



## 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY BANGSAMORO YOUTH: THE UNDERSTANDING OF BANGSAMORO HISTORY

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### Abstract

This study aimed to determine the understanding of Bangsamoro youth in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century about Bangsamoro history. The study used a descriptive qualitative approach to collect data from 23 participants in Maguindanao del Sur, Maguindanao del Norte, and Cotabato City. Using this design, the researcher was able to determine an in-depth understanding of youth in Bangsamoro History. The study focused on the profile of the Bangsamoro youth; understanding Bangsamoro history in terms of key concepts, historical events, and cultural traditions; learning Bangsamoro history; the challenges and hindrances they encounter in learning Bangsamoro history; their initiatives to overcome those challenges and hindrances; the knowledge sought about Bangsamoro history; and their knowledge and awareness of Bangsamoro history that may contribute to co-existence and understanding among different communities in the BARMM.

This study shows that Bangsamoro youth have varying levels of understanding of the Bangsamoro historical context due to limited knowledge or awareness of Bangsamoro history. They know about historical events such as the arrival of Islam in the Philippines, massacres and injustices that happened in Bangsamoro, armed conflicts, sacrifices of their elders and ancestors in the Bangsamoro peace process, and colonization by the Spanish, Americans, and Japanese. However, only a few of them know the details of these events due to their limited knowledge of history; most of what they know and understand is based on the stories of their parents and community.

They have different sources and methods of learning history, however, the youth also identified challenges and hindrances due to inaccurate information and limited sources but they try to mitigate those challenges and hindrances through proactive initiatives including research, reading reliable sources, community engagement, volunteering, advocacy, seminars and workshops, peer communication, and self-learning. The Bangsamoro youth believe that knowledge and awareness can foster co-existence among diverse communities.

Keywords: Bangsamoro Youth; Bangsamoro History; Bangsamoro Identity and Aspiration; Historical Incidents or Milestones; Preservation of Cultural and Heritage

### INTRODUCTION

The Bangsamoro, often known as the Moro people, are a group of ethnolinguistic Muslim communities in the southern Philippines. They have a long and complex history of struggle for self-determination, autonomy, and recognition of their identity and rights. Colonialism, resistance, bloodshed, marginalization, and peace talks characterize the history of the Bangsamoro people. The Bangsamoro

Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) was established as a political entity that aims to address historical grievances and ambitions after the Bangsamoro Organic Law was ratified in 2019. (Abinales and Amoroso, 2019).

The Bangsamoro region in the 21st century has experienced significant developments and changes. The establishment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) in the Philippines marked a milestone in efforts to address historical issues and provide self-governance to the Moro people. The region has been focused on promoting peace, stability, and socio-economic progress through various initiatives and reforms.

As discussed by Alonto (2018), the Bangsamoro youth, who comprised more than half of the population of the Bangsamoro region, are the future leaders and key actors of the Bangsamoro society. They had a crucial role in shaping the direction and development of the region, and in promoting peace and harmony among diverse communities.

Despite their crucial role, there's a noticeable gap in research focusing on the perspectives of Bangsamoro youth regarding their history (Mijares, 2006). While many studies have explored the historical narratives and socio-political dynamics of the region, very few have delved into how these stories are understood and reinterpreted by the younger generation. It is important to bridge that gap by investigating the diverse perspectives of Bangsamoro youth on their history, aiming to uncover their interpretations, concerns, and aspirations (Santos, 2019).

Accordingly, Lingga (2011) and Abdula (2014) noted that the Bangsamoro youth also face various challenges and opportunities in their social, economic, cultural, and political context. According to Lingga (2011), "They have different levels of exposure, awareness, and understanding of the Bangsamoro history and its implications for their present and future" (p. 258). Abdula (2014) added that they have different sources, modes, and mediums of learning and accessing information about their history, such as formal education, oral tradition, media, and personal experience (pp. 86-87).

Moreover, their understanding of the Bangsamoro history is crucial for their sense of identity and belonging. It is often limited or distorted by the dominant narratives of the state, the media, and the education system. Therefore, there is a need to explore how the 21st-century Bangsamoro youth perceive and interpret the Bangsamoro history.

According to the study of Ateneo de Davao University (2017), the existing curricula in schools across the Bangsamoro region may not adequately cover the rich history and contributions of the Bangsamoro People. Research conducted highlighted significant omissions in the national curriculum, which tends to focus predominantly on a Manila-centre narrative, thus marginalizing the diverse histories of other regions, including Mindanao.

While efforts have been made to integrate Bangsamoro history into educational curricula and public discourse, there remains a need to assess these initiatives' effectiveness and gain insights into the lived experiences of Bangsamoro youth.

Hence, the researcher found it interesting to pursue this study regarding the understanding of Bangsamoro history among 21<sup>st</sup>-century youth. It aims to explore the understanding of Bangsamoro youth about their identity, culture, history, and aspirations. The researcher also intends to investigate the sources, challenges, initiatives, and knowledge sought by the participants in learning Bangsamoro history, and how they think knowledge and awareness of Bangsamoro history may contribute to co-existence and understanding among different communities in the BARMM.

## METHOD

The study used a descriptive qualitative type of research. It is a type of research that aims to describe the characteristics, features, or phenomena of interest systematically and accurately. Descriptive qualitative research does not seek to test hypotheses or explain casual relationships, but rather to provide a rich and detailed account of the phenomenon under study. This method was used as it was deemed necessary because it prompts the researcher to gather information about the understanding of youth on

Bangsamoro History. Using this design, the researcher was able to determine an in-depth understanding of youth in Bangsamoro History through focus group discussions. This study was conducted in the Province of Maguindanao of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). Specifically, the study was conducted in Dalican, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao del Norte, Mapayag, Datu Anggal Midtimbang, Maguindanao del Sur, and Cotabato City.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### **The Participant's Understanding in the Term Bangsamoro**

The participant's responses about their understanding and perceived representation of the term Bangsamoro, responses revealed a shared knowledge among Bangsamoro youth, particularly those actively engaged in youth activities, contributing to understanding Bangsamoro's multifaceted identity. The common themes that emerged include Independence, Unity, Peace, Collaboration, Warrior, Struggle, and Autonomy. According to the participants, the term "Bangsamoro" refers to the people, the land, the culture, the religion, and the struggle of the Moro community. These aspects are interrelated and reflect the complex and dynamic nature of the term. With this, some of the participants mentioned the historical origin of the term, which was coined by the late Senator Datu Salipada Pendatun in the 1960s as a combination of "bangsa" (nation) and "Moro" (Muslim). The term was later adopted by the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) led by Nur Misuari, a former UP professor, who advocated for the self-determination and autonomy of the Moro people.

However, not all participants agreed on the positive connotation of the term "Bangsamoro". One of them shared that the term used to have a negative association with dirtiness and violence because of the movement and revolution. Another participant highlighted a less favorable perspective, noting that in certain places and countries, 'Bangsamoro' carries a negative connotation, being labeled as a terrorist group even now. These views suggest that the term "Bangsamoro" is not only contested within the Moro community, but also influenced by external factors and interests, such as the media, the government, and the international community.

From another perspective, some of the participants expressed their personal identification and affiliation with the term "Bangsamoro", while others preferred to use other terms, such as "Muslim Filipino", "Filipino Muslim", or simply "Muslim". These preferences indicate the diversity and plurality of identities among the Moro people and the challenges and opportunities for creating a sense of unity and solidarity in the region.

