



From Table to Home: Analyzing the Material Culture of Pagsa-Sharon Practice in Catanduanes Island, Philippines

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ABSTRACT: The cultural landscape of Catanduanes reveals a unique tradition known as pagsa-Sharon, which embodies the practice of wrapping and sharing food during social gatherings that commemorate significant life events, such as weddings, birthdays, and baptisms. This study explores the cultural dimensions surrounding pagsa-Sharon, focusing particularly on its material culture. Central to this exploration are the edible offerings, which, when artistically prepared, reflect culinary expertise and carry profound cultural significance. The manner of wrapping these foods—along with the choice of materials and decorative elements—constitutes an integral aspect of the region's tangible heritage, revealing a deep connection to local customs.

Moreover, the study extends to the array of items brought home from these events, whether they serve as symbolic tokens or practical mementos. The findings also highlight the varied roles of participants in this communal practice, including the creators of the food, recipients of the offerings, and the roles these individuals play within the gatherings' social dynamics. Notably, the study addresses the types of gatherings where pagsa-Sharon is prominent, allowing for insights into how this practice adapts across different contexts.

Additionally, the concept of "Gathering Takeaways" or "Wrapped Offerings" emerges as a significant component of shared cultural joy and exchange. By analyzing the categorization of food items into cooked and uncooked, along with non-food categories including beverages and objects, this research elucidates the comprehensive cultural fabric woven through these gatherings. The insights gained reveal not only the culinary preferences of the community but also the vital role of social connection and cultural identity in the practice of pagsa-Sharon, highlighting its dynamic nature and enduring relevance in the communal life of Catanduanes.

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INTRODUCTION

Catanduanes is a modest province located in the Bicol Region of the Philippines, consisting of 11 municipalities, with Virac serving as its capital. It is recognized by two notable titles: the "land of the howling winds" and the "Abaca Capital of the Philippines." Despite the frequent onslaught of powerful typhoons such as Reming, Loleng, Rolly, and Pepito, the resilience and joy of the Catandunganons endure due to their values and vibrant cultural traditions, which have been passed down through generations. A study conducted by Sarmiento et al. (2023) revealed that the Catandunganons possess unique coping strategies for overcoming the challenges posed by super typhoons, including Super Typhoon Rolly, which affected the province in 2020. Their profound sense of religiosity empowers them to remain strong and optimistic, enabling them to rise from each setback they encounter.

The rich and diverse traditions of the Catandunganons are exemplified through practices such as the pantomina and Kagharong during the Christmas season (Sarmiento & Tria, 2023), religious dramatizations during Holy Week (Balunsay, 2024), traditional wedding customs (Cantar & Balunsay, 2024), as well as oral poetry and other literary forms (Balunsay & Tindugan, 2017). Furthermore, the abaca industry has significantly elevated the province's profile, as it serves as a principal source of income for the local population. *Abacaleros*, or abaca farmers, uphold numerous cultural beliefs and practices that they have observed over time. Olfindo's (2023) investigation delved into these cultural aspects, examining the material culture associated with abaca farming, and identifying various objects and artifacts that are integral to this industry.

In addition, the Catandunganons hold a strong affinity for social gatherings, characterized by rich festivities that encompass food preparation, beverages, and extensive karaoke singing. Such gatherings include fiestas, birthday celebrations, reunions, barangay events like induction ceremonies, graduations, anniversaries, and even seminars and thesis defenses. A notable tradition within these gatherings is food sharing, where hosts prepare meals for guests and also provide food for relatives who are unable to attend, a practice known locally as pagsa-Sharon. Within this framework, pagsa-Sharon refers to the initiative of wrapping leftover food from gatherings for family members and friends who could not be present. The present author's study titled "Balutin moa ko ng Hiwaga ng Iyong Pagmamahal: The Phenomenology of Pagsa-Sharon during Social Gatherings in Catanduanes Island, Philippines" documents and elaborates on this practice, exploring its associated beliefs, functions, and cultural significance. One of the key elements of the paper includes a comprehensive description of the material culture involved in social gatherings. The author employed Practice Theory as a theoretical framework for this investigation.

Practice Theory represents a sociological framework designed to comprehend culture by emphasizing the everyday practices and actions of individuals and groups within a society. It conceives culture not merely as an assemblage of beliefs, values, and norms, but as a dynamic, evolving process shaped by the interactions and activities of people. Within Practice Theory, culture is recognized as a living entity, continually cultivated and reshaped through social practices. Three primary components define culture: material culture, non-material culture, and practices. Material culture encompasses the physical and tangible objects created, utilized, and revered by a society, including tools, artifacts, clothing, architecture, and technology. In contrast, non-material culture pertains to the intangible elements of culture, such as beliefs, values, norms, language, symbols, and rituals. Practices, in this cultural context, involve the routine actions, behaviors, and activities individuals participate in as part of their daily lives.

