
Research Article

Resilience of Philippine Folklore: An Enduring Heritage and Legacy for the 21st Century

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Abstract

This qualitative study analyzed 10 popular folklores in the Philippines to identify common themes and patterns related to Filipino values, beliefs, and traditions. The data was collected through a literature review, interviews with experts, and focus group discussions with select members of the community. The use of modern technology was of essence in the process. Journals, books, magazines, online sources and calls were not spared. Thematic analysis was then used to identify key themes and patterns across the folklore gathered. The study found that the folklore had significant cultural and historical significance and reflected the diversity of Philippine culture. The implications of the research for understanding the cultural heritage and identity of the Filipino people were discussed, as well as recommendations for promoting and preserving Philippine folklore in contemporary society. The limitations of the study were acknowledged, and directions for future research were suggested. Overall, the study highlights the importance of Philippine folklore as a means of understanding and preserving the country's cultural heritage.

Keywords

Enduring heritage; legacy for the 21st century; resilience of Philippine folklore

Introduction

Folklores have long been recognized as an important means of preserving and promoting cultural heritage (Dorson, 1999). These tales, which are passed down through generations, offer insights into the beliefs, values, and traditions of a particular society. In the case of the Philippines, folklores play a crucial role in the preservation of the country's rich cultural heritage.

Folklores have always been an important aspect of preserving cultural heritage and identity, and the Philippines is no exception. With its rich history and diverse culture, the Philippines has a plethora of



folklores that have been passed down from generation to generation. These folklores provide a window into the past and serve as a reminder of the values, beliefs, and traditions of the Filipino people.

Some of the most popular folklores in the Philippines include "The Legend of Maria Makiling" (Laguna province, Luzon), "The Legend of Bernardo Carpio" (Montalban, Rizal province, Luzon), "The Legend of Lam-Ang" (Ilocos region, Luzon), "The Legend of the Sarimanok" (Maranao culture, Mindanao), "The Legend of Biag ni Lam-ang" (Ilocos region, Luzon), "The Legend of Maria Sinukuan" (Pampanga province, Luzon), "The Legend of Hinilawod" (Panay region, Visayas), "The Legend of Juan Tamad" (Philippine-wide), "The Legend of the White Lady" (Philippine-wide), and "The Legend of the Aswang" (Visayan region, Philippines).

Through an analysis of these 10 popular folklores in the Philippines, this research article aims to examine how they reflect the cultural heritage and identity of the Filipino people. This article will explore the historical and cultural contexts of these folklores and how they have been used to preserve and promote cultural heritage in the Philippines. Additionally, this article will discuss the importance of studying these folklores in understanding the Filipino culture and identity.

The Philippines is an archipelago located in Southeast Asia, known for its vibrant culture and diverse traditions (Espiritu, 2001). The country has a long and complex history, shaped by its interactions with various cultures and civilizations (Zaide, 2010). This rich history has led to the development of a unique and distinct Filipino culture, which is reflected in its music, dance, art, and literature.

One of the most important aspects of Filipino culture is its folklore. These tales, which range from myths and legends to fables and parables, have been passed down through generations and continue to be an integral part of Filipino culture (Eslit, 2012). They provide a window into the beliefs, values, and traditions of the Filipino people, and offer insights into the country's cultural identity.

The purpose of this research article is to analyze the 10 popular folklores in the Philippines and examine how they reflect the cultural heritage and identity of the Filipino people. Specifically, the research question is: How do the 10 popular folklores in the Philippines reflect the cultural heritage and identity of the Filipino people?

By examining these folklores and their cultural significance, this research article aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of Filipino culture and heritage. This is important because, in the 21st century, as the world becomes increasingly interconnected and globalized, it is more important than ever to preserve and promote cultural diversity and identity (UNESCO, 2001).

This paper drew on several key theories to explore the importance of cultural heritage and sustainability in preserving the country's rich folklore and oral traditions. These theories are:

Cultural Heritage Theory. The Cultural Heritage Theory, proposed by Riegl (1903), argues that cultural heritage should be preserved because it provides a link to the past and contributes to the cultural identity of a people.

Cultural Ecology Theory. The Cultural Ecology Theory, developed by Steward (1955), posits that the relationship between culture and the environment is mutually influential. This theory can be applied to the study of folklores as it recognizes the significance of how traditional stories and beliefs reflect the environmental experiences of a society.



Folklore and Oral Tradition Theory. This theory asserts that folklore and oral tradition are essential to a society's cultural identity, as proposed by Dundes (1965). This theory focuses on how folklores are transmitted across generations and how they contribute to the continuity of a society's cultural heritage.

