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Echoes of Craft: Economical-Personal-Social Narratives of Guitar Artisans

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Abstract

The lived experiences of guitar craftsmen in the Philippines are often overlooked. Thus, this study described the lived experiences of guitar craftsmen, focusing on economic, personal, and social aspects. Using Edmund Husserl's Descriptive-Phenomenological qualitative research design, six guitar craftsmen with at least five years experience participated. In-depth interviews were conducted to collect data, which was then analyzed using Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological approach. The result revealed three major themes: Economical, Personal, and Social. Personally, they find fulfillment despite the physical limitations of the artwork, and socially, their tasks include handing down skills to future generations, preserving cultural heritage, and establishing social connections. However, they encounter challenges in adjusting to market changes, modern techniques, and declining local interest. Furthermore, it is evident that the guitar craftsmen experience challenges and yet continue to strive as this serves as their source of income and a family tradition that is frequently passed down through generations. As a result, the study recommends that guitar craftsmanship be promoted through local tourist initiatives and social media campaigns. Traditional craftsmanship should be emphasized in educational programs that teach arts and technical skills. Collaborations with cultural groups can raise awareness of the craft's economic and cultural importance, ensuring its continuation. Furthermore, seminars and exhibitions should be held to engage the public and highlight the accomplishments of these artisans. Future research should look at the sustainability approaches used by craftspeople and how they respond to changing market needs.

Keywords: Lived Experiences, Phenomenological Study, Guitar Artisans, Craft.

INTRODUCTION

Craftsmen are masters of innovation whose meticulous attention to detail transforms raw materials into masterpieces that inspire awe and admiration Matiaske, W. (2008). According to Siblin (2019), instrument craftsmen dedicate years to honing their skills and developing an intimate understanding of the materials and techniques required to create high-quality instruments. However, the lived experiences of guitar craftsmen in the Philippines are often overlooked. Thus, This phenomenological study delves into the lived experiences of guitar craftsmen in the guitar capital of the Philippines.

A craftsman is an individual who possesses extensive experience and well-developed skills in a specific craft or trade. They are known for their exceptional expertise, craftsmanship, and ability to think creatively. Craftsmen make products using hand utilizing their perception, embodied cognition, manual skill, creative sensibility, and experience (Zhang et al. (2016). Zhang et al. (2016) likewise draw attention to the fact that ability and curiosity have already become critical components for craftsmen. A good artisan is someone who finds joy in creating things, who grows to have a "playful mind" and "intelligent hand," who falls in love with materials, and who masters their tools to the point where they feel at one with them. On the other hand, craftsmanship, as defined by Sennett (2009), is the enduring human impulse to do a job well for its own sake. It symbolizes the state of humanity when one is focused on the task at hand. Additionally, Alan Cooper (2008) emphasizes that the goal of craftsmanship is to prioritize getting it right rather than getting it done quickly. Craftsmen strive for quality and repeatedly work on their craft until they achieve perfection. Guitar craftsmen still make guitars the old-fashioned way, by hand, from soft and hardwoods like jackfruit, narra, and black wood ebony (Roces, 2019). Guitar playing has become a globally popular hobby and way of life over the years, not only because of its cultural significance, but also because of its economic contributions, which have sustained many lives, especially for luthiers or guitar makers (Dudley, 2021).

Lapu-Lapu City in Cebu, Philippines, is renowned for its high-quality guitar craftsmanship. It's considered the guitar capital of the Philippines due to the world-class popularity of Lapu-Lapu City's local craft (McDonald 2017). The city is home to several guitar factories where local craftsmen produce world-class string instruments. The guitar industry is still thriving today despite a number of social and economic obstacles, including the global financial crisis at various points in time. Lapu-Lapu City is still proud to have this business as one of its economic and cultural icons. There are several guitar factory in Lapu-Lapu City. New Susing's Guitars, Alegre Guitars, Guitar Master, Jerry's Guitar, and Celia's Guitar are a few of these makers (Ceballos, 2015).

