Quality of Life of Four Muslim Tribes in Barangay Taluksangay, Zamboanga City, Philippines
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Abstract
Studies on Muslim Filipinos are scarce, especially those dealing with Western Mindanao. Taluksangay, a small community or barangay in Zamboanga City, is a cultural melting pot composed of a diverse group of cultural minorities, which includes the Badjao, Tausug, Sama-Banguingui, and Yakan. These tribes, although classified under a Muslim community, are distinct from one another in culture. They have resided in this community for several years after migrating from Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Basilan. No studies have been conducted as to their current conditions in the community, thus this study was undertaken. To be able to do this, the Quality of Life index by Ferrans and Powers (1984 & 1998) was used as a guide to assess the current state of their quality of life. The questionnaire measures the respondent’s general satisfaction towards different domains of life. A comparison of the weighted scores for the overall quality of life and the subdomains between sexes within and between the cultural groups was done. Results showed that the weighted scores for all the domains of life including that of the overall quality of life of the four Muslim cultural groups were above 15 indicating that all the Muslim groups perceived their quality of life as very good. These Muslim groups, despite the poor conditions in the Taluksangay community, have accepted their current situation in life, specifically the quality of their health and functioning, socio-economic, psychological and spiritual, and family conditions. Considering the culture of the four Muslim groups, it can be argued from the results of this study that Islamic tenets interwoven with traditional practices may have played a role in the perception of the four Muslim cultural groups of a very good quality of life.

INTRODUCTION
The Mindanao group of islands in the Philippines has many indigenous peoples including Muslim cultural groups. In Western Mindanao, there exist several Muslim groups residing in the islands of Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Basilan Islands. These groups are known as Sama-Banguigui, Badjao, Tausug and Yakan. Due to economic and peace problems, many members of these groups have migrated and permanently settled in Zamboanga City, a chartered city situated in the westernmost peninsula of the island of Mindanao. These people have settled in small barangays (referring to the smallest local government in the Philippines, historically composed of 50 to 100 families only, and is very similar to a village). Barangays Rio Hondo, Taluksangay, and Campo Muslim are Muslim villages which are built on stilts over water. One barangay, the Taluksangay, is populated by four Muslim groups—the Tausug, Sama-Banguingui, Badjao, and Yakan. This barangay is a small islet surrounded by mangroves and separated from the city mainland by a creek. Historically, this is where Islamic culture was first introduced in 1885. As such, it is the first center of Islamic propagation in the Zamboanga peninsula. It is also considered a tourist attraction in the Philippines because it is where the first Islamic mosque was constructed. This mosque serves as a place of worship and as a home to Muslim scholars from other Muslim countries.

As of the 2007 census of the National Statistics Office, Barangay Taluksangay has a total number of 1,266 households and a total population of 7,116. Members of the said groups are believed to be faithful believers and supporters of the “five pillars of Islam which are the Sahada, or to bear witness that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of God; Salat or prayer; fasting during the holy month of Ramadan; giving of charity and alms to the poor; and pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca.” Furthermore, they firmly believe that the Qur’an is the “divine revelation of Allah addressed to all mankind, regardless of race, region or time.”

Although similar in their religious beliefs, the above-mentioned four Muslim groups are, however, quite different
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in many ways, especially in their modes of life. The Tausug is the largest tribe inhabiting the area of southwestern Mindanao and is considered to be the bravest of all Muslim groups. The term Tausug means “people of the current” because Tausugs are fine seamen who possess skills and know-how in the barter of clothing and jewelry. They are thus regarded to be richer than the other minority groups. The Yakan is a tribe that is outstandingly skilled in weaving, and its members are considered to be great farmers and cattle raisers. They are thrifty people and most of them have kamunti kayu (grated camote) as their main food, coupling it with little fish. The Badjaos are gypsies whose main source of revenue is the lleness of the sea. Their experience with the sea has trained them to skillfully navigate without the aid of modern devices, relying merely on heavenly bodies, such as the stars and the moon, and current movements for direction and guidance when sailing at night. Because they are always moving from one island to another, they have not been able to establish a political institution that can advance their collective interest in society. They have no recognized community leader. Their social structure is leveled, all of them belonging to the poor strata. Physically, a Badjao can be easily recognized by his sturdy built and dark brown hair, which are due to prolonged exposure to the sea environment, and his manner of walking, which is due to long hours of crouching in boat sterns. The Sama-Banguingui is considered a major group within the Sama tribe. The term “Sama” is derived from the word Sama-Sama, meaning togetherness. Members of this tribe communicate more through verbal discussions and less through physical violence. They have a well-developed social organization comparable to the Tausugs.