When applied to the phenomenon of "pagsa-Sharon" within Filipino culture, Practice Theory serves as a lens through which this tradition can be analyzed and understood at a deeper level. "Pagsa-Sharon" is a practice that is deeply ingrained in Filipino social gatherings, whereby hosts intentionally prepare more food than necessary and encourage guests to take leftovers home. This practice embodies and reinforces values such as hospitality, generosity, and the distaste for food wastage. Regarding material culture, "pagsa-Sharon" corresponds with the physical act of preparing and distributing food, involving the utensils, dishes, and containers used during the gatherings. Additionally, non-material culture is relevant, as this practice is linked to the Filipino beliefs and values related to community, hospitality, and the spirit of sharing. The act of giving and receiving food encapsulates these cultural values and fosters camaraderie among participants.

Practice Theory underscores the notion that culture is not a static collection of beliefs or values; rather, it is constantly shaped and reshaped through social practices. The act of "pagsa-Sharon" epitomizes how culture is enacted and sustained through the everyday activities of individuals and communities. Such practices are crucial for embodying and transmitting cultural values across generations, thereby contributing to the continuity and evolution of Filipino food culture.

Pierre Bourdieu, a prominent figure associated with Practice Theory, has significantly influenced cultural sociology through his concepts, including habitus, which refers to the ingrained dispositions and attitudes shaped by one's social context. His work aligns with the fundamental tenets of Practice Theory, emphasizing the role of practices in reinforcing societal structures and hierarchies, as well as how individual actions and dispositions are informed by cultural and social backdrops. In the context of "pagsa-Sharon," Bourdieu's concepts may be employed to analyze how this practice reflects and fortifies Filipino cultural predispositions towards community, hospitality, and the importance of sharing.

This paper aims to provide a thorough examination of the material culture associated with "pagsa-Sharon." Specifically, it seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What are the common items typically wrapped for takeaway during social gatherings in Catanduanes?
2. What materials do Catandunganons utilize as wrappers for these items?
3. Who typically initiates the practice of "pagsa-Sharon"?
4. What types of gatherings do Catandunganons observe in relation to "pagsa-Sharon"?

METHODOLOGY

This research employed a qualitative methodology, specifically utilizing a phenomenological design. Data collection was facilitated through face-to-face interviews, observational methods during social gatherings, and thematic analysis of the participants' responses. A semi-structured interview guide was meticulously developed by the researcher and subsequently validated by three experts in qualitative research, who are also university professors and practitioners of pagsa-Sharon.

Data were gathered through videography (with signed informed consent), followed by transcription and thematic coding of the responses. This comprehensive approach ensured that the insights derived from the participants' experiences were accurately captured and analyzed, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the "pagsa-Sharon" practice within the cultural context of Catanduanes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In examining the cultural landscape of Catanduanes, a province rich in traditions and unique practices, a distinct cultural phenomenon emerges—pagsa-Sharon. This term encapsulates the artful practice of wrapping food during various social gatherings, marking significant life events such as weddings, birthdays, and baptisms. This section delves into the intricate cultural aspects surrounding pagsa-Sharon in Catanduanes, with a specific focus on its material culture. Through an exploration of tangible artifacts, tools, and objects associated with this tradition, we seek to unravel the deeper cultural meanings embedded in the material elements that contribute to the uniqueness of pagsa-Sharon in this province.

In the course of my investigation, the material culture associated with pagsa-Sharon in Catanduanes has unveiled a fascinating array of elements. Central to this exploration are the foods themselves, meticulously prepared and artistically presented. From sumptuous delicacies to traditional dishes, each item symbolizes not only culinary expertise but also carries profound cultural significance. The manner in which these foods are wrapped, the materials used, and the intricate designs applied become essential facets of the material culture, reflecting a meticulous attention to detail and a deep-rooted connection to local customs.

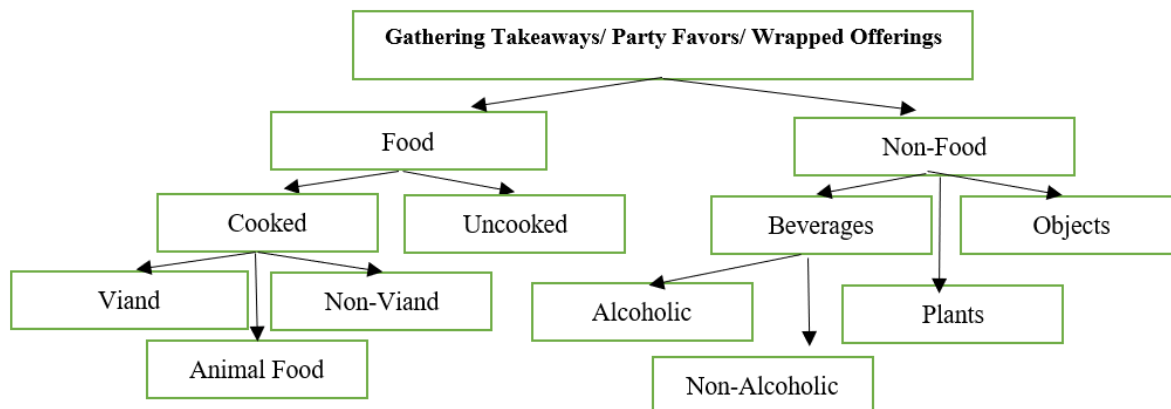
Beyond the culinary realm, the material culture extends to encompass the objects carried home from these gatherings. Whether symbolic tokens exchanged during celebrations or practical items imbued with sentimental value, these objects contribute to the broader narrative of pagsa-Sharon. Furthermore, our findings illuminate the roles of individuals involved in the practice—the creators of these culinary masterpieces, the recipients of the wrapped items, and the communal dynamics at play during these events. Understanding the roles of these key actors is crucial in comprehending the social fabric woven through the tradition of pagsa-Sharon.

