

# KANNAWIDAN FESTIVAL: IT'S EFFECT TO MERCHANTS

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## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the effect of Kanniwidan Festival to the participating merchants in terms of economic, social and cultural aspect. It also looked at the highlights of the Kannawidan and determined thhe areas of the festival that need improvement. It utilized a qualitative research design. The respondents of the study were the 56 merchants who were purposively selected from the different booths situated in the venue of the said festival. The principal device that was utilized by the researchers in this study was a survey questionnaire which was formulated by the researchers and validated by experts. The study revealed that the respondents strongly believe that the Kannawidan Festival is rich in culture and has a sense of identity among all Ilocanos committed to ensure the conversion, preservation, and promotion of the Iloco cultural, artistic, historical and intellectual heritage. There is also a great positive effect along economic, social and cultural to the lives of the respondents.

Keywords: Kannawidan Festival, Impact, Administrative Capability

## Introduction

Fifteen years ago, a noble idea developed in the minds of a group of civic spirited Ilocanos who wanted to promote

cultural awareness and preserve the rich historical and cultural heritage of Ilocos Norte. They wanted to rekindle in the youth and future generations the pride of their heritage. The magnificent idea developed and is now a living reality, **KANNAWIDAN**, the Iloko Foundation of Arts and Culture.

Ilocos Sur has a rich heritage and unique culture that are to be preserved for the next generations because it is observed that many of these traditions, songs, dances and other Ilocano culture are not familiar to the younger generations already. Children of today are paying more attention to the modern and novelty dances they seen on the television than the traditional ones. There is also a need to evaluate the different products of the different municipalities and the agricultural products and livestock of the farmers and fisher folks. Because of this, the provincial government of Ilocos Sur conceived a festival that will highlight these culture and traditions and attract local and foreign tourists as well. They call it the **KANNAWIDAN** Ylocos Festival, it is also a time to commemorate the anniversary of Ilocos Sur as a province since it was separated on February 3, 1818.

Kannawidan is a variant of the Ilocano word "tawid" meaning heritage or inheritance. Kannawidan has its beginnings in 1992 when Guia Monroy Valenciano, then vice-president of PCI Bank, began sounding out to friends about establishing a museum. Her son Al, an artist, and the late Perlita Alviar-Foz, who once served as a curator of the Ayala Museum in Vigan, encouraged her. The idea caught on fast. Among the instant converts were: Ogie Balmaceda Alviar and Alice Raval Ventura, the wife of then city mayor Cesar Ventura. Together with Guia and Al, they called on Francis Ablan, then Caltex Phils. President.

Since then, more members have joined the group. The number grew to include professionals, businessmen, civic leaders, government officials, housewives and retired executives and public servants whose roots are in Ilocos Norte and are committed to preserve their rich heritage.

Its vision is: An esteemed and respected cultural foundation of Ilocanos

who hold a deep respect for our heritage, instilling pride and sense of identity among all Ilocanos committed to ensure the conversion, preservation, and promotion of the Iloco cultural, artistic, historical and intellectual heritage.

Kannawidan became one of the most awaited annual celebrations in the province and consequently improves Ilocano culture. One way to understand community is to look at it as a social construction, in which people create the feeling of similarity based on their culture, thus the starting point of community is the culture (Cohen, 1985). This concept presents disagreement on understanding community as a fixed structure with components and a mechanism. Instead, Cohen drives us to look at how community appears based on human interpretation of cultural meanings, rather than on objective forms. It becomes necessary to understand the construction of culture, along this line of thinking. Geertz (1973, in Ziakas) explained that "culture is made by symbols, and their uniqueness can be seen under the expression of social behavior." Similarly, Cohen expressed that culture, in itself, is a symbol which equips people to be social.

