats. Following Gunn's (1988) assertions, Middleton (1989) described a tourism product as a complex human experience and not merely a simple commodity. Its development should be an integrated process considering accommodations, attractions, information services and transportation. Jefferson and Lickorish (1988) interpreted the components model of the tourism product. One view is that the tourism product is a "collection of physical and service features together with symbolic associations which are expected to fulfill the wants and needs of the buyers" (1988:59). The other view is that the tourism product "is a satisfying activity at a desired destination" (1988:211).

2.7 Generic Tourism Product Model

The views held by other authors that tourism products are primarily experiences is supported by the Generic Tourism Product Model conceptualized by Stephen Smith (1994) from the University of Waterloo, Canada. This is illustrated in Figure 1. The generic tourism product consists of five elements namely physical plant at the core or center; service in the second circle; hospitality in the third circle; freedom of choice in the fourth circle and involvement in the outermost circle. *Physical Plant* refers to site, natural resource or facility. *Service* pertains to specific tasks undertaken to meet needs of tourists. *Hospitality* is the manner by which service is delivered or performed. It is what makes the experience more special and meaningful. *Freedom of choice* means that tourists do not feel restricted particularly when their main purpose of travel is for leisure and relaxation. They have options to choose from with regard what to do, where else to go, what to eat and even what to buy. Last component is *involvement*. It is the tourist experience when they receive the service and engage in activities.

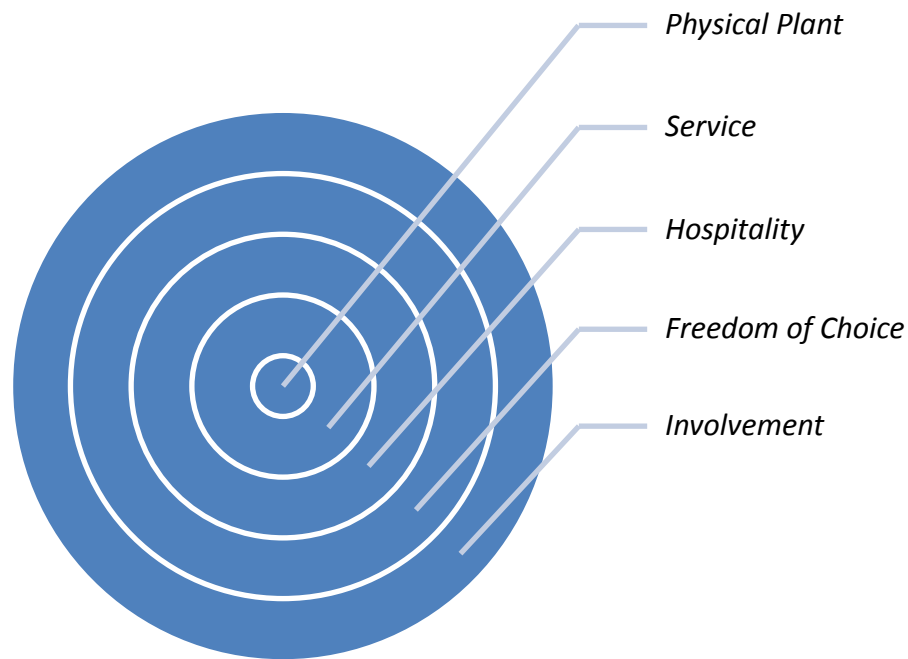


Figure 1. The Generic Tourism Product

Source: Smith, S.L.J. (1994)

Starting with the core and moving towards the outermost shell, this indicates decreasing direct management control and increasing consumer involvement. Intangibility is augmented. All tourism products incorporate the five elements whose relative importance depends on the type being considered. How well each element is designed and coordinated with others will be the deciding factor in the tourism product's success in answering needs of tourists.

