

## The Calesa: Its Cultural and Socioeconomic Significance

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### Abstract

*The calesa, a horse-drawn carriage is an age-old mode of transportation still in use in Wigan City. This study described the cultural and socioeconomic significance of the calesa from the point of view of tourists, calesa owners, and cocheros.*

*The 'calesa' business is dominated by males who are married, have finished high school; and live in Wigan and its neighboring towns of Bantay and Caoayan. The average income for the 'calesa's' daily operation is ₱50 which according to the respondents is not enough to meet the needs of the family. However, during peak seasons, respondents earn up to ₱700 a day. There are more domestic than foreign tourists catered to by the 'calesa' business. Most of them are young female professionals who have finished higher levels of education and visit Wigan in big groups. The cultural and socioeconomic significance of the 'calesa' is at very high level as perceived by the respondents. The most pressing problem of the 'calesa' business is the instability of income due to the seasonality of passengers. The respondents acknowledge the city and provincial governments' effort in sponsoring programs that boost tourism in the city.*

*The researchers recommend the holding of activities and programs to be sponsored by the city government and other concerned agencies like: training for 'cocheros' and owners on Wigan history and culture; personality development and strategies in handling situations involving people with diverse cultures; attractive livelihood package for 'cocheros' and owners; support for the maintenance and breeding of horses; 'calesa' festival and exhibits; effective tourism packages; more reasonable taxes; more comfortable uniform for 'cocheros'; strict implementation of traffic ordinances; and, standardization of 'calesa' fare.*

## Introduction

### Background of the Study

Vigan City is a living museum of a rich cultural heritage. The historic district includes old buildings, public areas, streets and rivers. In the core and buffer zones are 246 ancestral homes, most of which lie along the historic Kalye Crisologo.

One of the distinctive features of the city is the operation of an age-old mode of transportation - the *calesa* is a horse-drawn carriage used to move people to the different places in the city. It is most preferred by tourists for its being a rare ancient carrier to go around and enjoy the historic sceneries of the city. It affords an exclusive privilege to pass through the cobblestone path where one gets a whole view of the Heritage Village.

Considering that the city was built during the Spanish regime, the streets seem to be too narrow just enough for two *calesas* or other carts drawn by animals to pass comfortably. At present, there are more than a hundred *calesas* traversing the busy streets of the city. Along with a growing number of motorized vehicles of all sizes, the *calesa* continues to make its presence felt.

In an attempt to regulate the number of vehicles that operate in the city, the local government had crafted schemes to improve the flow of traffic. Recently, it has ceased dishing out franchise rights to tricycles which are used primarily by the public for its transport needs. However, this did not affect the issuance of franchise to *calesas*. The city government in fact is encouraging more people to venture into the *calesa* business with the hope that the *calesa* tradition goes on as the city strives to preserve its cultural heritage.

This study spells the cultural and social significance of the *calesa* as a mode of transportation and its economic gains and contributions to the people of Vigan City.

### Objectives ..

This study aimed to describe the cultural and socioeconomic significance of the calesa as a mode of transportation in Vigan City.

Specifically, it aimed to:

1. Describe the personal profile of the *calesa* owners and servicemen (*cucheros*) in terms of:
  - a. Age.

- b. Address.
  - c. Sex,
  - d. Civil status, and
  - e. Educational attainment;
2. Describe economic aspects of the *calesa* business/service based on the owners and *cucheros*'
    - a. Length of involvement in the *calesa* business/service based on the owners
    - b. Income,
    - c. Ownership of *calesas*, .
    - d. Mode of payment of the *cucheros*' wages,
    - e. Frequency of operation/mode of receiving wage; and
    - f. Other sources of income
  3. Determine the profile of the tourist respondents in terms of
    - a. Type.
    - b. Age,
    - c. Sex,
    - d. Civil status,
    - e. Educational attainment, and
    - f. Details of tour (type, duration, group size)
  4. Determine the respondents' perception on the cultural and social significance of the *calesa*;
  5. Identify the problems and needs of the *calesa* service in Vigan City; and
  6. Identify the programs of the local government in support for the continuous operation of the *calesa*.

### **Review of Literature**

The "King of the Road" during the Spanish period until the 60's was not the tricycle nor the *kariton* but the *calesa* which lorded over all other forms of transportation. The Hispanic Manileros formally called it *caromata* and the Cebuanos called it *tartanilla*. But the *cuchero* (cart driver) referred to their vehicle as *calesa* or *kalesa*. It was an all-purpose vehicle transporting children to school, housewives to market, employees to office, businessmen to their customers and leisurely folk around the old Ciudad Fernandina (old Hispanic name of Vigan City).

The Hispanic *calesa* is a horse drawn, tin-plated carriage. It has a painted, embellished and engraved coach. The tin plates are embossed with images of flowers, vines and geometric figures. The owner's name is nailed onto the carriage's side and back panels. Few are even polished like gleaming royal carriages (CCP Encyclopedia, 1994). It is designed for two passengers but often three could squeeze into the cab. The native horses or ponies are half the size of those in the USA and Australia. However, they compensate their petite size with their stamina against tropical heat, monsoon rains, typhoons and long working hours (Licao, 2003). To minimize distractions along the street, horses wear blinders.

