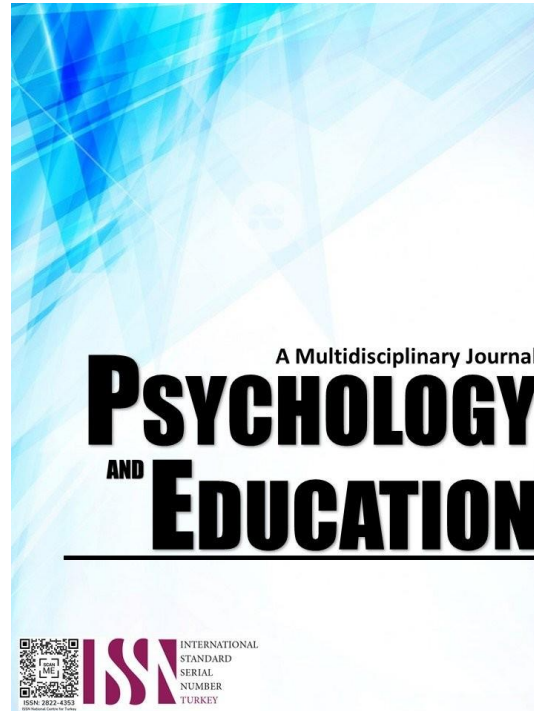


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The Peculiar Culture of Samal Bangingi Stakeholders: Key to Improve School Connectedness

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Abstract

Togetherness and unity describe Samal, while being an anti-begging Samal defines a Bangingi. Exploring the peculiarities and uniqueness of Samal Bangingi culture of the Samal Bangingi stakeholders of Payao Central Elementary School is the study's primary purpose. This qualitative study, which employed the Realist Ethnography Approach, allowed the active participation of the 8 Samal Bangingi parents of the school. It followed the ethnographic principles of Wolcott (2000) in deriving the concepts following the triangulation technique of gathering data, in which in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and observations were the primary activities employed in the method. Tando Pataom, Masanang, and Lumantic sitios, which were located in the coastal areas of the place with 100% Muslim inhabitants, were the identified locations in Payao, Zamboanga Sibugay for the study's data gathering. The result of this ethnographic was divided into three categories: cultural background, perspectives, and traditions. These categories were described by the nine themes of the study, such as History of Samal Bangingi; origin of Samal Bangingi; meaningful symbols and structures; perceptions; fortunes and misfortunes; characteristics and behaviors; the significance of rituals and ceremonies; Faith and Devotions; and livelihood and products of Samal Bangingi. The results and findings of this study ended up revealing the unique and peculiar aspects of the Samal Bangingi culture, which highlighted the aspects: the essence of vinta and pearl as the primary symbols of the tribe; togetherness and unity as a reflection of their primary characteristics; and inspired with the line which says, "we prefer to die hungry than to live as beggars." The results and findings of the study may help their children rebuild their self-esteem and gain the respect and trust of the environment. These are determinants of healthier perceptions in life, resulting in a high level of school connectedness, significantly influencing the learners' academic engagement in the school.

Keywords: *uniqueness, peculiar culture, samal bangingi stakeholders, realist ethnography approach*

Introduction

Bearing the title "The Unique Nation with four Cultural Heritages," the Philippines is inhabited by more than 182 ethnolinguistic groups. Many belong to "Indigenous Peoples (IP)" protected by the country's Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997. They are spread throughout the country and thrive in the coastal areas.

Banguingui people are among these famous Philippine ethnic groups, popularly known as Sama Banguingui or Samal Banguingui (alternatively spelled as Bangingi', Bangingi, Banguingui, Balanguingui, and Balangingi). They are a distinct ethnolinguistic group thriving at Balanguingui Island as native inhabitants. They are also found in some areas of the Sulu Archipelago, southern and coastal regions of Zamboanga Peninsula in Mindanao of the Philippines, including the hinterland of Payao, Zamboanga Sibugay.

Social integration and social connectedness are two aspects in which these ethnic group was experiencing severe challenges in both school and community regarding language, social orientations, beliefs, and

even civilizations (Tamayo 2008). However, their population in schools like Payao Central Elementary School denotes perseverance and determination to surpass these challenges in their social environment, including at school.

Payao Central Elementary School is a large K-6 offering school under Payao Central District managed by a School Principal III. Situated in the most populated area of Payao Municipality, the school is considered the heart of the diverse cultural civilization. Few Subanens, more Cebuanos, with Muslims and Cebuanos as the dominating group in the

community, made the place intensely diverse. Among the Muslim stakeholders in the school, few of them are natives and crossbreeds of Samal Bangingi inhabitants. As a marginalized group of Muslim brothers, most developed unhealthy social perspectives resulting in introverted behaviors, aloofness, and inferiority within their social environments. They are learners vulnerable to risks of dropping out for many reasons, including failure to acclimate to the school community. Besides, parents of these tribes were among those stakeholders with low involvement in the school activities, such as PTA meetings and parents' assembly. The school's attendance record revealed that among the



stakeholders of this school, Samal Banging has the lowest level of engagement in school. Thus, social integration and school connectedness in the school among these minority groups is relatively unfavorable. Several studies on Indigenous People and minority groups focus much on the Subanen Cultures, revealing the glorious aspects of the culture and its meaningful contribution to the country's unique culture (Ampuan, 2011). National Laws recognize, protect, and promote the rights of these indigenous cultural communities/ indigenous peoples as stipulated in Republic Act No. 8371. Besides, institutional laws are also made to strengthen such national policies, like DepEd Order No. 62, s. 20211 or the National IPEd Policy Framework articulates critical policy statements on access, pedagogy, learning resources, environment, teachers, institutional support and strengthening, linkages, and affirmative action against discrimination.

However, the Philippines being “The Unique Nation with 4 Cultural Heritages,” doesn't only have Subanens as its minority/ IP group. Like Samal Bangigi, who are among such Filipino marginalized cultures without any special rights and privileges in the community but started to become extinct due to crossbreeding and are given few emphases in the historical backgrounds of the country.

Thus, the primary purpose of this study is to explore and discover the worth of the Samal Bangingi Culture, who are the school stakeholders, by determining its meaning, uniqueness, and peculiarities, which are part of the unique cultural heritage of the Philippine nation. In this way, the research endeavor is of great help in cultivating the beauty of the Philippine culture in this minority group and raising the community's awareness about the glory and honor of the Samal people in the society and the country. These are vital points towards strengthening the social integration of these groups in schools, which are also determinants of their academic and non-academic engagement.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research method. The possible findings of the study were strongly relying on the data obtained by the researcher from the first-hand observation, interviews, focus groups, participant observation, recordings made in the natural setting, and artifacts.