The model best describes what elements comprise the tourism product and how these elements are assembled. It considers the role played by human experience in the tourism product and can be applied to individual commodities or to a package of commodities signifying the tourist experience. According to Smith, the word "generic product" refers to the conceptual commodity that an industry makes. It may come in various forms but serves the same function which is to facilitate travel and activity of individuals from their usual home surroundings.

The experience-as-product paradigm of Pine/Gilmore (1999) is backed up by Smith's model. In the tourism industry, it is overall experience that is sold to tourists and elicits customer satisfaction. Smith (1994) also illustrated the generic tourism production process in Table 1. It commences with raw inputs, proceeds thru intermediate inputs and outputs and ends with final output, i.e., tourist's experience. Examples were enumerated at each stage in Table 1. The process starts with primary inputs, raw materials or other components necessary to come up with facilities and equipment necessary in the tourism industry. Additional processing resulted in intermediate tourism facilities. Refinement is done on said intermediate inputs through infusion of management expertise, technical know-how and packaging to come up with intermediate outputs which are services offered in the industry. When refined by the consumers, services now assume the form of final outputs which are personal experiences that may be described not only as intangible but also valuable. Two features of tourism products

are demonstrated in the production process. One is that at each step of the process, value is added. The second feature is that the consumer is involved in the production process itself.

Table 1: Tourism Production Function

Primary Inputs (Resources)	Intermediate Inputs (Facilities)	Intermediate Outputs (Services)	Final Outputs (Experiences)
Land	Parks	Park interpretation	Recreation
Labor	Resorts	Guide services	Social contacts
Water	Transportation modes	Cultural performances	Education
Agricultural produce	Museums	Souvenirs	Relaxation
Fuel	Craft shops	Conventions	Memories
Building materials	Convention centers	Performances	Business
Capital	Hotels	Accommodations	contacts
	Restaurants	Meals & drinks	
	Rental car fleets	Festivals & events	

Source: Smith, S.L.J. (1994)

3. Research Method

Exploratory research was undertaken to gather information on tourism product, its various features and models that may serve as framework for the case of Filipino inmates as performers in their natural setting or while incarcerated. As cited in Beech (2000), a parallelism with how Kotler (1994) identified three levels by which a tourism product can be broken down at holocaust sites is similarly applied to prison sites. The first level consists of the core product. This represents what the customer, i.e., visitor or tourist is actually purchasing. Core products, therefore, are items which the prisoners produce and sell to visitors. The second level is the tangible product defined as something which customers purchase in response to their needs. In prison sites, the core and tangible products could be both represented by the so-called ‘*kalandrakas*’. These could range from simple key chains, ship in light bulbs, crucifix in test tubes, shirts to the more elaborate paintings or art works. Usually their products are sold to civilian guests on special occasions or during carceral tours. These tours were categorized by Lev Vygotsky (1926) under the experiential education paradigm wherein knowledge results from transformation of visitors’ experience.

It is in an atmosphere of encouragement that the third and last level as described by Kotler (1994) as cited in Beech (2000) could emanate. This is the total or augmented product which contains both tangible and intangible perks and advantages that the consumer derives.

Considering aforementioned changes made in the correctional system, it is worth mentioning here that Wight (2006) has appropriately described tourism products being viewed as evolutionary. At first, prisoners were made to do handicrafts and art works which were exhibited and sold. Later on, visitor motivation and interpretation came into the picture. As tourists, whether local or non-local, their interactive experience with inmates is primarily given support together with entertainment which they also seek. Aside from experience-based products, visitors now look for new meanings associated with particular socio-cultural and political agenda.

4. Results

Using Smith's model, an analysis of results shall be made on the five elements of the generic product and tourism production function. The term *tourism product* was used interchangeably with *tourist product* in the sources cited in the research.

In brief, applying the five elements of the generic tourism product to the inmates and the correctional facility, physical plant houses the country's national penitentiary in Metro Manila while services are tasks to meet basic needs of visitors like seats and electric fans. These are not necessarily enough to make them comfortable. Hospitality is how the inmates conduct themselves when visitors are around. Freedom of choice and involvement refer to the choices from which visitors may choose to have a fruitful experience from the trip.

