


BEYOND COVID-19: THE FUTURE OF FESTIVALS IN CALABARZON, PHILIPPINES

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Article history:</b></p> <p><b>Received</b> 20 February 2023</p> <p><b>Accepted</b> 04 May 2023</p>	<p><b>Purpose:</b> This study aims to determine or forecast the willingness of regular participants of festivals to attend or join events festivals in the post-COVID-19 scenario. Specifically, it aimed to 1.) identify the perceived future of festivals in the post-pandemic scenario and if people are still willing to participate in or join in any of the festival's events, and 2.) discuss the role of festivals in the post-pandemic scenario.</p>
<p><b>Keywords:</b></p> <p>Festivals; Post-Pandemic; Qualitative Research; Community Development; Snowball Sampling.</p> <div data-bbox="172 981 480 1234" style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p><b>Theoretical framework:</b> The researchers employed the stakeholder theory technique to predict the future of the festival's events. A stakeholder is "any group or person who may impact or is affected by the attainment of the institution's objective," Freeman (1984). Freeman contends that a person or group is a stakeholder if it has a sincere interest in a particular component of the institution's operations and, as a result, either can influence the company's performance or has a stake in that performance. Particularly, in this study, the stakeholders are the participants, the businessmen, and the organizers of the festivals. Ultimately, the perception of the stakeholders may be used by festival organizers as a basis for holding festivals in the post-pandemic scenario.</p> <p><b>Design/methodology/approach:</b> This study used a qualitative design using phenomenological approach based on the lived experiences of the participants with the festivals they have attended. Snowball sampling was used to choose 32 participants, commencing with the tourist local government official that had control over the festival events. The researchers utilized key informant interviews and focus group discussions on obtaining data, guided by a semi-structured questionnaire to allow the researchers to adjust questions according to the participant's willingness and manner of answering. For data clustering and theme identification, the researchers utilized a qualitative research tool (NVIVO) with license key: (N-L-Z-7-7) and used the analytical framework by Moustakas (1994), as covered by Creswell (2007). The researchers began by outlining the subject's or participant's encounters concerning the festivals being examined. Next, they created collection of noteworthy remarks and organized these into more substantial units of information (i.e., units or themes).</p> <p><b>Findings:</b> As a result, every participant is eager to engage, be present, or take part in their respective festivals again, once the COVID-19 restrictions are removed, but some have a few reservations.</p>

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**Implications for research, everyday life, and society:** In the Philippines, the COVID-19 restrictions were lifted in 2023. This is also a time for the local economy to recover. The series of lockdowns heavily hampered the local economy due to the pandemic. The local governments may use festivals to help small, medium, and microenterprises recover from the losses they took during the pandemic, and festivals can kick start the local economy. Festival organizers may utilize the findings of this research as a foundation.

**Originality/value:** All the data gathered in this research was at the peak of lockdowns and cases of COVID-19 in the Philippines. This made it very difficult for the researchers to collect data, thus resulting in an integration of in-person interactions, key informant interviews and online focus group discussions. It was a time when mass gatherings were hard to imagine, let alone the celebration of festivals uncertain. Nevertheless, the result was surprising since all the participants were still willing to join or attend festivals.

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## ALÉM DO COVID-19: O FUTURO DOS FESTIVAIS EM CALABARZON, FILIPINAS

### RESUMO

**Objetivo:** Este estudo tem como objetivo determinar ou prever a vontade dos participantes regulares de festivais em assistir ou aderir a eventos festivos no cenário pós-COVID-19. Especificamente, teve como objetivo 1.) identificar a percepção do futuro dos festivais no cenário pós-pandemia e se as pessoas ainda estão dispostas a participar ou aderir a algum dos eventos do festival, e 2.) discutir o papel dos festivais no pós- - cenário de pandemia.

