

## **Intergenerational Roles in the Yawa-Yawa Festival of Ibajay, Aklan: Perspectives of Baby Boomers and Millennials**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the intergenerational dynamics of the Yawa-Yawa Festival in Ibajay, Aklan, Philippines, exploring how the festival facilitates collaborative heritage preservation and bridges the cultural gap between Baby Boomers and Millennials. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive ethnographic design informed by a phenomenological approach, this study examined the lived experiences of 100 male participants (n=50 Baby Boomers; n=50 Millennials) selected via purposive sampling. Data triangulation was achieved through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, participant observation, and documentary analysis. Textual data were analyzed using thematic analysis, supplemented by descriptive frequency counts of qualitative role codes to map behavioral distribution. The findings reveal a highly cooperative, non-conflictual division of cultural labor. Baby Boomers primarily function as oral historians (accounting for 27.5% of total coded cultural expressions) and guardians of sacred rituals, anchoring the historical authenticity and symbolic communal meanings of the tradition. Conversely, Millennials dominate as aesthetic innovators (14.5%) and digital archivists (9.5%), expanding the festival's external visibility through modern media and structural logistics. The Yawa-Yawa Festival serves as a vital socio-cultural bridge where distinct cohorts engage in reciprocal mentorship. This intergenerational continuity ensures that localized intangible heritage evolves adaptively without compromising its structural and ritual integrity.

### **RESUMO**

Este estudo investiga a dinâmica intergeracional do Festival Yawa-Yawa em Ibajay, Aklan, Filipinas, explorando como o festival facilita a preservação colaborativa do patrimônio cultural e estabelece pontes entre as gerações Baby Boomer e Millennials. Utilizando uma abordagem etnográfica descritiva qualitativa, fundamentada na perspectiva fenomenológica, este estudo examinou as experiências vividas por 100 participantes do sexo masculino (n=50 Baby Boomers; n=50 Millennials) selecionados por amostragem intencional. A triangulação dos dados foi realizada por meio de entrevistas semiestruturadas, grupos focais, observação participante e análise documental. Os dados textuais foram analisados por meio de análise temática, complementada por contagens de frequência descritivas de códigos qualitativos de papéis para mapear a distribuição comportamental. Os resultados revelam uma divisão do trabalho cultural altamente cooperativa e não conflituosa. Os Baby Boomers atuam principalmente como historiadores orais (responsáveis por 27,5% do total de expressões culturais codificadas) e guardiões de rituais sagrados, ancorando a autenticidade histórica e os significados simbólicos e comunitários da tradição. Em contrapartida, os Millennials predominam como inovadores estéticos (14,5%) e arquivistas digitais (9,5%), expandindo a visibilidade externa do festival por meio de mídias modernas e logística estrutural. O Festival Yawa-Yawa serve como uma ponte sociocultural vital, onde diferentes gerações se envolvem em mentoria recíproca. Essa continuidade intergeracional garante que o patrimônio imaterial local evolua de forma adaptativa, sem comprometer sua integridade estrutural e ritual.

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## Introduction

The Yawa-Yawa Festival in Ibaday, Aklan, Philippines, serves as a dynamic, living cultural institution that mirrors the rich intangible heritage of its local community. Celebrated annually on December 28 to coincide with the Feast of the Holy Innocents (Niño's Inocentes), the festival is an intricate combination of spiritual rites, performance art, and joyful communal festivities. During the celebration, male participants don grotesque, hand-crafted Yawa-Yawa (demonic) masks and engage in playful, theatrical street interactions with the community. One of the most striking features of this festival is the traditional act of masked participants "exacting tribute" by asking for money and household goods. Within the local context, this act is deeply symbolic, representing a playful reenactment of historical and biblical narratives rather than transactional commerce or modern panhandling.

