Unveiling Cebuano Traditional Healing Practices

ZachiaRaiza Joy S. Berdon¹, Edheliza L. Ragosta², Reynaldo B. Inocian³, Creezz A. Manalag⁴, Elena B. Lozano
¹zachiaj@yahoo.com, ²ragosta.edheliza@gmail.com, ³inocian03@yahoo.com, ⁴manalag.creezz@gmail.com

Date Received: February 11, 2016; Date Revised: February 5, 2016

Abstract - This study aims to identify the features of Cebuano’s traditional healing practices. Specifically, it also answers the following objectives: analyze traditional healing in Cebuano’s perspectives, explain the traditional healing process practiced in terms of the traditional healers’ belief, and extrapolate perceptions of medical practitioners toward traditional healing. This study made use of qualitative approach, among five traditional healers who performed healing for not less than ten years, in the mountain barangays of Cebu City. These healers served as the primary informants who were selected because of their popularity in healing. The use of open-ended interview in local dialect and naturalistic observation provided a free listing of their verbatim accounts were noted and as primary narratives. Participation in the study was voluntary and participants were interviewed privately after obtaining their consent. The Cebuano traditional healing practices or “panambal” comprise the use of “himolso” (pulse-checking), “palakaw” (petition), “pasubay” (determining what causes the sickness and its possible means of healing), “pangalap” (searching) of medicinal plants for “palina” (fumigation), “tayhop” (gentle-blowing), “tutho” (saliva-blowing), “tuob” (boiling), “orasyon” (mystical prayers), “hilot” (massage), and “barang” (sorcery). Though traditional with medical science disapproval, it contributes to a mystical identity of Cebuano healers, as a manifestation of folk Catholicism belief, in order to do a good legacy to the community that needs help. For further study, researchers may conduct further the studies on the: curative effects of medicinal plants in Cebu, psychological effect pulse-checking healed persons by the mananambal, and unmasking the other features of traditional healing.

Keywords: mananambal, traditional healing, animism, Folk Catholicism

INTRODUCTION

The existence of traditional healing dates back from 14,000 centuries B.C., until Chinese, Graeco-Arabic and western countries start using traditional medicines. It is the oldest form of structured healing, which is practiced with basic set of tenets [1]. Before modern medicines have been introduced by this kind of practice in the Philippines, our early ancestors have engaged in traditional healing. According to Del Fierro and Nolasco, a traditional healer in Cebuano society is called mananambal. A mananambal is a local medicinal doctor who resorts to indigenous means of treating patients who are in pain or have been long suffering from various forms of illness caused by supernatural factors [2]. The appellation mananambal is a derivative of the term for the art of panambal or traditional folk healing in the Philippines. Those families of known mananambal, with reputation to heal a lot of diseases are known as group of tambalan [3]. But as time passes by, that kind of belief or practice is already slowly diminishing. Brought by modernity, new inventions in medicine, many people rely more on professional medical practitioners who use science or modern medicine to cure diseases. Hitherto, despite the extensiveness, power, and capacity of modern medical science, large portion of our human population can never avail its benefits, because of their impoverished economic situation. At the turn of the century, traditional medicine is practiced among the poor communities in rural villages. The healthcare needs of the Philippines is associated to power and capacity, because only the rich can avail to modern hospital facilities, while the poor is part of an estimated 50%, who rely on the use of folk healing [4]. Our interest and curiosity about how traditional healers help patients to be cured, in any common disease drives the conduct to do this research. This study aims to find out different features of a Cebuano’s traditional healing practices, and wants to discover different healing treatments or procedures done by the mananambal. The mananambal may utilize wide
variety of treatments for their patients including decoctions, poultices, fumigation, anointing, cupping, prayers, incantation, and diverse magical procedures [5]. Moreover, this study provides information on how the mananambal get his or her ability to cure those common diseases. Being a mananambal, he or she is highly respected because of his or her craft in folk-healing, which is learned through observation, imitation and experience. A mananambal is a person, who has been inherited the gift of healing from his or her family, as a hereditary influence. [6]. Traditional healing might have been forgotten because of highly modernized society, still it molds of how we are today. It has been part of our rich culture and it plays a significant role which makes the Filipino culture extraordinary.

