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Voices from the Sidewalk: The Compendium of Musical Compositions of Cebu City Street Musicians

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Abstract

Filipino composers have created various music, yet their works were rarely recorded or published. The paper documented and transcribed the original pieces of street musicians from Cebu City. The researchers utilized a Descriptive-Qualitative research design, focusing on four prospective street musicians aged at least 18 years old with over three years of experience with original music composition accompanied by their chosen instruments. The research involved capturing video and audio recordings, which were then transcribed to preserve the compositions for future reference. The researchers gathered four original works: "Hangad ng Pagbabago," "Balisa," "Pagkabalahan," and "Pangako," each reflecting the personal experiences and inspirations of the composers. The results revealed that Cebu City's Street musicians drew inspiration from their life experiences and emotions. By integrating these compositions into the curriculum, the study aimed to raise awareness of Cebuano Street music and develop initiatives to support the publication and distribution of original works, thereby increasing their visibility and fostering appreciation for these artists' talents. Preserving local musical traditions and encouraging future studies to explore the broader implications of street music on cultural identity and community engagement. This documentation serves as a tribute to the musicians and a vital resource for cultural education and appreciation.

Keywords: street musician, musical compositions, documentation, musical transcription, cultural preservation

INTRODUCTION

Documenting street music provides individuals with an understanding of the city's sounds as experienced by ordinary people. It is similar to absorbing the sounds of the city from the

streets (Adam, 2018). Musicians in the Philippines belong to different social groups that have an effect on how they use their skills. Their experiences are shaped either by the audience they

perform for, the songs they play, or the kinds of places they perform in (Dizon, 2018). Although street musicians are known to perform music pieces that are familiar to their audience, they still have their own compositions and repertoire that aren't recorded (Grygier & Elwina, 2018). It is important to know the musicology of their own repertoire in order to further understand how their music is shaped. The researchers need to find more music collections in the country in order to work towards preserving and promoting them for future research (Abrera, 2019). The purpose of this study is to document and transcribe the original song compositions played by street musicians in Cebu City.

Street music is defined as music played in public, whether enclosed or open, such as streets, buses, metro stations, or cemeteries (Grygier, 2013). It reflects the culture a musician has since it can absorb the essence of the society the musician lives in through his music (Adam, 2018). Some instruments that are used are much the same as they were a century ago, like acoustic guitars and violins. Yet other instruments are 'homemade' and unique, like the percussion 'kit' observed during fieldwork which consisted of empty plastic containers, metal rods and other 'found' objects (Slynn, 2017). The way street sound and music have been recorded over the ages forms the basis of a large portion of the literature on street music. Seeing street musicians gives insights not only into their motivations for performing, but also into the repertoire they play and how it impacts the audience. The places of performances and the methods used by the musician in their musical performance also gives an idea on the unstable position and challenges street musicians face in some public areas (Watt & Bacchieier, 2021).

Street musicians in Cebu, Philippines, have a significant impact on the culture (Minty, 2017). In Cebu City, it is common to see people busking. Many kids and even adults perform street songs in exchange for money or food (Lachica, 2019). The establishment of the Cebu Buskers Association (CBA), emphasizing the rich musical talents of the region, highlights the opportunity to expose local music through busking, and leveraging digital platforms (Magsumbol, 2023). This aligns with the documented practices of street musicians, as research indicates that they share their music to find happiness and fulfillment (Habermas, 1987). Despite facing derogatory terms such as "street kids" and "streets of shame" (May, 1998), street musicians use their performances to engage diverse audiences, discussing societal issues through their songs and influencing music genres and techniques (Herbert & Rykowski, 2018). The CBA's mini-concert, featuring talents like Kurk Fick and Rommel Tuico, signifies local support, with Mayor Rama and Vice Mayor Garcia endorsing the association (Magsumbol, 2023). Promoting Cebuano compositions within the heritage district resonates with the need highlighted in a study of (Agcaoili, 2002) that Filipino composers have written a substantial amount of music, but are rarely performed, unpublished, and unrecorded. This emphasizes the importance of this research in bringing these compositions to a wider audience.

