



Candle Symbolisms in the Sinulog Dance Vis-à-vis the Exploration of the *Kahayag* Model of Reflective Teaching

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ABSTRACT

Understanding the symbolism of candles in the sinug dance ritual is essential for Catholic Christians' devotional practices. The study described the symbolism of candles in dance ritual, explored how this tradition continued, and examined a potential culture-based instructional model. The study employed a naturalistic approach and grounded theory design. Ten key research participants: five *magsinug* and five devotees, were selected through convenience sampling. The study highlighted the socio-economic and cultural attributes of *Sinug* that reflect the significance of candles in Catholic devotion and the importance of the *sinug* dance ritual. Candles have a long history of use in religious ceremonies and festivals, symbolizing light and hope, and their lighting is a common practice in thanksgiving and prayer, as well as a sign of devotion to Señor Santo Niño. The *sinug* dance ritual incorporates candles, symbolizing the cultural and religious identity of the Catholic Cebuanos. Based on the findings, the *Kahayag* Model of Reflective Teaching (KMRT) was extrapolated from the lifestyle and practices of the *mansinug* and the devotees of the Basilica Minore del Santo Niño. KMRT is a relevant approach to teaching in the 21st century that encourages learners to engage in self, peer, and collaborative reflections, promoting a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

RESUMO

Comprender o simbolismo das velas na dança Sinulog é essencial para as práticas devocionais dos cristãos católicos. O estudo descreveu o simbolismo das velas na dança Sinulog, explorou como essa tradição continuou e examinou potenciais conflitos com a comercialização e a preservação do patrimônio cultural. O estudo empregou um delineamento qualitativo descritivo. Dez participantes-chave da pesquisa, consistindo de cinco *magsinug* e cinco devotos, foram selecionados por amostragem de conveniência. O estudo destacou os atributos socioeconômicos e culturais de Sinug que refletem a importância das velas na devoção católica, a importância da dança Sinug em Cebu e a preservação do patrimônio cultural em face da modernização e da comercialização. As velas têm uma longa história de uso em cerimônias e festivais religiosos como um símbolo de luz e esperança, e seu acendimento é uma prática comum em ações de graças e orações, e como um sinal de devoção ao Señor Santo Niño. A dança Sinug, incorporando o uso de velas, é uma dança tradicional em Cebu e serve como um símbolo de identidade cultural e religiosa. Com base nessas descobertas, o Modelo *Kahayag* de Ensino Reflexivo (KMRT) extrapolou o estilo de vida e as práticas dos *mansinug* e dos devotos da Basílica Menor do Santo Menino. O KMRT é uma abordagem relevante para o ensino no século XXI, que incentiva os alunos a se envolverem em reflexões individuais, entre pares e colaborativas, promovendo uma cultura de aprendizado e aprimoramento contínuos.

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Introduction

Candles have played a significant role in Catholic devotion and various religious beliefs, particularly in the East. They adorn and illuminate places of worship and enhance spiritual festivities throughout history. In Eastern culture, religious practices such as Buddhism and Hindu rituals prominently use candles to symbolize enlightenment, emerging from the cave of ignorance. For many, candles symbolize hope and light, and they play an important role in Catholic festivals and ceremonies. Lighting candles is essential during Mass, funerals, and various processions, including prayer gatherings and other events (Naletova, 2009). A candle is lit in front of the Tabernacle to represent the Lord's presence in the Blessed Sacrament and to encourage the faithful to demonstrate reverence and veneration. Notable biblical references, such as those from Emperor Constantine, call for the use of candles in the 4th century to enhance the Easter Service. Early Western cultures also utilized candles for church ceremonies.

In the Philippines, it is a common practice to light candles during prayer as a gesture of thanksgiving, an invocation for help, or a vow of gratitude. All these are commonly practiced in churches with patron saints, i.e., thought to be miraculous, for example, the Basilica Minore del Santo Niño, which houses the image of the Holy Child Jesus – the Señor Santo Niño brought by Magellan in 1521 (Ness, 1985). Candle vendors in the Basilica continue to perform the traditional *Sinug* dance ritual, uttering petition prayers requested by the devotees (Lopez-Abellana, 2017). The beaming light the candles emit gives people courage and wisdom as they battle the trials of life. This light becomes essential to the devotees' adherence to Señor Santo Niño, symbolizing their Christian faith. Before the spread of Christianity in Cebu, the early natives were animists who performed the so-called *sinug*, derived from the Cebuano word *sug* (water flow), which evolved into the modern Sinulog (Brion et al., 2018).

Lagahid and Puyo (2016) depicted this *Sinug* as a dance characterized by forward and backward movements, the synchronized sound of flowing water, and a drum beat. This ritual dance was performed as homage to their wooden idols or anitos. With the continuation of this tradition, few try to dwell on the aspect of how the candles started to be incorporated in the traditional *sinug* dance ritual, as to its interpretation to devotees, priests, and *Mansinug* or candle dancers, and the symbolism in accordance with its number, color, and location from the grounds of the Basilica. The prevailing aspect of this tradition is believed to have survived centuries, which brings this study's realization.

The portrayal of tradition and modernity intertwines the transformations of this dance and its cultural transitions at present. Though tradition and modernization are now inextricably intertwined, the bipolarity of these concepts is inevitably affected when tourism promotes commercialization, contradicting the very essence of culture preservation. It is more overwhelming to argue that the latter may replace the former if no restrictions are set up to

prevent it from exceeding the line between business and culture (Uy et al., 2018). The indigenous *sinug* dance is waning; if some individuals and groups have not taken part in safeguarding this cultural treasure, the essentialist challenge by heritage preservation activists. However, the spirit of its religious celebration has been affected by marketing and tourism, benefiting the region's local economy.

Honoring Señor Santo Niño through dancing shows a distinctive feature of the Cebuano Christian identity (Oracion, 2012; Ortiz et al., 2017). Upholding the symbolism of candles and the *Sinug* dance contributes to Cebu's historicity and relevance. Thus, it urges the people of Cebu to preserve their cultural inheritance and to challenge the essentialist perspective in preserving the history of dance, as depicted in its indigeneity, as a national cultural asset (Harvey, 2011).

This paper is essential to both the Señor Santo Niño devotees, who comprise the majority of Roman Catholics, and the candle merchants who keep the flame of culture alive. Through a culture of respect, humility, and diversity, they may strive to cultivate the Catholic religion and emphasize their religious missions without prejudice. Candle selling and its *sinug* dance ritual may help the vendors' daily earnings while returning to the candles' cultural meaning.

Now and then, electronic devices distract from what people have been working on (Sullivan, 2013), and the waning symbolisms of candles remain in the gaps of the existing literature and methodologies of the study. Psychologists Karen Wilson and James H. Korn said that modern technologies have produced a generation of students with short attention spans who are easily distracted (Wilkins, 2022). Cicekci and Sadik (2019) rejoined that the attention issues students faced in the classroom were primarily a result of their actions. Caution is a multifaceted trait influenced by physical, emotional, social, psychological, and environmental factors. As a result, educators have a responsibility and an expectation to devise remedies for this concern. Exploring the symbolism of candles can facilitate a reflective and contemplative pedagogy, serving as the basis of the Kahayag Model of Reflective Teaching (KMRT) to minimize the use of electronic gadgets and engage in reflective activities. Using several senses enhances the learning process by using memorable experiences.

Using candles in reflective instruction can provide a visual and sensory anchor for learners' focused attention and foster a soothing and introspective setting. This idea stresses introspection, mindfulness, and reflection to improve learning. Students engage in meditative techniques, such as meditation, deep breathing, and visualization, to increase their concentration, reduce stress, and improve their grasp of the subject matter. In addition, candles can be associated with religious or spiritual rituals, providing a deeper level of significance to the learning experience. By encouraging learners to cultivate self-awareness,

emotional control, and mental clarity, reflective and meditative teaching can help students become more effective, better problem-solvers, and resilient learners.

The study explored the symbolic significance of candles in the context of the *sinug* dance ritual, seeking to answer these questions: (1) What are the interpretations of the use of candles in the dance as perceived by the *mansinug* and the devotees? (2) What are the devotee's beliefs about candle use based on colors, numbers, and location? (3) What is the sustainability of candle selling based on the narratives of the candle vendors? Based on the findings, what instructional model can be proposed to make the symbolism of life sustainable in the Cebuano culture and traditions?

Review of Related Literature

The Cultural History of Candles

In a religious context, light and fire are often associated with people in sacred rites (Bolen, 1942), and candles are considered one of the most useful sources of ancient light (Wisniak, 2001). However, during the first three centuries, historians seem to agree that there was no ceremonial use of lighting candles, torches, or lamps. Scholarly documents have found that from the 4th century onwards, it was unclear when the church accepted candles as essentials to religious rituals. Hence, tracing the exact time and liturgical use of candles is difficult (Bolen, 1942). However, as annotated by Wisniak (2001), the reason for the extensive use of candles in religious aspects occurred during the persecution of the Christians. The pagans and Christian Romans were fond of processions that were frequently held at dawn; marchers carried torches to provide light during the procession, while later, wax candles replaced torches (Bolen, 1942). The cultural history of candles was associated with religion and the symbolism of light that they produced. Scholarly studies inclined all accounts concerning the adjuncts of candles in religion, mostly stated in holy scriptures. In 17th-century England, the Geneva Bible had widespread and enduring influence, identifying light with God's word, or the Holy Scriptures, which repeatedly commented on the Proverbs (Greene, 1991).

