Uggayam to the Tingguians of abra

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ABSTRACT
The study was conducted by recording Uggayam samples and collecting different information and views of some elderly Tingguians of Abra regarding how they looked or regarded and perceived one of the existing cultures of the Tinguian tribes of the province which is the Tingguian chant, usually called the Uggayam. It dealt with some themes like how people give meanings of Uggayam culture to their lives, the way it is sung or delivered, the language, the occasions when it is used, the way it is sung or delivered, the variations or differences on how it is done, its importance or values to the people and how is its preservation as a culture to the Tinguians as the Indigenous Peoples of Abra. The study, which is qualitative and descriptive, employed the interview method in the gathering of the data wherein the researchers interviewed the respondents but observed strictly the different protocols in against Covid 19. With much awareness, some were interviewed through their cellphone. As a result, it came out that the selected Tinguian respondents variably defined the term Uggayam. They said that the Uggayam is sung by a chosen elder of the community. The Tingguians regard the Uggayam as a very special way that they used to express their sentiments and thoughts regarding their occasion, purpose, and reason. They very much valued the Uggayam as an unforgettable custom and a usual way to sing and express their emotions as well as thoughts but not performed by anyone since it is not easy to do. It is using a language that is well-chosen aptly according to the theme and occasion hence appearing/sounding as poems of the natives since time immemorial; and an old practice in delivering intentions and information regarding the occasion. In the delivery of the Uggayam, the Tingguian chant, elders, or leaders of the community are the ones who are usually chosen; not anybody can do and deliver the Uggayam. There are more males than females observed to have the ability to deliver this chant. However, it does not matter whether it is a male or a female who will perform the Uggayam if he/she can perform and deliver it well. The Tingguian chant according to the respondents said that during their younger ages, Uggayam was frequently heard and delivered every occasion like weddings, burials, festivals, bodongs, and other important Tinguian occasions. When compared to the present, its observance is less especially to the Tinguians who may be tagged as modernized due to their transfer to the more non-Tingguian populated municipalities in the lowlands. Moreover, the Uggayam or the native chant as claimed, when sang, varied according to the
different occasions. Its language use varies, its tone and selection of words hence comparable to songs, poems, and other literary pieces where emotions match with the lyrics or the messages of the Uggayam being delivered. The valuing or the esteem and regard for the Uggayam is still high, the only difference is the frequency is no longer utilized or performed as frequently as how it is used to be performed before. Respecting the Uggayam culture is respecting the practices and the ancestors who handed this tradition to the younger generations, the respondents claimed. The respondents (the chosen elders) wished that Uggayan will be preserved with the help of the whole community specifically the home, the school, and the church through its more frequent observance hence instilling into the younger generations, an appreciation of their cultural heritage.

**Keywords:** ethnolinguistic groups, elders, rituals, tingguians of abra.

1 INTRODUCTION

Culture plays an extremely vital role in everyone’s life because it directs and leads people to understand their ways of living. It serves as the basis for identity, origin, and belongingness hence people should give importance to how it can be preserved. Culture has a big role and impact on man’s behavior. For these reasons, people, from ancestors to present generations are aiming how each can responsibly help to preserve the culture of the community they belong.

Considering one of the Tingguian cultures which is the Uggayam, Known as the Tingguian Chant, as to how it was termed since the time of their ancestors. The Natives or the indigenous people of Abra, stood independently with pride especially the old folks of all the tribes of the province with the Uggayam culture that they utilized in every occasion that they celebrate.

The indigenous practice, the singing of the Uggayam, that they perform on different occasions are found morally and ethically accepted by the indigenous peoples’ laws anchored with different privileges and rights. They continuously practice it but the issue on its preservations and sustainabilities comes in every now and then.

The practices on the deliberations of Uggayam keep running within the Tingguian lives done every different occasion are held from family to the whole community as a way of expressions and is known a very traditional vocal music among the different tribes.

It is a social gathering practice which is delivered that is intended to comfort the people and to inform them as well according to Dumagat, F. (2005), “Uggayam as a way of expression during social gathering make the Tingguians maintain their unity and cultural identity among other IPS of the cordillera and other regions in the Philippines Filipinos in all regions with their respective ethnicities found possessing the potential and beauty in their performances as they execute these practices, especially in terms of singing and dancing.

