

THE YOGAD LEFELWORLD IN THE MUSIC, COSTUMES, AND DANCE STEPS OF BAILE DE BAKAL

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Abstract

Music and dance come a long way in the Philippine history. It embodies the sense of cultural identity to most of our minority groups. This ethnographic investigated numerous elements of the Yogad's cultural dance, the Baile de Bakal in the Municipality of Echague, Isabela. In particular at Echague, Isabela, *Mengal Festival Dance/s* mirror/s the community cultural festival of Echagueños (the locals of Echague, Isabela). The study employed a qualitative research approach. It was then found out that Baile de Bakal is a historical performance that originated under the Spanish occupation on the outskirts of the Cagayan Valley region. However, the existence of the Yogads in the vicinity of the municipality does not equate to the beginning of the performance. The performance itself is heavily influenced by Catholic beliefs, contrary to the original Pagan idolatry of the people of Isabela. Certain elements of the performance such as music and costume were not physically preserved as there are variations to the actual decorations and ornamentations of the attire. However, there are clear symbols that are kept preserved by the organizers and performers. In terms of music, marching rhythm is considerably existent as well as the continuing dance steps that are handed down onto generations. Primarily, the Baile de Bakal represents the bravery of Yogad's life. This is depicted as the reflections of their resilience in terms of coping with the ever-changing society. The elements that are considerably evident in the performance itself symbolizes their utmost will to forge ahead despite conquest to which they valiantly resisted as per records. The researcher recommends that before actually performing the traditional dance, let it be known among the performers of the heritage or cultural background and symbolic representations of the dance so that performers may know its significance by heart.

Keywords: *Baile de Bakal, Mengal Festival, Yogads, cultural identity*

Introduction

Music and dance come a long way in the Philippine history. It embodies the sense of cultural identity to most of our minority groups. It is in this regard that we have numerous ethnic cultural music and dances that are more entertaining because of distinct and colorful costumes that the natives use in order to perform.

According to Cabalhin et al. (2017), cultural heritage is precisely significant and regarded as an expression of a community's ways of life that is passed down from generation to generation. Traditional practices are significant in that they can contribute to a society's heritage and culture. Music is an Ideological State Apparatus in Culture (Althusser 1971, 143- 148). In this light, this paper follows Althusser's argument, and the critique applies to popular music in the Philippines. Only if music is oriented with the people's struggle will it become scientific and carry forward emancipatory politics transforming society. Musikang Bayan encapsulates the militant-materialist-progressive-nationalist music against the fetish-character of today's neoliberal capitalist ideology; hence, it articulates the collective consciousness through music. (Santillan, 2022)

Upon close understanding of how music and dance culturally represent minority groups, the need to understand our own is considerably ideal. Baile de Bakal,

a Yogad traditional dance that embodies the rich culture of the Yogad natives in the town of Echague, Isabela, also has its own representation in today's Yogad culture and ways.

However, there are no evident connections of Yogad's current life as represented by Baile de Bakal to date. The lack of interest among Echague natives to discover their own traditional custom paves way to the researcher's curiosity on the dealings that are embodied in a single cultural tradition that is historically preserved and flagged during annual festivities.

The functions and significance of culture are as follows. Culture has seven functions, as stated in the article "Functions of Culture" (2017): (1) Culture provides people with design for living. It is something that people constantly learn and acquire. (2) Culture provides a pattern in which people's socio-cultural and biological needs are addressed or met (e.g., shelter, food, relationship, and reproduction) with individuals or groups. (3) Culture provides a set of rules to ensure that people in a group cooperate in adjusting to environmental situations. (4) Culture provides a person with a pre-packaged definition of a situation. (5) Culture aids in the understanding and prediction of human behavior, as well as providing channels of interaction among individuals in a group. (6) Culture provides people with a map or guidepost for all aspects of life. It describes a behavioral pattern for people to follow for appropriate actuations of a culturally prescribed pattern of behavior. (7) Culture functions as a means of social control through norms, folkways, and movement laws. Furthermore, many facets of culture are expressed in a variety of ways. Cultural festivals, as mentioned by Yeoman et al. (2004) in McClinchey and Carmichael (2010), celebrate aspects of culture such as music, performing arts, crafts and handiwork, games, sports, and food production and consumption. As mentioned in the work of McClinchey and Carmichael (2010), community cultural festivals are unique occasions that take place in open settings, particularly in community centers, parks, walkways, or off-limits streets. In the Philippines, particular at Echague, Isabela, *Mengal Festival Dance/s* mirror/s the community cultural festival of Echagueños (the locals of Echague, Isabela).

