

# Cultural Values Expressed in Proverbs of the Meranao People: An Emic Survey

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**Abstract:** In this study, 100 proverbs from the *Meranao* ethnic group in the Philippines were collected. These proverbs were translated into English and classified and interpreted by a Panel of Experts made up of *Meranao* community members. In order to determine the roles and functions these proverbs played within the *Meranao* ethnic group, as seen by the *Meranao* Panel of Experts, the study had two main goals: (1) to evaluate the cultural meanings and interpretations encoded in the *Meranao* proverbs, and (2) to determine these proverbs' roles and functions in general. There were 15 important informants were chosen from the provinces of Cotabato, Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, and Maguindanao to help gather the proverbs. The proverbs' sources included both published and unpublished library items. The DECS (Department of Education Culture, and Sports now Department of Education) Values Classification Scheme of 1998, which includes seven dimensions and basic values (moral, social, economic, intellectual, political, spiritual, and physical), served as the foundation for classifying the 100 proverbs. Each dimension is matched with particular associated values. For instance, the dimension of love encompasses principles like self-control, respect for oneself, honesty, and integrity. The concept of social responsibility encompasses principles like respect and love for one another, loyalty, parental responsibility, care for the welfare of the community, freedom and equality, social justice and observance of human rights, as well as peace and active nonviolence. The Values Classification Scheme of 1998, which includes seven dimensions and basic values (moral, social, economic, intellectual, political, spiritual, and physical), served as the foundation for classifying the 100 proverbs. Each dimension is matched with particular associated values. For instance, the dimension of love encompasses principles like self-control, respect for oneself, honesty, and integrity. The concept of social responsibility encompasses principles like respect and love for one another, loyalty, parental responsibility, care for the welfare of the community, freedom and equality, social justice and observance of human rights, as well as peace and active nonviolence.

**Keywords:** Values Classification Scheme, proverbs, Meranao ethnic group, cultural meaning, roles and functions.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

History shows that folk literature acts as a mirror of culture and either reinforces traditions or becomes a dynamic agent of change. It can prepare men for change and can bring about change. It can do these things in manners certainly more effective than a learn treaties can, for literature is more powerful means of communication. Folk literature a value-laden and it teaches and reinforces what a culture deems important.

Proverbs which fall under folk literature and are considered as source of every powerful set of instructions are very rich repository of social, cultural materials which reflect a people's world view.

Manuel (1762) considers folklore a significant area for social and humanistic studies. The study demonstrates how folklore assists local residents in preserving a feeling of cultural continuity, navigating the difficulties of modernity, and determining their place in a rapidly changing society. The results show how folklore may have a transforming effect on indigenous

people's social cohesiveness, empowerment, and cultural regeneration (Smith, Johnson, and Martinez, 2022). It constantly reinforces people's fundamental values. Eugenio (1987) claims in her article *Folklore and the Values Education* that "values in our folklore literature are expressed directly in the proverbs." Hence, when one is looking for values, it is best for him to look at the proverb first.

Folklore is an integral part and function part of the community and national life of people. It has a very significant role in national development as it embodies not only the people's beliefs and value system, but also their cultural. It validates culture in justifying their rituals and institutions to those who perform and observe them. It amuses people specially that sort of humor which has deeper meanings underneath. It plays the role of education, particularly in non-literature society. Both in the formal and non-formal types of education folklore certainly has a pedagogic function, and it is recognized as one of the most culturally acceptable sustaining elements in a given society. Thus, ogre tales are used in the discipline of young children, and lullabies are sung to put them to sleep. In good humor, fables and folk tales incorporating morals are introduced to inculcate general attitudes and principles, such as diligence and filial piety, and to ridicule laziness, rebelliousness, and snobbishness, (Tiamson, 1977). Proverbs generally contain practical advice and moral instructions largely addresses to young people as a guide to happiness and success, as a threat which the speaker may not later wish to carry out, to direct other's actions where a blunt command might offend, or incite a person to action through irony.

Proverbs as defined by (Demetrio, 1978) are called "quoted and capsuled wisdom", and "the wit of man, the wisdom of many" because they are based on observations and experiences as useful truisms on a hand-me-down basis from the past. They circulate, as all folklore does both, in time and in space, and tend to have the authority of generations on their side. Considered as, "part of culture" is a body of literature known as folklore which includes myths, legends, tales, riddles, the texts ballads and other songs, and proverbs according to Demetrio (1978), folklore comprise both the verbal or oral portion which has three categories: the behavioral, which includes calendrical feast, ritual feasts, dances, drama, games, gestures and pantomime; the material culture, like architecture, the arts and crafts, costumes, foods, medicine, weaponry, transportation and others; and the non-material culture like music, dramas, omens, and others. Additionally, the social, historical, and philosophical components of the many cultures are reflected in proverbs, which act as archives of cultural knowledge, social norms, and collective memory (Lee and Ndlovu, 2021). Taylor (1962) believes that proverbs are invented in several ways; some are derived from simple apothegms and platitudes elevated to proverbial dignity; others arise from the symbolic or metaphoric use of incident. Still others imitate already existing proverbs, and some owe their existence to the condensing of story or fable. Occasionally, a short wise remark by a famous author becomes a new proverb, like one of Shakespeare's saying, "Brevity is the soul of wit." This proverb, which means that a witty saying should be short, applies very well to all good proverbs. Their ultimate origin may be literally from the Bible, Shakespeare's works *Poor Richard*, McGuffey's *Readers*, and the *Farmer's Almanac*, or they may spring directly from the folks in the community.

In 1958, an academic organization known as Philippine Folklore Society (PFLS) was organized. Its first and immediate goal was to collect and record all available traditions nationwide to reinstate the fast reshaping/changing all acculturated society. Its second, remoter goal was to achieve all collected and recorded materials. Its two ultimate goals were the following: 1) to translate and publish any collected materials in order to disseminate information and share the enjoyment of folk tradition to the literate societies; 2) to conduct a humanistic and scientific study to the materials (Manuel, 1976). This particular endeavor of the PFLS inspired the researcher to collect, transcribe, translate, classify and interpret Philippine indigenous proverbs.

According to Eugenio (1992), in 1980, two Spanish friars made the observations that the "Indian" Filipino had a real enthusiasm in the use of maxims which they considered to be dogmas. The illustrious Father Toribio Miguella in his *Spanish-Tagalog Grammar* (Eugenio, 1992) maintained that often times a great deal can be expressed by using maxims rather than by uttering a long speech. Quick to turn proverbs to advantage, the two friars issued a collection of 876 Tagalog proverbs, epigrams, and idioms and translated and explained them to Spanish missionaries wishing to learn the native language enable them to administer the sacraments and teach the importance of the Gospel to the natives in a proper and effective way. It was noted that in using the proverbs for the language instruction, the two Spanish friars were not only applying the sound pedagogical principle of interest but were also following the old and time-honored tradition using the proverbs in teaching of values education. Hence, proverbs are used as instructional materials in teaching not only the national language but also character education and building the value of nationalism in the hearts and minds of the young generation. In fact, Batungbacal's (1947) "One Hundred Filipino Proverbs and Maxims" was the first to be approved by the Bureau of Education as a secondary teacher's reference in the teaching of character education.

In the Philippines, one of the thirteen Muslims ethnics are believed to have a very rich cultural heritage embedded in their proverbs. The *Meranao* were native inhabitants of the four provinces of Cotabato, and Sultan Kudarat (both located in the Central Mindanao, Region XII), Maguindanao (a part of the ARMM), and South Cotabato (Region X) and Lanao del Sur (part of ARMM now Bangsamoro Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao or BARMM).

However, not much is known about the values that are reflected in the *Meranao* proverbs and their impact in the lives of *Meranao* people. For this reason, the study was conducted to address this particular form of folk speech. The *Meranao* ethnic group, also known as the Maranao or Maranaw, is a predominantly Muslim community residing in the Lanao provinces of Mindanao, Philippines. The cultural heritage of the *Meranao* ethnic group is unique in some ways. Its unique set of values, beliefs, traditions, and practices. Renowned for their rich cultural heritage, the *Meranao* people possess a wealth of traditional knowledge that has been passed down through generations. Among their cultural treasures are the proverbs, concise yet profound expressions of wisdom and values that reflect the *Meranao* way of life.

In the *Meranao* culture, proverbs have a special position because they are a crucial component of their oral heritage. These brief summaries of the community's collective knowledge and experiences offer direction, moral lessons, and new perspectives on numerous facets of life. In this emic study, we examine the moral principles expressed in the proverbs of the *Meranao* ethnic group in an effort to comprehend their worldview and religious beliefs better.

*Meranao* proverbs provide a window into the cultural fabric that creates the community's identity through the ideals they uphold. The fundamental ideas that underpin *Meranao* people's daily lives, interpersonal interactions, and decision-making processes can be found by studying these proverbs. In addition to having an impact on how members of the community behave, these principles help strengthen the *Meranao* society as a whole.

This emic study aims to investigate the underlying principles of *Meranao* proverbs, recognizing their value as cultural objects that capture the community's collective knowledge. We seek to shed light on the *Meranao* worldview, their concept of morality, and their viewpoints on significant issues like family, community, religion, and honor by looking at the proverbs in their right context and interpreting their meanings.

Understanding the values reflected in the proverbs of the *Meranao* ethnic group can foster cross-cultural appreciation and promote intercultural dialogue. Moreover, it can contribute to the preservation and revitalization of *Meranao* culture, enabling future generations to appreciate and embrace their cultural heritage. By documenting and studying these proverbs, we can ensure that the values and wisdom of the *Meranao* community continue to resonate and inspire for years to come.

### **Theoretical-Conceptual Framework**

This study involved content and cross-cultural analysis of the proverbs as reflection of the cultural values of the *Meranao* was anchored on several theories on values as they are related to the functions of human personality and motivational needs, and of folk literature and culture. Personality, Culture and Values. Personality theorist Henry Murray (cited in the Hall, 1998) stated that needs always operate in the service of some values or with the intent of bringing about some end state and therefore, these values must be made part of the analysis of the motives. In this theory of motivation, Murray stresses the positive establishment processes that are not only useful for survival or as defenses against anxiety but also have their own energies, goals, and fulfillment which can be attributed to environmental forces.

Abraham Maslow maintains that the growth needs are the highest expression of human motivation. He feels that human needs can be arranged in a hierarchy ranging from the most necessary requirements for survival at the bottom to the most profound expressions of human potential at the top. The ladder of human needs according to him is as follows: (1) The physical needs (e.g. food, water, clothing, shelter, medicine); (2) The safety and security needs (e.g. the need for freedom from threat or danger, the need to ally oneself with the familiar and the secure); (3) The need to love and to belong (e.g. social need); (4) The self-respect needs (e.g. esteem needs or the need for achievement); (5) The personal growth needs (e.g. self-actualization, the need for self-fulfillment, to realize potentialities, to become what one is capable of becoming); (6) The cognitive needs (e.g. the need to know and understand the mysterious, the need to tackle the unknown); and (7) The aesthetic needs (the need for symmetry, order, system and structure).

Thus, Maslow posits a theory based on the biological requirements for survival at the bottom of the hierarchy to the growth needs that bring about the best human potential at the top. A need will not appear until the needs below it has been satisfied. That is, no person would bother about aesthetic needs such as creation and appreciation of beauty if he has not satisfied his need for food or his safety is endangered (Sevilla et al., 1998).

Another theory on human personality states that human personalities develop in accordance with the opportunities that a particular society allows. Erick Fromm (Limpico and Tria, 1990), in his social psychological theory, believes that the essence of human nature is expressed as needs for relatedness, transcendence, rootedness, identity, and frame of reference. Human beings create society in order to fulfill basic needs that arise from the development of one particular culture.

One theory that explains the relationship between culture and personality is that of Bandura's (1987). Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive hypothesis is one hypothesis that explains how culture and personality are related. It was first put forth in 1987. The importance of social learning and cognitive processes in influencing personality development within a cultural environment is emphasized by Bandura's theory. According to Bandura, individuals' cognitive processes, contextual variables, and behavioral patterns continuously interact to form and shape their personalities. According to Bandura, people pick up on and model other people's actions, values, and beliefs, especially those found in their own social and cultural contexts. His theory explains how socialization occurs or how an individual learns the types and traits of behavior considered important by his culture. His theory focuses on the basic role of modelling, and observed consequences to a model of a demonstrated behavior can guide an observer in reciprocal interaction between personal and environmental determinants.

