

Start of something new: narratological experiences of students and teachers at the Yilan festival

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Abstract

This qualitative study narrates the experiences of teachers and students from Bataan High School for the Arts (BHSA) who participated in the 2023 Yilan International Children's Folklore and Folkgame Festival in Taiwan. Using a narrative research design, the study aimed to explore how festival participation influences personal growth, emotional engagement, and the preservation of cultural and educational values. A total of 25 participants—seven teachers and eighteen students—were selected through purposive sampling. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, which experts validated to ensure depth and reliability. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using QUIRKOS, a visual and intuitive qualitative data analysis software. Three themes were of central significance. First, there was cultural immersion, learning, and personal growth reported by participants, contrasted with challenges such as strict timetables and cultural adaptation. Second, there were emotional experiences characterized by excitement, enjoyment, and a deep sense of awe that underpinned their most enduring memories of the event. Third, participants highlighted the significance of the sharing of story and experience in the passing on of festival values, with community engagement and legacy as the dominant themes that emerged. The research focuses on the power of global cultural festivals to transform identity, promote intercultural understanding, and enhance lifelong learning. The research adds to the general knowledge base regarding how these festivals are not only cultural events but also platforms for emotional enrichment and value-sharing, making festivals applicable in educational and community establishment contexts.

Keywords: arts festival, arts school, cultural education, high school for the arts, qualitative research.

Introduction and Literature Review

Festivals have been at the heart of the cultural life of communities for centuries as living and dynamic manifestations of heritage, artistic performance, and shared identity. As living traditions, festivals preserve and pass on values, customs, and cultural stories from generation to generation and across borders. International cultural festivals, in the globalized world of the present, have become important sites of cross-cultural learning and exchange, giving the participants a window into the other's world but also a deeper reflection on their own selves. When teachers and students

of different backgrounds participate in these festivals, they are part of an empowering experience of shared humanity, artistic performance, and intercultural appreciation.

This research focuses on the experience of the BHSA teacher and student participants in the 2023 Yilan International Children's Folklore and Folkgame Festival (YICFFF) in Taiwan. Globally renowned for its energetic promotion of youth performance and folk cultures, the YICFFF is an extraordinary site of cultural exposure, artistic co-creation, and educational renewal. Using the narrative inquiry approach, this research aimed to explore the experience of these Filipino participants by examining the stories they relate—stories that expose the emotional landscapes, personal transformations, and cultural significations contained in their festival experience. Festivals such as the YICFFF are not merely celebratory festivals; they are learning sites for culture that elicit identity-making, intercultural knowledge, and community formation. Cultural and tourism studies identify the ways in which overseas festivals offer an opportunity for people to engage positively with another culture's tradition, rituals, and expressive forms (Cohen, 2017; Getz & Page, 2016). Unlike conventional tourist sight-seeing, participation in a culture festival involves active engagement—on the stage, as well as through communication and social interaction. Such engagement has long-lasting impacts on the way people view themselves and others.

Motivations for traveling to world festivals are complex. Performers and spectators are drawn by the possibility of artistic discovery, cultural interaction, and unique, singular experiences (Chen & Chen, 2010; Richards & Munsters, 2012). Festivals are not so much performances as they are deeply emotional and subjective experiences. Proof is that the participants are personally and professionally transformed: students gain self-esteem, artistic maturity, and intercultural awareness, while teachers gain benefits through mentoring and the promoting of cultural heritage (Crossley, 2012; Gibson & Connell, 2012; MacLeod, 2006). The affective aspects of festival participation are central to the development of how these experiences are remembered and narrated. Kim and Thapa (2018) propose that festivals create a multifaceted set of emotions—awe, joy, anxiety, excitement, pride, and belonging. These emotional associations become part of the narrative repertoire that participants take away long after the festival. For the YICFFF, students frequently describe pre-performance jitters and post-performance euphoria. Teachers, on the other hand, describe responsibility, cultural pride, and identification with their students and the broader cultural purpose of their work. Bagozzi et al. (1999) propose that such group-based emotional experiences are amplified through emotional contagion, where shared affective states increase individual affective resonance.