The thriving guitar manufacturing in Lapu-Lapu City has made Cebu the "the Philippines Guitar Capital," and vice versa. The remarkable quality of Cebu guitars has made them highly recognized both in the country as well as internationally. Cebu is well known for its sophisticated guitars around the world. The guitar industry in Cebu has been thriving for a long time and is vital to the country's economy and culture (Cortes 2019). However, the lived experiences of guitar craftsmen remain largely underexplored despite the rich cultural heritage and economic significance of guitar craftsmanship. The creation of crafts is typically started in areas where they are still regarded as a way of life. Traditional and practical are characteristics of craft product

designs (Wesgro, 2000). Hence, it is imperative to carry out an indepth study on the lived experience of the guitar craftsmen, as this will provide individuals with valuable perspectives into the complex process of guitar creation, highlight the economic and social impact of their crafts, contribute to the conservation of cultural legacy, address contemporary challenges faced by guitar craftsmen, and provide support and empowerment for them.

It is crucial to study the real-world experiences of the guitars craftsmen in Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu, in order to protect and fully understand the particular traditions and craftsmanship of the area. By exploring their experiences and the current situation it helps us to gain a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences (Guptill, 2011), specifically for our guitar craftsmen. Due to the vast scope presented by the notion of musical instrument construction (Bower, 2011), this study focuses more on the daily life or the lived experiences of the guitar craftsmen in Lapu Lapu City, Cebu. According to Bower (2009), Guitar makers confront a huge difficulty in producing guitars that meet the playability and loudness requirements of today's instruments. Because of this, understanding their particular socio-cultural environment will be enhanced by our ability to appreciate not just the challenges they encounter but also the complex nature of their profession and the cultural importance embedded in their day-today existence.

Domain of Inquiry

The study aims to describe the lived experiences of guitar craftsmen of Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu Philippines

METHODOLOGY

This chapter included the process on how the lived experience of the guitar craftsman in Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu Philippines were described. It included the research design,research informants, selection process, locale of the study, research instruments, data gathering procedure, data analysis, rigors of the study and ethical considerations of the study.

Research Design

To describe the lived experience of the guitar craftsman in, the researcher will utilize the Descriptive Phenomenological Qualitative research design. Descriptive phenomenology, which aims to uncover the universal essence of an experience as it is lived, has its origins in the philosophical work of Edmund Husserl. Descriptive Phenomenological Qualitative research design is a type of research methodology that aims to describe the lived experiences of individuals or groups who have encountered a certain phenomenon (Giorgi, A.2009). Through this approach, the essence of the experiences of the guitar craftsman will be revealed via meticulous description and interpretation.

Research Informants and Sampling Designs

The six (6) prospected guitar craftsmen of Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu Philippines were the key informants of the study and this will help the researcher to achieve the aim of this study. The researcher will have a six (6) prospected guitar craftsmen but it is still up to the data saturation. The informants will be chosen using the purposive snowball sampling technique, ensuring their qualifications and achieving an adequate sample size.

In purposive sampling techniques, the key informants are intentionally selected because they possess specific characteristics needed for the research sample. The key informants were selected using this criteria:(a)Informants must have been craftsmen at least

5 years ,(b) Informants must have resided in Lapu-Lapu for a minimum of 5 years,(c)Informants are required to possess significant experience in the field of guitar craftsmanship,(d) Informants must be currently active in the craft of guitar making,(e)Informants should be within the legal age,(f) Informants should be capable of articulating their responses clearly.

Additionally, the sampling method employed led to the recommendation of inviting individuals who satisfied the aforementioned criteria to partake in the study.

Research Environment

The study will be conducted in Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu Philippines through a face-to-face interaction and was participated by the guitar craftsman in Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu .Lapu-Lapu City is also known by most Filipinos as the "Guitar Capital of the Philippines because of its thriving guitar-making industry(Narra studio 2020).

Instrument

In this research, direct interviews with the informants are conducted using the researcher as the primary instrument. These interviews are designed to start with an open-ended inquiry into the participants' lived experiences, then have follow-up questions to dig further into certain areas depending on their answers to further questions. To guarantee relevance to the study topic, participants are chosen according to specified criteria. Using audio recording devices like laptops or cellphones, all interviews are captured on record. To enhance the recorded information, thorough notes are also collected. Throughout the procedure, ethical considerations such as informed consent and confidentiality are crucial.

