Philippine Games: On the Contemporary Awareness and Involvement of University Students

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ABSTRACT

Philippine games have been popular outlets for leisure in the country over the past decades. Studies have also shown that Philippine games have a significant positive effect on the cultural and holistic growth of participants. At present, a majority of popular games and sports for leisure require money, and in consequence, physical activities. Consequently, Philippine games, slowly lessen while video games and other less strenuous activities become the more prevalent forms of leisure played by the Filipino youth. This study aims to (a) investigate which Philippine games are familiar to university students, (b) identify which Philippine games are close to being outmoded, (c) establish which games are still being played, (d) determine where the participants learned the games, and (e) recognize the factors affecting the sustainable participation and engagement in Philippine games. An online questionnaire was administered in a university. After which, descriptive statistics was used to compute for the demographic and Philippine games data. Evidently, Patintero and Tumbang-preso were the most familiar games to the respondents, while a significant percentage of Philippine games were marginally unfamiliar to the respondents. The investigation suggests that Philippine games are of paramount importance to cultural preservation and education, yet they appear to be of considerable unfamiliarity to today's youth. Accordingly, the study recommends increased attention and action from institutions to ensure the preservation of endemic Filipino culture.

Keywords: Cultural forms, leisure activity, millennial, Philippine games, physical activity.

Introduction

In the past, leisure games were not expensive at all. In fact, playing different games in the streets or even indoors did not require money, gadgets, nor tools. At present, majority of popular games and sports for leisure require money. Computer game rentals, swimming pool entrance fees, venue charges in basketball courts, volleyball courts, and even in baseball and football fields are but a few examples of costly leisure status quo.

Over the past decades, playing Philippine games has been a popular avenue to spend time and for leisure. It has been a means to enhance friendship, develop social relationship, and strengthen family ties. Philippine games were influenced by the Spaniards and Chinese, and some were from the creative minds and

resourcefulness of Filipino ancestors[1]. Cultural heritages, such as Philippine games, are resources inherited from the past with which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge, and transitions. It includes all aspects of the environment, resulting from the interaction between people and places through time.[2]

Mechanics of various Philippine games have been passed on from one generation to another since the early 1900's; hence, there are numerous Philippine games commonly known and played by all ages and genders. Usually, native materials, instruments, or even animals and insects were used. Thus, Philippine games were, and still are, not costly at all.

Games are classified as either mock warfare, racing games, or formula games. They are a type of leisure activity that involves physical, mental, and social skills and in which an individual or a team competes against one another for entertainment, recreation, socialization, and relaxation.

Previous studies have shown that cultural games have a significant positive contribution to individuals who participate.[3] Involvement in such games encompasses great amounts of focus and concentration for they are dynamic in nature. *Patintero, Moro-moro,* and *Tumbang-preso,* for instance, are Philippine games that require flexibility, balance, speed, and mental estimation and calculations, in addition to developing self- esteem.

Moreover, leisure games that involve physical and mental aptitude provide development in leadership skills and team collaboration. More importantly, participating in cultural games promotes a sense of nationalism.

Philippine games were slowly ebbing as computer and video games take their place in the lives of Filipino youth. Although there are games that are still played, researchers emphasized the need to draw attention to Philippine games to prevent losing them from culture[4]. The authors highlighted the effects of deteriorating involvement of Filipino people in Philippine games into three major points: (1) the holistic effects brought by these games through engagement has radically weakened, (2) the essence of awareness to environment, creativeness, and innovativeness subsides, and (3) these games are part of Filipino culture but are in danger of vanishing. Given these junctures, it is appropriate to thoroughly investigate different factors affecting the receding demand of Philippine games. Based on reports, a large percentage of the recreational time of school children is spent indoors and in front of computers or TV screens, playing video games. The diverse influences of gadgets in individuals are widely expressed in other research papers, as well.[5]

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[1] Mellie L. Lopez, *A Study of Philippine Games* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1980).

[2] Fernando Zialcita, "Heritage does Matter," in *Balangkas: A Research Book on the Care of built Heritage in the Philippines* (Manila: National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 2007), 1-4; Council of Europe, *Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society* (Strasbourg: Rada Europy, 2005).

[3] Lopez, *A Study of Philippine Games*; Dickie Aguado, "Reviving the Games of our Heritage to Instill Filipino Patriotism among the New Generation," Accessed October 8, 2018, https://dickieaguado.wordpress.com/tag/laro-ng-lahi

[4] Aivi R. Buan, Rowena N. Monte, Jovita S. Dela Cruz and Maritoni Salangsang, "Preservation of Culture through Philippine Games," *Asia Life Sciences* 20, no.2 (2011): 431-442.