Furthermore, in the history of candlesticks, Moses was commanded to create ten golden candlesticks for the Tabernacle in the southern and northern parts of the temple that Solomon built, placing five golden candlesticks (Gode, 1951). This account becomes a way of offering or mandating a ritual in the temple, as later accounts in Gode (1951) state that the golden sticks were placed again in the temple after the Babylonian captivity. Scholars of theology have extensively analyzed the interpretation of Proverbs 20:27, which states that "the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the innermost parts of the belly." For most Catholic Renaissance and scholastic commentators, the phrase "spirit of man" is the rational or intellectual soul, and the verse could be understood as the nature of man's conscience. Interpreting that the candle's light is the light of nature, or right reason, the recognition and participation of the natural law of man, which we call *synderesis* (Greene, 1991). The bliss

present in the phrase itself, as accounted in different holy scriptures in Greene (1991) as “light”, “lantern”, and lamp, had given way to “candle” in 1592, giving candles a more prominent role in the religious aspect

In some Southeast Asian countries, particularly Thailand, the indigenous Kuay have shaped their traditional practices and everyday lifestyles in the modern customs of Ubon Ratchathani (Candle Festival). These people used candles to display their faith and worship at the *dong-oo-peung* from 1792 onwards. From then on, candles became a sacred item for worship. They also recognized candle creation as an art after 1952 (Suwanvong et al., 2014). In the Philippines, the custom of candle use in the religious aspect had long been influenced by the Spaniards and the spread of Catholicism throughout the country. Long before the advent of the Spaniards, Indigenous Filipinos had their own religion, and after nearly four hundred years of Spanish colonization, the Filipinos adopted Catholicism (Fitzpatrick, 2013). One particular influence of that is the Sinulog Festival held in celebration of the image of Señor Santo Niño. Candle vendors offer a dance ritual and light candles during this festival in the Basilica Minore Del Santo Niño (Lopez-Abellana, 2017).

Symbolisms of Candles and their different uses

Various religions have symbolic meanings of candles. Native American ceremonial sites use fire, representing the sacred center where the great divine spirit is believed to reside. According to Buddhist beliefs, candlelight offers solace to the human soul. The belief in upward, vertical light lifts humans to the sky and brings divine enlightenment. Candlelight is associated with religious passion and martyrdom in Christianity. It also symbolizes Christ's "resurrection," with the candle representing his "body," and the flames signifying the transition into eternal life. The arrival of the Holy Spirit in Christianity is symbolized by the manifestation of a "tongue of fire," described in Acts 2:3.

In Hinduism, candlelight is associated with the illumination of transcendental light, knowledge, and wisdom. The menorah, a seven-branched lampstand, symbolizes divine presence in Judaism. Flavius Josephus, a Roman-Jewish historian, believed that the septenary arrangement of the golden menorah represents celestial entities such as the sun, moon, and planets. The seven luminaries also represent the hebdomadal division of time, the asterism of Ursa Major, and the seven epochs of global history. Cooper et al. (1978) described a receptacle in Kavala city in the northern region of Greece, designed to hold three candles or a candlestick with three branches, symbolizing the attributes of Sephiroth such as wisdom, simplicity, and beauty. According to the philosophical views of Philo Judaeus, a prominent figure in ancient Jewish thought, the Menorah symbolizes divine blessings bestowed upon all celestial beings.

The representation of candlelight encompasses diverse ideas such as birth, death, resurrection, and holiness. It also signifies enlightenment in life's darkest moments, a hopeful future, the sun's vitality, and the transient quality of life. Practicing candle lighting during

death is intended to dispel the darkness surrounding it, symbolizing light that exists beyond. Celebrating birthdays involves blowing out a specific number of candles; funeral ceremonies, particularly those in Catholic and Eastern styles, typically include lighting and blowing out candles to commemorate the departed (Cooper et al., 1978).

In the realm of analytical psychology, the candle represents the concept of "temenos," – the space of divine safeguarding, "initiation" that entails a cycle of death and rebirth, and the "evolution of consciousness" that involves bringing subconscious contents to the surface for natural development. Lighting of votive candles is a prevalent practice observed in many Catholic churches. The light emanating from the candle symbolizes our devout prayers rising toward God's illumination. It also signifies our reverence and commitment to engagement with continuous prayer throughout the day. In Cebu, the burning of candles during Sinulog represents the unwavering devotion of the faithful. It is a testament to their unquenchable ardor to live a life of faith. During the *sinug* dancing, women of the Basilica Minore del Santo Niño perform a swaying two-step forward and one-step backward routine while chanting prayers and waving candles in a manner reminiscent of flowing water.

Religious Philosophical Implications and Argumentation

One can observe candles composed of numerous symbols in their simple factual usage. Catholics, non-Catholics, and other religious organizations, particularly Buddhists, use candles that symbolize preservation of cultural activities inherited from their forefathers and continually practice these traditions (Tonny et al., 2023). On one hand, Hindus perspective on candle usage bears a strong resemblance to the Buddhist tradition. In historical and cultural practices, the use of candles is significant because of the belief that they are being guided by the divine light towards attaining truth and knowledge. As mentioned in the introduction, the candle's flame conveys a message of enlightenment, shedding light on the way to wisdom in uniformity with the inner being, and a constant presentation of hope for peace, tranquility, as well as calmness, and a deep connection to the Greater One than the self (Tonny et al., 2023). Candles in our lives create a hundred different symbols, meanings, and interpretations that can awaken us to other points of view.

The Argument of Mortality

A lit candle demonstrates its usefulness as a purposeful contribution to human life. The ability of a candle to produce light embodies its meaning. Therefore, when the candle is lit, the melting process is no longer a concern, but its light's quality remains remarkable. On the contrary, with each passing moment, the reality of a candle being situated there continues to show facts about melting, fire flickering, and the structure gradually diminishing. As influenced by Heraclitus, Stoics, particularly Marcus Aurelius, anchored their idea that the burning candle is just living its nature as it changes in structure, emphasizing that everything is in flux (Fieser et al., 2008). This may convey the Stoic understanding that life itself is a

process of constant change, reflecting on the ephemeral nature of existence and ultimately leading to death.

The Argument of Guidance

Any religious activity uses candlelight. In Plato's Allegory of the Cave, Fieser et al. (2008) portrayed a group of ignorant people imprisoned in the cave. They have been tied up since the day they were born. The role of the candle was figuratively depicted by a prisoner who accidentally untied from the chains and curiously followed the light from the corner, which was eventually recognized as the passageway of the cave. This role highlights the salient nature of the candle's reality. Following that, one of the prisoners escapes the darkness in the cave and unhesitatingly endures the flash of light that could suddenly cause his blindness. Thus, the candle saves the prisoner from the doom of darkness, which we have known as a misconception (Eyer, 2016).

The Sacrifice Argument

This sacrifice argument can be related to one who used to be our mentors, teachers, and advisers. The individual claiming to be a leader is the one making the greatest sacrifice – taking the greatest responsibility. In school, an educator named Rita Pierson ignites the teacher's belief that molding a student is not a waste; rather, she indulges the saying that every child needs a champion (Pierson 2013). In other words, Pierson (2013) wanted someone brave enough to teach and also dare to save these students from naivety and ignorance. The interpretative role of the candle in this context is that of humility and selflessness. In other words, though candles are designed to burn, the implication itself represents a self-voluntariness to "burn" oneself out for a greater purpose.

Belief in the devotion

The worship of the Santo Niño has transcended the confines of Cebu and the Philippines with the efforts of Filipino Catholic devotees who spread its devotion. In the Philippines, the icons of Santo Niño have no distinct differences, and all depict the child Jesus. His followers gather at the Basilica and display their devotion through prayers. Initially, numerous followers patiently queue to catch a glimpse of the image. Once they reached it, they caressed the glass case, some using their handkerchiefs to cleanse it before kissing the revered cross at the image's forefront. Subsequently, certain devotees would proceed to the church and attend Mass, while others would head to the *dagkutan* (an area designated for lighting candles) to pray and light their candles. These candles are openly accessible to all, donations are welcome, and can be dropped in the nearby donation boxes.

Individuals would offer silent prayers before their lighted candles. After concluding their prayers, they would extend their palms over the flames, feel the heat, and make the sign of the cross. The *Mansinug* are women dressed in yellow and red who vend candles and perform the *sinug* dance ritual. As a form of prayer and worship, they dance while holding

candles, recite prayers, or accept prayer requests on behalf of the devotees. It is essential to note that they solely entertain petitions for the living. The act of illuminating a candle at the Basilica through *the Mansinug* is a devotee's belief in expressing gratitude to the Santo Niño, beseeching Him for help on behalf of others, or fulfilling a vow. It is viewed as a ritual for life's thanksgiving and solace in coping with life's daily challenges. These candles emit a radiant light that imbues courage and guidance, which a devotee asks for to face life's challenges.

Candles in the Sinulog context

The practice of candle lighting in dancing and praying is a gesture of appreciation, a request for help, or a commitment fulfillment (Ness, 1985), as a physical expression of Filipino Catholic identity in the Señor Santo Niño (Brion et al., 2018). The incorporation of faith into the preservation of cultural practices enhances its essence. The *sinug* dance ritual was traditionally executed with two distinct purposes: to express gratitude (*pagpasalamat*) or to make a petition (*paghangyo*) to the Señor Santo Niño. The *sinug* dance ritual is a symbolic representation of a vow (*panaad*), often viewed as a *halad*, a ceremonial gift offered for sacrifice. Kaarma (2015) said that despite the economic difficulties surrounding the purchase of candles and their execution, it was firmly believed that the dance had to be carried out as a religious ceremony, without any intention of financial gain.

It was thought that the saint would not take the performance seriously and would not grant the petition if it was done with monetary motives. As a result, while the *Mansinug* ladies offer candles, their primary goal is far more essential. As part of each sale, the ladies include prayers beyond the business transaction. These prayers may involve dancing and praying to express gratitude to the Santo Niño, making requests on behalf of petitioners, or reciting a devotee's pledge (Landy, 2021). A person may light a candle, gaze at its flame, and pray for someone else's well-being.

Sustainable use of Candles in the Sinulog dance

The candle is one of the most ancient and practical forms of illumination (Wisniak, 2001). Candleholders dating from the 4th century BCE were discovered in Egypt. Winsiak (2001) added that the original Egyptian candles were made from a lump of wax with one end pointed for lighting, squeezed around a stick for support. Other improvements include fixing up a cup at the bottom of the lump to collect wax drips for later use and wrapping the wax lump in thin bands of hemp or cotton to keep it in place throughout the burning process.

