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# ASIA PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL EVENTS MANAGEMENT JOURNAL

Special Events (Sport, Music, Festival, Carnaval and Other Events)  
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# ASLAG PARUL AS A SIGNATURE COLLEGE FESTIVAL OF THE CITY COLLEGE OF ANGELES: PROMOTING LOCAL CULTURE AND EXCELLENCE IN EVENTS MANAGEMENT

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One of the global trends is putting emphasis and importance to cultural heritage as an essential element of society. In the City of Angeles in the Philippines, a century-old tradition of lantern making has made a mark in the community's cultural image. The industry of lantern making in the city is highly associated with the Christmas season and the annual *Lubenas ning Pasku*, a nine-night religious procession of the Catholic in reverence for the birth of Jesus. As a community college, City College of Angeles (CCA) conceptualized a school-based festival to promote and preserve the lantern making tradition of the city. *Aslag Parul Festival* primarily aims to make students aware and knowledgeable on the lantern making tradition of the community and later make them guardians and transmitters of the culture. This paper aims to present the process of conceptualization, preparations, activities, outputs, challenges, and lessons learned during the premiere of the *Aslag Parul Festival*. It also aims to present the individual and collective contributions of the stakeholders in producing the said event. This qualitative research utilized several data collection strategies such as interviews, literature and document reviews, observation, and photo and video documentations of the festival. After the pertinent data have been collected, the research shows that 1) all people in-charge of all aspects of the event played significant roles and worked efficiently in teams, 2) the festival was composed of two parts – a) workshops on lantern making and festival dance and b) the festival competition, 3) financial constraints can be addressed by looking and partnering with benefactors, and 4) through collective works, the school community can produce a rich and festive event. It also revealed that the festival as a cultural and extra-curricular event reflects a number of United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. In conclusion, this research affirms that education is one of the most influential social institutions for cultural promotion and transmission. Hence, cultural activities can be innovatively promoted and transmitted through events management.

**Keywords:** *local culture, school-based event management, cultural promotion*

## 1. Introduction

In the Philippines, Pampanga is well-known to be as the 1) culinary capital and 2) Christmas capital of the country. The pre-colonial era of the place has been recorded to be a civilized and cultured community. During the Spanish colonization, the Kapampangan people (people of Pampanga) were given a sort of favor by exempting them in paying taxes and were entitled for

encomienda. This paved way to more favorable circumstances for the Kapampangan people. That is why, it is not surprising that many Kapampangan cultural practices are of Spanish-influenced.

Generally, Kapampangan culture is diverse as it has been influenced by so many factors such as its geographical complexity, colonial influences, media, cultural and language policies, and other socio-cultural variables.

Angeles City, a chartered city in the province of Pampanga, takes pride of its cultural traditions that have been preserved amidst its cultural vulnerability because of migration and urbanization. One of its century-old traditions is *parul* making. *Parul* is the Kapampangan term for lantern. The use of *parul* in the city, in particular, is highly associated with the Christmas season. Typically used as decors that symbolize Christmas, (the star of Bethlehem in particular), *Parul Angeles* are also utilized during *Lubenas ning Pasku*. This socio-cultural and socio-religious annual community activity is inspired by the nine-day prayer called novena before the birth of Jesus Christ. The term is derived from the Spanish word “luz” which means light and “novena”, the nine-day prayer. The practice is observed through a night procession of the patron saint of each barangay. The procession is led and adorned by lanterns.

Angeles traditional *parul* has been essential in the projection of the city as a cultural hub. The preservation, promotion, and community awareness would play as key undertakings to sustain the leverage of the city taking an equilibrium in terms of being urbanized and being culturally-rooted.

### **Culture and Heritage**

Culture, as a shared element of a particular community, is integrated in the day-to-day living of the people. As a major social influencer in one’s personal development, culture is reflected through attitudinal, behavioral, and/or traditional manifestations. Similar to other social phenomena, culture is dynamic. It changes as a result of different factors such as advancement of technology, globalization, and socio-political activities.

Kottak (2009) mentioned that culture provides a sense of identity. Although individual identity exists on a personal sense, a group of people belonging to a cultural community is collectively described based on their cultural background. Cultural identity can be in a form of attitudes, values, beliefs, or behavior or a combination of all (Matsumoto, 1996). These shared characteristics are explicit cultural image of the people that are normally observed in their daily and traditional activities.

Learning a certain culture can be made through various means. It can be through education, legislation, or tradition. In the lens of practicing community traditions, it shows that culture can be transmitted not only in a lateral direction but also through an intergenerational way. In this context, culture can be interrelated to the concept of heritage. Heritage is defined as anything that has been inherited or transmitted from one generation to another. According to Zerrudo (2020), heritage can be categorized into two, 1) natural heritage and 2) cultural heritage. Natural heritage pertains to the environment and the ecological features of a cultural community. Cultural heritage, on the other hand, is the totality of cultural property preserved and developed through time and passed to posterity (RA 10066 – National Cultural Heritage Act of 2006). United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines cultural heritage as the legacy of physical artifacts and intangible attributed of a group of society that are inherited from past generation, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generation.

Cultural heritage is further divided into tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Tangible cultural heritage basically pertains to cultural property that can be touched such as kitchen tools, gadgets, clothes, appliances, jewelry, furniture, and even structures such as churches, houses, bridges, building, and the like. These are categorized into two – 1. Movable and 2. Immovable. Movable are those which can be transferred from one place to another, while immovable are those which have fixed location. Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) refers to the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills, as well as the instruments, objects and artifacts associated therewith, that communities, groups and individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage (RA 10066 – National Cultural Heritage Act of 2006).

UNESCO provided five domains of ICH which are the following:

1. Oral traditions and expressions including language as a vehicle for ICH;
2. Performing arts;
3. Social practices, rituals and festive events;

4. Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; and
5. Traditional craftsmanship.

Oral traditions and expressions function as transmitter of knowledge, beliefs, and values of a particular cultural group. Spoken in nature, oral traditions and expressions are in the forms of myth, folklore, songs, chants, riddles, legends and the like. The second domain, performing arts, can be categorized into three: music, dance and theatre. Music can be either vocal or instrumental which is used in various events such as spiritual activities, or entertainment purposes. Dance is composed of body movements, usually accompanied by music, and portrays meanings significant to the group and event. Lastly, theatre is a combination of dance, acting, music and dialogues. Like dance, theatrical activities portray meaning relevant to the event. The third domain deals with habitual or seasonal activities of a cultural community. Social practices, rituals, and festive events vividly manifest one's identity. Typically, social practices are observed in the daily lives of the people while rituals and festive events occurred during special occasions. Intangible Cultural Heritage of most cultural communities also gives reverence to nature and the universe. This includes their characteristic of being spiritual. Their cultural beliefs and practices are shaped by their natural environment. Although the result or product is clearly tangible, traditional craftsmanship is under ICH. The underlying cultural processes and procedures to produce crafts are intangible cultural heritage. Over the finished products that are usually celebrated, preserved, and exhibited in museums and galleries, the emphasis on traditional craftsmanship is the art, skills and culture of the processes and procedures in the production phase followed by the people.

### **Cultural Legislation**

The Philippines has also initiated a legal premise relative to the protection, preservation, and promotion of cultural heritage. Republic Act 10066 (RA10066) or also known as the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009 provides the a) protection, preservation, conservation and promotion of

the nation's cultural heritage, its property and histories, and the ethnicity of local communities, b) establishment and strengthening cultural institutions, and c) protection of cultural workers and of their professional development and well-being. The state is also mandated to provide a balanced atmosphere of the past and present society.

Consequently, local government units have also taken initiatives that aim the same in the context of local cultural heritage.

Ordinance No. 417, Series of 2017 by the *Sangguniang Panlungsod* (City Council) of Angeles City or the Ordinance Declaring “*Angeles Traditional Parul*” and “*Lubenang Pasku*” as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Angeles City and Establishing Systems and Policies in Safeguarding, providing for Mechanism of Implementation and for Other Related Purposes has been legislated. Section 7 specifically indicates the safeguarding measure and promotion activities that have to be observed. The city government has to adopt a general mechanism aimed at promoting and safeguarding such intangible cultural heritage of the community and establish a multi-sectoral and inter-agency body that would be in-charge in the realization of the content of the ordinance. The body shall be composed of but not limited to Angeles City Tourism Office (ACTO), the Holy Rosary Parish Pastoral Council, Culture and Arts Council of Angeles (CACA), the Kuliati Foundation, and the various barangays. It is also a mandate of the city government to foster practical, scientific, technical, and artistic studies to document and keep cultural information, to secure technical, administrative, and financial measures are also deemed to be essential as reflected in the city ordinance. To ensure recognition, respect, and continuous enhancement of the craft, educational and awareness campaigns shall also be set in place such as integration of lantern-making in the curriculum of public and private schools in Angeles City and annual lantern-making training in the barangays.

### **Angeles Traditional Parul**

Henson (1948) mentioned in his book, “The Town of Angeles,” that the use of *parul* has started since 1830 during the first celebration of La Naval fiesta in Pampanga.

Also, an assumption was made that origin on the use of *parul* was from the town of Bacolor, Pampanga, where the first La Naval fiesta in Pampanga was conducted. The practice then was passed on to San Fernando which was a barrio of Bacolor during that time and later on passed on to Angeles or Kuliat, a barrio of San Fernando during that era.

The *Angeles traditional parul* is described to be dominantly white. The prominent symbol is a star in the middle part. The star varies depending on the number of points. There is a five-point star, seven-point star or an eight-point star. Typically, the traditional *parul* is accented with a circular *yantok* covered with Japanese paper around the star. Traced and cut *palara* is pasted on the surface of the star to add more aesthetics. When the *parul* is used for *Lubenas* or other religious activities, the color of the *palara* follows the attributed color of the patron saint of the barrio or barangay. Basically, the Angeles traditional lantern has three varieties. The first one is the embossed *parul* with *patoto*. The *patoto* are two *semioval* shape that hang under the circular *yantok* of the *parul*. The second is the flat *parul* without the *patoto*. Another variety is the *parul* called sputnik or jackstone. Sputnik or jackstone has no circular design around the star which is a jackstone shape star. Also, there is no *patoto* in a sputnik type of *parul*. Innovations have also been integrated such as the use of LED lights and more durable materials.

To date, various groups, institutions, and organizations have initiated undertaking to preserve and promote such cultural tradition.

City College of Angeles, a community college, conceptualized a school-based annual activity termed as “*Aslag Parul Festival*”. This endeavor, which translates to lantern’s ray festival, primarily aims to give awareness, transmit, and promote Angeles traditional *parul* in an innovative, festive, and student-centered approach.

This paper aims at presenting the procedure in the conduct of the first *Aslag Parul Festival*. It specifically targets to answer the following questions:

1. Who were involved in all the processes?
2. What were the conceptualization and preparations conducted?

3. What were the major phases of the event?
4. What were the outcomes of the festival?
5. What were the challenges encountered?
6. What were the lessons learned in the festival?
7. How can United Nation’s Sustainable Goals be reflected in event?

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This paper utilized a qualitative-descriptive research design. The researchers, as highly involved in the entirety of the festival, looked at the procedures undertaken from conceptualization to post activity dealings among the people involved. Also, interviews, participant-observation, and document analysis were applied to gather pertinent data. Subsequently, the data were organized and presented in the form of themes. Conclusions were afterward drawn and recommendations were presented.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Organizers and Participants

The *Aslag Parul Festival* was made possible through the Institute for Cultural Heritage Education (formerly Institute for Kapampangan Cultural Heritage Studies) with the collaboration of the Office of the President, Institute for the Arts (formerly Center for Culture and the Arts), Physical Education Department, Institute of Education, Arts and Sciences (IEAS), Institute of Business Management (IBM), Institute of Computing Studies and Library Information Science (ICSLIS), Budget Office, Central Student Council, Institute Student Councils, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> year Bachelor of Science Tourism Management (BSTM) students enrolled in Events Management.

Two groups of 30 members per institute participated in the *Aslag Parul Festival*. There were a total of 6 groups who partook in the street dance and interpretative dance competitions of the festival. The groups were composed of students who are taking Physical Education (PE) subjects coming from 1<sup>st</sup> year and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students. The respective institutes, whether the institute council or the dean’s office, were given the

freedom to choose the students that comprised the participating groups.

The Office of the President provided consultative functions and networks to other school stakeholders.

The participating groups also underwent dance workshops in preparation for the street dance and interpretative dance competitions. The dance workshops were the primary assignment of the Institute of the Arts.

The Physical Education department served as auxiliary coordinator in keeping in touch with the student-participants who were P.E. students too.

The Institutes, the institute student councils, and the central student council served as coordinators in the dissemination of announcements and details of the event.

The budget office provided the processing of the needed budget which was coordinated to the city budget office.

This event was one of the authentic activities of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year BSTM students in their Heritage Tourism and Events Management classes consisting of 60 students. They performed as the major members of the organizing committee and were directly involved during the pre, during, and post activities.

### **Conceptualization and Preparations**

The *Aslag Parul Festival* was conceptualized after a meeting conducted by the Office of the President, together with the Institute for Cultural Heritage Education, and the Institute for the Arts. It primarily aimed in promoting the Angeles traditional parul (lantern), which is a community tradition, to the students of the City College of Angeles (CCA) in order for them to become richer in their cultural horizon and highlight the knowledge, skills, and values learned in different allied courses including Physical Education (movements and choreography), Humanities (parul craftsmanship and designing), Local History (history of Lubenas ning Angeles), Events Management (pre – production, implementation, post production) via real events. The event also highlighted the actualization of one of the four core values of the College, which is patrimony. The College believes that its students are culture bearers. Hence, it is essential that they become emerged in various and rich community traditions.

After the conceptualization that transpired almost three months before the festival proper, meetings and laborious preparations took place. A meeting was called on the 11<sup>th</sup> of October 2019. The meeting was attended by the college president, the vice president for academic affairs, the institute deans, the dean of student affairs, the academic coordinator of the P.E. department, the head of the Institute for Cultural Heritage Education, the head of the Institute for the Arts, the budget officer, and the central student council president. The main agendum of the meeting was to discuss the proposed event. All attendees were amenable to the plan. It was agreed upon to conduct pre-activities that would equip the participants with the necessary knowledge and skills relative to the objectives and conduct of the festival. Thus, a lantern workshop and a dance workshop were decided to be conducted on November 19, 2019 and November 22, 2019, respectively. Then tasking was done. It was the Institute for Cultural Heritage Education that was tasked to lead the event with the help BS Tourism Management - Events Management class.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of October 2019, a meeting was conducted which was intended for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year BS Tourism Management students. It was presided by the head of the Institute for Cultural Education. Delegation of committees and tasks transpired. Committees on logistics, program, finance, documentation, and secretariat were created. The head of the Institute for Cultural Heritage Education functioned as the overall event manager, while the college president provided consultative function.

Lantern, which was the highlight of the event, was also conceived as a symbolism of every CCA student's dream of pursuing higher education, becoming successful and asset of the community.

### **Phases**

There were two major phases in the *Aslag Parul Festival*. The first phase, which is two of series workshops, was subdivided into two, the 1) lantern making workshop and the 2) dance workshop. The second was the actual festival where the 6 participating groups competed in tow (2) categories and 2 special awards.

The lantern making workshop was conducted on the 19<sup>th</sup> of November 2019 in the admin hall and the quadrangle. It was attended by all P.E. and Arts subject students. It was facilitated by known local artist and cultural worker that has a long experience and knowledge about the Angeles traditional parul (lantern). One whole day was consumed. At the end of the session, students, who were divided into groups, produced their prototype Angeles traditional parul (lantern).

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November 2019, intended particularly to the participating groups, the dance workshop was staged. It was also participated by the P.E. instructors who were assigned to guide the participating groups during practices. This was facilitated by the head of the Institute for the Arts. What followed thereafter were the rehearsals that allowed the participants to showcase a choreographed dance festival where the *parul* serves as a highlight of the said lantern festival. The rehearsals usually were held during vacant times as well during the Physical Education class periods.

The details of the event planning, conceptualization, implementation, were discussed during the period classes in Events Management with proper coordination from the over-all organizing team.

The actual festival transpired at exactly 5:00 p.m. on December 17, 2019 at the school quadrangle. It started with the street dance competition. Participating groups performed their street dance around the campus for 2 rounds. During this part, the 5 judges were strategically located in different parts of the school to judge the performance. Afterwards, they convened at the quadrangle. It was followed by the opening program. By the time the college president formally opened the event through his remarks, the interpretative dance competition commenced. The judges were placed where they can observe appropriately each group's performances.

After announcing the winners, the program ended at 7:30 p.m.

### **Outcomes**

Each phase of the event required a specific outcome. The lantern making workshop particularly produced Angeles traditional lanterns. The outputs of the workshop were used as Christmas

decorations in the school. The dance workshop resulted to a complete street dance and an interpretative dance performance which later on were showcased during the actual festival. The events mechanism highlighted an on-the-spot running of the event with consideration on pre-events activities, during event activities, and post event activities..

On the day itself of the festival, each participating group had to comply with the requirement of having at least 6 large lanterns, costumes, lantern hand props, and a festival queen. Their performances were accompanied by local Christmas songs.

The set of awards were 1<sup>st</sup> place, 2<sup>nd</sup> place, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place for the street dance competition; 1<sup>st</sup> place, 2<sup>nd</sup> place, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the interpretative dance competition; 1<sup>st</sup> place, 2<sup>nd</sup> place, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place for the best lantern ensemble, and the festival queen award.

### **Challenges**

Having less than 3 months of preparation especially for the participants seemed to be short. Nevertheless, the entire event went generally smooth. The first and primary challenge that was encountered was the request for the budget that would be used for the logistics, food and honorarium of the guests, and prizes. As a protocol, the budget request has to go through a strict review by several key officials. Although the budget was released, it was after the festival that it was actually received by the winners. Because of this, the activities conducted before and during the festival that had financial requirements were faced with challenges. To address such concerns, the organizers resorted to augment possible solutions by looking for sponsors. It was through sponsorships that the entire program was made possible. Later, it was realized that this was the best strategy done because the budget requested was trimmed down later in some of its particulars. This also allowed the organizing team to be more creative amidst challenges that were encountered.

Another challenge encountered was the anticipation for a good weather. A few days before the festival, a rainy weather was experienced. Although another venue may be used, some parts of the program, especially the street dance, would be compromised.

Fortunately, the 17<sup>th</sup> of December 2019 had a good weather.

### **Lessons Learned**

With the challenges encountered, lessons were learned. In regard to budget concerns, it is advisable that it shall be requested before the opening of the academic year so that it may be approved and released prior to the event proper. Modifications can also be made upon receiving remarks from key officials. Starting academic year 2020-2021, the *Aslag Parul Festival* will have to be included in the yearly school calendar and the budget requirement has been marked by the budget officer as an annual school activity.

Weather conditions are uncontrollable, on the other hand, plans are. Based on the experiences on the *1<sup>st</sup> Aslag Parul Festival* relative to weather issues, it is essential to design alternative plans that include venues and other environmental and natural factors.

Generally, it can also be drawn that a longer preparation be done to see possible concerns and address them at an earlier part. Being proactive is important in minimizing possible issues. All these are made possible as one may explore on adding alterations to planning including risk management, and alternative management.

### **Aslag Parul Festival and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals**

Among the seventeen sustainable development goals, five of which are reflected in the *Aslag Parul Festival*. As an extra- and co-curricular activity that aimed to integrate cultural awareness and provide an avenue for knowledge, skills, and values application for events management students, *Aslag Parul Festival* addressed the fourth sustainable development goal of providing quality education. United Nations' (UN) goal on quality education pertains to inclusive and lifelong learning. In connection, cultural integration is one way of inclusive education by incorporating learners' cultural background. The application of knowledge, skills, and values in events management is a reinforcement and enhancement of learning resulting to more lasting acquisition of relevant qualities of events practitioners. And producing competent and competitive graduates are enabling contribution of an

educational institution to uplifting of the socioeconomic status of the community.

Through innovative ways of promoting cultural tradition, the event underscored the aim of UN of increasing industry, innovation, and infrastructure. As a community college, CCA has been performing its mandate to contribute in the development of the city in any form it may be. Aside from producing quality graduates who are to become part of the community workforce, the college also partakes in the cultural undertakings of the city to sustain its rich culture and tradition. As an educational institution, where creativity and innovativeness are expected to be practiced, CCA holds to its culture of providing excellent, relevant, and novel programs.