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to starting the study on the guitar makers in Lapu Lapu, Cebu City, prejudices and assumptions were first addressed by using Epoche as a basis. This required consciously putting aside one's opinions and convictions in order to maintain objectivity. Thorough measures were implemented to guarantee compliance with ethical standards and get authorizations. This includes the university's research ethics committee, for ethical approval. Furthermore, personalized consent letters were forwarded to related agencies, such as the tourism office, as well as informants directly as necessary. By providing informants with a detailed explanation of the study's aims and methodology in advance of interviews, these letters upheld ethical norms and encouraged transparency.

The rights of informants were respected and ethical standards were strictly adhered to during the interview and data collection procedures. Participants were given the freedom to openly share their opinions and experiences during the sensitive and compassionate interview process. Thorough note-taking and audio recording were utilized to guarantee precise data gathering while simultaneously honoring the privacy and secrecy of informants.

After the data was collected, an important step was to provide informants compensation or an honorarium in exchange for their time and ideas. A little grocery token will be presented to the main informants. In compliance with accepted ethical standards, this payment was made to informants in appreciation of their significant contribution to the research. In addition, informants' needs for resources or further assistance were met in order to maintain a win-win partnership outside the parameters of the research.

Colaizzi's Approach of Descriptive Data Analysis

Researchers described the lived experiences of Guitar Craftsmen in Lapu-Lapu City by using a descriptive phenomenology data analysis process grounded in Colaizzi's (1978) approach. Colaizzi's data analysis approach was applied to the actual research data in order to extract, arrange, and evaluate the data.

followed in the procedures phenomenological data analysis. The researcher reads the entire transcript multiple times to become familiarized with the data. Upon reading, any statement in the transcripts that directly relates to the topic being studied was found. Meanings were constructed and significant statements were identified from the verbatim transcription by the researcher. Meanings pertinent to the phenomenon that emerge from serious thought were identified from these significant statements. The formulated meanings led to the formation of clusters of themes. The final themes that emerged were integrated into an exhausted description of the phenomenon studies. The themes generated served as the foundation for summarizing the actual experiences of guitar craftsmen. This exhaustive description is crucial to the researchers comprehension of the informants' lived experiences. Lastly, the researchers give the statement back to each informant and inquire as to whether it accurately depicts their experience. This study's effective use of descriptive phenomenology data analysis enabled it to accurately reflect the lived experiences of guitar craftsmen.

Rigor of the study

Credibility

Credibility. Corresponding from Maher et al. (2018), establishing credibility in a study involves ensuring that the intended measures are achieved and that the participants' lived experiences are authentically reflected. Before conducting the interviews, the key informants were invited and given an outline of the study by the researcher.. This allowed the researcher to better understand the participants and facilitated the development of rapport during the interviews. Additionally, the researcher thoroughly examined the key informants to ensure that they fit the predetermined criteria. A purposive snowball technique was employed, wherein key informants who did not meet the qualifications were excluded from participation. The study specifically focused on Guitar Craftsmen residing in Lapu-Lapu City. Furthermore, the recorded interviews were transcribed and underwent manual coding, ensuring the use of the key informants' actual words. The researcher also employed techniques such as epoche or journaling to minimize biases. The data analysis followed the 6 steps of Colaizzi's approach, it sought to describe the experiences of guitar craftsmen in Lapu-Lapu City by carefully selecting key informants and meticulously reviewing their recordings and transcripts.

Dependability

Dependability was constantly employed to make sure that adequate information was provided and the study made it easier for future researchers to duplicate the work (Maher et al., 2018). In this study, the researcher described the lived experience of the Guitar Craftsmen in Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu. The data collection process relied solely on the responses of key informants, with their insights serving as the primary source of data. Following the transcription of the interview recordings, the researchers diligently verified the accuracy and completeness of the data by consulting with the key informants. The data collection process involved posing openended questions to the key informants, with subsequent inquiries tailored to their responses, allowing for a depth of exploration into the phenomenon under investigation. Before implementation, the

interview questions underwent scrutiny and validation by a panel of research experts to enhance their reliability and appropriateness for the study context. When the data has been analyzed, the findings were validated by an expert for additional verification of the phenomenon conducted.

