

Mindoro

LOST: RAYA MANGYAN CULTURE AND IDENTITIES THEN

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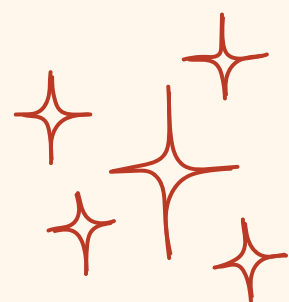
WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- ◆ IT PROVIDES A VITAL PLATFORM FOR IRAYA MANGYAN ELDERS TO SHARE THEIR LIVED EXPERIENCES, WISDOM, AND CULTURAL MEMORIES, RECOGNIZING THEM AS CUSTODIANS OF INDIGENOUS HERITAGE.

- ◆ ENRICHES THE BODY OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE RESEARCH BY OFFERING A QUALITATIVE AND EMIC (INSIDER) PERSPECTIVE ON CULTURAL CHANGE, IDENTITY, AND INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION.

- ◆ IT HIGHLIGHTS THE NUANCES OF CULTURAL CONTINUITY AND EROSION WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION, DEVELOPMENT, AND MODERNIZATION.

WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW...



How have the cultural expressions and identities of the Iraya Mangyan, as remembered by the elder generation, changed over time, and what factors have influenced their preservation or decline?

SUB-PROBLEMS



1. How do Iraya Mangyan elders describe their cultural identity and its significance in their daily lives and community practices?
2. What cultural expressions—such as festivals, performing arts, visual arts, gastronomy, and traditional games—were practiced during their youth, and what meanings did this hold?
3. How have these cultural expressions changed over time, according to the elders' recollections?
4. What challenges have the elders encountered in transmitting their cultural knowledge and practices to the younger generation?
5. What do the elders believe can be done to preserve and revitalize Iraya Mangyan culture today?

THEMES


A CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS AS VESSELS OF IDENTITY

B CULTURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION AND TRANSMISSION

C ELDERLY AS CUSTODIANS OF CULTURAL MEMORY

D CHALLENGES OF CULTURAL CONTINUITY IN THE FACE OF MODERNIZATION



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- Qualitative descriptive approach grounded in Indigenous research methodologies and narrative inquiry.
 - FGD was conducted in Iraya Mangyan communities of Occidental Mindoro, particularly in areas where elders (aged 50 and above) are still actively participating in cultural life or communal gatherings.
 - Purposive sampling was used in selecting 10–20 Iraya Mangyan elders, aged 50 and above, who are recognized as knowledge-bearers in their communities

METHODOLOGY

FOCUSED GROUP DISCUSSION



RESULTS & DISCUSSION

CULTURAL IDENTITY IN EVERYDAY AND COMMUNAL LIFE

How do Iraya Mangyan elders describe their cultural identity and its significance in their daily lives and community practices?

- Elders described cultural identity not as an abstract concept but as an embodied way of life expressed through daily subsistence activities, intergenerational roles, and communal rites.
- “kina, kalo, soog, abyan” are terms used to address each other, reflecting intricate kinship and social systems grounded in respect, reciprocity, and relational identity.
- Iraya Mangyan elders describe their cultural identity as deeply interwoven with nature, communal life, and spiritual practice.
- The elders underscored that cultural practices like kaingin, forest foraging, and ritualized sowing (paghahasik) are not only agricultural strategies but also spiritual acts, evidencing the close link between land, livelihood, and cosmology

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS AND THEIR EMBEDDED MEANINGS

What cultural expressions—such as festivals, performing arts, visual arts, gastronomy, and traditional games—were practiced during their youth, and what meanings did this hold?)

- Communal festivals (pagdiriwang) were remembered as vibrant, multisensorial events often aligned with the agricultural calendar and spiritual cosmology.
- Ritual slaughter of cattle (nagpapatay ng baka), food-sharing (sumánan), and ritual chants (maráyaw) served both social and sacred functions.
- Performing arts such as namumuyboy (evening story-dramas) and the use of bamboo instruments (plawta, subing) transmitted moral lessons, myths, and historical narratives.
- Visual arts like stone carving (pag-ukit ng bato) and functional crafts (e.g., traps such as balatik, balanan, atas) demonstrate how aesthetic practice intersects with survival, ecological knowledge, and cultural continuity.
- The Iraya diet, based on nami (wild yam) and other foraged plants, reflects deep ecological knowledge.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

CULTURAL CHANGE ACROSS GENERATIONS

How have these cultural expressions changed over time, according to the elders' recollections?

