



BASAO AS A LIVING DEVOTIONAL TRADITION: CULTURAL TRANSMISSION AND PRESERVATION IN BARANGAY TIPTIP, BOHOL

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the historical and cultural background of Basao, a devotional dance associated with the Feast of Señor San Roque in Barangay Tiptip, Tagbilaran City, Bohol, and examined how the tradition is transmitted and preserved within the community. Using a qualitative descriptive design, six cultural bearers were purposively selected based on their knowledge, experience, and involvement in Basao. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, direct observation, field notes, and audiovisual documentation and were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis. Two major themes emerged: Basao as an Inherited Devotional Tradition and From Living Transmission to Vulnerable Cultural Continuity. Findings showed that Basao is understood by participants as an inherited devotional practice sustained through oral memory, family participation, healing- and protection-centered narratives, and annual observance of the feast of Señor San Roque. Participants' recollections suggest that the practice was already observed by the 1950s, although its exact origin could not be established. Basao was primarily learned through observation, imitation, and participation with family members and community elders rather than through formal instruction. Participants also identified declining youth involvement, aging cultural bearers, and fading cultural memory as challenges to its continuity. The findings suggest that strengthening intergenerational participation, together with community-informed written and audiovisual documentation, may support the continued transmission and safeguarding of Basao while preserving its devotional meanings and customary practices.

KEYWORDS: Basao, Devotional Dance, Cultural Transmission, Cultural Preservation, Señor San Roque, Intangible Cultural Heritage

INTRODUCTION

Devotional dances form an important part of the religious and cultural life of many Philippine communities. Performed during fiestas, processions, and other religious observances, these practices express faith through embodied participation while reinforcing local customs, collective memory, and community identity. Macaranas (2021) explains that Philippine folk religiosity is shaped by historical and sociocultural conditions and is expressed through practices that extend beyond formal liturgical worship. From this perspective, devotional dances may be understood not only as cultural performances but also as forms of lived religious practice through which communities sustain relationships with patron saints, inherited beliefs, and local traditions.

One such tradition is **Basao**, a devotional dance associated with the Feast of Señor San Roque in Barangay Tiptip, Tagbilaran City, Bohol. Knowledge of Basao has been maintained largely through the experiences and recollections of cultural bearers who have participated in the practice or learned about it from earlier generations. Their accounts provide insight into how the community understands the dance's connection with the patron saint, the annual feast, and the devotional meanings attached to participation. At the same time, because much of this

knowledge is transmitted through memory and oral accounts, careful distinction is necessary between remembered community history and independently verified historical documentation.

Studies of other Philippine devotional dances demonstrate that religious performance is sustained through relationships among faith, community participation, and cultural continuity. Tamayo (2025), for example, examined the sponsorship system surrounding *Sayaw ng Bati* in Angono, Rizal, highlighting the social arrangements that support the continuation of a local devotional dance. Such studies provide useful comparative perspectives, but the historical and cultural circumstances of Basao require examination within its own community setting. Its remembered history, devotional significance, processes of learning, and preservation concerns cannot be fully understood through studies of other traditions alone.

Intergenerational learning is particularly relevant to understanding the continuity of Basao. Oropilla and Guadana (2021) emphasize the importance of family and community relationships in learning across generations in the Philippine context. Cultural knowledge may be acquired through observation, imitation, participation, and repeated engagement with parents, grandparents, elders, and other experienced community members. In the case of Basao, transmission may



involve not only learning physical movements but also understanding devotional conduct, customary practices, and the meanings associated with participation. Examining these processes is important because the continuity of a living tradition depends on opportunities for younger generations to encounter, learn, and participate in it.

Preservation therefore involves more than recording the visible form of the dance. Written and audiovisual documentation may help retain historical accounts, movements, and explanations for future learners, but documentation alone cannot fully reproduce the social and devotional context in which Basao has traditionally been practiced. Safeguarding the tradition requires attention to both documentation and living transmission through family, community, and religious participation. Understanding how these forms of preservation relate to one another is especially important when cultural knowledge depends heavily on aging tradition bearers and oral memory.

