



# Unveiling economic impacts: The role of the Niyogyugan Festival in enhancing local economies

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## Abstract

The study investigated the economic impact of the Niyogyugan Festival on the municipality of Candelaria, Quezon, highlighting both its direct and indirect contributions to the local economy. Specifically, it explored how the festival stimulates economic growth through increased visitor arrivals, support for local businesses, and strengthened community engagement. Additionally, the study examined the pivotal role of Local Government Units (LGUs) in the festival's success, including their provision of funding, logistical support, and transportation arrangements for participants. Data were collected using a mixed-methods approach from a total of 180 respondents: 100 festival participants, 70 event attendees, and 10 LGU representatives. The findings revealed that the Niyogyugan Festival significantly boosted local business revenues, promoted the preservation of cultural heritage, and fostered collaboration between local authorities and community members. Overall, the results demonstrate that the festival not only sustains local culture and economic activity but also contributes to the long-term sustainable development of Candelaria.

**Keywords:** *Niyogyugan Festival, economic impact, direct and indirect contributions, community engagement, local government unit initiatives*

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## 1. Introduction

The Niyogyugan Festival is held annually in Quezon Province, Philippines to celebrate the farmers who work with coconuts and contribute significantly to local life and culture. The festival not only honors those involved in the thriving coconut industry but also highlights the unique cultural heritage of the region. Visitors to the festival can enjoy colorful parades, traditional dances, local cuisine, and exhibits showcasing the area's rich traditions and history. In addition, five percent of every sale from the agri-tourism booths is donated to the Niyogyugan Foundation, which uses these funds to support scholarships, agricultural programs, and other initiatives for coconut farmers (Zoleta, 2025). This initiative underscores the importance of supporting the welfare of farmers, particularly those engaged in coconut production, which remains a primary economic driver for the province.

Quezon Province, the Philippines' leading coconut-producing area, regards the coconut as a symbol of its cultural and economic identity. The Niyogyugan Festival, a portmanteau of "niyog" (coconut) and "yugyog" (shake), celebrates the significance of coconuts while showcasing the province's heritage, arts, and traditions. As the province's main recognized festival, the two-week event highlights the creativity, skills, and agricultural products of its thirty-nine towns and two cities. Within Quezon Province, Candelaria Municipality occupies a prominent position in the southwestern region and is known for its cultural vibrancy, agricultural productivity, and industrial development. Comprising twenty-five barangays, the town demonstrates a diverse and active community.

Gao (2024) notes that the recent proliferation of cultural festivals is designed to foster economic growth, enhance creative industries, and strengthen social cohesion in cities. Cultural festivals contribute to urban renewal, provide opportunities for inclusion, and allow communities to assert themselves on national and global stages. Through culture-led regeneration, cities revitalize their urban areas by leveraging arts and cultural activities, thereby promoting tourism, attracting investment, and stimulating economic growth. Festivals also encourage citizens to participate actively, create new opportunities for growth, and enhance local pride and identity. In this context, the study aims to examine how the Niyogyugan Festival impacts personal finances, local businesses, and broader community development in Candelaria, Quezon.

The study seeks to fill existing gaps in understanding the direct and indirect economic effects of the festival, ensure more accurate stakeholder reporting, and assess the support

provided by the Local Government Unit (LGU). By doing so, it aims to raise awareness of the financial benefits of festival participation. The research emphasizes that the festival attracts visitors, generates economic opportunities, and may encourage investments in tourism infrastructure, marketing initiatives, and program development to enhance visitor experiences. Integrating festival activities with sustainable, “green” strategies can provide financial returns while maintaining the vitality of Candelaria in the long term.

Specifically, the study evaluates the economic impacts of the Niyogyugan Festival across multiple sectors in Candelaria, including tourism, revenue generation, employment, and infrastructure investment. The study also aims to answer key questions regarding the festival’s role in generating direct and indirect economic benefits, particularly in terms of job creation, community spirit, and sustainability. Furthermore, the study investigates community perceptions of the festival, including feedback on the event’s programming, marketing and promotion, and mechanisms for stakeholder input, to identify ways to maximize its economic impact. Finally, the study examines the initiatives and resources provided by the LGU to support the festival’s economic contributions.

## **2. Literature Review**

### ***2.1 Economic Contribution of the Festival***

Festivals play a significant role in local economic development by attracting tourists, generating spending, creating employment opportunities, and promoting cultural heritage and social cohesion. According to Nyandoro (2024), cultural festivals in Zimbabwe contribute to economic growth by increasing tourism and spending in sectors such as hotels and restaurants, while also enhancing community pride and cultural preservation. However, the economic benefits are often concentrated in urban areas, highlighting the need for organizers and local governments to improve infrastructure and resource distribution to ensure equitable impacts. Similarly, Wood (2015) notes that festivals stimulate local businesses, generate income for vendors, and encourage investment in infrastructure, while fostering community pride and enhancing quality of life.

