

# Unraveling Traditions of Calabanga in *Kami Kadto*: The Etnic Stance of Stakeholders

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## ABSTRACT

The staging of cultural heritage and traditions has garnered significant attention in recent years, with researchers exploring various dimensions of this practice. *Kami Kadto (us before)*, reflects local traditions in Calabanga which serves as the bedrock of cultural identity, offering a sense of continuity and belonging to community members. Examining these traditions through both emic and etic (etnic) provides a comprehensive understanding of their significance and evolution. This research study, grounded in the theoretical paradigms of constructivism and cultural theory, with a particular focus on the frameworks of ethnography and performance theory aims to (1) discover how dramatic performance can aid students in learning about and appreciating socio-cultural traditions and practices; (2) ascertain how stage play heightens awareness of one's cultural background and identity; and (3) explore ways in which dramatic theatre might strengthen community and educational settings' social cohesiveness and encourage a stronger sense of shared values and traditions. Thirty-six (36) stakeholders comprising of 22 students, seven (7) actors and production staff, nine (9) community members and local leaders watched the stage play and participated in the talk-back sessions, discussion, answering online feedback forms and interviews. The findings underscore the significance of integrating traditional art forms into educational programs and community initiatives to preserve cultural heritage while addressing contemporary educational and social needs. Research results affirm that with appropriate support, such as resources, partnerships, and institutional commitment, dramatic theatre can serve as a sustainable tool for social transformation and cultural revitalization. Challenges such as limited funding, audience engagement, and cultural sensitivity require deliberate strategies to ensure theatre's effectiveness in achieving these goals. Heritage and local traditions when translated as a stage play enliven the preservation, protection and promotion of culture beyond this generation and towards sustainability of creative communities.

**Keywords:** Calabanga, heritage, stakeholder, sustainability

## INTRODUCTION

The staging of cultural heritage and traditions has garnered significant attention in recent years, with researchers exploring various dimensions of this practice. Recent studies have focused on the role of dramatic performance in preserving and promoting cultural heritage. The transformative potential of theatre in education and community development highlights its ability to foster cultural awareness and social cohesion [1], [2]. These studies underscore the importance of staging cultural heritage as a means of engaging community members and preserving their traditions for future generations. Etnic perspectives are crucial for capturing the authentic voices and experiences of community members. Studies emphasize the value of engaging with local stakeholders to gain insights into their cultural practices and beliefs [3], [4]. A systematic literature review on the use of technologies for preserving cultural heritage highlights the importance of involving community members in the preservation process [3]. The impacts of climate change on indigenous and local cultures underscore the need to understand the emic perspectives of those directly affected by these changes [4]. Meanwhile, etic perspectives provide an objective analysis of cultural practices from an outsider's viewpoint. Valuable insights into the application of innovative technologies and digital tools in cultural heritage management are offered in studies that discuss the challenges and opportunities of using technology to preserve built heritage [5] and review the state of the art in using digital technologies for cultural heritage

preservation [6]. These studies highlight the importance of etic perspectives in identifying best practices and developing effective preservation strategies. Integrating both etic and emic (etmic) perspectives is essential for a comprehensive understanding of cultural heritage. Researchers have emphasized the need for a balanced approach that combines insider and outsider viewpoints to capture the complexity of cultural practices [7], [8]. This integration allows researchers to gain a holistic view of how traditions are maintained, adapted, and staged within communities. Local traditions serve as the bedrock of cultural identity, offering a sense of continuity and belonging to community members. Examining these traditions through both emic and etic perspectives provides a comprehensive understanding of their significance and evolution. The emic perspective, rooted in the insider's view, emphasizes the subjective meanings and experiences of those within the culture. Conversely, the etic perspective offers an objective analysis from an outsider's viewpoint, which can reveal broader patterns and influences [9].

Stakeholders, including community elders, local leaders, and younger generations, offer valuable insights into the emic and etic dimensions of local traditions. From the emic perspective, these stakeholders articulate the intrinsic values, beliefs, and practices that underpin their cultural heritage. For instance, community elders often emphasize the spiritual and historical significance of traditions, viewing them as vital for maintaining cultural identity and cohesion [7]. Local leaders may highlight the role of traditions in fostering community solidarity and continuity, while younger generations might focus on the ways in which these practices resonate with their contemporary experiences and aspirations [7]. From the etic perspective, researchers can analyze how external factors such as globalization, modernization, and policy changes impact local traditions. This approach helps to identify the adaptive strategies employed by communities to sustain their cultural practices amidst external pressures. For example, the reinterpretation and revitalization of traditions to align with modern contexts demonstrate the resilience and adaptability of cultural practices [12]. By integrating emic and etic perspectives, this research aims to provide a holistic understanding of local traditions. It seeks to explore how traditions are perceived, maintained, and evolved by various stakeholders, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on cultural preservation and adaptation. Employing qualitative methods such as interviews and participant observation, this study captures the nuanced perspectives of stakeholders, offering a rich, ethnographically-informed account of local traditions [11].

