



Exploration of Food Knowledge Transmission of Ethnic Dishes of Muslim-Migrated Ethnic Groups

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Abstract

Ethnic dishes play a crucial role in defining and preserving cultural identity. Upon the migration of Muslim ethnic groups to urbanized areas, their everyday life, cultural practices, and food intake behavior may be heavily influenced by the new environment. This led the researchers to investigate the transmission of food knowledge about ethnic dishes among Muslim-migrated ethnic groups. Most studies on the transmission of food knowledge have focused on Malay, Ainu, and other indigenous groups in other countries. This research addresses the lack of empirical studies on the food knowledge transmission of Muslim-migrated ethnic groups. Moreover, migration to a non-Muslim region changes the setting of passing on ethnic food knowledge from one generation to the next. This qualitative research employed the philosophical paradigm of interpretivism to investigate the transmission of ethnic food knowledge among Muslim migrant families. Using a semi-structured interview, the participants consisted of four sets of parent-child pairs selected through purposive sampling. Participants described the type of knowledge transmitted, strategies for transmitting ethnic food knowledge from parents to children, and adjustments made to ingredients due to limited access to raw materials. Findings explain further the translocalism framework, which initially focused only on migration networks, remittances, geography, and social resilience. This research demonstrates how Muslim migrants sustain their ethnic food knowledge traditions and transmission, further adding cultural remittance to the framework, despite moving to other regions in the Philippines.

Keywords: *food, knowledge transmission, ethnic dishes, Muslim, ethnic groups*

INTRODUCTION

Ethnic foods are foods derived from an ethnic group's tradition and culture, based on their understanding of local plant and animal sources (Kwon, 2015). Ethnic dishes play a crucial role in cultural preservation (Poting, 2024). It promotes cultural identity (Pivarski et al., 2023), strengthens community bonds (Borcoman & Sorea, 2023; Pivarski et al., 2023; Poting, 2024), and promotes sustainable development (Borcoman & Sorea, 2023). It is also a representation of brand, and culture (Sharif et al., 2016).

The United Nations, through the International Workshop on Traditional Knowledge, emphasized that traditional food knowledge should be continually retained for future generations, as they will carry out profound spirituality and identity for themselves or as peoples (UNESCO, 2007). Food knowledge is defined as the oral transmission of knowledge concentrated on how food is being produced by communities and ethnic groups from one generation to the next (Guerrero et al., 2009; Kuhnlein et al., 2009; Milburn, 2004). Traditionally, elder generations transfer knowledge orally, hands-on, through observation, and by consuming the foods they teach to younger ones. Food knowledge can be gained in a variety of ways, including through parents, family members, and community members, as well as during social or festive occasions (Kwik, 2008; Sharif et al., 2016; Trichopoulou et al., 2007; Yohannes, 2009). The role of parents, especially mothers in transmitting food knowledge is significant in shaping individuals' understanding of traditions,

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consumption habits, and social norms.

Some ethnic groups are reported not only to be facing the problem of deskilling issues related to domestic cooking skills but also to have started to lose the traditional food culture because of the weakening of the old generation to pass down traditional cooking knowledge to the younger generations ([Bowen & Devine, 2011](#); [Stringer, 2009](#)). For instance, the younger generation has embraced convenience culture through pre-prepared, packaged, and on-the-go foods, which lessens their interest in adopting domestic and traditional cooking from their mothers.

Muslims in the Philippines are part of thirteen ethnolinguistic groups, each with a home region in Mindanao and Sulu, which have almost seven million, equivalent to 6.4% of the population. Laguna, like other provinces in the Philippines, has a rising Muslim community of over 12,000 people. While the majority immigrated from Mindanao, others were born in Laguna to Muslim migrant parents. This raises the question of how they preserved their identity in terms of culture, spirituality, and even gastronomy.

The act of migration requires ethnic groups to leave their cultural and familial connections to start a new way of living. Cultural, religious, linguistic, and lifestyle differences present significant challenges for migrants transitioning from Muslim to non-Muslim regions. Muslim food culture is a reflection of Islamic culture, which is linked to religious beliefs, values, and ethics regarding food. Thus, they do not buy and eat all or any kind of food available in the markets. They would carefully check the food products, packaging, and even the menus being offered in restaurants in relation to Islamic rules. Some students who migrated to non-Muslim countries encountered recommendations to eat vegetarian meals using non-halal products. Cultural food insecurity, or lack of access to traditional foods, also limits the ability to engage meaningfully in their culture ([Alonso et al., 2018](#); [Power, 2008](#); [Wright et al., 2021a](#)). To Muslim consumers, limited access to halal foods causes anxiety ([Wright et al., 2021b](#)). Others would experience finding halal foods in supermarkets as difficult and stressful.

