

Secularization of the Sacred: “Bendian” through the Passage of Time

Filmore Y. Awas ¹

ABSTRACT

This study is designed to document how *Bendian* evolved from a ritual to what is now called as “staged performance” and how cultural integrity and community development was promoted through its staging. It is therefore intended to look into the process of community dialogue leading to community action that affects the welfare of the community especially in terms of the maintenance of cultural integrity and the promotion of tourism. The study is limited to the documentation of the experiences and processes.

Findings show that the process of dialogue that the community people continuously observed determined the evolution of *Bendian* with the following enabling factors: politics, education, economic condition of the community, and tourism. The staging of *Bendian* provided an avenue for exchange of ideas and sharing of values, principles, characteristics and values of the community members making them feel the process of change and the process of development.

Based on the ECIP framework, the cultural integrity of the staged performance was maintained. The staging also played a big role in the intergenerational transmission of knowledge and values. Religion, education, lack of interest of the youth, lack of resources, opposition of parents, personal convictions of a member of the community, death of elders, time constraints, and lack of documentation were considered as a challenge in the development of cultural integrity in the community.

In conclusion, the evolution of *Bendian* from a sacred healing ritual to a secularized medium is a manifestation of a cultural change influenced by internal and external forces. The process of dialogue that the community people continuously observed, however, determines the integrity of these changes. In relation to development, it is through careful and conscious examination and understanding of these changes can the community become more able to mainstream the concept of culture into the development process.

Continuation of such practice in a form of stage performance is strongly recommended. With regards to the boundaries of change that must happen, community dialogue should be continued and properly observed together with the elders of the community. A follow-up study must also be conducted to assess the impact of cultural tourism in the municipality.

Abbreviation used: ECIP - Episcopal Commission on Indigenous Peoples
IP - Indigenous People

KEYWORDS: *bendian*, culture, indigenous people, community dialogue and stage performance

INTRODUCTION

Culture is an integral part of human existence. It is inherent and woven into being human. For the indigenous peoples (IP), culture is the very wellspring of their identity and life itself; thus, a deeper understanding of how changes in culture affects the life and well being of the indigenous peoples is of importance.

Study of culture is not a new field in research; however, its potential in the development process is just a very recent addition. Development is closely associated to progress and for indigenous peoples, progress is more concerned with their identity, their land, and their culture as a whole.

An examination of the discourse on development and empowerment since the 1950s reveals that much attention has been given to economic, political, environmental and social indicators and considerations (ECIP 2008). This atomistic perspective is opposed to the indigenous people's holistic perspective that culture encompasses every aspect of life, from political, economic, spiritual and social aspects including identity. Understanding development in the context of the indigenous peoples is fundamental to effective community work in these IP communities.

It is only in recent years that this holistic view has started to gain respect and popularity. For instance, World Bank recognized the importance of learning and understanding culture as a component in the development process. World Bank President James D. Wolfenson, once noted, "We need to learn from local communities to enrich the development process," pertaining to interventions in developing communities. Part of that learning, as emphasized by the World Bank, is having an understanding of the dynamics of culture attached to these communities.

Still, the remaining majority, including many of the on-going development programs in IP communities of the Philippines has yet to catch up with this trend. As the Episcopal Commission on Indigenous People (ECIP) noted

in its concept paper, "it is this neglect of the cultural dimension that has crippled interventions from having deep meaning and relevance to indigenous communities". The government and other development and cultural organizations may have failed to recognize that fundamental to effective community work in these communities is the understanding of the community processes that are the very foundation of cultural integrity.

The challenge of cultural integrity simply points to a singular goal - that programs meant to empower must never compromise but instead work towards community oneness and cohesion. The sad reality is that, while this challenge burdens the national non-IP development planners, the IPs themselves, who has now gained political power to implement their own programs, seldom confront themselves with the same challenge. In fact, even as the Cordillera region popularized cultural festivals, this challenge remained uncontested.

Cultural festivals in the region usually take a two-fold function, one for cultural protection and the other for development purposes. The realization of this dual role gained momentum when the importance of protecting and maintaining cultural integrity has been recognized by the Philippine law under Republic Act No. 8371 otherwise known as the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997. This Act provides mechanisms for creating the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples for implementing and establishing guidelines and the appropriation of funds. The act is an embodiment of the rights and aspirations of the indigenous peoples where cultural integrity is included.

"The State shall respect, recognize and protect the right of ICCs/IPs to preserve and protect their culture, traditions and institutions. It shall consider these rights in the formulation and application of



national plans and policies (IPR Act of 1997).”

In addition, the UN General Assembly’s adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples on September 13, 2007 also guaranteed the IP communities of their rights to practice, observe, protect, maintain and teach tribal traditions and cultural practices for their own development. This right given to indigenous peoples is strongly emphasized in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Quoted in full is a statement under Article 11 of the said Declaration:

“Indigenous peoples have the right to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect, and develop the past, present, and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archeological and historical sites, artifacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literatures (Article 11, UNDRIP 2007).”

With these national and international recognitions, it can be assured that culture will take its rightful place in the development process.

Central to this integration then is the role of communication in binding and in bridging whatever possible opportunities of promoting and protecting the integrity of a culture amidst development. The goal of protection and at the same time of progress may present conflict and disagreement in terms of what aspect of culture need to be protected. However, through continuous communication in form of dialogues, the community may gradually converge toward a greater degree of mutual understanding and belief (Figueroa *et.al.*, 2002). As ECIP noted, through this continuous collective effort, cultural integrity can be maintained - the community will continue to evolve, maintain, nurture, and sustain a healthy dynamics, processes, and systems (ECIP, 2007). Thus, programs involving events

and other community processes that can serve as channels for dialogue and collective action should be meticulously planned and implemented by and through the community.

The above-mentioned possibilities have already started to be seen in the local level especially in the municipalities since they have a more direct control over community programs. In the case of cultural festivals, some municipalities in the region like Kabayan, has explored the possibility of staging some of their revered rituals. Recognized as the seat of the Ibaloi culture, this Ibaloi and Kalanguya dominated municipality is staging its long traditional practice of Bendian annually during its Foundation Day. Originally from a head-taking ritual to appease the spirits, this non-stop circle dance is now performed as a LGU-led “staged” performance for cultural awareness and for tourism program promotion. Although many efforts were made to study the Bendian, it is of equal importance to examine the processes in its staging by which leaders in the community were able to guide community members to maintain cultural integrity while promoting development in the municipality.

Generally, this study aimed at documenting the experiences by which the community members, through the staged Bendian, experienced the process of dialogue leading to collective action and how it was able to promote cultural integrity and development in Kabayan. Specifically, the study was able to: describe how Bendian evolved as a staged performance in Kabayan; and identify the enabling factors that influenced the conduct of Bendian as a staged performance and determine how cultural integrity is manifested in the staged Bendian using the ECIP framework in terms of the following community processes: community reflection, intergenerational ties, sense of being, and sense of doing. The study also identified the role of staged Bendian in the intergenerational transmission of knowledge; and specified the perceived challenges in promoting cultural integrity through the staged *Bendian*.



MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in the municipality of Kabayan, one of the 13 municipalities of Benguet Province. Benguet on the other hand is a landlocked province of the Philippines in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) in Luzon. The province is the homeland of several tribes, collectively referred to as the Igorot; the *Ibaloi* in the southeast and the *Kankana-ey* in the northwest, are the dominant tribes of Benguet.

Kabayan is a fifth class municipality of Benguet politically subdivided into 13 barangays. It is located about 85 kilometers Northeast of Baguio City. The origin of the present Kabayan lies in a small *Nabaloi* speaking settlement called Embosi that merged near the Agno River. It is believed that it is this settlement that many of the I-Kabayan's cultural practices flourished. According to the 2000 census, it has a population of 12,344 people in 2,063 households.

The municipality is recognized as the seat of *Ibaloi* culture in Benguet Province. Aside from the Bendian performance, Kabayan is also known of their long traditional practice of mummifying their dead. The *Ibaloi*, the dominant ethnolinguistic group of Kabayan, have a long traditional practice of mummifying their dead. Mummification began prior to the Spanish colonization. Individuals from the higher societal stratum of the *Ibaloi* tribe of Kabayan used to be mummified through a long ritual process over a long period of time. During the Spanish period, Christianity spread and took a foothold in the mountains of Benguet and the practice of mummification and cave burial was abandoned. The remains are then placed in wooden coffins and interred in man-made burial niches in rocks or rock shelters and/or natural caves. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage in 2006 have identified more than 200 man-made burial caves and 15 of which contain preserved human mummies.

Kabayan also owns the widest territory of

Mt. Pulag, the third highest mountain in the Philippines and the highest in Luzon with 9,610 feet elevation.

Respondents of the Study

There were two groups who were interviewed in the study. The first group was the key informants from the following groups: community elders; teachers; and the Local Government Unit of Kabayan. The second was 50 community members who either actively participated or observed the staged performance of Bendian initiated by the Kabayan-LGU.

In addition, the respondents were purposively selected based on the following criteria: their involvement in the staged performance either as observer or participant for two to three consecutive years.

The 50 respondents were characterized as to their age, sex, and civil status, educational background, occupation, and years of stay in Kabayan.

Based on their profile, 44 percent belong to age bracket 15-35 followed by 36 percent from 36 to 55 years. Twenty percent were between 56 to 75 years old. There were more female respondents in the study.

According to civil status, 27 or 54 percent were married while 23 or 46 percent were single.

As to educational attainment, 18 finished their college education followed by nine who reached secondary school education but did not graduate. Only one member/respondent had elementary school education.

