

THE INDUSTRIAL METAMORPHOSIS OF BANAWE, QUEZON CITY... IN THE EYES OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC

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Introduction

Places like products also possess trademarks. If products have brands and labels, places are likewise given a certain tag or image by the general public.

In the Philippines, every region, province, city, down to the barangay, are also associated with a certain image. These images are attributed to the physical environment, culture, traditions and even the goods and services uniquely offered by the place.

When beaches are being talked about, a typical Filipino would think of places such as Palawan, Boracay, Batangas, Bohol, and Puerto Galera. Historical artifacts in the Philippines are connected with the antique houses of Vigan, walls of Intramuros, Corregidor and Mount Samat in Bataan, and Magellan's cross in Cebu. Although the Philippines is a tropical country, people seeking for a different weather condition initially consider Baguio and Tagaytay as a point of destination. Laguna is associated with hot springs and Buko pie, Dagupan Pangasinan is known for its Bangus, the best Philippine mangoes are registered with Guimaras, and delectable Filipino delicacies are found in Pampanga. Feasts and celebrations are associated with Lucban, Quezon for the Pahiyas, Fertility Dance and Rites in Obando Bulacan, and the MassKara Festival of Bacolod City.

However, image recall does not appear to be always pleasing and positive. Places are also remembered and tagged by the public because it possesses some degree of notoriety. Some areas in Tondo, Manila are known for the prevalence of petty crimes, a portion of Quiapo, Manila is recognized for selling illegal CD and DVD copies of movies. The Banawe area in Quezon City is unfortunately one of the

places in the Philippines that have developed a negative image from the general public.

Banawe is considered as the central market or the “Divisoria” of car spare parts and accessories in the Philippines. Its beginnings could be traced in the late 1960s to the early 1970s, when some businessmen started to establish retail stores of car spare parts along E. Rodriguez Sr. Blvd. to the corner of Quezon Avenue. The potential of Banawe to become the car spare parts capital in National Capital Region (NCR) was recognized by other entrepreneurs. This in effect led to a gradual increase on the number of car related establishments in Banawe. The accessibility of Banawe to the different cities in the NCR is considered as a major factor to its industrial growth and development.

Unfortunately, part of Banawe’s industrial progress is linked to its image of being a haven of fences of car parts and accessories. According to authorities, these illegal vendors usually obtain their goods from stolen or disassembled vehicles. Even customers within Banawe became victims of these activities. If you have an item stolen in your car, chances are you would find it at the hands of the enterprising street traders of Banawe (Galford, 2004).

If Banawe will not be protected from these illegal activities, Banawe would no doubt be converted to an underground business center of car parts and accessories. This would overpower the legal businessmen who are religiously paying their taxes and are committed to provide quality goods and services to the general public.

Despite the presence of illegal activities in Banawe, one unrecognized achievement of Banawe is its industrial metamorphosis. Banawe has been successful in transforming itself from a car parts capital to a dining and leisure site in Quezon City. Banawe was able to undergo a phase of product diversification. Banawe apparently becomes identified with restaurants. In particular, most of these restaurants offer Chinese cuisine. Some of the noted restaurants in Banawe are Causeway Seafood Restaurant, Chinatown’s Best Food, Le Ching’s Tea House, Alex III, Tramway, Coral Garden, Muang Thai Restaurant, Haf Chang Tea House, and Shabu-Shabu Bar and Grill. Common restaurant chains such as Gerry’s Grill, Yellow Cab, KFC, Chow King and McDonalds are also found in Banawe.

Banawe's metamorphosis is not only limited to its diversification to restaurants. The area is starting to be known as a hub for spa and wellness centers in the city. The opening of the Ace Water Spa highlighted this phase of Banawe's product diversification.

People may not initially recognize Banawe's industrial metamorphosis. This could be attributed to the fact that Banawe is merely a part of Quezon City. Moreover, the presence of illegal activities in Banawe is one major factor that causes the general public not to realize its transformation and achievements.

More than emphasizing Banawe's industrial growth and development, this endeavor explored the specific factors that led to its successful transformation. Using the general public's perceptions towards Banawe, this paper was able to unravel a piece of story that speaks of how Banawe was able to achieve its successful industrial metamorphosis.

Methods of Research

Primary data generated from a self-administered questionnaire was the instrument utilized in this study. The questionnaire specifically assessed how Social, Political, Economic, Legal and Environmental factors influenced Banawe's industrial metamorphosis.

Since the researchers devised a questionnaire, the tests of validation and reliability were undertaken. The comments and suggestions of experts in the fields of Psychology and Business were considered in the process of content validation. The questionnaire was also pre-tested to a sample of twenty respondents. The computed Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the questionnaire was 0.866, which denoted a high reliability.

The respondents of the study are shop owners of car parts and accessories, regular clients of the shop owners, and other tenants (employees and of non-car establishments) in Banawe. The perceptions of these respondents were utilized in measuring the extent of influence of the factors considered. Descriptive Statistics were employed in generating the results of the study.