As stated, all the undertakings of the college are part and parcel of the actions towards the achievement of the community's goals and aspirations. Ranging from health, education, infrastructure, economic, cultural, and other social concerns, the city has been organizing and implementing programs that benefit its citizens. The college functions as an arm to address community concerns particularly in the education and cultural aspects that are foreseen to be essential variables in the city's sustainable development. In this regard, mobilizing sustainable cities and communities of UN has been targeted.

As elaborated, the *Aslag Parul Festival* was conceptualized primarily for cultural tradition. To associate UN's sustainable development goal of responsible consumption and production, the program promoted the use of traditional materials producing creative and artistic outputs. Because Angeles traditional lantern does not use electricity, aside from some variant, it could lessen the consumption of energy while maintaining its aesthetic and cultural value.

Lastly, through collaboration among stakeholders in the realization of the event, building partnership was observed. Partnerships make any endeavor more feasible. Working with other people, organizations, or institutions for the matter put more ideas to the project.

### **Discussion**

This event shows that the education sector is truly a strong institution that can

promote cultural traditions. This supports Zerrudo's (2020) claim that legislation, education, and tradition are the strong forces that contribute to cultural promotion and preservation. The *1<sup>st</sup> Aslag Parul Festival* also provided a bond that made the entire City College of Angeles community to work together to reflect patrimony in action as one of the pillars of the college.

Innovation as a key element of the event also significantly contributed to the promotion of the city's tradition of lantern making. Festivals are significant socio-cultural activities in the Philippines. UNESCO describe festivals as relevant events that provide identity to the members of the community. The City of Angeles has been well known for its *sisig*, a culinary identity of the community. It has not been known to many that the city has another gem in the form of lanterns. To reintroduce it in a festive and creative way, *Aslag Parul Festival*, although a school-based event, was conceptualized. In the introduction of this festival, not only a festive event was developed, but also it reintroduces a traditional craftsmanship of the community. These intangible cultural heritage domains are foreseen to last through innovative strategies such as this school-based event, wherein the effects are hoped to transcend beyond the corners of the school. The students, as culture bearers, are expected to transmit the knowledge and skills on *Angeles traditional lantern* making to their community or even to the next generation.

As far as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are concerned, these can be achieved in many ways, contexts, and scope. There are no big or little steps in the realization of the goals. Any undertakings are contributory to the achievement of the goals either in the community level, national, or international scale. Contributions of initiating activities can be through giving inspiration to the people, community, and other communities, and through opening the minds of stakeholders on their roles in the sustainable development of the community.

#### 4. Conclusion

After formulating the themes of this paper, it is therefore concluded that culture can be repackaged in an innovative and creative way. The *Aslag Parul Festival* also

supports the idea that culture is a community-based activity. It also affirms that academic institutions play vital roles in cultural promotions. Intangible cultural heritage domains can also be integrated to one another as evident on what was applied in the *Aslag Parul Festival*, a combination of traditional craftsmanship, festive event, and performing arts. Also, it can be claimed that through utilizing events management standards, cultural promotion undertakings can be realized in a structured, innovative, and controlled means. The intersection of local culture and events managements provides fresh and innovative ideas in cultural promotion and transmission. Because of its logical, structured, and standard protocols, events management is an effective and efficient strategy to showcase culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Aside from stated nature of events management, it also adds to its pros its flexibility and adaptability to the target audience.

Another point that is worth of recognizing is the applicability of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in academic communities. Academic communities cannot be separated from the profile of a general community. Educational institutions play pivotal roles in achieving the community's goals. As providers of training to students that are expected of taking part in the aspirations of the community, educational institutions have to perform anchored on such goals. Alignment between schools' vision, mission, objectives, and practices and the community's goals is essential for a communal responsibility.

Generally, it is affirmed that events management is an essential element of any program undertakings, be it a community-based, organizational, or school-based program. Its nature makes all concerns effective and efficient.

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**STAGING HERITAGE AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES / EVENTS AT THE  
CITY COLLEGE OF ANGELES: EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING TO  
PROMOTE SENSE OF PATRIMONY AND NATIONALISM**

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This paper presents the crossroads of the heritage tourism, experiential marketing, and cultural promotion and appreciation in an educational setting. The study documented the cultural promotion activities of the City College of Angeles, a community college in Angeles City, Philippines. There are 38 activities included that were organized from 2017 to 2020. These activities were highly experiential more than focused on simply appreciating tangible cultural heritage. An assessment on the impression of the participants was conducted. The study used a 5-point likert scale which was utilized and floated to 60 respondent-participants. The descriptors are 1) technical and organization, 2) platform, 3) relevance of the content, and 4) overall impression. A weighted mean of 3.74 was achieved meaning, “very good” which reveals the overall assessment of the said activities. Although the score reveals a favorable assessment, this still suggests further improvement in the context of delivery of the activities. This paper also shows that heritage tourism and experiential marketing interpose pragmatically in designing and implementing co-curricular activities and events.

**Keywords:** *heritage tourism, experiential marketing, cultural heritage, cultural promotion and appreciation*

## **1. Introduction**

Culture is said to be the soul of the community. It is reflected and embedded in the day to day activities of the people. Furthermore, Matsumoto (1996) asserted that the attitude and behavior of humans are reflective of culture. It suggests a sense of identity (Kottak, 2009). Members of a cultural community share common attributes and determinants as influenced by their cultural profile.

When culture is talked about, the concept of heritage is inevitable to be related. Culture and heritage are both inheritance from the past. The historical values that they bring provide identity and understanding in the present. The valuing of the people holds inspiration for future generation. Thus, culture and heritage, as an intergenerational

element of the society, transcends the dimension of time.

Zerrudo (2020) categorized heritage into two, 1) natural heritage and 2) cultural heritage. Natural heritage is the actual environmental and ecological landscape of a community. It is where culture develops. The result of the influences of environmental and ecological elements of heritage is cultural heritage. Cultural heritage is defined as the totality of cultural property preserved and developed through time and passed to posterity (RA 10066 – National Cultural Heritage Act of 2006). United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) describes cultural heritage as the legacy of physical artifacts and intangible attributed of a group of society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations.

Culture and heritage can be transmitted in various ways. Zerrudo (2020) suggested three ways of cultural transmission, including, continuous observation of cultural traditions, passing of laws or legislation, and integration of culture in education. The observance of cultural traditions in households, groups of people, and communities suggest a natural way of transmitting culture. While the high regard to education can be attributed in the powerful influence of schools to introduce cultural traditions. This is an effective way to transmit culture to the youth. Through legislation, legal binds are placed not simply for cultural promotion but for protection and conservation.

Another encompassing cultural activity to promote and conserve culture and heritage is the concept of cultural tourism, or sometimes interchangeably refers to heritage tourism. Prentice (2001) defined cultural tourism as a way for cultural appreciation. As a multifaceted cultural activity, cultural tourism involves community and economic development. Both culture and people-oriented, cultural tourism make the needs and preferences of the people one of its core elements, alongside with the environmental, marketing, and research aspects. The needs and the tastes of the people for leisure, considered as one of the pillars of the tourism industry, are constantly changing. Thus, good cultural tourism affairs consider the target market (Richards, 2001).

Cultural (heritage) tourism is product oriented. The product primarily pertains to the tangible culture a community or a place comprises. Leighton (2007) argued that a shift must be observed, that is to focus on experiential activities. This is in consonance to the statement of Schmitt (2000) that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, people are more attracted to entertainment and behavior experiences. People value more the memories that they form from various physical activities rather than simply appreciating cultural artifacts and other tangible culture. Thus, there is a need for cultural resources to be transformed into experiences (McManus, 1997). In this sense, culture is suited to the current style and preference of the people, the tourists and visitors.

To shift from product-oriented cultural tourism into experiential, a significant promotion and utilization of intangible cultural heritage as a tourism resource has to be dramatically observed. Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is highly behavioral and this includes oral traditions, literature, language, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festivals, traditional practices, and craftsmanship as framed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Cultural promotion, transmission, and conservation demand a multidimensional approach. The convergence of all stakeholders such as government agencies, business sector, tourism industry, educational institutions, and the community itself play a vital role in various cultural affairs.

The City College of Angeles, a local college in Angeles City, Philippines, is mandated to help the local government and the community in protecting, conserving, and promoting local culture among the students and the community. This mandate is reflected in one of the core values of the academic institution, identified as “patrimony.” To reflect this in the procedures and activities of the college, a 3-unit course on Kapampangan Culture is required among all students. Apart from this, the unit under the Office of the President and the Center for Culture and the Arts was created to institutionalize activities relative and responsive to cultural promotion and dissemination. The Institute for Cultural Heritage Education (ICHE) was created on July 1, 2019. Cultural promotion and dissemination activities vary from its nature and typology including seminars, trainings, workshops, research dissemination through conferences, and the like. Although emphasis has been dedicated to Kapampangan culture, subject matters have likewise covered mother-tongue and multilingual education, Philippine history and culture, and socio-cultural and religious activities that make the entirety of Philippine and Kapampangan culture. All of the undertakings of ICHE were done through in-campus, out-campus and virtual activities. The unprecedented occurrence of the pandemic has also affected the functions of ICHE in regard to the mode of delivery. To be dynamic and remaining faithful to its mandate, ICHE has transcended to full digital modality. Although primarily

intended to the CCA community, the activities have expanded to the general public through time considering its relevance to others. It is also targeted that the cultural activities of the college are also a sort of cultural tourism activities, especially to stakeholders that share the goals and peripheries of local tourism.

Following the concept of cultural tourism within the context of an academic institution, experiential marketing is applied. Pine and Glimore (1999) described experiential marketing as having engaging activities to invite clients to develop place brand and destination loyalty. This is utilizing multi-senses of the people for concrete, significant, and meaningful cultural experience in a certain place.

This paper explores the activities of the City College of Angeles relative to promoting patrimony and nationalism through its Institute for Cultural Heritage Education. The following are the specific objectives of this study:

1. To identify an inventory of the activities promoting patrimony and nationalism;
2. To explore the nature of experiential marketing and heritage interpretation undertakings of the college vis-à-vis events creation, and
3. To assess the impact of the activities to the stakeholders.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This study applied a qualitative-descriptive research design. A documentary analysis was conducted to produce an inventory of the college activities. A review of the activities for the past three years was done. To gather pertinent assessment data, a survey to 60 City College of Angeles students

was conducted and collected. The respondents were participants in the activities. The instrument, which was a researcher-made 5-point likert scale, was floated through an online platform. The weighted means of the descriptors were utilized to interpret the data. Four major elements were included in the survey form, namely 1) technical and organization, 2) platform, 3) relevance of the content, and the 4) overall impression.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As a general objective, all the activities

that the Institute for Cultural Heritage Education (ICHE) have conducted are geared towards the promotion and dissemination of local and national cultural heritage. This mandate is anchored on the college's core value of patrimony. Patrimony, in this context does not only refer to love to one's culture but of nationalism. The integration of cultural promotion in education intends to facilitate commitment among member of the community. Thus, a stability in the social system can be observed (Kottak, 2009).

Various activities have been conceptualized, conducted, assessed and evaluated. Integrating experiential marketing in cultural promotion and dissemination, the following activities were sorted to be included in the pragmatic scope of the term, and thus exemplified as experience-oriented and engaging affairs among the participants.

	Title	Objectives	Participants	Speaker/Facilitator	Date
1	Pamanaya King Aslag: Aslag Parul Festival 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To exhibit resilience through students' narratives</li> <li>• To promote Angeles Traditional Lantern</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City College of Angeles Community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Center for Culture and the Arts</li> <li>• Institute for Cultural Heritage Education</li> </ul>	December 18, 2020

2	A Special Lecture on The Forgotten Luzones: The First Filipinos in America	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To expound on the historical relations of America and the Kapampangans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> <li>Angeles City Community</li> </ul>	Prof. Kirby T. Araullo (University of California-Davis)	October 17, 2020
3	Webinar on Structure of Kapampangan Verbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To identify the structure of Kapampangan verbs</li> <li>To use Kapampangan verbs accurately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> <li>Kapampangan Community</li> </ul>	Ervin Pelagio Rexie Quizon Johans Cruz Kriziel Dela Rosa (University of the Philippines-Diliman – Department of Linguistics)	August 22, 2020
4	Webinar on Ang Dapat Mabatid ng mga Pinoy tungkol sa Wikang Pambansa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To describe Filipino language structure</li> <li>To use Filipino language in different contexts accurately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> <li>General Public</li> </ul>	Dr. Ricardo Ma. D. Nolasco (University of the Philippines-Diliman)	August 15, 2020
5	Webinar on Time to Junk Toxic Textbooks: Learn Kaalamang Bayan Amid Kuwentong Kutsero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To determine the importance of community-based knowledge</li> <li>To utilize community-based knowledge as sources of learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> <li>General Public</li> </ul>	Prof. Arnold M. Azurin (University of the Philippines-Diliman – Archeology Department)	June 24, 2020
6	Webinar on The Community as the Bedrock for the Love of Country and Patrimony: Values and Significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop the sense of patrimony</li> <li>To reflect on one's role in nation-building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> <li>General Public</li> </ul>	Dr. Richard G. Daenos (President, City College of Angeles)	June 12, 2020

7	Webinar on The Independence : Its History and Our Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To identify the historical account of Philippine Independence</li> <li>To pose challenges reflecting on our responsibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> <li>General Public</li> </ul>	Prog. Grace G. Lobo (Head, Center for Culture and the Arts, CCA)	June 11, 2020
8	Webinar on Black Lives and Filipino Freedom: Celebrating Independence Day in Solidarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop the sense of unity</li> <li>To reflect on one's role in nation-building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> <li>General Public</li> </ul>	Prof. Kirby T. Araullo (University of California-Davis)	June 10, 2020
9	Webinar on Philippine Independence in Times of Crisis: Redefining Its Values and Significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop the sense of nationalism</li> <li>To reflect on one's role in nation-building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> <li>General Public</li> </ul>	Prof. Ian Christopher Alfonso (Senior History Researcher, National Historical Commission)	June 9, 2020
10	Webinar on Commemorating Philippine Independence , Recognizing the Nation's Multiculturalism and Multilingualism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To describe the linguistic landscape of the Philippines and its relation to history</li> <li>To reflect on one's role in nation-building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> <li>General Public</li> </ul>	Marvin C. Punsalan (Head, Institute for Cultural Heritage Education, CCA)	June 8, 2020
11	A Special Lecture on the Celebration of the National Flag Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To identify the historical milestones in the evolution of the Philippine flag</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> <li>General Public</li> </ul>	Prog. Grace G. Lobo (Head, Center for Culture and the Arts, CCA)	May 29, 2020

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To reflect on one's role in nation-building</li> </ul>			
12	A Lecture-forum on the Role of Language Education vis-à-vis Cultural Heritage Preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To determine the functions of language in education and cultural preservation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> <li>General Public</li> </ul>	Marvin C. Punsalan (Head, Institute for Cultural Heritage Education, CCA)	May 12, 2020
14	A Lecture on Kapampangan : The Forgotten Chinese and Lusung: A Pre-Philippine Kapampangan State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To present the Kapampangan-Chinese relations in the context of history and culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> <li>General Public</li> </ul>	Prof. Michael Pangilinan (Sinupan Singsing: Center for Kapampangan Heritage Studies)	February 11, 2020
15	Sana All: Lecture on Vlogging and Advocacy as a Kapampangan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop ICT skills to promote cultural advocacies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> </ul>	Prof. Kirby T. Araullo (University of California-Davis)	January 31, 2020
16	Aslag Parul Festival 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To promote Angeles Traditional Parul</li> <li>To showcase students' talents on performing arts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Center for Culture and the Arts</li> <li>Institute for Cultural Heritage Education</li> </ul>	December 17, 2019
17	Lecture-Workshop on Angeles Traditional Lantern Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To promote Angeles Traditional Lantern</li> <li>To demonstrate skills in making Angeles Traditional Lantern</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> </ul>	Lucio Sison (Kapampangan Cultural Worker)	November 19, 2019
18	Basulto: A Cultural Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To showcase</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Center for Culture and the Arts</li> </ul>	August 30, 2019

	of Select Folk Dances	traditional dances		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institute for Cultural Heritage Education</li> <li>• Institute for the Arts</li> </ul>	
19	Cultural Competitions on Kapampangan Performance-based Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote Kapampangan literature</li> <li>• To showcase students' prowess in literature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City College of Angeles Community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Center for Culture and the Arts</li> <li>• Institute for Cultural Heritage Education</li> <li>• Institute of Education, Arts and Sciences</li> </ul>	August 30, 2019
20	Lecture-Workshop on Pialung: The Socio-cultural and Education Values of Kapampangan Traditional Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To explain the socio-cultural and educational values of Kapampangan traditional games</li> <li>• To execute Kapampangan traditional games</li> <li>• To revive Kapampangan traditional games</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City College of Angeles Community</li> </ul>	Dr. Joel Tubera (Dean, College of Education, Angeles University Foundation)	August 27, 2019
21	Local Heritage Tour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To visit select local heritage places in Angeles City</li> <li>• To identify significant landmarks in Angeles City</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Center for Culture and the Arts</li> <li>• Institute for Cultural Heritage Education</li> </ul>	August 24, 2019
22	Lecture on Ding Lakan king Amerika: Old Kapampangan in the New World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To present the historical relation of the Kapampangan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City College of Angeles Community</li> </ul>	Prof. Kirby Araullo (University of California-Davis)	August 24, 2019

		ans and the America			
23	Lecture-Demonstration on Kapampangan Cuisine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To demonstrate Kapampangan cooking technique</li> <li>To identify Kapampangan cuisine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> </ul>	Chef Don Edward Quito (President, Kusinero at Kusinerang Kapampangan; School Director, 23North Central Academy for Culinary Arts)	August 23, 2019
24	Lecture-Workshop on Kapampangan Traditional Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To execute Kapampangan traditional games</li> <li>To revive Kapampangan traditional games</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> </ul>	Dr. Joel Tubera (Dean, College of Education, Angeles University Foundation)	August 22, 2019
25	Lecture on Kapampangan Language: Assessing the Vitality of the Kapampangan Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To describe the vitality of the Kapampangan language</li> <li>To propose strategies to secure the vitality of the Kapampangan language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> </ul>	Michael Pangilinan (Talasinup ning Singsing; Most Outstanding Kapampangan Awardee)	August 22, 2019
26	Lecture-Workshop in Kapampangan Script Kulitan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To apply basic Kulitan rules in reading and writing</li> <li>To propagate the use of Kulitan writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> <li>Department of Education – Division of Angeles City</li> </ul>	Michael Pangilinan (Talasinup ning Singsing; Most Outstanding Kapampangan Awardee)	August 22, 2019
27	Film Viewing on Dayang: Our Knowledge, Our Pride	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To showcase Philippine culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Center for Culture and the Arts</li> <li>Institute for Cultural Heritage Education</li> </ul>	August 19-30, 2019

28	Lecture on Teaching Kapampangan Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To describe Kapampangan literature</li> <li>To demonstrate different strategies in teaching Kapampangan literature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> </ul>	Dr. Nestor De Guzman (Master Teacher, Department of Education)	August 24, 2019
29	Cultural Competition on Katutubong Sayaw (Folk Dance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To showcase students/skills and talents in dancing</li> <li>To promote different Philippine folk dances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Center for Culture and the Arts</li> <li>Institute for Cultural Heritage Education</li> <li>Institute of Education, Arts and Sciences</li> </ul>	August 31, 2018
30	Katutubo: A Collection of Philippine Indigenous Crafts, Costumes, Fabrics, and Instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To showcase Philippine indigenous craft, costumes, fabrics, and instruments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Center for Culture and the Arts</li> <li>Institute for Cultural Heritage Education</li> </ul>	August 30, 2018
31	Pamangan at Pamanistimang Kapampangan : A Briefer on Kapampangan Cuisine, Culture, and Hospitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To elaborate the Kapampangan culture relative to food and hospitality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> </ul>	Lord Francis Musni (Kapampangan Cultural Worker)	August 29, 2018
32	Lutung Tangab: An On-the-Spot Kapampangan Cooking Contest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To demonstrate Kapampangan cooking technique</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Center for Culture and the Arts</li> <li>Institute for Cultural Heritage Education</li> </ul>	August 29, 2018
33	Lecture-Workshop on Kapampangan and Other Indigenous Dances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To demonstrate Kapampangan and other Philippine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> </ul>	Prof. Aqui Ed Santos (Professor, Philippine Normal University)	August 29, 2018

		indigenous dances			
34	Lecture-Workshop on Cultural Mapping as a Research Method, Logical Tool in Urban Planning, Cultural Sustainability and Community Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To equip researchers and cultural workers with research techniques</li> <li>To explain the relevance of cultural research as a cultural work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> </ul>	Pro. Richard S. Aquino (Professor, Auckland University of Technology, Australia)	August 29, 2018
35	Angeles City Youth Heritage Lecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To equip the youth with knowledge, skills, and attitude towards heritage</li> <li>To discuss relevant laws and customs relative to heritage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sangguniang Kabataan of Angeles City</li> <li>Student Leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Center for Culture and the Arts</li> <li>Institute for Cultural Heritage Education</li> <li>Office of the President</li> </ul>	August 24, 2018
36	Retooling Teachers, Educators Training on Culture-based Core Curriculum in Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To equip teacher on culture-based pedagogy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>College/University Instructors/Professors in the Luzon Area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Center for Culture and the Arts</li> <li>Institute for Cultural Heritage Education</li> <li>Office of the President</li> </ul>	August 7-9, 2017
37	What Kapampangans Should Know About Their Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To discuss Kapampangan language</li> <li>To apply the topic in conversations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> </ul>	Michael Pangilinan (Talasinup ning Singing; Most Outstanding Kapampangan Awardee)	August 24, 2017
38	Lecture-Demonstration on Kapampangan Gastronomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To demonstrate Kapampangan cooking technique</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City College of Angeles Community</li> </ul>	Lilian Borromeo (Most Outstanding Kapampangan Awardee)	August 22, 2017

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To identify Kapampang an cuisine</li> </ul>			
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Table 1. List of Culture-related events from 2017 – 2020.

