

Exploring the value of cultural heritage sites in Ilocos Region

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Abstract

In the field of cultural heritage, knowledge sharing is an essential aspect of communication that preserves and maintains cultural collections. This study aimed to assess the value of cultural heritage and test the significant relationship between the value of cultural heritage sites, the role of food through festivals during travel, and factors that will promote the Lakbay Kultura program. Descriptive correlation research was utilized with 385 faculty members of HEI and tourism officers in the Ilocos Region as respondents of the study. Based on the result, the respondents agree that cultural heritage sites are valuable for their aesthetic characteristics, they provide inspirational and practical value, have a presence of spiritual connection to the tourist, and provide current employment opportunities. A significant difference exists in the value of cultural heritage sites when grouped according to profile. The result of the study implies that there is a significant potential for cultural tourism in the Ilocos Region, and efforts should be made to preserve and promote the region's cultural heritage to reap its economic and social benefits.

Keywords: cultural heritage site, cultural value; Ilocos region

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1. Introduction

Cultural heritage sites and food form the foundation of Lakbay Kultura by providing a multi-sensory and immersive experience for travelers. These elements not only attract visitors but also contribute to the preservation, celebration, and sustainable development of local cultures and communities. World tourism performs multiple functions and exhibits various characteristics that influence tourism development within their boundaries. They are the main gateway for tourists visiting a country and their success has a direct impact on the visitor economy of that destination (Maxim, 2019). Tourism is a significant pillar in many economies in the region, especially in the Philippines, where in 2019, it contributed 12.7% share in the country's GDP, and employed 14 out of 100 or 5.7 million of Filipinos (Philippine Statistics Authority [PSA], 2020).

Cultural heritage tourism stands out as a crucial socio-economic resource. Proper preservation and accessibility of works of art contribute to job creation, tourism promotion, social inclusion, and the reinforcement of cultural identity (Baglioni, et al., 2021). Cultural heritage assets, including historical buildings, archaeological sites, monuments, and their tangible and intangible components, serve as a legacy from the past, instilling a sense of place, identity, and aesthetic well-being within local populations (Cassar, 2009; Phillips, 2015 as cited in Sesana, et al., 2021).

This study will explore both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. 'Tangible Cultural Heritage' encompasses physical artifacts that are created, preserved, and transmitted across generations, including artistic creations, built heritage like buildings and monuments, and other tangible products of human creativity culturally significant in a society. On the other hand, 'Intangible Cultural Heritage' refers to practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills, and associated instruments, objects, artifacts, and cultural spaces recognized by communities, groups, and individuals as part of their cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2003). Intangible heritage comprises oral traditions, performing arts, local knowledge, and traditional skills.

Cultural heritage, viewed as a social and cultural process, significantly contributes to the concept and practice of sustainable development (Harrison, 2015). International frameworks such as the New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals increasingly acknowledge the need to better value the role of heritage in urban sustainability (Perry, et al., 2019). The assessment of the value of cultural heritage sites involves considering aesthetic, educational, spiritual, social, economic, and historical aspects (Qiu, et al., 2019) and the role of food through festivals during travel in terms of motivation, time pressure, prior knowledge, and food involvement (Yang, et al., 2020). This study can have a significant contribution to Ilocos region which can help in the preservation of cultural identity, educational enrichment, tourism promotion, cultural tourism development, community engagement, and empowerment. It will be aligned with the broader goals of sustaining cultural diversity and promoting the rich heritage of the region.

Objectives of the study - This study proposed a Cultural Academy Framework and development plan in Ilocos Region. Specifically, it (1) presented the profile of the faculty/employees of HEI's and tourism officers and staff in terms of educational attainment, frequency of visit, reason for visit, travel companion and mode of transportation used; (2) identified the value of cultural heritage sites in terms of aesthetic value, educational value, spiritual value, social and economic value and historical value (3) tested the significant difference on the assessment of the value of cultural heritage sites when grouped according to the profile of the respondents;

2. Methodology

Research Design - This research employed a descriptive design to evaluate the significance of cultural heritage in the Ilocos Region. Descriptive studies are designed to portray the distribution of one or more

variables without considering any causal or other hypotheses (Aggarwal and Ranganathan, 2019).