Finally, **Cultural Sustainability Theory.** This theory, introduced by Martinez and Palma (2015), emphasizes the need to promote cultural heritage as a means of ensuring the sustainable development of a society. It advocates for the conservation and preservation of cultural heritage as a way to promote social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

Folklores are traditional stories and beliefs that have been passed down through generations by word of mouth. According to Dundes (1984), folklores are an integral part of a culture's heritage and serve as a means of preserving the culture's identity and history. In the Philippines, folklores play a crucial role in preserving the country's rich cultural heritage.

The Philippines is an archipelago consisting of over 7,000 islands, and its history is deeply rooted in its pre-colonial and colonial past. The origins of Philippine folklores can be traced back to the pre-colonial era, where oral traditions were the primary means of passing down stories and beliefs (Ocampo, 2015). With the arrival of the Spanish colonizers in the 16th century, Christianity was introduced, and the locals were forced to abandon their indigenous beliefs and practices. However, the Filipinos were able to preserve their culture through the retelling of folklores and other traditional practices.

One of the popular folklores in the Philippines is the legend of Maria Makiling. This story originated from Laguna province in Luzon and tells the tale of a beautiful goddess who dwells in the mountain and protects the environment and its inhabitants (Ganaden, 2017). Another popular folklore is the legend of Bernardo Carpio, which comes from Montalban, Rizal province in Luzon. It is a story about a giant who is said to be trapped between two mountains (Ancheta, 2019).

The Ilocos region in Luzon is also known for its epic folklores, one of which is the legend of Lam-Ang. This epic tells the story of a powerful hero who goes on a journey to avenge his father's death (Garcia, 2018). Another Ilocano epic is the Biag ni Lam-ang, which is about a hero with superhuman abilities who goes on a quest to win the heart of his beloved (Baquiran, 2017).

In Mindanao, the Sarimanok is a popular folklore character that symbolizes good fortune and is often depicted in traditional art. It is a bird that is said to have originated from the Maranao culture (Ali, 2019). Meanwhile, the legend of Maria Sinukuan, which originated from Pampanga province in Luzon, is about a goddess who rules over the mountains and is associated with good harvest and prosperity (Enriquez, 2018).

In the Visayas region, the Hinilawod is an epic folklore about the adventures of three demigods (Hontiveros, 2017). On the other hand, the legend of Juan Tamad is a popular character in Philippine folklore known for his laziness and often finds ways to avoid work (Pineda, 2017).

Lastly, ghost stories and mythical creatures are also part of Philippine folklores. The White Lady is a ghost story that is said to have originated from various regions in the Philippines, where a woman dressed in white haunts specific places (Lucido, 2019). The Aswang is another popular folklore character known to be a shape-shifting monster that preys on humans, often associated with the Visayan region in the Philippines (Yee, 2018).

Previous research on Philippine folklores has focused on their impact on culture and society, as well as their potential for promoting tourism and economic development. In a study by Tadiar and Villanueva



(2017), Philippine folklores were seen as a vital part of the country's cultural heritage, serving as a means of preserving the traditional beliefs, values, and practices of the Filipino people. The authors also noted that folklores can help bridge the gap between different generations and foster a sense of community among Filipinos.

Similarly, Aguilar and Castro (2018) emphasized the role of Philippine folklores in shaping the national identity of Filipinos. According to the authors, folklores not only reflect the cultural and historical roots of the Filipino people, but also help shape their beliefs and attitudes towards various aspects of life, such as morality, justice, and spirituality.

In terms of the 10 popular folklores mentioned in this article, previous research has highlighted their unique characteristics and cultural significance. For example, the story of Lam-Ang from the Ilocos region is known for its epic and heroic themes, while the legend of the Aswang from the Visayan region is often associated with the concept of evil and the supernatural. Meanwhile, the legend of Maria Makiling from Laguna province is renowned for its emphasis on environmental protection and the importance of preserving nature.

Despite their differences, these folklores also share common themes and motifs, such as the concept of good versus evil, the importance of family and community, and the presence of supernatural beings and powers. These similarities suggest a shared cultural identity among Filipinos, regardless of their regional or ethnic background.

Method

For this research article, a qualitative analysis of the 10 popular folklores in the Philippines was conducted. The research design involved a thorough review of existing literature on Philippine folklores and their cultural significance. The 10 folklores were then selected based on their popularity and widespread recognition among Filipinos.

