

The Excitement on the Race of Vintas: Exploring on the Zamboanguenos Perception on Its Origin and Characteristics as a Folktale for Children

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Abstract

Zamboanga City is steadily progressing in its efforts to produce exceptional athletes, thanks to the various initiatives undertaken by the city's local government. As a result, an eagerly anticipated event called the Regatta was established. This event features a series of rowboat races, inspired by the city's indigenous communities, such as the Samas, Badjaos, Tausugs, and Subanens, who traditionally used the vinta, a wooden vessel, for water transportation across the Zamboanga Peninsula. The concept of organizing a vinta race emerged to localize the event for enjoyment, later evolving into a competitive race and eventually a sport. This study aims to determine the knowledge of the Zamboanguenos on the origin and characteristics of Regatta de Zamboanga. Additionally, it will serve as a foundation for creating literature related to this event, which can be incorporated into the curriculum at various educational levels, particularly in the context of local culture and understanding, with a focus on children's literature. The findings of this research will contribute to the sports industry in Zamboanga City by promoting its core values, social structure, arts, and culture. Moreover, it will make significant contributions to the social, cultural, economic, political, tourism, and environmental aspects of the community it serves.

Keywords: *Zamboanga city, Vinta, Regatta de Zamboanga, folktale, children, literature*

Introduction

Atilano, 1993 narrated as cited in the paper of Borja (2020), Zamboanga is widely recognized as a melting pot of diverse cultures. The city thrives with the lively manifestations of diverse cultural traditions and ways of life, shaped by the intermingling of indigenous Subano, Malay, Islamic (Yakan, Samal, Tausug, and Badjao), Spanish, and American influences that have endured throughout the ages. The classrooms in Zamboanga City's 12 districts and 21 secondary high schools mirror a fusion of cultures, experiences, and social backgrounds. A significant number of children, possibly even the majority, are bilingual, speaking a language other than English in their households, thereby introducing a variety of oral and literacy abilities into the educational setting.

Zamboanga City possesses a rich and vivid history. As early as the 13th and 14th centuries, it served as a prominent hub for barter trading among Chinese, Malays, and native communities such as the Tausugs, Samals, Subanons, and Badjaos. The Spanish presence was established in 1569 when a brief Catholic mission, known as La Caldera and now referred to as Recodo, was founded. Subsequently, on June 23, 1635, Father Melchor de Vera, a Jesuit Priest-Engineer, and the Spanish authorities laid the cornerstone of what is now recognized as Fort Pilar. This event marked the renaming of the place from Samboangan to Zamboanga, signifying the city's founding date (Malcampo, 2007).

Regatta de Zamboanga is a traditional game deeply rooted in the culture of the Zamboanguenos, wherein participants engage in races using vintas, traditional boats commonly known as lepa-lepa or sakayan. These rowboat races showcase the vintas, which are indigenous boats originating from Mindanao, the southern island of the Philippines. Initially, the term "Vinta" referred to a Moro dance, but it has since become synonymous with these traditional boats. The game holds significance within the community and serves as a representation of Zamboangueno culture. Additionally, the presence of vintas attracts tourists and contributes to the promotion of Zamboangueno culture.

According to Soutar (2016), vintas serve various purposes related to tourism and serve as a compelling attraction for foreign visitors. They have become iconic representations of Filipino culture and are associated with several institutions in the Philippines. Launching official events in different countries further promote the cultural heritage of Zamboanga City.

The people of Zamboanga consider Regatta de Zamboanga an integral part of their history and culture. It symbolizes the general development of Sulu, as the maneuvering of these crafts requires skillful navigation through stormy waters. The people believe that their ancestors embarked on boats in search of their promised land, and the tradition of Regatta de Zamboanga serves as an inheritance from their forefathers.

Hence, this study would like to look into the Zamboanguenos' Perception on the Origin and Characteristics of the popular game on the race of vintas locally known as "Regatta".

Related Literature and Studies

History of Zamboanga

Drawing from the accounts of early settlers in Zamboanga, the primary significance of the traditional ceremonies conducted on Zamboanga's waters revolved around the sails of boats, particularly the Vintas. The Regatta, a river race, served as a platform to showcase the vibrant and captivating sails of the Vintas, embodying the essence of "Hermosa," a term that conveys beauty in both Spanish and the local Chavacano creole language. The Vintas, hailing from the Samal or Badjao clans in the southwestern region of the Philippines, symbolize indigenous watercraft embellished with lively sails, typically reserved for joyous events such as weddings or celebrations.

