



## CULTURAL PRESERVATION INITIATIVES OF AN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY: A SINGLE CASE STUDY

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### **Abstract:**

This case study focused on the cultural preservation initiatives, the experiences and challenges faced by the community and the factors that contributed to the successful cultural preservation initiatives of the Kalagan community living in the Municipality of Hagonoy, Davao del Sur. The study utilized qualitative research design using a single case study with 1 Tribal chieftain as the main participant and the tribal youth president and a member of the Indigenous People Mandatory Representative considered as the significant others chosen through purposive sampling, utilizing an interview guide with open-ended questions. Thematic analysis was used as a data analysis tool. The results showed that the participants have cultural preservation initiatives in their own indigenous community, such as educating the youth, as education is a life-long journey, knowledge sharing through the conduct of seminars and workshops and embracing the festival spirit through the celebration of festivals. There were challenges identified in the implementation of the initiatives, to mention, passive, unwilling and resistant members, detaching and breaking away from culture and tradition and cultural erosion, cultural decline and loss. Moreover, the factors which led to the successful initiatives were the national agencies and local government support, fostering engagement and enabling participation of members and the conduct of meetings and dialogue. Collaboration between governmental and non-governmental organizations is necessary to sustain the preservation of culture. The results of the study contribute to the existing body of knowledge on cultural preservation initiatives of an indigenous community.

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## 1. Introduction

The loss of cultural heritage sites globally makes the problem of preserving cultural heritage urgent for today's indigenous leaders. There is an active economic development worldwide, which poses negative impacts on the preservation of the cultural heritage of the indigenous people (Gafurova *et al.*, 2022). Relatedly, indigenous leaders are faced with the problem of globalization and its tendency to work against cultural heritage and preservation. Various international development interventions prioritize progress over cultural preservation, exploit cultural heritage economically, and implement culturally disruptive projects (Song *et al.*, 2020).

Current issues on cultural preservation include indigenous claims of ownership, removal of monuments from their original site, damage through flooding, resettlement programs and rebuilding of urban centers (Mekonnen *et al.*, 2022). Also, indigenous leaders continually face the problem of cultural preservation, as there are only a few remaining generations left practicing cultural preservation locally. Such problems in Mindanao even include social, political, economic, and even religious discourse (Robiego *et al.*, 2022).

In a related study by Banda *et al.* (2024), there is a call to inculcate heritage in formal education and strengthen the community's crucial role in cultural legacy, contributing to heritage preservation. Addressing such gaps will improve the resilience of cultural practices and ensure the sustainable preservation of the indigenous community. In another study by Seila *et al.* (2025), the main factor that contributes to cultural preservation is the government, wherein laws and legislation are highly influential in their function as a regulatory mechanism of administrative operations and implementation. There is also a need for transparency in all procedures included in the administrative process for ease of interpretation and implementation.

There are no similar studies which deal with cultural preservation specifically in the Municipality of Hagonoy, Davao del Sur. Existing studies are only on Cultural Preservation Practices of the Blaan Tribe in Kiblawan, Davao del Sur, Philippines by Blessing (2024) and Binuhat: Inventory and documentation of the indigenous products of Ata-Manobo at Talaingod, Davao Del Norte by Law-ay *et al.* (2022). Thus, there was an urgency to conduct this study because the existing situation shows that there are still a number of problems and issues involving the community despite the implementation of various national and local programs which aim to improve cultural preservation initiatives. Also, the outcome of the study will help become an asset to the world of literature. Furthermore, results can be used to develop or augment practices to improve their cultural preservation. Thus, the need to conduct this study.

## 2. Literature Review

There are reviews of related literature which are discussed in support of the study. In the study by Zhang *et al.* (2024), the World Heritage Committee has declared that the youth, as the agents of social change and the decision-makers of the future, are a crucial group to be engaged, especially in the management processes of cultural preservation. Numerous initiatives have emerged to foster the connection between youth and cultural preservation, facilitating them to establish their cultural identity and take ownership through their personal narratives. Educating the youth increases their knowledge, both individual and community-based, to ensure the care, valorization and transmission of cultural preservation (Achille & Fiorillo, 2022).