Even the unprecedented pandemic has not hindered the continuous delivery of services. At the early stage of 2020, a dramatic shift from face-to-face to virtual activities. Nonetheless, the qualities of the contents are assured to be socially and culturally relevant. Although challenging, cultural promotion has to cope-up with the demands of the circumstance. The inevitable use of technology has significantly redefined the conduct and staging of cultural activities. It has also been apparent that the modality of experience has been compromised, but the anticipated results have been assured to be of same quality.

#### **Experiential Marketing in Cultural Promotion Activities**

The affairs that are presented in Table 1 show engaging and audience-centered activities. All activities are knowledge-based, geared towards skills development, and/or values development and appreciation. It has always been a priority to provide significant and relative experience whether the activity is a simple lecture, a workshop, or an event. Although it is in an educational context, this can be related to cultural tourism as the participants were presented with both the cultural, historical, aesthetic, and related values of the topics. Similar to cultural tourism, this co-curricular activities/events of the college, by and large, aim for cultural promotion and dissemination. Prentice (2001) stated that cultural tourism involves activities in the industry primarily for appreciating the cultural landscape of a place. This is aimed in the different cultural promotion activities using educational and academic platforms.

Richards (2001) also stressed that cultural tourism and cultural promotion and dissemination activities must be aligned to

the constantly changing needs and tastes of the people. This can be observed in the modalities, nature of activity, and approaches that were applied in the said activities. A dominant modality that has been used especially in the emergence of the pandemic is information and communication technology (ICT). Technological platforms have been used for general communication and media to stream the activities. During the pre-pandemic, where face-to-face interaction was observed, the needs and tastes of the participants were considered by providing topics and hands-on activities to both develop knowledge and skills. This is in consonance with the principle of making heritage tourism entertaining and behavioral in the 21<sup>st</sup> century era (Schmitt, 2000).

#### **Heritage Interpretation in Cultural Promotion and Dissemination Activities**

Heritage interpretation is defined as the utilization of language to communicate information to visitors or participants in a cultural heritage activity (Robertson, 2015). It is similar to story-telling either oral or written. As such, it is an educational activity that provides and heightens knowledge to the participants.

Using this concept of heritage interpretation, the approach in the various activities presented in Table 1 is highly communicative in nature. The activities vividly presented the entire picture of the cultural heritage through lectures, workshops, webinars, and other online events. This approach aimed to develop branding in the community where the cultural heritage belongs. Thus, the communicative competence and persuasive prowess of the speaker play a crucial role to deliver and achieve that learning target.

Technical and Organization	Platform	Relevance of the Content	Overall Impression	Weighted Mean
3.72	3.56	3.89	3.79	3.74

Table 2. Overall Assessment on the Activities

Legend: 4.50-5.00 – excellent 3.50-4.49 – Very Good 2.50-3.49 – Good 1.50-2.49 – Fair 1.00 -1.49 – Needs Improvement

Table 2 shows the evaluation of the respondents in the survey conducted. The first descriptor, technical and organization, refers to the technical assistance, time allotment, and program flow of the activities. This descriptor garnered a mean of 3.72 which corresponds to “very good.” Platform which pertains to the modality and medium used got a mean of 3.56 which means “very good.” Aside from the face-to-face activities, social media and videoconferencing platforms were utilized. As per the relevance of the content, a mean of 3.89 was revealed which is interpreted as “very good.” The overall impression got a mean of 3.79 which means “very good.” The weighted mean of 3.74 revealed that the respondents assessed the general delivery of the activities as very good.

The data that were revealed from the survey can be used as a point of reference in modifying and improving the activities.

#### 4. Conclusion

Heritage tourism is a concept that can be applied in different domains, including educational institutions. Regardless of the institution, the aim for cultural heritage promotion and appreciation must be achieved. To address the contemporary needs and preference of the people, experiential marketing has to be utilized. This is to assure that the participants in cultural heritage affairs receive relevant, concrete, and meaningful experiences. The shift from appreciating artifacts and other tangible cultural heritage to experiencing both tangible and intangible cultural heritage has paved the way to more engaged participants.

Educational institutions, like City College of Angeles, have been successful in applying experiential marketing to promote local and national culture in the context of education and academic activities. While the aim is basically cultural promotion and appreciation, the college has organized and

facilitated co-curricular activities/events primarily intended for the students and the community as stakeholders. Based on the assessment, it was found out that the impression of the respondents is “very good” which gives a positive demarcation on the intent and target. This is a favorable result that is open for improvement. This further affirms that assessment is an integral part of any activity/event management to check and monitor the quality of the undertaking to assure continuous improvement and modifications primarily for the target audience.

Cultural heritage provides the identity of the community and the place. The cultural undertakings of the school, where heritage tourism and experiential marketing were integrated, thus contribute to the place branding of the community.

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**Institutionalization of the City College of Angeles – Center for Academic  
Events:  
Highlights of Challenges, Strategies, and Impact to New Normal in Education**  
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**Abstract**

The study is focused on designing and describing the webinars sponsored by the City College of Angeles – Center for Academic Events. It assesses the overall impression on the performance and command of the invited resource speaker/s and the organization and delivery of the webinars. Based on the results of the study, the challenges and impact of the webinars on the new normal education are formulated. This study is a combination of qualitative and quantitative types of research. The participants of the webinars are from the entire Philippines. They ranged from a minimum of 150 to a maximum of 500 participants per webinar. They are employed in both public and private higher education institutions and schools catering for basic education (Junior and Senior High Schools). Descriptive statistics, observation, interview, and documentary analyses were used to interpret the data gathered. Results show that topics presented in the webinars were found to be relevant. The extent to which the content of the webinars matched the announced objectives; the time allocated for discussion, interaction between resource speakers and participants, depth of treatment of the topic, pace of delivery of the webinars, and length of the webinars were adequate. The concepts presented were very useful, the extent to which they acquired new knowledge on pedagogy, resource based learning, instructional design are sufficient, extent to which they acquired skills that were new to them is adequate, and extent to which they found new sources of information and skills are useful in the delivery of instruction. Overall, the webinars guide the current abilities of the participants to use the knowledge and skills that they acquired and learned. The content is at the fingertips of participants, and that unlimited playback is possible since it is recorded.

**Keywords:** Challenges, Continuing Professional Development, Transformation, Webinar

## 1. Introduction

Higher education institutions around the world are currently facing the biggest challenge in the industry this 2020 – the COVID-19 pandemic. With the disruptions not only in classes but in daily lives, several experts acknowledged how the sudden, forced adoption of technology-delivered instruction will affect the well-being of professors and students alike (Lederman, 2020). As in the case of the City College of Angeles (CCA), this pandemic is not just a challenge, but rather an opportunity to strengthen its core values and update its mission and vision to obtain its institutional goals.

The City College of Angeles envisions itself as an Institution of Hope and as a premier local college in the Philippines. Thus, the college has undergone various accreditations and quality assurance evaluations from different governing bodies since its establishment in 2012. To date, CCA has the following accomplishments and recognitions: (1) recognized higher education institution by the Commission on Higher Education, (2) official Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Provider granted by the Professional Regulations Commission; (3) International Centre of Excellence in Events Management granted by the Asia-Pacific Institute of Events Management based in Leeds, United Kingdom; (4) Award of Distinction by the Royal Institute based in Singapore. and , ALCU-COA Accredited given by the Association of Local Colleges and Universities .

As its mission, the City College of Angeles is responsively committed in providing quality education for the holistic development of future professionals who can collaboratively work locally and globally. To attain this, the college has been introducing innovative programs for its main stakeholders: the faculty , the students, and the community. Since the re-organization of the college in 2017, several new units and programs were structured and streamlined to improve the delivery of services both in curricular and co-curricular activities. Among the new units introduced were the

Center for Culture and the Arts, Institute for the Arts, Institute of Culture and Heritage Education, and just recently, the Center for Academic Events.

Prior to the establishment of these new units, CCA has already been organizing curricular and co-curricular activities that supplement student and faculty development. As a main core of its mission, the college believes that events and activities outside of the classroom are an integral part of the total development of its stakeholders. Among these activities are seminars, workshops, fora, conferences, colloquia, exhibits, and festivals organized for the faculty and staff, the students, and the community. By hosting and participating in academic events, scholars maximize the uptake and circulation of research findings as well as promote knowledge-sharing and agenda-setting with potential impact on the academic community and society at large (Hansen & Pedersen, 2018).

The birth of the Center for Academic Events was precipitated by the sudden shift of the traditional learning modality to that of online or virtual mode. As the college needed to prepare for this new normal context, the administration saw the immediate necessity to institutionalize a unit that will execute the academic activities initially planned to be on a face-to-face modality. The Center for Academic Events envisions itself as the premier provider of services in promoting academic events focused on learning and engagement among its stakeholders, the faculty and staff, the students, and the community. Banking on the experiences of its staff in organizing accredited CPD programs and having been trained in events management, the Center also aspires to provide quality events and relevant production management at the institutional, regional and national levels. The need for professional well-educated staff within the event management industry has been driven by the need to develop the industry in a more strategic direction (Arcodia and Reid, 2003).

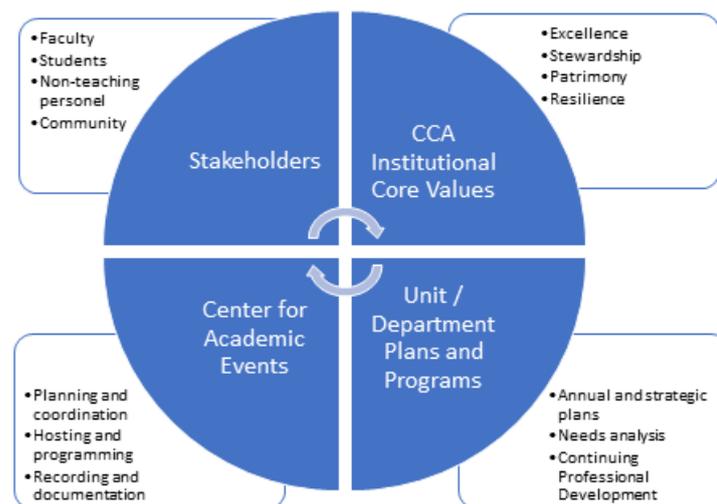
After its official launch on June 24, the Center for Academic Events serves as the

centralized operation through which all college academic events and activities will be scheduled, planned, coordinated, and executed. The center also serves as a repository of documented events and activities of different units within the college. This unit also manages institutional resources to support all campus academic events which aid the quality of programming, production management, and exhibitions that foster learning and development among its stakeholders. Industry-based research has shown that events management requires particular skills, knowledge, and competencies, thus the urgency and high impact of many events means that mistakes caused by the lack of appropriate management competencies can be costly, if not disastrous (Perry, Foley, and Rumpf, 1996).

Event management has emerged as a distinct field of study and career path, with increasing professionalism, yet its scope and

boundaries are somewhat unclear and it is not connected to a disciplinary core (Getz, 2002). Nevertheless, the center was able to ascertain its position in the organization through the following objectives: (1) organize faculty/staff development academic events; (2) facilitate tools and resources available to both faculty and students for their academic events (3) engage and invite resource speakers and experts to share their expertise through academic events; (4) encourage and support stakeholders to identify and participate in educationally meaningful co-curricular activities; and (5) collect and store documentations of academic events and activities conducted by all units that are in line with the center’s mission and vision.

**Figure 1. Strategic Framework of the Center for Academic Events**



One of the central roles of the center is to be the avenue of professional events that will cater for all the stakeholders of the college. As seen in Figure 1, all academic and co-curricular events in the college are guided by its core values: Excellence, Stewardship, Patrimony, and Resilience. In order to attain all of these, each unit and department formulates its own annual and strategic plans.

These plans are executed collaboratively with other units to ensure the use of available resources. Aside from these plans, needs analysis and continuing professional development programs are regularly conducted to foster current knowledge and skills among the faculty, employees, students, and community of the college. With the formation of the Center for Academic

Events, (1) planning and coordination; (2) hosting and programming; and (3) recording and documentation of academic and co-curricular events will be streamlined. Thus, providing the college an avenue to ensure its commitment to its stakeholders better and relevant services as guided by its core values.

From June to August 2020 the center (as its first activity) organized a series of webinars on behalf of the college. The purpose of this study was to answer the following questions:

1. How may the different webinars be designed?
2. How may the different webinars be described?
3. How may the overall impression on the performance and command of the invited resource speaker/s be assessed?
4. How may the overall impression on the organization and delivery of the webinars be assessed?
5. What are the challenges and impact of the webinars in the new normal education?

## **2. Methodology**

This study is a combination of qualitative and quantitative types of research. In terms of qualitative, the study designed and described the webinars needed by the participants in facing the new normal in education. It utilized a flexible, holistic, and reflexive method of data collection and analysis. On the other hand, a quantitative research method was employed in the assessment on the performance and command of the invited resource speaker and the overall impression on the organization and delivery of the webinar in general. Based on the results of the study, the challenges and impact of the webinars on the new normal education to the stakeholders were summarized to have a clear view of the conduct of the webinars in the new normal.

The participants of the webinars are from the entire Philippines. They ranged from a minimum of 150 to a maximum of 500 participants per webinar. They are employed in both public and private higher education institutions and schools catering for basic

Every Higher Education Institution (HEIs) is committed to promote quality lifelong learning opportunities for all, in all venues and at all levels of education. In facing the new normal in education, City College of Angeles, like other HEIs, is geared to provide clear policies, guidelines, measures, planned processes and actions in order to address the needs of the teaching and non-teaching personnel in their work place and the more and more diverse students in their learning situations. The creation of the Center for Academic Events provides settings for the lectures, fora, conferences, workshop, and trainings to meets the clients' needs and demands. Most of the webinars organized addressed quality and excellence in curriculum and instruction, library, research and community service, and teaching and non-teaching personnel development programs. These help establish the structures that students need to receive the excellence of education they deserve and bring strength in a time of uncertainty.

education (Junior and Senior High Schools). Descriptive statistics, observation, interview, and documentary analyses were used to interpret the data gathered. This study was conducted from March – August 2020.

## **3. Results and Analysis**

The webinars were designed to provide a presentation, lecture, workshop, or seminar that is transmitted over the Web using the Zoom app as the platform. It is a live online educational interactive presentation where the participants can submit questions and comments or ask questions directly to the resource speaker. The webinars follow the format of the face to face programs. The programs consist of the following parts: doxology, singing of the national anthem, welcome remarks, statement of purpose, introduction of the resource speaker, the talk, question and answer, reading and presentation of the speaker's certificate, closing remarks, and evaluation of the webinar. Only participants who accomplished the evaluation form were

given the e-certificates and these are received through their email addresses. In some cases, the webinars were delivered by a combination of live and recorded presentations depending on the availability and location of the resource speakers. In most cases, the recorded webinars are shared and

distributed via a portal or database. It means that the content is at the fingertips of participants, and that unlimited playback is possible. All the webinars have interactive elements such as the ability to give, receive, and discuss information.

Table 1. List of Webinar – Events Conducted by the CCA – Center for Events Management from June – August 2020

	Title	Objectives	Speaker	Date
1	Professionalization of the Philippines Events Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define the professionalization and events management</li> <li>• Identify the factors in attaining the professionalization of the events industry in the Philippines</li> <li>• Identify the challenges and opportunities in professional events industry</li> </ul>	President, Asia-Pacific Institute of Events Management	June 24, 2020
2	Psychological First Aid Relative to COVID-19 Experiences: A Response to the Challenges of the New Normal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define what is Psychological First Aid</li> <li>• Explain why PFA is relevant to the New Normal context</li> <li>• Identify activities that will help students adjust to the New Normal</li> <li>• Identify the roles of the teachers and school staff in performing PFA</li> </ul>	Program Chair – Psychology, College of Social Science and Philosophy Don Honorio Ventura State University	June 24, 2020
3	Implementation of Physical Education Courses across Discipline In the New Normal: Significance, Mechanism, Challenges and Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the significance of Physical Education in times of COVID crisis</li> <li>• Identify the mechanisms on how PE can be delivered via different modalities of learning</li> <li>• Describe the challenges that Higher Education PE teachers can experience during pandemic</li> <li>• Identify opportunities that will aid PE teachers in providing teaching-learning alternatives in the delivery of lessons amidst modalities</li> </ul>	Vice President for University Relations, Philippine Normal University Dean, College of Education, Angeles University Foundation	June 26, 2020

4	<p>Open Access Technology for the Implementation of Flexible / Blended in the New Normal: Tools, Pedagogy, and Assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify open access tools that will aid teachers in the delivery of their lessons</li> <li>• Describe pedagogical alternatives that will help in facilitating the teaching-learning process within the context of the New Normal</li> <li>• Provide assessment modalities to check the outcomes of the learning process in different modalities of teaching</li> </ul>	<p>Dean, College of Industrial Technology, Bulacan State University</p> <p>Google Educator</p> <p>Group Leader</p>	<p>June 29, 2020</p>
5	<p>Delivery of the General Education English Courses in the New Normal: Significance, Mechanism, Challenges and Opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the significance of Purposive Communication in times of COVID crisis</li> <li>• Identify the mechanisms on how PurComm can be delivered via different modalities of learning</li> <li>• Describe the challenges that PurComm teachers can experience during pandemic</li> <li>• Identify opportunities that will aid PurComm teachers in providing teaching-learning alternatives in the delivery of lessons amidst modalities</li> </ul>	<p>Academic Planning Officer, Angeles University Foundation</p>	<p>June 30, 2020</p>
6	<p>Teachers Competency Model in Higher Education Institution's Blended Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the expected qualities of teachers needed in the implementation of hybrid learning</li> <li>• Identify strategies that will facilitate the acquisition of competencies for the faculty and staff of higher education institutions</li> <li>• Describe the challenges and opportunities of Blended Learning environments in developing teachers' competencies</li> </ul>	<p>President, Association of Local Colleges and Universities</p>	<p>July 02, 2020</p>
	<p>The Teaching of the General Education Subjects via Flexible / Blended Learning: Approaches, Pedagogy, Assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify approaches that will aid teachers in the delivery of General Education Subjects via Flexible / Blended Learning</li> <li>• Describe pedagogical alternatives that will help in facilitating General Education Subjects via Flexible / Blended Learning; and</li> </ul>	<p>Former Vice President for Finance and Administration, Philippine Normal University</p>	<p>July 03, 2020</p>

7		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide assessment modalities to check the outcomes of the learning process of the General Education Subjects via Flexible / Blended Learning</li> </ul>		
8	<p>Changing Role of the Library as a Scaffold and Support in the Acquisition of Knowledge in the New Normal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the role of the Library Staff in the context of New Normal</li> <li>• Identify alternative methods to deliver Library services in times of the pandemic</li> <li>• Describe the challenges and opportunities in the acquisition of knowledge in the New Normal</li> </ul>	Chief Librarian, University of the Assumption	July 06, 2020
9	Fostering the Digital Life of Students through Seamless Learning Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the challenges and opportunities of student services staff within the context of New Normal</li> <li>• Describe the needed modalities to facilitate Digital Life of Students through Seamless Learning Environment</li> <li>• Identify best practices of higher education institutions in implementing a Seamless Learning Environment to support student learning in times of pandemic</li> </ul>	Vice President for Student Services and Community Development, University of Makati	July 09, 2020
10	<p>Taking a Big Leap towards Quality Assurance in Higher Education:</p> <p>The ALCU – COA Accreditation Framework and Processes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define Quality Assurance</li> <li>• Identify the steps and areas in accreditation and quality assurance</li> <li>• Describe the roles of higher education faculty and staff in accreditation process and quality assurance</li> <li>• Identify the challenges and opportunities of quality assurance in times of pandemic</li> </ul>	Executive Director and President of ALCU – COA	July 16, 2020
	Leave No One Behind in this Pandemic: A Panel Discussion about Children, Women,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define disability</li> <li>• Describe how disability is connected with the community</li> </ul>	Disability Affairs Officer and Head of Angeles City Persons'	July 31, 2020

11	and Senior Citizen with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify why a community should act as one on disability</li> </ul>	with Disabilities Affairs Office  Speech Pathologist and Founder, kasAMBAG	
12	Finding the Niche of Arts and Culture in Times of Pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify activities of promoting arts and culture in times of pandemic</li> <li>Identify the roles of the cultural workers and teachers promoting arts and culture despite of the pandemic</li> <li>Identify opportunities from different government institution to support the promotion of arts and culture within the New Normal context</li> </ul>	Officer-in-Charge on Plan/Policy Formulation and Programming Division, National Commission for Culture, and the Arts	August 10, 2020

Most of the 12 webinars were conducted from June 24, 2020 to August 10, 2020. The identification of title and objectives and choice of speaker and date were considered to address the needs of the participants in their workplace and family. The identified speakers are the authorities in

their field of specialization and hold high positions in the institutions where they are connected. The webinars were designed and conducted to offer a quality learning experience to participants across the globe and to make them ready in facing the new normal in education (Table 1).

