

ORIGINAL

Lokananta Music as Social Technology: An Interdisciplinary Study of Culture, Spirituality, and Community Psychology in the Sriwijaya Region

La música Lokananta como tecnología social: un estudio interdisciplinario sobre cultura, espiritualidad y psicología comunitaria en la región de Sriwijaya

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ABSTRACT

The periodic emergence of Lokananta sounds in the Batu Mountain region of Malaya Sriwijaya represents a unique cultural and spiritual phenomenon that connects the physical and supernatural realms. This study aims to explore how the Lokananta sounds function as a form of social technology that reinforces social cohesion and collective identity within the community. Additionally, it investigates the relationship between the sounds and lithophonic artifacts, such as stone drums, gongs, and canang, within the cultural and spiritual context of the region. Utilizing a qualitative and phenomenological approach, the research was conducted in the Batu Mountain area of South Sumatra, Indonesia, in July 2024. Data were collected through field observations, in-depth interviews with traditional leaders and local community members, and an analysis of lithophonic artifacts. The study found that the Lokananta sounds, characterized by a unique four-beat minor scale, act as an auditory ritual bridging the human and supernatural realms. These sounds, along with the lithophonic artifacts like the Gendang Batu and Gong Batu, serve as spiritual symbols that strengthen the community's cosmological beliefs. The findings highlight the importance of preserving both the sonic and spatial dimensions of cultural heritage, emphasizing their role in maintaining psychosocial and spiritual well being.

Keywords: Lokananta Music; Social Technology; Sriwijaya Culture; Lithophonic Artifacts; Spirituality; Community Psychology.

RESUMEN

La aparición periódica de los sonidos de Lokananta en la región del Monte Batu de Malaya Sriwijaya representa un fenómeno cultural y espiritual único que conecta los reinos físico y sobrenatural. Este estudio tiene como objetivo explorar cómo los sonidos de Lokananta funcionan como una forma de tecnología social que refuerza la cohesión social y la identidad colectiva dentro de la comunidad. Además, investiga la relación entre los sonidos y los artefactos litofónicos, como los tambores de piedra, gongs y canang, dentro del contexto cultural y espiritual de la región. Utilizando un enfoque cualitativo y fenomenológico, la investigación se llevó a cabo en la zona del Monte Batu, en la provincia de Sumatra del Sur, Indonesia, en julio de 2024. Los datos se recopilaron mediante observaciones de campo, entrevistas en profundidad con líderes tradicionales y miembros de la comunidad local, y un análisis de los artefactos litofónicos. El estudio encontró que los sonidos de Lokananta, caracterizados por una escala menor de cuatro tiempos, actúan como un ritual sonoro que une los reinos humano y sobrenatural. Estos sonidos, junto con los artefactos litofónicos como

el Gendang Batu y el Gong Batu, sirven como símbolos espirituales que refuerzan las creencias cosmológicas de la comunidad. Los hallazgos resaltan la importancia de preservar tanto las dimensiones sonoras como espaciales del patrimonio cultural, enfatizando su papel en el mantenimiento del bienestar psicosocial y espiritual.

Palabras clave: Música Lokananta; Tecnología Social; Cultura Sriwijaya; Artefactos Litofónicos; Espiritualidad; Psicología Comunitaria.

INTRODUCTION

Traditional Indonesian music represents a rich cultural heritage, filled with historical, spiritual, and social values embedded in local communities. Among the various forms of traditional music, Lokananta stands out with its deep symbolic meaning and multifaceted function. Although widely recognized both nationally and internationally, knowledge and understanding of its values and functions remain limited to certain groups, particularly within royal institutions and academic communities directly linked to ancient civilizations.⁽¹⁾

