

Kapampangan perceptions on the non-enactment of the bill declaring Pampanga as the Culinary Capital of the Philippines: Cultural identity, heritage recognition, and public discourse

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Abstract

Aim. This study examined the perceptions of Kapampangan residents regarding the non-enactment of the bill declaring Pampanga as the Culinary Capital of the Philippines, focusing on cultural identity, heritage recognition, and constructive public discourse.

Methodology. The study employed a mixed-methods research approach using a sequential explanatory design. In the first phase, quantitative data were collected through a survey administered to 300 Kapampangan residents from selected cities and municipalities in Pampanga using a validated questionnaire. Descriptive statistical tools, including frequency, percentage, and weighted mean, were used to analyze the survey responses. In the second phase, qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with 10 selected participants to further explain and contextualize the quantitative findings. Interview responses were analyzed using thematic analysis.

Results. The findings revealed that respondents generally interpreted the non-enactment of the bill as an issue of symbolic cultural recognition rather than political disagreement. While many respondents expressed mild disappointment, the majority demonstrated respect for legislative processes and emphasized that Kapampangan culinary heritage remains firmly established regardless of formal national designation. Participants also highlighted the importance of community initiatives, culinary education, cultural festivals, and documentation of traditional recipes as meaningful strategies for sustaining Kapampangan culinary heritage.

Conclusion. The study concludes that Kapampangan perceptions reflect strong cultural consciousness, heritage pride, and adaptive civic engagement. Culinary identity was viewed as deeply rooted in lived traditions, community practices, and intergenerational knowledge transmission rather than dependent on legislative recognition. Strengthening local heritage initiatives and collaborative cultural programs may further promote and preserve Kapampangan culinary traditions independent of formal national titles.

Keywords: *Kapampangan culture, culinary heritage, cultural identity, public perception, heritage governance*

INTRODUCTION

Culinary heritage has increasingly been recognized as an essential component of cultural identity and social continuity across societies. Food traditions reflect collective memory, local knowledge systems, and historical experiences that are transmitted across generations. These traditions often serve as cultural markers that connect communities to their past while shaping contemporary cultural expression. In many societies, culinary practices embody values, rituals, and narratives that define community belonging and cultural identity (Jiemuratova, 2025).

At the global level, food traditions have been formally acknowledged as elements of intangible cultural heritage. International cultural organizations recognize culinary practices as part of the broader cultural systems that preserve traditional knowledge and identity (Pugra et al., 2025). The preservation of culinary heritage therefore extends beyond gastronomy and includes the safeguarding of cultural meanings embedded in food preparation, ingredients, and communal dining practices. Such recognition reflects the growing awareness that food traditions constitute an important dimension of cultural sustainability (UNESCO, 2022).

Launched in 2004, the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in the field of Gastronomy highlights cities that utilize gastronomy as a driver of sustainable urban development, innovation and inclusion. Since 2023, Iloilo City, Philippines has been part of the UCCN as a City of Gastronomy. (Iloilo City, 2026)

One way in which UNESCO recognizes gastronomy is by acknowledging that food is “living heritage” through the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity since the 2003 convention. As of 2025, UNESCO has recognized approximately 50 to over 60 food-related traditions, culinary practices, and dietary cultures on the list. These inscriptions, which are growing annually, include specific dishes, preparation techniques, agricultural rituals, and food-related social customs, such as the Mediterranean diet, French gastronomy, and kimchi-making. (*Food and intangible heritage, a flavourful relationship*, 2025)

Documentation of gastronomy and culinary heritage could be done through cultural mapping by the LGU concerned, followed by submission to the Philippine Registry of Heritage maintained by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (Department of Interior and Local Government, 2021).

Culinary heritage also plays a role in strengthening cultural diversity and intercultural understanding. Communities use food traditions to express identity, maintain social cohesion, and celebrate collective history. Through festivals, rituals, and everyday practices, culinary traditions continue to function as vehicles through which cultural knowledge is preserved and transmitted. These practices highlight the significance of cuisine not merely as nourishment but also as a social and cultural institution.

In many countries, culinary heritage has also been linked to tourism development, regional branding, and cultural diplomacy. Governments and cultural organizations increasingly promote regional cuisines as part of national identity and economic development strategies. Culinary tourism initiatives have expanded globally as travelers seek authentic cultural experiences through local food traditions. As a result, culinary heritage has gained attention not only from cultural scholars but also from policymakers and tourism planners.

Within the Philippine context, regional culinary traditions represent localized histories shaped by geography, migration, colonial encounters, and community practices (Gutierrez et al., 2022). Filipino cuisine is characterized by diverse regional identities that reflect the country’s complex historical and cultural landscape. Each region contributes distinctive culinary practices that collectively shape the broader narrative of Philippine gastronomy.

Regional cuisines in the Philippines serve as expressions of cultural identity that reflect the lived experiences of communities. Traditional cooking techniques, locally sourced ingredients, and culinary rituals demonstrate the creative adaptation of communities to their natural and social environments. These food traditions often embody cultural resilience and continuity across generations. As such, culinary heritage forms an integral component of Filipino cultural identity.

Among the regions known for culinary excellence, Pampanga has long been recognized for its distinctive gastronomic traditions. The province has frequently been described as one of the culinary centers of the Philippines because of its rich food culture and historical culinary contributions. Kapampangan cuisine reflects a combination of indigenous culinary knowledge and external influences that have evolved over centuries (Leuterio & Vargas, 2021; Ranieses et al., 2023).

