

Preservation Efforts and Sustainability of *Banig* Weavers in Libertad, Antique

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the level of preservation efforts and sustainability of banig weavers in Libertad, Antique, and examined the relationship between the two variables. A survey-correlational research design was employed. From 625 identified banig weavers in the municipality, 125 active weavers were selected purposively based on residence in Libertad, Antique and at least five years of weaving experience. Data were gathered using two researcher-developed 30-item questionnaires on preservation efforts and sustainability. The instruments were pilot-tested, producing Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .939 and .747, respectively. Mean and standard deviation were used to describe the two principal variables, while Pearson product-moment correlation was used to test their relationship at the .05 level of significance. Results showed a high level of preservation efforts ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.75$) and a high level of sustainability ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 0.67$). Preservation efforts were positively and significantly related to sustainability ($r = .749$, $p < .001$), leading to rejection of the null hypothesis. The findings indicate that the continued practice and transmission of weaving skills, community participation, institutional support, and livelihood-oriented preservation initiatives are closely associated with the continuity of banig weaving. Strengthening youth participation, skills training, market access, cultural promotion, and livelihood support may help sustain the craft and its role in the cultural identity and local economy of Libertad.

Keywords: *banig weaving, cultural preservation, sustainability, traditional crafts, sustainable livelihoods, Libertad Antique*

INTRODUCTION

Traditional weaving is among the enduring expressions of Filipino cultural heritage. The banig, a handwoven mat commonly produced from bariw, pandan, buri, or related plant fibers, carries both cultural and economic meaning because it reflects local artistry, inherited knowledge, and community identity while providing livelihood opportunities to rural households. In the Visayas, weaving traditions remain closely tied to household production and intergenerational knowledge transfer. Flores (2021) emphasized the relationship between cultural preservation and livelihood sustainability among traditional weavers, while the Antique Provincial Government (2023) described banig weaving in Libertad as part of the province's heritage of creativity and resilience.

Despite its cultural value, traditional banig weaving faces pressures that may threaten continuity. Declining youth interest, limited market opportunities, competition from mass-produced goods, uneven training opportunities, and changing livelihood preferences can weaken the transfer of skills across generations (Villanueva, 2020). Similar concerns have led public and cultural institutions to support heritage preservation through community-based programs, skills development, product promotion, tourism, and market-oriented initiatives. The Department of Trade and Industry (2022, 2023) and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (2023) have promoted programs intended to safeguard traditional crafts while improving their economic viability.

Preservation and sustainability are therefore interrelated concerns. Preservation protects cultural knowledge, techniques, identity, and the continued practice of the craft, whereas sustainability concerns the capacity of weaving to continue as a viable cultural and livelihood activity over time. Earlier work on Philippine heritage conservation has highlighted the importance of community participation, institutional support, policy implementation, and livelihood linkages in sustaining cultural resources (Ayo & Nepomuceno, 2022; Bacelonia, 2020; Pineda, 2023). For weaving communities, this means that safeguarding tradition must be accompanied by opportunities that make the craft socially relevant and economically supportable.

Although preservation programs for traditional crafts exist, the source thesis identified a continuing need to examine whether preservation efforts are associated with the actual sustainability of banig weaving in Libertad, Antique. Guided by the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, the study treated preservation efforts as the independent variable and sustainability of banig weavers as the dependent variable. It specifically determined the levels of preservation efforts and sustainability and tested whether the two variables were significantly related. The results are intended to inform local weavers, local government, cultural and tourism agencies, and future researchers in designing initiatives that preserve the craft while supporting the livelihoods of those who sustain it.

Literature Review

Cultural Heritage and Preservation Efforts

Preservation efforts involve deliberate actions to protect cultural, historical, and natural resources so that community knowledge and identity can continue across generations. Philippine examples range from the conservation of heritage structures and documentary materials to the protection of agricultural and craft traditions. Custodio and Demont (2021) illustrated how cultural heritage can be sustained through the valorization of traditional resources, while Pineda (2023) described institutional efforts to preserve historical materials. Ayo and Nepomuceno (2022) similarly emphasized that conservation is strengthened when technical support, community involvement, and institutional commitment operate together.

