

PERCEIVED BENEFITS RECEIVED AND BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS OF KABANKALAN SINULOG FESTIVAL TOURISTS

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Abstract

The study documented the perceived benefits received and behavioral intentions of Kabankalan Sinulog Festival tourists. Tourist influx is a major indicator of the success of the festival. This investigation forwards that tourists has their own perceived benefits to be received in attending festivals like cultural appreciation, socialization, and enjoyment then have behavioral intentions after joining the event. The results show that there was no significant difference in the perception of the Kabankalan Sinulog Festival tourist in terms of behavioral intentions. However, there was a significant difference in the tourists' perceived benefits received in most aspects except when they are grouped according to age. Raj (2003) suggests that festival organizers should have a clear understanding that participants in their festival perceive the benefits they intend to provide. The benefits to be received as perceived by participants may continue or discontinue fascinating visitors to come. As stated, this would be one true measure of predicting a successful event in the hospitality and tourism industries.

Keywords: tourism, perceived benefits received, behavioral intentions, Sinulog Festival, descriptive research, Kabankalan City, Philippines

Introduction

Festivals are a kaleidoscope of intended culture, sport and political and commercial occasions (Goldblatt 2002) which are unique tourist attractions (Gursoy, Kim & Uysal 2004) that have enjoyed a tremendous progress in popularity in recent years and increase the development of cultural tourism to host communities (Raj, 2003).

Festival organizers use cultural and historical themes to develop annual events to attract visitors. Such events and festivals provide opportunities for the local community to share their culture and community development with the visitors. Furthermore, they support the local community to develop its own identity (Raj, 2003).

Tourist influx is a major indicator of the success of a festival. Major festivals in the Philippines have drawn a considerable number of local and foreign visitors and the number is growing every year. These study forwards that tourists have their own perceived benefits to be received in going to festivals and have behavioral intentions after joining the event. Raj (2003) suggests that festival organizers should have a clear understanding that participants in their festival perceive the benefits they intend to provide. The benefits to be received as perceived by participants may continue or discontinue fascinating visitors to come. As stated before, this would be one true measure of predicting a successful event.

Strategically located at the southern part of Negros Occidental, Kabankalan City prides itself as a service provider in education and health services, a major hub in business, trade and industry, information and communications technology, as well as host to a number of government and private offices. Sinulog, the Kabankalan City version of the world famous "Ati-Atihan" pandered in by their ancestors, is well-known on the third week of January. The search for Sinulog Queen climaxes the festivities.

The researchers then found inspiration from tourists' needs to provide a more thorough understanding of additional factors that may affect behavioral intentions of festival tourists, thus this research.

The study sought to determine the perceived benefits received and behavioral intentions of Kabankalan Sinulog festival tourists. The study likewise attempted to find out whether there is a significant difference in the perceived benefits received and behavioral intentions of the tourists in Kabankalan City Sinulog festival.

Framework

The benefits that visitors enjoy at destinations will affect behavioral intentions. Research has shown that effective communication of the promised benefits and the ability of the destination to deliver the benefits by the experiences provided will increase the probabilities that visitors will return to a destination (Petrick, 2004.). Repurchase intentions, word of mouth publicity; loyalty, price sensitivity and complaining behavior are main components of Behavioral Intentions (BI) (Zeithaml, Berry, Parasuraman, (1996)). Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman also reiterate that high service quality leads to positive behavioral intentions and vice-versa. They also point out to the intention to stay with a product or to defect as one the barometric gauges of Behavioural Intentions. Burton et al. (2003) support the opinion that customers' experience dictates Behavioural Intentions and that a positive experience would prompt a satisfied customer to reuse the brand.

Festivals also play a significant role in the lives of people in a community because they deliver significant activity outlets for both residents and visitors as leisure pursuits (Getz, 1993). Festivals aid builds social cohesion by reinforcing ties inside a community (Durkheim, 1965; Rao, 2001; Turner, 1982). Rao (2001) suggests that festivals provide a time and place for families to

demonstrate their obligation to the community. Hence, allowing them to develop strong relationships with each other. Festivals as tourist attractions provide personal benefits such as new or growing recreational opportunities for families, individuals and communities (Allen et al, 1993; Gursoy, Kim & Uysal, 2004). Festivals offer excitement, fun, and great cultural entertainment for people in the community. Festivals provide an opportunity to involve people in community activities who have not previously been active. “Festivals are often intimately associated to maintenance and celebration of community values and ultimately, to their existence” (O’Sullivan & Jackson, 2002, p. 327). In fact, in the case of small festivals, a local identity is often the most important outcome (De Bres & Davis, 2001).

