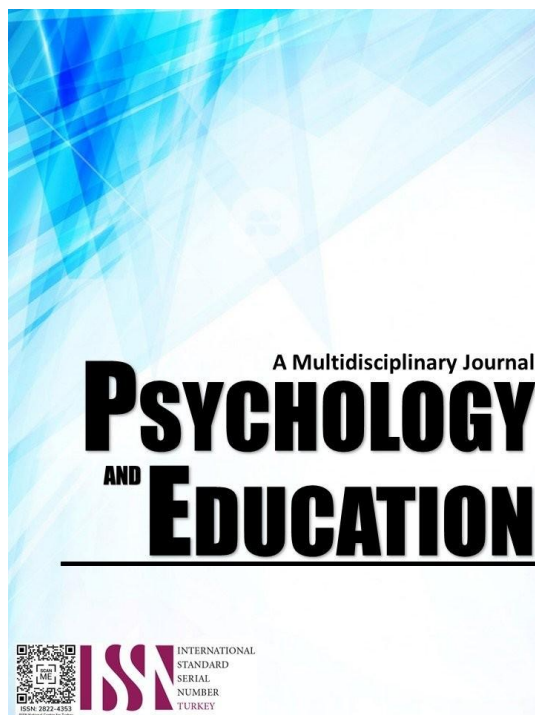


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Impacts of Religious Beliefs of Selected Residents in Alabat Island to the Sto. Ñino Fluvial Procession

Warren B. Capia,* Maria Celerina D. Oreta, Melchor B. Espiritu, Gil T. Segui

For affiliations and correspondence, see the last page.

Abstract

This study aimed to determine the Impacts of Religious Beliefs of Selected Residents in Alabat Island to the Sto. Ñino Fluvial Procession. It determined the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, and religion. It also revealed the impacts of religious beliefs of selected residents in Alabat Island to the Sto. Niño fluvial procession in terms of safety of travelers, invoking the patrons favor to bless the sea for their livelihood, and fostering a sense of community and shared spirituality. The researcher used descriptive method of research. This study used quota sampling design. Under this procedure, the researcher considered using one hundred (100) respondents selected residents in Alabat Island to get the 100% of the respondents. In terms of age majority of the respondents are 21-25 years old. Male got the highest percentage in terms of sex. In terms of religion, it revealed that most of the respondents are Roman Catholic, which accounts to 66% percent of the total respondents. This study revealed that the average mean of 3.68 interpreted as Agree indicated most of the respondents agreed on the impacts of religious beliefs of selected residents in Alabat Island to the Sto. Niño fluvial procession in terms of safety of travelers. Also, it revealed the average mean of 3.66 interpreted as Agree, indicated that most of the respondents agreed on the impacts of religious beliefs of selected residents in Alabat Island to the Sto. Niño fluvial procession in terms of invoking the patrons favor to bless the sea for their livelihood. Lastly, it showed an average mean of 3.50 interpreted as Agree, indicated that most of respondents agreed on the impacts of religious beliefs of selected residents in Alabat Island to the Sto. Niño fluvial procession in terms of fostering a sense of community and shared spirituality. Based from the results of Kruskal Wallis H-test the null hypothesis of age and sex are accepted, which means that there is no significant difference on the perceived impacts of religious beliefs of selected residents in Alabat Island to the Sto. Niño fluvial procession when respondents are grouped according to age and sex. While, the null hypothesis of religion is rejected means that there is a significant difference on the perceived impacts of religious beliefs of selected residents in Alabat Island to the Sto. Ñino fluvial procession in terms of their religion. From the result of this study, the following were recommended; To the Barangay Community, In order to increase at least 10 percent their faith they may conduct different activities that will help the residents to fully understand the meaning of fluvial procession and why it is important. they may promote greater participation and fostering understanding among different groups. To the Barangay Officials, they may provide safety precaution to prevent accident and hazardous in travel at sea. To the Residents, they may contribute a sense of responsibility during the fluvial procession, following the guidelines and reminders while on board for the safety while participating in the fluvial procession. To the Future Researchers, they may conduct a parallel study for further investigation of other variables not included in the current study.

