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PRESERVING HERITAGE: BOLIBONGKINGKING BEAT OF LOBOC, BOHOL

Chrystel Mariz R. Gementiza, LPT
[1]*College of Education, Holy Name University, Tagbilaran City, Bohol, Philippines*

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ABSTRACT
This study aims to document and preserve the traditional "Bolibongkingking" beat of Loboc, Bohol, through rhythmic notation and analysis of its tempo and time signature. As an essential component of the cultural identity of the Loboc community, this musical tradition plays a significant role in local festivities and religious ceremonies. However, limited scholarly documentation exists on its musical structure, making preservation efforts imperative. Utilizing a descriptive-qualitative approach, this study employed participant observation and structured interviews with local musicians to document and analyze the "Bolibongkingking" beat. Findings reveal specific rhythmic patterns, tempo variations, and time signatures that define the beat. The analysis highlights its percussive foundation, syncopation, and distinctive tempo, underscoring its unique role in the region's cultural heritage. By preserving this rhythmic tradition, the study contributes to the broader discourse on Philippine ethnomusicology, fostering efforts to safeguard and promote traditional music for future generations.

KEYWORDS: *Cultural Heritage, Ethnomusicology, Loboc, Rhythmic Notation, Traditional Music*

1.0 INTRODUCTION
The "Bolibongkingking" beat of Loboc, Bohol, is a vital part of the town's cultural identity, showcased annually during the Bolibongkingking Festival. This festival is celebrated every May 24 and features traditional music and dance performances in honor of the town's patroness, Our Lady of Guadalupe. The name "Bolibongkingking" originates from the rhythmic sounds of the instruments used: "bolibong" (drum) and "kingking" (gong). The festival is a religious celebration and a testament to Loboc's rich cultural heritage, commemorating the miraculous healing of the people during a cholera outbreak through music and dance rituals (Loboc Festivals-Bohol-Philippines.com, n.d.).

Music is a universal form of expression and communication, deeply embedded in cultural traditions worldwide (Rehfeldt et al., 2021). Am Ethnomusicological research underscores music's role in shaping communal identity and preserving intangible heritage (Nanjundaswamy & Chethana, 2025). Additionally, the idea was strengthened and emphasized through Blum (2023), as cited by Yust (2023), the importance of understanding music within its cultural context and recognizing its role in societal functions. As to the notation, documentation, and importance of preserving this cultural heritage, this benchmarked to Sinaga's (2019) Music Composition Process, which further provides a framework for analyzing the structure and development of indigenous beats like "Bolibongkingking."

In the Philippines, rhythmic patterns were utilized by researchers like Aquino (1976), who emphasized rhythmic notation to standardize indigenous beats in dances. However, systematic documentation for local music collections in cultural heritage remains limited, highlighting the need for further research (Doi, 2018). Gementiza (2024) also emphasized the importance of documenting local traditions to raise cultural awareness and encourage policymakers to support heritage preservation efforts.

Despite its continued performance, little scholarly documentation exists regarding the musical structure of the "Bolibongkingking" beat. This study aims to bridge this gap by systematically analyzing the beat's notation, tempo, and rhythmic patterns. The research contributes to the preservation and scholarly understanding of Loboc's musical heritage.

2.0 OBJECTIVES
This study aims to document and analyze the rhythmic beat of Loboc, Bohol, known as "Bolibongkingking," for the purpose of rhythmic notation and cultural preservation.

Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Describe the features of the Bolibongkingking beat in terms of:
   1.1. Beat structure;
   1.2. Notes and rhythmic patterns; and
   1.3. Musical elements, such as time signature, tempo, and instrumentation.
2. Document the rhythmic notation of the Bolibongkingking beat based on traditional recordings and performances.

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Determine how the use of native instruments, particularly the Gimbaw and Gong, shapes the overall rhythmic character of the beat.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive-qualitative research design to determine the rhythmic and musical elements of the "Bolibongkingking" beat. This approach ensured an in-depth understanding of the cultural significance of the music within the Loboc community.

3.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted in the municipality of Loboc, Bohol, a town widely recognized for its deep-rooted musical traditions and cultural festivities. The town hosts the annual Bolibongkingking Festival, where traditional music is performed as a form of devotion and cultural expression.

3.3 Research Participants

The study purposively selected local musicians, festival performers, and community elders from Loboc, Bohol, who are actively engaged in performing the "Bolibongkingking" beat. Their participation provided rich insights into the music's historical and cultural contexts.