For traditional crafts, preservation is not limited to keeping physical products. It includes maintaining techniques, transmitting skills, encouraging community participation, and creating conditions in which cultural practices remain useful and valued. Bacelonia (2020) highlighted cultural preservation as a component of national development, and Jian et al. (2023) emphasized community capacity building in heritage settings. Within the banig context, Jocano (2016) and Monte et al. (2022) support the importance of community participation and local support in maintaining indigenous skills and promoting traditional weaving as a cultural resource.

Sustainability of Banig Weaving as Culture and Livelihood

Sustainability in traditional weaving involves the long-term continuation of the craft, the responsible use of available resources, the stability of livelihood opportunities, and the transfer of knowledge to younger generations. Rodrigues (2018) linked cultural heritage with the sustainability of traditional crafts, while Shahani (2019) emphasized the role of cultural protection and development in securing the future of community-based crafts. From this perspective, sustainable banig weaving requires more than continued production; it requires the preservation of local identity alongside economic opportunities that allow weavers to remain engaged in the craft.

Research and institutional reports on banig weaving point to the value of innovation, skills training, market access, and cultural promotion. Switch-Asia (2023) documented a circular-economy case involving the Basey banig industry, while Vogue Philippines (2024) highlighted contemporary efforts to revive banig craftsmanship through new markets and design visibility. The Philippine News Agency (2020) also reported development initiatives for the banig industry. Together, these sources suggest that sustainability depends on the capacity of weaving communities to preserve traditional knowledge while adapting production, promotion, and livelihood strategies to changing conditions.

Community, Institutional, and Market Support

Community participation is a recurring element in successful preservation initiatives. Local weavers carry the technical and cultural knowledge of the craft, but institutional support can expand the resources available for training, production, marketing, and promotion. The Department of Trade and Industry (2022) identified industry-development strategies for Philippine weaving, while DTI Philippines (2023) presented the Basey Association for Native Industry Growth as an example of weaving linked with enterprise development. The National Commission for Culture and the Arts (2023) likewise places safeguarding intangible cultural heritage within a broader framework of cultural continuity and community participation.

For communities such as Libertad, these forms of support can help address limitations identified in the thesis, including irregular training, limited market exposure, and reduced youth participation. Cultural events, tourism activities, livelihood assistance, and product-development opportunities can make weaving more visible and economically meaningful. Antique Provincial Government (2023) situates banig weaving within the local cultural landscape, suggesting that municipal and provincial initiatives may help connect cultural preservation with livelihood development and tourism-based promotion.

Sustainable Livelihoods and Intergenerational Continuity

The study was anchored on the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, which views livelihood outcomes through assets such as human, natural, social, physical, and financial capital. Natarajan (2022) revisited the framework for contemporary livelihood analysis. In the context of banig weaving, weaving skills represent human capital, bariw and other plant resources represent natural capital, social networks and community support represent social capital, tools and workspaces represent physical capital, and income and access to credit represent financial capital. The framework is therefore relevant to understanding why preservation and livelihood sustainability may be mutually reinforcing.

Intergenerational continuity is particularly important because the sustainability of an intangible craft depends on people who are willing and able to learn and practice it. Flores (2021) and Villanueva (2020) both draw attention to the cultural and livelihood challenges faced by traditional weaving communities. The literature reviewed in the thesis therefore supports a combined approach in which preservation initiatives strengthen knowledge transmission, while sustainable livelihood opportunities make continued participation in weaving socially and economically feasible for current and future generations.

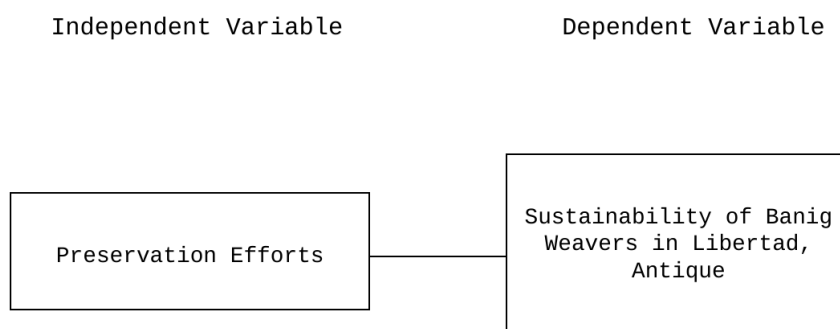


Figure 1. *Sustainability of banig weavers in Libertad, Antique as influenced by their preservation efforts.*