Keywords: *fluvial procession, fostering a sense of community and shared spirituality, invoking the patrons favor, religious beliefs, safety of travelers*

Introduction

Alabat, Quezon, the fluvial procession is a unique and traditional way of celebrating the feast of the Sto. Niño. During the procession, the image of the Sto. Niño is placed on a beautifully decorated boat or raft, which is then paraded along the waterways surrounding the island of Alabat. The procession is accompanied by devotees who gather along the shores to witness the event, offer prayers, and participate in the festivities. It is a colorful and vibrant occasion, often featuring music, dancing, and fireworks. The fluvial procession in Alabat, Quezon, not only has religious significance but also serves as a cultural celebration that brings the community together. It is a time for residents to express their faith, honor their traditions, and strengthen their bonds as a community. Through the years, this procession has become an integral part of the local identity and continues to be cherished by the people of Alabat.

In the study of Basilica Minore del Sto. Ñino de Cebu (201201 fluvial parade, a civic event was started in the early 1980's it is to show and demonstrate the arrival of Magellan's galleons bringing the image of child Jesus Christ known as Santo Niño in Cebu, with performers portraying carrying Sto. Ñino by Queen Juana and King Humabon, and the Spanish settlers taking the Image by sea from port of Mandaue to Cebu. The parade is already having a mass called Misa de Traslacion (Mass honoring the Transfer) and a vigil in the church. Quano private wharf and yacht (named Señor Santo Niño) has been the political family's offering to the Santo Niño since 1983 to be use in the parade.

In the year 1986, the fluvial parade with almost 15 gaily decorated vessels participated, and year 2003, the parade marked its nineteenth year. The parade attracts more visitors, with different transport like helicopters showering confetti, ships sounding bullhorns, people onshore being releasing the balloons and the others are having a lighting firecracker. The final destination of the parade is in Cebu City Pier I, after which a procession brings the image of child Jesus Christ from the pier to the Basilica.

Religion, constructed with different beliefs, practices, and rituals connected to the transcendent, is important to many people and plays an important role in their search for meaning and a sense of life. The COVID-19 pandemic happened served for religious people as a test to many on their faith, as it has lessened the availability of religion and forced the privatization of religious events. The pandemic happened has also exhausted the social structure, hazards to health care capacity of the country, and test the faith of many Filipino Catholics. The pandemic has obliged the government to implement the community quarantine procedures to minimize the spread of the virus, prevent hospitals from being overload, build emergency facilities for sick and recover people, and stop or minimize deaths. A lot of Filipino Catholics feel unsafe, concerned and isolated in their connection with spiritual leaders and church peers is lessen, as they communicate to God with other people during mass celebrations, processions, and large trans-parochial crowds (A. del Castillo, F., Del Castillo, C. D., & Corpuz, J. C.2021).

In the study of Felipe, (2016) in the 16th century year 1521 when the Catholicism was introduced in the Philippines by Spanish colonizers headed by Magellan accidentally hit the island of Homonhon. The religion established in 1565 when Legaspi took possession of the islands for the Spanish Crown. To lead a conversation and to have a power of control, the Spanish implemented a policy of reconstructing isolated settlements into compact villages called cabeceras, church serve as a center. However, a lot of Filipinos are not in favor to this system due to economic reasons, as they were smallholder farmers. The missionaries established the cabecera-visita complex, which visited small settlements and built chapels for the members of religion to worship, which was an effective tool in spreading Catholicism. Later on, the cabecera became the poblacion, with the church as the center point of socio-religious practices and one visita in the barrio with the ermita or chapel as the focal point of annual ceremonies. Two types of Catholicism developed: the cabecera and the visita, they are the same allow to interpret and emphasizing the doctrines and rites of the new faith differently.

Religious beliefs is a part of our life as a human being. Sto. Nino fluvial procession is a way of Christianity specially Catholicism to pay tribute, respect to the image of Sto. Nino, and ask guidance of seafarers to patron Sto. Nino. It is also to deepen and reinforce the religious beliefs of people by providing a tangible and participatory experience in their faith. In every year Sto. Nino fluvial procession is a tradition in Alabat Island. The researcher observes that many Catholics are joining in full to celebrate this kind of event. A hundred up to thousands of people participate in Sto. Nino fluvial procession.

Christianity is a religion that center on the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And believing that the creator of all things is our almighty father. Christians believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of our God and the Savior of humanity. Bible, is the holy book of Christians where comprising the Old and New Testaments, is the holy scripture of Christianity.

As a member of Catholic Church and part of Christianity thanksgiving and honoring different saint is part of our tradition like fiestas and festivals. It is our way to recognize them. And Sto. Nino Fluvial Procession is one good example of Catholic beliefs and practice

The researcher chose this study to look into the impacts of religious beliefs of selected residents in Alabat Island to the Sto. Nino fluvial procession.

