

Pastores A Belen in Oas, Albay

ROE T. CAMASIS

University of Saint Anthony

Abstract- Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay is a lively Christmas folk practice that embodies the rich religious devotion and cultural traditions of the Bicolano people. This study aimed to document Pastores a Belén as practiced by the locals in Oas, Albay. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions: (1) What is the historical basis of Pastores a Belén?; (2) What is the context of the dance in terms of: Dance step, Music, Costume, Implements, and other dance properties: (3) What is the significance of the dance in terms of: Cultural values, Religious Devotion, Community Identity, and Heritage Preservation; (4) What is the level of awareness of the respondents along: Existence Awareness, Content Familiarity, Cultural Relevance, and Preservation Importance; and, (5) What learning resource material can be developed based on the findings of the study?. The study was premised on several assumptions. It was assumed that Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay possesses a verifiable historical foundation and has been transmitted across generations through sustained community practices and performances. It further assumed that the essential elements of the dance, such as steps, music, costumes, implements, and other performance features, have been preserved and continue to reflect the cultural and historical identity of the locality. Moreover, the tradition was regarded as a significant cultural expression that reinforces values, religious devotion, and community identity while contributing to the preservation of intangible heritage. The study also assumed that respondents exhibit varying levels of awareness regarding the tradition, and that a relevant learning resource material can be developed based on the findings of the study. The respondents of the study were purposively selected individuals directly involved in the practice and preservation of Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay. The participants consisted of five (5) key informants: one (1) community elder, one (1) head of the dancers, one (1) active dancer, one (1) local official, and one (1) musician. The responses were classified and tabulated systematically according to the variables of the study. All data gathered were presented both qualitatively and quantitatively. The statistical tools used were thematic analysis, frequency count, weighted mean, and a Likert-type scale, which were employed to analyze the data and determine the respondents' level of awareness and perceptions regarding Pastores a Belén. The findings reveal that (1) Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay originated

through both individual and communal efforts, particularly under the leadership of Maestra Metring, with strong participation from local families and church members; it has been continuously transmitted through mentorship, practice, and storytelling, evolving in aspects such as dance, music, costumes, and group composition to adapt to community events and competitions while preserving its religious and cultural essence, further strengthened by annual celebrations that reinforce local identity and pride; (2) In terms of its descriptive components, the dance is characterized by graceful movements such as the waltz, heeland-toe polka, sway balance, and jubilation steps; its music reflects a blend of Spanish influenced and Filipino folk traditions using rondalla instruments and tambourines in varying time signatures and multiple musical sections; its costumes integrate traditional attire with symbolic colors representing religious meanings; its implements such as arko, fans, and tambourines enhance storytelling and devotion; and its other dance properties emphasize memorization, expressive performance, and disciplined choreography to maintain its cultural integrity; (3) The significance of Pastores a Belén is strongly evident in its high ratings across cultural values (4.60, VMA), religious devotion (4.66, VMA), community identity (4.56, VMA), and heritage preservation (4.56, VMA), indicating its vital role in strengthening tradition, faith expression, social unity, and intergenerational cultural continuity; (4) Moreover, the respondents demonstrated very high levels of awareness across all dimensions, including existence awareness (4.78, VMA), content familiarity (4.70, VMA), cultural relevance (4.68, VMA), and preservation importance (4.78, VMA), reflecting strong recognition, understanding, and commitment to sustaining the tradition; (5) Finally, the study highlights that a learning resource on Pastores a Belén may serve as an effective supplementary tool for teaching its history, performance elements, and cultural significance, while also enhancing awareness and supporting its preservation for future generations. The following conclusions were drawn: (1) The Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay emerged through the combined efforts of individuals and the community, with key organizers and local families passing the tradition through mentorship, practice, and storytelling; (2) The dance incorporates core steps, Spanish-influenced and local folk music, symbolic costumes, handcrafted props, and choreographic guidelines that maintain its technical,

cultural, and spiritual integrity; (3) The Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay is significant in reinforcing cultural values, religious devotion, community identity, and heritage preservation, as reflected in the respondents' high average weighted mean scores; (4) The respondents' level of awareness on Pastores a Belén along existence awareness, content familiarity, cultural relevance, and preservation importance is high; and, (5) There is a need to develop a supplementary learning resource on Pastores a Belén to teach its history, dance elements, music, costumes, implements, and cultural significance for future preservation and appreciation. In light of the foregoing conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were advanced: (1) History teachers, and local cultural officers should conduct workshops, storytelling sessions, and historical lectures to teach the origins and historical basis of Pastores a Belén. These activities will deepen appreciation for the tradition and ensure that its roots are remembered and celebrated; (2) Dance instructors, music teachers, and cultural facilitators should implement participatory training on the context of the dance, covering dance steps, music, costumes, implements, and other dance properties. Such programs will help students and community members master the technical, musical, and visual aspects of the performance; (3) School coordinators, parish leaders, and community elders should emphasize the significance of Pastores a Belén in reinforcing cultural values, religious devotion, community identity, and heritage preservation. Activities such as reflective discussions and community presentations can highlight the social and spiritual impact of the dance; (4) Teachers, youth organization officers, and local event organizers should organize activities that enhance existence awareness, content familiarity, cultural relevance, and preservation importance. This may include interactive demonstrations, participatory festivals, and cultural competitions, ensuring that the tradition is actively recognized, practiced, and safeguarded by all generations; (5) Teachers, cultural facilitators, and school librarians should use the learning resource on Pastores a Belén as a supplementary guide. This material can provide a structured tool for teaching, raising awareness, and ensuring the continuity of the tradition for future generations

I. INTRODUCTION

Local traditions are the living embodiment of a people's history, values, and identity, transmitted through generations by means of customs, rituals, narratives, and artistic expressions. These traditions function as vital links between a community's past, present, and future, sustaining collective memory and

reinforcing a sense of belonging. In the face of rapid globalization and cultural homogenization, the preservation of localized traditions becomes increasingly significant, particularly for communities whose cultural practices remain largely undocumented yet deeply rooted in everyday life.

