

UNDERSTANDING The Extant of Tboli Traditional Games: An Ethnographic INQUIRY

Stephen D. Celestial¹, Porferia S. Polaran²

¹College PE Instructor, Davao Del Sur College
scelestial_220000000097@uic.edu.ph

²Faculty, University of the Immaculate Conception, Davao City, Philippines
pporalan@uic.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

This ethnographic study explored the traditional games of the Tboli and their cultural underpinnings. We selected participants based on recommendations from the municipal tribal chieftain, IKSP team leader, and tribal leaders. Data was gathered using interview guides through FGD and IDI. Thematic analysis was done to get the core issues and dominant themes from the participants' responses. Results of the study showed that twenty-four traditional Tboli games were identified. The study identified the essential elements of each game, including preparatory activities, rules and mechanics, and logistics. On the traditional games as manifested in the lifestyle and culture of the Tboli tribe, the themes played traditional games as mirrors of daily life, transmission of cultural knowledge, assertion of tribal identity, games as carriers of values, cultural promotion amidst modernization spiritual and cultural significance, community collaboration in preservation, and alternatives to modern gadgets. On insights gained from the study, emerging themes include preservation of traditional games safeguarding cultural identity, intergenerational knowledge transmission being crucial, active community involvement strengthening cultural preservation, traditional games fostering values such as discipline and leadership, cultural education needing to be adapted to modern contexts, and deep spiritual significance being attached to traditional games.

KEYWORDS: *Education, physical education, traditional games, T'boli, Philippines.*

INTRODUCTION

The loss of traditional games represents a loss of cultural heritage and identity. There is a narrow margin between children who continue to play traditional Filipino games and those who do not (Asuncion, 2019). Further, researching cultural identity, particularly customs and traditions, is a

fundamental source of social empowerment. It provides a vivid image of social relations, cultural values, and symbols of people's quality of being or consciousness. People should not forget what our culture has to offer if they want to live in a culture that is more wealthy (Erol et al., 2011).

Furthermore, Melianasari and Suparno (2018) argue that traditional games should be integrated into the curriculum to preserve culture and encourage good behaviors in children. Playing can also help address childhood obesity, irrational fears, and emotional instability. In India, playing traditional games can be a helpful coping method for children to manage stress, worry, and anxiety (Kacar & Ayaz-Alaya, 2022).

Moreover, Aquino (2025) in Indonesia found that modernization makes reinstating traditional games in children's activities strenuous, while classic games are regarded as old-fashioned and less stimulating. Still, they build life skills better than electronic games. Online game addiction impairs children's socialization, serves as an enjoyment, and may lead to inactive lifestyles.

In Malaysia, according to a study by ChePa et al. (2017), traditional games used to be a choice for leisure activities. Various versions of them have been digitized to compete in the game industry. However, due to their lack, modern contemporary games have overtaken traditional games as leisure activities. This phenomenon may explain the growing need for written accounts of how classic games should be played, which have become more generic in terms of game mechanics, materials, and equipment.

In the Philippines, the 1987 Constitution, Article XIV, Section 14, mandates that the state foster the preservation, enrichment, and dynamic evolution of Filipino national culture based on the principle of unity in diversity in a climate of artistic and intellectual expression (Lazo, 2009). Likewise, the Department of Education (DepEd) implemented the same by advocating *Laro ng Lahi* in physical education curricula (Morales, 2014). This rings true among Filipinos who enjoy playing games as part of their daily lives (Alfarero et al., 2014). Thus, it has become urgent to explore other innovative learning approaches that will facilitate the migration from non-responsive learning models into culturally sensitive physical education teaching.

Republic Act 7356, the law establishing the National Commission of Culture and the Arts, states that every Filipino citizen must preserve and

conserve Filipino historical and cultural heritage and resources. This provision will be vigorously pursued to protect Filipino culture and history.

Exposure to the past can be patriotic, and the researcher noted the need for scholarly literature on traditional games. The legitimacy of community members as guardians of tradition needs to be investigated. The lack of research on documenting and preserving traditional games among the Tboli tribe in Mindanao is a significant concern. According to Cerón et al. (2022), it is crucial to preserve and transmit traditional games to prevent their disappearance.

As the researcher investigates various articles being researched, the researcher comes across various studies published regarding traditional games. These include the Blaan Games of Kiblawan, Franca, and Lumogdang (2022); the Ilokano Traditional Games, Auria and Galeon (2019); the Teduray Games, Gonzales (2018); and the Leyte Traditional Games, Alambra et al., (2014). Therefore, the aarticles, they come across several studies that have been published oneed toaddress to improve how we transmit these games to the next generation. In addition to this, there is a pressing requirementto place greater emphasis on local traditional games. Such an effort is necessary because foreign settings are more likelyto feature traditional games than local ones.