It has developed different activities to showcase the richness of Ilocos Sur culture and heritage. One of which became the most popular part of the festival-community food ways. Here, the meaning of food beyond the physical fact is stressed. Food is an important tool in unravelling the culture of a community because it belongs to a system of attitudes, beliefs and practices. They argued, in more detail, that food is the product that belongs to food ways that incorporate culinary smells, ingredients, sights, landscapes, sounds, eating practices, and farming traditions of people or a region. Then, food, food ways, cuisine and gastronomy are all part of a broader "system of communication." Food ways are a way of "cultural heritage by their passing of intergenerational knowledge, taste, political power struggles, connections to nature, stories of subsistence, local environment, human sensuality, poverty and wealth"

Understanding food as a heritage implies to comprehend the way by which human beings orient themselves to their

past, and many of the elements are organized chronologically (Edson, 2004). Heritage elements can be tangible, intangible, natural and historical; those are resources that need logical meaning, a time and space relationship, and a direction of possible change (2004) to be considered as heritage. Cultural heritage have emotional and intellectual appeal since they evoke feelings of prestige and a sense of pride as well, “It establishes our sense of who we are” (Edson, 2004). Heritage is needed for every society because it reinforces identity, and people act or react according to their examples of history and characteristics of the order established in their society. Consequently, as in the case with culture, every social group develops their own heritage. The capacity to render group identity meaning lies in the creation of heritage. The past can be represented, if it is first established in the group imagination as a place with identifiable features (Edson, 2004). It has been argued that evaluating foodways and cuisine from regions and communities as cultural heritage has led to different conceptualizations of food valuing within the national and international community, resulting in the delimitation of Cultural Heritage by institutions such as the UNESCO. In fact, Di Giovine and Brulotte (2014) explained the importance for communities to include their eating habits in the World Heritage List is that it is often perceived as the valuation of that particular social group, then integrated into the global community.

The value of food is important to: preservation of the traditional food, the inclusion of the local society and their history, enhance community pride and reinvent their identity and the opportunity to share their culture and knowledge with more people. Moreover, it is also substantial to understand the meaning of food within a festival to enhance community building; and the possible uses of this resources in combination with tourism will be studied as “culinary tourism”.

Kannawidan also conducts major activities and events for community participation. Community participation in events is more and more common, is been argued that often is a response of social, political, demographic and economic

realities (Picard and Robinson, 2006). The participation of communities in events depends on the community purpose and also on the type of event, therefore it is necessary to understand what means an event, and understand the type of events that communities participate.

There are different meanings to understand events, especially because of the wide variety of events like mega events, festivals, carnivals, concerts, political events, awards ceremonies, business conventions, trade shows, conferences, seminars, sports competitions, private events, just to mention few. The different meanings of events is relevant for this study because according to the definition, the studies of events adopt different approaches sometimes prioritizing the management and marketing approach of staging an event (Golden and Golden in Pages and Connell, 2012). For example, when events are understood as “any form of public display put for the entertainment and benefit of a large crowd of spectators” Golden and Golden in Pages and Connell, 2012) events does not include the interactions between people behind the event; the main purpose is entertainment and the benefits are for the spectators. Similarly understanding events as tourism potential has been developed implies to emphasize economic or political goals a destination is looking to meet and create and marketing a type of event according to the amount of tourists needed to fulfill those goals (Pages & Connell, 2012). Events understood towards a destination an entertainment context present overvalued economic impacts; it constitutes a limitation on the sustainability of events because usually, stakeholders stress different aims and concerns (Getz 2003). In fact, Strokes (2004) pointed out the emphasis on mega events. He argues that event-related strategy, and decisions are made in the state level. Therefore, event’s networks were based on public agencies and private companies for producing the events, leaving aside the community organization.

For the purpose of this research, to get insights of socio-cultural effects of events for communities, the accurate way to understand events is taking into account the role of people within events. In that sense, Getz (2008) explained events are a special-

temporal phenomenon, and each is unique because of interactions among people, settings and management systems, including design elements and the program. In addition Pages and Connell (2012) following the general literature on events established common features about event that is useful to understand events from the front-stage point of view as well as from the back-stage perspective.