It is unusual for street performers to focus on showing their musical abilities, while there has been little attention paid to the fundamental structure of their street music performances. In some instances, audiences might occasionally mislead the context of the powerful concept of music by viewing completed musical pieces rather than performances (Finnegan, 2007). There are occasionally a few street musicians who started writing their own compositions using the guitar in the past decades. When it comes to their own musical work, it makes them feel at ease and passionate (Dawe,

2013). For this instrument, Filipino composers have written a great deal of music which is the majority of these pieces are manuscripts that are seldom performed, unpublished, and unrecorded (Agcaoili, 2002). In the same context in Poland, street music is still not a highly popular topic for researches. Because of the size and complexity of the musical repertory, conducting research requires a challenging process which demands a broad background in almost every musical genre (Hebert & Ryskowki, 2018).

Together, street musicians have brought street music to life, uniting people and promoting a sense of identity and unity through their music. The statement, "Our city needs street music," asks others to recognize the value of street music in addition to expressing their strong belief in what they do (Ho, 2023). This study is significant because it allows it to explore the different original compositions of street musicians found in Cebu City. The sounds in the city might help understand what specific factors affect the music of the musicians the researchers will document (Adam, 2018). The researchers will be able to keep a record of these compositions. By documentation, this study will help understand more about their piece through a musical analysis.

Agcaoili (2002) highlights, that Filipino composers have written a substantial amount of music, but are rarely performed, unpublished, and unrecorded. This study aims to comprehensively document and transcribe the original compositions of street musicians in Cebu City. By carefully selecting willing street musicians ages 18 years and above and having their unpublished and untranscribed original composition accompanied by their instrument of choice with at least 3 years of experience, the researcher will record their original songs through video and audio, as well as transcribe the music they play in public. The scope excludes street musicians from other regions, those who only perform covers, and those who do not meet the study's participant criteria. The researchers will focus solely on the provided guiding questions and will not explore how the street musicians developed their music composition skills.

METHODOLOGY

The researchers believe that a qualitative research study would require a systematic process consisting of a series of steps. The steps include identifying what the gaps are, selecting the right method to be used in the study, gathering the necessary data, interpreting the collected data, analyzing the given data, and to provide a validating conclusion to the results. By doing so, the gaps identified will be given possible solutions. These will be the researcher's methodological expectations when carrying out the research. When conducting the research, the researcher must adhere to these certain methodological methods.

Research Design

The study was made through the use of descriptive qualitative research to document and transcribe the original compositions of street musicians. Descriptive-Qualitative research is the best way to document and transcribe the originality of street musicians' compositions as this design aims to provide an authentic and detailed documentation of the diverse and unique styles found in the compositions of these artists (Ayton, 2023). Through this approach, the musical compositions of street musicians were documented and transcribed.

Research Participants

The study involved the participation of street musicians from Cebu City, with a focus on selecting (4) prospective street musicians

who meet specific criteria. These musicians must be within the streets of Cebu City, at least 18 years old, and have a minimum of three years of experience. They should demonstrate authentic skills and techniques in playing instruments, particularly using their instrument accompaniment of choice. Additionally, they must have at least one original musical composition that remains unpublished or untranscribed, aligning with Agcaoili's (2002) observation that Filipino composers often face challenges in having their music performed or recorded. These musicians should also be willing to participate in the study and permit the documentation of their performances, including recordings and written analyses of their music and lyrics. This careful selection ensures that the study will provide a deep insight into the unique creative processes and experiences of Cebu's Street musicians.

Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling involves selecting participants on purpose because of the attributes that each participant possesses (Tongco, 2007). It is a non-random sampling that does not require a set of underlying theories and a variety of participants. In other words, Researchers select individuals with relevant skills and experience to provide valuable data. (Lewis & Sheppard, 2006). Purposive sampling is utilized in selecting the participants. In using this sampling, the participants must meet the following criteria: (1) A musician within the streets of Cebu; (2) At least 18 years old with 3 years of experience; (3) Must show their authentic skills and techniques in playing instruments; (4) Has unpublished or unrecorded own musical song compositions using their instrument accompaniment of choice; (5) Willing to participate and allow researchers to have their presentations documented. The idea of "Data Saturation" will be utilized to determine when there is sufficient data available (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Research Locale

The study was conducted within Cebu City, where street musicians performing is a typical sight. Cebu is located in the Central Visayas region of the Philippines. The scope of this study is limited only to the whole Island of Cebu. Street songs are performed by many children and even adults in exchange for cash or food (Lachica, 2019).