Research Design

This qualitative study employed the Realist Ethnography Approach. It is a traditional approach that reflects a stance taken by researchers toward the individuals or groups belonging to a distinct tribe being studied. Transcripts are usually written and narrated by the researcher from a third-person point of view to reflect information gathered from the participants.

The goal of this design is to provide a rich authoritative account on the social behaviors of the Samal Bangini Stakeholders of Payao Central Elementary School through the following elements, namely, origin, activities, symbols, values, beliefs, norms social orientations, religion, and their contribution (Wolcott, 2000), that made up the peculiarities of their culture. Notably, it will help reveal the essence and uniqueness of the culture of the target participants of the study, the Samal Bangingi learners and stakeholders of Payao Central Elementary School.

Research Locale

This study was conducted at Poblacion, Payao, Zamboanga Sibugay, among the Samal Bangingi inhabitants who are registered learners of the Payao Central Elementary School and their parents. The following puroks were the identified areas to visit as the specific locale of the

conduct of the study, namely, Tando Pataw and Masanang. These areas were located in the coastal part of the place, where most of the Samal Bangingi learners of the community reside.

Participants and Sampling

The participants of this ethnographical research were the parents of the 10 Samal Bangingi learners and their parents of Payao Central Elementary School. Inclusion criteria for selecting participants focused on the level of connectedness and participation of the stakeholders' cultural activities like consistently attending church activities, being able to speak the language, and can articulate the history of Samal Bangingi Culture. Thus, purposive sampling was used to qualify research participants.

Research Instruments

The researcher for the data gathering developed printed interview guide questions for the in-depth interviews. However, the researcher will be the

primary instrument of the study to do the interview using a guide and record the participants' responses. The ability of the researcher to facilitate meaningful and substantial responses and data from the participants counts most in the study's data gathering. Secondary instruments were recording gadget and paper-pencil to be used to record and note the participants' responses.

Data Gathering Procedure

A letter to conduct a study was sent to the heads of the department, namely, the principal, supervisors, and superintendent, to signify the researcher's intent of conducting the study with their learners as the target participants.

With the heads' permission, the researcher gave informed consent to all target participants of the study. The purpose of the consent was to inform the participants of their participation in

the research and the purpose of the study. This allowed them also to prepare themselves for the interview and the data they may substantiate. Besides, replacement of the target participants due to refusal will be done ahead of time without compromising the research timeline.

Initial and open coding was complementary activities along with the data gathering. After an interview, the researcher started to code the participants' responses to initially assess the substance of the answers, indicating if the process has to be improved or has reached its data saturation point.

Triangulation technique was used in the data gathering, with the following activities:

1. Interview – The target participants was scheduled for an in-depth interview.
2. FGD – The same participants were called for a group interview. This had clarified some erroneous data gathered during the in-depth interview .
3. Observation – The researcher had spent time to visit the community of the participants, namely, Tando Patao, Masanang, and Lumnatik, which are areas in Payao dominated by Samal Bangingis.

Ethical Considerations

The participants' welfare, benefits, and interest were the obligatory considerations of a researcher. Thus, exploring, discovering, and looking into the positive aspects of the Samal Bangingis' culture to uplift their cultural values was the researcher's endeavor to satisfy

the beneficence in conducting research.

The researcher had sent informed consent to the target participants a week before the data gathering. This informed them of their participation and the purpose of the study, which signifies a coercion free and voluntary participation in the study.

The researcher ensured the privacy of the sensitive information from the participants that may be revealed during the data gathering/data analysis by refining these data. No private or sensitive information became available in the manuscript, while the transcript and other instruments with these data were appropriately disposed. Thus, confidentiality was highly regarded.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings and analysis of the responses of the Samal Bangingi Stakeholders of Payao Central Elementary School depicting describing and depicting their culture as to the domains, namely, origin, activities, symbols, values, beliefs, norms, social orientations, religion, and their contributions. The participants' responses based on these domains have resulted in the 8 themes, which are grouped into 3 categories: cultural background, perspectives, and tradition. Under the cultural background is theme 1: History of Samal Bangingi of Payao, which has 4 sub-themes (1.1: Sacrifices of Samal Bangingi ancestors, 1.2: Reasons of coming to Payao, and 1.3: Native products, and 1.4: Ancient and contemporary instruments of Samal Bangingi of Payao), and theme 2: Origin of Samal Bangingi of Payao which has 3 sub-themes (2.1: Ancestors and leaders of Samal Bangingi, 2.2: Language of Samal Bangingi,

2.3: Significant places of Samal Bangingi. Under the perspectives are theme 3: Meaningful symbols and structures, theme 4: Perceptions which has 2 sub-themes (4.1: Life's purpose, and 4.2: Value of education), and theme 6: Characteristics and behaviors of Samal Bangingi which has 2 sub-themes (6.1: Expressions of Samal Bangingi, and 6.2: Crime's consequences of Samal Bangingi). Lastly, under tradition are theme 5: Fortunes and misfortunes of Samal Bangingi, theme 7: Significance of rituals and ceremonies, theme 8: Faith and Devotions of Samal Bangingi, and theme 9: Livelihood and products of Samal Bangingi.

Cultural Background

Cultural background refers to the history and origin of

the Samal Bangingi. It accounts for all the records of the tribe in the past as to their ancestors and their sacrifices, reasons for

coming to the place, native products, cultural figures and instruments used, language used, and significant sites.

History Of Samal Banginngi Of Payao

The 1st theme is described by the 4 sub-themes, which provide details and meaning of the primary theme. These sub-themes are considered the domains of the theme history of the data taken from the participants, namely, sacrifices of Samal Bangingi, Reasons for coming to Payao, native products, and ancient and contemporary instruments of Samal Bangingi of Payao.

Sacrifices of Samal Banngingi Ancestors

The ancestors of Samal Bangingis, who are stakeholders of Payao Central Elementary School, were said to be the heroes of their tribe from World War II. They were the reasons why Samal Bangingi tribes and their culture were still present today as glory for their war sacrifices. When Jolo and Sulu were tried to be invaded by the Japanese and Spaniards, most of them fought against these invaders and sacrificed their lives to delay the invaders allowing other members of the tribes to vacate the neighboring places, such as the Zamboanga Peninsula areas, including Payao, Zamboanga Sibugay. During the Spanish regime, a continuous fight was led by the Moro people and their allies, including Samal Bangingis and other Muslim tribes, to protect their place against the invader.

