

Threads of Identity: An Ethnographic Study on the Costumes and Cultural Signifiers of the Bukidnon and Menuvu Indigenous Communities in Mindanao, Philippines

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Abstract

This ethnographic study explores the authentic traditional attire among the Bukidnon and Menuvu Indigenous Cultural Communities in Mindanao, Philippines, focusing on costume dress cut, designs, colors, shapes and lines, through qualitative methods employing immersive fieldwork, focus group discussions, and validation from tribal elders the research documented the distinctive textile patterns, accessories, and ceremonial garments across the communities. Women typically wore navel-length blouses, with geometrically patterned skirts (“pinaksuy”) either mid cut, ankle level and/or midnight cut, and accessorized with feathered “pinanggahangan.” that conveyed status and clan affiliation. Men with positions in the community wore “sinug-ong,” included barong-style tops and long trousers, adorned elaborately embroidered garments while warriors and ceremonial dancers embroidered chaleku. Color choices reflected cosmological beliefs, with red, black, and white predominating as sacred tones, alongside other symbolic hues. The Menuvu were distinguished by their beaded headdress (“suwat”) and the intricate layering paired with knee or mid cut wrapped around skirt, and ankle level (double balloon skirt). The study affirms that indigenous costumes are more than aesthetic artifacts they are visual repositories of oral traditions, socio-political structure, and ancestral memory. These findings contribute to national efforts on cultural preservation, heritage education, and policy advocacy on the rights of Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines.

Keywords: Bukidnon, Menuvu, pinaksuy, sinug-ong, suwat, pinanggahangan, Indigenous costume,

Introduction

Costumes hold a simple appeal within Indigenous Cultural Communities, serving as lasting evidences to ancestral traditions, preserved for generations to come. These distinctive attires capture the essence of the past, manifesting in public appearances during momentous occasions like festivals, religious ceremonies, weddings, healing rituals, and leadership roles. Traditional costumes are part of the Cultural heritage which is “that part of the past which we select in the present for contemporary purposes, be economic,

cultural, political, or social” (Khakzad 2015, p 110). Globally this is supported by UN member countries when they ratified the international treaty called the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage adopted by UNESCO in 1972. The treaty seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage including the traditional costumes around the world considered being outstanding values to humanity.

In the Philippines, cultural communities are empowered by the government through the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) specifically implements interventions to strengthen the preservation of ancestral domains including the performing arts of the ICCs/IPs by only with a free and prior informed consent of such communities, obtained in accordance with customary laws of the concerned community. This was supported by Aquino (1991) underscores that culture and arts wield potent influence in national progress, enriching our diverse community and giving an inherent sense of pride and distinction to Filipinos. This essence is vividly embodied in the costumes worn by these indigenous groups, representing a heritage that demands cohesive preservation. Gabao (2001) emphasized in his speech during the 2001 National Folkdance Workshop, that traditional dances associated with rituals and ceremonies must be kept intact through the use of indigenous costumes to ensure preservation of an authentic representation of the real meaning and value of the dance. A cultural identity such as costumes and traditional attire is formed and maintained in many ways. A great deal of all these were passed on orally through generations (Salang, 2008).

The way one presents oneself through clothing, along with any alterations to the body, serves as a nonverbal means of sustainable communication, encompassing both the external attire and inherent characteristics like gender, cultural communities, and physical traits (Johnson et al., 2014). At an individual level, the attire and its aesthetic convey insights into the wearer's values, behaviors, interests, lifestyle, and interpersonal and psychological connections (Rosenbusch et al., 2020). This simply identifies individuals and a community by just looking on what they are wearing when they are within or during activities in the community.

The Bukidnun and Menuvu stand as (2) two major tribes in the province of Bukidnon, encompassing cultural communities. The Bukidnun tribes identified as Bukidnun, Talaandig, Higa-unun cluster predominantly inhabits the province's central and northern regions, while the Menuvu including the Menuvu, Tigwahanun, Matigsalug and Umayamnun takes root in the southern part, engrossed in agricultural pursuits and occurrence of wide river banks. The dynamic nature of these settlements emerges from intermarriage and ancestral practices, reflecting their nomadic heritage. These tribes wore their identity in and outside the community, with accessories to enhance their appearance whenever visitors, festivities, and meetings online and offline in terms of technology are called by their elders and officials. These tribes are empowered with the customary laws governing property rights or relations in determining the ownership and extent of ancestral domain. Sec. 17 of Art. XIV of the constitution. The State shall recognize, respect, and protect the rights of indigenous cultural communities to preserve and develop their cultures, traditions, and institutions. It shall consider these rights in the formulation of national plans and policies that strengthen the preservation of cultural heritage

The use of traditional wear and costumes hold profound significance within these tribes, symbolizing prestige, honor, and status. Attire not only differentiates among tribal roles but also reflects their identity. Whether it's the imposing "putong" worn by warriors or the adorned accessories of "datu" and "baylan,"

these elements mirror the wearer's role within the tribe. Festivals like Kaamulan serve as platforms for these distinct costumes to shine, embodying the rich culture and traditions. Baes (2004) cited Datu Imo that in cultural festivals, performances that showcase rituals and community celebrations where participants are donned in colorful costumes, utilize traditional implements and instruments as stage props with elaborate dance movements and stage blocking.

