



Batbat Hi Udan: A socio-cultural analysis

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the activities, beliefs, and customs reflected in the novel *Batbat Hi Udan* and to understand how these aspects are still practiced and showcased by the Bukidnon tribe in contemporary times. The research seeks to answer the following questions: What activities, beliefs, and customs are depicted in the novel? How does the tribe continue to display these practices today? To achieve this, the study employed a socio-cultural analysis, which allowed for a deeper understanding of the connection between the literary work and the cultural traditions of the Bukidnon people. The study found that the activities, beliefs, and customs portrayed in *Batbat Hi Udan* are still alive and relevant in the current practices of the Bukidnon tribe, highlighting the tribe's strong commitment to preserving their cultural heritage. These traditions continue to be valued and passed down through generations, demonstrating literature's vital role in preserving culture. Based on these findings, the study recommends further examination of other Bukidnon literary works to enrich the knowledge of the diverse cultural practices of various tribes and to emphasize the richness of the Bukidnon tribe's cultural legacy. Through this research, it becomes evident that literature is essential in sustaining and transmitting cultural values to future generations, ensuring that the tribe's identity and customs remain intact.

Keywords

Batbat, udan, socio-cultural

Introduction

Understanding literature through a sociocultural lens enables a deeper interpretation of the text and the culture it represents. Scholars such as Wertsch (1997) emphasized that sociocultural analysis uncovers how historical, institutional, and cultural forces shape human behavior, values, and traditions. It clarifies individual actions, beliefs, and customs, revealing a community's collective consciousness. This approach is particularly relevant when examining indigenous literature, which often remains underrepresented despite its rich cultural heritage. In this context, the novel *Batbat Hi Udan* by Telesforo Sungkit Jr., written in both Filipino and Binukid, emerges as a significant yet under-analyzed work that reflects the identity, traditions, and lived experiences of the Bukidnon tribe. Despite its cultural and literary value, few have explored its deeper meanings, and indigenous literature like it is increasingly overlooked. This study aims to address this gap by analyzing the sociocultural elements—specifically, the activities, beliefs, and customs—embedded in *Batbat Hi Udan* and investigating how these elements are still manifested in the practices of the Bukidnon tribe today. Ultimately, the research aims to contribute to preserving and recognizing indigenous literature and cultural heritage.

Recent studies highlight the dynamic relationship between culture and literature, underscoring how both evolve over time and in response to societal change. Panopio et al. (1994) defined culture as a person's social heritage passed on through generations via language. Copeland (1963) argued that changes in culture, society, and the individual profoundly affect one another. Altun (2023) further asserted that literature serves as a mirror to culture, enabling readers to recognize cultural similarities and differences through the narratives they encounter. These perspectives align with the view that literature is a powerful medium for understanding and preserving cultural identity. Sungkit (2009) noted that in the era of globalization, maintaining a strong cultural identity is crucial, warning that those disconnected from their roots risk losing their sense of national identity. Although these studies contribute valuable insights, they primarily discuss broad concepts of cultural change and identity, and not all focus on specific indigenous works or communities. This highlights a gap in analyzing lesser-known literary pieces that deeply reflect the lived experiences and traditions of particular indigenous groups, such as the Bukidnon tribe.

To address this gap, scholars like Brillantes (2014) and Singcolan (2025) have conducted ethnographic studies on the Talaandig tribe in Bukidnon, focusing on cultural practices and rituals amid the pressures of modernization. Their findings reveal a strong commitment within the tribe to preserve rituals like *Pasanghid* and *Panalawahig* despite fears of cultural erosion. However, these studies emphasize direct community observation and ritual documentation rather than literary analysis. Meanwhile, Turrano's (2007) sociological study of Genoveva Edroza-Matute's short stories illustrates the value of using literature to explore societal issues, such as poverty and migration. However, it is limited to mainstream Filipino literature. Complementing these perspectives, Nabas and Asidoy (2022) conducted a literary analysis of Ilonggo tales, revealing how themes of poverty, inequality, and migration are deeply embedded in regional narratives,

thereby highlighting the potential of indigenous literature to reflect and critique social realities.

In contrast, this study focuses on the novel *Batbat Hi Udan* by Telesforo Sungkit Jr., the first novel published by a member of the Higaonon tribe. As a unique literary work that blends indigenous language and contemporary narrative, it presents an untapped opportunity to examine how Bukidnon culture—its activities, beliefs, and customs—is represented and preserved through fiction. By analyzing this novel, the study aims to contribute to the growing but still limited body of research on indigenous literature in the Philippines.