### **Participant's Understanding in the Overview of Historical Context**

When asked "What do the participants know about Bangsamoro History? Several Participants expressed that they have a minimal understanding of Bangsamoro History. As indicated by six participants:

"Limited lang po talaga yung alam ko sa History ng Bangsamoro, doon naman po sa Martial law which is na experience ng parents namin. 20Doon nila na experience yung pag may makita na usok sakanilang tinitirahan, binobomba." (I have a very limited knowledge of the Bangsamoro History. About Martial Law, the experience of our parents was whenever the perpetrators saw smoke in their residences, they were being bombed.) [Participant 11]

"Ako naman honestly, konte lang talaga yung alam ko about history since hindi ako masyado expose sa organization, so parang bahay lang ako." (As for me, honestly, I know very little about history since I am not heavily exposed to any organization.) [Participant 13]

"Ako, ang pagkakaindinti ko sa Bangsamoro History ay hindi siya ganun ka deep, kase naranasan ko mag volunteer during caravan, I guess ang alam ko lang yung sacrifice, dugo at pawis ng mga ninuno natin, pinaglalaban nila talaga yung injustices na nangyayare." (For me, my understanding of the Bangsamoro History may not be that deep, as I've experienced volunteering during a caravan. I suppose what I know is the sacrifice, blood, and sweat of our ancestors – they truly fought against the injustices happened.) [Participant 15]

“To be honest po, wala po talaga akong alam, like yung basic lang po talaga na alam ko, isa yung mga ninuno natin ay nakipaglaban po talaga para sa race po natin. Parang makaguilt po as a Moro na hindi ko po alam yung kabuun ng Bangsamoro.” To be honest, I really don’t know much, just the basics. I do know that our ancestors fought for our race. It feels somewhat guilty as a Moro not to know the entirety of the Bangsamoro.) [Participant 17]

“To be transparent, to be honest, I don’t know much of the History of Bangsamoro kase paminsan, parang the moment na ah I am Muslim, and it is part of Bangsamoro and Bangsamoro composed of 13 ethnolinguistics, kasali na doon yung lahat ng tribes na meron tayo in Mindanao, Visayas and Luzon, kahit saang lugar. If pag uusapan yung History, actually parang napaka broad nung usapin na yun kase hindi natin, although may mga based and documents na parang it is an evidenced to back up nag anito, dito galing ang Bangsamoro.” (To be transparent, honestly, I don’t know much about the history of Bangsamoro because sometimes, the moment I acknowledge I am Muslim and part of Bangsamoro, which comprises 13

ethnolinguistic groups, including all the tribes we have in Mindanao, Visayas, and Luzon, it seems like the discussion about history becomes very broad.) [Participant 20]

“Para sa akin naman, sa usaping Bangsamoro, hindi rin ganun kalawak yung pagkaalam ko.” (For me, my knowledge about Bangsamoro is not that extensive.) [Participant 22]

Additionally, other participants also have little knowledge about the Bangsamoro narrative, briefly mentioning the formation of the Moro National Liberation Front (MILF) under the leadership of Professor Nur Misuari and the creation and separation of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which one of the participants stressed that:

“Nalaman ko din po na dati iisa lang po dapat ang MILF and MNLF. Naging independence na po ang Pilipinas then nagkaroon ng agreement ang Government ng Philippines para yung conflict sa Maguindanao mag stop na. Sabi nila mag sign kayo sa contract na ito para maging kasapi na sila ng Government pero yung MILF, si Hashim Salamat, parang ni reject niya yung agreement na yun dahil may trust issue siya sa Government, parang trauma dahil marami nag struggle ang Bangsamoro. Dahil po sa agreement na yun, doon po nagsimula yung magkahiwalay ng MILF sa MNLF.” (The MNLF and MILF were supposed to be one. The Philippines gained independence, and there was an agreement with the Philippine Government to stop the conflict in Maguindanao. They said, “Signed this contract to become part of the government”. However, Ustads Hashim Salamat, the leader of the MILF, seemed to reject that agreement due to trust issues with the government, like a trauma because many Bangsamoro people struggled. Because of that agreement, the separation of MILF from MNLF began.) [Participant 1)

These participants also briefly mentioned the reason why the Bangsamoro were called the Moro people of the Spaniards, Accordingly, Bangsamoro does not only refer to one tribe in Mindanao, but its a collective identity. They also mentioned the arrival of Shariff Kabunsuan in Maguidanao where the spread of Muslims began but they do not know the full details; the sultanate starting in Sulu with Shariff Makhdum; the Barangays, in which the basis for fighting was the belief that we have our government; and the establishment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

The terms ‘Muslim’ and ‘Moro’ have been used interchangeably. The former refers to a universal religious identity, while the latter denotes a political identity distinct to the Islamized peoples of Mindanao. The Spaniards originally used the term for peoples of Mindanao who shared the religion of the Moors who had once subdued Spain. ‘Moro’ was used in the same derogatory way as the term ‘Indio’ for Filipinos who converted to Christianity (San Juan, 2008).

However, with the self-assertive attitude expressed by the MNLF in the early 1970s, the Moro term gained positive connotations among the Muslim youth. It expressed distinctiveness as a people who had resisted foreign domination. Used together with a Malay word, Bangsa (nation) as in ‘Bangsamoro’/‘Bangsa Moro’, it indicates a nationality distinct from that of the majority of Filipinos.

Interestingly, both the MNLF and its rival, the MILF use the term Bangsamoro for all native inhabitants of Mindanao and Sulu, whether Muslim, Christian, or Highlanders (Lumad), who accept the distinctiveness of the Moro as a separate nationality from that of the Filipinos in Luzon and Visayas. A closer look reveals that the development of the Moro identity is tied to their colonial and historical past. From the mid-16th to the end of the 19th century Spain subjected most of the archipelago to colonial rule. Arab traders visited between the 10th and 12th centuries bringing Islam to the archipelago. (San Juan, 2008).

On the other hand, the remaining participants mentioned personal stories about the Bangsamoro challenges of their grandparents, parents, and others who saw and experienced the Bangsamoro challenge, as some of them stated:

“Kasali ang tatay ko sa All-out war, yun yung nagkaroon siya ng trauma, bago lang naalis yung trauma niya sa pagdaan ng eroplano kase pag narinig niya yan, magtago na yan siya, parang nanginginig. Namatay kase yung pinsan niya na nahulugan ng Bomba. (My father was involved in the all-out war, and that’s the reason why he experienced trauma. His trauma only recently lessened when planes passed by – upon hearing them, he wide hides, as if trembling. His cousin died from a bomb explosion.) [Participant 10]

“Siguro ngayon ko palang ito sasabihin, si lolo ko, tatay ng tatay ko ay isa sa mga leaders, and then sa struggle nila, kwento niya sa akin kung ano yung kinakain nila every day during war. Ang nasabi sa akin, every day ang kinakain nila since hindi pwede bumaba kase yun nga, may possible na may maka engkwentro sila na mga sundalo.” (But my grandfather, my father’s father, was one of the leaders. In their struggle, he told me about what they ate every day during the war. He mentioned that since they couldn’t go down, as there was a possibility of encountering soldiers, they ate cassava every day.) [Participant 12]

“So, doon dinidiscourage yung mga kababaihan doon na mag ayos, hanggat maaari, yung pinaka hindi maayos na itsura mo kase may mga instances na biglang magpasok yung mga sundalo tapos may lola ako na hindi na nakuwi sa amin kase inasawa siya ng Sundalo.” (There, women were discouraged from looking presentable, to avoid drawing attention, as there were instances when soldiers would suddenly enter. My a grandmother didn’t return home because she married a soldier.) [Participant 12]

“Since nung bata ako kapag Bangsamoro, nakwento na yan ng mga lolo/lola ko dati na grabe yung nangyare sakanila, araw-araw nagtatago sa ilalim ng tubig. Yung nanay ko din is pinatago nung bata pa siya kase asawahin siya ng Hapon. Kahit maliit ba bata pinatago sa ilalim ng tubig, tinatakpan ng lola ko ng water lilies para hindi siya makita. Anytime na may mga sundalo doon sa amin ay sinasabu ng mga lola namin na magtago kayo kase yan sila bumabari, kaya nagkaroon kami ng anxiety.” (Since I was a child, whenever Bangsamoro is mentioned, my grandparents used to recount the intense experienced they went through, hiding underwater every day. My mother too, used to hide when she was a child because she might become a bride of the Japanese during the Japanese colonization. Even as a small child, she was concealed underwater, covered with water lilies by my grandmother to avoid detection, whenever there were soldiers in our area, our grandparents would tell us to hide because they might shoot, which caused us anxiety.) [Participant 16]

Moreover, out of 23 participants, only one demonstrated a significant advantage in learning about the Bangsamoro Narrative as this youth is actively engaging in peacebuilding activities. This participant possesses a deep understanding, tracing the narrative from the arrival of Arab missionaries to the inception of the Bangsamoro struggle for self-determination and autonomy among the Bangsamoro people in the Southern Philippines. This historical journey dates to the period of Spanish colonization and intensified during American rule and subsequent administrations.

The Participant was able to discuss important moments such as the Jabidah Massacre or "Operation Merdeka" in 1968, considered a crucial event leading to the creation of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) during the Marcos regime. The Participant also highlighted the existence of the Mindanao Independent Movement (MIM) before the MNLF and various agreements between the MNLF and the Philippine Government, such as the Tripoli Agreement.

