

Article

Echoes of Batingaw: Cultural and Historical Conservation in the City of Cabuyao

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Abstract: In an era of globalization and digital distraction, local cultural identities are increasingly at risk of fading. This study focuses on Cabuyao City, Laguna, where the youth—often viewed as custodians of heritage—are showing signs of disconnection from their cultural and historical roots. It investigates the awareness levels of young residents and explores the lived experiences of local government officials (LGUs) involved in heritage preservation, addressing the urgent question: how can a community safeguard its heritage before it's forgotten? Using a mixed-methods approach, the research combined a quantitative survey of 268 randomly selected youth (ages 18–30) with qualitative interviews involving three LGU officials in cultural affairs, tourism, and youth development. Quantitative data assessed youth awareness of cultural and historical elements, while thematic analysis of interviews revealed institutional insights. Findings point to a troubling lack of awareness among youth, particularly regarding the Sakdalista movement, though some familiarity exists with symbols like the Batingaw (Golden Bell). LGU officials cited challenges including digital distractions, lack of local history in education, and resource constraints. They emphasized the need for stronger community engagement, educational reform, and accessible digital tools. The study concludes that safeguarding Cabuyao's heritage requires collaborative efforts between youth, schools, and LGUs. Recommendations include integrating local history into curricula, creating interactive digital resources, and launching community-driven heritage initiatives. These findings offer valuable direction for policymakers and practitioners aiming to strengthen cultural preservation, especially in developing regions facing similar pressures.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage, Youth Awareness, Local Government Unit (LGU), Preservation, Globalization

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1. Introduction

Globalization's impact on cultural heritage is a growing concern, particularly in rapidly developing nations like the Philippines. While globalization fosters connectivity, it also threatens cultural homogenization, leading to the erosion of unique traditions and historical sites (Abdullahi, 2024; Alvero, 2023; Diaz, 2024). In the Philippines, this tension is often humorously encapsulated in the question, "Heritage? Will that feed us?", highlighting the complex relationship between economic development and cultural preservation (Lin, 2024). Many historical sites face demolition or neglect in favor of modernization.

Cabuyao City, Laguna, provides a compelling case study. Originally named Tabuco, its history stretches back to its declaration as an encomienda in 1571 (Abellera, "Tracing the Indio Origins..."). The city's cultural identity is deeply rooted in its historical landmarks, such as the St. Polycarp Parish Church, a witness to significant events

including the tragic Sakdalista Massacre of 1935 (Camagay). Preserving these landmarks is crucial for maintaining Cabuyao's heritage.

This study investigates the awareness of Cabuyao's youth regarding their local culture and history, emphasizing the link between historical understanding and critical thinking (Gaddi, 2024). It also explores the lived experiences of local government officials in cultural conservation, a crucial area where research remains limited despite the abundance of international studies. The study aims to bridge this gap by examining youth awareness and the role of local governance in cultural preservation, drawing on successful examples like Vigan City (Bacuyag et al., 2015; Santos, 2021) and initiatives such as House Bill 3880.

This research will contribute to a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities in balancing modernization with cultural preservation in the Philippines, specifically focusing on the role of youth engagement and local government leadership.

Research Questions

This study aims to examine the Cultural and Historical Conservation in the City of Cabuyao Laguna. Specifically, it will address the following questions.

1. What is the level of awareness among the youth in Cabuyao Laguna about their local culture and history?
2. What is the lived experience of the local government officials on cultural and historical conservation?
3. What promotional program for the local culture and history of Cabuyao can be derived based on the result of the study?

2. Materials and Methods

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative data to comprehensively investigate cultural and historical conservation in Cabuyao City, Laguna. The quantitative phase utilized a survey questionnaire with a 4-point Likert scale distributed to a randomly selected sample of 268 registered youth voters aged 18-30, assessing their awareness of local culture and history. Concurrently, the qualitative phase involved semi-structured interviews with three key informants from the Local Government Unit (LGU) – specifically those involved in youth development, tourism, and cultural affairs – to explore their lived experiences in cultural and historical conservation. Data analysis involved descriptive and inferential statistics for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data, guided by the Rigorous Mixed Methods framework.