Even smaller community events provide substantial social and economic value. Mair and Duffy (2024) emphasize that while such events may not generate large revenues, they are essential for social cohesion, cultural preservation, community engagement, and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. Cabras et al. (2020) demonstrate that both

small and large festivals can significantly support local economies by increasing staffing levels, benefiting regional companies, and sustaining local industries such as craft breweries. In Nigeria, Ikwumezie et al. (2020) found that festivals like the Calabar Carnival and Ofala Festival boost GDP through direct sales, job creation, and increased local spending, highlighting their importance for policy planning and regulation.

The contribution of festivals to economic growth is further amplified through the support of SMEs and local government initiatives. As noted by the World Bank (2019), SMEs are vital drivers of economic growth, representing approximately 90% of businesses worldwide and generating significant employment. Financial support from local government units, as discussed by Fluxx (2024), empowers SMEs, vendors, and agricultural groups, particularly during community-driven events such as festivals and trade fairs. John (2023) also emphasizes that festivals increase consumer spending across retail, tourism, and event services, while creating temporary jobs in coordination, hospitality, logistics, and vendor operations. Such seasonal economic activity generates income for local communities and improves overall financial resilience.

Assessing the economic impact of festivals is critical for public investment and resource allocation. Dwyer and Jago (2018) argue that understanding audience size and spending enables accurate estimation of the additional financial activity generated by festivals, supporting arguments for public funding. Kostopoulou et al. (2013) further highlight that festivals require substantial physical infrastructure, specialized equipment, and services, and contribute to the economy through ticket sales, entertainment provision, and merchandise and food sales. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that cultural festivals serve not only as cultural expressions but also as significant contributors to local economic growth, social development, and community resilience.

## ***2.2 Tourism Development and Promotion***

Official support and strategic promotion are essential for tourism development, as they increase local income, improve infrastructure, and foster cultural exchange. Well-designed marketing and leadership efforts attract tourists, enhance operational efficiency, and leverage technology to support long-term economic growth. Liu et al. (2024) examined the influence of local leaders' pressure on tourism development in 334 Chinese cities over twenty years, finding that strong governance and fiscal strategies promote tourism expansion, particularly in

economically advanced areas. Similarly, Wang (2024) highlights the critical role of tourism professionals in raising awareness, creating employment, and developing industry skills, emphasizing that expertise in human psychology and motivation contributes to economic growth and community prosperity.

Effective festival management and public relations also significantly impact tourism promotion. Vitcenda (2024) notes that festivals are often seen as social or cultural gatherings, and their success in attracting visitors depends on careful planning and organization, which in turn generates revenue for local businesses. Public relations initiatives, such as those in Banten, Indonesia, encourage environmentally friendly tourism by sharing information, shaping perceptions, and engaging communities through social and educational strategies, supporting sustainable development and local economies (Singh, 2025). Talukder et al. (2024) further demonstrate that innovative technologies, including interactive digital systems, enhance religious tourism by increasing visitor satisfaction and retention, though challenges such as security and privacy must be addressed.

Inclusivity and digital promotion also play pivotal roles in tourism development. Berkers et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of incorporating diversity and inclusion in festivals to attract individuals from various cultural backgrounds. In addition, the promotion of agri-tourism in Bangun Harja Village, Central Kalimantan, through social media illustrates how digital marketing can overcome infrastructure limitations, leverage local assets, attract tourists, and stimulate rural economies (Lestariningsih et al., 2024). These strategies demonstrate the growing importance of technology and communication in enhancing tourism outcomes.

Cultural tourism, as defined by the UN Tourism Report (2017), involves engaging with the cultural life of a location, including arts, architecture, historical heritage, food, literature, music, creative industries, and customary practices. Unlike conventional tourism, cultural tourism emphasizes genuine interaction and exploration of a place's material, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional characteristics, allowing visitors to connect meaningfully with local communities and appreciate the unique identity, values, and traditions of the population. Collectively, leadership, professional expertise, technology, public relations, inclusivity, and cultural engagement form the foundation for sustainable tourism development that benefits both visitors and host communities.

