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Cultural Awareness and Preservation of Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam of the Indigenous Peoples of Suyo Ilocos Sur

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the cultural awareness, understanding, and participation of the Indigenous Peoples of Suyo, Ilocos Sur, in preserving “Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam,” a collection of traditional indigenous games. The research highlights the importance of these games as vital expressions of cultural identity, community bonding, and heritage transmission. Specifically, this study aims to answer the following questions: What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of: age, gender, and educational attainment? What is the level of cultural awareness, understanding and participation of the indigenous peoples in Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam? What are the challenges that hinders the preservation of Namunganayan nga Aya-ayam? Is there significant relationship between the demographic profile of the respondents with the cultural awareness, understanding and participation of Nmaunganayan nga Ay-ayam? Is there significant relationship between the cultural awareness, understanding and participation with the challenges that hinders the preservation of the Namunganayan nga ay ayam? Is there significant differences between the cultural awareness, understanding and participation between the 8 barangays of Suyo? What potential initiatives can be developed to preserve the Namunganayan nga ay-ayam among the generations of today’s society? Utilizing a descriptive-correlational quantitative research design, the study surveyed 320 respondents across eight barangays, analyzing the variations in cultural engagement through statistical methods like the Kruskal-Wallis test to compare the level of cultural awareness, understanding and participation of each barangays and Spearman’s Rho for the relationship of the respondents demographic profile as well as the initiatives in preserving Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam to the cultural awareness, understanding and participation. Results reveal a very high level of cultural awareness and understanding among participants, though actual participation in the games varies by age and location. Key challenges identified include the influence of digital entertainment, loss of open spaces, and insufficient cultural documentation. Despite these barriers, the community demonstrates a resilient commitment to its heritage, with initiatives such as school integration, cultural workshops, and social media promotion deemed highly effective for revitalization efforts. The study also notes significant differences in awareness and participation between barangays but finds no strong demographic influence from gender or educational attainment. Recommendations emphasize empowering youth leaders, integrating traditional games into formal education and community events, documenting indigenous knowledge, and fostering intergenerational learning. The findings advocate for proactive, culturally sensitive strategies to safeguard the Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam and reinforce indigenous cultural identity in the face of modernization. This research contributes to the broader discourse on intangible cultural heritage preservation within indigenous communities.

Keywords: *Cultural Awareness, Traditional Games, Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam, Preservation, Indigenous People*

I. INTRODUCTION

Culture is the collection of practices, beliefs, values, and customs that shape the identity of a particular group or society. It influences the way people interact, perform rituals, and pass down knowledge. In the context of sustainable development, culture plays a vital role in maintaining community identity, promoting social cohesion, and ensuring the transmission of traditions and values to future generations. The United Nations and its agencies highlight the need to preserve cultural expressions, especially in the face of modernization, conflicts, and global change. One of the distinct aspects of culture is indigenous games. These are traditional recreational activities that originate from specific communities and are different from modern,

