



Perceptions of Impacts and Challenges of the Panaghiusa Festival in Claver, Surigao del Norte

Ray L. Pagulong

University of Cebu, Main Campus

Email: ray.pagulong1992@gmail.com

ORCID: 0009-0000-1841-9502

Rene D. Osorno

University of Cebu, Banilad Campus

Email: reneosorno@yahoo.com

ORCID: 0000-0002-3675-8513

Abstract

The Panaghiusa Festival, celebrated annually in Claver, Surigao del Norte, Philippines, is a 13-day cultural and religious event that honors Saint Peter Claver and symbolizes resilience, unity, and gratitude. This study examined the opportunities and challenges of the festival as a driver of community development and tourism. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed, involving 150 respondents equally divided among residents, business owners, and festival participants. Data were collected through a validated researcher-made questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics, ranking, and Pearson's chi-square test. Findings revealed that the festival had a high perceptions of impact across four domains: community participation, community development, business, and tourism. The strongest perceptions of impact was observed in business, where local enterprises benefited from increased sales, brand exposure, and partnerships. Community participation also scored high, reflecting strengthened social cohesion and civic involvement. However, operational challenges such as parking shortages, waste management issues, overcrowding, and heavy traffic were consistently reported. Significant relationships were found between respondents' gender and educational attainment and their perceptions of the festival's perceptions of impact, while age, civil status, and employment status showed no significant influence. The study concludes that the Panaghiusa Festival is both a cultural celebration and a catalyst for socioeconomic growth. To sustain its benefits, the local government and organizers should adopt strategic measures addressing infrastructure, sustainability, and inclusivity. The findings provide insights for policymakers, festival managers, and tourism stakeholders in designing culturally authentic and economically viable festivals that foster long-term community development.

Keywords: Panaghiusa Festival; Cultural Tourism; Community Development; Socioeconomic Perceptions of impact; Sustainable Festival Management; Philippines

1. Introduction

Festivals are widely recognized as essential cultural expressions that sustain heritage, strengthen social ties, and stimulate economic growth. They are not only celebrations of tradition but also strategic tools for tourism development and community empowerment (Richards & King, 2022). In many countries, festivals function as platforms for reinforcing collective identity, fostering intercultural dialogue, and generating livelihood opportunities through increased visitor spending (Perry et al., 2020). The Philippines is globally known for its



vibrant and diverse festivals, which embody a fusion of indigenous, agricultural, and religious traditions. These celebrations preserve cultural identity while also serving as catalysts for local tourism and economic development (González-Reverté, 2023). The Panaghiusa Festival, celebrated annually in Claver, Surigao del Norte, exemplifies this dual role. As a 13-day event honoring Saint Peter Claver, it symbolizes resilience, unity, and gratitude while simultaneously supporting small enterprises, attracting tourists, and reinforcing the community's cultural pride

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Despite these contributions, the festival faces persistent challenges that threaten its sustainability. Overcrowding, waste management issues, and inadequate infrastructure are recurring concerns that reduce visitor satisfaction and strain local resources. Such operational difficulties are not unique to Panaghiusa; they mirror global trends where rapid growth in festival tourism generates pressures on host communities and destinations (Collins & Cooper, 2019; Quinn et al., 2021). Addressing these challenges is essential for ensuring that festivals remain inclusive, sustainable, and beneficial to all stakeholders.

This study positions the Panaghiusa Festival as a case through which broader issues of festival management, tourism growth, and community development can be explored. It aims to provide evidence of the festival's contributions to social cohesion, local business, and destination competitiveness, while identifying areas that require policy and managerial interventions. By focusing on both opportunities and challenges, the research seeks to inform local government, tourism planners, and festival organizers in crafting strategies that align with sustainable tourism practices and strengthen cultural identity.

Theoretical Background

This study is anchored on three interrelated theories: Social Capital Theory, Cultural Identity Theory, and Controlled Chaos Theory. Each provides a conceptual foundation for understanding how festivals influence community development, cultural identity, and tourism management.

