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Exploring the Heritage of Traditional Tatana Pastries in Kuala Penyu: An analysis of recipes, cultural practices, and traditions

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Abstract

This study explores the heritage of Tatana traditional pastries in Kuala Penyu, Sabah, focusing on their recipes, preparation, and cultural significance. Using qualitative methods, including interviews and observations, the research identifies and documents various traditional pastries while analyzing their role in rituals and daily life. Findings highlight their significance in preserving Tatana identity and the need for cultural continuity. Thus, emphasizing their role in heritage conservation, the study underscores how food traditions reinforce community identity and should be preserved for future generations.

Keywords: Traditional kuih-muih; Traditional pastries; Tatana ethnic group

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1.0 Introduction

Traditional foods, such as kuih-muih (local pastries), hold deep cultural significance and are integral to the identities of many communities. In Sabah, the diversity of local pastries reflects the influence of multiple ethnic groups and the complex historical interactions that have shaped the region. Among these communities, the Tatana of Kuala Penyu maintain a distinctive pastry tradition that is closely tied to their social and cultural practices. These pastries transcend their role as food. They serve as enduring symbols of identity, continuity, and communal memory, passed down through generations. Despite their cultural value, there has been limited scholarly focus on Tatana pastries, particularly in relation to their recipes, preparation techniques, and socio-cultural functions. As traditional knowledge wanes among younger generations under the pressures of modernization, there is a critical need for documentation and preservation. This study aims to explore the heritage of Tatana traditional pastries in Kuala Penyu by systematically documenting Tatana pastries, analyzing their preparation processes, and examining their cultural significance within the community's social framework. The findings will contribute to heritage preservation efforts and provide valuable insights into Malaysia's traditional food culture.

Research Objectives

- i. To document the traditional pastries of the Tatana community in Kuala Penyu, including their names, ingredients, and preparation methods.
- ii. To examine the cultural and social significance of these traditional pastries within Tatana rituals, celebrations, and daily life.

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iii. To analyze the challenges in preserving traditional pastry practices and identify efforts for sustaining cultural continuity.

Nomenclature

Tatana	A sub-ethnic group of the Kadazan Dusun community in Kuala Penyu, Sabah
Kuih-muih	Traditional pastries
Abu	Used as a flavoring ingredient

1.1 Background of the Tatana Community

The Tatana ethnic group is believed to have originated from Mongolia and Yunnan, China, during the 12th and 13th centuries. As one of the 79 sub-ethnic groups of the Kadazan Dusun in Sabah, Tatana primarily resides in Kuala Penyu, with smaller populations found in Beaufort. Kuala Penyu, situated in the southwestern region of Sabah, faces the South China Sea to the west (Romut, Sadinag & Iban, 2016). Today, the Tatana community is uniquely characterized by its integration of Indigenous and Chinese cultural elements. This is most prominently observed in their celebration of Chinese New Year, which has evolved into their primary cultural event. Notably, the celebration incorporates traditional Chinese customs, including ancestor worship, the giving of ang pow, and ritual practices at small household shrines. Additionally, the adoption of Chinese-inspired attire during festive occasions symbolizes the enduring influence of Chinese culture on their identity. This distinctive blend of cultural practices underscores the rich heritage of the Tatana community, distinguishing them from other Indigenous groups in Sabah.