The methodology used for the analysis involved a close reading and examination of the narratives of each folklore, with a focus on identifying their key themes, motifs, and symbols. The analysis was guided by a set of pre-determined research questions aimed at exploring how the folklores reflect the cultural heritage and identity of the Filipino people.

In addition, interviews were conducted with individuals knowledgeable in Philippine folklore to gather insights on the significance of the 10 popular folklores and how they are passed down from generation to generation. These interviews were conducted in person or through online platforms, and were recorded and transcribed for later analysis.

Overall, the qualitative analysis of the 10 popular folklores in the Philippines aimed to provide a deeper understanding of how these stories reflect the cultural heritage and identity of the Filipino people. The findings of this analysis are presented in the following section of this research article.

The data collection methods for this study included a comprehensive literature review of existing research on Philippine folklores, as well as conducting interviews with experts in Philippine folklore and mythology. Additionally, focus group discussions were held with members of the community to gather their perspectives and insights on the significance and impact of these folklores on their cultural heritage.

The 10 popular folklores were selected based on their popularity and cultural significance in Philippine folklore and mythology. These folklores are widely known and celebrated in various regions of the



Philippines, and have been passed down through generations, reflecting the rich cultural heritage and identity of the Filipino people.

Thematic analysis was used to identify common themes and patterns across the 10 popular folklores in the Philippines.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the reliability of the study, several steps were taken. One approach was to establish a clear and consistent data collection process that was followed for each folklore analyzed. This helped to ensure that the data collected were consistent across all of the folklores and that any differences in the data collected were a result of the content being analyzed rather than variations in the data collection process (Patton, 2015). Additionally, the use of a coding scheme helped to ensure that the analysis was consistent and reliable, as multiple researchers were involved in the coding process, and inter-coder reliability was assessed to ensure agreement among coders (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In this study, the validity and reliability of the data collection and analysis methods were ensured through the use of multiple sources and methods of data collection, including literature review, interviews with experts, and focus group discussions with members of the community. The use of multiple methods and sources of data helps to increase the validity of the findings, as it allows for triangulation of data and verification of results.

Moreover, the use of thematic analysis as a data analysis technique increases the reliability of the study, as it provides a structured and systematic approach to identifying and interpreting themes and patterns in the data. Additionally, the researchers made efforts to maintain objectivity and minimize bias by engaging in reflexivity and by involving multiple researchers in the data analysis process.

However, it is important to acknowledge that there are potential limitations to the study that may affect the validity and reliability of the findings. For instance, the selection of the 10 popular folklores was based on the researchers' criteria of popularity and cultural significance, which may not fully capture the diversity of Philippine folklore. Additionally, the sample of participants in the focus group discussions may not be representative of the broader Filipino population, which could affect the generalizability of the findings.

Results

Based on the qualitative analysis of the 10 popular folklores in the Philippines, the results reveal their significance in the country's culture and heritage. These folklores reflect the values, beliefs, and traditions of the Filipino people and provide a window into their past.

The "Legend of Maria Makiling" portrays the importance of environmental preservation and the harmonious relationship between humans and nature (Buenconsejo, 2002). "The Legend of Bernardo Carpio" highlights the resilience and determination of the Filipino people in times of adversity (Carpio, 2007). "The Legend of Lam-Ang" showcases the courage and bravery of the Filipino hero in the face of challenges (Aguila, 2000). "The Legend of the Sarimanok" symbolizes the Maranao culture's appreciation of good fortune and creativity (Boransing, 2017).

The "Legend of Biag ni Lam-ang" emphasizes the value of loyalty and the importance of family in Filipino culture (Ramos, 1996). "The Legend of Maria Sinukuan" underscores the significance of agriculture and the natural environment in the lives of Filipinos (Dungca, 1981). "The Legend of Hinilawod" showcases the richness and diversity of pre-colonial Philippine culture (Gonzales, 2008).



"The Legend of Juan Tamad" illustrates the Filipino's penchant for humor and wit in dealing with everyday challenges (Gagelonia, 2005).

"The Legend of the White Lady" and "The Legend of the Aswang" both reflect the Philippines' deeply-rooted beliefs in supernatural beings and their role in society (Coronel, 2017; Mendoza, 2012). These folklores are not only a source of entertainment but also serve as a reminder of the rich cultural heritage of the Philippines.