Furthermore, Liang, 2008 highlighted the various insights of some experts and researchers that tourism scholars have focused on repeat visitation as an antecedent of destination loyalty. Some experiential studies have acknowledged that many tourist destinations rely seriously on repeat visitors (e.g., Darnell & Johnson, 2001; Jayaraman et al., 2010). In this sense, previous researchers have studied factors influencing tourist behavior towards a repeat visitation. In tourism, major antecedents of revisit intention such as satisfaction (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Frochot & Hughes, 2000; Kozak, 2001, 2003; Petrik et al., 2001; Yuksel, 2001; Fuchs & Weiermair, 2003; Fallon & Schofield, 2003; Li & Carr, 2004; Jang & Feng, 2007), novelty seeking (Jang & Feng, 2007), perceived value (Petrik et al., 2001; Um et al., 2006; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Bigne et al., 2009), previous vacation experience (Chen & Gursoy, 2001; Kozak, 2001; Petrik et al., 2001), safety (Chen & Gursoy, 2001), cultural differences (Reisinger & Turner, 1998; Chen & Gursoy, 2001), image (Ross, 1993; Milman & Pizam, 1995; Yoon & Uysal, 2005, Chi & Qu, 2008), motivation and satisfaction (Yoon & Uysal, 2005), and destination qualities (Akama, 2003; Chi & Qu, 2008; Zabkar et al., 2010) have been

identified by various researchers.

It is of great challenge to the researchers to determine the perception of the tourists on the benefits they received and behavioral intentions after attending the Sinulog Festival in Kabankalan City.

This study focuses on the perceived benefits received and behavioral intentions of Kabankalan Sinulog Festival tourists. Tourists' sex, age, frequency of visit, origin and type were the variables.

Figure 1 explicitly show the framework advanced in this study.

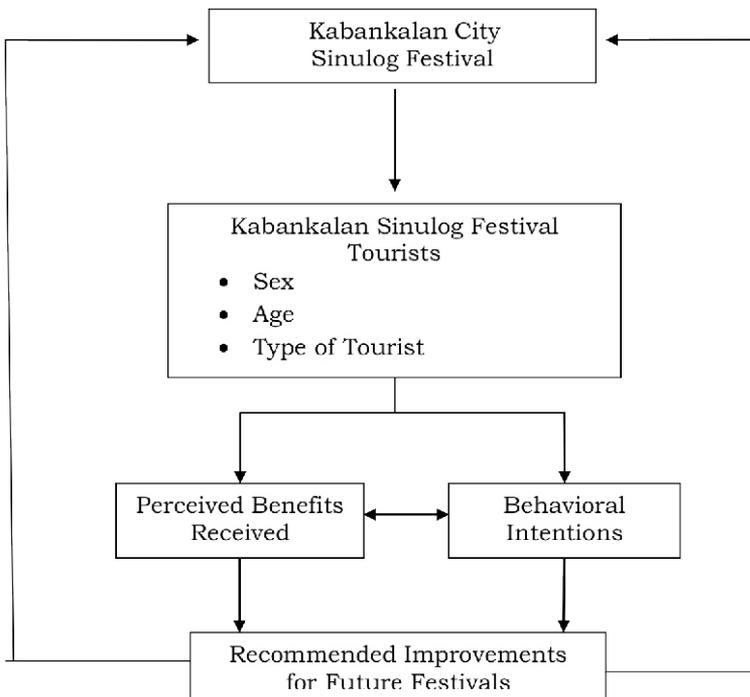


Figure 1: Schematic diagram of the framework of the study

Scope and Limitation of the study

This study was limited only to the tourists who had attended the Sinulog Festival in Kabankalan City last January 11-20, 2013. Intensive gathering through interview and interaction with the tourists in collecting the data was done on the days of the festival. The descriptive survey method was utilized. Because of the nature of the study, the researchers used the combination of quota and convenience sampling techniques. Data gathering was limited only on the major tourist areas of the city like the public plaza, government center and hotels in Kabankalan City. Chance interviews with some tourists were documented to substantiate the items in the self-made survey questionnaire. Moreover, the researchers delimits on the items in the questionnaire and to the statistical tool used in processing the data.

OPERATIONAL TERMS

Perceived Benefits Received. This refers to festival benefits received by the tourists like excitement, fun, and great cultural entertainment for people in the community. Festivals provide an opportunity to involve people in community activities who have not formerly been active (O'Sullivan & Jackson, 2002).

There were three categories in this study. Cultural appreciation is the first to which it includes food, drinks, religion, music, folk dances and hospitality. Second is socialization and third pleasure of tourists, which include fun, recreational activities, entertainment and sports.