During the Sinulog festival, devotees used candles throughout the religious procession. A candle purchase begins when the devotee buys a candle from the *Mansinug* to dance to the Santo Niño. Once a *Mansinug* approaches a potential customer, no other *Mansinug* interferes with her. It is only feasible to reasonably interrupt or surpass the first *Mansinug's* attempts if the buyer already has a long-standing arrangement with another *Mansinug* and is their regular client. A *Mansinug* may sell anywhere, but changing selling sites regularly or roaming around

constantly is frowned upon, and "moving in" on one of the senior *Mansinug*'s established spots is a ground for disagreement. The *Mansinug*'s candle sales are unstable because there are frequently many more of them selling at the Basilica than client activity demands. It is mostly a question of chance and time that will connect any given *Mansinug* with different purchasers. *Mansinugs* have devised a method of following clients until they are flatly and unequivocally rejected an offer. They will also try to block the entrances and exits of the Basilica to be the first to find a buyer. They recognize that this strategy increases the chance of rejection, since it upsets churchgoers. But, they are ready to take the risk because they are afraid of losing a client to another *Mansinug*. When initiating interaction with a customer, every *Mansinug* must watch out for herself alone (Ness, 1985).

Cebuano residents view the yearly feast of Señor Santo Niño as a commercial opportunity in certain respects due to the growing number of devotees from other parts of the country and an increasing number of foreign visitors. Seeing devotees offer candles in every area of the Basilica, trudge through the crowds, and hope to make money to fund their daily subsistence shows a vibrant manifestation of faith. The demand for candles increases regularly, especially during the holiday season. This demand creates more opportunities for money for the candle producers and the *Mansinug* families. Candles are an essential component of the Sinulog festival, which entails allowing the *Mansinug* to dance in front of the Señor Santo Niño while shouting their prayer requests like "Pit Senyor! Kang Tatay kini, Pit Senyor! Kang Nanay kini." These chants are manifestations of devotees' joy to shout Viva! Pit Senyor (Be Joyful! It's Fiesta Señor). The growing number of devotees during the festival implies that profits are quicker than on regular days (Delfino, 2007).

Background of the Use of Reflective Teaching in Education

Incorporating a reflective approach to teaching requires reexamining educators' established beliefs about pedagogy and active involvement in the instructional process. Educators who practice critical self-reflection to enhance their professional growth as instructors and the quality of education they provide their students change their attitudes and awareness (Boud et al., 2005). To Richards (2015), reflective teaching suggests that experience alone is insufficient for professional development; it necessitates a combination of experience and reflection. This methodology has proven to be a powerful agent for teacher improvement.

Schon (1983) rejoined that reflective teaching practice is an ongoing process that demands learners to deliberately assess their own experiences as they apply their knowledge in real-world circumstances while being accompanied by professionals. This approach supports the development of an individual's personality by encouraging them to reflect on their experiences and use them to enhance their learning and personal growth. The concept of reflective practice proposed by Gibbs (1988) involves individuals analyzing their feelings and evaluating their experiences to gain insights and improve their understanding. Jasper (2003)

noted that reflective teaching practice is closely linked to lifelong learning and the growth of competent, self-sufficient, and self-directed experts. Reflective practice is known to enhance the quality of care while promoting personal and professional development, and it has been observed to help bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills. According to Bartlett (1990), the transformation of an instructor into a reflective teacher entails a shift from an emphasis on instructional methods and practical queries, such as "how to," towards more comprehensive, reflective inquiries that ponder the significance of education. This approach regards instructional and management practices as integral components of a larger educational endeavor, rather than as the primary goals of teaching.

Research Methodology

Research Design

A naturalistic approach with grounded theory design was used in the study. As defined, Grounded Theory collects qualitative data and analyzes it to generate categories (theory) to explain interesting phenomena (Opie, 2004; Cresswell, 2012). Hence, actual observations were conducted during the first Friday masses and the regular Sunday masses, as part of the researchers' field notes. Before and after these masses, interviews of the *Mansinugs* were initiated to achieve the research objectives. When gathered verbal data are sufficient, the KRMT was explored using comparative convergent analysis of *Mansinug* cultural practices and learning theories to establish a comparison.

Research Participants

The 10 research participants consisted of 5 *Magsinugs* and 5 devotees. They were selected based on the following criteria: they sold candles in the vicinity of the Basilica Minore del Santo Niño, elderly aged 60 and above, and women, using convenience sampling. The use of convenience sampling was justified in selecting the 10 research participants because they were friends, cousins, and neighbors who had been selling candles and devotees for more than 10 years. The researchers used convenience sampling to get appointments with other *Mansinugs* because of their hectic schedules during the novena masses. The devotees had at least 2 years or more experience in devotion to Señor Santo Niño and used candles to offer their prayers.

Research Instrument

The study used an interview guide using unstructured questions for individual interviews to generate primary data. These were the questions raised during the conduct of the interview: (1) What is the use of candles in the *sinug* dance? (2) What are your beliefs in the use of lighting candles with blue, red, yellow, green, and other colors? (3) Does the number of candles lit matter? What are your beliefs about the number of candles lit? (4) What is your belief about lighting candles in specific or other locations? (5) Do you have a sustainable income from the selling of candles? How much is your income? (6) Could you please narrate

your income per day or per week? Photographs and recordings captured the participant's transcripts of their responses. Field notes were used to provide concrete evidence of their practices. These data were also supplemented using secondary data.

Research Environment

The research was conducted at the Basilica Minore del Santo Niño complex during Friday Novena masses. Its location is on Osmeña Boulevard, P. Burgos Street, D. Jakosalem Street, and Plaza Sugbo Complex, adjacent to the Metropolitan Cathedral.

Data Gathering Procedure

After receiving approval from the research committee to conduct the study, data collection started through appointments with the intended research participants. Letters of Informed Consent were given to them. Once they consented, the interview commenced using the Interview Guide. Participant Observation was also conducted. Interview responses were documented, and the results were transcribed and connected with the information reflected in the field notes. Clustering the data according to the research participants' familiar narratives was also analyzed and presented in vignettes, tables, and figures. The information gathered from the respondents was treated with utmost confidentiality. After the interview, the research participants were given expressions of appreciation: a certificate of recognition and grocery items for each participant.

Data Analysis

The collected data were transcribed and analyzed using semiotic and thematic analyses. The researchers employed semiotic analysis to examine the message from the data, exploring not only verbal cues but also visual and auditory ones. Signifiers and signified meanings were extracted from the significant statements. Signifiers are the things that give meaning, while the signified is a represented concept or idea of a signifier. For example, a candle is a signifier to provide light in the darkness, and one of its signified meanings is giving light to salvation. This enabled them to uncover the fundamental structures of meaning and determine which components are accountable for generating specific outcomes. By delving deeper into their underlying communication, the semiotic analysis provided a greater understanding and significance of their messages. The devotees' reflections were analyzed using thematic analysis. In the thematic analysis, vignettes of the research participants are included in the development of the presentation of verbal data. The study used inductive coding, close reading of the dataset, and significant statements of the research participants to generate themes in developing a grounded theory. A comparative convergent table analysis was used to realign the processes of the mansisinug ritual dancers and the existing instructional models to explore the unique features of the Kahayag Model of Reflective Teaching (KMRT).

Ethical Considerations

The study secured a certificate of exemption from the Office of the Research Ethics Review Committee. A Letter of Permission was presented to the Barangay Captain and the Rector of Basilica Minore del Sto. Niño de Cebu, to gather the data. Participants in the research project voluntarily signed their names to indicate their willingness to participate, and the confidentiality of their information was ensured by signing an informed consent form. Participants' information remained confidential and was used solely for this study.

Results and discussion

Pagsinug is an inherited tradition.

Thirty (20) to forty (30) percent of the research participants said that they have been performing the *Sinug* ritual for a significant period. Their responses reveal that their exposure to the practice of *Sinug* started at a very young age due to family traditions, which they have continued to uphold throughout the years.

“It’s been a long time, my mother was still alive at that time...” (Mansinug 1). “I was about seven years old, and my grandmother before did the Sinug here” (Mansinug 2).

The narrative shows that at a very young age, the *Mansinug* participants have already been exposed to *sinug* dance ritual practices as part of family traditions. However, it is also noted that they not only inherited this tradition from their families, but also take responsibility in sustaining it.

“No, I replaced my mother...” (Mansinug 4). “...I am now 55 years old, and I started it when I was still a kid when I joined my mother” (Mansinug 10).

These statements emphasize the influence of families in practicing the *Sinug* dance ritual at the Basilica Minore Del Santo Niño. They pass knowledge of the tradition within their families, and how it has become an integral part of their way of life. *Mansinug* dancing is handed down to the next generation.

Table 1.

Mansinugs’ reasons for selling candles

Significant Statements	Signifiers	Signified Meanings
<i>“I entered this job because we have been practicing this back in our time.” (M1) “Yes, I just followed it from my grandmother. I was influenced.” (M2) “It is because my mother had been selling candles back then,” (M4) “I am the 3rd generation. From my grandmother, then my mother. It has passed.” (M8) “It’s because of the tradition” (M9) “I entered here because of my mother” (M10)</i>	An old job A job handed down by the family An inherited job	Pagsinug is an inherited tradition. Pagsinug is a Family Religious Practice Pagsinug is a continuing legacy.
<i>“My sales were used to pay for my children's school expenses. Because of my hard work in selling, they became professional individuals” (M10)</i>	Earning income	Pagsinug gives financial support to the family.

Note: The semiotic analysis of the research participants' reasons for selling candles

Table 1 presents the vignettes on *Mansinug's* reasons for selling candles at the Basilica Minore Del Santo Niño compound. The *mansinug* participants' *pagsinug* (selling candles and dancing to the devotees' prayer petitions) is an inheritance from their respective families. According to *Mansinug* 8, "I am the 3rd generation from my grandmother, then my mother." She entered it because of the tradition handed down to them and continued over the years. The most reliable indicator of their religiosity is religious devotion inherited from their parents, which has been demonstrated to be the strongest predictor of faith (Myers 2000; Smith & Smith, 2020). The children's religious lives are more strongly influenced by parents living near them. When parents share religious convictions and exhibit strong religiosity... (Bader & Finke, 2010; Myers, 2000; Smith, 2020). Their influence may lead their children to become a *Mansinug*.

Pagsinug is a Family Religious Practice

As a religious practice, *pagsinug* is a family religious tradition, a prayer petition for the graces received from God. Religiously affiliated families have been observed to have closer bonds between their members. Being a member of a religious faith can provide activities to engage with others, which may improve family ties. Attending church and praying are some of these pursuits (Connelly, 2020). In the *pagsinug*, a devotee buys pieces of candles from a *Mansinug* and requests her to dance her prayers or petitions asking for success in studies, businesses, travel, healthy conditions of the family, healing of sickness, search for the ideal life partner, peace of mind, thanksgiving for the graces received, and other personal and communal intentions.

