

Tagurabong: The Traditional Harvest Ritual Practices of the Local Folks at Santa Ana, Tapaz, Capiz, Philippines

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: 30 Dec 2024 Revised: 05 Feb 2025 Accepted: 25 Feb 2025	<p>This study documented and showcased the <i>Tagurabong</i>, which is a special harvest ritual done by people in Santa Ana, Tapaz, Capiz, Philippines. Ethnography was the design utilized in this study. Also, four (4) people who know a lot about this ritual were chosen to share their knowledge. To understand the ritual, the researcher watched and participated during the ritual, talked to these knowledgeable people, and looked at pictures and written information about it. He wrote down everything these people said and then studied these words using a method created by Clarke and Braun in 2017.</p> <p>The study found that <i>Tagurabong</i> is a long-standing harvest tradition in Santa Ana, Tapaz, Capiz, Philippines. It is not only about harvesting rice but also about expressing gratitude for a good harvest and wishing for health and prosperity. The ritual involves specific steps and easily accessible local materials, reflecting the community's reliance on and respect for their environment. <i>Tagurabong</i> is significant to the locals as it honors a bountiful harvest and welcomes new rice. Passed down through generations, it holds cultural importance and is believed to have healing powers, helping people feel better when sick or tired. The ritual is meticulously performed, showing its deep-rooted value in maintaining health and connecting with ancestors.</p> <p>Keywords: abundance, gratitude, healing, rice, sustainability.</p>

INTRODUCTION

Traditional ways of gathering food help people learn about their culture and how their community works together. According to Balogbog (2020), these practices keep old customs alive and help everyone understand and appreciate different traditions, especially in farming. By following these old ways, people stay connected to their history and learn to value the unique methods used by their ancestors to grow and collect food. And as supported by Nelson and Shilling (2018), these practices help preserve important cultural knowledge and teach younger generations about the importance of their heritage and community bonds.

According to Hastuti and Sumarmi (2017), traditional harvest rituals are a way for people to communicate and share their culture. These rituals can include words, actions, and different kinds of art. The rituals can take different forms, like ceremonies, magic, or celebrations. These activities bring the community together to work towards keeping everyone safe and happy.

In Tapaz, Capiz, Philippines, every community had special rituals and practices connected to their beliefs, culture, and environment. Monderondo's (2014) study showed that these traditional harvest practices helped local farmers on Panay Island get good harvests every year. In Santa Ana, Tapaz, Capiz, people performed a harvest ritual called Tagurabong to ensure they would have plenty of crops during the harvest season.

Tagurabong is a special harvest ritual of the Tapaznons. Families have passed down this tradition for many years, and the local people still love and practice it today. Keeping this culture alive is very important because it connects us to our past, shows us who we are, and inspires future generations. Even though many researchers want to learn about these harvest rituals, there is still not much information about Tagurabong in Tapaz, Capiz.

This, therefore, inspired the researcher to conduct a study about Tagurabong, the traditional harvest practices in Santa Ana, Tapaz, Capiz. Bridging gaps in research has been the researcher's intent and passion and most especially to introduce to the world the unique practices of his fellow Tapaznons.

This study aimed to document and showcase Tagurabong, the traditional harvest practices at Santa Ana, Tapaz, Capiz, Philippines. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What do local folks know about Tagurabong?
2. What essential elements do local folks need to do Tagurabong?
3. Why do local folks celebrate Tagurabong?
4. How do local folks perform Tagurabong?

METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative research design. This means the researcher wanted to understand people's feelings, thoughts, and experiences. By talking to people and observing their behaviors, the researcher aimed to get a complete picture of how and why things happen. This approach helps to learn more about people's perspectives and the way they live and interact with others (Merriam, 2020; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

This study also used ethnography as a qualitative method. Ethnography is a way to study people by spending time with them and learning about their daily lives. The researcher lived with the community, joined in their activities, and talked to them to understand their culture and traditions better. He became part of the group to see things from the inside (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019).

