



EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF INDIGENOUS SPORTS ON CULTURAL PRESERVATION AMONG THE COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Abstract:

Indigenous sports play a significant role in upholding cultural identity and heritage, particularly among students. This study examined the correlation between indigenous sports participation and cultural preservation among Bachelor of Physical Education students. A quantitative research design was utilized, and 306 students of PAFH 4 were randomly selected. Correlation of mean, Pearson's r , and regression analysis were employed in analyzing the data. Survey questionnaires were used as the primary means of measurement for both independent and dependent variables. Results indicated a positive correlation between engagement in indigenous sports and the preservation of the culture. In addition, regression analysis indicated that active participation in indigenous sports was a significant predictor of cultural awareness among students and efforts to preserve cultural practice. These results highlight the importance of incorporating indigenous sports in school programs because they can enhance students' attachment to their cultural heritage. Schools can undertake promoting such activities through the development of curriculum, cultural events, and extracurricular activities to support cultural preservation as well as students' participation further.

SDG: #4 (Quality Education) & #11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities)

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1. Introduction

Cultural preservation is declining due to globalization, modernization, and economic growth priorities. With the spread of Western culture, numerous local customs and languages are disappearing or being replaced (Magu, 2015). UNESCO (2020) indicates that approximately 40% of the world's 6,700 languages are threatened with extinction, primarily because younger generations no longer use them. Up-to-date developments and urban expansion also overshadow conventional practices, with the World Bank (2021) observing that cultures and traditional crafts are disappearing in rapidly expanding cities such as those in India and Nigeria. Giddens (2000) suggests that pursuing modernization tends to generate conflict between development and maintaining cultural identity.

Cultural preservation is essential to uphold communities' identity, values, and continuity, particularly in a time dominated by globalization and modernization. It protects physical heritages, such as buildings and artifacts, and intangible heritage, including language, traditions, and practices, which foster a strong sense of belonging and cultural pride (UNESCO, 2020). This preservation strengthens communities against outside influence while retaining their fundamental value (UNESCO, 2019). Additionally, tourism is economically rewarding and fosters sustainable development by conserving the environment and encouraging diversity (Nilson & Thorell, 2020). By appreciating culture's visible and invisible components, societies ensure that future generations can comprehend and appreciate their origins.

Indigenous sports are deeply connected to cultural preservation, as they embody traditional practices, philosophies, and values integral to the identity of indigenous communities. These sports usually act as a living remembrance of the past, honoring cultural heritage, and strengthening ties within the community. Traditional Filipino games like Lahi ng Lahi foster unity and patriotism among players by emphasizing teamwork, sportsmanship, and cultural integration, integrating them into educational systems, organizing festivals, and raising awareness through modern platforms. Such initiatives ensure that this tradition continues and help bridge generational gaps, enriching cultural heritage. Preserving these games minimizes the growing influence of modern digital entertainment, safeguarding unique cultural identities for generations (Pineda, 2024). Moreover, their continued practice inspires pride among the youth and encourages active participation in preserving their cultural roots.

While previous studies have explored the connection between indigenous sports and cultural preservation in general, more focused studies on college students are urgently needed, particularly in the context of the University of Mindanao. A research gap in cultural preservation exists in exploring the effectiveness of community-based initiatives in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, especially in rural and indigenous communities. Many studies discuss how globalization harms cultural preservation, but only a few look at how local communities help protect their culture (Usmaedi *et al.*, 2024). Most existing studies emphasize top-down approaches, overlooking the potential of

local, community-driven strategies. Investigating how rural and indigenous communities preserve their cultural heritage amidst globalization and urbanization can provide insights into more sustainable and inclusive preservation practices. A localized inquiry at the University of Mindanao is necessary to understand the unique cultural elements influencing students' development of cultural preservation, with the possibility of shaping cultural preservation programs customized to students' needs.

