

Iliganon Myths and Folklores: Its Effect to Social Culture

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Abstract

This study gathers the Iliganon myths and folklores and shows its effect to social culture. The respondents selected are coming from the different barangays of the city. The researchers used interviews and internet resources in gathering these folklores. Findings showed that there are a number of folklores that originated in the city. Mostly are found in the rural areas and among the folklores gathered, the most dominant is the folktales. These folklores have been one of the locals' source of entertainment long before the existence of technology. However, as time passes by and with the rise of various entertainment sources, folklores are being neglected and their probabilities of preservation are decreasing. There may come a time that these folklores will no longer be accessible to man. Thus, the researchers, with a goal that is to preserve the literature of Iligan, put it into writing and made it into something Iliganons can read and relate. It is in this light that the K to 12 curriculum (Republic Act 10533) otherwise known as the "Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013" one of its aim is to engage in oral history research with focus on key personalities, from the students, regions, province/town and brought about the Indigenization or localization of literature to make it easy for teachers to impart and transfer literature during the class contact hour.

Keywords: Myths and Folklores, Social Culture

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Introduction

Folklores have inevitably been part of human culture. Places – may it be rural or urban, possess their own different folklores that have been passed from generation to generation and are kept active by the folks in the culture. Sims and Stephens (2005) noted that folklores help us to form and express identity in the midst of an always complex, sometimes confusing social context, in which our sense of who we are is frequently questioned and challenged. This reveals that folklore allows people to give meaning to their lives and their surroundings.

While Iligan City has multi-cultural residents, culture is rich and folklores exist in different areas and aspects. Iliganon folklores would have been completely lost had it not been for the attempt of the native Iliganons to preserve its culture. Some of these folklores allegedly dates from time immemorial which the natives have successfully made known to the modern man through oral narration. Naturally, folklores are told for entertainment on gatherings and social occasions until it becomes a source of identity and gives moral to the listeners especially the younger ones. Until then, the younger ones live with folklores they tell to their children and the children of their children.

The separation of society, culture and folklore in Iligan City is inviolable such that Iliganons obtain a culture that is reflected through existing folklores. According to Jayalxmi (2010), in the contemporary society, we are constantly struggling to go back to our own roots and to maintain our ethnical identities. This explains that folklores originating from the past contribute to who we are today and helps define and enhance understanding of ethnical identities.

Folklore, as an academic discipline, focuses on the human creativity within specific cultural and social contexts. This includes how such expressions (i.e. stories, music, material culture and festivals) are linked to political, religious, ethnic, regional, and other forms of group identity. As the city of Iligan, being rural, journeys through its progress, Iliganons take their folklores along with them. Taking this into account, the researchers seek to collect different Iliganon folklores as well as investigate how Iliganons are affected socially with the folklores originating in the city. The result of this study can bethebasis for the teachers as to what extent should folklores be integrated in the study of literature.

Body

This study is anchored with Richard Dorson's Current Folklore Theories, Functionalist Theory by Bronislaw Malinowski, Theory-theory, and Lev Vygotsky's Socio-cultural theory.

Richard Dorson, a Professor of History and Folklore and Chairman of the Folklore Program at Indiana University, speaks of the history and existence of folklore over many years, specifically that of twentieth century. In his article in 2016, *Current Folklore Theories*, he cited that there exist five points of view (or schools) related to folklore. These five include: Comparative Folklore Theory, National Folklore Theory, Anthropological Theory, Psychoanalytical Folklore Theory and Structural Folklore Theory.

Comparative Folklore Theory, known throughout Dorson’s paper as “Finnish”, is deemed to be the most empirical theory of the five. This Finnish method takes a historical-geographical approach, making comparisons based on all variations of each element of folklore in an attempt to reconstruct its history. Focusing on common themes, the comparative theory searches the many internationally varied tales for oldest traits. Since folklore tales vary as a direct result of geographic change in location and evolution of time, all variations must link back to one common time and place. This means that folklores are being collected and compared to one another to come up with a common theme that may help in tracing back identities and customs of the old, thus, giving the modern generation of a better picture of the past.

The conceptualization of the problem in this study has been assumed that the social culture of the respondents was influenced by the folklores they were exposed to.

