



Tourists' Perception and Expectation of the Mqabba Village Feast, Featuring a Case Study on Our Lady of the Lily Feast

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Abstract

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<p>This study is aimed to understand the inbound and outbound tourists' perception and expectation when visiting a traditional village feast in Mqabba, specifically that of Our Lady of the Lily. In addition, it also aims to investigate how the demographics play a part in the visitors' expectations, and how the promotion of the feast can be improve to attract more attendees. A mixed-method approach was applied specifically utlizing questionnaires and a focus group discussion. Some questionnaires were distributed during the feast celebrations whilst also shared online on social media platforms. The focus group discussion was carried out with eight speakers who are all part of the feasts' society. The study found that the society of the mentioned feast is not aiming to attract specifically outbound tourists and certain expectations are not being met, especially due to the modern celebrations taking over the traditional aspects. These findings suggest that the feast is catering mostly to party people who enjoy the feast for the free entertainment and its partying aspect. To conclude, the society shall enhance the importance of tradition, especially since the feast is part of UNESCO World Heritage and promote the feast to a wider outbound audience to share the Maltese tradition.</p>	
Keywords Our Lady of the Lily, Mqabba, Feast, Tradition, Tourists perception and expectation	

Declaration of Authenticity



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Research Title : Tourists' Perception and Expectation of the Mqabba Village Feast, Featuring a Case Study of Our Lady of the Lily Feast.

Declaration:

I hereby declare that this research study is based on the outcome of my own research. I, as the author, declare that this research study is my own composition which has not been previously produced for any other qualification.

The research study was conducted under the supervision of Mr. Daniel Demicoli

30th May 2025

Date

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Avril Spiteri', is written over a horizontal line.

Student's Signature

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1. Introduction

The Maltese village feasts have been a part of our culture since the 18th century (Mifsud, 2023) and became a huge part of our traditions and the beloved Maltese identity, the government has sought to have the feasts become a part of UNESCO's cultural heritage, and its request has been approved in 2023 (Times of Malta, 2023). There are around 200 feasts celebrated in Malta with six of them being recognised as a public holiday dedicated to the Saint. Each village has one or more feasts, and they all differ from each other, therefore, the expectations will be different for each feast. Some similarities that can be found in feasts are the celebrations of the Catholic patron saints, fireworks, street decorations, and brass bands (Farrugia, 2023).

The feast celebrated in the quaint town of Mqabba is known as the feast of Our Lady of the Lily. This feast was birthed from the Brotherhood of the Immaculate Conception which was founded in 1772. The Brotherhood once celebrated a feast that was quite different from how we know it today. On 21st May 1876, Mqabba received the statue of Our Lady of the Lily which nowadays can be found in the Church in its' niche (*niċċa*). During that time, people also celebrated a feast with the main attraction being the statue and pyrotechnics, in fact, the first document ever recorded in Mqabba regarding the pyrotechnics is about the feast of our Lady of the Lily. The society as we know it today was founded in 1911 and since then the works of the decorations in the town of Mqabba started extensively. The feast of Our Lady of the Lily is also renowned for celebrating the novena of the Immaculate Conception, as the tradition from 1772 has kept on going throughout these years. Although there is only one Feast of our Lady of the Lily in Malta celebrated nowadays, it is also celebrated in different towns in Italy, them being Acquasparta, Veroli, and Anticoli (Tal-Ġilju, n.d.).

The village feast is put together and organised by feast aficionados and volunteers that make part of the band clubs and societies. Every year they do their utmost to exceed expectations, whilst sticking to the unique feast traditions. Inbound and outbound tourists may not be aware that every village feast is unique and may differ from the other. This can result in them being pleasantly surprised or let down. These band clubs and societies must understand the tourists' expectations that are visiting their feasts, as these may differ as per the tourists' demographics. The promotion of the village feasts' attractions could be improved by tailoring it to different tourist demographics and targeting their specific interests. This dissertation will help fill in this gap especially for

the feast of Our Lady of the Lily in Mqabba to help fulfil the tourists' expectations and be satisfied when visiting the feast.

1.1 Research Background

The purpose of this study is to determine the expectations of the inbound and outbound tourists when they visit the feast of Our Lady of the Lily in Mqabba based on their current perceptions. It also aims to assist the Society of Our Lady of the Lily and its' committees to live up to the expectations of these tourists. By changing and enhancing the feast and its' activities they could encourage the tourists to keep visiting and participating in the feast in the coming years.

1.2 Research Aim, Objectives and Hypothesis or Question

My main research question is: What are the tourists' expectations when visiting Mqabba's village feast:

My first secondary research question is: How do demographics play a part in their expectations?

My second secondary research question is: How can the promotion of Mqabba's Village feast improve to attract more tourists?

1.3 Research Methods, Material and Structure

After a 6-year long-standing membership and being an active member in the society of the feast, which is dedicated to Our Lady of the Lily, it was decided to further study and understand the thoughts, opinions, and feedback from inbound and outbound tourists. Throughout the years it was noticed that many tourists visit the Mqabba village to celebrate the feast alongside the locals, which gives great satisfaction to all members of the society that were working hard throughout the year. Having local talent being showcased during the celebration week for tourists to enjoy and appreciate the hard work of the volunteers creates great satisfaction to all hard workers. The primary research methods used in this dissertation are a focus group and questionnaires.

1.4 Study Structure

This study is utilizing the Harvard referencing style. The purpose of referencing is to back up what is stated in the thesis, by books and other papers published. Should the

readers need to double check what is stated in the thesis, it is easier to reach out to the original source through Harvard referencing (University of Malta, 2022).

2. Literature Review

2.1 What is a Feast?

A traditional Maltese feast is a baroque times feast, which dates to the 17th and 18th centuries. It is an event where locals and inbound and outbound tourists join forces and enjoy and participate in the multisensory events happening throughout the week of the feast (Farrugia, 2016).

‘Each feast is a joyous event: multi-faceted, authentic, communal celebration, which on one hand hosts a social and culture dimension, and on the other hand still holds onto deep rooted traditions, which for centuries have embraced the Catholic faith and rituals’ (Farrugia, 2016).

As quoted by Dr Marie Briguglio and Ariana Sultana in 2015, in 2012 NSO had conducted a study and revealed that there are a total of 122 Parish feasts distributed between Malta and Gozo with three-fourths of them being primary feasts and the rest are referred to as secondary feasts. Six of the feasts also have a national holiday dedicated to them (NSO, 2012). The first feast celebrated in a calendar year, which is also a national holiday, is that of St. Paul’s Shipwreck on 10th February, followed by St. Joseph’s feast on 19th March. On 29th June St. Peter and St. Paul are celebrated, 15th August is the Assumptions’ feast, 8th September is the feast dedicated to Our Lady of Victories, and finally is the feast of the Immaculate Conception on 8th December. Other feasts that do not have their own national holiday, are mostly celebrated during the summer months, where the peak of these celebrations is from the beginning of May until end of September. Some feasts are celebrated in winter times too; however, they might not be that popular and not all elements might be included in their celebrations (Farrugia, 2016).

The villagers’ most important feasts are those celebrated in their own hometown which can be either a primary or a secondary feast. Although there are feasts celebrated by the filial churches – a small church or chapel that is a brand of the main church - (*knejjes filjali*) they are not as popular as the ones celebrated by the main church (Farrugia, 2016).

A feast is divided into two celebrations – *fešta interna* and *fešta esterna*. *Fešta interna* refers to the celebrations happening and limited to the precincts of the church – the liturgical services, while *fešta esterna* refers to the celebrations that are organized and

held by the society of the dedicated feast and are mostly held outside in the main square and streets of the villages (Farrugia, 2016).

Festi interni start when the statue of the patron Saint is taken out of its niche and placed in the centre of the church, in front of the altar (*ħruġ min-niċċa*). This is the start of the feast week whilst the end of the feast week is the procession with the said Saint around the main streets of the village and then the statue-bearers (*reffiegħa*) take the statue back inside after the last blessing (*il-barka*) (Farrugia, 2016).

During the feast, band marches—a significant tradition of the village feast—parade through the streets of the village, playing the marches purchased by the society. A group of people follows the band along its route, but the largest crowd gathers in the village square. Here, people put on the society's associated coloured t-shirts and wave flags. The crowd then chants enthusiastically, shouts slogans, and sings along with the band's marches. Each feast has its own set of lyrics to the same music (Farrugia, 2016).

“*M'hemmx festa mingħajr nar*” is a popular Maltese saying which translates to “there is no feast without pyrotechnics” as these have become a big part of the celebrations throughout the whole week. The biggest fireworks/pyrotechnics display will always be on the day before the procession with the Statue, where air spectacles and ground fireworks are displayed. Some feasts also have a spectacle synchronized with music, could be air or ground fireworks (Farrugia, 2016).

Each feast has a group of people that works throughout the whole year towards their special week to present their best work and celebrate their Patron or Saint with the rest of the village and the tourists that visit the feast. The group of people is a non-government organization (NGO) made up of several volunteers, as they do not get paid for their work and their time. These volunteers make a part of a society, which is then subdivided into committees and groups, however not all societies have the same committees and number of groups. The commonly found groups are: Administrative Committee (*Kumitat Amministrattiv*), Street Decorations Committee (*Għaqda Tal-Armar*), and the Fireworks Committee (*Għaqda Tan-Nar*) along with a Youth Committee (*Sezzjoni Żgħażaġħ*). The street decorations committee has overtime changed the style of the feast, from Baroque style to High Baroque, and it is mostly shown in the street decorations which are mainly made by local artists (Farrugia, 2016).

2.2 History of Mqabba

Mqabba is a small town in the southern-western region of Malta, which is surrounded by Hal Kirkop, Qrendi, Żurrieq, and Siġġiewi. Most of Mqabba is built on the Lower Globigerina Limestone, therefore, there are many quarries in Mqabba and its' surroundings as this type of rock is mostly used for the buildings in Malta (Farrugia, 1998).

The name Mqabba dates to the Arab Ruling times in Malta, where the word itself means a place covered by a dome or *qubba*. The place or building that might have been covered with a dome is unknown, but it could have been something religious, such as a monument in a cemetery, or a place of worship like a mosque, however it is sure that this was the one and only in Malta. The first time Mqabba was mentioned is in a document dated in 1419, which Godfrey Wettinger referenced in 1998, which has a list of *Dejma* watchmen, it is however, still unsure if the name is older than the document hereby mentioned (Wettinger, 1998).

On the 16th of September 1595, seven men representing all Mqabba's residents approached Bishop Thomas Gargallo with a petition that one of the churches in Mqabba becomes a Parish Church, specifically the one dedicated to Saint Mary. In 1598, during a visit from the same Bishop, the Saint Mary church was declared a Parish Church. The first diocese priest of Mqabba was Dun Ġwann Mizzi and lead this church for around 5 years. (Bonnici, 1998)

The current Parish Church of Mqabba was built on the same area that was previously occupied by two churches, one dedicated to *Tal-Lunzjata* and the other was dedicated to *L-Assunzjoni*. The benefactor who financed the new Church to be built was Mikiel Zammit and it was built by October 1607. However, additional parts were added overtime, and the Church was fully completed by 28th June of 1699. During the second world war, specifically on 9th April 1942 at 1pm, a bomb from the adversary had caused the Parish Church significant damage, such as one of the main major pillars, the dome, a smaller dome dedicated to Our Lady of the Conception, part of the choir, and one of the sacristies. On 7th April 1947, the restoration works of the Church were finished, however, the dome was not built the same as before but on a completely new design. (Busuttil, 1998)

2.3 The Evolution of the Maltese Village Feast

When the Order of St. John arrived in Malta in 1530, Christianity was already well-rooted in the Maltese culture. The feasts were already being celebrated but on a small scale, as the elaborate and colourful manifestation of this tradition began to develop in the 18th century and reached their form, as we know it today, between the late 19th century and early 20th century (Cassar, 2006).

The feast celebrations in the 16th century were possible due to a sole benefactor that would distribute money or food to those less fortunate (Cassar-Pullicino 1956; 41 in Cassar, 2006). In addition, Mgr. Pietro Dusina, gave the impression that some feast celebrations were held with the core purpose of merry-making activities (Cassar, 2006).

The 17th and 18th centuries' feast and large procession being held were mostly for the public, whilst other devotional services and the sacrament exposition were more reserved. Many people were strong believers, in fact, the Maltese population would turn to their saints when in need, and in times of distress, they used to pray to them. They strongly believed that the saints would only grant miracles if the believers would pray daily and attended to the Church services. Having said that, when the great plague hit Malta on 14th April 1676, each parish on the island organised a procession of the dedicated saint. However, these were not the largest pilgrimage that happened in Malta. Mgr Fra Lorenzo D'Astiria, who was the Bishop of Malta until 1678, along with the Cathedral Chapter, on 22nd April 1677, there was a procession from St. Pauls Bay to the sanctuary of Our Lady of Mellieħa, which confraternities and large congregation took part in (Micallef, 1984: 125; in Cassar, 2006). Religious images attracted popular devotion and formed the basis of healing shrines that attracted pilgrims and developed a great response to popular demand, as the great devotion to Our Lady of Mellieħa and other shrines suggests (Cassar, 2006).

Mid-17th century, short processions were happening on Fridays with one statue through Valletta during Lent time. However, in 1673, these had evolved into full-on processions as by that time, the cult of saints centred statues was well established in Malta. The parish processions of the day of the feast of the titular saint were developed around the 18th century. Some examples are St. Andrew in Luqa which has been documented to be one of the first fully developed procession in 1781 (Cassar, 2006).

