# Revitalizing Bicolano heritage through *Pinaggikanan*: A community-centered cultural education

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## *Abstract*

This qualitative case study reviews the Pinaggikanan extension program, identifying the nature of the program, strategies for implementation, and outcomes of the extension program. It also analyzes the implications of the program in education and the community. Pinaggikanan, derived from the Bikol term meaning "origin," is an extension program initiated by a Teacher Education College (TEC) of a state university in Camarines Sur, Philippines. Since 2015 the program was implemented with the primary goal of promoting Bicolano culture and arts through the development and dissemination of IEC materials. The program supports SDG 4 by enhancing education through local history integration, SDG 17 by fostering partnerships with schools, local governments; and SDG 11which promotes sustainable communities and the protection of cultural heritage. This extension program utilized community-centered cultural education approach. Its implementation is characterized by collaborative partnership and integrated research, extension, instruction, and publication for cultural awareness in the target localities. Annual Pinaggikanan Festivals were conducted wherein beneficiaries were able to express their appreciation for their Bicolano heritage through artistic expression. Based on the assessment conducted, it showed that beneficiaries who engaged in Pinaggikanan activities developed a high level of interest and appreciation for their municipality's heritage, which translated into increased civic action and community involvement. This paper revealed that the Pinaggikanan extension program enriches cultural awareness by incorporating local legends, folktales, and arts into educational activities, creating meaningful and context-based learning experiences. This exemplifies an effective model of community-centered cultural education that may be replicable in other regions.

*Keywords:* extension program, Bicol heritage, cultural awareness, community-centered cultural education, IEC materials

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## 1. Introduction

Cultural heritage is a vital part of a community's identity, representing its history, values, and traditions. In the Bicol Region of the Philippines, this heritage is reflected in its festivals, arts, oral traditions, and customs. However, cultural knowledge and practices are gradually disappearing, especially among younger generations, as a result of modernization and globalization. This emphasizes the importance of efficient initiatives that can close the gap between conserving cultural heritage and adapting it to modern society.

One such initiative is Pinaggikanan, an extension program initiated and implemented in 2015 by a TEC in a state university in Camarines Sur, Philippines. The program's name, derived from the Bikol term for "origin," reflects its goal to promote Bicolano history, culture, and arts. The extension program accomplishes this through the creation and distribution of printed information, education, and communication (IEC) materials. Pinaggikanan also supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4, which focuses on quality education by integrating local history into learning materials; SDG 17, which emphasizes partnerships to achieve shared goals; and SDG 11, which promotes sustainable communities and the protection of cultural heritage.

The program's objectives include fostering an appreciation for local heritage among students, teachers, and community members through a variety of art forms, such as literary, visual, performing, and media arts. Additionally, Pinaggikanan promotes cultural awareness and evaluates artistic skills through activities like the annual Pinaggikanan Festival. By combining education, community engagement, and artistic expression, the program provides a model for sustaining cultural heritage while fostering a sense of pride and identity.

The objectives of this study are: (1) Identify the Pinaggikanan extension program, emphasizing the nature of the program, strategies of implementation, and outcomes of the extension program; and (2) Analyze the implications of the program to education and community. This study is guided by the theories Cultural Transmission Theory, Cultural Identity Theory, and Cultural Education Theory. Cultural identification Theory (Kim, 2002; Collier, 2005) emphasizes the significance of common cultural practices in promoting identification and belonging, Cultural Transmission Theory (Van Schaik, 2011) describes how cultural information is transmitted down from one generation to the next. Tosande raise awareness and preservation, Cultural Education Theory (Smith & Sobel, 2010) places a strong emphasis on incorporating cultural information into the classroom.

This study also recommends several actions and initiatives that may be implemented to improve the extension program further helping in the preservation of cultural heritage amidst the changing world. By doing so, it contributes to the broader discourse on cultural preservation and sustainable development, ensuring that programs like Pinaggikanan continue to serve as a bridge between the past and the present.

## 2. Methodology

This study is a qualitative research design using a descriptive approach to describe the nature, implementation strategies, and outcomes of the extension program and to analyze the impact of the program. The descriptive research design was used because it is best suited for exploring the nature and effectiveness of programs like Pinaggikanan, where the focus is on documenting activities, processes, and outcomes based on stakeholders' experiences. According to Sandelowski (2000), qualitative descriptive studies provide a comprehensive summary of events as they are experienced, making them ideal for program evaluation.