Shared cultural practices strengthen community awareness and social cohesion by nurturing mutual respect and intergenerational interaction. Through festivals, religious observances, and traditional performances, elders are able to transmit historical knowledge, moral values, and cultural meanings to younger generations. This process ensures the continuity of tradition while allowing communities to maintain cultural relevance in contemporary society.

In the municipality of Oas, Albay, the Christmas season is distinctly marked by the enduring tradition of Pastores a Belén. This tradition is not merely a seasonal theatrical presentation but a living cultural heritage that reflects the faith, historical consciousness, and identity of the people of Oas. As a dramatized reenactment of the shepherds' journey to Bethlehem, Pastores a Belén has been preserved and adapted across generations, embodying the community's artistic expression, religious devotion, and shared values. Its sustained practice demonstrates strong local relevance and highlights the community's awareness of the importance of preserving its cultural legacy.

The preservation of Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay is supported by national legal and policy frameworks that recognize cultural heritage as integral to national identity. The 1987 Philippine Constitution, particularly Article XIV, Section 16, mandates the State to protect and promote the rights of cultural communities to preserve their traditions and institutions. This constitutional provision affirms the right of communities such as Oas to sustain and transmit their cultural practices. Complementing this mandate, Republic Act No. 7356, or the Promotion and Development of Filipino Culture and the Arts Act, emphasizes the promotion and preservation of Filipino cultural expressions through community-based initiatives and institutional support.

Additional legal basis is provided by Republic Act No. 10066, or the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009, which recognizes intangible cultural heritage, including folk traditions, rituals, and oral literature, as essential elements of cultural identity. In relation to Pastores a Belén, this law affirms the importance of documenting and safeguarding community traditions practiced at the local level. In addition, Republic Act No. 7160, or the Local Government Code of 1991, empowers local government units to initiate and support cultural programs, enabling communities such as Oas to sustain traditions through locally driven cultural activities.

Educational policies further reinforce the relevance of this study. The Department of Education promotes curriculum contextualization and culture-based education, encouraging the integration of local traditions into teaching and learning processes. Similarly, the Commission on Higher Education highlights the importance of local history and cultural research in strengthening cultural awareness and national identity. These policies align with the concept of Schools of Living Tradition, as emphasized by Hipolito (2024), which highlights experiential learning as an effective means of preserving community-based cultural practices.

At the international level, the Philippines' commitment as a signatory to the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage reinforces the obligation to protect and promote living cultural traditions practiced by local communities. This study likewise aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 11, which emphasizes the protection of cultural heritage as a key component of sustainable and inclusive community development. Focusing on Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay, the study contributes to heritage preservation efforts that promote cultural sustainability at the grassroots level. This research is also Gender and Development (GAD) responsive, as Pastores a Belén involves the inclusive participation of men and women across performance, organization, costume preparation, music, and narration. Recognizing these shared roles highlights gender inclusivity in cultural transmission and affirms equal opportunities for community members to contribute to heritage preservation.

Given these overlapping cultural, legal, and educational landscapes, there is a felt need to look beyond the surface of Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay. It is easy to view it as a vibrant seasonal performance, but to the people of Oas, it is far more.

It is a living heartbeat, holding the shared memory, faith, and struggles of generations. As educators, we see firsthand how quickly young people can lose their anchor in a rapidly modernizing world. Grounding our classrooms in the students' own heritage is an act of restoration. We give students a chance to see their own identities by bringing Pastores a Belén into the light of modern education.

This makes the development of a learning resource based on the literature of Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay. We cannot expect a tradition to survive on memory alone. Translating the rich literature, music, and values of Pastores a Belén into tangible instructional material bridges the gap between the past and the future. This resource will serve as a tool for teaching language, literature, and social awareness. In doing so, the study ensures that Pastores a Belén is not only preserved as a community tradition but also sustained as a living cultural heritage through education.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study on Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay was anchored from the following interrelated theories namely, Cultural Transmission Theory by Cavalli-Sforza and Feldman, Heritage Education Theory by Alsayyad et al., and, Post-Colonialism Theory by Bhabha. These theories collectively provide a framework for understanding how the dance is preserved, how cultural and religious practices influence learning, and how a locally relevant instructional resource can be developed. Figure 1 on page 6 reveals the theoretical paradigm of the study.

Cultural Transmission Theory (Cavalli-Sforza & Feldman, 1981) explains how cultural knowledge, values, and practices are passed down across generations. Cultural practices can be transmitted vertically from parents to children, horizontally among peers, or obliquely from elders to younger members outside the immediate family. In Oas,

elders guide the youth in singing, dancing, storytelling, and performing Pastores a Belén.

Through this process, the community's core values, including faith, solidarity, and respect for heritage, are sustained, while the local identity of Oas continues to thrive. The performance itself serves as a living repository of historical memory and community identity. This horizontal transmission among peers, where youth encourage one another to participate, transforms the performance from a static historical reenactment into a vibrant social activity.

As a result, the theory highlights a reinforcing cycle where performing becomes the main driver of community unity. This connection keeps the people of Oas anchored to their roots, even as they adapt to contemporary challenges.

Heritage Education Theory (Alsayyad et al., 2001) emphasizes the educational value of both tangible and intangible heritage, fostering cultural pride,

Theoretical Paradigm

identity, and continuity. Transforming Pastores a Belén into instructional materials allows learners to actively engage with the dance's music, movements, costumes, and narratives. This approach provides opportunities to connect cultural and religious meanings embedded in the performance with contemporary learning experiences. It encourages learners to appreciate and take responsibility for preserving their cultural heritage while promoting academic growth and community awareness.