Traditional healing is a part of Philippine society and culture. It is said that traditional healing practice is combined to Christian belief when Magellan has converted the Cebuanos (the people of Cebu) to Catholicism. In Cebuano society, a faith healer is called mananambal. It is believed that a mananambal is not only capable of healing biological defects; but he or she can also cure ailments which are instigated by paranormal control, beyond the capacity of an ordinary individual. A folk healer, according to Lieban is said to have an unusual connection with the spiritual world, which is derived from his or her mystical patron, in order to uphold the power to heal [5]. Several mananambal acquire their knowledge in healing or sorcery from their ancestors or through spirit intercession. They also learn orasyon or words of power from a book called librito which is authored and given by a spirit as a tuga, a gift, as they strongly believe; but contents of this little book are written in Latin texts, which are the basis of the healer’s yamyam (hushed mantras) imply that a librito, as a book of prayer, has been written brought to the Philippines, with an unknown origin. A conjecture is made that a librito might have been a keepsake amulet by any European migrant in the Philippine before or during the Spanish colonization, which is left nowhere with someone; but found as foretold by mananambal’s dream to be traced in a discreet place like: beside a river bank, inside the cave, under the rocks, in the graveyard, and in an old shack. All mananambal who are gifted with this power are known as gitugahan.

During the primitive time, the mananambal holds an infinite and more vital role in society than a medical doctor do in the present community. All mananambal are much concerned with the general welfare of everybody like: promising an abundant farm harvest and settling disputes in the family. Another function of the mananambal is protecting the people in the community from any harm brought by evil spirits and promoting quality in community life. As time progressed, an albularyo, a derivative of the herbolario, who heals sickness through the use of local herbs in the countryside, becomes a known figure in the marginalized areas in the Philippines. Without background in scientific medication, the marginalized Filipinos trust the powers of the mananambal to alleviate physical and psychological pains because of their supernatural powers. Lieban suggests that sorcery practices and folk healing may have the occurred in some in poor countries due to the muddling magnitudes of global transformation. This basically uses the healing powers of herbs in the backyard and in the woods, which modern ethno-botanists are interested in finding a connection to provide a healthy balance of life in nature. According to Gaabucayan in his study entitled, ‘The Medicine Men of Agusan in Mindanao’, there are many kinds of mananambal such as the: herbolario or herbalist, manghihilot or the masseur, the mananabang or the unlicensed midwife, mananawal or orasyonan or the one who possesses power to heal by means of oil and prayer, and the mambabarang or the sorcerer [7]. The terms for each kind of mananambal depend upon which is practiced and normally hired, to provide a panacea of the client’s diagnosed illness. Very frequently, he or she combines numerous of these roles collectively, in order to quicken the healing process.

Every mananambal has different methods or procedures in treating the illness of patients. Stafford as mentioned in the study of Del Fierro and Nolasco define illness as “a term that denotes the patients' perception of a health problem and such perception govern the patient’s behavior including the selection of a remedial measure” [2]. Folk healers observe several healing rituals. Most of them search concoction ingredients such as: herbs, candles, potion, oil and amulets every year. The practice is called pangalap or pagpupuros. The ritual of ancestor worship, like to offer their souls with food and drinks is called halad. This is substantiated with the rice-pouch ritual or puso in Barangay Taptap that farmers do as part of their traditions [3]. They also perform a ritual fumigation accompanied by prayers called palina. The chopping or slicing of pangalap ingredients is referred to as pangadlip. A burning
process is required to transform the ingredients into ashes is *pagpagong*. *Batak* is a ritual used to elevate one’s spirit to become invulnerable from spiritual attack and it also empowers amulets and implements use in healing commonly performs by folk healers. In some cases, a healer provides offering to the spirits to heal the patient afflicted with illness caused by any supernatural phenomenon. The offering is known as *kiyaw-kiyaw*. Tawas, a diagnostic ritual utilizing melted alum or candle wax, dropped in a basin with water, then images are formed and interpreted according to the nature of illness is also utilized. Other than rituals, most *mananambal* use special materials in the healing procedure. *Tuos* is an object, which consists of grains, coins, and eggs to be wrapped in a red cloth or sometimes black cloth and place in the altar or above the head of the patient to determine, if the spirit accepted the offering. They also use *lana*, a medicinal oil concocted from coconut and sometimes *orasyon* are written on paper to be added to strengthen the healing effect of oil.

