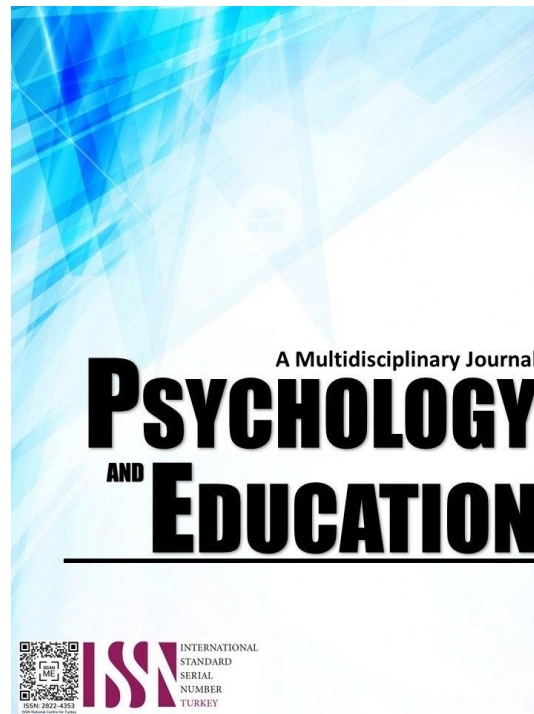


# THE STORY BEHIND THE NATIVE DANCES IN THE PROVINCE OF TAWI-TAWI: TRANCENDING CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING



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## The Story Behind the Native Dances in the Province of Tawi-Tawi: Trancending Cultural Understanding

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### Abstract

This study aimed to discover the historical background of cultural dances in *Tawi-Tawi*, namely, *Lunsay, Igal, Tariray, Linggisan, Langka budjang, Igal mag Jin, Igal Tawti, Igal ma kibut, Igal ma Boh and kuntaw*. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions: What is the origin of these dances, meaning, the materials used, and how is it being performed? And what are the socio-cultural implications? This research study utilized a qualitative design. The respondents of this study were selected from knowledgeable dance expert natives. All gathered data was analyzed, translated into English, and presented in a narrative form. The study found out the following: dances were performed in socio-cultural activities, gracing good harvest, mimicking bird movement, a strong conviction that their illnesses are cured, economic problems can be solved, and guidance and protection from ancestors. Native materials used such as *malong, pis yabit*, pieces of cloth in any native color; and musical instruments such as *kulintangan, agong, gong, and tambuli. Janggal, sudlay bulawan* (gold plated comb), and *kalajugjug*. This study concluded that the origin of the dances basically is almost associated with nature and spiritual beliefs. This helped maintain cultural continuity and prevent the loss of important cultural knowledge and practice as it fostered mutual understanding and unity within the different island municipalities of the province of Tawi-Tawi. It is recommended that these dances should be preserved with the help of the LGUs and procedures are needed for uniformity of execution.

**Keywords:** *qualitative, cultural dances, descriptive, Tawi-Tawi*

### Introduction

Tawi-Tawi is an island province that is situated in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. Occupying the Sulu Archipelago and the Province of Lanao Del Sur and Maguindanao in central Mindanao. Its capital is the municipality of Bongao. The word Tawi-Tawi comes from the Malay word which is mean as “Jau” meaning “Far”. The province has a land area of 3,626.55 square kilometers or 1,400.22 square miles. Its population as determined by the 2020 census was 440,276. Tawi-Tawi previously was part of the province of Sulu. But on the 11th of September 1973 pursuant to Presidential Decree No. 302, the new province of Tawi-Tawi was officially created, separate from Sulu. ([bch.bangsamoro.gov.ph/bangsamoro-cultural-heritage/tawi-tawi](http://bch.bangsamoro.gov.ph/bangsamoro-cultural-heritage/tawi-tawi))

The majority of the Tawi-Tawi population is Muslims and belong to the Sama and the Tausug tribes. The “Sama” is the language that is being used by the Tawi-Tawians. Tawi-Tawi has rich in cultural traditions, beliefs system and practices and has been influenced by the present modernization. But their cultural beliefs and practices remained and difficult to neglect like performing a song (Ongkah) and other native dances. Tawi-Tawi is also known for its cultural dances, like Igal, Tariray, Langka Budjang, Igal tawti and Linggisan performed in many occasion like wedding.

As part of hospitality, these dances are sometimes performed to welcome the tourist to the province. These native dances are being presented as part of the tourism program.

Tawi-Tawi culture adorned with intrigue and allurements, showcasing through a vibrant celebration like the celebration of the founding anniversary of the province which they called as the “Kamahardikaan sin Tawi-Tawi” celebrated every last week of September. During this celebration, different cultural dances are being performed on day of the competition for the native dances in the province known as the “Agal-Agal Festival”.