Scholarly and popular works have documented the significance of Kapampangan culinary traditions in shaping Filipino food culture. Historical accounts and culinary literature describe the province as a hub of culinary creativity and technical expertise. Kapampangan cooks have long been associated with mastery in food preparation, innovation in flavor combinations, and the preservation of traditional recipes. These practices have contributed to Pampanga’s reputation as a prominent center of Filipino gastronomy (Fernandez, 2021).

Kapampangan cuisine is also widely recognized for its diversity and richness. Signature dishes such as *sisig*, *bringhe*, and *kalderetang kambing* exemplify the creativity and adaptability of Kapampangan cooking traditions. These dishes have gained national recognition and have become part of the broader culinary identity of the Philippines. Beyond their gastronomic appeal, these dishes represent cultural narratives that reflect local history and community values.

Culinary traditions in Pampanga are deeply embedded in social and cultural practices. Family gatherings, religious celebrations, and community festivals often revolve around the preparation and sharing of traditional dishes. These occasions function as spaces where culinary knowledge is transmitted across generations. In this sense, Kapampangan food culture continues to serve as a living expression of cultural identity and community cohesion.

Given this strong culinary tradition, efforts have emerged to formally recognize Pampanga’s contribution to Philippine gastronomy. Legislative initiatives were introduced to declare the province as the Culinary Capital of the Philippines. Such initiatives aimed to formally acknowledge Pampanga’s historical and cultural contributions to the country’s culinary heritage.

The proposed legislation received support from policymakers and cultural advocates who recognized Pampanga's longstanding culinary reputation. The bill sought to institutionalize recognition of the province's gastronomic heritage and promote culinary tourism initiatives. Supporters viewed the proposal as a way to celebrate Kapampangan culinary identity and enhance national appreciation of regional food traditions.

However, despite passing through legislative processes, the proposed bill was ultimately vetoed by the President of the Philippines. The decision generated public discussion regarding the implications of such recognition for cultural identity and regional representation. The veto introduced a new dimension to the discourse surrounding culinary heritage and cultural recognition.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. vetoed House Bill No. 10634 (in consolidation with Senate Bill No. 2797) in March 2025, which aimed to declare Pampanga as the "Culinary Capital of the Philippines" (Cervantes & Gita-Carlos, 2025). According to Aurelio (2025), President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. vetoed the bill declaring Pampanga as the Culinary Capital of the Philippines due to concerns about potential regional sensitivity and the lack of comprehensive justification for such designation. The veto message emphasized the importance of recognizing the diverse culinary traditions present across the country. It also highlighted the need to avoid potential perceptions of regional bias that might arise from singular national designations.

The decision sparked various public reactions within Pampanga and beyond. While some individuals expressed disappointment regarding the missed opportunity for formal recognition, others viewed the decision as part of broader governance considerations. Public discourse surrounding the issue revealed differing perspectives on the role of legislative recognition in affirming cultural heritage.

The discussion surrounding the veto also highlighted the symbolic dimension of cultural recognition. For many communities, formal recognition through legislation or national designation carries symbolic value that reinforces cultural pride and identity. At the same time, cultural traditions often persist and flourish independent of formal government acknowledgment.

In academic literature, culinary heritage has often been studied in relation to tourism development, economic sustainability, and regional branding. Researchers have examined how culinary traditions contribute to destination attractiveness and cultural promotion. Such studies emphasize the economic and marketing potential of regional cuisines in tourism contexts (Richards, 2023).

While these studies provide valuable insights into the economic dimensions of culinary heritage, they often focus less on the perspectives of the communities that sustain these traditions. Community perceptions represent an important dimension of heritage studies because they reveal how individuals interpret cultural recognition, identity, and heritage preservation.

Scholars have argued that cultural heritage is ultimately sustained by communities rather than institutions alone. Heritage practices remain meaningful when they are actively maintained by people who identify with them. Community perspectives therefore provide important insights into how heritage is valued, negotiated, and preserved in everyday life.

Despite the growing literature on culinary heritage in the Philippines, empirical studies examining community perceptions regarding cultural recognition policies remain limited. Most research has concentrated on the economic and tourism-related aspects of culinary traditions. Less attention has been given to how communities interpret policy decisions that affect cultural recognition.

This research gap is particularly evident in the context of Kapampangan culinary heritage. Although Pampanga has received considerable attention for its food traditions, few studies have explored how local communities respond when initiatives aimed at recognizing their culinary identity do not materialize through formal policy.

Understanding community perceptions is essential because cultural identity is shaped not only by external recognition but also by internal cultural consciousness. Communities may interpret policy outcomes in ways that reflect their values, experiences, and sense of belonging. Investigating these perceptions therefore provides deeper insights into how cultural identity is negotiated within society.

Furthermore, examining public perceptions of cultural recognition contributes to broader discussions on heritage governance. Heritage governance refers to the processes through which cultural heritage is managed, interpreted, and recognized by institutions and communities. Community feedback plays a critical role in informing policies that aim to preserve cultural heritage.

In the context of Kapampangan culinary heritage, investigating community perceptions offers an opportunity to understand how local residents interpret the symbolic and cultural implications of legislative decisions. Such perspectives may reveal how cultural pride, identity, and heritage consciousness are maintained beyond formal recognition.

