

Socio-Cultural Perspectives of Fiesta Celebration

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Abstract

This qualitative study deeply examined the socio-cultural dimensions of Jiabong's fiesta in the Philippines. It unraveled the town's historical significance, spotlighting its origin, growth, and resilience against pirate attacks in the Spanish colonial era. The pivotal role of San Pascual Baylon in the fiesta was accentuated. In the religious aspect, the study revealed diverse themes encompassing rituals and practices during the fiesta, the community's profound devotion, and religious beliefs. Exploring the economic facet, it brought to light income generation, expenditure patterns, and financial challenges tied to the fiesta. While being a crucial income source, it posed financial strains for sponsors and organizers. The cultural and social exploration of the fiesta emphasized community engagement and social bonding. Events like gatherings and homecomings contributed to the overall vibrancy. This study, providing a holistic understanding of Jiabong's fiesta, contributes significantly to shaping community identity, fostering unity, and preserving cultural traditions in Samar, Philippines.

Keywords: Socio-Cultural, Experiences, Fiesta, Celebration

Introduction

Fiesta celebrations highlight the rich culture and tradition of the Filipino people, which derives from the religious beliefs they uphold. It emphasizes the community's colorful and jovial demeanor, which can be ascribed to their passion for having a good time. According to David (2017), the Philippines' geographic location had opened the door to a rich, diverse, and joyous festival in honor of their patron saint as a result of a successful harvest.

Fiestas play a significant role in Filipino culture, according to (Buted et al., 2014). Every province or city holds its own fiesta. In the Philippines, a fiesta is continually in progress. A dinner for family and friends is a traditional part of a fiesta. This has also given people a chance to meet guests and tourists and reunite with loved ones (Celis, Mendoza & Baruc, 2019; Aguda, Tamayo & Barlan, 2018).

Fiesta is celebrated by many of us and it is advantageous both emotionally and financially. It offers a setting for our regional manufacturers to advertise their goods and make money (Lewis, 2016). By taking part in activities and competitions, schools can also show off their skills. This also draws tourists who wish to view the natural beauty of our nation, both domestic and foreign. Our varied culture and traditions most crucially give us an identity (Landicho, 2019).

Understanding the underlying system and the feedback processes that affect how tourism develops over time is crucial. We emphasize that ecotourism generates successful enterprises and local jobs, which

would inspire stakeholders to practice sustainability and raise the level of ecotourism. We further warn that satisfied visitors will encourage more people to travel, which would raise pressure on the environment and jeopardize sustainability (Roxas et al., 2020).

In the Municipality of Jiabong, Samar, fiesta is held on May 17th in honor of San Paschual Baylon, the community's patron saint. The Tahong Festival, a local celebration, adds color and significance to the occasion. Due to the municipality's seaside location and the fact that the majority of its citizens depend heavily on the mussel industry for their living, it has maintained its status as the mussel capital of Region VIII.

This research inquiry was conducted in order to explore the socio-cultural perspectives of fiesta celebration in Jiabong, Samar, as to the different sectors: Alumni Association members, Business owners, BLGU & LGU Officials, Church Leader, DepEd Personnel & Teachers, Fiesta Coordinators, Hermanos Mayores, Pasados and Nominados, Parents, and Tourism Coordinators.

In this study, it focused on the socio-cultural perspectives of town fiesta of different sectors, historical and religious significance, economic aspect, traditions and cultures, and social aspect in the observance of fiesta celebration. It also served as a guide for teachers to integrate culture into their curriculum, thereby, leading to wider perception and appreciation. The result of the study was served as a great way for the educators' sector to such as cultural integration, and also to learn the rich and diverse socio-cultural aspects. It is an opportunity for anyone to merge and preserve cultural aspects as well as historical perspectives. With the aim in mind of providing necessary information through experiences about fiesta which revolves around sociocultural aspects of fiesta celebration, this study would be beneficial to the Local Government Unit in strengthening the local tradition and cultural aspects of the place and promoting its tourism activities.

Statement of the Problem

The study aimed to explore the socio-cultural perspectives of fiesta celebration.

Materials and Methods

Research Design: The nature of this research inquiry was a qualitative research approach using exploratory case study design to obtain a richer and in-depth exploration, analysis, and interpretation (Glesne, 2006) of the socio-cultural experiences of Jiabongnon town fiesta celebration. It was also allowing a deeper study of the research questions pertaining to the socio-cultural perspectives of fiesta celebration to the different sectors: alumni association members, business owners, BLGU & LGU officials, church leader, DepEd Personnel & Teachers, fiesta coordinators, Hermanos Mayores, Pasados and Nominados, Parents, Tourism coordinators, and others who involved in the fiesta celebration in the socio-cultural context of the celebration.

Instrumentation: The research inquiry explored the socio-cultural perspectives of fiesta celebrations in the municipality of Jiabong, Samar, using the data obtained through exploratory case study design. A validated semi-structured questionnaire was used to gather the data.

In-depth Interviews. Interview is a technique which may be considered as most suitable way to access personal perspective on the experiences of the participants during fiesta celebration. Semi-structured interviews are a type of interview in which the interviewer asks only few determined questions while the rest of the questions are not planned in advance (Pollock, 2019). The researcher used a semi-structured interview guide or question set that was followed by be open-ended questions to allow participants to elaborate, and for the researcher to be able to get more personal data in order to develop the themes. During the interview, the researcher gradually asked more personal questions as follow-up to support the participants' statements (Docsity, 2020). The entire procedure was recorded, documented, and secured to ensure confidentiality.

Validation of Instrument: The researcher drafted the interview question. This was submitted to the research adviser and other persons who were experts in the field of history and culture for comments, suggestions, and content validation. Revisions were made to cater to these suggestions.

Sampling Procedure: The research problems and inquiries that the researcher desired to clarify dictated the choice of the sampling procedure (Creswell, 2008). This study utilized purposive sampling to identify the participants in the investigation since the study aimed to capture the socio-cultural perspectives of the different sectors involved during the fiesta celebration: alumni association members, business owners, BLGU & LGU officials, church leaders, DepEd personnel & teachers, fiesta coordinators, Hermanos Mayores, Pasados, and Nominados, Parents, Tourism Coordinators, and others who involved in the fiesta celebration.

Data Gathering Procedure: The researcher conducted interviews to maximize the data and information gathered from the participants. To make this happen, the researcher wrote a letter, duly noted by his research adviser, to the Municipal Mayor of Jiabong, Samar to secure a permit for the study. The approved letter was used to inform the District Supervisor of the permit of study. Once the permit was approved on the municipal level, subsequently, a letter of consent was addressed to the targeted participants. Thus, a letter of consent was given to the participants and they were asked to signify on the letter to convey their interest to participate in the study at hand. The participants, however, had the freedom to withdraw from the study and the researcher took it with utmost understanding in accordance with search ethics. Upon approval, the researcher informed the participants regarding the objective of the study, the benefit they would gain from it, and the needed information the researcher would need from the participants. Upon completion of the interview, the data gathered were interpreted manually.