According to Bandura, by observation and imitation three effects can occur: (1) modelling effect, where an observer attends to and imitates a model that is new to him but the behavior must be those which the observer is capable of doing; (2) disinhibitory effect, where modelling can release a whole class of behaviors that is usually inhibited; and (3) eliciting effect, whereby observing and imitating a model, the observer may match the behavior of the model with responses that are already in the observer's repertoire or have been learned before.

In connection with Bandura's theory, Parsons and Shills (cited in Alexander and Kumaran, 1992) posit that culture is an autonomous component of social action, and has an existence of its own, independent of individuals and external to them. However, as a child grows up in the society, it assimilates the various components of culture, including its value orientation. Throughout this process of socialization, culture becomes external to the individual, a part of his personality, providing the framework for organizing his action.

On the basis of the above-mentioned theories, it can be said that the analysis of values is greatly relevant to the study of culture. Inter-group relations may be based on the operation of differing value systems a result of different social and cultural locations. The internalization of values depends essentially on the information often communicated through socialization. When people internalize their values, consciously, they use such values as a set of standards or evaluative criteria for guiding their actions, developing and maintaining their attitudes towards relevant objects and situations, justifying their own and other's actions, passing moral judgments on themselves and others, and comparing themselves with others. This is so because values possess a normative dimension.

Values are the core beliefs and principles that guide an individual's attitudes, behavior, and decision-making process. They represent what an individual considers important, desirable, and meaningful in life. Values influence how people prioritize their actions and decisions and provide a framework for evaluating what is right or wrong, good or bad (Luhmann and Hofmann, 2021). Values specify, for instance, what is good or bad, what is right or wrong, what ought to be or ought not to, what is useful or useless, what is appropriate or inappropriate. Therefore, values are social guideposts that disclose the cultural norms of society and that specify the ways in which people should behave. In fact, according to Manuel (1999), values are the object of positive attitude. It is the goal, vision, which motivates man to action. This belief about values is anchored to an approach of defining culture which suggests that people behave as they do because of the perceptions they have about the world and their expectations about how they should behave in that world. This approach is called the subjective culture approach which is defined by (Lustig and Koester, 1993) as "a culture group's characteristic way of perceiving the man-made part of its environment. The perception of rules and the group's norms, and values are aspects of subjective culture." This approach acknowledges that culture is learned and that values are perceptual guides for behavior.

**Literature, Culture and Values.** It is an undeniable fact that literature plays an important role in understanding the culture and values of a people. It is believed that there is no surer way of transmitting values than through literature. Literature records and inspires people and serves as their guide in pursuing their destiny. It is a sociological guide to the direction of their national conduct, attitudes, and goals.

Literature is a category of artistic expression that includes written works including short stories, plays, poems, and novels. It is a form of artistic communication that investigates and interprets numerous facets of the human experience, including as feelings, ideas, morals, and societal problems (Bojarska, 2021).

**Filipino Values from Proverbs.** A very rich of Filipino values is folklore, particularly proverbs. A proverb is short saying which teaches a moral lesson, which has a popular origin in the “collective wisdom of the folk”, and the expresses human truth in a symbolic and metaphoric manner. Philippine proverbs reveal much about the Filipino-his attitudes towards life, his distilled wisdom, and his system of values as deduced from the virtues he extols and vices he condemns (Eugenio, 1987).

Essentially, the Filipino’s system of values as expressed in the proverbs is the same as that of peoples everywhere. Wealth is a desirable commodity, for it go power, prestige, comfort, and security, as the following proverbs assert: “If you have money you can make even a cat dance” (*Pag may salaping tangan, pusa may napasasayaw*-Tagalog); “Many will take shelter under a leafy tree” (*In kahuy malambung, silongan sin katan* –Tausug); and “The mistakes of the poor are noticed by all; those of the rich are overlooked” (*So limban no miskinan na mailay no madakel, so limban no pakagaga na mana bon dala* – Maguindanaon). In other proverbs, however, a good name, honor, good judgment and discretion, good breeding, friends, happiness, and peace of mind are considered more valuable than material wealth- as illustrated in the following examples: “A hut may hold happiness as well as a palace” (*In baungbaung makaluun kasanyangan biya’ da astana*-Tausug); “Even if it be a place where I am troubled, I would prefer a hut where I have peace of mind” (*Ba piya pen so barit I sansaraimangbo no tumo so pagonayan a lomilintad ako ron*- Maranao); and “Even if you possess a chest full of silver and a jar full of gold, you are nothing if you do not have friends” (*Ang pilak mo man ay isang kaban, ang ginto mo man ay isang tapayan; kung wala ka naming kaibigan, ay wala ka ring kabuluhan* – Tagalog).

Other values directly or indirectly upheld in proverbs include love of and reverence for parents, family solidarity and harmony, brotherhood, education, and discipline, sanctity of and fidelity in marriage, strong faith in God, bravery and leadership, humility, gratitude, perseverance, thrift, peace and justice, and countless others. The examples thus far cited support the fact that proverbs are a rich source of Filipino traditional values.

For a clear and logical analysis of the cultural values assumed to be reflected in the *Meranao* proverbs, the values classification framework developed by the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) in 1988 has been adapted to test its applicability on these ethnic communities. This framework was based on a rational understanding of the value system of the Filipino as a human being in society and his role in the shaping of that society.

**Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) Values Classification of 1998.** In response to the Moral Recovery Program of the government, DECS has implemented the Values Education Program. This program aims to translate values from the abstract into the practical to make values education meaningful and effective. To help materialize this thrust, DECS identifies seven dimensions of the human person and their corresponding core values (cited in the Filipino Teacher 1989).

1. Physical (made of matter). The human must maintain *Health* and harmony with nature.
2. Spiritual (capable of higher concerns and risig above the material). He must cultivate a sense of *Spirituality* in consonance with his nature and respond to God faith.
3. Intellectual (gifted with mind, the faculty of knowing). He must constantly search for the *Truth*. He must seek knowledge that would transform society and the world.
4. Moral (endowed with the faculty of freely choosing and loving). He must go out to others and in fact to all humanity in *Love*.
5. Social (living in a community). He must cultivate sense of *Social Responsibility*, aware of his unique participation in the pursuit of the welfare of the family and the common good and well-being of the inhabitants.
6. Economic (bound to concerns of livelihood). He has the obligation to help achieve *Economic Efficiency* for the community.
7. Political (member of the nation). He must foster the sense of *Nationalism and Patriotism*, by which he identifies with the people and joins hands with them in the pursuit of common goals. As member of the world community, he must cultivate a sense of *Global Solidarity* for the emerging concerns and problems of one country can no longer be considered in isolation of others.

**Functions and Roles of Proverbs.** Philippines proverbs are greatly interesting not only for their positive cultural values but also for their significant roles or functions in the character education of both the Filipino youths and adults. Eugenio

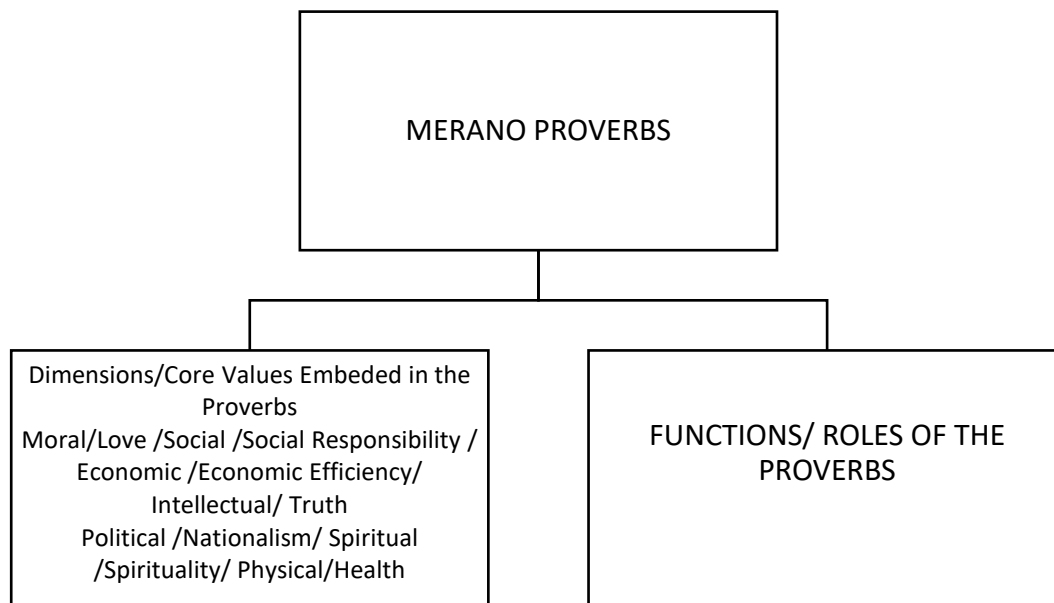


(1992) groups proverbs under the following headings: (1) proverbs intended to express general attitude towards life and the laws that govern life; (2) ethical proverbs, those that recommend certain virtues and condemn certain vices; (3) proverbs express a system of values; (4) proverbs to express general truths and observations about life and human nature; (5) proverbs to provide humor or proverbs to amuse.

Most of the *Meranao* proverbs are ethical; they are quoted to moralize and instruct children to do well and shun evil or vice. Those ethical proverbs are “direct exhortations”, and they “serve as the dos and don’ts of everyday living. At an early age the golden rule is told to children by the parents to guide them on the principle of justice, charity, fortitude, and integrity or honor. More effective, however than those direct exhortations are those proverbs that indirectly advocate the virtues, and condemn the vices. The virtues highly upheld in the proverbs include industry, thrift, patience, perseverance, humility, prudence, charity, gratitude, hospitality, leadership, and courage. The vices generally scorned in the proverbs are extravagance, sloth, arrogance “*ningas cogon*” mentality, gossip, and many others (Tuban, 1977).

In this paper one hundred proverbs were analyzed in terms of their functions or roles on the basis of the categories recommended by the 15 key informants were validated by 4 members of the Panel of Experts. These functions/roles were as follows: (1) To direct/guide (to give the person the information he needs to go in the right direction); (2) To teach/instruct (gives instruction on what to do or how to do something); (3) To admonish/criticize (sternly tells a person that he has done something wrong. Ethical proverbs fall into this category), (4) To inform/tell (expresses a general truth, observation about life and human nature); (5) To ridicule/insult (pokes fun at someone in somewhat unkind way so as to make him modify his behavior to make it acceptable to the society. Some ethical proverbs also fall into this category); (6) To confirm/ agree (shows that what one believes suspects or fears are definitely true); (7) To forewarn/caution (tells someone that something is going to happen and that he should take great care to avoid possible danger); (8) To remind (tells someone that he has not done something he ought to have done and enables him to think about it); (9) To imprint (a proverb intended to be repeatedly told so that it will be firmly fixed into one’s memory and will not be forgotten); and (10) To amuse (provides fun or humor or makes the hearer want to laugh or smile).

Figure 1 presented the Conceptual Framework of this study. As part of the oral literature or folk literature formed by the elders and handed down from generation to generation, these proverbs become common sources of values. It is strongly believed that the seven core values indicated in the DECS Classification Scheme are embedded in these proverbs which also play various roles and serve different functions in shaping the lives of the ethnic members. The dark straight lines indicate that both the core values and the function/roles are drawn directly from the proverbs on the basis of their literal and figurative meanings.



**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study**

## Research Questions

This study documented, classified, and analyzed the one hundred (100) *Meranao* proverbs and their cultural values/meanings and functions/roles.

More specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What were the common proverbs of the *Meranao*?
- 1.1 What intended cultural meanings do these proverbs hold for ethnic members?
2. What values do these proverbs reflect? and
3. What functions/roles do these proverbs serve to ethnic members?