My investigation also delves into the various kinds of social gatherings where pagsa-Sharon takes center stage. Weddings, birthdays, baptisms, and other communal celebrations serve as the backdrop for this cultural practice. By exploring the nuanced differences in how pagsa-Sharon is employed across diverse social contexts, I gain valuable insights into the adaptability and versatility of this tradition within Catanduanes' cultural tapestry. This examination of material culture sheds light not only on the aesthetics and practicalities of pagsa-Sharon but also on its dynamic role in fostering social bonds and preserving cultural identity.

Gathering Takeaways/ Party Favors/ Wrapped Offerings

In the vibrant tapestry of cultural celebrations, the concept of "Gathering Takeaways," "Party Favors," or "Wrapped Offerings" adds a layer of significance to communal events, bringing forth a tangible representation of shared joy and cultural exchange. These meticulously prepared and artfully presented items serve as tokens of appreciation, symbolic expressions of goodwill, and, at times, practical mementos that transcend the immediate moment of celebration.

Figure 1. Party Takeaways during Social Gatherings in Catanduanes



The tradition of presenting guests with takeaways or party favors holds a universal charm, creating a bridge between the intangible memories of an event and tangible objects that can be cherished long after the festivities have concluded. In the context of cultural practices such as pagsa-Sharon in Catanduanes, the act of offering wrapped items during gatherings takes on a unique cultural resonance. This subtopic delves into the multifaceted nature of these offerings, exploring the diverse forms they take, the cultural symbolism they embody, and the roles they play in fostering social connections and preserving traditions within the community. Through an examination of Gathering Takeaways, Party Favors, or Wrapped Offerings, we embark on a journey to uncover the layers of meaning woven into these seemingly simple yet culturally rich tokens of celebration.

Figure 1 illustrates the research findings regarding various items associated with the tradition of "pagsa-sharon" or the act of wrapping objects during social gatherings. According to the responses gathered from informants, individuals attending gatherings in Catanduanes typically bring home a variety of items, falling into the categories of both food and non-food. Within the food

category, the researcher further classified items into cooked and uncooked foods. Cooked foods were subcategorized into viand (ulam), non-viand (hindi ulam), and animal food. On the other hand, non-food items brought home from parties were classified into beverages, objects, and plants.

The research findings indicate that people in Catanduanes have a practice of bringing home items from social gatherings, with a notable focus on both food and non-food items. The categorization of food items, including distinctions between cooked and uncooked foods, provides insight into the preferences and choices made by attendees. Additionally, the subcategories of cooked foods shed light on the specific types of dishes that are commonly brought home.

The classification of non-food items into beverages, objects, and plants suggests a diverse range of party favors or souvenirs that contribute to the cultural significance of "pagsa-sharon." These findings hint at the importance of both culinary and non-culinary elements in the social fabric of gatherings in Catanduanes.

While a few categories feature limited examples extracted from interview transcripts, the majority of responses predominantly fall into the categories of viand or "ulam," non-viand, beverages, and objects. Viands are foods typically enjoyed with rice, characterized by their salty and oily nature. Among the viand categories, individuals participating in "pagsa-sharon" events often bring home dishes such as menudo, caldereta, lumpia, humba, pork steak, dinuguan, beef steak, embutido, chicken cordon bleu, fried chicken, kare-kare, bistek, lechon, adobo, paksiw, pork hamonado, sisig, sabaw, adobong baboy, sinigang, pork chop, pininyahang manok, kinis (alimango), paluto (hipon), buttered vegetables, afritada, chopsuey, ampalaya, fish, escabeche, prito, inihaw, morcon, and laing.

Respondents noted a preference for bringing home viands that are considered special or not part of their daily fare, referred to as "espesyal na ulam na hindi kinakain sa araw-araw." Despite these viands being leftovers or remnants, commonly known as "tira-tira o mga isidang buhin," individuals ensure that the food is dry or "walang sarsa" to prevent spoilage. Additionally, uncooked items such as pork, chicken, fish, and vegetables are also commonly taken home, as mentioned by other informants.

The data reveals a significant emphasis on viands or main dishes as items brought home from "pagsa-sharon" events. The extensive list of specific dishes indicates a diverse culinary landscape, with a preference for savory and oily viands. Importantly, the distinction of bringing home special viands not consumed daily suggests a cultural significance attached to these dishes, possibly associated with celebrations or special occasions.

