



LOCAL GAMES IN MAONON, LIGAO CITY, BICOL PENINSULA: SYMBOLISM OF COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Perla Y. Bejerano^{1*}, Merites M. Buot^{2,3}

¹UP Rural High School, College of Arts and Sciences, University of the Philippines,
Los Baños, Philippines

²Department of Human Kinetics, College of Arts and Sciences, University of the
Philippines, Los Baños, Philippines

³Faculty of Education, University of the Philippines Open University, Laguna,
Philippines

*Corresponding author: pdyson@up.edu.ph

ABSTRACT – One of the indicators of well-established local practices is the continuity of its local games. Playing local games as recreation can lead to enhancement of each contribution towards sustainability of local culture and awareness of ecological goods and services. However, with the current technologies that surround everybody, there is a probability of local practices to be left out. This present study sought to 1) determine the local games currently played in Maonon; 2) describe the nature of the local games, and 3) identify the cultural values portrayed in these games. Fifty-six (56) key informants were interviewed in Bikol, a local dialect. Photo and video documentation were taken along the beach, in the school grounds, and on the streets. Secondary data were also collated for analysis. There were twenty-six (26) local games identified, and *iloy-iloy* was the most popular game among the informants. The materials of the games were readily available in the natural environment and creatively done by young children. Games were either played on land or at sea. There were games classified as ordinary, whereas some games made use of formula and few included sea animals as part of the game. Distinct cultural values such as resourcefulness, determination, and cooperation were displayed while playing the local games. Indeed, local games emphasize the local identity of a place and highlighted some of the local values which concerned the benefits derived from its natural setting.

Keywords: Cultural values, Place identity, Traditional games, Senior Citizen

INTRODUCTION

The culture of a country is evidently shown through songs, dances and games. The Philippines is culturally rich in this context (Buot, 2008) as demonstrated through our local festivals and local games. Awareness about local games improves the contribution of each member of the community to value and maintain the resources within our physical and sociocultural environment as well. Since awareness of the ecological goods and services as the benefits derived from the natural environment, community members especially the youth will place higher value of an ecologically balanced locale. Playing local games as pastime and recreation can lead to enhancement of each contribution towards sustainability of local culture within the natural setting. In addition, Philippine games can also be an avenue for physical fitness,

enjoyment, and good health at almost no additional cost (Tubera, 2008). It also serves as a vehicle to understand the past of the people in order to appreciate the current practices (Calixihan, 2010). It was further mentioned that it was a chance for old people to once again experience their youth, while young people see it as a way to utilize their energy and build up social interaction within their age group.

However, local games are slowly disappearing due to the undeniable popularity and dominance of video games and electronic sports (Tubera, 2008). These local games which formed part of cultural heritage and serve as socio-cultural markers are widely considered ‘dying cultural legacies’ (Linaza, et.al, 2014). Despite this reality, some localities in the country were able to continually practice these local games throughout history and consider these games as part of their tradition. Currently some local games are integrated in the physical education (P.E.) activities in all levels from elementary to university education. These games formed part of the major components of the Physical Education curriculum through the efforts of Bureau of Physical Education and School Sports (BPSS) in 1984 (Wilhelmsen, 2012). These efforts supported the provisions of the 1987 Philippine Constitution mandating the State to conserve, promote, and popularize the nation's historical and cultural heritage and resources to be passed to future generations of Filipinos.

Local games played in the various localities in the country can be the threads that mesh learning situations into the fabric of life (Mackenbach, 2014). These interconnection of games with real life situations becomes the true definition of holistic learning as noted by Price et al. (2014). The local games of the Philippines remain relevant in the lives of Filipinos since they provide the opportunity to learn, appreciate, and experience our own culture. A subtle and fun way of instilling Filipino spirit among the youth through these traditional games. The present study sought to 1) determine the local games currently played in Maonon, Ligao City; 2) describe the nature of the local games, and 3) identify the cultural values portrayed in these games.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was conducted in Maonon, Ligao City, a coastal barangay in West Coast Albay (Figure 1). It is Ligao City's largest barangay with a land area of 2,493.57 hectares, occupying 10.12% of the city's total land area.

