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Strengthening the Devotion Through Dancing with Passion: The Sugat Kabanhawan Festival of Minglanilla, Cebu, Philippines

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Abstract

The festival's presence had a significant impact on the social and cultural dimensions of the local communities. The sociocultural aspects of the Sugat Kabanhawan festival in the municipality of Minglanilla, Cebu, the Philippines, were explored in this classical ethnographic qualitative study. The chosen ten prospecting Minglanillahanons from the performing arts, government, tourism, and education sectors all took part. The data collected through semi-structured interviews were analyzed using Braun & Clark's thematic analysis. Five themes generated in the study namely Sense of Pride and Gratitude, Life and Identity, Community Involvement, Appreciation of Religious Celebration and Artistry, Impact to Tourism and Economy, and Raising

Awareness. It is concluded that with the presence of the festival, people learned to cherish their arts and to share them with others as a result of the festival's existence. In turn, this gives them many opportunities, especially in the fields of religion, education, livelihood and tourism. With that, the annual Sugat Kabanhawan event should keep ingraining in the Minglanillahanons' minds the reason of celebration and how the belief of Minglanillahanons were giving life through movements. Additionally, the Sugat Kabanhawan celebration ought to be incorporated into educational programs and even into the instruction of different dance performers.

Keywords: Sociocultural, Dimension, Sugat Kabanhawan, Thematic Analysis, Ingrain, Incorporate

Introduction

The sociocultural dimensions have always been included in celebrating festivals (Seale, 2013). Related studies unveil that its purpose is to acknowledge traditions and living traditions in recognizing symbolism and social differences between cultures. Gonzales (2017) ^[9] discovered in her study that the sociocultural component of festivals boosted regional identification. The sociocultural dimension can be regarded as interacting with people's and groups' identities. The sociocultural aspects of festivals, according to Magpantay *et al.* (2014), is linked to the emergence of peaceful social connections in the community. There are, however, fewer studies that qualitatively characterize how these social and cultural components are being observed. To have an in-depth account of the people's opinions, insights, and experiences concerning the culture being researched, it is essential to explore the sociocultural dimension of festivals.

Festivals, also referred to as "Fiestas," are a feature of Filipino culture. Festivals offer the community a chance to share culture, trade knowledge, and experience while also allowing others to observe how locals celebrate festivals and uphold local traditions and customs. As what is said, "The greatness of a culture can be found on its festival" (Katragadda, 2016). There are local fiestas in every city and province in the Philippines. The fact that most festival pride in this country is strongly religious-based is one reason why this culture celebrates festivals.

In the Municipality of Minglanilla, Cebu, Philippines, commonly referred to as the "Sugat Capital of the South", holds this largest celebration annually, known as the "Sugat Kabanhawan Festival", where "Sugat" means welcome, and "Kabanhawan" means resurrection. On that account, a celebration honoring the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Sugat Kabanhawan event features the Minglanillahanons showing their dancing skills as a statement of joy and jubilation. The magnificent Sugat Kabanhawan presentation kicks off the festivities as early as three in the morning. In front of thousands of parishioners, worshippers, and viewers, participants from all around Minglanilla, Cebu, will execute the "Sugat," a recreation of the beautiful encounter between the rising Christ and his distraught mother. The Minglanillahanons express their cultural pride at the

celebration, and school groups perform and present ceremonial acts depicting the Sugat Kabanhawan.

Nevertheless, this study centers on exploring the sociocultural dimensions of the Sugat-Kabanhawan Festival of Minglanilla, Cebu, Philippines. The studies that describe the social and cultural elements' observation of festivals in qualitative terms are scarcer. Smaller events, like town fiestas, frequently receive less consideration when it comes to repercussions. Rarely are the cultural and social aspects of occurrences like these evaluated. The historic interpretation of festivals reflects their ancient origins; typically taking place at regular intervals, these events served as meeting places for the cultural expression of people living in particular places (Eckman 1999; Selberg 2016). There are still important historical, cultural, social, and developmental dimensions of this event. One wonders if the Sugat Kabanhawan celebration in Minglanilla, Cebu, may be considered on the basis of the aforementioned. So, this is what this study seeks to learn.