Research Questions

Specifically, the study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the traditional games of the Tboli?
2. How are these games played in terms of preparatory activities, rules and mechanics, and logistics?
3. How do these games manifest the lifestyle and culture of the Tboli?
4. What are the insights gained from the participants?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design. This research employed a qualitative design, utilizing an ethnographic approach, and is framed by a constructivist worldview to explore the importance and relevance of traditional Tboli games in the cultural setting of Lake Sebu, South Cotabato. Ethnography was chosen to document the lived experiences, practices, and symbolic meanings linked to these indigenous games.

Research Participants. The actual FGD participants were chosen through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling was utilized to select participants for in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. These encompass the elders and cultural leaders of the Tboli community. The methods for gathering data comprised comprehensive interviews, group discussions, and field documentation, which included notes, audio recordings, and video materials. The tools facilitated a deep, narrative-driven comprehension of the role traditional games play in cultural transmission, identity reinforcement, and the formation of values.

Data Analysis. This study employed Colaizzi's (1978) method of data analysis. This method allowed for discovering new information and insights into the research responses. It enabled the researcher to identify emerging themes and interwoven relationships. It was also a rigorous and robust data analysis. This process ensured that a qualitative method was used to establish the credibility and trustworthiness of the results. Triangulation was utilized to enhance credibility through the comparison of insights derived from various sources and methods. Throughout the research process, strict adherence to ethical standards, including informed consent and cultural respect, was maintained.

Ethical Considerations. The researcher ensured that all ethical criteria were complied with. This research protocol underwent a thorough review by the University of Immaculate Conception Research Ethics Committee.

RESULTS

Presented are the descriptions, mechanics, and cultural manifestations of the Tboli traditional games and insights gained from the participants.

The Traditional Games of the Tboli

Table 1 shows the various games played by the Tboli. The table below shows the different traditional Tboli games cited by the respondents. A total of 24 games are listed above. We classify these games into the following categories: race games, survival games, individual/dual games, cooperative games, and muscular games.

Table 1
The Traditional Games of the Tboli

Name of the Game	Game Classification
Hanaw	Race games
Hulo be Klifak Lefo	Race games
Skuya Meloy	Race games
Hmanak	Survival game
Sefobnus	Survival game
Skuya Medek	Survival game
Kemitay be Luos	Survival game
Bemuyos	Survival game
Snafang Senlek/Sesafot	Survival game
Kmisong	Survival game
Sekwang	Individual/Dual game
Stanggong	Individual/Dual game
Atom/Pitiw	Cooperative game
Sblid	Cooperative game
Studa Lem	Cooperative game
Sdoyol bi Klifak bli boy	Cooperative game
Slahu lem kumu	Cooperative game
Suseng	Cooperative game
Sasakab Sakatas	Cooperative game
Sebentey be Kules	Cooperative game
Sanggul	Muscular Games
Sekuti	Muscular Games
Sudol	Muscular Games
Seketeng	Muscular Games

There are three Tboli racing games. Racing games are competitions to see who can cover a specific distance in the quickest amount of time. To win these games, the player must possess physical abilities like speed, agility, and endurance. Race games involve quick foot movement, requiring participants to have muscular endurance, flexibility, or elasticity, particularly in their lower extremities, such as the legs. These games also require racetrack games with a starting point and a finish line.

Shown in Table 1 are seven Tboli survival games. These games need a specific skill set associated with hunting, survival, and combat. Players' motions in these games typically depict hunting activities like throwing and striking objects. Children can play these games with or without a target board. In these games, players typically use everyday items like bows and arrows, spears and pointed weapons, and fire starters in their daily lives. These survival games

involve a player's mental attention, refined motor skills, and physical capacity to perform tasks accurately and precisely. The game focuses on abilities rather than change. These skills are also games commonly used to teach young Tboli the talents they need to participate and survive in society.

Additionally, we identify two Tboli games as individual or dual games. One or two participants generally play these games, which frequently emphasize personal skill, strategy, or direct competition between players. They serve for recreation and enjoyment and demonstrate individual capabilities, concentration, and mastery. Commonly played during leisure time, festivals, or friendly contests, their main objective is to entertain while promoting personal discipline and competitiveness. Most games adhere to simple rules, necessitate moderate-to-advanced skills and often highlight precision, timing, and one-on-one engagement rather than large-group collaboration.

