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Article

Cultural Heritage, Family Enterprise, and Social Reproduction: A Phenomenological Study of Minasa Store Owners in Bustos, Bulacan

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Abstract

The study examines the Minasa business enterprises in the town of Bustos, Bulacan. The store owners emphasize that their locally made Minasa comes into a preservation of practices where the food processing techniques are traditionally done through artisanal skills where it showcases the cultural love and traditional consistency of the store owners and Minasa production in Bustos. The phenomenological approach is the research design used in this study which focuses on the lived experiences of the Minasa store owners which cater the full support in cultural preservation and utilization of authentic characteristics of their manufacturing for the best Minasa. Five (5) participants were interviewed and selected through purposive sampling to give their full knowledge and expertise to this study. Aside from using the online platform and machinery traditional Minasa food processing remains the best method for producing the authentic structure of Minasa cookies. The original recipe in doing the Minasa is sago and replaced it with cassava flour, when the plantation and the production of these ingredients are decreasing. The problem with skilled people hiring in this business to produce this Minasa is a dilemma for them and the rising of the ingredients cost that may suffer the quality of their products. Participating in the annual Bustos Minasa festival is a big factor for the increase in sales of the Minasa store owners which showcase their brands of products, and they make met the business. The findings reveal that the business enterprise in Minasa is preserving the cultural heritage and traditional accepted method in food processing of Minasa cookies, the Minasa enterprise is majority founded with family to sustain their needs and standards of living. Their lived experiences and stories from their line of interviews provides resiliency and cultural continuity and identity when people come and visit Bustos. This is a profound testament of Filipino for their unwavering commitments and workmanships in the food processing identity. Cultural capital theory is a non-financial asset that helps people succeed in society. Cultural resources help individuals gain status and succeed in society, often passing down through families, reinforcing social inequality. These assets shape how individuals are perceived, navigate social institutions and their ability to succeed in education in the workplace. In addition, Durkheim's Social Solidarity is evident in the collective participation of store owners in the Bustos Minasa Festival, strengthening community bonds; Weber's Social Action Theory explains the owners' rational choices in balancing tradition with modern technology; and Marx's Social Reproduction Theory highlights how family enterprises perpetuate cultural and economic practices across generations, ensuring continuity of heritage and livelihood.

Keywords: *Cultural Capital Theory, Cultural Heritage, Family Enterprise, Social Reproduction, Social Solidarity*

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Introduction

In the section describing heritage foods as identity and continuity: "Traditional foods are signs and symbols of local identity and its persistence in the face of industrialization and modernity, according to Mercado and Andalencio (2020). This situation is related to that of Bustos Minasa, where the production and survival of Minasa rely on the tenacity of small business owners who continue to preserve this cultural legacy in addition to maintaining ancient recipes and processes. In this context, Durkheim's concept of Social Solidarity explains how collective practices such as the Minasa Festival reinforce community bonds and shared identity (Durkheim, 1912/1995)."

In the section on family-based enterprises and resilience: "Minasa enterprises are family-based operation and orientation microbusinesses that proven longevity. Store owners sustain and provide target production through non-mechanized, traditional methods and food processing techniques. As observed in heritage MSMEs across Southeast Asia, such enterprises often maintain resilience through local supply chains, community networks, and culturally rooted marketing, rather than industrial scaling (Quak & Thorpe et al., 2022). This reflects Marx's theory of Social Reproduction, where family enterprises perpetuate cultural and economic practices across generations, ensuring continuity of livelihood and heritage (Marx, 1867/1976)."

In the section on entrepreneurship balancing tradition and innovation: "As Culturist type of entrepreneurs must continuously adapt to market changes and demand value while balancing tradition and innovation to ensure economic viability. Moreover, the case of woodcarvers in Paete, Laguna, revealed how artisans integrate modern marketing strategies therefore at the same time maintaining the cultural essence of their chosen craft. These studies show that entrepreneurship serves as a means of cultural preservation in addition to being an economic activity. Here, Weber's Social Action Theory provides insight into how Minasa store owners rationalize their choices, balancing traditional authenticity with modern adaptation (Weber, 1922/1978)."