While macro-level Philippine festivals such as the MassKara Festival of Bacolod and the Ati-Atihan Festival of Kalibo have been extensively documented in tourism and anthropological literature (Guadalquiver, 2022; Masculino, 2023; Masula, 2023), localized expressions of regional heritage remain significantly under-researched. In particular, there is a critical gap in understanding how small-scale town traditions survive shifting generational landscapes. Cultural heritage preservation is highly vulnerable to globalization, urbanization, and rapid technological shifts, which frequently alienate younger generations from traditional practices (UNESCO, 2003). Community rituals are vital vehicles for promoting social cohesion and historical preservation (Santos, 2014), serving as critical nodes of intergenerational communication that allow older followers to pass down embodied knowledge to the youth. However, the long-term survival of these traditions relies heavily on their capacity to adapt to contemporary sensibilities without compromising structural authenticity (Garcia, 2017).

Globally, cultural events serve as dual mechanisms for heritage preservation and community advancement. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the Kakube Festival acts as a socio-economic vehicle that sparked a modern "cultural reawakening" against the historical erosion of indigenous traditions (Kuuder et al., 2014). Similarly, the Pavvurulun Afi Festival of Tuguegarao City showcases how the indigenous Ibanag culture utilizes patterned ritual dances to foster cultural pride, social cohesion, and a shared vision for the city's future (Bayani, 2023). Beyond community solidarity, festivals frequently trigger broader socio-economic benefits.

The Umbria Jazz Festival demonstrates how cultural staging acts as a catalyst for urban revitalization, bridging a city's public image with a sustainable tourism cycle and a highly accessible local supply chain (Bracalente et al., 2011). Furthermore, historical material practices, such as the 19th-century colonial clothing practices in the Spanish Philippines (Coo, 2014) or traditional handwoven textiles (Guatlo, 2013), illustrate that visual crafts and festival

attire operate as living repositories of cultural history, carrying ancestral narratives that connect contemporary citizens to their pre-colonial identity.

When a festival successfully engages its community, it builds a powerful psychological bond known as place attachment. This emotional connection acts as a bridge that transforms a satisfying festival experience into long-term destination loyalty (Lee et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2021). As identified by Chung (2010), at the Jeju IhoTewoo Festival, this process follows a sequential chain reaction: the baseline quality of an event shapes a visitor's perceived value, which drives emotional satisfaction, and ultimately secures long-term communal support. However, relying on rigid, legacy frameworks to manage this lifecycle is insufficient (Holmes & Ali-Knight, 2017). Modern festivals must navigate highly complex, segmented participant demographics. For instance, local residents hold much higher, balanced expectations regarding performance quality compared to outside tourists (Bakic et al., 2021), while youth demographics exhibit highly nuanced, internal push factors split by gender and personal development goals (Marques et al., 2026; Oladeji, 2016).

This demographic complexity is deeply tied to changing technological behaviors. Generation Z travelers act as a disruptive force, functioning simultaneously as consumers and micro-influencers who dictate regional travel trends through real-time visual content (Pricope Vancia et al., 2023). This younger generation navigates tourism as a single, interconnected digital experience, requiring local institutions to reduce bureaucratic friction and increase organizational agility (Robinson & Schänzel, 2019). Crucially, digital natives accept technology based on its practical usefulness and functional value rather than mere novelty (Vašaničová et al., 2026). For these younger groups, tools like artificial intelligence are practical mechanisms to streamline schedules, customize travel plans, and access historical context, provided the data remains reliable and does not replace authentic human interaction.

On the other hand, the aging Baby Boomer generation presents completely different socio-cultural needs. As baby boomers enter retirement, their social participation is driven by a strong desire for personal agency and meaningful community impact (Valpuesta et al., 2025). Meeting their health, wellness, and social needs through active cultural participation fosters happiness and cultivates a sound mind and a healthy body (Kuehnl et al., 2026). While older adults often require tailored platforms to ease their adoption of digital scheduling tools (Camargo et al., 2026), their primary motivation stems from activities that align with their personal values and treat them as respected cultural contributors.

