

# The Status, Challenges, and Opportunities of Kalamay Festival in San Enrique, Iloilo

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**Introduction.** Events and festivals are a global phenomenon in a competitive industry that has experienced rapid growth. Festivals attract tourists and create festival tourism. San Enrique, Iloilo celebrates its Kalamay Festival every month of July. Kalamay Festival, as the primary subject of this research study, is a celebration of the town's sugarcane farming and the production of raw sugar as well as the impact of the sugar industry on the town for almost 40 years. With its current situation, it does not have a high level of market-oriented operation, public awareness, and public participation. The management of Kalamay Festival requires a well-written plan to greater guarantee sustainability in continuing such an event. The study aimed to develop a festival development plan to provide a direction in assessing the status of Kalamay Festival in terms of economic, social,

environmental, and cultural aspects, including the opportunities and challenges of Kalamay Festival in terms of accessibility, accommodation, attraction, amenities, and awareness. The findings of the study served as basis for the formulation of a three-year festival development plan that will help guide in identifying areas for development, and formulating programs to aid the needs of the Local Tourism Office of San Enrique, Iloilo that will facilitate the continuous improvement of the Kalamay Festival, to be well-recognized in the local and international tourism market.

**Methods.** This descriptive study utilized a researcher-made survey questionnaire that underwent content validity and reliability testing with five validators, all experts in the field of tourism. Through a purposive sampling technique, the respondents were 1 tourism officer, 5 local organizers, and 381 residents of San Enrique, Iloilo. Mean, standard deviation, frequency count, and percentage distribution were used to treat the data.

**Results.** Overall, the status of Kalamay Festival in terms of the economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions, as well as in terms of its implementation and functions, is "very good." The economic aspect ranked the highest, signifying that the festival itself contributes more income for the local businesses while it helps in the municipality's economic growth. As to the challenges and opportunities of Kalamay Festival for development in relation to the 5A's of tourism, minor variances have been noted in the percentages. Challenges encountered include slight market awareness in promoting Kalamay Festival in other areas; promotional materials are limited; and its potential is not maximized or utilized adequately as to the frequency and reachability of the promotional materials. Opportunities are also very high in terms of the tourism destination within the town because there is an existing wide array of the natural environment, potential ecotourism destinations like cold springs, and rural tourism.

**Conclusion.** Kalamay Festival serves as an avenue for volunteerism and provides opportunities to contribute to the well-being of the community. However, there is no extensive involvement of private event organizers in the town and other external linkages and affiliations. It must be drawn out to maximize its positive social, cultural, and environmental benefits. For the status of the festival, the economic aspect of the festival is the highest contributing factor why tourists visit Kalamay Festival. The environmental aspect of the festival needs to be developed and should be given emphasis. Though Kalamay Festival promotes green tourism through its zero-waste management initiatives, the festival should also serve as a platform to instill ecological awareness to the visitors in terms of energy and water resource management. The opportunities come when the festival itself is used as

a promotional tool of the town to encourage local or even international tourists. Awareness also among the locals about the activities during the festival is encouraged. Likewise, the provision of a large-scale accommodation may be made available for visiting attendees.

**Practical Value of the Paper.** The findings of this study may provide a reference in the formulation of a 3-year festival developmental plan for the Kalamay Festival to strengthen and encourage more tourists and business opportunities in the municipality. This developmental plan may also serve as a guide to all the responsible agencies, specifically the local government unit and the local tourism office.

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