

Rediscovering Love, Courtship, and Marriage of the Mansaka Tribe in Contemporary Times

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100600542>

Received: 03 June 2026; Accepted: 08 June 2026; Published: 29 June 2026

ABSTRACT

This qualitative phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of Mansaka married couples in love, courtship, and marriage in contemporary times, focusing on the effects of modernization, technology, and changing social norms. Purposive sampling was used to select participants with direct experience of Mansaka traditions, and data were gathered through in-depth interviews and analyzed thematically. Findings show that Mansaka couples express love through respect, patience, mutual understanding, and shared responsibilities. Courtship has shifted from traditional family-centered practices to technology-mediated communication, and marriage now blends traditional and modern practices, although family involvement and cultural values remain important. The study also found the decline of several traditional practices, including arranged marriages, dowry and bridewealth systems, parent-supervised courtship, and indigenous wedding rituals, largely due to modernization and education. Despite this, couples continue to balance cultural preservation with contemporary life. Overall, the study highlights the ongoing negotiation between tradition and modernity among Mansaka couples and contributes to the documentation of Indigenous knowledge for cultural preservation and policy development.

Keywords: Mansaka Tribe, Mansaka Couples, Contemporary Times, Culture, Phenomenology, Social Studies, Philippines **SDG Indicators:** SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities And Communities)

INTRODUCTION

Love, courtship, and marriage are aspects of human relationships that play a major role in individuals' lives within a society. These concepts are guided by the values, beliefs, traditions, and culture of the society in which the individuals live. Among indigenous people, courtship and love are not only felt as emotions and experiences but also serve as a means of reflecting an individual's culture and heritage from one generation to the next (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2023).

The Mansaka tribe was known for its unique cultural tradition that shaped their understanding of love, courtship, marriage, family relations, and their community life. According to Angon-Opena et al. (2023), all these traditions have served as a mechanism for preserving their rural identity and social cohesion through kinship ties, customary practices, and the guidance of tribal elders. However, there may also be some changes to these traditions as a result of the changes in society today. The traditional and modern values of society may have some impact upon the traditions of the Mansaka couples of today, thus requiring an investigation into whether those traditions have changed, or been replaced altogether by alternatives to those traditional practices.

Studies have shown that Indigenous cultural traditions continue to evolve while maintaining their essential values and meanings. According to Yu and De Catalina (2024), Indigenous groups such as the Mansaka preserve their cultural identity through oral traditions and customary practices despite modern influences. Similarly, Tuazon et al. (2024) emphasized that traditional courtship and marriage practices among Indigenous communities remain evident even as societal changes reshape certain customs and beliefs. These findings suggest the importance of

documenting and rediscovering Indigenous traditions to promote cultural preservation and awareness among younger generations.

There is limited research that aims to rediscover the love, courtship, and marriage practices of the Mansaka tribe in contemporary times. Furthermore, insufficient attention has been given to exploring how these traditions are preserved, practiced, and adapted in modern society, which may result in the gradual loss of cultural identity and traditional values among the younger generation.

In Barangay Tupas, Maragusan, Davao de Oro, the Mansaka Tribe is known for its unique culture and traditions, especially in terms of courtship and marriage. Traditionally, a Mansaka maiden usually marries upon reaching the age of 15, and marriages are commonly arranged by the parents of both the bride and groom. The parents of the bride-to-be also determine the amount of dowry for their daughter. However, in the 21st century, some of these cultural traditions and practices are gradually being forgotten by younger generations due to modernization and changing social influences. Recent studies emphasized that Indigenous traditions are continuously challenged by societal changes, making cultural preservation increasingly important (Yu & De Catalina, 2024).

Moreover, Livingston et al. (2022) describe love, courtship, and marriage as significant components of human relationships that embody a society's cultural values and traditions. Courtship generally refers to the process of developing emotional connections through dating before engagement and marriage, and these practices are often influenced by cultural customs transmitted across generations. In addition, Ferguson (2021) emphasized that concepts of love and marriage vary across cultures, as they are influenced by traditions, social norms, and historical contexts.

Similarly, among Indigenous communities in the Philippines, these practices remain deeply rooted in cultural identity. In particular, the Mansaka Tribe continues to observe traditional customs such as arranged marriages, dowry systems, and strong parental involvement in partner selection. However, with the influence of modernization, these long-standing traditions are gradually changing. As Yu and De Catalina (2024) noted, Indigenous groups like the Mansaka are continuously adapting to modern society while striving to preserve their cultural identity and traditions.

Furthermore, several studies have shown that traditional practices in courtship and marriage are slowly evolving due to social change. For instance, Tuazon et al. (2024) found that although Indigenous communities still practice some traditional customs, certain rituals and beliefs are no longer strictly followed because of modernization and shifting cultural values. Likewise, Osalvo (2021) explained that exposure to education, technology, and modern lifestyles has contributed to the transformation of traditional marriage practices. As a result, some cultural practices are being preserved, while others are gradually fading.

Moreover, in relation to married couples' experiences, cultural values continue to play a significant role in shaping their understanding of love, commitment, and family life. Abebe and Gebremariam (2022) highlighted that elders and family members remain influential in maintaining marital traditions and guiding relationships within Indigenous communities. Consequently, their involvement helps preserve cultural continuity even as societies undergo modernization.

Overall, the reviewed literature suggests that while Indigenous traditions on love, courtship, and marriage remain significant, they are increasingly influenced by contemporary changes. Nevertheless, there is still a gap in research specifically focusing on the lived experiences of Mansaka married couples in modern times. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by exploring how Mansaka couples express love, identifying traditional practices that are no longer preserved, and understanding their insights on courtship and marriage in contemporary society.

In this study, the researcher anchors the investigation on the Theory of Cultural Relativism and Symbolic Interaction Theory, with greater emphasis on Cultural Relativism as the primary theoretical foundation. Cultural Relativism, as defined by Cole (2019), asserts that people's values, behaviors, and knowledge must be understood within their own cultural context. In relation to the present study, this theory is essential in examining the love, courtship, and marriage practices of the Mansaka Tribe without imposing external or modern cultural standards.

Thus, traditions such as arranged marriages, dowry systems, and parental involvement are viewed as meaningful cultural expressions shaped by history and Indigenous identity, rather than outdated practices. This perspective allows for a more respectful and culturally sensitive interpretation of Indigenous ways of life in contemporary society.

Meanwhile, Symbolic Interaction Theory, as explained by Carter et al. (2015), complements Cultural Relativism by focusing on how people create meaning through communication, symbols, and social interaction. It explains how individuals understand and sustain social realities through shared meanings in everyday life. In the context of this study, it helps explain how Mansaka couples express and interpret love, courtship, and marriage through culturally shared practices that are continuously transmitted and modified across generations. Therefore, by combining these two theories, the study provides a deeper understanding of which traditions remain preserved, which have changed or disappeared, and how cultural meanings are maintained or transformed in contemporary Mansaka society.

Most of the existing research on the Mansaka tribe has primarily focused on their cultural preservation and their indigenous knowledge. Angon-Opena and Gempes (2013) researched the Mansaka culture from the perspective of tribal elders to gain an understanding of the importance of preserving their culture and traditional values. Additionally, others have explored the Mansaka folklore and cosmology to understand the cultural identity and traditions of the Mansaka people (Yu & De Catalina, 2024). While these studies provide valuable insights into the cultural life of the Mansaka people, they largely emphasize cultural descriptions and preservation efforts rather than the personal experiences of individuals within the community.

While there is some literature on the topic, there seems to be a paucity of research on Mansaka married couples alone. What is known about the topic is that there does not exist any published phenomenological literature on Mansaka married couples and their experiences regarding these aspects of their lives. Consequently, there is limited understanding of how traditional practices are maintained, adapted, or transformed in contemporary times.

Hence, the study explored the love, courtship, and marriage of Mansaka tribe in Barangay Tupas, Maragusan, Davao de Oro. It unveiled their insights into the cultural traditions that were preserved and those that were no longer practiced, as well as how they expressed love, courtship, and marriage. Moreover, this research endeavor revealed the community's experiences of love, courtship, and marriage, helping better to understand their lived experiences and strategies in these areas.

The urgency of this study lies in the increasing influence of modernization, technology, and changing social norms on indigenous cultural practices. As contemporary lifestyles continue to reshape interpersonal relationships and family dynamics, traditional practices related to love, courtship, and marriage among the Mansaka tribe may gradually be modified, forgotten, or replaced by modern alternatives. Given that these cultural practices play an important role in expressing cultural identity and passing along cultural values to the next generations, it is essential to gain an understanding of how these cultural practices are experienced and preserved by contemporary Mansaka married couples.

Furthermore, there is also a lack of scholarly research regarding the experiences of Mansaka couples in contemporary times. Their knowledge and practices may not be visible to future generations. Therefore, this study is timely and necessary as it contributes to the preservation of Mansaka cultural heritage while providing insights into how traditional values are maintained, adapted, or transformed amid contemporary societal changes.

The overall purpose of this study is to explore how Mansaka married couples express love, courtship, and marriage in contemporary times, to identify traditional practices on love, courtship, and marriage that are no longer preserved in the present context, and to understand the insights of Mansaka married couples regarding these practices in contemporary society.

Furthermore, there is a need to research because it could have implications for many different facets of society. This study will be a useful resource for insights into the Mansaka tribe's present-day love, courtship, and

marriage. The study's conclusions can serve as a starting point for developing interventions and programs to address future challenges.

Accordingly, the researcher believed that conducting this study would have a significant impact on various groups and individuals, including the community, the local government, educational institutions, and future researchers. These groups and individuals included the Mansaka tribe, the surrounding people, and the Mansaka married couples of respondents and non-respondents in the study. This study aligns with several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4: Quality Education, SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, and SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, as it aims to raise awareness of the need to contribute to equitable and sustainable.

Moreover, the outcomes and conclusions of this study may offer all Mansaka people pertinent information to help them understand their love, courtship, and marriage, as well as their lived experiences and cultural preservation strategies. Also, the results can shed light on the reality of the Mansaka tribe. This study will also aid the preservation of the Mansaka tribe's culture and traditions by providing a forum for them to speak up and share their insightful observations about tribal life, which we refer to as indigenous people in nature. Also, they will get the chance to discuss how they protect their culture and their experiences doing so with the younger generation through this study. It will also benefit the local government by providing substantial information about the love, courtship, and marriage of the Mansaka tribe, especially among today's generation. This study will open doors of opportunity for them to implement programs that will welcome their presence and protect the richness of their culture.

As a result of the study's extensive material, educational institutions will be able to enlighten people, particularly IP professionals, on the need to preserve and protect cultural traditions. As a result, they will be able to use this study to enlighten both IPs and non-IPs about the realities of being a member of the Mansaka tribe, leading to a well-informed and aware community. The results of this study may also serve as critical references for later researchers conducting related work and as crucial inputs for developing related ideas.

METHOD

This part of the research presents the methodology the researcher used throughout the study, from gathering key information from respondents to analyzing the data. It consists of the research design, participants and materials, the instrument, data-gathering methods, data analysis, and ethical considerations for data collection from study participants.

Study Participants

The participants of the study consisted of five (5) Mansaka married couples (10 individuals in total) in Maragusan, particularly in Barangay Tupas. The use of in-depth interviews in qualitative research is justified by the need to obtain rich, detailed, and experiential data from individuals with direct knowledge of the phenomenon under study. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research typically involves a small number of participants to allow for an in-depth exploration of meanings, experiences, and perspectives, rather than generalization. In fact, selecting three to five key participants or cases is often sufficient when the study aims to gather comprehensive, detailed narratives.

Furthermore, the inclusion criteria in selecting respondents of the study are: must be a member of the Mansaka Indigenous Cultural Community; currently married or experienced marriage within the Mansaka tribe; must be age between 25-70 years old; reside within the ancestral domain or barangay under the jurisdiction of the Mansaka tribe; and lastly, must be willing to participate voluntarily in the study and provide informed consent.

