

# Rediscovering Philippine Traditional Games: Experiences of Bachelor of Physical Education Students in Promoting Indigenous Physical Activities

Noemi S. Asuncion<sup>1</sup>, Mark Angelo I. Allera<sup>2</sup>, Ellen T. Balandra<sup>3</sup>, Roberto III E. Bustamante<sup>4</sup>,  
Joseph R. Deus<sup>5</sup>, Kurt Daniel DC. De Guia<sup>6</sup>, Paola Andrea B. Hora<sup>7</sup>, Rei Aldrin F. Ramirez<sup>8</sup>

Central Luzon State University

**Abstract:** Philippine traditional games are indigenous physical activities that promote physical development, social interaction, and cultural identity. This study explored the lived experiences of Bachelor of Physical Education (BPED) students in learning, facilitating, and promoting Philippine traditional games. A qualitative phenomenological design was employed with ten purposively selected BPED students who had experience participating in traditional games through Physical Education activities. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis. Findings revealed that participants generally experienced traditional games positively, describing them as enjoyable activities that evoked childhood memories while promoting communication, socialization, and confidence. Participants also encountered challenges involving unfamiliar or complicated rules, limited equipment and time, and difficulty performing certain movements. Traditional games were perceived as important expressions of Filipino culture and identity, with participants emphasizing the role of future Physical Education teachers in transmitting these practices to younger generations. Participants further recognized their potential to promote physical activity, fitness, strength, movement skills, and student engagement. The study recommends sustained integration of Philippine traditional games into Physical Education through clear instruction, adequate preparation, active participation, and resources. Promoting these activities may strengthen culturally responsive Physical Education while supporting the preservation of Philippine cultural heritage.

**Keywords:** Philippine traditional games; indigenous physical activities; Physical Education; BPED students; cultural heritage; phenomenology

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## 1. Introduction

Filipino traditional games have long been used to encourage physical activity, social interaction, teamwork, and character development among Filipino children and communities. They are an integral part of the nation's cultural legacy. In addition to offering chances for physical fitness, games like *patintero*, *luksong baka*, *tumbang preso*, *agawan base*, and *sipa* represent Filipino values like cooperation, respect, resilience, inventiveness, and sportsmanship. These traditional games support learners' holistic development while preserving cultural identity as part of indigenous physical activities. Through meaningful movement experiences, physical education gives students the chance to grow physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively (Bailey, 2006). Traditional games in Physical Education provide meaningful learning experiences that connect students with Filipino culture while developing movement skills, physical fitness, and social competencies. For Bachelor of

Physical Education (BPED) students, learning and facilitating these games is particularly important because they are future Physical Education teachers who can help preserve and promote Philippine cultural heritage.

Philippine studies have highlighted the educational and cultural value of indigenous physical activities. Santos et al. (2015), through their study of *Mangamaru*, emphasized the role of indigenous practices in preserving local traditions and promoting movement learning. Sanchez et al. (2019) likewise demonstrated the value of *Tinikling* in developing motor skills, coordination, and cultural appreciation. Santos et al. (2022) further found that learning *Arnis* enhanced students' perceived physical competence and cultural appreciation. Ryan and Deci (2000) also emphasized that meaningful and culturally relevant learning experiences can strengthen motivation and engagement.

Despite these studies, limited qualitative research has examined the lived experiences of BPED students in learning and facilitating Philippine traditional games, particularly their role in cultural preservation and their integration into contemporary Physical Education. Understanding these experiences may reveal the challenges, opportunities, and strategies involved in promoting traditional games in educational settings.

This study explores the lived experiences of BPED students in promoting Philippine traditional games. Guided by the phenomenological perspective of Creswell and Creswell (2018), it examines students' experiences in learning and facilitating these games, their meanings regarding cultural preservation and Filipino identity, and their recommendations for integrating traditional games into contemporary Physical Education. The findings may provide useful insights for teachers, curriculum developers, educational institutions, and future researchers seeking to strengthen culturally responsive Physical Education and preserve Philippine traditional games.

### **Statement of the Problems**

This study aims to explore the lived experiences of Bachelor of Physical Education students in promoting Philippine traditional games. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do Bachelor of Physical Education students describe their experiences in learning and facilitating Philippine traditional games?
2. What meanings do students attribute to Philippine traditional games in preserving Filipino culture and identity?
3. What recommendations do students provide for integrating Philippine traditional games into contemporary Physical Education instruction?

## **2. Methodology**

### *Research Design*

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore and understand the lived experiences of Bachelor of Physical Education (BPED) students in promoting Philippine traditional games. Phenomenology seeks to examine how individuals perceive, interpret, and make meaning of their experiences regarding a specific phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to capture the personal experiences, insights, challenges, and perceptions of BPED students in learning, facilitating, and promoting indigenous physical activities.