Further, in the case of the Aeta Magbukon community in Bataan, investigated by Paguio & Dela Rosa (2022), their very own oral literature serves as a crucial repository of cultural beliefs and traditions, carefully documented and preserved over generations. They actively teach oral literature such as legends, folktales, and songs, integrating these teachings into daily tribal life. The community also welcomes outsiders, including researchers interested in their culture, promoting cultural exchange.

Moreover, the conduct of activities and seminars creates and strengthens awareness in the local community on cultural preservation (Suaib *et al.*, 2020). In a related study by Borja *et al.* (2021), various resources, whether in the form of financial, human, physical, intellectual, or even psychological, are needed to ensure that the cultural preservation program is implemented in the local community. The conduct of seminars, conferences, and workshops about history and cultural preservation helps in promoting and increasing awareness and appreciation of history and culture. In the Philippines, substantial strides have been made recently to protect and promote the cultural traditions of indigenous peoples. Additionally, educational programs have been developed to integrate and respect indigenous knowledge and practices, ensuring that indigenous students receive culturally sensitive and relevant curricula (Abadi, 2023).

Cultural festivals are important in preserving and promoting cultural heritage, emphasizing both tangible and intangible assets. Such festivals are crucial for fostering cultural continuity and community identity (Feng, 2024). In a recent study by Yatim *et al.* (2025), celebrating festivals is an effective medium in preserving culture that has been passed down from previous generations to the current generation. Festivals provide an opportunity to learn about culture firsthand and deepen understanding of local identity. In addition, Maraña *et al.* (2023) determined that elders are making efforts to pass down their cultural beliefs, but they face challenges in participation and in integrating them with younger generations. There is a need to encourage tribe members to continue participating in tribal traditions and to avoid interfering with them when the tribe gathers. Similarly, Usmaedi *et al.* (2024) found out that member participation is minimal, with limited awareness and engagement in cultural activities. Barriers and challenges in involvement reveal several critical factors that hinder member participation in cultural activities.

Tribes use their culture less, which results in the fading of cultural practices and knowledge. This gives tribe members the feeling that their culture is not relevant in the dominant community and therefore choose the feeling of inferiority to assimilate aspects of the dominant group (Piquero, 2023). In the study by Inman (2024), the youth do not care anymore, as they do not respect their culture anymore. As much as things seem to be made easier, the change has consequences.

Furthermore, Veerasha (2025) found out that the challenges faced by tribal communities in preserving their knowledge are numerous. These include the erosion of cultural identity, the impact of modern education systems, environmental degradation, and the loss of intergenerational transmission due to migration and changing lifestyles. Relatedly, threats to cultural preservation also persist, with forces such as modernization, and migration influencing indigenous people to absorb these ideologies. Ethnic identity is in peril of being lost due to rapid urbanization brought about by the call to synchronize societies into a global community (Absolor *et al.*, 2023).

To improve the welfare of indigenous people, various efforts need to be made, such as the effort to empower indigenous people in a comprehensive and sustainable manner through all cross-sectors. The local government has the responsibility to improve the quality of services by providing plans to solve the problems of the community (Lanita *et al.*, 2024). In the recent study by Ncube *et al.* (2025), government support not only benefits indigenous communities but also contributes to broader societal goals related to cultural diversity, environmental sustainability and development. Government support helps preserve and promote cultural heritage, contributing to the continuity of indigenous customs.

In addition, encouraging participation and involvement of tribal members in all community activities shows their belonging to the community. As a result, they become more responsible in their decision-making and accept greater responsibility for their fellow tribal members (Molanggana, 2024). Relatedly, the research by Viscogliosi *et al.* (2020) emphasized that tribal elders contribute to individual and community wellness. The benefits of the support from elders were found in relationships, education, health, development of products, and contributions to services and policies.

Conducting meetings creates opportunities for Indigenous People to build relationships with others who may be able to offer further support and advocate for participation. Attending as many meetings as possible helps represent Indigenous People and their community interests (Zurba & Papadopoulos, 2023). Further, Pidgeon and Riley (2021) found out that the best practices for disseminating critical information in Indigenous communities were to ensure community guidance was available by way of numerous community meetings. Partnership development is carried out from the very beginning during preliminary meetings between the Indigenous community members.