On the other hand, the exclusion criteria in determining those respondents who are not qualified are the following: individuals who are not part of the Mansaka Indigenous Cultural Community; individuals who have never experienced marriage; respondents below 25 years old or above 70 years old; those who are unwilling to participate or unable to give informed consent; and non-residents of the Mansaka ancestral domain or designated barangay areas.

However, participants may be withdrawn from the study under the following conditions, either voluntarily or at the discretion of the researcher: the participant chooses to withdraw at any time without penalty; the participant expresses discomfort or emotional distress during interviews; failure to provide reliable or relevant information; violation of confidentiality agreements or ethical guidelines; and non-cooperation or disruptive behavior during the interview process.

Materials and Instruments

The researcher used the open-ended interview guide in this study. Before the interview, the questionnaires were validated by experts, who gave them a score of 9 out of 10. Provided interview guide questions to the participants, and they were asked for their experiences, insights, and how they express their love, courtship, and marriage in contemporary times. During the interview, the researcher notes the participants' responses. For the entire interview, I used a voice recorder with the participant's approval.

The researcher's notes and a reflective journal are also essential to the study; the process involves recording observations about the stories being told. Further, a reflexive journal aims to ameliorate the researcher's biases in the research process (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, as cited in Komolthiti, 2016). Moreover, the interview guide questions in this study are the researcher's and have been validated by experts. This process is necessary to modify the probing questions and guarantee the relevance of the central questions (Majid et al., 2017). The interviewer tried to make the conversation flow naturally by asking open-ended questions about the research topic. The method was well-suited to studies in which the researcher needed greater knowledge of the phenomenon (Merriam, 2009, as cited in Komolthiti, 2016). The interview questions sought to reveal their traditional practices that are no longer preserved, how they express their love, courtship, and marriage in contemporary times, and the insights they wanted to share. In formulating research questions, the researcher first designs the central question, a broad question that requires further exploration of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). It is followed by several associated sub-questions that narrow the study's scope and prompt further inquiry (Creswell, 2014). Confidentiality was upheld during the process.

Design and Procedure

This study used qualitative methods, specifically a phenomenological approach, to explore human experiences from a more personal and subjective perspective. This method allowed for a deeper understanding of individuals' thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors (Pathak et al., 2013), recognizing that experiences are interpreted differently (Patton, 2002).

Phenomenology helped the researcher explore how participants experienced events firsthand. It required setting aside personal biases to better understand participants' feelings and interpretations. In-depth interviews were used to gather insights, and by comparing experiences across individuals (Arnett, 2017), the researcher developed a broad understanding of the phenomenon (Giorgi, 2012).

This study employed Reflexive Thematic Analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2019) to analyze the qualitative data gathered from in-depth interviews with Mansaka married couples. This approach is appropriate for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning within participants' narratives. Through a systematic process of familiarization, coding, generating initial themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and writing up the analysis, the study aims to capture the lived experiences of Mansaka couples regarding love, courtship, and marriage in contemporary times.

In this qualitative phenomenological study, the researcher serves as the primary instrument in the collection, interpretation, and analysis of data. The researcher is responsible for conducting in-depth interviews with Mansaka married couples to gather rich and detailed accounts of their lived experiences regarding love, courtship, and marriage in contemporary times. During data gathering, the researcher ensures that participants are allowed to freely express their thoughts and experiences in a respectful and culturally sensitive manner.

In addition, the researcher plays a critical role in the process of data analysis using Reflexive Thematic Analysis. This involves familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, identifying emerging themes,

reviewing and refining themes, and interpreting the meanings embedded in the participants' narratives. Throughout the process, the researcher maintains reflexivity by being aware of personal biases, assumptions, and perspectives that may influence interpretation, ensuring that findings remain grounded in the participants' actual experiences.

Furthermore, the researcher upholds ethical considerations by ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and respect for the cultural traditions of the Mansaka tribe. The researcher also acts as a respectful observer and listener, recognizing the importance of indigenous knowledge and cultural sensitivity in conducting the study. Ultimately, the researcher's role is to faithfully represent the voices of the participants while contributing meaningful insights into the understanding of Mansaka cultural practices in contemporary society.

Before and after data collection, the researcher ensured that ethical protocols were followed. Data were handled both electronically and manually, and analyzed to identify recurring patterns, themes, and meanings (Cohen et al., 2007; Sitko, 2013).

Moreover, ethical considerations were strictly observed before data collection. The researcher obtained approval from the University of Mindanao Ethics Review Committee (UMERC) and permission from the Tribal Chieftain of the Mansaka Indigenous Cultural Community (NCIP-recognized) and the Barangay Captain of the study site. These approvals ensured that the rights, welfare, and cultural integrity of the Mansaka Tribe were respected, and data collection was conducted only after all required clearances were secured in compliance with institutional and cultural protocols.

To ensure ethical integrity in this study, the researcher followed the University of Mindanao Ethics and Review Committee and obtained approval under UMEREC Protocol No. UMEREC-2023-210. Respect for individuals and the privacy of participant data are ensured by this approach. The participant's efforts and honest responses to the research questions have been acknowledged by the researcher. Additionally, the participants received a presentation of this research to apprise them of their participation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses findings on the Mansaka tribe's concepts of love, courtship, and marriage in modern times. The discussion of these findings is based on qualitative analysis of interviews with tribe members, as well as on recent scholarly work in the field. The findings are presented in a discussion of the themes from the data analysis. Each of these themes is discussed in depth with relevant quotes from the interviews. Finally, the insights from the Mansaka tribe are related to other studies in the field and within certain theories of human society and behavior.

Ways on, How Mansaka Married Couples Express Love, Courtship, and Marriage in Contemporary Times

The table below shows how the Mansaka married couple describes love in the 21st century. This information was obtained directly from the stories and answers from these couples. The five themes that emerged included love expressed through respect, patience, and understanding; experiencing love daily by helping each other out; courtships led by the family and filled with rituals; moving from traditional courtships to online dating; and blending the old with the new in their marriages.

Table 1. How Mansaka Married Couples Express Love, Courtship, and Marriage in Contemporary Times

Emerging Themes	Core Ideas
Love Expressed through Respect, Patience, and Mutual Understanding	• Respect as the foundation of love • Staying together and not leaving each other • Handling conflicts with patience and emotional control • Relying on faith/God to strengthen the relationship • Showing love every day through acceptance and understanding despite hardships

Everyday Love through Acts of Service and Shared Work	• Helping with household chores as an expression of love • Providing financial responsibility and care • Preparing food, coffee, and attending to daily needs • Checking on each other through cellphones when apart
Courtship as a Family-Centered and Ritualized Process	• Asking permission from parents and involving the family • Bringing gifts or offerings to the woman's family • Courtship as a family-to-family engagement • Elders and parents serving as guides during courtship • Traditional courtship practices are now rarely followed
Shift from Traditional Courtship to Technology-Mediated Relationships	• Courtship through cellphones, texting, and social media • Secret meetings and relationships outside the home • Early cohabitation or pregnancy before formal marriage • Elders lamenting the decline of traditional Mansaka courtship practices
Blending Traditional and Modern Marriage Practices	• Transition from home-based tribal weddings to church or civil weddings • Emergence of contemporary wedding practices (seminars, documents, rings, gowns, cakes, and venues) • Elders continue to serve as advisers and sources of blessings

Love Expressed through Respect, Patience, and Mutual Understanding. For the Mansaka people, love within marriage goes beyond individual feelings. It requires individuals to make a lifelong commitment to one another. This includes respecting, being patient with, understanding, and helping one another. The stories shared by Mansaka women illustrate that a happy marriage is built on caring for one another and maintaining harmony over the years. The concept of love within marriage for the Mansaka people does not include grand gestures but requires individuals to perform small acts of kindness and to help and respect one another on a daily basis.

Many commented on the importance of respect in the foundation of love and marriage. One wife commented on the everlasting nature of her husband's love and shared:

Iyang pag panga sa akua ma'am wala jud nausab, 19 years nami nag uban pero mao ra gihapon siya. Respeto gyud ang dako sa amoang duha kay naa naman gud diha tanan mosulod nag gugma, pag-amping ug pagsinabtanay. (P3 Wife) (His love for me is still the same, ma'am. We've been together 19 years, yet he remains unchanged. Respect means everything to us; it covers love, care, and understanding.)

A husband also described how this mutual understanding and respect maintain their relationship even amid challenges arising from work and family responsibilities.

despite the challenges brought by work and family responsibilities:

Ako nga bana, ang pagsinabtanay ug ang pagrespeto gyud ang tinubdan sa inyong gugma. Akong trabaho is kapoy jud kayo, pero wala gyud ko kadungog ug yawyaw gikan sa akong asawa. Dili man ko maka atiman sa mga bata pag-abot sa balay pero akong asawa nakasabot jud. Salamat pod sa Ginoo kay naa siya kanunay sa amoa. (P4 Husband)

(As a husband, understanding and respect are truly the foundation of our love. My work is very tiring, but I have never heard any complaints from my wife.)

This sentiment was echoed by another participant who succinctly stated:

Oo, Respeto gyud kay diha man gud mag gikan ang tanan. Ug naay respeto, pagsabot, naa jud diha ang gugma. (P5 Husband)

(Respect is really important because everything stems from it. When there is respect and understanding, love naturally follows.)

Beyond respect, Mansaka couples highlighted the importance of commitment, togetherness, and patience in sustaining their marriages. For them, love means remaining faithful to one's promises and choosing to stay beside one another through life's challenges. One husband shared how his courtship promises continue to guide his actions as a spouse:

Mao ra gihapon atong akoang pagpanguyab sa iyaha akong pasalog kay panggaon, higugmaon, dili dapatan, ug dili dagmalan. Ang Mansaka man gud isa sa pagpakita sa gugma namo is kanang dili namo pagbiya sa matag-usa. Kung asa ang bana dapat kuyog pod ang asawa. Sa panahon nga adunay mga hikay unya dili maka uban akong asawa, paningkamotan jud nako nga madalhan nako na siya. (P1 Husband)

(My way of courting her hasn't changed. My promise was to love, cherish, and respect her, and not to harm her. In the Mansaka tradition, one way we show love is by never leaving each other. Wherever the husband goes, the wife should accompany him. If there are occasions where my wife can't go with me, I make every effort to bring her along.)

The same participant also described how patience and emotional control help preserve peace during conflicts:

Kay kanang mag asawa dili mana matag-an ang panaglalis, mag lalis me mulakaw ko kay pakalmahon sa nako na siya unya taud-taud mobalik ko, okay na siya. Kay ug imohang patulan, masuko pod kag apil mag tinag-asay mo diha dili mo mahuman. (P1 Husband)

(In marriage, arguments are inevitable. When we argue, I walk away to calm her down, and after a while, I come back, and everything is fine. If you're stubborn and keep arguing, both of you will just get more upset, and the fight will never end.)

Spirituality represents another significant dimension of love among the Mansaka. Participants identified faith in God as a source of strength, guidance, and stability within marriage. One wife explained:

Sinabtanay lang jud sa kanunay ma'am kay naa namay mga anak, mag lig-on sa kanunay ug mosalig gyud sa Ginoo. (P2 Wife)

(We just always understand each other, Ma'am, because we have children. We stay strong and truly trust in God.)

Her husband also shared how thankful he is for God's constant presence in their family:

Salamat pod sa Ginoo kay naa siya kanunay sa amoa. (P2 Husband)

(We are also thankful to God because He is always with us.)

