RICE FARMING PRACTICES AMONG AGSURNON FARMERS: A REFLECTION OF FILIPINO CULTURAL VALUES

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the farming practices and Filipino values embedded in the rice farming activities of local Agsurnon farmers addressing a gap in understanding the cultural dimensions of agricultural practices. The study contributed to the discourse on Filipino values and their role in sustaining traditional farming practices amidst modern agricultural challenges. Fourteen rice farmers from Barangay San Isidro, Bayugan City in CARAGA region belonging to two organizations and with at least ten years of experience in rice farming were purposively selected. The sample size was sufficient to ensure data saturation. Data were collected through a semi-structured in-person interview with questions divided mainly into three sections: (1) the profile and an overview of the participants regarding how they learn farming, (2) the farming practices in the five stages, and (3) the Filipino values reflected in these practices. A qualitative descriptive research design was used to determine their practices and values in rice farming. The qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis with predetermined categories or themes: farming practices, farming terms, and Filipino values embedded in the practices. Results revealed farming terms like pamilapil, daro, and turtol during the pre-planting stage; tanum and sabwag during planting; ispray during post-planting; garab, bulhot, and giok during harvesting; and hagdaw and bulad during post-harvesting. Filipino values such as the bayanihan spirit, faith and gratefulness, strong family ties, generosity, industriousness, positivity, resourcefulness, and commitment were all reflected in the five stages of farming practices. The study highlighted the significance of Filipino values in preserving traditional farming practices. With this, future studies may either explore other types of farming or develop pedagogical materials based on the farming terms and values to promote both agricultural and cultural preservation.

Keywords: Local Agsurnon farmers, farming practices, farming terms, Filipino values

INTRODUCTION

Rice is a staple food in Asia with the region producing and consuming 90% of the global rice crop produce (Fukagawa & Ziska, 2019). The Philippines as an agriculture-based country plays a significant role in this industry. With 9.7 million people employed in the agricultural sector from 2014 to 2018 as cited by Empeño (2024), the country ranked eighth in global rice production in 2018 (FAOSTAT, 2018). These figures show the vital importance of rice farming in the Philippines' agricultural landscape.

Historically, farming in the country relied heavily on manual labor and traditional methods (Mogato, 2018). However, advancements in technology have transformed agricultural practices, leading to the integration of synthetic products and mechanized tools. For instance, in Agusan del Sur, a province in Caraga region, Philippines, the farmers now use methods like *mang-turtle* (the process of using turtle power tiller), *mang-ispray* (the process of using a sprayer for herbicides and pesticides), and *mang-harvest* (the process of employing harvesting machines). Despite these advancements, many farmers continue to practice traditional methods reflecting that despite modernization, there are still efforts done for cultural preservation.

These traditional practices can be understood through Bourdieu's theory of Cultural Capital (Bourdieu, 2000), which argues that the knowledge, skills, and values passed down through generations form valuable resources that influence how individuals make decisions. For Agusanon farmers, cultural capital is evident in their agricultural knowledge, their shared customs, and the values they hold, such as hard work, cooperation, and resourcefulness. These values help sustain their farming practices and enable them to adapt to challenges such as market instability, pest invasions, and unpredictable weather, (Dacalan Ancestral Domain of Kalinga, 2019).

While modern farming technologies are adopted increasingly, the core practices of Agsurnon farmers remain deeply tied to their cultural capital. These values, passed down from generation to generation, help them navigate the evolving landscape of rice farming. According to Menguin (2021), Filipino values are the shared beliefs and assumptions that guide individuals' responses to various situations. Timbreza (2003) also identifies hard work and industriousness as fundamental Filipino values, which are clearly reflected in the farming practices of Agsurnon farmers.

By integrating cultural capital into our understanding of rice farming, we can see how Filipino valuesuch as bayanihan (community cooperation), resilience, and resourcefulness shape the agricultural practices of Agusanon farmers. These values are not only essential for preserving traditional farming methods but also for helping farmers overcome external challenges, ensuring the sustainability of their livelihoods and the continuation of their cultural heritage.

