

General Beliefs And Customs In The Folktales Of Bohol

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ABSTRACT

Culture encompasses a wide range of aspects, making it a comprehensive and expansive concept. This research investigates the collected oral folktales from various regions in Bohol, aiming to analyze and evaluate them based on predetermined elements and standards. Employing a qualitative research approach, specifically content analysis, the study explores the selected folktales of Bohol, examining their cultural significance and expressions. The analysis of these folktales focused on key components such as classification, customs, and beliefs. Following the evaluation, it was determined that the ten folktales could be categorized into six distinct groups based on their intended themes: family-oriented, supernatural, nature-related, romantic, religious, and political. The folktales of Bohol mirror prevalent customs and beliefs that encompass various aspects, including (1) Commemoration of Christian celebrations, such as weddings, baptisms, and significant events; (2) Firm belief in supernatural entities; (3) Practice of divination; (4) Existence of curses; (5) Engagement in trade and commerce; (6) Observance of offerings; (7) Reliance on healers or herbalists; (8) Recognition of divine retribution; (9) Embrace of the spirit of community known as "Bayanihan"; (10) Profound religious devotion; (11) Seeking parental consent for marriage; and (12) Defending one's territory. These elements found within the folktales exemplify the customs and beliefs prevalent in Bohol. The oral folktales of Bohol demonstrate the significance of family values, reflecting the strong emphasis placed on familial relationships by Boholanos. Moreover, these folktales reveal Boholanos' belief in the existence of unseen forces, guiding their actions in accordance with divine laws and the natural world. Additionally, Boholanos exhibit a deep respect for nature, as

evidenced by their efforts to protect and nurture it. The presence of love is also evident in one of the stories, highlighting the affectionate nature of Boholanos. Furthermore, the folktales of Bohol touch upon religious and political themes, further showcasing their relevance to the community. Overall, the classification, customs, and beliefs depicted in the oral folktales of Bohol provide a glimpse into the region's rich historical and contemporary context.

Keywords: tradition, beliefs, customs, folktales, culture.

INTRODUCTION

Literature enhances ideas and experiences, fostering a deeper comprehension of the world and nurturing personal, social, and national consciousness. It values experiences that serve as a source of strength during challenging times. Contemporary readers are fortunate as they have the opportunity to explore not only the present world but also the historical realms through literature, witnessing the diverse changes that have transpired. This demonstrates the timeless nature of literature, its enduring impact, and its ability to transcend generations. (San Juan et al., 2005).

Literature acts as a conduit, allowing readers to immerse themselves in the ideas, ideologies, emotions, and historical events of the past. The materials people read serve as building blocks for their moral, intellectual, social, physical, and spiritual growth. By capturing the essence of life, customs, experiences, and societal conditions of specific eras, literature becomes a precious treasure in the Philippines. It mirrors moments of joy, sadness, challenges, transformation, unity, and advancement, providing valuable insights into the nation's journey.

Filipinos possess an inherent inclination to share narratives encompassing life, society, livelihood, government, and a myriad of emotional experiences, which is evident in their deep appreciation for and preservation of literature. This reverence for literature serves as a testament to the profound connection between the realities of life and the creative spirit, emotions, and personal encounters of writers. Moreover, the significance of literature within a particular context reflects a broader reflection of the value placed on art, history, culture, society, and the inner world of the writer (Villafuerte, 2009).

The statement above underscores the notion that literature is born from the writer's profound emotions and intellect. It is through

their unparalleled creation, literature, that they fearlessly pour out their aspirations, joys, and personal experiences. Within the realm of literature, individuals have the privilege to express themselves using the transformative power of words and artistic expression.

Literature holds immense significance in people's lives as it stimulates the mind and evokes deep emotions. It evolves alongside the passage of time and historical transformations. Through literature, one can acknowledge the ancestral heritage, experiences, attitudes, and ideas that have shaped their identity. Literature not only reflects the past but also the present and the future. It is a source of joy to recall the noble customs, traditions, and precious treasures passed down by our ancestors, which should remain cherished within our hearts and minds as true Filipino values. Literature not only fosters a sense of nationalism but also rekindles and revitalizes appreciation for the rich cultural heritage crafted by the brilliant minds of the Filipino people (Pangkalinawan et al., 2006).

