



## THE ATI INHABITANTS IN THE EYES OF EDUCATION STUDENTS

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### Abstract

Ati is an ethnic group of people inhabiting the mountainous areas of Guimaras. They have organized leadership structures, cultural traditions, and can withstand from conflicts and struggles. This study ascertained education students' level of cognizance on Ati Inhabitants' leadership structures, cultural traditions, and conflicts and struggles in Guimaras Province. This descriptive-correlational study utilized a duly-validated researcher-made questionnaire administered through Google Forms among thirty (30) conveniently selected education students. The statistical tools employed were frequency count, mean, standard deviation, and Person's R testing set at .05 level of significance. All statistical computations were processed and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The result showed that education students have "high" ( $M=3.76$ ,  $SD=0.52$ ) cognizance. Moreover, there were "significant moderate positive correlations" ( $r(30) = 0.527$ ,  $p=0.003$ ) on the cognizance of education students on Ati Inhabitants' leadership structures, cultural traditions, and conflicts and struggles. Students' cognizance depends on their views and understanding of indigenous peoples in building human knowledge. Thus, they are considered as one of the agents in spreading and preserving indigenous perspectives.

**Keywords:** *Ati inhabitants, cognizance, education students*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Revisiting indigenous cultures and local knowledge of the Ati requires great learning absorbency and acquisition for the people. Ati is a group of people who inhabit the mountain areas of Guimaras. They have established leadership structures, preserved cultural traditions and experienced difficulties to deal and cope with, in order to survive from the modern world challenges. Their primary source of livelihood is developing of native products such as “buon-buon” or wallet, house decors and souvenirs. Despite the prowess and determination for socio-economic living, the Ati Inhabitants were opted to stop the making of native products because of shortage to the supply of raw materials. In fact, the equipments furnished by the government agency were absolutely deteriorated, subsequently affected their capacity to work (Department of Science and Technology Region VI, 2021).

Some of the notable studies that focus on indigenous people specifically the Ati group are centralized on their struggles for their ancestral land and ownership. The study of Petrola et al. (2020) examined the experiences of the Ati in Panay such as their tribulation, challenges, and coping mechanisms. The Ati people are one of the members of the Indigenous Peoples (IPs) in the Philippines who grievously suffered from inevitable forms of human violence such as oppression, discrimination, and many other human rights cruelties from the local mining and logging industry and business companies. Due to this, the Ati Inhabitants in their indigenous cultural communities became victims of affliction, abuse, and despondency. In apart, Gavino (2020) investigated the Ati people’s origins, socio-economic status, ethnic group’s rights, progressive issues, and excruciating challenges. This particular study formulated an extended consciousness to the historical experiences of the Ati Inhabitants as the first settlers in the Philippines. The study also compared the expatriation of the Ati as marginalized ethnic group, but they still exalted their accustomed and symbolic dance, rituals, chants, and festivals. Other studies also contributed on prevailing social inequalities among the indigenous peoples by delving on inequitable access to basic services and staples such as education, health, security, and other community empowerment socio-economic programs. The results revealed that there are significant social disparities between ethnic groups in the Philippines in terms of receiving opportunities and privileges to avail livelihood assistance (Reyes, et al.,2017). Despite these literature, updated information on indigenous culture relating to the field of education remains scarce.

This study seeks to determine Education Students’ cognizance on Ati Inhabitants’ leadership structures, cultural traditions, and conflicts and struggles. Students, teachers, other social groups in our society, and future researchers will benefit in this study as supplementary references for a much larger study. This topic is not limited to cultural preservation in a single location; it may also be a reflection on reaching out to untapped areas on a national level.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Purpose of the Study and Research Design

The research design employed was descriptive-correlational, which aimed to determine the cognizance education students on the Ati Inhabitants’ leadership structures, cultural traditions and conflicts and struggles.

**Respondents**

The respondents of the study were thirty (30) education students who were currently residing in Guimaras Province. The convenient sampling technique was applied for the selection of the respondents in the study.

**Instrumentation**

This study utilized a duly-validated researcher-made questionnaire. It is divided into 3 areas namely: (1) Leadership Structures; (2) Cultural Traditions; and (3) The Conflicts and Struggles of the Ati Inhabitants which composed of closed-ended questions. A 5 point Likert scale of agreement was featured wherein each rating has an assigned point consisting Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neutral = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1.