Despite the cultural and devotional significance of Basao in Barangay Tiptip, limited scholarly documentation is available concerning its historical background, cultural meanings, modes of transmission, and preservation. The specific gap addressed by this study concerns how Basao's cultural bearers describe its remembered historical and cultural background and how they explain the ways in which the tradition is taught, transmitted, and preserved within the community. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the study draws on the accounts of six cultural bearers to examine intergenerational memory, participation in the Feast of Señor San Roque, experiences of learning Basao, changes in its observance, and perceived threats to its continuity. Through this community-specific inquiry, the study seeks to contribute to the documentation and safeguarding of Basao while recognizing its character as a living devotional tradition.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to explore the remembered historical and cultural background of the Basao devotional dance in Barangay Tiptip, Tagbilaran City, Bohol, and to examine how the tradition is taught, transmitted, and preserved within the local community.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do cultural bearers describe the remembered historical and cultural background of Basao in relation to the Feast of Señor San Roque?
2. How is Basao taught, transmitted, and preserved within the local community?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Devotional Dance, Cultural Identity, and Religious Tradition

Devotional dances occupy an important place in Philippine religious and cultural life because they bring together faith, bodily expression, ritual practice, and community participation. Filipino spirituality is expressed not only through formal religious services but also through festivals, processions, devotional rituals, and other embodied practices. Yabut (2019) describes spirituality and religion within Sikolohiyang Pilipino as experiences shaped by

Filipino cultural and social contexts, while Cervantes (2025) characterizes Filipino spirituality as relational and holistic. Macaranas (2021) similarly explains that Philippine folk religiosity is expressed through popular devotions and culturally embedded practices that extend beyond formal liturgy. Taken together, these perspectives suggest that devotional dance may be understood as a form of lived religious practice in which faith, cultural identity, and communal participation intersect.

Studies of Philippine ritual and devotional dances further illustrate this relationship. Manalo (1994) documented religious dances among Filipino Catholics and identified dance as a means of expressing faith within religious life. Magos (2010), in discussing Sinulog, associated devotional performance with prayer, thanksgiving, healing, and religious offering. Mendoza (2015) likewise examined the Ati-Atihan tradition as a practice through which religious devotion and cultural identity are sustained. Tamayo (2023) further discussed Catholic ritual dances such as the Obando Fertility Dance, Subli, and Kuraldal in relation to devotion to patron saints and the fulfillment of panata or devotional vows. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that devotional dances function not merely as performances for entertainment but as culturally meaningful practices through which individuals and communities express religious commitment.

The local context is particularly important because devotional dances acquire meanings through the histories, beliefs, and relationships of specific communities. Studies of traditions such as Bolibongkingking in Loboc indicate how music and dance may contribute to the continuation of religious observances, while Tamayo (2025), in examining the sponsorship system of Sayaw ng Bati in Angono, Rizal, demonstrates how community arrangements help sustain devotional performance. In the Bohol context, Castilla and Soria (2026) documented Mongmong as a devotional dance associated with communal identity and intergenerational continuity. These studies provide relevant comparative perspectives for understanding how religious performance may be embedded in local community life.

However, traditions cannot be assumed to share identical histories, meanings, or modes of transmission simply because they involve devotional dance. Basao is situated within the specific religious and cultural context of Barangay Tiptip and its annual Feast of Señor San Roque. Consequently, understanding Basao requires attention to the experiences and recollections of its own cultural bearers, particularly regarding how they interpret its historical background, religious significance, and continuity within the community.

Cultural Transmission and Intergenerational Learning

The continuity of cultural traditions depends substantially on how knowledge, practices, and meanings are passed from one generation to another. The present study draws on the concept of cultural transmission, informed by Tylor's (1871) classical understanding of culture as socially acquired knowledge, beliefs, customs, and practices. From this perspective, culture is not inherited biologically but learned through participation in social life. Within families and communities, traditions may therefore



be maintained when younger generations repeatedly encounter, observe, imitate, and participate in established cultural practices.

Cultural transmission involves more than reproducing visible actions. In devotional traditions, what is transmitted may include religious meanings, appropriate conduct, community expectations, stories about the tradition, and understandings of why particular practices are performed. Parents, grandparents, elders, and experienced practitioners may consequently function as cultural bearers who introduce younger members to both the performance and significance of a tradition. This perspective is particularly relevant to Basao because the practice has been maintained through relationships among family members, elders, devotees, and other community participants.

Oropilla and Guadana (2021) emphasize the importance of intergenerational learning within family and community settings in the Philippines. Their work highlights learning through interaction, participation, and cultural immersion, suggesting that knowledge may be transmitted experientially rather than exclusively through formal instruction. Bautista and Aguilar (2023) likewise emphasize culturally grounded and community-based perspectives that recognize local practices and knowledge as meaningful resources within Filipino communities. Together, these studies support the view that cultural learning is embedded in relationships and everyday participation.