As mentioned by Yeoman et al. (2004) in McClinchey and Carmichael (2010), aspects of culture such as *music, performing arts, crafts and handiwork, games, sports, and production and consumption of food* are being celebrated in cultural festivals. These aspects of culture, particularly the *music, performing arts, and crafts and handiwork* (mentioned by Yeoman et al., 2004) have been materialized through *dance steps, costume, props/accessories, and music* in the *Mengal Festival Dance*.

Embarking on this understanding, this research is set on discovering and unravelling the culture of the natives of the Municipality of Echague through their music and dance, bringing about cultural linkages to their present way of life.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of the study is outlined below.

Cultural Identity Theory

Culture refers to the values, beliefs, thinking patterns, and behavior that are learned and shared by a group of people. It gives a group an identity, ensures survival, and increases the sense of belonging. Identity is a person's definition of themselves. It is the frame of reference through which a person perceives himself. Language, social structures, gender orientation, and cultural patterns all work together to form identities. Culture and identity have a complicated relationship.

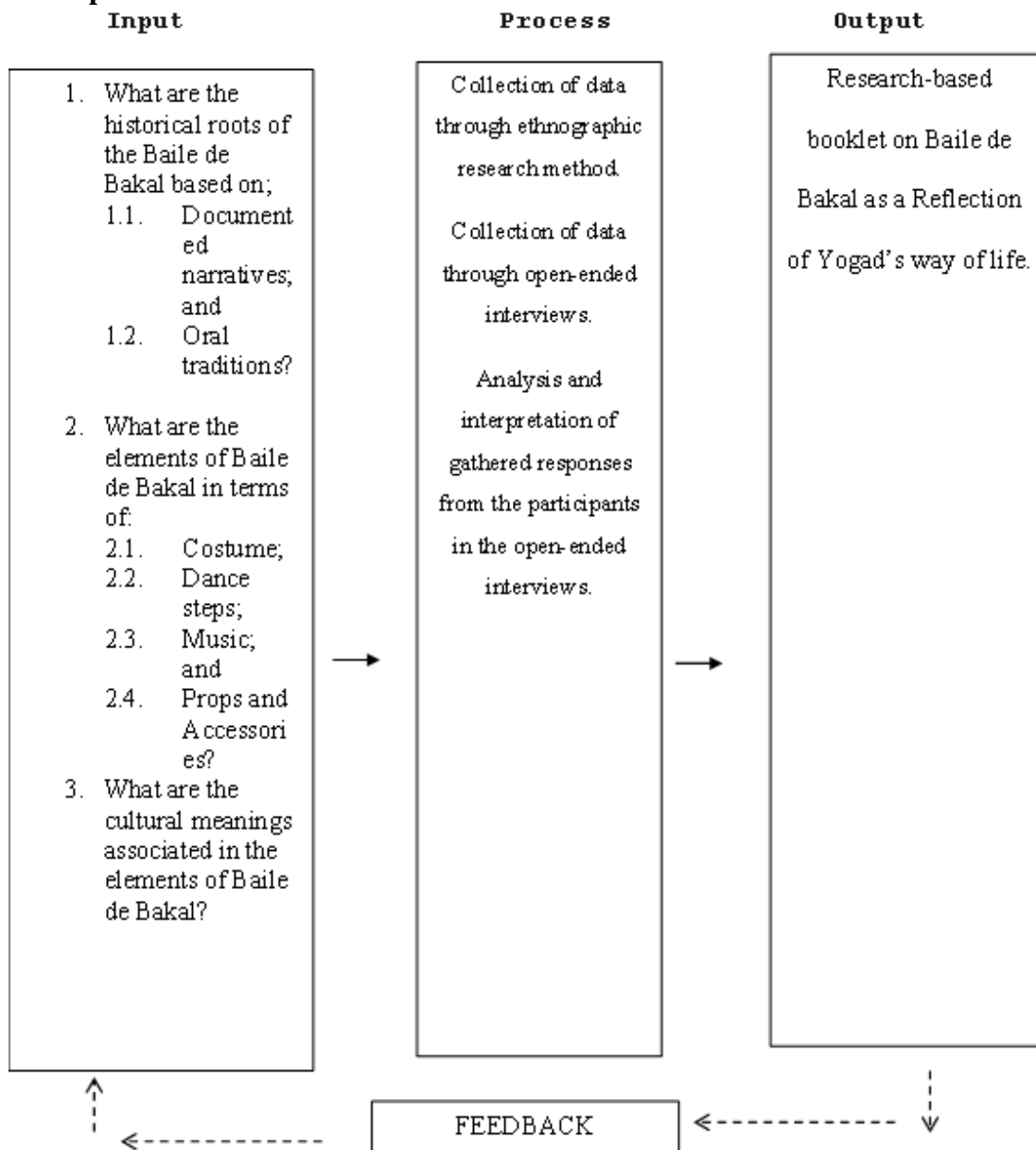
According to the cultural identity theory, there is a link between intercultural competence and cultural identity. The theory is concerned with the investigation of how people use communicative processes to construct and negotiate their cultural group identities and relationships in specific contexts. Culture, according to the theory, is one of many identities expressed in communication encounters. Through social comparison, cultural identity emerges. Speakers compare their own groups' status to that of other groups. During interaction, an individual's message will contain multiple cultural identities such as nationalist, racist, ethnic, class-related, sex, gender-based, political, and religious. Because people assume multiple identities, not all voices within a group speak in the same way or are recognized by others. An individual's sense of self is derived from formal or informal membership in groups that transmit and instill knowledge, beliefs, values, attitudes, traditions, and ways of life (Kim, 2002). CIT (Collier, 2005; Collier & Thomas, 1988) is fundamentally concerned with cultural identity as the enactment, representation, and negotiation of social identifications by group members in a specific setting in ways that are enabled and constrained by relational dynamics, macro context, and public discourses. CIT proposes properties and processes associated with the enactment of cultural identity (e.g. avowal, ascription, and salience)

