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RYAN ROY Q. BARTOLOME

**SUSTAINING CULTURAL IDENTITY THROUGH
TRADITIONAL FOOD PRACTICES IN ASEAN WEDDING:
THE PHILIPPINE CASE STUDY OF CAÑAO WEDDING CEREMONIES**

Thesis Adviser:

CONSUELO DL. HABITO, Ph.D.
Faculty of Management and Development Studies

17 July 2024

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Acceptance Page

This thesis titled: “**SUSTAINING CULTURAL IDENTITY THROUGH TRADITIONAL FOOD PRACTICES IN ASEAN WEDDING: THE PHILIPPINE CASE STUDY OF CAÑAO WEDDING CEREMONIES**” is hereby accepted by the Faculty of Management and Development Studies, U.P. Open University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of ASEAN Studies.

CONSUELO DL. HABITO, Ph.D.
Chair, Thesis Committee

07 November 2024

(Date)

JOANE V. SERRANO, Ph.D.
Member, Thesis Committee

11 November 2024

(Date)

MARITES G. YEE, Ph.D.
Member, Thesis Committee

07 November 2024

(Date)

JOANE V. SERRANO, Ph.D.
Dean
Faculty of Management and Development Studies

11 November 2024

(Date)

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Raised in Baguio City, the City of Pines and the Summer Capital of the Philippines, Mr. Ryan Roy Quirante Bartolome was adopted by Ms. Luzviminda Quirante Bartolome, who was the mother of his biological father. He was born on May 18, 1994. He received the Principal's Award upon graduation for his outstanding achievement in high school and finished elementary and secondary education at Grace Baptist Academy in Baguio City. He received the Cum Laude diploma in hospitality management from the University of the Cordilleras. In addition, he has taken units towards a Bachelor of Science degree in tourism management, leaving him with just 14 more units to graduate. During his time at the university, Ryan Roy served as the student governor for his department, a responsibility that provided him with many opportunities to showcase his leadership skills both on and off campus. When the dust settled, he was named one of the 2016 TOSP-CAR, or Ten Outstanding Students of the Philippines.

Ryan Roy managed to juggle multiple jobs alongside his studies. After finishing high school, he worked as a marketing assistant for Don Henrico's, a quality analyst for Sitel Baguio, and a waiter for Green Pepper Gourmet Stop. He worked as a restaurant manager at Yellowcab Food Corporation after graduating in 2016 and was invited to teach at his alma mater in 2017. He has been an educator at the University of the Cordilleras for seven years, during which time he has taught events management courses, been appointed to the position of course content developer, and guided his fellow educators in the implementation of the university's Learning Management System.

Ryan Roy's involvement in the ASEAN Plus Three Tourism Youth Summit in 2015 in Bohol and Cebu, in 2017 in Bangkok, Thailand and Manila, Philippines, and finally in 2018 in Pampanga, Philippines, as a facilitator, sparked his interest in ASEAN Studies. During his 2017 representation, he was also honored as an Outstanding ASEAN Tourism Alumni. This journal was created by Ryan Roy in the hopes that it will spark a more in-depth examination of Cordilleran cuisine and its role in ASEAN cultural identity. Ryan Roy's motivation for creating it stems from his exposure to Cordilleran culture and his desire to highlight his Indigenous heritage and the Indigenous cuisine of the region. He also wants to highlight the diversity of the region and how it contributes to ASEAN as a whole.

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DEDICATION

Despite going through one of the worst heartbreaks of my life while working on this thesis, I was able to pull myself together and complete the journal. This paper would not have been possible without the supportive people in my life. I would want to express my gratitude to Joiezen Lynn Puno and Gil Roy Reyes for welcoming me into their homes. Your love has my support, and I hope that you find your happily ever after.

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I would like to dedicate and share this feat to my best friends Jera Kigis and Neah Nonato. Despite the distance and our lack of communication, you both are the people I want to share this moment with. Soon may I celebrate this with you.

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I dedicate this to my Mommy Luz, Father George, and Mother Susan. Your love and support have been filling me all my life and may I fill your hearts with joy as we march together soon.

I dedicate this to my constants, Laarni Lourdes “Lala” Andam and Alexis Leigh “Becks” Dimas. You both have been my colleague, mentor, friend, travel and pig-out buddy, and of course, my confidant. May this journal be a testament to how your friendship filled me with so much motivation and to always believe in myself, that I can always do it.

Finally, I dedicate this to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for my sins. Thank you for all the answered prayers! The completion of this journal is all for the glory of GOD!

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ABSTRACT

The promotion and preservation of cultural identity shape the collective identity within the ASEAN socio-cultural framework. While scholars focus on food security, they often overlook the cultural symbolism of traditional foods. Wedding ceremonies, rich in history and legacy, provide a unique context for exploring the relationship between food rituals and cultural identity. This study aims to bridge the scholarly gap by investigating this relationship in ASEAN weddings, emphasizing the role of traditional food in maintaining cultural identity amid modernization and globalization. Using a qualitative approach and autoethnography, the research examines *Cañao* wedding ceremonies, organizing food meanings using Aktas and Aktas-Polat's Food Meaning Diagram into categories of hedonistic and symbolic consumption, emotional and cultural transfer, and national and personal identity. Hedonistic elements highlight sensory delights and is seen in the consumption of traditional food like *diket*, *patupat*, *adobo*, *watwat*, and *pinikpikan*, while symbolic meanings are found in traditional practices, like the exchange of food between families. Emotional transfer is seen in the communal spirit of pre-wedding preparations and rituals, reflecting love, respect, and gratitude. Cultural transfer is observed in the adherence to customs and communal food consumption, vital for passing down cultural identity. Identity meanings connect participants to their heritage through traditional food and family rituals, emphasizing personal and family identities. National identity is expressed through the diversity of *Filipino* food, with traditional food like *adobo* and *watwat* showcasing cultural heritage. The integration of Catholic and indigenous customs reflects a broader national identity, with ceremonial practices emphasizing mutual support and

community solidarity. Thus revealing the deep meanings embedded in traditional food and their crucial role in preserving cultural identity.

Keywords: *Cañao, watwat, diket, supon*

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The promotion and preservation of cultural identity are essential concepts that shape the collective identity of the region within the ASEAN socio-cultural framework (ASEAN Secretariat, 2015). Numerous rituals and ceremonies, each bearing great cultural importance and ancient wisdom, are woven into this intricate tapestry. These customs reflect the same values, beliefs, and traditions that characterize ASEAN's cultural fabric and act as both a means of fostering community cohesion and as archives of intangible heritage (Han, 2023). The preservation of these customs becomes even more vital as ASEAN strives for greater integration and unity, highlighting the inextricable connection between cultural identity and ASEAN as a whole (Mahiwo, et al., 2013).

The rich diversity of traditional food found throughout ASEAN, each with its own distinct flavors, ingredients, and symbolic meanings derived from regional customs and traditions, is the essence of the region's cultural legacy (Putra, Putra, & Novianti, 2023). Though scholars have paid more attention to maintaining food security in the region, they have mostly ignored the complex cultural symbolism and subtle meanings ingrained in traditional food, despite the deep cultural value of these culinary traditions (ASEAN Secretariat, 2016). This oversight draws attention to a significant research vacuum in the ASEAN region and emphasizes the need for more study to fully understand the complex interplay between identity, culture, and food.

Wedding ceremonies are particularly moving examples of history and legacy among the many cultural customs observed throughout ASEAN (Jariah, Rahman, &

Amir, 2022). These rituals represent love, harmony, and the continuation of family lineage, and they mark significant junctures in the lives of individuals and communities. Traditional food are important to wedding ceremonies because they are gastronomic representations of cultural identity and legacy (Jessen, 2017). By consuming these meals, participants strengthen the ties of tradition and community by participating in a symbolic communion with their cultural roots in addition to providing nourishment for their bodies (Zymelka-Colis, 2021).

The Philippines is a microcosm of historical and cultural variety among the different ASEAN member states. The Philippines, well-known for its colorful patchwork of native traditions and practices, provides an ideal setting for researching cultural identity in the context of ASEAN. I have had the honor of taking part in a variety of *Cañao* ceremonies since I was born and raised in Baguio City, Benguet. The three key components of these *Cañao*, or *Kanyaw*, ceremonies are, according to Antonio (2024), an abundance of traditional food, free flowing liquor (ideally *tapuy* or Cordilleran rice wine), and communal dancing to the beat of the gongs. These ceremonies range from the arduous funeral rituals to those for blessings when family members are leaving the province or even the entire country. Our cultural diversity and identity is anchored in these festivities, which are known for its gastronomic legacy and deep-seated significance, including the captivating *Cañao* wedding tradition (Jessen, 2017). These ceremonies offer an intriguing framework for examining the complex interactions between food rituals and cultural identity in ASEAN weddings since they are a fusion of ritualistic behaviors and culinary traditions.

Benguet province, which is home to the *Kankana-ey* and *Ibaloi* ethnolinguistic groups, is a lively mosaic of cultural diversity nestled within the stunning scenery of the Philippines. *Cañao* ceremonies are deeply culturally significant in many

communities, as they are beloved customs that have been passed down through the years. Both the *Kankana-ey* and *Ibaloi* communities regularly participate in *Cañao* ceremonies, which are essential to their cultural identity and legacy, especially during significant occasions like marriages (Russell, 1989). These rituals demonstrate the lasting legacy of indigenous customs within Benguet's complex cultural mosaic, strengthening ties between family members and the larger community while also promoting a sense of communal solidarity.

With an emphasis on the Philippines and the *Cañao* wedding ceremonies, this research bridges the gap in scholarly study by investigating the complex relationship between food, culture, and identity within ASEAN wedding celebrations. This study contributes to a greater knowledge of ASEAN's cultural legacy by revealing the deep meanings buried in traditional Filipino food and its role in maintaining cultural identity amidst modernization and globalization. Furthermore, this study highlights the urgent need for coordinated efforts to recognize and protect culinary diversity as a crucial component of ASEAN's cultural identity by illuminating the lack of existing guidelines or strategies pertaining to traditional food practices in ASEAN rituals and ceremonies like weddings. This research both expands scholarly debate and advocate for inclusive policies and strategies that honor and celebrate the rich culinary tapestry woven into the fabric of ASEAN's cultural heritage through multidisciplinary exploration and engagement with local people. Ultimately, ASEAN is well-positioned to preserve its rich cultural legacy and promote greater intercultural understanding and appreciation both inside and outside of the region by embracing the historic significance of food within wedding ceremonies.