The said participant emphasized significant developments such as the emergence of numerous conflicts, the creation of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, and the establishment of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). They also touched upon tragic events like the Jabitang Massacre and Palimbang Massacre, as well as important declarations and agreements like the Dansalan Declaration and the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain. The establishment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao through the Bangsamoro Organic Law, and insights into the Transitional Justice, Normalization Track, and Political Track of the BARMM were also mentioned.

The discussion reveals some important themes, such as the role of education in comprehension, the effect of individual trauma and experiences, knowledge gaps among participants, and complexity.

Education was a key factor that influenced how participants learned about Bangsamoro history. Participants highlighted the role of formal education in providing historical background but also acknowledged that they had incomplete or unclear knowledge. Additionally, their own experiences in educational institutions, such as military training courses or exposure to Bangsamoro-focused subjects, significantly influenced participants' understanding and perception of Bangsamoro History. It also shows that youth involvement in peacebuilding activities in BARMM significantly improves their understanding and knowledge of the key events in the Bangsamoro history, compared to youth members who do not engage in extra-curricular peacebuilding activities.

Many participants shared stories of personal trauma and experiences, such as family events, childhood war memories, and the challenges of their communities through generations. These personal narratives not only showed the lived experiences of Bangsamoro but also underscored the lasting impact of historical injustices and conflict on collective memory.

Knowledge disparities were evident among participants, with some expressing limited exposure to organized education or historical narratives. This highlights the importance of addressing gaps in knowledge and supporting inclusive educational programs and initiatives to foster a more comprehensive understanding of Bangsamoro history.

Bangsamoro identity was a complex theme, with talks about history, culture, and the fight for political rights and autonomy. Participants reflected on the foreign labels and the subtle processes of identity-making among the Bangsamoro people.

Overall, these responses underscore the need for comprehensive historical education among Bangsamoro youth and the need for inclusive and nuanced discussion to uncover diverse perspectives and experiences. By recognizing how education, personal stories, and historical context affect Bangsamoro identity and history, stakeholders can aim for a better understanding, reconciliation, and social cohesion in the community.

### **Participant's Understanding in Islamization**

When the participants were asked in what ways religion has played a role in shaping the history and identity of the Bangsamoro People, three of them highlighted how Islamic principles guide governance among the Bangsamoro, emphasizing concepts such as avoiding self-interest, upholding accountability, and promoting moral governance. They attribute the success and cohesion of Bangsamoro leadership to adherence to Islamic teachings and values which prioritize justice, compassion, and accountability.

“Nakatulong po para mas lalong patatagin po yung paniniwala ng iba and yung para hindi magkaroon ng self-interest, para yung mga tao na matataas maisip nila yung mga nasasakupan nila base sa Religion, naniniwala si Allah s.w.t, hindi na sila gagawa ng masama.” (It helped strengthen the beliefs of others and prevent self-interest, allowing those in positions of authority to consider their constituents based on religion. Believing in Allah (SWT), they refrain from harming.) [Participant 13]

Two participants preferred the leadership that prioritized communal welfare over individual interests and called for legislation that reflects Islamic values, as in Bangsamoro Organic Law as said:

“Yung connection ng Islam sa struggle natin is yung term na “Jihad” kase sinabi sa Qur-an “Fi Sabillilah”, defend the land, defend the women, defend the everything. Yung meaning ng Jihad is struggle for the sake of Allah s.w.t. Kita naman natin ngayon kung ano ang sinasabi nilang Moral Governance. Ang Moral Governance Unique lang yan siya sa BARMM kase pag pumunta ka sa National, ang sakanila ay Good Governance. Good governance is secular lang lahat nun pero pag pumunta ka dito, tanungin mo anong sa inyo, moral governance ang pinaglalaman.” (The connection of Islam to our struggle lies in the term “Jihad” because it is stated in the Qur'an, “Fi Sabillilah”, defend the land, defend the women, defend everything. The meaning of Jihad is the struggle for the sake of Allah (SWT). Now we can see what they refer to as Moral Governance. Moral Governance is unique to BARMM because when you go to the national level, it's Good Governance. Good governance is purely secular, but here, if you ask what they are fighting for, it's moral governance.) [Participant 18]

On the other hand, religious identity and the influence of Islam are also emphasized as the two participants underscore the deep-seated loyalty of the Bangsamoro people to their religion, expressing a willingness to uphold their Islamic faith even of Bangsamoro identity, influencing their values, beliefs, and actions.

“Kase po yung Bangsamoro, pinaglalaman yung religion laban doon sa mga nanakop na gustong ma Christianized tayo. Loyal sila kung ano yung kinalakihan na religion. Mas pipiliin pa na mamatay na Muslim kaysa maging Christian.” (In the case of Bangsamoro, they are fighting for their religion against those who want to Christianize us through colonization. They are loyal to the religion they grew up with and would choose to die as Muslim.) [Participant 5]

“Hindi natin masasabi na Bangsamoro kung hindi kalakip yung Islam. Kumbaga sa Bangsamoro, the holding glue para sa 13 tribo na ito ay Islam, kung walang Islam, wala din identity, dahil alam natin na lahat nitong tribo na ito ay meron ding kani-kanilang kinaugalian, meron silang norms, meron silang kultura, at tradition na nakasanayan. Kung hindi dahil sa Islam walang nagba-bind sa mga tribo na ito, 13 tribes na ito. Dahil nga tayo ay Moro, kaakibat nito ay Islam, kasama sa Right to Self Determination natin na Moro ay mga tribo na nag practice ng Islam kung saan dapat ang batas ay naka base sa kaugalian at mga hadith ng Prophet Muhammad s.a.w, although nakikita natin sa current government natin na hindi padin pwede i-apply.” (We cannot truly say Bangsamoro without including Islam. In Bangsamoro, the binding glue for these 13 tribes is Islam. Without Islam, there is no identity because we know that each of this has its customs, norms, culture, and traditions. Without Islam, there is nothing that binds these 13 tribes. As Bangsamoro, our identity is intrinsically linked with Islam, including the right to self-determination.) [Participant 19]

Furthermore, two participants emphasized how Islam served as a unifying force in resisting colonization, particularly in Mindanao, where Bangsamoro leaders fought against the attempts to Christianize the population through colonization and the ongoing advocacy for autonomy. Participants recalled how their ancestors fought to preserve their religion and cultural heritage. The historical context informs the contemporary push for independence and self-determination as expressed by one of the participants:

“Kase pinaglalaman ng ninuno natin yung religion natin kase first na rreligion talaga sa Pilipinas ay Islam then dahil sa colonization parang kumonte yung population ng Islam kase more on sa Luzon Visayas, na colonized talaga sila, parang na change yung religion nila into Christianity.” (Our ancestors fought for our religion because Islam was the first religion in the Philippines. However, due to colonization, the population of Islam decreased, especially in Luzon and Visayas, where they were colonized, and their religion changed to Christianity. [Participant 1]

Additionally, the analysis revealed a strong sense of solidarity and support among Muslims within the Bangsamoro community. Participants spoke of the importance of mutual support and cooperation in facing challenges and preserving their cultural and religious identity. This solidarity was seen as a source of strength and resilience, enabling the community to navigate complex social and political dynamics.

Overall, the participants highlighted the multifaceted role of religion, particularly Islam, in shaping the history and identity of the Bangsamoro People. The responses illustrate the universal influence of Islam on various aspects of Bangsamoro history, culture, governance, and identity. Islam serves as a religious belief system and a guiding force that shapes social cohesion, political ideology, and aspirations for self-determination among the Bangsamoro people.

### **Participant's Understanding in Historical Events that have shaped the Bangsamoro Region's Identity and Aspirations**

When the participants were asked how familiar they are with the key historical events that have shaped the Bangsamoro region's identity and aspirations, most of their answers revolved around the massacres that happened in Bangsamoro like the Jabidah Massacre as one of them stated:

“Jabidah Massacre. There are two side of stories. Una, kinuha sila para makipaglaban sa Sabah Malaysia, nung nalaman nila na makikipaglaban sila sa kapwa nila Muslimin, pumalag sila. Pangalawang story is hindi daw maganda yung pakikitungo nila doon sa Kampo kaya gusto nilang umalis that is why minassacre sila. Jabidah Massacre happened during Marcos's era and na create ang MILF during Marcos time.” (Jabidah Massacre. There are two sides of the story. First, they were recruited to fight in Sabah, Malaysia. When they found out they would be fighting against their fellow Muslims, they resisted. The second story was that they didn't like how they were treated in the camp, so they decided to leave, that was reason why they were massacred. Jabidah Massacre happened during Marcos's era.) [Participant 9]

The discussion highlighted historical massacres, such as the Jabidah Massacre, Tacub Massacre, Manili Massacre, and Malisbong Massacre, which were shown as intentional acts of political oppression and religious discrimination. These events were narrated as crucial moments that caused trauma and sparked political activism and identity creation among Bangsamoro youth.