The quantitative survey data provided a broad overview of youth awareness levels regarding various aspects of Cabuyao's cultural and historical heritage, enabling the identification of areas of strength and weakness in existing awareness initiatives. The qualitative interviews, on the other hand, offered rich contextual insights into the perspectives and experiences of LGU officials, revealing the challenges faced in cultural preservation, the effectiveness of current programs, and potential strategies for improvement. Purposive sampling was used for the qualitative phase, selecting individuals with significant expertise in relevant fields. The combination of these approaches aimed to provide a holistic understanding of the research problem.

Finally, the results from both the quantitative survey and qualitative interviews were integrated to identify convergent themes, enabling a more comprehensive interpretation of the findings. This integration provided a nuanced understanding of the relationship between youth awareness and LGU initiatives, informing the development of a sustainable cultural and historical conservation program tailored to the specific context of Cabuyao City. This program included educational initiatives, youth engagement campaigns, and community-based projects, all designed to enhance awareness, promote preservation, and foster a stronger sense of cultural identity among the youth.

3. Results

The results of the study were analyzed and discussed according to each research problem. The chapter concludes with a synthesis of these two data sets, identifying key themes, shared insights, and significant convergent themes between youth awareness and LGU-led heritage conservation programs. This integrated analysis offers a deeper understanding of how individual and institutional efforts intersect in preserving the cultural identity of Cabuyao.

Table 1. The Level of Awareness among the youth in Cabuyao Laguna about their local culture and history (Research question 1).

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. I have knowledge about the historical origin of St. Polycarp Parish Church.	2.31	Aware	2.5
2. I am knowledgeable that the old Cabuyao Market Arch was maintained because of its symbolism.	2.05	Aware	8
3. I am familiar about Marcos Twin Mansion and its history.	2.16	Aware	6
4. I can identify some significant artifacts or historical buildings in Cabuyao.	2.12	Aware	7
5. I can determine the significance of well-known landmarks in Cabuyao.	1.96	Aware	9
6. I can determine the significance of Batingaw (Golden Bell) in the City of Cabuyao.	1.83	Aware	10
7. I am informed about the tragic history of Sakdalistas.	2.68	Not Aware	1
8. I have seen Cabuyao tree within the city.	2.25	Aware	5
9. I know that the original part of Cabuyao area comprises of Biñan, Santa Rosa and Calamba.	2.31	Aware	2.5
10. I am informed about the cityhood inauguration of Cabuyao.	2.27	Aware	4
GENERAL ASSESSMENT	2.19	Aware	
Legend: 3.25 – 4.00 Fully Not Aware	1.75 – 2.49 Aware		
2.50 – 3.24 Not Aware	1.00 – 1.74 Fully Aware		

The table 1 presents data on the level of awareness among the youth in Cabuyao, Laguna, regarding their local culture and history. The awareness level was measured using a weighted mean, and each indicator was given a verbal interpretation and rank based on the mean score. The verbal interpretation classifies their awareness level based on a predefined scale, and rankings indicate which aspects have the highest or lowest awareness.

The general assessment score is 2.19, which falls under the category of "Aware", indicating that overall, **the youth in Cabuyao have low awareness of their local culture and history**. This means that, on average, youth in Cabuyao have some awareness of their local culture and history but are not deeply knowledgeable. The highest-ranked item (least awareness) is: "I am informed about the tragic history of Sakdalistas" (2.68, "Not Aware").

This suggests that youth are least knowledgeable about the Sakdalista movement, a significant historical event. The lowest ranked (most awareness) items are: "I can determine the significance of Batingaw (Golden Bell)" (1.83, "Aware"), indicates relatively higher awareness of this cultural symbol. While "I can determine the significance of well-known landmarks in Cabuyao" (1.96, "Aware"), suggests some familiarity with key landmarks.

Moreover, the historical origin of St. Polycarp Parish Church (2.31) and the original part of Cabuyao comprising Biñan, Santa Rosa, and Calamba (2.31) are relatively well-known (ranked 2.5). Awareness of the Marcos Twin Mansion (2.16) and historical artifacts/buildings in Cabuyao (2.12) is moderate. While knowledge about the Cabuyao tree (2.25) and Cabuyao cityhood inauguration (2.27) is slightly better but still in the "Aware" category.

The lack of awareness about the Sakdalista movement suggests the need for better historical education on this topic. Schools and local initiatives could integrate this into learning materials. The Batingaw (Golden Bell) and historical landmarks are among the better-known cultural elements, suggesting that past awareness efforts may have been effective. The city can enhance museum tours, cultural events, and digital campaigns to improve youth engagement with local history.