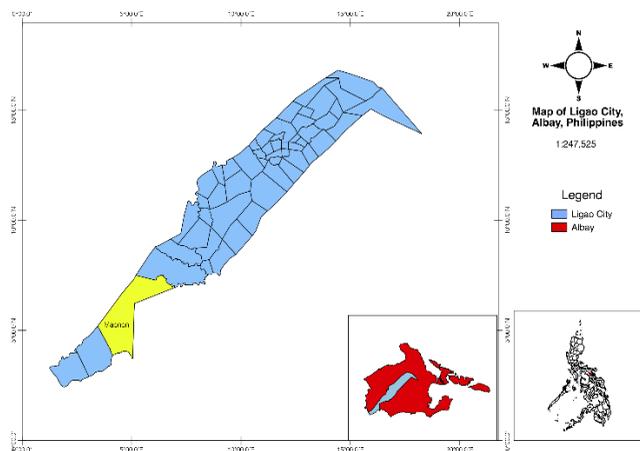


Figure 1. Maonon, Ligao City, the study site.

Fifty-six (56) senior citizens were included as key informants from the barangay. The interviews were done using Bikol dialect. Photo and video documentation were taken to corroborate with the actual observation, while children were playing along the beach, the school grounds and on the streets. Secondary data were also collated for the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Local Games of Maonon, Ligao City

The senior of the community possessed stock knowledge on the traditional practices of the locality. Maonon, Ligao City had several willing individuals who took part in the interview. Among the fifty-six respondents, thirty-seven (37) were females and 19 were males (Table 1.a). The average age of the respondents was sixty-eight (68) years old. Almost all were married, although 19% already lost their spouses (Table 1.c). These informants were all residents of the barangay since birth. The informants identified twenty-six (26) games, which they had either played or only had head knowledge about; nevertheless, they all understood the mechanics of the games (Table 2).

Table 1. The sociodemographic status of the Maonon, Ligao City informants.

Factor	Male		Female		Total	
	f	%	F	%	f	%
a. Gender	19	33.90%	37	66.10%	56	100%
b. Age						
60-65	8	42.10%	14	37.80%	22	39%
66-70	7	36.80%	9	24.30%	16	29%
71-75	2	10.50%	6	16.20%	8	14%
76-80	2	10.50%	5	13.50%	7	13%
81-85	0	0	2	5.40%	2	3%
86-90	0	0	1	2.70%	1	2%
c. Marital status						
Single	0	0	2	5.40%	2	4%
Married	17	89.50%	18	48.70%	35	62%
Widow/er	2	10.50%	17	45.90%	19	34%

Among the local games, *iloy-iloy* was highly identified by the informants (Table 2). Eighty nine (89%) percent mentioned that they had played the said local game. This was followed by *burukudan/pararyaan/tarayaan* with 66% of the informants saying “yes”, meaning they knew of and had played it in the past. *Bingkay* was the third highest in the number of informants saying “yes” (63%), though interestingly only females had played it.

Table 2. List of games identified by the informants.

GAMES	RESPONSE					
	MALE		FEMALE		TOTAL	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
<i>Bingkay</i>		0	35	94.6	35	62.5
<i>Burukudan/pararyaan/tarayaan</i>	16	84.2	21	56.8	37	66.1
<i>Burusuan bato</i>	7	36.8	2	5.4	9	16.1
<i>Durudamulag</i>	4	21.1	0	0	4	7.1
<i>Embarguan</i>	2	10.5	13	35.1	15	26.8
<i>Guruyudan Purupababa</i>	3	15.8	1	2.7	4	7.1
<i>Guruyudan sa dawn bunga</i>	1	5.3	1	2.7	2	3.6
<i>Iloy-loy</i>	18	94.7	32	86.5	50	89.3
<i>Kurukariton</i>	1	5.3	0	0	1	1.8
<i>Luksong lubid sa dalayday</i>	0	0	20	54.1	20	35.7
<i>Ontog</i>	6	31.6	0	0	6	10.7
<i>Orig-orig</i>	2	10.5	13	35.1	15	26.8
<i>Paltok</i>	17	89.5	1	2.7	18	32.1
<i>Pararyaan kalasakas</i>	8	42.1	2	5.4	10	17.9
<i>Pararyaan noyog sa dagat</i>	5	26.3	1	2.7	6	10.7
<i>Pararyaan plantsa sa dagat</i>	6	31.6	2	5.4	8	14.3
<i>Parayaan umang</i>	8	42.1	2	5.4	10	17.9
<i>Paytik</i>	11	57.9	2	5.4	13	23.2
<i>Pikot bado</i>	0	0	29	78.4	29	51.8
<i>Pungan sa kasco</i>	4	21.1	4	10.8	8	14.3
<i>Ralaban kalakakas</i>	8	42.1	2	5.4	10	17.9
<i>Siklot</i>	0	0	31	83.8	31	55.4
<i>Step no (kiki)</i>	0	0	22	59.5	22	39.3
<i>Suruluan</i>	1	5.3	1	2.7	2	3.6
<i>Tatsian buscay</i>	11	57.9	10	27	21	37.5
<i>Tatsian piso</i>	13	68.4	7	18.9	20	35.7