The primary objective of this study is to examine the relationship between indigenous sports participation and cultural preservation among students at a university in Davao City. Specifically, it aims to explore student engagement in indigenous sports by analyzing four key dimensions: history focus, cultural implication, unique characteristics, and social interaction. It also seeks to evaluate the extent of cultural preservation among students through six indicators: legislative framework, institutional roles, community involvement, international cooperation, economic impact, and digital innovation. Furthermore, the study aims to determine the correlation between indigenous sports participation and cultural preservation, emphasizing how traditional games contribute to preserving cultural heritage, strengthening social bonds, and continuity of traditions across generations. The following null hypothesis will be tested at a 0.05 significance level: There is no significant correlation between indigenous sports involvement and preservation of culture among students of PAHF 4. That is, indigenous sports involvement does not predict cultural preservation, and there is no quantifiable effect on the preservation of culture due to indigenous sports involvement.

This study is anchored to the Cultural Continuity hypothesis introduced by Cobb *et al.* (2024). Preserving heritage culture is an important psychological driver that influences behavior and is helpful to healthy psychological functioning. The intentional preservation of significant aspects of one's cultural heritage across time for practical and adaptive purposes is called cultural continuity. The authors integrate studies in various disciplines to show that cultural continuity is valuable everywhere, valued in every context, and visible at an early age. They provide strong evidence that achieving cultural goals significantly benefits identity, mental well-being, and overall wellness.

This study is supported by Cultural Sustainability Theory (Soini & Birkeland, 2014), underscoring that maintaining heritage culture is a core psychological motivation that ensures well-being, identity, and resilience. Cultural sustainability theory is concerned with preserving cultural customs, values, and practices for succeeding generations to keep cultural heritage alive and relevant in evolving societies. The concept of cultural continuity supports this by emphasizing the adaptive and practical advantages of maintaining aspects through time. Both theories emphasize that sustaining cultural heritage is more than just preserving the past, but also promoting social cohesion, mental health, and community resilience in the present. Therefore, the cultural continuity hypothesis offers psychological and behavioral support that strengthens the theoretical base of Cultural Sustainability Theory by showing its value in promoting positive human functioning and social stability.

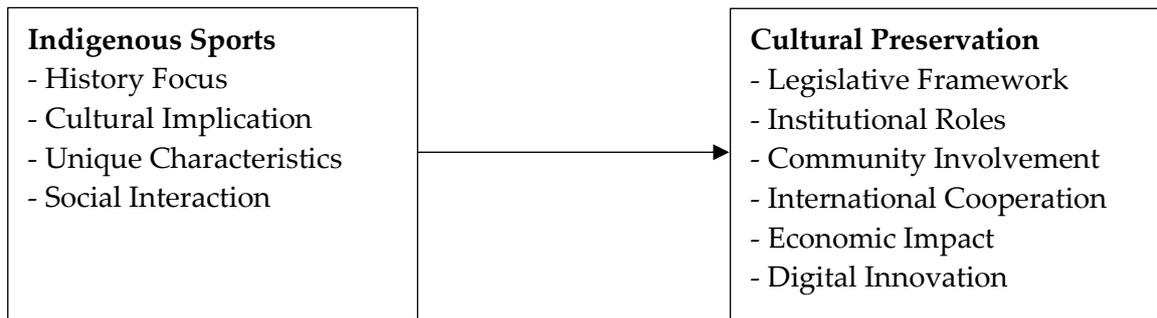


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual model, which discusses the interaction between indigenous sport (independent variable) and cultural preservation (dependent variable). The independent variables include four primary aspects of indigenous sport: history focus, cultural implication, unique characteristics, and social interaction (Rosanes, 2024). A dependent variable is preservation of culture as it is measured through six indicators: legislative framework, institutional rules, community involvement, international cooperation, economic impact, and digital innovation (Saputra, 2024). Together, these dimensions and indicators present an overall framework for understanding how indigenous sport is involved in maintaining and transmitting cultural heritage.

Together, these dimensions and indicators present an overall framework for understanding how indigenous sport is involved in maintaining and transmitting cultural heritage to future generations. The arrow represents the conceptual framework that helps college students understand how one variable influences another. This precise flow supports understanding and encourages systematic thinking. However, arrows can also confuse. For instance, students might mistakenly believe that every aspect of indigenous sports directly impacts cultural preservation, ignoring indirect factors like economic or political issues.

This study is significant because it investigated how indigenous sports help preserve cultural heritage among PAFH 4 students at Davao City University. This study contributes to understanding how traditional practices support cultural identity, social cohesion, and continuity over time by analyzing the relationship between indigenous sport participation and cultural preservation (Pineda, 2024).