In terms of occupation, the respondents were again evenly distributed as follows: 13 are farmers; 12 are govern-



ment employees working as staff and members of the local government unit of Kabayan; 10 are high school students; eight are teachers; five are plain housewives; two are entrepreneurs.

With regards to their years of stay in Kabayan, 33 of the respondents stayed in Kabayan for 21 years and above while only 17 stayed for 20 years and below.

Data Gathering

The researcher gathered the data and other pertinent information personally with the help of three enumerators and documentors. Formulation of questions for the interview schedule was based on two working papers: for the development communication questions of the study, they were based on the Integrated Model of Communication for Social Change developed by John Hopkins University’s Center for Communication Programs; for questions pertaining to cultural integrity, they were based on the framework developed by the Episcopal Commission on Indigenous Peoples (ECIP). The said framework was developed with the continuous dialogue and interventions of the ECIP with the different indigenous groups in the Philippines through the years, which merit them to be used as a reference in the study pertaining to cultural integrity. Accounts from literatures and personal interview with the authors and selected elders in the community were also conducted.

Data gathering was conducted in the months of August to September 2009.

Data Gathering Instruments

Generally, this study used qualitative approaches in data gathering.

To obtain pertinent information on how the *Bendian* evolved as a staged ritual, archive retrieval and literature reviews were conducted. They were supplemented by interviews with key informants who are known



elders in the community.

Purposive sampling was used in selecting respondents based on their knowledge and participation in the staged performance. Interview schedule using a structured questionnaire was the main instrument in gathering the needed data. This was designed as a tool in gathering data needed in this study.

Part one of the interview schedule includes a profile of the respondent which includes their name, sex, age, civil status, educational attainment, and occupation. Part two includes four sets that would check the dimensions of cultural integrity manifested through the staged Bendian. Part three includes the perceived challenges towards the development of cultural integrity from the respondent’s experience/s.

Focus Group Discussion and process documentation was also used to validate the gathered data through the interview schedule.

Statistical Analysis

All information gathered were consolidated, tabulated, presented, and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, and means.

The chi-square test was also used to determine the relationship of the respondent’s socio-demographic profile to their perception on the observation of community reflection, intergenerational ties, sense of being, and sense of doing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Development of Bendian as a Stage Performance

The following discussion on the history of Bendian was based on four available literature researched and written by local historians and researchers; the earliest of which was that written in 1920 by a foreign anthropologist who temporarily lived in Kabayan, the other two of

which were also written by “outsiders” or those who do not live or claim residence in Kabayan but whose ethnic origin is *Ibaloi*, and the last one was written by a Kabayan elder/historian. Personal interviews with respected elders and surviving historians were also made and their oral accounts are part of this discussion.

The origin of the *Bendian* as a form of ritual differs from one elder and/or historian to another. Some of these elders like Toren including Moss (1920) in his book, would claim that the first *Bendian* ritual was performed in Embosi, the commonly claimed first settlement of the *Ibaloi* in Kabayan now converted into rice fields. Baucas (2003) in his self-written book and Aguna (key informant) during an interview would also say that it was performed in *Barangay Pacso* then later in Kabayan Barrio.

In a book self-published in 1989 by Florentino A. Merino, a historian and a respected elder in the community, *Bendian*’s execution for healing purposes was first done in Ahin, Ifugao. He emphasized, however, that his version may not be the authentic one as there are many variants in the “origin” of *Bendian*.

Like its origin, there are also different accounts of why and how *Bendian* was performed in the olden days. For some elders like Merino, it was performed before for healing usually initiated by an ailing wealthy person in the community. Part of this celebration is an offering of a head of an enemy to appease the gods. This decision of offering a head usually comes from a *manbunong* who is believed to have the power to intercede with the spirits.

After the successful headtaking activity as part of the ritual called *Chongas*, the community would celebrate a “victory”; thus, the associated term for *Bendian* as a “victory dance”. Headtaking, translated as *Ngayow* in *Ibaloi*, is the mission-practice of taking an enemy’s head charged to *Ibaloi* warriors in the past by their elders to fulfill a vow, custom traits, or omens (Pungayan, 1985).

Later in 2003, Bianco A. Baucas, a retired teacher who taught in Kabayan for many years, claimed in his self-published book that *Bendian* was performed to have a successful and prosperous harvest after a few months of having low production.

Bendian as a Ceremony for Healing

Moss (1920) admitted that undoubtedly the *bendiyan* was used in early days to celebrate the taking of heads as part of the healing ceremony. At the time that Moss’ research was written, headtaking has already been abolished for many years in Benguet but the dance still survives, only in the town of Kabayan.

The association of *Bendian* with head-hunting is a very sensitive issue. As Pungayan (1985) observed, “no *Ibaloi* will accept that his ancestors were headhunters; thus, the association of *Bendian* with headhunting is not that much appreciated by some *ibalois* people. But the problem lies with the nature of the term used. Pungayan (1985) further discussed that head-hunting is translated as *akdo* (meaning “looping the head off”) in *Nabaloi*. This practice, he emphasized, involves the following activities: “*ly-ing* in wait for victims by the trail sides, sudden sweeps on hapless travelers, cutting the head of the stranger – just for the heck of it; all of which, are looked down by the *Ibalois* as simply uncharacteristic of a true *Ibaloimaksil* or warrior.”

On the other hand, head-taking, which is translated as *Ngayow* (meaning “destroying/ extinguishing” another’s life) in *Nabaloi*, is the practice that many *Ibalois* accept as their own “in the distant past” (Pungayan, 1985).

The celebration with the real head then –after a head-taking raid, is what Pungayan (1985) called “The Original *Bendian*”. In his account, the process of taking the head was described as follows:

According to guarded accounts, the raiding party goes on a



mission to a target enemy territory. They bring along provisions that will last them for days. While inside enemy land, they busy themselves spying, inquiring about, and observing the most influential, the most powerful, and the strongest figure in the community. Once the prospect is located, they strike.

The description goes on with the taking of the head to their community followed by the ritual and the dance called *bendian*. The context of this head-taking practice connotes pride on the side of the *Ibaloi* people. The victory of killing/beheading powerful and influential enemies by these *Iballoimaksils* or warriors is what they are celebrating by doing the *Bendian* dance. From the root word *bedhe*, which means fatigue or tiredness, *Bendian* or *bendiyán* literally means, “dance ‘till you tire” as interpreted by the ResearchMate Inc. in 2007 in their video documentary of the *Bendian* dance.

In the account of Merino (personal communication) and in the interview conducted, he agreed with the claim that headtaking is indeed part of the *Bendian* celebration. But, for him, this sensitive and controversial part of *Bendian* is done to heal an ailing person. Later on, a “dummy head” from a tree fern called *tibangdan* replaced the real head. To differentiate it from the first, Pungayan (1985) called it “The Modified *Bendian*”. According to him, this is the most popular version of the *Bendian* and most of the elder-respondents in this study were eyewitnesses of the said variant.

For Merino (1989), although he did not name this variant, he also gave a detailed description of how the modification occurred. He explained that it all started in Ahin, Ifugao when a rich Asibao Cambubo was stricken with an ailment. According to Merino (1989), Cambubo is a well-known man in Ahin, Ifugao.

As narrated, Cambubo’s condition worsened as the days went by. He then called the

great *Galgalon*, the *mambunong* in the area, and asked him to divine the cause of his ailment. *Galgalon* performed a “diagnostic” ritual and determined that Cambubo had to perform the “*bendiyán*” at once.

Cambubo then called on the fiercest and bravest warrior, *Humeklay*, to perform a vital errand for the *bendiyán*. Cambubo asked the warrior to go to the lowlands or anywhere else and bring him back the head of an enemy within nine months. But full nine months passed and they failed to get a head of an enemy. *Humeklay* was ashamed of his failure and did not dare to report this nor present himself to Cambubo, knowing it would aggravate the condition of his chief.

Downcast, but not discouraged, the warrior hatched a scheme. He cut down a big banana trunk and shaped it like a man’s torso. He next fashioned arm like appendages, which he stuck into the banana trunk then he cuts-off, the shoot of a giant fern. Curiously, the shoot of the fern looks like a human head, complete with markings and protrusions that look like a mouth, nose and eyes. The fern shoot even has hair that is very human-like. This is what *Humeklay* attached to this human-like form he had made. To complete the mock enemy figure, he provided it with a spear and shield. It was this dummy that they attacked as their enemy after placing it behind the bushes.

Upon arrival at Ahin, *Humeklay* proceeded to perform the *bendiyán* risking the pretence knowing that Cambubo was on the brink of death. He called *Galgalon*, the native priest, who was accompanied by three elders. *Galgalon* with his men sang the ‘*angba*’ all night long at the backyard of Cambubo. In the early morning, a rooster was prepared. The wings and neck of the rooster was slowly beaten with a short twig until it died. Its feathers were then pulled out and used as decoration in the headgear of the war-rior called *ulol* who would perform the dance.

At six o’clock in the morning, the chicken was eaten without rice. The *angba* singers sang



their chants continuously, then Galgalon ordered the warriors and all those present to shout the first *owag* (shout of approval by the crowd or people who are not participating in the dancing). This was to announce their arrival and coming to the village. The performers slowly made their way towards the house, carefully noting that no animals, fowls or even insects crossed their path. Each observation is interpreted for its good or evil meaning. If these creatures cross or go against the path of the performers, that is taken to mean a bad omen. But if the creatures go in the direction of the performers, that would mean a good sign for the ritual.

Humeklay with his leading men, who are just few meters away from the house of Cambubo, shouted the second and final *owag*, announcing finally the arrival of a successful headtaking. The men and women of the village danced the *bendiyan* the whole day.