Table 2. The Local Government Officials' Lived Experience on Cultural and Historical Conservation (Research question 2).

Question	Superordinate Theme	Subthemes	Direct Quotes
1. How important are culture and history of Cabuyao to you as a local government official?	Cultural and Historical Awareness	Uniqueness of Cabuyao's Culture	Culture is what makes us Cabuyenos unique or different from other communities, right?" – Participant 1 "The golden bell of Cabuyao—because that's what we became known for... and aside from that, we also have our, uh, our culture when it comes to planting coffee... When you talk about barako coffee, the ones grown in Casile really stand out, and that's truly part of our culture." – Participant 3 -
		Historical Significance of Events	"We had the most number of casualties during the Sakdalista Uprising, which you mentioned earlier." – Participant 1 "Why is it called Cabuyao? Isn't it from the kabuyaw tree that grows here?" – Participant 3

2. How do you perceive people's interest in our Cultural and Historical conservation?	Public Interest and Engagement	Declining Youth Interest	"I do not think that the youth are really that much interested in, uh, knowing our past." – Participant 1 "They don't know anymore. For them, it's just something that's standing there, but the history, the story behind it—they don't really know it deeply." – Participant 2
		Community Involvement	I'll join this kind of competition because my interest is to introduce Cabuyao to the whole of Laguna, to the entire Philippines, and of course, to the universe." – Participant 3
3. What are the challenges or factors contributing to the level of awareness among the youth of Cabuyao?	Challenges in Youth Awareness	Role of Education and Schools	"I think the schools would play an important role in trying to, uhm, make the youth remember the past." – Participant 1 "They're even toured to other places first, when we should really start with Cabuyao." – Participant 3 -
		Technology as a Distraction	"First of all... technology. Because of technology... uhm, the youth nowadays are just focused on using their cellphones." – Participant 2
4. As a local government official, what role do you play in preserving the rich culture and history of Cabuyao?	Government's Role in Conservation	Policy and Research Responsibilities	"The LGUs should be on top of preserving culture... We have the resources, we know the right people... Because, right, the tourism officer—our office is the City Tourism, Culture, and Arts Office. So culture is also included. And part of that is, of course, documentation and doing research." – Participant 1 "And also, our legal and policy framework for the protection of our heritage here." – Participant 3

		Cultural Events and Awareness Initiatives	- "Like during fiestas or festivals, we really hold the Batingaw Festival every year. That will never go away—because that's really the mark of Cabuyao, the festival itself as a program." – Participant 3 "We had a street dance, right? And the participants there were the youth." – Participant 2
5. What recommendations do you have to improve the cultural and historical conservation efforts in Cabuyao?	Recommendations for Improvement	Need for More Research and Documentation	"More studies, more research. Because, especially now, there's still so much you can gather." – Participant 1 "I think what we need is a new group of local historians." – Participant 2
		Awareness, Engagement, and Education Programs	"... to improve cultural and historical preservation, the first thing is community engagement... that's really what we lack, especially in terms of educational awareness, particularly with the museum itself, and most especially our digital platforms, our online platforms." – Participant 3 "Maybe the first thing here is awareness, of course... because many of the youth are no longer aware of the history of Cabuyao... perhaps it would be good to explore if it would be beneficial to require schools in Cabuyao to teach the history of Cabuyao." – Participant 2

The table 2 presents the data analysis that explores the importance of culture and history in Cabuyao, Laguna. Local officials value the uniqueness of Cabuyao's culture, highlighting the golden bell and coffee cultivation as distinctive elements. They also recognize the historical significance of events like the Sakdalista Uprising. However, there is a concern about declining youth interest in the past, with participants noting a lack of

knowledge about local history and a reliance on technology as a distraction. To address this, participants suggest a stronger role for education, community involvement, and the need for more research and documentation. They advocate for incorporating local history into school curricula, promoting public awareness through various platforms, and collaborating with local historians to enhance preservation efforts. Overall, the analysis emphasizes the need for a multi-pronged approach to cultural and historical conservation in Cabuyao, ensuring that its rich heritage is preserved for future generations.