Filipinos possess natural grace and inborn love for music and dances. They dance and sing in many occasions, birth, love, courtship, thanksgiving, wedding/marriage, victory, war, planting and harvesting,
voyage, recovery, prayer from rain, sun fertility, protection, and even forgiveness are all expressed through singing and dancing (Aplaten 2010).

The Tingguian cultures were found very unique as compared to other tribal communities. One of which is the practice of the singing or the deliberation of Uggayam. Lacey (2012) said and described the Uggayam as a song all Tingguians await for in social gatherings. It is used for comfort when people are working, resting, or traveling on foot. When performed during social gatherings, the Uggayam is done after a tadek dance shortly upon appointment and the announcement of the mantinador.

One of the researchers who used to be with the retired Dep Ed official, Rosita Brilliantes recalled her saying that Uggayam is a kind of song classified as a multi-purpose song together with the Adings, Ballogoyas, and many Salidummays. They don’t have fixed lyrics, but they could be supplied or extemporaneously composed by the singer/chanter according to the occasion. Moreover, she claimed that an Uggayam could be sung on all occasions except during funeral rites, but it may be sung during Lay-og and Dalis, a ceremony after the burials.

Furthermore, she said that the Inlaud people believed that the texts or words the Uggayam used could be traced in the said tribe, specifically in Penarrubia as one municipality, among the six communities of the Inlaud: San Quintin, Langiden, Danglas, Lagangnilang, San Juan and Penarrubia respectively and known that this influenced much the other tribes and that the person who delivers or sings the Uggayam uses the Inlaud dialect even if he comes from another tribe. With, Abra as the principal province to have adapted and still greatly practice singing the Uggayam, other Cordillera provinces like Kalinga, Apayao, Mt. Province, and Benguet have a long way to sing the same melody for different occasions.

Considering the study of Weygan (2013) where he found the Cordillera region is peopled with different ethnolinguistic groups and carry the pride of being proud of their identities in their spiritualities, stories, language, and community rituals that are seen or observed in their costumes, storytelling, music, and dances.

In the study of Abaya (2012), on Lay-og, that it is a Tingguian Family Tradition that the tadek, Uggayam, and the drinking of the Basi accompanied with a gansa are practices done in different occasions and celebrations of the Tingguians of Abra.

Weygan (2009) found in his survey that Tingguians, during wedding feasts, which is considered as a grand affair of the tribe, used the culture on eating, dancing, and chanting of the Uggayam and the singing of the Salidummay.

As experienced by Zapata whom one of researchers happen to be acquainted to, who was born of a pure Inlaud family, shared that she was exposed and grew up to the traditions and practices that her elders went through. She said, “ as a little girl, she learned early the practices of dancing Tadek and singing the Salidummay and she would dance and sing during weddings, before and after burials of loved ones.
and during Lay-og (first death anniversary) among many other events.” Also, she said that she was fascinated by the elders’ chants and songs that they deliver with much mastery. They termed them as Sang-sangit during wakes and Uggayams during Lay-ogs.

2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The paradigm shows the descriptive and thematic approach to determine and examine the data in identifying common themes, topics, or ideas that came from the respondents. The Uggayam culture to the Tingguians of Abra is utilized in some occasions like weddings, burials, festivals, Lay-og and Bodong. Whenever and wherever the Uggayam is used, The Tingguians, practically reveal its meaning to their lives, its values and importance, its utilization and delivery, its variations, and its preservation or sustainability.

3 OBJECTIVES / STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The main objective or focus of the study is to determine how the Tingguians of the Province of Abra, Philippines regard the Uggayam culture, how this native chant carries its system as it influences the Tingguians in the way it is used, practiced, and perceived in the different occasions in their lives, from the past and their present and the younger generations in the future.

Specifically, this study answered the following questions to determine suitable answers from the respondents:

1. What is Uggayam to the Tingguians of Abra?
2. Who usually delivers the Uggayam?
3. What are the different occasions wherein the Uggayam is sung or delivered?
4. What are the variations that exist in the way the Uggayam is sung or delivered?
5. How do the Tingguians of Abra regard the Uggayam?
6. What do the Tingguians of Abra want as regards the Uggayam?