The contemporary cultural landscape presents a new picturesque of each of these community, it poses challenges as these indigenous cultural communities navigate the 21st century. According to Ntombela (2015), the wearing of traditional attire is declining because of western philosophy that permeate all cultural norms and systems. External influences, technology, and individual inclinations have distorted between authentic heritage and modern adaptations. In the province of Bukidnon, these tribes used traditional costume mixing two tribes in one body for reasons they are a product of intermarriage causing to have a mixed costumes which destroy the specific identity of each tribe. The intersectionality theory (1880) looks at how social systems or groups are interrelated and dependent on one another (Crenshaw, 1989).

It raises the level of analytical sophistication and explains why members of a particular group could have diverse experiences depending on their other identities (Atewologun, 2018). This supports ideas that identities are largely affected by the relationship and decision of two different intermingling communities which diminish the authentic practices. Today, the Z-millennials of among the cultural communities in the province are no longer aware of their authentic identity. When asked, they cannot support and explain because they don't have that exercise of traditional practices. Parents can no longer hold the decision of their children to listen to storytelling time this is because of social media and other technology.

In light of these changes, a strengthened documentation and preservation of the genuine attire of each tribe must be done. Such initiatives ensure the transmission of accurate cultural knowledge to the succeeding generations, fostering awareness, education, and responsible stewardship of these costumes. It is understood that costumes epitomize cultural legacy, this study safeguard these tangible links to the past. By unraveling the complexities and understanding of these communities, their history, and their evolving identity, thereby contributing to the collective cultural heritage of the province.

Objectives of the Study

Indigenous traditional attire depicts individuals' identity, their roles and responsibilities. According to the World Book Encyclopedia, Vol. 4, clothing includes garments, accessories and ornaments, and evolved around 100,000 years ago. The early humans used clothing to look better, cover themselves from the elements, and establish identity. The earliest clothing was probably animal skin, used for warmth, and wearing the skin of a ferocious predator, could have been used as a signal of the hunting prowess of the wearer. Wayne (2015) Tailors do not make clothes simply for appearance's sake, but rather each symbol, color, and shape of the attire have a specific purpose or meaning such as creativity and allegiance to tribal roots.

Indigenous traditional attires are worn by members of the communities which has generally been passed from generation to generation through oral traditions, which are in danger of being lost unless it is formally documented and preserved. Indigenous knowledge is an important resource that contributes to social and

economic needs, community sustainability and sustainable development (Broadhead & Howard, 2011 as cited by Tabuti & Van Damme, 2012).

This research is on the preservation of cultural heritage among (7) seven indigenous cultural communities in Bukidnon through documentation of the descriptions of costumes by the elders based from their traditional knowledge. Wane (2013) emphasized that Indigenous knowledge is intergenerational and are passed on by community elders.

The Z- generations and millennials are expected to be skilled and knowledgeable on the culture and traditions of the Bukidnun and Menuvu and be the next bearer of their indigenous knowledge in the proper use of traditional costumes. This strengthens sense of pride in giving importance to the preservation of their cultural heritage. It is expected to draw up support for the preservation and promotion of the Bukidnun and Menuvu culture.

Materials and Methods

This research study adopts a qualitative-ethnographic approach, employing the descriptive-normative survey method. The research methodology involves video evaluation, focused group discussions (FGD), and participant observation, allowing the researcher to immerse in the community, observe interactions, and conduct informal interviews with group participants and elders. Drawing and sketching were also applied to further get the exact dress cut, designs, color, and lines. Analysis was done based on the actual presentation of materials and response to the interview during the gathering of data. Elders were invited to confirm the results of the study and the culture described through the material.), the author observed cautiously the importance of research ethics during the conduct of the research.

Ethical procedures for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences, Law and the Humanities (2006) which gave significance to the value of human life. Proponent shown respect for human dignity at their own choice of whether to answer or not the questions. This suggests that processes involved is at the interviewee's standards. The author has responsibly prevented research subjects from being harm and in difficulties. Research subjects were informed for them to understand the research questions, on the consequences of participating, and of the purpose of the research. In addition, as a rule, research projects that include individuals can be initiated only after securing participants' free and informed consent. The informants have the right to withdraw from participation at any time, without this entailing any negative consequences for them (Guidelines for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences, Law and the Humanities, 2006).