4. Discussion

RQ1

The results of the study indicate that the youth in Cabuyao, Laguna, have a low level of awareness of their local culture and history, with a general assessment score of 2.19 ("Aware"). This finding aligns with existing studies on youth cultural consciousness, which suggest that many young individuals have limited knowledge of their local heritage due to changing societal influences, digital distractions, and inadequate educational integration.¹⁰ Research by Smith and Brown highlights that modern educational curricula often prioritize global history over local heritage, leading to gaps in historical and cultural awareness among students.⁴⁷

One of the most striking findings of the study is the lack of awareness about the Sakdalista movement (2.68, "Not Aware"). This is consistent with the study of Garcia and Cruz, which found that historical political movements are often overlooked in formal education, resulting in young Filipinos having minimal engagement with their own revolutionary past.¹⁴ Similarly, Reyes and Santos argue that youth awareness of nationalistic movements in the Philippines is declining due to the decreasing emphasis on local history in the educational system.⁴⁴ This lack of awareness can be attributed to the absence of historical narratives in social media, a key source of information for many young people today.⁴⁵

Conversely, the study found that the youth exhibited higher awareness of cultural symbols, particularly the Batingaw (Golden Bell) (1.83, "Aware") and well-known landmarks in Cabuyao (1.96, "Aware"). This supports the findings of Lopez et al., which emphasize that physical landmarks and cultural artifacts are more easily recognized because of their visibility in public spaces and their inclusion in local festivities.²⁸ Furthermore, Torres suggests that cultural events, such as town fiestas and historical commemorations, play a vital role in reinforcing awareness of local heritage.²¹ In Cabuyao, the recognition of historical landmarks may be due to their role in city celebrations, thereby sustaining public consciousness about these cultural elements.

The study also reveals that awareness of the historical origin of St. Polycarp Parish Church (2.31) and the original territories of Cabuyao (2.31) is moderate, ranking relatively higher than other aspects of local history. This is in line with Martinez and Delgado's research, which states that historical structures and territorial histories are more likely to be acknowledged when they remain physically present in a community.³² However, Fernandez warns that while youth may recognize landmarks, their understanding of the historical context surrounding them remains superficial, indicating a need for deeper educational engagement.¹¹

Moreover, moderate awareness was recorded for historical artifacts and buildings (2.12), the Marcos Twin Mansion (2.16), and the Cabuyao tree (2.25). These findings are supported by Mendoza and Ramos, who argue that unless historical sites are actively promoted through educational programs, museums, and tourism initiatives, public recognition remains limited.³⁴ The case of the Cabuyao tree and the cityhood inauguration of Cabuyao (2.27) reflects the broader trend where significant historical events tend to be overshadowed by more mainstream narratives, making them less known to younger generations.¹

The findings of this study reflect broader trends in cultural and historical awareness among Filipino youth. While there is some level of familiarity with tangible cultural elements, deeper historical understanding remains limited. By integrating local history into the educational system, promoting interactive cultural experiences, and leveraging digital tools, the City of Cabuyao can significantly improve the youth's engagement with their heritage. Future studies may explore the impact of social media, tourism initiatives, and local governance efforts in enhancing cultural awareness.

RQ2

Cultural and Historical Awareness

The findings present that local officials in Cabuyao, Laguna, value the uniqueness of their community's culture, highlighting aspects like the golden bell and coffee cultivation as important elements of their cultural identity. They also recognize the historical significance of events like the Sakdalista Uprising, demonstrating an understanding of the importance of remembering the past and its impact on the community. This suggests a focus on preserving historical knowledge and understanding its impact on the community.

Cultural and historical awareness plays a critical role in shaping community identity, particularly in preserving significant elements that define a locality's past and present. The study's findings indicate that local officials in Cabuyao, Laguna, actively recognize and value their community's unique cultural elements, including the Batingaw (Golden Bell) and coffee cultivation, as fundamental aspects of their local heritage. Additionally, their acknowledgment of historical events like the Sakdalista Uprising reflects an effort to preserve historical consciousness within the community. These findings align with broader national efforts to safeguard cultural identity through local initiatives, education, and policy-driven conservation strategies. The importance of cultural elements in shaping local identity is widely recognized in literature. According to Lopez et al., preserving cultural heritage enhances community pride and fosters a sense of belonging among residents.²⁸ This is evident in Cabuyao, where the Batingaw (Golden Bell) serves as a historical artifact that connects present generations with their past. Similarly, the recognition of coffee cultivation as part of the town's agricultural history demonstrates an appreciation for economic and cultural sustainability. Mendoza and Ramos emphasize that integrating agricultural heritage into cultural awareness programs can promote sustainable tourism and economic resilience in local communities.³⁴

Beyond tangible heritage, culinary traditions also play a vital role in cultural preservation. A study by Jarito and Vargas highlights how the Slow Food Movement in the Philippines has contributed to preserving traditional dishes and cooking methods.²² The integration of local delicacies and traditional food production into cultural awareness programs can enhance youth engagement with heritage conservation.