Iloy-loy and *burukudan* are games that involve running and tugging and do not need any materials when played. The games can be played individually or by pair and it requires speed in order to win. *Bingkay*, on the other hand, requires high flexibility in order to bring the “*pamato*” (head) on its target. The material of *bingkay* evolves from coconut shell, to wooden slipper and to rubber slipper in the present time. The best example of a game that displays torso flexibility is *bingkay* (Figure 2). *Bingkay* is a game that may be played either individually or by group, and it has (13) thirteen levels or sequence. It requires the player to balance a pair of slippers, wooden shoes, or “*abab*” coconut shell on the different parts of the body and to reach a designated goal by using “*kiki*” or other methods such as hopping with one leg or jumping with both. The player must not drop the “*pamato*”, change feet, or take a rest while going to the target pair of slippers. This game was not enjoyed by the men, who found the flexibility aspect of it to be quite difficult while women found it enjoyable, due to women being more flexible than men (Buot, 2011; Hoge. et al., 2010).

Kurukariton (Fig 3) was the least known by the respondents (1.8%) (Table 2). It is a racing game that makes use of *kariton* made from bamboo and wooden wheels. The *kariton* was used by the children to fetch a pail of water from the well or deep well. It can be played individually or by pair. When played by pair, one player hangs on the cart just like the pail hanging from the *kariton* when fetching water and the other member pushes it. It requires speed and leg power to be able to arrive first at the designated goal and win the game.



Figure 2. The flexibility needed in *bingkay* as one hits the target.



Figure 3. Kurukariton played by pair.

Nature of Local Games

The games are played individually or by groups regardless of gender and ages. The materials and the venue of the games were categorized into land-based and sea-based (Table 3). Generally, a pattern was seen in the names of the local games. Most of the time, the games were named after equipment and common movements used to accomplish the goal of the game. All of the informants were uncertain about the origin of the games and there was no document available in the barangay library. Although the oldest among the informants was 90 years old confirmed that the games identified were played since they were young (Table 1). Oral tradition was clearly evident in the barangay and positively substantiated by the informants.

Table 3. Classification of the local games based on the composition of players, materials used and the playing areas.

LOCAL GAMES	Player Composition		Materials		Playing Areas	
	Pair/group	Individual	Land Based	Sea Based	Land Based	Sea Based
<i>Bingkay</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	
<i>Burukudan/Parar-yaan/Tarayaan</i>	✓	✓			✓	
<i>Burusuan bato</i>		✓		✓		✓
<i>Durudamulag</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	

Table 3 (Continued). Classification of the local games based on the composition of players, materials used and the playing areas.

LOCAL GAMES	Player Composition		Materials		Playing Areas	
	Pair/ group	Individual	Land Based	Sea Based	Land Based	Sea Based
<i>Embarguan</i>		✓	✓		✓	
<i>Guruyudan Pababa</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	
<i>Guruyudan sa dawn bunga</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	
<i>Iloy-iloy</i>		✓			✓	
<i>Kurukariton</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	
<i>Luksong lubid sa dalayday</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	
<i>Ontog</i>		✓	✓		✓	
<i>Orig-orig</i>	✓			✓	✓	
<i>Paltok</i>	✓		✓		✓	
<i>Pararyaan kalasakas</i>		✓		✓	✓	
<i>Pararyaan noyog sa dagat</i>		✓	✓			✓
<i>Pararyaan plantsa sa dagat</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓
<i>Pararyaan umang</i>		✓		✓	✓	
<i>Paytik</i>		✓	✓		✓	
<i>Pikot bado</i>		✓		✓	✓	
<i>Pungan sa kasco</i>		✓		✓		✓
<i>Ralaban Kalasakas</i>		✓		✓	✓	
<i>Siklot</i>		✓		✓	✓	
<i>Step no (kiki)</i>		✓		✓	✓	
<i>Suruluan</i>		✓			✓	
<i>Tatsian buscay</i>		✓		✓	✓	
<i>Tatsian piso</i>		✓	✓		✓	

