



LICEO DE CAGAYAN UNIVERSITY

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SCHOOL OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTANCY

TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

RESEARCH IN TOURISM 1

*“Exploring Students awareness of Local Heritage in
Bukidnon”*

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Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SCOPE

Introduction:

Tourism has increasingly shifted toward experiences that emphasize culture, history, and local identity. Globally, heritage tourism is recognized as a vital component of sustainable development as it promotes cultural preservation while generating economic opportunities for local communities. In the Philippines, this sector plays a significant role in strengthening national and regional identity, particularly in provinces rich in indigenous culture. Among these is the Province of Bukidnon, which is widely recognized for its cultural diversity, indigenous communities, and heritage-related events. The province serves as a sanctuary for the seven hill tribes, whose traditions, rituals, and festivals form the core of its tourism appeal. However, the sustainability of these cultural assets relies heavily on the younger generation, who are not merely consumers of tourism but are the future stakeholders of cultural preservation.

Despite the vibrant cultural landscape of Bukidnon, a unique challenge exists regarding the youth's connection to their heritage. This is particularly relevant for students who reside in Bukidnon but pursue their higher education in urban centers like Cagayan de Oro City, specifically at institutions such as Liceo de Cagayan University. These students navigate two distinct environments: the traditional setting of their home province and the modern, fast-paced academic life of the city. While it is often assumed that residence in a heritage-rich province automatically translates to cultural awareness, the extent to which these students

retain knowledge of their local history, symbols, and traditions remains unclear. Rapid urbanization and the influence of digital media may overshadow traditional knowledge, creating a potential disconnect between these young individuals and their cultural roots.

Existing studies on tourism in the region often focus on destination image, tourist satisfaction, or economic impact, leaving the perspective of the student population underexplored. There is limited quantitative data that assesses whether formal education, community participation, or media exposure effectively facilitates the transmission of cultural knowledge to students who study outside their home province. This lack of data represents a significant research gap. Without a clear understanding of the students' current level of awareness, it is difficult for educators and policymakers to design programs that ensure the continuity of Bukidnon's cultural identity.

The primary purpose of this study is to address this gap by determining the level of awareness of local heritage tourism among students who live in Bukidnon but are enrolled at Liceo de Cagayan University. Specifically, the research aims to measure awareness across three dimensions: knowledge of local historical sites and landmarks, appreciation of local culture and traditions, and recognition of local heritage symbols and figures. Furthermore, the study seeks to analyze the relationship between this awareness and influencing factors such as heritage education, participation in activities, and media exposure.

The significance of this undertaking extends beyond academic assessment, as it aligns with broader goals for sustainable development. The study supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 11, specifically Target 11.4, which calls for strengthened efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage. It also contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Quality Education by highlighting the importance of integrating indigenous knowledge into the learning process. By evaluating the awareness

levels of these students, the research provides a foundation for initiatives that foster a deeper sense of pride and responsibility, ensuring that the rich heritage of Bukidnon is preserved and promoted by its future leaders.

Background of the Study

Bukidnon is home to various indigenous groups and cultural traditions that are showcased through heritage sites, festivals, and organized heritage tours. These cultural assets contribute not only to tourism growth but also to the preservation of indigenous knowledge and traditions. Educational institutions play an essential role in shaping students' understanding of local heritage through formal instruction and community exposure. However, the effectiveness of this cultural transmission becomes complex when students leave their home province for higher education.

Liceo de Cagayan University, located in Cagayan de Oro City, hosts a significant population of students who reside in or originate from the neighboring province of Bukidnon. While these students are geographically close to their heritage, their academic focus and daily exposure to city life may impact their connection to their local roots. Although heritage tourism is actively promoted in Bukidnon, there is limited quantitative data that measures the heritage awareness of its youth who are studying in the city. Existing studies often focus on general tourist satisfaction or economic impact, leaving the perspective of the "student-local" underexplored. This gap highlights the need for a systematic assessment of these students' awareness levels using measurable indicators.

Consequently, this study aims to address this lack of empirical data by investigating the level of awareness among Bukidnon-resident students currently enrolled at Liceo de Cagayan University. Specifically, it seeks to measure their knowledge of historical sites, appreciation

of cultural traditions, and recognition of heritage symbols. By correlating these awareness levels with factors such as heritage education, participation in activities, and media exposure, the research intends to determine the extent to which cultural memory is retained within this transient student population. Ultimately, the findings will contribute to the development of more responsive educational and tourism policies, ensuring that the province's rich cultural legacy is effectively passed on to its future custodians despite the influences of urbanization.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on the **Diffusion of Innovations Theory**, proposed by Everett Rogers (1962). This theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how new information, ideas, or practices spread through a social system over time. Rogers posits that the adoption of knowledge is not instantaneous but occurs through specific communication channels. In the context of this research, this theory directly supports the variable of **Media and Social Media Exposure**. It is used to analyze the mechanism of how heritage knowledge is transmitted to students—comparing the efficacy of modern digital platforms (social media) versus traditional oral methods. By applying Rogers' concept of "time" and "rate of adoption," the study investigates whether there is a "diffusion lag" among the youth, where the rapid consumption of global pop culture may be delaying or hindering the adoption of local cultural awareness.