Statement of the Problem

The following questions that were explored from a qualitative perspective for the research are:

1. Based on my observations and experiences, how did participants at *Cañao* Wedding ceremonies engage with traditional food, in terms of consumption practices and the meanings attached to these dishes as analyzed using the Food Meaning Diagram?
2. From my personal immersion in these ceremonies, how are the traditional food and its meanings in *Cañao* wedding ceremonies passed down across Benguet communities through processes and channels?
3. Based on an autoethnographic experience, how did traditional food practices at *Cañao* wedding ceremonies help in the development and articulation of cultural identities among participants in the province of Benguet?

Objectives of the Study

With a focus on the significance of traditional food practices in sustaining cultural identity through *Cañao* wedding ceremonies in the Philippines within the larger ASEAN context, the following objectives will be pursued by this research:

1. This study aims to explore how traditional food practices in *Cañao* wedding rituals maintain cultural identity in the Philippines.
2. To investigate the role of traditional Filipino food in *Cañao* celebrations as a symbol of cultural identity, emphasizing its value in preserving cultural legacy in the face of ASEAN's pressures toward modernity and globalization.
3. To determine what needs more research on the cultural, symbolic, and individual meanings of traditional food in ASEAN wedding ceremonies, especially in light of

how important it is for maintaining identity through ritualistic and communal practices.

4. To advocate for policies that acknowledge culinary heritage as a crucial element in maintaining cultural identity, and to offer suggestions for the incorporation of traditional food practices within ASEAN frameworks for cultural preservation.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

In order to investigate how traditional food practices sustained cultural identity in the Philippines, this study utilized the role of these *Cañao* wedding ceremonies as a case study. The Food Meaning Diagram was used to analyze the hedonistic, symbolic, emotional, cultural, personal, and national meanings of food as it relates to the *Kankana-ey* community in *Mankayan*, Benguet. The study intended to investigate the function that traditional Filipino food plays in sustaining cultural heritage in the face of industrialization and globalization, as well as how it represented cultural identity and legacy in *Cañao* weddings.

The study also looked at how traditional foods support cultural values and community cohesion. It focused on how culinary techniques and knowledge are passed down through the generations, with a special emphasis on the elders' role in preserving cultural traditions. While the focus of the research is mostly on the *Kankana-ey* community's *Cañao* ceremonies, it also advanced our knowledge of traditional culinary customs in ASEAN wedding celebrations.

The availability of *Cañao* wedding ceremonies in Benguet was a limitation. Depending on what was accessible, the focus of the research was either on the *Kankana-ey* or *Ibaloi* communities. For this study, the *Mankayan Kankana-ey* community was observed as it was the one available. Although scheduling constraints

could make it impossible to record changes in these rituals over time, every attempt was taken to carefully record and examine all pertinent data.

Reliance on the internet for data collection provided issues with reliability and authenticity. The researcher carefully sifted through digital sources and ran into problems finding relevant information or getting participant replies.

The primary approach of autoethnography may have induced bias since the researcher's experiences impacted the interpretation of the data. To lessen this, the researcher assessed his own prejudices and confirmed results with a variety of data sources.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for a number of reasons. First off, by concentrating on *Cañao* wedding ceremonies within the *Kankana-ey* community of Benguet, it improved knowledge of cultural identity. The research investigated the ways in which traditional food practices support cultural identity in the Philippines and, consequently, throughout the ASEAN region. This research contributed to the larger conversation on cultural preservation by shedding light on the ways in which these culinary traditions functioned as an essential bridge to cultural heritage and social values.

Furthermore, the results added to the cultural legacy of ASEAN by offering insightful information about the intricate interactions among food, culture, and identity during ASEAN wedding ceremonies. This highlighted the value of traditional food practices in preserving cultural diversity in the face of modernity and globalization, adding to a deeper knowledge of ASEAN's cultural heritage.

By examining the cultural, symbolic, and emotional significance of traditional food in ASEAN wedding ceremonies, the study also filled a sizable research vacuum.

It drew attention to the necessity for more research on the relationship between traditional food practices and cultural identity, especially in the setting of ceremonial and social gatherings. This focus highlighted the need for more in-depth research on this topic and helps close a significant research gap.

Additionally, the study promoted culinary history preservation and recognition as a vital component of cultural identity. The study intended to help initiatives that recognize and celebrate the rich culinary traditions of the region by offering policies and strategies for integrating traditional food practices within ASEAN cultural preservation frameworks. This lobbying can help create more inclusive preservation initiatives and provide information for policy makers.

Another important component of the study is its focus on encouraging the generational transfer of knowledge. By highlighting the elders' role in maintaining and passing on culinary traditions, the study contributed to a deeper understanding of the value of elders in maintaining cultural continuity. This way of view may have encouraged more respect for traditional knowledge and customs both domestically and internationally.

Finally, by analyzing the historical and cultural significance of food in Cañao celebrations, the research promoted better knowledge and understanding of intercultural connections both inside and outside the ASEAN region. It encouraged a broader recognition of the role that traditional food practices play in fostering cultural identity and communal sharing. Overall, this study aimed to help the preservation of cultural heritage by offering insights that can direct both practical preservation efforts and scholarly research by offering a complete examination of traditional eating habits.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Wedding ceremonies in ASEAN are a wonderful example of the preservation and celebration of cultural standards. These rituals serve as a living archive of cultural values, traditions, and identity while also marking important life milestones. Symbols of love, continuity, and solidarity unite participants in these rituals, which reflect the community's heritage. According to Jessen (2017), ASEAN weddings bolster cultural links by confirming the responsibilities of family and community in these important events through their complex blend of rituals and shared experiences. From the most modest rituals to the most elaborate spectacles, all of these gatherings serve as stages upon which successive generations may share and learn from one another's traditions while also incorporating modern ideas and practices.

In addition to providing sustenance, traditional cuisine is a culinary manifestation of cultural heritage and identity, and its consumption is an essential aspect of these gatherings. Symbolic values such as fertility, wealth, and lineage continuation are reflected in traditional food, which are typically made utilizing indigenous products and time-honored techniques. According to Zymelka-Colis (2021), these dishes represent the cultural heritage that has been preserved through the years. At these feasts, people aren't just eating; they're renewing their bond with the cultural heritage that helped form their identity through a ritual communion with their ancestors.

These wedding rituals and the traditional feasts that mark them are, at their core, moving demonstrations of cultural perseverance. They strengthen the social fabric that unites people in ASEAN and symbolize a lasting dedication to protecting

the intangible heritage that characterizes each community. The significance of these rituals in preserving cultural identity and continuity is highlighted by Jessen (2017) and Zymelka-Colis (2021), making them an essential focus for understanding the broader significance of traditional eating practices in the region. Wedding ceremonies are particularly moving examples of history and legacy among the many cultural customs observed throughout ASEAN (Jariah, Rahman, & Amir, 2022). These rituals represent love, harmony, and the continuation of family lineage, marking significant junctures in the lives of individuals and communities. Traditional foods play a central role in these ceremonies, acting as gastronomic representations of cultural identity and legacy (Jessen, 2017). Through the consumption of these meals, participants not only nourish their bodies but also strengthen communal ties and traditions (Zymelka-Colis, 2021).

Ancestral food also play an important symbolic function in ASEAN as a whole. Traditional cuisines represent much more than just food, as pointed out by Putra, Putra, and Novianti (2023). Both the communities that make and buy them have strong cultural ties to these goods. The unique flavors and ingredients used in each meal are a reflection of the local environment, crafted with care from the biodiversity of the region. Not only are these dishes consumed, but they are also seen as tangible links to the heritage, culture, and history of the many ethnic communities that make up ASEAN. Cultural artifacts, traditional foods take on symbolic meanings like fertility, prosperity, and respect for ancestors as a result of the ceremonial usage of food in both daily meals and important occasions.

Certain foods are reserved for commemorating pivotal life events like births, marriages, and funerals because of the inherent symbolic connotations in their contents. Some grains and meats, for instance, may be saved for feast days because of the riches or vigor they represent, while other foods may have sacred significance

connected to the community's spiritual beliefs. These customs have been maintained through the years and help to keep the community's history and identity alive. There is a notable lack of research on the numerous layers of cultural symbolism within these ancient dietary habits, according to Putra, Putra, and Novianti (2023), even though current concerns like food security and sustainability have received a lot of attention. Culinary traditions serve as vehicles for cultural transmission, and the complexities of food's interactions with social, cultural, and spiritual life in the area are rich with research opportunities.

The cultural richness of the region, especially in Benguet province, is vividly displayed through *Cañao* events within the Philippines. During the *Cañao* celebrations, which are observed by people belonging to the *Kankana-ey* and *Ibaloi* ethnolinguistic groups, the significance of traditional food, beverages, and dance is brought to light. The importance of these rituals in preserving cultural identity and social cohesiveness is highlighted by Antonio (2024). These rituals symbolize the end of life with funerals and the beginning of a new chapter with marriages. The abundance of traditional dishes, representing the community's prosperity and charity, is a focal point of these events, with food taking center stage in particular. People feel closer to one another and their heritage via the shared experience of making and eating these meals, which also helps to keep cultural traditions alive.

Antonio (2024) points out that the three main elements of *Cañao* festivities are the plentiful traditional food, the unrestricted consumption of alcohol (particularly *tapuy* or Cordilleran rice wine), and the group dancing to the pulsating sounds of gongs. Aside from its ceremonial use, the native wine *tapuy*—made from fermented rice—stands as a symbol of communal festivity and harmony. The abundance of the alcohol at these ceremonies symbolizes the community's generosity and the importance of

shared experiences in defining life transitions. Just to how traditional foods like flesh from sacrificed animals symbolize the interdependence of life, death, and rebirth, they are also provided at *Cañao* ceremonies. Culturally significant food serve as an offering to the dead and as a statement of cultural continuity for the community.

These *Cañao* ceremonies, similar to other ancestral food traditions in ASEAN, nonetheless play an important role in protecting cultural heritage, even though industrialization and globalization pose obstacles. Traditional foods continue to play an important role in these communities' efforts to adapt to new social and environmental realities. Traditional foods, as Antonio's (2024) research shows, are not fixed artifacts but rather living, breathing parts of a culture's expression that change and develop over time while keeping their essential significance. These rituals demonstrate the perseverance of indigenous ways of life in the face of a dynamic and unpredictable environment by protecting the cultural wealth of the *Ibaloi* and *Kankana-ey* peoples.