This pedagogical approach deconstructs the symbolism of the dance, such as the significance of specific rhythmic patterns or the historical evolution of the costumes. This develops critical thinking skills alongside cultural literacy. This sense of ownership ensures that the heritage of Oas is not only remembered as a relic of the past, but is actively lived and reimagined.

Post-Colonialism Theory (Bhabha, 1990) situates Pastores a Belén within the historical context of colonial influence, recognizing how Spanish religious practices merged with indigenous Filipino customs.

The dance reflects this cultural syncretism through its music, movements, costumes, and storytelling. Understanding these historical and cultural layers highlights the community's role in preserving and adapting the tradition to maintain a distinct local identity. It emphasizes how the tradition has evolved as a unique expression of cultural, religious, and historical influences in Oas.

The interconnectedness of these theories forms a cohesive framework. Cultural Transmission Theory explains how the tradition is passed across generations, Heritage Education Theory highlights its educational and identity-forming value, and Post-Colonialism Theory provides understanding of its historical and cultural roots. Together, these three theoretical foundations feed into the researcher's theory, illustrating that when a tradition is examined through its transmission, educational significance, and historical context, it becomes a powerful tool for both cultural preservation and community engagement.

Building on these foundations, the Cultural-Based Learning Theory (Researcher's Theory, 2026) emphasizes that learning is most effective when it is immersive, socially constructed, and situated within the cultural context. All aspects of culture, historical, traditional, religious, and contemporary, serve as active teaching tools.

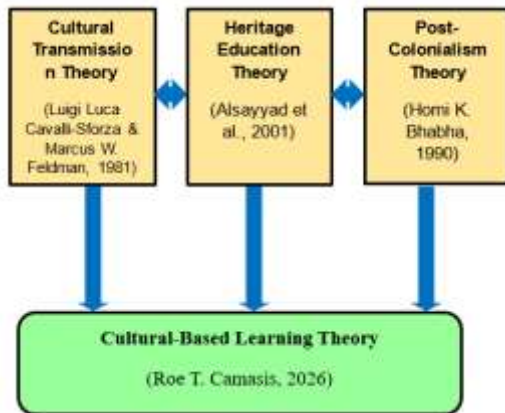
Using the literature and performance of Pastores a Belén as educational resources, learners actively construct knowledge while connecting with their community's values, rituals, and stories. This approach develops academic growth, enhances cultural awareness, and supports the sustainable preservation of local traditions.

It further highlights that meaningful learning occurs when students are given opportunities to interact directly with authentic cultural experiences that reflect their identity and heritage. Through active participation in culturally grounded activities found in Pastores a Belén, learners become more engaged, reflective, and collaborative in the learning process. The theory also stresses that culture is not supplementary content in education but a dynamic

framework that shapes learners' perspectives, values, language, and social understanding.

awareness, and contribute to the preservation of Pastores a Belén by transforming documented cultural knowledge into an accessible and educational form.

Figure 1



III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual paradigm of the study illustrated in Figure 2 utilizes the system review of research, which includes input, output, and output.

Input. This refers to the essential elements needed to document and analyze Pastores a Belén. These include the historical background of the dance, performance context in terms of dance steps, music, costumes, implements, and other dance properties, perceived significance in relation to cultural values, religious devotion, community identity, and heritage preservation, level of awareness regarding the existence of the dance, familiarity with its content, its cultural relevance, and the importance of its preservation.

Process. This involves the systematic methods undertaken to gather, analyze, and interpret the inputs. This includes the preparation of the questionnaire, distribution of questionnaire, gathering of data, documentation through observation, interviews and survey, statistical analysis, and the development of the output.

Output. This refers to the proposed learning resource material of the Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay, highlighting its historical roots, performance elements, cultural significance, and community awareness. This instructional material is intended to support heritage education, promote cultural

Feedback. The feedback mechanism ensures the continuous validation and refinement of the study through inputs gathered from cultural practitioners and respondents involved in the documentation of Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay. Findings related to the dance's historical background, performance context, cultural and religious significance, and community awareness provide feedback that allows the researcher to assess the accuracy, relevance, and cultural authenticity of the documented data. This feedback also guides the enhancement of the learning resource material developed from the study.

Responses and insights from participants inform necessary revisions to ensure that the material is contextually appropriate, culturally responsive, and aligned with heritage preservation goals. It also allows the researcher to identify gaps in documentation and clarify aspects of the dance's performance and significance. Through this process, the outputs are continuously improved and reintegrated into the research process, supporting the sustained documentation, education, and preservation of Pastores a Belén as a living local tradition.

IV. CONCEPTUAL PARADIGM

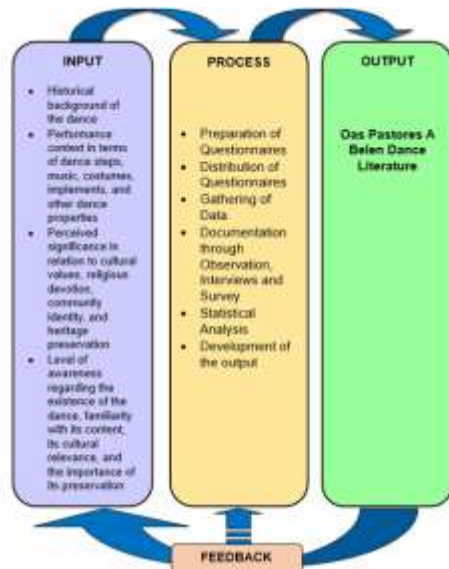


Figure 2

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to document Pastores a Belén as practiced by the locals in Oas, Albay. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the historical basis of Pastores a Belén?
2. What is the context of the dance in terms of:
 - 2.1 Dance step
 - 2.2 Music
 - 2.3 Costume
 - 2.4 Implements
 - 2.5 Other dance properties
3. What is the significance of the dance in terms of:
 - 3.1 Cultural values
 - 3.2 Religious Devotion
 - 3.3 Community Identity
 - 3.4 Heritage Preservation
4. What is the level of awareness of the respondents along:
 - 4.1 Existence Awareness
 - 4.2 Content Familiarity
 - 4.3 Cultural Relevance
 - 4.4 Preservation Importance