In addition to playing their traditional role as an institution that enables the presentation, dissemination, or preservation of a society's culture, festivals place value on their capacity to generate income in the communities where they are celebrated, for their contribution to the diversification of the tourist attraction, or for the improvement of the place's image (Devesa, 2012). Festival produced positive sociocultural impacts, such as the development of social capital, the preservation of cultural traditions, and racial peace, according to Whitford *et al.* (2013). Additionally, there is a strong social component to cultural events, providing opportunities for social interaction, building social capital, reaffirming identities, and promoting regional cultural expressions (Marques *et al.*, 2021).

The purpose of this study is to provide relevant information and expertise about the subject matter from the respondents, recent studies, and associated websites in order to meet the subjects' expectations for relevance. To better understand and respect the culture and customs of the Minglanillahanons, the researchers delved deeper into the sociocultural dimension of the Sugat Kabanhawan Festival and its significance in Minglanilla, Cebu, Philippines. Together, they considered their historical backgrounds and these cultural manifestations. This research project aimed to benefit not only the community but also the researchers. Communities was able to take into account all locations thanks to the aforementioned study, including tiny towns and barangays that hold the Sugat Kabanhawan Festival. Also, the community was urged to celebrate the Festival with pride as they considered its sociocultural aspects to be a part of their history.

Purpose of the Study

This study explored the sociocultural dimension of Sugat Kabanhawan Festival of the municipality of Minglanilla, Cebu.

Materials and Methods

Design

A classical ethnography qualitative research design was used by the researchers. In order to comprehend a culture, this design relied on seeing and analyzing how people interact with one another and their surroundings. This design's main objective is to investigate the customs, beliefs, and practices of the inhabitants of a specific environment

(Hammersly 1985 as cited by Reeves *et al.*, 2013). To create a thorough and in-depth description of the dimensions being examined, this involved interviews, observation, and documentation (Reeves, *et al.*, 2013). The Sugat Kabanhawan Festival's sociocultural dimensions is best explored through classical ethnography since it allowed researchers to become fully immersed in the culture and do fieldwork that result in extensive written cultural descriptions.

Informants and Sampling Design

The Minglanillahanons, or those who live within the boundaries of the municipality of Minglanilla, Cebu, Philippines, contributed to this study. Ten prospected Minglanillahanons from the private sector, academia, tourism, and local government were chosen to participate in the study. This group primarily consists of educators, learners, municipal workers, tourism officers, acolytes or altar servers, and Sugat sa Kabanhawan artists. These subjects were selected using a purposive sampling strategy. Purposive sampling also referred to as subjective sampling, is a non-probability sampling technique where the researcher uses their discretion to choose variables for the sample population. This method is particularly effective when researching a particular aspect of a culture where experts are present. According to Creswell (2007), this method chooses volunteers based on particular characteristics. The following all-inclusive criteria were used to choose the participants:

The participants are residents of the municipality of Minglanilla, Cebu, Philippines for at least 10 years, must have had an experience; participating in the Sugat sa Kabanhawan Festival of Minglanilla, Cebu for at least 5 years, the participant must be of legal age (18 years old and above), and must be a resident in the municipality of Minglanilla, Cebu particularly during the celebration of Sugat sa Kabanhawan festival for at least 5 years.

Locale



The municipality of Minglanilla, Cebu, Philippines, served as the study's location. The Sugat sa Kabanhawan Festival is held in Minglanilla, which is why this study is conducted there. Located at 10°14'42"N 123°47'47"E, it is a first-class municipality that is a part of the southern Cebu province. 65.60 km² are inside the municipal boundaries (25.33 sq mi). The 2020 census shows that there are 19 barangays in Minglanilla, with a total population of 151,002.