Since Tawi-Tawi is the country’s major producer of seaweeds, one of their famous cultural dance competition is the Agal-Agal festival or (Seaweeds Festival), the festival aimed to promote Tawi-Tawi as the seaweeds capital of the Philippines. The dance is dedicated to the Tawi-Tawi seaweeds farmers. The event also sought to preserve and showcase the culture of the Sama, Badjao, Tausug and Jamah Mapun of Southern Philippines through a very colorful street dancing contest and the parade of floats using the badjao’s “lepa” as the main structural design. Participants of the said contest must have utilized the cultural dances of Tawi-Tawi which is the dominant dance form known as “Pangalay or Igal”. Dance

performances depict the life of the people who lives in Tawi-Tawi. These cultural dances show as the evidence of uniqueness of the Tawi-Tawi culture.

A dance is an expression of one's emotions. This is the output of how the performers or the dancers, choreographer conceptualized the beat and the rhythm of the music. Dance in the light of cultural preservation, authenticity plays a major role to the life of the Tawi-Tawian, in such a way that what they have been practiced and performed by the past ancestors should not be neglected and changed.

However, through the years these dances have experience changes brought by the modernization. Majority of the music were already accompanied by modern instruments. Thus, the authenticity is gradually diminished. Dances reflect and speak our cultural identity, hence, they should be preserved and practiced, yet, need to be flourished. This cultural modification is a common problem nowadays as such, the researcher wanted to explore the existing story behind the cultural dance of the province and making them significant towards the social and cultural life of the Tawi-Tawians.

### Research Questions

This study aimed to discover the historical background of 10 cultural dances in Tawi-Tawi namely, Lunsay, Igal, Tariray, Linggisan, Langka budjang, Igal tawti, Igal mag Jin, Igal ma kibut, Igal ma boh, and kuntaw. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. Where is the origin of these dances?
2. What is the meaning of these dances and how is it being performed?
3. What are the materials used and its significance in performing these dances?
4. What are the socio-cultural implications of these cultural dances as they regularly performed in every occasion?

### Literature Review

Ekombi dance is etymologically linked with the sea and all that is in it. The aquatic world remains the pivotal arena where movements are derived and expanded through a musical frame design. It also stated that the Okobo people have a strong linkage with the Efiks and the Efiks have great respect for the mermaids and there is a strong belief that her happiness or anger modulates the social conditions in the society (Ita, & Okon 2022).

In addition, Philippine folkdance on our current generation must not yield to the trends of acculturation. It also said that some of these folk dances are mostly seen during cultural performances, entertainment and cultural diplomacy exchange. And the opportunities and treats of utilization of technological equipment and advancement provide advantage and disadvantage for the people conducting folk dance documents. (Dominggo, 2018).

However, Okpala, N. (2016) stressed out that traditional music has been viewed as an indispensable part of and Igbo culture and Africa at large. It plays an important role in the life of Akpo people. Tradition music in Akpo, encourages healthy relationship among the people. Membership into Idu accommodates young men from the age of thirty including very senior ones irrespective of their social status, and this establishes a kind of symbiotic relationship among the members.

Furthermore, Folk dance is an integral part of the Filipino culture, example of these dances are the Singkil, Kuratsa, Itik-Itik, Cariñosa, Maglalatik, Tinikling, Kuaratsa and other dances. These dances are impeccably depict its people's values and their way of life and mirror the influence of hundreds of years under foreign rule. In addition, this study will provide a satisfaction on preserving people's culture (Santos, 2012). In addition, the road map of arts education emphasize that dance is in the process of continuous solution and development. The lack of readily accessible body of information is deemed as a major seatback of improving practice, influencing policy making, and integrating the arts into education system (UNESCO, 2006).

Another identified dances are "Manok-Manok" and "Salingan" a new dance in "Banwa" Labo in Ozamiz City. These Subanen traditional dances are indeed rich in culture, traits and customs which may contribute to the cultural identity of this indigenous people. Manok-Manok is a dance for all usually performed during social gatherings like wedding or baptismal. The dance is very unique because the performers imitate the action of a flying bird or chicken. On the other hand, the "Salingan" dance is known for a worship dance, in which it is mostly performed during "buklog" (pronounce as 'gbecklug') is the most colorful and expensive Subanen celebration. It is a rite observed after a happy event, such as good harvest but it is also held to commemorate a dead person so that his acceptance into the spirit world maybe facilitated (Berdon, 2004).