Furthermore, non-viand or non-main dish items brought home by pala-sharon include pastas, rice cakes (kakanin), desserts, and appetizers. Examples mentioned by the informants encompass a wide range, such as suman, ibos, sinaing, atsara, santan, cake, pancit, spaghetti, biko, graham cake, bread rolls, hotdog with marshmallows, pizza, maja blanca, bibingka, palitaw, candy, sweetened pili nuts, puto, kakanin, cupcake, bread, coffee jelly, buko salad, latik, balisungsong, pinurunan, yema, chocolate, malagkit, turon, cheese, doughnut, carbonara, leche flan, kutsinta, tundog, binanban, cassava roll, and ubod.

The data suggests that alongside viands, individuals participating in pagsa-sharon phenomenon bring home a diverse array of non-main dish items. These items fall into categories such as pastas, rice cakes (kakanin), desserts, and appetizers, showcasing a rich variety of culinary choices. Complete list of non-viands as mentioned by informants includes a wide range, such as suman, ibos, sinaing, atsara, santan, cake, pancit, spaghetti, biko, graham cake, bread rolls, hotdog with marshmallows, pizza, maja blanca, bibingka, palitaw, candy, sweetened pili nuts, puto, kakanin, cupcake, bread, coffee jelly, buko salad, latik, balisungsong, pinurunan, yema, chocolate, malagkit, turon, cheese, doughnut, carbonara, leche flan, kutsinta, tundog, binanban, cassava roll, and ubod. The extensive list of specific examples highlights the culinary diversity and complexity of the items taken home. The inclusion of traditional Filipino delicacies (e.g., suman, ibos, biko) alongside more contemporary choices (e.g., pizza, doughnut, chocolate) suggests a blending of traditional and modern culinary influences in the context of these gatherings.

Regarding beverages, they can be categorized into alcoholic and non-alcoholic options. Informants referred to alcoholic drinks using terms such as "alak," "wine," "lady's drink," and "liquor," while non-alcoholic drinks were described as including "juice," "bottled water," "soft drinks," "tetra pack juice," "solo drinks," "coke," and "iced tea."

The data illustrates a clear distinction between two main categories of beverages—alcoholic and non-alcoholic. The terms used by informants to describe alcoholic drinks suggest a variety of options, including traditional terms like "alak" and more refined choices like "wine" and "lady's drink." This indicates a spectrum of alcoholic beverages with diverse cultural and social connotations.

On the non-alcoholic side, the inclusion of terms like "juice," "bottled water," "soft drinks," and others reflects a broad range of choices, encompassing both traditional and modern options. The mention of specific brands such as "coke" and "iced tea" suggests the prevalence of well-known commercial beverages in the community.

Overall, this information not only highlights the diversity in beverage choices but also provides insights into the cultural and social context surrounding the consumption of both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks during social gatherings in Catanduanes. Understanding the preferences and terminology used by individuals can contribute to a deeper appreciation of the cultural significance attached to different beverage choices in the community.

Furthermore, in terms of items taken home by attendees, informants mentioned various items depending on the occasion. For weddings, baptisms, and debut or birthday parties, souvenirs are commonly brought home, while children's parties yield balloons. Parlor games or "palaro" winners receive prizes, and Christmas parties and reunions result in gifts being taken home. Other items include "bilao" (round trays), shot glasses, cups, flowers from stage decorations, tokens, and plants, especially by individuals known as "plantitos" and "plantitas," who typically bring plants from the event organizer's home.

Individuals referred to as "lasenggos" or wine drinkers typically take home unconsumed or partially consumed bottles of drinks, often accompanied by "pulutans" (appetizers), along with plates, spoons, and forks. Consequently, after the event, "lasenggos" and "lasenggas" may find themselves with new kitchenware, as some items are not returned to their rightful owners.

The data reveals a variety of items brought home by attendees depending on the nature of the event. The mention of souvenirs, balloons, prizes, and gifts indicates a cultural practice of taking home mementos or rewards from different types of gatherings, reflecting the significance attached to these events in the community.

The inclusion of specific items such as "bilao," shot glasses, cups, and flowers provides insights into the diverse range of objects associated with different celebrations. The mention of "plantitos" and "plantitas" highlights a trend of individuals bringing home plants, potentially reflecting a growing interest in gardening or plant appreciation within the community.

The observation about "lasenggos" and "lasenggas" taking home unconsumed bottles, pulutans, and kitchenware sheds light on post-event behaviors. It suggests a potential informal exchange system or the unintended acquisition of items by certain attendees, contributing to a humorous note about new kitchenware acquisitions.

Finally, individuals participating in pagsa-sharon events often bring home leftovers intended for their pets and domesticated animals, including cats, dogs, and pigs. They refer to these food items as "kaning baboy" (pig's food), "kasing aso" (dog's food), and "kaning pusa" (cat's food). Although these meals are not exclusively composed of rice, the term "kanin" is used, derived from the word "pagkain" or food. These offerings can consist of a mixture of leftovers, chicken bones, pork fats, vegetable side dishes, fish bones, and "bahaw" or cold rice.

The data reveals a cultural practice among pagsa-sharon participants of bringing home leftovers specifically designated for their pets and domesticated animals. The specific terms "kaning baboy," "kasing aso," and "kaning pusa" highlight the consideration given to different types of animals, each with its own designated food.