To strengthen the preservation of the Bukidnun and Menuvu Tribes culture, A meeting was set to discuss the content of the program. This started with a ritual and all the participants, the tourism officers, Kaamulan Committee members, NCIP office, Indigenous Affairs Division office, academe and the performers were informed so they will better understand the meaning and importance of the gathering. The NCIP office carefully explained the purpose, procedure and process and the resolution as a contextualized FPIC. The meeting focused on the costumes which include Cut, Designs, Color, Shapes, Lines were documented using ethnographic approach, a method of collecting the necessary data and information. The data collected were presented again to elders-participants for validation. The selection of the elders-participants was based on the identification of the community. The cooperation of these elders is a big factor in cultural preservation. It is a fact that without someone to transfer the indigenous skill and knowledge, any cultural preservation program would not be successful.

Research Setting

The research was conducted in 11 municipalities and two cities within the province, where various indigenous communities are located. These include Maramag with the Talaandig and Menuvu cultural communities, Kitaotao with the Matigsalug cultural communities, San Fernando with the Matigsalug and Tigwahanun, Quezon with the Menuvu, Baungun with the Higa-unun, Talakag with the Talaandig and Higa-unun, Manolo Fortich with the Bukidnun, Impasug-ung with the Bukidnon, Kalilangan with the Menuvu and Talaandig, Kadingilan with the Menuvu, Malaybalay City with the Higa-unun and Bukidnun, while in Cabanglasan they have the Umayamnun, and Valencia City with the Matigsalug and Talaandig. The research period they have spanned from 2017 to 2021.

Research tool

The use of semi-structured interviews facilitated the capture of participants' responses, enabling the researcher to extract valuable insights on the costumes, used by the indigenous cultural communities. Interviewing, as highlighted by Farrell (2020), proved to be an effective method for data collection in this study. The researcher recorded participants' demographic and background information related to costumes. The discussions delved into participants' narratives regarding the cut, designs, color, shapes, and lines. The final interview session aimed to allow participants to elaborate on the significance of their culture and identity.

Data Gathering Procedure

To ensure proper documentation on the traditional costumes, the researcher obtained an approved letter from the University president through appropriate channels. As a Kaamulan committee member, the researcher actively engaged in the visitation phase, where opportunities were provided to present ideas, share observations, and pose questions. In the context of being the researcher, arrangements for immersion were made through a close relative within the community. Consent was obtained from the identified participant, and permission for the immersion was duly approved. During the immersion, participants were thoroughly briefed on the interview process, which involved video recording using a mobile phone. This method served a dual purpose it allowed the researcher to visually identify participants and capture their specific responses. The recorded interviews proved instrumental during the transcription and analysis phase, enhancing the accuracy and depth of the research findings.

Data Analysis

The data is presented in the form of a curated collection of drawings depicting the costumes. The printed transcriptions and interview data were meticulously organized to provide additional support to these descriptions. Descriptions were not limited to written text; rather, they were accompanied by sketches to vividly convey the ideas as articulated by the participants emphasizing the cut, design, color, shapes, and lines. This detailed interpretation aimed to capture the essence of the materials and costumes utilized by the Bukidnun and Menuvu indigenous cultural communities, offering a comprehensive and visually enriched understanding of their cultural expressions.

Key Informants

The key informants are the Elders representing the 11 municipalities and 2 cities with identified tribes. During these visits, the lead researcher is allocated 30 minutes to 1 hour to conduct a focused group discussion with the Elders, eliciting their authentic responses to a set of questions prepared by the group. These responses form the basis for the acceptance of the dance literature presented for the FPIC implementation. In each of the 13 areas, only 8 Elders are invited, with the Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representative (IPMR) occasionally acting as a mediator and moderator."

Results and Discussion

a comprehensive overview of responses describing the Bukidnon indigenous cultural communities through their costumes. This tribe's traditional attire is a beautifully crafted butterfly-sleeved blouse. It is carefully designed to be at the navel level but covered with a white undershirt, thus highlighting the tribe's emphasis on modesty and respect for their cultural norms. This is paired with an A-cut skirt extending, to sub-groups, worn below the knee, and some ankle-length skirts. The patterns patched depict local flora, fauna, and tribal symbols, each carrying stories and traditions passed down through generations. For the males, the Datu and baylan, distinguished leaders, exhibit distinctive attire. The Datu typically wears an upper costume resembling a barong paired with straight-cut pants, symbolizing authority and leadership. Meanwhile, performers and warriors wear a chaleku as their upper attire, paired with garter-hip pants, signifying their dual roles as entertainers and protectors. In terms of design, needlecraft is skillfully applied to cloth, with symbolic and frequently non-concrete, geometrical patterns adorned with beads (Anderson, 2012).