The study also reveals that local officials in Cabuyao recognize the historical significance of key events such as the Sakdalista Uprising, which underscores the community's commitment to historical remembrance. However, results suggest that awareness of this historical event among the youth remains low. This aligns with Reyes and Santos' study, which found that historical literacy among Filipino youth is often dependent on the effectiveness of local education programs and government initiatives.⁴⁴ One potential reason for the limited awareness of historical movements like the Sakdalista Uprising is the lack of comprehensive integration into formal education and digital learning platforms. Torres argues that digital tools and technology-driven initiatives can serve as powerful instruments for promoting cultural and historical literacy among young people.²¹ Digital archives, interactive museums, and social media campaigns can help bridge knowledge gaps and engage younger generations in historical discourse.

Local governments across the Philippines have implemented policies aimed at strengthening cultural and historical conservation, and Cabuyao's efforts reflect this national trend. According to the Manila Tourism and Cultural Development Plan (2020–

2025), heritage-driven urban planning is a growing strategy in many Philippine cities. This includes revitalizing cultural sites, preserving historical landmarks, and promoting awareness through festivals and educational campaigns.²¹ These policies align with Cabuyao's recognition of its historical landmarks, such as St. Polycarp Parish Church and the Marcos Twin Mansion, as significant components of local heritage.

Furthermore, initiatives aimed at empowering the youth in heritage conservation governance are crucial in bridging the generational gap in cultural awareness. Martinez and Delgado highlight the role of Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) in advocating for youth participation in cultural programs.³² By involving young leaders in heritage promotion, local governments can create sustainable frameworks for historical education and cultural appreciation.

Public Interest and Engagement

The findings show that though there is a strong sense of local pride in Cabuyao's cultural and historical heritage, concerns have been raised about the declining interest among the youth in learning about their past. Many participants in the study acknowledged a lack of historical knowledge, even among those who are aware of cultural landmarks. This suggests that historical education and cultural awareness programs need to be more accessible and engaging for younger generations. Moreover, participants emphasized the importance of community involvement in the conservation of local history, highlighting the need for collaborative initiatives that bring together multiple stakeholders, including educators, policymakers, and the local youth. These findings align with contemporary research emphasizing the role of education, digital engagement, and community-based initiatives in strengthening public interest in cultural and historical heritage.^{28, 32, 44}

The gradual decline of historical interest among younger generations is not unique to Cabuyao but reflects a broader national and global trend. According to Reyes and Santos, one of the primary reasons for low historical engagement among youth is the disconnect between formal education and real-life applications of history.⁴⁴ Traditional history education often focuses on memorization rather than experiential learning, making it less engaging for students. The Philippine educational crisis, which has led to reduced government spending on cultural education, further exacerbates this issue.⁴⁰

Moreover, research by Torres highlights that the rise of digital media consumption among youth has shifted their focus away from traditional learning methods.²¹ With the advent of short-form entertainment on social media platforms, younger individuals prefer interactive and visually engaging content, making traditional history lectures and textbooks less appealing. As such, integrating digital technology and interactive storytelling into local history education could serve as a more effective means of engaging the youth.

Accessibility to historical knowledge remains a key barrier to increasing public engagement in local history. A study by Lopez et al. found that many local governments in the Philippines have historical information stored in archives that are difficult to access.²⁸ Museums, libraries, and cultural centers often lack digital resources, making it challenging for younger generations to learn about their history in ways that align with modern learning preferences.

To address this gap, various Philippine cities have adopted digital heritage conservation projects. For instance, Intramuros Administration launched an online archive of historical documents and virtual tours of Manila's historic sites, allowing students to explore cultural landmarks remotely.²¹ Similar initiatives could be implemented in Cabuyao to digitize local historical records and make them more accessible through online platforms.

Community participation plays a crucial role in ensuring the sustainability of historical and cultural conservation efforts. Martinez and Delgado argue that youth engagement in governance structures, such as the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK), can be instrumental in revitalizing interest in historical awareness programs.³² By involving the youth in cultural festivals, storytelling initiatives, and museum programs, local governments can bridge the generational gap in cultural heritage appreciation.