Every *calesa* has to be registered for a license plate while the *cuchero* needs a driving license to be issued by the Office of the City Mayor (Vigan City Ordinance No. 4). Although the age requirement is 18, a few started younger to support their families. The age of *cucheros* ranges from 14-70 years.

This horse-drawn carriage was phased-out with the introduction of motorized vehicles like the tricycle which frightened the *calesa* and the horses away.

At present, civilized countries in the world are reconstructing, reviving their cultures anchored on the past as it reminds them of their heritage as a people. But as the economic growth of a country depends largely on the presence of an efficient transportation system that facilitates the movement of people, goods and services within and among the various places in the country, the government policy on public transport becomes less and less friendly to the *calesa*. The reasons are obvious: they are slow-moving and tend to choke traffic.

In Zamboanga City, city councilors are divided over the revival of the *calesa* as part of the government's effort to attract tourists to the city. Some opposed the *calesa* provision of the traffic code saying that the *calesa* only disturbs traffic flow in the city. Others however are in favor as it reminds them of their heritage (Sun Star, 2003). This deadlock has been the cause of criticisms as it manifested the city officials' ignorance and insensitivity to their heritage.

In Cebu, only few *tartanillas* are operating now. Their routes are limited and they are not allowed to enter the downtown area. This is a far cry from the initiative of the City Government of Vigan to revive the *calesa* in order to attract more tourists and at the same abate the worsening traffic in Vigan City caused by hundreds of tricycles. The city government has stopped the issuance of franchises for tricycles and is encouraging drivers to buy *calesa* instead. Aside from the historical significance of the *calesa*, it is also environment friendly and the maintenance is cheap compared to any motorized vehicle.

An updated version of the ordinance regulating the operation of *calesas* for hire and *cucheros* operating within the jurisdiction of Vigan City has been formulated by the city council. It includes the following: 1) all horse-drawn utility

vehicles plying the streets of Vigan City must secure a Mayor's Permit and there shall be collected an annual fee for its issuance in the amount of P221.00: 2) a permanent *calesa* plate number shall be issued at no cost; 3) a *calesa* owner or operator shall post the laminated photocopy of the Mayor's permit in a conspicuous place at the back of the front panel of the *calesa*. The *cuchero*/operator on the other hand must be at least 18 years of age. He must also pass a *cuchero* license test on traffic regulations to be administered by the Chief Traffic Division of the PNP or its duly authorized representative. The *cuchero* license shall be valid for 3 years and renewable upon expiration. He must also wear white "camisa de chino" with llocano "abel" scarf, long pants and footwear except rubber slippers. He must at all times observe courtesy, helpfulness, honesty and friendliness. The *cuchero* is expected to follow the designated parking areas. There are also *calesa* specifications/provisions to be followed. Receptacles must also be installed in the *calesa* to collect the manure of horses (Ordinance No. 2, Series of 1988). Penalties for violations range from P200.00 for the first offense to a maximum of P500.00 for the third offense (City Ordinance No. 4).

## Methodology

**Research Design.** This is a descriptive study focused on the cultural, social and economic significance of the *calesa* as a mode of transportation in Vigan City. The approach is quantitative, however, qualitative data is also used extensively to enrich the discussion of some aspects of the study.

**Sampling.** This study involved *calesa* owners and servicemen or *cucheros* as well as tourists who visited the city during the first six months of 2004. There were 25 *calesa* owners who were taken as samples. These respondents just own *calesas* and they are not *cucheros*. There were 56 *cucheros* who were randomly selected as samples. Some of these "cucheros" own the *calesa* they use. Fifty-two (52) tourists were also randomly taken as respondents. They were identified with the help of the staff of the Vigan Tourism Council. These tourists visited Vigan City from January to May 2004.

**Data Gathering Instrument.** There were three (3) sets of interview schedules used to gather pertinent information for this study. Data collectors were trained to personally interview the respondents and carefully record all data and observations made during the course of data collection. The level of significance was obtained by using a scale from one to five responses with one (1) as very low and five (5) as very high.

**Statistical Treatment.** All data gathered were analyzed and interpreted using frequency counts, percentages, and means. Means generated from the specific items for level of significance were interpreted using the following norm:

Rank	Description
4.21–5.0	Very High
3.41–4.2	High
2.61–3.4	Moderate
1.81–2.6	Low
1 –1.8	Very Low

## Results and Discussion

### Profile of the *Calesa* Owners and Servicemen

Table I shows the personal profile of the *calesa* owners and *cuchero*. Among the 25 *calesa* owners, 14 (56%) came from Caoayan, nine (9 or 36%) came from Vigan and only two (2 or 8%) came from Bantay. There were 56 *cucheros* involved: (19 or 33.93%) came from Vigan and Bantay and only 18 (32.14%) from Caoayan.