Participants also shared that love lasts when there is acceptance, adaptability, and support in daily life. As families expand and responsibilities grow, couples adjust to each other and stay committed to their relationship. One wife narrated how understanding deepened after becoming a parent:

Para sa ako, isip usa ka asawa, sa sinugdanan sa among kaminyoon, lig-on kaayo ang among gugma. Bisan pa sa pag-abot sa among mga anak, mas nakakat-on mi sa pagsinabtanay sa usag usa. Karon, tulo na among mga anak, ug adunay mga higayon nga daghan kaayong buluhaton sa balay. Usahay busy kaayo mi, ang mga bata magsige ug hilak ug dili makatulog, samtang ang akong bana kapoy gikan sa trabaho ug dili na makatabang pag-atiman sa mga bata. Siyempre, isip usa ka inahan, maningkamot gyud ko nga magpabiling lig-on pinaagi sa tabang sa Ginoo. Karon, nagpabilin gihapon ang among gugma, uban sa mas lawom nga pagsinabtanay ug pagtahod sa usag usa. (P4 Wife)

(For me, as a wife, in the beginning, our love was really strong, and even after having children, we started understanding each other. We now have three children, and there are times when there's a lot of work at home, we're busy, and the children are fussy and cannot sleep, while the husband is tired from work and cannot help take care of the kids. Of course, as a mother, I make an effort to stay strong, with the help of our Lord. Now, our love remains, accompanied by understanding and mutual respect.)

Another participant highlighted that love is expressed through consistent acts of care and adaptation, particularly during the later stages of marriage:

Magpakita ug respeto sa matag adlaw, supportahan ang mga lakaw, kay tigulang naman me mag inatimanay meng duha. Sabay me moadto ug simbahan, unya karon nga in ani na among edad murag dili nami mag away hahaha bitaw kay naga adjust jud me sa matag usa. (P5 Wife)

(We show respect every day and support each other in our work. Now that we are older, we look after one another. We go to church together, and at this stage in our lives, we hardly ever argue. We have really learned to adjust to each other.)

Overall, these narratives indicate that love among Mansaka married couples is based on respect, understanding, patience, commitment, and faith. The importance of respect in these marriages is evident in participants' discussions of its role as a foundation for love and understanding, a value well supported by existing research in the field (Owen et al., 2019). Additionally, the participants reference commitment, perseverance, and fulfilling the roles expected of married individuals within the couple, indicating the importance of these characteristics to the concept of love within these marriages (Lambert et al., 2020). Finally, each participant indicates that the couples' spirituality and religiosity are among the main sources of emotional support, a factor recognized in existing studies on marital love and satisfaction (Myers, 2017).

Everyday Love through Acts of Service and Shared Work. Love among the Mansaka couple is exhibited in ways beyond the spoken word. For instance, the couples indicated that several ways of expressing love include assisting with chores, providing for the family, meeting each partner's needs, and maintaining communication despite physical separation. Each of these indications of care for the spouse and partnership within the marriage is a way of indicating love for that individual within the relationship.

One common way of expressing love in these marriages is by assisting with household chores. These women believe that household chores are not the responsibility of women alone within the marriage, but of both partners, who are responsible for providing for the marriage and expressing care for one another. For instance, one wife stated that her husband helps with all chores in the house whenever he is at home:

Maong inag naa ni akong bana sa balay siya gyud na ang moluto ug molaba. (P2 Wife)

(That's why when my husband is home, he's the one who cooks and does the laundry.)

Another husband shared that he helps his wife whenever his work schedule allows:

Ug makalugar ko ma'am kanang walay duty sa trabaho, tabangan gyud nako na akong asawa sa lihokon sa balay. Lutuan nako na siya unya ug naa me extra nga kwarta manlaag me ddto sa Poblacion. (P3 Husband)

(And whenever I have free time, ma'am, without work duties, I really help my wife with the chores at home. I cook for her, and if we have extra money, we go out to Poblacion.)

Aside from sharing household responsibilities, participants also associated love with fulfilling financial obligations and ensuring that the family's needs are met. For many of them, providing for the family is an important expression of responsibility and care. One husband explained:

Mo provide kog unsay panginahanglan diri sa balay kay tinuod dili naman me anang mga sweet-sweet kay tigulang naman me, ang amoa nalang jud is magsinabtanay sa kanunay. (P1 Husband)

(I provide what's needed for the household. Indeed, we're no longer into sweet gestures because we're already old; what we really focus on is understanding each other all the time.)

Another husband shared how he supports his wife by ensuring that she has something meaningful to do while he is away at work:

Grabi gyud mo pangga akong asawa sa akoo, ma'am maong ako gina balos pod gyud nako sa iyaha ang iyang ginapa fell sa akoo. Gina sigurado gyud nako nga akong asawa dili mabu sa trabaho sa balay, dili ma bored maong gibuhatan nako na siya ug gamay nga tindahan diha para naa siyay lingaw inag mo trabaho ko sa tibuok adlaw. Bago sad ko molakaw, naa jud koy kiss ana dapat. (P3 Husband)

(My wife really loves me, ma'am, that is why I make sure to give back to her what she makes me feel. I make sure that my wife doesn't get tired from doing all the housework and doesn't get bored, so I set up a small store for her there so she has something to do while I'm at work the whole day.)

The narratives also revealed that love is demonstrated through simple acts of caregiving. Preparing meals, serving coffee, and attending to a spouse's daily needs were described as meaningful expressions of affection. One wife explained the happiness she feels in taking care of her husband:

Akong bana ma'am, ganahan na sya nga inag uli niya sa balay gikan sa trabaho nga naa nay kape, ready na ang pagkkaon niya. Ug ako usab ganahan sab ko nga atimanon nako akong bana ug malipayon na siya sa in ana lang nga sempleng butang. Ug ako pod, malipay pod ko magtan-aw ug maminaw nga naganahan siya sa akong giluto, sa akong mga gipangbuhat sa balay. Ma dasig kog samot ba kay iyang na appreciate akong mga gipangbuhat. (P3 Wife)

(My husband, ma'am, likes it when he comes home from work and there's already coffee ready and his meal prepared. I also enjoy taking care of my husband and seeing him happy with these simple things. I, too, feel happy watching and hearing that he enjoys what I cooked or the things I do around the house.)

Likewise, another husband expressed gratitude for the daily care he receives from his wife:

Ang pag atiman niya sa akoo sa matag-adlaw dako gyud kaayo na nga gipasalamatan nako sa iyaha. Diri sa among dapit akong lingaw kay mag tanom, mag harvest, ug mag atiman sa akong mga gipang tanom, Kani pod siya gina sigurado pod niya nga inag abot nako sa balay naa nay pagkaon para sabay nami duha mangaon. Kong sa mga butang mana nga regalo, naa man pod katong gihatagan ko niyag relo. (P5 Husband)

(Her daily care for me is something I really appreciate. Here in our place, I enjoy planting, harvesting, and tending to my crops. She also makes sure that whenever I arrive home, there is food ready so we can eat together.)

When couples are separated by work, they often show their love by keeping in touch. Participants said that modern technology, especially cellphones, is now a key way to show care and stay connected even when far apart. One wife shared how communication helps keep their relationship strong:

Since lagyo man me, cguro ang paggamit sa cellphone kay matawag namo nga modern nga pag express sa among gugma. Kay sauna wala man juy cellphone unya ang trabaho rapod sa mga Mansaka kay mag-uma. Pamaagi nalang gyud me sa cellphone magpakita sa among gugma kay lagyo man me, dili na siya makalimot nga mangumusta sa amoa diri, kanunay gyud na siya motawag ug naay bakante nga oras. (P2 Wife)

(Since we live far from each other, using a cellphone has become our way of showing love. In the past, when there were no cellphones, the Mansaka mostly focused on farming. Now, we rely on calls to stay connected. He always remembers to check on us and calls whenever he has free time.)

Her husband went through the same thing and made it clear that he worried about his family even when he was not at home:

Gatawagay me pero dili jud perminti. Mangumusta ko sa ilaha sa mga bata ug naa paba silay kunsomo, mga baon sa skwelahan. Mingawon ug mabalaka pod gyud ko nil aba kay syempre layo baya ko. (P2 Husband)

(We call each other, though not every day. I check in on the children to make sure they have what they need for school. I miss them and worry about them, since I'm far away.)

The stories participants share show that Mansaka couples express their love for their families and spouses through various actions. One of these actions is sharing household chores and providing financial support to their spouses, which indicates the level of cooperation these couples display within their marriages (Carlson et al., 2019). Another of these actions includes the performance of acts that express the love that they have for their spouses, such as cooking meals for them and taking care of their needs, which are acts that show the emotional support that they provide for their spouses and the way in which they ensure that their marriages remain strong and the well-being of their partners is maintained (Drouin et al., 2017). Finally, many of these couples also express their love for one another through the effort they put into keeping in touch, even when they are apart (Owen et al., 2019). Thus, these couples indicate that their love for one another is shown not only in saying loving words but also in the various efforts they make to support their families and maintain their marriages.

Courtship as a Family-Centered and Ritualized Process. The traditional Mansaka courtship was not only between the two individuals involved but also included the families, cultural practices, and community values. Courtship was another stage of life considered important for young adults to experience and required the guidance and approval of both potential partners' families. For individuals who participated in these relationships, romance was often connected to concepts such as family, respect for those in authority in one's community, and adherence to established traditions.

The participant mentioned that asking the woman's parents for permission was a key part of courtship. The girls' parents were to show the suitor respect and their intentions regarding the girl when they permitted the suitor to court her.

One wife shared her own story:

Kanang mananghid sa ginikan ug pag-adto sa balay, isa nan ga gibuhat sa akong bana sauna sa nanguyab pa siya. Kay akong ginikanan sauna higpit gyud kaayo sa amoa, dili gusto nga mag tagbo-tagbo ra maskin asa. Maong giingnan nak oni siya nga kung kujrsonada ka, adto ug balay, unya kay niadto jud d i siya. (P2 Wife)

(The practice of asking the parents' permission and visiting the house is one that my husband followed when he was courting me. My parents were very strict back then and didn't want us meeting just anywhere. That's why he was told that if he wanted to court me, he should go to our house, and he did.)

A similar experience was shared by another participant who emphasized that courtship could not proceed without the consent of both families:

Sa among panahon, walay pagpanguyab nga mahitabo kung walay tugot sa akong pamilya ug labaw na sa pamilya sa babae. Maong dako jud kayo ug role ang pamilya sa matag-usa panahon sa pagpanguyab. (P5 Husband)

(In our time, no courtship would happen without the permission of my family, and especially the family of the woman. This is why families were so important in a person's courtship during that time.)

In addition to asking for permission, participants talked about the custom of bringing gifts or offerings to the woman's family. They saw these gifts not as material displays, but as signs of respect and goodwill toward her parents and relatives. One participant remembered:

Oo bitaw, manulo na sila ug baki, unya dalhon sa amoa. Basta kada adto ana niya ug balay sauna, naa jud na siyay dala kay mao jud na anag timailhan nga nag respeto ka sa ginikanan sa babae. (P1 Wife)

(Yes, that's true. They would catch frogs and bring them to us. And every time he visited our house before, he always brought something with him because that's really a sign of respect for the woman's parents.)

Likewise, another husband recalled faithfully following this tradition despite the fact that both families were already acquainted with one another:

Bisan paman ug among mga ginikanan is kaila na daan, nagsunod jud gihapon ko sa tradisyonal nga pamaagi sa pagpanguyab. Mo bisita ko sa ilang balay nga nay dala nga pagkaon, usahay karne, isda, or pan. Ang mo atubang sa akua is iyang ginikanan, siya kay tagoan pana siya sa ilang kwarto dili pana siya ipakita sa akua. (P5 Husband)

(Even though our parents already knew each other, I still followed the traditional way of courting. I would visit their house, bringing food—sometimes meat, fish, or bread. The one who would face me was their parents, while he would stay hidden in their room; he wouldn't be shown to me yet.)

Participants pointed out that parents and elders played a key role in courtship. Family members were not just observers. They acted as mentors, guiding the couple and helping them respect cultural values. One husband explained:

Importante ang papel sa pamilya tungod kay sila ang mo hatag ug giya sa manag-uyab. (P1 Husband)

(The family plays an important role by guiding the couple.)