Thus, the present study was conducted to examine the perceptions of Kapampangan residents regarding the non-enactment of the bill declaring Pampanga as the Culinary Capital of the Philippines. The study focused on how residents interpreted the issue in relation to cultural identity, heritage recognition, and constructive public discourse. By documenting Kapampangan perspectives, the research aimed to contribute to scholarly discussions on culinary heritage, cultural identity, and community engagement in cultural policy discourse. The findings may provide insights for policymakers, cultural organizations, and scholars interested in understanding how communities sustain cultural heritage independent of formal legislative recognition.

Theoretical Framework

The present study was anchored on Cultural Identity Theory, which explains how individuals and communities construct and express identity through shared meanings, symbols, traditions, and social practices. Cultural identity is not a static attribute but a dynamic process shaped by historical experiences, social interactions, and collective memory. According to Hall (2021), cultural identity emerges through the continuous negotiation of meanings within communities, where shared traditions and cultural symbols serve as important markers of belonging.

Within this perspective, culinary traditions function as powerful cultural symbols that reinforce collective identity and historical continuity. Food practices represent more than gastronomic preferences; they embody cultural knowledge, values, and community narratives that are transmitted across generations. Through the preparation, sharing, and celebration of traditional dishes, communities affirm their cultural identity and maintain connections with their heritage.

Cultural Identity Theory also suggests that identity is constructed not only through internal cultural practices but also through interactions with external recognition and representation. Public discourse, policy decisions, and cultural recognition initiatives may influence how communities perceive and articulate their identity. However, cultural identity ultimately remains grounded in community practices and shared meanings rather than external validation alone.

In the context of Kapampangan culinary heritage, food traditions represent an important cultural symbol that reflects the province's historical experiences, creativity, and collective identity. The proposed legislative recognition of Pampanga as the Culinary Capital of the Philippines therefore carried symbolic implications related to cultural affirmation and regional pride.

The non-enactment of the bill created a situation in which community members interpreted a policy outcome that potentially affected symbolic cultural recognition. Cultural Identity Theory provides an appropriate framework for examining how Kapampangan residents interpreted this event and how they articulated their cultural identity in response to the absence of formal legislative recognition.

Guided by this theoretical perspective, the study examined Kapampangan perceptions as expressions of cultural consciousness and identity rather than as political opposition. The framework helped explain how respondents balanced cultural pride with respect for institutional processes while maintaining confidence in their culinary heritage. Through the lens of Cultural Identity Theory, the findings of the study were interpreted in relation to the ways communities sustain cultural identity through lived traditions, shared practices, and collective memory. This theoretical foundation therefore provided a basis for understanding how Kapampangan residents perceived the non-enactment of the bill while continuing to affirm their culinary heritage and cultural identity.

Statement of the Problem

Despite Pampanga's long-standing reputation as a center of culinary heritage in the Philippines, the non-enactment of the bill declaring the province as the Culinary Capital of the Philippines generated discussions concerning cultural recognition, heritage identity, and regional representation. While legislative decisions are often shaped by broader national considerations and policy frameworks, the reactions and interpretations of local communities toward such decisions remain an important but underexplored area of inquiry. In particular, little empirical research has documented how Kapampangan residents interpret the symbolic implications of the non-enactment in relation to cultural identity, heritage validation, and community pride.

The absence of systematic documentation of Kapampangan perceptions limits scholarly understanding of how cultural communities respond when initiatives intended to affirm regional heritage do not materialize through formal legislation. Community perspectives provide valuable insights into how cultural identity is negotiated, sustained, and expressed beyond institutional recognition. Examining these perspectives is therefore important in understanding the relationship between cultural heritage, public discourse, and governance decisions.

In this context, there is a need to investigate how Kapampangan residents perceive and interpret the non-enactment of the culinary capital bill and what meanings they attach to this development in terms of cultural recognition

and heritage promotion. Addressing this gap contributes to broader discussions on heritage governance, cultural identity, and community engagement in cultural policy discourse. Thus, the present study was conducted to systematically examine Kapampangan perceptions regarding the non-enactment of the bill declaring Pampanga as the Culinary Capital of the Philippines.

General Objective

To examine the perceptions of Kapampangan residents regarding the non-enactment of the bill declaring Pampanga as the Culinary Capital of the Philippines.

Specific Objectives

1. To determine the general perceptions of Kapampangan residents regarding the non-enactment of the culinary capital bill.
2. To examine how Kapampangan respondents interpret the non-enactment of the bill in relation to cultural identity and culinary heritage.
3. To explore the insights and explanations of selected participants regarding the cultural meanings and implications of the non-enactment.
4. To identify constructive feedback and recommendations expressed by respondents regarding the promotion and preservation of Kapampangan culinary heritage.

Research Questions

1. What are the general perceptions of Kapampangan residents regarding the non-enactment of the bill declaring Pampanga as the Culinary Capital of the Philippines?
2. How do Kapampangan residents relate the non-enactment of the bill to issues of cultural identity and culinary heritage?
3. How do selected participants explain and interpret the cultural meanings associated with the non-enactment of the culinary capital bill?
4. What constructive insights and recommendations do Kapampangan residents express regarding the promotion and preservation of Kapampangan culinary heritage?

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods research approach using a sequential explanatory design. Mixed-methods research integrates both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of a research problem. In a sequential explanatory design, quantitative data collection and analysis are conducted first, followed by qualitative data collection to explain and elaborate on the quantitative results.

In the present study, the quantitative phase involved the administration of a survey questionnaire to Kapampangan residents in order to determine their general perceptions regarding the non-enactment of the bill declaring Pampanga as the Culinary Capital of the Philippines. The quantitative findings provided an overall picture of community perceptions and trends.