Embedded in the breathtaking mountainous terrain of the Philippines, the province of Benguet is a vibrant tapestry of cultural diversity, inhabited by the ethnolinguistic communities of *Kankana-ey* and *Ibaloi*. The *Cañao* rituals, which are revered as cornerstones of their past, provide these people, with their deeply ingrained traditions, a strong link to their cultural identity. According to Russell (1989), *Cañao* ceremonies are more than just social events; they are complex symbolic rituals that represent the ancient customs of Benguet and their enduring heritage. To ensure that subsequent generations maintain a connection to their ancestral roots, these ceremonies, particularly during major events like marriages, play an important role in passing on cultural knowledge, values, and customs. Taking part in these ceremonies

is a way for the *Kankana-ey* and the *Ibaloi* to honor their heritage and culture while also drawing people closer together as a family and as a community.

Within the ASEAN socio-cultural framework, which highlights the importance of promoting and preserving cultural identity, the cultural relevance of these *Cañao* activities reverberates well beyond the boundaries of specific communities. Protecting intangible cultural assets, such as ceremonies, rituals, and traditional customs, is crucial to preventing the loss of cultural diversity in the region due to industrialization and globalization, as said by the ASEAN Secretariat (2015) and Han (2023). *Cañao* ceremonies provide an intriguing perspective on the preservation and celebration of cultural identity in this setting, even when confronted with outside influences. The elaborate ceremonies bring the region's intangible legacy to life through a multi-sensory experience that includes traditional food, music, and dancing. It strengthens social relationships and provides a concrete depiction of that heritage.

The significance of traditional food in preserving cultural identity is one of the most remarkable features of *Cañao* ceremonies. According to Mahiwo et al. (2013), the Philippines provides a wealth of research opportunities for studying the role of food habits in cultural heritage preservation due to its varied array of native traditions. The making and sharing of traditional dishes during *Cañao* weddings represents both the joy of coming together as a couple and the passing down of cultural wisdom. These dishes represent the community's identity and its bond to the land because they are typically made using traditional methods that have been passed down through many generations. In addition to providing sustenance, they represent the inextricable links that people have to their forefathers. This research intends to investigate how these long-standing Filipino culinary habits, especially in *Cañao* weddings, serve as a

method of preserving culture, illuminating how these traditions might persist in the face of globalization's homogenizing influence.

In addition, the importance of these traditional culinary practices is in line with ASEAN's larger initiatives to preserve and celebrate the rich cultural history of the area. Han (2023) highlights the importance of the many ceremonies and rituals that are part of ASEAN culture. These help to bring communities together and preserve intangible heritage. As pointed out by Russell (1989), the intricate relationship between food, ritual, and identity in ASEAN marriages provides a persuasive framework for comprehending the role of traditional culinary practices in safeguarding cultural identity. By maintaining cultural identity and providing a grounding in continuity in the face of change, these gastronomic practices serve as potent weapons of resistance against modernity. In conclusion, the study's overarching goal is to promote greater awareness and conservation of gastronomic diversity as an integral part of ASEAN cultural identity. Shedding light on the role traditional food practices play in cultural preservation initiatives will provide valuable insights for preserving the region's rich cultural legacy.

Studies like Putra, Putra, and Novianti (2023) have looked at how traditional foods are important to ASEAN culture, but there hasn't been much research into the deeper symbolic meanings of these dishes. There has been a lack of investigation into the ways in which certain food, cooking techniques, and eating habits reveal information about social status, religious beliefs, and cultural development in the existing literature on food's symbolic meaning. The complexities of these culinary symbols and their significance in modern contexts, especially in light of the ways in which these traditions embrace or reject modernity, merit further investigation in future research. By delving into this understudied facet of traditional food, we may learn more

about how communities deal with the challenges posed by globalization and tourism to their cultural traditions.

The importance of maintaining cultural identity through the maintenance of traditional dietary habits is emphasized in the review. Nevertheless, these practices face formidable obstacles to their continuation due to the demands of technology and globalization. There has been a steady erosion of the everyday usage of native foods and traditional cooking techniques due to industrialization, urban migration, and the increasing impact of Western culinary culture. According to Antonio (2024), traditional ceremonies like as the *Cañao* are still practiced in some rural areas, but they are facing more and more danger in metropolitan areas. The ways in which different communities deal with these issues and the ways in which their culinary traditions are changed or lost could be the subject of future studies. Cultural adaptation and resilience in the face of global homogenization can be better understood if these dynamics are properly understood.

While the *Cañao* rituals of Benguet province are the main topic of this paper, it is worth noting that ASEAN as a whole has comparable food-related traditions, which enrich the cultural fabric of the region. For instance, according to Jariah, Rahman, and Amir (2022), the kueh served during Malay weddings is a culinary representation of the continuity and unity of the community. The traditional food practices in wedding ceremonies across ASEAN countries can be better understood by comparing them. This will help us understand the region's culinary heritage better and find ways to preserve food through cross-cultural dialogues. By highlighting the shared legacy of the ASEAN members while valuing their cultural variety, this type of study would help to build a more inclusive ASEAN identity.

An ongoing subject in the study of traditional food practices is the struggle between maintaining cultural continuity and responding to contemporary change. Despite popular belief, these ceremonies are not static traditions but rather living, breathing things. Food and identity rituals in ASEAN communities have always been changing, according to Russell (1989), as they adjust to new social, political, and economic realities. Future research might look at how communities actively manage their traditions, finding methods to include new elements while retaining key parts of their cultural heritage, instead than seeing traditional behaviors as endangered by modernity. By taking this tack, we can gain a more complex picture of cultural preservation, one that recognizes that the intangible cultural legacy of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is shaped by the ongoing interaction between tradition and change.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

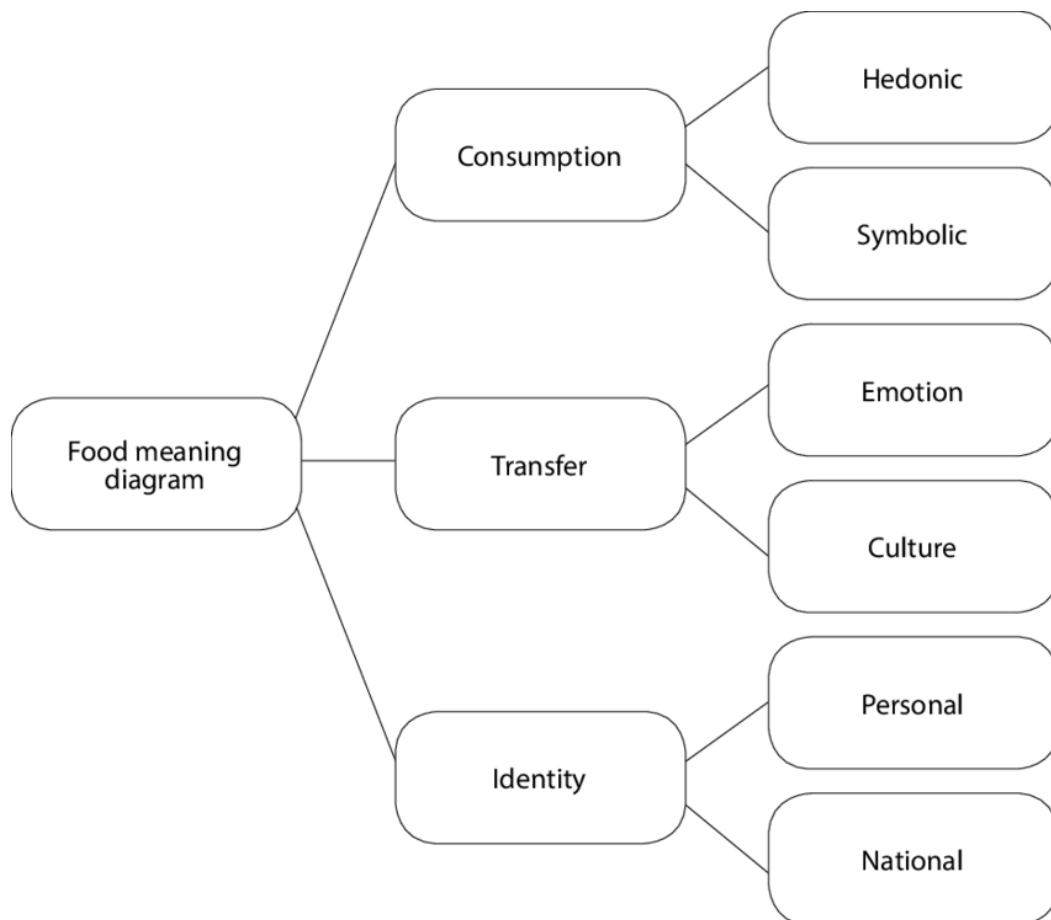
Conceptual Framework

The Food Meaning Diagram was the main investigative tool used in the research to examine the *Cañao* wedding ceremonies. Because the study questions are exploratory in nature and the goal was to comprehend the nuanced relationship between food, culture, and identity, the research design takes a qualitative approach (Creswell, 2014). The main technique of gathering data was autoethnography, in which the researcher used observations and personal experiences from his involvement in *Cañao* wedding ceremonies. This method made it possible to write in-depth accounts and observations on how people interacted with traditional food; how they consumed them; and the significance of particular meals.

Aktas-Polat and Polat (2020) carried out a theoretical analysis in their study of the anthropological and social dimensions of food, which disclosed three basic meanings: (i) consumption, (ii) transfer, and (iii) identity. Six sub-meanings were deduced from these meanings. Hedonic and symbolic qualities were included in consumption, while cultural and emotional aspects are covered under transfer, and national and personal meanings are within identity. This category aimed to organize and note the diverse meanings that food has in both social and personal situations. Their study gave rise to the Food Meaning Diagram (FMD), which emphasizes how food has evolved over time into a symbolic object that conveyed feelings, status, well-being, and cultural identity. It also offered a graphic representation of these meanings. This work contributed to the body of literature in the human sciences by formulating a

comprehensive framework, which is particularly useful for examining cultural and demographic variations in the meanings attributed to food.

Figure 1. The food meaning diagram (Aktaş-Polat & Polat, 2020).



Research Design and Procedure

Only casual interviews with friends and family were used by the researcher to clarify some of the observed traditions. These informal interviews shed more light on the participants' thoughts and experiences, as well as the significance of traditional food in the context of cultural identity. This approach preserved the authenticity of the observed practices that guaranteed a deep, intimate understanding of the traditions.