At the near end of the 17th century, the feasts were celebrated by a statue along the procession. Further documentation shows that during the 17th and 18th centuries, the statues were figures dressed in clothing as the old titular statue of St. Nicholas in Siġġiewi (Borg, 1983: 108; Catania, 1992: 101; in Cassar, 2006). Sicilian men brought to Malta their Papier-Mache craftsmanship around the 2nd quarter of the 18th century (Cassar, 2006).

Festivals in the 18th century were being held on various occasions, such as, the accession of a new pope, election of a Grand Master, the birth of a royal son in Europe, and more. These included street decorations, illuminations, fireworks, and other merry-making activities. Celebrations of feasts have evolved and increased in their popularity with thanks to these festivals (Cassar-Pullicino, 1976: 36-37 – 66; in Cassar, 2006).

The feast of Calendimaggio, which originated in Italy and gained popularity by the early 18th century, was held on 30th April in the afternoon at the Palace square where many Maltese were gathered to celebrate and participate in. There were many activities in the square for the Grand Master and people gathered to watch the theatrical representations, serenades and cantatas. These events have shaped the feast as we know it today. Village people tried to replicate what they saw at the palace square in the village square during the feast celebration week. The carnival, which started in Malta in 1535 and was held in Birgu, had similar attributes to the feast, mainly merry making (Cassar, 2006).

Under the British Colonial rule, therefore in the 18th century, the village people found it customary to hire a band from Valletta to participate in the procession. The band mainly consisted of five to seven men – a piper, tambourine player, trumpets, clarinets, and oboes. Don Salvatore Ciappara states that the first music was played in Żebbuġ in 1777 during the procession of St. Philip. On the other hand, Noel D'Anastas showed that the feast of St. Joseph in Rabat, in 1763, included music as well as fireworks. D'Anastas mentioned that the music playing during the procession dated back to the late 17th century or early 18th (Cassar, 2006).

Band clubs started being founded in the 19th century and the feast was developing as we know it today with fireworks displays being more dominant. The parish clergy, under the British rule, from 1800 until 1964, continued taking care of all social and religious activities happening in the village, with their role strengthening along the way. During this period, the festivities became more intricate while still preserving a blend of the

primitive rituals from the 16th century. By 1961, there were already 56 band clubs over 30 villages – with 19 of them had rival band clubs. Thus, rivalry during feasts emerged, as per Vassallo 1979 in Cassar 2005 (Cassar, 2006).

Initially, band clubs were not associated with religion, however, they quickly started to be identified with parish rivalries which was mostly shown during the feast. In 1935, the importance of secondary feasts was reduced by the church authorities and thus began the competition with the titular feasts. As the church had more authority than the police, the priest approved of everything that happens at the feast. Some of the rival band clubs emerged by the courage of parish priests, states Raymond Saliba, as feasts were intentionally made to celebrate the religion, however, one must accept that they are more than that (Saliba, 2004: esp. 181-183; in Cassar, 2006) (Cassar, 2006).

By the end of the century, these became an important feature in Malta (Cassar, 1988: 108-109; Frendo, 2004; 216-217; in Cassar, 2006). Mac Gill (1839: 33 in Cassar 2005) states that every village in the Maltese islands is under the patronage of a saint. The feast began with fireworks on the eve of feast day. Feast day meant that manual labour was refrained, young and elderly were to attend mass. People celebrated by singing, dancing, listening to guitars, and enjoying good quality food (Cassar, C. 2005).

As per Mamo 1913, by that same year, the Maltese preferred to spend the feast day near the sea, such as Għar Lapsi and Birżebbuġa. People used to sing the traditional Maltese rhymed folksong; the *għana* which consisted of 2 men and more commonly than not, it would end up in an argument and a brawl (Mamo, 1913, 7-8, in Cassar, 2006) (Cassar, 2006).

Since the second World War, the feast celebrations have changed, however, the most important, remained the procession through the villages' streets. The interior of the church is still decorated with the swatches of damask, with gold and silver treasures out for display. However, modern day feast has more glare and noise (Cassar, 2006).

The rivalry between band clubs in the same village is a motivation to start with the preparations for the feast and helps in building excitement. During feast celebrations, friendly bands from different villages are invited to play in the decorated streets. Flags, banners, paper decorations (*liedna*), wooden pillars (*pedestalli*) with papier-mache statues of other saints and popes, private houses near the square are white-washed and the balconies are decorated with damask drapes with the image of the saint (*pavaljun*), among many more decorations to enhance the feeling of the upcoming

feast. Originally, food stalls in feasts only consisted of Date fritters (*imqaret*), nougat (*qubbajt*), and *pastizzi*, but nowadays, they are less, and less common as fast-food trucks have taken over (Cassar, 2006).

Fireworks back in the 18th century were prepared by the artillerymen of the Orders' army or commissioned from Sicily, however, since the last two decades of the 19th century, they have been produced by the Maltese with help of feast volunteers (Cassar-Pullicino, 1976: 37; in Cassar, 2006) (Cassar, 2006).

A mid-day band march is held on feast day, with a parade that follows with many drunk people. The following day is known as *xalata* where people take the day off to conclude the weeklong celebrations by going to the beach or for a picnic. The day then ends with a car parade that includes decorated cars and busses full of people singing and music blasting (Cassar, 2006).

2.4 History of Feasts Celebrated in the Village of Mqabba

In Mqabba, there are two main feasts that are celebrated, one is dedicated to Saint Mary Assumption same as the Parish Church, and the other is dedicated to The Immaculate Conception. These are two stages of Mary's life, her ascension into heaven with soul and body, and the birth of her immaculate respectively. Although these have been the main feasts for hundreds of years in Mqabba. Additional smaller feasts were celebrated for other statues of Saint Mary, such as the Lady of the Rosary. This statue used to be taken out during a procession every first Sunday of May, as *Il-Madonna Tal-Warda*. Two other statues were of Our Lady of Lourdes and the Queen of the Heart of Jesus, which were then removed by the order of Bishop Mawru Caruana (Bonnici, 1998).

The statues of the main feasts in Mqabba as we know them today, Saint Mary Assumption and The Immaculate Conception, have been around for almost two hundred years and were crafted by Xandru Farrugia and Ġanni Darmanin respectively. Although the statue of Saint Mary Assumption is taken out of its' niche once a year on the 15th of August, the statue of the Immaculate Conception is taken out twice a year, on the 3rd Sunday of June and on the 8th of December. The title of Our Lady of the Lily is much older than the brotherhood of the Immaculate Conception, which was founded in 1772, as there was a procession for Our Lady of the Lily (Bonnici, 1998).

2.4.1 The Expectations

Casino San Giuseppe was the first social club in Mqabba by 1898, which provided support to Sigismondo Savona to pave the way to the *partiti tal-festa*. Founded in the 20th century, *Tal-Ġilju* and *Ta' Santa Marija* social band clubs were the first two rivalries with exclusive supporters in Mqabba. As the feast rivalries kept growing, the churches' control over the villagers kept diminishing (Farrugia, 1996).

Canon Pullicino, a popular figure in the educational sector, paid two scudi and four tari in September 1869 as an expenditure to celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows. This feast consisted of distribution of bread to the poor of Mqabba, Żurrieq, and Qrendi, which kept on happening yearly in September until World War 2 suspended the functions of the Chapel.

Even though Malta is a small, isolated land, Fernand Braudel was surprised that there was a lot of culture and economic networks through maritime routines, such as the fireworks and typical feast celebrations (Farrugia, 1996).

The celebrations in Mqabba closely resembled those happening in Cinisi Sicily with similar elements such as fireworks, music, and processions. Prof. Vito Mangiapani stated that there is no feast without music playing (Farrugia, 1996). On the other hand, Godfrey Farrugia states that there is not feast without fireworks (Farrugia, 2016). The records of feast of Santa Fara in Sicily shows that only certain prominent people could donate good amounts of money to finance the feast, while in Mqabba and certain places in Sicily sold hens to raise money for the celebrations. In Sicily, there was more control on the external celebrations such as financing of band and fireworks. In Malta the Parish Priest played a dominant role in the feast activities to have a more centralized control, whilst Sicily was the contrary as there was a decentralized organisational structure (Farrugia, 1996).

James Cleugh states that the procession is the main event where houses, the church and pavements are well-lit and decorated for the occasion with spectators on the church's' steps. The men carry the statue, while women and children hold candles wearing medallions, there is the clergy, municipal authorities, and detachment of the Civil Guard all following the procession of the Saint (Farrugia, 1996).

During the British's stay in Malta, the *partiti tal-festa* escalated as they found great support from the government for decisions taken in the 1970s. The clubs were founded around a particular saint which might be interpreted as a cult, which involves both religious and materialistic considerations. As the Order of the Knights was named after St. John the Baptist, it introduced a lot of devotion towards this saint as the order would need the protection of one (Farrugia, 1996).

The 16th century saw the village feast as a small affair, having only a religious celebration and charity acts. On the other hand, the 17th century evolved by having processions with a statue of the saint which allowed Maltese craftsmen to show their wood or Papier-Mache talents in the statues. Due to the new feast celebrations, there were more financial resources needed due to the complexity of the celebrations. Donations were made by people who were above average means and were seeking a reputation and status in their village. As an example, Innocenzo Zammit, known as *in-Naxxari*, from Mqabba, paid Carlo Darmanin in 1876 to create a Papier-Mache statue of the Immaculate Conception, which later came to be known as *Tal-Ġilju*. In the 18th and 19th centuries, a feast dedicated to Our Lady of the Lily was popular in Bormla (Farrugia, 1996).

The early 20th century showed that several band clubs were rooting for specific politicians which led to many disputes between senior members of the same band club. Qormi, had this happen which ended up in a new band club being founded in 1893 (Farrugia, 1996).

In 1905, a Band Club dedicate to Mary Assumption was founded and the colour red was associated with this club and the confraternity of the Holy Sacrament. and it oversaw the celebrations of the feast of Assumption, the Immaculate Conception, Our Lady of the Lily, and Our Lady of the Rosary. Five years later there was a dispute regarding the name of the club, as some members wished to change it to King George V. Those who were supporters of the feast of Our Lady of the Lily opened a separate club under the name Circolo Pio X and they embraced the colour blue to be identified with as it was the same colour worn by the members of the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception (Farrugia, 1996).

In the 20th century, new directives have been implemented which stated that the Tridium, meaning the three days of preparation leading up to the feast, was to be reduced to two days. Street decorations and lights were restricted to the village square,

excluding even the streets of the procession route. Only one band could play at a time and only on the eve and the feast day. Fireworks were also under new strict regulations. Due to the rivalries between the band clubs, most villages ended up having titular and secondary feasts. During these, the titular statue could pass from the main door and the main aisle of the church when entering and exiting for the procession. Meanwhile the secondary statue should only pass from the side door of the church. These changes made the Lily supporters in Mqabba angry and therefore cancelled the upcoming feast and organised an outing, also known as *xalata*, to Għadira bay (Farrugia, 1996). Nowadays, this rivalry motivates volunteers to work harder to be better than their rivalry and put on a better show for the spectators (Abela, 2017).

Dr. Vicky Ann Cremona said that the word feast brings a special time especially to Parish people. However, nowadays there is less attendance to the feast solely for the saint. Whilst public manifestation and celebrations have grown, attendance to the church and other religious rituals have decreased (Abela, 2017).

3. Methodology

Research methodology can be split in two categories: quantitative and qualitative, both assisting the researcher in collecting theoretical or practical data for their studies.

Methodology is a search for knowledge to fill in the gap of the research purpose (Goundar, 2012). In this section, the researcher will discuss the methodology chosen for the primary research of this thesis.

3.1 Research Methods

The reason of research is to find a solution or an answer to a problem or question that has been identified, which is referred to as 'the gap'. Through research methods, the said problem or question will be answered through the identified variables, carefully selected methods, and the conclusions will be drawn through the findings. Having said that, the researcher must choose which methods to utilize for their study; qualitative, quantitative, or a mixed-method approach (Sevilla, et al., 1992). For this study, it was ideal to choose a mixed-method methodology. Focus group discussions and individual interviews are examples of qualitative research which can provide in-depth insight as they are an open-ended and examining research methods and these are mostly used in case studies and historical studies. Focus groups allow the researcher to get different perspectives at the same time from different individuals with similar characteristics (Islam, 2025). Qualitative research focuses on answering the 'What', 'Why', and 'How' questions. On the contrary, quantitative research answers the 'How much' and 'How many' questions. It is a controlled and obstructive method as it deals with measurable answers which is conducted through many participants. The researcher will not be of influence through quantitative research methods as it is objective. The researcher can analyse the data of quantitative research with the statistics from the primary research that was carried out. It is also possible to include both methods into a single study which is known as the Mixed-Methods research (Kandel, 2020). Quantitative research is simpler to analyse as it consists of mostly numerical data, especially if most questions asked were close ended (Taherdoost, 2022). On the contrary, since qualitative research focuses on the quality of the responses due to the open-ended questions, it is more challenging to analyse the different answers and opinions (Kandel, 2020).

3.2 Data Collection Methods

Collecting primary data for a study might not be the easiest thing to organise as the researcher must choose a method that compliments their study and the research questions, as well as the targeted population. Should a researcher seek after numerical data, a quantitative method should be applied. However, if non-numerical is preferred for the study, qualitative is the method that should be utilized (Mwita, 2022).

