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Research Article

The Beliefs and Practices Embedded in the *Pasanghid* Ritual of the Talaandig Tribe

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About Article

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ABSTRACT

The language of the Talaandig tribe serves as a reflection of their identity. This paper explores the beliefs and customs of the Talaandig tribe in Lantapan, Bukidnon, as embedded in the language of their "Pasanghid" ritual. The study uses the ritual language as a framework to understand the tribe's identity and worldview. A qualitative design under descriptive research was employed, with an ethnographic approach for direct interaction and observation. Semi-structured instruments and open-ended questionnaires, adapted from Orobio (2013), were used to gather cultural terms and explore the tribe's beliefs. The researcher participated in the "Pasanghid" ritual to gain a deeper understanding of its significance. The "Pasanghid" ritual involves offerings and prayers to the spirits, especially the "Apu" (ancestors), to seek permission and express gratitude. It reflects the Talaandig belief that communication with the spirits, including Magbabaya, the Supreme Deity, is essential for a prosperous life. Ritual terms, spoken by the baylan (ritual leader), are integral to these communications, preserving the tribe's identity and cultural values. The study reveals that the ritual language is deeply tied to the tribe's spiritual beliefs, highlighting the importance of ritualistic practices to maintain harmony and prevent misfortune. The findings recommend further studies on the language used in indigenous rituals, which could help preserve and promote the cultural heritage of the Talaandig tribe and other indigenous groups in the Philippines.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Faith is an integral element of culture, encompassing rituals. Bowie (2021) describes a ritual as a designated type of public worship or the execution of a holy sacrament, including social events and activities. A ritual is a set of official activities that demonstrate religious or holy ideals through group actions. The elders lead all tribe members to attend this ceremony, especially the youth, who are expected to carry it on to the next generation. The Talaandig tribe continues to perform rituals that they wish to pass down to their children, keeping their culture and identity alive.

According to Bell (1991), rituals are a form of social documentation and pedagogy. It means that rituals preserve and teach a society's values, beliefs, and traditions through repeated social practices. Thus, rituals can convey a group's beliefs, attitudes, and ideologies. Rituals represent the identity of the Talaandig tribe because they are part of their cultural system and societal practices. They value the power of *Magbabaya*, whom they believe has the strength and influence to bring good fortune or positive outcomes in the lives of the indigenous people. Therefore, they take care to perform actions that will not bring misfortune or significant problems to the tribe.

Furthermore, Bell (1992) explained that ritual sequences are characterized by repetition and structured rhythms, which shape and coordinate participants' thoughts, emotions, and behaviors within a shared social context. Rituals employ repeated and organized actions to influence and align participants' thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, thereby fostering unity and a shared understanding within a group. In other words, there is only one ceremony for performing rituals, as seen in the rituals carried out by the Talaandig tribe in Lantapan, Bukidnon. This finding is consistent with the research of Hodson *et al.* (2018), which validates that rituals are ceremonies of organized, symbolic activities typically characterized by formality, repetition, and shared meaning. These rites help participants strengthen their social ties, cultural identity, emotional control, and sense of support, which are fundamental components of ceremonial events.

Meanwhile, according to Manansala's (2005) study on the beliefs of the Ibaloi, all critical decisions related to the Ibaloi's daily lives must align with the will of the gods and spirits. He explains that the Ibaloi base all major life decisions on guidance from gods and spirits. Hence, a ritual ceremony is performed to express gratitude, seek advice, ask for forgiveness, and other reasons.

The language of rituals reflects the tribe's beliefs and customs. Rituals are inextricably linked to symbols and meanings. Every word and action used in a ritual serves as a reflection of the tribe's identity. Many beliefs surround the language of their rituals, but the dominant belief is the tribe's firm adherence to the spirit of spirituality. Their belief in the spirits also represents and defines their identity. A person's faith and spirituality are based on their beliefs, as Covar (1998) mentioned, which means they are rooted in the traditions and convictions that shape how a person understands the divine. Therefore, the more frequently a person's language is used, the more one can understand and recognize their identity and the entirety of their being.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The history of rituals in the Philippines is vibrant. In Filipino culture and consciousness, rituals and ceremonial practices are given various meanings and interpretations across different levels. Rituals are a modern spirit and a seed within the identity of Filipinos (Salanga, 2007), serving as a contemporary expression and a foundational element of Filipino identity. Historically, many of the ancestors of the Talaandig tribe in Lantapan, Bukidnon, practiced rituals that showcased unique aspects of their distinct culture. This tribe is deeply rooted in indigenous culture, which is evident during various occasions, gatherings, and ceremonies that serve to fulfill their beliefs and worship their deity, *Magbabaya*. In Polenda & Elkins' (1989) work, they describe the rituals, ceremonies, practices, customs, and society of the Talaandig tribe based on narratives and their worldview. There are specific months and events during which the Talaandig perform rituals, such as *Pasanghid*, *Panalawahig*, *Panendan ta Balite*, and others. They consider these significant tribal rituals because they are performed yearly or during special occasions. These rituals reflect the social, economic, and political aspects of the Talaandig's life. They perform various rituals before engaging in any activities related to their way of life. It is how they establish communication with the spirits they believe help them in their daily activities and, most importantly, with *Magbabaya*. Palabrica (2021) affirms this by stating that the dances of the Higaonon symbolize good health and abundant crops. Thus, dancing has become an integral part of their rituals. They perform these to show respect and faith in their recognized deity, *Magbabaya*.

