

## Beyond Movement: Understanding the Significance of Indigenous Dances of the Applai Tribe of Northern Philippines Through Semiotic Analysis

By

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### Abstract

This research discusses the significance of indigenous dances as an expressionistic tool utilized to capture, express, embody, and formulate a people's culture. Specifically, the study focuses on the Applai indigenous dances of Solana, Cagayan in the Philippines which have a symbolic meaning that articulates their identity, relationships, thoughts, moods, motivation, and attitudes. The research used a qualitative research design and ethnographic research method to document and semiotically analyze the Applai dances, musical instruments, costumes, and props. The study participants were the elders, barangay officials, dancers, and other community members who have been involved or have seen the indigenous dances under study. The study reveals that Applai dances serve as a popular medium of dramatic expression and entertainment that reflects the tribe's personality, culture, community and worldview. Through semiotic analysis, the dances were found to be symbolic and filled with embedded meanings that articulate the tribe's identity, relationships, and thoughts. The study also highlights the importance of sustaining the practices that transmit and maintain these dances, as well as addressing the threats and challenges for their transmission and preservation. The study recommends the establishment of a School of Living Traditions and other forms of support, further studies on the semiotic analysis of indigenous dances, and raising awareness among the younger generations about the importance of indigenous dances as a form of cultural heritage and identity.

**Keywords:** Semiotic analysis, Indigenous dances, *Applai* tribe, Social Dances, Cultural heritage

### Introduction

Indigenous dance is a window to the life of a people. It is a true representation of their existence expressed through movement. Essentially, dance is an expressionistic tool utilized to capture, express, embody, and formulate any given representation of a people's culture. This explains why it is almost a truism to say that the body is a means for expression having a basic rhetoric potential for both verbal and non-verbal communication. As an expressionistic tool, a dance conveys numerous feelings, emotions, skills, and moral qualities using the different parts of the body. As Hutckinson (2004) claims: "In the grammar of movement, these actions are verbs. The parts of that body move are the nouns. How the action is done, the degree of change or the manner of performance, is described by the adverbs". In this context, dance is actually the appearance of body movements are very important for humans as it can be enjoyed as part

of body language communication. The body has a role and function to be the language of motion and this is to obtain the meaning of movement.

Across cultures, dance symbolizes social structure and traditional values of the people where it exists. Aside from it being used as a functional tool for expression of values and social status, it is also used for a variety of reasons. It is used in ritualistic purposes, aesthetic enjoyment, courtship, personal communication, and cultural continuity cum sustainability (Alphonse, 2004). From a sociological point of view, dance forms have three (3) communicative sub-themes. First, dance has a spiritual representation because it is used as a way of elevating oneself from the human realm to that of the spiritual universe. This type of dances engages the mind, body, and spirit in order to truly release the conscious, thereby allowing the individual to experience the power of self-expression. Second, dance has importance to the community because it is performed with and for the community. Such forms of dances are supported and affirmed by the group through symbolic songs, hand clapping, and shouted encouragement. Third, dance shows the relationship of the rhythm with the people. This means that the dance acts as the thread bonding of the very fabric of culture together with its communicative melodic expression. It is a good platform in understanding the history and heritage of the people that gave sense to their identity and continuity.

Given all these functions of indigenous dances, one may surmise that basic in all the functions of a dance is that it conveys a system of symbols – something created by humans and conventionally used together, regularly and truly learned so as to give a sense to their human nature or to give meaning of their relationship to others. This function of indigenous dances merit the use of a Semiotic-interpretative analysis (study of signs) which is a discipline that investigates all forms of communication occurring by means of sign and based on sign system or sign system. Semiotics is a tool for analyzing and interpreting all signs and symbols used in communication, including those in languages, words, images, traffic signs, sounds, music, advertising, architecture, fashion, literature, painting, and cartoons, to name some common examples (Parsa & Parsa, 2004; Rifat, 1996). In short, semiotics encompasses all meaningful structures that shape social and individual discourses. In a semiotic sense, signs according to Saussure (2002), “take the form of words, image, gestures, and objects.” A sign is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It suggests the presence or existence of a fact, condition or quality immediately evident, so long as it is used to convey meaning. Thus, the use of semiotic-interpretation in understanding indigenous dances is a good way of understanding the communicative ability of dance movements especially in unfolding the organized codes and systems of a group of people. This is in line with the idea that indigenous dance movements both in styles and forms are not done haphazardly but they are communicative tools, a watchdog on people’s daily activities in the community, and a sustaining tool for upholding communal moral beliefs (Ogbonna, 2011; Akas, 2015).