In this study, the researcher used ethnography to learn about the traditional harvest practices of Tagurabong in Santa Ana, Tapaz, Capiz, Philippines. The researcher lived in the community for two weeks, talking to people and joining in their activities. This helped the researcher see and understand Tagurabong from the local people's point of view. By being there and taking part, the researcher gathered real stories and observed the rituals in their natural setting. This way, the researcher made sure to capture the true meaning and importance of Tagurabong for the people in the community.

Participants

The researcher purposively selected four (4) key informants to represent the local folks in Santa Ana, Tapaz, Capiz, Philippines. The selection of the informants was guided by the criteria of Forero et al. (2018) on the three-generation test, which aimed to triangulate the data and capture insights from different age groups. The informants were chosen based on their relevance and ability to provide valuable perspectives on the traditional harvest practices of Tagurabong. These key informants were chosen to ensure a diverse representation of the local community and capture a range of perspectives related to Tagurabong. By including participants from different generations, the researchers aimed to obtain a comprehensive view of the cultural practices, beliefs, and values associated with the harvest.

Locale of Study

The study was conducted at Santa Ana, Tapaz, Capiz for two (2) executive weeks. Santa Ana is a barangay in the municipality of Tapaz, in the province of Capiz. It is situated at approximately 11.3154, 122.5402, in the island of Panay. Elevation at these coordinates is estimated at 61.7 meters or 202.4 feet above mean sea level. Santa Ana shares a common border with the following barangay(s): Camburanan, San Nicolas, San Antonio, San Julian, Candelaria, and Taslan. Its population as determined by the 2020 Census was 1,156. This represented 2.12% of the total population of Tapaz. The household population of Santa Ana in the 2015 Census was 1,074 broken down into 306 households or an average of 3.51 members per household. According to the 2015 Census, the age group with the highest population in Santa Ana is 10 to 14, with 116 individuals. Conversely, the age group with the lowest population is 80 and over, with 11 individuals. The population of Santa Ana grew from 1,032 in 1990 to 1,156 in 2020, an increase of 124 people over the course of 30 years. The latest census figures in 2020 denote a growth rate of 1.56%, or an increase of 82 people, from the previous population of 1,074 in 2015 (PhilAtlas, 2024).