internationally regulated sports. They serve not only as a source of entertainment but also as a reflection of social structures, history, values, and local ways of life. Indigenous games also foster socialization, teach important values such as teamwork and respect, and promote physical activity and health. In the Philippines, indigenous communities contribute to the country's rich cultural diversity. With more than 7,600 islands and around 110 ethnolinguistic groups, the Philippines is home to various indigenous peoples, each with unique traditions and customs. Despite their cultural contributions, these groups often face significant challenges such as displacement, marginalization, and loss of traditional practices. Modern influences, particularly technology and urbanization, continue to threaten their heritage and way of life. Among these groups, the Indigenous people of Suyo in Ilocos Sur stand out for their efforts to preserve cultural traditions despite living in a mountainous, underdeveloped area. Suyo's indigenous communities maintain a strong sense of identity through farming, fishing, rituals, music, dance, and oral traditions. One of the most cherished practices is the "Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam," a collection of traditional indigenous games that have long played an important role in community bonding and the transmission of cultural values. These games go beyond simple amusement. They are deeply embedded in the social and cultural life of Suyo. Children and adults alike once participated in them regularly, using the games to reinforce values like cooperation, respect, and resilience. They served as both cultural education tools and communal activities that strengthened social ties. Unfortunately, in recent years, these games have seen a significant decline in practice. The decrease in participation is largely due to the rising influence of digital technology, modern sports, and shifting lifestyle preferences. Children and youth now gravitate towards mobile games and sports like basketball and volleyball, leading to a detachment from traditional games. "Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam" is now played mostly during barangay festivals or Indigenous People's Month celebrations and has been abandoned entirely in some parts of Suyo. The research identifies several core issues that hinder the preservation of "Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam." First is the inconsistent practice of these games in daily life. While they are still celebrated on special occasions, there is no structured or regular way of integrating them into everyday activities. This inconsistency risks their eventual disappearance from the community's cultural fabric. Second is the lack of strong cultural education and awareness. Although there are occasional cultural leadership seminars and events in Suyo, they are often poorly attended unless modern games or entertainment are included. Many young people do not recognize the cultural value of these indigenous games, which makes them less likely to engage with or carry them forward. Another key issue is the dominance of external influences. The appeal of digital entertainment and organized sports has overtaken traditional forms of play. This has led to a generational gap in the appreciation of indigenous games, making it harder for elders to transmit these traditions. Without strategic interventions, these cultural practices may not survive the changing interests and habits of the youth. A fourth major problem is the limited documentation and formal records of "Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam." Unlike modern sports that are well-recorded and taught systematically, there is little to no written material or structured learning programs about these indigenous games. This lack of documentation contributes to their gradual erasure from public memory, especially as the older generation who know the games grow fewer in number. The research also identifies a lack of comparative cultural studies within the municipality of Suyo. The eight barangays of Suyo may differ in their levels of engagement, cultural knowledge, and practices due to various social, environmental, and emotional factors. However, there is limited research that compares these differences or examines how they affect preservation efforts. Without this understanding, it is difficult to create targeted strategies for revitalizing the games in areas where they are nearly extinct. The study is guided by two important theoretical frameworks: Postcolonial Theory and Cultural Ecology Theory. Postcolonial theory explores how colonial history continues to affect cultural identity, practices, and power dynamics in contemporary societies. In the context of Suyo, the diminished interest in indigenous games can be linked to the long-term impacts of colonization, which introduced Western values, modern education systems, and foreign recreational practices that slowly displaced traditional ways of life. Cultural Ecology Theory, on the other hand, examines the relationship between human culture and the environment. The theory highlights how culture adapts to environmental and social changes. In Suyo, indigenous games like "Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam" evolved in harmony with the community's way of life—interwoven with local farming, fishing, and social customs. However, with rapid modernization and digitalization, the environment has changed, and the community's culture is struggling to adapt. This theoretical lens allows the study to analyze how environmental changes and external pressures are disrupting the cultural equilibrium and affecting the survival of indigenous games. Ultimately, the research underscores the urgent need to understand the complex factors behind the decline of "Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam" and to develop culturally sensitive strategies to preserve it. By recognizing the game's importance in shaping identity and community cohesion, the study aims to contribute to broader efforts in cultural preservation and indigenous empowerment. Addressing the gaps in awareness, documentation, and daily integration is essential for ensuring that these games

II. METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational quantitative research design to examine the cultural awareness, understanding, and participation of indigenous people in Suyo, Ilocos Sur, specifically concerning the preservation of the indigenous game Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam. The research design was chosen for its ability to provide structured, numerical data that allows for a clear assessment of the factors influencing cultural preservation. Descriptive research was employed to measure the extent of cultural engagement by quantifying the awareness, understanding, and participation levels of respondents. This method helps to reveal patterns within the community, offering an objective assessment of how well participants recognize and engage with the game. The descriptive design, supported by structured surveys, provided the necessary data to evaluate the current state of cultural practices and the community's role in preserving them. This approach is ideal for studying the prevalence of specific knowledge and activities without influencing the responses of participants, ensuring an unbiased representation of cultural engagement in the community. The use of the Kruskal-Wallis test was particularly beneficial to statistically evaluate the variations between barangays, ensuring that potential disparities in cultural participation and awareness could be identified. This aspect of the research design was essential for understanding how different factors may influence cultural preservation practices in specific areas. Moreover, correlational research approach was applied to examine the relationship between cultural awareness, understanding, and participation as well as the demographic profile of the respondents with the potential initiatives in the preserving Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam. Through the use of correlation methods such as Spearman's rho and Pearson's correlation coefficient, the study sought to determine whether greater cultural awareness corresponds to stronger participation and preservation efforts. This analysis is crucial for identifying whether improving cultural