Participants of the Study - The participants of the study are 384 faculty members teaching hospitality and tourism courses in the 66 Higher Education Institutions in Ilocos Region and the tourism officers and staff employed in each province; visited cultural heritage sites and had experience in attending various festivals in the region. The number of respondents was evenly distributed to the HEI's offering hospitality and tourism programs with an average of 5 to 6 respondents per HEI and 3 officers and employees of each provincial tourism office.

Instrument - This study used a modified questionnaire from the study of Qiu, et al Visiting intangible cultural heritage tourism sites: From value cognition to attitude and intention. The questionnaire underwent content validation by the experts (1 Tourism Officer from Batangas province, 2 Tourism Officers from Pangasinan, and 1 Program Head of Tourism in one of the Colleges in Manila). Statistical test for validity and the reliability of the items/indicators was tested using Cronbach Alpha. Pilot testing was conducted on the residents and at the same time faculty of colleges and university that is not part of the actual data gathering

Procedure - Upon the approval of the Dean, a Google form link was shared with the faculty through their Dean or Department Head. After gathering the data using Google Forms the data was downloaded through Excel and coded before submission to the statistician. The statistician tested the data using different statistical tests of the software SPSS version 26. After obtaining the results, the researcher will conduct an interview to provide substantial discussion on the analysis of the data and will attend the Culture Sub-Committee Meeting with the Regional Development Council of Ilocos Region and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts to learn more about the project in the region.

Data Analysis - The study employed several statistical tools, including weighted mean, ranking, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The weighted mean was utilized to determine the cultural heritage sites' values in terms of aesthetic, educational, spiritual, social, and economic aspects, as well as historical significance. ANOVA was employed to examine any significant differences in the assessment values of cultural heritage sites based on the respondents' profiles. The Likert Scale used for assessing variables ranged from 4.50 to 5.00, indicating "Strongly Agree," 3.50 to 4.49 for "Agree," 2.50 to 3.49 for "Moderately Agree," 1.5 to 2.49 for "Disagree," and 1.00 to 1.49 for "Strongly Disagree." Additionally, all data were processed using the statistical software SPSS version 26 to facilitate a comprehensive interpretation of the study results, with alpha levels set at 0.05 and 0.01, respectively.

Ethical Considerations - To uphold the strict confidentiality of the survey, the report refrained from specifying individual names. The identity of the respondents remained undisclosed, with the sole mention that they are faculty members from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Ilocos Region and officials and staff of provincial tourism offices. The researcher abstained from expressing personal opinions, ensuring that the report solely presented information and results derived from the gathered data.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the profile of the respondents in terms of educational attainment, frequency of visit, reason for visit, travel companion and mode of transportation. Majority of the respondents have masteral degree with 169 respondents or 44 percent, followed by those with doctoral degree with 140 or 35.5 percent while the lowest are others who are currently enrolled in doctoral program. Having majority of the respondents are masteral degree graduates signifies that higher education institutions are following the mandate of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to the academe that minimum requirements for faculty members teaching undergraduate programs is having masteral degree.

As indicated in the CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 14 series of 2008, the manual of regulations for higher education, for undergraduate programs to teach mainly in the major field and where applicable must be a

holder of master's degree. As to the frequency of visit, majority of the respondents has no particular schedule when visiting heritage sites with 232 or 60.40 percent followed by once a year with 73 or 19.10 percent and the lowest was twice a month with 35 or 9.10 percent.

