

The Mat-Weavers' Legacy: Preservation and Promotion of Basey, Samar Banig Culture

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Abstract

This study is focused on the hows and whys behind the mat “tikog” industry in Basey, Samar, Philippines. The methodology used in this study is qualitative case study approach as the researchers had undergone a series of interviews with identified locals knowledgeable and have a first-hand experience of the said industry. Furthermore, this study would like to dig deeper, more on the extent of awareness of the locality with the House Bill 6566, a bill that will soon declare Basey, Samar as the “Banig Capital of the Philippines” and will provide funding for the education and promotion of the said industry. The researchers had also explored on the interventions being done by the Local government Unit in promoting and preserving the said industry.

Keywords: Banig, Tikog Industry, Banig Capital

Introduction

Basey, Samar’s mat production is an old industry. The origination of the culture dates far back as the beginning of the Spanish colonization. On the other hand, had people concerned in the industry been questioned regarding its emergence, no one answer would be sufficient. Nevertheless, the mat-making industry is continuously treated as an heirloom, being passed down from generation to generation with each cohort rendering novelty ideas to the processes of mat-weaving.

Undoubtedly, the industry’s emergence had not originated from the notion of aiding other people, but rather an attempt to supply mats essential to the members of one’s family. As with other household industries, mat weaving was enriched through the years and had a gradual increment in demand which, henceforth, engendered the industry as it is today.

Consequently, as the demand for the product continually increased, some people appeared to have had greater efficiency in their production compared to other manufacturers. The people in the locality have noticed these differences and have simultaneously demanded better products from the more well-versed workers. Afterwards, with the increased interest and preference from the consumers, the workers began to expend greater time in the manufacture, and with it, resulted to a greater degree of efficiency. This, furthermore, gave rise to commodity production, production for exchange.

The mats’ (produced in Basey) prominence has proliferated to the nearby towns of Samar and Leyte, which heightened the scope and demand of the product. This was the main approach by which the industry was instigated and was likewise advertised until the current Basey mats which are well-known throughout the entirety of the Philippines and several portions of the United States.

Meanwhile, a major factor of the success of the industry, and without which mat making in Basey would not be possible, let alone prosper, is the abundance of the “tikog” grass in the vicinity. The aforementioned grass is the primary material by which Basey mats are made. Another point to consider

is that tikog mats are manufactured exclusively in Samar and Bohol (Escoda, 1953).

As mentioned by Evite (2008), Basey sought and claimed to have set a world record for the longest mat in the world whereas the community weavers have paraded a mat whose length exceeded a kilometer. On the other hand, this was not proclaimed to be official given that it had not been submitted to the Guinness Book of World Records.

The aforesaid parade, however, is an annual event held to celebrate the feast of St. Michael, Basey's patron saint. The event's highlight is the Banigan-Kawayan Festival, where the women of the local weave varied designed mats from tikog (*Fimbristylis milliacea*) as weaving is the locality's prime industry (Kwentong Pilipinas, 2009).

As of late, Basey is to be proclaimed to be the "Banig Capital of the Philippines", further developing the tikog industry of the locality, through the legislative measure House Bill 6566 (Abella, 2021).

Review of Related Literature and Studies

This section will discuss the related literatures and studies by which the study is anchored to and will further present discussions about the subject of this research study, the preservation of banig mat-weaving culture in Basey, Samar, discussing the various procedures being and will be implemented for the aforesaid topic.

Related Literature

The Banig and Tikog Industry

At the current time, the government of Basey is undergoing formal procedures to have the municipality be introduced as the *Banig Capital of the Philippines* in accordance with the legislative measure House Bill 9490 (in substitution of House Bill 6566) – "The Act Developing the Tikog Industry, Creating for the Purpose the Banig Subsidy Fund and the Tikog Research and Development Center, and Declaring the Municipality of Basey in the Province of Samar as the Banig Capital of the Philippines" – (short titled Tikog Industry Development Act) as introduced by Cong. Sharee Ann Tan. The bill has been approved to the committee level last September 2020 (Abella, 2021). However, announced not on official publications is the approval for third rating of the aforesaid bill on August 2021 (as stated on a Facebook post by the aforesaid government official).

Basey, Samar is one of the notable manufacturers of mats, whose presence has become of great importance as the making of mats, or *petates*, was one of the most prevalent and essential occupations in the area given the limited number of industries. It should also be noted that through this banig-manufacturing industry, the estimated amount earned annually (as of 1917) reached twenty-five thousand pesos (₱25,000). This amount was tallied from Tacloban exports alone. With proper consideration that Tacloban is not the only area the mats are exported to, this amount constitutes a fraction of the whole, although Tacloban was considered the chief port of the export of the manufactured mats (Escoda, 1953).