**Referencial teórico:** Os pesquisadores empregaram a técnica da teoria dos stakeholders para prever o futuro dos eventos do festival. Um stakeholder é “qualquer grupo ou pessoa que pode impactar ou ser afetado pela consecução do objetivo da instituição”, Freeman (1984). Freeman afirma que uma pessoa ou grupo é um stakeholder se tiver um interesse sincero em um componente específico das operações da instituição e, como resultado, puder influenciar o desempenho da empresa ou tiver uma participação nesse desempenho. Particularmente, neste estudo, os stakeholders são os participantes, os empresários e os organizadores dos festivais. Em última análise, a percepção dos stakeholders pode ser utilizada pelos organizadores de festivais como base para a realização de festivais no cenário pós-pandemia.

**Desenho/metodologia/abordagem:** Este estudo utilizou um delineamento qualitativo com abordagem fenomenológica baseada nas experiências vividas pelos participantes com os festivais que frequentaram. A amostragem de bola de neve foi usada para escolher 32 participantes, começando com o funcionário do governo local turístico que tinha controle sobre os eventos do festival. Os pesquisadores utilizaram entrevistas com informantes-chave e discussões de grupos focais na obtenção de dados, guiados por um questionário semi-estruturado para permitir que os pesquisadores ajustassem as perguntas de acordo com a vontade e a maneira de responder do participante. Para agrupamento de dados e identificação de temas, os pesquisadores utilizaram uma ferramenta de pesquisa qualitativa (NVIVO) com chave de licença: (N-L-Z-7-7) e usaram o quadro analítico de Moustakas (1994), conforme abordado por Creswell (2007). Os pesquisadores começaram delineando os encontros do sujeito ou participante em relação aos festivais que estavam sendo examinados. Em seguida, eles criaram uma coleção de observações dignas de nota e as organizaram em unidades de informação mais substanciais (ou seja, unidades ou temas).

**Resultados:** Como resultado, todos os participantes estão ansiosos para se envolver, estar presentes ou participar de seus respectivos festivais novamente, uma vez que as restrições do COVID-19 sejam removidas, mas alguns têm algumas reservas.

**Implicações para pesquisa, vida cotidiana e sociedade:** Nas Filipinas, as restrições do COVID-19 foram suspensas em 2023. Este também é um momento para a economia local se recuperar. A série de bloqueios prejudicou fortemente a economia local devido à pandemia. Os governos locais podem usar festivais para ajudar pequenas, médias e microempresas a se recuperarem das perdas sofridas durante a pandemia e festivais pode impulsionar a economia local. Os organizadores do festival podem utilizar os resultados desta pesquisa como base.

**Originalidade/valor:** todos os dados coletados nesta pesquisa foram no auge dos bloqueios e casos de COVID-19 nas Filipinas. Isso tornou muito difícil para os pesquisadores coletar dados, resultando assim em uma integração de interações pessoais, entrevistas com informantes-chave e discussões de grupos focais online. Era uma época em que as reuniões de massa eram difíceis de imaginar, muito menos a celebração de festivais incertos. No entanto,

o resultado foi surpreendente, pois todos os participantes ainda estavam dispostos a participar ou frequentar festivais.

**Palavras-chave:** Festivais, Pós-Pandemia, Pesquisa Qualitativa, Desenvolvimento Comunitário, Amostragem Bola de Neve

## MÁS ALLÁ DEL COVID-19: EL FUTURO DE LOS FESTIVALES EN CALABARZON, FILIPINAS

### RESUMEN

**Objetivo:** Este estudio tiene como objetivo determinar o predecir la disposición de los asistentes regulares a los festivales para asistir o unirse a los eventos del festival en el escenario post-COVID-19. Específicamente, tuvo como objetivo 1.) identificar la percepción del futuro de los festivales en el escenario posterior a la pandemia y si las personas aún están dispuestas a participar o unirse a alguno de los eventos del festival, y 2.) discutir el papel de los festivales en el post -escenario de pandemia.-escenario de pandemia.