The study sought to answer several questions to deepen the understanding of how cultural preservation and Filipino values are embedded in the farming practices of local Agusanon farmers. Specifically, it aimed to examine the demographic profile of these farmers, focusing on their age and years of experience in farming, which provided context for their agricultural expertise and traditions. The study also explored the specific practices employed during various stages of rice farming—pre-planting, planting, post-planting, harvesting, and post-harvesting and identified the unique farming terms used in these processes, highlighting their linguistic and cultural heritage. Lastly, the study investigated the Filipino values reflected in these practices to understand their role in sustaining the traditions and livelihoods of Agusanon farmers.

Ultimately, this study examined how Agsurnon farmers embodied Filipino values through their enduring farming practices, showcasing their resilience and commitment to safeguarding their heritage despite the pressures of modernization. Understanding the values embedded in these farming practices was crucial as it provided insights into how cultural traditions influenced sustainable agriculture and community resilience. By identifying and preserving these values, the study contributed to ensuring that the cultural heritage of Agsurnon farmers was not lost amidst technological advancements. Furthermore, this research emphasized the importance of integrating traditional values into modern agricultural policies and practices, offering a holistic approach to addressing challenges in the agricultural sector.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study utilized a qualitative descriptive research design to explore the practices of local farmers of Agusan del Sur, and the values embedded in these practices. The research design was found suitable as it captures a profound understanding of concepts, opinions, and experiences as noted by Bhandari (2020). It facilitates a contextual understanding of farming practices across all stages: pre-planting, planting, post-planting, harvesting, and post-harvesting and the Filipino values reflected in the practices in each stage.

Participants

The participants of the study were the farmers from Barangay San Isidro, Bayugan City, Agusan del Sur. A purposive sampling method was employed in selecting participants who are farmers with at least ten years of experience in rice farming to ensure the reliability and depth of information provided. The participants were members from two farmers' associations: San Isidro Masipag Farmers, with a population of 29 local farmers, and Barangay San Isidro Farmers' Association (BASIFA), with a population of 56 local farmers. A total of 14 participants were selected, a sample size justified by the attainment of data saturation which is

context-dependent, as supported by Rahimi (2024) where recurring themes indicate sufficient data for robust analysis and conclusion.

Research Instruments

The researchers developed a semi-structured interview guide, checked by the adviser and validated by experts, to gather detailed data. The semi-structured interview was conducted in person, with questions asked within a predetermined thematic framework. In connection, the guide questionnaire included three main sections: (1) farming practices during pre-planting, planting, post-planting, harvesting, and post-harvesting, including the frequency of these practices; (2) the terms used to identify their practices at each stage; and (3) the values embodied by the practices and the farmers.

Data Collection

Before the data gathering began, the researchers presented the constructed interview questionnaires to experts for validation. These experts were selected based on their expertise in qualitative research and familiarity with agricultural practices. The criteria for their selection included academic qualifications, professional experience, and relevance to the study's focus. Their feedback was meticulously integrated into the final version of the questionnaire and interview guide to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the research objectives.

Following validation, the researchers identified participants by considering their age, years of farming experience, and membership in the two farming organizations. To achieve data saturation, a sample size of 14 participants was selected. This number was deemed sufficient based on the study's scope and the depth of information required to address the research questions. However, the study acknowledges that the small sample size may limit the representativeness and diversity of perspectives, and this is noted as a potential limitation.

Before conducting the final interviews, pilot testing was performed to ensure that the questions were clear and time-efficient. To minimize interviewer bias, the researchers employed strategies such as asking non-leading questions, avoiding personal reactions, and adhering strictly to the thematic framework. The interview process followed a structured approach based on a predetermined thematic framework comprising three main sections.

Ethical considerations were a priority throughout the study. Participants were provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights, including confidentiality and anonymity. Informed Consent Forms were obtained from all participants before their inclusion in the study. During the interviews, participant responses were documented through audio recordings and field notes, ensuring their confidentiality by securely storing and anonymizing the data.

After the interviews, the researchers transcribed the recorded data for analysis. The transcriptions were analyzed thematically to address the research questions and draw meaningful conclusions. By adhering to rigorous ethical standards and implementing strategies

to ensure credibility and transparency, the study ensured the reliability and validity of its findings.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the qualitative data. This method allowed for a systematic examination of the data. The analysis utilized both deductive and inductive approaches.

Deductive thematic analysis begins with preconceived themes (Delve & Limpaecher, 2024). In the context of the study, predefined themes were the rice farming practices across stages, farming terms, and Filipino values, informed by the study's objectives and prior literature served as the initial coding framework. Meanwhile, the researchers also identified emerging patterns from the data collected through iterative review and re-coding. This dual approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences.