Artistry of the Basey Mats

According to Baradas (2004), the art of mat making in the Philippines was manifested through various cultures and traditions, resulting to a varied history of each province. Disparate species of reeds are utilized which are characterized to remain cool within the heat of the day, have a distinct comfortable texture, and are porous enough to let ventilation through. The prevalence of these banigs in households have caused the invention to be taken for granted and was henceforth relegated to the realm of "*kaartehan ng matatanda*" [artistry of the elderly]. Samar mats could arguably be the most extensively used in the Philippines which is ubiquitous throughout markets not only in Visayas, but also in Mindanao and Luzon, stemming from the attractive colors and affordable prices. Also, the center of mat making is in the municipality of Basey. The process and color tones are similar to the Maranao mat, although the material used in Basey is tikog, and there is a significant difference in design. The motifs are either done with contrasting colors or the natural tikog color, whereas the latter is promptly costlier. Moreover, a highly

specialized skill characterized by the difficulty to be bequeathed is occasionally showcased – the “portrait mats”. Consequently, the technique for the creation of these mats could be termed as embroidery due to the process of inserting the design after the basic plain background mat has been fully woven.

Related Studies

As of 2014, of the 25 barangays situated in Basey, Samar, 342 individuals were involved in the banig mat-weaving industry whereas Brgy. Mabini constituted the majority of the total population of weavers. Meanwhile, a total of 177 raw material providers are involved in supplying for the local mat producers, contributing 357 bundles of tikog after each round of production. There are also 4 mat-based handicrafts producers which are, namely, Delza Morales Native Products, Elvira Padoc’s Native Products, Eva Marie’s Arts and Crafts, and Bacayo’s Native Products. Six (6) government entities (Basey LGU, DOT, DTI, DARMO Basey, PNOC, and DOST) provided interventions and support to the development of the mat industry. The mats prices and costs hinge on the sizes and designs. As the mat-weaving process is done manually entailing copious amounts of time and passions and requires human labor from start to finish, human workforce would be highly essential and human factors (such as attitudes and values) would greatly affect the productivity of this industry. On the other hand, the industry is facing threats that are silently affecting the productivity of the new generations. To wit, the said threats are; (1) negativity of the new generations towards the industry, (2) the absence of technological advancements and support from public sectors in easing production procedures, and (3) the absence of man-made tikog plantations. These threats also press the local players to limit its production capability given the instability of raw material supply resulting to inability to engage in direct exportation. Meanwhile, vast areas of marshlands are unutilized. The farmers’ attitude and values are rather pessimistic towards tikog production given that their income would be more assured through rice farming, rendering the latter to have more prevalence than the first (Diaz, 2014).

According to Cuaton (2019), the tikog industry has earned itself an important role in sole proprietorships and family-owned businesses, and so has the latter for the other, especially for the women. These businesses are derived from Basey-based individuals and households whom have progressed in the industry. Weavers, converters, sub-contract suppliers of raw materials, and embroiderers are employed. Meanwhile, a well-known group within the municipality of Basey is BANIG (Basey Association of Native Industry Growth). This is an association of 29 village associations which is fully operational active on developing of the tikog industry approved by the Basey Municipality (LGU) and has a seat in the Municipal Development Council (MDC). Regional inter-ministerial convergence includes the Tikog industry as a key development agenda for community development, and BANIG is supported by convergence members. The author has also identified the value chain map (VCM) determining the key factors in the industry, namely; (1) functions, (2) actor, (3) value, and (4) the enablers. The author, moreover, have pointed out (1) lack of market awareness, (2) limited access to domestic and export markets, (3) limited conducive work places, (4) inconsistent quality of dried tikog grasses, and (5) incompleteness of the administration and governance, to be some of the identified problems of the industry. On the other hand, some suggestions for the development of the tikog industry were mentioned; such as (1) to raise market and Fair-Trading awareness, (2) prioritization in establishing dried tikog grass supply inventory, (3) innovation of a dryer for tikog grass, (4) support of community associations, (5) sustenance of funds, (6) establish enabling policy environments and (7) institutionalize measures to encourage participation of women.

Methodology

This section presents the accessible research methods utilized in the conduct of the study in accordance with the detailed procedures in data gathering and analysis. Thus, this portion of the study itemizes the research design, research locale, sampling method used, the research participants, data collection and analysis procedures.