Moreover, case studies from Cavite show that integrating cultural education into local tourism efforts can significantly increase community engagement. Mendoza and Ramos highlight that heritage tourism projects, such as guided historical tours and cultural workshops, can foster a deeper sense of identity and belonging among community members.³⁴ By applying similar approaches in Cabuyao—such as incorporating historical narratives into local tourism strategies—stakeholders can encourage active participation in historical conservation efforts.

Challenges in Youth Awareness

The findings identified technology as a major distraction for young people, contributing to the decline of their interest in history. Participants believe that schools play a crucial role in fostering awareness of cultural and historical heritage, emphasizing the need for schools to incorporate local history into their curricula and provide opportunities for students to engage with their community's past. They also express concern about a lack of exposure to local history among young people, suggesting that they are more likely to be exposed to history outside of Cabuyao. This highlights the need to prioritize local history within the educational system and provide opportunities for young people to learn about their own community's past.

The decline in youth awareness of local history in Cabuyao, Laguna, is influenced by several factors, with technology emerging as a major distraction. Many young people are more engaged with digital media, social networking, and entertainment platforms, which often divert their attention away from learning about their community's past. Studies indicate that the overuse of digital devices in educational settings can contribute to reduced focus and engagement with traditional learning materials, including history education.¹⁷ The accessibility of global content through social media and online entertainment may overshadow the importance of local historical narratives, making it less appealing for the younger generation.¹⁶

Furthermore, research highlights the crucial role of schools in fostering historical and cultural awareness among students. Scholars argue that integrating local history into the curriculum is an effective way to enhance students' connection to their heritage, helping them develop a stronger sense of cultural identity.⁷ When students learn about historical events and landmarks relevant to their immediate environment, they are more likely to appreciate and engage with their community's history. However, in many cases, history curricula remain focused on national and international events, leading to a lack of exposure to localized historical narratives.⁸ This is evident in Cabuyao, where awareness of events such as the Sakdalista Uprising remains low despite its historical significance.

A key factor contributing to this challenge is the limited accessibility of historical information. Studies emphasize that making historical content more engaging through interactive approaches, such as museum visits, cultural events, and digital storytelling, can significantly improve youth participation and interest.²⁰ Community engagement is also essential in strengthening historical awareness, as collaborative efforts between educators, historians, and local government units can provide young people with firsthand experiences of their cultural heritage.²⁵

Additionally, the decline in youth awareness of local history is not only due to the distractions posed by technology but also a lack of structured initiatives to actively engage young people in learning about their community's past. Experts argue that educational

institutions must balance the use of technology by incorporating digital tools that enhance historical learning rather than detract from it.¹⁹ Schools can utilize interactive digital platforms that focus on local history, ensuring that students remain interested while still using the technology they are accustomed to.

Moreover, community-driven projects that involve storytelling, oral histories, and interactive exhibits can help bridge the gap between the younger generation and historical knowledge. Research has shown that students are more likely to retain historical information when it is presented in a dynamic and relatable manner, rather than through passive learning methods.⁴⁸ In Cabuyao, efforts to revitalize youth engagement in history could include initiatives such as youth-led historical research projects, digital archives of local history, and gamified learning experiences related to historical events.

Ultimately, prioritizing local history within the educational system and the community requires a multifaceted approach. Addressing the challenges in youth awareness involves not only minimizing digital distractions but also creating opportunities for young people to engage with their cultural heritage in meaningful ways. By fostering a collaborative approach that includes schools, local government units, and community members, it is possible to cultivate a renewed appreciation for Cabuyao's history among the youth.

Government's Role in Conservation

The government's role in the conservation of cultural heritage includes acknowledging the importance of documentation, research, and policy frameworks to protect cultural assets. This suggests a proactive approach to conservation, with a focus on supporting research and developing policies that promote the preservation of cultural heritage.

Cultural heritage conservation is a fundamental responsibility of governments, ensuring the protection, documentation, and promotion of historical and cultural assets for future generations. Government initiatives play a crucial role in preserving tangible and intangible heritage through well-defined policies, research-based strategies, and institutional support. According to the U.S. National Park Service, cultural resource management involves systematic research, legal frameworks, and documentation to maintain the integrity of historical sites and artifacts.⁵⁷ This suggests that a proactive approach to conservation requires structured policies that facilitate long-term preservation efforts.

