

## Cultural Heritage Preservation and Protection in the Province of Pangasinan

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This study aimed to examine the strategies, practices, challenges, and future plans related to the preservation and protection of selected cultural heritage sites in Pangasinan Province. Specifically, it sought to identify the salient features of the legal framework supporting the preservation of Casa Real and the Provincial Capitol Building, to explore the existing practices and strategies for their maintenance, and to determine the challenges and plans concerning their preservation, daily upkeep, and long-term sustainability.

A qualitative research approach was utilized, focusing on the analysis, interpretation, and understanding of non-numerical data regarding cultural heritage preservation in the province. As described by Yilmaz (2013), qualitative research is “an emergent, inductive, interpretive, and naturalistic approach to the study of individuals, cases, phenomena, and social situations and processes in their natural contexts to express in evocative words the meanings individuals attribute to their perceptions of the world” (p. 312). This aligns with the premise that qualitative research emphasizes inductive and interpretive methods of data collection and analysis within the natural environment where the phenomena occur.

The descriptive method was employed to identify and describe the current situation—specifically, the existing conditions of cultural heritage preservation and protection in Pangasinan. Data were gathered through an interview guide questionnaire administered to the respondents. The research was conducted in Lingayen, Pangasinan, focusing on two key heritage sites: Casa Real and the Provincial Capitol Building. Respondents included officials from the Provincial Tourism and Cultural Affairs Office (PTCAO). An interview guide was used to collect detailed information about the practices, strategies, challenges, and plans implemented by the PTCAO concerning the preservation of these heritage structures.

Data collection involved interviews, document analysis, and a review of relevant literature. According to Frey (2018), document analysis is a qualitative research technique that systematically examines documentary evidence to address specific research questions. In this study, document analysis included the review of official records, legal documents, and lists of recognized cultural heritage sites within the municipality of Lingayen.

The qualitative data obtained from PTCAO were analyzed using thematic analysis, which enabled the researchers to identify, analyze, and report recurring patterns or themes. This method provided a comprehensive understanding of the preservation and protection efforts in the province.

Interviews played a crucial role in this research. As noted by Esteburge (2002), qualitative interviews allow participants to express their insights and experiences freely, providing rich, detailed information about social and institutional processes. Through open-ended questions, the researchers identified the challenges, best practices, and future plans associated with maintaining the province’s cultural heritage sites.

The findings revealed that both local and national ordinances play vital roles in safeguarding cultural heritage in Pangasinan. These heritage sites hold significant historical and cultural value, symbolizing the province’s identity. Various strategies are currently being implemented, including initiatives in preservation and protection, human resource management, visitor management, and maintenance practices. However, several challenges hinder effective preservation, such as natural disasters that cause structural deterioration, partial damage, total destruction, or the loss of cultural significance. In terms of planning and maintenance, the study emphasized the importance of maintaining the structural integrity of heritage buildings through regular monitoring, restoration, and preventive maintenance.

Based on the findings, the researchers recommend the following: (1) The formulation of additional local ordinances to strengthen the preservation of all identified cultural heritage sites in Pangasinan, (2) The Provincial Government should enhance public awareness through workshops and seminars that highlight the importance of cultural heritage preservation, (3) The Provincial Government should prepare funding proposals and seek assistance from the National Government for restoration and repair projects, particularly for Casa Real and the Provincial Capitol Building, and (4) The Local Government should establish preparedness measures to address challenges such as natural disasters and environmental threats.

Through these collective efforts, Pangasinan can ensure that its historic landmarks—Casa Real and the Provincial Capitol Building—remain enduring symbols of the province’s cultural and historical legacy for future generations.