Research Questions

This study determined the Impacts of Religious Beliefs of Selected Residents in Alabat Island to the Sto. Nino Fluvial Procession Specifically, it sought to answer the following:

1. What is the profile of the residents in terms of:
 - 1.1. age;
 - 1.2. sex; and
 - 1.3. religion?
2. What are the impacts of religious beliefs of selected residents in Alabat Island to the Sto. Nino fluvial procession in terms of:
 - 2.1. safety of sea travelers;
 - 2.2. invoking the patrons favor to bless the sea for their livelihood; and
 - 2.3. fostering a sense of community and shared spirituality?
3. Is there any significant difference on the perceived impacts of religious beliefs of selected residents in Alabat Island to the Sto. Nino fluvial procession when the respondents are grouped by profile?

Methodology

Research Design

This study used descriptive research. Descriptive research aims to accurately and systematically describe a population, situation or phenomenon (McCombes, 2019). Descriptive method is used to describe the personal profile of the respondents along age, sex, and religion.

Respondents

In order to know the result of this study, the researcher determined the target population. The study determined the impacts of religious beliefs of selected residents in Alabat Island to the Sto. Nino Fluvial Procession by the used of the sample population. The respondents

of this study are one hundred residents of selected barangays in Alabat, Island. Quota sampling was used in the study. It is a non-probability sampling method that relies on the non-random selection of a predetermined number or proportion of units. This is called a quota. Nikolopoulou (2023).

Instrument

This study used survey questionnaire as research instrument. The survey questionnaire have two parts. Part I covered the general information of the residents including the age, sex, religion. Part II included the impacts of religious beliefs of selected residents in Alabat Island to the Sto. Nino fluvial procession in terms of safety of sea travelers, invoking the patrons favor to bless the sea for their livelihood, and fostering a sense of community and shared spirituality. The questionnaires is a likert scale of, 5 - Very Much Agree (VMA), 4 - Agree (A), 3 - Moderately Agree (MA), 2 - Disagree (D), 1 - Strongly Disagree (SD) for identifying the impacts of religious beliefs of selected residents in Alabat Island to the Sto. Nino fluvial procession.

The researcher-made questionnaire was validated by two experts. A pilot testing was conducted to twelve (12) respondents from a barangay which is not a target of the study using Cronbach's Alpha. Cronbach's Alpha is a measure of internal consistency of the research instrument. If the result is 0.70 and above there is an internal consistency of the instrument and it is acceptable.

The pilot testing was conducted at barangay Villa francia Quezon, Quezon where, the researcher selected 12 respondents to answer the questionnaires. The Cronbach's Alpha result of safety of travelers is 1.11 interpreted as excellent. Invoking the patrons favor to bless the sea for their livelihood is 1.17 interpreted as excellent and, fostering a sense of community and shared spirituality is 1.13 interpreted as excellent.

Procedure

Prior to the conduct of the study, the researcher sent a letter to the municipal mayors as well as to the barangay officials. Upon approval, the researcher administered the instrument to the target respondents.

The survey questionnaires distributed to the respondents of this study. After distribution of the survey questionnaires, the retrieval, collection and gathering process followed for the purpose of analysis and interpretation of the gathered data.

Data Analysis

In this study, the researcher used statistical measure to treat the collected data. All the data carefully read and examined for analysis. The data gathered through the questionnaires which were organized and interpreted through the use of percentage, mean and frequency. The responses were tabulated and interpreted according to the size of percentage distribution. To test the significant difference of three or more means, the researcher used the Kruskal-Wallis for non-parametric test.

Results and Discussion

This section shows the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the gathered data from the respondents. The data were presented in the tabular form followed by its descriptive analysis. The interpretation of the data was also provided to elaborate the data from the table.

Table 1. *Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents According Age*

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rank
15 yrs old & below	10	10	5
16 – 20 yrs old	11	11	4
21 – 25 yrs old	18	18	1
26 – 30 yrs old	17	17	2.5
31 – 35 yrs old	17	17	2.5
36 – 40 yrs old	6	6	8
41 – 45 yrs old	9	9	6
46 – 50 yrs old	6	6	8
51 yrs old & above	6	6	8
Total	100	100	

Table 1 displays the distribution of respondents according to age. Among the total respondents, 18 individuals or 18% aged 21-25 years old, 17 individuals or 17% aged 26-30 and 31-35 years old, 11 individuals or 11% aged 16-20 years old, 10 individuals or 10% aged 15 years old and below, 9 individuals or 9% aged 41-45 years old, and 6 individuals or 6% aged 36-40, 46-50 and 51 and above. The data suggests that most respondents fall within the 21-25 age group, which had the highest frequency and percentage.