### ***2.3 Cultural Identity and Community Engagement***

Cultural identity and community participation are closely linked, as a strong understanding of one's heritage often fosters unity, social cohesion, and collective action. Storytelling, visible artworks, education, and public events support cultural preservation and strengthen community bonds, which in turn enhances social capital and economic prospects. Festivals serve as powerful instruments for reinforcing cultural identity and community pride. Abbas (2023) emphasizes that festivals embody culture, tradition, and communal spirit, uniting people through shared experiences and preserving cultural heritage across generations. Similarly, Grames et al. (2025) note that festivals showcase local traditions, arts, music, and cuisine, fostering a sense of belonging and pride among residents while educating visitors about the community's unique characteristics. Rutagand (2024) observes that festivals promote cooperation, understanding, and inclusivity by breaking down stereotypes and encouraging diverse participation. Historically, festivals in the Philippines, introduced during Spanish colonization, have combined religious observance with gratitude for nature and abundance, acting as cultural bridges that preserve ancestral practices while maintaining connections to the divine and the natural world (Nunez, 2019).

Public art and heritage sites similarly strengthen community identity and engagement. Gesare (2024) highlights that public art fosters social cohesion and economic growth by telling cultural stories, transforming urban spaces, and including diverse groups in the planning process. Rosilawati et al. (2020) show that cultural heritage and World Heritage sites in South and Southeast Asia anchor social identity and encourage collective responsibility for conservation, enhancing solidarity within local communities. These practices demonstrate how tangible and intangible cultural assets serve as focal points for communal participation.

Digital platforms and media also contribute to cultural engagement. Jaccard (2023) reports that vloggers and influencers increase festival visibility by sharing personal experiences and inviting audiences to participate via hashtags, thereby enhancing community interaction and event promotion. In a similar vein, Berkers et al. (2022) highlight the importance of diversity and inclusion in festival planning to attract participants from different cultural backgrounds, ensuring broader representation and engagement.

Cultural participation extends beyond festivals and heritage sites to other creative expressions. Doona (2020) discusses how political comedy fosters collective identities, allowing communities to assert cultural and political views humorously, strengthening

belonging and solidarity. Baxter et al. (2022) examine engagement among individuals with mental health conditions, showing that participation in cultural and community activities supports recovery and reinforces cultural identity, though barriers such as social anxiety, economic limitations, and physical challenges must be addressed through peer support and sustained funding.

#### ***2.4 Sustainability of Economic Benefits***

Sustainability plays a critical role in festivals and community events. Bauer (2024) argues that strict regulations alone may not prevent environmentally harmful practices; instead, engaging approaches that encourage sustainable behavior while keeping events enjoyable are more effective. Varghese (2023) supports this view, noting that sustainable practices reduce resource consumption, stimulate the economy, and generate employment, ensuring that economic growth today does not compromise future needs. Baloch (2023) further emphasizes that sustainability allows current resource use without depletion for future generations, creating economic benefits such as job opportunities, higher income, and improved quality of life. Lee (2023) adds that festival attendees increasingly consider environmental and social impacts, with seven out of ten selecting events based on their sustainability practices.

Feedback and education are essential for promoting sustainability effectively. Colston (2025) highlights that collecting timely feedback from participants, vendors, and staff helps evaluate the success of events and align them with long-term goals. Muradov (2021) emphasizes that sustainable education, particularly lifelong learning, enhances human capital, fosters innovation, and prepares individuals for technological advances, thereby strengthening economic resilience and social welfare. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that embedding sustainability into technological systems, business operations, cultural events, and education supports economic growth, social cohesion, and environmental stewardship.

#### ***2.5 Conceptual Framework***

The study is anchored in several theories that provide a foundation for understanding and analyzing the economic and cultural impacts of the Niyogyugan Festival on Candelaria, Quezon.

Event Impact Theory provides a framework for examining how cultural festivals influence local economies, emphasizing tourist spending, job creation, and infrastructure

development. Nyandoro (2024) notes that festivals enhance the financial well-being of local businesses and communities through visitor inflows. Festivals encourage spending on accommodations, food, souvenirs, and entertainment, generating employment in hospitality, retail, event management, and transportation. Such events often result in permanent community infrastructure improvements, benefiting the broader population.

The Multiplier Effect illustrates how initial spending by festivalgoers creates additional economic activity in the local economy. Expenditures on lodging, food, and goods generate income for local merchants, which circulates through the community, supporting vendors, manufacturers, and service providers. Li (2021) emphasizes the need to reduce economic leakage by ensuring local suppliers and vendors benefit from this effect. Beyond immediate spending, festivals like Niyogyugan raise the profile of local culture and brands, attracting visitors and investors, which can sustain long-term economic growth and urban development.

Economic Impact Theory explains the direct, indirect, and induced effects of festivals. Direct effects involve immediate financial transactions, such as purchasing food, products, and lodging, benefiting businesses in hospitality, retail, and food services. Indirect effects occur as local companies purchase additional goods, transportation, and equipment to meet increased demand, supporting manufacturers, craftspeople, and suppliers. Induced effects happen when earnings from festival-related activities are spent locally, creating a ripple effect that strengthens the overall economy. Studies by Kang (2024) and Grames et al. (2024) show that festivals like Niyogyugan simultaneously preserve cultural heritage and generate significant economic benefits.

