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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### THE CULTURAL PARALLELISM OF FAITH AND THE TEACHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM

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#### ABSTRACT

This study gives insights on the reasons for waving of hands as an Ethno-Malayan practice of prayer and worship during the singing of Gozos, Bato Balani sa Gugma and its cultural parallel implications to teacher education curriculum. The researchers used qualitative method through in depth interview of the participants. The lyrics of the Gozos was integrated during the actual interview of the devotees and thematic analysis was used to confirm common themes and their experiences with the anthology behind the song. Results revealed the following themes: Expression of Faith, Supplication, Symbol of Praise, and Devotion with a Grateful Heart. The significant cultural parallelism of this practice to teacher education curriculum is discussed in the paper.

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## INTRODUCTION

Ethno- Malayan culture is characterized by the idea of belief in a supreme being who has the authority over man. This belief system influences the values and practices of Filipinos in ways of doing things. Filipinos stand out for their devotional fervor which is unusually material and physical, even among Catholic cultures, built especially on devotions to Mary, the suffering Christ, and the Santo Nino (Holy Child), and on powerful celebratory and penitential rituals practiced and experienced in a wide variety of Filipino vernacular forms. Appeal to emotion is primary in Filipino Catholic practice, and is evident in preaching, singing and devotions that connect deeply on that level. Images of Jesus in the country, it has been noted, focus on two extremes on images of a playful but regal boy child, the Santo Niño, and on tragic images of the suffering, crucified Christ (Landy, 2018). The Sinulog Festival in Cebu is an example of a cultural and spiritual practice. The festival attracts both local and foreign visitors who come to celebrate the colorful mother of all madrigals. Many participants consider it an honor to pay homage and tribute to the little Jesus known as Sr. Sto. Nino. An array of activities are arranged by the devotees and tourists alike during the festival to celebrate the Cebuanos' devotion thru the Sinulog Festival.

This highlights the long history of gratefulness for things and achievements they have been given by the Supreme being. The festival may seem as a historic remembrance as well of their pagan worship, which has developed into Catholic Worship. (Umbao, 2011). Though there are a lot of studies about the Sinulog Festivities, its history and other colorful writings about it both in print and online, seldom are studies that talk about the phenomenon of waving of hands during the Gozos Song, *Bato Balani sa Gugma* and using this practice to see significant parallelism in the teacher education curriculum. The researchers will bridge the gap about the life experiences, miracles and other testimonies of the participants and devotees and try to elucidate understanding about this phenomenon of the waving of hands and the implication and cultural parallelism to teacher education curriculum.

**Statement of Objectives:** The study explores the practice of the waving of the hands in prayer while singing the Gozos, Bato Balani sa Gugma and discloses the cultural parallelism of faith and the teacher education curriculum.

**Review of Related Literature and Studies:** Devotion to the Santo Niño (Holy Child), an image of Jesus as a small boy typically dressed as a king, is a mainstay of Philippine Catholic life. Devotions to him are part of every parish's life, and in some places a major feast of the year. Some image of Santo Niño is found in almost every Filipino home, because Filipinos

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believe that the Santo Niño is their protector and has the power to grant and answer their prayers (Landy, 2018). In Cebu, devotion to the Santo Niño reaches a fever pitch early in January, when crowds flock to the basilica that houses it, and the city and its harbor are taken over for days by processions, colorful parades and other celebrations. Sinulog, the name of the feast refers to a ritual dance inspired by and performed before the Santo Niño. In recent years the events have drawn 1.5 to 3 million participants in a city of fewer than 900,000 people, making Cebu's celebration one of the largest annual events in the Catholic world. (Nelson, 1996) studied about the "emotional worship service" amongst African-American Worship Service through interviews and participant observations. The study discussed the reasons of African Americans with their "emotional" worship and why they are still continuing their rituals and radiate vitality with their emotional worship. Additionally, this paper also critiqued traditional explanations of the connection between "emotionalism" and social class which is very much related to this study on the waving of hands during the sining of the Bato Balani sa Gugma. During the Gozos, the singing of *Bato Balani sa Gugma*, Cebuanos wave their hands and this is somewhat similar to the study of Shimasono. He said in his paper that Tenrikyo which includes magico-religious practices, are even more obvious. Tenrikyo believers strengthen their faith by exchanging magical-emotions with the deity. The believers give service, the tsutone and divine granting, the sazuke. Tenrikyo makes use of tsutone which is a ritual for harmony between the deity and the people (shinjin waraku). This ritual is performed daily or monthly where sacred songs (mikagura uta) and sacred dancing (kagura) are merged. The sazuke is considered a magical ceremony and is performed to help those suffering from illness.