### *Participants*

The participants of this study were ten (10) Bachelor of Physical Education (BPED) students. They were selected through purposive sampling because they had knowledge and experience related to traditional Filipino games, which they gained from their Physical Education subjects and classroom activities.

The participants included both male and female students who had experience participating in school programs and classroom activities related to traditional Filipino games and indigenous physical activities. Their experiences and perspectives helped provide a better understanding of how future Physical Education teachers recognize, value, preserve, and promote traditional Filipino games.

### *Data Collection*

Data were collected through semi-structured individual interviews. An interview guide containing open-ended questions was developed to explore participants' experiences related to participation, confidence, challenges, and inclusivity in PE classes. With participants' consent, all interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy in data collection.

### *Data Analysis*

The study employed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis framework:

1. Familiarization with the data
2. Generation of initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the report

Interview transcripts were repeatedly reviewed to identify meaningful patterns and recurring concepts related to learning and facilitating traditional games, cultural preservation and identity, and recommendations for PE integration. Codes were grouped into categories and eventually organized into overarching themes that represented the participants lived experiences.

### *Ethical Consideration*

The researchers followed ethical principles in conducting the study and ensured that the participants were treated with respect and fairness. Before the interview, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the process of data collection, and how their responses would be used. Their participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained before conducting the interviews.

The participants were also informed that they could refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty. To protect their privacy, their names and personal information were kept confidential and participant codes such as P1, P2, and P3 were used instead of their real names. The interview recordings and transcripts were kept securely and were only accessed by the researchers. The researchers also made sure that the participants' experiences and opinions were presented honestly and respectfully throughout the study.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

### **Experiences in Learning and Facilitating Philippine Traditional Games**

#### *Theme 1: Enjoyment and Childhood Memories*

The participants shared that their experience with traditional games was fun and enjoyable. Some of them also remembered their childhood while playing the games.

*"Very happy because I experienced different games. Facilitating games made them appreciate them more." P3*

*"Nostalgic and enjoyable; when I was 'lampa' I often got minor injuries, but still fun." P5*

*"Traditional games brought back inner child, taught communication/socialization, reduced shyness, built confidence." P7*

*"Very fun; brings back childhood games/memories." P8*

*"Very fun; happy to revisit games from childhood, feels like returning to childhood." P10*

These statements show that traditional games gave the participants a fun experience and brought back memories of their childhood. Some participants also experienced communication, socialization, and confidence while participating. This is related to Bailey (2006), who explained that Physical Education and sport can provide different benefits for learners, including physical and social development.

## Theme 2: Challenges in Facilitating Traditional Games

The participants also experienced some challenges when facilitating traditional games. These included difficulties with the rules, equipment, time, and some physical movements.

*"Challenge giving instructions because some games are complicated; they explained step-by-step so students could understand." P1*

*"Hard to facilitate, especially representatives/profs had their own rules; hard to explain/enforce rules; hesitant to correct professional teachers." P3*

*"Challenge when he didn't know correct rules, e.g. assigned as facilitator in intrams and didn't know how to facilitate." P4*

*"Insufficient equipment for members, causing the game to take longer/not finish quickly." P6*

*"Lack of equipment and time, causing games to be rushed." P7*

*"Moving between facilities at CLSU; lack of equipment because some couldn't find materials for games." P9*

*"Not as flexible as childhood; bending movements are harder because body changed." P8*

These statements show that facilitating traditional games can sometimes be difficult. The participants experienced problems with understanding or explaining the rules, having enough equipment, and having enough time. Some also found certain movements harder compared to when they were younger. This shows that preparation is important when conducting physical activities in PE.

## Traditional Games and Filipino Culture and Identity

### Theme 1: Traditional Games as Part of Filipino Culture and Identity

The participants shared that traditional games are important because they are connected to Filipino culture, identity, and childhood.

*"Traditional games preserve Filipino culture and promote national games like piko, patintero, tumbang preso." P1*

*"Very important as Filipino; should not be forgotten because people focus on phones/technology." P2*

*"Very important; Filipinos should appreciate/love games they grew up with." P4*

*"Traditional games are one of Filipino identity." P6*

*"Meaningful because part of childhood, games played before gadgets; way to spend time, stay busy, socialize." P7*

*"Traditional games give Filipinos something to return to from childhood and preserve culture." P8*

*"Important because learned many different games, some unfamiliar, and learned where they originated." P9*

*"Traditional games connect Filipinos to childhood and preserve culture." P10*

These statements show that the participants see traditional games as part of Filipino culture and identity. The games remind them of their childhood and give them a connection to Filipino traditions. This is related to Santos et al. (2015), which discussed the value of indigenous cultural practices in preserving local traditions.

### Theme 2: Passing Traditional Games to Younger Generations

Several participants shared that teaching traditional games to children and future generations can help preserve them.

