



## **Street Games in Filipino Society in Selected Rural Towns of Ilocos Norte**

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### **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors designed the study, performed data gathering and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. They all managed the analyses of the study as well as managed the literature searches. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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### **ABSTRACT**

The research identified the Rural Street Games (RSG) of the chosen Municipalities of Ilocos Norte, Philippines, and the Benefits of RSG in promoting Filipino rural identity. The design of this research is Descriptive Design. The six towns of Ilocos Norte, Bacarra, Dumalneg, Pasuquin, Banna, Marcos, and Solsona, were selected to conduct the study. The researchers employed informal interviews and focus group discussions. The research mainly identified rural street games played in Ilocos Norte, Philippines: hide and seek, line crossing game, cow jumping, onion base, and kick game. Playing enhances the intellectual domain, physical domain, and some Filipino values of the players. This research's importance may also reduce to its specific aim, which is exercising socialization. Better communication starts in a simple game. Therefore, playing rural street games carries with it the best practice on how we preserve, strengthen and exercise our traits as Filipinos.

**Keywords:** *Filipino identity; rural street games; rural; culture; games; traits.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Play as a social activity represents an integral part of human society [1-3]. It is fundamental to the initiation of social change and is instrumental in the process of development. It ultimately reflects the changes that have occurred during modernization. Thus, it may be studied as a window through which the social structure may be viewed and more clearly understood as a dynamic entity [4,5]. In the context of the 20th century Philippines, RSG reflects the Rural Filipino Societies in which modernity and tradition still thrive against each other. Based on ethnographic and Gross-Cultural Survey File material, games are models of various cultural activities and concluded that there are associations between the complexity of cultures and the complexity of games [6]. The association is often described as imitative and functions as an enculturating mechanism. Although RSG is simply gaming themselves, it is perceived in nature that its symbolism to rural life is imminent, especially to Filipino Life [7,8].

RSG refers to the games played by Filipino rural children before the coming of online games. Although RSG can be commonly associated with indigenous games (laro ng lahi), this kind of game, especially in the street, was more attributed to the community of various people. Filipino children practiced it with minor differences from other versions but not necessarily distinct to one tribe or place [9]. Modern team sports like football, basketball, and hockey have inspired street activities in recent years; self-organization and hedonistic individualism, two critical features of a new era in sports, are frequently cited as examples in discussions of these "street games". Although these sporting activities are more recent than the models they imitate, they mostly rely on ways of functioning embedded deeply in traditional games [10].

The term rural sports, in the British context, usually comprehends all those outdoor amusements in which man either pursues wild animals for sport, competes with an antagonist in racing by means of the horse, the boat, or his unaided powers, or indulges in manly games of skill, or artificial modes of locomotion--- like swimming, skating, riding, or driving [11]. In contrast to the British, the Filipino rural sports were more children's play designed to enhance physical and social skills. It is simply an outdoor play, widely practiced by Filipino street children.

Children can explore their neighborhood through outdoor play; appreciate muck, sand, water, and other sensory sensations. They discover or make their own play spaces, acquire items and pursue interests, making exercise more appealing. In reality, research demonstrates that a child's body has its maximum physical growth between the ages of 3 and twelve, as evidenced by the drive to sprint, climb, and leap in open areas [12-15].

However, as the era of technology is more likely to be defined by youth, these rural street activities are at risk of being forgotten. When comparing the mother's gameplay experience to the child's, it is abundantly evident that today's kids play outside far less than their mothers did. The decline in outdoor play was primarily due to increased reliance on video-streaming media and concerns about safety and criminality. To encourage the child's pleasure in outdoor play, early childhood specialists, school instructors, and parents can follow a number of recommendations [16]. It is true in the Philippine setting. Many Filipino children nowadays seldom play these games. The current generation has been exposed to different electronic games handled on devices such as tablets, cellphones, and game consoles, which may lead to reduced interest in Filipino games or other cooperative games [17].

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

This study primarily attempts to discover street games in Filipino society in selected rural towns of Ilocos Norte. It is specifically to answer the following questions:

1. What are the rural street games widely practiced in the rural areas of Ilocos Norte?
2. What benefits do people get from playing rural street games promoting rural Filipino identity?

### 1.2 Significance of the Study

This study focused on the Street Games in Filipino Society in Selected Rural Towns of Ilocos Norte. The following are the benefits of the study's findings:

**Government:** The result of this research will be necessary for policy-making, especially in the preservation of rural street games as well as utilization of them at a national level, such as National Rural Games practiced in other countries.

**Schools:** The result of this research will contribute to the curriculum enhancement of Social Studies, Filipino, and Physical Education.

**Community:** The result of this research will contribute to the continuation of a practice that will generally contribute to a more proactive and healthy life.

**Researchers:** Lastly, this study benefits further researchers about rural society, most especially the rural games of the province. This study work as the basis of the study of other interested researchers.