These emotional and thematic narratives need to be interpreted in order to shed further light on how festivals function as spaces of transformation. Referring to Victor Turner's liminal concept (1969), researchers such as Richards (2019) and Cohen (2017) characterize festivals as spaces of liminality where routine cultural structures are suspended, enabling people to experiment with new meanings and identities. This liminality is found in participants' testimony—students feeling more confidence, teachers reporting new cultural commitment, and both groups developing strong bonds through common struggle and victory. Most importantly, they are not merely personal, but cultural texts that are part of larger educational and community conversations. Narrative theory, as described by Bruner (1990) and Polkinghorne (1988), posits that narrative is a human universal form of constructing experience and conveying knowledge. In the festival, narrative is employed as a device for cultural and educational transmission. The participants in the festival become culture bearers, transmitting their stories through reflection essays, interviews, performance, and conversations that add to others' knowledge of the event and its meaning.

Studies have proven that international festival participation can evoke interest and pride from the general public. In the Philippines setting, David and Okamura (2010) recorded how school involvement in international cultural festivals facilitated increased local backing of cultural performance. Xie (2015) also mentioned the ripple effect of festival stories, where student performers' stories inspired public participation and helped conserve traditional arts. Therefore, choosing the Yilan Festival as the topic of this study is appropriate and significant. Being a youth-oriented, multicultural festival with international delegations, the YICFFF is a fertile ground to examine how cultural values are performed, lived, and passed on through narratives. For the BHSA participants, the festival was not merely a platform but also a space for learning, growing, and cross-cultural encounter. Their narratives are common human stories—courage, imagination, relating—and present a powerful argument for the importance of understanding the role of festivals in constructing educational and cultural identities.

This research tried to construct this knowledge by answering three fundamental questions: What are the key narrative motifs and themes that emerge from the teachers' and students' experiences in the Yilan Festival? What are the emotional considerations that inform their participation and recollections of the festival? And how do the stories reinforce and transmit pedagogical and cultural values, within their own communities and beyond? Through narrative analysis of their experience, this study aimed to reveal the affective, personal, and cultural textures of festival experience, providing rich insight into the potential of cultural festivals to reshape global learning and intercultural understanding. This study utilized narrative analysis to enhance understanding of festivals as dynamic cultural phenomena by analyzing the involvement of BHSA teachers and students in the Yilan Festival in Taiwan. By evaluating the motivations, experiences, and outcomes of those participating in the Yilan Festival, the study aimed to reveal general insights regarding the relationship between cultural celebrations and the human experience.

The narrative study design constantly develops with new views and approaches in modern qualitative research. Contemporary academic research has highlighted the importance of adopting a broader narrative perspective. It involves acknowledging that narratives are individual stories and societal structures deeply rooted in more general cultural and social frameworks. Advocates of narrative research, such as Creswell (2013), have proposed using mixed-methods approaches. These approaches involve integrating qualitative and quantitative methodologies to gain a more comprehensive knowledge of the studied phenomena. This integration facilitates a detailed examination of the intricacies within narratives while also considering overarching patterns and trends. The identified participants in this study were seven (7) faculty members and nineteen (19) students, with a total of twenty-six (26) study participants from BHSA. The study utilized an open-ended questionnaire that elicited individual responses, focusing on the participants' narratives about their participation in the Yilan Festival in Taiwan. It is believed that this provided the qualitative data necessary to analyze and interpret the findings. The instrument was validated through face-to-face and expert validation, for which the assistance of psychologists and psychometricians was sought. The rights and welfare of the participants were protected and respected.

The interview structure was semi-structured, allowing participants to co-construct their narratives to create a space of mutual sense-making and reflection to produce rich, thick, and dense data (Chase, 2011). The validation processes by the expert researchers guaranteed that emergent codes and themes were an accurate representation of participants' narratives to promote interpretive validity of the narrative analysis.

Interpretation of Summary of Findings Using Qualitative Narratology

Narratology, as a qualitative mechanism, centers on the study of stories and how they construct meaning, identity, and social realities within cultural contexts (Riessman, 2008). In this study, the narrative inquiry into the experiences of BHSA students and teachers at the Yilan Festival reveals how individual and collective stories intertwine to create a rich tapestry of cultural understanding and personal transformation.

