

Evolving Modes of Disseminating Binisaya Folk Music in Eastern Visayas, Philippines

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Abstract

Binisaya folk music in Eastern Visayas, particularly in Samar, the northern part of Leyte, and Biliran, is traditionally passed down through oral traditions, community performances, and informal learning. However, rapid cultural and technological changes transform how this music is shared, posing both challenges and new possibilities. Guided by Appadurai's Theory of Cultural Flow, this study explores how folk music transmission adapts to shifting global and local contexts. The framework's five dimensions—ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, and ideoscapes—offer a lens to examine how digital platforms, schools, and cultural initiatives influence the evolving modes of dissemination. Using a qualitative single-case study approach, nine participants including musicians, educators, and cultural advocates are interviewed and observed to gain insights into present-day practices. The study finds that Binisaya folk music is no longer confined to oral passing or rural gatherings. It reaches new audiences through classroom teaching, online content, media features, and formal cultural programming. Younger generations, aided by technology, actively reshape and revitalize the tradition. While modern tools alter the format, they also enhance access and appreciation. Ultimately, the study highlights how folk music remains a living, adaptive expression of identity and heritage—and recommends strategies to ensure its continued relevance in today's fast-changing world.

Keywords: Eastern Visayas folk songs, Binisaya music, Waray, Folk music dissemination

Introduction

Rationale

Binisaya folk music in the Eastern Visayas region of the Philippines, particularly within the provinces of Samar, Northern part of Leyte, and Biliran, represents a critical component of the area's cultural heritage (Lagarde, 2004). While this study uses the term Binisaya to refer to the broader cultural and linguistic identity shared across Eastern Visayas, Philippines, as advocated by scholars like Lagarde, the term Waray continues to be commonly used in academic literature to describe the language and musical traditions of the region. For instance, Payne and Oyzon (2020) use "Waray" in their linguistic analysis of transitivity, modality, and voice, reflecting the prevailing scholarly convention in linguistic and ethnomusicological studies. This variation in terminology underscores the evolving discourse

around regional identity and the need to approach local cultural expressions with contextual sensitivity.

For generations, traditional forms of music has served not merely as entertainment but as a vital cultural conduit for expressing community identities, histories, and shared values (Dionysiou, 2011). Predominantly sustained through oral transmission, communal performances, and informal educational practices (Hasanah & Andari, 2020), Binisaya folk music has traditionally thrived within close-knit communities, where it reinforced social cohesion and collective memory. However, globally, folk music traditions face unprecedented threats stemming from rapid modernization, technological advancements, and accelerating globalization (Zhang, 2023). These global forces have fundamentally reshaped the cultural

landscape, placing traditional forms of musical expression at risk. Traditional music genres frequently struggle against the dominance of mainstream media and global popular culture, which have significantly altered consumption patterns and reshaped audience preferences. As audiences, particularly younger generations, increasingly gravitate toward global popular music genres and digital entertainment platforms, traditional folk music often becomes marginalized, leading to a gradual erosion of cultural heritage (Balonek, 2019).

In the Philippines, the effects of globalization are becoming increasingly visible, especially in how traditional arts, including folk music, are being overshadowed by fast-moving global trends (Wang, 2024). Popular culture, digital entertainment, and shifting values among the youth have all contributed to a steady decline in interest and participation in local cultural practices (Poddar, 2024). This growing influence of global media has made it harder for traditional expressions to thrive, raising concerns among educators, artists, and cultural advocates. As a result, there is a strong call to action to develop meaningful approaches that can protect and keep alive the country's intangible heritage, including folk music.

In Eastern Visayas, Binisaya folk music stands at this cultural crossroads. Once a vital part of everyday life—heard in rituals, gatherings, and community celebrations—this musical tradition helped carry stories, values, and identities from one generation to the next. But as communities change, so do their ways of keeping culture alive. Fewer oral transmissions, less frequent social gatherings, and the effects of migration and urban living have weakened the connection younger generations have with these traditions. Many young people, drawn to opportunities in the cities or abroad, grow up detached from the music that once tied their families and communities together.