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative survey-correlational research design. The survey component was used to obtain standardized information on the preservation efforts and sustainability of banig weavers, while the correlational component examined whether the two variables were significantly related. Preservation efforts served as the independent variable and sustainability of banig weavers served as the dependent variable. The design was appropriate because the study measured the variables as they existed among active banig weavers without manipulating their conditions.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in the municipality of Libertad, Antique, Philippines. Participants came from the barangays of Barusbus, Codiong, Lindero, Panangkilon, Pucio, Tinigbas, Tinindugan, and Union. The locale was selected because banig weaving remains a traditional craft and livelihood activity in the municipality. The study focused on active local weavers during School Year 2025–2026.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The sampling frame consisted of 625 identified banig weavers in Libertad, Antique. Purposive sampling was used to select participants who met three criteria: they were active banig weavers, had at least five years of weaving experience, and were residents of Libertad. A total of 125 weavers participated in the study. The sample included 7 participants from Barusbus, 23 from Codiong, 19 from Lindero, 5 from Panangkilon, 21 from Pucio, 11 from Tinigbas, 27 from Tinindugan, and 12 from Union. Most participants were women (122, 97.6%), 108 (86.4%) had at least 11 years of weaving experience, and 88 (70.4%) reported a monthly banig-weaving income of ₱1,001–₱5,000.

Research Instrument

Data were gathered using two researcher-developed instruments: a 30-item Preservation Efforts Questionnaire and a 30-item Sustainability of Banig Weavers Questionnaire. Both instruments used a five-point response scale: 5 = Always, 4 = Often, 3 = Sometimes, 2 = Rarely, and 1 = Never. Mean scores were interpreted as Very High (4.21–5.00), High (3.41–4.20), Moderate (2.61–3.40), Low (1.81–2.60), and Very Low (1.00–1.80).

The instruments underwent pilot testing before administration to the main sample. The preservation-efforts questionnaire obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .939, while the sustainability questionnaire obtained an alpha of .747. The source thesis interpreted these coefficients as evidence that the instruments were sufficiently reliable for the study. Thirty banig weavers were involved in the pilot-testing process and were separate from the main sample.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before data collection, the researcher sought permission from the Dean of the Graduate School of Filamer Christian University and from the Municipal Mayor of Libertad, Antique. After approval was obtained, eligible banig weavers were identified and invited to participate. The two questionnaires were personally distributed to the selected participants and scheduled in a manner intended to avoid conflicts during administration. Completed questionnaires were retrieved, checked, encoded, and processed for statistical analysis using SPSS.

Data Analysis

Frequency and percentage were used to summarize participant characteristics. Mean and standard deviation were used to determine the levels of preservation efforts and sustainability. Pearson product-moment correlation was employed to determine the relationship between preservation efforts and sustainability of banig weavers. The inferential analysis was evaluated at the .05 level of significance, consistent with the reported hypothesis test in the results chapter.

Ethical Consideration

Participation was voluntary. The researcher requested permission from the local authorities and from the identified weavers before administering the questionnaires. Participants were informed that the study was for academic purposes, and the source documents stated that confidentiality and data privacy were observed in handling the information collected. The communication letter to the Municipal Mayor also specified that informed consent would be secured and that the collected information would be treated confidentially in accordance with ethical research standards and data privacy policies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Preservation Efforts of Banig Weavers

The preservation efforts of banig weavers were rated High, with an overall mean of 4.00 and a standard deviation of 0.75. This finding indicates that the participants regularly engaged in activities that maintained banig weaving as a traditional craft and community livelihood. The thesis discussion particularly emphasized continued practice, transmission of weaving knowledge and skills, recognition of banig as part of community identity, and participation in preservation initiatives. At the same time, the high rather than very high rating suggests that preservation activities were not yet consistently supported in all areas, particularly in relation to market exposure, regular training opportunities, and youth participation.

Table 1. *Level of Preservation Efforts of Banig Weavers*

Variable	M	SD	Interpretation
Preservation Efforts	4.00	0.75	High

The result is consistent with the source literature emphasizing that community involvement and institutional support are important to the continuation of traditional practices. Jocano (2016) associated preservation with the maintenance of indigenous knowledge and cultural practices, while Monte et al. (2022) reported that community-based programs can protect weaving knowledge and create livelihood opportunities. The finding also corresponds with the broader heritage-preservation literature, which identifies public participation and institutional support as important conditions for maintaining cultural resources (Ayo & Nepomuceno, 2022; Bacerlona, 2020).