In the section on food as cultural capital and symbolic power: "In cultural capital identity shapes the social positioning of traditions in food enterprises like Minasa production therefore do not merely operate as economic ventures but serve as cultural reproduction engines for sustaining identity and symbolic power within the locality (Bourdieu et al., 1986). This directly reflects Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory, where non-financial assets such as artisanal skills and authenticity reinforce social status and continuity across generations (Bourdieu, 1986/2011)."

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to explore and understand the lived experiences of Minasa store owners in Bustos, Bulacan particularly on how they preserve and sustain their cultural and entrepreneurial heritage to social and economic changes.

Statement of the Problem

The main problem of this study is how do the Minasa owners in Bustos, Bulacan experience and transpire their role as cultural entrepreneurs in sustaining and preserving the Minasa tradition aside form changing social and economic conditions. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences that Minasa store owners associate with their entrepreneurial journey as custodians of traditional food processing heritage?
2. How do Minasa store owners preserve cultural authenticity and artisanal practices while adapting to modern business trends and evolving consumer demands?
3. What challenges and coping strategies do Minasa entrepreneurs encounter in sustaining their enterprises amid economic, technological and generational transitions?
4. How do the entrepreneurial practices of Minasa store owners contribute for the preservation of local identity, community delicacy and intergenerational cultural continuity in Bustos, Bulacan?

Methodology

Research Design

This research study employs a qualitative research design particularly the phenomenological approach. This research methodology covers the investigation on the comprehensive lived experiences of Minasa cookies business sector in Bustos Bulacan. This research design is well suited in examining the culinary roots, providing full information through the narration of their experiences (Bautista et al., 2024). This choice of method enables the researchers to cope up with a pertinent document for a significance experience of Minasa store business owners, as to come up with the managing challenges for being entrepreneur but the main goal is to sustain and preserve the identity of local community of Bustos for the preservation of culture aside from the transition of technology.

Population and Sample of the Study

The study's participants were Bustos, Bulacan-based Minasa store owners, food processors, and producers who were involved in the manufacturing, distribution, or management of Minasa cookies. Purposive convenience sampling was used, in accordance with qualitative research methodologies, to choose participants who had first-hand experiences pertinent to the goals of the study. According to phenomenological research principles, which emphasize data depth over number, a total of five participants will be interviewed (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Both men and women are welcome to participate; participants must be at least 18 years old and there are no gender limitations. Participants must also be Minasa store owners with at least three years of experience, being Bustos, Bulacan residents, and are the family successors of a Minasa business. This study uses a quasi-phenomenological method to

investigate participants lived experiences, which is in line with the methodology utilized in Documented Experiences among Food Service Businesses towards Future Proofing the Industry (2022). By using this method, researchers may get firsthand information from people who work directly in food production and management, which supports the study's objective of comprehending the practical knowledge of those who maintain Minasa businesses in the community.

Instruments of the Study

In line with the phenomenological qualitative design and the study's objectives, the research instrument promotes participants' reflective and narrative replies while ensuring cultural sensitivity. The interview guide aims to collect extensive data on the genuine experiences of Minasa store proprietors, emphasizing their methods of preserving, innovating, and protecting their traditional enterprises amid socioeconomic and technical transformations. The use of a semi-structured interview guide made it easier to be flexible, ask follow-up questions, and give extensive descriptions. A phenomenological qualitative study employing semi-structured interviews can investigate how local business proprietors maintain the authenticity of traditional meals by gathering producers' introspective narratives informed by their extensive expertise in traditional food preparation (Kamaruzaman et al., 2022). This directly pertains to the study's aim of describing the relationship among enterprise, tradition, and cultural heritage, while simultaneously offering an in-depth portrayal of the activities and daily experiences of the Minasa store proprietors.