Constructing Cultural Immersion and Identity through Storytelling

The narratives of cultural immersion and learning experiences by the participants are more than event descriptions; they are narrative performances that constitute and validate their developing identity as global learners and cultural actors. Telling about their experiences of encountering new traditions, rituals, and customs, participants are involved in what Bruner (1991) calls "narrative identity", namely how people make sense of their experience by situating it within a culturally meaningful narrative. These narratives display a dialogic interaction between the self and the other in which personal transformation is internal development and response to cultural difference (Table 1).

Furthermore, the stories of food flavors, cultural difference, and rigid schedules mirror the tension between participants' own cultural systems and those they encounter at the festival. This tension is not narrated as negative but as part of the transformation process in which the disruption of known routine compels reflection and adjustment. These stories illustrate how stories function as sense-making tools in liminal situations in which cultural boundaries are brokered and re-interpreted. For instance, Participant 1 shared how the warmth and openness of the local people have been heartwarming as well as the opportunity to try traditional foods from different countries:

"We had a blast! The people are very welcoming. There is much food and many people from other countries. Like India, Mexico, and Sri Lanka."

Likewise, Participant 11 shared the same sentiments.

"You are very welcome in there; people are very hospitable."

The same feelings are expressed by Participant 13, who shared that:

"I think the festival is wonderful because all of their staff are nice to us performers whenever we perform."

Participant 23 indicated how the Yilan Festival has been an incredible journey into immersing in different cultures as well as the deep respect for the traditions and history of Yilan residents and how they hold on to their heritage while embracing modernity. This is inspiring, reminding of the importance of preserving one's cultural roots.

"The festival was a true spectacle of cultural diversity. It felt like a global village, with participants from various countries showcasing their unique folk traditions and games. The captivating performances were like journeying through the rich tapestry of world cultures. It was particularly impressed by how seamlessly the festival organizers brought together such a wide range of cultural expressions."

Table 1. Generated Themes on Experiences of Students and Teachers at the Yilan Festival

Themes	Description	Participants	Sample Text
Cultural Immersion	This theme primarily deals with how students and teachers have the opportunity to immerse themselves fully in the traditions, customs, and heritage of the Yilan Festival. They can participate in traditional activities, observe rituals, and interact with residents to better understand the culture.	Participant 1 Participant 11 Participant 13 Participant 23	<i>The festival was a true spectacle of cultural diversity. It felt like a global village, with participants from various countries showcasing their unique folk traditions and games. The captivating performances were like journeying through the rich tapestry of world cultures. It was particularly impressed by how seamlessly the festival organizers brought together such a wide range of cultural expressions.</i> (Participant 23)
Educational Opportunities	This theme focuses on how the festival provided a unique educational opportunity for students and teachers to learn about history, folklore, and local traditions firsthand and incorporate these experiences into their curriculum, making lessons more engaging and relevant.	Participant 2 Participant 7 Participant 9 Participant 20 Participant 22	<i>"Our performance taught us so much more than what is in textbooks. We learned about teamwork, cooperation, and the power of art in bridging cultures. It is not just about performing; it is about connecting with people from different backgrounds."</i> (Participant 2)
Personal Growth	This theme focuses on the experience of a deeper appreciation for cultural diversity, building empathy for different traditions, and expanding the participants' horizons. It also shows students' personal growth, recognizing the impact of experiential learning.	Participant 4 Participant 8 Participant 10 Participant 21 Participant 24	<i>"This experience has shown me that personal growth is an ongoing process. It is not about reaching a fixed destination but about embracing the journey. I have developed a greater sense of resilience and adaptability and am more open to new experiences."</i> (Participant 8)
Food Preferences and Cultural Differences	This theme shines a spotlight on the unexpected culinary challenges faced by the BHSA participants as they navigated a culinary landscape that was vastly different from their own, leading to a deeper understanding of the complexities of cultural differences and importance of cultural sensitivity.	Participant 3 Participant 5 Participant 17 Participant 24 Participant 25	<i>"The festival was eye-opening, but the culinary differences sometimes left us with few options we were comfortable with. It was a reminder that while cultural exchange is enriching, it can also be quite challenging regarding food."</i> (Participant 17)