Supporting this foundation is the **Place-Based Education Theory**, popularized by David Sobel (2004). This theory posits that education is most effective when it is grounded in the learner's immediate local environment and community. Sobel argues that by utilizing the "local" as the primary context for learning, students develop a stronger sense of stewardship and connection. This theory underpins the independent variables of **Heritage Education** and **Participation in Activities**. It suggests that abstract classroom learning is insufficient; rather,

students develop a deeper **Knowledge of Local Historical Sites** and a sincere **Appreciation of Local Culture** when they are actively engaged with the physical landscape, festivals, and community events of Bukidnon. It emphasizes that physical immersion in the province is a critical driver of awareness.

Furthermore, the study draws from **Social Constructivism**, established by Lev Vygotsky (1978). A central tenet of this theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and the concept of the "More Knowledgeable Other" (MKO). Vygotsky argues that higher mental functions are developed through social interaction with individuals who possess more knowledge or experience. In this study, this concept explains the transmission of **Recognition of Local Heritage Symbols and Figures**. It posits that students cannot fully grasp the meaning of sacred tribal symbols or historical figures in isolation. Instead, this awareness is constructed through interaction with "More Knowledgeable Others," such as tribal elders, educators, and cultural leaders, who provide the necessary guidance or "scaffolding" for the students to recognize and understand these complex cultural elements.

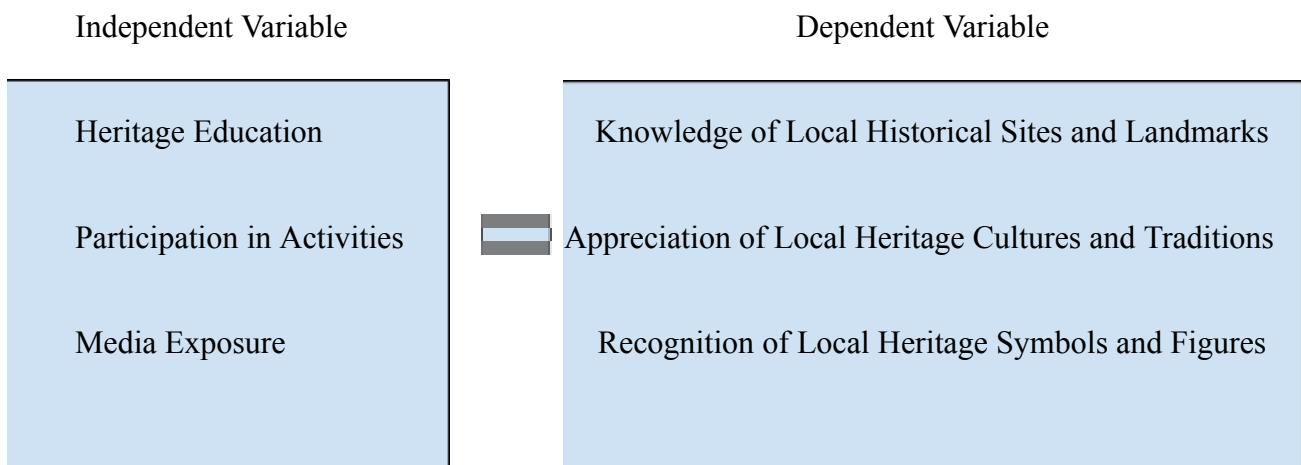
Finally, the **Cultural Identity Theory**, proposed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner (1979), frames the dependent variable of the study. This theory asserts that a significant portion of an individual's self-concept is derived from their perceived membership in a relevant social group. It suggests that individuals strive to maintain a positive social identity by enhancing the status of their "in-group." This theory validates the research by asserting that a student's level of **Awareness of Local Heritage** is not merely an academic exercise but is directly linked to their sense of belonging and self-concept as a member of the Bukidnon community. It implies that higher awareness of one's heritage fosters a stronger, more positive self-identity, motivating students to value and preserve their cultural roots.

Schematic Presentation

This section presents the schematic diagram that serves as the conceptual foundation of the study. It illustrates the hypothesized relationship between the independent variables—Heritage Education, Participation in Activities, and Media Exposure—and the dependent variable, Student Awareness of Local Heritage.

