

LEVEL OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN BUHAYANI FESTIVAL

Florence Mutya, Samuel Claveria, Paul Jersey Leron
AB in Communication

Abstract

Festival is a commemoration of culture or heritage and revival of communities which give way to the community participation to happen. Though community participation has various definitions, it simply focuses on the collaborative effort of private and public individuals. This study aims to find out the level of community participation of local community in Buhayani Festival which started on June 2014 in Calamba City, Laguna. The researchers used the quantitative research method. The researchers conducted a one-shot survey among the 190 residents from five most populous communities in Calamba. Interview on three key informants from the local community and one expert interview were also conducted to verify and support the results of the survey. Using the level of participation which is an adaptation of the International Association for Public Participation, Public Participation Spectrum and work by the Canadian Standards Association (CSA), the researchers found out that among its four levels, the local participation in Buhayani Festival was at the lowest level which is Inform. The community has a little knowledge about the festival though they have a positive perception about it. Their main source of information is Internet such as Facebook and Twitter. The researchers conclude that knowledge and perception could affect their level of participation.

Keywords: *community, level of participation, Buhayani festival*

INTRODUCTION

Festivals or events are merriment of something the community wants to share. It is essential in the society especially for the members of the community to commemorate cultural heritage and identity and to give a chance for the revival of communities (Ferdinand and Williams, 2013). Anderson and Lundberg (2013) considered them as one of the fastest growing types of tourist attraction wherein the community has the opportunity to show what they are presenting, therefore community participation is needed. Community participation is the process of working together of families, professionals, community groups, government officials, and others to make decisions or plans and work it out in formal or

informal meetings and partnership.

A study conducted by Muganda (2009) concluded that local people are willing to participate in the decision-making with the government and public officials. However, problems may come up in participation because of the contrasting perception of both parties. Bejrananda (2009), in her study, found out that participation is mostly limited to the local officials when it comes to policy formulation. It was supported by the study conducted by Dooris and Heritage (2013) stating that some city although embedding community participation, has no mechanism to empower local community and acknowledge it.

This study would look into the level of community participation in Buhayani Festival. “Buhayani: Buhay ng Bayani, Buhay na Bayani” is a festival celebrating the life of Jose Rizal, the Phillipine national hero, and the lives of everyday heroes. It was launched on June 19, 2014 during the celebration of the 153rd birthday of Jose Rizal who was a native of Calamba. It was celebrated with different activities that remind the life and personality of Rizal.

This research used the level of participation which is adapted from the International Association for Public Participaiton, Public Participation Spectrum (© 2006 International Association for Public Participation, (www.iap2.org) and work by the Canadian Standards Association (CSA).

This level of participation includes four levels: Inform, Consult, Involve, and Collaborate. It also describes the input the public can do in specific level. Each level also increases the influence the public could do.