5. What learning resource material can be developed based on the findings of the study?

V. ASSUMPTIONS

The study is premised on the following assumptions:

1. The Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay has a verifiable historical basis and that this tradition has been transmitted across generations through local community practices, storytelling, and performance.
2. All components of the dance, including steps, music, costumes, implements, and other performance elements, have been preserved and continue to reflect the cultural, historical, and traditional identity of the community.
3. The Pastores a Belén is a meaningful cultural expression that reflects the community's values, reinforces religious devotion and identity, and supports the preservation of Oas's intangible heritage.
4. The respondents have varying levels of awareness of the dance, including its existence, content, cultural relevance, and importance for heritage preservation.
5. A learning resource material can be developed based on the findings of the study.

VI. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is deemed important and beneficial to the following:

Learners. The findings of this study may provide them with a rich, culturally relevant learning resource. This resource allows them to engage with the dance's steps, music, costumes, and narratives, enhancing their understanding of local culture, heritage, and community values. It fosters cultural awareness, strengthens identity, and encourages appreciation for intangible heritage.

The material also promotes meaningful learning, connecting academic content with lived experiences, while cultivating pride and responsibility in preserving local traditions.

Teachers. They may benefit from this study by gaining access to a new, localized educational tool.

The developed learning resource will provide them with a concrete way to integrate local culture into the curriculum, making lessons on topics such as history, literature, and values more meaningful and relatable for learners. This resource can enhance their teaching methods and enable them to fulfill the mandate of culturally-responsive education.

Practitioners of Pastores a Belén. The study documents and preserves their tradition, ensuring that their cultural knowledge, skills, and performance practices are recognized and maintained. The study highlights the value of their contributions to local heritage, strengthens community pride, and encourages the continued transmission of the dance to younger generations, supporting its sustainability as a living cultural tradition.

Parents, Community, and Other Stakeholders. This study is vital for parents, the community, and other stakeholders as it validates and formalizes an important local tradition. The documentation and learning resource encourage intergenerational dialogue and promote the preservation of cultural values. These stakeholders may also gain opportunities to support education that integrates local traditions, ensuring that the community's cultural practices remain meaningful and sustainable for future generations.

Department of Tourism. This study promotes cultural tourism in Albay by showcasing local music, dance, costumes, and community participation that make the celebration meaningful and distinct from other festivals in the Philippines. It also strengthens the province's image as a destination rich in history and tradition. Moreover, preserving and promoting Pastores a Belén supports local performers and artisans, and helps sustain cultural practices for future generations. In this way, the study may contribute to the Department of Tourism's goal of protecting cultural heritage while boosting tourism and local economic development in the region.

LGU Tourism Coordinators. This study may provide valuable information that may strengthen and

preserve the municipality's cultural identity through tourism programs and heritage initiatives. As frontliners in promoting local culture and traditions, tourism coordinators may use the findings of the study as a basis for developing activities, cultural presentations, and promotional campaigns that highlight the uniqueness of Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay.

School Administrators. These findings may serve as a guide and resource on how Pastores a Belén can be integrated into the curriculum, thus reinforcing culture-based and values-focused education. The learning material may help school leaders in fostering innovative practices, improving learner engagement and building a school culture that builds on its local traditions, culture and community.

Department of Education. The findings may support the Department of Education's goal of contextualized and culture-based education by allowing learners to connect classroom lessons with their own community experiences and heritage. Moreover, the tradition encourages appreciation of Filipino values such as faith, unity, cooperation, and respect for cultural identity.

Commission on Higher Education (CHED). The learning resource can inform guidelines, programs, and initiatives that promote the integration of local traditions into the curriculum, supporting CHED's mission to strengthen cultural awareness, educational quality, and the development of contextually relevant learning across higher education institutions.

CHED Officials. This findings of this study can serve as a guide in policy-making and program development related to culture-based and heritage education. The documentation of Pastores a Belén and the developed learning resource generate understanding that can support the creation of training programs, and curriculum guidelines that promote the integration of local traditions into higher education, fostering cultural preservation and academic relevance.

Curriculum Planners. The learning resource based on Pastores a Belén provides a model for developing culture-based curriculum materials that promote

heritage awareness, values education, and contextualized learning, supporting the creation of more relevant and meaningful instructional designs.

Researchers. The findings of this study provide a foundation for further studies on local traditions, intangible cultural heritage, and the development of instructional resources, contributing to scholarship in cultural preservation, education, and community-based research.

Scope and Delimitation

This study focuses on documenting and analyzing Pastores a Belén as practiced in Oas, Albay, to understand its historical basis, performance context, cultural significance, and usefulness as a learning resource. For the qualitative data, the respondents consisted of one (1) community elder, one (1) head of the dancers, one (1) active dancer, one (1) local official, and one (1) musician. Meanwhile, for the quantitative data, a total of fifty (50) respondents participated in the study, six (6) of whom were dancers, while three (3) were musicians.

The study examines the dance's steps, music, costumes, implements, and other dance properties, as well as its significance in terms of cultural values, religious devotion, community identity, and heritage preservation. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and surveys conducted in the Oas, Albay.

The study is limited to the local practice of Pastores a Belén in Oas and does not cover variations performed in other communities or regions. It focuses on documenting existing knowledge, practices, and perceptions and excludes professional choreography techniques or competitive performance standards. These boundaries allow a detailed exploration of the dance within its community context and its role in cultural preservation and education.

VII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

This chapter presents the methods and procedures used in gathering and interpreting the data needed for the present study. It emphasizes the description of the method or design, the subject of the study, and the sampling design. This includes the sources or

instruments used and the statistical measures employed in the interpretation of the data.