Also, this study uses a case study design to explore Pinaggikanan extension program. Case study research is particularly suited for examining complex, real-life phenomena within their specific contexts, as it allows for a holistic and detailed understanding of the subject (Yin, 2018). Since the program was specifically conducted at the TEC in a state university in Camarines Sur, case study design may facilitate the flexible analysis of this particular context. It also enables the researcher to use multiple sources of data such as proposals, accomplishment reports, social media posts, direct observation, and others. Furthermore, Creswell and Poth (2018) note that case studies allow researchers to explore phenomena from the perspectives of various stakeholders, providing rich, contextualized insights. In this study, the voices of program coordinators, beneficiaries, and community partners are essential to understanding the program's impact.

## 2.1 Research Methods

This study used different qualitative methods to gather and analyze data, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the Pinaggikanan program. These methods include document analysis, interviews with various stakeholders, evaluation of festival assessments, and social media analysis. For the document analysis, it involved examining program documents, reports, communications, and IEC materials. This information provided insights into the program's development, goals, and implementation strategies. Documentary analysis offers foundational data, which is essential for understanding the framework of the program (Bowen, 2009). Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with stakeholders, including program coordinators, teachers, students, and local government representatives. This approach allowed for an in-depth understanding of their perspectives, experiences, and challenges regarding the extension program. Interviews are a well-established qualitative method for gathering rich, detailed data from participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data from assessments during the Pinaggikanan Festivals were also analyzed. These evaluations provided insights into the program's effectiveness and its contributions to the community. Lastly, the study employed social media analysis. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the program utilized digital platforms to sustain its activities. Social media posts and radio broadcast recordings were analyzed to evaluate how the program maintained its efforts during this period. According to Sloan and Quan-Haase (2017), social media analysis is increasingly recognized as a valuable tool for assessing digital engagement in qualitative research. By using these methods, the study ensured a comprehensive analysis of the Pinaggikanan program.

## 2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted in Camarines Sur, Philippines, where the Pinaggikanan program has been actively implemented since 2015. Specifically, the program engaged schools and communities in municipalities such as Bula, Nabua, Magarao, and Baao. These areas were chosen because of their active participation in the program and their representation of the diverse cultural heritage in the Bicol Region.

## 2.3 Research Procedures and Ethical Considerations

This study followed a systematic process and ensured ethical considerations. First, permission to conduct the research was obtained from the university's respective offices and program coordinators. Relevant program documents, such as program proposals, letters, reports, activity proceedings, and evaluation results, were gathered and examined to understand the program's nature, goals, implementation, and outcomes. Then, data were collected, analyzed, and discussed. Ethical considerations were carefully followed throughout the study. All participants were asked for informed consent before the start of the interview. The purpose of the study was clearly explained to them, including how the data would be used and their rights as participants. Confidentiality was strictly upheld. Their names were anonymized and their identities remained protected. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point. These steps were essential for promoting transparency and adhering to ethical research standards, as recommended by Orb et al. (2001).

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Nature of the Program

The state university has a dedicated Extension Services Division (ESD) office that functions as a key player in implementing community development interventions of the university. These interventions aim to engage stakeholders through a systematic and participatory process. Specifically, university extension services focus on organizing stakeholders, developing programs and activities, efficiently utilizing resources, building partners, documenting the implementation process, and conducting monitoring and evaluation activities. These functions align with the university's approved manual, which articulates extension as one of the four core mandates of its faculty and personnel alongside instruction, research, and production.

The Pinaggikanan extension program is aligned with the extension agenda of the TEC and of the university. These were collaboratively crafted by the college and the ESD. It was presented to both internal and external stakeholders and received formal approval. The process for developing extension programs at the university follows a sequential procedure such as proposal review, program implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

Moreover, needs assessments were done in the proposal preparation wherein the stakeholders were active in the identification of the community needs. Specifically for this extension program, the needs for local cultural and historical knowledge and appreciation were identified. Also, participatory planning was done to ensure that the ideas and needs of Local Government Units (LGUs), youth councils, and officials and teachers in basic education schools are considered. This agrees with the study of Ferrer and Cruz (2017), where they mentioned that effective extension programs rely on participatory planning and strong community partnerships. Henares (2022) further notes that partnerships with local government units enhance the sustainability and impact of conservation programs. In the case of Pinaggikinan program, the resources of the state university such as the expertise of faculty members and specialization of pre-service students of the TEC were matched with the needs of the community.