Galgalon silently prayed and invoked the good will of the gods. The dancing proceeded for eight days and as the days passed, Cambubo grew steadily stronger, recovering from his ailment. When he was fully recovered, it was only then that Humeklay informed Cambubo of the substitution. It was the twelfth day when Cambubo was back to his old healthy self.

The modification performed by Humeklay in Ahin was heard of and from that time on, the warriors of Kabayan were no longer compelled to take the head of an enemy to perform the *Bendian*.

On the other hand, Aguna Munang, an elder from Kabayan barrio, shared another version of how the headtaking stopped in Kabayan, Benguet. According to her, the last *Bendian* where the real head was offered happened in Embossi, known as the first *Ibaloi* settlement. When a certain rich family felt the need to perform the *Bendian* after three years of having poor rice harvest, a spirit, whom they believed to be *Kabunyan* (god), appeared to the warriors who were dispatched to take a human head from other community. As far as Munang

can remember, when the warriors were on their way to Kabayan after a successful head-taking, the spirit of the god appeared on a rock with a message that that would be the last headtaking mission. After the message was delivered, the wide-expanded-rock was turned upside down and became flat. The message spread over the *barrio* and from then on, the offering of real head was never practiced again.

Another version, perhaps the most emotional of the three, comes from Marcela Toren, an elder from Gusaran, Kabayan. The names of the people involved and the actual place where it happened was concealed as this story is considered *piju* or *pejew*, meaning forbidden, or in this particular situation, to talk about it is prohibited. Toren's version is narrated below.

During the last attempt to take a head for the *Bendian*, something very strange happened. The warriors who were dispatched for headtaking in the lowlands were not able to take the desired head. In desperation, and because they would like to fulfill their vow, they took the head of the owner of the hut where they used to rest and stay whenever they go on with this particular mission.

When they returned, the *Bendian* was immediately celebrated. In the middle of the ceremony, the wife of the man whose head they've taken arrived in Kabayan. While she stood on a rock overlooking the village, she wailed:

*Adda pinggan ko nga nangnanganam, sika
nga nang-ala ti ulo ni lakay ko. Adda
kutsarak nga inus-usar mo; Ngem apay?
Adda ules ko nga in-ululesmo...*

(Translated version)

*I have plates that you
used to share meals with
us,
You, who took the head
of my husband,*



*I have the spoon that you used.
Why did you do this?
I have the blanket that comforted you.*

The entire village was ashamed and from then on, the abridgement that Pungayan (1985), Merino (1989) and Munang discussed herein started.

Bendian as a Ceremony for Agricultural Prosperity

As compared to the first version of its execution, this version of performing *Bendian* is what is common to most elders in Kabayan and it is what is taught to the younger generations nowadays. As narrated by Aguna Munang, the offering of enemy’s head before as part of the *Bendian* ritual is done to appease the spirits who is causing poor rice harvest in the community.

Munang added that wealthy family in the community is initiating the performance since performing such ritual requires butchering of numerous animals for rations. This proves that *Bendian* is one of the most expensive ceremonies that the Kabayan people perform.

Baucas (2003) further discussed that based on his personal interactions with some respected elders of Kabayan like his interview with Oras Disok, an old *manbunong* for the *Bendian* , the start of the ceremony is when the warriors would arrive with the head of an enemy. It was an old native belief that they would prosper economically when they succeed in killing an enemy and has a “victory” celebration by dancing with the head of said victim. With this “victory” celebration, they believed that their plants would be productive and their animals would also easily increase in number.

This “victory” celebration would last for one and a half day characterized by the *Ben-dian* or *sed-sed* dances and butchering of some chicken, dogs, and pigs for offering and not for food. The whole commu-nity participates this cel-

ebration in.

Munang accounted that the substitution of the real human head to an improvised human head, according to their ancestors, was still effective because they have asked their gods to allow them to do so. This was supported by the book of Baucas (2003) in his interview with other elders that although substitution is being done, in their prayers, they still invoked the assistance of the spirits of the dead *manbunong* and their dead ancestors who have been practicing the real headtaking activities to make the modification as effective as the original practice.

Baucas (2003) further described how *Bendian* is performed for agricultural prosperity below:

“The practice of performing this celebration starts with the butchering of a pig in the evening of the first day. The playing of gongs and drums will also start in that same evening until the following day. The actual dancing of the *Bendian* or the *sed-sed* dance starts in the morning of the second day of the celebration.

Upon the arrival of the three warriors or headhunters with the head of an enemy in the morning, the *Bendian* will be lead by the three headhunters they called *ulol*. The leadsman among the three headhunters is called *kabasilja*. The leadsman leads the *sed-sed* or *bendiyan* dance throughout the occasion proving his leadership in headtaking. During the celebration day, three or more pigs are butchered and eaten by the celebrants.

The third day of this ritual is the end of the affair. There is only the dancing by pairs and not the *sed-sed* dance. After the crowd has eaten their lunch on this day, they are allowed to go home.”

The Last Bendian Ceremony

In the record of Merino, the last performance of *Bendian* as a ceremony in its entirety, for reasons still unknown, is in Eddet, Kabayan



in 1950 by Kabayan's "grand old man" Henry A. Kamora, a descendant of a Japanese and one of the soldiers of pirate Limahong who de-serted his master and stayed in Kabayan Bar-rio. The whole town partook of the festivities and the food. This was a two-day affair but the rites lasted eight days more. In Pungayan's record, this celebration was noted in 1949; this would be Kamora's second and last celebration since there was a celebration listed in 1943 based on his record of the performances in Kabayan.

In terms of dates of celebration, Pungayan's 1985 record noted *Do-ba Suedti* who celebrated the *Bendian* in 1980 in Bashoy Kabayan to be the last, and Merino's 1989 account mentioned Calsina Calabias who celebrated on November 11, 1989 in Pacso to have been the last in the list. According to Merino, Calsina had to do it because the family felt the need of doing the ritual based on personal instinct since their lineage is the one performing the said ritual. This feeling is what they refer to as the "bite of *Bendian*". During the ritual, the family offered to the gods two big carabaos, thirteen pigs, two chickens, several cavans of rice, socks of sweet potatoes, two baskets of gabi, sixteen jars of rice wine, and different kinds of clothing aside from other incidental expenses. The celebration rites lasted for four days when the *ulol* (warriors and lead dancers) were released from the house of Calsina.

Merino estimated that there were more or less 1,200 attendees during this celebration. Seven barangays have been given one pig each which they butchered.

Unfortunately, as Merino can remember, no one bothered to inquire from the elders about the ceremonies, their proper performance or the sequence. No one also bothered to ask the elders with questions and details of its performance.

Bendian as a Medium for Cultural Appreciation and Tourism Promotion

The most recent *Bendian* variant is what Pungayan called "The Stage Bendian" and what

Merino pertains to as *Bendian* as a "performance". Merino confirmed that since the *Bendian* ceremony started to be partly performed and not in its entirety sometime in the late 1980s, he required its performance in selected elementary and high schools during his term as Mayor in Kabayan. Among the first schools to initiate this was the Kamora National High School.

As far as he can remember, Merino required the pupils and students to perform the *Bendian* during fiestas and special occasions. Since then, students were required by the school perform the *Bendian* focusing on its dance element; thus, the common term to outsiders as the "*Bendian* dance".

The pronouncements of Merino were attested by most of the respondents who were then elementary and high school students during his term as Mayor.

Since outsiders consider *Bendian* as one of the most beautiful "dance," different cultural dance groups are conducting its performance outside the community. However, with so much variations and changes to its execution, some of the community members, especially the elders, felt that part of their culture is being adulterated and romanticized, as narrated by an LGU-respondent.

Other respondents added that appreciation of the younger generations toward the practice is decreasing as affected by external factors such as modern dances, new technologies, the media (television, internet, etc), education, and even religion.

Another respondent noted that "there is a chance that the next generation will forget the dance if not taught properly today. That is why there is a need to continue to teach it to the youth while elders who are willing to teach the dance are still alive."

Such reasons were also distinguished by the teacher-respondents as



problems arising regarding the conduct of *Bendian*.

In 2007, on the event of the municipality’s Foundation Day, a family member of the Aroco clan coordinated with the LGU to perform a *pachit*. *Pachit* is otherwise referred to in English as “a rich man’s feast”. According to Moss, “while *bendiyán* was previously used to celebrate the taking of heads, the *pachit* was used to celebrate the cementing of peace”. In addition, it is believed that the *pachit* as a public ritualized feast will bring riches and long life to the giver. Thus, the *pachit* which is the most expensive ceremony celebrated by an *Ibaloi* can only be performed by the wealthy who can bear the expense. However, as time passed and people became more practical, the meaning and purpose of this ceremony weakened.

As to why the Aroco clan wanted to perform *pachit* was narrated by James Aroco, President of the Onjon ni Kaskuran ni Kabayan (ONKASKA), a non-government indigenous people’s organization in Kabayan. A female family member who is married to a New Zealander, has been relating the said ritual to her husband. The husband in turn became interested not only to witness the ritual but also to give the feast. Through ONKASKA, the said plan of celebrating *pachit* at the same time the *Bendian*, was well received by the LGU and thus executed in Kamora Elementary School as planned.

With the above mentioned problems narrated by the respondents, the LGU and the community saw the need to stage the ritual. These challenges lead to the staging of the practice during the eco-tourism month every April of the year in the municipality.