This study sought to answer the following research questions: (1) What activities, beliefs, and customs are depicted in *Batbat Hi Udan* by Telesforo Sungkit Jr.? and (2) How does the Bukidnon tribe continue to exhibit these cultural elements in contemporary times? The research aims to analyze the sociocultural dimensions embedded in the novel and investigate their continuity in the present-day practices of the Bukidnon community. Furthermore, this research focused on an under-analyzed indigenous literary work, examining it through a sociocultural lens to explore how literature reflects and preserves cultural identity. By integrating literary analysis with cultural studies, the study sheds light on the representation of Bukidnon traditions, beliefs, and practices within the novel. It also investigates the continuity of these cultural elements in the present-day Bukidnon community. The research addresses a gap in existing scholarship and contributes to a deeper understanding and appreciation of indigenous literature in the Philippines.

Method

The research design employed in this study is a descriptive-qualitative approach, aiming to provide a clear and accurate portrayal of the data gathered from the novel *Batbat Hi Udan*. A qualitative design typically explores meanings, experiences, and perspectives, focusing on depth rather than numerical representation (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Specifically, descriptive-qualitative research provides a detailed account of real-life events or experiences, using everyday language and maintaining proximity to the data with minimal interpretation (Sandelowski, 2000). The researcher examined the activities, beliefs, and customs in the book *Batbat Hi Udan* and developed a codebook listing these cultural elements. This design helps identify the practices, beliefs, and customs in the novel *Batbat Hi Udan*. Therefore, this design is the most suitable and appropriate for studying the subject matter.

The data were taken from the book *Batbat Hi Udan* by Telesforo Sungkit Jr., where the activities, beliefs, and customs embedded in the work were analyzed. The data collection method is as follows: First, the researcher requested permission from the author to analyze *Batbat Hi Udan* by Telesforo Sungkit Jr. through communication via Facebook Messenger. Once the request was approved, the researcher immediately read the novel, which contains 215 pages and comprises seven (7) chapters, for analysis. While reading the novel, the researcher listed the activities, beliefs, and customs embedded in the work. After listing or analyzing the novel, the researcher sought validation from a language

expert or a teacher who has read the novel to ensure the accuracy of the information recorded. Once validated by a language expert, the list was then submitted to a Tribal Leader of the Bukidnon tribe to verify whether the activities, beliefs, and customs listed by the researcher are still practiced, believed in, and demonstrated by the tribe in the present day.

The instrument used in this study is a codebook with a checklist that the researcher created. A codebook is a structured guide in qualitative research that outlines and defines codes—labels representing recurring ideas or themes—to ensure consistent interpretation and categorization of qualitative data (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011). For this study, the codebook is a list of activities, beliefs, and customs embedded in the analyzed work *Batbat Hi Udan*, which a language expert and the Tribal Leader of the Bukidnon tribe validated.

Results

Tasks Included in the Novel *Batbat Hi Udan*

Tasks often refer to the specific roles, duties, or responsibilities assigned to individuals or groups within the community (Boyette & Hewlett, 2020). These tasks are integral to the tribe's social structure and are typically distributed based on age, gender, skill set, or social status. The division of labor ensures the community's survival, cohesion, and cultural continuity. Specifically, in the Talaandig, Table 1 below shows the specific tasks of the tribe as reflected in the novel *Batbat Hi Udan*.

Table 1. Tasks included in the novel *Batbat Hi Udan*

Tasks	Description	Reason
<i>Iranso</i>	It is a method of preserving meat by drying it in the sun. (Page 84)	In the Bukidnon tribe, this is called <i>idaing</i> . They still practice it today to preserve meat and prevent it from spoiling.
<i>Mamahandi</i>	It is a ritual of thanksgiving for the <i>Tagbaya</i> . (Page 91)	They perform <i>mamahandi</i> because it is a title for the spirit that guards the money.
<i>Mangayam</i>	Hunting is an activity in which they search for animals in the forest. (Page 15)	The Bukidnon tribe continues to practice hunting or <i>pangayam</i> to train themselves in various activities.
<i>Pangnganga/Mama</i>	"Pangnganga" is a method of chewing a mixture of ikmo, fruit, and lime. (Page 9)	According to Bae Inatlawan (2019), they no longer practice <i>pangnganga</i> or <i>mama</i> , but they still need the buyo, fruit, and lime included in the mixture because, when they pray, the buyo, fruit, and lime are used as a sacred offering to the spirit.