Conceptual Framework

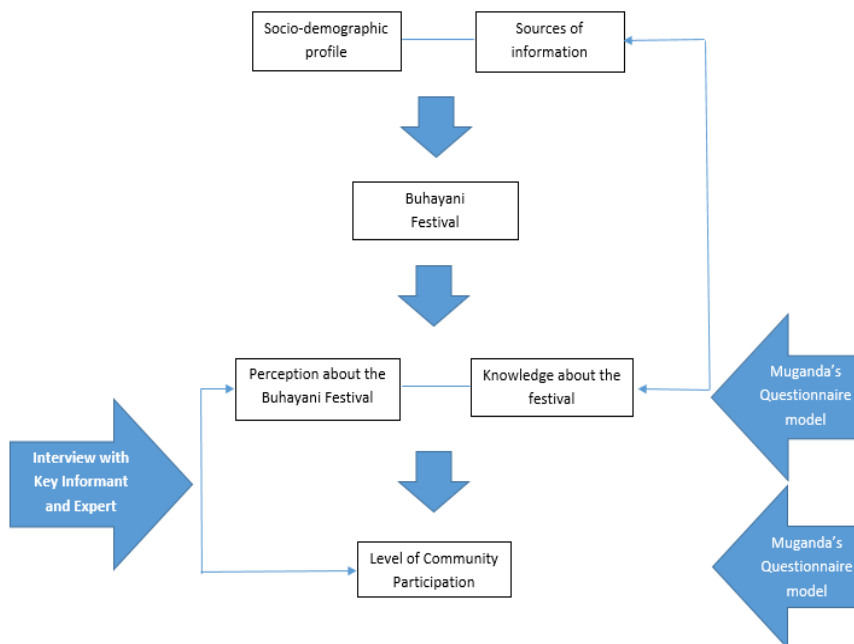


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study. In this study, the researchers determined the socio-demographic profile of the respondents and sources of information about Buhayani Festival which are independent variables. Knowledge of the local community about the festival, their perception and perceived level of participation in the festival are the dependent variables. Through the survey questionnaire which was adapted in the study used by Muganda (2009), the data for these variables were gathered. After which, they find the relationship between socio-demographic profile of the respondents and their knowledge about the festival, and the relationship between the perception of the local community about Buhayani Festival and their perceived level of participation. The results of the survey were validated through the interview with key informants and an expert.

Objectives of the study

This study aims to find out the level of participation of local community in Buhayani Festival. Specifically, it seeks to:

1. find out the socio-demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - a. age;
 - b. gender;
 - c. educational attainment; and
 - d. occupation.
2. determine the sources of information about Buhayani Festival;
3. assess the cognitive knowledge of the local community in terms of their awareness on the activities involved in Buhayani Festival;
4. find out the perception of the local community about Buhayani Festival;
5. find out the perceived level of participation of local community in Buhayani Festival;
6. find out the relationship between socio-demographic profile of the respondents and their knowledge about Buhayani Festival; and
7. find out the relationship between perception of local community about Buhayani Festival and their level of perception.

METHOD

This research was conducted using the descriptive method. The respondents came from the five most populous barangays of Calamba City. Using the stratified sampling technique, 200 respondents were distributed: 91 in Canlubang, 37 in Mayapa, 29 in Parian, 22 in Real, and 21 in Banlic. The respondents were given Informed Consent Form to accomplish to indicate their willingness to participate in the study. The survey questionnaire was pretested among 30 respondents living in Calamba and passed the reliability test with 0.828 Cronbach's effect. Among the 200, only 190 respondents completely answered the survey questionnaire.

After summarizing and analyzing the results of the survey, the researchers chose selected individuals from the respondents for a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to validate and to come up with in-depth results of the survey questionnaire. They invited seven participants to join in the FGD; however only two participants came. With this, they decided to have an in depth interview. The researchers also interviewed Ms. Liza E. Estolano, the Supervising Tourism Operations Officer IV and In-Charge-Office for expert interview. She was asked of information that contradicts and supports the answers of the local community.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Below are the results of the study:

Results show that most of the respondents are 18-28 years old (35.26%), female (66.84%), high school graduate (48.95%) and jobless (44.21%). Surfing the Internet is the major source of information of the respondents about Buhayani Festival with 36.32% while reading newspaper and other channel of communication are at the lowest rank.

The respondents were also asked of whom they knew the Buhayani Festival and they answered that someone told them about the said festival. Results revealed that students ranked first as their source, followed by acquaintance, while Mayor, sibling, coworker and child/children are on the last rank. One of the respondents stated that those persons can really influence them. "Minsan nakaka-ingganyo kapag ang pagyaya personal." (*Sometimes, it is encouraging when the invitation is personal*).

Results show that only 20% of the respondents passed the knowledge test. They do not have the general idea of the festival, the contests and its purpose. The participants in the interview explained that they have little knowledge about the festival because government officials lack actions. However, Miss Estolano mentioned that members of the community lack knowledge because the festival is new but she argued that the city government is very eager to promote the festival.

The local community has a positive perception regarding the festival with the weighted mean of 2.92 interpreted as *agree*. Though they do not have much knowledge regarding the festival, they still perceived it positively.

The study conducted by Cudny et al. (2012) also shows the positive perception of the citizens to the festival. The citizens see the festival as an interesting event to spend free time, an avenue to socialize and educate and it can build positive image in tourism. In contrary, one of the participants said that the festival is interesting but the officials should do better though Miss Estolano noted that Buhayani Festival is different from other festivals.

The total weighted of 1.48 shows that the level of community participation in Buhayani is in the lowest level, Inform. They were just receiving the information and may participate as audience. However, they were not part of the committee nor consulted, involved and collaborated.

Results show that there are significant and insignificant relationship between the two that means there are factors that dictate the value of one another.