While previous research has examined food knowledge transmission among Malay, AINU, and other indigenous groups, few studies have explored how Muslim migrant families in non-Muslim regions retain and transmit their culinary traditions. This research addresses the lack of empirical studies on the transmission of food knowledge among Muslim migrant ethnic groups. Moreover, it addresses the gap by focusing on Muslim migrants in the Philippines and examining how their food knowledge transmission is affected by migration. This study aims to address the following research questions:

1. How is ethnic food knowledge transmitted among Muslim-migrant families?
2. How did the participants describe the cultural significance of their ethnic food?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Muslim Ethnic Groups

The Maranao are a Maguindanao splinter tribe that has converted to Islam. They trace their religious roots back to Sharif Kabunsuan, who introduced Islam to the region. Lanao, which means "lake," is the name of their country, and their first town was located here. Communities are centered on a mosque and an organ, a royal residence belonging to the area's most powerful economic family ([Bara, 2017](#)).

The Yakan, on the other hand, are an indigenous Muslim tribe from the tropical island of Basilan in the Philippines. They converted to Islam in the final part of the 15th century. According to [Bara \(2017\)](#), the Yakans' culture is identical to that of the Tausugs, whose core is based on the spirit of martabat. Yakan people, who live in the Sulu Archipelago in the Philippines' southernmost area, are known for their outstanding techni-color geometric weaving and unusual facial ornaments.

Lastly, the Tausug or Suluk are the Islamized ethnic tribes in the Sulu archipelago. They are proud Muslims who are known for their tenacity despite the Spanish conquistadors. They are well-known for being the greatest pearl divers in the world, in addition to being the best, valiant, and ruthless fighters of independence. The Tausug are devout Sunni Muslims who adhere to Sunni Islamic doctrines and customs. However, they believe in ghosts that inhabit nature, particularly rocks and trees (De Jong, 2010).

Knowledge Transfer

Knowledge transfer is described as one-way, focused knowledge exchange that occurs between individuals, groups, or organizations when the information recipient has cognitive comprehension, the ability to employ the knowledge, or applies the knowledge (Sharif et al., 2016). Observation, word of mouth, and hands-on activities are examples of transmission modalities. During the process of knowledge transfer, a wide range of contacts occur from one party to another, whether between people or groups, to the organization (Wilson et al., 2013). The process of knowledge transfer begins with determining who the knowledge holder is within the company and attempting to encourage and persuade them to share. Prepare a sharing system so that the transfer plan can be carried out easily. After measuring to ensure transfer, use the knowledge before the last phase of monitoring and assessment (Szulanski, 2000).

Food Knowledge

Food knowledge about traditional dishes is a concept coined to acknowledge the importance of the relationship between traditional culture and healthy communities (Kwik, 2008). Without knowledge of traditional dishes, individuals, families, and communities cannot provide quality, healthy food for themselves. Block et al. (2011) categorized food knowledge into three: a) conceptual or declarative knowledge which means being able to read and acquire knowledge about food; b) procedural knowledge related on how to get food, how to prepare food; and c) the ability, opportunity, and motivation to apply or use that knowledge.

On the other hand, the local food culture related to knowledge, practices, and beliefs about rural, remote, and farming communities is considered informal knowledge (Gartaula et al., 2020). It is a systematic body of knowledge acquired by people through the accumulation of their experiences through informal experiments, coupled with an intimate understanding of culture (Warren & Rajasekaran, 1993).

Food Knowledge Transmission

Few researchers characterized food knowledge as the oral transmission of information about food production through generations within a community of an ethnic group (Milburn, 2004; Kuhnlein et al. 2009; Guerrero et al., 2009). This is referred to as the act of passing on the cultural tradition of sharing food provisioning skills, techniques and cultural beliefs that are being carried by generations through cooking skills, techniques and recipes (Nor et al., 2012). Cooking procedures, food skills, and food etiquette are interconnected and person-centered processes that involve a range of abilities necessary to prepare and present traditional meals that are safe, healthy, and culturally meaningful. Food knowledge transmission refers to the transfer of skills in producing traditional foods that are highly associated with cultural identity (Sharif et al., 2018). Food traditions reflect the customs of ethnic cultures and are sometimes related to religious practices. An effective knowledge transfer process should include the application of the knowledge, followed by monitoring and evaluation (Szulanski, 2000). Food knowledge can be gained through parents, family members, and community members, as well as during social or festive occasions (Kwik, 2008; Trichopoulou et al., 2007; Yohannes, 2009).