Tourism Development Theory highlights the connection between a region's tourism success and its attractions, including natural landscapes, historical sites, and cultural festivals. Well-managed attractions promote economic growth, job creation, infrastructure improvement, and local spending. Unique cultural festivals attract tourists who spend on hotels, meals, travel, and activities, supporting tourism-linked businesses and diversifying local economies (Gunes, 2023). Jackson (2025) emphasizes that involving residents in tourism development fosters pride and ensures that cultural traditions and community values are preserved. The Niyogyugan Festival draws tourists by showcasing distinctive cultural practices and local products, generating revenue and enhancing sectors such as hospitality, retail, and transportation, while increasing tax revenues for public infrastructure. Applying tourism development principles allows researchers and policymakers to assess festival impacts,

improve planning and marketing, involve local communities, and ensure sustainable economic and cultural benefits.

### **3. Methodology**

#### ***3.1 Research Design***

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative data to comprehensively assess the impact of the Niyogyugan Festival on the local economy of Candelaria, Quezon. Qualitative methods explored the initiatives and strategies implemented by the LGU, capturing insights from key stakeholders about their involvement and expected outcomes. Quantitative methods measured the financial and social impacts of the festival, including job creation, community engagement, sustainability, event types, marketing, and feedback mechanisms. By combining these approaches, the study captured both measurable economic effects and in-depth perspectives from stakeholders, providing valuable insights to guide future festival planning.

#### ***3.2 Instrumentation***

Data were collected using a researcher-designed questionnaire aligned with the study's objectives. A four-point Likert scale ("Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Disagree," "Strongly Disagree") measured respondents' attitudes toward the festival's economic and social impacts. In addition, interviews with LGU officials examined projects and support systems that facilitate the festival's success and economic contributions. The combination of questionnaires and interviews enabled a comprehensive understanding of both quantitative and qualitative aspects of the festival.

#### ***3.3 Data Gathering Procedures***

The survey instrument was validated by a committee of three domestic tourism and research experts, who ensured the questions were clear, relevant, and aligned with the study's objectives. Reliability was pre-tested with 30 respondents not included in the main study. Cronbach's Alpha scores indicated high internal consistency: 0.838 for direct and indirect economic impacts and 0.859 for community perceptions regarding festival improvement. All participants were informed of their rights under the Data Privacy Act of 2012, including voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the option to withdraw at any time. A pilot study

with 20 respondents confirmed the questionnaire's clarity and readiness for full-scale data collection.

Quantitative data were gathered via surveys distributed to 100 festival visitors and 70 festival participants. The Likert scale measured their perceptions of the festival's economic effects. Additionally, 10 LGU officials were interviewed to collect qualitative information on projects and support initiatives promoting the festival's success and economic contributions. Combining surveys and interviews provided a holistic view of the festival's impacts.

### ***3.4 Selection of Participants***

The study involved 180 purposively selected participants with direct experience of the Niyogyugan Festival, including 100 participants, 70 attendees, and 10 LGU officials. Purposive sampling ensured that data reflected the perspectives of those directly involved in or affected by the festival. Participation was voluntary, with informed consent obtained, and all responses were kept confidential for academic use. LGU officials provided insights on planning, organization, and resource management, while festival attendees and participants contributed perspectives through questionnaires, offering a comprehensive understanding of the festival's economic and social effects.

Purposive sampling targeted individuals with direct relevance to the Niyogyugan Festival in Candelaria, ensuring data reflected participants who directly benefit from the event. Before data collection, participants were informed of the study's objectives, their role, and the voluntary nature of participation, with assurances of anonymity.

### ***3.5 Data Analysis***

Quantitative data from surveys were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to measure agreement levels and variability in responses regarding economic, social, and cultural impacts. Qualitative data from LGU interviews were analyzed through thematic analysis, involving coding responses to identify patterns and grouping them into broader themes. This approach captured the underlying factors contributing to the festival's success and provided a comprehensive understanding of its economic and social contributions.

## **4. Findings and Discussion**

Table 1 shows the summary of the festival participants and festival attendees perception on the role of the Niyogyugan Festival in generating direct and indirect benefits in Candelaria, Quezon in the areas of job creation, community spirit and sustainability.