Confirmability

To ensure the confirmability of the study and mitigate bias, the researcher employed appropriate data analysis techniques aligned with the study's nature. Throughout the research process, the researchers deliberately suspended personal biases by utilizing Epoche. The manuscript also provided a detailed description of the data analysis procedure, emphasizing that manual coding was carried out with the assistance of an expert following Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenology approach. This rigorous approach aimed to ensure a thorough and accurate analysis of the gathered data. Every detail was carefully reviewed to verify that the data were derived solely from the informants' responses, with measures in place to identify and eliminate any potential bias during the analysis stage.

Transferability

Transferability. The concept of transferability was used to demonstrate the study's relevance to various situations or research (Maher et al., 2018). The study sought to discover the lived experiences of guitar artisans in Lapu-Lapu City. The researcher served as both the instrument and the study's investigator. A comprehensive strategy was used, which included a detailed explanation of the phenomenon in the researcher's written notes, journal, publication, and data analysis procedures. The study's specifics were thoroughly detailed, including the quantity and credentials of key informants. Furthermore, the researcher allowed other researchers to assess the study's applicability to their own research.

Ethical Consideration

The study commenced after the researcher obtained approval from the University Research Ethics Committee (RCE). Ethical guidelines were adhered to both prior to and during the data collection process. Participants were provided with an informed consent form, and their involvement was entirely voluntary. Before the interviews, participants were informed that their conversations would be recorded and utilized solely for analysis purposes. Access to the recordings was restricted to the researcher, who stored them on a private disc secured with codes. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were assigned to all participants throughout the study. Each participant received 200 pesos in cash as a token of appreciation for their honest participation in the interview.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As a result of the data gathering, three major themes emerged to explain the lived experiences of guitar craftsmen in Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu. The data revealed three major themes: economical, personal, and social. These findings reflect the craftsmen's challenges with financial security, personal passion to the art, and the importance of community interactions in molding their perspectives. The findings of this research, highlighting the economic, personal, and social themes in the lived experiences of guitar craftsmen in Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu, offer valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of their craft. The economic challenges faced by these craftsmen, such as market fluctuations and limited access to resources, resonate with existing research on craft industries (Smith, 2018). However, their unwavering passion for the art, fueled by a love for music and a desire to create beautiful

instruments, speaks to the intrinsic motivation driving their craft (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Furthermore, the importance of community interactions in shaping their perspectives and practices underscores the role of "craft communities" in transmitting knowledge and traditions across generations (Hanks, 2000).

After analyzing the data, the researcher identified three key themes that emerged from the lived experiences of the guitar craftsmen: economic, personal, and social. The researcher interviewed six male guitar craftsmen from Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu. Craftsman 1 has 10 years of experience in the guitar craftsmanship industry, followed by Craftsmen 2 and 3, each with 15 years of service. Craftsmen 4 and 6 both have 20 years of experience, showcasing deep-rooted expertise, while Craftsman 5 has 8 years of involvement. These craftsmen shared insights into how economic conditions, personal motivations, and social dynamics influence their work and livelihoods, reflecting both the challenges and rewards of their trade.

Theme 1: Economical

The first that was clustered in the study revealed that economics such as economic and livelihood makes the guitar craftsmen experience meaningful. Many of these craftspersons regard their occupation as their means of living that can provide their day to day living expenses because it provides a stable and regular income.

One key informant said:

"Maka-pakaon ko sa akong pamilya ug makapalit ug gagmay nga butang nga among ganahan(*I can feed my family and buy small things that we like.*)"

These statements from the informants reflect a sense of contentment and practicality. According to Entsua-Mensah, H. (2021) the craft will creates employment when taken seriously and improves livelihood for a larger population. The craftsperson is expressing satisfaction with having a stable job that provides a regular income. This income allows them to meet their basic needs, such as feeding their family, and also affords them the ability to enjoy small luxuries or treats. This highlights the importance of stability and the simple pleasures in life. Another informant also highlighted that

"Mao ra trabaho ra, normal na trabahanti kuan sweldo kada katapusan simana man"

"It's just a job, a regular worker, with a salary every end of the week."