**Marco teórico:** Los investigadores emplearon la técnica de la teoría de las partes interesadas para predecir el futuro de los eventos del festival. Una parte interesada es “cualquier grupo o persona que puede impactar o verse afectado por el logro del objetivo de la institución”, Freeman (1984). Freeman afirma que una persona o grupo es parte interesada si tiene un interés sincero en un componente específico de las operaciones de la institución y, como resultado, puede influir en el desempeño de la empresa o tener una participación en ese desempeño. Particularmente, en este estudio, los stakeholders son los participantes, empresarios y organizadores del festival. En última instancia, los organizadores de festivales pueden utilizar la percepción de las partes interesadas como base para celebrar festivales en el escenario posterior a la pandemia.

**Diseño/metodología/aproximación:** Este estudio utilizó un diseño cualitativo con enfoque fenomenológico basado en las experiencias de los participantes con los festivales a los que asistieron. Se utilizó un muestreo de bola de nieve para elegir a 32 participantes, comenzando con el funcionario de turismo del gobierno local que tenía control sobre los eventos del festival. Los investigadores utilizaron entrevistas con informantes clave y discusiones de grupos focales para obtener datos, guiados por un cuestionario semiestructurado que les permitió a los investigadores ajustar las preguntas de acuerdo con la disposición y la forma de responder de los participantes. Para agrupar datos e identificar temas, los investigadores utilizaron una herramienta de investigación cualitativa (NVIVO) con clave de licencia: (N-L-Z-7-7) y utilizaron el marco analítico de Moustakas (1994), como lo aborda Creswell (2007) . Los investigadores comenzaron delineando los encuentros del sujeto o participante en relación con los festivales examinados. Luego crearon una colección de observaciones notables y las organizaron en unidades de información más sustantivas (es decir, unidades o temas).

**Resultados:** Como resultado, todos los asistentes esperan participar, asistir o asistir nuevamente a sus respectivos festivales una vez que se eliminen las restricciones de COVID-19, pero algunos tienen algunas reservas.

**Implicaciones para la investigación, la vida cotidiana y la sociedad:** en Filipinas, las restricciones de COVID-19 se levantaron en 2023. Este también es un momento para que la economía local se recupere. La serie de cierres ha dañado gravemente la economía local debido a la pandemia. Los gobiernos locales pueden utilizar los festivales para ayudar a las pequeñas, medianas y microempresas a recuperarse de las pérdidas sufridas durante la pandemia y los festivales. puede impulsar la economía local. Los organizadores del festival pueden utilizar los resultados de esta encuesta como base.

**Originalidad/Valor:** todos los datos recopilados en esta investigación estuvieron en el punto álgido de los cierres y casos de COVID-19 en Filipinas. Esto hizo que a los investigadores les resultara muy difícil recopilar datos, lo que resultó en una integración de interacciones cara a cara, entrevistas con informantes clave y discusiones de grupos focales en línea. Era una época en la que las reuniones masivas eran difíciles de imaginar, y mucho menos la celebración de festivales inciertos. Sin embargo, el resultado fue sorprendente, ya que todos los participantes seguían dispuestos a asistir o asistir a festivales.

**Palabras clave:** Festivales, Pospandemia, Investigación Cualitativa, Desarrollo Comunitario, Muestreo de Bola de Nieve

## INTRODUCTION

Festivals play a crucial role in preserving and celebrating cultural heritage, fostering social cohesion, promoting tourism, generating economic benefits, and creating community