The sounds, songs, symbols, and even human gestures carry profound meaning in every indigenous ritual ceremony. According to Peirce (1935), it is natural for humans to use symbols and signs. The words used today to represent something physical, abstract, or an idea validate this. As a result, the intended message is understood, comprehended, and conveyed to those who seek to learn it. Human creativity has crafted various objects to represent the identity of a tribe, and the Talaandig is no exception. These elements envelop our beliefs about the world and everything related to human life. Sykes (1992) also discussed this, noting that these symbols are linked to the social experiences and historical context of the tribe. The formation of the tribe's society led to meticulous analysis, tracing, and categorization of its material culture, which was then compared to the social relationships and symbolic dimensions of its social activities.

Material objects, tools, or equipment used in rituals are also crucial to the success of the sacred connection during ritual performance. There are specific ceremonies to follow and preparations to be made by the Talaandig. Although they do not reside in one place, they all understand that they must strictly adhere to these practices. During the Kaamulan Festival, held from February to March, and the Talaandig Festival, which features the Panalawahig ritual every October, the Talaandig enthusiastically participate to fulfill their duties as Talaandig and share their traditions with those outside their community. It demonstrates how the rituals are performed to help others understand the significance of their culture and their reverence



for Mother Nature, which sustains human life. Non-indigenous people are also encouraged to participate in dancing and music playing during rituals or ceremonies, as experiencing these traditions firsthand helps them gain a deeper understanding of their culture's meaning.

Since language is an integral part of any culture, interpreting the ritual terms of the Talaandig tribe, embedded in the prominent rituals of the tribe, helps define the type of society they have. This notion was affirmed by Boas (1942), who stated that collecting words in the native language is essential. This means that by studying indigenous languages, we can deepen our understanding and share the cultures of those who speak them with others. The group's true identity is revealed through its language, and the Talaandig tribe is a notable example.

2.1. Statement of the Problem

The study's primary goal is to present and analyze one of the prominent rituals performed by the Talaandig tribe in Lantapan, Bukidnon. The following are the specific questions developed to address the objectives:

1. What is the *Pasanghid* ritual of the Talaandig tribe in Lantapan, Bukidnon?
2. What ritual terms are included in this ritual?
3. What beliefs and customs are reflected in this ritual?

2.2. Framework of the Study

The study focuses on gathering the ritual terms used by the Talaandig tribe. The theory closely related to the current study is cultural relativism, which posits that every culture is unique and distinct. Therefore, the study was conducted to prove that the mentioned tribe indeed possesses a unique culture. As proposed by Malinowski (1944), the theory of Functionalism emphasizes the importance of cultural institutions to which individuals belong, which create a "sense of belonging." On the other hand, the Whorfian hypothesis focuses on the relationship between language and culture. As the Humboldt and Sapir-Whorf theory states, language shapes thought and perception, influencing how individuals understand and interact with the world (Sapir, 1929). Thus, language, culture, and society are inextricably intertwined; they are inseparable. Thus, one can determine an individual's culture through their language.

Many cultural terms are still used in the rituals of the Indigenous Talaandig of Bukidnon. Each type of ritual has its own set of terms, and this study has been successfully conducted through research and the guidance of the theories applied.

