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**RELEVANCE OF *MALIGAY* TO CONTEMPORARY TAUSUG AND MALAY
SOCIETIES**

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Acceptance Page

This thesis titled: “**Relevance of *Maligay* to Contemporary Tausug and Malay Societies**” is hereby accepted by the Faculty of Management and Development Studies, U.P. Open University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of ASEAN Studies Program.

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Biographical Sketch

Cherry Mae Lumawan-Ladja, born on June 28, 1991, in Zamboanga City, is the first daughter among the five children of Mr. Jerry T. Lumawan and Mrs. Victoria P. Lumawan. She embarked on her academic journey in 2008 at Western Mindanao State University, where she pursued a Bachelor of Science in Community Development. Her earlier education includes secondary school at Don Pablo Lorenzo Memorial High School from 2003 to 2007 and primary schooling at Mabuhay Elementary School in Olutanga, Zamboanga del Sur, from 1997 to 2003.

Currently, Cherry Mae serves as an Instructor at Western Mindanao State University, specializing in imparting knowledge on Community Development within the College of Social Work and Community Development. Her responsibilities extend to guiding and supervising students in the field. Drawing from her previous teaching experience in Asian Studies, she specifically focuses on the History and Cultures of Southeast Asia. This academic background influenced her decision to pursue a Master's degree in ASEAN Studies. Notably, Cherry Mae has also earned units in Master of Social Work, showcasing her dedication to ongoing education.

Beyond academia, Cherry Mae is an active member of the Association of Mindanao Community Development Schools (AMCDS) and enthusiastically participates in activities centered around Gender and Development at Western Mindanao State University. This reflects her steadfast commitment to promoting inclusivity and understanding in both her community and academic spheres.

Adding a personal touch to her multifaceted life, Cherry Mae is happily married and blessed with two children. Beyond her roles as an educator and community development advocate, she remains dedicated to positive change in her community,

extending her commitment to education and community development beyond the confines of the classroom.

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To all of you, I wish to express my deepest gratitude. Your collective contributions have not only facilitated the completion of this academic pursuit but have also enriched my growth as a scholar.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my cherished children, Sitti Sofia and Quordus Kennedy. Their constant presence and boundless love have been a driving force behind my pursuit of academic excellence.

I extend this dedication to my beloved husband, Eddie, whose continual inspiration and unwavering motivation have propelled me forward throughout this journey. His belief in my abilities has been a cornerstone of my perseverance.

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Abstract

This study examines the Tausug cultural wedding practice known as *Maligay* in the town of Jolo. Despite the modern ways of living, this tradition has been continuously practiced by several individuals in southern Philippines for many decades. The concept of *Maligay* also finds parallels in other weddings practices in Southeast Asia particularly in the Malay Muslims in Sabah.

Utilizing a qualitative research approach, this study employed a descriptive case study design, and involved ten diverse participants, including barangay officials, elders, prominent Tausug families, religious leaders, and youngsters. Data collection methods included open questionnaires, diaries, and interviews. Furthermore, the study conducted an extensive review of the literature, both online and using secondary materials, to specifically examine the ASEAN's role in building regional identity, thereby enriching the study's contextual background.

By and large, this study has documented that *Maligay* has multiple purposes during a wedding celebration. Apart from providing entertainment, it is considered a symbolic "gift" for the bride. In certain situations, *Maligay* also acts as a form of "buffer" in cases of elopement, where it is given to appease the bride's parents. Additionally, some individuals prepare *Maligay* as an act of charity towards the community. This underscores integral role that *Maligay* plays within the Tausug culture, closely intertwined with their religious beliefs and moral principles. This research not only delves into the significance of *Maligay* within the Tausug culture but also explores its connection to the broader Southeast Asian culture. It constitutes a significant component of the overall effort to understand and contribute to the building of a

regional ASEAN identity, which forms a central aspect of the researcher's field of studies within the ground of ASEAN framework.

Keywords: dowry, cultural identity, *Maligay*, Muslim wedding pre-requisites

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Glossary

Terms	Definition
Adat	Refers to the traditional customs, practices, and norms that are followed within a specific community or cultural group. These traditions can include social behaviors, rituals, ceremonies, and ways of life that have been passed down through generations.
ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)	Is a regional organization consisting of Southeast Asian nations. It aims to promote economic growth, political stability, and cooperation among its member countries.
ASEAN Community	Refers to the vision of ASEAN member states to create a closer-knit region with three pillars: the ASEAN Economic Community, the ASEAN Political-Security Community, and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community.
ASEAN identity	Refers to the sense of belonging and shared values among people from ASEAN countries. It promotes a feeling of unity and solidarity among the diverse cultures and nations within the region.
BARMM	Stands for "Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao." It is an autonomous region in the Philippines located in the southern part of the country. BARMM was established as a result of the Bangsamoro Organic Law, which aims to grant self-governance and autonomy to the

Terms	Definition
	predominantly Muslim areas in Mindanao. The region seeks to address historical issues and provide the Bangsamoro people with more control over their local governance, resources, and cultural affairs.
Bangsamoro People	The Bangsamoro People are a predominantly Muslim ethnic group in the southern Philippines, with distinct cultural and historical characteristics.
Baci	A ceremony holds great significance as the most prevalent and crucial ritual in the nation in Laos. It is observed not only during weddings but also at a variety of other significant moments, such as births, deaths, house construction, embarking on journeys, and festivals. Notably, the practice of baci has become openly integrated into various events, including state functions, in modern times. In essence, no occasion in Laos would be deemed whole without the inclusion of the baci ceremony.
Babas	Are individuals with mixed Malay and Chinese heritage, often found in the Straits of Malacca region. They have developed their own unique culture and identity.
Bangbang	Refers to native pastries in Tausug cuisine.

Terms	Definition
Betrothal money	Also known as engagement money, is a payment made by the groom or his family to the bride's family as a sign of commitment and intention to marry.
Biryani	A popular dish made with fragrant rice cooked with spices and meat (or vegetables). It's known for its rich flavors and is enjoyed in various forms across different cultures.
Bride price	Is a sum of money or valuable goods given by the groom or his family to the bride's family as part of some marriage traditions.
Bride-wealth	Similar to a bride's price, bride-wealth involves the transfer of assets from the groom's family to the bride's family in marriage customs.
Buffer	It is something that acts as a protective barrier or cushion between two things. In various contexts, it helps to reduce impact or conflicts.
Dagdag	Among the Magahats of Southern Negros, the alliance formed between two families holds greater significance than the marriage itself. The concept of "dagdag" or bride price exemplifies this principle.
Darah manis	The Malay culture holds the belief that during the course of their wedding rituals, both the bride and groom are in a state known as "darah manis" (sweet blood), making

Terms	Definition
	them susceptible to potential dangers from different quarters.
Dowry	In Tausug culture, dowry pertains to the bride-wealth requested by the bride's parents. Typically, it involves monetary contributions, yet the dowry's components can differ according to agreements between families. Alongside money, assets like real estate, land, and animals might be part of the dowry, subject to customs and negotiations.
Đám Hối	A Vietnamese engagement ceremony where the groom's family formally asks for the bride's hand in marriage.
Hadia	A gift that is commonly used for various occasions, including weddings.
Hantaran	The exchange of gifts between engaged couples in Malay traditions. It is a symbol of goodwill and respect between families.
Ijtihad	Refers to the process of exercising personal judgment to determine the benefit or appropriateness of a particular action.
Intercultural	This pertains to interactions, communication, and exchange between different cultures.

Terms	Definition
Inter-religious	Refers to interactions or connections between different religions.
Islamic Wedding Pre-requisite	These are the requirements that need to be fulfilled before an Islamic wedding ceremony can take place, often involving legal and religious aspects.
Kampung	A traditional village or community in Malay cultures, often characterized by close-knit social relationships.
Kebaya	A fabric traditional Indonesian women's attire.
Kenduri kahwin	Recognized as a wedding open house in the Malay community of Malaysia, serves as a platform fostering community collaboration and teamwork.
Khan Mahk	It is an essential part of the procession where the groom's family visits the bride's family on the wedding day in Thailand. It's a unique tray prepared as a gift for the bride's parents and contains a mix of betel nut chew components such as whole betel nut, tobacco, betel leaves, and lime paste, along with flowers.
Kurmah	An Indian dish featuring tender beef or chicken simmered in coconut milk infused with curry spices, accompanied by potatoes and carrots.

Terms	Definition
Lokiya	Known as worldly affairs in Burmese culture. These include events such as birthdays, weddings, the arrival of a new family member, ear-boring ceremonies.
Magpahingitah	A traditional Tausug custom where the man being proposed to be given the chance to "meet the bride" before accepting the proposal. This involves allowing the man to spend time with the woman he is being proposed to, in order to get to know her better and make a more informed decision about the marriage.
Mahr	Also known as dowry, is a gift offered by the husband to the wife during the marriage contract.
Mas Kawin	Also known as Mahr, it refers to the dowry or bride price given in Indonesian and Malay cultures.
Mauludun Nabi	Refers to the celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday in Islamic tradition.
Mithaq	Refers to a marriage covenant in Islamic context, symbolizing the bond between a husband and wife as directed by the Quran.
Nikah	A religious ritual within Islamic law, allowing a Muslim couple to become legally married. Following a Prophetic

Terms	Definition
	tradition, it's the only accepted method for a man and woman to enter into marriage.
Pagkawin	Refers to the formalization of marriage between a man and a woman. It represents a significant step in societal progress, as it is a thorough and meticulous process rather than a superficial one.
Pagpasihil	It is a stage in Tausug wedding which an elderly woman or a group of elders, including an imam or priest, engage in the act of pagpasihil. This involves discreetly requesting details about the wedding costs and other requirements of the bridal party from the family of the man, albeit in an indirect manner.
Pagpangasawa	Refers to the formal request for a person's hand in marriage.
Pagtammat	A Tausug term signifies an Islamic graduation ceremony.
Pagtiyaun	In Tausug culture, this term signifies the formal and ceremonial union of two individuals in marriage.
Pagturul Tayma	A Tausug term used in the context of weddings to refer to a joyful and celebratory activity. In Tausug culture, this term likely pertains to a festive event or ritual that takes place during the wedding festivities, adding to the overall happiness and merriment of the occasion. It signifies the

Terms	Definition
	spirit of joy and communal celebration that surrounds the wedding ceremony.
Pha Kuan	This pertains to the significant tradition in Laos. It is a marigold pyramid made of banana leaves and flowers, accompanied by fruits, drinks, cooked sticky rice, eggs, and chicken. These "trays of the soul" are offered during events like births, marriages, departures, returns, and other important moments in a person's life, such as recovering from a serious illness. The arrangement symbolizes five stages and is presented for the souls' benefit, but the items can be consumed by those participating. During marriage ceremonies, the Pha Kuan is used to symbolically bind the couple's souls together.
Piyanggang	A roasted chicken dish holds a high culinary esteem. The chicken is coated with pounded charred coconut meat to enhance its aroma and tenderness. This dish is often seen as an essential element for a genuine <i>Maligay</i> feast.
Piyassak	A traditional Tausug dish, often featuring liver meat and a favorite among the Tausug people. It is frequently served at wedding celebrations, restaurants, and hotels.
Qabul	Signifies acceptance within Tausug culture during wedding ceremonies.

Terms	Definition
Shuhud eian	Are Islamic legal witnesses, often required in official religious ceremonies.
Sinsod	One of the categories of bride price in Thailand. It is more a customary practice than as legal obligation. It refers to monetary expense associated with a wedding. This is linked to Tongmun.
Siri	Encompasses the concepts of restraint, respect, and propriety, applied to both individuals and larger groups like extended families. It empowers women to retain authority over their property rights. This is demonstrated through aspects of wedding rituals.
Sirih Ayu	A collection of betel leaves along with garments adorned with diverse motifs
Stagen	A traditional Indonesian bridal accessory or a traditional belt.
Sukat Kahukaw	A Tausug term in which "sukat" signifies demanding and "kahukaw" means disfavor. This term represents a negative response from the female party during the formal marriage proposal by the male party. It involves the female demanding an unattainable or impossible amount of "ungsud," which is a local term referring to dowry or gifts, whether in cash or kind.

Terms	Definition
Tausug	Known as "people of the current" are the largest group in the Sulu Archipelago of the southern Philippines. The central hub of Tausug culture and politics is Jolo Island, strategically positioned within the archipelago.
Tingug Taingah	It is the first phase of Tausug wedding in which inquiries are made from nearby villages or neighboring households that lack any familial or relational connection to the family being considered for a marriage proposal.
Tongmun	One of the categories of bride price in Thailand. It is more a customary practice than a legal obligation. It refers to gold and jewelry. This is linked to Sinsod.
Tok Panjang	Translates to "long table" and represents a blend of Chinese and Malay influences in its terminology. "Tok" is derived from the Hokkien word for table, while "Panjang" is the Malay term for long. It refers to an opulent Peranakan feast spread out on a lengthy table during significant events like Chinese New Year or intimate weddings, usually attended by close family and friends.
Tudung dulang	It is a traditional food-covering crafted from Nipah leaves in Brunei particularly in Kampong Penchalap.
Ukkil	Also spelled okkil, okir, or okil, denotes intricate geometric designs and flowing patterns, often inspired by

Terms	Definition
	elaborate leaf and vine motifs. These artistic elements are prevalent in Maranao, Maguindanao, and Muslim-influenced artwork across the southern Philippines and parts of Southeast Asia.
Ungsud	Refers to the dowry payment in Tausug culture.
Usba	Pertains to paternal relatives, specifically referring to the male parent of the individual and the blood relatives related through the male parent's lineage.
Utak-utak	A seasoned fish cake prepared from shredded tuna meat blended with spices and grated coconut meat.
Wali	Refers to the Islamic legal guardian, often responsible for overseeing religious matters.
Waris	Pertaining to maternal relatives, specifically the family members related through the mother's side. This includes the mother herself and her blood relatives.
Yay-set-sone-deir	In Burmese culture, the union of a couple within Buddhism is referred to as "yay-set-sone-deir," which symbolizes the merging of two drops of water into one.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Food, as a basic need of mankind, is also a symbol of religious identity, hospitality, and social status. In many families, activities and ceremonies center on cooking and eating habits. A host family demonstrates its prosperity or societal rank by providing large quantities of food. This is evident in the gift giving practices in the wedding ceremonies of the Muslims in Southeast Asian region particularly in the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia. In southern Philippines especially in Jolo, people show their love for celebration and demonstrate their social standing through food carts. It is believed that the said practice showcases the long tradition of appreciating royalty and prosperity as manifested by the artistic design of the wedding cart and the grandeur of food choices (Santarita, 2022).

These and many other artistic productions have demonstrated that the Moro Tausug of the south have their own cultural identity that is linked to either or both ethnicity and religion. This particularization is evident in dialect, clothing, and food that are preserved to this day. One of the most exciting practices among the Tausug is *Maligay* (food cart). As this tradition evolved, its complexities became fascinating, and even in modern times, people are still attracted to it, despite knowing that these marriage rules aren't required by Islamic Law. This situation is not unique to the Tausug community. While oping for a global outlook and enhancing national pride and cohesiveness, ethnic harmony and integration have been constructed by said groups to give considerable, if not equal, representation (Tsui & Tollefson, 2015). Such a process of sharing collective knowledge about people-to-people relationships may

somehow increase the so-called cultural interaction as in the case of Tausug, whose beautiful contribution in culture should be acknowledged in today's literature. Not to mention sometimes they are ethnically marginalized due to various forms of biases.

In this study, the researcher has ventured into the examination of a particular local culture of the Tausug that apparently prevails in wedding occasions until today. In particular, how this practice has remarkably brought a significant influence on the day of a wedding celebration that likely functions as a nonverbal message of appreciation among residents of Jolo. This practice is also similarly observed as part of a community norm in other Muslim communities in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region.

The Tausug wedding is colorful and lavish which has long been culturally integrated and assumed a patchwork of resemblance with Bruneian, Malaysian, and Indonesian families whenever they celebrated wedding rites. This Muslim wedding practice is typical and unbroken despite crossing borders and remains dynamic to these days. Whenever a wedding celebration takes place, the event is usually highlighted by the preparation of a flashy *Maligay* as part of a dowry. This proves that despite cultural factors extending to modernization, the past remains an element of inspiration.

Interestingly, this topic can perhaps be a new trend of cultural growth among the Tausug kinfolk, favorable for portrayal of their identity. It also further explains the economic strength of a community where *Maligay* is generally immersed with monetary consideration. Furthermore, due to geographical mobility and migration, Muslims elsewhere brought with them their cultural practice. *Maligay*, for instance, which has its root from dominantly Tausug areas like in the town of Jolo, is also practiced in other Muslim communities or barangays during wedding celebrations and

other occasions within and beyond the Philippines. In southern Philippines, the Tausug marriage is equated to grandiose preparation that lasted for three days. For many Tausug, marriage is not complete without celebration with *Maligay* as the untold merriment having its inexpressible significance.

Maligay is a Tausug term used to describe a small wooden quarter-type receptacle with its roof, where varieties of native dishes are exhibited. Usually, it is prepared during occasions like weddings and Mauludun Nabi (commemorating the Birth of the Prophet) to attract the attention of attendees and for purposes of merrymaking. Traditionally, *Maligay* is intended to communicate people's impression at a particular place and time of ceremony. As part of amusement, both young and old invitees are expected to share the same feeling of delight regardless of social status. It should be noted that preparing these trays requires financial expenses which ordinary people seldom do due to costly consideration.

In 2010, the local government unit of Talipao on the island of Jolo has further provided opportunity for all to experience *Maligay* by supporting the annual celebration of the festival. By virtue of Sangguniang Resolution No. 06-24 s. 2010, *Maligay* was made as the town's icon of festivities and celebration.

This study delves into the profound significance of food within the cultural and traditional contexts of communities in southern Philippines and, importantly, its relevance to the broader regional identity, with a specific emphasis on the ASEAN region. It is crucial to recognize that food transcends mere sustenance; it is a reflection of the rich tapestry of traditions, customs, and social connections that form the foundation of these communities. As such, an exploration of food practices within the Philippines and its neighboring regions offers a unique window into the formation of a shared identity and, by extension, the dynamics of mobility and regionalization.

The central problem that this study addresses is the relevance of *Maligay*, a cultural wedding practice among the Tausug and Malay societies, to contemporary life. *Maligay*, as a symbolic and meaningful tradition, not only encapsulates the essence of these cultures but also carries profound implications for modern society. It serves as a microcosm of the larger narrative of Muslim cultural practices within the ASEAN region, where a substantial population of Muslims resides. By dissecting the cultural and social underpinnings of *Maligay*, this study aims to contribute to the ongoing effort to build a regional identity, one that is not only rooted in historical and cultural contexts but also responsive to the diverse and dynamic needs of the contemporary world. In doing so, this research seeks to shed light on the enduring value of traditions like *Maligay* and their role in shaping the evolving regional identity within the ASEAN community, encompassing a diverse tapestry of cultures and beliefs.

Statements of the Problem

Since time immemorial, food has been an important element in many activities of various societies that evolved in the world. In Southeast Asia, for instance, food is considered the star of the show in many celebrations including wedding ceremonies through the years. Given the diverse culture and geographical situations of various polities in the ASEAN region, however, the preparation and preferences on food also differ from one country/island to another. These practices in the region, however, are not well documented if not well circulated including those in Muslim Mindanao particularly the *Maligay* in Jolo, Sulu.

This study aims to address the following questions:

- 1) What is the role of food in the wedding celebrations of Muslim Southeast Asian societies?

- 2) How did the Tausug practice *Maligay* in a wedding celebration in Jolo?
- 3) What is the relevance of *Maligay* in promoting regional identity between Filipinos and Malay societies?

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to:

- 1) Discuss the role of food in the wedding celebrations of Muslim Southeast Asian societies.
- 2) Document the nature and practice of *Maligay* in Jolo.
- 3) Assess the importance of *Maligay* in promoting regional identity between Filipinos and Malay societies.

Significance of the Study

The study uncovered the issue of *Maligay* in Jolo as part of a dowry among the Tausug families. *Maligay* was foretold equally to a wedding requisite and thus as related to Malay wedding practice. Interestingly, a variance in the preparation of *Maligay* understandably reflects the cultural exclusivity between the Tausug and the Malay families in Malaysia. Because the practice of *Maligay* and its underlying concept have only been noted within these two specific groups. Though for the Malay, the way they prepared *Maligay* was quite unconventional from the Tausug, however, the idea of merrymaking or entertainment appeared tangible. Furthermore, the result of this study has provided crucial information to the public on ethnic cultural practice through traditional weddings in the town of Jolo. Taking that into consideration, the local wedding was on all occasions highlighted by a beautiful *Maligay* that gave nuptial attraction, and at the same time it drawn community appreciation.

This study yields extensive benefits for various stakeholders, notably in the realms of cultural promotion, ecological research, academic exploration, and regional identity building within the ASEAN community, particularly among its substantial Muslim population. The Department of Tourism can enhance the promotion of Tausug traditional weddings through a deeper understanding of *Maligay*, attracting more tourists and fostering cultural appreciation. Non-governmental organizations can utilize the study's findings for collaborations that preserve cultural traditions and ecological sustainability. Researchers, especially anthropologists, gain a foundation for cross-border cultural studies, while social science programs find a rich resource for understanding Filipino culture and its connections to neighboring Malay countries. Lastly, the study contributes to ASEAN's regional identity by fostering shared cultural understanding and unity among its diverse populations.

Scope and Limitation of the study

While there are stories of *Maligay* being held in other parts of Mindanao, this study has concentrated only in selected sites of Jolo, Sulu. The research sites include Barangays Alat, Asturias, Bus-Bus, Chinese Pier, and Tulay. Within this confinement, the study shall restrict superfluous data from unreliable sources so that only relevant information along with the three aspects of goals are carefully examined. A total of ten participants from the groups of barangay officials, elders, prominent families, religious leaders, and youngsters. These participants were interviewed last 2021.