[5] Sami Abdo radman Al-Dubai, Kurubaran Ganasegeran, Mustafa Ahmed Mahdi Al-Shagga, Hematram Yadav, and John T Arokiasamy, "Adverse Health Effects and Unhealthy Behaviors among Medical Students Using Facebook," *The Scientific World Journal*, no. 5 (2013); Nidhi Gupta,

Today's generation or younger individuals, known as millennials, are described as social media dependent, particularly with gadgets.[6] Millennials are described as socially connected by means of multiple technologic devices, and, in some cases, are bordering on being obsessed with social media.[7] When it comes to entertainment, millennials are usually observed to spend majority of their time watching videos online. Further, they are also described to have a short attention span and particular interests on tattoos, trivia, gaming, movies, and the likes. In addition, it has been reported that schoolchildren are less active and spend greater time with gadgets, indicating the need to formulate programs that will promote participation in regular physical activity.

Evidently, the persisting evolution of technologies thoroughly embrace the general interest of current generation of youth, resulting in distance from physical activities. This circumstance is a reason to consider if various Philippine games are still familiar to the youth.

Another factor to consider is the influence of Western countries. Popular sports, such as basketball and football, that had been introduced by the West have overwhelmed Filipino games. The Western influence in Philippine sports has enormous effect on Filipino culture[8]. By their dynamic nature, in which the games are rewarding for both players and spectators, the entertainment factor and their domination are the main reasons sports have merged so well with Filipino culture. Moreover, these sporting events are more prominently organized in local barangays and in schools, and numerous sports clinics for different ages are offered formally nationwide.

Social change describes variations in, or modifications of, any aspect of social processes, social patterns, social interaction or social organization. As per social change theory: a society is an ever-changing phenomenon, growing, decaying, renewing, and accommodating itself to changing conditions and suffering vast modifications in the course of time. Wahab et al., examined the causes and consequences of rapid erosion of cultural forms, and the authors concluded that people are no longer confined to developing their identities based on the place in which they reside, and that they can choose from a spectrum of identities by adopting clothes, ways of speaking, values, lifestyles, and interests.[9]

It is inevitably tough to compete with the fast pace of technology and the influences of other countries owing to the changing life conditions and social

V. Krishnamurthy, J. Majhi, and S. Gupta. 2013. "Gadget dependency among Medical College Students in Delhi." *Indian Journal of Community Health* 25, no. 4 (2013): 362-366.

[6] Venu M. Garikapati, Ram M. Pendyala, Eric A. Morris, Patricia L. Mokhtarian, and Noreen McDonald, "Activity Patterns, Time Use, and Travel of Millennials: A Generation in Transition?," *Transport Reviews* 36, no. 5 (2016): 558-584; Sandra O. Mensah and Ismail Nizam.. "The Impact of Social Media on Students' Academic Performance: A case of Malaysia Tertiary Institution," *International Journal of Education, Learning and Training* 1, no. 1 (2016):14-21.

[7] Fr. Armand D. Robleza SDB, "KIM The Filipino Millennial." *Pigeonscafe*, last modified 2016, http://www.pigeonscafe.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Kim-The-Filipino-Millennial-Part-1.pdf; Roy Manseras, Francisco Eugenio, and Thelma Palaoag, "Millennial Filipino Student Engagement Analyzer using Facial Feature Classification," *IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering*, vol. 325, no. 1 (2018): 1.

[8] Lou Antolihao, 2012. "From Baseball Colony to Basketball Republic: Post-colonial Transition and the Making of a National Sport in the Philippines," *Sport in Society* 15 1396-1412.

[9], Elias O. Wahab, Saheed O. Odunsi, and Olanrewaju E. Ajiboye. 2012. "Causes and Consequences of Rapid Erosion of Cultural Values in a Traditional African Society," *Journal of Anthropology* (2012).

patterns. People are engaging in activities that differ from those which they or their immediate predecessors were culturally accustomed to.

The main objectives of the study are: (1) to investigate the remaining Philippine games known to university students; (2) to identify which Philippine games are close to becoming outmoded; (3) to identify which games are still played; (4) to determine the origin/s from which the students learned the game/s; and (5) to determine the factors affecting the adherence to Philippine games.

Methodology

A permission letter to the Department Head of the Department of Human Kinetics, College of Arts and Sciences, University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) was the initial step to conducting a survey. The purpose of the study was indicated clearly in the letter, and the target respondents were students of Physical Education (PE) classes currently enrolled during the first semester of Academic Year 2017-2018.