Jane Collier and Milt Thomas combined communication ethnography and social construction to frame the properties of cultural identity. These characteristics refer to how members of a group communicate their identity.

1. **Avowal and Ascription:** These two concepts are concerned with what constructs or produces cultural identity, as well as how these identities are communicated. Avowal is the process by which one articulates or expresses his or her views on group identity. It is the manner in which one presents oneself to another. Ascription is how others perceive a person. It is how one addresses others. Stereotypes may be included. For example, consider how Europeans perceive Asians. Our identity is formed as a result of how others perceive us and how we perceive ourselves. As a result, both avowal and ascription are crucial. Insiders, for example, describe their culture differently than others. Avowed versus ascribed qualities causes conflict, but resolutions are dependent on the status position of group members.
2. **Modes of Expression:** The use of core symbols (expressions of a group's cultural beliefs and theories about the world around them), names, labels, and norms (expected standards of behavior) that a cultural community shares and follows to demonstrate shared identity. Collier discovered that while members of each ethnic group share some cultural norms, there are differences within groups in terms of gender and relationship type.
3. **Individual, Relational, and Communal Identity:** Cultural identity has three components. Individual refers to how a person interprets his or her cultural identity based on his or her experiences. Relational identity refers to how individuals interact with one another (what is appropriate behavior), whereas communal identity refers to the use of communication in the formation, affirmation, and negotiation of shared identity. The group's actions and interactions, as well as their communal practices, reflect the group's identity. By observing everyday situations, communal activities, rituals, and holiday celebrations, researchers can identify or study cultural identity in a group.