3. METHODOLOGY

The primary method used in this study was a qualitative design under descriptive research. The study also employed an ethnographic approach, as the researcher visited the study site multiple times to personally interact with and interview the informants. This direct involvement enabled a deeper understanding of the community's cultural dynamics. Specifically, a semi-structured instrument was adopted from Orobias (2013) to gather cultural terms, allowing for a flexible yet focused approach to understanding the subject matter. Additionally, an open-ended questionnaire, also adopted from Orobias (2013), was used to explore the customs and

beliefs embedded within these cultural terms. Furthermore, the researcher actively participated in the tribe's "*Pasanghid*" ritual, immersing themselves in the cultural context. Following this, interviews and focus group discussions were conducted to gather comprehensive insights, facilitating a clearer interpretation of the data.

This research took place in the area known as Mindanao's "Vegetable and Flower Basket," specifically in Sitio Tulugan, Barangay Songco, located in the Municipality of Lantapan, Bukidnon province, where the Talaandig tribe community resides.

The effectiveness of this study depended on the proper selection of data sources. The informants played a key role in unlocking new knowledge, perspectives, and truths about the unclear aspects of other beliefs and cultures of indigenous tribes in the country. Therefore, setting criteria for selecting informants was crucial, even if only the *Datus* (chieftains) and *Baes* (tribal leaders) were targeted. The following criteria were used in choosing the Talaandig informants: they were native Talaandig speakers with both parents being of Talaandig descent; they were born, raised, and still living in the study area; were 40 years old or older; were knowledgeable about the Talaandig culture and actively participated in significant tribal activities such as rituals; had lived in the community for over 20 years; may have lived elsewhere or abroad for a time due to tribal duties or educational purposes; held a position in Talaandig society; and, finally, they were experts in rituals, from which the data were sourced.

The researcher selected an interpreter and validator from these informants, as the researcher was neither a Talaandig nor fluent in the Talaandig language. This individual also assisted in navigating the community and served as a consultant for purposive sampling in data collection. Convenience sampling was also employed, as the researcher approached the tribal leader, or *Datu*, to identify informants who met the established criteria.

3.1. Ethical Consideration

As a citizen who values and deeply respects fellow Filipinos, the researcher followed the proper procedures and adhered to the requirements of the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) process, as stipulated under Republic Act No. 8371 of 1997, or the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA Law), in acquiring information from the community. The researcher first sought permission from the Municipal Mayor of Lantapan, Bukidnon, and the NCIP Provincial Officer. Following this, the researcher also ensured the consent of the Talaandig tribal leader. Additionally, the researcher obtained permission from *Datu* and *Bae*, who were interviewed, and provided answers to the questions for data collection. The data gathered from the interviews and questionnaire responses were considered confidential and private and will only be officially shared in the content of the research paper.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The tribe inherently believes in the efficacy of rituals. Before undertaking any endeavor, they seek permission from the spirits they believe watch over everything in their environment.



During these moments, they communicate directly with *Magbabaya* and the guardian spirits. As Orobias (2013) rightly asserted, "Communication with powerful beings enables them to live well; any misfortune or negative occurrence is believed to be the work of spirits. Therefore, continuous interaction with these entities through rituals is essential."

Rituals, therefore, form an integral part of the tribe's daily

life. They perform these rites in all aspects of their existence—social, political, and economic. They consider rituals essential to achieving any personal or communal goal. Each word and expression within these ceremonies reflects the tribe's identity and cultural essence. Table 1 below presents the cultural terminologies used in conducting the *Pasanghid* ritual.

