

Acculturation: Its influence on the cultural practices of Manobo learners of Bukidnon

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aimed to assess the extent of acculturation and its relationship with the cultural practices of Manobo learners in Damulog, Bukidnon, focusing on assimilation, integration, and marginalization.

Research methodology: A descriptive and correlational research design was used. The study utilized a researcher-made survey questionnaire administered to 300 Grade 10 Manobo learners across four secondary schools in the Damulog area of Bukidnon. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results: The study revealed that Manobo learners often experience acculturation in terms of assimilation, integration, and marginalization. Their cultural practices in the economic, social, political, and spiritual aspects were also evident. A moderate positive relationship was found between the extent of acculturation and the level of cultural practices among the learners, suggesting that higher levels of acculturation are associated with stronger cultural practices. These findings imply that acculturation influences how Manobo learners maintain their cultural heritage while adapting to new societal influences.

Conclusions: Indonesia's BRICS membership can bolster national defence and strategic autonomy if managed with diplomatic prudence. A balanced foreign policy is essential to leverage the advantages of BRICS while preserving partnerships with Western powers and the ASEAN allies. Investment in cybersecurity, military modernization, and defence diplomacy is crucial for long-term stability.

Limitations: This study is limited to Grade 10 Manobo learners in Damulog, Bukidnon, and may not represent other Indigenous groups or age levels. Self-reported data may also introduce bias, and external factors, such as socioeconomic background, were not fully examined.

Contribution: This study contributes to the understanding of how acculturation impacts the cultural practices of Indigenous learners, particularly in educational settings.

Keywords: *Acculturation, Assimilation, Cultural Practices, Integration, Manobo Learners, Marginalization.*

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1. Introduction

Indigenous Peoples are recognized as the earliest inhabitants of specific regions, with distinctive ways of life shaped by long-standing cultural, linguistic, and social traditions. These groups often encounter difficulties in maintaining their cultural identity amid intensifying economic transitions, educational homogenization, and the expansion of dominant societal institutions (Amin 2024). A key process that contributes to these shifts is acculturation, wherein members of one cultural group begin to adopt

practices and norms originating from another, often more dominant group. In Indigenous settings, this transition may alter customary behaviors and disrupt cultural continuity (Kunst, Lefringhausen, & Zagefka, 2024).

Globally, Indigenous communities possess distinct worldviews and have developed autonomous systems of governance, spirituality and subsistence (Petri & Kloczek, 2025). However, sustained exposure to external forces such as colonization, nation-building efforts, and market integration has placed significant pressure on these communities to conform to the prevailing norms (Ma, 2023). The adoption of dominant cultural practices, whether gradual or imposed, can weaken traditional institutions and displace intergenerational knowledge in the community. This trend has been widely documented among Indigenous populations, who frequently experience a decline in the use of their native languages, erosion of ecological wisdom, and diminishing spiritual traditions (Pirdehghan, 2024).

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Studies focusing on groups such as the Igorot, Mangyan, and Palawanon reveal how formal schooling tends to emphasize Western-oriented content and nationalistic discourses, thereby alienating Indigenous learners from their cultural heritage. Similar patterns are evident in Mindanao, where many Indigenous communities reside. Communities such as the Subanen, Higaonon, and Teduray report a declining use of their ancestral languages and rituals due to increased contact with non-Indigenous populations and institutional influences (Dumas, 2022). These changes are often most visible among youth, who occupy a transitional space between their cultural heritage and the norms embedded in the national education and social systems.

In Damulog, a municipality in southern Bukidnon, the Manobo community represents one group contending with these intersecting cultural forces. Many Manobo learners are enrolled in public schools, where they are exposed to curricular content and cultural references that often differ from their lived experiences and cultural practices. Preliminary observations suggest a gradual detachment from traditional practices, such as oral narratives, communal celebrations, and the daily use of the native language. Despite this trend, research that centers on Manobo learners' direct experiences with acculturation remains limited.

This study aims to examine the specific ways in which acculturation affects the cultural practices of Manobo learners in Damulog, Bukidnon. By focusing on a defined ethnolinguistic group within a localized setting, this study seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge on Indigenous education in the Philippines. It also aims to support pedagogical efforts that accommodate cultural specificity, particularly within the "Contemporary Issues" strand of the K–12 curriculum. Through this investigation, this study intends to inform discussions on developing learning environments that recognize Indigenous worldviews and uphold cultural resilience in public education.