Applied to Basao, intergenerational learning provides a framework for examining how participants acquire knowledge of the dance without formalized teaching. Observation and imitation may allow younger or less experienced members to learn movements, while repeated participation in religious observances may communicate devotional meanings and customary conduct. The sustainability of this process, however, depends on continuing opportunities for interaction between experienced cultural bearers and succeeding generations. When younger members participate less frequently, the informal mechanisms through which the tradition has historically been transmitted may become increasingly vulnerable.

Cultural Preservation, Documentation, and Safeguarding

Preservation of traditional cultural practices involves both retaining knowledge and sustaining the conditions that allow traditions to remain meaningful within their communities. Palabrica (2025) emphasizes that cultural dances carry narratives, values, and beliefs that may be maintained through continued intergenerational transmission. Roque (2025) similarly notes that community-based cultural dances transmitted largely through informal practices may become vulnerable when documentation and opportunities for continuity are limited. Aquino (2025),

meanwhile, associates participation in Philippine folk dance with cultural identity and shared values. These studies indicate that cultural dances may function as repositories of community knowledge in addition to their visible movement forms.

Documentation is particularly important when cultural knowledge depends heavily on oral memory and aging cultural bearers. Written accounts may preserve historical recollections, explanations, terminology, and cultural meanings, while audiovisual materials may provide references for movements, sequences, music, and customary forms of performance. Documentation can therefore provide future community members with resources that might otherwise be lost as memories fade or experienced practitioners become less able to participate.

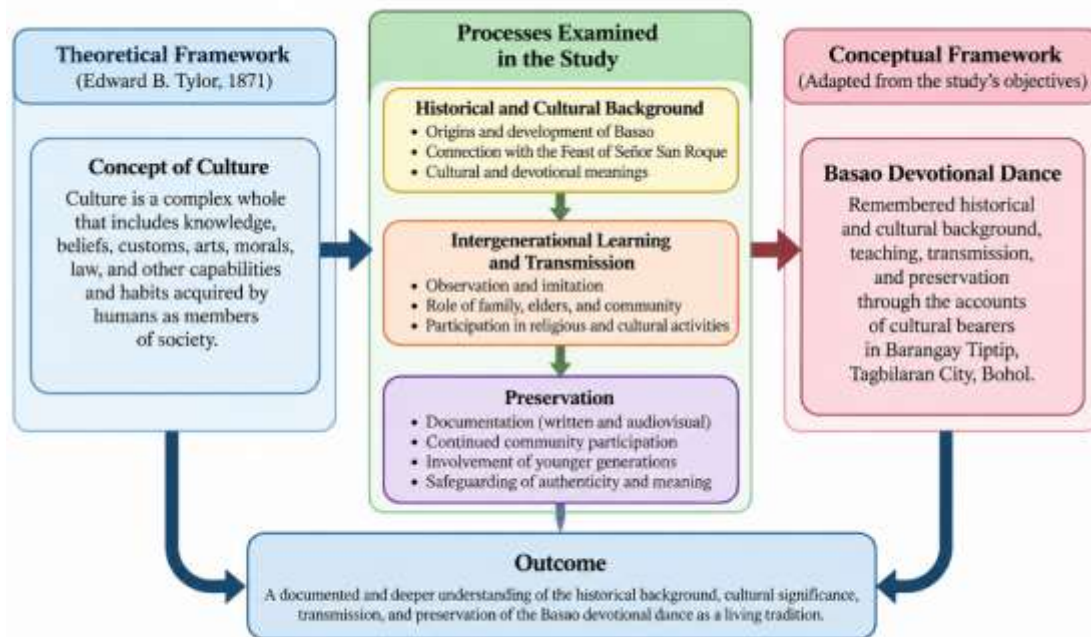
Nevertheless, documentation should not be understood as a substitute for living transmission. A video may record how a dance appears, but it may not fully communicate the social relationships, devotional intentions, religious atmosphere, or community meanings associated with its performance. Similarly, a written description can preserve remembered narratives while remaining unable to reproduce the experiential dimensions of learning directly from elders and participating in the annual observance. Preservation is therefore more appropriately understood as a combination of documentation and continued participation.

This distinction is particularly relevant to the safeguarding of Basao. Its preservation requires attention not only to physical movements but also to the devotional meanings, customary practices, historical narratives, and forms of respectful conduct recognized by cultural bearers. Involving practitioners in documentation may help ensure that preservation efforts reflect community understandings rather than reducing Basao to a standardized sequence of movements.