At least fifteen (15) respondents coming from different barangays of Iligan City participated in this study. These respondents were residents who can retell folklores about their respective barangays. Specific barangays include only the ones accessible to the researchers in terms of its proximity and safety. The respondents were selected accordingly, if not recommended by authorized personnel in barangay, i.e. barangay chairman. The focus of this study was on the collection of folklores taking into account the extent of its effect in the social culture.

Figure 1 showed the conceptual framework of the study. It presented three (3) components: Folklores (myths, legends and folktales) as the independent variables; Social Culture as covariates; and the output, *Iligan Anthology as Reflected in Myths and Folklores* as the dependent variable.

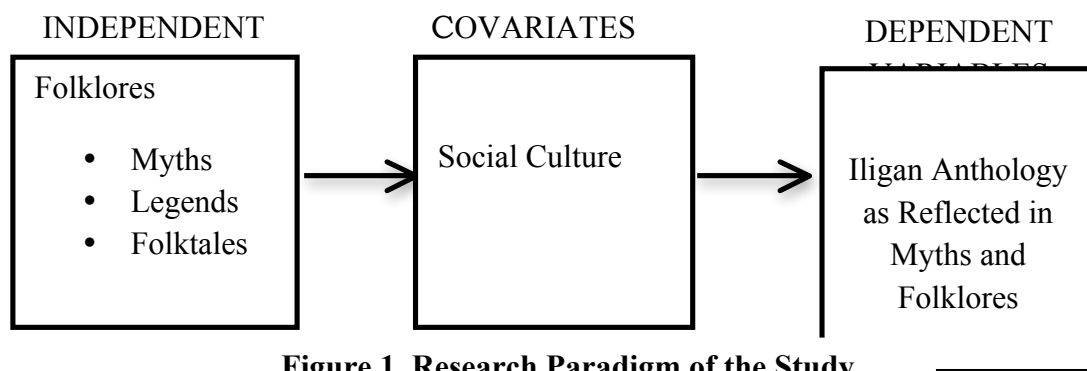


Figure 1. Research Paradigm of the Study

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to collect Iliganon folklores and to assess how it affects social culture.

Specifically, this study sought to answer to the following questions:

1. What are the Iliganon myths and folklores?
2. How do these folklores affect social culture?

Scope and Delimitation

This study aimed to collect and compile Iliganon folklores for future references. Involved in this research were residents from different barangays of Iligan City who can relate folklores originating in their place. Each has contributed at least one

folklore. The survey was conducted during midterm and semi-finals of the first semester of A.Y 2017 - 2018.

This research employed stratified sampling technique in which the selection of respondents was done through determining the common characteristics of the respondents i.e. knowledge on folklores. The respondents were expected to respond in an actual interview conducted by the researchers. The respondents' answers were recorded, transcribed and/or translated.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were defined operationally and conceptually for better comprehension of readers.

Folklore. This refers to the traditional beliefs, customs, and stories of a community passed through the generation by word of mouth (Oxford English Dictionary, 2017). In this study, it referred to the history that was preserved by the people of the culture consisting of traditions belonging to a specific culture. These traditions usually include music, folktales and other narratives.

Folk. This can automatically be identified with peasant or rural groups or with people from the past (Alan Dundes, 1965 as stated by Simon Bronner, 2007). In this study, it referred to a group of people who shared at least one common factor – could be occupation, language, religion or something that they can call their own.

Social Culture. This refers to the complex set of meanings, habits, values and behaviors adopted by one or more social formations (IGI Global Dictionary 2017). In this study this pertained to the actions presented by the respondents in socialization.

Socialization. This refers to the continuing process whereby an individual acquires a personal identity and learns the norms, values, behaviors and social skills appropriate to the social position (Dictionary.com). In this study, this referred to the way a person act during interaction among the people surrounding them in the society.

Related Literatures

The Philippines is a country that has varied cultural influences. Most of these influences are results of previous colonization, deriving mainly from the culture of Spain and the United States. Despite all of these influences, the old Asian cultures of Filipinos have been retained and are clearly seen in their way of life, beliefs and customs. Wherever you go, Filipino culture is very evident and has largely been appreciated and even applauded in many parts of the world. This proves that Philippine folklores continue to exist and give pride to the Filipinos.