In this islet barangay of Taluksangay, only a few of the houses are made up of cement or a combination of cement and wood. Most are made of wood, bamboo or coconut trunks or a combination of these and are built, supported by strong poles, over water. The four predominant tribal Muslim groups found residing in this barangay live in close proximity and harmoniously with each other despite language barriers, sharing one wet market (where the products of the sea are being sold) and one dry market (where vegetables are displayed for sale). The public means of transport within this village is the sikad (a bicycle with an attached cart with a seat good for two passengers) although one can also reach one’s desired destination on foot within a few minutes. Several small grocery stores, a dressmaking shop and a few small eateries can also be found in this village. The houses in each tribal community are built very near to each other and there are some homes which give shelter to not only one but two or three families. Two schools, one for elementary and one for high school, were established but there are no hospitals and clinics. Only the barangay health center caters to the health needs of the residents. Most of the earners in this village perceived their incomes as low compared to that in the city proper and they found this lacking, considering the number of dependents they have. Only those workers who have a college degree and worked as teachers or barangay officers or are grocery store owners have incomes above the minimum. Given this scenario, one might ask the question: What is the quality of life of the Muslim tribes in this village?

The idea of Quality of Life (QOL) is so complex. It is referred to as the well-being and life satisfaction of individuals, personal sense of well-being being determined by the assessment of quality of life from the individuals themselves. Furthermore, the World Health Organization describes quality of life as the “individuals’ perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live…”.

The self-assessment quality of life index questionnaire (QLI) developed by Padilla, Ferrell, Grant and Rhiner in 1990, which is composed of 14 linear analog scale items, has been used by some authors. The quality of life domains that are included in this assessment tool are psychological well-being, physical well-being, and symptom control. The Ferrans and Power Quality of Life Index, however, is an instrument that assesses areas which include goals of life, general satisfaction, stress, and physical health. This instrument, which stands for the degree of well-being considered by the people and the identification and appreciation of what every individual expects from life in general and from its condition, has been popularly used by many researchers.

While there are a number of research studies on the quality of life of ethnic groups or communities in several countries, in the Philippines none has been recorded on how Muslim minority groups rate their quality of life and how satisfied they are with their lives. The Muslim tribes in Taluksangay, namely, the Tausug, Badjao, Sama-Banguingui, and Yakan, are ideal groups for this kind of study. Considering the needs and the desires of these tribes to have a better life, living in such a small islet might give them fewer chances to achieve their aspirations and be pleased and contented with life or experience happiness. To look into how this influences their quality of life, this study was conducted.
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METHODOLOGY

The respondents were recruited to participate in this study through the help of the Barangay Chairman, Hon. Hadji Abdurahman Nuño. The objectives and procedure of this study were carefully explained to the Barangay Chairman and the possible recruits to be able to secure the necessary permit to conduct the study in the area. The participants, who may either be male or female, were selected by purposive sampling according to the following inclusion criteria: (a) individuals who are either a Tausug, Sama Banguingui, Badjao or Yakan; (b) aged 18 years or over; (c) able to understand the Tagalog dialect; and (d) willing to take part in the study. The individual’s rights and anonymity were respected. The purposes of the study, data collection procedure, type of questionnaire used, and the right to refuse to participate were explained to those who fit the above-mentioned criteria. Those who were willing to participate were informed and assured of the confidentiality of the data that will be collected and that the results will be reported as a group.

Only 143 residents participated in the study. Thirty-one (31) Badjaos (17 males; 14 females); fifty-seven (57) Sama-Banguinguis (28 males; 29 females); thirty-three (33) Tausugs (16 males; 17 females); and twenty-two (22) Yakans (12 males; 10 females) agreed to be interviewed. Weighted scores of each participant’s overall QLI as well as those for each of the four domains were generated after responses to the QLI were entered in the Microsoft Excel Scoring program. These are presented as boxplots.