The educational dimension of cultural preservation also provides opportunities for strengthening awareness among younger generations. Torio (2024) discusses the potential contribution of indigenous and contextualized materials to learner engagement and cultural awareness, while Oropilla and Guadana (2021) emphasize learning through cultural immersion and participation. The manuscript also relates this perspective to DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2019, which supports contextualization and localization according to learners' geographical and sociocultural environments. Within this perspective, documented local traditions may serve as educational resources, provided that their presentation remains sensitive to the meanings and practices recognized by the communities from which they originate.



Theoretical and Conceptual Framework



METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to explore the remembered historical and cultural background of the Basao devotional dance and to examine how the tradition is taught, transmitted, and preserved within Barangay Tiptip, Tagbilaran City, Bohol. This design was appropriate because the study sought to obtain detailed, experience-based accounts from cultural bearers regarding their memories, participation, knowledge, and understanding of Basao as a living devotional tradition.

A qualitative descriptive approach allowed the researchers to remain close to participants' accounts while identifying recurring patterns related to Basao's historical and cultural background, its association with the Feast of Señor San Roque, intergenerational learning, and preservation concerns. Rather than attempting to establish a definitive historical chronology or generate a formal theory, the study focused on describing how cultural bearers understood and experienced the tradition within its local religious and community context.

The design also supported the use of semi-structured interviews, direct observation, field notes, and audiovisual documentation as complementary sources of qualitative data. These methods provided opportunities to examine both participants' verbal accounts and the contextual features of Basao as practiced and remembered within the community.

Participants

The study involved six cultural bearers of Basao from Barangay Tiptip, Tagbilaran City, Bohol, who were selected through purposive sampling based on their knowledge, experience, and involvement in the devotional tradition. The

participants were chosen because they could provide firsthand or intergenerational accounts relevant to the study's focus on Basao's remembered historical and cultural background, its transmission, and its preservation.

Of the six participants, three were active Basao performers, while the other three were recognized cultural bearers with knowledge of the tradition's history, customary practices, devotional meanings, and modes of transmission. Their participation enabled the study to gather perspectives concerning family-based learning, community participation, changes in observance, and preservation concerns.

Selection was based on participants' demonstrated familiarity with Basao and their direct or inherited knowledge of the practice. With the assistance of a key informant, individuals who met these criteria were identified and invited to participate. The sample was intentionally small and focused on knowledgeable cultural bearers rather than on representing the wider population of Barangay Tiptip. Accordingly, the findings are interpreted as community-specific accounts and are not intended to represent the views of all residents, devotees, or younger community members.

Research Instrument

The primary research instrument used in this study was a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide designed to gather information on the remembered historical and cultural background of the Basao devotional dance and the ways in which the tradition is taught, transmitted, and preserved within the community. The guide consisted of open-ended questions and follow-up probes that allowed participants to describe their knowledge, experiences, and recollections in their own words.



The interview questions focused on several areas relevant to the study objectives, including the participants' recollections of Basao's historical background, its connection with the Feast of Señor San Roque, changes in the practice over time, ways in which Basao is learned and passed on within families and the community, and perceived challenges related to its continuity and preservation.

To improve the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the questions, the interview guide was reviewed and validated by a qualified researcher with expertise in dance research and documentation. Revisions were incorporated based on the feedback received prior to data collection.

Direct observation, field notes, and audiovisual recordings were also used as supplementary tools. These materials provided contextual information and helped document aspects of the practice that complemented the participants' interview accounts.

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to data collection, the researcher secured the necessary ethical clearance and permissions from the university, Barangay Tiptip officials, and the Parish of Señor San Roque. With the assistance of a key informant, individuals who met the study's criteria as Basao cultural bearers were identified and invited to participate.

Before each interview, the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the participants' rights were explained. Informed consent was obtained prior to conducting the interviews and making any audio or video recordings. Face-to-face interviews were then conducted at a time and place convenient to the participants using the researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide.

The interviews focused on participants' recollections of Basao's historical and cultural background, its relationship with the Feast of Señor San Roque, changes in the practice over time, and the ways in which the tradition is learned, transmitted, and preserved within the community. Follow-up questions were used when necessary to clarify responses and explore relevant experiences in greater depth.

With participants' consent, the interviews were audio-recorded using a mobile phone and were subsequently transcribed for analysis. Direct observation, field notes, and audiovisual documentation were also used to record contextual information related to the practice. These supplementary materials were used to complement and contextualize the interview accounts.