Specifically, it followed the six-phase framework of Braun and Clarke (2013) which consists of familiarization, coding, theme development, theme review, theme naming, and reporting. Data was familiarized through repeated listening and reading of interview transcriptions. Then, initial codes were created based on the predefined categories while identifying emerging patterns. Themes were reviewed to ensure alignment and coherence with the study objectives. With the themes already named, they were defined and integrated with literature to contextualize the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Participants

To describe the participants' profiles, the number of years in farming, age, and membership in either or both two farmers' associations were determined. The participants were local Agusanon farmers from Brgy. San Isidro, Bayugan City, Agusan del Sur. In total, there were 4 participants from the San Isidro Masipag Farmers (SIMFA), 5 from the Barangay San Isidro Farmers' Association (BASIFA), and 5 farmers who are membersof both organizations. All of them have spent more than 10 years in farming, with 21 years as the least and 56 years as the highest, resulting in an average of 38 years. The average age of the farmers in this study is 64 years. These demographic factors, particularly age and years of farming experience, were considered significant in the study, aligning with findings from Seok et al., (2018), which indicate that aging correlates positively with productivity due to accumulated experiences. To strengthen the study's insights, future research can adopt a more quantitative approach. This might include incorporating survey questions to assess patterns and frequencies of specific practices across various groups. Statistical methods, such as frequency distributions or other

tests, could be utilized to analyze relationships between demographic factors and observed behaviors or outcomes. Such approaches would provide a more comprehensive and structured understanding of the connections between demographic characteristics and related practices.

Rice Farming Stage and Practices

Pre-planting Stage

Table 1

Rice Farming Practices in Pre-planting Stage

Stage	Substages	Practices	Description
Pre-planting Stage	**Preparation**	***Daro***	This refers to the act of plowing the land to break and loosen the soil for planting.
		Lampas	This refers to the act of removing the weeds from the field to ensure proper land preparation.
		Pilapil	This refers to the process of repairing and reinforcing the rice paddy embankments to maintain water levels.
		Kanal	This refers to the process of constructing canal for effective drainage and water distribution.
		Turtle	This refers to the use of turtle machine to moisten the rice field.
		Soaking of seeds	This refers to the process of submerging seeds in the water to promote sprouting in preparation for the planting.
		Sapil	This refers to the process of levelling the field after it is moistened by the turtle machine.
	Storage of Water	***Sapong/semi -dam/rain field***	This refers to the storage of water in a designated area to ensure adequate supply for planting activities.

Table 1 summarizes the responses of the participants regarding the pre-planting stage. This stage has two main sub-stages, namely land preparation and water storage, which are initial steps for rice planting. Land preparation involves practices such as *daro* (plowing the soil), *lampas* (weeding), *pilapil* (repairing rice paddles), *kanal* (creating for drainage and water), *turtle* (using a turtle machine to moisten the field), and *sapil* (leveling the field after moistening). Additionally, the soaking of seeds and the use of *sapong*, semi-dams, or rain-fed methods for water storage are critical steps in preparing for planting.

The use of these traditional methods reflects deeply rooted practices shaped by the farmers' cultural heritage, economic realities, and environmental conditions. Majority of the participants preferred manual techniques, such as *lampas* (weeding) and *pilapil* (repairing rice paddies), due to limited access to advanced machinery and the suitability of these methods for small-scale farming. Similarly, they shared that they use *sapong* or semi-dams for water

storage which demonstrates their resourcefulness in adapting to local water availability and economic constraints.

In addition to these insights, the sustainability of these practices warrants further consideration. Some of the practices in this stage have their adaptability susceptible to the changing environmental conditions. Participants revealed the reliance on rain-fed methods became a challenge under prolonged drought conditions emphasizing the need for innovations like modern irrigation systems. Despite these challenges, however, traditional farming practices have shown resilience, adapting to local conditions and continuing to thrive in the face of adversity. This adaptability demonstrates the enduring strength of these practices, even as they evolve to meet new environmental realities.