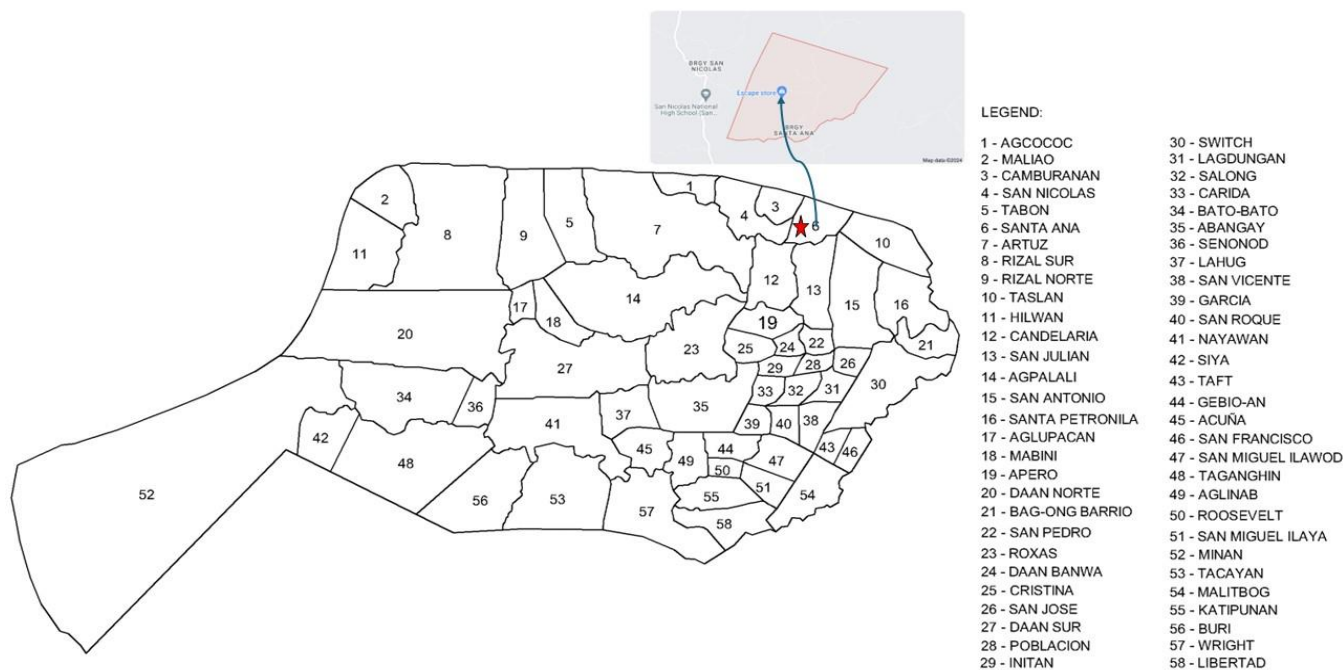


Figure 1. Geographic Information System (GIS) Map of Tapaz, Capiz from Berondo (2023)

Data Collection

Fieldwork, observations, key informant interviews, and documentary and photographic analysis were used to gather data. These methods substantiate and triangulate the data elicited from the informants. For ethical considerations, necessary permits and disclosure information were secured from the informants prior to the conduct of the study.

Data Analysis

The researcher talked to people and wrote down exactly what they said about their experiences with Tagurabong. To make sense of all this information, the researcher used the method by Clarke and Braun (2017) to organize the ideas into different themes. First, he looked at all the interviews and wrote down every important comment, treating each one equally. Then, he read through the interviews again and marked words, phrases, and sections that related to his questions, calling these marked parts "codes." He then grouped these codes into themes, which helped understand what people experienced during natural disasters, both individually and as a group. All this work was done by hand, without using any computer software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Basic themes from the codes were developed and organized into five (5) categories that eventually led to four (4) themes. The fourteen (14) statements from the four (4) respondents gave way to thirteen (13) codes that were grouped into five (5) categories that were further arranged into four (4) organizing themes paving the way to the central idea of the study which is to document and showcase the traditional harvest practices of *Tagurabong* in Santa Ana, Tapaz, Capiz (Table 1).