The Quality of Life of participants from the four different Muslim tribes was assessed using the Quality of Life Index (QLI) Generic Version III instrument, which was downloaded from the official QLI website. QLI is a generic satisfaction with life instrument that takes the individual’s responses into account. It was developed by Ferrans and Powers (1984 and 1998), professors at the University of Illinois (Chicago, USA), using different research approaches with its theoretical framework being satisfaction with life. It includes 66 items, divided into two sections, related to four life domains (number of items): Health and Functioning (13), Socio-economic (8), Psychological/Spiritual (7), and Family (5). The first section is related to the satisfaction the person experiences with various aspects of life, and the second is related to the importance he or she ascribes to the same aspects. Each item is evaluated by the participant on two 6-point Likert scales ranging from “very dissatisfied” (1) to “very satisfied” (6) or “not important” (1) to “very important” (6). The importance scores allow weighting of the satisfaction scores, reflecting both the individual’s satisfaction and importance of values. This importance score can be used to partially evaluate response shift. Five scores were generated: an overall score for quality of life and scores for the four domains. The scores range from 0 to 30 but no cut-off was established. In this study, however, scores of 14 or less indicate a low quality of life while a high quality of life is indicated by scores of 15 and above.

The internal consistency reliability of the QLI is supported by several studies (Cronbach’s alphas = 0.73 to 0.99). Cronbach’s alphas for the four subscales have also been published in several studies, giving support for internal consistency of the subscales (0.70 to 0.94 for health and functioning; 0.78 to 0.96 for the psychological/spiritual subscale; 0.71 to 0.92 for the social/economic subscale; and 0.63 to 0.92 for the family subscale). Good test-retest reliability (r = 0.81 to 0.87) and concurrent validity with one measure of life satisfaction (r = 0.65 to 0.75) have also been proved.

A scoring program (Microsoft Excel Scoring) developed by Dr. Derek McEntee, was downloaded from the official QLI website and was used to calculate the total and domain scores. In this program, there are four main columns which are separated by bold lines. Individual’s responses were entered and calculations were performed in the smaller columns within the main columns. Blank responses were entered as zero for that particular response.

In order to graphically display the QLI scores of the male and female participants of each Muslim tribe, a boxplot (also known as a box and whisper plot) method developed by John Tukey in 1997 was employed.

The sampled data in this study depended on the number of willing respondents thus limits were not set in terms of the number of participants. The assumption of normality (distribution of data) or equality of variance, therefore, was not met. Furthermore, it was not the raw data values (i.e., individual’s responses for each item in the survey questionnaire) but rather the weighted scores that were used for calculation of the statistic. Given these considerations, the Kruskal-Wallis test, a non-parametric test used to compare independent groups of sampled data, was used to determine the significance of differences (at 0.05 level of significance) in the calculated total and domain scores for male and female participants of each Muslim tribe.
RESULTS

Evaluation of the quality of life of the different Muslim cultural groups in Taluksangay in Zamboanga City is shown in Table 1. Weighted scores vary from as low as 10 to as high as 30. Weighted scores below 15 indicate poor quality of life while those above 15 denote good quality of life. It can be seen from the results that the average scores are above 20 indicating a good quality of life for the four cultural groups. However, since the range of values between groups vary, it was therefore appropriate to describe the quality of life of the different groups.

Table 1. Weighted Scores of the Quality of life index of the different Muslim cultural groups in Taluksangay, Zamboanga City.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CULTURAL GROUP</th>
<th>Overall Quality of Life (QOL)</th>
<th>SFH</th>
<th>SFM</th>
<th>TF</th>
<th>TM</th>
<th>EF</th>
<th>SM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Max</td>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**QUALITY OF LIFE (QOL) WITHIN EACH MUSLIM TRIBE**

Badjao. The weighted scores of the male and female Badjao’s for the overall quality of life and for each of the life domains are shown in Table 1 and Figure 1.