As implied earlier, the major purpose of the celebration was for thanksgiving. Later the secondary purpose was put forward by ONKASKA as part of the agreement with the LGU, that the celebration would especially feature the *Bendian* and document



it so that there would be available reference on how *Bendian* should be performed. The *Bendian* would serve as a main feature of the Foundation Week to attract tourist to go to Kabayan. The celebration gained numerous positive responses from the community and outsiders (local and foreign tourists) and with the support from the community, the annual staging of *Bendian* becomes part of the Kabayan LGU’s tourism program.

Staged Bendian as a Medium and as a Tool

Indirectly, *Bendian* is seen by most of the key informants as a medium to communicate to the world the rich culture of the Kabayan people as well as to “correct” misinterpretations of the generated meanings and adulteration of its steps and dance positions to one of its famous ceremonies. To the LGU, *Bendian* is seen as a potential tool to attract tourists to visit the eco – and cultural spots of Kabayan. As rituals could be a form of communicating something with others, in a broader form, the staged performance of *Bendian* tries now to communicate to the outside world the proud past of Kabayan and to make this past relevant to its development programs.

Today, *Bendian* has become a major calendar event of the municipal government. It started to be staged every founding anniversary of the municipality and during their annual eco-tourism month which is celebrated every April.

An LGU-respondent attested that since its staging, *Bendian* has become a potential “cultural product” of the municipality that enticed tourists to visit the place to learn and have a deeper understanding of the culture of Kabayan. He added that even researchers, both local and foreign, started to visit the place and try to learn and appreciate the said practice.

Merino also stated the same, adding that the openness of the community to stage and/ or perform some part of their culture paved the way for many researchers to study some other cultural practices (songs, folklores, dances,

rituals, norms, beliefs, etc) of the Kabayan people.

The same reaction was given by an outsider (local tourist) - respondent saying that the staging of *Bendian* opened a door for them to learn about the place's history and way of life. She added that it could also open business opportunities for any members of the community since tourists usually look for other items, which they could bring home in their places for souvenir purposes.

Yun *et.al.* (2008) further disclosed that there is little doubt that culture is an important part of the tourism "product" and is one of the factors that can improve the competitiveness of a tourism destination. An examination of the forces shaping the cultural "product" will help identify the reasons why cultural tourism is critical at destinations. Cultural tourism covers all aspects of travel where visitors can learn about another area's history and way of life.

Furthermore, the result of the study corroborates with the findings of Raj (2003) that festivals, in whatever forms, have contributed in the development of culture tourism. Festivals attract culture tourists to local community events to promote cultural exchanges between tourists and residents.

Based on the analysis, the *Bendian* shifted from a "ceremony" to a "performance" as a "medium" and as a "tool". With this shift is the change in its purpose. From a ceremony for healing to a ceremony for agricultural prosperity, *Bendian* now evolved to a stage performance for cultural appreciation and tourism promotion in Kabayan, Benguet.

Symbols in the Bendian Ceremony: The Evolution of Meanings

The symbols associated with the *Ben-dian* ritual changed over the course of time. Based on interview with different stakeholders, these changes were brought about by the arising need and preferences of the members of the

community. School of thoughts support that new symbols easily develop, old ones disappear. In the case of *Bendian*, from ceremony to a per-formance, the symbols and its generated mean-ings likewise changed. These symbols carried a particular meaning, which is only recognized by those who share a particular culture, the Ka-bayan people.

Although not included in the primary pur-pose of the study, changes in some of the sym-bols and meanings associated in *Bendian* was included to demonstrate that such change is a manifestation of community dialogue.

Tables 1 and 2 show some of the common symbols in the *Bendian* ceremony and its generated system of meaning over time according to its purpose. Shown in Table 1 are some of the changes that took place in the Bendian positions. Table 2 shows the direct relationship between the change in purpose and meaning.

The change in meanings could be attributed to the two distinct variants of the *Bendian* performance as discussed earlier – that for healing expressed in the "victory dance" (head taking) and that for agricultural prosperity expressed in "thanksgiving".

Some of the symbols that have generated different meanings are the entrance, the dancing ground, and the eight dancing positions.

Changes in the Meaning of the Bendian Costumes

Colors of ethnic attires often have different meanings in various cultures. This is also true for the Benguet people. Their clothing identifies them from other ethno-linguistic groups in the region. In an interview with some Kabayan elders, before, every accent in the clothing has a meaning. Every lining, design and color depict something related to the lives of the *I-Kabayan* people.

In the earliest *Ben-dian* ceremony, commu-



Table 1. Some changes in the entrance and performance of Bendian

Before	Now
<p>Entrance</p> <p>With the final shout of the <i>owag</i>, led by the native priest, the group has now arrived to the dancing ground. An elder standing near the ceremonial pig, holding the clay jar of rice wine sealed with a broad gabi leaf awaits the first dancer to pierce the gabi-leaf cover of the jar.</p>	<p>Entrance</p> <p>The celebration starts with a grand <i>cañao</i> where the whole town is invited including visitors from the neighboring towns and dignitaries from the province.</p>
<p>A ritual stepping on the pig is being performed symbolizing triumph. The piercing of the gabi leaf used to cover the jar symbolizes the defeat of the enemy. The empty jar is believed to be where the spirit of the enemy is being placed.</p>	<p>Although no more ceremonies are being performed. Still, the entrance of the dance signifies the arrival of the <i>sesed</i> and <i>ulol</i> at the center of the dancing ground carrying with them their spears, shields and the head dummy.</p>
<p>After the ceremony, the <i>sedсед</i> and <i>ulol</i> will now place their materials and other paraphernalia used during the ceremony and <i>angba</i> including the backpack containing the head or fern shoot (simulated enemy's head). After which, the lead man turn to face the dancers, tilts his head slightly to the left, bending his body to the left, carefully listening to the beat of the drums concentrating on a step with his left foot, his right foot posted about two inches from the ground. At the right moment, the lead-man kicks sidewise with his right foot and then continue the left-foot-right-foot movement seeming to hop as he moves on.</p>	<p>Upon arriving at the center, the spears and shields are stacked at the <i>paringal</i> (rack hunger setup at the center of the dancing ground) The performers are already in the ground with a lead dancer who will be shouting the steps to be followed by community dancers.</p> <p>The shout of the <i>owag</i> is led by the chosen elder of the community. An elder standing near the ceremonial pig, holding the clay jar of rice wine sealed with a broad gabi leaf no longer awaits the first dancer to pierce the cover of the jar.</p>
<p>As the dancing starts, the lead-man shouts at the top of his voice the positions that the other dancers will execute.</p>	<p>In some instances, the jar is filled with rice wine and sealed with any covering.</p>

nity people are particular with the color of the ethnic attire each participant should be wearing during the event. Marcela Torren, elder from Barangay Gusaran, Kabayan, emphasized that colors signify the status of the person wearing the *tapis* or *devit* for women or *kuval* or breech-clout for men.

be for women of ordinary status (Figure 1) and the *tapis* with different color combinations like green, red and yellow were worn by people of high status (Figure 4). In the later years, however, a new clothing with a combination of red, white and green (Figure 3) was also used by ordinary women.



According to the owner of the famous Kabayan weaving located at Poblacion, Kabayan, black and white is said to

This is also true with the men's *kuval* or breechclouts wherein ordinary *kuval* is colored dirty white called the *pinangsas* (Figure 2). A *kuval* used by people of high status has a combination of dark blue with red stripes (Figure

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Table 2. Symbols and interpretation in the *Bendian* ceremony according to Merino

<i>Bendian</i> as a Ceremony for Healing (Victory Dance)	<i>Bendian</i> as a Ceremony for Agricultural Prosperity (Thanksgiving)
The Entrance of dancers	
Call for celebration. The battle is over, we have overcome	Preparation of seedlings/rice seed
The dancing ground	
Symbolizes the area for celebration after a successful attack to the enemy	Symbolizes the rice field
Dancing Positions	
<i>Pinesbikan</i> – “Attack and takeover for difficult enemy target.”	<i>Pinesbikan</i> – “Rice transplanting”
<i>Salawasao</i> – “We announce to the world that we are the conquerors and brave warriors.”	<i>Salawasao</i> – “The seedling is sprouting ” (Tillering stage)
<i>Kinitangan</i> – “Relax. We can now rest for we have won the battle. Peace is with us.”	
<i>Kinikiyan</i> – “Captured enemy, better for you to serve us than be our slaves.”	<i>Kinikiyan</i> – “Time to weed the rice field for a better harvest” (Weeding)
<i>Inushongan</i> – “Protection of the community by men warriors and of women who are also protecting the children.”	<i>Inushongan</i> – “The plant has a grain, ready for harvest.”/ “Receive the blessing from above” (Maturing stage)
<i>Inodiyán</i> – “Turn-over or reverse to confuse the enemy in protecting the village or community.”	<i>Inodiyán</i> – “Time to go back and check the rice field and prepare for the harvest” (Harvest preparation)
<i>Pinadjusan</i> – “Fortune. Warriors carrying the spoils/ benefits from the war, and are now brought home for the village to enjoy.”	<i>Pinadjusan</i> – “Time to harvest what we sown. Carry at your back and bring it home for the family and village to enjoy” (Harvesting)
<i>Innabaya</i> – “I am here now bringing you the spoils I captured from the enemy. Put up your hands and receive the spoils as proof of our victory. Let us now celebrate the <i>Bendian</i> dance as victory.”	<i>Innabaya</i> – “Offer the harvest to the family for survival” (Sharing)

5). However, other elders would attest that there are no other kind of *kuval* except of the dirty white, pure black/dark blue and the combination of dark blue with red stripes.

However, in a study conducted by Benguet State University on Benguet attires, the researchers attested that the old folks and even the Ilocano weavers cannot disclose the designs and figures because the knowledge was passed on orally. The generated meanings of these figures were hard to recall by the elders even until it became a part of the practice among

Benguet *Ibalois* and *Kankana-eyes*. This process is locally termed as *tinmaru-tarun* (Alupias et.al., 2009).