knowledge directly influences efforts to maintain traditional practices, or if other external factors, such as socio-economic conditions, play a more significant role in shaping preservation outcomes. The study focused on the youth demographic (ages 20–30) in Suyo, Ilocos Sur, as they are key participants in the cultural transmission of traditional practices. A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure that each barangay was proportionately represented based on its youth population. The total sample size of 320 respondents was calculated using G Power analysis to ensure statistical rigor, optimizing the sample size for hypothesis testing while minimizing errors in analysis. A survey questionnaire was employed as the primary research instrument, structured to assess cultural awareness, understanding, and participation, as well as the challenges facing the preservation of Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam. The questionnaire was developed and validated by experts in indigenous culture, ensuring that it accurately captured the necessary data to meet the study's objectives. The instrument was divided into sections to assess various dimensions of cultural engagement, including awareness of the game's historical significance, understanding of its rules, and the level of active participation in its preservation. Statistical treatments of the gathered data included the use of frequency, median, and percentages for descriptive analysis of demographic variables, and Spearman's rho and Kruskal-Wallis test for examining relationships and differences in cultural awareness and participation across the barangays. These methods provided a robust, nonparametric approach to analyzing the data, ensuring that the study's findings were reliable and applicable to understanding the cultural dynamics of the indigenous people of Suyo, Ilocos Sur.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 Age Distribution of the Respondents

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
20 - 23	139	43%
24 - 26	93	29%
27 - 30	88	28%
Total	320	100%

The data presented in Table 1.1 illustrates the age distribution of the respondents which reveals a distinct trend toward younger participants. A significant 43% of respondents are within the 20–23 age range, followed by 29% in the 24–26 range, and 28% aged 27–30. This demographic composition indicates that the majority of participants are young adults in their early to late twenties that highlights their potential to influence cultural preservation efforts. The high representation of this age group may also reflect their openness to modern trends which makes them a key demographic for engaging in activities that promote cultural awareness and sustainability.

Table 2. Gender Preferences of the Respondents

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Male	155	48%
Female	109	34%
Non-Binary	50	16%
Prefer Not to Say	6	2%
Total	320	100%

The data presented in table 2 reveals that the highest gender representation among respondents is male, comprising 48% of the total population, while the lowest is those who preferred not to disclose their gender, accounting for only 2%. This suggests that males are the most represented or most willing to participate in the study, which may reflect either a demographic majority or a higher level of engagement. In contrast, the minimal percentage of respondents who chose not to state their gender indicates a general sense of comfort or openness among participants when it comes to disclosing gender identity. Notably, 16% of the respondents identified as non-binary, which is a significant portion and suggests a growing recognition and acceptance of gender diversity within the community. This indicates that traditional binary gender norms are being expanded or challenged, and that non-binary individuals are becoming more visible in various social contexts. The presence of diverse gender identities among respondents implies the importance of promoting inclusive practices, especially in community planning, education, and cultural preservation programs. This inclusive environment is crucial in fostering active participation from all members of the community.

Table 3. Highest Educational Attainment of the Respondents

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Elementary Undergraduate	9	3%
Elementary Graduate	19	6%

Highschool Undergraduate	14	4%
Highschool Graduate	65	20%
College Undergraduate	16	5%
College Graduate	71	22%
College Level (ongoing)	108	34%
Vocational	6	2%
Post Graduate	12	4%
Total	320	100%

The data presented in table 3 shows that the highest educational attainment among respondents is "College Level (ongoing)" with 108 individuals or 34%, while the lowest is "Vocational" with only 6 individuals or 2%. This suggests that a large portion of the population is currently pursuing higher education, indicating strong academic interest or ambition, particularly at the college level. On the other hand, the minimal number of vocational graduates highlights a possible lack of emphasis or access to technical and skills-based training programs in the area. The dominance of college-level respondents could imply a community that values formal education as a means of personal and economic advancement. However, the low turnout in vocational education may also suggest an opportunity to promote alternative learning pathways that are equally valuable, especially for those who may not complete a college degree. Thus, the data reflects an educational trend leaning toward higher academic pursuits, which can positively influence community development and participation, but it also underlines areas where educational diversification could be improved.