[Sharif et al. \(2013\)](#) mentioned that the transfer of family food knowledge from one generation to the next is part of the informal education scenario. The process generally occurred spontaneously and involved mothers and daughters. This practice has become a tradition of common families of all ethnicities. It was taught by one generation to the next through word-of-mouth, hands-on activities, observation, and consumption of foods. [Schonpflug and Yan \(2013\)](#) highlighted the role of mothers in their involvement and influence as mediators of food insecurity.

Recent studies further support these findings, such as [Ee \(2023\)](#) reported that food habits and eating behaviors were passed down from their parents, with family narratives being seen as ways parents explain the reasoning behind their eating habits and behavior at family mealtimes. Family recipes also play a significant role in transmitting and reinforcing behaviors and traditions through generations. They are often passed down within families by their grandmothers to their mothers, and participants expect to receive family recipes from their mothers when they have their own families.

There are also instances in which food knowledge can be acquired from familial and communal knowledge transmission. [Rodyna \(2023\)](#) noted that migrants often engaged in knowledge-sharing by forging connections with local and virtual community networks like online communication platforms (such as WhatsApp and Facebook). Despite the strong desire among youth to learn traditional food knowledge, challenges such as disconnection from knowledge bearers and the need to balance work and home responsibilities in their Western cultural context hinder the effective transmission of food traditions ([Divakarla et al., 2020](#)).

Empirical studies have focused on the transmission of food knowledge among ethnic groups. For instance, [Rodyna \(2023\)](#) explored the foodways among Muslim migrants in Canada. [Ezme \(2016\)](#) explored Muslim immigrants' food choice behavior, highlighting the effect of location on preferences. [Nor et al. \(2012\)](#) focused on investigating transmission modes of Malay traditional food knowledge within generations and revealed observation as the main mode of transmission used by Malay families. [Iwasaki-Goodman \(2017\)](#) examined traditional food use in the Ainu indigenous community of northern Japan which exhibits the role of community events in sharing traditional Ainu food as communal food. [Bowen and Devine \(2011\)](#) investigated how migration, acculturation, and family contexts influenced food choices. In the results, four types of food choices emerged: everybody cooks, tradition keeper, seeker, and on my own. [Tallara et al. \(2023\)](#) examined how the association between people and food can advance interreligious understanding of Maranao-Muslim migrants' food culture in Quaiipo Manila. Moreover, it also explores Pagana, a banquet showcasing traditional Maranao recipes, and how it can be reenacted or replicated. The food knowledge transmission in this study was presented through the Pagana, where food and culture are shared in a shared space with the community. This shows how food produces knowledge by sitting and eating together at the same table. It is not a familial sharing of food knowledge, but of the community.

A study by [Ferrera \(2011\)](#) explored the connection between food and identity by examining the effect of halal food on Muslim immigrants' ethnic identity. The results of the study emphasize how halal food plays a crucial role in how Muslims connect with each other and their identities. Although not focused on food knowledge transmission, an interesting result of the study mentioned that respondents admitted to abandoning their culinary traditions and religious dietary guidelines during the first years of immigration, but returned to the religious guidelines. This could affect the sharing of traditional food knowledge among children. Opposite to this, the qualitative study by [Aljaroudi \(2018\)](#) investigated how immigration affects the food choices of immigrants in Canada. The results show that Arab immigrants strive to maintain their traditional eating practices and food choices. They even avoid eating out in restaurants unless there are special occasions. Moreover, it was reported that since traditional foods are widely available, it is easier to maintain their practices;

however, their concern lies in the expensive cost of food and the lack of authentic flavor. This study does not explicitly mention traditional food knowledge transmission; however, if people are continuously practicing it and there are available ingredients, then it is possible that traditional food knowledge is being transmitted to their children. Compared with the majority of previous research, this research addresses the empirical gap in the knowledge transmission of Muslim migrant ethnic groups.