- Most elders acknowledged a significant decline in the practice and visibility of traditional cultural expressions.
- Activities such as storytelling, ritualized games, and traditional healing (marayaw) have diminished or are viewed as outdated.
- A few practices remain—such as the cooking of nami (wild yam) and kaingin—but often in modified forms.
- This intergenerational discontinuity reflects the impact of modernization and external interventions. For instance, the banning of balatik traps due to safety and DENR regulations demonstrates how legal frameworks rooted in Western conservationism can marginalize Indigenous systems of ecological stewardship (Berkes, 2012).
- The rise of formal education, economic incentives such as 4Ps, and increased use of mobile phones were identified as both facilitators of change and contributors to cultural loss.
- The country's conservation efforts, while environmentally beneficial, inadvertently curtailed access to forest resources—further displacing traditional practices such as wood carving and kaingin (swidden farming).

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

CHALLENGES IN KNOWLEDGE TRANSMISSION

What challenges have the elders encountered in transmitting their cultural knowledge and practices to the younger generation?

- Participants expressed concern over their inability to transmit practices to their grandchildren, citing lack of interest, technological distractions, and systemic dependencies.
- The youth's preoccupation with mobile phones and the internet—exacerbated by pandemic-era distance learning—diverts attention from traditional learning spaces like the forest, hearth, and community gatherings.
- Despite the elders' willingness to teach, there is often no institutional or community framework to facilitate intergenerational learning, demonstrating the gap between heritage knowledge and its sustainability in modern contexts.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES AND ASPIRATIONS

What do the elders believe can be done to preserve and revitalize Iraya Mangyan culture today?

- The elders strongly advocated for the revitalization of their culture, emphasizing the importance of teaching traditions to the youth.
- They proposed integrating cultural education into schools and reviving rituals and crafts through community-led workshops and storytelling circles.
- Elders also recommended recognizing Indigenous knowledge as equally valuable to formal education, echoing the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2000) and Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSPs) (Republic Act 8371, Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997).
- Supporting their leadership in cultural preservation initiatives ensures that cultural revitalization is not merely symbolic but rooted in Indigenous agency.

CONCLUSION

THIS STUDY UNDERSCORES THE PROFOUND ROLE OF CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS IN SHAPING AND SUSTAINING THE IRAYA MANGYAN IDENTITY ACROSS GENERATIONS.

Through the recollections of community elders, it becomes clear that identity is not a fixed label but a lived practice—embedded in language, land-based rituals, social relations, and embodied forms such as performance, crafts, and games. These cultural expressions, once vibrant in daily life, have gradually faded under the pressure of modernization, state interventions, formal education systems, and economic programs that privilege external norms over Indigenous worldviews.



ULTIMATELY, THIS STUDY AFFIRMS THAT PRESERVING IRAYA MANGYAN CULTURE IS NOT MERELY ABOUT CONSERVING THE PAST; IT IS ABOUT SUSTAINING A LIVING HERITAGE THAT CONTINUES TO OFFER MEANING, DIGNITY, AND DIRECTION IN THE FACE OF CHANGE. CENTERING THE VOICES OF ELDERS IS NOT ONLY A METHODOLOGICAL CHOICE BUT AN ETHICAL IMPERATIVE—ENSURING THAT CULTURAL CONTINUITY IS NOT SCRIPTED FROM THE OUTSIDE, BUT NURTURED FROM WITHIN THE COMMUNITY ITSELF.

Cultural Practices

<u>Pamumuyboy</u>	
<u>Pagtawag ng kina, kalo, soog, abyan</u>	
<u>Paggawa ng balatik</u>	
<u>'Marayaw' na gamutan</u>	✓
<u>Pangaw – pamamaraan ng pagbitin sa bata magdamag</u>	✓
<u>Pagkain ng 'nami'</u>	✓
Balanan at Atas	✓
<u>Pagkatay ng baka tuwing may pagdiriwang</u>	✓
Sumanan	✓
<u>Pag-ukit ng batong panghuli</u>	✓
Mga Laro: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>suungan (bunong braso):</u>• <u>talukunan-reverse tug of war (malaking kahoy ang gamit):</u>• <u>bikiran-parang sipaan, patibayan ng paa:</u>• <u>dawikan-balian ng daliri:</u>• <u>at baril barilan na kahoy</u>	✓
<u>Iguayan – awit pampatulog sa mga bata (Iguay)</u>	✓

MARAMING SALAMAT