Moro was our ancestors. They fought against the enemies to make their tribes survived. They are said to be the heroes of the tribe. Salicala family is believed to be the first Samal Bnagingi cla in the place. Bangsamoro – tribal heroes in the place. Tando Patao is the place of origin (Samal Bangingi 1).

Uniqueness: Using Garay, known as their ancient warship that only Samal Bnagingi had in the old-time, made their expedition unique from the other Muslim tribes or any other tribes in the country. Garays were used by the Moros, who were believed to be their ancestral warriors before. It was said to be more significant than a vinta by 5 times and can carry 5 – 10 individuals or warriors. The principles of the warriors in the Garay were to fight against the Spaniards and other invaders to protect their tribe, the Samal Bangingi. Garay was their warship used against the invaders before. Vinta was their native sailboat for

shipping and fishing (Samal Bangingi 5).

Reasons of coming to Payao

There were so many reasons why these tribes have started dominating the municipality of Payao, Zamboanga Sibugay. 1st was due to a war in which most of them vacated Sulu and traveled anywhere. Payao was one of the places some of them had landed. To establish in the place, they married Payaonons, 2nd, was due to Chinese trading using a vinta. They were also believed to have been influenced by Chinese mentality, particularly in business using their vinta. This business-led them to come to Payao to introduce barter trading. Most of them liked the place and stayed permanently. Lastly, because of the nature their livelihood which have been fishing using vinta and diving for pearls.

They don't have their own territory and they used to travel anywhere; some were landed to Payao. Vinta, cultural bangka, was their means of transportation and sources of living (Samal Bangingi 1). Our ancestors travelled anywhere from Jolo during the World War II, and among them were landed at Payao including their ancestors. They used to call the place as Piao. Sapit, or vinta was their means of transportation. Layag was the process. They guarded the natural resources in the coastal areas and produce large fishing industry in the place (Samal Bangingi 2). Some had found someone to marry from Payao was their reason of coming in the place. They usually met in the seas, while fishing. Fishing and agar-agar industry are their contributions to current society. They believed that Subanen and Samal were brothers and sisters in the history. Their culture varied based on their exposure. Samals were exposed in the seas, while Subanens were exposed to agricultural lands (Samal Bangingi 3). However, the nature of their source of living was the primary reasons of their coming to Payao, which were fishing and dving for pearls. Vinta is their primary instrument of transportation. Samal Bangingi has Sutanate, King and Queen as their ancestors. They were selected based on their blood. Only the royal blooded families can inherit their thrones. Their word and actions are laws in the entire group and tribe under their territory (Samal Bangingi 4).

Uniqueness: The nature of the livelihood of the Samal Bangingis, which is fishing using vinta (other tribes used bangka and diving for pearls were their unique reasons of coming to Payao municipality. Other Muslim tribes used bangka and balangay which differ in sizes, shapes, and structure. They have to travel to other places aside from Sulu province's seas to catch

more fishes and discover more pearls. Some of them landed in the coastal areas of Payao, Zamboanga Sibugay, and stayed forever. They put up their houses and started to create a family. Before, they were highly dependent on these activities and devoted their life on it. However, as the time passed by their instincts evolved, they started to discover other livelihood sources, such as farming, pottery making, and malong weaving. Besides, Samal Bangingi of the current generations started to put up sari-sari store, ukay-ukay trading, and selling in local vendors.

Samals were exposed in the seas, while Subanens were exposed to agricultural lands (Samal Bangingi 3). However, the nature of their source of living was the primary reasons of their coming to Payao, which were fishing and diving for pearls. Vinta is their primary instrument of transportation. Fishing, diving for pearls, and agar2 harvesting were their primary sources of living. They were highly dependent on these activities before. However, only fishing and diving pearls were unique to us from other Muslims. Today, they export dried fish and dominated in the vendor. Ukay2 is their other source of income. Pottery and malong weaving were also practice by their females before which were activities of other tribes. (Samal Bangingi 4).

Native products

Fresh and dried fish, seashells/cucumber, pearls, and Malong were their native products. Samal Bangingi males were said to be experts and skilled in fishing activities and pear searching, while females were good at collecting seashells, cucumbers, and malong making. Vinta, bangka, and Bubu were the primary instruments used for fishing and catching crabs.

Samal Bangingis are the highest form of Samal. Samal Bangingi of Payao came from Jolo. Malong making is one of their products. Fishing was their primary source of income and living. Mamasol, manguhag perlas, mamasol were others. Layag/ vinta was their transportation. They fought against the colonization (Samal Bangingi 3).

Uniqueness: Among the popular products of Samal Bangingis, sea pearls have their unique assets and have been coined to the identity of their tribe. Being sea divers, which made them closely similar to badjaos, they are acquainted with searching for natural sea treasures. Among the treasure of the seas, pearls have been the most expensive beauty they have introduced to society. Among the sea divers of the larger group of Samal, Bangingis was the first one to discover the value of pearls. That is if brought to the society and

dominates the eyes of humans with its pure white attractions outshining other materials, making it as precious as other gems like diamonds and quarts.

Other native products of Samal Bangingi such as, fish products, sea cucumbers, pottery, malong, and malong were common to other Muslim tribes.

Pearls – are worn by higher classes of Samal. Pupiya – naay mga agong, kulintang used by panglima in every event. Problem and ceremony, rituals. Samal Bangingis were the tribe first discovered these sea treasures. (Samal Bangingi).

Ancient and contemporary figures of Samal Bangigi of Payao

Kulintang and Agung were believed to be the tribal instruments of the tribe. These instruments are used only during special occasions of the Muslim tribes, including Samal Banging, until the present. Vinta, Bangka, gakit, and Garay were the ancient instruments of the tribe used in the seas. Activities involved in using these instruments were fishing, searching for pearls, and traveling from one place to another. These activities are still present, practiced, and still their source of living today. However, modernization and technology modified some of their culture, such as using pump and engine boats in fishing instead of vinta and bangka. Laya, Bubu, and pataw were their innovations to make their fishing activities effective and efficient. Besides, most Samal Bangingi stakeholders of Payao CES in contemporary times are started to practice other modern income-generating, such as, putting up sari-sari stores, copra processing, selling in the local vendor, engaging in small-scale market exchange, and ukay-ukay trading. These were part of their current orientations during the actual observation conducted by the researcher.