*First we clap the hands twice and call the deity down to us, then we report the name, age, sex and illness of the patient to the deity and pray for the success of the ritual, then while reciting three times, 'expel the evil, please help us, oh Lord of Tenri, ' and at the end of the third waving of the hands, we hold our palms as though we have received something from above, and are transferring it to the afflicted area of the patient. Then, while chanting three times, 'Assist us, we pray, Oh Lord of Tenri' we stroke the patient from top to bottom... We once again pray for the success of the ritual, and clap the hands twice in order to send the deity back to above. (Shimasono, 1981)*

Agreeing with Galbraith (2000), which says that participants experience a different sense of connection and a deeper relationship as they wave hands to the Black Madonna of Czestochowa. Her study, *On the road to Czestochowa: rhetoric and experience on a polish pilgrimage to the Black Madonna of Czestochowa*, maintained that they remain unconvinced by the political rhetoric while on pilgrimage. In the study of Elisha (2017), a group of neo-Pentecostal evangelists decided to participate so as to bring their church in the New York Dance Parade. They regarded their activity as an opportunity to endorse worship. According to these evangelists, this is their true purpose of engaging in spiritual warfare, and a form of art in itself. The process of intensive ritualization involves upholding the distinction in the immersive context of this secular festival and requires physical and spiritual preparations and symbolic boundary maintenance. Their participation was predicted on a distinction between "performance" and "ministry," privileging the latter. Upholding this distinction in the immersive context of a secular festival required a process

of intensive ritualization, involving physical and spiritual preparations and symbolic boundary maintenance. The researcher further argue that anthropological perspectives on such instances of public religion should seek to account for how ritual forms produce and are shaped by the effects of what the research call proximation, a condition of "closeness" between categories of activity otherwise regarded as separate and autonomous (e.g., religion and the arts). The concept is a means to explore how religious ministries are influenced by ostensibly external factors and the need to manage them, and by the various opportunities, tensions and moreal associations that arise when ritual strategies evoke comparisons with secular genres and domains (Elisha, 2017). Renato Rosaldo (1989) stressed that rituals be considered as a busy intersection where there is a space of merging for social process the prefigure and surpass ritual boundaries rather than as a self-contained sphere of pursuit. Aside from being an apt metaphor for writing about a street parade, this formulation reminds us that what is supposed to take place in the performance of a ritual is never all that takes place nor does it limit the scope of what participants experience or expect (Schieffelin, 1985). Rituals are rooted from sociohistorical contexts, which affect how we act although we tend to define them as symbolic essence and intelligible purposes. Cultural influences may seem extraneous because at times they are taken in isolation rather than looking at them as part of alternative behaviors. The ritualization of public religion is the work of establishing sacred practices as set apart in a world where it is increasingly hard for cultural forms to remain entirely distinct from others that may be regarded, or disregarded, as analogous. Fuistat (2015) mentioned that social- psychological indicators might be traced to the effects that individual prayer has and that there is a challenge of doing research on collective prayer as these are very limited. While it is tempting to assume that collective prayer may be analyzed as the aggregate of individual prayers, the research presented in this article suggests that worshipers pray differently when in community than when by themselves. Fuistat drew on work on group culture and rituals and created a framework in analyzing the essence of collective prayer so as to understand deeply the role of collective prayer in the practices of faith communities. Collective prayer connotes wider fields of meaning as they represent significant social routines. With the intercontinental literature review the researchers were able to understand more about the idea and symbolism of waving of hands, chanting and singing songs during worship, Furthermore the literature and prior studies gives motivation to the researchers to conduct the study in the perspective and experience of the devotees of Senor Santo Nino in Cebu, Philippines, Asia.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Research Method and Instrument:** The study makes use of qualitative phenomenological design where the investigators did an in depth interview on the participants to extract the common themes on their devotion to Sr. Sto Nino and experiences on the Gozos Song, *Bato Balani sa Gugma*. Phenomenological research involves trying to comprehend the significance of a particular phenomenon by looking deeply at the views of people and participants who have experienced that phenomenon. Then parallel analysis on the themes and the teacher education curriculum was done.