This intersection between generational values is highly evident in the municipality of Ibijay. The Yawa-Yawa Festival has evolved into a collaborative cultural space between two distinct demographic groups: Baby Boomers, who anchor the festival to its historical roots and

spiritual parameters, and Millennials, who introduce modern digital capabilities, structural logistics, and contemporary aesthetic frameworks. However, a traveler's immediate socio-economic context can create significant structural constraints such as financial insecurity or rigid schedules that dictate how disadvantaged or marginalized groups navigate the tension between internal desires for self-actualization and external realities (Qiao et al., 2024). This risk is highly real for localized traditions; as seen in the Ati-Atihan Festival, heavy commercial evolution can accidentally marginalize the very indigenous groups who inspired the tradition (Masula, 2023). Therefore, keeping a festival alive across generations requires local organizers to look past superficial digital hype and deploy high-value digital touchpoints like interactive archiving or localized translation that respect traditional Boomer values while satisfying the pragmatic expectations of younger participants.

While youth travel has evolved into a sophisticated quest for cultural capital and identity construction (Richards, 2015), and culinary branding has successfully re-engineered town identities like Batac's "Empanada Capital" (Orpia, 2013), literature has yet to examine how small-scale, localized festivals utilize intergenerational cooperation to survive. This study addresses this exact research gap by examining the specific cultural roles, distinct contributions, and collaborative dynamics of Baby Boomers and Millennials within the Yawa-Yawa Festival of Ibajay, Aklan, Philippines.

To ensure a systematic, human-centered interpretation of these lived experiences, this study utilizes a qualitative framework (Creswell & Poth, 2018) paired with the thematic analysis framework outlined by Saldaña (2015). Through a two-stage coding cycle using descriptive, in vivo, and pattern coding, this study transitions from localized data labeling to the derivation of overarching themes. By analyzing these narratives, this paper illustrates how reciprocal engagement between older traditional custodians and younger digital organizers ensures both the historical continuity and contemporary visibility of Ibajay's unique cultural legacy.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study utilizes a qualitative descriptive ethnographic design (Creswell & Poth, 2018) to investigate the cultural and social significance of the Yawa-Yawa Festival. Ethnography is uniquely suited for this inquiry as it allows the researcher to study the shared behaviors, values, and beliefs of an intact cultural group over an active ritual cycle. To capture the internal depth of these experiences, the ethnographic design was structurally informed by a phenomenological orientation, focusing heavily on the participants' first-hand lived experiences.

This study is explicitly qualitative. The primary data consist of text-driven narratives, behavioral observations, and historical records. Simple descriptive statistics (frequency counts and percentages) are utilized purely as a supplementary tool to map the distribution of qualitative codes across the text corpus, rather than indicating a mixed-method design.

### ***The Sources of Data and Protocol of Sampling***

A total of 100 male participants from Ibaday, Aklan, were selected using purposive sampling. The sample was equally divided into two generational group (N=100):

- **Baby Boomers (n=50, Ages 56–74):** Selected based on their deep historical knowledge, lifelong community residency, and extensive firsthand experience with the ancestral customs and ritual components of the festival.
- **Millennials (n=50, Ages 25–40):** Selected based on their active, creative participation in the modern execution of the festival, including contemporary costume adaptation, event organization, and digital media mobilization.

The sample was limited to male participants to reflect the historically gendered nature of the *Yawa-Yawa* street performers within the traditional local custom.

### ***Instrumentation & Protocol in Data Collection***

Data collection followed a rigorous multi-method qualitative protocol to ensure comprehensive data triangulation:

1. **Semi-Structured Interviews:** Conducted individually with the participants to elicit deep, open-ended narratives regarding personal festival histories, perceived generational shifts, and the evolving meanings of festival rituals over time.
2. **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** Four separate FGD sessions (two per group) allowed participants to interact within their peer groups, capturing shared communal values, collective memories, and group-specific critiques of cultural changes.
3. **Participant Observation:** The researcher engaged in direct field observation during the active festival cycle. Extensive field notes were kept to document real-time transmissions of customs, intergenerational behaviors, mask-making techniques, and digital content creation during the festivities.
4. **Documentary Analysis:** Municipal tourism reports, local government cultural scripts, promotional materials, and historic festival programs were reviewed to cross-verify oral testimonies against official institutional accounts.