Instrumentation

The researchers are the study's main instrument because of the nature of the investigation (Creswell, 2007). With the aid of guide questions, a semi-structured interview was used as a supplemental approach to collect the data (Creswell, 2007). The interview process included wearing of masks for both the researchers and the respondents for safety measures. Cellphones were used, mobile phones were utilized to videotape the informants' real performances of the Sugat Kabanhawan dance as well as recording their responses to questions during the interview. The interview script also passed validation incorporating a well-written questionnaire and secure the subjects' anonymity throughout the gathering of information. Further, the researchers then asked follow up questions after the interview and acknowledge the respondents for participation.

Data Gathering Procedure

The gathering of data started after the researchers were granted an ethical clearance from the research ethics committee. For approval to carry out the study in the municipality of Minglanilla, Cebu, a transmittal letter was written to the tourism officer of the research location and the municipal mayor. Prospective participants received the informed consent form after the local mayor approved it. To expedite the data collection process, the researchers were divided into two groups and use the interview guide. The interview started immediately away after some discussion with the participants. Face-to-face interviewing took place for a full day. Each participant was given a token of appreciation for taking part in our study and assisting us in collecting the information required for it.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis, a qualitative research technique was used to find patterns in data, such as commonalities or contrasts, was used to examine the data collected (Smith & Firth, 2011). After understanding the collected data, based on the responses of the participants about the socio-cultural dimension of the certain festival, the data created initial codes, the codes were combined with supporting data, the researchers then grouped the codes into themes, reviewing and refining themes, and composing a narrative about the conducted study are all steps in the thematic analysis process.

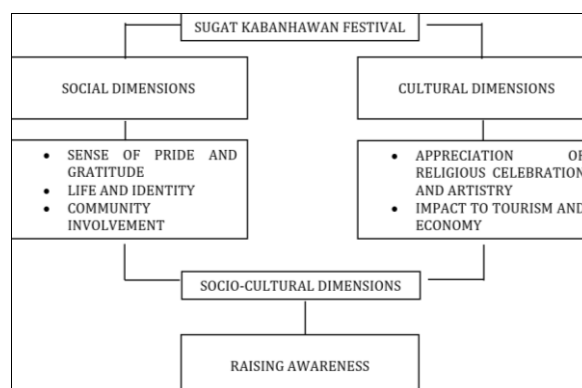
Ethical Consideration

Ethical standards were adhered to throughout the study period. The study was ethically reviewed by the university's Research Ethics Committee (REC). During data collection, researchers sent consent forms to participants and emphasized that their participation was completely voluntary and that they could refuse without penalty. The identity of the informant has been withheld and replaced with a pseudonym to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. In addition, each informant also received a fee as a token of gratitude from the researchers.

Results & Discussions

Following extensive research and immersion in the subject culture, the framework below is used to define the social, cultural, and sociocultural aspects of the Sugat Kabanhawan Festival. Social dimension includes a sense of pride and thankfulness for the festival, the way of life of

Minglanillahanons, and community involvement, while cultural dimension includes an appreciation for religious celebration and artistic merit as well as their effects on the tourism and economy. The act of promoting awareness of the Sugat Kabanhawan Festival in Minglanilla, Cebu, Philippines, is central to the sociocultural dimensions.



Social Dimension of the Sugat Kabanhawan Festival

According to Bandala (2018), the term "social dimension" refers to the "quantity and quality" of a person's relationships with others as well as their level of community participation. Social functioning, one's level of social skills, and the capacity to view oneself as a part of the global society are all included in this. The social component concentrates around these aspects as well at the Sugat Kabanhawan Festival in Minglanilla, Cebu.