Upon approval of the PE Department Head, the researchers formally discussed the objective of the study to the students. After which, students who had agreed to participate in the study were instructed to open their cellular phone/tablet/laptop and connect to the webpage wherein the questionnaire is published. Researchers also provided cellphones and tablets for students who had no available gadget. Furthermore, to validate the authenticity of the answers from the respondents, they were required to log-in through their university-issued Google accounts. The survey took around 5-7 minutes to complete. After three weeks of the same procedure in every PE class, the summation of the results in Google Forms were tabulated.

Survey Instrument

The first part of the self-administered, online questionnaire was set to gather information on the socio-demographic profiles of the respondents, including gender, age, year level, and secondary school background (private/public). Descriptive statistics was employed to compute for frequency, percentage, and ranking.

The second part of the questionnaire inquires on awareness and familiarity of the respondents with Philippine games. A checklist of Philippine games was presented, including games such as Agawang-sulok, *Agawang-panyo, Aso't pusa, Araw-gabi, Dakpanay, Langit –lupa, Luksong-baka, Luksong-tinik, Moro-moro, Patintero, Piko,* Pitik-bulag, *Sasaw-suka, Siato, Sili-sili, Sipa, Sungka, Step no-step yes, Sisiw at lawin, Tagu-taguan, Tamaang-bata, Tatsing.* and *Tumbang-preso.* Respondents answer by ticking Yes or No, and they were also provided an option to enter Philippine games they know of. Researchers also asked the respondents how many games they still play, and who introduced these games to them (teacher, parents, friends, local government, others).

The third part of questionnaire deals with the hindering factors in playing Philippine games (availability of time, playing venue, interest in playing, no knowledge of the game, ashamed to play, others).

Results and Discussions

A total of 220 respondents participated in the study, of which 68% were female and 32% were male. With regards to age, the respondents were between 15 to 23 years old, with majority being 19 years of age. Majority were also in their third year of university. The respondents originated from different provinces and cities, most from Region 4-A (CALABARZON), specifically from Laguna province, while the rest were from various places such as Batangas, Cavite, Bulacan, Quezon city, Quezon province, Metro Manila, Rizal, and Bataan.

Researchers probed the secondary background of the respondents for it gives insight whether the respondents' knowledge on Philippine games are from the influence of public and/or private schools. Results concurred that 51.4% of respondents finished secondary education from public schools while 48.6% finished from private schools. The percentage difference is small, suggesting that both parties partake near equally with regards to their influence on respondents' awareness of Philippine games.

Table 1: Familiarity and Involvement of Respondents in Various Philippine games.

List of Philippine Games	Number of Respondents that are familiar with	Percentage	Number of Respondents that still played this game	Percentage
Patintero	219	99.5%	214	97%
Tumbang-preso	217	98.6%	185	84%
Luksong-baka	214	97.3%	185	84%
Luksong-tinik	214	97.3%	180	82%
Langit Lupa	212	96.4%	25	11%
Tagu-taguan	212	96.4%	201	91%
Sipa	210	95.5%	25	11%
Piko	210	95.5%	176	80%
Sungka	209	95%	181	82%
Agawang Panyo	102	46%	50	23%
Sili-sili	100	45.5%	50	23%
Step no-step yes	100	45.5%	74	34%
Tamaang bata	99	45%	89	40%
Moro-moro	73	33.2%	57	26%
Tatsing	69	31.4%	47	21%
Siato	68	31%	25	11%
Aso't-pusa	53	24.1%	27	12%
Araw-gabi	50	22.7%	28	12%
Sisiw at lawin	31	14.1%	25	11%
Dakpanay	9	4%	0	0%
Agawang-sulok	0	0%	0	0%
Pitik-bulag	0	0%	0	0%
Sawsaw-suka	0	0%	0	0%

Table 1 shows the list of various Philippine games, aligned with the numbers and percentages of respondents' familiarity with each particular game. On the other side indicates the number of respondents who still played each game and its corresponding percentages.

Congruent to the 2011 study of Buan,[10] games such as *Patintero* and *Tumbang-preso* were the most familiar, and other games such as *Luksong-baka, Langit lupa, Tagu-taguan, Sipa, Piko,* and *Sungka* were relatively familiar to most

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[10] Aivi R. Buan, "Preservation of Culture through Philippine Games," 431-442; Graeme Aplin, "Heritage as Exemplar: A Pedagogical Role for Heritage Studies in Values Education," *The Environmentalist* 27, no. 3 (2007): 375-383

respondents. It is also evident that *Agawang-panyo, Sili-sili, Step no –step yes, Tamaang-bata, Moro-moro, Tatsing, Siato, Aso't-pusa, Araw-gabi, Sisiw at lawin,* and *Dakpanay* have drastically declined in terms of their popularity and familiarity to respondents.

