

Beyond the Arch: Narratives about Malagonlong Bridge

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge and examined the meanings they convey within the local community of Tayabas City, Quezon. It focused on understanding how these narratives shape cultural identity and collective memory and served as a basis for developing a historical narrative video output for heritage preservation. The study identified the narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge, determined how these narratives influence the lives of the local community, and proposed a narrative-based video output grounded in the findings. A qualitative research design using narrative inquiry was employed. Participants were purposively selected and included long-time residents, local historians, cultural workers, tourism officers, and selected teachers and students from

selected barangays in Tayabas City. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, supported by non-participant observation and photographic documentation. The collected data were transcribed, translated when necessary, and analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's framework, with the aid of NVivo software. Member checking and ethical procedures were observed to ensure credibility and trustworthiness. The findings revealed that narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge are shaped by supernatural beliefs, historical accounts, and lived experiences. These narratives influence the community by supporting education and cultural preservation, enhancing tourism and economic opportunities, and strengthening identity, pride, and belonging. Based on these findings, a historical narrative video entitled "Tulay ng Panahon: Mga Kuwento ng Malagonlong" was developed to promote and preserve the cultural significance of the bridge. The study concludes that narratives play a central role in shaping and sustaining cultural heritage and that preservation efforts must integrate both tangible and intangible elements through active community participation. It is recommended that stakeholders implement community-based heritage programs, integrate local narratives into education, develop digital archives, and promote intergenerational storytelling and further research on narrative-based preservation.

Keywords: *beyond the arch, cultural heritage, malagonlong bridge, narratives*

INTRODUCTION

In the Philippine context, cultural heritage serves as an essential lens through which the nation's historical and social narratives are understood. The National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA, 2020) emphasizes that the preservation of both tangible structures and intangible traditions fosters national identity, unity, and pride. Landmarks such as the Malagonlong Bridge are not merely relics of the colonial past but are repositories of narratives that continue to shape Filipino consciousness. These heritage sites remind communities of their shared history, collective resilience, and enduring craftsmanship.

The preservation of cultural heritage in the Philippines is anchored in legal and international frameworks. Republic Act No. 10066, or the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009, mandates the protection, preservation, and promotion of cultural properties, recognizing their importance to national

identity. Similarly, the UNESCO (2019) Convention underscores the shared responsibility of safeguarding heritage sites of cultural and historical significance. The designation of Malagonlong Bridge as a National Cultural Treasure in 2011 reflects these commitments and affirms its importance within the country's historical and cultural landscape.

Located in Tayabas City, Quezon, the Malagonlong Bridge also known as Puente de Malagonlong is one of the longest and oldest Spanish- protection, preservation, and promotion of cultural properties, recognizing their importance to national identity. Similarly, the UNESCO (1972) Convention underscores the shared responsibility of safeguarding heritage sites of cultural and historical significance. The designation of Malagonlong Bridge as a National Cultural Treasure in 2011 reflects these commitments and affirms its importance within the country's historical and cultural landscape. era stone arch bridges in the Philippines. Constructed between 1840 and 1850 under the supervision of Fray Antonio Mateos, the bridge is composed of thousands of adobe and limestone blocks and spans the Dumacaa River through a series of six arches. Its design reflects the engineering principles of arch construction, which efficiently distribute weight and contribute to its durability. Beyond its structural significance, the bridge also represents the historical realities of the Spanish colonial period, particularly the use of polo y servicio or forced labor in its construction.

The name "Malagonlong" is believed to have originated from the sound of flowing water beneath the bridge "lagonlong ng lagonlong" a Tagalog onomatopoeic expression that reflects the natural environment surrounding the structure (National Museum of the Philippines, 2022.) This linguistic origin highlights the connection between the bridge and the cultural identity of the local community. Today, although no longer open to vehicular traffic, the bridge remains a significant historical landmark, a symbol of Tayabas heritage, and a popular cultural destination.

Beyond its architectural importance, the Malagonlong Bridge is deeply embedded in a rich body of narratives, folklore, and oral traditions. These narratives shape how the community understands and relates to the bridge, transforming it from a physical structure into a meaningful cultural space. Oral accounts describe the hardships of its construction, the collective efforts of local communities, and the enduring legacy of those who built it. At the same time, folklore introduces elements of mysticism, including stories of ancestral spirits, supernatural encounters, and hidden treasures believed to be guarded within the bridge.

These narratives reveal that the Malagonlong Bridge functions not only as a historical structure but also as a cultural and symbolic anchor for the people of Tayabas. Through storytelling, the bridge becomes a repository of memory, belief, and identity, reflecting the community's connection to both the past and the present. Such narratives enrich the cultural fabric of the community and demonstrate how heritage is continuously shaped through shared experiences and interpretations. (Mallari, 2017)

This study aimed to document and analyze the narratives oral accounts surrounding the bridge. It sought to explore how these narratives contribute to cultural preservation, community identity, and social meaning.

Statement of the Problem

This study employed a narrative inquiry approach to explore the narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge and the meanings they convey within the local community. It focused on how these narratives shape understanding, identity, and cultural significance.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge?
2. How do these narratives influence the lives of the local community?
3. Based on the findings of the study, what historical narrative video output can be proposed to promote and preserve the cultural significance of the Malagonlong Bridge?

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on theoretical perspectives such as the Place attachment Theory, Oral History and Folklore Theory and Social Constructionism that emphasize the role of narratives in shaping cultural meaning, identity, and collective memory. Rather than viewing heritage as a static physical structure, this research approaches the Malagonlong Bridge as a dynamic cultural space whose significance is continuously constructed and reconstructed through storytelling. Narratives are central to this process, as they serve as vehicles through which individuals and communities interpret their experiences, express their beliefs, and preserve their cultural heritage.

Place Attachment Theory, as explained by Lewicka (2018), provides a foundation for understanding how individuals develop emotional and symbolic connections to specific places. These connections are not formed solely through physical interaction with a site but are deeply influenced by the meanings attached to it through narratives and shared experiences. Places become significant when they are embedded with memories, stories, and cultural interpretations that resonate with individuals and communities. In the case of the Malagonlong Bridge, narratives function as a means of strengthening place attachment by linking the physical structure to lived experiences, historical memory, and cultural identity. Through storytelling, the bridge becomes a symbol of belonging, pride, and continuity, reflecting how individuals perceive and relate to their environment.

Complementing this perspective, Oral History and Folklore Theory, as discussed by Thomson (2017), highlights the importance of storytelling in the preservation and transmission of cultural knowledge. Oral narratives, including myths, legends, and personal accounts, serve as primary sources of meaning-making within communities. These narratives are passed down through generations, allowing cultural values, beliefs, and historical interpretations to endure over time. In this study, the narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge are examined as forms of oral and cultural expression that reveal how the community constructs its understanding of the bridge. Folkloric elements such as supernatural beliefs, construction stories, and symbolic interpretations are not merely fictional accounts but are meaningful representations of how the community engages with its heritage. Through these narratives, the bridge is transformed into a living cultural artifact that embodies both historical and imaginative dimensions.