Tasks	Description	Reason
<i>Pagpamula/Pagtatanim</i>	Farming is one of their activities or livelihoods for survival. (Page 3)	They still engage in <i>pamula/pagtatanim</i> (planting) because it is a sacred offering in their prayers to the <i>Tagbaya</i> .
<i>Pamuhat</i>	It is a ritual for the <i>Tagbaya</i> . (Page 47)	They practice <i>pamuhat</i> because it is a ritual, they must perform to offer to the <i>Tagbaya</i> spirits that guard the land or waters. When a ritual is performed in the water to provide for the water, it is called <i>pamuhat</i> . <i>Pamuhat</i> is the spirit of all things.
<i>Saut</i>	It is a war dance. (Page 33)	The <i>saut</i> is still performed to inform all relatives that the guardians of their ancestors, when they perform <i>saut</i> , signal that enemies are approaching, depending on the sound of the <i>bangkaw</i> (bamboo spear).

Beliefs Contained in the Novel *Batbat Hi Udan*

On the one hand, beliefs encompass spiritual and cultural understandings that guide daily life, often centered on animism and the presence of spirits in nature (Gonzales, 2019). In the context of Philippine indigenous tribes, these beliefs shape rituals, social practices, and the tribe's relationship with the environment. Table 2 below enumerates the beliefs of the Talaandig tribe in the novel *Batbat Hi Udan*.

Table 2. Beliefs Contained in the Novel *Batbat Hi Udan*

Beliefs	Description	Reason
<i>Alagasi</i>	The <i>Alagasi</i> is a giant creature that eats humans. (Page 42)	They still believe in the <i>Alagasi</i> because of a story passed down by their ancestors. In the past, the <i>Alagasi</i> were giant beings that could be seen, but now they are no longer visible as they have become a spirit that guards wherever <i>Magbabaya</i> places them. They also refer to it as an evil spirit because it brings illness to those who encounter or cross paths with it.
<i>Bagani/Paggalad</i>	The <i>bagani</i> is a rank of warrior. (Page 2)	In the Bukidnon Tribe, the <i>Bagani</i> is called <i>Paggalad</i> , a guard or territory protector. The belief in the <i>Bagani/Paggalad</i> remains strong because they serve as guardians or security in a territory today. However, the <i>Bagani</i> must follow the rules of the tribe, one of which is the prohibition against killing humans. If a person commits a crime, it must first be tried and thoroughly examined before determining the cause of the offense.

Beliefs	Description	Reason
<i>Balighot</i>	The <i>balighot</i> is an old marker used by the tribes. (Page 133)	They continue to believe in the <i>balighot</i> because it symbolizes that something should not be disturbed. If you go to the forest and find a wooden cross on the ground, it means that area is <i>balighot</i> , and you should not step on it because it is considered a trap, and you might fall into it.
<i>Bito</i>	The <i>bito</i> are deep holes. (Page 32)	The <i>bito</i> is a deep, natural hole whose depth is immeasurable. Therefore, if you come across a <i>bito</i> , you must avoid it to prevent falling into it. (Bae Inatlawan, 2019)
<i>Gimokod</i>	The <i>gimokod</i> is a soul or spirit. (Page 17)	The belief in the <i>gimokod</i> remains in their culture because it serves as the spirit of every being. Whether alive or dead, each being has its spirit.
<i>Lana</i>	The <i>lana</i> is a container filled with oil applied to a person's body to be guarded by <i>Magbabaya</i> or <i>tagbaya</i> . (Page 10)	They still believe in the beneficial effects of <i>lana</i> . Usually, <i>lana</i> is mixed with various kinds of tree roots. They apply it to the parts of their bodies that hurt, instantly alleviating the pain.
<i>Magbangal</i>	The <i>Magbangal</i> , or the constellation Orion, is a star. (Page 91)	The tribe still believes in the <i>Magbangal</i> or star because it serves as their clock during Christmas. When the star is bright, it is a sign that they should plant because they will earn a good profit. On the other hand, if the star is dim, it signals that the harvest will be small.
<i>Pasungaw/Pasibua</i>	The <i>pasungaw</i> is a container filled with oil mixed with the bile of a <i>bakesan</i> (a type of animal). (Page 79)	In the Bukidnon Tribe, the <i>pasungaw</i> is called <i>Pasibua</i> . <i>Pasibua</i> is also an oil, but it is mixed with the bile of an animal and used to treat illnesses.
<i>Tagbaya</i>	The <i>Tagbaya</i> are spirits in large trees, rocks, and other places. (Page 26)	In the Bukidnon Tribe, the <i>Tagbaya</i> is also called <i>Anghel Magbalantay</i> . This refers to spirits believed to reside in various places, such as trees, water, and wherever <i>Magbabaya</i> has placed them, whom they recognize as their Lord.
<i>Talabusaw</i>	The <i>talabusaw</i> is a spirit that, when it possesses a person, makes that person brave and strong. (Page 34)	A person has seven <i>Tagbaya</i> . One of these seven <i>Tagbaya</i> is the <i>Talabusaw</i> . The Bukidnon Tribe believes in the <i>Talabusaw</i> because it is a spirit that sucks blood and possesses a person. When the <i>Talabusaw</i> possesses a person, they lose control of their thoughts and may commit actions they would not normally do, such as killing someone. To rid themselves of the possession, the person must be fed a live chicken to regain their senses.
<i>Tium</i>	The <i>Tium</i> are two children considered powerful beings and a type of <i>tagbaya</i> .	According to Bae Inatlawan (2019), the <i>Tium</i> are not just children. They can also grow, shrink, age, transform into pigs, and mimic other animals. He also mentioned that the <i>Tium</i> are beings cared for