Furthermore, data-gathering techniques through the internet were used, with a particular emphasis on obtaining information about traditional food practices and *Cañao* wedding ceremonies from online sources. Using text analysis techniques, the data obtained from online sources was examined to identify significant themes and viewpoints about traditional food in *Cañao* wedding rituals.

Ethical Considerations

Every participant was asked for their informed consent, guaranteeing their voluntary participation in the interviews and their ability to leave the study at any time. Before consent was sought, participants received an information leaflet and attended a briefing. Consent forms and guide questions were translated for participants whose first language was not English to ensure informed consent. Participants under 16 were not allowed to participate in the study.

It was extremely evident from the ethics consideration and consent forms whether audio recordings or images of traditional food and their preparation were used at any point during the study. The recording process was explained to participants, and their express consent was sought before any recordings were made. To preserve their privacy, participants' faces were obscured in any pictures that were taken.

The raw data is only accessible to the principal investigator. Data were safely kept on password-protected devices and cloud storage platforms in encrypted digital formats. Consent forms in hard copy as well as other private documents were stored in a secured cabinet. Following publishing, material will be kept for five years before being safely disposed of by digital wiping and physical document destruction.

Pseudonyms were used to convey results and ensure participant privacy. It was maintained by securely storing all data. Throughout the entire study, confidentiality and

anonymity were observed. No information was shared on to external firms or organizations throughout the course of the research.

Five people participated in the study; they were chosen based on their willingness to share their experiences and level of direct involvement in *Cañao* wedding ceremonies. I conducted informal interviews to shed light on traditional activities that require more explanation. The elders in the community and family members recruited the participants. Upon identification of referrals, I initiated direct participant recruitment for the project. Interviews were arranged at a time and location that works best for the participants, which included visits to their homes or other prearranged sites. Participants were contacted by phone, and going through this procedure, participants were guaranteed to be well-informed and at ease with the interview setup. They were not compensated financially or in any other way.

The research findings will be summarized and sent to the participants after the study is completed. Individual briefings or community meetings will be used to disseminate this feedback, based on participant preferences.

To ensure compliance with the ethical standards and guidelines of the University of the Philippines, the research topic went through a thorough ethics review at the University of the Cordilleras. This procedure emphasized the dedication to moral standards and the significance of moral issues in the search for knowledge within a specific research context.

Chapter IV

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This section delves at the findings of my study using the Food Meaning Diagram of Aktas and Aktas-Polat and my combined experience with *Cañao* wedding ceremonies. I organized all of the food meanings I observed and picked up at the *Cañao* wedding ceremony I went to in *Loacan, Itogon, Benguet*, based on whether they were related to hedonistic and symbolic consumption, emotional and cultural transfer, or national and personal identity. These views are supported by information I obtained from the bride and groom's families, my observations from previous *Cañao* wedding ceremonies, and pertinent information I found online.

The *Cañao* wedding ceremony that I will be focusing on is one that happened recently in *Itogon, Benguet*. The bride's family hails from *Kapangan, Benguet* and *Bokod, Benguet*, while the groom's family is from *Mankayan, Benguet*, and his ancestry includes *Bontoc* from Mountain Province. Since the majority of the wedding guests are from *Mankayan* and the groom's family is covering most of the costs, it was decided that the *Kankana-ey* traditions of *Mankayan, Benguet* would be followed for this wedding. While the indigenous *Kankana-ey* and *Ibaloi* peoples of *Benguet* share many cultural practices, there are significant regional variations that necessitate the specific customs of *Mankayan, Benguet*, which was observed at this wedding.

Consumption Meanings in Cañao Wedding Ceremonies

Consumption meanings are the first component in the Food Meaning Diagram of Aktas and Aktas-Polat (2020) and include further subcomponents that encompass hedonic and symbolic consumption meanings. I sorted my experience in *Cañao*

wedding ceremonies and found the food meanings that fit in this category and the accompanying table and discussion would provide a full presentation of the hedonic and symbolic consumption meanings in *Cañao* Wedding Ceremonies.

Table 1

Consumption Meanings in Cañao Wedding Ceremonies using Aktas and Aktas-Polat's Food Meaning Diagram

Consumption Meanings in <i>Cañao</i> Wedding Ceremonies	
HEDONIC CONSUMPTION MEANINGS	1. DIKET – Flavor & Texture, Variations, Cultural Staple 2. ADOBO – Delicious Flavor, Ubiquitous Presence 3. TAPUY – Cultural Significance, Flavor & Experience 4. PINIKPIKAN – Unique Preparation, Local Flavors 5. WATWAT – Simple Preparation, Cultural Significance 6. NATIVE BLACK PIGS – Cultural Preference, Preparation
SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION MEANINGS	1. FOOD EXCHANGE DURING COURTSHIP – Hospitality & Unity, Cultural Heritage 2. BUTCHERING PIGS – Symbolic Portions, Religious Beliefs 3. WEDDING RINGS – Family Legacy 4. BINNADANG/BAYANIHAN – Mutual Support 5. SUPON – Gratitude, Community Spirit 6. PATTONG – Cultural Expression, Shared Joy

Hedonic Consumption Meanings

There are numerous hedonistic elements in *Cañao* wedding ceremonies. These interpretations would center on the sensory delights of eating, emphasizing flavor, texture, and the simple act of indulging on food. The way sticky rice, or *diket* as it is known locally, is consumed during these festivities exemplifies the first hedonic meaning. Rice is a valuable crop in the Cordilleras and rituals have traditionally been performed in all stages of rice cultivation (Tolentino & Enkiwe-Abayao, 2017). Since rice is an integral part of the rituals of the Cordilleras (Acabado, 2012), *diket*, like any other sticky rice called *suman* in the Philippines, is a staple in *Cañao*. These are given

to the bride and groom as a love gift, throughout their courting period when they exchange food, during lunch at the main wedding reception, and during the post-wedding festivities. The taste and texture of *diket* are savored as a sweet treat, and one significant *diket* in these celebrations was the presence of *patupat*. This sticky, sweet delight is made by partially cooking rice in coconut milk, encasing it in banana leaves, and steam-cooking it through (Claver, 2019). When creating *diket* and *patupat*, local, native, or heirloom rice are typically utilized. There is a small variation in the *diket* and *patupat* served at *Cañao* weddings depending on your location in the Cordilleras. *Balatinaw* rice, also known as red rice, was utilized for the wedding I attended since it is widely accessible in *Benguet* local markets and has a distinct flavor profile that is only found in *diket* like *patupat*.

The existence of the well-known *Filipino* dish *adobo* demonstrates the second hedonic meaning. *Adobo*, pork slices simmered in vinegar, soy sauce, and garlic, is regarded as the unofficial national dish of the Philippines and a notable example of *Filipino* cuisine (Tacio, 2015). Similar to *diket*, *adobo* is an essential part of every *Cañao* wedding, from the engagement to the wedding and the celebrations afterward. *Adobo*'s delicious and rich flavor is a hedonic consumption that every *Filipino*, including Cordillerans attending *Cañao* weddings, looks forward to. I have never been to a *Cañao* without *adobo*; typically, this is prepared in enormous pots called *kawa*, which can fit one person comfortably.

Our native rice wine, *tapuy* or *tapey*, has a third hedonic meaning that is extremely significant to Cordilleran culture. The significance of *tapuy* in these celebrations cannot be overstated. Wilson (1953) in a chapter in his book about *Cañao*, highlights *tapuy* as a spirit that *Kabunian* himself asked for when the *Igorots* wondered what to do with all their pigs in the chapter of his book that tells the story of

Cañao. Wilson (1953) goes into great length about how *tapuy* is used in the blessings and rituals performed at these *Cañao* and how it acts as a portal for the spirits and ancestors to accept and participate in the celebrations. Originating from the indigenous people of the Cordillera, *tapuy* is served during feasts, rituals, and celebrations. Its preparation is a deeply rooted tradition, and it holds cultural and historical significance (Tiu, 2017). In this *Cañao*, *Tapuy* was used in ceremonies where *Mankayan* elders sought blessings from *Kabunyan* (the Great Creator), spirits, and ancestors. The fact that it was served throughout the wedding reception, the *pattong* (community dance and feast) after the ceremonies, and the actual wedding served as more evidence of its purpose as a celebratory liquor. It offers a nice flavor and a fun communal drinking experience.

Two important foods from the Cordillera were essential to the occasion. To start, there's *pinikpikan*, a Cordilleran version of *tinola* prepared by burning and boiling live beaten chicken with aromatics (Locsin, 2006). It usually has chayote or *pechay* (snow cabbage). This meal was served during the bride and groom's visit to the groom's residence, the newlyweds' visit to *Mankayan*, and the *pattong* (community dance and feast). *Pinikpikan*, a staple dish in Cordilleran cuisine, is usually offered on these kinds of occasions. Due to its unique flavor, local restaurants in the area now serve it to customers who are interested in sampling the smoky, savory broth that embodies Cordilleran cuisine.

Watwat, or boiled pig, is a specialty dish that is only served in *Cañao* to guests who have contributed to the family on this special occasion. This particular food is rather straightforward—it basically consists of chunks of pork that are boiled in big pots without the addition of any flavorings or aromatics, not even salt (Agoot, 2019). Occasionally, you will receive *watwat* pieces and require additional condiments or salt

on the side to enhance the taste of the dish. *Watwat* is a bit of an acquired taste, so newcomers may not enjoy the unique flavors of a native black pig.

Figure 2. A plate of rice and *watwat* served during lunch.



There is also a hedonic significance in the kind of pigs that are killed during *Cañao* weddings. The *Mankayan* elders would traditionally determine the number of pigs, chickens, and cows to be butchered. It was decided to slaughter twenty pigs and fifty chickens at the *Mankayan* wedding I attended after the groom's family and the elders of the *Mankayan* community reached an agreement. Since the bride's family is only inviting a small number of people, they made an effort to limit the number of animals that will be butchered. Among the decisions agreed upon was not to butcher a cow. The chicken, which was purchased from a local supplier did require special preparation. Six native black pigs belonged to the groom, while fourteen more were acquired from a different *Mankayan* piggery. Since native black pigs are locally domesticated by the Cordilleran indigenous people to be used as offerings at *Cañao*, these are preferred during celebrations. Not only because of its cultural significance but also because of its unique taste which sets them apart from domesticated pink

pigs. It was even noted in the study made by Lapeña and Acabado (2019) that domesticated native black pigs, *Sus philippensis* and *Sus scrofa*, are used in these feast and rituals and the use of wild animals are inappropriate for these rituals.