Research Design

The research follows the qualitative type of research. Moreover, the research employs the approach of a case study that seeks to understand the intricacy of the maintenance of the traditional practice – which would be the procedures of preserving the culture of mat weaving in the locality of Basey, Samar.

A case study examines complex phenomena in the natural setting for which it conducts an intensive analysis in a group of individuals aimed to generalize specified demographics (Heale & Twycross, 2017).

Research Locale

The research process consisting of the collection of data and analysis have been conducted within proximity to the primary participants, therefore the area for which the research interviews done was in Basey (Poblacion), Samar, Philippines. Specifically, the interviews were taken place in barangays Lawaan, Sulod, and Baybay in the aforesaid municipality.

Sampling

The scope of the participants is limited to those with a background on the matter or are knowledgeable of the *banig* industry in Basey, Samar. Given that there is a limited amount of people knowledgeable and are directly correlated to the study, the sampling technique utilized is non-random or non-probability. Thus, the purposive sampling technique will be used.

In accordance with Crossman (2018), the purposive sampling technique is characterized as a non-probability sample whose selection is based on the features and objective of the study. The technique becomes very useful in circumstances where proportionality is not the main concern.

Research Participants

The research participants are specifically limited to those knowledgeable of the *banig* industry, therefore a limited number (with a quota of 5 interviewees) of people was interviewed. As they should be directly concerned with the banig and tikog industry, the respondents are comprised of banig-based chain product manufacturers, tourism officials, and is/are part of BANIG.

Each individual participant has the choice whether to be interviewed or not – to participate or not. If ever the individual participant allowed the interview, since documentation is necessary, consent was asked beforehand, whether they would want their faces to be blurred out of the picture to respect confidentiality and privacy or not. Furthermore, whenever necessary, a letter of consent for the conduct of the interview were presented duly. These procedures were employed to avoid the invasion of privacy and other private affairs, and initiate controversies.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection procedure was accomplished through interviews. A semi-structured interview is to be conducted whereas the interview process contains prepared questions may or may not be subsequent questions whenever the researches deem it necessary. As this is a local research, language use was not be limited to English, and participants shall be free to use whatever they please. The researchers, however, will proceed to contextualized translation after transcription, to have a finalized study in the English language.

The participants, specifically those that are directly concerned with the banig and tikog industry (MSMEs (Micro, small, and medium enterprises), Tourism Officials, BANIG representatives), are expected to answer the following questions in accordance with the methodologies of preserving (and promoting) the *Banig* mat weaving culture of Basey, Samar:

1. How is the *Banig* mat weaving culture being preserved?
 - a. What are the current procedures you have implemented to preserve the Banig mat weaving culture of Basey?
 - b. Have you considered involving the youth in the Banig mat weaving industry?

- c. Are there any technological advancements or is technology considered in the mat-weaving industry?
 - d. What are your plans for the preservation of the culture?
2. How is the *Banig* mat weaving culture being promoted locally and nationally?
 - a. Have you heard of House Bill 6566? What are your thoughts on this?
 - b. How is the culture being promoted locally? How about in the national level?
 - c. Whenever promotion procedures arise, would you be willing to render assistance?

Data Analysis

In analyzing the gathered data from the interview, content analysis was utilized. According to Moore & McCabe (2005), content analysis entails that the data gathered will be categorized into themes and subthemes, which will make comparisons and the creation generalizations easier. Its advantages include the reduction and simplification of terms which will then be measurable through qualitative techniques.

On the other hand, Krippendorff & Bock (2008) state that human error may be prevalent in the utilization of content analysis – since misinterpretations could occur as the researchers analyze the data, thereby generating unreliable, faulty conclusions.

Results and Discussion

This section will present discussions of the content analysis and interpretations of the researchers in connection to the data they have gathered through an interview with the participants of this study, individuals whom are directly concerned with the banig and tikog industry.

Procedures considered in preserving Banig

Based on the interviews conducted, various procedures have been and are currently being implemented for the preservation of the banig mat-weaving culture, including the tikog industry being the main constituent of the product.

Generally, it is empirical for skills and cultures to continue being practiced for it to be preserved. This response has been the most pre-dominant answer to the question. Mat weaving is a skill that is passed down from generation to generation through practical demonstration with the help of adept mat weavers, which makes it hard to proliferate without the help of the laborers themselves.