This study is anchored on two theories: Social Learning Theory by [Bandura \(1971\)](#) and Translocalism ([Greiner & Sakdapolrak, 2013](#)). Together, these theories provide an explanation and understanding of how Muslim migrants preserve and transmit food knowledge. The social learning theory by [Bandura \(1977\)](#) proposed that learning occurs through observation, imitation, and modeling and is influenced by factors such as attention, motivation, attitudes, and emotions. Through this theory, learning occurs because people observe other people's behaviors. This is relevant in explaining how the younger generation learned ethnic food knowledge from their parent's knowledge bearers. For instance, children often start learning how to start cooking their traditional dishes when they are asked to watch and imitate the cooking techniques, select and buy ingredients in the market and prepare meals during feasts, occasions and rituals.

The second theory is translocalism, derived from transnationalism, which emphasizes immigrants' connection to their home country and suggests that these connections affect their current experiences ([Salami et al., 2020](#)). Translocalism focuses on cross-border migration, highlighting how migrants maintain cultural ties and practices within different regions within the same country ([Hoerder, 2013](#)). Similar to transnationalism, translocalism connects and influences different localities and people at the same time. Exchange is based on goods, commodities, money (including trades or remittances) or the exchange of information, ideas, and identities, or the exchange of services and labor ([Peth, 2021](#)). In the context of food knowledge transmission, translocalism explains how Muslim migrants sustain their traditional culinary heritage through communication with relatives from home, participation in cultural events, and engagement in online activities ([Salami et al., 2020](#)). These exchanges influence how food knowledge is adapted, maintained and shared across different localities.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study utilized a qualitative approach, specifically a case study, as defined by [Creswell \(2013\)](#) is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores real-life, contemporary bounded systems or multiple bounded systems over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information like observations, interviews, audiovisual material, documents, and reports. This approach was used based on the objective of the case study research design to provide an in-depth understanding of the case related to ethnic food knowledge transmission employed by Muslim migrant families.

To identify the key informants of the study, purposive sampling was used. This was adopted based on the assumption that these individuals have key knowledge and information related to the topic. This research identified four (4) informants from the Muslim ethnic group. This is within the suggested number of participants or cases, as suggested by [Creswell \(2013\)](#), to examine these cases in-depth. According to [Yin \(2014\)](#), case study research does not include more than four or five cases in a single study. This allows ample opportunity to identify the themes of the cases and conduct cross-case analysis.

Selection criteria were set to include key informants with experience, knowledge or expertise in food knowledge transmission. The following criteria were applied: 1) Muslim migrants living in the Province of Laguna for 5 years or more; 2) they belonged to Muslim ethnic groups: Maranao, Maguindanao, Yakan, and Tausug.

Initially, we could identify only three groups of participants. Because of this, the researcher employed snowball sampling, wherein the informants were asked to refer another informant with the same experience who qualified for the selection criteria. The researchers developed a semi-structured interview guide as an instrument and validated it by the research panel members before the data gathering. As part of the ethical considerations, participants were given a copy of the consent letter before the commencement of the interview, which informs them of their rights, outlines the objectives of the study, data privacy clause and statement that emphasizes the confidentiality and exclusivity of results to the academe.

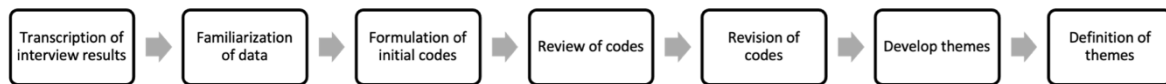


Figure 1. Researcher's Conceptualized Method of Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis, through an inductive approach, was used to analyze the data. Presented in Figure 1 is the conceptualized method of thematic analysis by the researchers. This figure presents the procedure employed by the researcher at the time of data collection. It started with the transcription of interview results, which included translation because some answers were provided by key informants in Tagalog and their native tongue. Through reading, taking notes, and familiarization, the researchers formulated initial codes using a spreadsheet application. This was refined where some were combined, revised, leading to developed themes.

To ensure the accuracy and validity of the responses of the participants, the researchers analyzed data from several sources. This included having our transcribed interviews validated by the participants, conducting observations, and confirming findings in the existing literature.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study. This study focuses on the transmission of food knowledge among Muslim migrant families from the ethnic groups of Yakan, Maranao, Maguindanao, and Tausug. This section explores the types of knowledge transferred based on the names of dishes, ingredients, and procedures, the learning process, and their cultural significance.