This study was anchored on the Cultural Evolution Theory by Boddy and Richerson (1985), which posits that cultural traits are subject to the forces of transmission, selection, and variation. As a direct consequence of these forces, the frequency of these traits in the population changes over time. This theory highlights the importance of cultural preservation in the ever-changing landscape today. Supported by the Stakeholder Theory

by Brenner and Cochran (1990) highlight the community's participation in the preservation of cultural heritage. The theories explain that studying a tribe involves the transmission, selection, and variation of culture. The theories provide the most in terms of explaining culture and the preservation of culture.

### **3. Material and Methods**

The study was conducted specifically in the Municipality of Hagonoy, Davao del Sur, Region XI, Philippines. There was only one main participant of the study, the 52-year-old chieftain of the Kalagan tribe, and for the purpose of triangulation of results, two significant others were included, who gave their statements collaborating or rejecting the ideas and sharing of the main participant. They were the 19-year-old President of the Tribal Youth, one of the significant others, and a 60-year-old member of the Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representative (IPMR), also one of the significant others, who are residents of Hagonoy, Davao del Sur. Their large population in the areas was one of the considerations why the Kalagan tribe was chosen. A single case study benefits from multiple viewpoints, and potentially also from external observers or significant others. Through this, differing perceptions become explicit and enhance transparency (Rabu & Binder, 2025).

One of the most acceptable standards in qualitative research is to allow the data to reach data saturation (Creswell, 2018). Data saturation is a data adequacy point where no new information can be obtained from participants in qualitative research. For a single case study, 2-10 participants may satisfy the requirement for data saturation. Although the sample size in a single case study is determined by the need to explore the case in depth, rather than by a predefined minimum. Purposive sampling was used as the participants were purposely identified to answer the research questions of the study. Purposive sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Patton, 2002).

The participants have the readiness to open themselves and share their cultural practices initiatives, experiences and challenges, and the factors that contributed to the success in the implementation of the cultural initiatives of the Kalagan tribe, second, the willingness to cooperate with the researcher until the end of the study and third, the interest of the researcher who is a member of the Kalagan tribe but seemingly unaware and unfamiliar of the efforts undertaken by her tribe considering that she is no longer staying in the areas where her tribe is residing. Tribes, even if residing in the identified area of the study (Municipality of Hagonoy, Davao del Sur), were excluded to become participants of the study. Also excluded were members of the Kalagan tribe who were not residing at Hagonoy, Davao del Sur, for they are outside the identified location of the study. All the Kalagan tribe leaders-participants of the study were given the free will to genuinely participate without any form of consequence or penalty. The purpose, benefits of the study and the rights of the participants to contribute to the study were carefully considered and adhered upon. A signed consent form by the participants was appended

in this study. Emotional support and a debriefing process after interviews was readily available with the help of the community social worker.

As a researcher, I did not force my participants to join the interview and they had the right if they discontinued their participation in my study. Also, the participants were given the freedom to withdraw from their participation whenever they felt that the researcher had violated the agreement. The required informed consent from the participants for their participation in the study was requested as evidenced by their affirmation/signature in the Informed Consent form. In the said form, the purpose of the study, and its terms and conditions involving confidentiality and beneficence were highlighted. The participants were informed of the observance of ethical considerations such that all their responses were treated with utmost confidentiality.

As part of the process, the researcher formulated the Interview Guide. The Interview Guide was presented to the panel of validators, 4 panel members from the University and 1 expert from outside the University. All of these 5 validators are experts on the subject matter under study. In the conduct of IDI, the identified participants took part in the face-to-face discussions. The data was analyzed using a method which included data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing and verification. In data reduction, this is employed to get the abstraction of data from the transcriptions, deleting data, which are unimportant and transforming it into a comprehensible material, easily understood by many (Namey, Guest, Thairu & Johnson, 2007). Thematic analysis involves pairing and sieving of data, a form of sorting and categorizing. With data reduction, which is a summary of responses, deleting irrelevant information, the expertise of a professional data analyst was employed for data analysis. Finally, came conclusion drawing and verification as the last step of qualitative analysis. It involves going back to consider what the analyzed data mean and to assess their aftermaths for the questions at hand, while verification, integrally linked to conclusion drawing, required revisiting the data as many times as necessary to cross-check or verify these emergent conclusions (Paul, 2006). The study covered the period July 2024- July 2025.