At the same time, this study focused only on the foods being employed as bridal gift which were offered or simply offerings during wedding celebrations among the Tausug. Foods include native or traditional cuisines as well as candies and other goods imported from neighboring countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia.

The question of the relevance of *Maligay* in promoting intercultural sensitivity between Filipinos and Malay societies can be contextualized within the theory of regional identity. In this framework, the study explores how cultural exchange and integration, as exemplified by the practice of *Maligay*, can contribute to the development of a shared regional identity. *Maligay* represents a symbolic link between the Tausug and Malay cultures, serving as a means of cultural exchange that fosters intercultural sensitivity. By recognizing the cultural significance of *Maligay*, both Filipinos and Southeast Asians can establish a sense of commonality and belonging to the broader regional identity. Furthermore, the study investigates how cultural resemblance and shared values, as reflected in *Maligay*, can enhance regional unity, as per the principles of regional identity theory. It highlights the importance of interconnectedness and cooperation among different cultures within the ASEAN region, with the understanding of *Maligay* serving as a catalyst for greater intercultural sensitivity and collaboration, ultimately contributing to the building of a stronger regional identity.

Operational Definition of Terms

Contemporary Muslim Community – Modern day lifestyle of the people in the community vis-à-vis their past life. Changes may be noticed but at a slow pace. Because the Tausug were sensitive and culturally attached.

Dowry – In Tausug culture, this refers to the bride-wealth demanded by the bride's parents. It usually takes the form of money, although the specific contents of the dowry can vary based on the agreement between the families involved. In addition to money,

properties such as buildings, parcels of land, and domestic animals can also be included as part of the dowry, depending on the negotiations and customs observed.

Islamic Wedding Pre-requisite – these are the components of Sharia standard requirement for marriage. Both parties (groom and bride) are obliged to accomplish. Such as, a) offer and acceptance, b) bride-consent, c) dower, and d) witnesses.

Maligay (Food Cart) – In the context of Tausug cultural weddings, it is a wooden food cart that does not have its trolley. It is typically carried by men in a four-angle shape or square position. The cart features a roof and a flat platform but does not have walls. In terms of size, it measures approximately 4 to 5 feet in length. The *Maligay* serves as a unique and important element during the wedding celebration, displaying various food items and other offerings.

Mauludun Nabi – the birth date of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). As a traditional practice, people in the community used to celebrate by narrating the biography of the Holy Prophet in the mosque where *Maligays* were set up for the guests.

Pagkawin – An act of a wedding rite solemnized by the Imam together with the parents of the spouse and the witnesses. It is performed in public to ensure veracity that the Shar'iah pre-requisites are met.

Relevance of *Maligay* – the importance of *Maligay* to Malay Muslims in Sabah. At certain point, it has same cultural meaning and value as the Tausug in Jolo. Although,

Malaysian used to call it “*hadia*” instead of *Maligay*. However, both groups used to array varieties of foodstuff on the wedding day.

Sharia – Sharia refers to the Islamic law that serves as a guidance and covenant for Muslims worldwide, including in matters of marriage. It is derived from the Qur'an and the practices of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Sharia provides principles and regulations that govern various aspects of life, including personal conduct, family matters, business transactions, and criminal justice. It outlines the rights and responsibilities of spouses and serves as a framework for ensuring justice and the well-being of individuals and society.

Spectacular *Maligay* – Suggests the impressive food cart portrayed during wedding. Normally It has different kinds of viands, rice, eggs, pastries, jams, and sometimes money. These stuffs were put on *Maligay*'s flat while others were hung up.

Sunna - Sunna refers to the traditional practices of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in Islam. It encompasses the way of life of the Prophet, which is derived from his words, actions, and manners as recorded in the Qur'an and Hadith (sayings and actions of the Prophet). Sunna serves as a guide for Muslims, providing them with a model to emulate in various aspects of life, including personal conduct, worship, interactions, and ethical behavior. Following the Sunna is considered virtuous and a means of drawing closer to Allah and attaining success in both worldly matters and the hereafter.

Tausug – the natives of the town of Jolo and are dominant numerically in Sulu province. Historically, Tausug have their Malay lineage who professed Islam. They are also known for their bravery against foreign subjugators.

Tausug Wedding Celebration – is a distinct native wedding celebration. It reflects the Tausug identity of exclusive attires, jewelries, and foods. Usually, post-celebrations take place for about three (3) consecutive days from the day of marriage.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

To continue the discussion of the role of food in the wedding ceremonies in the Philippines, it is imperative to revisit the practices and rituals performed by various societies in Southeast Asia. It is hoped that the materials encountered both online and in print will aid the researcher to deepen the reader's understanding of the intricate relationships between food, culture, and marriage celebrations.

In this chapter, three dimensions are highlighted to help in understanding the existence of *Maligay* in southern Philippines to encompass additional groups sharing cultural similarities with *Maligay*, such as the Maranao, Maguindanao, and Yakan communities. First are the rituals of wedding celebrations in Southeast Asia with emphasis on bride price. Second is the social history of Tausug communities in Mindanao in the context of wedding ceremonies. Lastly is the manifestation of regionalization in culture of Muslim Southeast Asians with special reference on wedding celebrations and by extension to culture.

Through a thorough critical analysis, it was determined that the breathing space is closely connected to the third objective, which aims to confirm *Maligay's* significance within Southeast Asian communities as an integral part of Filipino culture. This research identified a gap in this context, supported by factual information and data pertaining to the regional framework and its development.

Rituals and Celebrations in Weddings in ASEAN Countries

As stated earlier, wedding is considered one of the auspicious occasions in the lives of Southeast Asians. The extent of the preparations greatly depends on the

capacity of the family, mostly the groom's family, to support the expenses from the first day to several days and nights. Such expenses would normally include the practice of bride price in many societies in the region. The bride's price could be in the form of currency, in goods to include food or the combination thereof. Consumption could be exclusively by the immediate members of the bride or all relatives and guests. Speaking of preparations, each country or particular ethnic group observes a specific number of days with corresponding ceremonies depending on the existing societal norms or capacity of the groom to spend for all related expenses. In addition, the manner of doing the ceremony is also dictated by the influence of religion and its respective leadership.

The latter point is best exemplified by Islam. It should be noted that Islam is practiced widely in Southeast Asia with practically 240 million adherents. They constituted about 42 percent of the region's population that resided in Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and the southern parts of Thailand and the Philippines (Cornell University Library, 2022). Hence, in the succeeding discussion, marriage ceremonies governed by Islamic laws and peppered by local traditions are briefly discussed in Muslim countries in Southeast Asia.

In strictest sense, *Nikah* (marriage) in Islam is a sacred contract which every Muslim must enter, unless there are special reasons why the person should not. This is highlighted in the Quran, '*And marry those among you who are single and those who are fit among your male slaves and your female slaves; if they are needy, Allah will make them free from want out of His grace*' (30:21). Furthermore, marriage is called a *mithaq* (covenant) between the husband and the wife as ordered by Quran, that, "*And how you can take it (i.e., the Dowry) when one of you has already gone in the other and they have taken from you a strong covenant (mithaqan-ghalizan)*" (4:21).

The marriage contract is entered into by mutual consent expressed by the two parties in the presence of witnesses. Finally, the second most important thing in marriage is *mahr* (dowry/nuptial gift). The Quran is particular on *mahr* which is given as a gift by the husband to the wife at the time of contracting the marriage - 'And give women their dowries as a gift' (4:4) (Muhammad Ali, 1990).

As stated earlier, the *nikah* once observed in Southeast Asia has been peppered with traditions, rituals, and *adat* laws. In Brunei, for instance, the Malay traditional marriage ceremony consists of ten ceremonies (*Majlis Berjarum-jarum*, *Majlis Menghantar Tanda Pertunangan*, *Majlis Menghantar Berian*, *Majlis Berbedak Siang*, *Majlis Akad Nikah*, *Majlis Malam Berbedak*, *Majlis Berinai*, *Majlis Bersanding*, *Majlis Berambil-ambilan* and *Majlis Muli 3 atau 7 hari*). These ceremonies illustrate the three important elements that shape Brunei Malay customs and traditions namely: the ideology or expressions, cultural materials, as well as proper ethics and manners adopted in performing each of the respective ceremonies (Samad, 2023).

Before the process of entering married life, there are certain *adat* (local rites of passage) that are needed to take place in order to fully prepare the couple for their big day and more importantly life. The Malays believe that within the duration of completing their marriage ceremonies, both bride and groom are in a state of *darah manis* (sweet blood) in which both of them are vulnerable to various sources of harm. Therefore, *adat* was created to protect these individuals from harm- either by humans (purposely or otherwise) or spiritual beings. Hence, it is believed they should be practiced in a proper order (Ibid).

Weddings in Cambodia, on the other hand, are traditionally consisted of ceremonies and celebrations that usually last for three days and three nights. Dictated by the belief associated to the "three jewels" of Buddhism, the first day is set for

blessings from the priest for the couple and their family. A Buddhist ceremony is held in the temple because it is a private and religious ceremony with close relatives attending as only guests. During the wedding ceremony the bride goes through ten dress changes and takes photographs. The wedding starts early in the morning with the groom, dressed in the traditional Cambodian attire, arriving at the bride's house. The groom's procession to the bride's house is done with the banging of pots and chanting, serenading those people along the streets. The groom will have two best men, the groom waits at the entrance where banana trees have been tied to the pillars. When the chimes of a gong are heard the young girls of the wedding party and their family approached the visitors, greeting them by cupping their palms, following the bride and groom place garland on each other. The couple walked into the house carrying a silver container with flowers from the areca nut tree and other offerings. Young girls throw jasmine flowers along the couple's path. They knelt down and pay their respects to the bride's parents before offering prayers at a beautifully decorated altar. Soon members of the groom's family join in, carrying gifts on silver trays. The trays of gifts are arranged to fill the hall of the house when the master of ceremonies begins. In Cambodian tradition, the number of gifts indicate the wealth of the groom. Therefore, many trays are brought in by the groom's family including fruit, cakes, biscuits, sweets, beer, soft drinks, meat, vegetables, and household items (Capo, 2013).

In Laos, the *baci* is the most common and important ceremony in the country. It is performed not just at weddings but also on numerous other occasions including births, deaths, the building of homes, the beginning or ending of long trips, and festivals. In recent times, *baci* is practiced openly, even at state functions. In fact, no event in Laos would be complete without the *baci* (Kislenko, 2009).

For Buddhists, a wedding also involves a trip to the *wat* (temple) to receive ritual blessings from a monk, prayers, and at the same time make offerings to the deities. Large dinners, music, and dance follow all ceremonies. Weddings last a full day and sometimes two. Laotian communities usually hold traditional ceremonies as well as Western-style weddings, or they go to city hall and get married in accordance with local laws (Ibid).

In Myanmar, most weddings are solemnized as a holy matrimony. Since majority of the population are mainly Buddhist, religion plays a different role, depending on the type of ceremony that is being held. For instance, birthdays, weddings, arrival of a new family member, ear-boring ceremonies and so on are considered as *lokiya* (mundane or earthly affairs) (Htu, 2007). Burmese weddings are treated as a *lokiya* and the act of betrothal are never carried out by Buddhist monks but by either the parents, or a reputable person as a civil ceremony, in the presence of relatives and friends recognizing the couple's right to live as *lin* (husband) and *mayar* (wife.) The coming together of a couple in Buddhism is known in Burmese as *yay-set-sone-deir*, (the cohesion of one drop of water with another drop of water). Briefly, according to the fundamental tenets of Buddhism, the *kamma* of the incumbents play a role in their rounds of rebirth in the *samsara* (wandering). This doesn't mean destiny in the way that the chance meeting was arranged ahead of time by an outside force that controls a person's future. (Ibid).

In Indonesia, holding of wedding ceremonies means pompous and sacred at the same time. For some ethnic groups, marriage is always connected to traditions such as the observance of '*Mas Kawin*' or '*Mahr*' (bride price). This practice in Indonesia, according to Lowes and Nunn (2018), is a compensation for the expense, care, and trouble spent on the bride's upbringing. It is compensation for the complete loss of a

worker as a bride withdraws from her own kindred and henceforth belongs to her husband's, as well as payment for the bride's future children, who will no longer belong to her parents' family. The bride price is paid to the bride's parents and is based on *adat*. The bride price tradition in Indonesia varies by location. In Java, the bride price is influenced by local customs. It primarily consists of *sirih ayu* (a set of betel leaves), pieces of clothing with various motifs, fabric for *kebaya* (traditional Indonesian women's attire), '*stagen* (a traditional belt), fruits, groceries such as rice, sticky rice, sugar, salt, cooking oil, and kitchen spice, a couple of wedding rings, and some cash as a means of the prospective bride's payment. In Bali and other parts of Indonesia, the practice of bride price is optional and greatly depends on the decision of both parties whether to follow this tradition (Puspitorini et al., 2017).

For those who subscribe to the tradition, material transactions or 'movements' accompanying marriage are of three broad types. First is the *aratae* (formal marriage-wealth comprising valuable objects), *karanunu* (red cloth) and *kepeni* (money). The second type is the *konaupu* (marriage service) while the third type is the payments made by the bride's clan to that of the groom. The representation of these elements is interspersed by the giving of *nasae* (feasts) and other minor gifts (Ellen, 2018).

Malaysia, on one hand, as a multicultural country has its own methods of conducting the social cultural wedding practice, regardless of tradition, ceremonies, and rituals that differ according to religious belief, country of origin, and regional affiliation. It should be noted that Malaysia is the home of Malay, Indian, Chinese, Kadazan, Iban and others. Despite its multicultural setting, they are free to practice their own religion and organize open house events. One of them is the wedding ceremony which appears as the key element in the success of mutual public relationships in the country. Ethnic groups such as the Malay community have unique

cultural practices in each level of the wedding ceremony tradition, beginning with the initial level such as arrangements for the wedding day. In its traditional sense, a *kenduri kahwin* (wedding open house) in Malay community is also a platform for community collaboration and teamwork. Malay ceremonies must adhere to the principle of Islamic teachings and at the same time follow the Malay traditions. The processes involved in traditional Malay wedding practices comprise various levels starting with coordinating activities, pre-wedding activities, activities on the wedding day itself and the post-wedding activities (Jepson & Clarke, (eds.), 2017).

Approximately, a fortnight before the wedding the groom's household sends gifts to the family of the bride, including some cash to be used for a part of her wedding outfit and jewelry. An additional sum, known as breast money, is also paid to the bride's mother. On the wedding eve, the bride and groom go through a hairdressing rite in their respective homes; this ritual symbolizes their coming of age. Then, early on the wedding day, the bride goes in state to the house of her future father-in-law where, with the bridegroom, she pays her respects to the house deities, family ancestors, and senior members of the household. She then serves tea to the assembled group of relatives to indicate acceptance of her humble role in the family (Herderson, 2019).

In nearby Singapore, there are pre-wedding rituals and customs that are observed as important part of any Singaporean wedding. These traditions have been passed down from one generation to another and symbolized the couple's effort to get closer together before their big day. The tea ceremony, for instance, is a traditional Chinese custom that symbolizes respect between the two families. During this ritual, the bride and groom kneel in front of both sets of parents while serving them tea as a sign of gratitude for raising them into adulthood. This gesture also serves as demonstration of the bride and groom's respect to elders within each family. The dowry

presentation is another pre-wedding tradition in which the groom's family presents gifts such as jewelry or money to the bride's family as a token of appreciation for raising her into adulthood. This exchange usually takes place at either the bride's home or during a banquet hosted by both families prior to the wedding day itself (Singaporean Wedding Traditions, 2023).

Aside from the Chinese, the Babas (of mixed Chinese and Malay lineage) have complicated and diverse wedding rites and customs. These rituals are largely incorporating ancient Chinese rituals of the Ming and Qing dynasties as well as elements of local (Malay) customs which were taught by elders. Entrusting the institution of marriage with the desire to pass on one's ancestral line from generation to generation and to carry on the honor of one's family name is still held in high regard. Pre-wedding rituals such as match-making, fortune-telling, selection of auspicious days, kind of entertainment, inviting guests, combing and arranging of the matrimonial bed are essential parts of the ceremony (Kua & Kwa, 2019). Moreover, a gift-giving party, comprising the relatives of the bridegroom and the person responsible for the gifts, would be accompanied by gongs and drums on the way to the bride's house. The bridal family would collect the gifts and enclose them to the bridegroom for the gift-giving party to bring to the groom's home. Gifts to the parents of the bride must include pork legs, double candles, red packets filled with betrothal money and *belanja kahwin* (wedding expenses), *kain songke* (Song Ji satin), *pinang mas* (golden betel nut), jewelry and other auspicious gifts (Ibid).

In Thailand, bride price is more of a tradition to follow than a legal requirement. Bride prices are classified as '*Sinsod*' and '*Tongmun*'. The former refers to the cost of a cash wedding while the latter pertains to gold and jewelry. *Sinsod*, unlike *Mas-kawin* or *Mahar*, are assets that the groom's gifts to the bride's family rather than the bride

herself. The bride's price would be chosen and discussed by the bride and groom's families. The entire estate would eventually pass to the bride's parents. The bride's family would have more bargaining power, and they might decide whether to refund the bride price to the newlyweds or keep it for themselves after the wedding (Dhanakoses, 2019).

In Vietnam, the groom's family on the day of the marriage proposal puts a sum of money into the communal fund of the girls' village and a procession, led by an even number of men dressed in dark tunics, white trousers, red crepe belts, and black scarves on their heads, carry gifts covered with red cloths on trays on their heads. These men are followed by the groom and an even number of friends and relatives. At the young woman's house, a speech is made to ask for the young woman in marriage. After acceptance, tea is available to all, and gifts are distributed among relatives and friends. During this ceremony, the couple is considered formally engaged. A similar engagement practice is found in Brunei (Monger, 2013).

In many places around the world, bride price and other wedding gifts are an important part of the ceremony. The custom of paying a bride price has expanded widely across the globe. The bride's price is a gift from the groom and/or his family to the bride's family at the time of the wedding. The payout is usually large, often exceeding a year's earnings, and can come in the form of money, animals, or goods. This cultural practice was (and continues to be) widespread throughout the world, including Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (Anderson, 2007).

Bride price is not unique to Southeast Asia. In fact, the custom of paying a bride price at the time of marriage is practiced widely across Sub-Saharan Africa and many regions of Asia. In Zambia, the bride price was paid in 86 percent of marriages. It serves as legal proof of marriage and some churches will not consider a couple

married unless the bride price is paid in full. As a result, bride price is significant for inheritance and determining the lineage of any children born to the marriage, as it allows a wife to prove in court that they were legally married if her husband dies. Same case in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In areas where cattle were traditionally kept, marriage payments were negotiated in cattle, while in other areas, they were negotiated in small valuable items such as iron tools, beads, grain, bark, cloth, animal skins, and money (Chondoka, 1988). Whilst these mentions serve as prerequisites for marriage, it is crucial to emphasize that the primary focus of the study is the preparation of food as a gift to the bride.

By and large, wedding celebrations in Southeast Asia are diverse and rich in cultural traditions, reflecting the region's varied influences. In Thailand, the practice of giving a bride price symbolizes the groom's commitment and financial stability. Thai weddings involve multiple ceremonies, dress changes, and traditional customs. Similarities can be found in other countries, such as Vietnam's wedding proposal procession and Cambodia's multi-day celebrations with Buddhist ceremonies. Laos has the *baci* ceremony, while Myanmar emphasizes the couple's luck and sharing merits. In Malaysia, customs vary based on religious beliefs and ethnic groups, while Chinese weddings in Singapore include a tea ceremony and dowry presentation. Overall, Southeast Asian weddings are vibrant, multi-day events that bring families and communities together, reflecting the region's cultural heritage and values.

Tausug: Communities and Culture

. Tausug is one of 13 Muslim ethnic groups in Mindanao. They are called the Bangsamoro people or 'Moros' having their distinct cultural identities and practices that are preserved to this day. Moros settled in the mainland Bangsamoro Autonomous

Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) region to the inclusion of the non-Muslim groups particularly in the provinces of Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao as well as the island provinces of Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi. Moros professed Islam as their official religion and were proud Muslims of the south for nonbeing subjugated by any foreign powers in history. Today, the Tausug families lived a colorful life with meaningful past experiences and remained attached to their rich 'culture' as observed in the historic town of Jolo in the province of Sulu (Peralta, 2003).

Indeed, Tausug are unique people. The construction of Bangsa Moro identity is based on the premises that Moros in the Philippines constitute a distinct *Bangsa* (the Moro homeland consists of Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan) (Rosaldo, 2003). It is not therefore awe-striking to witness the beauty of their culture handed down from their fore-parents. In fact, one should understand that the Tausug foods, products, and industries are 'culture bound'. One good example of this is *Maligay*.

The Tausug marriage is indeed culture bound similar to the many wedding ceremonies performed in other cultures especially in Southeast Asia. In 1973, Juanito Bruno noted in his book "The Social World of Tausug", about the requisites of Tausug's couple to legalize their bond. The first stage is the *Tingug Taingah* that dates "asking of information from nearby barrios or neighboring houses which have no relationship or ties to the family which is the subject of marriage proposal. Next is the *Magpahingitah* where the man is required "to see the bride" during the marriage proposal. The third stage is the *Pagpasihil* where an elderly lady or group of elders composed of an *imam* (priest) performs *pagpasihil* which is the negotiation of the wedding expenses and other needs of the bridal party from the groom's family. This is something different from the *ungsod* (dowry). Here, the amount used in purchasing a wife will be spent for the wedding activities which usually last from one day to almost

a week, this depends on the amount of money given. Next is the *Pagpangasawa* (formal asking of the hand in marriage) followed by the *Pagturul Taymah* (joyous activity) and lastly *Pagtiyaun* which is the wedding itself (Bruno, 1973).