Majority (93%) of the games can be played individually (Table 3). Both *orig-orig* and *paltok* are group games. In *orig-orig*, the team resembles a hen with several chicks. It is hide and seek game between two groups of children sitting parallel to each other. Upon the starting signal, the “mother” or leader will hide a piece of stone on one of his teammate. While doing this, each member is prohibited to look at other team. When the stone was securely hidden, the leader of the other group will search the members of the other team. The goal is to be able to guess whom the stone is hidden. If the guess of the leader is right, the leader will jump as farther as he/she can and his member will follow. While *paltok* is like a gang war, with a small piece of bamboo containing *bakawan* buds, young papaya fruits, or wet paper pellets as the weapon (Figure 4). The aim of the game is to hit the opponent with the pellets. The game/battle ends when one group surrenders. Among the 26 games, eight or 31% can either be played individually or in groups (Table 3).

Barangay Maonon is one of the coastal barangays in Ligao City where agriculture and fisheries are the main sources of living. It can be inferred from the interview conducted that for practical reasons, parents were not willing to spend even a cent to buy commercially available toys even if they had money. Perhaps, the absence of toys encouraged the children to be more creative and innovative by using the indigenous and locally available materials to create their toys out of bamboo, coconut frond, vines, dried fruit, or tree branches.

More than half (57%) of the games used materials taken from the farms and other resources in the land (Figure 5) while 43% of the games had materials taken from the sea (Figure 6) (Table 3). These local practices prove that indeed the barangay has adapted well to the natural resources that abound in the locality. While they have the farm, the barangay has also the seas.



Figure 4. The weapon used in *paltok* made from bamboo.



Figure 5. Materials from the land like the vine used in *luksong lubid* (jump rope).

Only four (4) of the games were played in the sea like: *burusuan bato*, *pararyaan plantsa sa dagat*, *pararyaan niyog sa dagat* and *pungan sa kasco* (Table 3). *Burusuan bato* is a game where players try to collect or retrieve as many stones from the sea as possible. The game starts after one player throws stones in the water and when the go-signal starts, the players will swim from the shore, dive to the area where the stones are thrown and collect as many stones as they can. The player who collects the highest number of stones will be the winner of the game. Time is essential to the game. Meanwhile, *pararyaan niyog sa dagat*, is a race game played using a pair of empty coconut husks tied to each other to race in the sea (Figure 7). The game starts along the seashore. The player places the pair of empty coconut husks between his chest and stomach, using it as a floating device. One has to propel himself using his hands and legs towards the designated goal. The player who arrives first will be declared as the winner.



Figure 6. Materials from the sea like the empty shells in *tatsian buscay*.



Figure 7. Position of the empty coconut husks in *parayaan noyog sa dagat*.

Piriyungan sa casco is a hide and seek game where a “taya” or seeker tries to catch other players who are on the other side of the boat by diving underneath it (Figure 8). The playing area is divided into two sides by the boat or “casco”. The seeker stays on one side while the rest of the players are positioned on the opposite side of the boat. The goal of the seeker is to catch the player on the other side.



Figure 8. The boat as the obstacle in the hide and seek game *piriyungan sa casco*.

Table 4. Classification of the games based on its taxonomy.