The qualitative phase followed the quantitative analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected participants to obtain deeper explanations of the meanings and interpretations associated with the survey responses. This approach allowed the researcher to explore participants' insights regarding cultural identity, heritage recognition, and public discourse related to the issue.

The sequential explanatory design was considered appropriate for this study because it enabled the researchers to first measure the general perceptions of the respondents and then further explain the underlying cultural meanings behind these perceptions. The integration of quantitative and qualitative data therefore provided a more comprehensive understanding of Kapampangan perspectives on the issue.

Population and Sampling

The study focused on Kapampangan residents from selected cities and municipalities in Pampanga, Philippines. The target population consisted of adult residents who were familiar with Kapampangan culinary traditions and were aware of the public discussions surrounding the proposed bill declaring Pampanga as the Culinary Capital of the Philippines.

For the quantitative phase, a total of 300 respondents participated in the survey. The respondents were selected using stratified random sampling in order to ensure representation across selected demographic categories such as age group, gender, and locality. Stratification allowed the researchers to obtain a more balanced representation of Kapampangan residents from different sectors of the community.

For the qualitative phase, 10 participants were selected from among the survey respondents through purposive sampling. These participants were chosen based on their willingness to participate in follow-up interviews and their ability to provide deeper insights into the survey findings. The qualitative participants represented diverse demographic backgrounds to capture varied perspectives regarding the issue under investigation.

Research Instruments

The primary instrument used in the quantitative phase of the study was a researcher-made questionnaire designed to measure the perceptions of Kapampangan residents regarding the non-enactment of the culinary capital bill.

The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section gathered demographic information such as age, gender, and locality. The second section contained perception statements measured using a five-point Likert scale, where responses ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The instrument was subjected to content validation by three experts in the fields of cultural studies and research methodology. The validators reviewed the questionnaire in terms of clarity, relevance, and alignment with the objectives of the study. Their comments and recommendations were incorporated into the final version of the instrument.

To determine the reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was conducted with respondents who were not part of the actual study participants. The reliability test yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.89, indicating a high level of internal consistency for the perception scale.

For the qualitative phase, a semi-structured interview guide was developed to explore participants' explanations and interpretations of the survey findings. The interview questions focused on cultural identity, heritage recognition, and perceptions of the non-enactment of the bill.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted between August and September 2025.

For the quantitative phase, the survey questionnaires were distributed to the respondents through both in-person and online formats. In-person surveys were administered in selected communities in Pampanga, while online surveys were distributed through digital platforms to reach additional respondents. Respondents were provided with instructions on how to complete the questionnaire, and completed responses were collected and organized for analysis.

After the quantitative data were analyzed, the qualitative phase of the study was conducted. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 10 selected participants who agreed to provide further insights regarding the survey results. The interviews were conducted in either Kapampangan or Filipino, depending on the participants' preference. The interview sessions were recorded with the participants' consent and were later transcribed and translated into English for analysis.

Treatment of Data

The quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed using appropriate analytical procedures.

For the quantitative phase, descriptive statistical techniques were used to summarize the responses of the survey participants. These included frequency distribution, percentage, and weighted mean. These statistical tools were used to determine the overall perceptions of Kapampangan residents regarding the non-enactment of the bill.

Table 1. Likert Scale Interpretation

Scale	Range	Interpretation
5	4.21–5.00	Strongly Agree
4	3.41–4.20	Agree
3	2.61–3.40	Neutral
2	1.81–2.60	Disagree
1	1.00–1.80	Strongly Disagree

For the qualitative phase, interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis involved several stages, including familiarization with the data, identification of recurring ideas, coding of significant statements, and grouping of codes into broader themes. These themes were interpreted in relation to cultural identity, heritage recognition, and public discourse.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings occurred during the interpretation stage. The qualitative insights were used to explain and elaborate on the patterns observed in the quantitative survey results. This integration allowed the researchers to develop a deeper understanding of Kapampangan perceptions regarding the issue.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were strictly observed throughout the conduct of the study. Ethical clearance was obtained from an appropriate institutional review committee prior to data collection.

All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and were asked to provide informed consent before participating. Participation in the study was voluntary, and respondents were free to withdraw from the research at any time without penalty.

The anonymity and confidentiality of the participants were maintained throughout the research process. Personal identifiers were not included in the data analysis or reporting of findings. All collected data were stored securely and were used solely for academic research purposes.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Table 2. Perceptions of Kapampangan Residents on the Non-Enactment of the Culinary Capital Bill (n = 300)

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
The non-enactment of the bill is disappointing for Kapampangan residents	3.65	Agree
The decision does not diminish the value of Kapampangan cuisine	3.58	Agree
The legislative decision is understandable given national considerations	3.04	Neutral
Composite Mean	3.42	Agree

Weighted Mean: 3.42

Verbal Interpretation: Agree

Table 2 presents the perceptions of Kapampangan residents regarding the non-enactment of the bill declaring Pampanga as the Culinary Capital of the Philippines. The indicators were measured using a five-point Likert scale, and the results were summarized using weighted mean values and their corresponding verbal interpretations.

The first indicator, stating that the non-enactment of the bill is disappointing for Kapampangan residents, obtained a weighted mean of 3.65, interpreted as Agree. This result indicates that many respondents felt a sense of disappointment regarding the legislative outcome. The response suggests that the proposed designation carried symbolic value for the Kapampangan community, as it would have formally recognized the province's long-standing culinary reputation. However, the level of agreement also indicates that the disappointment expressed by respondents remained moderate rather than strongly negative.