Table 2. Assessment on the Overall Impression on the Performance and Command of the Invited Resource Speaker/s

No.	Speaker knowledge of the issue/topic	Effectiveness of speaker in communicating his/her message	Effectiveness of presentation of the objectives at the start of the webinar	Extent to which you achieved your personal objectives in this webinar	Quality of speaker's pedagogical support	Quality of speaker's answers to the participants' questions	Quality of speaker's facilitation of the discussions with the full group of participants	Weighted Mean
1	4.67	4.89	4.76	4.8	4.59	4.81	4.91	4.78
2	4.79	4.87	4.85	4.92	4.91	4.87	4.8	4.86

3	4.8	4.76	4.87	4.86	4.87	4.76	4.85	4.8 2
4	4.85	4.91	4.85	4.86	4.89	4.89	4.87	4.8 7
5	4.87	4.81	4.87	4.79	4.87	4.92	4.91	4.8 6
6	4.91	4.92	4.96	4.76	4.85	4.86	4.87	4.8 8
7	4.87	4.85	4.92	4.91	4.87	4.79	4.87	4.8 7
8	4.76	4.87	4.86	4.87	4.91	4.85	4.76	4.8 4
9	4.89	4.78	4.87	4.86	4.87	4.87	4.89	4.8 6
10	4.92	4.91	4.91	4.79	4.76	4.91	4.92	4.8 7
11	4.86	4.78	4.87	4.59	4.91	4.87	4.86	4.8 2
12	4.79	4.81	4.89	4.79	4.81	4.76	4.79	4.8 1
Composite Mean								4.8 5

Legend: 4.50-5.00 – excellent 3.50-4.49 – Very Good 2.50-3.49 – Good 1.50-2.49 – Fair 1.00 -1.49 – Needs Improvement

Table 2 presents the assessment on the overall impression on the performance and command of the invited resource speaker/s. As shown from the table, the 12 webinars obtained weighted means of 4.78, 4.86, 4.82, 4.87, 4.86, 4.88, 4.87, 4.84, 4.86, 4.87, 4.82, and 4.81, respectively. All were given a descriptive rating of excellent. The composite mean is 4.85 with a descriptive rating of excellent too. This indicates that the speaker knowledge of the issue/topic, effectiveness of speaker in communicating his/her message, effectiveness of presentation of the objectives at the start of the webinar, extent to which the participants achieved personal objectives in this webinar, quality of speaker's pedagogical support,

quality of speaker's answers to the participants' questions, and quality of speaker's facilitation of the discussions with the full group of participants are adequately accepted by the participants. The analysis of data shows that feedback in the evaluation form provided criteria in the selection of the resource speaker in each webinar. Knowing the expertise of the speakers, they are knowledgeable in the chosen topic, they maintain the participants' motivation making them attentive, they answer the questions of the participants with full satisfaction, and they achieve the learning intents of the stated objectives.

Table 3. Assessment on the Overall Impression on the Organization and Delivery of the Webinars

	Technical and Organization	Registration process	Email notification and follow up	Platform (Zoom)	Video and audio clarity	Hosts and moderators	WM
1	4.87	4.85	4.92	4.87	4.86	4.87	4.87
2	4.76	4.87	4.86	4.91	4.79	4.76	4.83
3	4.89	4.78	4.87	4.87	4.59	4.91	4.82
4	4.92	4.91	4.91	4.89	4.79	4.81	4.87
5	4.85	4.92	4.91	4.87	4.85	4.92	4.89
6	4.87	4.86	4.87	4.76	4.87	4.86	4.85
7	4.78	4.87	4.91	4.92	4.85	4.86	4.87
8	4.91	4.87	4.87	4.85	4.87	4.79	4.86
9	4.87	4.91	4.76	4.87	4.96	4.76	4.86
10	4.91	4.92	4.76	4.91	4.92	4.91	4.89
11	4.87	4.85	4.92	4.94	4.78	4.87	4.87
12	4.76	4.87	4.85	4.81	4.87	4.88	4.84
Composite Mean							4.86

Legend: 4.50-5.00 – excellent 3.50-4.49 – Very Good 2.50-3.49 – Good 1.50-2.49 – Fair 1.00 -1.49 – Needs Improvement

The assessment on the overall impression on the organization and delivery of the webinars is presented in Table 3. As can be gleaned from the table, all the 12 webinar – events obtained an excellent overall impression, that is, 4.87, 4.83, 4.82, 4.87, 4.89, 4.85, 4.87, 4.86, 4.86, 4.89, 4.87, and 4.84, respectively. The composite mean is 4.86 with a descriptive rating of excellent. This indicates that participants agree that the technicality and organization, registration process, email notification and follow-up, platform, audio-video clarity, and host and moderators are highly acceptable. It means that all the webinars are well-organized and provided high quality of administrative assistance.

#### 4. Challenges and Impact of the Webinars on the New Normal Education

Although the center was able to systematize its workflows and processes, planning and organizing online events such as webinars offer an array of program management challenges. Since its inception, one major challenge in organizing such an

event is online etiquette. Following etiquette is a must not only for face-to-face social events, but also refers to the world of online communication (Porowska, 2020). A large number of those who attended the center’s online events are outsiders, thus it’s difficult to control their online etiquette. As part of its system, once a participant is registered, an email containing some reminders are sent automatically to avoid such a challenge. According to Fabian (2018), attending an online presentation or meeting and not being able to get anything out of it is attributed to the presenter or fellow attendees who are unprepared or unfamiliar with how to behave in a formal, online environment.

Another challenge identified by the center in conducting online events is internet bandwidth. Participants, including the organizers, are working from their home. Stable internet connection can affect the delivery and conduct of a successful webinar. All events organized by the center are broadcasted in a live setting via an online platform. Despite of the said limitation, the organizers always find ways to get through or address technical issues should they arise .

They make sure they know how to work the webinar controls (Tiffany, 2017). As part of its online etiquette rules, all audiences are advised to turn off their audio and video while the program is on-going to save on the bandwidth.

Digital learning environments are increasingly popular in higher education and professional training (Gegenfurtner and Ebner, 2019). Thus, the center hosted and organized training sessions to prepare teachers, non-teaching staff, and other stakeholders in adapting to the needs of higher education in the new normal context. The center was able to partner and co-organized with several institutions such as the Association of Local Colleges and Universities to widen its audience reach. According to Gegenfurtner and Ebner (2019), teaching and learning via webinars, and web conferencing more broadly, represents one widely used approach. With the current situation in this pandemic, hosting and organizing online academic events will become a necessity for higher education institutions.

The impact of conducting online events such as webinars have been studied way back before the pandemic. Nagy and Bernschütz (2016), emphasize that using online video presentations is increasingly gaining ground in higher education. With the commitment of the college in quality higher education, the center was able to host and organize several online academic events that catered not only to its faculty, staff, and students, but with that of the whole community at the regional and national level. The academic events boosted the online presence of the college. More so, the availability of the online videos can be utilized to supplement students' classes that will eventually result in improvement in grades and it contributes to reducing dropout rates (Nagy and Bernschütz, 2016).

## 5. Conclusions

Results show that the creation of the Center for Academic Events of the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs posed challenges for the City College of Angeles. With the transformation of the education in the new normal, it is clearly acknowledged that the vision of the college is

as an institution of hope. With whatever happened, the college is ready to face the new normal in education. This is shown in the webinars that were sponsored by the center. In all the webinars, the organizers observed the following issues: maintaining the attentiveness of the participants, technical issues, limitation on non-verbal communication, limited time, cost efficiency, and convenience webinar (choice time frame and accessibility).

The webinars organized were all found to be relevant. The extent to which the content of the webinar - events matches the announced objectives. The time allocated for discussion, interaction between resource speakers and participants, depth of treatment of the topic, pace of delivery of the webinar – events, and length of the webinars were all adequate. Through the webinars, there are improvement in the participants' confidence in performing their work. In an interview conducted with some of the participants, they mentioned that the webinars are extremely helpful in the delivery of instruction. The concepts presented were very useful, the extent to which they acquired new knowledge on pedagogy, resource based learning, instructional design are sufficient, extent to which they acquired skills that were new to them is adequate, and extent to which they found new sources of information and skills were useful in the delivery of instruction. Overall, the webinars guide the current abilities of the participants in using the knowledge and skills they acquired and learned.

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## Philippine MICE Tourism Post-Covid 19: An Overview of Challenges and Opportunities

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The unprecedented impact of the novel corona-virus (COVID-19) adversely affected the Philippine Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) industry. Optimistic forecasts and expected increases in arrivals and investments in infrastructure were stifled by travel restrictions, involuntary quarantine, and social distancing bringing the industry to a standstill. However, the pandemic offers a unique opportunity to rethink and innovate strategies to transform MICE tourism. Anchored on the value-chain and stakeholder theories, this paper argues that recommendations from stakeholders are critical as the industry pivots into the new normal. Using primary and secondary data, the study reveals that the barriers include limited MICE infrastructure, intermittent internet connectivity, and non-targeted marketing campaigns. On the other hand, the study shows that the Philippines can leverage on its human resources, authentic tourism products, and opportunities for strong collaboration. Although the respondents were limited to a panel of industry experts, the results of this exploratory research resonate with similar studies. Further empirical studies may reveal its feasibility for sustained growth and development in a post-COVID-19 MICE tourism landscape. Moreover, the pandemic may provide the impetus to further strengthen the collaboration and partnership between stakeholders across the MICE value chain.

*Keywords: MICE Tourism, Philippines, post COVID-19, Stakeholders*

### 1. Introduction

The Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) reported that the overall business travel spending totaled US\$1.4 trillion in 2019 (BTI Outlook, 2021). Statistics from the International Congress and Convention Association revealed that there were 13,254 meetings held in the same year (ICCA, 2019). In addition, the UFI-Global Association of the Exhibition Industry (UFI, 2019) reported that 32,000 exhibitions are held annually showcasing 4.5 million exhibitors seen by over 303 million visitors. The Philippines, on the other hand, generated Php550.2 billion in international tourism receipts from 8.3 million arrivals in 2019 (PWC Philippines, 2020).

In 1982, the Philippines was ranked eighth worldwide in the list of top convention destinations. In the same year, the country was listed as the top Asian destination for business events (Manila Bulletin, 2018). The Philippines was also a major signatory to the 1980 Manila Declaration on Tourism, 1997 Manila Declaration on Social Impact of Tourism and the Sixth International UNWTO Conference on Tourism Statistics. Aside

from natural and cultural attractions, the Philippines is acknowledged for its unique brand of hospitality and cosmopolitan environment. The country is also home to the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC) and the Philippine Airlines (PAL), first convention center and the first commercial airline in Asia, respectively. But it has not been leveraging these and other resources to enhance its competitive advantages. The country has consistently trailed behind Singapore, Thailand, and Indonesia in terms of the annual number of meetings hosted and delegate arrivals.

Table I RANK OF SELECTED  
COUNTRIES  
FOR THE YEARS 2015-2019

Year	Thailand	Singapore	Indonesia	Philippines
2015	# 6	#1	#12	#13
2016	#5	#6	#11	#14
2017	#6	#7	#11	#13
2018	#5	#8	#11	#12
2019	#6	#8	#10	#13

Table I summarizes the rank of selected countries based on the number of meetings hosted for the years 2015-2019; while Table II enumerates the number of meetings hosted for the same period. These data were based on statistics from the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA).

Table II NUMBER OF MEETINGS HOSTED FOR THE YEARS 2015-2019

Year	Thailand	Singapore	Indonesia	Philippines
2015	151	156	78	57
2016	174	151	94	66
2017	163	160	89	56
2018	193	145	122	64
2019	162	149	95	72

Moreover, the impact of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) reset gains generated from a steady increase in the number of MICE events hosted over the past five years. As early as the first quarter of 2020, the Philippine Department of Tourism (DOT) reported a 36% reduction in international tourist receipts amounting to losses of PHP279.5 billion. (PWC Philippines, 2020). Almost 80% of tourism-related businesses have chosen to temporarily halt operations expecting 50% of revenues lost during the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) that was implemented on March 16, 2020 (PWC Philippines, 2020). However, these figures are not indicative of the impact on the MICE sector since the Philippines neither has an updated database nor metrics on business tourism despite its inclusion as a key priority tourism product (PACEOS, 2020).

This paper argues that the Philippines needs to revisit strategies outlined in MICE Roadmap 2030. This business model that was jointly prepared by DOT in collaboration with the Board of Investments (BOI) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) may need to incorporate stakeholder interest. Recommendations from stakeholders “can guide the creation of suitable strategies contributing to the recovery process and transformation of the sector (Rwigema, & Celestin (2020, p. 201).” The role of stakeholders in the success of MICE tourism

has been underscored in several studies that relate to the use of information and communications technologies (Buhalis, 2019); relationships with event managers (Kokkomäki et al., 2010; Jungyoung et al., 2017); and strategies for crisis recovery (Rwigema & Celestin, 2020; Rittichainuwata et al (2020); Sangpikul & Kim, 2009).

Bueno et al (2020) also emphasized that “intermediaries are key stakeholders in the design and production of the MICE product since they facilitate the path between buyers and suppliers (pp. 6-7).” Thus, the respite brought about by COVID-19 is a most opportune time to reposition the Philippines as a MICE destination with inputs from intermediaries who have been severely affected by the pandemic. Moreover, this paper is anchored on the value-chain approach and network analysis proposed by Soteriades & Dimou (2011) and tourism transformation through innovation theory by Brouder (2020). The former proposed the “optimum use of human and natural resources, taking into account the needs of all stakeholders, while encouraging the building of connections, identifying common concerns, capacity building, and coordination of effort, and has direct implications for the kinds of networks that could influence events tourism” (p. 335). On the other hand, the latter postulated that “tourism transformation can occur if there is sufficient institutional innovation resulting from both the demand and supply sides of tourism (p. 484).”

## 2. Method

For this exploratory research, a combination of primary and secondary data were collected. The study adopted a qualitative descriptive (QD) approach to understand the challenges and the opportunities in a post-pandemic MICE industry in the Philippines. This approach has been acknowledged as “appropriate for research questions focused on discovering the who, what, and where of events or experiences and on gaining insights from informants regarding a poorly understood phenomenon and when the time or resources are limited” (Neergaard, et al., 2009; Sullivan-Bolyai et al., 2005).

Preparations for this research began before the pandemic but interviews were

conducted during the initial stages of the lockdown in the Philippines. Face-to-face interviews were not an option given the travel restrictions, social distancing and other quarantine policies issued by the Office of the President (CNN Philippines, 2020). The experts were also geographically distant from each other preventing the possibility of conducting focus group meetings. Probing and in-depth live discussions would pose challenges given the intermittent internet signal. Thus, the study maximized the use of internet tools such as Facebook Messenger and Gmail to solicit the participation of eight industry experts who agreed to respond to the questionnaire via email.

The experts were selected using a purposive sampling method. Each one represented a key MICE sector, namely, accommodations, entertainment, marketing and creative services, travel agency, tour association, information and communications technology, national tourism organization, and the academe. The design of the questionnaire was adapted from tourism scales on convention city attributes developed by Baloglu & Love (2005). It had 10 questions focusing on seven themes, namely, infrastructure, human resources, industry collaboration, ease of doing business, branding, political climate, and tourism products and services. In order to support the primary data collected, an online search for relevant information was conducted using the keywords “Philippine tourism,” “MICE tourism,” “impact of COVID-19 on MICE,” and “MICE destination strategies.” An analysis of literature included textbooks, reports, and research articles. In addition, online conferences presented between March and April 2020 that were organized by the DOT, UNWTO, WTTC, ICCA, and UFI were likewise reviewed.

### **3. Results and Analysis**

According to the 2030 Philippine MICE Roadmap, the forecasted Gross Value Added (GVA) of MICE would reach PHP1.4 billion by 2030. The average rate of increase in delegate expenditure would increase by 19% from 2016 generating PHP24.6 billion in revenues by 2030. This was based on a forecasted annual three percent increase in

arrivals for the period 2016 to 2030 (DOT, BOI, DTI, 2018). In terms of infrastructure, 10,000 square meters of usable exhibition space were expected to be completed in the same period. Overall, these were predicted to boost the rank of the Philippines from number 16 in 2016 to number 10 by 2030 among the countries listed in the Asia Pacific cluster (DOT, BOI, DTI, 2018).

However, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has reset the gains and forecasts of increased growth in sales, revenue, and scope. It is now imperative to conduct a rigorous review of financial assumptions, business models, and strategies. Furthermore, Seraphin (2020) emphasized the critical importance of updating MICE strategies as we review the significance of the role of stakeholders in the tourism value chain (Roxas et al., 2020) in preparation for a post-COVID environment.

Based on the results of the primary and secondary data, there are three major barriers that may hinder the progress of the Philippine MICE industry in a post-pandemic scenario, namely, infrastructure, business climate and branding. On the other hand, soft skills, authentic tourism products, and industry collaboration were identified as providing the best opportunities for growth and expansion. These findings resonate with the results of similar studies undertaken in Galicia and Santiago de Compostela (Morla and Ladkin, 2006); Hong Kong (Lau, Simon & Wong, 2010); Macao (Kit et al., (2015); Rwanda (Rwigema, & Celestin (2020); Sri Lanka (Chandana, 2013); and Thailand (Sangpikul & Kim, 2009; Jurakanit & Taweepornpatomkul, 2018).

The panel of industry experts overwhelmingly agreed that the current state of internet connectivity, public transportation and airport facilities are in disarray. In addition, there is a “dearth of globally-compliant MICE venues outside of the National Capital Region (NCR), limited availability of Halal and Kosher restaurants as well as the absence of local cultural centers.” It is generally argued that convention centers and facilities are the key selection factors for holding international events. According to Sylla et al. (2015), “infrastructure is the basic requirement in the planning process of MICE events. Transport accessibility, quality of hotel services and the

capacity of congress facilities are elements constituting a competitive advantage of one destination over another” (p. 118). Moreover, mobility and access are impeded by limited modes of transportation and the slow internet connection. Inevitably, the limited infrastructure may adversely affect the country’s reputation to bid for and host international events in a post COVID-19 scenario.