Furthermore, Social Constructionism, as proposed by Burr (2015), provides a critical lens for analyzing how meanings are produced and sustained within a social context. According to this theory, reality is not fixed or objective but is constructed through language, interaction, and shared understanding. Narratives play a crucial role in this process, as they shape how individuals interpret events, assign significance to places, and construct collective knowledge. In the context of the Malagonlong Bridge, its meaning is not inherent in its physical form but is continuously shaped by the narratives created and shared by the community. Different interpretations may emerge based on personal experiences, cultural beliefs, and social interactions, demonstrating that heritage is fluid and evolving rather than static. Through this lens, narratives are understood as active forces that construct the cultural and symbolic significance of the bridge.

The integration of these theoretical perspectives provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing the Malagonlong Bridge as a narrative space. Place Attachment theory explains how narratives foster emotional and symbolic connections to the bridge, while Oral History and Folklore Theory emphasize the role of storytelling in preserving and transmitting cultural knowledge. Social Constructionism further deepens this understanding by highlighting how meanings are collectively created and continuously reinterpreted through narratives. Together, these theories support the idea that the Malagonlong Bridge is not merely a historical structure but a site of ongoing narrative construction where memory, identity, and cultural meaning intersect.

By focusing on narratives, this study underscores the importance of storytelling in shaping cultural heritage. It recognizes that the significance of the Malagonlong Bridge lies not only in its historical existence but in the stories that surround it, the meanings people assign to it, and the ways in which these

narratives are sustained within the community. Through this theoretical lens, the bridge is understood as a living cultural symbol whose meaning is continuously negotiated and redefined through narrative practices. Theoretical Paradigm

This study is guided by the Input–Process–Output (IPO) conceptual model, which illustrates the overall flow of the research. The model serves as a framework for organizing the essential components of the study, from the collection of narrative data to the development of meaningful outputs. It ensures a systematic and structured approach in examining the narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge, focusing on how these narratives are gathered, analyzed, and interpreted within the context of the community.

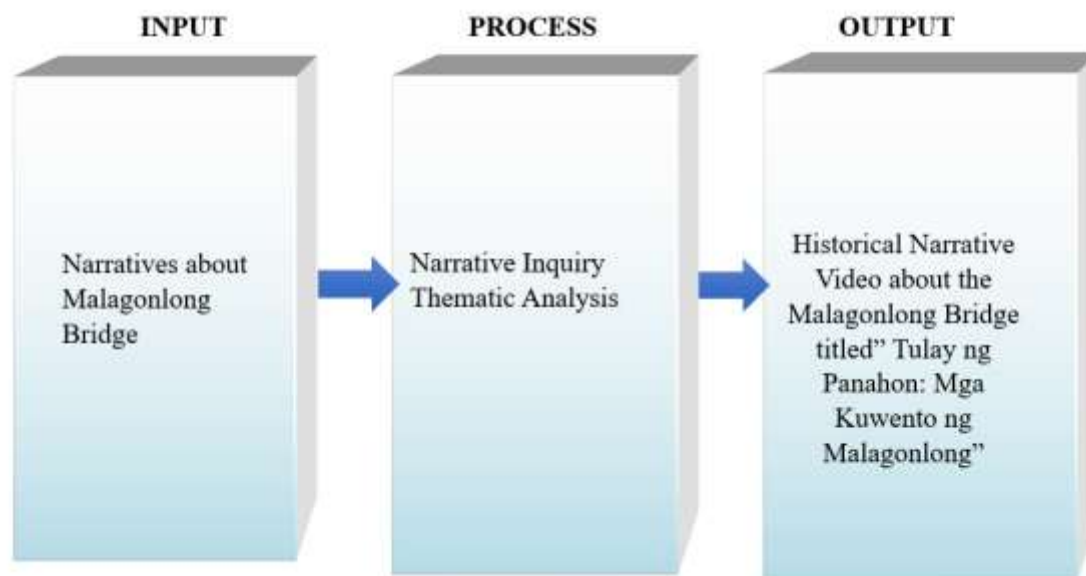


Figure 1. *Input–Process–Output (IPO) Conceptual Framework of the Study*

The conceptual framework of this study presents a structured approach to examining the narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge using the Input–Process–Output (IPO) model. The framework ensures a systematic process in understanding how narratives are collected, analyzed, and transformed into meaningful representations.

In the *input phase*, the study focuses on gathering narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge. These include various forms of stories, accounts, and descriptions derived from both historical and contemporary sources. The narratives serve as the primary data of the study, reflecting the community’s interpretations, beliefs, and cultural meanings associated with the bridge. By collecting narratives from different sources, the study aims to capture a comprehensive and multi-dimensional understanding of the bridge as a cultural symbol.

In the *process phase*, the study employs narrative inquiry and thematic analysis. Narrative inquiry is used to explore and understand the stories shared by participants, focusing on how they construct meaning through their experiences and storytelling. Thematic analysis, on the other hand, is used to identify recurring patterns, themes, and categories within the narratives. This process allows the researcher to interpret the deeper meanings embedded in the narratives and to understand how these stories reflect cultural identity, memory, and shared understanding.

Finally, the *output phase* of the study is the development of a historical narrative video about the Malagonlong Bridge. This output serves as a medium for presenting and preserving the narratives collected during the research. It aims to convey the meanings and cultural significance embedded in the narratives,

making them accessible and engaging for a wider audience. Through this output, the study contributes to the documentation and continuity of the narratives associated with the Malagonlong Bridge.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically narrative inquiry, to explore the narratives associated with the Malagonlong Bridge. Narrative inquiry is appropriate for this study as it focuses on understanding how individuals construct and interpret meaning through their stories and lived experiences. By using this approach, the study examines how narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge are formed, shared, and situated within the cultural context of the local community. The research design is grounded in clearly defined conceptual frameworks that guide the formulation of research questions, selection of methods, and analysis of data, ensuring consistency and coherence throughout the study.

The study recognizes that narratives are co-constructed through interaction between the researcher and participants. To manage this process, member checking was conducted to allow participants to validate the accuracy of interpretations, while collaborative dialogue was encouraged to foster shared understanding. Transparency in the research process and acknowledgment of participants' contributions were maintained to ensure the integrity of the study. Through these strategies, the research design supports a rigorous and ethical exploration of narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge.

Research Locale

This study was conducted in selected barangays in Tayabas City, Quezon, specifically Brgy. Lakawan, Brgy. Mateuna, and Brgy. Pandakaki, where the Malagonlong Bridge is located. As one of the most significant Spanish-era stone arch bridges in the Philippines, the site serves as a focal point not only of historical importance but also of community narratives and cultural memory. The surrounding communities are rich in local storytelling practices, beliefs, and shared experiences associated with the bridge, making the locale appropriate for a narrative-based study.