One procedure that is constantly being administered is the conduct of seminars and training workshops. In coordination with the provincial government, various public sectors, and through the initiative of the congresswoman, regular meetings with mat weavers are accomplished whenever major changes, projects, and updates are to be announced and implemented regarding the industry. Simultaneously, collaborating with barangay officials and parents themselves, children and youth would be accordingly invited to encourage them to be engaged in the banig and tikog industry. In this regard, the training workshops and seminars would not be limited in the barangay setting, but would also include schools, where the youth and children are readily locatable.

These are in accordance with UNESCO's statement regarding heritage preservation – may it be tangible or intangible, natural or cultural, movable or immovable. Specifically, the above-mentioned are in conformity with the second way in preserving cultural heritage which is “to preserve it in living form ensuring its transmission to the next generation” (Manila Times, 2014). In layman's terms, it is to manifest the culture through constant practice with the aid of already existing laborers. On the other hand, in the effort to continue the skill and be passed down to the proceeding generation, issues have been identified which includes, but is not limited to, the quarantine protocols during the pandemic, technology dependence, youth's indifference to the industry, and low revenue.

Meanwhile, a project initiated and headed by Congresswoman Sharee Ann Tan is the *LARA and Banig Showroom* which features the famous handwoven mats of the locality. LARA is a fashion brand that redefines the traditional usage and notion of banig. The name “LARA” was derived from the word

“lara” which means “to weave” in the locality’s vernacular. Mentioned by majority of the respondents, this project is a procedure in both the preservation and promotion of the culture. Furthermore, this gives rise to opportunities that could be given to local mat weavers and material preparation workers alike – bolstering also the income of the workers.



Illustration 1. LARA and Banig Showroom Exterior Design

Image Source: <https://www.facebook.com/ejgndisenocreativo.ph/photospcb.189114096624976/189113966624989/>

“The mats and by-products featured in the LARA Showroom are exclusively from the workers of the showroom themselves and members of BANIG (Ogrimen, 2022).”

As the showroom specifically has its own workforce comprised of skilled mat weavers, quality assurance would no longer be an issue to the consumers. Furthermore, the location of the showroom (Brgy. Can-manila, Basey, Samar) makes the travelers have easier access to the building as it is built along the highway. Along with this, a banig museum is said to be part of the establishment.

Another measure in increasing interest and productivity in the workers, possibly influencing other people outside of the industry, is to provide better income that would appropriately compensate the efforts of the weavers and material preparation workforce.

Diaz (2014) stated that farmers are despondent with regards to tikog farming as compared to rice farming due to the lower income the first acquires as opposed to the latter. This statement coincides with BANIG President Ogrimen’s statement that low quality income was an issue in the industry. She has articulated that a single mat would take four to five (4-5) days at least to complete. Afterwards, despite the hard-manual labor, they would only be paid about one hundred fifty pesos (₱150.00) for each creation. With this in hand, they strive to increase the revenue of the work.

One of the most common responses that has been observed by the researchers is the anticipation of the participants toward the inclusion of banig mat weaving as a course in tertiary education and/or as a strand in the secondary education, specifically in the Senior High School. The federation BANIG, being the primary proponent and facilitators of this premise, was especially intent on its implementation.

The above-mentioned courses of action imply that the local LGU, local mat weavers, MSMEs, and members of BANIG are constantly in coordination with various agencies in the attempt to preserve the culture, noticeably slowly declining as generations pass.

Youth involvement

As the results suggest, youth involvement is highly encouraged in the industry, both in the mat weaving process and material preparation. As the culture is highly dependent on its passage from one generation to another generation, youth involvement becomes a great factor in the attempt to preserve the culture. As expected, the youth has always been and always be a factor the local LGU will consider in the matter. As such, the following procedures are being employed with the aforesaid aim at hand:

Pre-pandemic, seminars and training workshops were held regularly for public information which also includes the encouragement of the youth. These were conducted as barangay-wide or school-related

events in the locality. Senior Tourism Operation Officer Evangelina Ritaga, however, had observed that children (persons under 14), specifically, are more intent to the matter, as compared to the youth (persons aged 15 to 24). These observations were taken from numerous seminars and training workshops.

The above-mentioned assessment denotes the youth's disinterest on the subject matter as opposed to past generations. As hard manual labor is required in the creation of the mats (and by-products), it can be inferred that technology plays a role in this behavior, in accordance with the actuality that blue collared jobs or degree-based professions yield higher profit. Furthermore, as children has greater dependence on their parents and would often follow them more frequently than the youth,

Meanwhile, already in the making is the inclusion of mat weaving as an SHS strand and/or as a degree – basically, let it be a part of the educational system completely.