Behavioral Intentions. Defined as “a perceived idea between oneself and some action” (Jaccard & King, 1977), behavioral intentions often times denote to upcoming behavior and often associated with overt behavior (Fishben & Ajzen, 1975).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Kabankalan City located in the Southern part of Negros Occidental Philippines. Descriptive research design was employed in this investigation. This design was particularly appropriate in the behavioral sciences (Best and Kahn 2005). The respondents of the study were the 281 tourists who attended the 2013 Kabankalan Sinulog Festival. Convenience sampling was utilized. In this investigation, the researchers used one set of self-made survey questionnaire on the benefits received and behavioral intentions of the Sinulog festival tourists of Kabankalan City Negros Occidental Philippines. The instrument was validated by the 5 jury of experts from Bacolod City Tourism Office. Moreover, Cronbach Alpha was used to test the reliability.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers personally distributed the questionnaires to the tourists who had attended the Sinulog Festival in Kabankalan City last January 11-20, 2013. Quota and convenience sampling were combined to gather data and chance interview was done to substantiate the results of the study.

Statistical Treatment of the Data

The data was analyzed using different statistical tools based on the statement of the problems. For first and the second problem, mean was used to determine the perceived benefits received by the tourists.

To interpret the mean score arrived at, the following interpretation was used:

Mean Score	Range	Description
3.26	- 4.00	Very Great Extent
2.51	- 3.25	High Extent
1.76	- 2.50	Low Extent
1.00	- 1.75	Very Low Extent

For the inferential problems, t-test and Anova (Analysis of Variance), were used to find the significant difference in the benefits received and behavioral intentions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results show that most of the tourists who had attended the Sinulog Festival in Kabankalan City perceived a very great extent in the benefits they received in terms of cultural appreciation, socialization and enjoyment. Research on the benefits of festivals is abundant (Besculides, Lee & McCormic 2002). Among them, there was a considerable focus on economic benefits of festivals for the destination (Crompton & McKay, 1994; Esman, 1984; Gartner & Holecek, 1983; Kim et al, 1998; Thrane, 2002; Uysal & Gitelson, 1994; Walo, Bull & Green, 1996). It should be noted that for some festivals in rural communities, this influence might be limited and relatively small (Chhabra, Sills & Cubbage, 2003). The magnitude of the economic impact of festivals in rural communities depends on its attributes of such as the length of the events as well as factors in the local economy like other visitor attractions.

Research also displayed that festivals also have many social impacts on a community (King, Pizam & Milman, 1993; Milman & Pizam, 1988). Folklore festivals, for example, are commonly seen in rural communities. They help to conserve cultures and invigorate traditions (Besculides, Lee & McCormic 2002; Esman 1984) Furthermore, the results also reveal that tourists perceived a positive behavioral intentions resultant to coming back again, and encourage friends and relatives after attending the Sinulog festival in Kabankalan City.

Som et. al, 2012 cited the ideas of Chen & Tasi (2007) that the relationships between upcoming behavioral and its determinants, destination tourism managers would know better on how to build up an attractive image and

improve their marketing efforts to maximize their use of resources. Study on replication visitation is vital for tourism businesses from the economic viewpoint. Attracting former customers is more cost-effective than gaining new ones (Shoemaker & Lewis, 1999). In tourism, the promotional costs of attracting repeat visitors are less than the first time visitors (Weaver & Lawton, 2002; Lau & Mckercher, 2004). Moreover, preserving loyal customers is a critical contributor to the profitability of business (Hsu et al., 2008).

The inferential results depict that the variables sex and types of tourists does not influence the perception of the tourists in the aspects of cultural appreciation, socialization and enjoyment. However, the age greatly affects the perception of the tourists in the said aspects. On the other hand, the behavioral intentions in all aspects do not affect the perception of the tourists attending the Sinulog festival in Kabankalan City.

CONCLUSIONS

The researchers concluded that the Kabankalan Sinulog festival organized well by the host organizers with the mean score of 3.59 interpreted as very great extent. The variables sex and types of tourists does not influence the perception of the tourists in the aspects of cultural appreciation, socialization and enjoyment. However, the age greatly affects the perception of the tourists in the said aspects. On the other hand, the tourists attained the positive behavioral intentions with the mean score of 3.63 which was interpreted as very great extent. Thus, the tourists gained benefits in attending the festival. The behavioral intentions of the tourists in the aspects of age, sex and types of tourist predicts no difference in the perception of the respondents.

RECOMMENDATION

A development and enhancement program of Sinulog festival in Kabankalan City should be considered by the local government and the organizers.

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