Validation and Reliability

The interview guide was thoroughly validated by three panelists who are academic and qualitative research professionals in the disciplines of cultural heritage and business management. The questions' wording, structure, and flow will be refined in response to expert input to guarantee clarity, cultural sensitivity, and compliance with phenomenological inquiry. Expert validation is essential for developing and refining qualitative interview guides (Adamova et al., 2025). It is noted that consulting with academic specialists ensures that interview questions are clear, relevant to the context of the study, and directly tied to its objectives.

Ethical Consideration

The rights, dignity, and safety of every participant are protected in this study by strict adherence to ethical standards. Participants' informed consent was obtained before the interview procedure, and participation was entirely voluntary, allowing them to withdraw at any moment. All material collected was securely saved and used exclusively for academic study, and pseudonyms were used to guarantee anonymity and confidentiality. The research process was conducted with cultural sensitivity, showing respect for the Minasa store owners' traditions and practices (Harrison & Leitch, 2025).

Results and Discussion

RQ 1: Lived Experiences as Custodians of Traditional Food Heritage

Main Question: *What are the lived experiences that Minasa store owners associate with their entrepreneurial journey as custodians of traditional food processing heritage?*

Theme 1: Preservation of Family Heritage Through Traditional Minasa Business Enterprise

Excerpts:

Participant 1: For 28 years, the first participant has been producing and selling Minasa. They started the business as an extra income while teaching because their prior pay was only Php 4,000. They built a devoted following of customers who appreciated the timeless formula after beginning with home-based production. The recipe has been the same since the start. The individual continues to use the same age-old technique that they were taught as children by older women who baked Minasa in a *pugon*. Minasa baked in a wood-fired oven still tastes superior, according to the participant, even though they now use a modern oven. The ideal business approach is to stick to the original recipe, even if other people have updated their techniques.

Participant 2: Regarding cultural and familial inheritance, the second participant, a retired teacher echoed the same opinion. They started producing Minasa as part of their fiesta customs and as a business endeavor. *"I'm not really business-minded; I'm a teacher"*, the participant said, highlighting the fact that the craft was inherited. When the family recipe won the title of *"Merienda ng Kahapon"* in regional culinary competitions, their pride grew.

Participant 3: The third participant described how their family switched from working in bakeries to Minasa making and connected the company to their sense of cultural pride. *"What makes me proud is that Minasa continues to be recognized as part of our town's heritage*", they said. Minasa is a source of both history and livelihood for the participant.

Participants 4: The fourth participant highlighted the delight of carrying on a family tradition and their goal to pass it on to their children by tracing Minasa making back to their mother in the 1980s and remembering, *"We baked using a traditional clay oven"*.

Participant 5: The fifth participant explained that Minasa began as a straightforward domestic treat before evolving into a family business. In the past, Minasa was only offered as a fiesta snack and was not commercially distributed. With the family recipe unaltered, the participant took pride in having handed the business along to their daughter.

Table 1. Thematic Analysis of Lived Experiences as Custodians of Traditional Food Heritage

Theme	Codes
Preservation of Family Heritage Through Traditional Minasa Business Enterprise	Started in mother's time; fiesta snack tradition
	Bustos heritage; *Merienda ng Kahapon*
	Selling began in 1980s
	Pride in *pugon*-baked taste
	Business passed to next generation

"…Originally a routine and traditional family activity, the Minasa making process evolved into their pride-based, culturally continuous, and caring means of livelihood. The steadfast devotion to the unique recipe, the family legacy, and the generational transfer of knowledge and wisdom are examples of a cultural commercial enterprise that started in a heritage house rather than out of ambition and fortune. Leuterio et al. (2021)… Together, they lend credence to the notion that traditional food enterprises frequently have goals beyond monetary gain; Minasa store owners share a number of important concerns, including preserving the authenticity of recipes, transferring family customs, and ensuring cultural continuity. This reflects Marx's Social Reproduction Theory, where family enterprises reproduce cultural and economic practices across generations, sustaining both livelihood and heritage (Marx, 1867/1976)."