Research Instrument

The researchers aimed to deeply engage with Cebu's street musicians by carefully observing and thoroughly documenting their performances. Given the nature of the research, the researchers will act as the principal means of conducting the study (Creswell, 2007). Observing and documenting also serve as a secondary tool in the gathering process. Observation is a technique used to gather information about individuals, groups, and societies. For over a century, observation has been used as a

method of data collection (Kawulich, 2012). A key aspect of this study involves analyzing the musical pieces they perform, achieved through transcribing and closely examining them. Music transcription process involves describing the complex melodies, harmonies, and rhythms inherent in their music, as well as exploring influences that inform their musical choices.

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to the data gathering of study, there are steps taken to make sure that biases and judgements are avoided. Data gathering will start only once the researchers receive an ethical permission from the Research Ethics Committee (REC). A transmittal letter was addressed to the dean of Cebu Normal University-Main Campus

under the College of Teacher Education and the creative research professor.

During the data gathering, researchers thoroughly adhere to ethical standards and conduct in a manner that places the rights and autonomy of the participants first. Therefore, the researchers obtain informed consent from every single participant before any interviews or observations can take place. In-depth observations will be done in addition to capturing notes, pictures, and videos using the cameras to collect the data. After the collection of data from the participants, the researchers will give an amount of 100 pesos as compensation.

After the data gathering, each song piece and musical works performed by the street musicians is attentively transcribed into a music sheet from the recorded footage, thus ensuring the precision and clarity of the documentation. The researchers will give the notated music sheet back to the street musicians and give them full ownership of the notated score. Researchers complete a thorough data analysis process, interpreting the collected data in terms of the study aims and objectives. The whole process of this study was done within the approximate time of 1 year or less.

Data Analysis

As a method, Music transcription by Klapuri and Davy (2005) was used to describe and transcribe rhythm, harmonies, melodies and time signatures of the original music compositions of street musicians. The aim of qualitative analysis, particularly descriptive design research, is to give authentic and detailed documentation of the different and unique styles seen in these artists' compositions (Gay, 2006). The researchers were able to secure recorded footage of the artist's public performance. From the performance, the music will be analyzed and notated thus creating a tangible copy and documentation of the music composition. The music sheet shall be the exact melody of the song and no other interpretation or artistry will be added other than what was in the video.

Rigors of the study

In qualitative research study, the researchers prioritize credibility, reliability, confirmability and transferability (Marshall and Rossman, 2016).

Credibility in this qualitative research is essential in determining the data appropriately that depicts the experiences of the participants (Enworo, 2023). Building connections with participants prior to the data collection contributes in cultivating trust and understanding between both of them. Purposive sampling is used based on the prospected participants and set criteria by the researchers to ensure data integrity and eligibility of participants. Also, by writing an epoch to minimize biases and judgements of the participants (Maher et al., 2018).

Reliability guarantees that study details are well explained and repeatable by other researchers. All of the study's data were derived from the answers of key participants, confirmed during transcription, and approved by specialists. To guarantee data reliability, validation panels and open-ended questions were utilized (Maher et al., 2018).

Maintaining confirmability involves avoiding biases and using the right data analysis procedures. Researchers' biases are reduced by Epoche, and thorough data analysis procedures including data entry with professional assistance are documented. Data integrity is ensured by regular evaluation and verification (Maher et al., 2018).

Transferability allows researchers in this study to assess how effectively the study's findings apply to various contexts. Journals, papers, and researcher notes often contain detailed descriptions of the study method that are helpful to other researchers in understanding how data is collected and analyzed. Data collected by the participant eligibility, selection, and criteria help in assessing the transferability of the research study (Maher et al., 2018).

Ethical considerations

Permissions are needed for the use of musical works in the research project, which follows RA 10173 and is approved by the University's Research Ethics Committee. Researchers avoid biases and prejudices in participant selection by maintaining neutrality. Throughout the observation time, following these standards protect the rights, culture, and dignity of street musicians in Cebu City.