Once a program proposal is finalized, it is submitted to the ESD for review and approval. The approved proposal then advances to implementation. Regular annual evaluations, which include inputs from external evaluators, provide valuable feedback to enhance future program designs.

### 3.1.1 Program Goals

The Pinaggikanan Program is a flagship extension initiative of the Bachelor of Elementary Education Program of the TEC in Camarines Sur, Philippines from 2015-2023, designed to promote Bicolano culture and arts through the development and dissemination of IEC materials. Its specific goals include: (1) Fostering appreciation for the origins of each barangay and municipality through creative writing, visual arts, media, and performing arts; (2) Promoting cultural awareness, social action, pride in local heritage, and environmental preservation among LGUs; and (3) Developing IEC materials on the history of barangays and municipalities, derived from indigenous plant-based stories, for distribution to participating schools and LGUs. The development and dissemination of IEC materials, as included in one of its program goals, is consonant with the findings from Vargas (2019). He highlights the importance of culturally relevant educational materials in fostering local identity. Vargas further argues that such materials can promote cultural pride and awareness among younger generations.

3.1.2 Partner Agencies

The Pinaggikanan Program's success is anchored in its strategic partnerships with key stakeholders. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the basic education schools in Camarines Sur, Philippines ensures the program's integration into schools across Bula, Nabua, Magarao, and Baao, Camarines Sur, Philippines. Additionally, partnerships with the youth council ensured the engagement of young citizens. It helped enhance cultural awareness through their participation in various activities.

In the 2020s, the program was further adopted by the Baao, Camarines Sur LGU and a basic education school in the said locality. These partnerships integrate Pinaggikanan Festival into barangay and school activities, such as their celebration of festival where the state university program coordinators were invited as resource persons and judges.

*3.2 Strategies of Implementation*

The Pinaggikanan Program employed an innovative methodology that integrated research, extension, instruction, and publication for cultural awareness in the target localities. This approach was strengthened through formal partnerships established via memoranda of agreement.

3.2.1 Compilation of IEC materials

The program has a compilation of local folktales, legends, and historical narratives into published materials, which were utilized in both classroom settings and community events. These materials served as valuable resources for promoting culturally rooted education. This is aligned with the study of Smith and Sobel (2010), which emphasizes the importance of integrating place-based and culturally responsive materials in educational frameworks. Similarly, Acabado and Lauer (2014) noted how integrating cultural narratives through community partnerships promotes cultural conservation effectively. Ancho and San Juan (2021) also highlighted that the inclusion of heritage-related themes in educational materials can significantly enhance cultural awareness and appreciation in local communities.

3.2.2 School and Community-based Pinaggikanan Festivals

Another mode of implementation of Pinaggikanan Program was the organization of school- and community-based festivals centered around themes related to the lifecycle of plants since the mandate of the university is agriculture-related. These events were adopted by local youth councils, including the youth council, and supported by LGUs, highlighting the program's collaborative nature. The festivals celebrated local history and culture, instilling a sense of pride and identity among participants. This approach is consonant with findings by Ferrer and Cruz (2017), who stated that participatory cultural activities contribute to enhancing community engagement and cultural preservation. Furthermore, the Pinaggikanan Program aligns with insights from Domingo & Roxas (2015) on the value of citizen participation in community-based heritage projects.

3.2.3 Conduct of Research

The program was the result of the study conducted by Dr. Gloria Osea in 2015, titled Pinaggikanan: Toponyms of Barangays and Municipalities in the Province of Camarines Sur. The study identified a lack of cultural awareness among respondents and underscored the need for interventions to promote local history. The study led to the compilation of five Pinaggikanan folktale books, which were used to develop printed materials for culture-based teaching under the K-12 curriculum. This aligns with the work of Vargas (2019), who emphasized the significance of culturally relevant educational resources in fostering local identity and awareness.

