

A Rapid Ethnographic Study of Ayta Dance Traditions: Basis for the Development of a Dance Manual

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Abstract—The indigenous Ayta dances of Tayabas City are an important cultural expression. However, only limited documentation of these dances is threatening them with extinction. This study was made to explore, document and analyse the Ayta dance traditions to preserve Ayta's culture, help transmit knowledge from generation to generation, and create a culturally based dance manual for instructional and preservation purposes. The nature of research is qualitative descriptive-ethnographic. Data were collected through purposive sampling by carrying out interviews with the elders and cultural custodians, observing real-time performances on the field, and video-documentation of the dances. The calculations carried out for data collected using thematic analysis to demonstrate again meaningful patterns which emerged from the titles, choreography, music, costumes, props and connotations. Based on the findings, various Ayta dances like Pandanggohan and Una-una Kaya-kaya are cultural forms with movement, music, costume, and meaning. The dances reflect the community's activities, systems of values, spiritual beliefs and environment. Some traditional dances are performed very infrequently. Research shows that they can continue to be presented creatively using suitable choreography, music and costume without compromising their authenticity. The Ayta's Dance Practices were documented due to the study conducted. A dance manual based on the culture also came through this instrument. This output aims to promote cultural awareness for the strengthening of the indigenous identity of the Ayta and the continuity or preservation of the Ayta cultural tradition for the next generation.

Keywords— Ayta indigenous dances, Pandanggohan, Una-una Kaya-kaya, cultural preservation, dance documentation, dance manual.

I. THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND

Introduction

Perceived Gap. Tayabas City is known for its intangible heritage that has been documented and promoted for a long time, as well as its tangible heritage in the form of heritage Spanish colonial buildings. The city's-built heritage includes many ancestral houses, stone bridges and centuries-old churches which are a witness to the community's history and craftsmanship. These were the Tagayan scene, festival, etc., which one may imagine from their description. Tagayan was a customary communal drinking ritual that took place in Tayabas City, Quezon Province, where a single glass is shared and passed on in the same order. Over the years, mainly in the city and provincial festivities, developed into a stylized dance interpretation and was recognized as the cultural dance representation of Tayabas City. There were also other celebrations like the Mayohan Festival and the Taytsinoy

Festival, which were highlighted in the tourism narrative, academic discourse, and local programs. Scholars have looked into the social implications, religious meanings, and Tayabas identity shaping aspects of the life ways that comprise the public canon of the city.

The indigenous dances of the Ayta community in Tayabas city is something that still lacks representation despite the city's rich cultural heritage. The Aytas, thought to be among the earliest ethnolinguistic group supposedly in the Philippines, maintained a non-Christian/Apostolic culture with a strong orientation towards nature, spirituality, survival traditions, and community life. The dances they perform often draw inspiration from ecological relationships, rituals and ancestral knowledge, an important aspect of their intangible heritage. The Ayta dances, unlike the Tayabasin traditions which attracted formal recording and research, had never received any attention in this manner. The presence of this contrast suggests an important gap in cultural studies in Tayabas City. This subtlety must be taken into consideration as this aspect of Tayabas' culture is largely been neglected.

It is unclear which dance has what name, or who created it, and what is the story behind the iconic movement sequence and music, and what are the clothes and/or accessories associated with the dance. The lack of knowledge is not only detrimental to their learning experience but to the broader community's appreciation and preservation of these cultural forms. What is existing today are fragmented memories from the elderly Aytas, which makes the dances susceptible to modification, misinterpretation, and disappearance. The artistic structure and cultural meanings of these dances will be lost without being systematically recorded.

In addition, although various Tayabas traditions were featured in festivals, plays, and community presentations, rarely do the dances of the Ayta appear in public cultural platforms. When they do not attend cultural events or creatively reinterpret, the wider public will not recognize the Ayta's artistic heritage. This accidental side-lining also denies opportunities for cultural education, strengthening identity, and representation in the cultural narrative in the city.

A further major problem is that there are no teach or reference materials that could be useful in preserving and transmitting the dances. Educators, researchers, cultural workers, or younger members of Ayta community have no access to manuals, guides, and academic resources at the

present. This oral teaching thus plays an important role in intergenerational transmission and becomes hard to maintain. The young Aytas have participated in fewer ritual practices due to modern influence, changes in livelihood and lifestyle shifts. As the count of elder culture-bearers dwindles, the knowledge that was once grounded into them grows thinner.

Concerns about preserving intangible cultural heritage share many of the same issues; specifically, traditions that are passed down orally and practically are at greater risk of extinction if there is no timely documentation. Such is the case for Ayta dances in Tayabas at this time. While Ayta dances are a culture of great value, they are overshadowed by dominant local traditions, which have greater institutional support, thus lessening visibility.

A focused study conducted on the documentation, interpretation & preservation of Ayta indigenous dances of Tayabas City shall help to fill the gap; this will enrich the scholarship on local culture and also protect and acknowledge the heritage of the Ayta community. Overall, the study shall foster an inclusive and comprehensive appreciation of Tayabas culture, its diversity, and the importance of a vital cultural legacy for future generations.

Background of the Study

Cultural heritage is comprised of two distinct types of cultural property. The first is tangible, where physical cultural property enables an identifiable connection between a society and its tangible culture. Examples consist of monuments, buildings, sites, artifacts, and artwork. The second type of cultural heritage is intangible, with cultural expressions via the means of communication without physical characteristics (e.g. language and ritual; performing arts; or any other non-physical means).

Dance has been part of the global human experience in a variety of ways since the dawn of the human race and remains the oldest and most universal form of expression. Dance is a form of non-verbal communication utilizing a wide variety of motions and rhythms, alongside other forms of movement and symbolic representation to express emotion/belief and to share experiences beyond verbal communication. The folk and ethnic dance traditions of the Philippines reflect and represent the multiple cultural identities in the country reflective of the beliefs/value systems/worldviews (as well as identity systems) of a culture through distinct rhythms, movements and other methods of identity representation. Some scholars claim that traditional indigenous dance can create an artistic/aesthetic representation of Indigenous culture; and that the tradition of indigenous dance encompasses societal, ecological, and spiritual connections.

The Ayta were among the earliest peoples to call the Philippine archipelago homeland had an extensive dance history, notwithstanding that to this day, this history is not valued to the extent that it deserves. Their environmental surroundings, their beliefs about their gods and how they lived in community with one another strongly influenced dance for the Ayta people, and many of the present-day Indigenous Peoples of the Philippines (IPPs) made use of the dance traditions of the Ayta in their everyday existence, during their

spiritual rituals and hunting activities, as well as during rituals marking the stages of life. While initially devised for performance, dance for the Ayta was also a means of communicating culturally, as in expressing appreciation, offering prayers for healing and wholeness, strengthening familial relationships, and connecting with ancestors; all of this was accomplished through imitative movements of animal and nature in their surroundings. The music, created using bamboo instruments, wood and other materials from nature, was the initial accompaniment to the dances. Similarly, the clothing and accessories worn by the Ayta during their dances were made from natural materials; thus, reinforcing the cultural connection of the Ayta to the environment.

In several villages within Tayabas City, Quezon Province, the Ayta are continuing to honor these traditions through their modern “living” culture. The Ayta use their cultural dances to represent struggles against hardship, traditional hunting rituals, celebrations of gratitude, and the natural world. However, much of the cultural history related to this dance form is neither documented nor studied, unlike many of the established Tayabas traditions (e.g., Mayohan Festival, Taytsitoy Festival, Tagayan ritual), which receive great publicity and promotion, documentation in tourism literature, and recognition in academic and local art programs. This difference in the recognition of Ayta culture compared to that of the mainstream often reflects the broader national trend where traditional forms of artistic expression (e.g., dance) of indigenous groups remain underserved by both the academic system and the tourism industry, despite being widely representative of their families and the surrounding community.