Additionally, this study supports Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, which emphasizes the value of cultural heritage preservation in the face of modernization and globalization (UNESCO, 2020). Additionally, it promotes the value of integrating cultural preservation into educational institutions to guarantee that students gain a greater understanding of their rich cultural heritage while fostering inclusive, diverse, and equitable learning environments, which aligns with SDG 4: Quality Education (UNESCO, 2019)

The findings of this study provide valuable implications for educators, policymakers, and cultural institutions in designing programs focused on enhancing

cultural sustainability. By promoting the role of native sports in university communities, the study can be seen to support measures that improve the students' identity and belonging (Joiner, 2024). Finally, the results offer viable suggestions for integrating traditional methods in contemporary educational and community settings and steps to face the obstacles of modernization and digitalization (Magu, 2015; Yeganeh, 2024). In short, this research is a foundation for further study of cultural preservation and the significance of the continued perpetuation of indigenous practices. Its place-based manner highlights the peculiarities concerning university students and cultural heritage that still constitute an integral part of academics (Saputra, 2024). These insights can lead to more responsive and culturally relevant initiatives that empower students to engage in heritage conservation actively.

2. Method

This section presents the research design employed in studying indigenous sports and cultural preservation among PAHF 4 students at a university in Davao City. Research design includes choosing respondents, data collection, methods, and statistical tools used for analysis. Using a quantitative correlation research design, this study systematically measured the extent of indigenous sports participation and its impact on cultural preservation.

2.1 Research Respondents

The participants in this research were PAHF 4 students from one of the universities in Davao City during the 2nd semester of the school year 2024- 2025. The PAHF 4 population consists of 1,488 students. The researchers used a Raosoft calculator to find the precise number of respondents. A sample of 306 was chosen to represent a wide range of opinions on indigenous sports and cultural preservation. The researchers used a random sampling method where each unit or individual in the population has an equal chance of being selected. In this method, the researchers cannot choose a specific unit. Instead, a set randomization method handles the selection process. This guarantees that every unit in the population has the same opportunity to be included, resulting in representative and reliable samples for analysis (Noor, 2022). The set inclusion criteria required participants to be officially enrolled in PAHF 4 to ensure the data is valid and reliable. This applied regardless of college affiliation, gender, ethnicity, or academic status. However, the study excluded students who were not officially enrolled in PAHF 4 and those under 18. They were not forced to provide additional responses or continue participating if they did not wish to.

2.2 Research Instrument/ Materials

This study employed adapted and modified questionnaires, comprising two sets to gather data effectively. The first set of questionnaires was taken from Rosanes's study. (2024) "Enhancing Philippine traditional games on student engagement and

performance", with four indicators such as history focus, cultural implication, unique characteristics, and social interaction, five items for each indicator. The second set of questionnaires was taken from a study in Saputra (2024) (Governance frameworks and cultural preservation in Indonesia), with six indicators: legislative framework, institutional roles, community involvement, international cooperation, economic impact, and digital innovation, with five items for each indicator. Participants responded using scale where a score of 5 (Strongly Agree) indicated a significant contribution to preserving cultural identity and traditions, 4 (Agree) reflected a noticeable contribution to preserving cultural preservation, 3 (Neutral) signified no significant impact, positive or negative, 2 (Disagree) represented a minimal to preserving cultural practices, and 1 (Strongly Disagree) indicated no contribution to preserving cultural heritage.

The researchers utilized a range of means to interpret the data regarding both the level of indigenous sports participation and the level of cultural preservation among college students.: 4.20-5.00 with a very high level of description, this indicates that the statements is always manifested, 3.40-4.19 (high) this indicates that the statements is often manifested, 2.60-3.39 (neutral) this indicates that the statements is sometimes manifested 1.80-2.59 (low) this indicated that the statements is rarely manifested, 1.00-1.79 (very low) this means never manifested.

2.3 Research Design / Procedure

The researchers used a quantitative correlation design to investigate the relationship between two variables and analyze their strengths and weaknesses (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This study explores the relationship between participation in indigenous sports and cultural preservation among college students in one university in Davao City. During the data gathering process, the researchers requested permission from the Dean of the College of Teacher Education (CTE) and Program Head of the Bachelor of Physical Education (BPE) at the University of Mindanao. The researchers used descriptive statistical analysis, including the mean and standard deviation, to measure the extent of indigenous sports and cultural preservation. The mean (average) was considered the best and most reasonable estimate of central tendency (Sykes *et al.*, 2016; Bhandari, 2020). Using the mean, the researcher answered problems one to four. In addition, the standard deviation helped estimate the variance of responses and offered more insight into the data distribution.

