

# Awareness and Level of Performance of Subanen Superstitions: A Survey

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*Abstract* — The main objective of this research is to determine the awareness and level of performance of the Subanen superstitions in Datagan, Siayan, Zamboanga del Norte in order to understand, monitor, and share their culture with the Local Government of the Municipality of Siayan, with the province of Zamboanga del Norte, with the University, with the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino, and even across the country.

This study utilized the descriptive-analytic method. The researchers distributed survey questionnaires to collect and gather data about their culture and beliefs which is essential in the completion of this research.

It was discovered that all superstitions associated with marriage, funeral and burial, planting, pregnancy, and healing and apothecary are known and are constantly done by the Subanen respondents because they believe that they will experience misfortunes if they cannot follow let alone apply these superstitions mentioned. This only shows how their local colors are excellently preserved up to these days.

Thus, it is proposed to continuously perform and to further enhance their local cultural traditions and customaries including their Rights to Ancestral Domain, and to maintain and develop their past, present, and future manifestation of their cultures in their architecture, historical sites, artifacts, designs, ceremonies, technology, visual performing arts, and even their literature.

*Keywords* — *Superstitions, Awareness, Subanen, culture, tribe, beliefs, traditions, customs, ancestors, ritual*

## Introduction

Every tribe or group of people in which a person belongs contains different kinds of beliefs that he has grown up with. According to [www.gintongaral.com.ph](http://www.gintongaral.com.ph), "Superstition is a baseless belief regarding random things that have no specific relationship with each other. Whether we admit it or not, superstitions contribute a lot of influence when it comes to cultural issues, life and decision-making, failures and triumphs and in sadness and happiness".

Despite dubbed as “baseless beliefs”, it is undeniable that our life, literature, culture, and customaries mainly revolve around our superstitions and non-conformance to these will bring forth adversity to a person, as what elders say. These practices are belief in something – actions or events, that affect our customs despite having no logical relationship towards the outcome. It is said that these beliefs were passed down by our ancestors from generation to generation and persist up to present times. Most of these beliefs are still practiced and performed especially in remote places where they are far from modern civilization.

According to the study of Torio (2016), our ancestors are the origin of anything including heirlooms. Therefore, it is necessary to value and appreciate these heirlooms because we will benefit from them and they bring positive effects to us. We can value and appreciate them by protecting, nourishing, and supporting this local heritage . We should never ignore these because all of these matters and if ever we have knowledge about this local heritage, we should enliven with it and share it with the next generations.

The new millennia has revolutionized the way we progress which hampers the progress of this heritage. According to Maneje (2014), we Filipinos are naturally appreciative, however, there are things we tend to value less due to modernization. Over the course of time, many customaries of Filipino changed, therefore, it is time to revitalize and relive these customs and beliefs because even though many things around us have changed today, it does not mean that we have to change our practices as well.

According to history, Jose Rizal Memorial State University, former Jose Rizal Memorial State College, has signed a memorandum in the person of Dr. Henry A. Sojor – former JRMSC President now President of Negro Oriental State University, with the tribal leader of the Subanen in the person of Mr. Dalmacio P. Donggo, DatuIgdinoAndus, DatuTumanggong and Edie Alvarez which was signed on January 16, 2003, at JRMSU – Dapitan stating the duty of the JRMSU in the recognition and preservation of these beliefs.

To sustain and further reinforce this agreement, the researchers desired to discover one of our country’s considered treasure – the superstitions of the Subanen, specifically in the Dagatan, Siayan so that it can be used as an instrument to awaken the feelings and rekindle the spirit of camaraderie, patriotism and most importantly our feelings of Godliness. For it is important that every man knows the importance of his rich ancestry to fully recognize his full identity and to navigate throughout life. This prompted the researchers to carry out this study – to help the University accomplish their agreements with the Subanens.