Table 1*Respondent's Demographic Profile*

	f	%
Educational Attainment		
College Degree	69	18.0
Masteral Degree	169	44.0
Doctoral Degree	140	36.5
Others	6	1.6
Frequency of Visit		
Once a month	44	11.5
Twice a month	35	9.1
Once a year	73	19.0
No particular schedule	232	60.4
Reason for visit		
Visiting friends and relatives	65	16.9
Leisure	233	60.7
Business	13	3.4
Education	73	19.0
Travel Companion		
Family	225	58.6
Friends	79	20.6
Colleagues	80	20.8
Guests		
Mode of Transportation		
Public Vehicle	24	6.3
Private Vehicle	360	93.8

Based on the interview with some of the respondents, they don't have specific schedule of visit to the sites because they are just looking into the chance of having their time off work or during holidays. Majority of them are taking advantage of the long weekend when visiting the sites or attending festivals. With regards to the reason for visit, majority of the respondents visits the heritage sites and attends festival as a form leisure activity followed by education with 73 or 19.0 percent and the lowest was for business reason with 13 or 3.4 percent. The reason why the respondents visits the cultural heritage is primarily to spend their leisure time in a place that is near to their work and family. This is in relation to the reason why there is no particular schedule of visit because they are just would like spend their leisure anytime they are free to visit the heritage sites and at the same time attend festivals. Participation and engagement in cultural goods, including arts events, museums, historical sites and certain sporting activities, form leisure experiences, where leisure is recognized as an action that takes place at a given time, is an activity that we can identify and, more importantly, brings pleasant experiences to the person involved in that action' (Ateca-Amestoy 2011 as cited in Wheatley & Bickerton, 2017).

In terms of travel companion, travelling with family members with 225 respondents or 58.60 percent topped on the rank followed by colleagues with 80 or 20.80 percent and the least are friends with 79 or 20.6 percent. This means that majority of the respondents are travelling with their family. This is best time to bond with the family in the most practical and convenient way. As a Filipino, travelling with family is must have experience because they can spend their precious with time their loved ones and at the same time wandering around the province to visit cultural heritage sites and experience the celebration of different festivals. According to the study of Durko and Pertrick (2013) travel is utilizing limited family time to help improve communications within a relationship, reduce the possibility of divorce, strengthen lifelong family bonds, and increase a sense of well-being in adults and children. When it comes to the mode of transportation, majority of the respondents are using private vehicle with 360 or 93.8 percent while only 24 or 6.3 percent are using public transport. This is signifies that most of the respondents are travelling using their private or own vehicle because this is the convenient and fastest way to travel. They can stay on each place at their own phase without worrying about that

the other groups joining the travel is waiting if they will be travelling using public transportation.

In the study of Camo, et al. (2017), particular emphasis was placed on the utilization of cars. Through statistical analysis of a questionnaire administered to 1,500 residents, the findings indicate that consistent car usage is predominantly confined to a specific social group. This group perceives the benefit of reduced time spent on daily travel, despite incurring higher costs. Conversely, populations relying on public transport face a disadvantage, as they spend a greater portion of their day commuting between different locations.

Table 2

Value of Cultural Heritage in terms of Artistic Value

The cultural heritage sites has...	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
unique regional characteristics and style	4.68	Strongly Agree	3.5
art element integration that perfectly blends artistic element such as color and ornamentation	4.70	Strongly Agree	2
aesthetic characteristics that has elegant and smooth artistic feature that is pleasing to the eye	4.71	Strongly Agree	1
artistic appeal and authenticity that satisfies social reality, aesthetic standard and emotional impact	4.68	Strongly Agree	3.5
complete artistic form that incorporates features of art, merchandise and symbols	4.66	Strongly Agree	5
Composite Mean	4.67	Strongly Agree	

Legend: for Tables 2-6: 4.50 – 5.00 = Strongly Agree (SA); 3.50 – 4.49 = Agree (A); 2.50 – 3.49 = Moderately Agree (MA); 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree(D); 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 2 presents the value of cultural heritage sited in terms of artistic value with the composite mean of 4.67 and verbal interpretation of strongly agree. Among the indicators, cultural heritage sites has aesthetic characteristics that has elegant and smooth artistic feature that is pleasing to the eye (4.71) got the highest mean followed by the cultural heritage sites has art element integration that perfectly blends artistic element such as color and ornamentation (4.70) both interpreted as strongly agree. These means that aesthetics of the of the structure of heritage sites is an important factor that makes the people visit places specially nowadays that people are fond of places that are called instagrammable or visually attractive and interesting in such a way that it lends itself to being photographed and posted on social media. In Ilocos, some of the heritage sites with artistic value are Calle Crisologo, St. Augustine's Church, Bantay Bell Tower and Minor Basilica of Our Lady of Manaog. These cultural heritage sites have special or unique artistic designs.