The proverbs of the *Meranaos*, if critically analyzed in terms of their socio-cultural elements can be an instrument for better understanding and appreciation of the identity and consciousness of the *Meranao* ethnic group but also to the Filipino people as a whole. These collected proverbs would constitute a valuable addition to the already existing collection of Southern Philippine ethnic proverbs. The result of the study in general, could be the researcher's valuable contribution to the enhancement of Filipino cultural heritage.

To future scholars and researchers, the findings would be a good source of baseline data for studies related to the folk literature, values, life styles and cultures of the *Meranaos*. It would also provide them an opportunity to appreciate the beauty and discover the peculiarities of the ethnic groups' languages in as much as in this paper the proverbs presented in both the original *Meranao* versions and their English translations.

To the *Meranao* youth whom the researcher considered the direct beneficiaries, this study would stimulate their awareness of the interest in their own literature, culture and way of life. The ideal traits or values reflected in their proverbs would serve as their guiding principles of life. As cited by Eugenio (1992), "proverbs contain the laws that govern life, recommend certain virtues and condemn certain vices, and express a system of values. No other figure of speech is more fit to teach, more forcible to persuade, wiser to forewarn, sharper to reprove, stronger to confirm, and more piercing to imprint." Briefly, they may be called the summaries of manner or the images of human life. Hence, to the younger generation, these proverbs may serve as instruments for them to lay down the "dos and don'ts of everyday living, to understand their own identity, and to develop consciousness of their culture thus from the foundation of their ethnic unity and solidarity.

In general, it is hoped that this study would contribute substantially to the Values Education program of the Department of Education, Culture and Sport (DECS) now Department of Education (DepEd). This thrust of DECS has found a strong support in the Philippine Constitution of 1987 under Article XIV, Sec.3, which states:

*All educational institutions shall inculcate patriotism and nationalism, foster love of humanity, respect for human rights, appreciation of the role of the national heroes in the historic development of our country, teach the rights and duties of citizenship, strengthen ethical and spiritual values, develop moral character and personal discipline, encourage critical and creative thinking, broaden scientific and technological knowledge and promote vocational efficiency.*

This study was limited only to 100 proverbs of *Meranao*. These were taken from two major sources; 1) both published and unpublished materials in MSU-Marawi, and Cotabato Provincial libraries, Dansalan College and Notre Dame University (NDU) of Cotabato City, and 2) personal interviews with 15 key informants for the *Meranao* ethnic group who were native speakers of the language and culture bearers aged 45 to 90, with the mean age of 64.75. They were chosen on the basis of their ages and ethnic affiliation; hence, they could be considered primary sources of information on indigenous proverbs.

The transcription of the proverbs and the classification of the values extracted from them were done by the researcher. The translations into English and the interpretation of their cultural meanings were likewise done but in consultation with friends, both professional and nonprofessional, who were native speakers of the language and culture bearers but were not English literature majors. Hence, most of the translations were limited to the literal level. Then the translation, interpretation and classifications were validated by a Panel of Experts/judges consisting of four professional native speakers and culture bearers *Meranao* ethnic group the DECS Value Classification Scheme (1988) served as the basis for classification of the proverbs collected for this study. Any inherent weakness of this scheme therefore became an additional limitation of this study.

Despite all these limitations, the researcher believed that the instrument used, the number of proverbs collected and the procedure followed were sufficient to make inferences with respect to the purpose of the study.

### Definitions of Terms

For easy reading and better understanding of the entire text of the study, the following terms were hereby operationally defined:

**Content analysis.** This process which involves classifying/categorizing the proverbs and interpreting their surface and deep meanings was done with the help of the Panel of Experts.

**Core values.** These are the seven values specified in the DECS Values Classification Scheme of 1988. These values are assumed to be reflected in the one hundred proverbs under study.

**Cultural meaning.** This phrase refers to the original, intended or figurative meaning of the proverb, within the context of the *Meranao* culture.

**Culture.** Taylor (1980) says this is the totality of the learned multi-individual customs of identifiable individual social group. In this study, it means an embodiment of the *Meranao* customs, traditions, beliefs, ritual practices and others.

**Culture bearer.** This term refers to native *Meranao* professional who could translate the original version of the proverbs to English. He/ She knew the necessary interpretations or cultural meanings and helped in the content analysis/classification of the proverbs.

**DECS Values Classification Scheme (1998).** This was a framework or guide in the implementation of the Values Education Program of DECS. This framework was used as the basis for classifying the 100 indigenous proverbs of the *Meranaos*. This framework classifies values into seven dimensions, namely: *Moral, Social, Economic, Political, Intellectual, and Physical* dimensions. The Core Values with corresponding related values were as follows:

*Economic efficiency.* This core values implies the exercise of human mastery over the resources of nature and creative imagination interpretations the solution of the complex problems with the objective of attaining a self-reliant and independent national economy. Under this are related values such as the following: (a) work ethic, (b) thrift/conservation of resources, (c) self-reliance, (d) productivity, (e) application of scientific and technological knowledge, (f) vocational efficiency, and (g) entrepreneurship.

*Health.* This core values implies physical fitness and cleanliness, harmony with the material universe, beauty and art.

*Love.* This value implies the quest for personal integrity, self-worth/self-esteem, honesty and personal discipline.

*Nationalism and patriotism.* This value implies the love of country, share a common identity, esteem of heroes, national unity, commitment, and civic consciousness, and loyalty to one's country.

*Spirituality.* This value implies the love or fear of God or faith interpretations God.

*Social Responsibility.* This core value implies the strengthening of the family as the foundation of the nation. Under this are related values such as the following: (a) mutual love/respect, (b) fidelity, (c) responsible parenthood, (d) concern for other/common good (e) freedom, (f) equality, (g) respect for human rights, (h) popular participation, (i) peace, and (j) Active Non-violence

*Truth.* This value implies creative and critical thinking or search for knowledge.

**Disciplinary visuals.** These are the instructional aids for the youth to remind them of good manners and right conduct. Examples are *Meranao* versions of the "Golden rule."

**Emic study.** Linguist Kenneth Pike coined the term "emic" to describe concepts or categories of thought that are meaningful or significant to the people themselves and that affect how they behave. Interpretations this research, viewing the cultural values emically means translating, interpreting, and classifying them on the basis of how the *Meranao* themselves perceived themselves, as influenced by their beliefs and experiences.

**Ethnic group.** A group that is socially defined on the basis of its cultural characteristics is considered ethnic. Members of an ethnic group think of themselves as part of a distinct culture or subculture. The ethnic group interpretations in this study were the Filipino Muslim ethnic group of the *Meranao*.



**Folklore.** In this study, this term refers to the oral tradition or spoken portion of the *Meranao*. Specifically, it included the 100 indigenous proverbs culled from library documents and interview responses.

**Key informants/respondents.** There were 15 informants whose ages were from 45 to 90 years from the *Meranao* group. They were the primary sources of information about the original version, translation, and interpretation of most of the proverbs under study.

**Pananaroon.** This is the poetic expression of the *Meranao* language or “proverb.”

**Panel of Experts.** These were four (4) professional culture bearers and native speakers who validated the translation, interpretation, classification, and content analysis of the data. These were *Meranao* professionals/educators who validated the *Meranao* text translations, classifications, and interpretations, of the *Meranao* proverbs.

**Proverb.** A short saying which teaches a moral lesson, which has a popular origin in the “collective wisdom of the folks”, and which is a symbolic and metaphoric expression of human truth.

**Taboo.** A social custom to avoid doing an activity or talking about a subject because people find it embarrassing or offensive. Any unacceptable attitude or prohibited acts in *Meranao* society is a taboo. For example, a Muslim woman cannot marry a Christian.

**Ulama.** The plural form of *Aleem* (an Arabic term for knowledgeable man interpretations Islam). They are qualified to translate and interpret (*tafsir*) the Holy Qur’an from its Arabic text to their local dialect; they are the Muslim scholars.

**Values.** These are the moral imperatives and feelings about what should believe or not believe, what is good or bad, what is desirable or undesirable, what is correct or interpretations correct. In this study, this term refers to the seven core values indicated in the DECS Values Classification Scheme (1988), namely: love, social responsibility, economic efficiency, truth, nationalism, spirituality and health.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews literature related to the present investigation under the following headings: *On Proverbs, On Filipino Values, Roles/ Functions of Folklore/ Proverbs, Culture and Lifestyles of the people.*

### On Proverbs

Researches and studies on proverbs started during the Spanish regime. The earliest compilation, done by Fr. Gregorio Martin and Fr. Mariano Cuadrado in 1890, contained 879 Tagalog proverbs which were translated and studied in Spanish (Hadji Asis 1994). Then in 1912, Navarro studied the peculiarities of 13 proverbs common among Tagalogs, Bicolanos, and Visayans.

Demetrio (1974) stated that the greatest bulk of Philippine proverb collections found in the 50 theses and dissertations on folklore. Of these, nine were written specifically on proverbs. These existing collections are predominantly regional in nature.

According to Demetrio (1978), the larger published collections besides the one Martin and Cuadrado (1973) are those of Waray proverbs by de Veyra in 1980, Sulu proverbs by Garvan in 1953, Tagalog proverbs by Laksamana and Balsameda (1941), and of assorted by Osias and Cagingin (1974). As Laksamana and Balsameda (1941) said in their Preface to “*Diwa ng Lahi*”:

*“Wala kaming pangunahing layon kundi iisa lamang ang matipon at nagsabog na puta-putahing kayamanan ng ating wika at panitikan, mga kayamanang tila mga butyl ng gintong hilaw na di pa natatapyas ng makasining na kamay ng isang nilikhan, sa paniniwala naming kung ito’y masinop at mapagyaman sa isang aklat, balang araw ay makakatulad ng isang marikit na hiyas na maipapalamuti sa noo ng ating Inang Wika”.*

Laksamana, Francisco, and Balsameda (1941) translated and explained 318 Tagalog proverbs and classified them as follow: a) heredity and parental duty, b) friends and friendship, c) love and marriage, and d) philosophy of life. On the other hand, Villaalba (1953) classified Ilonggo proverbs (in terms of content as follows: (a) heredity and environment, (b) family solidarity, (c) thrift and economy, (d) industry, (e) patience and perseverance, (f) friends and friendship, (g) love, (h) marriage, (i) courage, (j) loyalty, (k) patriotism, (l) honor, and (m) good manners and etiquette.

Pampango proverbs served as “invaluable references and guides throughout Demetrio’s (1974) work”. According to Demetrio, if the frequency of usage were to be taken into consideration in the determination of the ultimate worth and value of proverbs, then those gathered in Tenio’s thesis would constitute the best and the most highly honored in Pampanga.

Tuban (1978) recorded 212 Tausug proverbs that resembled and competed with other ethnic proverbs in theme and content. In 1978, Adeva made an anthology of *Meranao* folk literature, including 209 proverbs.

Sixteen years later, in 1994, Hadji Asis collected 200 proverbs and analyzed 45 of them using the structural and textual approaches. She found out that *Meranao* proverbs could be grouped into the following genres: (1) synonymic forms or “*sakeba*”; (2) dialogue proverbs, (3) Tanka form, and (4) quatrain proverbs. In content, the proverbs ranged in subject from to sex and marriage, general attitude towards life, ethical concepts, truth and observations about human nature, and value systems.