"It is already there at present. The plan is to implement it from elementary to Grade 12... As of late, the Commissioner of CHED came here to announce that there is a plan, whereas a proposal has already been made, to make mat weaving a degree, asking for the congresswoman for a bill (Ogrimen, 2022)."

The primary reasons of this proposition were (1) "not all students whom are able to graduate in high school are able to proceed to tertiary education" and (2) increase youth involvement in the industry. Contrarily, there have been counteractive responses to the proposition including the youth themselves and the parents of the youth.

Technological utilization

The main purpose of the question was to find out whether technological advances have also affected the tikog and banig industry through whatever means possible. As technology has become an essential part of human life, it would of great benefit to ease the laborious process. Based on the data gathered regarding the integration of technology onto the process of the banig production, technology has yet to become an integral element of banig mat-weaving.

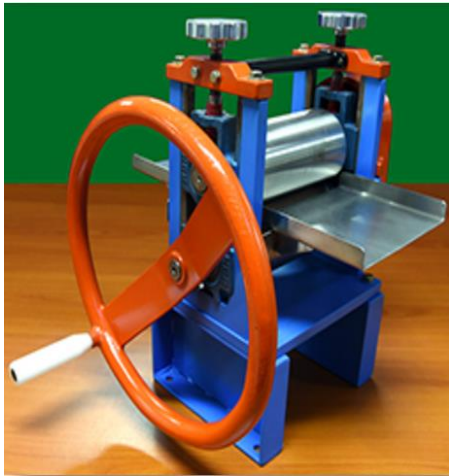
However, the technicality of the terms "banig mat-weaving" is to be taken into consideration. The respondents did not give confirmation that machineries have been innovated in the weaving process itself. As Diaz (2014) discussed, technological support from public sectors and advancement are lacking in the industry since the mat-weaving process requires full manual labor from start to finish. Highlighting this issue could also rouse the issue of the younger generations' pessimistic view upon the industry, which is in conformity to the aforesaid author's findings. On the other hand, there has been confirmed machineries that aid in fiber preparation which will then be utilized for weaving.

"We try to adapt to changing times. We do not have a machine that helps us in weaving the mats, since everything still requires manual labor. However, I am knowledgeable of a tikog flattener which helps us lessen manual effort on flattening the fiber (Ritaga, 2021)."

"We have the flattener machine... When I was a Grade 6 Science teacher, we made one of those... And it can be maneuvered either manually or with the help of technology (Padoc, 2021)."

"We do have a technology, simple technology... We also have one of those flattener machines in the school. I am, however, unknowledgeable of whether it is being used or not... You would only have to maneuver a simple crank lever after inserting the leaves onto the machine (Bacayo, 2021)."

The introduction of the flattening machine urged the researchers to search for the machinery as to its appearance and mechanisms. However, upon further examination, it has been found that the Tikog Flattening Machine was not the only apparatus that would aid in the production of mats. The "Pandanus Leaves Slitter-Presser" would also aid in the mat industry, although it serves the same purpose as the Tikog Flattening Machine. The only difference is the material to be flattened by each product.



Illustrations 2 & 3. Tikog Flattening Machine (left) and Pandanus Leaves Slitter-Presser (right)
 Image Source: <https://mirdc.dost.gov.ph/news-feeds/2-uncategorised/216-rizal-province-opens-its-doors-to-technologies-developed-by-the-dost-mirdc>

These products have been proposed to DoST-MIRC for the mat industry and was formally introduced to the public for mass production and utilization. The creation of these innovations could give rise to other equipment that could aid in the industry. As Cuaton (2019) has pointed out, prototyping a dryer for tikog grass, as recommended by CARE (2015), would be of help in easing one of the problems existing in the industry.

On the other hand, BANIG President Anita Ogrimen has identified technologies that have been planned for and to be proposed to different sectors for the purpose of easing the material preparation which includes the dryer and dyeing machines specific to the tikog grass.

Problems Identified in the Preservation of the Culture

In contrast with the technological innovation in the mat industry, with the gradual increment in the prevalence of usage of technology, people's dependence on technology has considerably afflicted the manual workforce in the industry. On the bright side, this urges the public sectors to introduce innovations that would be beneficial to the industry – which would be a positive signification of the industry's persistence in the locality.