Table 1 presents the distribution of the key informants' demographic profiles in terms of age, sex, civil status, and educational attainment. This indicates that the majority of the key informants belong to the age range of 19-22 years old, equal male and female participants, and single with the highest educational attainment of bachelor's degree.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Key Informants

| Demographic Profile | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Age | 19-22 | 3 | 75% |
| | 34-37 | 1 | 25% |
| Sex | Male | 2 | 50% |
| | Female | 2 | 50% |
| Civil Status | Married | 1 | 25% |
| | Single | 3 | 75% |
| Educational Attainment | Bachelor's degree | 3 | 75% |
| | Secondary | 1 | 25% |

N=4

Food Knowledge Transmission

Many family customs have been passed down through the centuries. Keeping children alive

in the family is an excellent method to teach children about the family's cultural and religious heritage. UNESCO (n.d.) discussed intangible cultural heritage and mentioned knowledge transfer as one of the strategies to safeguard heritage. In detail, it was stated that safeguarding them is about the transfer of knowledge, skills, and meaning. In other words, safeguarding focuses on the processes involved in transmitting or communicating intangible cultural heritage from generation to generation, rather than on the production of its concrete manifestations, such as a dance performance, a song, a music instrument or a craft.

Table 2. Types of Knowledge Transferred

| Types of Information | Knowledge Transmitted |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Name of the dishes | <i>Piaparan, Sinina, Suwan-suwan, and Kennah</i> |
| Ingredients | Turmeric, <i>palapa</i> , coconut milk |
| Procedure | Stew |

Table 2 discusses the types of food knowledge transferred by Muslim migrants' knowledge bearers to their children. This involves understanding the names of the dishes, ingredients, and procedures used. The first type of knowledge transferred is the names of traditional dishes. It is said that passing the knowledge, even with just the names of the dishes, is important to preserve heritage and maintain a connection to their cultural identity. The next type of knowledge transferred included turmeric, palapa, and coconut milk. One of the key informants quoted that in terms of ingredients or raw materials, they always used fresh crops that they usually plant and raise when they were in Mindanao. Participant 3, knowledge bearer quoted:

"For crops, we plant and, at the same time, we also buy. We plant crops and then go fishing (Nagtatanim-tanim tapos bibili rin, tanim-tanim, nangingisda-ngisda din)" – Participant 3

All four knowledge bearers mentioned the difference in the raw materials used. It was extremely unavoidable for them since they usually used local-sourced and fresh products and crops when cooking in their original region, as opposed to the place where they migrated, the province of Laguna, which is more likely full of preservatives and substitutes. Other participants expressed differences in available resources like edible leafy vegetables, freshly picked ingredients, and fish. On the other hand, according to [Brendan and Carter \(2019\)](#), becoming agriculturally sustainable through farming more native ingredients could save vast amounts of water and remove the swaths of chemical treatments used in broad-acre farming. It could also empower indigenous communities and add value to their land. The findings of the study by [Rodyna \(2023\)](#) discussed the lack of access to culturally appropriate foods like halal food and meat, which diminished and heightened stress due to the anxiety of finding no one with the same culture and religion interacts with them in the community.

The third type of transferred knowledge is the cooking procedure. Some key informants mentioned the presence of stew. Many Muslim dishes are prepared through slow cooking methods, such as stewing. This is highlighted in the number of Muslim dishes like Chicken stew, mutton, Tiyula, and black soup. Stewing, as described by [Gavin \(2020\)](#), is a combination cooking method in which small, uniform pieces of meat are immersed in liquid and slowly simmered. Stewing allows the slow combination of flavors from one ingredient to another. Aside from that, it helps tenderize the ingredients such as mutton, beef, and lamb, and at the same time, retain nutrients from them.

Furthermore, the key informants mentioned that they do not use exact measurements when cooking because it is up to the cook to decide how much of each ingredient to use. This practice is locally referred to as "*tantsa*," which means to estimate or gauge. This is the same whether they are

in their native land or in the migrated locality, emphasizing that no changes were made in their way of cooking. Participant 4 stated:

“We don’t. We only estimate [flavorings] according to the person who cooks (Wala naman. Tantsa tsantsa lang depende sa nagluluto)” – Participant 4.