According to industry experts, coordinated efforts are also needed to present a strong MICE brand. A strong brand image can become the competitive advantage of a destination (Kotler et al., 1993; Hoque, 2016). This includes environmental cues and intangibles such as safety, security, convenience, and accessibility that are important to high-value clients. De Lara & Har (2008) emphasized that “prices may remain a key decision factor for the choice of MICE destinations, but the intangible elements of host cities/destinations, i.e. scenic beauty, social and cultural attractions, and diversity of tourism activities would receive equal or greater importance in the choice of MICE destinations...this is where Asia, would have the greatest advantage” (p. 180).

However, member-countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region have similar attributes: warm weather, natural wonders, and a rich cultural heritage. Therefore, the Philippines requires a distinct positioning that highlights its competitive advantages and unique characteristics. For example, the slogan, “It’s More Fun in the Philippines,” is better suited for the leisure market whose interests are tourist-related activities such as adventure, shopping, and cultural trips. In comparison, the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) emphasizes “sustainability, modern, artistic, revolutionary, and transforming” in its marketing campaign for business events. On the other hand, the slogan of the Singapore Convention and Exhibition Bureau (SCEB), “passion made possible,” is anchored on its framework of customer centricity, ecosystem, and performance (SCEB, 2020). These examples articulate that the image presented may be seen as the sum total of the brand personality as well as the anticipated tourist experience (Temporal, 2000).

To strengthen its position, the industry panel argued for “MICE marketing initiatives that are directed towards specific markets such as the Middle East, North America, and Asia.” Tinnish & Mangal (2012) proposed a sustainable marketing model designed to “differentiate the brand, drive innovation and creativity, save costs and promote social responsibility” (pp. 235-236). For example, the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) and the TCEB highlight their internet connectivity, smart city attributes, quality management systems, and research. Both tourism agencies are proactively marketing their destinations for the years 2021-2025 (SCEB, 2020; TCEB, 2020). These are in contrast with the panel’s observation of the short-term, tactical activities implemented in the Philippines instead of strategic medium to long-term marketing campaigns. Unlike traditional techniques, event marketing focuses heavily on stakeholder needs and preferences for concept design, event execution, and metrics that are custom-designed for each one project (Hall, 1997). Moreover, restarting MICE tourism will require consistent messages emphasizing compliance with strict WTTC and UNWTO health and safety protocols. These action programs include the need to rebuild trust and confidence as well as the creation of new normal operating policies without sacrificing a safe experience (UNWTO 2020a, p. 2). MICE tourism, unlike leisure tourism, is designed for business travellers who demand services that are safe, secure, and inclusive. According to Amadeus (2021), “80% of business travellers are willing to pay more to ensure the highest quality standards for their trips (p. 8). Aside from the issues related to infrastructure and branding, there is limited participation of stakeholders in national and local MICE policy creation.

From the industry’s point of view, MICE tourism may not progress if there is no coherent strategy, and consistent safe travel protocols. These arguments are aligned with the UNWTO policies regarding safe, seamless, and hygienic travel as the key to attracting business delegates and foreign event planners in a post COVID landscape (UNWTO, 2020). Although the DOT has released guidelines for MICE events and venues, consistency in the implementation of these protocols will be key in securing bids

for business tourism. Meeting planners prefer destinations that offer economic opportunities and favorable business climate (De Lara & Har, 2008, p. 173). From a macroeconomic perspective, it is critical to review the national tourism ecosystem specifically, the current business models, use of government funds, and operational structure (Sigala, 2021).

The respondents recommended that information and communications technologies (ICTs) capabilities must match global standards. The popularity of webinars, live conference and virtual exhibition may soon become part of the norm. These would require a new skillset on the use of chatbots, augmented reality, and computer-enhanced production design and staging, among others. In addition, the establishment of a “one-stop-shop MICE office” and a special “MICE lane at the airports” are essential services for stakeholders that must be made available even during the ECQ to begin benchmarking best practices applicable for a post-pandemic scenario. According to the Center for Exhibition Industry Research (CEIR), “77% of executives based in the United States believe that virtual events will become a bigger component of their physical events” (Ex-Link Events, 2021). Furthermore, updated statistics on business tourism sectors can be used for tourism planning and development. It may be challenging, if not impossible, to compete with other MICE destinations whose strategies are based on research (Sangpikul & Kim, 2009). Among the key research areas are big data analytics, smart tourism, co-creation, delegate journey, MICE metrics and evaluation tools, use of information and communications technologies (ICTs), quality management standards, event sustainability, and participant behavior. In addition, access to real-time data is necessary to empower stakeholders (McKinsey & Company, 2020, p. 6).

Despite these challenges, the industry experts identified three main strengths of the Philippine MICE sector, namely, human resources, wide availability of tourism products, and the potential for industry collaboration. According to the industry’s perspective, MICE organizers have well-honed customer service skills with an innate understanding of hospitality. They are also

acknowledged as “industrious, flexible, creative and demonstrate competency in English.” These strengths form the Philippine event experience that “integrates dimensions, such as physical environment, social actors, and participants and organizational dynamics and features of service delivery, which, in turn, influence the way the tourist lives the experience” (Campos et al., 2015, p. 21). However, the respondents “caution against complacency, lack of global competency standards, self-interest, and the tendency to initiate short-term tactical campaigns which may impede collective progress.” Arena (2020) reported that event organizers in Asia Pacific are “embracing new technologies, new communication strategies and new revenue structures to ride the coronavirus wave and, ultimately, emerge stronger” (p. 16). When seen from a positive point of view, the pandemic provides an opportunity for both professional and new managers to level up their skills with professional certifications for consistent service delivery (De Lara & Har, 2008; Kraaijenbrink, 2020). Furthermore, these skills may be deployed for the Philippines to position itself as a training hub for global standards in event management.

With reference to the range of products, the National Tourism Development Plan (NTDP) 2016-2020 prioritizes eight other products aside from MICE tourism, namely, education tourism nature-based tourism, cultural tourism, sun and beach tourism, leisure and entertainment tourism, health, wellness, and retirement tourism, cruise and nautical tourism, and diving and marine sports tourism (DOT, 2011). Unlike destinations with limited attractions, the Philippines has an enviable list. However, it is important that a product matches its intended segment to ensure success (De Lara & Har, 2008, p. 173). These can be achieved through the identification of niche markets and the use of a focused differentiation strategy that appeals to the unique preferences of a specific target segment (Thompson et al. 2010, p 157).

These arguments match the insights from the panel. They recommended that the portfolio may be improve with creating MICE products and services that are “culture-specific, thematic, and activity-based.” The respondents recommended “high-yield,

sustainable, and authentic offers such as destination weddings, slow food and gastronomic tours, island cruises, soft adventure as well as tours to indigenous communities.” Thus, re-positioning the Philippines as a MICE destination may empower delegates to co-create their experiences by actively participating in the design, creation, and evaluation of their journey as they immerse themselves in authentic travel experiences. Furthermore, their engagement may help contribute to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

A major opportunity is to tap tourist source markets into a bleisure sector where business is combined with leisure activities. Expedia Research (2018) shows that 52% percent of international business trips turn into bleisure trips. These trips average 6.8 days where 57% percent is devoted to business and 43% is used for leisure. Moreover, the preferred bleisure activities by are easily accessible in the Philippines. For example, food and restaurants (56%), beaches (52%), natural attractions (51%), historical monuments and sightseeing (49%), museums, art and culture (41%), and outdoor recreation (39%). Foreign tourists interested in bleisure are among the major markets of the Philippines, namely, the United States and China (DOT, 2018). Furthermore, estimates show that MICE visitors in the Philippines spend six times more than leisure travellers (Francisco et al, 2017).

The success of any strategy requires stakeholder confidence, trust, and the willingness to adapt. Dwyer & Mistilis (1999) revealed that the most difficult challenge in MICE tourism is industry cooperation (p. 87). Likewise, the respondents observed that MSMEs, who form the majority of the sector, do not have a unified voice to lobby for support neither are they organized to seamlessly coordinate service delivery.

Aside from the concept of teamwork, the industry can tap into the Filipinos’ sense of *bayanihan*. It is often referred to as the spirit of solidarity and compassion “without expecting a reward...although the favor is expected to be paid forward in one’s lifetime to another person in need” (Ealdama, 2012, n. p.). It is interesting to note that the Philippine

government is also “depending on *bayanihan* from the local government units (LGUS) and the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) in its fight against COVID-19” (The Philippine Star, 2021). This act of extending assistance matches the UNWTO recommendation to strengthen community participation in tourism towards the new normal. The UNWTO has shifted its focus from the urban landscape to inclusive community development. Instead of a public-private partnership, the organization refocused initiatives through a public-private-community partnerships (PPCP) approach (p. 16). Moreover, the framework empowers communities by

... fostering innovation, digitalization and entrepreneurship including the digitalization of the whole tourism ecosystem and social entrepreneurship through support to local micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) that is critical to empowering and developing communities, providing them competitive advantages and access to the markets at both national and regional levels (UNWTO, 2020b, pp. 8, 14).

Stakeholders may use social media and mobile applications for collaborative commerce as well as to coordinate in the implementation of health and safety protocols. According to the UNWTO (2020b), “digitalization is expected to continue propelling the travel experience on its trajectory towards becoming more seamless, frictionless, and high quality and in a way that contributes to the achievement of the SDGs of the United Nations.” Although the internet download speed in the Philippines is 16.7 mbps as compared with 60.5 mbps, 34.4 mbps, and 33.2 mbps for Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, respectively (Hootsuite & We Are Social, October, 2020), it logs in 9.45 hours per day with an average of 4 hours and 15 minutes per day on social media (Hootsuite & We Are Social, January 2021) which can be redirected towards, communication, collaboration and coordination. Thus, the focus on the community as a key player may be achieved through interconnectivity using

best available technologies and devices to help ensure their active participation in tourism programs.

Warschauser (2004) posited that “what is most important about ICT is not so much the availability of a computing device or the internet ...but rather the people’s ability to make use of that device and line to engage in meaningful social practices” (p. 9). Furthermore, the Philippine government may “take advantage of the respite to reimagine, transform, review existing operating structures, and reduce the digital gap among MSMEs for a better normal” (McKinsey & Company, August 2020).

#### 4. Conclusion

This paper seeks to emphasize the need to incorporate stakeholder recommendations in restarting tourism. Without a clear end in sight, the response to COVID-19 requires more than a paradigm shift. As an exploratory research, this study has some limitations. First, it used a purposive sampling method that may not represent the majority. Second, it was written during the first phase of the lockdown in the Philippines when stakeholders have yet to fully understand the extent of the crisis.

Although this study is generally conceptual and requires empirical data, it presents a starting point for discussion of the potential challenges and opportunities based on opinions of industry experts that reflect results from similar researches. Authors also agree that a revisit of pre-pandemic strategies is necessary to pivot into the new normal. Future research agenda may focus on collaborative solutions, leveraging on opportunities, developing a knowledge database, redesign of strategies, and the use of technologies to empower stakeholders as they build stronger partnerships for consistent service delivery.

Furthermore, researches focusing on the trade exhibitions and incentive travel markets, hybrid and virtual platforms may be conducted with a larger number of respondents. Thus, this study seeks to underscore the urgent need to include stakeholder opinions in the Philippines’ bid to become a preferred MICE destination in a post-COVID-19 environment.

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## ASSESSMENT ON EVENT MANAGEMENT SERVICE COMPETENCIES OF SELECTED EVENT MANAGERS IN TAGUIG CITY

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The aim of the study is to assess the level of events management service competencies of selected event managers in Taguig City, to see if they conform with the standards of Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) which utilizes the Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) Competency Based Curriculum National Certificate Level III for Events Management. The study used a quantitative research method that generates numerical data. This research used descriptive research design to describe characteristics of a population or phenomenon being studied. The study used purposive sampling technique which is a type of non-probability sampling that is most effective when one needs to study a certain cultural domain with knowledgeable experts with. Based on the study, the event managers of the selected event companies that was assessed based on the competencies of events management and services in terms of Plan and Develop Event Proposal and Bid, Develop an Event Concept, Develop an Event Program, Select Event Venue and Site, Develop and Update Event Industry Knowledge, Provide On-site Event Management Services, Develop and Update Knowledge on Protocol and Manage Contractors for Indoor Events was competent. The research focused only on the events managers and their clients in selected event companies in Taguig City.

**Keywords:** *events management, competency-based, event concept, event industry, event manager*

### 1. Introduction

Event management is the application of project management to the creation and development of large-scale events such as festivals, conferences, ceremonies, weddings, formal parties, concerts, or conventions. It involves studying the brand, identifying its target audience, devising the event concept, and coordinating the technical aspects before actually launching the event. (Ramsborg, et.al, 2008)

The recent developments in the event management industry of the Philippines showed that Event Management is one of the careers in the future of this country. Several events are being divided into smaller and niche events. In the food industry, there are several big events that were narrowed and segmented to cater to a very particular audience. One factor that is driving this trend towards niche is the explosion of knowledge and birth of different subgroups and sub associations. This trend is not only true for the food industry, but also true for other industries as well. From Metro Manila, other events branched out to other locations.

Prominently, there are growths experienced in terms of number of events in Metro Davao and Metro Cebu. Other less known provinces, but with economic capabilities are also a hub for events that were once only found in Metro Manila. (Ex – Link Events, 2019)

The study aimed to assess the level of events management service competencies of selected event managers in Taguig City. The competencies for event planning include planning and developing an event proposal bid, concept, and program; selecting the event venue and site; and developing and updating event industry knowledge. The competencies for onsite management include providing onsite management services, managing contractors for indoor events, and developing and updating knowledge on protocols. It also includes competencies on leading workplace communication and small teams, controlling and ordering stock, and establishing business relationships. (TESDA Events Management Services Training Regulations)

**Competency is the combination of observable and measurable knowledge, skills, abilities and personal attributes that**

**contribute to enhanced employee performance and ultimately result in organizational success. To understand competencies, it is important to define the various components of competencies.**

Knowledge is the cognizance of facts, truths and principles gained from formal training and/or experience. Application and sharing of one's knowledge base are critical to individual and organizational success. A skill is a developed proficiency or dexterity in mental operations or physical processes that is often acquired through specialized training; the execution of these skills results in successful performance. Ability is the power or aptitude to perform physical or mental activities that are often affiliated with a particular profession or trade such as computer programming, plumbing, calculus, and so forth. Although organizations may be adept at measuring results, skills and knowledge regarding one's performance, they are often remiss in recognizing employees' abilities or aptitudes, especially those outside of the traditional job design. (Business and Finance Human Resources, University of Nebraska-Lincoln)

Individual attributes are properties, qualities or characteristics of individuals that reflect one's unique personal makeup. Individual attributes are viewed as genetically developed or acquired from one's accumulated life experiences. Although personal characteristics are the most subjective of the components, a growing, significant body of research links specific personality traits to successful individual and organizational performance. (Business and Finance Human Resources, University of

Nebraska-Lincoln) The Events Management National Certificate Level III qualification is designed to enhance the knowledge, skills, behavior and motivations in accordance with industry standards. It covers the basic, common and core competencies required for the National Certificate Level III in coordinating events. The competencies for event planning include planning and developing an event proposal, bid, concept, and program, selecting event venue and site, and developing and updating event industry knowledge.

## **2. Methodology**

This study used a quantitative research method that generates numerical data. It emphasizes objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires, and surveys, or by manipulating pre-existing statistical data using computational techniques. The aim of the questionnaire is to assess the clients and event managers and to test the level of event management service competencies of selected event managers in Taguig City.

The researchers utilized Purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, it is a form of non-probability sampling in which the researchers rely on their own judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in their study.

There was a total of 18 respondents of the study which comprised three event managers and three clients from three selected event management companies in Taguig City.

### 3. Results and Analysis

TABLE 1  
Plan and Develop Event Proposal and Bid

Category	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
The contents of the event brief are accurately interpreted and the company's capacity to meet stated requirements is assessed.	3.44	Highly Competent
Action required for the development of the proposal or bid is identified and planned.	3.11	Competent
Liaison with customer is undertaken to clarify requirements when appropriate.	3.28	Highly Competent
Details for inclusion in the proposal/bid are developed after consultation with suppliers and other relevant agencies	3.28	Highly Competent
Options to meet and where possible, exceed the expectations of the customer are developed including integration of current and emerging technology.	3.22	Competent
Possible competitors are evaluated and strategies to address competitive issues are developed.	3.00	Competent
Bid materials are prepared within the designated time lines in accordance with the requirements of the brief.	2.72	Competent
Materials are presented in a format that maximizes the use of presentation and promotional techniques.	3.00	Competent
The proposal/bid is delivered within the prescribed time line.	3.17	Competent

Proposal/bid presentation is conducted with maximum visual/retention impact.	3.00	Competent
<b>Overall mean</b>	<b>3.12</b>	<b>Competent</b>

Table 1 illustrates the competency, Plan and Develop Event Proposal and Bid. Based on the findings from category one to ten the verbal interpretation constitutes competent than highly competent and the overall mean is 3.12. Therefore, the verbal interpretation is competent.

TABLE 2  
Develop an Event Concept

Category	Weighted Mean	Verbal interpretation
The key objectives of the event are identified, clarified and agreed with the stakeholder	3.00	Competent
Key information is analyzed and stakeholders are consulted to determine the broad scope of the event including indicators for:		
1. size and numbers of guests/delegates		
2. audience/participant needs	3.00	Competent
3. location (s)		
4. duration		
5. Financial investment and other resource issues.		
Internal and external factors are analyzed which may impact on the event.	3.22	Competent
An overall event concept, theme and format are developed which reflect key objectives and meet the needs of the potential audience.	3.00	Competent
Creative elements are incorporated into the event concept and theme.	3.11	Competent
Operational practicality and cohesiveness of the concept, theme and format are verified through consultation and analysis.	2.89	Competent
A summary of key logistical requirements is developed based on the overall concept, theme and format.	3.00	Competent
Accurate and complete information on the concept, theme and format is provided	2.72	Competent

to all relevant stakeholders to facilitate timely and effective planning and implementation. Approval from stakeholders is obtained prior to implementation.	3.05	Competent
Overall mean	2.99	Competent

Table 2 shows the competency, Development of an Event Concept. From first category up to the last, all the findings are competent. Therefore, all the participating event companies are competent in terms of how to develop of an event concept. The overall mean is 2.99.

TABLE 3  
Develop Event Program

Category	Weighted Mean	Verbal interpretation
Overall context and scope of the conference are identified.	3.06	Competent
Specific conference objectives are developed and agreed with in consultation with colleagues and/or guests' dates and time are set to meet agreed objectives.	2.50	Moderately Competent
A theme is developed to complement event objectives.	2.55	Competent
Overall event format is developed within known budget, venue and staging constraints.	3.11	Competent
Relevant components are identified, designed and integrated in the program.	3.06	Competent
The use of appropriate Technological options are identified and integrated in program development.	2.94	Competent
A business program is	2.78	Competent

developed to incorporate an appropriate range of activities		
The proposed event program is presented within required timeframe.	3.50	Highly Competent
Approval of program details is obtained.	2.83	Competent
Appropriate actions are undertaken in relation to the dissemination and publication of the event program.	3.00	Competent
Overall	2.93	Competent

Table 3 illustrates the competency, Develop Event Program. The first category has a mean of 3.06 which constitutes competent in the total tally, second category has a mean of 2.50 which constitutes moderately competent in the said category, third category has a mean of 2.55 which constitutes competent, mean 3.11 is from category fourth which constitutes competent, mean 3.06 is from category five which constitutes competent, 2.94 is from the category six which constitutes competent, 2.78 is from category seven which constitutes competent also, from category eight it has a mean of 3.50 which constitutes highly competent, mean 2.83 is from the category nine which constitutes competent and lastly from the last category, there is a mean of 3.00 which constitutes competent of the total tally. The overall mean of table 5.1 is 2.93.