4. **Enduring and Changing Aspects of Identity:** Cultural identity evolves as a result of a variety of social, political, economic, and contextual factors.
5. **Affective, Cognitive, and Behavioral Aspects of Identity:** These are emotions that are fully associated with cultural identity in specific situations.
6. **Levels of Content and Relationship:** This refers to the interaction of two or more people. The message exchange contains data/content. Participants in the conversation interpret the word choices and meanings based on their own experiences. Interactions also reveal a person's relational level based on how they deliver a message. This message level implies a cultural interpretation of who is in charge, their levels of closeness, how they feel about each other, their level of trust, and so on.
7. **Salience or Prominence:** This refers to how much a person's cultural identity stands out and attracts attention in a situation. The degree of similarity or difference between two people influences this. The intensity varies according to the context, situation, topic, and relationship. Prominence demonstrates a significant investment/involvement in an identity.

Conceptual Framework



This research study adopted the Input-Process-Output (IPO) Model. This is cascaded below.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study in Input-Process-Output (IPO) Model. The *INPUT* revolves around the proponent's task of addressing the following research questions: (a) What are the historical roots of the Baile de Bakal?; (b) What are the elements of Baile de Bakal?; (c) What are the cultural meanings associated in the elements of Baile de Bakal? and (d) What research-based booklet on the historical roots and elements of Baile de Bakal can be created?. The *PROCESS* involves Collection of data through ethnographic research method, Collection of data through open-ended interviews and Analysis and interpretations of gathered responses from the participants in the open-ended interviews. These initiatives and processes are all geared towards the *OUTPUT* which is a research-based booklet on Bakal de Baile as a reflection of the Life of Yogads in the Municipality of Echague. This booklet hopefully becomes helpful in advancing and

preserving cultural knowledge about the Yogad people for years and generations to come.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Tracing the Roots of Baile de Bakal

The Itawes, along with the Ybanags, Yogads, and Gaddangs, are one of Isabela's indigenous groups, according to data presented by Manzolim (2014). In Cagayan Valley, there are two groups of Itawes: one from Cagayan Province and the other from Echague, Isabela. As the foods themselves fade away, so do the associated meanings and beliefs. Being aware of their indigenous foods would aid in the preservation of the Itawes' past generations and the creation of a link or bridge between them and the present. In terms of food consumption, indigenous living also represents culture. People used to live in harmony with nature, according to Magallanes (2020).

Based on the data given, it can be noted that **Baile (Baile) de Bakal** originated alongside the arrival of the Yogads in the Isabela.



Figure 2.
Bakal

Baile de

Performance

Though Yogads are not only found in the Municipality of Echague, the performance is evidently attached with the Yogads of the said municipality. In a blog posted by Ferdz (2017) in IrunWulf.net, he mentioned that Yogads, together with their ethnic dance had been long established even during the times that the Municipality was called **Camarag**. Originally coming from Mindanao with the resemblance of cultural appearances with the Sama people of Tawi-Tawi and Sulu, the Yogads were considered as fierce warriors and hunters as they were not easily conquered by then Spanish conquerors.

It was further presented that the Yogads perform the Baile (Baile) de Bakal during numerous festivities, one of which is the Tilamsikan festival.



Figure 3. Baile (Baile de Bakal) Performers

It was mentioned that the “Bakal” in the ethnic dance is not meant to be used, it just so happened that it rhymed with the word “Mengal” which is then connected to the annual festival of the Municipality of Echague.

“Noong kwan, unang panahon bata pa ako, kasalukuyang grade almost grade 6 ako noon eh nag umpisa na kami na nag ano ng Baile de bakal, pero kung tutuusin mo ang Baile de bakal ang pangalan talaga tunay ito ay yung hindi Baile de bakal yung kwan talaga, yung ano yon, bakal talaga na parang kwan ng mengal na nag i-skrima ganun yun, yung umpisa . Ako non nung nag aaral ako ng grade 6 hanggang noong medyo alam na tumatanda na ang tao syempre mahina na ang katawan mo na patalon talon dun na , dun na kami nakwa-kwan, pero nagiging maestro kami ng Baile de bakal na sinasabi nila.” (Participant I, Interview, April 1, 2023)

Translation: Back then, when I was still young, I was currently in grade 6, and we started to do Baile de bakal. really, what is that, it's really like a man who is playing a game like that, that's the beginning. I was when I was studying in grade 6 until I knew a little bit that people are getting old, of course your body is weak enough to jump and jump, we were already there, but we became maestro of baile de bakal as they say.