The second indicator, which states that the decision does not diminish the value of Kapampangan cuisine, obtained a weighted mean of 3.58, also interpreted as Agree. This finding indicates that respondents generally believed that the cultural value and significance of Kapampangan culinary traditions remain intact despite the non-enactment of the bill. Participants recognized that Kapampangan cuisine has long been celebrated in the Philippines through its distinctive dishes, culinary techniques, and cultural practices. Thus, the absence of formal legislative recognition was not perceived as a threat to the cultural legitimacy of Kapampangan food heritage.

In contrast, the third indicator, which states that the legislative decision is understandable given national considerations, obtained a weighted mean of 3.04, interpreted as Neutral. This result suggests that respondents were somewhat divided in their views regarding the policy rationale behind the legislative decision. While some participants acknowledged that national policymakers must consider broader regional sensitivities and governance factors, others may have remained uncertain about the specific reasons behind the non-enactment.

The presence of a neutral interpretation for this indicator reflects the complexity of public perception regarding policy decisions that involve cultural recognition. Respondents may recognize the importance of national policy considerations while still maintaining personal sentiments related to cultural pride and regional identity. Such balanced perspectives illustrate the nuanced ways in which communities interpret governance decisions.

The composite mean of 3.42, interpreted as Agree, indicates that the overall perception of respondents leaned toward agreement with the statements describing reflective acceptance of the legislative outcome. This finding suggests that Kapampangan residents generally acknowledged the symbolic importance of the proposed bill while maintaining confidence in the enduring value of their culinary traditions.

These findings highlight the ability of Kapampangan residents to balance emotional attachment to cultural recognition with respect for institutional processes. The moderate level of agreement across the indicators suggests that respondents interpreted the issue as a matter of symbolic cultural acknowledgment rather than as a source of political conflict.

The results support the argument that public responses to policy decisions are often shaped by cultural interpretations and civic awareness rather than purely political reactions. According to Hajer (2022), public discourse frequently integrates expressions of cultural identity with trust in governance institutions. The responses of Kapampangan residents reflect this dynamic by combining cultural pride with measured acceptance of legislative outcomes.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Kapampangan perceptions regarding the non-enactment of the bill reflect a combination of cultural pride, civic maturity, and institutional respect. While the proposed designation was valued as a symbolic affirmation of regional identity, respondents remained confident that Kapampangan culinary heritage continues to thrive through community practices, family traditions, and cultural celebrations.

Table 3. Perceptions on Cultural Identity and Culinary Heritage (n = 300)

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Kapampangan culinary identity remains strong despite the non-enactment	4.32	Strongly Agree
Kapampangan cuisine is sustained through family and community traditions	4.27	Strongly Agree
Formal legislative recognition is not necessary for cultural pride	4.19	Agree
Culinary traditions are preserved through everyday practices	4.06	Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	4.21	Strong Agreement

Table 3 presents respondents' perceptions regarding the relationship between the non-enactment of the bill and Kapampangan cultural identity. The overall weighted mean of 4.21 indicated strong agreement among participants that Kapampangan culinary identity remained intact regardless of formal national designation.

The highest-rated indicator emphasized that Kapampangan culinary identity remained strong despite the legislative outcome. Respondents consistently expressed confidence that their culinary traditions were deeply embedded in community practices. This finding suggested that cultural identity was perceived as resilient and independent of institutional recognition.

Participants also strongly agreed that Kapampangan cuisine was sustained through family traditions and community practices. Many respondents described cooking as a cultural activity that occurs regularly in households and social gatherings. These practices ensured the continuous transmission of culinary knowledge across generations.

The responses highlighted the role of family traditions in preserving culinary heritage. Traditional recipes and cooking methods were often passed down through informal learning processes within households. This intergenerational transmission reinforced the cultural continuity of Kapampangan food practices.

Community celebrations were also identified as important spaces for culinary transmission. Respondents mentioned fiestas, family reunions, and communal gatherings as occasions where traditional dishes were prepared and shared. These events reinforced collective identity through shared cultural practices.

The findings supported the concept that culinary heritage functions as an important form of intangible cultural heritage. Food traditions embody cultural knowledge, values, and social relationships that connect communities to their historical roots (UNESCO, 2022).

Respondents further emphasized that formal recognition through legislation was not the sole determinant of cultural pride. While the proposed bill was valued as symbolic acknowledgment, respondents believed that Kapampangan cuisine already possessed strong cultural legitimacy.

This perspective reflected the broader understanding that heritage practices are sustained primarily through community participation. As noted by Smith (2023), cultural heritage remains resilient when communities actively engage in preserving and practicing their traditions.

Another important insight from the survey responses was the perception that Kapampangan cuisine continues to evolve while maintaining its cultural foundations. Respondents recognized that innovation in cooking techniques and presentation contributes to the vitality of culinary traditions.

This dynamic understanding of heritage aligns with Cultural Identity Theory, which suggests that cultural identity is constructed through ongoing participation in shared practices and meanings (Hall, 2021). In the case of Kapampangan communities, culinary traditions served as a central symbol of regional identity.

Overall, the findings demonstrated that Kapampangan residents viewed their culinary heritage as deeply entrenched in everyday life. The resilience of Kapampangan cuisine was therefore attributed to community participation, cultural memory, and intergenerational knowledge transmission rather than legislative recognition.

What constructive insights and recommendations do Kapampangan residents express regarding the promotion and preservation of Kapampangan culinary heritage?

