

**Title : DOCUMENTATION OF THE MODE OF SKILL ACQUISITION AND
COMPETENCY LEVEL ON BASKET WEAVING AMONG NEGRITOS**

**Authors: Christine Mae Rumingquet
Teacher I, Dep-Ed, Apayao**

**Reymarie M. Caban
Asst. Professor IV, Apayao State College**

Abstract:

This study sought to document the mode of skill acquisition and competency level on basket weaving among the Negritos. The study made use of structured questionnaire in gathering the needed data. The data were statistically treated through the use of frequency count, percentage and was interpreted using the five point Likert scale.

Based from the findings, majority of the Negrito weavers are female, married, have attended basic education, aged 19 – 27 years old. Their mode of skill acquisition on basket weaving is through their parent by apprenticeship. Most of the Negritos are engaged in basket weaving for a period of one year now. This means that they are still on the process of mastering the different weaving steps/ processes.

The level of weaving competency among the Negritos is excellent using the seven steps as basis for the evaluation. The products they produce are bread basket and square basket.

The documentation of the mode of skills acquisition and competency level on basket weaving among Negritos serve as their livelihood. The basket weaving activities of the Negritos became their source of income. However, until this time the income derived from basket weaving activities is just sufficient for their daily existence.

This study also addresses the current problem on poverty alleviation of the province and the country as well.

In the light of the findings and the conclusion, the following recommendations are forwarded: (1) Government organizations should help the Negritos in the commercialization of their produced products. (2) Concerned agencies of the government should give continuous trainings for the Negritos for the sustainability and improvements of their weaving activities. (3) Similar study on the sustainability of their skills acquisition on basket weaving involving different groups of Negritos be conducted.

Introduction

Basket making is one of the oldest crafts, if not the oldest. Primitive humans used limbs, leaves, and vines woven together to carry the necessities of life—nuts, fruits, and game. From these crude beginnings, different cultures have developed literally hundreds of styles of baskets. In many cases, the style of basket depends on the availability of resources and plants suitable for basket construction.

In early times, baskets were a necessity. This was long before the days of metal containers. Metal and plastic containers, in many instances, have replaced baskets; but because baskets are a part of our heritage, most of us have a fascination for them. Baskets were a necessity in earlier times to carry and store various materials.

Baskets are used today for these same purposes, but also to decorate homes, to hold flowers for weddings and hospital visits, to store personal items, and to make arrangements for holiday festivities.

Baskets are used to carry dishes and supplies for summer picnics. Baskets are still used today to display and sell vegetables, flowers, and fruits in markets. Not only are baskets decorative and appealing, but their uses are infinite. No matter how far back we go in history, we find basket making among indigenous peoples. The American Indian is credited with many of the useful basket forms and methods which we now employ in the United States. Indians wove most of their hunting and fishing equipment, as well as many useful objects like plaques, mats, fishing nets, grain bowls, and carrying baskets.

The first basket may have been nothing more than a mesh of fibers drawn around a water gourd. The gourd made a valuable vessel to hold liquids, but it was very fragile; so the tribeswomen learned to strengthen it by interlacing grasses and twigs around it. If the gourd broke, nevertheless, its covering remained and became a useful basket. (Tod, Gallinger & Benson) Various arts owe their origin to basketry. From basketry sprang the art of hand weaving and the fabrication of textiles. Coarse grasses, at first used whole for plaiting, were split into finer and finer strips until the finished woven material formed from them became flexible like cloth. These methods of interlacing were later used in weaving with soft, twisted strands of wool, flax, silk, and cotton. Basketry led to the discovery of pottery. Archaeologists say that basket forms were lined with clay for use in cooking; hot stones were dropped into these basket-pots to boil water. If the basket-pots were too close to the fire, a flame burned the basket away and it also fired the clay.

Thus, by accident began the custom of using fired clay pots without their basket coverings. Creative hand weaving, as now practiced, is applied to many different things—household baskets, trays, chair seats, wicker furniture, commercial baskets of all sizes and forms, clothes baskets, measuring baskets, mats, and runners. All these articles show the development of the weaving arts by men and women of various nationalities who, with skillful fingers, transformed the native fibers growing wild in their homelands. (Tod, Gallinger & Benson) For the people of the Appalachian Mountains, baskets, together with cloth sacks, wooden barrels, and boxes, made up the total sum of a settler's devices for storage and for transporting what could not be contained in his hands. Although there is a considerable amount of overlapping usage, the mountain baskets fall into four main categories: storage containers, heavy baskets for agriculture, measurement containers, and house baskets.