Symbolic Consumption Meanings

Many traditions, customs, and cultural representations are associated with *Cañao* wedding ceremonies, and as I have seen and experienced, there are many symbolic meanings attached to the practices and traditional foods. The consumption of *diket*, *patupat*, and *adobo* demonstrates the first two symbolic meanings.

The requirement that the family of the bride and groom bring food to each other's houses during the courting stage is one of the most significant *Mankayan* traditions related to consuming food. This custom began when the groom's family paid the bride's family a visit and brought *adobo*, *patupat*, *diket*, and other food from a nearby Baguio restaurant. These traditions depend on rice, the staple diet of the Cordilleran people (Maentz, 2013). Beyond its flavor and texture, *diket* and *patupat* reflect hospitality, community, and unity in these traditional *Cañao* wedding ceremonies. It conveys stories of uplifting families and communities in addition to being a delectable treat from the Cordillera (Claver, 2019). Conversely, the significance of *adobo* in Filipino culinary traditions is indicated by its representation of cultural heritage and ties to the community. Similar to how the couple's courting began in December 2023, the groom's family used these two particular traditional foods to symbolize the hospitality and eventual unification of their two families.

After the groom's family left a week later, the bride's family went to Mankayan to bring food for the groom's family. The bride's family was cordially welcomed by the *Mankayan* community elders, who also gave them a tour of the area, the groom's

hometown, and the traditions and ways of life in *Mankayan*. The only attendees were the bride's immediate family members. The bride's sister made a cake and the bride's family brought *samgyupsal* pork at the groom's request. One of the groom's family members noted that there were no set rules for the food exchange other than that it had to be done. They were told not to bring too much food because several *Mankayan* community members assisted the groom's family in preparing food for the bride's arrival. The family of the groom once again produced traditional *diket* like *patupat*. They also cooked a whole pig for *adobo*, *pansit*, and *dinakdakan*. According to *Mankayan* traditions, feeding the community is expected even on happy occasions like the bride's arrival. The bulk of the people, approximately one hundred people, fed by the groom's family during this visit were men who worked for them. During these visits, the bride and groom and their families were able to become acquainted while sharing meals together. The exchange represents both the couple's union and their shared dual cultural heritages.

The pigs that are butchered for the wedding and the portions that are given to the bride's family represent the third symbolic meaning. The pigs were butchered the night before the big day. The pig's head and legs were severed and given to the bride's family, who were informed it was theirs for consumption. The pig's head was given to the bride as a symbol of their function as the event's host. The pig's legs can be given to guests as a good-travel gesture, especially if they are traveling a long way to attend the wedding. The bride had six heads ready for guests who stayed after the ceremony, but there were a total of fourteen heads and legs prepared and showcased for the wedding ceremony.

The pig's blood is used differently to satisfy religious beliefs, which represents a symbolic compromise between old traditions and contemporary approaches.

Selecting food for the wedding reception is a significant part of this event. The groom's family handled the food preparation since the majority of the attendees were either connected to him or from the *Mankayan* community. There were approximately 500 guests from the groom's side and 150 from the bride's side attending the reception. Additionally, because the groom's family is Bethel Church affiliated, this allowed the groom's side to fulfill their dietary restrictions, especially with regard to cooking *dinuguan* (pork blood stew) and other traditional food that contained blood. Since only half of the blood from the 20 pigs will be used, these *Mankayan* men also dug holes to appropriately dispose of the pig's blood that would not be used.

Choosing the source of the wedding ring is another kind of symbolism, but one that has nothing to do with the meanings associated with food. The ring, which came from the groom's family who runs a mining company, was very important since it represented a life-long legacy. The ring will not be connected to the couple in any kind if it is bought from a third party. Everything, including the ring's weight in grams, was taken into account by the parents and elders. The fact that the groom's family manages a variety of businesses, including mining and construction, meant that all of his businesses had to be included in the wedding. This is an essential requirement because it is expected that everyone in the community, including the *Mankayan* community and the companies that represent the groom's community, will be present at the wedding. This involvement and the groom's family covering the majority of the wedding costs are examples of a Cordilleran tradition in which people regarded as social elites support lavish feasts and rituals, strengthening relations with their community and even with neighboring groups (Lapeña & Acabado, 2017).

This brings us to a significant tradition that I have seen at every *Cañao* I have visited, irrespective of the indigenous people or location that hosts it. *Cañao* weddings

provide a unique opportunity for families and communities to get together, share traditions, and eat traditional food. Featr (2023) highlights in their documentary video that the preparations made before the wedding, the butchering of the animals, and the cooking of these dishes all wonderfully encapsulated the spirit of *binnadang* or *bayanihan*. The same author also mentioned that the custom of sharing meals highlights the *binnadang*, or *bayanihan*, spirit of community. Before learning that everyone has a responsibility to help at *Cañao*, I thought that helping was simply an act of common courtesy. The community's fundamental ideals of mutual support and cooperation are symbolized by this communal effort during *Cañao* weddings.

Figure 3. *Mankayan* men preparing the first pig to be slaughtered for the rituals and blessings.



Giving a love gift, known as *supon*, to the newlyweds is a significant part of *Cañao* wedding ceremonies, which heavily incorporate Cordilleran traditions. An announcement was given during the reception when it was time for the presentation of the *supon* to the bride and groom. While the bride and groom receive the *supon*, a queue was set up and assistance was provided to them. Typically, the couple would

give a bag of *watwat* as a sign of appreciation after receiving the *supon*. To obtain the names and quantity of the *supon* given to the bride and groom, careful documentation was done at this time. It is vital to accurately record all names and amount because the bride and groom are expected to return the gesture to everyone who assisted during their wedding.

Watwat, or boiled pork, is traditionally served to guests as a symbol of gratitude and has great significance in the region. The high quantity of pigs butchered in *Cañao* is largely due to this practice. Twenty pigs were butchered for this wedding in order to guarantee food for every guest, highlighting the groom's family commitment to taking care of everyone without anticipating *supon* in return. Instead of using the traditional *watwat* while presenting the *supon* to the newlyweds, a bag of toiletries was put together that contained lotion, perfume, shower gel, and more. Due to the large number of guests, 500 tokens were made for this wedding. Recording the giver's name and the quantity or kind of *supon* were done. In addition to monetary contributions, the *supon* also featured the guests' agricultural products and food, such as sweet potatoes, sweet potato leaves, potatoes, mangoes, water crest, *diket*, and even bundles of tilapia from one of the guest's fishponds. A group of elderly *Mankayan* people even sang a song to the newlyweds as a *supon*. Performance of the band that night was also considered to as a *supon*.

On the day of the wedding after dinner, the elders of *Mankayan* distributed the *supon* and counted them in front of those who were still present. It was customary in the *Mankayan* culture to do this since they wanted everyone who contributed *supon* to the wedding to know just how much it all cost. The couple kept a little over one million pesos in monetary love gifts afterward. The happy couple traveled to *Mankayan* two weeks after the wedding to meet with the groom's family and get their advice on

how to make the most of their *supon*. It was made clear that the *supon* can only be utilized for the couple's own expenses, such as building their own home, and not for business or investment purposes. During the visit, the groom's family prepared a feast of *patupat* and *pinikpikan* for the guests.

The last symbolic meaning that will be highlighted was the traditional practice of *patlong* or traditional community dancing that is usually paired with a feast. The *patlong* for weddings would usually be done the night before the wedding as pre-celebration after the rituals and blessings of the *Mankayan* elders. The ancestors and the spirits from the Upperworld who were invited to engage in the animal sacrifices and accept offerings made in their honor are said to be coming down through the performance of these ritualistic dances and evocations (Salvador-Amores & Martin, 2017). For this *patlong*, they served *adobo*, *pansit*, *dinuguan*, fried pork, and *pinikpikan*. The *Patlong* ended at about three in the morning, but the happy couple barely lingered so they could get ready for their wedding the following day. The pair had to complete the pig ritual and then begin the *patlong* before they could leave. The *patlong* was also done during the reception itself.

By the time the reception wrapped up at about 5:00 PM, the men from *Mankayan* were already finishing off dinner. For this meal, the bride's family made use of the vegetables served as *supon*, which included the six pig heads that had been distributed to them. *Adobo*, *pinikpikan*, and tilapia were made using the *supon*, sweet potatoes, and several *diket*. *Patlong* and live music were performed following dinner and *supon* counting until one or two in the morning of the following day. This traditional community dance and celebration highlighted the value of shared joy and cultural expression while reflecting the community's cultural heritage and unity.

It was evident that food and *Cañao* ceremonies and festivities were tightly interconnected, and that these *Cañao* wedding rituals observed both hedonic and symbolic meanings. A rich tapestry of cultural meaning and sensory delight was created in the narrative of every *Cañao* wedding through the use of these traditional food and the roles they played in the rituals and blessings that were performed.

Transfer Meanings in *Cañao* Wedding Ceremonies

The Food Meaning Diagram's second component is made up of cultural and emotional transfer meanings. These transfer meanings in *Cañao* wedding ceremonies are highlighted in the table below and in the discussion that follows.

Table 2

Transfer Meanings in Cañao Wedding Ceremonies using Aktas and Aktas-Polat's Food Meaning Diagram

Transfer Meanings in <i>Cañao</i> Wedding Ceremonies	
EMOTIONAL TRANSFER MEANINGS	Courtship and Food Exchange - Love, respect, and gratitude through food; - Traditional and modern food; - Symbol of warmth, hospitality, mutual respect Pre-Wedding Preparations - <i>Binnadang/Bayanihan</i>; - Men's tasks and bride's family's hospitality; - Sense of belonging, emotional investment Blessings and Rituals - Elders' <i>bayyog</i> chants, <i>tapuy</i> offerings; - Spiritual connection with ancestors, spirits, <i>Kabunyan</i> Supon - Monetary gifts, agricultural products, food; - Performances (songs, band); - Importance of reciprocity, community relationships
CULTURAL TRANSFER MEANINGS	Traditional Practices - Preservation of <i>Mankayan Kankana-ey</i> traditions; - Elders' influence in cultural ceremonies; - Integration of Religious Practices;

Transfer Meanings in *Cañao* Wedding Ceremonies

- Adaptation to Catholic and Bethel Church views; Dietary adjustments (e.g., serving of blood)
 - 2. **Culinary Traditions**
 - Elders transmitting culinary practices;
 - Traditional food (*watwat*, *pinikpikan*, *adobo*, *diket*);
 - Significance of *tapuy* preparation
 - 3. ***Pattong***
 - Community involvement, collective joy;
 - Teaching younger generations through participation;
 - Preserving cultural heritage
 - 4. ***Binnadang* or *Bayanihan***
 - Mutual support, kinship;
 - Community contributions to wedding and food preparation;
 - Post-wedding support activities
-

Emotional Transfer Meanings

Emotional transfer meanings were observed in *Cañao* wedding ceremonies, which involved the transmission of feelings such as love, respect, gratitude, and communal solidarity. These meanings can be observed during the courting, the pre-wedding preparations, the rituals and ceremonies that were facilitated by the *Mankayan* elders, and the ceremony in which the bride and groom were given the *supon*.