### ***Data Analysis***

All audio recordings from the interviews and FGDs were transcribed verbatim and subjected to thematic analysis following Saldaña's (2015) coding protocol. First-cycle open coding identified recurrent conceptual blocks, which were grouped into focused cultural roles and contributions during second-cycle coding.

To supplement these qualitative themes, descriptive frequency counts were applied to the categorical codes. Because participants frequently occupied multiple overlapping roles simultaneously during the festival—such as a Baby Boomer acting as both an oral storyteller and a ritual leader—the cumulative frequencies reflect the total thematic occurrences of cultural roles across the text corpus rather than mutually exclusive individual counts.

### ***Ethical Considerations***

Proper ethical protocols were maintained throughout the research process. Formal administrative clearance was secured from local government units (LGUs) and community elders. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to fieldwork, ensuring voluntary participation, complete anonymity, and the right to withdraw without penalty. All data were stored securely to maintain confidentiality, and local vernacular expressions were translated with strict adherence to semantic accuracy and cultural sensitivity.

### **Results and Discussions**

The qualitative data gathered from the 100 participants, revealed a deeply collaborative, symbiotic division of cultural labor. Rather than manifesting as cross-generational point, the intersection of Baby Boomer traditionalism and Millennial modernization creates a resilient mechanism for heritage survival. The comparison of roles, contributions, associations and implications were discovered, identified and valued. The Yawa-Yawa Festival serves as an active space where generational differences resolve into a collaborative preservation effort. Baby Boomers provide the historical framework and ritual boundaries, while Millennials provide the reach, visibility, and modern stylistic updates necessary to keep the festival viable in the 21st century.

The study revealed that the Yawa-Yawa Festival plays a significant role in connecting the generational gap between Baby Boomers and Millennials in Ibajay, Aklan. Both generations dynamically contributed in the festivity, with Baby Boomers contributing their knowledge of the traditional customs and rituals, while Millennials carried modern elements, such as social media integration and contemporary music, to the festival.

*Baby Boomers* were found to play a critical role in preserving the traditional features of the festival, especially the *Yawa-Yawa* costumes and the symbolic act of asking for money, which are deeply tied to the community's cultural heritage. Many Baby Boomers highlighted

the importance of these rituals, not just as a festivity, but as a way to express appreciation and ensure communal unity. These individuals served as cultural carriers, passing on the knowledge of the festival's origins and significance to younger generations.

On the other hand, *Millennials* established a new and imaginative style to the festival, adapting traditional customs to appeal to contemporary sensibilities. For example, Millennials were seen documenting the event on social media platforms, using hashtags, and sharing the festival's happenings with a wider audience. This not only contributed to the festival's growing popularity but also helped it entice younger viewers from adjacent towns and cities. Additionally, Millennials merged modern music and dance styles into the celebrations, creating a blend of old and new that resonated with both age groups.

### The General Distribution of Cultural Roles

"These connections function in practice as Table 1 displays the frequency of cultural roles observed within the sample population during the fieldwork tracking. Specifically, it defines the roles of Baby Boomers as traditional storytellers, whereas Millennials in the modern generation utilize digital spaces as the new frontier for heritage preservation, cultural storytelling, and community identity.

**Table 1: The Distribution of Qualitative Cultural Roles Among Baby Boomers and Millennials**

Table 1 maps the structural distribution of cultural roles identified during the thematic coding of the text corpus.