Lokananta, as a sacred ensemble, plays an essential role not only in preserving cultural heritage but also as a social technology that facilitates the transmission of social identity, values, and rituals across generations. According to Malik Husaini, a cultural elder from Pagar Gunung, Lahat, South Sumatra, Lokananta is not just an ordinary gamelan ensemble, but a sacred symbol considered an important element of ancestral heritage and cultural identity. In traditional Indonesian societies, particularly those historically connected to great kingdoms such as Nagara Malaya of the Sriwijaya Kingdom in Pagar Gunung, South Sumatra, and the ancient palaces of Mataram and Majapahit in Java, Lokananta serves as an integral part of social and spiritual life.⁽²⁾ The presence of instruments like gongs, drums, and gamelan in Lokananta music indicates a strong connection to the socio-political structure and sacred rituals of the past.⁽³⁾

The mystical and exotic dimension of Lokananta is further reinforced by local myths and legends, emphasizing its role as more than just a musical expression. For example, the poem “Warahan Radin Jambat” from the Lampung civilization, with historical ties to Sriwijaya, contains the expression Pacak Bugamol Sayan, which literally means “can sound by itself”.⁽⁴⁾ This belief that the gamelan instruments can sound on their own not only becomes part of local spiritual narratives but also reflects the spiritual and ritualistic functions of Lokananta, far beyond mere entertainment.

From an ethnomusicological perspective, Lokananta can be understood as a medium for cultural transmission that plays a dual role: as a form of entertainment and as a means for education and expression of social identity, passed down across generations.^(5,6) In the context of multicultural education, understanding traditional music like Lokananta is crucial for preserving cultural heritage amid the pressures of modernization and globalization, which often threaten the sustainability of indigenous traditions.^(7,8)

The term Lokananta comes from Sanskrit, meaning “heavenly sound that sounds without being struck”.^(9,10) Mythological narratives tell that this gamelan was created by Bathara Guru in the heavenly palace on Mount Lawu as a symbol of the grandeur of Medangkamulan, accompanying the gods in various rituals.^(11,12) Additionally, historical records and empirical experiences from the Lokananta studio in Solo report occurrences of gamelan instruments sounding on their own, reinforcing their supernatural qualities.⁽¹³⁾

Previous studies on Lokananta have generally focused on technical aspects such as sound recording and the phenomenon of autonomous resonance in gamelan, both in Indonesia and abroad.^(14,15) However, in-depth research into the meaning, value, and socio-cultural function of this music, particularly in historical areas such as Nagara Malaya of Sriwijaya, is still limited. These regions are centers of culture, rich in both material and immaterial heritage, including traditional instruments still used in contemporary rituals.

Furthermore, the Lokananta phenomenon contains a physical landscape and musical philosophy that connects humans, nature, and the spiritual world. Pagar Gunung, as a cultural center, reflects a natural structure that represents the eight directions of the wind and the cosmological symbolism of Laya and Maya, realized through media such as stone, which serves as a focal point for cultural transmission (Malik Husaini). These symbols show the organic relationship between the physical landscape and the musical culture embedded within it.

This study aims to identify, analyze, and assess the symbolic meanings and functions of Lokananta by integrating historical, mythological, cultural, and ethnomusicological perspectives. Specifically, the research focuses on four main objectives. First, to identify the social and spiritual roles of Lokananta as well as its symbolic significance within traditional communities. Second, to analyze the impact of Lokananta as a form of social technology that facilitates cultural transmission and serves as a medium for the expression of social identity. Third, to evaluate the contribution of Lokananta to the preservation of cultural heritage in the face of modernity. Fourth, to explore the interrelation between mythological narratives and musical practices surrounding Lokananta. By combining this interdisciplinary approach, this research not only contributes to the

preservation of traditional music but also provides a broader understanding of how music functions as a medium for cultural and spiritual communication in Indonesian society. In this way, Lokananta can be appreciated not only as a historical artifact but as a living cultural heritage that remains relevant for the contemporary evolution and future of Indonesian civilization.