Calabanga, a municipality rich in cultural heritage, is home to a myriad of traditions that reflect the vibrant history and identity of its community. These traditions, encompassing rituals, festivals, and everyday practices, are integral to the cultural fabric of the region. Staging these traditions through dramatic performances offers a dynamic approach to preserving and revitalizing cultural heritage. Such performances not only provide a platform for cultural expression but also foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of local traditions among community members and beyond. This research aims to explore the process of staging Calabanga's heritage and traditions, with a focus on obtaining the perspectives of stakeholders through both emic and etic lenses. The emic perspective, representing the insider's view, emphasizes the subjective meanings and experiences of those within the culture. This perspective is crucial for capturing the authentic voices and interpretations of community members, including elders, local leaders, and participants in the traditions [9]. Conversely, the etic perspective provides an objective analysis from an outsider's viewpoint, offering broader insights into how these traditions are perceived and influenced by external factors such as globalization, modernization, and policy changes. Integrating both perspectives allows for a comprehensive understanding of how Calabanga's traditions are maintained, adapted, and showcased through dramatic performances [7]. By examining the staging of Calabanga's heritage through these dual lenses, this study seeks to illuminate the dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity. It aims to uncover the ways in which dramatic performances can serve as tools for cultural preservation, education, and social cohesion. The findings of this study contribute to the broader discourse on cultural preservation and the role of arts in community development. They offer practical recommendations for leveraging dramatic theatre to sustain and celebrate local traditions, ensuring that the cultural heritage of Calabanga continues to thrive in an ever-changing world.

Understanding and preserving the cultural heritage of Calabanga is of paramount importance in fostering a strong sense of identity and community among its residents. This research study aims to delve into the unique traditions and practices of Calabanga, with a particular focus on the role of dramatic performance in education and community cohesion. Dramatic Performance and Educational Enhancement: Dramatic performance, as an interactive and immersive art form, has the potential to enhance students' learning experiences significantly. By

integrating elements of local arts and agriculture into dramatic performances, students can develop a deeper appreciation for these subjects. This approach not only makes learning more engaging but also helps to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. The hands-on experience of participating in or watching dramatic performances can stimulate students' interest in local traditions and cultivate a sense of pride in their cultural heritage [1]. Stage plays are a powerful medium for storytelling and cultural expression. They can vividly portray the history, values, and traditions of a community, thereby heightening awareness of one's cultural background and identity. Through the dramatization of local folklore, historical events, and traditional practices, community members, especially the younger generation, can gain a better understanding of their roots. This heightened cultural awareness fosters a sense of belonging and identity, which is essential for the preservation and continuation of local traditions [2]. Dramatic theatre can serve as a catalyst for social cohesion within educational settings and the broader community. By bringing people together to participate in or observe theatrical productions, it encourages interaction and collaboration among diverse groups. This collective experience can help strengthen social bonds, promote mutual understanding, and reinforce shared values and traditions. The communal nature of theatre also provides a platform for discussing contemporary issues and challenges, offering a space for dialogue and reflection that can lead to a stronger, more cohesive community [13].

By exploring these dimensions, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the ways in which dramatic performance can contribute to educational enrichment, cultural awareness, and social cohesion in Calabanga. *Kami Kadto* (literally, us before), is a stage play which highlights the customary tradition of *bajon* the process when a man asks for the hand of the woman in marriage. This tradition has been practiced in Calabanga until the death of the last known participant who has experienced *bajon*. The findings of this study not only highlight the significance of local traditions but also offer practical recommendations for leveraging dramatic theatre as a tool for cultural preservation and community development. This qualitative research inquiry shall explore Calabanga's traditions and practices from the ethnic perspectives of stakeholders. Specifically, this research aims to: (1) Discover how dramatic performance can aid students in learning about and appreciating socio-cultural traditions and practices; (2) Ascertain how stage play heightens awareness of one's cultural background and identity; and (3) Explore ways in which dramatic theatre might strengthen community and educational settings' social cohesiveness and encourage a stronger sense of shared values and traditions.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Dramatic play, also known as imaginative play, is an essential component of child development and has been shown to foster creativity, problem-solving, and social-emotional skills [14] [15]. In recent years, researchers have also begun to explore the potential of dramatic play in promoting religious and cultural expression. Furthermore, dramatic play in religious settings can help preserve and transmit cultural and heritage traditions, such as religious stories and rituals, to future generations [16].

