

A phenomenological study on the experiences and challenges of Labtang weavers as socio-cultural activity in Palacapac, Candon City

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Abstract

Ilocanos are equipped with skills in weaving. It can be traced from history and radiates all through the out the generation. With the skills that they have, local folks in Palacapac, Candon City tend to bring life to Labtang vine, which for a very long time served with no specific purpose. This study is an assessment taking the lived experiences of the people involved in Labtang weaving. Through this study, the people in the community can revive such a beautiful and unique socio-cultural activity that will promote unity among them. Based on the results of the study, it was found that Labtang weaving must be revived and continue to further enhance and intensify the socio-cultural activity in the locality, and laws about the protection, production, and exportation of Labtang must be revised and intensified. The local government unit of Palacapac must initiate the action as soon as possible before Labtang becomes endangered, Constitution and by Laws of Palacapac Agrarian Reform Community-Multi Purpose Cooperative must be revisited and reviewed to protect the goals and objectives of the cooperative previously in charge with Labtang weaving. Members should strictly adhere to the guidelines and policies of the cooperative, Labtang weaving must be included in the Basic Education and inculcated in Art subject under MAPEH to address localization and contextualization, a machine should be provided for faster processing of the raw materials, training must be conducted to enhance the number of persons involved in weaving most especially the weavers.

Keywords: Labtang weaving, socio-cultural activity, phenomenology

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1. Introduction

Culture is a way of life. All these activities engaged in by people in their day-to-day lives form part of their culture. As simple as drinking coffee in the morning, combing the hair, taking a bath, eating three times a day, and sometimes having midnight snacks is a manifestation of culture. It may also consist of the traditions, celebrations, beliefs, behaviors, objects, expressions, and other characteristics common to the members of a particular group or society. Through their culture, people and groups define themselves, conform to society's shared values, and perform their obligation that may contribute to the society where they live. Thus, culture includes many societal aspects: language, customs, values, norms, mores, rules, tools, technologies, products, organizations, and institutions. An institution may refer to clusters of rules, policies, rules, regulations, and cultural meanings associated with specific social activities. Common institutions are the family, education, religion, work, and health care.

Culture and society are intricately inseparable and related. A culture consists of the tangible and sometimes intangible "objects" of a society, whereas a society consists of different kinds of people but endowed with a culture that is sometimes diverse like religion and ethnicity, and sometimes common which may include habits and sometimes activities. In the classroom setting, teachers should design lessons grounded in local heritage and traditional crafts to strengthen students' cultural identity and entrepreneurial mindset. Zerrudo & Bautista (2019) stated that labtang weaving is an authentic manifestation of Ilocano craftsmanship and cultural heritage. Including this indigenous practice in the basic education curriculum, particularly under Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) or MAPEH, encourages contextualized and experiential learning. Learners develop cultural pride, creativity, and practical livelihood skills when exposed to locally relevant content.

Integrating cultural activities in learning processes strengthens socio-emotional learning and reinforces cultural appreciation and empathy. Labtang weaving fosters a sense of belongingness, pride, and community spirit among the weavers, which are essential values that can be translated into classroom learning (Ingold, 2009). Through cooperative activities like weaving, learners develop teamwork, patience, and appreciation for local culture—key dimensions of values education. Educational institutions can develop technical-vocational modules or community immersion programs using indigenous practices like weaving to cultivate functional skills and lifelong learning habits. The research demonstrates that weaving provides hands-on learning experiences that blend creativity, problem-solving, and craftsmanship—skills aligned with constructivist and experiential learning theories (Rogoff et al., 1995; Saunders & Wong, 2020).

When these activities in society become cultural patterns of the people, these are considered to be socio-cultural. Assessing sociocultural factors answer questions such as: Do people consider rice to be part of their day-to-day food? What is their attitude toward the election? Do people celebrate traditions? Are there common activities of the people in the community that bind them and that these distinguish them from other communities? By asking these questions and social behaviors and cultural traditions, society could easily be identified. Understanding the concept of socio-cultural requires a researcher to analyze and see the things that are important and beneficial to a particular group or society. In doing so, it is a must to involve people from the target group or society because they are the recipient and target of the study.

Candon is a community endowed with vast natural resources and a diverse population because of the intermarriage of people. Officially known as the City of Candon which in the dialect of the people is Siudad ti Candon is a 4th class component city in the province of Ilocos Sur. According to the 2020 census, it has a population of 61,432 people. Also dubbed the "Tobacco Capital of the Philippines" the city is the country's largest

producer of Virginia-type tobacco. This once small resort town is known for making the heaviest and largest kalamay, a sweet and sticky snack made from sticky rice, coconut milk, and sugar, in the world. This city also has a rich historical background. In its legends, the name of the city is derived from the legendary “kandong” tree which is now extinct in the area. Its patron saint is John of Sahagun and his feast day is celebrated every June 12.