Use of Kulintang and Agung for rituals and ceremonies for all Muslims. Way of treating buyag2. Vinta was used as transportation and before, but currently we have pump boat. Samal Bangingis are known to be most patient among the Muslim culture, and humble. They usually manifest similar characteristics of Subanens (Samal Bangingi 1).

Uniqueness: Vinta has been an important instrument for all Samal Bangingis, for it has witnessed all the ups and downs and the tales of the Samal Banging history. Vinta has not just been defined as life among the tribe but also describes their culture. Though the modern Samal Bangingis of the 21st century use engine/ pump boats for the modern way of fishing, vinta designs, and

structures are still prevailed and enhanced through intensifying their cultural presentations by adding colors and figures depicting their culture as well. However, few Samal Bangingis still used to have the traditional vinta in their fishing.

Inverted quarter moon is meaningful to them. Bangka/vinta symbolizes our life in the sea, because it is unique to our tribe. Only Samal Bnagingi used vinta ever since. House should have posts to stay it above the water. (Samal Bangingi 6).

Origin Of Samal Bangingi Of Payao

Samal Bangingi origin is described by the 3 sub-themes, namely, ancestors and leaders of Samal Bangingi, language of Samal Bangingi, and significant places of Samal Bangingi.

Ancestors and leaders of Samal Bangingi

These Samal Bnagingis were said to be a crossbreed of Malayan people, who were once traders and businessmen in the country. They married these peculiar Muslim tribes and form a permanent family in the country. Sultan, Sultanate, and Moro were their ancestors and leaders before who fought against the Japanese and Spaniards during the war. Panglima is currently their leader, who used to rule the group of Samal Bangingis.

Their unity, courage, and skills in fighting to protect their territory made them a true leader of the tribe. Though, some died and sacrificed their lives during the encounter, others were survived and went to their families. The reason why they have these tales and have successfully passed to their next generation.

Sultans were our ancestors and Jamalorkiram was among our famous ancestors. He was a Malaysian, Indonesian, and British blooded. Most Samal Bangingis of Payao are Tausog hybrids. We used to live and thrived at the coastal areas (Samal Bangingi 2).

Kings and Queens were once also their leaders and managed their group. This fact has clearly emphasized that monarchy was once the kind of government they were following before. They used to recognize also social classes in the past centuries, in which the highest form of their social distinction is being a Royal Blood. They were not the same with badjaos and luwaan, whose characteristics are too different from their orientations and guiding principles, though they belong to a large group of samal. Bangingis are said to be the highest social classes among the Samal groups

in the country.

Samal Bangingi has Sultanate, King and Queen as their ancestors. They were selected based on their blood. Only the royal blooded families can inherit their thrones. Their word and actions are laws in the entire group and tribe under their territory (Samal Bangingi 8).

Uniqueness: However, all those tribal leaders mentioned above were present among the historical accounts of other Muslim tribes, except for the Tumpuk Spokeman. Tumpuk means village in the national Filipino language. Thus, Tumpuk Spokeman was referred to a village's leader among the Samal Bangingis before. Today, Tumpuk spokesmen are considered leaders of their Puroks and currently having the same functions of the brgy. president.

Within the village, one household head is acknowledged as tumpuk spokesman. In some instances, the tumpuks coincide with parishes, whose members belong to a single mosque. They are known for their traditional dances, songs, dyed mats and food covers, and wood carvings.

Language of Samal Bangingi

Sinama and Bangingi are terms they used to call their language. Sinama is believed to have influenced by the Malaysian vocabulary mixed with the terms involved, which were coined by the tribe upon performing their daily routines in the seas and coastal areas. This means, in terms of language Samal Bangingis are extremely different form other Muslim groups, making them unique and peculiar Muslim tribe in the country.

We have our own language known as sinama. Our ancestors developed these from our daily activities in the seas. Most of ots vocabularies were inspired by the Malyan culture. We use this to communicate (Samal Bangingi 2).

Significant Places of Samal Bangingi

Sulu province, part of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao is the province of origin of the Samal Bangingi of Payao, who were the stakeholders of Payao Central Elementary School. The tribe was originated and dominated in the municipality of Bangingi, where they took their name and added to Samal/Sama.

The sama peoples were originally in the islands and coastal areas separating southwestern Mindanao from the northwestern islands of Sulu. They probably

dispersed because of expanding Chinese trade. These led to the founding of Sulu Sultanate and increase maritime trade. From bases, particularly on Bangingi island, Samal slave traders carried out annual raids on coastal settlements from Luzon to Mindanao. They are mainly on the Philippines though some live in Malaysia (Samal Bangingi 2).

Uniqueness: Being them an aboriginal group from Balangingi or Bangingi area of Sulu province, this place has been considered as their significant place in the entire country particularly in its coastal areas that only Samal Bangingi could have its value. As a matter of fact, they got their tribe's name from the place where they first thrived, the Bangingi town combined to sama/samal as their dominant characteristics.. Today, more Samal Bangingis were no longer thriving in such place, but highly dispersed to the coastal areas of the neighboring provinces, such as, Lanao, Cotabao, and Zamboanga.

Perspectives

Perspective category depicts on the orientations, inclinations, behaviors, characteristics, perceptions and ideology of the Samal Bangingi tribe. It covers themes, namely, meaningful symbols and structures, perceptions of Samal Bangingi of Payao, and characteristics and behaviors of Samal Bangingi.

Meaningful Symbols And Structures

Aside from the activities and instruments involving seas, such as, vinta, bangka and gakit, Samal Bangingi tribe has been sharing almost no difference of the cultures of other Muslim tribes, such as, Tausog, Maranao, and Maguindanao. They matter most of the time on the way they perceive things and create meaning of events and things around them.