Rigid Schedule and Lack of Flexibility	This theme reveals how the festival's structured schedule limited the participants' ability to engage fully with the vibrant, ever-evolving atmosphere of the event.	Participant 8 Participant 13 Participant 15 Participant 20 Participant 23	<i>"As students, the rigid schedule challenges showed us the importance of striking a balance between structure and spontaneity. While organization in international festivals such as Yulan Festival is crucial, it is equally important to allow flexibility for participants to explore and fully engage with the festival's dynamic atmosphere, which often leads to the most memorable experiences during cultural exchanges."</i> (Participant 15)
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Emotional Narratives as Vehicles of Shared Experience and Memory

The emotional aspects of the participants' stories—surprise, joy, wonder, and excitement—play a central role in constructing the meaning of the festival experience. The narrative approach emphasizes how emotional stories construct a shared emotional space that unites people into a community of memory (Somers, 1994). The participants' emotional stories construct a shared memory of the Yilan Festival, a cultural event that occupies time and space (Table 2). Furthermore, the discursive production of wonder and enchantment are symbolic markers of cultural encounter, pointing to the manner in which narratives not only record events, but create affective resonance. These affect stories are "cultural scripts" which prefigure future engagement with culture and education, shaping the vision and identity of participants well beyond the duration of the festival. Excitement and anticipation, similar to a vibrant overture to a grand symphony, serve as one of the themes that set the stage for an extraordinary journey of participation in the Yilan Festival. This theme relates to the emotions that enveloped participants as they prepared for the Yilan Festival, including the electrifying sense of anticipation, the thrills of performing on an international stage, and the boundless excitement that fuels their every step. The theme also revealed how these emotions infuse the festival with energy and passion, setting the tone for a journey filled with enchanting performances, cross-cultural exchanges, and the creation of lasting memories. The theme of excitement and anticipation at the Yilan Festival is a testament to the profound impact of this cultural celebration and how it stirs the hearts and souls of all who partake in its enchanting magic.

Participant 3 shared how they feel about participating in the Yilan Festival.

"The anticipation has been building for weeks, and now it is at its peak. We are thrilled about the chance to represent our country and share our talents with a global audience. It is not just about performing; it is about celebrating our cultural heritage".

In the same manner, Participant 5 echoed the same sentiment.

"The excitement is hard to contain. It is not just about the performance but also the prospect of new friendships, unique experiences, and the opportunity to expand our horizons. We all feel excitement and a small amount of nervousness, making it even more thrilling."

Additionally, the students' excitement before going to Taiwan is reflected in the statement of Participant 6.

"The excitement is hard to contain. It is not just about the performance but also the prospect of new friendships, unique experiences, and the opportunity to expand our horizons. We all feel a mix of excitement and a small amount of nervousness, which makes it even more thrilling."

Arts teachers who accompanied the students also had their anticipation of the festival. Participant 20 described the preparations for the festival as follows:

"Months before, I was having second thoughts about whether the group would be accepted into the festival, and after receiving the confirmation, I already announced it to everybody, and that is where it started: preparations and rehearsals. A week before the festival, I am confident we have something to show in Taiwan, but I keep it to myself. I want to challenge everybody to be at their best. We have prepared by group, the folk dance and the music group (choir and angklung). Earlier, we identified our repertoire and started rehearsing in preparation for our fundraising concert; then, the rehearsals focused on the festival. Then, I started buying materials and supplies, borrowing costumes from Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, and asking my friends for help. Although we ordered some costumes, it did not make it on time. We have also ordered some uniforms like shirts and jackets, and I have conducted several orientations with the kids to inform them of things to do and not to do. Prepared assigned numbers for the checking of attendance and schedule of packing of luggage (personal and costumes and props)."

Participant 23 also shared his thoughts before the group went to Taiwan for the festival.

"The 2023 Yilan International Children's Folklore and Folkgame Festival in Taiwan is an exciting event that celebrates the rich cultural heritage of Taiwan and brings together people of all ages to share in the joy of traditional folklore and folk games. This week, my thoughts about the festival have been focused on the wonderful opportunity it presents for cultural exchange, learning, and fun."