1.1 Research Objectives

Gaining a clear understanding of how acculturation affects Indigenous cultural practices is vital for sustaining the heritage of communities that continue to face pressure from modern societal structures. Among groups such as the Manobo learners in Damulog, Bukidnon, such influences can be observed in the gradual transformation of customs and social behaviors, shaped through ongoing contact with dominant cultural systems. This study examined the degree to which acculturation has occurred among these learners and how it shapes their engagement with traditional practices. In particular, this investigation aimed to respond to the following questions:

- a) What is the extent of acculturation among Manobo learners in terms of:
 - 1) assimilation;
 - 2) integration; and
 - 3) marginalization?
- b) What is the level of cultural practices of Manobo learners relative to:
 - 1) economic;
 - 2) social;
 - 3) political; and
 - 4) spiritual?
- c) Is there a significant relationship between the extent of acculturation and the level of cultural practices among Manobo learners?

1.2 Research Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was tested at the 0.05 significance level:

H₀: There is no statistically significant relationship between the extent of acculturation and the level of cultural practices among Manobo learners in Damulog, Bukidnon.

2. Literature review

2.1 Theoretical Framework on Acculturation

Acculturation refers to the process by which individuals or groups from one culture come into contact with and adopt elements of a different culture. Berry's (1997) acculturation model posits that there are four main strategies for dealing with cultural interaction: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization (Wilczewska, 2023). Assimilation occurs when individuals adopt the culture of the dominant group, often at the expense of their original cultural identities. Integration involves maintaining one's culture while participating in the dominant culture. Separation refers to the preservation of the original culture while avoiding interaction with the dominant culture, and marginalization occurs when individuals are disconnected from both their original and dominant cultures (Yoo, 2021).

In the context of Indigenous communities like the Manobo learners, acculturation is particularly important because it influences the retention of cultural identity. Acculturation may lead to changes in traditional practices, social structures, and worldviews. Ward and Szabó (2023) suggest that the outcome of acculturation varies depending on the interaction between the individual's values and practices and those of the dominant culture.

2.2 Acculturation Strategies in Indigenous Populations

Research on Indigenous populations has revealed that acculturation is a complex and multifaceted process. For the Manobo people, a tribe native to Mindanao, acculturation is driven by exposure to modern influences, particularly education, the media, and religion. While some studies emphasize the preservation of traditional practices, others point to significant shifts in the cultural practices of Indigenous youth due to assimilation pressures from dominant national and global cultures (Bihari, 2023).

In a study of Indigenous youth in New Zealand, Anderson et al. (2022) found that acculturation can lead to positive outcomes when integration is encouraged. However, when assimilation dominates, there may be negative effects on cultural identity and self-esteem. Similarly, in the Philippines, research on Indigenous populations such as the Aeta and Tagbanua has shown that acculturation influences their social practices, language, and religion, with younger generations often adopting more elements of mainstream Filipino culture (Susim, 2024). These studies suggest that Indigenous groups' experiences with acculturation are not monolithic but depend on the interplay of various factors, including education, language policies, and access to cultural resources.

2.3 Impact of Acculturation on Cultural Practices

Cultural practices, including social, economic, political, and spiritual behaviors, are central to the identity of Indigenous communities in Canada. Changes in cultural practices due to acculturation can lead to the loss of traditional knowledge and practices, thereby altering the social fabric of these communities. In the case of Manobo learners, acculturation may influence practices related to subsistence farming, language use, communal living, and spiritual beliefs (Yamane & Helm, 2022). Economic practices among Indigenous populations are often centered around agriculture, with a strong reliance on traditional farming methods. According to Adefila, Ajayi, Toromade, and Sam-Bulya (2024), the introduction of modern agricultural techniques and commercial farming has reshaped economic activities in many Indigenous communities. This change can lead to shifts in communal roles and resource redistribution. The effects of these economic changes can be seen in the migration of younger generations to urban areas in search of work, a phenomenon that weakens community ties and erodes traditional practices (Gautam & Mishra, 2024).