A wife also remembered that parents played a key role in guiding young couples and helping them make good decisions:

Sa unang panahon, ang babae magpaabot rgyud na sa balay kay mahadlok mana mag kitaay sa gawas kay lagi dili na pwde sauna. Maong ang lalaki jud ang mo adto sa balay sa babae. Dako ug responsibilidad ang mga ginikanan kay sila ang mo tambag sa duha ug unsay mayo nga buhaton. (P4 Wife)

(In the past, women usually stayed at home because meeting outside was not allowed, and they were afraid to break this rule. This is why men would visit women at their homes. Parents played an important role by advising and guiding the couple on what was considered right.)

Participants looked back on these traditions with fondness, but many also noted that these practices have slowly faded. Modernization, migration, education, and intercultural marriages have all shaped how the younger generation views relationships. Several participants observed that traditional Mansaka courtship is no longer widely practiced within their communities. One wife shared her observations:

Sa tribung mansaka, sa among namatikdan diri sa amoa wala naman tong traditional nga pagpanguyab sa lalaki karon. Gustohon man namo nga naa pato pero murag nawala naman jud oy. Kay kasagaran diri sa amoa, dili naman mansaka ang minyoan. Naa nay nagminyo ug Bisaya, Ilongga, Tagalog ug naa pod mga foreigner. Maka asawa man ug kapwa mansaka pero pili nalang pod kayo unya panagsa rasad kaayo e apply ang mga tradisyonal nga pagpanguyab sa mansaka. (P4 Wife)

(In the Mansaka tribe, based on what we've observed here, the traditional way of courtship by men is no longer practiced. We would like it to still exist, but it really seems to have disappeared. Here in our community, most people no longer marry fellow Mansaka. Some marry Bisaya, Ilongga, Tagalog, and even foreigners. It's still possible to marry a fellow Mansaka, but very selectively, and the traditional Mansaka courtship is only occasionally practiced.)

This observation was reinforced by another participant who noted:

Ang traditional nga pagpanguyab sama sa amoa sauna, wala nagyud karon. Pili nalang ang pamilya nga nagasunod. Daghan klase sa pagpanguyab nga natun-an sa mga lalaki karon. (P5 Husband)

(The traditional way of courting, like how we did it before, no longer exists today. Today, only a few families still keep this tradition. Men now use many different ways to court someone.)

Overall, these stories highlight the importance of family, the rituals that must be observed during courtship, and the need to show respect and seek guidance from parents and elders in the culture. To complete a Mansaka courtship, the man must ask permission from the woman's parents, visit the woman's home with her family, and

offer the woman gifts as a sign of respect for the family's elders. These steps help build strong ties between families and support the values required of individuals in the culture. These findings align with other studies on indigenous and group courtship relationships (Abebe, 2020; Fernandez, 2021; Kandirir, 2020; Malaquias et al., 2024). However, the participants noted that these customs have somewhat faded in popularity due to cultural modernization and the growth of intercultural relationships between Mansakans and individuals from other cultures and backgrounds. The match's research presents findings indicating that societal modernization, the growth of cultural diversity, and the development of new socializing behaviors and manners have changed the courtship rituals between Mansaka women and men (Holloway, 2023; Tuazon et al., 2024). Despite changes in courtship between Mansaka men and women, the importance of the family, the elders, and the preservation of cultural traditions and practices remains central in courtship stories. These findings, therefore, suggest that the importance of social belonging and group identity continues to support cultural practices within the Mansaka community (Gudykunst & Nishida, 2001).

Shift from Traditional Courtship to Technology-Mediated Relationships. The participants also noted that there have been many changes in the courtship practices of the Mansaka people over time. For instance, the families used to be more involved in the courtship process, and the couples had to meet in person. Today, technology has changed the way couples get acquainted and form relationships; they can communicate more freely and independently. Thus, the traditional method of courtship and relationships, supervised by families, has largely been replaced by private relationships formed through technology.

Some participants talked about how technology has changed the way young people interact. One woman shared her worry that cellphones have changed traditional customs and now make it easier for young couples to meet without their parents knowing.

Tungod anang mga technology, na apektohan gyud ang pagpanguyab sa Mansaka nga tribu tungod kay naa namay nakita nga dili maayo o sakto sa tribu unya mao nay buhaton. Magkita sa gawas kay dali raman kayo mo text o tawag kay naa nay cellphone. Matingala nalang ka, nabuntis na nga mo atubang sa ginikanan. (P1 Wife)

(Because of technology, courtship in the Mansaka tribe has really been affected. Some couples do things that are considered inappropriate or unacceptable in the tribe. They meet outside because it's easy to text or call each other on their cellphones. Sometimes, you'd be surprised that a girl is already pregnant by the time she faces her parents.)

Another participant noted how courtship itself has shifted from personal visits to communication through mobile phones:

Ang pamaagi sa lalaki nga manguyab karon kay sa cellphone na magtagbo sa lugar ug asa sila nagkasinabot. (P2 Wife)

(Nowadays, the way a man courts is through the cellphone, meeting at a place they agreed upon.)

For some participants, technology was not only a source of concern but also a means of forming relationships. One wife shared her own experience of developing a relationship through mobile communication:

Kami ma'am, isa pod jud me nga na inpluwesyahan sa modernisasyon, tungod kay nagka ila man jud me'g lalom sa cellphone, nag text-text ug hangtud sa nag kakitaay ug nag-ipon nagyud. (P3 Wife)

(We, ma'am, are also among those who were influenced by modernization, because we really got to know each other more deeply through our cellphones—texting, until we started meeting in person and eventually living together.)

Participants also observed that technology has expanded opportunities for interaction beyond the local community. One husband remarked that young Mansakas are now able to form relationships with people from distant places, something that was nearly impossible in earlier generations:

Sa mansaka karon, ang mga kabatan-onan addict nagyud kayo sa cellphone. Maka uyab na ug taga laing nasod, makai la-ila na ug taga lagyo kay naa naman n inga mga butang. Nawala nagyud ang tradisyonal nga pagpanguyab sa mansaka. (P2 Husband)

(Among the Mansaka today, the youth are really addicted to cellphones. They can have relationships with people from other countries or meet people from far away because of these devices. The traditional Mansaka way of courting has really disappeared.)

The participants further described how secret meetings and relationships outside the home have become more common. Unlike the traditional practice in which a man would formally visit the woman's house and interact with her family, many participants observed that couples now meet privately before informing their parents.

One wife explained:

Ang karon lahi naman, mo bisita lag isa balay pero nagkita na daan sag awas ang babaye ug lalaki. (P1 Wife)

(Nowadays it's different. They say they're visiting the house, but the man and woman have already met outside beforehand.)

Another participant shared a similar observation:

Halos sa mga namatikdan gyud nako karon diri, wala nagyud koy nabalitaan nga ang lalaki nag-adtoan sa balay sa babae para manguyab. Kay sa karon murag nag uyab naman daan sa gawas palang kay naa na lagi cellphone. (P2 Wife)

(From what I've observed here nowadays, I haven't heard of any man going to a woman's house to court her. These days, couples often go out on dates because they have cellphones.)

Participants noticed that as more relationships begin outside of traditional courtship, marriage practices are changing. Some were concerned that couples often start living together or have children before getting their families' approval.

A participant emphasized the significance of parental blessing and noted the evolution of this practice over time:

Sa tinuod lang gyud ma'am no, ang pagtugot sa ginikanan ug katigulangan nga magminyo is dako jud kayo na nga importansya sa matag-usa tungod kay kani nga pagtugod is nahimo ban ga blessings gani, walay kakulian ang pagminyo. Kay kita nitoo baya jud ta nga mas mayo ug dagan ang kaminyoon ug walay ni babag niini. Pero sa karon man gud, ang realidad kay maskin dili nato gusto nga magminyo pa atong mga anak dili nata maka buot kay sila naman ang masunod kay humana man, nabuntis na or naka anak na bago pa gikasal. (P2 Wife)

(Honestly, Ma'am, parental and elder approval for a marriage is very important. However, in contemporary society, even if we prefer that our children delay marriage, we often lack influence over their choices. Frequently, they make independent decisions, and in some cases, they may already be pregnant or have a child prior to marriage.)

Another participant echoed this concern:

Uyab naman daan, naa pod buntis na diha na nangatubang sa ginikanan. Murag maihap rgyud iri ang nisunod sa tradisyonal nga pagpanguyab. (P3 Wife)

(Most people are already in a relationship, and some are even pregnant by the time they talk to their parents. These days, hardly anyone follows the traditional way of courting.)

Although modernization has introduced various conveniences, several elders expressed concern regarding the gradual decline of traditional courtship customs. They noted that younger generations have adopted new modes

of communication, but also expressed apprehension about the loss of practices that previously reinforced family involvement and cultural identity.

One husband stated:

Isa gyud sa mga prone kaayo anang mga social media kay kaning mga batan-on nato karon. Dili jud malikayan nga ang pamatasan sa mansaka sa pagpanguyab, mawala. Kay naa naman ning mga bag-ong uso karon, mag chat-chat nalang, dili na mag-ilhanay sa ginikanan. Murag dali nalng kayo karon ba, maong ang mga mansaka nisabay pod sa pagka modern. (P5 Husband)

(One thing that young people today are really prone to is social media. The traditional Mansaka courtship practices are inevitably disappearing. With these new trends, they just chat online and no longer formally get to know each other's parents. Things have become so fast nowadays, which is why the Mansaka have also adapted to modern ways.)

Similarly, one wife reflected on the gradual loss of traditional practices:

Naa paman gyud mapili sa atong tribu karon pero gamay nlng jud kayo ang nag sunod sa tradisyonal nga pagpanguyab. Subo man huna-hunaon nga nagka anam nag kawala pero mao nagyud na ang realidad kay nisabay man pod sa bag-o nga panahon. (P5 Wife)

(There are still some who are selective in our tribe today, but very few still follow the traditional way of courting. It's sad to think that these practices are slowly disappearing, but that's really the reality since we have also adapted to the new times.)

When the participants' tales are combined, they reveal drastic changes in Mansaka courtship customs due to the impact of technology and social media, which provide couples with more opportunities and control over the development of their relationships (Barber et al., 2019). However, these changes have diminished the importance of traditional courtship rituals, the family's role in the courtship process, and parents' role altogether. Furthermore, many of these studies found increases in various aspects of relationships and partnerships outside of marriage (Coyne et al., 2020). For example, while the elders of today's society may be concerned about the erosion of these traditions, young people today have more freedom in their relationships outside of marriage.

Blending Traditional and Modern Marriage Practices. The wedding ceremonies of the Mansaka people integrate both traditional and modern practices. Many participants in the study stated that the Mansaka wedding ceremonies have undergone several changes over time. While the traditional values of the Mansaka people remain important, weddings have changed over time to reflect the influence of modern society. Modern wedding ceremonies incorporate both traditional and contemporary practices to honor Mansaka culture while also reflecting contemporary society.

A prominent change identified by participants is the shift from simple, home-based tribal weddings to church and civil ceremonies. Older participants noted that previous weddings were modest family gatherings, whereas contemporary weddings are characterized by increased formality and elaboration. One husband explained:

Ang kasal sa mga Mansaka karon dili na parihas saunang panahon, kay naa na mga bag-ong magtiayong Mansaka karon ilang mga kasal naa nagyud sa simbahan, naa nay mga bongga nga dekorasyon ug daghan na kaayog mga handa ug mga tao nga invited. (P1 Husband)

(Marriage among the Mansaka today is different from the past. Nowadays, many Mansaka couples have their weddings in churches, with elaborate decorations, plenty of food, and a large number of guests invited.)

Another participant described the variety of wedding options available today:

Ang kasal sa Mansaka karon, daghan nag pamaagi. Naa nay magpakasal sa Mayor, sa Attorney ug sa Pari depende ug asa nila masabotan. (P2 Wife)

(The Mansaka weddings today have many ways of being conducted. Some get married by the mayor, some by an Attorney, and some by a Priest, depending on what they agree upon.)