Pagsinug is a continuing legacy.

Sinug dancing is a legacy handed down from a generation of religious families to the present with an enduring faith in God. It is said that without faith, culture may lead to individualism and ungratefulness—a particular type of societal illness (Brion et al., 2018). The observance of cultural traditions is complemented by faith to give one's life. Thus, the legacy of *Mansinug* continues today. These *mansinugs* are mostly unstructured collections of semi-transient moms, grandmothers, and widows who requested to perform the *Sinug* dance ritual from their customers (Ness, 1995).

Pagsinug gives financial support to the family.

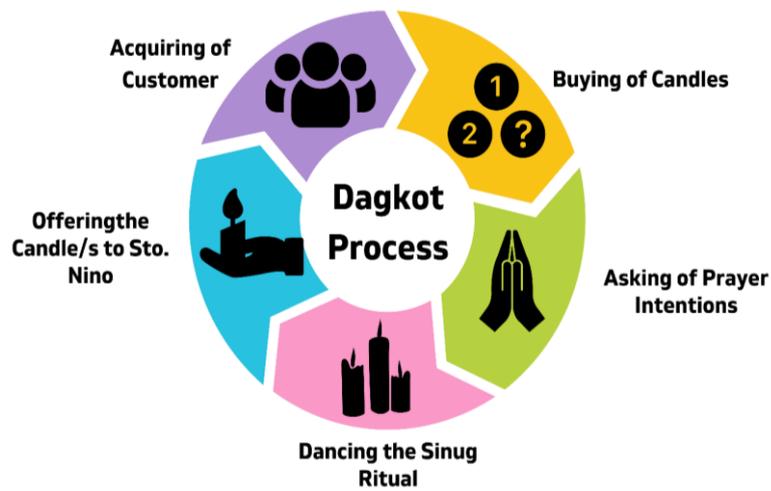
Another reason why a *Mansinug* engaged in the dance ritual is the income they earned, as revealed in this narrative,

"The reason why I engage in this religious trade is that we do not have any other means of living. Then we can eat daily, and pay for house rentals" (MR6). "My sales were used to pay for my children's school expenses. Because of my hard work in selling, they became professional individuals" (MR7).

This narrative emphasizes the practical belief in the job and how it provides a livelihood for the family. On the other hand, Figure 1 shows the mundane process of the *Dagkot* (lighting of candles) by the *Mansinug* inside and outside the Basilica Minore Del Santo Niño compound. Every person professes faith uniquely, making them distinctive. The devotion to Señor Santo Niño is one way the Cebuanos represent their Christian faith (Brion et al., 2018). The first process acquires a devotee who wants a *pagsinug*. The *Mansinug* approaches the devotee to buy their candles. Devotees want prayer petitions to be performed by a *mansinug*. Catholic devotees from all walks of life, rich or poor, professionals or laborers, comprise the community of adherents (Ness, 1992), expressing a common prayer purpose.

Figure 1.

The Process of Dagkot



Note: Process of dagkot (lighting of a candle) devotion observed by the religious
 After customers desired the number of candles and the kind of prayer intentions they wished for, the *pagsinug* is initiated. This supports this narrative,

“When I ask them what their intentions are in the pasinug, like health in the family, success in the board exam, studies, work, business, and guidance” (MR9). “For example, he asked me to offer a prayer for him to pass the board exams and to be successful ” (MR7).

The next process is dancing the *sinug* ritual wherein the *Mansinug* starts to pray, dance, and utter prayers while raising their hands holding candles. As for the steps of the *sinug* dance ritual, they follow the traditional dance steps, the swaying of hips as they raise the candles in front of the Holy Child’s image, and pray for the requested intentions. *Mansinug 2* stated that,

“Sinug is a kind of prayer; it is a dance prayer. There are steps in doing so, one step forward and two steps backward.”

Virtually, every feature of the ritual movement style, as they performed it, was associated with this face-to-face performance context: a slow (*hinay*) tempo for performing the Sinulog gestures and steps, a "softened" (*piano*) or gentle dynamic quality employed to form the hand waves, and a restrained, small-range (*gamay*) manner of moving all the limbs (Ness, 1995). After dancing the Sinug ritual, the *Mansinug* gives the candle back to the customer to offer or light it inside or outside the church. This figure represents a repetitive process done daily by the *Mansinug* inside and outside the Basilica Minore Del Santo Niño.

The number of devotees is a factor in the sales of candles

Mansinug's sales are based on the number of devotees attending masses daily.

"It depends on the devotees who pass and buy candles for the sinug (Mansinug 2). "It is not the same every day. Sometimes there are more sales, sometimes none, but even if there are, the candles will still be sold out at the end of the day (Mansinug 6). "It is not the same every day, but it would always go more than ten (Mansinug 8).

Mansinug 2 had been a *mansisinug* for more than 50 years already. Her narrative specified that her candle sales would depend on the customers who would pass by and request a *sinug* dance ritual. While *Mansinug 8* had been a *mansinug* for 38 years already. Their narratives shared that they tend to acquire more than 10 customers daily and sell out all of their candles during normal days in the Basilica.

Holy day of obligation as a factor in the sales of candles

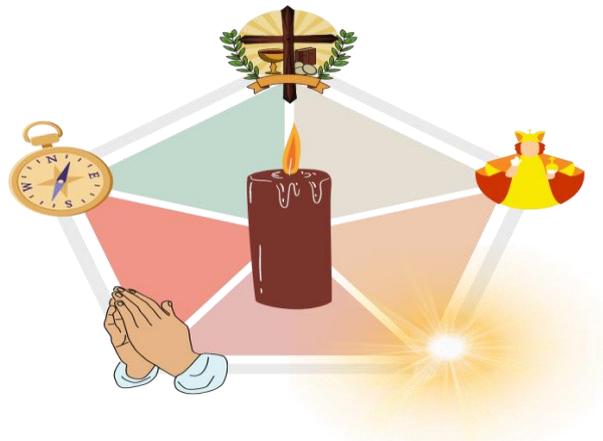
The devotees' obligation to attend Sunday masses affects the sales of candles to the *Mansinug*. Most *Mansinug* candle sales would increase eventually on Fridays and Sundays.

"It depends, sometimes my candles would sell out... But mostly on Sunday and Friday, there are several customers" (Mansinug 4).

Mansinug 4 narrated that she had several customers during holy obligation days because many devotees attended mass. This narrative is also supported by one *Mansinug* interviewee (Fennema, 2017), who admitted that she makes significantly more candle sales during *Fiesta Señor* (Señor Santo Niño feast) than on other days when thousands of devotees attend the nine-day Novena Masses.

Figure 2.

The Importance of Candles in the Sinug Dance Ritual



Note: Five important uses of candles used in the sinug ritual dance

Candles have been a significant component of the *Sinug* ceremony for a long time, playing a pivotal role in enabling devotees to establish a connection with Señor Santo Niño. In addition to their religious connotations, candles are significant in various facets of human existence. It has been discovered that candles play an important role in the *Sinug* dance ritual, serving varied purposes. They serve as a light of guidance in our path through life, a representation of our spiritual connection with the divine, a testament to our unwavering faith, and a symbol of Señor Santo Niño. Candles are commonly used for birthday celebrations, the coming of the Messiah, worship, praying, and reflecting on the glory of the Lord (Redazione, 2019).

A symbol of light

In *Sinug* dance rituals, candles frequently symbolize illumination. These candles symbolize the presence of light in darkness, representing optimism, illumination, and spiritual awakening. The flickering candlelight creates a tranquil and meditative atmosphere and serves as a reminder of the dance's spiritual significance.

“So it is necessary to have candles in Sinug so that there will be light” (Mansinug 8).

“The candle symbolizes light” (Magsisinug 10; Devotee 5).

The candle's light is thought to dispel darkness and evil and to provide comfort and solace in times of need or distress. Lighting a candle and offering a prayer to the Señor Santo Niño are expressions of trust in a greater power, seeking strength, and facing life's challenges. Candles have long been used as a symbol of light in religious practices, providing a visual representation of faith and prayer. Its flame is often seen as a metaphor for the divine light of God (Rosado Mendez, 2020).

A symbol of faith

The image of Señor Santo Niño, a revered statue of the child Jesus, is surrounded by lighted candles. The flickering flames of the candles serve as a visual reminder of the Divine's presence and the hope that faith provides.

*“This is also the sign of your faith and devotion to Señor Santo Niño” (Mansinug 8).
“A spiritual act of devotion, lighting a candle symbolizes reverence and commitment to Señor Santo Niño associated with the concept of Divine light” (Devotee 8).*

Lighting a candle and praying to the image of a saint is an approach for believers to express their devotion. In Orthodox Christian tradition, lighting candles before icons is a common practice. Candles are lit, showing reverence and respect for the holy figures depicted in the icons and as a symbol of one's faith.

A symbol of guidance

Candles can also symbolize guidance, as the faithful light candles before the statue of Señor Santo Niño; they seek God's guidance and the saints to lead them through life's challenges and uncertainties. The light from the candles is believed to represent the illumination and clarity of the Divine guidance.

“It symbolizes light alongside life” (Devotee 9). “The candle is in life” (Devotee 6).

Candles, like lighthouses, serve as guiding lights that direct the devotee toward taking action. For instance, if one desires the attraction of love into one's life, one can opt for a candle with fragrances and hues that evoke that feeling. Whenever someone lights a candle, it serves as a reminder of their goal to attain love (Moorhead, 2022).

A symbol of connection to God

Candles in the *sinug* dance ritual are an important signifier in one's spiritual connection with Señor Santo Niño. The lighting of candles is often accompanied by prayer, reinforcing the ritual symbolic nature. This prayerful act has provided a connection between the physical and spiritual worlds and can help believers feel a sense of peace and comfort.

“Candles are always considered a part of the Sinug ritual. It will always be a part because what use does your prayer have without an accompanying light? Candles are the light. Of course, God is always there to guide us through the light” (Mansinug 5).