among participants. The researchers saw festivals as a way to teach others, especially the younger generations, about the community's history, identity, and values. It has an influence, according to the experts and affects the host region or community since it draws visitors to the province, town, or municipality. Most of those effects are favorable; however, some may be unfounded. It is crucial to study, comprehend, and measure the effects of festivals on the host community since they are observed internationally and in the Philippines. Per Falassi (1987), festivals serve as events and social phenomena present in nearly every human society. Travelers and men of letters have been drawn to and consumed by the vibrant variation, and the notable shifts in its choreographic and aesthetic features, the profound symbolism they encompass, the historical origins, and the ongoing engagement of the local population throughout history are all essential elements. Festivals, as cited in the work of Allan et al., 2014 may help maintain and commemorate traditions, history, and culture while fostering racial diversity and may also be used to lengthen the lifespan of a venue (Chacko & Schaffer, 1993). Dugas and Schweitzer (1997) concluded that creating a feeling of community requires much effort, particularly when raising levels of connection, belongingness, and support. Since festivals draw crowds, they are a crucial component of the tourism sector, which significantly impacts the economy (Lee-Anant, 2022). Raj (2003) said that festivals increase a location's tourist appeal and impact its cultural and economic development. Locals may share their culture, trade knowledge, and experiences during festivals. Festivals give visitors a glimpse into a nation's people's customs, traditions, and holiday celebrations. Raj (2003) asserts that festival tourism positively affects a nation's economy by lowering unemployment and raising revenue. Creating regional festivals boosts cultural tourism and helps tourist places economically and culturally. Festivals and events are utilized to revitalize and direct post-production economies toward consumption as part of a broader spectrum of new "cultural strategies" (Gotham, 2005). However, from 2020 until 2022, all large gatherings were outlawed because of the COVID-19 epidemic. Festivals were also outlawed at this time since they included large-scale gatherings. The epidemic impacted all economic activities, and many firms struggled. Thus, in many communities across the globe, festivals are a vital part of cultural and social life because of their power to unite people, cross-cultural barriers, and provide possibilities for social and economic interaction.

### **Research Objectives**

Festivals typically occur on a yearly basis that bring together many people (mass gatherings). During the height of the pandemic and a series of hard lockdowns, it was hard to

imagine festivals being observed and celebrated again. This study aims to determine whether people will join festivals in the future after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Particularly, this study aimed to:

- 1.) identify the perceived future of festivals in the post-pandemic scenario;
- 2.) discuss the role of festivals in the post-pandemic scenario.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a qualitative research design using phenomenological approach to determine the future of festivals in the post-pandemic period. The researchers utilized a semi structured questionnaire that allowed probing/qualifying questions to fully understand and describe the participants' perspectives regarding the future prospects of festivals. The examined festivals include those with over a decade-long history, and are endorsed, acknowledged and launched by the officials within each province in Region IV-A, Philippines which presents a unique perspective. These festivities comprise the *Pahimis* in Cavite, *Anilag* in Laguna, *Parada ng Lechon* in Batangas, *Higantes* in Rizal, and *Pahiyas* in Quezon. The Coco Festival in San Pablo City, Laguna, has now taken its position owing to the current epidemic and the tourist office's lack of cooperation in Amadeo, Cavite. Since 1940, the event's location has recognized as a city and started in 1996. Since the celebration of the festival is already for more than 20 years, the researchers believe using it in place of the Cavite *Pahimis* Festival is appropriate.

### **Locale of Study**

Region IV-A CALABARZON, where the research is being conducted, is made up of five provinces: Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, and Quezon, with 123 towns and 19 cities totaling 1, among them is a metropolis city run autonomously from any of the regional province. There are 4,018 barangays in the whole area.

Figure 1. Map of Region IV-A, Philippines



Source: <https://calabarzon.denr.gov.ph/index.php/about-us/regional-profile>

### Participants of the Study

In this research, thirty-two participants in total were given questions. They are either the (1) event organizers or (2) attendees for each festival. The festival's officials, staff, director of the tourist bureau, or organizing committee members are the organizers. The participants came from the corporate community or residents who have attended the festival more than once or participated in programs or presentations related to specific festival events. In addition, the participants were chosen using a snowball sampling technique that began with leader of the tourism offices or a comparable role and continued up to the attainment of the saturation point. When saturation, the tourist head/officers were requested to provide two additional participants for an interview, and those two participants provided two more each.

### Data Gathering

All mass gatherings were not possible due to restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic; hence, all celebrations of the festivals are not possible with their traditional practices. As a result, the scope of this study is confined to exploring the celebrations or festivals from the perspectives of those who participated in and watched them on at least three occasions between July and November 2021. The information was acquired over five months via individual interviews, phone conversations, and video chats to ascertain the causes behind the conception and execution of the festival as well as the perceived effects of the festival that led to (1) trust, (2) network, and (3) norms, all of which are concepts that make up the social capital

theory. The researchers used KIIs and FGDs through individual and group interviews and calls via (Facebook Messenger and Zoom).