In addition, dramatic play in educational settings has been shown to promote a deeper understanding and appreciation of culture and heritage [17]. For example, in a study of Nigerian preschoolers, [17] found that using dramatic play in the classroom helped students better understand their cultural heritage and traditions. Similarly, in a study of Jewish preschoolers, [18] found that incorporating dramatic play into religious education programs helped to promote a deeper understanding and appreciation of Jewish culture and heritage. Specifically, the use of dramatic play was found to be effective in promoting the children's understanding of Jewish traditions, such as the celebration of Shabbat. Moreover, research has shown that dramatic play in educational settings can promote social cohesion and a sense of shared values and traditions [19]. In a study of preschoolers in the United States, [19] found that using dramatic play in the classroom helped promote a sense of community and shared values among the children. In summary, the literature suggests that dramatic play in religious and educational settings can promote a deeper understanding and appreciation of culture and heritage, preserve and transmit cultural and heritage traditions, and promote social cohesion and a sense of shared values and traditions.

One of the local studies discusses the role of rituals and plays in traditional Philippine festivals, such as the Ati-Atihan and Sinulog. The author argues that these festivals provide opportunities for the community to engage in creative expression and play while promoting a deeper understanding and appreciation of cultural

heritage and religious traditions [20]. Another article explores the role of drama in promoting cultural awareness and identity among Filipino youth. The author argues that incorporating dramatic play can provide youth with a means of exploring and expressing their cultural identity while fostering a sense of pride and connection to their heritage [21]. The recent research investigates the use of dramatic theatre in encouraging religious and cultural expression, similar to foreign and local studies. The studies seek to comprehend how dramatic theatre can aid in the promotion of shared values and traditions within a community, social cohesion, and a more profound sense of cultural identity and heritage in individuals. They also acknowledged the potential of dramatic play to foster holistic learning and individual development while fostering creativity, imagination, and critical thinking skills. On the other hand, the international studies examine various communities abroad, but the newest research focuses especially on the community in Calabanga, Camarines Sur. In addition to including an educational viewpoint, the most current research also examines the function of dramatic play in educational contexts, which is not the primary emphasis of international and local studies. While some local studies place a strong emphasis on religion's role in fostering cultural expression, recent research incorporates cultural heritage as a crucial aspect and extends its investigation beyond religious rituals and customs. Overall, the most recent research adds to the body of knowledge on the use of dramatic theatre to support religious and cultural expression while offering a more specialized and instructive viewpoint.

The staging and dramaturgy of local traditions have been the subject of extensive research in recent years, highlighting the importance of these practices in preserving cultural heritage and fostering community identity. A study explores the Pasa Harau Festival in West Sumatra, Indonesia, and its role in empowering the community through spatial planning and performance curation [22]. The research highlights the importance of curating performance spaces to organize shared areas within the village, which resembles dramaturgy [22]. The study emphasizes the strategic value of this approach in preserving culture and developing tourism without compromising natural beauty and vernacular settlements [22]. Another study focuses on the revitalization of rural performing arts in Indonesia for tourism purposes [23]. It examines how traditional performances can be adapted to attract tourists while maintaining their cultural authenticity [23]. The findings suggest that staging local traditions can contribute to economic development and cultural preservation, providing a sustainable model for rural communities [23]. Research investigating the Rampak Genteng Festival in West Java, Indonesia, celebrates the contemporary culture of roof tile production [24]. It explores how spatial practices and festival organization can fabricate cultural meanings and values for local people [24]. The study highlights the cultural hybridization process and the role of festivals in shaping community identity [24]. Meanwhile, a systematic literature review examines the role of the School of Living Traditions (SLT) in preserving the cultural heritage of Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines [25]. The study emphasizes the importance of culture-based education and experiential learning in safeguarding indigenous knowledge and practices [25]. The findings underscore the pivotal role of SLTs in empowering Indigenous communities and ensuring the transmission of cultural legacies to younger generations [25]. Finally, another discussion explores the ways in which social actors construct, display, and perform scenes in their social interactions [26]. The chapter draws on Erving Goffman's dramaturgy as a metaphor for social life, highlighting the role of performance in identity work and social cohesion [26]. The study emphasizes the importance of impression management and cooperative support in maintaining social order [26].