Socially, acculturation often leads to changes in the social structures and relationships within Indigenous communities. For example, in communities where traditional roles are gendered, the introduction of Western ideas of gender equality and individualism may disrupt social structures. Moreover, as younger generations gain access to education, they may become less inclined to engage in traditional social roles, such as farming or crafting, opting instead for wage labor or urban employment (Rana et al., 2024). Spiritually, acculturation can displace Indigenous belief systems. Shaheed (2024) shows that the imposition of Christianity on Indigenous populations has often supplanted traditional spiritual practices, resulting in the loss of cultural identity. However, some communities have adapted by integrating aspects of their traditional beliefs with Christianity, leading to the emergence of syncretic belief systems (Aluede & Ikhidero, 2024).

2.4 The Role of Education in Acculturation and Cultural Practices

Education plays a significant role in acculturation. For Indigenous learners, schooling often represents a site of cultural exchange, where students learn not only academic subjects but also the norms and values associated with the dominant culture. The relationship between education and acculturation has been well documented in various studies. In a study on Indigenous students in Latin America, Vargas-Callejas and Verdeja Muñiz (2024) found that education has the potential to both promote integration and reinforce the marginalization of Indigenous culture. This dual effect is particularly evident in curricula, where Indigenous knowledge is often excluded or misrepresented.

In the Philippines, Indigenous students, such as Manobo learners, face challenges related to access to culturally relevant education. While efforts have been made to include Indigenous culture in the curriculum, much of the education system remains focused on mainstream Filipino culture and values. According to Salgado, Koike, Maglasang, and Minoza (2024), the lack of culturally appropriate learning materials and the dominance of Filipino and English in the classroom hinder the development of Indigenous students' cultural identities. However, there are examples of community-based schools where Indigenous languages and practices are incorporated into the curriculum, promoting a more inclusive and culturally relevant form of education (Nganga & Kambutu, 2024).

2.5 The Relationship Between Acculturation and Cultural Practices

The relationship between acculturation and cultural practices is often framed within the context of the "cultural loss hypothesis," which posits that the more individuals acculturate to the dominant culture, the more likely they are to abandon their traditional practices (Kunst et al., 2024). However, recent studies have shown that acculturation does not always result in a cultural loss. For instance, the integration strategy described by Zheng (2024) allows individuals to maintain aspects of their cultural heritage while adapting to a new culture. Integration has been shown to promote cultural pride and resilience among Indigenous groups, as they find ways to balance the demands of the dominant culture with their traditional practices.

Empirical evidence from studies on Indigenous populations in Southeast Asia suggests that acculturation can lead to the retention and modification of cultural practices. For example, Gonzales (2024) researched the Ifugao people in the Philippines and found that while some traditional practices

have been abandoned, others have adapted to the changing environment, particularly in the areas of economic activities and religious practices. In summary, the literature reveals a complex relationship between acculturation and cultural practices in Indigenous communities. For Manobo learners in Damulog, Bukidnon, acculturation influences their cultural identity in multifaceted ways, impacting their economic, social, political, and spiritual practices. While some aspects of traditional culture are retained, others are modified or abandoned in response to modernity's pressures. Education plays a pivotal role in this process, serving as both a conduit for cultural change and a potential avenue for preserving Indigenous heritage. Understanding the extent of acculturation and its effects on cultural practices provides important insights into the challenges Indigenous communities face in maintaining their cultural integrity in the face of external influences.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Research Design

This investigation adopted a descriptive and correlational research design to examine how acculturation affects the cultural practices of Manobo learners in Damulog, Bukidnon, Philippines. The study addressed three central questions: the extent to which learners experience acculturation across three dimensions—assimilation, integration, and marginalization; the level of their participation in traditional cultural practices, specifically in the economic, social, political, and spiritual domains; and the degree of association between these two variables.

The descriptive part of the study documented the present conditions of acculturation and cultural engagement within the Manobo learner population. The study focused on gathering accurate and structured data reflecting their day-to-day experiences of cultural transitions. Measures of assimilation, integration, and marginalization were employed to capture the varied ways in which learners relate to both their Indigenous identity and the dominant culture. Similarly, cultural practices were described through the lens of how they are sustained or modified in economic routines, social interactions, political participation, and spiritual observances.