3.4 Sampling Design

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select individuals with firsthand knowledge and experience of the “Bolibongkingking” beat. This ensured that only credible and culturally engaged participants were included in the study.

3.5 Statistical Design

Since the study employed a qualitative approach, no statistical analysis was used. Instead, descriptive and thematic analysis was applied to interpret patterns from transcriptions and interview responses, along with rhythmic and musical notations.

3.6 Geographical Area

The geographical focus of the study was Loboc, Bohol, a town in Central Visayas, Philippines, where the Bolibongkingking tradition continues to thrive as a core part of local identity and cultural expression.

3.7 Research Instrument

Primary data were collected through audio-visual recordings of live performances, an interview guide with key informants, and the use of music notation software--MuseScore for transcription and analysis.

3.8 Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher conducted fieldwork during the Bolibongkingking Festival, recording live performances and interviewing musicians regarding the techniques, variations, and historical significance of the beat. Additionally, observations of performances allowed for a nuanced understanding of the rhythmic patterns and instrumental interactions.

3.9 Data Analysis

The collected data were transcribed using standard music notation techniques to accurately document the rhythmic and structural components of the beat. The researcher anchored her notation methods with Sinaga’s Music Composition Process (2019). The tempo and time signature were analyzed systematically, and variations in rhythm were categorized based on their recurrence and musical function.

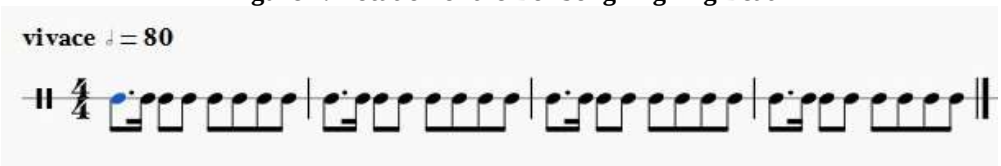
3.10 Ethical Considerations

All participants provided informed consent before the study commenced. Cultural sensitivity and respect for local traditions were strictly observed throughout the research process. Confidentiality was ensured, and participants were given the opportunity to review the findings before publication.

4.0 Results and Discussion

The "Bolibongkingking" beat is characterized by distinctive percussive elements and rhythmic intricacy. Key musical components identified in the study include:

Figure 1. Notation of the Bolibongkingking Beat



- **Time Signature.** The beat follows a 4/4 time signature, with four beats per measure.
- **Tempo**. The tempo is marked as "Vivace," signifying a lively and fast-paced rhythm suitable for festival celebrations.
- **Rhythmic Pattern.** Involves syncopation using dotted eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and eighth notes with the count: “1 ah and 2 and, 3 and 4 and.”
- **Instrumentation**. The "Gimbaw" (two-sided drums made of goat skin) and the "Gong" (native brass instrument struck with mallets or sticks) are the primary instruments used.

The rhythmic foundation is established through the interplay between the "Gimbaw" and the "Gong." While the "Gimbaw" maintains the beat, the "Gong" provides accentuated beats, particularly in the final two eighth notes of each measure. The beat’s structure is repetitive, ensuring consistency while allowing for expressive variations by musicians.

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5.0 SUGGESTIONS

Findings indicate the importance of integrating the Bolibongkingking beat into cultural education programs at both local and regional levels to promote greater awareness and appreciation of Loboc's musical heritage. Furthermore, the rhythmic documentation of other indigenous music traditions in Bohol and throughout the Philippines is vital for preserving the nation's rich cultural diversity. Lastly, sustained support from local government units and cultural agencies is essential to advance initiatives aimed at documenting, archiving, and safeguarding traditional music practices.

6.0 CONCLUSION

This study successfully analyzed and notated the "Bolibongkingking" beat, documenting its tempo, rhythmic patterns, and instrumental interplay. The findings contribute to the preservation of Loboc's musical heritage and highlight the importance of continued research in Philippine traditional music. The beat's structured yet flexible rhythm demonstrates both artistic depth and cultural function, making it a valuable subject for heritage studies.

7.0 AREA FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research should include a comparative analysis of the Bolibongkingking beat with other indigenous Philippine rhythmic traditions to highlight its unique features and regional significance. Additionally, there is a need to examine the sociocultural narratives and oral histories that shape the performance and transmission of the beat within the Loboc community. Investigating the integration of traditional rhythms into contemporary music and performance education can also provide valuable insights into how indigenous music can be sustained, reimagined, and passed on to future generations.

8.0 FIGURES, TABLES, AND REFERENCES

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