The color directs the eye, evokes emotion, communicates meaning, and ultimately helps establish an identity. Colors may have contrasting meanings around the world Mukamal (2020). However, the colors used by the Bukidnon tribes in their attire hold significant meanings. Red, a dominant color, symbolizes authority and strength. Secondary colors include blue for peace, white for cleanliness, and black for power. These colors are accented with yellow, representing hope and wealth. In the northern Bukidnon variant, blue becomes the dominant color, representing peace, with red and black as secondary colors, and yellow and white as accents. Moreover, Colors, demonstrate the different states of the person in the system of objects, in nature, and in the whole "man-color" system. (Bakieva and Popova, 2019) The language of color in culture is a non-verbal means of communication, which serves to understand the mentality by interpreting signs and symbols expressed in traditional costumes, symbolically embodying the cosmological model of the traditional society.

The costumes of the Bukidnon tribe feature common shapes and figures like circles, triangles, and zigzags. These symbols often hold cultural and spiritual significance, representing elements from nature, rituals, and communal bonds. We pay respect to Elders past, present, and emerging. (Shah 2022). Vertical lines are prevalent in their costumes, emphasizing their connection to the earth and the growth of their community. Horizontal lines are used selectively to convey specific concepts tied to the symbols they represent.

On Higa-unun costume in terms of Cut, Designs, color, shapes, and lines

The Higa-unun tribe's traditional apparel includes various lengths and cuts, decorated with difficult beadwork, patchwork, and interweaving strategies. The blouse is worn at the navel level. Some groups wore another style entails a reduced skirt that reaches ankle length, signifying modesty and practicality. Those in the eastern groups use a mid-cut beneath below the knee. According to the study of Tortosa (2013), The essence of Higaonon cultural identity is deemed worthy of safeguarding, and every member is called upon to contribute to this preservation endeavor by embracing and adorning their traditional attire. The profound significance lies within these meticulously crafted costumes and accompanying accessories a collective manifestation of their shared heritage. These attires, imbued with cultural symbolism, enable individuals to discern fellow community members based on the garments they wear and the hues that adorn them. A unique and unspoken language emanates from these attire choices, encapsulating their identity within the intricate weavings, colors, and patterns.

The Higa-unun show off their creative talents through beadwork, patchwork, and interweaving techniques. Notable strategies include Tinilogas (unmarried thread over one), Tigdaduwa (double thread over), and Tigtatulo (double thread over a single). For edges, they incorporate Sinapay and Binaling strategies. Their craftsmanship is in addition highlighted through binitu-on, binabangon, and kinabuka, which keep cultural and spiritual significance in alignment with their ideals. With regard to color respect positions in the Higa-unun tribe's attire. Northeastern and southeastern Higa-ununs, find red and black as the dominant colors, The red symbolizes power within the tribe, and the black means keeping the evil deeds *dautan nga buhat, ginabuhaton para dili manghilabot sa tawo*. As an accent colors, blue means *kumakaid/gaapi- apil nga walay klaro*, and the color green is for *talahunon nga timailhan*. For Eastern Higa-unun, they find yellow colors as dominant for they believe in progress, success, and wealth. This is accented with red, blue, white, black, and green with the same meanings.

Moreover, the Higa-unun tribe usually consists of shapes together with circles, triangles, and zigzags and *lanahan* or *jar* in their attire. Vertical traces dominate their costumes, emphasizing their grounding inside the land and growth as a network. Horizontal strains are hired selectively to depict specific principles associated with the symbols they constitute. Brandeis (1993) Attires, known as "Panaksoy," which is worn by women. The Panaksoy comprises a bloused striped white, black, red, or yellow bodice accompanied by a vibrant red *cenepha*. These bodices are adorned with appliquéd triangles or zigzag patterns, imbuing them with a unique aesthetic. The sleeves of the Panaksoy resemble the shape of bells and are intentionally cut just above the hips, revealing midriff tattoos—a practice that adds another layer of cultural significance. The Men typically wears a costume resembling a *barong* and straight-cut pants. For performers and warriors wear a *chaleku* as an upper attire, paired with garter-hip pants. these garments represent their roles as entertainers and protectors.

On Talaandig costume in terms of Cut, Designs, color, shapes and lines

The descriptions of the Talaandig traditional attire. The ladies consist of a navel-level butterfly and /or bell-shaped sleeves blouse paired with white long sleeves as an undershirt. This ensemble is complemented by a balloon-cut skirt with draping and a *palakot* hanging on both hips. Techniques and skills, which include draping, pattern making, and stitching, can be exchanged between the fields, enriching the practices of each culture. (Zamaziyy & Maltseva, 2021). For males, the *Datu*, a leader, typically dons an upper costume resembling a *barong* paired with straight-cut pants. Performers and warriors, on the other hand, wear a *chaleku* as their upper attire, paired with garter-hip pants. Design plays

a crucial role in their costumes, incorporating beadwork, patchwork, and interweaving techniques such as Tinilogas, Tigdaduwa, and Tigtatulo. Edges are adorned with Sinapay and Binaling, highlighted with binitu-on, binabangon, and kinabuka, reflecting their cultural beliefs. This is complemented by a floral design skirt enhanced with the wearing of pingganggahangan. This tribe has a wealthy combination in their beautiful conventional costumes embellished with embroidery, first-rate ring pieces, beading, and woven patterns. Some traditional clothes indigenous people in PH wear (Mayol 2021) For males, the costumes feature intricate lines and sulam designs depicting symbols of the sun, river, trees, fish, deer, and shields. In terms of colors red, black, and white are considered primary, symbolizing power and authority. These colors convey notions of modesty, purity, and religiosity. Black signifies justice and the avoidance of malevolence, while blue, brown, and green serve as accents symbolizing a cherished and honorable identity, while yellow is associated with wealth.

