

EXTENT OF OBSERVANCE OF FOLK MEDICAL PRACTICES OF THE STUDENTS OF NORTH LUZON PHILIPPINES STATE COLLEGE

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the extent of observance of the folk medical practices by the students of North Luzon Philippines State College who belong to the Indigenous Peoples. This study made use of descriptive method of research with a validated questionnaire as the main data gathering instrument. The respondents of this study were the 328 students of the college who were identified as members of the Indigenous Peoples in the upland areas of the province of Ilocos Sur. It was first semester of school year 2010 – 2011 when this study was conducted. Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following conclusions were formulated: (1) majority of the respondents are in the lower academic years in college; many of them prefer business-related course; most of them are female; majority have low family income and or they live simply like how they live in their tribal communities; majority of the respondents are affiliated with the dominant religion in the country; many of the respondents are freshmen in college (2) The respondents who belong to the tribal communities have some preference in attending to their health needs like consulting the modern medical practitioners in their localities or visiting the health center in their barangay rather than relying so much on their traditional practices of healing; and (3) folk medical practices is observed regardless of the variables used in this study.

Keywords: Folk Medical Practices, Upland Municipalities, Ilocos Sur, Indigenous Peoples

Introduction

The upland areas are populated by different tribal communities that share distinct customs and tradition. The culture in these areas is very different from the culture of the lowland and coastal areas. They have their own rituals, beliefs, language and way of living. Although many people appreciate the modernity of life in the lowland, many still desire and promote of the culture of the upland communities as this defines the unique identity of tribal people.

According to Alviento and Alviento (2017), the upland communities of Ilocos Sur and neighboring provinces are composed of different ethnicities. These ethnic tribes have their own tribal governance, festivals and even medical practices.

Stuart (20013) claimed that the observance folk or traditional and alternative medical practices is a culture of both lowlands and highlands in the Philippines. Other than effectiveness, people see the use of traditional and alternative medical practices as very practical and affordable considering their far distance from hospitals which are usually situated in urban areas or lowland. This led to the creation of RA 8423 in order to make the tribal people's medical practices legal and safe for everyone.

Republic Act No. 8423 was enacted in Congress as recognition of the traditional medical practices. This law is known as the "Traditional and Alternative Medicine Act (TAMA) of 1997." The enactment of TAMA is consistent with the policy of the State to seek a legally workable basis by which indigenous societies would own their knowledge of traditional medicine. When such knowledge is used by outsiders, the indigenous societies can require the permitted users to acknowledge its source and can demand a share of any financial return that may come from its authorized commercial use. The objectives of this Act are to promote and advocate the use of traditional, alternative, preventive and curative health care modalities that have been proven safe, effective, cost effective and consistent with government standards on medical practice, and to promote traditional and alternative health care in international and national conventions, seminars and meetings in coordination with the Department of Tourism, Duty Free Philippines, Philippine Convention and Visitors Corporation and other tourism-related agencies as well as non-government organizations and local government units (http://www.lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra1997/ra_8423_1997.html).

Tribal people are still believed to observe folk medical practices. They do rituals, use herbal medicines and others to heal the illness of a family or community member. It is observed that if they see that a disease can be cured by the tribal doctor, they choose not to go to the hospital. However, due to modernization, many of the young adults from the tribal communities also prefer to use medicines prescribed by doctors or the medicines that people can avail in pharmacies. Thus, the dependence on formulated drugs increased even in upland communities.

To determine the extent of observance in folk medical practices in the tribal communities, the researchers decided to conduct this study to the students of NLPSC who belong to the upland municipalities.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to determine extent of observance of the folk medical practices by the NLPSC students.

Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

- 1) What is the profile of the respondents with respect to the following socio-demographic factors along:
 - a) Age;
 - b) Sex;
 - c) monthly allowance;
 - d) course;
 - e) religion;
 - f) academic year;
 - g) place of residence; and
 - h) membership in the tribal community?
- 2) What is the extent of observance of the folk medical practices by the respondents?
- 3) Is there a significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and their extent of observance on folk medical practices?

Methodology**Research Design.**

This study made use of the descriptive method of research to properly describe the data gathered from the respondents.

Population and Locale of the Study.

There were 328 Indigenous Peoples students of NLPSC who served as respondents of the study. They were identified as members of the tribal communities in the upland municipalities of Ilocos Sur through their records from the registrar.

NLPSC is a higher education institution where the respondents study which located in San Nicolas, Candon City, Ilocos Sur.

Data Gathering Instrument.