Table 1. *Pasanghid* Ritual

Ritual Terminology	Belief	Custom/practice
<i>Apu Ayukusa</i>	There is a guardian spirit of the chicken.	Serious and honest
<i>Badi</i>	It will only be used in the ritual.	Brave and powerful
<i>Bagtingen</i>	The money should be placed in the designated container to prevent loss.	Thrifty and careful
<i>Balagnau</i>	There is a spirit that grants wisdom.	Values knowledge
<i>Bangkasu</i>	Offerings must be given to the guardians of opposing forces to prevent them from obstructing the ritual's purpose.	Values others and is thoughtful
<i>Baung</i>	This symbol ensures that no harm or negativity will affect the ritual's goal.	Respectful to spirits
<i>Dalupa</i>	It will be used in <i>Pabanyug</i> so that the spirits may prepare to receive the offerings in the ritual.	Thoughtful and respectful to spirits
<i>Dengan/Talug- pada</i>	The <i>Dengan/Talugpada</i> accompanies a person at birth. One cannot leave the house without performing a ritual. The <i>Dengan</i> is always present and watches over at all times.	Prayerful and trusting
<i>Dusu hu Baladaw</i>	It is sacred and is only used in rituals.	Brave and powerful
<i>Gepes</i>	A <i>Bae</i> also has power and capability.	Has strong determination
<i>Himulmulan liug ta manuk</i>	Obstacles to the ritual's purpose can be removed.	Determined in life
<i>Inbanting</i>	The scale is the one that balances all things.	Just and fair
<i>Inpanandig</i>	When all needs and purposes are entrusted to the spirits, they will be fulfilled.	Has strong faith and is prayerful
<i>Inumen</i>	The offering of <i>Inumen</i> is an act of honoring the spirits believed in.	Respectful and compassionate
<i>Kalipi</i>	A <i>Datu</i> is a source. A source of information and the primary needs of a person.	Generous, dependable, and prioritizes the welfare of others.
<i>Kamama</i>	There are four elements in the <i>Pangapug</i> ritual.	Values symbols.
<i>Lantung</i>	Problems are a part of life.	Determined and strong-willed.
<i>Libun</i>	A <i>Bae</i> is also a source of information.	Generous.
<i>Lugbak</i>	This is used to settle debts and compensate for any wrongdoing of a person.	Prayerful.
<i>Lutuan</i>	A <i>Datu</i> can support the primary needs of the people under their care.	Generous and dependable.
<i>Luy-a</i>	Prayers immediately have an effect.	Has a strong connection with spirits.
<i>Magbabaya</i>	One must respect not only the Father but also the Grandfather, <i>Magbabaya</i> . <i>Magbabaya</i> is the Grandfather and the source of all things.	Polite to guests and polite to those in power.
<i>Makatu</i>	Every person has a spirit.	Self-confident and respectful to spirits.



<i>Mamaen</i>	Each spirit can sympathize.	Sensitive to the feelings of others.
<i>Mangged</i>	Wealth is essential, whether material or spiritual.	Values wealth.
<i>Manika</i>	Every request will be heard.	Prayerful and has a strong faith.
<i>Manunungaya- wa</i>	There is a spirit that brings misfortune to a person. Protection and defense against evil spirits are necessary.	Has strong faith in spirits.
<i>Maitum ha Manuk</i>	There is a spirit of darkness, misfortune, and problems.	Respect elders or ancestors who may be revered, but also be mindful that they may have been harmed in the past.
<i>Mapula ha Manuk</i>	There is a spirit of <i>Tagulambung</i> that grants the ability to a leader.	Brave, aggressive, makes independent decisions, and keeps their word.
<i>Maputi ha Manuk</i>	There is a spirit of <i>Mulin-ulin</i> that grants wisdom.	Powerful, stable, and wise in decision-making.
<i>Mulin-ulin</i>	The spirit of <i>Mulin-ulin</i> gives wisdom to a person, leading to success.	Prayerful, with strong determination, they keep their word, remain resilient in all situations, and possess self-confidence.
<i>Namiyansa Hu Kahilawan</i>	One should not rely solely on their strength and abilities. Success is not only due to personal strength and capacity but also due to divine favor.	Values received blessings, thrifty, strong relationship with the creator, and humble.
<i>Nanlitan/ nanlaginu</i>	There is a spirit that protects humans.	Has strong beliefs.
<i>Nanangenen Ulagengen</i>	Humans have safety.	Calm at all times, skilled in communication, aggressive and firm in decision-making, and just.
<i>Nanapnay hu Untung</i>	There is a protector that keeps a person safe from harm.	Prayerful
<i>Paghuyop ha luy- a</i>	Any request will be immediately granted.	Has strong faith
<i>Palangesa hu salapi</i>	Every task requires a ritual.	Has strong faith and religious
<i>Pagtalikud hu badi</i>	All obstacles and problems can be overcome or prevented.	Has strong determination and faith
<i>Pagsinalu hu badi</i>	All requests will be fulfilled.	Has strong faith
<i>Pamat-aw/ Saguilaw</i>	They have <i>Tumanud</i> , <i>Dengan</i> , and <i>Tagulambung</i> . If you wish for something, you must give a coin.	Prayerful, and they do not rely on their strength and capacity
<i>Pamuhat</i>	All tasks will succeed when performed with a ritual.	Prayerful and religious
<i>Panampulot (pang.)</i>	This is the time when spirits accept all requests.	Prayerful and has strong faith
<i>Pangampu</i>	For any activity, prayer is required.	Prayerful and respectful to spirits
<i>Panlibatuhan</i>	There is a guardian spirit to protect from danger.	Respectful to spirits and prayerful
<i>Panika</i>	This shows the power and authority of a Bae.	Generous
<i>Panyu ha Kanggan</i>	A symbol of courage.	Values peace
<i>Panyu ha Kikilyu</i>	A symbol of peace.	Demonstrates value for peace
<i>Pasagi</i>	There is a rule of law; laws must be followed and respected. Some regulations require asking the elders to clear duties and responsibilities.	Obedient to elders and the law, and a responsible citizen
<i>Patuluan ta wahig</i>	Used in rituals to calm those feeling anger and as a cleanser for impurities.	Has strong faith, calm and composed at all times
<i>Pinaksuy hu Bae</i>	These are symbols of the power and authority of a Bae.	Fair in decision-making
<i>Pinanghahangan</i>	A Bae shows power and authority.	Fair in decision-making
<i>Tabaku</i>	<i>Tabaku</i> has a significant influence on power.	Generous and a bridge of relationships