Since folk healing is greatly influenced by Christian faith, most of the *mananambal* utter prayers to the images of significant figures of the Christian religion like: Virgin Mary, the statues of the Señor Santo Nino, the Holy family, and the Crucified Christ, before performing a certain healing procedure to the patient. Lola Conching, a famous *mananambal* in Siquijor has reported to heal patients using prayers and the process of bolo-bolo or water bubbles. Bolo-bolo is an old Visayan language means "bubbles" [9]. A person who practices bolo-bolo is called *mambobolo*. The process includes placing a black magic stone inside a drinking glass and then poured with visibly clean water until it is half-full. The *mambobolo* then inserts a *bagakay* or a stick, taken from a dwarf bamboo variety, into the glass, where he or she sips some water, gurgles, and finally spats it out. Then, the *mambobolo* blows air into the water so it becomes bubbly. Surprisingly, the water becomes extremely dark and murky. Mang Francisco, one of the patients of Lola Conching and who has been suffering from chronic itching all over his body declares that he no longer feels itchy after the bolo-bolo session [9]. Mang Francisco is the only one of those who shares the same testimony on the effectiveness of folk healing.

However, some people perceive traditional healing as a sin against the Catholic Church. This is because one of the varieties of traditional healing is sorcery. Sorcery can be viewed in different ways. It is considered as an art, a practice, or a person’s spell, which is supposedly to be exercised with supernatural powers through the aid of evil spirits like: black magic and witchery. In Cebuano term, sorcery is called as *barang*. In the study of Gaabucayan, anyone who has the capacity to wreak witchcraft to an enemy is supposed to cause disease by forcing live insects or inanimate objects like hairpins, broken glass, fine sands or mud into the corpus of the intended victim*. Ironically, most of the *mambabarang* or sorcerer consults to saints. In the study of Gaabucayan, a *mambabarang* says that before doing anything evil, he or she consults Saint Anthony [7]. Just like any other traditional healing practices, *barang* is accompanied with prayers often referred to as *paghalad* or offering. The weirdest and most dreaded character of traditional *mananambal* is doing a dual role of being a sorcerer and a healer, at the same time.

Traditional healing is generally viewed as a distinctly different system of giving treatment from modern medical treatments. But a study of two American psychologists, conclude that there is a complementation of both systems of Western and traditional healing [10]. In fact, Mavis and Sophy recommend that there is “a sharing of knowledge and collaboration between modern health-care practitioners and traditional healers” [11]. Their studies have found out that “traditional health practitioners have good knowledge about cervical cancer care”. Thus, collaboration may help in the early detection of cervical cancer, thereby providing the best treatment, in order to reduce the usual rate of the mortality.