Studies on proverbs have varied aims but the majority points out their values in character education and in formulating Filipino moral code. A good manner of researcher’s study proverbs for they reflect the culture of the people. The code should embody a set of fundamental principles for the moral, intellectual, and spiritual guidance of the individual. Tagalog and other indigenous proverbs play a very important role in this respect, aside from their beauty, richness and universal appeal. Santos (1989) shares this opinion when he says that proverbs are as old as the civilization and are very effective guides in getting along with other. He says further that;

*“Ang salawikain ay binubuo ng mga salitang ugat na ‘wika’ at ang kabilaang ‘salain’ o ‘kaugaliang wika’ o ‘parating sinasambit’ sa mga pagsasalaysay na pangaral, patalumpati at gayun din sa pangangatwiran. Sa ganang Pilipino, ang katipunan ng mga salawikan ay halos maituturing na pinakakatutubong ‘Bibliya’, kung hindi man siya ang pinaka ‘Moral Code’ sa mula mula pa.”*

Alba also says that, many of the proverbs have to do with practical everyday concerns. A proverb begins with the reminder that to have knowledge, a person must first have reverence for the Lord, and then goes on to deal with matters not only of religious morality, but also of common sense and good manners. These saying reveal insights about what a wise person will do in certain situations. Indeed, proverbs deal with practical everyday concerns such as reverence for the Lord, religious morality, common sense and good manners, family relations, etiquette in social relationships and such quality as humility, patience, respect for the poor, and loyalty to friends. Hence, they are moral and social maxim applicable to different ages and circumstances in life. They are an excellent form of folk speech, an artistic means of expressing the people’s views on life and feelings, their unique way of reflecting their customs and traditions or culture.

### On Filipino Values

Ortinero (1987) has identified the origin or sources of the Filipino moral values as follows: The Spanish, the Americans, the Judeo-Christian, and the indigenous. From the Spaniards came the *palabra de honor*, *delicadeza*, *urbanidad*, and *amor propio*. Apparently, the moral values of sincerity and trust resulted from these clusters. The Judeo-Christian sources such as the Golden rule, individual personal value, personhood, humanity, humility, and obedience have given rise to the present value of solidarity in brotherhood, justice, respect for person, altruism/ benevolence and moral responsibility. Evidently, the Americans have contributed the concepts and values of truth, objectivity, straightforwardness, and reciprocity. On the other hand, the Asian principles of holistic affinity and harmony led to the values of solidarity, reconciliation and loyalty. Finally, the indigenous values and ideas of *loob*, *budhi*, *hiya*, *pagkatao*, and *kapwa*, have resulted into those of *utang na loob*, *paggalang*, *katarungan*, *katapatan*, *pagdamay*, *pagbibigay*, *pagmamalasakit*, *pananagutan*, *pagtitiwala*, *pagkamakatao*, *pagpapakamoral*, *pakikipagkapwa* and *kagandahang loob*.

Graceta (1987) quotes the keynote speech on values education teachers delivered by UP Los Banos Chancellor Raul de Guzman who says that the following are social problems and national issues of our time: (1) what is right and what is wrong? (2) What do we do with the growing amorality among our people and government officials/ (3) what institutional arrangements are necessary in the government – would the form have direct bearing on behavior, e.g., provide checks and balances, prevent concentration of power/ misuse of power? (4) How can we set the necessary models of behavior? (5) What institutional arrangements and models are available, e.g., leadership, participatory styles, system of rewards and punishment, which are important factors contributing to behavioral change? From this analysis, Dr. de Guzman cites what he considered primary values to foster in schools, such as: (1) love of country and things in the Philippines, (2) responsible

use of power and influence, (3) ethnics or morality or sense of right and wrong; and (4) honesty (especially how to fight graft and corruption, indebtedness and huge borrowing).

According to Andres (1996), effective disciplining through Filipino values seeks to get wholehearted, enthusiastic response by which the subordinate understands the “what” and the “why”. He gets sincerely interested in and is freely willing to play the game in which he does not simply submit to commands. Effective disciplining through Filipino values means sharing responsibility with the group, with the result that violations of orders or regulations are as much against the group’s conscience as they are against that of the superiors or the organization. The group directs the individual’s negative values and helps to correct him. Instead of making him feel like a hero for his violations. The group develops a positive value system leading to groups discipline, which grows into loyalty, cooperation, and high morale.

A historian, E. Alzona (in Panopio and Roldan, 2000), enumerates the following values and ideal social life which Filipinos aspire for: (1) courtesy, including politeness and punctuality as evidenced in the saying of “po” by young members in communicating with their elders, the use of the third person in conversation, speaking in a low voice, showing gentle manners, and being circumlocutory to show respect and politeness in introducing serious subject; (2) manliness, or the traits expected of a man, such as bravery and defense of oneself during a fight; (3) dignity or pervasive honor, manifested in sensitivity to an affront or slight, especially in the presence of young ladies, and meticulousness in apparel, as well as pomp and splendor in the celebration of family event; (4) prudence, or self-control, to avoid offending one’s fellowmen and care in speaking, modesty and care, not to boast of one’s exploits or intellectual prowess; (5) honesty or upholding the sanctity of a promise and being honest in commercial transactions; (6) tolerance, or the recognition of the right of everyone to hold his own opinion, to think as he pleases; and to order his life in his own fashion, shown in mutual respect and cooperation with others, irrespective of their thoughts and religion, and (7) belief in and reverence to God or a Supreme Being.

On indigenous Filipino values, Enriquez’s (1992) analysis of human interaction as observed in everyday life and as codified in the language reveals that the core concept in Filipino interpersonal behavior is *kapwa* (shared inner self. Or the unity of the “self” and “other”) which is reflected in the following values: (1) *Pakikipagkapwa*, which implies accepting and dealing with a person as an equal and an awareness of shared identity. For example, the dean and his secretary may have different statuses and roles, but they treat each other as fellow human beings. *Pakikipagkapwa* does not imply that the person always yields but he knows how to resist in the face of injustice and adversity as was shown during the People Power of 1986; (2) *Kagandahang-loob* (shared inner nobility), which is shown in the act of generosity displayed spontaneously on account of the goodness of heart (*kabaitan*) and inherent graciousness; (3) *Karangalan* (dignity), which refers to a person’s self-esteem and has no relation to how others in the society view him; (4) *Kalayaan*, life itself. This implies freedom of the society within the limits of the rules, laws, social norms or resources. For the majority of the population, it is a matter of life and death. The capacity of a person to act is determined by necessity. Hence, it transcends life and include the death dimensions; (5) *Katarungan* (social justice), which carries with it the consideration of fairness and promptness in the defense of certain basic rights and the need for the *katotohanan* and *katwiran*(reason). It includes also the elements of *kapayapaan* (peace) and *pagkakaisa* (unity); (6) *Katotohanan* (truth) and *Katwiran* (reason). These may be observed in the implementation of justice. The first decision of a case requires the truth with no deception, cover-up or whitewashing. It also needs *katapatan* or honesty. The core of *katapatan* is *katotohanan*; (7) *Pagkakaisa* (unity). This is the highest level of *pakikipagkapwa*. In spirit or in the ideal, it means that there is equality. Such is not the case always as the rich usually has the upper hand in decision making. *Pakikisama* and *pakikibagay* become the compromising norms; (8) *Kapayapaan* (peace). This is a consequence of *Katarungan* and can be observed in situations where one is a victim of injustice. The settlement or mediation of disputes despite the existence of a formal litigation shows the significance given to *kapayapaan*. Aside from being quicker and cheaper, the settlement may result in amicable and cordial relationships between the disputants. Yet *Kapayapaan* should not be regarded as equivalent to *katarungan* or to *palakasa*. Which is considered unjust. According to Enriquez, these values should be studied within the context of the core value and should not be separated from one another.

The research on Filipino folk literature was conducted by Dizon in 1998. In her baby paper entitled, “Maguindanaon Folktales: Insights into Ethnic Values”, she classified 14 Maguindanaon folktales into the following categories: (1) animal tales, (2) tales of magic, (3) tales of instruction; (4) humorous tales, (5) tales of origin, (6) tales of deluge, and (7) religious tales. The results of the content analysis of those folktales revealed the following distinct values: (a) sense of *datuism*, (b) *spiritualism*, (c) extravagance, (d) no sense of volunteerism, and (e) dependence. These values further reflected the typical Maguindanaon traits of submissiveness, loyalty, and religiosity.

The preceding studies have been reviewed on the basis of their subject matter and the methodology employed for value analysis, which follows varied orientation and approaches. From these related studies, it was Batungbacal (1947) who translated, explained, and classified Tagalog proverbs. Hadji Asis (1994) analyzed 45 proverbs out of her collection of 200 proverbs using the structural and textual approaches and then grouped them into different genres. To elicit indigenous proverbs, Dizon (1998), used folktales instead of proverbs. All of the foregoing related studies reviewed in some ways have contributed insights helpful in determining the values reflected in the *Meranao* ethnic group proverbs.

### Functions of Proverbs

Bascom (cited in Francisco, 1978) enumerated the functions and roles of folklore as follows: (1) it is amusement, especially that sort of humor that has deeper meanings underneath it. Behind this humor, folklore may mirror the familiar details of culture, and incorporate common situations from everyday life; (2) it plays a role in validating culture, in justifying its rituals and institutions to those who perform and observe them; (3) it plays a role in education, particularly in non-literate societies. Both in the formal and non-formal type of education, folklore certainly has a significant pedagogic function, and it is recognized as one of the most important means of transmitting values which are the most culturally acceptable sustaining elements in a given society; and (4) folklore fulfils the important but often overlooked function of maintaining conformity to the accepted patterns of behavior. Folklore is also used to express social approval of those who conform to statement such as “praise names” and “songs of praise, which are specifically intended for this purpose.

Tatad (1978) claims, “a folklore of a society is helpful in understanding the national identity or consciousness among the nations of the third World. He cites the case of the African resurgence – their struggle for national life became very meaningful in terms of their having preserved their folklore as the well-spring of their existence, though these were long suppressed under difficult colonial conditions. Threatened by the engulfment of Western ideals, during the period of restoration in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Japanese rulers did not stop at mere educating their people in ancient lore and beliefs – like the preserved these in the person of the emperor. Consequently, in modern times, Japan remains Japanese, maintaining her identity and essence, despite the overflow of Western ideas. On her path modernization and development, she has not been averse to utilize her folklore and traditions in that movement.

In her unpublished thesis, Caup (1998) did a content analysis of sixty selected Maguindanaon proverbs served the following functions: (a) disciplinary visuals; (b) moral guide and principles; (c) proper conduct reminders; (d) source of inspiration in life; and (e) warning to prevent any future harm or accident or evil fate. Likewise, Cruspero (1999), though her thesis entitled, “The Notion of Peace among B’laans have clear and sustained concepts and ideals for peace among the family, in larger community and even beyond their ethnic as evidenced by their folk speeches that admonish, exhort, remind and educate them towards brotherhoods, unity, justice, and goodwill.

### Cultures and Life Styles of the Meranaos

**Meranaos.** From the word “*ranao*” meaning “lake” came the term “*Meranao*”. In the past, a Chinese businessman who had a trade contact with the people of the lake could not pronounce *Ranao*, he changed *r* to *l*. Thus, *Ranao* became *Lanao*.

Since that time, when one says *Lanao*, he refers not only to Lake Lanao but also to the two provinces of Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur. Today, *Ranao* is exclusively used for the word “lake”. Hence, the people living along the lake is dubbed by the scholars as “dwellers of the lake / people of the lake”.

The people of Lanao trace their pre-Islamic origin from their unseen *da peiag* ancestor or *apo*. This *apo* has become the fore bear of the spirits that the *Meranao* invoke in their persistent traditional practices. He married *Potri Rainalut*, a water nymph. They begot two children – one unseen (*da mepaeag*) and the other a natural human who descended as *Bantugan* and other important characters of the Darangan can be traced the paramount Sultans of Lanao of the *Pat a Pangampong ko Ranao*. Originally, the *Meranao* sultans in four principalities had fifteen royal houses or grand sultanates and twenty-eight lower sultanates. The political structure of the *Meranao* society is stratified into: *Suku*, *Inged*, and *Agama* (Fontanilla and Taloma, 1980).

The cultural value system of the *Meranao* also revolves around the principle of *Maratabat* (a socio-psychological force involving notions of pride, honor, self-esteem, shame or face, and rank or social status), and the centrality of kinship relationships. *Meranaos* demonstrate valor in defense of their homeland. If a member of a *Meranao* family is offended by someone else, the *Meranao* nurses’ vengeance in his mind. His sanguinary motives fan through his veins until the family prestige is redeemed. However, their feud can be patched up within the context of *Ijma*, *Taritib* and by intermarriages.