Physical Plant; (Core) refers to the site i.e., New Bilibid Prison, the national penitentiary in Muntinlupa City, Metro Manila. It is a fixed government property where structures house inmates in Minimum, Medium and Maximum Security Compounds. The Minimum Security Compound or Camp Bukang Liwayway was excluded from the study. It is an open camp with less restrictions and regimentation and intended for prisoners who can be reasonably trusted to serve their sentences in open conditions. For the Medium Security Compound, prisoners' behavior requires minimum supervision and their lowest sentence is set at less than twenty years. Also, they pose less danger to society if they escape. The Maximum Security Compound houses prisoners whose escape would be highly dangerous to the public and worst, the country's security. Inmates residing herein have a minimum sentence of twenty years. To others, physical plant could be a nature resource or facility. It may be a hotel or conditions of the physical environment to include weather or infrastructure. Quality of the physical plant may impact on visitors' experience. Buildings in the national penitentiary leave much to be desired. Dormitories are crowded. Cleanliness and sanitation must be addressed as these have been long-standing concerns.

If prisoners' performance will showcase aspects of the country's culture like regional dances, rituals or songs, the prison compound will need a lot of facelifting especially in areas where performances are delivered. Currently, the Education Section at the Medium Security Compound can accommodate at most two hundred guests, both local and foreign, while the auditorium at the Maximum Security Compound may be filled with four hundred guests. Entry in both cases is previously approved in cooperation with organizers like schools or other institutions. There is no need for tour operators. Muntinlupa City, being in the metropolis with its milieu of culture, food, history and natural attractions, is well positioned to be a special interest destination.

Service; would refer to rendition of particular tasks to answer needs of visitors. The physical plant will be practically useless to visitors unless services are added. In the course of inmates' performance, the audience (as tourists, consumers) will watch in an assigned venue. To function as such, lights and sound systems have to be provided, electric fans (since air-conditioners are not sufficient or installed in many areas) will be needed and chairs enough to seat the guests will be required. Since the penitentiary is a facility whose primary purpose is incarceration, the audience should understand that they cannot expect much in comparison to regular venues for performances.

Hospitality; is the extra mile that goes with service rendered. It encompasses the manner by which tasks are performed and the sensitivity to travelers. Hospitality is a lot more subjective than service. From the perspective of inmates, this is actually the respect required from them when there are civilians from the outside. It is their general deportment and how they carry themselves before and after their performances.

The last two elements, namely freedom of choice and involvement, are necessary ingredients leading to the understanding that the tourism product is indeed an experience.

Freedom of Choice; relates to the range of options set before the visitor in order to enjoy the experience and find satisfaction in it. The degree of freedom will vary depending on the objectives of the trip, prior experience, knowledge and expectations. The choices available to persons who wish to watch the inmates perform are as follows: whether to go inside the prison compound and see their actual performance live or just to watch recorded videos if these are made available to the viewing public. The latter is the choice of those who are either fearful, adamant or refuse to take the risk for fear of their own security or at worst, their own lives.

Freedom of choice need not refer to offered or available alternatives alone. It may also apply to other pleasant surprises or spontaneous activities. In some performances, audience participation is allowed enabling civilians to interact with prisoners to a limited extent. It could be anybody from the guests or it could be a well-known artist, celebrity or personality who performs with them. This leads to the fifth element, i.e., the encapsulating shell of involvement.

Involvement; in the case of the civilian audience is not limited to the physical but could extend to both their intellectual and emotional facets when they empathize with inmates and see conditions currently prevailing while incarcerated. A sense of focus and appreciation of their own liberty are inculcated. Reality checks come to the fore.