The selection of this locale was primarily based on its relevance to the research focus, as the study aims to explore the narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge as expressed by members of the local community. The proximity of residents to the heritage site allows for the collection of diverse narratives that reflect lived experiences, cultural interpretations, and intergenerational storytelling. While the area is also known for its cultural heritage and traditions, the study specifically emphasizes the narratives that give meaning to the bridge within its local context.

Sampling Technique

The participants consisted of individuals who possess direct experiences, knowledge, and connections to the Malagonlong Bridge and its associated narratives. These participants were purposively selected to provide rich, in-depth, and diverse perspectives relevant to the study's focus on narratives.

The participants included (1) long-time residents of Brgy. Mateuna, Brgy. Lakawan, Brgy. Mate, and Barangay Pandakaki, Tayabas City, particularly those aged 45 to 85 years old, who have lived in the community for an extended period and are considered key sources of oral narratives, personal experiences, and local knowledge about the bridge; (2) Local historians, cultural workers, and tourism officers who have engaged in documenting, interpreting, or promoting the heritage of the Malagonlong Bridge; and (3) selected teachers and students who could provide insights into how narratives about the bridge are learned, interpreted, and transmitted across generations.

Furthermore, representatives from the local government, particularly from the Tayabas City Tourism and Cultural Affairs Office, were included to offer perspectives on heritage documentation and narrative preservation initiatives. A total of 10 participants were selected using purposive sampling to

ensure the inclusion of individuals who can meaningfully contribute to the understanding of narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge, reflecting both historical and contemporary interpretations.

Research Instrument

The primary instrument used in this study was a semi-structured interview guide, which allowed flexibility during data collection and enabled the researcher to probe deeper into significant responses. This approach facilitated the collection of rich and detailed narratives, as participants were encouraged to freely share their experiences, interpretations, and meanings related to the Malagonlong Bridge. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions designed to elicit in-depth responses aligned with the objectives of the study.

Section 1 of the guide comprises of the oral narratives about the the Malagonlong. Section 2 includes quistions about the impact of narratives on local communities. Lastly Section 3 comprise of quistions about the proposal historical narrative video about the Malagonlong Bridge.

To ensure accessibility and cultural appropriateness, the interview guide was translated into Filipino and, when necessary, into the local Tayabas dialect. The instrument underwent expert validation to establish its clarity, relevance, and cultural sensitivity. The validators included experts in the fields of education, history, cultural heritage, and local governance. Their feedback contributed to the refinement of the interview questions, ensuring that they were appropriate, comprehensible, and aligned with the research objectives.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis in this study consists of the narratives associated with the Malagonlong Bridge as recounted by members of the local community in Tayabas City, Quezon. These narratives represent collective expressions of cultural identity, beliefs, and historical memory surrounding the bridge. The study focuses on the content, themes, and meanings embedded within these narratives rather than on the individuals who shared them.

Each narrative is treated as a cultural text that reflects the community's shared experiences, values, and relationship with the Malagonlong Bridge as a heritage site. The analysis examines recurring themes, symbols, and patterns within the narratives to understand how meaning is constructed and communicated through storytelling. By interpreting these narrative elements, the study seeks to reveal how the bridge functions not only as a physical structure but also as a cultural symbol shaped by memory, interpretation, and lived experience.

The researcher identified the following oral narratives; Supernatural Framing of the Bridge, Oral Transmission and Cultural Continuity, Coerced and Communal Labor Systems, Construction Hardship and Indigenous Techniques, Construction Hardship and Indigenous Techniques, Tourism and Economic Impact, Identity, Pride, and Belonging. These oral narratives are the primary source of analysis and interpretation of the researcher.

Thus, the unit of analysis centers on the meanings embedded in the narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge, emphasizing their role in expressing and sustaining cultural identity and collective memory within the community.

Data Gathering Procedures

The data gathering procedure of this study followed a systematic and ethically guided process to ensure the credibility, accuracy, and authenticity of the narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge. Prior to data collection, the researcher secured approval from the Research Ethics Committee and obtained formal permission from the City Tourism Office, the Tayabas Heritage Society, and the respective Barangay Councils. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring their voluntary participation, confidentiality, and right to withdraw from the study at any time.

During the preparatory stage, the researcher identified key informants who possess firsthand or inherited knowledge of the narratives associated with the Malagonlong Bridge. Rapport-building activities were conducted through community visits to establish trust with participants.

The data collection stage involved multiple field visits, during which in-depth interviews were conducted with selected participants, including long-time residents, local historians, and cultural practitioners. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes to one and a half hours and was conducted in familiar and comfortable settings such as participants' homes or community spaces. With participants' consent, interviews were audio-recorded.

The researcher conducted non-participant observation during cultural activities and community interactions associated with the Malagonlong Bridge.

Following data collection, all recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and translated into English, when necessary, while preserving the original meaning and context of the narratives. Member checking was conducted by returning selected transcripts to participants for validation to ensure accuracy and credibility. The data were then organized and analyzed through thematic analysis, focusing on identifying recurring patterns, themes, and meanings within the narratives. This process enabled the researcher to interpret the cultural significance of the narratives and understand how they reflect collective memory, identity, and community perspectives related to the Malagonlong Bridge. Photographic documentation was also used to support and enrich the narrative data.

Data Analysis

This study employed a qualitative data analysis approach using thematic analysis to examine the narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge. The analysis followed the six-phase framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2019), which includes data familiarization, coding, theme development, theme review, theme definition, and interpretation. This method is appropriate for narrative research as it allows for the systematic identification of patterns, meanings, and cultural interpretations embedded in the collected data.

The first phase, data familiarization, involved repeated reading of the transcribed interviews, field notes, and observation records to gain a comprehensive understanding of the narratives. During this stage, initial impressions, recurring ideas, and emotional tones were noted. The second phase, coding, involved identifying and labeling significant segments of the data that reflect key concepts such as beliefs, values, practices, and meanings associated with the Malagonlong Bridge. Coding was conducted systematically to ensure accuracy and consistency in capturing cultural nuances within the narratives.

To support the organization and management of qualitative data, NVivo software was utilized. NVivo facilitated efficient coding, categorization, and retrieval of data, allowing for a more structured analysis of large volumes of textual information. The use of this software enhanced the accuracy of theme identification and enabled the comparison of perspectives across participants, thereby strengthening the analytical process.

In the third phase, codes were grouped into broader thematic categories, leading to the identification of emerging themes. These themes were then reviewed and refined in the fourth and fifth phases to ensure coherence, consistency, and alignment with the study's objectives. The analysis was guided by relevant theoretical frameworks, including Cultural Heritage Theory, Collective Memory Theory, and Social Constructionism, which provided a lens for interpreting the narratives within their broader cultural and social context.