Event is a temporary experience based on a unique combination of timing, location, theme, design and ambience created and complemented by participants, spectators and organizers. The connotation here is the distinctiveness, and special qualities allied with an event experience that creates interest, appeal and motivation to participate compared with those motivations generally associated with everyday leisure and tourism activities (2012: 12)

The understanding of events as an experience is relevant because it considers people and their interaction as principal elements of the events. It invites to think about the experiences that increase interest to participate in the preparation of the festival, hence considering the organizers and participants' point of view as important as the spectators. What is more, for this study is relevant to understand what is events experience when the communities members have the role of organizers, participants and spectators. Ziakas (2013) contributes to understand events in a communitarian perspective. She argues events are spaces denoting something outside themselves and providing channels for the production and expression of culture. In addition Getz (2008) argued that different events have different meanings attached to; but also have common characteristics within the variety of events. Both authors explained that the common features of events are a) liminality, defined as any condition of time and space outside or on the peripheries of everyday life, wherein normal social life and boundaries are suspended, and it is related to seclusion and scarce conformity to a ritualistic behavior. Similarly to liminality there is b) liminoid, used for post-modernist events (sports, parades, etc.), but with the main difference that it is profane terms, so that emphasize the notion of separation, loss of people's identity and social status and

role reversals. "In that state people are more relaxed and open to new ideas" (Getz, 2008). Then is the characteristic c) notion of festivity, is a celebration "out of the ordinary time". Following d) "flow" is the maximum engagement or peak experience in the event. Lastly the feature of e) *communitas* state, participants create a group identity and reconstruct social reality.

For this research, events are understood as the channel of expression of culture and celebration. That present common characteristic of liminoid and festivity, the understanding of those features are relevant for this research because assuming those characteristics of events, contribute to understand possible effects of festivals on host communities. The valuable contribution of those elements to generate effects is based on the meaningful social interaction among people which overpass the imposed social boundaries, events containing liminoid can enhance social networks, and the social fabric of a community is strengthened (Ziakas, 2013). As for festivity invites people celebrate something as traditions, history, belief, and cultural knowledge; thus when cultural events are staged it can contribute to enhance community identity. Here the lesson is that intrinsic features of events can contribute to social changes for communities; as well events can be assigned a transformational role for communities (Getz, in Page & Connell, 2012; Ziakas, 2013). In conclusion festival can present socio-cultural effects for communities.

More recent studies (Page & Connell, 2012; Ziakas, 2013) suggests that community participation is more and more common in festival. Coming next community and festivals will be further explored to understand the interest of communities when participating in festivals and the effects that festivals can have on communities. This is relevant to understand how culture as foodways can be celebrated in festivals and the effects of that celebration for community progress.

Kannawidan has become a festival that affects the lives of the participants. The key characteristics of festivals are people's interactions and festivity of their culture as a consequence several socio-cultural impacts

on communities can be drawn from festival. Such impacts will be unavoidably a combination of positive, negative or controversial outcomes (Pages & Connell, 2012). According to Mathieson (in Sharpley and Stone, both in Pages & Connell (eds), 2012) social impacts derived from festivals are transformations in how people live their live “changes in quality of life of local communities, participants and other stakeholders who arise from the holding of an event” (2012). As for cultural impacts was explained like the “changes to the norms, values and beliefs of individuals that guide and rationalize their cognition of themselves and their society” (Burde and Vanclay in Sharpley and Stone, 2012). Hereafter, Sharpley and Stone’s definition of social and cultural impacts will be the reference to understand the effects of festivals and because of the evident relationship between the two concepts, they will consider here collectively as socio-cultural impacts. For this study socio-cultural impacts are understood “as the impacts of an event on the day-to-day life of people associated directly or indirectly with that event and on the values, attitudes, beliefs and traditions that determine or guide that day-to-day life” (in Pages & Connell, 2012). Here, it is undeniable the interaction and relationship within and between the different groups of stakeholders who may plan the nature and extend of social and cultural impacts of events (Sharpley and Stone, in Pages & Connell, 2012; Picard and Robinson, 2006).