4 METHODOLOGY / PROCEDURES

The study used the descriptive and thematic approaches. The researchers had interviewed people whose cultures showed commonality concerning to the researchers’ intentions. The researchers closely examined and thematically analyzed the data to identify common themes and ideas from the respondents. Participants of the study were identified using purposive sampling. Using purposive sampling, the researchers choose their participants who will be fit for the study (Dever & Frankel, 2000). Seven (7) identified elders participated in the study. The participants are pure Tingguians belonging to any Tingguian tribe, must have been delivering Uggayams and an elder from any of the ethnic tribes of Abra.
In gathering the pertinent data for the study, a semi-structured questionnaire interview guide was contextualized. The questions were written on an interview guide card that facilitated the one-on-one correspondence. This type of interview is the most familiar strategy in collecting qualitative data (Bloom & Crabtree, 2006), which helps the researchers in obtaining information needed and facilitate asking follow-up questions for clarification.

In gathering the data, the selected elders/old folks were visited personally one after the other or they were phone interviewed by the researchers. In the conduct of the interviews, the researchers strictly observed health protocols in observance of the covid 19 safety protocols. The researchers brought with them the interview guide card with the set of questions prepared and were asked to the respondents, answers were recorded and follow-up queries were asked if needed.

5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Most responses were given through any of the Tingguian Ethno languages and then they were subsequently recorded, transcribed and translated. The Data are presented, analyzed and interpreted.

The Uggayam, as based from the responses, is a song of greetings that is sung on Tinguians’ momentous occasions: life related or after death related occasions. The respected elders usually are the ones to sing the uggayam with few cases of women chanting it. The mode or tone of delivery and vocabulary choice vary depending on the occasion for the greetings and the expressions of thoughts and sentiments.

The above-mentioned paragraph affirm the study of Dumagat (2005) when he said that the Uggayam is a song delivered on social gatherings as a form of greetings and Lancey 2012 as he stated that Tingguian occasions are highlighted with delivery of the Uggayam by esteemed elders to express greetings, to express thoughts and to deliver messages.

From the responses, very evidently the elders have a very high regard to the Uggayam since this is a culture or a tradition handed down from generations to generations. It is a manifestation of their Tingguian Identity as an Indigenous People of Abra. They want very much the younger generations to appreciate and value the singing of the Uggayam by more exposures to occasions where the Uggayam is performed. Furthermore, they want the popularization of the Uggayam in the families, in schools and other societal institutions.

Their responses support Meghjarani (2002) as she wrote that Uggayam is a very significant and a timeless Tingguian Oral Literature. There is a threat to its existence specifically with the modernization the young Tingguian generations are exposed to. She further reiterated the inclusion of this culture, the chanting of the Uggayam, in the family and school. The answers further back up Llaneza (2016) when she pointed out in her study, the very important role the societal institutions: the family, the school, the
church and the community, play in the preservation of the Tingguian culture in the Abra Case. She, as a Dep Ed supervisor, pointed out the practice of the IPED, The Indigenous Peoples’ Education as an important action of the department in the preservation of the Tingguian practices, cultures and beliefs.

Based on the interviews conducted, the following findings as reflected from the data that were collected: (1) Uggayam is an old Tingguian chant that is sung by elders or community leaders in different occasions like during burials, festivals, weddings, Lay-og, Bodong, and other community activities or celebrations; (2) A usual way that Tingguians deliver to express greetings or anything like purpose or reason; (3) There are more males than females who are tasked and can deliver the Uggayam; (4) Uggayam is usually sung by a chosen elder or personality based on the occasion attended; (5) Uggayam culture was used more frequently during the past as compared to the present; (6) Not Everybody has the ability to deliver the Tingguian chant, Uggayam and (7) Most elders want that the Uggayam will be appreciated by the young and that it will remain a Tingguian culture for the incoming generations.

6 CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn: (1) Uggayam culture is still practiced by the Tingguians of Abra on different occasions like weddings, burials, festivals, Lay-og, Bodongs or other celebrations; (2) More males can sing the Uggayam better than the females; and (3) The desire to maintain the Uggayam culture is very strong.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the aforementioned, the researchers recommend the following: (1) The school, home, and the church can help the Tingguian youths in the appreciation, Preservation and utilization of the Uggayam Culture; (2) More researchers are invited to conduct a study on the Uggayam and the other cultures of the Tingguians as Indigenous Peoples Of Abra to further determine what cultures are still strongly practiced and what cultures need Reawakening among the younger generations for the preservation of the Tingguian Culture and (3) Tingguian parents are encouraged to greatly influence their children whether male or female to be Conscious or familiar with the Uggayam and its singing as part of their culture.
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