According to Pangkalinawan's statement, literature is not solely centered around the writer but also on the environment in which it flourishes. Within the writer's tangible reality, a narrative takes shape that possesses the power to either construct or dismantle a nation. Literature acts as a gateway through which readers can partially witness past events, listen to the resonating emotions of the writer and their era, savor the joys and sorrows of bygone times, perceive the fragrances and repulsiveness of yesteryears, and ultimately immerse themselves in the writer's perspective.

In addition to examining the forms, values, and classification of Boholano folktales, this study also takes into account the translation quality. This aligns with the principles of Hans J. Vermeer's Skopos Theory (Du, 2012), which highlights the importance of tailoring translations to the specific target audience or recipients of the translated information.

This implies that translation considers not only the conversion to another language but also the influence it has on the intended message recipient. In this study, the focus is on preserving the accuracy of the translations of Boholano folktales while capturing their essence. Additionally, translation serves as a medium to achieve the goal of imparting values and information to students.

Sidney Simon's "Values Clarification Theory" highlights the importance of not only focusing on the actual content of values but also understanding the process of valuing itself. This theory encompasses the examination of an individual's aspirations and internal thoughts through a thorough analysis of the outcomes they

generate. According to Simon, this process is an essential aspect of human existence (Andres and Andres, 2000).

This implies that valuing is an ongoing process rather than a mere end result. To gain a deeper understanding of a product, it is essential to appreciate the process through which it is created. Similarly, when studying folktales, it becomes crucial to comprehend the underlying process by examining the values that are embedded or depicted within them. This involves exploring why these values endure and understanding how they emerge or evolve. In the context of this study, it is relevant to examine the process of valuing through the analysis and interpretation of observable values.

The primary objective of this research was to recover the presumed lost oral narratives of Bohol and to examine and assess specific Boholano folktales using predetermined criteria and standards. Additionally, the study aimed to accomplish the following objectives as part of its promotion: (1) identifying the anthology and categorization of the collected Boholano folktales; (2) analyzing the prevalent Filipino beliefs and customs depicted in the Boholano folktales; and (3) proposing the development of a literary tool as a potential outcome of this study.

METHODOLOGY

This research employed a qualitative methodology, specifically utilizing qualitative content analysis. The researcher conducted interviews with elderly speakers of the Cebuano dialect, sourcing Filipino-speaking informants from the province of Bohol. For each Congressional District, three cities were selected, with an additional four places chosen from Congressional District 1. The selected municipalities were Baclayon, Loon, Tubigon, Tagbilaran City (the capital city) for CD 1; Clarin, Inabanga, and Talibon for CD 2; and Pilar, Sierra Bullones, and Carmen for CD 3. Informants were selected through snowball sampling, focusing on elderly individuals aged sixty (60) and above residing in the respective areas. The researcher conducted interviews with the informants, covering various essential topics such as personal information (age, duration of residency in the city) and knowledge of folktales heard in their city. The folktales shared by the informants were collected and served as the primary data for analysis in this research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section provides the findings and analysis of the study. It is divided into two main parts: the compilation and categorization of the

collected folktales, and the exploration of the beliefs and customs reflected in the folktales of Bohol.

The study reveals that the ten folktales can be categorized into six distinct themes: supernatural, family, politics, romance, nature, and spirituality.

The folk narrative "Ang Kweba Sanggonaneb" depicts the unique and harmonious relationship between the engkantos (enchanted beings) and humans in Tagbilaran. This is exemplified by their willingness to lend objects to people, implying that humans are regarded as part of the engkantos' family based on their interactions. The act of lending and communication reflects the traits found within Filipino families. Filipino families are known for their strong "close family ties," where mutual assistance and support are provided during times of necessity.

