PERCEPTIONS OF PNU-MINDANAO PHYSICAL EDUCATION STUDENTS TOWARDS CHOREOGRAPHING MANOBO-INSPIRED MASS DANCE DEMONSTRATIONS

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Abstract - Dance, like all forms of cultural expression, reflects the society in which it exists. It is considered as the identity of the culture and society from where it evolves. It plays an important role in the social and religious life of the indigenous and local communities as it embodies know-how and skills and transmits the core values and beliefs of the community. Hence, it is but important that this form of cultural expression be protected not just to preserve cultural heritage, but also, to promote cultural diversity. This idea is in line with the vision of Philippine Normal University-Mindanao (PNU-Min) as the Multicultural Hub. As a second home to a number of Agusan Manobo students who come from a number of Manobo communities in Agusan del Sur, the university seeks to introduce and preserve the richness of culture of the ethnic and local communities in the region. The university's founding anniversary celebration is in fact one of the avenues to realize this. The event is always highlighted with mass dance demonstrations performed by different groups of pupils and students of the university. Central to this annual activity is the Manobo-inspired mass dance demonstration performed by select college students which is choreographed and trained by the Bachelor of Secondary Education-Major in Physical Education (BSE-PE). This paper then aimed to find out the perceptions of PE majors towards choreographing these Manobo-inspired mass dance demonstrations. Specifically, these sought to find out what the choreographers need to consider in the conceptualization of the dance, what preparations they have to undergo to be able to put together the whole dance routine and what propels them to give a Manobo touch in the mass dance routines that they choreograph. Fourth year BSE-PE students were the participants of the study. A questionnaire was prepared by the researcher and was then validated by experts before it was administered to the participants. The data gathered showed that although most of the students were only exposed to Manobo dances in school, they give importance to the performance of the whole Manobo-inspired dance routine as it paved the way towards the promotion and preservation of Manobo culture. Students also showed positive feelings and attitude towards choreographing these mass dance demonstrations. It was also found out in the study that authentic Manobo culture is the primary aim of the student choreographers as they always take into consideration the Manobo way of living, authentic Manobo dance steps, original music and clothing in the conceptualization of the dance routine.

Index Terms - Manobo-inspired, mass dance demonstration, choreography, physical education

I. INTRODUCTION

Dances reflect the people's customs, traditions and beliefs, preserved in its antiquity void of outside influence. More than any type of dance and perhaps, greater than any of the other form of art, the folk dances has a strong factor in the expression of Filipino soul and Filipino identity (Aquino, 1994). The preservation of folk dances as they represent a vital picture of one's national life and culture is therefore imperative as it also entails a closer look at people's way, belief, legends and rituals.

Mindanao is a home to different ethnic groups. It is widely known for its rich and colorful dances. In Agusandel Sur alone, a number of cultural minorities abound. Each of these ethnic groups has its sets of beliefs, rituals and traditions that are distinct from each other. Their performing arts, for instance, their dances, reflect their own culture that meant to be promoted and preserved. These dances then are worth showing off.

Philippine Normal University-Mindanao (PNU-Min), as Multicultural Hub, has its mandate of respecting and preserving these different cultures that make the country worth-visiting. Hence, the presentation and performance of different folk and ethnic dances is encouraged in the university. Most of the times, dances of the Manobos and Higaonons are performed. Ethnic dances, cultural presentations and mass dance demonstrations are showcased annually and are highly- appreciated by the people from the community and the province. Behind these dance performances are the choreographers and trainers that conceptualize and put together the whole dance routine. In PNU-Min, this role is usually taken by the students taking up Bachelor in Secondary Education Major in Physical Education (BSE-PE). It is in this premise that the researcher would like to find out the perceptions of these students as regards choreographing Manobo-inspired mass dance demonstrations. Knowing such would help these students be cognizant and be aware of their perceptions, thereby, helping them develop a more authentic dance routines that would help promote and preserve Manobo-culture.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

Dance is the oldest of arts. It is the reflection of the pulse and rhythm of man as a social being. It has been handed down through the ages and civilization has made it what it is today. According to the CCP

Encyclopedia of Philippine Art Vol. V (1994), a dance is not simply adapted; it absorbs and showcases the traits of the people even as it serves to express their own experiences and aspirations.

