
CULTURAL IDENTITY OF CONTEMPORARY FILIPINO LEARNERS

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Abstract

In the course of life, educators try to update and get a grasp of the clientele they are engaged in. With the rapid influx of information through social media, it has been their preoccupation to fill in the gaps, without even realizing the reason why am I enjoying doing this. Discernment that includes - where they are, who is with them, where they have been, what am I doing, what are we doing and where they are heading. Perhaps, questioning - what is the purpose of my existence? Precepts that social media cannot answer. In the process of the study, the query, in turn, is - how will the cultural identity be preserved in the influx of foreign influences brought about by an influx of information in the Philippine society? This could help and contribute to the development of the school curriculum as to the goals of the subject and the subject area. Eventually, this could help in the planning and development of the school. The layout could assess the existing programs relevant to the study. Furthermore, administrators could cascade this to the teachers in the different departments of specialization. Further, the following determinants were specifically assessed among the subjects' responses in a form of a quick survey. This includes the characteristics of our students based on their knowledge, and affinity to the culture they were raised. Since the impact of the rapid turnout of the Digital Age was hypothesized, the factors that influenced the Filipino character were analyzed. The study was conducted at Cavite State University-CCAT Rosario Campus in Cavite, one of the satellites of the Cavite State University main campus. The respondents come from a Technology and Vocational course in their third year in college. The total number of respondents is fifteen (15). Based on the results, the young people of this generation are generally not too familiar with their roots, perhaps on the first level of awareness of their roots only. Custom, opinions, and position in the society also matter in posing generalizations among each other. Somehow, the environment is a factor that affects cultural identity, and it is relative. Customs foster social harmony and unity within a group. It allows the opportunity to get influenced by their affinity. Furthermore, it provides important social and economic benefits. Improved learning and health increased tolerance, and opportunities to come together with others' cultures enhance our quality of life and increase overall well-being for both individuals and communities. (Times New Roman, 9)

Keywords: Contemporary; cultural identity; Filipino learners

Introduction

Social scientists are becoming concerned about the uniqueness and particularity of their own culture in the current era of globalization in the 21st century. The importance of awareness of the nation's preservation and a sense of self, community, and nation are provided by cultural identity. But how does the ongoing process of globalization affect people's cultural identity? People construct their identities through their cultures, they will defend them.

From the standpoint of Social Development, we live in a world characterized by the process of broadening and deepening individualization, in the process of globalization Kupianen, Sevanene, et al.2004. According to Bouymay, 2020, globalization has positively impacted individuals' cultural identities and lives. To be specific, its favorable effects are the increase in education, employment opportunities, and open-mindedness concerning cultural diversity. Thus, we can clearly see the favorable effects of globalization on the economic context of a country. Globalization, they say, has allowed them to grow up in a multicultural environment, which has strengthened their relationships and enabled them to learn new languages. Furthermore, the opportunity to grow up in a multicultural atmosphere encouraged the participants to become more open-minded and respectful of different cultures. Globalization had influenced their culture positively, and while immersing themselves in the new culture, they had lost part of their cultural identities.

Materials and Methods

Guided by the reference, of George Herbert Mead, 1934 “The Community and the Institution, Sec. 34 Mind and Self Society, the framework of the sociologist George Herbert Mead, believed that people develop self-images through interactions with other people. He argued that the self, which is the part of a person's personality consisting of self-awareness and self-image, is a product of social experience. George Herbert Mead dwells on the concept of the social self that the behavior and perception held by individuals are influenced by the social groups where they belong (in a Filipino community).

The Descriptive Method allowed the researcher to discover the truth behind themselves in affinity to the cultural group they belong which were interpreted and extracted from the survey. The process of documentary analysis was also used to arrive at conclusions on the first level of awareness.

Thus, the survey is a standard questionnaire authored by is as follows:

- a. Personal identity / National Identity (Standard Questionnaire)
- b. The Content of the Survey: Gender, Age, Religion, Language, Race and Ethnicity (province as indicated)

The study was also supported by an analysis of the documents. Below are the questions posed on fifteen (15) students taking up TESDA course blended by Education academic units, The Bachelor of Science in Technical and Vocational courses in Teacher Education (BTVTED).