The qualitative phase of the study provided deeper insights into the perspectives of Kapampangan residents regarding the promotion and preservation of their culinary heritage. Semi-structured interviews with ten selected participants generated several recurring themes that explained the survey findings. The themes were derived through thematic analysis of the interview transcripts and reflected community-driven approaches to sustaining Kapampangan culinary identity. The major themes that emerged were: strengthening community culinary festivals, culinary education and cultural transmission, documentation of traditional recipes, collaboration among cultural institutions, and digital promotion of culinary heritage.

Theme 1 Strengthening Community Culinary Festivals

Selected Interview Transcripts

P2 stated:

"Mas masarap ipakita ang Kapampangan food sa mga festival kaysa sa titulo lang. Kapag may festival, nakikita at natitikman talaga ng mga tao ang kultura namin."

("It is better to showcase Kapampangan food through festivals rather than just through titles. During festivals, people actually see and taste our culture.")

P7 explained:

"Kapag may food festival, hindi lang pagkain ang ipinapakita. Kasama na rin ang history, ang paraan ng pagluluto, at ang kwento ng bawat putahe."

("When there is a food festival, it is not only the food that is showcased. It also includes the history, the cooking methods, and the story behind each dish.")

The responses of participants highlighted the importance of community culinary festivals as effective platforms for celebrating and promoting Kapampangan cuisine. Participants consistently emphasized that festivals allow culinary traditions to be experienced directly by the public rather than simply acknowledged through symbolic recognition. The emphasis on experiential engagement suggested that respondents valued active cultural participation more than formal institutional designation.

Community festivals were described by respondents as spaces where cultural identity becomes visible through food preparation, presentation, and storytelling. Participants explained that culinary festivals provide opportunities for residents to demonstrate traditional cooking methods and share the historical narratives associated with Kapampangan dishes. Such events therefore function as cultural performances that reinforce collective identity. Some of the festivals are Fiestang Tugak in San Fernando, Pampanga, Kamaroo Festival in Magalang, Pampanga, and even the October Twin Festival in Angeles City, Pampanga where visitors also experienced the promotion of famous *sisig* (Carbungco, 2025).

These perspectives reflect broader scholarly understandings of culinary heritage as a lived cultural practice. Food traditions are sustained not merely through documentation but through shared experiences that involve

preparation, consumption, and cultural storytelling (Bessière, 2021). Culinary festivals therefore serve as dynamic spaces where heritage is continuously reproduced and communicated within communities.

Participants also emphasized that festivals encourage community participation across generations. Younger residents often become involved in festival preparations, allowing them to learn traditional recipes and cooking techniques from older community members. This intergenerational interaction strengthens the transmission of culinary knowledge.

The significance of festivals as sites of cultural transmission is consistent with international perspectives on intangible cultural heritage. According to UNESCO (2022), community events and cultural celebrations play a crucial role in maintaining traditional knowledge systems and strengthening cultural continuity.

Another insight emerging from the interviews was the role of festivals in promoting cultural tourism. Participants noted that visitors who attend food festivals gain a deeper appreciation of Kapampangan cuisine and cultural traditions. Such interactions expand the cultural visibility of local communities while fostering pride among residents.

Ultimately, the responses suggested that culinary festivals represent a practical and community-driven approach to heritage promotion. Rather than relying solely on formal recognition through policy or legislation, Kapampangan residents viewed festivals as meaningful avenues for sustaining culinary traditions through participation, celebration, and cultural exchange.

Theme 2

Culinary Education and Cultural Transmission

Selected Interview Transcripts

P3 shared:

"Kung gusto talaga natin mapanatili ang Kapampangan cuisine, kailangan ituro ito sa mga kabataan. Hindi sapat na alam lang nila ang pangalan ng pagkain."

("If we truly want to preserve Kapampangan cuisine, it must be taught to the younger generation. It is not enough for them to simply know the names of the dishes.")

P6 noted:

"Mas maganda kung may workshops o cooking classes sa community. Doon matututo ang mga bata kung paano lutuin ang traditional dishes."

("It would be better if there were workshops or cooking classes in the community. Through these, young people can learn how to cook traditional dishes.")

Participants frequently emphasized the importance of culinary education as a long-term strategy for preserving Kapampangan culinary heritage. Respondents believed that younger generations must be actively involved in learning traditional cooking practices to ensure the continuity of local food traditions.

Many participants expressed concern that modernization and changing lifestyles may reduce opportunities for younger individuals to learn traditional cooking methods within household settings. As a result, they proposed educational initiatives such as community cooking workshops and cultural heritage programs.

The idea of culinary education as a form of cultural transmission reflects broader perspectives in heritage studies. Culinary traditions are often sustained through informal learning processes in which knowledge is transferred through observation, participation, and mentorship within families and communities (Fernandez, 2021).

Participants also suggested that schools and community organizations could play a role in promoting awareness of local culinary traditions. Educational programs that highlight regional food heritage could strengthen cultural identity among students and encourage appreciation of traditional practices. This integration may focus on home economics tracks focusing in cookery, hospitality management, and other related disciplines.

The role of education in preserving cultural heritage is widely recognized in heritage scholarship. Cultural knowledge is often transmitted through structured learning environments that complement informal family-based learning (UNESCO, 2022). Such initiatives contribute to sustaining cultural traditions in rapidly changing social environments.

Another important aspect raised by participants was the value of experiential learning. Rather than relying solely on theoretical instruction, respondents emphasized the importance of hands-on cooking experiences that allow students to practice traditional techniques.