The mean age of the *calesa* owners is 47.60 though the most number of respondents (11 or 44%) fall under the age group 31 to 40. This may be due to the presence of old owners, nine for age group 71 to 80 and another one who was 84 years old. This means that old age does not hinder one from engaging in the *calesa* business. A person who owns a *calesa* may just delegate a *cuchero* to take care of the horse. The table also shows that the "cucheros" are generally young with 25 (44.64%) falling within the age range 21 to 30. However, there are also old "cucheros", two (3.57%) were more than 61 years old and four (7.14%) belong to age group 51 to 60. It is also interesting to note that there was one "cuchero" who takes with him his young son while traversing the city streets. He said that aside from the fun in going around the city, it is beneficial for him to orient his son about the *calesa* business early so he would appreciate better what seems to be a family enterprise.

On gender, the business is dominated by males as evidenced by 96% male ownership of *calesas* and 96.43% males in the service. There was only one female owner and two female *cucheros*. Though being *cuchero* is a role closely associated to the males, the two females interviewed said that there isn't any gender-specific task in being *cuchero*. Likewise, the female owner does not see anything wrong about owning a horse. These women believe that gender isn't much of an issue in the business.

**Table 1. Demographic profile of *calesa* owners and "cucheros" in the *calesa* business.**

ITEMS	OWNERS		CUCHIEROS/SERVICEMEN	
	F (N=25)	%	F(N= 56)	%
<b>Address</b>				
Vigan	9	36.00	19	33.93
Caoayan	14	56.00	18	32.14
Bantay	2	8.00	19	33.93
<b>Age</b>				
21–30	2	8.00	25	44.64
31–40	11	44.00	13	23.22
41-- 50	3	12.00	12	21.43
51–60	2	8.00	4	7.14
61- 70	5	20.00	2	3.57
71–80	1	4.00	0	0
81 above	1	4.00	0	0
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	24	96.00	54	96.43
Female	1	4.00	2	3.57
<b>Civil Status</b>				
Single	3	12.00	13	23.22
Married	20	80.00	40	71.43
Widow/er/Separated	2	8.00	3	5.35
<b>Educational Attainment</b>				
Elementary				
High School	9	36.00	15	26.79
College	12	48.00	37	66.07
	4	16.00	4	7.14

Note: Mean Age for Owners = 47.60  
Mean age for Cucheros = 36.18

Majority of the respondents were married (20 or 80% owners and 40 or 71.43% *cucheros*). These respondents see their involvement in the *calesa* business as an occupation because it is a means to feed the family. They believe that this is a noble and decent way of earning for their families' needs.

The respondents mentioned the importance of education, though most of them (12 or 48% owners and 37 or 66.07% *cucheros*) are elementary graduates. They said that they strive hard to earn money for their children's education. There were four college graduates each among the *cucheros* and *calesa* owners. According to these *cucheros*, this is the only job available for them at the moment since they could hardly be accommodated in the government or private firms.

## Economic Aspects of the *Calesa* Business/Service

The profile of the *calesa* business is presented in Table 2. The findings are based on the experiences of the *calesa* owners and *cucheros*. There were more respondents who are engaged in the business for less than 10 years. Among 25 owners, eight (32%) are new in the business but there was one who has been a *calesa* owner for more than 60 years. Among the 56 respondents, 34 (60.71%) have been *cucheros* for ten years and 15 (26.79%) for 11-20 years. Two (3.57%) respondents have been *cucheros* for more than 31 years. This finding implies that people who get involved in the *calesa* business stay along. During the interview, there were even three respondents who said that they intend to be *cucheros* for life. Most of them mentioned that they will continue with the business as long as their health permits. The younger *cucheros* however said that they will hold on to the job until they land on a better job.

Data on income is also presented in Table 2. Most of the respondents operate on a daily basis so the figures reflect their daily income. The most number of *calesa* owners (10 or 40%) fall within the income range of P101 to P150 per day. Eight (8 or 32%) have income that fall within the P51 to P100 per day; five (20%) have slightly higher daily income at P151 to P200; and only two (8%) have income that fall within the range of P201 to P250. On the part of the *cucheros*, the greatest number of respondents (24 or 42.86%) also falls within the income range of P101 to P150 per day. The income distribution is much wider since there were eight (8) *cucheros* who earn below B50 daily. These *cucheros* only go out for several hours a day. There was one who admitted earning more than P300 per day and another one from P251 to P200 daily. These *cucheros* stayed longer in their daily operation and they even went out at night. Most of the respondents agreed that income from *calesa* is not stable due to the seasonality of passengers; however, they estimate their average income as P150 on regular days and more than B700 during peak seasons and festivals when tourists flock to the city.

In terms of ownership of *calesas*, among the 25 owners, 21 (84%) own one *calesa* each, two (8%) respondents own 2 *calesas*, and another two (8%) own 3 *calesas*. According to the respondents, their horses were bought from Abra, Caoayan, Vigan, Narvacan, Magsingal and Ilocos Norte. Just a few mentioned that they inherited the *calesas* from their parents. Most of these owners actually intend to own some more as long as they have money for the purchase of more horses.



