

CULTURAL IMPACTS OF THE KADAYAWAN FESTIVAL ON THE BAGOBO TRIBE IN CALINAN, DAVAO CITY, PHILIPPINES

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the cultural impacts of the Kadayawan Festival on the Bagobo community in Calinan, Davao City, Philippines. A total of fifty (50) respondents participated in the research. The study also investigated how demographic factors influenced perceptions of the festival's cultural impacts. Data were gathered through validated questionnaires and analyzed using t-tests and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Findings revealed that the Kadayawan Festival has a significant positive impact on the cultural identity of the Bagobo tribe in Calinan. Notably, there were significant differences in perceived cultural impact based on gender, while tribal rank or position showed no significant effect. Additionally, age was found to significantly influence cultural interactions related to the festival. These results highlight the festival's important role in reinforcing cultural identity and fostering intercultural engagement within the community.

Keywords: cultural impacts, cultural festival, indigenous festival, Kadayawan Festival, event tourism

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between culture and tourism has been widely discussed (McKercher & Du Cros, 2002; Richards, 2014). However, it was not until the 1980s that culture and tourism began to be seen as closely interconnected rather than as two separate aspects of destinations. Historically, culture was primarily regarded as the foundation of local and national identities, embodied in the cultural heritage of places. Tourism, on the other hand, was often viewed as a leisure or recreational activity, largely separate from the everyday cultural life of communities (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2009). The OECD later concluded that culture and tourism share a symbiotic relationship, particularly in enhancing the competitiveness of destinations. Culture is a fundamental element of tourism products, increasing destination attractiveness, as it is one of the key attributes sought by tourists. Conversely, tourism brings an influx of visitors whose spending helps preserve and develop cultural resources, thereby sustaining cultural heritage.

Unlike many other industries, tourism impacts multiple facets of a community, including economic development (Andereck et al., 2005; Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Esu et al., 2011; del Barrio et al., 2012; Bracalente et al., 2011) and sociocultural dimensions (Whitford, 2008; Whitford & Dunn, 2014; Brunt & Courtney, 1999; Deery & Jago, 2010). Festivals and celebrations—local, national, and international—are increasing in both number and significance, growing larger in scale and scope (Crespi-Vallbona & Richards, 2007; Getz, 2010, 2012; Oklobdžija, 2015). Festivals play critical roles in tourism by attracting visitors to specific places, overcoming seasonal travel fluctuations, contributing to place marketing through image formation and destination branding, animating attractions, and catalyzing broader community development (Getz, 2010).

Cultural festivals serve as public spaces where Indigenous peoples reaffirm their unique socio-political identities (Slater, 2009). Indigenous cultural festivals are increasingly recognized worldwide for their vital contributions to community growth and vitality (Whitford & Dunn, 2014). For example, festivals in Papua New Guinea have long been central to community life, helping to share and sustain Indigenous culture. Both local communities and the public sector in Papua New Guinea acknowledge that these festivals strengthen tourism and events industries while revitalizing indigenous culture, traditions, and rituals. Phipps and Slater (2010) emphasize that festivals matter deeply to communities at all scales—from small, local celebrations to large, internationally recognized events—supporting efforts to maintain and renew cultural identity through celebration.

Despite the many positive attributes, the primary role of festivals is often debated. Many festivals were created to preserve and conserve culture, while others were staged primarily as tourist attractions. The latter can lead to entertainment overshadowing cultural authenticity, which is a critical element travelers seek in tourism destinations (Getz, 1998). The United Nations Environment Programme (n.d.) highlights negative sociocultural impacts of tourism, including commodification and “reconstructed ethnicity,” where sacred sites and cultural expressions may be exploited or altered to satisfy tourist demands. This can result in the loss of authenticity, cultural erosion, and the standardization of local cultures to meet tourist expectations.

In Davao City, the Kadayawan Festival evokes mixed responses. While businesses and visitors celebrate the energy of the festivities, some critics note a lack of genuine representation of indigenous peoples’ struggles, particularly when non-indigenous participants dominate the performances. Absin (2011) pointed out the “absence of real representation” of indigenous peoples’ narratives in the festival, calling for more meaningful cultural expression rather than superficial displays aimed at financial gain.

Events and festivals significantly impact community life. Communities that organize festivals to celebrate culture, exchange knowledge, and strengthen neighborly ties often experience greater unity and resilience in facing challenges (Getz, 2007). Prentice and Andersen (2003) affirm the benefits of cultural tourism festivals, noting that they contribute to local revitalization, create job opportunities, and foster sustainable, visitor-friendly infrastructure. Similarly, Bachleitner and Zins (2012) argue that festival tourism enhances residents’ knowledge, pride, ethnic identity, and intercultural understanding, while promoting small- and medium-sized enterprises. Sdrali and Chazapi (2007) highlight that festivals encourage communication that fosters mutual understanding between hosts and visitors. Through tourism,

regions can strengthen their competitive positions on national and international levels (Smith, 2004).

Falassi (2007) defines cultural festivals as “occasionally repetitive social events” where the entire community, united by ethnicity, language, religion, history, and worldview, participates to express shared values and identity. Communities—including governments, residents, and stakeholders—channel their values and aspirations into festivals as acts of social expression and cultural renewal.