Since the interview played a great role as the research progressed, the researcher conducted it in an agreed manner, being the most convenient way to the participants, to warrant a profound willingness to answer semi-structured and in-depth interviews. The review of biographical data that was collected from the participants was used to start building rapport with the participants of the study. In order to successfully perform the study, rapport was crucial because, in the absence of it, even a well-written inquiry may be unsuccessful. The participants were persuaded that they would be heard and understood; comfort was not the only thing that mattered. The entire duration of the interview was recorded to safeguard the verbatim language as well as the voice variations during the interview to keep the textual meaning and how the participants conceived the interpretations of their shared experiences.

Data Analysis Procedure: The data, which included audio recording, notes, and transcriptions, were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) case study analysis framework. The phases of thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006) allowed for a systematic way of seeing, as well as processing, qualitative information using "coding".

The following (Braun & Clarke, 2006) described the several stages of the thematic analysis that were applied in the current study: (1) Data familiarization is the process of reviewing and rereading the data while transcribing it and making initial notes. The main points were noted and written down. (2) "Coding interesting features of the data in an initial code," gathering information pertinent to each code in a methodical manner across the whole data collection" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). Features were coded during translation and transcription as a brief phrase or keyword that referred to a particular concept. To maintain track of the condensed information, memos were written down. (3) Finding common patterns in the data: "Collecting codes into possible assembling all information pertinent to each potential theme," Braun and Clarke (2006), p. 87. To reduce the amount of codes and group them into recognizable themes, the data were reviewed and reread numerous times in this cycle. Following analysis, the codes were categorized into four main themes, which are described in the following section. (4) Reviewing themes entails determining if they relate to the coded extracts at the first level and the full data set at the second level, resulting in the creation of a thematic map of the study (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). To verify the codes, the entire interview data set was read again. Thematic maps were created using in-built tools that were utilized to identify patterns in the data. (5) Report creation: "Final analysis; choice of vivid, captivating Examples of extracts, a final analysis of chosen extracts, comparison of the analysis to the literature and the search question, and creation of a scholarly report of the study" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). To demonstrate the outcomes both as statements in the form of ideas and sentiments and as graphic representations produced utilizing linkages between codes, some key statements/features reflecting the data were retrieved.

In this study, the researcher decided to employ a manual interpretation of the data collected to ensure an accurate description of the socio-cultural perspectives of fiesta celebration based on the experiences of the participants. To maintain the credible and agreeable result of the study, participants were provided with the transcript for counter-checking. The counter-checking of the result through the participants who actually experienced it increased the dependability of the research.

Ethical Considerations: The ethical considerations in this research study included obtaining permission from authorities, obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring confidentiality of participant's identities, properly disposing of research data, ensuring trustworthiness of the study through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, and addressing research reflexivity to avoid bias.

Results & Discussions

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered using the exploratory case study. This chapter features the salient findings which were significant to the understanding of the socio-cultural perspectives of the Jiabong town fiesta celebration.

Historical Significance

The fiesta celebration in Jiabong, Samar, Philippines, holds significant *Historical Significances* rooted in the origin and development of the town, the veneration of San Pascual Baylon as the patron saint, and the resistance against Moro Pirates. These historical narratives have shaped the fiesta traditions and cultural practices in Jiabong, highlighting the resilience and cultural heritage of the community.

Regarding *Jiabong's Origin and Development*: in the book "Jiabong: The Birth of a Town" by Fr. Ruben Abiva, the author delves into the historical origins and development of Jiabong as a town. The book provides insights into the early settlements, migration patterns, and the establishment of Jiabong as a separate municipality, shedding light on the historical context that informs the fiesta celebrations in the town.

The following utterances describe the historical profile of the town fiesta of Jiabong, Samar, Philippines, based on *origin and development*.

“The history of Jiabong dates back in the late 18th century. When a group of people settled in a shore body of waters. They built their huts and shan’t this on the hill fought of the area. All inclined to the hill “nasandig ha bulod” to make their houses stronger in anticipation against the strong habagat season and other stormy winds. The settlers fondly and jokingly called their areas as “Casandig” due to the abundance of marine resources and the accessibility of the transportation through Magbag River. More people settled in this area but unfortunately the inhabitants were not is faired from the Moro Pirates who haunted down the coastal areas near the lower and upper parts of Magbag River...” (Participant 4)

“Actually, our historical profile of our town fiesta sometime in the last quarter of the 18th century, people resettle themselves along the shore body of water teeming with resources. The gentle people never realized they were laying the foundation of a settlement destined to be called” Municipality of Jiabong” someday. The growth of the settlement could be attributed to the abundance of marine resources of the Bay and “Accessibility” as complemented of Magbag River. Unfortunately, rivers to yield a lot things, including Pirates-they marked menace of coastal settlement and Magbag is not exception. Moro Pirates frequently haunts the lower and upper Magbag River. Worse, the lower portion of Magbag River later become an anchorage for Pangkas and Vintas and the settlement became the prey...” (Participant 11)

The veneration of *San Pascual Baylon* as the patron saint of Jiabong is explored in the article "**San Pascual Baylon: His Historical and Devotional Significance in the Philippines**" by Fr. Romulo R. Ponte. The article discusses the life and significance of San Pascual Baylon as a symbol of faith and devotion, highlighting how his cult has become an integral part of the fiesta celebrations in Jiabong.

The following utterances describe the historical profile of the town fiesta of Jiabong, Samar, Philippines, based on *San Pascual Baylon and his significance*.

“Our patron saint, San Pascual Baylon, is a eucharist. He became a helper in a church, where he became a martyr for the sacrifice of all the work he had done in the church. He is a poor and helpful man who works in the church. When he died, one person saw him once, and his eyes opened”. (Participant 1)

“I know the history profile of our town fiesta of Jiabong, San Pascual Baylon; he is one of the martyrs in Spain, and his "monstrance" signifies his devotion to the Holy Eucharist. He is one of the Patron Saint of women who need to have children. As far as I know, there is a book of history about our patron saint, and it is there in ma'am Elaine, the former hermano mayor”. (Participant 3)

“Ernia, the Moro Captive returned home with a son and the image of San Pascual Baylon. Upon arriving in Jiabong with the image, she went to the church and gave it to the governing priest. The blessed San Pascual Baylon was enthroned as the Patron Saint of Jiabong. The Blessed Sta. Teresa, the former Patron Saint was set aside”. (Participant 4)