Some people believed that “*Maligay*” could be traced back to the ancient Chinese cultural influence as mentioned by Dr. Juanito A. Bruno with respect to parental agreement in marriage. This affirms the fact that the Tausug family has strong attachment to their cultural heritage as evidenced by the way they hold celebration adopted from their fore forefathers who had contact with peoples from the neighboring countries. In fact, the ancient cultural heritage of the Philippines is traceable to the different influences brought about by contact with the different cultures of the neighboring countries (Salcedo et.al, 2001). This postulation if indeed true is a clear proof that *Maligay* is a product of the intercultural interactions of indigenous peoples, Arab, and Chinese influences in Jolo.

In modern times, two different concepts of marriage have developed. The legal point of view considers marriage as a contract between a man and a woman to live together as husband and wife for the discharge of the duties they legally assume to each other and to the community. The religious point of view (Catholic) is that marriage is a sacrament whose main purpose is to beget, rear, and educate children and to maintain a permanent social relationship with mutual responsibility to each spouse. As a sacrament, marriage is an inviolable contract which can only be dissolved upon the death of one of the spouses. Marriage operates on an understanding that brings together two people into an intimate and complete degree of sublimation to each other under God (Ibid). In contrast, in Shariah law, as per Muslim traditions, marriage can be dissolved but is not generally encouraged.

As reported by the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC), marriages are still arranged among the Tausug, although it is increasingly common for the young ones to choose their own spouses. Besides, first or second cousins are often preferred as spouses, primarily to strengthen clan relations and simplify issues of inheritance. Still forbidden; however, are unions between half-siblings, and brides and grooms who vastly differ in age (DLIFLC). Moreover, in contemporary culture, restrictions on choosing a marriage partner have relaxed and marriage to a non-Tausug or a non-Muslim is gaining acceptance in accordance with DLIFLC. Also, this reflects the Tausug's strong belief in *suratan* (destiny) to which one must surrender. Marriage of Muslim women to non-Muslims, while not preferred, is now tolerated to some extent as per DLIFLC.

Correspondingly in Jundam's study of Tausug (Jundam, 2006), he narrated that there are 11 types of marriage practices with different corresponding rituals recognized and observed in the Tausug folk Islamic traditions. These include *Magpangasawa*; *Magdakup*; *Magguyud*; *Magsumbaih*; *Magsarahakan-Tugul*; *Magtahakkim*; *Muwih-Magbanah*; *Magtambul Lawang*; *Mag-Giba*; *Magtahgu Bay*; and *Kawin Saputangan*. In addition, Jundam also defined the term bride-price and *ungsud* are used interchangeably to mean nuptial gift. Furthermore, the giving of *ungsud* is but a monopoly of the male, yet the females, in some instances, are not strictly restricted by *adat* to undertake the first move in the choice of their lifetime partner. At the same time, in the performance of such pre-marital union undertakings such as *muwih-magbanah* and *magtahakkim*, females are not obliged by *adat* to give the *ungsud*. Neither will they be fined for such marital undertakings. In fact, despite their failure at times to get positive response during their *Muwih-magbanah*, some forms of nuptial gift are extended to them by *adat* which are categorized into *ungsud* and *ungsud kasa-*

an. In addition, Jundam also pointed out the other type of nuptial gift which is the *Tampan Maru* (literally means “shield of complaint”). In addition, *tambang* is the local term used when referring a nuptial gift which Adat Law requires male’s party to produce and give to female’s party because of the male’s *Mag-giba* act of getting a woman for his future wife as well as act of *Magguyud* (abduction). Lastly, *Sukat Kahukaw* refers to the negative response from the female party to the formal asking of her marriage by the male party by demanding an impossible kind of *ungsud* either in cash or in kind. *Sukat* means to demand while *kahukaw* means disfavor) (Jundam, 1983).

Moreover, one of the interesting developments over the last twenty to thirty years with respect to weddings has been the increasing trend to follow the *paghalal kawin* (traditional wedding ceremony) and the three-day celebration which follows (*paglingkud tu*) with a modern reception. Both events are marked by (among other things) the acquisition and use of clothing appropriate to each activity. When families cannot afford to host two events, the ‘modern’ style gives way to ‘tradition’. The latter is, if anything, more expensive. When a family is on a very tight budget the expectation is that even if – as is often the case – the groom wears ‘modern’ style for the marriage ceremony while the bride will be dressed in ‘traditional’ attire. Johnson, in his 18 months of field work, observed only once a marriage celebration in which the bride wore a ‘modern’, western-style dress for the initial marriage rituals (Johnson, 2020).

For free males, legal capacity was a simple matter before they were subject to paternal compulsion. After it, they were not. As minors, they could not contract their own marriages; as mature they could (Hajr, 2003). Maturity was usually constituted by puberty, normally menarche for a girl and first nocturnal emission for a boy, though other signs of physical maturation could be taken into account. A father’s right to marry

off his minor sons was taken for granted, as was the cessation of this right when they attained maturity. Any free male in his majority and of sound mind had free rein over his marital affairs, but the Muslim jurists did not think of this in term of obtaining his consent. That would have implied assent to someone else's decision or actions, which was antithetical to their notion of the male agent. Instead, it is only with regard to enslaved males and females that serious discussion of consent or lack thereof, occurs (Ali, 2010).

The Maguindanao customs of marriage are also Islamic. Marriages between persons of varying ranks are common, with children assigned to a rank intermediate between those of their parents. This leads to a spectrum of rank rather than sharply defined social classes. Social rank is important for determination of the amount of bride wealth to be exchanged at marriage. Marriage to one's second cousin is preferred. Depending on the social status, a man might have multiple wives, but polygamy is rarely practiced among the lower-ranked people. Among the Tausug communities, marriages are ideally arranged by parents, in line with Islamic laws. First and second cousins are favored spouses since their parents are kinsmen and the problem of inheritance is simplified. The bride's wealth must be given to the bride's family before the wedding is held, and the newly married couple first lives with the bride's family. Among the Yakan, marriage is usually initiated by the groom. He not only pays the bride's price but must also pay all expenses connected with the wedding ceremony. The newly married couple initially lives with either of their parents, then later build their own home on either the wife's or husband's land (An-Naim, 2002).

The Tausug culture and tradition on *pagkawin* varied only in terms of each municipality's interpretation or application of the concept, according to Sajan, et.al (2021). Along with it, Sajan, et.al (2021) also stated that the Tausug observed common

processes in marriage started from norms before *pagkawin* which comprised *pagpasihil* (pre-negotiation), *pagpangasawa* (formal negotiation,) *pagturul taymah* (re-deliberation), *pagkawah tugun* (final scheduling), *paghatud bugas* (sending of sacks of rice and other commodities as part of the demands); to *pagkawin* proper with Imam or any religious official tasked to solemnize marriage, *maharbasingan* (dowry and other requirements), witnesses, *Wali*, *dulang*, *khutba' Nikah* (wedding sermon) and celebration as its main features; to norms after *pagkawin* which comprised the consumption of *dulang*, *pagba'tal* (legal/nuptial touch), *pagtingkuang* or *pagbaid* (reversion) and public viewing) *pagjaga* (watching over) and *pag salam* (consumption of marriage). Moreover, Tausug is rich in culture. *Pagkawin* or Tausug marriage practice with its sophisticated processes, procedures and materials attached to it is an indication of high level of cultural orientation (Sajan et.al, 2006).

Before marriage takes place, there are stages of match making conducted from day one until the final arrangement. It could start from the *pagkawin*, down to the pre-nuptial celebration, to designing and sewing of wedding attires, venue contracting, Muslim food menu and officiating imam. The preparation also includes video-photo documentation and everything in-between (Banagudos, 2018).

In accordance with Jainal's (1971) study of Tausug kinship, he stated that Tausug completely arranged weddings were more common in the past. Also, young men and women now have greater opportunities to choose their own mates because of increased contact among young people, particularly as the educational system has grown into higher levels of study. In addition, a friendship will develop between two people, which will eventually lead to the *tunang-tunang* (sweetheart) stage, then the boy requests that his parents approach the girl's parents to obtain permission to marry her. If the outcome is good and the boy's parents can afford the bride's price, a formal

event known as *pagturul taima'* or *pagkawad' tiyangguhan* is held. Jainal also mentioned the degree of a girl's formal education is a critical aspect. Additionally, a bride price for an educated young woman is substantially greater than for one who does not have this advantage. The bride-price is viewed as recompense for her father's educational expenses (Jainal, 1971).

According to Oracion (1964), among *magahats* of Southern Negros, the alliance created by two families is more important than the marriage itself, and the *dagdag* (bride price) is a good example of this. As a result, marriage by capture is relatively important because it provides little, if any, of the benefits gained from kinship relationships in traditional marriages, since the *dagdag* is the most essential factor in a *Magahat* marriage proposal. Moreover, the girl's father invites all of his relatives, and they cluster around to determine the *dagdag*. In addition, the *dagdag* demanded by the parents is proportional to the prestige, beauty, and the work capabilities of the woman. Some families do not require much, for some, it is enough to receive money for the bride's price and then for the girl's parents to buy the items they wanted to distribute to their relatives (Oracion, 1964).

In line with Generoso Rivera's (1966) study of Maranao in Lumbayao, Lanao, he stated the Marriage customs and practices of Maranao are very well defined. For the boys, marriage is an expensive affair and is therefore a heavy burden. This is true for all classes of people although among the poor the "price" of the bride is proportionately low. In addition, among the upper classes, the bride's price, which may be called a "dowry" runs to thousands of pesos plus some carabaos. Moreover, in many instances, to finance a marriage, some mortgages are necessary, and the boy may have to resort to asking for some financial help from relatives. Also, the dowry must be met, as no legal marriage would be affected without it. In marriage, the young

Maranao boy and girl are dominated by parental wishes and a very restricted courtship takes place. Moreover, the boy and girl are not allowed to speak with each other except in groups and when they do, they are closely watched. According to a prominent Hadji in Lumbayao, the educated Muslims are getting impatient with these restrictions but only minor changes or disobedience to the ancient practice have so far taken place (Rivera, 1966).

Furthermore, as what Orosa has commented that in Sulu, marriages are commonly arranged by their parents, and the agreement of a woman's father is required for her marriage. In addition to that, if the father is deceased, the grandfather's approval must be obtained; if there is no grandfather, the consent of the oldest brother or the closest male relative will suffice. A man who is old enough to support a wife has the freedom to choose his wife, but a woman does not have the right to marry without the required consent. However, the severity of ancient customs is fading, and women are increasingly marrying according to their own preferences. Other than that, when the marriage has been properly arranged, the man pays the bride's parents a price that has been agreed upon, usually between forty and one hundred pesos, and makes the bride's obligatory gifts. The man also covers the expense of the traditional celebration, which can run into the thousands of pesos (Orosa, 1931).

In most cases, parental arrangement in marriage remains in practice especially in the rural areas. During the match, the parents of the bride occasionally asked for a *Maligay* as part of the dower for the would-be bride. It somehow complements enthusiasm on the day of celebration because *Maligay* is attention grabbing. In other words, dower is the right of every bride prior to marriage. This is a gift that has been specified and mandated by Islamic teachings (Sheeha, 1997).

Following this line of thought, the *Maligay* is part of or close to the realization of “*ungsud*”. It should be noted that the term literally means -that which is given in payment. Ideally, it is a transfer from the “*usba*” (patrilineal kin) of the boy to the *usba* of the girl. In practice the mother’s kindred “*waris*” are also involved although Tausug like to emphasize the primacy of the “*usba*” because it can be more closely derived from orthodox Islamic doctrine (Ijin, 2015).

Thus, *Maligay* is an example of a Tausug folkway that is commonly known as the customs, traditions, and conventions within a society. These are the general rules, customary and habitual ways and patterns of expected behavior usually followed, without much thought given to the matter (Panopio et al. 1994).

It is also important to point out in this paper that the evolution of the customs, traditions and cuisines of the Tausug is greatly influenced by the peoples’ interactions with foreign traders and the likes. Sulu culture was rich and advanced due to the integration of influences from the outside which may include the Sultanate’s cuisines of mixed local and foreign dishes. Sulu appears in Chinese sources as early as the Yuan dynasty (1278 – 1368) which chronicled lengthy account of tributary mission in 1417 from Sulu to the celestial court as recorded in the Ming annals (Warren, 1981). While there is no clear mention about the *Maligay* in Sulu Sultanate’s *tarsila*, there are a few Tausug oral traditions that would link the two (*Maligay* and royalty).

According to the old lady from Parang Sulu, the Tausug oral tradition mentioned that *Maligay* is served to the royal family during occasions. (“*In Maligay hipag-tagama ha bang awn pakaradjaan sin mga sila tao barbangsa*”). The dishes were carefully selected and cooked according to the request of the royal family. Invariably, the foods have so much in common with other sultanates’ cuisines in Malaysia and Brunei. This raises the possibility that the Sulu royal family would have preferred the glamorous

preparation of various delicacies as may be the result of the intervention process that may include the intrinsic value of Chinese and Indian influences.

Therefore, *Maligay* is linked to Sulu's royalty within the framework of status symbol. Admittedly, the royal family had the highest social and economic standings during the Sultanate reign. This status is strengthened by the power of the Sultan that transcended to personal life. Preferably occasions and gifts must be fascinating to the eyes. This is one way of saying, supremacy over the subjects who belong to the ruler.

As a status symbol, *Maligay* has its shape so close to architectural design on the general belief and aesthetic creativity that conform to prestige and power. In fact, the emblem of *Ukkil* (visual arts) is something worth admiring because of its meaning. According to Ligaya F. Amilbangsa (2005), visual arts of the Sulu is a treatise on cultural practices inextricably linked to economic and social history of Sulu Archipelago.

Regionalization (to include the culture of the Tausug) and culture of Muslim Southeast Asians

It seems cultures and religion of Muslim in Southeast Asia may have a conventional direction as both either in agreement or the religion itself guides culture to operate for the most part. Three important clarifications may be in order here. The first concerns the use of the term's 'culture' and 'religion', two concepts that are quite distinct though inextricably entwined, hence the source of much confusion. Both religion and culture are all-encompassing concepts that cannot be easily or usefully categorized by making one the subset of the other, or by any attempting to reduce one to the realm of the sacred and assigning the other to the realm of the profane. Nor it is satisfactory to characterize religion in terms of doctrinal or metaphysical claims on

the other hand, and culture purely in relation to ethnicity or 'primordial' attachment on the other. Both culture and religion delineate in complex and interacting ways of boundaries that separate the insider from the outsider, the internal from external, right from wrong or at least acceptable from reprehensible conduct. The second has to do with the understanding of religion itself. It hardly needs be said that the world's major religions, including the three Abrahamic faiths, are heterogeneous entities composed of a bewildering array of sects, schools, denominations, orthodoxies, and heresies. If this sometimes makes it difficult to conceive of faith traditions in the singular, this is even more so in the case of abstract references to religion. And the third regards the understanding of culture that has also elaborated many times before, but bears repeating here. We are not dealing with immutable, primordial essences but with malleable, highly dynamic, and constantly transforming norms, values, customs, and practices. Nowhere is this more so than in Southeast Asia, a region straddling one of the most ancient trading routes, open to the exchange of goods, ideas, and speculations about the metaphysical. Not only have Southeast Asia's indigenous peoples themselves long participated in these networks of trade, scholarship, and pilgrimage, but they have also long hosted a diverse range of diasporic communities (Camilleri and Schottman, 2013).

By the same token, the mobility of people from one island to the other and within the island has also allowed the spread of culture. This phenomenon happened since time immemorial and has resulted to inter-cultural and even inter-religious interfaces. This situation continued to exist in the present and evolved towards the development of regionalization. Regional identities can influence regionalization and vice versa. It should be noted that people from different countries at the onset often lack knowledge of each other, mutual trust, and common identities (Hettne, 2005). Through time, trust

and knowledge may grow, and shared identities may emerge as transnational interaction and cooperation increase. This can make cooperation easier also in other areas. Hence, social contact and relations between isolated groups can create regional identities and space for regionalization. In this way, transnational social movements can influence processes of regionalisation and regionalism through identity formation. Again: regionalism and regionalisation may evolve, not only as a response to strategic action, but also as unintended bioeffects of the actions of regional actors. This does not imply that formal regionalisation cannot evolve without the existence of a regional identity (Dahle, 2004).

Identity is a complex and contested notion. In simple terms, identity refers to an actor's (which may be a person group of persons state or group of states) sense of being unique or distinctive because of physical and social attributes values and patterns of behaviour Identity is a function of two main factors which are mainly subjective. One is how an actor sees itself. The second is how others or outsiders see that actor. The two are related but not identical. A person's or group's own sense of being distinctive may be stronger than the outsider's perception or recognition of it. For example, the sense of ASEAN identity is arguably stronger inside the grouping than when viewed by outsiders (Acharya, 2018).

Why is identity important? Identity is key to building a community, whether economic, socio-cultural, or political-security varieties. A community has two key features. First, it implies a social, rather than purely instrumental, relationship. The key attributes of a community, to use American political scientist Ernst Haas' words, are 'trust, friendship, complementarity, and responsiveness' (Haas, 1973). Second, a community is not just a group of culturally similar people. While people in communities have cultural and physical attributes in common, they are also people who 'display

mutual responsiveness, confidence, and esteem, and who self-consciously self-identify' (Puchala, 1984).

Identity is socially constructed, combining instrumental logic with habit-forming socialisation, norms, and institutions. Moreover, such identity building is not entirely divorced from cultural and historical ties but is reinforced by it. Simple proximity, historical ties, and shared culture are sufficient for identity. Their outcome can be indeterminate, proximity can lead to either war or peace, historical memories have been associated with war, and cultural ties do not make nations immune to conflict. One needs a sense of common or collective identity to build a true community, legitimise cooperation nationally and internationally, and reinforce the rationale for collective action (Acharya, 2018).

Like a community, a regional identity can be imagined. Ben Anderson (1991) spoke of nationalism and the nation-state as 'imagined communities. He referred to the role of print media, colonial administration, and elite socialisation in creating a sense of community amongst disparate and disrupted localities that formed the basis of the nation state. Just as nations are imagined, so can regions be. Southeast Asia is in many ways an imagined region, its experience of regional identity building can be likened to a quest for identity. Without forgetting the influence of historical interactions of its constituent units, Southeast Asia could not have been conceived except through the imagination of historians (both Western and indigenous), imperial strategists in the late colonial era, and above all by the elites of ASEAN Member States. Hence, Singapore's first Foreign Minister and a founding father of ASEAN, S. Rajaratnam, exhorted ASEAN members to recognise a 'regional existence', in addition to national ones – a kind of existential community. Others, including nationalist leaders, sought to return Southeast Asia to its pre-colonial ties through a regional organization. Here, the

actions of ASEAN's founders were purposive and rational. But they were also underpinned by a sense of history and identity. Its founders were 'imagining' themselves to be part of a collective entity, or a region, by drawing upon a shared historical heritage as well as identifying common goals in a contemporary setting (Ibid).

Southeast Asia, currently a region of ten nations that comprise ASEAN, displays a remarkable degree of political, cultural, and economic diversity. Being located at the crossroads between China and India and straddling the major sea lanes linking the Pacific and Indian Oceans, Southeast Asia is also exposed to a constant stream of external influences. Hence, ideas and identities in currency in Southeast Asia tend to be fluid and contested. Nonetheless, the growth of a long-term and relatively robust form of regionalism (ASEAN) has created a sense of regional identity alongside the still distinctive national identities of Southeast Asian countries (Acharya, 2000; Acharya, 2013).

Within this context, the identity of ASEAN emerged from the five major sources: nationalism, religion, cultural norms and modes of interaction, a modernist developmental state orientation and approach, and regionalism (Ibid).

Identity is crucial to the understanding of ASEAN's community-building efforts as "identities are the bases of interests" and "identities both generate and shape interests" (Wendt, 1992). Alexander Wendt explained that "an actor cannot know what it wants unless it knows what it is." Simply put, in order for the ASEAN Community to create and pursue its interests, it must be aware of itself first (Wendt, 1999).

In general terms, identity does not only refer to the physical attributes of the people, but also the ideas, norms, behaviors, languages, values, symbols, discourses, practices, and socio-political systems that are constructed through time. These social constructions are often nested under the label culture, which, according to Amitav

Acharya, may be considered enough condition for regional identity along with shared history and proximity (Acharya, 2017).

Benedict Anderson emphasized this function of social construction in conceptualizing a community through the role of imagery, invented traditions, representation, imagination, and symbols as constructed narratives (Anderson, 1991). For him, a community can be imagined into being, even if the members do not know each other.

That established, the formation of an ASEAN Community is anchored on an ASEAN Identity, which should not be construed as equivalent to the Southeast Asian regional identity, but rather an expression of it. Acharya clarified that Southeast Asian Identity is founded on, but not limited to, important shared geographical, socio-cultural, and historico-political features. By contrast, ASEAN Identity is shaped by strategic and political forces through government and societal interactions. In this respect, ASEAN Identity is to be understood along a full appreciation of the broader identities in the Southeast Asian region (Acharya, 2018).

Through the exploration of the materials presented, the researcher has identified a research gap - a lack of comprehensive studies that specifically delve into the culinary aspects of wedding ceremonies across Southeast Asian countries particularly the ones practiced by the Muslims. While existing studies have examined the cultural and religious dimensions of weddings, the detailed exploration of food preparation in these contexts remains limited. Therefore, this section seeks to bridge that gap and contribute to the enrichment of knowledge by shedding light on the significance of food in wedding rituals and traditions.