Elements of Baile de Bakal

Yogads are known for their warrior-like spirits, having pride of not easily being conquered by the Spanish rulers. This particular motivation points them to their current stature in the province. The following discussion on elements were from

primary sources such as from the Baile de Bakal performers and elders who grew up in the dance and secondary sources that consist of records from other researchers who had access to some key elements of the performance.

Costume

The customary dresses for the performance are made out of satin cloth decorated and coded in colors but the variations on the designs and accessories are accepted as there is no strict standards on the actual design. In the data gathered by the researcher, there is a set of three (3) color coded costumes worn in the performance. These are basically the primary colors, red, blue and yellow.

Elders claim that the red represents the Moro Muslims while the blue represents its adversary, the Christians. Yellow then symbolizes the Emperor. These reflect how the performance emphasizes color representations as other culture provides.

The costumes, though tailored differently by different generations bear resemblance on symbols present in the costume. For those representing Christians in the performance have a cross sewed in their headdresses which are commonly crowns. This symbol proudly represents their biblical culture which focuses on their mere religion. The Moro Muslims in the performance, on the other hand, wears headdresses with a symbol of snake, symbolizing their bravery. The members of the performance all wear capes and glass attached to their dress. These additional characteristics of their costumes primarily add both decorations and defense mechanisms to the ones wearing it, signifying that the dance performance is a realistic depiction of feud between the Christians and the Muslims.

In terms of their gender classifications, it was in head dresses that they distinguish male from female performers. The male headdresses are ornamented with feathers while it is flowers ornamenting that of the female performers.

For their footwear, it was standardized to whether they will wear shoes or they will perform barefooted. The weaponry, specifically the swords present in the performance must be crafted with exact measurement of half meter and shall be made out of iron.

It can be analyzed that by coding dresses through colors and ornamenting them with specific characters such as cross, snake, feathers and flowers, there can be a provided distinction among the characters in the performance.

Christian Costumes	Moro Costumes
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The Christians wear capes coded in blue and is lined outlined with ornamentations.



The inner shirt used by the performers representing the Moro Muslim is usually made from satin cloth.



As observed, the clothing material for Christian performers is made out of silk-like clothing material.



The cape that the performers as Moro Muslims is also made out of satin cloth and has lining ornaments of gold or yellow, depending on the desires of the tailors.



The headdresses for Christians are usually crafted with simple ornaments as well as glass details to match up the headdresses intended for the Moro Muslims.



The warrior helmet worn by the performers are usually made of metal or painted with metal paints to make it appear like metals. It has distinct glass decorations as well as feather cap.



Coded in blue, the sword is made out of metal to go along its counterpart among the Moro Muslims.



Swords are critical piece in the performance. Without swords, the battling dancers cannot fully showcase the culture of the dance and its religious background.

Figure 4. Costume and Props Comparison of Christian and Moros Muslims in Baile de Bakal



the National Anthem of the Philippines. The music is not played through a definite lyrical accompaniment, however, the music utilized is uniquely marching so as to provoke scenes from the presentation which primarily consists of battles between the Christians and Muslims.



Figure 5. Marching Movements as Accompanied by the Marching Music Dance Steps

Dance steps are significant in the performance. These are handed down and are considered original by the locals as these should not be altered by any means.

Cariaga (2021) listed and recorded the following as the steps in the performance as officially documented by the National Folk Dance Workshop under the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Christians are dressed in dark colors, usually green or blue.

Moros are attired in red or orange.

To underscore the hierarchy of authority-

The king wears the longest cape and the only crown.

The queen dons a tiara and cape and the only crown.

The prince, a small cape and the three cornered hats called trespicos.

The soldiers, tiny capes and small hats.

Royal personalities wear bands and sashes.

All characters usually carry swords and knives.