Choosing a method within the categories mentioned before might be a challenge based on the time that the researcher has, means of collecting the data, funds available, and possible participants. If the data collection method is not done properly, it will unfortunately pose a problem in the study as it might not be answering the research questions (Mwita, 2022). Research methods are usually independent of the data collection methods. This shows that any data collection method can be utilized with any research approach, though certain data collection methods are more utilized and associated with specific research, such as experimental approaches which are usually used with certain methods. Comparative or survey-based approaches commonly use other methods, as qualitative research relies on entirely different methods (Morgan & Harmon, 2001) Researchers must take into consideration 10 factors when choosing the data collection methods.

These are: 'research goal, scope of the study, sample size, type of data, time and user-friendliness to the subjects. Other factors are research approach, safety and security of a researcher, the need for triangulation and theoretical framework' (Mwita, 2022).

3.2.1 Focus Group

In this thesis, the researcher used a mixed-method approach for the primary research collection. Focus groups were initially utilized in the 1940s at Columbia University specifically the Bureau of Applied Social Research (Gill, et al., 2008). There seems to be an increase in focus-groups methodology in tourism studies as the researcher is gaining a different form of communication from the participants as they encourage each other to communicate their full knowledge on the subject (Islam, 2025). A focus group can be unstructured, semi-structured, or structured. An unstructured method will lessen the control of the researcher the participants' responses, making it ideal for studies with ample time to gather extensive information from various individuals. A semi-structured

technique consists of the researcher preparing questions and probes, being asked in no order, to cover the necessary topics and requiring deep thoughts from the participants to understand where the answers come from during the discussion in the focus group. Lastly, a structured procedure is the most controlled where the moderator will ask the questions in a specific order without providing any explanation of the questions to the participants if not understood well. This method is mostly used for large samples which can be used to generalise a large population (Harrell, & Bradley, 2009)

For the qualitative method for data collection, a focus group was utilized, consisting of a moderator and eight participants. Questions were prepared beforehand after identifying the main aim of the focus group and the key objectives of the study. Mixed-gender groups and people who share similar characteristics (such as: age range, ethnic and social class background) will improve the discussion and its conclusions. Participants might see it as a challenge of who will have the last say in a discussion, who will come up with the most important topics, which might not happen in a one-to-one interview (Gill, et al., 2008).

Focus group participants can be chosen through various means, such as door-to-door canvassing, a monetary incentive, interviews, and through personal contacts. Unfortunately, choosing individuals through personal contacts might lead to convenience sampling as it might lead to volunteer bias. A drawback to all the mentioned methods of sampling, is the uncertainty that the participants might not attend. It is recommended by Burrows & Kendall (1997) that more than one meeting with the group should be done, a minimum of three or four meetings are to be held. It is vital to have a venue that can accommodate all participants well, with all people being able to see each other and being comfortable (Nyumba, et al., 2018).

Being well-prepared for the focus group with well-structured questions based on the study's objectives will assist the researcher in having a greater chance of getting the data and answers required from this method. A moderator should encourage everyone to voice their thoughts and opinions without letting a singular person overtake others. The moderator's role is to keep the discussion in line with the questions asked and the topic being discussed, otherwise, the focus group will go out of point and certain people might feel less interested (Gill, et al., 2008).

3.2.2 Questionnaires

Questionnaires is one of the most popular methods used for research which is designed around the research questions that can be answered through the questionnaire and the targeted segment (Taherdoost, 2022). It is ideal for numerical data collection and analysis as it is quantitative research with a structured or unstructured method. A structured questionnaire will entail predetermined and concrete questions that are given to all respondents. While an unstructured questionnaire can vary from one respondent to another as the interviewer will have a guide depending on the answers received (Kuphanga, 2024). Having simply open-ended or close-ended questions in the questionnaire is not ideal, it is better to opt for a combination of both. Close-ended questions are typically multiple choice, rating scales, or checklists where the respondent is limited in providing their opinion and might be influenced by the options provided. On the other hand, open-ended questions will provide the researcher with many different opinions and feedback from the respondents. For the researcher, having to analyse close-ended questions is easier, whilst open-ended question might pose a challenge (Taherdoost, 2022).

There are multiple ways of how a questionnaire can be held, either self-administered or interview-based; face-to-face, by telephone call, postal, or online (Taherdoost, 2022). There are factors to be considered when developing the questionnaire, such as, how it will be collected, target community, any limitations, resources available and the expected answer rate, and the target community's knowledge. If a questionnaire is to be held solely by the responder, they should be user-friendly and easy to understand, however, if they will be assisted via phone call, it can be more complex. Questions in questionnaires should be clear with a proper sequence to avoid any misunderstandings. It is ideal to start with general questions and having more specific queries at the end. By doing so, there is a greater chance to have more accurate responses (Kuphanga, 2024).

Researchers must keep in mind the ethical issues that lie behind questionnaire methodology research. There are laws that differ from one country to another about data protection. A respondent should only be willing to answer the questionnaire voluntarily, rather than feeling compelled to do so. It is vital for the researcher to assure the respondent that the data will be used solely for the specific study and that only information

provided through the willingness of the respondent will be mentioned (Taherdoost., 2022).

A questionnaire is ideal to reach audiences that can only be reached through online platforms to answer which broadens the target population therefore increasing the sample size. An online shared questionnaire gives the flexibility and commodity to the respondents to answer at whatever time they want with whatever pace they prefer (Kuphanga, 2024).

If the questionnaire is challenging for individuals with low literacy skills, it may create bias and lead to issues during analysis due to a low response rate. As most questionnaires are anonymous, particularly when distributed online, there is a heightened risk of purposeful sabotage and misuse. Another disadvantage is that it is not easy to recall the questionnaire once it is publicly shared to do some amendments (Kuphanga, 2024).

3.3 Pilot Study

A pilot study is developed to ensure high-quality and feasible research methods prior to conducting the primary research with the respondents. The appropriate methodology for data collection of a particular study is determined through the pilot study, however, one should consider that the pilot study is done on a smaller scale of the actual study to ensure validation of the results that will be received (In, 2017). A pilot study is carried out to determine whether the methods need to be changed completely or fix certain aspects through different opinions of the small sample to refrain the researcher from conducting flawed research (Dźwigoł, 2020) (Lowe, 2019).

To test the questionnaire and the focus group that the researcher drafted, a pilot study was done with the tutor of this thesis. The first draft of the questionnaire revealed that the questions were not worded properly and did not address the research objectives. Consequently, they were then re-written to ensure they correctly addressed the research questions and were appropriately worded. This update allowed the tutor to understand the questions better with the order of the questions being more appropriate, as well with questions where the respondent can provide their own feedback and share their opinion, rather than answering solely questions with multiple choices. The focus group questions were originally drafted in a way that they were close ended requiring

one-word answers which was feedback provided by the tutor after piloting the method. The researcher then adjusted the questions and included more queries which exhibited that the answers were more strengthened and elongated. The more important questions were drafted to be at the second part of the questionnaire which allowed time for the participants to get comfortable to answer to their full knowledge.

3.4 Methods of Analysis

In this sub-chapter, the research will explain the methodologies utilized to analyse the outcomes of the primary data and the literature review. The researcher adopted a thematic analysis approach and a triangulation method to collect all data.

3.4.1 Thematic Analysis

A thematic analysis (TA) is used mostly in qualitative research methods to identify and analyse patterns through differently gathered data. It is utilized to understand the patterns and relationships within raw data (Jowsey, et al. 2021). Braun and Clarke (2006) developed six-phase guidelines to approach TA. Firstly, the research shall familiarize himself with the data, then systematically coding the data into their respective groups, afterwards, a search for relevant themes is to be conducted to further categorize the data. Later, refining the themes to confirm their relation to the purpose of the study, followed by generating definitions to analyse the general narrative and finishing by relating the gathered data to the research questions and the literature review (Ahmed, et al., 2025).

In this study, the researcher familiarised himself well with the collected primary data and pointed out any data with importance. The most interesting parts where the expectations differ from inbound, and outbounds' tourists based on their demographics, personal preferences and beliefs. In addition, an interesting aspect was also how the marketing and promotion done by the society affects the visitors' experience. The data was organized and labelled based on important features of the information, then the data was grouped to identify recurring themes and see the ones that mostly stood out. It was made sure that the themes linked to the research question and later the data gathered was analysed with the research questions and information from the literature review to back it up (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This analysing tool allowed the researcher

to combine the two primary research methods to identify the common themes from the answers gathered to achieve the research objectives.

3.4.2 Triangulation Approach

A triangulation approach allows the researcher to use different perspectives in a single study to enhance the credibility and validity of the findings. It is also applied to heighten the understanding certain data and theories when cross-verifying with different sources (Carter, et al., 2014). In a triangulation approach, a researcher will collect data preferably from different times, people, and settings to perceive the various approaches a singular subject can have and how things have evolved and transformed while also ensuring good quality data (Carter, et al., 2014). Having multiple perspectives in one study, will minimize the bias and methodological limitations. Nonetheless, combining the findings can bring up perspectives and theories that a single approach method might have missed.

In this study, the researcher utilized this approach in the discussion where all data collected from the focus group, the questionnaires, and the literature review were combined to validate the findings and apply different perspectives of the study (Santos, et al., 2020).

3.5 Ethical Considerations

When conducting primary research, it is imperative to obtain consent from the participants, particularly in methods where the respondents are answering directly, such as questionnaires and focus groups.

When questionnaires are shared online the target audience has the option to decline answering the questionnaire. Consequently, the researcher will obtain verbal consent from the respondents, as the audience is deciding whether they would be comfortable in answering the shared questionnaire (Hammer, 2017). It is vital that the respondents are aware about the data will be storage and utilization. Furthermore, the respondents shall know if it is anonymous or not, if so, how their confidentiality will be protected. Participants should be able to withdraw from answering further questions if they are not comfortable, thus any data gathered from them, shall be destroyed and cannot be utilized in the study (Halej, 2017).

When conducting a focus group, it is vital to obtain consent from each member. Alternatively, one participant may give consent on behalf of each participant. The participants must be aware if their name will be displayed on the research and how the data will be utilized and stored. A participant can leave the discussion should they not feel comfortable; however, their contribution will remain in the data (Sim & Waterfield, 2019). Particularly in small communities, the researchers cannot guarantee that the participants will maintain confidentiality outside the discussion, which might create issues or harm to the participants (Cowton & Downs, 2015). In addition, if the participants share personal experiences and information, it is a greater risk to them being exposed (Sim & Waterfield, 2019).

3.6 Limitations

The researcher found many difficulties when searching for relevant secondary research for this study. Many papers and books that have been published about the Maltese traditional feasts have been around for a long time, and mostly were all written by the same few authors, which might create some bias.

As the researcher preferred to pass around the questionnaire during the feast celebrations, it was not feasible as many visitors were enjoying the feast and did not want to be bothered by a questionnaire. Having said that, the researcher decided to share the questionnaire online, thus, had no control over who answered it, which creates a question of credibility. Despite that, many volunteers who are part of the society, answered the questionnaire. Apart from that, some respondents did not answer all required questions which creates a shortage of in-depth responses.

Regarding the focus group, a limitation that the researcher encountered was that a participant stated that they would attend, however, entered the focus group discussion before the last question was being asked. In addition, another participant left the discussion before it was finished, which these create an imbalance in the discussion. Some participants dominated the discussion which made others remain quiet as they did not have ample time to voice their opinion. The researcher did find an issue when organizing the questionnaire, as it is not easy to schedule a group discussion with a total of 10 people.

Despite all limitations encountered, the researcher did their utmost to not let it discourage them from the study. As the researcher is a part of the society of the feast of Our Lady of the Lily, it was easier to ask the focus group members to attend as they were too excited for this study. The researcher knew of the limitations that were encountered due to the background of volunteering in this sector.

4. Results, Analysis and Discussion

The researcher of this study conducted questionnaires and a focus group, as stated in the Methodology section. The targeted number of questionnaires was 100, however, there was a total of 146 respondents, whilst the focus group was done with eight participants. This section will present the data collected from the specified methods, followed by the discussion highlighting the main findings of the analysis. A triangulation of the findings will be presented to address the research questions.

4.1 Results and Analysis

The researcher will present the findings of the study from the data collected through the Mixed-Method approach. The data will be analysed through a thematic system which will identify the key patterns and insights based on the research questions. The first section focuses on the questionnaire responses, followed by an analysis of the focus group findings.

4.1.1 Questionnaires

The questionnaires were responded by outbound and inbound tourists that visited the feast of Our Lady of the Lily. These were shared through a QR code to the visitors and shared online to maximise reach and engage a broader tourist audience.

What is your age?

Starting off the questionnaire with demographics questions, 44 respondents are shown to be between the age of 21 and 30, followed by the age group of 41 to 50 with 41 respondents. Age group 31 to 40 saw a total of 25 respondents whilst 51 to 60 had 17 people from that age group, leaving just 8 participants over the age of 61.

What is your age?

146 responses

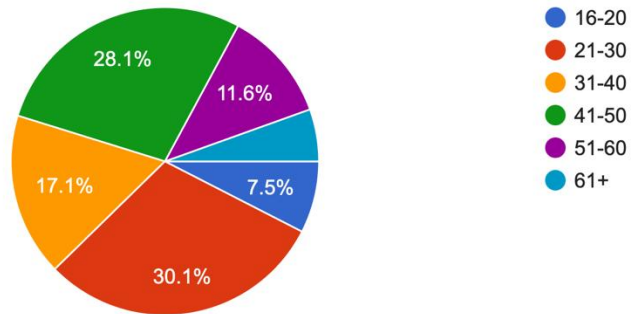


Figure 1 - A pie chart of 'What is your age?' answers

What is your gender?