A husband who experienced traditional marriage firsthand reflected on the differences between past and present ceremonies:

Ang ceremony sa kasal karon sa Mansaka, dako nagyud ug kalahian sa among nasinati. Hilom, seryoso, ug respetado ang ceremony sa kasal sauna. Pamilya ug pili ra namo nga mga tao ang naa. Simple ra kayo among pagkaon kay dili man pabonggahay. Karon sa akong namatikdan, Ang kasal sa Mansaka susama na sa kasal nga atong makita karon sa Bisaya ug sa Tagalog, daghan imbitado. Ipahigayon na sa simbahan, naa nay ninong ug ninang, mga design sa palibot. Nindot tan awon kay daghan nakigduyog pero nawala nagyud ang traditional nga ceremony sa mansaka. (P5 Husband)

(The marriage ceremonies among the Mansaka today are very different from what we experienced. In the past, the ceremony was quiet, serious, and respectful. Only family and a few close people attended. The food was simple since it was not meant to be fancy. Now, from what I have seen, Mansaka weddings are more like Bisaya and Tagalog weddings, with many guests. They usually take place in churches, with sponsors called ninongs and ninangs, and the venues are decorated.)

Participants observed the introduction of modern wedding requirements and rituals that were previously absent from traditional Mansaka marriages. Formal procedures, legal documentation, and ceremonial elements now characterize contemporary weddings.

One participant explained:

Naa nay mga seminar karon bago makasal. Naa nay mga permahan nga papel nga nagpamatuod nga nakasal jud. Kay ang sauna namo sa Mansaka wala may mga in ana, kaslon me sa balay ra ug mga pamilya ra namo ang naa. (P1 Husband)

(Today, people attend seminars before getting married and receive official documents as proof of marriage. In the past, for us Mansaka, we did not have these. We simply got married at home with only our families there.)

Another participant shared mixed feelings about these changes:

Ang sa karon bongga na kayo ug mga bisti, naa nay mga daghang abay nga babae ug lalaki. Nindot tan awon pero usahay maka huna-huna pod ko nga sayang kayo ang tribu kay naa jud wala na naampingan nga mga pamatasan. (P5 Husband)

(Nowadays, weddings are very extravagant, with fancy clothes and many bridesmaids and groomsmen. It looks beautiful, but I sometimes feel sorry for the tribe since some traditions have not been kept.)

Although wedding ceremonies have become increasingly modernized, participants consistently emphasized that elders and parents continue to play a significant role in the marriage process. The guidance, advice, and approval of elders and parents remain highly valued, functioning as a bridge between traditional beliefs and contemporary practices.

One wife explained:

Ang papel nila sa kasal sa mansaka karon kay sila ang paghatag ug tambag ug tabang sa duha ka mag-asawa. Kay syempre sila may nakabalo ba kay na again naman na nila so sila ang mangusog nga mangistorya ug mohatag ug mga tambag. (P2 Wife)

(In Mansaka weddings today, their main role is to offer advice and support to the couple. Because of their experience, they are the ones who guide, talk to, and advise the newlyweds.)

Another participant emphasized the importance of parental and elder approval:

Ang pagtugod sa gikinan ug katigulangan panahon sa kasal ang maong dako kayo ug importansya sa kaminyoon, kay tungod ana mahimong mabungahon, ug malamposon ang pagahimoon nga kasal. Ang pagpamuyo pod sa magtiyaon mahimong peaceful ba, walay gubot, walay mga pagdumot kay uyon man ang tanan. (P5 Husband)

(Parents and elders play an important role in weddings. Their guidance and approval can help make a marriage successful and peaceful, as it encourages harmony and agreement among everyone involved.)

Another participant reinforced this belief by describing parental approval as a blessing that facilitates a successful marriage:

Sa tinuod lang gyud ma'am no, ang pagtugot sa ginikanaan ug katigulangan nga magminyo is dako jud kayo na nga importansya sa matag-usa tungod kay kani nga pagtugod is nahimo ban ga blessings gani, walay kakulian ang pagminyo. Kay kita nitoo baya jud ta nga mas mayo ug dagan ang kaminyoon ug walay ni babag niini. (P2 Wife)

(Ma'am, we feel that getting approval from parents and elders is very important. Their support is like a blessing and helps the marriage go smoothly. We truly believe that with their consent, the marriage will be happier and more successful.

The findings indicate that Mansaka weddings are undergoing change while still upholding many of their cultural values. The ceremonies held at home are being replaced by church weddings or civil ceremonies featuring formal, modern wedding rituals (Hogan & Ritchie, 2017; Tarlow, 2018). However, guidance from parents and elders in the culture remains part of the marriage process (Toller, 2016). Thus, weddings in the Mansaka culture feature both traditional and modern elements.

Traditional Practices on Love, Courtship, and Marriage No Longer Preserved in Contemporary Times

The rising themes describing the traditional practices of courtship, marriage, and love that are no longer practiced in modern times are shown in the table below. Themes were extracted from the qualitative data obtained from participants' narratives and replies. The inquiry revealed five primary themes: Vanishing Arranged and Parent-Orchestrated Marriages; Decline of Dowry, Bridewealth, and Related Payments; Fading Parent-Supervised, Home-Based Courtship; Disappearing Indigenous Wedding Rituals and Spiritual Leadership; and Diminishing Traditional Expressions of Marital Love and Togetherness.

Table 2. Traditional Practices on Love, Courtship, and Marriage No Longer Preserved in Contemporary Times

Emerging Themes	Core Ideas
Vanishing Arranged and Parent-Orchestrated Marriages	• Arranged <i>buya</i> marriages are now rarely practiced. • Parents no longer select spouses for their children; individuals now choose their own partners. • The previous practice of “taking” a woman when <i>bandi</i> could not be paid has ceased.
Decline of Dowry, Bridewealth, and Related Payments	• Dowry (<i>pangayo</i> or <i>bandi</i>) is now uncommon or considered optional, particularly in lowland areas. • Dowry remains more prevalent in upland communities, although it is no longer universally practiced. • Sibling payment (<i>nilakaran</i>) and related customs are gradually disappearing.
Fading Parent-Supervised, Home-Based Courtship	• Home-based, parent-approved courtship practices have largely disappeared. • Secret or unsupervised relationships have supplanted traditional supervised courtship visits. • Parents and elders, who were once central to courtship decisions, are now frequently marginalized.
Disappearing Indigenous Wedding Rituals and Spiritual Leadership	• Weddings formerly led by <i>babaylan</i> or chieftains have been replaced by church, pastoral, or civil ceremonies. • Simple, home-based family weddings have been replaced by large, formal celebrations. • Symbolic rituals involving

	rice, grinding, and offerings have been supplanted by cakes, flowers, and contemporary wedding practices.
Diminishing Traditional Expressions of Marital Love and Togetherness	• Couples are no longer consistently engaged together in work and daily activities. • Traditional expressions of affection and mutual attention have been overshadowed by increasingly busy lifestyles and the influence of technology. • The loss of elders and the limited transmission of traditions to younger generations have contributed to the decline of customary practices.

Vanishing Arranged and Parent-Orchestrated Marriages. Participants reported that Mansaka marriage traditions have undergone significant changes over time, notably the gradual decline of *buya*, a customary practice in which parents arranged marriages for their children. Historically, marriage was primarily a family-led decision, formalized through agreements between parents and customary exchanges such as dowry or *bandi*. Currently, these practices are seldom observed, particularly among younger generations.

One husband explained the meaning and structure of *buya* as it was traditionally practiced:

Ang kaning buya, isa jud ni sa kinaraan nga pamatasan sa Mansaka. Ang kaning buya mao ning ang ginikanan sa babae ug lalaki managsabot nga ilang anak maoy magminyo sa panahon nga pwde na sila mag minyo. Bali sa uban pa ginatawag nila ug arrange marriage. Aduna poy ginabuhat nga pagpangayo o paghatag sa dowry o bayad kin isa lalaki sa ginikanan o mga kaparentihan sa babae. Kani nga mga pamatasan wala nagyud nasunod karon sa kadaghanan. (P1 Husband)

(This practice, called '*buya*' is one of the old traditions of the Mansaka. In '*buya*,' the parents of the man and woman agree that their children will marry when they are of marriageable age. In other terms, it's like an arranged marriage. There was also the practice of asking for or giving a dowry or payment from the man to the woman's parents or relatives. These traditions are no longer followed by most people today.)

A wife further confirmed that this practice has largely disappeared in their community, although traces of dowry practices may still exist in some places:

Diri sa atua wala nagyud ning buya, pero naa paning pangayo o dowry. Cguro sa uban nga lugar ilaha panang na practice pero sa atua wala nagyud. (P5 Wife)

(Here in our area, the '*buya*' is no longer practiced, but there is still some request or dowry. People might still do this in other places, but around here, it just doesn't happen anymore.

The narratives suggest that marriage decisions, previously determined primarily by parents and kinship networks, are now increasingly shaped by individual choice. Although parental approval remains culturally significant, contemporary youth exercise greater autonomy in partner selection.

A participant further highlighted this shift by describing the change in authority regarding marriage decisions:

Ang mga mansaka man gud sauna, ug kinsa ang maoyonan sa imong ginikanan mao gyud imong minyoan. Pero karon ang anak naman ang masunod kung kinsa iyang gusto minyoan maskin paman ug wala naka uyon ang ginikanan. (P1 Wife)

(In the past, among the Mansaka, you would marry the person your parents chose for you. These days, children choose whom they want to marry, even if their parents disagree.

Participants recounted historical practices that are no longer accepted in contemporary society. One participant described a previous custom involving forced marriage arrangements when dowry requirements were unmet or parental consent was withheld:

Sa una, matod pa sa mga katigulangan, kung dili kaya sa lalaki bayaran ang bandi (dowry) o dili mosugot ang pamilya sa babaye, pwede niya kining 'kuhaon' uban sa tabang sa iyang mga paryente. Giundangan kini tungod kay bawal na kini sa balaod ug dili na angay sa Kristohanong pagtulon-an. (P2 Wife)

(Elders say that in the past, if a man could not pay the bandi (dowry) or if the woman's family did not agree, he might take her with help from his relatives. This practice ended because it is now against the law and does not fit with Christian teachings.)

Another participant corroborated this account, confirming that these practices were previously part of their families' lived experiences:

Tinuod gyud na nga nahitabo sauna kay naa koy mga ante nga nakuha gyud tungod kay dako man ug bayad ang nahatag sa lalaki kauban sa iyang mga parente. (P2 Husband)

(This actually happened in my family. Some of my aunts were taken because the man and his relatives could offer a large payment.)

These narratives demonstrate the shift from arranged marriages to individual decision-making in the Mansaka community. Additionally, some of the marriages historically practiced within the Mansaka community have been discontinued due to legal, religious, and moral considerations. The traditional marriage systems of the Mansaka community have shifted from systems based on buya, marriage customs involving the exchange of dowries between the two marrying parties, to systems that focus on the individual decision-making of the individuals involved in the marriage. These changes in the traditional marriage practices of the Mansaka community result from the growing influence of modernization and Christian teachings on marriage. Related studies have demonstrated that many of these indigenous marriage systems in Africa have evolved in response to changing morals and social structures within these communities (McDaniel & Toller, 2016).

Decline of Dowry, Bridewealth, and Related Payments. Some of the participants also shared their thoughts with the researcher on changes in the practice of providing dowry. Most of the participants indicated that the practice of providing dowry has gradually changed over time. In the past, dowry was considered a significant component of the marriage between two individuals and their families. However, most participants indicated that the practice of providing dowry is less common today, especially among Mansaka communities living in the region's lowland areas. The reasons dowry is less common among these communities include the influence of intercultural marriages between Mansaka and non-Mansaka individuals, as well as the fact that younger members of these communities are less familiar with dowry customs.