The following are their cultural symbols and meanings:

1. Kulintang and Agung, tribal instruments used to solemnize a ceremony/ ritual, which serve as instruments for luck
2. Vinta, which is their fishing instrument and transportation symbolizes life of a Samal Bangingi
3. Garay as their warship symbolizes fortitude and courage
4. Tasbi as their religious instruments represents devotions and faith
5. Wearing of pearls symbolizes royalty
6. Moon, specifically inverted quarter moon symbolizes faith and religion

7. Strong foundation of house's posts means resilience
8. Big triangular house denotes togetherness and unity

Vinta/ with layag is their native structure - symbolizes life. Balangkas – balay na dako kayo nga walay divisions sa sulod – oneness of the members of the family. Pearls – are worn by higher classes of Samal. Pupiya – naay mga agong, kulintang used by panglima in every event. Problem and ceremony, rituals (Samal Bangingi 1). Inverted quarter moon is also meaningful to them (Samal Bangingi 6). However, vinta which means life, was their cultural icon (Samal Bangingi 8). Additionally, Tasbi, which symbolizes faith and devotion is a holy thing in our tribe. We have kupyaa (male), and lukoo (female) to cover our heads. It means devotion and faith.

Uniqueness: The following were the symbols and its meanings that are unique to Samal Bangingis among other Muslim tribes:

1. Vinta, which is their fishing instrument and transportation symbolizes life of a Samal Bangingi
2. Garay as their warship symbolizes fortitude and courage
3. Wearing of pearls symbolizes royalty
4. Big triangular house denotes togetherness and unity

Perceptions Of Samal Bangingi Of Payao

The perceptions of the Samal Bangingis are described by the way they see their life's purpose and how they valued education based on their culture. It is described by its 2 sub-themes, namely, life's perceptions, and value of education.

Life's purpose

Samal Bangingi as one of the largest recognized Muslim communities in the society establishes its uniqueness through its life's perceptions and purpose. Most of the Samal Bangingis of Payao believed that they are born to obey and devote themselves to Allah (Divine creator) by protecting the mainland of the place where they are living by fighting against the invaders. Besides, they used to act as shepherds among the lives in the coastal areas. Serving others is their primary purpose of existence. Unity and togetherness are their core life's value. They believed that being together and united, they tend to help each other easily. Being friendly is tagged to them, since they used to smile to others regardless of the acquaintances.

Uniqueness: Being them inclined to dwell in the coastal areas of a land territory defines their life's

purpose and missions: First, they perceived their existence in the coastal areas as an overseer of peace and order of a metropolitan area of the land against the invaders, like what happened at Sulu during the Spanish occupation; second, they believed that they are born to protect the lives and maintain the ecosystem in the coastal areas.

We are protectors of the lives of the coastal areas. We used to protect the mainland of Payao from invaders. Education before was not valued, but today we give more emphasis on it. We also viewed education to secure our children's culture. We don't have any norms on working with other cultures.

Value of education

Bangingi as one of the dominant tribes of Samal, such as, Badajos and Luwaan is said to be the highest social class of the tribe. Way back to the ancient times, Samal Bangingi ancestors failed to value the essence of education. They believed that education except Madrasah will just teach the children to activate self-foolishness which may result to disobeying their religion and will develop principles of activism. However, modern, and healthier thoughts from the earlier generations make education viewed as it is, which is learning and development for the future. As a matter of fact, almost 25%-30% of the population of student of Payao Central District is composed of this tribe, while 10%-20% of the leaders in the municipality is a population of excellent and productive Samal Bangingi or a mixed blood of this tribe.

Samal Bangingi means highly respected in the Muslim culture. They used to obey and keep quite in the social environment. They can achieve higher positions. They are born to obey their culture and religion. Surga – walay sala. Narka – impyerno para sa makasasala. Before they did not value education. Accordingly, it will make children knew foolishness things like sending letter leading early marriage. But they have Madrasah – Arabic is their language to learn. In the contemporary times, they see education as helpful (Samal Bangingi 1). Bangingi are noted to have friendly nature in the society among the muslims, however they used to fight their rights and privileges. We are made to protect the lives of the coastal areas. We are open in working with other tribes. Education before are not valued, but important as of today. They used to send their children in school, but if there are cultural events to be absent is recommended (Samal Bangingi 6). Lastly, to serve their fellowmen (Samal Bangingi) is their promise (Samal Bangingi 8).

However, their existence in the society was not as easy with other major groups of Muslims. Most parents revealed that unbearable and even traumatic instances were experienced by their children in school, which had resulted to poor interest in attending schools and frequent absences. Besides, being them sometimes involved in their livelihood activities were their valid mechanism why they have to be absent sometimes. They were vulnerable to racial discrimination through bullying with the following issues: The term Badjaos was highly associated to them who are known to beg in the streets and seaports for money; their skin color complexions are generally darker compared to others; and poor nutrition due to unstable income sources. Thus, they are noted to be lower in class among the Muslim groups, which made them feel inferior and envy of other groups.

As a result, more children in school of this tribe have been in denial of their culture and identity to avoid discrimination and subject for bullying. These had greatly affected their motivations in coming to school.

Uniqueness: The current Samal Bangingis have healthier perceptions towards education. What makes them unique was that they viewed education as springboard to serve more the place by aiming to strengthen the implementation of laws protecting the natural environment specially the coastal areas. As a result, most of them hope their children to learn in the school, proceed to tertiary education and earn courses concerning to forestry, fishery, and environmental focus.

Currently we see education as the only instrument for us to protect our culture and improve our ways of living. We used to hope for our children to learn in the school, proceed to tertiary education and earn courses concerning to forestry, fishery, and environmental focus. (Samal Bangingi 8).

Characteristics And Behaviors Of Samal Bangingi

Characteristics and behaviors of Samal Bangingis describe their social the kind of orientations they used to have in school and in the community. As to describing their uniqueness and peculiarities, these areas may help determine the kind of tradition and custom that this group has been exposed to.

The following sub- themes depicts the characteristics of Samal Bangingi stakeholders:

Expressions and practices of Samal Bangingi

One way to know the characteristics of a group of

people, like Samal Bangingis is to know the way they show and express appreciation, gratitude, respect, rage, and grief. Samal Bangingi used to appreciate others, such as, neighbors, companions, and co-workers in the workplace by inviting them to their residence during special occasions. They are naturally more than generous and kind individuals regardless of their life's status, be it prosperous or less prosperous especially if their rights and existence were highly regarded in the group. Establishing good rapport and relationship is their traditional way of paying back gratitude, while treating someone as their lord is their best way of expressing gratitude.

To pay respect to others and creatures of Allah is their way of defining their silence and avoid populous place to avoid conflict of interests with others. Protecting the lives of the coastal areas and seas, which are the major source of living of most Filipinos is their expressions of showing respect to the lives of others, including plants and others. One of the literal ways of paying respect to other groups of people regardless of culture is pointing their hands to their minds and hearts after a hand shaking to signify their sincerity, with their souls and body aware.