Local Games	Jokes and Trickster Game	Formula Game	Sea-Animals Participating in Man’s Games
<i>Iloy-loy</i>	✓		✓
<i>Orig-orig</i>	✓		
<i>Pararyaan kalasakas</i>			✓
<i>Pararyaan umang</i>			✓
<i>Paytik</i>	✓		
<i>Pikot bado</i>		✓	
<i>Pungan sa kasco</i>	✓		
<i>Ralaban Kalasakas</i>			✓
<i>Siklot</i>		✓	
<i>Step no (kiki)</i>		✓	

Table 4 shows the game classification according to the taxonomy of the game, either as a game for jokers and tricksters, or a game that uses formula and allows the participation of sea animals (Art and Bush 1959). Games that included practical jokes, games of chance, hiding and hunting games, and guessing games were under the jokes and trickster category. *Iloy-loy*, *orig-orig*, *paytik*, and *pungan sa casco* were jokes and trickster games (Table 4, column 2).

Formula games were *pikot bado*, *siklot* and *kiki* (Table 4). These games involve a step-by-step process in chronological order to attain the goal of the game. *Pararyaan kalasakas*, *pararyaan umang*, and *ralaban kalasakas* were games that allowed sea creatures as participants of the game (Table 4, Figure 9). Who wins or loses among the human players is determined by the performance of sea snails (Lopez, 2001).



Figure 9. The *kalasakas* (crab) used in the *pararyaan kalasakas*.

Common playtime was after lunch or in the late afternoon (after class). During the preparation phase in a game, the general goal and rules of the game are clarified, discussed, and agreed upon first by the players. Determining a step-by-step process or sequential pattern of how to play the game was essential for the game to progress. Preparations for the games would vary depending on the game's requirement and the players' preference. It can be inferred that the games do not follow exact rules. Every time a game is played, there can be little or no modification at all in the rules.

Cultural Values Displayed in the Games

There were three (3) main values acquired and developed in the games that were identified through the type of collaboration among players and how the games were played. The identified values were the following: resourcefulness, determination, and cooperation. The resourcefulness of the children

was evident in the different materials used in the games. Almost all materials used in the local games could be found in the barangay. They are usually made from indigenous materials by the children or by their parents. In the game of *bingkay*, the materials used evolved from coconut shells to *bakya*. At present, the children use their slippers. The children also collected snails and *kalasakas* (crab) to be used as props for racing games. The children displayed their creativity in using boats as their obstacles for their hide-and-peek game of *pungan sa casco* (Fig. 9).

From the interviews conducted, it can also be inferred that the children's resourcefulness stemmed from the fact that parents do not choose to spend money on commercially available toys due to practical reasons. Local games paved the way for skill acquisition in maintaining a holistic attitude toward life for everyone (Wanderi, 2005), and it is only through promoting our local games that we can expect more young people to reap the benefits, as emphasized by Wanderi (2005). Games enhanced the acquisition and practice of skills required for the gradual growth to adult life (Horlings, 2015, Nyota and Mapara, 2008). As claimed further by Montecalbo-Ignacio et al. (2017), engaging in sports for the duration of time had an effect on a player's cognitive process. Cooperation was strongly observed in individual, pair, and group games where the players discussed and agreed on the rules on how to conduct the game depending on the situation they were at. In pair and group games, players collaborated well by dividing the tasks among themselves, and strategized together to win the game. Scott et al. (2016) discussed the developed well-being as a result when everyone was involved in the task.

CONCLUSION

The local games of Maonon, Ligao City were identified through interviews and actual observations. The interview revealed twenty-six (26) games as identified by the 56 senior respondents. The nature of these games was defined according to the players, the materials, and the playing area (land-based or sea-based). Some of the games were found to be gender-based. There were games that were relatively more favourable for women and some that were for men, all due to body types, limitations and the ability to perform some tasks of the game that were complicated like *bingkay* which required high flexibility.

The materials of the games were also categorized into land-based and sea-based, depending on the location from where the player can gather materials. Furthermore, the games were classified according to its taxonomy as ordinary game, jokes & trickster game, formula game, and animals' participation in a man's game. Lastly, cultural values were distinctly seen in these games such as resourcefulness, determination, and cooperation.

These findings will provide more insight on how policy makers within the local academe should look at our local games as an avenue for character formation and nation building. At an early age, the cultural values acquired through the local games can help children know more about themselves and the community they live in. The local leaders of the community (like political leaders and, more especially, representatives of local schools) must promote and encourage the young generation to play the games inherent in their locality thereby improving the value placed on an ecologically balanced locality.

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

The first author conceptualized the study, identified key informants and gathered data. Together with the second author, data were analyzed and discussions were theoretically enhanced.

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