Through these, researchers identified whether the selected festivals are bridging or bonding capitals and whether the perceived issues (effects of commercialization/commodification) have associations with having the festival, and open-ended inquiries permitted in-depth, semi-structured topics based on the study's goals. Please see the attachment in the appendix section on acquiring and collecting information for the five events.

For the *Anilag* Festival (Table 1), a personal interview was done with the Chief of History, Arts and Culture Division of the Laguna Tourism, Culture, Arts and Trade Office (LTCATO). Then from him; he recommended two more participants; however due to availability and time conflict, the researchers were not able to interview any of them. Nonetheless, one of them was able to recommend a volunteer student who was under him. Fortunately, she was currently studying at an academic institution affiliated with one of the researchers. From there, the volunteer student was able to recommend a participant, who was then able to recommend two more participants. Moreover, one of those two participants was able to recommend three more participants. All of whom have attended the *Anilag* Festival at least three (3) times. The researchers then conducted two separate focus group discussions via Zoom meeting. Furthermore, for the student volunteer, the researchers conducted a key informant interview with that individual via Microsoft Teams. All in all, there were seven participants interviewed for the *Anilag* Festival.

Table 1. *Anilag* Festival data gathering procedure.

PARTICIPANTS	PROCEDURE	MODE OF INTERVIEW	DATE AND TIME OF INTERVIEW
Chief of History, Arts and Culture Division of the Laguna Tourism, Culture, Arts and Trade Office (LTCATO) Male, 55 y.o.	Key Informant Interview	Personal/Face-to-Face	July 26, 2021 10:00 am to 11:00 am (approximate)
Volunteer student under the LTCATO Female, 21 y.o.	Key Informant Interview	Online Interview via Microsoft Teams	July 31, 2021 5:00 pm to 5:30 pm (approximate)
Participants who have attended the festival at least 3 times (two participants) Female, 22 y.o. Female, 23 y.o.	Focus Group Discussion	Online Interview via Zoom Meeting	July 28, 2021 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm (approximate)
Participants who have attended the festival at least 3 times (three participants)	Focus Group Discussion	Online Interview via Zoom Meeting	July 29, 2021 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm (approximate)

Male, 22 y.o.	Male,		
24 y.o.	Female, 22 y.o.		
Total number of participants:		Seven (7)	

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)

For the *Pahiyas* Festival (Table 2), the researchers went to the tourism officer, who agreed to be interviewed face-to-face; she then recommended one key informant, who was interviewed via Zoom. That key informant was able to recommend two more key informants, all of whom were interviewed via Zoom. One of them was able to recommend two more informants, who were both interviewed face-to-face: one was a businessman, and the other had been a resident of *Lucban* since the late 1980s. All in all, there were six key informants for the *Pahiyas* Festival.

Table 2. *Pahiyas* Festival data gathering procedure.

<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<b>MODE OF INTERVIEW</b>	<b>DATE AND TIME OF INTERVIEW</b>
Lucban Municipal Tourism Officer Female, 45 y.o.	Key Informant Interview	Personal/Face-to-Face	September 21, 2021 11:00 am to 12:00 pm (approximate)
Participant/Store Owner Male, 68 y.o.	Key Informant Interview	Personal/Face-to-Face	September 21, 2021 2:00 pm to 2:45 pm (approximate)
Participant/house owner around the vicinity of the route of the festival Female, 63 y.o.	Key Informant Interview	Personal/Face-to-Face	September 21, 2021 1:00 pm to 1:45 pm (approximate)
Participant for at least 3 times Female, 33 y.o.	Key Informant Interview	Online Interview via Zoom	September 22, 2021 8:00 pm to 9:30 pm (approximate)
Participant for at least 3 times Male, 27 y.o.	Key Informant Interview	Online Interview via Zoom	September 25, 2021 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm
Participant for at least 3 times Male, 26 y.o.	Key Informant Interview	Online Interview via Zoom	September 25, 2021 8:00 pm to 9:30 pm
Total number of participants:		Six (6)	

