

Potentials and Challenges of Festivals in the Fourth District of Iloilo: A Framework for Tourism Development Plan

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Abstract: This study assessed the potentials and challenges of festivals in the Fourth District of Iloilo to serve as foundational inputs for a localized Tourism Development Plan. Specifically, the study covered Passi City and the municipalities of Anilao, Banate, Barotac Nuevo, Dingle, Dueñas, Dumangas, and San Enrique. Utilizing a descriptive-evaluative and comparative quantitative research design, data were gathered from 142 respondents representing five key stakeholder groups: Local Government Unit (LGU) officials and planners, fisheries and aquaculture stakeholders, tourism and business sector representatives, cultural and community leaders, and local residents and festival attendees. Respondents were selected based on their active involvement and capacity to provide insights into festival management. Statistical analysis employed percentage and frequency counts, Mean, Standard Deviations (SD), and the Kruskal Wallis H test to determine significant differences in perceptions across stakeholder groups. The festivals in Iloilo's Fourth District help to develop the economy, create local pride, and promote tourism through the coastal heritage of the area. However, the event's organizers find it very difficult to create a successful financial event; therefore, they must manage issues regarding overcrowding, safety, and environmental impacts as part of their efforts. Each stakeholder from the various segments of society has a unique approach to preserving cultural heritage and achieving sustainable growth. Ultimately, there is a shared understanding among stakeholders from varying backgrounds that the success of any event will come through cooperation to break down management barriers and create a positive experience for all participants.

Keywords: Festival Tourism, Stakeholder Perception, Tourism Potentials and Challenges, Tourism Development Plan, Cultural Heritage Preservation, Iloilo Fourth District

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In the Philippines, festivals serve as vital cultural representations and economic resources. They attract domestic and international visitors by promoting local pride and preserving local tradition. These events showcase history, visual arts, culinary arts, and tradition, while generating economic opportunities through tourist-related activities (Getz; Briones; Arcodia and Whitford as cited by Sheeba et al., 2025). Legally, Article XIV of the 1987 Constitution of the Philippines mandates the state to preserve and develop Filipino culture, establishing the National Commission for Culture and the Arts to formulate policies and coordinate cultural programs. Furthermore, Republic Act No. 10066 (National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009) protects these festive events by defining them as intangible cultural heritage and listing them in the Philippine Registry of Cultural Property (PRECUP) (National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 2023; Republic Act 10066, 2010; Republic Act 11904, 2022).

Festivals are regulated for tourism, development, and heritage preservation. Republic Act No. 9593 mandates the DOT to use them for destination branding and business stimulation. Republic Act No. 11904 leverages performing arts and cultural expressions for revenue. Senate Bill No. 2289 aims to promote fiestas to boost local economies. Furthermore, the Local Government Code of 1991 empowers municipalities to institutionalize official festivals via ordinances for sustainability and cohesion (Department of Budget and Management, 2012; Senate of

the Philippines, 2023). Philippine festivals also propel multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), focusing on economic development and heritage preservation. They offer short-term employment in logistics and booth operations, while helping small and medium enterprises access markets through local government support. Additionally, they serve as mechanisms for heritage preservation under Target 11.4 of SDG 11. Festivals centering on faith tourism, heritage, and cultural practices foster community identity and social cohesion, which are critical for resilient urban environments (Mair and Smith, 2024; Colston, 2025; University of the Philippines, 2025).

While festivals hold significant cultural and economic importance in the Philippines, the current research literature exhibits critical gaps. Studies primarily focus on immediate tourism and cultural pride, neglecting long-term socioeconomic sustainability, ecological impacts, carrying capacity, and legitimacy or management issues (Castillo 2022). Furthermore, researchers frequently overlook the "outflow" effect where profits leave communities (Ramos and Prasetyo 2020), the impact of digital transformations (Henderson 2021), and geographic bias in approved research (Tabaquero, 2021). Finally, there remains a lack of diverse approaches, as existing evaluations of festival authenticity heavily favor a critical perspective (Alampay and Libosada, 2023).