By lighting candles, a spiritual connection with God and believers is established, and it affirms their commitment to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, the light of the world. Also, this act symbolizes the believer's identity as a child of God, represented by the candle flame (Redazione, 2019).

A symbol of the Holy Child

Lighting candles is a way to show reverence and connect with the divine presence of the Holy Child. Candles' significant role symbolizes Señor Santo Niño. The candles serve as a reminder of the miracles and blessings that the Señor Santo Niño has granted to His devotees.

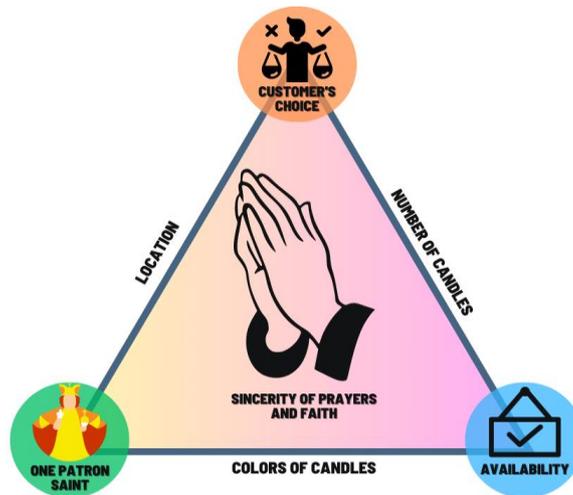
Lighting a candle during the *sinug* ceremony is a way to honor and show respect to Him and to ask for His intercession.

“...the candle is important because it is the source of light, it is said to be the sun” (Mansinug 4). “Because this is for Catholics. “Pagpasinug” is like the light of Christ. (Mansinug 7).

The candle's flickering light represents the continuous presence of Señor Santo Niño's guidance and protection in the lives of His followers. The offering of candles can be seen as a way to show gratitude and reverence to Him for the blessings and grace received (Landy, 2021). Candles in the *sinug* dance ritual hold a deeper meaning beyond their physical appearance. It serves as an instrument of faith and connection to the Lord, providing guidance and light towards life. Moreover, these candles symbolize the unwavering devotion, particularly to Señor Santo Niño. The candle's significance in the *sinug* dance ritual goes beyond what meets the eye, as it is integral to establishing a strong bond with Señor Santo Niño (Amendras, 2018).

Figure 3

Devotee's Choice of Colors, Numbers of Candles, and Location



Note: The tripod of sincerity of prayer and faith

In Figure 3, it can be seen that the research participants had given importance to the aspects of customers' choice, patron saint, availability, and sincerity of prayers and faith as factors affecting the choices made in choosing different colors of candles, buying several pieces of candles, and the location of devotees' *sinug* dance ritual.

Colors of Candles

The Catholic Church has traditionally preached that the saints are the devotees' heavenly companions. Their prayers are frequently addressed to a saint or divinity. The petitioner's demands are granted (Malbrough, 2002). The depiction of Jesus as Señor Santo Niño is an important aspect of Cebuano spirituality and culture, which impacts and develops the Cebuano people's way of life and faith (Villaganas, 2019). This aspect affects the selection of candle colors for both the Devotees and *Mansinug* respondents. Regardless of colored

candles offered during the *Sinug* dance ritual, there will always be one prayer for Señor Santo Niño. The same reason led the priests of Basilica Minore Del Santo Niño to prohibit the *Mansinug* from selling colored candles, except red, brown, and white – the official colors of Señor Santo Niño. These are their narratives.

“Before, there were different colors of candles used because they symbolized good health and more, but now no more, because the priest forbade us, because no matter what color, it is still the light of Christ. White, red, and brown. We sell all of these candles” (Mansinug 7).

This narrative showcased the factor of one patron saint in choosing colors of candles to be offered during the *Sinulog* ritual and how priests depict those color choices, red, brown, and white, symbolizing the image of Señor Santo Niño. The availability of colors may also vary based on the devotees’ choices.

“There are different colors, but for me, it is nothing, because these are just colors; what is important is that we believe in God” (Devotee 3).

This narrative means that faith is more important than the colors of candles to be lit during and after the *sinug* dance ritual.

Numbers of Candles

The Catholic Church followed the "Ordines" that the Roman pope should be followed by seven acolytes bearing candles. However, in Edmund Bishop's article in the "Downside Review" from 1906, six candles were required to be lit on the altar at each high Mass, four for every Missa Cantata or exclusive bishop mass on festivals, and two for the rest of the Masses. Still, there is an option of burning extra candles on important occasions (Thurston, n.d.). In particular, the number of candles depends on a prayer’s intentions. However, customer choice became a significant factor in candle selling.

“The number of candles does not affect the prayer. It depends on how many they will buy; we do not decide how much they will buy” (Mansisinug 6). “It does not matter because it has only one purpose” (Devotee 9).

The narratives of both the *Mansinug* and devotees have highlighted that it depends on the individual's choice of how many candles to offer during the *Sinug* dance ritual. For them, offering different candles could not affect their intention to pray. This context nuances the freedom to choose how many candles they offer during prayer.

Location of Sinug

Following the prayers, devotees who purchase candles walk them elsewhere in the church, where they typically leave the unlit candle at the foot or within the perimeter of the Magellan's cross, or they burn them in traditional grates on the street (Borre, 2021) or inside the basilica.

“The location in staging a sinug does not have any connection to the effectiveness of someone’s prayers...” (Mansisinug 3).

The key informant implies that there is no particular connection between the location of the *sinug* dance ritual and their intentions. However, she asserts that devotees should offer their prayers near Magellan’s Cross because it has a more significant connection to the Señor Santo Niño. It has been a long tradition at every Sinulog Festival where thousands of unlit candles are offered at the foot of the Magellan’s Cross, bearing devotees’ prayer petitions to Him (Gumapon & Labana, 2023). Giving importance to offering candles symbolizes religious meanings. However, Cebuanos’ worship ceremonies are performed in houses, cemeteries, streams, or any other location regarded as sacred by the community (Villaganas, 2019).

Sincerity of Prayers and Faith

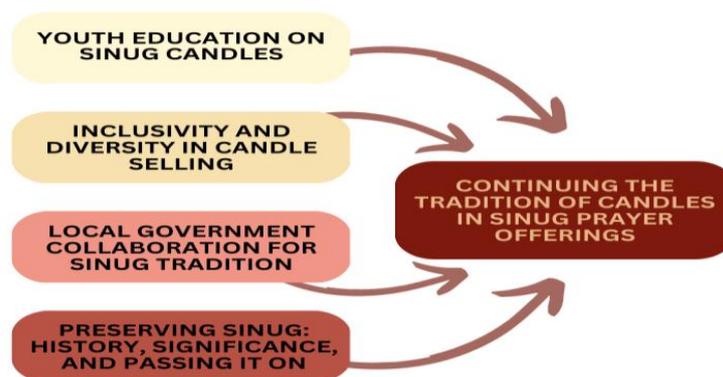
Of all the factors given importance by the research participants, prayer sincerity and faith are central during the *sinug* dance ritual. No matter the location, candle colors, or number of pieces offered, never affect the devotee’s prayer intention, as there is only one recipient of prayers in the premises of the Basilica Minore del Señor Santo Niño.

“No, for me, the different colors of candles symbolize nothing. Prayers are just about your sincerity and strong faith; no matter what colors are used in the candles...” (Mansisinug 5). *“It is not based on different colors or the location. According to my late mother, as long as your prayers are sincere and heartfelt, even if you offer them below the kitchen, God will always be there to listen”* (Devotee 5).

These narratives describe how one’s pure and sincere intentions in prayer create a valuable impact, i.e., being heard by God. However, one must be objective, acknowledging that a good purpose cannot transform a bad deed into a good one.

Figure 4.

Managing the Tradition of Using Candles in Prayer Offerings



Note: Four Ways to Achieve a Continuing Tradition of Candle Prayer Offerings

The *sinug* dance ritual, with candles as an essential component, is a long-standing tradition of the Cebuanos, showcasing their unwavering devotion to Señor Santo Niño. This practice has become deeply ingrained in their culture and history, making it an indispensable

part of their identity. However, the passing of time and the aging of the current generation of *Mansinug* pose a challenge to the continuity of this practice. Preserving and continuing the tradition of candles in *sinug* prayer is a collective responsibility of all stakeholders, including the church, government, and the *Mansinug* themselves.

Youth Education on Sinug Candles

The younger generation needs to step up and continue the tradition to ensure its preservation. Efforts by various organizations and religious groups encourage them to become more involved, educating them on the significance and meaning of the practice. With their support and dedication, the tradition of the *sinug* dance ritual with candles as its centerpiece can continue to thrive and remain a vital part of the Cebuano heritage and identity for generations to come. Encouraging them to uphold the tradition and educating them about its significance is crucial.

Inclusivity and Diversity in Candle Selling

Promoting inclusivity and diversity in the practice, such as allowing everybody to participate in selling candles, can help keep the tradition alive. They also suggested that the Basilica should open its doors to others who wish to become a *mansinug*, rather than limiting the role to those who have mothers or relatives who were previously in the position. Additionally, they emphasized the need to accept men as *Mansinug* too, as they believe that everyone is equal in the eyes of God when it comes to matters of faith.

Local Government Collaboration for Sinug Tradition

Collaboration with local government units can also bring support and awareness to preserve the tradition, including its history documentation and significance, which can be handed down to future generations. By working together, the community ensures devotion to Señor Santo Niño, and the practice of *sinug* prayer continues to thrive as an integral part of Cebu's cultural heritage. To *Mansinug* 1,

“We continued it, and we never cut it off. When I was still young, I was here selling candles” Magsinug 2. “My children continue to work as a Mansinug.” “But we got used to selling candles, and it is comfortable for us due to the prayers I offer to students who succeeded in their board exams. I am not boasting myself, all my offered prayers have been answered... That’s why I have so many patrons coming back.”

Furthermore, some of the *Mansinug* expressed their desire for the local government unit of Cebu City to provide support for their work, not just a business, but also as a means of preserving a tradition started by their ancestors.

