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Indigenous Knowledge System and Practices on Arts and Crafts of Indigenous Peoples in Capiz, Philippines

Leo Andrew B. Biclar
Louis Placido F. Lachica
Adelfo Z. Virtudazo
Rector John A. Latoza

Social Science and Industrial Technology Research Development Center Office, College of Agriculture, Capiz State University - Dumarao Satellite College, Research, Development and Extension Office, Capiz State University, Philippines

Abstract

This study explored on the Indigenous Knowledge System and Practices (IKSP) on arts and crafts of the indigenous peoples such as the Panay Bukidnon and the Ati in Capiz, Philippines. Using the qualitative research design, nine (9) informants from three (3) communities (Dumarao, Jamindan, and Tapaz) were purposively chosen based on the three generation test by Manuel (1955). Fieldwork, observations, informal and key informant interviews, and documentary and photographic analysis were the methods used. Verbatim data transcripts were analyzed using the general inductive approach (Thomas, 2006) and in vivo coding technique. IKSP on arts and crafts were intended for protection from natural disasters, clothing and accessories, livelihood, and crafts for food. Both groups of indigenous peoples claimed that indigenous knowledge were inherited from their ancestors, could be passed on to the next generation, and it reflects their identity as people. Development improves the quality of life, it creates changes in the society, and it is economically-driven. The indigenous peoples in Capiz have rich indigenous knowledge system and practice on arts and crafts.

Keywords: Arts and crafts, indigenous knowledge system and practices, indigenous peoples

Corresponding author: Leo Andrew B. Biclar
Address: CAPIZ STATE UNIVERSIY - Philippines
E-mail: labbiclar@capsu.edu.ph

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INTRODUCTION

Indigenous Knowledge System and Practices (IKSP) are vital in maintaining equilibrium in the physical, socio-economic, and cultural ecosystem. Without it, frameworks in the operation of human interaction and adaptation to environment will be affected.

IKSP as systems, institutions, mechanisms, technologies comprising a unique body of knowledge evolved through time embodying patterns of relationships between and among peoples; and between peoples and their lands and resource environment, including such spheres of relationships which may include social, political, cultural, economic, religious, and which are the direct outcome of the indigenous peoples' (IPs) responses to certain needs consisting of adaptive mechanisms which have allowed IPs to survive and thrive within their given socio-cultural and biophysical conditions (Wandag, 2012). For the IPs in the Cordilleras, IKSP was found to be an important catalyst to sustainable development due to its direct connection to resource management and conservation (Flor, 2013). These knowledge, systems, and practices, however, are at an escalating rate of deterioration due to consistent assimilation that resulted from the continuing loss of interest of these practices from younger generations (Kinomis, 2016). IPs are among the most educationally marginalized communities in Asia due primarily to access, equity and quality issues (Flor, 2013). Mainstream and popular culture have often misrepresented and abused indigenous knowledge and practices (Buasen, 2010). The indigenous peoples and local communities in the Agusan Marsh provide living testimonies of best practices for adaptation to adverse change. With the benefit of their indigenous knowledge and spiritual beliefs, combined with appropriate training, and legal and physical support, the local people offer the best solution to benefit the area economically without compromising the ecosystem services that it provides (Ibonia, 2018).

The study aimed to describe the indigenous knowledge system and practices on arts and crafts of the indigenous peoples in Capiz, Philippines.

Data elicited may help narrow gaps on the dearth of information on the IKSP on arts and crafts. This may aid in documenting tacit and explicit IKSP on a wider scale.

Materials and Methods

Research Design

The study used the qualitative research design. Qualitative research stress the socially constructed nature of reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This design is naturalistic, emergent, and purposeful. It focuses on real-world situations as they unfold naturally. There is acceptance of adapting inquiry as understanding deepens. Cases for study such as individuals or communities are selected because they are information rich and illuminative (Berg, 2012).

Participants

Purposive sampling was used to identify nine (9) informants through the three generation test (Manuel, 1955). The three oldest members of the communities were determined in coordination with the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) regional and field offices in Iloilo City and in Tapaz, Capiz, respectively. The IP communities in Capiz, Philippines identified as the locale of the study is shown in Figure 1.