*"Preserve by teaching young generation traditional games and giving tips on how to win/play specific games." P1*

*"Preserve by always playing/teaching children so as they grow they still know the games." P3*

*"Promote and teach games as future teachers; kids now focus on gadgets; teaching preserves Filipino culture."*

P4

*"Helps preserve for next generation."* P5

*"Preserve by teaching to children and future children."* P8

*"Modern technology is rising; teaching traditional games to modern generation helps prevent forgetting."* P9

*"Preserve culture by teaching children and future generations; keeps tradition alive."* P10

These responses show that the participants believe teaching and continuing to play traditional games can help keep them from being forgotten. They also see future teachers as having a role in passing these activities to younger generations. This is related to UNESCO (2003), which emphasizes the importance of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and passing traditions from one generation to another.

### Theme 3: *Influence of Technology and Modern Games*

Some participants mentioned that phones, gadgets, and modern technology can affect young people's interest in traditional games.

*"Bringing back traditional games is enjoyable, especially because people are now more into technology."* P2

*"Promote and teach games as future teachers; kids now focus on gadgets; teaching preserves Filipino culture."*

P4

*"Even with youth focused on cellphones; PE students still have larong lahi in curriculum."* P7

*"Modern technology is rising; teaching traditional games to modern generation helps prevent forgetting."* P9

These statements show that the participants noticed how technology has become part of young people's activities. Because of this, traditional games may receive less attention. However, the participants believe that schools and PE can still provide opportunities for students to learn and experience these games.

### **Integration of Traditional Games in Physical Education**

#### Theme 1: *Traditional Games as Part of Physical Education*

The participants believed that traditional games can be used in Physical Education because they involve physical activities, exercise, fitness, strength, and skills.

*"Can integrate because games use body strength and thinking/strategies."* P1

*"Can integrate through projects/activities requiring traditional games; traditional games have many physical activities so connect to PE."* P3

*"Include traditional games in every activity/topic related to PE; not only discuss but teach and make children appreciate Filipino tradition."* P4

*"Promotes activity, fitness, exercise, strength."* P5

*"Integrate through programs and activities."* P7

*"Good for student health and serves as exercise."* P9

*"As BPED students focus on physical/sports, traditional games can be part of PE activities."* P10

These statements show that the participants believe traditional games can be included in Physical Education because they involve movement and physical activity. They can give students opportunities to exercise and develop different physical skills while also learning about Filipino culture. This is consistent with Bailey (2006), who discussed the benefits of Physical Education and sport for learners. It is also consistent with the Department of Education (2016) Physical Education curriculum, which includes physical activities and movement experiences.

## Theme 2: Encouraging Students to Participate

The participants suggested that students should be given the chance to experience traditional games. They also believe that showing the fun and benefits of the games can encourage participation.

*"Let students experience different traditional games so they understand/learn specific games." P1*

*"Students should know/recognize traditional games; older ones are different and more enjoyable than modern activities." P2*

*"Encourage participation by telling students they need to participate or they could be a reason others eventually forget traditional games." P3*

*"Encourage students to focus more on traditional games than online games and explore Filipino games." P4*

*"Emphasize that playing is happy/fun and explain the benefits." P5*

*"Let students play games they like and try different games to gain more learning." P6*

*"Encourage by showing physical fitness, skills, physical abilities, socialization, and confidence benefits." P7*

*"Apply it to yourself first; try games then engage others so they see they are fun." P8*

*"Tell fellow students participation helps preserve traditional games and prevents them from being forgotten." P9*

*"Try the games first; after experiencing the fun, it is easier to spread to others and show sports/traditional games are fun." P10*

These statements show that the participants believe students may become more interested when they are given the chance to actually play the games. They also think that showing the fun and benefits of the activities can encourage participation. This is related to Ryan and Deci (2000), who explained that meaningful experiences can support motivation and engagement.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The participants generally had positive experiences with Philippine traditional games, describing them as enjoyable activities that evoked childhood memories while promoting communication, socialization, and confidence. However, they encountered challenges such as unfamiliar rules, limited equipment and time, and difficulty performing some movements, which could be addressed through proper preparation. The participants viewed traditional games as important to Filipino culture and identity and believed that teaching them to younger generations can help preserve cultural traditions amid increasing reliance on technology. They also recognized their value in Physical Education because they promote physical activity, fitness, strength, and movement skills. Hands-on participation was considered important in helping students appreciate and enjoy these games.

## 5. RECOMMENDATION

The study recommends that Philippine traditional games continue to be integrated into Physical Education to promote physical activity and cultural learning. Teachers should provide clear instructions, adequate equipment, and sufficient time to ensure effective implementation. Students should also be given opportunities to actively participate in different traditional games to develop appreciation and enjoyment. Future Physical Education teachers are encouraged to learn, promote, and teach these games to younger generations as a means of preserving Filipino culture amid increasing use of technology. Future researchers may further examine traditional games in different schools, communities, and educational settings to explore their role in Physical Education and cultural preservation.

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## **INFO**

**Corresponding Author:** **Ellen T. Balandra**, **Central Luzon State University**.

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