<i>Tagbantay Hu Pamulahan</i>	There is a spirit that guards all the crops.	Polite and respectful to spirits
<i>Tagulambung</i>	<i>Tagulambung</i> guides a leader. Without <i>Tagulambung</i> , one may be oppressed.	Has leadership abilities
<i>Tatangkulu</i>	Wearing a <i>Tatangkulu</i> is a sign of power and holds the spirit of <i>Tagulambung</i> .	Respectful and follows those in power
<i>Tumanud</i>	A person has a guardian, and the guardian helps the person succeed.	Self-confident
<i>Untung /bangkoles</i>	A person will have good health and well-being.	Has strong beliefs, self-confident
<i>Wahig</i>	<i>Wahig</i> is used to wash away material or spiritual impurities and has a significant influence on the tribe's way of life.	Calm, humble, with a pure heart

Rituals are an integral part of the Talaandig tribe's way of life. The community regularly invokes the spirits and *Magbabaya*, guided by the belief that doing so protects them from harm and ensures a life of abundance and balance. The Talaandig recognize humanity as part of nature and believe guardian spirits reside in natural elements—such as water, land, trees, and animals. Thus, every interaction with nature—whether drawing water, planting, harvesting, cutting trees, or hunting—requires a ritual to show respect and seek permission from these guardian spirits. These rituals symbolize the tribe's deep reverence for the spiritual forces believed to protect and govern the natural world.

Accessing cultural knowledge, especially from the tribe's intangible heritage, also demands adherence to the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) process, as stipulated in the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA Law). Before engaging in scholarly pursuits or data collection, one must undergo a ritual called *Pasanghid* or *Pananghid*, based on the belief that the source of knowledge is itself protected by spirits. This ritual serves as a gesture of respect and a formal request for guidance and permission from the spiritual guardians of wisdom. Within the Talaandig worldview, no undertaking—particularly one involving cultural exploration—can achieve success without spiritual sanction.

According to *Datu Makapukaw Adolino Saway* (2005), livelihood and spiritual life are deeply intertwined through the belief in the seven elements of nature that sustain all beings." These elements—water, wood, air, earth, fire, language (or speech), and thought—are paired with both material and immaterial realities. The Talaandig believe one cannot discuss land without considering the spirits of water, trees, air, fire, the world, and thought. A harmonious life depends on listening to all seven spirits. Consequently, the tribe performs rituals before and after significant activities, such as farming, hunting, or other forms of Livelihood. This practice reflects spiritual devotion and a profound connection between cultural identity, tradition, and environmental stewardship.

During rituals such as *Pasanghid* or *Pananghid*, specific spirits are called upon, including *Mulin-ulin*, *Tagulambung*, *Dengan*, *Tumanud*, *Apu Ayukusa*, *Namiyansa Hu Kahilawan*, and others. Each spirit holds a particular role and meaning in the community's spiritual framework. The spirits form the center of every ceremony, as they are regarded as the source of all

blessings and intentions and the very reason the rituals take place.

The spirit of *Mulin-ulin* is believed to be the origin of wisdom. This spirit is considered the keeper of knowledge, capable of granting understanding to those who seek it. Within cultural research on the Talaandig, *Mulin-ulin* is regarded as the spiritual figure who provides the knowledge necessary to uncover and appreciate the tribe's cultural depth. The *Pananghid* ritual is performed to attain this wisdom, offering tribute to the spirits guarding the spring of knowledge. A white chicken is offered, which the tribe believes is the preferred nourishment of these spirits. Regular offerings express the community's confidence that their wishes will be fulfilled during the ritual. This demonstrates a devout, resolute faith that the spirits will grant their aspirations. It also reflects a determined cultural ethos—to pursue goals with commitment and devotion, guided by spiritual guardians. The tribe's reverence for the spirit of wisdom is especially evident during rituals, where it receives the highest tribute and honor.

