

Tabat as a Living Musical Heritage: The *Pasyon* Tradition of Atimonan, Quezon as a Community-Based Music Education Resource

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✉ doi: <https://doi.org/10.66133/ejne2x94>

Abstract

Tabat is one of the cultures in the town of Atimonan, Quezon Province. It is a ritual practice that is commonly heard in the town during the Lenten season. It is mostly done by the elderly, such as *cantor & cantores*, *tagasenyas*, and *musikero*'s who repeatedly chant authentic compositions accompanied by rhythmic instrumentations. *Tabat* intersects with localized culture, music, and contextualized identity. Using a descriptive-historical study, this study explores the origin, communal participation, the music, the process, roles, and performance of *Tabat*, contributing to the body of Philippine contextual and cultural preservation.

While there is much research to *pasyon*, studies on the field of faith-based community ritual integrating music educational resources remain underexplored. The study argues that the concept of *Tabat* can be a potential resource in community-based music education. Given the situation, by exploring and examining *Tabat*, the study underscores diverse contributions and discourse to the body of music teaching, teacher training, and cultural heritages. From this context, integrating Philippine ritual in an education framework fosters societal engagement in education, awareness of identity, and conducive movement through music education. Ultimately, *Tabat* cannot be called "merely music" but can play an important role in bridging cultural ideology, contextual knowledge that will contribute to the Filipino musical pedagogy that will strengthen teaching education, especially in the Philippine music and cultural education.

Keywords: *Tabat (Atimonan, Quezon), Living Musical Heritage, Community-Based Music Education, Pasyon Tradition*

Introduction

Exploring music as heritage has been a critical issue in society because it often sees music as a "simple act" or "merely music". This stereotypical context is anchored to the societal constructs of heritage typology as interchangeable, which contests its meaning and dialogue from time to time. (Graham and Howard 2008) Over the years, music as a whole in a global perspective has been thoroughly explored, which possesses meanings to larger societal issues, such as social inequity, racism, and injustices. (Bartleet, 2023; Bartleet et al., 2024). It helps safeguard intangible cultural heritage through a model that synergizes the transmission of music with indigenous dance and language

practices. (Gwerevende & Mthombeni, 2023) And importantly, to localize and integrate local music into the formal learning system in which students learn their culture and identity. (Guadalupe et al., 2023)

From the recent literature, music education has been divided into diverse forms, such as (1) Community music, (2) Formal music from a conservatory, and (3) non-formal music outside regular schools, which has been evident for hierarchical discourse and discriminatory arguments in the past, where formal music is viewed as superior, as also evident in the Philippine context. (Bates, 2018; Green, 2014; Jorgensen, 2007; Wright, 2008; Del Valle, n.d., as cited in Guadalupe et al., 2023, p. 11;

Ward et al., 2025). Although music has been inclusive since contemporary times evident by Sustainable Development goals, Department of education, and community practices (Bartleet, 2023; Del Valle, n.d.; Department of Education [DepEd], 2016; Telfer & Howley, 2020, p. 5), the main arguments lie between the integration-collision of community-based music and formal music learning in conservatories and schools, where decontextualized knowledge or a Western perspective has been favorably selected, detaching the ideology of the music and culture. (Ward et al., 2025; Green, 2006a; Green, 2008b; Campbell, 2004) These large gaps are intersected by the impression that exploring a pilot music study from the locality is suggested for determining a potential resource for a more culture-sensitive, Filipino-centered music education and identity formation in the Philippine context.

In the Philippine context, it is widely evident that contextualizing community music, rituals, and indigenous music from the locality is being proposed for utilization. Articles and policies related to this, such as the K to 12 curriculum and MATATAG curriculum, are directly involved in fostering localized initiatives and strengthening academic policies, quality education, and music through strategic use. (K to 12 IRR, 2013, Section 10.3; Department of Education [DepEd], 2016; Angeles & Rabago, 2025; Guadalupe et al., 2023) Although this policy offers a stronger background in formulating education materials, Guadalupe et al. (2023) stated the concept of “*napakadugo*”—a context where formulating responsive, authentic, and contextualized music resources remains a challenge. This crisis is similar to the studies gap where transitions of music resources offer a sophisticated challenge by multi-layered factors from the learner, resources, teacher, and environment. Exposing the gaps reveals the distance of contextualizing music-based practices, contrary to the policies aforementioned. From this constraint, the researcher offers a pilot study to describe *Tabat* — a music-

based ritual from the town of Atimonan, Quezon, as a way to conduct preliminary research on a ritual-based case in the Province of Quezon, which may help in identifying potential resources in contextualizing localized practices conforming to the policy of the MATATAG curriculum and K-12 curriculum.