Sustainability of Banig Weavers

The sustainability of banig weavers was also rated High ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 0.67$). The result indicates that banig weaving continued to function as both a cultural practice and a livelihood activity among the participants. The source discussion linked sustainability with continued production, conservation of traditional methods, transmission of skills, and the ability of weavers to adapt to community and commercial challenges. However, it also noted continuing vulnerabilities, including limited access to wider markets, declining youth interest, uneven support, and the need for more regular training and market demand.

Table 2. *Level of Sustainability of Banig Weavers*

Variable	M	SD	Interpretation
Sustainability of Banig Weavers	3.99	0.67	High

The finding agrees with Shahani (2019), who linked cultural sustainability with product innovation, skills development, livelihood programs, and opportunities for younger generations to value traditional crafts. It is also compatible with initiatives described by DTI Philippines (2023) and Switch-Asia (2023), where weaving is supported through enterprise development and market-oriented strategies. These sources reinforce the view that long-term continuity requires both cultural protection and economic opportunities for artisans.

Relationship Between Preservation Efforts and Sustainability

Pearson correlation analysis showed a positive and statistically significant relationship between preservation efforts and sustainability of banig weavers, $r = .749$, $p < .001$. The null hypothesis stating that no significant relationship existed between the two variables was therefore rejected. The result indicates that higher preservation efforts were associated with higher sustainability among the participating weavers. In practical terms, continued practice of traditional techniques, teaching weaving skills to others, valuing the craft, and supporting preservation activities were associated with the continued livelihood and cultural presence of banig weaving in the community.

Table 3. Relationship Between Preservation Efforts and Sustainability of Banig Weavers

Variables	r	p	Decision
Preservation Efforts $\times$ Sustainability	0.749	< .001	Significant; reject H_0

Note. Statistical significance was evaluated at $\alpha = .05$.

This relationship supports the source thesis interpretation that preservation initiatives can reinforce the continuity of banig weaving. Monte et al. (2022) linked preservation strategies such as skills training and cultural promotion with the continuation of weaving traditions and livelihoods. Rodrigues (2018) likewise connected cultural-heritage preservation with the sustainability of traditional crafts. Viewed through the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, preservation can strengthen human and social capital by maintaining weaving skills and networks, while livelihood support and market access can reinforce the financial conditions that make continued participation possible (Natarajan, 2022).

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that banig weaving in Libertad, Antique was supported by high levels of both preservation effort and sustainability among the participating weavers. The weavers continued to practice the craft, value it as part of community identity, and transmit knowledge and skills that help maintain its cultural continuity. Banig weaving also remained a relevant livelihood activity, although the results and source discussion indicate that its long-term continuity is not fully secured because market access, regular training, youth participation, and sustained institutional support still require strengthening.

The significant positive relationship between preservation efforts and sustainability demonstrates that efforts to maintain traditional knowledge and practice are closely associated with the continued viability of banig weaving. The contribution of the study lies in showing, within the local context of Libertad, that cultural preservation and livelihood sustainability should not be treated as separate concerns. Programs that preserve techniques, transmit knowledge, support weavers, and create viable markets can work together to strengthen the continuity of the craft for future generations.

Recommendation

Local weavers are encouraged to continue practicing and transmitting banig-weaving knowledge and skills to younger community members while exploring appropriate product innovations that retain traditional methods and identity. The Local Government Unit may strengthen livelihood assistance, regular skills training, financial support, market development, and programs that provide spaces where weavers can display and sell banig products. Cultural and tourism agencies may expand exhibits, cultural events, tourism activities, and promotional initiatives that increase public awareness and appreciation of Libertad's weaving tradition. Collaboration among weavers, local government, cultural agencies, and enterprise-support institutions should prioritize both cultural continuity and sustainable income opportunities. Future researchers may examine additional factors that influence preservation and sustainability, use qualitative or mixed-method approaches to document weavers' experiences, and investigate youth participation, market access, product innovation, tourism, and intergenerational transfer of weaving knowledge.

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