This research study is grounded in the theoretical paradigms of Constructivism and Cultural Theory, with a particular focus on the frameworks of Ethnography and Performance Theory. Constructivism posits that knowledge and understanding are constructed through social interactions and experiences. In the context of this research, constructivist theory suggests that students and community members actively construct their knowledge and appreciation of arts, agriculture, and cultural traditions through engagement in dramatic performances [27]. This paradigm emphasizes the importance of experiential learning and the role of social context in shaping individual and collective identities. Cultural theory provides a lens through which to explore the meanings and significance of local traditions. It examines how cultural practices are produced, maintained, and transformed within a community [28]. This research draws on cultural theory to understand how dramatic performances reflect and reinforce Calabanga's cultural heritage, and how they contribute to the community's sense of identity and cohesion. Ethnography is a qualitative research approach that involves immersive observation and participation within a community to understand its cultural practices from an insider perspective [7]. This study employs ethnographic methods, including interviews and participant observation, to

capture the emic (insider) perspectives of stakeholders, such as students, educators, and community members. Ethnography allows for a rich, detailed understanding of the lived experiences and cultural contexts of the participants. Performance theory examines the ways in which theatrical and performative practices shape social reality and individual identities. It posits that performances are not merely representations but are active processes that produce and transform meaning [29]. This theoretical framework is particularly relevant for exploring how dramatic performances in Calabanga can heighten cultural awareness, strengthen community bonds, and foster social cohesion. It underscores the transformative potential of performance in educational and community settings. By integrating these theoretical paradigms, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how dramatic performances can serve as powerful tools for education, cultural preservation, and community development in Calabanga. The study seeks to illuminate the dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity, and how cultural practices are continually negotiated and reimaged by various stakeholders.

The conceptual framework for this study is anchored on the interaction between dramatic performance, education, cultural awareness, and social cohesion within the context of Calabanga's local traditions and practices. Dramatic Performance encompasses various forms of theatrical expression, including stage plays, skits, and folk performances that reflect local traditions. It serves as a medium for storytelling, cultural transmission, and community engagement. Education involves both formal and informal learning experiences of students and community members, focusing on how dramatic performance can enhance learning about arts and agriculture, making these subjects more relatable and engaging [1]. Cultural Awareness refers to the understanding and appreciation of one's cultural heritage, history, and identity. It explores how participation in or exposure to dramatic performances heightens awareness of cultural background and identity [2]. Social Cohesion represents the strength of relationships and the sense of solidarity within the community, investigating how dramatic theatre can foster a sense of shared values, traditions, and communal bonds [30]. The theoretical underpinnings of this study include Constructivism, which highlights the importance of social interactions and experiences in constructing knowledge and cultural identity [27]; Cultural Theory, which provides insights into how cultural practices are produced and maintained within a community [28]; Ethnography, which offers a detailed insider perspective on the lived experiences and cultural context of the community [7]; and Performance Theory, which examines how performances shape social reality and individual identities [29]. The interactions among key concepts reveal important dynamics. Dramatic Performance and Education integrate local arts and agricultural themes in performances, enriching the educational experience by making learning interactive and engaging. Through participation and observation, students construct knowledge, leading to a deeper appreciation of these subjects. Dramatic Performance and Cultural Awareness utilize performances as vehicles for cultural storytelling, preserving and promoting local traditions and values, which heighten cultural awareness among participants and audiences and strengthen cultural identity. Dramatic Performance and Social Cohesion foster interaction, dialogue, and collaboration among diverse groups through the communal nature of theatre. Shared experiences in dramatic performances build social bonds, reinforcing community solidarity and cohesion. Education and Cultural Awareness work together through programs incorporating dramatic performances to enhance students' understanding of their cultural heritage, thereby contributing to the preservation and appreciation of local traditions. Finally, Education and Social Cohesion align as schools and educational institutions serve as community hubs where dramatic performances promote shared values and social harmony. Educational initiatives that emphasize cultural traditions ultimately strengthen the fabric of the community.

While there is extensive literature on local traditions and their importance in maintaining cultural identity, several gaps remain in our understanding of these practices from both emic and etic perspectives. One significant gap is the limited comparative analysis of emic and etic viewpoints. Many studies tend to focus solely on either the insider perspective, which provides an in-depth, nuanced understanding of the cultural context, or the outsider perspective, which offers a broader, more objective analysis [9]. However, few research efforts have effectively integrated both perspectives to provide a comprehensive understanding of how local traditions are perceived, maintained, and adapted by various stakeholders [8]. Furthermore, there is a lack of longitudinal studies that examine the evolution of local traditions over time, particularly in the face of rapid social, economic, and technological changes. Most existing research captures a snapshot in time, but does not adequately address how these traditions are reinterpreted and sustained across generations. Understanding the

temporal dynamics of local traditions, and how stakeholders negotiate changes while striving to maintain cultural continuity, is crucial for a holistic view of cultural preservation [12]. Another research gap lies in the underrepresentation of younger generations' perspectives. While community elders and local leaders are often the primary focus of studies on cultural traditions, the views and contributions of younger community members are frequently overlooked. This omission is critical, as younger generations play a vital role in the transmission and adaptation of traditions, ensuring their relevance and vitality in contemporary contexts [11].