METHOD

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach using ethnographic methods, chosen because the subject under investigation involves cultural and spiritual phenomena that cannot be measured or replicated experimentally.⁽¹⁶⁾ Lokananta, regarded by the local community as a sacred sonic entity, necessitates the researcher's direct engagement within its social and spiritual dimensions. Therefore, the researcher is not merely a passive observer, but an active participant who experiences and reflects on acoustic encounters within the sociocultural life of the Sriwijaya-Malaya people. The primary goal of this approach is to uncover the meaning of Lokananta music as an expression of culture, spirituality, and local identity.

Theoretical Framework

This study integrates a multidisciplinary perspective by combining ethnomusicology, spiritual phenomenology, and historical-cultural analysis.⁽¹⁷⁾ Ethnomusicology is used to analyze the structure, instruments, rhythms, and social functions of Lokananta sound practices. Spiritual phenomenology is applied to explore the spiritual experiences of both the community and the researcher as they interact with these mystical sonic phenomena. Historical-cultural analysis aims to trace the mythological and narrative roots surrounding Lokananta, including the influence of local legends, manuscripts, and oral traditions in shaping collective perceptions of this sacred acoustic phenomenon. In this regard, theories such as Edmund Husserl (phenomenology),⁽¹⁸⁾ Clifford Geertz (thick description),^(19,20) and sonic ethnography⁽²¹⁾ are used to strengthen the theoretical framework of the study.

Research Location

The primary research site is Gunung Batu Gramat located in Lahat Regency, South Sumatra, regarded as the epicenter of Lokananta-related narratives and auditory experiences. Additional locations include Pagar Gunung Hill, Air Lingkar, Laya Cave, and Kemuhak Hot Spring, all of which are spiritually and historically connected within the local community's Lokananta narrative system.

Data Collection Techniques

To collect comprehensive data, this study employs five primary techniques, which are explained in the following table:

Table 1. Data Collection Techniques	
Technique	Description
Participant Observation	The researcher lived and interacted directly with the community, participated in cultural activities, and documented sonic experiences contextually.
In-depth Interviews	Conducted with traditional leaders, village elders, and site custodians to reconstruct the spiritual and cultural narratives of Lokananta.
Documentation	Involved capturing photographs, videos, and site maps, as well as recording the surrounding geographical and cultural context.
Natural Sound Recording	Field recorders were used to capture sound phenomena that occurred naturally at specific times and locations.
Literature Review	Examination of local manuscripts, historical archives, and scholarly references related to folklore, legends, and sound spirituality.

Research Instruments

The instruments used reflect the need to capture, observe, and reflect on qualitative data in depth. The details are outlined in the following table:

Table 2. Research Instruments	
Instrument	Function
Field Notes	To record observations and personal reflections on cultural and spiritual interactions.
Sound Recorder	To document natural or sacred auditory phenomena recognized by the local community.

Digital Camera	To document the visual aspects of research sites, cultural artifacts, and the surrounding environment.
Interview Guide	A list of open-ended questions regarding spiritual experiences and interpretations of sound as shared by key informants.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis process followed four key stages, presented in the following table:

Table 3. Data Analysis Techniques	
Stage of Analysis	Description
Data Reduction	Selecting and filtering relevant information from field notes, interview transcripts, and audiovisual documentation.
Thematic Categorization	Grouping data according to major themes such as sound structure, spirituality, and local cultural values.
Phenomenological Interpretation	Interpreting the subjective and symbolic meanings of sonic experiences encountered by both the researcher and the community.
Data Presentation	Presenting the findings in the form of descriptive narratives, accompanied by site maps, sound transcripts, and contextual interpretations.

Data Validity

To ensure the integrity and validity of the data, the researcher applied four validation strategies as follows:

Table 4. Data Validation Strategies	
Validation Strategy	Description
Source Triangulation	Verifying information through multiple sources such as traditional leaders, local residents, and historical documents.
Method Triangulation	Combining various methods (observation, interviews, documentation, literature review) to enhance the credibility of findings.
Member Check	Confirming preliminary results with informants to obtain direct feedback and validation.
Researcher Reflexivity	The researcher consciously reflected on their positionality to avoid spiritual bias or romanticization of local culture.