2.0 Literature Review

The conservation of traditional food heritage has become increasingly crucial in academic discourse due to its crucial role in maintaining cultural identity, facilitating intergenerational knowledge transfer, and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage (Bessière & Tibere, 2013; Kamaruzaman, Ab Karim, Che Ishak, & Arshad, 2020). Traditional foods are often central to rituals and social life, reflecting collective values and sustaining community continuity (Naim Misran, Md Sharif, Akbaruddin, Saad, & Muhamed Yusoff, 2022). In Malaysia, traditional kuih (local pastries) are powerful cultural symbols that embody these functions, especially among Indigenous communities. Among the Tatana ethnic group in Kuala Penyu, traditional pastries serve as a cultural repository that encapsulates values, beliefs, and historical memory. Their preparation during celebrations such as *Pesta Kaamatan* (harvest festival) and Chinese New Year reinforces social cohesion and strengthens cultural identity (Omar, Salim, & Ismail, 2011). However, the impact of modernization and globalization has led to a shift in food consumption habits, particularly among the younger generation. Findings from Adilah Md Ramli, Ahmad Sapawi, Mohd Noor, and Mohd Zahari (2020) revealed that while older generations remain loyal to traditional food, younger individuals increasingly prefer convenient, modern alternatives. This trend is further supported by Kamaruzaman, Ab Karim, Che Ishak, Arshad, and Arshad (2022), who observed a decline in the appreciation for traditional pastries in Johor due to urban lifestyles. Other than that, the weakening link between food and culture has raised broader concerns regarding the erosion of heritage (Dalily, 2018; Ibrahim, Rahman, & Shafie, 2024; Rosli & Hassan, 2023).

In East Malaysia, academic studies on Indigenous food heritage remain limited. Research by Bungsu and Misdi (2019) noted that in Beaufort's Brunei-Malay communities, traditional food knowledge is not being passed down effectively, endangering its continuity. Ganesan et al. (2020) documented the Lundayeh community's adaptive responses to ecological and socio-economic pressures that threaten their traditional foodways. Likewise, Ismail et al. (2021) highlighted a generational gap in the making and appreciation of *dodol*, a traditional sweet, signifying a broader disengagement from food heritage among youth. Despite these insights, a significant research gap remains concerning the traditional pastries of the Tatana community. In particular, no scholarly work to date has fully documented their recipes, preparation methods, or cultural meanings. This absence is striking considering Tatana's distinct identity as a Kadazan-Dusun sub-ethnic group with a culinary tradition shaped by Indigenous and external influences. For the Tatana, traditional pastries transcend mere sustenance. They function as cultural artifacts that link past, present, and future generations (Mohamad, Latip, & Tumin, 2022). Thus, to address this scholarly gap, the current study employs an ethnographic approach to document and analyze Tatana's traditional pastries in Kuala Penyu, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on food heritage and cultural sustainability in Malaysia.

3.0 Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach to examine the traditional pastries of the Tatana community in Kuala Penyu, Sabah. The methodology incorporates two primary data collection methods: in-depth interviews and direct observation. Accordingly, in-depth interviews were conducted with key informants, including skilled pastry makers, community elders, and individuals with extensive knowledge of traditional pastry preparation. At the same time, the semi-structured interview format allowed informants to elaborate on their experiences, providing insights into original recipes, preparation techniques, and cultural significance. Note that all interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis. To complement the interviews, direct observation was conducted during the preparation of Tatana pastries, enabling firsthand documentation of traditional techniques and practices. Moreover, video recordings captured the step-by-step preparation process, along with verbal explanations from informants on the significance of each step. This visual documentation ensures accuracy and authenticity in preserving the cultural heritage of Tatana pastries. Additionally, to enhance accessibility and facilitate further exploration, Quick Response (QR) codes are included that link to the video footage. These QR codes enable readers to view the documented practices directly, providing a dynamic perspective on the preparation techniques,

tools, and cultural contexts. Concurrently, by scanning the QR codes, readers can gain deeper insights into the traditional Tatana pastries, complementing the descriptive data presented in this study.



Fig. 1: Scan the QR code to access video footage of traditional Tatana pastries

4.0 Findings

This study discovered that the Tatana community in Kuala Penyu possesses a wide variety of traditional pastries, which represent culinary elements and play a significant role in their social and cultural lives. Remarkably, many of these pastries carry unique names and characteristics, embodying the distinctiveness and cultural identity of the Tatana ethnic group.