This estimation method is a deeply ingrained aspect of the Filipino culinary tradition. When children were first taught to cook by their parents, measurements were introduced as part of the learning process, but later on, children brought their personal touch to their cooking. Highlighting that instead of sticking to the book in cooking their recipes, many Filipino cooks rely on their experience, intuition, and taste preference, not only based on their own selves but also considering the person who will eat the food, in adjusting the taste and flavor. This is supported by a statement by Newman, a Filipino cookbook author, who stated that “in the Philippines, food is all about customization” (Ayoub, 2024). This underscores the idea that Filipino cooking is less about following precise measurements and more about adapting dishes to suit individual tastes and preferences.

Oral administration is the common method employed by parent key informants when transferring food knowledge to their children. This is the common form of knowledge transmission because it is the universal ability of humans to communicate. It is said that language is a system of vocal signs specific to members of the same community; it is an instrument of communication within that same community and, from a sociolinguistic point of view, a symbol of identity and cultural belonging (Oumar, 2022). In addition to this, observation was also used in learning. Based on the statements of the key informants, they shared that most of their knowledge came from their mother. Participant 2 stated:

“I learned to cook from my mother, I watch her while she was cooking then that’s how I know how to cook (Sa nanay ko ako natuto magluto, pinapanood ko siya habang ngluluto tapos dun ako natuto magluto)” – Participant 2

This emphasizes the role that mothers play in transmitting ethnic food knowledge among Muslim migrant families. Rodyna (2023) mentioned that women play a significant role in food preparation processes and the transfer of traditional food knowledge. Since food is considered a source of connection, care and evoking loving memories, food cooked connected to ethnic roots and tradition brings comfort to migrants in times of stress and isolation from their community (Wright et al., 2021b). Iwasaki-Goodman (2017) explained how food knowledge transfer was specific to gender. In the context of their research, knowledge related to hunting and fishing was transferred from father to son, while knowledge related to food foraging and preparation was transferred from mother to daughter. Men often have less time to develop cooking skills due to work commitments, whereas women are more likely to spend their day managing household responsibilities, including childcare and meal preparation. This reflects the familial tradition of a Muslim family. Even as women migrate, they often cook at home while men work (Ezme, 2016).

The findings highlight how food knowledge receivers commonly learn from a combination of verbal, observational, and experiential learning. This is practiced in cooking, whereas the mother or father, who is the knowledge bearer, cooks a certain dish and demonstrates, verbalizes the ingredients and cooking process, and their children, who are the receivers, listen and watch. Tejedor (2008) stated that the method of transmission of this cultural heritage is essentially based on dialogue and the telling of stories by the elders, combined with observation and practice of the knowledge that is at the heart of the learning process. In other words, children and young people

appreciate collective knowledge by observing and reproducing the activities of the elderly and adults, thanks to a permanent dialogue between the two groups.

Continuous observation and practice helped in the absorption of food knowledge transmission. It is typical for households to have the knowledge bearers (mother) to demonstrate foodways to learners (child) once or twice, then letting them do the practice of cooking on their own on the next turn. Having a close connection with family members sharing the same cultural background significantly affects children's continued engagement in the practice of preparing ethnic foods (Rodyna, 2023).

For some key informants, the recipient of food knowledge can vary depending on who is available and willing to learn. If the receiver is eager to learn, he or she is more likely to absorb the knowledge imparted by the bearer. This explains that the attitude of the receiver of the ethnic food knowledge also affects how they absorb the knowledge being transferred to them. They believe that if their children are willing to accept and comprehend the culinary process, they will gain knowledge. This process was carried out by observations and through teaching from the bearer, and one participant stated that they had acquired a culinary book from their ancestors. To preserve ethnic cultural identity, family food traditions should be passed down and evolved in tandem with social and technological change (Shariff, 2018). They added that in some cases, there is some different knowledge coming from the extended family. Participant 3 stated:

"Our family, [its] directly from my from father, others are from my cousin (Ah sa pamilya, yung direct sa tata ko, yung iba sa pinsanIn)" – Participant 3.

This study is anchored on two theories: Social Learning Theory by Bandura (1977) and Translocalism (Greiner & Sakdapolrak, 2013). Together, these theories provide an explanation and understanding of how Muslim migrants preserve and transmit food knowledge.

The social learning theory by Bandura (1977) proposed that learning occurs through observation, imitation, and modeling and is influenced by factors such as attention, motivation, attitudes, and emotions. Through this theory, learning occurs because people observe other people's behaviors. This is relevant in explaining how the younger generation learned ethnic food knowledge from their parent's knowledge bearers. For instance, children often start learning how to start cooking their traditional dishes when they are asked to watch and imitate the cooking techniques, select and buy ingredients in the market and prepare meals during feasts, occasions and rituals.