Table 2: Generated Themes on Emotions and Feelings that Shaped the Students and Teachers' Engagement and Memories at the Yilan Festival

Themes	Description	Participants	Sample Text
Excitement and Anticipation	This theme focuses on the emotions that enveloped participants as they prepared for the Yilan Festival, including their sense of anticipation, the thrills of performing on an international stage, and the boundless excitement that fueled their every step.	Participant 3 Participant 5 Participant 6 Participant 20 Participant 23	<i>"The excitement is hard to contain. It is not just about the performance but also the prospect of new friendships, unique experiences, and the opportunity to expand our horizons. We are all feeling a mix of excitement and quite of nervousness, which makes it even more thrilling."</i> (Participant 5)
Joy and Happiness	This theme deals with the emotions of joy and happiness that enveloped the participants as they engaged in the Yilan Festival.	Participant 12 Participant 16 Participant 18 Participant 21 Participant 25	<i>"The atmosphere at the 2023 Yilan International Children's Folklore and Folkgame Festival is all about celebrating different cultures, like stepping into a whole new world at the Dong-Shan River Park. This year's theme, "Gaming in the Metaverse," gives the festival a futuristic and fun vibe. Imagine this: Families and friends worldwide come together,</i>

			<i>and you can feel the excitement in the air – it is like a big global party. It is where you can make great memories and have a fantastic time.”</i> (Participant 21)
Surprise and Wonder	This theme focuses on the experience of surprise and wonder the participants had as they encountered unexpected sights, performances, and cultural traditions. These emotions further enhanced their engagement and resulted in vivid, memorable experiences.	Participant 14 Participant 15 Participant 17 Participant 22 Participant 24	<i>“The surprise and wonder we felt underlined the importance of cultural appreciation and the joy of lifelong learning. It was a reminder that curiosity and openness can lead to profound connections and personal growth.”</i> (Participant 24)

Stories of Preservation and Transmission as Acts of Cultural Continuity

The traditions of transmission and preservation of cultural and educational values bring the storytelling culture into focus as a practice of transmission of collective memory and identity across generations. Through the retelling of the festival stories, the participants enact the practice of cultural continuity where stories are a vehicle of passing on conventions and values (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008). Narratologically, the stories are "meta-narratives", placing individual experiences in broader cultural and historical contexts. In the narration of their engagement in the festival as a gesture of contribution to legacy and communal participation, the participants position themselves as active agents in the cultural transmission processes. This positioning illustrates the active engagement between individual agency and communal narratives in cultural heritage transmission. The transmission of educational values is a profound theme that encapsulates the essential role of the Yilan Festival as a vibrant classroom without walls. This theme underscores how the festival serves as a dynamic platform for preserving and transmitting knowledge, cultural understanding, and essential life lessons. Further, this theme reveals how the festival becomes an immersive classroom where cultural, historical, and life lessons are taught and absorbed. Through the stories, performances, and interactions at the festival, educational values are passed from one generation to the next, fostering a deeper understanding of culture, traditions, and the shared human experience. With its rich educational tapestry, the Yilan Festival is a testament to the enduring importance of cultural heritage and the invaluable knowledge it imparts to all who engage with its vibrant offering (Table 3).

As experienced by Participant 3, the Yilan Festival is a vibrant classroom that transmits educational values from other cultures.

“The Yilan Festival is like an educational treasure trove. We are not just performing; we are learning about the value of traditions, the significance of language, and the power of cultural exchange. It is an immersive educational experience.”

Likewise, Participant 7 has also shared this same experience.

“Performing at the Yilan Festival in Taiwan has shown me that learning can be an exciting journey. It is not just about acquiring knowledge; it is about understanding the world and appreciating the beauty of cultural diversity. The festival is like an interactive textbook brought to life.”

In the same manner, Participant 10 has voiced her sentiment regarding her experience of participating in the festival abroad.

"For me, the festival is not just about performances but about connecting with people, learning their stories, and discovering the wisdom that transcends borders. We have witnessed traditions and actively participated in them, learning life lessons about teamwork, responsibility, and respect. It is a holistic approach to education."

On the other hand, Participant 22 shared her perspective as a teacher regarding the Yilan Festival as a platform for transmitting educational values as follows:

"The Yilan Festival has been a vivid cultural exchange and education journey. As bearers of educational values, we have shared Filipino traditions and learned valuable lessons from the local culture. The festival has provided an opportunity to bridge the gap between education and culture."

Participant 23 had the same sentiments about participating in the festival.

"The transmission of educational values at the Yilan Festival has emphasized that culture is a dynamic classroom. It is a reminder that the true essence of education is to foster an appreciation for diversity, to respect traditions, and to understand that learning is a lifelong journey. The values of respect, curiosity, and openness were palpable. Education was happening in classrooms and the conversations and shared experiences."