Research discussing the Philippine indigenous dance traditions indicated that many dances across tribes were significantly at risk due to no written documentation, lack of passing these dances down between generations and the pressures of modernization on these dances. This is demonstrated in Tayabas City, as the dances of the Ayta did not have systematic documentation of the title, history, formations/executions of the dances, the musical elements, costumes or props used in their dances or the true cultural meaning of the dances.

Due to the lack of available material about these indigenous dance traditions, it has made it extremely difficult for educators, cultural workers and younger Aytas to be able to learn about them, understand them and help to preserve them. The increased pressures of changing lifestyles and migration away from one's homeland, and more exposure and increased reliance on digital entertainment, have lessened the amount of interest that younger members of the community have in dancing and maintaining these traditions. While this is occurring, the elders who are the main custodians of the community's indigenous knowledge are gradually passing away and increasing the possibility of losing critical parts of cultural memory.

Intangible Heritage is largely dependent on oral communication and the embodiment of the practice through participation. Due to the lack of documentation in this area, the Ayta dances are ranked within the most vulnerable heritage expressions of the Region. Experts on the preservation of culture consistently emphasized the need for documented

methods for preserving cultural heritage. Therefore, they warned that these types of traditions could completely vanish without urgent and planned methods of capturing them. This created an urgent need for documentation of Ayta dances considering the urgency of the situation in Tayabas City.

Consequently, the goal of this study was to identify, document and catalogue the Ayta traditional dances of Tayabas City by creating a culturally relevant dance manual to serve as a reference guide for this body of work. Ethnographic research methods such as field observations, interviews with knowledgeable bearers, and video recording of performances were employed to comprehensively record the fundamental aspects of Ayta dances: movement patterns (the actual dances), music used in the dances, dance attire, props used, and symbolism behind the dances. The study provided the necessary context for the understanding of the rituals, community, and ceremonial/cultural significance of the Ayta dances within Ayta life.

In order to preserve and support both the historic and ongoing importance of Ayta culture, the research aimed to document the Ayta community's place in the larger cultural heritage of Tayabas City and Quezon Province. The research contributed to the advancement of cultural awareness, assistance in local ethnic heritage initiatives, and assurance of the continued recognition, respect, and transfer of Ayta's living traditions through the use of an instructional dance manual and the systematic documentation of Ayta's culture.

Review of Related Literature and Studies

This review examined studies on indigenous and folk dances, focusing on cultural preservation, ecological and spiritual significance, community participation, and the documentation of Ayta dance traditions in Tayabas City as vital expressions of identity, heritage, and living cultural practices.

Philippine Dance as Cultural Heritage

Dance has been considered one of mankind's oldest forms of expression; it has also been used as a means of expression for the entirety of civilization. All dances throughout the world represent emotions or represent movement from one phase of life to another through the use of movement. Folk dances and ethnic dances are more than just entertainment; they are also a method of remembering one's culture. According to Castaños Jr. (2022), they are a form of preserving a country's history and collective memory through the use of dance, emotion, and physicality. Folklife activities have helped convey humanity's experiences of joy, suffering, spirituality, and perseverance through the various elements of dance gesture, costuming, and rhythm. Pandya (2025) states that the act of dancing helps the individual build their identity and shows that dancing serves not only as a means of performing an art form, but also as a way to pass culture onto others.

Dance has been an important part of cultural expression among the different ethnolinguistic groups in the Philippines (of which there are more than 110). Dance is either part of creating or expressing an identity for an individual, local/community and/or the nation. As stated by Lobo (2022), folk and indigenous dances have provided entertainment and education and record aspects of historical experience and/or

significant local knowledge. On the other hand, Domingo (2020) has expressed concern that many indigenous dances that were created by communities living in the uplands or those who are marginalized have not been well documented or represented. As a result, of modernization, migration and popular culture, many of these dances therefore are at risk of being lost. Programs undertaken by the NCCA and CCP, such as cultural mapping and documentation of dance, have brought to light the need for communities to work together to document and preserve folk and ethnic dances in order to maintain these as forms of active living heritage.

Ayta Dance Traditions

Indigenous movements in the Philippines are usually based on their cultural beliefs and spiritual practices; for example, many Indigenous dancers participate in rituals that demonstrate their relationship to the environment; therefore, Indigenous dance is a means by which the Indigenous community can express the spiritual and physical worlds they inhabit (Estrella, 2018). All Indigenous tribes (Ifugao, Bagobo, Manobo) participated in ceremonial acts to honor the harvest, ancestors, themselves, and demonstrate reciprocity with ecosystems.

The Aeta use dance based on their daily experience and can actively participate in creating art rather than performing, demonstrating their connection to the surrounding land and natural elements. There are limited studies on Aeta music and dance. Research has identified many unique rhythms, gestures, and ecological connections (Estrella, 2018). In addition to creating music with traditional bamboo instruments and drums and using natural materials to make clothing or dance accessories, Aetas' movements can mimic a variety of animal and natural forces, strengthening their cultural and ecological ties.

Documentation Concerns

The Aeta dance is of great cultural value; however, anthropologists and others have not yet documented this important form of expression. Almost all of the dances' traditions (names of each dance and their historical significance, movement vocabulary, the music used in the dances, costumes/props used in the dances, and the more general symbolism of Aeta culture) have not been recorded in any fashion. The increase in modernization/migration and the popularity of new technology through digital media has decreased the number of young people participated in Ayta dance activities and decreased the number of elderly members of the Aeta keepers of the history of Aeta dance. That leaves the Aeta dance at-risk of being lost or extinct forever.

To accurately study Aeta dance movements using a modern ethnographic approach, scholars have suggested that dancers should be viewed in the context of the cultural beliefs and traditions of the Aeta people, developing an understanding of what each particular Aeta dance movement means to them. As stated in this literature, the Aeta people have specific traditions, cultural beliefs, and community shared value associated with Ayta dance and these need to be understood before dancers' movements can be properly documented (De la Peña, 2017). In addition, based on the literature regarding the education of Aeta dance, sedimentary techniques of teaching dance and the

involvement in the community are good ways to preserve Aeta dance traditions and have lasting impact.

Relevance to Tayabas City Context

Modernity and changes in the economic system are some of the factors that have impacted on the cultural lives of Ayta located in Tayabas City Quezon Province, while they are participating more in lowland job opportunities which have resulted in them losing their interest in performing traditional dances and rituals. Changes in the economy and social systems in addition to new gender roles in the society have created an impact on how Ayta Aborigines are able to express their connection to their culture through dance.

Because of this pressure, it was very timely to create a documentation project of the Ayta dances in Tayabas. Collectively documenting the movements, music, costumes and their symbolic meanings will aid in preserving culture by encouraging knowledge transfer between generations through educational opportunities, festivals and other community events. Thus, through documenting the Ayta dances, it preserves not just one vulnerable aspect of acculture; yet it allows for the broader appreciation of and awareness of the indigenous people of the Philippines and the Ayta's role in enriching Tayabas City's ongoing cultural diversity.

Synthesis

All of the reviewed studies have shown that dance is an important way to represent culture and define a person's identity within that culture. The value of folk and traditional dances is not only as expressions of individual thoughts but instead as a way for two kinds of people (i.e., indigenous peoples) to preserve their collective history or memory through physical movement (Castaños Jr., 2022; Pandya 2025). In the Philippines, these types of dances serve to keep both national and regional identities alive while also helping to develop a sense of identity that has been influenced by their combined experiences as colonized and colonizer (Lobo, 2022). Despite this fact, the transition toward modernity, globalization and migration has resulted in a decline in the use of these traditional ways of expressing culture (Domingo, 2020).

The literature regarding the link between indigenous dance and spirituality includes numerous subjects related to the use of dance as a way of communicating with ancestors and nature as well as an expression of culture through the collective act of dancing. A consistent theme that emerges throughout this literature on indigenous dance is using ritualized performance as a form of expressing gratitude, promoting social cohesion, and demonstrating connection to nature (Estrella, 2018; Salvador-Amores, 2020). In spite of this focus on ritualized performance in the literature and research regarding indigenous dance, changing socioeconomic structures and the lack of a national policy are threatening the sustainability of this art form.