Table 1. Thematic Analysis of the study

Statement	Coding	Category	Theme
1. It is a ritual to ensure that the harvest season of rice will be fruitful and abundant	Abundance	Ritual	Knowledge
2. This ritual is passed down since our ancestors to prevent illness among workers during harvest time	Illness	Ritual	Knowledge
3. The ritual is a form of thanksgiving for all the blessings received and the abundance experienced by the harvesters	Thanksgiving	Ritual	Knowledge
4. There are many things to prepare for the ritual of <i>Tagurabong</i> but these can be found and sourced locally	Locally sourced	Preparation	Essential Elements
5. The elements I can remember are <i>latoy</i> (beans), <i>banag</i> (freshwater snail), <i>kagang</i> (freshwater mud crab), <i>sinamog</i> (cassava delicacy), <i>iraha</i> (roasted sticky rice), <i>isda nga karaho</i> (lizard fish), <i>tuba</i> (coconut wine), <i>kamangyan</i> (frankincense), <i>pinakas</i> (dried mullet fish), and <i>tabako</i> (tobacco).	Locally sourced	Preparation	Essential Elements
6. The elements we mix are also <i>baye-baye</i> (rolled sticky rice), <i>sinamog</i> (cassava delicacy), <i>urang</i> (freshwater prawns), and <i>manok</i> (chicken).	Mixed	Preparation	Essential Elements
7. The elements prepared sometimes vary but what were shared were the common essentials prepared by our families.	Common	Preparation	Essential Elements
8. We celebrate <i>Tagurabong</i> as a gratitude for the bountiful harvest and a way to welcome the newly harvested rice.	Gratitude	New Harvest	Reasons for Celebration
9. As it is a ritual passed down through generations, it serves as a unique inheritance of our family in Santa Ana, Tapaz, Capiz	Inheritance	Ritual	Reasons for Celebration
10. This ritual highlights our deep connection to our culture and tradition and gives us specific identity	Identity	Ritual	Reasons for Celebration
11. <i>Tagurabong</i> is believed to have therapeutic and spiritual significance and through this practice, sickness and fatigue may be cured	Therapeutic	Significance	Reasons for Celebration
12. There are many steps in this ritual. We will divide it into three and this is the first step: After the arrival of the newly harvested rice, it will be pounded, cooked, roasted, and made into <i>baye-baye</i> . We will then gather the other elements such as the beans, crabs, dried mullet fish, snails, prawns, chicken, cassava delicacy, coconut sap, and tobacco.	Pounded	Ritual	Execution of the Ritual
13. The next step is we will put the mixed ingredients in the table with the cooked rice and shape it resembling a figure of the <i>halo</i> (monitor lizard) or man. Then, we will place 17 <i>baye-baye</i> on top, 21 <i>sinamog</i> and the rest of the ingredients.	Mixed	Ritual	Execution of the Ritual
14. The last step is the chicken will be grilled whole and placed in a leaf. The traditional healer will roam holding the coconut shell with <i>kamangyan</i> and invoke the spirits. The female and male owner of the rice fields will then sip on the coconut wine.	Sip	Ritual	Execution of the Ritual

Knowledge of Local Folks about *Tagurabong*

Within the local community, *Tagurabong* is deeply revered as an intricate harvest practice that has been passed down from generation to generation. It is considered an heirloom or *surundon*, carrying with it the wisdom and traditions of their ancestors. It serves as a significant occasion for local folks to express their gratitude for the bountiful harvest they have received and to welcome the new harvest of rice. The practice of *Tagurabong* is not solely about the physical act of harvesting, but rather it holds a symbolic meaning that encompasses prosperous life and good health. It is believed that by performing this tradition with utmost respect and adherence to the prescribed rituals, the community ensures the continuous abundance of their harvest and the well-being of its members.

Participant 2 shared and as agreed by others that, “*Ini isa ka ritwal agud masigurado nga magbinungahon kag maduro ang pag-ani sang paray.*” (It is a ritual to ensure that the harvest season of rice will be fruitful and abundant.)

Participant 3 remembered that, “*Ang ini nga ritwal ginpanubli halin pa sa amon mga kamal-aman agud mapunggan ang masakit sang mga mamumugon sa tion sang pag-ani. Ini amon surundon kag paranublion nga sa amon pamilya lamang makit-an.*” (This ritual has been passed down from our ancestors to prevent sickness among workers during harvest time. It is a tradition and a practice that we keep within our family only.)

Participant 4 mentioned and as agreed by others that, “*Ang ini nga ritwal daw isa ka pagpasalamat sa mga padya kag premyo nga nabaton sang mga mamumugon.*” (The ritual is a form of thanksgiving for all the blessings received and the abundance experienced by the harvesters.)

Essential Elements needed to conduct *Tagurabong*

In the *Tagurabong* ritual, local folks emphasize the utmost importance of having all the key elements present for the ritual's success. The informants have identified several essential elements that are integral to the ritual's practice and significance. These elements are *latoy* (beans), *banag* (freshwater snail), *kagang* (freshwater mud crab), *sinamog* (cassava delicacy), *iraha* (roasted sticky rice), *isda nga karaho* (lizard fish), *tuba* (coconut wine), *kamangyan* (frankincense), *pinakas* (dried mullet fish), *tabako* (tobacco), *baye-baye* (rolled sticky rice), *urang* (freshwater prawns), and *manok* (chicken). Additionally, the presence of a *merko* or healer is of great importance, as they play a crucial role in leading the ritual and establishing a connection with the spirits using these materials.