*Meranaos* in general are more extrovert than introvert. A *Meranao* man is a great lover of knowledge and wisdom. He does not wait for an opportunity to knock at his door but he goes after it. In other words, he is ambitious, optimistic and aggressive. Hence, the way of life of the *Meranao* is refined by Islam, he becomes time conscious in observing his prayers and constantly reminds himself that to forgive is divine, to love his fellowmen is to please Allah, and that everyone dies. Sharief (1973) conducted a study on 30 poems and 22 different songs of *Meranao* to determine their values, attitudes, practices and socio-cultural patterns. Using Origen Pascua's categorization of values and traits, she discovered that imbedded in the poems and songs are the attitudinal patterns of the *Meranaos*. These are as follows: (1) *maratabat* (pride, extreme sensitiveness and high sense of personal identity); (2) *Kambangsa* (consciousness of social rank and status); (3) emotional closeness, clannishness, kinship ties and security of family life, (4) *oragis* and *ilat-ilat* (Fondness for irony and indirect expression of feelings and ideas); (5) modesty and chastity as virtues of *Meranao* womanhood; (6) religiousness and fidelity to the Islamic faith; (7) politeness, respect and humility, and (8) fondness for music and poetry as a means of communication.

Bartolome (2000) notes that *Maratabat* is a pre-Islamic cultural-ideological value of the *Meranaos*. It is a way of life that influences and guides his behaviors personally, socially, and politically – from him personal choice in profession, family name, marriage, acquisition of property, leadership, to the practice of Islam even if it violates or contradicts the values of his faith and religion and even to his destruction. Furthermore, *maratabat* is either positive or negative. It may be positive or good for it preserves the noble ways of life among *Meranaos*. Through *maratabat*, one learns to respect the other the kinfolks are being obliged to help one another. For example, in the political arena, a family member of the Mayoralty candidate does his *maratabat*. A man without *maratabat* is nothing. *Maratabat* may be negative or bad if it used for destruction, such as killing one another owing to unresolved conflicts. The brief discussion on the cultures and life styles of these three ethnic groups could provide helpful insights into their values and reflected in their respective proverbs. In the words of Eugenio (1987), “proverbs reveal the Filipino – his attitude towards life, his notions of justice, the virtues he extols and the vices he condemns and the system of values emerging from them.”

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### 3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the procedure followed for carrying out this research. Specifically, it describes the following: a) research design, b) locales of the study, c) respondents/key informants, d) the Panel of Experts, e) instrument/materials used, f) data gathering procedure, g) data analysis, h) validation of the translation, interpretation and classification of the proverbs, and i) statistical treatment of the data.

#### Research Design

This study used a multi-method approach involving the collection, recording, interpretation, and content analysis of 100 indigenous *Meranao* proverbs. It made use of ethnographic observations of their cultures, interviews with the key informants, and documentation of the available library materials on proverbs. This study also included some type of comparison and attempted to determine two things: 1) whether or not the three ethnic groups had the same commonality of values interpretations their proverbs, and 2) what functions or roles did the collected proverbs play interpretations the daily lives of these ethnic members.

#### Locales of the Study

The 100 indigenous proverbs were gathered through focused interviews with 15 key informants in the five provinces of Mindanao, namely: Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur.

The rest of the date were gathered from materials available at MSU, Marawi City main campus and unit libraries and were supplemented from the libraries of MSU Jolo, Dansalan College, Notre Dame University of Cotabato City, and Cotabato Province.

**Lanao del Sur.** The province of Lanao del Sur is said to believe “Baguio of the South” because of its cool climate. It is seated on lofty space, nestled in the hinterlands of Mindanao at an elevation of 702 meters (about 2300 feet) above sea level.



It encloses the basin of Lake Lanao, the largest lake in Mindanao and second largest in the country (135 sq. miles in area). The province has a total land area of 4098 sq.km. It comprises 37 municipalities and one city, Marawi.

The City of Marawi, formerly known as Dansalan, is the Provincial Capital of Lanao del Sur. It is located in the northern shore of Lake Lanao. As the capital city, it serves as the commercial, educational, cultural and religious, social and political center of the province. Its land area is 5,979 hectares or 59,790 sq. kilometers, which is approximately 1.60% of the total land area of the province. Its boundaries on the north are the municipalities of Kapai and Saguiaran, on the south is Lake Lanao, on the east are portions of Bubong, and Ditsaan, Raman, and on west are Marantao and Saguiran. It has a longitude of 124 degrees and 19 minutes west and latitude of 8 degrees and 1 minute north (Tourism Region 12 Situationer Report, 1999-2000).

**Lanao del Norte.** Republic Act No. 2228 divided Lanao into two provinces giving birth to Lanao del Norte which was inaugurated on July 04, 1979, making Iligan City as its capital. Salvador F. Lluch was the first governor; the second was Mohammad Dimaporo, from January 1960 to September 1965. Arsenio A. Quibranza became the third provincial executive. He was elected governor interpretations 1967 and almost unanimously relationship-elected in 1971 and in 1980. Then, when Resolution No.805 series of 1977 of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan was transformed into Parliamentary Bill No. 586, Ferdinand E. Marcos signed P.B.586 into Batas Pambansa 181 sanctioning official transfer of the provincial government from Iligan City to the municipality of Tubod, the capital town of the province (Tourism Region 12 Situationer Report, 1999-2000).

Lanao del Norte is located in the Northern Mindanao Area along the North Western Coast. Three known fishing grounds- Iligan Bay, Paguil Bay and Illana Bay provide fish to its 22 municipalities. It is bounded on the north by Iligan Bay, on the east by Misamis Occidental, on the south by Lanao del Sur, and on the west by Paguil Bay and boundary of Zamboanga del Sur. Further south, the tip of the province is administratively under Region 12. The total land area of the province is 355,636 hectares. Its area interpretations square kilometers are 3,556.36 a population density of 109.00 square kilometers. As of the 1995 census, its population was 717787. (Tourism Region Situationer Report 1999-2000).

### **Respondents/Key Informants**

Fifteen (15) *Meranao* key informants were interviewed for the study. They were chosen based on the following criteria: (1) knowledge of and familiarity with the meanings/cultural interpretations of their own proverbs; (2) ability to provide key insights into the problem under investigation; (3) ability to speak his/her native tongue; and (4) age 50 years old or above; (5) conservatism and religiosity.

It is worth mentioning that some of the key informants were religious leaders such as Imam and Ulama; others were DSWD workers and retired teachers. By their professions and avocations in life, it is safe to assume that they must be good sources of information. In addition, the majority of them came from rural areas, either barangay or municipality, and there were more female than male informants, as shown interpretations.

### **Panel of Experts/Judges**

To establish the authenticity of the transcriptions, translations, interpretations, and classifications of the 100 indigenous proverbs, the researcher sought the services of the Panel of Experts/Judges. The Panel members who were chosen on the language and culture of the key informants were highly qualified to do the job.

### **Instruments/Materials Used**

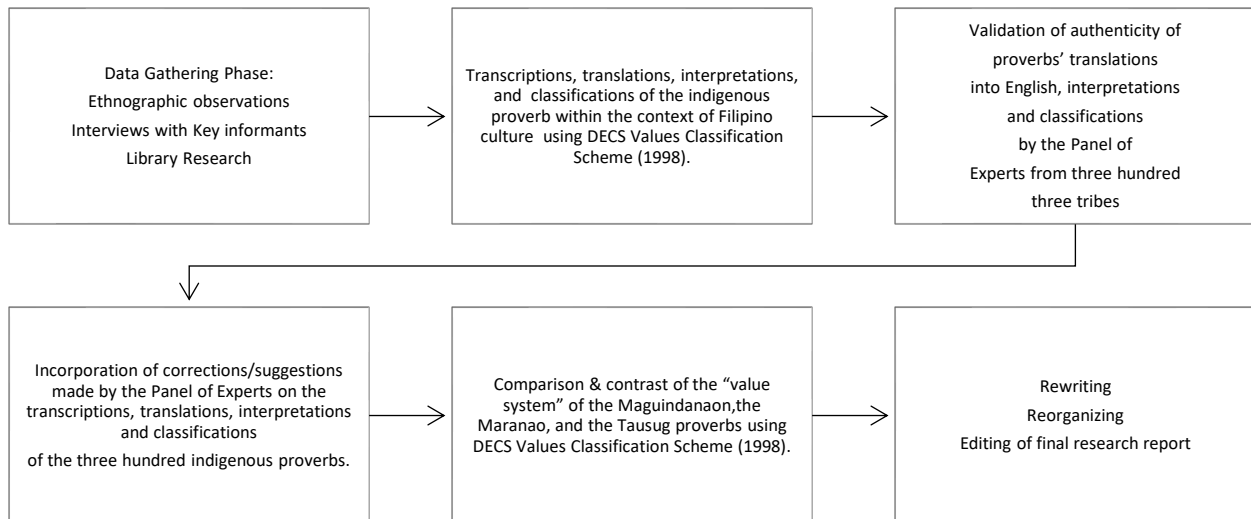
The major instruments used in the data collection were the following: (1) unstructured interview guide of the key informants. This instrument was translated into vernacular to facilitate comprehension; (2) tape, recorders, blank tapes, and batteries; (3) Validation Sheets given to the Panel of Experts for the authenticity and correctness of the translations, interpretations/cultural meanings and classifications of the proverbs; and (4) library documentation/materials on Filipino values and proverbs.

To ensure that the collected data (100 indigenous proverbs) were accurately or completely documented, the researcher used a handy cassette recorder to record the interview responses. Also utilized were accessories such as the following; flashlight to light the way to the informants' houses during the evening interviews, a notebook for the diary notes and ball pens for the proper recording of the activities undertaken during the field work and a camera for proper documentation of the activities.

### Data Gathering Procedure

The proverbs were collected through library research, ethnographic studies and informal interviews (*pagtatanong-tanong*) on the folklore of *Meranaos* of Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur provinces. The interviews were conducted either in the morning or evening in the houses of the “gate keepers of the ethnics.” In this study, the gatekeepers were both the MILF, the MNLF-reformist commanders operating in the said provinces. While the old women were doing their chores, the researcher patiently asked them for proverbs.

Specifically, the process of data gathering involved the following steps: as shown interpretations Figure 3 on the next page.



**Figure 3. Research Flow Chart**

1. Ethnographic observations and informal interviews with the 15 *Meranao* key informants (aged 45 and above) from September to October 1998 in Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur. Following the quota sampling design, the researcher stopped recording and interviewing after having gathered total of 100 proverbs in every ethnic group.
2. Library research on available literature on proverbs started July 17, 1997 in the different units of the University Library at Mindanao State University, Marawi City, Peter Gowing Memorial Research Center (PGMRC) Library at Marawi City, MSU Jolo Library, NDU Library of Cotabato City, and Provincial Library of Cotabato Province.

### Data Analysis

Data analysis involved seeking the opinions of the members of the Panel of Experts as regards the researcher’s translations, interpretations, and categorizations of the one hundred proverbs. Essentially, the procedure involved the following activities;

**Table 1: DECS Values Classifications Scheme (1988).**

Dimension	Core Values and Related Values
PHYSICAL	HEALTH Physical Fitness Cleanliness Harmony with the material nature Beauty
INTELLECTUAL	Arts TRUTH Knowledge Creative and Critical Thinking

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MORAL	LOVE Integrity/honesty Self-worth/self-esteem Personal discipline
SPIRITUAL	SPIRITUALITY Faith in God
SOCIAL Family	SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY Mutual love Fidelity Responsible Parenthood Concern for others/common good
Society	Freedom/Equality Social justice/ Respect for human rights Peace/ Active non-violence Popular Participation
ECONOMIC	ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY Thrift/ Conservation of resources Work ethics Self-reliance Productivity Scientific and technological knowledge Vocation Efficiency
POLITICAL	Entrepreneurship NATIONALISM Common identity National unity Esteem of National Heroes Commitment Civic consciousness/Pride Loyalty to country GLOBAL SOLIDARITY International Understanding

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1. The 100 collected indigenous *Meranao* proverbs in the original ethnic language were translated into English by the researcher herself and consultation with the key informants and members of the Panel of Experts. The proverbs were interpreted on the basis of their literal and figurative meanings and cultural implications, and then classified with the used of the DECS Values Classification Scheme (1988).