**Research Participants and Environment:** The study was conducted in the different barangays in Cebu City. Snowball

sampling method was used in identifying the participants, those who manifest devotion of the Sr. Sto. Nino. The researchers identified 30 participants who were then interviewed several times to extract their experiences and reasons on the practice of the waving of hands and devotion to the Sr. Sto. Nino as part of the Ethno-Malayan practice of prayer and worship.

**Data Analysis:** After the in depth interview, the researchers coded and categorized the responses and came up with the emergent common themes. The saturated responses of the participants were used as bases for the thematic analysis. The treatment of analysis focused solely on the practice of the participants on the waving of hands and the traditional singing of the *Gozos, Bato Balani sa Gugma*. Analysis by themes is a method for identifying and analyzing patterns gathered from the roster of data. The process organizes and describes the data in rich detail. Then, an analysis was done on the relevance of the reasons for waving of hands with the practices in the teacher education curriculum.

**Ethical Consideration:** The researchers have the responsibility to regard and consider the rights, values as well as the needs of the participants. The main purpose of the research project and objectives were explained clearly to the participants; this was done verbally. It was made clear that at any point of the process, the informants may dismiss his or her participation anytime and that there is no coercion needed in gathering the data. The study protects the informants' or participants' identity and respects confidentiality and anonymity. They were asked to fill out the informed consent form to establish that there was no coercion done in the gathering of data. Their identity and names were deleted in the transcribed interviews so as to protect their person for whatever circumstances the study might bring. The researchers also complied with the Research Ethics Board checklist for Ethical Standards in the conduct of the study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the participants' utterances, in depth interview and the researchers' descriptive analysis of transcripts, the following themes were identified.

*Theme 1: Expression of Faith*

*Theme 2: Supplication*

*Theme 3: Symbol of Praise*

*Theme 4: A Grateful Heart*

**Theme 1: Expression of Faith:** All participants shared that the song *Gozos, Bato Balani sa Gugma* is sacred. They considered the song lyrics as prayer in itself. Singing the song moves them in a different way, which they described as the working of the Holy Spirit. Raising of hands when singing the song is an expression for their faith and belief in the Supreme being, Sr. Sto. Nino. They feel like floating in the air and experiencing goose bumps all over their bodies. Their tears freely fall without reasons while singing and they attribute these to their strong faith and belief that Sr. Sto Nino is there welcoming and listening to them.