One participant, for instance, indicated the following about the change in this practice:

Naa paman na karon pero panagsa nalng nga makita nato diri sa atoa sa patag. Nawala ni kay mismo ang pamilya sa naminyoan sa babae is wala kaila ug dowry or para sa ilaha hilas ba kay wala sila kasabot sa atong tradisyon kay kasagaran sa maminyoan dili man pod ka tribu nato. (P2 Wife)

(That still exists today, but it is only rarely seen here in the lowland areas. It has disappeared because even the families of the women who are getting married do not know about dowry, or for them it seems unnecessary because they do not understand our tradition, since most of the people they marry are no longer from our tribe.)

Another participant recalled a similar experience within her own family. Although they wanted to follow the traditional custom, circumstances made it difficult to practice:

Sa among mga anak gani wala naman na apply kay gustohon man namo nga naa pero ang pikas pod wala may ikahatag o mismo wala kasabot sa among tradisyon. (P5 Wife)

(Even with our children, it was no longer applied because we wanted it to happen, but the other side had nothing to give or simply did not understand our tradition.)

These accounts indicate that while many Mansaka families continue to value the tradition, practical constraints and evolving social conditions frequently hinder its practice. In certain cases, non-Mansaka spouses and their relatives do not understand the custom, which complicates its preservation within contemporary marriages.

While the practice of dowry has declined in the lowland areas of these countries, many respondents reported that it remains prevalent in certain upland Mansaka areas. These communities continue to consider the dowry as a significant aspect of marriage and their relationships with one another.

One husband explained:

Didto sa bukid kay gina apply jud na nila maskin pa ug dili ka tribu ang lalaki, sa ngalan nga naa pa ang dowry sa ilang kumunidade mohatag gyud. (P2 Husband)

(Up in the mountains, they still really practice that, even if the man is not from the tribe. As long as the dowry tradition is still present in their community, they will still require him to give it.)

Likewise, another participant recounted witnessing a marriage where the tradition was still observed:

Naa me na tambongan nga gikasal nga kaila rapod namo, panahon sa panagsabot kanang mo atubang ang lalaki sa tibuok pamilya sa babae, ang bayad o dowry kay ilaha pagyud na practice. Sa karon nga panahon naa paman gyud na pero mapili nalang gyud ang pamilya nga naga sunod ana. (P3 Wife)

(We once attended a wedding of someone we know. In the past, during the agreement stage, the man would meet the woman's whole family, and paying a dowry was common. Today, this tradition still exists, but families can decide whether to follow it.)

The narratives collected from the participants demonstrate that the pangayo or bandi tradition plays a distinctive role within the marriage traditions of the Mansaka people. While some communities continue to uphold this marriage tradition, others have abandoned it over time. The intermarriages between individuals of different communities, the cultural exposure that many Mansaka individuals have experienced, and the changing expectations of the families of Mansaka women and men have all contributed to the decline of the pangayo or bandi tradition in some communities, while the remaining communities continue to uphold it. However, the tradition of giving a dowry to the bride's family is still seen in some upland communities.

The participants' responses indicate that the tradition of giving a dowry when marrying into another community has become increasingly uncommon in the lowland communities of the Mansaka people. Instead, most marriages between Mansaka men and women from other communities are intercultural, which helps explain why the tradition of providing a dowry has become uncommon in these areas. In contrast, the tradition of providing a dowry remains common in the upland communities of the Mansaka people, where these marriage traditions are upheld. These findings are in agreement with the findings of Hogan and Ritchie (2017) regarding the decline of the dowry tradition within marriage relationships between Mansaka men and women, as they have attributed such a shift to the increasing choice of individual Mansaka people to form marital relationships with other individuals according to their personal choices and desires. Furthermore, these findings are consistent with those of McDaniel and Toller (2016), who found that while many communities may be experiencing the decline of marriage traditions, such as providing dowries for the wives of other community members, these traditions remain important markers of those communities' cultural identity. These findings, therefore, indicate the balance the Mansaka people must strike between preserving their cultural traditions and adapting to the changing social and cultural contexts in which they live.

Fading Parent-Supervised, Home-Based Courtship. Participants indicated that traditional courtship in Mansaka was highly structured and centered on forming relationships under the supervision of parents and other family elders. The concept of courtship was not to be enacted individually by the potential partners in the relationship, but was supervised by the family and elders, and followed the rules and traditions of the culture in which the individuals lived. The practice of nilakaran, which required one sibling in a family to "pay" for another sibling's marriage, underscored the importance of respect within the family hierarchy.

Additionally, participants indicated that family elders traditionally exerted influence and control over courtship relationships within the family to ensure that the cultural and familial expectations for those individuals were met. One husband explained the role of family traditions, such as nilakaran:

Magdepende mana sa pamilya ug ilang buhaton. Naa pod nang muhatag sa nilakaran o mao nang nauna ug minyo ang manghud kasa magulang kailangan mohatag ang manghud ug nilakaran alang sa pagrespeto sa iyang magulang. (P1 Husband)

(It depends on the family and what they decide to do. Some give 'nilakaran,' which is given by the younger sibling if they marry before the elder, as a sign of respect to the older sibling.)

A wife further described how courtship used to require parental permission and proper visiting rituals, which have gradually disappeared in modern times:

Kaning mananghid daan sa ginikanan bago manguyab sa anak. Mo adto sa panimalay sa babae magdala ug maayohon. Kini nga mga pamatasan nagka wala nagyud ni kay tungod pod sa bag-o nga generasyon. Magkita na daan sa gawas bago pa magkitaay sa mga ginikanan. Daghan napod karon nga diha napod makita sa ginikanan kong na buros na. (P1 Wife)

(This is the practice of asking the parents' permission before courting their child. The suitor would go to the woman's house and bring proper gifts. These traditions have disappeared because of the new generation. Today, many couples start dating before introducing each other to their parents, and sometimes parents only learn about the relationship when the woman is already pregnant.)

Another participant reflected on how strict supervision once protected women and regulated courtship behavior:

Sauna gyud no, dili jud basta-basta maka-uyab sauna kay gina preserved gyud ang matag usa labi na ang babae. Maghulat ragyud me nga naay lalaki mangursunada sa amoa kay dako nga sala gyud para sa ginikanan ug maskin asa rami magkitaay sa lalaki. Maong sauna, wala jud kay makit-an nga ang babae ug lalaki mag-uban nga sila rang duha pwera nalang ug mag-asawa na sila. (P5 Wife)

(Back then, it wasn't easy to court someone because everyone, especially women, was well protected. We would wait for a man to formally ask for permission from our family, as it was a serious offense for a girl to be seen with a man anywhere. That's why in the past, you wouldn't see a man and woman being alone together, except when they were already married.)

Family involvement was also central in early stages of courtship, as young men were expected to seek their own parents' approval before approaching the woman's family. One husband shared:

Bago sad me mangurso sa balay sa babae, storyahon sa pod usa namo among ginikanan nga naka gusto me atong bayhana kay aron pod among ginikanan makabalo unya mo hatag pod ug supporta. (P2 Husband)

(Before we would formally court the woman at her house, we would first talk to our own parents to let them know that we liked her, so that our parents could also be aware and provide their support.)

Participants further noted a decline in the prevalence of these traditional practices. Contemporary courtship frequently begins outside the home, with couples meeting independently prior to family involvement.

One participant noted this shift clearly:

Magkita na daan sa gawas bago pa magkitaay sa mga ginikanan. Daghan napod karon nga diha napod makita sa ginikanan kong na buros na. (P1 Wife)

(These days, couples usually spend time together before introducing each other to their parents. Sometimes, parents only learn about the relationship when the woman is already pregnant.)

The narratives indicate a gradual decline in the practice of courtship at home, along with parental supervision. The influence of elders on the establishment of romantic relationships among adolescents has gradually diminished. The practice of choosing partners of one's own choosing is increasingly prominent among adolescents today. The practice of nilakaran and other traditional concepts related to the establishment of romantic relationships between individuals is being slowly replaced by these concepts and ideas popular among adolescents today.

The courtship practices within the Mansaka culture have undergone a transformation due to modernization, shifting cultural values, and increasing youth independence. Traditional practices of courtship required the decision of the whole community and the individuals within the couple's families, while modern practices require each individual to decide their own courtship activities. Nevertheless, the Mansaka culture continues to seek to balance these traditional practices with modern practices and beliefs to preserve their cultural identity, yet adapt to the changes within their society. These findings are in agreement with other research on the topic of courtship within indigenous cultures, which reveals that modernization, cultural change, and the ability of individuals to make their own decisions all play significant roles in the alteration of the courtship practices of those groups while allowing them to preserve some of those traditional cultural practices (McDaniel & Toller, 2016).

Disappearing Indigenous Wedding Rituals and Spiritual Leadership. The wedding ceremonies of the Mansaka people were tied to the indigenous spirituality that once existed in the region. For the Mansaka people, marriage was both a legal union between two individuals and a sacred union blessed by the ancestors, with the community involved in the marriage ceremony. Traditionally, weddings were officiated by the babaylan, or the tribe's chieftain, who blessed the marriage of the two individuals, underscoring the ceremony's significance.

One participant recalled this traditional authority clearly:

Kanang ang mokasal pa daw sauna kay ang babaylan/spiritual leader or ang tribal chieftain pero karon kay sa pastors, pari o sa mayor na. P4 Wife

(In the past, weddings were led by the babaylan, who was the spiritual leader, or by the tribal chieftain. Today, pastors, priests, or the mayor usually officiate these ceremonies.)

Another participant further described how many indigenous rituals that once shaped the wedding ceremony have gradually disappeared:

Sa akong namatikdan, daghan mga ritwal sa kasal sa mansaka ang wala na karon, isa na ning ang magdumala sa kasal kay ang mga babaylan pa or mga chieftain, naa pay mga ampo o ritwal nga pagahimoon bago ang opisyal nga kasal. Naa pa gani toy mga halad sauna kanang kinaraan jud kayo. Sa seremonya pod sa kasal naa tong maghinungitay ang magtiayon ug gipalingin nga kan-on pero karon murag cake naman ang ipang hungit. Daghan paman gyud kayo na pero mao rani akong ma na abtan. (P5 Husband)

(Based on what I've seen, many traditional wedding rituals among the Mansaka are no longer followed. In the past, there were offerings and prayers before the wedding. During the ceremony, couples would grind rice together and share traditional food, but now it looks like cake is served instead. There are still other customs, but these are the changes I've noticed...)

One woman recalled that traditional weddings used to be simple and full of symbolism, focusing on humility and shared rituals:

Akong mahinumduman sauna sa among kasal, gipalingin me ug kan-on unya gipa hungit sa matag usa. Unya among kasal ato naa rami sa balay nagluhod nag atubang sa nikasal namo. (P1 Wife)

(I remember that during our wedding, we were given rice to eat from a circle, and each of us took a turn sipping it. Our wedding took place at home, and we knelt facing the person who officiated.)

The type of wedding ceremony has changed from the spiritual ceremonies established and led by community members to formal weddings officiated by pastors, priests, or even government officials. The authority to officiate these weddings used to lie with the babaylan and the elders of the community, but today, those formal and religious leaders are used instead.

Simultaneously, another transformation has also occurred in relation to weddings. Rather than the ceremonies that once took place between the two individuals to be attended to by both the bride and groom, share a meal with relatives, and perform ceremonies regarding the sharing of rice and the blessings of the ancestral spirits, weddings today have transformed into events with cakes, decorations, ceremony venues, and audiences of individuals who attend to celebrate the marriage of the two individuals. The concept of marriage has shifted from a sacred, spiritual ideal to one that is publicly celebrated and tied to broader religious and societal norms. Additionally, the indigenous spiritual practices and ceremonies associated with marriage have declined over time, being replaced by ceremonies focused on cakes and the wedding venue rather than ancestral spirits.