Reblora Jr. (2016) studied catechists in the Diocese of Imus, which involved examining age distributions of participants in parish programs. Most participants were middle-aged females, supporting the findings that middle-aged adults are often the most active demographic in parish and community work. The profile of the respondents aligns with the findings, where certain age groups (such as 21-25 and 26-35) are actively engaged in local and community-based activities.

Table 2. *Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents According to Sex*

<i>Sex</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Male	51	51	1
Female	49	49	2
Total	100	100	

Table 2 illustrates the distribution of respondents by sex. Male respondents had a frequency of 51, representing 51%, while female respondents had a frequency of 49, accounting for 49%. This indicates an almost equal representation of males and females in the sample.

Laya (2018) conducted a study on the development of Sto. Niño Parish in Bula, which emphasizes how both laypeople and clergy, including men and women, worked together to establish and develop the parish community. Although the study doesn't provide specific percentages of male and female participants, it highlights the collaborative nature of religious community-building, where both genders contribute significantly.

Table 3. *Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents According to Religion*

<i>Religion</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Roman Catholic	66	66	1
Iglesia Ni Cristo	17	17	2
Methodist	8	8	4
Saksi ni Jehovah	9	9	3
Total	100	100	

Table 3 presents the distribution of respondents according to their religion. The data shows that 66 respondents (66%) are Roman Catholic, 17 respondents (17%) are Iglesia Ni Cristo, 8 respondents (8%) are Methodist, and 9 respondents (9%) are Jehovah's Witnesses. This suggests that most respondents are Roman Catholic.

According to National Statistics Office (NSO) of the Philippines (2010 Census) around 81% of Filipinos identified as Roman Catholic, with smaller percentages belonging to other religious groups like Iglesia Ni Cristo (2.45%), evangelical Christians, Methodists, and Jehovah's Witnesses. The 66% representation of Catholics in the study mirrors this overall demographic trend, though the sample might slightly underrepresent the national proportion of Catholics and overrepresent groups like Iglesia Ni Cristo and Jehovah's Witnesses, still, this distribution aligns with known religious demographics in the Philippines.

Table 4. *Respondents Assessment on the Perceived Impacts of Religious Beliefs to the Sto Niño Fluvial Procession in terms of Safety of Sea Travelers*

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Average Mean</i>	<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>	<i>Rank</i>
1.It reinforces the faith and devotion of the community, as people gather to witness and participate in this sacred event.	3.73	Agree	2
2. The sea journey becomes a spiritual pilgrimage, strengthening religious beliefs and traditions.	3.57	Agree	5
3. Sto. Niño fluvial procession remains a meaningful and secure event for all faithful participants.	3.77	Agree	1
4. It ensure safety of sea travelers.	3.66	Agree	4
5. Cooperation from the public and clear coordination with law enforcement contribute to maintaining a peaceful and secure atmosphere.	3.69	Agree	3
Grand Mean	3.68	Agree	

Legend; Strongly Disagree (1.0-1.80), Disagree (1.81-2.60), Moderately Agree (2.61-3.40), Agree (3.41-4.20), Very Much Agree (4.21-5.0).

Table 4 presents the perceived impacts of religious beliefs of selected residents in Alabat Island to the Sto.Niño fluvial procession in terms of safety of sea travelers. The respondents agree that Sto. Niño fluvial procession remains a meaningful and secure event for all faithful participants evidenced by the highest mean of 3.77. However, the respondents agree that the sea journey becomes a spiritual pilgrimage, strengthening religious beliefs and traditions evidenced by the lowest mean of 3.57. The average mean is 3.68, interpreted as "agree".

The data implies that the Sto. Niño fluvial procession serves as more than just a community tradition; it is also a cultural and religious anchor that reinforces the spiritual identity of participants. The highest mean score of 3.77, indicating that the event is perceived as meaningful and secure, reflects the participants' trust in the safety and religious significance of the procession. This suggests that the community's faith in the Sto. Niño plays a role in ensuring that the tradition is sustained, and that people feel secure participating in the event.