Sense of Pride and Gratitude

Participating in the celebration of the Sugat-Kabanhawan Festival helped the Minglanillahanons develop a sense of pride and gratitude. The Sugat Kabanhawan festival is a highly-anticipated event that showcases the talents of the Minglanillahanons through artistic choreography of dance. It is already a culture of them in which people are always looking forward for this celebration. The festival also features carabao racing and other activities that attract a growing number of visitors annually. The festival indeed was able to create and instill a sense of pride and gratitude among the Minglanillahanons for their strong faithfulness, creativity, and culture. The strong cooperation and unity between the community and the local government makes the festival unique and successful for the Minglanillahanons. The festival made it inspirational and has shaped the faithfulness of Minglanillahanons and how they dedicate their everyday sacrifices to the holy resurrection. Having a unique festival and a strong faith is a source of pride for Minglanillahanons. The informants added that:

"The government chose this festival because it is unique and different from other local festivals. The other festival talked about food. It's unique because it's a religious festival. (KI6)".

"It's amazing that there is unity and cooperation between the schools and barangays and because of that we already see the changes or the improvement of the community. (KI1)"

"It's not about entertainment for Minglanillahanons but it's about being back to God. It's included in

ritual, persuading others to bring them back to Roman Catholicism. (KI6)"

"They celebrated through dancing because the people are happy. (KI1)"

One of the aspects of having a festival is having a sense of pride (Buted, 2014) ^[3]. People learn to value their place because of the festival (Bravo *et al.*, 2020) and also gratitude to their God (Bilason, 2020). Developing a sense of pride is significant especially in education and religious aspects. Having a festival in the fiesta will also strengthen the faith of the people, art and the unity of community. People will go to church to pray for forgiveness of their sins and also to honor and remember the different saints they believe in (2019). These are being shown on the staging of festivals.

Life and Identity

The sugat kabanhawan festival of Minglanilla provides a sense of life and identity among the minglanillahanons. It plays a multifaceted role in shaping one's identity and enriching their life experiences. They connect the Minglanillahanons to their culture, community, and beliefs while allowing for personal expression and growth. The following statements of the respondents support this claim.

"As a citizen of minglanilla attending sugat kabanhawan is part of our culture and it is what the people are used to" (KI3)

"It helped in the spiritual aspect and the unity of the people" (KI3)

"So, this strengthens us Minglanillahanons, because as sons and daughters of God, we are cleansed from our sins through the resurrection of our Lord and this is celebrated through the Sugat Kabanhawan Festival" (KI7)

Cultural debates have identified cultures as a way of life (Strinati, 2000). Community cultural festivals help create communities of values (Ulrich, 1998) by forging strong and distinct identities. The experiences of the Minglanillahanons while celebrating the Sugat Kabanhawan Festival highly contribute to the narrative of their lives. Thus, create memories and stories that shape their life story and identity.

Community Involvement

The Sugat-Kabanhawan Festival in Minglanilla, Cebu, is an annual celebration of Jesus Christ's resurrection, featuring vibrant dances, carabao racing, and cultural activities. This event, driven by community-government cooperation, instills pride and gratitude for their faith and heritage. Minglanilla's commitment to this tradition since 1887 has earned it the title of "Sugat Capital" of the South, drawing visitors from across Cebu. The Kabanhawan Festival, with its exuberant dance displays, also commemorates the resurrection in Minglanilla. This event, held on Easter Sunday, is a testament to the community's joy and devotion. Minglanilla's dedication to these traditions is a source of inspiration, shaping the faithfulness of its people in their everyday lives.