**Data Gathering Procedure**

After a letter of permission to conduct the study was approved by the Dean, data gathering started on September 13-20, 2021 using Google Forms sent to the respondents through messenger and e-mail. Upon the retrieval of the data, responses were tallied and submitted to statistical treatment.

**Data Analysis Procedure**

The collected data from the respondents were processed and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. Frequency count, means, standard deviation, and Pearson’s R were used and set at .05 level of significance. The scale of interpreting the level of cognizance and correlations are as follows.

**Level of Cognizance**

Scale	Description
4.21-5.00	Very High
3.41-4.20	High
2.61-3.40	Average
1.81-2.60	Low
1.00-1.80	Very Low

**Size of Correlation**

Scale	Description
0.90-1.00 (-0.90 to -1.00)	Very high positive (negative) correlation
0.70-0.90 (-0.70 to -0.90)	High positive (negative) correlation

0.50-0.70 (-0.50 to -0.70)	Moderate positive (negative) correlation
0.30-0.50 (-0.30 to -0.50)	Low positive (negative) correlation
0.00-0.30 (0.00 to -0.30)	Negligible correlation

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Table 1.** Education Students’ Cognizance on Ati Inhabitants’ Leadership Structures, Cultural Traditions, and Conflicts and Struggles

Category	SD	M	Description
Leadership Structures	0.68	3.93	High
Cultural Traditions	0.69	3.62	High
Conflicts and Struggles	0.58	3.72	High
<b>Congregated Result</b>	<b>0.52</b>	<b>3.76</b>	<b>High</b>

Legend: Very High (4.21-5.00), High (3.41-4.20), Average (2.61-3.40), Low (1.81-2.60) and Very Low (1.00-1.80).

As a whole, education students level of cognizance was high ( $M=3.76$ ,  $SD=0.52$ ), leadership structures ( $M=3.93$ ,  $SD=0.68$ ), cultural traditions ( $M=3.62$ ,  $SD=0.69$ ), conflicts and struggles ( $M=3.72$ ,  $SD=0.58$ ).

It is vital to heighten students' cognizance on the socio-economic, cultural, political and environmental situations of the indigenous peoples, specifically of the Ati Inhabitants. Krakouer (2015) emphasized that cultivation of the knowledge and perspectives of the learners towards indigenous cultures is vital because this will shape their personal understanding and views on the world. Therefore, the education system should realign cultural studies or lessons relevant in heightening awareness and preservation of indigenous groups’ knowledge in their respective community. Preservation is viewed as a people's salient action in bringing up cultural awareness and societal treasures (Henares, 2010; Pedroso, 2020).

**Table 2.** Relationship of Students ‘Cognizance on Ati Inhabitants’ Leadership Structures,

Variables	Leadership Structures		Cultural Traditions		Conflicts and Struggles	
	r	p	r	p	r	p
Leadership Structures	-	-	0.527*	0.003	0.338	0.067
Cultural Traditions	-	-	-	-	0.512*	0.004
Conflicts and Struggles	-	-	-	-	-	-

Cultural Traditions and Conflicts and Struggles

Note. \*Significant at  $p < .05$

The preceding table tells that there were significant moderate positive relationships in the cognizance of the Education Students ( $r(30)=0.527$ ,  $p=0.003$ ). Furthermore, the results implied that the leadership structures, cultural traditions and conflicts and struggles of the Ati Inhabitants are deemed as important areas of indigenous knowledge in heightening the awareness of all the students about indigenous cultural communities in their respective locality. In connection, the article of National Commission for Culture and Arts (2018) tackled that the Ati Inhabitants in the Western Visayas have their leadership or political system for cohesive and systematic society. Their cultures, traditions and practices unified the entire indigenous community. But the conflicts and struggles are inevitable that challenged their capacity to deal and cope with environmental and economic hardships. These aspects of living of the Ati Inhabitants are significantly interweaving which considered as group foundations. These are indeed to be known by the students and other social groups as citizens of this country. Therefore, indigenous people's cultural elements such as customs, practices, livelihood, norms, artistic expressions, and acquired values are crucial to pass on from generation to generation (ICOMOS, 2002; Pedroso, 2020).

## CONCLUSION

Students' cognizance depends on their views and understanding of indigenous peoples in building human knowledge. They are also considered as agents in spreading and preserving indigenous perspectives. As indigenous people are assets and integral contributors in building cohesive human networks, it is important to incorporate indigenous cultural curriculum instructions in teaching competencies for macro-scaled learning acquisition towards strengthening cultural heritage education.

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