TABLE 4  
Select Event Venue and Site

Category	Weighted Mean	Verbal interpretation
Venue or site requirements are analyzed based on the detailed requirements of the proposed event with multiple components.	3.28	Highly Competent
Accurate and complete specifications of the venue or site are developed to facilitate the research process.	2.89	Competent

The needs of the stakeholders are integrated, including those with disabilities, into venue or site specifications.	2.55	Competent
Potential venues or sites are researched on using appropriate information sources	3.00	Competent
The suitability of venues or sites is assessed based on comparison of services offered with specifications.	3.17	Competent
The need for and the nature of contingency planning required by the venues or sites are assessed.	3.11	Competent
Venue or site capacity to deliver quality outcomes in relation to customer service, cooperative management, and past experience is assessed.	2.89	Competent
Personnel from potential venues or sites is negotiated and liaised with to ensure all event requirements can be met and to address potential problem areas.	3.22	Competent
The need for tentative bookings is assessed and prompt action is taken.	3.05	Competent
When required, multiple site and venue selection is coordinated in a logical manner.	2.72	Competent
Clear and accurate briefings on venue or site options are provided to colleagues and key stakeholders to include recommendation and rationale.	3.33	Highly Competent
Venue or site arrangements are accurately confirmed in writing when the selection process is finalized.	3.22	Competent
Venue or site contracts are reviewed and signed within appropriate timeframes and within the scope of individual responsibility.	2.94	Competent
Specific venue and site planning issues are integrated into overall event management systems promptly.	3.05	Competent

Overall 3.03 Competent

Table 4 shows the competency, Select Event Venue and Site. The first category has a mean of 3.28 which constitutes highly competent, second is 2.89 which constitutes competent, the third category has a mean of 2.55 which constitutes competent, 3.00 is from fourth which constitutes competent, the next has a mean of 3.17 which constitutes competent, 3.11 is from the next which constitutes competent, the next one has a mean of 2.89 which constitutes competent, next has a mean of 3.22 which constitutes competent, other is 3.05 which constitutes competent, 2.72 is also competent and the next is highly competent with the mean of 3.33, the next category has a mean of 3.22 which constitutes competent, the next category have a mean of 2.94 which constitutes competent and the last category has a mean of 3.05 which constitutes competent of the total tally.

TABLE 5

Develop and Update Event Industry Knowledge

Category	Weighted Mean	Verbal interpretation
Sources of information on the event industry are identified correctly including information relating to:		
1. industry structure		
2. different event types and staging elements		
3. event protocols	3.28	Highly Competent
4. major industry bodies/associations		
5. impacts of events on local economies		
6. Career opportunities.		
Knowledge of the event industry is used to enhance the quality of work performance.	2.89	Competent
Information on legal and ethical issues is obtained to assist effective work performance	3.00	Competent

Day-to-day event organization activities are conducted in accordance with legal obligations and ethical industry practices.	2.72	Competent	An accurate briefing is provided to operational staff and contractors prior to the meeting or event in an appropriate format including clarification of roles and responsibilities.	3.39	Competent
Information on current and emerging technologies that impact on event organization processes are obtained.	3.06	Competent	Contact with the nominated contractor personnel is established at the appropriate time to reconfirm all requirements.	2.67	Competent
The potential effects of different technologies are assessed on the event organization process.	3.00	Competent	Necessary adjustments are made and agreed with the contractors.	3.00	Competent
Knowledge of current and emerging technology is applied in day-to-day work activities.	2.89	Competent	All aspects of the event or meeting set up are checked against the pre-arranged agreements, including:		
A range of opportunities is identified and used to update knowledge of events industry.	3.11	Competent	1. availability of all materials and		
Monitor current issues of concern to the industry.	2.94	Competent	2. equipment		
Current issues of concern to the industry are monitored.	2.89	Competent	3. room set up	3.00	Competent
Updated knowledge is shared with guests and colleagues as appropriate, and incorporated into day-to-day work activities.	3.06	Competent	4. staging		
Overall	2.99	competent	5. technical equipment display and signage		
			6. food and beverage arrangements		
			7. registration areas.		
			The venue space and the set-up of the equipment are checked to allow for easy access, especially for those with disabilities, and to avoid risk of injury to guests, delegates and colleagues.	3.22	Competent
			Any deficiencies and discrepancies are identified and prompt action is taken to rectify the situation.	2.72	Competent
			Additional on-site staff is briefed on the full details of the meeting or event operation including communication and control mechanisms.	3.05	Competent
			Sessions and activities are monitored throughout the meeting or event through observation and appropriate reporting processes.	2.72	Competent
			Problems are identified as they arise and prompt action is taken to resolve the situation.	3.33	Highly Competent

Table 5 illustrates the competency, Develop and Update Event Industry Knowledge. In this table, there is only one highly competent which has a mean of 3.28 of the total mean in the first category and the rest is competent therefore, in Table 8, the event companies are all competent in terms of develop and update event industry knowledge.

TABLE 6

Provide On-Site Event Management Services

Category	Weighted Mean	Verbal interpretation
Plans for on-site management are developed in accordance with agreed procedures for the meeting or event.	3.28	Highly Competent
Final arrangements for all aspects of the meeting or event are checked and any discrepancies are attended to.	3.05	Competent
Materials are created and collated to facilitate effective on-site management.	2.72	Competent

Additional requirements are identified and promptly organized.	3.28	Highly Competent
The guest is liaised with throughout the meeting or event to ensure it is progressing to his/her satisfaction.	3.00	Competent
All contractors are liaised with to ensure effective delivery of services.	3.22	Competent
The breakdown of the meeting or event is overseen to ensure it is completed in accordance with agreements.	2.89	Competent
The packing and removal of all materials and equipment are coordinated in accordance with pre-Arranged details.	2.61	Competent
The venue is checked to ensure items and belongings are not left behind.	3.11	Competent
Accounts are checked and signed in accordance with contractor agreements.	3.39	Highly Competent
Any outstanding items requiring post-event action are noted.	2.50	Moderately Competent
Overall	3.00	Competent

Table 6 shows the competency, Provide On-site Event Management Services. There are four highly competent and sixteen competent sub-competencies. The overall mean is 3.00 which means all the event companies are doing their job well.

TABLE 7  
Develop and Update Knowledge on Protocol

Category	Weighted Mean	Verbal interpretation
Accurate information on protocol is acquired.	2.72	Competent
Relevant protocol information is accessed in response to workplace needs.	3.22	Competent
The areas of work activity that require appropriate use of protocol are identified in a timely manner.	3.17	Competent

The correct use of protocol is integrated into work activities.	3.06	Competent
Colleagues and other stakeholders are liaised with to determine appropriate protocol requirements.	2.94	Competent
Appropriate information on protocol is provided to colleagues and stakeholders.	2.50	Moderately Competent
Opportunities are identified and used to update protocol knowledge.	2.72	Competent
Updated knowledge is shared with guests and colleagues and incorporated into day-to-day working activities.	2.78	Competent
Overall	2.89	Competent

Table 7 illustrates Develop and Update Knowledge on Protocol. On the verbal interpretation there's only one moderately competent which has a mean of 2.50 and the rest is competent which has a mean of the following, 2.72, 3.22, 3.17, 3.06, 2.94, 2.72 and 2.78 of the total tallies. Therefore, there's one category on which the event companies have to improve.

TABLE 8  
Manage Contractors for Indoor Events

Category	Weighted Mean	Verbal interpretation
Event staging requirements are analyzed based on a detailed review of all aspects of the proposed event with multiple components.	3.39	Highly Competent

An accurate summary of staging requirements is developed for each event component in consultation with key stakeholders.	3.33	Highly Competent
Safety and risk management issues are incorporated into all planning documentation and processes.	3.28	Highly Competent
Appropriate contractors are identified and sourced to provide services for the event.	2.61	Competent
Accurate briefings or specifications on precise staging requirements are provided to contractors.	2.55	Competent
Complete and timely quotations are obtained for the provision of services.	3.17	Competent
Quotations are analyzed and contractors are selected in consultation with key stakeholders.	3.06	Competent
Agreements are confirmed with contractors in writing to include details and costs of all services.	3.06	Competent
Progress, including safety issues, is monitored at regular intervals through ongoing liaison with contractors and other stakeholders.	2.89	Competent

The need for adjustments is identified and appropriate changes are organized with confirmation in writing	3.11	Competent
Adjustment is negotiated to maintain the integrity and quality of the event.	3.06	Competent
Work completed is evaluated against event requirements and time schedules and appropriate action is taken to address delays.	3.44	Highly Competent
Overall	3.08	Competent

Table 8 illustrates the Manage Contractors for Indoor Event. The first, second third and the last category have an interpretation of highly competent which has a mean of 3.39, 3.33, 3.28 and 3.44, the remaining category has an interpretation of competent. The overall mean is 3.08. Therefore, Table 11 shows that the three events companies are competent in managing contractors for indoor events.

#### 4. Conclusion:

Based on this study, the event managers of the selected event companies that were assessed based on the competencies of events management and services in terms of Plan and Develop Event Proposal and Bid, Develop an Event Concept, Develop an Event Program, Select Event Venue and Site, Develop and Update Event Industry Knowledge, Provide on-site event management services, Develop and Update Knowledge on Protocol and Manage Contractors for Indoor Events were competent. The researchers concluded that the level of event management core competencies of selected event managers in Taguig City are met based on the set standards of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) using Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) Competency Based Curriculum - National Certificate Level III for Events Management. The researchers recommended to have further capability and skill development through intervention programs,

capability building and trainings to exceed the needs of the dynamic industry of hospitality and tourism.

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## TAGUIG CITY MELON FESTIVAL AS A DRIVER OF LOCAL TOURISM PROMOTION

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to measure the level of awareness on Melon Festival of the community in promoting Tourism of Taguig City. Awareness is the ability to directly know and perceive, to feel, or to be cognizant of events. It also describes as a state wherein a subject is aware of some information when that information is directly available. Descriptive quantitative research method was used in this study. It involves the description of the festival and locale, recording of data gathered from initial interview, analysis and interpretation of results based on the survey questionnaires and composition for processes of phenomena. The study dealt directly to the local community of selected barangays in Taguig City. The population of this study includes farmers, barangay officials and residents. The total population was sampled using the Slovin's formula and proportional stratified sampling. There were 450 respondents taken from the total population. Based on the findings derived from this study, the following conclusions were drawn, findings showed that the three groups of respondents were moderately aware about Melon Festival. Based on the data gathered, they were agreed that the reason why they attend festivals is because they want to experience the culture of one's place followed by the reason that they are interested in performances, excitement to the event, venue for social interaction and escape. There are more female attendees compare to male attendees and most of them are young teenagers age ranges from 18 and below. Local festivals are increasingly being used as instruments for promoting tourism.

**Keywords:** Festivals, Awareness, Culture, Tourism, Promotion

### 1. Introduction

A festival is an event ordinarily celebrated by a community and centering on some characteristic or national holiday. A festival constitutes typical cases of globalization, as well as the high culture-low culture interrelationship, *Caves (2004)*.

The Philippines has so many festivals: there are town fiestas celebrating foundation days, patron saints and a combination of both. These festivals are occasions when and where people converge, the same occasions when

Government units and the private sector become generous with funds. **Fiestas become important avenues for artistic engagement.** As artistic ventures especially in the Philippine countryside are always wanting in venues and avenues for artistic engagement, it is in these convergences that the artists find their audience.

The Philippine festival calendar is full. Every province, town and city celebrates foundation days, patronal fiestas and historic celebrations. While it is a hodgepodge and flurry of sports and commercial activities, oftentimes culture and the arts are the central motifs of the celebrations allowing artists to dare and engage in new projects. Depending on the local expertise, these fiestas become the stage for local visual arts, music and dance festivals. Cosmopolitan centers feature contemporary arts while others highlight traditions indigenous to the locale, Carino (2011).

According to the *Census of Population (2015)*, Taguig is the seventh most populous city in the Philippines with a population of 804,915 people. Located in the western shores of Laguna de Bay, the city is known for the Bonifacio Global City, one of the leading financial centers of the Philippines. Originally a fishing village during the Spanish and American colonial periods, the municipality experienced rapid growth when former military reservations were converted by the Bases Conversion and Development Authority into mixed-use planned communities and financial centers. Taguig was converted from a municipality into a highly urbanized city with the passage of Republic Act No. 8487 in 2004.

In 2011, during 424th foundation day of Taguig, former Mayor (now Congresswoman) Lani Cayetano takes pride in calling the city a “ProbinSyudad” because it is the only remaining city in Metro Manila which has the amenities of a highly urbanized city, yet has the feel and relaxing atmosphere of a province plus its people exude the values and magandang asal of the probinsyano, what with its more than 10 kilometers of lakeshore, with farmers, fishermen, old churches, a historic

lighthouse, and with people whose virtue of pagtutulungan is still very much alive.

The City of Taguig, (formerly spelled as Tagig), is a highly urbanized city located in south-eastern portion of Metro Manila in the Philippines. From a thriving fishing community along the shores of Laguna de Bay, it is now an important residential, commercial and industrial center. The recent construction of the C-5 highway and the acquisition of the Fort Bonifacio Development Area has paved the way for the cityhood of the municipality. It will also be accessed by the future C-6 Road, Guia, (2012).

Taguig City, May 15 (PIA) -- The city government of Taguig recently launched its first-ever Melon festival at Taguig Melon Farm in Barangay Wawa giving due credit to the sweet fruit that symbolizes the hard work of Taguigeño farmers. During the event, Taguigeño families from different barangays had an exciting and fun-filled afternoon as they joined various games such as Melon Relay, Melon Eating, Father-and-Son Melon Run, and Shoot That Melon which uses the fruit as an essential part of the game. There were also performances of stilt walkers. Variety of melon products and refreshments such as melon pancakes, melon jam, melon doughnuts, melon puto, melon ice candies, and melon juice were also made available during the festival.

Taguig City Mayor Lani Cayetano led the launching along with House Deputy Speaker and Taguig 2nd Dist. Rep. Pia Cayetano, Vice Mayor Ricardo “Ading” Cruz Jr. and other city officials. “This celebration is our way of gratitude to our Lord for providing continuous blessings to Taguig. We want to show everyone that despite our continuous progress as an

urbanized city, we do not forget our roots,” Cayetano said during the opening ceremonies. The city government through its City Agriculture Office provides technical assistance that includes the provision of Knapsack four-Stroke Power Sprayers and distribution of free vegetable seeds to farmers in the city. Taguig continues to support the agricultural sector not just by providing Taguigeño farmers equipment but also creating a platform where they can exhibit the significance of the farming community and to promote the city’s homegrown products.

The City Agriculture Office also conducts lectures, seminars and trainings regarding urban farming and gardening. “We are happy for the opportunity to promote our harvest. This will help us promote Taguig as the sole “Probinsyudad” in the Metro Manila and in return will help us in retain the remaining agricultural land in our city,” Cruz explained. Reynaldo Cruz, who is also the President of the Taguig Farmers Association.

The rapidly developing city, home of the Bonifacio Global City and the ARCA

## RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN

This study utilized a descriptive research. A descriptive research is used to describe characteristics or population being interpreted. It involves the description, recording, analysis, and interpretation of the present nature, composition or processes of phenomena. The focus is on prevailing conditions, or how a person, group, or thing behaves or function in the present. Quantitative research it is a structured way of collecting and analyzing data obtained from different sources. Quantitative research involves

South business districts, managed to retain 202 hectares of agricultural land used for cultivation of melon, rice and high-value crops like kinchay. The Taguig Integrated Urban Farm, which sits on a 2,500-square meter land beside Lakeshore Hall in Barangay Lower Bicutan was also launched last December 2017. The farm overlooking Laguna Lake integrates different kinds of urban farming setups—from gardens that showcase vertical farming that save space, to wooden rack and pole gardens. Guzman, (2018)

This research will give further discussion and explanation about the community awareness and the related influence constructs on the basis of the research motivation and purpose. The purpose of this study is to measure also the level of awareness on Melon Festival to the community of Barangay Wawa to promote Tourism of Taguig. Besides, for measuring awareness, it should be done according to the models. Awareness is the ability to directly know and perceive, to feel, or to be cognizant of events. Generally speaking, it is the state of being conscious of something.

## 2. Methodology

computational, statistical, and mathematical tools to derive results. It is conclusive in its purpose as it tries to quantify the problem and understand how prevalent it is by looking for projectable results to a larger population. This method also attempts to accurately describe the awareness level of individual or groups. Moreover, it may be defined as a purposive process of gathering analyzing classifying, and tabulating data about prevailing conditions, practices, beliefs, process, trends, and cause and effect relationships and then making adequate and accurate

interpretation about such data with the aid of statistical method.

#### POPULATION AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The study dealt directly to the local community of selected barangay in Taguig City. The population of the study includes farmers, barangay officials, and resident. This sampling method is conducted where each members of the population have an equal opportunity to become part of the sample. The sample

population of Brgy. Wawa is 128, Brgy. Bambang 115 and Brgy. Sta. Ana has 207 with a total population of 450 respondents.

#### RESPONDENTS OF THE STUDY

The respondents of this study were the selected local community of Barangay Wawa, Barangay Bambang and Barangay Sta. Ana in Taguig City. The total population of each Barangay is as shows in the table and the researchers got the total of 450 respondents.

### 3. Tables

TABLE I  
LEVEL OF MOTIVES OR REASONS OF RESPONDENTS FOR ATTENDING  
FESTIVAL IN TERMS OF EXCITEMENT

LEGENDS:

4.00-3.50 = Strongly Agree	2.49-1.50 = Moderately Agree
3.49-2.50 = Agree	1.49-1.00 = Disagree

Indicators	Barangay Wawa		Barangay Bambang		Barangay Ana		Sta.	Total	
	$\bar{x}$	V.I	$\bar{x}$	V.I	$\bar{x}$	V.I		$\bar{x}$	V.I
1. Motivated to attend an event/festival because of excitement.	3.20	A	3	A	3.11	A	3.10	A	
2. Excitement to the event's games/activities.	3.13	A	3.15	A	3.17	A	3.15	A	
3. Excitement to build memories.	3.30	A	3.17	A	3.29	A	3.25	A	
Overall Mean	3.12	A	3.10	A	3.19	A	3.16	A	

Table I reveals that the most likely reason why people attended the festival was in terms of excitement to build memories with the highest total weighted mean of 3.25, followed by the lowest rank with 3.11 of motivated to attend an event/festival because of excitement.

It was concluded on the study of Yuan et al. (2015) that the festival atmosphere attracted successfully to a large group of attendees who were motivated by the

prospect of enjoying a fun experience to which a festival will provide a venue for them to relax and have fun

TABLE II

Indicators	Barangay Wawa		Barangay Bambang		Barangay Ana		Sta.	Total	
	$\bar{x}$	V.I	$\bar{x}$	V.I	$\bar{x}$	V.I		$\bar{x}$	V.I
4. Wants to experience the culture of one's place.	3.30	A	3.30	A	3.14	A	3.25	A	
5. To experience local food..	3.13	A	3.16	A	3.29	A	3.19	A	
6. To appreciate local art, performances,	3.27	A	3.19	A	3.74	A	3.4	A	

and diversity of culture.									
Overall Mean	3.23	A	3.22	A	3.39	A	3.28	A	

LEVEL OF MOTIVES OR REASONS OF RESPONDENTS FOR ATTENDING FESTIVAL IN TERMS OF CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

Table II shows that the most likely reason why people attend festival in terms of cultural experience was that they wanted to experience the culture of one's place with the highest total weighted mean of 3.25, followed by 3.19; to experience local food and lowest rank with 3.4 is to

appreciate local art, performances and diversity of culture. On the previous study of Huang (2014), it was stated that festivals demonstrate new entertainment forms which enable the attendees to achieve their goals of cultural exploration entertainment novelty and socialization.

TABLE III

LEVEL OF MOTIVES OR REASONS OF RESPONDENTS FOR ATTENDING FESTIVAL IN TERMS OF ESCAPE

Indicators	Barangay Wawa		Barangay Bambang		Barangay Ana		Sta.	Total	
	$\bar{x}$	V.I	$\bar{x}$	V.I	$\bar{x}$	V.I		$\bar{x}$	V.I
7.The motivation to escape in to the usual environment.	2.77	A	2.67	A	2.75	A	2.73	A	
8. Relieve stress, depression and loneliness	3.20	A	3.19	A	2.95	A	2.99	A	
9. To seek freedom from the pressure of responsibilities	2.97	A	3.04	A	2.82	A	2.94	A	
Overall Mean	2.98	A	2.97	A	2.84	A	2.89	A	

Table III indicates that the most likely reason why people attended the festival was in terms of escape to relieve stress, depression and loneliness with the highest total weighted mean of 2.99, and the lowest rank with 2.73 of motivation to escape into the usual environment.

It is identified in the study of Nolasco (2012) 'Filipino's motives for traveling as: to social interaction, experience and to relax, learn and escape.