Candon is the center of the 2nd district of Ilocos Sur which is politically subdivided into 42 barangays. These barangays are headed by elected officials. One of the 42 barangays in this city is Palacapac. Palacapac as one of the barangays is located in the eastern part of the city. It is geographically a mountainous area where different species of plants grow that includes the twiner vine called labtang scientifically known as *Anamirta cocculus*. This was introduced to the people as the main material in weaving. Products made from the vine command high prices and are highly in demand in the local and international markets. Labtang could be used as a material in the making of bags, baskets, trays, fancy boxes, flower bases, home decors, and other products.

People were delighted knowing that the materials are just around the corner and that they could have something which others do not have: the skill and materials for weaving. In 2005, with the help of the Department of Agriculture together with the Department of Agrarian Reform, the weaving flourished and established a cooperative for the weavers. Thus, because of weaving, the socio-cultural aspects of the people became positive and active. After less than a decade, the cooperative weakened because of so many factors. Weavers were demotivated and became inactive in weaving which affected the lives of the people. Because of the situation, the researchers were motivated to cultivate and dig more about the Labtang Weaving and the life experiences of the weavers that once made the people and the community shine. The researchers are positive that after the study they can craft well-defined recommendations that could bring and revive the Labtang Weaving.

To support the study, the researchers presented various literature and studies:

Díez-Vial and Montoro-Sánchez (2020) as cited by Telep et al. (2021), mentioned the methods and materials needed in socio-cultural activities that should be rising to the needs of society until the third millennium as a field of scientific knowledge and social practice should provide, scientific and methodological comprehension of socio-cultural understanding and phenomena, implementation of state cultural policy and adoption of scientifically reasonable management decisions in the socio-cultural sphere, effective forecasting, design and regulation of social and cultural processes, development of technologies for preservation of historical and cultural monuments, national and cultural traditions, transferring and expanded reproduction of socio-cultural experience, and substantiation of the technology of implementation of the corresponding cultural scenarios of social practice. The methodological basis for the study of socio-cultural activities is the integration of historical, philosophical, cultural, sociological, structural, and operational trends. The interdisciplinary nature of the study of socio-cultural activities requires considering philosophical, cultural, psychological, social psychology, anthropological and sociological perspectives. Symbolic interactivity is a theoretical and methodological approach in sociology and social psychology, which focuses on the symbolic content of social interactions. Since the language of any voluntary interactivity is the main symbolic means of interaction, communication in this area is emphasized.

Applying the suggestions mentioned by Oksana et al. (2021), is a big help in assessing Labtang weaving regarding the socio-cultural activity in the community. The study of social interactions at the level of microprocess allows determining the dynamics of personality development, its socialization, to establish the social relationship with social roles of communication and social norms of communication, to show the relationship between means of communication (words, gestures, etc.) and common symbolic structures. However, relativism in the interpretation of the social life in this area in particular complicates the development of the theory of social communication (Iniesta-Arandia et al., 2014).

As a conclusion in the study of Telep et al. (2021), the culture of communication is considered as an integral part of the general culture of human behavior, the system of values, norms, and patterns of behavior adopted in society, the ability of the individual to organize communicative activities. Thus, communicative culture is one of the components of general culture; it improves in the process of human interaction with others; the culture of

communication is formed by the external environment, microsocial environment, social relations; it should be considered as an established personal education that affects the quality of activities and communication that evolve in the process of human participation in it. The culture of communication is a complex spiritual and practical education of the individual, which includes the mastered social norms and requirements of communication and develops mechanisms of communicative interaction between people, gains practical experience in communicative activities. Communicative culture is developed under the influence of social, psychological, and cultural conditions based on the norms and requirements that society offers at a certain stage of its development. Finally, the authors of the study found that such a complex phenomenon as the “culture of communication” requires objectively in-depth theoretical and methodological study of the problems of its design and maintenance.

Small K. et al. (2005) in evaluating the socio-cultural impacts of small festivals concluded that the practical application of the Social Impact Evaluation and the Social Impact Perception scale demonstrates that care should be taken when making statements about socio-cultural impacts arising from festivals and events. This is evidenced by Small and Edwards (2003) who found that before the festival, respondents rated the non-occurrence of impacts such as increased traffic and crowding in local shops, as a positive impact however when increased traffic and crowding in shops were perceived not to have occurred, they were rated as negative impacts. In other words, those impacts respondents thought they’d be happy about not having, were those that they would like to have seen occur.

