Sugboanong' Taras:
A Glimpse of Cebuano Personality

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Through the years, there have been many studies aiming to unfold Filipino personality. However, existing general concepts are limited as the Philippines is made up of different ethnic groups with differing cultures and traditions. To contribute to this endeavor, this study focuses on identifying the personality of one of the largest ethnic groups in the country, the Cebuano people. Using participant observation and *pakikipagkuwentuhan* as methods, the study explains how a Cebuano goes about his or her daily life. Theoretical sampling was used in sample selection—the Cebuanos' common behaviors, ways of thinking, and ways of feeling were considered as samples in the study. Thematic analysis was used in data interpretation. Results showed three concepts that describe Cebuano personality: "Espirituhanon"—belief in God, spiritual beings, and life after death; "Garbo"—the dignity and pride with which the Cebuano protects his or her sense of self-esteem; and, "Lumadnon"—the love for one's family, origin, and community. The interrelation of the three character traits describes the proposed theory on Cebuano personality, the "Sugboanong' Taras". This, however, does not define the entirety of Cebuano personality but is rather offered as an aid in understanding Cebuano characteristics and personality.

Keywords: Sugboanong' Taras, Cebuano personality, indigenous personality, social psychology

Psychologists in the past formulated their theories by analyzing data obtained from among their own people on the premise that they were in a better position to understand the behaviors that occurred in their cultural milieu. Personality psychologists collected behavioral clues, described by Funder (2013) to be data in the formation of an individual's personality, on the assumption that the self develops within a particular culture that structures how one is to think, feel, and act. In attempting to define the Filipino personality, the Filipino should then be in a better position to analyze behavioral cues that occur in the context of the Filipino culture and lifestyle.

Among Filipinos, it is easy to point out some stereotypical differences in behavior, culture, and lifestyle that indicate the region where the individual comes from (de Torres, 2002). Regional or ethnic identification is so strong that nationalists in years past decried how intense regionalism divided the people of the Philippines and hindered the formation of a national identity that would unite them to push for the ends of national development. Regional categories are observed to fall in line according to an implicit hierarchy that translates to perceived privilege for some or exclusion for others from the cultural benefits of Filipino citizenship. As recognition of the historical injustice that oppressed some regional groups, there is now a conscious attempt to dignify group identities and bring them into the bigger body politic. For example, it is now politically correct to call Islamic followers Muslim Filipinos.

Elsewhere in Philippine studies literature, there are attempts to define who or what is a true Filipino. McFerson (2002) opines that the Filipino race is a combination of different races from the Asiatic mainland as well as from the Arabian and Chinese peninsulas that had in precolonial times come to the islands for trade or migration. Later in history, Spanish, American, and Japanese colonizers also left their respective stamp on local language and physical characteristics evident today among Filipinos all over the country. To tease out what is truly Filipino from this complex combination would be a daunting task. Orig (2002) simplifies the matter by collapsing the Filipino's defining attribute to his brown complexion — what we refer to as "*kayumanggi*".

The question of what is a true Filipino remains, however, and Enriquez (1977; 1949; 2002) argues that it could not be adequately answered by relying on foreign theories of personality as these were formulated by individuals from somewhere else. Pe-Pua and Marcelino (2000) and Allwood and Berry (2006) concur that our knowledge in psychology cannot be totally universalized if we always depend on foreign theories.

How are we to study the Filipino personality? Cuizon and Garcia (2013) believe that it is important to consider the environment and culture of study subjects. Loo, Fong, and Iwamasa (1988) had previously advocated that community immersion be required for researchers to truly understand their subjects.