**Table 1**

*Community perception on the role of Niyogyugan Festival in generating direct and indirect economic benefits in Candelaria, Quezon*

Indicators	Festival Participants			Festival Attendees		
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Job Creation	3.67	0.5169	Strongly Agree	3.503	0.6019	Strongly Agree
Community spirit	3.79	0.415	Strongly Agree	3.79	0.415	Strongly Agree
Sustainability	3.544	0.5618	Strongly Agree	3.544	0.5618	Strongly Agree

**Legend:** 1.00-1.74 –Strongly Disagree, 1.75-2.49 - Disagree, 2.50-3.24 – Agree, 3.25-4.00- Strongly Agree

In terms of job creation, responses from Niyogyugan Festival participants revealed strong agreement with the statements provided. The data indicated that the festival played a significant role in increasing temporary job opportunities in Candelaria, Quezon ( $M = 3.67$ ;  $SD = 0.5169$ ). Participants perceived the event as an effective avenue for short-term employment due to the surge in labor demand during the festival's preparation and implementation phases. This implies that while participants recognize the festival's economic contribution, they also acknowledge its limited impact on long-term employment because of its seasonal nature. As John (2023) emphasized, festivals significantly stimulate the economy by increasing consumer spending and supporting various sectors, particularly retail, tourism, and event services. One of their key economic contributions lies in creating temporary jobs, as they require additional manpower for coordination, security, hospitality, logistics, and vendor operations. These seasonal opportunities provide much-needed income for local residents and strengthen small enterprises through increased demand, thereby amplifying short-term economic activity.

On the other hand, responses from festival attendees ( $M = 3.503$ ;  $SD = 0.6019$ ) also reflected the perception that the festival generates immediate employment opportunities through event logistics, food and product vending, and other support services. This suggests that while attendees recognize the positive effects on job creation, they do not perceive the festival as a sustainable or long-term solution to the community's unemployment challenges.

This aligns with the findings of Ikwumezie et al. (2020), who analyzed the economic impacts of cultural festivals in Nigeria. Their study revealed that events like the Calabar Carnival and Ofala Festival significantly boost GDP through tourist spending, direct sales, and job creation.

Both participants and attendees unanimously agreed that the Niyogyugan Festival plays a vital role in generating employment in Candelaria. For booth operators, performers, and vendors, direct involvement strengthened their affirmation of the festival's temporary job-creating capacity. Their firsthand experience provided clearer insights into the income-generating opportunities and labor demands tied to the event. Meanwhile, attendees, who engaged mainly as spectators, acknowledged the employment benefits but in a more indirect manner, based on observation rather than participation. Importantly, both groups shared the belief that while the festival contributes to seasonal employment, its ability to address persistent unemployment in the community is limited.

Regarding community spirit, participants strongly agreed that the Niyogyugan Festival fosters collaboration and unity, with a mean score of 3.79 (SD = 0.415). The findings highlight the festival's role as a key event that brings people together, creating opportunities for cooperative efforts and solidarity. This suggests that while the festival enhances local pride, its impact is more strongly felt in strengthening community bonds and collaboration. Abbas (2023) described festivals as vibrant embodiments of culture and communal spirit, extending beyond celebration to serve as universal platforms for shared experiences that transcend cultural boundaries. Similarly, attendees, with the same mean score (M = 3.79; SD = 0.415), recognized the festival's instrumental role in fostering identity and cultural cohesion within the community. These results underscore the event's power to unite residents and enhance pride in their cultural heritage. However, participants viewed the festival's effects on unity and pride as slightly stronger than attendees did, reflecting the difference between direct involvement and observational perspectives. According to Rutagand (2024), festivals promote unity and collaboration by encouraging intercultural dialogue and dismantling stereotypes. They foster inclusivity, strengthen ties, and cultivate a shared sense of belonging, thereby enhancing cultural understanding in diverse communities.

Both groups agreed on the festival's importance in promoting cultural pride and unity, though participants, being directly involved, placed greater emphasis on these outcomes than attendees. Interestingly, attendees highlighted the collaborative efforts between barangays more strongly, likely because of their external vantage point. Overall, both groups

acknowledged the Niyogyugan Festival's central role in reinforcing cultural identity and community pride, with participants expressing slightly more favorable perceptions.

In terms of sustainability, responses from participants reflected strong agreement on the festival's commitment to eco-friendly practices ( $M = 3.544$ ;  $SD = 0.5618$ ). This indicates recognition of its sustainable initiatives in materials, resource use, and tourism promotion. However, participants perceived the festival's long-term economic contributions to sustainable development as somewhat less significant compared to its environmental and cultural impacts. Poirot (2022) emphasized that sustainability and economic growth are interconnected, with responsible practices ensuring resource preservation for future generations while supporting present-day needs. By promoting cultural preservation and environmental responsibility, festivals can contribute to sustained economic benefits.

Attendees also strongly agreed with the festival's sustainability efforts ( $M = 3.544$ ;  $SD = 0.5618$ ), particularly in fostering sustainable tourism and environmental conservation. However, they rated the festival's ability to raise sustainability awareness slightly lower than its use of eco-friendly materials and tourism promotion. Bauer (2024) argued that rigid regulations are not always the most effective way to eliminate unsustainable practices in festivals. Instead, innovative and engaging approaches that encourage responsible behavior without compromising enjoyment are more effective. This strategy allows organizers to embed sustainability into the festival experience, making it a shared cultural practice rather than a mandated obligation.