## **Literature Review**

A person’s superstition or beliefs define his or her identity where it belongs. It also serves as a guide to this life’s decisions that even if it is said to be a no-nonsense belief.

According to Money (2011), culture refers to the meaning and way of life that defines a society. Therefore, what we do with our daily lives from waking up to bed is part of the culture. Each culture has the meaning, importance of faction, attitude, and color that should be expressed. It indicates the identity of the race.

Salazar, et al. (2011), argues that our society and culture have an “equal perspective” if we all use concepts and behaviors that we all know, including the relationships with each other. This happens only if the code is the same, meaning there is a common link and connectivity of meanings.

Mendoza (2015), stressed that the Subanen religion is traditionally based on belief and the exaltation of spirits and deities. They played instruments in song and dance for weddings and other important occasions. They also have dances for wars, and rituals they perform using “taltal”.

Along this context, Andrews (2010), asserted that people were blessed with freedom of will. Participants as ordinary people show their nature to choose something they think is good and right.

According to Panopio (2014), our culture is one of the most beautiful cultures in the country, whether we have cultures that we don't do or forget. Diversity of superstition that we believe should still be appreciated. It is because by the influences surround our society. By following the trends habits of the majority, we once tested the modernity in which to maintain it and forget the habit of birth. We cannot even avoid because this is the flow of the innovative generation we live in today.

Superstitious beliefs are beliefs that science cannot explain. Keeping it in our society is the result of the continued obedience and belief of human. According to Whitbourne (2014), superstitious behavior includes making rituals that produce a desire or expectation of something or event. He added that these beliefs remain if a practice results in his expected event.

It is said that individual has the belief that luck is one of their quality as a human and that is possessed and controlled (Darke, 1993; Darke & Freedman, 1997; Kramer & Block, 2010).

According to Life Skills (2008), as cited by Lopez et al. (2015), an individual develops a belief in something by how they understand what they have observed and experienced between their actions and events in their environment

The superstition also serves a good lesson in following and respecting it. Garzia (2013), says that the qualities of a good child are having respect and obedience because parents have more experience in life and can tell them what is good and harmful. Meanwhile according to Fardin (2013), other than respect and obedience, another quality is to be honest with the parent. These qualities are said to be general and will never change over time and culture.

## Methodology

This research used descriptive-analytic method. The researchers distributed questionnaires and conducted an interview to gather information from the respondents. This is done to determine the level of awareness of Subanen tribe in Datagan, Siayan, Zamboanga del Norte when it comes to their superstitions.

The respondents of this study is composed of 220 Subanens residing at Datagan, Siayan, Zamboanga del Norte. Average Weighted Mean is used in determining the awareness and level of performance of these superstitions in their society.

## Results and Discussion

**Table 1 Awareness and Level of Performance of Subanen Superstition in terms of Marriage**

Superstitions Associated in Marriage	Awareness		Level of Performance	
	F	%	Mean	Interpretation
1. During marriage, women should wear <i>patadyong</i> and men should wear <i>lingkupan</i> .	217	98.6 %	4.95	Always Performed
2. The bride's family asks dowry to the family for the marriage to be continued.	220	100 %	4.90	Always Performed
3. The hands of both groom and bride are placed on a pillar and brushed with blood using <i>salumaya</i> .	220	100 %	4.90	Always Performed
4. After the wedding ceremony, both groom and bride will dine all together with their parents and they shall spoon-feed each other.	220	100 %	4.95	Always Performed
5. After the wedding, it is necessary to throw rice grains for the newly-weds to not experience hunger during their settlement.	219	99.5 %	4.94	Always Performed
6. The bride should sleep on the groom's house for 3 (three) days before she is can go home.	219	99.5 %	4.94	Always Performed
7. During their wedding, the groom shall comb the hair of the bride to ensure a harmonious settlement.	215	97.7 %	4.95	Always Performed
8. The newly-wed should stand together on a whetstone to refine their relationship.	218	99.1 %	4.96	Always Performed
9. The newly-wed will be fetched after the wedding and they will be given money to have a prosperous way of living.	220	100 %	4.96	Always Performed
10. Both hands of the newly-wed shall be placed on the house's pillar facing upwards for a marriage life.	220	100 %	4.95	Always Performed
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>			<b>4.94</b>	Always Performed

Table 1 shows that most of the Subanen respondents are well aware of their superstitions pertaining to marriage. It also shows that they always apply these superstitions during their wedding ceremonies as reflected on their Average Weighted Mean of 4.94.