Additionally, there is a need for more interdisciplinary approaches that incorporate insights from anthropology, sociology, history, and cultural studies. Such approaches can provide a richer, more nuanced understanding of the complex factors influencing local traditions. Current research often remains siloed within specific academic disciplines, limiting the scope and depth of analysis [7]. Lastly, the impact of globalizing influences on local traditions remains an area requiring further exploration. While some studies have begun to address this issue, there is a need for more detailed examinations of how globalization affects cultural practices, both positively and negatively. Understanding the ways in which communities resist, adapt to, or integrate external influences is essential for developing effective strategies for cultural preservation in an increasingly interconnected world [31].

## METHODOLOGY

This research combines theater in education principles and approaches with the tenets of dramaturgy, hence the talk back session as the predominant method of data collection. Meanwhile, participant observation with immersion was applied from the preparation through towards the staging of the play. A talkback session is a common post-performance evaluation session in theater, where the audience is given the opportunity to ask questions or provide feedback about the production. The session was led by a moderator, which guides the conversation and helps to ensure that the discussion remains focused and productive. Combining rich research traditions aligned with dramaturgy and theater in education, this research adhered to an analytical framework. This research used content analysis which involves systematically analyzing the content of talkback sessions, such as the types of questions asked, the themes that emerge, and the tone of the discussion. Content analysis shall identify patterns and trends in audience responses, and to compare and contrast talkback sessions across different performances or contexts. In this research, a manual coding and identification of themes was implemented from thick descriptions, interview transcripts and discussions of relevant stakeholders. Incorporating both emic (insider) and etic (outsider) perspectives provides a comprehensive analysis of the data. The emic perspective captures the stakeholders' subjective experiences and interpretations of local traditions, while the etic perspective offers an objective analysis of how these traditions are influenced by external factors such as globalization and modernization [9]. Cast and production staff comprised the insider or emic stance while the audience and community members represent the etic perspectives for this research. Narrative analysis was applied to the stories and accounts shared by the participants during the interviews and observations. This method helped to understand how individuals and groups construct and communicate their experiences and identities through dramatic performances [32]. Similarly, ethnographic analysis was conducted to provide a rich, detailed account of the cultural context in which the *Kami Kadto* story. This involved a deep immersion during the training, rehearsal and pre-production of the stage play, observing and participating in their daily activities, ceremonies, and performances, capturing the cultural nuances and meanings [7]. Furthermore, performance analysis has focus on the structure, content, and impact of the dramatic performances. This included examining the scripts, staging, audience reactions, and the overall effectiveness of the performances in conveying cultural messages and fostering community cohesion [29]. Audience experienced a talk-back session where insights and feedback were gathered. Also, questions and discussions aided this performance analysis to reflect into varying perspectives from stakeholders. Comparative analysis was employed to compare and contrast the perspectives of different stakeholder groups, such as community elders, local leaders, educators, and students. This helped to highlight the similarities and differences in their views and experiences, providing a holistic understanding of the role of dramatic performance in the community [8]. Thirty-six (36) research participants and stakeholders comprising of 22 students (college-14, high school-6 and elementary-2), seven (7) actors and production staff, nine (9) community members and local leaders including senior citizens, combining 9 male and 27 female watched the stage play and participated in the talk-back sessions, discussion, answering online feedback forms and interviews. However, the following

were considered: (1) Relevant expertise: Participants with relevant expertise or experience, such as actors, directors, or scholars, can provide valuable insights into the performance. Five of the participants have been actors and trainers of stage play productions in the local setting. (2) Diversity: It is important to ensure that a diverse range of perspectives and experiences are represented in the talkback session. In this research, invited audience from schools and barangays represent diversity of background; (3) Respectful behavior: Participants should be able to engage in a respectful and productive discussion, even if they have differing opinions or perspectives. Before any data collection begins, participants' informed consent was obtained. With a research information sheet, translated in the vernacular, participants were thoroughly informed about the study's aims and design, as well as their right to withdraw from the study at any point without any penalties. Throughout the study, confidentiality and anonymity was strictly maintained, ensuring that participants' identities remain anonymous and all information is securely stored also adhering to the privacy act. However, there are certain limitations to this study. The sample size may be influenced by the availability and willingness of participants to engage in the study. Additionally, the study focuses exclusively on the participants' experiences and perceptions, and not on a comprehensive analysis of the broader impact of dramatic theatre on religious and cultural identity within the community.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The collected responses from interviews and talk back sessions exhibit a strong consensus regarding the positive impact of dramatic performances on students' appreciation of socio-cultural traditions. Through qualitative content analysis, several recurring themes and key points were identified. The content analysis of responses regarding the impact of *Kami Kadto* as a stage play and dramatic performance on students' appreciation of socio-cultural traditions revealed several key themes (see Table 1): cultural awareness and preservation, educational and reflective experiences, intergenerational and community engagement, contemporary relevance, personal and social development, and broader societal impact. [33] emphasizes the importance of oral traditions and cultural expressions in preserving heritage.