RQ2: Preserving Cultural Authenticity and Artisanal Practices
Main Question: *How do Minasa store owners preserve cultural authenticity and artisanal practices while adapting to modern business trends and evolving consumer demands?*

Theme 1: Balancing Culture and Tradition, Adaptation in Preserving Minasa Authenticity

Excerpts:
Participant 1: The first participant emphasized the importance of preserving the original recipe, flavor, and texture. As mentioned, "I think that sticking to the original recipe is the best business practice because my Minasa always tastes the best" . Minasa baked in a wood-fired oven still tastes better, even when an oven has replaced the pugon. This demonstrates a dedication to customs despite contemporary developments.

Participant 2: According to the second participant, although the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) offers equipment such mixers, staff members rarely utilize them because it takes time for them to become accustomed to the apparatus. The participant favors hand mixing because it preserves the connection between the creator and the product.

Participant 3: The third participant modified some of the elements in their traditional recipe as time went on. They explained that although sago was originally the main ingredient, flour and cassava flour are now used.

Participant 4: The fourth participant claims that they once altered the recipe to save money, but the customers were mindful of it. They went back to the original format and formula, reiterating their belief that authenticity ensures customer loyalty.

Participant 5: The fifth person continues to execute all tasks by hand, including baking and kneading. Although they still use the same process, they now substitute cassava for sago as a component.

Table 2. Thematic Analysis of Preserving Cultural Authenticity and Artisanal Practices

Theme	**Codes**
Balancing Culture and Tradition: Adaptation in Preserving Minasa Authenticity	Hand-kneading maintained as traditional practice
	Use of DOST equipment; shift from *pugon* to oven
	Substitution of *sago* with cassava
	Feedback on taste changes
	Maintaining the original recipe

"…Authenticity is a distinctive feature of their offering that is valued by the remaining participants. Recipe changes like using cassava instead of sago and altering the oven show adaptive authenticity if modernization encourages sustainability without erasing the culture. The artisan's hands and principles are provide authenticity beyond the ingredients… The experience of Minasa artisans is reflected in these studies, which show how their handiwork exhibits a dynamic balance between tradition, adaptation, and cultural stewardship. This balance can be explained through Weber's Social Action Theory, which highlights how entrepreneurs rationalize their decisions, weighing traditional authenticity against modern efficiency (Weber, 1922/1978)."

RQ3: Challenges and Coping Strategies
Main Question: *What challenges and coping strategies do Minasa entrepreneurs encounter in sustaining their enterprises amid economic, technological, and generational transitions?*
Theme 3: Resilience and Adaptation Amid Challenges in Sustaining the Minasa Business

Excerpts:

Participant 1: As stated by the first participant, *"When my nieces are busy with school, I have to make everything by myself"*, labor scarcity is the greatest obstacle. Nevertheless, they resilient by relying on word-of-mouth advertising and increased exposure during the Minasa Festival. There has never been a problem with competition because each player has regular and devoted clients.

Participant 2: Due of competition and imitation, the second participant had to deal with former employees starting their own Minasa firms. *"But that's fine"*, they said, stressing harmony above competition.

Participant 3: Sales fluctuate, according to the third participant, who explained, "Sales drop during lean months but rise during the Ber months". They utilize social media to promote their products, but since Minasa is so fragile, they have never delivered via sites like Shopee.

Participant 4: The Minasa business offered greater exposure and improved morale, but the fourth participant found it difficult to balance the teaching profession and the company, saying, "It often means sleepless nights".

Participant 5: The fifth participant emphasized the growing price of materials like sago but cited media attention and community recognition as sources of strength, saying, "Even with many competitors, our sales remain strong".

Table 3. Thematic Analysis in Challenges and Coping Strategies

Theme	Codes
Resilience and Adaptation Amid Challenges in Sustaining the Minasa Business	Managing production alone; sleepless nights
	Former workers becoming competitors
	Increasing cost of *sago*
	Higher demand during *ber* months
	Promotion through festivals and TV features

"…Their coping strategies serve as an example of cultural resilience in the form of tenacity for sustained communal collaboration, trust, and adaptability. The Minasa store

owners' and producers' struggles are not only monetary; they are also cultural and emotional, showing how a business endeavor intertwined with tradition sustains both livelihood and legacy. According to Matias et al. (2025)… This resilience demonstrates Durkheim's Social Solidarity, where collective practices, festivals, and community ties strengthen cohesion and enable small enterprises to endure challenges (Durkheim, 1912/1995)."