In many ways, community music-based education and rituals from the localities have a diverse set of messages and reflections. They often learned from informalities and fostered communal relationships. (Bartleet, 2023; Bartleet et al., 2024; Veblen, 2007; Higgins, 2012). Given this, it's anchored in the principles of Small's perspective of “*musicking*” (1998) and Wenger's “*community of practice*” (1998), which involved participatory engagement, identifies meanings and social significance. This literature offers a variety of perspectives where music in a global and local perspective thrives to advance music, helping the concept of conservation, strengthening social cohesion, life-long learning, contextualization, and democracy of culture. Similarly to this, the study also anchored *Kapwa* in *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, which strengthened community cohesion in the Philippine context. This angle is largely significant as it fosters community engagement, in which music from the community is always involved. (Enriquez, 1978a; Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000) Furthermore, it is beneficial to suggest that, given the literature above, music and ritualized practices from the locale, such as *Tabat*, may be a potential resource for teaching and learning, especially in analyzing and creating a lesson in an inclusive and critical curriculum.

Aside from aiming to bridge the scholarly gap, the study's practicality is significant in contributing to the preservation of local practices, especially from the town of Atimonan, Quezon, where the *Tabat* takes place seasonally during the Lenten season, and which is underexplored. *Tabat* offers a

three to five-hour repetitive chant that is performed by musicians accompanied by musicians using original hymns composed by local musicians from the town. Rituals such as *pasyon* from the Philippines open an avenue to the academic world, literature from Iletos' "*Pasyon and revolution*" foregrounds oppression and the political aggression through which it primarily discusses a decolonial perspective using the *pasyon*, which contributes to a Filipino-centered ethos. (Ileto, 1979; Trimillos, 1992) The scholarly work of Sapitula (2021), which discusses selfhood and suffering, highlighting social dimensions and participatory reflection through devotion. Moreover, the study of Jacinto (2025) highlights *pabasa* from the region of Manila, which scrutinizes the social and cultural meaning contributing to the affective relief of *pasyon* from the Filipino perspective.

Given the situation, *pasyon* in the Philippines has been thoroughly examined in a diverse set of disciplines such as anthropology, social science, and community music that may foster a similar context of communality, inclusivity, and political oppression. At this stage, the study positioned *Tabat* — a community music-based education ritual from Atimonan, Quezon, for possible integration into formal music education in the Philippine curriculum. These corresponding studies are essential to discourse ritual traditions, especially from the locality, which are susceptible as a pedagogical music resource, while simultaneously documenting and preserving the culture. Notwithstanding, the study explores the origin, communal participation, the music, the process, roles, and performance of *Tabat* that may inform pedagogical thinking, especially on conforming to the policies in academic institutions such as the Department of Education. (Department of Education [DepEd], 2016; Angeles & Rabago, 2025; Guadalupe et al., 2023) While this study may not advance to an application model, may the study help to change and develop the concept of "*napakudogo*" of Guadalupe et al. (2023)

in formulating and contextualizing ritual or music-based practices from the Philippines by providing a preliminary basis for contextualizing music teaching, such as *Tabat*, for continuum and responsive education. (Jacinto, 2025; Trimillos, 1992; Guadalupe et al., 2023; Department of Education [DepEd], 2016). By doing this, the study helps to contribute to the culture of *Tabat* in a descriptive ethnomusicological perspective, it fosters a preliminary argument of ritualized practices as a contextualized pedagogy, and highlights music in localized curriculum development.

Methods

Given the gap in the study, the research utilizes a qualitative approach, which explores the lived experience of intercalators of the study, especially in the case of *Tabat* in Atimonan, Quezon. It is important to note that this approach helps the study to further analyze *Tabat* as a potential resource in the field of educational pedagogy by understanding the essence of participants' stories and narratives. (Creswell & Poth, 2018) Furthermore, the study is grounded in a descriptive-historical approach that has a touch of ethnographic inquiries, as it uses the concept of "*pakikipagkwentuhan*" and "*pakikilahok*" — a Filipino-centered methodology to further explore and create an epistemic data that is grounded in the Filipino perspective. (Anacin, 2024; Enriquez, 1978a; Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000)

Conceptual Framework

In this study, the research conceptualization is grounded by three (3) conceptual ideas developed by the esteemed researchers from the field of music education, social sciences, and cultural and arts education. It is grounded in Cristopher small's perspective of "*musicking*" (1998), Wenger's perspective of "*community of practice*" (1998), and Enriquez's concept of "*Kapwa*" (1978) of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*. Given this, it validates the rigor of the study by thoroughly conforming to the consciousness of the Filipino, especially from

the perspective of music and its potential resource for pedagogy. Furthermore, it also discourses that music is not just an “*entertainment leisure*” or “*merely music*” but has a deeper meaning in a communal context.