The folk narrative "Ang Paghahanap kay Ponso" embodies the spirit of community cooperation known as "bayanihan." Bayanihan entails collective effort to accomplish a shared objective. This practice is closely connected to the concept of family, as the spirit of cooperation within a family is also evident in bayanihan. In the story, the entire community joins forces in the search for Ponso, exemplifying their united assistance. The community to which Ponso belongs demonstrates their genuine concern and care for one another.

The folk narrative "Ang Paglalayag ni Fausta" unravels a mysterious event where the protagonist, Fausta, undergoes a supernatural experience as her illness vanishes without any medical intervention. This occurrence serves as evidence of the belief in miracles held by the people of Bohol. Folktales and oral traditions act as a foundation for their faith in finding remedies for their ailments. Stories like Fausta's narrative solidify the unwavering belief of the Boholano people in miracles, particularly when it comes to matters of health, as exemplified in Fausta's journey.

The folk narrative "Macaban: Ang Nakatagong Bayan" implies that something peculiar is occurring in the area. Although Macaban is renowned for its products in other regions and countries, the residents of Inabanga affirm that no such place exists in their town. Inabanga's inhabitants believe that Macaban is the domain of engkantos (enchanted beings), and the merchants there are also engkantos. The people of Bohol adhere to the concept of "lamat," which pertains to encountering unfamiliar places and individuals that transcend reality, and they perceive this phenomenon to be unfolding in Inabanga.

The tale "Ang Paglipat" portrays a supernatural occurrence involving engkantos and the Balete tree. As previously mentioned, the Balete tree serves as a habitat for engkantos, malignos, and other supernatural entities. In this narrative, a community of engkantos relocates to the Balete tree.

The folk narrative "Binaliw: Hiwaga at Kalikasan" presents the engkantos as a deterrent, signifying their ability to mete out punishment and inflict undesirable consequences when nature and its inhabitants are mistreated. For instance, the Binaliw Falls, explored in this study, is feared due to the incidents and encounters people have had when they engage in harmful actions towards nature. In this context, nature serves as a means to prompt individuals to act responsibly.

The folk narrative "Ang Mahiwagang Balon" highlights the deeply religious nature of the people of Bohol, fostering their keen interest in all matters pertaining to religion. For instance, a resident of Baclayon had a dream in which Sr. San Isidro Labrador appeared and provided instructions related to water and devotion.

The Bohol-based story called "Kilometro Sidenta" centers around the romantic relationship between Julian and Maria. Julian sets out to find Maria's home but faces difficulty in locating it due to a mysterious presence surrounding the area, including their own love story. Nevertheless, driven by his love for Maria, Julian decides to accompany her despite the enigma that surrounds them.

The translation of the salindila "Ang Kwento ni Ino" conveys a political ideology through the uprising of Ino's group against the Spanish government. This ideology is subtly implied rather than explicitly stated in the story, but their rebellion can be inferred from their actions. Ino's group can be viewed as outlaws as they engage in stealing livestock and possessions from the people. However, what sets them apart from ordinary individuals is the air of enchantment surrounding Ino's disappearance, depicted as his sudden vanishing akin to a bursting bubble.

The narrative of "Isla Hajaan" portrays the power struggle between Christians and Muslims, each driven by their respective principles and beliefs that they fiercely defend. As a consequence, one side instigates aggression while the other retaliates, creating a repetitive cycle of conflict between the two groups.

Based on the aforementioned details, the identified categories encompass supernatural, family, political, romantic, nature, and spirituality themes. Throughout history, politics has played a significant role in the fight for Filipino freedom against colonizers, a

theme exemplified in the story of Isla Hajaan, where the people defended their land and constituents against exploitative invaders. While less common in Bohol's folktales, elements of romance, nature, and spirituality are evident. Over the course of more than 300 years of Spanish colonization, Boholanos developed a deep reverence for religion. Christianity became the primary faith embraced by Filipinos, as portrayed in one of the collected stories. Romance and nature are depicted in other tales, showcasing the inherent human inclination to love and interact with the natural world—a sentiment deeply cherished by Boholanos.

