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# The Socio-Cultural Beliefs and Practices of the Ilocanos of Hacienda San Antonio, City of Ilagan: Their Influence on the Behavior and Education of the Adolescents

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**KEYWORDS:** Beliefs, Practices, Education, Adolescents, Socio-Cultural

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## INTRODUCTION

People live in a community with an innate pattern of attitude. They share the experience with each other that make them connected as days go by. These experiences teach them lessons and guidance in facing life's challenges. It can be passed on to their children until it becomes a part of their everyday living. In this matter, culture is being formed.

The Philippines is a melting pot of races, religions, arts, and culture. It offers a variety of groups of people living together in a community. These groups of people can be identified solely in their way of living. Manifestations of their identity come in their actions, beliefs, and aspirations. These things are passed on to their generations being influenced by a foreign group of people during the early times.

In the northern part of the Philippines where the province of Isabela lies, offer various ethnic groups among which are the Ilocanos. "The Ilocanos (Ilocano: Tattao nga Iloko/Ilokano), Ilokano, or Iloko people are the third largest Filipino ethnolinguistic group that mostly reside within the Ilocos Region in the northwestern seaboard of Luzon, Philippines. Due to dispersal of population, some of the Ilocanos in the Ilocos Region migrated in the City of Ilagan in Isabela particularly in the Barrio of Hacienda San Antonio where Spaniards are present during those times. Ybanag and Gaddang ethnic groups do not know how to plant tobacco, so the Spanish missionaries requested Ilocanos in Ilocos Region until they established permanent settlements in the Barrios. The Hacienda then was divided into twenty-five (25) Cabecera to identify where the tenants are residing. The cabecera include: Cabecera 2 (Dappat), Cabecera 3 (San Fernando), Cabecera 4 (San Manuel), Cabecera 5 (Baribad), Cabecera 6-24 (Villa Marcos), Cabecera 7 (Nangalisan), Cabecera 8 (Sta. Maria), Cabecera 9-11 (Capugotan), Cabecera 10 (San Jose), Cabecera 14-16 (Casilagan), Cabecera 17-21 (San Rafael), Cabecera 19 (Villa Suerte), Cabecera 22 (Sablang), Cabecera 23 (San Francisco), Cabecera 25 (Sta. Lucia), Cabecera 27 (Abuan), Centro San Antonio (Capital), Aggasian, Salindingan, Namnama, Gayong-Gayong Norte, Gayong-Gayong Sur, Sindun Bayabo, Sindun Maride, Paliueg.

Due to the advancement of technology and modernization of the world, external influences directly affect culture thereby altering the ways of life of Filipinos. The researcher as an Ilocano was curious whether the Ilocanos in Hacienda San Antonio have been influenced by modernization. Hence, he was challenged to identify the existing beliefs and practices of the Ilocanos in Hacienda of San Antonio in the City of Ilagan and how these influence the behavior and education of the adolescents as basis for culture preservation, educational innovations, and youth empowerment.

## THE PROBLEM

This study is focused on the socio-cultural beliefs and practices of the Ilocanos in Hacienda of San Antonio in the City of Ilagan and their influence on the attitude and education of the adolescents. It sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the cultural beliefs and practices of the Ilocanos in Hacienda of San Antonio in the City of Ilagan along the following aspects:
  - a. Pregnancy and Childbirth,
  - b. Childcare and Child-rearing
  - c. Courtship and marriage
  - d. Healing of the sick, Death, and Burial
  - e. Agriculture and food gathering
2. How do these socio-cultural beliefs and practices affect the behavior and education of the adolescents?

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## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

In a broad sense, the study is predominantly ethnographic which is a fusion of both historical and descriptive methodologies. According to Scott Reeves, et.al., ethnographic research is a type of qualitative research that gathers observations, interviews, and documentary data to produce detailed and comprehensive accounts of different social phenomena. In this study, the descriptive method was used to identify the prevailing beliefs and practices which are still done and practiced up to the present. The historical method, on the other hand, was used to identify how the older generation, perform, or observe certain beliefs and practices during their time.

## **SELECTION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE RESPONDENTS**

Purposive sampling was used in the selection of the key informants and participants of the study. They are the aged citizens who are residents of the area and are pure Ilocanos. They are residents of Hacienda San Antonio who are knowledgeable of their culture and traditions. The younger generation within the adolescent stage was also considered to gather information on the influences of the beliefs and practices on their attitude and education.

## **DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENTS**

To gather the data about their cultural beliefs and practices, the following instruments were used.

**In-depth Interview and Focus-Group Discussion.** This instrument was used by the researcher to investigate the existing socio-cultural beliefs and practices of the respondents. The interview session was done at the most convenient time for the respondents. The researcher made use of a video recorder, voice recorder, or tape recorder for accurate information. The interview guide was composed of questions related to the topic that seeks answers to the cultural beliefs and practices of the Ilocanos.