According to the people who lives in Menuvu island,

dancing for them is a tradition they want to keep as semblance of their own cultural community identity. They perform the cultural dance with a strong conviction that their illnesses are cured, economic problem can be solved and guidance and protection are continuously receiving. It also stresses that dance for them, help them attain their peace, to live with a good life, and gain strength that may benefit them spiritually and physically (Dulce, Pobre, & Buot 2000).

In the Province of Tawi-Tawi their famous dance is Pangalay a traditional form that predates Christianity and Islam in the Philippines Sulu Archipelago. The style performed with elongated brass finger nails (Janggal), arm movements that look like waves (Taut Taut) and various (Bunga lima) or hand gesture. (parangral.org).

However, in the study of Domingo (1993), the dance of the people or the island of Mindanao and Sulu archipelago in Southern Philippines. Arabic and Indo Malay influence are strongly evidence in this dances, these dances like Pangalay of Tausug and Igal among Sama of Tawi-Tawi are always intense and stately with the male dance out rightly ferocious.

Basically, dancers perform to the music accompaniment of assorted gongs made of brass. The gong is usually turn-in at the rims and have protruding center knobs which are stuck with the bare stick rubber covered end.

Some of the studies both local and international below help strengthen the concept of this study in which Sali (2022), concluded that due to the monotonous step and length. Lunsay could be boring and tiresome and the present generation could possibly neglect or do not practice this traditional dance the fact that technology gives great impact to the changing culture. She also stressed that transition and innovation of Lunsay could be soon be an evident because most of the cultural dance are now changing from traditional to modern style as accompanied with contemporary music. However, it is being concluded that as long as this dance is always valued by the old folks, this traditional and cultural dances is always highly honored.

According to Garcia (2020), the study found out that teaching and presenting a dance in any genre and most specifically folk dance requires fundamental knowledge and actual experience to accentuate its importance and contribution in the cultivation, expression and preservation of culture in one's country. In the same vein, standards, measures and norms are deemed necessary to set and to practice by physical education teachers in teaching and presenting

ASEAN folk dances to ensure the appropriateness and correctness of its usage. Thus, improve the quality of teaching of the physical education teachers which is tantamount to students' improvements.

In addition, Nigerian cultural dances are seen and treated as indispensable molders of characters of their nation, only then they would bear the emblems of unity of the federating units. Promoting Nigerian cultural dances as instruments of national unity is, therefore, strategic and crucial to mutual coexistence and sustainable development of the nation (Udoka, 2020). However, Lunsay is a group dance. Essentially, it is a coil or spiral of hand holding dancer. It is also a song and dance to be exact, the participants sing and dance at the same time. Lasting the entire night, the Lunsay is the most popular social activity and form of entertainment among the Jama Mapun, particularly among wedding celebration. The Lunsay in itself, is an attractive and intricate dance that could rank with the best among the choreographic and musical tradition of the Philippines (Casino 2019).

Furthermore, another dance is entitled "Kanimbahi or Tagwahaponan" it is one of the Bukidnon dances. A ritual dance for an expectant mother, this ritual dance is performed to ask for the blessings primarily for the child in the womb. It is their belief that if the baby is a boy, it has great chances of becoming the Datu of the tribe or a warrior. They believe that the child will bring good leadership and progress to the group if it passes through the ritual "Tagwahaponan". This dance is always performed in the afternoon in the belief that the guardian spirit being invoked who reside in the core of the ocean, blesses only in the afternoon (Tan, 2019).

Another dance is "Datun Julun" known as the hornbill dance it is a traditional dance of Sarawak kenyah women. It was created by the prince of kenyah called Nyik Selong to symbolize happiness and gratitude. This dance is usually performed during communal celebrations that greeted warriors returning from headhunting raids or during the annual celebrations that marked the end of the rice harvest season (Amir 2016).

However, "Singkil" is the most popular dance which is mastered by the Maranao young ladies and several institutional and professional dance troupes. Singkil is the most popular and admired among Maranao dances. The dance takes its name from the heavy rings worn by the female dancer around her ankles to keep time while she dances. It also added that the girl moves in and out of the bamboo poles that are arranged in a

crisscross formation and clack together in a unique, syncopated rhythm as she manipulates two elaborately designed fans. She represents a Muslim princess (Panarag 2015).

In the study of Amilhamja (2015) entitled “Five Selected Ongkah-Ongkah Anak-Anak of the Sama of Tandohbas: A Documentation.” She found out that folksong is very important to the Sama of Tandohbas. Accordingly, it expresses their feelings, emotion and appreciation in life. Aside from being a means of expression, the folksong is considered by the Sama as a recreation, an art done by every Sama who has knowledge about folksong.