They are advocates of anti-begging group of Samal. Being them respectful, unselfish, kind, hardworking with regards of dignity are the life's guiding principles of Samal Bangingis in the society, which are too different from the society's general misconceptions to the larger group of Samal. It's true that there are Samal groups who used to become beggars in the street, who opted to drop down their values and dignity by making their lives futile and have a visionless living in the street. However, they are not Bangingis.

Burying the treasures of their dead loved ones is their common expressions of grief. Material possessions of their dead loved ones should be buried to signify moving on and accepting the loss of the member of the family. Other members of the tribe believed that reusing of the possessions of a dead member makes its soul to be trapped in the place in miserable manner. Just like with other Muslim tribes, they believe that dead bodies should be buried not later than 24 hours. Even a dead body is holy that should not be injected with chemicals, like, formalin and other body preserving chemicals.

Offering goats and cows is their highest way of expressing success and celebration, such as wedding, and other special ceremonies and occasions in the tribe. Playing of kulintang and Agung are still common today in every ceremony they used to

commence, and celebration as well.

The same with other Muslim tribes, Samal Bangingis are used to have arranged marriages specially for royal blooded family with dowry as a way of paying respect to the family of the bride.

To smile, bow their heads, pointing heads and hearts after shaking their hands. They used to fight their rights and privileges labi nag unhan ug daugdaugon ikamatay man nila. They used to share blessings, such as fishes, and other products. Courting is still practice and more traditional. Male should ask permissions to the parents of females. Sharing of blessings, render some services, and maintain good rapport and relationship. Vigil is strictly practiced and hire someone to cry for the death of their loved ones. Praying with rituals, sacrificing animals for their success. Giving of souvenir to others, especially cultural foods. Eldest child has greatest responsibility in the family after their parents. As to mealtime and bedtime, not so strict (Samal Bangingi 1). Males and females not related or not couple are strictly prohibited to be in a place together without other's presence. Even to look at the eyes without others as witness. "Wala pay tawo" if a female or male is to be visited by an opposite sex alone. Not laughing at some one's mistakes or not to look at it. Most of them are noisy if offended by someone. Educated Samal Bangingis used to keep quiet and let the leaders to settle. Say nice words and usually talk to them and share thoughts. Traditional way of courting for males are still present. We used to give or offer something we have to show and expressed our gratitude to someone. The most important thing is to establish and maintain positive rapport among them. We used to refrain from attending ceremonies and events. Sometimes we used to sacrifice our bath and other basic activities. They used to have rituals, prayers (Duwahan) for success. They used to give souvenir and allocate a part of their products to be shared to others. No extended families are found on the homes. If they are married, they have to make their own homes and find some sources of income. Nilakaran is still practiced. It is believed that paying the elder sister/brother is still hoping for luck of marriage (Samal Bangingi 8).

All members of the tribe are inseparable to one another, not only in the place where they used to be, but also sharing common goals and orientations resulting to a strong culture of unity. This characteristics of them was derived from the Filipino term "sama-sama" where they coined the term "Sama." The word "sama" started to evolve and finally to Samal Bangingi, because they dominated the



Bangingi area of Sulu.

Uniqueness: Among their expressions stated above, to bury the remaining treasures of their lost family member made them different from other Muslim tribes. It signifies moving on and lifting to Allah the life of these lost member. Other members of the tribe believed that reusing of the possessions of a dead member makes its soul to be trapped in the place in miserable manner.

They are practical enough upon saying that one of the primary reasons why their economic status didn't improve from the previous generation to the present is because of these unhealthy practices. Treasures should be passed to the next generation for them to use. Only those personal accessories should be buried upon the burial of their lost member (Father, mother, etc.), such as, clothes, and things of their identity.

Besides, our ancestors believed that we have to bury the remaining treasures of our dead love ones to make their soul at peace. But for us in the current generation of parents, we do not practice such to for practical consumptions of the treasures of our ancestors. However, the current generations of Samal Bangingis do not heed this tradition (Samal Bangingi 7).

Having the core principle of "anti-begging" makes them different and unique from other tribes of Samals. They rather die hungry, than to live in the street as beggars.

We are not similar to Badjao, though we belong to Samal group. We are anti-begging group of Samal who prefer to die hungry than to live as beggars in the street. (Samal Bangingi 7).

Another uniqueness from their characteristics was being them inseparable and attached to each other to express their camaraderie within the members of the group. This is how they got their tribe's name, which was Samal Samal Bangingi. From the Filipino term "sama-sama" where they coined the term "Sama," the word "sama" started to evolve and finally to Samal Bangingi, because they dominated the Bangingi area of Sulu (Wikiedia.com).

Crime's consequences of Samal Bangingi

The rules for sanctions of Samal Bnagingis before were rigid and brutal. What you have taken from the person will also be the nature of your punishment and sanctions including death. However, in the cotemporary times, they started to modify their norms

reducing the degree of sanctions and punishments, though cutting of some parts of the body could still be practiced depending on the crimes committed.

Samal Bangingi 3: Bawal ang pagkaon ug baboy, taban2 (depreciating their values). Sactions – kawatan kay putol ug kamot. Killing is allowed to them depending on their crimes committed, like have killed someone without reasons, to covet. Panglima, Hadji, Ostads.

Samal Bangingi 4: Panglima acts like a captain. Death penalty is present also in the tribe. Hadji – religious leader. Ostads – known to be holy and are teachers in Madrasah.

Uniqueness: Samal Bangingis considered the seas and oceans as having spirits to please. As a matter of fact, they used to worship before (pre-Spanish era) on the seas and oceans for more blessings and fortunes. Though, this is no longer practiced today but there is a norm in their tribe that submerging a member in the sea may help him prove if he is telling the truth or not. A couple of minutes depending on the degree of the truth to test maybe imposed, which a member must have to sustain under the water to insist that he is telling the truth. This made them different and unique from other Muslim groups in terms of imposing charges or punishment.

We believe also that seas and oceans have spirit to please and have been bestowing us blessings of good products in fishing. We need to acknowledge them by offering rituals. Colorful foods offered were involved in these rituals. String waves connotes for us that these sea spirits are trying to punish us for the sins we committed against the seas and oceans (Samal Bangingi 5).

Tradition

This category describes the beliefs, orientations, preferences, norms and standards of the Samal Bangingis. It covers the remaining themes of the study, namely, fortunes and misfortunes, rituals and ceremonies and its significance, faith and devotions, and livelihood and products of Samal Bangingis.