TABLE IV  
LEVEL OF MOTIVES OR REASONS OF RESPONDENTS FOR ATTENDING  
FESTIVAL IN TERMS OF SOCIAL INTERACTION

Indicators	Barangay Wawa		Barangay Bambang		Barangay Ana		Sta.	Total	
	$\bar{x}$	V.I	$\bar{x}$	V.I	$\bar{x}$	V.I		$\bar{x}$	V.I
10. To socialize with other visitor	3.09	A	3.20	A	3.10	A	3.13	A	
11. To have positive influence in better quality life	3.38	A	3.19	A	3.17	A	3.25	A	
12. To boost confidence and have a positive mind set	3.30	A	3.33	A	3.23	A	3.29	A	
Overall Mean	3.57	A	3.24	A	3.17	A	3.22	A	

Table IV displays that the most likely reason why people attended the festival in terms of social interaction was to boost confidence and have a positive mindset with the highest total weighted mean of 3.29, and the lowest rank with 3.13 of to socialize with other visitor. Nowadays, events are very important to our culture, being an important motivator of tourism. The increase of leisure time and the creates the opportunity to organize events on almost every subject and topic (Bowdin et al., 2012).

possibility of discretionary spending have led to a proliferation of public events, celebrations and entertainment. Governments now encourage and support events as strategy for economic development, nation building and destination marketing. The enthusiasm of community groups and individuals for their own interests and passions

TABLE V  
LEVEL OF MOTIVES OR REASONS OF RESPONDENTS FOR ATTENDING  
FESTIVAL IN TERMS OF INTEREST IN PERFORMANCE

Indicators	Barangay Wawa		Barangay Bambang		Barangay Ana		Sta.	Total	
	$\bar{x}$	V.I	$\bar{x}$	V.I	$\bar{x}$	V.I		$\bar{x}$	V.I
13. Motivated to attend because of interest in performances	3.37	A	3.17	A	3.34	A	3.29	A	

14. Amusement to the performers and guest	3.24	A	3.17	A	3.32	A	3.24	A
15. Influence of other attendees to watch the performances	3.16	A	3.18	A	3.31	A	3.22	A
Overall Mean	3.26	A	3.17	A	3.32	A	3.25	A

Table V indicates that the most likely reason why people attended the festival was in terms of interest in performance which motivated people to attend because of their interest in the performances of local or well-known performers with the highest total weighted mean of 3.29, and the lowest rank with 3.11 of influence of other attendees to watch the performances.

It is explained by Janiskee (2017) that the festival and events can be understood as ‘formal periods of programs in pleasurable activities, entertainment, or events having a festive character and publicly celebrating some happening, concept or fact.

TABLE VI  
LEVEL OF AWARENESS OF RESPONDENTS TO MELON FESTIVAL AND ACTIVITIES

Indicators	Barangay Wawa		Barangay Bambang		Barangay Sta. Ana		Total	
	$\bar{x}$	V.I	$\bar{x}$	V.I	$\bar{x}$	V.I	$\bar{x}$	V.I
Melon Festival is celebrated every month of May	2.51	A	2.16	MA	1.80	MA	2.18	MA
Melon festival was launched on May 7,2018	2.35	MA	2.04	MA	1.91	MA	2.06	MA
Melon Relay	2.32	MA	2.24	MA	2.13	MA	2.16	MA
Melon Eating	2.44	MA	2.16	MA	2.05	MA	2.24	MA
Father and Son	2.13	MA	2.04	MA	2.00	MA	2.07	MA
Melon Run								
Shoot that Melon	2.12	MA	1.91	MA	2.14	MA	2.01	MA
Melon Carving	2.33	MA	2.00	MA	2.21	MA	2.16	MA
Biggest Melon	2.32	MA	2.15	MA	1.80	MA	2.23	MA
	2.32	MA	2.09	MA	2.00	MA	2.14	MA
Overall Mean								

Table VI reveals that the level of awareness of the respondents for the activities and information above has a verbal interpretation of moderately aware meaning that the 450 respondents for the selected barangays of Taguig are moderately aware of the Melon Festival of Barangay Wawa. Barangay Wawa is the most aware among the two barangays for all the information and activities.

It showed that from 128 respondents of Barangay Wawa there are 2.50 weighted mean interpreted as moderately aware that the Melon Festival is celebrated every month of May, followed by 2.16 weighted mean of Barangay Bambang's 115 respondents and 1.88 of 207 respondents of Barangay Sta Ana. 2.35 weighted mean for Barangay Wawa rated as moderately aware that the Melon Festival was launched on May 7, 2018 followed by 2.04 weighted mean of Barangay Bambang and 1.80 weighted mean for Barangay Sta. Ana. Barangay Wawa rated as moderately aware with 2.35 weighted mean that Melon Festival

was launched on May 7, 2018. With the total combined weighted mean of 2.16 for both barangays to Melon Relay, 2.24 weighted mean to Melon Eating, 2.07 weighted mean in Father and Son Melon Run, 2.01 weighted mean to Shoot that Melon, 2.16 weighted mean to Melon Carving and 2.23 weighted mean to Biggest Melon are interpreted as moderately aware.

According to Hall S. (2013) Festival participants were mostly and generally regional residents. Awareness in the community has major reasons wherein communication itself is involved. First, it can be a catalyst for further development efforts in the community. Second, it also leads to a sense of responsibility for the project that is being implemented in the community. Third, it also guarantees the participant that a felt need is involved.

Lastly, it also ensures that things are done the right way and indigenous

knowledge and expertise have been used by the participants or residents themselves.

TABLE VII  
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE ON SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE AMONG THE LEVEL OF AWARENESS OF THE THREE GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS

	F-value	F crit	Decision	Interpretation
Level of Awareness	11.68	3.47	Reject Ho	Significant
X = 0.05 if computed value > Critical Value, Reject Ho				

Table VII shows the result of ANOVA on the significant difference among the level of awareness of the 3 groups of respondents. It is found out that there is a significant difference among the level of awareness of the respondents. The data showed that the computed F value of

11.68 is greater than the tabular or critical value of 3.47 leading to the rejection of null hypothesis. It means the levels of awareness of the respondents among the 3 different barangays are significantly different.

### 3. Mathematical Equation

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where:

n = sample

N = population

e = margin of error (0.05)

Slovin's Formula and Proportional stratified sampling were used. According to Stephanie (2012), concluded that statistics is a way of looking at a population's behavior by taking a sample. Slovin's formula is where a sample is taken from a population; this formula must be used to take into account confidence level and margins of error.

$$P = \frac{f}{n} \times 100$$

Where:

P – Percentage

f – Frequency

n – number of population

100 – Constant factor

Frequency and Percentage Distribution were utilized to quantify the demographic profile of the respondents. These tools were used to find out the part or the whole respondents profile based on the frequency/tally gathered.

$$x = \frac{\sum fw}{n}$$

Where:

$x$  – weighted mean  
 $f$  – frequency of response  
 $w$  – weight of an item

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the findings derived from this study, the following conclusions were drawn;

Findings showed that the three groups of respondents were moderately aware about Melon Festival. But it was hypothesized that there is a significant difference on the level of awareness to Melon Festival when they are grouped according to their residency and the respondents in Barangay Wawa was the most aware among the barangays. Based on the data gathered, they were agreed that the reason why they attend festivals is because they want to experience the culture of one's place followed by the reason that they are interested in

$n$  – total response

This was used to determine the assessment of the respondents with regards to their personal profile.

performances, excitement to the event, venue for social interaction and escape. There are more female attendees compare to male attendees and most of them are young teenagers age ranges from 18 and below. Local festivals are increasingly being used as instruments for promoting tourism. This is often reflected in the level of public assistance made available to them. However, it is difficult to assess the extent of the contribution of the local community. In line with this, the researchers found out that the reason why it is difficult to assess the extent of the contribution of the local community is because they are not highly aware.

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## COLLABORATIVE LEARNING WITH EVENT INDUSTRIES

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The events industry has been a growing sector of the Indonesian economy for several years, such as meetings, incentives, conferences, exhibitions, sports, music, and cultural events. The growth in the events industry has created a demand for reliable and skilled human resources which has resulted in the establishment of degree programs in events management such as the S1 Event degree offered by Universitas Prasetiya Mulya (UPM). This degree combines academic management subjects with vocational subjects that are essential for working in the events industry – one such skill is networking skills. To assist students develop their networks and networking skills, collaborative learning with the events industry is crucial. Using a narrative method, this paper describes the collaboration that was developed by the S1 Event degree faculty team at UPM with industry through a customized apprenticeship program. This program enables the S1 Event students to gain practical event management knowledge by planning and operating live-events for a client organisation based on a project brief from the client. The implication of this study is that university education in event management must consider the importance of collaboration with the events industry to improve the networking skills of students.

**Keywords:** *Event Management, Event Industries, Networking, Collaboration*

### 1. Introduction

The event industry has grown over recent years. In Indonesia, the government acknowledges 100 events related to tourism (Indonesia Ministry of Tourism website, 2019). This includes business events such as meetings, conferences and exhibitions but excluding individual events such as birthday parties, wedding parties, anniversaries of company, etc. In Indonesia there are organizations which are specifically responsible for managing events such as INACEB and IECA, showing that event management has become a very big industry.

According to Getz (2005), events can be divided into special events and MICE events. Special events include sport events, music events, personal events, and cultural events, while MICE is meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions. The growth of the events industry was followed by the development of event study programs

offered by universities, polytechnics and colleges, popularly known as event management. The term “event studies” appears in Getz’s speech in the Events Beyond 2000 Conference (Getz, 2007). Previously, academic study about events existed within several disciplines, for example anthropology, geography and the economics of events.

The organisation of events plays an important role in tourism development. Events appear in the development and marketing plans of most destinations (Getz, 2007). Universitas Prasetiya Mulya through its Bachelor Event degree, introduced their graduate profile as Destination Orchestrator and designed their curriculum based on Sapta Aksata, 7 important stakeholders of tourism who possess an important role in achieving a well-being tourism (Univeritas Prasetiya Mulya website, 2019). They are Communities, Creative Industries and Agriculture Products, Tour Operators/Hotels/Transportation/Compa

nies, Trading House Entrepreneurs, Universities and Research Institutions, Content and Experience Creators, and Destination Orchestrators. Between these stakeholders, Destination Orchestrator is the most important because of its role to relate all the other six in order to build and develop a tourism destination. Event studies helps to educate people to become Destination Orchestrators. Networking is essential for Destination Orchestrators, therefore collaborative learning becomes important in learning Event studies.

In order to improve the knowledge spillovers and maintain the sustainable development of the industry–university integration, universities have to work closely with the industry (Marshall, 1920). A key requirement is to include learning opportunities within the curriculum that assesses the students' ability to connect classroom theory to practice and to reflect on their individual experience. This has to be supported by structural components and guidelines for improvement. One way of achieving this is through internships where students will have an opportunity to apply classroom theory and coursework to practice.

This paper explains a program called Event Management Apprenticeship to draw a practice-based example of collaborative learning between an academic institution and industry. The following sections will explain how the program was started, the curriculum and syllabi, the rewards and finally an evaluation of the success of the Event Management Apprenticeship.

## **2. Reflection & Lesson Learned**

In 2015, Universitas Prasetiya Mulya collaborated with the Indonesian government and community to build an event. This project is related to two S1 Event modules - Event Planning and Event Operation Management which are conducted in the 1st and 2nd semesters, respectively. During the Event Planning

class, students generated ideas about the event theme and produced a written event proposal. The proposal itself had to be presented to the stakeholders of the event and approved by their decision maker. In Event Operation Management, students learned about how to organise events by staging the event concept they designed and planned in the previous semester.

In 2018, the university decided to deliver a bigger project because students were more experienced and needed a greater challenge. A client institution with complex organizational behaviour characteristics, such as financial company, was believed to have more difficulties to work with. Thus, the students would need extra efforts and extra learning in completing the project task. Fortunately, at the same time one of the biggest private banks in Indonesia saw one of the previous student's event and they thought it would be beneficial if students were involved in their brand activation projects.

The bank, was chosen to be the university's partner to conduct collaborative learning. The bank, related to Triple Helix theory (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff, 2000), was part of the industry that participated in the event project as the customer/client. The bank wanted to stage four events in 2018 (brand activation) and they needed S1 Event students to develop these events based on the client's brief. The university and the bank agreed to call this collaborative project the Event Management Apprenticeship (EMA).

### **2.1 EMA – Event Management Apprenticeship Program**

Nowadays, students are facing a challenge in looking for real work experience because not many companies want to accept student interns. Furthermore it is costly for universities to make their own big events to give more working exposure to the students.

Meanwhile, in fact, many companies need more temporary human resources to conduct their business activities instead of full-time employees. Thus, the Marketing Communication Department of the bank proposed to collaborate with the university, especially the S1 Event program, to join the bank's Event Management Apprenticeship project, a means for students to gain more real-life work experiences, in which they could hone their event management skills and get more connections with many industry people from diverse backgrounds.

In EMA, students must manage a real event from the preparation stage to the post-event. As they go through this project, students needed to show their excellence by having:

1. Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the hosted events.
2. Creativity for new ideas.
3. Outstanding flexibility for problem solving.
4. Great communication skills for sponsorship acumen.
5. Executional excellence on the D-day.
6. Integrated thinking on report writing.
7. Great communication skills for the post-event presentation.

**2.1.1. The Benefits**

By completing the EMA, the students will have experience working in a "real"

**2.1.2. The EMA Program Detail**

industry situation and extra points in the class. Although the EMA is an academic project, students must undertake it professionally, and as such the bank provided tangible benefits for students who delivered outstanding performance, individually and in their group, to the program. The benefits are:

- \* certificates for participating in the program
- \* on the job /apprenticeship experience
- \* a reference letter from the bank
- \* scholarship funds based on the aggregate score of the best students
- \* real live case study experience
- \* networking access to professional bankers who became the day to day mentors for the students
- \* an individual feedback report from the mentors
- \* financial payments to cover the students' cost for meals and transportation.

Benefits for the bank included receiving the students' original ideas for the event, the students' creative human resources, and the honest feedback provided to the bank by the students. The bank also learned how to create an event in a logical manner based on theory as well as having an opportunity to cooperate with an academic institution by involving students on the EMA project.

**EMA Detail Program**

<b>Program Milestones</b>	<b>Module Approach</b>	<b>Related Academic Course</b>
Part 1 – Event Ideation 1a. Presentation from The Bank / Briefing 1b. Presentation by Students 1c. Announcement of competition result and	Idea Competition & Presentation to Clients	- Marketing Management - Brand Management - Event Planning - Business Communication

individual job descriptions		
Part 2 – Event Preparation	On The Job Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project Management</li> <li>- Sponsorship and Fundraising</li> <li>- MICE Event</li> <li>- Lifestyle, Music, Cultural, Sport Event</li> <li>- Event Supplier &amp; Venue Management</li> <li>- Risk &amp; Crisis Management</li> </ul>
Part 3 – Dday Execution	Real Simulation on Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project Management</li> <li>- MICE Event</li> <li>- Lifestyle, Music, Cultural &amp; Sport Event</li> <li>- Risk &amp; Crisis Management</li> </ul>
Part 4 – Post Event Report & Review Presentation	Review and presentation to clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Business Communication</li> <li>- Project Management</li> </ul>
Part 5 – EMA Graduation	Graduation with EMA Mentors	

The Program divided into four phases and each phase contained a timeline. Each phase had different objectives and had different tools and academic concepts to work with. Students learned the tools and academic concepts from their previous modules/classes or during the current semester. The Table above explains the objectives in each phase and which subject module in the S1 Event degree may help them.

In Part 1, the objective was for the students to give ideas about the event based on the client's brief. As this project related to brand activation, the students has to acknowledge the bank's target market and their consumers' perception of the bank. Students were able to use tools and cocnepts from both the Marketing Management and Brand management modules to explore this. After that the students were able to elaborate the information gained and to generate ideas for their project brief. This process of designing an event is covered in the module Event Planning.

In Part 2, students had to prepare all the items they needed to make the approved event idea happen. The module Project Management helped them to break the big concept for the event into micro activities which is called work breakdown structure. Other information they needed to prepare the event such as which sponsor might be interested to support the event, where would be the most suitable place to hold the event, or which vendors can offer the best deal, will be supported by other subject modules such as, Sponsorship and Fundraising, Event Supplier and Venue Management, for example.

Part 3, was all about implementing and staging the Event. Event Operation Management, MICE Management, Risk and Crisis Management, were the most important subject modules to support students delivering their best performance in this phase. Lastly in Part 4, students had to evaluate their event,

write their report and present it to the bank. This part required the students to use their knowledge and understanding from the modules Event Management and Business Communication which developed the students analysis and communication skills in order to present their results.

## **2.2. Evaluation**

At the end of the project the bank evaluated the student's performance based on their responsibility in the project. The bank felt that involving students gave a special direct impact to the activation events. Based on their calculation, visitors numbers to the activation events increased significantly from 6,000 in the previous year to more than 10,000 in 2018. The bank stated that the variation of speakers and tenants were the reasons for this improvement, which came from the students creativity and ideas. As a result, the bank decided to give more rewards to the students.

During the EMA, the bank and the faculty lecturers realised that scheduling of the project work and the events themselves was one of the crucial challenges that was encountered by the students. Students experienced a tight schedule because they must work in the bank's office once or twice a week while studying in the campus on the other days. Thus, it was not easy to have sudden changes of schedule because of the students' overall project and academic commitments. Consequently, working schedules had to be included within the academic calendar at the beginning of project initiation.

The faculty lecturers learned, beside the scheduling, having an agreement letter between the institutions prevented the students from being overused. The scope of the work, objectives and rewards were included in the agreement. In order to understand the scope of work during the

EMA, the curriculum of the project had to be defined.

### 3. Conclusion

This project has shown that students' knowledge of event studies helped them in understanding the client's brief, transfer it into ideas and execute the event. As a result, involving students brought significant impact for the bank on the events it organised in collaboration with the students, especially in variations that led to improvement in the number of visitors who attended the bank's activation events.

In addition, the learning gained from collaborating with the bank has also emphasised that the scope of work, objectives, rewards and allowances, curriculum and scheduling must be clearly defined before the project starts. All of these had to be transferred into a written agreement.

Finally, it is concluded that collaboration between an academic institution and industry is beneficial for both the faculty lecturers, students, and the industry itself. Collaborative learning with industry helps students to connect theory to real business situations, while industry gains more ideas and human resources, and the faculty lecturers get updated case studies that could be taught in class. However, the continuity of the project depends on the needs of the industry and its decision maker.

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## SUCCESS FACTORS IN MANAGING OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES IN SRI LANKA

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This study intends to recognize success factors in the managing of international conferences in Sri Lanka. Special emphasis was given to understand the relative usefulness of those working in conference management. The seven hypotheses of the study were formulated based on the conceptual model comprised from seven independent variables. A quantitative online survey questionnaire was used to obtain data from the respondents: professional conference organizers. Hypotheses were tested using statistical methods of regression analysis and one-way ANOVA analysis utilizing SPSS 16.0. All hypotheses were proven by the analyses. Six important success factors and one less important success factor in managing international conferences in Sri Lanka were identified by this study. Stakeholder commitment and attitude, availability of competent human resources, marketing & promotion, financial management, techniques of project management, cooperation and communication among stakeholders are important success factors while leadership is the only less important factor. Stakeholder commitment and attitude was recognized as the most useful determinant for the success of international conferences of Sri Lanka in this context. It was concluded that human factors are more important than technical factors as success factors.

Key Words: *Event Management, Event Tourism, Success Factors, MICE tourism, Conference Studies*

### Introduction

Conferences are one of the most important types of events in the event and tourism industries of the world. Conferences have gained this prominence with the growing demand for conducting all kinds of convention events at significant levels (World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2006; Sikošek, 2012). International Congress and Convention Association [ICCA] (2018), states that the number of meetings doubles in every 10 years and further elaborates that there is a slow transcend towards a more mature, solid growth pattern. 12,558 rotating international association meetings were conducted throughout the world in 2017 (ICCA, 2018). During the last several decades, the meeting industry has become a significant contributor for national economies. It has been recorded that 269,800 conventions/ conferences /congresses were conducted in USA with

participation of 51,104,000 participants contributing 25% of the MICE industry (Convention Industry Council [CIC], 2011).

Sri Lanka was ranked 71st place at a global level and 18th place in Asia Pacific ranking in international meeting destination ranking for 2017 (ICCA, 2018). The island has recognized the importance of MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions) tourism in which conferences or conventions exists as one of the major components out of the four, and has taken certain steps in order to develop the sector with special emphasis. The Sri Lanka Convention Bureau was established to promote Sri Lanka as a MICE destination by Tourism Act No. 38 of 2005 (Tourism Act, 2005). Both national level tourism development plans of post war Sri Lanka (after 2009) have addressed the issue of MICE tourism

development (Ministry of Economic Development, 2011; Ministry of Tourism Development and Christian Religious Affairs, 2017).