Observed Festival Roles	Baby Boomers (n=50)	Millennials (n=50)	Total Occurrence	Percentage of Sample Focus
Storytellers	30	25	55	27.5%
Promoters of Cultural Pride	30	10	40	20%
Innovators	5	24	29	14.5%
Promoter in social media	1	18	19	9.5%
Role Models for Younger Generations	10	8	18	9%
Festival Organizers	10	8	18	9%
Leaders in Rituals	10	5	15	7.5%
Mentors for Millennials	4	2	6	3%
Total Role Identifications	100	100	200	100%

The code distribution demonstrates that Baby Boomers predominantly occupy the roles of Traditional Storytellers (f=30) and Promoters of Cultural Pride (f=30). This strongly aligns with ethnographic expectations of elders serving as the primary guardians of oral history. They translate the historical meaning of the Yawa-Yawa festival to younger participants, keeping the

core meanings intact. As multiple elder participants noted during the semi-structured interviews:

Participant 1(Baby Boomer): *"Our main duty is to guarantee that they know why we put on the traditional masks that looks like a demonic with a long tongue. It is not a simple play; it is a profound tradition of discipline to the children that we must pass down."*

Participant 2(Baby Boomer): *"Elders in the community traditionally use the frightening presence of the Yawa (devils) to encourage children to behave. Parents jokingly warn their children that if disobeyed, the masked men would "abduct" them".*

Participant 6 (Baby Boomer): *"In the past decades, participants would playfully "kidnap" a child or "steal" a household item (such as an image of the Child Jesus from a local chapel). They only return the child or object once the family paid a small, symbolic "ransom" of a few coins or snacks."*

Participant 29(Baby Boomer): *"The significance of being a storyteller is keeping the tradition live, valuing the good deeds and proclaiming to all Aklanon and even not Aklanon that there is a value from the festival."*

These narratives highlight that the frightening aesthetics of the Yawa-Yawa are deeply pedagogical. The demonic imagery is intentionally deployed to create a controlled environment for reinforcement of social order, obedience, and community values.

Participant 34 (Baby Boomer): *"The significance of the Yawa-Yawa Festival (celebrated every December 28 on the Feast of the Holy Innocents/ Niños Inocentes) lies in its unique, contradictory nature: it uses dark, grotesque imagery to teach a profound lesson about the preservation of innocence, faith, and communal discipline and as an Elder, I love the festival and will continue practising this".*

Participant 50 (Baby Boomer): *"Keeping the story for the benefits of our future generation helps them know that festival serves as a living reenactment of the mass infanticide ordered by King Herod in Bethlehem. The terrifying black-and-red masks represent Herod's ruthless soldiers, while the community's efforts to shield their belongings and the image of the Santo Niño symbolize the ultimate protection of Christ and childhood innocence".*

Furthermore, the data reveal that the theological underpinnings of the festival remain preserved through this elder-led oral transmission: In contrast, the data shows that the festival core remains insulated but vulnerable: Leaders in Rituals accounts for just 7.5% of overall expressions, with Boomers outnumbering Millennials 2:1. This confirms that complex traditional rituals require deep cultural knowledge accumulated over decades, making this core component highly vulnerable if intergenerational transmission channels fail. Millennials

dominate as Innovators (f=24) and Digital/Social Media Promoters (f=18). This highlights a clear hand-off of cultural responsibilities: the older generation anchors the structural meaning of the event, while the younger generation manages its outward-facing survival by expanding its reach via digital networks.

During the FGDs, Millennial participants articulated their motivations for digitizing this heritage:

Participant 51 (Millennial) : *“For a young male participants like me in the Yawa-Yawa Festival, I love using social media to upload and share my looks on Tiktok. It is not just a digital scrapbook; it serves as a platform for validation, performance, and cultural ownership”.*

Participant 60(Millennial) : *“ I am an influencer! My Yawa-Yawa group is the most active in filming our traditional masks and making some films to share on Instagram Reels and Facebook. We have fun, and at the same time we are learnings”.*

Participant 64 (Millennial): *“That's where our digital skills bridge the gap. We realized that if our elders' knowledge stays only in the barangay, the tradition might eventually face extinction. So, we guide the elders through digital interfaces. I sat down with Nong Edwin and showed him how we stream the plaza events and how Facebook Live works. We even created digital infographics using the history he taught us to explain the biblical significance to tourists online. They give us the authentic cultural soul, and we give them the digital megaphone to project it.”*