Conceptual Framework

Poverty remains the greatest challenge for rural population whose livelihoods are mainly derived from farm and non-farm activities. Statistics indicate that 1.2 billion people worldwide are in dollar poverty, consuming less than a dollar a day. Of the dollar poor, 75 percent of them work and live in rural areas (IFAD, 2001: p.15). However, within the rural households, poverty levels are highest among female headed households and this gender dimension to poverty has serious implications on efforts to achieve the millennium development goals.

In most cases, the entrepreneurs does not have enough resources because rural industries operate in a setting where there is little support services, poor infrastructure as well as inadequate access to formal microfinance markets making it difficult for the

rural entrepreneurs to approach the formal markets and other institutions for assistance. (Zuwarimwe & Kirsten, 2010).

As a result, the last resort for rural entrepreneurs is social networks with relatives and friends for more business information, obtaining credit facilities during establishment, repayment of loans and forming contractual relations governing employees and employers at low transaction costs, which, in turn, leads to higher levels of performance. Most studies on social networks and economic development nexus have associated the level of social networks with the ability of entrepreneurs to access information and resources from inside and outside their locale for the purpose of alleviating poverty (Granovetter, 1973).

There is also a gender dimension to the use of such social networks as the social structure influences who participates in particular social networking platforms. It is important to note that discourses on gender in Ghana usually slide into an analysis of the disadvantaged position of Ghanaian women as they struggle to realize their full potentials in the society. The reason for the greater focus of women rather than men is primarily because of the patriarchal nature of the Ghanaian society. Oyekanmi (2003) defined patriarchy as a set of social relations with material base that enables men to dominate women. Deriving from the above, it is clear that the disadvantage of women stems from socio-cultural such as deprivation, customary values and traditional paternalistic lifestyles which continue to make women gradually slip out of mainstream social and economic life within the household almost unnoticeably (Dinye & Derbile, 2004).

Analysis of the Problem

This study was conducted to document the mode of skill acquisition and competency level on basket weaving among Negritos of Apayao.

Specifically, this answered the following questions:

1. What is the socio-demographic profile of the Negritos engaged in basket weaving?
 - 1.1 sex
 - 1.2 civil status
 - 1.3 age
 - 1.4 educational attainment
2. What is the mode of acquisition of the basket weaving skills?
3. How many months are they engaged in weaving?
4. What is the competency level of the Negritos in terms of basket weaving?
5. What are the materials used and process of weaving?

Materials and Methods

This study made use of the qualitative method with interview and observation as instruments in gathering data. All aspects of the observation process were documented using a camera. Data were presented in plates and figures.

A total of 32 Negritos who are engaged in basket weaving residing at San Jose, Pudtol, Apayao served as respondents of the study.

The instruments used in the study were structured interview, observation and questionnaire.

The data gathered were recorded, tabulated, analyzed and interpreted. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, mean and percentage were used. Vital

informations were documented using camera. Verbal responses were noted for emphasis.

One of the researcher is an Alternative Learning System (ALS) teacher of Pudtol District identified the participants/ respondents of the documentation. Upon identification of the respondents, the researchers immersed to the community and observes and interviews the respondents on the process of basket weaving. The researchers documented the production of handicrafts from the gathering up to the utilization.

The NC II Trainers from TESDA were requested by the researchers to assess the competency level of the respondents in terms of basket weaving.

Results and Discussion

Socio-Demographic Profile

Table 1. Socio-demographic Profile of the Respondents

Profile N=32	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	7	22
Female	25	78
Civil Status		
Single	4	13
Married	27	84
Widow	1	3
Age		
46 above	5	16
37-45	8	25
28-36	5	16
19-27	12	38
10-18	1	3
1-9	1	3
Educational Attainment		
No Formal Education	8	25
Elementary level	21	66
Secondary level	2	6
Tertiary level	1	3

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents according to sex, civil status, age and educational attainment. The table revealed that majority of the respondents are female (78%) than male (22%).

Basket weaving is a predominant occupation among Negrito women but men participate in the gathering of raw materials needed. This is to augment the low income of their husbands since most of the time they are left at home to take care of their children and to prepare food for the family.

Of a total respondent of 32, 84% are married, 13% are single and 3% are widow.

Most of the respondents who are engaged in basket weaving are aged 19 -27 years old which is thirty eight percent (38%) of the total population. This implies that the respondents are on their early adolescent period.

In terms of educational attainment, twenty one (21) or 66% of the total respondents have attended elementary level, eight (8) of them have no formal

education, two (2) attended secondary education and one (1) of them have attended tertiary education. This implies that majority of the respondents acquired the basic literacy skills in formal education.