On the matter of the subject itself, Enriquez (1977, 2002) pointed out that not all Filipinos are the same as communities vary according to cultural background. Macapagal, Ofreneo, Montiel, and Nolasco (2013) stress that both self and culture shape each other; thus, it is hard to make generalizations about the Filipino personality given the diversity of regional cultures all across the islands. Perhaps the task is not to generalize but to mark the diversity of the various ethnic identities that make up the whole. Bernardo (2009) urges psychology practitioners to theorize based on different phenomena and explain how they are connected to culture. Bulatao (1977, 2002), for his part, challenged Filipino psychologists to focus instead on Filipino experiences through cross-indigenous perspective and cross-cultural comparisons. To help researchers distinguish a certain ethnicity from others, Acosta (2008) presented different criteria as a basis, namely values, customs, traditions, and practices.

The way we understand individual and cultural perspectives affects how we improve and establish developments in the far-ranging areas of management, business, economics, and even environmental protection (Smith, Peterson, & Schwartz, 2002). The culture of an individual helps form the culture of an organization (O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991). Problems in organizations and in the bigger society occur when individual and cultural differences could not be reconciled. Indeed, personnel turnover increases when employees cannot abide by the organizational culture of the workplace, and government programs fail when the culture and the implementation of policy do not support each other (Adger, Barnett, Marshall, & O'Brien, 2013).

This paper took up the challenge laid out by Enriquez and Bulatao to examine the Filipino personality at the level of one of its major regional or ethnic groups — the Cebuano (or the Sugboano, as he or she prefers to be called). The Cebuano cultural behavior, attitude, practices, and language serve as observation ground. The study aims to encourage psychology practitioners to develop diverse concepts that would better explain the Filipino personality by establishing criteria for future cross-cultural or cross-indigenous comparisons. Understanding our people's diverse identities might

be the first step in reconciling our differences, until eventually, we would be able to help strengthen our country and culture (Poralan, Babiera, & Habla, 2012; Smith, Peterson, & Schwartz, 2002).

Defining the Cebuano Behavior, Culture, and Lifestyle

Lameli, Sudekum, Nitsch, and Wolf (2015) and Nivales (2009) observe language to play a huge role in understanding ethnicity as it can be used as the basis for identifying similarities and differences among certain groups of people. Cebuano refers to one of the major languages in the Philippines (Dumanig & David, 2011) used mostly by people in the southern islands of Cebu, Bohol, half of eastern Negros, half of western Leyte, and some northern parts of Mindanao (Wolff, 1982). Considering the relatively wide geographical distribution of its speakers, Blowers, Cheung and Ru (2009) as well as Ji, Zhang, and Nisbett (2004) opine that the selfhood of the Cebuano people may also differ from other Filipino ethnic groups.

Two recent studies that have sought to unlock the Cebuano personality examine personality constructs in the context of resiliency to disaster experiences (Orio, 2016) and in terms of how the personality is expressed against the backdrop of a local festival (Flores, Mata, Parinasan, Inocian, & De la Torre, 2016). In looking into the identity of Cebuanos as an ethnic group, Orio homes in on four constructs that indicate a Cebuano's individual resiliency through trying times. He found the Cebuano's resiliency to feature the following: a) *Optimism* — being positive and hopeful; b) *Coherence* — having the intrinsic will to help one another and the ability to use available resources in rebuilding what was destroyed; 3) *Hardiness* — being strong and courageous for oneself and family; and lastly, 4) *Religiosity/Spirituality* — surrendering oneself to God's mercy.

Orio finds that the optimistic Cebuano always bounces back from a difficult situation through "*paningkamot*" (effort) which realizes his or her "*paglaum*" (hope). Hanssen, Peters, Vlaeyen, Meevissen, and Vancleef (2013) observe that optimism reduces pain in whatever situation a person finds himself or herself in. In the face of adversity, Cebuanos stand strong and put their best foot forward. Orio further shows that Cebuanos find coherence in extending the self through "*pagtinabangay*" (helping each other). They feel a sense of responsibility not only for their immediate family but also for their fellow countrymen and women as well, especially in times of calamities and disasters. Cebuano people also demonstrate hardiness during difficult times by calling on their "*pagmaisugon*" (courage) and

"*pagmalig-on*" (strength). Lastly, Orio also finds that trying times serve to strengthen the Cebuanos' faith, as manifested in their "*pag-ampo, pagsalig, ug pagtuo sa Ginoo*" (worship, trust, and faith in God).