Throughout history, people have consistently placed significance on aesthetics and the experiences derived from it. Instances of such experiences encompass admiring a breathtaking or awe-inspiring landscape and being emotionally moved by a profoundly impactful piece of music. Aesthetics, in this context, encompasses various elements, including art, nature, and what is referred to as the "real environment." This encompasses design, architectural components, and aspects of landscape planning (Breiby & Slåtten, 2018). Meanwhile, the cultural heritage sites has unique regional characteristics and style (4.68), tied with artistic appeal and authenticity that satisfies social reality, aesthetic standard and emotional impact rank low and the lowest indicator is the cultural heritage site has complete artistic form that incorporates features of art, merchandise and symbols (4.66). These indicators ranked low but still rated as strongly agree.

This indicates that features of arts and symbols are always part of the artistic value of every structure or architecture. Cultural heritage must have a touch of arts in their design so that it can serve as attraction to fascinate people and make the decide to visit the heritage sites. The artistic value and symbolism of cultural heritage sites can greatly enhance their appeal to visitors. People are often drawn to places that are aesthetically pleasing and have cultural or historical significance. Incorporating artistic elements and symbols into the design of cultural heritage sites can help to make them more attractive and memorable to visitors. Additionally, these elements can also help to convey the cultural and historical significance of the site, making it a more meaningful experience for those who visit.

Illustrating distinctive architectural heritage, the Paoay Church, officially known as St. Augustine Church,

stands as an exemplary site. With a massive pediment and a complementing bell tower dominating an expansive plain, this church is renowned for its architectural fusion of baroque, gothic, Chinese, and Javanese influences. Notably, the structure features enormous buttresses on its sides and rear, contributing to its unique architectural character. Recognizing its cultural significance, the Philippine government designated it as a National Cultural Treasure in 1973. Furthermore, the Paoay Church holds the prestigious status of a UNESCO World Heritage Site as part of the collective group known as the Baroque Churches of the Philippines (Cabie, 2022).

Table 3 presents the educational value of cultural heritage with the composite mean of 4.69 interpreted as strongly agree. The cultural heritage sites has reflected community or national spirit (4.74) rank first tied with the cultural heritage sites provides inspirational and practical value (4.74) with the verbal interpretation of strongly agree

Table 3

Value of Cultural Heritage in terms of Educational Value

The cultural heritage sites has...	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
personalized learning experience	4.61	Strongly Agree	5
enjoyable and interactive learning experience	4.68	Strongly Agree	3.5
reflect community or national spirit	4.74	Strongly Agree	1.5
provide inspirational and practical value	4.74	Strongly Agree	1.5
serve as political, cultural and social institutional symbols	4.68	Strongly Agree	3.5
Composite Mean	4.69	Strongly Agree	

According to the respondents some of the heritage sites have reflects community and national spirit because most of it became part of the history such as museums, residences of the heroes like Juan Luna and their monuments. These also has educational value and therefore students must be knowledgeable of the existence of these cultural heritage sites. Museums and monuments serve as a tangible representation of a community's or nation's history, values, and achievements. They provide a physical space for people to connect with the past, present, and future of their culture and identity. By preserving and showcasing these heritage sites, people are able to learn about the struggles and triumphs of their ancestors and the significant events that shaped their society. It also fosters a sense of pride and belonging among the people, as they are able to appreciate and celebrate the rich cultural heritage of their community or nation.