Fortunes And Misfortunes Of Samal Bangingi

The 4th theme depicts on the beliefs of Samal Bnagingis as to attract lucks and to deflect bad luck, which include superstitious beliefs handed down by their ancestors. These beliefs were partially similar to the beliefs of other cultures with a little tweak on meaning based on their traditions. Thus, these beliefs

signify their identity as a Filipino, whose unique cultural and

traditional perceptions on things around them make them peculiar from other cultures of the world.

The beliefs of luck and bad luck of the Samal Bangingi stakeholders of Payao Central Elementary School are as follows:

1. Spirit of their dead loved ones will remain in the vicinity. They will serve as the source of miracle among their families who are still alive. This is also the reason why they should always commemorate their dead loved ones to attract them for miracles. However, they could be source of misfortune if not pleased.
2. Howling of dogs attract lamentable events. Just like with other major tribes, such as cebuanos, and tagalogs, howling of dogs are believed to foretell unfavorable things. For Samal Bangingi it connotes a life to end through accidents or natural death. This is the secondary reason why they are not fan of taming dogs as pets.
3. Cats can guide souls to heaven and may attract luck of money. In contrast with dogs' howl, cats' purpose of sleeping with their masters' bed is to secure the environment to become free bad spirits. Cats are believed to see metaphysical things including spirits. They are believed to exist to guide our souls going to heaven when we die.
4. Performing basic hygiene at night is disgraceful. "Rijiki" or blessings in their own language will be lessen and will deflect luck if basic cleaning activities, such as, sweeping of floor etc. are done without the presence of natural sunlight. Cutting of nails and hairs at night are two things inviting bad luck for them. With these activities, a member of a family is being cursed to death.
5. Preparing "lugaw and aroscaldo" is the best expression on hoping for good health and blessings in their time during new year. The foods are believed to help their body maintained its health, while allowing their minds for effective meditation and praying. Thus, maintaining their soul's health as well.
6. They believed that seas and oceans have spirit that need to please. Big waves denote that this spirit has been punishing the abusive fishermen, who use dynamites and other illegal fishing techniques in fishing.

Ghosts/ multo are said to have not accepted by Allah. Most Ostads (pari) believed that no creature cannot be accepted by their supreme being. Rijiki (blessings) are taken away from the family if manilhig during nighttime. Naay magtaban kung muputak ang manok.

Lightning connotes unfavorable practices among humans. Eating porks is strictly prohibited in the culture. They used to have no birthday celebration before. Lugaw or aroscaldo primary food on their new year (Samal Bangingi 6). We used to associate positive and negative events to the sounds of animals. Kwahao and kukok were bad denotations for example. Other birds' sounds were denoted as luck and may describe positive impact of the day. Cat "iring" is said to bring luck and can guide our soul to heaven. A dog howling denotes a presence of bad spirit/ manunglo (Samal Bangingi 7)

Uniqueness: Among the superstitious beliefs of the Samal Bangingi mentioned above, believing on the spirit of seas and oceans made them unique from other Muslims. This spirit needs to be pleased by offering some colorful foods every year during their yearly rituals and ceremonies. If this spirit will be pleased, fishing will be favorable to them.

We believe also that seas and oceans have spirit to please and have been bestowing us blessings of good products in fishing. We need to acknowledge them by offering rituals. Colorful foods offered were involved in these rituals. String waves connotes for us that these sea spirits are trying to punish us for the sins we committed against the seas and oceans (Samal Bangingi 5).

Theme 7: Rituals And Ceremonies And Its Significance

Nispo (soul's day), Hariraya (Puasa), and Eid'l Fitr (Fast breaking) are non-negotiable and equally important ceremonies not only Samal Bangingis but all Muslims groups. The purpose of adhering these activities is to offer sacrifices of themselves by doing fasting to signify their sincerest devotion of their body and soul to Allah (Divine creator). In this way, their unselfish hopes for their lost loved ones, elders and younger generations' holistic health and development, career and source of living will be more likely to be prosper. It is also their best way of expressions of camaraderie, forgiveness, repentance, and devotions.

Commemorating the past and hoping for the future as purpose of camaraderie specially if committed mistakes (Samal Bangingi 5).

Uniqueness:

Baptism

Ancient Samal Bangingis used to baptize their young

ones by testing their capacity to survive in the seas. A year after a baby was born, he will be subjected to their baptism by throwing him to the sea a meter away from their parents. The baby should swim for his life going to his parents. If the baby will survive without the help of his parents, he will then be claimed by the group as one of them. This will be followed by the first cutting of hairs, which connotes a new life's chapter as a Samal Bangingi. If the baby failed to survive, it is perceived that he is denied by the sea (their world), so as his tribe. However, before the baby will be drowned, the parents may rescue him and declared the ceremony as futile. The baby will grow with impartial treatment, rights, and privileges from the tribe (Wikipedia.com).

The current generations of Samal Bangingi do not practice the 1st stage of the ceremony, which had resulted to drowning of many babies of the tribe in the past. Only the 2nd stage, which is the first cutting of hairs.

Bunyag – cutting of hairs of the baby after a ritual days. Prior to this, babies were have to undergo sea rituals of survival. They will be thrown to the sea to test their survival skills in the sea (Samal Bangingi 2).

Wedding

Wedding ceremony among this tribe has no difference among other Muslims. However, their pre-wedding activities made them unique and peculiar. The first menstruation among their females defines their readiness to undergo wedding regardless of age. Thus, females in the tribe with failure reproductive system cannot be married. To inform the males in the tribe on their readiness to marry, they must fit a gold tooth on their upper denture. This signifies their worth as a lady, which will be enhanced by wearing colorful costumes and dresses. Like other Muslims, they practiced Buya (arranged wedding) regardless of relationship, be it relatives or not. Then follows the usual wedding practice of the Muslim weddings (Wikipedia.com).

Burial

To bury the remaining treasures of their lost family member made them different from other Muslim tribes in their burial. It signifies moving on and submitting to Allah the life of these lost member. Other members of the tribe believed that reusing of the possessions of a dead member makes its soul to be trapped in the place in miserable manner.

However, the current generations of Samal Bangingis do not heed this tradition. They are practical enough upon saying that one of the primary reasons why their economic status didn't improve from the previous generations to the present is because of these unhealthy practices. Treasures should be passed to the next generation for them to use. Only those personal accessories should be buried upon the burial of their lost member (Father, mother, etc.), such as, clothes, and things of their identity.

