

**EXPLORING THE PEDAGOGY AND CULTURAL MANIFESTATIONS OF ASIN
TIBUOK**

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ABSTRACT

AsinTibuok making is a unique process of making salt and is innate to a Boholano asindero and no other process is similar to it anywhere in the world. It has made the coastal town of Alburquerque, Bohol, Philippines identifiable, despite being classified as a fourth-class municipality. However, this is now considered a dying legacy because the lone thriving maker is already in the sunset of his life and his offspring has lost interest in continuing the traditional craft due to its low-income potential, lack of support, and the eleven very labor-intensive procedures. Applying the tqualitative ethno-case study design, it is found out that the artisanal craft helped the asinderodevelop personal and social skills that are absolutely relevant in life. In empowering the asinderothrough giving the right and adequate support, AsinTibuok making could be a life-changing work as it can produce income, provide services, and generate job opportunities to the residents of Alburquerque, Bohol, Philippines.To be able to continue this legacy's existence, it is recommendable to create a handbook on the pedagogy and marketing strategies; seek interagency support for the conduct of training-workshop; and find a viable market for the product so that it can blend well with the fast-changing landscape of the society with the hope of possibly keeping the tradition.

Key Words: Asin Tibuok, artisanal, Bohol, culture, dying legacy, salt making, pedagogy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Using different methods, salt making is auniversal life-relevant process that could trace its origin back to the prehistoric times. There are many ways to produce salt which include the traditional and commercial methods. One method is *mag-itus*, the most unique traditional method wherever in the world and innate to a Boholano salt maker identified as *asindero*. It is a laborious process of cooking salt in the area called *asinan*. Sadly, this old way of making salt --- the salt is known as *AsinTibuok* --- is a dying legacy because only one maker remains alive at present, an *Alburanon*, assisted by his family. The young generation does not find it interesting to follow since, aside from it takes a long time to make one *AsinTibuok*, the demand for it is also low and cheap, because the commercially produced iodized salt has taken over the kitchens.

The dying legacy of *AsinTibuok* making is considered a traditional craftsmanship that mirrors a cultural identity and needs to be integrated into the evolving present-day society so that it will not be eternally forgotten. While it is true that culture is dynamic, its relevance towards constituent survival would strengthen its urge to do something to, at least, save the legacy from its ultimate death by blending it with the present beliefs and interests. The disconnection between interests and economic benefits, coupled with the long and tedious process, grows wider and wider. Being said, *AsinTibuok* would most likely become extinct at the current state it is going through.

A hard work-entailing activity, *AsinTibuok* making, which belongs to the first method of salt production, is unarguably a Boholano tradition. It is an integral part to the personal life of the maker and to the cultural life of *Alburanons*. It is an identity that makes the fourth-class town of Alburquerque in Bohol famous for. Its uniqueness, referring to both the industry and the product, has made *AsinTibuok* gain both national and international recognitions. Many came to Bohol to see in person this television-featured stuff, but no amount of effort has been extended yet for the propagation and conservation of this traditional craft.

This traditional craft exemplifies one's love for work because the process is a tedious and laborious one. Gathering of raw materials, soaking them under seawater, burning them to produce salt ashes, and cooking them to become a strongly and tightly packed *AsinTibuok* are more of a service of love than a commercial act. In other salt-making factories here and abroad, the process is much easier because they use the latest state-of-the-art technologies. The other *asinderos* have quit because, aside from it is a tiresome job, there is no available support provided by the local government unit. Although a tiresome job, *AsinTibuok* making help the makers develop life-relevant skills and virtues. For the simple reason that *AsinTibuok* making is a source of life skills and possible socio-economic benefits, there is a need to continue this legacy. The conduct of this study will hopefully help the legacy continue.

This study is anchored on the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) of Albert Bandura, as cited by Atilano (2014), which states that learning occurs through the observation and imitation of the modeled behavior (making of *AsinTibuok*) in the learning environment (socio-cultural norms in the *asindero* family).

Sigelman and Rider (2006) used Bandura's theory in their study and found out that much of the learnings of a socially connected practice result from imitation, a process called observational learning, and the best way to understand how learning occurs is through considering operant conditioning principles.