Symbols and shapes commonly used include florals, circles, triangles, zigzags, the sun, trees, rivers, and mountains. Vertical lines dominate their costumes, with horizontal lines used sparingly to depict concepts of symbols and traditions. These intricate details collectively contribute to the cultural richness and symbolism embodied in the costumes of the Talaandig tribe. Vertical traces dominate their costumes, symbolizing their connection to the land and boom as a community. Horizontal strains are strategically used to convey unique standards tied to the symbols they represent. As defined by way of Damer (1998), the Talaandig dress is a powerful way for every member to explicit their community's identity. It presents no longer only a road for private expression but additionally emphasizes the importance of roles and respect in the tribe.

On Menuvu costume in terms of Cut, Designs, color, shapes and lines

The Menuvu Indigenous cultural community. For the ladies, the traditional attire includes a butterfly and/or bell-shaped navel-level blouse with long white sleeves as an undershirt, paired with a balloon and double balloon-cut skirt, adorned with a palakot hanging on both hips. Meanwhile, the attire for males varies based on their roles within the community. The Datu, as a leader, typically wears an upper costume resembling a barong paired with straight-cut pants. Performers and warriors opt for a chaleku as their upper attire, paired with garter pants. Tan (2017) offers lengthy-sleeved tops with open fronts and knee-degree pants. Despite versions, the percentage of common accessories. The women in these tribes' suwat (comb) embellished with balls as a headdress. Their maliog (necklace), crafted from beads, can be worn as a wrapped necklace or connected to rings. Additionally, they use tikus, safety worn beneath the knee to guard against bites and ailments.

The Menuvu tribe employs patchwork for shapes and figures in their attire. Individuals with specific positions may choose interweaving techniques such as Tinilogas, Tigdaduwa, and Tigtatulo. Edges are intricately adorned with Sinapay and Binaling, highlighted with binitu-on, binabangon, and kinabuka, reflecting their cultural beliefs. Cardinal shapes, symbolizing the central north, south, east, and west, are placed inside a square made of lines, depicting limitations, ownership, and boundaries of their territories. Garra's (2020) main processes involved are weaving, cutting, sewing, and bead designing. Tools they use are traditional and it is operated manually symbolism and designs. In terms of colors, the tribe considered black and white to be primary, which symbolizing justice and avoiding malevolence. For the Menuvu, it represents power and authority within the tribe. White conveys notions of modesty, purity, and religiosity. Blue and brown serve as accents, while green symbolizes a cherished and honorable identity,

and yellow is associated with wealth. Horizontal lines predominantly enhance their costumes, signifying standards of land barriers, possession, and connections to the earth. Vertical lines whole this visible representation. (Garra, 2020)

On The Matigsalug Indigenous Cultural Community

The traditional attire of the Matigsalug indigenous cultural community. The females don a distinctive costume. Their blouse features three-quarter sleeves and is designed to reach navel-high, adorned with intricate patterns along the edges. To cover their bodies, they often wear a white undershirt or a long-sleeved shirt, or they may opt for tattoos to conceal their belly skin. The skirt, which reaches knee level, is checkered and embellished with various shapes and horizontal lines. Additionally, they wear an upper garment known as "Sálug," which reflects the clothing styles of their ancestors. A "palakot," consisting of three pieces of cloth in different sizes, is typically hung on both the left and right hips. Male members of the Matigsalug tribe wear long-sleeved shirts with open fronts and knee-length pants. As described by Garvan (1931), male clothing often features loose-fitting pants, although some may opt for a more snug fit. There are typically no buttoned jackets involved, but the attire is patched with cardinal directions using diamonds. Both genders commonly incorporate shapes such as triangles and diamonds into their clothing designs, which hold significance as cardinal directions shared across all Menuvu tribes. According to Brandies (1993), fabrics with stripes in black, red, or green are frequently used. Women's blouses typically 3/4 sleeves, and their skirts may be striped or checkered, wrapped around their waistlines and extending down to the knees, forming an inverted V shape in the front.

