

“SA KUMPAS NG BAYAN AT PUSO”: AN EXPLORATION ON HOW OPM SHAPES THE YOUNG FILIPINO MIND”

by:

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"Oh pare ko, meron akong problema. Huwag mong sabihing na naman" —I still remember years ago when this song filled the halls of my old high school, echoing the heartaches of a generation and the need to express it. And many years later, the same is true for the new, young, naive yet emotionally aware generation that we have as youth today. Their songs might differ in words, beat, and tempo, but they all tell the same story as ours. Young Filipinos are preparing to become the best version of themselves. The songs they listen to and identify with play a significant role in shaping their identity

Previous research has shown that the youth listen to music for an average of three hours a day (Thompson et al., 2018) and in a study entitled "Usong pa ba ang OPM?: A Semantic Analysis of Original Pilipino Music (OPM) Songs Preferred by Filipino Youth" (Lano et al, 2023) among 103 eligible participants who are of Filipino descent, 73.2% belong to the age group 18-21 years old, then being followed by the age group 22-24 year old young adults in second place. This shows a clear interest from the youth in OPM. OPM has continued to influence people and serves as a hub of interest among young people. Complete strangers bonding over their music tastes, and Filipinos supporting other local talent, catapulting their careers onto the global stage. Truly, we are seeing a renaissance in Filipino music since the 2020 COVID-19 global pandemic happened (Lano et al, 2023). With artists like Ben & Ben, SB19, and many more representing the present of OPM, and many up-and-coming artists that will surely surpass their predecessors. This shift marked the beginning of a new wave of youth — stronger, more opinionated, and deeply inspired. Expanding their capabilities while still standing for the same virtues

their parents stood for, singing new songs with the same hopeful voices we sang with. Songs like MAPA by SB19, 711 by TONEEJAY, and Ako Naman Muna by Angela Ken inspired the youth to express their emotions and stand for themselves and their family.

Politically, OPM songs urged the youth to be more involved, elevating their voice and letting them be heard from wherever they may be. For ages, politics and nationalism have always been greatly influenced by OPM music (Nagai, 2022), from Ako ay Pilipino by Kuh Ledesma and

Bayan Ko by Freddie Aguilar. And that is the case today more than ever, people making their voices heard through music, expressing their political disdain and hopes for a better life for their fellow countrymen, and none more so than the youth of today.

Culturally, OPM has long stood as a beacon of identity and national pride among the Filipino people. From childhood singing Ako ay may Lobo and Bahay Kubo, all the way to singing pop songs and Filipino rap music today, it is with great pride that we carry our musical identity within ourselves. The way we act, think, and walk with these values nested within each song that we take into our hearts is our pride and identity as Filipinos.

Remember that these songs are more than entertainment; to some, it is the story of their lives, it echoes the hardship of manual labor of our farmers (Magtanim ay 'di biro), the sorrows of our heirs, and the hope of a nation (Rosas). OPM never shouted its message; it never needed to. It lingers in the minds of its listeners, softly guiding us to the best selves we can be, and slowly but surely builds a nation of pride, identity, and greatness.

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