

EFFECTIVENESS OF CULTURAL FESTIVAL EVENTS TOWARDS CULTURAL AWARENESS AMONG FIRST-YEAR TOURISM STUDENTS AT BESTLINK COLLEGE OF THE PHILIPPINES

ABSTRACT

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Cultural festival events in today's society serve as essential platforms for preserving traditions, customs, beliefs, and cultural heritage amid the forces of modernization and globalization. While many existing studies highlight the short-term economic impact or social influence of such events, there is a noticeable lack of research focusing on their educational effects—particularly on tourism students. This study seeks to address that gap by exploring how participation in cultural festivals influences the learning and development of tourism students. Guided by David Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, which outlines four stages—concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation—this research examines how engaging in these events promotes deeper and more meaningful learning among future tourism professionals. This study adopted a descriptive research design and employed a cluster sampling technique. The total population comprised 1,822 first-year Tourism students enrolled for the Academic Year 2024–2025. Due to the limitations of the hybrid learning modality, a sample of fifty (50) students was selected based on accessibility and willingness to participate. These respondents completed a structured survey questionnaire, which served as the primary instrument for data collection. According to the findings, 25% of the respondents were aged 19 to 20. Most of the participants were female, with the majority coming from section BSTM 12016. The results indicated that cultural festival events had a significant impact on students' cultural awareness. These events deepened their appreciation for the diversity, strengths, and unique perspectives of different cultures. In terms of cultural connection, the festivals fostered a sense of inclusion and belonging, enabling students to feel more emotionally engaged with other cultural groups. Additionally, cultural festivals promoted social cohesion by encouraging collaboration and interaction among participants. However, students also reported that the most frequent challenge encountered during these events was the clash of cultural norms, which sometimes led to misunderstandings or discomfort. It is recommended that students be encouraged to actively participate in cultural festival events, as these experiences significantly contribute to enhancing their cultural awareness, appreciation of diversity, and sense of belonging. Teachers are advised to incorporate culturally engaging activities into their curriculum that promote inclusivity and cross-cultural understanding, thereby reducing potential challenges such as cultural misunderstandings and social exclusion. Parents should play a supportive role by motivating their children to join cultural activities, which can help broaden their perspectives and deepen their appreciation of different cultures. Furthermore, school administrators are encouraged to implement and institutionalize regular cultural festival events to create opportunities for meaningful cultural interaction and learning among students, teachers, and the wider school community.

RECOMMENDED CITATION

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