The Sama despite their lack of education, are talented. They have developed their own expression of arts, their talent and their aspiration in life. Most of all they are peace loving people. They would sing their own folksong rather than indulge in activities that might trouble to them and their family. In addition, Pamansak specifically refer to a traditional dance form popular in the Sulu archipelago among the Tausug, Sama, Sama Dilaut/Badjao, Jama Mapun and Yakan. It is also known as the gandingan among the Yakan. Pangalay comes from the Tausug verb means “To dance”. The gandingan or Pamansak performance is accompanied by the tagunngguh, a gong ensemble consisting of three gongs of different sizes. Pamansak is a dance that characterizes by slow and flowing movement performed during the ceremonial gatherings of the Yakan elite and members of the royalty (Matilac, 2015).

Meanwhile, leaping, hopping and skipping are prevalent in Tinikling. Although in other countries, a 4/4 tempo is used, in the Philippines, the use of 3/4 tempo is sustained. Symbolism of the farmer’s perseverance was clearly illustrated by the dancers holding poles while the swiftness of tikling evading from the traps installed by farmers is portrayed by the dancers (Buot, 2012).

The Igorots remain identifiable with Filipino culture, largely because this pre-colonial civilization is still alive today. Although modernized, they still wear the traditional cloths on occasion, and continue to practice their rituals and traditions. Many of these rituals involving dance were popularized in the Philippines by the Bayanihan Philippine National Folk Dance Company, whose repertoire includes a suite made up entirely of the “dances of the Cordillera people.” Most recognizable of these dances is “Sayaw sa Banga,” wherein an Igorot maiden balances several clay pots on her head while whirling like a dervish. According

to Alejandro (2002), the folk dance is inspired by Cordilleran lasses fetching water from the river.

Furthermore, another well-known Tausug dance is the “Dalling-dalling” where handkerchiefs or fans are used. A singer usually accompanies the dance by describing the various movements of the dancer. The song is known as the sangbay and the singing, pagsangbay. Some of the songs used are “kinjung-kinjung” and “Dalling-dalling.” The development of the dalling-dalling is attributed to a native Tausug by the name of Albani, who became a famous proponent of the dance (Amilbangsa, 1983).

On the other hand, most dance forms in the Cordillera were originally connected with ritual activities. Rituals, in turn, were divided into those that were based on giving thanks, those associated with planting and harvest season, marriage, birth, and death; and others msky-dwelling and earthbound made through offerings of spirits, including the spirits of the deceased. A People’s History of Benguet defines it as “several and quite different feasts celebrated for the purpose of appeasing spirits of departed ancestors, curing illness, ensuring prosperity, and promoting social status in the community” (Bagamaspad, Anavic & Pawid, 1985: 94). This quite describes its similarities to most cultural dances in the province of Tawi-Tawi.

With regards to costumes, the cultural dances of Tawi-Tawi had a strong Javanese-Indian influence. For the female dancers it consists of a tight fitting blouse with a tight long sleeves called a biyatawi, loose pantaloons called sawal kantiu and a tabular skirt called patadjung which is and drop over the left shoulder and left to hang over the right hip. It also added that male dancer’s costume consists of a short jacket which is collarless and with tight long sleeve called a badjula, skirt tight long trouser called sawal kuput—mahaba a colorful handwoven sash called a kandit. (Jamair Vol, 33 1985).

In addition, the article “Ethnic and Non-Native Philippine Folk Dance”, countries of the world have their own culture and it is said that folk dances made it more colorful, beautiful, and vibrant that are a reflection of who they are and what they are. Philippines will not be left behind in terms of folk dances. Filipinos show such love and respect for the country gave birth to the development of the Philippine Ethnic Folk Dances (Jose, 2021).

However, according to the article about folk dances, folk dance, generally, a type of dance that is a vernacular relating to the common style of a particular

time, place, or group usually recreational expression of a past of present culture. In the article it is said that the term folk dance was accepted until the mid-20th century, when this and other categories of dance were questioned and their distinction became subject to debate (Kealiinohomoku, 2019).

## Methodology

The research study utilized a qualitative-descriptive design as it gave a comprehensive summary (Lambert, 2012) on the different cultural dances of Tawi-Tawi. This is also employing purposive technique as it purposely identifies the respondents that can give a full detailed information about the history behind the cultural dances of the province of Tawi-Tawi.

## Participants

The respondents of this study were 30 selected natives who are knowledgeable in the history of the different cultural dances. They were considered as native dance experts in the province of Tawi-Tawi. Most of them works as educators, some are engaged in culture and arts, and others were tourism officers of the municipalities under Tawi-Tawi province.