But, what Muller and Steyn mention, “there is still limited cooperation that exists between the two systems” [12]. This means that prior to any cooperation of the existing two practices; an attempt of common understanding necessitates recognition. In many countries in the world, health among men, women, and children becomes a basic right. Limitation to financial resources affects choices and actions of people toward healing. As mentioned by Bongcac, Dr. Vergie Bonocan Maquiabas emphasizes the age old practices continue; despite modern day science because those who seek it finds it cheaper and sometimes more effective than relying on medical experts [13]. In the state of impoverished situation, people may resort to inexpensive ways even if the ailment requires care of licensed physicians. Beliefs and practices about healing, including the ideas on culture, may affect people’s decision in response to
treatment, when they consult the mananambal. This context mirrors the shades of poverty, where people cannot afford to avail the health services in medical centers, because they only give a little amount to the mananambal for his or her rendered service, which is called pahalipay or an offering.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
This study aims to identify the features of Cebuano’s traditional healing practices. Specifically, it also answers the following objectives: analyze traditional healing in Cebuanos’ perspectives, explain the traditional healing process practiced in terms of the traditional healers’ belief, and extrapolate perceptions of medical practitioners toward traditional healing.

METHODS
Research Design
This study made use of an ethnographic design, among five traditional healers who performed healing for not less than ten years, in the mountain barangay of Cebu City. These healers served as the primary key informant mananambal (KIMs) who were selected because of their popularity in healing. In order to provide a balance of results, 13 special informants paseyente (SIPs), as traditional healing patients were also consulted.

Research Tool
A Phenomenal Coinage of "Panambal"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Informant Mananambal</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KIM1</td>
<td>Tayhop</td>
<td>➢ Gentle blowing of the head of the patient coupled with prayers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tutho</td>
<td>➢ Mild spitting of saliva to the patient (commonly on the head) coupled with prayers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Himolso</td>
<td>➢ Checking on the pulse of the patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orasyon</td>
<td>➢ Blessing of prescribed medicines or direct blessing to the patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIM2</td>
<td>Orasyon</td>
<td>➢ Blessing of prescribed medicines or direct blessing to the patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rubbing of Lana</td>
<td>➢ Medicinal oil concocted from coconut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Himolso</td>
<td>➢ Checking on the pulse of the patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIM3</td>
<td>Orasyon</td>
<td>➢ Blessing of prescribed medicines or direct blessing to the patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rubbing of Lana</td>
<td>➢ Medicinal oil concocted from coconut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Himolso</td>
<td>➢ Checking on the pulse of the patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Panubay</td>
<td>➢ Determining the causes of illnesses through the guidance of supernatural entities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIM4</td>
<td>Orasyon</td>
<td>➢ Blessing of prescribed medicines or direct blessing to the patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rubbing of Lana</td>
<td>➢ Medicinal oil concocted from coconut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Himolso</td>
<td>➢ Checking on the pulse of the patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIM5</td>
<td>Orasyon</td>
<td>➢ Blessing of prescribed medicines or direct blessing to the patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rubbing of Lana</td>
<td>➢ Medicinal oil concocted from coconut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Himolso</td>
<td>➢ Checking on the pulse of the patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PagtambalsaNasudlan</td>
<td>➢ Driving away supernatural beings from possessed individuals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The use of open-ended interview in local dialect and naturalistic observation served as research tools in which key informants are observed and interviewed in its natural setting without any manipulation by the observer provided a free listing of their verbatim accounts were noted and as primary narratives. Participant Observation was voluntarily conducted privately after obtaining their consent.

Research Environment
The study was conducted in the selected remote mountain villages of Cebu namely: Barangay Ga-as, Barangay Taptap, and Barangay Sudlon. These barangays were selected because of the presence of lush vegetation where the natural medicines can be sourced out, villagers the mananambal for healing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Table 1 shows the different sets of healing procedure, which the five key informant manambal are engaged in treating the different forms of illnesses. Traditional folk healing in Cebu does not limit to cure biological illnesses, ailments and diseases as what most of people think. As revealed in the study, panambal also means treating impaired social relationships, which KIM3 specializes this kind of healing. Accordingly, he only needs photographs and complete names subject to the healing procedure, to fix relationships, using special orasyon (prayers), which he has inherited from his mother-in-law.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Informant Mananambal</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KIM1</td>
<td>Tayhop</td>
<td>➢ Gentle blowing of the head of the patient coupled with prayers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tutho</td>
<td>➢ Mild spitting of saliva to the patient (commonly on the head) coupled with prayers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Himolso</td>
<td>➢ Checking on the pulse of the patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orasyon</td>
<td>➢ Blessing of prescribed medicines or direct blessing to the patient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P-ISSN 2350-7756 | E-ISSN 2350-8442 | www.apjmr.com
Magical Treatment for Building or Destroying a Relationship