One of the most obvious ways that traditional food practices in *Cañao* weddings are being passed down is through the exchange of food during courtship (Pekas, 2006). In this case, the couple's regard for *Mankayan Kankana-ey* traditions as taught by their elders was evident in this interaction. Even with the addition of restaurant-bought dishes like *Samgyupsal* pork, traditional food like *adobo*, *patupat*, *diket*, and *pinikpikan* are still served, paying homage to the old traditions.

Each family extends a warm welcome to the other during the exchange of food that took place during the courtship stage of the bride and groom. This is done in an

effort for the couple to become familiar with the culture of their prospective spouse. This ritual revolves around the sharing of food, and the food that are shared between these two families are a source of warmth, hospitality, and mutual respect. The act of sharing food during the courtship phase also assists in developing a link between these two families, which is symbolic of the acceptance and unity that they will both share for the rest of their lives together as a couple.

The pre-wedding preparations that convey the *binnadang* or *bayanihan* spirit is one emotional transfer that would always take part in *Cañao* wedding ceremonies. The wedding planning process began in earnest in January 2024. There were men traveling from *Mankayan* to inspect the reception site on a weekly basis. Cleaning the venue, determining the location of the kitchen and reception, and setting up the parachutes were all part of the pre-wedding preparations. The men of *Mankayan* began sleeping at the bride's house two weeks before the wedding in order to begin the final preparations for the big day. Taking good care of these men throughout the preparations was the responsibility of the bride's family, hence they were provided with breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks. The collective effort seen in the *binnadang* or *bayanihan* reflected a sense of belonging and emotional investment in the bride and groom's union.

Figure 4. The women portioning and preparing the plates for lunch.



The most important customs are probably the blessings and rituals that the elders perform the evening before the wedding. Traditionally, elders recited *bayyog*, or ritual chants, within the celebrants' home in a semicircle. The doorway is occupied by the *manbonong*, a local elder or priest, who is carrying a sugar cane sheet and a cup of *tapuy* (rice wine). The *manbonong* oversees the ceremonies, which included offering cups of *tapuy* to symbolize the ten pairs of male and female deities being called to bless the event (Pekas, 2006). For this wedding, they performed these rituals outside following the same process. There were no *manbonong* involved and the elder men were the ones who facilitated the rituals. They were assisted by additional elders and trainees. A member of the groom's family mentioned that a *manbonong* can be excluded from these rituals if one of the elders in the family can perform the rituals properly. Salvador-Amores and Martin (2017) mentioned that these rituals are typically passed down orally from one *manbonong* to another. The *manbonong* and the elders interacted with the gods by chanting these prayers. The elders at the wedding referred to *Kabunyan* (or *Kabunian*), the Great Creator, and their ancestors. Although it was customary in *Cañao* to read the liver and bile of a butchered animal, weddings in

Mankayan were not usually associated with this practice. Following the first butchering, the elders began the rituals, trade *tapuy* and local gin shots, and then had *patpong* (community dance and feast) afterwards. These rituals aimed to invoke good fortune, health, and prosperity for the couple. Not performing these rituals and prayers was believed to lead to sickness, loss of wealth and, most importantly, the weakening of the soul (Salvador-Amores & Martin, 2017). These prayers and the consumption of *tapuy* created a spiritual and emotional connection with the ancestors, the spirits, and *Kabunyan*.

Another emotional transfer can be seen in the giving of the *supon* during the reception of the *Cañao* wedding. As previously mentioned, the *supon* was not only limited to monetary gifts but also included agricultural products and food like potatoes, sweet potatoes, *diket*, and tilapia. These *supon* can also come in the form of a performance like the ones provided by the *Mankayan* elders where they offered songs for the couple and the bride's friend who played with his band during the post-wedding reception celebrations. These *supon* expressed affection, support, and good wishes to the newlyweds. The process of recording the names of the giver and the amount or type of gifts given signified the importance of giving back to the people who gave *supon* during the wedding. Giving *supon* is also a key practice that signified the maintenance of strong relationships within the community.

Cultural Transfer Meanings

Traditional customs, rituals, and practices carried out at *Cañao* wedding ceremonies reveal cultural transfer meanings. These events played a crucial role in conserving and transmitting cultural identity and values to younger generations. These meanings can be seen in the adherence to the *Mankayan Kankana-ey* traditions, the

integration of indigenous and Catholic practices, the rituals performed highlighting traditional food and liquor, the *tapuy* preparations, the *pattong* or community dance and feast, and the *binnadang* or *bayanihan*.

One of the cultural transfer meanings that was quite visible in the *Cañao* wedding ceremony was the decision to carry out the traditional practices of *Mankayan Kankana-ey*, that eventually reflected the preservation and respect for the cultural traditions that were specific to the region. Despite the fact that both the bride and the groom were from Benguet, the couple were from two separate indigenous communities that practiced *Cañao* in a different way. The strong presence of elders in *Mankayan* on the side of the groom could have influenced their decision as well. This was because the elders on the bride's family are already too far away from Benguet to assist in the facilitation of the cultural ceremonies that were required from the indigenous group that the bride belonged to.

Another cultural transfer meaning that should be taken into account was the alterations that were made to accommodate the religious views of the bride and groom. This wedding was just like any other *Cañao* wedding ceremony nowadays, that it can integrate elements from other religions around the world. The wedding adhered to Catholic traditions, even if the groom's family was from Bethel Church, because the bride's family was Catholic. Since the Bethel Church prohibited the consumption of blood, a small adjustment was made. The wedding menu was prepared by the groom's family. This ensured that their dietary restrictions were met, especially in the preparation of *dinuguan*, or pork blood stew, and other food that contained blood.

The elders on both families of the bride and groom played a major role in transmitting traditional culinary practices in *Cañao* rituals and festivities. In the Cordilleran society, elders were crucial in maintaining and passing down traditions

(Bustillo, 2023). In communities throughout the Cordillera, elders are decision-makers. These elders served as members of the community's elite power structure, leading, controlling, and counseling heads of families and dictating when feasts should be held (Prill-Brett, 2015). While there have been some contemporary changes, such as adding new recipes and restaurant-bought food, the fundamental customs have not changed. Sadly, younger people do not learn about these traditions through formal documentation for future generations; instead, they observed and participated (Marcelo-Padua, 2023). While some attempts were made to record traditional food preparations, these documents sometimes fell short of providing a thorough analysis of the cultural importance of these practices (Talastas, 2018). The preparation and communal consumption of traditional food like *watwat*, *pinikpikan*, *adobo*, and *diket* like *patupat*, and the use of *tapuy* and the practice of butchering pigs in *Cañao* rituals, highlighted the cultural significance of these traditional food in *Cañao* wedding ceremonies and celebrations.

In addition, the preparation of *tapuy* by the bride's grandmother was very significant in terms of cultural transfer. This rice wine, which is traditionally used for toasts and consumed by the community in *Cañao*, was an essential component of the celebrations that took place at the wedding. In the same way that the *diket* and *patupat* are prepared, the Cordilleran *Tapuy* is often prepared with *balatinaw* (Cordilleran red rice) (Dela Rosa & Medina, 2021). The labor-intensive process of preparing fifty *banga* (earthen jars) of *tapuy* requires the cooperation of women and children, who in turn teach them the traditions of making rice wine that are peculiar to the region.

The practice of *pattong*, which consisted of traditional community dance and feast, was another way in transmitting cultural transfer meanings. This activity highlighted the significance of community involvement and the joy that can be

experienced collectively during festivities (Lakay, 2024). *Pattong* placed a strong emphasis on the significance that cultural practices have in preserving cultural heritage and developing the links that bind communities together. During *pattong*, elder people like aunties and uncles lead the community dancing. Younger people were encouraged to join, and in some cases, they are even forced to do so, so that they can learn how to correctly do the traditional dance. Even interpretations of the dance routines were translated for young people to understand as they are participating in *pattong*. There is no doubt that *pattong* presented an opportunity to learn about and share traditions.

The tradition of lending a hand to one another in times of need, also known as *binnadang* or *bayanihan*, was an essential component of cultural heritage preservation. To ensure mutual support when needed, community members were asked to help on significant occasions (Featr, 2023). This custom strengthened the bonds of kinship within the group. Through *binnadang*, individuals of the community who participated with wedding planning and traditional food preparation contributed to the preservation and intergenerational sharing of these cultural customs.

Binnadang was practiced even during the post-wedding activities. The bride's family spent the following two days feeding the out-of-town visitors who had taken up residence in the rented transient houses. Anyone could stay in these temporary homes and all three meals were provided to the guests, including some of the wedding's leftover meats and *adobo*. The meat was prepared into fried pork and *afritada* to make use of the couples' vegetable *supon*.

The bride's family fed the *Mankayan* men for five days after the wedding while they stayed behind. They managed the wedding's logistics and were responsible for cleaning up afterward. The men's duty included seeing to it that the bride's guests who

were still at her dwellings were fed or otherwise accommodated with the meat that had been prepared. As long as the host has meat to offer, the *Cañao* will continue even for several days after the wedding celebrations, and everyone will take home some of the meat, making the hosts happy, prosperous, and well-known (Wilson, 1953).

Identity Meanings in *Cañao* Wedding Ceremonies

Cañao wedding ceremonies are packed with references to personal and national identity, which are the focus of the third meaning in the Food Meaning Diagram. To summarize the significance of food in these cultural celebrations, this section will offer the final component and its subcomponents.