Rather than distinguishing the Cebuano personality, however, these findings echo the results of earlier studies that tried to capture the Filipino personality. For example, Ysseldyk, Matheson, and Anisman (2010) and Teng-Calleja and Menguito (2010) also discovered courage, optimism, and faith in the "*bahala na*" attitude of Filipinos. In particular, the piety of the Cebuano is not an exclusive ethnic characteristic that sets them apart from other Filipino ethnic groups. Abanes, Scheepers, and Sterkens (2014) observe that there are a lot of religious groups in the Philippines that shape both the religiousness and identity of its people.

Following Jaeger and Mykletun (2013) who consider festivals as a milieu to express individual and collective identities, Flores et al. (2016) explore the local behavior during the La Torta Dance Festival in south Cebu in an attempt to isolate some distinct Cebuano characteristics. They found that the following show up in the behavior of the locals at festival time: *enduring hospitality*, *mystical tradition of faith*, and *inner peace*. The locals describe the La Torta Dance to be a metaphor of thanksgiving in that, in the way the dancers spread their arms and swing them up and down, the Cebuanos' hospitality is conveyed. They explain the gesture to be symbolic of welcoming visitors to the festival. In doing so, they are thanking the Almighty for the grace that has been bestowed.

The mystical tradition of faith that is played out in the La Torta Dance Festival is just one of the ways the Cebuanos express their devotion to patron saints. Cebuanos are known for their devotion to the Holy Child, or the *Senior Santo Niño*, whose feast day in January features much street dancing. However, during the fluvial procession in His honor, the locals are observed to channel inner peace and solemnity as they go about the religious rituals (Ibones, Oliverio, Ondo, Tagpuno, & Inocian, 2016).

At the level of individual behavior, Cebuanos mark religious festivals as downtime with family and friends. Even the *tartanilla kucheros* (coachmen) who depend on their daily income willingly hang up their driving caps for the day. Manugas, Recto, Sollano, Inocian, and Cabras (2016) interpret this sacrifice of their day's income as optimism on their part in the belief that what they may lose in income to honor their patron saint will be more than sufficiently made up for in the days to come through His blessings.

The limited literature on the Cebuano identity investigates their behavior during special times, such as when the Cebuano is confronted with disasters or during public festivals, when his or her optimism, religious worship, and family-rooted strength come to the fore. There is, however, a dearth of literature that expounds on who Cebuanos are in their normal everyday lives. This study explored the Cebuano personality more in depth in order to answer the following question: How do Cebuanos behave in their daily interactions with each other?

METHODS

Research Design

The study utilized a participant observation research design. Myers and Hansen (2012) described this method as the gathering of behavioral data where the researchers immerse themselves in their subjects' environment. Loo et al. (1988) and Bernardo (2009) believe that the best people who can understand a particular culture are those who come from the same community. Being Cebuanos themselves, the researchers have long been exposed to how Cebuano people think, feel, and behave. We are familiar with the Cebuano norms for dealing with family members, relatives, friends, classmates, colleagues, and fellow church members. We participate in cultural activities and special occasions in Cebu, such as the Sinulog festival (feast day of the Sto. Niño), parish fiestas, concerts, school activities, political rallies, and public discussions. Thus, it made sense to use this milieu for *pakikipagkuwentuhan* (everyday conversation). As an indigenous Filipino research method, the strength of *pakikipagkuwentuhan* lies in its focus to engage in normal conversation with people who may be the most likely source of explanation for a particular behavior or those who have privileged information about it (De Vera, 1982). Unlike in formally structured research interviews, *pakikipagkuwentuhan* allows the researcher to also share his or her views on a particular experience. This method fits the study as the exchange can make people at ease in sharing information. By exchanging thoughts with the research subjects, we are better able to understand different perspectives in our shared behavior and experiences.

