

Evolving Beliefs: Transformation and Transmission Patterns of Superstitions Across Generations

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Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<i>Superstitions remain embedded in Filipino cultural life despite modernization, scientific advancement, and increasing digital connectivity; however, limited empirical attention has been given to how these beliefs persist, are transmitted, and transform across generations. This study examined the common superstitions among Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z, the processes through which these beliefs are transmitted, and the patterns of their transformation across generations. Employing a descriptive qualitative design within the narrative inquiry tradition, the study involved 15 participants purposively selected from the three generational groups. Data were generated through validated semi-structured interviews and analyzed thematically. Findings revealed five major thematic clusters of common superstitions, referred to as the Five S's of Filipino Superstitions: Safeguarding, Spirituality, Supernaturalism, Safety, and Social Conduct. Among the specific beliefs identified, sweeping at night emerged as the most frequently cited superstition. Three interconnected channels of transmission were also identified: Family, Culture, and Communication, demonstrating that superstitions are learned through parental instruction, discipline, observation, participation, storytelling, repetition, personal testimony, and interpersonal reminders. Finally, three patterns of transformation emerged: Questioning and Decline, Digital Recontextualization, and Selective Persistence and Experiential Reinforcement. The findings indicate that superstitions do not simply disappear across generations; rather, they are selectively retained, questioned, modified, and reinterpreted according to family influence, cultural practices, personal experiences, education, scientific reasoning, and technological exposure. The study concludes that Filipino superstitions remain culturally significant not necessarily because they are universally believed, but because they continue to function as forms of cultural knowledge, memory, identity, and social practice. The findings highlight the importance of culturally responsive education that preserves cultural understanding while fostering critical thinking and evidence-based interpretation.</i> Keywords: Descriptive-qualitative, Generation X, Y (Millennials), and Z, Patterns, Superstitions, Transformation and Transmission.
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Introduction

Superstitions have long been embedded in Filipino culture, influencing everyday decisions, social practices, and interpretations of events across generations (Garcia, 2022). These beliefs are often observed in practices intended to avoid misfortune, preserve good luck, or protect individuals from perceived harm. Examples include avoiding sweeping the floor at night for fear of sweeping away good fortune,

refraining from going outside immediately after certain life events, observing particular practices when visiting the dead, and avoiding seeing a future spouse before the wedding (Gandeza et al. 2023). Although many of these beliefs are not supported by scientific evidence, they continue to be practiced, remembered, and communicated within families and communities. Leventhal et al. (2021)

explained that individuals may turn to superstitious behaviors as a way of gaining a sense of control in situations characterized by uncertainty. Similarly, Calao and Salazar (2022) noted that people's lives are influenced by beliefs inherited from their culture and shaped by the environments in which they live. These observations suggest that superstition is not merely an individual belief but is also embedded in social and cultural systems that enable its continuity across generations.

Superstitions are generally understood as beliefs or practices that are not grounded in established scientific evidence and are often associated with luck, supernatural forces, or perceived connections between unrelated events (Karmakar & Chattopadhyay, 2021). Their influence, however, extends beyond their lack of scientific basis. Welum (2020) argued that superstition may influence human behavior and decision-making, demonstrating that such beliefs can have practical consequences in everyday life. In the Philippine context, superstitions are closely intertwined with cultural traditions, religious practices, indigenous beliefs, and historical experiences. Escalona (2024) emphasized that Filipino rituals and beliefs reflect a complex cultural heritage shaped by indigenous spiritual traditions and colonial influences. Rather than completely disappearing in the face of modernity, many traditional beliefs have been retained, modified, or incorporated into contemporary cultural practices. This persistence indicates that the study of superstition requires attention not only to whether people believe in them but also to how these beliefs are culturally transmitted, interpreted, and transformed.

The continuity of superstition can be understood through the concept of cultural transmission, wherein beliefs, values, practices, and knowledge are learned and passed from one generation to another (Tomasello, 2001). According to Colage & d'Errico (2025), Cultural transmission allows traditions to persist while simultaneously providing opportunities for modification as individuals interact with changing social environments. In Filipino families, for example, superstitions may be transmitted through parents, grandparents, relatives, peers, and community members through storytelling, observation, instruction, and repeated practice (Garcia, 2022). However, transmission does not necessarily result in the exact reproduction of a belief. As individuals encounter education, technology, migration, globalization, and changing social norms, inherited beliefs may be questioned, modified, selectively practiced, or rejected. This perspective is consistent with the Cultural Transmission Theory, which explains how cultural knowledge and practices are acquired and transferred through social interaction and communication (Eerkens & Lipo, 2007). It provides a useful lens for examining why some

superstitions remain relatively stable while others undergo changes as they move across generations.

The changing nature of superstition is particularly evident in the context of technological advancement and digital communication. Traditionally, superstitions were primarily transmitted through face-to-face interactions, oral narratives, family practices, and community traditions. Contemporary generations, however, encounter cultural beliefs through television, online platforms, social media, and other digital spaces. Wheatley (2018) and Eslit (2023) suggest that cultural beliefs continue to adapt within changing social and technological environments. Social media, in particular, can simultaneously preserve traditional beliefs and facilitate their reinterpretation, popularization, or contestation. Consequently, younger generations may encounter the same superstition known by their parents or grandparents but understand or practice it differently. Education and increased exposure to scientific knowledge may also contribute to greater skepticism among younger generations, while emotional attachment, family influence, and cultural identity may encourage continued observance (Wheatley, 2018; Eneva, 2023).

Beyond cultural continuity, literature also points to the psychological and social functions of superstition. Although superstitious beliefs may be considered irrational from a scientific perspective, they can provide individuals with a perceived sense of control, particularly in situations involving uncertainty, anxiety, or fear. Luna et al. (2019) and Besa et al. (2021) noted that superstitious practices may provide psychological benefits, including stress reduction, emotional regulation, and increased focus. From a sociocultural perspective, shared beliefs can also reinforce relationships within families and communities by providing common practices, meanings, and traditions. Thus, superstition may function simultaneously as a personal coping mechanism and a cultural practice that contributes to social identity and cohesion. These perspectives demonstrate that the persistence of superstition cannot be explained solely by a lack of scientific knowledge; rather, its continuity may also be associated with emotional, social, and cultural functions (Tamariz et al. 2026).

The transformation of beliefs can further be examined through the Theory of Belief Networks proposed by Galesic, Olsson, and Dalege (2024), which conceptualizes beliefs as interconnected within personal, social, and external networks. From this perspective, an individual's belief is influenced not only by personal experiences but also by perceptions of what others believe and by interactions with the broader social environment. Such a framework is particularly relevant to understanding generational differences in superstition because individuals may simultaneously negotiate inherited beliefs, personal

experiences, social expectations, and contemporary information. A person may therefore continue to practice a superstition without necessarily accepting its literal explanation, or may reinterpret an inherited belief according to contemporary values. This suggests that generational transformation involves not only the disappearance or retention of superstitions but also changes in their meanings, purposes, and forms of practice.

Despite the substantial cultural and psychological literature on superstition, there remains a need for greater empirical understanding of how superstitious beliefs are transmitted and transformed across generations within Filipino society. Existing discussions have established the persistence of traditional beliefs, their psychological functions, and their relationship with cultural identity; however, less attention has been given to examining the patterns through which specific superstitions are transmitted among different generations and how their meanings and practices change as they move from one generation to another. In particular, the interaction between inherited cultural practices and contemporary influences such as education, technological advancement, globalization, and social media warrants further investigation. Examining these patterns among Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z may provide a clearer understanding of whether superstitions are being preserved, modified, selectively practiced, or gradually abandoned. Such an examination can also illuminate how cultural beliefs remain relevant even as the social contexts in which they are practiced continue to change.

In view of this gap, the present study aims to investigate the persistence, transmission, and transformation of superstitious beliefs across Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z in Filipino society. Specifically, it seeks to identify common superstitions across generations, examine the patterns and processes through which these beliefs are transmitted, and determine how such beliefs have transformed across generations. By examining both continuity and change, the study hopes to contribute to a deeper understanding of superstition as a dynamic cultural phenomenon rather than simply an irrational belief. Its findings may provide insights into how Filipino cultural traditions are preserved and negotiated in contemporary society and may serve as a basis for further discussions on cultural identity, intergenerational relationships, and critical engagement with traditional beliefs.

Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the common superstitions across the three generations?
2. How are these superstitions transmitted?

3. How have superstitions transformed across generations?

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design using the narrative inquiry tradition to explore the transmission and transformation of superstitious beliefs across three generations of Filipinos: Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. A qualitative approach was appropriate because the study sought to understand participants' experiences, perceptions, and personal accounts concerning superstitions within their families and communities. Narrative inquiry focuses on the stories through which individuals construct and communicate their experiences and understandings of social and cultural phenomena (Robinos et al., 2025).

The narrative approach enabled the researchers to examine how superstitions are remembered, practiced, transmitted, and transformed across generations. It also allowed the study to identify recurring patterns and variations in participants' accounts while considering the cultural, familial, and social contexts in which these beliefs were developed and maintained. Rather than determining the truth or scientific validity of the superstitions, the study focused on how participants understood and experienced these beliefs and how such understandings changed across generations.

Research Participants

The participants were 15 individuals, comprising five participants from each of the three generational groups: Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on predetermined inclusion criteria relevant to the objectives of the study. For purposes of participant classification, Generation X consisted of individuals aged 45–60 years, Millennials were aged 29–44 years, and Generation Z were aged 13–28 years at the time of data collection. The inclusion of these generational groups allowed the researchers to examine similarities and differences in the transmission and transformation of superstitious beliefs across age cohorts.

Participants were included if they: (1) had satisfactory to very satisfactory exposure to superstitious beliefs within their families or communities, as determined through a researcher-made screening survey; (2) had lived in an extended-family setting for at least 10 years; (3) could communicate in English and/or Filipino; and (4) voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. The researcher-made screening survey was used solely to determine participants' eligibility based on the predetermined exposure criterion and was not treated as the primary source of data.

Participants who met the criteria and agreed to participate were invited to the individual interviews.

Research Instrument

The primary data-gathering instrument was a semi-structured interview guide consisting of open-ended questions aligned with the research objectives. Semi-structured interviews provide a framework for maintaining consistency across participants while allowing researchers to pursue relevant experiences and responses that emerge during the interview (Robinos et al. 2025). The interview guide focused on participants' experiences with superstitions, the ways these beliefs were introduced and transmitted within their families or communities, and perceived changes in the beliefs and practices across generations.

The interview guide was reviewed by three experts with relevant expertise in research, sociology, and psychology to establish its face and content validity. Revisions were incorporated based on their comments and recommendations before the conduct of the interviews. A researcher-made 10-item, four-point Likert-type screening survey was also administered during the participant-selection stage. The instrument was used to determine the participants' level of exposure to superstitious beliefs and to assess their eligibility according to the study's inclusion criteria. It served only as a screening tool and was not included as a primary instrument for generating the qualitative findings. With participants' permission, interviews were audio-recorded using a digital voice recorder or mobile-device recording application. The recordings were transcribed verbatim for analysis. Digital files were stored in a password-protected storage location accessible only to the researchers.

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to data collection, the researchers secured approval from the appropriate institutional research ethics committee and obtained the required permission to conduct the study. The study protocol was endorsed and approved by the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC). Participants were initially screened using the researcher-made exposure survey based on the established inclusion criteria. Eligible participants were then contacted and provided with an explanation of the study's purpose, procedures, expected duration, potential risks and benefits, confidentiality measures, and their rights as research participants.

Before the interviews, adult participants provided written informed consent. For Generation Z participants who were below 18 years of age, written parental or legal guardian consent was sought and obtained prior to their participation, together with the participants' own informed assent. The

researchers ensured that both the parent or legal guardian and the minor participant understood the purpose, procedures, voluntary nature, and confidentiality provisions of the study.

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted in a private, comfortable, and mutually agreed-upon setting. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 60 minutes. The researchers followed the interview guide while allowing participants to elaborate on experiences relevant to the research questions. Follow-up and probing questions were used when clarification or further description was necessary. With permission, all interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim. The researchers reviewed the transcripts against the audio recordings to ensure accuracy. Identifying information was removed from the transcripts, and pseudonyms or participant codes were used throughout the data management and reporting processes.

Data Analysis

The interview transcripts were analyzed using narrative analysis, focusing on the content and context of participants' accounts regarding superstitious beliefs. The analysis proceeded through several stages. First, the researchers repeatedly read the transcripts to become familiar with the participants' narratives. Second, significant statements and narrative segments related to the study objectives were identified and coded. Third, related codes were grouped to identify recurring ideas, patterns, and variations concerning the types of superstitions, their sources of transmission, and their changes across generations.

The researchers then compared narratives within and across the three generational groups to identify similarities, differences, continuities, and transformations in superstitious beliefs and practices. Attention was given to how participants described the role of family members, community, personal experiences, education, technology, and social media in the transmission and modification of these beliefs. Finally, the emerging patterns were interpreted in relation to the study's theoretical perspectives on cultural transmission and belief networks. To enhance the credibility of the findings, the researchers maintained an organized record of interview transcripts, codes, and analytical decisions throughout the analysis. Relevant participant accounts were used to support the identified themes and patterns while preserving participant anonymity.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to the ethical principles and requirements of the institution's research ethics committee. Before participation, all participants were informed about

the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, the expected duration of the interview, potential risks and benefits, confidentiality measures, and their right to decline participation or withdraw from the study without penalty. Written informed consent was obtained from all adult participants. For Generation Z participants below 18 years of age, written consent was sought and obtained from their parents or legal guardians, while the minor participants were also required to provide their informed assent before participating in the study. The researchers ensured that participation was voluntary and that no participant was subjected to coercion or undue influence.

Participant confidentiality was maintained through the use of pseudonyms or identification codes in transcripts, analysis, and research reports. Personal identifying information was excluded from the presentation of findings. Audio recordings, transcripts, and other research data were stored securely and were accessible only to the researchers. Data will be retained and disposed of according to the data-management requirements of the institution and the approved research protocol.

Because discussions of personal and family beliefs may occasionally cause discomfort, participants were informed that they could decline to answer any question, pause the

interview, or withdraw from the study at any time. The researchers maintained appropriate professional boundaries and conducted the interviews in a respectful and nonjudgmental manner. The study protocol was reviewed and approved by the UREC prior to data collection.

Results and Discussion

Common Superstitions Across the Three Generations

Thematic analysis of the participants' narratives revealed five major thematic clusters of superstitious beliefs and practices shared across Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. These themes are presented as the Five S's of Filipino Superstitions: (1) Safeguarding—Superstitions for Bad Luck; (2) Spirituality—Superstitions and Practices at Funerals; (3) Supernaturalism—Superstitions Related to Folklore; (4) Safety—Superstitions Associated with Pregnancy; and (5) Social Conduct—Superstitions Associated with Eating Practices. These thematic clusters demonstrate that Filipino superstitions remain embedded in family practices, everyday behavior, and culturally significant life events, although their meanings and degrees of observance vary across generations.

Table 1. The Five S's of Filipino Superstitions Across Generations

The Five S's	Thematic Cluster	Representative Superstitions and Practices	Cultural Meaning or Function
Safeguarding	Superstitions for Bad Luck	Sweeping at night; <i>sukob</i> ; Friday the 13th; disposing of broken objects; <i>usog</i> ; incense and lucky charms	Avoiding misfortune and protecting household well-being
Spirituality	Superstitions and Practices at Funerals	<i>Pagpag</i> ; avoiding bathing or sweeping during a wake; not bringing food home; avoiding certain sleeping positions; scattering water or coins; avoiding red clothing	Spiritual protection, respect for the deceased, and prevention of perceived harm
Supernaturalism	Superstitions Related to Folklore	<i>Nuno sa punso</i> ; <i>aswang</i> ; protective charms; red cloth; inverted broom; ginger and <i>perdible</i>	Protection from supernatural threats and preservation of folklore
Safety	Superstitions Associated with Pregnancy	Avoiding nighttime exposure; restrictions on certain movements and activities; postpartum practices; advice from <i>manghihirot</i>	Protection of mother and child during pregnancy and childbirth
Social Conduct	Superstitions Associated with Eating Practices	Not clearing the table while someone is eating; avoiding noisy eating; serving from the side of the pot; not sleeping immediately after eating; fallen utensils as signs of visitors	Regulation of behavior, discipline, respect, and symbolic interpretation of everyday events

Note. The Five S's represent thematic clusters generated from the qualitative narratives and are not intended to indicate statistical rankings of prevalence.