This study seeks to understand how Binisaya folk music is adjusting to these changes. It focuses on how traditional songs, once passed down by word of mouth, are now being shared through schools, festivals, online platforms, and cultural programs. By looking at these evolving pathways, the research explores both the risks and the potential in adapting tradition to today's world. In the end, this investigation emphasizes the importance of keeping Binisaya folk music alive—not just as an art

form, but as a living expression of identity, history, and regional pride. It also offers insights into how traditional practices can remain meaningful even as society continues to change.

Statement of the problem

This overarching question guided the conduct of this study: How has Binisaya folk music in Eastern Visayas adapted to contemporary social, technological, and cultural transformations? Specifically, this answers the following questions:

1. How do translocal experiences, media platforms, technological tools, and institutional interventions shape the transmission and sustainability of Binisaya folk music across generations and regions?
2. What forms of cultural identity and advocacy are emerging to preserve, promote, and revitalize Binisaya folk music in contemporary Eastern Visayas?

Review of related literature

Folk music has long served as a vessel of cultural identity, community memory, and intergenerational knowledge, traditionally passed down through oral traditions and communal participation (Anitha, 2024). In many pre-modern societies, folk songs served as informal repositories for communal values, historical narratives, and local wisdom, passed down through oral traditions, communal gatherings, and intergenerational learning (Rubin, 2009). This study underscores how global and technological influences in the past decade have shaped folk music traditions, highlighting how continuity, variation, and selective adaptation remain central to how these traditions are preserved and transformed (Pu et al., 2024). In the Philippines, oral and performance-based transmission has long underpinned cultural continuity, especially in Visayan communities, where songs are shared through memory and communal participation rather than written notation (Cayetano et al., 2024). Felisilda (2015) emphasizes that the folk songs in the Southern part of Leyte are repositories of community realities, encoding values and social practices into musical forms. This suggests that dissemination is not only about preserving melody and text but also about transmitting embedded cultural meanings. They depict farming practices, courtship traditions, and even rituals such as coffins made from sawed-off boats, serving as symbolic narratives of

community life (Felisilda, 2016). Such representations reveal that folk music transmits not only melodies but also the lived experiences and values of the people. However, these traditional systems of transmission are now confronted by the far-reaching impacts of globalization. Appadurai's (1990) Theory of Cultural Flow offers a compelling lens to understand how five overlapping dimensions—ethnoscapes, technoscapes, mediascapes, financescapes, and ideoscapes—interact to reshape cultural practices. The increasing mobility of people (ethnoscapes), the rapid development of technology (technoscapes), and the global reach of digital media (mediascapes) have shifted the landscape in which local musical traditions like Binisaya folk music are produced, circulated, and received (Appadurai, 1996). These processes have led to both the marginalization of local traditions and the emergence of new opportunities for cultural revival.

One of the most significant developments in folk music dissemination is the rise of digital platforms, where technoscapes and mediascapes interconnect to create new spaces for performance, archiving, and access (Muhsyanur, 2025). Platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Facebook have democratized music sharing—enabling artists and cultural advocates to broadcast local traditions to global audiences (Park et al., 2017). In the Philippine context, Soriano and Cabalquinto (2022) describe digital media as vital “brokers” of culture, particularly for underrepresented regional expressions, helping form “digital heritage communities” where traditions are preserved and revitalized through youth engagement and online visibility.

Educational institutions also play a key role in sustaining folk music traditions. Globally, pedagogical models such as the *Táncház* method in Hungary demonstrate how integrating traditional music and dance into educational settings can foster cultural continuity via immersive, community-based learning (UNESCO, 2011). The Philippine K to 12 curriculum has explicitly sought to incorporate indigenous and traditional knowledge systems, including music, through policies on curriculum contextualization, localization, and indigenization (Department of Education, 2016b). However, this contextualization faces challenges in the form of inadequate teacher training, lack of culturally relevant materials, and policy

fragmentation. In a study from Samar et al. (2024) found that many educators lack familiarity with local folk repertoires, resulting in the reliance on generic materials not reflective of regional identity. Beyond classrooms, cultural festivals and local advocacy initiatives are essential for preserving folk music practices. Chang and Hsieh's (2017) investigation into festival dynamics demonstrates that festival experiences, particularly the recreation experience and local development benefits, play a crucial role in forming festival identity.