The Philippine has clearly stated in its Constitution the conservation and promotion of the nation's historical and cultural heritage and resources as well as artistic creations in order to preserve them for future generations. As Article II Section 15 of the Philippine Constitution mandates:

"Arts and letters shall enjoy patronage of the state. The state shall conserve, promote and popularize the nation's historical and cultural heritage and resources, as well as artistic creations."

Culture connects the past and the present. As dance is part of culture, it is the duty of the state to promote cultural consciousness especially among the youth, so they can better understand our heritage. Along with this, they can also appreciate the beauty of the communities and the culture they come from. As dance can convey ideas, impressions, images, moods, atmospheres, feelings and practically the whole gamut of human life and human experiences, people could clearly understand where they are coming from and how they have become what they are now. The musical backdrop, beautifully interpreted in the rhythmic motion with the use of the body as a focal instrument would convey message and communicate to its audience (Loque, 1996).

Sociological Aesthetic Theory explores dance ethnic features, considering aspects of dance as a medium of cultural and social interactions. According to this theory, dances occur collectively, expressing the life of the community more than the individual. Singing and dancing therefore is so important to communicate culture and background. Dances are used at nearly every social, cultural and religious event. These dances tell the story of the people, give moral instructions on how to live a good and harmonic life. That is to say, that similar themes may be fund throughout dances across landscapes, each has its own history, language, song, background and purpose. With this theory, one is able to distinguish body movements, and associate particular dance movements to individual ethnic background. Thus, with this at the back of the mind, looking into the dances of Manobo and choreographing Manobo-inspired dances is tantamount to understanding that these dances and dance movements are direct features of an ethnic history and mannerisms.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study made use of the descriptive-survey method in order to find out the perceptions of students as regards choreographing Manobo-inspired mass dance demonstrations in the campus. The respondents of the study were fifteen fourth year students of Philippine Normal University-Mindanao (PNU-Min) taking up Bachelor in Secondary Education Major in Physical Education who have choreographed and trained PNU-Min freshmen for mass dance demonstrations during founding anniversary celebrations of the university.

Philippine Normal University-Mindanao is the Multicultural Hub among the five campuses of the PNU System. It is located in the capital town of Agusan del Sur, the municipality of Prosperidad.

The tool used to gather the needed data is a researcher-made questionnaire. The first part was designed to elicit responses as regards the profile of the respondents. The second part included questions as regards the respondents' perception towards choreographing Manobo-inspired mass dance demonstrations.

In gathering the data of the study, the researcher undertook the following phases :

Phase 1- Revision and Validation of the Research Instrument.

Phase 2- Writing of the Letter of Permit to the Executive Director and the Respondents of the Study.

Phase 3- Conduct of the Instrument to the Respondents..

Phase 4- Retrieval of the Instrument.

Phase 5- Statistical Treatment of the Data.

IV. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents the data gathered in this study for the purpose of descriptive and statistical analysis and interpretation of findings.

Profile of BSE-PE Students
Age. The age of the BSE-PE students is presented in Table 1.

Age Level	Frequency	Percent
21 & above	5	33.33
18-20 years old	10	66.67
15-17 years old	0	00.00
Total	15	100.00

The table shows that majority of the BSE-PE students are aged 18-20 years old, comprising 66.67% of the population. Only five of them or 33.33% are aged 21 and above.

Gender This variable is indicated in Table 2 below.

Table 2
Gender of BSE-PE Students

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	4	26.67
Female	11	73.33
Total	15	100.00

The data from the table reveal that majority or 73.33% of the BSE-PE students are female. This is attributed to the more number of female enrollees in the university.

Ethnic Origin.This variable is indicated in Table 3 below.

Table 3
Ethnic Origin of BSE-PE Students

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent
Manobo	3	20.00
Cebuano	7	46.66
Surigaonon	1	6.67
Kamayo	1	6.67
Boholano	2	13.33
Ilonggo	1	6.67
Total	15	100

The table reveals that most of the students are of Cebuano origin, comprising 46.66% of the population. Three of them are Manobo (20.00%) while two or 13.33% of them are Boholano. Meanwhile, among the group, one is Kamayo, one is Ilonggo and one is Surigaonon, each comprising 6.67% of the population.

Socio-Economic Status. The socio-economic profile of the respondents is shown in Table 4 below..