RQ4: Contribution to Local Identity and Cultural Continuity
Main Question: *How do the entrepreneurial practices of Minasa store owners contribute to the preservation of local identity, community delicacy, and intergenerational cultural continuity in Bustos, Bulacan?*

Theme 4: Cultural Preservation and Identity Through Generational Entrepreneurship
Excerpts:

Participant 1: According to the first participant, "The festival has been a big help, sales increase during that time." Additionally, they stated that the Minasa festival contributed to the increased recognition of their business. The town is proud of its traditional recipe, which enhances its prestige.

Participant 2: The second participant recognized Minasa as a part of Bustos culture, saying, "It's our way of keeping our tradition alive", despite the fact that the event did not significantly increase sales.

Participant 3: The third participant attributed their increased visibility to the festival and media attention, saying, "I'm proud that Minasa remains a symbol of our town's culture".

Participant 4: The fourth participant pointed out that a number of customers anticipate their table every year, demonstrating how the fair encourages continuity and civic engagement.

Participant 5: The fifth participant, who emphasized the generational transmission of tradition by stating, "I passed the business to my daughter and told her to never change the recipe", related flavor preservation to brand identity maintenance.

Table 4. Thematic Analysis in Contribution to Local Identity and Cultural Continuity

Theme	Codes
Cultural Preservation and Identity Through Generational Entrepreneurship	Symbol of the town's culture
	Increased sales during festivals
	Business passed to the next generation
	Maintaining the original recipe

"…Their enterprises not only support their livelihoods but also contribute to the preservation of the town's culinary heritage for upcoming generations. Solano & Wetzels et al. (2021) emphasizes that artisan enterprises function as cultural heritage bearers, where skills, authenticity and tradition are transmitted across generations, reinforcing identify and continuity within communities. This contribution reflects Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory, where non-financial assets such as artisanal skills, authenticity, and symbolic heritage reinforce social status and continuity within the community (Bourdieu, 1986/2011)."

Conclusion

This study concludes that rather than being motivated just by financial gain, the commercial operations of Minasa store owners are positioned as an important act of cultural preservation and guardianship identity. The findings indicate that they are motivated by a strong sense of moral obligation to uphold the integrity of their culinary skills, pride in their ancestry, and familial responsibilities. Through narrative, best practices, and community involvement, the Minasa making tradition sustains their way of life and serves as a living representation of Bustos cultural identity, bridging generations.

Authenticity remains a distinguishing characteristic of Minasa manufacturing, according to the report's findings. In order to ensure that modernity does not detract from the product's traditional essence, Minasa producers are implementing practical innovations like oven utilization and ingredient substitution gradually and carefully. The approach demonstrates adaptive authenticity by finding a balance between honoring history and embracing long-term change. This reflects Weber's Social Action Theory, which explains how entrepreneurs rationalize their choices in balancing tradition with modernization (Weber, 1922/1978).

Minasa company owners remain resilient in the face of challenges including growing labor demands, material costs, and market competition in the community by participating in annual festivals, cooperating as a family, and fostering communal solidarity. This resilience reflects Durkheim's concept Social Solidarity, where collective practices and shared rituals strengthen cohesion and enable small enterprises to endure challenges (Durkheim, 1912/1995).

The Minasa Festival in particular is important for both economic development and cultural preservation. It provides a venue for gatherings to honor shared history, regional identity, and handicrafts. The Minasa commercial company bridges the gap between past and present experiences by establishing a long-lasting relationship between cultural memory and modern enterprise through this event. This contribution reflects Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory, where non-financial assets such as artisanal skills and authenticity reinforce social status and continuity across generations (Bourdieu, 1986/2011).