Participant 65 (Millennial): *“Today, the fearsome appearance contrasts sharply with the playful nature of the participants. The children runs fast and even adults as we ask something from them. Some gives, some don't, but it's okay because there are enjoyable moments then some would films us how we look like as we parade in the streets.”*

Participant 80 (Millennial): *“ As a teenager and having been born of good parents, I value listening from the Elders about how this tradition pass through generations even in my time and I see the importance like coming from biblical to socio-cultural and now posting it in social media so a lot of people will come to know whats the lesson from this”.*

Participant 61 (Millennial): *“I, as a social media person learn that in earlier decades, a father or mother would playfully collaborate with a masked participant, paying them a small token or snack to "kidnap" a misbehaving child for a few minutes. This immediate, safe exposure to a physical manifestation of their "bad behavior" instilled a temporary, healthy fear that rapidly corrected*

*stubborn attitudes and reinforced parental authority and from this I was inspired to innovate and promote the festival.”*

**The Core Cultural Contributions**

The table shows the roles translate into tangible impacts on the festival’s evolution, the specific contributions of both groups were categorized and tracked during field observations. Ultimately, the demonic mask is worn not to glorify evil, but to vividly manifest a dark historical narrative so that the community can collectively celebrate the preservation of innocence, local artistry, and Ibajaynon identity.

**Table 2.** *The Categorized Cultural Contributions Across Generations*

Key Areas of Contribution	Baby Boomers (n=50)	Millennials (n=50)	Frequency	Percentage
1. Preserving Cultural Heritage and Tradition	30	25	55	27.5%
2. Mentoring the Younger Generation	20	20	40	20%
3. Promoting Cultural Pride	20	17	37	18.5%
4. Festival Organizers and Community Leaders	10	19	29	14.5%
5. Festival Organizers and Community Leaders	10	11	21	10.5%
6. Leading Rituals and Ceremonies	10	8	18	9%
Total Contributions Documented	100	100	200	100%

The tracking data reinforces that Preserving Heritage and Ritual Authenticity remains the most prominent contribution (27.5%). Baby Boomers lead this category by enforcing the original artistic forms of the *Yawa-Yawa* costumes and protecting the symbolic meaning behind the requesting of money, safeguarding it as a traditional practice of community reciprocity rather than viewing it as mere panhandling.

A Millennial participant explained how this understanding altered their behavior:

Participant 83 (Millennial): *"We used to think asking for money or something during the festival was just a fun way to get loose change. The elders explained it is actually a traditional symbol of teaching discipline to the children who are naughty and preserving our tradition. Now, we treat that interaction with respect."*

The internalization of these narrative elements transforms the participant's experience from a simple holiday performance into a profound moral framework:

Participant 77 (Millennial): *"One of my experiences as a child was when the older Yawa-Yawa participants stole a household item from us. My family felt a sense of threat, knowing that if we did not negotiate, our*

*item would not be returned. However, as my family negotiated the return of the stolen item and shielded the Holy Child through a symbolic 'ransom' of food or coins, I internalized a deep lesson: goodness, family, and faith will always protect us from external chaos. This experience shifted my attitude from selfish behavior to a profound appreciation for family safety and community cohesion."*

Significantly, Active Intergenerational Mentorship accounted for a substantial 20.0% of the field tracking, balanced equally between both groups (f=20 each). The qualitative narratives reveal that mentorship within the Yawa-Yawa Festival is not a top-down transmission of authority, but rather a symbiotic cultural exchange. The Baby Boomers act as the custodians of historical authenticity and oral literature, while the Millennials operate as technological facilitators.