Research participants

The participants are Cebuano speakers residing in the province of Cebu and neighboring islands. Because of its thriving economy, Cebu is referred to as the next Manila as people from neighboring provinces go there for employment and educational advancement (Sumacot & Booc, 2010; Silva & Padyhag, 2015) as well as for tourism (Catado, 2015). Thus, some of the participants are not originally from Cebu, but they were included in the study because they present to be fluent in the language with only a slight difference in intonation. Anyone observed in the locale at the time of the data gathering was considered as a participant of the study as well.

We recorded the cultural practices of the Cebuanos as they dealt with their families and neighbors. We asked them to explain the behaviors we observed them doing in their role as students, employees, supervisors, and managers. We asked them to expound on their beliefs that underpinned their acts of worship and faith. We also recorded their manner of interacting with fellow Cebuanos and non-Cebuano speaking people. These samples of behavioral clues were accumulated through theoretical sampling technique which allowed us to choose all possible samples focusing not only on human beings but also on any behavior that can contribute to the foundation of a theory (Flick, 2009).

Research Procedure

The researchers worked separately within the limits of their capabilities and their social circles to gather behavioral clues that could be observed any time during the normal waking hours of the Cebuanos. These observations were made in different locations, such as inside public transportation, in the mall, in school, at the bank, at work, in church, or in the neighborhood. In most cases, the researchers initiated *pakikipagkuwentuhan* with Cebuano speakers who happened to be around when someone's behavior seemed uncommon. Conversation starters employed on a potential informant were often an invitation in spoken Cebuano to explain his or her or someone else's actions.

After gathering data, the researchers pooled their recorded notes and extracted from there the most common Cebuano behaviors observed. Themes on understanding Cebuano personality were identified, analyzed, and presented.

RESULTS

There were three themes identified from the explanations Cebuano speakers gave to various everyday behaviors observed and interrogated through *pakikipagkuwentuhan*: *Espirituhanon*, *Garbo*, and *Lumadnon*.

Espirituhanon

Espirituhanon" was the concept developed to account for Cebuano behaviors that appear to be motivated by the belief in the individual's coexistence with the incorporeal — the supernatural, souls, and divine beings. Literature suggest that the belief in the supernatural is common among Filipinos, as shown in their traditional healing practices that often attribute to spiritual beings the power to heal. It is also believed that these spiritual beings have the power to hurt or to cause illness when offended; thus, the safer course of action would be to always show respect towards them and to request their permission before undertaking any activity that could disturb them. For example, a driver explains why he blows his horn even when there's nobody out on the streets. He says:

> *Moagi gali ka'g ingon ani nga lugar, busina gyud ka kay naa mga dili ingon-ato nga nag-puyo diha sa palibot.* (When you pass a quiet street like this, you should blow your horn because there are supernatural beings in the area.)

We also observed a man needing to relieve himself against a tree (where a tree spirit may reside) who would say "*Tabi-tabi*" (Pardon me). Also, a mother cautioned her child at play:

> *Ayaw pataka ug labay-labay diha kay maka-igo ka og dili ingon-ato.* (Don't just throw stuff around because you might hit a spiritual being.)

Espirituhanon is also a characteristic that shows the Cebuano belief in the afterlife. Cebuanos believe that the soul lives on even after the physical body has given up and that the fact of death does not necessarily put an end to loving relationships. They believe that, after one dies, his or her soul would still linger or visit, waiting to be united with family members in the "next world". A mother who was seen placing candles outside the house during All Souls' Day explained:

Taga Kalag-kalag kay mag ingon-ana man mi para inig bisita sa mga kalag sa amo parente, kahibalo sila nga gi-ampo namo sila. Kung pila ka parente namatay mao pud ang gi-daghanon sa kandila, butangan man apil ang hagdanan. Mag butang pod mi og prutas ug uban pagkaon sa altar kay mo kaon man pud na sila. (It's our tradition every All Souls' Day. We do it to let our dead relatives know that we are praying for them. The number of candles symbolizes the number of our departed loved ones. Some candles are placed on the stairs. We also place food in the altar because when souls visit, they also eat.)