Festivals act as catalysts for local entrepreneurs and education advocates to serve as "cultural connectors," boosting student cultural engagement and creating trade opportunities. However, the identified literature gaps highlight a critical need to quantify the socioeconomic impacts on local trade and visitor attraction (Iloilo City Government, 2025). Furthermore, current research lacks depth regarding long-term sustainability, specifically requiring investigation into structured planning for social interaction, the long-term ecological effects of week-long events, and how diverse resident perception, influenced by social class and residency length, affect the festival's management structure, balancing cultural authenticity with global recognition (Franciliso & Estores, 2020; Santiago & Dela Cruz, 2022; Villaluz, 2025). While tourism literature extensively covers Philippine festivals, a significant research gap exists regarding the resource endowments, policy support, potentials, and challenges of small community festivals. This study addresses these gaps within the Fourth District of Iloilo, where festivals anchor municipal Tourism Development Plans (TDPs). Examining these smaller events is critical because they preserve local identity, drive economic growth through job creation, and generate a tourism multiplier effect. By analyzing these specific challenges and assets, this study aimed to formalize community heritage within the TDP to align festivals with local development goals and ensure long-term sustainability.

Anchored on Elkington (1994)'s Triple Bottom Line (TBL) Theory complemented by Community-Based Tourism (CBT) Theory, this study aimed to assess the potentials and challenges of Festivals in the Fourth District of Iloilo, to serve as inputs for Tourism Development Plan. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions: (1) What is the assessment of the potentials of festivals in the Fourth District of Iloilo in terms of five core pillars: motivation, experience, management, impacts, and place when the respondents are grouped according to profile such as local government Unit (LGU) officials and planners, fisheries and aquaculture stakeholders, tourism and business sector, cultural and community leaders, and festival attendees? (2) What are the challenges in managing the festivals in the Fourth District of Iloilo in terms of the following core pillars: financial sustainability, environmental responsibility, risk and safety management, and cultural preservation when the respondents are grouped according to profile such as local government Unit (LGU) officials and planners, fisheries and aquaculture stakeholders, tourism and business sector, cultural and community leaders, and festival attendees? (3) Is there a significant difference in the assessment of the potentials of festivals in the Fourth District of Iloilo when the respondents are grouped according to profile such as local government Unit (LGU) officials and planners, fisheries and aquaculture stakeholders, tourism and business sector, cultural and community leaders, and festival attendees? (4) Is there a significant difference in the assessment of the challenges in managing the festivals in the Fourth District of Iloilo when the respondents are grouped according to profile such as local government Unit (LGU) officials and planners, fisheries and aquaculture stakeholders, tourism and business sector, cultural and community leaders, and festival attendees? (5) Based on the findings, what tourism development plan can be proposed to maximize the potentials and address the challenges of the festivals in the Fourth District of Iloilo?

METHODOLOGY

The geographical scope is specifically centered on the fourth district of Iloilo encompassing one component city—Passi City—and seven municipalities: Anilao, Banate, Barotac Nuevo, Dingle, Dueñas, Dumangas, and San

Enrique, as the primary context for the research. The investigation is delimited to five specific stakeholder groups: Local Government Unit (LGU) officials, fisheries and aquaculture stakeholders, tourism and business sector representatives, cultural and community leaders, and local residents or festival participants. The study employed various statistical tools such as frequency count and percentage, Weighted Mean, Standard Deviation, and Kruskal Wallis H test of difference. This study included 142 respondents composed of five distinct groups of stakeholders who possess direct involvement or interest in the festivals in the fourth district of Iloilo: Local Government Unit (LGU) official, Local Government Unit (LGU) official planner, Fisheries and aquaculture stakeholder, Tourism and business sector, Cultural and community leader, and Festival Attendees. These participants were selected based on their capacity to provide comprehensive insights into the potentials and management challenges of Festivals. The study employed various statistical tools such as frequency count and percentage, mean, Standard Deviation, and Kruskal Wallis H-test. The inferential statistics is set at a 5% alpha level of significance.