By examining the significance of food in understanding ASEAN and its regional identity, this study aims to shed light on the intricate relationship between cultural

practices, regionalization, and the formation of a shared regional identity. The exploration of *Maligay* as a case study provides insights into how localized customs can contribute to a broader regional integration process within ASEAN, showcasing the potential for cross-cultural resonance and the development of a cohesive regional identity. For instance, among families across SEA region observe a local custom in table setting wherein foods are treated communal and accessible to all. This is highlighted by Kong Foong Ling in his study that all dishes in an Asian table, with the exception of dessert, are usually presented at once and served with rice (Ling, 2002). This custom is on a par with *Maligay* granting the fact that foods of different dishes are hauled inside for creative display during wedding celebrations. The presentation of foods on one platform also implies the holistic approach to life, the promises of a better life for the newly wed individuals.

By and large, Filipino culture can significantly contribute to the idea of regional cooperation and understanding. Through academic research and policy initiatives, the exchanging of information on local communities shall be possible. In this case, *Maligay* as one of the manifestations of the Tausug culture and a product of diverse interactions of indigenous Filipino practices, Arab, and Chinese influences. Some of the participants held the belief that *Maligay* is a result of interactions between diverse cultures, including those of Arab and Chinese that somehow captivate the attention of other peoples with distinct cultures in the region. With the help of social media, the distinct features of *Maligay* can ignite curiosity in other communities to appreciate their own wedding practices or influence them to adopt *Maligay* as part of their wedding ceremonies.

Communities were primarily organized into kinship groups rather than formal “tribes”, so gifting was a way to maintain cordial ties among group as well as to

reallocate goods. Goods then could move between groups, ensuring a varied diet for individuals who did not use “money” and had no tradition of bartering. The potlatch system, seemingly bizarre to European eyes, relied on the expectation that every gift would be reciprocated and that the most prosperous would give the most gifts, thereby maintaining their status as well as sharing their resources (Stewart, 2017).

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

The result of the review of available materials both from online and print sources shows that rituals and ceremonies are present in the wedding celebrations among the Tausug and of the Southeast Asian societies and beyond. Such rituals and traditional beliefs vary from one island or ethnic group to another. Despite this difference, the fact remains that there are commonalities in wedding celebrations to include the role of food. To further examine the foods' role in the wedding occasions between the Tausug and Malaysian, this research has employed the case study tool to gather relevant data from various participants in southern Philippines.

The research employs two data collection methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of *Maligay's* cultural significance within the Tausug community. The first method involves direct observation to explore the tangible aspects of *Maligay's* practice, including its role in Tausug ceremonies and cultural contexts. The second method delves into the intangible aspects by conducting in-depth interviews to uncover the lived experiences that shape *Maligay's* uniqueness and significance to the Tausug group. These dual approaches aim to provide a holistic perspective on *Maligay*, considering both its observable practices and its deeply rooted cultural dimensions within the Tausug community's identity and tradition.

The practice of giving "*hadia*" (gifts) within Malay families in Malaysia is a common tradition during wedding celebrations. Relatives and friends present "*hadia*" to express their appreciation, respect, and best wishes to the newlyweds. This tradition is closely linked to the concept of bridal gifts, and it can be said that *Maligay* plays a significant role in shaping Malay wedding customs, particularly in relation to the

exchange of gifts. Thus, the data for this section were drawn from interview of a colleague and his friends in Malaysia through series of phone calls, making these supplemental data reliable and well-grounded.

Research Design

Employing the descriptive case study design has allowed the researcher to document the experiences and practices of the participants about the *Maligay* where viewpoints, attitudes, and ways of life are contributing variables. It is important to point out that the case study is hoped to contribute to the continuing knowledge on wedding and food practices in the ASEAN region. People may appreciate the connections of the Philippines with its immediate neighbors as manifested by the similarities in the wedding rituals and practices as exemplified by *Maligay*.

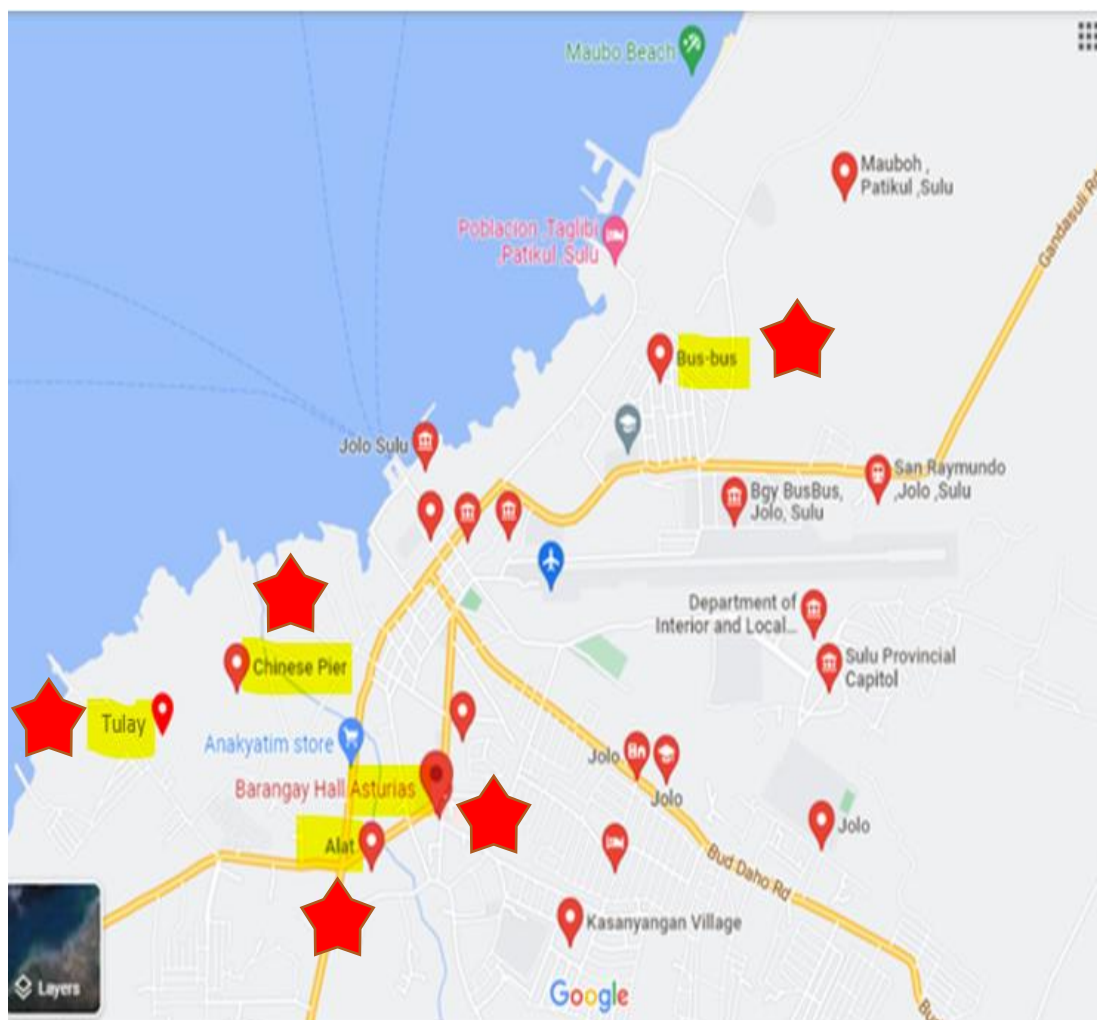
Aside from the set of questionnaires administered to the participants, the researcher also utilized a Diary Note that recorded lengthy and uncontrolled questions allowing to cover other unexplored data. These data collection instruments were necessary in gathering primary data on the pretext of a) counterchecking of answers found in both questionnaire and diary note, b) commonality of topic through individual impressions by way of “written” vis-à-vis “heard” from the participants, and c) variance of answers measures the degree to which each statement differs. Following the thematic analysis, it is necessary to identify the undiversified ideas and relationships in the responses.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in the town of Jolo where a lot of potential residents were known. The town was composed of eight barangays and the capital of Sulu

province. Majority of the residents were Muslims who shared same culture and spoke one single dialect. The town of Jolo is a mainland municipality with progressive commercial establishments, accessible by sea and air transportation from Zamboanga City. While from nearby islands, it is only reachable by sea transportation. According to Global Volcanism Program, Jolo lies in the Sulu archipelago, about 150 km southwest of the tip of the Zamboanga Peninsula on southwest Mindanao Island.

Figure 1. Research locale. Courtesy of Google.



Participants

The study carefully selected participants who met specific criteria, ensuring their deep understanding of the *Maligay* wedding practice's cultural significance, traditions, and customs. Participants were chosen from five different barangays to capture diverse perspectives, representing a range of geographical areas. These participants varied in age from 18 to 65, covering multiple generations within the community to offer a broad perspective on *Maligay*. All participants willingly participated in the study, facilitated by barangay officials who ensured their eligibility. The resulting group of participants provided a comprehensive and representative sample, and their profiles are presented in tables within the study for clarity and organization.

Table 1

Participants' Profile

Participant	Address	Livelihood/ Profession	Gender	Age
1	Busbus, Jolo, Sulu	Elder	Male	55
2	Asturias, Jolo, Sulu	Religious Leader	Male	58
3	Asturias, Jolo, Sulu	Elder/Religious Leader	Male	67
4	Tulay, Jolo, Sulu	Religious Leader	Male	49
5	Tulay, Jolo, Sulu	Barangay Official	Male	40
6	Chinese Pier, Jolo, Sulu	Youngster	Female	31
7	Chinese Pier, Jolo, Sulu	Barangay Official	Male	43
8	Alat, Jolo, Sulu	Youngster	Female	27
9	Busbus, Jolo, Sulu	Prominent Family	Female	26
10	Alat, Jolo, Sulu	Prominent Family	Male	27

Data Gathering Procedure

1. Data collection

During data gathering in Jolo, the researcher was able to identify point-persons of ten participants from the groups of Tausug families, barangay officials, elders, prominent families, religious leaders, and youngsters. A consent note was presented to Barangay officials prior to an interview. Afterwards, a set of open and mixed questionnaires was administered with the purpose of exploring the wider range of responses for each question raised. In addition, a diary note was also used to access direct statements from the participants.

Furthermore, an online interview with an important key informant from Malaysia and his associate was conducted to explore additional insights concerning the practice of *hadia* (wedding gifts) in Malaysia. The key informant, who is a knowledgeable figure within the Malaysian community, holds a position of significance related to wedding customs and traditions. This interview aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the *hadia* practice in the Malaysian context and its potential connections or distinctions from the Filipino wedding traditions.

1.2 Research Instrument

The data were collected using both survey questionnaires and interview guides, employing two distinct methods. The first involved administering the questionnaires in person to ten participants from each of the five barangays. The second method included conducting online interviews with participants located abroad using a cellphone.

Incorporating participants from various barangays in Jolo and individuals from diverse backgrounds, including foreigners, greatly enhanced the data collection process, effectively addressing the research questions.

In the research methodology, the questionnaire and interview guide were designed to encompass various aspects. Firstly, they included sections for profiling the participants. Second, they contained questions related to the participants' knowledge of the practice of *Maligay* in Jolo and Sabah, Malaysia. Additionally, the questionnaire and interview guide also delved into how the participants perceived the practice's contribution to regional identity and understanding, covering dimensions such as its relevance to other Muslim communities in Sabah, Malaysia, the frequency of observance, and the motivations behind the practice.

1.3 Data Analysis

The analysis of the findings was primarily derived from the results of the questionnaire and interviews. In addition to written responses and diary notes, an analysis of online data on practices in other countries was also incorporated to provide a comprehensive view of the subject matter. This multifaceted approach allowed for a more robust and holistic examination of the research questions, enhancing the depth and breadth of the analysis.

Aside from writing, a diary note was also used as a tool that points at the analysis. Furthermore, interpretation of data analysis involved the categorization and interpretation of responses based on their relevance to the research problems and themes. This process employed logical reasoning to discern how and which determining factors contributed to the existence of the practice, ultimately leading to pertinent and meaningful conclusions.

The topic's broad based was assessed by examining how the practice was understood within Muslim communities and its transmission from one generation to another. The results were considered with respect to their potential applicability not only within the town of Jolo but also in Sabah, Malaysia, and possibly to a wider range of diverse groups of people. It is important to note that the analysis was conducted based on the data gathered in Jolo, from participants located overseas, and from online sources. While the findings can provide insights and perspectives, their widespread may be limited to the specific context and sample studied in this research.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

This chapter discusses the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data gathered from the field and online sources. The research instrument used were the unstructured questionnaire and interview guide administered to the selected participants. In addition, a critical analysis of online sources from other Malay countries was undertaken to complement the primary data collection methods and provide a broader perspective on the subject matter. This multifaceted approach ensured a comprehensive examination of the research questions. Utilizing a mixed approach to generate wider data on the practice of *Maligay* and other similar practices in the region.

In presenting the results, the study was systematically organized into three distinct sections, each addressing a specific research problem. The first section illuminated the pivotal role of food in the wedding celebrations of Muslim Southeast Asian societies, providing a comprehensive overview of Islamic wedding beliefs and practices with a focus on the central significance of food in these celebrations. Shifting focus to the Tausug community, the second section delved into the practice of *Maligay* in wedding celebrations in Jolo, exploring its production and cultural importance within Tausug wedding traditions. The final section extended the inquiry to the broader context of promoting regional identity between Filipinos and Malay societies. It revealed how the practice of *Maligay* and the food cart tradition transcended the Tausug community, resonating with other Muslim communities in Southeast Asia and contributing to a deeper understanding of regional identity within the ASEAN region. This structured approach ensured a methodical presentation of results that closely aligned with the overarching research objectives.

It is crucial to emphasize that the study's findings have addressed the research questions and have been presented in three distinct sections as appropriate.

PART I – FOOD IN WEDDING CELEBRATIONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Aside from bride price, food is another element that is always present in the wedding feasts in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines. There are instances that food became part of the bride price itself. In fact, some of these variants are mentioned partly in the previous section. Except for Brunei and Cambodia, the rest of the ASEAN countries have at least documented food offerings during wedding ceremonies.

In Laos, the people practiced the *Pha Kuan*. It is a handmade marigold pyramid made of banana leaves and flowers, surrounded by fruits, drink, cooked sticky rice in baskets, boiled eggs, and chicken) (Laos Guide 999, 2022). *Pha Kwan* ('tray of your soul') are offering trays that are presented for the ceremonies around birth, marriage, departures, and return, and at other key intervals in a person's life, such as after recovery from a severe illness. The 'tray' usually includes an elaborate arrangement of the abovementioned materials to represent the five stages. The offerings on the tray are for the *kwan* (souls), but once 'consumed' by the soul may be eaten/taken by those involved in the ceremony. At marriage, the *pha kwan* are presented during a ceremonial binding of the couple's souls together (Chalernphon and McKinnon, 2018).

In the case of Myanmar, the Burmese particularly the Bamar group observed religiously the offering of *ohn bwe ngapyaw bwe* (receptacle of a green coconut with its stalk intact encircled by bunches of green bananas), and six ceremonial trays containing rice, popcorn, grated betel nut and coconut, jasmine flowers, and red and

white steamed glutinous rice cakes and seven fried whole fish, are prepared for the ceremony.

In Indonesia, there are several weddings that require distinct food preparation and ritual. Being an archipelago, the food preparation and preferences differ from one island to another or from one ethnic group to another. For Betawi wedding, for instance, *Roti Buaya*, crocodile-shaped bread, is important and is used as a symbol of faithfulness. In the case of Bataknese wedding, people observed *Ulaon Unjuk*. It is a symbolic procession of slaughtering a cow which then will be cooked in a traditional way to be eaten together. Because of this sacrifice custom, the groom has to really highly honor the bride (Bridestory, 2015).

In Malaysia, foods in Malay wedding ceremony symbolized the aspects of life. *Pulut kuning* (symbol of royalty), *sireh junjung* (symbol of relationship) egg flower (fertility), *wajik* (will) are some of the examples. Togetherness, social bonding, and ways of appreciation clearly indicate that foods are significant for this ethnic group. This is collectively part of the *makan beradab* which include special food such as beef rendang, *hati masak kicap*, sweet sour fish, *acar rampai* and fruits are served and arranged in attractive way for the bridegroom. Food also provided for the guest as gift. Normally *bunga telur*, *wajik*, *dodol*, and *pulut kuning* (Muhammad et al. 2013).

All Malay weddings must be accompanied by *hantaran* (gifts) at the time the vows are exchanged. These gifts are placed on a tray and beautifully decorated, showing respect. The *hantaran* includes few traditional sweet desserts such as *halwa maskat*, *kek lapis*, *wajik pulut*, *kuih kacang labu*, *wajik ubi kayu*, *halwa lobak merah*, and *dodol* (Raji, 2017).

In Singapore, people had this *Tok Panjang*. It literally means long table, the word itself reflects intermingling of Chinese and Malay terms. *Tok* means table in Hokkien

language, and *Panjang* is Malay term for long. It is a lavish Peranakan feast laid out on a long table during special occasions such as Chinese New Year or on weddings with close family and friends (CJ Photography, n.d.).

In Thai culture, the Khan Mak parade is an essential part of wedding traditions where the groom and his family are required to lead the parade carrying valuable items and cash to the bride's house. This pre-wedding ceremony is to prove that the groom is able to financially support and take care of his bride throughout the rest of his life. However, it seems like customs do have a curious way of reinventing themselves. Here's the story of a confident Thai bride who led her Khan Mak procession to her groom instead (Supanat, 2022).

In Vietnam, a traditional Vietnamese wedding looks very similar to *Đám Hối*, the traditional Vietnamese engagement ceremony and engagement party. The Vietnamese wedding day starts with the groom's family and friends forming a procession line, traditionally at the groom's house, and parading to the bride's house. Of course, this is remarkably impractical most of the time, so usually the groom's side forms a procession a little bit down the block from the bride's house. This procession will include the groom's close family and friends, and is headed by a couple, usually the parents of the groom or an elder couple of the clan. The groom himself will be at the end of the procession, often carrying a bouquet. Each person in line will carry fabric-covered trays bearing gifts, usually involving components of a feast; fruit, candy, *bánh trung thu* (moon cakes), *bánh xu xê* (pandan rice cakes with mung bean), *bánh cốm* (other pandan rice cakes with mung bean), *xôi* (colorful mounds of sticky rice), wine, and others (Nowack, 2022).

Being an archipelago, the Philippines has diverse practices on food preparation on several occasions especially during weddings. Ethnic affiliations, island conditions

and traditions also dictate the kind of food being offered in wedding ceremonies. In southern Philippines, the showcasing of *Maligay* is based on the landscape, available resources, and influence of Islam. In the succeeding discussion, the offering of *Maligay* is not a novel phenomenon for the Philippines.

Similarities of *Maligay* with other marriage practices and traditions with communities residing in Southeast Asia are also noted by some participants. During the interview, one of the participants said, “*Awn da isab pag Maligay kanila byah da di katuh in ha Indonesia*” (there is also a version of *Maligay* in Indonesia) that the practice of *Maligay* can also be seen among the Indonesian. However, as further stated typical Indonesian used to give gift to a bride not just by means of foodstuffs rather a bequeathed property. In her study, Rosmah Tami gave attention to women’s property rights among the Bugis and Makassar ethnic groups in South Sulawesi. She looked at the concept of *siri*, meaning reticence, honor, or shame, both of individuals and collective entities such as an extended family. Tami discussed how the norm of *sirj* serves as a means for women to have control over their property rights and is articulated through features of wedding ceremonies (Bowen & Salim, 2019).

This is also true to Bruneian Muslims. Kate Mikoley and Tamra Orr in their book titled “Cultures of the World Brunei” noted that before the wedding took place, the parents of the bride and groom may meet to determine the *hantaran*, a gift that is traditionally given from the groom to the bride and her family. Once considered customary, today the choice to give *hantaran* or not is often the decision made by the bride and groom and their families. The term can also refer to gifts exchanged between both the bride and groom. Although *hantaran* was not obviously mentioned as to what form or item did it appear. Plainly the author just explained this as merely an offering which among Muslims can construe it to be a goodie or souvenir that is suggested

following a set of circumstance arising from the talks between parties. Somehow with this similarity in marriage proposal, thence a clear depiction of a symbolic cultural element between the Tausug and Bruneian Muslims (Mikoley & Orr, 2021).

The foregoing could be an instance of a learned collective behavior, which was explained by Edwin Thumboo, in his edited book titled, “Cultures in ASEAN and the 21st Century”, that accordingly a learned collective behavior as opposed to instinctive, or inborn behavior. These learned traits form a total way of life held in common by a group of people. Learned similarities in speech, behavior, ideology, livelihood, technology, value system and society bind people together in a culture. It involves a communication system of acquired beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes that serve to supplement and channel instinctive behavior (Thumboo, 1996).

Correspondingly, the case of the Muslims in Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, and the Philippines flashes commonality when it comes to wedding practice. This suggests that whatever the practice is, it can easily be adopted by allowing the external rationalization to penetrate the common consciousness thereby understanding what practically could be accepted by Islam. And once Muslims in these countries are accustomed to one another in the context of cultures, the tendency would be that they lived by the practices and toed the line to the next generation. In this instance, there shall be a symbiotic association among Muslims irrespective of what nationality within the ASEAN region. Literally, in the regional areas of Muslims, wedding celebration is closely comparable due to its typical ceremonial rite as prescribed by Islam. Interconnectivity allows cross cultural communication, thus making a single group part of the whole. In addition, trading has become the ground for connectivity of people in ASEAN region. With barter trading advancing the exchange of goods and services, local market industry flourished across maritime countries. People kept themselves

busy travelling from one destination to one another, having their experiences unique as a result of the cultural confluence.

Among the Tausug families, food appears to play a significant role in weddings. The preparation of various dishes holds great importance as it is connected to maintaining their family reputation. Weddings are considered special and formal occasions for them. From the moment of the proposal to the wedding day, Tausug families are meticulous about selecting the food they will serve to their guests. In fact, the satisfaction of the guests largely depends on the presence of delicious and sumptuous foods on the table. This underscores the significance of food during a wedding celebration.