The folktales of Bohol were thoroughly examined and analyzed, considering their anthologies, classifications, customs, and the beliefs held by the people of Bohol. These tales were found to fall into six distinct classifications: supernatural, family, political, romantic, environmental, and religious. Among these categories, the supernatural classification holds a prominent position. Throughout ancient times, numerous unexplainable events and phenomena have unfolded in remote towns across the Philippines. These stories are often passed down through the narratives of the elderly and shared through legends read by parents and teachers.

In the folktales of Bohol, a prevalent classification emerged, where extraordinary events were transformed into chilling narratives. Given that Bohol is primarily composed of rural and mountainous areas, discussions about the supernatural are inevitable. Folktales were crafted in an attempt to explain phenomena such as sudden disappearances, extraordinary occurrences, and more. Additionally, Boholanos place great value on their families, a sentiment that is evident in the transmitted folktales. Like most Filipinos, Boholanos have a deep-rooted family-oriented nature instilled by their social upbringing, and this appreciation for family remains unwavering even in the face of hardships.

Presented are the general customs and beliefs of the folktales of Bohol. Leading the list is the "beliefs in supernatural beings," which includes six (6) folktales. Following in rank are "lamat (mystical affluence)" and "celebration of feast, wedding, baptism, and other significant occasions in Christianity," each with two (2) folktales associated with them. Ranking third are the following customs and beliefs: "baliw (Divine punishment)," "sacrifice," "basaw (ritual noise-making)," "bayanahian (community spirit)," "asking for parental consent," "religiousness," "business dealings," "faith in the traditional healer or folk healer," "territorial defense," "sacrifice," and "business

dealings," each with one (1) folk tale from Bohol tied to their respective customs and beliefs.

Beliefs in supernatural beings. The Boholanos believe that not only humans inhabit this world but also other beings that are different from them. It is part of the Boholanos' behavior to respect these beings by taking care of nature and the creatures found within. The following folktales fall under this category: "Ang Kweba Sanggonaneb," "Ang Paghahanap Kay Ponso," "Ang Paglalayag ni Fausta," "Macaban: Ang Nakatagong Bayan," "Ang Paglipat," and "Binaliw: Hiwaga at Kalikasan."

Lamat. Lamat or mystical affluence is a phenomenon that occurs when a person becomes obedient or loses touch with their true self or the real world they inhabit. The Boholanos believe that "lamat" is often caused by supernatural beings who either bewitch or take a person to play with or bring them to their realm. The folktales "Ang Paghahanap kay Ponso" and "Ang Paglalayag ni Fausta" showcase this belief.

Celebration of Feast, Wedding, Baptism, and Other Significant Occasions in Christianity. One of the contributions of the Spaniards to the Boholanos is the appreciation of traditions such as celebrating special occasions. The Boholanos do not overlook important Christian events like feasts, baptisms, weddings, and birthdays. This custom is prominent in the folktales "Ang Kweba Sanggonaneb" and "Ang Mahiwagang Balon."

Baliw. The term "baliw" or Divine Punishment comes from the Visayan language, which means being struck by lightning. The Boholanos believe that being struck by lightning is not ordinary because it usually brings a curse. It commonly strikes people or events that are considered unacceptable or taboo. This belief is evident in the folktale "Binaliw: Hiwaga at Kalikasan."

Sacrifice. It is done when people commit offenses against supernatural beings. This is the Boholano belief. The common request of supernatural beings for an offering is a white pig, which is sacrificed, and its blood is spilled in the desired location of the supernatural beings. This belief can be seen in the folktale "Ang Paglipat."

Basaw. The term "basaw" is used by the Boholanos when they make loud noises. It is done to locate a person who is suspected to have been taken or played with by supernatural beings. The folktale "Ang Paghahanap kay Ponso" exhibits this custom.