To them, involvement means being able to enter the premises and have access to activities and programs that arouse their interest and feed their imagination. This applies most especially to first timers. Being subjected to regulated time limits, the guests make a quick exploration of the surroundings, other people present, whether as guests or as inmates or prison officials and employees and discover their response to the trip, be it emotional or intellectual. When a relatively acceptable plant, service, hospitality and freedom of choice are synergistically combined, consumers are able to participate actively and attain a certain level of success in the production of a tourism product. Table 1 by Smith (1994) summarizes the product process which results to the tourism product. Each stage shall be explained relative to the artistic performance of inmates.

To begin, the process has primary inputs. In this case, human capital is considered, i.e., the inmates. In the second column, Smith discusses that primary inputs are then converted through additional processing into intermediate inputs or tourism facilities. For prisoners, further processing would entail more training and practice under the supervision of designated mentors as technical support and facilitators. Their expertise will be depended upon for refinement of inmates' skills and talents. Intermediate outputs or services include the item performances. On this third stage, Smith points out effectively that tourism product is just a potential commodity. Potential since it does not form part of the ultimate product which is tourists' experience until the tourists are able to witness for themselves the inmates' performance. The final output, therefore, is experience which is intangible and carries a premium value. For guests who visited prison facilities, these could mean education, memories and to a certain extent, social contacts. The production process applied points explicitly to a particular feature of the tourism product, i.e., the consumer has a role to play in the process. The tourism product cannot exist unless consumers get involved in the final stage which is to see inmates perform and relish the experience. Thus, visitors take the intermediate output which is performance and process it into a tourism product which is their personal tourism experience.

Consumption of the Tourism Product; Intentions for consumption of the tourism product to a certain extent depend on the motivations geared toward particular outcomes that are expected by prison visitors. These could range from mere curiosity, lack of something better to do, search for nostalgia, remembrance or novelty, entertainment and for the more noble reason of getting educated. Motivations and intentions of prison visitors emerge from

different reasons. These are expectations which depend on their experience with specific social and cultural environments. Mark Watson, executive director of Tourism Concern, an ethical travel campaign group, said “People go for a huge variety of reasons, so it’s very difficult to assess their motivations” (Coldwell, 2013). What is more important to him is to look at the impact on local communities concerned and not merely consider the act of going to these places as photo opportunities.

These insights coincide with the classification of Prison Tourism under Dark Tourism, a special interest tourism wherein there are motivations and interests of tourists under consideration instead of just leisure and recreation (Minic, 2012). According to Dr. Philip R. Stone (2006), “Dark tourism may be referred to as the act or travel to sites associated with death, suffering and the seemingly macabre”. He further stated that ‘dark tourism production is multi-faceted and occurs in a range of social and cultural contexts.’ Therefore diverse groups with varying attitudes toward dark tourism sites are targeted by its products. Hence, the expectations of visitors become dependent on their experience with the social environment they find themselves in and people from different cultures have varying impressions of a dark site as well. Niemelä (2010) described it as a combination of history, heritage, tourism and tragedy. It was distinguished from typical package tours more familiar to civilians because of the authenticity experienced by visitors and the attractions’ offered credibility. Other than prison tourism, known types of dark tourism include disaster, graveyard, grief and holocaust tourism. Using the Pine/Gilmore (1999) experience-as-product paradigm, demand for visits to the penitentiary is thus derived from travelers’ demand for experiences. It becomes a function of personal preferences, visits to other historical sites or cultural attractions with historical value in the prison compound and other relevant activities like community extension work which include health services or gift giving. Getz (1991), on the other hand, considered festivals and special events in the new wave of alternative tourism. Prisoners as performers in special events or occasions may be viewed as part of this tourism genre. As an alternative tourism, it minimizes negative repercussions, contributes to sustainable development and could foster improved host-guest relations. Gibson and Connell (2005) stated that as tourism is transforming, music has become a new reason for travel regardless of its genre. For so many generations, singing has been a reflection of the way of life of Filipinos and a channel through which their talents can be exhibited. Pfeiffer (1975) said that the ancient Filipinos felt the strong need to express their beliefs. This became evident in the rituals they chant and work-songs which reminded them of their traditions, ideals, successes, failures, and future aspirations.