The power of healing can never be underestimated in the following vignettes. One of the photos KIM shows is an image of a middle-aged woman who is widely smiling. At the back of it is a letter written by his client which says,


KIM3 narrates that his client is Jed's fiancé. Since her fiancé is cheating on her, she's trying to get rid of the other party in their relationship. Stories like that are not new to KIM3 and in fact, he can also be a matchmaker.

"Magdayon jud si Rosegen Pacaldo og Jed Palao. Dili jud magbowag si Jed og Rosegen hangtod sa pagbalik namo gikan sa abroad." (Rosegen Pacaldo and Jed Palao will be bonded together. That they will not be separated until we come back from abroad).

His client wrote at the back of two pictures which are attached to each other by an electrical tape. The aforementioned practices are called palakaw (petition), which can be either positive (preserve life) or negative (destroy life). The use of mysterious or supernatural forces to influence the course of events is perceived to be a magic. Magic can be associated to sorcery and witchcraft which is popularly known as barang in Cebuano language. The five mananambal use orasyon but; only KIM3 seems to use these prayers to cast spells or curses. One photo illustrates a man and at the back portion of it is a writing that says,

"Mouli na unta siya. Makunsensiya siya sa iya gibuhat. Maglabad ang iyang ulo ug dili na unta siya makatulog. (I hope he will go home already. He will have the conscience to all the things that he has done. He will have a headache and will not fall asleep).

The letter is written by the man’s wife as shown in the picture. As observed, the last sentence of the letter is a statement that inflicts harm to someone. In anthropological terms, cursing others so that they are struck by misfortune or even death is a variety of sorcery [14]. However, KIM3 strongly denies that he practices sorcery.

"Mutambal ko, pero, barang? Di ko oy!" (I heal, but, sorcery? I don't!)

He firmly says, but, admits that he counterparts other sorcerer's curse to his clients. He clearly identifies himself as a mananambal and his clients consult him para magpatambal (for healing). The habitual use of the phrase magpatambal ko (I need healing). When consulting a mananambal (healer), both the healer and the believer perceive that panambal (healing) encompasses strengthening social or intimate relationships or impairing and cursing a person to illness. Himols (pulse-checking) is the initial process of the panamnal in order to diagnose the sickness and perform palakaw (petition) or pasubay (determining what causes the sickness and its possible means of healing).

The Healing Power of Nature

Table 2 Medicinal Plants for Fatigue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photos</th>
<th>Local Names</th>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
<th>Curative Parts</th>
<th>Uses for Ailment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tigaw</td>
<td>Callicarpaformosana Rolfe</td>
<td>Leaves, Roots</td>
<td>Fatigue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The five mananambal or healers use herbal plants which are seen in Tables 2 and 3, which are perceived to be safe and effective remedies to treat common illnesses or diseases in the upland areas. Consequently, the healers utilize these plants in making ointments, oils and medicines which they prescribe to their patients. Although Cebuano traditional healing is often conceived as influenced by religion, mysticism, magic and superstition, the uses of medicinal plants suggest that panambal (healing) is an alternative modality for treating mild diseases and illnesses. In fact, former President Fidel V. Ramos signed into law Republic Act 8423, also known as “Traditional and Alternative Medicine Act of 1997”, in order to find an immediate panacea to physical and psychological pain using the way of nature [15].