It is highly advised by researchers that the use of decolonial and ethnographic approaches to study Indigenous dance will help maintain its authenticity. The scholars in this area advocate for the respect of Indigenous knowledge systems, and a proper placement of dance in its cultural, ecological and ritual settings (De La Peña, 2017; Mabingo, 2024). Studies within education

have also shown how the inclusion of indigenous dances within their curriculums enhances cultural literacy; along with reinforcing identity awareness and facilitating holistic learning (Morales 2021; Cabanilla, 2019).

Research on Aeta's performance customs yielded insightful information, but there was little written about Aeta's dance customs. Previous findings suggested that Aeta dances were primarily an expressive- and ritual-based representation of the activities that occur in Aeta's environment and Aeta's daily lives (Estrella, 2018). Consequently, there was a close connection between Aeta's movements, music, costumes, and props as well as the environments they were performed within, but there was little systematic documentation for these performances. Thus, modernization, migration, and decreasing youth participation have resulted in declining numbers of cultural elders in Aeta, placing these performances at risk of being lost.

This literature review demonstrates the need for a thorough and context-based study that documents Aeta dance as an important component of Aeta's living heritage. Additional studies need to examine the contributions of Aeta dance to contemporary cultural identity and education, develop strategies for engaging communities in a meaningful way, and support culturally based preservation efforts.

In keeping with this purpose, the researchers set out to further investigate and describe the indigenous dances of the Ayta Community in Tayabas City, Quezon Province. By employing ethnographic techniques, observational studies, conducting interviews, and video documenting indigenous dances, this project was able to obtain information regarding the title, historical background, choreography, music, costumes, props, and symbolic meaning behind Ayta dances.

A full classification of the dances and creative presentation of the dances was accomplished. By presenting the indigenous dances through this manner, the research emphasized how they represent the Ayta people's spirituality, identity, and way of life as well as illuminated the former lack of scholarly research and documentation on the dances of the Ayta. Ultimately, the goal of the research was to preserve Ayta traditional dances from the potential for cultural loss and establish their place within the wider cultural heritage of Tayabas City.

Theoretical Framework

The research project is based on Berry's Acculturation Model (1997) which serves as a basis for examining how individuals and groups respond when numerous cultures come into contact. According to Berry, acculturation means the changes in culture and psychology that happen as a result of contact between different cultural groups. The model describes four modes of acculturation including assimilation, separation, integration and marginalization as methods of negotiation used by groups wishing to protect their cultural identity and participate in the dominant culture.

In an assimilative process, an individual or community comes to adopt the customs and beliefs of the dominant culture and discards its cultural heritage and practices. In the case of separation, one group of people has little to no influence from outside cultures and seeks to hold on to their cultural and ancestral heritage. In integrating, individuals maintain their

sense of cultural identity while participating in the dominant culture. Finally, in marginalizing, an individual experiences a loss of cultural affiliation and cultural continuity with both their ancestral and mainstream societies possibly due to discrimination or social exclusion (Berry, 1997; Sam & Berry, 2010).

Berry's model is applied in this research to understand how the Ayta of Tayabas City are negotiating their cultural identity through dance practice within the context of modernization. As a form of cultural expression, dance allows the Ayta to respond to and adapt to changes in their social environments. This theoretical framework assists the investigator to determine if the Ayta's cultural expressions show evidence of separation (maintenance of cultural heritage), integration (blending of cultures), or marginalization (loss of connection).

As a result, the ethnographic study of Ayta traditional dances as acts of resistance and transformation contributes to the understanding of how indigenous dance is a vehicle for cultural adaptation, negotiating identity, and culturally decolonizing through creative means.

Conceptual Framework

Using research conducted by Berry (1997) that focuses on the preservation, adaptation, and maintenance of the Ayta people of Tayabas City's cultural identity through dance during a time of rapid modernization and social change is a way to clarify the Ayta People's cultural identity through their cultural heritage, traditional beliefs, indigenous customs and practices, and the use of traditional dance as a way to define who they are and how they live.

Because of acculturation impacts by outside influences, such as modernization, education, media or mainstream cultures, and their interaction with other cultures; there has been an overall long-term acculturation process for the Ayta people as well as a continuous negotiation between maintaining their cultural heritage and interacting with (as members of) the larger society.

Berry's acculturation model produced four outcomes based on how Aytas reacted to cultural interaction: integration (the mixing of traditional and modern); assimilation (the taking on of most dominant elements of another culture); separation (the maintenance of one's traditional ways); and marginalization (the inability to maintain one's cultural identity regardless of other cultural influences). These four types of acculturation outcomes are represented in the Aytas' cultural expressions through dance, where the movements, music, and performance are visual expressions of their strategies for adaptation.

The researcher adapted the preservation component of Berry's acculturation model to highlight the critical need for preserving and revitalizing Ayta cultural heritage, particularly with the continued social transformations occurring today. The adaptation emphasizes that preserving Ayta identity is not simply about resisting change; rather it is about ensuring the continuous existence of cultural knowledge, practices, and expression through documentation, creative ways of presenting, and passing on knowledge and practice from generation-to-generation. By integrating preservation into the model, this study demonstrates how the dynamic balance between

adaptation and preservation will allow Ayta traditional dances to continue to be a living expression of their identity.

The Ayta's dance practices were influenced by outside forces, shows this conceptual framework. The dances were also an important expression of the identity of these peoples as a people. By means of Berry's Model of Acculturation and by stressing their commitment to cultural preservation, this framework helped to explain how the Ayta community defended change while also protecting their culture. The dances expressed both continuity and change, indicating that both adaptation and tradition coexisted in their artistic and social life.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to conduct a rapid ethnographic investigation of the dance traditions of the Ayta communities in Tayabas City, Quezon Province. Specifically, it sought to document and analyze their indigenous dances as the basis for the development of a dance manual.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. How can the indigenous dances of the Aytas in Tayabas City be described in terms of their titles, historical backgrounds, dance steps, music, costumes, and props?
2. What are the different indigenous Ayta dances that can be found in Tayabas City?
3. How may the indigenous dances of the Aytas in Tayabas City be presented through creative choreography?
4. Based on the finding, what dance manual may be proposed?

Significance of the Study

This study holds significant value for various stakeholders in the fields of culture, education, and heritage preservation. By exploring and documenting the indigenous dances of the Ayta communities in Tayabas City, Quezon Province, the research seeks to bridge the gap between cultural knowledge and its preservation for future generations.

The study emphasizes the historical, social, and artistic dimensions of Ayta dances, highlighting their role as living expressions of identity, belief, and community cohesion.

Ayta Communities. The study honors the Ayta people as custodians of their cultural heritage, helping preserve the knowledge, stories, and meanings embedded in their dances.

Researchers and Scholars. Findings provide valuable data on Philippine indigenous arts, offering insights into dance structure, music, costumes, and performance practices that are under documented.

Educators. The research supports integrating indigenous dances into programs and workshops, promoting cultural awareness, history, and artistic appreciation.

Local Government and Cultural Institutions. Results can guide initiatives for preservation, promotion, and creative presentation of indigenous practices in festivals, exhibitions, and tourism programs.

Future Practitioners. The study lays a foundation for further research, comparative studies, or creative adaptations in choreography and performing arts.

Scope and Limitations

This study is focused on the exploration, documentation, and creative interpretation of the indigenous dances of the Ayta communities in Brgy. Tongko, Tayabas City, Quezon Province. It seeks to determine the indigenous dances practiced by the Ayta communities and how these dances reflect their cultural identity, particularly in terms of titles and meanings, historical and cultural backgrounds, dance movements and sequences, music, rhythms, instruments, costumes, props, and symbolic elements. The study also examined how these dances can be interpreted, arranged, or presented through culturally respectful creative choreography and identifies culturally appropriate elements and structure for a proposed Ayta Dance Manual.

The study employed qualitative research methods, including documentary analysis, observation, interviews with Ayta elders and cultural practitioners, and video documentation of performances. Participants are limited to selected Ayta community members considered custodians of their dance traditions. As such, the findings may not represent all Ayta dances across Brgy. Tongko, Tayabas City, or other Ayta communities in the Philippines.