Social Capital Theory. Pierre Bourdieu (1986) described social capital as the networks, trust, and reciprocity within a community that can be mobilized for collective well-being. Festivals strengthen these connections by fostering interaction, shared experiences, and civic engagement. Research shows that strong social networks enhance knowledge exchange, collaboration, and economic activity, while weak ties and low trust hinder cooperation (Bjørnskov & Sønderskov, 2013). Festivals, therefore, act as vehicles for building social capital, creating opportunities for volunteerism, cooperation, and mutual support that translate into broader community benefits (Luoma-Aho, 2018).

Cultural Identity Theory. Stuart Hall (1990) argued that cultural identity is not fixed but is continuously constructed through history, culture, and power. Festivals play a crucial role in this process by providing spaces for communities to perform, negotiate, and reinforce their identities. They showcase cultural narratives through dance, music, rituals, and food, thereby shaping collective memory and belonging (Zhang et al., 2019). Studies have shown that festivals not only preserve intangible cultural heritage but also foster intergenerational learning and inclusivity, contributing to the resilience of cultural identity (Koenig-Lewis et al., 2021). In this sense, the Panaghiusa Festival strengthens local pride and belonging while adapting to contemporary social and economic realities.

Controlled Chaos Theory. Faulkner and Russell (1997) conceptualized tourism development as a dynamic and often unpredictable process, best understood through chaos and complexity theory. Festivals illustrate this unpredictability, as they involve fluctuating visitor numbers, spontaneous activities, and shifting external conditions. Rather than viewing disruptions as purely negative, this perspective emphasizes adaptability,

innovation, and resilience in festival planning (Faulkner, 2001). Recent applications of the theory highlight how adaptive planning and flexible management strategies can balance order with unpredictability, enhancing both visitor experiences and destination sustainability (Yin et al., 2022).

Together, these theoretical lenses highlight that festivals such as Panaghiusa are not only cultural celebrations but also complex social systems. They generate social capital, reinforce cultural identity, and require adaptive management to navigate challenges. Grounding the study in these theories provides a multidimensional framework for analyzing the festival's opportunities and challenges within the context of community development and tourism.

