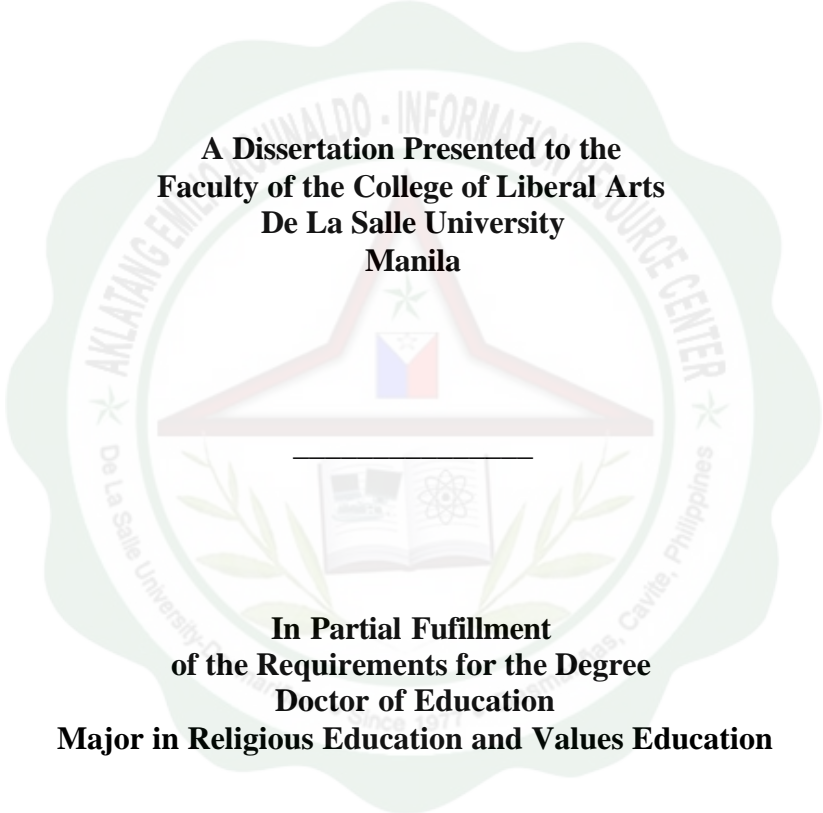


**RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, RITUALS AND PRACTICES  
AMONG SELECTED TINGGUAN AND ILOCANO  
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS OF ABRA:  
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY**

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**A Dissertation Presented to the  
Faculty of the College of Liberal Arts  
De La Salle University  
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**In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education  
Major in Religious Education and Values Education**

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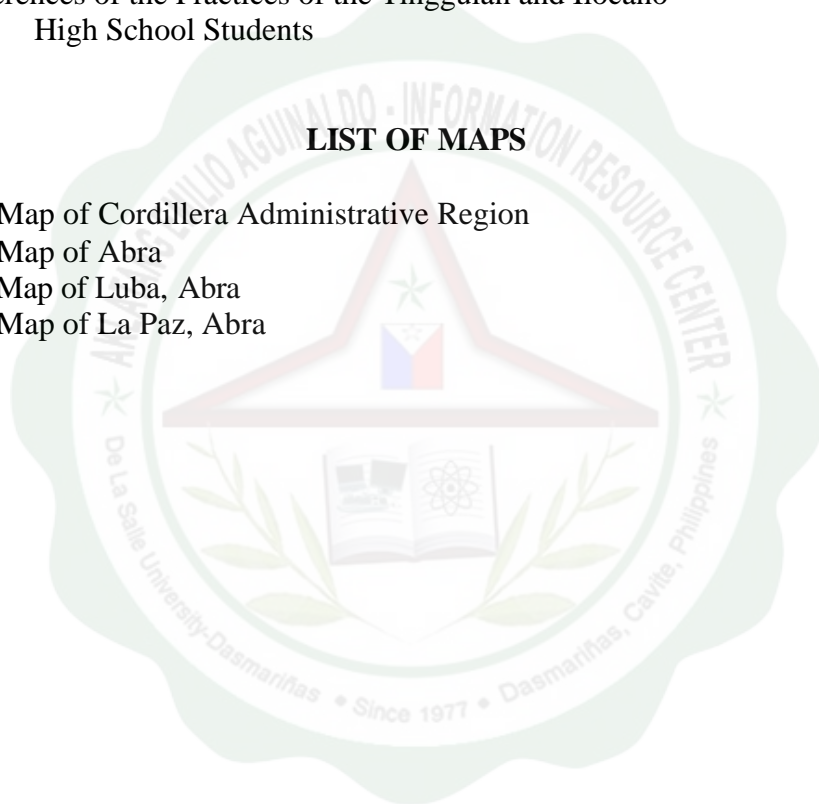
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## ABSTRACT