Additionally, the spirit *Tagulambung* plays a crucial role during rituals. The Talaandig believe this spirit grants leadership abilities and guides those who lead the community. A red chicken is offered during the ritual, which is believed to be the appropriate offering for *Tagulambung*. When called upon by a leader, the spirit is said to bestow wisdom, strength, and authority to enact laws and guide the community with integrity. This includes ensuring the implementation of FPIC for anyone who visits or conducts research within the tribe's territory. *Tagulambung* is believed to grant the leader clarity, allowing for the respectful and accurate sharing of cultural knowledge. It also empowers the leader to gain the respect of both community members and outsiders. Through the spirit's influence, the leader acquires a distinct intelligence and cultural insight that protects the tribe's heritage from misrepresentation or exploitation.

This belief is embodied in the current leadership of the Talaandig. The current leader demonstrates exceptional skill in governance and maintains meaningful relationships with people from diverse backgrounds—both locally and internationally. The Talaandig tribe believes that every individual is accompanied by a *Dengan*, a spiritual presence watched over by a guardian spirit known as *Nanapnay Hu Untung*. This spirit is believed to protect individuals from harm and misfortune by offering



constant guidance and ensuring their safety. In childbirth, the *Mangunguyamu*—the traditional midwife of the community—retrieves and preserves the baby's *inunlan* (placental cloth or sacred birth item), placing it above the house's ceiling to safeguard the child. This object is considered a spiritual twin, born alongside the child, serving as its protector throughout life. Such practices reflect the tribe's profoundly religious and prayerful nature, consistently invoking their *Dengan* and *Nanapnay Hu Untung* for protection, regardless of place or circumstance. Items believed to offer spiritual protection are treated with great care and reverence.

This belief system is reflected in various experiences, such as researchers' safe and uninterrupted conduct during their fieldwork. The tribe interprets such protection as a sign that the researcher was accompanied by a *Dengan* and guarded by *Nanapnay Hu Untung*, who kept them from danger. Furthermore, the Talaandig believe each person has a *Tumanud*—a spiritual guide who ensures success in all endeavors. Whatever the individual sets out to achieve is believed to prosper because of the guiding presence of this spirit. The *Tumanud* instills courage, self-confidence, and inner strength. This belief empowers the tribe to face life's challenges with resilience, trusting that they can attain their goals with the inspiration and guidance provided by their *Tumanud*.

Good health and freedom from illness are considered forms of wealth among the Talaandig. Health is viewed as the foundation of human existence. The tribe believes in the presence of *Batuwa Balakat*, a spirit that watches over and shields individuals from harmful forces. Rituals are performed regularly to maintain a healthy body and protect against illness. For the Talaandig, health is an irreplaceable form of wealth that cannot be equated with material possessions. This belief system underscores their deep relationship with *Magbabaya* and reflects a spiritual discipline that helps ensure a joyful and prosperous life free from costly illnesses. Family wellness and harmony are also central values, where every member plays a role, and the spirit of cooperation is expected to flourish for a peaceful and fulfilling communal life.

Each time spirits such as *Mulin-ulin*, *Tagulabung*, *Dengan*, and *Tumanud* are called upon during rituals, the tribe offers a form of tribute known as *mangged*. This offering symbolizes the invitation of the spirits' presence, serving as a spiritual signal and expression of the tribe's reverence. It highlights their prayerful and generous disposition, showing that they acknowledge the power of these spirits and recognize their role in communal well-being. By giving offerings, the tribe also affirms that success is not based solely on human strength or capacity; assistance from the spiritual realm is always available to those who call upon it and honor it with sincerity.

At the beginning of each ritual, when a chicken is about to be sacrificed, the tribe calls upon *Apu Ayukusa*, the spirit believed to guard the chicken's soul. This acknowledges the belief that even the animal offered holds spiritual significance and that its soul requires care. The sacrificial act is regarded as sacred and sincere, with the chosen chicken representing the community's heartfelt intentions and aspirations. Offerings must be freshly prepared—warm food is necessary, as the spirits are believed to reject cold offerings. The ritual act, *Pamuhat*, begins while

the food is still hot. The tribe also avoids tasting the offerings, recognizing that these are reserved solely for the spirits. The spirits are believed to partake in the ritual meal through the scent of the offerings.