The use of the term "kanin" emphasizes the inclusion of rice in these leftover offerings, despite the diverse composition of the meals. This choice of terminology reflects the cultural association of rice as a staple and essential part of a meal in the community.

The description of the leftovers, including chicken bones, pork fats, vegetable side dishes, fish bones, and cold rice, provides insight into the variety of food items that may be included in these pet and animal meals. This practice not only showcases a sense of care for pets and domesticated animals but also highlights a sustainable and resourceful approach to minimizing food waste by repurposing leftovers for animal consumption. Overall, this information contributes to a deeper understanding of the cultural practices surrounding food and pet care in the context of pala-sharon events.

The practice of taking home such a wide range of non-viand items implies a cultural significance attached to sharing and enjoying diverse food offerings during social events. The inclusion of both traditional and modern items reflects the dynamic nature of culinary practices within the community, possibly influenced by cultural exchange and evolving tastes over time. Overall, this information adds depth to our understanding of the gastronomic aspects of pala-sharon events in Catanduanes.

The practice of ensuring that leftover viands are dry without sauce reflects a practical concern for preventing spoilage, showcasing a mindful approach to preserving the quality of the food taken home. The inclusion of uncooked items in the items brought home further emphasizes the importance of food in these social gatherings, encompassing both prepared and raw ingredients. Overall, these insights contribute to a deeper understanding of the culinary traditions and preferences surrounding "pagsa-sharon" events in Catanduanes.

Understanding the types of items brought home from social gatherings in Catanduanes has implications for cultural studies, community dynamics, and event planning. These findings could be used to enhance cultural awareness and appreciation, as well as inform the development of community-based events. Event organizers and researchers alike may find value in recognizing and respecting the cultural significance attached to specific items, thereby fostering a sense of inclusivity and understanding within the community.

Furthermore, these findings indicate that the people of Catanduanes have a strong inclination toward giving and sharing both food and non-food items during social gatherings. This practice clearly reflects how Catanduanes residents embody their Catholic faith, adhering to the teachings of their religion. Overall, Catanduanes individuals, as Filipinos, consistently demonstrate thoughtfulness towards their friends and relatives. These findings are consistent with the research of Abinales and Amoroso (2022), which examined the Muslim tradition of "Pagpag." Similar to the Catanduanes practice of pagsa-Sharon, "Pagpag" involves food

sharing during Eid al-Adha, commonly known as the Feast of Sacrifice. Both pagsa-Sharon and "Pagpag" highlight the significance of food sharing during religious celebrations and its role in strengthening social bonds, as well as ethnic and religious identities.

Items Used for Wrapping/Containers of Pala-Sharon

In the cultural tapestry of Catanduanes, the practice of "Pagsa-Sharon" stands as a vibrant tradition that extends beyond the joyous gatherings themselves. One intriguing aspect of this communal celebration is the meticulous attention given to the items used for wrapping or containers, collectively known as "Mga Gamiting Pambalot/Lalagyan ng mga Pala-Sharon." These items play a pivotal role in encapsulating the essence of the event, not only serving as practical vessels but also bearing cultural significance. As participants engage in the exchange of food, gifts, and various items during these social occasions, the carefully chosen wrappers and containers become carriers of tradition, reflecting the unique blend of modern and traditional influences within the community.

Delving into the intricacies of these items reveals a fascinating blend of practicality and symbolism. From the functional role of preserving and transporting foods to the symbolic representation of cultural values, the "Mga Gamiting Pambalot/Lalagyan ng mga Pala-Sharon" weave a narrative of community connection and shared identity. This exploration aims to unravel the layers of meaning embedded in these items, shedding light on how they contribute to the richness of the Pagsa-Sharon tradition and the cultural identity of Catanduanes.

Figure 2. Containers Used in Pagsa-Sharon Phenomenon in Catanduanes

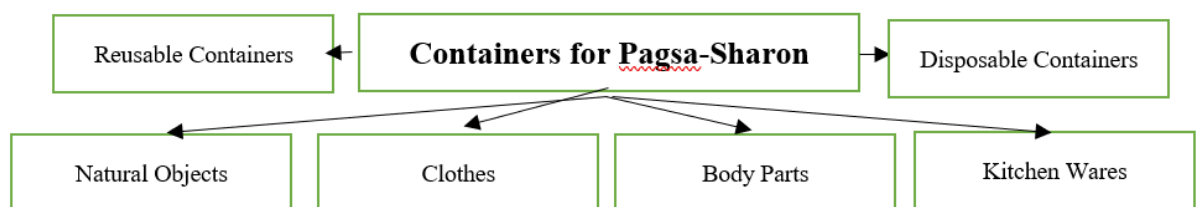


Figure 2 presents the outcomes of the investigation into the containers utilized in the "pagsa-sharon" phenomenon in Catanduanes. Drawing from the responses provided by informants, seven types of containers or wrappers were identified for transporting foods from social gatherings. These encompass reusable containers, disposable containers, natural containers, clothing, kitchenware, and, remarkably, even their bare hands.