Table 1 shows that the p-values were all greater than 0.10. This means that the respondent's knowledge about Buhayani Festival is independent on their demographic profile. Being male or female does not dictate their knowledge about it. In addition, even most of them are high school graduates and jobless, it does not determine the information they know about the festival.

This result supports the findings of the study of Reyes et al. (2011) which states that age, gender, and educational attainment have no significant relationship with the knowledge of the respondents. However, the content of www.fao.org/docrep opposed the findings of Reyes et al. (2011). It stated that the type of knowledge of people possess has a relationship with their age.

Table 1. Relationship between socio-demographic profile of the respondents and their knowledge about Buhayani Festival

Profile variables	Pearson Chi-Square	p-value	Interpretation
Age	3.960	0.411	Not Significant
Gender	0.069	0.793	Not Significant
Educational Attainment	2.885	0.718	Not Significant
Occupation	2.908	0.714	Not Significant

Legend: Significant at $p\text{-value} < 0.10$

Table 2 shows that there is a significant relationship between the level of perception and the general level of participation since its p-value is 0.053 which is less than 0.10. This means that the level of participation contributes to the respondents' level of participation to Buhayani Festival. The relationship shows that though the respondents have positive perception about the festival, they are still at the lowest level of participation.

This contradicts the results of the study of Ahmad et al. (2011) when they found out the citizen's perception and level of participation have no significant relationship even though they have the positive outlook to the event. However, the fact that they are willing to participate is enough for them to actually participate and immerse themselves in the festival.

Table 2. Relationship between perception of local community about Buhayani and their general level of participation

Variables	Spearman's rho	p-value	Interpretation
Level of perception vs. general level of participation	0.041	0.053	Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.10

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings using the triangulation method, the researchers conclude the following:

The respondents are mostly female 18-28 years old, high school graduate and jobless. Most of them learned the Buhayani Festival through the Internet and students were ranked one as the source of information or informant.

The result shows that the local community has the lowest level of participation which is to "Inform". They were informed but not consulted, involved and collaborated. It can be attributed the local community's lack of knowledge about the festival.

The findings reveal that there is no significant relationship between socio-demographic profile and knowledge of the local community about the festival. However, the level of participation in terms of attendance, level of participation and sense of ownership have significant relationship to the perception of the local community about Buhayani Festival in terms of theme.

The result shows that there are factors that could contribute to make level of participation of local community higher. These factors as part of the Diffusion of Responsibility Theory are the anonymity and ambiguous of the situation. The local community has a positive perception on the festival but because they have a little knowledge of the event, they have a very low level of participation. However, the three factors that can increase the level of participation were visible in this study. Based on the interview with the key informants, they said that it may happen if they were knowledgeable of the event, and were addressed to help. Meaning, if they knew that the organizer needed help, they may extend their hands. However, this factor is contradicting with the interview with the expert because she said that for now, they were not open to full cooperation and participation by the local community. The third factor which refers to skills explains of their level of participation. They were not used to managing an event and they have other things to do.

Their approach and promotional materials were not enough to inform the local community about the festival. These were evident to the little knowledge of the community about the Buhayani Festival. This lack of information regarding the festival reflects the necessity to improve and be provided to increase their level of participation.

Based on the results of this study, the researchers recommend that the organizer of Buhayani Festival, the Cultural Affairs, Sports and Tourism Development Department, should maximize the use of Internet which includes Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to improve the knowledge of the local community regarding the festival since the Internet serves as their major source of information. It is shown in the result that lack of knowledge contributes to their state of participation. They should also impose more positive image so the local community would be encouraged to attend in the activities involved since the result shows that increase in their perception regarding the activity can lead to increase in participation. Moreover, the organizer should also implement a strict rule in the dissemination of information to reach wider scope of audience. Every person in the subsystem must be able to carry out his or her responsibilities.

The result of this study can be used by future researchers as a reference for topics related to this study. Furthermore, future researchers could conduct the same study to evaluate if the level of participation of the local community have increased and find out the reasons. It is also recommended that they add more key informants to interview so that they could gather varied answers and opinions.

Since the survey questionnaire which was adapted to Muganda did not cover all the factors to measure the level of participation and perception of the local community, the researchers recommend that the future researchers should add more and look for other aspects of the topic.

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