

Preservation of Philippine Folk Performing Arts

Mr. John David Seven Rocamora

Professional Teacher, College of Teacher Education Graduate School, Batangas State University-Pablo Borbon

Abstract

This study investigated the preservation of Philippine folk performing arts in terms of folk dance, folk music, and folk theater as practiced by public and private junior high school MAPEH teachers in the City of Sto. Tomas. Using a descriptive-correlational design, data were gathered from sixty-one teachers through a researcher-made questionnaire and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. Findings revealed that most respondents were female, had longer teaching experience, and had attended mainly lower-level trainings. Folk dance was the most consistently preserved, while folk music and folk theater showed moderate levels of preservation. A significant relationship was found between sex and folk dance preservation, while other profile variables showed no significant relationship. Teachers also encountered challenges related to limited resources, student diversity, time constraints, and technology integration. Based on the results, an advocacy program was developed to strengthen the preservation of Philippine folk performing arts in secondary education.

Keywords: Philippine folk performing arts, cultural preservation, MAPEH teachers

Context & Rationale

This study centers on the preservation of Philippine folk performing arts—folk dance, folk music, and folk theater—within the context of secondary education in the City of Sto. Tomas. While the findings indicate that MAPEH teachers actively contribute to preserving these cultural forms, the data reveal that preservation efforts are not evenly distributed across all areas of the performing arts. Folk dance emerges as the most consistently preserved, supported by regular classroom integration, use of traditional music and costumes, and participation in cultural activities. In contrast, folk music and folk theater are preserved to a lesser extent, particularly in terms of hands-on engagement, collaboration with cultural practitioners, and performance-based learning. This pattern reflects earlier studies emphasizing that dance is often more visible and prioritized in school-based cultural programs compared to music and theater (Villaruz, 2018; Santos & Garcia, 2019).

The study further shows that most teachers involved in preservation efforts are female, have long years of teaching experience, and have attended mainly lower-level seminars and trainings. Although teaching experience supports basic cultural instruction, the limited exposure to advanced and specialized trainings affects the teachers' capacity to deepen and diversify preservation practices. This gap is especially evident in folk music and theater, where more technical skills, contextual knowledge, and authentic performance experiences are required. Similar findings in previous research suggest that sustained and specialized professional development is critical in strengthening teachers' roles as cultural bearers (Garcia, 2020; Banks, 2018). Moreover, the significant relationship found between sex and folk dance preservation

supports the view that gendered roles and exposure may influence teachers' engagement with performance-oriented cultural forms, particularly dance (Cruz, 2019; Santos & Reyes, 2021).

Teachers also reported several challenges that hinder effective preservation, including limited access to traditional costumes, musical instruments, and instructional materials, difficulties in sustaining student interest, time constraints within the curriculum, and challenges in integrating technology meaningfully. These concerns echo broader issues identified in cultural education research, where institutional limitations and competing academic demands often restrict the full implementation of heritage-based instruction (Garcia & Ramos, 2019; Tiongson, 2021). Without adequate resources and structured support, preservation efforts risk becoming surface-level activities rather than sustained cultural practices, especially in folk music and theater that rely heavily on experiential learning (Manalo, 2021).

Given these findings, the study is grounded on the rationale that a structured, research-based intervention is necessary to strengthen existing preservation practices. Addressing gaps in training, access to resources, experiential learning, and community involvement is essential to ensure that all aspects of Philippine folk performing arts are given balanced attention. The development of an advocacy program anchored on the actual needs of teachers and aligned with the K to 12 MAPEH curriculum provides a practical pathway to sustaining cultural heritage (Department of Education, 2016). By reinforcing teacher capacity and creating meaningful, culturally grounded learning experiences for students, the study affirms that Philippine folk performing arts can remain living traditions within education rather than being reduced to historical content alone (Smith & Akagawa, 2019; Soini & Dessein, 2016).

Action Research Objectives/Questions

This study determined the preservation of Philippine Folk Performing Arts by Public and Private Junior High School MAPEH Teachers in the City of Sto. Tomas.

Specifically, it aims to answer the following questions;

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of;
 - 1.1. sex
 - 1.2. length of service
 - 1.3. level of related seminars, workshops, and trainings attended
2. How do the respondents assess themselves in preserving the Philippine folk performing arts in terms of:
 - 2.1. dance
 - 2.2. music
 - 2.3. theater
3. Find the significant relationship between the respondents' profile and their assessment on the preservation of Philippine folk performing arts.
4. Identify issues and concerns encountered in the preservation of Philippine folk performing arts.
5. Develop advocacy program.