The Jabidah Massacre was a pivotal moment in the history of the Bangsamoro struggle for self-determination. It exposed the atrocities and injustices committed by the Philippine government against the Moro people and ignited a wave of resistance and solidarity among different Moro groups. The massacre also drew international attention and support for the Moro cause, as well as condemnation of the Marcos dictatorship.

According to Abinales and Amoroso (2005), the Jabidah Massacre was the catalyst for the formation of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in 1971 and became the first and largest armed organization fighting for an independent Moro homeland. The MNLF launched a series of attacks against the Philippine military and declared the establishment of the Bangsamoro Republic in 1974. The MNLF also sought diplomatic recognition and assistance from other Muslim countries and organizations, such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and Libya.

According to the Bangsamoro Information Office, an estimated 200 young Tausug and Sama men were unceremoniously killed on March 18, 1968, at the height of the Marcos Regime. The death of these young men would spark a unified consciousness that would define the Bangsamoro as what it is today. The Marcos Administration had a grand plan known as Operation Merdeka. The idea is simple – invade and reclaim the disputed territory of Sabah from Malaysia.

Furthermore, three participants highlighted various massacres, such as Manili Massacre, Tacub Massacre, and the Malisbong Massacre, underscoring the violence and victimization experienced by the Bangsamoro people.

The Manili Massacre was a horrific event that happened in 1971, when a group of armed men killed more than 70 Moro Muslims who were praying in a mosque in the town of Manili, in the southern Philippines. The massacre was part of a larger conflict between the Moro Muslims, who wanted more autonomy and respect for their culture and religion, and the Philippine government, which was ruled by a dictator named Ferdinand Marcos, who wanted to suppress their rebellion (Santos Jr., 2010).

The massacre was investigated by a commission of people from different sectors of society, such as churches, lawyers, journalists, and human rights activists. The commission found out that the killers were members of a paramilitary group called the Ilaga, which hated the Moro Muslims and worked with the government forces. The commission also discovered that the government tried to hide the truth and

blame the massacre on the Moro rebels or on a fight among the Moro Muslims themselves (Citizens' Commission of Inquiry on the Manili Massacre, 1971).

The survivors and the families of the victims of the massacre told their stories to the media, the human rights groups, and the researchers. They also filed cases against the people who were responsible for the massacre and the government that failed to protect them. However, they did not get justice or compensation for their losses. The cases were either dismissed or delayed because of lack of evidence, political pressure, or fear of retaliation. Until now, no one has been punished for the massacre, and the survivors and the families of the victims still want recognition and reparation for their suffering (Jubair, 1999).

The Tacub Massacre was another example of the brutal violence that the Moro Muslims faced during the martial law era under President Ferdinand Marcos. The incident occurred a few months after the Manili Massacre, which also involved the Ilaga paramilitary group and the government forces. The Moro Muslims were targeted because of their resistance to the government's policies of land grabbing, cultural assimilation, and political marginalization. The Tacub Massacre showed how the government violated the Moro Muslims' right to vote and participate in the democratic process (Saleeby, 1976).

Additionally, the Massacre took place on November 23, 1971, in the town of Tacub, Lanao del Norte, Mindanao. A group of armed men, allegedly belonging to the Ilaga, a Christian vigilante group, attacked the town and killed at least 60 Moro Muslims, mostly women and children, who were preparing for the Barangay (village) elections. The attackers also burned several houses and a mosque in the town. The massacre was reportedly carried out with the assistance of the Philippine Constabulary and the Philippine Army, who blocked the roads and prevented the Moro Muslims from escaping or receiving help. The massacre was part of a series of attacks by the Ilaga and the government forces against the Moro Muslims in Mindanao, who were seen as a threat to the Marcos regime and its allies (Abinales & Amoroso, 2005).

Furthermore, the Tacub Massacre was one of the factors that led to the boycott of the Barangay elections by the Moro Muslims, who felt disenfranchised and discriminated against by the government. The massacre also intensified the Moro Muslims' distrust and resentment towards the government and the Christian settlers, who had been encroaching on their ancestral lands and resources. The massacre also contributed to the radicalization and mobilization of some Moro Muslims, who joined the MNLF and other rebel groups to fight for their rights and autonomy. The massacre also highlighted the need for a peaceful and political solution to the Moro problem, which could not be solved by military force or repression alone (Majul, 1985).

Moreover, the discussion illuminated the role of religious identity in shaping the Bangsamoro narrative, with participants recounting instances of religious heresy, such as the Malisbong Massacre, as a symbol of communal trauma and defiance against oppressive forces.

“Yung pinaka diko makakalimutan sa akin is yung Malisbong Massacre, yung sa masjid, yung pinatay, yung pig kinatay mismo doon sa Masjid.” (What I can never forget is the Malisbong Massacre, where people killed, and pigs were slaughtered inside the mosque.) [Participant 23]

“Yung Malisbong massacre, di lang kami ganun ka pamilyar pero nasa 1000+ ang namatay doon.” (The Malisbong Massacre, we're not that familiar with it, but around 1000+ people died there.) [Participant 6]

The Malisbong Massacre was one of the horrific atrocities committed by the Philippine military against the Moro people during the martial law era. The massacre was part of the counterinsurgency campaign of the Marcos regime against the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), which was fighting for the autonomy and self-determination of the Bangsamoro homeland. The survivors of the massacre have been seeking justice and recognition for decades, but their plight has been largely ignored by successive governments and the mainstream media. (Abinales, P. N., & Amoroso, D. J. (2005)

Accordingly, the Malisbong Masjid or H. Hamsa Tacbil Mosque massacre, also called Palimbang Massacre, was the mass murder of Muslim Moros by units of the Philippine military on September 24, 1974, in the coastal village of Malisbong in Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat, Mindanao. Accounts compiled

by the Moro Women's Center in General Santos State that 1,500 male Moros aged 11-70 were killed inside a mosque, 3,000 women and children aged 9-60 were detained – with the women being raped, and 300 houses were razed by the government.

Additionally, the discussion highlighted the perseverance and resistance of the Bangsamoro people against colonial invaders, as evidenced by accounts of the Battle of Tampakan, and other historical battles led by revered leaders like Datu Uban and Sultan Kudarat.

“Yung Battle of Tampakan. I am not sure pero naganap daw po yun sa area ng Tamontaka nung dati-dati pa. Diko lang matandaan yung exact na year pati date pero yun yung first na mag invade ng Espanyol dito sa Mindanao. Ang nakipaglaban doon ay sila Datu Uban, Sultan Kudarat. Ang tinawag nila doon ay Battle of Tampakan, pinaglaban ng mga Bangsamoro People sa pangunguna ng mga Datu and Sultan, at Rajah para di masakop ng Espanyol ang kanilang area.” (The Battle of Tampakan, I'm not sure, but it is said to have happened in the Tamontaka area a long time ago. I can't recall the exact year and date, but it was the first invasion by the Spaniards here in Mindanao. Leading the resistance were Datu Ubal and Rajah Buayan Silongan. They called the Battle of Tampakan, fought by the Bangsamoro people under the leadership of Datu, Sultan, and Rajah to prevent the Spanish from taking over their area.) [Participant 5]

Overall, the analysis showed how historical, cultural, and a political factor influenced the collective awareness of the Bangsamoro youth. The narratives reflected a profound sense of pride in Bangsamoro heritage and a determination to preserve cultural identity amidst ongoing challenges and struggles for autonomy.