*"It's so moving to see many people who are really fervent in prayer especially when they sing the Gozos." (P1)*

*"The song lyrics is like a prayer for me." (P16)*

*"Participating the Novena mass made my life meaningful. I become closer to Him and I became more prayerful. For me it's not a ritual it's a prayer. Praying to Him made a lot of miracles in my life as a student He is my refuge." (P20)*

*"Para nako, ang pag-Novena/pagvenerate kang Sto. Nino kay usa sa paagi na pag-ampo.. paghimo ug panaad ug one way of reparation of sins." (For me, the song is like comparable to the novena prayer and my way of tradition and way of reparation for my sins). (P15)*

*"Kani cya nga kanta meaning ful kaayu nako kai the moment mu tukar ni, mu tulo jud akong luha. Mura man gud tag gi bayaw s aka lipay nga daghannn kaayu tag grasha na dawat gikan ni St. Sto Nino. Maong mu saka jud akong kamot sa pag praise and worship niya. Ang pag kanta murag pag ampo napud ni." (This song is very meaningful and every time it is played, my tears fall. It is like we are lifted in joy because of the graces received from Sr. Sto. Nino and that is why I lift my arms in praise and worship to Him. Singing is my way of praying to Him)(P27)*

**Theme 2: Supplication:** All participants mentioned that singing the *Bato Balani sa Gugma* is their way of communicating and asking for supplications-from financial debts and obligations, to career improvements, good health, livelihood, peace of mind, etc. They believed that since Sr. Sto Nino is the child Jesus, then like a child, he is easy to please and easy to ask for help. The devotees cry for help of mercy and grace. Raising their hands during the singing is their symbol of lifting to Sr. Sto Nino, all their worries and request. It is their way of communicating that as humans, they need the help and guidance of the Supreme being. They feel near to the child Jesus, Sr. Sto. Nino when they do so.

*"Para nako is it's a sign of obedience ba nga kuan jud ka nga Christian. Kanang mukuan jud ka sa God ba. Muask jud ka ba unsay dapat nimu iask unya unsay mga petition prayers nimu imu jud ihalad bitaw sa diyos." (For me, it is a sign of obedience and a test of your Christian faith. You ask for petition and offer these to God. (P2)*

*" Sign nga atong gitahod ug paghangad nga Siya naa sa langit. Siya gyud natan-aw ug naminaw sa akong pag-ampo. (It is a sign of my respect because He watches over me from heaven and listens to my prayers) (P13)*

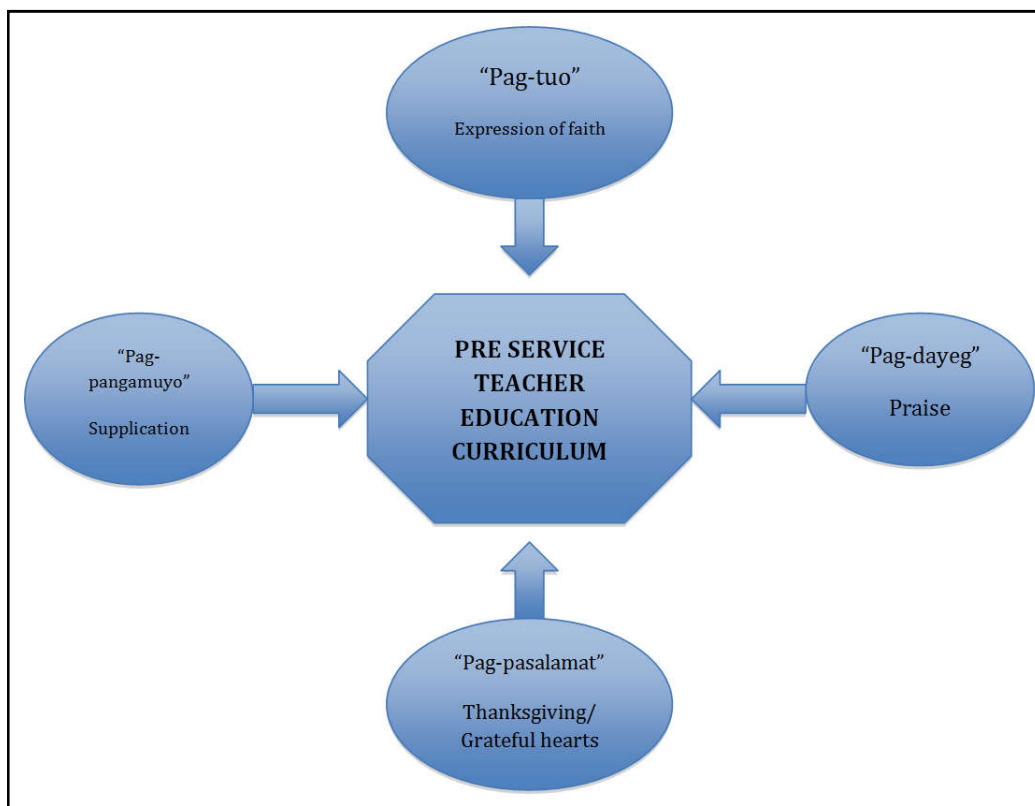
*"Mangayu ug Malamdagan ta sa Holy Spirit." (Asking for petitions and wisdom from the Holy Spirit.) (P22)*