Locale of the Study

The participants of the study were focused solely on Atimonan, Quezon, as *Tabat* can be heard from Atimonan. It is also necessary that the participants of the study are composed of community elders from the town (e.g., *Musiko, Cantor, and Cantores*), cultural bearers, educators, and community musicians who embody the essence and lived experience of *Tabat* as a cultural practice during the Lenten season. Furthermore, the study conforms to the perspective of quality over quantity of the participants' purposive sampling, which delves into the richness and thickness of the description of data. It is also important to notice that the data gathering was conducted in the academic year of 2023-2024, and the researcher extended the data gathering and methodological rigor using “*pakikipagkwentuhan*” and “*pakikilahok*” into the year 2025-2026 for a brief inquiry and observation.

Population and Sampling

The study follows the rules of purposive sampling, which filters and satisfies the given criterion for reaching the quality and richness of data. The participants from Atimonan were selectively chosen and possess quality knowledge relating to *Tabat* and its potential as a community-based music education resource. (Patton, 2015) The criteria below must be satisfied by the participants' in-depth knowledge for them to be included in the study.

- a. Filipino citizen from Atimonan, Quezon Province
- b. At least 18 years old before the formal inquiries
- c. More than 7 years of experience practicing the *Tabat* ritual in Atimonan
- d. Without cognitive impairment before the formal inquiries
- e. Knowledge of community music, ritualized practices, and intangible heritages in the town

After carefully selecting the participants of the study, the researcher selected ten participants ($N=10$), all of which are resided in Atimonan, Quezon. Given by the population, the study conforms to the principles of information of power of Malterud et al. (2016), as they stated to conforms to the quality or the richness of data rather than quantity of participants without “thickness” of information.

Research Instrument

Proceeding to the selective sampling of the population, the study uses a Filipino-centered indigenous methodology grounded in the “*Kapwa*” of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* to center on the lived experiences of participants, carrying their epistemic values within a local community in the Philippine context. The “*pakikipagkwentuhan*” (Conversational interviewing) and “*pakikilahok*” (Enriquez, 1978a; Enriquez, 1994b; Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000; Anacin, 2024) are the two methodological instruments being used. Furthermore, the use of archival documentation with proper consent and ethical protocols was applied. These conditions were mandatory for the secondary analysis, which was utilized, allowing the study to triangulate data for a thorough analysis.

Pakikipagkwentuhan, from the root word “*kwento*,” has been explored by Ong (2019) and Orteza (1997) as cited by Anacin (2024), which creates an open-ended conformity on the Filipino perspective; it is often a flexible rather than structured interview inquiry, as it also creates a conducive environment to both participants and the researcher. From this viewpoint, the researcher was allowed to create a non-structured interview that casually conversing with participants. This point of view is being

discussed by Tuhiwau Smith (1999) as it differs from Western traditional interviews that may create a medium of neutrality. (Anacin 2024) But in the Philippine context, Filipinos have been characterized to share their culture and interactions, such as *pakikisa* (full trust), *pakikibagay* (conforming)... (Kalaw, 2015; Anacin, 2024) that has been part of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, especially from the concept of “*Kapwa*”. (Enriquez, 1978a; Enriquez, 1994b; Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000; Anacin, 2024)

Furthermore, it is also significant to note that the researcher's positionality remains a crucial step in the use of language and experience relating to *Tabat*, especially since it is used in Filipino/Tagalog, which are commonly used in the Southern Luzon provinces. Moreover, the researcher resides in Atimonan, Quezon, and also community musicians from the town. The shared experience from culture and ritual practice of the town instilled shared vision, familiarity, identity, and cultural experience for both participants and the researcher.

Pakikilahok has also been utilized in the study, as it is one of the contextually grounded methods of observation. (Anacin, 2024; Enriquez, 1994b) In the study, the researcher positioned *Pakikilahok* as a concept where the researcher is also a part of the community. As Anacin (2024) noted, the researcher may create a notion of “insiderness” where the researcher offered *tulong* (assistance), *bayanihan* (community involvement) ... Notwithstanding, the researcher used *pakikilahok* to collect data, and the researcher went to community event ritual practices with the elders to embody the essence of culture and so-called Filipino values. By combining this with “*pakikipagkwentohan*,” it allowed the researcher to create a theme that conforms to the Filipino-centered context. It enhances the rigor of the study and creates a space where the multi-layered experience of participants, especially from the voices of the Elders who have been characterized as minorities.