Beliefs	Description	Reason
	(Page 47)	by their ancestors. If the tribe falls ill, they ask for the <i>Tium's</i> help and are immediately healed. If the <i>Tium</i> take the form of a human, they are not allowed to eat raw food. However, they can eat raw food if they transform into a dog.

Customs Embedded in the Novel *Batbat Hi Udan*

On the other hand, customs refer to the traditional practices, rituals, and social norms that are integral to the community's cultural identity and daily life (Macusi, at al., (2023) These customs encompass various aspects such as agricultural methods, ceremonies, and communal interactions, reflecting the tribe's values and worldview. Table 3 illustrates the customs embedded in the novel *Batbat Hi Udan*.

Table 3. Customs Embedded in the Novel *Batbat Hi Udan*

Customs	Description	Reason
<i>Buliga</i>	The <i>buliga</i> refers to everyone's mutual help and cooperation. (Page 31)	One of the tribe's customs is called <i>buliga</i> , which means cooperation. If people lack food, they help each other to ensure everyone has enough to eat.
<i>Kilalaha</i>	This is a custom or trait that an individual should possess. It is also a way to show respect to others. (Page 3)	In their tribe, it is essential to know the policies, ordinances, or laws because they are deeply rooted in their culture, and you must first recognize who you are talking to, or even the laws of a tribe, as a sign of respect.
<i>Mabalaw</i>	This is a custom that reflects courage. (Page 14)	The <i>mabalaw</i> or bravery is a characteristic of a <i>paggalad</i> or <i>bagani</i> . When a leader in a particular area or tribe can stop a conflict, they bravely face it and manage to bring peace to the barangay.
<i>Mapangal</i>	The term “masipag” describes a person who is active and diligent in their tasks. (Page 2)	The diligence of each tribe member is still visible today. They do not waste time; instead, they use their time working, such as planting rice and vegetables, and even hunting.
<i>Matanul</i>	This is a custom that signifies taking care of or nurturing a person. (Page 7)	The tribe still shows care and concern for others, as it has been customary for them to help one another, especially when someone is sick and needs to be looked after.
<i>Matinumanun</i>	One of their customs is being obedient. (Page 4)	The Bukidnon tribe has long been known for its obedience, a custom they still uphold today. They are truly obedient because they immediately follow the commands of their Bae or Baylan without hesitation.
<i>Pagbatun-batuna</i>	The <i>Pagbatun-batuna</i> refers to helping a person or family who is	The <i>Pagbatun-batuna</i> is a continuation of <i>buliga</i> , which means helping one another. If a person is

Customs	Description	Reason
	in severe need and struggling to survive, and needs assistance to rise above their situation. (Page 37)	struggling, do not push them further down; instead, help them lift themselves or their family.
<i>Pamalandung</i>	The <i>Pamalandung</i> is the reflection of a person about their loved ones, whether they are in a good state or not. (Page 39)	The tribe consistently follows the <i>Pamalandung</i> custom because reflecting on their loved ones and their well-being has become a tradition.
<i>Sayuda</i>	The <i>Sayuda</i> refers to everyone's understanding or mutual agreement. (Page 202)	The custom of <i>Sayuda</i> refers to mutual understanding and agreement among the members. Whatever activities must be done in the barangay, permission must first be asked to inform the officials about the event, so they know what is happening in their area.
<i>Tag-amul-amul</i>	This is a custom that reflects unity or solidarity among individuals or tribes. (Page 202)	<i>Tag-amul-amul</i> is the gathering of a group of people in one place where they understand each other, have mutual respect, and unite. They gather to unite and discuss the problems they are facing. For example, they gather in <i>Tulugan</i> during prayers, which they consider their church.