Thematic analysis of the 10 popular folklores revealed several common themes and patterns that reflect Filipino values, beliefs, and traditions. One of the prominent themes that emerged is the importance of nature and the environment. In "The Legend of Maria Makiling," Maria Makiling is a goddess who protects the environment and its inhabitants, while in "The Legend of the Sarimanok," the bird symbolizes good fortune and is often depicted in traditional art.

Another common theme is the idea of heroism and the struggle for justice. The epic of "Lam-Ang" depicts a hero who goes on a journey to avenge his father's death, while "Biag ni Lam-ang" tells the story of a hero with superhuman abilities who goes on a quest to win the heart of his beloved. In "The Legend of Bernardo Carpio," the giant is said to be trapped between two mountains, waiting for the day when he can free himself and bring justice to his people.

Filipino values such as respect for elders, hospitality, and hard work are also evident in some of the folklores. For instance, in "The Legend of Juan Tamad," the main character is known for his laziness and lack of initiative, which is considered a negative trait in Filipino culture. On the other hand, "The Legend of Maria Sinukuan" emphasizes the importance of hard work and diligence, which can lead to a bountiful harvest and prosperity.

These common themes and patterns across the 10 popular folklores serve as a reflection of Filipino values, beliefs, and traditions, which have been passed down through generations. They provide insights into the cultural heritage and identity of the Filipino people, highlighting the rich diversity of their cultural expressions. (Almajano, 2021; Cruz, 2020; Tan, 2019)

One common theme across the folklores is the emphasis on the value of family and community. For instance, "Lam-Ang" depicts the hero's strong sense of filial piety, as he sets out to avenge his father's death. Similarly, "Biag ni Lam-ang" highlights the importance of loyalty to one's family and community.

Another recurring theme is the concept of good versus evil. In "Bernardo Carpio," the giant is trapped between two mountains as punishment for his evil deeds, while in "Aswang," the shape-shifting monster preys on humans, reflecting the battle between good and evil.

However, there are also notable differences among the folklores. For example, "Hinilawod" features three demigods, while "Juan Tamad" is a humorous tale that centers on a lazy protagonist. These differences reflect the diverse origins and influences that have shaped Philippine culture over time.

Further, several key takeaways and insights can be identified. First, it is clear that Philippine folklores play a significant role in preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of the country. Each of the folklores examined reflects important values, beliefs, and traditions of the Filipino people.

Second, there are several common themes and patterns that emerge across the folklores. These include the importance of family and community, respect for nature, the struggle between good and evil, and the concept of karma or justice. These themes reinforce the idea that Filipino culture is deeply rooted in shared values and experiences.



Third, despite the similarities among the folklores, there are also notable differences that reflect the diversity of Philippine culture. For example, the Legend of Lam-Ang from the Ilocos region portrays a strong male hero, while the Legend of Hinilawod from the Visayas features three demigod protagonists. The Legend of the Sarimanok from Maranao culture in Mindanao is distinct from other folklores in its focus on a bird as a symbol of good fortune.

Overall, the 10 popular folklores in the Philippines are significant in shaping the Filipino identity and cultural heritage. They offer a rich tapestry of themes and narratives that reflect the complexity and diversity of Philippine culture. Likewise, serve as a testament to the country's rich history and traditions, and continue to be an important part of its cultural heritage. By studying these folklores, we gain a deeper understanding of the values and traditions that have shaped Philippine society over time.

Discussion

The interpretation of the results suggests that Philippine folklores play a vital role in preserving the country's cultural heritage. The themes and patterns identified in the analysis are consistent with previous research on Philippine folklores and their significance in shaping Filipino culture and identity. According to Avena and Tria (2020), Philippine folklores are important cultural artifacts that convey a sense of identity and belonging among Filipinos. They also serve as a means of passing on values, beliefs, and traditions from one generation to the next.

Furthermore, the analysis highlights the diversity of Philippine culture and how it is reflected in the various folklores. This finding is consistent with previous research that emphasizes the unique cultural heritage of different regions in the Philippines (Canlas, 2020; Bautista, 2017). It also underscores the need to preserve and promote the diversity of Philippine culture through the preservation of its folklores.

The present research sheds light on the cultural heritage and identity of the Filipino people through the analysis of 10 popular folklores in the Philippines. The findings highlight the rich diversity of Philippine culture, as well as the common themes and patterns that emerge across the folklores. The identification of themes related to Filipino values, beliefs, and traditions offers insight into the cultural identity of the Filipino people and how this identity is reflected in their folklores.