Table 4
Socio-Economic Status of BSE-PE Students

Socio-Economic Status	Frequency	Percent
21,000 and above	2	13.33
16,000 - 20,999	0	0.00
11,000 - 15,999	5	33.33
6,000 -10,999	4	26.67
5,999 and below	4	26.67
Total	15	100.00

In Table 4, it can be gleaned that BSE-PE students come from different economic brackets as regards their socio-economic status. Majority or 33.33% of the respondents have a family earning of only 11, 000-15,999 every month. This is followed by students with a monthly family income of 6,000-10, 999 and 5,999 and below, each comprising 26.67% of the population. Only two of them or 13.33% come from a family that earns 21,000 and above.

Exposure to Manobo Dances.This variable is indicated in Table 5 below.

Table 5
BSE-PE Students' Exposure to Manobo Dances

Exposure to English	Frequency	Percent
Home	0	0.00
School	8	53.33
Both (Home and School)	4	26.67
Community	3	20.00
Total	15	100

It can be gleaned from the data that majority (8 or 53.34 %) of the BSE-PE students are only exposed to Manobo dances at school. Four or 26.67% of them are exposed to Manobo dances both in school and at home while three or 20.00% of them are exposed to Manobo dances from the community that they come from.

How BSE-PE Students Learned Manobo Dances

When asked how they learned Manobo dances, majority of the respondents said they were able to learn the dance when they were asked to participate in the mass dance demonstrations themselves during their freshmen years in the university. The said tribal dance demonstrations are performed annually by freshmen students as part of the celebration of the university's founding anniversary.

Aside from being obliged to join the mass dance demo, some of the respondents stipulated that their being members of the Kaliyagan Dance Troupe of the university has made them aware of the different Manobo dances as their troupe mainly focuses on performing ethnic dances. Respondents 9 and 14 attested:

Respondent 9: "I am one of the performers of the Kaliyagan Dance Troupe, that focuses on Folk dances and Manobo dances."

Respondent 14: "Since I became an active member of a dance troupe during my high school years and a member of a Kaliyagan Dance Troupe in PNU-Mindanao at present, I learned many Manobo dances. Through joining those dance troupe organizations which specifically focus on ethnic dances, I became more acquainted with the dances."

Moreover, it is evident that the university is instrumental in the teaching of Manobo dances as some respondents claimed that they learned these dances through their lessons in their PE subjects. Respondents 12 and 13 maintained:

Respondent 12: "When I entered PNU, some Manobo dances were introduced in some of my subjects."

Respondent 13: "I learned Manobo dances in school by the professional teacher in ethnic dances."

Interestingly, one respondent has learned the dance from an authentic source. Respondent 11 quipped:
Respondent 11: "I've learned Manobo dances during my childhood years. That was when my parents were working on ministry in Bagombong. That place was a Manobo community. The Datu itself taught me the exact ritual dance. I am very grateful because of that experience. I also learned other ritual dances of Manobo in Pakwan, Surigaodel Sur."

Importance of Manobo-Inspired Mass Dance Demonstrations

The responses of the students were indicative of the fact that showcasing Manobo-inspired dances could preserve the culture of the ethnic group. Through mass dance demonstrations, people become aware of the underlying beliefs, traditions and way of living of the tribe. It is also a way of promoting and showing to others how beautiful Manobo culture is through their dances. Further, performing Manobo-inspired dances is encouraged in the university as one of its roles as Multicultural Hub. These are the same reasons of some BSE-PE students as regards their endeavors to create a Manobo-inspired dance routine. R1, R3, R10 and R14 mentioned:
Respondent 1: "For me, it is important to encourage the performance of Manobo-inspired mass demo in the university since we are a Multicultural hub and we are giving values to the cultural background of every individual in the university, especially the Manobos. It is also important to showcase their culture and to preserve their cultural identity."

Respondent 3: "Manobo-inspired mass demonstration is a way of preserving culture. It is important to encourage this kind of performance, aside from the fact that the university is a multicultural hub; it is also a way of promoting and preserving our culture."

Respondent 10: "It is important because through that activity, we who are not Manobos can help preserve the Manobo-inspired dances. We have to promote this kind of dance since we are a multicultural hub, which means we are open to execute and learn this dance too; also preserve the Manobo culture through dancing."