Within the category of reusable containers, participants mentioned various items such as mini bags, covered glass or "garapon," small containers, ice cream tubs, bags, eco-bags, microwavable containers, round rattan/plastic trays or "bilao," plastic tubs, and plate holders. Disposable containers include materials like styrofoam, plastic bags, disposable glass, plastic "labo," paper plates, pizza boxes, cake boxes, disposable plastic bags, disposable cups, paper bags, zip locks, aluminum foil, single-use plastic, disposable containers, cartons, ice plastic, plastic rolls, and "sando" bags.

Interestingly, some individuals utilize kitchenware to transport food from gatherings, parties, and eat-outs. Examples of these kitchenware items include Tupperware, plates, lunch boxes or "baunan," bowls or "mangkok," a cooking pot or "kaldero," and a saucepan or "kaserola." Additionally, respondents mentioned the use of natural objects such as banana leaves and "upas" or banana trunks. Others specified that they carry food from gatherings using their pockets or even their bare hands.

The investigation into containers used during the "pagsa-sharon" phenomenon in Catanduanes has revealed a cultural tapestry rich in diversity and resourcefulness. The community's adaptability is evident in the seamless integration of traditional items like round rattan trays ("bilao") and banana leaves with modern alternatives such as microwavable containers and eco-bags. This dynamic blend of traditional and contemporary elements underscores the fluid nature of cultural practices, showcasing the community's ability to adapt while preserving cultural heritage.

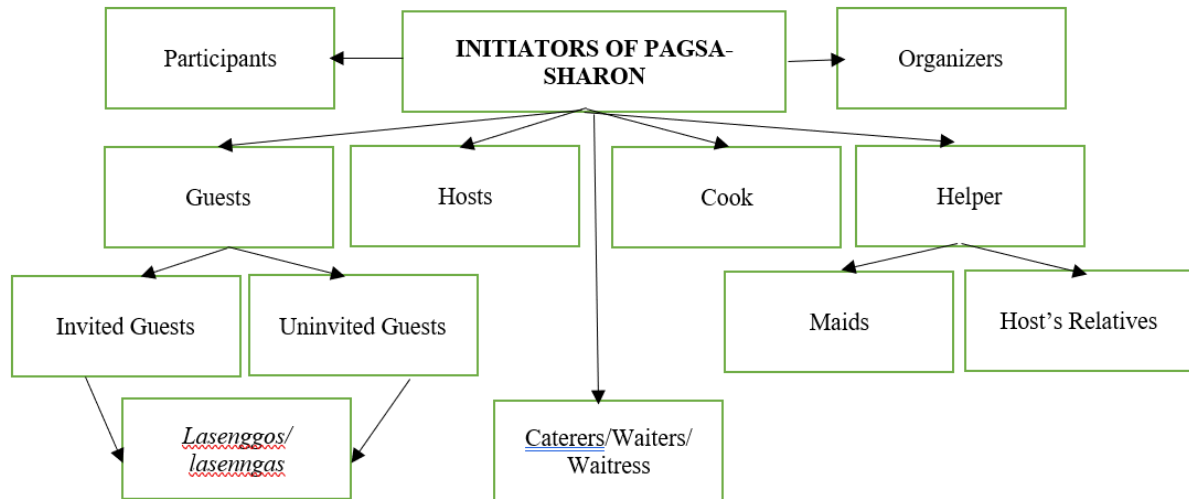
The presence of a wide range of containers reflects not only cultural considerations but also practical factors influencing participants' choices. Reusable containers, including eco-bags and Tupperware, suggest a growing awareness of sustainability within the community. This aligns with global efforts to reduce single-use plastics and embrace environmentally friendly alternatives. However, the practical convenience of disposable items like styrofoam, paper plates, and plastic bags remains crucial, meeting the needs of bustling social gatherings where quick disposal is essential.

Moreover, the mention of specific containers for certain foods, such as ice cream tubs or cake boxes, indicates a culinary identity intertwined with the choice of containers. This implies that certain dishes or desserts may be associated with distinct types of containers, adding a layer of cultural significance to the act of bringing home food. Overall, these findings carry implications for cultural preservation, environmental awareness, community dynamics, and opportunities for innovative container design, offering valuable insights for sustainable and culturally sensitive approaches to community traditions.

Initiators in Pagsa-Sharon Phenomenon

The vibrant tradition of "Pagsa-Sharon" in Catanduanes unfolds as a communal celebration that extends far beyond the realms of mere gatherings. At the heart of this lively phenomenon are the diverse individuals who actively partake in the festivities, each playing a unique role in shaping the rich tapestry of community life. Understanding the people involved in the "Pagsa-Sharon" phenomenon is essential to unraveling the complexities, traditions, and social dynamics that make this cultural practice a cherished and integral part of Catanduanes' identity

Figure 3. Initiators of Pagsa-Sharon in Catanduanes



Participants in the "Pagsa-Sharon" phenomenon encompass a broad spectrum of community members, reflecting a mosaic of age groups, social backgrounds, and familial ties. From elders steeped in the traditions of yesteryears to the younger generation infusing modern influences, each participant contributes to the collective energy and spirit of the event. Families, friends, and neighbors come together, creating a dynamic and inclusive environment that fosters a sense of unity and shared cultural experience.