It can be seen from the results that the range of QOL weighted scores between sexes varies. Although the average scores indicate satisfaction with their QOL, a few individuals have scores below 15. This means that the majority of the Badjaos have relatively good quality of life, indicating satisfaction with their present health, socioeconomic and psychological/spiritual, and family conditions. The individuals who have below 15 weighted scores were females who were not satisfied with the state of their health. This, however, did not affect their high level of satisfaction with the other domains of life.

TAUSUG

Table 1 and Figure 2 show the QOL’s weighted scores of the male and female members of the Tausug tribe who participated in this study.

The results show that the mean weighted scores of the overall QOL including the subdomains were above 15, indicating that the quality of life of the Tausugs was good. Although there were male Tausugs who have weighted
scores that are below 15 for almost all the subdomains of life except the psychological/spiritual aspect, most male Tausugs have high levels of satisfaction with their quality of life. Male Tausugs with weighted scores below 15 have low satisfaction with the status of their health, socioeconomic, and family conditions.

Results also show that a few female Tausugs have weighted scores below 15 in their socioeconomic and psychological/spiritual domains of life. This indicates low satisfaction in these areas. For the rest of the life domains, however, all of the female participants were highly satisfied.

SAMA-BANGUIGUI

The QOL’s weighted scores of the male and female Sama-Banguinguis are shown in Table 1 and Figure 3.

Figure 4

Figure 3. Boxplot presentation of the weighted scores for QOL of male (M) and female (F) Sama-Banguingui participants.

The results show a number of male and female Sama-Banguinguis have weighted scores below 15 in all aspects of life except in the health domain, wherein all the male participants have weighted scores above 15. This result indicates that the majority of Sama-Banguinguis have high levels of satisfaction toward their health, socioeconomic, and psychological/spiritual conditions, and family situations.

YAKAN

Table 1 and Figure 4 show the QOL’s weighted scores of the participants belonging to the Yakan tribe.

QUALITY OF LIFE BETWEEN MUSLIM TRIBES

Since the four Muslim cultural groups reside in the same community, a comparison of their quality of life was done. The comparison was based on their overall quality of life and the other subdomains of life.

OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE (QOL)

Figure 5 shows the range and means of the weighted scores for the overall QLI of the four Muslim tribes.
Almost all individuals of the tribes have a high overall quality of life. The outliers are some female Sama Banguinguis who have a low overall quality of life. Although all the four cultural groups have high overall quality of life based on the weighted scores, comparison between the sexes of the four Muslim cultural groups using Kruskal-Wallis test revealed that the Badjao males significantly differ in their quality of life with those of the Tausug and Sama Banguigui males. Likewise, it was also shown that the Sama Banguingui males significantly differ in their overall quality of life with those of the females of their tribe (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Pairwise comparisons of the weighted scores of the male (M) and female (F) groups of the 4 Muslim tribes for the overall QOL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEALTH AND FUNCTIONING DOMAIN</th>
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Qualitative observation of the boxplots shows that the range of the weighted scores in the health and functioning domain of the quality of life index (QLI) were observed to vary between tribes and between male and female groups of each tribe (Fig. 6). Except for a very few individuals, almost all are satisfied with the health and functioning aspect of their lives.

**Table 3.** Pairwise comparisons of the weighted scores of male (M) and female (F) participants of each tribe with respect to the Health and Functioning domain of the QLI.
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DOMAIN

All the male and female Badjaos were shown to have weighted scores above 15 in this subdomain of the quality of life indicating that this Muslim group is highly satisfied with their social and economic conditions. The other three Muslim groups have individuals with weighted scores below 15 indicating a low level of satisfaction with their social and economic conditions.

Comparison of the level of satisfaction of the different Muslim groups with their social and economic conditions shows that only the Sama Banguingui females differ from the males in their tribe and the Tausug males (Table 4).

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SPIRITUAL DOMAIN

The Badjaos as well as the Yakans were observed to have high levels of life satisfaction with regard to the psychological and spiritual domains of their quality of life. Some Tausugs and Sama Banguinguis were shown to have low levels of satisfaction with their psychological and spiritual life conditions (Fig. 8). Comparison between the tribes, however, shows that these four Muslim cultural groups do not differ in the social and spiritual domains of their quality of life (Table 5).