Planting Stage

Table 2

Rice Farming Practices in Planting Stage

Stage	Substages	Practices	Description
Planting Stage	**Method of Planting**	***Sabwag***	Also known as direct seeding, this method involves scattering or sowing seeds directly into the field. The process typically takes 1 to 4 hours or up to half a day.
		Manual Planting	A traditional method where young seedlings are transplanted by hand into the prepared field. This process can range from 1 to 16 days, depending on the field size and workforce availability.
		Calendar-based planting.	Planting is scheduled based on local farmers' beliefs, often aligning with the full moon, which is considered an auspicious time for planting to ensure optimal growth and yield.

Table 2 summarizes the participants' insights regarding the planting stage, highlighting three key sub-stages: methods of planting, duration, and proper season. Farmers reported using three primary approaches for planting rice. The first is *sabwag*, or direct seeding, which involves scattering or sowing seeds directly into the field and takes approximately one to four hours or up to half a day. The second approach, manual planting, is a traditional method where young seedlings are carefully transplanted by hand into the prepared field, requiring anywhere from 1 to 16 days depending on field size and available labor. Lastly, calendar-based planting is guided by the farmers' cultural practices and agricultural knowledge to determine the most favorable planting time.

The choice of these methods was shaped by a combination of practical, economic, and cultural factors. According to the participants, *sabwag* offers a more time-efficient method but may be less precise than manual planting which allows better control over the placement and spacing of seedlings. While manual planting method is more labor-intensive, it remained a preferred practice due to its effectiveness in ensuring a stronger crop yields.

Adherence to calendar-based planting further underscores the farmers' deep cultural connection to their agricultural cycles. This approach serves as both a practical guide and a reflection of the farmers' respect for traditional wisdom and the natural environment. Several participants revealed their belief, passed down through generations, that planting during the full moon, particularly at night, yields better results. Scientific explanations support this belief, as the moon's gravitational pull is strongest during this phase, enhancing the soil's ability to retain moisture and aiding seed germination and growth.

Post-planting Stage

Table 3

Rice Farming Practices in Post-planting Stage

Stage	Substages	Practices	Description
Post-planting Stage	**Method of protecting the rice crop**	***Spray***	This refers to the process of using insecticides, herbicides, or other treatments to protect crops from insects, weeds, or diseases.
		Fertilizer	This refers to the application of fertilizer to the plants for their nourishment.
	Frequency of visits	***Every day***	Farmers visit their rice fields daily to check their crops after planting.
		According to situation	The frequency of visits varies depending on other errands, priorities, or specific agricultural conditions.
		Many times	This refers to an unspecified number of visits made to the fields to ensure proper crop care.
		Other frequencies	Accounts for various other reasons that may influence the frequency, number, or absence of field visits.

Table 3 presents the participants' responses regarding the post-planting stage, which focuses on ensuring the health and growth of rice plants. This stage emphasizes protective measures, such as the application of pesticides and fertilizers, as well as the frequency of field visits to monitor crop conditions and address emerging issues.

The choice of protection methods revealed a blend of economic, environmental, and cultural considerations. Many participants preferred chemical sprays due to their effectiveness in controlling pests and weeds. However, some, constrained by the high cost of these inputs, opted for alternatives such as organic fertilizers or traditional pest management practices, reflecting a resourceful approach to maintaining crop health.

The frequency of field visits, whether daily or situational, demonstrated the farmers' industriousness and adaptability. Participants noted that these visits were often balanced with other responsibilities aside from farming, highlighting their ability to manage competing demands effectively.

From a sustainability perspective, the reliance on chemical sprays and fertilizers raised concerns about long-term environmental and soil health. While participants acknowledged the immediate benefits of these inputs, some reported a gradual shift toward eco-friendly practices, such as using organic fertilizers or adopting natural pest control methods. This transition mirrors broader trends in rice farming across Southeast Asia, where sustainable practices are increasingly being integrated to address issues of soil degradation and environmental impact (Chang et al., 2020).

Harvesting Stage

Table 4

Rice Farming Practices in Harvesting Stage

Stage	Substage	Practices	*Description*
Harvesting Stage	**Method of Harvesting**	***Garab***	This is the traditional method of harvesting rice using a handheld tool called garab.
		Giok	This refers to the manual way of separating grains of rice from its stalks by trampling barefoot
		Bulhot/thresher	This refers to the process of separating the grain from the straw using threshing.
		Harvester	This refers to the use of a machine called harvester to automate the harvesting process.
	Method of selecting people	***Find people***	This is the practice of the local farmers seeking anyone available to assist with harvesting.
		Neighbors and close friends	Farmers ask for help from neighbors and close friends during the harvest.
		Sundunon	This is a practice where the person who planted the crop is also responsible for harvesting it.
	Method of paying workers	***Wages***	Workers are compensated through money or a share of the harvested grains.
		Free foods and drinks	Workers are rewarded with meals, snacks, or beverages for their assistance.
		Hunsanay	This is a traditional bartering system where a service is repaid with another service.