This is an ethnographic study conducted in Abra, with the Tingguian students (Maeng tribe) of Luba-Tubo Catholic High School and the Ilocano students of Queen of Peace High School, La Paz. It describes the religious beliefs, rituals and practices of the Tingguian and Ilocano high school students.

The main sources of data came from individual interviews, focus group discussions and key informants as well as from the limited participant-observations in the community itself. Other information were gathered from local libraries and from the offices of Northern Cultural Communities of Bangued, Abra, Provincial Planning and Development of Abra, Municipal Planning and Development of Tubo, Indigenous Peoples of Abra, and the Abraeniana Institute and Research Center of Divine Word College of Bangued.

The findings revealed that the cultures of the Tingguians and Ilocanos play an important role in their education and faith. An elaborate blending of the indigenous and Christian beliefs and rituals can be noted in Tingguian and Ilocano practices. These beliefs, rituals and practices that are rooted in the culture of the people are manifested in various symbols, images and local dialects. These have been inherited from their ancestors. These traditional beliefs and practices provide satisfaction of some basic needs of the people like the curing rituals of the Tingguians (*sapo*) and Ilocanos (*sangasang*). However, these ancestral belief systems are slowly fading due to external cultural stimuli. The elders are afraid because these might die a natural death because of the external factors and because the elders who faithfully practice these belief systems are also dying.

The religious beliefs, rituals and practices of the Tingguians and Ilocanos have more similarities than differences. They vary only in the titles, names, materials, and procedures. The rituals differ in details; some elements may be added or omitted. The names are interchanged. However, the essential elements are retained.

The study provides implications for different areas: (1) Religious and Values Education should look into its content and methodology. Faith and culture are two important elements in the education in the faith or Religious and Values Education. The thrust of the Church on inculturation is a joint effort of all sectors particularly the school and the Church. The expression of faith puts balance to symbols and theology, content and method. Culture is an indispensable tool to better understand the Christian message. (2) The Religious and Values educator is challenged to undergo training programs and to keep himself/herself abreast with the trends and issues of the Church especially on inculturation. (3) The curriculum of the Religious and Values Education includes a review of the syllabi, materials, methods and strategies in teaching, and is designed to suit the cultural backgrounds and orientations of the students. (4) Interactions of the Tingguian and Ilocano students with the community especially their participation in cultural performances is an indispensable way of preserving the culture of the people. (5) The school has to intensify parents-teachers relationship so that both can pay attention to the formation or education in the faith of the students. The teachers are the second parents of students (*loco parentis*). (6) The inculturated liturgies of the local Church make the Gospel attuned to the concrete situations of the people leading them to understand more fully the Christian message. (7) The larger society led by the government officials and Church leaders is an important arm for the promotion and preservation of the cultural



heritage of the people by designing programs suited to the concrete situations of the people and providing resources or funding for documentations and researches.

Based on the study, it is conclusive to say that the religious beliefs, rituals and practices of the Tingguian and Ilocano high school students are still intact in spite of the influence of modern living. The perpetuation of this cultural belief system will depend on the practitioners and the younger generation. Culture and faith go hand in hand especially in the education in the faith or Religious and Values Education. The Ilocano high school students are more knowledgeable of and experienced in their culture as revealed in the sharings of the student-respondents. However, the Tingguian rituals are more elaborate and extensive in terms of ceremonial rites. Lastly, the study has posed a strong challenge to those who are responsible for the education in the faith, the local Church for inculturation, and the agencies that take care of the promotion and preservation of cultures.