Ultimately, the study concludes that the Minasa commercial enterprise epitomizes the combination of livelihood and legacy, with its small-scale businesses

acting as cultural guardians, safeguarding Bustos' culinary culture. According to the lived experiences of Minasa store owners, heritage-based business plays a vital role in maintaining Filipino culture by proving that moral artistry, resilience, and authenticity can maintain both community identity and economic standards in the face of modern change. This intergenerational transfer of recipes and artisanal skills further reflects Marx's Social Reproduction Theory, where family enterprises perpetuate cultural and economic practices across generations (Marx, 1867/1976).

Recommendations

1. The LGU of Bustos, Bulacan should institutionalize the Minasa Festival within the municipal tourism calendar and formally recognize Minasa making under a Cultural Heritage Ordinance. This policy action ensures sustained government support for preservation initiatives, while providing financial assistance, training, and enterprise development programs. Embedding Minasa into heritage law strengthens cultural preservation and safeguards its authenticity against commercialization pressures.
2. Agencies such as the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), TESDA, and higher education institutions should implement structured training programs in digital marketing, product standardization, and intellectual property protection. These interventions position Minasa enterprises within broader MSME development frameworks, ensuring competitiveness while maintaining artisanal authenticity. This aligns with social reproduction by sustaining family enterprises across generations.
3. Schools and higher education institutions in Bustos should integrate Minasa heritage into curricula and extension services. Embedding culinary heritage in education fosters social solidarity by strengthening community identity among youth, while also cultivating entrepreneurial skills rooted in cultural tradition. This policy ensures intergenerational continuity and elevates Minasa as a pedagogical tool for values-based education.
4. Establishing a Minasa Makers Cooperative would unify branding, improve product quality, and enhance access to shared resources. Cooperative structures promote fair pricing, equitable competition, and knowledge-sharing among artisans. This reflects Weber's Social Action, as collective organization is a rational response to market pressures while preserving cultural authenticity.
5. Under the Culinary Heritage and Tourism Program, LGUs and cultural tourism departments should promote Minasa making as a flagship attraction. Storytelling, baking demonstrations, and festival activities can be packaged into tourism experiences, reinforcing Bustos' identity as a heritage town. This policy leverages Bourdieu's Cultural Capital, positioning artisanal knowledge and authenticity as symbolic assets that enhance both cultural prestige and economic viability.

6. Policymakers and academic institutions should support research on gender roles, youth engagement, and sustainability in Minasa enterprises. Studies on eco-friendly ovens, locally sourced cassava, and women's leadership in heritage businesses can inform inclusive and sustainable cultural policies. This ensures that environmental responsibility complements cultural preservation, aligning with global heritage management standards.

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Amor S. Lazaro earned a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Education, major in Foods, from Bulacan State University Main Campus. She further pursued graduate studies and completed a Master of Arts in Teaching, major in Food Trades, at Eulogio 'Amang' Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology (EARIST). She is currently a Food Processing Instructor at Bulacan State University, Bustos Campus. She holds Events Management NC III, Bread and Pastry Production NC II and Cookery NC II certifications, demonstrating her expertise in hospitality and food-related industries. She has actively participated in various professional development seminars and training programs, including Barista Training, Japanese Cuisine, and Baking. These experiences have enhanced her technical competencies and enriched her teaching practices in food processing and culinary education. Her research interests include food innovation, food processing technologies, sustainable food production, entrepreneurship in the food industry, and outcomes-based education in technical and vocational training.

John Marco A. Lazaro is a Food Safety Compliance Officer (FSCO) and a dedicated faculty member at Bulacan State University – Bustos Campus. His diverse background in the Food Service Industry has honed his knowledge and ability particularly in food safety standards. Professionally, he has served as a part-time faculty member at Bulacan State University – Bustos Campus since January 2020. Prior to this role, he worked as a Store Manager at Wendy's SM City Baliwag from November 23, 2018, to January 18, 2020. Academically, the author holds a Master of Industrial Technology Management from Bulacan State University, completed in 2023, and a Bachelor of Industrial Technology majoring in Food and Service Management from the same university, completed in 2018. His academic excellence is highlighted by several awards and recognitions, including graduating Magna Cum Laude in 2018.