The lowest mean of 3.57 for the spiritual pilgrimage aspect suggests there might be an opportunity to enhance participants' connection between their religious beliefs and the symbolic meaning of the sea journey. Organizers could explore further integrating religious education or deeper spiritual reflections into the event to strengthen participants' understanding of the event as both a devotional act and a symbolic spiritual pilgrimage.

With an overall average mean of 3.68, the findings imply that community-wide participation in such religious events is crucial in maintaining cultural consistency on Alabat Island. Religious processions like this often serve as platforms for the community to come together, reinforcing shared beliefs and traditions. The fact that the community "agrees" on the safety and spiritual significance of the procession indicates that the event plays a key role in the communal and religious life of the island residents.

The significance of the Sto. Niño fluvial procession aligns with similar religious traditions in the Philippines, as discussed in studies by Peracullo (2020) and Adiova (2014). Peracullo's work on the Virgen de Caysasay procession highlights how religious traditions tied to bodies of water carry deep spiritual meanings and are believed to offer divine protection to participants. This mirrors the perception in Alabat Island that the Sto. Niño procession ensures safety for sea travelers, reinforcing a sense of trust in divine intervention during the event. Both traditions emphasize the importance of faith in creating a sense of security and protection during religious celebrations. Similarly, Adiova (2014) examines the broader role of religious festivals in expressing faith, memory, and community identity. The Sto. Niño fluvial procession shares these characteristics, serving as a public expression of collective identity and religious devotion. Adiova's research shows how festivals, including processions, are not just religious acts but also essential cultural platforms that reflect a community's spiritual and social values. The procession in Alabat Island similarly strengthens religious beliefs while fostering a sense of communal identity, making it a pivotal part of the residents' cultural and religious lives.

Table 5. Respondents Assessment on the Perceived Impacts of Religious Beliefs to the Sto Niño Fluvial Procession in terms of Invoking the Patrons Favor to Bless the Sea for Livelihood

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Average Mean</i>	<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>	<i>Rank</i>
1.The patron saints of the sea, including the revered Sto. Niño, extend their blessings upon the waters that sustain livelihoods.	3.55	Agree	2
2.May the waves be gentle, the catch abundant, and the journeys safe for all those who venture out to seek their sustenance from the deep.	3.63	Agree	1
3.The faith of the seafarers be unwavering, knowing that they sail under the watchful eyes of heavenly protectors.	3.45	Agree	4
4.They provide valuable insights into the impact of livelihood programs on communities' well-being.	3.53	Agree	3
5.The Patrons' Blessing descends upon weathered hands, guiding them through tempests and tranquil days, their boats, like ancient vessels of prayer, Carry dreams of sustenance and abundance.	3.35	Agree	5
Grand Mean	3.50	Agree	

Legend; Strongly Disagree (1.0-1.80), Disagree (1.81-2.60), Moderately Agree (2.61-3.40), Agree (3.41-4.20), Very Much Agree (4.21-5.0).

Table 5 presents the perceived impacts of religious beliefs of selected residents in Alabat Island regarding the Sto. Niño Festival procession and its role in invoking the patron's blessing for their livelihood at sea. The respondents agree that because of Sto. Niño fluvial procession, the waves become gentle, catches are abundant, and journeys are safer for those who rely on the ocean for their livelihood, shown by the highest mean of 3.63. Additionally, the respondents agree that the patron's blessing is believed to guide their weathered hands through both storms and calm seas, with their boats symbolizing vessels of prayer carrying hopes for sustenance and abundance. This is reflected by the lowest mean of 3.35. The average mean is 3.50, interpreted as "agree"

The findings from Table 5 imply that the Sto. Niño Festival procession plays a vital role in the lives of the residents of Alabat Island, not only as a religious tradition but as a spiritual practice deeply intertwined with their livelihood at sea. The highest mean score of 3.63 reflects the strong belief among participants that the procession brings tangible blessings, such as gentler waves, abundant catches, and safer journeys. This suggests that the procession reinforces their faith in divine protection and provision, which, in turn, strengthens their connection to their religious beliefs and traditions.