### **Participant's Understanding in the Historical Incidents or Milestones that Stand Out in the Bangsamoro Narrative**

The participant's responses about their understanding in the historical incidents or milestones that stand out in the Bangsamoro narrative. There are three out of 23 participants answered the Jabidah massacre as one of the events that contributed to the rise of the Muslim separatist movement in Mindanao, and another three out of 23 mentioned the Malisbong massacre as one which sparked outrage among the Muslim community in Mindanao and further fuelled the Moro insurgency. It drew international condemnation and led to calls for an investigation into human rights abuses committed by the Philippine military. The Malisbong massacre remains a dark chapter in Philippine history despite efforts to bring justice to the victims. These incidents represent traumatic events in Bangsamoro history, like serving as reminders of the injustices and violence faced by the community, and left lasting traumas within the collective memory of the Bangsamoro people,

“Yung sa akin is yung Malisbong Massacre (Palimbang), maalala ko nakwento pala sa akin ng nanay ko kase yung province naming malapit doon sa Palimbang, kapag daw po pumupunta yung mga sundalo sa bahay ng nanay ko, nagtatago at nag e-evacuate po sila. Hanggang ngayon nag se-see padin po sila sa Justice.” (For me, it's the

Malsibong massacre in Palimbang. I remember my mother retold me about it because our province is near to Palimbang. Whenever the soldiers visited my mother's house, they hid and evacuated. Until now, they are still seeking justice.) [Participant 17]

“All the deceased were tied and carried to the water, and men were shot inside the mosque. Not long ago (not familiar with the year), they found sacks of skulls under the water. They didn't know if their relatives are among them. The mass grave is near the mosque. When they visit, they still cry until now.” [Participant 18]

Furthermore, two participants emphasized Martial Law as a historical incident or milestone that stands out in the Bangsamoro Narrative.

“Martial Law, base sa story ng lola ko po, grabe daw ang dinanas ng mga kababaihan nung time na yun, may nagaganap na rape, nire-rape sila ng mga sundalo. Ngayon nakikita natin na women empowerment na tayo which is from mahihinang tao, malalakas na tayo ngayon.” (Martial Law. Based on my grandmother's story, was a severe time for women. There were

incidents of rape, with soldiers committing such atrocities. Now we see women's empowerment, transforming vulnerable individuals to strong ones.) [Participant 11]

“Siguro dalawa. Una yung mga nangyareng massacres, ito yung maraming massacres, yung kulong-kulong massacre, malisbong massacre, manili massacre, more than 40 na massacres within Mindanao na nangyare during the time of Martial Law. Isa ito sa will kung bakit anong meron tayo ngayon, ito yung kumbaga naging spark kung ano yung nararating natin ngayon, awakening na ang mga moro ay pinamatay, dapat ipakita natin na tayo ay moro nagkakaisa pagdating sa pakipaglaban ng oppression. Kung hindi lang man tayo pinagpapatay, hindi man tayo makakapag form ng moro revolutionary. Sabi nga nila, Bangsamoro is peace loving people, napilitan lang kaming lumaban dahil kami ay pinapatay. Paano kami hindi lalaban sa gobyerno kung pinapatay kami ng sarili naming Gobyerno, this is why kaya kami nagkaroon ng struggle dahil pinapatay niyo kami.” (Perhaps two (2). First, the numerous massacres that occurred, such as the Kulong-Kulong Massacre, Malisbong Massacre, and Manili Massacre, with more than 40 massacres within Mindanao during Martial Law. This was a reason of what we have now. It served as the spark that led us to where we are today – an awakening that Moros were being killed, and we need to show unity to fight oppression. We might not formed the Moro revolutionary if we had not experienced killing. As they say, the Bangsamoro are peace-loving people; we were forced to fight because we were being killed. We would not fight against the government if they won't kill us. This is why we struggled – because they would kill us.) [Participant 19]

The Martial Law period was a dark and difficult chapter in the history of the Philippines, especially for the Bangsamoro people who suffered from oppression and violence under the Marcos regime. The declaration of Martial Law in 1972 was met with resistance and rebellion by various sectors of Philippine society, including the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), which sought to establish an independent Islamic state in Mindanao. The MNLF waged a guerrilla war against the government forces, resulting in thousands of deaths and displacements on both sides.

The conflict between the government and the MNLF also had regional and international implications, as neighboring countries such as Malaysia, Libya, and Indonesia intervened to support the cause of the Bangsamoro people. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) also played a key role in facilitating the peace talks between the two parties, which culminated in the signing of the Tripoli Agreement in 1976. The agreement provided for the creation of an autonomous region in 13 provinces and nine cities in Mindanao, where the majority of the Muslim population resided. However, the implementation of the agreement faced several challenges and controversies, such as the opposition of some Christian groups and local politicians, the division within the MNLF, and the constitutional issues raised by the Philippine government. Thus, the peace process remained stalled, and the armed conflict continued until the end of Martial Law in 1986. (Abinales, Patricio N. and Donna J. Amoroso (2005). *State and Society in the Philippines*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers)

During the Martial Law time, women faced intense challenges and atrocities, yet emerged as empowered individuals in the present context, showcasing progress in gender empowerment amidst past adversities which the participants reflected on.

Moreover, one participant also expressed that the Dansalan Declaration is one of the key historical incidents or milestones that stand out in the Bangsamoro narrative which accordingly is where the participant understood the Bangsamoro desire for independence and marked when the Moro people spoke up, saying that Moro didn't include in the island and has been sold because it is not part of it. Moro people in Mindanao, not in Visayas and Luzon.

The Dansalan Declaration, also known as the Dansalan Appeal, was a historic document issued by Muslim leaders in the Philippines on September 16, 1976. It was named after Dansalan, the former name of Marawi City in Lanao del Sur, Mindanao. The declaration called for the recognition of the Bangsamoro people's right to self-determination and the establishment of an autonomous region in Mindanao. This declaration was a significant milestone in the pursuit of peace and autonomy for Muslim communities in the Philippines. It paved the way for negotiations between the government and Moro

National Liberation Front (MNLF) rebels, ultimately leading to the signing of the Tripoli Agreement in 1976. (Jumaidee, Yusop. (2014). Dansalan Declaration: A Momentous Event. Marawi City: Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process)

Additionally, one of the participants revealed that the Tripoli Agreement is one of the key historical incidents or milestones that stand out in the Bangsamoro narrative. Accordingly, it pushed Muslims to be better, and the National Government promised three things to the Muslims or Bangsamoro; there is an Autonomous Region, the right to govern, and Muslim have security, and that the Muslim can be part of the National Government. The Tripoli Agreement is viewed as a turning point that provided Muslims with autonomy, security, and a path toward peace. It represents a shift towards peaceful resolutions and recognition of the Bangsamoro's political identity.

The Tripoli Agreement is a landmark peace agreement that aimed to address the historical grievances and aspirations of the Bangsamoro people in the southern Philippines. However, the agreement also faced several challenges and limitations in its implementation and impact. The following paragraphs will discuss some of the issues and implications of the Tripoli Agreement, drawing from various sources.

One of the issues that emerged after the signing of the Tripoli Agreement was the lack of clarity and consensus on the scope and boundaries of the autonomous regions. According to Vitug and Gloria (2000), the Tripoli Agreement stipulated that the autonomous regions would cover thirteen provinces and nine cities, but this assumed that the inhabitants of these areas would opt for autonomy in a plebiscite.

However, when the Philippine government conducted the plebiscite in 1977, only four provinces (Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi) voted for inclusion in the autonomous region, while the rest rejected it. This resulted in a smaller and less viable autonomous region, which was later renamed the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

Moreover, the MNLF felt that the Philippine government violated the Tripoli Agreement by holding the plebiscite without consulting them and by excluding other areas with significant Muslim populations, such as Zamboanga, Basilan, and Palawan.

Another issue that affected the implementation of the Tripoli Agreement was the political instability and changes in the Philippine government. The agreement was signed during the martial law regime of President Ferdinand Marcos, who was ousted by a popular uprising in 1986. The succeeding administration of President Corazon Aquino initiated a new round of negotiations with the MNLF, resulting in the Jeddah Accord of 1987, which reaffirmed the Tripoli Agreement and called for the establishment of a provisional government and a constitutional commission for the autonomous region. However, the Jeddah Accord was superseded by the 1987 Philippine Constitution, which created a new system of regional autonomy through the enactment of the Organic Act for Muslim Mindanao (RA 6734). The MNLF rejected the Organic Act, claiming that it diluted the provisions of the Tripoli Agreement and the Jeddah Accord, and boycotted the plebiscite that ratified it in 1989 (OPAPP, n.d.).

Lastly, three participants voiced that the struggle of Mujahideen and the sacrifices of Bangsamoro Leaders are the milestones that stand out in the Bangsamoro narrative as these are significant chapters in the history of Mindanao. The Mujahideen fought for the recognition of their cultural and religious rights, as well as for self-determination in the predominantly Muslim areas of Mindanao which also led to the signing of the Framework on the Bangsamoro (FAB) in 2012. The FAB is a landmark document that outlines the basic principles for establishing a new political entity called the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) in the Philippines. The agreement served as a roadmap for subsequent negotiations and the enactment of legislation to create the Bangsamoro region. The sacrifices of the Mujahideen, along with those of countless others, have contributed to the establishment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

Overall, most of the responses underscore the complex historical narrative of the Bangsamoro people, marked by struggles, sacrifices, resilience, and aspirations for peace and self-determination.