The final phase involved the synthesis and interpretation of the data, wherein the researcher developed a narrative account that integrates the identified themes with insights from related literature and theoretical perspectives. Direct quotations from participants were incorporated to preserve authenticity and accurately represent their voices. Member checking was conducted by returning selected findings to participants for validation, ensuring that interpretations faithfully reflected their perspectives.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, the researcher adhered to the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Credibility was established through triangulation of data sources and member checking, while transferability was supported by providing rich and detailed descriptions of the research context. Dependability was ensured through systematic documentation of the research procedures, and confirmability was maintained by keeping an audit trail of data, codes, and analytical decisions. Through this rigorous process, the study ensured that the analysis of narratives was grounded in authentic community perspectives and provided meaningful insights into the cultural significance of the Malagonlong Bridge. Inclusion of two Specialist Informants helped strengthen the credibility and validity of the findings.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were strictly observed throughout the conduct of this study to protect the rights, welfare, and dignity of all participants. Prior to data collection, the researcher secured approval from the Research Ethics Committee and obtained formal permission from relevant institutions, including the City Tourism Office, the Tayabas Heritage Society, and the concerned Barangay Councils where the Malagonlong Bridge is located. The study, entitled *“Beyond the Arch: Narratives about Malagonlong Bridge,”* adhered to the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act 10173), ensuring that all personal information shared by participants was collected, processed, and stored with transparency, confidentiality, and informed consent.

Before each interview, participants were provided with an informed consent form that clearly explained the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and their rights as participants. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. Confidentiality was maintained by using pseudonyms in all transcripts and written outputs to protect participants' identities. All data, including audio recordings, field notes, and transcriptions, were securely stored in password-protected files accessible only to the researcher. The collected data were used strictly for academic purposes and were handled with utmost care to ensure privacy and confidentiality.

In compliance with ethical research practices, participants were also given the opportunity to review their responses through member checking, allowing them to verify the accuracy of the recorded narratives and request corrections if necessary. Sensitive information and culturally significant narratives were treated with respect and handled responsibly to avoid misrepresentation or misuse.

Cultural sensitivity was a key consideration in this study due to the historical and cultural nature of the narratives associated with the Malagonlong Bridge. The researcher exercised respect when documenting narratives, beliefs, and practices, ensuring that these were represented accurately and without bias. During fieldwork, local customs and protocols were observed, and guidance from community members and elders was sought when engaging with culturally significant spaces or practices.

Through adherence to ethical principles, including respect for persons, beneficence, and justice, the study ensured that the narratives of the Tayabas community were documented responsibly and authentically. This ethical approach not only safeguarded participants but also strengthened the credibility and integrity of the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on the data gathered from the participants in response to the research questions. It provides a comprehensive presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge as shared by members of the local community in Tayabas City, Quezon. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using an inductive thematic approach supported by NVivo software. The analysis focuses on how participants construct

meanings, experiences, and cultural interpretations through their narratives. The findings are organized into themes derived from the coding process and are supported by verbatim excerpts and relevant theoretical perspectives to strengthen interpretation.

Oral Narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge

This section presents the thematic analysis of participants' narratives regarding the Malagonlong Bridge, highlighting how collective memory, cultural beliefs, and historical accounts are constructed and sustained within the community. The data, drawn from narrative accounts of the participants, were systematically coded and organized into overarching themes that capture both the symbolic and lived meanings associated with the bridge.

The findings are grouped into four major themes: *Supernatural Framing of the Bridge*, *Oral Transmission and Cultural Continuity*, *Coerced and Communal Labor Systems*, and *Construction Hardship and Indigenous Techniques*. Each theme is supported by specific codes that represent recurring patterns in the narratives, alongside significant statements that illustrate the participants' perspectives in their own words. These themes reflect the interplay between folklore, historical consciousness, and socio-cultural practices, demonstrating how the Malagonlong Bridge is not only understood as a physical structure but also as a site of meaning shaped by fear, memory, labor, and tradition.

The presentation of themes, codes, and significant statements aims to provide a clear and organized account of the participants' narratives, serving as the basis for subsequent interpretation and discussion of the findings.

Table 1. *Supernatural Framing of the Bridge*

Theme	Codes	Significant Statement
Supernatural Framing of the Bridge	Fear, Danger, and Warning Function	<i>"They described it in frightening terms, that the bridge was somehow connected to the blood of children. So, we grew up thinking of Malagonlong as something creepy and unsettling.</i> <i>There are also stories of people who jumped from the bridge, those who were said to have been unable to go on with their lives. Suicide was a recurring theme in the stories told about the bridge."</i> P10
	Sacrifice Narratives	<i>"It is also said that every part of the bridge, particularly the arches, involved some form of sacrifice, that people may have died or were offered during its construction, and that this is what made the bridge so enduring and strong."</i> P9
	Paranormal Encounters and Apparitions	<i>"People would say that whenever you passed by the bridge, you would feel something strange. Some people would suddenly disappear, or others would claim to have seen something out of the ordinary."</i> P4

Supernatural Framing of the Bridge

The theme *Supernatural Framing of the Bridge* reveals how the Malagonlong Bridge is not only remembered as a historical structure but is also deeply embedded in narratives of fear, mystery, and the unseen. Participants' accounts suggest that the bridge has long been constructed in the imagination of the community as a place marked by danger and otherworldly presence, shaping how individuals relate to it across generations. UNESCO (2015) defines heritage as encompassing both tangible and intangible elements, while Harrison (2015) explains that heritage is a dynamic and interpretive process shaped through cultural meaning. These perspectives support the idea that narratives transform physical structures into spaces of collective interpretation.

Fear, Danger, and Warning Function are reflected in many of these narratives, as the bridge is introduced through stories that evoke caution and unease. One participant recalled how, from an early age, the bridge was described in frightening terms, embedding a lasting sense of apprehension. As shared by P10, *“They described it in frightening terms, that the bridge was somehow connected to the blood of children. So we grew up thinking of Malagonlong as something creepy and unsettling. There are also stories of people who jumped from the bridge, those who were said to have been unable to go on with their lives. Suicide was a recurring theme in the stories told about the bridge.”* *“Sabi sa mga kwento, parang may koneksyon daw yung tulay sa dugo ng mga bata. Kaya lumaki kaming iniisip na yung Malagonlong ay nakakatakot at parang hindi kami mapalagay. May mga kwento rin tungkol sa mga taong tumalon mula sa tulay, yun yung mga hindi na kinakaya ang pagsubok sa buhay. Kaya palagi din may kwento about sa suicide sa tulay na yun.”* This illustrates how oral traditions shape perception and behavior, reinforcing the role of storytelling in constructing community values (Eslit, 2020).