“As I read about San Pascual Baylon, you can see his image; he shows signs of grace and defends us in times of calamity. This "monstrance" is only seen here in Jiabong because we can notice that it was given to the Jiabongnon”. (Participant 10)

“My understanding of our patron, San Pascual Baylon, is that he was a martyr and a seminarian in Spain. During that time, there were rebels in Spain who asked him to convert to another religion, but he refused and was killed”. (Participant 12)

“Year ago, there is a time when the church was ruined because of a typhoon, and the image of Saint Pascual Baylon was floating in the water. San Pascual Baylon is the one who save as when there is a typhoon. So, whenever there is a typhoon, they procession the image of San Pascual Baylon every afternoon”. (Participant 13)

The *Resistance Against Moro Pirates* and its impact on the fiesta celebration in Jiabong is examined in the book "Samar and Leyte: The Visayan Islands" by F. Landa Jocano (2021). The book provides historical accounts of the conflicts between the locals and the Moro Pirates, emphasizing how these encounters influenced the development of defensive structures, cultural practices, and the spirit of resilience that permeates the fiesta celebrations in Jiabong.

The following utterances describe the historical profile of the town fiesta of Jiabong, Samar, Philippines, based on *Resistance against Moro Pirates*.

“This Jiabong before was attacked by the Moro Pirates and the Spaniards, and they were killing people. So, a bunker was built in the mountains to the altar of the church. Before, the church cemetery was located beside the church. When the Spaniards arrived, the church was ringing the bell, and some people hiding”. (Participant 13)

The historical significances of Jiabong's origin and development, the veneration of San Pascual Baylon, and the resistance against Moro Pirates have profound implications for the fiesta celebration in Jiabong. They serve as pillars of identity and cultural heritage, fostering a sense of pride and unity among the community members. These historical narratives provide a rich backdrop for the fiesta traditions, influencing the religious rituals, processions, and cultural performances that characterize the celebrations.

Moreover, they remind the community of their shared history and the challenges they have overcome, reinforcing their resilience and collective spirit. The fiesta celebration in Jiabong becomes a vibrant tapestry of history, faith, and cultural expressions, contributing to the preservation and promotion of the town's unique heritage.

Religious Significance

The fiesta celebration in Jiabong, Samar, Philippines holds significant ***Religious Importance***, as evidenced by various religious rituals and events that take place during the festivities. The Diana and Solemn Procession, Pontifical Mass, Requiem Mass, Junta, and the role of religious organizations such as Cofradia all contribute to the religious significance of the fiesta.

The ***Diana and Solemn Procession*** is a religious procession that honors a patron saint or a significant religious figure. It involves a solemn march accompanied by prayers, hymns, and religious symbols. This event is a display of devotion and faith within the community.

The following utterances describe the religious significance of the town fiesta of Jiabong, Samar, Philippines, based on ***diana and solemn procession***.

“During fiesta church in the morning there is a “janna” and then a solemn procession. (Participant 3)
“During the fiesta there will be a solemn procession followed by a pontifical mass, then there would be a gathering at our home, preparation of our food for our visitors, and we will eat, drink, dance, and sing”. (Participant 5)

The ***Pontifical Mass*** is a grand religious ceremony presided over by a bishop or other high-ranking clergy. It is a significant moment of worship, where the community gathers to receive blessings and participate in the Eucharistic celebration. The Pontifical Mass signifies the spiritual significance of the fiesta and the unity of the community in their religious beliefs.

The following utterances describe the religious significance of the town fiesta of Jiabong, Samar, Philippines, based on ***pontifical mass***.

“During fiesta there is a pontifical mass served by a Bishop. After that, foods are served to the visiting priests”. (Participant 3)
“During the fiesta there will be a solemn procession followed by a pontifical mass, then there would be a gathering at our home, preparation of our food for our visitors, and we will eat, drink, dance, and sing. That is the usual thing that happens during the fiesta”. (Participant 5)
“During the fiesta, there is a procession followed by a pontifical mass, and after the mass, there is food served to the visitors”. (Participant 4)
“During the fiesta, there is a pontifical mass. More than 30 priests were invited because it coincidentally happened that there were no other events during the fiesta”. (Participant 8)
“During the fiesta, there is a procession followed by a pontifical mass, which is the most important part of the celebration of the patron, led by the Bishop”. (Participant 13)

The ***Requiem Mass*** is a special Mass held in remembrance of the deceased members of the community. It is a solemn and reflective ceremony that offers prayers for the souls of the departed. This aspect of the fiesta acknowledges the community's spiritual connection to their ancestors and the importance of honoring their memory.

The following utterances describe the religious significance of the town fiesta of Jiabong, Samar, Philippines, based on *requiem mass*.

“After the fiesta, the church had a "requiem mass" for the passed-away hermanos pasados, indicating that the church values the memory of its members who have passed away”. (Participant 3)

“After the fiesta, there is a "requiem mass" for the passed away hermano pasados”. (Participant 5)

“The next day there will be a requiem mass at the church for the deceased members of San Pascual Baylon hermano pasados”. (Participant 10)

The *Junta*, also known as a gathering or meeting, is often held after the Requiem Mass. It serves as a platform for community members to discuss and make decisions regarding fiesta-related matters. The Junta provides an opportunity for the community to come together, share ideas, and contribute to the planning and organization of the fiesta events.

The following utterances described the religious significance of the town fiesta of Jiabong, Samar, Philippines, based on *junta*.

“The church leader mentions that after the mass, the hermanos pasados or nominados go to the house of the hermano mayor to have a “junta” where they talk about the saint's fund”. (Participant 3)

“After the fiesta, there is a "junta" where the hermano pasados go to the house of the hermano mayor. They discuss the funds of the association and appoint the next hermano mayor”. (Participant 5)

“After the fiesta, we had a meeting here at a place called "Junta," where the hermano pasados gather and discuss who will be the next one. There are voting and recommendations, present oneself as a hermano mayor”. (Participant 4)

“Yesterday, there was a "junta" where the members of the San Pascual discussed the funds of the association”. (Participant 8)

“After the fiesta, we had a "junta" meeting in our house, where the members of San Pascual talked about the funds of the association. This is usually done after the fiesta because during the fiesta, they cannot hold a meeting since they have visitors coming to their homes”. (Participant 10)

The *religious organizations, such as Cofradia*, play a crucial role in the fiesta celebration. These organizations are responsible for coordinating religious activities, organizing processions, and promoting spiritual engagement within the community. Their involvement highlights the deep-rooted religious traditions and the central role of faith in the fiesta.

The following utterances describe the religious significance of the town fiesta of Jiabong, Samar, Philippines, based on the *role of religious organizations (cofradia)*.