One of the most critical areas of focus in contemporary folk music transmission is youth engagement. While influenced heavily by global popular culture, young Filipinos are also finding innovative ways to reconnect with their heritage through digital vernacular expressions (Botangen et al., 2018). Without institutional and community support, youthful interest in folk traditions may remain superficial or fade over time. This dynamic has been observed in unrelated traditions, such as Chinese Wuyue ceremonial songs, where modern pressures and declining intergenerational engagement undermine their transmission. Limited institutional structures and educational frameworks have significantly contributed to this erosion (You & Prathumchan, 2024). Appadurai's theory offers a multidimensional lens for understanding these transformations. Ethnoscapes account for the migration of young people to urban areas and overseas, where their exposure to dominant cultures may dilute their ties to folk traditions. Technoscapes refer to how innovations like mobile phones and streaming platforms allow for new modes of access and sharing. Mediascapes enable the narrative construction of cultural identity through content creation and curation. Financescapes influence which cultural activities receive funding or visibility—festivals, school programs, or digital projects. Finally, ideoscapes shape the discourse on heritage and nationalism, impacting policy and public support for cultural preservation (Appadurai, 1996).

Despite these insights, several critical gaps in the literature remain. First, there is a paucity of research specifically addressing the digital documentation and archiving of Binisaya folk music. While numerous studies examine indigenous music in Luzon or Mindanao, fewer exist for Eastern Visayas. Second, the intersection of formal education and digital dissemination as complementary channels remains

underexplored. Finally, there is limited inquiry into youth-led innovations in folk music revival, particularly in terms of content creation, reinterpretation, and local advocacy.

The existing literature suggests that while traditional forms of transmission for folk music are eroding due to global and societal changes, alternative dissemination modes, particularly through education, festivals, and digital media, are offering new lifelines. For Binisaya folk music to endure and flourish, these contemporary channels must be strategically leveraged. The integration of Appadurai's cultural flows provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the evolving dynamics of folk music dissemination in a rapidly transforming world.

Methodology

Design

This study employed a qualitative single-case study design, which, as defined by Yazan (2015), allows for an in-depth exploration of a bounded system in its real-life context. The case focused on the changing practices of disseminating Binisaya folk music in the Eastern Visayas region of the Philippines. A single-case design was appropriate as the study examined a specific cultural phenomenon—folk music transmission—within a defined regional and sociocultural context. This design enabled the researcher to explore lived experiences, subjective meanings, and contemporary adaptations in music transmission while considering cultural, technological, and institutional dimensions.

Participants

A purposive sampling technique was used to select nine (9) participants, ensuring information-rich cases that align with the purpose of the study (Creswell, 1998). The participants included three (3) local musicians (P1-P3), two (2) music educators (P4-P5), two (2) representatives from the local government (P6-P7), one (1) cultural advocate/author (P8), and one (1) from local tourism office. The inclusion criteria required that participants (1) be active contributors to the promotion or teaching of Binisaya folk music, (2) have at least five years of involvement in cultural or educational work in Eastern Visayas, and (3) demonstrate willingness to participate in in-depth interviews and field observations.

To maintain confidentiality, each participant was assigned a pseudonym (e.g., P1, P2).

Research environment and data collection

The study was conducted in select cultural hubs and academic institutions across Samar, northern part of Leyte, and Biliran. These locations were selected due to their rich traditions of Binisaya folk music and the presence of organized cultural dissemination efforts. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and direct field observations conducted between February and April 2025. Participants were interviewed face-to-face in their preferred languages (Binisaya or Filipino) and were encouraged to reflect on changes in music transmission practices. Field notes and documentation of live performances, music workshops, and community festivals were also gathered to triangulate the data. Prior to data collection, participants signed an informed consent form, which explained the voluntary nature of participation, assured anonymity, and emphasized the right to withdraw at any time. Ethical clearance was secured through the university's research ethics committee.