82 respondents identify as female while 64 identify as male.

What is your gender?

146 responses

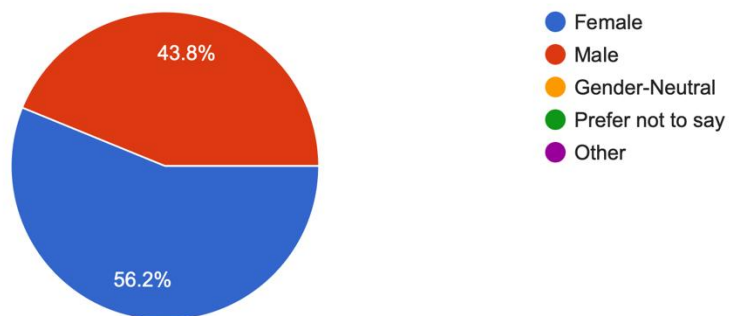


Figure 2 - A pie chart of 'What is your gender?' answers

What is your nationality?

A total of 139 respondents stated that they are Maltese, while two were British, two were Filipinos, one Canadian, one Swiss, and one Vietnamese.

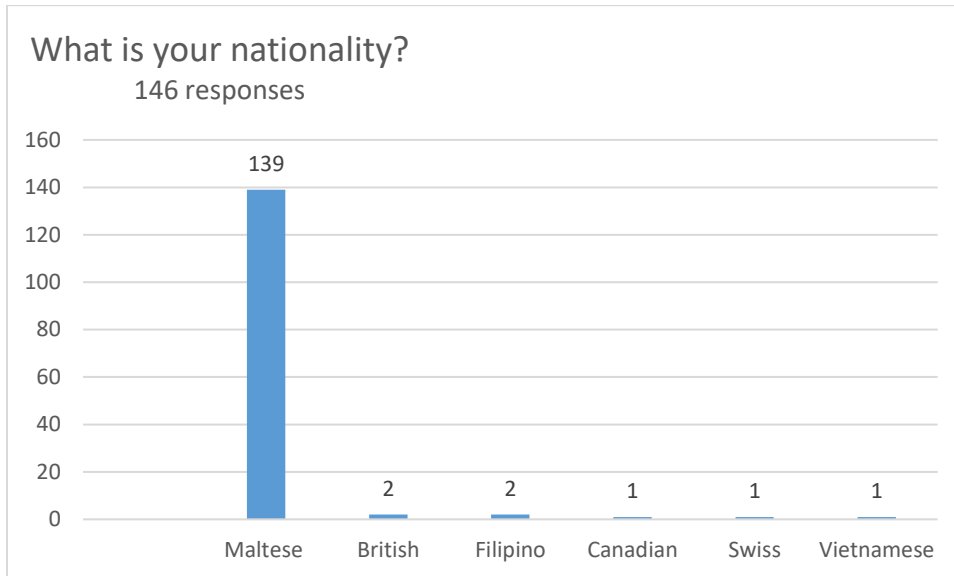


Figure 3 - A bar graph of 'What is your nationality' answers

What is your marital status?

A total of 69 people reported being married while 57 identified as single. Additionally, ten stated that they are in a relationship or have a partner, whilst four indicated that they are separated, three are co-habiting, two are divorced, and one considered the category not applicable to them.

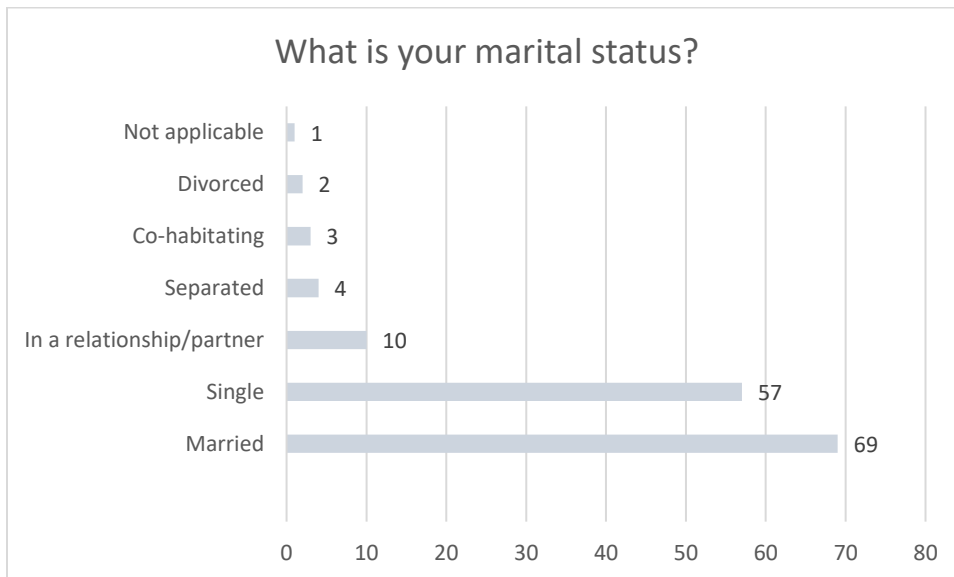


Figure 4 - A horizontal bar graph of 'What is your marital status?' answers

Is this your first visit to Mqabba solely for the feast of Our Lady of the Lily?

A total of 125 respondents responded 'no' which makes the remaining 21 respondents being their first time visiting the feast.

Is this your first visit to Mqabba solely for the festa of Our Lady of the Lily?

146 responses

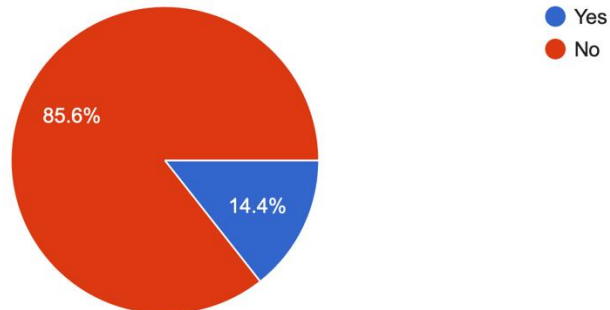


Figure 5 - A pie chart of 'Is this your first visit to Mqabba solely for the festa of Our Lady of the Lily?' answers

Which day of the feast did you visit?

As seen below in Figure 6, this was a multiple-choice question with 9 options to choose from. The options were the whole week of the feast, starting from Sunday 9th June 2024 to the last day of the feast being Sunday 16th June 2024, with 2 options being provided for Sunday 16th June (morning and evening). The most popular day to visit was Friday 14th June with a total of 118 visitors, followed by Saturday 15th June with a sum of 115 visitors. The procession on Sunday 16th in the evening saw a total of 102 visitors. Monday and Tuesday were the least popular with a total of 73 visitors each from the 146 respondents. Wednesday 12th June saw a total of 79 respondents that attended. 88 of the respondents visited the feast on Thursday 13th June. Sunday 9th June and Sunday 16th June in the morning saw the same total of respondents of 82 people each.

Which day of the festa did you visit?

146 responses

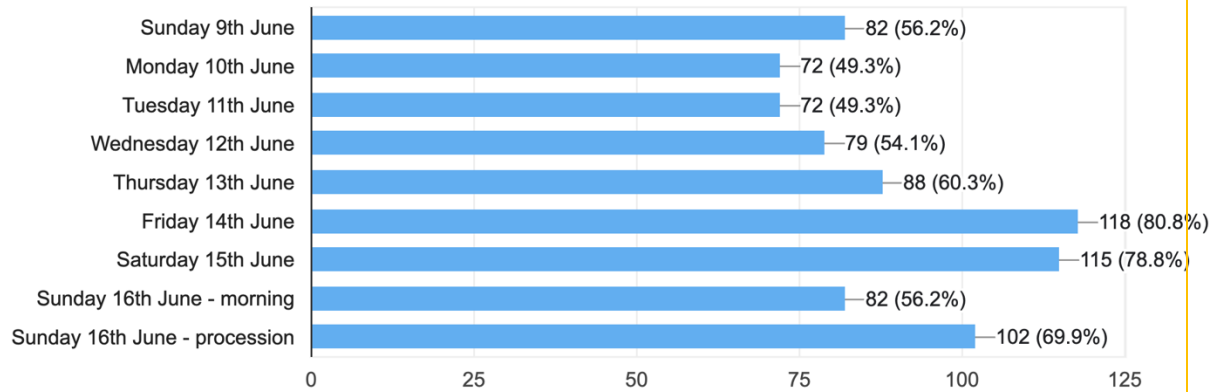


Figure 6 - A horizontal bar graph of 'Which day of the feast did you visit?' answers

What motivated you to visit Mqabba's village feast?

This question is also designed as a multiple-choice format, allowing the respondents to select predefined options while also providing the opportunity to include their own reasons for motivation to visit. Pyrotechnics was the most popular motivation as 91 people stated. 84 people stated that their motivation is the Culture Experience, while 70 chose Religious Significance as their motivational factor. Advertising and promotions of the feast motivated 31 attendees. 28 people were motivated to attend because of recommendations from others. Seven people attended as their motivation is that they reside in Mqabba. Five attendees were motivated because of family tradition, while four people stated that they are part of the society that celebrates this feast. Three people chose 'other' factors in the selection however they decided not to specify, while two people stated that everything was their motivation. One was motivated to meet friends, one 'presided over the vocal and instrumental soiree' and found it as their motivation, another one found the decorations being their motivation, one person stated that it is the best village feast and another stated that the vibes are wonderful which is their motivation. Unfortunately, two of the respondents mentioned disrespectful words.

What motivated you to visit Mqabba's village festa?

146 responses

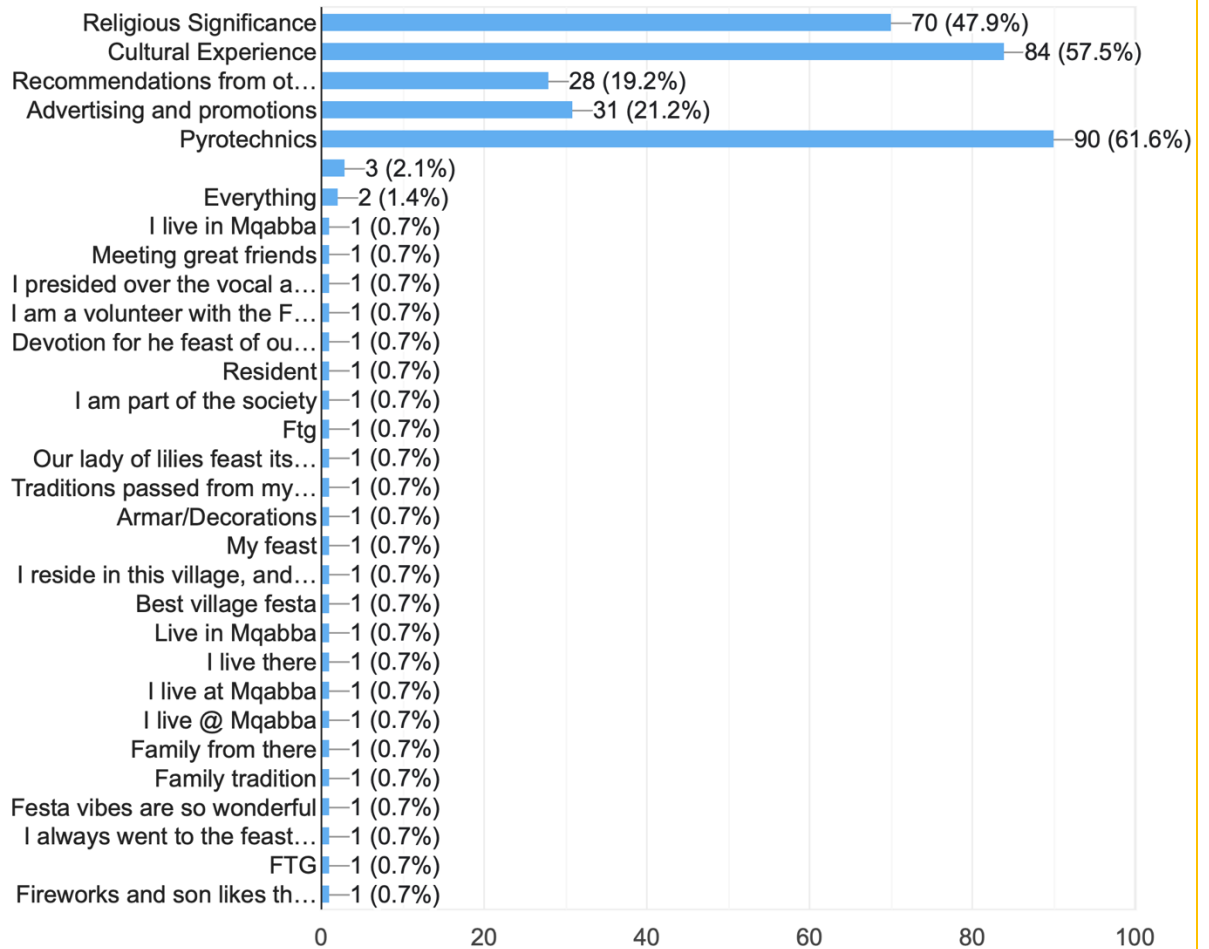


Figure 7 – A horizontal bar graph of ‘What motivated you to visit Mqabba’s village feast?’ answers

Please indicate your agreement with the argument: ‘I have seen a lot of advertising and promotion of this feast on social media’.