In this study, the researcher applied the qualitative case study method. Case study research, through reports of past studies, allows the exploration and understanding of complex issues. Recognized as a tool in many social science studies, the role of the case study method in research becomes more prominent when a specific issue is to be deeply understood (Zainal, 2007). Case Study research is appropriate in dealing with community-based problems (Johnson, 2010), such as poverty, unemployment, drug addiction, illiteracy, and, in this case, cultural preservation. The case study approach is best for my study because complex issues surrounding cultural preservation were tackled, and concerns about how these indigenous leaders employed initiatives and strategies in preserving their culture were presented. A single case study can provide convincing data to test theories, as each case study should be concentrated, a single inquiry, studied holistically in its own entirety (Gaya & Smith, 2016). A case study allows one to look beyond the individual case, to the phenomenon, in this cultural preservation initiative, experiences/challenges and factors contributed to the successful preservation of the cultural practices of the Kalagan tribe. Also, case study design provides a rigorous

approach for collecting and analyzing data. Thus, the case study design best suits this research.

The researcher played several roles to facilitate the study. These roles were considered inherent in a qualitative study. The researcher was the main facilitator of the study. With the use of the validated interview guide coming from the 3 approved research questions, the researcher conducted the IDI using the face-to-face mode. As a protective mechanism, a community consultation was conducted beforehand alongside the community social worker. Considering that the 3 participants are highly literate, the researcher explained orally the contents of the English version of the Informed Consent form and the interview Guide was provided. Objectivity was maintained all throughout the data gathering process through an audit trail and ensuring verification and traceability, compliance, fraud detection, and error detection by providing a detailed record of events. The use of an audit trail created a comprehensive, well-organised, and easily accessible record that illuminated the research process and bolstered the trustworthiness of the findings. To enhance transparency in managing insider bias, identifying information was either replaced with pseudonyms or hidden. Data validation and detailed documentation were also observed by the researcher.

As part of the process, the researcher prepared a formal letter request for my study, addressed to the Head, National Commission of Indigenous Peoples, Davao del Sur; a copy was furnished to the chieftain of the tribe. This letter was approved by the Dean, Professional Schools, and there was also an attached copy of the informed consent for free and voluntary involvement of the participants. When the letter-request was approved, and the UMERC certificate was issued for the conduct of the data gathering, the researcher proceeded with the IDI activities. The researcher was the documenter of the study, where the researcher used my field notes and the video recording to write down relevant statements and information during the IDI process. The researcher took charge of the transcription and translation of the study, taken from the verbatim responses/statements of all the participants.

In terms of trustworthiness on the credibility or in reference to the internal validity of the study, the researcher visited the participants more than once and was able to spend more time with them talking about their experiences being members of the Kalagan tribe and how they were able to continue with the initiatives they established in order to ensure that the results of the research were believable and based on facts, Porter, (2007). The researcher prepared the field notes indicating the processes incurred during the interview and the results, which included the interpretation and analysis to come up with the desired themes, ensuring transparency and allowing others to replicate the process. Also, the researcher used the data collected from the participants to develop interpretations, avoiding biases or personal opinions. In this case, the results are confirmed by others stressing that it is the application of objectivity (neutrality), Speziale and Carpenter, 2007).

During the gathering of data, ethical considerations were observed. Before the conduct of actual data collection, the researcher secured a Certificate of Approval from UMERC (UMERC Protocol Number 2025-260) with the understanding that all ethical

considerations were properly observed. The participation of the respondents was completely voluntary and anonymous. In adherence to the Data Privacy Act of 2012, all data gathered was kept confidential, and informed consent was secured from all the respondents. The study did not involve high-risk situations. It utilized the Grammarly or Turnitin software and/ or Plagiarism Detector to ensure that there was no plagiarism, no conflict of interest, and there was no deceit. The researcher secured proper permission from the targeted schools where the respondents are teaching/working. There was a face-to-face mode of data gathering. No person was authorized to publish or present this paper except the researcher or the adviser without the researcher's consent of the researcher. For the purposes of publication of this study, the adviser becomes a co-author of the study.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

**Table 1:** Cultural Preservation Initiatives of the Indigenous Community

Major Themes	Core Ideas
Educate the youth through education is a life-long journey	Educate the youth members about our practices
	Guiding the youth to follow the practices of the tribe
	Organizing the youth to spearhead programs
Knowledge sharing through the conduct of seminars	Help in preserving the culture and beliefs
	Raise the awareness of the tribal members
	Gave us proper knowledge about our own culture
Embracing the festival spirit through the celebration of festivals	Highlights our traditional practices
	Give us a chance to appreciate and showcase our traditions
	Learn to value our roots

“Educate the youth as education is a lifelong journey” was the first theme that emerged as one of the cultural initiatives of the Kalagan tribe. The tribe gives high regard to education to preserve their culture. Participants have revealed that educating, most especially their youth members, is crucial not only for the awareness of their own culture, but also to understand the need to value and preserve their cultural practices.