When comparing perceptions, both participants and attendees agreed that the Niyogyugan Festival promotes sustainability, especially in tourism and material use. However, participants gave slightly higher ratings, reflecting their stronger recognition of its impact on local businesses and the environment. Attendees, while agreeing on the use of sustainable materials, placed less emphasis on the festival's role in building awareness. Overall, both groups affirmed the festival's sustainability initiatives, though attendees were less convinced of its influence in promoting widespread sustainability awareness.

Table 1 presents the summary of the festival participants and festival attendees perception on the various initiatives to enhance the Niyogyugan Festival thereby maximizing its impact to the economic development of Candelaria, Quezon. The areas measured include event's program, marketing and promotion and feedback mechanism.

**Table 2**

*Community perception on enhancing the Niyogyugan Festival to maximize its impact to economic development in the Candelaria, Quezon*

Indicators	Festival Participants			Festival Attendees		
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Event's program	3.604	0.5188	Strongly Agree	3.593	0.565	Strongly Agree
Marketing and promotion	3.512	0.593	Strongly Agree	3.523	0.6029	Strongly Agree
Feedback mechanism	3.362	0.7395	Strongly Agree	2.846	1.0256	Disagree

**Legend:** 1.00-1.74 –Strongly Disagree, 1.75-2.49 - Disagree, 2.50-3.24 – Agree, 3.25-4.00- Strongly Agree

In terms of events programming, responses from festival participants show strong agreement regarding the effectiveness of the Niyogyugan Festival ( $M = 3.604$ ;  $SD = 0.5188$ ). Participants believed that the festival offers a diverse range of activities that appeal to various demographics. However, some respondents noted that the timing of events could be improved to provide more flexibility for enjoying all activities. This suggests that while the program is highly engaging, better scheduling could enhance the overall festival experience.

Berkers et al. (2022) highlighted that inclusion and diversity have become foundational values in festival planning, ensuring that events welcome individuals from different backgrounds, identities, cultures, and experiences. The Niyogyugan Festival's program reflects this, as participants strongly agreed that it successfully balances traditional and modern elements. This blend of cultural heritage and contemporary features resonates with a wide audience. Nevertheless, concerns regarding the scheduling of events indicate that some participants felt insufficient time was allocated for them to fully enjoy the activities. This aligns with Vitcenda (2024), who argued that the success of festivals depends heavily on effective organization and management. Careful planning of objectives and logistics maximizes a festival's potential to attract visitors and generate economic benefits for the surrounding region.

Both participants and attendees rated the variety of events and the balance between traditional and modern elements highly. However, both groups consistently rated event scheduling lower, signaling a shared concern that more time should be allotted to ensure a fuller experience.

From participants' perspectives, the marketing and promotional efforts of the Niyogyugan Festival were seen as strongly reflecting the identity and culture of Quezon Province ( $M = 3.512$ ;  $SD = 0.593$ ). The festival's branding and theme are perceived as closely

aligned with the cultural values of the community. Nonetheless, participants suggested that there may be opportunities to further enhance economic benefits by maximizing the effectiveness of promotional activities. Talukder et al. (2024) emphasized that digital platforms and interactive technologies can significantly enhance tourist experiences by increasing informativeness, interactivity, and engagement. Applying such tools could further strengthen the festival's marketing strategies. On the other hand, attendees also rated the festival's marketing strategies positively ( $M = 3.523$ ;  $SD = 0.6029$ ), noting their effectiveness in drawing more visitors and participants annually. This indicates that current promotional efforts generate substantial interest and engagement. However, there remains an opportunity to tailor strategies more closely to the town's unique identity. Singh et al. (2023) noted that successful festival promotion requires balancing modern digital tools with traditional local media. While social media provides a platform to reach wide audiences quickly, festivals face the challenge of standing out in crowded online spaces and maintaining consistent branding.

Both participants and attendees acknowledged the effectiveness of the Niyogyugan Festival's marketing in increasing attendance, boosting visibility, and reinforcing cultural identity. Collectively, their responses affirm the festival's role in supporting tourism development through strategic promotion.

In terms of feedback mechanisms, participants strongly agreed that community input plays an important role in enhancing the Niyogyugan Festival's contribution to economic development ( $M = 3.362$ ;  $SD = 0.7395$ ). They highlighted that feedback gathered from the community is actively used to improve the festival in subsequent years, reflecting organizers' responsiveness. However, concerns were raised about the transparency of how these feedback-based changes are implemented, suggesting room for improvement in communication. Streimikiene et al. (2021) emphasized that the primary purpose of feedback is to bridge the gap between current practices and desired goals, ensuring alignment toward improved outcomes.