Within the spectrum of participants, distinct roles emerge, shaping the multifaceted nature of "Pagsa-Sharon." Elders often serve as bearers of cultural knowledge, preserving and passing down traditions to younger generations. Meanwhile, the youth inject fresh perspectives and contemporary elements, ensuring the tradition remains dynamic and relevant. The roles extend beyond age, with individuals contributing through various means, whether it be in the preparation of traditional dishes, the crafting of unique wrappers, or the orchestration of lively parlor games. The diversity of roles emphasizes the collaborative nature of "Pagsa-Sharon," where each participant's contribution adds a layer of significance to the overall celebration.

The research findings shed light on the seven primary instigators of the "Pagsa-Sharon" phenomenon in Catanduanes. As illustrated in Figure 3, these initiators comprise hosts, guests, cooks, and helpers, particularly when gatherings take place in private residences. Guests are further categorized into invited and uninvited guests, with some extending their stay for "inuman" or liquor-drinking sessions. Men are colloquially known as "lasenggos," while women are referred to as "lasenggas." Following these drinking sessions, they often engage in "Pagsa-Sharon," bringing home unconsumed "pulutan" and partially filled liquor bottles, along with utensils like bowls and plates.

Conversely, when events unfold in commercial venues such as hotels and restaurants, additional initiators emerge, including organizers, participants, as well as caterers and their waitstaff. This distinction holds true for events conducted within educational institutions, encompassing seminars, parties, and thesis defenses. The delineation between home-based and commercial settings introduces a nuanced understanding of the initiation process, highlighting the influence of the context on the various roles involved in the "Pagsa-Sharon" tradition.

This diversity in initiators highlights the inclusive nature of "Pagsa-Sharon" within the community. It signifies a collaborative effort where various roles, ranging from hosts and guests to cooks and helpers, collectively contribute to the initiation and continuation of this cultural practice. The involvement of community members underscores a shared responsibility, fostering a sense of unity and collaboration in upholding the tradition.

The differentiation between home-based and commercial settings introduces a location-dependent dynamic in the initiation process. In homes, responsibility is often shared within the immediate community, while commercial settings bring forth external entities such as organizers and caterers as integral initiators. This suggests that the initiation of "Pagsa-Sharon" is influenced by the context in which the event takes place, pointing to potential economic and social implications tied to the phenomenon.

Furthermore, the presence of "Pagsa-Sharon" in educational institutions signifies the adaptability and cultural resilience of the tradition. Its extension into academic settings, involving seminars, parties, and even thesis defenses, underscores the ability of

"Pagsa-Sharon" to transcend traditional social gatherings and find relevance in diverse contexts. This adaptability reinforces its cultural significance, making it a cherished practice across various settings and generations.

These results are supported by Zen's study titled "Food, Feasts, and Sociality in the Philippines." The individuals involved in pagsa-Sharon, referred to as initiators in this paper, play a significant role in social gatherings and in fostering camaraderie among participants through the food they share. Similarly, Zen emphasized that food and feasting are essential components of social life in the Philippines, contributing to the establishment of strong social bonds, hospitality, and a sense of community among Filipinos. Both studies indicate that social gatherings serve as excellent opportunities for participants to demonstrate positive values.

Types of Gatherings in Catanduanes Where Pagsa-Sharon Takes Place

The cultural fabric of Catanduanes is interwoven with a distinctive tradition known as "Pagsa-Sharon," a communal celebration that unfolds in various types of gatherings throughout the region. This subtopic delves into the diverse settings where "Pagsa-Sharon" takes place, uncovering the multifaceted nature of this cherished cultural phenomenon. From private residences to commercial venues and educational institutions, the types of gatherings in Catanduanes serve as dynamic backdrops for the manifestation of "Pagsa-Sharon," each imbued with its own unique characteristics and cultural significance.

One prominent setting for "Pagsa-Sharon" is within the confines of private residences, where hosts open their homes to guests, initiating the celebratory event. These traditional homestead gatherings foster an intimate atmosphere, emphasizing the close-knit bonds within the community. Here, hosts, guests, cooks, and helpers collectively contribute to the festive ambiance, creating a communal space where the cultural traditions of "Pagsa-Sharon" come to life. The setting of a private residence adds a personal touch to the celebration, shaping the interactions and dynamics of the event.

Another facet of "Pagsa-Sharon" unfolds in commercial venues, such as hotels and restaurants, providing a different backdrop for the cultural practice. In these settings, additional initiators emerge, including organizers, participants, caterers, and their waitstaff. The transition to commercial spaces introduces an external influence, impacting the dynamics and scale of the celebration. Public spaces become platforms for the manifestation of "Pagsa-Sharon," amplifying its reach and fostering a broader sense of community engagement beyond the confines of individual homes.

Beyond residential and commercial spaces, "Pagsa-Sharon" finds expression within the walls of educational institutions. Seminars, parties, and even thesis defenses become catalysts for the communal celebration, demonstrating the adaptability of "Pagsa-Sharon" across diverse settings. The academic environment not only serves as a backdrop for intellectual pursuits but also as a vibrant arena where cultural traditions thrive, showcasing the versatility of "Pagsa-Sharon" within the broader cultural landscape of Catanduanes.