## Instrument of the Study

This study provided a guided-questionnaire questions and conducted interview with the respondents. The questions focused on the origin of these dances, the meaning of these dances and how is it being performed. The researcher used mobile phone for recording the conversation with the respondents.

## Procedure

The researcher presented a proposal on documenting the history of this cultural dances. Upon approval of the proposal from the committee on research in Social Sciences Department of the College of Arts and Sciences in MSU-TCTO. The researcher secured a letter of permission from the committee to be given directly to the target respondents. Questions focused on the historical background of cultural dances in the province of Tawi-Tawi. After the request has been approved the researcher immediately scheduled an interview with the respondents. And the conduct of the study covered almost three months due to the geographical location which is the province is an island communities.

## Ethical Considerations

Prior to the conduct of this study, the researcher asks convenient time to the respondents for proper face-to-face interview using informed consent which strictly observed confidentiality of the respondents' answers.

## Results

### Lunsay

Talking about the origin of the dance, Sir Agustin M. Togoanon expressed that the Lunsay is the dance of the Sama people it is a way of expressing the connection to the nature and also Lunsay is known as courtship dance that is originated from the municipality of Mapun.

Furthermore, Sir Aidin Ismael explained that *Lunsay* is originated and only performed by the native of Jama Mapun. He added that the *Lunsay* is the most popular cultural dance of Jama Mapun and mostly performed during celebrations like *Wedding*, *Paggunting* and *Pagtammat*. Some materials used during performing the Lunsay dance are the handkerchief, a stick or a piece of string for connecting the circle. The attire used can be casual, native dress such as *Sambra*. But nowadays, the Jama Mapun likes to wear *Tadjung*, *Sablay* for female *Suwa lahat*, *Badjuh Lapih*, with barung *Syabit* for the male dancers.

Moreover, there are various verses that commonly heard during the performance of Lunsay. According to Sali, (2022), during dancing, there are some routine of verses that can be heard. These following verses to be heard are:

Boys: "*Pilambuy dudun kasi*" (Let me praise you), "*pinuhunan pinudji*" (my lady friend).

Girls: "*Daa nuda sipat na*" (judge me not), "*nia tahati adat na*" (I'm still a stranger to you). Boys: "*Pilambuy Kadudunan*" (let me describe you), "*pinudji pinuhuna*" (my maiden friend).

Girls: "*Daa nadu pudji na adat sa tahati na*" (describe me not I'm still unknown to you).

Boys: "*Pilambuy ku subidan*" (let me extol you), "*pinudji binaida*" (my cherished friend).

Girls: "*Bong ko doman na nipat*" (know me first), "*ngadji nad ko adat*" (before speaking of me):

Boys: "*Pilambuy ikomayanag*" (your long wavy hair), "*nia lagu pinahayang*" (stay moist in the sun).

Girls: "*Daa du ko kiaka*" (ask not about a girls)," *kaam boho sikita*" (you have just met me).

Boys: "*Pilambuy patta haut*" (let me describe you),

“*pinihunan sinabbut*” (with the fair form”

Girls: “*Daa du kiaka nakay*” (ask her not, my dear man),” *boho-boho sumampay*” (you are yet a stranger)

**Igal**



Paramisuli Tidal-Amin, a current director of the CACRO explained that the *Igal* was introduced by Ligaya Fernando Amilbangsa in the year 1974. She added that, *Igal* is a traditional *Pangalay* of the people of Tawi-Tawi. She also affirmed that this dance *Igal* is a term used by the Sama; *pangalay* by the Tausug; and “*mag-mansak*” by the Badjao. The *Igal* should be performed solo preferably by a female wearing a native costume with attached *janggay* - a pointed metal or gold on the finger to enhance the beauty of the hand movement.

Furthermore, it should be done by authentic ways and with a smooth flowing of the arm movements, good posture and gracefulness and appealing aura “motion in stillness/stillness in motion”. Dir. Amin elaborately discussed some basic gestures and postures to be executed during dancing, to wit:

***Sinilayan***



***Sinilayan*** is the beginning or starting community gesture which the held in front tracing a small figure eight appears like a scooping motion. This is done in unison with the *palalay-lalay* or gliding/shuffling steps with the knees bent or *nilangkahan*, which implies the same characteristics position in the *langka* or martial dance.

***Sinagang***



***Pata’ut-ta’ut*** – or ***Sinagang*** is the arm pushing/pulling gently, or undulating and bouncing, wave-like, from the elbows to the fingers.

***Binalikul***



*Binalikul* is the arm folding or bending a short distance from the chest, hands alternately circling with the palms facing outwards.

*Magdambila*



*Magdambila* is the hand shifting from side to side, or from left to right and vice versa. The dancer execute the gestures freely depending on the movement.