### Table 3 Medicinal Plants for other Ailments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photos</th>
<th>Local Names</th>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
<th>Curative Parts</th>
<th>Uses for Ailment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mangagaw</td>
<td>Euphorbia hirta</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Dengue Fever</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
M₁ identifies *mangagaw* (*Euphorbia hirta*) as a therapeutic plant for fever, but according to the research done by students of UP Los Baños, the claim still depends on what type or variety of *mangagaw* a healer is using because this has a certain side effect. *Mananambal* and medical personnel have different perceptions toward medicinal plants. *Mananambal* strongly believe that the herbs they prescribe are reliable, since nobody in the community has complained about their possible negative effects. People in the medical field, on the other hand, promote conduction of scientific studies to validate the effectiveness and safety of the use of medicinal plants. Thus, folkloric health care using herbs could develop scientific studies and promote medical product development, as a breakthrough for modern medicines. The use of herbs becomes essential in “pangalap” (searching) of medicinal plants for “palina” (fumigation), “tuob” (boiling), “hilot” (massage), and “barang” (sorcery).

**Every Healing Procedure is accompanied by Prayers**

The *mananambal* make use of prayers, specifically identified as *orasyon* in treating whatever ailments or diseases. Often, *orasyon* is written in Latin, which is known to be the language of God. Two of the *mananambal* reveal that they use “librito”, a book composed of several *orasyon*. KIM₅ said that his *librito* is written in 520 languages with 73 prayers and 21 of those are Latin *orasyon*. Although not all of...
them have *librito*, it does not lead to the absence of *orasyon*, in every healing procedure that they perform. KIM$_1$ who acquires his ability to utter *orasyon* from his unusual trainings in his dream testifies that prayers should be done to make his healing craft effective. “*Mao to nga silbi giorasyonan siya para maayo siya kay nabughat man to siya,*” (That is why a prayer alleviates his or her suffering of fatigue) he answered when asked of the reason of uttering prayers to one of his patients upon performing the healing process called “*tayhop*” (gentle blowing).

The remaining four mananambal are also asked on the necessity of the said *orasyon*. Their responses suggest that an *orasyon* is neither a healing guide nor a source of healing abilities. There is no empirical way of testing the effectiveness of prayers in healing a person as of now; yet, KIM$_2$, KIM$_3$ and KIM$_5$ claim that they have healed patients who are suffering from cancer by means of an *orasyon*. Despite all the uncertainties, it is undeniable that traditional healing in Cebu is strongly driven and influenced by the Christian faith similarly to other traditional healing practices in the Philippines. This is folk Catholicism—a belief that animism and faith in the Supreme God co-exist.