Our heritage serves as a guide to unraveling our past and understanding the evolution of our society. It facilitates the exploration of our history and traditions, fostering an awareness of who we are. By delving into our heritage, we gain insights that aid in comprehending and explaining the reasons behind our present identity and characteristics (Heritage, n.d.). Another indicator which topped the rank is the cultural heritage sites provide inspirational and practical value. This means that cultural heritage sites can inspire people in many ways. They can teach about the past, connect and I've a sense of identity. They can also show the beauty of the world and the creativity of human beings. When visiting a cultural heritage site tourists can be transported to another time and place, can learn about the stories and traditions of the people in the past and can deeply provide inspiring experience.

Cultural heritage sites are fascinating places to visit, but they can also be overwhelming. There is so much to see and learn, and it can be difficult to know where to start. That's why it's important to do your research before you visit a cultural heritage site. Learn about the history of the site, the culture of the people who built it, and the architectural significance of the building. This will help tourist inspire and appreciate the site on a deeper level and make the visit more meaningful (Chung, 2018). Meanwhile, the indicators the cultural heritage sites serve as political, cultural and social institutional symbols (4.68) tied with the cultural heritage sites has enjoyable and interactive learning experience (4.68) and the lowest, the cultural heritage sites have personalized learning experience (4.61), but still rated as strongly agree.

This means that visiting cultural heritage sites can be enjoyable when the staff or the personnel provide personalized experience to their visitors specially if there is tour of the facilities and tour guide. During the site

tour, tour guide provide the information or share the history of the place. Providing a personalized experience to visitors can enhance their enjoyment and appreciation of the cultural heritage site. Having a knowledgeable and engaging tour guide can also make the site tour more interesting and informative, which can leave a lasting impression on the visitors. This can potentially lead to positive word-of-mouth and encourage more people to visit the site in the future. In Cohen-Aharoni's study (2017), the local guides, in the course of the tours, incorporate intricate details from Jewish law. Instead of merely reciting traditional knowledge, these guides craft a distinctive guided tour performance. This performance establishes a meaningful link between the visitors' existing knowledge and the exhibited vessels.

Table 4 shows the spiritual value of cultural heritage with the composite mean of 4.67 interpreted as strongly agree. Among the indicators, cultural heritage sites has presence of spiritual connection to the tourist (4.71) rank first followed by the cultural heritage sites has activities that celebrate spiritual quality of nature (4.70), both interpreted as strongly agree. This is an indication that visiting heritage sites and pilgrimages sites can provide a feeling of spiritual connection specially to those religious persons who are visiting the sites regularly. The idea of a spiritual connection to a tourist destination is highly personal and subjective, and can manifest in a wide variety of ways. It may be related to cultural heritage, religious beliefs, a sense of oneness with nature, or simply a feeling of resonance with a particular place. Whatever the source of the connection may be, it can enrich the travel experience and leave a lasting impression on the visitor. Often than not Ilocanos are Roman Catholic or Christians that's why they can easily feel the connection to the cultural heritages sites that they visited specially the churches like the Minor Basilica of our Lady of Manaog, Paoay Church/ St. Augustine Church, St. Andrew the Apostle Parish, Sta Monica Parish Church and many others.

Table 4

Value of Cultural Heritage in terms of Spiritual Value

The cultural heritage sites has...	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
activities that celebrate spiritual quality of nature	4.70	Strongly Agree	2
trigger spiritual resonance	4.62	Strongly Agree	4
presence of spiritual connection to the tourist	4.71	Strongly Agree	1
assist an individual in finding the meaning of life	4.63	Strongly Agree	3
Composite Mean	4.67	Strongly Agree	

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This is an indication that visiting heritage sites and pilgrimages sites can provide a feeling of spiritual connection specially to those religious persons who are visiting the sites regularly. The idea of a spiritual connection to a tourist destination is highly personal and subjective, and can manifest in a wide variety of ways. It may be related to cultural heritage, religious beliefs, a sense of oneness with nature, or simply a feeling of resonance with a particular place. Whatever the source of the connection may be, it can enrich the travel experience and leave a lasting impression on the visitor. Often than not Ilocanos are Roman Catholic or Christians that's why they can easily feel the connection to the cultural heritages sites that they visited specially the churches like the Minor Basilica of our Lady of Manaog, Paoay Church/ St. Augustine Church, St. Andrew the Apostle Parish, Sta Monica Parish Church and many others.