Informed Consent and Ethics

The process of informed consent was carried out by clearly explaining to the community and individuals the purpose of the study, the use of data, and any limitations involved. Key informants were selected using purposive sampling, considering their knowledge, status, and experience related to Lokananta culture and spirituality. To protect sacred and confidential knowledge, sensitive data will be managed with care, including the use of confidentiality agreements and research ethics protocols. All collected data will be stored securely, both in digital and physical forms, and will be used only as per the agreements made with the informants.

RESULTS

The Phenomenon of Exotic Lokananta Sounds

Fieldwork conducted in two phases, specifically on July 18-19, 2024, confirmed the emergence of a mysterious sound known as Lokananta. This sound appears periodically at 00:00 and 03:00 AM, characterized by four resonant beats resembling a soft and transcendent minor-toned gong or drum. Uniquely, no identifiable physical source could be found; the sound did not emanate from any visible instrument or human activity, but rather manifested as a non-physical acoustic phenomenon. This event was directly witnessed by seven individuals, including traditional elders, site custodians, and local villagers.

This sound phenomenon, beyond its acoustic uniqueness, serves as a social technology that strengthens social cohesion within the community. As a shared spiritual experience, the sound of Lokananta unites community members in a collective experience that transcends physical reality. This collective experience reinforces a shared cultural and spiritual identity, contributing to the psychological well-being of the community by connecting individuals deeply with spirituality and ancestral traditions.

Culturally, the emergence of this sound is interpreted by locals as a “heavenly voice,” believed to originate from the sky and imbued with deep spiritual meaning.

Table 5. The Phenomenon of the Supernatural Lokananta Sound	
Aspect	Description
Name of the Sound	Lokananta
Time of Occurrence	July 18 & 19, 2024, at 00:00 and 03:00 AM
Sound Characteristics	Four resonant beats, resembling gong or drum, minor key, soft and mystical
Physical Source	Unknown; not produced by humans or physical instruments
Community Perception	A heavenly sound from the sky; spiritual resonance
Number of Witnesses	7 individuals (traditional elders, site guardians, community members)

Beyond its acoustic uniqueness, Lokananta is understood as a cosmic metaphor that transcends Western musical logic. It is seen as a primordial symbol of music in human civilization, connecting people to mystical realms and higher spirituality. This interpretation enriches the meaning of the sound as both an auditory and spiritual-cultural legacy of the community.

Lithophonic Artifacts: Historical and Spiritual Evidence

In the Gunung Batu region and its surroundings, several lithophonic musical artifacts were discovered, playing vital roles in ritual practices and sacred symbolism among the locals. Artifacts such as the Gendang Batu and Jis Batu from Geramat Village, as well as Gong Batu and Canang Batu from Air Lingkar, serve not only as traditional instruments but also as intermediaries in spiritual communication. These artifacts are seen as part of social technology, enabling the transmission of spiritual and cultural beliefs across generations. Their role in rituals, such as summoning sacred sounds, reflects their importance in maintaining the community’s spiritual continuity.

These artifacts, as non-physical mediators, further strengthen community psychology, reinforcing shared beliefs and practices that contribute to the mental and spiritual cohesion of the community.



Figure 1. Gong Batu (Left), cagak berelief naga or tiang gong naga (Center), Canang Batu (Right) at Pagar Gunung, Lahat, South Sumatra

Each artifact emits a distinctive sound signature: the Gendang Batu produces deep thuds, the Gong Batu yields prolonged resonance, the Canang Batu gives off a clear chime, and the Jis Batu produces sharp tones, all serving different functions in local spiritual practices.