Respondent 14: "It is important to perform Manobo-inspired mass demo in the university because as all we know that the ancestors of our community are the Manobos and as a show of respect and being grateful to them it would really be great to experience to manifest their movements and practice their traditions."

Preparations When Putting Together A Manobo-Inspired Mass Dance Demonstrations

Majority of the respondents agree that when putting together a dance routine which is Manobo-inspired, being acquainted with the Manobo way of living, practices, beliefs, clothing, language and even their performing arts are important. R14 maintained:
Respondent 14: "The preparation that we undergo together with my peers is first we studied their way of living, their practice, beliefs, traditions, the way they dress up, the rhythm of their music and some of their language. We also gather information to create an ideal and realistic concept and manifested their movements to create choreography."

Also, observing and learning authentic Manobo-dance steps and practicing these steps themselves will also help create a more authentic choreography. Mastering the basic dance steps and the context in which these steps are performed is a great help in the planning of a whole routine. Taking into account the music to be used and the costume to be worn is also necessary. R 2, R3 and R10 stressed:
Respondent 2: First, know/understand the background of the people and how they live. Identify how they a festival is done on their tribe. Listen and feel the music. Study and imitate the movement. Make a good choreography that has a proper flow of story.
Respondent 3: When putting together a Manobo-inspired mass dance demonstration, the actions must be accurate. So, we practice the flow of the actions. We observe the different practices of Manobo and we listen to the different music of Manobo.

Respondent 10: We took a lot of practice to perfect the routine. We do warm-ups before undergoing to the practice and it took us long hours at night to practice.

Considerations in Organizing Manobo-Inspired Mass Dance Demonstrations

In organizing Manobo-inspired mass dance demonstrations, the BSE-PE students agree that Manobo beliefs and tradition must be firstly considered. Authenticity of the whole routine must be exemplified. R14 maintained:
Respondent 14: "When organizing a Manobo-inspired mass dance demonstration, we need to consider the concept and movements that we put in the performance or presentation. The music and costumes that are to be used should be similar/closer to their tradition. We must ensure that we do not distort their practice and beliefs."

The accuracy of the dance steps must also be considered. R11 and 12 emphasized:

Respondent 11: "We should consider the origin of the dances and the proper way of delivering the message and the importance of those dances."

Respondent 12: "I need to consider when organizing Manobo-inspired mass dance demonstration knows their basic steps, their costume, and how their steps presented/dance correctly."

Good and harmonious relationship between and among the choreographers and the performers must also be maintained to ensure a smooth flow of practice. As R15 said:

Respondent 15: "The relationship between you and your peers should always be positive avoid unwanted behaviors to prevent conflicts. And always seek an advice and suggestions to those who have more knowledge about Manobo."

They also pointed out that the music to be used, the costume and props, the performers and even the audience of the performance must be taken into account.

How is Manobo Culture Manifested in the Dance Demo

When students were asked if they were advocating authentic Manobo dancing in their dance routines, students agreed that authentic Manobo-dancing is shown through the execution of accurate Manobo dance steps, the use of authentic Manobo beat and musical instruments in the dances and even the use of Manobo costume and props. However, R14 maintained that to make the performance more entertaining, it is also useful to include a "sinulog" touch to the dance routine. R14 pointed out that:

Respondent 14: "The Manobo culture was being manifested although some parts of the choreography were "sinulogized" to make the presentation more entertaining."

Feelings When Organizing Manobo-Inspired Mass Dance Demonstrations

When asked about how they feel after successfully organizing a Manobo-inspired dance routine and seeing it being performed in the university, all of them stressed that the activity gave them immeasurable happiness that they were able to contribute to the promotion of Manobo culture. Also, they pointed out that it brought about a sense of fulfillment and immense pride that they were able to showcase to the community a whole dance routine inspired by Manobo culture. R1, R3, R8 and R9 maintained:

Respondent 1: "Happy knowing that I choreographed and showed to the university that I am valuing cultures of the minorities and to showcase that I have a talent in organizing a Manobo-inspired dance."

Respondent 3: "Happy and overwhelmed to the fact that we organized and choreographed this kind of performance. Honored, because we are able to share and show students, teachers, and the community the kind of life the Manobo people has."

Respondent 8: "It is actually fascinating to see Manobo-inspired dance being performed in the university. It's like sharing to everyone how amazing the Manobo are."