Table 1. Themes from Etnic Perspectives for *Kami Kadto* on Students' Appreciation of Socio-Cultural Traditions

Themes	Subthemes	Derived from participant's responses
Cultural Awareness and Preservation	Awareness Many responses highlight that involvement in dramatic performances raises students' awareness of cultural traditions and practices.	<i>"It will lead the students to be aware of our cultural tradition and practices."</i>
	Preservation There is a strong belief that engaging in these performances helps preserve cultural practices.	<i>"Students will help to preserve this kind of old traditional cultural practices."</i>
Educational and Reflective Experience	Educational Benefits Respondents emphasize the educational aspect, noting that performances provide knowledge about traditions.	<i>"Students acquired knowledge and appreciate our old traditions practiced in our community."</i>
	Reflection on Culture Participation in performances encourages students to reflect on cultural treatment and respect.	<i>"Students to appreciate and reflect on how we treat and also respect our culture."</i>
Intergenerational and Community	Intergenerational Learning Responses indicate that performances facilitate	<i>"Somehow it encourages students to engage themselves in</i>

Engagement	learning across generations.	<i>these kinds of practices."</i>
	Engaging in performances strengthens community ties and identity.	<i>"It deepens the comprehension of the students to appreciate further the culture and traditions."</i>
Contemporary Relevance	Modern Context Respondents acknowledge the importance of adapting and understanding traditional practices in a modern context.	<i>"In the contemporary world, everything is not the same as we have in the past."</i>
	Adaptability The ability of dramatic performances to address current issues, such as modernization and societal changes, is noted.	<i>"Students will help to restore them in today's generation."</i>
Personal and Social Development:	Empathy and Engagement Participating in performances fosters empathy and deeper engagement with cultural narratives.	<i>"Participating in dramatic performances can help students appreciate socio-cultural traditions."</i>
	Character and Skill Development Responses mention the development of presentation skills and personal growth.	<i>"Participating in dramatic performances can develop the students' presentation skills."</i>
Broader Societal Impact	Lifelong Learning The enduring educational impact of cultural performances is highlighted.	<i>"It gives lifelong learning to students about the culture and practices."</i>
	Cultural Identity Engagement with dramatic performances reinforces cultural identity and heritage.	<i>"The play presents to us the Filipino culture that should be preserved as it symbolizes our practices and our identity as Filipinos."</i>

The responses indicating that dramatic performances raise cultural awareness align with this view. For example, the statement, "It will lead the students to be aware of our cultural tradition and practices," resonates with UNESCO's assertion that such practices maintain community values and histories [33]. The significance of oral narratives in shaping communal memory and identity supports the idea that students reflect on cultural treatment and respect through participation in dramatic performances [34]. This is evident in the response, "Students to appreciate and reflect on how we treat and also respect our culture," which aligns with Ong's perspective on the educational impact of engaging with cultural narratives [34]. Theatrical performances enhance cultural expression and preservation by involving the community, as argued by another study [35]. The analysis found that performances encourage intergenerational learning and community unity. Statements like, "Somehow it encourages students to engage themselves in these kinds of practices," support Schechner's findings on community involvement in cultural preservation [35]. The adaptability of traditional practices in the face of modernization is highlighted in responses reflecting the importance of understanding traditions in a modern context, such as "Students will help to restore them in today's generation," which align with Van der Ploeg's emphasis on the dynamic nature of culture [36]. The role of theater in developing empathy and understanding among participants is emphasized in another study [37]. Responses indicating that participation fosters empathy and engagement, such as "Participating in dramatic performances can help students appreciate



socio-cultural traditions," support Bennett's views on the personal and social benefits of theatrical involvement [37]. The contributions of local traditions to economic resilience and community identity are discussed in research findings that align with responses like, "It gives lifelong learning to students about the culture and practices," which reflect Scott's views on the broader societal impact of maintaining cultural practices [38]. Modernization's potential to dilute traditional practices is highlighted by Appadurai, who warns that integrating modern elements can obscure original meanings and values [39]. The community's efforts to adapt traditions are reflected in responses like, "In the contemporary world, everything is not the same as we have in the past," illustrating the tension between preservation and modernization [39]. The impact of climate change on traditional practices is explored in responses indicating that dramatic performances address contemporary issues like climate change, such as "They specifically pray for their barangay to be spared from frequent natural disasters," which align with findings on the adaptability of cultural practices to environmental challenges [40]. The content analysis reveals a strong consensus on the positive impact of dramatic performances on students' appreciation of socio-cultural traditions, supported by relevant literature on cultural preservation, education, community engagement, and personal development. While there are challenges in maintaining these traditions in a modern context, the adaptability and resilience of cultural practices ensure their continued relevance and significance. The analysis reveals a strong consensus on the positive impact of stage plays on cultural awareness and identity, supported by relevant literature on cultural preservation, education, community engagement, and personal development. While modernization presents challenges, the adaptability and resilience of stage plays ensure their continued relevance and significance.