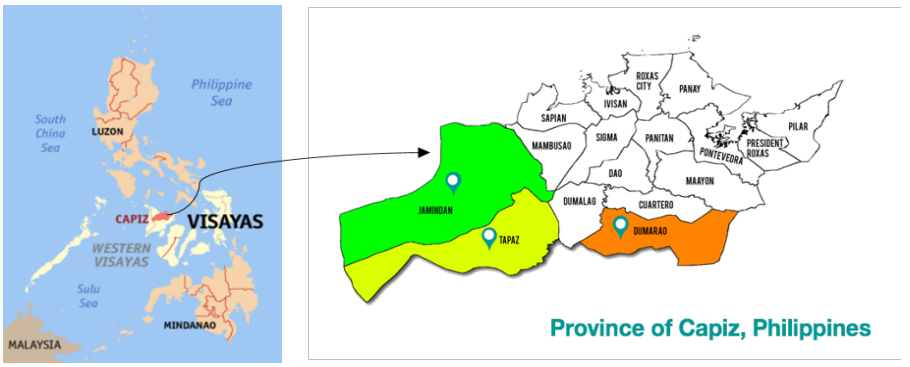


Figure 1. Map of Capiz, Philippines showing the identified IP communities covered in the study.

Data Collection

Fieldwork, observations, informal and key informant interviews, and documentary and photographic analysis were used to gather data. These methods substantiate and triangulate the data elicited from the informants. For ethical considerations, necessary permits and disclosure information were secured from NCIP and the IP communities prior to the conduct of the study.

Data Analysis

Data gathered through informal and key informant interviews were transcribed in verbatim. To make sense of the data transcripts, general inductive approach (Thomas, 2006) was used (see Figure 2). Emerging concepts were then arranged thematically. In vivo coding (Saldana, 2009) was used since folk or indigenous terms are participant-generated words from members of a particular culture, subculture, or microculture. Folk terms extracted indicate the existence of the group's cultural categories (McCurdy, Spradley, & Shandy, 2005). The codes refer to a word or short phrase from the actual language found in the qualitative data record, "the terms used by [participants] themselves" (Strauss, 1988).

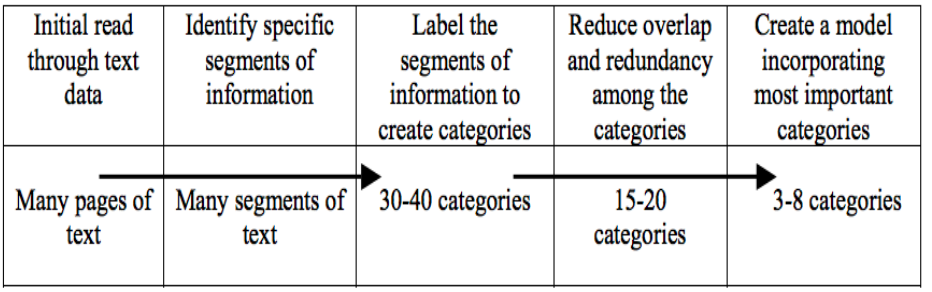


Figure 2. Procedure of the general inductive approach

Results and Discussion

Indigenous Knowledge on Arts and Crafts

Emerging notions of IKSP on arts and crafts focused on protection from natural disasters, clothing and accessories, and livelihood which included fishing gears, basketry, farming tools, weaving, and crafts for food (refer to Table 1).

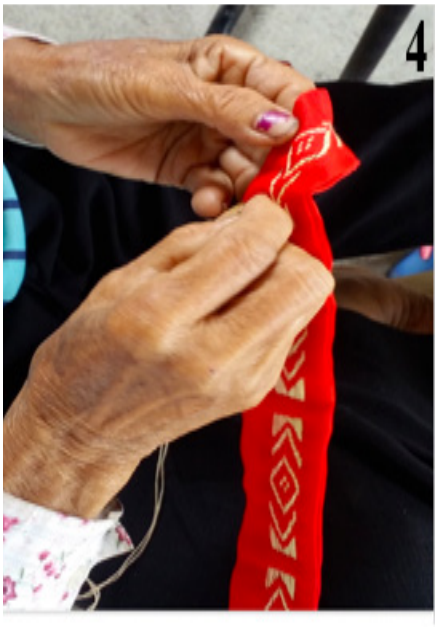
Protection from natural disasters

The Kurob/Lambon/Sulakob (Hut). The Aeta and the Panay Bukidnon constructed it using branches of trees or pieces of wood that serve as the framework of the structure. It can be a shelter from heavy rains during a typhoon. This hut is being built days prior to the anticipated typhoon (see Plate 3).