Level of Cultural Awareness, Understanding and Participation of Namunganayan nga Ay—Ayam

Table 4. Level of Cultural Awareness of Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam

INDICATORS	MEDIAN	DER
1. I am aware that Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam is part of our indigenous cultural heritage.	5.00	VHA
2. I believe that traditional games, including Namunganayan nga ay-ayam play an essential role in preserving cultural identity.	5.00	VHA
3. I am aware on the historical significance of Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam in our community.	5.00	VHA
4. I am culturally aware that playing Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam brings us back to our vibrant histories.	5.00	VHA
5. I recognize Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam as an important representation of our indigenous culture.	5.00	VHA
6. I believe that awareness of Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam contributes to a deeper understanding of our cultural roots.	5.00	VHA
7. I acknowledge that Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam reflects the values and traditions of our ancestors.	5.00	VHA
8. I am aware that Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam is a form of intangible cultural heritage that should be recognize and valued.	5.00	VHA
9. Cultural awareness about the Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam fosters appreciation and respect for our indigenous heritage.	5.00	VHA
10. I am culturally aware that Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam carries symbolic meanings that reflects indigenous beliefs and practices.	5.00	VHA
OVERALL	5.00	VHA

The data in Table 4 shows that all ten indicators received a perfect median score of 5.00, indicating a Very High Level of Cultural Awareness among the respondents toward *Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam*. This consistent result across all items suggests that the Indigenous people of Suyo hold a deep and unified understanding of the game's cultural and historical significance. The high scores reflect that *Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam* is widely regarded not just as a traditional game, but as a symbol of cultural identity, values, and heritage. It shows that the community recognizes its role in preserving traditions and fostering a strong sense of belonging and continuity across generations. The findings imply that cultural awareness is deeply rooted in community life and is likely reinforced through family, education, and local practices. This shared cultural knowledge can be a strong foundation for future preservation efforts and cultural revitalization initiatives. These results align with the findings of Ruiz Palacios (2023), who emphasized that cultural expression plays a critical role in maintaining identity, especially in the face of modern influences. Thus, the high level of cultural awareness among respondents reflects a community-wide commitment to valuing and sustaining their indigenous identity through meaningful cultural practices.

Table 5. Level of Understanding of the Respondents

Namunganayan Nga Ay-Ayam	Indicators	Median	DER
1. Banga Relay	Any blindfolded person that can break a banga that contains coins and candies were automatically be the winner.	5.00	VHU
2. Bekang	The player who accumulated the highest scores based on their hit on the target will be declared as winner.	4.00	HU
3. Binnurang-itan	The players sit on the ground facing each other with their legs positioned on a 4-5 degree where they use their upper body strength and leg to try off-balance their opponents.	4.00	HU
4. Buwwabo	This game needs a two pair of player who will try to pull each other towards the finish line without letting their hands touch the ground.	4.00	HU
5. Gabbo	It is played in a hugging position between the opposing players and pushing the opponent forward is not allowed.	5.00	VHU
6. Kadang-Kadang Kawayan	Teams need to cross the the finish line as fast as they can without falling on the ground.	5.00	VHU
7. Kadang-kadang sabot	This is commonly played by women where any player falls a grip more than twice during their turn, their team will loss the game.	5.00	VHU
8. Patalunton	A street game where players try to cross a marked grid without being tagged by defenders who guard the lines.	5.00	VHU
9. Lipay	This game needs a player who will take turns trying to knock off the lippay beans with their motherball.	5.00	VHU
10. Pana	This game will use a bow to shoot arrows at a target, archers shoot at stationary targets from set distances.	5.00	VHU
11. Pika	The pointed metal end or what we call javelin is thrown from a runway, and the throw is measured from the fault line to the point where the javelin lands within a marker sector	5.00	VHU
12. Sanggol	It is played by boys where they have a muscle to muscle match and aims to be the standing man.	5.00	VHU
13. Sigking	Players draw a grid on the ground with numbered section and each of them takes turn in tossing a small object into the numbered sections.	5.00	VHU
14. Sinnangduan Pusa	In this game, both players kneel on their hands on the ground facing each other and use their head to try to off-balance their opponents.	4.00	HU
15. Siyatong	It mainly played on farm where the players try to hit the opponent's stick depends on how far they throw it.	5.00	VHU
16. Sunay	Players can challenge other players by putting the sunay in their hands while its spins with the longest time record.	5.00	VHU
17. Ginnuyudan Tali	Traditional strength-based game played by two opposing teams of men pulling on a rope and has a goal to drag the opponents past a designated boundary line	5.00	VHU
Overall		5.00	VHU