In an archipelagic country like the Philippines with 7, 107 islands (About the Philippines (dfa.gov.ph), Ret. August 2022), there are at least 110 ethnolinguistic groups comprising the ICCs/IPs with a population of about 14 million based on extrapolation of the Philippines population growth (IPRA AND NCIP (sec.gov.ph), Ret. August 2022). With the situation that the country is facing, every ethnolinguistic group is responsible for promoting their own culture. However, various agencies in the government work hand in hand in the promotion and preservation of culture toward national and cultural interests. In the study of Gacula (2019), he mentioned Ilocanos in Candon City as a great talent and said that the Ilocanos in Candon City Ilocos Sur have been very skillful in doing woven baskets. The unique and distinct cultural activity of the people is seen almost in their everyday chores. Fact Because the geography of the city is adaptive to all sorts of farming, farmers adapt the use of woven baskets in many of their planting and harvest seasons, particularly for rice and tobacco. Because of so many factors affecting their lifestyle, Ilocanos in the city tend to forget the traditional way of living. They become idle in using the traditional woven baskets. Globalization took place and they prefer to use synthetic and other readymade materials for everybody’s convenience. They were so amazed by the product of the new technologies. Candonians undermined their culture of basket weaving. They haven’t thought about the cultural value basket weaving can bring to their place and especially to the people.

The study of Gacula boosts the idea that before the colonial period, Filipinos are with great talents in various fields specifically in weaving, which people saw, as a very important skill because they can produce different handicrafts for various purposes and could be a potential business for the people. He further concluded that the Ilocano in Candon City are very much willing to save basket weaving as a cultural activity in the city because it gives pride to them as Ilocano and helped them a lot in the traditional farming where people are still engaged. Just like in the old times, people want basket weaving as active as it used to be because the city did not change, and it is still the center for trade and commerce and farming is still the leading form of job for many that support the need of their family. In the other region of the country, some of them are struggling in reviving and promoting their respective culture. The Mangyans in Mindoro, who are well-known for having a vibrant culture, and also have traditional weaving, are experiencing a dilemma. Almedilla II (2015) concluded in his study that such kind of industry (Basket Weaving) needs help, especially from the local government unit and other government agencies for them to grow their economy and the industry of basket weaving. In an interview he made with the people in the community, they said that this could be a great help for them especially when their spouses have lost their jobs or no goods from farming can be marketed.

Mangyans’ basket weaving does not only reflect and represent the people who are engaged in basket weaving but represents and reflects their very rich culture and tradition that elevate people’s lives in many ways because it

served as their means to sustain their basic needs and necessities. The study of Gacula and Almedilla II is similar to the current study because all of them are dealing with basket weaving and presenting facts about the reviving, preservation, cultivation, and promotion of one's cultural activity that could serve as a means to help people in a certain community with great talent in building their small industry and eventually affects the lives of other people that could lead to cultural pluralism.

While numerous studies in the Philippines have explored the preservation and promotion of traditional crafts and cultural heritage, there remains a limited body of research focusing on the lived experiences and challenges of local weavers in small, community-based industries such as the Labtang weaving of Palacapac, Candon City. Previous studies, such as those by Gacula (2019) and Almedilla II (2015), discussed basket weaving as a traditional livelihood and cultural expression among Ilocanos and Mangyans, respectively. However, these works primarily centered on the economic and cultural significance of weaving rather than the phenomenological understanding of the artisans' personal experiences, emotions, and social interactions within their cultural context. Moreover, existing literature (e.g., Inocian, 2018; Zerrudo & Bautista, 2019) highlights the role of government support and cultural education in sustaining indigenous crafts, yet few have investigated how socio-cultural, political, and educational factors interplay in sustaining or diminishing such local industries. The weakening of the Labtang Weaving Cooperative in Palacapac presents an underexplored case of how globalization, policy gaps, and socio-economic transitions affect community-based cultural industries and the identity of local artisans.

Additionally, while the Department of Education's K to 12 curriculum promotes contextualization and localization (Zerrudo & Bautista, 2019), there is a lack of concrete studies examining how indigenous practices like Labtang weaving can be integrated into formal education to foster cultural awareness, livelihood skills, and sustainability. The absence of curriculum-based programs or continuing education initiatives to transmit weaving skills to younger generations underscores a pressing need for research linking cultural heritage and education. Finally, research on socio-cultural activities in the Ilocos Region remains scarce, particularly those adopting a phenomenological lens to capture weavers' sense of belonging, pride, and identity. Most available works employ descriptive or economic approaches, leaving a gap in understanding the subjective meanings and social realities experienced by the weavers themselves (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, this study addresses these gaps by documenting and analyzing the lived experiences, challenges, and socio-cultural implications of Labtang weaving, thereby contributing to cultural preservation, educational relevance, and policy development toward sustainable community-based cultural practices.