Analysis of Data

Written and oral consent from participants were utilized for the conduct of the study, and the use of the Filipino language was used, ensuring language commonality among participants in Atimonan, Quezon. *Pakikilahok* and *pakikipagkwentuhan* were also used during the conduct of the formal inquiries; each inquiry lasted 40-60 minutes and was recorded with their permission using mobile phones. Archival documentation was also utilized for secondary analysis to allow important triangulation of data.

The data were transcribed manually using Microsoft Word. The study utilized thematic analysis, allowing the data to be structurally grounded and systematic for deep interpretation, especially when exploring participants' lived experiences. (Braun & Clarke, 2006;2021) All of the data was stored on a hard drive, in a dry box, and on a laptop with a password known only to the researcher, ensuring the data is secure. The data will last for only 5 years. After the maximum period has passed, the data will be permanently deleted.

Notwithstanding, the study uses the perspective of Lincoln and Guba (1985) on trustworthiness, as it allows the researcher's rigor that safeguards the content and data of the entirety of the study. Furthermore, it is composed of Credibility, Transferability, Confirmability, and Dependability.

Transferability refers to the data that is transferable and can be contextualized by various researchers. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) From this standpoint, the study focuses on contextualizing *Tabat*—a ritual practice from Atimonan, Quezon, especially performed during the Lenten season as a potential resource for community-based music education. The result can be applied to other *pasyon* rituals from the Philippines or other music-based related research that may provide information and narrow the data, resulting in other music resources from the community.

Dependability refers to the “backbone” and trails of the entirety of the study. The study provides systematic audit trails to each “*pakikilahok*” and “*pakikipagkwentuhan*” across the data gathering, including informed consent from the public, LGU, community elders, and leaders. Furthermore, all archival documents and photos are evident from the aforementioned trail, allowing a comprehensive backbone and evidence of the study.

Credibility is actively performed, especially when doing “*pakikilahok*”, as it allowed the study to use contextualized member checking and peer debriefing, where the data were debriefed by the participants and experts from the field. They are free to comment and suggest inducing accuracy of the data that may enhance the rigor of the study.

Moreover, conformability refers to the biases and hindrances affecting the result of the data. However, due to the use of Filipino methodology such as “*pakikipagkwentuhan* and *Pakikilahok*,” the data can be at potential bias, especially from the emic perspective. The researcher acknowledges the potential risk of biases. However, the researcher also acknowledges reflexive transparency, such as a systematic audit trail to every inquiry, member checking, which can induce validation of shared understanding, and a reflexive journal through which the researcher writes a personal and analytical journal that improves the relationship of the data. Combining these technicalities, Filipino methodologies don’t affect the biases but rather improve transparency, relationality, and subjectivity of the information, allowing epistemological stances of the study.

The study applied quality standards from the perspective of Orb et al. (2001) and the British Educational Research Association (2018) for ethical consideration. Before proceeding with the interview proper, the researcher first explained what the study is all about by openly and honestly sharing the

clear purpose and objectives of the research while simultaneously conversing casually in a “*pakikipagkwentuhan*. This non-structured inquiry ensures sensitivity that provides commonality and transparency between participants and researchers sharing common values and experience. The researcher then seeks the participants’ voluntary agreement to take part in the study. Along with consent, the participants were given the right to withdraw at any point in the study without negative consequences, and the right to privacy and confidentiality, where their personal information and responses are protected and not disclosed without their permission. Throughout the inquiries, proper sensitivity was used by treating participants with care, respect, and understanding, especially regarding their feelings, culture, beliefs, and personal experiences. The researcher upheld the Filipino values of “*pakikisama*” and “*paggalang*” by treating the participants kindly and respectfully, showing courtesy, and utilizing the words “sir”, “ma’am”, “po”, and “opo” when dealing with older participants. This is also to conform with Enriquez’s concept of “*Kapwa*” (1978) of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* as seen in the conceptual framework of this study. With these considerations, the researcher ensures the integrity and credibility of the research. Furthermore, the researcher utilizes Grammarly to ensure “correctness” and proper grammar flow throughout the study. Moreover, this is to provide a disclosing software that the study used for conforming to the perspective of Lincoln & Guba (1985) “trustworthiness,” which mainly helps to secure ethical research protocols and sensitivity.

Results and Discussion

From across all participants, the study delves into five major themes: (1) *Tabat* as a Ritualized Musical Practice Beyond “Mere Music”, (2) Embodied Participation and the Concept of Musicking, (3) Intergenerational Transmission and Informal Musical Learning, (4) *Kapwa* and the Construction of

Communal Musical Identity, and (5) Tensions in Contextualizing Ritual Music within Formal Education. Within these themes, using thematic analysis, it helps to recognize the gaps of the study, especially *Tabat* as a potential resource in academic pedagogy.