In order for the teaching of the art of *AsinTibuok* making to be successful, the modified social cognitive theory would be carried out by the researcher. The pedagogy would focus on the appropriate conditioning in order to encourage the young generation to love doing the craft.

This study is also supported by the *Omnibus Cultural Heritage Law*, otherwise known as the "**Philippine Cultural Heritage Act**" (RA 10066), which aims to provide for the protection, preservation, and promotion of the nation's cultural heritage. The implementation began as an interface program within the Subcommittee for Cultural Heritage (SCH) of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) in 1994.

Similarly, RA 7356, known as "An Act Creating the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, Establishing National Endowment Fund for Culture and the Arts, and for Other

Purposes” has also become a pillar for this study. The law encourages the preservation and promotion of local practices and tradition by providing technical and financial assistance.

Schematic Diagram of the Theoretical Study

The aforementioned discussions support the concepts involved in the procedures in making *AsinTibuok*. Preservation and promotion of cultural traditions is mandated by Presidential Decree No. 374, Republic Act No. 4846, otherwise known as “The Cultural Properties and Preservation Act.”

It is also based on the Social Cognitive Theory of Albert Bandura which highlights the pedagogy and cultural manifestations in making the craft. Through observation and imitation, the learner is able to acquire the modeled behavior.

Observation takes place in the field of work, while the learner observes the process face-to-face and imitate them. This is also connected to John Dewey’s Learning by Doing Theory, 1938, which gives emphasis on experiential learning. By doing it himself, the learner is able to acquire the modeled behavior which is the making of *AsinTibuok*.

The opposite page shows the schematic diagram of this study.

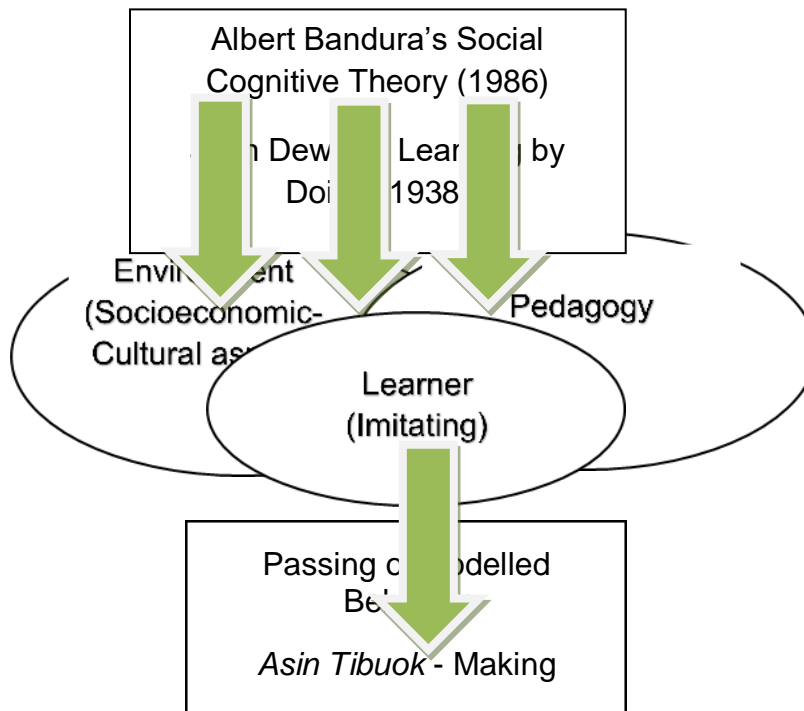


Figure 1. A Schematic Presentation of the Background of the Study

Driven by the desire to help continue this tradition, this study sought to describe how the teaching and learning happen in the *AsinTibuok*-making, as well as to determine the significance of *AsinTibuok* in the economic, social, environmental, and cultural aspects of the *Alburanon* family's way of life. More importantly, this study aimed to develop a pedagogy --- either structured, through demonstration and modeling by the maker himself, or informal through observation and imitation by the learners. The pedagogical training would enable the passing of this tradition to young bloods of artisans who find meaning and relevance of the legacy.