According to the study of Lopez et.al. (2015), over the course of time, family inevitably plays an important role in shaping a person’s mentality because they help in nourishing a person’s sense of values, beliefs, and aspirations. Learning and maintaining superstitions can be associated with how a person values the family he belongs to. It is also undeniable that Filipino families have enlivened the term “strong family ties” which means strong family relationships. This only shows how family greatly influences the character and mentality of an individual as well as how he values their family. By doing so, they are willing to do and believe everything just to improve the life of each family members.

Their study also insisted that belief in superstitions is considered intergeneration which means it occurs within generations showing how strong and deeply-rooted these superstitions are in one’s awareness.

**Table 2 Awareness and Level of Performance of Subanen Superstition in terms of Funeral and Burial**

Superstitions Associated in Funeral and Burial	Awareness		Level of Performance	
	F	%	Mean	Interpretation
1. If a person dies, he should be buried immediately the next day to prevent the family from contracting disease.	219	99.5%	4.78	Always Performed
2. When the family of the deceased cries, tears should not befall on the deceased for him not to haunt the family.	220	100%	4.78	Always Performed
3. Family members of the deceased should pass under the coffin.	219	99.5%	4.80	Always Performed
4. Ash is placed on a ladder before a bereaved family member enters a house.	218	99.1%	4.79	Always Performed
5. Singing is not allowed during the funeral services to avoid the dead from having resentment and ill-will.	219	99.5%	4.83	Always Performed
6. The dead should not be embalmed because <i>Bathala</i> will not accept his body.	219	99.5%	4.85	Always Performed
7. It is forbidden for a tear to befall on the deceased because he will be sad in the next life.	220	100%	4.84	Always Performed
8. The ritual <i>pimalais</i> performed to ensure that <i>Bathala</i> will accept the body of the deceased.	220	100%	4.82	Always Performed
9. The ritual <i>pasuwayanis</i> performed to ensure that the deceased will be happy in the next life.	220	100%	4.77	Always Performed
10. He ritual <i>lingat</i> is performed to ease the resentment and ill-will of the deceased to his family.	220	100%	4.89	Always Performed
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>			<b>4.81</b>	Always Performed

As shown in table 2, five out of 10 superstitions pertaining to funeral and burial gathered 100 per cent frequency when it comes to awareness. Meanwhile, the rest of the result validated

that their superstitions on funeral and burial is highly observed and performed within thier society as shown on their Average Weighted Mean of **4.81**.

According to the study of Lopez *et.al.* (2015), it clearly shows people’s natural fear of death and even in health issues associated with death. Because the superstitions relating to the dead are associated with death itself, following them became a way of preserving the life and well-being of the bereaved family as well as for those who visited to extend their condolences. Moreover, many people believed in supernatural forces and elements, thus validating their belief and compliance to these superstitions.