**Video Camera.** This was used to document the activities done by the respondents particularly on the stages of life covered by this study. This is to document actual beliefs and practices.

**Observation and Immersion.** The researcher stayed in the place of the respondents to feel and experience their way of life and to better understand their cultural beliefs and practices. It is also a way for the researcher to validate the verbal information gathered from the respondents. Since the researcher is from Hacienda San Antonio, it was not difficult for him to interact with the Ilocanos in the place. The researcher sought assistance from the Chairman of every barangay to ensure his safety and security. The immersion started in January 2021.

## **DATA GATHERING PROCEDURE**

Before the actual data gathering, the researcher conducted a pre-survey of the place to determine those who are genuine Ilocanos and have lived in the place since birth. After the survey, the researcher coordinated with the Chairman of the different Barangays of the Hacienda San Antonio to seek permission to conduct the study. The researcher together with friends, relatives, and co-teachers from the barangays visited the identified respondents and explained their purpose. After having gained the residents' confidence and trust, the actual data gathering started with the use of observation, interviews, focused group discussion and immersion. After three months of living with the respondents, data gathered were organized and analyzed.

Findings

1. Beliefs and Practices on:

### **a. Pregnancy and Childbirth**

Life among the Ilocanos of hacienda San Antonio starts from conception as result of a couple's sexual contact. Many conceiving Ilocano women manifest physical and emotional changes like having morning sickness, headaches, craving for things, being irritable and menstruation ceases, which is the first indication of pregnancy. Other Ilocano women though do not experience morning sickness, craving for things and body pains and uneasiness. The Ilocanos believe that maternal impressions (naginawan) on food, things and people would affect the physical appearance of the child in the womb. They also believe that the emotions of the mother during pregnancy would impact on the child's emotions. Most pregnant Ilocano women subject themselves to "hilot" and "agpatal-o" to position the fetus and to keep it cling to the mother's womb.

During childbirth, the Ilocanos observe traditions, beliefs and practices starting from the time the mother starts to labor. When a mother starts to feel labor pains, she keeps it to herself and does not tell anyone so as not to make her delivery difficult. She goes around the home and kicks domestic animals which is believed to absorb the pain from the laboring mother. Among many Ilocanos, the child's umbilical cord is wrapped in a newspaper for the child to be intelligent. The baby's first (haircut, fingernail trimming) is done by an intelligent person believing that the child will also become intelligent. To protect the newborn child from evil spirits, "anglem" is performed and ginger, salt and bolo is placed under the bed or near the child. Rituals are performed to keep the mother health and safe after childbirth to include steaming or "sidur" for fast contraction of the uterus.

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### **b. Childcare and Childrearing**

The Ilocanos consider the newborn child a blessing, hence utmost care and love for the child is given. When a child gets sick, the Ilocanos perform some rituals. Despite the presence of hospitals, clinics, many Ilocanos still rely traditional healers which they call "albularyo" or "mangngagas" who perform "ud-udong" and "patalado." They also believe on offering, "atang" food for the unseen who they think might have caused the child's illness. They also change the name of the child who repeatedly gets sick. The new name given to the child is called "siruk ti latok." Children at an early age are trained to do household chores and are taught the values of love, respect, and obedience. Among the Ilocanos, children's education is of prime importance because this is the only legacy parents can give their children especially that they are not financially sufficient and have no material wealth to leave their children.

### **c. Courtship and Marriage**

The Ilocano adolescents are taught the value of modesty and chastity and proper behavior specially in relating with the opposite sex. They are frequently reminded by elder of the Ilocano belief and practices which many adolescents still adhere to but for some are not followed because of modern orientation and influence of social media. Too much display of affection especially in public would lead the adolescent male and female to early marriage to protect the woman's reputation. Most Ilocano still cling to traditional beliefs and practices in terms of marriage. Among these are the following: "uli-uli" where the male's relatives go to the female's house to ask permission to marry; dates and month of wedding is meticulously chosen, giving of dowry; choice of wedding sponsors; trying on the bridal gown before the wedding day is a big no-no; social dance or "pasala" in the eve of the wedding and the pinning of bills (gala) on the groom and bride during the wedding reception.

### **d. Sickness and Death**

The Ilocanos like any other ethnic groups are not exempt from sickness. The common illness/sickness experienced by most Ilocanos in Hacienda San Antonio are cough, fever, and colds. The sick is brought to the hospital when the illness is at its worst and if not addressed, the Ilocanos bring their sick people to traditional healers who they call "mangngagas" or "albularyo" where rituals called "ud-udong and patalado" are performed. Offerings or what they call "atang" are given to appease the bad spirit who according to the Ilocanos have caused the illness. The Ilocanos also believe in "tapal-tapal" where leaves of herbal plants are placed on the body part in pain.