One way of studying festival effects on communities is the multidimensional approach where the complexity of stakeholders and the potential for long term, tangible and fewer intangible impacts are studies regards they fall outside from the management and planning field in events (Sharpley and Stone, 2012; Getz, 2008; Picard & Robinson, 2006). For example, Ziakas (2013) mentioned a major effect of events, the social development; is the global effect. The author established that the participation of people in festivals is crucial for the enhancement of social networks and creation of social capital. She argued “social capital is a concept that encompasses features of social life (networks, norms and trust) that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue common

objectives (2013)”, in addition Putman argued that the consequences of it are co-ordination and cooperation for mutual benefits as Putman summarized (in Ziakas, 2013). However, here I do not intend to explore the construction of social capital; but this is taken as a wider understanding of the effects that could be considered if it comes along the research case study and should be pointed out for further research for their higher impact on community building and progress.

Researches on the impact of festivals in different regions and nations have emerged and one framework used is multidisciplinary framework. The multidisciplinary framework involves many axes within event. It goes beyond the stage of an event; it implies the backstage -like social construction of meanings within events- and future of festivals planning and studying. Within this framework, practical and theoretical questions could be addressed; hence more sophisticated and multiple research methods is needed (Getz, 2008). This guideline can be used to study community festivals’ impacts in a wider perspective. The meaning and experiences of the events are invited to analyze under a sociological, political or anthropological perspective where the meanings of events is studied form social groups, community and society as a whole. Moreover, it pays attention to the political meaning attached to event and the political platform behind events. The framework highly pointed out the study of events under a management, marketing and economic disciplines when it is related to stakeholders and the capacity of being organized to determine common goals and achieve them. This framework contested what Foucault called the “classic discourse”, which is focused on events as a provider of significant local place identity understood within a discourse based on researchers’ values. The language and concepts delimit what is legitimate or expected as well some understandings are marginalized or ignored by researchers (Getz, in Pages and Connell eds. 2012). By contrast the events’ framework presented (Getz, 2008) contributed to this research by underlining the necessity understand the outcomes of the festival in relation to the meaning of the festival given by the different actors like

private sponsors, organizer, the participants, the spectators and hostess.

Here this framework is used in to search for the meanings of the events as a source of information to know the outcomes. Indeed, this is significant because to gather knowledge about sensitive topics as identity, pride, participation, authenticity, cohesion, political participation, which also are less evident effects of community festivals in comparison as effects like increasing the amount of visitors or increasing levels of sales. In addition, this framework is useful to comprehend that meanings of the events should be connected with the goals of the effects, or it could be used to set up the goals of community festivals. What's more here is also mentioned the establishment of backstage relationships and the management of that relation, as an element connected with the outcomes. Finally yet importantly, the framework also drove to the following reflections: First, the capacity of knowledge creation from the people involved (directly or indirectly) to the festival. Second, the possibility for them to reflect on that knowledge to apply it in different future actions as improve the organization of the festival, the establishment of goals, the political participation for cultural policies, etc. Third, the need to create events knowledge with the active participation of the researched group. Finally, Finding similarities and differences between the meanings of this specific event, contributes for a deeper analysis of the effects of the festival according to the role of people. Even more, when finding similarities of meaning between the actors the results gain validity and the same time the differences of meaning between the actors allow looking for a reflection of the effects of festivals gaining more qualitative knowledge about the singularities of this case study.

### Statement of the Problem

From the aforementioned discussions, the researchers opted to undertake the study to determine effect of Kannawidan Festival to the participating merchants.

1. What are the highlights of the Kannawidan festival?
2. What is the effect of Kannawidan festival in terms of the following aspects:

- a. Economic;
  - b. Social and
  - c. Cultural?
3. What are things that need improvement according to the merchants?

### Methodology

**Research Design.** The study used a qualitative research design.

**Population and Sample.** The respondents of the study were the 56 merchants who were randomly selected from the different booths situated in the venue of the 2017 Kannawidan festival.

**Data Gathering Instrument.** The principal device that was utilized by the researchers in this study was a survey questionnaire which was formulated by the researchers and validated by experts.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The conversational analyses were presented in narrative form.