1. Safeguarding: Superstitions for Bad Luck

Safeguarding, or beliefs intended to prevent bad luck and preserve good fortune, emerged as one of the most recurrent themes. The most frequently cited specific superstition

was sweeping the floor at night, reported by 8 of the 15 participants. Other beliefs included *sukob*, Friday the 13th, disposing of broken objects, *usog*, and using incense and lucky charms. Watanabe (2024) noted that nighttime

sweeping is associated in folklore with disturbing household spirits, inviting misfortune, or dispersing positive energy.

In this study, the belief functioned as a practical household rule for avoiding misfortune. Millennial participant 2 described a protective charm used for babies: “*Sa mga bata, 'yung pansabit galing sa simbahan sa baby, 'yung bilog-bilog na kulay pula—naniniwala ako doon dahil 'yun ang turo sa akin ng aking pamilya.*”. English translation: “For babies, there is this red circular charm from the church that is attached to them. I believe in it because that is what my family taught me.” The response demonstrates how family instruction contributes to the continuation of inherited beliefs.

Similarly, Generation Z participant 1 recalled: “*My grandparents, parents and aunts always remind me na kahit anong basag sa bahay kailangan itapon na siya kasi may malas siyang dala—so kailangang alisin yung malas.*” English translation: “My grandparents, parents, and aunts always remind me that any broken object in the house should be thrown away because it carries bad luck, so the bad luck needs to be removed.” This response shows how repeated reminders from several family members embed superstition in routine household behavior.

Another Generation Z participant described *usog*: “*Yung usog daw' nangyayari yun when you compliment a baby despite gutom ka or wala kang kain at all.*” English translation: “They say *usog* happens when you compliment a baby while you are hungry or have not eaten at all.”—Gen Z Participant 3. The use of “*daw*” (“they say”) suggests awareness of the belief without necessarily indicating unquestioned acceptance, demonstrating that knowledge of a superstition and belief in it may differ.

A further example was provided by Gen Z Participant 4: “*Tuwing Friday/Sunday night, nag-eensenso kami ng bahay namin. Most of our family members, yung adult, they believe that it can remove bad luck.*” English translation: “Every Friday/Sunday night, we burn incense in our house. Most of the adults in our family believe that it can remove bad luck.”—Gen Z Participant 4. The response demonstrates that superstition may persist through collective household practice, even when younger members may interpret the practice differently from older family members.

Participants also described *sukob* and Friday the 13th: “*The Sukob is very particular to our family—siblings are not allowed to get married in the same year dahil if that happens, may isa daw mamatay or mamalasin ang family habang-buhay. Third, is that you shouldn't sweep at night because it is like driving away good fortune. Malas ang magwalis sa gabi. And the last one is Friday the 13th, since*

it is unlucky and they say that you need to be careful sa araw na yan.” English translation: “*Sukob* is very particular to our family. Siblings are not allowed to get married in the same year because if that happens, one of them might die or the family might experience bad luck for life. You should not sweep at night because it is like driving away good fortune. Sweeping at night is unlucky. Friday the 13th is also considered unlucky, so they say you need to be careful on that day.” — Participant, generational group reported in the original data

Taken together, these accounts show that safeguarding superstitions are maintained through family instruction, repeated practice, and precautionary behavior.

2. Spirituality: Superstitions and Practices at Funerals

The second S, Spirituality, encompasses beliefs associated with wakes, funerals, and burial. One prominent example is *pagpag*, in which individuals stop at another location before returning home after attending a wake or burial.

One participant explained: “*When we go to a funeral, the family don't go back directly at home. We stop over to convenience store/fast food/coffee shop which we termed Pagpag. This practice means avoiding of being followed by death or our family will be next in line to have someone to die.*” English translation: “When we go to a funeral, the family does not return directly home. We stop at a convenience store, fast-food restaurant, or coffee shop, which we call *pagpag*. This practice is believed to prevent death from following us or another family member from being the next person to die.”— Participant, generational group reported in the original data. The practice functions as a culturally prescribed precaution following exposure to death and is often performed collectively within families. Other funeral-related beliefs included avoiding bathing or sweeping during a wake, not bringing food home, avoiding certain sleeping positions, scattering water or coins, and avoiding red clothing.

Millennial participant 2 recalled: “*Kapag may namatay o nakalibing, magsaboy sa daan ng tubig o coins.*” English translation: “When someone dies or has been buried, scatter water or coins along the road.” These practices reflect concerns with spiritual protection, respect for the deceased, and protection of the living, providing culturally familiar ways of responding to death.

3. Supernaturalism: Superstitions Related to Folklore

The third S, Supernaturalism, refers to beliefs involving supernatural beings and protective practices rooted in Filipino folklore. The *nuno sa punso* was repeatedly identified across the generational groups.

A Millennial participant shared: “*Sa bakuran namin may maliit na parang hill, pinaniniwalaan na may nakatirang*

nuno doon—kaya lagi kaming 'nagtatabi-tabi po'. Turo sa akin iyon ng lahat ng nakakatanda sa pamilya namin.” English translation: “In our yard, there is a small hill-like area where we believe a *nuno* lives, so we always say ‘tabi-tabi po.’ That was taught to me by all the older members of my family.” — Millennial Participant 2. The response demonstrates that folklore is transmitted through both language and behavior. The expression “*tabi-tabi po*” functions as a learned practice of caution and respect toward a perceived supernatural presence.

Participants also described protective practices associated with the *aswang*: “*We learn that to protect ourselves we have to tie a red cloth to doorways, inverting a broom (walis), or wearing ginger wrapped in red fabric pinned with a pardiblee.*”— Participant, generational group reported in the original data

These practices demonstrate how folklore provides symbolic strategies for dealing with perceived supernatural threats. However, differences in acceptance were also evident, indicating that cultural transmission does not necessarily produce identical levels of belief. Individuals may retain knowledge of a superstition while questioning its literal truth.

4. Safety: Superstitions Associated with Pregnancy

The fourth S, Safety, encompasses beliefs associated with pregnancy and childbirth. Fliginskikh et al. (2017) emphasized that pregnancy is a significant period of physical and social transformation in which families may develop beliefs and practices for navigating uncertainty.

Generation X participant 4 shared several pregnancy-related beliefs: “*Bawal lumabas sa gabi at magpahamog ang buntis kasi marami raw epekto sa bata. Bawal maglagay ng kung anu-anong tali sa balikat dahil maaapektuhan ang panganganak. Kapag nakapanganak na, bawal yumuko-yuko at mauntog. Kumain ng pampabinat na pagkain para sa susunod na pagbubuntis wala nang bawal-bawal. Bawal magpahangin, para maiwasan na yung utak at isip mo ma-stress. Pati para pag nag-breastfeed ka, hindi siya putol-putol.*” English translation: “A pregnant woman should not go outside at night or be exposed to the evening dew because it may affect the baby. She should not place certain ties around her shoulders because this may affect childbirth. After giving birth, she should not repeatedly bend down or hit her head. Certain foods should be eaten to prepare for the next pregnancy so that there will be fewer restrictions. She should avoid exposure to drafts or wind to prevent stress and interruptions in breastfeeding.” The participant also reported following these practices and trusting the advice of a *manghihilot*. These narratives suggest that pregnancy-related superstitions function as culturally transmitted

mechanisms for protecting maternal and child well-being and managing uncertainty.