Table 4 presents the harvesting stage which encompasses various traditional and modern methods the participants practiced based on their economic, environmental, and cultural contexts. Traditional methods such as *garab* (manual harvesting using a sickle) and *giok* (separating grains from stalks barefoot) were deeply rooted in cultural heritage and were often chosen for their cost-effectiveness, especially among small-scale farmers.

Although traditional methods required the participants a minimal financial investment, they admitted that such practices demanded significant labor and time. Meanwhile, they saw the benefit of adopting advanced technologies for efficiency, yet the high costs of such equipment limited their accessibility.

The participants shared the values they embodied in terms of selecting the workers which were *bayanihan* (community spirit) and *family ties.* Farmers frequently enlisted the help of neighbors, friends, or family members. The use of *sundunon* which means that those who planted the crops also harvest them, emphasized responsibility and commitment. Payment practices, including monetary wages, food provisions, or bartering services (*hunsanay*), illustrated their adaptability and resourcefulness in meeting labor needs despite financial constraints.

However, sustainability remained a pressing concern. The participants admitted that their traditional practices were less adaptable to climate change and were labor-intensive, posing challenges as they faced aging populations and shrinking labor forces. The reliance on modern harvesters, while efficient, had an environmental impact and economic feasibility for smaller farmers.

Comparing these local findings to national and international trends reveals common challenges in rice farming across Southeast Asia. For instance, many regions in the Philippines and neighboring countries similarly grapple with balancing cost-effective traditional methods with the efficiency of modern technologies, especially in light of environmental and economic pressures (Boquet, 2017).

Post-harvesting Stage

Table 5

Rice Farming Practices in Post-harvesting Stage

Stage	Substage	Practices	Description
Post-harvesting stage	**Method of Hauling**	***Through people and motorcycle***	This refers to the practice of hauling rice by people carrying the harvest or using motorcycles.
		Through carabao	This refers to hauling rice using a carabao, a traditional method for transporting harvested rice.
	Method of drying	***Mechanical dryer/ Flatbed***	This refers to drying the harvested rice using a mechanical dryer or flatbed for more controlled drying.
		Natural heat	This refers to the traditional method of drying rice using natural sunlight and heat.
	Method of milling	***Lobok***	This refers to the traditional way of milling rice with the use of the tool *lusong* in which the grains are placed and of *alho* or pestle in grinding the rice.
		Miller Machine	This refers to the modern practice of milling rice using a mechanical milling machine.
	Method for the newly	***Subing/ hagdaw/ garab/giok***	These refer to processes where newly grown crops or leftovers (subing) are harvested (hagdaw) using

grown crops		local tools (garab) and then separated by foot (giok).
Belief	***Patilaw***	This refers to the belief that tenants are the first to taste the harvest as a gesture of respect and acknowledgment for their work.

Table 5 illustrates the post-harvesting practices employed by farmers, highlighting the methods used for hauling, drying, milling, and utilizing newly grown crops, as well as beliefs related to the distribution of the harvest.

Farmers primarily relied on traditional methods such as hauling rice using carabaos or motorcycles. Economic factors played a significant role in their choices, with motorcycles providing efficiency for short distances and carabaos being more cost-effective in areas with uneven terrain.

Drying practices varied between mechanical dryers or flatbeds and natural sun drying. While mechanical dryers provided consistency and efficiency, participants noted that their use was limited due to financial constraints. Consequently, natural heat was the more widely used method, valued for its affordability. However, its dependence on favorable weather conditions raised concerns about its reliability, especially in the face of climate change, which affected the quality of the harvested rice.

Milling methods ranged from traditional *lobok* (using tools such as *lusong* and *alho*) to modern milling machines. While the traditional *lobok* method persisted, milling machines were favored for their speed and ability to produce polished rice, which was important for both commercial and domestic purposes.

Farmers also engaged in practices such as *subing*, *hagdaw*, *garab*, and *giok* to maximize the use of leftover crops. These methods, deeply rooted in tradition, reflected the farmers' commitment to minimizing waste and promoting sustainable resource use.