Preserving Sinug: History, Significance, and Passing it on

The *Sinug* dance ritual with candles as its centerpiece is integral to Cebuano culture and heritage. The history of *sinug* dates back to pre-colonial times and has evolved over the centuries, reflecting the various influences and changes. Despite its rich history and cultural

significance, the tradition is at risk of fading away, as younger generations may not be as familiar with its practice and meaning. It is essential to pass it on to future generations and educate them about its significance to preserve the tradition. This can be achieved through efforts by various organizations and religious groups to encourage their participation in the ritual. Recording and documenting the history and evolution of the *sinug* practice can also help preserve it for future generations. By actively promoting and passing on the tradition of *sinug*, this vital part of Cebuano heritage and identity continues to thrive for years to come.

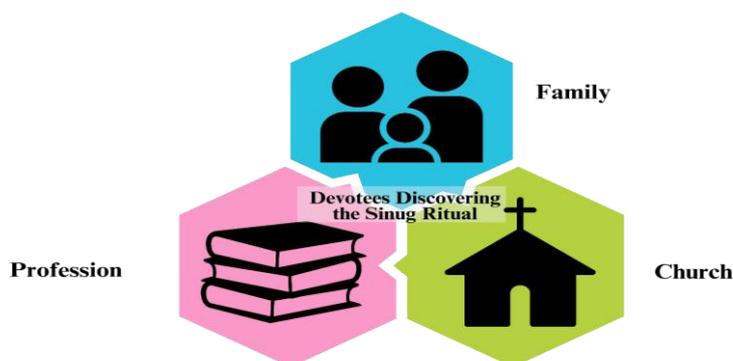
Although many *Mansinugs* are successful in selling candles and feel fulfilled when they can grant prayers, wishes, and intentions to the devotees, some do not want their children to follow in their footsteps. This is due to various reasons, such as wanting their children to pursue better job opportunities, to attend university, and to explore other career paths. Despite their passion for preserving the traditions of being a *Mansinug* and the *sinug* dance ritual, they want their children to have the opportunity to choose their path and have a wider vista of opportunities than they had. According to *Magsinug 5*,

“To my family right now, I would rather not want them to enter into the tradition like me. What I want them to become is to finish their studies, succeed, be educated in other aspects of life, and have a decent and high-paying job. While I acknowledge that this tradition can be profitable, I do not wish for them to pursue it and be like me. I prefer them to explore other paths.”

Despite the challenges and limitations of their job, the *Mansinug* continue to take pride in their role as keepers of tradition and bearers of a unique cultural heritage. They can share their ancestors’ stories and keep their community’s cultural practices alive with their work. They are motivated to pass on this legacy to future generations, to experience the significance and beauty of the *sinug* dance ritual. Furthermore, *Mansinug’s* unwavering pride and commitment to their work and heritage speak volumes about cultural traditions that shape individual and collective identities.

Figure 5.

Determinants of the Sinug Dance Ritual



Note: Three determinants of the Devotees’ Discovery in the Sinug Dance Ritual

Figure 5 exhibits the different factors that led the devotees to discover the *Sinug* ritual. These factors include the devotee's family, the church, the school, and the world of work.

Family

The research participants learned the *sinug* dance ritual through their parents or grandparents, who are also devotees. From then on, they practiced this with their family members until they adopted it as part of their routine to visit the Basilica Minore Del Sto. Niño. According to Devotee 9,

"I've known about this through my mom and grandparents, and it has been passed on until it became a routine."

The family is a factor in learning the ritual because family members have inculcated the idea of *sinug* into their minds. Devotee 7 added,

"Actually, when I was in elementary school in Mindanao, my grandfather had a transistor radio. My grandfather is a fan of Cebu and Visayas. When the month of Sinulog came, I remembered that he would turn up the radio. There were contests in Sinulog during my elementary days. I already inculcated in my mind the idea of sinug."

It promotes familial unity and encourages individuals to commit themselves to a set of shared ideals (Connelly, 2020).

Church

Devotee 5 learned the *sinug* dance ritual through the Basilica Minore Del Santo Niño, as reflected in this narrative:

"In Basilica Minore Del Santo Niño, as I am from Cebu."

Catholic religion and devotion are celebrated and expressed through the *sinug* dance ritual. Piety relieves and atones for sins through the sacrifice of the novena prayers, masses, and fluvial and foot processions. Filipino Catholicism is rich in rituals and symbolism, and participation in religious gatherings – a form of appreciation for answered prayers and for the continuation of heavenly blessings in the future (Almendras, 2018).

Profession

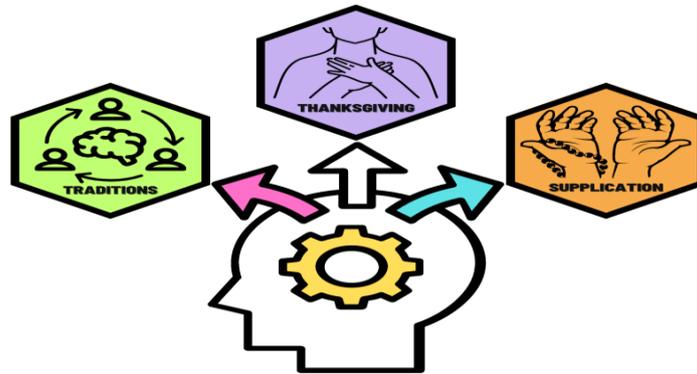
While most research participants learned the *sinug* dance ritual through their families, some found it through their profession. Devotee 10 states that,

"I'm a literature teacher, it is part of the content that I teach, culture and traditions."

Her profession is a factor that learn her the ritual, for she teaches culture and traditions among her Cebuano students in literature classes. This experience connotes she was converted to become a devotee, making the *sinug* part of her routine whenever she visited the Basilica Minore Del Santo Niño with her family.

Figure 6.

Reasons for the Devotees' Engagement in Sinug



Note: Three reasons why Devotees' Engagement in the Sinug Dance Ritual

Figure 6 shows reasons for the devotees' engagement in the *sinug* dance ritual, giving three significant factors: traditions, thanksgiving, and supplication.

Traditions

Señor Santo Niño's miraculous deeds provide tangible evidence at the core of the devotion of the faithful, handed down across generations through enculturation, by which they develop their faith in the Santo Niño (Sala-Boza, 2008). This devotion takes many forms, engaging in prayer and dancing the *sinug* ritual through the *Mansinug* (Borre, 2021).

"Inheritance from our ancestors" (Devotee 1).

From this narrative, it implies that acquiring knowledge about the *sinug* dance ritual was from their relatives and family's traditional religious practices, where she eventually adopted the practices and became part of their faith.

Thanksgiving

Several reasons led people to pray, asking for guidance, thanksgiving, consolation, and protection (Association for Psychological Science, 2020). Devotees had the option of conveying their prayers through the *Sinug* ritual. The ritual is performed as a tribute to the divine image of Señor Santo Niño (Borre, 2021). They consider Señor Santo Niño their protector, giver, and healer, particularly in expressing gratitude (Villaganas, 2019). Hence, the devotees offer him thanksgiving for their petition for good health and a better life.

"Usually, we pray for every birthday" (Devotee 2).

From the narrative, thanksgiving, especially during birthdays, was also given importance as one of the devotee's main reasons for engaging in the *sinug*.

Supplication

The Señor Santo Niño answers life's mental, physical, and spiritual challenges every day. He increases one's confidence in God and grants people's pleas for free. He certainly hears the people's cries. The expanding number of devotees of Señor Santo Niño would demonstrate

that the following realization is correct (Villaganas, 2019). A *sinug* dance ritual is performed by the *Mansinug* to request favors and petitions from Señor Santo Niño through dancing (Brion et al., 2018).

“Usually for health reasons and personal concerns, and sometimes when you have problems” (Devotee 10).

Devotee 10's narrative shows that supplication is a significant factor in her life. She engages in the *sinug* dance ritual with personal concerns, usually for guidance, good health, hope, and peace of mind. There is a connection between the devotee's religious ritual practices and healing. Humans pray for wellness and healing (Andrade & Radhakrishnan, 2009). Hence, annotating that aside from traditions being passed to the Devotees, they also engage in the *sinug* dance ritual due to personal concerns for one's well-being in financial, physical, mental, and educational aspects. But, this is not limited to one's supplication alone, but also a thanksgiving for what they have personally received.

Devotees' Reflections on Prayer Requests

The reflections of the devotees during the *sinug* dance ritual reveal the deep-rooted significance of faith and prayer in their lives. Their belief in the power of devotion and prayer to bring about positive outcomes is evident throughout their reflections. They emphasize the importance of grace in fulfilling one's desires. Furthermore, their reflections illustrate the influence of faith and belief on their emotional experiences, highlighting the importance of utilizing faith to overcome obstacles and make sense of complex emotions. The reflections also reveal the importance of maintaining a positive outlook and having faith in God's timing and plan.

Table 2.

Devotees' Reflections on the Religious Practice

Devotees' Reflection	Meaning	Theme
D3, <i>“My prayers were granted, after I perfected attending the novena mass for Señor Santo Niño during His fiesta, for two years, I got pregnant, and my longing for a child was fulfilled.”</i>	1. Persistence and resilience in sustaining religious practices and beliefs.	1. The significance of faith and prayer in people's lives
D7, <i>“In my devotion to Señor Santo Niño way back since 1997, not too boastful, I have no prayers, not answered by Him. There might be a delay, but it would just come.”</i>	2. Role of trust and patience in religious practices and beliefs.	2. The role of grace in fulfilling one's desires, even if it takes time.
D9, <i>“No, prayers are not heard by God instantly; these will be answered in His time. Even if we are sinners, there are still graces to come.”</i>	3. Different ways individuals understand and experience the power of prayer in their lives.	3. The significance of faith.

Note: Three Themes derived from the Devotees' Reflections on Religious Practices

Table 2 highlights the importance of religious practices and beliefs in devotees' lives, particularly in the context of the *sinug* dance ritual. The devotees' persistence and resilience in sustaining these practices reflect the deep connection they have with their beliefs and traditions. Trust and patience play a crucial role in this process, as they understand that fulfilling their desires may take time, but having confidence in His power. They experienced the power of prayer differently, in understanding the significance of faith in their lives. Religious ritual observance has been shown to improve physical and mental well-being, educational performance, and lifespan.

Table 3.