Research Design

The study employed a mixed-method research design, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of Pastores a Belén as practiced in Oas, Albay. This design was applied because the nature of the study requires both an in-depth description of the tradition and measurable data on its significance. The study ensures a more complete and balanced interpretation of the phenomenon by integrating both approaches.

The qualitative component focused on the systematic documentation of Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay, particularly its historical background, dance context, and music. Through interviews and descriptive accounts, rich and detailed information was gathered to capture the lived experiences and cultural meaning of the tradition.

Meanwhile, the quantitative component used a descriptive-survey method to assess the significance of Pastores a Belén in terms of values, devotion, community identity, and heritage preservation. It also measured respondents' level of awareness in terms of existence, content familiarity, cultural relevance, and preservation importance.

Respondents

The respondents of the study were purposively selected individuals directly involved in the practice and preservation of Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay. For the qualitative data, the participants consisted of one (1) community elder, one (1) head of the dancers, one (1) active dancer, one (1) local official, and one (1) musician. Meanwhile, for the quantitative data, a total of fifty (50) respondents participated in the study, six (6) of whom were dancers, while three (3) were musicians.

A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that the respondents possessed relevant knowledge, experience, and active participation in the tradition. The community elder was selected based on well-established knowledge of the historical background and cultural significance of the dance.

The head of the dancers was chosen due to leadership responsibilities in organizing and directing performances. The dancers were selected on the basis of active participation in recent performances.

The local official was included to provide insights into community involvement and cultural support initiatives. The musicians were chosen for their involvement in providing musical accompaniment and understanding of the traditional music used in the performance. The inclusion criteria required that respondents must be residents of Oas, Albay, and have hands-on involvement, experience, or recognized authority related to Pastores a Belén. This ensured that the data gathered were credible, culturally rooted, and reflective of authentic community practices.

Source of Data

The study gathered data from individuals who play essential roles in the performance and preservation of Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay. For the qualitative data, the participants included one (1) community elder, one (1) head of the dancers, one (1) active dancer, one (1) local official, and one (1) musician. They were purposively selected based on their firsthand experience, active participation, and comprehensive understanding of the dance.

Meanwhile, for the quantitative data, a total of fifty (50) respondents participated in the study, six (6) of whom were dancers, while three (3) were musicians. Ethical considerations were strictly observed in the selection and engagement of participants. Before data collection, the purpose of the study was clearly explained, and informed consent was obtained from each participant, ensuring that their participation was voluntary.

Respondents were assured of confidentiality, and their identities were treated with discretion to protect privacy. Informed consent was also secured from all participants before the conduct of the study. These measures helped maintain the ethical integrity of the study while fostering trust and openness during interviews and observations.

Data Gathering Tool

This study utilized multiple data-gathering instruments to ensure comprehensive and credible data collection. These included a focus group discussion (FGD) and a survey questionnaire. The focus group discussion was conducted among the community elder, head of the dancers, local official, musician, and active dancer to gather in-depth information regarding the historical background of Pastores a Belén and its contextual elements, such as dance steps, music, costumes, implements, and other related properties.

The use of focus group discussion allowed the participants to share their experiences and perspectives collectively, providing richer and more detailed information about the tradition. Meanwhile, the survey questionnaire was used to gather quantitative data regarding the significance of Pastores a Belén and the respondents' level of awareness toward its preservation and relevance.

Survey Questionnaire

A researcher-made survey questionnaire was developed to quantitatively measure the perceived significance of Pastores a Belén and the level of awareness of the respondents in terms of existence, content familiarity, cultural relevance, and preservation importance. The questionnaire consisted of structured statements rated using a five-point Likert scale.

Preparation of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was composed of two major parts aligned with the objectives of the study, focusing on the significance of Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay, and the respondents' level of awareness of its related literature. The first part consisted of items designed to assess the respondents' perceptions of the significance of Pastores a Belén in terms of cultural values, religious devotion, community identity, and heritage preservation.

The second part measured the respondents' level of awareness of Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay, through indicators such as its existence, content familiarity, cultural relevance, and preservation importance. The questionnaire items were developed based on a thorough review of related literature and

consultations with subject-matter experts to ensure content validity, clarity, and cultural accuracy.

Below 0.50 Unacceptable

Validation of the Questionnaire

To ensure the reliability and validity of the survey instrument, the researcher subjected the questionnaire to content validation and reliability testing. Initially, the draft questionnaire was evaluated by selected experts in cultural studies, physical education, and research methodology to assess the clarity, relevance, and alignment of each item with the objectives of the study. Their suggestions and recommendations were carefully considered, and necessary revisions were made to improve the structure and wording of the instrument.

After content validation, a pilot test was conducted among selected respondents who were not included in the actual study. The data gathered from the pilot testing were analyzed to determine the internal consistency of the instrument using Cronbach's Alpha. This statistical measure assessed the reliability of the questionnaire by determining the consistency of responses across items within each variable. A Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.70 or higher was considered acceptable, indicating that the instrument was reliable and suitable for administration in the actual study. The formula is:

$$\alpha = \frac{K}{K-1} \left[1 - \frac{\sum s^2 y}{s^2 x} \right]$$

where:

K = the number of test item

$\sum s^2 y$ = sum of the item variance

$s^2 x$ = variance of total score

Cronbach's α	Internal Consistency
0.90 and above	Excellent
0.80 – 0.89	Good
0.70 – 0.79	Acceptable
0.60 – 0.69	Questionable
0.50 – 0.59	Poor

Administration and Retrieval of the Questionnaire

Upon securing approval to conduct the study, the validated questionnaire was administered to the identified respondents. The researcher personally distributed the survey forms to ensure proper orientation and accurate completion of the instrument. Before answering the questionnaire, the respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, and clear instructions were provided regarding how to accomplish the survey.

Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained before data collection. Respondents were assured that their responses would be treated with strict confidentiality and would be used solely for academic purposes. Sufficient time was given to complete the questionnaire, and all completed forms were collected immediately to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the data.