5. Social Conduct: Superstitions Associated with Eating Practices

The fifth S, Social Conduct, includes superstitions related to food, dining, and table behavior. Generation X participant 4 recalled: “*Huwag pagliligpitan ang hindi pa tapos kumain.*” English translation: “Do not clear away the dishes while someone is still eating.” Similarly, Generation X participant 3 stated: “*Wag kang kakain nang maingay, dahil nagtatawag ka ng maligno.*” English translation: “Do not eat noisily because you might attract a malevolent spirit.” The same participant added: “*Kapag nagsasandok sa kaldero, kailangan nasa gilid lang ang sandok, kapag sa gitna, maghihirap ang buhay mo.*” English translation: “When serving food from the cooking pot, the ladle should be placed at the side; if you scoop from the center, you will experience hardship in life.” These responses show how supernatural explanations may reinforce household discipline and socially appropriate behavior.

Generational differences were also evident. A Millennial participant recalled: “*Bawal agad matulog pagkatapos kumain.*” English translation: “You should not sleep immediately after eating.” — Millennial Participant 1. Meanwhile, Generation Z participant 2 shared: “*Pag nahulog yung kutsara o tinidor, parang dun naaano kung lalaki o babae ba yung biglang darating sa bahay mo.*” English translation: “When a spoon or fork falls, it supposedly indicates whether the unexpected visitor who will arrive at your house will be a man or a woman.” These responses suggest that younger participants may encounter such beliefs more as familiar sayings, symbolic practices, or entertaining traditions than as strict behavioral rules.

The Five S's—Safeguarding, Spirituality, Supernaturalism, Safety, and Social Conduct—capture the principal contexts in which superstitious beliefs were expressed across the three generations. The findings show that these beliefs extend from protection against bad luck and supernatural harm to responses to death, pregnancy, and everyday social behavior. Importantly, the participant narratives demonstrate that knowing, practicing, and believing in a superstition are distinct but related dimensions. The use of expressions such as “*daw*” (“they say”) and the presence of skepticism among some participants suggest that individuals may recognize or practice a tradition without fully accepting its supernatural explanation. Therefore, in response to the first research question, the common superstitions identified in this study are organized into the Five S's of Filipino Superstitions: Safeguarding, Spirituality, Supernaturalism, Safety, and Social Conduct. These beliefs remain culturally present across Generation

X, Millennials, and Generation Z, although their meanings and levels of observance vary. Some are actively practiced, others are maintained as family traditions, while others survive mainly as cultural stories or familiar sayings. Thus, the continuity of Filipino superstition is characterized by both persistence and variation in interpretation and practice (Tamariz et al., 2026).

Patterns and Processes in the Transmission of Superstitions Across Generations

Thematic analysis of the participants' narratives revealed three major channels through which superstitions are transmitted across generations: (1) Through Family, (2)

Through Culture, and (3) Through Communication. These channels demonstrate that superstitions are not transmitted through a single mechanism but through overlapping processes involving parental instruction, discipline, storytelling, personal experiences, observation, participation in cultural practices, repeated reminders, and everyday interactions. The narratives further show that transmission is not always direct or compulsory. In some families, superstitions are explicitly taught and reinforced by older members, while in others, they are introduced as suggestions, observed through practice, or retained as cultural traditions even when their supernatural explanations are questioned.

Table 2. The Three Channels and Processes of Superstition Transmission Across Generations

Channel of Transmission	Processes Identified	Illustrative Evidence from Participants	Nature of Transmission
1. Through Family	Parental instruction; discipline; advice; testimonies; personal experiences; intergenerational guidance	Parents, grandparents, and older relatives explicitly teach or remind younger members about superstitions	Direct and intentional; may be authoritative or advisory
2. Through Culture	Observation; participation in rituals; family traditions; habitual practice; cultural identity	Superstitions are practiced during funerals, birthdays, and other significant events and eventually become customary	Implicit, participatory, and habitual
3. Through Communication	Storytelling; word of mouth; repetition; persuasion; mutual reminders; sharing of experiences	Beliefs are transmitted through conversations, stories, warnings, and repeated reminders among family members, friends, and peers	Informal, interpersonal, and experiential

Note. The three channels represent thematic patterns derived from participants' narratives and may overlap. A single practice may be transmitted simultaneously through family, cultural participation, and communication.

1. Through Family: Instruction, Discipline, and Intergenerational Guidance

The family emerged as the most prominent channel of transmission. Parents, grandparents, aunts, and other elders served as sources of superstitious knowledge through instruction, reminders, discipline, advice, and personal experiences. This finding is consistent with Abdulina et al. (2023), who found that parental attitudes and parental superstitiousness influence teenagers' superstitiousness. Similarly, Keller (2019) emphasized that behaviors, cultural practices, and beliefs may be transmitted from parents and family members to younger generations, potentially producing lasting effects.

Generation X participant 2 described how superstitions were incorporated into child-rearing: “*Sa life kasi natin palagi natin na uudyok ang pamahiin sa pag-uutos natin sa mga bata. Lagi naman natin ina-advise or kahit sabihin naman nating ‘beliefs’ lang siya pero walang mawawala kasi kung paniniwalaan natin. Sa ngayon sa generation nyo*

(pertaining to Gen Z) parang hindi na kayo masyadong naniniwala sa amin (pertaining to Gen X), pero kaming matatanda ay nasanay na. Kasi minsan diba totoo, tapos minsan naman hindi talaga siya totally mapapaniwalaan, dahil noon, wala naman kaming mga cellphone, kaya kung ano yung sinasabi ng mga matatanda sinusunod namin kasi sila naranasan na nila, kaya sinusunod namin mga paalala nila.” English translation: “In our daily lives, superstitions were often used when giving instructions to children. We would advise them, and even if we say that they are only beliefs, we think there is nothing to lose by following them. In your generation, referring to Gen Z, you do not seem to believe in us as much anymore. But we older people became accustomed to them. Sometimes they seemed to be true, and sometimes they were not completely believable. Before, we did not have cellphones, so we followed what older people told us because they had experienced those things themselves. That is why we followed their reminders.” The response illustrates vertical transmission, in which beliefs move from older to younger family

members. It also highlights the importance of trust in the experience and authority of elders. This is consistent with Besa et al. (2021), who noted that Millennials and Generation Z are taught by elders to listen to and respect ancestral knowledge associated with superstition.

The disciplinary role of family was further emphasized by Generation X participant 5: “*Sa pagdidisiplina, dun kasi kami noon. Kapag inutusan kami, laging nakasubaybay mga magulang namin. So kapag inuutusan kami, ay para sa amin iyon. Ito ang sabi, ‘Kaya ngayon tinuturuan namin kayo. Kaya yung mga sinasabi namin sa inyo. Yung mga paniniwala at beliefs ay para sa inyo rin balang araw.’ So, kami noong mga bata, naniniwala kami. And naniniwala ako na totoo naman, kasi hindi ka lalaki kung di mo susundin ang mga magulang mo. Kasi sila naman ang nakakaalam.*” English translation: “Discipline was how it was done in our time. When our parents instructed us, they closely supervised us. They would tell us, ‘This is why we are teaching you these things. The beliefs and practices we are telling you are also for your benefit someday.’ As children, we believed them. I believed they were true because you would not grow up properly if you did not obey your parents, because they were the ones who knew better.” This demonstrates that superstition was transmitted not merely as information but as part of parental authority, discipline, and socialization.

However, family transmission was not always authoritative. Gen X Participant 1 described a more permissive approach: “*Yung pagkasinasabi yung ano halimbawa ‘ito bawal, ito’ pero nasa kanila naman iyon kung maniniwala sila o hindi basta nasabi ko na ano iyon, pero wala naman ako sa kanila na kung maniwala sila o hindi.*” English translation: “We tell them, for example, ‘This is prohibited, this is not allowed,’ but it is up to them whether they believe it or not. As long as I have told them about it, I do not force them to believe.” This finding demonstrates that transmission does not necessarily result in acceptance. Older family members may communicate traditional beliefs while allowing younger members to decide whether to follow them. Testimonies and anecdotal experiences may likewise serve as informal evidence for why a practice should be observed.

Conversely, transmission may weaken or stop altogether. Millennial Participant 4 stated: “*Wala kasi kaming pamahiin, wala. Sa mga ninuno namin, mga ganyan, pero sa amin kasing ganyan, hindi na sinasabi.*” English translation: “We do not have superstitions. Our ancestors had those kinds of beliefs, but in our family, those things are no longer talked about.” This illustrates that non-transmission is also part of intergenerational transmission. When beliefs are no longer communicated or practiced, they may gradually disappear from family discourse.