The questionnaire was formulated by the researchers based on the folk medical practices by the tribal communities in the northern part of the Philippines. It was validated by two educators from the upland municipalities and one educator in a tribal community from the lowland. The validity index of the instrument was 4.0 which is described as very valid.

The questionnaire is composed of two parts: the first part consisted the personal profile of the respondents and the second part contained the list of folk medical practices of the tribal communities.

The range of values for the numerical rating used to measure the extent of observance on the folk medical practices by the respondents is indicated as follows:

Rating Scale	Quantitative Equivalent	Descriptive Rating
5	4.21 – 5.00	Always (A)
4	3.41 – 4.20	Often (O)
3	2.61 – 3.40	Sometimes (S)
2	1.81 – 2.60	Rarely (S)
1	1.00 - 1.80	Never (N)

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers determined their respondents through interview. The researchers floated the questionnaire personally to the respondents who are members of the tribal communities in the upland municipalities. They were given 30 minutes to answer the questionnaire. The questionnaires were retrieved afterwards. The data were then tallied and interpreted.

Statistical Treatment of Data.

The following are the statistical tools used in the treatment of data in this study:

- 1) Frequency and Percentage was used to determine the profile of the respondents.
- 2) Weighted Mean was used to determine the extent of observance on the folk medical practices by the respondents.
- 3) Pearson Product Method of Correlation was used to determine the significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and their extent of observance on the folk medical practices. In this study, the statistical program for social science (SPSS) was employed.

Findings of the Study:

Problem 1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, course, monthly allowance, religion, number of years in the institution?

Table 1.a presents the profile of the respondents in terms of age.

AGE	f	%
15 – 18 years old	182	55.49
19 – 22 years old	138	42.07
23 years old or older	8	2.44
TOTAL	328	100.00

The table shows that there are 182 or 55.49 percent respondents who belong to the age bracket of 15-18 years old, 138 or 42.07 percent to 19-22 years of age and eight or 2.44 percent 23 years old or older.

It shows that majority of the respondents are in the lower academic years in college.

Table 1.b presents the profile of the respondents in terms of sex.

SEX	f	%
Male	102	31.10
Female	226	68.90
TOTAL	328	100.00

The table shows there are 102 or 31.10 percent respondents male and 226 or 68.90 percent are female.

It shows that most of the respondents are female.

Table 1.c presents the profile of the respondents in terms of course.

COURSE	f	%
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBS)	80	24.39
Bachelor of science in Computer Science (BSCS)	27	8.23
Bachelor of Science in Criminology (BS Crim)	33	10.06
Bachelor of Arts (AB)	25	7.62
Bachelor of Science in education (BSE)	22	6.71
Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED)	38	11.58
Certificate in Midwifery	25	7.62
Bachelor of Science in office Management (BSOA)	78	23.79
TOTAL	328	100.00

The table shows that there are 80 or 24.39 percent respondents who belong to BSBA department, 27 or 8.23 percent are from BSCS department, 33 or 10.06 are from BSCrim, 25 or 7.62 percent are from AB and Midwifery departments respectively, 22 or 6.71 percent are from BSE Department, 38 or 11.58 percent are from BEED department, and 78 or 23.79 percent from BSOAM.

It shows that many of the respondents preferred business-related course.

Table 1.d presents the profile of the respondents in terms of monthly allowance.

MONTHLY ALLOWANCE	f	%
Php. 1,000.00 – Php. 2,999.99	193	58.85
Php. 3,000.00 – Php. 4, 999.99	87	26.52
Php. 5,000.00 – Php. 6, 999.99	34	10.36
Php. 7,000.00 & above	14	4.27
TOTAL	328	100.00

The table shows that there are 193 or 58.85 percent respondents whose monthly allowance are Php. 1,000.00 – Php. 2,999.99, 87 or 26.52 percent are Php.3,000.00 – Php.4,999.99, 34 or 10.36 percent are Php. 5,000.00 – Php. 6, 999.99, and 14 or 4.27 percent have Php. 7,000.00 & above monthly allowance.

It shows that majority of the respondents have a low family income and or they live simple like how they live in their tribal communities.

Table 1.e presents the profile of the respondents in terms of religion.

RELIGION	f	%
Roman Catholics	216	65.85
Non – Catholics	112	34.15
TOTAL	328	100.00

The table shows that there are 216 or 65.85 percent respondents who are Catholics and 112 or 34.15 percent non-Catholics.

It shows that majority of the respondents are affiliated with the dominant religion in the country.