Bayanihan or Community spirit. This refers to the actions and behaviors of people when they help each other. The people of Bohol

commonly exhibit this, especially in times of need. This custom is prevalent in the folktale "Ang Mahiwagang Balon."

Asking for parental consent. This is a primary Filipino culture, the formal proposal of marriage to a woman. In Bohol, it is often done by men when they desire to unite with their beloved. This tradition is widespread in the folk story "Kilometro Sisenta".

Religious devotion. The people of Bohol have a distinct sense of prayerfulness and religious devotion. They have wholeheartedly embraced and internalized the more than three hundred years of Spanish presence in the Philippines, and as such, many customs of the Boholanos originated from the Spaniards, including their religious devotion. This aspect is a central belief in the tale "Ang Mahiwagang Balon".

Business dealings. Like in other places, the Boholanos also engage in commerce. Bohol is an agricultural province, so the Boholanos have a wide range of goods to trade. This aspect is highlighted in the story "Macaban: Ang Nakatagong Bayan".

Faith in the traditional healer or folk healer. This is related to the custom of offering because the healers or traditional medicine practitioners determine what should be offered. They are the ones who communicate with spiritual beings. The people of Bohol believe in these healers or practitioners, known in their dialect as "Binisaya," because over time, they have seen their effectiveness. The story "Ang Paglipat" exhibits events anchored in this belief.

Territorial defense. The people of Bohol are known for their kindness, but they also become brave and fight when their territory or land is at risk. A concrete example is the recent war that happened in Inabanga, where the people of Inabanga prevented terrorism due to their curiosity about outsiders. Similar events can be seen in the story "Isla Hajaan".

In the beliefs and customs depicted in the transmitted tales of Bohol, the belief in supernatural beings takes precedence. It is connected to other beliefs such as "lamat" (curse), "basaw" (calling spirits), "pag-aalay" (offering), "baliw" (insanity), and "pananalig sa albularyo" (faith in traditional healers). Boholanos hold deep beliefs that not only humans dwell in the world but also other non-human beings living quietly in different dimensions. "Lamat" is a phenomenon where a person loses their sanity due to supernatural powers. It is often lost and only found through calling or making noise. It is believed that the "engkantos" (enchanted beings) get disturbed, so the taken person is returned. Sometimes, calling is not effective, so people consult traditional healers and make offerings. Other customs include

"pagbabayanihan" (mutual assistance), "asking for the hand of a parent" (a marriage proposal tradition), "being religious," and "territorial defense." Boholanos are known for being religious, and one aspect of this is the tradition of asking the parents for the hand of their daughter in marriage. It showcases goodwill and respect for the honor of Boholanos. Mutual assistance and territorial defense are interconnected. Cooperation or mutual assistance is observed when a group has something to fight for, as seen in the story of Isla Hajaan.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the folktales of Bohol served as a platform for shaping the virtues and values of individuals. Anthologies and classifications such as supernatural stories were used as a "regulator" for determining the proper behavior and conduct of people. Because the people of Bohol believed in the consequences of immoral actions and behaviors, they strived to be good to others and to nature. Boholanos also hold their families in high regard, as reflected in their folktales. It is inherent in Boholanos to be loving, so they try to return to their families no matter how far they are. This also implies that other classifications such as politics, love, environment, and religion are valued aspects of the Boholano way of life. The people of Bohol, like other beings, also experience love. Due to love, Boholanos formally ask for their beloved's hand, following the custom of "paghingi ng kamay sa dalaga" (asking for the girl's hand in marriage). This demonstrates that Boholanos value a person's honor and uphold actions deemed correct by society. Religion also serves as a template or pattern for determining the proper conduct of an individual within their community.

Recommendations:

1. Explore other folktales from different areas of Bohol that were not covered in this research.
2. Utilize the output of this study in teaching values.
3. The local government unit (LGU) should take steps to collect and preserve folktales while simultaneously presenting the distinct identity of Filipinos.
4. Incorporate these folktales as a foundation for Mother-Tongue Based Instruction in education.

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