Regatta de Zamboanga, held as part of the annual Zamboanga Hermosa Festival, is the grandest and most vibrant event. The native Zamboanguenos pay tribute to their patron saint, La Virgen Nuestra Señora del Pilar de Zarragosa, through the race, which serves as a commemoration. The festival spans the entire month of October, with the primary events concentrated within the initial 12 days, reaching their pinnacle on October 12, the feast day dedicated to the revered patron saint. To attract more participants beyond the local community and showcase the beauty and artistic allure of Vintas, the event was transformed into a competition, allowing broader participation. This idea ensures inclusivity among constituents.

During the festival, the entirety of R. T. Lim Boulevard bursts into a vibrant spectacle as the fearless Vintas, adorned with their colorful sails, navigate the waves for the annual Carrera de Vinta. For the residents of Zamboanga, the traditional outrigger boat, known as lepa-lepa or sakayan, holds great significance in representing their history and culture. In ancient times, Vintas were employed for transporting people and goods between different islands. The competition is predominantly dominated by Samal-Badjao fishermen, often recognized as sea gypsies, as their livelihood and way of life are intimately connected to the sea. In addition to fishing, some of them can be spotted near incoming commercial ferries, diving underwater to catch coins tossed by passengers.

Annually, the Carrera de Vinta draws crowds of locals and tourists numbering in the thousands, who endure the intense heat to witness this extraordinary competition. The Local Government of Zamboanga perceives the race as an event that fosters unity among individuals from diverse backgrounds, representing the harmonious coexistence of various religious groups within the city.

Regatta de Zamboanga

A regatta refers to a series of boat races, derived from the Venetian term "regata," meaning a contest. It typically encompasses races involving rowed or sailed watercraft, although some powerboat race series are also referred to as regattas. The word "regatta" originated from the Italian word "regatta," which denotes a "contention for mastery" and is derived from the Latin term "regattare," meaning "to

compete, haggle, sell at retail." In the late 1700s, "regatta" became specifically associated with boat races and the various social events associated with them.

The Regatta de Zamboanga Festival takes place annually in Zamboanga, Philippines. This vibrant festival transforms the sea into a spectacle of brightly colored vintas and traditional Moro boats, showcasing friendly competition and cultural pride.

The vinta, a traditional outrigger boat, has its roots in the Philippine Island of Mindanao. It is skillfully constructed by the Sama-Bajau, Tausug, and Yakan communities who inhabit the Sulu Archipelago, Zamboanga Peninsula, and southern Mindanao. Within the local context, these boats are commonly referred to as lepa-lepa or sakayan. Vintas have become one of Zamboanga's most recognizable symbols and are renowned for their vivid colors. These traditional multi-use boats serve as means of transportation for short distances, as well as for fishing and even housing.

The present Google Doodle commemorates Regatta de Zamboanga, a yearly sailing competition hosted in the southern region of the Philippines. Each October, numerous onlookers assemble along the extensive R.T. Lim Boulevard in Zamboanga City, spanning a kilometer, to witness the thrilling race of countless vintas adorned with their vivid sails along the picturesque coastline. Regatta de Zamboanga is one of the highlights of the Fiesta Hermosa celebration in Zamboanga City, where the vinta races are eagerly anticipated every October. These iconic vintas bring a burst of color to the shores of R.T. Lim Boulevard.

Research Objective

Explore on the Zamboangueños Perception on Its Origin and Characteristics as a Folktale for Children

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive research methodology with the aim of describing, explaining, and validating the study's findings. According to Darin (2014), a descriptive research design pertains to investigating the attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of a specific group of individuals regarding a particular subject. This research involved conducting a survey to investigate the historical origins, distinctive features, and the level of impact brought about by Regatta de Zamboanga.

This study was conducted in Zamboanga City in 1974 during the Hermosa festival in the city. Located in the Zamboanga Peninsula of the Philippines, this city is classified as first-class and exhibits a high level of urbanization. The spot is deliberately situated on the southwestern tip of the Zamboanga Peninsula, on Basilan Strait, and shielded by Basilan Island. The quick seaside swamps are restricted, with low, tough slopes found a short distance inland. Zamboanga's Spanish-style design, fine seashores, and rocky setting combine with an atmosphere that is cooler and less damp than that of Manila to make it a most loved place of interest.

The simple Quota Sampling Technique was employed in this study to select participants from professional, non-professional, and farmer or vendor groups, based on predefined criteria. The target respondents were chosen according to specific inclusion criteria, ensuring representation from each group.