Instrumentation

An interview guide consisting of open-ended questions was developed and validated by three experts in ethnomusicology and qualitative research. Questions focused on (1) participants' experiences with folk music transmission, (2) observed changes in dissemination practices, (3) roles of digital platforms and educational institutions, and (4) strategies for sustainability and youth engagement.

Data analysis

The data gathered from interviews and field observations were analyzed using the thematic analysis approach of Clarke and Braun (2013). The researcher began by transcribing and reading the data multiple times to gain familiarity. Initial codes were then generated from significant statements and grouped into patterns. These codes were organized into themes that reflected changes in folk music dissemination practices. The coding and theme development were aided by Atlas.ti, a qualitative data analysis software. To ensure trustworthiness, peer validation and member checking were conducted. Select colleagues and participants

reviewed the coded data to confirm the accuracy of interpretations. This process helped ensure that the emerging themes were grounded in participants' actual experiences and aligned with the study's theoretical lens.

Trustworthiness

Following Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for qualitative rigor, the researcher ensured credibility through prolonged engagement and member checking, transferability by providing rich contextual descriptions, dependability through a maintained audit trail, and confirmability via reflective journaling and triangulation.

Ethical considerations

Prior to data collection, informed consent is obtained from all participants, clearly explaining the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Participation is entirely voluntary. The research is submitted for approval to a recognized institutional ethics review committee to ensure alignment with ethical standards for social science research. To protect participant confidentiality, pseudonyms (e.g., P1, P2) are assigned in all transcripts, field notes, and reports. Any identifying details shared during interviews are anonymized or excluded from the final documentation. Audio recordings, transcripts, and related data are securely stored in encrypted digital folders accessible only to the researcher. Physical documents are stored in a locked cabinet and destroyed five years after the completion of the study. In terms of data protection, the study complies with data privacy laws in the Philippines, ensuring secure handling and disposal of both digital and physical records. All files are password-protected and backed up to prevent unauthorized access or accidental loss. The research documentation plan includes audio-recording in-depth interviews (with consent), field note journaling, and systematic coding of responses using qualitative analysis methods. A digital logbook tracks all data management activities, including interview schedules, transcriptions, coding frameworks, and emerging themes. This documentation provides an audit trail to ensure research integrity, transparency, and replicability. All findings are reported with sensitivity to cultural contexts and participant dignity, upholding the

ethical responsibility of the researcher to the communities involved.

Results and discussion

Theme 1: Cultural transmission across regions and generations

Across multiple participants, folk music emerged not just as a creative tradition but as a living thread that connects generations, regions, and even continents. Whether sung at family gatherings, taught in classrooms, or shared through published works, Binisaya folk music remains a powerful expression of identity and belonging.

My brother moved to Cebu City but comes home every fiesta. Every year actually, he is bringing new arrangements of our old songs, adding a twist based on what he learns in the city. It's just so interesting to see how our music is evolving with his experiences outside of Leyte." (P1, *Local Choral Musician*)

This account reflects how mobility fosters the evolution of folk music. While rooted in tradition, Binisaya folk music absorbs influences from urban centers through returning community members. These contributions are not seen as diluting heritage but as enriching it with contemporary relevance.

Many of my students have parents who work abroad. I teach them songs their elders used to sing, so they don't lose that connection. Some say it's the only Waray song they know—and that means something. (P4, *Tertiary Music Teacher*)

Here, folk music becomes a bridge between generations and geographies. As family structures become more globalized, educators serve as cultural anchors for youth left behind. Teaching heritage songs not only preserves tradition—it restores emotional links to absent parents and ancestral roots.

Our office coordinated a cultural exchange where our region's performers traveled to Manila with the help of the Local Government. It helped raise visibility. The audience there loved our songs, even if they didn't understand every word. (P6, *LGU Representative*)

Through formal exchanges, regional folk music becomes a vehicle for intercultural appreciation. Even with language barriers, the affective power of music communicates identity and story. Initiatives like these affirm that regional traditions have value beyond their locality.