### **Participant's Understanding in the Impact of Colonial History on the Development of the Bangsamoro Identity**

The participant's perception of the impact of colonial history on the development of the Bangsamoro identity and the current situation in the region. Most of them highlighted that the cultural and social changes throughout colonial history have influenced various aspects of the culture and social changes of the Bangsamoro. These include changes in clothing style, education, language, social norms, and economic practices.

In terms of clothing, four participants stated that only the private parts were covered, and that clothing is influenced by the Spaniards such as the Barong Tagalog. However, when the Americans came, they introduced a more Western cultural way of dressing. Accordingly, the conservative culture is disappearing.

“Sa pananamit ng Bangsamoro during pre-colonization, dati naka Muslim Dress pero ngayon Modern na talaga.” (In the clothing of the Bangsamoro during pre-colonization, they used to wear Muslim dress, but now it's truly modern.) [Participant 1]

In terms of education, Moro before did not prioritize education because this was one of the ways the Americans tried to colonize them. They could not conquer the Philippines through strength, so they used intellectual means. However, modern Westernized formal education was their biggest contribution to the Moro people. In Pre-colonial, Alibata or Baybayin served as the basis on how the Filipinos learn to read and write. For the Islamized people in Mindanao was the Arabic and Islamic education system.

“Kase yung mga dating Bangsamoro ay hindi nakapag-aral sa eskwelahan, yung parents dati kahit sa pag-aaral ng mga anak nila ay hindi nila pinapayagan kase baka maging Christian, kaya karamihan sa mga parents natin ay wala masyadong pina-paaral.” (Because the previous Bangsamoro generation didn't have the opportunity to go to school; parents were hesitant to send their children to study because of fear that they might be Christianized. That's why many of our parents didn't prioritize education.) [Participant 5]

In terms of language, three participants mentioned that many words used today are from Spanish terms such as uno, dos, tres, pandesal, and many borrowed words. Accordingly, most of the words used today, especially English and Tagalog have been influenced by colonization.

On the other hand, seven participants noted how colonization brought significant changes in economic systems and resource management. In the precolonial period, Mindanao was the center of commerce with a trader/barter system as expressed by one participant:

“Pre-colonial, alam natin na wala masyadong established kung paano tayo makipag trade, kundi iisa lang ang language na makikipagpalitan ng products kundi barter lang, and when itong mga mananakop ay dumating sa lupain ng Pilipinas, natuto tayo kung paano gamitin ang gold as medium of change.” (During the Pre-colonial times, we knew that there were little established trade, just the barter with a single language for exchanging products. When these colonizers arrived in the Philippines, we learned how to use gold as a medium of exchange.) [Participant 19]

It also noted that the introduction of new currencies and economic dependencies on foreign powers have influenced economic structures in the region. Because of this, colonial powers also exploited natural resources, leading to economic inequalities and environmental degradation as mentioned by one participant:

“Economically sa pre-colonial, ang mga tao dito sa atin is nagbebenta, nagkakaralan sila, trade nila is for instance, gusto mo ng manok, bibili sila gamit ang gold. Ang alam ko nung pumasok na yung mga Amerikano or Spaniards (Not sure), since malawak ang sakahan natin dito, hinawakan nila tayo sa leeg and tayo mismo yung nagta-trabaho sa mismong lupa natin at tayo nagbibigay ng buwis sakanila.” (Economically, in the pre-colonial era, people here engaged in trade and barter. For example, if someone need a chicken, they would buy it using gold. However, when the Americans or Spaniards (not sure) came in and saw our vast agricultural land, they took control, and we ended up working on our land, paying taxes to them.) [Participant 12]

In addition, there is also a participant who highlighted how colonization introduced new economic practices, such as the commodification of agriculture and economic investment. Accordingly, when the colonization happened, the Philippines also implemented economic investment.

“Kumbaga dati, tayo yung nagko-cultivate sa mga kakainin natin. Tayo yung pagtatanim, right now maraming technology ang lumalabas then nakakabili na tayo. Dati kung saan may makain, doon sila kaya walang permante na bahay dahil walang may-ari ng lupa. Kung saan may alam sila na makain, doon sila tumitira para sa pamumuhay nila.” (Before, we provide our food....we plant...but now with emerging technologies, we can simply purchase what we need. In the past, people lived where there was food, without a permanent home since there was no land ownership. They settled wherever there was a source for their livelihood.) [Participant 6]

“Hindi na sila nahihirapan kung paano mamuhay, kase nga may idea sila from other countries kung ano gagawin nila like sa fisheries. Parang na share naman nila sa atin kung paano mamuhay like sa agriculture kung paano magtanim.” (They no longer struggled on how to live because they have gained idea from other countries, such as in fisheries. It’s like they shared with us how to live, especially in agriculture and farming practices.) [Participant 4]

Moreover, one of the participants shared that the negative impact of colonization especially during the Japanese colonization, they abused women.

“I saw these documentaries na yung mga Japanese soldiers na kumbaga may kinuha sila na 30 females (Pilipino), they sexualized, sorry for the term pero ginawa po sila comfort women, nasa isang building lang sila and yun po everytime na umuwi yung mga Japanese soldiers. They are abusive in terms of their power, mapanakit sila, inaabusado po nila ang mga Pilipino.” (I’ve seen documentaries where Japanese soldiers took around 30 Filipino females, and raped them – sorry for the term, but they made them comfort women. They were confined in one building, and every time Japanese soldiers returned, they were abused in terms of power and causing harm the Filipino people.) [Participant 20]

Overall, the responses offer valuable insights into the complex legacies of colonization on Bangsamoro society in Mindanao, highlighting enduring impacts on culture, economy, education, and identity. These discussions emphasize the need to recognize historical narratives and comprehend their implications for contemporary challenges and aspirations.

### **Participant’s Understanding in the Cultural Traditions and Heritage in Preserving the Identity of the Bangsamoro**

the participant’s responses in the cultural tradition and heritage played in preserving the identity of the Bangsamoro despite Historical challenges?” Nine participants responded highlighting the significant role of how culture and heritage play in preserving the identity of the Bangsamoro community despite historical challenges.

The importance of passing down the traditions was highlighted by this ensures the continuity of Bangsamoro identity. The intergenerational transmission of cultural practices to the next generation such as Kulintang, wearing traditional dresses, and engaging in cultural dances. This highlights the importance of elders in shaping and preserving Bangsamoro culture as said by one of the participants:

“By generation kase, for example, this generation ay parang tumanda na, yung mga nalaman or natutunan nil ana culture and belief and naipapasa nila next generation kaya hindi nawawal yung identity natin as Bangsamoro kase like yung mga Kulintang, pagsusuot ng mga Muslim Dress, pagsasayaw ng Cultural Dancing (Gandingan) pwede kase siya aralin ng mga bata kaya di nawawala yung identity natin as Bangsamoro.” (By generation, for example, this generation has aged, and they pass on what they’ve learned about our culture and beliefs to the next generation. That’s why our identity as Bangsamoro exists—traditions like playing the

Kulintang, wearing Muslim dress, and engaging in cultural dances (Gandingan) can be learned by children, preserving our Bangsamoro identity.) [Participant 1]

In terms of dress or attire, another participant emphasized the significance of the women's traditional dresses, particularly the hijab to identify easily and preserve Bangsamoro identity.

“Ako, yung pananamit ng mga kababaihan, parang madali lang sila ma identify na ah Bangsamoro siya. Parang doon palang, nape-preserve yung identity, yung sa pag Hijab.” (For me, it’s how the women dress, it is easy to identify them as Bangsamoro. Just there, the identity is already preserved, especially with wearing the hijab.) [Participant 13]

In terms of cultural practices, two participants further elaborated their practices, rituals, ceremonies, and dances which are considered unique in preserving Bangsamoro’s identity as expressed by the participant:

“Halimbawa sa Tausug, pag mag “kawing” (kasal) sila, pag mag-libing sila meron sila hawak na apat na may malong na may palabag na anim na tapos ang bangkay ng isang Datu, merong ilalagay na “sundang” (sandata). Sa Maguindanaon, as long as merong kang Damak, merong Sigkil sa Igan, merong Pangengedung, Salangguni, yun ang tradition at pagkilanlan natin, yung yung culture natin. Isa sa mga pagkakakilanlan natin na kailangan natin i-preserve dahil sumasalim yan kung sino tayo dati at ngayon. Pagkakakilanlan din natin yung pagiging conservative, tulad na pagsuot ng “malong”. Yung “Inaul”, may distinct, yung inaul ng Maranao iba sa Maguindanao, makapal masyado yung sa Maranao.” (For Tausug, when they have a wedding ('kawing') or a burial, they have specific rituals, like holding four items with a 'malong' with 'palabag,' and place a 'sundang' (weapon) beside the dead body of a Datu. For the Maguindanaon, Damak, Sigkil sa Igan, Pangengedung, and Salangguni, and Kawing are their traditions and identify them. One of our identities that we need to preserve is being conservative, like the wearing of 'malong.' The 'Inaul' has its distinct styles with the Maranaos and the Maguindanaon.) [Participant 18]

While traditional ceremonies and practices were elaborated on, two participants also revealed that cultural showcasing in cultural events or festivals like the Kadayawan festival and the Shariff Kabunsuan festival can contribute to the preservation of Bangsamoro’s identity.