FAMILY DOMAIN

The weighted scores of the four Muslim cultural groups is presented in Figure 9. Qualitative observation of the
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DISCUSSION

Results of this study showed that the mean weighted scores for the overall and subdomains of the quality of life index were above 15 for all the four Muslim cultural groups in Taluksangay. It can thus be generalized that all the Muslim groups living in the same community generally perceived their quality of life as very good. These Muslim groups, despite the poor conditions of the community they reside in, have accepted their circumstances in life, specifically the quality of their health and functioning, socio-economic, psychological and spiritual, and family conditions.

HEALTH AND FUNCTIONING

It can be argued from the results of this study that Islamic tenets interwoven with traditional practices may have played a role in the perception of the four Muslim cultural groups of a very good quality of life. Majority of Muslim Filipinos’ strict observance of Islamic principles and application of these principles to their way of life so as not to provoke Allah’s displeasure are perceived to prevent the occurrence of misfortunes or illnesses. These groups also practice rituals in order to continually pacify the spirits of their ancestors since it is believed that the course of one’s life is influenced by the stance of one’s ancestors. Peculiar practices are likewise observed to put a stop to epidemics or to deter illnesses. The Yakans, for example, wear ornaments that serve as talismans. Belts made of snake bones are believed to safeguard their bodies from pain while fruits of a flower sequenced together into a necklace or bracelet, an ornament called manic tegiyas, is said to keep them away from illnesses caused by evil spirits. The Badjaos also have practices which they can claim as their own. One example is the reliance on mediums to get rid of infirmity-causing spirits from their community during times of disease outbreaks. This is done by setting a “spirit boat” floating aimlessly in the open sea, way beyond the area where they conduct economic activities. They also have this practice of deliberately breaking their eardrums at a young age to make hunting and diving into the sea easier.

It is also important to note that health awareness programs and delivery of health care services by Taluksangay’s barangay health center have helped in preventing and alleviating illnesses in the Muslim groups. Assessment of satisfaction with respect to the health and functioning life domain revealed high satisfaction with their health and energy conditions, self-reliance, sex life, control over their conditions, and family.
own lives, abilities in taking care of family responsibilities and in handling the worries that come into their lives, usefulness to others, and recreation. These variables were also considered important by the respondents from the four Muslim groups. Similar findings have been documented in the Quality of Life literature. Robinson in a study of older adults and sexuality found positive correlations between quality of life and health status as well as intimacy and sexual activity. She reported that there is a 0.465 increase in the predicted quality of life scores when an individual is healthy. In addition, a small but significant 0.003 unit increase in predicted quality of life scores was observed when there is a one unit increase in the sexual activity aspect. She further cited a study done in 2003 by Bowling et al. who found out that a significant percentage of the participants in their study indicated that health was essential to a “good” quality of life.

Interviews with the respondents revealed that they were also satisfied with the delivery of health care services by their barangay health center. This reflects efficient implementation of the policies created to nurture the health of Taluksangay residents. This also reflects a duly proportioned fund for health care, thus indicating good governance on the part of the Taluksangay barangay officers and success of the Zamboanga City’s first and foremost mission, which is “to improve the quality of life of its citizenry through sound local governance that delivers efficient and effective basic services and provides the necessary infrastructure.”

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE

Different Filipino Muslim cultural groups are commonly perceived to not be closely bonded and that camaraderie among them is wanting. It was argued that this is probably due to some differences in the social norms and mode of conduct between each group resulting in tribal conflicts that have kept on for centuries. While the Muslim cultural groups in Taluksangay differ in their cultural and social practices, they have remained cordial and are not in conflict with one another. This can be attributed to the fact that the different groups are guided by the basic principles for a good person as dictated by their culture. The members of the Taluksangay community are more focused on economic activities for the improvement of their life conditions. The following cultural practices may explain the results of the study where all the Muslim cultural groups perceived the quality of their social and economic life to be very good.

Underlying Tausug socialization, for example, are five groups of accepted norms: (a) adat (customs); (b) tabi-at (etiquettes); (c) pali-lihan (beliefs and practices); (d) tarasul iban daman (proverbs and sayings); (e) agama (religious orientation). Education and training according to these norms is provided to a Tausug child by his parents. In addition, observation of his environment and direct participation in various processes of social interaction facilitate the Tausug child’s internalization of these norms.