*"Singing the song and raising my hands is like trying to reach out to Sr. Sto. Nino so He can listen clearly to my requests- maayung lawas, grasha sa pang adlaw adlaw." (Sining the song and raising my arms is like trying to reach out to St. Sto. Nino so He can listen clearly to my requests and plea for good health, graces every day.) (P24)*

*"Uhm Last year akoang gipangayo kay good health for my son then after that wala na sya nagsakit. Pneumonia. Last year. After atu gud kay sige nakog simba. Straight na gyud. Three. Pero wala sya naospital atu naa ra sa balay. Kuyaw pa jud kay pneumonia. Pero after atu kay nada ra sad." (Last year, I asked for the good health and healing for my son from Pneumonia; since then I always attend mass and thereafter, he was healed." (P5)*

**Table 1. Implications and cultural parallelism to Teacher Education curriculum**

Reasons for Waving of Hands	Implications to Teacher Education Curriculum	Explanation and Examples
<i>Theme 1:</i> "PAG-TUO" Expression of Faith	✓Intuitive thinking	Intuition in educational context is a process in which instructors efficiently code, sort and access experientially conceived mental models for use in making instructional decisions. Put another way, instructors have cognitive schemas or mental models born of experience that they can overlay on particular instructional problems to detect a timely solution.
<i>Theme 2:</i> "PAG-PANGAMUYO" Supplication / Expressing Needs	✓Communicative theory ✓Expressed need	Teachers need to communicate clearly – Communication process is successful when the message is delivered in clear and understandable way. Expressing it is the first step towards achieve one's need. Teacher praise is one tool that can be a powerful motivator for students.
<i>Theme 3:</i> "PAG-DAEYG" A Symbol of Praise	✓Concept of Recognition and Praise ✓Reinforcement	The power of praise in changing student behavior is that it both indicates teacher approval and informs the student about how the praised academic performance or behavior conforms to teacher expectations (Burnett, 2011)
<i>Theme 4:</i> "PAGPASALAMAT" Devotion, A Grateful Heart	✓Gratefulness	Gratitude is a trait that can be taught. The more it is practiced, the more it becomes second nature. Practicing gratitude increases student's positive emotions and makes them feel more satisfied in school and in life in general.



**Fig. 1. Conceptual diagram of the input of the findings of the study to Teacher Education Curriculum**

**Theme 3: A Symbol of Praise:** All participants share the same vibes when they wave and raise hands during the singing of the Bato Balani sa Gugma; it's basically in worship and praise. It is like surrendering to Sr. Sto Nino for according to the them, He is the Almighty, Powerful Lord, the Supreme Being.