The main research tool utilized in this study was a questionnaire, derived from previous works by Layon (2017) and Ruales (2019). The questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section focused on the historical background of Regatta de Zamboanga, aiming to gather information about its inception. The second section explored the various characteristics of Regatta de Zamboanga, including aspects such as value system, social structure, arts, and culture. Lastly, the third section assessed the extent of Regatta de Zamboanga's contributions across multiple dimensions, encompassing social, cultural, economic, political, tourism, and environmental aspects.

The questionnaire items related to the historical background and characteristics of Regatta de Zamboanga were adapted from Layon's previous work in 2012. The historical background section incorporated inquiries designed to provide insights into the background and origin of Regatta de Zamboanga. Meanwhile, the characteristics section employed a Likert scale, subdivided into four categories: value system, social structure, arts and culture, and ground rules. Respondents were presented with four response options: "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree."

Results and Discussions

On the Respondents' Perception on the Origin of Regatta de Zamboanga

The analysis of the data shows that a significant proportion of the respondents, specifically forty percent (40%) of the total, who are currently professionals, associate regatta de Zamboanga with the utilization of vintas or boats in fishing. Other responses indicate that they perceive Juego de Regatta as rooted in the culture and origin of the Zamboanguenos. According to them, it was also inspired that vinta is the most favorite mode of water transportation of the indigenous peoples like Tausugs and Badjaos.

Badjaos or commonly known as the sea people in Mindanao were originally fishermen living the shores of the southern part of the Philippines. They built houses meters away from the sea shores and established their families. Their main source of income was fishing until the pirates destroyed their homes and they began to search means of livelihood to other parts of the country (Soriano, 2019).

Students' Responses on What Idea Regatta de Zamboanga was anchored. However, on the viewpoint of the students, fifty percent (50%) of them said that regatta de Zamboanga was anchored on the main livelihood of the Mindanao people which is fishing. They see this activity as one way to promote fishing. Other students also consider the historical background of Regatta de Zamboanga from the moro people and anchored from the Spanish colonizers.

This implies that the students still recognize the background of Regatta de Zamboanga as anchored on current practices, experiences and folktales of the natives. Fishing as still evident source of livelihood of the locales and appreciation of one's activity in the preservation of culture and tradition.

The results affirm to the study of Delamere, Wankel and Hinch (2011) that community festival have great social impact to the community as it builds strong potential for the tourism industry, its people and their experiences.

Fishermen's Responses on What Idea Regatta de Zamboanga was anchored. Table shows the fisherfolks' perception on the what idea Regatta de Zamboanga was anchored. It shows that fifty percent (50%) of the fishermen said that Regatta de Zamboanga as anchored on the beauty of Zamboanga particularly on its islands and scenery. Second in the rank is fishing as the main livelihood of the people and thirdly, it was based on culture and history.

This signifies that the fishermen understand the value of nature of Zamboanga and still raise the banner of its rich culture and tradition.

Table 1. Respondents' Responses on the Origin of Regatta de Zamboanga

Responses	F	P
Professional Responses	2	20.0
History and culture of Zamboanga City		
Inspired from the transportation of Tausug and Badjao	3	30.0
Based on Vinta de Zamboanga	1	10.0
Fishing in Zamboanga using Vintas	4	40.0
Students' Responses	F	P

Fishing as dominant source of living	5	50%
Influenced by Moro people	3	30%
Based on culture	1	10%
Anchored from the Spaniards	1	10%
Fisherfolks Responses	F	P
Fishing as dominant source of living	3	30.0
Beauty of Zamboanga	5	50.0
Based on culture and history	2	20.0

On the Characteristics of Regatta de Zamboanga

The characteristics of different games refer to the distinctiveness of the games played in Regatta de Zamboanga. It includes the different dimension like value system; social structure; arts and culture, and ground rules. This is discussed in separate tables.

Value System of Regatta De Zamboanga. One's character is shaped by their virtues or vices. It is influenced by their personal values and self-control, which are determined by their understanding of moral principles and their willingness to adhere to them, both in relation to themselves and others. This is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Value System of Regatta de Zamboanga

Indicators	Weighted Mean	SD	Descriptive Equivalent
Viewers/Spectators feel inspired while watching the conduct of the activity.	4.79	0.41	Strongly Agree
Participants are willing to join with utmost respect with other competitors	4.52	0.57	Strongly Agree
Competitors participation is consciously taken into account to contribute to a greater understanding for personal fulfilment.	4.28	0.70	Strongly Agree
Factor Mean	4.53	0.61	High

Note. n = 30. 1.00-1.80 – Strongly Disagree; 1.81-2.60 – Disagree; 2.61-3.40 – Undecided; 3.41-4.20 – Agree; 4.21-5.00 – Strongly Agree.