The Tausug families in Jolo have been accustomed to the frequent cultural observance of the practice of *Maligay*. This manifests their unconscious association to their fore parents channelling the so-called community norm, drawn from the legacies that remain enforced to the present time. One good example of the community norm in Jolo is the customary wedding. That aside from the legal ritual prescribed by the Sharia, the Tausug adopt the 'add-on' requisite for wedding which is now the gift of a *Maligay*. It can be discerned that *Maligay* is outside of the Islamic requisites for wedding. However, across the four schools of thought namely, *Shafie*, *Maliki*, *Hambali*, and *Hanafi*, the issue of 'cultural integration' as part of the Islamic teachings is not a problem - provided that any cultural practice MUST not adulterate the Islamic teachings in one way or the other. At least rhetorically Muslims had emulated and followed the *Sunna* (tradition) of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) so that awareness of the Islamic law remains intact, and avoidance of Haram (prohibition) persists on a particular practice. Meanwhile, majority of the participants preferred to see *Maligay* during wedding. In fact, in the areas where the study was

conducted, the views from various sectors of society indicated a strong attachment to *Maligay* which underscores a sound wedding ritual once *Maligay* is included in the preparation. For a typical family, simple *Maligay* is enough as a wedding gift, as a matter of fact, people do not care about how *Maligay* is prepared, what is important is the food and aside from this, the preparation is optional, and it depends on the financial capability of the host. More importantly are the foods placed inside the *Maligay*. Moreover, the cost of a simple *Maligay* ranges from 10,000 to 20,000 pesos often the outward appearance should be presentable to the eyes so that people in the community would have a positive impression towards *Maligay*. Conclusively, at least twice a year that people witnessed *Maligay* in the town of Jolo. This expressed a continuous belief that is socially engendered and thus pervasive to the modern wedding celebrations. Where people in the community will have their complete joy and appreciation as if their ancestors continue to live among them in a state of a harmonizing system with *Maligay* as proof of a genealogical connection from one generation to another.

No doubt *Maligay* is part of the community norm. As if the practice cannot be questioned by anyone. Although people find it burden sometimes due to a reason that *Maligay* would incur financial requirement. However, most of the bride's parents wanted to entertain the invitees through *Maligay*. In fact, it is offered for all invitees, young and old to take home some foodstuffs and desserts like leche flan, *durul* (puff), *hantak* (bonbons) and many more from *Maligay*. Other participants believed that *Maligay* was just made for fun, yet they could not think of any other reason. While some said that it was part of the sacred ritual so why they practiced. And few of them said that affluent families (specially politicians) simply wanted to let people in the community know how rich they were. That whenever there was a wedding celebration

to take place, these rich families used to prepare a stunning *Maligay* of different sizes and embellished sometimes with paper bills ranging from five hundred to thousand notes.

Therefore, majority of the Tausug believed that *Maligay* is par for the course because of its advantage, people would really appreciate once local wedding turns out to be enthusiastically stirred up by the portrayal of a beautiful *Maligay*. Granting the fact that *Maligay* bears the cost of expenses for the host however, it does not bring to a halt the enchantment of producing a piece of *Maligay*. While many of the Tausug assumed that *Maligay* can be understood as a charity being that the foodstuffs contained in *Maligay* are intended for everyone. Others also have no doubt, for them *Maligay* is prepared for the entertainment of guests. Bottom line, *Maligay* becomes part of the community norm observed during wedding celebrations as an add on to dowry. In other words, *Maligay* is not a marriage requisite in Islam, but a customary practice that allows newlywed to hanker after. Be that as it may, the rich family usually the politicians have their own interpretation of *Maligay*. From the circle of their family, wedding celebration is a pathway to increase family reputation whilst they prepared a dazzling *Maligay* with an intention to array high standing. Epitomizing both 'wealth' and 'power' to impress people so that respect from members of other communities will be fathomed out.

The data show that all the participants were unanimous in their response by putting into words each individual awareness of the marriage requisites. This suggests that most of the Tausug are aware of the Sharia wedding requisites. However, there are still Tausug who are not contented with the Islamic law requirements for marriage, instead ironically, they themselves resorted to their customary practice as an add on to Sharia's. Meaning, there is an association of Custom and Sharia when it comes to

marriage. That in the town of Jolo, despite *Maligay* is not laid as requisite, nonetheless people acknowledged its importance as it further casts up joy to a spectacular celebration.

Thus, those Tausug coming of age are aware of the Sharia marriage requisites. It is not surprising that in the town of Jolo, Muslim couples have their own perception of how simple marriage in Islam is. Suffice to say, any 'demand' from the bride's parent which is outside of Sharia's requirement cannot be in any ways pinned on Islam. Consequently, the issue of a traditional wedding is crowd-pleasing to this day that leaves anyone with an option whether to make too much of something or just simply follow the Shariah. Remarkably despite the Tausug families are aware of the Islamic wedding, on the flip side they freeze to ways of innovation by lavishly celebrating marriage.

Most of the participants believed that Shariah wedding requisites should be followed. Hence, including their own wedding in the future necessarily the celebration must be in accordance with the Sharia. Since *Maligay* is outside of the Sharia wedding requisites therefore they prefer NOT to request it, as Islam does not put burden to anyone who is about to get married. While some believed that *Maligay* is a razzle-dazzle to wedding celebrations. Further they thought that *Maligay* could draw the attention of the crowd, so is the reason why they prefer to have *Maligay* for their weddings. While a lone view coming from a certain participant who said that at least by portraying a beautiful *Maligay* people would know his family background. This infers social lifestyle and standing among prominent Tausug.

Hence, among the Tausug, the decision to make *Maligay* is an option to pick. From the start of a marriage proposal both parties of the groom and bride must agree on certain requisites. It appears that there are many Tausug families who prefer the

Islamic wedding due to its simplicity. Although, there are some who believe that marriage can be perfected by the presence of a beautiful *Maligay*. While that is happening, there are few Tausug with deep pockets having their confidence that people in the community would be able to acknowledge them instantly after seeing a lavish *Maligay*. In other words, the rich maintain their status quo in the neighbourhood from beginning to end of the celebrations.

In terms of Sharia's wedding requirements, the celebration is typically simple yet sacred. It is essential to fulfill all the necessary elements. These include the offer and acceptance of the proposal, the presence of witnesses, and the agreement upon the dowry by both the bride and groom. Among these Islamic wedding requirements, the Tausug people often display their creativity through the concept of dowry. They introduce "add-ons" to align with the wedding customs, aiming to entertain the guests. In other words, *Maligay* serves as an optional addition to the celebration, but it does not undermine the sanctity of the Islamic marriage.

The next section touches specifically on the role of food in the wedding celebration in Jolo, Sulu. The opinions of participants have vividly described the nature of *Maligay*.

PART II – THE NATURE AND PRACTICE OF *MALIGAY* IN JOLO

As mentioned earlier, *Maligay* is a manifestation of the ethnic “uncorrupted” culture demonstrated beyond the test of time. Its transmission has pointed out the Tausug version of wedding celebrations which was regarded as exemplary contribution to the concept of regionalism. Furthermore, under this section, the practice shall be explained in accordance with the reasons for the Tausug to

continuously practice *Maligay*. As such, it is as well necessary to emphasize the cultural latitude in describing the manner of preparations and purposes.

Most of the participants indicated a high frequency, stating "very often," while a smaller portion mentioned preparing *Maligay* for wedding celebrations "occasionally." This suggests that Tausug families have a frequent tradition of including *Maligay* in their wedding festivities.

Admittedly, some of the participants have seldom witnessed the display of a *Maligay* because of their dwelling place is comprised of stilt houses situated over a shallow water nearly inaccessible. Thus, quite far from the main road where usually people gathered when there is a spectacle exhibit or parade of a beautiful *Maligay* every time there is wedding celebration.

Therefore, the Tausug's interaction to one other includes thoughts and values that help shaped their pattern of behaviour when it comes to a wedding practice. Nonetheless, this behaviour defends on the geographic location that sometimes kept a certain family at the rear of something leap forwards rather than toeing the line of progress with the majority. Based on findings, some participants said that their houses situated in swampy areas which were not conveniently accessible to public. So, every time there is a wedding occasion like motorcade, they cannot just go to the main road and watch the event. This suggests that seldom they gazed at the beautiful *Maligay* on display.

Several participants believed that *Maligay* evolved into a practice because it is a remnant of the so-called cultural legacy. All the three participants have common views with regards to the issue on *Maligay*. As emphasized by Participant 1, when he said,

"In kasabunnalan niya, in mga tao ha kawman dih da manganal atawakan magtalih sin salsilah ha tungod Maligay. Amura in kaingatan nila in ini busakah Sin

kamaas-maasan nila sampay pa adlaw ini hihinang nila. Amu hadja in bulan liyabayan yaun, awn ungod-ungod ko nag asawa ubos siyukatan sin maas sin babae mag hinang Maligay, minsan laung ta tihmus na in pagjianjian ha tungod sin ungsud. In katan-tan tihmus na maiba-ini ha hulihan na sin wakto putus na in katan dih mabayah in ina subay tuod awn Maligay malainkan ubos na piyagbissarahan.”

(“The truth of the matter, people in the community really do not think about the history of *Maligay* what they know is that this practice handed down to them from their fore-parents until these days. Just last month my cousin got married and he was asked by the parent of the bride to make *Maligay*, although we already agreed on the amount of bride-wealth. Everything was settled already however in the last minute of the deal; the mother of the bride insisted the inclusion of *Maligay* in the agreement.”)

This was reinforced by the statement of Participant 2, from Asturias who said,

“In ha tungod parkalah Maligay ha Lupah Sug sapantun niya biyah sangkap ha pagkaun. In mga manusiya mabayah hadja kuminam sin masarap lamay amu in taga sangkap marayaw. Na’sah, in kira-kirahan nila way kiyalukis sin agama Islam, Ha pamaham ko, in Maligay ha guah na sin sarah sin Sharia ha tungod sarat sin pagtiyaun. In ini laung ta’ maninjuki bunga sin pangaddatan ha pagtiyaun amu in mahunit na pabuntulun kalnah sin biyah sapantun niya dih maharus in pagtiyaun bang way Maligay.”

(“The issue of *Maligay* in the town of Jolo is like an ingredient for a delicacy. Nevertheless, their curiosity is not justified by Islam, I mean, *Maligay* is outside the Sharia wedding requirements. This is merely the product of our local tradition which is hard to curb as if marriage will not be consummated without *Maligay*.”)

Which in like manner this statement is metaphorically inferring that the people in the town of Jolo never question anymore the food ingredient if it was already

determined and prescribed for a certain dish. Just like *Maligay* people do not anymore attempt to question its origin because it is already practiced by many people who came from all walks of life. While comparably Participant 5, from Barangay Tulay further said,

“Ha Lupah Sug awn mga tao kimikila sin paghinang (Maligay) sumagawa dih nila kaingatan bang maitah in parkalah ini masi-masi pyapa-aun. In kasabunalan niya, in Tausug dih magparuli bang uno in sabab maita napa-aun in parkalah.”

(“In the town of Jolo, there are people who recognized the practice however they do not know why this practice continues to exist. In other words, the Tausug do not care about the reason behind the practice.”)

This suggests that *Maligay* is appreciated by the public without bothering themselves of its origin and why they practiced it up to this time. Therefore, *Maligay* is something like a birth right of a bride that cannot be questioned and taken away. In the town of Jolo, many Tausug did not wonder nor doubt as to why *Maligay* is always part of the wedding celebration. In fact, during the interview, one resident said, “even my kins despite of being learned in Islamic discipline have no comment whether *Maligay* is part of the Islamic teaching or merely a product of cultural practice among the Tausug”. Further, it is not surprising to hear at the last minute of the wedding proposal the inclusion of *Maligay* because majority from the bride’s family circle expect *Maligay* to be the center of attraction during the wedding celebration. And once, if the host could display a single marvellous *Maligay*, thereupon a good community impression follows.

A religious leader from Barangay Tulay believed that the size of a family whether small or big makes no difference but what really matters is the cultural prestige of *Maligay* that is cared by many people. He further said,

“In kalihalan iban lagguh in magtali-anak di yadtu mabista, duon naka sibih-sibih atawa malagguh in mahargah amu in timatap-tap pa pikilan sin hisiyu-syu na. Sabab

in pag-hinang Maligay bukon darajat mu in kitaun malaingkan in mga kya-maas maasan sin kami.”

(“The status and size of a family does not matter, whether small or big in size the notion and the drive remain in everyone’s view. Because preparing *Maligay* is not about who you are, but it is about our fore parents who introduced this practice to us.”)

This is an indication that *Maligay* holds the fundamental importance of social fabric which is seen through cooperation and appreciation of the practice. As such, *Maligay* is recognized and appreciated elsewhere in Jolo as evidenced by the participation of the people in the community working together in the preparation for a beautiful *Maligay*. Although the general assumption is that those who hold grip to the practice were the ones who maintained the legacy, while those who did not practice at all were the ones who had their asceticism leading towards a complete admiration of the modern way of life. On the other hand, this view was challenged by Participant 7 from Barangay Chinese Pier who said,

“Huon, sabab in paglami-lami ha pagtiyaunan amu na yan in wakto in mga sila malagguh magtali-anak in mag pun-pun iban sin Maligay bilang kalalamihan. Na byahun, in kari-asali niya, amu in sila “big family” mag imun-imun iban mga lau lasiyah nila malawak na, hangkan na in Maligay papa-awnun bat da mayan in mga lasiyah makahampit kumaun iban na sin makara pa bay uno-uno na in taud sin pagkaun.”

(“Of course, because wedding celebration is the right time for people who belong to big family to gather with *Maligay* as the source of an entertainment. Now normally, big family used to celebrate with their distant relatives, so *Maligay* is being prepared for them to partake and bring home some amount.”)

This denotes a particular group of people who are influential in the town of Jolo. Obviously from his statement, how rich people pleased their relatives and described

Maligay as a material symbol of resources. In addition, Participant 9 from Barangay Bus-Bus who belonged to a prominent family has also expressed his opinion in agreement with Participant 7. He said,

“Huon, maglalaguh in “family” maglalaguh da isab in angan-angan amu in way sabuli bat subay tuod maghinang Maligay. Hangkan nasa in kami mga Tausug maharga in pangatud namuh pa nanubuh kamuh, sila yadtu in timagnah mag Maligay.”

(“Yes, the bigger the size of a family the more chance to make *Maligay*. That is why we Tausug are proud of our fore parents for they are the ones who started the practice of *Maligay*.”)

Thus, within the cultural context, majority believed that the bigger the size of a family it is likely that the drive to make *Maligay* is strong. It even corresponds to the manner related to their pattern of self-assertion being the “Tausug” with a distinct cultural identity.

At that point, the Tausug achieved an explicit strength of character being who they are and what they have in the face of social change. As earlier noted, both participants 7 and 9 welcomed the idea that *Maligay* is much more expected whenever an extended family holds social gathering. This suggests that even the professionals like doctor, engineer, teacher, nurses, and other government employees are also showing responsiveness towards the practice. Meaning, *Maligay* is something that generates an emerging sense of identity among the professionals. Therefore, having a good education does not detach them from their cultural practice - rather it helps perpetuate more.

Bridal gift is customarily recognized among the Tausug, in fact no marriage would take place without dowry. According to the Qur'an, *Mahr* (dowry) is given as a gift by the husband to the wife at the time of contracting the marriage: “And give women their

dowries as a gift” [Q 4:4]. (Maulana, 2005). For this reason, came to forth a reference to welcome local custom governing marriage. This unspoken custom echoed the past practice of their ancestors such that for any marriage proposal shall have to be concluded in accordance with the custom of a true Tausug.

One custom widely known is the practice of *Maligay*. During the marriage proposal, *Maligay* is included in the talks between parties so that the preparation will be allocated with corresponding amount of money. How many *Maligay* shall be made and how much for each of them. Following the agreement, the host is obliged to call the family members and close relatives who would be taking part in the preparation. And because the planning is too taxing, teamwork must be oriented towards accomplishment set on specified day.

Figure 2. Sample *Maligay* prepared by a restaurant.



Source: D’Cowboy – Lanjal Kamu. March 31, 2022. Accessed at <https://www.facebook.com/dcowboybbqzamboangacity/photos/pcb.1796423490561771/1796419560562164>)

Figure 3. Sample *Maligay* with iconic dishes.



Source: Lahir Batin Page. January 13, 2013. Maligay Festival. Talipao Sulu. Picture taken by Patta's Amie on July 2, 2011 [Photograph]. Facebook. Accessed at <https://www.facebook.com/tausugnovel/photos/a.370404593033120/441527369254175/>

In terms of the preparation of *Maligay*, the host usually gather in one place to discuss the feature of *Maligay* they wanted to make. All members of the host family would be present to listen, suggest, or contribute certain idea in the preparation. Normally, the father and mother are the ones to present the plan for a beautiful *Maligay*, while the children and close relatives curiously listen as everyone is delighted and inquisitive towards how the preparation should be done, and what variety of foodstuffs to consider - whether native cuisines or contemporary cooking with assorted ingredients. By the way, there are two choices, the popular native cuisines which refer to the local method of cooking, characterized by distinct ingredients and unique taste that relates to culture itself. Ironically, the Tausug is known for spicy foods which are

most liked and often served during celebrations. On the other hand, the trendy contemporary cooking which raises the modern method of culinary, branded by a common innovative style. Offering a mixed of the Tausug and Malaysian dishes abound by seasoning like curry flavor and colorful sauces of different tastes made from a variety of coconut milk and spicy pastes. These condiments are made to enhance aroma of meat, chicken, fish, and vegetables. Sometimes, ingredients include jams and caramelized substance like peanut butter and granulated sugar. This could be a manifestation of a regionalization that somewhere in ASEAN region sets in position the unalterable culture which birthed collation of practice throughout the width of Muslim communities.

Maligay, within the context of regionalization, has the potential to make a noteworthy cultural contribution in the Southeast Asian region, particularly concerning food and cuisine. The culinary heritage of the Philippines, particularly the Tausug tradition of *Maligay*, plays a vital role in expressing regional identity. Furthermore, the Tausug people take immense pride in *Maligay*, and this pride serves as a source of strong attachment to their culture and local customs.

Among the Tausug, *Piyanggang* (roasted chicken) is very much-admired delicacy. The whole chicken is dressed in pounded burnt coconut meat that used to intensify pleasant smell and tenderness. It creates the impression that a true *Maligay* must have a bunch of *Piyanggang*. Aside from *Piyanggang*, the Tausug also love to eat *Kurmah* (flavored beef), *Piyassak* (beef liver recipe), *Utak-utak* (grilled fish fried with crated coconut), fried prawns, crabs, lobsters, boiled eggs, vegetables (beans, ampalaya, bottle gourd, eggplant, and chayote) and *Biryani* (yellow rice).

While for pastry, a beautiful *Maligay* always has an assorted *bang-bang* (native pastries) either sweetened or sugar-coated cooked with locally made jams (durian,

peanut, and mongo). These native pastries are of different variances such as *Panyam*, *Bawlu*, *Daral*, *Durul*, *Jaǎ*, *Hantak*, *Panganan*, *Pitis*, *Patulakan*, *Palikambing*, *Pasong*, *Pitis*, *Putlimandi* and *Wadjit*. (See appendices in pp. 139-148). Although the nature of preparation is not fixed. It depends on the size of *Maligay* and the variance of foodstuffs. This implies that the bigger in size, the greater expenses it incurs.

Figure 4. A glimpse of *Maligay*'s preparation in Jolo, Sulu.

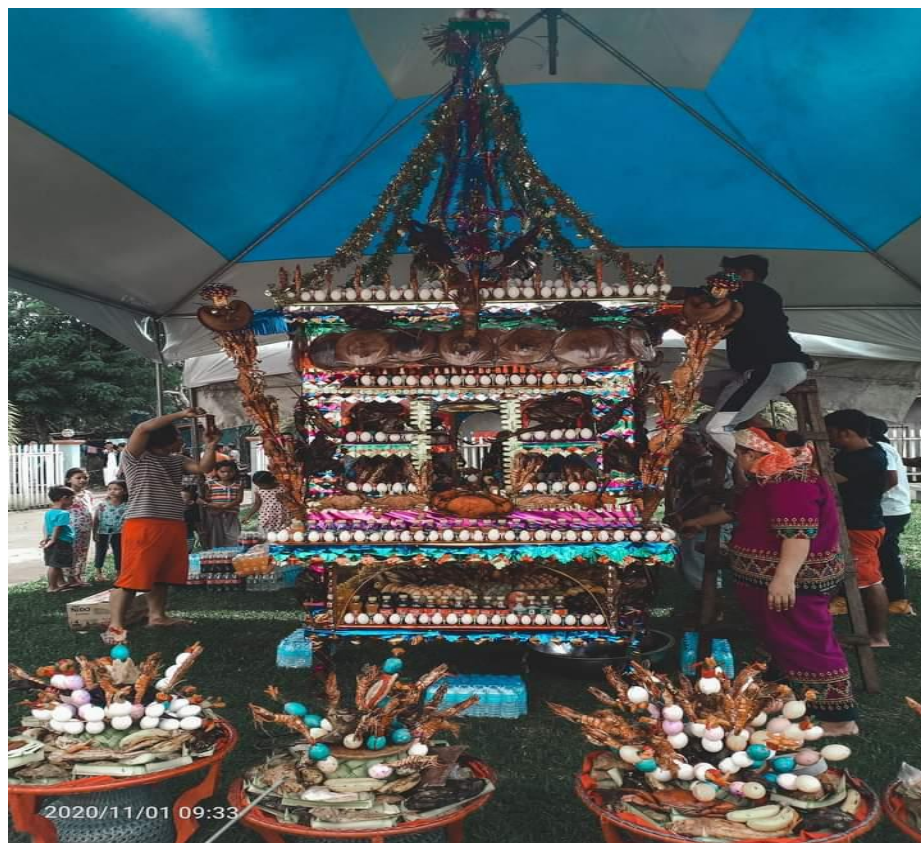


Source: Photo by the author

After they finished discussing the details, the host will assign relatives to go to the market and purchase the needed commodities including meat shop where they

can buy beef, and chicken. Traditionally, for fish the host contracted local fishermen to buy in bulk their catch. Everything should be done simultaneously to meet the scheduled time. While in the intervening, some relatives were getting themselves busy constructing the structure of a beautiful *Maligay* which was carefully designed and thought out to appear pleasing to eyes. Sometimes the host suggests for two layers, while others prefer for three layers. However, the common type is only one-layer *Maligay* capable of holding different types of viands, pastries, and rice.