*"Ani man gud na siya sir, kay sa by definition, ang religion is your relationship with God. Unya kong duna kay relasyon, duna jud kay pagabuhaton, para pagmatood nga duna kay relasyon niya. Sama sa imong uyab, mo ingun diay ka nga naa koy relasyon nimo pero dika mosakripisyo? Ug adto sa ilang balay hatag buwak, magdate mo—similar sad na sa atong relasyon sa Ginoo, kong mo, ni claim ko nga duna koy relasyon niya, nya dili diay ko, o.. dili diay ko mo sakripisyo, dili ko muhatag ug panahon, labi sa iyahang fiesta, dili ko mag procession mura bag, uyab ta? mura lagig dili. Na lagi in ana, more—to affirm, to confirm that I have a relationship with Him, I should be willing to do some ritual and sacrifices and*

*in doing so, kani man gung sakripisyo og kaning ritual nga atung gibuhath" (It is like that religion is having a relationship with God; thus, one has to do something to prove that there is this relationship. Just like the boy-girl relationship, sacrifice is needed. The boy usually goes to the house of the girl to give flowers and court, then ask for a date. This is the same as the relationship with the Lord. One has to sacrifice, give time – like during fiesta celebration. The rituals and sacrifices are part of that relationship. (P7)*

*"Buhi gyud siya. Maprove nimu ba nga naa jud siya, kanang paghatag sa mga gipangayo. Mga blessings. Sa family, sa career. Maong mu ampo ko dala saka sa kamot sa pag bayaw kaniya." (He is alive. We can prove that he is always around when He gives and grants your requests concerning family and career. That is why I raise my hands in awe and worship. ) (P3)*

*“Ang pag-isa sa kamot senyales sa imong paghigugma ug pagdayeg sa batang Hesus. Paghalad sa tibuok naku nga kinabuhi. Ang pagwagayway usa sad sa paagi sa pag-ampo.” (My raising of hands and arms is a sign of my love and praise and worship for Sr. Sto. Nino. For offering my whole life and raising of my hands is also my one way of praying) (P14)*

*“Its my way of expressing praise and worship to the Lord’s Kingship.. nga ako nagadayeg ug nagasimba sa Balaang Bata na atong Ginoo.” (that I am praising and worshipping the child Jesus my Lord) (P15)*

*“Ang pagwagayway sa akong kamot usa kini ka timailhan sa akong paghalad sa akong self Niya..Siya nga akong gisaligan ug giampoan ug ako gidayeg. Ako giisa ang akong kamot aron iya makb-ot ang akong paghatag sa akong kaugalingon ug madungog ang akong mga pag-ampo.”(The raising of my hands is a symbol of offering myself to Him. I trust in Him and I pray and praise Him. I raise my arms to Him to offer myself and for Him to listen to my pleas.) (P19)*

#### **Theme 4: Devotion, A Grateful Heart**

Some participants consider it their tradition as devotees to go to the basilica and pray. Being devotees, they feel the natural responsibility to attend the novena and celebrate the Holy Mass there. With grateful hearts, they sing their hearts out as their way of saying Thank You for all the goodness Sr. Sto. Nino has brought for them.

*“Moapil gyud ko sa Novena kay ang Ginoo wala sad miundang ug hatag kanaku ug grasya. (I always join the novena because the Lord has never ceased in giving me graces.) (P19)*

*“Murag I saka jud ang kamot kai halad pasalamat kai Sto Nino. Siya jud ang dampanan maong ga devotion ko niya.” (I always raise my hands offering thanks to Sr. Sto Nino. He is my refuge that is why I offer devotion to Him.) (P29)*

*“Everytime I am in the basilica and I sing the song, Bato Balani, I feel so happy and grateful. Sto Nino has blessed me immensely and for this I can’t thank Him enough.” (P3)*

*“Sa Sto. Nino lisod man gud kaayo, isip pasalamat ba nindot man gud kaayo tan awon nga iisa ang kamot ug iwagayway ang mga kamot isip pagdayeg ug pasalamat (It is very difficult to praise and give thanks without raising one’s hand. It is good to see raising of hands as praise and thanks giving) (P11)*

*“Unsay imong mga ampo sa Ginoo, mga hangyo ni Sto. Nino nga naa kay mga hangyo naa kay mga pasalamat sa tanan grasha. Buyag lang, gihatag jud sa Ginoo tanannakong pang ampo ug gi hangyu niya.” (Whatever you ask for from Sto. Nino, you give thanks. God gave me all I asked and prayed for) (P24)*