But the associated meaning and use of various colors have changed over the years. In the latest presentation of *Bendian*, the color of attire being used by participants depends on what the community would prefer and on its availability. Also, any of the three (for women) or



two (for the men) attires could be used by the participants regardless of their status in the society. But as to its availability, the most common attire used by women participants is the clothing with a combination of green, red, and yellow. All men use a *kuval* with a combination of dark blue with red stripes during the performance. Red *kuval* is also a common color used during staged performances outside the area.

According to one weaver from the place, participants prefer the colored clothing because of its aesthetic contribution to the presentation. This was supported by most of the respondents during the interview, some of them attesting that they would prefer to use the colored ones since it is more attractive and eye-catching. Availability of the old clothing in the community also affected the retention of the generated meanings through time, as attested by some of the elder-respondents. This shows that the cultural meaning attached to the clothing was no longer observed and the shift in choice is already a matter of aesthetics. Perhaps, this is still directly related to the nature of the change in the purpose of *Bendian* as a performance and not as a ritual.

Based on the foregoing accounts, it could be noted that for a certain time and period, the community felt that the color should be changed. For the purpose of presentation, the need for the clothing to be more pleasing and attractive urged the weavers to weave a colorful design regardless of its meaning being associated with it by the past generations. This results to a new cultural product; therefore, its cultural meaning evolved. The old context of clothing and color symbol is not already as significant as compared before; the meaning has already changed from a dichotomy of social status to a costume that would represent the totality of Kabayan's culture.

In the present times, the old context of class system associated with the clothing of the *iKabayans*, although rec-

ognized by the present generation, is no longer lived by the community. To fit the present need and wants of the community, they migrated from the old context of associating it to class status to a new one with new generated meaning, which is to present the dance with aesthetic value.

These changes in the context of meaning were briefly discussed by Kraft (1996). He explained that any sacredness lies only from the meanings generated by the people themselves when they are used. These generated meanings could be changed based on the choice and how the community people interpret it in their own context.

Community Dialogue and Collective Action in the Evolution of Bendian

Figuroa *et al* (2002), through their concept paper of the Integrated Model of Communication for Social Change (IMCFSC), explained that social change or any collective change in the community for that matter can occur through the important process of community dialogue.



Figure 1. Clothing for women with ordinary status



Figure 2. Clothing for men with ordinary status



Figure 3. Clothing for women with ordinary status (an alternative of the black and white color combination)



Figure 4. Clothing for women with high status



Figure 5. Clothing for men with high status

The model describes a dynamic, iterative process that starts with a “catalyst” or “stimulus” that can be external or internal to the community. This catalyst leads to a dialogue within the community that when effective, leads to collective action and the resolution of a common problem or issue. In the case of Kabayan, this process of change was properly demonstrated in each of the change in *Bendian*. The following discussion will be focusing more of how it occurred in the final *Bendian* variant.

Following the IMCFSC framework, the dialogue is first initiated by external and internal stimuli/catalyst. In Toynbee’s model of Social Change, this is called “challenges”. With the staged *Bendian*, a combination of internal and external are represented by the members of the community who felt that part of their culture is being adulterated (i.e. they “feel hurt” when they see that the *Bendian* being performed outside of Kabayan is not “properly or correctly” executed). On the other hand, the following are the two identifiable internal stimuli: the “felt” need by the community people to present the “authentic” *Bendian* for the cultural appreciation of the youth in the community as well as the “outsiders”, and opportunity “seen” by the LGU to utilize *Bendian* to promote the rich culture of Kabayan thereby promoting its tourism program as well. These were all the trigger factors that enable the stages of dialogue to happen. These stages and processes included for each stage are as follows:

Identification of the Problem. As identified in the earlier discussion, the feeling of some members of the community that part of their culture is being adulterated, the decreasing interest of the youth toward the practice, the challenge to perform what is “authentic”, the need to perform the practice for cultural appreciation and awareness of both insiders and outsiders, and the need to promote the tourism program of the LGU are some of the common problems identified.



Involvement of Leaders and Stakeholders. The dialogue on the resolution of these problems was made possible with by formal and informal talks, discussions, meetings of con-cerned members of the LGU, elders, educators and the youths.

Clarification of Perception. During the consultation processes with the LGU and other community stakeholders, different perceptions of the problem were seen among the different members of the community. According to some respondents, some members of the community, especially the elders, thought that staging of the *Bendian* would be unacceptable since the ceremony entails proper observance of it. However, some of the elders openly accepted the idea.

Originally, the *Bendian* is being performed with the following performers: *sed-sed* (lead man), the *ulol* (lead dancers or warriors), the *angba* (Signers lead by the native priest), a cook and servers of food. This group was the main actors aside from the gongs and drum players (musical players).

Also, in any ritual administered by the native priest, the elder insists that the taboo be strictly observed during celebrations. According to some elders, it is believed that the effective healing process of any ritual lies in the firm observance of the taboo. These observed as dos and don’ts in performing the ritual.

As for the materials, the following are prepared and used during the ritual: animals to be butchered, jars of rice wine, chickens, headgears, arm-rings, turban rack, spears and shields, blankets, and other utensils.

But today, with its staging, taking aside the ceremonial ritual, the *Bendian* may only require the following participants as approved and accepted by the community during dialogues: the *sedsed* or lead-man; the *ulol* or lead dancers; the gongs and *solibao* players; and the followers. Attires required are *sadey (tapis)*

for the women and *kuval* (g-string) for the men. For the lead dancers, additional ornaments may include spears, shields, headgears of bamboo and feathers, arm rings, turbans, and the head dummy. Musical instruments may include *kalsa*, *pinsak*, *solibao*, *kimbal* and *tiktik*.

For outside performances where musical instruments and players are not that available, the use of recorded music is now allowed.

According to Kenneth Kelcho, the designated local history coordinator of the municipality, most of those who accepted the idea of staging are those educated elders and members of the community. The wide acceptance of the staging was also due to the influence of religion in the area. Since most of the Christian denominations condemn the practice of rituals in their teachings, the community accepted the idea of having a staged version so as to avoid the ritual part thereby making it acceptable and comfortable with some Christian faith.

These reactions of the community members, the debate, negotiations, and setting of boundaries did not necessarily occur simultaneously in one event, rather in many separate and informal setting. The event of staging of the *Bendian* itself became the floor for dialogue and negotiations: these were manifested during rehearsals, in the dancing ground, during eating time, and in direct or indirect comments heard, written, or texted some members of the LGU and the community.

For the *Bendian*, there are two identified major source of conflict, the first is the conflict on its purpose and the second is the conflict on the symbols specifically on the dance positions and its generated meanings.

The conflict on the purpose was further discussed in the earlier part of this study. Meanwhile, the arising conflict pertaining to the dance position is the inclusion of two steps during its performance in 2008 being questioned by other elders of Kabayan barrio. As they (*i-Kabayan* barrio) claim to be the original locale

where the *Bendian* started, they also claim that originally, there were only eight dancing positions in the *Bendian*; however, other elders from other barrios would insist that the *Bendian* has ten positions. Others explained that because there were only eight dancing positions documented in some literatures (like that of Merino, 1989) the community just followed it.

Marcela Toren however disputed the claims of other elders in Kabayan barrio that the two steps were just add-ons from Gusaran. She insisted that such were really part of the *Bendian* dance positions, based on her own research and as far as what she can remember during its execution initiated by the late Kamora where she became a part of it.

These two steps refer to *Pa'nga* (horn of the carabao) and the *Siningpayan*. *Pa'nga* represents the carabao that helps the farmers to plow their rice fields as well as hauling rice from the field. The latter represents the beauty of the ricefield when all the rice starts to turn golden yellow and the stems are fully erected). Torren added that the *siningpayan* position could be executed after *kinikiyan* (weeding of the ricefield in preparation for the harvest) while the *pa'nga* could be inserted anywhere in the dance positions.

With the staging of *Bendian*, several changes and modifications were made to suit the need of the community.

Consensus on Action. Kenneth Kelcho attested that during these cultural congresses, many of the participants became aware of the challenges with regard to their cultural practices. Most of these were identified in the earlier discussions.

These congresses were initiated by the Kabayan Cultural Organization for Supporting, Developing, and Empowering the Youth (KOS-DEY), a local organization of young professionals and youth from Kabayan founded in 2005 by Dr. Ryan C. Guinaran, a med-



ical practitioner who traces his roots in Kabayan.

Based on record, KOSDEY has mobilized more than 500 individuals and many local groups and sectors in and from Kabayan to accomplish pioneering youth-initiated programs in the municipality. Its strategies include cultural research camps, cultural workshops, contests and fora, KOSDEY Cultural Digest publications written in *Nabaloi*, *Kalanguya*, Filipino and English, and the annual Kabayan Cultural Congress, aside from pursuing several innovative projects in support of cultural preservation and promotion.

From these congresses, Kelcho noted that most of the community members became open to performances of some of their cultural practices specifically their rituals for the sake of cultural awareness, conservation, and appreciation.

Kelcho also admitted that it was during these congresses that perceptions and ideas were clarified and different points of view were rectified. It can be noted here that a consensus was made possible through a dialogue.

Action Plan. With the concerted effort of the LGU and local groups in the community, the staging of *Bendian* was understood and accepted by the community.

After its acceptance, a specific timetable for the activity was mapped out with the initiative of the LGU, ONKASKA and the stakeholders as attested by James Aroco. This was done to help the community to have a clear view of solving the problems and/or issues identified.