This statement reflects a straightforward and practical view of employment. It emphasizes the routine nature of the job and the reliability of receiving a weekly salary. It suggests a sense of stability and predictability, which can be very important for many people.

Theme 2: Personal

The personal experiences of guitar craftsmen in Lapu-Lapu City reveal a complex interplay of challenges, skills acquisition, and job satisfaction. Many craftsmen express the physical and emotional difficulties inherent in their work, alongside a deep sense of fulfillment derived from their craft. One key informant shared:

"Ang akong dili malimtan dre kay sigi kog kasamad, katung mga dagko nga tigib kay dili nimo mabantayan bitaw."

("What I cannot forget here is the frequent injuries, especially with the heavy tools where you have to be careful.")

This statement highlights the physical risks associated with guitar craftsmanship. The labor-intensive nature of their work often results in minor injuries, underscoring the demanding physical environment that craftsmen must navigate daily. According to the literature, manual labor in crafts can lead to repetitive strain injuries and other physical challenges (Buchan & Calman, 2004). Despite these difficulties, many craftsmen view their work as a labor of love, often motivated by their desire to support their families. Another informant noted:

"Pasalamat ko nga nabalik na ang operation nila diri kay gikuha rapud ko nilag balik." ("I am grateful that operations have resumed, as they re-hired me.")

This statement reflects a sense of relief and gratitude for job stability, particularly after the disruptions caused by the pandemic. The COVID-19 crisis posed significant challenges for many workers in various sectors, with job losses leading to economic uncertainty (Kirk & Hurst, 2020). For these craftsmen, the ability to return to work represents not just a financial necessity but also a restoration of purpose and identity tied to their craft.

Craftsmanship in guitar-making is also viewed as a means of acquiring valuable skills. An informant mentioned:

"Akong papa sad kay mao mani iyang trabaho sauna nya karun sigi pasad syag trabaho dre... nitan aw rakos ilang mga gipang trabaho." ("My father worked in this field too, and now I often watch my colleagues' work.")

This intergenerational transfer of knowledge illustrates how skills are passed down and honed over time. The craftsmanship is not merely about making guitars; it involves a commitment to continuous learning and adaptation. Research shows that skilled trades often rely on apprenticeship models, where experienced workers impart their knowledge to the next generation (Blair & Taylor, 2008). This shared learning experience fosters a sense of community and belonging among craftsmen.

Job satisfaction among these craftsmen is often intertwined with their ability to contribute to their family's welfare. One key informant expressed:

"Oo, nakatabang kaayo unsaon pagkabuhi nimo kung wala kay trabaho." ("Yes, it helps a lot with daily living; without work, life is hard.")

This sentiment reflects the economic realities that drive many craftsmen to persevere despite the challenges they face. Their craft is a vital source of income that directly impacts their family's quality of life, reinforcing the connection between job satisfaction and personal responsibility.

In summary, the personal experiences of guitar craftsmen in Lapu-Lapu City encompass both the challenges of physical labor and the rewards of skill acquisition and job satisfaction. The interplay of these elements shapes their identity as craftsmen and their commitment to their families, highlighting the profound personal significance of their work in the face of adversity.

Theme 3: Social

The study revealed that guitar craftsmen in Lapu-Lapu City are heavily impacted by their social and family duties. Many of these craftsmen see their job as more than simply a source of income, but also as a family tradition that is frequently passed down through generations. Two Key Informant said:

"Sa akong amahan og sa akong mga uyuan, mga trabahante man to in-ani sila."

("I learned this From my father and uncles, they worked in this kind of job too.")

"Akong papa man, naa mn mi shop sauna man. Nakat on pud ko, dugay ko nakat on kay tapulan man ko mo trabaho sauna"

("My father taught me. We used to have a shop. I learned from him, but it took me a while because I was lazy back then.")