### 1.3 Scope and Delimitations

This study explores the different Rural Street Games widely played in the rural towns in Ilocos Norte, namely Pasuquin, Dumalneg, Baccara, Marcos, Solsona, and Banna. The study also explores the role of RSG in strengthening the identity of a Rural Filipino Society (RFS) in the different rural towns listed. The study is also pure qualitative and therefore limited from using statistical treatment. The study is conducted in the different rural towns of the Province of Ilocos Norte, namely Pasuquin, Dumalneg, Baccara, Marcos, Solsona, and Banna. The respondents of the study are chosen purposively. They are the residents of the municipalities listed in the Ilocos Norte province. This study is confined to the RSG extensively performed in Ilocos Norte's rural communities, the values individuals gain from playing rural street games, and the socio-cultural significance of playing rural street games in representing Filipino rural family life.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Research Design

The study utilized Descriptive Design. It serves to describe "what exists" in terms of the components or conditions of a scenario and to get additional knowledge about the phenomenon's current state [18]. It applies IPO format, which means it has input, process, and outcome. The inputs of this research will be the data gathered from the people of Bacarra, Dumalneg, Pasuquin, Banna, Marcos, and Solsona. The process identifies the roles of rural street games in strengthening the identity of RFS. The researchers analyzed the roles of RSG in strengthening the identity of RFS through interviews and focused group discussions. After

analyzing, the researchers' output is research output.

### 2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was undertaken in Ilocos Norte, a province in the northern part of the Philippines. South Sea bounds it in the northwest, the Province of Cagayan in the north, Apayao in the northeast, Abra in the southeast, and Ilocos Sur in the South.

Ilocos Norte has two Provincial Districts in which the researchers picked three rural towns per district: Bacarra, Dumalneg, and Pasuquin from the First District. Banna, Marcos, and Solsona from the second district. These six chosen Municipalities represent the Province.

### 2.3 Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers utilized a researcher-made questionnaire during their Informal Interviews and focus group discussions. Triangulation was also employed.

The researchers prepared questionnaires that reflected the objectives of their study. Then, each researcher was assigned to each subject municipality, wherein the purposive sampling was made. Each respondent undergoes the Informal Interview wherein they are asked so that they cannot be intimidated. Researchers also discussed their respondent's answers in groups and employed triangulation by checking the integrity and truthfulness of the answers.

### 2.4 Population and Sampling

Respondents of the study are the elders aged 60-80 and children aged 10-15 of Bacarra, Dumalneg, Pasuquin, Banna, Marcos, and Solsona. The family heads were also included. The researcher Interviewed five people per municipality.

This research used purposive or judgment sampling in selecting the sample. Only those respondents that the researchers believe can give authentic and relevant information.

### 2.5 Research Instruments

The researchers used an interview guide. An interview guide is just a list of the broad subjects that intend to discuss in the interview and the broad questions to be asked about each subject.

To make it simple to refer to and ensure that researchers are not becoming too basic, they typically keep the instruction manual to one page. The act of writing such a manual can assist in organizing and focusing the area of inquiry. The questionnaire contains two questions that identify the RSG played in the community as well as its benefits.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Mostly Played Rural Street Games in Selected Towns of Ilocos Norte

The interview resorted to the identification of some but mostly played rural street games in selected towns of Ilocos Norte, namely; Hide and Seek (Tagoan), Line Crossing Game (Patintero), Cow Jumping (Baka-Baka), Onion Base (Bawang Base), and Kick Game (Sipa). The respondents frequently mentioned and identified these street games as they were entertaining and quite competitive.

**Hide and Seek (Tagoan):** The game's mechanics are hiding and seeking. One will seek other players in an area agreed by them. When someone is caught by the "agala" or in the Tagalog language "taya" he will run back to his base and say "boom" followed by the name of the player caught.

A parcel of the interview was quoted herein, "...There are many variations of Hide and Seek, but its similarity is always there will be one who seeks, and others hide. There is no limit on how many players there are, but all were agreed upon into a compromise." Although the mechanics are not as straightforward as the respondents answered, the surest rule is that players can make, agree or stipulate their own rules. A similar mechanic variation is also described where after the count, the 'taya' start looking for the rest of the players. Once found, one is automatically out of the game. However, in some provinces though, once a player is found, the found player will have to race to the base and touch it while the "it" player tries to catch up so that when the found player beats the "taya," the "taya" stays in place until everyone else is found [19].

Also expressed by the respondents was that they played it during the day. However, it is also played on moonlit nights. The respondents answered, "Mostly, it is played during daytime, but it is a thrilling experience to play on moonlight

nights where players can camouflage and enjoy the game as it becomes challenging. However, players are also reminded to be wary of the spirits they may disturb in their rural community. Some children were afraid to play on moonlit nights as they believed that monsters appear actively on the full moon."