This statement had linear scale as an answer method, one being the least and five being the most. The majority, being 62 respondents marked five to the statement, 34 chose four, 26 people chose three, 14 respondents chose two, and ten chose one as their answer.

Please indicate your agreement with the argument: "I have seen a lot of advertising and promotion of this festa on social media".

146 responses

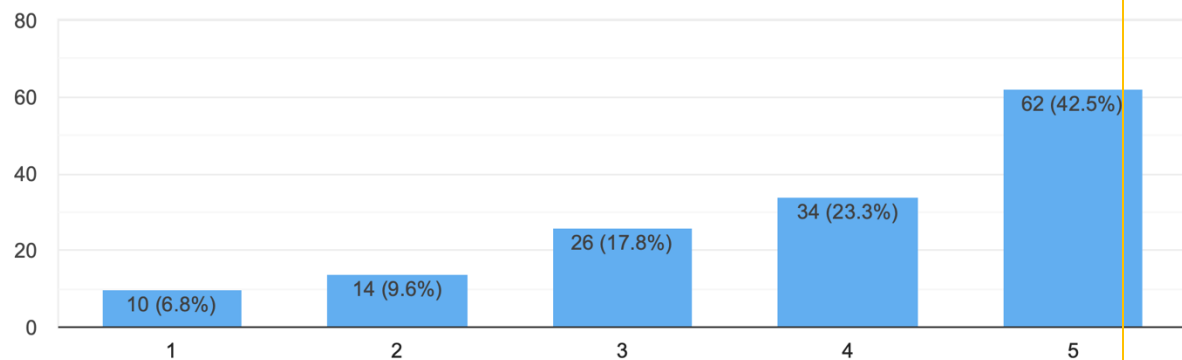


Figure 8 – A bar graph of 'Please indicate your agreement with the argument: 'I have seen a lot of advertising and promotion of this festa on social media'.' answers

On which media platform did you get to know about the festa?

107 respondents out of the 146 total, chose social media as their answer, while 72 chose word of mouth, 32 chose website which is owned by the society, 16 chose television while 15 chose radio. Eight of the respondents stated that they are residing in Mqabba. Five mentioned that they have been celebrating this festa for a long time and it is their chosen festa to celebrate. One resides in a neighbouring town of Mqabba and has been attending for years, whilst another person mentioned that they heard about it through their family. Similarly, someone wrote 'Chồng của tôi' which translates to 'my husband'. Another person chose 'other' but did not specify on the media platform. Unfortunately, once again, two respondents wrote disrespectful comments.

On which media platform did you get to know about the festa?

146 responses

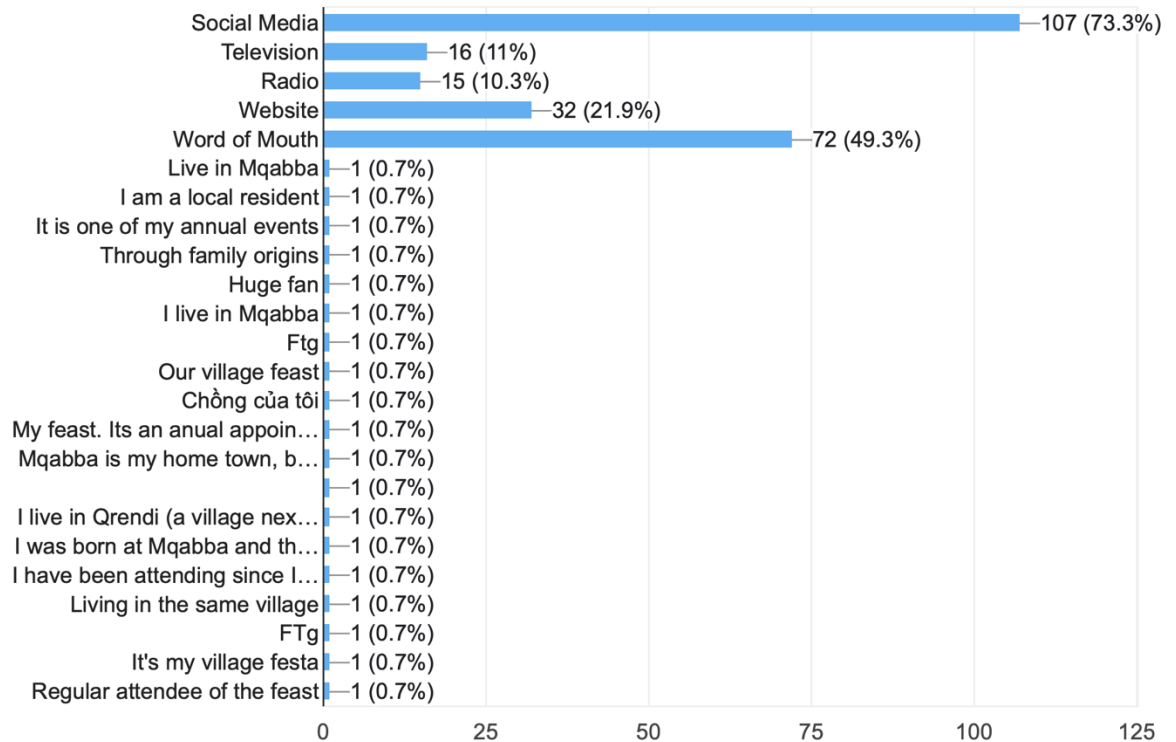


Figure 9 – A horizontal bar graph of ‘On which media platform did you get to know about the feast?’ answers

What did you like most about the feast?

This question required a personalised answer, therefore, there were many different opinions. 41 people mentioned the fireworks, 22 stated that they liked everything from the feast, seven mentioned the organisation, and another seven mentioned the vibe and atmosphere. Six of the respondents liked the culture along with the arts and the atmosphere, whereas another six enjoyed the teamwork of the volunteers and how they showed professionalism. Five people liked the fireworks and the band. Four people liked the decorations, another four liked the band, whilst the church functions were mentioned by four respondents. The fireworks together with Friday celebrations were mentioned by four respondents. Similarly, another four people mentioned the fireworks and decorations. Four people enjoyed only Friday’s celebrations, whereas another four mentioned that they like the people and the fireworks. The religious functions, the marches, the pyrotechnics and the concert by the band were

mentioned altogether by four individuals. Three people mentioned the marches and the atmosphere. The tradition and authenticity were liked by two people while another two mentioned the organisation and the fireworks. One respondent mentioned the band marches, pyrotechnics and decorations, whilst another one mentioned the procession and fireworks. Similarly, one attendee mentioned the procession and the marches. One person liked the marches, fireworks, and the cultural experience. Only one mentioned the feature (a video produced by the society which will showcase all aspects of the works behind the feast, typically shown on Friday celebrations before the march), another one mentioned fireworks and the church. One enjoyed the respect. One liked meeting old friends. The religious significance and decorations were mentioned by one attendee. One person mentioned they like the band concert, one mentioned the band club's building, another liked nothing, while similarly, one individual stated that on the 14th there was nothing to see.

Did you feel that the feast is well-organized?

Figure 10 features a pie chart illustrating that 143 individuals perceived the feast was well organized, while three respondents disagreed.

Did you feel that the festa is well-organised?
146 responses

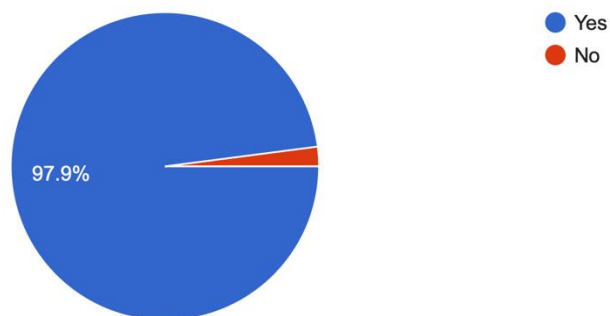


Figure 10 – A pie chart of ‘Did you feel that the feast is well-organized?’ answers

Please specify the above answer.

For this statement, the respondents had to write their comments as to why they chose a specific answer for the above question. 97 of the respondents stated that the feast was well-organised with a timed schedule and great teamwork. 13 attendees decided not to specify. Five people stated that everything was well-organised, whilst another five said that it was perfect. Five people even mentioned that it is the best feast. Two people said

that it was okay, whilst another two mentioned that it had good organisation but not enough volunteers. Further two respondents stated that the Friday celebrations were well-organised and professional, in addition, two other people mentioned that the disco on Friday took priority over the significance of the statue. Two people noted the nice atmosphere and great experience. One person said that it was up to standard, one said that it was as expected, whilst another responded stated that it was boring. A singular person mentioned that they enjoyed it, another mentioned that the feast was beautiful, whilst one other respondent said that it was a typical feast. Religious significance was mentioned by one individual, as well as fireworks and marches were only mentioned by one respondent. A sole person noted the young active volunteers. A respondent mentioned that they would prefer the feast to be celebrated in July. Unfortunately, one person mentioned a disrespectful comment.

My expectations of the feast were...

In Figure 11, it shows that 76 respondents exceeded their expectations, whilst 65 people's expectations were met, and five attendees' expectations were not met.

My expectations of the festa were..

146 responses

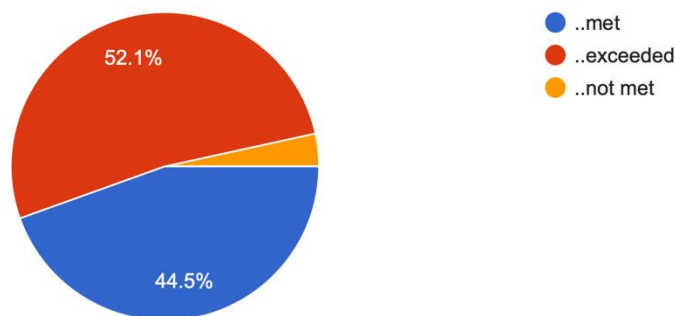


Figure 11 – A pie chart of 'My expectations of the feast were...' answers

4.1.2 Focus Group

The focus group took place on the 8th of October 2024 at the Band Club of Our Lady of the Lily with eight speakers alongside a moderator. The speakers were the following:

Speaker 1 – President of the society
Speaker 2 – Secretary
Speaker 3 – Pyrotechnics Team Leader
Speaker 4 – PRO of the Youth Committee
Speaker 5 – Decorations Team Leader
Speaker 6 – Band Leader
Speaker 7 – A member of the Administrative Committee
Speaker 8 – Brotherhood Team Leader

Why do you think tourists visit the feast?

Speaker 7 started the discussion by stating that it is something traditional in Malta which offers free entertainment for the tourists, and it is something unique that you will not find somewhere else. Speaker 1 agreed and added that the outbound tourists will not see this spectacle in their country.

Which is the most famous factor of the feast?

Speaker 3 stated that everything is popular, however, Speaker 1 did not agree, and it was stated that Mqabba is known for its' pyrotechnics. Speaker 7 agreed with Speaker 3 however pointed out that the pyrotechnics are the most popular. Speaker 3 added that before, in older times, Mqabba was known for its' street decorations. The band was only mentioned by Speaker 6, but it was never mentioned by inbound and outbound tourists when attending or discussing the feast. On the other hand, Speaker 4 agrees with everyone, but still believes that it depends on whom is being questioned. Speaker 6 disagrees with Speaker 4 and says that pyrotechnics is the most famous factor no matter what. In addition, Speaker 2 agrees by saying that when the pyrotechnics team was not providing a good show, the tourists decreased, however, when the quality of the fireworks show was getting better, more people started attending. Once again, Speaker 4 mentioned that teenagers and young adults will mention the Friday celebrations if asked.

What do you think you can do to attract more tourists?

Implementing a better marketing strategy was mentioned promptly by Speaker 4. Agreeing with that statement, Speaker 1 added that to attract outbound tourists, the feast needs to be marketed with the agencies. It was also said by Speaker 1 that inbound tourists will be attracted only by something new and unique that they might not see in their village, a surprise, or attempts to achieve The Malta Records or Guinness World Records were noted.

When do you think specific age groups visit the feast? (16-20, 21-30, 31-40, etc.)

The feast offers a day specified for each age group, stated Speaker 1, hence why there is a day for the younger kids, a day for the elderly, the band concert is for multiple age groups same as Saturday when there is the pyrotechnics show. The band marches are for younger generations continued saying Speaker 1, with Speaker 4 agreeing on everything.

Which age group do you think visits the feast the most? - And when/which days do you think they visit?

Friday is the day in which people from all age groups visit as per Speaker 3. Speaker 4 contradicts by saying that teens are attending most. Speaker 2 does not agree with anyone and says that the age group of 41-50 are interested in every aspect of the feast which means they attend the most.

As per your opinion, do you think you are advertising enough based on the people that are visiting?

Speaker 4 said that in their opinion the marketing is good, however, there is always room for improvement, especially being that marketing and technology is always evolving.

Are you using the resources which are most effective? (social media, Television, Radio, etc)

Speaker 5 started off by referring to a video promotion that was done during Christmas time by the society and stated that it reached a big audience on social media being that it was something unique and each section was being represented by someone. In agreement, Speaker 7 mentioned the use of TikTok by the society, however, Speaker 1 said that things can be better and everyone agreed.