But, in contrast to that growth of the sector in comparison with other sub sets of tourism by the number of tourist arrivals, by percentage of tourist arrivals the number of conferences doesn't show a healthy development. There is a decline of the percentage of tourist arrivals for conferences and meetings after 2006 (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority [SLTDA], 2018). The largest figure within last 12 years from, 2006 – 2017 was 3% in 2006 which cannot be considered as a considerable contribution. It has fluctuated even down to the very low figure of 0.2% in 2015 (SLTDA, 2016). It is noteworthy, in contrast that facilities for small and medium size conferences have been increasing specially, at hotels and resorts.

According to the SLTDA statistical information (SLTDA, 2018) on the number of international conferences held at Bandaranayake Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH), Colombo and the number of foreigners attending the conferences during last 30 years clearly depict a decline in 21st century in comparison with the last decade of the 20th century. When it is compared with the highest figure during the 30-year period which was recorded in 1992 with 33 international conferences at BMICH, the highest figure within the last decade was recorded in 2012 with 10 international conferences is even lower than one out of three. And only one international conference was held at BMICH in 2010 in accordance with the information. There is a decline in the number of foreigners attended the conferences at BMICH during the last decade in comparison with 1990s. Largest figures recorded were 4,500 (in 2012) and 5,540 (in 1993) respectively. Since, BMICH has been considering as

the main conference venue of the country, the figures can be considered as an important case about the nature of conference statistics, although, there may be impacts from some other factors.

According to SLTDA, 27,455 international MICE tourists have visited Sri Lanka in 2017 (SLTDA, 2018), representing only 1.28 % of the total arrivals. It is evident that the percentage of MICE tourists is representing a small figure out of the total arrivals. Convention tourists are only a fraction of that which is not known due to unavailability of data. Since, Sri Lanka has considerable amount of facilities for small and medium size conferences, it can be assumed that those facilities are underutilized. Potentials of international conferences for enhancement of event and tourism industries has been not properly addressed. Failures of some conferences in tourism industry has made negative impacts as well.

Lack of emphasis on success factors in managing international conferences can be considered as one of the main reasons for these failures. In the attempts of using conferences for tourism development, application of success factors in managing international conferences relevant to context of the host destination can be considered as a crucial issue.

Although, event management has started to emerge as a kind of a prominent industry in Sri Lanka, some event management companies confronted business failures leading to termination of operations in number of companies. International conferences have opened lots of business opportunities for event management companies. Lack of proper knowledge and related guidelines for organizing successful international conferences in Sri Lanka with special emphasis on relevant success factors has created a gap in this context. Based on the factors discussed above, this research intends to identify success factors in the managing of international conferences in

Sri Lanka and attempts to recognize the relative importance of these. It covers success factors in the managing of international conferences which are organized by event management companies of the country in a professional business context. A conference is defined in a broader sense in this study covering events with same nature and characteristics including conventions, conferences, meetings, forums and symposiums. Practical usage of the terms in the event industry of Sri Lanka, was considered as a very important aspect. Only internal management aspects of the international conferences are explored by the present study.

Success factors in managing international conferences is crucial for planning and managing the events successfully. Adequate emphasis on conference studies and its subset of convention tourism have not been given by the researchers even in global level in accordance to the views of some scholars (Malhotra, 2004, as cited in Ismail, 2014; Yoo & Weber, 2005). It is difficult to find any published research works conducted on conferences or convention tourism of Sri Lanka. Therefore, any research study in this field would make at least initial contribution for development of research literature in conference studies. Although, Sri Lanka has given considerable emphasis to the development of MICE tourism in tourism development policies and strategies (Ministry of Economic Development, 2011; Ministry of Tourism Development and Christian Religious Affairs, 2017), adequate results were not obtained so far. Lack of research may be considered as a reason for this phenomenon.

Successful management of international conferences would help to attract more convention tourists to the island making a contribution for the development of the event and tourism industries. In this context, identification

of success factors in managing international conferences with their relative importance, assists conference organizers and event managers in order to stage more successful events. The organizing of successful international conferences will enhance foreign exchange earnings and the image of the country while generating more direct and indirect employment opportunities.

### **Literature review**

A small number of research studies have been conducted on the success factors for events mainly, from the view of project management (Abouhafs & Bellihi, 2013). Most of the studies on this regard were conducted on major sports events revealing various different factors and some researchers have categorized the success factors based on selected criteria.

Dancsecz (2008) has conducted research on success factors and criteria of international sport event projects based on selected event projects in Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Slovenia, Germany, Austria and Switzerland. (Dancsecz, 2008). The study has recognized three groups of success factors; task orientation, relation orientation, random impacts in the organizational activity with individual success factors under each category. The first category comprises from project objectives and contract strategy while project leadership, organizational culture, cooperation & communication, partnership are in the second category. Natural-weather events, social-political events, unforeseen events and managing of random impacts have been pointed out as success factors under the category of random impacts. The random impacts can be considered as elements beyond the internal management aspects of managing events except the last element. On the other hand, small sample size is an issue of this research as revealed from

the recommendations of the researcher (Dancsecz, 2008).

Another study focused on success factors of international sport events from the perspective of project management has identified eight success factors including clear objective of the event, clear concept of the event, feasibility of the event, event evaluation, good communication, management skills, volunteers & project team (Rofner, 2009). However, methods of data analysis of this qualitative study is not convincing. One can argue that event evaluation may not cause to the success of individual events, although, it can contribute to the success of future events organized by the same organizing body.

Most of the studies regarding success factors for events are primarily considered about perceptions of stakeholders. The following study can be given as another example. This micro study has been conducted to recognize success factors of wedding projects in Marrakech, Morocco and found five key success factors for informal 'area' (sector) including trust, patience, control of the relational, discipline and seriousness, innovation and creativity in accordance with their importance respectively (Abouhafs & Bellihi, 2013). It has recognized innovation and creativity, good experience in the field of event, good communication and good organization as key success factors for the formal sector in wedding planning.

Michelle Marais & Melville Saayman (2011) have published results of a research on key success factors of managing the Robertson Wine Festival in South Africa. This study was able to identify seven key success factors including quality and good management, wine farm attributes, effective marketing, route development, festival attractiveness, entertainment and activities, accessibility.

Some studies have discussed the success of events as tourism products and

success factors for event tourism. While certain studies have focused on the success of events as a whole, others may consider on success factors in order to achieve a particular objective or task from an event. It is critically important to understand that success factors may not fit for all events (UNWTO, 2014) due to diverse nature of events, their internal & external environments.

The attractiveness and uniqueness, natural and anthropogenic values of the location, time and duration, quality of organization, number of visitors, location, content, rank, tradition of the event which are considered as main components that promote an event as a product cause to deliver successful tourism event (Bjeljac, Pantić & Filipović, 2013). They further state that event tourism products with greater value comprise from factors such as availability of a specific values, well planning, an attractive event venue, conducting at a time comfortable for visitation, prevailing of more interesting participants for the event. In the context of international sport events, it has been found that human aspects of organization, coordination, partnerships and communication are some of the success factors (Cserhádi & Polák-Weldon, 2015). Proper use of management methodologies and best practices cause to the success of the event organization.

The success factors identified by several studies on success of projects in generic senses, can be divided in to two segments as the factors denote technical side of project management and human side of project management (Cserhádi & Polák-Weldon, 2015). The first category comprises from project conception (clear and achievable goals), planning, structure, control, risk management and so on. Factors such as a competent and committed project team and project leader, client consultation,

communication, co-operation and participation belong to the latter segment.

Objectives can be considered as an essential requirement for production of events successfully and before, the establishment of vision and goals, requirements of internal and external environments should be analyzed (Getz, 1997). Getz (1997) has provided a general list of key success factor in event management and event tourism comprising: finding a suitable venue for the event; having suitable facilities that meet the event's criteria; ensuring that the venue is accessible; guaranteeing high levels of hygiene; paying attention to food safety requirements; ensuring a safe environment, managing crowds; applying risk management to all aspects of the event; providing quality service; implementing an emergency response process.

Feasibility of the event is an evaluation of costs versus benefits of the event which is very important for event success (Rofner, 2009). It is considered as a good practice to conduct a similar event specially, before a major event which play the role of a learning curve proving an opportunity to analyze assets and defects subsequently, helping to improve those capabilities while overcoming defects.

The event manager is another success factor beyond the factors related with the planning process frame (Masterman, 2004). Quality of the integration of various agents for meeting good results was pointed out as a key factor for success of tourism events (Hernández-Mogollón, Folgado-Fernández & Duarte, 2014).

In their review of 755 articles about event tourism, Getz and Page (2016 a) recognized meeting planners, technology, economic impact assessments, venue selection, evaluation of satisfaction, impact of destination image on attendance, and decision-making processes of attendees as main

themes of the research literature on 'convention and tourism'. Even a single article on success factors for conference /convention /congress has not been mentioned in their work. Therefore, it is clear that there is a gap of this theme in literature on conference studies and other related fields.

Proper facilities and the quality of the conference services have been pointed out as critical factors for the success of destinations in conference tourism (Crouch & Weber, 2002). A study in Malaysia addresses critical success factors in event management in the context of meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (MICE) (Ismail, 2014). The research work has identified six critical successful factors for successful MICE event management comprising from clear objectives, location of venue, financial resources, code of conduct, marketing & promotion and event sponsorship.

## **Methodology**

The present research is a deductive research with the purpose of testing hypotheses taken from previous empirical research works. In deductive research, data is gathered with specific objective of examining the hypotheses utilizing statistical techniques (Getz & Page, 2016 b). Some scholars like Karl Popper (Popper, 2002 a, as cited in Sekaran & Bougie, 2010) have suggested that science is accomplished by deductive approach in comparison with the inductive approach. Usage of statistical techniques for the analysis provides more scientific characteristics to this deductive reasoning. This was the main factor which caused for the selection of a deductive method for the present study. On the other hand, most of the previous research works on success factors of events and some related studies in project management, have been conducted using this method (Cserhádi & Polák-Weldon, 2015; Rofner, 2009;

Abouhafs & Bellihi, 2013; Marais & Saayman, 2011; Jha and Iyer, 2007; Ismail, 2014). Since, certain level of consistence in research design can be maintained with the previous research works.

This is a quantitative study. Hypothetico-deductive approach was used in this study generally, causes to the application of quantitative methods (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). It is considered as a scientific approach in nature (Daniel, 2016). It is perceived that quantifiable data has higher precision (Creswell, 2009, as cited in Crowther et. al., 2015). There are a number of advantages for the use of quantitative methods in a research study which have been discussed by Daniel (2016).

A research conducted on articles published in highly reputed international journals in the field of event management has found that 64% of the research works have followed quantitative survey-based methods (Crowther et. al., 2015). This may be an indication that most of the researchers in this field believe that quantitative methods are more important for event research.

The conceptual frame work of the present study was developed based on the literature review. It is noteworthy, that only the internal factors related with managing of the events were considered excluding external factors such as weather conditions. Most prominent seven factors appeared on the previous research studies on regular basis were taken as independent variables of this study.

According to the above discussed conceptual model, there are seven proposed separate individual direct relationships between the independent variables: techniques of project management; availability of competent human resources; leadership, marketing & promotion, cooperation and communication among stakeholders; stakeholder commitment & attitudes;

financial management and the dependent variable: success of international conferences. In addition to that, independent variables are divided in to two categories based on the nature of those as people factors and technical factors. The second category is represented by techniques of project management and financial management while all other five factors belong to the first division.

The following hypotheses for the present study were formulated based on the literature review and the conceptual frame work.

#### Hypothesis 1

The higher the application of the techniques of project management, the higher the success of international conferences.

#### Hypothesis 2

There is a relationship between availability of competent human resources and success of international conferences.

#### Hypothesis 3

There is a relationship between leadership and success of international conferences.

#### Hypothesis 4

There is a relationship between marketing & promotion and success of international conferences.

#### Hypothesis 5

The greater the cooperation and communication among stakeholders, the greater the success of international conferences.

#### Hypothesis 6

The greater the stakeholder commitment and attitude, the greater the success of international conferences.

#### Hypothesis 7

There is a relationship between financial management and success of international conferences.

A Likert scale is used as the main scale of measurement in this study. The Likert scale attitude indicator which is used in this study can be combined into an index

ensuring improved levels of reliability and validity (Neuman, 2014). 42 Likert scale questions' quantitative data of this study were collected using a questionnaire-based survey with utilization of Google Forms as the online survey tool.

According to Getz and Page, a questionnaire-based survey is probably the most popular data collection method which can provide lots of data cheaply and quickly (Getz & Page, 2016 b). It is considered as an efficient mechanism of data collection when the researcher is armed with the information on the requirement of data and the measurement of exact variables (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Veal (2011) has discussed reasons for the popularity of questionnaire based survey methods in leisure and tourism studies with merits of the method.

The population of the study is professional conference organizers (PCOs) who have experience of organizing international conferences in Sri Lanka. The sampling frame of the current study is the member companies under the category of PCO (Professional Conference Organizer) of Sri Lanka Association of Professional Conference, Exhibition and Event Organizers (SLAPCEO). There are 13 members under the category in accordance with the official web site of the SLAPCEO (Sri Lanka Association of Professional Conference, Exhibition and Event Organizers [SLAPCEO], 2020).

One member out of those is a sole venue provider now which doesn't organize any international conferences. Therefore, it was excluded in the sample units dropping the number up to 12. The sample of the study represents PCOs as respondents involved in international conference management for those 12 companies as employees. Finally, total number of 84 fully completed questionnaires were returned by the respondents.

The researchers used SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) Version 16.0 (IBM: Armonk, NY, USA) for the data analysis of this study. Regression analysis and ANOVA (analysis of variance) test were used for hypothesis testing.

## Results and discussion

According to the Beta values of the standardized coefficients obtained from the regression analysis, the independent variables with highest to lowest impacts on the dependent variables are shown in the Table No. 1 given below. The highest impact on the dependent variable; success of international conferences has been recorded from the independent variable of stakeholder commitment and attitude marking it as the most important success factor in managing international conferences in Sri Lanka. It is followed by availability of competent human resources which can be recognized as the second most important factor in this context. The third independent variable for the success of international conferences in Sri Lanka in accordance with the statistical values of the above table is marketing & promotion.

Table No. 1: Impact of independent variables on the dependent variable

Rank	Independent Variable	Level of impact (Beta value of standardized coefficient)
1.	Stakeholder commitment and attitude	.567
2.	Availability of competent human resources	.473
3.	Marketing & promotion	.448
4.	Financial management	.403

5.	Techniques of project management	.253	Stakeholder commitment and attitude	.000
6.	Co-operation and communication among stakeholders	.241	Availability of competent human resources	.000
7.	Leadership	.177	Marketing & promotion	.000
Source: Regression analyses of the study			Financial management	.000
			Techniques of project management	.020
			Co-operation and communication among stakeholders	.027
			Leadership	.007

Based on the decreasing order of the level of impact, financial management variable has been recorded as the fourth value which indicates that it is the fourth in the level of impact on the success of the international conferences. It is followed by techniques of project management. The second lowest value of the above table is related with co-operation and communication among stakeholders indicating it as the second least important success factor in managing of international conferences in Sri Lanka. The independent variable of leadership has the lowest value. Therefore, it is proven that it has the least impact on the dependent variable of the study making it as the least important success factor among the independent variables of this study in managing international conferences of Sri Lanka. Since, the Beta value of standard coefficient of leadership variable is less than .200, it can be considered as the only less important success factor in this context.

The significance values of the regression tables confirmed confidence of the result as well. Further, according to that one-way ANOVA analysis (Table No. 2), it is revealed that all effects of the independent variables of this study on the dependent variable are significant.

Table No. 2: Significance values of ANOVA analysis

Independent Variable	Significance Value
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Thus, it is clear that all the independent variables: stakeholder commitment and attitude, availability of competent human resources, marketing & promotion, financial management, techniques of project management, co-operation and communication among stakeholders and leadership can be considered as success factors in managing international conferences of Sri Lanka.

As revealed from the results of the statistical analyses, all seven hypotheses of the present study were proven. According to the first hypothesis, higher application of the techniques of project management result in a higher success for international conferences. The Beta value of the standardized coefficient of the regression analysis is .253 which indicates that when 1 value of the techniques of project management increases there is .253 rise of the success of international conferences. Therefore, it is clear that the higher application of the techniques of project management, the higher the success of the international conferences in Sri Lanka proving the first hypothesis of this study. The significance value of the ANOVA analysis is .020 which indicates a significant impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

The second hypothesis indicates that there is a relationship between the

availability of competent human resources and the success of international conferences. The related regression analysis yielded the result of .473 as Beta value of the standardized coefficient. It can be defined that 1 value rise of the availability of competent human resources effects .473 value enhancement of the success of international conferences. Thus, it is possible to interpret that there is a positive relationship between availability of competent human resources and success of international conferences confirming the validity of the second hypothesis. Related ANOVA analysis yielded the result of the significance figure as .000 which proves a significant effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

There is a relationship between leadership and the success of international conferences as depicted in the third hypothesis of the present study. When it was tested using regression analysis, the Beta value of the standardized coefficient indicated the value of .177. It can be understood that 1 value of growth of leadership impacts on .177 rise of the success of international conferences. It is obvious that there is a relationship between leadership and the success of international conferences in Sri Lanka. Therefore, it can be stated that the third hypothesis of the present study was proven. The significance value of the related ANOVA test reads as .007 depicting a significant effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

The fourth hypothesis says that there is a relationship between marketing & promotion and the success of international conferences. The hypothesis testing regression analysis provided .448 as the related Beta value of the standardized coefficient. It is possible to define that 1 value increase of the marketing & promotion of conferences causes a .448 rise in the success of

international conferences. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a relationship between marketing & promotion and the success of international conferences in Sri Lanka confirming the credibility of the relevant hypothesis. The ANOVA analysis between the two variables yielded the result of significance value of .000. It confirms that there is a significant impact on the dependent variable from the independent variable.

The fifth hypothesis of the present study is that the greater the cooperation and communication among stakeholders, the greater the success of international conferences. The related regression analysis showed the Beta value of standardized coefficient as .241. Therefore, it is possible to explain that 1 value increase of cooperation and communication among stakeholder's effects to .241 increase of the success of international conferences. Since, it is clear that the greater the cooperation and communication among stakeholders, the greater the success of international conferences proving the fifth hypothesis of the present study. .027 is the significance value of the ANOVA analysis on the above variables which proves significant impact of the dependent variable on the independent variable.

The sixth hypothesis states that higher stakeholder commitment and attitude leads to higher success of international conferences. When this hypothesis was tested using regression analysis, the resulted Beta value of standardized coefficient was .567. This clearly indicates that 1 value growth of stakeholder commitment and attitude causes to .567 increase of the success of international conferences. Thus, obviously, the greater the stakeholder commitment and attitude, the greater the success of international conferences ensuring the validity of the sixth hypothesis of the study. The significance value of the ANOVA analysis reads as

.000 which indicates a significant effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

There is a relationship between financial management and success of international conferences as indicated in the final; seventh hypothesis. The Beta value of standardized coefficient of the related regression analysis is .403. It can be explained that 1 value increase of financial management leads to .403 improvement of the success of international conferences. Therefore, it is clear that there is a relationship between financial management and success of international conferences in Sri Lanka proving the truthfulness of the final hypothesis of this research project. The ANOVA analysis of the above variable shows the significance value of .000. It proves a significant impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

### **Conclusion**

Sri Lanka has failed to make considerable progress in convention tourism with issues related with managing some conferences successfully, although, attempts were made to develop this sector of the tourism industry. Lack of emphasis on success factors in organizing conferences may be

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a factor related to this phenomenon. There is a clear gap of the research literature on the aspect of success factors of conferences. The present study has attempted to address the two issues of convention & event tourism industries of Sri Lanka and conference literature.

This quantitative research aimed to recognize success factors in managing international conferences in Sri Lanka with relative importance of those based on internal management aspects. An online questionnaire survey was applied as the method of data collection from the professional conference organizers. Data analyses were performed using SPSS with regression analysis and one way ANOVA test.

Stakeholder commitment and attitude was identified as the most important success factor in managing international conferences in Sri Lanka which was followed by availability of competent human resources, marketing & promotion, financial management, techniques of project management and co-operation and communication among stakeholders respectively. Leadership was recognized as the only less important success factor in this context.

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