"The festival has helped achieve unity because first thing is in the holy mass that is being held, people can see how united the Minglanillahanons because when you come and also join us in the holy mass, the church is filled with people. Up to the activities provided by the local government, we gather in the oval. There is also an activity that we call Ritual Showdown. It's a ritual showdown at the Sugat Kabanhawan Festival, where it is participated by the different schools around Minglanilla. We can see how supportive the Minglanillahanons even though it's a contest. We support it because it somehow shows how we value this festival here in Minglanilla" (KI5)

"For some, this festival helped. One factor that I could mention is our economic progress because every time we celebrate the Sugat Kabanhawan Festival, there are more chances for people to sell. They can sell, they can earn income. That's one factor, economic. Another factor is the socialization of other Minglanillahanons not only inside our homes but also socialize with others." (KI6)

Derrett (2003) argued that festivals and events contribute to community well-being in several ways, including the creation and enhancement of sense of place that contributes to social identity, and opportunities to build relationships. On the extension of the above assertion, Rogers and Anastasiadou (2011) ^[19] argued that festivals are committed to display local performers and their artistic values using locations around their various communities. The purpose of the idea is to bring people and cultures together, celebrate diversity, access and share social values, understanding, and foster opportunities

Cultural Dimension of the Sugat Kabanhawan Festival

While viewed as a religious festival, it has cultural dimensions that are worth exploring. Aside from the religious aspect, the Sugat Kabanhawan Festival also has cultural dimensions that is significant to the community as well as for tourist attraction. According to Smith and Bond (2020) ^[21], the term "cultural dimensions" refers to the way in which cultural groups are observed to differ from one another in terms of psychological characteristics like values, beliefs, self-concepts, personality, and actions. These are the fundamental key elements of a culture that can be used to define that culture. The cultural component concentrates around these aspects as well at the Sugat Kabanhawan Festival in Minglanilla, Cebu.

Appreciation of Religious Celebration and Artistry

The Sugat sa Kabanhawan Festival defines the culture, traditions and the religion of Minglanilla hence, established identity in the town. The festival involves aesthetic presentation depicting the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Its cultural aspect adheres to the heart of the people living in there. The minglanillahanons devote their life as a Catholic Christian in significance of the festival, the festival has shaped and expands the faith and religious intact of the church and the people in the community.

"Yeah meeting on 4 am the sugat was celebrated... sugat meeting definitely the sugat is meeting... on Jesus Christ resurrection and holy Mary.... It was called sugat because they meet. It was expanded by the Municipal, it is now celebrated through dancing, program, contest by school... that's it... they have theme like... how like... how to thank? Through dancing. How to thank is through dancing." (KI1)

"Yes...It's nice to see. There are people who are selling, there are people from other places. It is the usual because it's beautiful, I saw it once before, it's really beautiful... since it's the first time I've ever been to a resurrection festival, and we are the ones collecting since it's our schedule to.. I literally said, so this is the event, it's nice because there's an angel with a...hahaha is it really hanging on the. Yes...yes... It's really nice..it's nice..it's nice... but because of the pandemic, the celebration eventually became physically inactive at some point. I haven't watched it since then... Because of the pandemic."(KI2)

"As a citizen of minglanilla attending sugat kabanhawan is part of our culture and it is what the people are used to." (KI3)

An article shows that during the early days of Minglanilla, it was considered as a barangay of Talisay, Cebu. Minglanilla was known for *buat*, a variation of the word *bulad* derived from a dried fish. According to the records of the church, the town was founded by Father Fernando Sanchez in 1858, the first Spanish priest who changed the name to Minglanilla, an obscure place in Spain where he was born. Another article also highlighted that the Sugat sa Kabanhawan in Cebu, particularly in the town Minglanilla engages tourists to appreciate the history of Cebu and Minglanilla's rich and colorful past. Festival staging is a long social phenomenon. Such occasions like festivals, harvest celebrations and market fairs, people have always honored, commemorate and celebrated something related to their cultures (Douglas & Derrett, 2001). Festivals during the past gave opportunities to encounter things that are different from everyday life, communal gatherings, and collective wishes through art, ritual, and fiestas (Earls, 1993). This form of open celebration has its origins in the European carnival (Arcodia & Whitford, 2007). Festivals were initially staged to benefit the local population, not tourists (Getz, 1989). Festivals were typically held for religious, harvesting, and commemorating purposes (Douglas & Derrett, 2001).