The data for this study were gathered using a validated researcher-made questionnaire, developed to examine the unique distinctions of festivals in the fourth district of Iloilo, with a particular focus on its potentials and challenges. To safeguard the integrity of the study as well as the empirical rigor of the instrument designed to assess festivals in the 4th District of Iloilo, comprehensive validation and reliability testing were performed on the researcher-created instrument. The validation and reliability testing occurred in two distinct phases, which is necessary because the instrument measured two different and multi-dimensional frameworks. The first phase of the evaluation measured the potentials of the Haw-as festival based on five distinct dimensions: motivation, experience, management, impacts, and place. At the same time, the second phase of the evaluation measured the challenges faced by the festival within four core areas: financial sustainability, environmental sustainability, risk management, and cultural preservation. While both phases of evaluation were performed on the instrument, the researcher ensured that the indicators clearly identified the complexities of local festival tourism, and that the resulting data will be reliable and accurate. After expert recommendations were made, a pilot test was conducted with a small, representative sample (30 total) outside of the local area of the study to check for potential logistical barriers and to provide a preliminary "dry run" of the data collection method to ensure that the final version of the instrument will be both reliable and culturally sensitive. Through this structured process, it is expected that the final data resulting from this study would provide a sound foundation on which to base a Tourism Development Plan for the 4th District of Iloilo. The potentials of festivals questionnaire was distributed to 30 respondents outside the locale of the study to examine the reliability of the instrument. The results showed a high level of reliability as indicated by Cronbach's alpha scores of .829 for motivation, .904 for experience, .918 for management, .901 for impacts, and .966 for place, and all items exhibited positive item polarity. A total of fifty (50) items were retained in the validated version of the instrument based on the panel of experts. In conclusion, the instrument is valid and as indicated by a Cronbach's alpha of .971, the instrument is capable of confirming the potentials of festivals based on motivation, experience, management, impacts, and place. The reliability of The Festival Challenges Questionnaire was determined using a number of methods: (1) Cronbach's alpha level of .969 for financial sustainability, .952 for environmental responsibility, .942 for risk and safety management, and .951 for cultural preservation indicates a high degree of reliability; and (2) All four subscales were found to have positive values of item polarity. The final version will include 40 items accepted by the panel of experts as reliable. Thus, the festival challenges questionnaire will be considered valid with a full Cronbach alpha of .983. This validates the festival challenges related to financial sustainability, environmental responsibility, risk and safety management and cultural preservation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Data Analysis

Potentials Of Festivals in the Fourth District of Iloilo in terms of Motivation, Experience, Management, Impacts, And Place

Table 1 shows the potentials of festivals in the Fourth District of Iloilo in terms of five core pillars: motivation, experience, management, impacts, and place, as assessed by Local Government Unit (LGU) official, Local Government Unit (LGU) official planner, Fisheries and aquaculture stakeholder, Tourism and business sector, Cultural and community leader, and Festival Attendees.

Festivals that occur in the Fourth District of Iloilo show tremendous potential across all main indicators. They demonstrate a strong correlation between community identity and the promotion of tourism development.

Table 1. Potentials of Festivals in the Fourth District of Iloilo in terms of Motivation, Experience, Management, Impacts, And Place

Respondents			Motivation	Experience	Management	Impact	Place
Local Government (LGU) official	UniM		4.3500	4.4147	4.3853	4.4647	4.4147
	SD		.51005	.52057	.51530	.47283	.52405
	Des		High	High	High	Very High	High
Local Government (LGU) official planner	UniM		4.3214	4.4643	4.3143	4.4357	4.1857
	SD		.42640	.56651	.59207	.60841	.80274
	Des		High	High	High	High	High
Fisheries and aquaculture stakeholder	UniM		4.5800	4.9000	4.9400	4.8400	4.7600
	SD		.46043	.17321	.05477	.30496	.53666
	Des		Very High	Very High	Very High	Very High	Very High
Tourism and business sector	M		4.6500	4.6100	4.5700	4.7100	4.6200
	SD		.37193	.45326	.39172	.31429	.40497
	Des		Very High	Very High	Very High	Very High	Very High
Cultural and community leader	M		4.6632	4.5895	4.5421	4.6158	4.5737
	SD		.44122	.42543	.45621	.52627	.52477
	Des		Very High	Very High	Very High	Very High	Very High
Festival Attendee	M		4.3150	4.4300	4.2550	4.4233	4.3850
	SD		.47150	.37475	.54537	.38899	.48845
	Des		High	High	High	High	High
Total	M		4.4035	4.4803	4.3768	4.4951	4.4275
	SD		.47913	.44725	.52884	.45419	.54162
	Des		High	High	High	High	High

Range & Qualitative Interpretation: 4.50 – 5.00 Very High Potential; 3.50 – 4.49 High Potential; 2.50 – 3.49 Moderate Potential; 1.50 – 2.49 Low Potential; 1.00 – 1.49 Very Low Potential

The results showed that festivals are essential for economic development and community identity within the Fourth District of Iloilo. Festivals are generally well received, though they have the greatest value for members of local industries such as cultural leadership and fisheries. Festivals support branding within the business and tourism sectors, and offer unique local experiences through the celebration of coastal bounties. While the management standards of the festivals are high, a disconnect exists between the strong community connection to the site of the event and the technical planner's recommendations for infrastructure improvements at festival participation sites. Ultimately, festivals accomplish their goals by creating an economic impact and instilling strong community pride.