The survey questionnaire was authored by Simon Groen and De Evenaar: (Brief list of questions for Cultural Interview, 2006). This set of questions was chosen because it is indicative of what the culture of the learners is all about and how they treat each other. The research instrument was on an Adapt basis because some questions were not experienced by the respondents and were not included, and some alterations were made. They were distributed to 15 students taking up Bachelor of Technical Vocational Teacher Education.

The phenomenological approach was used to understand and describe the experiences of contemporary learners. It caters also to the Descriptive type of research which allowed the researcher to discover the truth behind themselves in affinity to the cultural group they belong which were interpreted and extracted from the survey. Husserl believed that phenomenology suspended all suppositions, was related to consciousness, and was based on the meaning of the individual's experience. The experience of perception, thought, memory, imagination, and emotion, involve what Husserl called “intentionality”, which is one's directed awareness or consciousness of an object or event.

Data Gathering

The study was done in a quick survey. The 15 respondents were chosen according to age, gender, and exposure to a regional environment, dialect, etc. all in equal distribution.

Data Gathering:

1. Read their responses to know what students know and their folks are saying.
2. Map out a few general categories to put each of the responses in.
3. Create sub-categories underneath the general ones to get richer detail of responses.
4. Re-categorize according to topics and number them.

The questionnaire comprises of the following, which were used in the results and discussions.

B. Language

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1. Which language (dialect) did you speak when you were growing up?
2. Did you also speak another language (or any dialect)?
3. Which language do you speak at home now? [If applicable: with the people living in the house?]
4. How well do you think you speak English?
5. When you speak English, can you explain exactly what you mean in English?

B. Ethnicity and Culture

1. Do you belong to a group that is different from other (ethnic) groups? Are your parents from the same group?
2. What makes this group different from other groups? Which customs, opinions, and positions in society?
3. How important is belonging to this group to you?
4. Are you still in contact with people from this group or your culture? If so: how important to you is this? If not: would you like to?
5. What do you feel is the most important thing about your culture? [For example: eating customs, respect, family, holidays, honor]
6. How do you think your culture differs from Saudi Arabia's customs and opinions? Is that important to you?
7. Do you think you fit in well in the Netherlands? Do you talk to Dutch people? Do you have any Dutch friends or acquaintances?

Results and Discussions

The questionnaires allowed the respondents that first, the majority of them are not clear about the culture embedded (culture since childhood practicing the customs and traditions) and the present culture they are in. It is a manifestation that the older generations to which their parents belong), have an undefined cultural identity, Second, most of their interactions were conceived ideas from social media. So, their self is the social media. Finally, the third is most of them refused to mingle or exhibit close-mindedness when it comes to different countries and nationalities.

The environment is a factor that affects cultural identity because if you are with your ethnic group, you are encouraged to practice common values, and practices common you. Since this pandemic, the difficulty in transportation expenses has been a problem.

What is interesting is - amongst the respondents, many mentioned that Cavitenos find the Batanguenos argumentative people. Since this group is different in the inflection in the way they project their voice. But it should not be taken personally nor pose judgments on the character of the respective group. Thus, discrimination has been observed, they find it more civilized.

On the part of their concern about Saudi Arabia and Netherlands, it is foreign to be in affinity with them. Since they are still groping on their roots as a Filipino, all much more of having another country.

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1. LANGUAGE/DIALECT SPOKEN WHEN GROWING UP

Since the colonization of the Americans, Filipinos have been using English as their second language and have been accustomed to using the language alongside local languages. The centuries of extensive contact between American English and Filipino language raises questions pertaining to language change and language identity. According to Morrison (2002), with an estimated 350 million native speakers and 1.9 billion competent speakers, the spread of the English language around the world over the last few decades has been swift and steady. English has become the lingua franca of our time. It is the international language of the airlines, the sea and shipping, computer technology, science, and indeed communication generally.

Based on the result of the study, the majority of the participants are knowledgeable in speaking Filipino and English. On the other hand, some also speak another language like Chavacano, Ilonggo, and one with an accent of Batangueño. A participant shared:

“When I was in grade school, the environment that I have been encountered mostly people that speak different dialects but the majority of them are knowledgeable in speaking Filipino or Tagalog rather. Although there are some factors that affect my knowledge in improving or learning some dialects the thing is that the only dialect that I have comfortable to speak with is the Tagalog language and English.”