The collected materials were organized and prepared for qualitative analysis in accordance with the study's research questions and ethical procedures.

Ethical Considerations

The study observed appropriate ethical standards throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, ethical clearance was secured from the Holy Name University Ethics Review Board, together with the necessary permissions from the concerned university authorities, Barangay Tiptip officials, and the Parish of Señor San Roque.

Before participation, each participant was informed of the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, the voluntary nature of participation, and the right to decline to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Written informed consent was obtained prior to the conduct of interviews and audio or video recording.

To protect privacy and confidentiality, participants were identified using codes rather than their names in transcripts, analysis, and reporting. Personally identifying information was excluded from the presentation of findings. Audio recordings, video files, interview transcripts, field notes, and other research materials were stored securely and were accessible only to the researcher and authorized personnel.

Because the study involved a living devotional tradition and community-based religious practices, cultural sensitivity and respect were maintained throughout data collection, interpretation, and reporting. Care was taken to represent participants' accounts accurately and respectfully, particularly when presenting devotional beliefs, customary practices, and translated interview excerpts.

Data Analysis

The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis began with repeated reading of the interview transcripts to develop familiarity with the participants' accounts and to identify statements relevant to the study's research questions.

Initial codes were then generated from meaningful segments of the data concerning Basao's remembered historical and cultural background, its relationship with the Feast of Señor San Roque, intergenerational learning, changes in participation, and preservation concerns. Related codes were compared and grouped into broader categories based on similarities and recurring patterns across participants' accounts.

These categories were subsequently examined and refined into potential themes. The themes were reviewed in relation to the coded extracts and the overall dataset to ensure that they adequately represented the participants' accounts. Each theme was then defined and named according to its central meaning and relevance to the research questions.

The final analysis produced two major themes: Basao as an Inherited Devotional Tradition and From Living Transmission to Vulnerable Cultural Continuity. These themes were supported by subthemes addressing intergenerational and oral memory, the annual Feast of Señor San Roque, healing-centered narratives, continuity and transformation of practice, observation and imitation, family-based transmission, declining youth participation, aging cultural bearers, documentation, and the safeguarding of devotional meaning and customary practice.

Direct quotations from participants were used in the presentation of findings to illustrate and support the interpretation of each theme. Where Cebuano excerpts were presented, English translations were provided to make the participants' accounts accessible to a wider readership.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The thematic analysis generated two major themes that reflect how the cultural bearers understood the historical and cultural background of Basao and how they described its transmission and preservation within Barangay Tiptip. The first theme, Basao as an Inherited Devotional Tradition, captures participants' accounts of Basao as a religious practice received from earlier generations and sustained through oral memory, family participation, feast observance, and devotion to Señor San Roque. The second theme, From Living Transmission to Vulnerable Cultural Continuity, describes how Basao has traditionally been learned through observation and participation while also highlighting concerns regarding declining youth involvement, aging cultural bearers, fading memory, and the need for culturally sensitive documentation.

Basao as an Inherited Devotional Tradition

Participants consistently described Basao as a tradition that was already being practiced before their own involvement. Rather than identifying a particular founder or providing a definite date of origin, they recalled following practices performed by their parents, relatives, and community elders. These accounts position Basao as an inherited devotional practice whose continuity has depended largely on family and community participation.

P6 recalled:

“nahinomdoman nag sugod na ang Basao nag sunod raman gud pod mi sa among mga ginikanan lami ka ayo na bibo gani na sa una pa ang bungbong sa among kapilya kawayan pa.” (P6)

English translation: “I remember that Basao had already begun. We simply followed our parents. It was enjoyable and lively in the old days, when the walls of our chapel were still made of bamboo.”

The participant's recollection places Basao within an earlier period of community life and indicates that the tradition was already established when the participant began taking part. The reference to the chapel when its walls were still made of bamboo provides contextual detail about the participant's memory but does not, by itself, establish an exact historical date for the beginning of Basao. The finding therefore supports an interpretation of Basao as a tradition preserved through remembered community history rather than a documented founding chronology.

Four subthemes further explain this inherited devotional character: intergenerational transmission and oral memory, Basao within the annual feast cycle, healing-centered devotional narratives, and continuity and transformation of practice.

Intergenerational Transmission and Oral Memory

Participants frequently identified parents, grandparents, and community elders as the principal sources of their knowledge about Basao. Their accounts suggest that information about the tradition was retained largely through oral memory and continued participation rather than through written historical records.