Figure 5. Preparation of *Maligay* for the wedding of in-laws in Jolo, Sulu.



Source: Photo by the author

Based on interview, it was learnt that during the Sultanate period, *Maligay* contained numerous cuisines cooked by the locals from different places under the tutelage of the Sulu Sultanate. As mentioned, the food for the royal family must be

served in a well-arranged platter placed inside a receptacle made of wood. This could be part of the influence of the Chinese traders who came to Sulu during the Yuan and Ming Dynasty. For instance, as mentioned by James Francis Warren in his book, “The Sulu Zone, 1768 – 1898: The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery, and Ethnicity in the Formation of the Southeast Asian Maritime State”, the Ching Annals refer to five separate tribute-bearing missions dispatched by the Sultans of Sulu in the years between 1727 and 1763. The envoys of these missions, which were spaced approximately a decade apart, spent several years in China before returning to Sulu on one of the great junks voyaging to the “tributary lands” bordering the South China Sea with renewed friendship and wealth in gifts”. At this point, the cultural integration, etiquette, and trait might have taken place between the Sulu Sultanate and the Chinese Empires through their missionary envoys, and the earliest evidence of contact could be traced back to the Yuan dynasty.

Aesthetically, the appearance of a *Maligay* echoes the Celestial Palace of China. The roof design has its local version of Ukkil among the Moros. Ukkil is the art of carving a unique curvilinear wood design attached to the protruding roof side of a royal house. On this account, possibility is that influence could extend to the manner of giving a royal gift, where traditionally Chinese used decorative carts resembling the design of their palace. The carts were made to harbor precious items such as swords, gunpowder, armor, silks, wares, pottery, porcelain, jewelry, and many others. Absolutely, the manner how royal gift was prepared using carts carried by soldiers and presented to kings outside China. These historical practices could have influenced the artistic design of contemporary food trays.

When the construction of *Maligay* is completed, the next step would be the finishing touches and decoration. Female relatives would dictate what color, style, and

piece of cloth to be used. Decoration took some time due to intricate arrangement of foodstuffs which means that everything must go along together in evenness. For instance, viands together with vegetables, and pastries with sweets, so on and so forth. Necessarily preparation must be consistent in terms of the amount of stuffing for all the prepared *Maligay*.

Most often, the host prepared two or three *Maligay* of same or different sizes. And the most bizarre one is decorated with paper bills mainly One Thousand note. This type of *Maligay* is customarily produced by rich families especially those politicians. Having noticed the distinction, any *Maligay* of normal size would reflect the social status of the couple, suggesting average condition in the community. While elegant *Maligay* implies prosperity that by and large one can determine the status quo of couple by just observing the nature of *Maligay* they would have prepared.

Meanwhile, one of the participants said that *Maligay* depends on the social status of the bride. If the bride belongs to the rich family usually the prepared *Maligay* must be grandiose with all the stuffs and money hanged around it. Further she revealed that if the groom belongs to average family, then all his close relatives would contribute some amount of money to meet the demand of the bride's parent. To rephrase it, rich family matches their own clique in a society. And so rarely one could find a match above his status. Unlike may be when a woman wanted to marry her ideal man, not in terms of wealth. Then in such a case, she would do anything to convince her parents to accept the guy.

In another instance, there was a couple whose marriage was not lavishly celebrated and only the Sharia requisites were followed. This household has the means to host excessive spendings on wedding celebrations, yet they hold the view that listening to the complete principles of Islamic law may represent the most

convenient action for Muslims. Suffice to say that there were some Tausug families who did not recognize *Maligay* as part of the dowry. This is the statement from one of the participants, “*in Maligay bukon daakan hipahinang sin sarah Shariah, hangkan na minsan way Maligay ma’sa’ ra atawakan taymah da in pagkawin*”. (Meaning, *Maligay* is not part of the Shariah wedding requisite, even without *Maligay* marriage is consummated). Neither was it considered an ‘add-on’ for purposes of entertainment. So, bearing with or without *Maligay* marriage can be consummated if the key Islamic nuptial requirements are put in place. Besides, many Tausug believed that *Maligay* is “optional” therefore should not be taken as “obligation” in marriage.

For the most part, while the host is busy with the preparation, close relatives keep on anticipating fine result of the constructed *Maligay*. They carefully examine every inch of its design, apropos of shape, looks, and color. Although, typical *Maligay* is simple however mostly done in fascinating mood whilst something else deserves praises like arrangement of tables and chairs, cleanliness of the surroundings, receptions afforded to the invitees, and the foods and drinks – all these are counted to be in line for. Surprisingly, once *Maligay* is displayed it surely would cloud everything.

On the bright side of *Maligay* as told by an elderly participant from Barangay Bus-Bus, when two lovers would decide to elope and leave without any trace, normally the parent of the girl may go to the barangay and report the incidence. In the course of time, efforts to find their daughter may fleetingly wane but the hope is still there that someday they will see their lost offspring. As years go by, unexpectedly the couple would send feeler from the barangay to negotiate the despairing parent, who hid their hatred towards the boy. At this point, it is necessary to soothe the feelings of the bride’s

parent by giving *Maligay* as a token of respect in consideration of what had happened. This decisive chance would open the door to forgiveness and reconciliation.

The same view coming from a young man in Barangay Alat, who mentioned the role of *Maligay* in parties involved in unwanted situation of espousal. Unequivocal remarks are always expected from the party of the bride because they feel offended. As a result, the parent of the bride would demand from the groom of high dowry to relatively cause him with financial suffering as penalty. At this stage, it is important to calm the discontented parents with something that symbolizes “courtesy” like *Maligay* which could generate sympathy, consideration, and forgiveness.

In a nutshell, *Maligay* is not only for entertainment, rather it has its unspoken purpose of ciphering the situation. Should worse comes to worse, *Maligay* can serve better as “buffer” to avoid further aversion. Doing it is also a demonstration that the one offering it is now admitting his fault. *Maligay*, therefore according to many witnesses, has prevented escalation of tensions in many instances.

Today, many Tausug who reside in the remote areas carry on their wedding custom compared to those who are living in the town proper. Traditionally speaking, the people in the Rural accord value to a greater extent of the practice. As some interviewed said, that even the young ones are acquainted with *Maligay* more than the adult in the town proper. This implies that cognizance of the practice is much seen from among the uninformed residents settled in the rural community. Being simple in lifestyle, they embrace what the tradition dictates them to proceed from.

One reason why rural folks in Jolo are attached to their tradition is due to a close-knit settlement where their houses are built too close to one another especially those with lineal kinship. Often, it follows that they help each other and even share same practice. According to the National Geographic Society, in a rural area, there are fewer

people, and their homes and businesses are located far away from one another (Rural Area: July 28, 2022). Perhaps the same logic brought to bear the typical rural folks in Jolo, as many of them chose to live in acquaintance. In this way, believing that once the practice is introduced by their ancestors, it seems that no one could ever question. And *Maligay* is the best example, thus together they beheld on several occasions.

On one wedding occasion that took place in Jolo last July 9, 2022, many relatives and friends have witnessed the union of Ms. Mayranul A. Ladja and Mr. Billy J. Tanjilil. During that event, the bride's parent did not expect any *Maligay* owing to its exclusion in the agreement. However, a bunch of large serving platter plates full of foodstuffs were brought to the house of the bride. On that very moment, the invitees were pleasantly surprised and delighted upon seeing the variance of viands from meat, chicken, noodles, to vegetables and sweets cooked in different ways with different tastes and flavors. Once more, the idea of a simple *Maligay* is worth realizing, still and all the couple is not sometimes prepared for having *Maligay* but as a substitute "food platters" can be a good option.

Some said that *Maligay* is the perfect example of charity. Because the host prepared the foodstuffs for all irrespective of status in life. In Islam, almsgiving is mandatory for those who can afford. That is why a well-off family must extend hand to a poor family which is basically understood as a social service. In this way, guests and invitees have the chance to partake in the celebration. As one participant commented that a wedding without *Maligay* is dull seeing everyone is expecting to take share at the end of the celebration.

In a nutshell, despite *Maligay* is burdensome however there is much that in common interpretation of its purpose. As widely acknowledged among Tausug *Maligay* has three grounds. First, as an 'add-on' to a colorful wedding embellished with

satisfying foodstuffs hauled in a beautiful food cart of a classic look. Second, *Maligay* serves as a “buffer” to contain disagreement between parties involved in marriage. Most importantly, in any unwanted situation, one party MUST concede to a chance of asking for forgiveness and reconciliation. Third, *Maligay* can be interpreted as charity considering the intention of the host who in one way or another see to it that the provisions displayed inside a beautiful *Maligay* are consumed by everyone.

Interestingly, *Maligay* has its variance of purpose depending on what kind of occasion it is prepared for. From this point of view, it could be said that *Maligay* is suitable for modern-day way of social life and able to maintain its novelty in the face of social transformation. That despite of the changes nowadays this practice can linger through generations. Another male participant from Barangay Alat said,

“Magkahagad ako ha mga sila amu in kimakahagad in artah kunuh maka-sukud sin darajat sin manusya. Kaingatan mo bang awn artah mo cin mataud kabagayan mo ha panglungan. Na bang in hambuuk tao mag-pangasawa pa kan siyu-siyu na, in mga tao ha kawman tima-tagad mapa-awn in Maligay pasalan sin darajat niya barkanan, na in siya maka gaus minsan malagguh Maligay.”

(“I agree most of the time with persons who believed that social status is measured in terms of money. You know once you have money you would have more friends in the neighborhood. So, when someone gets married to somebody, they would expect *Maligay* especially being affluent he can afford to make even a huge *Maligay*.”) See Figure 6.

Such remark creates social awareness about how wealth plays its role in a society. It seems that the value system in the neighbourhood is defined by social status – once you are rich you have more friends. Yet normal in Jolo, that wherever you would go same reality you may encounter. However, the *Maligay* is expressed

artistically beyond any motives than to please the people in the community. This exceptionally builds empathy and rapport to one another because there is something in that moment when everyone shares labor in the preparation of a beautiful *Maligay*.

Figure 6. *Maligay* is seen in the background of a wedding celebration in Jolo, Sulu.



Source: Photo by the author

Undoubtedly, the Tausug always prepared *Maligay* during wedding celebration because it is part of their customary wedding practice, indicating commonality in the society. For instance, in the five barangays of Alat, Asturias, Bus-Bus, Chinese Pier, and Tulay majority of the residents are Muslims and only few percent of non-Muslims. However, both Muslims and non-Muslims appreciated the showcase of *Maligay* in spite of what motive did it demonstrate. Hence the rationality of the practice has always been set aside, as if they do not care whether it is part of the Islamic practice or not. What seized them to perpetuate the practice was their interest to see a flamboyant celebration.

According to the 2020 census, Jolo has a population of 137,266 people (Census of Population (2020). "BARMM". *Total Population by Province, City, Municipality and Barangay*. PSA. Retrieved 8 July 2021.) Approximately, ninety (90) percent of the populace is Tausug, this puts forward the notion that the characteristic of wedding practice in Jolo is similar across barangays. Again, it brings up the idea that *Maligay* is well liked by the majority since they shared same lifestyle and belief. In fact, among the Tausug the practice is elaborately adorn as if more than the care for other bridal stuffs.

Furthermore, aside from the Islamic wedding requirements, such as *Qabul* (acceptance), *Wali* (consent), *Mahr* (dowry), and *Alshaahid* (witnesses), being prescribed by Sharia to the Muslims tradition always plays a role in the belief of the Muslims. For instance, in the town of Jolo many Muslims were very much attached to traditional practices which could even be described as “add ons” to the existing Islamic doctrines. This brought to the fore the idea of a mixed practice of “Islam” and “Tradition” where at certain point both may have complemented each other as evident by the matrimonial practice among the Tausug.

If truth be told, most of the residents in Jolo believed that nuptial rite should be “open” to a conventional belief. That is by saying “anything” can be part of the ceremony if it shall not run contrary to Islam. Meaning there is a valid reason among the Tausug as to why they resort to traditional wedding practice despite of the Islamic guidance. An example of this add on enhancement is the preparation of a beautiful *Maligay* on the day of a wedding celebration.

Evidently, Islam allows *Ijtihad* (personal judgment) over a certain act which is assumed beneficial. Imran A. K. Nyazee (2002) defined *Ijtihad* as the expanding of maximum effort in the performance of an act. And for this thought, human effort should

be directed towards new discovery. In simple word, Muslims should exercise diligence from time to time to broadly interpret Islam. So *Maligay* can be reflected in one's own belief not to mention the family traits among the Tausug.

In fact, *Maligay* as a product of the Tausug's cultural legacy, existed in the five barangays in Jolo, namely: Alat, Asturias, Bus-bus, Chinese Pier, and Tulay. In these areas, it can be observed that the people's mindset was homogeneous towards the practice, and neither would a single resident refuse to acknowledge the importance of a *Maligay*. Although, there were some residents who asserted that marriage can be consummated with or without *Maligay*. In other words, a number of Tausug were also aware that *Maligay* is not part of the Sharia wedding requirements. However, majority believed that though it is not part the Islamic requirement obviously *Maligay* can boost attraction.

Figure 7. *Maligay* during a wedding of a prominent family in Jolo, Sulu last 12 June 2022.



Source: Photo by the author

As observed, perception regarding *Maligay* varies in terms of the influence or impact on society. The majority understood that *Maligay* showcases how rich the person is in respect of his status in life. This suggests that the majority who prepared *Maligay* were those influential families - like the politicians and the wealthy families (See Figure 7). Nonetheless, there were also some who realized that *Maligay* can be for anybody's wedding whether rich or poor. For them what is important is that the wedding would be meaningful to everyone having its full preparation. And it goes to say that a simple *Maligay* is appreciated indeed a few families said that even without *Maligay* marriage is complete hence worth celebrating. By its nature, such perception differs from one family to another depending on their situations yet almost all the Tausug recognized *Maligay* as a common bridal custom.

A Muslim scholar named Al Haj A.D. Ajiola mentioned about the role of law in the society. That is to say, what is the problem of law? He continued to say, that the problem of law in society is the problem of valuation, since the essence of law is to regulate and balance the right of individual with the interest of the society". Hence, to put it simply, this statement speaks of the same situation in Jolo. Referring to the right of a person, whether, to practice *Maligay* may correspond to the interest of the Tausug as a whole. This is true, unfortunately among the Tausug as if the practice of *Maligay* cannot be questioned anymore since it was a legacy handed down from their ancestors. For them, it is an accepted fact already that *Maligay* should be part of the wedding requisites without tending to appraise the soundness of the practice.

The practice of *Maligay* holds great significance in symbolizing the identity of the Tausug people. It is a distinctive cultural tradition that is closely tied to individual perceptions and self-conceptions. Upon observing this practice, one can note that the social status of the newlyweds often plays a crucial role in determining the extent of the preparations, as more extravagant ceremonies tend to incur higher expenses. This wedding custom has evolved over time to honor ancestral traditions and foster a sense of belonging within the Tausug community. As a result, the practice of *Maligay* cannot simply be disregarded by the Tausug people without valid reasons.

Moreover, this Tausug practice of *Maligay* has become their own identity, much observing from the ontological prestige of the term Tausug referring to the 'man of the current' in the opinion of some scholars, to personal disposition through the way they observe and practice the legacy deep-rooted from in their ancestors. In a nutshell, *Maligay* represents the richness and vibrance of the culture of the Tausug that suggests an ingenious creative artwork engendered by a local artistic construct.

Undeniably, *Maligay* as part of the Tausug culture has transcended into a community culture identity with its great impact on the contemporary wedding.

The essence and observance of *Maligay* in Jolo, especially within Tausug families, are firmly embedded in their cultural heritage and societal traditions. *Maligay* holds a significant role in their weddings and communal events, serving as a representation of their Tausug identity and self-expression. Even among highly educated and professional members of extended families, active involvement in and appreciation for this practice persists, underscoring that education does not sever their ties to cultural roots; instead, it helps keep these traditions alive.

Moreover, within the context of weddings, the concept of *Maligay* takes center stage during marriage proposals, playing a crucial role in determining the necessary budget for the arrangements. The host family collaborates to strategize and deliberate on the specific elements they intend to incorporate into the *Maligay*. This entails deciding the quantity of *Maligay* to be produced as well as selecting the particular dishes and culinary delights to be featured. The options span from traditional indigenous dishes celebrated for their unique ingredients and zesty profiles, to a fusion of contemporary cooking styles drawing from Tausug and Malaysian cuisines, infusing curry inflections and luscious coconut-based sauces. The preparation process encompasses offerings like *Piyanggang* (succulent roasted chicken), *Kurmah* (flavorful spiced beef), an assortment of grilled and fried seafood, an array of vegetables, and Biryani (fragrant yellow rice). Among the pastries, an assortment of local delicacies (*Bang-bang*) holds a prominent place, often adorned with sweet coatings or locally crafted jams, presenting an indispensable facet of the celebration.

PART III – RELEVANCE OF *MALIGAY* IN PROMOTING REGIONAL IDENTITY BETWEEN FILIPINOS AND MALAY SOCIETIES

After discussing the nature and practice of *Maligay*, it is high time to assess its relevance in the promotion of intercultural and inter-religious understanding of Filipinos and Southeast Asian societies particularly the Muslim communities. The information provided has highlighted how cultural influences occurred through social mobility, resulting in the adoption and incorporation of elements of *Maligay* into some of the traditions and practices of these communities.

Most of the participants believed that *Maligay* is part of the culture of the Tausug. This common view may tell the readers that the Tausug are passionately attached to their culture. This means that even after they knew already that *Maligay* is not a religious requirement for marriage, yet they remain hands-on with its preparation. As noticed, individual curiosity towards *Maligay* has been strong among Tausug which suggests peculiarity of the practice. This explains why the said peculiarity continue to exist to-day. Only one participant believed that it is part of the religious practice. This simply means that in a given society such as of Tausug in Jolo, there are people who are ignorant of the principles of Islam on the one hand and of the social surroundings on the other. It is not surprising that in the town of Jolo there are lots of religious issues that challenged Muslims especially those nonconformists who often contradicted the conventional teachings.

Majority of the Tausug believe that *Maligay* is the product of their culture. It is something like an “art” that is being preserved and is only showcased during certain occasions. Still and all *Maligay* is not for special social events rather it infers an exclusive ethnic identity as a Tausug. From the views of the exogenous groups, it is automatic to associate *Maligay* to have Islamic origin on the basis that the ones who

practiced it are Tausug who profess Islam. But the truth is, Islam has nothing to do with the practice of *Maligay*. It is purely the entire inherited pattern of activity passed on to the mainstream society.

For typical Tausug, wedding celebration is not complete without *Maligay*. The reason for majority to include *Maligay* during the negotiation between parties is the belief that *Maligay* symbolizes something, be it in form of an entertainment or as a token of respect for the bride's parents. Either way, this practice is part of the community norm that sets the boundaries of a customary wedding. In the study, a lone participant believed that *Maligay* has nothing to do with the success of a wedding celebration. *Maligay* should not be treated as a contributing 'factor' for wedding celebration.

Therefore, the Tausug wedding is unique that aside from a traditional concept it also leads the guests having their excellent impression due to the portrayal of a beautiful *Maligay*. This is the part where the element of intercultural and inter-religious understanding comes into the picture. As an object of attraction, majority of the Tausug welcome the idea of having a beautiful *Maligay* that adorned during wedding celebrations. Further they assert that *Maligay* is just a shared practice and becomes habitual in the life cycle of many people in Jolo.

Almost all the participants optimistically believed that *Maligay* has its relevance to the Malay practice. Again, a lone participant deferred to believe about the relevance of *Maligay* in Jolo and its connectivity to Malay practices in Sabah, Malaysia. Looking at the distribution of responses and the interview results, however, all the answers subscribed that the *Maligay* is important in the continuity of intercultural and interreligious interfaces of people within Southern Philippines and its immediate neighbors in the ASEAN region.

In fact, even those who have not been to Sabah, Malaysia believed that there is relevance of the practice between the Tausug and the Malay. Based on the interview, the interaction of people during wedding in Jolo, described as jubilant, happy, and pleasant is indeed equal to the gathering of people during wedding in Sabah. And only one participant believed that *Maligay* has “no relevance” since he has not been to Sabah and therefore has no idea at all. Accordingly, wedding preparations are almost similar between the Tausug and the Malay's idea of bringing foodstuffs as a gift. Like the Tausug, the Malay used to bring gift from the groom's family to the bride's family on same purpose which is primarily to please the bride and her parents and for other purpose like entertainment or charity. Indeed, this result has been validated by the findings of scholars that were formerly reviewed in Chapter II.

Moreover, participants also opined that *Maligay* has similarities to Malay's wedding practices. While both the Malay and Tausug are Islam adherents and ideally should follow the Sharia's requisites (simple and in manner of exchanging vows before witnesses), the cultural element, local laws and traditions shape the conduct of marriage ceremonies. One of these is the issue of a gift wherein culture comes into play which varies in form or in manner of presentation. It can be said also that the intercultural and inter-religious aspects come in with the kind of invited guests. From the responses, the holding of *Maligay* is not exclusive to relatives but also to dignitaries who are non-Muslims and even to outsiders (not resident of the same village).