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)

For the Coconut Festival (Table 3), the researchers requested an interview with the *San Pablo* City tourism officer via email. The tourism officer agreed to an interview, which was conducted via Zoom. She then recommended two individuals who are active participants in the festival. The interview was conducted one-on-one via Zoom with the two participants. The two were able to recommend two more participants each; hence, a focus group discussion was conducted via Zoom with the four participants. The four participants then recommended two



more participants who were interviewed via Zoom individually. All in all, there were nine key informants for the Coconut Festival.

Table 3. Coconut Festival data gathering procedure.

<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<b>MODE OF INTERVIEW</b>	<b>DATE AND TIME OF INTERVIEW</b>
San Pablo City Tourism Officer Female, 56 y.o.	Key Informant Interview	Online Interview via Zoom	September 02, 2021 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm
Participant/attended the festival at least 3 times Female, 26 y.o.	Key Informant Interview	Online Interview via Zoom	September 04, 2021 7:45 pm to 8:45 pm
Participant/attended the festival at least 3 times Male, 24 y.o.	Key Informant Interview	Online Interview via Zoom	September 04, 2021 8:45 pm to 9:45 pm
Participant in an event and/or attended the festival at least 3 times (4 participants) Male, 24 y.o. Female, 24 y.o. Female, 24 y.o. Male, 28 y.o.	Focus Group Discussion	Online Interview via Zoom	September 05, 2021 10:00 am to 11:30 am
Participant in an event and/or attended the festival at least 3 times Female, 27 y.o.	Key Informant Interview	Online Interview via Zoom	September 05, 2021 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm
Participant in an event and/or attended the festival at least 3 times Male, 26 y.o.	Key Informant Interview	Online Interview via Zoom	September 05, 2021 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm
Total number of participants:		Nine (9)	

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)

The researchers personally delivered a letter of request for the interview to the tourism office of *Angono* for the *Higantes* Festival (Table 4). The interview was done via Zoom meeting, and the tourism officer then recommended that we can interview the founder's child of the *Higantes* Festival, an artist himself. The founder's son agreed to a personal interview; he then recommended another local artist with a restaurant and art gallery who was a constant participant in the festival. The local artist could then recommend two staff members who have attended the festival numerous times. All the interviews were conducted face-to-face. All in all, there were five key informants for the *Higantes* Festival.

Table 4. Higantes Festival data gathering procedure.

<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<b>MODE OF INTERVIEW</b>	<b>DATE AND TIME OF INTERVIEW</b>
Angono Tourism Officer Male, 52 y.o.	Key Informant Interview	Online Interview via Zoom	September 29, 2021 2:30 pm to 3:30 pm
Child of the Higantes Festival founder/ businessman/ regular participant of the festival Male, 39 y.o.	Key Informant Interview	Face-to-Face Interview	October 14, 2021 10:40 am to 11:30 am
Businessman/ regular participant of the festival Male, 42 y.o.	Key Informant Interview	Face-to-Face Interview	October 14, 2021 1:30 pm to 2:30 pm
Participant in an event and/or attended the festival at least 3 times Female, 28 y.o.	Key Informant Interview	Face-to-face Interview	October 14, 2021 2:30 pm to 3:15 pm
Participant in an event and/or attended the festival at least 3 times Male, 31 y.o.	Key Informant Interview	Face-to-face Interview	October 14, 2021 3:15 pm to 3:45 pm
Total number of participants:		Five (5)	

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)

The researchers personally delivered a letter to the tourism officer of Balayan for the *Lechon* Festival (Table 5). The interview was conducted via Zoom; she then recommended two business owners and regular festival participants, one of whom was interviewed face-to-face and the other via Zoom. They were able to recommend one from each of their staff members, who have attended the festival numerous times. The interview with their staff was done via Zoom. All in all, there were five participants for the *Lechon* Festival.