One of indigenous people of Cagayan province is the Applai of Nabbotuan Solana, Cagayan. Historical records of the Applai in Solana revealed that they are migrant tribe from Mountain Province belonging to the Igorot tribe (NCIP, 2018). They have distinct culture and perpetuated such way of life from generation to generation. However, there is a dearth of literature and studies regarding the Applai of Solana, Cagayan. They are the least studied as confirmed by both the local government and the regional office of the National Commission of Indigenous People. Significantly, NCIP (2018) records showed that Applai cultural arts related to tribal dance, accompanied with traditional music and customs are not completely documented and analyzed by various experts (anthropologists, sociologists, historians, and educators). Apart from the lack of documentation on the Applai cultural arts, documenting and analyzing their dances using semiotics addresses the backward concept by government and

wealthy people who regard the indigenous dance as something mundane (Chielotam, 2015). Instead, the documentation and analysis shall be a valuable platform in re-appreciating and interpreting the indigenous dance as an interconnecting rod between the Applai community and the world at large. But most importantly, the documentation and analysis of Applai dances puts into a critical examination the misinterpretation that the enjoyment of various indigenous dances is just based on their aesthetics, patterns and styles without considering their communicative potency (Akas, 2015).

Given the foregoing context, a documentation and a semiotic analysis of the Applai indigenous dances are imperative as this will contribute to preserving their unique culture, identity and heritage thereby enriching younger generation's knowledge on cultural education (Nozaleda et.al, 2022; Maborang et.al, 2022). Doing so, will usher the sharing of the communicative potency of their dances through a cultural educational media that ensures the appreciation of local students, teachers, and other culture enthusiasts.

## **Methodology**

The study uses a qualitative research design using ethnographic research method. In this study, it is used to uncover, analyze and interpret the data about dance, music, musical instruments, costumes, and props that were collected with reference to Peirce's theory of semiotics as its theoretical framework.

The members of the ethnic tribe of Applai of Cagayan province were the respondents of the study. Furthermore, the key informants to be interviewed in the study are the elders and chieftains who are knowledgeable of the traditional dances. In-depth interview was employed other than the in-situ survey. These study participants were the elders, barangay officials, dancers, and other community members who have been involved or have seen the indigenous dances under study.

This study developed an in-depth interview questionnaire as research instrument. The instrument was subjected for its content and face validity by Indigenous Peoples (IP) experts who come from the academe. The in-depth interview guide covered questions on dance, music, musical instruments, costumes and props. The questions were able to uncover the signs, meanings, and patterns of the dances, music, musical instruments, and costumes through their specific narratives. All the questions asked led to a better understanding and analysis of the tribe's body, mind and culture.

The steps in performing the semiotic analysis were as follows: First, identification of the signs in each dance step and then determine what these signs are in themselves. Second, examination of how the signs relate to each other and then find out the relations to broader meaning systems. Third, reexamination of the signs through their codes to discover the specific enunciation of ideology and collective behavior of the Applai.