These two statements emphasize the significance of family tradition in the skill of guitar building. Beyond skills, these craftsmen inherit ideals and duties that are profoundly ingrained in their social system. The intergenerational transfer of knowledge highlights the importance of family in the preservation of the skill, as well as the strong pride in handing down both the trade and its cultural relevance. Furthermore, their social relationships within the community promote collaboration and mutual assistance, as craftsmen exchange resources and advise. This social correspondence and family-centered motivation play an important role in creating these craftsmen's identity and resilience. Furthermore, research shows that caring for children is primarily regarded as a family task rather than a social duty (Herlofson, 2011), emphasizing the craftsmen's commitment to safeguarding their family's future. These variables work together to assist individuals in negotiating the hurdles of sustaining their art.

Furthermore, family responsibility plays an important role in their motivation to pursue the craft, with many stating a desire to support their family's financial requirements through the guitar industry. According to Fuligni & Pedersen (2002), increased knowledge of one's responsibility frequently leads to a stronger commitment to family welfare and financial stability. One Key Informant said:

"Aw dako kaau uy, pag skwela sa mga pag umangkon nako, ingon ana. May panginabuhian nako kada adlaw, konsumo, kaon. Dakog natabang ani."

("Oh, it's helped a lot, especially in sending my nephews and nieces to school. It provides me with daily income for food and living expenses. It's been a big help.")

The informant described how the craft of guitar-making helps to meet not only current necessities but also the education of younger family members. This demonstrates how closely their job is linked to the well-being of their families, emphasizing the economic importance their craft plays in guaranteeing the future of the next generation. Another Key Informant shared:

"Naningkamot jud ko para sa kuan, makabaton kog pamilya naa koy ikasapar sa akong panginahanglan, unsay mga kinahnglan, naa koy mga anak. Bisag lisod ning trabahoa, kuan pud naningkamot pud para makapa edukar nako sila ba. Bisag lisod kaayo, pero kuan mani nahog manig hagit sa kinabuhi ba" ("I work hard because I have a family to support, and I need to provide for their needs. Even though it's difficult, I keep at it to make sure my kids can get an education. It's hard, but it's a challenge in life.")

The informant stated that, despite the difficulties encountered in the guitar-making profession, the motivating reason behind their tenacity is the responsibility to provide for their family's necessities, notably their children's education. This demonstrates the sacrifices and fortitude necessary to combine the demands of their creative endeavors with the responsibilities of providing for their family's well-being.

Understanding the motivations and tenacity of guitar artisans in Lapu-Lapu City, where families are crucial to the learning and passing down of skills and the development of the artisans' sense of purpose, requires an examination of the themes of social responsibility and familial ties. Making guitars is not only a means of subsistence but also a legacy that has been passed down through the generations, guaranteeing that upcoming generations will be encouraged, educated, and exposed to cultural customs. These craftsmen work in a social setting that fosters cooperation, support amongst one another, and resource sharing, all of which contribute to the craft's continued survival. This connection emphasizes how social and familial responsibilities are inextricably linked. Furthermore, personal accounts demonstrate the economic worth of guitar manufacturing, since the craft not only financially sustains families but also allows for social mobility and scholastic development, particularly for younger family members. Finally, guitar-making in Lapu-Lapu City is more than a trade; it is an important component of the social and familial fabric, and its survival in the face of adversity reflects the tenacity of a community profoundly rooted in tradition, family, and mutual support.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, economic, societal, and personal factors all have an impact on the guitar craftsmen's lives in Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu. They make a reliable living thanks to their crafts. The craftsmen's personal stories show a tremendous passion for what they do, despite the risks and physical demands of their chosen career. In addition, their work-related sense of fulfillment and the need to provide for their families drive them to persevere.

RECOMMENDATION

After learning about and exploring the lived experiences of guitar makers in Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu, it is highly recommended that their craft be promoted by including guitar-making into local tourist efforts and social media campaigns. Traditional craftsmanship should be emphasized in educational programs, especially in arts and technical skill curriculum. Furthermore, collaborations with cultural organizations can assist promote awareness of the craft's economic and cultural importance, ensuring its survival. To create broader appreciation and support for these craftspeople, seminars and exhibitions should be arranged to engage the public and raise awareness of their achievements. Future study should look into craftsmen's sustainability methods and how they have adapted to new market needs.

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