Further, eight games are classified as cooperative games played by the Tboli. These games are mostly recreational, and groups can play them. These games are activities done for enjoyment, entertainment, and fun. Furthermore, people typically play these games at leisure and community meetings, and they aim to provide enjoyment and amusement. Most games have basic rules, do not require advanced abilities, and are less physically demanding than others.

Furthermore, there are four games in the physical game category. These are classified according to the type of movements and the abilities required. Physical games are performed with the body and may necessitate physical characteristics such as muscular strength, endurance, or power. To win these games, the player must be physically powerful. Physical games have well-defined rules and restrictions to protect participants from injury and harm. In these Tboli games, players compete against one another or as a team. These sports are mostly male-dominated and require significant physical effort. Physical games require no equipment or tools. Players depend mainly on brute strength.

Mechanics of Various Tboli Games

The mechanics of various Tboli games are presented. It discusses preparatory activities, including the number of players, gender preferences, and preparatory positions. The game mechanics and logistics, including materials and the game area, are also shown in Table 2.

Table 2*Mechanics of Various Tboli Games*

Name of the Game	Preparatory Activities
HANAW	- No definite number of players - Both males and females can play the game. - The playing area is usually an open space free of any obstacles.
HULO BE KLIFAK LEFO	- Both males and females can play the game. - Around a 45 degree angle is allowed. - Before playing, the players must ensure that the playing area or hill is not too steep. A steep hill is dangerous to the participants. - The players also ensure that there are no large rocks or sharp objects at the bottom of the hill.
SKUYA MELOY	- Two players or more, male or female, but not mixed. - A clear starting line and finish line. - No limit on the distance. - The playing area may be an open space free of obstacles or a downhill or uphill slope.
HMANAK	- No definite number of players - Create a ten-meter distance from the starting line and place the bamboo post with a round-shaped fruit target above it.
SEFOBNUS	- There is no definite number of players. - Players usually go from childhood to early adolescence to avoid injury and accidents.
SKUYA MEDEK	- One or more players. - Both males and females can play the game.
KEMITAY BE LUOS	- No definite number of players. - Both males and females can play the game.
BEMUYOS	- Can be played by two or more players. - The playing area is usually an open space free of any obstacles.
SNAFANG SENLEK/ SESAFOT	- There is no definite number of players. - Players are usually adolescents to avoid injury and accidents. - The playing area is usually an open space free of obstacles.
KMISONG	- It is played individually - Can be played by both males and females - There is no definite number of participants in the game. - Each participant must have the necessary materials, such as bamboo and dried coconut husk fibers, as tinder.
ATOM/PITIW	- Two players or more, either male/female or a combination as long, same, or in even numbers. - Dig a hole in the ground at least four inches deep. - Players will decide the total points to hit as their goal during the game to determine the winners, for example, 200 points. They will also choose appropriate points in different scenarios like for example: - A shorter stick will be caught 20 points.

	- A longer stick will be hit or touched by a shorter stick 20 points.
SBLID	- Two players or more, either both male/female or a combination. - A table must be prepared free from obstruction.
SEKWANG	- Two players only, either both male or both female or a combination of both - Dig ten holes in the ground, one hole (store) for player one and one hole (store) for player two, and the eight holes have five stones
STUDA LEM	- Played by either male or female - 10 to 20 players - The playing area is usually an open space free of any obstacles.
STANGGONG	- Two players only, with similar weight for balance and safety, if possible - Flat Ground or Cleared Open Space
SDOYOL BI KLIFAK BLI BOY	- Played by six to ten players. - Players are divided into teams of equal members - Both males and females can play the game. - The playing area is usually an open space free of any obstacles. - A clear starting line and finish line.
SLAHU LEM KUMU	- No definite number of players - Done by pair. It can be both male and female or a combination. - A game for ten-year-old and below. - Two players are chosen as Seekers (“IT”) for each round.
SUSENG	- No definite number of players. - Can be played during a funeral.
SASAKAB SAKATAS	- There is one male and an indefinite number of female players.
SEBENTY BE KULES	- Can be played by both males and females. - There are 5 players in each team. - A rectangular box is drawn on the ground.
SANGGUL/ SEKUTI	- Played by males only. - Two players play against each other.
SUDOL	- Played by males only or females only - Five players for Team A and five for Team B - Create markings on the center line. - The playing area is usually an open space free of any obstacles.
SEKETENG	- Played by males only or females only. - five players for Team A and five for Team B - Create markings on the center line. - The playing area is usually an open space free of any obstacles.