Moreover, the animal chosen for the ritual must be of the highest quality, without defects, and with all body parts intact. The tribe insists on offering the best possible specimen to the spirits, considering the sacredness of the act. This principle echoes the lesson found in Genesis 4:4, where the offering of Abel, who presented the finest lambs from his flock, was favored over that of Cain. Like Abel, the Talaandig believe that only the best should be offered to *Magbabaya* and the spirits. This practice underscores their genuine respect and spiritual dedication, reflected in the care taken to prepare and select their offerings. Through this, the tribe demonstrates generosity and spiritual devotion, emphasizing that reverent giving is the most effective way to express faith.

The color of the chicken used in rituals also holds symbolic meaning. A white chicken (*Manuk ha Puti*) represents purity and is associated with clarity, strength, and wisdom in decision-making. A red chicken (*Manuk ha Pula*) symbolizes courage, assertiveness, decisiveness, and firm conviction—qualities attributed to leaders, especially when offering tribute to *Tagulabung*. Meanwhile, a black chicken (*Manuk ha Itum*) represents darkness, misfortune, illness, and other hostile forces. Offerings to these harmful spirits are necessary to prevent them from interfering with the ritual's purpose. Respect for unseen spirits, especially those capable of causing harm, is demonstrated in practices such as offering apologies when entering forests or secluded areas. "*Tabi, Apu*" signifies a request for safe passage and deference.

The tribe also upholds community laws governed by its traditional leaders, collectively known as the *Pasagi*. This indigenous council embodies the community's governance system and represents the concept of the rule of law. Everyone is expected to respect and observe these regulations. In cases of uncertainty, individuals are encouraged to consult the elders of the *Pasagi*. The tribe maintains a structured and orderly system ensuring equal rights, defined roles, and shared responsibilities. The preservation and practice of cultural laws rest in the stewardship of the *Pasagi*, and adherence to these laws is regarded as a vital duty.

This cultural framework reveals a high level of discipline among community members—not only in their obedience to *Magbabaya* but also in their respect for elders and customary law. The tribe views each day as an opportunity to uphold its ancestral culture. Love and respect for family, community, and nature, combined with a strong spiritual foundation, define the Talaandig identity. These values prepare individuals to safeguard their spiritual life and draw strength from it, allowing them to live as full members of the Talaandig tribe.

The rituals of the Talaandig tribe are rich in symbolism. Every gesture or movement performed during ritual ceremonies reflects the tribe's spiritual beliefs and cultural traditions. Objects such as the *Badi* and *Dusu hu Baladaw*, used in the ritual slaughter of pigs and chickens, are believed to block or dispel all forms of obstacles and adversity. For the Talaandig, every problem has a corresponding solution. Hence, they expect their



intentions and desires to be fulfilled during ritual performance. This reflects strong determination and unwavering faith in the tribe's ability to overcome life's challenges.

A peaceful and harmonious family life is also highly valued. Love among family members and the spirit of cooperation within the community are seen as essential to achieving a life of serenity and collective well-being. In praying, the tribe uses *luy-a* (ginger), which symbolizes the swift fulfillment of desires. When bitten, ginger instantly produces a strong taste—a metaphor for an immediate spiritual response. This practice reinforces the tribe's firm belief that their wishes will be granted through the strength of prayer and ritual.

The tribe holds that every endeavor must be preceded by ritual to seek blessings from the spirits. This demonstrates their profound religiosity and faith; success, in any form, must be grounded in spiritual connection. Central to this belief is the conviction that only *Magbabaya*—the source of all human needs—possesses the actual power to guide and sustain life.

In every ritual, sacred offerings are essential. Objects like the *wahig* (water offering vessel) hold deep cultural and spiritual significance. A ritual called *Panalawahig* is performed as a form of gratitude and reverence to *Apu Bulalakaw*, the spirit of water. The tribe considers water sacred, recognizing its profound impact on their lives—not only as a cleanser for the body and a source of hydration but also as a spiritual element that ensures peace and prosperity. As such, the tribe protects water sources with great care and respect.

The use of *Walu Nanggatos Salapi* during ritual is also significant. This object symbolizes blessing and abundance. It also represents the individual's connection to a tree—a sign of strength and resilience. The tribe believes that strength of character and self-confidence grow from spiritual connection and that all problems are surmountable with the help of the ever-present spirits.