The research is bounded by time and location, focusing only on dances currently practiced or remembered in Brgy. Tongko, Tayabas City at the time of the study. The study does not cover other aspects of Ayta culture, such as rituals, oral literature, or traditional crafts. Furthermore, as with all ethnographic inquiries, the findings rely on the personal recollections, interpretations, and perspectives of participants, which may be influenced by memory limitations or subjective viewpoints.

Finally, while the study documents, analyzes, and interprets these dances for cultural preservation, educational purposes, and the development of a dance manual, it does not aim to evaluate or compare Ayta dances with those of other ethnic groups or regions. The creative choreography and proposed manual are grounded in documented cultural elements and do not seek to alter or commercialize traditional forms.

Definition of Terms

To ensure clarity and consistency in the interpretation of concepts used in this study, the following terms are operationally defined:

Ayta. This refers to the Indigenous group in the Philippines known for their unique cultural heritage, ancestral practices, and deep connection to the natural environment. In this study, it refers to the Ayta community whose dances are examined and documented.

Dance Manual. This is a structured instructional guide that organizes and presents dance steps, movements, sequences, and cultural meanings. In this study, it refers to the proposed output that systematizes the Ayta dance traditions for educational and cultural preservation.

Dance Traditions. These are culturally rooted dance practices passed down through generations. In this study, these include the movements, rhythms, rituals, and symbolic meanings embedded in the Ayta community's traditional dances.

Ethnographic Study. This is a qualitative research approach involving immersion in a cultural group to observe and interpret their practices and lived experiences. In this study, it refers to

the researcher's engagement within the Ayta community to document and analyze their dance traditions.

Rapid Ethnographic Study. This refers to the focused and time-efficient form of ethnographic research designed to collect essential cultural data within a shorter period. In this study, it involves quickly but accurately gathering observations and insights about the Ayta community's dance traditions.

Indigenous Dances. Traditional dances originating from Indigenous cultural communities and preserved by those communities. These dances correspond to what is important to the community and their life. The term "indigenous dances" in this paper refers to the Ayta community's traditional dances that represent their cultural identity, rituals and heritage.

Creative Choreography. The way the dance movements are designed and arranged to make a worthwhile artistic performance is called choreography. Further, choreography involves creativity and culture. In this research, it deals with choreographic works inspired by the indigenous dances of the Ayta community, which will show their ethnic identity in an artistic but contemporary way.

II. METHODS

This chapter presents the research methods and procedures employed in the study.

Research Design

In Tayabas City of Quezon Province, the indigenous dances of the Ayta communities were documented and explored through a qualitative-research design descriptive-ethnographic study. With qualitative design, the researcher will be able to understand the cultural meanings, practices, and performance contexts of these dances. The ethnographic part will focus on immersing himself in the community to observe, record, and interpret cultural expressions. This study enabled the researcher to describe and interpret the Ayta's dance traditions as living expressions of their identity, history and social life. Using participant observation, informal interviews and field documentation, the research aims to determine the symbolic and functional role of dance among the people.

This has a contemporary qualitative ethnographic approach that had reflexivity and cultural sensitivity (Pink, 2021; Madden, 2023). This was in line with decolonizing research methodologies that centre indigenous voices and experiences (Smith, Tuck, & Yang, 2021). This project design is, as expected, more culture relative. The Ayta community uses dance to maintain, perform and transmit their cultural heritage.

Population, Sample and Sampling Technique

The respondents for this study were members of the Ayta communities based in Tayabas City, Quezon Province who are knowledgeable in indigenous dance traditions. The study particularly focused on those acknowledged by the community as custodians, practitioners, and elders who have the ability and understanding of Ayta dances. They have an appreciation of various aspects, including steps, music, costumes, props, and relevance.

The study engaged participants who were chosen purposely based on their expertise and involvement in the protection and performance of Ayta dances in order to meaningful insights.

The researchers employed this non-probability sampling technique which allowed them to deliberately select key informants and elders who were identified by the community leaders to have rich knowledge on Ayta dance culture (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

The small sample size was intentionally selected to emphasize depth rather than breadth. Focusing on a small group of knowledgeable informants, the study attempts to get rich, detailed and authentic descriptions of particular dance practices rather than generalizations. As an approach, this study is associated with descriptive-ethnographic research. The characteristics, historical background, creative choreography, and cultural values of the dances could be defined comprehensively.

Research Instrument

The researcher in this study utilized an interview protocol guide as the principal research instrument, which was supplemented by video recording/photography and field notes to document the indigenous dance of the Ayta of Tayabas City, Quezon Province. By using these instruments, it was possible to cover Ayta performances in a more holistic manner, including the technical aspects of their movements, accompanying music, and the meaning of their costumes and the symbolic meaning (Adams, 2020; CastilloMontoya, 2021).

The interview protocol guide consists of structured and unstructured questions that aim to collect complete information about Ayta dances' history, meaning, and performance. Questions that were structured were used to ensure consistency in factual information pertaining to title of the dance, its choreography, props, costumes, etc. while questions that were unstructured were used for participants to share their experiences, interpretation and reflections on the Ayta dance practices freely.

The interview guide was assessed for content validity by experts. These experts included a Physical Education or PathFit teacher who is an expert in folk dance, English teacher or language teacher to be assessed the clarity and appropriateness of questions, an elder from the Ayta community, and a recognized Ayta leader. Each interview was done with complete dignity, getting informed consent, then recorded and transcribing verbatim to analyze thematically. To enrich the findings and enhance reliability and authenticity video recordings, photographs, and field notes were used to have a reliable, genuine, authentic, and contextual insight into the Ayta's dances.

The reliability of the interview protocol guide was established through a pilot testing procedure with a small group of subjects from a similar indigenous community. This process helped us to identify ambiguities and ensured that the questions resulted in coherent answers.

To test the stability of responses over time, the test-retest method was used. The consistency of results was subjected to inter-rater reliability procedures during coding and thematic analysis. Reliability was also achieved through triangulation, checking interviews, field notes, photographs, and video recordings for the dependability and credibility of the data.

Data Gathering Procedure

This study followed a systematic and ethical data collection process in line with qualitative descriptive-ethnographic research standards. The following steps outline how data will be gathered:

Securing Permissions and Ethical Clearance

Securing Permits; Securing Ethical Approval, the researchers requested approval from the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) to conduct their research by providing the required documentation for evaluation. Required documents that were submitted include, a formal letter of request for approval to address to the proper NCIP Provincial/Community Service Center; a copy of the research proposal including the research objectives, methodology and intended outcomes, a draft of the questionnaire or research tool and a consent form (in the accordance with the Data Privacy Act) prepared for participant completion; and an endorsement from one of the researchers' academic institution (thesis adviser, dean, or department).

When the above documentation is deemed sufficient, the NCIP Regional Director forms the Indigenous Knowledge System and Practices (IKSP) team, which works with the coordinator to prepare the Work Financial Plan for submission to NCIP. A community conference and disclosure meeting is held with the Ayta before the Ayta approve and consent to participation. O. The Ayta give their approval and consent to participate in the researchers' project, sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and provide a resolution supporting the project.

After getting all the permits, prerequisites and clearances from the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), the researchers began the study. Initially verified and validated the information they gathered, and then they prepared the final outputs to be submitted to NCIP. Participants were intentionally selected, focusing on Ayta elders, cultural practitioners, and other knowledgeable key informants on local dances. Prior to participation, researchers clearly communicated the study objectives, methods of data collection and the rights of the participants and obtained informed consent.

Through structured and informal interviews, the researcher collected data on the name, history, movement vocabulary, music, costumes, props and cultural meaning of each dance. They also made use of non-participant observation, including photographs and video recordings of performances taking place in their setting. Through the use of documentary analysis on all recorded materials interview transcripts, photos, videos, and field notes. Undocumented Ayta dances were recorded.