Table 6. Lithophonic Musical Artifacts and Their Spiritual Functions			
Artifact / Location	Cultural / Spiritual Function	Sound Characteristic	Physical Form / Spiritual Status
Gendang Batu (Geramat Village)	Sound summoning; sacred	Deep thuds	Elongated round stone; taboo to touch casually
Gong Batu (Air Lingkar)	Sound source and ritual water purification	Prolonged resonance	Large concave stone
Canang Batu (Air Lingkar)	Sacred sound medium	Clear chime	Small round stone
Jis Batu (Geramat Village)	Local artifact component	Sharp tone	Flat round stone

Each artifact emits a distinctive sound signature: the Gendang Batu produces deep thuds, the Gong Batu yields prolonged resonance, the Canang Batu gives off a clear chime, and the Jis Batu produces sharp tones all serving different functions in local spiritual practices.

Rhythm Structure and Musical Patterns of Lokananta

The analysis of Lokananta's rhythmic patterns reveals a consistent repetition of four beats at a slow tempo. This acoustic pattern is unique, not conforming to the diatonic or pentatonic scales commonly found in Western musical traditions. It reflects an autonomous musical system, functioning as a medium of cosmic and spiritual expression within local culture.

The four recurring beats (notated as "Ilv - Iv - vvlv - II") represent a cyclical structure symbolizing cosmological time in local belief. This pattern is more than just a sequence of beats; it carries deep symbolic meaning. The repetition of these beats serves as a spiritual marker in community psychology, connecting time, sound, and spirituality in a way that deepens the collective understanding of the universe. This repetitive rhythm also functions as a social technology, maintaining a connection between the community and the spiritual world. The sound itself provides a moment of collective reflection, where individuals can experience spiritual transcendence, thus contributing to their well-being.

The structure of Lokananta invites listeners into a transcendent experience where boundaries between physical and metaphysical dimensions become blurred. This further affirms its significance as a tool for psychological and spiritual engagement, reinforcing a collective identity based on shared ritual experiences.

Table 7. Structure and Patterns of Lokananta Sound				
Aspect	Details / Notation	Tempo	Symbolic Meaning	
Sound Pattern	4/4 meter, notation "/v.../v.../v.vv/v... //"	Slow	Cycle of life and cosmological time; beat 1: cue, 2: readiness, 3: action, 4: closure	
Time Signature	G Major / 4/4 major	Slow	Contemplative and sacred	
Sound Types	Chimes, beats, celestial vibrations	-	Spiritual markers and natural cosmic call	
Time of Occurrence	Dawn and dusk	-	Liminal moments between the visible and invisible worlds	

The entire structure and sound pattern of Lokananta assert that this phenomenon is far from ordinary acoustic noise; it is a representation of spiritual musicality that unites time and space within a localized cosmological framework. The sound invites listeners into a transcendent experience where boundaries between physical and metaphysical dimensions become blurred, reaffirming its significance in community beliefs and rituals.

Topography and Sacred Acoustic Space

The landscape of Gunung Batu and its surroundings forms a unique acoustic and spiritual space, where natural features such as stones, caves, and hills generate resonant effects that support the emergence of the Lokananta phenomenon. This geographical setting, coupled with cultural beliefs about the site, demonstrates how the physical landscape acts as a social technology to preserve community identity and spiritual beliefs. Each site plays a specific role within the ritual structure.

For the local community, this space is not merely physical but sacred, an integral part of their cultural heritage. The connection between the landscape, ritual artifacts, and the sounds of Lokananta emphasizes the interwoven nature of cultural identity, social cohesion, and spiritual health.