**Table 3 Awareness and Level of Performance of Subanen Superstition in terms of Planting**

Superstitions Associated in Planting	Awareness		Level of Performance	
	F	%	Mean	Interpretation
1. Ritual pills for abundant planting.	219	99.5%	4.72	Always Performed
2. Hair strands of females will be planted together with the crops to make the crops grow taller.	219	99.5%	4.72	Always Performed
3. Chili is also planted together with the rice to yield more crops.	218	99.1%	4.71	Always Performed
4. The planting of rice is done 3 days after the third quarter to ensure abundance of crops.	218	99.1%	4.71	Always Performed
5. One of their bases in planting rice is the pupil of a cat’s eyes. If it dilates, it means that there is an ample amount of water supply which is an ideal time for planting. It constricts, it means there will be shortage of water supply which is not an idea time for planting.	220	100%	4.76	Always Performed
6. In planting rice, it has to be on the dates 3, 0 or 7 or during odd dates to ensure an abundant planting.	218	99.1%	4.81	Always Performed
7. The ritual called <i>kanolupais</i> performed when the rice grain is about to come out from the plant. This is done to ensure an excellent quality of harvest.	219	99.5%	4.75	Always Performed
8. The farmer shares the harvest with some people in their locality so that they will be blessed with even more harvest.	220	100%	4.76	Always Performed
9. A machete shall be stabbed on a tree, if the machete falls, planting on that soil is not allowed.	218	99.1%	4.77	Always Performed
10. The ritualcalled <i>pasungkois</i> performed so that the harvest will still be abundant.	219	99.5%	4.72	Always Performed
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>			<b>4.75</b>	<b>Always Performed</b>

Table 3 shows that the Subanen of Datagan, Siayan, Zamboanga del Norte are well-aware and always perform their rituals associated with planting which garnered the Average Weighted

Mean of **4.75**. Notably, only two of these superstitions are the respondents fully aware of but other criteria show that they are greatly manifested in their society.

According to Jovina (2013), our Filipino ancestors were like people from other countries who also believed in superstitions which usually served as their guide in everyday living.

**Table 4 Awareness and Level of Performance of Subanen Superstition in terms of Pregnancy**

Superstitions Associated in Pregnancy	Awareness		Level of Application	
	F	%	Mean	Interpretation
1. When an earthquake struck, flowers have to be thrown to the pregnant woman without her knowledge so that the baby does not become abnormal.	220	100%	4.53	Always Performed
2. Pregnant woman are not allowed to roam at night because the child's scent may attract monsters.	220	100%	4.48	Always Performed
3. When a pregnant woman is about to give birth, she will collect all of the small stuff that she usually used and place it in water and drink from it.	217	98.6%	4.50	Always Performed
4. The pregnant woman and her husband should have a designated area for eating so that the baby won't be going in and out during the delivery.	220	100%	4.51	Always Performed
5. The pregnant should undergo massage to ensure smooth delivery.	219	99.5%	4.51	Always Performed
6. Upon delivery, a fabric must be tied around the woman's belly to avoid the baby from going back to her womb.	220	100%	4.46	Always Performed
7. When eating, the pregnant woman should not use cauldron as a plate so that the baby will come out willingly during delivery.	220	100%	4.51	Always Performed
8. Herbal plants and medicine should be placed on the pregnant's belly so that she will not experience difficulty during delivery.	219	99.5%	4.46	Always Performed
9. The pregnant woman shall not walk on a back-and-forth manner so that her baby will not also move on a back-and-forth manner in the mother's womb during delivery.	219	99.5%	4.51	Always Performed
10. When taking a bath, it is necessary to put flowers in the water to make the baby look beautiful when he is born.	220	100%	4.46	Always Performed
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>			<b>4.50</b>	Always Performed

Table 4 shows that the awareness and level of performance of Subanen superstitions in terms of pregnancy. Five out of ten of these superstitions gathered a 100 percent awareness among the respondents while the others also showed excellent results. This category earned an Average Weighted Mean of **4.50** in terms of performance. This only shows that the Subanen, particularly female Subanen, who experienced pregnancy, are fully aware of their superstitions and continuously follow these superstitions in present times.

According to Advance Life Skills (2008) – as cited by Lopez *et.al.* (2018), an individual forms his belief in something by understanding what they have observed and experienced between their actions and their environment.