The lower mean of 3.35, associated with the idea of the patron's blessing guiding fishermen through both storms and calm days, implies that there may be room to deepen the community's understanding or engagement with this spiritual aspect of the festival. This could encourage organizers to highlight the symbolic importance of the event as not only a request for blessings but also as a means of spiritual guidance and sustenance, both in times of plenty and hardship. Overall, the average mean of 3.50 shows that the community generally agrees on the positive impacts of the Sto. Niño procession on their livelihood. This emphasizes the significant role of religious traditions in shaping the collective consciousness and sense of security among the island's residents, particularly in relation to their dependence on the sea for sustenance. Such beliefs likely enhance community solidarity, resilience, and hope, particularly in navigating the uncertainties of life as sea travelers.

Recto (2019) discusses how precolonial inhabitants of Luzon viewed natural places like rivers as sacred, with rituals involving offerings to deities. The transition to Catholicism saw the blending of indigenous beliefs with new Christian practices, such as fluvial processions. This aligns with the belief among Alabat Island residents that the Sto. Niño fluvial procession invokes divine favor for gentler seas and abundant catches, reinforcing the deep cultural and religious connection to water as a source of both livelihood and spiritual protection. Similarly, Bagadion and Capistrano (2022) explore the effects of religious festivals like the Peñafrancia in Naga City on local tourism and community life. In Alabat Island, the Sto. Niño procession likely serves a similar function, fostering community identity,

strengthening religious bonds, and influencing perceptions of safety and prosperity linked to the sea.

Table 6. Respondents Assessment on the Perceived Impacts of Religious Beliefs to the Sto Niño Fluvial Procession in terms of Fostering a Sense of Community and Shared Spirituality

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Average Mean</i>	<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>	<i>Rank</i>
1. Elders share wisdom, and children listen with wide-eyed wonder.	3.97	Agree	1
2. By cultivating inclusivity, we can break down barriers of prejudice and create a more harmonious and accepting community.	3.47	Agree	5
3. Individuals come together in a community aligned with their beliefs, they deepen their spiritual understanding and connection.	3.54	Agree	4
4. Participating in community prayer groups provides support and uplifts shared faith.	3.72	Agree	2
5. Cultivating community through prayer fosters a sense of belonging and unity.	3.59	Agree	3
Grand Mean	3.66	Agree	

Legend: Strongly Disagree (1.0-1.80), Disagree (1.81-2.60), Moderately Agree (2.61-3.40), Agree (3.41-4.20), Very Much Agree (4.21-5.0).

Table 6 demonstrates the perceived impacts of religious beliefs of selected residents in Alabat Island to the Sto. Nino Festival procession in terms of fostering a sense of community and shared spirituality. respondents agree that because of Sto. Nino fluvial procession, elders share wisdom, and children listen with wide-eyed wonder shown by the highest mean of 3.97. Furthermore, the respondents agree that by cultivating inclusivity, they can break down barriers of prejudice and create a more harmonious and accepting community shown by the lowest mean of 3.47. The average mean is 3.66, interpreted as “agree”.

The findings suggest that the Sto. Niño Festival procession plays a pivotal role in fostering a sense of community and shared spirituality among the residents of Alabat Island. The highest mean score of 3.97, indicating that elders share wisdom with younger generations, highlights the procession’s role in preserving and passing down cultural and religious traditions. This intergenerational connection strengthens the community’s identity and ensures that the younger generation remains engaged in the island’s spiritual and cultural heritage. The lowest mean of 3.47, which reflects the belief that inclusivity and breaking down barriers of prejudice can lead to a more harmonious community, implies that while the procession promotes unity, there is room to further enhance inclusiveness. This may suggest that some social divisions or prejudices persist, and the event could be a platform for addressing these issues more effectively. By promoting greater participation and fostering understanding among different groups, the procession has the potential to enhance greater social organization and acceptance.

Overall, with an average mean of 3.66, the findings indicate that the Sto. Niño fluvial procession is perceived as a meaningful event that not only reinforces religious and cultural bonds but also serves as a tool for building a more inclusive and united community. This emphasizes the importance of religious festivals as vehicles for social harmony, cultural transmission, and collective spirituality in Alabat Island.