Sacrifice Narratives are interwoven with these accounts, attributing the bridge’s strength and endurance to human offerings. As P9 shared, *“It is also said that every part of the bridge, particularly the arches, involved some form of sacrifice, that people may have died or were offered during its construction, and that this is what made the bridge so enduring and strong.”* *“Sabi rin na bawat parte raw ng tulay, lalo na yung mga arko, may kinalaman sa kung anong sakripisyo, parang may mga namatay o inialay habang ginagawa ito, at yun daw ang dahilan kung bakit ang tibay matagal masira ang tulay.”* Such accounts reflect a broader pattern identified in the literature, where heritage structures become associated with origin myths and symbolic meanings that extend beyond their physical construction (Harrison, 2022; Almeida & Barbosa, 2021). In this sense, the bridge is reimagined as a structure embedded with spiritual significance, where its material strength is explained through cultural belief rather than solely through engineering.

Paranormal Encounters and Apparition further reinforce the supernatural framing, positioning the bridge as a site of the unexplained. As P4 recounted, *“People would say that whenever you passed by the bridge, you would feel something strange. Some people would suddenly disappear, or others would claim to have seen something out of the ordinary.”* *“Sabi nila, sa tuwing dadaan ka sa tulay, may mararamdaman kang kakaiba. May mga taong bigla bigla na lang nawawala, may iba din naming nagkukuwento na may mga nakikita daw silang kakaiba sa tulay.”* These narratives reflect what Holtorf (2019) describes as the blending of historical reality and folklore, where communities construct meanings that go beyond documented history. Such experiences also resonate with the concept of *genius loci* or the “spirit of place,” wherein emotional and experiential dimensions shape how individuals perceive and interact with heritage sites.

Collectively, these narratives demonstrate that the Malagonlong Bridge functions not only as a physical remnant of the past but as a narrative space where meanings are continuously constructed through storytelling. As supported by the literature, heritage is best understood as a dynamic interplay between tangible structures and intangible cultural expressions, where myths, fears, and supernatural beliefs contribute to the ongoing reinterpretation of place (Wang, 2024). In this context, the supernatural framing of the bridge reflects the community’s active role in shaping its cultural significance, reinforcing the idea that heritage is sustained not only through preservation of form but through the continuity of narrative.

Table 2. Oral Transmission and Cultural Continuity

Theme	Codes	Significant Statement
Oral Transmission and Cultural Continuity	Intergenerational Knowledge Transfer	<i>“I first heard the stories from my grandmother.”</i> P10

	Informal Storytelling Contexts	<i>"In the community, through conversations and from people who enjoy sharing stories. Not in any formal setting, but through everyday conversation." P6</i>
	Decline of Oral Narratives	<i>"Mostly in the community, though not very frequently. That is precisely why it is important to gather stories directly from the elders while it is still possible." P7</i>

Oral Transmission and Cultural Continuity

The theme *Oral Transmission and Cultural Continuity* highlight how narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge are sustained, shared, and, at times, challenged within the community across generations. Participants' accounts reveal that storytelling remains a primary means through which knowledge about the bridge is passed on, reinforcing the role of oral traditions as carriers of cultural memory and identity. Eslit (2020) emphasizes that oral traditions function as mechanisms for transmitting beliefs and values, while Peterson (2023) highlights their role in preserving historical consciousness.

Intergenerational Knowledge Transfer is a significant aspect of this transmission, where stories are handed down through family lines. As P10 simply recalled, *"I first heard the stories from my grandmother."* *"Una kong narinig yung mga kuwento mula sa lola ko."* This brief yet meaningful statement reflects how narratives are often rooted in familial relationships, where elders serve as key custodians of cultural knowledge. In line with the literature, this process illustrates how heritage is not only preserved in physical structures but also in the lived experiences and memories shared within households, allowing continuity between past and present (Harrison, 2015).

Informal Storytelling Contexts further sustain these narratives, embedding them in everyday social interactions rather than formal settings. As described by P6, *"In the community, through conversations and from people who enjoy sharing stories. Not in any formal setting, but through everyday conversation."* *"Sa community, sa mga usapan at sa mga taong mahilig magbahagi ng kuwento. Hindi lang sa formal setting kundi sa araw-araw na pag-uusap."* This reflects how storytelling is woven into daily life, occurring organically in communal spaces and casual exchanges. Such findings support the idea that heritage is continuously constructed through social practices, where meaning is negotiated and reinforced through repeated telling and shared experiences (Jones & Ramirez, 2019). The absence of formal structures for storytelling does not diminish its significance; rather, it highlights its accessibility and integration into community life.

Decline of Oral Narratives is evident alongside these processes of continuity, as participants pointed to shifts in how stories are transmitted and valued. As P7 noted, *"Mostly in the community, though not very frequently. That is precisely why it is important to gather stories directly from the elders while it is still possible."* *"Madalas sa komunidad, pero madalang naman. Kaya importante din na makakuha tayo ng mga kuwento mula sa mga matatanda habang possible pa."* This sense of urgency reflects concerns about the gradual loss of narrative traditions, particularly as older generations pass on and younger members engage less with these forms of knowledge. This aligns with studies emphasizing that while narratives are evolving and dynamic, their sustainability depends on active transmission and engagement across generations (Pastera, 2024).

These accounts highlight that oral narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge are both enduring and vulnerable, sustained through family, community interaction, and everyday conversation, yet threatened by changing social conditions. As supported by literature, heritage is a living process that relies on continuous storytelling to maintain its relevance and meaning (UNESCO, 2015; Wang, 2024). In this context, the transmission of narratives is not merely about preserving stories but about sustaining cultural identity and collective memory within the community.

Table 3. *Coerced and Communal Labor Systems*

Theme	Codes	Significant Statement
Coerced and Communal Labor Systems	Forced Labor (Polo y Servicio)	<i>"I have heard a story that during the Spanish colonial period, the bridge was built through forced labor, known as polo y servicio." P9</i>
	Bayanihan and Collective Participation	<i>"The bridge was built using stones carried by the people themselves. They say that when you crossed the bridge back then, you were required to bring a stone, and those stones reportedly had letters carved into them, like the initials of the people who contributed them." P8</i>

Coerced and Communal Labor Systems

The theme *Coerced and Communal Labor Systems* highlights how narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge reflect both historical realities of colonial labor and communal participation, revealing a complex interplay between coercion and collective effort. Participants' accounts suggest that the construction of the bridge is remembered not only as a product of imposed labor systems but also as an expression of shared community involvement. This aligns with the literature emphasizing that heritage structures are shaped by historical processes, including power relations, labor systems, and social practices, which are later reinterpreted through community narratives (Bannerjee, 2022; Smith, 2020).

Forced Labor (Polo y Servicio) reflects narratives that situate the Malagonlong Bridge within the context of Spanish colonial labor practices in the Philippines, particularly *polo y servicio*, where Filipino men were required to render unpaid labor for public works such as bridges, roads, and churches. As P9 shared, *"I have heard a story that during the Spanish colonial period, the bridge was built through forced labor, known as polo y servicio."* *"May narinig akong kuwento na noong panahon ng Kastila yung tulay ay ginawa sa pamamagitan ng sapilitang paggawa, yung polo y servicio."* In line with the literature, these accounts demonstrate how communities remember and reinterpret colonial experiences through storytelling, embedding them within collective memory (Zialcita, 2018).