It should be noted, moreover, that a factor of the reduction of the appreciation and utilization of banig is the frequency by which people in the locality can discern the product (and byproducts) and have gotten accustomed to the sight of it. This issue has been identified by the respondents which also has a direct correlation to the youth's view of the material. Furthermore, this is greatly similar to Baradas' (2004) statement where the culture is gradually fading due to it being taken for granted and relegated to the realm of *kaartehan ng matatanda*.

Consequent to the proposal of making mat weaving an official part of the educational system, backlash and negative comments were also received, whereas most came from parents of the youth themselves. The main reason of their disapproval of the recommendation was that "the students go to school so that they would be able to deviate from their original lifestyles and work as professional workers in offices, rather than do hard manual labor that they are currently experiencing". A factor by which this issue is heavily anchored by is another issue in and of itself – low quality income of the industry. The effort expended upon the creation of mats seem to not be compensated by the revenue they earn afterwards, which also contributes to the youth's pessimistic view of the industry.

The emergence of the pandemic has also inhibited both the pace of production and the preservation and promotion procedures, given that the protocols for the welfare of the public are to be adhered. This issue gave rise to another issue in the banig and tikog industry. Proliferation procedures

through trainings and workshops were halted; delivery and processing of raw materials were restrained; and certain publicity methods were suspended. It is presumed, however, that once the pandemic has been mobilized, the aforesaid processes would revert to its prosperous state.