Collective Action

The collective action portion of the framework describes the process of effectively executing the action plan for the staging of *Bendian* in contemporary Kabayan, Benguet. To understand this further, the study tried to analyze the processes employed by the Kabayan LGU in staging *Bendian*.

Shown in Figure 6 is the communication process applied by the Kabayan LGU during the first staging of *Bendian* in 2007.

The process as indicated by the figure started with a meeting of the members of the Kabayan local government units until the evaluation.

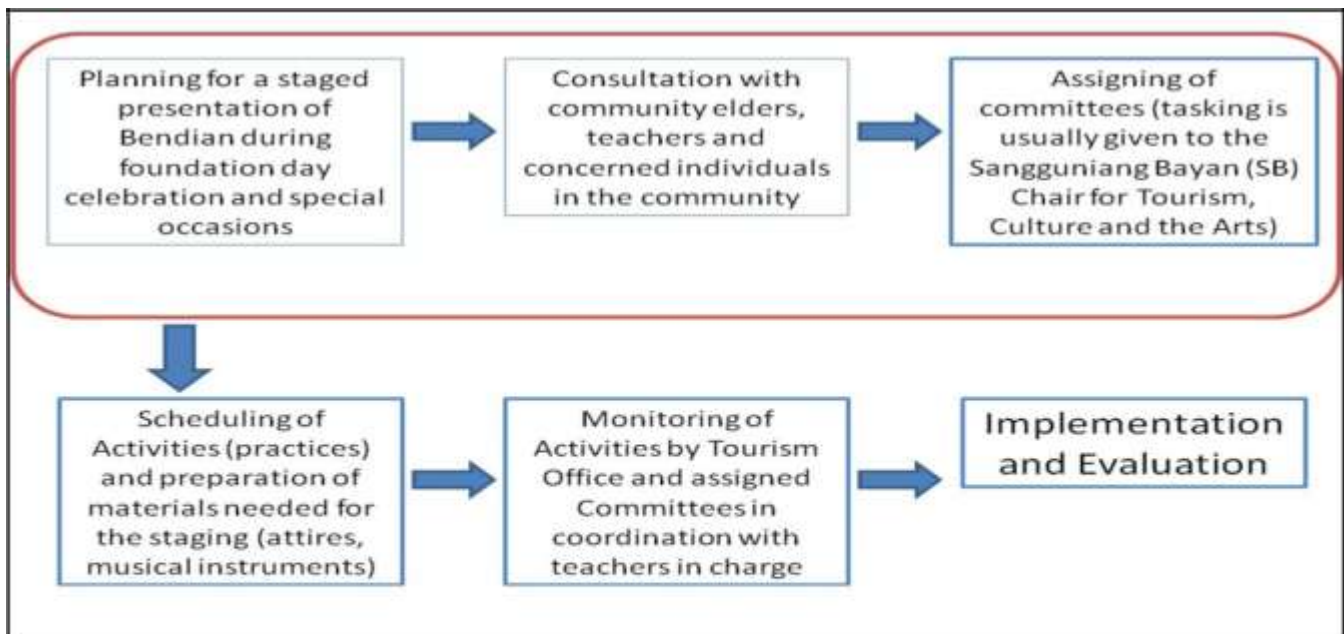


Figure 6. Process of staging the first Bendian in Kabayan, Benguet

Meeting/ Planning. According to Engineer Berry Sangao Jr., Municipal Tourism Officer, the staging of *Bendian* as initiated by the Kabayan LGU started with an idea of repackaging the practice for performance sake as part of the Eco-tourism Month. This was laid on the table in semi-formal meeting of the LGU.

During these meetings, the group decided to stage the dance annually during the *Pachit chi Kabayan* and during the Founding Anniversary of the Municipality for the following purposes: for tourism; for educational purposes (while elders are still present to teach the dance); and to maintain and conserve the beautiful culture of Kabayan.

According to the Tourism officer, there is already an allotted budget for tourism activities and part of these tourism activities is the staging of *Bendian*.

Based on the Local Government Code of 1991, the Sangguniang Bayan, as legislative body of the municipality, shall approve activities and appropriate funds for the general welfare of the municipality and its inhabitants pursuant to Section 16 of the Code. This means that the approval of the activity and funding of the Kabayan LGU was covered in the Local Government Code of 1991.

However approved, the need for consulting the elders was conducted still for several purposes.

Consultation with Elders. This part of the process was further discussed in the earlier part of this discussion. This is further conducted to ensure full cooperation and participation of the members of the community. Engr. Sangao added that consultations were done to make sure that community elders were properly informed about their roles in the staging so that they can take part in shaping the plan.

To prove these claims of the LGU, an interview with the elder-key informants and teachers was conducted. Out of the ten respondents,

only one elder cannot remember having been asked by any LGU regarding its staging; however, she was called to participate and help teach the steps to the other participants.

Assigning of Committees. After the approval of the community, the LGU assigned committees to oversee the implementation. Unlike in submitting a proposal, the LGU did not undergo several readings, revisions and public hearing. Right away, the tasking was given to the Sangguniang Bayan chair for Tourism, Culture and the Arts. A working group was created under this office. Also, the Kamora National High School was given the authority to plan on their own regarding the implementation of the staged dance since students will be mostly involved in the activity. At this point, presentation of the allotted budget for the activity was done.

Scheduling of Activities. Part of this process was the scheduling of rehearsals, venue for rehearsals, designation of musical players, and preparation of costumes, among other pertinent activities related to the staging. Rehearsals were usually scheduled twice before the final presentation.

Implementation and Monitoring. This step refers to the actual execution of the action plan and its monitoring. According to the key informants, both the LGU-committee in-charge and the teachers involved do monitoring of rehearsals and post activities. Things being monitored are the conditions of the elders and participants; attires used and musical instruments to be used. Also, the LGU monitors the animals and other materials and utensils to be used during the festivity.

Evaluation. After the implementation, evaluation of the finances, performance and problems encountered were done. Evaluation on the performance is merely based on what other people would say regarding the staging or their feedback on the said event.



The participation of the teachers in the staging of *Bendian* was previously emphasized by the LGU. To note, LGU claimed that the teachers have been very instrumental in the planning and implementation of the dance.

These claims of the LGU-respondents were corroborated by the responses given during the Focus Group Discussion with the selected teachers and principal of the Kamora National High School. The teachers confirmed that they are usually assigned by the LGU to practice and monitor the students' performances every staged performance of *Bendian*.

Since the LGU claimed that they also give full authority to the teachers to plan regarding the implementation of the staged dance, the teacher-respondents were asked to enumerate the processes they employed in the first staging of the *Bendian*.

According to them, the task of organizing the students and scheduling of the rehearsals are being handled by the Music, Arts, Physical Education and Health (MAPEH) Department. MAPEH teachers are automatically in-charge of planning as directed by the head of the school (principal). Lecture and demonstration of *Bendian* dance is being integrated in this subject and elders are initiated to such.

Continuous consultations with elders are conducted before each performance. This is very possible since elders are actively involved during each performance.

After the implementation, evaluation is done by getting feedbacks from the participants and other viewers within the community.

Enabling Factors that Influenced the Staging of *Bendian*



Based on the interviews, it was noted that there were different factors that influenced the

staging of *Bendian* in contemporary Kabayan noted in the study based on. These changes serve as the “trigger” factors as described in the Integrated Model of Communication for Social Change. The model further describes a dynamic, iterative process that starts with a “catalyst/ stimulus” that can be external or internal to the community. This catalyst leads to a dialogue within the community that when effective, leads to collective action and the resolution of a common problem.

Intervention of the Local Government Unit of Kabayan, Benguet

The intervention of the LGU was further emphasized in the earlier part of this discussion according to key informants. However, to get the side of the respondents, an interview schedule was conducted.

Based on the interviews, all (50) of the respondents recognized the role of the local government unit in staging the *Bendian* in the community since, according to them; they are in the authority to do so.

A statement by one of the respondents could support this that “LGUs are the right institution to stage the *Bendian* since they have the power to implement it.”

Recognizing this power, the LGU-respondents said that they are also involving and empowering the education sector for the implementation of the plan. Moreover, they are allocating budget for the activity; however, they admitted that not all expenses could be covered by the LGU budget, the reason why they are still seeking donations from outsiders and “*balikbayans*”.

In sociological view, politics as part of the social institution is always considered as a factor for rural development. Generally, politics is a type of human interaction that involves one party acquiring and exercising power over the other. Part of this power of the political institutions is to allocate resources among and plan for the citizens of the society (Thio, 1986).

In Toynbee's Cyclical Theory of social change, Toynbee explained that a successful response usually hinges on the actions of creative minority or individuals who developed new ideas and lead masses to meet the challenge. These individuals could be the local government unit who are recognized by the community as the power holders. In the case of Kabayan, the environmental and socio-political changes that occurred over time resulted in the modification in the performance of the *Bendian* including the shift of power holders.

Education

Aside from LGU, the respondents recognized the big role of formal education in the staging of *Bendian*.

Education is one of the social institutions in our contemporary society. One can see that education is important to society and individuals alike as it functions in providing knowledge and skills necessary to maintain society.

In an interview with the student-respondents, they claimed that they were able to learn the *Bendian* steps in their school as part of their requirement in their MAPEH subjects. Also, they are being encouraged to join during especial occasions and invitations. These presentations are those that are being initiated either by the LGU or the school itself.

The teachers' response proved this data noting that they are really requiring their students to learn this aspect of their culture for their own advantage.