This study will help the new blood of artisans to find meaning and relevance of this legacy by describing, preserving, and promoting the pedagogy in the making of *AsinTibuok* and by establishing ways on how to carry on this nearly-extinct tradition. Specifically, this study aimed to (1) describe the current pedagogy in making *AsinTibuok*; (2) determine the cultural manifestations of *AsinTibuok* in terms of economic or livelihood potential, social significance, and environmental adaptation; and (3) establish ways of passing this craft to the next generation.

2. METHODS AND MATERIALS

Research Design

This study used qualitative research design as it is associated with the naturalistic inquiry on the ways on which *AsinTibuok* is produced. The method was based on case-study methodology, as the researcher wished to describe the issue of human complexity, his attitude to the traditional craft, and the craft's significance on the *asindero's* family tradition. This descriptive single case study presented a complete description ('tell it as it is') of *AsinTibuok* making within its context.

The researcher employed naturalistic investigations that emphasized understanding of the subject's lived experiences in practicing the craft in a narrative and subjective approach. This study intended to illustrate the pedagogy involved in the making of *AsinTibuok*. Moreover, it identified the cultural manifestations of the craft in terms of its economic or livelihood potential, social significance, and environmental adaptation.

This case study also described the process by which the key informant inherited the tradition of *AsinTibuok*-making from his ancestors and the possible ways to pass this tradition to the present generation. Additionally, it pointed out the cultural manifestations of the craft based on the gathered data and on the in-depth analyses of the responses of the informant and participants (the immediate family of the *asindero* and the neighbors who constantly observe the artisan's practice).

The researcher also conducted observational method by which Hale (2018) clarified that it enabled a researcher perform very close observation to human and his environment. It was done in a naturalistic way in order to achieve a greater ecological validity, the extent to which research result can be used in real-life situations.

Research Key Informant

The head of the Manungas family served as the primary or key informant of the study, while the immediate family, the neighbors, and other townfolks served as the secondary informants for

confirmatory purposes. They were asked about their personal experiences of the tradition. As per record, only the head of the Manungas family, who now belongs to the senior citizen group, continues the tradition.

Research Locale

The town of Albuquerque, colloquially called *Albur*, a fifth-class [municipality](#) in the [province](#) of [Bohol](#), [Philippines is the place of study](#). It is located in the eastern part of Bohol, 12 km (7.5 mi) from [Tagbilaran](#) City, the province's capital.

The town has a total land area of 2,865 ha (7,080 acres) which is relatively mild rolling to rolling and hilly. The land is used as built-up area 216.5 ha (535 acres), agricultural purposes 2,511 ha (6,200 acres), timberland 15 ha (37 acres), mining/quarrying 44.3 ha (109 acres), roads 72.3 ha (179 acres), and landfill site 5 ha (12 acres). Census data show that it has a population of more than 15 thousand.

The town's former name was "Segunto," originally a barangay of Baclayon. In 1861, Segunto was later changed to Albuquerque in honor of two distinguished people: [Afonso de Albuquerque](#), the famous Portuguese seafarer and conqueror of Malacca, Sumatra, and the viceroy of Albuquerque City in New Mexico, Fernandez de la Cueva, with the title Duque de Albuquerque. Starting that time, the town's inhabitants are called *Alburanons* or *Alburquerqueños* in Spanish.

Albuquerque is most unique of its church, the Santa Monica Parish, for unlike most churches, its *convento* is located only at some distance from the main church and connected by an arcade or bridge as provided by the official website of Bohol in 2011.

Santa Fe is only one of the 11 barangays that continues the tradition of making *AsinTibuok*, spearheaded by only one family, the Manungas family. Therefore, the study focuses in this barangay.