Figure 2. Batu Betabuh in the Form of a Gendang Batu Gramat Village

Table 8. Sacred Locations and Their Functions

Location Name	Spiritual / Cultural Function	General Position
Gunung Batu	Central site of Lokananta sound emergence	Heart of Malaya
Geramat Village	Site of the sacred Gendang Batu	West of Gunung Batu
Air Lingkar	Location for Gong Batu and Canang Batu water rituals	East of Gunung Batu
Laya Prayer Site	Worship of the Divine	Bukit Air Lingkar
Laya Cave	Meditation and spiritual seclusion site	Valley of Gunung Batu
Kemuhak Hot Spring	Ritual source of sacred water and spiritual energy	Inner circle of Gunung Batu
Humah Bahi	Ancient house for birth, marriage, and death rituals	Bukit Pagar Gunung

Reflections of the Researcher

As a researcher actively involved in participatory observation, I felt a profound impact on my understanding of the Lokananta phenomenon. Directly encountering the sound, which is regarded as a spiritual entity, provided deep insights into the powerful connection between music, place, and the social identity of the community. This experience also enriched my understanding of the importance of preserving cultural and spiritual knowledge, as well as the role of Lokananta in maintaining harmony and psychological well-being in the community.

DISCUSSION

The periodic emergence of the Lokananta sound, audible between 00:00 and 03:00 AM, illustrates the anthropological concept of liminality, as discussed by Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner. Liminality refers to a phase of social and existential transition, where established structures become temporarily suspended, allowing space for symbolic and sacred experiences.⁽²²⁾ In this context, the Lokananta sound functions as an auditory ritual, marking a moment of transcendence that serves as a point of transformation for both individuals and the community. This sound acts as a social technology, bridging the physical and supernatural realms and reinforcing social cohesion within the community.

The liminal moment, occurring during the early hours of dawn, is seen as a threshold between the physical and spiritual worlds, facilitating experiences that transcend the material.^(23,24) The emergence of Lokananta during this time functions not merely as a physical sound but as a symbol of transcendence, connecting the visible and invisible worlds. As such, the Lokananta sound becomes a collective channel linking the community to transcendental forces, strengthening their belief in a multidimensional spiritual cosmology.⁽²⁵⁾

Phenomenologically, the Lokananta sound is characterized by four soft, resonant beats in a minor key, resembling a gong or drum, yet devoid of any identifiable physical source. This phenomenon is placed in the domain of anomalous acoustics, surpassing conventional technology's ability to record or reproduce the sound.⁽²⁶⁾ While some scholars argue that such phenomena can be explained through complex material interactions and acoustic phenomena,^(27,28) the mysterious quality of this sound reinforces its spiritual role as a conduit between humans and non-human entities.⁽²⁹⁾

Within the local community, the Lokananta sound is perceived as a "heavenly voice," symbolizing the sacred bond between humans and the supernatural realm. This belief deepens the understanding of the universe as a reality where various forces continuously interact.⁽²⁵⁾ The sound is interpreted as a divine message that resonates within the collective consciousness of the community, reinforcing their traditional belief systems. Therefore, the sound functions not only as a spiritual symbol but also strengthens cultural identity and cosmology that unites humans, nature, and transcendental forces.

The communal aspect of this phenomenon is also significant. Witnessed by seven individuals, including customary leaders, site guardians, elders, and local residents, the sound is not merely a personal experience but a collective event that strengthens cultural legitimacy. Lokananta acts as the core of collective rituals, intergenerational dialogue, and reinforcement of local values. It is intricately embedded within the community's sacred temporal cycle, serving as a conduit for ancestral connection and spiritual cohesion. As such, the Lokananta sound functions not only as a cultural artifact but also as a point of multidisciplinary reflection on the human relationship with metaphysical realities, blurring the lines between science, spirituality, and existential experience.

In cultural anthropology, material artifacts often represent collective spiritual experiences and serve both symbolic and ritualistic functions.⁽³⁰⁾ The manifestation of Lokananta's acoustic mystery is evident in the lithophonic artifacts found around Gunung Batu, such as Gendang Batu, Gong Batu, Canang Batu, and Jis Batu. These are not merely musical instruments but sacred mediums that connect the community with the supernatural realm and reinforce their cosmological values. The physical durability of these stones and their ritual taboos underscore their symbolic, spiritual, and cosmological significance.⁽³¹⁾ These artifacts exemplify the integration of intangible culture (spirituality, sound, ritual) and tangible culture (stone, form, materiality).