## **Results And Discussion**

### ***Indigenous Dances of the Applai***

Dance plays a critical element in the life of the Applai. They have traditional dances which bear the elements of their culture and heritage and they have been passed on from generation to generation. Fundamentally, the dances of the Applai contribute substantially to the reinforcement of their cultural identity and plays a crucial role in the "cultural development" of their community. As one participant remarked: *Had nan hucu gway harharaon mi hija ran*

*mas nawhos-or jas mangmang tod pigha han kaob nan kina hiru vi yas taku jas hija ran mangipayla han inwharun nan kaob nan uvili. Kapu han na harhara naag-akammu chaavi akas taku, nu hiru ran galad mi han whijag, ja ran pijoon mi akas ohay taku.* (Our dances contribute substantially to the reinforcement of our cultural identity and they play a crucial role in the cultural development of our community. Through these dances, we are known as a people - what we value in life and what we dream individually and collectively).

The results of the study reveal that the Applai have three (3) indigenous dances which are predominantly performed by the community. These dances include *pattong*, *takik*, and *tuppaya*.

**Table 1.** *Indigenous Dances that are Predominantly Performed by the Applai*

Dominantly Performed Dances	Dance Classification
<i>Pattong</i>	Community dance; merry making
<i>Takik</i>	Wedding dance
<i>Tuppaya</i>	War dance

*Pattong* is one of the most popular and most performed dances among the Applais. According to the informants, it is considered a community dance of festivity and merry-making. *Had nan pattung oha han maipaypalajad gway hara ravi tan ipappayla ran lagha jas lajad gway oon mi. Avod nan tarok mi yay taku, ad hadnu avod nan tarok mi majakan nan hinuvili ta maaragha achavi han lohan gway taraon gway magwagwat mi.* (*Pattong* is one of the famous dance of our group because it depicts festivity and merry making. We are happy people and once we are happy, we involve the whole community for all the blessings received). The participants range from young to old. However, it is customary that the chieftain has to lead the dance followed by the elders. Thereafter, the village people may follow from adults to children. Among Applais, *pattong* is most performed because it is a collective term to mean the event of the dances in which one dance completes each other. Singing and talking are not required in *pattong*. The dance is serious but pleasurable pastime for the Applai dancers. It is usually led by men in a circular manner and then followed by women. By and large, the dance is characterized by leaping and hopping or skipping. About 7 to 14 men lead the dance followed by women who execute their sways and turns depending on the line of direction and gong position. Significantly, the dance embodies freedom of the Applai showing their inherent human capacity for self-expression which is best manifested in their kinetic flow. According to an informant, *pattong* also articulates the Applai' individual mobility expressed in the propensity of movement, change, flow, as well as conditions of autonomy. The emotional nature of *pattong* movement, which is dominantly merriment and festivity, expresses the inner life of the Applai as being obsessed with the real in the physicality of the body movement. The dance has been considered as one of the best avenues for self-expression among Applai since the rhythmic movements, steps and gestures of dance often express joy and fun.

On the other hand, *takik* is a form of wedding dance among Applais. It is danced by a couple surrounded by the musicians. The groom leads the dance followed by the musicians who play the gongs, metal tong, and *solibao* (ethnic drum). The dance does not require singing and talking. Usually, six musicians constitute the complete set. Each musician creates a certain beat to produce harmony. The beating of *solibao* serves as the guide of the musicians. The player of *solibao* does not join the dancers but squats and strikes the *solibao* on post using his right and left hand alternately. After the dance of bride and groom, a male dancer leads the dance in a circular motion and a female dancer comes to pair with him. (*Had nan takik oha han pang aher gway hara. Had nan a aher gway manahagwa hija ran manghi paylaan cha han*

*lagha ancha ajat cha gway mai tagwid cha han uvili*). (Takik is our wedding dance. Newly married couple express their joy and romantic love and this is shared with the community).