Conceptual Framework

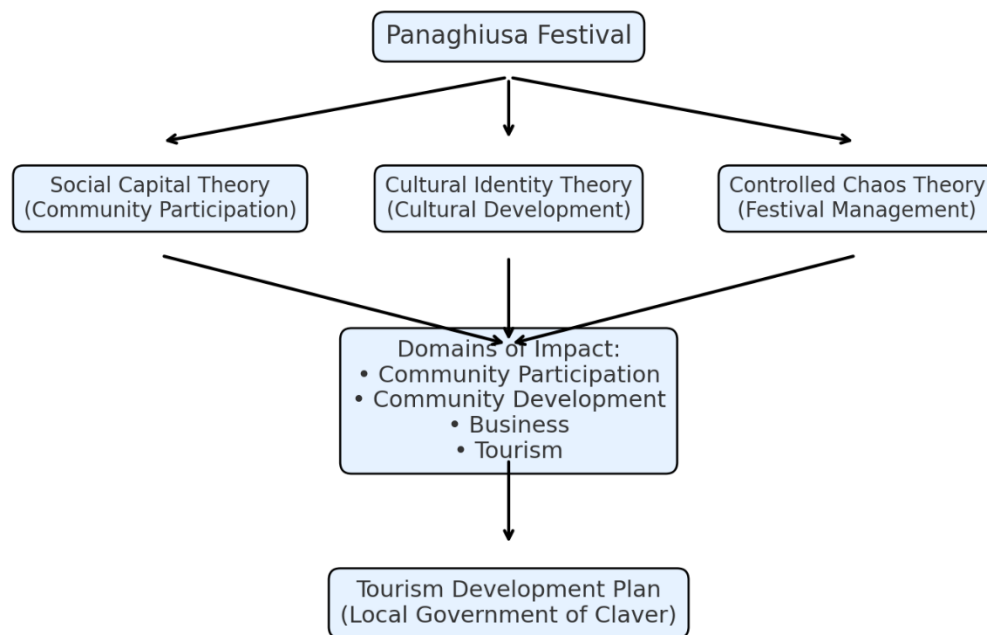


Figure 1. Schematic Diagram of Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework of the study, which is anchored on three theoretical perspectives: Social Capital Theory, Cultural Identity Theory, and Controlled Chaos Theory. These theories provide the foundation for understanding the dynamics of the Panaghiusa Festival. Social Capital Theory explains how the festival fosters community participation through strengthened networks, trust, and cooperation. Cultural Identity Theory emphasizes the role of the festival in reinforcing and negotiating local identity through cultural practices and performances. Controlled Chaos Theory highlights the unpredictable yet adaptive nature of festival management, where challenges are addressed through resilience and flexible strategies. These theoretical lenses converge on the domains of perceptions of impact identified in the study—community participation, community development, business, and tourism—reflecting the multidimensional contributions of the festival to Claver, Surigao del Norte. The integration of these domains informs the development of a Tourism Development Plan for



the Local Government Unit (LGU). The framework demonstrates how the Panaghiusa Festival functions not only as a cultural celebration but also as a driver of inclusive growth, sustainability, and destination competitiveness.

Statement of the Problem

This study examined the perceptions of impact of the Panaghiusa Festival on the local community of Claver, Surigao del Norte, Philippines. The findings were used as the basis for a proposed tourism development plan for the Local Government Unit (LGU). Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

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1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - a. age,
 - b. gender,
 - c. civil status,
 - d. employment status, and
 - e. highest educational attainment?
2. What is the level of perceptions of impact of the Panaghiusa Festival on the local community as perceived by the respondents in terms of:
 - a. community participation,
 - b. community development,
 - c. business, and
 - d. tourism?
3. What problems were encountered by the respondents during the Panaghiusa Festival?
4. Is there a significant relationship between respondents' demographic profile and their perceptions of the impacts of the Panaghiusa Festival on the local community
5. Based on the findings, what tourism development plan may be proposed for the LGU of Claver?

Hypothesis

At the 0.05 level of significance, the following null hypothesis was tested:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between the respondents' demographic profile and their perceptions of the perceptions of impacts of the Panaghiusa Festival on the local community of Claver, Surigao del Norte.

2. Review of Related Literature

Festivals are recognized as cultural platforms that preserve heritage, strengthen social cohesion, and stimulate economic growth. They provide opportunities for community participation while serving as tourist attractions that enhance destination competitiveness. Richards and King (2022) emphasized that festivals are not only cultural displays but also economic drivers contributing to sustainable tourism and community development. Similarly, Quinn, Foley, and McPherson (2021) noted that festivals transform public spaces into inclusive sites of engagement where shared experiences foster identity and belonging. In the Philippine context, festivals such as Sinulog, Ati-Atihan, and Kadayawan illustrate how cultural expressions merge with tourism development, generating both cultural and economic vitality.



Despite these contributions, challenges in festival management are consistently documented. Issues such as overcrowding, waste management, and commercialization have been identified as threats to festival sustainability (Collins & Cooper, 2019). Luna, Reyes, and Bautista (2022) argued that while festivals generate revenue, the commercialization process risks undermining cultural authenticity. Wozniak (2019) further observed that rapid growth in festival tourism often pressures infrastructure and local services, reducing long-term viability. These global concerns resonate with Philippine experiences where many community-based festivals face logistical and sustainability issues alongside their cultural and economic successes.

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The role of festivals in reinforcing cultural identity is equally critical. Hall's (1990) Cultural Identity Theory highlights festivals as dynamic spaces where communities negotiate and perform identity. Zhang, Sun, and Xue (2019) described festivals as "living museums," preserving rituals and performances that reinforce collective belonging. Philippine studies provide similar insights. Masula (2022) showed that the Ati-Atihan Festival strengthens Akeanon identity by linking heritage preservation with communal unity. Panaguiton, Santos, and Villanueva (2015) demonstrated how the Dinagyang Festival fosters community participation and cultural pride through ritual performance and civic involvement. These findings suggest that festivals provide both symbolic meaning and practical opportunities for identity reinforcement.