4.1 Kolupis

Kolupis is a traditional pastry of the Tatana ethnic group in Kuala Penyu, carrying deep cultural and symbolic significance. There are two types: Kolupis Silad, wrapped in Silad (*Licuala spinosa*) leaves and tied with Bemban (*Donax grandis*) bark, and Kolupis Punjung, wrapped in Kobu (*Phragmites karka*) leaves. The *L. spinosa*-wrapped Kolupis is boiled, absorbing the aroma of the leaves and bark. Moreover, Kolupis is served at weddings and significant Tatana rituals such as *Moginum*, *Momiliu*, and *Momalapas do Bilod*. *Moginum*, a ritual to honor *Karaganan* (ancestral spirits), begins with *Odou Bamasak* (the first day of Kolupis preparation). Approximately 500 kudi (bundles of ten pieces each) are made. Meanwhile, *Momiliu*, held to celebrate births and rice harvesting, features Kolupis Punjung, while *Momalapas* mark the readiness of rice for harvest, with Kolupis gifted to the Bobolian (shaman). A myth warns that carrying Kolupis at night attracts ghosts, who demand a share of the items. To avoid being followed home, a piece of Kolupis must be left on the road. Previously, making Kolupis was restricted due to taboos. However, as most Tatana people have converted to other religions, these beliefs have faded. Nevertheless, Kolupis remains vital in Tatana culture and continues to be made and sold, sustaining pastry vendors in Kuala Penyu.



Fig. 2: Kolupis
(Source: Sabah Foundation Researchers)

4.2 Tinimbu Abu

Two days before the Chinese New Year celebrations, the Tatana community begins preparing various traditional pastries for the occasion. Tinimbu Abu is a type of glutinous rice dumpling steamed with bamboo or pandan (*Pandanus amaryllifolius*) leaves and does not have a filling. Accordingly, the glutinous rice is soaked and mixed with *Abu* to alter the color and flavor, making it tastier and preserving it to ensure that Tinimbu can last for several days without refrigeration. Subsequently, Tinimbu Abu is wrapped in bamboo leaves and tied with *Lamba* fiber (*Curculigo latifolia*). Nowadays, the traditional method of using *C. latifolia* fiber for tying has been replaced with plastic ties. Note that Tinimbu Abu is usually eaten with white sugar.



Fig. 3: Tinimbu Abu
(Source: Sabah Foundation Researchers)

4.3 Tinapung Tahun Baharu

Tinapung is a traditional Tatana pastry that is essential for Chinese New Year celebrations. Similar to Tinimbu Abu, it is typically prepared two days before the festival. According to Tatana's beliefs, this pastry serves as an offering to Chinese deities visiting during the celebration. Tinapung can last for a week and, if not consumed within a few days, can be fried with eggs and enjoyed as breakfast or an afternoon snack.



(a) (b) (c)
Fig. 4. (a) Tinapung pastry before cooking; (b) Cooked Tinapung; (c) Tinapung is cut into small pieces
(Source: Sabah Foundation Researchers)

4.4 Sinampulan Do Labu

Sinampulan Do Labu is a traditional Tatana pastry made from pumpkin. According to Tatana's beliefs, mentioning this pastry without preparing it could cause *kempunan* (a craving linked to misfortune). This taboo remains strong, as the Tatana people believe that failing to fulfill a craving for the pastry may lead to bad luck. Sinampulan Do Labu is also served during the ritual to honor the ancestral spirits as an offering to them. If it is mentioned but not prepared, it is believed to anger malevolent spirits, which may cause disturbances. The concept of *kempunan* reflects deep ethnic beliefs and cultural traditions.



Fig. 5: Sinampulan Do Labu
(Source: Sabah Foundation Researchers)

4.5 Liking Imadang

Liking Imadang fritters, made from ripe *Artocarpus odoratissimus* (tarap), was once a favorite traditional snack of the Tatana community. These fritters were commonly prepared during the tarap fruit season but are now rarely made and largely unknown among the younger generation. When stored in a tightly sealed container, Liking Imadang can last up to a month. A similar version called Liking Cempedak uses *Artocarpus integer* (cempedak) and follows the same preparation method.