The data presented in table 5. shows that the respondents from Suyo exhibit a strong understanding of *Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam*, with fourteen out of seventeen games rated as Very Highly Understood (VHU) which indicates a deep cultural knowledge. Games such as *Banga Relay*, *Gabbo*, and *Kadang-Kadang Kawayan* received the highest ratings which suggests that these games are widely practiced and valued. These games, which promote physical activity and communal values like unity and coordination, reflect the community's traditional lifestyle. This finding aligns with Siregar and Ilham (2019), who observed that community-based games with interactive and physical elements tend to endure and remain popular over time. However, the lower scores for games like *Bekang* and *Sinnangduan Pusa* suggest that some traditional games may be fading from practice. This decline can be attributed to a lack of active participation or documentation. Booc et al. (2019) emphasized that traditional games risk disappearing without institutional support and integration into formal education. These findings highlight the importance of preservation efforts to keep both widely practiced and less common games alive, ensuring the continuity of the community's cultural heritage.

Table 6. Level of Participation of the Respondents

Indicators	Median	DER
1. Banga Relay	4.00	HP
2. Bekang	4.00	HP
3. Binnurang-itan	4.00	HP
4. Buwwabo	4.00	HP
5. Gabbo	4.00	HP
6. Kadang-Kadang Kawayan	5.00	VHP
7. Kadang-kadang sabot	5.00	VHP
8. Patalunton	5.00	VHP
9. Lipay	4.00	HP
10. Pana	4.00	HP
11. Pika	4.00	MP
12. Sanggol	5.00	VHP
13. Sigking	5.00	VHP
14. Sinnangduan Pusa	4.00	HP
15. Siyatong	4.00	HP
16. Sunay	5.00	VHP
17. Tag of War	5.00	VHP
Overall	4.00	HP

The data on the level of participation in *Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam* reveals both positive engagement and areas of concern. Games like *Kadang-Kadang Kawayan*, *Tug of War*, and *Sunay*, which scored 5.00, show that physical and socially interactive games continue to thrive, especially in educational and community settings. This indicates that games promoting teamwork and physical activity remain valued for their cultural and social benefits. However, the lower scores for other games highlight a concerning decline in active participation. While these games are still known, their limited practice points to a potential lack of institutional or community support. While overall median score of 4.00, suggests that these games are still recognized and occasionally played, but not consistently practiced within the community. This moderate participation reflects a disconnect between cultural knowledge and regular practice, particularly in a time where modern entertainment options are increasingly competing with traditional practices. This indicates that knowledge of traditional games alone may not be enough to sustain their practice, especially when there are few structured opportunities for engagement. These findings are supported by De Guzman and Ramos (2020), who noted that knowledge of cultural practices does not always translate into active participation without structured opportunities. These results suggest the need for intentional strategies to ensure the continuation of these traditions, such as incorporating games into school curricula or increasing their presence in community events and rituals.