According to Lily M. Aroco, School Principal of the Kamora National High School (during the conduct of the study), in response to the call of the Department of Education (DepEd) Main office to start implementing the indigenization of the curriculum, they are starting to incorporate indigenous or traditional knowledge and practices in their curriculum. Aside from the *Bendian* and other cultural dances, they are also incorporating indigenous stories, songs, poems, and

riddles in some of their subjects.

The public high schools are now being mandated by the DepEd to include some of the indigenous knowledge, systems and practices in the curriculum also known as the "indigenization of the curriculum".

This indigenization of the secondary education curriculum focuses on the relevance of the curriculum to the local culture. It took off with a national workshop on the development of curriculum frameworks and sample lesson plans in eight (8) subject areas.

Economic Condition of the Community

Another influencing factor under this category is the economic status of the community. In social studies, researchers are more interested in the social aspect of economy- on how people work, how their occupation affect their lives, and how economy is related to other aspect of society.

In the interviews, it can be described that the performance of *Bendian* depends on the capability of a certain family to cash out big amounts for the needed materials, animals, and other food for the people who will participate in the ritual. According to Aguna Munang (an elder from Kabayan Barrio), after the last stage of the *Bendian* performed in Pacso by the Calabias family (as discussed earlier), no one ever dared to perform the ceremony since it is very expensive. It could be assumed that the high cost of the ceremony pushed the community to accept the staging of *Bendian* by the Kabayan LGU.

Tourism

It is also interesting to note that tourism was considered by most of the respondents as a common influencing factor in staging the *Bendian*. One LGU emphasized that tourism could be an avenue for "cultural conservation". In this case,



the staging of *Bendian* is considered as part of the cultural tourism being showcased by the Municipality of Kabayan.

Cultural tourism is one of the largest and fastest-growing global tourism markets. Culture and creative industries are increasingly being used to promote destinations and enhance their competitiveness and attractiveness. As noted by the Kabayan tourism officer, many local government units all over the country are now actively developing their tangible and intangible cultural assets as a means of developing comparative advantages in an increasingly competitive tourism marketplace. This, he added, is to create local distinctiveness in the face of globalization.

An interview with some residents also noted the role of tourism in improving their economic status. According to the entrepreneur-respondents, the staging of *Bendian* in Kabayan resulted in the mushrooming of small, family-run and 'value for money' businesses like lodges, food and beverages (wine), restaurants, among others. Personal observations and ocular inspection conducted by the researcher supported these claims.

Several coffee and souvenir shops, stalls, lodging are now starting to thrive in the community especially during fiestas where the staging of *Bendian* is being conducted.

These responses of the respondents strengthen the role of staged *Bendian* in boosting tourism in contemporary Kabayan.

Manifestation of Cultural Integrity in the Stage Performance of Bendian

In the ECIP framework, there are two levels of manifestations on how cultural integrity should be seen: the group and the individual level.



At the group level, the most obvious would be the tribe's being able to act on situations

and circumstances as one entity consistent with its culture. Another indicator would be the healthy functioning of the tribe's way of doing - the systems and processes - of the tribe. A third would be the tribe's capacity to adjust to changing situations and the contemporary times as a community while being able to maintain those aspects that keep them one.

At the individual level, cultural integrity is manifested by the members in their clear sense of identity that is manifested through their practice, protection and nurturing of their culture; self-ascription and loyalty to their tribe; balance of individual needs, ideas and aspirations with the needs, collective ideals and aspirations of the tribe; rootedness in their heritage and history; sense of responsibility as a descendant and as an ancestor.

To check if cultural integrity is manifested in the performance of Staged *Bendian*, different indicators were considered based on the ECIP framework. Four fundamental community processes that help in sustaining cultural integrity were considered in the study as follows: community reflection, intergenerational ties, sense of being, and sense of doing.

Fifty respondents were purposively selected for this part of the study; 44 of whom were direct participants while only six were observers and/or spectators.

Community Reflection

Based on the result, all the respondents agreed that they were able to meet with friends and tell stories with other people in the community and even from outside areas during the gathering. Also, 49 or 98% claimed that they were able to feel the spirit of oneness during the performance of *Bendian* while 48 or 96% said that they were able to value all the good sharing they have acquired during the gathering.

According to the ECIP framework, without these venues to synergize, the oneness of the tribe is threatened; cultural integrity is

threatened; however, with the figure, one can say that cultural integrity is not threatened in the stage performance of *Bendian*.

The figures indicate that majority of the respondents responded positively to the statements given. This further implies that cultural integrity is being manifested in the staged *Bendian* based on the high community reflection.

The ECIP framework states that for a group to survive through time and to be able to birth a shared culture as one entity, one needs to undergo the following together: experience events from day to day living; share these experiences with each other; processing these experiences; and incorporate what they have learned into their way of life by living it out.

The above processes, as the ECIP notes, are usually done during moments when community members gather together to 'tell stories'.

Intergenerational Ties

All of the respondents saw how the elders were respected during the performance with 49 or 98% saying that the youth and/or organizers consult the elders before and during the performance. This supports the statements of some of the organizers that they often consult the elders regarding the performance of the *Bendian*.

Meanwhile, elders and organizers were observed explaining the importance of the activity to the younger ones (44 or 88%). According to the participants, this is usually done during rehearsals with the students for them to appreciate what they are doing.

Forty five agreed that elders usually play the lead role in the performance of the *Bendian* and that the ceremony is properly performed by the youth with the help of the elders and organizers.

It can be noted that there is a strong bonding between the youth and elders during the

stage performance of the *Bendian*. Observations from the outsiders would support this result. In an interview with some outsiders who were able to witness the staging of the *Bendian*, they claimed that youths have high regards to their elders as clearly shown during the staging. "They usually follow what the "panglakayen" in the group would say without any doubt. In turn, other youths would also lead the elders in their positions and lines.

According to the ECIP, it is this bonding between generations which assures that culture and heritage continue to be accepted and nurtured. This necessitates a conscious passing on of heritage and culture from one generation to another.

ECIP researchers also added that the importance of intergenerational ties is also one of the main reasons why the respect for elders and ancestors is very deep and the valuing of what is inherited (which, if it were to be summarized in one word, would be LIFE) is deeply inculcated. Anything that threatens the bonding of intergenerational ties is a threat to the continuing growth of the tribe.

Sense of Being

The third fundamental process in sustaining cultural integrity is the sense of being. Forty-nine or 98% of the respondents observed that there is oneness of the community while staging the *Bendian* and are proud in executing the choreography of the dance. This feeling of oneness and expression of joy is part of the unique way of being human. As ECIP explains it, sense of being is the unique way of being human (the group's dominant cognitive and affective processes, sensitivities, values, expression of joy and sorrow, etc). This unique way of being human manifests itself through and influences the group's way of doing.

Sense of being can also be described as the collective interiority of the tribe that is also the



anchorage of each member's interiority. Each tribe expresses humanity in its own way and this flows into its sense of doing. Thus, cultural integrity is maintained when the sense of being of the individuals in the tribe mirror the interiority of the tribe (ECIP, 2008).

In this context, the fact that the participants are aware of what they are doing and that they are proud and happy in performing would indicate that the tribe or members of the community have established a certain process of expressing their joy which is through the dance.

Sense of Doing

ECIP distinguished 'sense of doing' as the easiest to understand for outsiders among the four fundamental processes of cultural integrity because this is what is most observable.

But from an IP perspective, sense of doing is not just doing the rites, rituals, dances, and the like. It also involves being in tune with the sense of being from which the doing flows from. It is this being attuned that enables an indigenous people to sense if the act is from the depths of the tribe's spirit and the person performing the act or not.

Almost all of the respondents agreed that the participants were listening to the explanations of the steps; the participants are aware of what they are doing during the entire performance; and they saw how the participants perform the dance with pride and joy.

Interviews with the participants also revealed that they perform in the staged *Bendian* not because they are forced to do it but because they feel proud and fulfilled in showcasing the dance to other people. Other participants added that somehow, parts of their values are being shown while performing the dance. These

values would include the community's high respect and honor to the creator of life, respect to the culture, high regard to

the elders, deep respect to nature, and value of peace and community harmony.

The result indicates that while they are performing the *Bendian*, their unique way of being human is being manifested and it also influence their way of doing the performance.

Generally, the results could indicate that the four fundamental processes that help in sustaining cultural integrity were manifested in the staging of *Bendian* based on the framework used in the study.

Correlation between the Respondents' Socio-demographic Profile and their Response to the Indicators of Cultural Integrity

Chi-square test was used to determine the influence of age, civil status, educational attainment, gender, occupation, and length of stay in Kabayan.

At 3.871 level of significance, the socio-demographic profile of the respondents does not have any significance to their response to the fundamental processes of cultural integrity except for educational attainment in Set D (Sense of Doing) where it gained 17.72 which means that the higher their educational attainment, the higher their tendency to have a varied answer.

The meaning of this finding is that their observation on the presence of community reflection, intergenerational ties, sense of being, and sense of doing is not affected by their sex, age, civil status, educational background, occupation or years of stay in Kabayan.

Role of Staged *Bendian* in the Intergenerational Transmission of Knowledge

Intergenerational transmission refers to the transfer of individual abilities, traits, behaviors, and outcomes from parents to their children (Lochner, 2008).



Ideally, transmission occurs in an informal setting unstructured. This is done in homes where parents are to transmit something to their children as emphasized by Lochner (2008). The transmission of preferences, beliefs, and norms of behavior which is the result of social interactions across and within generations is then called cultural transmission. But external forces like education and intervention of powerful groups like the LGU could also aid in the transmission. This, however, is a structured transmission of knowledge.

In the case of staged *Bendian*, transmission occurred both in an unstructured and structured setting. Structured setting is indirect: elders are not in direct contact with the youths for transmission instead, transmission occurs through the teachers and/ or organizers of the event. This is done during consultations conducted by either the teachers and/or the local government unit of Kabayan.