Srivastava (2019) similarly reported that while some young people retain superstitions out of respect for elders, many reject them as lacking truth.

A more selective form of transmission was evident in a Millennial participant's account of funeral practices: “*Wala. ‘Di ba sa probinsya ganyan, mga ano sila—mapamahiin. Sa amin kasi, wala, okay lang naman. Pag may mga matanda lang naman, ano, ‘Oy, huwag n’yong gawin ‘yan.’ Lalo na nung namatay ‘yung kapatid ko nung March, sabi nila bago lumabas ang bangkay, magbasag ng bote, tapos magkatay ng manok. Sabi ko, ‘Ah, gano’n ba ‘yon? Sige, gawin n’yo kung ano ‘yung sinabi din nila kasi ‘yun ang kailangan sundin.’ So gano’n ang ginawa namin. Tapos kapag may mga ganyan daw sa bahay n’yo, bawal daw kayong maligo doon sa CR n’yo—kailangan sa ibang bahay—but hindi na namin ginagawa. Meron pa ‘yung sinabi nila na hindi kayo puwedeng mag-ano ng gawaing bahay habang andun ‘yung nakalibing, kailangan magbayad. Gumawa naman kami. Kung ano ‘yung utos ng matanda, ‘Oh sige, sundin natin,’ pero pag ayaw mo naman, okay lang naman.*” English translation: “In the provinces, people are often like that—they are more superstitious. In our family, we are not really like that. Sometimes older people would say, ‘Hey, don't do that.’ When my sibling died, they told us to break a bottle and slaughter a chicken before the body was taken out. I said, ‘Oh, is that how it is? Okay, do whatever they told us because that is what we are supposed to follow.’ So we did it. They also said that if there was a death in the house, we should not bathe in our own bathroom and should use another house's bathroom, but we no longer do that. They also said that we could not do household chores while the deceased was still there and that we had to pay something. We followed what the elders told us, but if you did not want to follow it, that was also okay.” — Millennial Participant 4. The account illustrates selective compliance, in which some practices are followed out of respect for elders during significant events while others are no longer observed. Thus, family transmission involves negotiation between respect for elders and individual judgment.

2. Through Culture: Observation, Participation, and Habitual Practice

The second channel is culture, through which superstitions are learned through participation in family and community traditions. Consistent with Cultural Transmission Theory, cultural knowledge develops through social learning and interaction. Superstitions may therefore be learned not through formal instruction but through observation, participation, and repeated practice.

Gen X Participant 2 recalled: “*Noon kasi sa generation namin, gaya nga ng wala pa kaming cellphone, naniniwala lang kami sa mga sabi-sabi. Dahil ang sabi naman sa amin*

ay naranasan naman nila. So kahit hindi na natin naranasan, kumbaga yung paniniwala natin sa Diyos walang ebidensya, walang patunay, pero naniniwala tayo sa mga sinasabi o pinaniniwalaan natin siya. So parang ganun din yung superstitions, kung may nangyari man o nagkataon lang na nangyayari yung mga paniniwala o sinasabi, pinaniniwalaan natin.” English translation: “In our generation, especially before we had cellphones, we simply believed what people told us because they said they had experienced it. Even if we had not experienced it ourselves, we believed what people said or believed. It was similar with superstitions. If something happened or seemed to happen as predicted by the belief, we believed it.” The narrative highlights the importance of socially shared experience. The testimony of people perceived to have experienced an event could be sufficient to sustain a belief even without direct personal evidence.

Similarly, Gen X Participant 3 stated: “*Sumunod lang kasi wala namang mawawala, diba? Kung sumusunod ka. Pero mas maganda kung sumunod ka. Katulad namin sumusunod kami.*” English translation: “We simply followed because there was nothing to lose by doing so, right? It was better to follow. That is what we did.” This illustrates habitual compliance, in which a superstition may persist because following it is considered harmless and culturally appropriate.

Cultural transmission may also occur during significant events. Gen X Participant 2 recalled: “*Dati pag galing akong patay diretso bahay, ngayon ko lang din naman nalaman, nung nakinig ka, ‘Ay may ganon pala.’ Gawin na lang natin, kasi mamaya baka kasama natin, kaya gawin na lang natin.*” English translation: “Before, I would go straight home after coming from a funeral. I only learned about the practice later, when I heard about it and thought, ‘Oh, there is such a practice.’ We might as well do it because perhaps the spirit might come with us, so we should just do it.” The response demonstrates that cultural transmission may occur even after childhood, as individuals encounter and participate in practices associated with significant life events.

The participatory nature of transmission was explicitly described by Gen X Participant 3: “*Simple lang, sunod-sunod lang tayo. Ang tanging ginawa namin is kasama na namin ang anak namin sa pagsunod.*” English translation: “It was simple; we just followed one another. What we did was include our children in following the practice.” This provides a clear example of participatory cultural transmission, in which children learn by performing the practice rather than merely hearing about it.

The same process appeared in family celebrations. Millennial Participant 5 recalled: “*Tulad na lang pag may birthday ‘yan sa amin, pag halimbawa birthday ng mother*

o father ko, di kami makapag-alis nang gabi palagi. Di kami makapag-prepare ng ano kasi bawal magwalis, oo bawal magwalis ng gabi ganyan. Tapos kaya minsan ang ginagawa namin, kadalasan, umagang-umaga, saka kami nagde-decorate tapos hapon yung ganapan.” English translation: “For example, during birthdays in our family, especially when it is my mother's or father's birthday, we cannot leave at night and we cannot prepare things because sweeping at night is prohibited. So sometimes we decorate early in the morning and hold the celebration in the afternoon.” This illustrates how a superstition can become integrated into the organization of family activities, eventually becoming habitual through repeated observance. Thus, the cultural channel demonstrates that superstitions are transmitted not only through words but also through doing—watching, participating, repeating, and incorporating practices into everyday routines.

3. Through Communication: Storytelling, Repetition, and Shared Experiences

The third channel is communication. Participants identified conversations, storytelling, word of mouth, reminders, and personal testimonies as mechanisms through which superstitions are maintained. Mandal (2018) similarly described superstition as culturally transmitted behavior that may arise from fear, uncertainty, and unpredictable circumstances and may be learned through verbal and social interaction.

Gen X Participant 1 described the resistance of younger generations to direct verbal persuasion:

“*Sinasabi rin na ‘ito, maniwala kayo,’ pero yung iba kasing kabataan hindi naniniwala sa mga ganun. Pag minsan sinasabi ko sa mga anak ko, sasabihin, ‘Naku mama, iba na generation namin!’ ganun.*” English translation: “We also tell them, ‘Believe in this,’ but some young people do not believe in those things anymore. Sometimes when I tell my children about them, they say, ‘Oh Mom, our generation is different now!’” The response shows that communication remains an important channel even when acceptance is no longer guaranteed.

Gen X Participant 2 further explained: “*Sa pagtsi-tsismis. Totoo naman talaga iyon. Through communication, kasi pag nag-usap-usap, dun naipapasa yung mga beliefs. Pag kinakausap natin yung iba, sa communication magkakaroon ng pagpasa-pasa ng beliefs.*” English translation: “Through gossip or casual conversation. That is really how it happens. Through communication, because when people talk to each other, beliefs are passed on. When we talk to others, beliefs are transferred through communication.” This highlights the informal nature of transmission, where beliefs circulate through ordinary interpersonal interaction rather than formal instruction.

Personal experience also emerged as a mechanism of reinforcement. Millennial Participant 3 stated: *"Pag ikaw na mismo naka-experience ng ganong pangyayari, doon ka maniniwala na totoo yung mga pamahin."* English translation: "When you personally experience something like that, that is when you will believe that the superstition is true." This demonstrates experiential validation: a belief initially received through communication may become stronger when individuals interpret a personal experience as confirming it.