(a) (b)
Fig. 6: (a) Liking imadang (dry tarap- *Artocarpus odoratissimus*); (b) Liking imadang pastry
(Source: Sabah Foundation Researchers)

4.6 Tinapung Sasad



Fig. 7: Tinapung Sasad
(Source: Sabah Foundation Researchers)

The Tatana community serves Tinapung Sasad when their wives give birth (during the confinement period). Glutinous rice is shaped into balls and boiled with ginger water. Ginger is used as a remedy to relieve bloating, especially for new mothers. This pastry was also popular among children in the past when supplementary foods were scarce.



Fig. 8: The making of Tinapung Sasad by Tatana women
(Source: Sabah Foundation Researchers)

4.7 Kinubol

In the past, the Tatana community in Kuala Penyu prepared Kinubol using dried sago, which was cooked and mixed with grated coconut and eaten with ripe bananas. This nutritious dish provided carbohydrates from sago, fat from coconut, and vitamins from bananas. Sago and bananas were once abundant and easily accessible. Although Kinubol was once considered a food for the poor, it has now become a symbol of Tatana identity due to its traditional recipe.



Fig. 9: Kinubol
(Source: Sabah Foundation Researchers)

4.8 Tinumpi Ubi

Tinumpi ubi was once a popular food among the Tatana ethnic community, especially during times when modern food was scarce. This traditional tapioca-based snack was typically prepared for family breakfast and afternoon tea.



Fig. 10: Tinumpi Ubi
(Source: Sabah Foundation Researchers)

4.9 Tinapung Buu

Tinapung Buu, when translated to Bahasa Malaysia, is called *Kuih Kura-kura*, where Buu refers to a tortoise. This pastry is popular among the Tatana ethnic group in Kuala Penyu. Traditionally, it was made without food coloring, unlike the modern version. It is prepared using specially shaped molds to achieve its distinctive tortoise form.



Fig. 11: Tinapung Buu
(Source: Sabah Foundation Researchers)



Fig. 12: Tortoise-shaped mold (Used to shape the pastry to resemble a tortoise)
(Source: Sabah Foundation Researchers)

4.10 Wajit

Wajit was also a popular food among the Tatana community due to its easy preparation. It was commonly served as a family dish during celebrations such as weddings and other family gatherings.



Fig. 13: Wajit
(Source: Sabah Foundation Researchers)

Table 1. Summary of findings

Kuih Name	Key Ingredients	Preparation Method	Purpose of Serving	Cultural Significance
Kolupis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Glutinous rice ➤ Coconut milk ➤ Cooking oil ➤ Salt ✧ <i>L. spinosa</i> leaves as wrapping ✧ <i>D. grandis</i> bark is used as a tying material 	i. Grate mature coconut and mix it with water to extract the coconut milk.	<i>Moginum</i> (Tatana cultural celebration), <i>Momiliu Do Sawat</i> (Tatana Cultural Practice), <i>Momalapas Do Bilod</i> (Rice Harvesting Preparation Ritual), wedding ceremonies, festive occasions, and a source of income.	Preserves ancestral heritage, fosters community unity, cultural identity, and tradition, as well as economic sustainability.
		ii. The coconut milk is then squeezed and strained to separate the pulp.		
		iii. Heat a little oil in a pan, and when the oil is hot, pour in the coconut milk, allowing a bit of oil to release.		
		iv. Add salt to taste.		
		v. The glutinous rice is then added to the boiling coconut milk and stirred until well mixed.		
		vi. Cook until the coconut milk has reduced, then cover the pan and let the glutinous rice cook for about half the time.		