The practice of having a *Maligay* in the wedding ceremony has evolved from personal to public wherein the community in the long run has dictated the must have or otherwise in a wedding ceremony. The personal or familial celebrations become a community tradition and that prospective couple should follow the norm. This is best exemplified by the answer of Participant 1 who is an elder member of the community.

Maligay, according to him, has long been observed in the town of Jolo which eventually helped in sustaining the uniqueness of their socio-cultural identity.

The element of intercultural interaction is also felt in the preparation of food. Central to the Tausug identity is their native delicacy drawn from a unique component of ingredients with different tastes. It is the product of a cultural practice from centuries ago, having its value trait that is almost mandatory to observe during wedding celebrations. As stated earlier, Islam has never mentioned *Maligay* as one of the wedding requisites but Muslims in Jolo remained zealous over this practice for a long time. Some residents thought that marriage is not complete without the presence of *Maligay*. The absence of a food cart is likened to a “tasteless” food which would only become palatable once the host knows how to develop it into a food culture.

Preparing and offering of *Maligay* in the wedding celebrations solicited diverse responses from the participants. One of them has expressed his opinion contrary to the idea of the Tausug celebrating a wedding with *Maligay*. While majority of the participants have no qualms of having the *Maligay* in the wedding, Participant 2 opined that the said practice is outside of Islam and is not a requisite of a successful wedding.

“Ha kirahan ko in ini ha guwah na sin Islam. Bukon laung ta subay na hadja in tao maka hinang Maligay ampa bat mahinang malingkat in pagtiyaun. Way kimuddan ini, in kasabunnalan niya minsan way Maligay mapa-awn mura in indaginis kawalnah-walnaan amu in hikalingkat sin pagtiyaun.”

(“In my opinion this is outside of Islam. It does not mean that only when people have *Maligay* that their wedding turns flamboyant. That is wrong, the fact is that even without *Maligay* you can still have a colorful wedding.”)

Such opinion is also shared by Participant 8 but is more tolerant than Participant 2. He does not care about the purpose or origin of *Maligay* but what is important is the

success of the celebration in the accompaniment of food and entertainment among others.

“In bunnal niya, dih da kami magparuli bang maitah awn subay Maligay. In mahalgah kamuh amu in adlaw sin pag-parkalah subay tuod way na sawihun daing naman ha paglami-lami pa pagkaun, iban na sin pag inum.”

(“Actually, we do not care about why Tausug made *Maligay*. What is important to us is the day of celebration which should be perfect with all of the necessary entertainment, foods, and drinks.”)

Participant 9, on the other hand, believed that *Maligay* must be present in wedding celebrations. Despite the criticisms hurled against food cart by some Tausug, he believed that *Maligay* becomes an important part of the tradition that has been observed by communities in Jolo for years. Following this line of argument, there are opposing views between those who believed that *Maligay* is a nuance and pointless part of the wedding celebration, and those who believed that *Maligay* is an add-on to the celebration. The former has their view derived from the teaching of Islam that maintained simplicity in marriage. While the latter has their view drawn from the existing cultural practice which to these days remained enforced. Nevertheless, majority of the Tausug have recognized the worth and beauty of *Maligay* as a token of a groom’s love for his bride. Regardless of the question of its religious origin, holding of *Maligay* is a testament of an unquestionable devotion of two people whose hearts are bound together before their loving parents, relatives, and friends.

“Bang para kakuh, in pagtiyaun subay tuod awn Maligay. Laung ta way in ini pyangda’aki sin agama sumagawa in pagtiyaun adlaw mahalgah atawa malagguh pa kansiyu-siyo na tao. Iban in ini sa ummul masa pamintangan, na maitah kaw dumungog ha mga sila amu in nangu-ngudjuh-ngudjuh sin parkalah ini? Ha panalih

ko subay na taymaun natuh in kasabunnalan na in Maligay gimagamut na pagkatao katuh amu in makuyag kita bang iyanun Tausug.”

(“For me, wedding should always have *Maligay*. Although this is not advised by Sharia however marriage is a big day for everyone. And this is a lifetime experience, so why listen to other people who are critiques of the practice? I think we need to accept the fact that *Maligay* is embedded in our trait as proud Tausug.”)

In a way, Participant 9’s remark has pointed out clearly the reason why people in the town of Jolo have celebrated wedding lavishly because for them holding it is a lifetime experience. While the wedding is considered private and solemn to most of the participants, it is not just merely a celebration but a life lesson since the couple is about to face new life. That is why, many would like to make their own wedding impressive and elegant on the premise that it only happens once in a lifetime (at least for the bride). To have a grandiose ceremony (in their own standard) is already a manifestation of patience and passion especially for those who have been waiting longer for the right person to come and sometimes breaking through parental obstacles. In short, wedding is the final stage of life for a bachelor and most importantly to the bachelorette.

Aside from being a milestone in one’s life, *Maligay* can also be a determinant for social status. Considering the present situation where everyone is struggling financially, the issue of dowry is not seen as a problem. According to Participant 3 who was an elder from Barangay Asturias, most of the time the bride’s parents will ask for the inclusion of *Maligay* in the agreed dowry. Further he said,

“Pasalan sin parkalah ungsud, kamatauran kimakahagad in Maligay makadjari palamurun ha piyag-isunan. Ha mga sila makagaus mga tao dayahan in parkalah ini di mahinang sat-sat.”

(“Due to issue on dowry, majority believed that *Maligay* can be inserted in the talks as add on to the amount of dowry. For those who could afford especially the rich family this issue of *Maligay* is not a problem.”)

The dowry system in Jolo has become crucial in contemporary time - perhaps the reason why dowry cannot simply be terminated together with *Maligay*, because traditionally, the Tausug marriage is associated with the right to demand for something. Such demand is done not only by the bride's parents or immediate family members but sometimes the first-degree cousin, uncle, and auntie are also lucidly participating in the negotiation. However, seldom this happens in the town of Jolo. Usually, this kind of reception is more frequent in rural areas where close knit family is often seen helping one another in all their community affairs.

Figure 8. *Maligay* during the commemoration of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) last 08 October 2022, at HB Homes Mosque, Sinunuc, Zamboanga City.



Source: Photo by the author

The data gathered from the answers of the participants clearly mentioned about the intercultural interactions of the people of Jolo and of the Malays particularly in Sabah, Malaysia. Participant 4 from Barangay Tulay, for instance, demonstrated the similarities or likeliness of *Maligay* with the wedding practices of the Malay.

“In mattan niya, in Maligay bunga sin hiyahargaan namuh pusakah daing pa ha kamaas-maasan namuh. In makksud sin magda pagkaun pa maas sin pangantin babae biyah sibuh da isab iban sin mga Malayo. Laung ta way ako naka pa Sabah sumagawa in mga lasiyah ko nagbaytah in mga Malayo magda ra isab sila pagkaun iban pag inom pa bay sin pangantin babae ha wakto sin pagtiyaun.”

(“Actually, *Maligay* is the product of our treasured legacy from our fore parents. The idea of bringing foods to the bride’s parents is the same with the Malay’s. Although I have not been to Sabah, but some of my relatives told me that among Malays they also bring foods and drinks to the house of the bride as gift for her parents on the wedding day celebration.”)

This 49-year-old resident inferred that the Malays have the same practice with the Tausug when it comes to bride gift. Again, the available literature, as stated in Chapter II, have validated this inference. It should be noted that Malay families used to present packets of native pastries and sweets along with jams and drinks. Sometimes, the groom’s family prepared viands of different kinds, yellow rice, and desserts. The practice is quite similar to *Maligay* and to other wedding practices in Jolo. This revelation was made by some participants who had witnessed the traditional Malay wedding in Sabah.

Participant 5 even expressed his observation about the commonalities of the Tausug and the Malay especially in their faith and the practice of *halal* (permissible)

and *haram* (unlawful) among others. However, he also noted about the difference in preparation as described below.

“Way ra piyag-biddan ha tungod sin panghati iban sin paghunah-hunah tungod pa paghinang (Maligay). Kalu bahah laung ta awn maniyuh-tiyoh Piyagbiddat ha pag tagama. Sabab bukun biyah sin Malayo, in mga Tausug magtuyuh-tuyoh tuod maghinang Maligay, ampa in Malayo kari-asali niya pusotun hadja palingkatun in pagkaun byah pasantun niya pamusot. Na sah sibuh da in maksud sin dua pihak ha pag-parkalah.”

(“There is no difference in terms of impression and notion of the practice. There may be a bit of dissimilarity in the preparation. Unlike the Malay, the Tausug toiled a lot in making *Maligay*, while the Malay normally they just beautifully wrapped the foodstuffs in packet type. But both groups have the same purpose of their practice.”)

The gentleman from Barangay Tulay explained the meaning of *Maligay* and its pervasive intra-group occurrence. Just like the Tausug, Malay families have their cultural practices which they observed since time immemorial until the present. Marriage is then characterized as ancestral legacy wherein the giving of a gift to the bride is a good-willed thought to please the bride and her parents. This act is often prompted by love and eagerness to marry the woman despite all odds. Accordingly, many believed that there might be variances in the preparation of bridal gifts between the Tausug and Malay, but the purpose remains the same. In fact, many literatures have documented that bridal gift has progressed through the years in many parts of mainland ASEAN where even non-Muslim countries also practiced the giving of bridal gifts. This observation is also reinforced by the answer of another participant from Barangay Chinese Pier.

“Sibuh da in maksud sin paghinang Maligay pa mga Tausug iban Malayo. Sagawa mag biddah na hadja ha harga. Huon, bang kaw mabayah laung ta malingkat, na subay na hadja tuod gumastos kaw mataud.”

(“The purpose is the same, having *Maligay* between the Tausug and Malay. It only differs in terms of the cost of a *Maligay*. Of course, if you want a beautiful one, then you have to spend more.”)

Another observation from this response is the similarity in the purpose of having food offering by the Malay and the *Maligay* of the Tausug. They only differ in the manner of the presentation and the cost of a bridal gift.

The existence of *Maligay* widens the definition of Tausug cultural tradition despite some reconcilable tensions between Sharia and local traditions. It should be noted that Islam is precise but susceptible – meaning strict nonetheless lenient to local norms which do not run against its teachings. Having said, *Maligay* is a good example of promoting intercultural and inter-religious understanding. Due to technological revolution, globalization and regionalization, Muslims who are mobile have the capacity to share their tradition with their relatives and even newly found friends beyond their place of origin. This includes the practice of *Maligay* and other food offerings in wedding celebrations which are participated not only by Malay families but also by Chinese Muslims and other ethnic groups in mainland Southeast Asia.

The nature and purpose of *Maligay* have evolved through the years. This is captured in the observation of a young woman from Barangay Alat. She said that *Maligay*’s utilitarian purpose is not exclusive only to wedding and gift giving but also to celebrate the birth of the Prophet and even of the successful completion of an individual in his study of the Qur’an. The last two purposes of *Maligay* are not

discussed elaborately in this paper but are mentioned only to point out that *Maligay* is also employed for other occasions as stated below.

“In Maligay bukon hadja bat subay mag tiyaun ampa-papa-awnun, minsan ha wakto pagbatah sin Rasulullah iban amu in makatangbus mangadjih Qur’an in tao mag hinang da isab Maligay. Mataud maghinang minsan simple basta malingkat ha pangatud.”

(“*Maligay* is not only prepared during wedding celebration, including also Mauluddin Nabi (Birth of the Prophet) and local graduation (those who studied and finished the entire Qur’an). Meaning, *Maligay* is for various occasions. Many people make *Maligay* even the simplest one if it is attractive to naked eyes “.

Going back to the discussion of bride price and gift giving, *Maligay* also serves as an avenue of appeasing the insulted feelings of the parents and of fulfilling the Islamic obligation of beneficence. Gift giving as one of the requisites in the marriage ceremony can add excitement to the joyful feelings of the bride’s parents or appease the feelings of a worrying person. The latter is true especially in an unwanted situation when the bride’s parent’s express enmity towards the groom.

To minimize disaffection, he let the presence of *Maligay* be a gesture of respect and in a way express his good intentions. Doing this is to pacify the bride’s parents. Aside from the respect accorded to the bride’s parents, *Maligay* can likewise be interpreted as a form of charity to the community. Because all invitees, young and old, can partake the displayed foodstuffs and even take home some leftovers. This practice is an unequivocally held norm among the Tausug - that whenever there is wedding celebration food sharing through *Maligay* is always expected. *Maligay* stamps three purposes, such as a token or “gift”, a gesture of “respect”, and a form of “charity”. Therefore, the community would admire once a newlywed is able to serve each

purpose in contemplation of a smooth and happy celebration. While on the part of the host they felt satisfaction to see people gathered around waiting for a *Maligay* to be shared and consumed. This sort of a unique celebration would mean a lot for the Tausug who are proud of their own identity in many ways.

Meanwhile, one participant said that *Maligay* was a good example of charity because it was prepared for everyone. This view was supported by the majority Muslims for the sake of Islamic teachings they learned from the value of generosity towards others. According to Cihan Tugal, the world has undergone a revolution that replaced the ethics of individual independence for communal interdependence (Tugal, 2017, p.12). Precisely the scenario of reciprocity and cooperation with one another or between rich and poor that Islam has taught mankind. To some extent, *Maligay* in its broadest sense becomes a platform of inter-religious engagements through food with fellow Muslims and even non-Islamic adherents. The making and elevation of the *Maligay* as a festival further widens its purpose to reach out to a wider public including those outside the town and of Jolo. The festival has practically made the *Maligay* as inter-religious and intercultural activity in the municipality of Talipao. In the Official Gazette of the Municipal Government of Talipao, it says that in 2010 *Maligay* was officially adopted through the Sangguniang Resolution No. 06-24 s. 2010 which declares *Maligay* as the town's icon of festivities and celebration. It is the only festival in the province of Sulu which is celebrated to promote *Maligay* as one of the Tausug's rich cultural heritages and as a symbol of hospitality, cultural vibrancy, and affluence of the people of the current known as the Tausug (Official Gazette of the Municipal Government of Talipao, 2015).

Furthermore, *Maligay* symbolizes the identity of Moro in the Philippine south, which is akin to the Malay arts of traditional paintings such as *batik* and ethnic motif

depicting *kampung* (village) in an ancestral site. To further analyze, *Maligay* is made to serve the “relative” and so likewise the purpose of batik and ethnic motif. Significantly, the relevance of *Maligay* is noticed in the cultural aspirations and meanings among the Malay. Similarly, the Indonesian arts and handicrafts such as the Balinese carvings, Bugis silk sarong, and Bayan Lombok handicrafts have their equivalence in Filipinos handicrafts and craftworks. All these designs and wares that are exactly found in a traditional structure and platform take in of a beautiful *Maligay*. And eventually, among the Bruneians the famous *Tudung Dulang* (dish cover) is sometimes used by the Tausug to cover the dishes on the way to the bride’s house.

Figure 9. Wedding in Zamboanga City.



Source: Photo by the author

Figure 10. *Maligay* in Tawi-Tawi.



Source: I Care for Bangsamoro Movement. November 3, 2014. Accessed at <https://www.facebook.com/icare4Bangsamoro/photos/pcb.853302054702561/853301731369260>

More than that, the special dishes and cuisines that are offered in the food cart are pretty much similar or if not at least familiar with Southeast Asian societies when it comes to taste. Owing to the fact, Muslims love spicy foods and curry paste. Transcending the idea that trade may have caused contact among Muslims that eventually established a multitude of cultural adaptation including foods or anything that fits the needs of a particular group. Until the relationship rolled forward to successive influences in culinary skills preparation and mixed cooking method. Invariably combined the native dishes which are known for hot food among the Tausug also a favorite food for the Malaysian, Indonesian, and Bruneian.

For instance, the Tausug delicacy *Piyanggang* (roasted chicken), and *Kurmah* (flavored beef) both have harmonious versions with Malay *Ayam Percik* (roasted chicken) and *Daging Masak Kurma* (flavored beef). Likewise, the Tausug (adobo) and (*kari-kari manok*) have equivalence in Indonesian dishes called *Semur Ayam* (chicken

dish), and *Opor Ayam* (chicken curry) sequentially. Another Tausug dish is *Pastil* (seasoned meat puff) is symmetrical to Bruneian *Cincin* (curry puff). And finally, the Tausug *Kyuning* (flavored yellow rice) is much the same with the Indonesian with their *Nasi Kyuning* and the Bruneian *Nasi Biryani* (flavored yellow rice) served during occasions.

While in Singapore, Lap Chai is the term used by the Peranakan Chinese to refer to the ceremony where wedding gifts were exchanged between the families of the bride and the groom. This ceremony took place before the wedding day, on an auspicious day selected by both families. The gifts varied from family to family, although some items were considered essential. The gifts also varied depending on whether the families were in Singapore, Malacca, Penang or Indonesia. In general, the gifts would include a leg of pork, auspicious fruits, pairs of red candles, a red packet containing the *wang tetek* (dowry), jewelry and clothes (Fludd, 2019). This practice though usual as compared to marriage practices in other countries in the region, taking into account of the way Singaporeans held their wedding rite that was prior to the scheduled wedding day. Along with the kind of gifts was too peculiar of sort that would bring to light the impression about how Singaporeans manage to cope life in convulsion. As seen from the time when the couple exchanged gifts which could be interpreted as a pretext to a try and error commitment until assurance may come forth, and that is the final day of marriage, to the nature of gifts ranging from a simple token to a high value item. Whilst a mixture of things intended for the gift may tout to stretch to a complex life in the future. Such practice would allow the couple to carefully plan step-by-step and fixed things ahead for understanding before entering the real world of marriage life.

Also, the resemblance of *Maligay* can be glimpsed from the practices of the peoples in mainland ASEAN region. For instance, among the Vietnamese, the giving of a “Gift Tray” during wedding celebration is a traditional way of expressing an aesthetic sense on the part of the groom’s parent. Ann Le in her book titled, “The Little Saigon Cookbook: Vietnamese Cuisine and Culture in Southern California’s Little Saigon”, mentioned that the groom and his entourage – his wedding party and the most important of his family members arrive in a procession with edible gifts as an offering to the bride’s family. Placed in tins, the traditional trays of food called *trau cau* include rice cakes (sticky rice with coconut and mung beans), tea and rice wine, and a whole roasted pig (Le, 2011).

The same pattern of a wedding bash mentioned by George P. Monger in his book titled, “Marriage Customs of the World”, that in Vietnamese tradition, the giving of gifts by the groom’s family to the bride’s family is an important part of the proposal ceremony and of the ceremony on the wedding day. The gifts are placed on trays covered with red cloths or red paper and carried in procession by an even number of attendants – even numbers and the color red are both considered lucky in Vietnamese culture (Monger, 2013).

Vietnamese for this reason were like the Tausug who used to give a wedding gift of foodstuff to the bride as demonstration of charity in the context of Islam. Because charity for the Tausug and Vietnamese is about bringing joy and satisfaction that is expected of during the wedding day. No words can describe the feelings of the groom than to see his bride’s smile of contentment. Which could have been the conventional thought for both the Tausug and the Vietnamese grooms after getting inspired of the surroundings. Of course, seeing everyone busy while advancing high receptions for the event through foods, drinks, gifts, and dances preparations.

As what Joan Nakoong has mentioned that among Laotians, wedding gift is not only given by the groom. Rather even the parents of both groom and bride will also give gift. In other words, gift is expected from both parents of the groom and bride only it varies in form, and these include foods and drinks which are similar to the concept of *Maligay*. In fact, Arne Kislenko in her book titled, "Culture and Customs of Laos", said that traditionally a bride's price is required, although since the communist revolution the practice has been officially discouraged. The values vary widely, but generally men are expected to pay their brides' parents for marrying her (Kislenko, 2009).

Meaning, the idea of giving gift is observed across the ASEAN region depending on a particular wedding custom. Having said, the "gift" therefore depends on how the practice was venerated being entrenched in custom yet could only mean one thing - and that is the "life" of the indigenous peoples in ASEAN region. Of course, with their distinct language, comes a unique culture that allows certain marriage custom of each nation to emerge in the face of other ethno-linguistic groups in the region. As both the ethnic minority and majority have certain common traits to count, so to speak there is a room for the harmonious and balanced condition despite of their differences in beliefs across the mainland and maritime zones.

So far, today cultural transmission via cross-cultural contact is now made easy with the accessibility of border-to-border destinations that improved over time the migration of peoples within the ASEAN region. Under this circumstance, integration of indigenous cultures into the mainstream whole hold true to marriage rites. Especially in recent times, the idea of wedding rites nearly essential if not by right of the couple to have the best marriage in life. In addition, marriage rites among the Tausug families reflect the solemn betrothal which constantly preceded the celebration. Where in that

celebration, *Maligay* plays its role as it is prepared to entertain people in the community. Hence, the Tausug cultural identity has been expressed through the practice of *Maligay* and eventually would illustrate as part of the ASEAN regional culture. Anticipating the idea of 'acculturation' on one hand, and the 'people-to-people' contact on the other. – Of course, seeing *Maligay* with its equivalence of a 'bridal gift' is found in both mainland and insular countries of the region, where unique wedding practices buzzed and busted the external cultural supremacy.

When considering the impact of *Maligay* and its relevance to Southeast Asian societies, three possible outcomes can be identified. Firstly, the historical connection within the Southeast Asian (SEA) region has maintained neighboring ties through a chain reaction in the migration process and cultural exchange. This has contributed to the cultural interconnectedness of the region, whereby the *Maligay* tradition may contain elements that reflect this cultural connection.

Secondly, cultural exchange transmission has occurred within the SEA region, and *Maligay*, as a wedding custom among the Tausug, may represent an exclusive cultural heritage of the Filipino people within the broader SEA region.