The ritual uses certain animals, plants, and materials that show how closely the local folks are connected to nature. These things represent the richness and variety of their environment and show how humans and nature depend on each other in farming. During *Tagurabong*, the community honors these connections and asks for blessings, protection, and good fortune for their harvest and health.

Participant 1 introduced that, “*Madamo ang kinahanglan ipreparar para sa ritwal sang Tagurabong pero ini makita kag makuha lang diri sa lokalidad. Ini nga mga materyales masami makita sa palibot lamang.*” (There are many things to prepare for the ritual of *Tagurabong* but these can be found and sourced locally. These are materials easily found in the environment.)

Participant 2 shared as agreed by others that, “*Ang mga elemento nga nahinumduman ko amo ang latoy, banag, kagang, sinamog, iraha, isda nga karaho, tuba, kamangyan, pinakas, kag tabako.*” (The elements I can remember are beans, freshwater snail, freshwater mud crab, cassava delicacy, roasted sticky rice, lizard fish, coconut wine, frankincense, dried mullet fish, and tobacco).

Participant 4 added as agreed by others that, “*Ang mga elemento ginamikslahan pa ina kag ginahimo nga baye-baye, sinamog, urang, and manok.*” (The elements we mix are also rolled sticky rice, cassava delicacy, freshwater prawns, and chicken).

Participant 3 with strong familial ties and one of the families who are actively engaged in this ritual shared that “*Ang mga elemento nga ginapreparar nagalainlain kung kaisa pero ang mga ginhambal amo ina ang mga komon nga kinahanglanon nga ginapreparar sang kada pamilya.*” (The elements prepared sometimes vary but what were shared were the common essentials prepared by our families.)

Reasons for Celebrating *Tagurabong*

Tagurabong is very important to the local folks because it is a celebration to say thank you for their big harvest and to welcome the new rice they just picked. This ritual has been done by families in Santa Ana, Tapaz, Capiz for many generations, making it very special and important to their culture. The family also says that *Tagurabong* helps with healing. Their ancestors have done this ritual for as long as they can remember to help make people feel better when they are sick or tired. This shows that they believe it has special healing powers and is very important for their health and well-being.

Tagurabong is more than just a harvest celebration. It helps people feel good, stay healthy, and connect with their ancestors. The main ideas of this celebration are being thankful, keeping their traditions alive, and healing. It shows how much the local people appreciate nature, their effort to keep traditional practices, and their belief in the healing power of rituals. The ritual is a sign of the strong and rich culture of the community, showing how humans, the land, and the spiritual world are all connected.

Participant 4 shared as agreed by others that, “*Ginasilebrar namon ang Tagurabong bilang pagpasalamat sa madinalag-on nga pag-ani kag bilang paagi sa pag-abot sang bag-o nga gin-ani nga paray.*” (We celebrate *Tagurabong* as a gratitude for the bountiful harvest and a way to welcome the newly harvested rice.)

Participant 3 also shared that, “*Bilang isa ka ritwal nga ginapanubli halin pa sa amon mga kalolo-lolohan, ini nagaserbi nga talahuron nga panubli-on sang amon pamilya sa Santa Ana, Tapaz, Capiz. Ini amon surundon kag naga selebrar kami sining okasyon kay espesyal ini kag ginisiling nila nga ini lamang makita sa amon diri duog.*” (As a ritual passed down from our ancestors, it serves as a cherished inheritance of our family in Santa Ana, Tapaz, Capiz. This is our tradition, and we celebrate this occasion because it is special, and they say it can only be found here in our place.)

Participant 2 further stated as agreed by others that, “*Ini nga ritual nagapakita sang amon madalum nga koneksyon sa amon kultura kag tradisyon kag nagahatag sa amon isa ka espesyal nga identidad. Paagi sining paghiwat sang Tagurabong, makilala nga taga Santa Ana guid kami.*” (This ritual shows our deep connection to our culture and tradition and gives us a special identity. Through this celebration of Tagurabong, we are recognized as truly from Santa Ana.)