**Table 2. Economic profile of the *calesa* business/service.**

ITEMS	OWNERS		CUCIHEROS/SERVICEMEN	
	Frequency (n=25)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (n=56)	Percentage (%)
<b>Length of <i>calesa</i> business/service</b>				
Below 10 years	8	32.00	34	60.71
11--20	6	24.00	15	26.79
21--30	3	12.00	5	8.93
31--40	3	23.00	2	3.57
41- 50	2	8.00	0	0
51--60	2	8.00	0	0
More than 60 years	1	4.00	0	0
<b>Daily income</b>				
Below 50	0	0	8	14.28
51- 100	8	32.00	14	25.00
101 - 150	10	40.00	24	42.86
151- 200	5	20.00	3	5.35
201 -250	2	8.00	5	8.93
251 - 300	0	0	1	1.79
330 up	0	0	1	1.79
<b>Number of <i>calesa</i> owned</b>				
One (1)				
Two (2)	21	84.00		
Three (3)	2	8.00		
	2	8.00		
<b>Mode of payment of the "cuchero's" wage</b>				
Daily				
Weekly	11	44.00		
Only when the <i>calesa</i> operated	4	16.00		
	10	40.00		
<b>Frequency of operation/mode of receiving pay</b>				
Regular (daily - 18: weekly - 8)			26	46.43
Not regular			30	53.57

The *calesa* owners were also asked about the mode they adopt in paying their *cuchero*'s wages. Eleven (44%) of the 25 respondents give the wage daily. This means that the *calesa* operates everyday. Ten (40%) respondents mentioned that their *calesas* do not have regular travel that is why they give only payment for the services of the *cuchero* only when the *calesas* operate. Only for (16%) pay their *cucheros* weekly. This finding supports the claim of the respondents about the instability of the business.

In terms of frequency of operation, there are more *cucheros* (30 or 53.57%) who are not regular. These *cucheros* do not operate daily. Twenty-six (26 or 46.43%) respondents are regular *cucheros*; eighteen (18) of them receive their wage daily and eight (8) receive their wage weekly.

**Table 3. Reasons of respondents for engaging in the calesa business.**

ITEMS	OWNERS		CUCHEROS/ SERVICEMEN	
	F N = 25	P (%)	F n = 56	p (%)
No other job/the only job I can do			12	21.43
No diplomas required			3	5.35
No job after farm work			5	8.93
I want to work because I don't want to be idle			7	12.50
Income helps in the family budget! additional income	15	60.00	29	51.79
I own a horse, so I want to earn money out of it.	13	52.00		1.79
It's the job I witnessed my folks doing/inherited from parents	6	24.00	10	17.86
Noble/decent job	5	20.00	6	10.71
Easy job/comfortable job	4	16.00	3	5.35
Just to pass time/for enjoyment			2	3.57
For exercise			1	1.79
Better than tricycle	2	8.00		
I like horses	2	8.00		

Note: Multiple responses

The respondents were also asked if their income is enough for their needs. Fifteen (15) *cucheros* said their income from *calesa* is enough since they do not have big families and they save a lot and spend only for basic necessities. The respondents who are single said their income is enough for them since they do not have a family to feed. Instead, they give some of their earnings to their parents. Forty-one (73.21%) *cucheros* said their income is not enough for their families' needs. They mentioned the high cost of basic needs, high cost of children education, many children to feed, and unstable source of income as the main reasons why they are poor.

The respondents also gave reasons why they chose to be in the *calesa* business. Most of the *calesa* owners (60%) and *cucheros* (51.79%) said that income from *calesa* adds to the family budget. Other significant reasons given were: they want to make money out of the horse they own, they treasure the job which they

inherited from their parents, and the job is noble and decent. Twelve (21.42%) *cucheros* were frustrated of not being able to fit in other jobs and being *cucheros* as the only option.

When asked if they want their children to be in the same kind of job, there were some who said **Yes** for reasons that the job is decent and it being a family tradition. There were more respondents who strongly said **No** due to the instability of the job and that the income is very minimal. Moreover, the respondents said that their children are not interested in the business, their children are professionals and are employed somewhere, and that they have other dreams for their children. This is the reason why most of the *cucheros* work hard to finance the education of their children so that they graduate and get a more stable job. These *cucheros* see nothing wrong if their children would want to be in the *calesa* business. "Anyway", they said; "it's a decent job and if one is industrious enough, he can feed a family with just one *calesa*". They also expressed concerns about the difficulty of finding a job even if a person is a degree holder.

Table 4. Measures done to improve *calesa* service.

ITEMS	OWNERS		CUCHEROS/ SERVICEMEN	
	Frequency (n=25)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (n = 56)	Percentage (%)
Bathe/Clean	20	80.00	26	46.43
Decorate	14	56.00	22	39.29
Repair regularly	12	48.00	23	41.07
Paint/repaint/varnish	8	32.00	7	12.50
Groom horse	6	24.00	4	7.14
Put horseshoe	8	32.00		
Courtesy in dealing with passengers			16	28.57
Orients <i>cuchero</i> on courtesy towards passengers	11	44.00		
Multiple responses				

Table 4 presents data on the specific measures done by the respondents to improve the *calesa* business. Most of them agree that there should be proper maintenance done on the *calesa* such as bathing, cleaning and grooming the horse, decorating, painting and varnishing the coach. The respondents are also aware of the importance of courtesy in dealing with passengers. It is very evident that the owners as well as the *cucheros* value cleanliness and courtesy in their operation.