Local studies further highlight the socioeconomic contributions of Philippine festivals. Abejero and Viray (2024), examining the Gigantes Festival in Rizal, revealed how festivals promote small businesses and cultural communication. The MassKara Festival in Bacolod has been studied as a branding strategy that attracts tourists while fostering resilience in times of crisis (González-Reverté, 2023). The Paraw Regatta Festival in Iloilo demonstrates how indigenous maritime practices are revitalized to support cultural tourism and local entrepreneurship. Similarly, the Kaamulan Festival in Bukidnon showcases indigenous heritage, strengthening both identity and tourism competitiveness, while the Tuna Festival in General Santos highlights the role of festivals in diversifying local economies. Collectively, these Philippine studies show that festivals function as both economic enablers and cultural anchors, but they also face recurring challenges of crowding, commercialization, and sustainability.

Taken together, the literature demonstrates that the Panaghiusa Festival reflects global and local patterns of opportunity and challenge. However, while international scholarship provides useful conceptual insights, a deeper integration of Philippine case studies enriches contextual understanding. Locating the Panaghiusa Festival alongside other community-based celebrations highlights its uniqueness while also underscoring shared issues in cultural tourism, community participation, and sustainability across the country.

3. Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational design to examine the perceived perceptions of impact of the Panaghiusa Festival on the local community of Claver, Surigao del Norte. The design was appropriate as it allowed the researcher to describe the festival's influence across several domains—community participation, community development, business, and tourism—while also testing for relationships between demographic characteristics and perceived perceptions of impact. Such designs are widely used in tourism and cultural studies to capture the interaction between community demographics and festival outcomes (Balogun & Ajagunna, 2023).

Research Environment



The study was conducted in Claver, a coastal municipality in Surigao del Norte, Philippines. Known for its mining industry and natural coastal resources, Claver has increasingly sought to diversify its economy through cultural and tourism initiatives. The Panaghiusa Festival, celebrated annually from September 1 to 13 in honor of Saint Peter Claver, has become central to these efforts. The festival features religious rituals, street dancing, trade fairs, and cultural exhibitions that draw residents, business owners, and tourists alike

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Research Respondents

The respondents comprised 150 individuals selected through random sampling. They were divided into three groups: residents (n = 50), business owners (n = 50), and festival participants (n = 50). This distribution ensured diverse perspectives on the social, cultural, and economic effects of the festival. Demographic data included age, gender, civil status, employment status, and highest educational attainment. Including multiple stakeholder groups aligns with best practices in festival perceptions of impact studies, as it allows for a multidimensional understanding of perceived benefits and challenges (Meriç, 2023).

Research Instrument

A researcher-made questionnaire, validated by experts and pre-tested for reliability, served as the primary instrument for data collection. The survey consisted of three parts: (a) demographic profile of respondents, (b) perceptions of the festival's perceptions of impact on community participation, development, business, and tourism using a four-point Likert scale, and (c) problems encountered during the festival through multiple-response items. This structure provided both quantitative and qualitative insights into the festival's outcomes.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection was conducted after securing formal approval from local authorities and the respondents. Surveys were administered personally, with care taken to minimize disruption to daily routines. Respondents were given adequate time to complete the questionnaires. This process ensured a high response rate and reliable data collection.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency counts and percentages were used to describe respondent demographics and identify common challenges encountered during the festival. Weighted means were computed to determine the perceived level of perceptions of impact across the four domains. Ranking was applied to prioritize problems, while Pearson's chi-square test of independence was employed to assess the relationship between demographic variables and perceived festival perceptions of impact. This combination of methods has been widely applied in tourism research to capture both descriptive trends and statistically significant associations (Mwakyusa, 2024).