Additionally, the preservation of culture through education has always been important. Educating the youth increases their knowledge, both individual and community-based, to ensure the care, valorization and transmission of cultural preservation (Achille & Fiorillo, 2022). In the study by Paguio & Dela Rosa (2022), their very own oral literature serves as a crucial repository of cultural beliefs and traditions, carefully documented and preserved over generations. They actively teach oral literature such as legends, folktales, and songs, integrating these teachings into daily tribal life.

Continuing the sharing of knowledge to all members of the IPs, not only to the Kalagan tribes, particularly on the preservation of cultural practices and traditions, is very relevant. The sharing of knowledge may be done through the conduct of seminars, dialogues and other activities which will showcase the best practices of the IPs in terms of the daily implementation of their cultural beliefs and ways.

Besides education, there is also a focus on guiding and organizing the youth. In another study by Zhang *et al.* (2024), the World Heritage Committee has declared that the youth, as the agents of social change and the decision-makers of the future, are a crucial group to be engaged, especially in the management processes of cultural preservation. Numerous initiatives have emerged to foster the connection between youth and cultural preservation, facilitating them to establish their cultural identity and take ownership through their personal narratives. In the Philippines, substantial strides have been made to protect and promote the cultural traditions of indigenous peoples. Additionally, educational programs have been developed to integrate and respect indigenous knowledge and practices, ensuring that indigenous students receive culturally sensitive and relevant curricula (Abadi, 2023).

The second theme that surfaced from the description of the participants under cultural initiatives was “Knowledge sharing through conduct of seminars and workshops”. It is evident that the community conducts seminars and even workshops to preserve its culture. This could help broaden their knowledge, develop their skills and improve their innovativeness in cultural preservation. During the sharing, there seemed to be a realization on the importance of the conduct of the seminar to maintain continuity in the cultural practices among the members of the Kalagan tribe. Attendance at the seminar on the appreciation of tribal cultural practices should be mandatory for all, not only for the younger generation but also for all members of the tribe.

Moreover, the conduct of activities and seminars creates and strengthens awareness in the local community on cultural preservation (Suaib *et al.*, 2020). In a related study by Borja *et al.* (2021), various resources, whether in the form of financial, human, physical, intellectual, or even psychological, are needed to ensure that the cultural preservation program is implemented in the local community. The conduct of seminars, conferences, and workshops about history and cultural preservation helps in promoting and increasing awareness and appreciation of history and culture.

The last theme identified as part of the cultural initiatives was “Embracing the Festival Spirit through the Celebration of Festivals”. The community regularly celebrates festivals which showcased cultural practices, traditional dresses, and delicacies, among others. The conduct of festivals is truly one of the initiatives that can preserve their culture.

Cultural festivals are important in preserving and promoting cultural heritage, emphasizing both tangible and intangible assets. Such festivals are crucial for fostering cultural continuity and community identity (Feng, 2024). In a recent study by Yatim *et al.* (2025), celebrating festivals is an effective medium in preserving culture that has been passed down from previous generations to the current generation. Festivals provide an opportunity to learn about culture firsthand and deepen understanding of local identity.

**Table 2:** Experiences and Challenges Faced by the Community in Implementing Cultural Preservation Initiatives

Major Themes	Core Ideas
Passive, unwilling and resistant members	Not cooperative in participating in our tribal activities
	Not that interested in participating to cultural events anymore
	Struggle in keeping the members participative
Detaching and breaking away from culture and tradition	Non-IP spouses heavily influence them
	A lot of young people don't follow them anymore
	Many of our youth are more connected to foreign cultures than their own
Cultural erosion, cultural decline and loss	Courtship practices are rarely observed
	Do not dwell much on preserving marriage practices and the use of herbal medicine anymore
	Do not use herbal medicines anymore

For the research question on experiences and challenges in the implementation of cultural initiatives, “Passive, unwilling and resistant members” was the first theme identified, coming from the description of the participants. Chieftains do not just govern a tribe. They also strive to keep the members actively present through participation. This is the existing situation among the Kalagan tribe in Hagonoy, Davao del Sur. The leadership of P1 is shaken, and there was frustration and disappointment with the present situation among his tribe. The commitment of P1 towards the preservation of their cultural practices was evident, but it was just so frustrating that said efforts were not appreciated by the members.