The Sama-Sama (togetherness) concept guides the sea-oriented Sama-Banguinguis in their social interactions with one another. One avenue for socialization is their economic activities such as shell gathering, fishing, and seaweed farming. The adult members of the Sama-Banguingui community are careful to conform to the said concept and other social norms because they firmly believe that their practice influences their children’s future behavior. “What the adult does is being imitated by the young.” In addition, the “ought” and “ought not”, as prescribed by the Sama religion, play a big role to the sculpting of value orientations. The belief on the existence of Sulga (heaven) and Narka (hell) is a valuable and effectual means that lends a hand in controlling the Napsu (desires) of the Sama, hence, protecting their Iyman (faith). This is further enhanced by their traditional belief in Jinism and supernatural power of dead ancestors whose tampats (graveyards) are respected and hallowed through yearly offerings because they are believed to have the powers of busung and barakat. Busung bestows bad things to happen, while barakat grants good blessings.

In the Badjao community, ties and bonds within and among families are the main bases of social interactions and are considered as essential economic units as well. Most social interaction occurs among contemporaries and kinsmen in economic activities such as fishing and other related undertakings. The Badjao people are found to be commonly engaged in trading their goods with their family relatives or neighbors. One dynamic that shapes the conduct of agreeable and friendly relations among the Badjao is their tendency to lend and borrow on a mutual basis. One will definitely be separated and even cut off from his larger social unit if one neglects doing so.

In the Yakan community, people are very polite and courteous. They always give out a greeting when they come across each other or as they enter and leave the house they are visiting. A Yakan always believes that he is not alone.
and can always depend on the help of his relatives, neighbors and friends in solving whatever conflicts that may arise between individuals or between families.  

Economic wise, the Tausugs are considered wealthier than the other Muslim groups due to their expertise in clothing and jewelry trading. 33 Aside from this, fishing and farming are regarded by most Tausug non-professionals as the two most important areas of economic activity. Most of the Tausug professionals, on the other hand, are seen working in various government bureaus and private ventures while the rest are into sales and provision of services. 9

The Yakan are exceptionally skilled in weaving as well as farming and cattle raising. 33 Their economic activities are influenced by their belief that certain days of the week such as Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays are good working days, while Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays are regarded as bad days. Hammis (Monday), for example, stands for water which implies coolness and is therefore considered a favorable day to start working. Juma-at (Friday), on the other hand, stands for fire or heat hence, the Yakan avoid doing work on this particular day. 7

Much of the Badjao’s economic activities are tied to the sea, thus most of them are engaged in fishing 33 and pearl diving. The pearls they get and a portion of their daily fish catch are sold in the markets. Moreover, many of them are into mat weaving, especially the women, while a significant number of them are into building sailboats or vintas, fish trap making and fishnet weaving. 14

The Sama-Banguinguis are also very much exposed to maritime activities 33 thus, their major source of revenue is fishing. Farming, followed by logging and hunting are their other major sources of income. A few of the Sama-Banguinguis are also engaged in other gainful trades and livelihoods, such as transportation, communications, restaurants and refreshment parlors, carpentry and other crafts, trades and other commercial enterprises, including the most recent one which is seaweed farming or Agal-Agal. Furthermore, an increasing number of educated Sama-Banguinguis have joined either the government or private institutions and are salary earners. 8

In evaluating the quality of life of the four Muslim groups with respect to the social and economic life domain, results revealed high satisfaction and contentment with their friends, the emotional support they get from people other than their family, their neighborhood, home, having a job or not having a job, educational attainment, and financial needs. 3

The foundation of the Tausug culture lies in the spirit of maratabat, a concept of honor, “face”, dignity, sense of shame and pride, ethics and etiquette, protocol, and self-esteem. It is an age-old guide to social relations, individual and collective action, that is, if one does not treat other people well, then he cannot expect respect and support to be given to him in return. 33 A similar underpinning is also seen in the cultures of the Yakan, Sama Banguingui, and the Badjao. So, despite differences in their practices, social unity can be seen within each group which might have a great impact on their quality of life with respect to the social domain.