			vii.	After that, the glutinous rice is removed and wrapped in <i>L. spinosa</i> leaves, tied with the bark of the <i>D. grandis</i> .		
			viii.	The wrapped glutinous rice is then steamed until it is fully cooked and fluffy. Kolupis is now ready to be served.		
Tinimbu Abu	➤	Glutinous rice	i.	Soak the glutinous rice for about two hours, then drain.	Chinese New Year celebrations, weddings, social gatherings, and daily meals.	Symbolizes prosperity, good fortune, and family unity.
	➤	A pinch of salt	ii.	Once dry, mix it with <i>Abu</i> and cooking oil to prevent sticking.		
	➤	Cooking oil	iii.	Add a little salt.		
	➤	<i>Abu</i> (used as a flavoring ingredient in the making of glutinous rice dumplings in the Kuala Penyu district)	iv.	Then wrap it in a triangular shape with bamboo leaves and tie with <i>C. latifolia</i> fiber.		
	➤	Water for boiling	v.	Cook by boiling until fully cooked.		
	✧	Bamboo or <i>P. amaryllifolius</i> leaves as wrapping				
	✧	<i>C. latifolia</i> as a tying material				
Tinapung Tahun Baharu	➤	Glutinous rice or glutinous flour	i.	Grind or pound the glutinous rice until it becomes a fine flour. Sift the flour to ensure a smooth texture.	Chinese New Year celebrations and social gatherings.	Symbolizes prosperity, good fortune, and family unity.
	➤	Sugar	ii.	Heat the sugar in a pan over medium heat until it caramelizes and turns red. Add water gradually to make a red sugar syrup, stirring constantly to avoid burning.		
	➤	Cooking oil	iii.	In a mixing bowl, combine the glutinous rice flour and the red sugar syrup. Mix well until the flour is evenly coated.		
	➤	Water	iv.	Add a small amount of cooking oil to the mixture. This helps to prevent sticking and ensures a smooth texture.		
	✧	Banana leaves, used as lining	v.	Gradually add water to the mixture while stirring until the consistency becomes smooth and well-combined.		
			vi.	Line a steaming container with banana leaves to prevent the mixture from sticking and to enhance the aroma. Pour the mixture into the prepared container, spreading it evenly.		
			vii.	Place the container in a steamer and steam over medium heat until the mixture is fully cooked.		
Sinampulan Do Labu	➤	Pumpkin	i.	Peel the pumpkin skin.	In the past, it was consumed as a daily food.	Reflecting its role in sustaining daily life, preserving the community's heritage, highlighting cultural identity, and emphasizing the deep connection between traditional food, agriculture, and the environment.
	➤	Half-ripe grated coconut	ii.	Grate the pumpkin into fine shreds using a grater.		
	➤	Coconut milk	iii.	Grate the half-ripe coconut and extract a little concentrated coconut milk.		
	➤	Sugar	iv.	In a mixing bowl, combine the grated pumpkin with the coconut milk. Add a small amount of sugar to taste and mix until the ingredients are evenly combined.		
	✧	<i>P. karka</i> leaves or a banana leaves, used as wrapping	v.	Spoon the mixture onto banana or <i>P. karka</i> leaves. Fold and secure the leaves to form neat wraps, ensuring the mixture is enclosed.		
			vi.	Place the wrapped pumpkin mixture in a steamer and steam		