Gen X Participant 5 similarly described oral transmission: *"Kanya-kanya kasing paniniwala o kwento 'yan e, saling-kwento... kwentuhan gano'n, parang ako, kwento ni ganito ganyan, nagsasalin-salin lang 'yon e."* English translation: "These are different beliefs or stories from one person to another. It is through storytelling and conversation. Someone tells me a story, and it is simply passed from one person to another." The response illustrates how storytelling becomes a vehicle for preserving and circulating cultural beliefs.

Among Generation Z participants, communication also occurred through peers and friends, particularly during significant events. Gen Z Participant 3 explained: *"Sa mga friends and families we always remind each other yung mga superstitions. Siguro there are specific events na parang maaalala namin na, ah, ganito palang superstition na kailangan nating sundin or important life events like yung mga weddings or mga funerals."* English translation: "Among friends and family, we always remind each other about superstitions. There are specific events that remind us that there are certain superstitions we are supposed to follow, especially during important life events such as weddings or funerals." This demonstrates mutual reinforcement, showing that transmission is not always a one-way process from older to younger generations. Younger members may also remind one another of traditional practices.

Gen Z Participant 5 further explained: *"So hindi naman lahat ng friends ko naniniwala sa ganitong belief, and as well as my family, hindi naman sila ganon naniniwala sa ganito. But there are some events na parang sinasabi sa'yo na gawin mo na lang kasi wala namang mawawala. So through that way, parang na-reremind 'yung isa't isa about these practices—na ayun nga, may ganito palang practices na until now, it's still existing."* English translation: "Not all of my friends and family believe in these beliefs. However, during certain events, people tell you to simply do the practice because there is nothing to lose. In this way, we remind one another about these practices and realize that such practices still exist today." This provides strong evidence that transmission and belief are distinct processes. Individuals may not accept a superstition as fact but may

still communicate, remember, and perform it because it is considered harmless or culturally meaningful.

The role of elders and repetition further strengthens this process. Gen Z Participant 3 explained that elders maintain continuity by telling stories and repeatedly practicing superstitions until they become habitual. Similarly, Millennial Participant 4 stated: *"Kapag paulit-ulit na sinasabi, natatandaan nila."* English translation: "When something is repeatedly said, they remember it."

These accounts demonstrate that repetition strengthens memory and increases the likelihood that a belief will remain accessible for future practice.

The findings demonstrate that Filipino superstitions are transmitted through three interconnected channels: Family, Culture, and Communication. Family transmission occurs through instruction, discipline, advice, and personal testimony; cultural transmission occurs through observation and participation; and communication occurs through storytelling, conversation, repetition, reminders, and shared experiences. Importantly, transmission is neither linear nor uniform. Four forms were evident: direct transmission, through explicit instruction; participatory transmission, through observing and performing practices; experiential transmission, through personal experiences that reinforce beliefs; and selective transmission, in which individuals retain some practices while rejecting others.

The findings further establish that transmission does not automatically result in belief. Participants sometimes followed practices because of respect for elders, habit, perceived harmlessness, or cultural significance, while others expressed skepticism or rejected traditional explanations. Thus, what is transmitted across generations may be the belief itself, knowledge of the belief, the associated practice, or its cultural meaning. Transmission may also be interrupted. As demonstrated by the Millennial participant who reported that ancestral superstitions were no longer discussed in the family, beliefs may weaken when communication and practice cease.

Conversely, transmission may produce adaptation and modification. Millennial Participant 5 described how the family's *pagpag* practice was modified by the participant's mother: *"Nung ano pa eh, sa burol 'yon, yung mother ko, may dinagdag pa nga siya eh... sabay-sabay kasi kami umuwi noon. 'Daan muna tayo sa ganito,' edi may dinaanan kaming store... pagpasok namin, may nakita na akong timba doon sa may pinto... yung mother ko is naglagay na doon ng timba na may tubig tapos sabi niya bago daw kami pumasok ng gate, maghugas daw kami ng kamay. Yun ang sabi niya, maghugas daw kami ng kamay dahil daw 'yun sa spirit or mga bad ano gano'n."* English

translation: “It happened during a wake. My mother added another practice. We all went home together, and she told us to stop somewhere first, so we stopped at a store. When we arrived home, I saw a bucket of water near the entrance. My mother had placed it there and told us to wash our hands before entering the gate because it was related to the spirit or something bad.”

The participant (Millennial 5) further explained how the modified practice was adopted by the next generation: “...*lagi kong sinasabi sa kanya, ganito, maghugas ng kamay bago pumasok ng bahay... ang ginagawa ng dalaga ko, pumupunta na siya sa poso naghuhugas ng kamay bago siya pumasok sa bahay. Kahit na nakapag-pagpag na kami, basta ano na-adopt na niya. Nakasanayan na eh.*” English translation: “I always tell her to wash her hands before entering the house. My daughter now goes to the water pump to wash her hands before entering the house. Even though we have already performed *pagpag*, she has adopted this additional practice. It has become a habit.” This provides clear evidence that cultural transmission involves both continuity and transformation. The practice was not simply reproduced unchanged; it was modified by one generation, repeatedly practiced, and subsequently adopted by the next.

Therefore, in response to the second research question, Filipino superstitions are transmitted primarily through family relationships, cultural participation, and interpersonal communication. These processes involve

instruction, discipline, observation, storytelling, repetition, testimony, participation, and mutual reminders. However, transmission is accompanied by selection, negotiation, skepticism, discontinuation, and modification. Superstitions therefore persist across generations not because they are reproduced unchanged, but because individuals continuously interpret, practice, adapt, and communicate them within changing family and social contexts.

Transformation of Superstitions Across Generations

The analysis of participants' narratives revealed that superstitions have undergone substantial transformation across Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. Rather than simply disappearing with modernization, these beliefs have been questioned, weakened, digitally recontextualized, selectively retained, and reinforced through personal and emotional experiences. Three major themes emerged from the narratives: (1) Questioning and Decline of Traditional Beliefs; (2) Digital Recontextualization of Superstitions; and (3) Selective Persistence and Experiential Reinforcement. These themes demonstrate that the transformation of Filipino superstitions is neither linear nor uniform. Instead, traditional beliefs continue to exist in changing forms as individuals negotiate inherited practices with education, scientific reasoning, technological exposure, personal experience, and contemporary social environments.

Table 3. Three Patterns of Transformation of Superstitions Across Generations

Transformation Pattern	Key Characteristics	Generational Evidence	Resulting Form of Superstition
1. Questioning and Decline	Increased skepticism; scientific reasoning; education; reduced observance; rejection of traditional explanations	More evident among Millennials and Gen Z, although also recognized by Gen X	Beliefs become less frequently practiced or are abandoned
2. Digital Recontextualization	Online exposure; social media; digital storytelling; fact-checking; new online forms of superstition	Particularly evident among Millennials and Gen Z	Traditional beliefs are challenged, preserved, or presented as entertainment and digital content
3. Selective Persistence and Experiential Reinforcement	Habit; family influence; fear; cultural respect; coincidence; personal experience; symbolic meaning	Present across all generations, with different degrees of adherence	Beliefs are selectively maintained, modified, or practiced without necessarily being literally believed

Note. The three themes represent qualitative patterns identified from the participants' narratives. They describe forms of transformation rather than mutually exclusive categories; a participant may simultaneously question, retain, and reinterpret a superstition.

1. Questioning and Decline of Traditional Beliefs

The first transformation pattern, Questioning and Decline, reflects the gradual weakening of traditional superstitions as individuals become increasingly exposed to formal education, scientific explanations, technology, and alternative sources of information. Razon (2020) noted that superstition and scientific understanding can coexist in contemporary life, allowing individuals to distinguish between traditional explanations and evidence-based perspectives. The present findings similarly indicate that younger generations increasingly evaluate inherited beliefs rather than automatically accepting them.

Gen X Participant 2 observed: “*Actually unting-unti lang naman siyang nabago... basta ‘yung mga bata kasi ngayon... sasabihin, ‘Naku di naman totoo yan!’*” English translation: “Actually, it has only gradually changed. The children nowadays would say, ‘Oh, that isn’t true!’” The response suggests a gradual generational shift rather than an abrupt rejection of superstition. Traditional beliefs may continue to be communicated, but younger members are increasingly willing to question their validity.