In contrast, attendees expressed general disagreement with the current feedback mechanisms ( $M = 2.846$ ;  $SD = 1.0256$ ). While some acknowledged that feedback is collected and considered for future festivals, many felt less confident about how effectively it is used. This reflects a challenge in fostering a strong feedback culture within the community. Colston (2025) stressed that gathering feedback from all stakeholders, including organizers, attendees, and vendors, while the experience is still fresh is critical for continuous improvement.

Importantly, feedback should not only identify weaknesses but also highlight what can be further strengthened.

The contrast between participants and attendees reveals a noticeable gap in perceptions. Participants, being more directly involved, expressed confidence in the importance and usefulness of feedback. In comparison, attendees were more skeptical, possibly because they felt less engaged in the process or lacked awareness of how their suggestions influenced festival planning. This suggests that participants' closer involvement in festival operations gives them a more informed view of feedback integration, whereas attendees' perspectives are shaped primarily by their experiences during the event. To bridge this gap, the festival could improve transparency and communication, ensuring that attendees feel empowered to contribute and see their feedback reflected in future editions.

This section presents the summary and discussion based on interviews with 10 LGU officials, who provided insights on the planning, organization, and resource management of the Niyogyugan Festival. The responses were organized into five main themes: (1) LGU Initiatives to Enhance the Economic Impact of the Niyogyugan Festival; (2) LGU Funding and Grants to Local Vendors, Businesses, and Organizations; (3) LGU Initiatives in Community Participation; (4) LGU Plans for a Sustainable Niyogyugan Festival; (5) Emerging Opportunities and Trends in the Niyogyugan Festival.

### ***Theme 1: LGU Initiatives to Enhance the Economic Impact of the Niyogyugan Festival***

The interviews revealed that LGU initiatives play a critical role in maximizing the economic benefits of the Niyogyugan Festival. Officials emphasized the importance of active participation, strategic planning, financial support, and promotion of local products and culture. Concrete actions included providing booths, joining competitions, allocating budgets, and showcasing local identity through events such as the Candle Festival. From these insights, several codes emerged - booth support, tourism development, promotion of local products, SME support, and budget allocation. These codes were synthesized into broader sub-themes, including participatory governance, strategic tourism planning, festival-based marketing, local entrepreneur empowerment, and cultural event visibility.

The findings suggest that when festivals are integrated into tourism strategies and supported by interdepartmental collaboration, they drive economic development, boost

cultural visibility, and enhance community pride. These results align with Wood (2015), who argued that local governments use festivals to achieve both economic and social objectives by stimulating local businesses, attracting tourists, creating jobs, and strengthening community pride and cultural heritage. Similarly, the World Bank (2019) emphasized that SMEs are vital drivers of economic growth, accounting for 90% of businesses globally and providing over half of global employment. Empowering SMEs through events such as the Niyogyugan Festival contributes to inclusive development and long-term stability.

### ***Theme 2: LGU Funding and Grants to Local Vendors, Businesses, and Organizations***

The LGU provides significant financial and logistical support to local vendors and businesses. Codes such as budget planning, itemization of programs, provision of subsidies, and vendor coordination highlight a strategic and collaborative financial approach. While the LGU does not directly fund vendor products, its support in providing booth spaces, logistics, and promotions empowers local entrepreneurs. These efforts foster sub-themes such as vendor empowerment, community engagement, and cultural identity representation. The provision of booth infrastructure also creates short-term jobs in logistics, booth management, and promotions, contributing to local economic activity.

Fluxx (2024) emphasized that LGU grants are pivotal for grassroots economic development, particularly in empowering MSMEs, vendors, and agricultural groups during festivals and trade fairs. The Niyogyugan Festival illustrates how such support can enhance entrepreneurship, strengthen cultural identity, and contribute to Candelaria's economic growth.

### ***Theme 3: LGU Initiatives in Community Participation***

The LGU ensures broad community involvement in the Niyogyugan Festival, engaging schools, barangays, NGOs, local vendors, and private stakeholders. Codes such as multi-sectoral partnership, collaborative planning, cultural integration, and merit-based representation highlight its inclusive approach. By integrating existing events like the Candle Festival, promoting barangay-built booths, and holding merit-based competitions, the LGU fosters grassroots mobilization, strategic festival management, and community ownership. Active roles played by the tourism council and private partners further underscore sub-themes of public-private partnership and sustained stakeholder engagement. These practices align

with Grames et al. (2025), who stressed that festivals enhance community pride, showcase unique traditions, and preserve cultural heritage. By engaging multiple sectors, the Niyogyugan Festival reinforces local identity while ensuring inclusivity and sustainability.