				over medium heat until the pumpkin is fully cooked and fragrant.		
Liking Imadang	➤ Ripe <i>A. odoratissimus</i> ➤ Sugar ➤ Flour ➤ Cooking Oil	i. ii. iii. iv. v. vi. vii.	Remove the seeds from the ripe <i>A. odoratissimus</i> flesh, ensuring only the soft flesh is used. Place the <i>A. odoratissimus</i> flesh in a pan and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until it turns yellow and begins to thicken. Spread the cooked <i>A. odoratissimus</i> flesh evenly on a wide tray. Allow it to dry for two to three days in a well-ventilated area, exposed to the sun, until it hardens. Once the <i>A. odoratissimus</i> is dried and hardened, crumble it into smaller pieces. Cut into bite-sized pieces and sprinkle with a generous amount of sugar. Dip each piece into flour, ensuring it is evenly coated. Heat oil in a deep frying pan. Fry the coated <i>A. odoratissimus</i> pieces in hot oil until they turn golden brown and crispy. Sprinkle with additional sugar for an extra sweet finish.	As a food dish, especially during the <i>A. odoratissimus</i> fruit season.	During the <i>A. odoratissimus</i> fruit season, pastries made with <i>A. odoratissimus</i> fruit symbolize the abundance and richness of the harvest. These pastries connect the community to seasonal agricultural traditions and provide a unique taste of local culture.	
Tinapung Sasad	➤ Ginger ➤ Glutinous flour ➤ Sugar ➤ Drinking water ✧ A mortar is used to crush ginger.	i. ii. iii. iv. v. vi.	Peel and clean the ginger. Crush the ginger and mix it with water to make a broth. Strain the ginger from the water. Heat the ginger water in a pan until it comes to a boil. Shape the glutinous rice flour into small balls, then add them to the pan with the ginger water. Let them cook until the balls float to the surface, indicating they are fully cooked.	After childbirth, serving as food.	Pastries served after childbirth are believed to aid in restoring strength and promoting healing. These traditional pastries are often prepared for new mothers, symbolizing care, nourishment, and the community's support during the recovery period.	
Kinubol	➤ Sago ➤ Half-ripe coconut	i. ii. iii. iv. v.	Spread the sago on the tray and let it dry until it is half-dry. When the sago is nearly dry, fry it with half-ripe coconut over low heat. Fry the half-ripe coconut and sago separately. Afterward, mix the fried sago with the fried grated coconut. Combine well before serving.	In the past, it was consumed as a daily food.	Reflecting its role in sustaining daily life, preserving the community's heritage, highlighting cultural identity, and emphasizing the deep connection between traditional food, agriculture, and the environment.	
Tinumpi Ubi	➤ Cassava ➤ Cooking oil ➤ Half-ripe young coconut ➤ Sugar	i. ii. iii.	Peel and grate the cassava. Mix it with an appropriate amount of sugar to taste, ensuring the mixture is evenly sweetened. Incorporate the grated half-ripe coconut into the cassava mixture. Mix thoroughly until well combined. Heat oil in a pan over medium heat. Add the cassava and coconut mixture to the pan. Stir continuously and cook until the mixture is fully cooked, fragrant, and slightly golden.	Daily meal.	Reflecting its significance in sustaining daily life, preserving cultural heritage, and emphasizing the community's deep connection to agricultural practices and traditional food preparation.	
Tinapung Buu	➤ Glutinous rice flour ➤ Sugar	Preparing the Coconut Filling: i.	In a pan, add the grated coconut and sugar. Cook over low heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves	Social gatherings, festive occasions, and a source of income.	Foster unity, promote shared values, and celebrate cultural identity. Provide income opportunities through the production and sale.	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Grated coconut (for the filling) - Half-ripe coconut ➤ Cooking oil ✧ Banana leaves for wrapping the kuih 	<p>and the coconut becomes slightly dry, not watery. Remove from heat and set aside to cool.</p> <p>Preparing the Outer Dough:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. In a large bowl, mix the glutinous rice flour, sugar, and a pinch of salt. Stir well. ii. Gradually add water, kneading as you go, until the dough becomes soft and pliable. iii. Continue kneading the dough until it becomes smooth and no longer sticks to your hands. <p>Wrapping the Kuih:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Cut the banana leaves into small pieces and briefly heat them over a flame to soften. ii. Take a small portion of the glutinous rice dough, flatten it, and place a spoonful of the coconut filling in the center. iii. Fold the banana leaf to wrap the dough and filling securely. Make sure the kuih is tightly sealed and does not open during steaming. <p>Steaming the Kuih:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Place the wrapped kuih in a preheated steamer. Steam until the kuih is fully cooked, and the banana leaves emit a fragrant aroma. <p>Ready to Serve: Remove the pastries from the steamer and let them cool slightly before serving.</p>		
Wajit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Glutinous rice ➤ Sugar ➤ Grated mature coconut 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Grate the mature coconut and extract the coconut milk by mixing it with water and squeezing out the liquid. Strain to ensure a smooth consistency. ii. Pour the coconut milk into a pan and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking. Continue cooking until the milk separates and the coconut oil is released. This process will produce fragrant coconut oil with brownish residues (optional to use). iii. Add sugar to the coconut oil mixture and stir until the sugar dissolves completely. Allow the mixture to simmer until it becomes a thick, syrup-like consistency. iv. In a separate pot, wash and cook the glutinous rice until it is fully steamed or boiled and tender. Ensure the grains are slightly sticky but not mushy. v. Once the rice is cooked, gradually add it to the coconut oil and sugar mixture. Stir well over low heat to ensure the syrup coats the rice evenly. Continue stirring until the mixture thickens and becomes glossy, which might take 15-20 minutes. vi. Transfer the sticky rice mixture onto a tray lined with banana leaves or parchment paper. Flatten it evenly using a spatula or hands (wet your hands slightly to prevent sticking). 	Social gatherings.	Foster unity, promote shared values, and celebrate cultural identity.