Do you think that the visitors' expectations are being met? Kindly explain.

The outbound tourists' expectations are being well-met as they have never experienced a Maltese traditional feast before stated Speaker 4. The statement continues by adding that the inbound tourists especially those that are feast fanatics, might not have their

expectations being met. As Speaker 1 said before, the outbound tourists will be impressed with every aspect of the feast, on the other hand, the inbound tourists would need something extra-ordinary to exceed their expectation. However, Speaker 5 said that it is easy to notice if people are enjoying it if they are participating.

Feedback gathered from the questionnaire was shared and discussed during the focus group session.

Feedback 1: “The recent cultural experience week in Mqabba, dedicated to celebrating the religious significance of Our Lady of the Lily, underscores the village's reputation as a Marian stronghold, also hosting two additional Marian feasts: the Assumption of Our Lady and Our Lady of the Rosary. Historically, these events have been deeply rooted in religious and cultural traditions, reflecting the community's devout nature. However, the contemporary trend of incorporating extensive partying following the band march marks a considerable departure from the traditional observances of the feast. This shift appears to prioritize attracting 'party people' and enhancing the event's fame, akin to other religious feasts organized by band clubs across Malta. Such transformations risk diluting the feast's original religious significance, overshadowing its spiritual and cultural essence with a more secular, entertainment-focused agenda.”

Speaker 1 said that the feast should be based on the traditional type of feast once again with Speaker 2 agreeing and adding that the more important things should be elevated. Speaker 8 stated that it is important to not lose your identity.

Feedback 2: “The disco on Friday takes the priority on the significance of the statue”

Speaker 4 acknowledged that the significance of the march is gradually overshadowing the importance of the *tlugħ tal-Madonna*. The committee is making efforts to restore its prominence, as it holds great value for the followers of Our Lady of the Lily. However, Speaker 4 pointed out that tourists tend to favor the celebratory aspects of the event.

Feedback 3: ‘Sense of belonging - people's participation in it - popular/authenticity feeling when seeing the feast’

Speaker 3 mentioned that the outbound tourists are appreciating the fact that what is happening during the feast is all authentic which allows them to learn about the culture and way of living of the locals.

Feedback 4: 'I would like to celebrate it in July'

All participants agreed that it is not feasible due to behind the scenes works, however, it is understood why the tourists would like to celebrate it later in summer.

4.2 Discussion

In this chapter, the researcher discusses and analyses the results that were gathered from the focus group and the questionnaires. This discussion will also include any pre-existing literature, and a triangulation analysis will be implemented to get a better understanding of the topic.

Over time, the focus of the Maltese traditional feasts has shifted from the religious significance to the entertainment. As stated in the literature review by Dr. Vicky Ann Cremona, the most important aspects of the feast which relate to the church functions, such as the mass, the procession, *ħruġ min-niċċa*, and *dħul fin-niċċa* have been overpowered by the external aspects, such as fireworks and partying. This can also be supported by the primary research that was carried out. In section 4.1.1 figure 7 shows that the most popular motivation to visit Mqabba's feast was the pyrotechnics for 91 respondents, whilst religious significance was chosen by 70 people. Similarly, 12 people only mentioned the religious activities for the question of 'What do you like most about the feast'. This variation can suggest a cultural shift in the perceive value and tradition of feasts, especially in younger generations. During the focus group discussion, the religious aspect was not mentioned by any of the speakers until providing the first feedback from the questionnaire. Three speakers expressed their agreement that it is important to preserve the traditional activities while ensuring that they are not being overshadowed by the extensive partying. These concerns can be aligned with the marketing strategy where the fireworks are being more emphasized than the religious part. As a result, it can mislead the tourists into thinking there are no religious celebrations which they could be interest in for the cultural experience. Thus, it can be argued that the current promotion of the feast does not reflect the whole traditional feast experience. A more balanced marketing strategy shall be implemented

to preserve the traditional aspect and promote them the same way the external celebrations are promoted.

Attendees' expectations of the feast varied as three respondents stated that their expectations were not met. These respondents come from different age groups; 21-30, 31-40, and 51-60, which is a variety of disappointed generations. A first-time female visitor to the Mqabba feast, aged between 21 and 30, voiced her disappointment due to lack of organisation with the disco taking priority over the importance of the statue on Friday celebrations. The other two respondents, who have attended the feast before, did not specify their reasons as to why their expectations were not met. This feedback clearly displays a lack of standard between what is expected from the feast and what is being delivered. During the focus group discussion, it was noted that the expectations of inbound tourists, as are the three mentioned questionnaire respondents, might not always be met since they might be visiting many feasts in different towns with similar celebrations. This could lead to inbound tourists not fully appreciate the typical celebrations of a feast due to repetitive activities and lack of uniqueness and variation. The focus group speakers also expressed their concerns regarding the lessening of religious factors while also agreeing that the parties and discos, as part of the atmosphere, are conquering the original intent of the feast. Supported by Raymond Saliba's statement that the feasts were meant to celebrate the religion, however, it is more than that, and it must be accepted. Having said that the expectations differ among the attendees based on their personal interests, level of interest in local tradition, and cultural appreciation. This new way of celebrating a feast might benefit the demographic of people who are seeking the free entertainment of music and partying, however, the people who value the religious significance and the traditional aspect will continue being disappointed. A more balanced feast will live up to everyone's expectations, which can preserve the tradition with a modern twist to the feast celebrations.

Responses from the questionnaire show noteworthy patterns in terms of age demographic, previous attendance, and awareness of the feast through different channels. All respondents aged 61 and above had already attended the feast previously. Age group between 51-60, with a total of 17 respondents, two of whom attended the feast for the first time. Both respondents were aware of the feast through word of mouth, however, one disagreed and the other was neutral regarding seeing any promotion of the feast on social media. In the 41-50 age group, there was a total of 41 respondents, three of whom attended for the first time. Interestingly, one strongly

disagreed with seeing promotional content on social media, however, still learned about the feast through the same channel. The other two strongly agreed that they saw lots of advertising on social media, yet both had heard of the feast through word of mouth. Age group of 31-40 had a total of 25 respondents, five of whom attended for the first time. Their opinion to seeing social media promotion varied as; one strongly disagreed, one disagreed, one was neutral, one agreed, and the other strongly agreed. The medium through which they learned about the feast varied too, as two heard about it through word of mouth, two through social media, and another through both sources. With the 44 respondents in the 21-30 age group, nine attended for the first time. One strongly disagreed with seeing promotional content on social media and heard about the feast through word of mouth. Another disagreed though still heard discovered the feast through social media. Three were neutral and learned about the feast through word of mouth. Another two were also neutral but discovered the feast on social media. One neutral respondent and another who strongly agreed, learned about the feast through various channels, them being social media, word of mouth, and the society's website. The youngest age group of 16-20, with a total of 11 respondents, included two first-time attendees. One agreed and the other strongly agreed to seeing social media promotional content. Both learned about the feast through social media and word of mouth. The focus group participants agreed that the existing marketing is aligning with today's trends and technology, however, it can still be improved to attract more inbound and outbound tourists. 50 respondents from the questionnaire strongly disagreed, disagreed or were neutral, while 96 respondents agreed or strongly agreed with seeing promotion on social media. This supports the focus groups' observation that there is room for improvement to enhance the outreach. Inbound tourists can be more attracted to the feast by introducing a unique element to the feast, such as a surprise or an attempt to break a Malta Record or Guinness World Record to differentiate from the other feasts. These attempts will generate more media coverage and increase social media engagement.

There were seven outbound tourists who filled out the questionnaire, five of whom stated that they heard about the feast through word of mouth, another through her husband, and only one discovered the feast through social media. This shows that there is a clear gap in targeted promotion for this demographic. In addition, six of the outbound tourists attended the feast on Friday or Saturday, which creates the assumption that outbound tourists think that the feast celebrations are limited to the weekend only. The respondent who got to know about the feast through her husband

attended on Thursday, which highlights the lack of awareness that the feast celebrations are week-long. As the detailed feast schedules are usually posted on social media platforms, it is difficult for the outbound tourists to gain that information and remain unaware of the scheduled activities. As a result, the focus group recommended outsourcing their marketing efforts to tourism operators to promote their feasts to outbound tourists. To go above and beyond for a marketing strategy, the feast can also market on in-flight magazines with the feasts' full programme.

Dr. Godfrey Farrugia stated that 'there is no feast without pyrotechnics', which is backed up by the questionnaire as 115 respondents visited on Saturday, when it is solely dedicated to pyrotechnic shows. 92 respondents were motivated to visit the feast because of the pyrotechnics. Furthermore, the focus group discussion clearly displays that most of the speakers agree that fireworks shows are the most popular aspect of the feast. Consequently, the strong emphasis on pyrotechnics, which clearly attracts large crowds, will unintentionally narrow the feasts' cultural and religious significance. The data shows that the tourists are attending mostly during the weekend and for pyrotechnics only, where the visitors are missing out on the full celebrations with the music traditions, religious aspect, and the traditional march. As the Maltese traditional feast is part of UNESCO, it is vital to keep the feasts' identity alive rather than it being transformed into a spectacle. As not everyone has the same interests, relying only on the pyrotechnics to attract visitors is a risk. The society shall promote the other activities more, especially the traditional heritage of the feast, to encourage more attendance during the whole week.

4.3 Conclusion

This study's primary research through a focus group and questionnaires, followed by a thematic analysis and a triangulation approach, has revealed that the feast of Our Lady of the Lily in Mqabba is particularly known for its' pyrotechnics and cultural atmosphere. It is more popular with the Maltese audience; however, some outbound tourists are aware of the feast.

The marketing strategies that the society is implementing, is effective in raising awareness for the feast, however, there is still room for improvement to reach to more tourists, especially outbound. Visitors' expectations were mostly met or exceeded,

especially from outbound tourists. On the other hand, inbound tourists, mostly feast enthusiasts expect something that is more unique and newer.

In the following chapter, the researcher will present their final conclusions of this study derived from the research questions. The next chapter will also provide recommendations for the future of the traditional Maltese feasts and provide suggestions to future research on this field. Lastly, the study will be evaluated through an assessment of its reliability and validity.

5. Final Arguments

In this chapter, the researcher will assess whether the study's research questions, and main aim were accomplished whilst evaluating the reliability and validity of the study. The researcher will also provide recommendations for future research and education.

5.1 Conclusions

To conclude, this study's aim was to find out what are the expectations of tourists attending the feast of Our Lady of the Lily in Mqabba. The primary research question was aimed to discover what tourists are expecting when visiting the feast, whilst the secondary questions focused on evaluating the effectiveness of the promotion of the feast and how the demographics can significantly influence the expectations. The researcher utilized a mixed-method approach in the primary research including a questionnaire and a focus group and were then sustained by secondary research. Thematic and triangulation approach were utilized to further understand the value of the implemented marketing strategies, the attractiveness of the traditional feast, and to evaluate if the tourists' expectations are being met.

The researcher, firstly, studied the attractiveness of the feast and through the study and it was found out that the main event during the feast is the pyrotechnics displays. This was highlighted in both the questionnaires and the focus group discussion, where it was noted that Malta's traditional feast, especially the village of Mqabba, is very well known for their fireworks. Nonetheless, other aspects of the feast, such as the traditions, the volunteers and community participation, and the atmosphere were mostly highlighted in the questionnaire responses as attractive aspects. Most of the visitors stated that their expectations were met or exceeded. However, during the focus group it was noted that some inbound tourists would prefer something more unique during the feast to be distinguish from other similar celebrations.

The current marketing efforts employed by the feasts' society were examined throughout this study. Promotion on social media platforms has been proven to be affective with many local tourists to create awareness and maintain repetitive visitors. Unfortunately, these marketing efforts are not reaching outbound tourists which creates a limitation in these marketing efforts. These adverts are clearly not attracting new visitors, which can create opportunities for the society to enhance their strategies by

collaborating with other organisations. Such collaborations can be done with airlines and tour operators to increase the target audience.

As the research aimed to compare how tourists' expectations vary based on their demographics, mostly age and nationality, it is worth noting that the questionnaire had a majority of local respondents, which means that the information gathered was mostly from the same nationality demographic. This has created a limitation in being able to provide a better-balanced view of both inbound and outbound tourists. The researcher recommends a more diverse respondent base for future studies to have a deeper comparative analysis.

To conclude, the feast of Our Lady of the Lily provides a celebration that is rich in culture and experience for most attendees. However, the research highlighted the areas of opportunity where the society can enhance their marketing, keep the old traditions alive, and create something unique to make this feast stand out from others.

5.2 Recommendations

Even though this topic is part of the Maltese culture, there is not enough research and studies on it. It is recommended that further studies are carried out to have more information on the traditional feasts in Malta. Said studies can conduct interviews with outbound and inbound tourists before attending the feast celebrations to understand what they are expecting, and after visiting the whole week of celebrations, another interview shall be conducted to see if their expectations were met, exceeded, or not met.

For this to be possible, the government can implement more awareness about the Maltese traditional village feasts, which are part of UNESCO's world heritage, in the primary education of the students which can assist in having more people interested in volunteering, a new hobby, and building new connections.

5.3 Evaluation, Reliability and Validity

This sub-chapter is a vital part of the study as the evaluation, reliability, and validity ensure that this research is reliable and correct.