Studies completed related to particular festivals in Iloilo indicate that these types of events promote social cohesion and promote the economic recovery of local areas. For example, one study regarding the Iwag Festival in Pototan, Iloilo, indicated that the festival played a significant role in developing a cohesive community and developing the identity of the community. Additionally, research demonstrated that this event promoted economic activity via increased expenditures due to tourism and local trade. The findings in your data indicating that Impact and Experience were rated with "High" descriptive ratings correspond with the studies conducted that suggested that the stronger the perceived connection between the festival and an individual's cultural heritage, the greater the perceived socio-economic value. Additionally, studies of the Kalamay Festival in San Enrique indicate a solid basis in strategic development plans needed to ensure these local industry celebrations (such as sugarcane farming) continue to be sustainable and continue to promote public participation (Casumpang et al., 2024; The Status of Kalamay Festival in San Enrique 2020; Panay News, 2026).

Likewise, high-level stakeholder ratings from the local industries (including fisheries) indicate that festivals act as "economic equalizers," empowering local artisans and micro-entrepreneurs. Studies of the Sulay-Basya Festival indicate that a community's culture and religion are the major motivators for how residents participate in and value festivals, with the participation of local stakeholders in a festival often influenced by their level of engagement in the festival's culture or industry. All studies collectively conclude that Iloilo's festivals are successful due to transforming traditional practices into the basis for memorable tourism experiences that include real contributions to the local economic base (Posadas et al., 2024).

Strong motivation and experience within the district provide a stable foundation to attract local and tourist visitors to the festivals. High stakeholder ratings from the tourism (4.65) and business (4.61) sectors confirm that all festivals provide viable opportunities to develop economic activity and build brands. There is a high degree of experiential involvement with respect to fisheries and aquaculture and other stakeholders in the Fourth District, as indicated in the ratings (4.90). This indicates that festivals in the region (such as the Bantayan, the Kasag, etc.) provide participants an authentic experience of local life through an experience-based approach.

There is a sound basis for attracting visitors to the region through festivals (see Serrano et al., 2025). Their study found that from a tourism standpoint, festivals generate revenue for local businesses, create connections between communities due to increased visitor numbers, and provide local businesses with business opportunities from increased visitors. This is further supported by the findings of the aforementioned study from Buted et al. (2017), which found that festivals can be instrumental in assisting towns to develop their identities on the tourism map (creating a form of place-mapping). This can lead to extended tourism seasons and help to provide local communities with core identities, which corresponds to the branding success experienced in this district.

The high degree of experiential involvement for fisheries and aquaculture stakeholders is supported by the available evidence that connecting local livelihoods to tourism creates an enhanced level of engagement for survey participants. According to research finding (in the Philippine Journal of Fisheries), local coastal communities where tourism plays a significant role in terms of their economy often rely on both fishing and tourism-based activities. As such, festivals based on the theme of "coastal bounty" contribute to the preservation of cultural identity and enhance social connections. Research has shown that cultural immersion is an important component of "experience quality" for festival participants, and thus, is a contributor to the overall satisfaction of festival participants in terms of perceived quality. Both the aspects of Management and Place scored highly, but there exist some differences in perception between how LGU planners judged, scored and rated these two respective areas: 'Place' was rated by LGU planners at 4.1857, which corresponds to the lowest relative score; while, the venues and the local ambience where the fishery stakeholders and the cultural leaders experienced were rated as being Very High. The difference suggests that the community feels strongly connected to the places where the evangelization festival activities occurred, while the Technical Planners identified areas for technical, infrastructure improvement. Generally, Impact continued to be rated as the most important, as LGU officials rated Impact at 4.4647 (Very High); thus the festivals produced success in contributing to community pride, supporting visibility of local governance and helping to advance the overall development agenda of the districts.

Stevenson (2022) found an additional explanation for the variances in ratings of how to perceive 'Place.' Community stakeholders often viewed the festivals' venues based upon Social Sustainability definitions that focus on the social connections and relationships developed in the natural space via organic community social connections, while Institutional Planners frequently follow a top-down approach and tend to focus more on the physical limitations of the landscape. The impact of the analysis in Poland also tracks similarly to what was experienced with rural festivals within Poland. Visitors perceived "Place Character" positively compared to those that developed the events through Technical, Economic or Institutional Management lenses.

Research conducted by He et al. (2021) has established the importance of developing appropriate infrastructures for continued viability/sustainability of rural tourism and cultural festivals. Although community members rated their respective Venues 4.4647 (Very High) as being important to their overall connection, Technical Planners frequently noted the need to modernize and/or upgrade current infrastructures to accommodate increased capacity for festival activities and to minimize safety concerns - and these same observations were documented as part of Philippine Local Government Unit (LGU) initiatives. A significant number of studies have affirmed that

festivals are important to express cultural identity and pride within communities, and Nyandoro (2024) and Wood (2015) both have illustrated that festivals enhance the quality of life for the community through providing credibility to the district's development agenda, which can both directly and indirectly attract and facilitate new investments, as well as improve the overall perception of the district in non-participating communities. Festivals provide Local Government Units an opportunity to demonstrate their visibility and effectiveness in promoting and expanding the State-to-Citizen connection.