Tabat as a Ritualized Musical Practice Beyond “Mere Music”

Tabat has been a ritual practice tracing back to its origin from Fr. Isabelo Martinez, that introduce the ritual to fellow *Atimonanin* in the late 1917. It is commonly practiced during the Lenten season, where they chant and perform original compositions/hymns of *Tabat* Elders composers until the present time. *Tabat* was performed starting from *Krus de abo* (Ash Wednesday) until the end of the Lenten days. Practitioners and Elders such as *Cantor*, *Cantores*, *Tagasensyas*, and *Musikero* go to “*nagpapatabat*” — a *deboto* (principal devotee) to fulfill their “*panata*” (vow) during the holy week and perform the ritual from their personal spaces. It is also performed from the church during “*biyerness santo*” (Good Friday), during *pahalik*, or after the procession of the aforementioned date. It was performed for a continuous span of 3 to 5 hours, in length, with a short break, that undergoes drinking “*salabat*” — a fresh ginger tea primarily for voice relief of cantores and for protecting their voice, so that they cannot do “*piyok*” or cracking of voices.

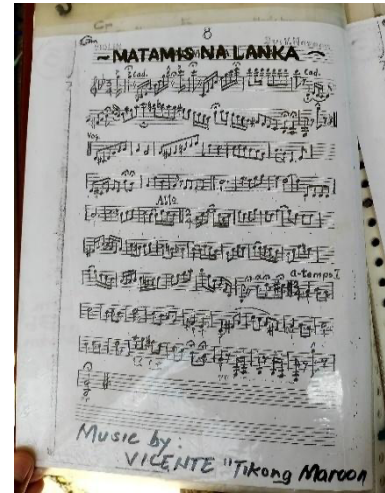
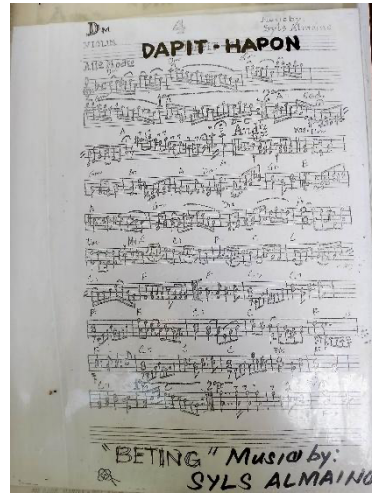
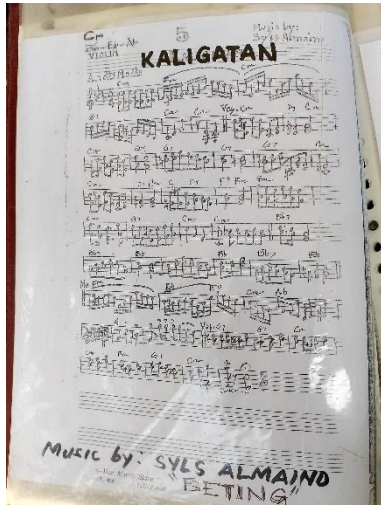
According to the participants, *pabasa* and *Tabat* have been different practices during the Lenten season in *Atimonan*. From the claim of local historians (e.g., Francisco Laude) as cited by the participant, *Pabasa* are performed with a continuous 24-48-hour cycle without accompaniment, while *Tabat* has been performed with authentic compositions/ hymns accompanied by instrumentalist that guide the singer elders from the entirety of the ritual practices. (e.g., *Hinagpis*, *Pambungad*, *Pangprosisyon*, *Dapit Hapon*, *Kaligatan*, *Dolorosa*, *Matamis na Lanka*, *Etse Matter Tuwa*, *Mainit na Kape*,

Makaluma, *San Jose*, *Golgota*, *Konsehala*, *Hinahanap Kita*, *Muling Pagkikita*, *Hindi Ko Akalain*, *Kalayaan*, *Candelaria*, *Babalik Ka Rin*, *Pasyon*, and *Pasasa* with the primary composers such as Vicente Maroon, Celvestre Inoy, Agustin Almeyda, and Gregorio Catamio.

The process of *Tabat* begins with the opening prayer – a recitative prayer of “*Aba Ginoong Maria*” and “*Luwalhati*”, then proceeds to the lyrical narration of the sacrifice of Christ using local compositions that are mentioned above. The process contains resting (*pagpapahinga*) and resuming (*pagpapatuloy*) until they reach the peak part of the process called *bulaklakan* or *pagsasaboy* – a sacred part where an elder scattered a flower (*sampaguita* or *bougainvillea*) to *Nagpapatabat* or the devotee. Flowers are believed to be a form of *biyaya* and *kagalingan*. The process continued until they reached a certain chapter, then proceeded to the closing prayer or *Pamamaalam* – a recitative prayer of *Ama Namin*, “*Luwalhati*,” and “*Panalangin sa Mahal na Birhen*”.