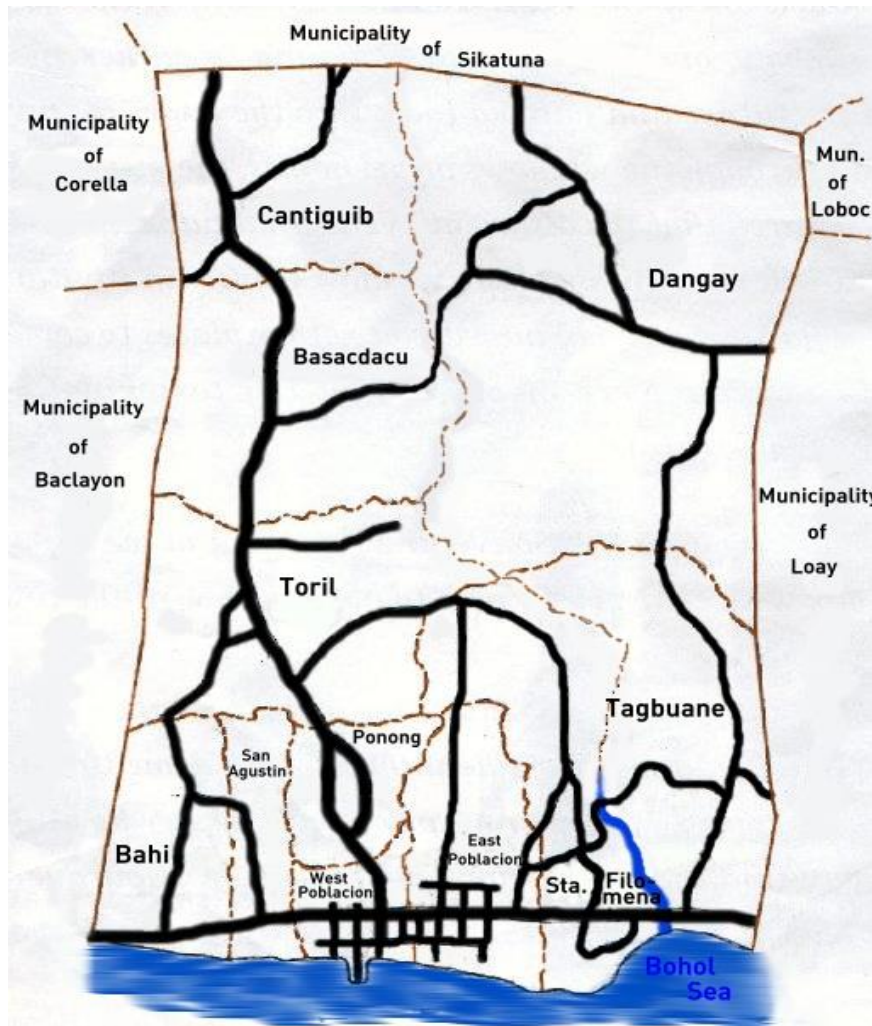


Figure 3.Map of Alburquerque

Research Instruments

The qualitative research tool utilized in this study was observer-participant direct observation. Being an observer participant, the researcher carried the role of a visitor with the only right to observe their behaviors and environment without participating in their activities (Scribano & Zacarias, 2013). As said, the observer participant only took notes of the activities he observed.

Another tool employed was the semi-structured interview-guide questions. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, in 2006, concluded that interviewing involves asking questions and getting answers from participants in a study. The interview was done in a variety of forms

including individual, face-to-face interviews, in-depth interviews, history stories and life stories, and face-to-face interviewing to both the primary and secondary informants.

Interview questions asked the *asindero* (key informant) and his immediate family and neighbors (secondary informants) to recall their experiences with how the craft was passed on from their forefathers. Informants' perceptions of their *AsinTibuok*-making experiences and observations were elicited and recorded so as to assess the effect of this tradition towards their social, economic, and cultural condition.

Validity of the Research Instrument. As data are collected and analyzed, the researcher integrated a process of member checking in which interpretations of the data were shared with the informants, giving them the opportunity to discuss and clarify the interpretation, and contribute new or additional perspectives on *AsinTibuok* making. Aside from the aforementioned steps, the use of reflection or the maintenance of field notes and peer examination of the data was also carried out. These strategies contributed to the trustworthiness of collected data (Guba, 2017). Double-checking key informant's responses with that of secondary informants' enhanced data quality based on the principles of idea convergence and the confirmation of findings (Knafl&Breitmayer, 1989).