DISCUSSION

The Traditional Games of the Tboli

Games are organized forms of play. It implants the player's spirit of independence, self-esteem, self-trust, and fair play. Games can also serve as a

valuable source of material for understanding cultures. It is a fundamental element of human social existence and behavior. Jabar et al. (2022) said that games are of national heritage. It mirrors human beliefs and practices, such as religiosity and social status. These factors show that games have socio-cultural characteristics. Various studies have explored the relationship between games and culture, as well as their connections to social and scientific life, religiosity, law, art, war, and philosophy. There are at least 24 traditional Tboli games. These games are categorized into race, survival, individual/dual, cooperative, and muscular. Just like the games of other tribes, traditional Tboli games have much to say about their way of life.

Hanaw is an exciting traditional race game that tests balance, coordination, and focus. It is usually played during an occasion, like fiestas in a barangay, when people converge, or during IP Day. Two or more players compete, and the game is very much known for using two pairs of bamboo stilts, just like Kadang-Kadang. *Hulo be klifak lefo* has a name similar to *Hulo*. The players sit on the coconut stem, and on the signal, they slide down the steep hill. *Sebentey be Kules* is like the typical Filipino game of Patintero, usually played on a whole-moon night. Ashes from the burned firewood lay in lines in the rectangular playing area.

Moreover, *Bemoyus* is a bamboo spear game. Traditional Tboli households usually have a "Beyos," or a bamboo spear, which they mainly use for defense. In its practical use, the bamboo spear is also used in hunting. Young Tboli people are introduced to hunting by practicing spear-throwing at banana tree trunks as their target.

Kmisong, or fire by friction, is a traditional Tboli game in which the players compete against each other to make fire by either rubbing two wooden sticks together or using bamboo sticks and coconut husk fiber as fuel. This game has practical applications as well. For example, Tboli hunters make fire by rubbing sticks or bamboo when hunting. The technique is an essential skill for survival and hunting.

Furthermore, *Hmanak* is a traditional Tboli game that is developed from hunting. A typical bow (Kosung) and arrow (Toko Hanak) / archery game is used for hunting wild chickens and wild boars, or "baboy ramo." "It is also used for self-defense in farm areas and households.

Sanggul and *Sekuti* are physical games like arm and finger wrestling.

Sekuti is a game like finger wrestling, using only the middle finger. On the other hand, *Sanggul* is a game like arm wrestling. Both use arm strength and pure brute force. The objective of the game is to avoid being overturned by your opponent. This game is for boys only.

Tboli believes that as a male, he must be strong and masculine, the head of the family. The man's brute strength is also a measure of being a warrior. It was also believed that strong men attracted women. In the old Tboli way of life, it was widespread to see the wife carrying all the products and other things when walking with her husband. The husband usually holds nothing but his *Beyos* (Bangkaw). This setup reflects the man's responsibility to protect his wife from danger or harm; he cannot do so efficiently if he carries much of the load.

Sudol is another physical game of the Tboli. It is described as a game usually done during large gatherings. It is also done in other critical tribal celebrations. This game requires players to be physically, mentally, and spiritually healthy and prepared to engage in this kind of game. It is one of the most physically enduring and challenging games of the Tboli that measures the leg strength and tolerance to the player's pain. It is also one of the Tboli games that involve the tribal leaders and tribal spiritual leaders/healers. *Seketeng*, or pulling the players using an abaca, is also a physical game.

Skuya Meloy is a race in which runners take their position at the starting line, and whoever reaches the finish line first will be the winner. *Skuya Medek* is a lively, hands-on game rooted in everyday life. It turns the art of rice preparation into a fun and competitive challenge. It's often featured during IP Day, community events, and cultural celebrations to showcase local heritage.

Sefobnus is a game that is the Tboli version of "Hide and Seek"/Taguan. This game is usually done during the full moon before bedtime. Another version of *Sefobnus* is *Slahu lem kumu*, where two players are the "IT" or seeker, and they use *malong* as part of their logistics that connects the two players. They had the same rules: other players tapped the big tree trunk or large rock to save them, and whoever the "IT" saw became the next "IT."

In addition to the traditional games, *Atom/Pitiw* is a classic, fun, and energetic game, much like baseball, but with a local twist. *Sblid and Sekwang* are games for an elder and an adolescent, where children can open up about

their problems or concerns. Also, elders may take this moment to speak personally to their grandchildren and give them advice or teachings.