As Urry (1992) has stated, guests may experience extreme heat temperature, encounter new smells and others. This is especially true in the prison compound where visitors could experience heat and smell what they do not normally encounter which are not necessarily pleasant. Kotler, on the other hand, was right when he said that niches are also smaller and could attract one or few competitors. The dancing inmates from the province of Cebu in the Visayas could be matched by those in the national penitentiary. Reputedly more exposed to appearance on You Tube, the prisoners have gained worldwide fame. They prepared a mob dance in time for the visit of Pope Francis to the country in January 2015 (Delizo, 2015) and performed to the tune of “We Are All God’s Children”. The video can be seen on You Tube. Also, in line with the promotion for Mega Cebu’s vision for a Wholesome, Advanced, Vibrant, Equitable and Sustainable (WAVES) Cebu by 2050, the inmates presented a three-minute routine featuring a human formation of the letters C, E, B, and U with a wave before government officials and private citizens. Boxing icon and later Senator Manny ‘Pacman’ Pacquiao also went there to watch dance performances and boxing matches (Indino, 2015).

Public awareness has been undeniably influenced by contemporary media which has swayed interpretation of landscapes including sites of dark tourism, i.e., correctional facilities

in this case. Public opinion and behavior are affected by radio and television programs to which people regularly tune in for news and entertainment. Communication is now a global commodity. While the shows of high risk inmate Colangco were met with criticism, Gang Badoy, founder and executive director of RockEd Philippines, a foundation that has been conducting outreach programs in the national penitentiary for the past seven years, thought otherwise. Badoy stated “Na-offend lang yata tayo doon sa music video kasi may thinking tayo na kapag merong nagkasala sa lipunan via krimen, we want to see them suffer...but you know they are still human, they try to breathe a bit better everyday, so for me, yung music video okay lang” (Marcelo, 2014). (In English, “Maybe we are just offended by the music video because we have that thinking that if there is somebody who sinned in society through crime, we want to see them suffer...but you know they are still human, they try to breathe a bit better everyday, so for me, the music video is just ok.”) Badoy recommended that the music studio be made a public facility instead of donating or dismantling the instruments there.

Pfieffer’s (1975) observation that ancient Filipinos are expressive of their beliefs also holds. Inmates during their incarceration cannot simply veer away from engaging themselves in musicals as well as other artistic performances.

The consumption of the tourism product consequently paves the way for satisfaction of visitors’ needs. This is more on that aspect of filling in their curiosity and reinforces the objectives set by prison officials and by inmates themselves which include making the public aware of the plight of inmates in prison facilities.

Prisoners’ Performance as a Unique Tourism Product; the comparative analysis of related literature will account for prisoners’ performance being a unique tourism product. This can be best explained by observations made. First, the tourism product is viewed from the perspective of the audience, i.e., those who have watched prisoners perform live on stage in the national penitentiary grounds. It consists of experiences and memories that are intangible. Therefore, it is the total travel experience of those who are able to watch inmates. It sums up the travel experience of the audience to include everything seen or consumed as part of the trip. In essence, tourism is all about time well-spent and the experience gained. Visitors are being sold something that they cannot see, hear, smell, touch or taste before they purchase. The tourism product is intangible. Discounting souvenirs and pictures taken if possible, visitors at the end bring home with them memories and stories about their trips. Tourism products cannot be touched or held as they primarily include experiences during their travel, views that they are able to take in and trips made to the correctional institution. Once these have happened, they cannot be taken from visitors nor their emotions or sentiments be reproduced. They can only be remembered and savored.

