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The Ati Inhabitants in the Eyes of Education Students

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Abstract: Introduction: Ati is an ethnic group of people inhabiting the mountainous areas of Guimaras. They have organized leadership structures, cultural traditions, and can withstand from conflicts and struggles. Objective: This study ascertained education students' level of cognizance on Ati Inhabitants' leadership structures, cultural traditions, and conflicts and struggles in Guimaras Province. Methods: This descriptive-correlational study utilized a duly-validated researcher-made questionnaire administered through Google Forms among thirty (30) conveniently selected education students. The statistical tools used were frequency count, mean, standard deviation, and Person's R testing set at .05 level of significance. All statistical computations were processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Results: The result showed that education students have "high" (M=3.76, SD=0.52) cognizance. Moreover, there were "significant moderate positive correlations" ($r(30)=0.527$, $p=0.003$) on the cognizance of education students on Ati Inhabitants' leadership structures, cultural traditions, and conflicts and struggles. Conclusion: Students' cognizance depends on their views and understanding of indigenous peoples in building human knowledge. Thus, they are considered as one of the agents in spreading and preserving indigenous perspectives.

Keywords: Ati inhabitants, cognizance, education students

1.1 Introduction

Revisiting indigenous cultures and local knowledge of the Ati requires great learning absorbency and acquisition for the people. Ati is a group of people who inhabit the mountain areas of Guimaras. They have established leadership structures, preserved cultural traditions and experienced difficulties to deal and cope with, in order to survive from the modern world challenges. Their main source of income is from making of native products such as "buon-buon" or wallet, house decors and souvenirs. Despite the prowess and determination for their livelihood, the members have recently decided to stop their production of native products due to lack of supply of raw materials, and most of the



equipments that were given by the national agency are already old and exacerbated, thus affected their quality of work (Department of Science and Technology Region VI, 2021).

Some of the notable studies that focus on indigenous people specifically the Ati group are centralized on their struggles for their ancestral land and ownership. The study of Petrola et al. (2020) examined the experiences of suffering, struggle for self-determination, challenges, aspirations and motivation of the Ati in the Panay Island in the lens of Arthur Schopenhauer. This is premised on the idea that the Ati people, being one of the members of the Indigenous Peoples (IPs) in the country have suffered from inescapable forms of sufferings such as oppression, killings, victims of land grabbing, discrimination and various human rights abuses from the local elites, companies engaged in mining and logging, restaurant and hotel businesses, and non-Ati people surrounding their cultural communities that had resulted in their feelings of pain, boredom and despair. In apart, Gavino (2020) investigated the Ati people, the indigenous people of Panay Island, Philippines—their origins, current economic status, ancestral rights, development issues, and challenges. This particular inquiry draws attention to the history of the Ati people as the first settlers of the islands. The study has compared the displacement of the Ati as marginalized minorities in contrast to how they are celebrated and portrayed in the dance festivals. Other studies contributed to the scant body of literature on inequalities among and within ethnic groups in the Philippines by examining both the vertical and horizontal measures in terms of opportunities in accessing basic services such as education, electricity, safe water, and sanitation. The study also provides a glimpse of the patterns of inequality in Mindanao. The results show that there are significant inequalities in opportunities in accessing basic services within and among ethnic groups in the Philippines (Reyes, et al., 2017). Despite these literature, updated information on indigenous culture relating to the field of education remains scarce.

This study seeks to determine Education Students' cognizance on Ati Inhabitants' leadership structures, cultural traditions, and conflicts and struggles. Students, teachers, other social groups in our society, and future researchers will benefit in this study as supplementary references for a much larger study. This topic is not limited to cultural preservation in a single location; it may also be a reflection on reaching out to untapped areas on a national level.

2. Methodology

2.1 Purpose of the Study and Research Design

The research design employed was descriptive-correlational, which aimed to determine the cognizance education students on Ati inhabitants' leadership structures, cultural traditions and conflicts and struggles.

2.2 Respondents

The respondents of the study were thirty (30) education students who were currently residing in Guimaras Province. The convenient sampling technique was employed in the selection of the respondents of the study.

2.3 Instrumentation

This study utilized a duly-validated researcher-made questionnaire. It is divided into 3 areas namely: (1) Leadership Structures; (2) Cultural Traditions; and, (3) The Conflicts and Struggles of the Ati Inhabitants which composed of closed-ended questions. A 5 point Likert scale of agreement was featured wherein each rating has an assigned point consisting Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neutral = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1.