Playing Traditional Tboli Games

Generally, traditional Tboli games follow certain preliminary activities, rules and mechanics, and materials and equipment. Preliminaries identify the number of players and the gender roles, prepare the playing area, or choose the playground. Tboli games can be played individually, in pairs, in groups of three or more, or by as many as 20 players. Two players mostly play running games, as with most physical games. Cooperative games are primarily played in large numbers.

Preliminaries. Traditional Tboli games can be described as games played mainly by men. One reason for this is that most games relate to how the Tboli live in society: hunters and warriors. Men only play physical games. There are games where women can play, but they should follow certain restrictions. There are some games where men may compete with women, but they are usually not allowed to do so.

Rules and Mechanics. Rules are also strictly followed. The rules of traditional Tboli games can be described as straightforward. Winners are determined by being the fastest, the most accurate, precise, or the strongest. Some games are non-competitive and purely for recreation. Other games serve as a training ground for learning lifelong skills.

Logistics. The game tools used in the traditional Tboli games are made from natural materials abundant in the area where they live. Most game tools are made from bamboo, coconut, and wooden materials. However, physical games don't use any game materials. Game tools are modified, improvised, and made from synthetic/non-natural materials such as cellophane and crumpled paper. Tboli's craftsmanship and ingenuity are also shown in some of the game tools used, like the invention of the Kosung (bow) and Toko Hanak (arrow), a device used for hunting.

Traditional Tboli games usually occur in natural settings. Some games are played on the mountainous or hilly slopes, and others are played under large trees and tree branches. Some games are organized in specific areas, like open fields during fiestas. In addition, running tracks are set up where running or race games are held. A target range is also being constructed in games that require a

target area. However, games use the natural environment alone, like hunting birds in the rice field or shooting fish using blow darts on the rivers.

In summary, Tboli games are inexpensive and straightforward. They are also practical, can be played almost everywhere, and can be enjoyed by everyone, regardless of age and gender. The rules are straightforward. The tools used can be found abundantly in nature. No large stadiums or courts will be constructed; games can be played in natural settings.

Manifestations of Culture in the Games of Tboli

Games represent a unique expression of culture, acting as vehicles that convey the distinctive traits of a community's lifestyle. According to Nyota (2008), games serve as a vibrant reservoir of children's cultural heritage, showcasing playful originalities that reflect cultural values. Traditional games preserve and transmit cultural practices while offering valuable resources for researchers and anthropologists to gain insights into specific cultures. This research considers traditional games emblematic of social interaction and cultural identity. Players of traditional games embody the essence of their community's customs, serving as symbols of the values, behaviors, and codes that define their society.

The findings of this study revealed six significant themes: traditional games as mirrors of daily life, transmission of cultural knowledge, assertion of tribal identity, games as carriers of values, cultural promotion amidst modernization, spiritual and cultural significance, and an alternative to modern gadgets. These themes emphasize that traditional games are more than just recreational activities; they embody cultural continuity and collective identity.

Traditional Games as Mirrors of Daily Life. This theme supports the ideas of Ness (1992), who highlighted that traditional games reflect culturally influenced body techniques molded by societal values and norms, rather than simply being a product of natural physical movements. This theme supports the study by Casal (1978), who illustrated how the traditional artistic and bodily expressions of the Tboli are intricately woven into their socio-cultural contexts, mirroring the lived experiences of the community. This theme supports the statement of Aribowo and Hidayah (2019), which indicated that traditional games play a significant role in enhancing children's physical endurance and mental discipline, which are crucial for navigating real-life challenges.

Transmission of Cultural Knowledge. This theme supports the ideas of Nyota (2008), who emphasized that traditional games are effective mediums for transmitting cultural heritage and Indigenous knowledge to younger generations. It also supports the study by Fiagoy (2000), which stressed the importance of adult and community involvement in educating Indigenous youth through culturally rooted practices. This theme supports the statements of Concepción (2006), who advocated for using traditional games and play as tools to enhance cultural awareness, interpersonal relationships, and emotional well-being.

Assertion of Tribal Identity. This theme aligns with the statements made by Erol et al. (2011), emphasizing that cultural activities, including traditional games, are crucial for the establishment and reinforcement of community identity and development. This theme aligns with the findings of Cabalza (2013), who examined the societal frameworks of the Tboli and highlighted the importance of rituals and cultural expressions, such as games, in strengthening identity and unity. This theme aligns with the insights of Franca and Lumogdang (2022), who elaborated on the connection between the Blaán tribe's cultural preservation initiatives and practices that reinforce indigenous identity, including festivals and traditional games.