Another important concept is *Lugbak*, which reflects the belief that every human action comes with a spiritual debt. Everything from nature—water, air, and food—must be reciprocated. A portion must be offered to the spirits who guard these elements. This demonstrates the tribe's sense of fairness, justice, and balance. No one should take more than they need, and all must recognize the invisible forces that sustain life. This view acknowledges the coexistence of positive and negative forces in the world and upholds the principle of equal treatment for all, as a higher power creates all beings equally.

Offerings such as *Tabaku*, *Mamaen*, *Apug*, and *Manika* are explicitly prepared for the spirits of the upper realms—those who do not consume bloodied animals like chickens. These are known as "foods of the immortals" and are believed to reflect unique spiritual attributes.

Tabaku (tobacco) is believed to wield spiritual power and strengthen human relationships. Only the highest quality tobacco is offered, symbolizing generosity and the tribe's understanding of social harmony. *Mamaen* (betel nut) is associated with empathy; the tribe believes each spirit can sympathize with human emotions. This reflects the value of compassion, embodied in the Indigenous law *buliga*, which states that anyone in need must be helped. *Apug* (lime powder) is seen as a symbol of wisdom. Offering it is an act of gratitude

for the knowledge granted by the spirits, representing just and intelligent decision-making. *Manika*, shaped like a human ear, is offered in rituals to signify that the spirits are listening and will respond. This symbolizes the tribe's prayerful disposition and their unbroken connection with *Magbabaya*. Collective offerings to *Magbabaya* reflect unity, spiritual abundance, and a prosperous life.

Specific clothing is worn by a *Datu* or *Bae* (tribal leader and female leader) during rituals such as *Pasanghid* or when attending significant gatherings outside the community. Each element of their attire is tied to symbolic meaning. These garments represent their identity and spiritual authority. The *Tatangkulu* for the *Datu* and the *Panika* and *Pinanggahangan* for the *Bae* are not mere headpieces but expressions of leadership. These leaders are believed to embody the spirit of *Tagulambung* and must, therefore, be treated with respect.

The *Pinaksuy hu Datu* and *Pinaksuy hu Bae* symbolize the leader's broad knowledge. Each color woven into these garments holds a specific meaning, believed to correspond with the wisdom of the *Datu* and *Bae*. The *Lutuen*, another garment, indicates the leader's ability to provide for the community, while the *Palipi* identifies the leader as a source of knowledge and provision—both spiritually and materially. These practices reflect the tribe's respect for authority and the leaders entrusted with communal care. Obedience to these customs is also an act of honoring *Magbabaya's* will.

In every aspect of Talaandig life—whether social, economic, political, or spiritual—rituals of permission and offering to guardian spirits are observed. These practices are not merely traditions; they serve as foundational expressions of belief, justice, and spiritual alignment that sustain the moral and cultural order of the Talaandig society.

4.1. Findings of the study

Based on the findings of the study, the following insights were discovered:

1. The tribe continues to actively perform its rich and deeply rooted ritual traditions, particularly the *Panandig* or *Pasanghid*, which involves seeking permission from the spirits believed to guard all elements of their environment—most especially the spirit of wisdom.

2. These rituals employ specific terminology that conveys a wealth of information and reflects the tribe's belief systems and customary practices. The study identified commonly used terms frequently invoked during ceremonies by performing these rituals. These include the names of guardian spirits such as *Tagulambung*, *Mulin-ulin*, *Dengan*, *Makatu*, and *Tumanud*, who are believed to guide the *Baylan* (ritual specialist) throughout the ritual process.

3. The ritual language of the Talaandig tribe is closely tied to their beliefs and traditions. The community maintains strong spiritual convictions and continues to venerate their *Apu* and guardian spirits, underscoring the enduring presence of spiritualism in their cultural life. Because they believe in the efficacy of rituals, they begin any activity by seeking permission and expressing gratitude to the spirits that oversee all aspects of their surroundings. This ritual practice represents



a sacred moment of communication with both *Magbabaya* and the spiritual guardians.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Rituals are an integral part of the daily life of the Talaandig tribe. Every activity is believed to succeed only when preceded by ritual performance; failure to observe these spiritual protocols is thought to result in misfortune or failure.

2. Each ritual embodies the beliefs and customs of the tribe. While the Talaandig holds a wide range of spiritual convictions, all are ultimately anchored in *Magbabaya*, the Supreme Being and Creator. The rituals serve as vital instruments for expressing the community's collective faith, traditions, and reverence toward the spirits believed to guard all elements of their surroundings.

3. The language used in Talaandig rituals reflects the identity and inner character of the tribe. It encapsulates the essence of their worldview, spirituality, and cultural integrity.

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