4. Results and Discussion

Profile of the Respondents

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age	18–24	23	15
	25–31	54	36
	32–38	36	24
	39–45	20	13
	46–52	10	7
	53 and above	7	4
Gender	Male	67	45
	Female	83	55
Civil Status	Single	79	53
	Married	62	41
	Widowed	9	6
Employment Status	Regular	45	30
	Job Order	44	29
	Contractual	31	21
	Self-employed	30	20
Educational Attainment	College Graduate	74	49
	College Level	33	22
	Master's Degree/Units	10	6
	Doctoral Degree/Units	4	2
	High School and Below	29	21

The results indicated in table 1 show that the majority were aged 25–31 (36%), female (55%), single (53%), regularly employed (30%), and college graduates (49%). This reflects the strong engagement of young, educated adults in the Panaghiusa Festival. Similar findings were noted by Meriç (2023), who argued that younger, more educated populations are often more active in cultural events due to higher awareness and disposable income.

Table 2. Level of Perceptions of impact of the Panaghiusa Festival on the Local Community

Dimension	Mean	Interpretation
Community Participation	3.72	High
Community Development	3.66	High
Business	3.79	High
Tourism	3.77	High

The overall results in table 2 reveal that the Panaghiusa Festival had a **high perceptions of impact across all domains**. The strongest perceptions of impact was on business ($M = 3.79$), suggesting that local enterprises benefited significantly through sales opportunities, brand exposure, and customer engagement. This finding aligns with Ossowska et al. (2023), who emphasized that festivals in rural areas generate tangible economic benefits by supporting small enterprises and attracting external markets. Community participation ($M = 3.72$) also scored high,

indicating that the festival strengthened social ties and inspired civic involvement, echoing Perry et al.'s (2020) findings on festivals as catalysts for collective belonging.

Table 3. Problems Encountered During the Panaghiusa Festival

Problem	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Rank
Lack of parking spaces	95	63	1
Waste management issues	82	55	2
Overcrowding	65	43	3
Heavy traffic	64	43	4
Noise disturbance	53	35	5
Shortage of accommodations	49	33	6
Access to essential services	36	24	7
Road closures and infrastructure strain	33	22	8

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As shown in table 3, the top three concerns—parking shortages, poor waste management, and overcrowding—reflect the limited infrastructure capacity to handle large visitor inflows. Similar issues have been documented in festival tourism globally, where visitor surges often overwhelm transport and waste systems (Collins & Cooper, 2019). These findings suggest that while the festival boosts tourism and business, its long-term sustainability depends on improved urban planning, crowd management, and environmental practices.

Table 4. Relationship Between Respondents' Demographic Profile and Their Perceived Perceptions of impacts of the Panaghiusa Festival

Variable	χ^2	df	p-value	Interpretation
Age	9.149	5	0.103	Not Significant
Gender	6.932	1	0.008	Significant
Civil Status	0.247	2	0.884	Not Significant
Employment Status	3.569	3	0.312	Not Significant
Educational Attainment	23.643	9	0.005	Significant

The results in table 4 show significant relationships for **gender** and **educational attainment**, indicating that women and more educated respondents perceived higher benefits from the festival. This supports Alshammari et al. (2019), who found that women often emphasize social and cultural engagement, while education enhances appreciation of cultural heritage. Conversely, no significant relationship was found for age, civil status, or employment status, suggesting that the festival's benefits were widely shared across these groups.

5. Implications of the Results

The findings of this study carry significant implications for cultural tourism, community development, and local governance. The Panaghiusa Festival demonstrated its potential as a multifaceted driver of socioeconomic and cultural growth. Its strong perceptions of impact on business highlights the role of festivals as economic catalysts for local enterprises. Increased sales, brand visibility, and new partnerships illustrate how cultural events can stimulate entrepreneurial activity and encourage sustainable livelihood opportunities. This suggests that festivals,



when strategically managed, can become important platforms for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to expand their market reach and competitiveness.