P6 stated:

“Dili kalimtan kay maoy kuan sa mga tiguwang importante ni kay mao ni kuaan sa atong tinu uhan henerasyon.” (P6)

English translation: “It should not be forgotten because it comes from the elders. It is important because it is part of our faith across generations.”

This statement shows that Basao was valued not merely because it had been practiced for a long time, but because participants associated it with inherited faith and relationships between generations. Within this context, elders functioned as cultural bearers whose memories and participation helped maintain knowledge of the practice.

This finding may be understood through Tylor's (1871) conception of culture as socially acquired knowledge, beliefs, and customs. Basao appears to have been encountered and learned within social relationships rather than through formal instruction. The finding also corresponds with Oropilla and Guadana's (2021) emphasis on family and community as important environments for intergenerational learning. In Basao, the transmission of cultural knowledge involved not only the visible performance of the dance but also remembered narratives, devotional expectations, and understandings of why participation mattered.

At the same time, reliance on oral memory creates an important methodological consideration. Participants' accounts preserve community knowledge, but differences in recollection and the absence of independently verified historical documentation mean that these narratives are more appropriately interpreted as **remembered history**. This distinction allows the study to recognize the value of oral accounts without presenting them as definitive historical chronology.

Basao within the Annual Feast Cycle

Participants situated Basao within the annual religious observance of Señor San Roque. Their accounts connected the dance with the novena, the patronal feast, and recurring acts of devotion. P1 recalled that Basao had previously been performed over several days:

“Wako katimaan kay gasunod mga ginikanan, among pagtuo pag sugud pag ka patron Agosto 16 among nobenahan pag abot sa takna among sayawa n sa 3 ka adlaw gikan sa Agosto 15 hantod Agosto 17.” (P1)

English translation: “I cannot remember because we followed our parents. In our belief, the patron's feast is on August 16. We hold a novena, and when the time comes, we perform the dance for three days, from August 15 to August 17.”

This recollection places Basao within a recurring cycle of religious observance rather than presenting it as an isolated cultural performance. The feast created an annual setting in which participants could renew their devotion and encounter practices inherited from earlier generations.

Macaranas (2021) describes Philippine folk religiosity as historically and culturally embedded, with devotion expressed through practices extending beyond formal liturgy. The participants' accounts of Basao reflect this pattern. Its significance appears to lie partly in its integration into the religious life surrounding Señor San Roque, where movement,



prayer, feast observance, and community participation become interconnected.

The annual repetition of Basao may also have contributed to its transmission. Because the tradition was encountered repeatedly within the feast cycle, younger family and community members had opportunities to observe experienced performers and become familiar with the practice. In this sense, religious observance functioned simultaneously as a devotional setting and as an informal environment for cultural learning.

Healing-Centered Devotional Narratives

Participants also associated Basao with beliefs and experiences concerning Señor San Roque as a source of healing, assistance, and protection. These narratives contributed to the devotional meanings attached to continued participation.

P4 explained:

“Diha gani koy na experience nga naa koy mga balatian nag ampo ra gyd ko ni Sr. San Roque kada fiesta mo sayaw gyd ko kay wla gyd ko pasagdi ni sr. san roque mao nag gyd na akong devotion nga gi tuman matag tuig.” (P4)

English translation: “I experienced illnesses and prayed to Señor San Roque. Every fiesta, I dance because he never abandoned me. This has become the devotion that I fulfill every year.”

For this participant, personal illness and prayer became connected with an annual commitment to dance. The significance of Basao was therefore not limited to inherited custom; participation was also sustained through personal religious experience and perceived relationships with the patron saint.

The finding is consistent with literature describing Philippine devotional dance as connected with prayer, thanksgiving, healing, and the fulfillment of religious commitments. However, participants’ accounts should be interpreted as expressions of religious belief and devotional meaning, not as evidence of medical causation or objectively verified healing. This distinction is important because the purpose of the study is to understand how participants interpret Basao within their religious and cultural world.

Healing-centered narratives may also contribute to cultural transmission because they provide explanations for why the practice should continue. When a dance is associated not only with movement but also with gratitude, protection, and faith, succeeding generations may inherit both the practice and the meanings attached to it.

Continuity and Transformation of Practice

Participants’ accounts indicate that Basao has continued over time, although aspects of its observance have changed. They recalled differences in the duration of performance, location, and number of participants. In particular, the earlier three-day observance was described as having been reduced to performance on the feast day, while participation was perceived to have declined compared with previous celebrations.