Second, the tourism product described here is unique. The experience of watching inmates sing, dance and act cannot be similarly seen in other correctional facilities in the country. For now, it can be experienced in the national penitentiary where more spectators could be accommodated compared to penal colonies or provincial and city jails. Others, like the Cebu inmates, perform as dancers alone. However, the prison compound allows only a certain number of guests who may watch. It speaks of its own carrying capacity.

Third, mounting an event which displays inmates’ talents attracts tourists as spectators and at times, participants in the event or both. Where said event is an attraction, it becomes an event based tourism product. Haru (2005) in his article written in *About Festivals...* entitled *The Business Side of Festivals*, he mentioned that the first step to be taken would be to determine a budget for the event just like when a business is run. Second is to raise funds through the networks and not just break even but to have excess funds to serve as capital for the next event. Manpower volunteers and corporate sponsorship may help lessen the budget.

Merchandise booths may also generate funds by selling products of inmates. This could also lead to a multiplier effect.

Fourth, as a product, it is highly seasonal. Only when there are important occasions to celebrate or guests visit the compound will prisoners be asked to render numbers. Therefore, as consumers of tourism products, guests cannot just try it out anytime they wish in the same manner that they do with other products. Fifth, being highly perishable, it is not every day that prisoners are made to perform before an audience. This is a once in a lifetime experience that people from the outside, as consumers, should not miss. If visitors cannot go to the prison facilities, the opportunity is lost and can no longer be recovered. Thus, the term perishability is associated to the opportunity of selling goods and services to visitors which is foregone if the product is not bought by the consumers. A tourism product cannot be stored, put in inventory or stockpiled for future sales, use or consumption. Sixth, the purpose of the trip is to engage in activities which satisfy primary visitors' needs. In this case, it is to satisfy their curiosity and see how well inmates could render performances. As audience, they may just watch or in other cases, may perform with inmates when their participation is requested.

Seventh, time constraints are present during the prisoners' performance. Events inside the penitentiary have a relatively short time allotment due to strict security regulations. Understandably, inmates are not allowed to perform endlessly. Usually, programs start between 9 and 10 in the morning and end at 3 in the afternoon when guests should leave the compound. Beyond 3 p.m., permits have to be obtained from the chief of security. Hence, watching the performance is said to be consumable only at the supplier's premise, i.e., in prison. The supplier and consumers or the guests become inseparable and dependent on each other. They must be with each other during the inmates' performance. Eighth, the quality of the tourism product could depend on factors beyond the control of the seller. In this regard, the audience will feel very limited in their movements since they are not free to roam around the compound when they are there simply to watch a program. Also, facilities will not be similar to those that exist when watching performances elsewhere. Examples of these are the provisions for air-conditioning and cushioned seats. Ninth, historical landmarks and sites to visit in the national penitentiary including the museum, Administration Building, Japanese shrine and cemetery, Memorial Hill and others are cultural products that may be found within the compound. Aiello and Cacia (2014) defined "cultural products are goods and services that include the arts (performing arts, visual arts and architecture), heritage conservation (museums, galleries, libraries), the cultural industries (written media, broadcasting, film, recording), and festivals. Considering the restriction of movements by outsiders inside the penitentiary, watching a performance is more often than not done separately from touring the sites.

Lastly, as consumers, the audience may perceive inmates' performance in a subjective way. This perception could be influenced by audience's conceptions and misconceptions, personal motivations and expectations as well as previous trips to the penitentiary, if applicable. Other factors that may set in are personalities of the audience themselves and their natural attitudes toward certain things. Since it is the experience that is marketed and sold to tourists, the product could become very subjective in this context. Customer perception of the product, i.e., perceived quality, may be highly affected by other factors like weather conditions, other guests and interaction with people.