Overall, festivals have significant impacts on cities and local communities. They foster local pride and identity, contribute to national and community destination planning, and enhance tourism and commerce. Key benefits include image creation, economic impact generation, overcoming seasonality, local community and business development, and supporting key industrial sectors (Tice, 2009).

METHOD

Research Respondents

This study involved fifty (50) respondents who were randomly selected members of the Bagobo community residing in the Calinan District of Davao City. Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 50 respondents who participated in the study. In terms of age, the largest group of respondents (34%) fell within the 23–27 age range, indicating that the majority were young adults. With regard to sex, the sample was composed of more female respondents than male, accounting for more than half of the total population. As for tribal rank, the vast majority—48 out of 50 respondents—identified themselves as members of the Bagobo community under the category “others,” while only two respondents held formal positions as tribal council members.

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
18-22 years old	5	10%
23-27 years old	17	34%
28-32 years old	3	6%
33-37 years old	5	10%
38-42 years old	11	22%
43 years old – above	9	18%
Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	24	48%
Female	26	52%
Rank	Frequency	Percent
Tribal Council Member	2	4%
Others	48	96%
Total	320	100

Research Instrument and Materials

Data were gathered using a structured survey questionnaire designed to measure the perceived cultural impact of the Kadayawan Festival on the Bagobo Tribe. The questionnaire utilized a 5-point Likert scale, where 5 indicated a "Very High" impact and 1 indicated a "Very Low" impact.

Research Design and Procedure

The study employed a quantitative research approach with a descriptive research design to assess the cultural impacts of the Kadayawan Festival on the Bagobo community. Data collection was conducted through the administration of the survey questionnaire to the selected respondents. Descriptive statistics, particularly mean scores, were used to determine the overall level of cultural impact. Inferential statistical methods, including t-tests and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), were applied to examine significant differences in cultural impact perceptions across demographic variables such as sex, age, and tribal rank.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Perceived Impact of Kadayawan Festival on the Cultural Identity of the Bagobo Tribe

Table 2 presents the perceived cultural impacts of the Kadayawan Festival on the Bagobo Tribe in Calinan, Davao City. Overall, the results show that the Kadayawan Festival has a high impact on the cultural identity of the Bagobo community, as reflected in the high mean scores across three major dimensions: cultural awareness (3.98), cultural understanding (3.90), and cultural interaction (3.99). Among these, cultural interaction received the highest rating, suggesting that the festival serves as a significant platform for strengthening connections both within the tribe and with other cultural groups. Respondents noted that cultural interaction is promoted through forming friendships with other tribes, sharing traditions, fostering communication, and demonstrating unity and harmony with other communities.

Cultural awareness, rated at 3.98, is also effectively promoted through the showcasing of Bagobo tribal dances, traditional arts, and distinct traits and attitudes. Respondents also highlighted efforts to explain their unique culture and historical background to other groups, thereby fostering mutual respect and recognition. Cultural understanding, while slightly lower at 3.90, still indicates a strong perceived impact in terms of how the festival contributes to greater empathy and insight into Bagobo heritage.

The demographic profile of respondents further revealed that sex was a significant factor influencing perceived cultural impact, while age and tribal rank showed no statistically significant differences. This implies that male and female members of the community may experience or interpret the festival's cultural influence differently, whereas generational or hierarchical status within the tribe does not substantially affect perception of impact. In terms of individual items, the highest-rated indicator was "showing unity and harmony with other tribes" under cultural interaction, while the lowest-rated item was "promoting traditional

leadership roles” under cultural understanding, indicating an opportunity to further emphasize indigenous governance systems in future iterations of the festival.

These findings align with Hall’s (2014) assertion that festivals have a substantial impact on the development of social and cultural tourism within host communities. As noted, celebration organizers increasingly use authentic cultural themes to structure events that attract visitors and shape the cultural image of host cities. In the case of Kadayawan, the event is not merely a spectacle but a strategic cultural platform that elevates the identity of the Bagobo tribe while fostering broader cultural harmony and awareness across diverse groups.

Table 2. Cultural Impacts of Kadayawan Festival:

<i>Cultural Awareness</i>	Mean	Description
Cultural Awareness		
1. Showcases the Bagobo tribal dance to local and foreign tourists.	4.10	High
2. Shows the unique arts and culture of Bagobo tribe.	3.90	High
3. Promotes awareness on the traits and attitudes of Bagobo tribe.	3.92	High
4. Able to explain to other tribes the unique culture of the Bagobo tribe.	4.02	High
5. Promote the historical background of Bagobo tribe to other tribes and to tourists as well.	3.94	High
Total Mean	3.98	High
<i>Cultural Understanding</i>	Mean	Description
1. Promotes cultural understanding between different tribes.	3.92	High
2. Creates harmony and understanding with other tribes.	3.96	High
3. Able to explain to other tribes their cultural similarities and differences.	3.80	High
4. Able to erase or eliminate misconception or misunderstanding about Bagobo tribe to other people, specially the tourists.	3.92	High
5. Able to understand the cultures and traditions of other participating tribes.	3.88	High
Total Mean	3.90	High
<i>Cultural Interaction</i>	Mean	Description
1. Able to create friendship with other tribes during the festival.	4.10	High
2. Able to interact and share culture and traditions with other tribes	4.08	High
3. Able to communicate with others to promote cultural interaction and understanding.	3.82	High