The belief in *patilaw* reflected the participants' gratitude and respect, allowing tenants to be the first to taste the harvest. This practice not only strengthened the bond between farmers and tenants but also fostered a sense of community harmony.

When compared to national and international trends, the use of mechanical dryers and milling machines aligns with efforts in Southeast Asia to modernize agricultural practices (Hegazy et al., 2013). However, the continued reliance on traditional methods like *lobok* and natural drying highlights the adaptability and resilience of local farming practices.

Filipino Values

Table 6

Filipino Values Reflected in Farming Practices

Theme	Subthemes	Description
Filipino Values	***Bayanihan***	This refers to the act of helping or collaborating with fellow farmers to complete tasks.
	Faith and gratefulness	This reflects how the farmers' religious faith is embodied in their farming practices, showing gratitude for their work and harvest.
	Family ties	This highlights the crucial role of family in farming, with family members often contributing in various ways.
	Generosity	This represents how farmers share their harvest or resources with others, demonstrating selflessness.
	Industriousness	This refers to the hardworking nature of farmers, showing their willingness to work long hours without hesitation.
	Positivity	This describes the farmers' optimistic outlook on life and farming, despite the challenges they encounter.
	Resourcefulness	This refers to the farmers' ability to find creative solutions and adapt to overcome difficulties.
	Commitment	This demonstrates the farmers' dedication and responsibility toward their work and the agricultural process.

Spirit of Bayanihan

From pre-planting to post-harvesting, the Filipino value, *bayanihan* was evident among the participants. When asked about the harvesting process, Participant 1 shared that it was done collectively rather than individually. Similarly, in the drying process, Participant 3 recounted how they helped each other gather dried grains into sacks during an unexpected rain instead of working alone. Participant 2 emphasized that being part of a community involves socializing and strengthening shared beliefs. Participant 9 expressed the same sentiment, stating that good communication with fellow farmers fosters *bayanihan* even during the turtle-paced processes in pre-planting. Additionally, Participant 5 recalled, "*Sa una nagabuhat me anang hunsanay* (Before, we used to practice Hunsanay)," referring to the tradition of mutual help. These narratives illustrate how *bayanihan* is embedded in various farming practices, such as turtle, harvesting, hauling, and drying. The findings align with the definition of Adlit et al. (2023) which explains *bayanihan* as the community's voluntary cooperative effort toward shared goals. The study further highlights that the foundation of is rooted in *bayanihan* maintaining good relationships within the community.

Faith & Gratefulness

Faith emerged as a significant theme across all stages of farming. Participant 1 acknowledged that God, as the ultimate provider, must be called upon because human efforts alone are insufficient. Several participants, including Participants 8, 12, and 13, echoed this belief, emphasizing farmers' dependence on divine intervention. In the pre-planting stage,

Participant 4 shared that he prays for a bountiful harvest to support his children's education, while Participant 8 expressed his devotion to God and saints for a successful harvest. Similarly, Participant 11 hoped that offerings would result in doubled gains.

Despite acknowledging the inevitability of failures, participants expressed gratitude during the harvest and post-harvest stages. Participant 6 stated that he remains thankful even during challenges, and Participant 8 mentioned that when failures occur, they surrender to God while continuing their efforts. Participant 14 also highlighted the acceptance of failure as part of the process. Across the entire farming cycle, Participant 2 affirmed that farmers inherently have faith, which was supported by Participant 7, who noted their consistent prayers. These manifestations resonate with Abao's (2022) study, which highlights how faith sustains farmers' hopes for a good harvest and profit even in adversity.

Strong Family Ties

Participants consistently identified their families as their primary motivation for continuing farming. For instance, Participant 3 shared that his family is his ultimate driving force, while Participants 4, 5, and 13 mentioned that their inspiration comes from supporting their children's education through farming. Participant 5, as the family breadwinner, stressed that farming is the only job that can meet their needs. Similarly, Participant 8 highlighted that farming supports their daily living expenses.