Clothing and accessories

Tinubukang Ponseras (Embroidered Bracelet). The tinubukang ponseras gives strength to the preservation of the Panay Bukidnon's needlework. It also serves as a source of livelihood for a manugtubok during lean months while waiting for the harvest season (see Figure 4).

Sinumbrahan (Embroidery on the blouse). The sinumbrahan depicts the identity of the Panay Bukidnon. This is an extension of their kalibutan (universe/cosmos) where every design has its embedded notions about nature. Women wear a butterfly-sleeved blouse call saipang. The saipang is either a sinumbrahang pula (or embroidered or patched red blouse) or the sinumbrahang puti (or embroidered or patched white blouse). The sinumbrahang itom or embroidered or patched black long-sleeved shirt called supa is worn by men. Currently, these costumes are especially prominently used in dancing the binanog, the mimetic courtship dance of the Panay Bukidnon people (see Plate 5).



Plates. 3. Kurob; 4. Tinubukang ponseras; 5. Sinumbrahan

Livelihood

Fishing gears

Bidyo. It wounds or kills fishes or crustaceans and functions like a spear or an arrow (see Plate 6).

Pukol. It is constructed like the binawgon but the difference is, it has thorns inside. Once the fish enters, there is no chance to escape. It also has uway that weaves around the body that helps the device to adjust according to the size of the fish. Nowadays, they used nylon instead so that it could last longer. These devices usually catches sili, urang, unog, and other fishes (see Plate 7).

Sarapang is made up of a metal prong usually three pronged spear (like Poseidon's trident) and has a sara-it or sima (barbed points) on its rods (see Plate 8).

Saga-ngat is bigger than the sarapang. It is also made up of a metal prong but the sara-it or sima (barbed points) is doubled in the middle prong. This is Panay Bukidnon's version of goggles locally known as lente or antipara (see Plates 9,10).

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Plates 6. Bidyo; 7. Pukol

Plates 8. Sarapang; 9-10. Saga-ngat

Basketry

Taon. It is made of bamboo which is made into a cylindrical shape. The mouth is wide open and the base is narrow. The method of using this trap is simple where the device is placed facing against the water current to allow the fish to come in (see Plate 11).

Binawgon. This is also similar to taon. It is made of bamboo woven like a trapezoidal cylinder. The base has a slat pointing towards inside the device and has a hole in the middle. The device also place against the water current (see Plate 12).

Farming tools

Bolo/Binangon. The blade comes in different designs or shapes such as ginunting (scissors-like), kinampit, linamay, bakutan, sinuwak, saraw, and binakuko or piyakang. The ginunting as its name derived from the word gunting, a local term for scissors. Each type of binangon has the same function such as clearing and cutting the woods and grasses during the kaingin and pangayam (hunting), except for saraw which is used only to cut the cogon grass (see Plate 13).

Paranggas nga Salsalon/Tagad/Tara-tara. It is a tool used in dibbling holes when planting rice (see Plate 14).

Sabakan. It is a basket-like object tied on the waist of the farmer which serves as container for the rice seeds to be planted. It is made up of either the leaves

of nito, buri, or pandan (see Plate 15).

Plates 11. Taon; 12. Binawgon; 13. Bolo/binangon

Kayog. This triangular knife-like tool is used in harvesting upland rice. Its handle is made up of wood and is also crafted by the blacksmith (see Plate 16)

Weaving

Rara it banig (mat weaving). The Panay Bukidnon women in Jamindan, Capiz have mastered the art of weaving banig using buri (see Plate 17).