The experiences of the participants illustrate how the wedding traditions of the Mansaka community are changing due to modernization, the influence of Christianity, and the law. While the practice of marrying under spiritual leaders and following traditional wedding rituals is declining, elements of their culture and marriage traditions are still observed. These communities are adapting their culture; thus, the values traditionally associated with Mansaka culture remain evident in their weddings today. The findings of this study align with prior scholarly research on the changes indigenous marriages have undergone under the influence of religion and modernization (McDaniel & Toller, 2016).

Diminishing Traditional Expressions of Marital Love and Togetherness. Participants shared that Mansaka married couples showed love in ways different from those of couples today. For instance, the couples participated in various activities together each day, worked together to complete household tasks, and spent time with their spouses. These activities and commitments helped indicate the love, respect, and unity that existed between the couples and contributed to the strength of their marriages and families.

Participants noticed that these signs of togetherness have gradually decreased due to modern work pressures, more frequent moves, and societal changes.

One wife reflected on how close companionship was defined in earlier generations:

Sauna ang mga Mansaka, loving gyud kayo na sila. Sa mga katigulangan, ug asa sila mo adto ang asawa kuyog gyud nang bana. Ang sa karon man gud, murag dili na gyud mag uban kay naa may lahi-lahi nga trabaho ang matag usa. (P2 Wife)

(In the past, the Mansaka were very loving. According to the elders, wherever the wife went, the husband would always accompany her. But nowadays, it seems they no longer stay together as much because each person has different jobs.)

This was supported by another participant who recalled how couples once shared nearly all aspects of daily life:

Saunang panahon, dili gyud magbulag ang magtiayon. Maskin sa umahan kuyog gyud gihapon na sila, magtinabangay. Kanang mga anak nila nga gagmay gani biyaan jud na nila sa balay, ipabantay sa ilang mga ginikanan. Kahinumdom ko sa akong mama ug papa sauna nga ibilin rami sa balay, kay silang duha magkuyog sa bukid. Inag uli pod nila maka dal ana sila ug mga saging, kamote ug mga gulayon. (P4 Wife)

(In the old days, husbands and wives were never apart... they worked together in the farm. Their children were left with grandparents while they worked together in the mountains, and they would bring home food like bananas, sweet potatoes, and vegetables.)

A husband also confirmed this shift from constant togetherness to separation caused by work demands:

Daghan gyud ug wala na karon kay sa bata pako, akong nasayran akong ginikanan ug unsa siila sauna. Parihas anang ug asa si papa mo adto ubanon gyud na niya si mama. Dili sila magbulagay, kanunay gayud na sila mag

kuyog ug asa mana sila mo adto. Sa kasamtangang panahon nihit na kayo nato nim akita kay aduna namay mga klase-klaseng trabaho ang matag-usa. (P5 Husband)

(Many practices are no longer seen today... wherever my father went, he always brought my mother. They used to spend all their time together. Now, that's unusual since people have so many different jobs.)

In addition to the reduction in physical togetherness, the participants also reported a decline in emotional expressiveness and affectionate behavior within their relationships with their partners. One participant stated, for instance, that behaviors like openness and affection with their partner, which were once common behaviors between the two partners, are now often replaced with restraint and the use of technology to avoid relationship conversations and conflicts:

Ang mansaka gyud sauna, dili na sila motago ug feelings ba. Mo storya gyud na sila ug unsay gusto, mo pakita gyud na sila ug lambing sa ilang asawa. Pero sa karon murag maulaw naman magpa lambing sa matag-usa. Siguro, dinala pod gyud ni sa bag-o nga panahon kay ma busy naman sa cellphone ang uban, wala nay oras sa pamilya. (P5 Wife)

(In the past, the Mansaka would not hide their feelings... But nowadays, people are shy to show affection. Maybe this is because of modern times and cellphones.)

Participants attributed this decline to inadequate cultural transmission and the loss of elders who previously modeled and guided these traditions. One wife stated:

Wala na napadayon kay wala naman gidala ang kinaraan nga pamatasan, ang gihimo naman kay kong unsay uso o trending karon. Sundugon na ang binuhatan sa uban, wala na gi apply unya dili napod permi ginabuhat. (P1 Wife)

(These traditions are not continued anymore because people do not pass them down. Instead, most people now just follow what is popular.)

Her husband further supported this perspective by associating cultural decline with the absence of key tribal leaders:

Isa pod sa rason nganong nawala kini nga mga pamatasan tungod kay wala napoy mo giya sa tribu labi na sa mga batan-on. Sukad namatay si Nawnaw (Lolo Nawnaw) nga maoy gi isip nga daku-daku sa atong tribo. (P1 Husband)

(One reason these traditions disappeared is that there is no longer anyone guiding the tribe, especially the youth... since the death of Lolo Nawnaw, a key leader.)

Another participant pointed out that traditional practices have declined since the elders passed away:

Pagkawala ni Ama, murag na luag na tanan ba pati atong tradisyon sa mansaka nagkawala napod. (P2 Husband)

(Since Ama passed away, it feels like everything has become less certain, even our traditions.)

Modern factors like technology, intermarriage, and new ways of living also played a role in this change, as one participant explained:

Mawala gyud kay wala naman ginabuhat. Gusto man jud nato nga naa ra atong mga tradisyonal nga pamatasan pero tungod sa gidala sa bag-ong panahon murag labo nagyud kayo. Dili man nato mabalik sa panahon nga wala pay cellphone kay halos karon mao nnamay ginagamit. (P5 Wife)

(These things fade away because people stop doing them. We can't go back to the days before cellphones.)

The narratives indicate a shift from marital companionship to individual lifestyles influenced by work and other modern social elements. Although still valued, the nature of companionship has changed considerably over time, reflecting broader changes in Mansaka culture.

From the above discussion, it becomes evident that the marital affection between Mansaka and his wife has transitioned from physical togetherness and shared work to independent relationships mediated by technology. The love traditionally cultivated between the two through cooperation and the influence of elders is fading due to modernization, the use of digital technology, employment, intermarriage, and the elders' diminished influence over today's young children. While the Mansaka culture may have altered over time, they have adapted to fit in with the world in which they now live. These findings are in agreement with previous research in that the industrialization of the world, the digital communication among individuals, and the change in the roles of individuals within traditional families have led to the reduction of relationships among individuals, the reduction of face-to-face interaction between individuals, and the reduction of the expressions of traditional love between indigenous and rural community members (McDaniel & Toller, 2016; Hogan et al., 2017; McDaniel et al., 2016).

Insights of Mansaka Married Couples on the Practices of Love, Courtship, and Marriage in Contemporary Times

The table below presents the themes that emerged from the analysis of the data from the married couples. The themes are derived from the narratives and responses of the participants. The three themes include navigating the modern relationship with autonomy, maintaining respect, family and cultural identity, and finding a balance between tradition and modernity in their marriage and relationships.

Table 3. Insights of Mansaka Married Couples on the Practices of Love, Courtship, and Marriage in Contemporary Times

Emerging Themes	Core Ideas
Navigating Modern Relationships with Greater Autonomy	• Faster and more accessible courtship through technology. • Freedom to choose one's partner based on love. • Equality and shared decision-making in marriage.
Preserving Respect, Family Guidance, and Cultural Identity	• Continued respect for parents despite modern independence. • Importance of parental advice in marriage decisions. • Weakening transmission of Mansaka culture to the youth. • Absence of elders as cultural guides.
Seeking Balance Between Tradition and Contemporary Realities	• Longing for the simplicity and sincerity of past practices. • Critique of excess and loss of meaning in modern weddings. • Selective adaptation of traditions to modern life. • Viewing tradition as a foundation rather than a hindrance. • Hope for cultural continuity through community action.

Navigating Modern Relationships with Greater Autonomy. The relationships between Mansaka couples today are characterized by individual choice, communication technologies, and evolving partnership concepts. Unlike the relationships of previous generations, which were shaped by the choices and customs of individuals' families and communities, Mansaka couples today have more choice and autonomy in their relationships with their partners. The use of technology and the introduction of modern values into Mansaka relationships have transformed how these couples form and maintain their relationships.

Many of the participants in these studies noted the influence that modern communication technologies had in creating Mansaka relationships more quickly and easily than ever before. For instance, individuals can use their cell phones and digital communication technologies to get to know someone quickly and determine whether the relationship is worth pursuing.

Maskin paman sa henerasyon karon nga dali ragyud ang proseso sa pagpanguyab ug sa pagminyo ... dali rapod mailhan ug unsa gyud iyang tinuod nga tumong. (P1 Wife)

(Even in the current generation, where the process of courting and marrying is very quick... it's easy to understand his true intentions.)

Another participant highlighted how technology has reduced the challenges posed by distance:

Kay sa cellphones, makita man nimo ilang nawng, maka story animo sila maskin pag lagyo mo. (P3 Wife)

(With cellphones, you can see their image and talk to them even if you are far apart.)

Similarly, a husband reflected on how technology has simplified courtship and decision-making:

Ang pagpanguyab dali nalang jud karon.... Dali nalang kung sugton nimo o dili ang tao. (P5 Husband)

(Courtship has become faster... it's easier to agree or not agree with someone.)

The narratives indicate that mobile phones and digital communication have substantially transformed how Mansaka couples initiate and develop relationships. Previously, relationship formation often depended on extended, family-mediated interactions; however, direct communication now enables individuals to evaluate compatibility, express interest, and make autonomous decisions regarding relationships.

Participants noted that contemporary relationships increasingly emphasize individual choice and emotional connection in selecting a life partner. In contrast to previous generations, in which family influence was more prominent, many Mansaka now prioritize love and personal preference.

One wife shared:

Karong panahona, ang pipila ka Mansaka nga magtiayon nagpili na sa ilang kapikas tungod sa tinuoray nga gugma, dili lang tungod kay gi-arrange sa pamilya. (P2 Wife)

(Today, some Mansaka couples pick their partners because they truly love each other, rather than only following arranged marriage traditions.)

Another participant emphasized that this freedom applies to everyone, especially women:

Kanang naa nay katungod ang matag-usa ka Mansaka nga mo pili ug kinsa ilang naoyonan/nagustuhan labi na sa mga babae. (P3 Wife)

(Today, all Mansaka people have the right to choose whom they like, especially women.)

These accounts indicate a substantial transformation in partnership, where personal feelings and individual preferences become primary factors. Participants reported an increasing sense of autonomy, enabling them to actively shape their romantic futures rather than relying mainly on family arrangements or traditional expectations.

Another significant transformation identified by participants is the increasing emphasis on equality and shared decision-making within marriage. Participants noted that contemporary marriages are more frequently characterized by cooperation and mutual participation rather than male-dominated authority.

One husband reflected on this change:

Sa karon nga panahon... Naa me parihas nga katungod sa panimalay. Kay sauna man gud ang lalaki ragyud ang naay tingug sa panimalay. (P5 Husband)

(Today, husband and wife share equal rights at home. In the past, only men made decisions.

Likewise, a wife noted:

Ang modernong prinsipyo sama sa pagkakaparehas ug hiniyang pagdesisyon makaimpluwensya na sa praktis.
(P4 Wife)

(Ideas like equality and making decisions together can shape how things are done.)

The narratives indicate that technology, concepts of autonomy, and egalitarian values are beginning to influence relationships within the Mansaka community in several ways. Many participants indicated that technology has enabled greater freedom and autonomy in selecting a partner based on the concept of love, and that many marriages exhibit egalitarian relationships between partners. These changes indicate a shift away from traditional family roles and structures towards relationships based on autonomy and partnership. Furthermore, many Mansaka navigate a balance between traditional relationships and modernity as they adapt to the current relationship between the two populations. These findings are in alignment with previous studies that indicated that the modernization of many communities, the advancement of technology within those communities, and the changing norms between community members is correlated with changes in autonomy in the relationships between individuals, in the ability of those individuals to select their partners based upon love, and in the shift towards more egalitarian relationships between couples within the communities (Hogan et al., 2017).