One of the key aspects of cultural heritage conservation is documentation and research. The Getty Conservation Institute emphasizes that proper recording and management of heritage sites are essential for effective preservation.¹⁵ When governments invest in comprehensive research initiatives, they create a strong foundation for understanding the historical, social, and economic significance of cultural assets. Moreover, the use of modern technologies such as digital archiving and geographic information systems (GIS) has enhanced the documentation process, allowing for better monitoring and restoration planning.³³

Policy frameworks are another essential component in the conservation of cultural heritage. National and local governments implement laws that protect historical landmarks, traditional practices, and indigenous heritage. For example, the U.S. Department of State underscores the importance of international cooperation in safeguarding cultural properties, particularly in conflict zones where heritage sites are at risk of destruction.⁵⁶ Similarly, in the Philippines, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) has developed policies to support local governments in preserving cultural heritage through educational programs, funding initiatives, and site restoration projects.³⁶ These policies ensure that conservation efforts are not only reactive but also proactive in preventing cultural loss.

Despite these efforts, challenges remain in the implementation of cultural heritage policies. One of the major concerns is funding, as many historic preservation projects require significant financial support. A report by *Le Monde* highlights how the lack of funding in France has put numerous historical monuments at risk, demonstrating that without consistent governmental support, conservation initiatives may struggle to sustain themselves.²⁶ This underscores the need for governments to allocate sufficient resources to heritage conservation and encourage public-private partnerships to ensure sustainable funding mechanisms.⁴⁹

In addition to legal and financial support, governments also play a role in raising public awareness and fostering community engagement in cultural preservation. The American Institute for Conservation argues that community involvement in conservation efforts leads to more successful preservation projects, as local stakeholders become active participants in safeguarding their heritage.⁴ In Cabuyao, for instance, policies that promote cultural education, such as integrating local history into school curricula and organizing heritage festivals, can strengthen public appreciation and involvement in conservation efforts.

Another significant aspect of governmental responsibility is addressing the threats posed by modernization and urban development. Rapid urbanization often leads to the destruction or neglect of historical sites, requiring governments to implement stricter zoning regulations and heritage impact assessments before approving development projects.⁴³ This is particularly relevant in cities experiencing economic growth, where balancing development with heritage conservation is a critical challenge.

Recommendations for Improvement

The participants recommend cultural and historical conservation efforts in Cabuyao like further research and documentation to gather and document information about the community's culture and history. They also emphasize the importance of community engagement, requiring programs and initiatives that involve the community in preserving cultural heritage. Finally, they advocate for education and awareness programs that incorporate local history into school curricula, promote public awareness through various platforms, and provide opportunities for community members to learn about their heritage.

The preservation of cultural and historical heritage requires a multi-faceted approach that includes thorough research, community engagement, and education. Participants in the study emphasized the importance of these components in strengthening conservation efforts in Cabuyao. Research and documentation are essential to ensure the accurate preservation of cultural heritage. According to Smith and Watson, systematic documentation of historical events, artifacts, and cultural practices prevents the erosion of cultural identity and provides future generations with a rich understanding of their past.⁵⁰ In Cabuyao, further research can be conducted on lesser-known historical events, such as the Sakdalista Uprising, which has received limited attention in educational curricula and public discourse.

Community engagement plays a crucial role in sustaining cultural heritage conservation efforts. Scholars argue that involving local communities in preservation initiatives fosters a sense of ownership and pride, making conservation efforts more effective and sustainable.²³ The involvement of different generations in cultural programs, historical reenactments, and heritage festivals can help bridge knowledge gaps and strengthen cultural transmission. Research suggests that community-based initiatives, such as heritage mapping and oral history projects, are highly effective in preserving local traditions and ensuring their continuity.⁵³ In Cabuyao, organizing workshops and forums where elders share historical narratives with the youth could significantly enhance awareness and appreciation of local history.