Ultimately, the emphasis on culinary education demonstrated that Kapampangan residents viewed cultural preservation as a shared responsibility involving families, schools, and communities. Through educational initiatives, communities may strengthen cultural awareness and ensure the continued relevance of Kapampangan culinary heritage.

Theme 3 Documentation of Traditional Recipes

Selected Interview Transcripts

P1 stated:

"May mga lutuin na unti-unti nang nawawala dahil wala nang nakakaalala ng tamang recipe."

("Some traditional dishes are gradually disappearing because no one remembers the correct recipes anymore.")

P8 added:

"Kung maitatala ang mga recipes at kwento ng bawat pagkain, mas mapapangalagaan ang Kapampangan cuisine."

("If the recipes and stories behind each dish are properly documented, Kapampangan cuisine can be better preserved.")

Participants emphasized the need to document traditional Kapampangan recipes and culinary knowledge. Respondents expressed concern that some traditional dishes may gradually disappear as older generations pass away and younger generations adopt new food practices.

Documentation initiatives were therefore seen as important strategies for preserving culinary heritage. Participants suggested the development of community cookbooks, digital archives, and culinary heritage databases that record recipes, cooking techniques, and historical narratives associated with traditional dishes.

Such initiatives align with scholarly perspectives that emphasize the importance of documentation in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Cultural documentation provides a means of preserving traditional knowledge for future generations (UNESCO, 2022).

Participants also emphasized that documentation should include not only recipes but also the cultural stories associated with each dish. Culinary narratives often reflect historical events, family traditions, and local cultural practices that enrich the meaning of food traditions.

The inclusion of narratives in culinary documentation reflects the broader understanding that food traditions function as cultural texts. Culinary practices encode historical experiences and collective memories that contribute to community identity (Bessière, 2021). This community identity is emphasized in the various places in the Kapampangan region.

Another advantage of documentation identified by participants was the possibility of sharing Kapampangan culinary traditions with wider audiences. Written and digital records make it possible for individuals outside the community to learn about local cuisine and appreciate its cultural significance.

Overall, the emphasis on documentation demonstrated that Kapampangan residents recognized the importance of preserving culinary knowledge through systematic recording and archiving.

Theme 4 Collaboration Among Cultural Institutions

Selected Interview Transcripts

P4 explained:

"Kung magsasama ang LGU, schools, at cultural groups, mas magiging malakas ang promotion ng Kapampangan cuisine."

("If local government units, schools, and cultural groups work together, the promotion of Kapampangan cuisine will become stronger.")

P9 noted:

"Kailangan ng partnership ng researchers at communities para mas maayos na maitala ang ating food heritage."

("There must be a partnership between researchers and communities so that our food heritage can be properly documented.")

Participants emphasized the importance of collaboration among cultural institutions in promoting Kapampangan culinary heritage. Respondents believed that partnerships between local government units, academic institutions, and cultural organizations could strengthen research and heritage preservation initiatives.

Collaborative efforts were viewed as necessary because culinary heritage involves multiple dimensions, including cultural history, community practices, and tourism development. Addressing these aspects requires coordinated action among different sectors.

Academic institutions were identified as important partners in documenting and studying culinary traditions. Universities and research organizations may contribute through research projects, cultural documentation initiatives, and educational programs related to food heritage.

Such collaboration reflects broader approaches in heritage governance that emphasizes the role of multiple stakeholders in preserving cultural heritage (Smith, 2023). Heritage preservation is most effective when communities, institutions, and policymakers work together for promoting this advocacy.

Participants also highlighted the role of local governments in supporting culinary initiatives through funding, infrastructure, and promotional activities. Local governments often serve as facilitators of cultural programs that strengthen community identity.

Another advantage of collaboration identified by participants was the opportunity to integrate research with community knowledge. Researchers may document culinary traditions while community members provide practical knowledge and lived experiences.

Ultimately, collaborative partnerships were viewed as essential for sustaining Kapampangan culinary heritage in a rapidly changing cultural landscape.

Theme 5 Digital Promotion of Culinary Heritage

Selected Interview Transcripts

P5 said:

"Sa social media, mas maraming nakakakita ng Kapampangan food. Kahit nasa ibang bansa, puwedeng malaman ng mga tao ang ating cuisine."

("Through social media, more people are able to see Kapampangan food. Even those in other countries can learn about our cuisine.")

P10 added:

"Kung may online archive o website tungkol sa Kapampangan dishes, mas madali itong matutunan ng mga kabataan."

("If there is an online archive or website about Kapampangan dishes, it will be easier for younger generations to learn about them.")

Participants also emphasized the growing importance of digital platforms in promoting Kapampangan culinary heritage. Respondents noted that social media, websites, and online archives provide accessible platforms for sharing culinary knowledge with wider audiences.

Digital media were perceived as particularly effective in reaching younger generations who are highly engaged with online platforms. Through digital storytelling, communities may present traditional recipes, cooking demonstrations, and culinary histories in engaging formats.

The use of digital media for heritage promotion reflects broader trends in cultural preservation. Digital technologies allow communities to document and disseminate cultural knowledge beyond geographical boundaries (UNESCO, 2022).

Participants also recognized that digital platforms enable diaspora communities to reconnect with their cultural heritage. Individuals living outside Pampanga or abroad may access online resources that allow them to learn about Kapampangan culinary traditions.

The ability of digital platforms to connect communities across distances demonstrates the evolving nature of heritage transmission. Cultural knowledge is no longer limited to physical community spaces but can be shared through digital networks.

Participants also noted that digital promotion complements traditional forms of cultural transmission. Online platforms may document and archive culinary practices while community events and family traditions continue to sustain everyday cultural practices.