Impact to Tourism and Economy

The Kabanhawan Festival is a festival commemorating the resurrection of Jesus Christ where the Minglanillahanons display their dancing skills as a statement of joy. A Cebuano word that means resurrection is *kbanhawan*. The festival is typically held on Easter Sunday. The Ritual Showdown and Street Dancing are the two subcategories of the dance. Sugat is a yearly religious celebration that takes place on Easter Sunday, which marks the conclusion of the Lenten season, among us Filipinos. However, the word for resurrection in the Cebuano language is *Kabanhawan*. The Sugat is regarded as one of the largest celebrations in Minglanilla. Since 1887, the parish has been continuing this custom. Thousands of people, not just Minglanillahanons, but also

Cebuanos from other areas who came to hear about it, are currently present and witnessing it. First-class municipality Minglanilla, Cebu is also referred to as the "Sugat Capital" of the South.

"For some, this festival helped. One factor that I could mention is our economic progress because every time we celebrate the Sugat Kabanhawan Festival, there are more chances for people to sell. They can sell, they can earn income. That's one factor, economic. Another factor is the socialization of other Minglanillahanons not only inside our homes but also socialize with others." (KI7)

(Additional response)

"Before, only few attends in the event, mass, and witness our celebration after the holy mass but now when people hear Sugat Kabanhawan, Minglanilla comes first in mind. Others also practice Sugat but even people from Naga travel to Minglanilla because it is awaited by everyone and a huge celebration in our place."

A festival is a yearly celebration with a specific theme that combines leisure, tourism, and culture. It is a key attraction for travel destinations. This study defines festival attractiveness as the ability to both draw tourists to festivals and satisfy their benefit perception and cognitive value. This definition is based on the features of attractiveness and festivals (Getz, 2007). Festivals increase the tourist appeal of a location and have an impact on its cultural and economic development (Luna, 2015). The places that tourists visit are thought of as products, and travelers might return to those places or suggest them to other travelers (like friends or family members) (Yoon, 2005). The three most crucial factors that make up destination loyalty is revisit intention, word-of-mouth referral, and destination choice (Lee, 2012). "The movement towards sustainability must be refocused as being of economic value," the author writes. Sustainability must not just be economically feasible. A significant consideration when having anything in or putting something up is the economic gain. These events are intended to provide entertainment for attendance and visitors. They are intended to be beneficial for the organizations and communities that host them. (Moore, 2012).

Not only in Minglanilla, but also in other areas, the Sugat Kabanhawan event took on various interpretations and connotations. The Sugat Kabanhawan festival in Minglanilla, Cebu, is comparable to the others in that it is a simple celebration. This week of holy reflection and joy is mainly in honor of the Minglanillahanons. In order to correct the misconception that holy week is a fiesta in Minglanilla, this festival was developed to make people know that the Sugat Kabanhawan Festival is more than just an aesthetic event.

With these reasons, it centers on spreading knowledge of the Sugat Kabanhawan celebration in Minglanilla. Since we are already in the 21st century and our culture is already eroding, increasing awareness of the area and its culture is advantageous. Because of the celebration, the younger generations will know more about their community and the customs they follow every day. Similar to the Sugat Kabanhawan celebration, which has been held for many

years but whose essence is unknown to many. They do not understand the origins of the festival; all they perceive is the celebration. People will be aware of its social and cultural backgrounds as a result of the festival's existence.

Conclusion

The Sugat Kabanhawan festival breathes life into the municipality of Minglanilla's rich culture and artistic talent. People learned to cherish their arts and to share them with others as a result of the festival's existence. In turn, this gives them many opportunities, especially in the fields of religion, education, livelihood and tourism.

Recommendation

The annual Sugat Kabanhawan event should keep ingraining in the Minglanillahanons' minds the reason of celebration and how the belief of Minglanillahanons were giving life through movements. Additionally, the Sugat Kabanhawan celebration ought to be incorporated into educational programs and even into the instruction of different dance performers.

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