These accounts suggest that continuity does not necessarily mean that a tradition remains unchanged. Basao appears to retain its association with Señor San Roque and its

devotional purpose even as certain features of the observance have been modified.

Tamayo’s (2025) discussion of the community arrangements surrounding *Sayaw ng Bati* provides a useful comparative perspective because it demonstrates that devotional dances depend on changing social structures and patterns of participation. In the case of Basao, continuity may similarly be understood through the relationship between what participants perceive as enduring—devotion, respect for the patron saint, and annual observance—and what has changed, including duration, participation, and performance conditions.

This distinction is important for cultural preservation. Safeguarding Basao need not imply freezing the tradition into a single unchanging form. Rather, preservation should identify which meanings and customary practices cultural bearers consider central while recognizing that living traditions may adapt as community circumstances change.

From Living Transmission to Vulnerable Cultural Continuity

The second major theme describes a tension between the way Basao has traditionally been transmitted and the conditions participants believed may threaten its continuation. Cultural bearers described learning Basao informally through observation, imitation, and participation with relatives and elders. At the same time, they expressed concern about declining youth participation, aging practitioners, and fading memories. These findings indicate that the same person-to-person processes that have sustained Basao may become vulnerable when opportunities for intergenerational engagement diminish.

Learning through Observation and Imitation

Participants described learning Basao primarily by watching experienced performers and following what they did rather than through formal lessons.

P6 explained:

“Wla may nag tudlo ani namo ani nag sunod ra mi sa mga katigulangan namo kay akong inahan nag cge gyd sila ug sayaw aning basao.” (P6)

English translation: “No one taught us this. We simply followed our elders because my mother regularly danced Basao.”

This account illustrates an experiential form of cultural learning. The participant did not describe receiving explicit step-by-step instruction; instead, learning occurred through repeated exposure to family and community members who already practiced the tradition.

Oropilla and Guadana (2021) emphasize that intergenerational learning may occur through participation and cultural immersion within everyday family and community relationships. Basao reflects this process because involvement in the tradition appears to have provided the learning environment itself. Observation, imitation, and repeated participation enabled cultural knowledge to be acquired through practice.

Importantly, this mode of learning likely communicated more than movements. By observing experienced practitioners in the religious setting of the feast, learners could also encounter



devotional behavior, ways of approaching the patron saint, and community expectations surrounding the performance.

Family-Based Transmission

Family relationships emerged as an important channel through which knowledge of Basao was passed across generations. Parents, grandparents, mothers, and elders were repeatedly identified as sources of knowledge and examples for participation.

P2 stated:

“Amo ra ning gi sinunod sa among mga ginikanan dli nako ka hinomdom pa sa uban ani.” (P2)

English translation: “We simply followed this from our parents. I can no longer remember some of the other details.”

The statement illustrates two interconnected features of Basao’s transmission. First, participants learned through parental example. Second, the admission that some details could no longer be remembered demonstrates the vulnerability of a tradition that depends primarily on memory and person-to-person transmission.

The finding supports Oropilla and Guadana’s (2021) emphasis on family and community relationships in intergenerational learning. In Basao, family participation appears to have provided both access to the practice and a social environment in which its devotional significance could be encountered.

However, the dependence on family transmission also means that continuity may be affected when younger family members no longer participate regularly. If opportunities to observe and join experienced practitioners diminish, the informal learning process itself may become increasingly difficult to sustain.

Declining Youth Participation

Participants expressed concern about what they perceived as reduced participation among younger community members. P2 observed:

“O wla na mga batan on jud ron nga mo sayaw na di na man gani mu luhod anang atobangan, wala.” (P2)

English translation: “There are no young people dancing now; they do not even kneel there in front anymore.”

For the participant, reduced involvement was evident not only in participation in the dance but also in associated devotional gestures. This perception is important because Basao has historically been learned through exposure to and participation with older practitioners. Fewer younger participants may therefore reduce opportunities for the same form of intergenerational learning to continue.

Nevertheless, this finding should be interpreted cautiously. The study interviewed cultural bearers rather than younger residents, and it did not systematically measure youth participation or investigate the reasons for any decline. The statement therefore represents the participant’s perception of changing involvement rather than evidence of the views, motivations, or attitudes of younger people themselves.

This limitation also identifies an important direction for future research. Studies involving younger community members

could examine why they do or do not participate and what forms of engagement might make the tradition meaningful to succeeding generations.