Tourists sometimes ask for performances of local music. We usually request the local cultural groups in the city to perform folk songs in for our visitors. They like it so much. As for the performers, it enriches their experience and supports local artists. (P9, *Local Tourism Officer*)

Tourism has emerged as a surprising ally in cultural transmission. Folk music is now not just preserved for community memory but also offered as a curated experience. This positions local artists as both tradition-bearers and cultural ambassadors.

A well-known choral group in the Philippines is touring around the world and is selling my book of choral arrangements of our local folk songs to their audience and it's always sold out. (P8, *Cultural Advocate/Author*)

P8's contribution shows that cultural transmission now extends far beyond local communities. His published choral arrangements, traveling with international performers, turn regional heritage into a global narrative. This reflects a shift from oral sharing to documented dissemination, without losing the original cultural intent.

Theme 2: Media and public visibility

Participants emphasized how traditional music, once confined to local gatherings, now finds new life and wider audiences through digital media and public broadcasts. Platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok have enabled regional performances to gain thousands of views, while local media partnerships and published materials have legitimized and amplified the cultural value of Binisaya folk music. These developments not only extend the music's reach but also validate its importance in contemporary cultural discourse.

I saw our barangay's tinikling and folk song performance on Facebook last year. Someone uploaded it after the fiesta. I was surprised it had more than 10,000 people who viewed it. (P1, *Local Choral Musician*)

Digital media amplifies what were once local-only events. This story shows how folk traditions, when documented and shared online, gain a broader audience—even going viral. The sense of validation from external viewership enhances community pride.

A friend made a TikTok remix of our folk song, the one you hear in mercado with beats (market), it went viral. Teenagers started asking where the song came from. I was surprised how something so old could suddenly become cool. (P2, *Local Band Musician*)

Youth-led digital trends can give folk music unexpected new life. This remix culture does not erase tradition but reframes it in formats that younger generations understand. The viral success also challenges assumptions about what content resonates online.

We maintain a committee for local music events to preserve our culture in whatever form. There is also a Facebook page designated to help inform the public. I remember one post about a rondalla group playing our music reached 20,000 views. It encouraged us to continue this. (P6, *LGU Representative*)

Consistent online presence is key to maintaining folk music's visibility. What once depended on physical performances now benefits from strategic digital promotion. Government offices, too, are realizing the media potential of folk traditions.

We sponsored a music video competition and collaborated with vloggers and film makers last 2024 in Tacloban City to feature our local folk songs. It brought attention to our traditions. Viewership spiked during the festival season. (P9, *Local Tourism Officer*)

Vlogger partnerships can be strategic for broadening cultural reach. These collaborations bring authenticity and contemporary storytelling to traditional

events. The increased engagement shows that audiences still care about heritage—if packaged accessibly.

Theme 3: Technology in folk music dissemination

Technology has become a crucial enabler in preserving and sharing Binisaya folk music across generations. From mobile apps used in choral rehearsals to online streaming platforms hosting regional song recordings, participants described how digital tools have transformed access, learning, and performance. These innovations have bridged gaps between tradition and modernity, making folk music more engaging and accessible to today's audiences.

Currently we use a mobile app now downloaded from google playstore to practice pitch before rehearsals. It helps us blend better during rehearsals and live performances. It's a small thing, but it's changed how confident we feel when we sing. *(P1, Local Choral Musician)*

Technology has become an integral part of everyday music-making. Even simple tools like pitch apps support vocal improvement and ensemble cohesion. This shows how even modest digital interventions can enhance confidence and performance quality in community choirs.

I created some digital modules in pdf and some are on LMS (learning management system) for folk music during the pandemic. Students could watch and sing along at home. It was my way of continuing music education despite the lockdown. *(P4, Tertiary Music Teacher)*

The pandemic catalyzed digital innovation in music education. For educators like P4, going digital was not just about survival, it opened new avenues for instruction. It also proved that folk music could thrive in asynchronous, online environments.

We partnered with private sector who runs a website and YouTube channels with downloadable folk songs and school resources and also with a known music scholar here in Tacloban to sponsor and let his materials

be used for classroom teaching. It's especially useful for teachers especially in some areas. We've seen more schools using them in their activities. *(P7, LGU Representative)*

Institutional investments in digital infrastructure can broaden access to folk materials. By creating centralized resources, local governments empower educators to sustain cultural teaching. This also standardizes and archives content that was once solely oral.