### **Approaches to Dramatic Theatre**

Participants emphasized the importance of engaging local community members in theatre activities, such as casting local talent, involving schools, and collaborating with local organizations. Theatre workshops and seminars are frequently cited as initial steps for fostering skills, appreciation, and participation in dramatic theatre. These activities are seen as essential for both performers and audiences. Social media and partnerships with local stakeholders were highlighted as modern tools to amplify theatre's reach and impact, particularly among younger audiences.

### **Community Involvement in Theatre: A Grassroots Approach**

Dramatic theatre fosters emotional and intellectual engagement, creating opportunities for empathy and mutual understanding among community members. Theatre plays a pivotal role in preserving and reviving cultural practices, traditions, and values, which resonate deeply with audiences and contribute to a shared sense of identity. Involving young people in dramatic theatre is viewed as critical for ensuring the sustainability of cultural practices and traditions. Theatre initiatives must actively engage diverse community members, with a particular focus on youth participation, to build lasting connections and strengthen community bonds. Efforts to strengthen community relationships through theatre should prioritize grassroots involvement, leveraging partnerships with schools, government units, and local organizations to sustain interest and participation. Dramatic theatre thrives when rooted in the community, involving local talents, organizations, and audiences. This grassroots approach not only enhances the authenticity of the performances but also fosters a sense of ownership and pride among participants. Community-based theatre projects empower individuals by giving them a voice, creating spaces for dialogue, and fostering social cohesion [41]. Participatory theatre strengthens civic engagement, allowing communities to address shared concerns collectively [42]. However, participatory theatre may inadvertently exclude marginalized groups if not implemented inclusively, underscoring the importance of deliberate efforts to involve underrepresented voices [43].

### **Theatre as a Catalyst for Cultural Preservation**

Theatre serves as a living archive of cultural practices and traditions, ensuring their continuity in contemporary society. By dramatizing local narratives, theatre can revive pride in cultural heritage and encourage its preservation. Theatre's role as a repository of intangible cultural heritage is highlighted, emphasizing its capacity to convey complex cultural meanings through performance [44]. It is also noted that theatre can serve as a powerful medium to resist cultural homogenization in an increasingly globalized world [45]. However, the risk of oversimplifying or romanticizing cultural practices in performances is cautioned, as this could alienate

younger audiences or distort authentic traditions [46].

### **Integration of Theatre in Educational Environments**

Incorporating dramatic theatre into educational curricula fosters experiential learning and cultural awareness, helping students connect with their heritage while nurturing creativity and collaboration. Drama's value in education is underscored by its ability to facilitate active learning and critical thinking [47]. Furthermore, drama is observed to bridge the gap between diverse cultural narratives in classrooms, fostering empathy and inclusivity among students [48]. On the other hand, critics argue that using theatre in education risks commodifying art, potentially reducing its aesthetic value in favor of functional purposes like cultural or moral education [49].

### **Enhancing Social Capital Through Theatre**

Theatre's capacity to create shared experiences builds social capital by bringing people together and strengthening networks of trust and cooperation within communities. Social capital is defined as the glue that holds societies together, with cultural activities like theatre building bridges across diverse groups [30]. Applied theatre projects have been shown to enhance social ties and community resilience in various contexts [50]. However, some critique the overemphasis on theatre's social benefits, arguing that its impacts are often overstated without rigorous evidence of long-term community transformation [51].

### **The Role of Technology and Digital Media in Expanding Theatre's Reach**

Using digital platforms to showcase performances or host discussions broadens theatre's audience base, especially among younger generations. This ensures that the cultural narratives explored in dramatic theatre remain relevant and accessible [52]. Technological innovations in theatre production are also noted to enhance the emotional and intellectual impact of performances [53]. Conversely, reliance on digital media is critiqued for potentially diluting the immediacy and communal essence of live theatre [54].