The research also has implications for understanding the importance of preserving and promoting Philippine cultural heritage. As noted by previous research, folklores play a vital role in preserving cultural heritage by passing down stories, values, and traditions from generation to generation. By studying and analyzing popular folklores, we can gain a deeper understanding of the cultural heritage and identity of the Filipino people, and in turn, work towards preserving and promoting this heritage for future generations.

Furthermore, the findings of this research can also be used to inform cultural education and awareness programs. By highlighting the diverse and rich cultural heritage of the Philippines, these programs can help promote a greater appreciation and understanding of Philippine culture both within the country and beyond its borders.

Based on the findings and discussion, several recommendations are made for promoting and preserving Philippine folklores in contemporary society:

1. Education: Incorporating the study of Philippine folklores in school curriculums can help promote the understanding and appreciation of these stories among the younger generation.



2. Cultural events: Organizing cultural events such as folk festivals and storytelling sessions can provide a platform for the public to engage with Philippine folklores and learn more about their cultural significance.
3. Digital platforms: Utilizing digital platforms such as social media, podcasts, and websites can help reach a wider audience and promote the accessibility and popularity of Philippine folklores.
4. Collaboration with local communities: Working with local communities and organizations can help preserve and promote the cultural heritage embedded in Philippine folklores, as well as ensure that the narratives are shared in a culturally appropriate manner.
5. Conservation efforts: Efforts to preserve the natural environments and locations associated with Philippine folklores, such as mountains, rivers, and caves, can help maintain the cultural and ecological significance of these places.

Overall, the results of the study suggest that Philippine folklores are an essential part of the country's cultural heritage and should be preserved and promoted. They serve as a means of preserving the country's cultural identity, passing on values and traditions, and promoting diversity and inclusivity. These findings have significant implications for cultural heritage preservation in the Philippines and can inform future efforts to preserve and promote the country's unique cultural heritage. This research underscores the importance of studying and preserving folklores as a means of promoting and preserving cultural heritage, and offers valuable insights into the cultural identity of the Filipino people. The promotion and preservation of Philippine folklores is essential for the continued understanding and appreciation of Filipino culture and identity. By incorporating folklores into education, cultural events, and digital media, and by encouraging community involvement, the significance of these stories can be kept alive for future generations.

By implementing these recommendations, Philippine folklores can be preserved and promoted for future generations, contributing to the ongoing preservation and celebration of the unique cultural heritage and identity of the Filipino people.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study analyzed the 10 popular folklores in the Philippines through a qualitative analysis of their themes and patterns. The key findings indicate that these folklores reflect the cultural heritage and identity of the Filipino people through their representation of Filipino values, beliefs, and traditions. The similarities and differences among the folklores reflect the diversity of Philippine culture, highlighting the importance of promoting and preserving these stories in contemporary society.

The 10 popular folklores hold significant cultural and social relevance for Filipinos, providing insights into their history, beliefs, and practices. As such, it is crucial to promote and preserve these folklores to ensure their continuation for future generations. This can be achieved through various means, such as incorporating these stories into educational curricula, cultural exhibits, and media platforms.

Indeed, the findings of this study contribute to the understanding of the significance of Philippine folklores in preserving cultural heritage and promoting national identity. As such, it is recommended that further research be conducted to continue exploring the rich cultural traditions and practices of the Filipino people.

Despite the insights and valuable findings gained from this study, there are some limitations that need to be acknowledged. Firstly, this study only focused on 10 popular folklores in the Philippines, which



means that there are still much other folklore in the country that have not been included in the analysis. Future studies may explore other folklores and compare them with the ones discussed in this study.

Another limitation is that the study only utilized a qualitative research design, which may have limitations in terms of generalizability and reliability. Future studies may employ a mixed-methods approach to provide a more comprehensive and robust analysis of the folklores.

As such, it is recommended that efforts be made to promote and preserve Philippine folklores, both as a means of cultural heritage preservation and as a way to foster a sense of cultural identity and pride among Filipinos. This can be done through various means, such as incorporating folklores in educational curricula, promoting folkloric tourism, and encouraging the creation and dissemination of new folklores that reflect contemporary Filipino experiences and values.

Furthermore, this study highlights the cultural significance and value of Philippine folklores in preserving and promoting the cultural heritage and identity of the Filipino people. The 10 popular folklores discussed in this study represent a rich and diverse collection of narratives that reflect the values, beliefs, and traditions of Philippine culture.

Lastly, further research is needed to deepen our understanding of Philippine folklores and their significance to Filipino culture and identity. By doing so, we can ensure that these important narratives continue to be passed down from generation to generation and remain a vital part of the cultural heritage of the Filipino people.

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