Performers and warriors within the tribe also wear chaleku as their upper attire, similar to that of the Datu, differ on pants which is below the knee or porontong (barrel or sinug-ong pants). These garments signify their roles as both entertainers and protectors. They adorn their clothing with patchwork designs in various shapes and figures. Depending on their positions, they may use different interweaving techniques such as Tinilogas (single thread over one), Tigdaduwa (double thread over two), and Tigtatulo (double thread over a single). The edges of their attire are embellished with Sinapay and Binaling, accentuated by binitu-on, binabangon, and kinabuka designs, reflecting their cultural beliefs. The Matigsalug tribe incorporates cardinal shapes that represent the central north, south, east, and west directions within a square shape made of lines, which indicate the tribe's territorial boundaries and ownership. They attribute primary significance to the colors blue and red, with blue and brown serving as accents. Green, also an accent color, symbolizes their esteemed and honorable identity, while yellow, another accent color, is associated with wealth. White symbolizes modesty, purity, and religiosity. Additionally, black is considered a primary color, signifying justice and emphasizing the importance of avoiding malevolence or wrongdoing to prevent harm to others. It also represents power and authority within the tribe.

On Tigwahanun Indigenous cultural community

The traditional attire of the Matigsalug, which includes a $\frac{3}{4}$ butterfly-sleeved blouse with navel level, paired knee-level cut checkered skirt with a palakot hanging on both hip reaching navel level, often worn with a white long-sleeved undershirt. Paired with knee-length checkered skirts and hang a palakot on both hips. The tribe's leader, known as the Datu, typically dons an upper garment resembling a barong or a long-sleeve chaleku, paired with garter hip straight-cut pants. For the performers and warriors of this tribe, wore a chaleku as upper garments, paired with garter-hip below the knee or porontong (barrel) pants.

These garments symbolize their dual roles as entertainers and protectors. Elaborate patchwork designs adorn their clothing, featuring various shapes and figures. Depending on their positions, they may utilize different interweaving techniques such as Tinilogas (single thread over one), Tigdaduwa (double thread over two), and Tigtatulo (double thread over a single). The edges of their attire are embellished with Sinapay and Binaling, accentuated by binitu-on, binabangon, and kinabuka designs, reflecting their cultural beliefs.

Incorporated into their attire are cardinal shapes representing the central north, south, east, and west directions, all enclosed within a square shape formed by lines. These lines signify the tribe's territorial boundaries and ownership. Hoyer (2019) The use of symbols as a mode to express and preserve important cultural stories is something that has been a part of Aboriginal culture all throughout history and is a practice that continues strongly today. Within their color symbolism, they prioritize blue and red as primary colors. Blue and brown serve as accents, while green is notably absent. However, when present, green symbolizes a cherished and honorable identity. Yellow, an accent color, is associated with wealth, while white conveys notions of modesty, purity, and religiosity. Black, a potential primary color, signifies justice and emphasizes the importance of avoiding malevolence or wrongdoing to prevent harm to others. It also represents power and authority within the tribe. Commonly used shapes include circles, triangles, zigzags, and squares. Their attire predominantly features horizontal lines, and a vertical line is employed to depict land boundaries, and ownership, and convey symbolic meanings. Proper wearing and use of cultural ornaments for costumes must be respected in a way no culture is deprived of its identity and rights. According to Tobia (2022), While the recognition these garments receive for their intricate beauty and cultural significance is well-deserved, Indigenous Peoples (IPs) are quick to call out the use of their cultural pieces when it crosses the line from cultural appreciation to bastardization.

On the Umayamnun Indigenous Cultural Communities

The Umayamnun tribes' traditional attire consists of a $\frac{3}{4}$ butterfly-sleeved blouse with navel level, paired A-cut knee-level skirt a palakot hanging in both hip blouses reaching the navel level, often worn with a white long-sleeved undershirt. Paired with this, they wear an A-cut knee-length skirt. Additionally, they adorn themselves with a Palakot hanging on both hips. The tribe's leader, known as the Datu, a leader, typically wears an upper costume resembling a barong sleeve with straight-cut pants. The Performers and warriors wear a chaleku as an upper attire, paired with garter-hip pants. These garments represent their roles as entertainers and protectors. Elaborate patchwork designs adorn their clothing, featuring various shapes and figures. Leaders may opt for interweaving techniques such as Tinilogas (single thread over one), Tigdaduwa (double thread over two), and Tigtatulo (double thread over a single). The edges of their attire are embellished with Sinapay and Binaling, accentuated by crookback designs, as how they honor a crocodile who saved their great ancestors

The Umayamnun tribe uses crocodile shapes in their attire to symbolize goodness and safety. In terms of color symbolism, they are the community that give significance and honor to the Philippine flag. The blue for bravery, red serves as an accent, symbolizing cherished and honorable power. Yellow is used as an accent color, particularly in their accessories like baling and headdresses. White conveys notions of modesty, purity, and religiosity, and it can also be an accent signifying justice, emphasizing the tribe's commitment to avoiding malevolence or wrongdoing to prevent harm to others. A combination of red and white is commonly used in the shape of a crocodile back. Figures such as triangles, zigzags, and squares

are prevalent in their attire, with horizontal lines often found along the hedges of their costumes. Orlater (2022) Costume designing is one way of expressing and communicating one's country to the world. The intricate woven designs represent the story of the locals and tell this story through costumes in plays, shows, and festivals while considering the fashion of the time.