The illustration highlights how various channels of cultural transmission act as drivers in shaping a student's cultural literacy. Heritage Education represents the formal coverage of local history in the school curriculum; Participation in Heritage-Related Activities encompasses the students' active engagement in community rituals, tours, and festivals; and Media and Social Media Exposure accounts for the influence of digital platforms. Collectively, these factors are tested to determine their impact on the students' Knowledge of Local Historical Sites and Landmarks, Appreciation of Local Culture, and Recognition of Local Heritage Symbols and Figures.

Figure 1. A schematic diagram showing the interplay between the variables.



Statement of the Problem

This study aims to determine the level of local heritage tourism awareness among students who reside in Bukidnon but are currently enrolled at Liceo de Cagayan University. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1.** What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1** Age
 - 1.2** Gender
 - 1.3** Academic Program
 - 1.4** Municipality/City of Residence in Bukidnon?
- 2.** What is the level of students' awareness of local heritage tourism in terms of:

2.1 Knowledge of local historical sites and landmarks

2.2 Appreciation of local culture

2.3 Recognition of local heritage symbols and figures

- 3. Is there a significant difference in the students' level of awareness of local heritage tourism when grouped according to their demographic profile?**
- 4. Is there a significant relationship between the factors influencing awareness (Heritage Education, Participation in Activities, and Media Exposure) and the students' level of awareness of local heritage tourism?**

Significance of the Study

This study provides valuable insights into the cultural awareness of students bridging the gap between their home province of Bukidnon and their educational environment in Cagayan de Oro City. The findings of this research offer practical implications for various stakeholders:

For Liceo de Cagayan University, the results may serve as a basis for enhancing heritage-related content in the curriculum or student affairs programs. Understanding the cultural background of their students from Bukidnon can help the university create a more inclusive learning environment that respects and utilizes indigenous knowledge, potentially leading to the development of university-wide cultural exchange programs that benefit the entire student body.

For the Provincial Government of Bukidnon, the study offers empirical data on how well their younger generation—specifically those studying outside the province—retains knowledge of their heritage. This information can guide the provincial tourism and cultural

offices in designing targeted youth campaigns and digital initiatives. These efforts are crucial to ensuring that students studying in the city remain connected to their roots and do not become estranged from their cultural identity, thereby securing the future of the province's tourism workforce.

For the Students, this research may increase self-awareness regarding the richness of their own province. It encourages them to realize their role not just as students, but as potential cultural ambassadors within their university. This heightened awareness can foster a sense of pride and responsibility, motivating them to actively preserve their traditions while navigating modern city life, which ultimately contributes to their personal growth and cultural grounding.

For Future Researchers, this study provides baseline data for further research on heritage awareness among transient student populations. It serves as a reference for future studies exploring the impact of educational migration on cultural retention, providing a framework that can be replicated in other regions with similar dynamics, thus advancing the academic understanding of youth and heritage tourism.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study.

This study focuses on exploring the level of awareness of local heritage tourism in Bukidnon. The respondents of the study are strictly limited to students who currently reside in the province of Bukidnon but are enrolled at Liceo de Cagayan University in Cagayan de Oro City for the Academic Year 2026–2027.

The study examines the influence of three primary factors: Heritage Education (curriculum coverage), Participation in Heritage-Related Activities (events and tours), and Media and Social Media Exposure. The dependent variable is the students' awareness of Bukidnon's

local heritage, measured specifically by their Knowledge of Local Historical Sites and Landmarks, Appreciation of Local Culture, and Recognition of Local Heritage Symbols and Figures.

The study is delimited to students who have a permanent address in Bukidnon and commute or travel to Cagayan de Oro for their education. It excludes students who are permanent residents of Cagayan de Oro City with no residential ties to Bukidnon. Furthermore, the study does not aim to provide an anthropological analysis of the tribes but rather assesses the students' perception and general knowledge of these cultural elements as they exist in the context of heritage tourism.

Definition of Terms

To ensure clarity and consistency, the following terms are operationally defined:

Appreciation of Local Culture refers to the degree to which students value and respect Bukidnon's traditions, indigenous practices, and local festivals as measured by the survey.

Media and Social Media Exposure refers to the frequency and source of information students consume regarding local heritage, including television, radio, printed materials, and digital platforms (Facebook, TikTok, etc.).

Heritage Education refers to the extent to which local heritage topics are covered or integrated into the students' formal school lessons and curriculum.

Knowledge of Local Historical Sites and Landmarks refers to the students' factual familiarity with historical places, markers, and cultural sites within Bukidnon.

Participation in Heritage-Related Activities refers to the students' active involvement in cultural events, the Kaamulan Festival, heritage tours, and community rituals in Bukidnon.

Recognition of Local Heritage Symbols and Figures refers to the students' ability to identify important cultural symbols (e.g., tribal attire, instruments) and well-known historical figures of Bukidnon.

Student Awareness of Local Heritage refers to the overall understanding of Bukidnon's local heritage based on the aggregate results of the knowledge, appreciation, and recognition indicators.