Recognition of House Bill 6566

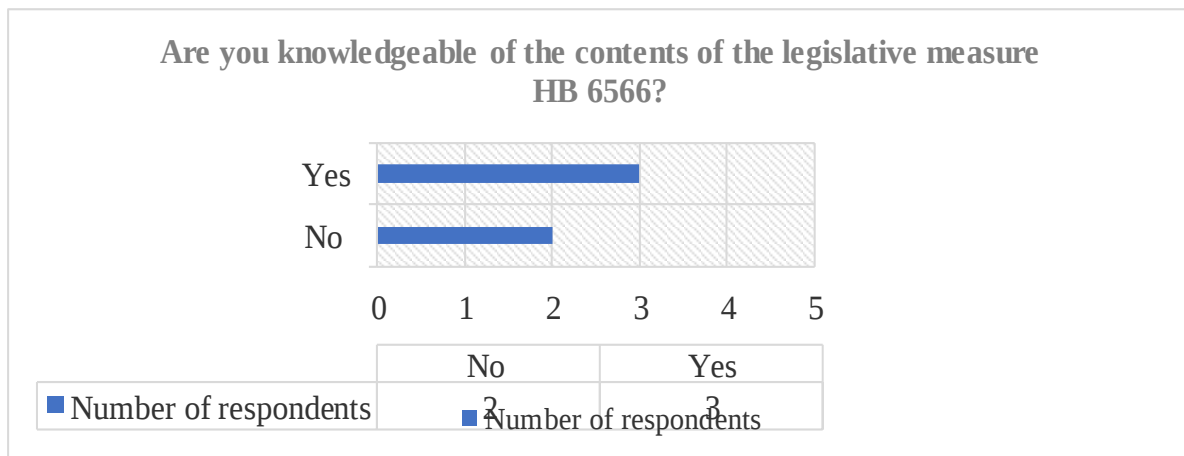


Figure 1. Responses on the surface recognition of House Bill 6566

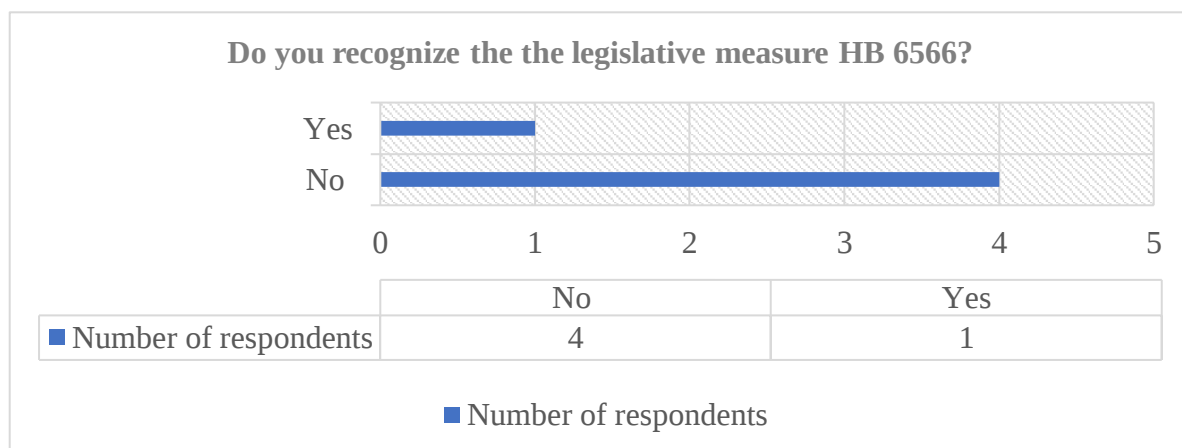


Figure 2. Responses on the content recognition of House Bill 6566

The legislative measure House Bill 6566 includes the *Tikog Industry Development Act* and the proclamation of Basey as the *Banig Capital of the Philippines*. Recently, on August 2021, the bill had been approved on third reading which heightens the possibility of the bill to be realized.

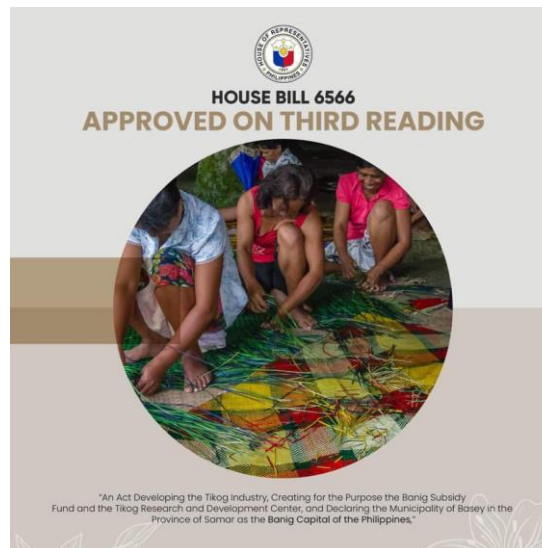


Illustration 4. House Bill 6566 Approval on Third Reading

In accordance with the conducted interviews, the following observations have been found, in accordance with the graphs displayed:

Specifically, although the tourism and banig promotion officials had knowledge on the aforesaid bill, the banig manufacturers, shop owners, and designers were unaware of it. This denotes that the bill had not reached much influence on the local community as of the conduct of the interviews. Moreover, despite having knowledge of the contents of the bill, the house bill number appeared to be irrelevant as the bill number was unfamiliar to the majority. It is expected, however, that once the bill becomes an official act, the name and contents of the bill shall gain recognition compared to its current relevance (2021).

Nonetheless, the respondents showed optimistic views on the proposition of the bill, especially since it has been passed for third reading.

“In collaboration with the provincial government, this bill will aid not only in the recognition of Basey as the Banig Capital of the Philippines, which is an honor nationally, ..., the industry of Tikog and Banig itself will be heightened, uplifting the source of income of the people in the industry (Ritaga, 2021).”

In conformity with the respondent’s quote, having the province be declared as the Banig Capital of the Philippines will accrue the opportunities that may arise from national, and possibly international, exports and transactions. Ultimately, this would aid in the increase of economic status of the mat-related people, decreasing possible financial crises. Furthermore, in accordance with the significant increment in demand, the people inside and outside the industry would manifest more optimistic views and hopefully increase the manual workforce it is comprised of currently.

Local and National Promotion

Based on the interviews conducted, the most prevalent and most effective methods being done to advertise and promote the creation of banig and any chain products of the material are through (1) Word-of-Mouth marketing (WOM Marketing) or viva voce and through (2) utilization of local, mass, and social media.

The respondents have identified the word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing to be an efficient way of advertisement. WOM marketing is a method by which a person who has interest in the output involves the utterance of the product in their daily dialogues and becomes a marketing strategy along the way, meaning communication is the primary means by which a product is propagated. This method also becomes more reliable as a person has personally used the product and can guarantee its quality. On the other hand, other procedures are being administered in accordance with the aforesaid aim.

“Before the pandemic, brochures and leaflets were being distributed to the tourists and to all the people that are interested in the matter... We suggest tourists to visit several banig-related locations such as the Saob Cave and local MSMEs so that they would not be fixated only in this specific area... We also use social media, so that at least it would be promoted not only locally, but also nationally (Garcia, 2021).”

The above-mentioned response points out that other methods to consider in promoting banig were the use of brochures and leaflets and suggesting tourists to explore various destinations. These procedures, however, were employed before the pandemic – meaning that the aforesaid approaches were halted due to the quarantine protocols. This implies that promotion procedures have been employed before but was greatly limited to face-to-face interaction, in contrast to the large-scale propagation subsequent to the emergence and utilization of social media and marketing platforms using technological means.