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Cultural Significance

Even away from their birthplaces, food is a way for them to connect with their ethnic roots. This is observed in how food keeps people rooted in their religion, origin, and culture. Furthermore,

discursive and material food practices continue to reflect and adapt to diverse economic, social, and political contexts, reinforcing the connection between food and religious identity. This highlights how food-related practices are not only sustained but also transformed into various economic, social, cultural, and religious elements that adapt to different environments while maintaining their core significance.

Based on these statements, there are certain occasions when dishes were specifically prepared and consumed. Participant 4 stated:

"Sometimes when there is occasion for example Ed'l Fitr or the end of Ramadan and the kanduri (Minsan kapag may occasion, tulad pag ed'l fitr o yung tapusan ng Ramadan tsaka (ka)pag nag kakanduri)" – Participant 4

The respondent cites examples like the well-known celebration for the Muslim community; the Eid Al Fitr, which they celebrate after a month of fasting and meditation. There is also the native term "*kanduri*" which is said to mean thanksgiving. There are also some other answer that tells different circumstances, emphasizing that the dish can also be served at any time of the day. Participant 2 quoted:

"Any time of the day, you can cook the dish (Kahit anong raw pwede n'yong lutuin)" – Participant 2

Just like Christians and Catholic people, there are some prayers that Muslims have before eating. Participant 3 mentioned the following:

"Before we eat, we should say prayer "Allahuma barik lana fima razaqtana waqina athabannar" (Bago humain dapat sinai muna "Allahuma barik lana fima razaqtana waqina athabannar")" – Participant 3

These prayers that they recite came from the Qur'an that has been shared by the key informants, as stated in the Arabic language, "*Allahuma bark lana fima razaqtana wawina athabannar*" which has been translated as "Allah bless the food You have given us and save us from the sin of hell". It symbolizes that every dish they take and cook was mostly made in the process of glorifying and praising Allah.

Like many religions, Islam prescribes a set of dietary guidelines for its believers to follow: In general, Islamic dietary law distinguishes between food and drink that are allowed—called *halal*—and those that are prohibited—*haram*. These rules serve to bond followers together as part of a cohesive group and, according to some scholars, they also serve to establish a unique Islamic identity. For Muslims, the dietary rules for allowed and forbidden foods are fairly straightforward. The rules for killing allowed food animals are more complicated. Islam shares much in common with Judaism with regard to dietary rules, even though in many other areas, Qur'anic law has focused on establishing distinctions between Jews and Muslims. The similarity in dietary laws is likely a result of the similar ethnic backgrounds of these Abrahamic religious groups.

Muslims are allowed to eat what is "good" (Quran 2:168)—that is, food and drink identified as pure, clean, wholesome, nourishing, and pleasing to the taste. In general, everything is allowed (*halal*), except for what is specifically forbidden. Under certain circumstances, even prohibited food and drink can be consumed without the consumption being considered a sin. For Islam, a "law of necessity" allows for prohibited acts to occur if no viable alternative exists. For example, in an instance of possible starvation, it would be considered non-sinful to consume otherwise forbidden

food or drink if no halal were available (Huda, 2019).

The statements shared by the key informants indicate a significant cultural legacy that persists in their culinary practices despite being from a migrated locality. Participant 4 noted:

“Culture is still applied in our food such as the use turmeric and palapa that are main ingredients in our cooking (Naa-apply din sa pagkain ang kultura tulad ng paggamit ng luyang dilaw o yung tawag dito na turmeric at palapa, pangunahing gamit yun sa pagluluto samen)” – Participant 4

This indicates that certain resources and ingredients serve as markers of ethnic identity. Turmeric and “palapa”—the toasted mixture of chili and grated coconut meat—are typically used when cooking most of their dishes. This symbolizes the nativity of their dishes because of the different tastes that are mostly used by their respective ethnic groups. Palapa, in particular, originated from the Maranao people of Lanao del Sur. Ortil (2020) stated that palapa is an important cultural symbol of the Maranao people and is a ubiquitous accompaniment to every meal. This is mainly due to sakurai, a distinct flavor of Maranao cuisine, as mentioned in Malig (2019). This vegetable-like scallion is found in Lanao and is one of the main ingredients in palapa. The same article compared the cultural significance of palapa and kimchi in Korean culture. This underscores the deep-rooted cultural importance of these ingredients and their role in preserving the culinary heritage of the respective ethnic groups.