In 2016 and 2018, two studies were conducted to evaluate the outcomes and overall impact of the Pinaggikanan Program on cultural awareness and engagement. In 2023, additional research focused on assessing

the gender sensitivity of the Pinaggikanan stories and publications, ensuring that the program's materials promote inclusive and equitable representations. This effort answers the recommendations of UNESCO (2020), which advocates for the creation of inclusive educational materials to promote equity and representation in cultural education.

### 3.2.4 Program Proposal and Implementation

The Pinaggikanan Program was approved for implementation in 2015 and employed various strategies, including seminar-workshops for students and teachers, as well as literary and cultural competitions. These activities provided platforms for creative expression while reinforcing the program's objectives of cultural promotion and education. Over the years, the program introduced thematic festivals such as *Pagpatalubo kan Istoryang Pinanggikanan (2015)*. The Bicol word *pagtalubo* means "to sprout," as in the emergence of a plant, while *istoryang pinaggikanan* means "stories of one's origin." Together, the title of the event, *Pagpatalubo kan Istoryang Pinaggikanan*, symbolizes the extension program as a seed of cultural knowledge and appreciation and are ready to sprout and grow through the extension program. By the program's fifth year, the festival was titled *Pag-ani kan mga Arteng Pinanggikanan*. The term *pag-ani* means "harvesting," and *arteng pinaggikanan* translates to "arts works of one's origin." This progression in event themes reflects the program's journey—from planting the seeds of cultural and historical awareness to harvesting the fruits of appreciation and engagement through arts.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the program adapted to digital platforms. Activities such as radio broadcasts on DWOS 103.9 Boom FM, educational vlogs on local bamboo crafts, and online documentaries on local legends were done. Talk shows such as It's a DATE and BET Ko! further helped the program's reach and impact. This approach aligns with the study by Eisenlohr (2004), who emphasized the role of digital technologies in expanding the accessibility and relevance of cultural programs in modern contexts. Through its integration of research, education, and community participation, the Pinaggikanan Program stands as a model for revitalizing local heritage to promote cultural awareness and promotion.

### 3.3 Outcomes of the Extension Program

The Pinaggikanan Program has shown success in meeting its objectives, particularly in fostering cultural appreciation, encouraging civic engagement, and developing educational resources. Through its emphasis on creative arts, strategic community partnerships, and the creation of IEC materials, the program has contributed to the preservation and promotion of Bicolano heritage.

### 3.3.1 Objective 1: Development of Appreciation for Local Origins through Creative Arts

The Pinaggikanan Program has successfully instilled an appreciation for local origins among its participants during the Pinaggikanan Festivals. According to the survey conducted in 2016 by the pre-service teachers to the 53 secondary school student beneficiaries from six Pinaggikanan schools, most students were highly engaged and interested in the origins of their municipalities. Many actively participated in and showed enthusiasm for festival-related activities that celebrated these origins.

Furthermore, an assessment of the student beneficiaries' skills across various artistic areas was conducted. It revealed high levels of competency. In literary arts, students participated in essay writing and poster-making contests, with three out of nine participants achieving an "excellent" level and others receiving "outstanding," "very good," or "good" ratings. In visual arts, such as poster-making and painting, four out of eight students reached the "excellent" level, with the remainder performing at an "outstanding" level. Performing arts, which included storytelling, traditional poetry (*tirigsikan*), and creative dance, yielded an overall rating of "excellent," showing the program's success in enhancing cultural competencies. Film and media arts also saw participants achieving high standards, further demonstrating the program's effectiveness in nurturing artistic skills. These assessments showed that elementary school student beneficiaries have high interest, awareness, appreciation, and

skill competency across artistic areas. These findings agree with Vargas (2019), who stated that integrating culturally relevant creative arts into education strengthens identity and fosters pride in local traditions. Furthermore, The role of local schools in cultural preservation, as explored by Bonnet et al. (2018), aligns with the program's goal to integrate cultural education into curricula.

### 3.3.2 Objective 2: Promotion of Cultural Awareness, Civic Action, and Environmental Preservation

The Pinaggikanan Program's community-based approach, particularly its partnerships with local governments, has magnified its impact by encouraging civic engagement, cultural pride, and environmental awareness. The program was able to collaborate with the youth council in Bula, Camarines Sur for the integration of cultural themes from Pinaggikanan into their annual celebration of Youth Week (*Linggo ng Kabataan)*. This partnership facilitated various competitions—such as promotional video-making, slogan creation, and logo design—that empowered participants to creatively express their cultural heritage and pride. Notably, the winning logo design from this collaboration was adopted as the official emblem of the Youth Council of Sagrada Bula, Camarines Sur creating a lasting symbol of cultural identity.