The researchers came up with inventive choreographies using these records. To ensure the choreographies continued to be culturally authentic and artistically valid, review and evaluation were conducted by ayta elders and dance professionals. Due to the incorporation of their feedback, the pieces were polished to retain their cultural essence but were performance-worthy.

In the end, all field notes, transcripts, photographs and videos were organized and stored in password-protected files. Personal identifiers were eliminated to protect the participants.

Ethical Consideration

The research followed ethical guidelines for the duration of all phases of the study in order to respect and protect the Ayta Community in Tayabas City and to work with them in a culturally sensitive manner. The researcher received permission and ethical clearance from the NCIP, and the Ayta Tribal leader, elders, and the Ayta community.

All of the participants were informed of the purpose of the study, the procedures involved in data collection, and how they may benefit from participating in the study. Informed consent was obtained prior to the participants taking part in the research. All participants were given the right to withdraw from the study at any time during the data collection with no consequences.

The project placed cultural sensitivity and respect first by adhering to the cultural values and protocols of the Ayta community during all research procedures (interviews, and dance observation). All possible identifiers that would lead to the identification of participants have been removed from transcripts, field notes and any associated photographs or video recordings, and all have been securely stored in password protected files.

In addition, the interview protocol guide as well as all other research instruments were validated by an expert panel consisting of Ayta community elders, cultural practitioners and, folk dancers, and an English Teacher. Expert panel validation ensured cultural accuracy and ethical appropriateness. The data collection and analysis process was guided by Braun and Clarke's 6 phase thematic analysis approach that was implemented in a manner that displayed integrity and ensured that all interpretations reflected the true perspectives of the Ayta community.

The investigation followed the concepts of participatory research and decolonizing principles; thus, it focused on the Ayta people's voices and the final product documentation, creative choreography, and proposed dance manual was created according to the Ayta culture and heritage in a genuine and respectful manner. Ethical consideration continued to be an essential component of the research project; therefore, every effort was made to create research that benefited the Ayta community by maintaining their culture and identity as well as promoting their history and heritage.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data were obtained through conducting interviews, making field observations, and collecting video documentation. All the data was transcribed, organized, and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) Six Phase Thematic Analysis. This methodology provided a systematic approach to identifying significant patterns and themes related to the Ayta community's traditional dance.

The qualitative data gathered from interviews, field observations, photographs, and video recordings were transcribed, organized, and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) Six-Phase Thematic Analysis. The researchers first familiarized themselves with the data through repeated reading of interview transcripts, field notes, and video recordings to gain a comprehensive understanding of the cultural context and symbolic meanings of the Ayta indigenous dances.

Initial codes were then generated by identifying significant statements and observations related to the dances' titles, choreography, music, costumes, props, and cultural significance. These codes were systematically organized and grouped into broader themes that reflected common cultural patterns and shared experiences within the Ayta community.

The emerging themes were subsequently reviewed, refined, merged, or discarded to ensure that they accurately represented the collected data. Once finalized, each theme was clearly defined and appropriately named to capture the essential characteristics and cultural meanings of the Ayta dances.

Finally, the researchers produced a comprehensive narrative report that integrated descriptive and interpretive analyses, supported by interview excerpts, photographs, and video documentation to ensure cultural authenticity and credibility. Through this thematic analysis, meaningful patterns and cultural insights were identified, serving as the foundation for the development of a culturally grounded creative choreography and dance manual for the Ayta community.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings of the study and discusses them in relation to the research objectives. The results are analyzed and interpreted to provide a better understanding of the indigenous dances of the Ayta community and their application in creative choreography.

1. Description of the Cultural Setting

1.1 Physical Environment

The Ayta community of Tayabas City keeps a strong bond with their natural surroundings which shapes their everyday activities and their cultural practices and traditional dances. The natural environment including forests and rivers and mountains serves as their source of survival and provides them with resources to create musical instruments and dance accessories from bamboo and wood and leaves and vines. Their costume patterns together with color choices display their natural habitat because they show their strong connection to the environment. The natural world serves as inspiration for many dance movements which duplicate the flight patterns of birds and animals and the work of farmers and other natural occurrences. The Ayta indigenous dances show their environmental influences through their titles and their dance movements and their musical compositions and their stage costumes and their entire stage presentation.

1.2 Social Structure

The Ayta have a high degree of community and group sense. The important roles of elders include the transfer of cultural knowledge such as indigenous dances, the Pandanggo. Knowledge is transmitted from older to younger generations through observing, participating and getting feedback. Men and women are given specific roles to play in the performance of a cultural practice as a whole. The community is cooperative, respects its elders, and ensures shared responsibility for cultural heritage.

1.3 Daily Routines

The Ayta people have a daily life which includes farming, community gatherings, and participation in cultural traditions.

Their dances will depict planting, blessing ceremonies, and giving thanks for the bounty. Dancing is done on special occasions such as may be at a wedding or a festival or guest visit the community. For significant life events occurring in the home, such as building a house, prayer not dance is practiced. A daily routine reflects their close relationship with nature and community traditions.

2. Description of Cultural Practices

2.1 Rituals

The rituals of Ayta community are an important aspect of their culture. Nevertheless, traditional dances like Pandanggo are generally not included in religious ceremonies. Rather, rituals are performed through prayers at the time of the construction and farming of houses. The Pandanggo is classified as a celebratory ritual observed during weddings, community gatherings, festivities, and on the arrival of visitors. Giving and sharing holiday gifts is a great way to spread joy and happiness around the community.

2.2 Traditions

Ayta's indigenous dances, musical instruments, costumes and teachings are still in existence today, thanks to the community's ancestors. One of the original dances is the Pandanggo ng Katutubo which was passed down from generation to generation. Thus, this is the dance of the natives. The men wear the bahag while the women wear the tapis. These traditional clothing reflect the special identity of ethnic groups.

In addition, musical instruments like guitar, bamboo and barimbaw are also important in connecting their dance-accompanying musicians to their ancestors. These days, it is common to find youth performing more modern dances; however, they do the traditional acts under the supervision and consent of the community elders.

2.3 Communication Patterns

The Ayta community primarily uses an oral and experiential approach in their communication. Cultural knowledge and dance are taught by one another through story, watching, copying, and practicing. Older people and experienced dancers teach younger ones by showing them the movements, allowing them to learn by doing. Oral explanations of cultural values, meanings of dances and traditions helps the youth to understand their significance. The roles of the family members are quite important for passing on the traditions.

2.4 Roles and Relationships

In Ayta cultural practices, especially dance, the roles and relationships of the community are expressed. The elders are cultural bearers and teachers who safeguard traditions. In dances such as the Pandanggo, men and women perform different roles. The movements of the women are soft and gentle, while those of the men are protective and court-like. The families impart knowledge to the young generation, and the community participates in the preservation of culture. The dances signify social relations, unity, courtship, cooperation of the people.

3. Emerging Themes

This section presents the emerging themes derived from the stories and observations of Tayabas City's Ayta community. These themes are indicative of their social identity, beliefs, teaching and learning processes, and relationships within the community as expressed in their indigenous dances, especially the Pandanggo dance.

Theme 1: Social Identity

Thick Description

Dance is a primary tag of cultural identity and shapes how Ayta perceive their history and experience. The pandanggohan, passed on from generation to generation by their forebears means not only art but also ethnicity and membership. But the unity of this identity is at risk as modern dances take over among younger generations. Despite this transformation, these dances anyway symbolize their history and heritage. Even the dances themselves, which represent their lifestyle, emotions, and values, balance, responsibility and freedom. The adding of simple objects to the dance, such as sticks and glasses, embeds it in their everyday lives.

Ayta Pandanggohan as Cultural Identity in Tayabas City

The Ayta Pandanggohan located in Tayabas City represents the Ayta's cultural identity, and acts as an active representation of their ethnicity, history and belonging to a social unit. The Ayta have passed this dance down from one generation to the next and has maintained its expression of their culture, way of life, feelings and values, such as balance, sense of responsibility, and living in harmony with nature. Modernity and outside influences present challenges to ensuring that Ayta Pandanggohan will continue; however, it has retained its value as a strong symbol of the Ayta's indigenous identity. Elements from everyday life, such as stick or cups, may be included in the performance, but these two remain minimal in their inclusion and have an Ayta cultural basis.