Devotee's Reflection on Feelings or Emotions

Devotees' Reflection	Meaning	Theme
<p>D1, <i>"It is possible, depending on the source of faith, spreading the Gospel, for our salvation is based on faith."</i></p> <p>D5, <i>"God will provide. He is the Ultimate provider. He answered our prayers as long as you asked for them. He won't refuse, as long as it is heartily pleaded. Good health, peace..., our protection, and guidance."</i></p> <p>D8, <i>"I thanked God for the miracle he gave me. I continued doing the Sinug ritual as a gratitude and trust given by God. This relationship will never be cut; we still maintain the faith and light candles for Him."</i></p> <p>D10, <i>"When prayers are granted, people are happy. If you asked for your parents, and this is not granted, it would be a lie if I said I would not feel bad. When something is not given, I get hurt. In my case, I refuse to talk to them for a week or two based on my experience last year. I was too angry, humans as we are, but of course, me."</i></p>	<p>1. Faith and belief in one's prayers and how they can impact an individual's life and mindset.</p> <p>2. Being thankful for the opportunities and gifts, i.e., from one's faith and belief.</p> <p>3. The belief that God listens and answers prayers shows the importance of building a connection to a higher power for a meaningful and fulfilling life.</p> <p>4. The human side of faith and belief, and how people can struggle with their emotions when their prayers go unanswered.</p> <p>5. The importance of continuing the practice of Sinug and maintaining one's relationship with God through it. It shows how traditions can be a source of identity and meaning in an individual's life.</p>	<p>1. The interplay between faith and emotions.</p> <p>2. The power of prayer and belief.</p> <p>3. Finding meaning in difficult emotions.</p> <p>4. Reconciling emotions and beliefs.</p> <p>5. Faith is a source of solace and inspiration.</p>

Note: Five Themes derived from the Devotees' Reflections on Feelings or Emotions

Table 3 presents the narratives of the *sinug* dance ritual, which shall not serve as a form of prayer alone, but provides a space for devotees to reflect on their feelings and emotions. The first theme highlights the interplay between faith and emotions, believing in one's prayers can greatly impact a devotee's mindset and well-being. The second theme emphasizes the power of prayer and belief, as expressed in being thankful for the opportunities and gifts from one's faith. The third theme highlights the important connection to a higher power and the belief that God listens and answers the prayers of the faithful. The fourth theme acknowledges the human side of devotees' faith, as people can struggle with their emotions when their prayers

go unanswered. The fifth theme highlights the significance of maintaining the practice of *sinug* for individual identity, meaning, solace, and inspiration. Although some individuals may seek alternative forms of solace, such as supplication or developing a spiritual connection with a divine entity, the *sinug* dance ritual is a distinctive chance for devotees to connect with their emotions and discover greater significance in their faith and beliefs.

Table 4.

Devotees’ Reflections on Actions or Behavior

Devotees’ Reflection	Meaning	Theme
D2, “Every time, we request a <i>sinug</i> ritual, praying for good health and safety only. Whether this is granted or not, we continue praying to the Lord for Him to hear this prayer on time.” D4, “Without hesitation, my prayer is granted. If ever it is not granted, I still request a <i>Sinug</i> ritual.” D6, “No, don’t stop praying because there is always God’s perfect time.”	1. The importance of faith, acceptance, and tolerance. 2. The importance of having faith in a higher power and accepting that everything happens for a reason. 3. The idea of being grateful for the blessings received and asking for protection for the future. 4. The power of prayer and resilience in hoping for a positive outcome.	1. Faith and spirituality in coping with uncertainty and adversity. 2. Prayer in promoting physical and emotional well-being. 3. Optimistic outlook in promoting resilience and coping with challenges. 4. Power of God's timing and plan in guiding and shaping one's life.

Note: Four Themes derived from the Devotees’ Reflections on Actions or Behavior

Table 4 presents the narratives of faith, acceptance, and gratitude, highlighting the importance of spirituality and belief in coping with uncertainty and adversity. The use of prayer in the *sinug* dance ritual promotes physical and emotional well-being, while the power of community provides support and comfort for the devotees. The belief integration into daily life and the resilience to keep hoping for a positive outcome demonstrate an optimistic outlook to promoting resilience and coping with challenges. Additionally, accepting God's timing and plan in guiding and shaping one's life emphasizes the importance of right behavior and reflection about actions, as devotees strive to live according to their beliefs and traditions. Utilizing spirituality, fostering, and maintaining resilience comprise five of the principal domains in late life: reliance on others, spiritual metamorphosis, spiritual coping, conviction in one's beliefs, and dedication to spiritual principles and rituals (Manning et al., 2019).

The exploration of the KMRT

Based on the study’s findings on research participants' experiences, the Kahayag Model of Reflective Teaching (KMRT) was developed. Using a parallel comparative convergent analysis of the processes of the *Mansinug* ritual dancers and the devotees’ experiences, the KMRT is derived as one of the indigenous models of education in the instructional process. KMRT is anchored in the Culturally Responsive Theory (CRT) (Gay, 2018), which led to the development of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP), thereby providing more opportunities for scholars to research various culture-based teaching models. Unlike other culture-based

teaching models, KRMT uses reflection to avoid the usual practice of rote learning in didactic teaching to generate authentic learning. Unlike the other Reflective Models of Teaching, KRMT dovetailed the unified use of three types of students' reflections, as shown in Figure 7. During the *Huklog Kat-un* (Reflection On) process, learners express their knowledge of the subject matter through their vicarious cultural experiences. The teacher facilitates this to connect their experiences to their feelings or emotions, forming their *Huklog Pamati* (Reflections In). The *Huklog Buhat* (Reflections About) engages the learner's positive action or manipulation of the previous cognitive and reflective insights. This phase actualizes the practical applications of learning.

With these, KMRT is a humanistic approach to education that promotes holistic learning in cognitive (*huklog kat-un*), affective (*huklog pamati*), and psychomotor (*huklog buhat*) development. Another unique characteristic of KMRT is its essentialist foundation, which recognizes the cultural values of *sinug* dance ritual practiced by the Cebuanos for more than four centuries before the arrival of the Spanish colonizers in the Philippines. What is central to KMRT is the learner as the center of the educative process. In KMRT, learning activities facilitate reflections to assimilate and accommodate learning.

Figure 7.

Three Types of Reflections



Note: Unified Reflections in KMRT

This culture-based teaching model pays tribute to the role of candles in the *Sinug* dance ritual and the devotee's significant faith in Señor Santo Niño. The KMRT addresses the need for instruction's localization and contextualization mandated by the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10533, 2013). This model provides a culturally sensitive and relevant approach to teaching that recognizes the importance of the *Sinug* dance ritual in Cebu's local community. Therefore, the development of the KMRT is deemed essential in promoting a deeper understanding and appreciation of the symbolism of candles used in the *Sinug* dance ritual.

Table 5.*Comparison of the Mansisinug Process and the Kahayag Model of Reflective Teaching*

The Mansisinug Process	Description	Instructional Practices	Learning Theories and Principles	Scope of Reflection
1. Panawag (Acquiring of Customer)	During <i>Panawag</i> in the Sinug ritual, the <i>Mansinug</i> roam around the church premises to actively seek individuals who would like to request a <i>sinug</i> dance ritual.	Calling learners' attention involves various techniques to gain and maintain their focus. These techniques may include verbal cues, visual aids, physical gestures, or other attention-grabbing methods that can help minimize distractions and maximize engagement.	Principles of Motivation Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985; Ryan and Deci, 2000). This phase is based on Self-Determination Theory by Deci and Ryan. This theory emphasizes the importance of establishing a positive relationship between the teacher and students to promote autonomous motivation. This is achieved through the motivational practice of <i>Panawag</i> , which enhances students' related needs by fostering a supportive classroom environment to make them feel connected and engaged in the learning process.	Pre-reflection focuses on gaining and maintaining students' attention during this process, such as the "Weighing My Choices Activity," which utilizes a student's decision-making skills (Leyba, 2022b), and encourages students to share their prior knowledge and ideas, such as the "Think-pair-share," which is a multi-step collaborative tool in which participants must first obtain conversation of ideas before gathering in groups.
2. Pamalit (Buying of Candles)	During the <i>Pamalit</i> , devotees engage with the <i>Mansinug</i> by buying candles from them.	A buzz session allows students to contribute ideas based on their prior knowledge in a collaborative environment. It is a brainstorming activity that encourages active participation and idea generation.	Collaboration Engagement Cooperative Learning of Johnson and Johnson (1999) emphasizes the importance of collaborative learning and idea generation through a buzz session. This stage allows students to contribute ideas	This is the proper time to use the "Reflection On" or Huklog Kat-un both in the <i>panawag</i> and <i>pamalit</i> , as shown in Figure 8. The Pamalit is the beginning of the During Reflection Phase that bridges to the <i>Pangamuyo</i> and <i>Pagsayaw</i> steps.

			based on their prior knowledge, promoting group interaction and the sharing of perspectives to enhance the teaching and learning process (Johnson et. al., 1994) in Razzouk and Johnson (2012)	
3. Pangamuyo (Asking for Prayer Intention)	During the Pangamuyo stage, the <i>Mansinug</i> inquires about the devotee's specific prayer intention they want to include in the <i>Sinug</i> dance ritual.	Collaborative Learning strategies involve students expressing their thoughts, feelings, and opinions on a specific topic. These strategies promote critical and creative thinking, research skills, and the ability to articulate and defend one's propositions or arguments.	Theory of Interactive Learning Constructivism by John Dewey (Kivinen & Ristela, 2003). This phase aligns with John Dewey's constructivist theory, which emphasizes student engagement in the learning process (Brau, n.d.). By challenging students to justify and evaluate their ideas using higher-order thinking skills, <i>Pangamuyo</i> enables learners to develop their understanding of the subject matter through social interaction and collaboration.	It allows students to develop their understanding of the subject that promotes higher-order thinking skills, such as "Reciprocal Questioning," in which students ask and answer questions collaboratively and engage students more deeply with the subject matter and demonstrate their understanding through the development of new thoughts or the adaptation of existing concepts, such as applying acquired knowledge to new situations, such as when students learn to apply their knowledge to new situations.
4. Pagsayaw (Dancing the Sinug)	During the <i>Pagsayaw</i> , the <i>Sinug</i> dance ritual is performed, wherein the <i>Mansinug</i> wave their hands while holding the candles high, expressing their gratitude and devotion.	Clinching the lesson involves summarizing and reinforcing the lesson, ensuring that learners have a clear understanding of key concepts. This practice can help learners retain information and apply it in future contexts.	Generalization Theory Transfer of learning by Perkins and Salomon (1992). This phase is anchored to the transfer of learning in the teaching and learning process, as described by Perkins and Salomon, where learners engage more deeply with the subject matter and demonstrate their understanding	This is the proper time to use the "Reflection In" or Huklog Pamati both in the <i>pangamuyo</i> and <i>pagsayaw</i> , as shown in Figure 8.