According to the participants’ perspectives, the innovations made to ethnic meals depend on the resources or raw materials used to produce the dish. The following generation of Muslim groups highlighted that the flavor of food was determined by the availability of the dish’s major ingredients. They are using substitutes for items that are not accessible in Laguna, where they previously resided. Effective knowledge transfer and innovation efforts in the agro-food supply chain may encourage all vertical producers to increase their competitiveness while saving resources (Ratinger et al., 2013).

Themes Emerged

Through thematic synthesis, the systematic coding of data and generating descriptive and analytical themes (Nicholson et al., 2016), the qualitative data gathered, coded, and grouped together to develop the themes that emerged. Table 2 presents the themes that emerged from the responses of the participants.

Table 2. Themes Emerged

| Themes | Sub-Themes |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| Learning | Oral Tradition |
| | Observation |
| | Willingness to learn |
| Culinary practice | Ingredients |
| | Alternatives |
| | Estimation |
| | Availability |
| | Distinct flavor |
| Culture | Religion |
| | Special occasion |

a. Learning

This theme emphasizes the process that food knowledge receivers practice in relation to their ethnic cuisines. This is based on the subthemes of oral tradition, observation, and willingness to learn. This highlights the processes of verbal and observation that the participants mentioned how they learned how to cook their ethnic dishes.

b. Culinary practice

This theme was based on subthemes including ingredients, alternatives, estimation, availability, and distinct flavors. These sub-themes collectively describe the knowledge they learned from their parents and how they adjusted their recipes and ingredients to reflect their geographical location.

c. Culture

This was based on the imminent practice and tradition of cooking ethnic dishes despite their distance from their homeland. The influence of religion in culinary practices can be seen in their preparation and consumption. This included strict adherence to dietary laws based on Islamic beliefs like Halal, as well as rituals and prayers associated with eating. Moreover, the preparation of specific dishes for religious and cultural celebrations like Eid Al Fitr highlights the role of food in these celebrations.

CONCLUSIONS

The study found that the food knowledge transferred among the Muslim migrant families is based on the names of the dishes, ingredients, and procedures. They are transmitted through oral instruction, observation, hands-on cooking, and communal cooking. It was highlighted based on their responses that the raw materials used for their recipes of traditional food were mostly fresh, picked directly from farms and caught from the seas. However, their migration to a different locality has affected their foodways and recipes and adaptations are based on what is available in the market.

Four different Muslim groups, including Maranao, Maguindanao, Yakan, and Tausug, prepared specific ethnic foods on some occasions like Eid Al Fitr and Kanduri. The dishes were prepared and consumed in accordance with the will of Allah. They used to cook the dishes to signify their respective groups' culture and beliefs. They made foods represent the culture and beliefs of their distinct communities. This emphasizes the concept related to the translocalism framework (Greiner & Sakdapolrak, 2013), which initially only focused on migration networks, remittances, geography, and social resilience.

This research demonstrates how Muslim migrants sustain their ethnic food knowledge traditions and transmission, further adding cultural remittance to the framework, despite moving to other regions in the Philippines. Different initiatives, programs, and activities were organized by different sectors of the Philippine government to protect and preserve heritage. This also includes preserving the indigenous heritage of ethnic groups. There are legal frameworks like of the Indigenous People's Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997, education and awareness campaigns, prioritization of heritage-related research through digitization, and use of technology and AI funded by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), National Research Council of the Philippines (NRCP), and even the Intellectual Property of the Philippines (IPOPhil). This highlights the recognition of the Philippine government in ensuring the preservation and protection of the transferred ethnic food knowledge.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

Since the research was conducted during the pandemic, contact with other Muslim migrant

ethnic group members in the province is limited. This significantly affected engagement, and the data extracted from the key informants. Unlike in a face-to-face interview setting, there is limited time to establish a comfortable environment in which key informants can freely express their thoughts during the interview. It has been noted that even with one of the researchers and facilitator of the interview sharing the same religion as the participants, the invisible barrier between computer monitors has taken a toll on the interview process and data extraction.

It is imperative that future researchers expand the choice of participants and comfortably conduct data gathering through face-to-face interviews, unlike online conferencing. Moreover, the researcher proposed an output of a recipe book of ethnic foods based on the participants' statements and instructions that may be used in food knowledge transmission related to their food, culture, and origin.

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