Binasuan

The roots of Binasuan lie in Pangasinan, particularly in the towns of Lingayen and Bayambang. It is influenced by both Spanish colonization and festivities in the lowlands. Dancers execute circular movements with their arms and bodies while balancing wine glasses, which are usually filled with either water or rice wine on their heads and/or hands. The music for Binasuan uses bamboo instruments to produce upbeat percussion sounds and is often performed for fiestas and weddings. The use of rice wine in Binasuan shows the hospitality and celebratory nature of Binasuan as well as the level of technical skill involved with executing the movement and/or dance while maintaining the elements of an everyday product such as rice wine.

Pandanggo sa Ilaw

Pandanggo sa Ilaw is a traditional Filipino dance originating from Lubang Island, Mindoro and is a derivative of the Spanish fandango. This dance includes dancers imitating fireflies while performing graceful waltz-like (3/4 time) movements including complicated foot movements with an oil lamp, also known as tinghoy, balanced on their heads and hands. In addition to symbolizing light, this dance is also a symbol of grace, courtship and celebration.

TABLE 3.1. Social Identity: Key Differences of Ayta Pandanggohan to Other Dances

Aspect	Ayta Pandanggohan (Tayabas City)	Una-una / Kaya-kaya (Ayta)	Binasuan	Pandanggo sa Ilaw
Origin	Indigenous Ayta community of Brgy. Tongko, Tayabas City	Indigenous Ayta community of Tayabas City	Pangasinan; lowland Christian community with Spanish-era influence	Lubang Island, Mindoro; derived from Spanish fandango
Cultural Influence	Purely indigenous; based on lived experience and oral tradition	Purely indigenous	Strong Hispanic/Spanish lowland folk influence	Hispanic-influenced
Props	Minimal; sometimes one or two glasses, sticks, or simple culturally grounded objects	Usually none; simple hand gestures	Wine glasses balanced on hand and head	Oil lamps (tinghoy) balanced on head and hands
Movement Quality	Free, spontaneous, grounded, nature-inspired; circular pathways and complementary gender interaction	Structured yet natural; includes worship bow, seed-throwing, and community formations	Graceful, controlled circular arm and torso movements emphasizing balance	Waltz-like sways, twirls, and intricate footwork emphasizing elegance
Music / Rhythm	Flexible rhythm; guitar, barimbaw, bamboo instruments, native violin; no fixed time signature	Moderate upbeat tempo; community-based musical accompaniment	Lively bamboo percussion accompaniment	3/4 waltz-like rhythm

Direct Quotations

“In our Ayta community, only a few traditional dances are still remembered and occasionally performed. One of these is the Pandanggo, a dance performed by both men and women. Today, modern dances adapted from other communities and accompanied by contemporary music are more commonly taught and performed. Many traditional dances practiced in the past are now rarely or no longer performed.” — A1

“Our traditional dance in the past was Pandanggo, which was performed by the elders. At present, the younger generation mostly performs modern dances, such as Kaya-kaya. Pandanggo is now rarely performed because the elders who used to dance and play music for it are no longer around.” — A2

“At present, traditional Ayta dances are rarely performed because many of the younger generation are no longer familiar with them. Only my siblings and I still know these dances. Our main traditional dance is Pandanggo, which we inherited from our ancestors. It can still be performed today, but the community now more frequently performs modern dances.” — A4

Observational Excerpts

During field observation, the researcher observed in the field that there were only few people in the community who can still perform Pandanggohan. A majority of the subjects were better acquainted with modern dances. The Pandanggohan dancers danced with natural, graceful movements that were more of personal artistic expression than memorized lines and sequences.

Interpretation

These results suggest that dance is an important tool for constructing and articulating the social identity of the Ayta. However, the reduction in traditional dance practice is a sign of cultural identity infringement. Nevertheless, the fact that the Pandanggo still exists shows cultural continuity and its significance in their identity.

Theme 2: Belief Systems

Thick Description

The belief systems of the Ayta are manifested through their dance as a symbol of joy, gratitude, and experiences in life. The Pandanggo is not only a ritualistic dance but also a manifestation of celebration and emotions. The free movements of the dancers represent their belief in natural expression rather than control. The activity of balancing objects in the dance

represents patience, discipline, and mindfulness, which are important attributes in the lives of the dancers.

The Ayta Pandanggohan dance of Barangay Tongko in Tayabas City has its roots in the indigenous belief systems of the Ayta. These beliefs are focused on the creation of happiness through being grateful and a connection to nature. This connection to nature is represented through the random and free flowing movements of the Ayta dancers versus controlled. The glass being balanced during the dance represents the application of patience, discipline and the knowledge that comes from one's everyday life.

Binasuan and Pandanggo sa Ilaw represent the coming together of festive celebrations and hospitality, while also representing the technical skills developed from the lowland Christian cultures. The Binasuan and Pandanggo sa Ilaw have incorporated influences from the colonial period, however, the Ayta Pandanggohan originates from indigenous Spiritual tradition and lived experiences of the community. All three dances contain balancing and stacking movements of objects; however, they differ in their cultural influences and historical significance.

TABLE 3.2. Belief Systems: Key Differences of Ayta Pandanggohan to Una-Una Kaya-Kaya, Binasuan and Pandanggo sa Ilaw

Dance	Belief Foundation	Symbolism of Balancing	Cultural Influence
Ayta Pandanggohan (Brgy. Tongko, Tayabas City)	Indigenous spirituality; harmony with nature; lived daily experience	Patience, discipline, mindfulness, responsibility	Purely indigenous
Una-una Kaya-kaya (Ayta)	Faith in God, thanksgiving, and community livelihood	Not balance-centered; focuses on worship, unity, and agricultural life	Purely indigenous
Binasuan	Celebration, hospitality, community festivity	Skill, abundance, social gathering	Lowland Christian / Spanish influence
Pandanggo sa Ilaw	Light, grace, courtship	Illumination, elegance, festivity	Strong Spanish influence

Direct Quotations

“The dance is characterized by spontaneity and happiness. The Pandanggo is a dance of joy. The movement is free and usually comes from the natural movement of the body.” — A5
Observational Excerpts

The researcher noted that the dancers performed without rigid formations, and the movements seemed spontaneous. The dancers were smiling and behaving naturally, showing that the dance was not merely a technical performance but a display of emotional and cultural expression.

Interpretation

This means that the Ayta consider dance a reflection of their worldview and emotional experiences. Their belief system emphasizes freedom, harmony, and the integration of cultural values into their daily lives.

Theme 3: Teaching and Learning Practices

Thick Description

The transfer of cultural knowledge is done through observation, participation, and oral tradition. The transmission of dances from one generation to another is done by the elders. But the reduction in the number of elders who know how to perform the Pandanggo has contributed to the reduction in the number of young people who are learning the dance. Modern dances have become prominent.

Ayta Pandanggohan as Teaching and Learning Practice in Tayabas City

In Tayabas City, the Aytas Pandanggohan learn through an experiential, participative style of learning. The child observes and imitates the adult's movements and the development of the dance is a natural progression. Viewing nearly everything the adult does, ceremonially, during celebrations or in their day-to-day life, is a chance for the child to observe when they see the adult perform the dances in diversified occasions.

Also, learning to dance is not just about memorizing steps. The child learns the intention behind the dance, its cultural meaning for the community where he lives, and the social meaning attached to each step of the dance. While materials like sticks or simple glasses can be practiced during the dance, these materials are secondary to the dance, as they are used as part of practice and cannot be used as practice focus.

The current research material regarding Binasuan and Pandanggo sa Ilaw also supports that these dances are learned and passed on by observing, demonstrating, and performing. However, in teaching these dance forms, the teaching methods are more formal than experiential learning methods, giving higher importance to choreography creation and aesthetics

presentation than embedding cultural knowledge or community knowledge with each dance.