Yakal (2023) discusses how Catholic rituals, like processions, blend indigenous and Catholic beliefs, creating a hybrid identity within communities. This blending of traditions allows rituals like the Sto. Niño procession on Alabat Island to serve as important cultural and spiritual events, connecting different generations. The sharing of wisdom by elders, coupled with the curiosity and wonder of children during the procession, reflects how these religious rituals act as instruments for passing on cultural knowledge and fostering intergenerational continuity. Similarly, Macatangay (2022), through the analysis of Batangas religious legends, stresses archetypes like the “sage” and “caregiver,” which emphasize the respect for elders and their role as knowledge bearers in spiritual traditions. This analysis aligns with the Sto. Niño procession’s practice on Alabat Island, where elders pass down wisdom during the event, emphasizing respect for older generations. The procession not only celebrates religious devotion but also strengthens community bonds, as it allows for the transfer of cultural and spiritual knowledge from elders to the younger members of the community. These studies show that practices like the Sto. Niño procession plays an important role in preserving cultural traditions and strengthening the connection between different generations within a religious and community setting.

Table 7. Summary Table on the Perceived Impacts of Religious Beliefs to the Sto Niño Fluvial Procession

<i>Perceived Impacts of Religious Beliefs to the Sto Niño Fluvial Procession</i>	<i>Average Mean</i>	<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Safety of Sea Travelers	3.68	Agree	1
Invoking the Patrons Favor to Bless the Sea for Livelihood	3.50	Agree	3
Fostering a Sense of Community and Shared Spirituality	3.66	Agree	2
Average Mean	3.91	Agree	

Legend: Strongly Disagree (1.0-1.80), Disagree (1.81-2.60), Moderately Agree (2.61-3.40), Agree (3.41-4.20), Very Much Agree (4.21-5.0).

Table 7 describes the summary table on the perceived impacts of religious beliefs of selected residents in Alabat Island to the Sto. Nino Festival procession. It revealed that the respondents agree that Sto. Nino Festival procession has the most significant impact on safety

of sea travelers as shown by the highest average mean of 3.68. Meanwhile, the respondents agree that Sto.Nino Festival procession has least impact on invoking the patrons favor to bless the sea for livelihood as shown by the lowest average mean of 3.50.

Adiova (2014) explores the role of religious festivals in the Bicol region and their connection to faith, memory, and tradition. The study reveals how festivals like the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia relate to community identity and faith, particularly through processions that symbolize protection and blessings. This strengthens the perception in Alabat Island that the Sto. Niño Festival procession is considered as crucial for ensuring the safety of those at sea, illustrating how festivals in other regions are viewed as protectors of the community.

Table 8. *Significant Difference on the Perceived Impacts of Religious Beliefs to the Sto. Niño Fluvial Procession when Respondents are Grouped According to Age*

Groups	N	Median	df	χ^2 (H value)	χ^2_c (Critical Value)	Significant Level	P- value	Decision
15 y/old & below	10	4.53	8	13.366	15.507	0.05	0.100	Accept Ho
16-20 y/old	11	4.13						
21-25 y/old	18	3.93						
26-30 y/old	17	4.07						
31-35 y/old	17	3.80						
36-40 y/old	6	3.93						
41-45 y/old	9	3.60						
46-50 y/old	6	3.60						
51 y/old & above	6	3.83						

Table 8 demonstrates the significant differences on the perceived impacts of religious beliefs of selected residents in Alabat Island to the Sto.Nino Festival procession when respondents are grouped according to age. Since the H value of 13.366 is lower than the critical value of 15.507 and the p-value of 0.100 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, it failed to reject the null hypothesis. This suggests that there is no significant difference in the responses of different age groups toward the perceived impacts of Sto.Nino Festival procession.

The findings indicate that age is not a significant factor in shaping how residents of Alabat Island perceive the impacts of the Sto. Niño Festival procession. The results suggest that the procession acts as a unifying force within the community, with both younger and older residents experiencing and valuing it in similar ways. This reflects a shared sense of identity and spirituality across age groups, highlighting that the religious beliefs and cultural practices associated with the procession are effectively passed down through generations. It emphasizes the festival's role in preserving traditions, values, and communal relationships.

Ferrari & Vaclavik (2016) studied permanent deacons in the Roman Catholic Church and found that leadership styles were similar across different age groups. This means that age did not affect how people viewed leadership in a religious context. This finding is parallel to the findings to the Sto. Niño Festival, where age does not play a big role in how people perceive the religious significance of the event. It shows that religious beliefs and practices are experienced in the same way, regardless of age.