The confidentiality of participant information is maintained via safe storage and restricted access by those with permission. Under the study's standards, participants' efforts are properly responded to through appropriate treatment and compensation. If someone has any questions or concerns, they can speak with the researcher directly. The researchers will also ask permission from the artist regarding stating their name in the music sheet to be made. The participant may also choose to not be part of the study.

The Artist has the right to their musical creation as long as it is manifested in a tangible form. (VaridaAriani, N.2021) Any use of the musical repertoires can be done as long as it is not for monetary gain and for research purposes only. (Drummond, T. 2015). The researchers would like to clarify that this research shall not be used for any monetary gain and will solely be used for education or research purposes only. The artist will be able to contact the researcher through a contact provided to them.

Even though there might not be many dangers involved in participating, the research provides an opportunity to have further scientific understanding and be recognized for cooperation with free compensation.

RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the findings of the study, highlighting four original compositions by street musicians in Cebu City. Following an exhaustive search, researchers identified and engaged with musicians performing in public spaces. The participating musicians willingly provided clarifications on notation and shared their works: "Hangad ng Pagbabago," "Balisa," "Pagkabalahan," and "Pangako."

Title: Hangad ng Pagbabago

Composer: Rodrigo Paraiso

Background of the Song: Based on the recorded video during the interview, Rodrigo said "Ako ning nasulat na kantaha kay tungod sa akong naobserbahan na mga butang ug panghitabo sa atong palibot na wala nay maayo na impluwensiya sa mga tao o sa mga Pilipino na nagpuyo aning kalibutana ug duna puy maayo pero mas nagaibaabaw jud ang mga bati na panghitabo labi na jud sa karon na henerasyon. Kun akong ekompara sauna ug karon mas disiplinado pa ang mga tawo sauna kaysa karon, mao tu nakahunahuna ko na himuon ning kanta para dugang tabang ug inspirasyon sa mga tawo o sa mga Pilipino na bsn unsa pamay mga bati na nahitabo sa kalibutan napa gihapoy chance na mag-usab o mabag o kitang tanan ". Translated as (The composer of "Hangad

ng Pagbabago" drew inspiration from prevalent societal issues and negative events. This song serves as a call to action, encouraging Filipinos to adapt to positive change, assume responsibility, and contribute to global improvement.)

Hangad ng Pagbabago

Composed by: Rodrigo Paraiso
Transcribed by: F.A.V Arevalo

Title: Balisa

Composer: Jonel

Background of the Song: In a recorded audio interview, Jonel stated "Balisa ko, para ma express akong feeling og para sa akoang asawa nga bulag na og tulo (3) ka anak nga babae". Translated as (I am distressed, to express my feelings for my wife who is separated and for my three daughters). "Balisa" draws inspiration from the composer's personal experiences, specifically his separation from his wife and three daughters. The song features a 4/4-time signature, D major key, binary musical form, and guitar accompaniment.

Balisa

Composed by: "Junel"
 Transcribed by: F.A.V Arevalo

$\text{♩} = 75$

D F#m

PagNa-ki - ki - ta ki-ta, na may ka - u-sap na i-ba,

4 G Gm D

Ang pu-sot i-sip ko ay na-ba-ba-li-sa. hin - di ko ma-la-man a-no ang

7 F#m G A

a - king ga - ga-win. nag-se - se-los a - ko sa kan - ya.

10 G A F#m Gm D7

Pag-kat hin-di ko ma - ka-ya. Ang mag-pa-tu-lo ng lu-ha.

14 G A F#m G F#m

Ka-yat Pa-ki-u - sap na la-mang. sa-na ay i-nga-tan

17 G A D F#m G Gm

Pag - kat a - koy na-sa-sak ta-n. Di

22 D F#m G

ko ma-la-la-man ang tu-nay na dam-dam-in ko, Pa-rang mun-ting ba-tang, i-na-

25 Gm D F#m

ga-wan ng sing-ko. A - ka - la mo ya-ta na a - koy nag-bi - bi-ro,

28 G A D

kung gus - to mo ma-ra-na-san si - ge, su-bu-kan mo.

2

31 G A F#m Gm D7

Pag-kat hin-di ko ma ka-ya. Ang mag-pa-tu-lo ng lu-ha.