Challenges in Managing the Festivals in the Fourth District of Iloilo in terms of Financial Sustainability, Environmental Responsibility, Risk and Safety Management, and Cultural Preservation

Table 2 shows the challenges in managing the festivals in the fourth district of Iloilo in terms of four pillars: financial sustainability, environmental responsibility, risk and safety management, and cultural preservation, as assessed by Local Government Unit (LGU) official, Local Government Unit (LGU) official planner, Fisheries and aquaculture stakeholder, Tourism and business sector, Cultural and community leader, and Festival Attendees. The festivals in the Fourth District of Iloilo face numerous challenges, however, all festival managers surveyed agree that they have consistently high levels of concern and management relative to key areas of festival management.

Table 2. Challenges in Managing the Festivals in the Fourth District of Iloilo in terms of Financial Sustainability, Environmental Responsibility, Risk and Safety Management, and Cultural Preservation

Respondents		Financial Sustainability	Environmental Responsibility	Risk and Safety Management	Cultural Preservation
Local Government Unit (LGU) official	Mean	3.7794	3.9265	3.9382	3.7412
	SD	.93704	.91231	.70109	.94456
	Des	High	High	High	High
Local Government Unit (LGU) official planner	Mean	3.6214	3.8500	3.6071	3.6714
	SD	1.03119	.70792	.86954	.91855
	Des	High	High	High	High
Fisheries and aquaculture stakeholder	Mean	3.5200	4.0600	3.4800	3.5400
	SD	.99850	.86197	.92574	.89610
	Des	High	High	High	High
Tourism and business sector	Mean	3.9900	4.0200	3.8100	3.9300
	SD	1.23149	.92352	1.11699	.96615
	Des	High	High	High	High
Cultural and community leader	Mean	3.9579	4.0158	3.8368	3.8895
	SD	1.17204	.98278	1.13147	1.22106
	Des	High	High	High	High
Festival Attendee	Mean	3.4983	3.7883	3.6650	3.6350
	SD	1.00431	.80298	.91445	.97769
	Des	High	High	High	High
Total	Mean	3.6746	3.8838	3.7514	3.7155
	SD	1.03001	.84783	.90528	.98530
	Des	High	High	High	High

Range & Level of Challenge: 4.50 – 5.00 Very High; 3.50 – 4.49 High; 2.50 – 3.49 Moderate; 1.50 – 2.49 Low; 1.00 – 1.49 Very Low

The results showed that the Fourth District of Iloilo experiences problems related to managing festival events due to financial (as well as many others) difficulties presented by their events (festivals) within their district are related to tourism and how businesses generate jobs through tourism and what effect (negative) those have on the environment while providing safety concerns related to festivals (and other events) overcrowding and safety for their area and district (in general). Finally, to maintain an area's cultural heritage, the way to manage an area's festivals in a sustainable way is very important.

Many researchers agree that financial sustainability is an ongoing theme in terms of the management of Festivals, where there is an inherent struggle between decreasing funding sources and increasing production costs. While Festivals are able to produce significant social capital, research suggests that a Festival will be sustainable over the long term if it is able to obtain stable revenue streams, either through the generation of private-sector partnerships and/or through government subsidies that help offset funding fluctuations (Getz & Page, 2019). This aligns with the belief that specialized stakeholders, such as community leaders and tourism officers, feel the financial pressures of fiscal management more acutely because they have a greater responsibility for managing the logistical quality and the financial sustainability of the festival (Felsenstein & Fleischer, 2013).

The gap in perception between the Festival managers and Festival attendees regarding financial hurdles (cost of production) is prevalent in the literature of event managers, as while event managers are primarily focused on the cost of producing an event, participants focus on the experiential value of the events and are generally unaware of the economic constraints of event production (Yeoman et al., 2015). There is a struggle occurring within the region's celebrations which create an environment where traditional activities face an increased amount of pressure towards aggressive marketing and sponsorship in order for the festival to remain a viable tourism product (Quinn, 2019).

The number one challenge facing the district is Environmental Responsibility, which was given the highest total mean score of 3.88. Both fisheries and aquaculture stakeholders (4.06) along with cultural leaders (4.01) express the most sensitivity toward the environmental impact these festivals leave on the earth, likely from both the waste and large number of attendees traveling to festival to enjoy the various events along with their impact on the coastal and natural resources of the district. This demonstrates a collective realization that with growing festival size comes the burden of implementing effective waste management and sustainable practices by festival organizers.