Our ancestors believed that we have to bury the remaining treasures of our dead love ones to make their soul at peace. But for us in the current generation of parents, we do not practice such to for practical consumptions of the treasures of our ancestors. (Samal Bangingi 7).

Faith And Devotions Of Samal Bangingi

Religion describes the common denominators of all Muslim tribes including Samal Bangingis. Islam is their religion. They follow the commandments of Quran (bible), and they used to worship Allah at their Masjid or Mosque. Mohammad is their prophet too. They also celebrate Nispo, Hari Raya, and Eid'l Ftr and other muslim ceremonies. Nasi is said to be a very sensitive part of their culture which should not be divulged and be involved in any conversation. Imam, Haji, and Ostads are their religious leaders, and their holy land is Mica. The same with Christians, they believed on hell and heaven, norka and surga respectively.

Masjid/Mosque – is the name of our church. Imam – equivalent to Pari. Qur-an- bible. Nasi (confidential, not be divulged). Their commandments are almost the same with Christians. Males can marry many women in a proper way and they can sustain the needs of their wives. If females are found to have relationship with other men, and have caught in the act. The husband can legally kill them both. Dogs can be their pets now but cannot be eaten. Pigs are not allowed to be their domestic animals. Allah is our God. Qur-an is our divine book. Masjid is our church. Islam is our religion. Limus and not paying a debt are discouraged in the culture (Samal Bangingi 1). Allah is our divine creature. Mohammad – prophet. Mosque is pur church, it is called Masjid in our own language. Haram means free from alcohol, pork-free foods, cigarette, and activities according to the laws of Islam (Samal Bangingi 2).

Uniqueness: Part of their religion that makes them different from other Muslim is that they believe that

Allah permits the souls of their dead to return to this world. This is the reason why they used to offer special prayers to the dead and clean the graves to honor them and be blessed by these returning souls. Thus, part of their devotions is honoring and praising their dead ancestors to attract their luck and blessings.

We believe for the souls of our dead love ones are permitted by Allah to return to the world and guide the current generations. They have to be pleased for blessings and luck. However, they can also punish us if committed inhumane act. (Samal Bangingi 7).

Livelihood And Products Of Current Samal Bangingi Of Payao

Samal Bangingi stakeholders of Payao are still practicing best of fishing activities, which were handed down by their ancestors. Vinta as their traditional boat for both fishing and transportation are rarely used today in the place. There are replaced by pump boat and engine boats, which are innovations from vinta. These are more effective and efficient compared to vinta in terms of fishing and means of transportation. However, the shapes and figures of these boats are patterned from their traditional boat figure, the vinta. They used to have fishing net instead of a mere fishhook. They are the current producers of the dried fish industry of Payao municipality. Secondary products are copra, cucumber, seashells, nipa hut, ukay-ukay, and malong, which are made by females of the tribe. A site confirmed this fact, which states that one of the livelihood sources of the tribe today is more on fishing, and boat building are their occupations, while weaving mats and malong, and collecting seashells were their females job (Joshua project.net). Both men and women engage in collecting and selling valuables from the sea, such as sea cucumbers. They started to also adopt the trend of the society with sari-sari store and motorcycle driving as the other source of income. Additionally, more half-blooded Samal Bangingis are currently good leaders (politicians) and permanent employees of the municipality.

Fishing and pearl searching are their primary source of living. They used to work with small business within local vendors (Samal Bangingi 5). Fishing, boat building, are their primary male occupations, while weaving mats and marketing pottery are jobs for women. Both men and women engage in collecting and selling valuables from the sea, such as sea cucumbers. Some of them are also farmer (Samal Bangingi 6). Additionally, agar2 harvesting are also their livelihood today. They also export dried fish and dominated in the vendor. Ukay2 is their other source of

income (Samal Bnagingi 8).

Uniqueness: Fishing using vinta makes the Samal Bangingi in the place unique from other Muslims in term of livelihood. Though vinta was replaced by the engine and pump boats due to its efficiency, its shape, design and, and structures are still dominant and reflecting the Samal Bangingi

Culture. Pearls are still their elite products that only among their tribe has the skills to search for it without detecting instruments.

Pearls – are worn by higher classes of Samal. Pupiya – naay mga agong, kulintang used by panglima in every event. Problem and ceremony, rituals. Samal Bangingis were the tribe first discovered these sea treasures. (Samal Bnagingi 6).

The discovered uniqueness and peculiarities of the Samal Bangingi culture are the key points to regain their image, reputation, and dignity before the eyes of the society including the school community, which maybe the elements of rebuilding their self-esteem and regaining the trust of their social environment.

These are areas to improving social integration and school connectedness for Samal Bangingi Students in school, which are more likely to achieve if the domains of motivation according to self-motivation theory, such as, relatedness, competence, and autonomy are fulfilled. Be able to establish good effigy in the school community as a Samal Bangingi learners may create a ladder of being them accepted by the other learners in the school, thus increasing their relatedness. With relatedness optimally acquired, learners may start to create rapport with other learners. Being able to overcome inferiority, show pride of their culture by accustoming to their practices, mingle and be part of the bigger circles of group are strong manifestations self-esteem and self-autonomy developed. These are essential elements towards effective attainment of social integration and social connectedness, which are found to be significant factors influencing the academic engagement of the learners in school.

Conclusion

The study has revealed significant orientations, preferences, and perceptions of Samal Bangingi groups of Payao municipality, who are also the stakeholders of Payao Central Elementary School. These results lay down the following



recommendations: (1) The result and findings of this study may help school administrators to continue implementing culturally responsive and sensitive programs, projects, and activities in school as reflected in its operational and strategic planning. In this way, stakeholders in the minority group, including Samal Bangingi may view the school as a safe and secure environment for their learners to dwell and learn. (2) This study's result may help teachers effectively and efficiently localize and indigenize lessons with differentiated activities involving the identity to the needs of the IPs, including Samal Bangingi. (3) The result of this study may serve as a reference among teachers in integrating lessons about the values of IP groups, particularly Samal Bangingi, helping them to find their worth in the society, which will help them develop confidence and self-esteem. (4) The result of the study may help Samal Bangingi stakeholders and learners establish their worth in the community and society, improving their social integration and school connectedness. (5) The result of the study may serve as a potential reference for future researchers to explore more on the culture and tradition of Samal Bangingis.

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