The correlational element aimed to determine whether patterns in the learners' acculturation experiences corresponded to changes in the way they maintained or modified their cultural practices. Rather than establishing causality, this study examined the statistical relationship between the extent of acculturation and the level of cultural engagement. This was done through appropriate tools for correlation analysis, making it possible to detect whether higher or lower levels of acculturation were linked to specific trends in cultural practice. This design is well-suited for educational and cultural research, where variables cannot be manipulated (J. V. Baron, 2024). It provides a balanced method for understanding both the current status and the underlying connections between cultural shifts and Indigenous identity. The combination of descriptive and correlational approaches allowed the researcher to explore both what is happening and how the key elements of cultural change may be related (J. V. Baron, 2023).

3.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in Damulog, Bukidnon, specifically at the four largest secondary schools in the area: Old Damulog National High School, Macapari National High School, the Angga-an Integrated School, and the Xavier de Damulog High School. Rossini/us borders the eastern part of Humphre light inland and the southern part of the city of Hudson. Nut Kun isheimer, contributions totop of the/share therein. This choice allowed for an extensive examination of the influence of acculturation and cultural practices among Manobo learners in different school environments. The focus on these schools was justified by their size and central role in the community, making them ideal locations for gathering diverse perspectives on the research topic. Their varied student populations and available resources provided a suitable setting for analyzing the ways in which acculturation interacts with cultural practices on a significant scale in the United States.

3.3 Respondents of the Study

The study involved Indigenous Peoples (IP) learners enrolled in Grade 10 from four major secondary schools in the municipality of Damulog, Bukidnon, Philippines. The schools included Old Damulog

National High School, Macapari National High School, Angga-an Integrated School, and Xavier de Damulog High School. Grade 10 learners were selected for their developmental stage, which is pivotal in the formation of cultural and personal identity. At this age, adolescents are known to actively negotiate cultural values, traditions, and external influences, making them an appropriate population for examining issues related to acculturation and cultural practice formation (Kroger, 2017; Schwartz et al., 2019).

To ensure inclusivity and avoid sampling bias, the study employed a total enumeration strategy, as suggested by (J. V. Baron & Cruz, 2023). All identified Grade 10 learners from the selected schools were included as participants. This method allowed for the full participation of the target population, thereby strengthening the internal validity and generalizability of the results within the defined context of Indigenous learners in Damulog, Bukidnon. As shown in Table 1, the total Grade 10 population across the four schools was 526. Of this total, 300 learners were identified as Indigenous Peoples, forming the final participant group. By including the entire Grade 10 level, the study ensured that the perspectives and cultural experiences of all eligible learners were accounted for, providing a reliable basis for interpreting the extent of acculturation and the state of cultural practices in the community.

Table 1. Respondents of the Study

Schools	Total Grade 10 Learners (N)	IP Learners (n)
Old Damulog National High School	360	178
Macapari National High School	88	65
Angga-an Integrated School	42	35
Xavier de Damulog High School	36	22
Total	526	300

As shown in Table 1, the study involved 300 Grade 10 Manobo learners from four secondary schools in Damulog, Bukidnon, Philippines. The researchers used a complete enumeration method, including all Indigenous Peoples (IP) learners from the selected schools in the municipality. This approach allowed the study to reach all available participants within the defined group, which helped ensure that the findings reflected the actual conditions and experiences of Manobo learners in the area. Since no sampling was used, the results are more consistent with the full range of responses from the population under study.

3.4 Research Instrument

A researcher-made survey questionnaire was used in this study to match the cultural context and lived experiences of the Manobo learners. The tool was divided into two main sections. The first part focused on the extent of acculturation, specifically on assimilation, integration, and marginalization. The second part examined the level of cultural practices still observed among learners, including economic, social, political, and spiritual aspects. Each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale.

- 5 – Highly Evident
- 4 – Evident
- 3 – Moderately Evident
- 2 – Slightly Evident
- 1 – Not Evident

To ensure the tool's validity, it was evaluated by experts in education and social studies. The average score of 4.77 from the validators confirmed the clarity and appropriateness of all items. A pilot test was also conducted, and the questionnaire's internal consistency was confirmed through a Cronbach's alpha of 0.956, indicating that the instrument was highly reliable.

3.5 Data Gathering Instrument

Data collection was conducted in a careful and organized manner. The researcher first reviewed and finalized the questionnaire to ensure that it aligned with the study objectives and could be easily understood by the intended respondents. It was validated by experts and pilot-tested with a small group of learners from similar settings. The results showed strong consistency, with a reliability score of 0.96.