Bayanihan and Collective Participation are alongside narratives of coercion are stories that emphasize voluntary communal effort and shared contribution. As P8 described, *"The bridge was built using stones carried by the people themselves. They say that when you crossed the bridge back then, you were required to bring a stone, and those stones reportedly had letters carved into them, like the initials of the people who contributed them."* *"Yung tulay ay ginawa gamit ang mga batong pinapasan ng mga tao. Sinasabi pa nga nila na kapag tatawid ka raw noon kailangan may dala kang bato at yung mga batong iyon may mga letra pa raw na nakaukit parang initials ng mga taong gumawa."* This account reflects the value of *bayanihan*, highlighting cooperation and collective responsibility in the construction of the bridge. Such narratives suggest a re-framing of the past, where community participation and shared identity are emphasized alongside historical hardship. This aligns with studies indicating that communities often reinterpret heritage structures by integrating local values and cultural practices, transforming them into symbols of unity and resilience (Lising & Barretto-Tesoro, 2025; Acabado et al., 2025).

Taken together, these accounts illustrate how the Malagonlong Bridge is understood through dual narratives of coercion and cooperation. While historical realities of forced labor remain embedded in collective memory, they are complemented by stories of communal participation that highlight local values and identity. As supported by the literature, such narratives demonstrate how heritage is continuously

reconstructed through storytelling, allowing communities to negotiate and reinterpret their past in ways that sustain meaning and cultural continuity (Harrison, 2022; UNESCO, 2015).

Table 4. *Construction Hardship and Indigenous Techniques*

Theme	Codes	Significant Statement
Construction Hardship and Indigenous Techniques	Disease, Death, and Difficulty	<i>"They were built for 10 years. Not because the river was that big, but because there was an epidemic during that time. So, the laborers, the constructors of our communities, were dying."</i> P1
	Indigenous Materials and Methods	<i>"They used egg whites as glue for the adobe bricks."</i> P2

Construction Hardship and Indigenous Techniques

The theme Construction hardship and indigenous techniques reflect how participants situate the Malagonlong Bridge within narratives of labor, suffering, and traditional craftsmanship, emphasizing both the difficulties faced during its construction and the ingenuity embedded in local building practices.

Disease, Death, and Difficulty reflects narratives that frame the construction of the Malagonlong Bridge in connection with a period marked by human suffering, labor hardship, and loss of life. As P1 recounted, *"They were built for 10 years. Not because the river was that big, but because there was an epidemic during that time. So, the laborers, the constructors of our communities, were dying."* *"10 years daw bago mabuo ang tulay, hindi dahil malaki yung ilog, pero dahil nagkaroon ng epidemya noon. Yung mga manggagawa ay mga namamatay"*. This account positions the bridge as a structure shaped by prolonged difficulty, where construction was slowed and burdened by illness and mortality among laborers. In doing so, it highlights how the bridge is remembered not only for its physical endurance but also for the collective vulnerability and sacrifice embedded in its history, echoing broader historical understandings of colonial-era labor systems where infrastructure development was often intertwined with suffering and precarious working conditions.

Indigenous Materials and Methods complement these narratives of hardship are accounts highlighting local ingenuity in construction practices. As P2 shared, *"They used egg whites as glue for the adobe bricks."* *"Ginagamit nila na pang dikit yung puti ng itlog para sa dun sa adobe bricks."* This statement reflects the use of indigenous knowledge systems and resourceful techniques in adapting available materials for large-scale construction. In relation to heritage literature, such accounts align with studies emphasizing that built heritage is shaped not only by formal engineering knowledge but also by localized, adaptive practices that reflect cultural creativity and environmental responsiveness (Zialcita, 2018).

Influence of the Narratives About the Malagonlong Bridge on the Lives of the Local Community

This section presents the findings on the *Influence of the Narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge on the Lives of the Local Community*, highlighting how narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge influence education, local economy, and the construction of community identity. Drawing from participants' accounts, the table organizes the data into key themes that illustrate the broader social and cultural effects of these narratives beyond their role as mere stories.

As presented in the table, the findings are clustered into three major themes: *Education and Preservation, Tourism and Economic Impact*, and *Identity, Pride, and Belonging*. Each theme is supported by corresponding codes that capture recurring patterns in the participants' responses, alongside significant statements that reflect their lived experiences and insights. These themes demonstrate that narratives about

the bridge function not only as carriers of cultural memory but also as active forces that shape learning practices, stimulate economic opportunities, and reinforce a shared sense of identity within the community.

The table provides a structured presentation of how narratives surrounding the Malagonlong Bridge contribute to its continuing relevance in the lives of local residents, serving as a foundation for further analysis and interpretation in the succeeding discussion

Table 5. *Education and Preservation*

Theme	Codes	Significant Statement
Construction Hardship and Indigenous Techniques	Educational Use	<i>“They are used in schools, particularly in the teaching of history, so that students have something meaningful to learn about their local heritage.” P7</i>
	Preservation Practices	<i>“What's good about this is that because of the changing times, once you share this, it can be shared quickly through social media. It's great because education has its own feedbacks or effects. But at least, something good is happening.” P1</i>
	Need for Curriculum Integration	<i>“We should integrate what's happening. So even if it's not part of our curriculum, what's happening is we teach it through localization. So, it's not part of it. So, it should be included in the curriculum, especially in our teachings here in Tayabasin.” P2</i>

Education and Preservation

The theme *Education and Preservation* highlight how narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge serve as important tools for learning and sustaining cultural heritage within the community. Participants emphasized that these stories are not only remembered but are actively utilized in educational contexts, reinforcing the idea that heritage is continuously passed on through teaching and shared knowledge. This supports the view that narratives serve as key mechanisms for preserving cultural memory and identity within communities (Peterson, 2023; Eslit, 2020).

Educational Use reflects how narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge extend beyond community storytelling and function as localized learning resources within formal education. As P7 explained, *“They are used in schools, particularly in the teaching of history, so that students have something meaningful to learn about their local heritage.”* *“Ginagamit din sila sa mga eskwelahan, lalo na sa pagtuturo ng kasaysayan, para may makabuluhang matutunan ang mga estudyante tungkol sa sarili nilang pamana.”* These accounts illustrate how oral narratives are incorporated into classroom instruction to make historical content more relatable, contextualized, and accessible to learners by grounding it in familiar cultural and local settings. The integration of oral narratives into education has been shown to enhance students’ appreciation of heritage and encourage active engagement with local culture (Collins, 2022). In this sense, the use of the Malagonlong Bridge narratives in teaching aligns with literature emphasizing that heritage becomes meaningful when connected to learners’ immediate environment and lived experiences.