Table 7: Challenges that Hinders the Preservation of Namunganayan nga Ay-Ayam

Challenges	Median	DER
1. The rise of video games and online entertainment reduces interest in traditional outdoor games	5.00	VHI
2. Rapid urban development limits open areas where children can play.	4.00	HI
3. Modern parents and children prioritize structured sports or screen-based activities.	4.00	HI
4. The gradual disappearance of cultural knowledge as older generations pass away without transferring it.	4.00	HI
5. Schools prioritizing contemporary sports like basketball and volleyball over traditional games.	5.00	VHI
6. Absence of policies or funding to promote and preserve traditional games.	4.00	HI
7. Exposure to Western sports and recreational activities leading to the neglect of indigenous games.	4.00	HI
8. Paid amusement parks, video arcades, and gadget-based entertainment replacing free outdoor games.	4.00	HI
9. The lack of recorded materials on traditional games leads to their gradual disappearance.	5.00	VHI

10. Traditional games being perceived as outdated or "uncool" by younger generations.	4.00	HI
11. Migration and changing lifestyle contribute to the decline of traditional game participation.	4.00	HI
12. Government and cultural agencies do not actively promote and safeguard traditional games.	5.00	VHI

Overall	4.00	HI
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The data presented in table 3 suggests that while there are several significant factors that impact the preservation of *Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam*, those with a median score of 4.00 have a less immediate or severe effect compared to the factors rated with a median of 5.00, which are deemed to have a high impact. For instance, the rise of video games and online entertainment, which received a median score of 5.00, is a particularly notable factor. This shift toward digital entertainment has redirected children's attention away from physically engaging in traditional outdoor activities. This change contributes significantly to the marginalization of traditional games like *Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam*. In contrast, factors like the gradual disappearance of cultural knowledge which only rated as highly impact are less immediate threats. While the loss of elders could hinder the transmission of knowledge, it does not necessarily equate to the complete disappearance of the game. Cawili and Bakidnan (2016) argue that cultural practices, including traditional games, are often passed down through active community participation, not solely through elders. This suggests that with continued community involvement and educational programs, the practice of these games can be sustained. While both challenges are significant, the shift to digital entertainment demands more urgent intervention to prevent further erosion of *Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam*.

Table 8. Significant Relationship of the Age of the Respondents

	Aspects	Spearman Rho (p)	df	p-value	DER
Age	Cultural Awareness	0.104	318	0.063	NS
	Understanding	0.063	318	0.261	NS
	Participation	0.074	318	0.189	NS

The data presented in table 8 shows that age does not significantly influence the level of cultural awareness, understanding, or participation in *Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam*. The non-significant p-values across all three areas suggest that individuals from different age groups engage with the traditional game in similar ways. This implies that cultural practices in Suyo are not limited to older or younger generations but are shared broadly through community experiences and traditions. Rather than age being a determining factor, the communal setting and collective cultural activities play a stronger role in shaping cultural engagement. This supports the idea that heritage preservation in indigenous communities thrives through intergenerational interaction and shared participation. Cawili and Bakidnan (2016) support this view, stating that cultural knowledge is maintained through consistent community involvement rather than age-specific instruction. The findings affirm that inclusive community efforts, rather than age-targeted approaches, are more effective in ensuring the continuity and relevance of indigenous traditions across generations.

Table 9. Significant Relationship of the Gender Preferences of the Respondents

	Aspects	Spearman Rho (p)	df	p-value	DER
Gender Preferences	Cultural Awareness	-0.061	317	0.278	NS
	Understanding	-0.039	317	0.488	NS
	Participation	0.155	317	0.006	S

The data presented in table 9 reveals that gender does not significantly influence cultural awareness with p value of 0.278 and understanding which has 0.488 of *Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam*, suggesting that appreciation and knowledge of the game are shared equally across all gender identities. This indicates a strong communal transmission of cultural values, where traditions are internalized regardless of gender. However, gender shows a significant relationship with participation which has a p value of 0.006 which implies that while awareness and understanding are inclusive, actual engagement may still be shaped by traditional gender roles. This discrepancy highlights the need for gender-sensitive strategies to ensure equal opportunities for participation. Acosta and Aguilar (2021) emphasized that cultural activities often mirror societal gender expectations, where males typically engage more in physical cultural practices. To truly preserve *Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam*, efforts must ensure that participation becomes as inclusive as cultural appreciation, empowering all genders to engage actively and equitably in sustaining indigenous traditions.