Transition steps

Christian and Moro

(Note these steps will be repeated every after the figures)

Counts

- 1 Step R forward
- 2 Step L in place
- 3 Step R backward
- 4 Step L in place
- 5 Heel-place R sideward
- 6 Step R in place
- 7 Heel-place R in place
- 8 Step L in place

Counts

- 1-2 Tiro sword together
- 3-4 Turn sword
- 5-6 Hasa sword facing away
- 7-8 Hasa sword facing audience
- 9-10 Turn sword
- 11-12 Toss
- 13-14 Tiro sword
- 15-16 Turn sword

<https://ijase.org>

9	Step R backward	17-18	Hasa sword
10	Step L in place	19-10	Hasa sword
11	Step R forward	21-22	Turn sword
12	Step L in place	23-24	Toss
13	Step R backward		
14	Step L in place		
15	Step R forward		
16	Step L in place		
17	Step R backward		
18	Step L in place		
19	Heel-place R sideward		
20	Step R in place		
21	Heel-place L sideward		
22	Step L in place		
23	Step R backward		
24	Step L close to R		

FIGURE 1

Christian

Counts

Counts

1 Tap L backward pasting R to R shoulders	1-2 Sangga sword knuckles up
2 Step L backward	3-4 Sangga sword knuckles down
3 Tap R backward	5 Sangga using the sword overhead
4 Step R backward	6 Bring left hand back holding the knife
5 Step L in place	7 Sangga knife below waist level, sword up
6 Step R forward at the same time bend body	8 Turn sword
7 Pivot turn left about to face partner and step L backward	
8 Step R close to L	

Moro

Counts

Counts

1 Tap R forward going to partner's place	1-2 Tiro sword from R pass by R to R shoulder
2 Step R forward	3-4 Tiro sword from L shoulder
3 Tap L forward	5 Tiro sword head level
4 Step L forward	6 Bring left hand at the back holding the knife
5 Step R forward	7 Duyok knife on stomach
6 Step R sideward facing audience	8 Turn sword
7 Pivot turn L about and step L across R facing partner	
8 Step L close to R	

FIGURE II

Christian

Counts

Counts

1 Tap L backward passing left to left shoulder	1-2 Sangga sword knuckles up
2 Step L backward	3-4 Sangga sword knuckles down
3 Tap R backward	5 Sangga knife on left ear

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 4 Step R backward | 6 Sangga knife waist level |
| 5 Step R sideward right | 7 Sangga sword overhead |
| 6 Step L sideward left | 8 Turn word |
| 7 Step R forward at the same time pivot turn left about to face partner | |
| 8 Step L close to R | |

Moro

Counts

- 1 Tap R forward passing left to left shoulder
- 2 Step R forward
- 3 Tap L forward
- 4 Step L forward
- 5 Step R sideward right
- 6 Step L sideward left
- 7 Step R forward at the same time pivot turn left about to face partner
- 8 Step L close to R

Counts

- 1-2 Turn sword from right
- 3-4 Tiro sword from left
- 5 Duyok knife on left ear
- 6 Tiro knife waist level
- 7 Tiro sword head level
- 8 Tiro knife

FIGURE III

Christian

Counts

- 1 Tap L backward
- 2 Step L backward
- 3 Tap R backward
- 4 Step R backward
- 5 Step L in place
- 6 Step R forward
- 7 Step R backward half kneel on R foot
- 8 Stand up

Moro

Counts

- 1 Tap R forward
- 2 Step R forward
- 3 Step L close to R facing audience
- 4 Step L forward
- 5 Pivot turn left about and step R

- 6 Pivot turn left about again and step R sideward

- 7 Step R across L in front
- 8 Step L forward

Counts

- 1-2 Sangga sword knuckles up
- 3-4 Sangga sword knuckles down
- 5 Push buttocks through the sword
- 6 Sangga sword shin level
- 7 Sangga overhead
- 8 Sangga knife

Counts

- 1-2 Tiro sword from right
- 3-4 Tiro sword from left
- 5 Carry sword on shoulder
- 6 Tiro shin level
- 7 Tiro head sideward facing away audience finished facing partner
- 8 Tiro knife on left ear facing audience finished facing partner

FIGURE IV

Christian

Counts

- 1 Tap L backward
- 2 Step L backward
- 3 Tap R backward
- 4 Step R backward
- 5 Heel-place L sideward left
- 6 Step L backward
- 7 Heel-place R sideward right
- 8 Step R close to L

Counts

- 1-2 Sangga sword knuckles up
- 3-4 Sangga sword knuckles down
- 5-6 Sangga sword knuckles facing left
- 7 Turn sword
- 8 Carry sword on shoulder