Preservation Practices beyond formal education were also highlighted by participants, showing how the safeguarding and transmission of Malagonlong Bridge narratives extend into contemporary contexts through both traditional and modern means. As P1 shared, *“What's good about this is that because of the changing times, once you share this, it can be shared quickly through social media. It's great because education has its own feedbacks or effects. But at least, something good is happening.”* *“Ang maganda dito, dahil sa nagbabagong panahon, kapag ibinahagi mo 'to, mabilis na rin itong kumakalat sa social media. Maganda rin kasi may epekto o balik ang edukasyon. Kahit papaano, may magandang nangyayari.”*

This suggests that storytelling has extended into digital spaces, allowing narratives to reach wider audiences and ensuring their continuity in contemporary contexts. Recent studies affirm that heritage preservation today involves both traditional and technological approaches, where digital platforms support the transmission and sustainability of cultural knowledge (Dañez, Tioxon, & Advincula, 2023).

Need for curriculum integration was emphasized despite these efforts, as participants expressed the need for more formal inclusion of local heritage in the curriculum. As P2 noted, *“We should integrate what's happening. So even if it's not part of our curriculum, what's happening is we teach it through localization. So it's not part of it. So it should be included in the curriculum, especially in our teachings here in Tayabasin.”* *“Dapat i-integrate natin kung ano yung nangyayari. Kahit hindi siya bahagi ng curriculum, tinuturo pa rin namin siya sa pamamagitan ng localization. Pero sa totoo lang, dapat talagang maisama na siya sa curriculum, lalo na sa pagtuturo namin dito sa mga Tayabasin.”* This highlights a gap between informal educational practices and institutional recognition, suggesting that while educators already incorporate local narratives, integration remains largely unsystematic. It indicates the need for more structured and formal approaches to embedding local heritage within the curriculum. Such perspectives reflect scholarship emphasizing that sustainable heritage preservation is strengthened through institutional support and curriculum-based strategies that formally integrate cultural narratives into education systems (Jones & Ramirez, 2019; UNESCO, 2015).

Overall, these accounts demonstrate that education plays a crucial role in preserving and sustaining the narratives of the Malagonlong Bridge. Through both informal dissemination and formal teaching, these stories continue to shape identity and cultural awareness, reinforcing the idea that heritage remains meaningful when it is actively shared, thought, and institutionally supported as part of the learning process (Harrison, 2015; Wang, 2024).

Table 6 .*Tourism and Economic Impact*

Theme	Codes	Significant Statement
Tourism and Economic Impact	Attraction Through Narratives	<i>“When a place has stories attached to it, it becomes more interesting, which draws more people to visit and explore it.”</i> P7
	Economic Opportunities	<i>“Malagonlong could draw a steady stream of visitors and generate economic activity for the community, much like historic sites in other countries that have successfully revived the spirit of their old structures through commerce, performance, and storytelling.”</i> P10
	Curiosity and Engagement	<i>“People have become more interested, especially the youth, in learning about the history of the bridge and the community it represents.”</i> P7

Tourism and Economic Impact

The theme *Tourism and Economic Impact* highlights how narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge contribute to increased visitor interest, community engagement, and potential economic development. Participants’ accounts suggest that storytelling enhances the appeal of the bridge, transforming it from a historical structure into a meaningful destination that attracts both locals and tourists. This supports the literature’s assertion that heritage sites gain value not only from their physical features but from the narratives that shape their interpretation and public appeal (Harrison, 2015; Rethinking the Future, 2024).

Attraction Through Narratives is reflected in how stories associated with a place enhance its appeal, as P7 explained, *“When a place has stories attached to it, it becomes more interesting, which draws more*

people to visit and explore it.” *“Kapag ang isang lugar ay may mga kuwentong nakabahagi dito, mas naging interesado ito, kaya mas nahihikayat ang mga tao na dumalaw at i-explore ito.* This reflects how storytelling functions as a powerful tool in heritage tourism, where narratives add depth and emotional connection to physical spaces. Studies have shown that integrating folklore and local stories into heritage interpretation enhances visitor experience and encourages cultural appreciation (Almeida & Barbosa, 2021; Harrison, 2022). In this context, the narratives surrounding the Malagonlong Bridge serve to enrich its attractiveness, making it more than just a site to see, but a place to experience.

Economic Opportunities is reflected in how participants recognize the potential of Malagonlong Bridge narratives to generate economic benefits for the community. As P10 shared, *“Malagonlong could draw a steady stream of visitors and generate economic activity for the community, much like historic sites in other countries that have successfully revived the spirit of their old structures through commerce, performance, and storytelling.” “Kayang makahikayat ng tuloy-tuloy na mga bisita ang Malagonlong at makapagpasigla ng ekonomiya ng komunidad, parang sa mga makasaysayang lugar sa ibang bansa na napasigla ulit ang dating sigla ng mga lumang estruktura nila sa pamamagitan ng negosyo, pagtatanghal, at pagkukuwento.”* This aligns with studies highlighting how heritage tourism, when supported by strong narrative interpretation, can stimulate local economies through increased visitation, cultural activities, and community-based enterprises (Torres, 2025; Hayes, 2020). Such perspectives suggest that the bridge holds not only cultural value but also economic potential when effectively integrated into heritage tourism strategies.

Curiosity and Engagement is reflected in the growing interest among community members, particularly the youth, as narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge stimulate curiosity and encourage deeper engagement with local heritage. As P7 noted, *“People have become more interested, especially the youth, in learning about the history of the bridge and the community it represents.” “Mas naging interesado ang mga tao lalo na ang kabataan na malaman yung kasaysayan ng tulay at ng komunidad na kinakatawan nito.”* This suggests that storytelling fosters curiosity and deeper engagement with heritage. Studies indicate that narrative-based approaches can enhance awareness and participation, particularly among younger generations. This is reflected in research showing increased youth engagement with heritage sites (Dañez, Tioxon, & Advincula, 2023) and in studies emphasizing the role of narrative transmission in sustaining cultural knowledge (Pastera, 2024). By making heritage more accessible and relatable, narratives help sustain interest and encourage continued interaction with the site.

These findings indicate that these accounts demonstrate that narratives play a significant role in shaping the economic value and tourism of the Malagonlong Bridge. By enhancing its attractiveness, creating opportunities for economic activity, and fostering community engagement, storytelling contributes to the bridge’s continued sustainability and relevance. Heritage tourism is most effective when it integrates both tangible and intangible elements. This is emphasized in international frameworks that highlight the importance of combining physical preservation with intangible cultural values (UNESCO, 2015) and in studies that view heritage as a lived and relational process shaped through human interaction and meaning-making (Wang, 2024).