### **Key Challenges and Future Directions**

The challenges of resource constraints, audience development, and youth engagement emphasize the need for strategic partnerships, capacity building, and sustained efforts to integrate theatre into both formal education and community practices. There is a need to revive languishing heritage and traditions such as *bajon* as [55] posits that old practices necessitates innovative ways of preserving, protecting and promoting local heritage which are encapsulated in the retelling and transformational processes from oral narratives, to written text as script for theater productions and potentially as movies that shall entice young generations of audiences. Government and institutional support are advocated to ensure the sustainability of community theatre initiatives [56]. Theatre, as a form of "critical pedagogy," is suggested to empower marginalized communities when aligned with their specific needs and aspirations [57]. Conversely, some scholars argue for theatre's autonomy from institutional frameworks, warning that excessive reliance on external support may compromise its artistic integrity [13]. The analysis reveals that dramatic theatre is a dynamic tool for community building, cultural preservation, and education. Supported by relevant literature, these implications highlight the need for inclusive, sustainable, and innovative approaches to maximize theatre's impact. By addressing challenges and leveraging opportunities, dramatic theatre can continue to foster unity, cultural pride, and social transformation across diverse communities.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study highlights the intricate interplay among dramatic performance, education, cultural awareness, and social cohesion within the context of Calabanga's local traditions and practices in the stage play, *Kami Kadto*. It demonstrates that dramatic performances serve as powerful tools for storytelling, cultural transmission, and community engagement, making education more interactive and meaningful. By incorporating local traditions and agricultural themes, performances enhance students' understanding of their cultural heritage, fostering a deeper appreciation for both the arts and the environment. Furthermore, these performances reinforce cultural

identity and strengthen the bonds within the community, contributing to social cohesion.

The theoretical underpinnings of constructivism, cultural theory, ethnography, and performance theory provide a robust foundation for understanding how dramatic performances shape knowledge, identity, and social relationships. The findings underscore the significance of integrating traditional art forms into educational programs and community initiatives to preserve cultural heritage while addressing contemporary educational and social needs. The findings affirm that with appropriate support, such as resources, partnerships, and institutional commitment, dramatic theatre can serve as a sustainable tool for social transformation and cultural revitalization. Challenges such as limited funding, audience engagement, and cultural sensitivity require deliberate strategies to ensure theatre's effectiveness in achieving these goals. Further, the following recommendations are presented: (1) Integration in Education: Educational institutions in Calabanga and similar communities should incorporate dramatic performances into their curricula, emphasizing local traditions and agricultural themes to enhance student engagement and cultural appreciation; (2) Capacity Building: Workshops and training programs for teachers, artists, and community leaders should be developed to equip them with the skills to design and implement culturally relevant dramatic activities; (3) Community-Based Initiatives: Local governments and cultural organizations should support community-based theatre projects that showcase traditional practices, promoting cultural awareness and fostering social cohesion; (4) Documentation and Archiving: Efforts should be made to document and archive traditional dramatic performances to preserve these practices for future generations. Digital platforms and multimedia tools can be utilized to make these archives widely accessible; (5) Research Expansion: Further research could explore how dramatic performances intersect with other aspects of community life, such as environmental sustainability, economic development, and mental health, to deepen the understanding of their multifaceted impact; (6) Policy Support: Policymakers should recognize the value of traditional arts in education and community development and allocate resources to support cultural preservation initiatives. Furthermore, overarching recommendations are also forwarded through the results: Enhance Institutional Support. Schools, local government units, and cultural organizations should allocate funding and resources to promote dramatic theatre as a means of cultural preservation and community building. Establish partnerships between educational institutions and local arts organizations to facilitate workshops, performances, and capacity-building programs. Integrate Theatre into Education. Include dramatic theatre in school curricula to foster an appreciation of arts and culture among students while promoting shared values and traditions. Organize cultural festivals and theatrical performances that encourage collaboration between students, teachers, and community members. Promote Inclusive and Relevant Storytelling. Develop scripts and performances that reflect diverse community narratives, ensuring representation and inclusivity. Engage community members in the creative process to foster ownership and authenticity. Leverage Digital Platforms. Utilize social media and multimedia tools to expand the reach of performances, engage younger audiences, and document cultural practices. Create online archives and platforms showcasing local plays to preserve and promote cultural heritage. Encourage Audience Cultivation. Conduct workshops and seminars to build awareness and appreciation of dramatic theatre, targeting both young people and marginalized groups. Provide incentives such as free or subsidized tickets to make theatre more accessible to a wider audience. Facilitate Post-Performance Dialogue Organize discussions and forums after performances to encourage critical reflection and dialogue on the themes presented. Use these sessions to gather feedback, which can inform future productions and community engagement efforts. By implementing the recommendations, communities and institutions can harness the full potential of dramatic theatre to build unity, preserve cultural identity, and inspire social change.

This research emphasizes the transformative power of dramatic theatre in fostering unity, cultural preservation, and community engagement. By enabling emotional and intellectual connections among participants, theatre provides a platform to explore shared values, respect cultural diversity, and address social issues. It reinforces the importance of storytelling as a medium to bridge generational gaps, cultivate empathy, and celebrate the richness of local traditions. Integrating dramatic theatre into educational and community settings creates an inclusive environment where individuals can learn, express themselves, and collaborate to strengthen community bonds.

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