Respondent 9: "I feel happy and proud because Manobo dance is preserved and promoted. Now it is being performed in universities and big events."

V. SYNTHESIS

The data gathered show that majority of the PNU-Min BSE-PE students are aged 18-20. Most of them are female and are of Cebuano ethnicity.Majority of them also have a family income ranging from 11,000 to 15,999. Their exposure to Manobo dances is attributed to their schooling.

When asked how they learned Manobo dances, majority of the respondents said they were able to learn the dance when they were asked to participate in the mass dance demonstrations themselves during their freshmen years in the university. Aside from being obliged to join the mass dance demo, some of the respondents stipulated that their being members of the Kaliyagan Dance Troupe of the university has made them aware of the different Manobo dances as their troupe mainly focuses on performing ethnic dances. Moreover, some respondents also claimed that they learned these dances through their lessons in their PE subjects. Interestingly, one respondent has learned the dance from an authentic source.

Students also stressed that showcasing Manobo-inspired dances could not just preserve the culture of the ethnic group but also, would make people aware of the underlying beliefs, traditions and way of living of the tribe. It is an avenue of promoting and showing to others the beauty of Manobo culture. Further, students are aware that performing Manobo-inspired dances is encouraged in the university as one of its roles as Multicultural Hub thus, they are one with the university in their endeavors of creating a Manobo-inspired dance routine.

Majority of the respondents agreed that when putting together a dance routine which is Manobo-inspired, being acquainted with the Manobo way of living, practices, beliefs and their language are important. Taking into account the music to be used and the costume to be worn is also necessary. Furthermore, observing and learning authentic Manobo-dance steps and practicing these steps themselves will also help create a more authentic choreography. Mastering the basic dance steps and the context in which these steps are performed is a great help in the planning of a whole routine.

In addition, BSE-PE students emphasized that in organizing Manobo-inspired mass dance demonstrations, Manobo beliefs and tradition must be firstly considered. Authenticity of the whole routine must be exemplified. The accuracy of the dance steps must also be considered. They also pointed out that the music to be used, the availability of the costume

and props, the performers and even the audience of the performance must be taken into account. Good and harmonious relationship between and among the choreographers and the performers must also be maintained to ensure a smooth flow of practice. When students were asked if they were advocating authentic Manobo dancing in their dance routines, students agreed that authentic Manobo-dancing is shown through the execution of accurate Manobo dance steps, the use of authentic Manobo beat and musical instruments in the dances and even in the use of Manobo costume and props. However, one student maintained that to make the performance more entertaining, it is also useful to include a "sinulog" touch to the dance routine.

Students maintained that they feel elated and proud after successfully organizing a Manobo-inspired dance routine and seeing it being performed in the university. They stressed that the activity gave them immeasurable happiness that they were able to contribute to the promotion of Manobo culture. Also, they pointed out that it brought about a sense of fulfillment and immense pride that they were able to showcase to the community a whole dance routine inspired by Manobo culture.

CONCLUSION

1. Most of the BSE-PE students who are tasked to choreograph mass dance demonstrations in the university were first exposed to Manobo dances in school and in their community. Manyof them stressed that they learned about it when they were asked to perform the dance demo themselves during their freshmen year in the university.
2. BSE-PE students take into account the culture of Manobo in putting together a whole dance demo routine.
3. In the preparation of a Manobo-inspired mass dance demonstration, BSE-PE students consider several factors to make the routine as authentic as possible. Basic Manobo dance steps must be mastered, the music and musical instruments to be used must be originally Manobo, the costumes and the props must be based on original Manobo clothing. Also, the performers and audience must also be taken into consideration.
4. The students have a positive feeling towards choreographing Manobo-inspired mass dance demonstrations, believing that activities such as these could help promote ad preserve Manobo culture.
5. BSE-PE students are aware of the mandate of the university as Multicultural Hub and are instrumental in carrying out this mandate.
6. The students advocate the teaching of authentic Manobo-dancing and in fact are doing their best to apply these original dance steps in the choreography. However, they also are aware that adding some 'sinulog' touch to the routine makes the choreography more entertaining.
7. BSE-PE students feel happy and proud for every successful mass dance demonstration performances that they choreograph themselves. This pride and happiness springs from the fact that they are able to take part in the promotion and preservation of Manobo culture.

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