Given the situation, music from across genres and ritual practices has different senses of purpose. From its rooted sense of culture, it has been characterized by having a sacred value, such as “vow” or *panata*, that devotees tend to do every holy week. Furthermore, the concept of *Kagalingan* (healing) and *Kahilingan* (supplication) is evident in the participants, which practitioners believe that the lord may grant them “*ginhawa*”— or a holistic relief or fulfillment. This kind of circumstances delves into the combination of music, devotion, and spiritual well-being. Similar to the findings of Jacinto (2025), which explores the concept of *Pabasa* in the Manila region. Although *Tabat* and *Pabasa* have contrasting styles and methods from across the region, they have strong similarities in the affective nature of the practice, which induces the concept of communal well-being, “*kapwa*,” and integrated embodiment.

Photos of excerpt compositions/ hymns of Tabat



Under these circumstances, it has been explored that songs and spiritual devotion have been interconnected. Through its music, it creates a grand narrative that embodies and reflects the sacrifices of Jesus Christ. According to Ileto (1979), the concept of “*pakikiramay*” or shared sympathy affects the involvement of the people by visualizing the narrative of *pasyon* through music. (e.g., *pagpako kay Kristo*) These shared notions create an interpretation of practices on which it affects the practitioner that embedded in the meaning and action. (Jacinto, 2025)

Furthermore, audiences and practitioners are connected, all of which resonates meaning to the practices. Similar to the perspective of Small’s (1975) *musicking*, which holds that all members of the community as co-creator of ritual and performance. From this standpoint, *Elders*, *cantor*, and *cantores* create a communal relationship, values, and identity formation, especially from the affective aspect and the significant roles in the ritual. The 3–5-hour repetitive chant and authentic compositions symbolized the repetitive pattern of ritual musicking and frame *Tabat* not as an act of “entertainment”, “object”, and “mere music” but as a form of social identity and affective

awareness through which collective relationships, experiences, and participants play a crucial role in value and meaning-making.

Embodied Participation and the Concept of Musicking

The *Tabat* community practitioner is composed of several members, such as *Cantor*, *Cantores*, *Tagasensyas*, and *Musikero*, all of whom are Elders and seasoned musicians from the town of Atimonan. *Cantor* and *Cantores* are male and female singers who are responsible for singing the melodious hymn and lyrics of the *pasyon* text. The *Tagasensyas* are also elder singers who give cues to the singers and *Musikero* for them to be able to synchronize repetitive stanzas of the text. *Musikero* is composed of several instrumentalist whom are responsible for the root and harmonic foundations of the songs. They are a *gitarista* (guitarist), a *bahista* (bassist), a saxophonist, and a *piyanista* (pianist). These *Musikero* (e.g., saxophonists) led the singers to a melodic pattern, enabling them to also scaffold a melodic pattern from different compositions of the aforementioned composers. There are also *nagpapatabat* (devotee) and the audience who actually

participate casually in the ritual. It is important to note that the ritual is inclusive as it welcomes individuals of all ages. Despite these circumstances, roles played a significant part in building this ritual, as it is in contrast to the standard performance-audience that was commonly found in every staged context.

From its affective nature and longer length, which performance lasts for 5 hours, continuous playing of instruments and singing, plays a crucial role in building identity formation, rather than viewing it as a mere repetitive play, it reflects a connection to devotion, a focus of where individuals induce conformity of synchronization. Given this, participants, audience, and their bodies became one with ritual practices where reflection, experience, and relationship open an avenue for ritual musicking.

Notwithstanding, *Tabat* is often performed in a place that doesn't have a clearly defined environment. According to the participants, as long as it is comfortable, sacred, and a space where they feel tranquil. These circumstances clearly stated the position of *Tabat* between the audience, elders, practitioners, and the community, where they have a similar performative field. Furthermore, this manifestation conforms to the *musicking* perspective of Small (1975), where ritual practices were not treated as an "object". The collective participation, relationship, and experience from the diverse community affected the so-called "co-creator" of a ritual.

Intergenerational Transmission and Informal Musical Learning

Tabat practitioners learned through a multi-layered set of learning, such as *pakikisalamuha* (socializing), *sabayang pagkatuto* (collaborative learning), and *paulit-ulit na pagkatuto* (repetitive learning), all of which delve into informal music learning where they learned ideas outside formal conservatories.