Preserving Respect, Family Guidance, and Cultural Identity. Within Mansaka communities, respect for parents and elders remains valued, despite the increased autonomy younger generations have in selecting their partners. Each of the interview participants discussed how modernization had actually not eliminated the importance of respecting one's parents.

For instance, one mother indicated:

Kaning maskin pag atong anak na ang ni pili sa ilang gusto nga ma bana o ma asawa, mahimo gyud gihapon nga respetohon me isip ginikanan nila. (P1 Wife)

(Even if our children decide for themselves whom to marry, we can still earn their respect as parents.)

For many participants, permitting children to make independent decisions does not equate to a rejection of traditional values. Rather, respect for parents remains a central principle in guiding family relationships. This perspective was reinforced by another participant, who noted:

Bisan paman sa kabag-o na sa panahon, ang mga mansaka nagpabilin gyud gihapong Mansaka. (P4 Wife)

(Even with many changes, the Mansaka continue to respect their elders and parents.)

As discussions advanced, participants emphasized that parental advice continues to play a significant role in marriage decisions. Despite increased independence among young people, elders are still viewed as authoritative sources of wisdom and guidance. One participant stated:

Maminaw gyud sa istorya sa ilang mga ginikanan. (P2 Wife)

(They should listen carefully to what their parents have to say.)

Another participant emphasized the importance of patience and adherence to the guidance of elders:

Tuman gyud mo sa mga tambag nga gikan sa inyong ginikanan ug mga katigulangan. Ang pagminyo maabot...
(P5 Husband)

(Follow the advice of your parents and elders. Marriage will come in its own time.)

Although respect and guidance remain evident in family life, many participants expressed concern about the gradual erosion of the Mansaka cultural identity among younger generations. Several elders noted a decline in the use of the Mansaka language and the practice of traditional customs. One participant lamented:

Wala nay makasunod nga mga bag-ong henerasyon kay nawala naman. Dili na sila kabalo mo storya ug minansaka... (P1 Wife)

(The new generation is unable to follow previous traditions because they lack knowledge of the language and customs...)

Similarly, another participant expressed concern regarding the gradual erosion of cultural identity:

Hinay-hinay nga nagkahuyang ang pagka-Mansaka. (P3 Wife)

(The Mansaka identity is gradually weakening.)

For many participants, the decline in cultural knowledge is directly linked to the absence of elders who previously served as teachers and cultural guardians. One participant described this loss:

Wala napod ang mga karaan nga mga tao nga maka giya ug maka tudlo nila. (P1 Husband)

(The elders who once guided and taught them are gone now.)

This statement demonstrates the loss of knowledge from the Elders of the Mansaka community. The younger generations of Mansaka do not have the same exposure to the language and culture of the people of Mansaka as previous generations did. Participants in this research project indicate that younger generations of Mansaka have more freedom and autonomy in their partnership and dating decisions.

However, respect for parents, the importance of following their recommendations, and the dedication to maintaining the culture of the Mansaka people remain important to community members of all ages. However, concerns regarding the decline of the Mansaka language, the loss of the Mansaka people's cultural identity, and the lack of knowledge of cultural traditions among younger generations in the Mansaka community were voiced by the village Elders. These challenges faced by the Mansaka people are common to indigenous communities across the globe. Many current studies show that while parental guidance is still used to make decisions regarding relationships and partnerships, various factors like urbanization and the loss of those who know traditional cultural practices continue to contribute to the decline of the indigenous language, traditions, and cultural identity of those younger generations of indigenous communities (McDaniel & Toller, 2016; McDaniel et al., 2016).

Seeking Balance Between Tradition and Contemporary Realities. The participants reflected on the nature of Mansaka marriage and the relationships within these marriages. The participants noted the challenges that arose from attempting to reconcile the values of traditional marriages with the demands of modern society. While the advantages of the modern age were recognized, the participants expressed nostalgia for past marriages and relationships.

A participant recounted that weddings in the past were characterized by simplicity, intimacy, and a focus on the fundamental purpose of marriage rather than on public display.

She shared:

Kanang kasal sa minansaka nga pamilya ragyud ang naa, maka mingaw na nga pamatasan kay karon man gud pa bonggahay na, dili na nimo makita ang tomong sa kasal tungod kay sa lahi naman nag focus. Kaniadtong panahona man gud, makita jud ang tumong ug ang ka seryoso sa kasal kay wala may laing gibuhad, dili man daghan ug mga buhaton sa kasal. (P1 Wife)

(In the past, Mansaka weddings were small gatherings focused on family and simple but meaningful traditions. Today, weddings have become much more elaborate.)

The reflection demonstrates a strong appreciation for the simplicity of traditional ceremonies, which emphasize commitment, family, and the solemnity of the marital union. The increasing complexity of modern weddings is seen as potentially obscuring the significance that once characterized these events.

Another participant articulated a comparable concern, linking the growing emphasis on extravagant celebrations to the decline of marital relationships. He stated:

Maong karon, daghan nagpakasal nga nagbulag rapod kay mas gi una man ang ka bongga kaysa sa tinuod nga gugma. (P1 Husband)

(Many couples break up because they focus more on luxury than on real love.)

From his perspective, the value of marriage lies in the sincerity of the relationship rather than the grandeur of the ceremony. This viewpoint highlights a broader concern that external displays can overshadow the emotional, spiritual, and cultural foundations of marriage.

Although these concerns were present, participants did not entirely reject modernization. Rather, many emphasized the importance of carefully balancing traditional values with contemporary realities. One participant described this process as a deliberate effort to honor the past while adapting to current circumstances:

Ang pagbalanse kay kombinasyon sa pagtan-aw sa kahintang karon ug pagrespeto sa among naandan nga tradisyon. (P1 Wife)

(Balancing means taking our current situation into account while also respecting our traditional practices.)

Her statement indicates that Mansaka couples respond to change by selectively adapting cultural practices, thereby preserving tradition and maintaining their relevance in contemporary contexts.

Participants emphasized that tradition should not be considered an impediment to progress. Instead, they identified tradition as a source of strength that enables individuals to preserve their identity during periods of rapid social change. This viewpoint was articulated by another participant, who stated:

Usa pa, gilauman nako nga mas daghan ang makakita sa kahayag nga ang tradisyon dili babag sa pag-uswag, kundi usa ka pundasyon nga makapalig-on sa identidad ug pagkahimakas sa bag-ong mga hagit. (P1 Wife)

(I hope more people come to see that tradition is not a barrier to progress. Instead, it gives us a strong sense of identity and helps us meet new challenges.)

Her words articulate an optimistic vision for the future, where cultural heritage and modern development coexist rather than compete.

Within these discussions, it was made clear by the various participants that action must be taken together to preserve these traditions. The participants stated that both individuals within each family and the community as a whole must play a role in preserving these traditions. One of the wives stated:

Ang mentorship, workshops, ug active community participation makatabang sa batan-ong magtiayon nga ipreserba ang tradisyon samtang nag-adjust sa modernong kinabuhi. (P5 Wife)

(Young couples can keep their traditions alive and adapt to modern life by joining workshops, finding mentors, and getting involved in their community.)

According to her perspective, cultural preservation relies on providing opportunities for younger generations to learn, participate, and maintain connections to their heritage as they navigate contemporary realities.

These narratives indicate how the participants negotiated the relationship between tradition and modernity within their culture. The participants expressed nostalgia for their traditional wedding culture, but also recognized the need for adaptations to modernity. Overall, the participants indicated support for integrating some traditional wedding elements into modern weddings and for initiatives that ensure younger generations of the community remain connected to those traditions. These findings are in line with existing discussions of cultural adaptation, which often suggest that indigenous communities tend to adapt to modernity by integrating traditional values

into modern contexts and societies, rather than discarding those traditional cultures and societies (Hogan & Ritchie, 2017).

Implications And Concluding Remark

This section discusses the implications derived from the study's key findings. Recommendations are presented based on the challenges participants encountered and the coping strategies they employed, to provide insight into the lived experiences of the Mansaka tribe. These recommendations are intended to inform the broader community and serve as a valuable reference for future researchers in related fields, thereby advancing relevant concepts. Concluding remarks include the researcher's personal comments and observations.

Implications for Practice

The result of this study is critically important to preserving the cultural heritage of the Mansaka people, especially their traditions of love, courtship, and marriage. These results have important implications for cultural preservation.

First, it is to institutionalize cultural education programs within the Mansaka community. The leaders and government of the Mansaka community can establish cultural programs that educate individuals about the culture of love, courtship, and marriage. Including these initiatives in the community cultural preservation standards will ensure that Mansaka indigenous knowledge is passed down to younger generations.

Second, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) should enhance the policies and programs that it has implemented. The NCIP can use these findings to further develop policies that will aid in the preservation of these indigenous cultures and practices. The standards for ICCs can be amended to require the establishment of cultural education programs for these communities. Such initiatives would help find a balance between cultural preservation and modernization.

Third, the values of indigenous cultures can be incorporated into society through the development plans and educational institutions within the communities. Educational institutions that serve indigenous communities may incorporate learning materials that discuss the traditions and values of the Mansaka. Furthermore, the local government in these communities may establish standards that incorporate elders and their knowledge of indigenous culture into the community. Both of these efforts can help preserve the culture and instill a sense of respect for that indigenous culture within the communities.

Fourth, the community and cultural organizations can use these findings to advocate for the preservation of the Mansaka culture. The creation of policies that support cultural preservation will enable future generations of the Mansaka tribe to maintain and cherish their culture. Additionally, cultural centers can be established to help preserve the Mansaka culture.

Lastly, the knowledge gained from this research will be valuable to the general public, enabling them to understand Mansaka culture and to appreciate and respect its traditions, as well as the policies that protect the country's cultural diversity, as provided for in Philippine and international laws regarding indigenous peoples' rights.

Implications for Future Research

This research study contributes to the existing literature on indigenous cultural practices and also suggests several areas for future research. As this study employed qualitative methods to gather the thoughts and experiences of a few couples who practice the Mansaka cultural tradition, future studies could use alternative methods to investigate the same topic. For instance, future research could use quantitative designs to assess the extent of this cultural change among the remaining Mansaka population. Surveys of Mansaka populations could yield valuable insights into these cultural changes and their determinants.

Future research studies could also incorporate mixed-methods research designs to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the interaction between traditional and modern influences on these indigenous cultural

relationships. Additionally, future research studies could expand the populations studied. While the current study utilized married couples who practice the Mansaka culture, future studies could include adolescents, young adults, elders, tribal leaders, parents, and educators to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the extent of this cultural change.

Future research could explore the cultural practices of other indigenous groups within the Philippines. Such studies would allow for the observation of similarities and differences to those of the Igorot people, which would help to gain an understanding of the adaptations of these indigenous cultures.

Methods for gathering this data could include ethnographic research, such as conducting interviews with the indigenous peoples of the Philippines, observing their societies, conducting focus group discussions with participants from these communities, immersing researchers in these societies, and analyzing documents published by these groups. Each of these methods will reveal insights into the lives of these indigenous groups.

Additionally, it may also be beneficial to employ longitudinal studies to observe the evolution of these cultural practices over time. Overall, incorporating these diverse research and data-collection methods will contribute to a more complete understanding of the Philippines' indigenous cultures.

Concluding Remarks

The Mansaka tribe is currently doing a delicate dance between the past and the future. The days of courtship that happen only at home are now changing. Even as their traditional customs change, respect, patience, and shared responsibility remain the same.

Owing to these couples losing their culture, they have to decide what to keep from the modern world and what to keep from their heritage. There are significant consequences of the loss of elders and knowledge of their culture. This gap can be addressed by engaging elders as mentors and transforming traditions into participatory community workshops.

Ultimately, being Mansaka in the 21st century signifies continual adaptation and progress. It's about moving forward with the knowledge of the past in your heart and the tools of the present in your hands.

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