Meanwhile, *tuppya* is a mock combat dance showcasing a war combat or duel movement for men. It is exclusively performed by male dancers considering that only men go for war. Congruently, the dance is reflective of manhood where males demonstrate courage, bravery and strength. The dance depicts the old-age head-hunting practice of the Applais. Males who hunted more heads show more power and domination in the group. The *war* represents the valiant man in battle and in the toils of enforced endurance, as in the depiction of the motions of eluding blows and shots of every kind of swerving, yielding ground, leaping from the ground, or crouching. The motions of attack are also included such as the shooting of arrows and the dealing of all kinds of blows. The dance also showcases the attainment of physical fitness and help promote mental excellence. (*Had nan tuppaya ket haran nan larawhan. Han han idi agwad nan ukali vi yay mang kutod das whaag to irawhan mi ran ikaw vi han taku gway mangi payla han lagwighan han ugwa vi yay ikaw. Had chay hara vi manghipayla han turod nan lalarai jas ilagha mi ran nangawhaan mi an uvili.*) (War dance is our mock combat. In the past, we have a head-hunting tradition to defend our territories from people who disrespect our right to property. The dance shows the bravery and strength of men and victory is celebrated with the community).

### ***Semiotic Analysis of Pattong***

#### ***Basic Semiotic Plane***

The *pattong* is a merry-making dance and everyone in the community may participate in it. Since it is a community dance, many men and women are involved in it. Interestingly, men act as dancers and at the same time musicians while women perform only as dancers. The rocking step (**Min pasangu pasanud**) is the dominant movement in *pattong*. It is done by men bending the trunk of the body looking down. On the other hand, women usually perform the parallel standing position (*pagdippa*) in closed fist and the thumbs up. Also, women perform the *ityag mu lim-am* there they usually raise their hands obliquely sideward up, with fingers close together and palms facing upward.

Interestingly, while *pattong* dance is merry-making, all the movements are executed without smiling but the joyfulness is reflected in the movements and beat of music. Dancing the *pattong* requires the use of *ba-ag* and the *tapis*. The design of the *ba-ag* and *tapis* represent the mountain, man-like figure, snake and frog. The music of *pattong* is moderato in 2/4 signature with accented notes.

#### ***Iconic Plane***

The execution of the rocking step looking down and the side skip with bending of the bodies as well as the knees dragging and going outward direction signify the Applai's intimate relationship with the earth. They acknowledge the earth as their provider and burial. For them, life begins and ends with the earth.

The *pagdippa* mimics the flapping of the wings of the birds which signifies freedom and independence. They believe that life is best lived if when they are free. It is a life having the ability to act without constraint or to possess the power and resources to fulfill their purposes as a community. Also, the *pagdippa* signifies the carabao style, which is a very important animal for the life of the Applai. Since the Applai are generally farmers, they consider the carabao as their best friend. To the Applai farmers, the carabao is a mainstay in farm works. It is their tractable, reliable and uncomplaining ally in myriads of works in the field. It is also harnessed as the farmer's steady power behind transport or cargo facilities, like the *kariton* (cart) and *kareta* (sled).



The dominance of red in the *patpong* costumes symbolizes bravery, independence, war and blood. The black color relates to the spirit of their ancestors and the ground - forefathers who bestowed their life. Meanwhile, the symbolism of all things found in nature. For them, to speak of beauty is to speak of the work of nature. There is beauty in nature and through contact with nature, they become happy and fulfilled. Also, this finding proves that costume culture and etiquette system are closely related to social, political and economic development of a community (Lin, 2020). The music shows merry-making with community. Applai are joyful people and happiness is always shared with others.

### ***Contextual Plane***

The *patpong* dance showcases the attainment of physical fitness and help promote mental excellence. The movements narrate the Applai's value of the body strength as most of their activities require human effort. Technology during that time was pervasive and that all works by men and women required human energy and strength. Significantly, their individual mobility expressed in the propensity of movement, change, flow, as well as conditions of autonomy because they are free-loving people. The Applai, as indigenous peoples are risking their lives and freedom to protect their lands and territories.

The movements reveal their close connection with their environment especially the land. For centuries, the Applai people have become the custodians of the earth, have lived on their lands in the harmony of nature. They are the guardians of some of the most earth's precious resources. They have mastered the art of living on the earth without destroying it.

The semiotic analysis of the dances articulates that the Applai community is hierarchically structured. The costumes worn and those who play major roles in the dances convey one's class in the community. The costume's design and color distinguish the rich from the poor. Such affirms the study that indigenous Filipinos are not identified by their physical characteristics, but by means of their clothing, activities or facial paintings (Gong, 2014).