5.3.1 Evaluation

The researcher conducted a self-evaluation of the study, confirming that the primary objective was to explore the tourists' perception and expectations when visiting Mqabba's village feast, specifically, the feast dedicated to Our Lady of the Lily. The study highlighted a niche where tourism was rarely explored in other studies and research. The study's primary focus was to understand how the tourists will interpret their expectations during feast celebrations; however, it also noted the cultural and traditional values that these celebrations embrace for inbound and outbound tourists.

The research methodology section specifies the explanation of how the study was carried out, including the data collection methods and how the results were analysed. For an improved study, the researcher could have asked a group of preferably outbound tourists, who have never visited a traditional Maltese feast before, and did an interview with them before the feast and another interview after the feast. This recommendation is in result to the lack of outbound tourists answering the questionnaire, which created a limitation in answering the study's' researcher questions thoroughly.

Having chosen a focus group as a qualitative primary research method allowed the researcher to get richer discussion and answers from the knowledgeable group. On the other hand, having chosen questionnaires as a quantitative primary research method allowed the study to have a larger range of respondents. Furthermore, the timing and distributing method of the questionnaire has influenced the lack of outbound respondents which has influenced the overall findings.

Nonetheless, the study offers valuable insight of how the marketing of a feast can be improved to increase visitors from overseas. The findings from this research shows that the visitors enjoy the authenticity of the experience, however, some would prefer something more tradition and other would enjoy a unique aspect to the feast of Our Lady of the Lily.

The structure of this study was organised well to allow a smooth transition from one chapter to another. This research aligned with the institute's guidelines while constantly applying Harvard referencing throughout the thesis. The feedback received from the tutor was incorporated thoroughly to ensure a successful study.

5.3.2 Reliability & Validity

The reliability of the study to its' title was partially met as the researcher focused on the tourist part when conducting the primary research whilst also examined the visitors' perceptions. In addition, the study also put light on the marketing and awareness of the feast of Our Lady of the Lily which answered the second secondary research question. Having said that, when analysing the expectations part of the tourists was not fully achieved as some respondents of the questionnaire decided not to elaborate further to provide more details. Apart from that, the researcher was not aware of first-time visitors' expectations before attending the feast which leaves a gap in the study.

In addition, secondary data on tourists visiting local village feasts was limited therefore reduced the researchers' ability to back up the findings when implementing the triangulation approach. Be that as it may, the secondary data collected was valid, however, feasts evolve year by year, therefore, more current studies are needed to have more recent data to back up new studies on the subject. The current research available are mostly from the same authors who are conducting research on the same feast, as they might be biased to research the feast, they prefer celebrating.

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Appendix

Focus group transcript

Focus Group Transcript

Ghalfejn tahseb illi in-nies izuru l-festa?

Speaker 7 – xi haga tipika tal pajjiz, free entertainment, something li ma ssibiex kullimkien

Speaker 1 – qabel ma' Speaker 7 – xi haga li f'pajjiz it turisti mhux ha jarawha

Speaker 4 – riklamar ta bhalissa ghal maltin, bhekk jigu in nies maltin.

Liema tahsbu li huwa l-aktar fattur popolari tal-festa taghna?

Speaker 3 – naqra minn kollox

Speaker 1 – ma qabilx, semma' li meta jghid li hu mill-imqabba, kulhadd jew maggoranza jghidulu li marufin ghan-nar.

Speaker 7- qabel li kollox importanti imma liktar in nar

Speaker 3 – fl-antik kienu jghidu li ghall armar mgharufin limqabbin. Nahseb naqa minn kollox

Speaker 6 – Qatt ma semmew il banda imma!

Speaker 4 – taqbel, pero xorta temmen li jiddependi lil min issaqsi

Speaker 6 – Limqabba marufin ghan nar, tghid xtghid

Speaker 2 – meta ghamilna zmien mmorru naqa hazin fin nar in nies waqqfu, met aergajna bdejna sejr in tajjeb, in nies regew zdiedu fil gimgha tal festa

Speaker 4 – Jekk issaqsi liz zghazagh ha jghidulek il marc tal gimgha

Xtistaw tamlu biex tattiraw iktar turisti?

Speaker 4 – Marketing

Speaker 1 – Barranin = agenziji. Maltin = toffri xi haga li fil lokalita taghhom mhux ha jarawha. Xi haga unika. Malta Records, Guinness world records. Sorprizi.

Meta tahsbu li jigu etajiet specifici fil-festa (16-20, 21-30, etc.)

Speaker 1 – il festa toffri gurnata ghal kulhadd. Hence, festa tfal, tal-anzjani, kuncert etajiet vasti, purcissjoni – age groups kbar, marci speccjalment il gimgha – zghazagh, is sib t – liktar vasta.

Speaker 4 – taqbel ma Speaker 1

Liema grupp t'etajiet jigu l-iktar, u meta?

Speaker 3 – il gimgha jlaqqat kollox

Speaker 4 – zghazagh jigu liktar

Speaker 2 – bejn 41-50 – jinteressahom kollox (marci, diski, murtali, banda, armar, knisja)

FL-opinjoni taghkom, tahsbu li qed tirreklamaw bizejjed, ibbazzat fuq in-nies li jigu jzuru l-festa?

Speaker 4 – nahseb tajjeb, pero room for improvement dejjem, speċjalment, habba li reklamar dejjem jevolvi.

Mir-rizorsi li hemm, qed tkunu effettivi?

Speaker 5 – fi zmien il milied sar video b'persuna minn kull sezzjoni u lahaq hafna nies. (social media)

Speaker 7 – qedin naghmlu tiktoks.

Kulhadd qabel ma Speaker 1 li they can do better

Speaker 4 qalet li ma tahsibx li marru hazin, pero room for improvement

Tahsbu li l-espettativi tat-turisti qed jintlaqhu?

Speaker 4 – ta' barra minn Malta zgur ghax ma jafux xinhi festa. Pero jaf ta' malti u speċjalment dilettant, ma tilhaqieq being li jaf ikolu expectations ohra. (hadd ma qal li qabel/ma qabilx)

Speaker 5 – in-nies qed jiehdu gost fil-festa ghax tarhom jippartecipaw =

Speaker 1 – barranin ha jimpresjonaw ruhhom bkollox, bil-maltin, trid tamel xi haga straordinarja biex timpresjonhom ghax kull local ghandu xi haga xjoffri

“The recent cultural experience week in Mqabba, dedicated to celebrating the religious significance of Our Lady of the Lily, underscores the village's reputation as a Marian stronghold, also hosting two additional Marian feasts: the Assumption of Our Lady and Our Lady of the Rosary. Historically, these events have been deeply rooted in religious and cultural traditions, reflecting the community's devout nature. However, the contemporary trend of incorporating extensive partying following the band march marks a considerable departure from the traditional observances of the feast. This shift appears to prioritize attracting 'party people' and enhancing the event's fame, akin to other religious feasts organized by band clubs across Malta. Such transformations risk diluting the feast's original religious significance, overshadowing its spiritual and cultural essence with a more secular, entertainment-focused agenda.”

Speaker 1 – nergaw nduru fuq it tradizzjonali

Speaker 2 – napprezzaw lantik, nelevaw dak li huwa vera important

Speaker 8 – ma titlifix l-identita

Speaker 1 – party tarah kullimkien, marc le. Party kuljum zgur li le fil-festa.

“The disco on Friday takes the priority on the significance of the statue”

Speaker 4 – hija vera li limportanza qed tinghata lil marc rather it tluh tal Madonna on Friday. Pero SZ qed jipprovaw jatu iktar importanza lejha, ghal nies mithla tal festa tal-gilju, hija imp. Imma nies li gejji minn barra jippreferu party. Hija l-mentalita tan-nies esteri (turisti)

“Great space for recreational purpose, food and beverage stalls, mobile toilets and bins, seating for the pyro was lovely, great parking and traffic control.”

Speaker 2 – it is imp. That people follow the traffic control provided. These all cost a lot of money.

“Sense of belonging - people's participation in it - popular/authenticity feeling when seeing the festa”

Speaker 7 – the tourists are learning about the culture and the way of living/celebrating the authentic life of the locals

July celebrations

Theres a lot of hassle, because we know the behind the scenes... outsiders do not know this hassle and the works. Kulhadd QABEL

Theres a lot of work, but not many volunteers.

Kulhadd qabel li huwa vera imma taw raguni ghalfejn... In nies saru busy, tghazznu.

Raw data

RAW DATA:

Għalfejn tahseb illi in nies iżuru il festa?

Speaker 7 – jiena nahseb illi in nies qieghdin jigu jaraw il festa ghax lewwel nett hija xi haga tipika tal pajjiz u hafna mill pajjizi li jkunu gejjin ma ssibiex. It tieni nett ghandek entertainment free, dan biex tara dak ix xoghol kollu u bxej ghat turisti huwa bonus kbir ghax inti medx thallas qed tigi toqod tara enormita ta affarijiet u tahlita u nar. Ezempju biex tara kuncert barra minn Malta trid thallas hafna u hawn qed tarah bxejn. Biex tara spettaklu bhal dak tan-nar barra, irid jasal jew il jum Nazzjonali u Malta tista tghid ghandek kuljum fis sajf. Gifieri dan it turisti ghandhom draw kbira ghalihom.

Moderator: Bhala riklamar?

Speaker 5 – Zomm naqa, jiena nahseb, ghax hija vasta din il-mistoqsija. Per ezempju, mhux riklamar biss. Jiena nemmen, jekk anka tista taqsama fdak il kuntest; gieli gew 4 turisti filghodu, tinnuthom, imma dawk huma ftit, tista tirriklama xi haga during the day, specjalment, lejn l-ahhar tal-gimgha, li inti ara gibt 'private' (coach) u qieghda ddu, ikollok xi nies jidhlu gol-knisja, imma filghodu! Mela inti qsamt segments.

Speaker 2 – Kif tahseb li jkunu jafu li jridu jigu filghodu?

Speaker 5 – ahna, ahna irridu nirriklamaw

Speaker 2 – lele, il ftit li jigu bhalissa kif tahseb li jkunu jafu li...

Speaker 5 – mbad jinfurmawhom li jergaw jigu filghaxija

Speaker 2 – naqblu naqblu, imma kif saru jafu li jistaw jigu filghodu?

Speaker 5 – b'kumbinazzjoni nahseb

Speaker 2 – mmm inzertaw ghaddejjin.

Speaker 5 – mhux hekk hux!

Speaker 1 – hafna mid-drabi ikollhom xi relazzjonijiet li jghidulhom "isma, ser ikun hemm xi haga 'l hemmhekk, ha jkun hemm il festa u tista tmur".

Speaker 5 – Tista tirriklama dawn l-agenziji filghodu, tghid ara filghodu... mghandikx għalfejn... ha naghti ezempju, per ezempju, dik tal-barriera tas-siggiewi li ghamel tal-heritage. Filghodu jkollu xi hames privates (coaches). Ghandu PR tal-genn.

Speaker 1: Pero dik attrazzjoni ohra. Issa min naha ta' festa jien narahha illi hija attrazzjoni, kif qal Speaker 7, tipika tal-pajjiz. Dan qisek bhal meta tmur pajjiz barra minn Malta sewwa u inti tghid "isma, mhux ha mmur McDonald's, ha niekol l-ikel tipiku t' hawnhekk." Issa dawn iridu jaraw xi haga li f'pajjizhom mhux ha jaraw.

Speaker 5 – Ezatt. Imma inti trid tara l-istampa ta' filghodu, li ahna ma nirriklamawhiex, u ta' filghaxija trid timbutahha iktar hux.

Speaker 4 – jien nemmen bhala riklamar, fil verita ghax ahna qisna meta nitfaw qisek qed titfa biex tibqa relevanti u li l-festa qed issir. Gifieri qisek qed toqod ghal min hu dilettant tal-festi madwar il pajjiz kollu. Nahseb kieku mbad jekk trid tattira iktar turisti, qisek trid tmur ezempju...

Speaker 5 – ghat-turisti qed ngħid ta' jien.

Speaker 4 – Iva iva, imma jien qed ngħidlek nahseb ghat turisti mbad jista jsir xi tip ta reklamar, imma ma nahsibx illi r-riklam kurrenti li qed nagħmlu huwa għalihom.

Speaker 5 – mhux riklamar Facebook ta... insiha dik

Speaker 1 – gifieri inti qed tahseb illi t-turisti qed jigu b'kumbinazzjoni?

Speaker 4 – jigu b'kumbinazzjoni. Jien nemmen mbad jekk mbad it-turisti trid ggibhom sew..

Speaker 5 – le jghina, le imma din li qed ngħid jien mhux oggett ta' Facebook.

Speaker 2 – irid ikun targeted.

Speaker 5 – oggett ta’ targeting.

Speaker 4 – Ezempju isir b’kollaborazzjoni...

Speaker 5 – mhux ovvja..

Speaker 4 - ..ma xi hadd li jigu it-turisti u... ghax dawn ovvjament ha jigu u ma jafx li hawn festa.

Speaker 5 – Ghalekk semmejtlek tal-heritage [HAWN HEKK TKELLEM FUQ META KIEN JAHDEM MONTEKRISTO U XHEMM XTARA U HEKK – MA NEMMINX LI HIJA RELEVANTI]

Speaker 1 – Promozzjoni hija kollox, mijja fil-mijja. Inti tinsiex kif ahna nirreklamaw il-festa wkoll. Ahna il-programm tal-festa taghna jibda filghaxija fil-verita, aqta’ is-servizzi li jzommu ovvjament it-tradizzjoni, taf kif, dik it-tradizzjoni ghaddejja li tahraq mat-tokki, imma altru minn hekk... Jigifieri jiena jekk nara private turisti tigilek fl-ghaxra ta’ filghodu fil-gimgha tal-festa, kwazi kwazi nihu qata ghax ahna mhux lesti ghaliha. Ma pjanajniex ghaliha, dan mhux muzew! Ahna mahniex muzew.