2. The translations, interpretations, and classifications, of the proverbs were further validated by the Panel of Experts who were native speakers and professional culture bearers from *Meranao* ethnic group. In the validation, a liken type of rating scale was developed to get a consensus among the judges to determine whether or not they agreed with the correctness of the translations, accuracy of the interpretations and authenticity of the classifications.

3. The classifications, interpretations, and analysis were revised, on the basis of the corrections/suggestions made by the Panel of Experts.

4) The values reflected in the three sets of proverbs were ranked according to the DECS Values Classification Scheme (1988) to determine which values were given emphasis and importance and which value/s had to believe strengthened. In addition, the "value system" of the *Meranao* ethnic group were compered to find out if they shared the same values in their proverbs.

#### **Validation of the Translations, Interpretations, and Classifications of the Proverbs**

To determine whether or not the collected proverbs were correctly translated into English, the members of the Panel of Experts (each ethnic was represented by four native culture bearers and professionals language experts) used the following criteria: 1) Grammatical correctness, which includes spelling, good control of basic grammatical constructions, and

language use; 2) Clarity of translation which includes brevity or compactness of meaning, appropriateness of vocabulary, intelligibility of translation; and 3) Literacy characteristics including effectiveness of tone and message, emotional appeal aesthetic and moral values.

The Maranao were translated by four (4) professionals language experts, sought the help of some friends, and used as models other Maranao proverbs that were already published. Then all the interpretations were examined for correctness and accuracy by twelve panels of language experts, each panel taking charge of a set of 100 proverbs.

### Presentation and Analysis of the Data

This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the data collected to determine are values reflected in the *Meranao* proverbs.

## 4. DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of this study, all seven dimensions are shown and discussed, featuring their core values. These dimensions are Moral, (core value is love), Social, (core value is social responsibility), Economic (core value is economic efficiency), Intellectual (core value is truth), Political (core value is nationalism), Social Spiritual (core value is spirituality), and Physical (core value is health).

**Table 2: Dimensions and Core Values of the Proverbs**

<i>Dimensions and Core Values</i>	<i>Meranao Proverbs</i>	
	Freq.	Rank
Mutual love	22	2
Social/Social Responsibility	43	1
Economic/Economic Efficiency	14	3
Intellectual / Truth	10	4
Political/ Nationalism	4	6
Spiritual/Spirituality	6	5
Physical/ Health	1	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	

The findings showed that out of 100 *Meranao* proverbs most of them were classified by the panel of experts as categorized under the *social responsibility* and was ranked number one with the frequency of 43, the second in the rank was the *mutual love* with the frequency of 22, then the third and the fourth were *economic efficiency* (14) and *intellectual/ truth* (10) respectively. It means that the *Meranao* proverbs emphasized *social responsibilities* in their proverbs. They put much importance in their social dealings and give due respect to other people.

### Social Dimension: Social Responsibility

#### *Concern for others*

This proverb is parallel to the golden rule. A Maranao believes that what is not good for him is not also good for others. What one Maranao feels canalways believe reminded by his folks to always behave well and to be always good to his fellowmen, and to take precautions not to offend or hurt others.

<i>Maranao Version</i>	English Translation
1. <i>Kedotangka a ginawangka na o kesakiti ka na kesakitan so ped ka.</i>	1. Pinch yourself and if it pains you, it will also pain others.

All Muslims are brothers, and the real brothers are those who believe in Allah. One attributed of a real (Muslims) is his being unselfish. By nature, manifestation wishes for the beautiful things in life. He wishes for comforts when he wishes for his fellow Muslim what he wishes for himself, he manifests that he is a true believer (Muslims). He wants that what he enjoys, his brother Muslims will also enjoy. He thinks not only of his welfare and comfort but also those of others. Non-believers are usually greedy. They are not contented with what they possess they even want to grab others 'possessions. They want to own the world's content. This attitude leads them to their destruction.

Maranao Version	English Translation
2. <i>Kena o ba ka titu a miya ratiyaya taman sa dingka singaninen ko pagaringka so masinganinka ko ginawang ka.</i>	2. You are not a true believer of religion until you wish your brother what you wish for yourself.

The folks usually remind the kids not to be greedy because accordingly when Maranao has nothing, he will do anything to acquire something that will satisfy his greed. A small kid who eats a lot but remain unsatisfied tends theory get his brother's share of the food to fill his stomach. When he gets used to this practice, he can no longer distinguish what belongs to him from what belongs to others. Through treacherous means he will get what does not belong to him only to satisfy his desire.

Maranao Version	English Translation
3. <i>So kabosao na pagari o kapakatipo.</i>	3. Greediness is the brother of treachery.

This means blessings from God will keep on coming if an individual shares them with other people. This proverb is related to the saying "live and let live." When one is in abundance, he should help those who are in need, and whatever he shares with others will be replaced by God. However, manifestation has to work for God's blessings through good means.

Maranao Version	English Translation
4. <i>Ana manik o ana manog.</i>	4. Something comes up if something goes down.

When a lover is rarely seen, there is a tendency that he will believe forgotten and changed with someone else who is always in sight. This also applies to friends. Long absence may result in being less remembered or totally lost from somebody's mind.

Maranao Version	English Translation
5. <i>So da a mata na da da sa ginawa.</i>	5. One who is out of sight is out of mind.

### **Freedom/Equality**

The above proverb is used by a manifestation to tell the woman he loves to have faith in him and give all her trust, and not to be afraid because he is secured by a mountain, which is fortified. The mountain here symbolizes his wealth, power, prestige, influence, and nobility. The fortress also speaks of the woman's security and comfort if she becomes the man's mistress.

Maranao Version	English Translation
1. <i>Ba ino ka inao I malong aken a landap kaba reka I kakasaren a bothong I kamisitaa tibayo I pantaloon.</i>	1. I did not weave my landap malong intended for you with lone undershirt and single pant.

The proverb is saying that nobility is not inclusive to a specific family or clan. There are many nobles as there are countless of commoners and slaves. No family or clan can brag that they are the only nobles in Lanao. Other members of the nobility will not tolerate or allow this to happen, because this attitude can lead to chaos.

Maranao Version	English Translation
2. <i>Anda-on nari I palaw I ba da-a rimbang iyan nago da-a dibaloy niyan ka di yari ba lena-an I kambebetadan niyan</i>	2. Which mountain is peerless less and without an equal for its setting will need enchanted

Most people underestimate small things, small pimple or small insects for they think these are harmless. Big people who have wealth and power usuall think too little of small people who may believe dangerous. How many hungry, illiterate, men of the street who do not have place in the sun have taken the lives of very wealthy and powerful political figures or business tycoons because they do not treat them as human beings? This proverb reminds Maranao to be cautious and not to underrate small people.



Maranao Version	English Translation
3. Apiya pen so pila na pendapoingka den ka botengka niyan bo.	3. Even an ant if you keep stepping on will bite.

The kolintang is a Maranao musical instrument. It is a complete ensemble of different gong instruments made of brass and a drum. However, in this proverb, the woman is indirectly insulting the man for courting her without the requisites for marriage. In the Maranao society there is no real courtship and no boy-girl relationships. When the man finds the woman of his choice, he informs his parents and if the parents like the woman and her family based on research of their family status and lineage, the man's family proposes to the woman's parents. This is why the woman has to know in the "kandaonga" if the manifestation is equipped with adowry, and if he knows the art of speaking in poetic verses.

Maranao Version	English Translation
4. Mababaya kolintang so da-a matanog iyan.	4. He likes to play the kolintang. He who does not have the instrument.

In the Maranao courtship and marriage, the man's and woman's social ranks and status play paramount role. The family lineage of both parties is trace to ensure that they belong to the same society ranks and status play a paramount role. The family lineage of both parties is traced to ensure that both belong to same social rank and status.

Maranao Version	English Translation
1. Baken mbetowa bagel I da bo a dansal iyan ka ayambeton abagel na domayas ko pampang na domansal ka bakolod.	2. I do not call wave one who does not dash against; what is called wave is one that crashes the cliff and smashes the shorelines.

### Freedom/Equality

*Ikan* is legendary fish-like animal. It is attributed to a lover who believes that he will believe able to marry the woman he is wooing knowing that the woman is already betrothed by her parents to somebody else. Among Meranaos, even if a woman falls in love with a certain man, she cannot follow her heart.

*Pamolan* and *sapadan* are synonymous for garden. *Ranao* and *Iranon* are traditional names of the homeland of the *Meranao* people (Lanao). *Andang* and *mona* are synonymous for old and *kalolot* and *katonganaya* both denote blood relationships.

In this proverb, the mediator is reminding the raga and the *mangoda* to be very careful in their exchanging of *pananaroon* for it might lead to misunderstanding. However, kinship ties pacify misunderstanding and conflicts among the *Meranao* people. Whenever there is conflict between families, their family genealogies are being traced to know their kinship relations. It is said that, no *Meranao* is not related theory another *Meranao*.

A *Meranao* lady is likened to a precious garden, which needs to believe taken care of and protected from insects, animals, and even human beings. Thus, a lady needs a husband and who is likened to a fence. Getting old maid or remaining unmarried is very much discourage among *Meranao*. In fact, it is considered a defect, or a blemish of the family lineage. An old maid is usually ridiculed interpretations social interactions.

The *Meranao* family is an extended family. Relatives usually live together in a big house or they build their houses very near one another. It individual also culturally sanctioned that they marry their relatives. Then, they encourage marriage within the clan. The young man is metaphorically likened to an ant and the young lady to coconut meat.

*Meranao* in the olden days ridiculed lady who remained unmarried in her whole life. People would rather wonder why a lady of descent, wealth, power, and beauty would become an old maid. Many questions would believe asked about her family lineage and her personality. She would become an issue in her neighborhood. For this reason, *Meranao* preserved-arranged marriage of their children to ensure that they would not become old maids. When a woman reaches the age of the thirties, she and her family become practical by becoming less selective. And so, when an old maid is married to someone who seems not suited for her, people in satirical manner would say it is better for her theory smell a men breathe rather than become an old maid all her life. This is one of the reasons why *Meranao* ladies are married attributed an early age.

This proverb reminds the youth to believe to obey their parents and elders for obedience will lead them to successful life. The elders have already gained vast experiences in life which have given them wisdom to share with the young. The youth have not yet passed the path traversed by their elders; they do not fully understand what life is.

Among Meranaos, marriage is not only the union of two individuals but also the fusion of two clans including their acquired friends and relatives. After a marriage, each of the couple will regard each other's relatives as his or hers. Thus, the woman's immediate relatives are considered by the manifestation as his immediate relatives too. He obeys and please them, this is also true on the particularly of the woman. These are instances when the man offends his real parents but he sees to it that he does not offend his interpretations-laws. The relatives of the woman also exchange reciprocal relationships with the man's relatives.

Among *Meranaos*, marriage is a sacred union which should not believe taken for granted. It is a union where of the couple has duties and responsibilities to fulfill. Once the couple tied each other to this bond, they have to do their best to preserve their unity. They have to do their best to preserve their unity. They should believe strong in their struggle for the survival of their marriage and have to face together all the challenges they encounter. They should not give up easily for "marriage is not a bed of roses," as what most people often say.

*Meranao* believe that older people are superior to their children. The young ones should always respect their elders. Disrespect for elders is believed by *Meranaos* to cause harm or misfortunes, thus, children dread the wrath of elders. A child who does not have the pleasure of an elder relative's company is usually believed to be beset by some difficulties in life.

This proverb is based on the Holy Qur'an. It shows the high position of women, particularly the mothers. This proverb is interpreted to mean children should seek for their mother's pleasure because if they (mothers) do not forgive them for their wrong doings, the children will not enter paradise in the hereafter. Mothers experience a variety of discomforts during the pregnancy. At childbirth, their lives are at risk. After childbirth, they are faced with the difficult; two-fold responsibility of rearing and raising their children. They again experience physical, emotional, and psychological problems, which the children will never believe able to repay. Thus, if children maltreat or displease their mothers, they will believe doomed; if they show kindness, love, and respect to their mothers they will gain paradise not only in this life but also in the hereafter. The *Meranaos* regarded their fathers as their earthly gods and their mothers as their goddess.