Table 1.f presents the profile of the respondents in terms of academic year.

ACADEMIC YEAR	f	%
1 st year	109	33.23
2 nd year	94	28.66
3 rd year	77	23.48
4 th year	48	14.63
TOTAL	328	100.00

The table shows that there are 109 or 33.23 percent respondents who are 1st year, 94 or 28.66 percent 2nd year, 77 or 23.48 percent 3rd year, and 48 or 14.63 percent 4th year. This shows that many of the respondents are freshmen in college.

Table 1.f shows the profile of the respondents in terms of place of permanent residence.

PLACE OF RESIDENCE	f	%
Abra	6	1.83
Banayoyo	33	10.06
Candon	35	10.67
Cervantez	7	2.13
Galimuyod	31	9.45
Lidlidda	25	7.62
Quirino	12	3.66
Salcedo	36	10.98
San Emilio	23	7.02
Sigay	9	2.74
Suyo	8	2.43
Sta. Cruz	26	7.93
Sta. Lucia	12	3.66
Others	65	19.82
TOTAL	328	100.00

The table shows that there are six or 1.83 percent who are resident from Abra, 33 or 10.06 percent from Banayoyo, 35 or 10.67 percent from Candon, seven or 2.13 percent from Cervantez, 31 or 9.45 percent from Galimuyod, 25 or 7.62 percent from Lidlidda, 12 or 3.66 percent from Quirino, 36 or 10.98 percent from Salcedo, 23 or 7.02 percent from San Emilio, nine or 2.74 percent from

Sigay, eight or 2.43 percent from Suyo, 26 or 7.93 percent from Sta. Cruz, 12 or 3.66 percent from Sta. Lucia and 65 or 19.82 who have other places but did not mentioned.

It shows that many of the respondents are residents of Banayoyo, Candon, Salcedo and other places.

Table 1.g shows the profile of the respondents in terms of membership in tribal community.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE TRIBAL COMMUNITY	f	%
Kankanaey	8	2.44
Tinguian	29	8.84
Bago	239	72.87
Others	52	15.85
TOTAL	328	100.00

The tale shows that there are eight or 2.44 percent who belong to Kankanaey tribal community, 29 or 8.84 percent are Tinguians, 239 or 72.87 percent are Bago tribe members and 52 or 15.85 percent have other trbal community membership but did not specify.

This shows that majority of the student-respondents are Bago tribe members.

Problem 2. What is the extent of observance of the folk medical practices by the respondents?

Table 2 shows the extent of observance of the folk medical practices by the respondents.

Folk medical practices of the tribal communities in the upland municipalities of the province of Ilocos Sur	<input type="checkbox"/>	DL
1. A tribal priest is consulted to reveal the cause of the sickness and describe the type of ritual to be performed (banaw).	3.12	S
2. Drinking of tapey or rice wine is part of the ritual when folk medical practices is observed	3.03	S
3. Food and liquor (atang) are offered to a displeased malevolent anito or bad spirit to cure the disease of the affected person.	3.11	S
4. A palis ritual is done to appease the displaced spirit of a person that might have caused the illness	3.23	S
5. Prayers or sapo are recited when folk medical practices is observed	3.16	S
6. Selected animals are butchered when folk medical practices is observed for the healing of a sick person.	3.21	S
7. An egg is offered to please the anitos while mumbling the sapo for the healing of a sick man.	2.95	S
8. Sibsib or healing ritual is performed so that bleeding of a cut or wound will stop.	3.12	S
9. Kidlos ritual is used to cure shock caused by fright or scare	3.23	S
10. Ilot is performed to properly set dislocated joints (bone-setting)	2.74	S
11. Sucking of the dead blood (tandok) in the inner part of the body to extract toxins or venom.	2.77	S
12. Calling on temporarily lost spirit or tako ritual to calm a frightened or	3.06	

scared person (nakabatbati)		S
13. Touching a sick man (naan-annongan) with a dead man's clothing to drive away the sickness.	3.68	O
14. The smoke from leaves or woods (pausokan) is used to treat a sick man by putting the smoke under his/her bed.	3.04	S
15. Herbal medicines are used to treat fever, dysmenorrhea, cough and colds, stomach ache, wounds, and other diseases.	4.12	O
Weighted Mean	3.17	S