However, gender dynamics seem to influence the future of farming within these families. Not all family members were motivated to continue in farming, and gender expectations play a significant role in this. For example, Participants 1 and 9 expressed doubts about whether their daughters would take up farming, while Participant 6 strongly opposed the idea of his children pursuing farming due to its physically demanding nature. In contrast, Participant 11 shared that he has already passed his farming knowledge to his son. This suggests that rice farming remains predominantly male-dominated in these families, which challenges Garner and de la O Campos' (2014) view of farming as a family enterprise, where responsibilities are typically shared across genders. Another reason for not continuing farming in the family were the physical and economic hardship that goes with it. This aligned with the study of Palis (2020) which involved farmers from Agusan del Norte, Iloilo, and Isabela. Most of them aspired to their children's college education for they want them to work on non-farming jobs in urban areas or abroad. Logistic regression showed that age and number of children of farmers increase the likelihood that a farmer aspires for at least one of his or her children to be rice farmers.

These findings also aligned with the observation of Verkaart et al., (2018) that the reluctance to continue farming is driven by perceptions of farming as labor-intensive and financially unrewarding. Gender expectations further influence decision-making around farming practices, with male children expected to inherit farming duties. This underscores the

need to explore how gender roles impact the future of farming and the decision-making processes within farming families.

Generosity

Generosity was another value evident throughout the farming stages. During pre-planting, planting, and post-planting, Participants 3 and 11 shared that true farmers lend seedlings or fertilizers to neighbors, trusting that the favor will be returned in times of need. Participants 4 and 6 mentioned offering opportunities for others to earn money through tasks like hauling and harvesting. Additionally, Participant 13 highlighted the importance of sharing farming knowledge as an act of generosity. These practices reflect a culture of giving without expecting anything in return, emphasizing the farmers' community-oriented values.

Industriousness

The participants' industriousness was evident across all farming stages. Participant 1 described spending long hours in the field, even at midday, checking crops and participating in seminars to improve her productivity. Participant 3 mentioned visiting his rice field multiple times a day to monitor its condition. Participant 2 shared his motivation to farm to ensure his family's food security, while Participant 5 recounted working tirelessly, regardless of the weather, to support his children's education. Participants 8 and 9 emphasized patience as a critical quality for farmers, with Participant 9 adding that collaboration and concentration are essential. These reflections align with the findings of Sanfo and Gerard (2012) which reveals that farmers are driven by a desire for mastery and achievement.

Positivity

Despite the challenges, participants maintained a positive outlook. Participants 2, 3, 5, and 14 expressed confidence that failures are temporary and success will follow in future harvests. Participant 14 further emphasized the importance of acceptance and faith during trying times. Participants 4 and 10 expressed gratitude for government support, such as fertilizer and seed distribution, which fosters optimism. Participant 1 shared how she viewed her farming experiences as opportunities for growth, even during limitations. These attitudes align with Abao's (2021) observation that positive affirmations foster resilience and effective problem-solving.

Resourcefulness

Positivity often translated into resourcefulness, enabling participants to overcome financial challenges. Many participants, such as Participants 7 and 14, relied on borrowing money during the pre-planting stage, while others, including Participants 2, 4, and 6, explained their strategies for gradual repayment after harvest. Participant 13 noted borrowing funds for his child's education, while Participant 9 described setting aside 30% of his salary for farming expenses. Participant 11 shared that he sold a pig to finance crop recovery, and others

mentioned savings schemes like *baug* for emergency needs. These strategies align with Palis's (2020) study, which highlights the financial entrapments faced by rice farmers.

Commitment

Despite the challenges, participants demonstrated unwavering commitment to farming. For instance, Participant 3 stated that he would continue farming until his last breath, and Participant 7 shared that he cannot envision doing any other job. This reflects the assertion of CityRise (2024) assertion that values, shaped by conviction, drive individuals to remain steadfast in their chosen paths despite adversity.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study, the farmers provided slightly varied but mostly unified answers from the start until the last part of the interview. They all shared the same expertise on how to prepare the land before planting and were honest about their reliance on rain-fed fields and mini-dams. However, their accounts also revealed how socioeconomic factors like market price fluctuations, insufficient crop insurance, and the effects of climate change impose significant challenges on their farming practices. Fluctuating prices often leave farmers with minimal profits despite abundant harvests, while limited insurance options exacerbate their vulnerability to climate-related disasters, such as droughts and typhoons.

Despite these challenges, the farmers expressed openness to the use of modern technologies in farming while also recounting and preserving former practices. They shared their experiences during manual planting and revealed how threshing and post-harvesting required cooperation. They noted that this value is sustained with the current methods and the presence of harvesters, showing how traditional collective efforts adapt to modern approaches.