Additionally, in a similar study by Maraña *et al.* (2023), elders are making efforts to pass down their cultural beliefs; they face challenges in participation and in integrating them with younger generations. There is a need to encourage tribe members to continue participating in tribal traditions and to avoid interfering with them when the tribe gathers. Relatedly, the study by Usmaedi *et al.* (2024) found out that member participation is minimal, with limited awareness and engagement in cultural activities. Barriers and challenges in involvement reveal several critical factors that hinder member participation in cultural activities.

The second theme that came up from the description of the participants on their experiences and challenges was “Detaching and breaking away from culture and tradition”. It pains to hear such sentiments from the chieftain. Despite all of his efforts and the initiatives of the tribal leaders, the tribe members are distancing themselves from their culture. Tribes use their culture less, which results in the fading of cultural practices and knowledge. This gives tribe members the feeling that their culture is not relevant in the dominant community and therefore choose the feeling of inferiority to assimilate aspects of the dominant group (Piquero, 2023). Furthermore, in the research by Inman (2024), the youth do not care anymore, as they do not respect their culture anymore. As much as things seem to be made easier, the change has consequences.

The last theme on the experiences and challenges coming from the description of the participants was “Cultural erosion, cultural decline and loss”. The commitment of the chieftain to preserve their culture amidst the various challenges was sincere because for him what matters this time is the well-being of their members, specifically in the use of

scientifically tested medicines versus the herbal or alternative medicines, and the adoption of civil marriages versus their wedding practices.

As a member of the Kalagan tribe, I did not expect that our tribe still practice or observes this kind of wedding ceremony. In addition, there was also a sharing about the cultural practice where, before the sick member is brought to the hospital, some rituals are applied to the sick member, like doing some prayers over or applying herbal oil or plant roots over the head or body. Honestly, I was a bit ashamed of myself because I did not know about all those practices and had it not been for this study, I would not have been able to discover them.

In line with this, the study by Veerasha (2025) found out that the challenges faced by tribal communities in preserving their knowledge are numerous. These include the erosion of cultural identity, the impact of modern education systems, environmental degradation, and the loss of intergenerational transmission due to migration and changing lifestyles. Also, threats to cultural preservation also persist, with forces such as modernization, and migration influencing indigenous people to absorb these ideologies. Ethnic identity is in peril of being lost due to rapid urbanization brought about by the call to synchronize societies into a global community (Absolor *et al.*, 2023).

**Table 3:** Factors that Contributed to the Successful Cultural Preservation Initiatives of the Community

Major Themes	Core Ideas
National agencies and local government support (barangay and municipal)	Provided us with financial aid for our festivals
	Partnerships with LGUs gave us the chance to hold seminars and activities
	LGU really helped with organizing events and giving support for cultural activities
Fostering engagement and enabling participation of all members	Encouraging the members to join seminars
	Active involvement of the community
	Support from local elders
Conduct and convene regular dialogue and meetings	In our meetings, we deliberately discuss the needs of our community
	Community meetings are where we brainstormed how to keep our culture alive
	Elders share their knowledge during barangay gatherings

From the description of the participants, the first theme that arose on the factors which contributed to the success in the implementation of the cultural initiatives of the Kalagan tribe was “National agencies and local government support (barangay and municipal)”. This first theme emphasized that local government support has greatly helped the community. This first theme stressed the point that for LGU which has a population consisting of IPs, there is always a corresponding funding of support to the IPs, particularly in the celebration of their festivals and even some support for the livelihood programs for the tribe members. Some government agencies like NCIP, DTI, DSWD and even DOH have corresponding budgets for the IPs as these national government agencies

acknowledge the IPs as vulnerable groups, much more fellow Filipinos who need attention and proper support from them.