This is supported by the study of Cohen-Aharoni (2017) wherein the respondents of the study mention that the tour she joined was the most special tour that they have because throughout the tour they had a strong spiritual connection and everything is on spiritual level. Meanwhile, the low results are the cultural heritage sites assist an individual in finding the meaning of life (4.63) and the cultural heritage sites trigger spiritual resonance (4.62), but still both are interpreted as strongly agree.

The result mean that spiritual resonance emerges when individuals collectively share a purpose that is

simultaneously task-oriented and spiritually oriented. It manifests when people genuinely respect each other and view nature as living entities, actively working to care for all life. Eliciting spiritual resonance in visitors demands a profound comprehension of a destination's unique aspects and a commitment to creating experiences that nurture a sense of connection and significance. By prioritizing cultural heritage, natural beauty, community, and contemplation, a destination can offer visitors a transformative travel experience that instills spiritual growth and fulfillment. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ are naturally inclined to experience a form of spiritual resonance with one another. Ideally, this attribute should consistently define the covenant people of God (Church News, 2010).

Table 5

Value of Cultural Heritage Sites in terms of Social and Economic Value

The cultural heritage sites has...	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
The local community operates services such as tourism and sightseeing, folk experiences, etc.	4.64	Strongly Agree	4
Community's has trademark or brand value.	4.65	Strongly Agree	3
Current employment opportunities are available in cultural heritage sites.	4.81	Strongly Agree	1
Current community residents' participation depicts local residents' personal values.	4.76	Strongly Agree	2
Composite Mean	4.71	Strongly Agree	

Table 5 reveals the social and economic value of cultural heritage with the composite mean of 4.71 interpreted as strongly agree. Current employment opportunities are available in cultural heritage sites (4.81) rank first followed by current community residents' participation depicts local residents personal values (4.76), both interpreted as strongly agree. This confirms that in the operation of the cultural heritage sites they hire people/employees who will manage, assist the visitors and maintain the cleanliness and orderliness of each sites. There are also people who manage the entry the tourist specially the sites with entrance fees. They usually hire people or residents near the heritage sites. In this way the residents will also be benefited or given the opportunity to have a job by the existence of the heritage sites. Cultural heritage sites offer a diverse range of employment opportunities, ranging from front-line positions such as tour guides and interpreters, to back-end jobs such as conservation and management roles.

The presence of heritage tourism was recognized to generate three distinct categories of employment opportunities: direct, indirect, and induced jobs. Direct jobs encompass positions within heritage sites, involving operations, visitor hosting, entertainment provision, and site maintenance. Indirect jobs pertain to roles associated with delivering services for the upkeep and management of heritage sites. Lastly, induced jobs are those created through the activities generated by both direct and indirect employment opportunities (Necissa, 2011 as cited in Chang & Balasingam, 2018). Meanwhile, the indicators community's has trademark or brand value(4.65) and the local community operates services such as tourism and sightseeing, folk experiences, etc (4.64) rank the lowest but still interpreted as strongly agree.

This means that the cultural heritage sites operate as sight seeing sites and give the residents and visitor positive experiences when visiting the site. Sightseeing provide income to the cultural heritage sites because of the entrance fees they collect from their visitors. Local communities can play a significant role in operating tourism and sightseeing services, as well as offering folk experiences that can enhance the visitor experience. By involving the local community in tourism, destinations can benefit from their knowledge, expertise, and cultural heritage, while also providing economic benefits to the community. Cultural sightseeing activities continue to demonstrate success when examining tourism revenue statistics across various destinations. However, the substantial influx of visitors poses a potential threat to heritage attractions. Nevertheless, this situation should be regarded positively due to the favorable economic impact it brings to the lives of the local community (Jelinčić & Mansfeld, 2019).