Interview

This was employed as one of the data-gathering procedures to obtain detailed and reliable information from selected participants. Using a semi-structured interview guide, the researcher asked questions related to the historical background and dance context of Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay. The interview allowed the participants to openly share their experiences and personal knowledge regarding the tradition.

Observation

This was used in the study to gather firsthand information on the actual performance and practices at Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay. Through observation, the researcher examined the dance movements, musical accompaniment, costumes, implements, and other related cultural elements of the tradition. This method also enabled the researcher to observe the participants' interactions, behavior, and participation during the performance, which contributed to a more authentic and detailed documentation of the tradition.

Development of Learning Resource

The development of the learning resource was anchored on the findings gathered from the qualitative and quantitative phases of the study. The documented historical background, contextual elements (dance steps, music, costume, implements, and other properties), cultural and religious significance, and the level of awareness of the respondents served as the primary basis for the content and structure of the material.

The development process followed a systematic procedure. First, relevant data from interviews, and survey results were organized and analyzed to identify key themes and essential concepts that should be included in the material. Second, a draft of the learning resource was prepared, ensuring that the content was accurate, and aligned with educational objectives.

The developed learning resource included discussions of the historical origin of the dance, its performance context, cultural and religious significance, and supporting visual or descriptive elements to facilitate comprehension. The content was structured in a clear and learner-friendly format appropriate for instructional use. The learning resource was intended to serve as supplementary instructional material that supports cultural preservation and strengthens awareness of Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay.

Statistical Tools

The research employed means in the treatment of the data gathered. After the necessary data gathering was done, all the formations were collated, organized, tabulated, analyzed thematically, and treated statistically. The statistical tools used were all the following:

Thematic Analysis. This was employed to systematically analyze qualitative data. Transcripts from interviews and observation notes were first reviewed thoroughly to achieve familiarity with the content. Meaningful data segments were then identified and assigned initial codes, which summarized key ideas or concepts, such as cultural values, religious devotion, and community identity.

Themes were reviewed to ensure they accurately represented the data and were distinct from one another. Each theme was clearly defined and named to correspond to the objectives of the study. Representative quotes from respondents were used to support each theme, providing rich descriptions of the dance's historical background and performance context.

Through thematic analysis, qualitative data were organized into meaningful patterns, allowing the researcher to interpret and present findings in a structured manner that addressed the research questions. This method ensured that the study captured authentic perspectives of the Pastores a Belén tradition.

Frequency Count. This method was done by counting the number of responses of the respondents.

Weighted Mean. This was used to describe the weight of every indicator as selected in the variable used in the study and averaged across each variable.

$$WM = \frac{\sum fx}{n}$$

where:

WM	=	Weighted Mean	
\sum	=	Summation	
		f	=
		frequency of item/category	
		x	=
		no. of items/categories	
		n	=
		number of respondents	

Likert-type scale. This was used to measure the respondents' perceptions of the significance of Pastores a Belén and their level of awareness of its literature. Regarding the dance's cultural values, religious devotion, community identity, and role in heritage preservation, the scale was interpreted as follows:

Scale	Interval	Verbal Interpretations
5	4.50 – 5.00	Very Much Significant
4	3.50 – 4.49	Much Significant
3	2.50 – 3.49	Moderately Significant
2	1.50 – 2.49	Slightly Significant
1	1.00 – 1.49	Not Significant

To assess the respondents' level of awareness regarding Pastores a Belén, a five-point Likert-type scale was employed, focusing on indicators such as existence awareness, content familiarity, cultural relevance, and preservation importance. The scale was interpreted as follows:

Scale	Interval	Verbal Interpretations
5	4.50 – 5.00	Very High Awareness
4	3.50 – 4.49	High Awareness
3	2.50 – 3.49	Moderate Awareness
2	1.50 – 2.49	Low Awareness
1	1.00 – 1.49	Very Low Awareness

VIII. SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary of the methods and procedures adopted in this study, together with the findings and conclusions from which the recommendation was drawn.

Summary

The study aimed to document Pastores a Belén as practiced by the locals in Oas, Albay, serving as a basis for the development of a learning resource material. Specifically, it sought to examine the historical basis of the tradition and to describe the context of the dance in terms of its fundamental components, including dance steps, music, costume, implements, and other dance properties.

Furthermore, the study explored the significance of Pastores a Belén in relation to cultural values, religious devotion, community identity, and heritage preservation. It also determined the level of awareness of the respondents along key dimensions such as existence awareness, content familiarity, cultural relevance, and preservation importance.

The study was premised on several assumptions. It was assumed that Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay possesses a verifiable historical foundation and has been transmitted across generations through sustained community practices and performances. It further assumed that the essential elements of the dance, such as steps, music, costumes, implements, and other performance features, have been preserved and continue to reflect the cultural and historical identity of the locality.

Moreover, the tradition was regarded as a significant cultural expression that reinforces values, religious devotion, and community identity while contributing to the preservation of intangible heritage. The study also assumed that respondents exhibit varying levels of awareness regarding the tradition, and that a relevant learning resource material can be developed based on the findings of the study.

The respondents of the study were purposively selected individuals directly involved in the practice and preservation of Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay. For the qualitative data, the participants consisted of one (1) community elder, one (1) head of the dancers, one (1) active dancer, one (1) local official, and one (1) musician. Meanwhile, for the quantitative data, a total of fifty (50) respondents participated in the study, six (6) of whom were dancers, while three (3) were musicians.

The responses were classified and tabulated systematically according to the variables of the study. All data gathered were presented both qualitatively and quantitatively. The statistical tools used were thematic analysis, frequency count, weighted mean, and a Likert-type scale, which were employed to analyze the data and determine the respondents' level of awareness and perceptions regarding Pastores a Belén.