Legend: 2.61-3.40 S - Sometimes

Folk medical practices is sometimes observed on the items: A tribal priest is consulted to reveal the cause of the sickness and describe the type of ritual to be performed ($\square=3.12$); Drinking of tapey or rice wine is part of the ritual when folk medical practices is observed ($\square=3.03$); Food and liquor (atang) are offered to a displeased malevolent anito or bad spirit to cure the disease of the affected person ($\square=3.11$); Palis ritual is done to appease the displaced spirit of a person that might have caused the illness ($\square=3.23$); Prayers or sapo are recited when folk medical practices is observed ($\square=3.16$); Selected animals are butchered when folk medical practices is observed ($\square=3.21$); When folk medical practices is observed, offering of an egg to please the anitos while mumbling the sapo ($\square=2.95$); Sibsib or healing ritual is performed so that bleeding of a cut or wound will stop ($\square=3.12$); Kidlos ritual is used to cure shock caused by fright or scare ($\square=3.23$); Ilot is performed to properly set dislocated joints (bone-setting) ($\square=2.74$); Sucking the dead blood (tandok) in the inner part of the body ($\square=2.77$); Calling temporarily lost spirit or tako ritual is done to calm a frightened or scared person (nakabatbati) ($\square=3.06$); The smoke from leaves or woods (pausokan) is used to treat a sick man by putting the smoke under his/her bed (3.04); and Herbal medicines are used to treat fever, dysmenorrhea, cough and colds, stomach ache, wounds, and other diseases (4.12).

The extent of observance of the respondents on folk medical practices has a computed weighted mean of 3.17 which is described as Sometimes.

This implies that the respondents nowadays have preference in attending to their health needs like consulting the professional medical practitioners in their localities or visiting the health center in their barangay rather than always relying on their traditional practices of healing.

Problem 3. Is there a significant relationship between the profile of the respondents to their extent of observance on folk medical practices?

Table 3 presents the correlation analysis between the profile of the respondents and their extent of observance on folk medical practices.

PROFILE	FOLK MEDICAL PRACTICES
Age	-.104
Sex	.062
Monthly Allowance	-.105
Religion	-.033
Academic Year	-.059

Place of Residence	-.073
Membership in the Tribal Community	-.013

Legend: *-significant

The table shows that all the variables on the profile of the respondents have no significant relationship to their extent of observance on folk medical practices.

SUMMARY

This study aimed to determine the extent of observance of the folk medical practices by the North Luzon Philippines State College (NLPSC) students.

Specifically, it sought answers to the following:

- 1) What is the profile of the respondents with respect to the following socio-demographic factors along: age, sex, monthly allowance, religion; academic year, place of residence and membership in the tribal community?;
- 2) What is the extent of observance of the folk medical practices by the respondents?; and
- 3) Is there a significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and their extent of observance on folk medical practices?

This study made use of descriptive method of research with a validated questionnaire as the main data gathering instrument. The respondents of this study were the 328 NLPSC students who were identified as members of the tribal communities in the upland areas of the province of Ilocos Sur. It was first semester of school year 2010 – 2011 when this study was conducted.

FINDINGS

Based on the gathered data, here are the findings of the study:

- 1) There are 182 or 55.49 percent of the student– respondents belong to the age bracket of 15-18 years old; 226 or 68.90 percent are female; 80 or 24.39 percent belong to BSBA department; 193 or 58.85 percent has monthly allowance of Php. 1,000.00 – Php. 2,999.99; 216 or 65.85 are Catholics; 109 or 33.23 percent are 1st year students;
- 2) the extent of observance of the respondents on folk medical practices has a computed weighted mean of 3.06; and
- 3) the profile of the respondents have no significant relationship to their extent of observance on folk medical practices.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were formulated:

- (1) majority of the respondents are in the lower academic years in college; many of them prefer business-related course; most of them are female; majority have low family income and or they live simply like how they live in their tribal communities; majority of the respondents are affiliated with the dominant religion in the country; many of the respondents are freshmen in college
- (2) The respondents who belong to the tribal communities have some preference in attending to their health needs like consulting the modern medical practitioners in

their localities or visiting the health center in their barangay rather than relying so much on their traditional practices of healing; and
(3) folk medical practices is observed regardless of the variables used in this study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations were drawn by the researchers:

- 1) adult tribal members should be included as respondents of the study;
- 2) There should be proper information dissemination drive about the provisions of "Traditional and Alternative Medicine Act (TAMA) of 1997" in the upland areas of Ilocos Sur to ensure the safe use and practice of folk medicines; and
- 3) other researchers should be conducted in some upland areas to find out the extent of observance of the Traditional and Alternative Medicine Act (TAMA) of 1997.

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