Table 3

Identity Meanings in Cañao Wedding Ceremonies using Aktas and Aktas-Polat's Food Meaning Diagram

Identity Meanings in <i>Cañao</i> Wedding Ceremonies	
PERSONAL IDENTITY MEANINGS	Offering and Serving Traditional Food <i>Diket</i> and <i>patupat</i> as symbols of heritage - Emotional connections to traditional dishes <i>Tapuy</i> preparation by bride's grandmother Personalized Gifts - Cake from bride's sister to groom's family - Mining company rings symbolizing emotional connection <i>Pattong</i> - Community participation in traditional dance - Solidarity and shared cultural identity Elders' Rituals and Prayers - Blessings from <i>Kabunyan</i>, spirits, and ancestors - Spiritual significance of <i>tapuy</i> and local gin Nostalgic Traditional Food <i>Watwat</i>, <i>pinikpikan</i>, <i>adobo</i> evoking memories - Shared experiences of traditional dishes Continuity and Adaptation - Traditional customs with modern adjustments - Serving blood dishes despite Bethel Church beliefs
NATIONAL IDENTITY MEANINGS	Showcase of Cultural Diversity <i>Adobo</i> as national dish

Identity Meanings in *Cañao* Wedding Ceremonies

- *Pansit* for celebrations
 - Cordilleran dishes (*pinikpikan*, *watwat*) highlighting regional uniqueness
 - 2. Traditional Food Preparation**
 - Community involvement in butchering and cooking
 - Agricultural produce as symbols of prosperity
 - 3. Cultural Continuity and Social Cohesion**
 - *Supon* emphasizing agricultural value
 - Traditional food fostering cultural identity and unity
 - 4. Integration of Cultural Influences**
 - Catholic and *Mankayan Kankana-ey* wedding customs
 - Adaptation to Bethel Church beliefs
 - 5. Social and Economic Relationships**
 - Offering *supon* in various forms (monetary, agricultural, performances)
 - Financial stability and social responsibility of the groom's family
-

Personal Identity Meanings

During the *Cañao* wedding ceremonies, the act of offering and serving *diket* and *patupat* brought by the groom's family, particularly during the courting stage, served as a symbolic representation of the personal connections that they have to their heritage and the traditions that they have passed down from their family. This form of emotional connection is brought about by the majority of the food that is served and offered during the *Cañao*. This is owed to the fact that these foods are deeply ingrained in the traditions of *Cañao*, and those who practiced *Cañao* also have an emotional connection to these dishes. Even the fact that the bride's grandmother was the one who prepared the *tapuy* inspired an emotional connection between the bride and the grandmother to the *tapuy* that was consumed throughout the entire ceremony. Knowing that the bride's sister baked a cake and gave it to the family of the groom during the courting stage was a further example of the emotional connection that existed between the two families. This added a touch of personalization to the gift that the bride's family made during the exchange of food during courtship. Additionally, although it is not related to food, selecting the mining company of the groom as the

source for the rings of the newlyweds generated a strong emotional connection to the family of the groom. This choice indicated a connection that would always be a part of the couple for the rest of their married life.

Along with celebrating together and strengthening cultural ties, the community was supposed to execute the *Mankayan* local dance and feast on traditional food during the *pattong*, which promoted a sense of solidarity and shared cultural identity among participants. A key component of demonstrating the distinct *Mankayan* cultural identity was the performance of rituals, prayers, and requests for blessings from *Kabunyan*, spirits, and ancestors by the *Mankayan* Elders at *Cañao* wedding ceremonies. The link and cultural significance of these prayers and ceremonies were reinforced by the usage of *tapuy* and local gin. The profusion of traditional food, particularly *tapuy*, *watwat*, *adobo*, *pinikpikan*, and *diket*, also had spiritual importance because they were offered during the elders' ritual and blessing in addition to being consumed for sustenance. Even while it was not carried out during the *Mankayan* wedding, the traditional *Cañao*, which involved examining the liver and bile to gauge the responses of *Kabunyan*, spirits, and ancestors, illustrated how deeply traditional food can bind people spiritually (Alog, 2021). Even the provisions of the pigs' heads and legs given to the bride's family pays homage to cultural beliefs and rituals that connected to personal and family identity.

Comforting and traditional food brings back memories of previous celebrations and gatherings with relatives. Regardless of the indigenous people that celebrates it, *Cañao* generally have similarities, and there are some dishes that are classic in these events that provide attendees nostalgia and memories. In *Cañao*, *watwat*, or boiled pork, a staple dish that evokes recollections of the simplicity and traditions of Cordilleran food preparation (Comanda, 2022). It brings memories for both immigrants

and Cordillerans of their first *watwat* feast and how they grew accustomed to and began searching for the authentic taste of black pig in *Cañao*. A common meal among Cordillerans, *pinikpikan* embodies many aspects of our culture and brings a nostalgic journey when chewing the gamy battered burnt chicken and sip the rich, smokey broth. *Adobo* is a mainstay in *Cañao* and common in Filipino kitchens. Most Filipinos like and appreciate *adobo* because it brings memories and feelings of nostalgia from both personal experiences with the dish and the *Cañao* celebrations each individual has attended. Depending on where you are in the Philippines, there are numerous ways to prepare *adobo*. There would be several types of *adobo* available: one with coconut milk, one that is white and solely uses vinegar, one that is dry, saucy, and gingery. Its variations in the Philippines serve as a symbol of how a single dish can both unite and celebrate the diversity of our nation (Tee, n.d.).

Figure 5. Bags of *watwat* for to be distributed during lunch.



The presence of our elders, parents, aunts, and uncles plays a vital role in maintaining the intricate traditional customs of *Cañao*, including wedding ceremonies. These traditional practices are still carried out to honor the ancestors and the set of beliefs that once held the indigenous people firmly together. Though, of course, minor

adjustments were made to accommodate modern philosophies like those of world religions and of economic capacities. An excellent illustration of this occurred during the courtship when food was exchanged. Even while there was still traditional food served in this exchange, restaurant-bought food, including *samgyupsal* pork and cake, was allowed as long as the actual food exchange followed the traditions. Another is the continuation of serving blood even when the groom's family had Bethel Church members. In *Cañao*, it was customary to utilize each component of the pig, even its blood. Typically, this blood is prepared into Cordilleran blood sausages known as *pinuneg* or cooked as *dinuguan*, pork blood stew. By only using half of the blood from the 20 pigs that were killed at the wedding, modifications were made in observance of the tradition and to preserve cultural continuity. Offering *watwat* as a component of the reception lunch rather than as a token in return for a *supon* is an additional approach that honored cultural continuity. It was far more vital to make everyone feel contented and they belonged than just to provide them *supon* in return for a *watwat*.

National Identity Meanings

The richness and gastronomic diversity of the Cordillera and Philippine cultures were showcased through the traditional food of *Cañao*, including *adobo*, *pansit*, *pinikpikan*, *watwat*, and more. Unofficially designated as the national dish of the Philippines, *adobo* embodies the richness and complexity of Philippine cuisine. Its readily available ingredients make it a household mainstay. On the other side, *pansit*, a favorite celebration noodle among Filipinos, is served at special occasions like birthdays and, in this case, *Cañao* wedding ceremonies because of its significance of being blessed with long life (Kanuckel, 2020). In addition to symbolizing the tastes and cuisine of the Cordillera, *pinikpikan* and *watwat* also served as a reminder of the

distinct cultural character that set this region apart from other regions of the Philippines. When making *tapuy* and *diket*, local ingredients are used, such as easily accessible vegetables from the Cordilleras or even heirloom rice like *balatinaw* that symbolize the community's heritage. Every cooking technique, from smoking and boiling pork to live-beaten chicken, reflects the essence of the national identity in every food consumed. The distinctive culture of our region and nation is reflected in the cooking techniques and ingredients. Several things are common in Filipinos, such as the addition of unique flavors to food. These dishes are a representation of how beautiful and diverse Philippine traditional food and variations of these dishes can be found throughout the whole archipelago.

The process of making traditional food showed a great deal of force in strengthening bonds and preserving the Cordilleran cultural identity, from setting up the space where it was butchered and cooked to actually performing the butchering and cooking and to sharing the meat. As mentioned earlier, giving out *watwat* and utilizing crops and food products as gifts or substitutes—such as potatoes, sweet potatoes, *diket*, tilapia, and other crops—highlighted the role that food plays in fostering cultural continuity and social cohesion. In *Cañao* wedding ceremonies, symbols of prosperity, abundance, and blessings include pigs, chickens, and *tapuy*. In addition to reflecting these elements of significant national cultural narrative, it was hoped to educate those who are curious about the identity of Filipinos and Cordillerans. Giving the *supon* in the form of native dishes like sweet potatoes, potatoes, tilapia, and even *diket* highlighted the value and importance of agricultural goods in Filipino culture. Giving the *supon* in the form of agricultural produce also emphasizes the worth and significance of these agricultural products in Filipino culture, which is a shared tradition throughout the country.

Formation and expression of cultural identities are intimately associated with the traditional food culture and social ceremonies observed during *Cañao* weddings. The communal sharing of food, the active participation of elders, and the inclusive traditions all contributed to the development of a strong feeling of cultural identity and continuity. When combined, these elements ensure that the rich cultural past of the Cordilleras are acknowledged and protected, saving significant traditions for future generations. Through such celebrations, community members fortified their cultural identity, fostered a strong sense of solidarity and belonging that was fundamental to the Cordilleran way of life.

The *Cañao* wedding ceremonies exhibited the mixing of numerous cultural influences as national identity, as evidenced by the integration of Catholic wedding traditions with *Mankayan Kankana-ey* wedding customs. This was demonstrated even by the modifications made for the groom's family, who adhered to the doctrines and beliefs of Bethel Church. Even with the intricate traditions of *Cañao* and the guidelines established by our ancestors, these traditions are evolved with time to embrace a broader national cultural identity that was shared by all Filipinos, not only those in the Cordillera.

The offering of *supon*, which included monetary presents, agricultural products, and even performances by those who attended, served as a last example of our national identity and the social and economic relationships within the Cordilleran community. These traditions demonstrated that you can always offer something at the table to express support and assistance, in the case of the newlyweds, regardless of your standing in the community as an individual. *Cañao* fulfilled two communal functions, as noted by Antonio (2024), which were to uphold the structure of society and strengthen relationships to extended family while also enhancing the reputation

of the family hosting it. The groom's family covering majority of the wedding expenses shows the groom's family's financial stability and sense of social responsibility. This illustrated that social responsibility was fulfilled by feeding the men who helped in the preparation and the community where they belong to, even in situations like the visit of the bride's family in *Mankayan* during the courtship and the newlyweds' visit to confirm the use of the *supon* in *Mankayan*.

Chapter V

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Using Aktas and Aktas-Food Meaning Diagram, this study has shown the food meanings in *Cañao* wedding ceremonies. The meanings of food using my experiences and observations of *Cañao* weddings, especially the latest one in *Loacan, Itogon, Benguet*, have been organized and categorized.