With the backgrounds, literature, and studies presented, the researchers were motivated to conduct a study in assessing a socio-cultural activity in one of the barangays which is the Palacapac in Candon City. The study aimed to assess the inactive Labtang basket weaving industry that served as a reflection of their community's rich culture and as a job opportunity for other members of the community.

2. Methodology

Research Design - The study is a qualitative form of research and used phenomenology as a method to describe the participants' experience and viewpoint (emic) as well as the researchers' point of view (etic) to create a clearer picture of their experience on Labtang weaving as socio-cultural activity in their community. In the study, the researchers conducted focused group discussions and utilized interviews as a tool for obtaining data from the participants. A structured Interview Questionnaire and open-ended interview were conducted.

Selection and Study Site - There were 12 participants involved in the production of Labtang weaving. The participants involved in the study are all females. Five of them classified themselves as weavers, five participants are gatherers and shredders, and the remaining two are involved only in shredding. All the participants hail from Palacapac, Candon City. Palacapac is one of the 42 barangays in Candon City. It is situated in the eastern part of the city. The area lies within the hills and mountainous parts of the city. The barangay is beside Parioc Segundo on its western side and San Andres on its Northern side.

Research Instrument - The researchers utilized a structured interview questionnaire and an open-ended interview to obtain data from the participants. Structured Interview Questionnaires were carefully crafted by the researchers and were validated by the members of the research congress during its initial presentation to align with the purpose of the study and to answer queries stated in the general problems as well as problems stated specifically. An open-ended interview was infused for the participants to freely express themselves in answering the queries and for the researchers to throw more questions beyond what is stated in the structured interview questionnaire.

Data Gathering Procedure - The researchers used a focused group and utilized two methods of interviewing the participants: a structured interview questionnaire and an open-ended interview. Both were essential in obtaining data—the participants narrating their experiences and the researchers validating those experiences. Through the focused group, participants involved in Labtang weaving refined their responses based on shared insights from other participants, allowing the researchers to capture collective and individual meanings more comprehensively. Video recording was employed to document the discussions and interviews for accurate transcription and analysis. A copy of the transcribed interviews, both from recordings and off-camera sessions, was reviewed and attested by the participants' representatives to ensure accuracy and authenticity of the gathered data.

To ensure reliability and trustworthiness, the researchers followed Creswell's (2007) criteria for qualitative validation. The interview guide was validated by experts during its initial presentation at a research congress to ensure alignment with the study's objectives. Reliability was established through member checking, where participants reviewed the transcribed data and confirmed the accuracy of their statements and perspectives. This process minimized researcher bias and ensured that the findings faithfully represented the participants' lived experiences. In analyzing the qualitative data, the researchers used a thematic coding scheme following the stages of open, axial, and selective coding. During open coding, recurring words, phrases, and expressions related to the participants' experiences were highlighted. In axial coding, these initial codes were grouped into broader categories that reflected significant patterns, such as sense of belongingness, pride, anxiety, and anticipation. Finally, in selective coding, central themes were derived that encapsulated the essence of the Labtang weaving experience as a socio-cultural phenomenon. Coding consistency was maintained through collaborative discussion among the researchers, and intercoder agreement was achieved by comparing and reconciling independently generated codes before finalizing the thematic structure (Rogoff et al., 1995).

To enhance the credibility and validity of the findings, the researchers applied data triangulation by comparing and corroborating information from multiple sources and methods. Triangulation involved the convergence of data from (1) structured interviews, (2) open-ended interviews, and (3) observations made during field visits to the weaving sites and the Candon City Eco-Park. Supplementary data from literature and related studies (e.g., Inocian, 2018; Gacula, 2019; Zerrudo & Bautista, 2019) were also consulted to contextualize the participants' experiences within broader socio-cultural and educational frameworks. This methodological triangulation strengthened the validity of interpretations and provided a holistic understanding of the socio-cultural dimensions of Labtang weaving. Through these reliability measures, coding procedures, and triangulation techniques, the researchers ensured that the analysis remained faithful to participants' authentic voices and reflective of their collective experiences as Labtang weavers in Palacapac, Candon City.

Analysis of Data - This study used thematic analysis as its mode in scrutinizing the responses of the participants. It categorized answers of the participants from the interview with codes and themes.