Table 9. *Significant Difference on the Perceived Impacts of Religious Beliefs to the Sto. Niño Fluvial Procession when Respondents are Grouped According to Sex*

Groups	N	Median	df	χ^2 (H value)	χ^2_c (Critical Value)	Significant Level	P- value	Decision
Male	51	3.93	1	0.074	3.841	0.05	0.785	Accept Ho
Female	49	3.93						

Table 9 establishes the significant differences on the perceived impacts of religious beliefs of selected residents in Alabat Island to the Sto.Nino Festival procession when respondents are grouped according to sex. Since the H value of 0.074 is lower than the critical value of 3.841 and the p-value of 0.785 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, it failed to reject the null hypothesis. This suggests that there is no significant difference in the responses of male and female respondents toward the perceived impacts of Sto.Nino Festival procession.

The data indicates that both men and women see the festival and its religious importance in a similar way. The result suggests that the festival brings people together, regardless of gender, and creates a shared sense of cultural and spiritual identity. It highlights the inclusive nature of the event, where both men and women equally appreciate its religious practices. Overall, the festival helps strengthen community bonds, as its impact is recognized by everyone, regardless of their gender.

Reblora Jr. (2016) investigated the Diocesan Catechetical Program and found that although most of the parish catechists were women, both men and women took part in the activities equally, without any major differences in how they served or got involved. This supports the idea that both men and women value religious activities and community participation in the same way, which is similar to how both genders equally appreciate the Sto. Niño Festival.

Table 10. *Significant Difference on the Perceived Impacts of Religious Beliefs to the Sto. Niño Fluvial Procession when Respondents are Grouped According to Religion*

Groups	N	Median	df	χ^2 (H value)	χ^2_c (Critical Value)	Significant Level	P- value	Decision
Roman Catholic	66	4.13	3	15.800	7.815	0.05	0.001	Reject Ho
Iglesia Ni Cristo	17	3.87						
Methodist	8	2.13						
Saksi ni Jehovah	9	2.07						

Table 10 exhibits the significant differences on the perceived impacts of religious beliefs of selected residents in Alabat Island to the Sto. Nino Festival procession when respondents are grouped according to their religion. Since the H value of 15.800 is greater than the critical value of 7.815 and the p-value of 0.001 is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. This suggests that there is a significant difference in the responses of respondents with different religion toward the perceived impacts of Sto. Nino Festival procession.

The rejection of the null hypothesis suggests that people from different religious backgrounds experience and interpret the Sto. Niño Festival differently. This stresses the impact of religious diversity on how the community engages with the festival. While the Sto. Niño Festival is a significant cultural and religious event for many; it may not hold the same meaning for those with other religious beliefs. This suggests that the festival, which is important to the local Catholic community, might need to be more inclusive to respect the religious diversity in the area. It points to the importance of promoting mutual respect and understanding between different religious groups, so the festival can continue to strengthen community bonds without excluding non-Catholic residents.

In his study, Laya (2018) discusses how the community's involvement in religious activities, such as the Sto. Niño Festival can be seen as a cultural and spiritual gathering. However, the experience may differ for people of different faiths. While the parish itself grew out of devotional activities, it is important to recognize that the festival's religious significance may not be perceived in the same way by non-Catholic residents. The study points to the importance of inclusivity when engaging in a diverse community, which aligns with the suggestion that the festival should consider the religious diversity in Alabat Island.

Conclusions

Based on the findings discussed in this research, several conclusions were drawn. Most respondents were aged 21 to 25, with males representing the highest percentage and the majority identifying as Roman Catholic. It was found that the Sto. Niño fluvial procession is perceived to have a significant impact on the safety of travelers, highlighting its importance within the community. Additionally, while respondents' perceptions regarding the religious impact of the fluvial procession did not significantly vary when grouped by age and sex, there was a notable difference in perception when grouped according to religion.

In light of these findings, several recommendations are proposed. The Barangay community may consider implementing activities that deepen residents' understanding of the significance of the fluvial procession to strengthen faith and promote inclusivity. Barangay officials are encouraged to enhance safety measures during the event to reduce risks associated with sea travel. Residents are advised to take an active role in ensuring safety by adhering to guidelines during the procession. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to explore additional variables and conduct parallel studies to further enrich the understanding of this cultural and religious event.

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Affiliations and Corresponding Information

Warren B. Capia

Eastern Quezon College Inc. – Philippines

Maria Celerina D. Oreta Ed.D

Eastern Quezon College Inc. – Philippines

Melchor B. Espiritu Ed.D

Eastern Quezon College Inc. – Philippines

Gil T. Segui, LPT

Eastern Quezon College Inc. – Philippines