“Like sa Pageant, sa pageant kase for example sa Kadayawan, may maguindanaon, maranaw or iranun, those candidates ay pini-present nila yung kanila culture, so yun yung kanilang identity para mas makilala” (In pageants, for instance, like in the Kadayawan festival, candidates representing Maguindanaon, Maranaw, or Iranun showcase their respective cultures to express their own identity to be known.) [Participant 4]

Furthermore, one of the participants mentioned that the Bayok or Dayunday, the traditional forms of music and literature practiced by the elders which are considered artistic expressions serve as repositories of culture and identity.

Additionally, another participant emphasized unity within diversity among the 13 ethnolinguistic tribes of the Bangsamoro community despite differences in terms of traditions and practices as the term Bangsamoro serves as a unifying factor, and cultural diversity contributes to collective identity.

Lastly, another participant discussed the importance of cultural education and awareness by showcasing Bangsamoro cultures and traditions in educational institutions to help raise awareness and preserve cultural identity.

Overall, the discussion highlights the significance of cultural preservation efforts in safeguarding Bangsamoro identity in the face of social and cultural changes. By acknowledging and embracing their cultural heritage, the Bangsamoro youth reaffirm their commitment to preserving their identity and ensuring its continuity for future generations.

## **Participant's Responses in the Sources of the Bangsamoro Youth in Learning**

### **Bangsamoro History**

When the participants were asked where they usually learn Bangsamoro History, the responses demonstrated a variety of sources and methods.

Five participants indicated that they learn from the internet and social media platforms as sources of information on Bangsamoro history. In contrast, four others expressed that they usually learn about Bangsamoro history through the storytelling of their parents and grandparents, indicating the passing down of oral history within families. This underscores the enduring value placed on interpersonal connections and the transmission of knowledge through generations, contributing to a sense of cultural continuity and identity.

Furthermore, four participants highlighted that they learned Bangsamoro History through attending seminars, workshops, and symposiums, and by volunteering in BARMM activities and being mentored by leaders of organizations. At the same time, three participants mentioned that reading books, brochures, or text, watching documentaries and theatre performances are their ways of learning Bangsamoro History.

Moreover, another four participants mentioned that by sharing ideas and discussions with friends and peers, and community interactions (kwentuhan) indicating informal storytelling sessions within the community they usually gain knowledge of Bangsamoro History.

Additionally, four more participants mentioned learning Bangsamoro history through formal education in schools and Madrasah (Arabic school), indicating formal and informal Islamic education. This highlights the importance of educational institutions in imparting foundational understanding and appreciation of Bangsamoro heritage. On the other hand, one participant also mentioned that learning through educational visits or Lakbay-Aral suggests experiential learning opportunities outside the classroom.

Summing it up, all participants learn Bangsamoro history from different sources and methods, such as formal education, family stories, digital platforms, community interactions, experiential learning, and cultural and organizational activities. These show how historical education in the Bangsamoro community is dynamic and adaptive, based on a strong desire to keep and honor their cultural heritage.

## **Challenges and Hindrances Encountered by the Participants in Learning**

### **Bangsamoro History**

When the participants were asked about the challenges and hindrances encountered in learning Bangsamoro History, four of them answered lack of prioritization or the fragmentation of historical narratives with limited coverage in textbooks and curriculum.

“Yung History ng Bangsamoro ay ini-insert lang sa History na napagaaralan pero walang books na naka focus lang sa Bangsamoro. Yung mga history na natutunan natin ngayon ay magkakaiba ang source, halimabawa sa books, kapag ni ask sa grandparents naka experience, magkakaiba yung kwento. Kung meron lang sana isang book na naka focus sa Bangsamoro History ay maging magkakapareho tayo ng pagkakaintindi, yung pare-pareho ang source. Yung sa mga teacher dinidiscuss nila kung ano lang natutunan nila pero hind nila dini-detail yung buong story. Isa din sa nagiging dahilan kung bakit nadidiscriminate yung Bangsamoro dahil yung iba wala silang basehan, sa social media lang sila nag ba-base. (The history of the Bangsamoro is just integrated in the curriculum, focusing on the Bangsamoro. The history that have learned now came from different sources, like books and personal experiences from asking grandparents which lead to varied narratives. If there were a single book dedicated to Bangsamoro history, we would have a consistent understanding from the same sources. Teachers often discuss what they've learned, but they don't detail the entire story. This lack of comprehensive information can contribute to the discrimination faced by the Bangsamoro, as other people might rely solely on social media without a solid foundation.) [Participant 5]

“I think po hindi talaga siya tinuturo sa school (the details). Limited lang yung books.” (The details of the Bangsamoro History are not taught in school. The books are limited.) [Participant 15]

The need for better integration of Bangsamoro History into the education curriculum, with suggestions for designated subjects or additional units dedicated to the history of Bangsamoro, is highlighted by these participants.

Furthermore, four participants also expressed that limited access to comprehensive and reliable information about Bangsamoro History, and Research and Documentation of the Bangsamoro History, including gaps in knowledge and missing details in the narrative is a challenge because this might lead to confusion because of different narratives and sources.

“Nagiging challenge din yung magkakaiba na kwento, iba-iba ang sources hindi mo alam kung saan doon yun paniniwalaan mo.” (The challenge also arises from varied stories and different sources; you don't know which one to believe.) [Participant 7]

Moreover, three participants raised concerns about media bias and misinterpretation. Accordingly, even the media have conflicts with their report on television, but not on the economic growth and biases arise. Historical accounts and evidence are not recorded, and some are still not recognized in the Philippines.

Additionally, two participants also pointed out that lack of interest and awareness among some youth and cultural globalization is a challenge for Bangsamoro youth because they are more exposed and influenced by foreign cultures and tend to prioritize this entertainment – leading to a loss of focus on their heritage and history.

“...parang na le-left out yung ilan sa mga Kabataan hindi na sila concern or interesado alamin kung ano yung History ng Bangsamoro which is yung iba salita lang ng salita wala naman alam sa history.” (...it seems like some of the youth are being left out. They are no longer concerned or interested in knowing the history of Bangsamoro. Some are just talking without knowing the real history.) [Participant 11]

Overall, these responses underscore the multifaceted challenges faced by youth in learning Bangsamoro history, including educational, social, media-related, and personal factors. Addressing these challenges would require intensive efforts from educational institutions, media outlets, communities, and individuals to promote awareness, access to information, and a sense of cultural pride and identity among the youth.

The Initiatives of the Participants to Mitigate those Challenges and Hindrances Encountered in Learning the History of Bangsamoro.

### **Importance of Having Knowledge and Awareness of Bangsamoro History in Coexistence and Understanding of Different Communities in the BARMM**

When asked how the youth think about knowledge and awareness of Bangsamoro history can contribute to co-existence and understanding among different communities in the BARMM, four participants stressed that it is very important to be aware of the history and the struggle of the ancestors because this will help the Bangsamoro youth and next generation to understand what the Bangsamoro people are fighting for, and bridge the gaps in understanding with other communities. They also emphasized the importance of Bangsamoro history in preserving cultural identity and heritage. Understanding the Bangsamoro history allows Bangsamoro youth to connect with their roots and defend against misinformation.

“Knowledge and awareness are important sa atin kase bilang isang Bangsamoro ay hindi tayo dapat ma ignorante sa sarili nating History. Yung knowledge ay makakatulong sa atin para I defend yung mga fake news na kumakalat ng ganito yung totoong nangyare. Give knowledge not only to the next generation of Bangsamoro but to all people na hindi pa nila alam yung totoong History ng Bangsamoro. Hindi lang yung Christian ang parang ignorante sa History natin kundi pati tayong mga Moro.