Lastly, Participant 1 added which was highly agreed by others especially by Participant 3 as he experienced it firsthand, “*Ang Tagurabong ginapatihan nga may teraputiko kag espirituhanon nga kahulugan, kag paagi sa paghimo sini, ang masakit kag kakapoy mahimo nga maayohan.*” (Tagurabong is believed to have therapeutic and spiritual significance and through this practice, sickness and fatigue may be cured).

Local folks’ Execution of the Ritual

Tagurabong is a special ritual with a series of important steps. When the new rice arrives, it is first roasted and pounded with a wooden mortar and pestle to remove the outer covering, a step called “paglimbok.” Then, the rice is placed in a cloth and hung up for further preparation, known as “tuos.” The rice is roasted again, pounded, and mixed with sweetened coconut flesh to make round balls called “baye-baye,” a process called “mag-iraha.” Family members gather ingredients like *latoy* (beans), *kagang* (freshwater mud crab), *banag* (freshwater snail), *urang* (freshwater prawns), *isda nga karaho* (lizard fish), *manok* (chicken), *sinamog* (cassava delicacy), *tabako* (tobacco), and *tuba* (coconut wine). These ingredients were carefully boiled and grilled, and the *manok* was cooked whole with its blood used to color the *sinamog*.

Once the cooking is done, all the food is placed on a table covered with banana leaves. The cooked rice is shaped into forms like a *halo* (monitor lizard) or a *tawo* (man), and seventeen pieces (17) of *baye-baye* and twenty-one (21) pieces of each ingredient are placed within the shaped rice. The *merko*, a special person in charge of the ritual and a traditional healer, spreads the smoke of *kamangyan* (frankincense) around the food and calls upon the spirits of deceased relatives to join the feast. The *merko* pours *tuba* (coconut wine) and lights a piece of *tabako* (tobacco) for the spirits. Selected family members who own the rice fields sip the coconut wine seven (7) times to honor the spirits. After all the rituals are done and the spirits are honored, the family and their guests are allowed to enjoy the feast. *Tagurabong* is a way for the family to show gratitude for their harvest, honor their ancestors, and celebrate together.

Participant 3 mentioned, “*Madamo nga tikang ang sini nga ritual. Pagatungaon naton ini sa tatlo kag amo ini ang una nga tikang: Pag-abot sang bag-o nga gin-ani nga paray, ini pagabayo-bayuhon, pagalutoon, pagsugbaon, kag pagahimuon nga baye-baye. Dayon pangitaon naton ang iban nga mga elemento nga amo ang latoy, kagang, pinakas, banag, urang, manok, sinamog, tuba, kag tabako.*” (There are many steps in this ritual. We will divide it into three and this is the first step: After the arrival of the newly harvested rice, it will be pounded, cooked, roasted, and made into *baye-baye*. We will then gather the other elements such as the beans, crabs, dried mullet fish, snails, prawns, chicken, cassava delicacy, coconut sap, and tobacco.)

Participant 1 continued, “*Ang sunod nga tikang amo nga ibutang naton kag ihalo ang mga sangkap sa lamisa kaupod sang naluto nga bugas kag himuon nga daw porma ka halo o tawo. Dayon, ibutang naton ang 17 ka baye-baye sa ibabaw, 21 ka sinamog, kag sang mga nabilin nga mga sangkap.*” (The next step is we will put the mixed ingredients in the table with the cooked rice and shape it resembling a figure of the monitor lizard or man. Then, we will place 17 *baye-baye* on top, 21 *sinamog* and the rest of the ingredients.)