“In my opinion, I feel burdened with the session because I am also a hermano pasado. In addition, to the expenses for the mass, if you also consider the expenses for the fiesta celebration, it entails a significant amount of money”. (Participant 1)

“I am a hermano pasado in Jiabong. What I do as a hermano pasado during the fiesta is to help with church and community activities. I also spent money on painting the church, and I bought roofing materials that I used to repair the church”. (Participant 4)

“As a hermano mayor, I support our town. The San Pascual Baylon organization also helped in improving the church and other activities that we do during the patron saint celebration. There is a fund for the saint, which is used for the future improvement of the patron's festivities”. (Participant 8)

“There are times when the priest requests for the church to be repaired, and as a hermano, you have to shoulder the expenses. The copra dia organization has also helped in improving the church because they have a fund specifically for the San Pascual Baylon church). (Participant 10)

The Implications of these religious significances in the fiesta celebration include fostering a sense of spirituality and faith among the community members, reinforcing religious traditions and cultural heritage, promoting social cohesion and unity, and providing opportunities for community participation and engagement in religious activities.

In conclusion, the Diana and Solemn Procession, Pontifical Mass, Requiem Mass, Junta, and the involvement of religious organizations like Cofradia significantly contribute to the religious significance of the fiesta celebration in Jiabong, Samar. These rituals and events not only serve as acts of religious devotion but also strengthen the communal bonds and preserve the religious and cultural heritage of the community.

Economic Aspect

The fiesta celebration in Jiabong, Samar, Philippines has significant *Economic* implications, involving various aspects such as ***income generation, expenditure, and financial challenges***. These factors contribute to the economic dynamics of the fiesta and impact the local community and businesses.

One of the key economic aspects of the fiesta celebration is ***income generation***. The festivities attract a large number of visitors, both from within the community and from outside, leading to increased economic activity. Local businesses, such as food vendors, souvenir shops, and accommodation providers, benefit from the influx of visitors, generating additional income.

This income supports church projects, funds elementary school initiatives, and contributes to social gatherings, as reflected in the following statements:

“On the vesper, there is a dance, and this is where the income is generated 150 thousand, depending on the sponsors, the CWL, the municipality, the church, or sometimes even the Deped. The net proceeds are divided among the sponsors, and the share of hermano is for the Saint funds that will be used to improve the church”. (Participant 1)

“As a business owner, I promote my product to the returning overseas Filipinos because they are my target customers. This is where I make most of my sales, and that's why I earned 10,000 pesos from them”. (Participant 9)

“The highlight of this event is the curacha, which is usually done during the vesper night. It typically generates an income of around 150,000 pesos, which is then divided among different sponsors for the said activity”. (Participant 11)

“Then we also have activities at night where we dance. And the money we collected was used for our project in the elementary school, that's what we are doing”. (Participant 12)

“The benefits in terms of social gatherings we get an income and it will help the church in putting up a project for the church improvement, an amount of 25 thousand pesos. (Participant 14, lines 87-89)

Expenditure is also an important aspect of the fiesta celebration. The community members and organizers allocate funds for various fiesta-related expenses, including decorations, food, entertainment, and

infrastructure. The expenditure during the fiesta contributes to the local economy, as it stimulates business activities and generates income for suppliers and service providers.

These *expenditures* are reflected in the following statements of the participants:

“It depends on the politician. Many people in the countryside approach me. I slaughtered two pigs, bought around forty to fifty cases of beer, as well as some tuba and hard liquor. We also had puto ligong, turta, cassava cake, soft drinks, more or less one hundred thousand pesos, just like me as politician”. (Participant 1)

“I spend a lot, especially when there's lichon, which costs around 10 thousand. I spending around 20 thousand or more. That's why I have to borrow money just to prepare food. Because everything you prepared, even if it is your last money, you still have to find a way to complete food for the fiesta). (Participant 7)

“Well, it could reach millions depending on our priorities for the church. If we invite an artist, there will be expenses and other activities as well. Maybe it will cost millions for the fiesta. But for us, we will only spend within our means, as long as we can afford it”. (Participant 8)

“As for our hermano, we spent almost 400 thousand because we paid for the venue and also spent for the repairs in the church”. (Participant 10)

“Here in our house, the expenses for a fiesta can reach up to 30 thousand because I cater for around 100 people to avoid the hassle of cooking. This includes having lechon and various traditional delicacies. I even borrowed money just to add more to our feast”. (Participant 13)

“For me, more than 50 thousand that I spent during fiesta, litson more or less 10 to 12 thousand and other expenses during fiesta. Of course, it will affect my financial status in life because you spend thousands of pesos for the fiesta.” (Participant 14, lines 80-83)

However, the fiesta celebration may also pose *financial challenges* for the community. The costs associated with organizing and hosting the fiesta can be substantial, placing a burden on the local community and organizers. Financial management becomes crucial in ensuring that the expenses are managed effectively and do not lead to long-term financial difficulties.

These *financial challenges* are reflected in the following statements of the participants:

“The challenges encountered are nothing but expenses because it's costly. It really becomes a challenge to spend that much. It's not something that can be avoided, especially for politicians, as they have to accommodate the guests”. (Participant 1)

“The situation of our people, especially if there are students, affects their condition. Even without students, they still have to pay for monthly electricity and water bills, which is the problem that I see”. (Participant 2)

“I have many challenges because you have to manage all your plans, such as cultural nights, athletics, sports, and music. You have to look into everything. One of the challenges I encounter as the hermano mayor is the allocation of resources”. (Participant 4)

“I encounter many challenges as the fiesta coordinator, starting with the feedback from people regarding how well I can handle these activities. The second challenge is the manpower; we need energetic individuals who can consistently help because I am the one responsible for organizing these activities for the patron, and everything relies on us”. (Participant 5)

“As a hermano, of course, you have the obligation to serve and participate actively in church activities, including attending the novena masses. Another challenge is the financial constraint, as it also affects the

plans and activities, particularly in providing prizes for the winners of the games. These are the challenges I encountered as the *hermano mayor*”. (Participant 10)

“The patron and alumni both affect my financial resources even though the patron expenses are already accounted for, and there are still alumni expenses to consider. (Participant 12, lines 51-53)

The economic implications of the fiesta celebration extend beyond the immediate income generation and expenditure. The fiesta can serve as an opportunity for local businesses to showcase their products and services, attracting potential customers and expanding their customer base. It can also contribute to the growth of the tourism industry in the region, as visitors are drawn to the cultural and festive atmosphere of the fiesta.

Moreover, the economic benefits of the fiesta celebration can have a positive impact on the overall development of the community. The income generated from the fiesta can be reinvested in local infrastructure, education, healthcare, and other community development initiatives, leading to long-term economic growth and improvement in the standard of living.

In summary, the fiesta celebration in Jiabong, Samar, Philippines has significant economic implications, including income generation, expenditure, and financial challenges. The celebration stimulates local businesses, generates income for the community, and contributes to the overall economic development of the region. However, it is important to manage the financial aspects effectively to ensure long-term sustainability and avoid financial burdens.