Moro

Counts

- 1 Tap R foot forward
- 2 Step R forward
- 3 Tap L forward
- 4 Step L forward
- 5 Step R sideward right facing away audience
- 6 Step L in place
- 7 Step R foot facing audience
- 8 Step L. close to R

Counts

- 1-2 Tiro sword from right
- 3-4 Tiro sword from left
- 5-6 Duyok sword on stomach level
- 7 Carry sword on shoulder

FIGURE V

Christian

Counts

- 1 Tap L sideward going towards direction
- 2 Step L sideward left
- 3 Tap R in place
- 4 Step R across left in front
- Step L in place
- 6 Step R across left in front Junge position (giran)
- 7 Step R backward
- 8 Step L foot close to R

Counts

- 1-2 Sangga sword knuckles up of the audience
- 3-4 Sangga sword knuckles down
- 5-6 Sangga knife
- 7 Sangga sword shin level
- 8 Toss sword together

Moro

Counts

- 1 Tap R sideward going toward the audience
- 2 Step R sideward
- 3 Tap L in place
- 4 Step L across R in front
- 5 Step R in place
- 6 Step L across R in front
- 7 Step L backward
- 8 Step R close to L

Counts

- 1-2 Tiro sword front right
- 3-4 Tiro sword front left
- 5-6 Tiro knife on right ear
- 7 Tiro shin level
- 8 Tiro sword together

FIGURE VI

Christian

Counts

- 1 Tap R forward going to partners place passing
- 2 Step R forward, bent head and body to avoid
- 3 Pivot turn L about finished facing away and tap
- 4 Step L backward
- 5 Step R across L in front facing away
- 6 Step L in place
- 7 Step R sideward
- 8 Step L close to R

Counts

- 1 Sangga sword R to R shoulder
- 2-3 Carry sword on shoulder being chopped
- 4 Sangga knife L backward facing audience
- 5 Sangga sword away audience
- 6-7 Sangga facing partner lunge position
- 8 Toss sword

Moro

Counts

Counts

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1 Tap R forward | 1 Tiro head level |
| 2 Step R forward | 2-3 Turn sword |
| 3 Step L forward | 4 Tiro but push sword |
| 4 Pivot turn left about finished facing away audience | 5 Tiro but push knife |
| 5 Step L across R in front | 6-7 Tiro shin lunge position |
| 6 Step R in place | 8 Toss sword together |
| 7 Step L backward | |
| 8 Step R close to L | |

FIGURE VII

Christian

Counts

- 1 Tap R forward going to partner's place clockwise
- 2 Start R forward
- 3 Tap L forward
- 4 Step L forward
- 5 Heel place R
- 6 Heel place L forward
- 7 Pivot turn left about at the same time face position
- 8 Bend backward go to lunge position
- 9 Step R close to L
- 10 Jump

Moro

Counts

- 1 Tap R forward
- 2 Step R forward
- 3 Tap L forward level
- 4 Step L forward
- 5 Step R forward
- 6 Step L forward
- 7 Pivot turn L about at the same time step R finish
- 8 Step L in place
- 9 Step R backward
- 10 Step L close to right
- 11 Bend body forward

Counts

- 1-2 Sangga sword knuckles up
- 3-4 Sangga sword knuckles down
- 5-6 Sangga knife on left ear
- 7-8 Sangga knife
- 9-10 Sangga sword
- 11-12 Push to avoid tiro
- 13-14 Toss audience lunge
- 15-16 Jump

Counts

- 1-2 Tire sword from right
- 3-4 Tiro from left
- 5-6 Tiro knife head
- 7-8 Tiro knife waist level
- 9-10 Tiro overhead
- 11-12 Tiro but pushed by the opponent
- 13-14 Toss facing partner
- 15-16 Tiro shin level

NOTE: After finishing the Christian dance steps and hand movements do Moro steps and vice versa.

Cultural Representations of the Performance

Yogad elders tend to relate the idea of Baile de Bakal with their childhood experiences primarily citing that such performances are done during festivities and had been a customary performance ever since. As to their knowledge, there is no concrete data that dates the actual beginning of the performance.

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