3. Result and Discussion

What is Labtang (*anamirta cocculus*)? “Lanot” (vine) as the participants call it, is a specific type of vine that is very common in the area. Labtang (Lagtang in other language) with the scientific name *anamirta cocculus* is a large woody vine with a corky, gray bark, and white wood. Stems are sometimes 10 centimeters thick, longitudinally wadded, porous, with stout, smooth branches. Leaves are ovate or ovately-cordate, 10 to 20

centimeters long, with pointed or tapering apex and rounded or nearly heart-shaped base, smooth above, hairy on the nerve axils beneath, and 3-nerved from the base. Petioles are 5 to 15 centimeters long. Flowers are yellowish, sweet-scented, 6 to 7 millimeters across, crowded on 3- to 4.5 centimeters long, pendulous panicles. Fruit is a drupe, nearly spherical, about 1 centimeter in diameter when dry, smooth, and hard (Stuart, Ret. 2022)

How did the Labtang Weaving start? As the participants were trying to recall how Labtang weaving started, they were not sure whether it started between 2003 or in 2004. However, what they were certain about is when Labtang Cooperative started in 2005. According to Angelita Wagayen, Head of the Labtang cooperative, Labtang became popular with them when a man from Balaoan, La Union came to their barangay asking for Labtang to be bought. When they asked about the labtang, the man replied that they will use it for weaving. With that encounter, the people were given a hint that they can weave out of labtang. From there, people became aware of the importance and purpose of Labtang in their area.

When did the Labtang Weaving become an industry? Knowing that Labtang is a marketable product, people were very eager and excited knowing that there is a new product available and unique in their place. Because of excitement, Barangay officials acted to seek help from government agencies. Participant 1 mentioned that through the assistance of the Department of Agrarian Reform together with the Department of Agriculture, the Labtang Cooperative was founded and named Palacapac Agrarian Reform Community- Multi-Purpose Cooperative. Both agencies were responsible for getting someone to teach the people in the community as far as weaving is concerned. As mentioned by Participant 2, the people who were first involved in the training were those people who have an initial knowledge about weaving. There were around 15 persons who attended the initial training. Not all of them became skilled weavers and so they involved themselves in the other process of weaving. Before Labtang, people were already making bamboo baskets. Added by Participant 3, people were delighted and became more interested because Labtang is new to them, and it is the first in the city because no other barangay has it not like bamboo which almost every barangay has it. With the idea of Estacio, the participants agreed to her observation.

The initial reaction of the participants highlighted the study of Inocian, et.al (2019) regarding the use of cultural heritage in uplifting the economic status of an individual stating that the essence of cultural preservation is not terminal. To make it sustainable, it needs a system to ensure its viability through promotion and tourism. When the cooperative is well-established, people in the community took part in the process and the manufacture of Labtang woven baskets. Each of them has a distinct role. For Participant 3, she may not be adept at making the woven basket but gathering Labtang and processing them to be ready for weaving is her expertise. "They cannot weave without the gathered and processed materials" she added laughing. Participant 4, her partner in gathering Labtang, seconded. The two became special to each other because of gathering Labtang. Both became partners in gathering Labtang vine in the mountains.

Participant 5 has the same experience as Participant 6 and Participant 8 the only difference is that Participant 5 does not involve in gathering because of her physical condition. However, her husband does it for him and she will be the one to process it and make it available for her husband's weaving. Unfortunately, her husband was not present during the interview for personal reasons. Establishing a cooperative that supports the program is one great move. Throsby (2006) believed that when there is an application of economics to cultural heritage decisions, it mobilized stakeholders to achieve its ends and possible trade-offs. In relation to this, George W. Bush's Preserve American Community Program created a collaboration of local communities and government departments in the preservation of American heritage for economic development, and community revitalization for public awareness promotion (National Park Service, 2018).

As to the process of Labtang weaving, it is not what it is. First, people need to gather Labtang from the hills and mountains in their area. After gathering, Labtang needs to be classified according to its use: weaving and forming. A younger Labtang will be processed and subdivided into fronds. Once shredded, it will be dried within the day under the sun. The shredded fronds are used in weaving to form intricate designs within the base of the basket. However, the older Labtang, with a sturdier texture, is formed and served as a base of the basket. As to the

functions, there are gatherers, shedders, and of course, the weavers.

What are the experiences of the people regarding Labtang weaving as a socio-cultural activity? Sense of belongingness- Labtang weavers feel proud because they thought of having a second family because of the Labtang cooperative. With joy, the participants claimed that they found an extension of their home because they feel secure and confident with the members and participants of the cooperative. “The feeling that you have someone to lean on and a group to be considered family is exemptional” mentioned Participant 3.

Pride- Participants are proud of what Labtang has reached and contributed not only to the community but to the whole city. “Every time we were invited to conduct a trade fair in a certain fiesta or event, we feel as if we are carrying the name of the city” added Participant 1. For years since the cooperative was established, Labtang baskets became popular in the province.