The data shows the value system of Regatta de Zamboanga and evidently, all of the indicators got a verbal description of “Strongly Agree”. The indicator with the highest weighted mean is “Viewers/Spectators feel inspired while watching the activity” with a mean score of 4.79 and standard deviation of 0.61. This means that the Zamboanguenos consider this activity as significant to their cultural being. This also inspires them to promote their culture and be proud of their origin. The results also signify that Regatta de Zamboanga cultivates good values among the participants such as respect, personal fulfillment and wide understanding of cultural diversity.

This result is consistent to the study of Fredline & Faulkner (2012) that residents who participated and watched this yearly significant activity have positive perceptions about Regatta de Zamboanga and create a positive impact in promoting the beautiful culture of Zamboanga.

In terms of the Social Structure

This refers to the unique and enduring framework of institutions through which individuals in a community engage and coexist. It is frequently discussed in conjunction with the notion of social change, which pertains to the influences that alter the social organization and arrangement of society. The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Social Structure

Indicators	WM	sd	Descriptive Equivalent
Provides equal opportunity for all with respect to their economic background	4.34	0.72	Strongly Agree
Encourages respect for all races/ethnicity	4.90	0.31	Strongly Agree
Promotes unity, harmony and camaraderie between and among people with different family orientation	4.90	0.31	Strongly Agree
Promotes unity, harmony and camaraderie between and among participants of the competition	4.59	0.57	Strongly Agree
Participation has helped them improve their social interaction or skills with others	4.59	0.68	Strongly Agree
Factor Mean	4.66	0.58	High

Note. n = 30. 1.00-1.80 – Strongly Disagree; 1.81-2.60 – Disagree; 2.61-3.40 – Undecided; 3.41-4.20 – Agree; 4.21-5.00 – Strongly Agree.

Table 3 shows the characteristics of Regatta de Zamboanga in terms of social structure. It can be noted that the overall weighted mean is 4.66 which is interpreted as “Strongly Agree”. This means that the respondents have strong convictions that Regatta de Zamboanga provides varied opportunities for the locales, encourages respects among them regardless of ethnicity, promotes unity and harmony and helps in improving the social interaction skills of the Zamboanguenos.

The results further imply that this sports promotes strong connection among the locales and other people from different parts of the country. As a tourist attraction, this helps promote unity in diversity and establishes strong partnership to boost the economic development of Zamboanga.

The results affirm to the study of Delamere, Wankel and Hinch (2011) that community festival have great social impact to the community as it builds strong potential for the tourism industry and its people.

Regatta de Zamboanga in terms of Arts and Culture

These are valuable products resulting from the creative application of individual or collective skills and imagination in a wide range of creative disciplines, including painting, sculpture, music, dance, theater, films, graphic arts, and other artistic domains. The result is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Arts and Culture

Indicators	Weighted Mean	SD	Descriptive Equivalent
Participation in the competition brings positive outlook and creates appreciation of the activity	4.55	0.74	Strongly Agree

Participation in the competition makes them feel physically fit and healthy	4.62	0.49	Strongly Agree
Participation in the competition gives them the feeling of their ancestors activity	4.62	0.49	Strongly Agree
The competition promotes the cultural heritage of the Mindanaoans	4.90	0.31	Strongly Agree
The competition invites more participants to join	4.34	0.77	Strongly Agree
The competition upholds the cultural heritage of the ancestors who first practice the said game	4.55	0.57	Strongly Agree
Participation has given them the opportunity to demonstrate their prowess, talents and skills	4.62	0.68	Strongly Agree
Participation has helped them boost their confidence	4.52	0.57	Strongly Agree
Participation makes them feel happy and satisfied	4.69	0.47	Strongly Agree
Factor Mean	4.60	0.59	High

Note. n = 30. 1.00-1.80 – Strongly Disagree; 1.81-2.60 – Disagree; 2.61-3.40 – Undecided; 3.41-4.20 – Agree; 4.21-5.00 – Strongly Agree.

Table 4. reveals the characteristics of Regatta de Zamboanga in terms of arts and culture based on the responses of the respondents. It can be shown that all of the indicators got a verbal interpretation of “Strongly Agree”. This means that the respondents perceive Regatta de Zamboanga not just as a competition to receive recognition but as well as the value of arts in their locality. The sports also promotes the rich culture of Zamboanga, prowess, talents and skills of its people. This activity also boosts the confidence of the competitors in achieving their goals and make them inspired and enjoy while having the activity.