**Cultural Parallelism to Curriculum:** Table 1 shows the capsulized picture of the cultural parallelism of faith in prayer as an Ethno Malayan practice and the teacher education curriculum as extrapolated from the depth of the study. Parallel to teacher education curriculum, the gesture implies embracing of the educational philosophy of humanism; the total development of the human person. One of the features of intuition, as it operates in the classroom and elsewhere, is the easy and effortless way in which faculty implement solutions to problems that present themselves on the spot. It’s

one of the reasons intuition is frequently described as a “mystical sixth sense or paranormal power.” Teachers also rely on intuitive knowledge when time is of the essence. For example, intuition is summoned in those situations when explicit guidelines are missing. Most teachers follow rules that prescribe actions for instances of cheating. But what about when a student is unexpectedly hostile or a class makes accusations? Here teachers craft a response at the moment. Likewise, intuition is called upon in those situations without precedents for action as when something totally unexpected happens in a class. Most teachers do not abruptly end the class and head to the library to search for solutions others have used in similar situations. As with any potential classroom reinforce, praise on the other hand has the ability to improve student academic or behavioral performance- but only if the student finds it reinforcing (Akin-Little *et al*, 2004). The American Psychological Association conducted a study (2010) that showed that children that grow up grateful have multiple health benefits. The study which involved children ages 10-14, measured the development of gratefulness. The result found that the students with the most gratitude were more satisfied with their life, became more happy or hopeful, and had a better sense of meaning in their lives. The subjects also experienced a 13 percent drop in depression and negative emotions. Another study tested elementary students ages 8-11 and taught them weekly half-hour lessons on gratitude. The study found that students showed a significant increase in mood and grateful thinking after the lessons were completed. These findings suggest that children need to practice gratitude in their lives, it will improve their happiness and overall life satisfaction. Scientists say that repeated behavior changes the neuropath ways of the brain, and with repeated practice you can strengthen the happiness part of the brain. (retrieved from <http://www.teachhub.com/teaching-strategies-power-appreciation>)

#### **Conclusion**

It can be concluded that the phenomenon of the singing of the Gozos, Bato Balani sa Gugma and waving the hands of the devotees are manifestations of their strong faith and tradition. The devotees and participants continue doing this for decades to express their gratitude to the miraculous image of child Jesus in Basilica del Sto. Nino. Thousands of miracles were granted and experienced by the faithful in their Physical and Spiritual Life while others continue to humbly ask for their request and supplication. This practice of waving of hands during the singing of the Gozos is a spiritual habit of worship and the participants feel that it is not just an obligation but rather a privilege. Life experiences of miracles and testimonies of answered prayers were all attributed to the participants’ endeavor of waving hands in this phenomenon. The Ethno Malayan practice of waving of hands is a manifestation of the systems of belief of the people on the ways of expressing faith in prayer. The set of beliefs is formed based from the significant value system of a certain culture. Connecting this to the pre service teacher education curriculum, it can be deduced that the curriculum can take the stance of the arts where learning can take place based on intuition “pag-tuo” as well as the stance of science where there is praise “pag-dayeg” and value for the learner’s achievement; or modification combining the two.

**Recommendation:** It is highly recommended that Cebuanos should continue preserving the rich cultural tradition of the

singing of the Gozos, *Bato Balani sa Gugma* because of its positive effects on the people. The original lyrics, writings, composers and different variations of the Gozos should be conserved. Cultural Preservation through propagation to ASEAN Nations is also recommended. For further enhancement of the study the researchers recommend having in-depth analysis on the historical aspects and archiving of Bato Balani sa Gugma on verbal and written accounts. It is also recommended that Ethno Malayan cultural practices be imbedded in the curriculum to make teacher education curriculum highly specialized.

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