We benchmarked in General Santos City where they invested in digital kiosks in tourism centers where people can browse tourist spots. It's like a cultural sampler for visitors. *(P9, Local Tourism Officer)*

This account reflects a creative fusion of culture and technology for tourism. The kiosk model presents folk music as a sensory experience, integrating it into the visitor's journey. It also honors local artistry in a public, accessible format.

Theme 4: Funding and institutional support

Sustaining folk music traditions requires more than passion—it demands resources. Participants highlighted the crucial role of local governments, cultural institutions, and grant programs in supporting performances, recordings, and educational initiatives. These financial and institutional efforts not only enable continuity but also validate the importance of Binisaya folk music in the broader cultural agenda.

Our choir is sometimes sponsored by local businesses to perform in Tacloban. The money we get, we used to pay for our uniforms and transportation. *(P1, Local Choral Musician)*

Grassroots-level support remains essential for sustaining performance opportunities. Without small sponsorships, many cultural groups would struggle to remain active. These forms of aid may be informal but are vital for visibility and morale.

We received a grant to organize a seminar-workshop on contextualizing lessons of course with the use of our own folk songs. It made a big impact on our

students. They gained confidence. (*P4, Tertiary Music Teacher*)

Grant funding directly contributes to both creative output and identity-building. Workshops like these do more than teach skills—they empower participants to use their language and stories. The ripple effect benefits both the individual and the community.

Part of our annual budget is allocated to heritage preservation—workshops, concerts, training. It's a commitment we renew every year. (*P7, LGU Representative*)

This account emphasizes how heritage funding can be institutionalized. Regular budgeting signals that cultural preservation is a long-term priority, not just a one-time event. Such consistency ensures program stability and community trust.

Our department sponsored local musicians during one of the municipality's founding anniversaries. It boosted visibility. Some even got invited to perform in other towns. (*P9, Local Tourism Officer*)

Financial support also leads to networking and career expansion for local artists. These sponsorships validate artistic labor and often lead to wider recognition. It's a reminder that when folk music is funded, it flourishes beyond its home base.

Theme 5: Cultural identity and advocacy

For many participants, promoting Binisaya folk music is a deeply personal and collective act of cultural affirmation. The songs are seen not merely as art but as vessels of heritage, pride, and belonging—especially for younger generations navigating modern influences. Advocacy efforts, slogans, and school-based initiatives reflect a growing movement to reclaim and celebrate regional identity through music.

I used to think folk music was boring, but our conductor kept reminding us it's our identity. Over time, I realized these songs carry stories from our grandparents' time. (*P1, Local Choral Musician*)

This narrative captures a shift in perspective from indifference to pride. Often, identity isn't realized through lecture, but through lived engagement and reflection. Music becomes a vehicle for rediscovering ancestry and community roots.

In our curriculum, we now include 'music as heritage' to promote regional pride. Students respond more emotionally to local songs than foreign ones. This is actually to pattern our instruction to the curriculum in Department of Education, the MATATAG curriculum. (*P4, Tertiary Music Teacher*)

Formalizing heritage education legitimizes folk music in the academic space. When students see their culture in the curriculum, they value it more. Emotional resonance becomes a powerful educational tool that fosters deeper cultural ties.

Through 'Kanta Binisaya (an advocacy project of Binisaya choral arrangements),' it's been really my advocacy to promote Eastern Visayan folk music for our shared cultural identity. (*P8, Cultural Advocate/author & arranger*)

Advocacy projects like this one represent intentional acts of cultural leadership. P8's efforts are a blend of scholarship, artistry, and social mission. Such endeavors reinforce that identity is not static—it must be actively nurtured.

We created tourism campaigns that connect pride of place with pride in tradition. Folk music is central to that. We use it to brand our identity. (*P9, Local Tourism Officer*)

This reflects how cultural branding can function as both preservation and promotion. By integrating music into tourism, stakeholders redefine it as a symbol of identity. It becomes not just entertainment, but a statement of belonging.