**Atypical Way of Attaining Healing Abilities**

Most of the mananambal claim that their healing abilities originated from their ancestors and are passed on through the next generation; while some confess that they obtain their healing abilities through apparition. Two of them say that their calling begin through a series of dreams/apparition. KIM$_1$ laments “*Aw! Oh, kanang kuan, unsay nga anan, pagbuot siguro sa kinaiyahan kay gitugutan naman kog panambal. Wa man ko ingon nga nituon ko ug panambal.*” (Aw! Yes, maybe it’s the will of God that He grants me the ability to heal. It is not that I practiced my ability to heal). When asked how his calling begins, he answers, “*Nadya panahon nga nag damgo ko, nakamao na kog niana, naa may tiguwang nga naghatag nako og mga polong nga iyang isulti ba unsaon paggamit. Magbalik-balik sa akong damgo, kapin sa buwan kada-gabii.*”. (There are times that I am dreaming of an elderly, giving me words on how it will be done then with that, I knew I can. It was continuous and repetitive dreams, more than a month, every night). Like KIM$_1$, KIM$_2$ also testify that their calling begin through an apparition “*Permi ko ato gipadamgo ug usa katawo na pweri gyud dakoa, unya iya kong gituok ug nay nagpakita na usa ka tiguwang na babaye ug gitululan ko niya sa agianan paingon sa langob din nakaplagan nako didto ang usa ka librito.*” (It starts with a series of repetitive dreams. In my dreams I saw a big man, who chocked me then an elderly woman came. She guided me the way to the cave where I found the libretto). If some mananambal attain their healing abilities through apparition, there are some of them who attain healing abilities to heal from their ancestors and pass on through the next generation. Most of them who attain their healing abilities through their ancestry and by training are part of the Rizalista—a society that mushrooms in the 20th century, in honor of Dr. Jose P. Rizal, as the country’s National Hero. The execution of Rizal in 1896 paves the way to a popular imagination as a Filipino Jesus Christ. In the study done by Reynaldo Ileto as cited by Lahiri explains that the association of Rizal to Christ paves way why a symbolic Rizal has brilliant characteristic to represent the powers of Filipino mananambal, who transforms a physical form to something spiritual and receives a healing power [16]. Rizal is also associated to “Amang Doktor”, a fatherly doctor, in “a spirit who appears to certain people as a wizened old man hunched over a walking stick”. Although in appearance, he is nothing like the handsome young man with the wave of hair over his forehead but according to many, “Amang Doktor” and Jose Rizal are just one. The spirit of the young patriot, whose martyrdom at thirty three, has apparently grown old. Every interviewed mananambal has their own story in acquiring their healing abilities. Despite their differences, they all have the same goal—to heal the sick, since they believe that healing their patients is their legacy to the community.

**Traditional Healing as an Alternative**

Twelve out of thirteen patients interviewed believe in traditional healing. They see traditional healing as an alternative to medical practice because of financial matters. SIP$_4$ says, “*People at the province believe traditional healing because some have no money.*”

Vis-à-vis, SIP$_{10}$ confirms SIP$_{4}$’s statement the impoverished have no other choices and says,

“If I’m sick then I go to traditional healer... to have a “hilot” (massage), then I feel comfortable, because I believe he or she can heal my pain without paying big cash.”
Evidently, patients consult traditional healers instead of a professional doctor for medical help because they are not required to pay a fix amount unless they donate. This is an opposition to the hospitals or clinics where a consultation fee is required for every transaction made. This is supported by the study of Dr. Vergie Bonocan Maquiabas, that the age old practices continue despite modern day science because those who seek it finds it cheaper and sometimes more effective than relying on medical experts [13].

Medical Practitioners Disprove Traditional Healing

The mananambal, as traditional healers are already a reliable persons who have the indigenous health information and ways of indigenous treatments. Provided with appropriate competencies, traditional healers play a bigger role in preventing diseases to anyone, in the society. However, most medical practitioners do not believe in traditional healing for the reason that most of the medicines the traditional healers use have not been validated scientifically. One medical practitioner even states, “Many people suffer because of the serious complications that arise due to the use of traditional medicines.” Medical practitioners do not recommend traditional healing as an alternative way to cure diseases. It needs further studies to prove its effectiveness.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The Cebuano traditional healing practices or “panambal” comprise the use of “himolso” (pulse-checking), “palakaw” (petition), “pasubay” (determining what causes the sickness and its possible means of healing), “pangalap” (searching) of medicinal plants for “palina” (fumigation), “tayhop” (gentle-blowing), “tutho” (saliva-blowing), “tuob” (boiling), “orasyon” (mystical prayers), “hilot” (massage), and “barang” (sorcery). Although traditional healing with medical science disapproval, it contributes to a mystical identity of Cebuano healers, as a manifestation of folk Catholicism belief, in order to do a good legacy to the community that needs help. For further study, researchers may conduct further the studies on the: curative effects of medicinal plants in Cebu, psychological effect pulse-checking healed persons by the mananambal, and unmasking the other features of traditional healing.

REFERENCES
http://www.traditionalmedicine.net.au/tradheal.htm

Copyrights
Copyright of this article is retained by the author/s, with first publication rights granted to APJMR. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)