The study also revealed a shift in their beliefs and practices. Modern methods offering more practicality have diminished the popularity and observance of traditional practices, such as calendar-based planting, which is now overpowered by reliance on rainfall. Additionally, the practice of *patilaw* has ceased due to the absence of threshers. These changes reflect a shift driven by practicality, but they also highlight the loss of practices once integral to cultural identity.

In conclusion, the findings underscore that despite advancements in rice farming, the values deeply rooted in the farmers' lives remain the foundation of their resilience. Their families serve as their primary motivation, inspiring their dedication to farming despite the challenges. The spirit of *bayanihan* and industriousness is evident in their collective approach to planting, while faith, positivity, and resourcefulness enable them to adapt to adversity. Their love for farming anchors their commitment, and their contentment sustains them through times of progress and hardship. Ultimately, the study highlights how these enduring values, often

overlooked, continue to shape farming practices while helping farmers navigate the complexities of modern agriculture and climate-related challenges.

Based on the findings and conclusions obtained, recommendations have been made for consideration:

Farmers. Farmers must recognize their indispensable role in the community and the significance of values such as cooperation and resourcefulness in sustaining rice farming. Participation in associations and training programs is essential to making farmers equipped not only with the necessary skills but also the knowledge on how to navigate modern tools for farming. A study in Nueva Ecija by Morante et al. (2023) shows that modern agricultural technologies have advantages on crop productivity, resource efficiency, and economic viability. Learning about this can encourage farmers to integrate modern tools that can make their livelihood and produce sustainable.

Family. It was found that a farmer's main source of motivation is their family. The family can reinforce this motivation by providing financial support and, most importantly, by learning and applying effective farming practices. Agriculture is also a family endeavor, and there must be someone in the family to continue rice farming. There is a need to produce younger generations of rice farmers despite more promising and practical opportunities outside farming.

Association. Associations play a crucial role in empowering farmers by providing them with essential knowledge and resources to enhance their efficiency and profitability. For instance, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) implemented a training program for rice farmers in three regions of Northern Ghana, yielding significant benefits (Issahaku et al., 2022). The program not only enhanced farmers' social and cognitive skills but also boosted their economic outcomes by increasing rice yields, thereby improving productivity and profitability. Collaborating with private sectors to subsidize fertilizers, pesticides, and farming tools further enhances these efforts, ensuring greater access to resources. Additionally, associations can organize peer-to-peer learning sessions where farmers can share success stories and practical techniques, fostering a supportive and innovative farming community.

Community. The community, primarily composed of farmers, should place a greater emphasis on living out the values that sustain farming practices. This includes not only preserving traditional methods but also strengthening the cultural and social values embodied in these practices, which can increase interest in farming. To further promote engagement, communities could implement programs that demonstrate how farmers apply knowledge and values in specific farming procedures. These programs can include showcasing the importance of sustainability, resourcefulness, and cooperation in agricultural activities. Additionally, community leaders must encourage younger generations to take part in farming by demonstrating its cultural significance and economic viability.

Government. In response to the identified needs of farmers, particularly in financial support and access to modern farming technologies, the government should take specific actions. For instance, it could introduce targeted subsidies for adopting climate-resilient crops to help farmers mitigate the risks of climate change. Additionally, facilitating access to modern technologies through partnerships with the private sector could enable farmers to adopt more efficient and cost-effective tools, such as advanced irrigation systems and climate-resilient seeds. Moreover, the government should consider allocating a larger budget to support farmers, with a focus on providing subsidies for seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and training programs. Policies that stabilize market prices and give farmers more control over product pricing would also help improve their financial well-being. The Department of Agriculture should also continue offering ongoing support in the form of free or subsidized farming inputs and educational seminars to ensure the sustainability and growth of the agricultural sector.

Other Researchers. Researchers should explore how traditional practices can be adapted to address modern challenges. For instance, integrating traditional water-conservation techniques with modern irrigation systems could enhance water-use efficiency. Additionally, researchers could examine regional differences in farming practices, focusing on how traditional knowledge interacts with modern innovations. Furthermore, creating pedagogical materials that incorporate farming terms could help preserve linguistic and cultural heritage while promoting agricultural education.

By incorporating specific examples and data, these recommendations become more grounded and actionable, enhancing their credibility and relevance to farmers and stakeholders.

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