Table 3. Generated Themes on Preservation and Transmission of Cultural and Educational Values Associated with Yilan Festival

Themes	Description	Participants	Sample Text
Transmission of Educational Values	This theme underscores how the festival serves as a dynamic platform for preserving and transmitting knowledge, cultural understanding, and essential life lessons.	Participant 3 Participant 7 Participant 10 Participant 22 Participant 23	<i>"The Yilan Festival has been a vivid cultural exchange and education journey. As bearers of educational values, we have shared Filipino traditions and learned valuable lessons from the local culture. The festival has provided an opportunity to bridge the gap between education and culture."</i> (Participant 22)
Community Engagement	This theme reveals how the Yilan festival strengthened the bonds between participants and the local community, deepened cultural understanding, and created enduring relationships.	Participant 1 Participant 4 Participant 9 Participant 20 Participant 25	<i>"The Yilan Festival is a dynamic classroom without walls, where we have learned about culture and community from the inside. The engagement has deepened our appreciation for Taiwanese culture and shown us the importance of unity and connection in a global context. We had a cultural exchange at the Da Si Elementary School of Tou Cheng Town, Yilan County. We enjoyed the walk at the beachfront; they also prepared cold snacks for us"</i>

			<i>and taught us to make a necklace. On the other hand, we also taught the locals and our partner community how to play angklung and dance Polka sa Nayon.”</i> (Participant 4)
Legacy and Continuity	This theme highlights the festival as a platform for cultural preservation.	Participant 2 Participant 12 Participant 14 Participant 23 Participant 24	<i>“The surprise and wonder we felt underlined the importance of cultural appreciation and the joy of lifelong learning. It was a reminder that curiosity and openness can lead to profound connections and personal growth.”</i> (Participant 24)

According to Participant 2, participating in the Yilan Festival is not just about performing but preserving one’s culture.

“The festival has been a journey of connection, where we have felt the weight of responsibility to carry forward the cultural torch. It is not just about performances but about preserving our legacy and ensuring continuity for future generations.”

Participant 12 has the same sentiments of keeping the tradition through performances.

“The Yilan Festival is like a bridge between the past, present, and future. It has shown us that our cultural legacy is not stagnant but dynamic, and we must keep the traditions alive for generations to come.”

Additionally, Participant 14 shared how the experience in Taiwan has opened her eyes to the impact of cultural traditions.

“This journey has illuminated the significance of cultural legacy. It has shown me that our cultural traditions are not relics of the past but living expressions that bridge generations.”

As an Arts teacher, Participant 21 also asserted that performing is an avenue to preserving the traditions and culture of one’s nation:

“The Yilan Festival has been a unique opportunity to bridge generations and embrace cultural legacy. As bearers of tradition, we have carried the torch of our Filipino heritage, sharing it with the world and ensuring that the legacy and continuity of our culture live on. The festival is a living testament to the enduring importance of preserving and passing traditions.”

Participant 24, on the other hand, stressed the benefit of participating in the festival to preserve the legacy of Filipino culture.

“For our students, the Yilan Festival has been a profound lesson in cultural heritage and the importance of continuity. They have learned about the value of tradition, art and the responsibility to pass them forward. The festival is a living history book. It has shown me that our cultural traditions are not relics of the past but living expressions that bridge generations. The Yilan Festival is a living testament to how the legacy of culture is like a river, flowing through time and enriching all it touches.”

Findings

The study's findings illustrate the unique and enriching encounters of students and teachers during the Yilan Festival. Several themes emerged that focused on the participants' multifaceted

educational, cultural, and personal growth experiences that arise when students and teachers immerse themselves in the traditions and festivities of this unique cultural event. These generated themes are Cultural Immersion, Educational Opportunities, Personal Growth, Food Preferences and Cultural Differences, and Rigid Schedule and Lack of Flexibility. The study reveals the profound emotional impact of the Yilan Festival experience, ranging from an initial curiosity and excitement upon arrival to the overwhelming feelings of wonder and enchantment as the participants immersed themselves in the festival's cultural richness, including the visual and auditory beauty of the event that deeply touched the hearts and minds of students and teachers alike. Several themes emerged as the profundity of the participants' experiences was explored, encompassing the shared emotional experiences at the festival, created lasting memories that transcend borders, and served as a reminder of the beauty of cultural diversity, influencing their perspectives on culture, education, and the world at large, long after they have left Yilan. The generated themes are Excitement and Anticipation, Joy and Happiness, and Surprise and Wonder. The findings underscore the power of stories and narratives in safeguarding the festival's values, passing them down through generations, and illuminating the minds of those who participate. The generated themes include Transmission of Educational Values, Community Engagement, and Legacy and Continuity.