Data Collection Protocol

Preliminary Data-Gathering. Before conducting the study, the researcher secured the permission from the office of the mayor of Alburquerque. As soon as the mayor granted permission, the researcher went to the barangay hall of Santa Fe for a courtesy call.

Actual Data-Gathering. After securing the permission, the researcher then proceeded to the house of the artisan to conduct the interview. Since the *asinan* was quite far from the informant's house and there was no *AsinTibuok* production during that day, the interview was just done at home, while he was making brooms using buri palm fiber.

The researcher also gathered relevant data from the immediate family of the *asindero*, as well as his neighbors. During the semi-structured in-depth interviews, a set of interview questions was used to guide opportunities to explore the ways by which *AsinTibuok*-making was handed down from generation to generation, as well as its social-economic-cultural significance to the *asindero* and the Alburanon people as a whole.

Data Treatment and Analysis

The sources of data were the recorded interviews and notes taken by the researcher. All of these were done with permission of the informants. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and the notes were used to assist in accuracy and transcription, but the note-taking was limited to allow the researcher to focus on the informants and their answers to the prompts.

The researcher made sure that all data should be treated with utmost confidentiality, while at the same conducting the interview at a place convenient and comfortable for them as they continue doing their usual chores.

The transcriptions were analyzed using theory-guided analysis, where it offered the chance to compare and complement the primary data collected (key informant) within the study with secondary data (secondary informants). A comparative interpretation of results and conclusions of existing theories and research results between primary and secondary sources helped ensure the quality of content analysis, especially validity (Mayring, 2003).

Ethical Considerations

Standard operating procedure (SOP) was placed into consideration before the conduct of the research. Exploration through onsite visit was undertaken to gather further inputs that were beneficial for initiating the study. All responses were treated with utmost confidentiality.

Prior to the start of the conduct of the study, a transmittal letter was submitted to the research professor. Along with it was the seeking of approval from the municipal mayor and the barangay captain, informing them about the conduct of the research. Their approval was the determinant for another approval given by the Ethics Committee of Cebu Normal University to the researchers.

Research questions:

1. What is the current pedagogy in making *AsinTibuok*?
2. What is the cultural manifestations of *AsinTibuok* in terms of:
 - 2.1. economic or livelihood potential,
 - 2.2. social significance, and
 - 2.3. environmental adaptation?
3. What ways should be established to carry on this traditional craft to the next generation?

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Current Pedagogy in Making *AsinTibuok*

The procedures in making *AsinTibuok* carried on today are the same procedures when their forefathers did it in the past, according to informant, the only thriving *asindero* to date. The traditional way is a multiprocess and labor-intensive set of step-by-step procedures --- usually takes three to four months and is done in the *asinan*--- which involves the following:

1. **Gathering.** Coconut husks are gathered (as plenty as possible) from different sources (own backyard or buy them in sacks from neighboring areas).
2. **Soaking.** The husks are soaked in seawater from three months to one year in an open pit where water from the sea takes in. The longer the soaking time, the better is its absorption of salt from the seawater.
3. **Chopping.** After a period of time (specified above), husks are taken out of the seawater and chopped up into pieces. Water-filled husks are quite heavy, thus, extra caution is needed in the process.
4. **Drying.** Chopped husks are dried up under the heat of the sun until they are completely dried up. The process takes about 3 days to one week, depending on the availability of sunlight.

5. **Burning.** Completely dried up chopped husks are burned into ashes. It takes about three days or more to completely burn the husks.
6. **Brining.** Ashes from burned husks are placed in a large funnel and added with seawater to make a brine solution. The ratio of 2:1 (two parts seawater for each part of the ashes) is used in brining.
7. **Filtering.** The brine solution, locally called *tasik*, is filtered resulting to a clear, colorless solution.
8. **Boiling or Cooking.** The filtered brine solution is placed in a metal sheet and boiled or cooked until it thickens.
9. **Potting.** While, still boiling, the thickened brine solution is transferred to locally made earthenware or clay pots known as *kon* or *kulon*.
10. **Solidifying.** As the fire keeps burning and the transferred brine keeps boiling, the liquid part of the *tasik* slowly evaporates, leaving a semisolid stuff.
11. **Finishing.** After three hours, the solidified *tasik* forms into a big, hard unbroken lump called *AsinTibuok*, the “purest and cleanest artisanal sea-salt. Called dinosaur egg by the foreigners, it has a mild, smoky and fruity flavor (Zalceda, 2017).