Masakit na dinisdiscriminate tayo dahil hindi natin alam yung history.” (Knowledge and awareness are important to us because, as Bangsamoro, we shouldn't be ignorant of our history. This knowledge helps us defend against fake news spreading misinformation about what truly happened. Provide knowledge not only to the next generation of Bangsamoro but to all people who may not know the true history of the Bangsamoro.... It's painful to be discriminated against because we don't know our history.”

[Participant 5]

Another four participants expressed that knowledge of Bangsamoro history is essential for advocating peace and promoting understanding among different communities. Through raising awareness, sharing history, and engaging in various activities and initiatives, they could contribute in shaping more inclusive and peaceful society with common understanding and respect.

“It is important to learn the history of Bangsamoro kase alam natin na nag sacrifice yung mga ninuno natin para I save yung future natin sa generation na ito, parang mawawalan ng saysay yung sacrifice nila kung ileft out natin yung sariling history natin. Kapag may marinig kang hearsays na ganito ganyan, pwede mo ipaglaban kase may bases ka, may pinanghuhugutan ka kase pinag-aralan mo. Kase sa iba pag marinig nila yung Moro, ang tingin nila ay terrorism, yun yung kailangan natin I bridge sa iba.” (It is important to learn the history of Bangsamoro because we know that our ancestors sacrificed for the sake of saving our future in this generation. Their sacrifice might lose its meaning if we leave out our history. When you hear hearsay, you can defend it because you have a basis, you have something to draw from because you studied. For others, when they hear 'Moro,' they associate it with terrorism. That is what we need to bridge with others.) [Participant 11]

“As a youth peace advocate, it is important for us to have awareness about understanding of Bangsamoro, to advocate young people in our community para magkaroon sila ng knowledge about history of BARMM and para magkaroon din sila ng peace, maiwasan din yung violence na nangyayare before.” (As a youth peace advocate, we need to raise awareness and promote understanding of the Bangsamoro. We aim to advocate for young people in our community so that they may gain knowledge about the history of BARMM and foster a sense of peace, avoiding the violence that occurred before.) [Participant 4]

In addition, three participants highlighted the importance of educating future generations. By understanding the origin and struggles, youth can contribute to the continuity of the Bangsamoro narrative.

“As a kabataang Bangsamoro is kailangan natin magkaroon ng knowledge about the Bangsamoro history kase kung hindi natin pag-aaralan yung Bangsamoro History, parang nakakahiya kapag may nagtanong sayo ng about sa Bangsamoro at hindi ka makakasagot kase wala kang knowledge doon. So kaya kailangan natin pag-aralan yung history ng ating Bangsa.” (As a youth of Bangsamoro, it is necessary for us to know Bangsamoro history because if we don't study Bangsamoro History, it's embarrassing when someone asks you about Bangsamoro, and you can't answer because you lack knowledge about it. So, we need to study the history of our nation.) [Participant 21]

Furthermore, four participants highlighted how knowledge of Bangsamoro history empowers youth to assert their identity and engage in meaningful dialogue with others. It provides them with a sense of belonging and strengthens their selfidentify as Bangsamoro.

“Para sa amin as youth, doon yung participation in terms of political, economy, social lahat-lahat na po is parang mas active. That I think po would contribute to peace that we want right now and in the future.” (For us as a youth, our participation in political, economic, social aspects, and everything else should be more active. I believe that would contribute to the peace we desire now and in the future.) [Participant 20]

On the other hand, two more participants also stressed the significance of honoring the sacrifices of the ancestors and leaders by understanding and preserving Bangsamoro history. To sustain the gains of

the peace process, the youth need to know what are the factors that pushed the leaders to fight for self-autonomy.

“Hindi tayo magiging fully develop or mahuhubog yung pagkatao natin kapag hindi tayo well-informed kung saan tayo nanggagaling. I think makakacontribute tayo sa pamamagitin ng pag gawa ng small things, tulad nung nabanggit naming lahat, yung pagsali sa mhga ganitong klase ng mga organizations sa simpleng pagreresearch, sa pagbabasa. I think yan yung simple way para pasalamatang yung mga great leaders natin kung bakit tayo nagging ganito.” (We won't be fully developed or shaped as individuals if we are not well-informed about where we came from. I believe we can contribute through small things, as mentioned by all of us, such as joining organizations, engaging in simple research, and reading. I think these are simple ways to express gratitude to our great leaders why we become what we are now.) [Participant 23]

The responses from participants answers show a firm conviction among Bangsamoro youth that learning and being aware of their history are vital for creating connections, advancing peace, and enhancing comprehension among different communities within the BARMM.

### **Generalizations**

The Bangsamoro youth have varying levels of understanding of the Bangsamoro historical context due to limited knowledge or awareness of Bangsamoro history. They know about historical events such as the arrival of Islam in the Philippines, massacres and injustices that happened in Bangsamoro, armed conflicts, sacrifices of their elders and ancestors in the Bangsamoro peace process, and colonization by the Spanish, Americans, and Japanese, and the changes and challenges, both negative and positive, that they brought to the country.

However, only a few of them know the details of these events due to their limited knowledge of history; most of what they know and understand is based on the stories of their parents and community. This underscores the need for comprehensive historical education for the Bangsamoro youth to enhance their awareness and engagement with the issues affecting their communities. The curriculum should provide in-depth coverage of Bangsamoro history, including significant events, milestones, and cultural traditions, to ensure a nuanced understanding of Bangsamoro history.

The sources and methods of the Bangsamoro youth in learning Bangsamoro history are varied, including storytelling from parents and grandparents, formal education through schools, community interaction, community leaders, online platforms, seminars, learning visits, youth organizations, and sharing with peers. However, the youth identified challenges in learning Bangsamoro history, such as limited coverage in textbooks, lack of access to comprehensive information, media biases, varied stories, and different sources of information which result in inaccurate historical narratives, and cultural globalization which affects Bangsamoro youth, making them uninterested in their own history. This implies a need for improvement in access to learning resources, including textbooks, online platforms, documentaries, and materials from reliable sources.

The proactive initiatives of the Bangsamoro youth include research, reading reliable sources, community engagement, volunteering, advocacy, seminars and workshops, peer communication, and self-learning.

The Bangsamoro youth also expressed a strong desire for a comprehensive understanding of Bangsamoro history, including detailed narratives of significant events such as massacres and the impact of colonization. They also want to learn about the overall evolution of Bangsamoro society, the struggles faced by the Bangsamoro over time, and the sacrifices made to achieve the right to self-determination and autonomy.

The Bangsamoro youth also believe that knowledge and awareness of Bangsamoro history might foster coexistence, understanding, and peacebuilding among diverse communities in the BARMM, and understanding Bangsamoro history is crucial in sustaining the gains of the peace process.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are proposed based on the findings of the study.

1. Ministry of Basic, Higher and Technical Education (MBHTE), the Bangsamoro Commission for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage (BCPCH), and universities may strengthen the development and implementation of a culturally responsive and inclusive curriculum that integrates Bangsamoro history, culture, and identity in the formal education system.

2. Bangsamoro Youth Commission (BYC), Bangsamoro Commission for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage (BCPCH), and other Civil Society Organizations may organize and support cultural activities and events to promote Bangsamoro history, culture, and identity in the informal education system through planning and facilitating cultural festivals, exhibitions, competitions, workshops, and dialogues that showcase the diversity and richness of Bangsamoro culture and identity.

3. Ministry of Basic, Higher and Technical Education (MBHTE), the Department of Education (DepEd), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), the Bangsamoro Commission for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage (BCPCH), the Bangsamoro Youth Commission (BYC), universities, schools, teachers, students, parents, and communities may establish and strengthen mechanisms and platforms to address the gaps and challenges in the implementation of the culturally responsive and inclusive curriculum and to share best practices and lessons learned.

4. Bangsamoro Commission for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage (BCPCH), the Bangsamoro Youth Commission (BYC), and other relevant institutions and experts may conduct further research and documentation of Bangsamoro history, culture, and identity from various sources and perspectives.

5. Ministry of Basic, Higher and Technical Education (MBHTE) may strengthen the development and implementation of media and communication strategy that raises awareness and appreciation of Bangsamoro's history, culture, and identity among the general public, especially the youth.

6. The Bangsamoro Youth Commission (BYC) should strengthen the support and encourage the participation and involvement of the Bangsamoro youth in the promotion and preservation of Bangsamoro history, culture, and identity.

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