In 2018, pre-service students of the TEC assessed the beneficiary's result of participation in the program. It showed that participants who engaged in Pinaggikanan activities developed a high level of interest and appreciation for their municipality's heritage, which translated into increased civic action and community involvement. Reinforcing these findings, the leader of the youth organization of Bula, Camarines Sur shared on the program's lasting impact, stating, "the TEC in a state university in Camarines Sur planted the seed of Pinaggikanan in Bula, and we, the youth, cultivated it in the name of history, culture, and arts." This statement implies the Pinaggikanan Program's success in instilling cultural pride and ownership within the community's youth. The impact aligns with Ferrer and Cruz's (2017) study, which highlights the critical role of participatory cultural programs in fostering sustainable civic engagement.

### 3.3.3 Objective 3: Development of IEC Materials on Barangay and Municipal Histories

The Pinaggikanan Program also emphasized the creation and distribution of IEC materials that highlight the histories and cultural significance of various barangays and municipalities. These materials include folktales, legends, and origin stories derived from historical research. These were then provided to local schools and government units for educational use. According to the assessment done after the implementation of the program in 2018, student beneficiaries using Pinaggikanan resources demonstrated high competency in literature and cultural expression. One of these IEC materials is the Pinaggikanan Folktale Book, a compilation of origin legends from partner municipalities. Additionally, the program developed a newsletter titled "The Climb". This IEC was used in the instructions of pre-service teachers during their demonstration teachings, wherein one of them received an award in Bicol Region's Ten Outstanding Student Teachers competition, with one student placing third overall. This recognition underscores the effectiveness of Pinaggikanan's IEC materials in fostering culturally responsive education, supporting culture-based teaching, and contextualizing lessons in elementary and secondary schools.

### 3.4 Implications to Education and Community

This paper revealed that the Pinaggikanan extension program enriches cultural awareness by incorporating local legends, folktales, and arts into educational activities, creating meaningful and context-based learning experiences. By incorporating community-specific IEC materials, the program fosters a deeper connection to heritage among students, promoting a stronger sense of identity and belonging (Smith & Sobel, 2010). Moreover, the development of IEC materials contextualized to the Bicol Region ensures that Bicolano heritage is both preserved and revitalized, addressing the need for contextualized and culturally relevant education.

The Pinaggikanan extension program exemplifies an effective model of community-centered cultural education, offering a replicable framework that can be adopted in other regions across the country to address

similar challenges. This is aligned with the study of Dulay and Villanca (2023), where they emphasized the importance of community-driven approaches in teacher-led extension programs for cultural education. Furthermore, the potential for culture-based education to bridge traditional and modern learning approaches is supported by Vitorillo and Arriola (2018). This approach aligns closely with UNESCO's (2020) framework for sustainable cultural education and supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 4, which emphasizes quality education, and SDG 11, which promotes sustainable communities and the protection of cultural heritage.

## 4.  Conclusion and Recommendations

The Pinaggikanan program has proven to be an effective way to promote and preserve Bicolano heritage by connecting the beneficiaries to their cultural roots. Through the use of local legends, folktales, and creative arts, it has fostered cultural awareness and pride among students, teachers, and community members. Its focus on collaboration, education, and the development of IEC materials shows how culture-based initiatives can be both meaningful and impactful. The program's success reflects the value of engaging communities in preserving traditions while adapting to the needs of today's society.

This study recommends expanding partnerships with additional agencies, educational institutions, and cultural organizations. This may broaden the program's reach and resources. Collaborating with NGOs and private sector stakeholders can provide new opportunities for funding and support. Second, the program may incorporate technology and digital media for better dissemination of IECs and social media campaigns. Third, the program may promote gender sensitivity. It may initiate efforts to ensure and address gender biases in cultural narratives and encourage inclusive and gender-fair language in writing IECs. Fourth, the program may empower young leaders to initiate cultural promotion and preservation activities. Lastly, alumni of the TEC may be engaged to maintain sustainability. They may serve as ambassadors of Bicolano heritage and sustain the goals of the Pinaggikanan extension program.

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