Thirdly, the regional identity in the SEA region is based on solidarity and unity among peoples through an understanding of cultural diversities. Thus, it highlights the cultural commonalities across the region, emphasizing the richness and vibrancy of the cultures and peoples. Describing how *Maligay* in Jolo was influenced by Islamic Malay and indigenous cultural elements adds to the tapestry of diverse practices, such as food preparations and bridal gifts.

The preparations, which range from sweets and pastries to various spices of viands, are likely the result of Chinese-Arab influences, demonstrating the idea of

cultural adoption among the Tausug. This further explains how values and traits specific to food preferences and products have gained access to Muslim communities.

By and large, *Maligay* plays a significant role in advancing cross-cultural and interfaith comprehension among Filipinos and Southeast Asians, particularly within the Tausug populace. While not obligatory from a religious standpoint, it has seamlessly woven itself into the fabric of Tausug heritage, embodying both their ethnic distinctiveness and collective togetherness. The incorporation of *Maligay* into wedding festivities mirrors communal standards and establishes a shared tradition with the Malay population in Sabah, facilitating cross-cultural exchange and mutual comprehension. As a means of preserving their socio-cultural identity, *Maligay* additionally accentuates their indigenous delectables and culinary practices. In a broader context, its acceptance and admiration by a diverse array of groups contribute to concord and reciprocal admiration, further bolstering unity across the Southern Philippines and the ASEAN region as a whole.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, the researcher provides a comprehensive summary of the findings of the study on the Tausug practice of *Maligay* in wedding celebrations. The chapter presents the conclusions drawn from the research, highlighting the significance of *Maligay* within Tausug culture and its broader implications for regional identity. Additionally, recommendations are offered for preserving and promoting this cultural tradition. This chapter serves as the culmination of the research journey, focusing on the practical implications of the findings and the path forward for safeguarding this intangible cultural heritage.

Summary

This comprehensive study aimed to investigate the Tausug practice of *Maligay* in wedding celebrations, with a focus on three key aspects. The problem of the study revolved around understanding the cultural significance of *Maligay* within the Tausug community and its potential impact on regional identity and intercultural relations in Southeast Asia.

The research employed various methods, including online research, to gather data. Online sources were consulted to establish a foundational understanding of *Maligay* and its role in Tausug wedding traditions. Additionally, fieldwork and interviews were conducted within the Tausug community in Jolo, Sulu, to delve deeper into the production, cultural significance, and multifaceted role of *Maligay* in Tausug wedding customs. The study also explored the connections between *Maligay* and

wedding practices in other Muslim communities in Southeast Asia, which involved comparative analysis and cultural exchange.

The major findings of the study highlighted the profound role of food, represented by *Maligay*, in Tausug wedding celebrations. *Maligay* was identified as a symbol embodying matrimonial preparation and social norms, reflecting the richness and beauty ingrained in Tausug customs. Furthermore, the study revealed the complex nature of *Maligay* as a gift, comprising native dishes, pastries, and jams, which also played a role in dowry agreements. The research underscored the broader regional significance of *Maligay*, connecting Tausug traditions with those of other Muslim communities in Southeast Asia and contributing to a deeper understanding of regional identity and shared cultural values.

In summary, the study aimed to shed light on the cultural significance of *Maligay*, emphasize its potential role in strengthening regional identity, and promote intercultural relations within Southeast Asia. The research stressed the need for recognizing and preserving *Maligay* as an intangible cultural heritage and encouraged collaboration among stakeholders to safeguard this unique tradition.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this study has explored the cultural significance of the Tausug, particularly through the practice of *Maligay*, and its implications for regional identity and cultural integration. The examination of this unique wedding tradition has shed light on its role as an enduring cultural legacy within the Tausug community.

Firstly, in addressing the role of food in the wedding celebrations of Muslim in two areas of Jolo and Malaysia, the research has illustrated how food plays a central role in wedding celebratory events. The overview of Islamic wedding beliefs and

practices emphasized the importance of food in reflecting cultural and social aspects of the event. Moreover, this practice mirrors the rich and diverse traditions of wedding celebrations across Southeast Asia, revealing commonalities and shared elements among different local communities or countries.

Secondly, the focus on the Tausug practice of *Maligay* in Jolo has elucidated the intricate details of its production and cultural significance within Tausug wedding traditions. The study has revealed the meticulous planning and craftsmanship that go into creating a *Maligay*, serving as a symbol of social status and entertainment during wedding celebrations. Thus, the practice has been embraced by the Tausug community, preserving a cultural identity rooted in customary wedding norms.

Lastly, in exploring the relevance of *Maligay* in promoting regional identity between Filipinos and Southeast Asians, the research has demonstrated that *Maligay* transcends the Tausug community and resonates with other Muslim communities in Southeast Asia. The practice's adaptability and assimilation in various cultural contexts highlight the broader implications of cultural integration within the ASEAN region. The unity and acceptance of diverse cultures among Muslims reflect a shared identity and understanding.

Furthermore, the study aligns with the insights of scholars like Anthony Reid (1999), whose works on Southeast Asia in the age of commerce provide clues to the cultural influence of Malay Muslims in the region, making it tangible, particularly in Mindanao. The history of the Moro Tausug offers valuable cues for understanding a unique custom and a distinct Moro identity within the evolving times. The persistence of the *Maligay* practice and its continuity in a multicultural society reinforces the Filipino identity, which is a confluence of cultural practices within the country and external influences.

To comprehend the regional assimilation of *Maligay*, one must consider the mobility of Tausug group of people who migrated to other islands and countries in Southeast Asia, such as Sabah in Malaysia. This migration has facilitated the dissemination of the *Maligay* practice to foreign ethnic communities, further highlighting the practice's adaptability and ability to connect with diverse cultures.

In conclusion, the practice of *Maligay* exemplifies the persistence of cultural legacies and their role in shaping regional identity and cultural understanding in a multicultural and diverse ASEAN region. While there may be differences among the cultures, the act of giving a bridal gift to the bride and her parents is a unifying element, reflecting the unity sustained by a shared identity among Muslims. *Maligay*, as an exclusive Tausug practice, echoes with other cultures and communities throughout the ASEAN region, reinforcing the interconnectedness and shared cultural threads that bind this diverse and vibrant part of the world.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations of the study.

For the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA):

- Spearhead efforts to document and promote the historical facts about the origin of *Maligay* in the town of Jolo.
- Sponsor research to determine whether the practice of *Maligay* has connections with neighboring countries, emphasizing the range of cultural diversity in the region.

For Academic Researchers:

- Future researchers shall benefit from the study that pertains to an inquiry into culinary traditions and practices among Muslim communities,

particularly focusing on the role of food in cultural celebrations like weddings. This study provides a valuable foundation for exploring the broader culinary aspects of cultural heritage and its significance in various socio-religious contexts within Muslim communities across Southeast Asia.

For the People and Youth in Jolo:

- Implement educational programs to inform the young generation that *Maligay* is not a religious requirement for weddings.
- Encourage Ulama (Muslim Scholars) to continue reminding the society of the cultural significance of *Maligay* via radio and TV programs.
- Promote the historical culture of the Tausug among all barangay officials in Jolo, emphasizing shared values and attitudes related to the essence of *Maligay*.
- Establish an inter-barangay committee responsible for conducting youth awareness programs on the significance of *Maligay*.

For the Department of Tourism (DOT):

- Include *Maligay* as a cultural attraction in travel and tourism promotions, providing information about Tausug customary weddings.
- Enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Local Government Units (LGUs) in Sulu province to formalize the commitment to hold an annual Cultural Exhibit, highlighting the display of a beautiful *Maligay* for visitors and promoting other local arts.

For BIMP-EAGA (Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area):

- Foster cooperation to strengthen cultural ties within the BIMP-EAGA zone through exchange cultural studies and regionalization processes among Muslim communities involved.

Additional Recommendations for Future Studies:

For Future Studies:

- Conduct additional research to explore the socioeconomic impacts of food carts as gifts in wedding celebrations across Southeast Asian countries, focusing on historical and cultural factors, evolution over time, and economic and political implications.

For Food as Bridal Gifts in Indonesia and Malaysia:

- Conduct comparative research on food as bridal gifts in Indonesia and Malaysia, exploring historical and sociocultural contexts and investigating regional variations of similar wedding customs.

For Enriching ASEAN Studies:

- Encourage research in the field of ASEAN Studies to provide insights into cultural exchange and integration facilitated by wedding customs, socioeconomic cooperation, and policies to preserve traditions and promote sustainable development.

By following these recommendations, various stakeholders can contribute to the preservation and promotion of *Maligay* as an intangible cultural heritage, enriching the cultural tapestry of Jolo, Sulu, and the broader ASEAN region. These efforts can also

enhance intercultural and inter-religious understanding in the region while celebrating the unique cultural identity of the Tausug Muslims.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Photographs of the Field Research



During the visit in Jolo, Sulu dated March 26, 2021.



APPENDIX B

Photographs and Personal Details of Participants

Participant #1

Address : BUS-BUS, JOLO SULU

Livelihood/Profession/Category : COMMUNITY ELDER

Age : 55 years old



Participant #2

Address : ASTURIAS, JOLO SULU

Livelihood/Profession/Category : RELIGIOUS LEADER

Age : 58 years old



Participant #3

Address : ASTURIAS, JOLO SULU

Livelihood/Profession/Category : ELDER/RELIGIOUS LEADER

Age : 65 years old



Participant #4

Address : TULAY, JOLO SULU

Livelihood/Profession/Category : ELDER/RELIGIOUS LEADER

Age : 49 years old



Participant #5

Address : TULAY, JOLO SULU

Livelihood/Profession/Category : BARANGAY OFFICIAL

Age : 40 years old



Participant #6

Address : CHINESE PIER, JOLO SULU

Livelihood/Profession/Category : YOUNGSTER

Age : 31 years old



Participant #7

Address : CHINESE PIER, JOLO SULU

Livelihood/Profession/Category : BARANGAY OFFICIAL

Age : 43 years old



Participant #8

Address : ALAT, JOLO SULU

Livelihood/Profession/Category : YOUNGSTER

Age : 27 years old



Participant #9

Address : BUS-BUS, JOLO SULU

Livelihood/Profession/Category : PROMINENT FAMILY

Age : 26 years old

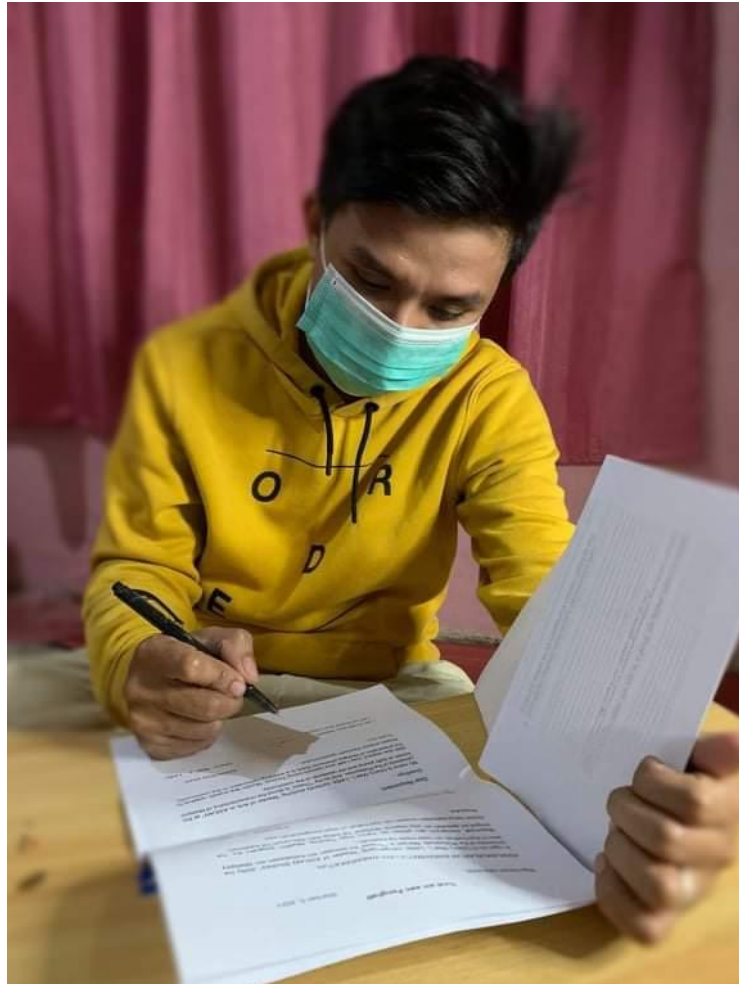


Participant #10

Address : ALAT, JOLO SULU

Livelihood/Profession/Category : PROMINENT FAMILY

Age : 27 years old



APPENDIX C

Foods showcased in Maligay



Bauluh

(Source: Photo by the author)



Daral

(Source: Photo by the author)



Durul

(Source: Photo by the author)



Colorful Hantak

(Source: Photo by the author)



Plain Hantak

(Source: Photo by the author)



Jaa/Lokot-Lokot

(Source: Photo by the author)



Palikambing

(Source: Photo by the author)



Panganan

(Source: Photo by the author)



Panyam

(Source: Photo by the author)



Pasong

(Source: Photo by the author)



Pitis

(Source: Photo by the author)



Putlimandi

(Source: Photo by the author)



Wadjit

(Source: Photo by the author)



Beef Kurmah

(Source: Photo by the author)



Chicken Biryani

(Source: Photo by the author)



Chicken Kurmah

(Source: Photo by the author)



Piyanggang

(Source: Photo by the author)



Tiyula Itum

(Source: Photo by the author)



Sambal

(Source: Photo by the author)



Utak-utak

(Source: Photo by the author)

APPENDIX D

Request Letters



University of the Philippines Open University
Faculty of Management and Development Studies
Los Baños, Laguna
Philippines

March 26, 2021

HON. MASHIER S. TAN
Barangay Chairman
Barangay Asturias
Jolo, Sulu

Assalamualaikum warakmatullah wabarakatuhu!

I am respectfully informing your good office that I am a student at University of the Philippines Open University and currently, I am working now on my thesis entitled, "Role of Food Cart in Muslim Wedding Celebrations of Southeast Asia: The Case of *Maligay* in Jolo" as part of a requirement in Master of ASEAN Studies.

In this regard, I would like to seek permission from your good office to allow me to conduct data gathering for my study in your respective barangay.

Rest assured that all information gathered will be kept confidential for the benefit of my participants.

I am looking forward for favorable response regarding this matter. Should you have any concern, you may contact me at my mobile number 0997-6675785.

Thank you so much!

Yours truly,

Cherry Mae L. Ladja



University of the Philippines Open University
Faculty of Management and Development Studies
Los Baños, Laguna
Philippines

March 26, 2021

HON. NURIA I. TALIB
Barangay Chairwoman
Barangay Alat
Jolo, Sulu

Assalamualaikum warakmatullah wabarakatuhu!

I am respectfully informing your good office that I am a student at University of the Philippines Open University and currently, I am working now on my thesis entitled, "Role of Food Cart in Muslim Wedding Celebrations of Southeast Asia: The Case of *Maligay* in Jolo" as part of a requirement in Master of ASEAN Studies.

In this regard, I would like to seek permission from your good office to allow me to conduct data gathering for my study in your respective barangay.

Rest assured that all information gathered will be kept confidential for the benefit of my participants.

I am looking forward for favorable response regarding this matter. Should you have any concern, you may contact me at my mobile number 0997-6675785.

Thank you so much!

Yours truly,

Cherry Mae L. Ladja



University of the Philippines Open University
Faculty of Management and Development Studies
Los Baños, Laguna
Philippines

March 26, 2021

HON. RIGDUAN A. UNDUG

Barangay Chairman
Barangay Bus-Bus
Jolo, Sulu

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Los Baños, Laguna
Philippines

March 26, 2021

HON. HUSSEIN K. HASSAN

Barangay Chairman
Barangay Chinese Pier
Jolo, Sulu

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Yours truly,

Cherry Mae L. Ladja



University of the Philippines Open University

Faculty of Management and Development Studies
Los Baños, Laguna
Philippines

March 26, 2021

HON. SALIP UTAL P. HAIRAL

Barangay Chairman
Barangay Chinese Pier
Jolo, Sulu

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Yours truly,

Cherry Mae L. Ladja

APPENDIX E

Consent Letter



University of the Philippines Open University
Faculty of Management and Development Studies
Los Baños, Laguna
Philippines

Consent Letter

Dear Participant,

Greetings...

My name is Cherry Mae L. Ladja, currently studying “Master of ASEAN STUDIES” at the University of the Philippines Open University. And so, my “Thesis” is about the characteristics of *Maligay* known to both young and old residents of the community.

With due respect, may I ask your opinion being Tausug, Muslim like me, relative to the preparation of *Maligay* whenever there is a wedding celebration in the community.

Please answer therewith questionnaire.

Thank you.

Respectfully yours,

Cherry Mae L. Ladja

☐	I will accept your request
☐	I will not accept your request

Name (please print) : _____

Signature : _____

Date : _____



University of the Philippines Open University
Faculty of Management and Development Studies
Los Baños, Laguna
Philippines

Sulat sin awn Panghati

Mga kakasi nata-abbit,

ASSALAMUALAIKUM WARAHMATULLAHI WABARAKATUH...

In ngan ko hi Cherry Mae L. Ladja, nangangadji “Master of ASEAN Studies” didtu ha University of the Philippines. Manjari in “Thesis” ko pasalan sin kallabiyen sin Maligay amu in kiya-hatihan sin bata-maas ha kawman.

Mag-maaf, mangayuh ako pikilan sin kamu mga Tausug, Muslim pagkahi ko, ha tungod sin parkalah sin pag tagama “Maligay” ha bang awn tiya-unun ha kawman.

Anduh bang makadjari answer-ran nyo kakuh in mga pangasubuh yan.

Magsukol.

Pag-addat ko kaniyu,

Cherry Mae L. Ladja

	Huon taysaun ko in pana-abbit mo
	Di ko taysaun in pana-abbit mo

Name (please print) : _____

Signature : _____

Date : _____

APPENDIX F

Research Questionnaire

Questionnaire

Demographic Profile:

Name: _____ Age: _____
Gender: _____ Livelihood/Profession: _____
Address _____
Contact No. _____

Question Proper:

I. **Ordinal Data Category** (please “check” the **box** or “encircle” the **letter** of your choices)

1. Which category will you recognize the practice as part of:

_____ Culture
_____ Religion
_____ Both

2. People always wanted to have a successful wedding celebration. Does it mean they have to include *Maligay* in the preparations?

_____ Yes
_____ No
_____ Not really

3. Have you been to Sabah, Malaysia? If YES, can you tell us about the practice? If NO, do you think there is relevance of the practice of *Maligay* for wedding celebration?

YES: _____

NO: _____

A. There is relevance
B. There is none
C. Undecided

A. There is relevance
B. There is none
C. Undecided

4. What do you think is the reason for having *Maligay* as a pre-requisite of marriage?

A. Because it is part of the community norm.
B. Because bridal parents wanted to have *Maligay* in order to please the visitors.
C. Because people just wanted to make *Maligay* for fun without any reason at all.
D. Because Muslims believed it is part of the religious rite.
E. Because rich people wanted to array their social status in public.

5. Do you think Muslims in Jolo are aware of the Sha'riah requisites of marriage?
- _____ Yes
 _____ No
 _____ Not really
6. If you were given the chance to decide for your wedding, will you also request for a *Maligay*? _____ Yes, _____ No. Why?
- ☐ Because I want to have a perfect wedding celebration.
☐ Because I want to let people know who we are in our community.
☐ Because I want to follow what is prescribed by Islam.
☐ Because *Maligay* is NOT a Sha'riah requisite for marriage.
7. How often you see *Maligay* in your community?
- ☐ Very often
☐ Often
☐ Occasionally
☐ Once in awhile
☐ Rarely
8. Can you please rate the type of *Maligay* you prefer to see in a wedding ceremony?
- ☐ Simple with small amount of foodstuffs.
☐ Simple but with complete dishes of foodstuffs.
☐ Modest and elegant having a well-designed structure with glamorous foodstuffs.
☐ Super big and unique *Maligay* that only few can afford to have one.
9. Usually how much is the cost of a typical *Maligay*?
- A. Ranging from 10,000 to 20,000
 B. Ranging from 20,000 to 30,000
 C. Ranging from 30,000 to 40,000
 D. Ranging from 40,000 to 50,000
 E. Ranging from 50,000 to even higher
10. On the average, how frequent is wedding celebration with *Maligay* in your community?
- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| _____ Once a Week | _____ Once a Year |
| _____ Once a month | _____ Twice a Year |
| _____ Twice a Month | _____ Thrice a Year |
| _____ Thrice a Month | _____ Seldom in two Years |

II. Nominal Data Category

11. What can you say about *Maligay* as a cultural practice applied to a wedding among the Tausug Families?

(Uno in mahipamung mo ha tungod sin Maligay laung ta' bilang pangaddatan kalagihan mapa-aun bang awn tiya-unun mga usba-waris sin Tausug?)

12. Can you differentiate the nature of *Maligay* of Jolo from that in Sabah in terms of purpose?

(Malilay mo bang uno in piyag-biddaan sin kahantang sin Maligay di ha Sug Iban sin Sabah ha tungod sin maksud?)

13. In your opinion, how *Maligay* evolved into a practice among the Tausug?

(Bang ha pikilan mo, bya' diin timagnah napa-aun in pag-hinang Maligay sin mga Tausug?)

14. Do you think, the bigger the size of a family, the greater chance to prepare *Maligay*? Why?

(Bang ha pikilan mo, yampa na mataud mag-laulasiyah, gam naman malagguh in pag hunah-hunah magpa^aun Maligay. Maytah ba ha?)

15. Does *Maligay* symbolize social status in the community? Why?

(In Maligay bakkas sin sila makagaus ha kawman. Maytah ba ha?)

Thank you so much!