Death practices among the Ilocanos come in three stages: pre burial, burial, post burial. During the wake, it's a practice not to do cleaning of the house; taking a bath in the house where the dead lies is prohibited; mirrors are covered; combing the hair is not allowed neither is scratching or slapping. During the burial, family members of the dead whisper "arasaas" their last message to the deceased; children are passed over the coffin to the other side and when the dead is already placed in the grave, family members leave and are prohibited to look back. After the burial, the family members, and relatives of the dead upon reaching home, wash their face with water mixed with wine. Such ritual has called "dinam-us" before entering the house. The washing is done by elderly. Ilocanos also go to the river for the "gulgol" which is believed to wash away bad luck. Vigil prayer is done until the ninth day from the date of death which they term as "pasiyam" and nine days before the 40th day, novena prayers are offered.

### **e. Agriculture and Food Gathering**

It is a practice among the Ilocanos to offer a prayer before planting. It is prohibited to borrow farm paraphernalia. Dates are also considered for planting and harvesting. To drive away evil spirit in the field, the Ilocano folks usually kill a chicken and let its blood drip on the field. This ritual is called "agpadara." Offerings (atang) in the farm of food are also done. During harvest time, part of the harvest is left in the corners of the field to invite good produce during the next harvest. Fishing and other food gathering activities are done secretly by the head of the family so as not to pre-empt the harvest (matullaw). Influence of Socio-Cultural Beliefs and Practices on the Attitude and Education of the Adolescents Education is the greatest factor in developing our character and shaping our personality as it equips us to the journey towards destiny. The Ilocanos' informal education starts from home before the children go to school for formal schooling. It is where values are formed and developed. In the house alone resides the culture that has passed on from generation to generation and it's the family's responsibility to instill these beliefs and practices to their children before facing the real outside world. The beliefs and practices of the Ilocanos in Hacienda of San Antonio have influenced the attitude and education of the Ilocano adolescents. The beliefs and practices of the Ilocano made the adolescents be aware and conscious of how to respond or react to things. Every time they must do things, they are reminded by the beliefs and practices taught to them by their parents. The adolescents' relationship with the opposite sex is guided by the Ilocano beliefs and practices. Likewise, with how they take care of themselves, how they relate with other family members, their responsibilities as a family member. The Ilocano beliefs and practices have inculcated in the minds of the adolescents the do's and don'ts during courtship and the sanctity of marriage. The Ilocano beliefs and practices have also influenced the adolescents' concept of the necessity of education.

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## CONCLUSIONS

The Ilocanos of Hacienda San Antonio have their distinct set of beliefs and practices that have started and mentored by their elders. These beliefs and practices guide them in going through the different stages of life from conception to death and livelihood activities. Many of the Ilocanos of Hacienda San Antonio still perpetuate the beliefs and practices but for some of the younger generation, some of these beliefs and practices have gained less importance because of the effect of modernization. The beliefs and practices of the Ilocanos have strong influence on the behavior and development of the adolescents and the younger Ilocanos. Rituals performed and other practices impact on the young Ilocanos' values and beliefs, self-esteem, and academic success. These socio-cultural beliefs and practices also influence the adolescents' aspect of sexuality, such as decision regarding appropriate sexual behavior, suitable life partner, appropriate age and as well as who is to decide on what appropriate. These beliefs and practices of the Ilocanos also have impacted on how the adolescents view education.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The integration of the traditional culture of Filipino especially in the beliefs and practices of the Ilocanos in the curriculum to develop a love of country, patriotism, and preservation of valued traditions. These beliefs and practices should include the Tanggad and Sidur in Post Natal Care, Courtship in the Barrio, The Roles of a family throughout Childbirth, The Ul-uli as a Customary Tradition, The Padara Practice in Agriculture, The Tapal-tapal Healing Practice, and The Gul-gol as a Post Burial Practice. This can be done with appropriate stages of learning from simple practices to complex.
2. The revision of the curriculum in the tertiary level specifically on the importance of knowing one's traditional culture to instill and sustain the patriotism and loyalty of the youth especially in these times of modernization and with the influence of foreign cultures.
3. A greater interest in Ethnographic research and cultural studies should be encouraged to enhance and uplift our interest in our Filipino culture.
4. The Department of Education and other related agencies should craft programs, projects, and activities to sustain the spirit of patriotism and to promote awareness about Filipino culture.
5. Libraries should have a platform on anthropological and ethnographic research about the life of the Filipinos to showcase these.
6. Related research of this study should be done.

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