Regarding economic life, not much opportunity for the practice of these groups’ expertise were seen in Taluksangay so some members opted to find some other means of livelihood in order to support their families. However, this did not deter the respondents of this study from being satisfied and contented with their earnings.

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SPIRITUAL

Aside from the spirit of maratabat, the cultures of these Muslim groups are also founded on their firm belief and trust in their god, Allah, the observance of the five pillars of Islam, and spirit/ancestor worship. 7-9, 14 The Sama-Banguinguis, for example, believe that good fortune and adversity are due to what has been willed and destined by the divine (Kadar Iban Janji). But despite being very pious and faithful in following Islamic principles, they cannot do away with their firm belief in environmental spirits. 29

The strong-minded Tausugs are also faithful followers of Islam. But apart from Allah or Tuhan, they also believe in spirits that inhabit nature, such as rocks and trees, like the evil spirits called saytan and unseen creatures called jinn. This belief in spirits and the things they can bring to the life of a Tausug still plays a great part in their daily life. 23

The Badjaos are primarily pagans, practicing ancestor worship and keeping these spirits “happy” and comfortable, by offering food and cigarettes, so as not to trigger the occurrence of misfortunes. Islamic influences, however, are shown in some of their ceremonies, such as weddings, which are presided over by an Imam (a Muslim religious leader) and where the Qur’an is used. 20

The Yakan also firmly believe in both Islam, where the mosque has always played a dynamic role in guiding them,
and spirit worship, a pre-Islamic religious belief. They also truly accept the concepts of Surga (heaven) and Narka (hell) so that they have to do rigorous work on earth in order to go to heaven after death. These two areas of belief, incorporating Islamic principles and traditional practices, is where their real strength and confidence lie, thus giving them peace of mind and general happiness as well as satisfaction and contentment with the personal goals that they are able to achieve, their appearance, and their selves in general, as revealed by the results of the assessment of the four tribes’ satisfaction with respect to the psychological and spiritual life domain. These results are in agreement with one of the findings of Ferriss in his study on Religion and the Quality of Life, that happiness is found to be associated with the frequency of attendance at religious services, with denominational preference, and with doctrinal preference, hence arriving at a conclusion that “religion may explain a purpose in life that fosters well-being.”

**FAMILY LIFE**

The Tausug, Sama-Banguingui, Badjao, and Yakan communities residing in Taluksangay are similar in family structure. They all belong to the patriarchal society wherein the father is the head of the nuclear family or household. As the leader of the home, the father has the responsibility of ensuring that the customs, Islamic tenets, and belief systems particular to their specific tribe are being taught and followed in his household. Furthermore, the father is also in charge of providing for his family’s daily needs and, together with the mother, responsible for molding his children’s character.

Aside from the parents, consanguineal relatives from both the paternal and maternal sides also have a role in fashioning the children’s future behavior. This concept of a kinship system is referred to as mag-usba-waris (usba, father’s kinsmen; waris, mother’s kin).

In the Tausug community, the usba plays a major part in sculpting an individual’s thinking as well as social relations. They are expected to afford help and protection to the Tausug males and select husbands for the females as well as give the final decision on marriage agreements, especially regarding the ungsud (bridal gift).

In the Yakan community, an individual or family can rely on the assistance of his usba-waris in solving conflicts. A high degree of responsibility is given to the usba. The waris are afforded the right to decide, but the final say falls on the usba. This concept of a kindred system is similarly observed in the Sama-Banguingui community.

In the case of the Badjaos, every member of the household, from the parents down to their offspring, has his own set of duties and responsibilities. The father acts as leader; the mother does the cooking; the children collect firewood from the coastal areas, help gather seafood and fetch water. The whole family comprises an economic unit, which means that they all have to work together in order to survive.

Assessment of satisfaction with regard to the Family life domain also reveals a high satisfaction with their family’s health, children, family happiness, spouse/lover/partner, and the emotional support from their family.

The family is the basic foundation that is vital to the structure of society thus, social processes such as mutual trust among members, support and shared expectations despite difficult family situations can also be assumed to be in operation. These social processes affect the family’s health and happiness.

A high level of satisfaction with respect to the family aspect of quality of life, as found in this study, indicates that the said social processes are functioning in the families of the respondents.

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