To begin addressing the results exhibited in the findings that Environmental Responsibility was the number one challenge for festival management in the Fourth District of Iloilo (Mean = 3.88) specifically for fisheries and cultural stakeholders, the following related research studies have been synthesized: Sustainable Festival Management has become solely concerned with reducing the "Ecological Footprint" of large-scale events, as the expansion of festivals generally results in significant environmental damage. The researchers Mair and Smith (2016) indicate that determining the Ecological Footprint, including outdated waste-output and carbon emissions caused by gigantic numbers of visiting attendees, is imperative for festival organizers to arrive at a holistic evaluation of the outcomes of the event beyond economic benefit. Like so many studies about sustainable festivals, this one includes a case study of the Hay Festival. These situations are of paramount importance, particularly on coastlines where there exists heavy reliance by those involved in fishery/aquaculture whether through "the stability of nature" from which they derive their livelihood or being influenced by the impacts associated with the depletion/pollution of natural resources. For example, the research from Gomez et al., as cited in the article (2025), shows that sediment disruption and deterioration of water quality pose significant risks to aquaculture within the Philippines and that these issues are exacerbated as a result of unmanaged waste and pressures from unregulated tourism and social events.

The lack of public awareness and involvement with respect to environmental concerns within the Iloilo area, along with insufficient engagement and implementation of "eco-friendly strategies," create barriers to ensuring that festivals serve as tools for sustainable development rather than as ecological burdens.

With respect to Risk and Safety Management, stakeholders evaluated these issues highly (Total mean of 3.75) with Local Government Unit (LGU) officials providing a score of 3.93. This reflects the challenges associated with the administrative burden associated with maintaining order, responding to emergencies, and managing crowds in very congested festival venues. While both the tourism and community leaders placed importance on this issue (3.81 and 3.83 respectively), fisheries stakeholders rated their importance slightly less (3.48); according to them because their respective physical risks vary depending on their distance from the most significant festival activities. Local governments share a large burden of administrative functions in providing security and safety for the patrons of large-scale cultural festivals and events within their jurisdictions. Their work is complicated because they have two primary roles: (1) being the major promoter and organizer of these events; and (2) being the first responders to

any emergencies that may occur during them. Festival managers, who are typically employed by an LGU, face many "liason" challenges according to Mendoza (2025); they must find a way to balance the economic needs of festival sponsors with the sociocultural and safety concerns of the attendees from the local community. When dealing with the different risks related to festivals/large events, there may be different levels of risk perception between the different stakeholders; e.g., local government and tourism officials may not view the risk of losing a positive reputation as related to a festival as high, while local community members or members of occupations related to the local fisheries may perceive the same risk differently based on their proximity to or activity at the festival.

The success of a festival, both in its continued operation and its reputational image, is significantly influenced by the effectiveness of the planning process, the strength of stakeholder collaboration, and the rigor of risk and safety management efforts. Research indicates that community members are more likely to support and sustain these events when they have actively participated as planners and collaborated with key local stakeholders. Nonetheless, barriers to full cross-sectoral representation persist; consequently, perceptions and measures of safety often vary among different stakeholder groups (Republic of the Philippines, 1991; Badilla & Oreta, 2017; Pai et al., 2021).

Overall Cultural Preservation scores a 3.71, which is both critically important and intrinsically difficult. Examples of particularly high scores are provided by the tourism and business sectors at 3.93 and community leaders at 3.88, who are likely to be particularly concerned that commercialization could threaten the authenticity of their Ilonggo heritage. The scores from LGU officials (3.74) and festival attendees (3.63) are slightly lower but overall indicate "High" commitment from all survey participants, demonstrating agreement that the Fourth District must balance the demands for contemporary entertainment against the conscientious safeguarding of local traditions and historical identity.

Studies of festival management in Iloilo reflect the continuing tension between economic growth and cultural preservation. For example, the Kalamay Festival in San Enrique, Iloilo, celebrates the local historical significance of the town's sugar industry; however, that celebration does not have the required market-oriented planning and public involvement to ensure sustainability. This situation is echoed in your studies where community leaders and business sectors (3.88 to 3.93) perceive cultural dilution as posing a significant risk. In addition, the Banaag Festival in Anilao is an excellent example of a local festival representing identity, but as a modern celebration it has limited funding that requires strong collaborative support from LGUs and the tourism sector to protect their cultural heritage (Posadas, Cerbaña, Pulgan, & Pulgan, 2024).