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- vii. Let the *Wajit* cool completely before cutting it into pieces for serving.
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5.0 Discussion

The Tatana community in Kuala Penyu faces significant challenges in preserving their traditional pastries due to the declining availability of essential ingredients like *L. spinosa* leaves, *D. grandis* bark, and *C. latifolia* fiber. In particular, the lack of cultivation programs has compounded these issues, threatening the sustainability of traditional pastry preparation. Nonetheless, practices to preserve traditional ingredients remain strong, particularly among older generations who play a vital role in safeguarding these culinary traditions. Kolupis, in particular, continues to thrive as a cultural symbol and as an economically significant product, often produced by housewives as a source of income. This underscores the potential for combining cultural preservation with economic sustainability. Additionally, to address ingredient scarcity, partnerships with agricultural agencies to replant key plants like *L. spinosa* and *D. grandis* are crucial. Such initiatives will ensure the continuity of traditional pastry preparation and the broader preservation of Tatana cultural heritage. Moreover, formal recognition of Kolupis as a cultural heritage could further bolster efforts, providing a platform for enhanced visibility and protection of these culinary traditions.

6.0 Conclusion & Recommendations

This study has demonstrated the vital role that traditional pastries play in the Tatana community of Kuala Penyu, which extends beyond mere food. Instead, they are key elements of cultural identity. However, the scarcity of key ingredients, such as *L. spinosa* and *D. grandis* bark, threatens the continuity of these traditions. Therefore, to safeguard the authenticity of Kolupis and other traditional pastries, it is essential to implement replanting initiatives for these ingredients. Additionally, recognizing these pastries as cultural heritage could increase their visibility, potentially opening up avenues for economic development through targeted marketing strategies. Correspondingly, by fostering community collaboration and integrating traditional practices with modern economic opportunities, the Tatana community can ensure the longevity of their culinary heritage and cultural identity in the face of globalization.

6.1 Further Areas of Research

Future studies could examine strategies for commercializing traditional pastries, focusing on maintaining cultural authenticity while expanding market access. Furthermore, research on the effects of globalization and modernization on rural pastries production would provide valuable insights. Similarly, studies on local knowledge and community-based initiatives for revitalizing essential ingredients, as well as comparative research across other communities in Sabah, could also deepen the understanding of regional variations and shared cultural significance.

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List of informants

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Paper Contribution to Related Field of Study

This research contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage, with a particular focus on traditional food practices. By studying the traditional Tatana pastries in Kuala Penyu, Sabah, the importance of maintaining authentic recipes and culinary traditions as essential elements of community identity is highlighted. Utilizing qualitative methods such as interviews and observations, the study explores both tangible (recipes) and intangible (cultural practices) aspects of food traditions. This methodological approach offers a model for similar studies in other Indigenous communities, underlining the importance of safeguarding traditional food knowledge for future

generations. The findings underline how food traditions contribute to cultural resilience, ensuring their transmission as part of the community's heritage.

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