			through the development of new thoughts or the adaptation of existing concepts, serving as evidence of the transfer of learning and the actualization of the teaching process.	
5. Paghalad (Offering of Candles to the Holy Child)	This step follows <i>Mansinug's</i> giving of candles to the devotees and permits them to offer them inside the church.	Writing a reflection is a process of expressing one's thoughts and feelings about an experience or topic in writing. It helps learners to develop self-awareness, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.	Theory of Discernment-Reflection theory by Dewey (1933 in Fennema, 2017). This phase is based on Dewey's Reflection Theory. It emphasizes the importance of applying newly acquired knowledge in a practical context. This allows learners to reflect on their learning and understanding of the subject matter, contributing to continuous improvement and advancement in the teaching and learning process (Dewey 1933 in Fennema, 2017).	Post-reflection emphasizes the significance of putting newly acquired knowledge into practice. This enables students to reflect on their learning and comprehension, similar to the "Reflective Essays" in which they can personalize learning and reflections on their acquired experiences and knowledge. This is the proper time to use the "Reflection About" or <i>Huklog Buhat</i> both in the <i>paghalad</i> , as shown in Figure 8.

Note: Comparative Convergent Analysis of the Mansisinug Process of Sinug Dance Ritual and the KMRT

Table 5 juxtaposes the culmination of a contextualized KMRT, which entails the complete process of reflective teaching. The three phases of the instructional process - pre-reflection, during reflection, and post-reflection - are observed in the model integrating humanistic reflection techniques such as *Huklog Kat-un* (Reflection On), *Huklog Pamati* (Reflection In), and *Huklog Buhat* (Reflection About). Pre-reflection, known as *Panawag* (Customer Acquisition), is a motivational practice promoting a positive connection between the teacher and the learners. This helps children and younger people focus on the learning goal or outcome and minimize potential distractions. Preliminary activities, such as presenting the problem and soliciting students' input, are typically conducted during this stage. During Pre-reflection, *Pamalit* (Buying of Candles) dovetails the *Sinug* ritual practice of buying candles, involving asking students preliminary questions that connect to the main topic to be discussed. In this stage, students are encouraged to contribute ideas based on prior knowledge through a

buzz session, promoting collaborative learning and idea generation. This phase emphasizes the importance of "buying" students' ideas.

The second scope of reflection is the During-Reflection phase, which includes the third stage, *Pangamuyo* (Asking for Prayer Intention). During this stage, students are challenged to justify ideas gathered in the buzz session by evaluating them using Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) and Creative Thinking Skills (CTS). This stage is similar to a debate where students express their thoughts on how they would like to learn and what knowledge they possess on a specific topic. The fourth stage, *Pagsayaw* (Dancing the Sinug), is the application of the ideas presented during the previous stage. Here, the learners engage more deeply with the subject matter and demonstrate their understanding of new ideas – the adaptation of existing concepts. This stage serves as evidence of Transfer of Learning (TOL) and the actualization of the teaching process.

In the final stage of the KMRT, known as *Paghalad* (Offering of Candles to Holy Child), students demonstrate their newly acquired knowledge by applying it in a practical context. This is where the success of the teaching process is evaluated, and students can assess their learning and mastery of the subject matter. Applying the newly formed understanding on a Concrete Experience marks the beginning of a new cycle of the KMRT, continuously enhancing progress in the instructional process.

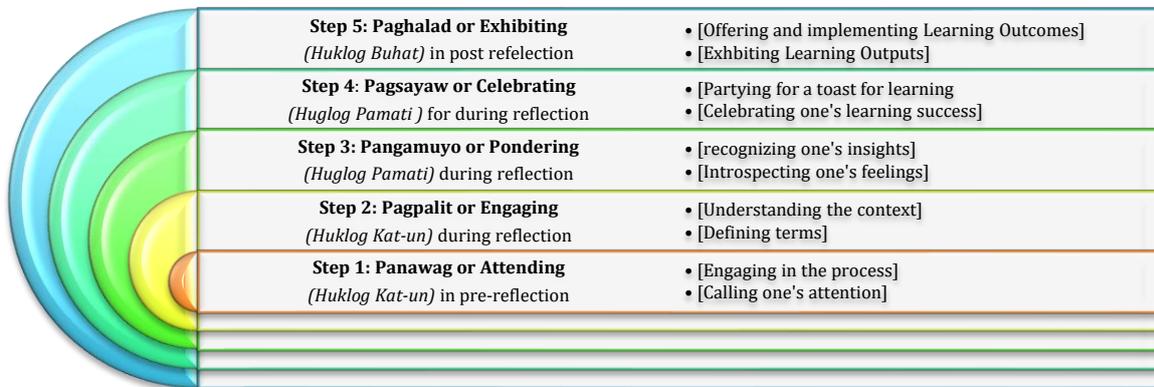
How to use the KMRT?

For classroom use, the teacher can facilitate the KMRT through five (5) basic steps as observed in the sinug dance ritual. Figure 8 presents the spiral progression approach of these steps from the *panawag* to the *paghalad*. These steps realign the *huklog kat-un*, *huklog pamati*, and *huklog buhat* in humanistic education for pre-reflection, during reflection, and post-reflection. Step 1 refers to the introductory phase of the instructional process. In this step, the teacher establishes learning readiness, and learners are attentive and engage in the learning process. Step 2 engages learners in assimilating and accommodating learning by defining terms and understanding the selected context. Step 3 focuses on the affective domain, where learners engage in introspection of their feelings and insights regarding the lessons.

Step 4 accentuates a celebration of learning success, partying, and a toast to learning. Words of appreciation, felicitations, and rewards are given to learners for their learning success. Step 5 culminates in the exhibition of learning outputs and the implementation of indicators of success in achieving learning outcomes.

Figure 8.

Realignment of KRMT Steps and the Three Types of Reflection in Humanistic Education



Note: Illustrated version of the 5 steps of the KRMT techniques in three Types of Reflection

Strengths of the KMRT

The KMRT is emblematic, not only fostering the acquisition and maturation of knowledge among students, but also accentuating the cultural importance of candles in Cebu, Philippines. In KMRT, students appreciate the function of candles in diverse rituals and events. The pedagogical approach employed in KMRT facilitates learners' introspection of their cognitive framework and personal encounters as they engage in KMRT's various phases. The KMRT aligns with the imperative for localized/contextualized pedagogy, advancing the nurturance of learners' critical thinking and feeling proficiencies. Moreover, this pedagogical model prioritizes a learner-centered, spiral, and outcome-driven instructional framework. At the outset, KMRT has the potential to cultivate cultural conscientiousness as they gain greater awareness of their culture and the importance of candles in their daily lives.

Limitations of the KMRT

The KMRT requires more time and resources for implementation compared to traditional teaching methods. The model involves multiple stages of reflection, requiring additional planning, preparation, and further evaluation. This limitation may affect teachers' workload and may not be feasible for every classroom situation. Additionally, the model's emphasis on student collaboration and active participation may require a certain level of student maturity and willingness to engage in group process, which may not be present in every student or classroom context.

Conclusion and recommendation

Candles have long been symbolized not just light but also faith, guidance, and a connection to God. Candle colors, numbers, and offering location are immaterial to the devotees, but the light that strengthens their faith. The *sinug* dance ritual is performed with burning candles, creating a reverent spiritual atmosphere by the *Mansinugs* or *sinug* ritual

dancers. This cultural act represents tradition, a family religious practice, a continuing legacy, and financial support to the *Mansinug* families. The study provided valuable information about the life of the *Mansinug*, their dedication to the tradition inherited from their ancestors, and their reliance on this practice for economic reasons.

In the 21st century, the Kahayag Model of Reflective Teaching (KMRT) is a useful approach to education. It enables teachers and students to scrutinize their experiences, derive lessons from them, and modify their methods accordingly, making it highly pertinent. KMRT encourages learners to engage in individual, peer, and collaborative reflections to promote a culture of continuous learning and improvement. In addition, it promotes self-awareness and personal growth, helping students to become independent and responsible learners. Teachers can create a student-centered classroom environment that fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity. KMRT provides an effective framework for promoting reflection and continuous learning. Thus, it is essential to evaluate and improve teaching practices to ensure holistic learning in KMRT's humanistic approach of *hukog kat-un* (cognitive reflection), *huklog pamati* (affective reflection), and *huklog buhat* (metacognitive reflection).

This conclusion has implications for Cebu City's economy, teacher education, curriculum design, and government. Organizing the *Mansinugs* (the candle ritual dancers) into a cooperative can improve candle production and sales. This religious and cultural attraction increases tourist arrivals at the Basilica Minore del Santo Niño, a religious and historical tourist destination. The addition of KMRT to the plethora of teaching models enhances the contribution to curriculum design using an indigenous flavor. Hence, teacher education can benefit from the use of contextualized instructional models in a local setting, away from the influences of Western thought. The findings of the study impact the local government of Cebu City in terms of resource and social mobilization of the *Mansinugs* and their contributions to society.

To preserve and promote the culture of *sinug* dance ritual, the following recommendations are made to different stakeholders. The Local Government Unit (LGU) of Cebu City may look into the current situation of the *Mansinug* at the Basilica Minore del Santo Niño and enact ordinances to improve their socio-economic life. LGU may also prioritize preservation of tradition and develop practical ways to showcase it as a tourism attraction. Academic scholars shall engage in research on the historical and cultural relevance of the *sinug* dance ritual, which may impact society and the academic community. Lastly, Catholic parishioners may archive and share the oldest accounts through digital or physical archiving for information dissemination. These recommendations aim to ensure that the symbolism of candles in *Sinug* dance will continue to be valued and passed on to future generations.

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