Additional studies of Ilonggo festivals, such as the Sulay-Basya Festival, conclude that although festivals promote community pride and identity, there are many complex socio-cultural impacts that vary for residents depending on their value systems and traditions. To ensure that municipal festivals remain "uniquely Ilonggo" and do not become homogenized as a result of the "Dinagyang-inspired" culture that threatens local authenticity, the Iloilo provincial government-initiated research-based summits. All of these studies support your finding that "High" commitment must be demonstrated by all stakeholders in order to balance the gross profit orientation of the commercial sector with the stringent protection of the historical identity (Iloilo Provincial Government, 2025; Casumpang, 2024; Santiago & Mendoza, 2020).

Inferential Data Analysis

Significant Difference in the Potentials of Festivals in the Fourth District of Iloilo in terms of Motivation, Experience, Management, Impacts, And Place

Festivals located in the Fourth District of Iloilo are an essential source of both cultural and economic development for the region. They create a spirit of cooperation between all local government unit (LGU) officials, business leaders and festival attendees who help to foster this cooperative "festival spirit." Evidence from a statistical analysis shows that professional roles can affect perceptions related to how festivals are managed, however, stakeholders also demonstrate a similar motivation to maintain their culture and will exhibit a shared view of the success of the festivals.

Significant Difference in the challenges in managing the festivals in the Fourth District of Iloilo in terms of financial sustainability, environmental responsibility, risk and safety management, and cultural preservation

All stakeholders within the Fourth District of Iloilo including local governmental officials, socially relevant leaders, as well as the larger public have statistically similar perspectives when rating common challenges with festival management. Further, while there is diversity in their professional background, none of the groups show meaningful differentiation with respect to perceived barriers including financial sustainability, environmental responsibility or cultural preservation. Although tourism and economic development sectors may be impacted more directly by finance and safety concerns, the overall consensus is identical across all four groups resulting in acceptance of the null hypothesis. Therefore, due to this collective acknowledgment of barriers such as funding dependence and operational risk, there is a high level of confidence that management and preservation strategies developed in one part of the district will apply to all areas ultimately allowing local cultural events to survive in a long-term manner.

The Proposed Tourism Development Plan

The rich cultural tapestry of Fourth District Iloilo is epitomized through coastal values and its vibrant festival spirit. There are numerous examples of how successful festivals provide the basis for greater economic development and pride in the community. There continues to be a fundamental lack of disconnect between cultural celebrations (their "experience") and the necessary technical infrastructure to support them. To make sure that festivals have a sustainable future, there is a compelling need to transition systemically from organic growth to Sustainable Festival Management Framework.

The establishment of the "balancing act" of not only maintaining financial health & Environmental Health in balance with the physical pressures created by the overcrowding and safety of festivals, but also unifying the shared vision of various stakeholders to maintain the community's unique cultural identity while providing economically viable, long-term inclusive economic development opportunities. Additionally, a majority of stakeholders and decision-makers have already begun to work towards some level of governance to align their various interests, however, it would be advantageous to have a standardized process to overcome any barriers to entry in creating and executing festivals.

Thus, the development of this plan is to specifically address the gaps identified during the stakeholder assessment by focusing on the following areas:

1. Infrastructure/Industry Alignment: To address the disconnection between the Fishing Industry and Cultural Industry and current technical infrastructure and develop physical facilities that support the coastal-alive experience.
2. Sustainable Resource Management: To create a plan to provide structured management policies to achieve a "balancing act" between financial gain, environmental protection, and preservation of culture.
3. Public Safety and Capacity Control: To develop specific protocols to address overcrowding and safety issues, thus ensuring a high-quality experience for both residents and visitors.
4. Collaborative Governance: To leverage the existing festival spirit as well as the shared visions of the diverse stakeholder groups to create a consistent process for overcoming barriers to festivals regardless of their professional affiliation.
5. Economic Opportunity Enhancement: To create and strengthen the relationship between local brand and job creation to ensure that the economic impact of tourism reaches all areas of the community at the grassroots level.