During a funeral service, someone said: "*Nag-una lang ka namo partner, pero mag-abot ra unya gihapon ta.*" (You may have left ahead of us, but I know we will meet again someday.)

In a similar vein, a daughter talks about her dead father:

I know wala na si papa namo, pero sigurado ko nga naa ra siya pirmi nag bantay namo. Pa, ayaw biya mi ug biyae ha. (I know our father is gone, but I'm sure he still watches over us. Pa, please don't leave us.)

Another characteristic related to *Espirituhanon* is the Cebuanos' strong faith in God. This characteristic is evident in their daily activities. They believe that having good relationships with others is equivalent to having a good relationship with God. One must do good deeds if he or she hopes to receive blessings in return. A mechanic was overheard talking to his friends about earning money on the side:

Apil nako og collect mga plastic na botelya karon. Maayo nalang na pang additional ba, ginagmay ra gud. Naa pa gyud to ni agi tig-kolekta pud og plastic nga botelya, ako giingnan nga dili na ipa-kuha ang naa sa basurahan kay akoa na. Boanga pagka human, mura man ko na konsensya. Maayo na lang unta to sa iyaha ba. Mahatagan unta ta og grasya sa Ginoo. (I collect empty plastic bottles now to have a little extra income. Earlier, I caught a garbage collector rummaging through our garbage bin and I told him the bottles were mine. Later, I felt guilty when I realized that he needed them more than I do. If I had given the bottles to him, God may bless me.)

Meanwhile, a man surrenders his decision in a manner that underlines his faith in divine providence: "*Ginoo ra bahala ani. Kung maayo ang resolta or dili, Ginoo na ang mag-igo nako.*" (I leave everything to God. No matter what the result may be, God will take care of me.)

Espirituhanon also manifests in the holding of feast days of saints in different villages, cities, or provinces; in the placement of the image of the Holy Child Jesus in homes and business establishments; and in the traditions of *pagdagkot sa mahal nga Sto. Niño* (lighting of candles for Senior Sto. Niño) and the dawn and block rosary for Mother Mary. Faith that is constant serves as a solemn vow that marks the milestones in one's relationship with God, as shown by this overseas worker who comes back to Cebu annually for the Sinulog festival in the belief that it sustains his relationship with the patron saint:

> *Mag-ulian man ko taga Sinulog* (feast day of the Holy Child Jesus) *bai, mao man ni panaad nako gud kang Sto. Niño.* (I go home every Sinulog festival. It's my promise to Sto. Niño.)

On any given day, it is normal for Cebuanos to discuss their religious beliefs and rituals even in public places. The day commonly starts with a prayer, especially in classrooms among the young. The practice of faith is encouraged, with some universities allocating different prayer rooms for different religious groups.

Garbo

The second theme identified from the gathered data is *Garbo*, which shows Cebuanos' behavior in dignifying their social identity. Cebuanos strive for a higher social status commonly through education or, alternatively, through sheer hard work. Education for the professions for themselves and their children is still prized, however, and becomes a marker indicating when one has achieved the social desirability that earns the right to be *mapasigarbohon* (proud of oneself). This is illustrated in the reasons given by an overseas Filipino worker for working abroad:

> *Maningkamot ta para sa atoang pamilya, para pud dili na sila mauwaw kung kinsa sila kay naa silay nakab-ot. Dili pareha nato nga wala. Mauwaw ta makit-an sa ato mga* classmates *sauna kay sila* professionals *na.* (I work hard to help my family members reach their dreams. Unlike me, I want them to be proud of themselves

because they've achieved something. Actually, I feel ashamed to meet my former classmates because unlike me, they are now professionals.)