5. Conclusion, Implications, and Limitations

The research aimed to put into perspective the artistic performance of inmates within the realm of how tourism product is seen and defined. It satisfied properties and components of the tourism product. However, it is not really just the generic tourism product as known but one with its peculiarities and intrinsic to the Filipino people and the Philippines. The limited

access for the general public coupled with prison cells whose very nature is shrouded in secrecy altogether add to the appeal to explore and watch the prisoners entertain as they perform. While prisoners' artistic performance may be considered an unconventional tourism product, it has started to attract attention of the general population. It is to the advantage of the public and the inmates as well that more performances are rendered on different occasions to further develop the prisoners' abilities and enable more visitors to come and watch them perform. As inmates are featured in various performances, such occasions allow them to attain a certain degree of integrity other than the other citizens' perceptions which are only associated to persons who are imprisoned and labeled as misfits in society. Inmates should not be hindered from pursuing their passion for arts and music and remain ignored individuals of Philippine society. Artistic performances have the power to make significant impacts on their lives as these increase their self-confidence, enhance their social skills and boost their motivation to learn. The other five penal colonies in the country together with the Correctional Institute for Women may also be encouraged to hold similar performances so that their offenders may be tapped and more visitors will be given the opportunity to see them do their act.

Those who desire to promote prison tourism have to convince correctional officials and the government that this type of dark tourism is in the best interest of all stakeholders. For the prison visitors who may be tourists, both local and foreign who are on a cultural exploration, or just regular visitors of convicts, the trips do not only restore but also reinforce the belief that prisoners can mend their ways for the better. Second, if public participation is encouraged and visitors are given the chance to mingle and interact with inmates, the mystery which encompasses prison compounds and prisoners themselves alongside the culture of fear are reduced if not totally eliminated. Quoting Dr. Philip R. Stone (Coldwell, 2013), Executive Director of the Institute for Dark Tourism Research at the University of Central Lancashire, he said: "Dark tourism doesn't need dark tourists. It just needs people who are interested in learning about this life and this world". In this regard, corrections officials may set-up a data bank on future performances. This way, statistics will identify the demographic profile of those who came to watch. They may be visitors or guests of inmates who are part of the program or who were just coincidentally visiting other offenders. They could be Filipinos from other places within and outside the metropolis or non-locals who were invited or knew there was a performance and were granted prior entry permission. Excursionists, if there are, likewise have to acquire same access permits.

Other than raising their awareness, full civilian support for offender rehabilitation and social inclusion could be solicited as well as assistance in crime prevention by promoting commitment and firm belief in the rule of law. While acceptable financial returns from performances may result, human interaction is even more significant. Ideally, a positive change in attitudes and perceptions toward the prison system is expected to come about as discernible consequence. While visitors would desire proof of their trip, only memories would best represent and authenticate their experiences. Watching these inmates perform is already an experience. Next time around, it will be another new experience.

As a tourism product, performances of inmates can be viewed as evolutionary beginning with its development and formulation as a new product. Performances of inmates in the other penal colonies may be looked into and included in further studies to analyze and reinforce these performances as tourism product. Also, a separate study on actual performances in the Maximum Security Compound together with the Correctional Institute of Women could be included to expand the evaluation of tourism product. If permission is granted, the views of inmates who participate may be taken through extensive interviews with them.

As a tourist destination, the country's penitentiary is beginning to manifest what it takes to come up with a memorable tourism product through its inmates' artistic performance. For the

city of Muntinlupa, other forms of niche tourism such as food, heritage, medical and religious tourism may be explored. Marketing a destination for entertainment also entails bringing culture translated into different forms such as action and drama films, documentaries, theatre shows and art products and enticing tourists from other places so they can experience such. People involved in the tourism industry have to effectively use inmates' talents, resources and time to enhance their capacity to develop their performances as quality tourism products. In the next decade or so, prison tourism will continue to get increasing media exposure and attention and possible inclusion in the educational curriculum. As awareness is brought to a new height, the subject is expected to feature more in the research agenda of stakeholders concerned and reach a broader and more mature audience.

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