Folklore and folk traditions have formed a large component of emergent nationalism. Frequently, the burgeoning interests in national language and a national folklore reinforce each other. Concerns for national history and literature also overlap with pride in a distinctive folklore. Circumstances vary from nation to nation, but it promotes national self-consciousness and has clearly appeared to have recognized the value and utility of folklore. Folklore is a national treasure, so, it should be valued and

preserved. Every child is entitled to this treasure. It is his heritage. He should be born to it in the home, and should come to a sure realization of it in the school.

Iligan City is home to diverse cultural groups: Maranao, Higa-onons, Lumads and Christians. Internet site LGU Iligan City (2012) states that for ages, they have worked together, played together, and lived together in peace and prosperity. It is their diversity that makes Iligan what it is today. It is no wonder that the city boasts different groups of artists that highlight the different talents of Iliganons in: art, music, dance and literature. Folk narratives represent a major part of the domain of folklore. The term 'folklore' is used for the verbal, spiritual and material aspects of a culture that are conveyed verbally, by observation, or by imitation. It is significant as an academic discipline, in the fields of literature, anthropology, sociology, art, music, history, linguistics, philosophy, mythology and so on. Specially, in the context of anthropology, folklore is an important means to study of man related matters. "The relation of folklore to culture is highly concerned in anthropology because folklore cannot be fully understood without thorough knowledge of their culture. Folklore belongs to one branch of cultural anthropology and anthropologists consider it as a part of culture but not the whole of culture. (Bascom, 1953 as stated by Kalyani, 2009) Folktales permit people to express emotions in a socially approved manner that would be inappropriate in any other form. The acceptance of popular lingo and non-standard expressions is commonplace and actually enriches folktales. People can engage in projective fantasy by creating tales that contain realistic themes, using symbolism and metaphoric projections on both the unconscious and conscious levels.

Folktales can be used in virtually all disciplines to convey knowledge and communicate ideas. Historians, for example, while questioning the historical accuracy of a tale, acknowledge that much information is contained in them. Folk history reveals a lot about behavior during the historical period, and certainly the views of 'folk' give insight into the time and the prevailing attitudes held by the people. Anthropologists can study the cultures and traditions of a group. The behavior of the characters and the deeds performed reveal much about the lifestyle and beliefs of the cultures.

Ezeigbo (2009) stated in *Language and Creativity in African Literature* by Jacinta Onyekachi (2015) that many children, especially those born in the urban areas, have completely lost touch with the oral traditions of their people. Gone are the days when children grew up with deep knowledge of their culture and traditions. Indeed in the traditional past, children were entertained and instructed with folktales. With the rise of technology comes various sources of entertainment for adults and children. This made folklores seem to be left-behind. Some writers have tried to write down and preserve the oral tradition in books which are marketed for children with the intention of instructing and entertaining them, for example, the ubiquitous tortoise tales which have found their way in some storybooks.

Praxedis L. Garay, 65, a resident of Brgy. Sta. Filomena, makes it a habit to relate folklores, especially customs and beliefs to her grandchildren. This is her way of showing the younger generation the beauty and importance of the folklores of Iligan. This made her grandchildren more careful and cautious of the way they socialize with the people they interact with.

Culture is a form of *uniformity of mankind* according to E.B. Tylor and J.H. Frazer, 1981 as stated by Daniel Gold in his book *Aesthetics and Analysis in Writing on Religion: Modern Fascinations*, 2003. Tylor provided the framework for his theories regarding cultural diffusionism, as well as two ways wherein groups of different age constructs can have commonalities in terms of cultural forms which are the independent invention and the inheritance from ancestors. Tylor then states that “The earlier conceptions of culture is that of a complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, morals, laws, customs and other habits possessed by any single member in a society.”

The closest and most immediate means of transmission of knowledge, language, practices, myths, beliefs, lores and etc is through oral tradition. There are important elements that serve as arbiters for distinguishing a folk narrative from other forms and those are its shared *experience, relevance* and *symbolism* to the people in the community.