This also shows up in the views shared by a woman who dropped out of school to get married:

Mauwaw jud ko kung mag kita-kita mi sa akoang mga classmates *pagka*-high school *uy.* Successful *na kaayo sila, maka-palit na sila kung unsa gusto nilang paliton. Ako man gud kay sayo ko na minyo, duha na gud kabuok akoang anak. Maau gali karon naka balik jud ko ug skwela, mao naningkamot gyud ko maka-human pud ko para sunod dili na ta maulaw.* (I feel ashamed whenever I meet friends from high school. They are now very successful and can even buy things they want. I, on the other hand, got married early and have two kids now. Currently, I'm working hard to finish my studies so that I will no longer feel the same way the next time I meet them.)

Garbo regulates public behavior, with the standard set at the dignified manner in which educated people are expected to act. In preserving social hierarchies, *garbo* sets the Cebuano's conduct above that of others perceived to be lower in social standing. Here, it is illustrated in the words of a mother who takes her son to task for arguing with the neighbors:

Mas maayo pa ta ana nila. Mas gradohan pa ta. Nakahuman gud ta og skwela. Sila unsa ra'y nahuman ana nila? (We are way better than them. We have finished our studies and are more educated. How about them, what have they finished?)

Consequently, *garbo* makes the Cebuano assert in the face of a putdown, as shown in how this mother explains to her son why she was quarreling with the neighbors:

Dili pwede nga magpakahilom lang ta. Natandog ang akong garbo sa ilahang gipang-sulti ug gipang buhat diri nato. As if *sila ra ang maayong laki ug kahibalo sa tanan.* (We can't just stay silent after hearing all the mean things they've said and done against us. That hurts my pride. They act as if they're the only ones who were brought up well and know everything.)

It has been said that a Cebuano seldom backs down when it is a matter of pride, but too much *garbo* could be counterproductive to one's self presentation. Others consider one who has too much *garbo* as *garboso*, a negative term used to describe someone grandiose or a show-off of accomplishments.

Lumadnon

Lumadnon comes from the word *lumad* which means "native to one's place of birth". This type of behavior shows how Cebuanos attach the importance of one's native place (including family and relatives) to self-development. It gives Cebuanos an almost automatic sense of kinship to discover someone of the same family or community of origin. They are moved to initiate interaction on these grounds. Inside a public utility vehicle, for example, a man suddenly turns to a woman wearing a shirt with a family name written on it:

Ocampo ka, ma'm? Taga di-in ka nga Ocampo, ma'm? Ocampo man sad ko. Basin diay ug parente ra ta. (Are you an Ocampo (a family name)? Where are you from? I'm also an Ocampo. Who knows, we might be related.)

Cebuanos seek out others who speak Cebuano or come from Cebuano-speaking areas and leap from being strangers to confidantes without passing through the gradual stages of acquaintanceship and friendship. Among a milieu of non-Cebuano speakers, they watch out for vocal cues that reveal other Cebuanos among them. In a Manila market, for example, a vendor engages a customer thus:

Oi, gahi man lagi imong Tagalog? Bisaya ka sa? Taga Cebu? Taga Cebu man pud ko, Mandaue ang amoa. Dugay na ko wala naka uli sa Cebu raba. (You seem to have a hard Tagalog accent. Are you a Bisaya? Are you from Cebu? I'm also from Cebu, actually. I'm from Mandaue. It's been a long time since I went home to Cebu.)

This sense of affinity is most felt by those who work outside the country, as in the case of this lady who works in Hong Kong:

Taga Domingo man mi diri mga Pinoy magkita-kita sa plaza, labi na mga Bisaya. Day-off *man kasagaran namo gud, mao diri ra mi palabay sa oras. Bisan dili kaila, magkaila na lang,*

bisan dili Cebuano gali basta Pinoy magkaila ug magka amigo na. (Every Sunday many Filipinos gather here in the plaza, especially Cebuanos. Most of us have days-off during Sundays. When you meet a Cebuano or a Filipino, even if it's for the first time, you become friends immediately.)"