Findings of the Study

The study yielded the following salient findings:

1. The Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay originated through both individual and communal contributions, with Maestra Metring as the key organizer and local families and church members also involved. The tradition has been passed down through mentorship, practice, and storytelling, evolving in dance, music, costumes, and group composition to suit competitions and community events while maintaining its religious and cultural significance. Annual celebrations and festivals have reinforced the practice, strengthening community identity, and local pride, making Pastores a Belén a resilient and enduring cultural expression.

2. Pastores a Belén was described in terms of:

2.1 Dance Steps. The core dance steps of Pastores a Belén are the waltz, heel-and-toe polka, and sway balance, complemented by specialized movements such as the Jubilation step, which symbolizes joy and celebration. These steps are executed gracefully, reflecting skill, coordination, and the narrative of the shepherds' journey to Bethlehem.

2.2 Music. The music of Pastores a Belén is a hybrid of Spanish-influenced melodies and local Filipino folk traditions, performed predominantly with rondalla instruments and supported by percussion such as tambourines. Time signatures vary between 2/4, 3/4, and occasionally 4/4, creating a flexible rhythmic structure that guides the dancers' steps. Performances typically feature a medley of six to eight musical sections, allowing dynamic transitions that match choreographic changes.

2.3 Costume. The costumes combine traditional Filipino attire with festive and occasionally modern elements, visually differentiating characters and roles. Female dancers wear long skirts and blouses with accessories such as pañuelos and flowers, while male dancers wear barong-style shirts, trousers, and decorated hats. Colors carry symbolic significance, white and gold represent purity and divine joy, red denotes divine love, green signifies hope, and blue reflects guidance or Mary's presence, highlighting the integration of religious symbolism with visual storytelling.

2.4 Implements/Props. Props are central to storytelling, with female dancers using arko and lacey fans to signify grace and devotion, and male dancers using tambourines to emphasize rhythm and jubilation. The props are handcrafted by dancers from locally sourced materials such as garlands, flowers, and water hoses, symbolizing offerings, celebration, and the shepherds' journey.

2.5 Other Dance Properties. Dancers are expected to memorize movements and songs, maintain expressive gestures such as smiling, and adhere to choreographic formations, reinforcing both the technical and emotional integrity of the performance. These guidelines, along with music, costumes, and props, collectively sustain the cultural, spiritual, and communal significance of the tradition.

3. The significance of the Pastores a Belén dance in Oas, Albay, focused on its contributions to cultural values, religious devotion, community identity, and heritage preservation. The findings are:

3.1 Cultural Values. The findings reveal an average weighted mean of 4.60, described as Very Much Significant (VMS), highlighting the dance's role in reinforcing cultural identity and sustaining local traditions.

3.2 Religious Devotion. The average weighted mean of 4.66, described as Very Much Significant (VMS), confirms the dance's strong impact as a communal devotional practice and a tool for informal religious education.

3.3 Community Identity. The findings show an average weighted mean of 4.56, described as Very Much Significant (VMS), illustrating the dance's role as a symbol of solidarity and cultural distinctiveness in Oas, Albay.

3.4 Heritage Preservation: The average weighted mean of 4.56, described as Very Much Significant (VMS), demonstrates the dance's effectiveness as an instrument for intergenerational cultural preservation.

4. The level of awareness of the respondents on Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay includes existence

awareness, content familiarity, cultural relevance, and preservation importance. The findings are:

4.1 Existence Awareness. The respondents demonstrated a high level of recognition of Pastores a Belén as a recurring cultural practice in Oas, Albay, with an average weighted mean of 4.78 (Very High Awareness).

4.2 Content Familiarity. Respondents showed substantial familiarity with the internal elements of the dance, achieving an average weighted mean of 4.70 (Very High Awareness).

4.3 Cultural Relevance. The level of awareness regarding the cultural relevance of Pastores a Belén was high, with an average weighted mean of 4.68 (Very High Awareness).

4.4 Preservation Importance. Respondents indicated a strong commitment to safeguarding the tradition, reflected in an average weighted mean of 4.78 (Very High Awareness).

5. A learning resource on Pastores a Belén can serve as a supplementary guide to teach its history, dance elements, music, costumes, implements, and cultural significance, while also enhancing awareness of its existence, relevance, and preservation for future generations.

IX. CONCLUSIONS

Based from the above-mentioned findings, the following conclusions are formulated:

1. The Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay emerged through the combined efforts of individuals and the community, with key organizers and local families passing the tradition through mentorship, practice, and storytelling.

2. The dance incorporates core steps, Spanish-influenced and local folk music, symbolic costumes, handcrafted props, and choreographic guidelines that maintain its technical, cultural, and spiritual integrity.

3. The Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay is significant in reinforcing cultural values, religious devotion,

community identity, and heritage preservation, as reflected in the respondents' high average weighted mean scores.

4. The respondents' level of awareness on Pastores a Belén along existence awareness, content familiarity, cultural relevance, and preservation importance is high.

5. There is a need to develop a supplementary learning resource on Pastores a Belén to teach its history, dance elements, music, costumes, implements, and cultural significance for future preservation and appreciation.

X. RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were drawn:

1. History teachers, and local cultural officers may conduct workshops, storytelling sessions, and historical lectures to teach the origins and historical basis of Pastores a Belén. These activities will deepen appreciation for the tradition and ensure that its roots are remembered and celebrated.

2. Dance instructors, music teachers, and cultural facilitators may implement participatory training on the context of the dance, covering dance steps, music, costumes, implements, and other dance properties. Such programs will help students and community members master the technical, musical, and visual aspects of the performance.

3. School coordinators, parish leaders, and community elders may emphasize the significance of Pastores a Belén in reinforcing cultural values, religious devotion, community identity, and heritage preservation. Activities such as reflective discussions and community presentations can highlight the social and spiritual impact of the dance.