The historical, political and social context of Applai life is that they were free from the subjugation of the colonizers. They exemplify the "real" Filipinos who resisted colonization from Spaniards and Americans. The Applai are warrior people who enjoy freedom in their abode. Ancestor worship was evident as they accord respect to their ancestors. Significantly, this is a show of their love to their origin and their connection to afterlife. The high respect they give to their ancestors commemorates the continued existence of their deceased ancestor beyond death.

Communal life is the essence of life. It is an intentional community of people living together, sharing common interests, property, possessions, resources, work and happiness. Their resilience through the years is a result of their commitment to each other.

### ***Axiological Plane***

For the Applai, lands and territories are at the core of their culture, spirituality, and identity. To them, land is life. They put primary value on land and their relationship with the land remains fundamental to their identity and way of life. For them, land is much more than soil, trees, rocks or minerals. It's a living environment that sustains, and is sustained by, people and culture. Significantly, dancing among the Applai is a celebration of happiness experienced individually but celebrated collectively. This finding solidifies the idea that Filipinos dance basically to congregate and socialize, for general welfare and recreation, and as an outlet for repressed feeling (Guinabang & Tanglib, 2021).

Applai men have long tradition as brave people and this was sculpted from birth. After birth, the umbilical cord of an Applai was often buried on the battle field. Also, ancestor worship is part of their life as they have the custom of venerating deceased ancestors who are considered still a part of the family and whose spirits are believed to have the power to intervene in the affairs of the living. They believe that the spirits of deceased ancestors will look after the family, take an interest in the affairs of the world, and possess the ability to influence the fortune of the living.

For the Applai, living with family, friends, and building a community is a much more fulfilling use of their time and resources. This style of living promotes human connection since young and old Applai take notice of the benefits of communal living. This communal living brings together like-minded people.

### ***Semiotic Analysis of Takik*** ***Basic Semiotic Plane***

*Takik* is a wedding dance usually performed by the groom and the bride followed by the musicians who are usually men. The bride is the only woman in the dance highlighting her as the most important and beautiful girl for the day. As a wedding dance, the *takik* is a marriage ritual establishing the union of a couple and it is witnessed by the entire community. The community members provide support and partake in the happiness of the groom and the bride as well as their families.

The *takik* have similar steps with *patpong* particularly the rocking step (*Min pasangu pasanud*). Also, men and women perform the *pagdippa* (parallel standing position) but with open palm. For women, they perform the *pagdippa* in open palm in reverse T position which is not done in the *patpong*. Also, men perform the running step (*tumagtag*) and they shout to give cheers to the newly-wed couple especially for a happy and successful marriage.

The same costume for men and women. The groom and the bride as well as the musicians wear the same costume used in dancing the *patpong*. However, the bride wears *lubbay o lingling-o* as earring which signifies fertility and *bongor* necklace made of porcelain or old stone. Finally, the music of *patpong* is briskly in 2/4 signature with accented notes.

### ***Iconic Plane***

The open palm of men and women in performing the *pagdippa* symbolizes prayers offered to the Supreme Deity and to their dead ancestors. The open palm represents a vital begging of successful journey, uniting the couple to branch their own families. It is symbolic of seeking for the blessings of the newly-wed couple that their marriage become fruitful and successful.

The reverse T position shows that the bride is “whole” with complete parts of the body and with complete family (not a widow) that goes to the care of her husband. The wholeness of a woman is required during the dance because she has to offer to her husband and to the community not only her fertility and skills in managing the home but also her strong heart and strong mind. Her wholeness reflects that she has fertile feminine bodies and has strong orientation to motherhood, both spiritual and physical.

Significantly, the performance of *tumagtag* reflects the couple’s intimate relationship with the earth. As newly-wed couple, their marriage needs to be blessed with the bounty of life which is sourced from the earth such as adequate food, house, farm and the like. A good marriage is gifted with the bountiful food and resources which are highly cherished for any married couple especially when raising their children. Also, the shouting alerts the community

in partaking for the joy of the married couple. It is also symbolic of the community member's way of giving their blessings for a good marriage.