Next, the researcher sent formal letters requesting permission to conduct the study to the Schools Division Superintendent of Bukidnon. After receiving approval, the researcher delivered letters to the principals of Old Damulog National High School, Macapari National High School, Angga-an Integrated School, and Xavier de Damulog High School to seek authorization to administer the survey in their schools.

Once all permissions were granted, the researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to the Grade 10 learners at the selected schools. This face-to-face distribution helped clarify any questions and guided the students in completing and answering the survey honestly. After collection, the responses were prepared for statistical analysis to determine how acculturation relates to cultural practices among Manobo learners. Throughout the process, the ethical guidelines were strictly followed. The participants were informed of their rights, including the option to withdraw at any point. Their responses were kept confidential, and all participants were asked to provide informed consent before participating in the study.

3.6 Statistical Treatment

The statistical analysis in this study was conducted at the 0.05 level of confidence to ensure the reliability and validity of the results (J. V. Baron, 2023). To measure the extent of acculturation among Manobo learners, specifically in terms of assimilation, integration, and marginalization, the mean was utilized as the primary statistical tool, as suggested by (J.R. Baron, 2022). This approach provided an average score for each parameter, reflecting the general trend of how learners experienced these aspects of acculturation. Similarly, the mean was employed to assess the level of cultural practices among Manobo learners across the economic, social, political, and spiritual dimensions, following the recommendations of (J. Baron, 2022). This provided an overall understanding of the frequency of these cultural practices within the community.

To examine the relationship between acculturation and cultural practices, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used, as proposed by (J. Baron, 2022). This statistical method determined the strength and direction of the association between the two variables, identifying whether changes in the degree of acculturation influenced the cultural practices of Manobo learners. The findings of this analysis contribute to understanding the relationship between acculturation and cultural traditions within the Manobo community in Damulog, Bukidnon.

4. Results and discussion

This section presents the findings of the study based on the data gathered from the Grade 10 Manobo learners in the selected schools in Damulog, Bukidnon. Tables summarize the responses and guide the discussion for each major variable examined in the study.

4.1. Extent of Acculturation among Manobo Learners

This section presents data on how Grade 10 Manobo learners experience acculturation, focusing on the processes of assimilation, integration, and marginalization. These areas reflect how learners interact with and adapt to external cultural influences while maintaining their indigenous practices. Table 2 presents the findings on the extent of acculturation in these areas.

Table 2. Extent of Acculturation among Manobo Learners

Extent of Acculturation among Manobo Learners	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
Assimilation	4.14	0.74	Often
Integration	3.90	0.77	Often
Marginalization	3.85	0.81	Often
Overall Mean	3.96	0.78	Often

The results in Table 2 illustrate the extent of acculturation among Manobo learners, showing that they manifest acculturation to a moderate extent, with a mean score of 3.96 and a standard deviation of 0.78. This indicates a consistent level of acculturation across all three dimensions: assimilation, integration,

and marginalization. Specifically, assimilation received the highest mean score (4.14), suggesting that the learners often adopted aspects of the dominant culture. This is consistent with the view that minority groups, particularly Indigenous communities, frequently adopt elements of the dominant culture in response to societal pressures such as education and media.

In terms of integration, the mean score of 3.90 indicates that Manobo learners also engage with both their traditional culture and the dominant culture, managing a balance between them. This supports Berry's model of acculturation, which suggests that integration enables individuals to retain their cultural identity while participating in a broader society (Spencer & Charsley, 2021). The ability of the learners to navigate both cultures suggests that they are maintaining a dual identity, which may support the preservation of cultural practices while adapting to modern societal demands.

For marginalization, the mean score of 3.85 reflects that some learners may feel disconnected from both their Indigenous culture and the dominant culture. This suggests that while they engage with both cultures, they may experience alienation. Such marginalization is commonly observed when individuals struggle to reconcile their cultural heritage with the pressure to conform to mainstream society, as noted in acculturation research (Colak, Van Praag, & Nicaise, 2022).

These findings have several implications for educational practice. The frequent engagement of learners with assimilation and integration points to the need for curricula that are both culturally relevant and inclusive, allowing Indigenous learners to maintain their cultural identity while adapting to contemporary society. Educational programs that emphasize both cultural preservation and societal integration can help mitigate feelings of marginalization, which could otherwise lead to challenges in social and academic development (Uddin, 2023). Furthermore, the findings emphasize the need for culturally responsive teaching that respects the unique traditions and practices of Indigenous communities while supporting their academic growth and development.