Discussion

Tasks Included in the Novel *Batbat Hi Udan*

Due to the changing times, some activities are now less frequently practiced by the tribe, primarily due to the rise of globalization. This is supported by Brillantes' (2014) study, which suggests that the sacred culture of a tribe may gradually fade due to the changes brought about by globalization. According to Panopio et al. (1994), "It is transmitted from one generation to another through language." This means that culture is passed down from one generation to the next. Undeniably, culture does not remain static; it evolves.

As reflected in Table 1, the *iranso* or *idaing* is one of the everyday activities of the Bukidnon tribe (Page 10). It is a method of preserving meat by drying it in the sun. Other tribes may no longer do this because some now live in urban areas with electricity, allowing them to use refrigerators to store food or meat, thereby preventing spoilage. According to Bae Inatlawan (2019), they still practice *iranso* even though they have refrigerators, as they go to the mountains of Olanghon to guard what they call their ancestral lands. Those mountains have no electricity, so the tribe continues to dry meat to preserve it and prevent spoilage.

In the mountains of Olanghon, they also perform the *Mamahandi* ritual. *Mamahandi* is a Thanksgiving ritual for the *Tagbaya* (Page 91). In these mountains, they perform a ritual to express gratitude for the blessings they have received. *Mamahandi* is not just a ritual but a sacred title for the spirit that watches over wealth. Therefore, they need to show gratitude through prayer and a ritual where they offer chickens or pigs as a sign of thanks to the *Tagbaya* spirits that helped them (Bae Inatlawan, 2019).

Meanwhile, hunting remains an everyday activity among the Bukidnon tribe. They call this activity *mangayam* or *pangayam*, where they search for animals in the forest that they can cook and eat (Page 10). Although hunting is now a less frequent activity due to many people having jobs and being able to afford food, some tribes still engage in hunting, not because they lack jobs, but as a form of training or to strengthen their bodies for other tasks they may face (Bae Inatlawan, 2019).

After training their bodies or strengthening themselves, they engage in *nganga* or *mama*, which is chewing a mixture of ikmo (betel nut), fruit, and lime (Page 10). One of the benefits of *nganga* is that it provides extra strength to their bodies. When they feel tired, they chew on *mama* to relieve fatigue and regain strength. However, according to Bae Inatlawan (2019), the Bukidnon tribe does not practice *nganga* or *mama*, unlike other tribes. What they need for *mama* is betel nut, fruit, and lime, which they use as a sacred offering to the spirits. If they do chew, they pray before doing so. *Mama* is also used as medicine for heart disease, high blood pressure, and toothaches, making it a valuable part of their daily life.

Another essential part of their daily life or livelihood is farming, specifically planting rice and corn (Page 3). While farming remains a primary occupation, not everyone in the tribe relies solely on farming, as some people have been given opportunities to work in various companies by the government. This presents an excellent opportunity for those who are currently unemployed. However, farming rice and corn remains deeply rooted in their tradition, passed down by their ancestors, and continues to be practiced as a sacred offering in prayers to their *tagbaya* (Bae Inatlawan, 2019).

In their prayers to the *tagbaya*, they also have a ritual called *Pamuhat*, which is a ritual for the spirits of the land (Page 47). *Pamuhat* is the spirit of all things, and whatever is around them—a tree, flower, water, or any other object—has its *tagbaya* spirit watching over them. According to Bae Inatlawan (2019), it is necessary to thank all the *tagbaya* spirits that watch over the land where they live, and they do this through *Pamuhat* or performing a ritual where they offer seven white chickens to these spirits.

The final activity of the Bukidnon tribe is *saut*, a war dance (Page 11). They dance and sway with the wind. According to Bae Inatlawan (2019), *saut* can be performed by men and women; anyone can do it. Moreover, the tribe continues to perform *saut* to pass on to the new generation the knowledge that the ancient guardians used to dance *saut* to practice for an upcoming battle. Their *saut* dance has different meanings: if the sound of their spear during the dance is gentle, it indicates that they are just practicing to strengthen themselves, but if the sound is harsh or aggressive, it means that enemies are approaching or that they are in the midst of a battle.