Participant 83(Baby Boomers): *"It makes us proud. When we see our mask-making process recorded on a phone and posted online, I don't feel left behind by technology. I feel respected. It shows that our tradition isn't dead; the youth are just using a different kind of mask, a digital one to keep it alive."*

Finally, structural and organizational responsibilities reflect a modern operational shift. Millennials lead in Modern Logistics and Event Staging (f=19), taking charge of contemporary crowd management, digital scheduling, and regional tourism coordination. This logistics management allows the festival to remain economically viable and culturally visible without losing its historical parameters:

Significantly, Mentoring the Younger Generation accounted for a substantial 20.0% of the field tracking, balanced equally between both groups. The qualitative narratives reveal that mentorship is not a top-down transmission of authority, but rather a symbiotic cultural exchange. The Baby Boomers act as the *custodians of historical authenticity and oral literature*, while the Millennials operate as *technological facilitators*. This intersection of ancestral memory and modern digital literacy creates a resilient framework for heritage survival, ensuring the *Yawa-Yawa* tradition remains both structurally authentic and digitally accessible.

Participant 74 (Baby Boomer): *"You know, for us older folks, the Yawa-Yawa is all in the memory and the hands. If you look at the young kids today, they know how to paint, but they don't know the gugma (love) and the deep history behind why the masks have to look grotesque. So, I sit down with Mark and his group. I tell them the stories of King Herod's soldiers that my grandfather told me, and how the gunot (coconut fiber) must be cut to look like traditional wild hair. It's an equal exchange because*

*while my hands are tired, their hands are strong, but they need our memories to guide them."*

This relationship shows that technology does not inherently dilute the tradition. Instead, it serves as an adaptive mechanism that validates the older generation's knowledge while giving the youth a strong sense of cultural ownership:

Participant 64 (Millennial): *"That's where our digital skills bridge the gap. We realized that if our elders' knowledge stays only in the barangay, the tradition might eventually face extinction. So, we guide the elders through digital interfaces. I sat down with Nong Edwin and showed him how we stream the plaza events and how Facebook Live works. We even created digital infographics using the history he taught us to explain the biblical significance to tourists online. They give us the raw, authentic cultural soul, and we give them the digital megaphone to project it."*

Participant 79: *"Our Older Yawa-Yawa leaders are right. It really is a two-way street. When we were preparing last December, the elders gave us the spiritual and historical context of the Niños Inocentes. But on our end, the Millennials handled the structural layout. We helped them coordinate the timeline of the street performance so the boys wouldn't get too exhausted. We also managed the 'ransom' system logistically, formatting the public plaza presentations so the community could see the performance clearly, instead of it just being scattered and chaotic on the highway."*

Participant 55: *"In the past, we just did our street parade. But now, everything is modern. I know the traditional festivals yearly and how to wear the costumes, but I have no idea how to explain that to outsiders or people visiting our town. The youth don't just listen to our oral stories; they help us put our voices in the social media."*

Finally, the organizational responsibilities show a modern shift. Millennials lead in Modern Logistics and Event Management, taking charge of contemporary staging, regional promotions, and securing modern sponsorships, which allows the festival to remain economically stable and culturally visible.

## **Conclusion**

The Yawa-Yawa Festival of Ibajay, Aklan, serves as a resilient, living cultural institution that successfully bridges generational divides between Baby Boomers and Millennials. Rooted in deep spiritual narratives and shared local identity, the festival evolves without losing its core values. This study demonstrates that while Baby Boomers protect the structural and ritual integrity of the festival—safeguarding ancestral narratives, costuming guidelines, and symbolic meanings—Millennials dynamically sustain the tradition by leveraging performative, creative, and digital media spaces.

Despite distinct differences in operational style and expressive medium, both generations share a deep sense of ownership, belonging, and pride regarding the Yawa-Yawa tradition. Their cooperative engagement demonstrates that local intangible heritage remains highly resilient when it is inclusive, adaptive, and community-driven. Ultimately, the Yawa-Yawa Festival is more than an annual historical re-enactment; it serves as an essential space for intergenerational continuity, ensuring that Ibajay's unique cultural legacy is preserved by one generation and revitalized by the next.

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