Table 10. Significant Relationship of the Highest Educational Attainment of the Respondents

	Aspects	Spearman Rho (p)	df	p-value	DE
Highest Educational Attainment	Cultural Awareness	-0.022	318	0.691	NS
	Understanding	0.078	318	0.163	NS
	Participation	0.108	318	0.053	NS

The data presented in table 10 reveals that educational attainment does not significantly influence the respondents' cultural awareness, understanding, or participation in *Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam*, as evidenced by the p-values for each correlation such 0.691 for cultural awareness, 0.163 for

understanding, and 0.053 for participation. These results suggest that factors beyond formal education, such as community engagement and shared experiences, play a more critical role in the transmission and preservation of indigenous practices. The lack of significant correlation between education level and cultural involvement implies that cultural practices like *Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam* are deeply rooted in communal traditions rather than individual educational achievements. This finding aligns with the study of Mabborang et al. (2022), which highlights that indigenous games foster cultural identity and social cohesion regardless of one's formal educational background. Consequently, community-based transmission and participation are central to maintaining these cultural practices, emphasizing the importance of local engagement over formal schooling in preserving heritage.

Table 11: Significant Relationship Between the Cultural Awareness, Understanding and Participation to the Challenges that Hinders the Preservation of Namunganayan nga Ay-Ayam

Aspects	Spearman Rho (p)	df	p-value	DE
Cultural Awareness	-0.046	319	0.407	NS
Understanding	-0.003	319	0.953	NS
Participation	-0.198	319	< .001	S

Legend: $p < .05$, S – Significant NS – Not significant

The data presented in table 11 shows that while cultural awareness with a p value of 0.407 and understanding with p value of 0.953 do not significantly relate to the challenges in preserving *Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam*, participation does which has a p value of < 0.001. This indicates that even though the youth may be aware of or understand the significance of the game, it doesn't necessarily translate into active involvement. Participation is a key factor in preservation, and the more challenges there are, the less likely youth are to engage with the game. Factors like digital entertainment, urbanization, and the lack of institutional support contribute to this gap. These elements hinder opportunities for hands-on engagement, making it difficult for youth to connect with cultural practices. This aligns with Booc et al. (2019), who noted that while the youth may be aware of cultural heritage, they often lack the real-world opportunities to engage, leading to further disengagement from traditional practices.

Table 12: Significant Differences in Cultural Awareness, Understanding and Participation of Nammunganayan nga Ay-Ayam between the Eight Baranggays of Suyo

Aspects	χ^2	df	p-value	DE
Cultural Awareness	54.7	7	< .001	SD
Understanding	47.2	7	< .001	SD
Participation	68.3	7	< .001	SD

Legend: $p < .05$, S – Significant Differences NS – No significant Differences

The data presented in table 12 highlight significant differences in cultural awareness, understanding, and participation among youth across the eight barangays, with p-values all below .001. This indicates that the level of engagement with cultural heritage varies greatly depending on local factors. Higher cultural awareness was found in barangays where traditions and community practices are actively promoted through schools and local events. In contrast, lower awareness was seen in areas with fewer cultural touchpoints. This suggests that a community's commitment to preserving its heritage plays a crucial role in fostering cultural awareness. Similarly, differences in cultural understanding and participation reflect the presence of structured learning and community involvement. Barangays that actively support cultural programs saw higher participation. Alviento and Nisperos (2008) emphasize the importance of consistent efforts by communities to pass on cultural knowledge. These findings underscore the need for context-specific strategies to strengthen cultural education and practices at the local level.

Table 13: Potential Initiatives to be Develop to Preserve Namunganayan nga Ay-Ayam

Potential Initiatives	Median	DER
1. Integrating Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam into school and community activities.	5.00	HE
2. Organizing cultural workshops and training for younger generations.	5.00	HE
3. Creating instructional materials about Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam.	5.00	HE
4. Encouraging elders and community leaders to teach the Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam to children.	5.00	HE
5. Holding annual festivals and competitions featuring Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam.	5.00	HE
6. Promoting Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam through social media and local media outlets.	5.00	HE

7. Incorporating the games into tourism and heritage programs.	5.00	HE
8. Seeking government and NGO support for funding and advocacy.	5.00	HE
9. Developing community-based preservation programs and policies.	5.00	HE
10. Documenting and archiving traditional rules, history and variations of Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam.	5.00	HE
11. Encouraging inclusion of Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam in sports and recreational programs.	5.00	HE
12. Collaborating with cultural organizations and researchers to further study and promote the games.	5.00	HE
Overall	5.00	HE