Discussion

Drawing from the narratives of local musicians, educators, cultural workers, and community advocates, the study paints a portrait of tradition not in decline, but in motion. While oral transmission and communal

music-making remain core to the cultural memory of the region, these practices are now being complemented—and in some cases replaced—by formal education systems, festival programming, digital media, and institutional support. One of the most pronounced themes was the role of mobility and migration in the continuity of folk traditions. Participants described how family members working or studying in urban centers or abroad often carry with them fragments of their home culture—songs, melodies, and rituals—which they later reinterpret or share in new settings. These exchanges allow folk music to grow in unexpected directions, adapting to different contexts while still retaining its emotional and cultural essence. This echoes McKay's (2006) and Kiwan and Meinhof's (2011) arguments that cultural expressions, especially music, often evolve through translocal experiences. What once belonged only to the village now belongs to the world, yet its roots remain firmly in the soil from which it came.

Media exposure has amplified this movement. Participants shared examples of how local performances, whether recorded by a cellphone or broadcast through regional networks, found their way to broader audiences via platforms like YouTube, TikTok, or Facebook. In some cases, these clips went viral, unexpectedly reigniting interest in traditional songs among younger audiences. Others pointed to local media features, festival broadcasts, or short documentaries as key tools in building public appreciation. This visibility plays a crucial role in both promoting and preserving folk traditions (Julakarn, 2025). More importantly, it transforms folk music from a niche or "rural" art form into something that stands alongside more mainstream expressions in terms of value and reach.

The integration of technology has also opened new possibilities. In many accounts, participants spoke of how recording software, pitch-training apps, and online editing tools became integral in the creation and teaching of Binisaya folk music. Some educators developed digital modules and streamed recorded versions for classroom use, especially during the pandemic. This blending of tradition with technology not only modernizes the presentation of folk music but also allows its accessibility to those outside of its

immediate cultural sphere. As noted in recent studies, digital tools can serve as bridges that connect learners to intangible heritage in ways that oral instruction alone can no longer sustain (Velarde, 2021).

Institutional and financial support further enables the music's survival and growth. Grants from government units, cultural agencies, and universities were identified as vital to the documentation, arrangement, and performance of Binisaya songs. Scholarships and outreach programs were also mentioned as ways to sustain the interest of younger generations. Such backing helps counteract the impact of cultural homogenization and ensures that folk traditions remain dynamic and community-centered. According to Samson (2023), consistent funding and institutional commitment are often what separate fragile traditions from those that thrive amid modern pressures.

At the heart of all these efforts lies a strong current of cultural advocacy. Many participants did not merely view themselves as performers or educators but as custodians of cultural memory. Through festivals, community workshops, classroom instruction, and even casual storytelling, they found ways to embed Binisaya folk music into the consciousness of the youth. Their intent was not just to preserve songs, but to transmit the values, stories, and identity embedded within them. Music, in this context, becomes a form of cultural assertion—a declaration that these traditions still matter and deserve a place in the lives of future generations (Aguilar, 2022).

Viewed through Appadurai's (1996) theory of cultural flows, the transmission of Binisaya folk music clearly reflects the interplay of global and local forces. Ethnoscapes emerge through the movements of people who carry culture with them. Mediascapes and technoscapes illuminate how music is mediated and digitized for new forms of engagement. Financescapes capture the support systems that sustain these efforts, while ideoscapes reflect the cultural values and advocacy work behind them. Taken together, these flows reveal that Binisaya folk music is not disappearing—it is transforming, responding to its time, and reaffirming its relevance in today's fast-changing world.