Anxiety- After years of being in the limelight, participants feel anxious because Labtang is slowly fading. Little by little, participants involved in the process found other means to earn money. The majority of those who were trained became an employee of well-established companies that give them an overwhelming salary. Those participants left in the cooperative started to feel demotivated because of the separation.

Anticipation and excitement- with the presence of the researchers, participants are hopeful that there are people interested in their cultural activity and so they are very excited. The first time we visited the place and ask about Labtang weaving, we saw from their eyes their eagerness to participate and help in the study. Participants were very generous in terms of information. They were participative too. They showed us concrete evidence as to their claims. An example of this is by going to the mountains with them to look for Labtang and we even visited the Eco-Park as part of the study.

The experiences of the participants in the study are a clear manifestation of how culture affects every feeling and emotion as also reflected in the study of Ingold (2009) and I quote, “with every stitch they make, every fiber they bend, and every loop they pull tight, they weave together the past and the future, the here and there, the individual and the collective. They bring to life something new and age old at once. As they weave their baskets, they weave their lives and livelihoods”. From the quotation, it is reflected that there is pride for being part of there culture. Participating in one’s cultural activity is like reminiscing every part of humanity specially how a person was raised by his ancestors. The feeling of pride and the sense of nationalism lie within a person’s heart.

How did Labtang Weaving help in promoting the socio-cultural aspect of the community? Social aspect. Participants undoubtedly admitted that a strong bond of relationship was formed after the establishment of the cooperative. Though a harmonious relationship is already present in the community, however, because they participated in the cooperative, the relationship intensifies and becomes more special until such time that deep friendship among and between the members of cooperatives and other members of the community became visible. Participant 3 highlighted that because of a very positive ambiance in the workplace, people who have been involved in the production of Labtang baskets most of the time visit the area. The majority of those who are involved prefer to perform their duty in the designated workplace. “Verbal communication is an element in the production of Labtang basket because they performed their task well if they have someone to “Marites” (chat) with, Participant 7 added, and everybody cheered as a sign of approval.

Engaging in a cultural activity boost confidence of the participants that eventually make them sociable to other members of the community. Basket weaving enhances not only on the economic aspect but also in social aspect of life and this is very much evident in the study of Inocian (2018) stating that the reality offers understanding and windows of opportunities for educators, artists and cultural workers on the intricacies of bakat weaving. Its economic and commercial impact measure the weavers’ values of resiliency to hardships, adaptation to change, passion for craftsmanship, strong sense of community and family centeredness that contribute to economic significations that shape the Cebuano sense of cultural identity and national pride.

It is undoubtedly that in engaging in a cultural activity promotes not only awareness, but it is more of enhancing the skill and talent that could lead into a great opportunity to earn a living. Pomeroy and Baker (2006) concluded in their study about the economic impact of basket weaving appears to be positive. This comparison is made by examining the normal am prices amount of labor as compared the Ye'Kwana baskets as compared to the prices paid for the baskets if they were sold in fair trade market in Boca de Ninchare or the final point of purchase. The improvement varied between 10 and 43% if baskets were sold in the community of Boca de Ninchare and 11 and 53% if the baskets were sold in Ciudad Bolivar. In reality the increase is much higher than the normal prices for the baskets. The project is paying an average of 400 bs. per cm (\$1=2140 bs.) per basket while the normal market is 150 bs. per cm. Overall, the fair-trade market has shown a strong improvement.

Without a doubt, all the participants agreed that Labtang weaving industry, through the cooperative, is a success because it helps a lot in the financial status of people involved in the manufacturing of Labtang baskets.

Political aspect. The establishment of Palacapac Agrarian Reform Community- Multi-Purpose Cooperative reflects good governance. Through the collaborative efforts of the Palacapac Barangay Council with the assistance of the Department of Agrarian Reform and the Department of Agriculture, the objective to help people and transform their lives with the materials locally available in their area became reality. "With the present situation, Labtang weaving is facing, we are looking into ways on how to revive the industry" mentioned Participant 7, the Punong Barangay. A possible training workshop for a new set of weavers is eyed to further revive the industry. Intensifying laws about the exportation of Labtang out of the barangay are planning to be reviewed and added by the active chairman. The study of Zerrudo and Bautista (2019) regarding basket weaving confirms that there is a need for the government to support local weavers. In their conclusion, it came out that there was no Local Government Unit direct support from a certain municipality. The PLGU had direct involvement that it proposed the bill for the protection of banig weavers and declaration of Basey as banig capital of the Philippines. Good thing that in the case of Palacapac weavers, a great support poured out to them by establishing a cooperative that will support the weavers.