Plates 14. Tara-tara; 15. Sabakan; 16. Kayog; 17. Rara it banig

Crafts for food

Simat. It is a typical simat made of banana leaves used as plate (see Plate 18).

Hal-o and Lusong. The traditional hal-o and lusong (mortar and pestle) used for pounding grains of rice in a Panay Bukidnon community in Jamindan, Capiz (see Plate 19).

Plates 18. Simat; 19. Hal-o and lusong

As reflected in Table 1, the Panay Bukidnon did not indicate any indigenous fishing gears used in their communities. On the other hand, the Ati informants claimed that they no longer use their indigenous clothing and accessories except when invited to perform in local and national festivals. As to farming tools, they excluded sabakan and kayog. The Atis did not specify any crafts for food unlike the Panay Bukidnons who still use the simat as an alternative plate.

Table 1
Traditional arts and crafts with intended purpose

Purpose	Arts and Crafts	Indigenous Peoples	
		Panay Bukidnon	Ati
Protection from natural disasters	*Kurob/Lambon/Sulakob*	/	/
Clothing and accessories	*Tinubukang ponseras*	/	
	sinumbrahan	/	
Livelihood Fishing gears	*Bidyo (sarapang, saga-ngat)*		/
Basketry	*Pukol*	/	/
	Taon	/	/
Farming tools	*Binawgon*	/	/
	Bolo/binangon	/	/
	Paranggas nga salsalon/tagad/tara-tara	/	/
	Sabakan	/	
	Kayog	/	
Weaving	*Banig*	/	/
Crafts for food	*Simat*	/	/
	Hal-o	/	/
	Lusong	/	

Note: */*= existing or practiced

Views on Indigenous Knowledge

Indigenous knowledge is viewed as inherited by the informants from their ancestors. It could be passed on to the next generation, and it reflects their identity as people. These claims could be reflected on the given exemplars:

Inherited from the ancestors. According to Ati 1: Ginpanubli namon sa amon kalolo-lolohan ang mga tradisyunal nga mga naman-an. (We inherited our traditional knowledge from our forefathers.)
PB 4 mentioned: Gin-mana namon kara sa katigulangan. (We inherited it from our elders.

Passed on to the next generation. Ati 3 explained: Gina-tao namon sa ulihing tubo. (We passed it on to the younger ones.)

PB 6 disclosed: Ginpasa sa masunod nga henerasyon (We passed it on to the next generation.)

Reflects identity as people. Ati 1 shared: Dira makita ang amon duna kag kinaiya bilang isa ka grupo sang tawo. (It mirrors our identity and characteristics as a group of people.)

Acording to PB 2: Masalamin ang amon duna bilang tawo. (It reflects our identity as people).

Views on Development

Views on development emerged from the data transcripts as something which could improve the quality of life. It may create changes in the society. Development, according to the informants, is economically-driven. The exemplars below details the claims:

Improves the quality of life. Ati 2 explained: Tungod sang natawag nga development ginapaayo kadya ang amon pangabuhi. (The so-called development improves our quality of life.)

PB 3 noted: Ang kalidad ka kabuhi napasangkag. (It improves the quality of life.)

Creates changes in the society. For Ati 1: Damo ini sang nahimo nga mga pagbag-o sa aton palibot sa karon. (As of the present, it creates many changes in our society.)

PB 1 explained: Nagabuhat diya pagbag-o sa sosyudad. (It creates changes in the society.)

Economically-driven. According to Ati 1: Gapati guid ako nga ang development nagadepende sa ginaganar o sa trabaho sang mga tawo sa isa ka lugar. (I believe that development is dependent on the income or occupation of the people living in a community.)

PB 5 emphasized: Amo kadya base sa ekonomiya o sa pangabuhian kang lugar. (It is based on the economy or on the livelihood of a locality.)

Conclusion and Recommendation

The indigenous peoples in Capiz, Philippines showed a rich indigenous knowledge system and practices on arts and crafts with intended purposes. They have notions or views on indigenous knowledge and development.

IKSP may be documented to protect both the explicit and tacit knowledge of the indigenous peoples. Traditional knowledge must be protected through the participatory efforts of multiple stakeholders including the local community, government, and non-government organizations.

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