Lumadnon manifests in the importance one gives to family occasions for the chance of being with one's kin. For some Cebuano students, Friday is a "Fly day", which means going home to respective provinces or just simply having gatherings with friends. Sunday is also considered a family day.

Mag leave *ko karong fiesta. Magkita-kita napud mi sa mga kaparentihan nako ug mga kaila didto.* (I'll file a leave of absence this coming town fiesta. I'd get to meet my relatives and friends in the province again.)

Uli jud ko taga Sinulog. Lahi ra jud kung kauban nimo celebrate Sinulog kay imo family ug mga barkada. Lahi ra ayo didto sa gawas, bisan gali Pasko. Ari jud ko spend Sinulog para reunion sa family. (I go home every Sinulog festival. It feels really different to celebrate Sinulog among family and peers. It's not the same overseas, even at Christmas. So I go home for the family reunion)

DISCUSSION

Based on the data presented above, the researchers were able to come up with three concepts that would identify Cebuano personality. These three concepts are *Espirituhanon*, *Garbo*, and *Lumadnon*.

Espirituhanon comes from the word "*espiritu*" or spirit. As shown in the results, Cebuanos believe in their coexistence with unseen spiritual beings, souls, and divine beings. Generally, these findings had also been established from the Filipino personality; Saquilayan et al. (2009) argue that all these beliefs are congruent with their concept of God while Timbreza (2003) said that Filipinos are religious and that they do manifest this religiosity in different behaviors. Yalung (2011) recognizes these religious behaviors in celebrations, dance representations, and rituals such as found by Flores and colleagues (2016) on the La Torta Dance in Argao, Cebu.

Religiosity also forms Filipino people to be more conscious of their actions and show prosocial behavior, which defines the morality of an individual (Batara, 2015). This helps them to become more peaceful individuals and reminds them to treat others the way they want to be treated. This nature is called "*kapwa*" as described by Enriquez (1977, 2002). In our study, we find that Cebuanos also extend this kapwa treatment to unseen spiritual beings in the environment. They believe that spiritual beings should be treated the same way they treat human beings — with courtesy for the inconvenience or injury one's presence and action may cause.

In Cebuano traditional healing practices, Berdon, Ragosta, Inocian, Manalag, and Lozano (2016) observed that Cebuanos perform "*pasubay*" (cause and cure determination). Before doing any activity in a particular place, some Cebuanos ask permission first. They believe that failing to do so would result in illness or bad luck. When one suddenly becomes ill, for example, he has to trace the places he visited before he acquired the illness to seek pardon from the spirits whom he may have unknowingly offended.

Espirituhanon as connected in the belief in the afterlife lends a sense of optimism (Flannelly, Ellison, Galek, & Silton, 2012). This belief is somehow a coping mechanism when one talks about death concerns (Heflick & Goldenberg, 2012). For Cebuanos, the souls of their dearly departed are believed to be keeping watch over them. The belief reassures them, while at the same time making it easier for them to let go.

Garbo reflects Cebuanos' dignity and pride, similar to the oft-quoted but least studied concept of *amor propio*. Dignity shapes personal honor or worth (Timbreza, 2003; Agich, 2007) and is an important factor for quality life (Hall, Dodd, & Higginson, 2014). Pride, on the other hand, has been linked by McFerran, Aquino, and Tracy (2012) to different behavioral outcomes. On the positive side, *garbo* makes Cebuano people strive hard to earn self-worth through education. *Mapasigarbohon* or taking proper pride in one's achievement is about appropriating quite rightly the actuations of an educated person. *Garbo* misunderstood can lead a Cebuano to become grandiose and annoyingly loud, perhaps as a defense mechanism in asserting his or her social position, such as described by Lobbestael, Baumesiter, Fiebig, and Eckel (2014) in their concept of the *garboso*.