Beliefs Contained in the Novel *Batbat Hi Udan*

The *Alagasi* is a giant creature believed to consume humans (Page 14). It is also thought that the *Alagasi* can take the form of a human to deceive others. This belief was prevalent in ancient times, but according to Bae Inatlawan (2019), the *Alagasi* is now considered a part of the tribe's history and is no longer believed to be a tangible being. In the past, the *Alagasi* were also called a *paggalad* or *bagani*, guardians who protected specific places or objects. However, today, the *Alagasi* is seen as a spirit that watches over specific locations or resides in large or balite trees. The *Alagasi* is also considered a "bad spirit" because it is believed to bring harm or sickness. If a person crosses paths with an *Alagasi* in an area where it is active, they may fall ill or even die. This belief in the *Alagasi* is still prevalent among the Bukidnon tribe in Dalwangan, Malaybalay City, as witnessed by Adelina Tarino Bae Inatlawan.

While the *Alagasi* represent invisible guardians, there are physical guardians known as *Bagani* or *paggalad*. The *Bagani* is a warrior rank (Page 2) and is believed to be a title given to those with extensive battle experience who have killed numerous enemies. However, according to Bae Inatlawan (2019), "Maybe in other tribes, killing is done, but in ours, we must judge and not kill people. The *Magbabaya* will take care of that." In the Bukidnon tribe, if someone commits a crime, they do not have the right to kill the offender. Instead, a process called *paghusay* or trial is followed to understand the reasons for the wrongdoings. If the matter cannot be resolved, the *Magbabaya* (their supreme deity) decides on the appropriate punishment.

Another belief of the tribe is the *balighot*, an ancient sign used by the tribe (Page 14). A *balighot* is considered a guide that warns people to avoid danger. If a *balighot* is found, it is believed that the object or area marked by it should not be disturbed, as doing so may bring harm. In the novel, Datu Masagila uses the *balighot* to signal that he has received a letter. The Bukidnon tribe still believes in the *balighot*, as Bae Inatlawan (2019) explained. For example, if they come across a wooden cross in the forest, it is a *balighot* signaling that the area is a trap, and they should not step on it.

The tribe also believes in the *bito*, a deep, natural hole that is immeasurable in depth (Page 14). It is believed to be a hole where a fallen star landed. If one comes across a *bito*, they are advised to avoid it. While some may no longer believe in the *bito* today, Bae Inatlawan (2019) explains that it may still be found in the forest. However, due to modern technology, some holes are now created as traps for enemies, which may confuse whether the hole is truly a *bito*.

The *gimokod* is another belief of the tribe, referring to the soul or spirit of a person (Page 15). The *gimokod* is invisible to the eyes but is felt by the heart. Despite its invisibility, the tribe continues to believe in the *gimokod* as part of their culture. According to Bae Inatlawan (2019), every person has a soul that serves as their guardian. This is similar to the Kalag in Visayan culture, which is the *gimokod* of the Bukidnon tribe. The soul remains with a person, whether alive or dead, and continues to guard them.

Another belief in the tribe is the *lana*, a container filled with oil that is applied to the body for protection from *Magbabaya* (Page 15). The oil, when applied, is believed to make *Magbabaya* grant their wishes and protect the person from harm. However, according to Bae Inatlawan (2019), the *lana* is now just oil with no magical properties. Despite this, the Bukidnon tribe still believes in the *lana* because it benefits their bodies. The oil is often mixed with tree roots and applied to sore body parts to relieve pain. Some people even mix it with snake skin, which they believe can heal various ailments.

The tribe also believes in the *Magbangal*, a star, or the constellation of Orion (Page 16). The *Magbangal* is believed to be a sign that it is time to plant and a good season for hunting. It also serves as their time indicator, especially during Christmas. Since clocks were not invented in ancient times, the tribe used the brightness of the *Magbangal* to gauge the time. They believed that if the star was very bright, it was a sign that they should plant, as they would have a large harvest. If the light was dim, they would expect a smaller yield.

Connected to this belief is the *pasungaw*, a container filled with oil mixed with the bile of a *bakesan* (Page 16). This oil is used to protect against snakes and other dangerous creatures. However, today, people use modern methods to deal with snakes. According to Bae Inatlawan (2019), the *pasungaw* is also used for other animals and is a part of traditional Bukidnon medicine.