2. LANGUAGE/DIALECT AT HOME

It is also important to highlight that the invention of the national language Filipino is a state-sponsored project purportedly initiated to unite the ethnolinguistically diverse citizens of the archipelago. Filipino is based on Tagalog, which is the native tongue of the people in central Luzon, specifically in Manila, Bataan, Batangas, Bulacan, Marinduque, Lubang, and Tayabas, among others. It is worth noting that although the Tagalog-based Pilipino was renamed Filipino “because it is perceived to have incorporated vocabulary and elements from other Philippine languages” (Gonzalez, 2003, p. 3), it continues to be identical to Tagalog, especially in terms of structure.

Similar to the language/dialect spoken when growing up, the majority of the participants are comfortable speaking Tagalog, especially at home for better communication with each other one participant explained:

The people in my surroundings especially my family affect the language that I need to speak especially for them to understand and communicate with me and vice versa. The language I speak is mostly a combination of Tagalog and English language.

3. HOW WELL DO THE RESPONDENTS SPEAK IN ENGLISH

The various reading activities, grammar drills, and discussion topics in the textbook are helpful in building students’ reading skills such as word attack, comprehension, and fluency. However, it is very modest in terms of presenting materials that might be considered consistent with critical pedagogy, except for the last chapter which briefly discusses colonialism and migration.

In the study, most of the respondents are not fluent in speaking the English language but can understand. A participant then stated that:

There are some instances that I feel like speaking English is the thing that I am confidently speaking but the Tagalog language is our native and my way also to express my feelings in the most accurate way. Although I have learned some of the English terminologies Tagalog is what my heart speaks.

4. RESPONDENTS IN EXPLAINING ENGLISH

When speaking English, the participants explain the meaning of what they are saying. Since English is a universal language and basically, the second known language because it is being taught in school. A participant explained that:

“When I am speaking in the English language, there are times that I doubt because there are still some errors that need to achieve in order to manage the correct expression and message that I want to convey because misconception can still be a hinder.”

Speaking English is very difficult in a country that has different cultures, different dialects, and different languages that they know since they were born.

5. RESPONDENTS/PARENTS BELONG TO DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS

Based on the result of the study, the majority of the participants belong to different ethnic groups. There is a participant having both parents from a different ethnic group, with his mother in Ilonggo ethnic group while his father is from Tagalog. However, there are also participants who did not belong to different ethnic groups and stated that most groups from different places such as Luzon areas or urban areas have distinct groups and none of them are part of the where they grew in.

“My parents are in the same group where Tagalog is their native language but Cebuano, Ilonggo, and Ilocano is also their language. “

Ethnicity is similar in concept to race. But while races have often been distinguished on the basis of physical characteristics, especially skin color ethnic distinctions generally focus on such cultural characteristics as language history, religion and customs.

6. CUSTOM, OPINIONS, AND POSITION IN SOCIETY WHICH MAKES DIFFERENT FROM OTHER GROUPS

I must mention that although the students in each were completely different, some similarities in experiences could be a factor that shaped the similar themes generated by these students. Shared experiences among these students are culture and beliefs and various racist representations of Filipinos as most of them are second-generation Filipino. A participant shared:

Customs foster social harmony and unity within a group. If a law goes against an established social custom the law may be difficult to uphold. The loss of cultural norms such as customs can cause a grief reaction that leads to mourning. There are no groups related to us because we are on the same ground, cultures, and a language that speaks within the country nonetheless if my family is part of those ethnic groups but not quite. Although many Filipino people were very entitled to the things that they want to do society speaks that distinct groups are not different from other groups, they are also part of the web, a circle that relies in on the language, Filipino.

7. IMPORTANCE OF GROUP BELONGINGNESS:

Wink (2000) highlights the importance of introducing interactive participation of students into the existing curriculum so that it becomes reflective of their own experiences. She suggests a curriculum that is not top-down, but rather a curriculum that is created through clothing, and elaboration of both teachers and students, so that what is taught is directly relevant and meaningful to students' lives. There is a participant mentioned:

“For me, It is very important to become a Filipino because that is the culture that shapes you, the group which taught us to improve our humility, and the country that molds us to become great good moral individuals. It enables us to share personal relatedness and support the perpetual growth of each other ourselves and our environment so, being part of an engaging community gives us a sense of belongingness.”