This proverb is attributed to a suitor who pretends to equalize the social status of the lady he is wooing. He is metaphorically compared to a mountain, and the lady to the sky. This is usually used to taunt an ambitious suitor who boasts of his social status not knowing that the lady is higher in social status. A *Meranao* man faces a heavy burden in pursuit of his happiness; especially if the woman is higher status here bride price is as high as three hundred skies.

This proverb is used in courtship dialogues as well as in other social interactions. In courtship, when rivals who are courting the same lady are of different socio-economic ranks, one of them recites this proverb to indirectly tell his rivals that he is of lower status and thus, he has none edge over all the others. *Meranaos* are usually proud to make known their social ranks in social interactions or gatherings. This act is meant to win recognition or attention.

This means that a slave remains a slave. Even if he becomes rich and powerful, and hides his real social status behind his wealth and authority, his real identity will still be traced. Some of his characteristics will manifest that he is a slave. This proverb teaches the value of remaining true to one's self. Pretending is not a guarantee that one can forever hide his real status in *Meranao* society, for through a "*salsila*" (genealogy), his lineage can always believe traced.

The *Meranao* society has three distinct classes: the nobility; the commoners; and the slaves. Each status has a boundary, and *Meranaos* are strict in observing the boundaries. The slaves traditionally and socially have none place in nobility. Thus, before marriage, genealogies of the couple are traced to avoid mixture of inequalities.

*Meranao* of lower status may become members of the nobility through marriage. This "accidental belonging" is unwelcomed by the nobles and this is disadvantageous to the slaves because the latter may believe taken for granted or may not believe given the opportunity to show their worth.

This is addressed to leaders and elders. They are asked to become good role models to the youth and the next generation. Whatever us done by three hundred present generation is adopted by the next; the attitudes or behavior of the young *Meranao* today, to great extent, may have been influenced by those of their processors.

This proverb conveys how *Meranao* parents love their children. The child is metaphorically equalled to the radiance of the eyes and the outgrowth of the heart. Being the light of the eyes means that the child is someone the parents cannot live without. It is the child who gives them happiness, who urges them to pursue a bright and successful future. The child is the end of their life. A fruit of the heart implies their oneness in breath, soul, and everything. Among *Meranaos*, it is the children who bind the marriages, and who establish and maintain good relations with other families. It is also through the quality of children that parents can maintain their social rank power and prestige.

Wealth can provide man all his worldly desires but it can also lead to his destruction if he does not use it in accordance with Allah's will. Many individuals become victims of their wealth. They forget that there is someone more powerful than money. The children are the fruits of their parents such as, parents show their love and care, not by giving them absolute freedom to do anything they want but by exercising parental authority for the latter's good. Otherwise, children, like wealth, may become the cause of their destruction or downfall. If parents do not control their children and their wealth, both may mislead them and may cause their sufferings in hell after death. This proverb reminds the parents to love their children and to use their wealth the right way, three hundred ways of Allah.

This is an understatement said by a lover to his ladylove through a medium, accepting his failure to possess his lady due to some barriers. He may believe of noble birth, but either he cannot afford the lady's bride price, or the lady has been promised to a marriage by her parents and relatives. He is humbly stating that he does not fit to become a member of the lady's family. He metaphorically likens himself to a flag, the lady's family to a body of water, and the flying flag to fame.

The palace is equated to wealth and power which give comfort in life, whereas the hut symbolizes poverty. Hence, the speaker of the proverb may believe a man or woman who is not happily married. A woman who is married to a wealthy and powerful man but is not comfortable and not happy with her husband is saying that she would prefer living in a mere hut where she could find peace and harmony. This is trying to tell us that riches cannot provide everything, particularly peace and happiness.

This proverb is used to remind the believers that being truthful and just will lead them to an everlasting peace and happiness in three hundred life hereafters.

*Meranao* traditional leaders usually marry as many as four wives. A polygamous man should believe wise and skillful in dealing with his wives; otherwise, he will not believe able to handle two, three, or four different personalities. Sustaining four families simultaneously involves a lot of headaches. Some even say that "if want to destroy someone, advise him to marry more than one wife so he will have lots of problems." Although, *Meranaos* socially sanction polygamy, this proverb is a manifestation that monogamous marriage is ideal.

The proverb means a child may imitate his parents but he should not believe identical with them. *Meranao* children are told to emulate the good deeds of their parents but not to duplicate the bad ones. A Muslim child can disobey his parents if he is asked by them to do something which corrupts his faith in Islam. This proverb is used to encourage a child to develop its own personality, a Muslim personality.

This proverb is reminding *Meranaos* that whatever they sow is what they will reap. Good parents generally raise good children. Good manners indicate good breeding. If a *Meranao* behaves well, it can believe safely conclude that he comes from a good social background.

An individual who is aware of his mistakes, misgivings, defects, or weaknesses but who refuses to accept them will find it hard to change himself for the better. Whatever other people do to make him realize his real worth, will not succeed because the person concerned knows who is but refuses to be himself.

This is metaphorical proverb which likens the mouth of a person to the current of a river. The mouth continuously utters words, good or bad, just like a flowing river. Hence, gossips spread easily and speedily because there are people who really love to talk about other people's private affairs. Some gossips have been handed from one generation to another. They believe a gossip may outlive its victims. Thus, parents admonish their children to avoid gossips.

*Meranaos* believe that a man's social tongue can either do him good or lead him to destruction. On one hand, he can use it to communicate with God and with his fellowmen. He can use it to express his appreciation of everything that is good about himself and his world. On the other hand, he can use it to destroy those whom he envies or to assassinate people to destroy their image and their social relations with one another. Hence, the meaning of "kills" in this proverb is not limited to the taking of one's life. But also, to the act of destroying one's image and reputation through the power of words.

*Kalopindo* is a tamed, beautiful bird of parrot family. It is used in this proverb to refer to a lover. The woman is insinuating the man not to dillydally his intention to propose marriage; otherwise, someone more courageous and secure may come along and thus, he will never believe considered for not being persevering. Among the *Meranaos*, even if the woman likes the man, she does not acknowledge him as a suitor if he does not make his intention formally known.

This proverb means giving is better than receiving. It is much better to give help or serve others than to be helped by others. *Meranaos* use this proverb to teach the youth to become independent and to share with others what they have in abundance. Moreover, this proverb discourages *Meranaos* from begging alms, especially when begging becomes means of living.

The roamer in this proverb is a suitor who constantly visits the girl but does not propose marriage. When the lady's kinsmen are already fed up with his visits, they call him a roamer. Breaking the ladder and wearing out a sleeping mat are both intended exaggerate his constant visit. Thus, a young *Meranao* man is always reminded to remain moderate in his undertakings.

This proverb is attributed to individuals who have the necessary abilities for leadership but they do not become leaders because of lack of self-confidence and lack of support from their relatives. For instance, there are many men of good character who deserve to believe politicians but they do not win the election owing to lack of support from their own relatives because of jealousy. The voters would prefer non-relative as their ruler or leader. Among *Meranaos*, when a member of a clan is a leader, all of his relative's shade in his power and fame which means they are given recognition and respect by the society. When the relatives do not help their potential relative to a certain political position, it means they do not belong to the leadership but they are contented with being mere followers of other leaders or families.

This proverb teaches the value of secrecy. It means that whatever a person gives to others, especially goods or services need not to be publicized. If somebody announces his extended help to others, he only shows that he is a braggart. When one is boasting, he is not sincere about what he is doing but he is only after of popularity. The proverb also means that when an individual is entrusted with a secret by another, this secret should not be revealed to anyone else. He has to keep the secret to himself. He should take all precautions not to make it known to others, otherwise, he becomes untrustworthy. "*Kitang*" refers to any container or can made of tin which is considered cheap, valueless, inferior, or poor. This proverb is saying that an individual who does not strive hard generally possesses things or belongings which are of low quality or which are worthless. When this proverb is said to somebody, the sender is trying to tell the receiver to do his utmost best to become competitive with others, to leave no stone unturned when aiming at something; otherwise, if he wastes his time he will be left behind others. He will get only the leftover of those who are persistent. The proverb teaches the value of strong determination or firmness of purpose in all undertakings.

<i>Maranao</i> Version	English Translation
1. So mapenggalkbek ka imanto na dingka pemapitaan.	1. What you can do for today do not wait for tomorrow.

This proverb shows the importance of time and the need to do things at the right time. What can be done at the hour should not be delayed to a later time, for time flies fast; once it passes by, it does not come back anymore. Besides, if one keeps leaving his chores undone, something may happen that will prevent him from doing all his unfinished tasks. *Meranaos* consider it if they waste much of their time, they waste much of their life.

<i>Maranao</i> Version	English Translation
2. Apiya pen so oran na di-I makasasukeli.	2. Even the raindrops may fall one after the other.

This proverb teaches the value of patience among *Meranaos*. An individual cannot have all what he wants at one time; neither can he do everything to accomplish at one sitting, for he has no power to do it. The *Maranao* elders and the wise men usually tell the young to take their pace, for even God created man and the universe in seven days although He could have done these in just a second. Thus, *Meranaos* are reminded by this proverb to be patient. All they have to do is to work hard, seek guidance from Allah, and they will eventually get their wants and needs at specific times designed by Him.

<i>Maranao</i> Version	English Translation
3. So randagen ni Inambar na igira da masowa na ipembabalinganon.	3. The wailing of Inambar when not echoed is heard over and over again.

This proverb means that an individual does something and he fails the first time, he should do it several times until he succeeds. He should try again and again; he should not immediately give up. Success comes to those who persevere.

Maranao Version	English Translation
4. Mawatan ko mapiya so taw a bobokelen.	4. Distant from good person who is lazy.

A lazy person will not attain the good things in life. This proverb is telling the *Meranaos* that the blessings of Allah are all around us, but if we do not look for them, we will not find them. This proverb is usually said to someone who is not exerting effort, or sweating to improve his status in life. Individuals have to work for their earnings in life for success in all undertakings lies in our efforts to achieve them. An idle person accomplishes nothing. He is only wasting his precious time; thus, he is far from success.

An individual is remembered for his doings as well as his accomplishments in life. When someone well of others, he gets praised by others in return. If he is a trouble maker, he will have conflict with others. If he struggles hard, he will reap something; if he remains idle, he will have nothing.

Time is metaphorically likened to a sharp sword which cuts off completely. Man should be in control of his time; he should not allow time to overcome him. *Meranaos* usually remind the youth to strive hard while they are still physically vigorous and mentally active. They may lose such qualities in old age. Hence, the *Meranaos* folks use this proverb to remind the youth of the value of time.

Both incoming and outgoing refer to the activity of investing money or wealth, time, or effort. *Meranaos* believe that if a person has a fat income, he is not afraid to spend a lot because he has the means. If he has a small income, he will be forced to buy only what he needs, not what he wants. In addition, the more time and effort a person spend on an endeavor, the greater are his chances for success, or the more productive he becomes.

This is attributed to things done or taken in excess. Sometimes a *Meranao's* *maratabat* or self-esteem may be so high that it drives him into trouble beyond his control. This is typical among men who used to oppress others. There will come a time when he will meet an equal or one who is braver than he is, one who will challenge and fight him to death.

This has something to do with contentment and acceptance of what one possesses. Pretending to have what one does not have will lead him to fantasy which is very unhealthy.

Life is full of trials and challenges. Thus, success in life depends on the individual himself. If he works hard to surpass the trials and challenges, he will be successful. However, if he is afraid to take chances, he will remain a failure. This proverb teaches *Meranaos* the value of perseverance and resourcefulness.

This is usually said to somebody who has been betrayed or cheated by someone. Through this proverb, the speaker is reminding that person not to fully trust others. He should always have reservations when he deals with others.

This refers to leading statements uttered by individuals. Although their meanings may not be directly conveyed, their implications are clearly understood by the receiver or listener.