Hypothesis

The study was premised on the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the respondents' profile and their level of preservation of Philippine folk performing arts.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it provides insights into the preservation of Philippine folk performing arts—dance, music, and theater—in secondary education. It highlights strengths in folk dance preservation while identifying gaps in folk music and theater, offering a basis for improving teaching practices and resource support.

The findings may benefit MAPEH teachers by guiding professional development, assist school administrators and curriculum planners in program enhancement, and support educational and cultural institutions in strengthening cultural education initiatives. For students, the study promotes cultural awareness and appreciation, while future researchers may use the results as a reference for related studies on cultural preservation in education.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative approach to determine the level of preservation of Philippine folk performing arts in terms of dance, music, and theater, as well as the challenges encountered by junior high school MAPEH teachers. Data were gathered using a researcher-made questionnaire administered to public and private junior high school MAPEH teachers in the City of Sto. Tomas. The responses were collected, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools to describe patterns, relationships, and trends relevant to the objectives of the study.

Study Design

A descriptive-correlational research design was utilized to describe the current status of Philippine folk performing arts preservation and to determine the relationship between the respondents' profile variables and their assessment of preservation practices. This design was deemed appropriate as it allowed the researcher to examine existing conditions and identify significant relationships among variables without manipulating the research setting.

Participants and Sampling

The participants of this study were public and private junior high school MAPEH teachers in the City of Sto. Tomas who are directly involved in teaching and promoting Philippine folk performing arts. A total of 61 teachers participated in the study. The respondents were selected using purposive sampling, as they possessed the relevant background and experience necessary to provide reliable information on the preservation of folk dance, music, and theater. This sampling technique ensured that the data gathered were directly aligned with the objectives of the study and reflective of actual classroom practices in MAPEH.

Data Collection

Data for this study were gathered through the direct administration of a researcher-made questionnaire to the selected junior high school MAPEH teachers in the City of Sto. Tomas. Prior to data collection, permission was secured from the concerned school authorities to ensure ethical and orderly conduct of the study. The questionnaires were distributed personally to the respondents to allow clear instructions and immediate clarification of questions when needed. Sufficient time was given to the respondents to accomplish the instrument, ensuring thoughtful and honest responses. All retrieved questionnaires were checked for completeness before proceeding to data analysis.

Instrument/s. The primary instrument used in this study was a researcher-made questionnaire designed to assess the respondents' profile, level of preservation of Philippine folk performing arts in terms of dance, music, and theater, and the issues and concerns encountered in preservation efforts. The questionnaire consisted of structured items using a Likert-scale format to measure the extent of preservation practices and challenges. To ensure validity and reliability, the instrument underwent content validation by experts in MAPEH and research, and necessary revisions were made based on their suggestions before final administration.

Procedures. The study followed a systematic procedure. After securing approval from school administrators, the researcher identified the qualified respondents based on the set criteria. The validated questionnaire was then distributed and collected within the agreed schedule. The researcher ensured confidentiality and informed the respondents that their participation was voluntary. Upon retrieval, the responses were organized, coded, and prepared for statistical treatment. The entire process was conducted with transparency and adherence to ethical research standards.

Data Analysis

The data gathered were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools to address the objectives of the study. Frequency and percentage were used to describe the respondents' profile, while weighted mean and standard deviation were utilized to determine the level of preservation of Philippine folk performing arts and the issues encountered. The chi-square test was applied to identify the relationship between the respondents' profile and their assessment of preservation practices. All results were carefully interpreted to provide meaningful insights aligned with the purpose of the study.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered from the junior high school MAPEH teachers regarding the preservation of Philippine folk performing arts. The discussion focuses on the respondents' profile, their preservation practices in folk dance, music, and theater, the relationship between profile variables and preservation, and the issues and concerns encountered in sustaining these cultural traditions.

1. Respondents' Profile

The respondents' profile provides context for understanding teachers' involvement in preserving Philippine folk performing arts in terms of sex, length of service, and level of related seminars, workshops, and trainings attended.

1.1 Sex

Out of 61 respondents, thirty-six (36) teachers or 59.0% were female, while twenty-five (25) teachers or 41.0% were male. This indicates that female teachers comprised the majority of respondents involved in the preservation of Philippine folk performing arts.

The higher proportion of female teachers suggests that women are more actively engaged in folk dance, music, and theater-related activities in junior high school settings. This result reflects school practices where female teachers are often assigned to culture-based and performance-related tasks. The numerical difference highlights a noticeable imbalance in participation, underscoring the importance of encouraging greater involvement among male teachers to promote shared responsibility in cultural preservation.

1.2 Length of Service

Twenty-five (25) respondents or 41.0% have been teaching for eight (8) years or more, followed by twenty

(20) teachers or 32.8% with four (4) to seven (7) years of service, and sixteen (16) teachers or 26.2% with one (1) to three (3) years of experience.