The researchers wanted to determine how much the answers in the data set deviated from the mean. To do this, researchers used standard deviation to see how much the data points varied from the mean (Bhandari, 2020). Standard deviation is calculated by squaring the variance (El Omda & Sergent, 2024). This helped the researcher to examine how the answers of the 306 PAHF 4 students clustered around the mean or dispersed. The researchers utilized Pearson's *r* to determine the relationship between the variables. Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was employed to determine the strength of the relationship between the variables (Nickolas & Drury, 2021).

This statistical measurement was utilized specifically for problem number three. The researchers employed multiple linear regression to determine the variables that explained students' engagement in indigenous sports and to test the correlation between several indicators of the perceived independent variables by teachers and the dependent variable, preservation of culture. This was applied statistically through linear regression, enabling the determination of the deviation and type of influence between the fields. This research considered whether there was an influence or relationship between the indicators (Devault, 2024). Collectively, these statistical measures assisted in analyzing and comprehending the data in depth, responding to critical research questions, and confirming existing knowledge. Dulks *et al.* (2023) wrote that Indigenous sports such as running, stickball, and lacrosse promote traditional activities and play a role in determining cultural identity. Similarly, Oyelude (2023) discussed how Indigenous knowledge displayed in stories, dance, and paintings is linked to sports, highlighting the significance of keeping culture alive. (Nofrizal *et al.*, 2024) Also, traditional sports ensure various generations learn from one another, bringing the community together annually and forging regional identity. These opinions collectively affirm that indigenous sports are more than physical activity; they are a powerful component of indigenous identity, cultural resilience, and generational transmission of indigenous values.

3. Results and Discussion

This section shows how the data gathered on the relationship between indigenous sports and cultural preservation among PAHF 4 students from one of the universities in Davao City. The findings are based on the study's objectives to determine how many people participate in indigenous sports: the level of indigenous sports participation and cultural preservation. The quantitative findings are supported by existing literature, providing a comprehensive understanding of how indigenous sports contribute to students' cultural awareness. The theoretical framework is also discussed to explain cultural revitalization and sustainability findings.

3.1 Indigenous Sports Participation

The results in Table 1 revealed a very high level of students' participation in indigenous sports, with an overall mean score of 4.28 and a standard deviation of 0.44, indicating a very high level. This suggests that indigenous people are always manifested.

Table 1: Level of Indigenous Sports Participation

Indicators	Mean	SD
History Focus	4.35	0.54
Cultural Implication	4.36	0.56
Unique Characteristics	4.22	0.54
Social Interaction	4.16	0.56
Overall Mean	4.28	0.44

Further, cultural implications, with a mean score of 4.36 and a standard deviation of 0.56, received the highest rating, which was very high. Meaning they see indigenous sports as a reflection of our rich cultural heritage. Social interaction, with a mean of 4.16 and a standard deviation of 0.56, received the lowest rating, which is high, indicating that the students agreed that participating in indigenous sports helps them to meet and interact with different people.

Overall, the findings show how important indigenous sports are to maintaining cultural heritage and fostering college students' social and personal growth. According to Rosanes (2024), most students concur that playing traditional games fosters unity, friendship, and peace. In addition to fostering an appreciation for cultural preservation and showcasing Filipino creativity, these games also help develop character, self-worth, and accountability. Supported by Balay-as *et al.* (2024), they discovered that although stakeholders had differing opinions about promoting indigenous games, they acknowledged their value in upholding cultural customs, offering inclusive and easily accessible education, and reaffirming fundamental educational principles. This suggests that while social aspects are valued, cultural preservation remains the most significant factor for the students. It highlights the importance of preserving and promoting these sports to uphold cultural identity.

3.2 Cultural Preservation among Students

The results in Table 2 indicate that participants generally report a very high level of cultural preservation, with an overall mean score of 4.28 and a standard deviation of 0.44, indicating a very high level. This suggests that cultural preservation is always manifested. Additionally, digital innovation's mean score of 4.34, standard deviation of 0.53, received the highest rating, indicating that students strongly agree that digital technologies are essential for documenting and preserving cultural heritage for future generations.