**Table 5 Awareness and Level of Application of Subanen Superstition in terms of Healing and Apothecary**

Superstitions Associated in Healing and Apothecary	Awareness		Level of Application	
	F	%	Mean	Interpretation
1. If one gets sick, it is necessary to hang some rice especially if it's not yet severe so that the person gets well immediately.	219	99.5%	4.76	Always Applied
2. If one get's sick, it is necessary to perform the ritual called <i>tawaggimod</i> to bring back his soul to his body.	219	99.5%	4.81	Always Applied
3. If one has done mischievousness on a creek inhabited by dark elementals, one must perform the ritual called <i>kanosapato</i> be healed.	220	100%	4.81	Always Applied
4. Performing of the ritual called <i>buklogan</i> – a chanting ritual performed so that all ailments will be healed	220	100%	4.80	Always Applied
5. If one gets sick, one must seek and use herbal medicines.	220	100%	4.76	Always Applied
6. One must drink the medicine called <i>bulongpanapoto</i> be healed.	220	100%	4.80	Always Applied
7. Perform the ritual called <i>takuli</i> which is perform by a shaman.	220	100%	4.72	Always Applied
8. The ritual called <i>ipangako</i> is performed to the elementals so that a person will be healed and his ailments will not come back.	220	100%	4.81	Always Applied
9. Everything that a shaman forbids a person to eat should be followed so that the person's ailments will not come back.	220	100%	4.76	Always Applied
10. A strong sense of trust and faith must be established with the shaman so that one will be completely healed from his ailments.	220	100%	4.81	Always Applied
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>			<b>4.79</b>	Always Applied
<b>Grand Mean</b>			<b>4.758</b>	Always Applied

Table 5 shows the awareness and level of application of Subanen superstitions in terms of healing and apothecary. It is notable that most of the superstitions gathered a 100 percent awareness among the respondents. This category gathered an Average Weighted Mean of **4.79** which shows that the respondents are highly acquainted with these superstitions and continuously perform these superstitions in their locality.

Overall, the categories presented – superstitions associated with marriage, funeral and burial, planting, pregnancy, and healing and apothecary, gathered a Grand Mean of **4.758**. This has the range value of **4.21-5.00** which bears the description **Always Applied**. This only shows



how the Subanen in Datagan, Siayan, Zamboanga del Norte values their local colors and continuously apply these local heritages in their society amidst modernization with the support of their local government.

**Legend:**

Weight	Range of Value	Description
5	4.21 – 5.00	Always Applied
4	3.41 – 4.20	Often Applied
3	2.61 – 3.40	Seldom Applied
2	1.81 – 2.60	Rarely Applied
1	1.00 – 1.80	Never Applied

**Table 6 Significant Relationship between Awareness of Subanen Superstitions and Level of Application of Subanen Superstitions**

Factors Compared	Level of Application of Subanen Superstition					
	$\alpha$	df	tv	$x^2$ value	Interpretation	Action/ Decision
<b>Superstition</b>	0.05	16.0	26.296	34.206	Significant relationship	$H_0$ was rejected

Table 6 shows the relationship between Subanen superstitions and the level of application of Subanen superstitions. The value of  $x^2$  is **34.206** which is relatively higher than the tabular value of **26.296** in which the null hypothesis is not accepted. This shows that the awareness of Subanen superstitions have **significant relationship** to the level of application of Subanen superstitions.

According to Money (2011), culture refers to the meaning and the way of life that is reflected in a society. In other words, everything that we do from dawn until dusk is part of our culture. Every culture, in its essence, contains meaning, societal importance, insights, and connotation and allegorical significance that has to be expressed. This is what identifies one's race.

**Conclusion**

Based on the findings, all superstitions associated with marriage, funeral and burial, planting, pregnancy, and healing and apothecary are known and are always applied by the Subanen respondents and for they believe that they will experience misfortunes or abomination if they

cannot follow, let alone perform these superstitions mentioned. This only proved how they have valued and enlivened their superstitions up to present times amidst modernization.

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