Games as Carriers of Values. This theme aligns with the perspectives of Huizinga (2014), who posited that play serves as a fundamental aspect of culture, uncovering the values and ideologies inherent in a society through its frameworks and activities. This theme aligns with the findings of Suhra et al. (2020), emphasizing the role of traditional games in enhancing students' character education and moral growth. This theme aligns with the findings of Morales (2015), who examined the impact of culturally relevant content in education, including games, on fostering respect, cooperation, and a sense of local identity.

Cultural Promotion Amidst Modernization: Spiritual and Cultural Significance. This theme resonates with the views of UNESCO (2004), emphasizing the significance of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, including traditional games, to maintain identity and promote cultural continuity in an increasingly modernized society. This theme aligns with the findings of Auria and Galeon (2019), who examined how cultural expressions, such as traditional practices, can evolve within contemporary platforms while maintaining their core identity. This theme aligns with the views of Marasigan and Ferolino (2022), who highlighted the importance of revitalizing traditional

Filipino games to enhance cultural identity, especially among young people impacted by digital progress.

Traditional Games as Alternatives to Modern Gadget Use. This theme aligns with the perspectives of Barboza (2003), who highlighted the importance of maintaining and rejuvenating traditional Filipino games in light of the growing impact of modern technologies on the lives of children. This theme aligns with the findings of Asuncion (2019), who observed a decrease in awareness and participation in traditional games among Generation Z, attributed to the widespread use of digital devices. This theme aligns with the assertions made by Gul (2022), emphasizing the significant role of traditional games in early childhood education. These activities contribute to physical, social, and emotional development, which excessive screen time often overlooks.

In the digital age, traditional games provide significant alternatives to over-reliance on gadgets, delivering engaging, interactive, and physical play experiences. Within the Tboli community, people engage in these games collectively, fostering physical activity, creativity, and social interaction advantages that are frequently absent in digital forms of entertainment. As noted by Melianasari & Suparno (2018), traditional games significantly improve children's interpersonal skills and foster holistic development. In contrast to passive activities on screens, traditional games of the Tboli culture actively involve children in play, which promotes coordination, teamwork, and discipline.

Additionally, research such as that conducted by Emblen-Perry (2018) suggests that engagement through games, grounded in cultural contexts, can foster ongoing interest and enhance learning. Reintroducing and sustaining traditional games within communities allows parents and educators to mitigate the impact of screen dependency, fostering a reconnection with heritage for children while promoting healthier play habits.

Insights Gained from Traditional Tboli Games

The study confirms that preserving traditional Tboli games is essential for safeguarding the tribe's unique socio-cultural identity. These games serve as vibrant, living records of Tboli history, ritual significance, and shared values. By actively maintaining these traditions, the Tboli community ensures that future generations will recognize and continue their distinctive cultural legacy, effectively resisting the homogenizing effects of modern cultural decline.

Intergenerational knowledge transmission is vital to cultural continuity. Traditional games act as educational conduits, allowing elders to pass down essential life skills, ethics, and survival strategies to the youth. This bridging of generations not only imparts practical knowledge but also fosters a deep respect for ancestral wisdom, ensuring that the worldview and ethics defining the Tboli culture are preserved and understood by younger community members.

Cultural preservation relies heavily on active, collective community involvement. The sustained vitality of these games requires the collaborative efforts of families, educators, and tribal leaders. Beyond recreation, these activities are foundational for character development, embedding core values such as discipline, responsibility, teamwork, and leadership. These games create a structured environment where participants learn equity and decision-making, which are crucial for effective community leadership.

To remain relevant in a digital age, cultural education must adapt to contemporary contexts. Incorporating traditional games into modern educational programs, media, and online platforms allows the Tboli to reach younger generations while maintaining authentic representation. By leveraging technological and societal advancements, the community can present these games as engaging alternatives to screen-based entertainment, offering unique physical and social benefits that digital gadgets cannot replicate.

Finally, traditional Tboli games carry profound spiritual significance, deeply intertwined with rituals, agricultural cycles, and reverence for the divine and nature. These games link participants to their ancestors and sacred traditions, making them far more than simple leisure. Despite the decline in engagement, the ongoing advocacy, school-based IP education, and the aspiration for tribal cultural hubs provide a hopeful path forward to ensure these practices remain a vibrant part of the Tboli future.

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