*Nilambayan*



*Nilimbayan* is an alternate swaying movement of the arms, forward/backward at the side of the body, with the hands either overhead, head, shoulder, hip, or knee level (for crouching position).

*Nilambayan ni dakan*



*Nilimbayan ni dakan* is the arm stretched outwards from the chest, palm facing outwards. The body bended slightly slant or with sloping direction while the right or left leg is being forward while the heel is lifted.

*Nilimbayan ni bukutan*



*Nilimbayan ni bukutan* is the arm stretched backwards with both hands behind the lower part of the body or buttocks.

Meanwhile, according to Tawi-Tawi Tourism officer Mr. Pershing Taiyab, *Pangalay* is considered as a “temple dance” *Pangalay* is a Tausug term for “*Igal*” and it is known as *Dalling-Dalling* or *Mengalai* in Sabah. It is a traditional finger nail dance of the Tausug. He added that this cultural dance is originated from Sulu Archipelago. This *Pangalay* dance is characterized by elaborate body posture and gesture and the graceful arm and hand movement. *Pangalay* is basically pure dancing. A sense of anti-linear time persuades the slow, refined, meditative, elegant and almost hypnotic movement.

Furthermore, Nur L. Perong a teacher from TTSAT added that *Igal* is a popular festival dance in Tawi-Tawi and performed in wedding celebrations and a big social affair. The families in Tawi-Tawi luckily observed wedding celebration which may last for several days or week depending on the financial status and agreement of both families. Well common dancers performed the dance which the feasting is going on the music of the *kulintangan*, *tambol agong* and the *gaddang*.

Aside from musical instruments used, there are several important materials used by the native Tawi-Tawians in performing this cultural dance. Like the *malong*, a traditional tube like garment made of woven fabric that can be worn in some various ways. During dances the *malong* often used as a props. with dancers twirling and waving it on the air to create a visual effect.

Other materials can be used include a colorful fabrics such as the Sinama cloth, which is a hand woven fabric with intricate design and pattern. And the most important material are ornaments wore during dances such as *janggal*, *kalajug-jug*, and *sud bulawan* (gold plated comb) that are made up of bronze, silver and gold. Over all, the use of important materials serves to enhance the visual and auditory elements of traditional Tawi-Tawi dances, and to create a vibrant and dynamic cultural experience.

Meanwhile, Nursida Jaluddin staff at Sama Study Center explained in dancing *Igal* there are no wrong moves, all is correct, the only incorrect is unattractive body posture or feet on opposite directions. Like us dancers of *Igal*. One should know how to position the body, and should concentrate and don't look at the audience. It just looks on the hands, and motions of the hand, the fingers and the dance lead you. Also there are no incorrect positions or moves in dancing the *Igal*, as long as the dancers don't shake their hips. The dancers should move like a princess and follow the music, floating in and moving gently. Let the spirit and power of the *Igal* flow through your body.

### Tariray



According to Ligaya Baruk, a founder of Ligaya group in Sitangkai. He explained that Tariray “*Dikayuh iya igal-igal bay min saga ka mboan, bang angy aniyah iya nipag onan Tariray dance ituy pasal bay jaman dahuh yuk sigam aniyah konoh bay asaki, jari aa ma saki inaan alibut na bay panambalan iya doctor hospital, sah dalam na pain pahap. Jari dikayuh sangom bay aniyah amauppi ma sigam subay konoh ni igalan tariray boh pahap, na jari wae du magtuy ni hinang iya bay uppi inaan, na min deheh way isab pahap aa bay asaki inaan. Iyana min deheh poonan na bang angauy jari aniyah iya ni onan Igal Tariray. Bey ni paniyah maka bay ni hinang heh bay saga ka mboan tam heh bangsa Sama sumagawah, Tariray itu iya*

*poonan na, bey min lahat tam iyana ni onan Sitangkai. Aa sitangkai iya original tagdapu igal-igal ituy*". (This Igal dance is a legacy from our ancestors. The reason why Tariray exists because during those times, there was a person who suffered from sickness. That person had already visited all the medical doctors but was not even healed. Then one night, someone dreamt that this Tariray should be performed to cure the weak or ill person. Eventually, they performed Tariray after dreaming and the illness had been healed gradually. That's the story behind in performing of Igal Tariray. This was then performed occasionally by the Sama ancestors. Hence, this dance originated from Sitangkai. Sitangkai people claimed that Igal Tariray is theirs).