2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

After a letter of permission to conduct the study was approved by the Dean, data gathering started on September 13-20, 2021 using Google Forms sent to the respondents through messenger and e-mail. Upon the retrieval of the data, responses were tallied and submitted to statistical treatment.

2.5 Data Analysis Procedure

The data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. Frequency count, means, standard deviation, and Pearson's R were used. The level of significance was set at .05 alpha. The scale of interpreting the level of cognizance and correlations are as follows.

Level of Cognizance	
Scale	Description
4.21-5.00	Very High
3.41-4.20	High
2.61-3.40	Average
1.81-2.60	Low
1.00-1.80	Very Low

Size of Correlation	
Scale	Description
0.90-1.00 (-0.90 to -1.00)	Very high positive (negative) correlation
0.70-0.90 (-0.70 to -0.90)	High positive (negative) correlation
0.50-0.70 (-0.50 to -0.70)	Moderate positive (negative) correlation
0.30-0.50 (-0.30 to -0.50)	Low positive (negative) correlation
0.00-0.30 (0.00 to -0.30)	Negligible correlation

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Education Students' Cognizance on Cultural Traditions, and Conflicts and Struggles

Category	SD	M	Description
Leadership Structures	0.68	3.93	High
Cultural Traditions	0.69	3.62	High
Conflicts and Struggles	0.58	3.72	High
Congregated Result	0.52	3.76	High

Legend: Very High (4.21-5.00), High (3.41-4.20), Average (2.61-3.40), Low (1.81-2.60) and Very Low (1.00-1.80).

As a whole, education students level of cognizance was high ($M=3.76$, $SD=0.52$), leadership structures ($M=3.93$, $SD=0.68$), cultural traditions ($M=3.62$, $SD=0.69$), conflicts and struggles ($M=3.72$, $SD=0.58$).

It is vital to heighten students' cognizance on the social, cultural, economic and political aspects of the indigenous peoples, specifically of the Ati Inhabitants. Krakouer (2015) emphasized that cultivation of the knowledge and perspectives of the learners towards indigenous cultures is vital because this will shape their personal understanding



and views on the world. Therefore, the education system should realign cultural studies or lessons relevant in heightening awareness and preservation of indigenous groups' knowledge in their respective community. Preservation is viewed as a people's salient action in bringing up cultural awareness and societal treasures (Henares, 2010; Pedroso, 2020).

Table 2. Relationship of Students 'Cognizance on Ati Inhabitants' Leadership Structures, Cultural Traditions and Conflicts and Struggles

Variables	Leadership Structures		Cultural Traditions		Conflicts and Struggles	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Leadership Structures	-	-	0.527*	0.003	0.338	0.067
Cultural Traditions	-	-	-	-	0.512*	0.004
Conflicts and Struggles	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note. *Significant at $p < .05$

The preceding table tells that there were significant moderate positive relationships in the cognizance of the Education Students ($r(30)=0.527$, $p=0.003$). Furthermore, the results implied that the leadership structures, cultural traditions and conflicts and struggles of the Ati Inhabitants are deemed as important areas of indigenous knowledge in heightening the awareness of all the students about indigenous cultural communities in their respective locality. In connection, the article of National Commission for Culture and Arts (2018) tackled that the Ati Inhabitants in the Western Visayas have their leadership or political system for cohesive and systematic society. Their cultures, traditions and practices unified the entire indigenous community. But the conflicts and struggles are inevitable that challenged their capacity to deal and cope with environmental and economic hardships. These aspects of living of the Ati Inhabitants are significantly interweaving which considered as group foundations. These are indeed to be known by the students and other social groups as citizens of this country. Therefore, the ways of living including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expressions, and values developed by a community are crucial to pass on from generation to generation (ICOMOS, 2002; Pedroso, 2020).

4. Conclusion

Students' cognizance depends on their views and understanding of indigenous peoples in building human knowledge. They are also considered as agents in spreading and preserving indigenous perspectives. As indigenous people are assets and integral contributors in building cohesive human networks, it is important to incorporate indigenous cultural curriculum instructions in teaching competencies for macro-scaled learning acquisition towards strengthening cultural heritage education.

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