Tradition and Culture

The Jiabong Town Fiesta in 2023 has a vibrant and diverse set of fiesta mechanics, ensuring a lively and engaging celebration for the community. The fiesta celebration in Jiabong, Samar, Philippines showcases a rich tapestry of *Traditions and Cultural Practices* that are deeply ingrained in the community's identity. These customs and events play a significant role in preserving heritage, fostering community bonds, and promoting a sense of belonging.

The tradition of *general cleaning*, where the community comes together to spruce up the town, signifies a collective commitment to creating a welcoming and vibrant environment for the festivities. The basketball and volleyball inter-barangay tournament foster healthy competition, sportsmanship, and camaraderie among residents, strengthening community ties.

The *opening of the carnival* is an eagerly awaited event that signifies the start of the fiesta celebration. It brings joy and entertainment to both locals and visitors, creating an atmosphere of excitement and festivity.

The "*Bazaar ni Batch (Day) and Bar ni Batch (Night)*" event provides a platform for local businesses and entrepreneurs to showcase their products and delicacies, contributing to economic activity and highlighting the community's entrepreneurial spirit.

The *decoration and preparations* leading up to the fiesta involve the community's collective efforts in adorning the streets, houses, and churches with vibrant displays, creating a visually stunning ambiance. The Novena Mass, a series of nine days of prayer and devotion, deepens the religious significance of the fiesta, fostering spiritual connections and strengthening faith within the community.

Cultural events such as the "*Little Miss Jiabong*" pageant, the "Laos Kana, ako dire pa" singing contest, and the "Miss Gay Babaysaye-Queen of Tahong" provide platforms for showcasing local talent, creativity, and cultural expression. These events celebrate diversity and inclusivity while promoting cultural appreciation and pride.

The inclusion of "*Laro ng Lahi*" (Traditional Games), a Cycling Race, and the Final Judging and Awarding of the Most Festive Barangay highlights the community's commitment to preserving traditional sports and fostering a sense of healthy competition and pride. The Mobile Legends Tournament and Tourism Jingle Contest embrace modern interests while infusing them with the spirit of the fiesta, reflecting the evolving cultural landscape.

Cultural Nights, Pastoral Night, and Social Night, known as the Vesper Night, showcase the community's artistic talents through music, dances, and performances. These events foster cultural exchange, appreciation, and unity among community members and visitors.

The *Diana and Solemn Procession, Pontifical Mass, and Requiem Mass* hold deep religious significance, offering moments of reverence, prayer, and reflection for the community. The Street Party, with its vibrant and energetic atmosphere, brings people of all ages together to celebrate, fostering community spirit and unity. The Requiem Mass and Junta honor the departed, emphasizing the community's respect for its ancestors and collective memory.

The *Alumni Homecoming* serves as a platform for past residents and community members to reconnect, fostering a sense of nostalgia, continuity, and intergenerational bonds.

The implications of these traditions and cultural practices are manifold. They contribute to the preservation and promotion of local heritage, strengthening community bonds and solidarity. These events foster a sense of identity, pride, and belonging among community members, while also showcasing the vibrant culture and traditions of Jiabong. The fiesta celebration serves as a catalyst for economic activity, tourism, and cultural exchange, bringing social and economic benefits to the community.

Social Aspect

The fiesta celebration in Jiabong, Samar, Philippines holds great significance in terms of its *Social Aspects*, fostering family gatherings, alumni homecoming, and social interactions that contribute to a sense of unity, belonging, and social cohesion.

The fiesta serves as a time for family members to come together and reconnect. It provides an opportunity for relatives, both near and far, to gather and celebrate, strengthening family bonds and nurturing a sense of kinship. The festive atmosphere and shared traditions create a conducive environment for family members to engage in meaningful conversations, reminisce about the past, and create lasting memories.

The following utterances describe the social aspect of the town fiesta of Jiabong, Samar, Philippines, based on *family gatherings*:

“During the fiesta, we have a joyful feast in our home, with plenty of food, karaoke, and dancing. We also ask our relatives who are visiting, and ask about their lives and then livelihood”. (Participant 2)

“During the fiesta there will be a gathering at our home, preparation of our food for our visitors, and we will eat, drink, dance, and sing. That is the usual thing that happens during the fiesta”. (Participant 5)

“During the fiesta, there is food that will be offered to the visitors, stories will be shared among friends, and videoke”. (Participant 9)

At a broader level, the fiesta celebration brings the entire community together. It serves as a unifying force, transcending individual differences and fostering a sense of togetherness among residents. Community gatherings during the fiesta enable people to interact, share experiences, and establish connections, enhancing the social fabric of the community.

Alumni homecoming promote a sense of collective identity, shared experiences, and a feeling of belonging. They strengthen social cohesion, cooperation, and solidarity among community members, leading to a more harmonious and resilient community.

The following utterances describe the social aspect of the town fiesta of Jiabong, Samar, Philippines, based on **alumni homecoming**:

“*After fiesta* there is also an alumni homecoming because you have seen your classmate of elementary”. (Participant 5)

“After the fiesta, there is an alumni event where the elementary graduates attend the alumni homecoming”. (Participant 7)

“And yesterday, there was an alumni homecoming where the teachers were also part of the activity”. (Participant 13)

“Aside from the fiesta celebration, there was also an alumni homecoming for elementary and high schools. Even though it was not related to the fiesta celebration, it was still celebrated to accommodate Jiabongnons who work and live outside the municipality”. (Participant 11)

“The changes that I encounter during alumni homecoming depend on the host batch as to what activities they will do. That's why, every year, the activities depend on the theme that they had”. (Participant 12)

Social gatherings and interactions during the fiesta celebration contribute to the formation of social networks and social capital within the community. They create opportunities for cooperation, collaboration, and collective action, which can have positive implications for community development and social progress.