Participant 4 added, “*Ang katapusan nga tikang amo nga ang manok pagaisugba nga bilog kag ibutang sa dahon. Ang merko dayon magalibot nga nagadala sang bao sang lubi nga may kamangyan kag magatawag sang mga espiritu. Ang babaye kag lalaki nga tag-iya sang talamnan sang paray maga-inom sang tuba.*” (The last step is the chicken will be grilled whole and placed in a leaf. The traditional healer will roam holding the coconut shell with *kamangyan* and invoke the spirits. The female and male owner of the rice fields will then sip on the coconut wine.)

DISCUSSIONS

This study aimed to document and showcase *Tagurabong*, the traditional harvest practices at Santa Ana, Tapaz, Capiz, Philippines. The researcher immersed himself among the local folks for two weeks, talking with them and joining in their activities. This helped the researcher see and understand *Tagurabong* from the local people's point

of view. Additionally, he gathered four (4) key informants to impart knowledge, enumerate the essential elements, give reasons and share the meticulous steps in performing the ritual.

The study found that *Tagurabong* is a special harvest tradition that has been practiced by local people for many years. This tradition is not just about collecting rice, but also about showing gratitude for a good harvest and wishing for good health and prosperity. The people believe that by following the rituals properly, they can ensure a successful harvest and keep everyone healthy. They also see *Tagurabong* as a way to give thanks for the blessings and rewards they receive. The tradition has been passed down from their ancestors and is kept within families, showing the deep respect and value they have for their heritage. A study by Reyes et al. (2020) on enhancing sustainability in traditional agriculture found that traditional practices and rituals, similar to *Tagurabong*, play a critical role in sustainable agriculture and community health. The research highlighted that indigenous knowledge systems contribute significantly to biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management. This supports the findings that the *Tagurabong* ritual ensures continuous harvest abundance and the well-being of the community. Another study by Gonçalves et al. (2021) on agroforestry and traditional farming practices in Latin America showed that traditional agricultural practices, including rituals and ceremonies, enhance food security and social cohesion. The study found that these practices help maintain soil fertility, control pests, and manage water resources effectively, leading to sustainable and productive farming systems. This aligns with the belief that *Tagurabong* ensures fruitful and abundant rice harvests and prevents sickness among workers. Conversely, a study by Muhie (2022) on the impacts of traditional practices on agricultural productivity found that some rituals might be seen as superstitious and potentially divert focus from modern, scientifically proven farming techniques. The research suggested that reliance on traditional practices without integrating modern agricultural methods could limit the potential for increased productivity and efficiency.

The study found that the *Tagurabong* ritual requires many specific things to be done correctly. People need to gather special items like beans, freshwater snails, mud crabs, a cassava delicacy, roasted sticky rice, lizard fish, coconut wine, frankincense, dried mullet fish, tobacco, rolled sticky rice, freshwater prawns, and chicken. These items are important because they represent the connection between the community and nature. The ritual also needs a special person called a *merko* or traditional healer to lead it and connect with the spirits. The things used in the ritual are easy to find in the local area, showing how people depend on and respect their natural environment. Research by Brondizio et al. (2021) on traditional agricultural practices supports the findings by demonstrating how cultural rituals and the use of locally sourced materials play a critical role in sustainable farming. This research shows that traditional practices enhance community resilience, biodiversity, and ecological balance. The use of locally available materials in rituals like *Tagurabong* reflects a sustainable approach that preserves local biodiversity and supports agricultural productivity. A study by Hoagland (2017) on the limitations of traditional ecological knowledge argues that while traditional practices have value, they can sometimes be less effective than modern scientific approaches. The study emphasizes the need for a hybrid approach that combines traditional knowledge with modern technology to achieve better agricultural and environmental outcomes. This view suggests that while the *Tagurabong* ritual is culturally valuable, integrating modern farming techniques could improve overall productivity and sustainability.