The *tagbaya* is another important belief in the tribe, referring to spirits that inhabit large trees, rocks, and other places (Page 16). These spirits are known as the *Anghel Magbalantay* (Guardian Angels) of the Bukidnon tribe. The tribe believes these spirits protect the environment and the resources they depend on. As a gesture of gratitude, they perform rituals to honor the *tagbaya*. Bae Inatlawan (2019) mentions that the tribe has seven *tagbaya*, some good, while others, like the *talabusaw*, are considered evil spirits. The *talabusaw* is believed to possess people, making them strong and aggressive, sometimes leading to violent actions such as murder. To appease the *talabusaw*, the possessed person must be fed a live chicken.

In addition to the *talabusaw*, there is also the belief in the *tiom*, two children considered powerful beings (Page 47). The *tiom* is believed to search for a master to serve. Bae Inatlawan (2019) explains that the *tiom* can also shape-shift into animals like pigs or dogs, depending on their master's needs. The *tiom* is cared for by the tribe's ancestors, and they are believed to assist in healing if one becomes ill.

Table 2 in the study shows the tribe's beliefs, many of which are still upheld today. These beliefs, passed down orally from generation to generation, are integral to the tribe's identity and culture. As de Leon (2017) highlighted, the preservation and transmission of these beliefs are vital in maintaining the tribe's cultural heritage through oral traditions and written records.

One of the traditions demonstrated by the tribe is *buliga*. *Buliga* refers to cooperation among individuals (page 22). This is a tradition that the Bukidnon tribe continues to practice. When a person lacks food, they help one another to ensure everyone's needs

are met. Some other tribes may no longer practice this tradition regularly, as their lives have become more difficult due to the rising cost of living. However, according to Bae Inatlawan (2019), each tribe must continue to uphold the *buliga* tradition. Even with limited resources, they show love and care for one another through mutual assistance.

The tribe also has a custom called *kilalaha*. *Kilalaha* is a practice that every individual must embody (page 22). It is a way of showing respect to others. According to Bae Inatlawan (2019), it is essential to be aware of policies, ordinances, or laws because the tribe has ingrained the practice of recognizing one's conversation partner or adhering to the tribe's laws as a sign of respect. Nowadays, however, some people no longer observe *kilalaha* as they follow modern trends, which has led to a decline in showing respect toward elders or others in conversation.

Another prominent value in the tribe is courage, referred to as *mabalaw*. *Mabalaw* signifies bravery (page 23). According to Bae Inatlawan (2019), being *mabalaw* or courageous is a *bagani* (warrior) characteristic. Before someone can be called a *bagani* or *paggalad* (warrior), they must show courage and be willing to face challenges. An example is Bae Inatlawan, a tribal leader of the Bukidnon tribe, who could stop a conflict, demonstrating that true courage is about resolving disputes without using violence. Bravery is not solely defined by using weapons, but rather by how one handles situations with wisdom.

Like all people, the Bukidnon tribe also values hard work, or *mapangal*. *Mapangal* is the characteristic of being active and diligent in one's work (page 23). Even today, the tribe continues to exemplify this hardworking nature. They do not waste time, but they invest in planting rice, vegetables, and corn, and even hunting. While some individuals may no longer show this trait due to losing touch with their traditions, it does not mean that the *mapangal* value has disappeared, as the tribe still demonstrates this characteristic. According to Bae Inatlawan (2019), the tribe remains hardworking despite modernization.

Another tradition of the tribe is their obedience and nurturing attitude towards their community. *Matanul* refers to the practice of caring for others (page 23). When people or warriors are injured or ill, they immediately provide help and treatment without hesitation. According to Bae Inatlawan (2019), this tradition will never disappear from the Bukidnon tribe because they continue to show their nurturing nature. It has become a habit for them to care for one another, especially when someone falls ill and needs attention. Being nurturing is a beautiful trait everyone should possess, as it feels fulfilling to take care of and monitor the well-being of loved ones through nurturing actions.

Obedience, or being *matinumanon*, is another tradition that persists within the tribe. *Matinumanon* refers to the act of following orders (page 23). The Bukidnon tribe has deeply ingrained the practice of obedience. They are truly obedient, as they immediately follow the commands of their *Bae* or *Baylan* (tribal leader) without question. However, not everyone adheres to their leaders' rules or orders because some individuals make their own decisions, especially in modern times when people have the right to respect

their personal choices, even if those choices may be detrimental to the group. Bae Inatlawan (2019) highlights this behavior change.