The following utterances describe the social aspect of the town fiesta of Jiabong, Samar, Philippines, based on **social gatherings**:

“During vesper night, there is a sarayaw dance, which is where the income is generated). (Participant 1)

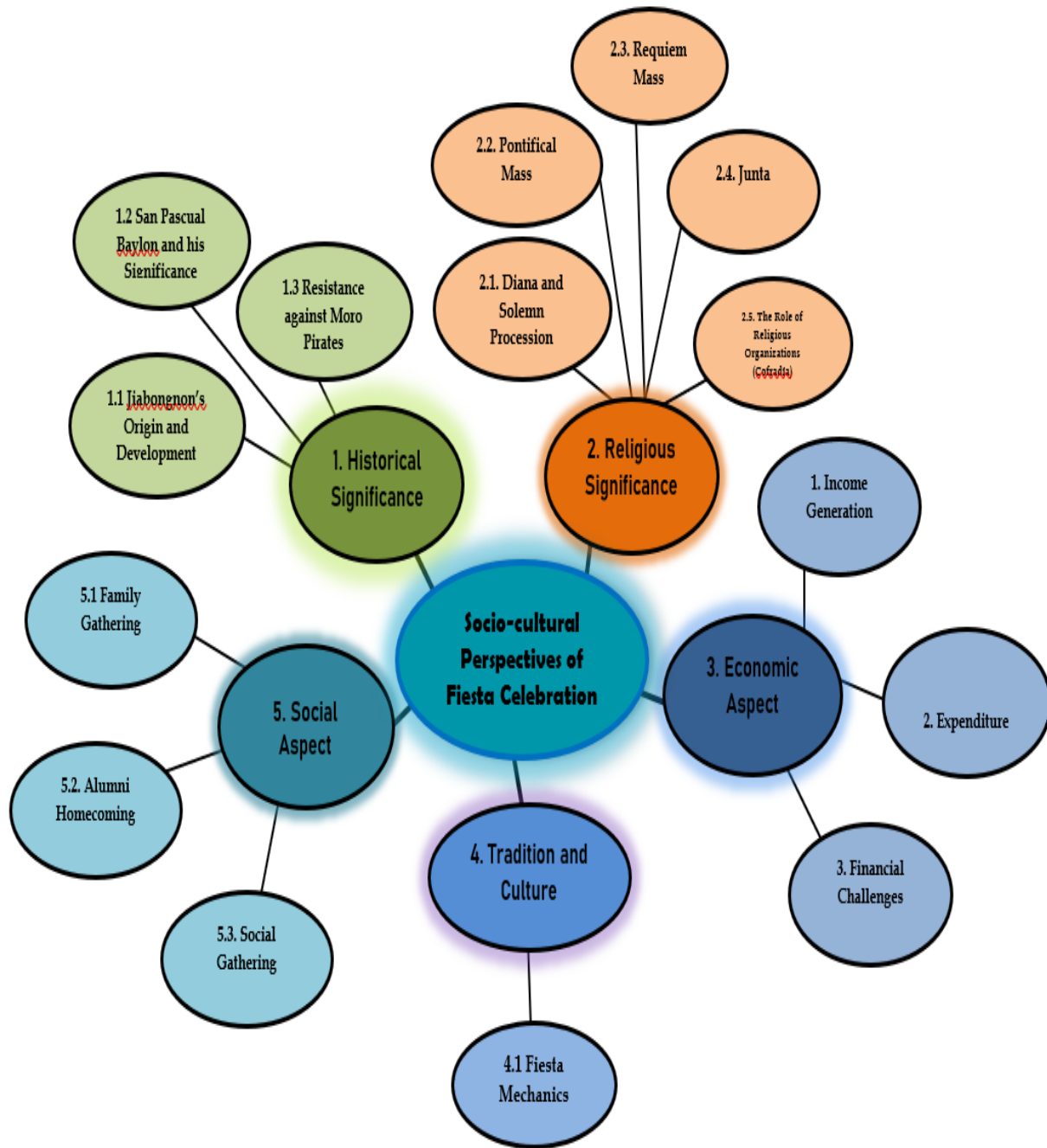
“Before the fiesta, we have a community dance, which is like a social gathering, during the vesper night. Usually, the attendees are the balikbayans, the hermano mayor, and the LGU/BLGU officials. The highlight of this event is usually the curacha dance, which is performed during the vesper night. And then, during the feast day, there is another dance for the youth”. (Participant 11)

Social gatherings and events such as cultural nights, street parties, and parades provide opportunities for social interactions and engagements among community members. These occasions foster a sense of camaraderie, solidarity, and inclusivity. They create a platform for individuals to meet new people, forge new friendships, and strengthen existing relationships, promoting social integration and a sense of belonging.

The implications of these social aspects of the fiesta celebration are profound. Family gatherings during the fiesta contribute to the preservation of family traditions, values, and relationships. They provide a sense of continuity, promoting intergenerational bonds and transmitting cultural heritage from one generation to the next. Strong family ties and connections fostered during the fiesta celebration can have long-lasting effects on social support networks and emotional well-being within the community.

In summary, the fiesta celebration in Jiabong, Samar, Philippines serves as a catalyst for family gatherings, alumni homecoming, and social interactions. These aspects contribute to the social fabric of the community, fostering unity, belonging, and social cohesion. The fiesta celebration nurtures familial relationships, strengthens community bonds, and promotes a sense of togetherness and solidarity among residents.

The Jiabong town fiesta celebration in Samar, Philippines, is a vibrant and meaningful event that encompasses various aspects contributing to its overall significance. Firstly, the historical significance of the fiesta reinforces the town's identity and resilience by highlighting its origin, development, and resistance against adversity. Secondly, the religious significance fosters devotion, spirituality, and unity through religious rituals and events, reinforcing faith and cultural heritage. Thirdly, the economic aspect of the fiesta stimulates local businesses, presents economic opportunities, and contributes to the region's tourism industry. Fourthly, the tradition and culture aspect preserves heritage, fosters community bonds, and promotes cultural appreciation through diverse customs, events, and practices. Lastly, the social aspect emphasizes the importance of family gatherings, alumni homecoming, and social interactions that strengthen relationships, social networks, and a sense of belonging within the community. Together, these aspects create a dynamic and significant celebration during the Jiabong town fiesta.



Socio-Cultural Perspectives of Fiesta Celebration

Summary of Findings

This chapter presents the findings of a qualitative approach using exploratory case study design on the socio-cultural perspectives of fiesta celebration of Jiabong, Samar, Philippines. These results serve as the foundation for drawing conclusions and making recommendations to answer the ultimate goal of the study which is the socio-cultural perspectives of fiesta celebration.

The following are the summary of findings based on results of the study:

1. The results of the study established the **historical significance** of the town fiesta in Jiabong, Samar, Philippines. The study explored three sub-themes that were relevant to the town's history and development.

The first sub-theme delved into the *origin and development of Jiabong* as a town, highlighting its foundation as a settlement near a bay with abundant marine resources and the Magbag River's accessibility. The settlers faced the threat of pirate attacks, which were a common occurrence in the area. The joint forces' preparation and final assault at Horon (now Jia-an) led to the defeat of the pirates and the preservation of the settlement.

The second sub-theme focused on the significance of *San Pascual Baylon, the patron saint of Jiabong*, and the central figure of the town fiesta. The study explored the historical and cultural significance of San Pascual Baylon to the people of Jiabong and the role that the saint plays in the town's history and identity. The participants discussed various aspects of San Pascual Baylon's life, such as his martyrdom and his devotion to the Holy Eucharist. The image of San Pascual Baylon is believed to have miraculous powers, and it is paraded during the fiesta.