4. Teachers, youth organization officers, and local event organizers may organize activities that enhance existence awareness, content familiarity, cultural relevance, and preservation importance. This may include interactive demonstrations, participatory festivals, and cultural competitions,

ensuring that the tradition is actively recognized, practiced, and safeguarded by all generations.

5. Teachers, cultural facilitators, and school librarians may use the learning resource on Pastores a Belén as a supplementary guide. This material can provide a structured tool for teaching, raising awareness, and ensuring the continuity of the tradition for future generations.

Suggested Topics for Future Research

- a.) The Historical Evolution of Pastores a Belén in Oas, Albay: A Community Perspective
- b.) The Role of Music, Dance Steps, and Costumes in Sustaining Pastores a Belén: An Evaluative Study
- c.) The Impact of Pastores a Belén on Cultural Values and Religious Devotion of the Youth in Oas, Albay
- d.) Community Awareness and Participation in Preserving Pastores a Belén: Basis for Cultural Programs
- e.) The Use of Learning Resources on Pastores a Belén as a Tool for Enhancing Awareness and Heritage Preservation

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1] Aquino, F. R. (1953). *Philippine folk dances* (Vol. 2). Kayumanggi Press.
- [2] Castro, C. R. (2011). *Musical renderings of the Philippine nation*. Oxford University Press.
- [3] Goqingco, L. O. (1980). *The dances of the emerald isles: A great Philippine heritage*. Ben-Lor Publishers.
- [4] Hila, A. C. (2004). *Music in the Philippines: Instrumental and vocal music*. University of Santo Tomas Publishing House.
- [5] Obusan, R. (2002). *Kayaw: The dance and the ritual*. Ramon Obusan Folkloric Foundation.
- [6] Tiongson, N. G. (Ed.). (2017). *CCP encyclopedia of Philippine art* (2nd ed., Vol. 7: Dance). Cultural Center of the Philippines.
- [7] Abaño, G. P. (2018). The religious and cultural significance of the Pastores in the Bicol region. *Hataw: The Bicol University Journal of Culture and Arts*, 2(1), 45–58.
- [8] Almilla, R. Z. (2021). Evolution of Spanish-influenced folk dances in the Philippines: A choreographic analysis of the Bicolano Pastores. *Philippine Journal of Education and the Arts*, 5(2), 112–129.
- [9] Bañez, M. A. (2019). Traditional Bicolano Christmas carols: A musical analysis of the Pastores a Belen. *Journal of Southeast Asian Ethnomusicology*, 14, 88–105.
- [10] Buenaventura, C. S. (2015). Liturgical influences on secular folk performances in the Philippines. *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*, 43(3/4), 201–225.
- [11] Cantero, L. M. (2020). Preservation of intangible cultural heritage: The case of the Albay Pastores. *Lokal: Journal of Regional Studies and Community Development*, 7(1), 15–32.
- [12] De Leon, F. M., Jr. (2016). The Hispanic-Mexican legacy in Philippine musical traditions. *Musika Journal*, 12, 5–22.
- [13] Lanuza, R. D. (2017). Choreographic patterns and symbolic movements of the Pastores a Belen. *Bicol Heritage Review*, 9, 40–55.
- [14] Mendoza, S. L. (2022). Mapping the geographical spread of Christmas folk traditions in the Bicol Peninsula. *Journal of Philippine Social Sciences and Humanities*, 11(4), 67–83.
- [15] Reyes, M. T. (2014). The role of folk performance in community bonding: A study of Bicolano festivals. *Unitas*, 87(2), 154–178.
- [16] Velasco, J. P. (2023). Sustaining the rhythm: Youth participation in traditional Pastores competitions in Albay. *Arts and Culture Education Journal*, 8(3), 210–228.
- [17] Alcid, M. L. (2022). Ritual performance and collective memory in Philippine Christmas traditions. *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints*, 70(3), 421–445.
- [18] Alcantara, P. M. (2023). Meter and movement: Rhythmic structures in Philippine folk dance music. *Philippine Journal of Music and Performance*, 11(1), 45–63.
- [19] Delos Reyes, M. A. (2023). Competency determinants in traditional dance role allocation: Leadership and performance skills. *Journal of Dance and Cultural Practices*, 8(1), 47–65.

- [20] Dela Cruz, J. P. (2022). Cultural resilience and community identity: Sustaining Philippine intangible heritage in the digital age. *Philippine Social Science Journal*, 5(3), 45–58.
- [21] Dela Cruz, M. P. (2023). Cultural bearers and the transmission of intangible heritage in Philippine communities. *Philippine Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 28(2), 45–62.
- [22] Liu, W., Xue, H., & Wang, Z. Y. (2024). A systematic comparison of intercultural and indigenous cultural dance education from a global perspective (2010–2024). *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15, 1493457. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1493457>
- [23] Luna, S. M. (2022). Choreographer authority and decision-making in folk dance ensembles. *Journal of Performance Leadership Studies*, 5(3), 112–129.
- [24] Martinez, L. J. (2025). Overlapping origin stories: Negotiating heritage and agency in Filipino folk dances. *International Journal of Cultural Pluralism and Heritage Studies*, 11(3), 67–82.
- [25] Pastera, R. J. P. (2024). Intangible cultural heritage and the Filipino college students' knowledge and perceptions of living heritage. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*, 11(2), 25–41. https://www.ejecs.org/index.php/JECS/article/download/1818/556?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- [26] Roque, J. (2025). Preserving heritage through leisure: An ethnographic exploration of recreational activities and cultural dances in Isabela. *International Journal on Culture, History and Religion*, 7(SI3), 124–142. <https://doi.org/10.63931/ijchr.v7iSI3.311>
- [27] Santos, R. M. (2023). Ritual time and cultural continuity: Religious celebrations and folk practices in Philippine communities. *Philippine Journal of Cultural Studies*, 11(1), 23–44.
- [28] Serrano, M. E. (2023). Community participation and cultural transmission through performance objects. *Heritage and Society Review*, 11(1), 58–77.