Furthermore, to improve the welfare of indigenous people, various efforts need to be made, such as the effort to empower indigenous people in a comprehensive and sustainable manner across all cross-sectors. The local government has the responsibility to improve the quality of services by providing plans to solve the problems of the community (Lanita *et al.*, 2024). In the recent study by Ncube *et al.* (2025), government support not only benefits indigenous communities but also contributes to broader societal goals related to cultural diversity, environmental sustainability and development. Government support helps preserve and promote cultural heritage, contributing to the continuity of indigenous customs.

The second theme that surfaced from the description of the participants on the factors leading to the success of their cultural initiatives was “Fostering engagement and enabling participation of all members”. In this second theme, it is important to encourage participation, whether through the conduct of seminars, involvement in the community, or support from elders. When each member of the community unites for the attainment of its goals and objectives, everything is possible. The sincerity of the leaders in its public service is visible through the actions they showed, all for the benefit of the community and its members.

In addition, encouraging participation and involvement of tribal members in all community activities shows their belonging to the community. As a result, they become more responsible in their decision-making and accept greater responsibility for their fellow tribal members (Molanggana, 2024). Relatedly, the research by Viscogliosi *et al.* (2020) emphasized that tribal elders contribute to individual and community wellness. The benefits of the support from elders were found in relationships, education, health, development of products, and contributions to services and policies.

The last theme was the “Conduct and convene regular dialogue and meetings” which was identified as one factor that contributed to the successful implementation of the cultural initiatives of the Kalagan tribe. Meetings and dialogues are proven to encourage participation, resulting in initiatives that would aid in the betterment of the community. With this theme, it is important that there should be regular meetings among the tribal leaders and among the members. In this case, sentiments, problems, issues and concerns will easily be solved before they worsen. Constant reminders may be done to be able to guide the members in the proper direction in life, and as to the preservation of the cultural practices, its implementation should always be part of the meetings and dialogues.

Relatedly, conducting meetings creates opportunities for Indigenous People to build relationships with others who may be able to offer further support and advocate for participation. Attending as many meetings as possible helps represent Indigenous People and their community interests (Zurba & Papadopoulos, 2023). Further, the study by Pidgeon and Riley (2021) found out that the best practices for disseminating critical information in Indigenous communities was to ensure community guidance was available by way of numerous community meetings. Partnership development is carried

out from the very beginning during preliminary meetings between the Indigenous community members.

Overall, educating the youth is of utmost importance. There is a call to inculcate heritage in formal education and strengthen the community's crucial role in cultural legacy, contributing to heritage preservation. Addressing such gaps will improve the resilience of cultural practices and ensure the sustainable preservation of the indigenous community (Banda *et al.*, 2024). Also, the government contributes to cultural preservation as laws and legislation are highly influential in their function as a regulatory mechanism of administrative operations and implementation. With this, there is a need for transparency in all procedures included in the administrative process for ease of interpretation and implementation (Seila *et al.*, 2025).

## **5. Recommendations (Implications for Practice and Future Researches)**

Initiatives for cultural preservation are fundamental for 3 reasons: to maintain the identity of society, foster community cohesion, and promote sustainable development. To preserve cultural heritage, the communities have a major contribution to preserving cultural heritage by fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility. The local government units should be involved in their efforts to preserve cultural practices and traditions that are sustained across generations.

It is noteworthy that the preservation of cultural heritage faces numerous challenges such as urbanization, globalization and a lack of public awareness. The displacement of traditional communities and the erosion of cultural sites are examples of urbanization. On the other hand, globalization presents homogenizing influences that threaten unique cultural identities. Additionally, the lack of public awareness and engagement in cultural preservation deepens these challenges, as many people do not recognize the importance of safeguarding and preserving their heritage.

To address these challenges, there must be effective strategies implemented both by the government and non-governmental organizations. There should be collaboration between governmental and non-governmental organizations to enhance preservation efforts, ensuring that cultural heritage is protected for future generations. Utilizing local leaders and influencers to advocate for preservation efforts will help build trust and engagement. There may be community committees to be established to oversee preservation activities to ensure ongoing commitment and accountability.

Also, the use of effective communication and education campaigns will substantially increase community awareness and involvement. The conduct of workshops, seminars, and local cultural events is effective in fostering a sense of pride and ownership among community members. As a researcher and a teacher in social studies, I can include in my subjects' relevant topics which will showcase Filipino cultural heritages and encourage the students to be part of the preservation of the cultural practices and traditions which are available in their localities. This means that I should be able to inculcate in the minds of my students the importance of Filipino culture, which need to be protected and preserved. These strategies will enhance the effectiveness of

community involvement in preserving cultural heritage, leading to more sustainable and impactful preservation efforts.