Finally, the third sub-theme examined the *town's history of resistance against the Moro Pirates*, a group of Muslim raiders that plagued the region during the Spanish colonial period. This study highlighted the efforts of the people of Jiabong to resist the attacks of the Moro pirates and Spaniards. It is an importance of community solidarity and cooperation in the face of external threats.

2. The results of study on the **religious significance** of the town fiesta in Jiabong, Samar, Philippines, revealed five sub-themes related to the religious aspects of the fiesta: *Diana and Solemn Procession, Pontifical Mass, Requiem Mass, Junta, and the role of religious organizations (Cofradia)*. The study found that the fiesta involves a series of religious rituals that are followed in a specific order, highlighting the community's strong devotion to their religious beliefs and the importance of coming together to celebrate and strengthen their bonds. The study also found that the fiesta celebration is rooted in tradition and culture, with the procession and pontifical mass being significant events in the celebration, and junta being an essential element of the organizational structure of hermano associations in the country. The study's participants emphasized the importance of the religious aspects of the fiesta, such as the solidarity of the people with religion, faith in God, generosity, and cooperation of all the people in helping the church, and preserving the local traditions and culture by imparting knowledge to the next generation. Overall, the study shed light on the religious significance of the town fiesta in Jiabong and its contribution to the cultural identity and tradition of the community.

3. The results of study on the **economic aspect** of the town fiesta in Jiabong, Samar, Philippines, revealed three sub-themes; The first, sub-themes are *income generation*: the fiesta serves as a significant source of income for various individuals and organizations. Business owners target returning overseas Filipinos as potential customers, leading to increased sales. Activities like the curacha dance during the vesper night and other social gatherings generate substantial income, which is often shared among different sponsors involved in the event. Secondly, *expenditure*: the expenses during the fiesta can vary significantly depending on factors such as individual preferences and the involvement of politicians. Participants mention spending amounts ranging from thousands to millions of pesos. Expenses include purchasing food and drinks, slaughtering pigs, venue rentals, and organizing various activities. Some participants mention borrowing money to finance the expenses, while others emphasize the importance of spending within their means. Lastly, the *financial challenges*: participants acknowledge the financial challenges associated with the fiesta. The burden of expenses is particularly felt by those involved in sponsoring

events or catering services. The cost of monthly bills for electricity and water also poses challenges, impacting individuals' financial situations.

The study highlighted the financial contributions made by individuals, particularly through the role of *hermano pasado*, who shoulders the expenses for the church and community activities. Participants mentioned the existence of funds specifically allocated for the patron saint's celebration, emphasizing the financial support provided by religious organizations.

Overall, the study emphasized the economic dynamics of the town fiesta in Jiabong, highlighting the income generation, expenditure patterns, and financial challenges faced by individuals and businesses during this festive event. The findings underscored the importance of fundraising activities, collaboration among various groups, and the need for financial planning to ensure the sustainability of projects and programs within the community.

4. The study explored the importance of **tradition and culture** in the Philippines, particularly in the Jiabongnon community. The study also highlighted *fiesta mechanics*, as follows:

Inclusive and Participatory Nature: The general meeting held during the fiesta preparations ensures effective communication, collaboration, and decision-making among organizers and participants. This inclusive approach fosters a sense of unity and cooperation among community members, encouraging their active involvement in the celebration.

Community Bonding through Sports: The basketball and volleyball inter-barangay tournament promotes friendly competition and community bonding. It showcases the athletic skills and teamwork of the participants, engaging both players and spectators and contributing to the overall festive ambiance of the fiesta.

Carnival as a Centerpiece of Entertainment: The opening of the carnival adds entertainment and amusement to the fiesta celebrations. It offers a wide range of thrilling rides, games, and attractions for people of all ages. The carnival becomes a social gathering place, supporting the local economy and providing an enjoyable environment for friends, families, and neighbors to celebrate together.

Diverse Activities and Commerce: The "Bazaar ni Batch (Day) and Bar ni Batch (Night)" event organized by Batch 1993 offers a diverse range of activities, commerce, and entertainment. The daytime bazaar supports local entrepreneurs and vendors, while the evening "Bar ni Batch" serves as a social gathering place. These events foster community engagement, support fundraising initiatives, and contribute to the overall success of the fiesta.

Decoration and Preparations: The decoration and preparation activities involve the entire community, with the *hermano mayor* taking responsibility for adorning the church. The community's involvement, including the establishment of the "pentakasi" by the barangay, showcases unity and collaboration in creating a visually captivating and festive environment throughout the town.

Spiritual Preparation and Renewal: The Novena Mass, a series of nine consecutive days of prayer and devotion leading up to the fiesta, holds great significance. It serves as a time for spiritual preparation, reflection, and unity within the community. The Masses provide an opportunity for individuals to deepen their faith, express gratitude, and seek blessings for the fiesta and the entire community.

Showcasing Young Talent: The "Little Miss Jiabong" event, a beauty pageant for young girls, provides a platform for talent showcase, emphasizing positive values and self-esteem. It promotes character-building, personal development, and community support, creating a joyful occasion for families, friends, and community members to celebrate the young girls' talents and potential.

Promoting Local Singing Talents: The "Laos Kana, ako dire pa" singing contest showcases local singing talents. It encourages individuals passionate about singing to step forward and showcase their skills in a friendly competition. The contest celebrates the rich musical heritage and diversity within the community, providing exposure and motivation for participants to pursue their passion for music.

Celebrating LGBTQ+ Diversity: The "Miss Gay Babaysaye-Queen of Tahong" pageant highlights the beauty, talent, and charisma of the local LGBTQ+ community. It serves as a platform for self-expression, empowerment, and celebration of diversity within Jiabong. The pageant promotes inclusivity, acceptance, and understanding among all members of the community.

Socialization and Formal Gatherings: The Social Night/Vesper Night, Diana and Solemn Procession, Pontifical Mass, Street Party, Requiem Mass, and Junta provide opportunities for socialization, formal gatherings, and moments of spiritual reflection. These events contribute to the overall festive atmosphere, cultural preservation, and community engagement during the fiesta.

Alumni Engagement: The Alumni Homecoming brings together former residents, graduates, and attendees of Jiabong, providing a platform for reconnection, shared heritage and fostering a sense of community among individuals who have experienced their formative years together.

The findings of the study on the Jiabong Town Fiesta and its fiesta mechanics revealed a celebration deeply rooted in tradition, culture, and community engagement. The fiesta mechanics encompass a diverse range of activities that promote inclusivity, friendly competition, talent showcase, spiritual reflection, cultural preservation, and socialization. The fiesta serves as a unifying event that fosters unity, pride, and a sense of belonging within the community. It highlights the rich heritage and diversity of Jiabong, providing opportunities for individuals of all ages and backgrounds to come together, celebrate, and strengthen social bonds. The Jiabong Town Fiesta is a cherished and memorable celebration that showcases the community's spirit, traditions, and commitment to their cultural identity.