Religion. There is nothing directly associated between Labtang weaving and religion. If there were, their good relationship and attitude developed among and between the people involved in weaving, which were established through socialization within the process of weaving, were also brought to the church. Predominantly, people involved in the weaving were members of Born-Again Christians. The people involved in weaving are also the same people who are members of the same church.

Education. "It should be included in the Basic Education", exclaimed the participants. "Weaving during our elementary days is being taught," said Generosa. With the participants' reactions as they shared their thoughts, they want weaving, specifically Labtang weaving to be taught because it could help them finance their education even just for their daily allowance. Unfortunately, weaving is not included in basic education. However, the fact that it is in demand in the market, it should be taught as part of the lesson in basic education because those who were first involved in the training-workshop of Labtang weaving, specifically the weavers, were already involved in other fields of work which gave them a better ad promising income. Though according to Participant 8, she was invited before to the community school to teach the basic skills in labtang weaving there was no follow-up and sustainability of the program from the school.

To strengthen the study, Paalis (as mentioned by Zerrudo and Bautista, 2019), the director of ARTIST Inc., mentioned that Livelihood Education is Cultural Education. Teaching should start from our experience, our home, and our community. "Edukasyong may hugot" or contextualized learning should be promoted. Hugot is a Filipino word which means to draw or to pull out, a personal deep sentimental or emotional feeling, coming from deep within. Teaching should not just be for content and competency; teaching is for meaningful learning that leads to faster acquisition and longer retention. Weaving is like a story with a start, middle and end, it has chapters, character, settings, and plot. It is an adventure with obstacles and success. The knowledge on basket weaving should be thought about its "Pinagmulan" or sources, "Pinagdadaan" or process, and "Pinaglalaanan" or Uses. The

knowledge about basket and weaving of basket will lead to the ability to weave basket. This ability is based on knowledge about the basket. This knowledge and ability will elevate to skills in basket weaving.

In addition, Zerrudo and Bautista (2019) discussed in their study about the role of the new curriculum in the basic education. “The significant educational reforms of the country happened in 2012 during the implementation of the K to 12 Basic Education Program. The reform introduced programs and projects to expand and improve the delivery of basic education in the country to provide the learners with the necessary skills and competence. One of the policy statements of the Department of Education was that the curriculum should be flexible to enable schools to localize, indigenize and to enhance the respective educational and social context. The K to 12 Curriculum Guide for Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) geared towards the development of technological proficiency and was anchored on knowledge and information, entrepreneurial concepts, process and delivery, work values, and life skills. TLE was a skill subject which engaged students in an experiential, contextualized and authentic teaching-learning process. The learning area standard stated that learners should demonstrate the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes (KSVA) in TLE which would enable learners to gain employment, become entrepreneurs, a middle level manpower and/or pursue higher education.”

What are the challenges encountered by the people involved in Labtang weaving in the preservation of their socio-cultural activity? The fact weaving does not only have a single process, but the problems also arise from every phase: gathering to shredding and it affects weaving.

Gathering. Labtang became an in-demand material in the process of weaving. Because of this, the exportation of Labtang vine became rampant. Gatherers tend to sell the gathered Labtang to other weavers from another locality. This way, they can have a faster seller-buyer transaction. Because of the situation, the manufacturing of Labtang baskets was affected.

Openness. The availability of Labtang in the area gives other people to opportunity to freely gather and trade. This will give people a fastest way to get income by merely engaging to gathering and trading of materials which on the other hand will left local weavers to have insufficient supply of materials.

Age and Health Factors. Considering the age of the weavers, they could hardly climb into the steep mountain hills most especially during the wet season where the roads are very challenging to take. Their age also associates with their existing health conditions. It is expected that as people grows old, our health tends to deteriorate.

Shredding- To be a shedder requires skill and mastery. It involves the use of a bladed weapon to cut the vine into pieces. For the shedders, it is very risky and requires a lot of patience in shedding the vine. This is the only problem the participants, especially those who are involved in shredding, are facing. The participants’ only hope is to have a machine that will cut the vine into pieces. “If such machine will be provided, the manufacturing of baskets will be very fast and easy because the vine coming out from the machine will be readily available for weaving”, Estacio said.

Weaving. There were five (5) participants who identified themselves as weavers. Four of them are still engaged in weaving and the other one has already found another means of employment. These participants are deeply affected by their numbers. Of those 15 who attended the training, only four of them left practicing the skill. Psychologically, these participants involved in the actual weaving are affected by their numbers. “there were times that we want to stop weaving because we are demotivated by our numbers”- mentioned Dagusen. Because of their numbers, the situation gravely affects them and the production of baskets because only four of them are involved in a full swing of weaving despite the availability of processed materials. The labtang weavers faced the same challenges with that of the weavers in Leyte. Zerrudo and Bautista (2019) identified the problems such as Organization of the weavers, source of materials, policy support, program support, infrastructure and equipment, funding, capacity building, education transmission, marketing promotion, disaster resilience and network and linkages.