Scientific reasoning was explicitly identified as a factor in this transformation. Gen X Participant 3 stated: “*Marami na ang nagbago, lalo na yang mga science ngayon na nagsasabi ng ‘di totoo yan.’*” English translation: “Many things have changed, especially because science today tells us that these things are not true.” This suggests that scientific knowledge has become an important basis for evaluating traditional beliefs. Rather than accepting a superstition solely because it has been inherited, individuals increasingly consider whether claims are supported by evidence. This is consistent with Srivastava (2019), who reported that many young people in contemporary society are less inclined to adhere to traditional superstitions.

Among Millennials, this shift was associated with a stronger sense of personal agency. Millennial Participant 4 explained: “*Hindi kami naniniwala sa ‘Wag mong gawin ‘yan, malas ‘yan... sa amin kasi, kapag masipag ka, kaya mo—magagawa mo.’*” English translation: “We do not believe in ‘Don’t do that, it’s bad luck.’ For us, if you work hard, you can achieve what you want.” The statement indicates a movement from superstition-based causality toward personal agency, wherein success is understood more in terms of effort and determination than luck or supernatural forces.

Generation Z participants likewise described the decline of particular practices. Gen Z Participant 3 stated: “*Some superstitions... like bawal mong i-allow yung mga siblings mo na mag marry ng same year... hindi na siya ganon kapractice.*” English translation: “Some superstitions, such as not allowing siblings to marry in the same year, are no

longer practiced as much.” This indicates that some beliefs have shifted from active behavioral rules to recognized cultural traditions.

Gen Z Participant 5 further described how some beliefs are retained primarily for cultural or recreational purposes: “*In this generation, some superstitions are fading while others are kept more for fun or traditions out of belief... social media... nagiging fun siya.*” English translation: “In this generation, some superstitions are fading, while others are kept more for fun or tradition rather than because people truly believe in them. Through social media, they become something fun.” This finding is important because decline does not necessarily mean disappearance. A superstition may lose its authority as a behavioral rule while remaining recognizable as a family tradition, cultural reference, or source of entertainment.

However, the findings also challenge the assumption that younger generations simply become more rational. One Gen X participant described younger people as “*matigas ang ulo*” (“stubborn” or “hard-headed”), suggesting that rejection may sometimes be interpreted as resistance to elders. Similarly, a Millennial participant explained that some practices continue because they are “*parang nakasanayan na lang*” (“it has simply become a habit”), while another noted that “*kapag mga kasama mo naniniwala, minsan mapapaniwala ka rin*” (“when the people around you believe, sometimes you may believe as well”). These accounts demonstrate that decline is neither uniform nor driven exclusively by rationality. Family habits, social influence, and interpersonal relationships may continue to sustain selected beliefs.

Gen Z Participant 3 explicitly identified education and media as factors: “*I think yung main factors... #1 is yung Education... or yung mga media influence... mas skeptical.*” English translation: “I think the main factors are, first, education, and also media influence, which make people more skeptical.” The response reinforces the role of education and media exposure in encouraging critical evaluation. Akbirova et al. (2020) likewise reported that less-superstitious students tend to feel more confident, believe in their own agency, and perceive greater control over their lives.

2. Digital Recontextualization of Superstitions

The second transformation pattern is Digital Recontextualization, referring to how technology and social media have changed the ways superstitions are encountered, evaluated, preserved, and presented. The findings reveal a dual role of technology: it can challenge traditional beliefs by providing alternative explanations while also preserving and circulating them through digital platforms.

Gen Z Participant 5 explained: *“Technology has introduced new beliefs and made people rethink old ones. And dahil nga sa technology, you can search na talaga kung ano ba talaga ‘yung reason behind those superstitious beliefs, and may mga research talaga na nagpapatunay na there are some superstitious beliefs na hindi naman talaga totoo.”* English translation: “Technology has introduced new beliefs and made people rethink old ones. Because of technology, you can now search for the actual reasons behind superstitious beliefs, and there is research showing that some superstitious beliefs are not actually true.” This demonstrates how digital access has changed the basis for evaluating beliefs. Individuals can now compare inherited explanations with scientific and educational information. Nevertheless, Luna et al. (2019) noted that despite scientific and technological advancement, Generation Z continues to engage with superstitions that may provide meaning or help individuals cope with everyday experiences.

Gen X participant 1 similarly observed: *“Malaki kasi ngayon ang takbo sa mga kabataan, na babalewala dulot ng social media.”* English translation: “Social media has a strong influence on young people today, causing them to disregard these beliefs.” The statement reflects the perception that social media contributes to the weakening of traditional beliefs among younger people. However, digital platforms also preserve traditional beliefs. Gen Z Participant 1 stated: *“I think, ‘yun specific yung mga tawag dito... animation, yung mga animation na ano eh, kinukwento yung ganito, podcast specifically, specific na topics sa Spotify na mapapakinggan mo yung mga superstitious beliefs na pinaniniwalaan... ‘yun yung parang influence ng social media na kahit papaano hindi natin nakakalimutan na meron tayong ganoong paniniwala... may knowledge tayo na, oh meron palang ganito or dapat pala siyang sinusunod.”* English translation: “I think it appears through animations and podcasts that tell stories about these beliefs. Through social media, we do not completely forget that we have these beliefs. At least we gain knowledge that such beliefs exist or that some people believe they should be followed.” This demonstrates that digital platforms may function as repositories of cultural memory. Even when beliefs are no longer regularly practiced, digital content can keep them visible and familiar to younger audiences. Thakkar (2023) similarly discussed how superstitious thinking among Millennials and Generation Z has appeared in digital forms, including email chains that use threats of bad luck to encourage users to forward messages.

Technology may also contribute to weakened intergenerational transmission. Millennial Participant 4 explained: *“Nawawala na din, kasi sa sobrang dami ng bago ngayon, nakakalimutan na rin nila ‘yung mga*

pamahiin na ganyan—lalo na ‘yung mga kabataan ngayon na ang ginagawa ay maglaro. Ako din, millennial ako eh. Hindi ko na rin naipapasa sa anak ko kung minsan ‘yung mga ganyang pamahiin ng mga matatanda.” English translation: “They are also disappearing because there are so many new things today that people forget those superstitions, especially young people who are occupied with other activities. I am also a Millennial, and sometimes I no longer pass those kinds of superstitions from older people on to my child.” The account suggests that some beliefs decline not because they are deliberately rejected but because they become less visible and less frequently communicated or practiced.

At the same time, technology may generate new forms of superstition. Gen Z Participant 5 noted: *“Yes, like people believing certain numbers and passwords are unlucky or that constantly using a phone is cursed—may mga gano’n na ngayon na paniniwala.”* English translation: “Yes, like people believing that certain numbers and passwords are unlucky or that constantly using a phone is cursed—there are beliefs like that now.” This suggests that superstition can adapt to contemporary objects and technologies. While the content changes, the tendency to assign symbolic or supernatural meaning to uncertain events may remain.

The dual role of technology is further illustrated by Gen X Participant 3: *“Yun nga, malakas ang hatak ngayon ng social media, yung mga bata wala nang pinaniniwalaan yan, yung ngang mga magulang nila hindi na pinaniniwalaan yan. Napakalaki ng naging epekto ng mga cellphone na yan. Yes ako gumagamit ng cellphone, pero hindi nagbabago ang aking paniniwala.”* English translation: “Social media has a strong influence today. Young people no longer believe in these things, and even their parents may no longer believe them. Cellphones have had a huge effect. Yes, I use a cellphone, but my beliefs do not change.” The response demonstrates that technology exposure does not automatically produce belief change. Individuals interpret digital information according to their existing values, experiences, and relationships. Digital transformation is therefore better understood as a space for questioning, preservation, reinforcement, and reinterpretation, rather than simply a cause of disbelief.

3. Selective Persistence and Experiential Reinforcement

The third transformation pattern, Selective Persistence and Experiential Reinforcement, emerged from participants who continued to observe or believe in selected superstitions despite modernization, education, and technological exposure. Some beliefs persisted because they were embedded in childhood upbringing and family routines, while others were reinforced by fear, perceived consequences, coincidence, or personal experiences.