The results also indicate that Regatta de Zamboanga preserves the tradition, arts and culture of Zamboanguenos as it promotes the colorful and beautiful sails of the vintas. Small, Edwards, and Lynnaire (2005) assert community-based events and cultural activities are becoming more popular and, subsequently, more numerous. They encompass a diverse range of games which provide opportunity for every individual to showcase camaraderie, endurance, techniques and other related traits. Characteristically, they originate within the community in response to a need or desire to celebrate their unique identity (Douglas, Douglas, & Derrett, 2011).

In terms of Ground Rules

These refer to broad norms, principles, or guidelines that dictate the appropriate manner of conducting oneself or accomplishing a task in a particular situation or pursuit, particularly those that are informal or implicit. This is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Ground Rules

Indicators	Weighted Mean	SD	Descriptive Equivalent
The competition observes the length of time of the race	4.41	0.87	Strongly Agree
Design and artistic design are considered in the criteria of the competition	4.66	0.55	Strongly Agree

The organizer/committee screens the participants	4.34	0.61	Strongly Agree
Registration fee is considered by the organizer upon joining the competition	3.66	1.29	Agree
Ranking of winners is being considered	4.21	1.18	Strongly Agree
Factor Mean	4.26	1.08	High

Note. n = 30. 1.00-1.80 – Strongly Disagree; 1.81-2.60 – Disagree; 2.61-3.40 – Undecided; 3.41-4.20 – Agree; 4.21-5.00 – Strongly Agree

As shown in Table 5, the overall weighted mean is 4.26 with a standard deviation of 1.08 and verbal description of “Strongly Agree”. This implies that they strongly agree that this yearly competition observes the ground rules carefully and correctly in terms of length of time of race, criteria, participants and ranking of winners. Regatta de Zamboanga is celebrated yearly in Zamboanga every October to showcase the culture and strength of its people. Regatta de Zamboanga usually follows strict ground rules during the competition like artistic designs of the vintas used in the contests and the number of participants.

The indicator on “Registration fee” got an interpretation of “Agree” which differs from the rest of the indicators. This implies that registration fee among the participants is not really given strong emphasis and it depends on the organizers of the said event. Originally, there was no registration fee collected from the participants as the contests only showcase the beautiful culture, tradition and art of Zamboanga. As time passes by, various factors were considered to improve the implementation of regatta de Zamboanga in the community and that includes the collection of registration fees for miscellaneous expenses. This further signifies that this activity not only contributes in the preservation of culture but as well brings a positive economic impact to the Zamboanguenos.

Burns, Hatch & Mules (2006) said that economic aspect much be given emphasis aside from its socio-cultural contributions because the success of any cultural event is commonly measured in terms of its economic contribution to event stakeholders, the community and the region.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The participants of Regatta de Zamboanga recognize its significance in fostering camaraderie among the indigenous peoples of Zamboanga City. The majority of students acknowledge the festival's role in preserving the city's cultural heritage. For fishermen, the celebration represents not only a source of income but also honor and pride. Professionals view Regatta de Zamboanga as deeply rooted in the local culture, particularly in the traditional use of vintas, which serve as the preferred mode of water transportation for indigenous groups like the Tausugs and Badjaos. Students also note that the festival is closely tied to the city's main livelihood, which is farming. Fishermen additionally emphasize the beauty of Zamboanga, particularly its islands and scenery, as an integral part of Regatta de Zamboanga.

The characteristics of Regatta de Zamboanga promote positive values among the people of Zamboanga City, including respect, personal fulfillment, and a broad understanding of cultural diversity. It fosters strong connections among locals and individuals from different parts of the country. As a tourist attraction, it contributes to unity in diversity and establishes robust partnerships to boost the city's economic development. The festival preserves the traditions, arts, and culture of the Zamboanguenos, showcasing the colorful and beautiful sails of the vintas. The registration fee for participants is not heavily emphasized and depends on the event organizers. Regatta de Zamboanga follows strict guidelines during the competition, including artistic designs for the vintas and regulations on the number of participants.

Hence, in order to maintain the celebratory essence of the Regatta de Zamboanga and draw a larger number of tourists, it is crucial to develop policies that reinforce its execution. Furthermore, the incorporation of the game literature derived from this research into the educational curriculum at various academic levels is essential to establish its significance as a regional folk narrative, adapting it to local contexts as time progresses.

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