35 G A F#m G F#m

Ka-yat Pa-ki-u - sap na la-mang. sa-na ay i - wa-san,

38 G A D F#m G Gm D

pag-kat a - koy na-sa-sak - ta-n.

Composer: Dado

Background of the Song: "Pagdayeg ni nakos Ginoo, unya ang kanang pagpasalamat sa Ginoo, sa mga Gracia ba na miabot". Translated as (Kuya Dado composed "Pagkabulahan" as an expression of devotion, praising God and acknowledging divine grace. Musically, the piece features a $\frac{3}{4}$ time signature, Eb major key, binary form, and instrumental accompaniment by bandurria and acoustic guitar.)

Pagkabalahan

Composed by: "Dado"
Transcribed by: F.A.V Arevalo

Bandurria

Acoustic Guitar

Band.

Guit.

Band.

Guit.

Band.

Guit.

Band.

Guit.

Band.

Guit.

Band.

Guit.

Band.

Guit.

Band.

Guit.

Band.

Guit.

Band.

Guit.

Title: Pangako**Composer:** Jan Nino

Background of the Song: According to the recorded interview, the composer stated, "*Kani siya is broken ko ani that time nya ako ni gihimo para di ko makuan sa anxiety gani ako gipaagi sa kanta.*" Translated as ("Pangako" is an emotional musical reflection on heartbreak and anxiety, inspired by an unfulfilled promise of eternal love. The composition, in D major with a 4/4-time signature, features dynamic tempo shifts, wrapping up the emotional distress.)

Pangako

Composer / arranger

Andante

Na-a - la - la mo pa ba ang pa - nga - ko mo Atang pag - si - mu - la ng pag - gi
 5 ging ta - yo, hin - di ba't kai - lan lang ang a - ting si - mu - la ngu - nit na - sa - yang
 9 lang sa wa - la, a - ka - la ko na ta - yo na ta - la - ga, pe - ro ba - kit ga - non, a -
 13 koy pi - na - a - sa? Na - sa - an na ang pa - nga - ko mo, na ta - yo lang da - la - wa
 18 hang - gang du - lo ba - kit big - la kang nag - la - ho si - na - yang mo - ang pag
 23 i - big na a - lay ko sa - yo. O - hhhh - hhh O - hhhh O - hhhh
 28 Di bat no - on na sob - rang sa - ya na - tin, Sa - bay na - tin na - hi - na - ha - wa - kan ang pa nga rap.
 33 Na - sa - an na ang pa - nga - ko mo, na ta - yo lang da - la - wa
 40 hang - gang du - lo ba - kit big - la kang nag - la - ho si - na - yang mo - ang pag

2

45 i - big na a - lay ko sa - yo. O - hhhh - hhh O - hhhh O - hhhh

DISCUSSIONS

It is observed that all the songs the researchers have gathered utilize a binary form of music. Most of the song's background was tied to the lives, emotions and experiences of its composers. Most of the street musicians brought their accompaniment instrument of choice, the guitar. Except for "Dado" the composer of "pagkabalahan". This supports the study of Slyn (2017) in which the accompaniment used of some street musicians are guitars and other improvised instruments. The researchers found out that all of their original compositions were not yet published or known to the public, this supports Grygier & Elwina's (2018) and Agcaoil's (2002) study that states that Filipino street musicians may have unpublished compositions.

The idea that music can serve as an inspiration for the establishment of a national identity is consistent with the feeling expressed in the song "Hangad ng Pagbabago," which honors Filipino nationalism and patriotism. National identity is contextually bound and historically embedded, which means it changes over time and reflects cultural and historical experiences, according to Boer's (2013) theoretical thesis. Similar to this, "Hangad ng Pagbabago" relates to the historical and cultural background of the Philippines since it embodies Filipino values, struggles, and aspirations while inspiring a sense of pride in the country.

Similar to Handler's (1994) idea of culture as a continuous process, the song serves in this context as a way of cultural expression that aids in reconstructing and reaffirming the symbolic borders of what it means to be Filipino. Filipinos can come together via music in support of common nationalism and patriotism ideals, strengthening their shared sense of national identity.

Mesiona, et.al (2022) states that Besides providing entertainment, Cebuano's literary works represent the perspectives, thoughts, and life experiences of the people living in Cebu. They state that a song is a piece of lyrical poetry performed with an instrument. This is observed with all of the gathered compositions of Street Musicians found in Cebu city.