Summary of findings

The results of observations regarding the costumes used by the (7) indigenous Cultural Groups. In various communities, a distinct fashion prevails, characterized by butterfly/bell-shaped sleeve blouses with a navel-level cut, complemented by white long sleeves underneath. Among the Bukidnon, Higa-unun, Talaandig, Menuvu, and Umayamnun, this blouse is elegantly matched with an A-cut ankle-length skirt, though some opt for below-the-knee or mid-cut skirt, and others embrace the charm of floral balloon cut skirts. In an interview during the FGD:

Kami mga Bukidnun, Higaunun ug Talaandig, pareha pariah rami ug sayal, taman gyud sa bukolbukol sa lapa lapa. Pero sang Talaandig mao ang gagamit ug bulakbulak saila sayal unya ang tumoy I sang it sa kilid magporma ug kurtina sa atubangan ug naa sad pula o itom sa tumoy sa ila sayal. Ang Bukidnun ug Higaunun, daku nga color makita pula, puti ug adun sad mga trayangul, linya ubos sa ila sayal, pero pareha pareha mi tanan ug style sanina sa ibabaw.adunay bukton nga katas taman sa tunga sa kamot ug siko, unya bukad nga murag bagtingan

The Bukidnun, Higaunun and Talaandig have similarities in our skirt, must be ankle length. Only Talaandig use florals with a drape on their skirts but still have solid colors in a cloth like black and white tailored at hedges. The Bukidnun and Higa-unun with plain colors skirts and with shapes and lines at hedges. We are the same in our blouse having $\frac{3}{4}$ bell sleeves.

All ensembles feature a palakot hanging on both hips. Brandeis (1993) delves into the intricate world of tribal identity through the lens of costumes and accessories, specifically focusing on the indigenous tribes' distinctive attire. The author aptly identifies one of these attires, known as "Panaksoy," which is worn by women. The Panaksoy comprises a bloused striped white, black, red, or yellow bodice accompanied by a vibrant red cenepha. These bodices are adorned with appliquéd triangles or zigzag patterns, imbuing them with a unique aesthetic. The sleeves of the Panaksoy resemble the shape of bells and are intentionally cut just above the hips, revealing midriff tattoos a practice that adds another layer of cultural significance. For male leaders, particularly the datu, a symbol of authority and leadership is embodied in their upper costume a button-opening barong paired with straight-cut pants. Performers and warriors, on the other hand, don a distinctive attire. Their upper garment, the chaleku, is paired with garter hip pants, reflecting their dual roles as entertainers and protectors.

Similar to the Bukidnon, the Manevu Tribes also embrace the distinctive bell-shaped or butterfly-sleeved blouses. Among them, the Matigsalug and Tigwahanun share a common cardinal-shaped design, differing in the pairing of costumes a wrap-around checkered below-the-knee level skirt forming an inverted V in front. Both groups adorn palakots hanging on both hips. In contrast, the Umayamnun opts for an A-cut knee-level skirt with white cloth hanging on both hips. Notably, the "saya" emerges as a crucial element of this traditional attire. The "saya" is a wrap-around skirt that mirrors the color and design pattern of the bodice. This skirt is often tucked on the right side, either by inserting the end within the wrapped portion

or through a "tapis," a distinct accessory resembling a back-to-back bib with bibs located on the sides. In an interview during the FGD:

As, sa amo mga tigwahanun, mubo gayod kayo amo saluwal. Kung kami manguwit diha ta tibaluy hu mga dalapakan daw pait, dle kami mabasa. Kung magbaok sad sa waga, dili lisod mag dala sa mo produkto kay dle man basa amo pinaksuy.

oh, for us Tigwahanun, our skirt is short especially when we do fishing in the river so that our dress will not be wet. Also, when we cross the river, we would not wet and find difficulty bringing our products.

This meticulous dressing ritual is emblematic of the tribes' identity and culture, offering a unique lens through which to perceive their heritage. Furthermore, the historical context within which these costumes evolved is revealed. As for the males, the Menuvu people are recognized and distinguished by their association with cardinal shapes and figures, including the circle, triangle, zigzag, sun, tree, river, and three mountains. These symbols are commonly depicted on the back of a crocodile. Notably, figures such as the triangle, zigzag, and square hold significance within their cultural identity. The Matigsalug and Tigwahanun wear long-sleeved chaleku featuring front openings, adorned with cardinal shapes and lines for squares. Meanwhile, Umayamnun males incorporate white clothes, placing them on their hands as part of their distinctive attire. In an interview during the FGD:

Ang panaksuy sa mga datu ug baylan, taas ang bukton unya abre gamay sa atubangan, ang mga design depende sa position sa tribu paresan kini ug karsunes na ang katas taman sa bukol-bukol sa lapa-lapa, unya garter lang sya. Kaniadto, panahon pa a amo mga amay ug inay, ang mga sundalo or mananaot pareha sila sa mananayaw, gagamit sila ug walay bukton unya abre ang atubangan. Ila agtang adunay hikot na pula o puti. Pirme silagadala ug gamay nga bag para mamaon ug gibakus ang badi.