The study found that *Tagurabong* is very important to the people in Santa Ana, Tapaz, Capiz. They celebrate it to say thank you for a big harvest and to welcome newly harvested rice. This ritual has been passed down for many generations, making it special to their culture. The people believe that *Tagurabong* helps them feel better when they are sick or tired, showing its healing powers. It is more than just a harvest celebration; it helps them stay healthy and connect with their ancestors. *Tagurabong* shows their appreciation for nature, their effort to keep traditions alive, and their belief in healing rituals. It represents the strong and rich culture of the community. A study by Snodgrass et al. (2017) on traditional agricultural practices supports the findings by emphasizing the role of cultural rituals in enhancing community resilience and well-being. This research demonstrates that traditional rituals and celebrations, like *Tagurabong*, not only preserve cultural heritage but also contribute to the mental and physical health of community members. The belief in the healing powers of these rituals aligns with findings that traditional practices often have significant psychological and therapeutic benefits, reinforcing social bonds and providing a sense of stability and continuity. A study by Tekken et al. (2017) on traditional agricultural practices in Southeast Asia provides a contrasting perspective, suggesting that while traditional rituals are culturally significant, they may not always lead to optimal agricultural productivity. The research argues that an over-reliance on traditional practices without integrating modern techniques could limit the potential for increased efficiency and yield. This viewpoint

suggests that while *Tagurabong* is valuable for cultural and health reasons, incorporating modern agricultural methods could enhance overall productivity.

The study found that *Tagurabong* is a special ritual with many important steps. When the new rice arrives, it is roasted, pounded, and mixed with sweetened coconut to make round balls called baye-baye. Families gather ingredients like beans, crabs, snails, prawns, fish, chicken, cassava delicacy, tobacco, and coconut wine. These ingredients are cooked and placed on a table covered with banana leaves. The cooked rice is shaped like a monitor lizard or a person, with 17 baye-baye and 21 pieces of each ingredient placed within it. The *merko*, a traditional healer, spreads the smoke of frankincense, calls upon spirits, pours coconut wine, and lights tobacco. After honoring the spirits, the family and guests enjoy the feast. Research by Napier et al. (2017) on indigenous food traditions and health supports the findings by highlighting the role of traditional food practices in promoting community health and well-being. This study suggests that rituals involving traditional foods, such as *Tagurabong*, contribute to physical and mental health through the use of locally sourced, nutritious ingredients and the fostering of social connections. The detailed preparation and consumption of traditional foods during *Tagurabong* align with the findings that such practices support both cultural heritage and community health. A study by Green and Colucci (2020) on the efficacy of traditional healing practices raises questions about the health benefits claimed by such rituals. The research found that while traditional healing practices have cultural and psychological significance, their actual therapeutic efficacy may not always align with modern medical standards. This suggests that while *Tagurabong* is valuable for its cultural and communal aspects, its purported healing powers should be complemented with contemporary medical knowledge to ensure comprehensive health benefits for the community.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As the world population grows, the more in need we are of sustainable practices to improve the bounty we have in agriculture. This study of the Tagurabong ritual in Santa Ana, Tapaz, Capi, reveals its deep cultural significance and intricate process to celebrate and increase the harvest of rice in the community. Tagurabong is not just a celebration of the harvest but a way for the community to honor their ancestors, connect with their cultural heritage, and promote well-being. The ritual involves many detailed steps, from preparing the rice to gathering specific local ingredients, and is led by a traditional healer, or merko, who invokes the spirits. This practice has been passed down through generations, highlighting the community's strong commitment to their traditions and their appreciation for nature.

This study aimed to preserve the Tagurabong ritual by documenting its steps, educating young people, and promoting community support. By doing this, the rich cultural heritage and traditional knowledge associated with Tagurabong can be maintained for future generations. Additionally, the study suggests that farmers can benefit from integrating modern farming and health practices with traditional methods. This combination can lead to better agricultural productivity and improved health outcomes for the community. The study also encourages cultural exchanges, which can help share the importance and significance of the ritual with other communities, fostering greater appreciation and understanding. These efforts ensure that it continues to thrive and adapt to the needs of today's world. By balancing tradition with innovation, the community can maintain their cultural identity while also benefiting from modern advancements, ensuring the sustainability and relevance of Tagurabong in the future.

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