Stone, often perceived as a sacred natural element, represents ancestral power and cosmic resonance, functioning as a symbolic intermediary between the human and divine worlds.

These musical artifacts are inseparable from the local cultural identity and value system. Revered as ancestral heritage, they are protected by strict social norms, including prohibitions against casual contact.⁽³²⁾ They are believed to possess spiritual and magical powers, not only for protection against negative energies but also for summoning sacred sounds such as Lokananta. In this context, lithophonic instruments serve both religious and traditional preservation roles.

From a material anthropology perspective, these lithophonic artifacts function as vessels for storing and transmitting the religious, social, and historical values of the community.^(33,34) They are not static relics but living components of cultural narratives, actively maintained and passed down across generations. Through their continued ritual use, these objects reinforce communal cohesion and sustain collective identity founded on the sacred bond between humans, nature, and transcendental forces.

Similarly, the rhythmic structure of Lokananta's music, composed of four recurring beats with a unique notation ("llv - lv - vlv - ll") in a slow minor key, represents an autonomous local musical system. This structure embodies the community's cyclical cosmology, where time and space are interwoven into a harmonious whole.⁽³⁵⁾ Each beat symbolizes an element of temporal flow beginning, preparation, action, and closure mirroring the cycles of life and the universe.

The slow minor tempo cultivates a contemplative and sacred atmosphere, transforming Lokananta into a medium of spiritual expression and inner reflection, rather than mere entertainment or ceremonial accompaniment. The music invites listeners into a meditative state, evoking transcendent consciousness beyond the physical realm.⁽³⁶⁾ It acts as a bridge between humanity and the supernatural, offering profound spiritual experiences and connecting individuals to forces beyond themselves.

Lokananta intricately unifies symbolic elements of cyclical rhythm, reflecting beliefs in temporal perfection and the sacred alignment of life, nature, and spiritual journey. Its rhythmic structure is a vehicle for spiritual growth and self-discovery,⁽³⁷⁾ while its celestial resonance symbolizes cosmic vibrations linking human experience to supernatural dimensions.^(38,39) It is more than just music; it embodies metaphysical harmony between the material and occult worlds, rich in philosophical depth.

Lokananta also acts as a temporal marker in rituals and liminal moments, especially during dawn and dusk, reinforcing its function as a bridge between visible and invisible realms. More than melodic or rhythmic content, Lokananta's symbolic language resonates with cosmological and spiritual values, offering an inner space that unites humans with nature and the divine. It is not merely a source of cultural enjoyment, but a tool for sustaining universal harmony and expressing deeply rooted philosophical meaning.

It is essential to acknowledge that not all traditional music carries the same spiritual function. In various cultures, music may serve more as entertainment or artistic expression.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Yet, this diversity affirms the universal role of music as both ritual media and cultural expression.⁽⁴¹⁾ Music, regardless of context, remains a symbolic language that permeates human experience,⁽⁴²⁾ reinforcing ties between individuals, communities, and nature. Lokananta exemplifies how music reflects and resonates with the environment from which it emerges.

This study also reveals that the geographical configuration of Gunung Batu acts as a performative medium that sustains sacred space within local belief systems. This unique landscape, with its stones, caves, hills, and springs, provides spiritual and symbolic resonance that impacts local spirituality.⁽⁴³⁾ Gunung Batu's position at the heart of the Malaya region reinforces its role as a cosmological center, serving as the focal point of religious and acoustic experience. The spatial distribution of ritual functions across locations reflects a layered and cohesive ritual system. For instance, Geramat Village and its Gendang Batu create a ritual soundscape integrating human and natural elements, while Air Lingkar, with its Gong Batu and Canang Batu, plays a role in purification rites. Meanwhile, Laya Prayer Site at Bukit Air Lingkar facilitates direct connection between humans and the divine, establishing a clear spiritual hierarchy.