The data show that the largest group of respondents consists of experienced teachers. This suggests that preservation efforts are largely carried out by educators with prolonged exposure to curriculum implementation and cultural activities. However, the presence of teachers with fewer years of service highlights the need for mentoring and support systems to help newer teachers strengthen their competence in preserving folk performing arts.

1.3 Level of Related Seminars, Workshops, and Trainings Attended

Thirty-eight (38) respondents or 62.3% have attended lower-level seminars, workshops, and trainings related to Philippine folk performing arts, while only twenty-three (23) respondents or 37.7% have participated in higher-level professional development activities.

This numerical imbalance indicates that most teachers have only received basic or introductory training. While foundational knowledge supports preservation efforts, limited access to advanced training may restrict teachers' ability to implement more authentic, innovative, and in-depth preservation practices, particularly in folk music and theater.

2. Assessments on the Preservation of Philippine Folk Performing Arts

The preservation of Philippine folk performing arts was assessed in terms of folk dance, folk music, and folk theater using weighted mean and standard deviation.

2.1 Folk Dance

It shows that Philippine folk dance obtained the highest composite mean of **3.45** with a standard deviation of **0.477**, interpreted as *Preserved*. The highest-rated indicator was “teach my students the fundamental folk dance steps” with a weighted mean of **3.72**, followed by “use prescribed music and costume in staging the folk dance” with **3.67**, both interpreted as *Often*.

Other indicators such as “describe and demonstrate folk dances that show cultural activities” (**WM = 3.59**) and “incorporate modern adaptations while preserving core essence” (**WM = 3.57**) also received high ratings. However, lower means were observed in “organize workshops or seminars for fellow educators” (**WM = 2.98**) and “collaborate with cultural organizations” (**WM = 3.15**), indicating these practices are less frequently implemented.

The numerical results confirm that folk dance is the most consistently preserved art form, though professional collaboration remains an area for improvement.

2.2 Folk Music

Philippine folk music yielded a composite mean of **3.37** with a standard deviation of **0.584**, interpreted as *Preserved*. The highest-rated indicators were “incorporate opportunities for students to learn about cultural significance” (**WM = 3.62**) and “integrate folk music as lesson motivation” (**WM = 3.61**).

Lower ratings were recorded for “collaborate with local cultural organizations” (**WM = 2.98**) and “organize guest lectures by traditional musicians” (**WM = 3.05**). These values indicate that while folk music is integrated into classroom instruction, experiential and community-based activities are less emphasized.

2.3 Folk Theater

Philippine folk theater obtained the lowest composite mean among the three art forms at **3.24** with a standard deviation of **0.638**, interpreted as *Preserved*. The highest-rated item was “incorporate discussions on historical and cultural significance” (**WM = 3.54**), while lower means were observed in “collaborate with local theater groups” (**WM = 2.93**) and “create theater organizations” (**WM = 3.08**).

These values indicate that theater preservation is largely theoretical, with limited performance-based and experiential activities.

3. Relationship Between Respondents' Profile and Preservation Practices

Sex has a significant relationship with the preservation of Philippine folk dance, with a computed chi-square value of **3.905** and a p-value of **0.048**, which is lower than the 0.05 level of significance. This led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, indicating that sex influences teachers' assessment of folk dance preservation.

All other relationships yielded p-values greater than 0.05. Length of service and level of seminars attended showed no significant relationship with the preservation of folk dance, music, and theater. This suggests that experience and training level alone do not significantly influence preservation practices.

4. Issues and Concerns Encountered

The overall composite mean for issues and concerns is **3.28** with a standard deviation of **0.498**, interpreted as *Agree*. The highest-rated concern was “catering to diverse backgrounds and abilities of students” (**WM = 3.46**), followed by “maintaining continuity of traditions” (**WM = 3.44**) and “integrating technology” (**WM = 3.41**).

The lowest-rated concern was “adapting teaching methods” (**WM = 3.11**), indicating that teachers are relatively confident in modifying instructional strategies, but are constrained by external factors such as resources, time, and student engagement.