5. The study on the town fiesta in Jiabong, Samar, Philippines, provided data showing that the **social aspect** of the fiesta is explored through three sub-themes: *family gathering*, *community gathering*, *social gathering*. The community members come together, reminisce, and strengthen their bonds. It fosters a sense of joy and nostalgia, bridging the gap between the past and present lives of the participants. The event reflects the community's commitment to unity, cultural preservation, and the nurturing of lifelong relationships.

In addition to family gatherings and alumni homecoming, social gatherings are an integral part of the town fiesta in Jiabong, Samar, Philippines. These gatherings bring community members together and contribute to a sense of unity, cultural exchange, and celebration.

Social gatherings during the fiesta include community gatherings, vesper night, and feast day night celebrations. Community gatherings provide a platform for people from different backgrounds to come together, transcend social barriers, and strengthen bonds. Activities such as parades, processions, communal meals, and cultural performances promote solidarity and the exchange of traditions and stories, preserving the community's rich heritage.

Vesper night, the eve of the feast day, sets the tone for the fiesta celebration. It is a time when the community gathers in anticipation of the upcoming festivities. Social gatherings during vesper night often take place in public spaces, where people engage in lively conversations, enjoy food and drinks, and participate in cultural performances. These gatherings create an atmosphere of excitement and anticipation among the attendees.

Feast day night is the culmination of the fiesta celebration. It is marked by religious processions, elaborate street decorations, and various forms of entertainment. People gather in the streets, adorned in traditional attire, to witness the vibrant displays of faith and cultural heritage. Feast day nights often feature music performances, dance parties, and firework displays, providing opportunities for community members to socialize, dance, and celebrate late into the night.

These social gatherings during vesper night and feast day night foster a sense of unity and belonging within the community. They promote cultural exchange, as individuals showcase traditional music, dance, and cuisine. The festivities create a strong sense of community pride and identity as people actively participate in shared customs and traditions.

Overall, the social aspect of the town fiesta in Jiabong, Samar, Philippines, plays a significant role in strengthening social bonds, promoting cultural exchange, and fostering a sense of belonging and unity within the community. Family gatherings, alumni homecoming, and various social gatherings contribute to the vibrancy and inclusivity of the fiesta celebrations.

Conclusions

Through a qualitative research approach using exploratory case study design, the study on the town fiesta in Jiabong, Samar, Philippines, established the historical significance and explored various aspects of the fiesta, including its origin and development, religious significance, economic dynamics, cultural traditions, and social gatherings.

The study highlighted the historical context of Jiabong's foundation and the role of joint forces in defeating pirate attacks, ensuring the preservation and growth of the settlement. It also emphasizes the significance of San Pascual Baylon as the town's patron saint and the central figure of the fiesta, with participants discussing his life, martyrdom, and devotion to the Holy Eucharist. The study further delved into the town's history of resistance against the Moro Pirates, showcasing the importance of community solidarity in the face of external threats.

Regarding the religious aspect, the study revealed the specific sub-themes related to religious rituals and practices during the fiesta. On the economic aspect, the study shed light on income generation, expenditure, and financial challenges associated with the fiesta. It emphasized the significant role of the fiesta as a source of income for individuals and businesses, as well as the importance of financial planning and collaboration among various groups to ensure the sustainability of projects and programs within the community.

The study also explored the importance of tradition and culture in Jiabong's fiesta, highlighting the inclusive and participatory nature of the celebrations, community bonding through sports, diverse activities and commerce, decoration and preparations, spiritual preparation and renewal, showcasing young talent, promoting local singing talents, celebrating LGBTQ+ diversity, and socialization through formal and informal gatherings. These findings underscored the cultural identity, unity, and pride that the fiesta brings to the Jiabongnon community.

Lastly, the study delved into the social aspect of the fiesta, highlighting the significance of family gatherings, community gatherings, and social gatherings during the celebrations. It emphasized how these gatherings foster a sense of unity, cultural exchange, and celebration among community members, strengthening social bonds and preserving the community's rich heritage.

Overall, the study provided a comprehensive understanding of the town fiesta in Jiabong, Samar, Philippines, and its multiple dimensions. It revealed the historical, religious, economic, cultural, and social significance of the fiesta, showcasing its role in shaping the identity and fostering a strong sense of community among the Jiabongnon people.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study on the town fiesta in Jiabong, Samar, Philippines, the following recommendation were made:

Preservation of Historical Heritage: Given the historical significance uncovered in the study, it is recommended to undertake initiatives for the preservation and promotion of Jiabong's historical heritage. This can include the establishment of a local museum or heritage center that showcases artifacts, documents, and narratives related to the town's foundation, the defeat of pirate attacks, and other significant historical events. By preserving and sharing this history, the community can foster a deeper appreciation for their roots and attract visitors interested in learning about Jiabong's unique past.

Strengthening Religious and Cultural Practices: Recognizing the importance of San Pascual Baylon and the religious aspect of the fiesta, it is recommended to support and enhance religious and cultural practices associated with the town's patron saint. This can involve providing resources for the maintenance and restoration of the church and the image of San Pascual Baylon, organizing educational programs and workshops on the saint's life and teachings, and promoting the participation of the community in religious activities during the fiesta. By strengthening these practices, Jiabong can reinforce its religious identity and preserve its cultural traditions for future generations.

Sustainable Economic Planning: Given the economic dynamics and challenges associated with the fiesta, it is recommended to focus on sustainable economic planning and collaboration among various stakeholders. This can involve creating a dedicated committee or organization responsible for managing the financial aspects of the fiesta, developing strategies for income generation beyond the fiesta period, promoting local entrepreneurship and small businesses, and implementing financial literacy programs to ensure prudent financial management. By adopting sustainable economic practices, Jiabong can maximize the economic benefits of the fiesta while ensuring long-term financial stability and growth.

Community Engagement and Social Bonding: To strengthen community engagement and social bonding, it is recommended to encourage and facilitate a wide range of activities and gatherings during the fiesta. This can include organizing sports tournaments, cultural showcases, talent competitions, and

inclusive events that celebrate diversity. Additionally, promoting opportunities for families, friends, and neighbors to come together in both formal and informal settings will help foster stronger social bonds and a sense of unity among community members. By actively promoting community engagement, Jiabong can create a welcoming and inclusive environment that celebrates its rich cultural heritage.

By implementing these recommendations, Jiabong can further enrich the town fiesta experience, preserve its history and traditions, stimulate economic growth, and foster a strong sense of community pride and togetherness among the Jiabongnon people.

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