In terms of expenses for the horse, the owners spend money to buy vitamins, feeds, medicines, rice bran, and com. They said that they do not buy grass

to feed the horse but the supply is limited. This necessitates the purchase of animal feeds thus increasing the maintenance expenses for the horse.

**Table 5. Other sources of income of owners and *cucheros* in the *calesa* business.**

ITEMS	OWNERS		CUCHEROS/ SERVICEMEN	
	Frequency (N=25)	Percentage	Frequency (N = 56)	Percentage
Farming	8	32.00	20	35.71
Cattle/livestock raising	3	12.00	1	1.79
Raising horses and ducks	-		1	1.79
Office work		4.00		
Wife is OCW		4.00	3	5.35
Wife is employed			8	14.28
Storekeeper		4.00		
Pensyonado		4.00		
Tricycle driving		4.00		
Abel weaving		4.00	1	1.79
CHB making		4.00	1	1.79
Driving (truck)			1	1.79
Delivery service...			1	1.79
Painting			1	1.79
Jail guard			2	3.57
None	7	28.00	16	28.57

Table 5 shows the respondents' other sources of income. The major alternative source of income is farming (8 or 32% owners and 20 or 35.71% *cucheros*.) Most of the farmer respondents own the lands that they till, however, some of them just help in other people's farms during planting and harvesting seasons. There are also those who venture into cattle and livestock-raising. Others have wives who are either (OCWs) or employed in some government or private firms. There are seven (28%) owners and 16 (28.57%) *cucheros* who have no other source of income and relying on their earning from *calesa*. The 16 *cucheros* operate more than eight hours daily.

## Profile of Tourists

Table 6 contains data from tourists who were interviewed. They visited Vigan City from January to May 2004. Among the 52 subjects, there were 45 (86.54%) domestic and seven (13.46%) foreign tourists. This means that the city attracts more domestic tourists. During the time of the study, there were many foreign tourists but they were hesitant to be interviewed due to their inability to speak the English language and that they were excited with the tour that they don't want to be disturbed.

Table 6. Profile of *calesa* customer tourists.

ITEMS	FREQUENCY n = 52	PERCENTAGE (%)
<b>Type</b>		
Domestic	45	86.54
Foreign	7	13.46
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Age</b>		
Below 20	2	3.85
21–30	21	40.38
31–40	13	25.99
41–50	10	19.23
51–60	6	11.54
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Mean Age = 35.42</b>		
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	19	36.54
Female	33	63.46
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Civil Status</b>		
Single	24	46.15
Married	25	48.08
Widow	3	5.77
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Educational Attainment</b>		
Elementary	0	0
High School	1	1.92
College	39	75.00
Post Graduate	12	23.08
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Duration of Stay</b>		
1 day	40	76.92
2–3 days	9	17.31
4–7 days	3	5.77
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 6 continued

ITEMS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
	n=S2	(%)
Type of Tour		
Educational	21	40.38
Company	9	17.31
Personal	3	5.77
Family Tour	11	21.15
Barkada Tour	8	15.39
Total	<b>52</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Number of Companions		
1-5	<b>18</b>	34.61
6- 10	12	23.08
11--15	9	17.31
16 above	13	25.00
Total	<b>52</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The data on age shows that most respondents (21 or 40.38%) fall within the age group 21 to 30. There were 13 (25%) tourists in age group 31 to 40, 10 (19.23%) in the 41-50 age bracket, six (11.54%) who were more than 51 years old and only two (3.85%) who were below 20 years old. The mean age as reflected is 35.42 years old. This implies that most tourists who visit Vigan are middle age tourists who are expected to be employed thus enabling them to come up with funds for the tour.

Of the 52 respondents, there were 33 (63.46%) female and 19 (36.54%) male tourists. In terms of civil status, there are 25 (48.08%) married, 24 (46.15%) single and three (5.77%) widows. Most (39 or 75%) of the respondents were bachelor's degree holders, and 12 (23.08%) finished their post graduate studies. There was only one high school graduate. Considering these personal information about tourists, it can be said that most of them are financially stable and matured enough to understand and appreciate Vigan's historical and cultural heritage.

As regards the details of their tour, most (40 or 76.92%) of them stayed in Vigan City for only one day. According to them their package tour includes the whole of Iocos Region so they only dropped-by to see some significant places in Vigan. This includes a tour around the historic district of the city.

The most popular type of tour is educational with 21 (40.38%) tourist respondents joining these groups. Table 7 shows 11 (21.15%) tourists came with their families, nine (17.31%) were with their business colleagues, eight (15.39%) with their "barkada" and three were on their personal adventure. As to the size of groups, 18 (34.61%) belonged to groups composed of 1-15 members and 13 (25%) belonged to big groups of more than 16 persons. This means that group size of

tourists is rather big which provides evidence that the city especially with its festivals is attractive to tourists.