#### ***Theme 4: LGU Plans for a Sustainable Niyogyugan Festival***

Sustainability emerged as a core value in LGU planning. Codes such as zero waste system, plastic prohibition, indigenous materials, and coconut-based packaging reflect the municipality's commitment to environmental stewardship and cultural authenticity. The MENRO enforces environmental guidelines through inspections, highlighting institutional environmental leadership. The use of recyclable materials in floats, booths, and costumes reflects circular resource use and sustainable packaging. Economically, the festival uplifts local farmers and environmentally friendly businesses, aligning with Sustainable Economic Development.

Community involvement is also central, as initiatives like farm-to-table dishes and organic farming practices tie sustainability to local livelihoods. The coconut, celebrated as the "Tree of Life," embodies both cultural identity and ecological consciousness. Lee (2023) noted that festival-goers increasingly value environmental and social responsibility, with 70% considering sustainability a key factor in festival attendance. The LGU's sustainability-driven initiatives therefore position Niyogyugan as both culturally and environmentally relevant.

#### ***Theme 5: Emerging Opportunities and Trends in the Niyogyugan Festival***

Interviews also revealed emerging opportunities. A major trend is the integration of digital marketing and social media, with local vloggers expanding the festival's reach and boosting product promotion through online platforms. Jaccard (2023) underscored the role of vloggers in amplifying engagement by encouraging user-generated content and promoting event-specific hashtags. Such strategies increase online visibility, strengthen cultural branding, and allow festivals to connect with larger audiences in more personal and impactful ways.

Codes such as social media involvement and economic impact through digital exposure reflect this digital shift. The LGU is also exploring product identity and value addition, recognizing the need for a "star product" to highlight Candelaria's economic potential. While desiccated coconut is a major export, it is not widely marketed locally. Efforts are underway to bridge this gap and strategically promote local goods. Corporate support from factories, such

as donations of coconut products for floats, illustrates how export-oriented industries can be aligned with local promotion.

Inclusive governance and tourism development are also emphasized. The People's Council provides feedback, ensuring community voices are incorporated into festival strategies. Tourism initiatives highlight local sites, cuisine, and heritage, supporting the sub-theme of local culture and destination marketing. However, regulatory limitations on promotions present challenges, prompting the adoption of compliance-based and digital strategies. These initiatives demonstrate how the LGU is using digital innovation, inclusive governance, and strategic product development to position the Niyogyugan Festival as a driver of sustainable local economic growth.

## 5. Conclusion

The Niyogyugan Festival plays a vital role in fostering local economic growth by generating seasonal employment for vendors, performers, artisans, and service providers. It also strengthens social cohesion by uniting diverse community sectors to celebrate shared traditions and promote local identity. While the festival already incorporates eco-friendly practices and supports local products, there remains a need for deeper integration of environmental and economic sustainability measures to ensure its long-term impact on Candelaria's development.

Although the festival's inclusive and diverse activities attract a broad audience, improvements in scheduling are necessary to allow participants to fully enjoy all events. Likewise, while current branding strategies have successfully increased visitor turnout, aligning promotional campaigns more closely with cultural heritage could further strengthen community pride and enhance tourism and business support. Moreover, the uneven utilization of feedback between festival participants and attendees highlights the need for a more transparent and inclusive feedback mechanism that considers all community voices in festival planning.

The Local Government Unit (LGU) of Candelaria has strategically positioned the Niyogyugan Festival as a platform for economic development, cultural pride, and tourism growth. Through its support of SMEs, provision of financial and logistical assistance, and promotion of local products, the LGU empowers small businesses and stimulates temporary job creation. Its commitment to sustainability is demonstrated in the use of indigenous and eco-

friendly materials, while its collaborative approach with barangays, NGOs, and schools fosters inclusivity and collective ownership of the event. Additionally, the LGU's exploration of digital marketing strategies and product innovation, such as the development of a coconut-based flagship product, underscores its vision of expanding the festival's economic and cultural impact.

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations emerge to further strengthen the Niyogyugan Festival. The festival should highlight a signature product derived from Candelaria's coconut resources, supporting local entrepreneurs in creating innovative and culturally significant goods through LGU-provided training, financial assistance, and branding initiatives. Equally important is the improvement of feedback mechanisms by establishing digital surveys, suggestion boxes, and community forums, ensuring that both attendees and service providers contribute to shaping future events. Finally, the LGU should establish an official Facebook page titled "Niyogyugan Festival" to serve as a verified source of updates, promote local products, and foster stronger engagement with the community.

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### **Institutional Review Board Statement**

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines set by Manuel S. Enverga University Foundation-Candelaria, Inc. The conduct of this study has been approved and given relative clearance by MSEUF University Ethics Review Committee with Ethics Review Board Reference Number: BS-2025-051.

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