Aging Cultural Bearers and Fading Memory

Participants’ accounts also reflected concern about aging practitioners and difficulty recalling details of the tradition. P2’s statement—

“dli nako ka hinomdom pa sa uban ani”

or

“I can no longer remember some of the other details”

illustrates how cultural knowledge may become increasingly vulnerable when it remains concentrated in the memories of a limited number of experienced practitioners.

Fading memory does not mean that Basao has ceased to exist. Rather, it suggests that some historical narratives, customary details, and explanations may become more difficult to recover over time. This is particularly important when written or audiovisual records are limited.

The finding highlights a broader tension between living memory and cultural documentation. Oral transmission allows traditions to remain embedded within relationships, but it may also leave particular details vulnerable when cultural bearers age or when fewer people participate. Documentation may help retain these accounts, provided that it accurately represents uncertainty, variation, and differences in recollection rather than presenting a single version as unquestionably authoritative.

Documentation as a Preservation Strategy

Participants regarded documentation as one possible means of supporting Basao’s continuity. P4 stated:

“Ang documento mka tabang gyd nip ag reserba sa basao ilabina karon wla nay mga batan on ni sayaw sa devotion kang Sr. San Roque.” (P4)

English translation: “Documentation can really help preserve Basao, especially now that there are no young people dancing in devotion to Señor San Roque.”

This statement reflects participants’ concern that written or audiovisual records could become increasingly important if fewer younger people encounter the tradition through direct participation. Documentation may preserve historical accounts, explanations, movements, customary conduct, and the voices of cultural bearers for future reference.

However, the study did not evaluate documentation as an intervention. It therefore cannot establish that documentation alone will ensure Basao’s continuation. Rather, participants identified documentation as a potential preservation strategy.

The literature reviewed in this study similarly suggests that documentation can support the preservation of cultural practices but should not replace community participation. A recorded performance may demonstrate movement, but it cannot fully reproduce the devotional setting, interpersonal relationships, and experiential processes through which Basao has traditionally been learned.

For this reason, documentation may be most useful when understood as a complement to living transmission. Written and



audiovisual materials can provide references, while continued interaction with cultural bearers can preserve the social and religious contexts that give the practice meaning.

Commitment to Safeguarding Devotional Meaning and Customary Practice

Participants' preservation concerns extended beyond retaining dance movements. Their accounts also emphasized the importance of devotional conduct and respect for Señor San Roque.

P1 explained:

“Dili nimo talikdan ang patron ni Sr. San roque imo unahong yukbuan ug mu luhod ka mag pasalamt nga ni abot ka sa lain pang mga katuigan, ug mo abot pa gyd ka sa lain pang mga katuigan dli nimo talikdan.” (P1)

English translation: “You should not turn your back on Señor San Roque. First, bow and kneel to give thanks that you have reached another year and for the years still to come. Do not turn your back on him.”

The statement demonstrates that participants understood Basao not simply as a sequence of movements but as a devotional practice governed by customary forms of respect. Bowing, kneeling, thanksgiving, and appropriate orientation toward the patron saint formed part of how at least some cultural bearers understood proper participation.

This finding has important implications for preservation. If Basao were documented only in terms of visible movement, important aspects of its cultural and religious significance could be lost. Safeguarding should therefore attend to the meanings, beliefs, narratives, and customary forms of conduct that cultural bearers associate with the practice.

At the same time, documentation should recognize possible variation among practitioners rather than imposing a rigid standardized form on a living tradition. Involving cultural bearers in documentation and future teaching initiatives may help ensure that preservation reflects community knowledge while allowing differences in memory and practice to remain visible.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that Basao remains a locally rooted devotional tradition in Barangay Tiptip, Tagbilaran City, Bohol, sustained through oral memory, family participation, intergenerational learning, and the annual Feast of Señor San Roque. Participants described Basao as an inherited expression of faith whose significance extends beyond dance movements to include devotional meanings, customary practices, and connections with earlier generations. The findings further indicate that the tradition has primarily been transmitted through observation, imitation, and participation with parents, relatives, and community elders rather than through formal instruction. However, participants also identified declining youth involvement, aging cultural bearers, and fading recollections as concerns that may affect its continuity. Because much of Basao's history is preserved through oral accounts, its historical development is more appropriately understood as remembered community history rather than as a fully documented chronology.

The study, therefore, suggests that the continued safeguarding of Basao may be supported through stronger opportunities for intergenerational participation together with community-informed written and audiovisual documentation, with such documentation serving to complement rather than replace the living religious and social context in which the tradition is practiced.

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