Equally important are the results showing high levels of community participation and development. The festival strengthened civic involvement, social cohesion, and collective identity, reflecting the capacity of cultural events to build social capital. These outcomes support the need for community-centered policies that prioritize inclusivity and volunteer engagement. Such policies can enhance cultural pride, foster intergenerational learning, and ensure that the festival remains relevant to diverse groups within Claver.

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However, the operational challenges identified—particularly waste management, parking shortages, and overcrowding—carry implications for festival sustainability. These issues indicate the urgent need for infrastructure investment and environmental management strategies. Without addressing these challenges, the positive perceptions of impacts of the festival may be undermined by environmental degradation, reduced visitor satisfaction, and community fatigue. Local authorities must therefore adopt integrated urban planning and sustainable tourism practices that align with national and international standards for cultural event management.

The significant influence of gender and educational attainment on perceptions of festival perceptions of impact also underscores the importance of targeted strategies. Women and educated participants perceived greater benefits, implying that specific demographic groups may derive unequal value from the festival. To maximize inclusivity, programs should be designed to broaden participation among underrepresented groups, such as less-educated residents and those with limited resources. This approach can promote equitable access to cultural and economic benefits, ensuring that the festival's contributions are widely shared.

Finally, the results emphasize the festival's potential as a model for other Philippine and international communities aiming to integrate cultural preservation with tourism development. The Panaghiusa Festival illustrates how cultural celebrations can be positioned as platforms for unity, resilience, and sustainable growth. For policymakers and scholars, the study contributes insights into balancing cultural authenticity with economic objectives, a challenge faced by many festival destinations worldwide.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This study examined the perceived impacts and challenges of the Panaghiusa Festival in Claver, Surigao del Norte. Results showed that respondents consistently perceived the festival as having a high impact on community participation, community development, business, and tourism. Among these, the strongest perceived impact was on business, highlighting how local enterprises benefited from increased sales, visibility, and partnerships during the festival period. High ratings on community participation also reflected strong civic involvement and social cohesion, suggesting that the festival continues to strengthen local identity and pride.

Despite these positive perceptions, respondents also identified recurring operational challenges. Parking shortages, poor waste management, overcrowding, and heavy traffic emerged as the most pressing concerns, raising sustainability issues that could undermine the long-term viability of the festival if left unaddressed.



The chi-square analysis further revealed significant relationships between gender and educational attainment and respondents' perceptions of the festival's impacts, while age, civil status, and employment status were not significant. This suggests that while the festival benefits were broadly perceived, certain demographic groups—particularly women and those with higher educational attainment—recognized greater advantages.

Overall, the Panaghiusa Festival was perceived as both a cultural celebration and a catalyst for socioeconomic opportunities. However, addressing sustainability challenges and ensuring inclusivity across demographic groups remain essential for maximizing their contribution to community development and tourism.

Recommendations

1. The Local Government Unit (LGU) of Claver should prioritize infrastructure improvements such as designated parking areas, enhanced traffic flow systems, and waste management facilities. Eco-friendly measures like waste segregation, recycling programs, and green event practices should be integrated into festival operations to align with sustainable tourism standards.
2. Since women and respondents with higher educational attainment perceived greater benefits, festival organizers should design programs that encourage broader participation among less-represented groups. Initiatives such as capacity-building workshops, volunteer recruitment drives, and inclusive cultural showcases can help ensure equitable involvement and benefits.
3. Local entrepreneurs should be given opportunities to maximize economic gains from the festival. Training in product development, branding, and digital marketing, supported through partnerships with the Department of Tourism (DOT) and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), can help local businesses expand their reach and competitiveness.
4. The LGU should adopt a long-term tourism development plan that balances cultural preservation with economic growth. This plan should include institutional support for festival management, safety protocols, and partnerships with private and academic sectors to ensure sustained innovation and adaptability.
5. Future studies should explore visitor satisfaction, preferences, and environmental impacts to guide evidence-based improvements in festival management. Comparative and longitudinal research involving other Philippine festivals—such as Dinagyang, MassKara, and Kaamulan—may provide broader insights into best practices for cultural tourism and sustainability.

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