Speaker 3 – jiena kont ha nsemmlkom il-Mosta fuq hekk mbad.

Speaker 1 – Nahseb il-Mosta ghandhom naqa iktar... inqas sorpriza ghalihom ghax il-koppla wahidha hija attrazzjoni.

Speaker 3 – Le jiena nahseb anki riklamar u hekk. Jien perezempju gieli mort nara x-xoghol li jkollhom fuq gewwa per ezempju l-Mosta u hekk. Anki rigward pjanta jew pjanti..

Speaker 5 – u filghodu..

Speaker 3 – ..u filghodu per ezempju

Speaker 5 – qed tara! Taf kemm taffetwa ta’ filghodu?

Speaker 3 – u perezempju mbad jibda jsemmilek minn fej gibr .. (not understandable 07:02.00)

Speaker 5 – SA 08:07.96 MAR OUT OF POINT BL-OVERPOPULATION LI HAWN FIL-PAJJIZ.

Speaker 1 – il festa, jekk ha jigi filghod, turist xha jara?

Speaker 5 – heq mela mghandux xjara!

Speaker 1 – iva imma ha jara settur, mhux ha jaraw banda per ezempju, mhux ha jara in-nar.... (not understandable).

Speaker 5 – imma isaqsu, mhux lewwel darba li gew isaqsu dak xinhu?

Speaker 3 – ma fimtux xqal at 8:27 qisu kif tigi reklamata ta, anki knisja u hekk

Speaker 1 – is-sena kollha nifima dik jiena

Speaker 7 – li ghalina huwa ovvju, ghalihom mhux.

Speaker 6 – imma fej jidhol l-armor, l-armor qieghed hemm stationed. Jista jdur mieghu, jarah u jista jsaqsi.

Speaker 1 – nifhem illi attrazzjoni. Dak li qieghed nipprova nghid, dak li qed tghidu inthom bhala punt huwa tajjeb hafna, jien nippretendi illi dik tkun xi haga all year round min naha tal-kazin perezempju – li joffri attrazzjoni, jkun hemm fondi li allokati ghaliha, kif xbajt neqred ghaliha wkoll by the way, li ghandek xi haga, li ghandek storja, li inti qed turiha tul is-sena kollha. Kemm jekk hija banda, u kemm jekk huwa armor. Inti ghalxiex inti ristrett li oggett turih dik il-gimgha fis-sena biss? Jiena nemmen perezempju l-ewwel wiehed li bicciet mill-plancier u bicciet mill-armor ghandhom ikunu on permanent exhibition il-kazin.

Speaker 5 – naqbel mieghek jien.

Speaker 1 – qed tifimni? Umbad tkellem lil MTA u tghidilhom “isma aghmlu rotta, li hawnhekk isma ghandna muzew tal-kazin.” Haddiehor jaghmilha wkoll...

Speaker 3 – Imsomma, b’kull rispettt kollu, muzew il-kazin mghandna xejn eh, u ilna ta! Mill-bidu nett!

Speaker 1 – le imma ghandna storja! Ghandna storja x’nghidu.

Speaker 3 – Imma xorta ma tantx naqbel mieghek ta. Ghax ahna qisna bdejna bil-kazin mil-lum. Ghax il-kazin mgħandu xejn, kollox mitluf anzi għandna!

Speaker 1 – Ma naqbilx mieghek ta.

Speaker 4 – Ghax mhux ezebiti nahseb.

Speaker 3 – jiena ngħidlek li tlifna kollox ha ngħid hekk, ghax kollox qisu xejn mhu xejn.

Speaker 1 – għandna anki l-instrument originali tas-Surmast “Kombotur?” perezempju, li huwa pjanat ikun fis-sala tal-banda. Issa jaf għalina jfisser hafna, imma inti jekk tispjega l-istorja warajh, anki forsi dak li jkun tgħidlu ha tidhol u l-ewwel parti tat-tour ha nuruk biċċa filmat ta’ kif issir il-festa. Matul is-snin il-festa kif issawmet.

Speaker 3 – Nirraħ jekk jiġi Speaker 8 jgħidlek, qed ngħidlek jiena! Ghax il-kazin qisu inbena issa.

Speaker 2 – Fuq ċertu affarijiet jaf jaqbel żgur.

Speaker 3 – Mija fil-mija. Jiena nahsibha li affarijiet ta’ valur hawnhekk, nahseb il-garaxx għandi iktar milli għandu l-kazin.

Speaker 1 – pero issa aqta..

Speaker 3 - minn tal-kazin. U tgħidli fejn sibthom? Got-trab!!

Speaker 1 – aqta’ lilna, bhala festa tal-Madonna tal-Gilju, u nitkellmu fuq il-festi ingenerali issa, vera?

Avril – It-tezi fuq il-festa tal-Gilju.

Speaker 1 – Orrajt orrajt. Mela ha nitkellem min naħa ta’ festa ingenerali, li kulhadd għandu l-istorja tiegħu x’juri. Li kellna affarijiet li matul is-snin tlifnijhom, mija fil-mija, ma jfissirx li l-istorja intesiet magħhom ukoll hux.

Speaker 5 – tini minuta ċans.

Speaker 3 – dawn ix-xjuħ meta kienu jmutu u jitwiellu wieħed wara l-iehor, Speaker 1 ifimni. L-istorja qed **tizvinta** (11.19) naqra naqra u lanqas qiegħdin nindunaw jerġa. Qas qiegħdin nindunaw.

Speaker 1 – Naqbel mieghek imma xorta għandna storja xi ngħidu.

Speaker 3 – Nixtieq li hawn Speaker 8...

Speaker 1 – xorta teżisti l-istorja...

Moderator – mela, għarna biżżejjed informazzjoni fuqha din.

Speaker 3 – din tlifniha Speaker 1, jew qiegħdin nitilfuha.

Speaker 1 – Mhux totalment, mhux totalment. Hemm hafna affarijiet fil-Knisja, li issakkarhom ġo kaxxa tal-injam is-sena kollha, jien ma nistax nifimha dik. Qed tifimni? Għalxiex mgħandekx ikollok ‘display’ tagħhom daww l-affarijiet? Bħalma Knejjes oħra għadhom ukoll. U l-kazin għandna affarijiet x’nistaw nuru.

Speaker 3 – Kellna ta’ qabel. Anki perezempju jekk immur fuq il-faċċata biss tal-kazin, minndu ħarqu l-ewwel bieb ‘l hawn, perezempju, dawn iż-żgħażaġh, b’kull rispet, u għandhom kull raġun ġifieri ta’! Min minnhom jaf li fuq il-bieb kien hemm saljatura? Illum hemm saljatura ‘plain’. Qabel kien hemm saljatura kollha **ravul** (12.23) perezempju. Inħarqet bin-nar, saret plain, twessa’ naqra l-bieb u daqsekk! Din min jafha? Jien ngħidlek qas hija rikordjata fuq il-dan tal-kazin. Ibqa’ ċert li qiegħed ngħidlek.

Speaker 7 – Qas kelli idea jien! Minn fejn toħroġ il-bozza, hawn?...

Speaker 3 – Eh mela mela mela. Għandkom raġun għax inthom għadkom żgħar.

Speaker 6 – Ritratti ma jeżistux?

Speaker 3 – Ma nafx, ma nafx, ma nafx, Speaker 6. Jiena dawn l-affarijiet tgħidx kemm inħobbhom, għalekk nikkritika l-kazin tagħna, u forsi jarawni dimonju lili, li nibda noqros fil-laħam il-ħajj, li aħna li kellna armejniħ. Li kellna armejniħ!

Speaker 6 - Imma arkivji ta' ritratti jew hekk xi hadd..? nimmagina li jezistu.

Speaker 4 – Mela mela qed isir diġitali.

Speaker 1 – nahseb trid tapprezza li qed isir...

Speaker 2 – pero sa certu punt naqbel ma' Speaker 3 u naf x'qed jghid ghax anki jiena bhallissa qiegħed niġbor ritratti u niskanjaħhom, pero l-maġġorparti tar-ritratti huma mid-90ijiet 'il quddiem. Issa tgħidli ovvjament, iktar ma tmur lura, inqas hemm ċans li ħa jkollok kwantita' ta' ritratti. Ovvjament dak iż-żmien biex taffordja kamera... Imma ehe hemm tendenza li mid-90ijiet 'l hemm l-iktar li se ssib.

Speaker 3 – Tifhem.

Speaker 6 – ġieli jtellgħu ritratti antiki tal-irhula, eżemġju, ħafna li jitilgħu ta' fuq il-mentna.

Speaker 2 – ija, ija.

Speaker 6 – Għallura possibli hadd m'għandu ritratt tal-pjazza, b'xi mod? Jaf tidher il-faċċata tal-każin.

Speaker 2 – Hekk hu.

Speaker 6 – ma kienx intenzjonat biex jingibed ir-ritratt tal-faċċata.

Speaker 3 – Pereżempju, dik il-vara li għandna tal-Kuncizzjoni, li konna ġibna mill-għassa. Meta kont dħalt għarus għand ta' Camilleri hawn, (hemm biċċa żejda dwar l-għarusa u familta u li jhobbuh hafna 14:20), iz-zija tal-għarusa qaltli "Speaker 3, tridx hemm statwa tal-Kuncizzjoni ġol-għassa (ghax l-għassa tagħhom kienet – ma nafx illum hekk għadiex jew hekk) ”.

Speaker 1 - ...tal-Franċiż.

Speaker 3 – ...tal-Franċiż. U jiena dakinhar kont qedtilha "Issa ngħid lil kumitat" u ġibniha. Għadni niftakar konna morna bil-vann tiegħi u konnha erbgha biex niżżilniha biex niżżilniha minn ġol-għassa, din l-istatwa. Illum għandna bravura.

Speaker 6 – illum ma tagħmilix dik.

Speaker 1 – Għalekk.

Speaker 3 – X'tagħmel tagħmel!!

Speaker 1 – Illum dik qiegħda għandna għallura ma nistax ngħidlek li kollox. Dik biċċa ta' skultur tas-seklu 17.

Speaker 3 – u allaħares le, u allaħares le.

Speaker 1 – jien nahseb kien hemm żminijiet fejn kien hemm, kienet moda, sewwa, li ogġett jekk tagħmlu ġdid ħa jkun iprem.

Speaker 3 – pereżempju qed insemmu ...

Speaker 1 – Pero nahseb illi illum 'il ġurnata qed napprezzaw ħafna iktar l-antik.

Speaker 3 – Pereżempju s-swali li kien hawn qabel, pereżempju, bl-affarijiet ta' persuni u hekk, dawk għalija sparixxew. B'Kull rispettt.

Speaker 1 – Għadhom għandna,

Speaker 3 – Għadhom għandna imma jiena hdejn siehbi inkun, u mejda mitlufa 'l hemm u mħarbat 'l hemm, u arloġġ imħarbat 'l hawn, ieħor imħarbat 'l hemm u ieħor imħarbat 'l hawn. Ħa ngħidlek aħna nahseb għandna kultura, ma nibzawx għall-affarijiet, qed ngħidlek jien. U qiegħed nidher dimonju eh bhallissa.

Speaker 2 – Sa certu punt naqbel miegħek pero mbagħad min naħa oħra, bhala problema ma rridx niddevja. Erm, hija ovvjament bħal ma jġri dejjem, il-'workforce' ta' nies li għandek bzonn biex, dawn l-affarijiet iġġibhom lura, dduħom, taf fejn ser tagħmilhom.

Speaker 5 – mhumiex mitlufin ta.

Speaker 1 – Ma nemminx li huma mitlufin ta.

Speaker 2 – Għalekk qed ngħidlek, għalekk qed ngħidlek. Ġifieri dawk li mhumiex mitlufin, xorta hija problema biex teżibihom jew turihom, jew tagħmilhom f'post fejn hu iktar....

Moderator – Mgħandix xtaqsam il-festa bħalissa naħseb aħjar inkomplu għax naqra mafusin ħabba l-ħin.

Speaker 1 – Naħseb aħjar inkomplu mas-sugġett,

Moderator – Mela ser ngħaddu għal domanda oħra. **Liema taħsbu li huwa l-aktar fattur popolari fil-festa?**

Speaker 4 – il-Knisja

Speaker 2 – Fil-festa tagħna ġifieri?

Moderator – Mhux x'jaħsbu n-nies, ġifieri x'taħsbu inthom.

Speaker 4 – Mhux kollox mal-festa jdur li nagħmlu.

Speaker 6 – in-nar popolari żgur.

Speaker 2 – Eħe l-fattur popolari l-mistoqsija ġifieri.

Ħafna f'daqqa – in-nar hux naħseb.

Speaker 4 – Eee, ġifieri mhux xinju importanti? Orrajt, le fimt ħażin mela.

Speaker 6 – Jekk tagħmel il-festa u ma tagħmilx in-nar qas ikollok xejn.

Speaker 3 – Jiena naħseb naqra minn kollox ta' mbagħad.

Speaker 6 – ija imma xorta

Speaker 1 – Le, jekk hemm barra, jiena meta nsemmi minn fejn jien li mill-Mqabba, jgħidu "ee tan-nar". Dik l-ewwel ħaga li jgħiduli.