Allan Dundes a folklorist in the University of California, in J. Bronner’s *The Meaning of Folklore* (2007), finally associates folklore with the society by the oral tradition, stating “Folklore, as a mirror of culture, is as invaluable as a reflection of a particular culture’s conditions and values.” Dundes also stated that, it was not understood in Boas’s mirror concept that an item of folklore can serve as a vehicle which requires an individual to what he may not be permitted to do in everyday reality. This argument of Dundes later consolidates the importance of folklore to reveal the trends of changed, unchanged or even invented traditions in the culture of the community over time.

In addition, Hobsbawm, E.J & Ranger, T.O in their book *The Invention of Tradition* (2012) states that “modern academic discourse on traditional lores argues that it is not culturally given but a cultural construct, invented at a certain period of time under certain circumstances. It is not relevant to judge whether a tradition phenomenon (for example, a folklore ensemble) is genuine or spurious. Tradition is neither genuine nor spurious because it is not handed down from the past as a thing or collection of things, but it is symbolically reinvented in an ongoing present. As particular lore or tradition is not passed on from generation to generation in language, art, and music as a time-honored body of knowledge and values, but it is rather in a constant stage of disorder and confusion, about to disintegrate under the pressure of change. And members of the society strive to restore and maintain tradition in new rituals, displays, and in diverse forms of entertainment, or in the revival of old ones.

Also According to Eugenio (2002) in his book, *Philippine Folk Literature: An Anthology*, culture or traditions and folklores are both dependent on each other. Not only does folklore shift, but it changes as it shifts between the highest to the lowest layer of culture.

In folkloristic writing, the “mirror” concept is still applied to relate historical and cultural information about a group that has undergone change from another perspective, with the presumption that it is also a maker of a particularistic social identity. Further references on the idea of folklore not rejecting culture suggest, however, that there is the underlying psychological possibility of folklore distorting or inverting reality.

Lopez(2006), in her book titled “*A Handbook of Philippine Literature*” elaborates that folklore is a paradox, for it is a combination of stability and change. There is always the conscious and unconscious introduction of new elements in a folklore item by the transmitter of the lore. The two factors—the creative urge of transmitters of lore to improve on a traditional material and the forgetfulness on the part of the raconteur or a creator of a material item that causes in the substitution of new elements in place of the forgotten ones cause innovation in folklore.

“Amazing as it may seem, however, folklore maintains and preserves itself for posterity through its stable structure. The basic skeletal pattern in folklore is constant even if folkloric content and stylistics vary such that even character, setting and style of narration change, the basic plot remain unchanged”,Lopez (2006) stated.

Related Studies

The first period of Philippine literary history is the longest. As literary works created in the setting of a society where the resources for economic subsistence – land, water, and forest – were communally owned, the oral literature of the pre-colonial Filipinos bore the marks of community. The subject matter was invariably the common experience of the people constituting a village – food-gathering, creatures and objects of nature, work in the home, field, forest or sea, caring for children, etc. This is evident in the most common forms of oral literature like the riddle, the proverbs, and the song, which always seem to assume that the audience is familiar with the situations, activities and objects mentioned in the course of expressing a thought or emotion.

The language of oral literature, unless the piece was part of the cultural heritage of the community like the epic, was the language of daily life. At this phase of literary development, any member of the community was a potential poet, singer or storyteller as long as he knew the language and had been attentive to the conventions of the form.

The Filipinos realized the essence of folklore as part of the Philippines’ national cultural heritage in the nineteenth century, as a result of the nationalism of its people. The inward relation between nationalism and its people’s interest towards folklore was evident. Because ownership of a literary composition by the originating individual is not emphasized in the process of oral transmission, it is conceivable that the receiving performer of a song or a poem often feels that the work he is performing or delivering is expressive of his own beliefs, attitudes and emotions (Lumbera and Lumbera 2007).Folktales act as cultural transmitters (Leimgruber, 2010). Every culture has long traditions of oral storytelling. Students can learn about their own culture and transmit their own culture to others by studying folklore, by collecting folklore from their own families and communities, and by writing or dramatizing their own variants of traditional tales and rhymes. Hanlon (2000), as stated in Hou-rani (2015), in her article *folktales, Children Literature and National Identity in the United Arab Emirates*, said that once educators and students start looking, they can find allusions to familiar folk heroes, rhymes, and sayings throughout popular culture. Folktales are universal and enhance globalization of cultural knowledge. Although it is interesting to compare culturally specific details in folklore from different times and places, one of the most intriguing phenomena in human experience is the