### ***Contextual Plane***

Dancing the *takik* involving the entire community brings to fore that the Applai are communal people. Life starts and ends with the community. The Applai believe that communal living is where they live together and choose to share the living space, resources, interests, ideals, and property with one another. Among the Applai, the goal of seeking the blessing of the Supreme Deity and their ancestors means continued well-being and positive disposition for the couple. It means asking for special favors or assistance that the couple will have the best of their marriage. As spirits of ancestors who were once human themselves, articulates the belief that they are seen as being better able to understand human needs of the newly wed than would a living being.

A very evident reality in the community life of the Applai is egalitarian especially shown in recognizing the wholeness of Applai women. Men and women play major roles in the dances and this articulates the status of women before the Spanish colonization that they enjoyed a high status in society. There was equal value given to male and female offspring and women participated in the decision-making processes not only in the home but in the important social processes of the bigger community (Rodriguez, 2009).

Fundamentally, the Applai' dances show the group's inherent human capacity for self-expression which is best manifested in their kinetic flow. Their dance showed their main attribute as joyful and fun-loving people not in terms of facial expression but in rhythmic movements, steps and gestures. Such finding is an affirmation that Igorots (where the Applai originally belong) danced for numerous celebrations and other social gatherings (Fiar-od, 2014).

Moreover, the involvement of women in the dances is a revelation that the indigenous women occupied higher positions in a pre-colonized society. They acted as medical doctors in the community referred to as "babaylans" (Agoncillo, 1990). They served as political advisers to the "Datu" or Chieftain and practiced rituals and incantations expletive of their concern for the natural and human ecosystem. This is also consistent with the assertion that compared to other parts of Southeast Asia, women in Philippine society have always enjoyed a greater share of legal equality. Some pre-colonial social structures of the Philippines gave equal importance to maternal and paternal lineage. This bilateral kinship system accorded Philippine women enormous power within a clan (Hega, et al, 2017).

### ***Axiological Plane***

The social and non-religious function of communal life and ancestor veneration, among the Applai, is to cultivate kinship values, such as filial piety, family loyalty, and continuity of the family lineage. Ancestor veneration for them occurs with every degree of social, political, and technological complexity, and it remained an important component of their lives through time.

Moreover, the Applai dances manifest the duality of their mind about life. They believe that the physical world is the inhabited by the seen and the unseen beings. The unseen beings are the humans, animals, plants and other living forms found in their environment. On the other hand, the unseen beings are the deities, dead ancestors and other spirits which co-exist with the seen being in their world. This worldview of the Applai is well articulated in their dance steps which mimic the movements chickens, birds and other life forms on earth. The finding is consistent with the claim that the base of ethnic dance among ethnic groups in the Philippines



are those that imitate nature and life. Many birds and fowls easily became the inspiration for the various ethnic dances like the *Tinikling*, *Itik-itik*, and *Kilingkingan* (Villaruz, 2017). This inspiration is a manifestation that indigenous Filipinos practiced animism where they believed that gods and spirits guarded natural features such as mountains, rivers, and forests.

The dances of the Applai reveal a long and rich story that shows the intertwining of their dances with daily life and worldview. Clearly, the dances reveal their culture, art, and temperament as people which affirms the view that the kind of dances found in the Philippines even before the Spaniards set foot on the Philippine soil reveal the high culture of the Filipinos (Aquino, 2014).

### ***Semiotic Analysis of Tuppaya*** ***Basic Semiotic Plane***

Unlike *patpong* and *takik*, the *tuppaya* is performed exclusively by men since this is a war dance. In those times, only men are engaged in war in defense of their rights to property, life and their identity. There are two main characters in *tuppaya*, the hero and the villain who are fighting usually over right to property. In short, the mock-battle was over the possession of land. The *tuppaya* seeks to instill courage and strength to the warrior prior to a headhunting expedition or war.