**Table 7. Tourists reasons for riding the *calesa*.**

REASONS	FREQUENCY (n=52)	PERCENTAGE (%)
Riding the <i>calesa</i> enriches my Vigan City experience	45	86.54
Since the <i>calesa</i> is not too fast, it makes me see whole place better	41	78.85
The <i>calesa</i> is good for joyriding	10	19.23
<i>Calesa</i> is appropriate for touring the city	5	9.62
I ride the <i>calesa</i> for curiosity	4	7.69
I ride the <i>calesa</i> for educational enhancement	3	5.77
The <i>calesa</i> is part of my family tradition	2	3.85
I ride the <i>calesa</i> because my son likes horses	1	1.92

Note: Multiple responses

The tourist respondents were asked about their reasons why they wanted to ride in a *calesa*. Table 7 shows that most (45 or 86.54%) of them expressed appreciation about the *calesa* ride as very enriching in their Vigan City experience. They said it is very appropriate because it blends with the cultural heritage of the city with the massive backdrop of old Spanish houses. One foreign tourist and his son in fact rode on a *calesa* several times because according to him, his son likes horses and there is nothing like the *calesa* in their own place. Another fascinating feature of the *calesa* which the tourists enjoyed is the sound of the pealing bells which according to them is pleasant to the ear.

**Table 8. *Calesa* fares and length or ride in the *Calesa* business of Vigan City.**

RANGE OF FARES	FREQUENCY (n = 52)	PERCENTAGE (%)
P75 – 100	1	1.92
101 – 125	2	3.85
126 – 150	27	51.92
151 – 175	6	11.54
176 – 200	8	15.38
201 and above	5	9.62
PIO per head	3	\$ .77
Length of <i>Calesa</i> Ride		
Below 30 minutes	30	57.69
31min.-- 1 hour	10	19.23
1.1 hrs. -2 hours	7	13.46
More than 2 hours	5	9.62
Total number of respondents	52	100.00

There is one thing however that disappointed some of the tourists respondents - the fare. Most of them believed that the fare is too high. As reflected in Table 8, 27 (51.92%) of the tourists were charged an amount between P126-P150 for less than 30 minutes ride around the historic district of the city. There were five (9.62%) tourists who were charged more than P201 for two hours ride that brought them to more distant places in the city like the jar factories and museums. There were *cucheros* however, who charged domestic tourists P10 per head for a short distance ride like going around Plaza Salcedo and Plaza Burgos. This implies that tourists still pursue the *calesa* ride even if the fare is rather high. As some respondents said, they rode the *calesa* to experience exactly what Vigan City offers.

### Cultural and Socioeconomic Significance of the *Calesa*

The three groups of respondents were asked to describe their perceptions on the cultural and socioeconomic significance of the *calesa* as a mode of transportation. Table 9 offers data obtained from *calesa* owners and *cucheros*. *Cucheros* rated low the item on the expenses incurred on maintenance ( $X = 2.56$ ) while the owners rated the same item as moderate ( $X = 3.13$ ). The item about the *calesa* as easier to maintain than motorized vehicles was held at moderate level by the *cucheros* ( $X = 3.40$ ) and very high by owners ( $X = 4.17$ ). The two groups perceive as moderate items about the *calesa* being a source of income ( $X = 3.13$  and  $3.36$ ), and the *calesa* affecting the flow of traffic ( $X = 3.36$  and  $3.20$ ). Items on the fare ( $X = 4.16$  and  $3.52$ ) and effect on the cleanliness of the surroundings ( $X = 3.86$  and  $3.56$ ) were given a descriptive rating of high by the two groups of respondents. They said however that cleanliness of the surroundings ( $X = 3.86$  and  $3.56$ ) were given a descriptive rating of high by the two groups of respondents. They said however that cleanliness of the surroundings can be maintained if the *cucheros* are responsible enough to practice proper waste disposal. All other items were rated very high. As a whole, the owners perceived the *calesa* as having a very high ( $X = 4.33$ ) cultural and socioeconomic significance while the *cucheros* gave a descriptive rating of high ( $X = 4.02$ ).



Table 9. Cultural and socioeconomic significance of the *ca/esa* from the point of view of *ca/esa* owners and *cucheros*.