Conclusions

Research on the participation of educators and learners in the Yilan festival in Taiwan provides insights into the notable impact of this cultural occasion on the educational system and community involvement. The results of this study emphasize the festival's capacity to function as a potent teaching instrument, affording students a distinctive occasion to engage with their regional culture, history, and customs. The role of teachers during the festival is of utmost importance as they serve as facilitators and guides, aiding students in cultivating a more profound understanding of and respect for their cultural history while fostering a sense of connection and belonging within their community. The research highlights the significance of cultural events, such as the Yilan festival, in promoting cultural preservation and maintaining cultural identity within an increasingly polarized world. Through active engagement in these activities, students can enhance their comprehension of their cultural heritage while cultivating a profound sense of pride and a steadfast dedication to preserving their cultural origins. These experiences possess the potential to exert a profound and enduring influence on an individual's personal growth and cultural identification, making a significant contribution to the general enhancement of society. Lastly, the involvement of educators and learners in the Yilan festival provides evidence of the influence of cultural gatherings in promoting unity within the community, enhancing educational experiences, and safeguarding cultural heritage. This study highlights the importance of these festivals. It also emphasizes the necessity of ongoing support and integration of these artistic experiences within the educational system to guarantee the preservation and transfer of cultural heritage to subsequent generations.

Recommendations

Suggestions for future research and the practical application of the findings about the involvement of BHSA teachers and students in the Yilan Festival in Taiwan have the potential to yield significant enhancements in cultural exchange, education, and community engagement. Prior to involvement in the Yilan Festival, educators and students should undergo cultural sensitivity training to enhance participants' perception and appreciation of Taiwanese customs, traditions, and cultural norms, facilitating meaningful and respectful engagement in the event. This training can equip individuals with the necessary skills to fulfill the role of cultural ambassadors effectively, hence facilitating the promotion of cross-cultural understanding. The organization of collaborative workshops between educators from the Philippines and Taiwan can facilitate the development of joint lesson plans that integrate the Yilan Festival into the curriculum. It enables a reciprocal and

advantageous interchange of ideas and educational methodologies, enriching the cultural learning encounter for both the Philippines and Taiwan students. Establishing collaborative efforts among educators from both nations contributes to a more comprehensive comprehension of one another's cultural contexts.

Proactive engagement can be fostered from the local Taiwanese community in facilitating and endorsing the participation of Filipino educators and learners in the Yilan festival. Community members' involvement can yield considerable benefits in organizing cultural events and language exchange programs, as well as facilitating real cultural experiences. These contributions have the potential to enhance the learning process and foster pleasant interactions among individuals significantly. A comprehensive and enduring cultural exchange program is recommended to be initiated between the Philippines and Taiwan, extending beyond the scope of the Yilan Festival. It may entail implementing reciprocal visits between students and teachers, fostering a more profound cultural immersion experience, and establishing enduring relationships. Long-term efforts of this nature can potentially promote the development of lasting cultural connections between the two nations.

Subsequent research should prioritize evaluating the enduring consequences of Filipino educators' and learners' involvement in the Yilan festival. These consequences encompass both the personal development of the individuals concerned and the more comprehensive cultural comprehension and interchange between the two nations. This study has the potential to provide valuable insights into the efficacy of cross-cultural education and can serve as a blueprint for comparable international educational endeavors. In summary, the adoption of these suggestions has the potential to augment the cultural interchange and educational significance of the involvement of Filipino educators and learners in the Yilan festival. This initiative can facilitate the cultivation of a more profound sense of cultural diversity, the facilitation of international understanding, and the reinforcement of bilateral relations between the Philippines and Taiwan. Furthermore, these recommendations serve as a paradigm for analogous cross-cultural educational endeavors worldwide.

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