These results underscore the complexity of the acculturation process for Manobo learners. They actively engage with the dominant culture but grapple with the challenge of balancing their Indigenous identity. This suggests the importance of educational interventions that not only focus on academic success but also ensure the preservation and respect of cultural heritage within the learning environment.

4.2. Level of Cultural Practices of Manobo Learners

The following section presents the results of the level of cultural practices among Manobo learners, focusing on their engagement in key cultural areas such as economic, social, political, and spiritual practices. These practices are vital for maintaining and strengthening cultural identity. Table 4.2 displays the findings regarding the extent to which Manobo learners engage in cultural activities.

Table 3. Level of Cultural Practices of Manobo Learners

Level of Cultural Practices of Manobo Learners	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
Economic	3.74	0.84	Often
Social	3.82	0.74	Often
Political	3.87	0.76	Often
Spiritual	3.84	0.75	Often
Overall Mean	3.82	0.77	Often

Table 3 presents the level of cultural practices among Manobo learners, revealing that they engage in cultural practices across various domains at a frequent level, with an overall mean score of 3.82 and a standard deviation of 0.77. This reflects a strong and consistent connection to their cultural heritage in key areas such as economic, social, political, and spiritual practices in the region.

In the economic domain, with a mean score of 3.74, the learners often participate in cultural practices tied to their traditional economic activities. These may include agriculture, handicrafts, and other forms of livelihood integral to the community's economy. This finding aligns with the literature, suggesting

that Indigenous communities tend to maintain traditional economic practices that are directly linked to their cultural identity and sustainability (Reddy & Sailesh, 2024).

The social dimension, with a mean score of 3.82, suggests that learners frequently engage in social practices that reflect their cultural norms, values, and community interactions. This includes participation in community events, family gatherings, and social rituals that strengthen the social cohesion. Such practices help foster a sense of belonging and identity within the group, which is essential for maintaining cultural continuity. As found in studies on Indigenous groups, social practices serve as key mechanisms for transmitting values and ensuring cultural survival (Bihari, 2023).

In the political domain, the mean score of 3.87 indicates that political engagement is an important aspect of Manobo learners' cultural practices. This includes involvement in local governance, participation in decision-making processes, and advocacy for the rights and welfare of Indigenous communities. Political participation is often linked to cultural preservation, as Indigenous communities seek to protect their land, language, and customs (Aktürk & Lerski, 2021). The political engagement of Manobo learners suggests that they are actively involved in advocating for their cultural and socio-political rights, reinforcing the importance of cultural identity in the political sphere.

The spiritual domain, with a mean score of 3.84, indicates that the learners frequently engage in spiritual practices central to their cultural beliefs. This may include rituals, ceremonies, and spiritual activities that are deeply connected to the Indigenous worldview. Spirituality plays a significant role in the lives of indigenous communities, providing a framework for understanding the world and reinforcing cultural values (Tu'itahi, Watson, Egan, Parkes, & Hancock, 2021). The frequent engagement of Manobo learners in spiritual practices emphasizes the resilience of their cultural and spiritual identity amidst external influences.

These findings have significant implications for educational practices and policies. The frequent engagement of Manobo learners in cultural practices across all domains indicates the importance of incorporating cultural relevance into their education. This can be achieved by integrating Indigenous knowledge, traditions, and values into the curriculum, thus supporting learners' cultural identity and encouraging them to actively participate in preserving their heritage. Furthermore, recognizing the importance of these cultural practices can foster a more inclusive learning environment that respects and supports Indigenous students' cultural diversity. The overall frequency with which these learners engage in cultural practices highlights the resilience of their cultural identity and the need for educational systems to recognize and support such engagement.

4.3. Relationship between the Extent of Acculturation and the Level of Cultural Practices among Manobo Learners

The relationship between the extent of acculturation and the level of cultural practices among Manobo learners is examined in this section. Table 4.3 presents data that reveal how varying degrees of acculturation influence the expression of cultural behaviors within the group.