ITEMS	CUCHEROS		CALESA OWNERS	
	$\bar{X}$ n=56	Description	$\bar{X}$ n=25	Description
The <i>ca/esa</i> is a major source of income of the people.	3.13	Moderate	3.36	Moderate
The <i>ca/esa</i> fare is affordable	4.16	High	3.52	High
People and tourists prefer the <i>ca/esa</i> than the tricycle	4.88	Very High	4.60	Very High
It is easier to maintain the <i>ca/esa</i> than motorized vehicles.	4.71	Very High	3.40	Moderate
One incurs less expenses for the maintenance of the <i>ca/esa</i>	3.13	Moderate	2.56	Low
The <i>ca/esa</i> does not contribute to pollution and/or diseases.	4.52	Very High	4.60	Very High
The <i>ca/esa</i> affects the flow of traffic	3.36	High	3.56	High
The <i>ca/esa</i> is one important feature of Vigan as Heritage City	4.57	Very High	4.64	Very High
The calesa is part of the Ilocano tradition	4.71	Very High	4.56	Very High
One gets a better view of Vigan in a <i>ca/esa</i>	4.80	Very High	4.64	Very High
Riding a <i>ca/esa</i> for helps preserve Vigan's customs and traditions.	4.84	Very High	4.40	Very High
The presence of the <i>ca/esa</i> helps preserve the customs and traditions	4.73	Very High	4.28	Very High
Tour around Vigan is not complete without the <i>ca/esa</i> ride	4.79	Very High	4.28	Very High
The <i>ca/esa</i> should stay as part of Vigan culture	4.79	Very High	4.56	Very High
<b>As a Whole</b>	4.33	Very High	4.02	High
Note: *	4.21–5.00	Very High		
	3.41–4.2	High		
	2.61–3.4	Moderate		
	1.81–2.6	Low		
	1 - 1.8	Very Low		

Table 10 presents the tourists' perception on the socioeconomic and cultural significance of the *calesa* as a mode of transportation.

**Table 10. Cultural and socioeconomic significance of the *calesa* from the point of view of tourist respondents.**

Items	<b>5</b> n = 52	Description
<i>Calesa</i> fare is affordable.	2.55	<b>Low</b>
Tourists prefer the <i>calesa</i> than the tricycle	4.29	Very High
The <i>calesa</i> does not contribute to pollution and/or diseases	4.31	Very High
The <i>calesa</i> affects the cleanliness of the surroundings	4.04	High
The <i>calesa</i> affects the flow of traffic	4.08	High
The <i>calesa</i> is one important feature of Vigan as a Heritage City	4.44	Very High
The <i>calesa</i> is part of the Ilocano tradition	<b>4.54</b>	Very High
One gets a better view of Vigan in a <i>calesa</i>	4.62	Very High
Riding <i>calesas</i> helps preserve Vigan's customs and traditions	4.87	<b>Very High</b>
The continuous presence of the <i>calesa</i> helps preserve Vigan's customs and traditions	4.94	Very High
Tour around Vigan is not complete without the <i>calesa</i> ride	<b>4.88</b>	Very High
The <i>calesa</i> should stay as part of Vigan's culture.	4.92	Very High
<b>As a whole</b>	4.37	<b>Very_high</b>
Note:	4.21–5.0	Very High
	3.40–4.2	High
	2.61–3.4	Moderate
	1.81–2.6	Low
	1–1.8	Very Low

They gave a descriptive rating of low ( $\bar{C} = 2.55$ ) for *calesa* fare. Items about its effects on cleanliness and traffic were perceived as high ( $\bar{C} = 4.04$  and  $4.08$  respectively). All other items were given descriptive rating of very high. Generally, the tourists believe that the *calesa* has a very high ( $\bar{C} = 4.37$ ) socioeconomic and cultural significance as a mode of transportation.

## Problems in the *Calesa* Business

The *calesa* owners and *cucheros* expressed some worries about the difficult aspects of the *calesa* business and daily operation. These problems are presented in Table II. Inconsistency of income brought about by the seasonality of passengers and tourists is the most pressing concern of the owners and *cucheros* (15 or 60% and 33 or 58.93%)

**Table II. Problems encountered in the operation of the *calesa*.**

ITEMS	OWNERS		CUCHEROSI SERVICEMEN	
	F	%	F	%
	(n=25)		(n = 56)	
Traffic	14	56.00	21	37.50
Maintenance	12	48.00	19	33.93
Taxes	5	20.00	16	28.57
Seasonality of tourists/passengers/ inconsistency of income	15	60.00	33	58.93
Inefficient parking system	2	8.00	15	26.79
There are some irresponsible <i>cucheros</i> who don't know how to manage waste/feces of horses			2	3.57
Prescribed uniform is very hot			6	10.71
Language problems with tourists			15	26.79
Tourist buses bring passengers around Vigan, so number of <i>calesa</i> passengers is reduced.			5	8.93
Other <i>cucheros</i> charge higher fees than what is supposed to be the fare.	3	12.00	6	10.71
Some tricycle drivers discriminate <i>cucheros</i>	2	8.00	7	12.50
No problem	4	16.00	3	5.35

Note: "Multiple responses

Other major problems are traffic, maintenance of the *calesa*, and taxes. Inefficient parking system is also a problem especially on the part of the *cucheros* since according to them, even if there are designed parking areas, there are still irresponsible *cucheros* and even tricycle drivers who do not comply. Some *cucheros* even complain about discrimination and the negative attitude of some tricycle drivers. They said that tricycle drivers treat *cucheros* with condescension shout at them and even pick their passengers. As regards taxes paid to the city

government, they said that the amount is high considering that their income is rather low and not stable. It is also very surprising that they paid different amounts for their license, franchise and Mayor's Permit. They are also required to pay for tickets and stickers.