5. Implications for the Advocacy Program

The numerical findings clearly indicate that while Philippine folk performing arts are preserved, stronger emphasis is needed in folk music and theater. The lower composite means and limited collaborative activities justify the development of a structured advocacy program focused on advanced training, access to resources, and experiential learning. Addressing the quantified challenges identified in this study can further strengthen preservation efforts and ensure the sustainability of Philippine folk performing arts in secondary education.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on Based on the findings of the study and in direct alignment with the stated research objectives, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Profile of MAPEH Teachers and Preservation Practices. The MAPEH teachers involved in the preservation of Philippine folk performing arts in the City of Sto. Tomas are predominantly female, with most having eight years or more of teaching experience. Despite their length of service, the majority have only attended lower-level seminars, workshops, and trainings related to folk performing arts. This suggests that while experience supports basic preservation practices, limited exposure to advanced professional development may restrict the depth and variety of instructional approaches, particularly in folk music and folk theater.
2. Extent of Preservation of Philippine Folk Performing Arts. Philippine folk performing arts are generally preserved in secondary education. Among the three art forms, folk dance is the most actively and consistently preserved, as reflected in regular classroom integration, use of traditional music and costumes, and cultural demonstrations.
3. Relationship Between Teacher Profile and Preservation Practices. A significant relationship exists between sex and the assessment of folk dance preservation, indicating that male and female teachers differ in their level of engagement or approach toward this art form. However, no significant relationship was found between length of service or level of seminars attended and the preservation of

folk dance, folk music, and folk theater. This implies that experience and training level alone do not necessarily influence teachers' perceptions and practices related to cultural preservation.

4. Issues and Challenges in Preservation Efforts. Teachers encounter various challenges in preserving Philippine folk performing arts, with the most prominent being accommodating diverse student abilities and backgrounds, limited access to cultural resources such as costumes and instruments, time constraints, and difficulties in integrating technology into instruction. These challenges are more pronounced in folk music and folk theater, where experiential and performance-based learning opportunities are limited.
5. Need for a Research-Based Advocacy Program. The findings highlight the need for a structured advocacy program that responds directly to the identified gaps in preservation practices. A focused program is necessary to enhance teacher competence, improve access to resources, strengthen experiential learning, and prioritize the preservation of folk music and folk theater within the K–12 MAPEH curriculum.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions drawn from the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Adoption of the Advocacy Program. The Schools Division Office of the City of Sto. Tomas, in coordination with school administrators and MAPEH coordinators, may consider adopting the *Pamanang Sining* advocacy program to reinforce the preservation of Philippine folk performing arts, with particular focus on strengthening folk music and folk theater instruction.
2. Expansion of Professional Development and Resource Support. Schools, together with cultural institutions and partner organizations, may expand opportunities for advanced trainings, workshops, and seminars for MAPEH teachers. Improving access to traditional costumes, musical instruments, and culturally appropriate instructional materials may help address resource-related challenges identified in the study.
3. Enhancement of Experiential and Community-Based Learning. Educational institutions may increase the integration of performance-based activities, collaborations with local cultural practitioners, and school-community cultural events. These initiatives may help improve student engagement, provide authentic learning experiences, and deepen appreciation for Philippine folk dance, music, and theater.

References

1. Banks, J. A. (2018). *An introduction to multicultural education* (6th ed.). Pearson Education.
2. Cruz, I. V. (2019). Gender roles and cultural transmission in Philippine folk traditions. *Philippine Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 24(1), 67–82.
3. Department of Education. (2016). *K to 12 curriculum guide: Music, arts, physical education, and health (MAPEH)*. DepEd Philippines.
4. Garcia, H. M. (2020). Sustaining cultural education through professional learning communities. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 19(6), 112–125. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.19.6.7>
5. Garcia, L. M., & Ramos, P. D. (2019). Challenges in implementing cultural education in Philippine schools. *Philippine Journal of Education*, 98(1), 55–71.

6. Manalo, F. T. (2021). Community-based cultural advocacy in urban Philippine schools. *Philippine Social Sciences Review*, 73(2), 78–95.
7. Santos, R. L., & Garcia, P. N. (2019). Preserving Philippine folk performing arts through education. *Journal of Asian Arts and Culture*, 4(2), 55–68.
8. Santos, R. L., & Reyes, M. D. (2021). Cultural ownership and student engagement in arts education. *Journal of Cultural Studies in Education*, 10(1), 23–38.
9. Smith, L., & Akagawa, N. (2019). *Intangible heritage* (2nd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315710877>
10. Tionson, N. G. (2021). Performing arts education and cultural sustainability in Philippine schools. *Journal of Southeast Asian Arts and Culture*, 6(2), 101–118.
11. Villaruz, C. E. (2018). *Dance and cultural education in the Philippines*. University of the Philippines Press.

Acknowledgment

1. The researcher would like to express sincere appreciation and heartfelt gratitude to the Almighty God for the strength, wisdom, and guidance granted throughout the completion of this study.
2. The researcher is also deeply thankful to his family for their constant love, understanding, and moral support, which served as a continuous source of inspiration.
3. Lastly, heartfelt thanks are extended to the researcher's friends and colleagues for their prayers, encouragement, and support that greatly contributed to the completion of this research.