Remarkably, half of the presented Philippine games were unfamiliar to respondents, as shown in Table 1, and three Philippine games, namely *Agawang-sulok, Pitik-bulag,* and *Sawsaw-suka* were totally unknown to respondents. In summary, there are still familiar traditional games amongst university students; however, a significant percentage of these games were marginally unfamiliar to the respondents.

Table 1 also presents the number of respondents who still play each game. Results show *Patintero* is the most played, followed by *Tagu-taguan* and *Tumbang*-preso, and *Luksong-baka.* Correspondingly, a decent percentage for *Tumbang-preso, Luksong-baka, Luksong-tinik, Piko,* and *Sungka* revealed in the table. However, in deeper analysis, the table affirmed a very low percentage for most of the games, considering the respondents' engagement for various games.

Further, though data fervently suggests that there are numerous games neglected, the age demographic of respondents still manage to engage in cultural games despite the allure of numerous gadgets and other available leisure activities.

One point to consider from the results is the differences in the quality of the games and their mechanics. Youth today might find less popular cultural games uninteresting or unchallenging. Conversely, in *Patintero* for instance, the pace of the game is fast, challenging, and puzzling. A modification or enhancement of a game might be necessary so long as the nature and objectives of the game are still viable and interesting.

One of the objectives of the study was to determine the source of knowledge of various Philippine games. For most of the respondents, games were introduced by friends (60%); by parents and relatives (21%); teachers or school (19%); and (0%) by local government and barangays. These results provide additional understanding on why Philippine games crucially decline in popularity and demand.

Based on the data acquired, the major source of knowledge of Philippine games among respondents were friends. Social interaction has a significant positive effect in passing or influencing the nature of games. In social learning theory by Bandura,[11] he pointed out that behaviour is learned from the environment through the process of observational learning and mediating processes between stimuli & responses. Therefore, it could be gleaned that majority of respondents acquired games by observing and imitating others. Though there is no formal or proper transmission of learning about these games, ideas and the nature of the games are passed on.

Likewise, parents and relatives also contribute to the awareness of respondents in Philippine games. Filipinos cherish strong family ties, so parents and elders share their childhood stories, experiences, and the various games they had played. Through this, many different games are passed on.

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[11] Albert Bandura, *Social Learning Theory* (New York: General Learning Press, 1971).

Also, based on the results, the educational sector seemed to be a minor source of awareness of Philippine games (19%). Schools should play a prominent role in the awakening and fostering nationalism. Philippine games are unique as they represent Filipino culture and our national identity. Ironically, owing to the low percentage of school contribution, many students did not learn and experience different cultural games.

School systems should be spearheading the education, involvement, and learning on Philippine games, with their goals being to protect, to conserve, and to promote cultural heritage. Referring from the data acquired, with regards to the secondary educational background of the respondents, both private and public secondary schools should provide firm strategies to address this circumstance. Many studies have suggested that cultural heritage should be included at all levels of education, not particularly as a core subject, but through interdisciplinary activities.[12]

As per the 2014 article of Apostolopopoulou:[13] "in the Greek curriculum for primary education, among the general goals for the lesson of History, the following are inter-related with heritage education: a) experiential learning of aspects of culture such as traditions, customs etc., b) contact with cultural heritage, c) appreciation of cultural heritage, d) identification of the contribution of the Europe to the world culture and of the value of world peace and collaboration". By these conventional objectives, pupils are able to interpret and analyze critically, valuable information and understand Filipino identity, culture, and individuality. Also, they allow to strengthen the sense of belonging to the country and the capacity of civic action.

Another key factor of the receding demand of Philippine games is the seemingly poor contribution of the local government and barangays. From the results, local government or barangay sectors have no contributions at all. The absence of campaign awareness in valuing these cultural games and their promotion have huge impact on people, environment, and culture. Buan et al[14] in their 2011 paper had stated, in playing these games, players recognize the value of nature through creative use of space and elements or objects in it. More so, these individuals are able to fully understand different personalities, strengthen social interaction, and develop physical, emotional, and mental attributes. Positive interpretation from the data which shows that we as a people do not suffer from isolation for most of our cultural transcendence still comes from social interaction. The process of cultural conservation is entwined with the issue of awareness. It cannot be expected for local communities to promote and to conserve something which they are unaware of. Therefore, education is vital in the process of heritage conservation.[15]