For the Datu and baylans, we usually wear long sleeved with small opening in front, designs depend on the position in the tribe. This is paired with long pants with ankle length and is garter hip. In the past, according to our grandparents, the warriors and entertainers usually use chaleku without sleeves polo with open front. They tie red or white color cloth at their head and they always brought with them small sling bag for mamaon and a small bolo tied at their hips.

In terms of design, all tribes are the same in their approach to making their costumes appealing and authentic, and that is the use of sulam and patching. The Bukidnon tribe uses red, blue, and yellow as dominant colors, combined with secondary colors which are white and black. Meanwhile, the northern Bukidnon finds blue as their dominant color, combined with red and black as secondary colors, and yellow and white as accents. They believe the dominant color symbolizes power within the tribe, the keeper of the unaccepted deeds. The color green is only an accent, which means talahuron identity.

Moreover, the Menuvu, regard black and white as primary colors. Black signifies justice, keeping all actions of malevolence or wrongdoing done to avoid causing harm to others. It represents power and authority within the tribe. White conveys notions of modesty, purity, and religiosity. In an interview during the FGD;

Iklaro ko lang sir nga sa amu Menuvu, V man kami dle B ug wala man mi o,. sa amu Sanina, daghan ang maitum kay mau kini ang gatagu sa dautan nga Batasan ug ingun sa aku amay, ang itum mau sad gatimbang sa hustisya sa amu tribu.

For us Menuvu, we use V not B in our words, The black color hides the bad attitude and this is also a symbol of justice in the tribe.

Meanwhile, blue and brown serve as accents, and the color green, also an accent, symbolizes a cherished and honorable identity. Yellow is an accent color associated with wealth. The Umayamnun, on the other hand, regard blue, white, and red on their costumes as they are identified as devoted to the Philippine flag. Accent colors like yellow are found dominantly in their accessories as primary colors.

General Statements

The study findings reveal that:

1. The costumes of men and women across the seven tribes exhibit notable similarities in terms of dress cut. Females predominantly wear $\frac{3}{4}$ butterfly-sleeved blouses paired with A-line, mid-length, ankle-length, and evening-length balloon or double balloon skirts. Males commonly don polo shirts with a 7-button opening, matched with straight-cut garter pants. The Tigwahanun and Matigsalug tribes distinguish themselves with knee-level wrapped-around skirts for females, forming an inverted V in front, and knee-length porontong barrel shorts with a jacket-style suit for males. These costumes are complemented by beaded accessories, such as necklaces, earrings, wrist, leg, and ankle ornaments for females, and tangkulo, necklaces, wristbands, and anklets for males. Umayamnun females uniquely wear a beaded headdress, while males add a barrel cloth or malong during rituals. In essence, the study highlights observable similarities in the costumes across these diverse tribes. The Bukidnon and Menuvu tribes share dominant color preferences, favoring red, black, blue, and yellow, accentuated with white, green, and brown.
2. Unique patterns and designs distinguish the costumes of the Bukidnon and Menuvu tribes. The Bukidnon utilize patchwork, including sulam triangles, circles, shields, zigzags, and vertical lines in contrast, the Menuvu employ patchwork with rectangles, circles, and cardinal directions using diamonds and horizontal lines.

Recommendations

1. Authorities may consider reinforcing policies that safeguard cultural heritage, particularly in the use of costumes. This involves the identification and preservation of dress cut, color, design, and lines. Collaboration among relevant offices, academic institutions, and local officials is crucial for sustaining authenticity.
2. Higher education institutions (HEIs) are encouraged to integrate the teaching of culture through dedicated programs in culture and arts within their curriculum. This step ensures that future generations are educated about and engaged with their cultural heritage.
3. Offices The strict implementation of Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) among tribes is recommended. This process should be contextualized and indigenized to effectively strengthen the preservation of culture, respecting the unique traditions and perspectives of each tribe.

Conflict of Interest

This study was conducted with institutional sponsorship from Bukidnon State University, in partnership with the Tourism Office of Bukidnon, the Indigenous Affairs Division, and the Provincial Office of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP). The researchers affirm that the findings and interpretations presented in this study are their own and were not influenced by the sponsoring offices. Ethical guidelines, including the observance of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), were rigorously applied and respected throughout the research process to ensure the cultural integrity and autonomy of the Indigenous communities involved. No potential conflict of interest exists in relation to this work.

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