Overall, the findings demonstrated that Kapampangan residents recognized the potential of digital tools in expanding the reach of their culinary heritage. By integrating traditional cultural practices with modern communication technologies, communities may strengthen the visibility and sustainability of Kapampangan cuisine.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings provided a more comprehensive understanding of Kapampangan residents' perceptions regarding the non-enactment of the bill declaring Pampanga as the Culinary Capital of the Philippines. The quantitative survey results revealed that respondents generally agreed that the legislative outcome was disappointing yet did not diminish the value of Kapampangan cuisine. The qualitative interviews further enriched these findings by explaining how community members interpreted the situation within broader cultural and social contexts.

Survey data indicated that respondents maintained confidence in the resilience of Kapampangan culinary identity despite the absence of formal legislative recognition. The qualitative interviews supported this result by demonstrating that respondents viewed culinary traditions as deeply embedded in everyday community practices. Participants frequently emphasized that Kapampangan cuisine is preserved through family traditions, communal gatherings, and intergenerational knowledge transmission.

The interviews also revealed that respondents interpreted the non-enactment of the bill not as a cultural loss but as an event that encouraged reflection on alternative pathways for heritage promotion. Participants expressed the view that cultural recognition could be achieved through community initiatives rather than solely through legislative designation. This perspective reinforced the survey findings that respondents did not equate policy outcomes with the legitimacy of their culinary traditions.

Another important insight from the qualitative responses was the emphasis on lived cultural practices as the foundation of culinary identity. Respondents described cooking, sharing meals, and celebrating local food traditions as everyday activities that sustain cultural belonging. These practices illustrate how culinary heritage functions as a form of intangible cultural heritage that is continuously reproduced through community participation (UNESCO, 2022).

The findings also highlight the role of collective memory in maintaining Kapampangan culinary traditions. Interview participants frequently referred to family recipes, traditional cooking techniques, and community celebrations as sources of cultural continuity. These experiences contribute to the preservation of cultural narratives embedded in food traditions, which scholars have identified as key elements of culinary heritage (Bessière, 2021).

In addition, the integration of the two data sets revealed that respondents viewed cultural identity as independent of formal recognition by institutions. While the proposed legislative designation was appreciated as symbolic acknowledgment, participants believed that the cultural value of Kapampangan cuisine had long been established through community practices and historical traditions.

The qualitative findings further demonstrated that respondents interpreted the issue through a framework of civic maturity and institutional respect. Participants recognized that legislative decisions involve broader national considerations and therefore approached the outcome with understanding rather than hostility. This balanced perspective reflects the ability of communities to interpret policy decisions through both cultural and institutional lenses.

These findings support the argument that public discourse surrounding policy decisions often integrates emotional expression with trust in governance institutions. According to Hajer (2022), communities frequently articulate their perspectives on policy issues through cultural values while maintaining respect for institutional processes. The responses of Kapampangan residents illustrated this dynamic interaction between cultural pride and civic awareness.

Moreover, the integration of quantitative and qualitative data demonstrated that Kapampangan residents prioritized community-driven approaches to heritage preservation. Rather than relying solely on formal titles, respondents emphasized the importance of local festivals, culinary education, documentation of recipes, and digital promotion of Kapampangan cuisine. These initiatives reflect the broader principle that cultural heritage is sustained primarily through community participation and collective responsibility (Smith, 2023).

Overall, the integration of findings revealed that Kapampangan residents maintained strong confidence in the enduring value of their culinary heritage. While the non-enactment of the bill was perceived as a missed symbolic opportunity, it did not diminish the cultural pride associated with Kapampangan cuisine. Instead, the event encouraged reflection on community-based strategies for preserving and promoting culinary traditions, thereby reinforcing the resilience of Kapampangan cultural identity.

Conclusion

The study examined the perceptions of Kapampangan residents regarding the non-enactment of the bill declaring Pampanga as the Culinary Capital of the Philippines. The findings revealed that respondents generally viewed the issue through a cultural rather than political lens. While many participants expressed mild disappointment, the majority demonstrated respect for legislative processes and institutional decision-making.

The results further indicated that Kapampangan culinary identity remained deeply rooted in everyday cultural practices and community traditions. Respondents consistently emphasized that the reputation of Kapampangan cuisine was sustained through intergenerational transmission, family traditions, and community celebrations rather than formal legislative recognition. This perspective reflected a strong sense of cultural pride and confidence in the resilience of Kapampangan culinary heritage.

Moreover, the findings highlighted that Kapampangan residents responded to the issue with reflective civic engagement. Rather than framing the non-enactment as a source of grievance, respondents interpreted it as an opportunity to strengthen local initiatives that promote culinary heritage. The study therefore demonstrated that cultural identity and heritage sustainability are maintained primarily through community participation and lived cultural practices.

Recommendations

1. Local government units may strengthen community-based culinary heritage programs, including food festivals, culinary workshops, and heritage documentation initiatives that promote Kapampangan cuisine independent of national designations.
2. Cultural agencies and academic institutions may collaborate with local communities in documenting traditional Kapampangan recipes, culinary practices, and food histories in order to support cultural preservation and intergenerational knowledge transmission.
3. Educational institutions may integrate local culinary heritage studies into community learning initiatives or cultural education programs to increase awareness of Kapampangan food traditions among younger generations.
4. Future researchers may conduct comparative studies across other Philippine regions to examine community perceptions regarding cultural recognition policies and heritage identity.

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