On the other hand, according to Sir Aidin Ismael, Tariray is a cultural dance. This dance is included in the Sama performing arts as a celebration of the conflict resolution between two groups. It is also an exhibition showing the bountiful harvest time of fishes and other marine creatures. For this, a lot of ladies from the Badjao tribe join the performance. It involves hopping, skipping and swaying of arms to show the happiness of everyone in the community. The Tariray dance does not have any materials aside from the native attire worn by the dancers it could be the native Sama Badjao dress, a combination of yellow and green color fabric or the Tausug native attire which is the *batawi*.

### Linggisan



According to Sir Nur L Perong, a teacher of TTSAT, Linggisan is a classified style Pangalay or Igal stimulating birds playing, searching for food or simply enjoying the gift of life or freedom. Linggisan is the session segments of the performer when dance as a solo number, it is accompanied by kulintangan music with a disturbed melodic pattern. Also, he added in performing the Linggisan the only materials that can be used while performing are the Sama Badjao attire which yellow and green are the colors of the attire.

On the other hand, Ismael Haibaton, tribal leader stressed, that this dance "*Bay time dahuh bang sahbuh kalaut bay ka mboan kami heh, kansang tandah heh sigam iya manuk-manuk Linggisan ni onan, landuh ahap leyang na jari wa sigam kahapan wae ni beyah-beyaan heh sigam iya leyang na heh sampay wae na ta hinang Igal-Igal, pearo bang ma ingga toongan iya bey tagnaan ma lahat Tawi-Tawi du mbal lang ta battah bang bey mindingga municipality bay maka tagnaan iya*". (During those times when the fisher folks went into fishing, they always saw the flock of birds called *Linggisan*. It was so beautiful when they fly and soar high in the sky as such those fishers follow the movements of this *Linggisan* until these movements became known as *Igal-igal*. However, the origin of this is not being identified on what specific

municipality this dance originated, but it is rest assured that this is a cultural dance of Tawi-Tawi.)

### Langka Budjang



According to Prof. Paramisuli A. Tidal-Amin *Langka Budjang* is a dance usually performed by the female Sama and Tausug Tribes classified under Muslim martial arts dance, the dancers imitate the fighting instances of opposite forces. Mostly dancers performing this dance wear a Tausug native attire the *batawi* or could be the Sama native attire that sometimes paired with the (*Pamaypay*), it depends on what attire mostly prefer by the dancers to wear. Other than that there is no other material use when performing the cultural dance *Langka Budjang*.

According to, founder of Linggisan cultural troupe of TTSAT Mr. Julie P. Jalilul *Langka Budjang* is one of the martial arts dances, and only female dancers can perform this kind of dance. The *langka budjang* is a cultural dance originated from the Tausug, specifically from Jolo Sulu, and was adopted by the Sama people of Tawi-Tawi as one of their cultural dances. And it is

## Igal Tawti

commonly performed in the occasions such wedding or even during the anniversary of the Province of Tawi-Tawi or the *Kamahardikaan* of Tawi-Tawi.

### Igal Mag Jin

According to Ligaya Baruk, “*Igal mag Jin, igal ituy ni hinang atawa ni igalan bang sahbū ma waktu ni paniyah iya pag igal jin, hati na angalaanan saytan ma baran, maka pangalaan sakki bang sawpama aniyah aa asakki kasumaan ni hinang du isab itu, bang sawpama aniyah sakki patikka ni lahat, hasupayea pa niggal iya sakki maka aniyah du isab lamud na tawal-tawl inggaeka hal mag igal*”. (This Igal mag Jin can be performed exclusively during the conduct of *Igal mag Jin*. In other words, this can be performed to outcast evil spirits from those who were possessed or to heal people when they were in the influence of bad spirits. As such, this can be done or performed through when bad omen or any destruction cause by natural phenomena).

According to Prof. Paramisuli A. Tidal-Amin. She emphasized that *Igal Mag Jin* is a human spiritual and mystical rituals. This is a cultural practice among the Sama and Sama Dilaut where sacred rituals are performed in a gathering held by family members due to problems like sickness, conflict and calamities. It is performed by male and female dancers as a supporting cast to performer invoking the aid of spirits to resolve the problem.

Some materials used for this ritual dance are the *tonek*, *kamanyan*, and ½ cloth its either green or yellow color.

Furthermore, Ma’am Nursida Jaluddin, added that *Igal mag Jinn* is a ritual dance introduced by the Sama Dilaut of Sitangkai, Tawi-Tawi. This is performed on the fourteenth moon to appease or drive away an unfriendly Jinn or bad spirit. The performers take turns dancing until one of them go into a trance. The ritual ends after the ritual leaders put his yellow handkerchief or *Pis* whips the possessed performers and performed a ritual prayer to revive them.