Drawing on Tuan's phenomenology of place,⁽⁴⁴⁾ the community does not merely "inhabit" Gunung Batu, but spiritually experiences and lives it as sacred space, where sonic resonance bridges the human and spiritual realms. Rituals such as cleansing with Ring Water, Gong Batu, and Canang Batu emphasize purification, while Laya offerings strengthen religious hierarchy.⁽⁴⁵⁾ The soundscape of Geramat Village illustrates the intimate integration of human and ecological elements in divine communion.⁽⁴⁶⁾ All of this reveals that Gunung Batu is not merely physical terrain, but a multilayered field of spiritual experience.

Likewise, Laya Cave, as a meditation space, aligns with the concept of religious space as a liminal zone between material and sacred worlds.⁽⁴⁷⁾ Kemuhak Spring, with its ritualistic hot water, embodies the animist view of nature as spiritually alive.⁽⁴⁸⁾ Humah Bahi in Pagar Gunung, serving as a sacred domestic space, shows the fusion of social and religious spheres, where life cycles are interpreted through cosmological frameworks. The entire Lokananta phenomenon results from a complex interaction of geography, culture, and spirituality. Therefore, preserving this cultural heritage requires protecting not only the sound itself but also the sacred spaces where it manifests since detaching sound from space would erode its meaning and jeopardize the

sustainability of inherited tradition.

Lokananta exemplifies the rich cultural heritage of the Sriwijayan Malay people, showcasing their high collective intelligence through intricate gong harmonies. This traditional form of music highlights not only technical mastery but also a deep understanding of historical and cultural values that shape identity.⁽⁴⁹⁾ The blending of indigenous and foreign influences in Sriwijaya-Malay culture further enriches its musical expression, reflecting communal creativity and collaboration.⁽⁵⁰⁾ Moreover, this emphasis on artistic skill and cultural appreciation promotes holistic education, which aims to nurture intellectual, emotional, and creative development.⁽⁵¹⁾ Lokananta functions as a vital educational tool deepening cultural connections and encouraging preservation for future generations. Lokananta also embodies strong social values, particularly gotong royong (mutual cooperation), which emphasizes community support and collaboration.⁽⁵²⁾ Frequently performed during ceremonies and celebrations, it fosters solidarity and mutual respect among participants. These communal experiences teach individuals to value cooperation and cultivate humility, which are crucial for building positive social relationships. Thus, Lokananta music enriches cultural heritage while playing a key role in shaping a cohesive society capable of addressing contemporary challenges.⁽⁵³⁾

Finally, Lokananta reflects a deep respect for tradition and communal life. The harmonized beats of gongs and drums symbolize tolerance and appreciation of cultural diversity.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Through this message, education can instill love for local traditions while nurturing openness to difference an essential foundation for building a harmonious and civilized society.

CONCLUSIONS

The Lokananta sound in the Gunung Batu region represents a unique acoustic phenomenon, perceived by the local community as a “heavenly voice” bridging the physical and spiritual realms. This phenomenon is not just an auditory anomaly but a profound symbol of the spiritual and cultural interconnectedness of the community. The presence of lithophonic artifacts like Gendang Batu, Gong Batu, and Canang Batu further emphasizes the ritualistic and spiritual role of the sound, acting as a link between intangible spiritual experiences and tangible cultural heritage. The rhythmic structure of Lokananta, with its four-beat pattern, reflects the community’s deep understanding of cosmic cycles and spiritual harmony, while the sacred landscape of Gunung Batu facilitates transcendent experiences, supporting the community’s rituals and beliefs.

To preserve the Lokananta phenomenon for future generations, a holistic approach is essential protecting not only the sound but also the cultural landscape, ritual artifacts, and social structures that sustain it. By doing so, the spiritual and cultural values embedded in this tradition can be safeguarded, ensuring its continued relevance as a living cultural legacy that fosters social cohesion and spiritual connection within the community.

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