Lumadnon as a character trait of the Cebuano refers to strong attachment to their ethnic origin. Wherever they go, they identify themselves through their ethnic origin (Min & Park, 2014). Kaelin (2012) has seen

family as a model of relationships in the society. Cebuanos consider their native place, as well as their entire country, their one big family. This behavior appears to be common to Filipino people. Medina (2001) and Tarroja (2010) indicated that Filipino families are nuclear and extended in nature. For the gregarious Cebuanos, the family relationship extends beyond to friends and neighbors. Under certain circumstances, the need for family-like affinity allows them to overcome the boundaries of regional and ethnic divides to include the *paisano* or the *kabayan*. When a Cebuano and a Bicolano meet in the United States, for example, affinity is likely to be stronger than animosity, making it easy for them to find common ground in their cultural similarities.

Proposed Theory: Sugboanong' Taras

The three concepts thus presented are the bases in developing the proposed theory "*Sugboanong' Taras*". *Sugboanon* is the term used to call the people of Cebu. *Taras* refers to qualities, character, and traits. *Sugboanong' Taras*, therefore, is a collective term that denotes the interrelation of the three identified concepts describing the Cebuano personality: *Espirituhanon*, *Garbo*, and *Lumadnon*.

As presented, *Espirituhanon* can be defined as a *taras* that shows belief in God, spiritual beings, and the afterlife. It describes the spirituality and religiosity of the Cebuano. Religious teachings are usually presented in a way that is relatable to a certain society's culture (Groleau, Whitley, Lesperance, & Kirmayer, 2010); thus, *Espirituhanon* contributes to the development of the *Lumadnon*, with the Cebuano religious expressions closely identified as joyous events that bind families together.

Garbo, meanwhile, can be defined as a *taras* that reflects the dignity and pride with which the Cebuano expresses his or her sense of self-worth. Thus, it may lead to either prosocial behavior when affirmed or aggressive behavior when violated. *Garbo* defines who a person is and, by extension, also defines his or her family.

Lumadnon is how the collectivist character manifests among Cebuanos. It is the motivation to form and keep strong kinship bonds that can extend to include even those who are not immediate family members. One's achievements are seldom one's own. These are also celebrated and owned by the family and the community and become an occasion for the *Espirituhanon* thanksgiving to ceremoniously acknowledge the divine guiding

hand or the intercession of the dearly departed or benevolent spirits. *Lumadnon* also contributes to the formation of *Garbo* as it develops one's desire to achieve something in order to be accepted by the society (Tracy & Robins, 2008) — but more importantly, by the family and the community.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Sugboanong' Taras is proposed in an attempt to gradually understand Cebuano personality and ultimately Filipino personality. The study aims to serve as a starting point in understanding further Filipino personality through focusing first on the perspective of Cebuanos, being one of the largest ethnic groups in the country.

Using *pakikipagkuwentuhan* to collaboratively examine behavioral clues from the normal everyday life of the Cebuanos in interaction with each other, this study turned up three dominant themes of the Cebuano personality: *Espirituhanon*, *Garbo*, and *Lumadnon*. While these behavioral tendencies and motives may have been shown in earlier studies on the Filipino personality, this paper makes an attempt to put these behavioral expressions in the context of the Cebuano culture and lifestyle. Considering the limited existing literature about Cebuano personality and behavior, this study can be used to provide a deeper understanding of the Cebuano personality.

The study, however, does not explain the entirety of Cebuano personality characteristics. Researchers have analyzed only the behaviors that were commonly observed in the daily lives of Cebuano-speaking people. To further explore Cebuano identity, more studies focusing on different Cebuano subethnic groups may be conducted in both northern and southern parts of Cebu, including the province's neighboring islands. It is also recommended to include in the study the different livelihoods and traditional practices of Cebuano people.

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