The movement in *tuppaya* is more of walking and running clockwise and counter clockwise. The step backward and step forward with jumping are evident movements among the dancers. These are all imitation of the gestures of fighting roosters or cocks. The shaking of the body by the villain shows that he is the loser in the war. Interestingly, the raising of the hand by the hero shows his victory.

The costume used by men in dancing the *patpong* and *takik*. The only difference is that the two main characters wear red head band with their shield, spear and axe. Warriors performing the *tuppaya* brandish their head axes and spears while clashing their shields. The music of *tuppaya* is in 2/4-time signature with accented notes. The accented notes are louder. For the Applai, their *tuppaya* dance is one of the best avenues for joyful self-expression of heroism – something that is serious but pleasurable as indicated in the rhythm and tempo of their music. Moreover, the dominance of red in the Applai' costumes and the strong beat of the gongs reflect their strong personality. This is seen in their determination, intimidation and fierce as expressed in their war dance. Most movements in *tuppaya* show and require strength of body. They also enact a fierce fight which reveals their headhunting activity primarily done to defend their territory from trespassers who disrespect their right to property.

### ***Iconic Plane***

The exclusive performance of men in the *tuppaya* reveals that war is men's undertaking. Performing war dances boosts men's fighting spirit and give them the opportunity to practice combative moves. The dominance of walking and running surveying the terrain of the enemy. The terrain analysis gives way for the warriors to think of effective strategies on how to win against the enemies.

The clockwise and counter clockwise are movements in actual combat. They are reflective of the combative movements among opponents. Specifically, the step backward is defense movement while the step forward and the jumping are offensive movement. Interestingly, the shaking of the body is prelude to death of the enemy which congruently signals the victory of the war hero. Significantly, the accented notes signify heroism, the rise in emotion and perceived importance of the dance

### ***Contextual Plane***

The cause of conflict of war among tribes is dispute on property. The Applai concept of property is directly associated with land which is either individual or communal. Land is the most precious and important in all the group properties because it serves two purposes; (1) Individually, it directly supports life (economic existence) and acts as a social symbol that marks one's individual identity (social existence) (2) Communally, it strengthens social relationships and group solidarity. Land is an indispensable property that determines the survival of the individual, family or group in Applai community.

### ***Axiological Plane***

For centuries, war dance played a significant part in the lives of the Applai. This is a sheer proof that even before the conquerors arrived, the indigenous Filipinos danced to celebrate a successful hunt or harvest and present a great victory (Crawford, 2013). The Applai concept of communal life emanates from their concept of group life as evidenced in the communal ownership of the land. The communal properties are factors that lead to the maintenance of group solidarity and harmony

## **Conclusion And Recommendations**

In conclusion, the semiotic analysis of Applai dances significantly serve as a popular medium of dramatic expression and entertainment that reflects the tribe's personality, culture, community and worldview. The dances are symbolic – filled with embedded meanings that articulate their identity, relationships and thoughts, as well as moods, motivation and attitudes. The steps, costumes, musical instruments and musical notations shape a continuum of meanings that reflect their innermost mind and soul. They also communicate unspoken information about their relationship with nature, their ancestors, their Supreme being and with one another. While the communicative potency of their dances has withstood the test of time, there is now a need to sustain the practices that transmit and maintain these dances and address the threats and challenges for their transmission and preservation.

In view of the foregoing findings and conclusions, the following are recommended:

The National Commission for Culture and the Arts, Local Government Unit of Solana as well as private and civic groups with advocacy of preserving indigenous dances should help the Applai in transmitting their dances by establishing School of Living Traditions and other forms of support. Additionally, the young and educated Applai members should help in preserving and transmitting their dances through available technology and internet platforms to guarantee the continuation of their culture and traditions. The Department of Education and Higher Education Institutions must help in preserving and transmitting the Applai dances including their costumes, musical instruments and the like through effective integration of these dances in the curriculum and crafting instructional materials for subjects such as MAPEH and Araling Panlipunan.

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