*Meranaos* have a bride price which is set on the basis of the bride's social rank. Usually in a family, whatever is the bride price asked for the first daughter given in marriage should become the standard bride price for the succeeding marriages of other daughters. The bride price may be higher at the next marriage if the groom can afford, but it should not however be lower than what he had been asked for the first. This practice of setting bride price sometimes causes the delay in the marriage of other daughters in the family. Some parents do not make the necessary adjustments because of pressures coming from the relatives. This proverb may be addressed to the parents or elders to remind them of their responsibility as role models to their children, to make them aware that whatever they do, their children will follow. A message likewise applies to predecessors-the latter always tend to follow the former.

*Meranaos* believe that they learn lessons from their past experiences, thus the lessons learned from the past should be remembered and used as guide to the present life which is full of new challenges and trials. On the other hand, nobody knows what lies in the future. Therefore, the young *Meranao* is trained to face trials and difficulties in his present life as a preparation for the uncertain future.



This is another version of the above proverb. They mean the same thing. In many cases, there are two versions of one and the same story. For this reason, one has to probe into both versions for accuracy of judgment. This proverb teaches the *Meranaos* not to pass outright judgment or decision on things they have understood well.

*Meranaos* believe that one way to learn fast is observing keenly the things and happenings in one's environment. Education should be not confined in the four walls of the classroom. Thus, *Meranaos* are encouraged to be observant. In fact, kids who are keenly observant are said to be intelligent.

"Iliyan" and "kota" are synonyms which refer to firm and powerful fortress equated to education or knowledge. Having education, Arabic and Islamic on the other hand, and western education on the other hand, is a peerless asset an individual can possess. It leaves behind individuals who only possess the highest social rank and wealth. These two assets can be gained through right education. The gap between the noble and a commoner has been presently bridged by education. Thus, *Meranao* parents nowadays do not mind the high cost of education of their children. They have realized that the right education will enable their children to lead successful lives not only on earth but also in the hereafter.

People tend to be always cautious about their enemies but confident and trusting about their friends. They sometimes forget that there are friends who are not real and not sincere. This proverb is related to the saying "best friends are best enemies." A friend can become a clever enemy because he knows his enemy's weaknesses thus, he knows where and how to hit him. This proverb can also mean that it is easier to handle a real enemy than a friend who becomes an enemy.

Education, knowledge, and intelligence are synonymous words. The proverb means that what is learned (Education) is of no value if it is not passed on to one's fellowmen. It is not a private property. It has to be taught to others, otherwise, it becomes useless. Knowledge has to be transferred for it is kept within and not put to use, it becomes futile. Nobody profits from an intelligence which is not applied for the benefit of other people. The proverb also reflects that an individual should not be greedy of what he possesses.

People change with time. One's childhood friend may no longer be a friend after he has gotten wealth and fame. Those good times in his childhood may be meaningless to him now especially if he has already improved his social status. He may not fulfill the promise he has. The same case holds true to politicians. During their campaign for votes, politicians usually make a lot of promises to their supporters, but after amassing wealth and power, they no longer recognize the people who have placed them in their present positions. When someone recollects these promises and have a deep sight of regret, an observer usually appeases him with this proverb which means yesterday is different from today.

The *Meranaos* strongly believe that whatever is happening to an individual is his fate. Allah controls man's destiny. Muslims all over the world believe in predestination.

Faithful Muslims strongly believe that they will not believe put to shame by Allah for He protects them. As long as a believer stays close to God by praying to him and asking for His help, He will find solutions to his problems in life for God will always come to rescue him. If he prays sincerely and ask for God's blessings, somebody will lend him the money he needs. Thus, this proverb tells *Meranaos* encourage their children to have strong faith in Allah for He is the One who does not fail any believer.

God created man and his environment for man's own good, not for his destruction. If man destroys God's creation, God will certainly punish him for such crime. In fact, nowadays man has been experiencing a lot of disastrous natural calamities such as floods, earthquakes, and fires. All these are manifestations of God's wrath on men. This proverb therefore, is meant to remind *Meranaos* not to destroy one another as well as their properties and the environment for these are only lent to them by God who has full control over them.

Life on earth is metaphorically likened to wayfaring. The world is full of wonders and excitement. Man should not believe enticed by these wonders and excitements for these may mislead him away from the right path towards his real destination. As a wayfarer, man is faced with enumerable challenges and trials. If he passes through all these challenges and trials, he gets victorious, and thus, he reaches his final destination which is another world waiting in the life after.

This proverb is usually said to individuals who are losing hope. There are times when man becomes apathetic, he just blindly accepts his poor state, defeat, or misfortunes in life. This serves as a reminder to man that if he sincerely struggles and keeps on asking Allah for His help, Allah will shower him with his bounty. This proverb teaches the values of perseverance and faith in Allah's mercy and guidance.

This proverb is reflective of the *Meranao* value of unity. The scattered showers are metaphorically likened to disunited relatives/brothers or collective strength or opinion.

The *Meranaos* are always reminded that in unity there is strength or power.

In short, this proverb means “there is no place like home.” This proverb reflects the *Meranaos* love of their homeland. A *Meranao* always return to Lanao, even if he has lived in another place for a long time. If he will not believe able to return home alive, his relatives will find means to bring his dead body to Lanao for his final rest. An ailing *Meranao* always asks his relatives to bring him home. In other instances, the rain and drizzle are likened or attributed to a lady. The proverb means the *Meranao* man prefers to marry his own kind, especially a relative. Among *Meranaos*, a non-*Meranao* woman can never equal a *Meranao* especially a relative. This is one reason why there are pre-arranged marriages where the parents are the one selecting the life partner for their children.

“*Maratabat*” (self-esteem) influences much of *Meranaos* social interactions. A *Meranao* cannot allow his self-esteem to believe hurt or wounded. He will fight to the end only to save his self/family pride/esteem. Some individuals do not hesitate to take the life of others who belittle their self-esteem. A wounded self-esteem is always avenged at any cost; no *Meranao* wants to be branded as one “without self-esteem” (without *maratabat*). This is what is referred to as the second name in the proverb.

Most often people underestimate small things or small people for they are considered harmless. People who have wealth and power usually look down on those who are weak and poor. However, these small things or people can believe very dangerous. How many hungry, illiterate, men of the street who do not have place in the sun have taken the lives of very wealthy and powerful political figures or business tycoons because they did not treat them as human beings? This proverb reminds the *Meranao* to believe cautious and not to underrate small people.

Purity in this proverb refers to purity of the body, soul, mind, and possessions. Man’s mind is pure when it is free from malicious thoughts. His body is pure when all his senses are free from unlawful things, which are forbidden by Allah. It is pure when it is cleaned, clothed, and nourished with clean food. Possessions or wealth and positions in a job or in society, which are man’s instruments in life, are pure when they are acquired through hard work and not through corruption and extortion. One’s job or possession in the society should not believe acquired at the expense of others. When the mind, body and possessions are pure, it follows that the soul is pure and this is half of faith. Islam is a religion, Allah in prayers. This proverb is used to instill into the minds of the *Meranao* the values of purity of the body, the soul, and the minds, for all these can lead them to paradise.

The findings of this study reveal that:

1. The moral dimension of proverbs highlights the profound ethical principles ingrained in these succinct expressions of wisdom by encompassing fundamental values like love and related values of self-control, self-worth, and honesty. Proverbs work as moral compass points, offering timeless wisdom on the value of developing love in our relationships, exercising self-control to achieve self-worth and integrity, and keeping the values of honesty and integrity in our interactions with others.
2. Proverbs' social dimensions, which are based on fundamental principles of social responsibility, frequently mention caring about others, the greater good, reciprocal love and respect, social fairness, human rights, and widespread participation. These proverbs highlight the importance of individual acts in promoting the wellbeing and equitable treatment of all members of society, reflecting the enduring ideals of community, compassion, and societal harmony.
3. Third in importance among the investigated proverbs, the economic dimension centers on the fundamental principle of economic efficiency and highlights concomitant principles like work ethics, independence, and productivity. In a particular cultural context, these proverbs emphasize the significance of diligence, resourcefulness, and responsible resource management as major forces behind economic growth and personal achievement.
4. The spiritual dimension, which is comprised of the core value of spirituality and the related value of faith in God, as well as the physical dimension, which includes the core value of health and related values of physical fitness, cleanliness, beauty and the arts, and harmony with the material universe, appeared to be underemphasized or underrepresented among the three groups of proverbs. Notably, the data shows that out of the seven dimensions examined, health was the one that was least stressed or represented.

5. The twelve members of the study's Panel of Experts believe that proverbs have a variety of roles inside tribal groups. These include imparting important life lessons, warning or cautioning people about pitfalls, reminding people of significant values or principles, validating current beliefs or cultural norms, telling stories or evoking cultural heritage, offering guidance or advice on decision-making, imprinting societal expectations or norms on individuals, reproof or correcting behavior, occasionally insulting to express disapproval, and even acting as a means of punishment. These several purposes highlight the adaptable character of proverbs and the crucial part they play in influencing the social structure and personal behavior of primitive civilizations.

### Implications

Based on the findings of the study, it is clear that the moral, social, and economic elements are heavily emphasized in Meranao proverbs, while the intellectual and political dimensions occupy a middle position. Notably, in terms of frequency or representations, the Spiritual and Health aspects ranked the lowest. This finding is consistent with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which holds that higher-level demands only materialize until lower-level needs have been met. The Meranao community's emphasis on spirituality, cleanliness, beauty, and the arts is a reflection of their goal in improving their socio-cultural situation and guaranteeing local economic stability.

Indigenous proverbs have deep importance since they act as moral rules for the people who reside in the community. These proverbs serve as a "*pinakakatutubong Biblia*" or a moral code firmly anchored in their cultural history, as Lope K. Santos (1964) succinctly puts it. Therefore, it is essential to teach these proverbs to the younger generation so that they can comprehend and cherish the ideals contained inside and obtain priceless life lessons.

The recommendations that are made in light of these findings are as follows:

1. Ensure a standard curriculum that meets the needs of the local Muslim population by strengthening the management of the *Madrasah* system of education through the office of the Bureau of *Madaris*. To improve ethics and morality and to create rounded, capable, God-fearing, and peace-loving people in Mindanao, emphasize the essential Islamic principles.
2. The teaching of proverbs in literary and values education classrooms should be a top priority for literature teachers at all levels of instruction. This will encourage young tribal members to love and value the aesthetic qualities of the cultural heritage.
3. In order to create an environment suitable to sharing the literary values inherent in the proverbs, it is necessary to encourage *Meranao* parents and elders to reinstate the tradition of gathering family members, particularly the young ones, after supper. A profound respect for the rich literary traditions encompassed within the proverbs can be fostered by the older generation actively passing along their cultural history to the younger generations through the revival of this activity. A crucial method for sustaining and reviving *Meranao* cultural identity is this intergenerational exchange.
4. Future scholars should replicate this study in order to do comparative analysis and develop firm generalizations, which will increase our understanding of the subject. There are a number of important factors that need to be taken into account to guarantee the replication's robustness. In order to convey the intricacies and variances in proverbial expressions throughout different *Meranao* communities, a larger sampling from another location should be included first. In order to evaluate the precision and integrity of the translations utilized in this study, a careful back translation of the proverbs is necessary. The use of literary methods, figurative language, and idiomatic expressions that add to the proverbs' artistic and cultural depth should also be explored in a nonliteral translation of the proverbs. The authenticity and depth of understanding of the proverbs' intended meaning will be improved by such translational adjustments.
5. It is highly recommended that further researchers explore topics outside of proverbs in indigenous oral literature. It is possible to gain a thorough understanding of the indigenous communities of the Philippines' cultural practices and aesthetic manifestations by investigating nursery rhymes, folk songs, riddles, ritual chants, indigenous healing methods, and other types of oral literature. Given the vast amount of tribal folk materials that have previously been cataloged, taxonomized, and published, conducting in-depth research on these suggested themes is essential. A more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the cultural heritage of the indigenous tribes can be attained by broadening the research focus to include a wider range of oral literature, which will aid in the preservation and appreciation of their priceless traditions.

All the above recommendations, if given considerable attention by the individuals concerned, hopefully will give opportunities to the *Meranao* ethnic group to acquire admirable traits and values and eventually become useful active and productive members of the Muslims society.

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