Cultural Manifestations of *AsinTibuok*

This section narrates the informants’ responses regarding the capacity of *AsinTibuok* to produce income, provide services, and generate job opportunities.

a. Economic or Livelihood Potential

The following data were gathered:

1. Each *AsinTibuok* is priced at Php 80 to Php 150.
2. The income from *AsinTibuok* merchandizing is not regularly produced, considering the length of time needed to complete the process. It can help with the family’s needs, but limited.
3. *AsinTibuok* has no regular market. It is not displayed in a store but in the house of the *asindero*. There is no regular buyer yet. Buyers are usually from other places, mostly tourists who learned about the product. Locals buy it once, because the salt lasts very long.
4. For now, since there is no regular market, the income from *AsinTibuok* making is clearly hardly providing for the family’s financial needs. However, the informants said that with enough support, it could be a promising business venture.

b. Social Significance

Zimbrado (2013) believes that every craft has immediate and crucial applications to important issues of everyday experience which comprise physical and mental health, ability to form and sustain close relationships, and capacity for learning and personal growth. Similarly, this study presents the social significance of making *AsinTibuok*.

1. Everyone in the family is engaged in the process of making *AsinTibuok*. Since the step-by-step process is independent from each other, it is easy to divide the task. However, some of the children were already done with school and have their own job already, the *asindero* and his wife are often left to make *AsinTibuok* alone.

2. When they are doing *AsinTibuok* together, the *asindero* admitted that it is also his family's bonding time. While doing the procedures, they share about each other's plans, especially that of his children --- their whereabouts, achievements in school, and day-to-day challenges and how they go about it. *AsinTibuok*-making somehow strengthened his family's bond and helped them create an open-communication line.
3. The *asindero* assured that through experience, making *AsinTibuok* makes an individual socially responsible. Millan (2013), citing author Frank Ingram (2007), said that social skills help people succeed. This Boholano tradition enables an individual to master the following social skills: concern for others, responsibility of own behavior, listening to others, ability to follow, attention to details, multitasking skill, and marketing skills.
4. The *asindero* believes that making *AsinTibuok* has strong social significance in the since that it involves the community of people.

c. Environmental Significance

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources considers world heritage properties, cultural tradition among others, as matters of national environmental significance. In the point of view of the informants, making of *AsinTibuok* holds the following environmental significance:

1. The byproducts of *AsinTibuok* making does not cause harm to the environment, considering that the raw materials are indigenous.
2. Although energy is used in the evaporation process, the temperature is not that high to pose a threat of carbon dioxide emissions.
3. Working directly with the environment developed and actualized one's concern for it.
4. Performing the craft motivates one to love his roots and cultural heritage. According to the informants, it is a nice feeling when they learned that tourists admire their work of art and that their place became known all over the world.

4. CONCLUSION

*AsinTibuok*making is a dying traditional craft, which needs immediate support, because the current thriving *asindero* is already in the sunset of his life. His children are not interested to continue the tradition because of its low economic potential due to the absence of a regular market for the product. Strong marketing support is a crucial aspect for this craft to grow.

*AsinTibuok*making has a strong potential for acquisition and development of personal and social skills, which are relevant and necessary to succeed in life. It also encourages concern for the environment as the makers are closely in commune with nature everytime they make this kind of salt.

5. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations may be forwarded.

1. A module titled “The Art of *AsinTibuok*Making” may be created. The module will contain the simplified step-by-step processes of making this kind of salt. It will also contain possible strategies about how to market the product.
2. Request the local government unit (LGU), specifically the local tourism office to conduct an *AsinTibuok*Making Training-Workshop or a Crash Course for all interested individuals. Priority will be given to out-of-school youths.
3. Apply for a grant at the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) in conducting a technical-vocational training on *AsinTibuok*-making.
4. Approach government agencies that could possibly help the *asindero* market their product.

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