**Line Crossing Game (Patintero):** It is a street game that many spectators often watch. Patintero is the most played game requiring speed, flexibility, balance, mental estimation, and calculation in addition to developing self-esteem [20].

Unlike the abovementioned street game, patintero is played by teams. Usually, the game has two competing teams. Similarly, the game and other rural street games have no exact number of players because Filipinos usually cover all available players who agree to play a game. Filipino culture is very considerate and sensitive to the feelings of others; excluding one player would give an impression that he/she does not belong to the group. Thus, regardless of age or number of players (balance or not), the game still proceeds.

The game starts with making the court, a portion of a street, a perfect place for the game. The street will be bordered with chokes or stone scratch marks, creating a border of the game. Next, the leaders or representatives will decide who the defense and offense team will be by tossing a coin or anything that breaks the even. The offense team will earn game points by surpassing the defense team from one starting point to another. When the defense team catches someone, the game will reverse. The team with more tagged incidents will lose, and the other team will be declared the winner.

A respondent added, "... Playing patintero is good because as I watch my children playing, there is a childhood willingness within me also wanting to play. You know, son, no one can stop me when I run in the streets before because of that game. Patintero is like the American Football. I learn how to strategically evade the enemy team and enjoy the moment, especially when winning a hard match." Indeed, the game is like American Football but without a ball. The players aim only to surpass the guards or the defense team to the finish line or point.

**Cow Jumping (Baka-baka):** Baka-Baka is one of the most played rural street games in Ilocos

Norte. The game is so popular because the players will not exert too much effort in creating the game. One of the players will act like a cow, who will bow down to different levels, and the other players will jump over him. When someone touches the cow, he will replace him and become the new cow in the game. It is a street game where each player aims to jump higher, but in some rural towns, it is modified by making the next jumper follow how the first jumper jumps or touches where the first jumper touches the assigned cow.

"... (laughed) as long as there is someone who became a cow to be jumped on, we continue to jump wherein the one who touches it becomes the next cow. We play it often in the open farmlands where it is flat and safe enough for us from any impact...."

**Onion Base (Bawang Base):** The game is more on catching the players of the enemy team. There are two teams in this particular game, each with the same objectives. Both teams will make a post oppositely and try to catch all opposing team players. Catching or tagging is done upon the team captains' agreement wherein a player can be captured by tagging his/her back, hands, or whole body. What makes the game more interesting is that the players caught can be saved by their teammates by tapping their hands. Nevertheless, this is not easy; caught players are in the custody of the enemy team. A team can also score if they capture or tag the enemy base, which is often represented by a rock.

"...The onion base is enjoyable but differs now because of the slapping, as they say. Slapping Onion Base, as they say, you slap it now instead of just touching the player's hands. Because of that, many are fighting. However, the one I grew up with is great because it is group work and no fighting...."

Although the bawang base has a negative side still, this game is being played especially by high school students. However, strict supervision must be implemented because contacts may result in trouble sometimes.

**Kick Game (Sipa):** Sipa is very popular not only in the Ilocos Norte but also in the whole Philippines. This makes the game the national sport of the Philippines. Sipa is traditionally played by kicking a ball or anything capable of bouncing upon kicking. The game is very similar to Sepak Takraw. In rural towns, Sipa is played

with different modes. However, if a player needs to finish a certain amount of agreed kicks to the modified ball, the last kick must be kicked with force to avoid being kicked by the "taya." If the "taya kicks it," the player who last kicked will be the next "taya." If the "taya does not kick it," the game will restart with a player needing to finish a certain number of agreed kicks to the modified ball. However, if a player does not finish the required kick, he/she will be the "taya," or the next player can first save him/her. As it is observed, Sipa has many variations in each rural town depending on the agreed rules and terms of the players. In each rural town interviewed, the ball used in the Kick Game (Sipa) is mostly rubber bands held together by rubber bands and leaves, held together by rubber bands and round hole metal with a candy wrapper.

"...Kick game is one of the most famous games in our place because it is so easy to follow and play. Our parents are not scolding us for playing this because they know this is Sports."

Most respondents agreed that sipa is the most popular game in their towns. Moreover, because of its enjoyment, people may spend half a day playing it. It is a game that fills the heart of the youngsters.

### 3.2 Benefits of Playing Rural Street Games and Promotion of Rural Filipino Identity

Aside from enjoyment and happiness, people may have gained some benefits from playing rural street games. It was emphasized that games provided its players with comfort and times of refreshing from studies and other daily activities [21]. Playing enhances the intellectual domain, physical domain, and some Filipino values of the players.

**Cognitive domain:** Different rural street games have different rules. Some are rigid, and some are lenient, but the most important thing is that players obey the rules to win. For these reasons, an individual or the team must exert efforts or make some strategies. Strategies are the product of mental processes. Therefore, these children also exercise their cognitive or intellectual domain while playing.