Binasuan

The Binasuan dance originated in Pangasinan, most notably in the towns of Lingayen and Bayambang. The dance originated from community teaching initiatives or school-based dance programs. Community members demonstrate how to balance wine glasses on their hands or heads and help dancers to learn the technique by having them observe and practice the techniques in an organized format. Dance students and dancers will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of ways including imitating others. However, it should be noted that primarily technical skill and stage performance are emphasized.

Pandanggo sa Ilaw

Pandanggo sa Ilaw originated from the town of Lubang on the island of Mindoro, and is taught through demonstration, imitation and guided practice in the same way that it is traditionally learned during community celebrations or as part of a school's curriculum. Learners practice balancing an oil lamp while doing choreographic footwork and twirling performance, focusing on performance techniques and that the performance is aesthetically pleasing rather than the cultural context or social significance of the dance.

Direct Quotations

“Sa ngayon po, bihira na pong maisayaw ang mga tradisyunal na sayaw... Kami na lang pong magkakapatid ang nakakaalam ng mga dating sayaw.” — A4

“Pandanggo is now rarely performed because the elders who used to dance and play music for it are no longer around.” — A2

Observational Excerpts

The researcher noted that learning took place informally, with younger members observing and sometimes trying to imitate the older dancers. However, there was limited opportunity for formal learning.

Interpretation

This shows that cultural transmission is highly dependent on the elders. The loss of such cultural transmitters puts the transmission of indigenous knowledge of dance at risk.

Theme 4: Community Interaction

Thick Description

Dance is a social behavior that encourages relationship building and oneness among the people. The Pandanggo is participated in by both men and women, which is an indication of unity and cooperation among them. The dance is done during social gatherings.

TABLE 3.3. Teaching and Learning Practices: Key Differences of Ayta Pandanggohan to Other Dances

Aspect	Ayta Pandanggohan	Una-una / Kaya-kaya	Binasuan	Pandanggo sa Ilaw
Teaching Mode	Observation, participation, oral tradition; learning embedded in community life and worship contexts	Observation, participation, oral tradition; often taught during community gatherings and schools	Demonstration, structured practice; often formalized in schools or festivals	Demonstration, structured practice; often school- or community-based
Focus of Learning	Holistic: steps, meaning, social function, cultural values	Holistic: faith, expression, unity, livelihood	Technical skill, balance, choreography, aesthetic performance	Technical skill, balance, movements, aesthetic performance
Role of Elders / Teachers	Elders as cultural custodians and mentors, providing contextual meaning	Elders guide movements and explain faith-based meanings	Elders or instructors focus on technique and form	Elders or instructors focus on technique and form

Youth Engagement Challenges	Fewer elders and rise of modern dances reduce youth participation	Similar challenge; continuity depends on active cultural transmission	Interest persists but may vary; largely dependent on community and school programs	Same as Binasuan; popularity may depend on formal instruction
Props	Minimal; sticks or simple glasses integrated into cultural context	Usually none; gesture-based movements representing daily life	Wine glasses; primary focus is on balance and visual effect	Oil lamps; primary focus on balance and visual effect
Learning Environment	Informal, community- and ritual-centered; experiential	Community events or school programs; semi-formal	Community events or school programs; semi-formal	Community events or school programs; semi-formal
Transmission Depth	Emphasizes meaning, culture, and social values	Emphasizes faith, unity, and cultural values	Emphasizes performance and technical mastery	Emphasizes performance and technical mastery

TABLE 3.4. Community Interaction: Key Differences of Ayta Pandanggohan to Other Dances

Aspect	Ayta Pandanggohan	Una-una / Kaya-kaya	Binasuan	Pandanggo sa Ilaw
Community Participation	Men and women across generations; active intergenerational interaction	Men and women across generations; often performed collectively during gatherings	Men and women, mostly for celebration; less intergenerational mentoring	Men and women; participation often in performance or school contexts
Social Function	Strengthens unity, cooperation, and social cohesion; embedded in rituals	Expresses faith, thanksgiving, and community unity	Celebration, festivity, and entertainment; social bonding occurs but is secondary	Celebration, entertainment, and coordination; social bonding present but not central
Learning & Interaction	Holistic learning through participation and mentoring by elders	Demonstration-focused; learning emphasizes social unity, cultural values, and technical skill	Demonstration-focused; learning emphasizes performance and precision	Demonstration-focused; learning emphasizes performance and precision
Props	Minimal; sticks or simple glasses aid coordination and communal practice	Usually none; gesture-based movements	Wine glasses; mainly for visual effect	Oil lamps; mainly for performance and coordination
Role of Dance in Relationships	Reinforces interpersonal bonds, trust, and shared identity	Reinforces communal faith, cooperation, and shared values	Encourages enjoyment and social interaction	Encourages teamwork and coordination

Ayta Pandanggohan as Community Interaction in Tayabas City

Tayabas City has developed an opportunity for an Ayta Pandanggohan to assist in having a direct connection with one another, as well as building a community that helps provide a sense of belonging and holistic support for all. This dance promotes teamwork across gender and age groups and nurtures a willingness for younger dancers to engage purposefully with their elders and one another. By providing community gatherings where all participants engage in traditional cultural experiences together, all members of the community can receive help from one another while continuing their cultural traditions. The use of props, such as sticks to create rhythm, for example, can foster teamwork and help develop socially-based lessons embedded in the dancer's movements.

There is literature published on the Binasuan and Pandanggo sa Ilaw dances that show that they also encourage people from their communities to come together to participate in a community event. They also serve to create a festive occasion for many of the participants. Most of the focus in these dances is based on the visual demonstration of learning, and they tend to have less of an emphasis on building strong social ties and less of an emphasis on creating intergenerational mentoring relationships than the Ayta Pandanggohan does.

Binasuan

Binasuan, which occurs during wedding receptions and fiestas in Pangasinan, promotes social engagement between men and women through the performance of artistic expression. The act of performing together, or with others, communicates the love and friendship that exist in the province between individuals living in the same province. While the performance of Binasuan clearly promotes technical skill and visual spectacle, social interaction is a less important aspect. Therefore, the way in which cultural value and

intergenerational connections are transferred through the Binasuan performance isn't as emphasized as other aspects. *Pandanggo sa Ilaw*

Pandanggo sa Ilaw, originating from Lubang Island, Mindoro, promotes group involvement by having all dancers work together to keep their movements in sync with respect to retaining balance while performing with oil lamps. This is beneficial because it helps people to learn how to coordinate and work as a team; however, it does not accomplish the strengthening of long-lasting relationships within a community between generations.

Direct Quotation

"Ang Pandanggo, isang sayaw na karaniwang ginagampanan ng mga lalaki at babae." — A1

Observational Excerpts

During observation, the researcher noted that community members gathered and watched the performance together. The atmosphere was lively, and participants showed mutual support and encouragement.

Interpretation

This shows that dance is a social binder that brings people together in unity. This is because it helps in strengthening cultural continuity by bringing people together through cultural expression.

4. Cultural Patterns and Meaning-Making

This section describes the cultural patterns of the Ayta community and the meaning given to their actions, especially through their indigenous dance in Tayabas City.

What Behaviors Signify

The Ayta Tribe's Pandanggo dance is a reflection of their ethnic identity and a method of conserving their cultural legacy. It connects the past generations of Ayta with contemporary

generations by supporting continuity between old traditions and new ones. In addition to representing how the Ayta live simply and authentically, the intertwining of body movements demonstrates how well-connected the Ayta are with nature.

When the Ayta's performers balance objects on their heads, such as a glass, the performer's skill, patience, and technique all make them successful in their everyday lives. When Ayta males and females perform, they show the community that both genders must work together and provide support in order to reach their common objectives as an Ayta community and fulfill their obligations to each other.

The decline of traditional dance participation from younger Ayta indigenous people indicates that the Ayta continually lose their cultural identity as a result of encroaching modernity. Furthermore, younger generations are increasingly forgetting about the Ayta's cultural identity because of their disinterest in participating in traditional dance forms.