Generally, this plan addresses the "hinge point" that connects us as we manage our economy with our environment; by focusing primarily on our infrastructure, the district can close the gap between the cultural traditions that give us so much history, with the logistical demands associated with providing for modern-day tourism. The district's primary aim is to uphold the "festival spirit" while creating a more professional method for managing barriers such as crowd safety and long-term financial sustainability.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. In the Fourth District of Iloilo, festivals play an important role in preserving culture and enhancing the economy, providing the opportunity to create a tangible point of tourism through the transformation of community identity. The research found that while these annual celebrations are generally valued, most significant to individuals involved with local culture and industries (cultural leaders; fisheries) is how important each event is to their livelihood. Overall, the district has developed an efficient system for branding the economy and the tourism and business sectors are using festivals to market both local culture and coastal resources. The general consensus among residents is that they have strong feelings of satisfaction and a strong emotional connection to the festival venues; however, all planners agree that to support the district's growing tourism potential, there are critical technical deficiencies. The future growth of the festivals ultimately relies on festivals' capability to build community pride and to provide economic opportunities for locals through socio-economic development.
2. There are many challenges of managing festivals in the Fourth District of Iloilo because there is a need to balance increasing economic activity and overcoming many financial, environmental, and safety challenges. The difficulty of obtaining funding through private partnerships and a continually changing budget makes operating within the district very challenging for both tourism operators and business operators. Additionally, the management of the festivals is affected by complex multi-sector issues. One of the largest issues is environmental impact and this item is one of the most pressing issues that must be dealt with quickly for waste management and coastal protection as they will help win long-term sustainability. Likewise, there is great public pressure on local government agencies to ensure that public safety is maintained, thus creating a multi-sector recognition that sustainable and well-managed practices should continue to preserve the community's culture and history.
3. Cultural and economic growth throughout The Fourth District of Iloilo, as well as increased community unity through shared experiences these festivals offer despite the fact varying stakeholders (LGU officials, business leaders and attendees) have differing viewpoints of how administrative management of a festival should occur; however, they are all united in their commitment to the preservation of culture and the success of the festival. Therefore, there is a consensus throughout the entire district that the socio-economic benefits of these festive celebrations, along with their intrinsic value, are significant
4. According to the study, there is a common agreement between festival management stakeholders from each sector within the Fourth District of Iloilo regarding their major festival management challenges. In addition, statistical analyses confirm that there are no statistically significant differences in responses between festival management stakeholders across sectors related to financial sustainability, environmental sustainability, safety & security, and preservation of cultural heritage. The acceptance of the null hypothesis supports the conclusion that management approaches and policy interventions can be universally applied throughout the Fourth District of Iloilo, providing a solid platform for stakeholders working together to improve festival management outcomes within their community through enhanced cooperation and coordinated efforts toward protecting cultural heritage while also improving festival safety.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Local Government Units may prioritize infrastructure upgrades to support rising tourism, while Tourism Officers may focus on experiential, heritage-based programs to enhance the regional brand. Local businesses are encouraged to develop products showcasing coastal resources, and the community should continue active heritage preservation to ensure equitable socio-economic benefits. Finally, researchers may undertake longitudinal studies to document the impact of modernization on traditional livelihoods and intangible cultural heritage within the fourth district.
2. To officially establish ways to manage them through legislation to create a set budget; however, there should also be an emphasis on using circular economic concepts such as waste separation. Tourism agents must implement "heritage-first" models that focus on supporting heritage and empowerment rather than purely

commercial interests when marketing to tourists. Businesses are encouraged to be environmentally responsible and to use sustainable methods to market their products and services, and citizens should become involved in supporting the communities that create tourism and become educated about their environment. Future research should determine how tourism affects the environment over time and how people's cultural ties to their communities help support them in creating and sustaining tourism development.

3. To improve local festivals, Local Government Units (LGUs) must add multi-sector planning groups to their agendas for collaboration opportunities and for the sharing of ideas and receiving multiple avenues of stakeholder feedback. With the implementation of integrated marketing campaigns to demonstrate how cultural preservation and quality standardization at events create community capital, Tourism Officers and Planners can provide this type of support. The locally-owned business community must view festivals as investments in their community, and align their offerings with the cultural theme of the festival as a way to stimulate the economy. Ultimately, the community must remain advocates for the festival; through the collective voice of the community, the essence of the festival can be preserved as it develops into its final form thereby instilling a sense of pride within the local community.
4. Through the implementation of unified district-wide policies regarding funding, safety and environmental regulations, municipalities are able to create an avenue to move towards a new approach to sustainable models of governance. Planners of both tourism and culture should combine their efforts with the common ideas and timelines to create cohesiveness in calendars, promotional materials, marketing strategies and to standardize training related to heritage preservation. Additionally, local business can become engaged partners by creating alliances to jointly develop sustainable, eco-friendly sponsorship opportunities that allow for long term sustainability. Lastly, volunteers and community members can establish stronger networks of volunteers and form oversight committees to ensure the continued authenticity of culture, while researchers can use these findings as a basis for future longitudinal studies tracking the continued evolution of the district's perceived value.

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