In correspondence with the latter quotation, mass media has become an integral medium in the promotion of the material. This is in accordance with the precedence of technology and social media in the everyday lives of the people. Upon the conduct of the research which has taken place during the pandemic, physical contact and travels have been dramatically restricted. The more efficient method during the aforesaid circumstance would be a non-contact means, making social media an essential platform. Sales and inquiries are also employed through this platform which helps in the propagation of the material.

Willingness to aid in popularizing banig

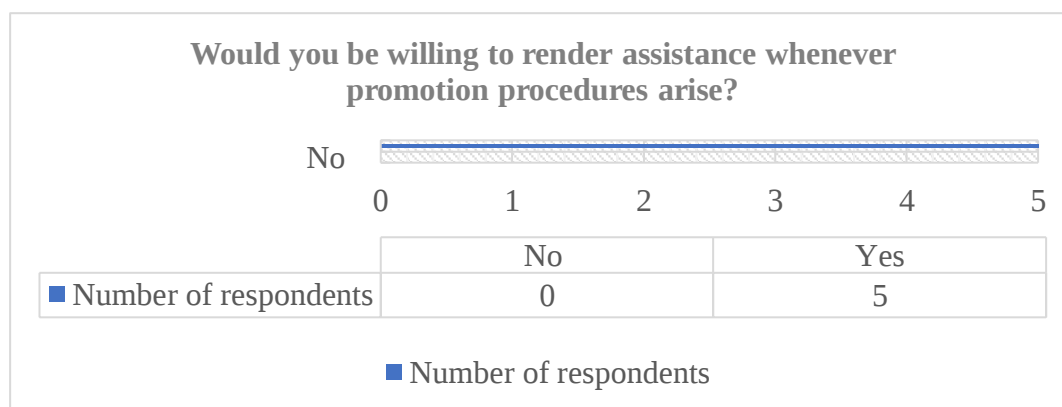


Figure 3. The willingness of the respondents in the promotion of Banig products, either locally or nationally

The results indicate that all the respondents that were interviewed have shown interest in aiding in the banig promotion procedures. In fact, as the respondents themselves are primarily involved in the banig industry, they have long been dedicated to contributing to the industry. In addition, they expressed their elation to be able to help in such circumstances.

Conclusion

This section presents the summary and conclusions of the study. This will include the overall interpretations of the results based on the questions and the primary goal of the study.

Summary and Conclusion

The results and the data interpretations lead the researchers to create plausible conclusions.

The banig mat weaving culture is indeed gradually deteriorating to a certain degree and recognition and appreciation of the creation of banig (and its chain products) is becoming less prevalent.

According to the gathered responses, several identified causes of the decrement of the said instance are the following:

1. lessened overall appreciation of banig;
2. decreased youth engagement;
3. relatively low-quality income;
4. a relatively low number of tikog farmers; and
5. pandemic restrictions

The causes were determined to be mostly correlated to be people-centered or, in other words, were pre-dominantly concerned with the manual workforce of the industry in accordance with the culture's crucial dependence on manual labor. Other major determinants of the issues were factors in passing down the culture to the next generation, adaptation to changing times, and the perspective of the majority.

Despite these circumstances, some procedures are being done in coordination with various local public sectors in the endeavor for which includes, but is not limited to, (1) regular seminars and training workshops, (2) establishment of the LARA and Banig Showroom, (3) proposition and introduction of some technological novelties concerning the industry, (4) propagation through social media, and (5) inclusion of mat weaving in the educational system. Meanwhile, the following statements are major observations upon the conduct of the study.

Youth involvement is a crucial approach in preserving the culture of Banig mat-weaving since they are the generation that will follow, and the ones who will be preserving the culture in the future. And the younger they are involved, the more they become aspired to the culture which is why the children and the youth are constantly being persuaded to be engaged in the industry.

Technology has been and will continue to be inevitably and vitally a part of human life. As such, adapting to and utilizing such intricacies would not only ease the manufacturing process of making mats, but would also encourage the youth (whom are more susceptible to technology) in making banig. Although, it still completely requires manual labor throughout the weaving process, material preparation would require lessened manual labor with the use of technological machineries.

Furthermore, promotion of the products using the word-of-mouth marketing strategy and social media helps to elevate the popularity of the Banig mat-weaving culture which is a big deal in its preservation. Being known makes the culture alive. Ultimately, it can be inferred that the local LGU, public sectors, banig-related associations, and MSMEs are constantly exerting effort through various methodologies to preserve the culture.

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