Basing on the two studies, we can say that almost all of those who are engaged in the traditional weaving are facing the same sentiments most especially if such cultural activity does not promote economic growth and bring full recognition of their own ethnolinguistic group. As much as the gatherers and the shredders want to engage themselves in weaving but they do not have the skill and artistry in making such. “We are not inclined in weaving; however, we are trying to make ourselves productive as far as the production of Labtang basket is concerned because we believe that creating a basket does not require a single process and so we are involved in the process” lamented Wagayen. As a country that promotes and recognize the role and importance of various ethnolinguistic groups in the nation building, we, the people should support in any way the aim of our government in promoting the Philippine culture and heritage because in this we can grow and foster as a nation embracing nationalism and patriotism. As a Filipino, it is our mandate to advocate for the welfare of our people and to for our country. Mabuhay!

4. Conclusion

The study revealed that the Labtang vine holds significant importance within the community of Palacapac, Candon City. Beyond serving as the primary raw material for basket weaving, it is also widely appreciated for its aesthetic value, particularly in architectural and decorative designs. Its versatility and abundance in the locality made it an essential component of the residents’ cultural and economic activities, symbolizing both creativity and resourcefulness. However, findings indicated a decline in the availability of Labtang vines in the area. This depletion is attributed not only to the increasing demand for Labtang as a weaving material but also to its exportation outside the locality for other commercial uses. The unsupervised harvesting and lack of sustainable management have led to the gradual reduction of this valuable natural resource, posing a threat to the continuity of the Labtang weaving industry.

Another major concern observed is the failure of the local government unit (LGU) of Palacapac to create barangay ordinances concerning the protection, regulation, and utilization of Labtang. The absence of strict implementation and monitoring systems has allowed overharvesting and unregulated trade to persist, undermining efforts to conserve the plant and sustain the weaving enterprise. Furthermore, the Palacapac Agrarian Reform Community–Multi-Purpose Cooperative, which was originally established to promote and strengthen Labtang weaving, has deviated from its founding mission and vision. Instead of sustaining weaving as a socio-cultural and economic activity, the cooperative redirected its operations toward financing and lending services. This shift in focus weakened the support system for the weavers and reduced opportunities for training, production, and marketing of Labtang-based products.

Despite these challenges, the study confirmed that Labtang weaving significantly enhances various socio-cultural dimensions of community life—particularly in the social, economic, political, and academic aspects. The activity fosters social interaction, provides economic livelihood, reflects collaborative governance, and holds potential as an educational tool for skill and value formation. However, it was found to have no direct linkage to religious promotion, though it indirectly reinforces positive moral and social values among practitioners.

The study also found that the absence of modern equipment for processing Labtang poses a considerable challenge to production efficiency. The lack of machinery to cut and shred the vine forces weavers to rely solely on manual labor, which is time-consuming and physically demanding. Providing mechanical support could improve productivity and make the weaving process more sustainable. Additionally, there is a shortage of skilled individuals involved in the various stages of Labtang weaving—particularly gatherers, shredders, and weavers. The dwindling number of active participants has significantly affected production output and continuity. Among these roles, the weavers themselves emerged as the most crucial contributors, as they possess the artistry and craftsmanship required to transform raw Labtang materials into intricate cultural products. Thus, increasing the number of trained weavers through capacity-building initiatives is vital for the industry’s revival. Finally, participants expressed strong anticipation and optimism for the revival of Labtang basket weaving. They remain hopeful that renewed community efforts, coupled with government and institutional support, will breathe new life

into this cultural practice. Such revival would not only restore an important livelihood source but also reinforce local identity, pride, and the community's shared cultural heritage.

Recommendation - The study strongly recommends the revival and sustained promotion of Labtang weaving as a vital socio-cultural and economic activity in Palacapac, Candon City to preserve the community's cultural identity and heritage. The local government should strengthen and enforce policies on the protection, production, and exportation of Labtang to ensure environmental sustainability, while the Palacapac Agrarian Reform Community–Multi-Purpose Cooperative must revisit its constitution and by-laws to refocus on its original goal of supporting the weaving industry. Integrating Labtang weaving into the Basic Education curriculum under MAPEH will promote localization, contextualization, and intergenerational transmission of indigenous knowledge. Additionally, the provision of modern machinery is essential to improve production efficiency and encourage participation, particularly among the youth. Finally, continuous training and capacity-building programs should be conducted to enhance the skills of weavers, ensuring the sustainability of the industry and its contribution to cultural preservation and local economic development.

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