Originally, as a rite of passage, the younger generation would take on the responsibility for its continuity consciously; however, with *Bendian* as a stage performance, what happened was, the transmission that is happening is not a conscious transmission of knowledge but more of appreciation. The elders in the staged *Bendian* fit in to what the present generation wants. This is then called the conscious bargaining.

Unstructured Transmission

The events (eco-tourism month and foundation anniversary) where the staging of *Bendian* is being performed serves as an avenue for intergenerational transmission to occur. According to the respondents, it is during these gatherings where the elders usually share their indigenous knowledge, systems and practices to the younger generations.

All the youth-respondents said that the elders usually share stories of some legendary heroes in the community, share some myths and sing some folk songs.

One member of the KOSDEY and *Tanghalan Niyal ni Kabajan* (TNK), quoted, “elders usually sing folks songs where youth would love to join and feel amused. At first, we used to laugh at how the elders would sing these folk songs but as we join them singing, we were able to understand its meanings since its being sang in our own language. As we join them, they would always correct the way we sing the song. These corrections made us feel they truly care for how we should learn the songs.”

Another youth-respondent added that the elders would always correct the way they (youth) perform the dance part of the *Bendian*. “The elders would say we have to endure the essence of tiredness while performing the *Bendian* because that is what the ritual is all about.”

Structured Transmission

In a structured transmission, the elders transmit their knowledge regarding the steps of the dance and the processes involved in the performance of *Bendian* to the teachers and/or organizers. The teachers then relate the received knowledge to the students. According to the youth-respondents, what is being communicated to them by their teachers are the meanings of the steps, the purpose of performing it and the reasons for its conduct.

In this case, the school is the mediating agent in the transmission process; consequently, there is limited interaction between the elders and the students and if there are, they happen either during municipal meetings, school or community rehearsals and the like, which are considered a formal setting.

Perceived Challenges towards the Sustenance of Cultural Integrity through the Staged *Bendian*

The following were perceived challenges in sustaining cultural integrity through the staged



Bendian in contemporary Kabayan, Benguet according to the key informants and the respondents.

Perceived Challenges According to Elders

Based on the interviews, the following were the challenges perceived by the respondents.

Religion. According to Merino (1989), the fading of the *Bendian* ceremony could be attributed to the entry of Christianity in the community. Christian missionaries had then established some hold in the area. Those who had converted to the new faith were understandably not willing to ask about the old pagan beliefs for fear of being charged as backsliders.

Other challenge under this would be the banning of the other church leaders to their members to join the performance as they perceive it to be “demonic”.

Education. Education here could be seen in two ways: positive and negative. They could be a reinforcing agent at the same time a threat depending on what direction it would take. As an example, many of the key informants consent that education play a role in maintaining the staging of *Bendian* in this modern age since one of its function in our society is to teach knowledge and skills which include cultural practices, systems and knowledge such as folklores, songs, dances among others. They also consider formal education as an avenue for strengthening the *Bendian* as a dance if taught with the aid of the elders, still.

Some of the elders would say that education could be a threat in maintaining the cultural integrity of the *Bendian* if taught in a wrong context. A respondent added that if some teachers will not understand the purpose of its performance, it could add up to “miseducation” of the students. This, according to the respondent, usually

happens if the teacher would interpret the practice the way other church denominations would interpret it. However, the respondent added that with the continuous cultural congresses being held in the area, this threat could be turned into an opportunity for further learning.

Lack of interest of some youths. With the advent of modern technologies, some of the key informants observed that some of the youth now are becoming disinterested in participating the *Bendian* especially when not forced by the school. This lack of interest could be attributed to the rise of mass-entertainment (entertainment programs and facilities) that are available in the area. Some of these are the television, radio, internet, print materials among others.

Perceived Challenges According to the Respondents

Below are the perceived challenges on the development of cultural integrity in the stage performance of *Bendian* according to the respondents.

Lack of resources. According to the teacher-respondents, lack of materials (costumes and musical instruments), financial support for transportation of the participants and the people who will play the instruments during practices were the common problems they encounter during the stage performance of *Bendian*. Although budget is being allotted by the LGU, this is only limited for the event itself excluding the finances during the rehearsals.

Also, only a few have the skills to play the instruments used in the *Bendian* since players have their own specialization: a gong player should not be playing other instruments other than the gong. This is also the same to other instrument players (congruency of music and players). Another respondent said that although most youths are interested to join the dance, some of them are not interested in learning how to play the musical instruments that accompany the dance.



However, the respondents postulated that some of these problems are being resolved during dialogues with the organizers and the community members. Dialogues occur during cultural forums and meetings called upon by the organizers or the school itself.

Opposition of parents. Many of the respondents claimed that some parents are against the practice since they perceive that such performance is against their spiritual belief or religion. This corroborates the statement of Merino that the fading of the *Bendian* ritual could be attributed to the entry of Christianity in the community.

Personal Conviction. Others don't want to join due to their personal convictions. Personal conviction here refers to the respondent's personal moral code.

Death of elders. Some respected elders in the community whom the teachers or the LGU are consulting with are dying of age. Also, some of the elders who are living cannot be consulted due to physical and health problems. Another respondent added that other elders cannot recall anymore the dance steps specially those who were not active participants of *Bendian* during their time.

As noted by one respondent, "there is a chance that the next generation will forget the dance if not taught properly today that is why there is a need to continue teaching it to the youth while elders who are willing to teach the dance are still alive.

Time. Most of the student-respondents claimed that they have difficulty in balancing their time in academic and co-curricular activities. This is considered by the teachers as one challenge to the performance of *Bendian* since practicing *Bendian* requires time especially for the youth to properly execute the dance part.

Lack of documentation. Although books like that of Merino are available in the community, there is still a need for another form of

documentation aside from print, this according to the teacher-respondents. According to them, a video documentary of the dance part of the dance could be used by the school as an aid in teaching *Bendian* especially now that students are exposed to some media like television.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the salient findings of the study:

1. *Bendian* evolved from a ceremony for healing to a ceremony for agricultural prosperity then later as a staged performance for cultural appreciation and tourism promotion.

There is direct relationship between the change in purpose and meaning of some of the common symbols in the *Bendian* ceremony. This change did occur not instantly but through continuous dialogue among the community members. In the Toynbee's theory, he did mention of the minority who are the movers of change. They are otherwise referred to as the "catalyst" or "stimuli" to initiate the dialogue in the IMCFSC framework. In Kabayan, if we look into the identified catalyst or few minorities, they are actually the affluent; either the traditional "*baknang*" or the LGU, the power holders. The process of dialogue, however, was both triggered by external and internal stimuli.

With the staged *Bendian*, the internal stimuli is the feeling of the members of the community that part of their culture is being adulterated (i.e. they "feel hurt" when they see that the *Bendian* being performed outside of Kabayan is not "properly or correctly" executed) and the external environmental stimuli include the threat of modernization and its variants.

2. There were different factors that influenced the staging of *Bendian* in contemporary Kabayan as follows: intervention of the LGU; edu-



education (indigenization of the high school curriculum that leads to strengthening of the *Bendian*); economic condition of the community; and tourism.

3. Using the ECIP framework, it can be noted that respondents expressed a positive perception that staged *Bendian* manifested cultural integrity under the four community processes: community reflection, intergenerational ties, sense of being, and sense of doing.

In addition, using chi-square test, the respondent's perception on the observation of community reflection, intergenerational ties, sense of being, and sense of doing is not affected by their sex, age, civil status, educational background, occupation or years of stay in Kabayan.

4. In the case of Staged *Bendian*, intergenerational transmission occurs both in a structured and unstructured setting. With *Bendian* as a stage performance, the transmission is not a conscious transmission of knowledge but more of appreciation.

In a structured setting, the school is the mediating agent in the transmission process; consequently, there is limited interaction between the elders and the students, and if, there are, they happen either during municipal meetings, school or community rehearsals and the like, which are considered a formal setting.

5. Perceived challenges towards the development of cultural integrity in Kabayan, Benguet include: religion, education, lack of interest of the youth, lack of resources, opposition of parents, personal convictions of a member of the community, death of elders, time constraints, and lack of documentation.

Conclusions

Based on the foregoing findings, the following conclusions are given:

1. The evolution of *Bendian* from a sacred healing ritual to a secularized medium is a manifestation of a cultural change influenced by internal and external forces. The process of dialogue that the community people continuously observed, however, determines the integrity of these changes.

2. The respondents consider politics, education, economic condition of the community, and tourism as the enabling factors in the staged performance of *Bendian* in contemporary Kabayan.

3. The staged performance of *Bendian* maintained its cultural integrity based on the ECIP framework.

4. The staged *Bendian* played a role in the intergenerational transmission of knowledge in two ways: structured (the school is the mediating agent in the transmission process) and unstructured (the events where the staging of *Bendian* is being performed).

5. Religion, education, lack of interest of the youth, lack of resources, opposition of parents, personal convictions of a member of the community, death of elders, time constraints, and lack of documentation were considered as a challenge in the development of cultural integrity in the contemporary Kabayan, Benguet

Recommendations

1. The LGU should continue the staging of *Bendian* as it was found out to have maintained its cultural integrity but should ensure that community dialogue is present and the elders are still given the key roles in deciding the boundaries of change.

2. Dialogue and/or awareness seminar for other Christian denominations in the area could



be conducted for wider understanding of culture as part of life and not as a paganistic practice, as mentioned by the teacher-respondents.

3. A follow-up study must be conducted to assess the impact of cultural tourism in the municipality.

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