Discussion of Results

Industrial growth and development is initially linked with business and economic growth. In the case of Banawe, Economic Factors were not observed as a key reason in its industrial transformation. The respondents instead viewed that Social Factors was responsible for Banawe's transformation.

In the point of view of the clients and general public, Banawe's industrial transformation was mostly dictated by the changing needs and preferences of its customers. This means that it is the customers that directed Banawe to what it is today. The entrepreneurs simply observed and made an opportunity out of the needs and demands of the customers.

The belief that people means business prompted the entrepreneurs in Banawe to explore other opportunities. The bulk of the regular customers of car parts and accessories called for other business opportunities. The businessmen felt that the regular customers of car related establishments should be given other reasons to visit Banawe.

Food then became the secondary but promising business venture in Banawe. This later on caused the existence of Chinese restaurants catering to different income classes. The dominance of the Chinese community in Banawe further influenced this trend. Fortunately for Banawe, these Chinese restaurants brought them product diversification and differentiation. Banawe gradually became known as a dining place for people seeking Chinese cuisine. Later on, other types of restaurants offering varied cuisines began to spread in Banawe.

The respondents also recognized the dominance of the Chinese community within Banawe as an essential factor that caused its industrial transformation. The innate entrepreneurial side of the Chinese contributed to the intensification of the business activities in the area.

Unfortunately, the prevalence of fences or illegal vendors was a significant social aspect of Banawe that hinders its continuous positive transformation. The shop owners, clients and the general public all believed that these illegal activities only heighten the negative side of Banawe. These serve as obstructions to Banawe's industrial

transformation. Every place has its own imperfection. In the case of Banawe, the prevalence of the illegal free lancers of car parts and accessories is like a fatal disease that plagues the legal and hardworking business owners, residents and the clients.

Environmental Factors emerged as the second most influential variable in Banawe's industrial transformation. The respondents viewed that part of Banawe's successful transformation is attributed to the presence of quality infrastructures. Having adequate and quality infrastructures is another essential requirement for a place to become industrialized. These infrastructures specifically include roads, bridges, lighting and proper signages.

Every city, town, province or even a district has its own potential and capabilities. However, without sufficient and quality infrastructures, such strengths could never be capitalized. Banawe is one perfect example of a place that benefited from strategic location and quality infrastructures. Banawe is strategically located in the heart of NCR's largest city, the area is accessible to people from different places of NCR and quality roads link and surround the area. More importantly, Banawe does not suffer from any form of flooding during the rainy season. In effect, business activities are not affected from such hindrances.

Legal and Political factors were likewise observed by the respondents as integral to Banawe's industrial metamorphosis. Legal and Political factors pertain to the laws, city ordinances, local government's programs and projects and other forms of intervention by the city government. In the case of Banawe, the perceptions of the respondents suggest that Banawe has been receiving its share of assistance from the government. This is particularly evident on the presence and maintenance of infrastructures in the area.

Legal and political intervention could be beneficial or disadvantageous. Intervention that protects the welfare of selected sectors in the community would yield limited long-run benefits. It further promotes oppression and welfare disparity. In the case of Banawe, the respondents believed that the area has been receiving sufficient assistance from the government. Traces of government biases were not evident in the study. However, as mentioned, legal and political intervention was not highly accepted by the respondents, as influential in Banawe's industrial metamorphosis.

Economic Factors was the least identified reason that caused Banawe's industrial metamorphosis. The respondents do not necessarily see that inflation rate, increase in operating costs, imposition of higher business taxes as exceedingly dominant in Banawe's industrial transformation. Factors that relate to the financial and monetary aspect do not emerge as exceedingly contributory in Banawe's industrial metamorphosis.

Initially, it was expected that Economic Factors would fulfill a significant role in Banawe's transformation. Ironically for this study, the respondents do not highly regard this area as highly valuable in Banawe's industrial metamorphosis. The respondents believe that Banawe is not adversely affected from any form of downswing in the national economy. Banawe is seen as a tough and self-supporting community. It is rather social transformation that could divert Banawe's industrial success.

Banawe is an area that benefited and flourished from social transformation. This serves as the primary reason why Banawe's fate was not observed to be dependent on the country's economic condition. Banawe's industrial metamorphosis is rooted in its capability to shift and adjust to the changes occurring in society. The people of Banawe have seen social changes, not as threats, but signs of hope and better opportunities.

Conclusions of the Study

Industrial Metamorphosis is a holistic end result of adjustments and transformations in the society. Being able to adjust one's sails to the wind of changes is the solitary key that opens the path to successful Industrial Metamorphosis.

Banawe is a living proof that even minor vicinities are capable of transforming itself to income generating communities. The people of Banawe imbibed two principles, the presence of people calls for business and social changes represent horizons of countless opportunities.

Banawe's industrial metamorphosis was not merely rooted on business and economic gains. It is the capability to capitalize on social changes that led Banawe's to its successful industrial metamorphosis.

References

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