Education and awareness programs are also critical in cultural conservation. Studies indicate that incorporating local history into school curricula fosters a stronger connection between students and their community's past.¹³ Many schools focus on national or global historical narratives, often neglecting local history, which results in a weaker sense of cultural identity among students. According to Williams, the integration of local heritage topics into formal education can increase students' engagement with history and cultivate a deeper appreciation for their cultural roots.⁶¹ Cabuyao's education system could implement localized modules covering significant events, figures, and landmarks in the city's history. Additionally, the use of interactive learning tools such as digital archives, virtual museum tours, and gamified historical lessons could appeal to younger generations who are more inclined toward technology-driven learning methods.³⁸

Public awareness campaigns are another vital component in promoting cultural and historical conservation. Social media and digital platforms have been identified as effective tools for engaging a wider audience in heritage preservation.¹¹ Digital storytelling, virtual exhibitions, and short documentary films can help bring historical narratives to life and make them accessible to the public. Governments and local organizations can collaborate to create online content that highlights Cabuyao's cultural landmarks, traditions, and historical events. According to Roberts and Chen, utilizing platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram can significantly increase youth engagement in heritage-related discussions.⁴⁵

Despite the significance of these efforts, challenges remain in their implementation. Funding limitations, lack of institutional support, and insufficient public interest often hinder heritage conservation initiatives.²⁹ To address these issues, stakeholders must advocate for policy reforms that prioritize heritage funding, create incentives for cultural research, and promote collaborations between educational institutions and cultural organizations. Successful case studies from other localities have demonstrated that public-private partnerships can provide financial and logistical support for cultural preservation projects.⁴⁹

Merging of Data

Overall, three convergent themes arise from the two sets of data;

1. **Limited Awareness of Local History:** Both the quantitative and qualitative data highlight a significant gap in the youth's knowledge of local culture and history. The quantitative data shows low awareness scores across various historical and cultural aspects, particularly concerning the Sakdalista movement. The qualitative data confirms this, with participants expressing limited knowledge about local history and the stories behind landmarks.
2. **The Need for Educational and Community Engagement:** The data strongly emphasizes the crucial role of education and community involvement in enhancing cultural awareness. The quantitative data reveals a need for better historical education, particularly regarding the Sakdalista movement. The qualitative data suggests integrating local history into school curricula, organizing tours, and involving the community in preservation efforts to foster a sense of ownership and pride.
3. **The Role of Technology as a Tool for Outreach:** While technology is acknowledged as a potential distraction for youth, the data also highlights its potential as a tool for outreach and engagement. The need for digital platforms to reach a wider audience and the suggestion of using online platforms for educational purposes are key points. This suggests that technology can be leveraged to bridge the gap in awareness and connect youth with their local history in innovative ways.

RQ3

The "Echoes of Batingaw" program aims to preserve Cabuyao, Laguna's cultural heritage through sustainable initiatives. It focuses on raising youth awareness via

integrated school curricula, interactive activities, and community engagement. The program includes education and awareness campaigns, youth involvement (Youth Heritage Ambassadors), a historical exhibit on the Sakdalista movement, and a virtual reality tour of historical landmarks. All initiatives involve collaboration with the LGU, educational institutions, and cultural organizations, with funding secured through diverse sources and ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure long-term success and community participation. The ultimate goal is to foster a sense of identity and pride in Cabuyao's history for future generations.

5. Conclusion

The following conclusions were drawn from the treatment and data explication relevant to the research questions and analysis of relevant meanings.

1. The quantitative data revealed a concerning low level of awareness among Cabuyao's youth regarding their local culture and history, particularly concerning significant historical events like the Sakdalista movement. While some awareness of cultural symbols (like the Batingaw) and landmarks existed, this was superficial and lacked deeper historical understanding. This aligns with existing research showing a general decline in youth engagement with local history due to factors like technology distractions and inadequate educational integration.
2. Qualitative interviews with LGU officials highlighted challenges in cultural preservation, including limited resources, coordination issues between agencies, and the difficulty in engaging youth in meaningful ways. Officials acknowledged the importance of preserving Cabuyao's unique heritage but expressed concerns about declining youth interest and the need for more effective strategies, including improved educational programs and community engagement initiatives.
3. By integrating the quantitative and qualitative findings, a comprehensive "Echoes of Batingaw" program was developed. This program proposes a multi-pronged approach to enhance youth awareness and strengthen LGU initiatives. It includes integrating local history into school curricula, creating interactive digital resources (website, VR tour, interactive exhibits), fostering community engagement (festivals, youth ambassador program), and conducting further research and documentation to fill existing knowledge gaps. This program directly addresses the identified shortcomings in youth awareness and LGU capacity, offering a sustainable framework for cultural and historical conservation in Cabuyao.

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