Pagbatun-batuna refers to assisting a person or family who is destitute and struggling with life's hardships (page 23). Helping one another is a value that should never fade from people's hearts and minds. According to Bae Inatlawan (2019), *Pagbatun-batuna* is an extension of *buliga*, which means mutual help. However, there is a slight difference between the two. While *buliga* involves helping others in general, *Pagbatun-batuna* focuses on helping those in dire need, struggling with hunger or poverty. In such cases, it is not about pushing someone down but helping them rise and improve their situation.

Pamalandung refers to reflecting on one's loved ones (page 24). The tribe often practices *Pamalandung* because it has become a custom to reflect on the well-being of their loved ones, especially when they are far away. It is undeniable that this tradition endures in the tribe because they have family members who work in other places to support their needs. While these relatives are away, their families back home continuously pray for their good health and safety, hoping they are protected from harm. This is the type of reflection most often expressed by tribe members regarding loved ones far away. Bae Inatlawan (2019) elaborates on this.

Sayuda refers to mutual understanding and agreement among individuals (page 24). Particularly in the Bukidnon tribe, *Sayuda* is an essential cultural practice for all tribes. According to Bae Inatlawan (2019), any activities planned in the community require permission from local officials. This ensures that the officials are aware of the event and the activities taking place in their area. Asking for permission is a sign that your intentions are good and that the tribe understands you are not intending any harm to them or the tribe.

Another important tradition is *Tag-amu-amul*. *Tag-amu-amul* refers to the unity and togetherness among tribes (page 24). The various tribes gather in one place where they understand each other, collaborate, and unite. They also meet to discuss the issues and challenges the tribe faces. For example, during prayer gatherings, they gather in a place called *Tulugan*, which can also be considered a church. The tribes also come together during significant events, such as the Kaamulan Festival in Malaybalay City, Bukidnon, where the seven tribes of Bukidnon unite and celebrate together. Bae Inatlawan (2019) explains this tradition.

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Table 3 shows the traditions of the tribe. It can be observed that the traditions listed by the researcher are still practiced by the Bukidnon tribe today. While some people or other tribes may no longer demonstrate these cultural practices because they are no longer accustomed to them or have become disconnected from their cultural roots, this does not mean the traditions are lost. This phenomenon could lead to the dissolution of a tribe's culture. Sungkit (2009) agrees, stating that individuals must connect with their culture, as the tide of globalization will sweep away those detached from it. Anyone swept

away by this tide will become a foreigner in their land. A nation that loses its cultural identity will be wiped from the face of the Earth.

In conclusion, by analyzing the literature of Bukidnon, particularly the novel *Batbat Hi Udan*, we gain insight into the culture of the Bukidnon people. Christ (2020) emphasized that literature is a gateway to understanding culture, whether similar or different across societies. Since literature reflects people's daily lives, it cannot be separated from how they express their way of life. Thus, readers of literary works can see or recognize cultural traits of the people represented in the text. Mar et al. (2009) further elaborate that literature exposes social truths and fictional imaginations. This means that means that literature reveals real-world social issues and values while also exploring creative, imagined worlds and ideas. Wright (2021) clarified that traditional works must be preserved, but once created, writers and other creators should be allowed to reinvent them, thus bringing new perspectives to the ongoing cycle of creation and recreation.

However, through this study, the cultural heritage of individuals will continue to endure and be passed down to current and future generations. Through analysis, Bukidnon's once-overlooked literature will shine again and be revitalized through this research.

Conclusion

The findings of this research reveal that the activities, beliefs, and traditions portrayed in *Batbat Hi Udan* are still actively practiced and embraced by the Bukidnon Tribe today. This continuity is mainly due to the strong connections among different tribes, which are reinforced through the shared expression of cultural practices. The study also highlights the importance of analyzing Bukidnon literature to preserve individual and collective cultural identity. Literature reflects one's cultural roots and is a medium for supporting original Filipino creations. Furthermore, it enables the transmission of cultural values and traditions from one generation to the next. Notably, while each tribe may use unique terms shaped by their internal cultural agreements, they remain united by common ancestral roots.

In light of these conclusions, several recommendations are proposed. First, deeper engagement with Bukidnon literature should be encouraged as it plays a vital role in preserving and promoting the unique literary contributions of Bukidnon writers. Second, it is essential to recognize, value, and protect cultural heritage, ensuring that cultural practices, beliefs, and traditions remain deeply rooted and continue to be passed down to future generations. Lastly, further exploration of other literary works from the Bukidnon region is recommended to gain a broader and richer understanding of the diverse cultural expressions and traditions of its various tribes.

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