Table 7. *Identity, Pride, and Belonging*

Theme	Codes	Significant Statement
Identity, Pride, and Belonging	Pride in Heritage	<i>“They remind us of the hard work and bayanihan spirit of our forebears. They keep our traditions alive and bind us together as a community through our shared history with the bridge.” P10</i>
	Place Identity and Symbolism	<i>“Structures like the bridge reflect the identity of Tayabas. They show the greatness and uniqueness of</i>

		<i>the place. Without them, it would be difficult to define what Tayabas truly is.” P6</i>
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Identity, Pride, and Belonging

The theme *Identity, Pride, and Belonging* highlights how narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge contribute to the construction of collective identity and foster a sense of attachment among community members. Participants’ accounts suggest that the bridge is not merely a historical structure but a meaningful symbol that reflects shared values, history, and cultural continuity. These narratives illustrate how heritage sites function as “memory vessels,” through which identity and belonging are constructed and sustained across generations (Zialcita, 2018). This perspective is further reinforced by studies that view heritage as a relational and experiential process, where connections between people and place shape a sense of belonging and cultural attachment (Wang, 2024).

Pride in Heritage is reflected in how narratives about the Malagonlong Bridge reinforce a sense of collective identity rooted in historical experience, communal effort, and cultural continuity. As P10 shared, *“They remind us of the hard work and bayanihan spirit of our forebears. They keep our traditions alive and bind us together as a community through our shared history with the bridge.” “Pinapaalala nila sa atin yung sipag at bayanihan ng mga ninuno natin. Binubuhay nila yung mga tradisyon natin at mas pinagkakaisa tayo bilang isang komunidad dahil sa pinagsasaluhan nating kasaysayan sa tulay.”* This statement reflects how narratives have reinforced a sense of pride rooted in collective effort and historical experience. The reference to *bayanihan* highlights the communal values embedded in these narratives, illustrating how heritage becomes a source of cultural continuity and unity. Such perspectives are reflected in studies emphasizing the role of oral traditions in sustaining cultural values and collective memory across generations (Eslit, 2020). This is further supported by literature that views heritage as a dynamic process through which communities maintain continuity by engaging with their past (Harrison, 2015).

Place Identity and Symbolism is reflected in how the Malagonlong Bridge functions as a defining marker of local identity, where heritage structures become symbolic representations of a community’s cultural distinctiveness and sense of place. As P6 explained, *“Structures like the bridge reflect the identity of Tayabas. They show the greatness and uniqueness of the place. Without them, it would be difficult to define what Tayabas truly is.” “Yung mga imprastrakturang tulad ng tulay, sumasalamin sa pagkakakilanlan ng Tayabas. Ipinapakita nila kung gaano ka-unique at ka-galing ang lugar. Kung wala ang mga ‘to, mahirap sabihin kung ano talaga ang Tayabas.”* This emphasizes the role of heritage structures in shaping a community’s sense of place, where physical landmarks become representations of cultural identity and distinctiveness. Studies emphasize the role of heritage in embedding cultural meanings and practices within community life (Jones & Ramirez, 2019). Other research highlights how heritage contributes to identity formation and a sense of attachment to place (Phibul & Jiraprasertkun, 2023).

Overall, these accounts demonstrate that the Malagonlong Bridge functions as a powerful symbol of identity, pride, and belonging within the community. Through narratives that highlights shared history, collective values, and local distinctiveness, the bridge becomes more than a physical structure, it becomes a cultural anchor that connects individuals to their heritage. As supported by the literature, heritage gains its enduring significance through these lived meanings, where storytelling plays a central role in sustaining identity and fostering a sense of belonging (UNESCO, 2015; Harrison, 2022).

Research Output: Historical Narrative Video About the Malagonlong Bridge titled “Tulay ng Panahon, Kuwento ng Malagonlong”

This section presents the research output formed from the findings of the study, a historical narrative video entitled *“Tulay ng Panahon: Kuwento ng Malagonlong.”* The video serves as a creative and scholarly translation of the collected data into a visual medium, aiming to communicate, preserve, and sustain the cultural significance of the Malagonlong Bridge. The video involves interviews with participants

who possess knowledge and lived experiences related to the bridge, allowing their perspectives to be directly represented. These interviews are complemented by visual elements, including photographs and clips of the Malagonlong Bridge, which provide concrete and contextual representation of the said site. In addition, the historical background of the bridge is presented to situate the narratives within a broader temporal and cultural framework.

Grounded in the themes derived from the inductive thematic analysis, the video integrates key narrative elements identified in the study, including supernatural beliefs, oral transmission practices, historical labor systems, and construction experiences. These components are organized into a coherent narrative that reflects both the cultural and historical dimensions of the bridge as understood by the local community. The structure of the video follows a logical progression, beginning with the historical context of the Malagonlong Bridge, followed by the presentation of participant narratives, and concluding with the symbolic meanings and cultural significance attributed to the structure. Through the combination of interviews, visual documentation, and narration, the video presents an engaging and immersive interpretation of the research findings.

As a research-based output, the video functions as both a preservation tool and an educational resource. It transforms oral narratives into a format that can be disseminated through digital platforms, supporting wider access and long-term sustainability of cultural knowledge. Overall, *“Tulay ng Panahon: Kuwento ng Malagonlong”* demonstrates how research-based creative outputs can bridge academic inquiry and community engagement. By integrating participant interviews, historical context, and visual documentation, the study not only records cultural narratives but also contributes to their preservation, appreciation, and continued relevance.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The Malagonlong Bridge is understood as a culturally constructed space shaped by multiple narratives that integrate folklore, historical memory, and lived experiences. These narratives collectively transform the bridge from a mere physical structure into a meaningful cultural site, where interpretations are continuously formed through storytelling of the community members and shared understanding within the community.
2. The study establishes that the meanings attached to the Malagonlong Bridge are socially constructed and dynamically negotiated. Through narratives that reflect beliefs, historical accounts, and personal experiences, the community actively participates in defining the significance of the bridge, reinforcing the idea that heritage is not fixed but continuously reinterpreted over time.
3. Narratives play a crucial role in transmitting and preserving cultural identity and collective memory, as they enable the continuity of knowledge across generations. Through shared experiences and oral traditions, the community sustains its connection to the bridge, allowing it to remain relevant despite the social and cultural changes.
4. The study further concludes that narratives extend beyond symbolic meaning and have practical implications for community life, particularly in the areas of education, tourism, and local economic engagement. By serving as tools for teaching, cultural preservation, and heritage promotion, narratives contribute to increased awareness, participation, and appreciation of local heritage.
5. A historical narrative video output entitled *“Tulay ng Panahon: Kuwento ng Malagonlong”* demonstrates that media grounded in authentic community narratives can enhance cultural preservation. By integrating both tangible and intangible elements of heritage such as historical accounts, local beliefs, and personal stories, such output can enhance public awareness, foster deeper engagement, and promote greater appreciation of the Malagonlong Bridge.

6. The study affirms that cultural heritage is evolving, dynamic, and participatory, and is shaped by continuous interaction between narrative, place, and people. The preservation of heritage, therefore, requires not only the conservation of physical structures but also the active documentation, transmission, and integration of narratives within community practices.
7. Overall, the study concludes that narratives are central to the interpretation, construction, and sustainability of cultural heritage, as they provide meaning, strengthen identity, and it ensures the continued relevance of heritage sites within changing social contexts.

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