Pakikisalamuha (socializing) was

evident during the "*pakikilahok*", as the researcher conforms to its systematic rigor, such as being with them" (*kasama sila*), and "being them" (*pagiging sila*). (Anacin, 2024) They often socialize and form bonds that are critical to the community and to the ritual. By doing so, it reflects and induces their social cohesion, and the manifestation of *Kapwa* that often progresses into shared belief and collective ideology.

It is also important to note that the *sabayang pagkatuto* (collaborative learning) was evident during the field immersion, as various elders (e.g., elders that has less experience) collaborated with seasoned members of the elders. By doing so, it creates a space where deeper content comprehension is enhanced. Furthermore, it also improves their engagement and interest in *Tabat*, as they become more meaningful and positive rather than being passive participants and listeners.

Paulit-ulit na pagkatuto (repetitive learning) was also active during the proper ritual, since *Tabat's* nature was a repetitive cycle for hours. Given the situation, this learning style foregrounds accuracy and control, which are important in both playing an instrument and singing the chants. Furthermore, it improves the memory and structure of the practices. By delivering repetition, it promotes the formation of proper structure, which aims to stabilize the ritual.

These three learning styles from ritual practices are evident and helpful for providing knowledge, especially outside the formal music conservatory. From this point, it is significant to know that elders such as seasoned *Cantors*, *Cantores*, *Musikero*, and *Tagasenyas* play a crucial role in preserving the knowledge of the ritual. They often act as a cultural transmitter, where they bridge and preserve the culture through performance and teaching the narratives to the public. Given this, the study also acknowledges that *Musikero* uses music sheets that guide singers to their melodic interpretation. However, Singers also use memory-based learning,

through which they acquire by various learning methods in the aforementioned paragraph.

It is significant to state that these rituals were open to the public and community setting, where the audience can freely join *Tabat* practitioners. This illustrates social immersion rather than a standard teacher-student relationship from a traditional classroom setting.

From this standpoint, learning is evident. Although it doesn't have a standardized student-teacher setting, these kinds of emerging claims are necessary to build the arguments about the concept of "*Napakadugo*" (Guadalupe et al. 2023) in contextualizing localized ritual practices such as *Tabat* from the community. Although the researcher doesn't claim to advance further curriculum application, the documentation of learning style, such as *pakikisalamuha* (socializing), *sabayang pagkatuto* (collaborative learning), and *paulit-ulit na pagkatuto* (repetitive learning), proper documentation of music scores, roles, and performance suggested alternative views on musical learning which are culturally situated and deeply connected to the students' contextualized culture. Meaning, this suggests a preliminary rapport of contextualized ritual practice, such as *Tabat*, as a preliminary potential resource from the town of Atimonan, Quezon. Given the situation, it also suggests further research about the exploration of music from a locale in the context of music education, which is necessary for a thorough study providing a critical and educational paradigm.

Kapwa and the Construction of Communal Musical Identity

Social cohesion has always been part of communal musical identity, especially in the Philippine context, where people shared their collective experience with others. Atimonan, as one of the developing towns in Quezon province, is characterized by lively and crowded spaces of locality, where they often help each other through a diverse set of

experiences. As such, *Kapwa*, as part of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, fosters the bond of community relations through shared singing and performing, especially through chanting *Tabat*. Given this, it treated all participants across all ages with the same respect and *humility* through *pakikipagpalagayang-loob*. (Enríquez, 1994; 1992; Anacin 2024) During the ritual practices, no specific spotlights or hierarchical divisions separate the practitioners and the audience; the focus is on performing and chanting the lyrical narration of Jesus Christ, accompanied by original hymns. Moreover, *Kapwa* is evident from the underlying theme, as participants did not separate themselves but rather formulated interconnectedness that unified their beliefs and spirituality. Furthermore, the affective nature of the ritual further reinforces relational consciousness. (Jacinto, 2025) These synchronization and representative engagement through singing transcends the Filipino values that may have led to *Kagandahang loob* (shared humanity) and eventually formed community musical identity. (Enriquez, 1994)

Engaging with multi-layered values while actively performing *Tabat* during the Lenten season serves as a cultural memory that repetitively engages and acknowledges across generations. These circumstances are key to sustaining the ritual by positioning every performance as renewal and remembering. By positioning *Tabat* incorporated with Filipino values, it may angle the ritual not just as a mere act of chanting but as a lived expression of community values through collective ideology.