#### 1. What are the highlights of the Kannawidan festival?

One of the highlights of the Kannawidan Festival is the OTOP or One Town One Product, wherein the different municipalities would display and sell their own products. Majority of the informants have said that what they like most is their free booth and the prices are also being monitored by the DTI.

One informant from Laoag City said, "Namayat ti aglako ditoy ta awan bayadam nga ticket isu nga saan nga masapul nga ingato ti presyo dagitoy lako mi, isu nga nalaka laeng nga maibus." Thus it can be said that Kannawidan Festival is an instrument to help the farmers and other producers to sell their products at lower prices and also they are motivated to produce with better quality.

#### 2. What is the effect of Kannawidan festival in terms of the following aspects:

- a. Economic;

“Kannawidan Festival helps not only those aspiring and well-endowed businessman locally but also the farmers producing Agri-Products to market here.” He also added, “This festival increases the income compared to local barangay based market,” a statement from the Agricultural Technologist from San Emilio, Ilocos Sur which was seconded by other exhibitors who displayed their products.

As per observation, on the first day they have a voluminous stocks, but on the last day of the festival, they just bring home a little and some others just go home with a big smile because of their big profit.

The statements given also conform to the finding of Pages & Connell (2012) that festivals and events have tourism potential emphasizing the economic gains of the participants involved.

#### **b. Social;**

During Kannawidan, many visitors are coming from Manila, Cavite, Laoag City and Nueva Ecija to name a few. Believing that they also have different culture from others. This festivity would help others to display their own culture.

This conforms to the study of Ziakas (2013) that festivals create meaningful social interaction among people which overpass the imposed social boundaries and can enhance social networks, and the social fabric of a community is strengthened.

This is supported by one of the exhibitors from Bataan saying, “I’m happy to meet new friends here, and my self-confidence is also being developed as I sell our products (smoke fish, boneless bangus and dried fish).

#### **c. and Cultural?**

An informant from San Jose, Nueva Ecija have revealed, “It made me realized the richness of ones’ culture, but though we have different cultures we are still equal in the eyes of God, but only gives us different cultural identities.” It is during this festivity where many people from varied cultural heritage are coming.

Another vendor said, “Maganda itong festival kasi marami akong nakikitang bago sa aking paningin. Sobrang mayaman talaga ang kultura nang mga lugar sa Pilipinas (This festival is very nice because I saw new things. It goes to show that the Philippines has a very rich culture.”

Ilocos Sur alone is comprised of numerous cultures because the province is composed of 32 municipalities, 2 cities, and 768 barangays. These statements conform to the findings of Edson (2004) that festivals create cultural heritage that evoke feelings of prestige and a sense of pride. It establishes our sense of who we are.

### **3. What are the things that need improvement according to merchants?**

The province of Ilocos Sur is doing its ultimate capabilities to give the best, most especially to the visitors and exhibitors. But since Ilocos Sur is accommodating thousands of people; lack of accessible comfort rooms and bathrooms are the visitors and exhibitors reported problems that the province has to address. Majority of the respondents said “comfort rooms” must be enough for everyone and must be accessible. This is supported by he exhibitors from Marikina who said, “The venue is good, but we need more accessible comfort rooms and bathrooms.”

### **Conclusions**

1. The respondents strongly believe that the Kannawidan Festival is rich in culture and has a sense of identity among all Ilocanos committed to ensure the conversion, preservation, and promotion of the Iloco cultural, artistic, historical and intellectual heritage.
2. There is a great impact along economic, social and cultural to the lives of the respondents.
- 3.

### **Recommendations:**

Based from the conclusions, the following recommendations are drawn:

1. Kannawidan Festival of Ilocos Sur should be sustained since it showcases the different cultures of

the Ilokanos at present and even in the past centuries.

2. Visitors and exhibitors' needs should be addressed so they would be comfortable as they stay in the province.
3. Farmer producers should continue to improve their products to have more presentable and higher income would be expected.
4. Administrators of the festivals must always be present in monitoring the situations of the participants.

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