Factors affecting the non-playing of Philippine games

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[12] Mercedes Camille B. Ocampo and Pauline I. Delgado, "Basic Education and Cultural Heritage: Prospects and Challenges," *International Journal of Education, Learning and Training* 1, no. 3 (2014): 201-209; Aivi R. Buan, "Preservation of Culture through Philippine Games," 431-442; Graeme Aplin, "Heritage as Exemplar: A Pedagogical Role for Heritage Studies in Values Education," *The Environmentalist* 27, no. 3 (2007): 375-383; Leah E. Abayao, *Articulating Indigenous People's Culture in Education: Indigenous Education and Empowerment: International Perspectives* (Lanham: Altamira Press).

[13] Aikaterini P. Apostolopopoulou, Luis Miguel Carvoeiras, and Aikaterini Klonari, "Cultural Heritage and Education: Integrating Tour Maps in a Bilateral Project," *European Journal of Geography* 5, no. 4 (2014); 67-77.

[14] Aivi R. Buan, "Preservation of Culture through Philippine Games," 431-442.

[15] Eric B. Zerrudo, *Pamanaraan: Writings on Philippine Heritage Management* (Manila: UST Publishing House, 2008).

The study used pre-selected choices to assess the reasons behind the non-playing of Philippine games, factors being "unavailability of time", "no playing venue", "no interest in playing", "no knowledge of the game", "ashamed to play". Results showed that "unavailability of time" was the most likely reason behind the non-playing of Philippine games, followed by "no interest in playing", "no knowledge of the game", "no playing venue", and "ashamed to play", respectively.

This paper offers various suggestions on the reasons why the results were ranked in that manner. The "unavailability of time" may imply that university students do not engage in Philippine games for they may have allocated their time to studying, and they may have also chosen a different leisure activity, such as sports, tech-games, social media, among others. Playing newer sports and engaging in trendy innovations as their source for leisure is acceptable, if not expected, behavior. Thus, the responsibility of promoting Philippine games remains with those of effective influence, more favorably from the education and governance sectors.

"No playing venue" as a hindering factor may be correlated to urbanization. Back then, access to the internet, tech-toys, and gadgets was not common. Lifestyles of the past decades were more conducive for playing Philippine games. Today, streets are more crowded and access to technology and its popular innovations is easy to acquire. The conditions of today decrease the appeal of playing in the streets and having face-to-face engagements, owing to the allure of trendier alternatives.

"No knowledge of games", being the third most answered hindrance, reveals that there is a deficiency in the teaching and dissemination of Philippine games. This disheartening data should serve as a "wake up call" to those in education. The appreciation for cultural heritage, traditions, and customs, along with nationalism, should be cultivated in all levels of education.

The tendency to play for leisure, especially in public, usually decreases as people grow older. Being "ashamed to play" as a hindering factor in playing Philippine games is expected, especially amongst college-level students. However, a more positive analysis and outlook on this result is that "ashamed to play" ranked last amongst the choices for the non-playing of Philippine games. This suggests that most respondents do not feel embarrassed when playing Philippine games.

Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

To understand the rapid weakening of cultural practices, one must consider the different factors affecting its influence. Globalization and changes in global culture transform, in turn, a nation's culture. People are no longer confined to ethnic practices, consequentially becoming a more homogeneous society; and this should be reason enough to advocate for the preservation of cultural preservation.

One of the most effective ways in maintaining a unique cultural identity is playing cultural games. Sadly, Philippine games, along with their contexts, lessons, and histories, are being endangered by a shift in interest in practice.

There seems to be an insufficiency in the efforts of the education sector in spearheading the promotion and dissemination of Filipino culture, specifically endemic games. What was lost was the organic community, and with it, the living culture it embodied. There should be a concerted effort to capture the interest of today's youth and to cultivate their cultural growth. Further, this thrust must also transcend not only through Philippine games but also through folk dances, songs, and literature.

Schools and local leaders of the community should redeem themselves as key components in promoting Philippine games. Similar to recommendations in the 2011 paper of Buan, et al, the authors recommend including Philippine games in the standardized school curricula, under Physical Education, and to provide more leisure courses, clubs, and facilities promoting cultural growth.

In communities, the authors suggest reviving the old ways of celebrating fiestas, highlighting games such as *Agawang-panyo*, *Palosebo*, *Patintero*, and Agawang-buko, instead of focusing on pageants and talent competitions. Lastly, the authors recommend a more thorough study on the restoration, organization, and implementation of Philippine games. Preservation should not stop at the mere playing of games, as the contexts and histories of Philippines games are just as vital.

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