Table 4. Relationship between the Extent of Acculturation and the Level of Cultural Practices among Manobo Learners

Variables	Mean	r	Degree of Relationship	p-value	Remark
Acculturation	3.96	.598	Moderate Positive	.000	Statistically Significant
Cultural Practices	3.82				

*Tested at 0.05 level of significance

The data presented in Table 4 reflect the relationship between the extent of acculturation and the level of cultural practices among Manobo learners. The correlation coefficient of 0.598 suggests a moderate positive relationship between acculturation and retention of cultural practices. The p-value of 0.000 confirms that this relationship is statistically significant at the 0.05 level, indicating that the extent to which Manobo learners adopt external cultural elements meaningfully influences the maintenance of their own cultural practices.

This finding suggests that as the degree of acculturation increases, Manobo learners also tend to exhibit stronger engagement with their cultural practices, albeit at a moderate level. This moderate positive relationship implies that while external cultural influences, such as formal education and social interactions outside their communities, shape these learners' behaviors, they can still maintain a connection to their cultural heritage. This indicates a balance between assimilation and preservation, which may help foster cultural resilience despite the pressures of acculturation (Majhanovich, 2024).

These results have significant implications for education and policy design, particularly in terms of cultural preservation. The moderate positive relationship highlights the need for educational systems to support cultural inclusivity, while respecting Indigenous practices. Educators can use this information to develop curricula that encourage the integration of Indigenous knowledge systems alongside national and global content, helping prevent the complete erosion of traditional cultural values. Furthermore, policies aimed at supporting cultural sustainability should consider the role of acculturation in shaping Indigenous learners' cultural behaviors, ensuring that both external influences and cultural heritage are balanced.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings show that Manobo learners in Damulog experience a moderate degree of acculturation, particularly in assimilation, integration, and marginalization. This indicates that these learners engage with the broader society, incorporating certain external practices into their lives, but still retain significant elements of their traditional cultural identities. While they adapt to new norms and values, their indigenous culture continues to play an important role in their lives. Regarding cultural practices, Manobo learners consistently engage with the economic, social, political, and spiritual aspects of their culture. This persistence suggests that, despite the pressures of external cultural influences, the learners have managed to preserve key elements of their heritage. Their ongoing participation in these practices reflects a strong sense of cultural continuity and belonging, reinforcing their ties to the community and traditions. Finally, a moderate positive relationship was observed between the extent of acculturation and the level of cultural practice. This relationship suggests that while learners' cultural practices are influenced by external factors, their traditional practices are not diminished. Instead, the results point to a dynamic interaction in which new cultural elements are absorbed, yet their indigenous values and customs continue to shape their daily lives. This demonstrates the adaptability of Manobo learners in balancing their cultural heritage with modern society's demands.

5.1 Limitations

This study had several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the scope of the research is limited to a specific geographic area, Damulog, Bukidnon, which may not fully represent the experiences of all Manobo learners in other regions. Therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to other Indigenous groups or learners in different cultural or geographical contexts. Second, the study focused solely on Grade 10 students, representing a single educational level. This age group is at a critical stage of forming their cultural identities, but the findings may not apply to younger or older learners, who may have different levels of engagement with both traditional and external cultural practices. Additionally, the research utilized a self-reported survey method, which can introduce bias, as participants may provide socially desirable responses or may not accurately recall or express their cultural practices. Although the instrument was validated, self-reported data inherently carry the risk of misrepresentation. Finally, the study did not account for all potential influencing factors, such as family background, socioeconomic status, or exposure to specific types of cultural influences. These variables could affect the extent of acculturation and the preservation of cultural practices, but were not fully explored within the scope of this study.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to address the extent of acculturation and the level of cultural practices among Manobo learners. First, to enhance the preservation and promotion of Manobo cultural practices, educational programs should incorporate activities that reinforce traditional economic, social, political, and spiritual values. Schools can establish

partnerships with local cultural leaders and elders to provide opportunities for learners to engage with and learn about their heritage. This approach would help balance the acculturation process and strengthen learners' cultural identity.

Second, considering the moderate relationship found between acculturation and cultural practices, future research should explore how different types of cultural interactions, such as those with other indigenous groups or urbanized populations, affect cultural identity. Educators and policymakers should aim to create a more inclusive educational environment that recognizes the diversity of cultural influences and encourages students to appreciate and integrate these influences in a manner that supports their personal and community identities. Finally, since this study focused on Grade 10 learners, it is recommended that further studies be conducted across different age groups to better understand how cultural practices evolve as individuals grow older. Additionally, extending the research to include parents, community leaders, and other stakeholders could provide a more comprehensive view of how acculturation and cultural practices are experienced across generations.

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