A respondent answered, "I played many street games in my life. It is fascinating because you utilize not only your body but also your brain,

especially in team street games. It is not only a battle of who lasts physically as of speed and stamina but also a battle of who plays strategically better. Not only do we enjoy playing but also develop and practice ways to win."

**Psychomotor domain:** The most obvious benefit that one could get from playing rural street games is body exercise leading to good mental and physical health. The majority of the games involve body movements. Some games require running, jumping, walking, and the like. Thus, while these games are being played, the children's muscles are also enhanced. Doctors might also agree that in rearing a child, parents must permit them to play outside and not tolerate them sitting idle with their gadgets.

A respondent answered, "I always play the street game, especially when holidays and weekdays wherein I develop a strong and healthy body. We have many strong children in our barrio (rural community) because we play many street games. We jump higher and run faster as we play each more of it."

**Filipino values:** Playing is very important for Filipinos because some of these games motivate children. This motivation's effect is that children unknowingly perform Filipino values like camaraderie and sportsmanship. Peer groups have a significant impact on the development of socialization. Children best learn how to care, coordinate, help, and so forth through sports. Because children spend more time playing games than in other activities, children also learn to accept defeat by playing rural street games. Most children who played these street games became more responsible and caring people.

A respondent answered, "By playing street games, I improved my physical body and thinking capacity and my attitude as I learned more values such as camaraderie and sportsmanship. I have always learned to value the gift of friendship over other things. I also learned always to have a good character even if I win or lose."

Playing rural street games has an impact on the socio-cultural of Filipinos. Our culture and sense of patriotism are shown in the playing of these Laro ng Lahi [22]. The interview's unambiguous findings reveal some significance. All agreed that these rural street games could preserve Filipino culture, strengthen Filipino identity, and exercise socialization. It further emphasized that

maintaining a unique cultural identity is playing cultural games [20].

Surprisingly, the enumerated games herein preserve Filipino culture so that the originality can still be gleaned thru these games. It is noted that traditional games are continuously taught, even with the emergence of video games [23]. The terms used, the mechanics, and how they are played manifest that a significant portion of our culture is involved. Having unique games also differentiate our country from other countries. It is imperative because colonizers made some changes in our culture. The Identity of Filipinos had also been changed. Nevertheless, this notion about the Philippines can also be negated. Admittedly, colonizers influenced the Philippines, but some practices are still being practiced by the Filipinos, such as playing these rural street games.

As time passes, innovation and integration of technology are also done as well as the emergence of digital games. However, a study showed that most children, especially in rural areas, still prefer traditional games over digital games due to their significance as part of the unique Filipino heritage and a tool for sportsmanship and socialization [24]. The rural towns of Ilocos Norte enjoy a continuing practice of street games. However, the tradition of playing street games may soon be forgotten without intervention. The researchers also observed a growing small group of children who prefer to play digital games and watch movies inside. The less appreciation of our culture and its connection to the social and natural surroundings resulted from the displacement of Philippine games that act as socio-historical markers [25].

This research's importance may also reduce to its specific aim, which is exercising socialization. Better communication starts in a simple game. It might not sound so technical, but it is a fact for children. Children might believe their peers more than their parents. Therefore, playing rural street games carries with it the best practice on how we preserve, strengthen and exercise our own unique Filipino rural culture.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In the light of the study, the following posting conclusions are drawn:

First, there are five identified Rural Street Games in the chosen municipalities, namely, Hide and

Seek (Tagoan), Line Crossing Game (Patintero), Cow Jumping (Baka-baka), Onion Base (Bawang Base), and Kick Game (Sipa).

Second, these rural games provide different benefits for rural Filipino society. These games serve as an exercise for the members of rural Filipino society. These games require a lot of bodily movements. The members of the Rural Filipino Society will exert a lot of physical movements when playing these games; hence these serves as an exercise. These games can help maintain the health of the members of the RFS. These rural games are also avenues for socialization. When playing these games, the members of the Rural Filipino Society gather together and enjoy. By playing these games, the Rural Filipino Society Members strengthen their bond. When these games are played, the players strengthen their relationships. The playing of these games has socio-cultural importance for the Rural Filipino Society. It strengthens the identity of Filipinos. A part of our socio-cultural identity is these games. Other Nationalities can identify Filipinos through these games. These games are our own, and it represents a part of our identity. These games also teach Filipinos the Value of Camaraderie and Sportsmanship. Some of these games are played in groups to win. The group should possess the value of teamwork. Hence by playing these games, the Members of the Rural Filipino Society develop camaraderie. Sometimes, a player cannot win, or a team will lose. These games also teach Filipinos the Value of Accepting defeat. The value of Sportsmanship is developed when Filipinos play these games.

## CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

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## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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