Shared Meanings

The Pandanggo is a symbol that has been used by all people in the community as a representation of cultural continuity, celebration and unity. It can be seen during celebrations such as weddings, gatherings, and holidays. While it can offer entertainment for the Ayta, it is more importantly a way for them to represent their collective history, identity and experience.

The dance is part of their cultural inheritance, as it has been passed on from generations before them to those living now. Members of the community view it as part of their identity as an Ayta, through the use of the same movements, music, and costumes associated with them all carry cultural meanings associated with them, and serve as reminders of their heritage and connection to one another as community members. Therefore, the shared experience of participating in the dance contributes to their overall sense of belonging within the Ayta community.

Underlying Values

The Ayta community shows several core values through their practices. One of the most essential core values is the respect for the elderly, who are believed to be the best keepers and disseminators of cultural knowledge. The Ayta recognize the significance of their elderly in preserving their culture, particularly in the transmission of dance knowledge.

The Ayta community retains their connection to the Pandanggo as part of their identity; however, they do not practice the dance as they used to before. The recognition of this dance by the community even to this day shows that they want to retain their cultural identity.

Most of the Ayta community also retain the value of unity and cooperation because almost all of the male and female Ayta participated in either dance or cultural activities. Moreover, the respect of the Ayta community for both males and females with equal participation shows their value for mutual respect.

Finally, the Ayta community values the idea of simple living and natural expression through their performance of dances. The unbridled and expressive way that they perform their dances is reflective of their value for authenticity and emotional expression over technical correctness.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes the findings of the study and presents the conclusions and recommendations based on the results. The conclusions are based on the research objectives and the findings regarding the indigenous dances of the Ayta community in Tayabas City, Quezon Province.

Conclusions

This research aimed to explore and document the indigenous dances of the Ayta communities in Tayabas City, Quezon Province. The findings of the study served as the basis for the development of a dance manual for cultural preservation and educational use.

1. From the research, it can be seen that in response to their marginalized status within Philippine culture, the Ayta's indigenous dances have distinct titles, a well-defined history, numerous steps, music including instruments, and a unique style of clothing. In fact, this makes them representative of their cultural identity and ancestry/heritage as a group of people. Pandanggohan or Pandanggo ng Katutubo is an example of this.
2. The research found two types of native dances originating from the Tayabas City area: the Pandanggohan and the Un-una Kaya-kaya. These two dance styles express the identity, memory, values, and the continuance of their connections with their ancestors. Both are performed at community celebrations, such as weddings and festivals. The Pandanggohan is a representation of the cultural heritage of the Ayta people and represents unity and collaboration among the community and its changing dynamics. The number of people who can perform the Pandanggohan has decreased.

The dancers of the Ayta wear clothing such as bahag and tapis that represent their individual dignity as well as their dignity as part of the Ayta community. The musical instruments typical of the Ayta are represented by those used in the performance, including guitar, banduria, bamboo instruments, barimbaw, and violin, as part of their connection to their ancestry. The use of items like glasses, sticks, and arnis by dancers provides a means for representing balance, protection, and other aspects of social roles while at the same time representing the fact that they are part of a long-standing tradition.

3. The study showed that Ayta dances are a major source of cultural values, traditions, and society. Symbolic movements, traditional costumes, meaningful props, and musical accompaniment used in the dance provide a means to convey cultural knowledge and demonstrate respect, courtship, cooperation, gratitude, and connection with nature.

The free and natural movement of Pandanggohan, which is based on things like everyday life, natural phenomena, and courting, is representative of the Ayta people and their culture. Pandanggohan is considered an ancestral dance of the Ayta. Its purpose is twofold: to honor those who have come before them through gratitude and to remind them that they will live on. The creative choreography inherent in the dances maintains their original cultural context, while the dances continue to

demonstrate their cultural identity as well as their values and traditions.

The Ayta continue performing traditional and contemporary indigenous dance forms. The Una-una Kaya-kaya allows them to accept a new way of expressing their culture while making an effort to preserve their cultural identity while adapting to changes in culture. However, there are fewer elders to teach the dance.

4. A culturally specific dance manual based on the findings may be created to document and archive the indigenous dance forms of the Ayta of Tayabas City, Pandanggohan and Una-una Kaya-kaya. The proposed manual will consist of cultural and educational information, including dance titles with historical background, step-by-step details of the dance, music associated with the dances, costume and prop information, as well as cultural significance.

The proposed manual will assist in the preservation, teaching, and passing down of indigenous dances for future generations of Ayta people. It will also act as a reference for teachers, students, choreographers, and community members when integrating Ayta dances into educational and cultural programs. The manual may help revitalize and stimulate the interest of the younger generation and facilitate the preservation of the Ayta people's cultural identity, values, and traditions.

Recommendations

The study recommends the following based on the findings of the study. The objective of the project is to preserve, promote, and/or integrate the indigenous dances of the Ayta in Tayabas City, Quezon Province. The recommendations are addressed to the Ayta community, teachers, school administrators, local government agencies, cultural institutions, National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), and future researchers for the continuity and appreciation of Ayta's cultural heritage.

1. For the Community

Through scheduled methods of practicing traditional dance, educating via storytelling, and through community gatherings, the Ayta people are encouraged to involve elder members of their community in the transmission of dance. Regular opportunities to engage in organized cultural activities and performances will assist the Ayta to maintain culture and promote the continuance of cultural traditions.

2. For Educators

Teachers ought to include culture-specific, culturally relevant and culturally responsive lessons in curricula by adding Ayta indigenous dance to Arts (Visual, Performing and Media), Physical Education parameters, as well as Social Studies, to create awareness about the local cultural heritage of the Ayta people. Using these types of instructional methodologies will create accurate structures that represent and respect the knowledge systems of Indigenous peoples. Building partnerships with Indigenous-respectful Ayta cultural bearers will support maintaining the authenticity of the curriculum, provide students with an education that is richer and more comprehensive regarding indigenous Ayta traditions, and enhance the overall student experience.

3. For School Administrators

School executives are asked to back inclusive policies of their institutions that acknowledge and safeguard traditional Indigenous culture. Establishing supportive resources, training and programming for the implementation of the suggested dance manual will assist in sustaining preservation efforts.

4. For the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Tayabas City

It is recommended that the Local Government Unit of Tayabas City create permanent programs that promote and preserve Indigenous Ayta dance. The allocation of resources for documentation, community workshops, and heritage activities will enhance cultural sustainability. The LGU should also support collaborative efforts between schools and Indigenous communities to help ensure ongoing cultural preservation in the long term.

5. For the Tourism Office of Tayabas City

It is advised that the Tourism Office promote Ayta dances from an Indigenous perspective and in a culturally sensitive manner. When incorporating cultural presentations from festivals or tourism activities, the Ayta community's priority should be to ensure authentic representation of themselves as the owners of and the purveyors of their culture. Tourism initiatives should contain an educational and respectful component regarding Indigenous heritage and all of their culture.

6. For the Tayabas Culture and Arts Office

Through cultural programming, exhibitions, and performances, the Tayabas Culture and Arts Office should encourage the documentation, archiving, and dissemination of the traditional Ayta indigenous dance forms. The office may also support validating the proposed Dance Manual and including it as part of the local cultural development plans. Ongoing collaboration with the cultural bearers of Ayta dance forms will continue to preserve the integrity and meaning of the traditional forms of dance.

7. For the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP)

It is recommended that the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples assist in establishing policies related to the protection of Indigenous Peoples' rights from inappropriate documentation, presentation, or promotion of Ayta dances. The NCIP can also provide assistance with protecting the intellectual property rights of Indigenous Peoples through their support of cultural projects that respect the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples in addition to the legal and cultural protection of Ayta Peoples.

8. For Future Researchers

Future researchers should pursue longitudinal and comparative studies that show how Ayta dances will change over time. Comparative studies with other indigenous dance traditions and with other countries can give a broader picture of how cultures have been maintained and transformed. Mixed-methods research may also be used to assist in producing comprehensive developmental studies of indigenous culture's long-term viability.

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