The results showed that the traditional food consumed at these weddings have deep hedonistic meanings that highlighted the aromas, textures, and richness of the food while also offering sensory pleasures. Among the essential food that enhanced the hedonic experience were sticky rice (*diket*), *patupat*, *adobo*, *tapuy*, *pinikpikan*, and *watwat*. In addition to their flavor, these kinds of food were enjoyed for the lively, social environment they fostered.

Equally important were symbolic meanings; common food represented cultural heritage, hospitality, community, and solidarity. The butchering of pigs, the preparation of traditional food, the sharing of food between the bride and groom's families, and the tradition of giving *supon* all emphasized the ceremonies' significance in both culture and society. These symbolic activities uphold the community's values of harmony, cooperation, and shared happiness.

The wedding ceremonies in *Cañao* elegantly demonstrated the intricate transmission of cultural, emotional, and identity implications through traditional food customs. These rituals, preparations, and food sharing demonstrated how cultural continuity, relationships, and individual and national identities were interwoven. The warmth and respect that were exchanged throughout courtship, the collaboration

among those involved in pre-wedding preparations, and the symbolic presents and performances during the reception all demonstrated emotional transmission. Respect for *Mankayan Kankana-ey* customs, the incorporation of religious practices, and the communal preparation and consumption of *tapuy*, *watwat*, and *pinikpikan* were examples of cultural transmission. These traditions were essential for maintaining cultural identity and instilling values in the next generation.

Elders' participation in rituals, the celebration of common cultural heritage, and their emotional attachment to traditional food all served to cement identity meanings, both national and personal. The vast culinary diversity of the Philippines and the Cordilleras was showcased, and the inclusion of traditional food and community food sharing generated nostalgia and a sense of belonging. The modifications implemented to align with contemporary ideologies and religious perspectives illustrated the dynamic character of these customs, guaranteeing their continued relevance and inclusivity.

By concentrating on the significance of traditional food meanings in shaping the ASEAN community, this research aimed to contribute to the growing body of knowledge surrounding ASEAN cultural identity. Unfortunately, there has not been much research done on the traditional food of the indigenous people of ASEAN and its cultural significance. By looking at the *Cañao* wedding ceremonies in the Philippines, this study emphasized how traditional food served as an essential link to cultural heritage, strengthening personal identities and community bonds. Knowing these customs provided important insights into the larger cultural fabric of the ASEAN Member States, where food frequently represented complex symbolic, emotional, and social dimensions that go beyond simple sustenance.

Furthermore, this study emphasized how crucial it was to protect and promote traditional food practices to maintain cultural identity in the face of rapid industrialization and globalization. It highlighted how important it was for ASEAN member states to work together to record, honor, and incorporate traditional practices into modern cultural narratives. These kinds of projects have the potential in improving the ASEAN identity overall, thus promoting mutual respect among member states, and thus encouraging a deeper awareness of cultural variety.

In conclusion, this study added to the conversation about cultural sustainability by providing a framework for other ASEAN nations to investigate and promote their own culinary practices. To ensure that these priceless cultural treasures were passed down to future generations, it acted as a call to action for communities, cultural groups, and legislators to promote and invest in the preservation of traditional food practices.

Recommendations

Based on the results and discussions, the following recommendations are proposed: to enhance the comprehension and appreciation of food meanings not only in *Cañao* wedding ceremonies, but ASEAN weddings in general.

Launch a community-based campaign to document ASEAN wedding traditions, including traditional food, cooking methods, and cultural stories. Doing so will ensure that intangible cultural products are preserved for the benefit of generations to come. ASEAN and its member states might provide substantial financial and other support to assist local communities in keeping these programs running.

Implementing workshops and educational sessions to educate the younger generation about the cultural value of traditional food in ASEAN weddings. Cooking demonstrations, storytelling, and discussions regarding the symbolic meanings of

traditional food on ASEAN weddings can all be a part of these workshops. ASEAN may help to facilitate these initiatives by providing regional forums for member nations to collaborate and exchange expertise

Encourage collaborative research endeavors among cultural anthropologists, culinary specialists, and indigenous communities to look into the varied meanings of food in ASEAN weddings. An enhanced comprehension of the cultural, social, and emotional aspects of food consumption can be obtained through such research. ASEAN can assist these research endeavors by creating cross-border research funds and promoting collaborations amongst regional academic institutions.

Encourage and promote local restaurants and culinary activities to use native ingredients and traditional cooking techniques to cultivate a stronger appreciation for ASEAN cuisine. This will bring attention to the distinctive flavors and cultural significance of ASEAN traditional food served in wedding ceremonies. ASEAN can also initiate and organize regional culinary festivals that showcased and celebrated local food from its member nations.

Encourage and support community events and festivals that highlight ASEAN wedding traditions, such as cooking and preparing traditional food. These gatherings can act as forums for cross-cultural dialogue, enhancing community members' sense of identity and pride. ASEAN can also raise awareness of traditional food meanings and encourage participation in these celebrations with the help of its cultural heritage initiatives.

ASEAN frameworks and activities can be utilized to support and foster cultural identity through traditional food practices. ASEAN has the potential to foster cultural interactions, offer forums for exchanging successful strategies, and enforce regulations aimed at safeguarding and advancing the gastronomic legacy of its

member nations. Through the integration of traditional food practices into ASEAN's wider cultural conservation initiatives, the region may ensure that these traditions are acknowledged and appreciated globally.

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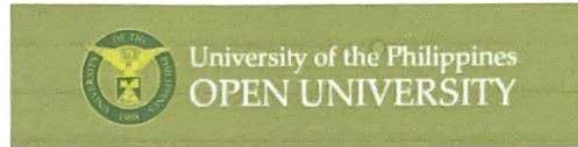
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A ETHICS REVIEW REQUEST LETTER



31 MAY 2024

Ms. JUDITH ODANEE G. MAGWILANG
Chairperson, Research Ethics Committee
Academic Dean, College of Nursing

6/6/24

Ruben,

Please facilitate
Ethics Review

Dear Ms. Magwilang,

Mabuhay!

6/7/2024

My name is Ryan Roy Q. Bartolome, and I am a faculty member at the UC – College of Hospitality & Tourism Management. I am also a graduate student at the University of the Philippines – Open University, pursuing a Master's degree in ASEAN Studies.

I am currently working on my thesis, tentatively titled "Sustaining Cultural Identity Through Traditional Food Practices in ASEAN Weddings: The Philippine Case Study of Cañao Wedding Ceremonies." This research explores the rich cultural heritage and traditional food practices integral to Cañao wedding ceremonies in Benguet, Philippines, aiming to highlight their role in sustaining cultural identity within the ASEAN region.

Given my affiliation and ongoing work with the university, I am seeking to submit my thesis proposal for an ethics review through your office. Conducting the ethics review at the University of the Cordilleras would greatly facilitate the process, as it provides ease of access and aligns with my current professional commitments.

Your guidance and support in this matter would be immensely valuable.

Maraming Salamat.

Very truly yours,

Mr. RYAN ROY Q. BARTOLOME
Researcher & Graduate Student
Master of ASEAN Studies
University of the Philippines – Open University
Phone Number:
Email Address: rqbartolome@up.edu.ph

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT



PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT

Sustaining Cultural Identity Through Traditional Food Practices in ASEAN Wedding: The Philippine Case Study of Cañao Wedding Ceremonies

You are being invited to participate in a research study entitled "Sustaining Cultural Identity Through Traditional Food Practices in ASEAN Weddings: The Philippine Case Study of Cañao Wedding Ceremonies." This study being conducted by Mr. Ryan Roy Q. Bartolome is aimed to look at the intricate relationship between food, culture, and identity in ASEAN wedding ceremonies, with a particular focus on the Philippines and the Cañao wedding ceremonies. Specifically, it will try to figure out how the traditional food practices at Cañao weddings support participants' attempts to preserve and articulate their cultural identities.

There are no known risks if you decide to participate in this research study. There are no costs to you for participating in the study. On the other hand, there will be no monetary compensation to be given for your involvement in the study.

The information you provide will determine the success of this research study. The interview/questionnaire will take about 10-15 minutes to complete. The information collected may not benefit you directly, but the information learned in this study should provide more general benefits to you and the community.

The data collection conducted follows an ethical procedure wherein your identity will be considered anonymous. Do not write your name on the questionnaire. This will assure you that no one will be able to identify you or associate your answers with your identity. Likewise, no one will know whether or not you participated in this study. Should the data be published or disseminated, no individual information will be disclosed.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decline to answer to participate in case you do not wish for any reason. Should you wish to withdraw from the study, you may verbalize your intent to the research and/or return the unfinished questionnaire.

In case of an injury or any health-related concerns during the data gathering, the researchers will be assisting the respondent to the nearest clinic or medical facility.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact:

Mr. RYAN ROY Q. BARTOLOME
Researcher
rqbartolome@up.edu.ph

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE:

Ms. JUDITH ODANEE G. MAGWILANG
Chairperson, UC –Research Ethics Committee
Dean, College of Nursing
University of the Cordilleras, Baguio City



PARTICIPANT'S CONSENT FORM

Check the items:

- ☐ I have received enough information about this study
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study
- ☐ I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions
- ☐ I understand that I am/the participant is free to withdraw from this study
- ☐ **I AM WILLING** to take part in this study
- ☐ **I AM NOT WILLING** to take part in this study

Signature over Printed Name

Date

APPENDIX C
ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER



Research Ethics Committee
ETHICS APPROVAL

July 22, 2024

Mr. Ryan Roy Q. Bartolome
University of the Philippines
Open University, Los Banos Laguna

Dear Mr. Bartolome:

After having evaluated your research for ethics review and the revisions emanating from the review, notice is hereby given that the research project entitled "**Sustaining Cultural Identity Through Traditional Food Practices in ASEAN Wedding: The Philippine Case Study of Cañao Wedding Ceremonies**" , is ethically accepted, and you may now proceed to data gathering upon receipt of this notice.

In view of the above mentioned notice, the committee is requesting you to submit the following documents as part of the approval:

1. Progress report (monthly, especially if deviations in the protocol occur); and
2. Manuscript in hard and soft copy.

Please acknowledge receipt and acceptance of this APPROVAL by signing both copies in the space provided below. Keep one copy and return the other to the Research & Innovation Office, University of the Cordilleras, Gov. Pack Rd., Baguio City.

This serves as a certification.

Very truly yours,

JUDITH ODANEE G. MAGWILANG
Chairperson, UC-REC