Table 2: Level of Cultural Preservation among Students

Indicators	Mean	SD
Legislative Framework	4.24	0.56
Institutional Roles	4.16	0.58
Community Involvement	4.30	0.59
International Cooperation	4.29	0.56
Economic Impact	4.24	0.59
Digital Innovation	4.34	0.53
Overall	4.28	0.44

Further, institutional roles mean score of 4.16, with a standard deviation of 0.58, received the lowest rating but still considered high, meaning students agreed that nongovernmental organizations significantly enhance the effectiveness of cultural preservation through advocacy and expertise. The results emphasize how crucial community involvement is to maintaining cultural heritage. Strong awareness of the

need to preserve both tangible and intangible elements, such as monuments, language, and customs, is demonstrated by respondents' high ratings. This highlights the importance of collaborative efforts between institutions and communities in sustaining cultural identity.

Overall, these results show how important it is for people to get involved in their communities to protect cultural heritage. Students know how important it is to protect physical things, like monuments, language, and traditional customs. This is in line with Feng (2024), who talks about how data and evidence-based methods can help with environmental and policy problems that affect heritage conservation in a roundabout way, like pollution, urbanization, and gaps in governance. In the same way, Kiare (2024) supports sustainable tourism and gives power to local people. He sees globalization as a force that can help or hurt cultural preservation. Panchal (2024) also says that social media can help diasporas keep their cultural tradition alive, but it can also make people less involved in heritage practices or only superficially involved. Thus, encouraging youth participation and critical awareness is key to ensuring authentic and long-term cultural preservation.

3.3 Correlation Between Indigenous Sports and Cultural Preservation Among College Students

Table 3 presents clear evidence of a statistically significant relationship between indigenous sports and cultural preservation, as indicated by a correlation coefficient (R-value) of 0.776, which indicates a strong positive correlation. Students participating in indigenous sports tend to uphold and value their cultural heritage. The data emphasize that indigenous sports strengthen students' connection to their cultural identity.

Furthermore, the p-value of 0.00 confirms that the relationship between the variables is highly statistically significant and not due to random chance, making the findings highly reliable. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. These findings support the conclusion that participation in indigenous sports contributes meaningfully to students' awareness and appreciation of their cultural heritage.

This supports Dizer *et al.* (2022), who argue that indigenous games such as sipa, pukpuk palayok, and palo sebo assist in solidifying cultural identity and preserving traditions. Likewise, Balay-as *et al.* (2023) point out how sports are intimately connected to rituals, myths, and traditional knowledge, ensuring the preservation of cultural heritage. Nofrizal *et al.* (2024) further contribute that indigenous sports foster community engagement and regional pride, supporting cultural preservation. These observations attest that indigenous sports are more than mere recreations. They are crucial to keeping culture and history intact.

Table 3: Significant Correlation between Indigenous Sports Participation and Cultural Preservation Among Students

	Legislative Framework	Institutional Roles	Community Involvement	International Cooperation	Economic Impact	Digital Innovation	Cultural Preservation
History Focus	.558** 0.00	.382** 0.00	.565** 0.00	.466** 0.00	.417** 0.00	.485** 0.00	.638** 0.00
Cultural Implication	.510** 0.00	.438** 0.00	.609** 0.00	.488** 0.00	.400** 0.00	.545** 0.00	.653** 0.00
Unique Characteristics	.564** 0.00	.490** 0.00	.578** 0.00	.448** 0.00	.438** 0.00	.534** 0.00	.656** 0.00
Social Interaction	.349** 0.00	.378** 0.00	.443** 0.00	.437** 0.00	.466** 0.00	.456** 0.00	.551** 0.00
Indigenous Sports	.614** 0.00	.524** 0.00	.682** 0.00	.572** 0.00	.535** 0.00	.628** 0.00	.776** 0.00

3.4 Regression Analysis: Identifying the Influencing Indigenous Sports

The result of Table 4 revealed the regression analysis of which domains of students' indigenous sports, such as history focus, cultural preservation, unique characteristics, and social interaction, significantly influence the cultural preservation.