Tosyali et al. (2021) noted that stronger analytical thinking among Millennials and Generation Z may contribute to declining superstition because some beliefs are viewed as untrue, impractical, or outdated.

Gen X Participant 1 explained: *“Kasi, madami sa mga ito, ay nakalakihan, pero hindi mo naman kasi minsan magagawa lahat non, basta kung ano ang nakamulatan mo pagkabata mo, na madadala mo sa pagtanda mo.”* English translation: “Many of these beliefs are things we grew up with. You cannot necessarily practice all of them, but whatever you were exposed to during childhood, you may carry with you into adulthood.” This illustrates habitual persistence. A belief may survive not necessarily because it is continuously defended as objectively true, but because it has become part of an individual's upbringing and behavioral repertoire.

The continuing influence of parents was evident even among Generation Z. Gen Z Participant 4 stated: *“Wala, kasi lagi akong sinasabihan ng mga parents ko patungkol sa mga pamahin, binibigyan nila ako ng limit like ito hindi ka dapat ganyan o gano'n kasi sa online platform wala naman kasi silang alam e, like wala silang evidence kaya ako mas naniniwala ako sa parents ko.”* English translation: “No, because my parents always tell me about superstitions and give me limits about what I should or should not do. I trust my parents more because, on online platforms, there may not be evidence that applies to our family.” This response is significant because it demonstrates that digital access does not necessarily override familial authority. Trust in parents may remain stronger than information encountered online, allowing selected traditional beliefs to persist even within digitally connected generations.

Personal experience was another important mechanism of persistence. Gen X Participant 2 stated: *“So parang yung pamahin na iyon ay parang totoo, kasi kung hindi naman totoo, bakit nangyari siya?”* English translation: “So it seems that the superstition is true, because if it were not true, why did it happen?” The response illustrates how coincidence may be interpreted as confirmation. When an event appears to occur after a superstition is followed or violated, individuals may construct a causal relationship between the belief and the event.

Millennial Participant 3 similarly described an experience involving *tawas*: *“Mayroon, 'yun nga sabi ko sa'yo o kwento ko sa'yo pero ayun lahat sila aware na kasi sila mismo naka-experience nang gano'n, like nung nakaraan ito nakunan at nung nagpatawas dun na nakita sa tawas yung aswang.”* English translation: “Yes, as I mentioned in the story, everyone was aware of it because they themselves had experienced something similar. For example, someone previously had a miscarriage, and when they

underwent *pagtatawas*, they said that an *aswang* was seen in the wax.” The account shows how shared community narratives and emotionally significant experiences can reinforce traditional explanations. The experience becomes part of the evidence used within the community to sustain the belief.

Another Millennial participant described perceived consequences associated with funeral practices: *“Yung paniniwala ko... meron pang... yung isa pang pamahin, diba pag yung ilalabas yung patay sa bahay nyo, nagbabasag... may mga binabasag din na gano'n. Tapos pag hindi mo daw yun nagawa yung sa paglabas ng patay sa bahay, sunod-sunod every year halos.”* English translation: “One of the superstitions I believe in is that when the deceased is taken out of the house, something breakable should be broken. They say that if you do not do this when the deceased leaves the house, deaths may continue almost every year.”— Millennial Participant 5. This demonstrates how fear of negative consequences may encourage adherence even when individuals are uncertain about the supernatural mechanism behind the practice.

Fear was also evident among Generation Z. Gen Z Participant 1 recalled: *“Ayun yung first time kong nakapunta ng burol, na parang sabi ko, ay kailangan ko talaga maniwala dito kasi parang somehow takot din ako na baka nga sinabi ng nanay ko baka sundan ako ng kaluluwa, ayoko naman malasin buong buhay ko.”* English translation: “That was my first time attending a wake, and I thought that I really needed to believe in it because I was somehow afraid that what my mother said might happen—that the spirit might follow me. I did not want to experience bad luck for the rest of my life.” The account suggests that belief can be context-dependent. An individual may question a superstition under ordinary circumstances but become more willing to follow it when confronted with death, uncertainty, or fear.

Conversely, personal experience can also weaken belief. Gen Z Participant 5 stated: *“May mga times na naniniwala ako sa superstitions. I swept the floor at night despite being told not to, and nothing bad happened naman. It made me realize that these beliefs are more symbolic than real, kasi wala namang nangyaring masama sa akin.”* English translation: “There were times when I believed in superstitions. I swept the floor at night despite being told not to, and nothing bad happened. It made me realize that these beliefs are more symbolic than real because nothing bad happened to me.” This is particularly significant because it demonstrates that personal experience can operate in opposite directions. A perceived confirming experience may strengthen belief, whereas an experience that contradicts an expected consequence may weaken it. Akbirova et al. (2020) similarly associated lower levels of superstition with greater confidence and perceived control over one's life.

The findings demonstrate that the transformation of Filipino superstitions across Generation X, Millennials, and

Generation Z is best understood as a process of decline, recontextualization, and selective persistence, rather than simple disappearance. First, traditional beliefs undergo questioning and decline as education, scientific reasoning, and alternative sources of information become more accessible. Second, superstitions undergo digital recontextualization, as technology and social media both challenge traditional beliefs and preserve them through digital content. Third, selected beliefs demonstrate persistence and experiential reinforcement because of family upbringing, cultural practices, habit, fear, perceived consequences, and personal experiences. Importantly, the findings show that belief, practice, and cultural knowledge are not necessarily identical. A person may no longer literally believe a superstition but may continue to perform it because of family expectations, respect for elders, habit, or the perception that there is “nothing to lose” by following it. Conversely, an individual may strengthen a belief after interpreting a coincidence or personal experience as confirmation.

Thus, the transformation of Filipino superstitions is not a simple movement from belief to disbelief. Rather, beliefs may move from strong conviction to habitual practice, symbolic observance, cultural memory, reinterpretation, or abandonment, while some may simultaneously be revived or reinforced through digital exposure and personal experience. The result is a hybrid form of contemporary superstition, in which inherited beliefs coexist with scientific reasoning, personal agency, digital culture, and cultural identity. Therefore, in response to the third research question, Filipino superstitions have transformed through questioning and declining adherence, digital recontextualization, selective retention, and experiential reinforcement. Their transformation is neither uniform nor irreversible. Instead, superstitions continue to evolve as individuals negotiate inherited cultural knowledge with changing social environments, technological influences, scientific perspectives, and personal experiences.

Conclusion

This study examined the persistence, transmission, and transformation of superstitious beliefs across Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. The findings demonstrate that Filipino superstitions remain culturally meaningful despite modernization, education, and technological advancement. Rather than disappearing, they continue through reinterpretation, selective practice, and adaptation.

The study identified the Five S's of Filipino Superstitions—Safeguarding, Spirituality, Supernaturalism, Safety, and Social Conduct, showing that superstitions remain embedded in family life, significant events, spiritual practices, and everyday behavior. Their transmission occurs primarily through Family, Culture, and Communication, particularly through parental guidance, observation, participation, storytelling, repetition, and personal experiences. Consistent with Cultural Transmission Theory, these findings show that

cultural beliefs are passed across generations through social interaction, but not necessarily reproduced unchanged. Across generations, superstitions were found to undergo three major transformations: Questioning and Decline, Digital Recontextualization, and Selective Persistence and Experiential Reinforcement. Younger generations tend to question traditional beliefs through education, scientific reasoning, and digital exposure, yet selected practices remain because of family influence, habit, cultural respect, fear, and personal experience. The Theory of Belief Networks further supports the finding that beliefs are shaped by interconnected personal, social, and external influences.

Overall, the study concludes that Filipino superstitions are not simply disappearing—they are transforming. Their continued presence reflects the resilience of Filipino cultural knowledge and the ability of individuals to negotiate tradition within changing social and technological contexts. The findings imply that education and cultural preservation should recognize superstitions as part of cultural heritage while encouraging critical thinking and evidence-based interpretation. Ultimately, their significance lies not only in whether they are believed, but in how they continue to shape cultural memory, identity, relationships, and everyday practices across generations.

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