Table 6*Value of Cultural Heritage in terms of Historical Value*

The cultural heritage sites has...	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Ruins and artifacts are well- preserved.	4.70	Strongly Agree	3
The culture and heritage is well - known in history .	4.63	Strongly Agree	4
The culture is unique Ilocos Region.	4.77	Strongly Agree	1
The culture is an inheritance of history.	4.74	Strongly Agree	2
Composite Mean	4.71	Strongly Agree	

Table 6 presents the historical value of cultural heritage sites with a composite mean of 4.71 interpreted as strongly agree. The culture is unique in Ilocos Region (4.77) ranked first followed by culture is an inheritance of history (4.74) interpreted as strongly agree. The Ilocanos are recognized for their industriousness, gratitude, simplicity, and determination. However, in a light-hearted manner, they are also playfully referred to as "kuripot" or stingy among Filipinos, though it's important to note that this term is more accurately described as frugality rather than a negative regional stereotype. In this context, the cultural traits of the Ilocanos hold historical significance. The distinct culture of the Ilocos Region serves as a mirror reflecting its abundant history and the varied influences that have molded the region throughout the centuries. Visitors to the region can experience this unique culture by sampling local cuisine, attending festivals and celebrations, and exploring the region's historic landmarks and attractions. Ilocos Region is home to many talented artists and craftsmen who produce a wide range of products, including pottery, weaving, and woodcarving.

Noting the historical succession of colonizers, Ilocandia has transcended into a conglomeration of traits and values. However, when everything had settled, the Ilocanos survived to have set their identity as a tribe and became a strong race of sturdy, strong-willed, frugal, and industrious people. It is through their collective effort that have established their niches everywhere in the world (Esguerra, 2013). Meanwhile, the ruins and artifacts are well-preserved (4.70) and the culture and heritage is well - known in history (4.63) both are rated as strongly agree. In the Ilocos Region, one prominent cultural heritage site is the Historic City of Vigan, established in the 16th century as an exceptionally well-preserved model of a planned Spanish colonial town in Asia. Its architectural design signifies the fusion of cultural elements from various parts of the Philippines, China, and Europe, creating a unique culture and townscape unparalleled in East and South-East Asia. The presence of this Historic City holds immense value for the Ilocanos. The culture and heritage of Ilocos Region is well-known and celebrated in Philippine history. Its unique blend of indigenous and colonial influences has created a rich and diverse cultural landscape that continues to be a source of pride for the region's people.

The Crisologo Street, located in Vigan City, stands as the sole remaining site in the Philippines that showcases urban planning and architecture embodying a blend of diverse cultural influences on Filipino heritage. This includes the incorporation of Spanish urban planning and authentic 19th to early 20th-century architecture set within a landscape that still retains remnants of its original context. It is one of the UNESCO World Heritage sites (Estonanto, et al. 2018).

Table 6*Difference on the Respondent's Assessment of the Value of Cultural Heritage when grouped according to Profile*

Value of Cultural Heritage Sites	t/F	p-value	Interpretation
Educational Attainment	52.527	.000	Significant
Frequency of Visit	16.334	.000	Significant
Reason for Visit	9.450	.000	Significant
Travel Companion	21.656	.000	Significant
Mode of Transportation	-.123	.902	Not Significant

Legend: Difference is significant at 0.05 alpha level

Table 6 reveals the comparison of the responses on the value of cultural heritage sites. A notable observation was the presence of a significant difference in assessment, as evidenced by all p-values ($p = .000$) being lower than the alpha level, when participants were grouped based on educational attainment, frequency of visit, reason

for visit, and travel companion. However, in the mode of transportation, no significant difference was observed. This indicates a substantial variance in responses. The post hoc analysis revealed that individuals with doctoral degrees (4.77, 4.20, & 4.68) provided higher assessments regarding the value of cultural heritage sites. These findings imply that individuals with doctoral degrees possess a more comprehensive understanding of the significance of cultural heritage sites. They exhibit greater knowledge or experience regarding the importance of these sites to the tourism of the region. Some studies have suggested that higher education enhances interest in heritage sites (Yan and Morrison, 2007) and other cultural activities. The higher the level of education, the more awareness and interest individuals have in participating in various cultural activities. Globally, there is a growing enthusiasm for cultural tourism, making it a popular choice worldwide (Shen, 2009).