Table 5. Lechon Festival data gathering procedure.

<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<b>MODE OF INTERVIEW</b>	<b>DATE AND TIME OF INTERVIEW</b>
Bayalan Municipal Tourism Officer Female, 28 y.o.	Key Informant Interview	Online Interview via Zoom	October 30, 2021 3:00 pm to 4:45 pm
Businessman/regular participant of the festival Male, 53 y.o.	Key Informant Interview	Online Interview via Zoom	November 02, 2021 9:00 am-10:00 am
Businessman/ regular participant of the festival Female, 49 y.o.	Key Informant Interview	Face-to-Face interview	November 04, 2021 2:00 pm-3:30 pm
Participant in an event and/or attended the festival at least 3 times Female, 38 y.o.	Key Informant Interview	Online Interview via Zoom	November 07, 2021 8:00 pm to 9:00 pm
Participant in an event and/or attended the festival at least 3 times Male, 38 y.o.	Key Informant Interview	Online Interview via Zoom	November 08, 2021 8:00 am to 9:00 am
Total number of participants:		Five (5)	

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023)

## Data Analysis

Content analysis of the interview and thematic analysis were done to identify the perceived future of festivals in the post-pandemic scenario. In addition, the researchers utilized a qualitative research tool (NVIVO) with license key: (N-L-Z-7-7) to recognize patterns or topics and organizing data into groups as this social science study was qualitative and focused on a significant amount of data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Festivals in the Time of the Pandemic

In this section, the results are laid by participants' responses per festival to the question should the festival be continued once the pandemic is over/under control?

### The Anilag Festival

All agreed (7/7) that the *Anilag* festival should be continued because it can be a means to jumpstart Laguna's local economy, which is related to the economic factor of the festival. It will be a venue to take a break, relax, unwind, and unite the people of Laguna once again after all that we have been through (referring to the pandemic). It was recommended that when the pandemic is under control and strict compliance with the minimum health and safety protocols, the provincial government should continue the celebration of the Anilag Festival. As mentioned by the participants:

*"Yes, it will be a good venue to revive the local economy that has been severely affected by the pandemic"-Female, 21 y.o.*

*"Yes, because this is the best way for people to recover from the pandemic, but they must ensure they take extra precautions. It is difficult to cause the number of covid cases to increase again"- Female, 22 y.o.*

### The Pahiyas Festival

All the participants (6/6) agreed that when the pandemic is over or under control, the *Pahiyas* festival should be continued as they believed it is part of their identity as *Lucbanons*. It will be a good venue to boost the economy of *Lucban*, which was heavily ravaged by the pandemic. According to the participants:

*"When everything returns to normal, Lucban will once again be called "the summer capital of Quezon" and at the same time "the art capital of Quezon" and a tourist destination internationally and locally." - Female, 45 y.o.*

*"Yes, definitely because it is part of the culture, it is part of the tradition of Lucban; hence it should be continued because it is a good practice as part of tourism that would boost the community's economy."- Male, 26 y.o.*

When asked if the festival should be continued after the pandemic, all the participants (9/9) agreed that there is a need, as it may be an event to jump-start the local economy of San Pablo City, an event to relax and bond together again after the years of being in the pandemic and hard lockdowns. According to the participants:

*"Yes, when the pandemic started, the festival was not celebrated, it felt different, and the vibe of San Pablo City was different.) - Female, 24 y.o.*

*"It should be continued more than how it was celebrated before because it is our pride. I think it needs to be continued because it is one way of uplifting the economy in San Pablo."- Female, 26 y.o.*

### **The Higantes Festival**

Given that the pandemic will be over or under control, all participants (5/5) agreed that the festival should be continued. They will join the festival again, given the opportunity because it unites the people of *Angono*. It can help the local artists and the local economy of *Angono* get back on its feet after the pandemic. According to the participants and business owners, respectively:

*"I think yes because it is a celebration, we all want one thing, to see the local artist and their craft"- Male, 52 y.o.*

*"Yes, it can help the local artist and local economy of Angono start again."- Female, 28 y.o.*