Conclusion

It is concluded that the street musicians of Cebu City have their own unpublished compositions. These compositions are performed using the accompaniment of the street musician's choice, whether it be a guitar or another improvised string instrument. The compositions often reflect the musicians' lives and experiences, providing insights into their faith in God and their perspective on the world. In terms of musicology, their works do not vary significantly, as they all utilize a binary form of music and begin with a major chord. Although these compositions remain unpublished, they offer a glimpse into the musicians' lives and the unique stories they have to share.

Recommendations

It is recommended that these compositions be included in music textbooks as examples of Cebuano Street musicians' unique sound. Additionally, programs should be developed to support the publication of their original compositions, as well as workshops to help them improve and market their music. Opportunities for these musicians to perform at events can also be organized to showcase their talent and provide further support. Since music serves not only as a means of expression but also as their livelihood, it is important to extend all possible support to these street musicians.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Guide Questions

This study is aim to document and transcribe the original compositions of street musicians within Cebu City by recording their original songs. Specifically, this seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is your name or pen name? (Optional)
2. What is the name of your music piece?

What inspired you to compose this song?

APPENDIX B: TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE DEAN March 26, 2024

DR. VENUS M. CORTES

Dean- Office of the University President

Cebu Normal University

Osmeña Boulevard St., Cebu City

Dear Dr. Cortes,

Greetings of Peace!

The undersigned are students at Cebu Normal University- College of Teacher Education Undergraduate School taking up Bachelor of Culture and Arts Education and are currently writing a research journal entitled “**Voices from the Sidewalk: The Compendium of Musical Compositions of Cebu City Street Musicians**”.

This descriptive-qualitative study aims to document and transcribe the original compositions of street musicians within Cebu City by recording their original songs.

In connection to this, we are writing this letter to formally ask you to allow us to observe and document four (4) prospective participants within the streets of Cebu City with one or more original musical compositions. Rest assured that the data gathered will be used for educational purposes only and will be **treated with utmost confidentiality**.

Attached here is a copy of our research proposal for your reference. We are willing to further discuss our study at your convenient time. The researchers can be reached through their mobile number: 09501087209, 09456418814, 09938225159, 09606551875, 09086343302, & 09298037127 or email: main.21001903@cnu.edu.ph,

main.21001090@cnu.edu.ph, main.21001767@cnu.edu.ph, main.21001800@cnu.edu.ph, main.21002172@cnu.edu.ph, & main.21001766@cnu.edu.ph. We are looking forward for your positive response about this request.

Thank you and God bless!

Sincerely,

FRITZ ADRIELLE VIC B. AREVALO

NIÑA S. CAÑO

LEIZA JANE M. GAURANO

BENZ LOUIE B. MATILLANO

MARJORIE R. PANERIO

RUTCHEL ANN REQUINA

Researchers

APPENDIX C: TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE ADVISER

March 26, 2024 **Dear Sir Nepangue,**

Greetings of Peace!

The undersigned are the students at Cebu Normal University- College of Teacher Education Undergraduate School taking up Bachelor of Culture and Arts Education and are currently writing a research journal entitled **“Voices from the Sidewalk: The Compendium of Musical Compositions of Cebu City Street Musicians”**.

The aim of this descriptive- qualitative study is to document, observe and transcribe the original compositions of street musicians within Cebu City by recording their original songs.

In connection to this, we are writing this letter to formally ask you to allow us to observe and document four (4) prospective participants within the streets of Cebu City with one or more original musical compositions. Rest assured that the data gathered will be used for educational purposes only and will be **treated with utmost confidentiality**.

Attached here is a copy of our research proposal for your reference. We are willing to further discuss our study at your convenient time. The researchers can be reached through their mobile number: 09501087209, 09456418814, 09938225159, 09606551875, 09086343302, &

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main.21001090@cnu.edu.ph,main.21001767@cnu.edu.ph,main.21001800@cnu.edu.ph, main.21002172@cnu.edu.ph, & main.21001766@cnu.edu.ph. We are looking forward for your positive response about this request.

Thank you and God bless!

Sincerely,

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Researchers