Table 1 Summary table of responses based on Appadurai's cultural scapes

Scape	Participant Narratives
Ethnoscap es	Migration, both internal and international, has played a key role in the continued transmission of Binisaya folk music. Family members who relocated to urban centers or abroad carry the songs with them—teaching them to their children, performing them at cultural events, and even forming informal music groups in diaspora communities. In some cases, published arrangements of regional songs are brought to global audiences through performances abroad.
Mediascap es	Traditional music is gaining renewed visibility through mass media and social platforms. Folk music performances uploaded to Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok reach large audiences and spark engagement. Locally produced print and digital songbooks are being integrated into schools and homes, while regional festivals receive media coverage that elevates public awareness and pride. These media outlets help amplify cultural traditions once confined to rural communities.
Technoscap es	Advancements in technology have transformed the way folk music is learned, recorded, and shared. From classroom tablets and notation apps to home studio setups and streaming platforms, technology has democratized access to cultural materials. Digitally distributed music, including regional folk arrangements, now allows for broader audience reach and easier educational integration.
Financescap es	Funding and economic support from cultural agencies, local government units, and universities play a vital role in preserving folk music traditions. Grants and sponsorships enable the production of recordings, the purchase of instruments, and the organization of workshops and festivals. Cross-sector collaborations sustain efforts that would otherwise struggle in under-resourced rural areas.
Ideoscap es	Shifting values and advocacy campaigns are fostering a renewed sense of cultural pride, especially among the youth. Educational programs and public events emphasize the relevance of folk music to regional identity. Efforts to link cultural heritage with community development have encouraged the reimagining of folk traditions as contemporary, relevant, and vital to the collective self-understanding of local communities.

While the evolving modes of dissemination create opportunities for greater visibility and intergenerational engagement, they also pose challenges for cultural preservation (Wang, 2024). The adaptation of folk songs into remixes, staged performances, or digital content may lead to simplification or distortion of original meanings (Billeri, 2017). Some traditional elements such as the communal setting, improvisational character, or ritual functions, risk being diminished when songs are repackaged for broader audiences. This tension reflects a common paradox in heritage work: to keep folk music alive, it must change; yet change can also alter the very qualities that preservation seeks to protect. Balancing preservation and evolution, therefore, becomes essential to ensure that Binisaya folk music remains both relevant and authentic in a fast-changing world. Although new modes of dissemination are reshaping the visibility of Binisaya folk music, the oral and communal traditions remain equally significant

(Hasanah & Andari, 2020). Songs sung at fiestas, family gatherings, and community rituals still provide the most immediate and lived experiences of the tradition.

Conclusions

This study revealed that the dissemination of Binisaya folk music has undergone significant shifts, shaped by the convergence of tradition, modernity, and globalization. From its deeply rooted oral and communal practices, folk music in Eastern Visayas is now increasingly mediated through educational programs, media exposure, digital technologies, institutional support, and youth-led advocacy. Despite the threats of cultural dilution and generational disconnect, the local communities remain active agents of preservation and adaptation. The interplay between inherited practices and innovative strategies shows that cultural transmission is not static, but a living, negotiated process.

The study further confirms that music educators, cultural advocates, government units, and artists are reimagining folk music's place in contemporary life. The findings show that dissemination is no longer limited to inherited spaces but thrives in classrooms, online platforms, tourism centers, and collaborative performance arenas. By embracing the tools of the present while honoring the stories of the past, the custodians of Binisaya folk music are fostering both continuity and creative evolution.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several key recommendations are proposed to support the sustainable preservation and dissemination of Binisaya folk music in Eastern Visayas. First, there is a pressing need to strengthen curriculum integration by incorporating localized folk music content into basic and tertiary education, supported by accessible materials and teacher training. Second, digital platforms should be harnessed to document and distribute folk songs through audio-visual recordings, interactive apps, and collaborations with local digital creators. This will help make folk music more engaging for younger generations. Third, institutionalized and expanded funding from government agencies, cultural commissions, and academic partners must be secured to support community choirs, school initiatives, and research projects centered on local musical heritage. Fourth, festivals and tourism programs like *Kanta Binisaya* should be strategically developed not only as performance showcases but as cultural education tools, encouraging intergenerational participation and community storytelling. Fifth, grassroots advocacy must be nurtured by empowering local musicians, educators, and artists to lead initiatives that cultivate pride in cultural identity through school clubs, peer mentoring, and public campaigns. Lastly, fostering intersectoral collaboration between education, tourism, and cultural sectors, as well as forging regional and national partnerships, will ensure a more cohesive and impactful approach to safeguarding and revitalizing Binisaya folk music amidst ongoing societal changes.

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