4. Interact with other people from other tribes and tourists to promote awareness of one's own culturally shaped values, beliefs, perceptions, etc.	3.96	High
5. Able to show unity and harmony with other tribes through cultural interaction.	4.00	High
Total Mean	3.99	High

The data revealed that the Kadayawan Festival plays a vital role in promoting cultural understanding between different tribes. It fosters harmonious relationships by helping communities recognize both their cultural similarities and differences, while also addressing and eliminating misconceptions and misunderstandings. More than just a visual spectacle of tribal dances and performances, the festival serves as an educational platform where both local and foreign tourists can learn about the traditions, values, and identities of the various participating indigenous communities, including the Bagobo tribe.

These findings are consistent with Tice (2009), who emphasized that festivals offer local communities the opportunity to express, develop, and share their culture, creating a stronger sense of shared values and beliefs. Tice also noted that such events allow host communities and visitors to exchange experiences, interact meaningfully, and appreciate each other's cultural expressions—ultimately enhancing community development and fulfilling the leisure needs of both tourists and locals.

Moreover, the findings affirm that the Kadayawan Festival strengthens inter-tribal bonds and creates spaces for interaction not only among indigenous groups but also between locals and tourists. This is especially crucial in a culturally diverse country like the Philippines, which is home to numerous tribes with varying traditions, belief systems, and lifestyles. Through such cultural interaction, the festival becomes a unifying event, promoting not just celebration but also mutual respect and national identity.

In line with Granada (2012), the Kadayawan Festival is an enriching experience that celebrates the past, present, and future of Davaoeños, Mindanaoans, and Filipinos as a whole. It serves as a tribute to Davao's cultural, artistic, and historical legacy, fostering pride and awareness among participants and observers alike.

The study also found that cultural interaction varies among members of the Bagobo tribe, particularly when analyzed by age. Younger members were found to engage more actively with other tribes, leading to a higher level of cultural understanding, while older members were generally more reserved and conservative, limiting their exposure and interaction with other groups. This supports the findings of Arnhoff, Leon, and Lorge (2004), who suggested that age can influence one's ability to learn, adapt, and interact culturally. While aging brings wisdom and respect, younger individuals often show greater flexibility and openness in cross-cultural engagement, which can result in richer interactions and deeper cultural appreciation.

In summary, the Kadayawan Festival acts as a dynamic platform for cultural education and unity, helping bridge generational and tribal gaps through shared celebration, mutual learning, and respectful engagement.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings of the study affirm that the Kadayawan Festival has a significant and positive impact on the cultural identity of the Bagobo Tribe in Calinan, Davao City. Across the dimensions of cultural awareness, cultural understanding, and cultural interaction, the respondents consistently rated the impact as high, with cultural interaction receiving the highest mean score (3.99). This indicates that the festival serves as an effective platform for building connections between the Bagobo community and other tribes, as well as with local and international tourists.

The festival promotes awareness of Bagobo traditions, such as their tribal dances, arts, values, and historical background, and encourages open communication, unity, and cultural sharing. It also fosters a deeper understanding of both their own heritage and those of other cultural groups. Notably, the study revealed that gender plays a significant role in shaping perceptions of cultural impact, while age and tribal rank do not. Younger tribe members appear to be more actively engaged in cultural interaction, suggesting generational differences in openness and engagement.

Overall, the Kadayawan Festival emerges not just as a celebration of heritage but as a catalyst for intercultural dialogue, mutual respect, and social cohesion. These findings are consistent with existing literature, reinforcing the idea that cultural festivals contribute to cultural tourism development, identity affirmation, and community empowerment.

Based on the results of the study, it is recommended that the organizers of the Kadayawan Festival further strengthen the cultural education components of the event by incorporating interactive exhibits, storytelling sessions, and workshops led by Bagobo elders to enhance cultural understanding and appreciation. Since younger members of the tribe exhibit higher engagement in cultural interaction, youth participation should be encouraged by providing them leadership roles and involving them in the planning and execution of festival activities, thus nurturing them as future cultural ambassadors. Additionally, gender-inclusive programming should be promoted to address the observed differences in perception between male and female participants, ensuring equal representation and voice in all cultural expressions. The festival should also highlight the traditional governance systems of the Bagobo tribe by showcasing indigenous leadership roles and rituals, which could address the lower perception in promoting cultural understanding related to tribal authority. Moreover, the creation of dedicated cultural interaction spaces—such as tribal villages or exchange booths—can facilitate dialogue and engagement between various indigenous groups and tourists, fostering deeper mutual respect and learning. Finally, stronger institutional support from local government and cultural agencies is encouraged to ensure the sustainability, authenticity, and inclusivity of the festival, making it a continued platform for cultural preservation and community empowerment.

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