Tensions in Contextualizing Ritual Music within Formal Education

By the overarching themes, the tensions between contextualizing *Tabat* in formal education reveal a crucial finding, as *Tabat* is often characterized as spiritually grounded, longer length, continuous performance, and socially immersive through community, which is contrary to the

standardized curriculum setting, where it has standardized 40-60 minutes of classroom lectures in every field of subject, structured lesson competencies, and performance standards. These circumstances are a major conflict upon contextualizing ritual practices, especially from the formats that are mainly aligned to the educational curriculum. Furthermore, it is quite evident that formal music education tends to conform to a Western-centered paradigm, such as utilizing Western notation and musical theory, which may marginalize rituals and music that are often performed within their specific community. (Ward et al. 2025) From these constraints, it is largely apparent from the broader discourse of Green (2008), and Campbell (2004) that decontextualized knowledge has long been criticized due to the dominant and “unconnected” culture and practice of the learners.

Similarly to the concept of *Napakadugo* as cited by Guadalupe et al (2023), which further discusses how complicated creating contextualized authentic rituals is. In the case of *Tabat*, it is composed of multi-layered narratives, performance, process, and roles negotiated within the community. Its sacredness and its meaning render minor resistant, which is being at risk when “cutting”, “decongesting,” or “aligning” the ritual to a possible content that is standard to the formal curriculum without losing the essential beliefs and *aral* from the community. Given this, it raises a foundational question about contextualizing ritual practices without losing their value and meaning-making.

Furthermore, teachers may face crucial challenges such as a lack of accessible materials, limited familiarity with tradition, and insufficient teaching workshops on the ritual. These conditions are critical as it is evidently anchored on widen gap between policy and responsive pedagogy. From the researcher's argument, the findings suggest that not all rituals from the community can be integrated into formal education without

specifically knowing the culture that requires sensitive consideration. Rather than decongesting or “just cutting”, “extracting” the authentic hymns from the ritual, there is a critical step that one must acknowledge the significance, cultural appropriation, and contextual meaning of the practices. Given the situation, *Tabat*, as a ritual practice from the town of Atimonan, was framed as an important case where challenges and possibilities of contextualizing community-based rituals and formal music education without reducing one to the terms of the other.

Conclusion

The study finds that *Tabat*, as a ritual practice from the town of Atimonan, was not just a mere music or an objective type of entertainment leisure; it composed multi-layered narratives embedded in the tradition. Similarly, from the perspective of Jacinto (2025) and Iletos (1979), although they may not further explore the politics and colonial aggression, they have similarities in the values of affective nature treated in various disciplines (e.g, perspective in social science, music education...) and connected to the Filipino-centered values. Furthermore, the music of *Tabat* and the roles embedded remain a crucial step while arguing that *Tabat* amplifies participation and conduciveness rather than passive listeners. The roles aforementioned symbolized fluid boundaries and collaborative learning. Moreover, by positioning the roles where there is no division of performer–audience, it affirms relationality conforming to Small’s concept of *Musicking*.

Musical knowledge is composed of a layered learning, such as *pakikisalamuha* (socializing), *sabayang pagkatuto* (collaborative learning), and *paulit-ulit na pagkatuto* (repetitive learning), all of which delve into informal music learning where they learned ideas outside formal conservatories. The researcher also noted that *Musikero* (e.g., saxophonist) used a music score that guides the singers. Although it intersects with the principle of learning, it highlights pedagogy

in community rituals. Aside from this, Elders, especially *Cantor and Cantores*, act as bearers who bridge the tradition to future generations. *Tabat* highlights meaningful and collaborative prowess in music learning that occurs outside formal education.

Tabat also reflects the concept of *Kapwa* embodied the relationality and consciousness within the other. The ritual fosters affective nature, engagement, and participation and serves as a medium of social cohesion. (Enriquez, 1994)

The study finds the mismatch between policy, structured standard of formal education, and the ritual nature of *Tabat*, which may be a hindrance to contextualizing a ritual. Western centric model are often privileged, marginalizing minorities such as ritual from the community. The concept of “*Napakadugo*” by Guadalupe et al. (2023) is also evident as it is composed of complexity and challenged by utilizing ritual music from teachable content. Furthermore, decongesting, extracting, and cutting cultural scores and narratives from the ritual forcing to education content may reduce its meaning and integrity.

While not proposing an applicative model on curriculum integration, *Tabat* can be positioned as a potential source of musical knowledge. It highlights the importance of where and how learning occurs. The findings conclude that local practices such as *Tabat* may require careful consideration, sensitivity, appropriation, and complexity that induces importance rather than trimming fragmentize content.

From these circumstances, *Tabat*, as a living musical heritage, is anchored to the community, music, and identity. Documenting the rituals enhances and provides helpful recognition and preservation of community ritual, giving voice to the masses of minorities. Ultimately, open a discourse where it challenges, expands, and further explores community music-based traditions without reducing “meaning and integrity”.

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Biodata

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