With regards to the frequency of visit significant difference on the responses exist. This was observed because all the p-value (.000) was less than the alpha level. This means that the respondents have different assessment and this was supported by the post hoc test. It was observed that those who visit twice a month (4.91, 4.91) have higher assessment of the on the values of cultural heritage sites. The result indicates that the those who visit twice a month have higher assessment because they were able to observe the cultural heritage sites more often. Those who visited frequently the cultural heritage site might see the different dimensions that are important to its implementation. The study of Dorn and Polegate (2014) indicated that first-time visitors might be different in terms of their responses, perception and values and travel motives while those who repeat travellers might have lower degrees of satisfaction and may not directly influence tourist in their revisit intension (Su, et al 2016 as cited in Preko, 2020).

When it comes to reason for visit difference on the responses exist. This was observed because all the p-value (.000) was less than the alpha level. This means that the respondents have different assessment and this was supported by the post hoc test. It was observed that those visiting friends (4.78, 4.20 & 4.81) have higher assessment on the values of cultural heritage sites. The result implies that those visiting their friends when going to the cultural heritage sites are more motivated and can have more food involvement because this is a special day they can connect or unite with their friends who might not have seen for the longest time. This is another time they can have a fun together. The result of the study is not supported by the study of (Kempiak, et al. 2017) wherein based on his investigation of motivations and visitor's behaviour patterns revealed that the most common reason for visiting the heritage site was recreation and the desire to gain more knowledge and learn about the heritage being is just a secondary factor. Significant differences were noted when participants were grouped according to travel companion, as evidenced by all computed p-values ($p = .000$) being below the alpha level. This signifies a substantial variation in responses, further supported by post hoc analysis indicating that individuals traveling with friends had a higher assessment of the values associated with cultural heritage sites.

This suggests that those who travel with friends exhibit a heightened ability to recognize the value of cultural heritage sites in terms of artistic, educational, and spiritual significance. Their shared experiences allow for unique observations and discussions about the cultural heritage sites. An additional benefit of traveling with friends is the development of stronger friendships through shared incredible moments and learning experiences. The ability to talk about these shared memories during the trip and in the years to come forms the foundation for lifelong friendships and potentially more shared holidays in the future. These findings align with Zhu & Fan's (2018) study, which highlights the strong relationship between travel companionship and both happiness and meaningfulness. Traveling with a spouse/partner, children, other family members, and friends contributes to a greater sense of happiness and meaning compared to traveling with parents or co-workers.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

- Cultural Heritage sites are valuable for their aesthetic characteristics that have elegant and smooth artistic feature that is pleasing to the eye, it provides inspirational and practical value, have a presence of spiritual connection to the tourist, and provide current employment opportunities. This implies that cultural heritage tourism experiences emphasize on the aesthetic qualities of these sites, such as

guided tours that highlight the art and architecture of a historical site, may be particularly successful in attracting visitors.

- Significant differences also exist in the assessment of the value of cultural heritage when grouped according to the profile variable except for mode of transportation in terms of educational value and reason for visit in terms of mode of transportation.

4.1 Recommendations

- To the State Colleges and Universities, inclusion of theater arts focusing on scenography, lighting, and stage direction as well as acting and actor training and methods and expressive technical work may be included to dramatize the culture and traditions of the region.
- To the provincial government and tourism office, the proposed budget for this project may be considered for budget appropriation to help the proponent of this study implement his plan.
- Future researchers may conduct another study that will focus on other types of intangible cultural heritage that will contribute to the offering of more courses in the proposed cultural academy.

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