The strategies for promoting and preserving Namunganayan nga Ay-ayam, the indigenous games of the indigenous community, have been rated as Highly Effective across all twelve indicators, with a median score of 5.00. This reflects a community-wide effort to safeguard cultural identity through traditional practices. The strategies include integrating these games into school curricula and community events which ensures that both youth and elders play an active role in preserving their heritage. Additionally, the documentation of game rules and histories, as well as the use of social media for promotion, helps ensure that the games remain relevant, particularly among younger generations. Results show that these strategies are successful in fostering high participation and engagement. The integration into educational settings helps learners understand the significance of the games beyond recreation, strengthening cultural identity. This aligns with Villar (2010), who highlighted that traditional games foster civic engagement and personal development. Additionally, the community's use of workshops and media platforms supports the view of Ruiz Palacios (2023), who emphasized the role of digital media in making traditional practices accessible and relatable to modern youth. These strategies contribute not only to cultural preservation but also to building social cohesion and identity resilience in the face of modernization.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study presents a comprehensive picture of the cultural status of *Namunganayan nga Ay-Ayam* among the Indigenous people of Suyo, Ilocos Sur, reflecting both the strengths and challenges in its preservation. The respondents' diverse demographic profiles ranging across various ages, genders, and educational backgrounds indicate a broad-based cultural perspective and allow insights into the intergenerational transmission of traditional practices. Despite this diversity, findings show that cultural awareness and understanding of the game are moderately high, while actual participation remains relatively low. This suggests a cultural disconnection where appreciation exists, but opportunities for involvement are lacking which possibly due to modernization, shifting recreational interests, and limited institutional support. Interestingly, the study reveals no significant and consistent relationship between demographic factors such as age, gender, and education, and the respondents' levels of cultural awareness, understanding, or participation. This implies that the cultural disconnection is a collective experience rather than one confined to specific groups. However, respondents with lower engagement were more likely to perceive stronger challenges in preserving the game. This highlights that cultural involvement can reduce perceived barriers and foster a sense of empowerment in sustaining indigenous heritage. Furthermore, significant differences were observed across the eight barangays of Suyo, with some communities showing notably lower engagement. This disparity underscores the impact of local leadership, availability of cultural programs, and intergenerational communication on cultural vitality. These findings point to the importance of community-specific strategies in revitalization efforts. To address these issues, the study recommends several key initiatives: integrating the game into educational programs, organizing community-based cultural events, documenting its history and rules, and facilitating intergenerational learning through elders. These approaches must combine institutional backing and grassroots participation to be effective. Thus, sustaining *Namunganayan nga Ay-Ayam* requires inclusive, locally responsive, and community-empowered preservation efforts that celebrate and protect Suyo's indigenous identity. The recommendations emphasize the importance of a collaborative and inclusive approach to preserving *Namunganayan nga Ay-Ayam*. Cultural revitalization programs should be designed to reach various demographic groups, especially the youth and individuals with lower educational backgrounds, as they may have less exposure to traditional practices. Schools, local media, and community storytelling events can help promote awareness and appreciation of cultural heritage. Including both male and female perspectives in these programs ensures equal representation and engagement. Although many individuals are aware of the game's cultural value, actual participation remains low. To address this, communities should organize regular events, festivals, and school activities that involve playing the traditional game. These activities can transform cultural knowledge into real experiences, encouraging more people to take part. Media campaigns that showcase the importance and enjoyment of participation can also spark renewed interest. Support from local government, educational institutions, and cultural organizations is essential. Establishing cultural centers, preserving records, and involving elders in teaching help maintain authenticity and ensure sustainable preservation efforts. Creative and engaging formats can also help counter modern distractions. All cultural programs should promote participation across all age groups, genders, and educational levels. Intergenerational activities like workshops and community games can strengthen cultural bonds and collective identity. Increased cultural education through campaigns and seminars can empower individuals to become active advocates of heritage preservation. Thus, since each barangay has unique needs, the local government should develop tailored strategies. Stronger barangays may assist weaker ones, fostering unity and a more widespread revival of *Namunganayan nga Ay-Ayam* across Suyo.

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