Within the social fabric of Catanduanes, gatherings where the tradition of "Pagsa-Sharon" thrives are distinctly categorized into "handaan" and "di-handaan." The term "handaan" encapsulates events where the central focus is on communal dining or banquets, exemplifying shared joy and camaraderie during various celebratory occasions. This inclusive category spans a diverse range of events, from the religious solemnity of fiestas, christenings, and wedding anniversaries to the jubilation of birthday parties, Christmas celebrations, and office festivities. These occasions underscore the cultural importance of shared meals, serving as powerful conduits for fostering connections and reinforcing social bonds within the community.

Conversely, the classification of gatherings as "di-kainan" denotes events where the primary emphasis is not on feasting. This category encompasses a wide array of activities, including interments, excursions, induction ceremonies, seminars, conferences, religious events like "pasyon" or "pabasa," team-building activities, and academic pursuits such as thesis defenses. The diversity within "di-kainan" reflects a holistic cultural observance that extends beyond celebratory feasts, showcasing a community engaged in a spectrum of events, each with its unique cultural context and significance.

The implications of this categorization delve into the cultural priorities and values embedded in Catanduanes' social fabric. The distinction between "handaan" and "di-handaan" not only reveals a community that values togetherness and sharing during celebratory feasts but also emphasizes a holistic approach to cultural observance, acknowledging the importance of various events in their own right. This nuanced understanding sheds light on the broader cultural tapestry, showcasing the intricate dynamics and the significance of communal practices within the community practicing "Pagsa-Sharon."

Virgilio S. Almario's work extensively covers the cultural and historical contexts of communal eating in the Philippines. He emphasizes that feasting practices are central to Filipino culture, where gatherings provide an opportunity for individuals to come together, share meals, and reinforce social bonds. Almario discusses the symbolism of traditional dishes served during these gatherings, highlighting how food serves not only as sustenance but also as a medium for cultural expression and community connection.

The book illustrates that food sharing is a vital aspect of Filipino social life. It fosters a sense of belonging and intimacy among participants, reflecting values such as hospitality and generosity, which are crucial in Filipino culture. This ties directly to the practice of pagsa-Sharon, where food is shared during social gatherings to enhance community ties and demonstrate thoughtfulness towards one another.

Doreen Fernandez's research provides a thorough examination of the intricate relationship between food and social dynamics within Filipino society. She explicates how food plays a crucial role during gatherings and celebrations, positing that sharing meals is a significant ritual that strengthens relationships among participants. Fernandez notes that Filipinos have a profound love for eating and cooking, and these activities are often intertwined with social events such as fiestas and family reunions.

Her insights reveal that gatherings involving food sharing are not merely about consumption but about cultivating a sense of community and belonging. By participating in rituals like pagsa-Sharon, individuals express mutual regard and foster social cohesion, resonating with the findings of your research regarding the cultural importance of food in Filipino gatherings.

Both Almario and Fernandez provide strong corroborative evidence to your findings on pagsa-Sharon, affirming that Filipinos are indeed fond of social gatherings that prominently feature food and food sharing. Their works emphasize the cultural significance of these practices, illustrating how communal eating not only fulfills a nutritional need but also serves as a cornerstone for building and maintaining social relationships within the community.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The practice of bringing home food items from social gatherings in Catanduanes serves as a meaningful expression of community values, reinforcing social bonds and cultural identity. These shared culinary experiences reflect a deep-rooted tradition of generosity and hospitality, highlighting the communal spirit that thrives within the province. By transforming leftovers into cherished mementos, participants not only honor the ties forged during celebrations but also contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage, ensuring that the essence of these gatherings continues to resonate across generations.
2. The diverse types of containers used for wrapping food during the pagsa-Sharon phenomenon in Catanduanes not only reflect the community's resourcefulness and adaptability but also embody a rich tapestry of cultural significance, merging traditional practices with contemporary considerations to enhance the shared experience of celebration and connection among participants.
3. The diverse initiators involved in the pagsa-Sharon phenomenon in Catanduanes—ranging from hosts and guests to cooks and helpers—each play pivotal roles that contribute to the richness and resilience of this cultural practice. By fostering collaboration and inclusivity, these individuals not only uphold traditional customs but also adapt them to contemporary contexts, ensuring that the spirit of community and cultural identity remains vibrant and relevant across generations. This dynamic interplay of roles reinforces the significance of social bonds and collective memory in the celebration of life's milestones within the fabric of Catanduanes society.
4. The practice of pagsa-Sharon in Catanduanes transcends various types of gatherings, whether they occur within private residences, commercial venues, or educational institutions. Each setting not only supports the celebration of significant life events but also serves as a testament to the adaptability and robust cultural identity of the community. By facilitating the exchange of food and wrapped offerings, these gatherings reinforce social bonds and foster a sense of belonging, highlighting the essential role of communal interactions in preserving and promoting the unique traditions of Catanduanes.

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