similarities in stories with universal themes from all over the world. For example, there are obvious historical connections between the Appalachian "Ashpet" and the German "Ashputtel" that European settlers in Appalachia would have known. There are stories that are similar to Cinderella motifs also found in ancient African and Asian traditions. There are many fascinating theories about the universal elements in world folklore and myth, in addition to the localization and cultural unique features of folktales, but (unfortunately) this is beyond the scope of this study.

Eugenio (2008) in her journal *Folklore in Phillipine Schools* stated that when folklore was first taught in Philippine schools, American teachers who collected and studied these folktales were the ones who introduced them to the schools. During the first decade of the twentieth century, folklores from the Tagalog were collected by Fletcher Gardner and Lucetta Kellenbarger, and they taught them in schools. Berton Maxfield and W.H. Millington, on the other hand, were teaching and collecting folklore in Panay Island. Most, if not all, of the Filipino children encountered and were familiar with folk stories such as why the sky is high and the legend of the first bananas. Moreover, these tales were authentic folklore having been taken from such early collectors as M.C. Cole, Alfred Worm, and some student collectors of Dean S. Fansler and H.O. Byer.

According to Jenkins (2002) and Hanlon (2000), in Hourani's *Folktales, Childrens Literature and National Identity* (2015), folktales reflect infinitely meaningful socio-cultural codes, moral and civic values. Because folktales represent human experience through symbols and archetypes, there is room for endless debate about how to interpret particular tales. These tales also provide excellent examples of the symbolism of socio-cultural codes that may be conveyed in children's literature. They also tend to preserve oral history, and link oral and written literatures of the world). According to Hanlon (2000), educators often forget that all literature developed originally from oral traditions, and that most people in human history had no writing system to record their languages and stories. Storytelling is still alive as an oral tradition in many places. Thus folklore works well when teaching oral skills, speech drama and social values.

Folktales are found among peoples from various cultures, all over the world. They include fables, myths, tales of heroes, fairytales and ghost stories etc. Nevertheless, there are many reasons that limit folk narrative practices among school children. Mainly, children always face the problem of absence of leisure for extra activities such as practicing folk narratives due to competitive education system and electronic media. Most of children have to spend free hours after school and weekends for tuition classes. In addition, most of them spend time on watching television. Even though, there are some television programs of folk narratives, children are mostly attracted by other popular programs (Kalyani, 2009).

As emphasized in UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), folktales play an invaluable role, along with other cultural traditions, in bringing people closer together and "ensuring exchange and understanding among them." As globalization and social transformation demand renewed dialogue among communities, educators and artists are more motivated to protect and promote oral traditions and related cultural heritage. As pointed by Hae-ri (2003), studies of folktales never cease to be relevant even today and will remain so in the future.

Moreover, the indigenous knowledge and wisdom found in the folktales keep us connected to our traditions and indeed help shape our culture. Today's children may think of folktales as old-fashioned or even irrelevant. However, the influence of folktales is alive and well even today. Despite these stories' age, they still carry important messages to learners today.

Conclusion

A folklorist, Margaret Read MacDonald (2004) wrote in her tale, "Once the story leaves your mouth, it is carried away in the hearts of your listeners". This is one of the most appreciated attribute of folklores, that once it is told, it tends to live in the hearts of the listeners - it is remembered. When remembered, one can tell it to the other and the story live longer. But with the rise of multi-media, younger generations are bowing their heads into watching and listening to their gadgets that they forgot to look up and listen to what the elderlies has to say.

As fearful as it could get, there may come a time when folklores will no longer be accessible to man. In this regard, this study promotes the Iliganon folklores with a goal which is its preservation. Through "*Iliganon Folklores, A Local Anthology*", Iliganon stories and legends from the past is made accessible in printed material. This can be very helpful not only to the researchers seeking for these stories for academic purposes but also to the commoners in most common occasions when entertainment is needed.

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