There are problems which are exclusive to *cucheros* only and unique to the operation of *calesa* mode of transport. Language barrier seems to trouble them since they find it very difficult to communicate with foreigner tourists especially Asians who do not speak and understand English. These *cucheros* just depend on simple sign language and facial expression to connect with their passengers. They also complained about the uniform prescribed by the city government saying that it is very hot and suitable for warm afternoons. Nevertheless, they agreed that the uniform improves their posture and enhances the cultural value of the *calesa*.

### Government Programs that Support *Calesa* Operation

The *calesa* is one of the major attractions in Vigan City. It is therefore expected that the city government has programs to improve the operation of this age-old mode of transportation. The owners and *cucheros* were asked to identify the government programs which they think are helping in the *calesa* business. The programs which they identified are placed in Table 12. Most of the respondents pointed out the tourism programs of the city government as very helpful to the *calesa* business. These tourism programs consist of festivities and the city and provincial government's strong drive to promote Vigan City as a major tourist destination. Other items identified were in line with the tourism programs of the government. Ordinances also help, however, the implementation should be looked into by the law enforcers and government officials. There was one respondent who mentioned attending a seminar sponsored by the Department of Tourism (DOT) but he was not able to explain further what the seminar was all about.

**Table 12. Government programs that benefit *calesa* owners and *cucheros*.**

ITEMS.	OWNERS		CUCHEROS/ SERVICEMEN	
	F (n=25)	%	F (n = 56)	%
Tourism programs	22	88.00	32	57.14
Funds from the government	1	4.00	3	5.35
Free t-shirts	2	8.00	7	12.50
Parades	2	8.00	17	30.36
Seminar sponsored by DOT	1	4.00		
Ordinances	6	24.00	4	7.14
No answer/not aware of any	10	40.00	6	10.71

## Summary and Conclusion

The *calesa* business is dominated by males who are married and have finished high school. *Cucheros* who live in Vigan and its neighboring towns of Bantay and Caoayan are generally younger than the owners who mostly come from Caoayan, Iloeos Sur.

Most respondents have been in the business for less than 10 years. The average daily income from *ealesa* is P150 which according to the respondents is not enough to meet the needs of the family. However, during peak seasons, respondents earn up to P700 a day. *Calesa* owners generally have one *calesa* each and they pay their *cucheros* daily. Both groups of respondents believe that their minimal earning from the *calesa* adds to the family budget. Courtesy in dealing with passengers and proper care and maintenance of the horse and coach are observed so as to improve their service. Farming is the most popular alternative source of income of the respondents.

The study noted that there are more domestic than foreign tourists in Vigan City. Most of them are young female professionals who have finished higher levels of education. The most common type of tour is educational which lets tourists in big groups to visit the city for one day. The tourists agree that the *calesa* enhances the Vigan experience because it is not appropriate for touring the city and it blends with its rich cultural and historical heritage. However, tourists find the *calesa* fare rather high.

*Calesa* owners and tourists put the cultural and socioeconomic significance of the *calesa* of very high level while *cucheros* perceive it to be at high level. Thus, the *calesa* should be maintained as part of Vigan City heritage.

The most pressing problem of the *calesa* business is the seasonality of passengers. This results to the instability of income of the people who depend on the *ealesa* for their daily needs.

The respondents acknowledge the city and provincial government's efforts in sponsoring programs that boost tourism in the city. They are aware that their livelihood depends much on these tourism activities.

## Recommendations

Since the target clientele of the *calesa* business are the tourists, the city government should collaborate with other agencies in training *cucheros* on personality development. Vigan history and culture and strategies in dealing with people with diverse culture. This hopefully lessens the problem on language and

other cultural barriers. While there is no training yet for *cucheros*, tourism officials should accompany foreign tourists to serve as guides and to explain historical details which the *cucheros* might not know very well.

Alternative sources of livelihood should be available to the *cucheros* to make them productive even during rainy seasons wherein tourists are few. The local government should set aside grazing areas for horses, e.g., near river banks and vacant lots suitable for the cultivation of certain species of grasses which could be used to feed the horses to lessen maintenance expenses. Furthermore, operators and *cucheros* should be encouraged to breed their own horses so that they would not go to far places to buy horses.

The government should further its drive to boost tourism in the city. It should come up with tourism programs which hold tourists to stay longer in the city. It should promote Vigan as an alternative tourist destination in the north to sustain the income of *cucheros*. Aside from the *calesa*, many small-scale home-based industries depend on tourism for survival.

Taxes on *calesa* operation should be more reasonable so as not to burden the owners and *cucheros*.

The fabric used for the prescribed uniform should be improved to give more comfort to the *cuchero*.

The local government should strictly implement traffic ordinances that affect the operation of the *calesa*. Orientation should also be given to drivers of motorized vehicles on the proper treatment accorded to *calesa*. These drivers should give way to the *calesa* as a sign of respect to Vigan's heritage.

The city government should monitor the implementation of the standardized *calesa* fares so as to avoid overcharging passengers specially foreign tourists. Tourist buses should park at the designated area upon arrival in Vigan. These buses should not be used in the tour within the city.

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