I believe that community involvement in cultural heritage preservation has significant social implications, as engagement will foster a stronger sense of cultural identity and continuity among community members. Active participation in preservation activities helps reinforce local traditions and practices, thereby strengthening cultural bonds and social cohesion. The sense of ownership and pride generated through involvement in preservation projects also contributes to greater community resilience and solidarity. Communities that actively participate in these initiatives often bring invaluable local knowledge and cultural sensitivity, which are crucial for maintaining the integrity of heritage sites. Cultural heritage can be a valuable asset for economic development, particularly through cultural tourism. Preserving historical sites and promoting cultural practices can attract tourists, create jobs and generate income for local communities. However, it is important to balance tourism with the need to protect the cultural heritage from negative impacts.

Finally, the concern about cultural preservation is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires a range of strategies and approaches. People must understand how important cultural preservation is, specifically the challenges it faces, and the strategies to be implemented for effective cultural preservation. We can work together towards promoting cultural identity, cultural diversity, and cultural heritage for future generations. Also, cultural preservation initiatives are not just about safeguarding tangible and intangible cultural heritage; they also have significant implications for a society's identity, economy, and social well-being.

The study has covered the cultural preservation initiatives of the participant from the indigenous community, the experiences and challenges faced by the community in implementing cultural preservation initiatives, and the factors that contributed to the successful cultural preservation initiatives of the community. The efforts and the struggles of the participants on the initiatives used and the challenges encountered in the implementation of the initiatives will pave the way to future research to comprehensively determine what specific support services will be extended to the IPs, particularly the Kalagan tribe, by government and non-government organizations and to know whether such support will result in better strategies for the cultural preservation. This is a quantitative study on the support services to be received by participants and what particular kind or type of services are needed for the preservation and even recovery of their cultural practices.

Moreover, a study on how IP tribal leaders cope with the challenges encountered while implementing cultural preservation initiatives can be explored by future researchers to explicate their resiliency and optimism amidst their difficulties encountered. Another quantitative study which can be explored by future researchers using an expanded population and in different locales or areas where the IPs lived. Likewise, a phenomenological qualitative study is recommended for future researchers to explore the best practices of the IP community while preserving or in the process of recovering their culture and traditions.

## 6. Conclusion

To conduct a study on the cultural preservation initiatives of the participants from the indigenous community, the experiences and challenges faced by the community in implementing cultural preservation initiatives, and the factors that contributed to the successful cultural preservation initiatives of the community lived has been a difficult journey on my part. As a member of the Kalagan tribe who is far from their present situation, considering that I did not live with them in the same community, brings me no options but to embrace their situation, which is heartbreaking and is very challenging to handle, knowing that I am with them to get their stories of the phenomenon.

Given this actual condition of my fellow Kalagan, I come to a realization that I have to offer some contributions and share whatever I am capable of in order to alleviate their living conditions and find a meaningful life to live ahead. I will volunteer to conduct a summer literacy class for the children/youth in the area. With this, I will prepare and equip myself with some materials where I can impart to the children/youth the basic English terminologies using the Kalagan dialect and vice versa. Also, I will make sure that during the class, I will be able to share some inputs about the value of culture, traditions, and cultural practices, so the children/youth will appreciate its importance and significance in the community and how to promote and preserve their culture. Another contribution which I would like to give is their source of livelihood. Since I have some resources on nipa weaving, I will volunteer myself to send an expert in nipa weaving to lecture and demonstrate the intricacies of nipa weaving. I will encourage the Kalagan men to join the monthly session on nipa weaving, which sessions may be conducted in my house or in the area where they live. This is my commitment to my fellow Kalagan as a countermeasure for my absence or unavailability for so many years.

As to the conduct of the study, my greatest realization as a researcher and as a teacher in social studies is that I have different roles to perform, especially on the concept of cultural preservation. I am an IP, a Kalagan member, I should be equipped with adequate knowledge, practical experiences, and demonstrate a sense of belonging and oneness to all IPs and by doing this, I may be able to make a difference in the lives of our indigenous people.

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### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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