Table 2. Mode of Acquisition

Mode of Acquisition	Frequency	Percentage
1) Through parents	26	81
2) TESDA Training	6	19
Total	32	100

Table 2 shows the mode of skills acquisition of the respondents on basket weaving. Their modes of skills acquisition on basket weaving are through *their parents* (impatawid) and through *TESDA trainings*. It was evident that most of them acquire their weaving skills from their parents. The rudiments of weaving have been passed from generations to generations through apprenticeship of Negrito girls. As one Negrito girl said, (“*masapul nga mapan kami agsursuro, saan nga mabalin nga matantan, paritan dakami nga agay-ayam.*”) Instead of playing at their very young age, it is their responsibility to learn the basics and the intricateness of creating their weaving designs.

Table 3. Number of Months Engaged on Basket Weaving

Ranges(months)	Frequency	Percentage
41 and above	2	6
31 – 40	2	6
21 – 30	6	18
11 – 20	11	35
1 - 10	11	35
Total	32	100

The table shows that there are eleven respondents who are engaged in basket weaving for a period of 1 – 10 months now, and eleven are engaged 11 -20 months

respectively . This implies that most of the respondents are still on the process of mastering the basket weaving skills. However, there are six (6) of them who are NC II holder in this competency. Furthermore, the products produced by the respondents are *square basket* and *bread basket*.

Table 4. The basket weaving competency level of the Negritos

Weaving process	Mean	Descriptive Rating
1. Preparation of the pakan	4.41	Excellent
2. Framing the base of the basket	4.03	Excellent
3. Framing the sides of the basket	4.28	Excellent
4. Weaving the basket	4.03	Excellent
5. Process of bending the nito/darumaka/rattan upwards from the bottom of the basket.	4.19	Excellent
6. Shaping the basket	4.38	Excellent
7. Completion of the bottom and shape of the basket	4.38	Excellent
Composite Mean	4.86	Excellent

The table shows the weaving competency level of the Negritos. It shows that the competency level of Negritos in basket weaving based on the steps is excellent as reflected by the composite mean of 4.86. This implies that they are competent in all the steps in basket weaving.

The materials used



Dried darumaka, nito,pakan and ratan



Dried pakan



Dried nito



Dried darumaka



Dried ratan

The weaving process

1. Preparation of Pakan

Stripping of Pakan. The pakan is strip into half to one inch.



Stripped pakan ready for weaving the base of the basket.

2. Framing the base of the basket

Arrange the pieces of the nito/darumaka or rattan in criss –cross to the desired size.



3. Framing the sides of the basket





In order to get the desired shape and size of the basket, the weavers made use of another basket which served as a frame to design the shape.

4. Weaving the basket

Continue weaving, the nito/darumaka or rattan are bend along the side of the basket to get the desired shape and size. A looped pattern using ratan is use around the edge of the basket until it has been completely woven.



5. Process of bending the nito/darumaka/rattan upwards from the bottom of the basket



6. Shaping the Basket



7. The completed basket.



square basket

bread basket

These beautiful woven baskets are sold or bartered to rice and other items needed by the family. The cost depends on the size and quality of products developed. Price ranges from 100.00 to 150.00 pesos.

Summary of Findings

The results of the study reveal that there are more female respondents (78%) than that of the male respondents (22%). Also, there are more married respondents (84%) , followed by single respondents (13%) and widow respondents (3%) respectively .Furthermore twenty one or 66% of the total respondents have attended elementary level, eight or 25% of the respondents never attended formal education, two or 6% attended secondary education and one or 3% attended tertiary education. This implies that majority of the respondents have attended formal education.

Likewise, most of the respondents who are engaged in basket weaving are aged 19 -27 years old which is 38% of the total population. This implies that the respondents are on their mid-adolescent period.

Their mode of skills acquisition on basket weaving is through their parents (impatawid) and through TESDA trainings. It was evident that most of them acquire their weaving skills from their parents. According to the old folks in their community, this weaving skill is being transferred to their children generation by generation. This means that weaving in their community is a form of family bonding and of past time.

There are eleven respondents who have been engaged in basket weaving for a period of 1 – 10 months now, eleven are engaged 11 -20 months also . This implies that most of the respondents are still on the process of mastering the basket weaving skills. However, there are six (6) of them who are NC II holder in this competency.

Implications and Recommendations

The local government, no-governmental organizations including the Apayao State College should help the Negritos to improve their weaving skills and help them in the commercialization and market of their products.

Concerned agencies of the government should give continuous trainings for the Negritos for the sustainability and improvements of their weaving activities.

Further researchers may conduct a similar study on the sustainability of their skills acquisition on basket weaving involving different groups of Negritos.

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