### **The Lechon Festival**

All the participants (5/5) agreed that once the pandemic is over or under control, the celebration of the festival should be continued as they believed it had been a long tradition. It is a means of thanksgiving for the blessings received for the year, even in tough times. Furthermore, there is an annual budget allotted by the local officials of *Balayan* even though the complete control of the festival is separate from them. According to the participants:

*"Yes, because it is a way of thanksgiving for the bountiful years ahead"- Female, 38 y.o.*

*"I think it will still come back because people are looking for it". Male, 53 y.o.*

*“Yes, because we promised, and there is a budget for it (appropriation from the local budget). During the pandemic, there is an existing liquor ban, and we are restricting the sale of alcohol.”*

**-Female, 28 y.o.**

## **THE PERCEIVED FUTURE OF FESTIVALS IN THE POST-PANDEMIC SCENARIO**

For two years, starting March 2020 up to the time of research proper, July to November 2021, there were no onsite celebrations of festivals in the entire Philippines due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some LGUs celebrate their festivals online and strictly comply with health and safety protocols: the *Higantes* and *Pahiyas* Festivals. However, it was different from an onsite/face-to-face celebration.

At some point during the hard lockdowns from 2020 to 2022, it was hard to imagine that people would participate again in events that gather people (mass gatherings), such as festivals. However, All the participants (32/32) agreed that festivals should be celebrated again once the pandemic is over for a variety of reasons such as it will be good for the local economy, to help the small and medium enterprises, a venue to get together, relax, unwind and among others. All of which refers to the positive effects of the festivals on the host community.

## **THE PERCEIVED ROLES OF FESTIVALS IN THE POST-PANDEMIC SCENARIO**

### **Jumpstart the Local Economy**

For the participants, festivals would be a means to jumpstart the economy severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic; as many SMEs struggled and shut down during the pandemic, they see the festivals as a venue to help these SMEs jumpstart their enterprises. The result supports Raj's (2003) conclusion that festivals have positive economic effects in that they are associated with lower rates of unemployment and higher levels of income in a country, and the development of local celebrations boosts tourism for cultural reasons. It also helps visitors to destinations' host communities on both a socio-economic and socio-cultural level.

### **Unite the People of the Community**

Aside from that, festivals will help the local economy recover; participants also mentioned that the festivals would be a good venue to get together once again, relax, and unwind after the years of the pandemic. Festivals are their source of pride and identity, ultimately giving the people a sense of belonging. This finding supports Derrett's (2003) assertion that festivals are associated with enhanced social cohesiveness, heightened

community satisfaction, and a strengthened sense of community identity, all commonly examined in festival and event research.

### **A Tradition**

The participants also believed that festivals must be celebrated after the pandemic as festivals are part of their traditions; it is a means to pass the knowledge and practices of the older generation to the younger generation. Festivals are the common ground for people of all ages. This is in connection with the research result of Getz (1989) that local commemorations or festive may propose tourist hints of local distinctiveness and varied socio-cultural involvements as cited by Luna et al., 2022.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

There is a future for festivals in the post-pandemic scenario. During the peak of the lockdowns and the COVID-19 pandemic, it was hard to imagine that people would still be willing to celebrate, let alone join the celebration of the festivals; however, surprisingly, 32 out of the 32 participants all agreed that festivals should be continued once the pandemic is over and that they are willing to join/attend events of the festivals given a chance. Furthermore, the participants see the festivals as an excellent venue to jumpstart the local economy that was heavily affected by the pandemic, a venue to unite the people once again, and that festivals are necessary as they are part of the local community's tradition and at the same time development of a community. Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that organizers of the festivals should continue the celebration of the festivals in the post-pandemic scenario and that people are willing to attend and join the festivals. Finally, this study was limited to a combination of online and face-to-face interviews; it will be highly recommended for future studies that a full face-to-face key informant interview and focus group discussion be done as another research so that the researchers may be able to fully capture the facial expressions and gestures and grasp the essence of what the participants are trying to communicate.

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