Table 4: Influence of Indigenous Sports to Cultural Preservation

Model	B	SE	B	T	Sig
(Constant)	0.961	0.196		4.862	0.00
History Focus	0.193	0.052	0.234	4.721	0.00
Cultural Implication	0.195	0.051	0.245	3.797	0.00
Unique Characteristics	0.223	0.051	0.269	4.368	0.00
Social Interaction	0.68	0.042	0.213	3.992	0.00

R² = 0.603; F-value = 74.035; p-value = 0.00

Among the three domains, unique characteristics strongly influenced cultural preservation with a B = 0.223 (p 0.00). Suggests that students with higher levels of engagement experience a greater extent to which various domains of indigenous sports impact cultural preservation, including their efficiency in reinforcing traditional values in educational and societal settings.

On the other hand, cultural preservation with a B of 0.195 (p= 0.0), history focus with a B of 0.193 (p= 0.0), and social interaction B = 0.68 (p= 0.0) positively influence the cultural preservation, emphasizing how traditional games contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage and the continuity of traditions across generations. A computed r² value of 0.603 was obtained, indicating that 60.3% of the variance in cultural preservation is influenced by the three domains of indigenous sports on cultural preservation. The remaining 39.7% cannot be attributed to the domains of indigenous sports.

These results reject the null hypothesis, showing a strong relationship between participation in indigenous sports and efforts to keep culture alive. The result favors the

Cultural Continuity Hypothesis by Cobb *et al.* (2024), indicating that indigenous sports play an important role in preserving culture, which enhances heritage culture and positive psychosocial adjustment. The traditional games' inherent features skillfully support cultural values and traditions, while history, cultural implication, and social interaction promote identity, social belonging, and wellness. This resonates with the cultural sustainability theory (Soini & Birkeland, 2014), which emphasizes that cultural values and customs must be kept, sustaining and strengthening the heritage in contemporary societies. The findings generally emphasize that indigenous sports ensure cultural continuity and sustainability through retaining traditional values and social stability.

As Saputra (2024) anchored, institutions and communities play vital roles in preserving culture, while Pineda (2024) emphasized how indigenous sports promote cultural pride and tradition. Nilson and Thore (2020) further argued that cultural heritage contributes to social unity and economic development, which this research also reflects, that policies, tourism, and community efforts together support culture. In summary, this research confirms that indigenous sports are more than games; they are vital tools for preserving traditions, building cultural identity, and fostering unity. For PAHF 4 students, this demonstrates that maintaining culture is not passive; it is an active, ongoing process where communities decide how to keep their heritage alive and meaningful in modern life.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the study's findings, the following conclusions are drawn indigenous sport and cultural preservation levels were very high. Also, there was a significant relationship between indigenous sports and cultural preservation. Moreover, among the four domains of indigenous sports, the unique characteristics are the best domain that influences cultural preservation. These results rejected the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between indigenous sports and cultural preservation.

This means supporting indigenous sports is important to protecting and passing on our culture. It also encourages people to connect to their roots, fun, and meaningfully. In summary, the Cultural Continuity Hypothesis, as proposed by Cobb *et al.* (2024), which describes how individuals' experiences continually shape and reshape culture, forms the basis of the study. Indigenous sports are just one instance of a tradition that evolves so that indigenous people remain relevant to future generations. Supported by the Cultural Sustainability Theory (Soini & Birkeland, 2014), the process that illustrates renewal, where communities consciously safeguard, adapt, and share their heritage to preserve its continuation. Thus, indigenous sports are more than just a game; they are powerful instruments for cultural regeneration that safeguard Filipino heritage, strengthen identity, build pride, and foster intergenerational harmony.

To sustain cultural preservation, the researchers suggest that the college students' government may hold an annual indigenous sports festival. Students from different

programs can join and play Filipino traditional games like Sipa, Palo-Sebo, and ang Luksong Tinik. Giving rewards like certificates or extra points may encourage more students to participate. To support quality education (SDG 4), the history and meaning of indigenous sports may be taught in subjects like social studies so that students can learn and appreciate their culture better.

Also, this study may serve as a basis for other researchers to conduct further research to rule out the remaining 39.7% of unexplained factors influencing students' cultural preservation. Future researchers are encouraged to look for other potential influences, particularly city and country schools, for a broader understanding. Employing other research methods, such as surveys and interviews, can further strengthen insights into students' experience.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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