8. RESPONDENTS STILL IN CONTACT WITH PEOPLE FROM THIS GROUP OR CULTURE

It is important in having contact with people of Ethnic groups or cultures, especially if they are part of one's family. Some motivation to study the language is based on family or heritage connections to the language, and most of these learners do not or may hardly speak the language, and sometimes nor do their immediate family members. A participant answered:

“Yes, because some of them are part of my environment so basically they cannot become indifferent to me that impose the same culture as them. Knowing their part in your life is very important as they have contributed to the knowledge and culture that you have known or still need to process or in your progress, they are also the ones that can assess you to engage with the culture present in your place, etc.”

In addition to its intrinsic value, culture provides important social and economic benefits. Improved learning and health increased tolerance, and opportunities to come together with others' cultures enhance our quality of life and increase overall well-being for both individuals and communities.

9. MOST IMPORTANT THING ABOUT CULTURE

One of the most important things about culture is the celebration of special occasions like birthdays, Christmas, New Year, etc. Moreover, the surroundings and ambiance are also a way of respecting each other opinions. Generally, a participant stated:

Culture is very important, especially to those Catholics. Cultures can be the thing that can be used as a guide in order for a country to develop, improve and still become globalized also culture is a reflection of a community or nation. This makes culture a vital and important determining factor of how the community reacts, responds, and grows. Culture plays a major role in the lives of everyone in society. Culture gives you a sense of belonging especially when everyone speaks the same language.

10. CULTURE DIFFERS FROM THE SAUDI ARABIA'S CUSTOMS AND OPINIONS

The culture in Saudi Arabia's customs and opinions are different and important, as well. A participant added on how a woman wears whatever they want in Filipino, however in Saudi Arabia, the women there have what is needed to wear all the time. It does not matter to me the tradition of another country. Moreover, a participant also explained:

Because of culture, Saudi Arabia is different from the culture of the Philippines most people living there have different religion that is distinct to them or a religion that can be distinguished from theirs (Muslim). Filipinos are people living in a free world country so in another way, Saudi Arabia has a strict ruling that is inclined to their religion. Especially is fundamentally traditional and conservative. Islam has an extensive influence on society guiding people's social, familial, political and legal lives.

11. RESPONDENTS ON HOW WELL TO FIT IN NETHERLANDS

Based on the result of the study, the majority of the participants have no idea about in living Netherlands, because most of them do not have any connections or acquaintances in that place. However, a participant mentioned that "everyone can be fit in any country not only in the Netherlands, as I believed that we should explore our life and travel while we can. Also, it's important to know every country's culture so that you can blend and communicate". Also, one added that:

There are minimal differences between Philippines to the Netherlands as our country needs to adapt to the tropical climate. Also, the language that needs to be used in order to communicate with other people, the traditions that need to incline to the religion and also the government associates and everything about politics. I do not talk to Dutch people because their language is not my NATIVE language. I do not have friends from that country

Conclusion

This study was anchored on the framework of the sociologist George Herbert Mead, who believed that people develop self-images through interactions with other people. He argued that the self, which is the part of a person's personality consisting of self-awareness and self-image, is a product of social experience. The focused was more of the culture of the Tagalog region specifically, Cavite and Batangas and only a few from the Visayan region. The concept of contemporary learners is another study to be pursued by the researcher. This is inclined to knowing there are still some of my students who would practice their respective culture if they are of common denominator.

A study similar to this, generally about Cultural Identity, is a wide array of series of ideas. More so, the term "contemporary, "as in this era on post-pandemic requires dynamic research approach. Considering the fact that it's features is not constant due to its inherent dynamism. So, any research study would dwell in a developmental data of the different aspects of cultural living in the particular period or era.

I gathered an insight that many mentioned that many Cavitenos and Batanguenos (both natives) are argumentative people. Since this group is different in the inflection in the way they project their voice, both are still misinterpreted for such. But it should not be taken personally, nor pose judgements on the character of both groups. One respondent even implied discrimination when they mingle with other soft-spoken region like the Ilonggos in particular (as it appeared in one of the responses, who happens to be an Ilonggo). Cultural differences is what I mean. Different folks, different strokes.

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