Jaafar Ninjahali explained that *Igal Tawti* “*Panagnaan aniyah bay amanah tawti, iya itingan ba inaan pangalingan kami bangsa Sama, jari banan saga ka mbooran ituy bey time dahuh mogos wae ni hinang kalalamihan, wae ni beyaan heh sigam iya aksyon aa bay abakat heh, sambil wae na iya tahinang Igal-Igal wae na jari ta hinang huhulmatan ma paglami-lamihan anginna saga pagkawin, paggunting maka pagtammam*”. (The *Igal Tawti* started in a case where one Sama fishers got strike by a catfish and, his action was imitated by the Sama ancestors for entertainment until it became a dance performed in every special occasion like wedding, baptism and Quran reading completion).

Ligaya Baruk discussed that *Igal Tawti* “*istori na igal-igal ituy, tagnaan na aniyah bay kapalihan heh dayng itingan sahbū bey sigam mag tibba, jari wae pain abakat iya lilla heh bay ni bowa amoleh heh saga seheh na, maka bay ni bowa ni aa atau anambal, bay nipatawalan hasupaya palaan iya bisa keket itingan, wae pain ni tawalan jari aa anawal inaan wae kasoran attuy mbal duiab atoggol wae na pakulang piddi na, hati na wae na angok iya tawal heh. Jari aa bay maka hadil, iya bay maka nndah pakaradjaan heh, wae kahapan sambal bay ni hinang heh sigam hati na angin drama inaan mag aksyon ameyaan bey luwa aa mabakat, maka aa anambal sambal wae ni lamuran igal-igal, iyana bey ni onan heh sigam igal tawti pasal poonan naiyah bay aniyah abakat heh tawti. Sambal bat naan wayna tahinang heh bangsa kami addat jari wae tahinang na iya igal*”. (the *Igal Tawti* started in the case where one Sama fisher man got pricked by a catfish during *Pagtabba*. He was brought by his fellow fisher man to a local healer to be treated. The local healer was possessed by a Jin and in just a short time, the pain that he was feeling suddenly gone and because the *tawal* was effective. Those who were present and have witnessed the situation started to imitate the action and dramatize of the man and the

local healer and they blended it with an Igal that they called *Igal Tawti* that until today it became part of the Sama culture).

According to Sir Agustin M. Togonon, *Igal Tawti* is originally from Tawi-Tawi, amusingly portrays the difficulties of catching *tawti*, or a catfish. The dancers wear a *Bahag* fashioned by securely tucking to the waists the rolled trouser legs of the *Sawwal* or *Patadjung*. On the other version, the fisher poisons the water and scoops up the dazed *tawti* with his bare hands, his big toe is pricked when accidentally stepping on the *tawti*. He expressed that this dance only performed by the male dancers.

### Igal ma Kibut



Prof. Paramisuli Tidal-Amin, discussed that *Igal ma kibut* is a kind of native dance to be performed by only a female dancer using a unique *kibut* (earthen Jar) as a primary prop. On the other hand, Ma'am Nursida Jaluddin uttered that this *kibut* (earthen jar) is used signifying innovations as it already considered as *Igal* innovative. Further she believed that a traditional *Igal* is only performed at the plane surface without using any materials that can lift the body of the dancer. Hence, using a jar to dance *Igal* is a modern artistic ways of dancing.

### Igal ma Boh



According to Mr. Mohammad H. Jakaria, a member of *Tambuli cultural dance troupe* and a staff at CACRO *Igal ma boh* is the cultural dance performed by the female dancers using a bamboo poles as their props. This is considered a classical dance of the native Tawi-Tawians. This dance is originated in Simunul island in Tawi-Tawi. When performing this dance female dancers climbing a bamboo poles while continuously dancing on the top of them. This shows off the articulate graceful movements of a highly respectable lady of the Sama tribes.

Furthermore, Prof. Paramisuli A. Tidal-Amin talks about the origin of *Igal ma boh* which is according to her this cultural dance is one of the most popular dances of *Siminul* it was originated and came from the island of Simunul. This dances are considered as difficult dance that requires balance alignment, strength, concentration and stigma. The variant is originated from the Sama of the island of Simunul, the female dancers atop twin bamboo poles borne on the shoulders of the two male dancers. She added this cultural dances required two male dancers holding a bamboo poles simultaneously or alternately. Furthermore, Prof Aming explained *igal ma boh* have no proper steps, the dancers only need a presence of mind, balance and concentration.

In addition, Atty, Pershing Taiyab. *Igal ma boh* or *Pangalay ha Patung* in Tausug is a cultural dance in Tawi-Tawi characterized by the solo female dancer keeping their balance in a bamboo pole and two male dancers caring the bamboo poles above their shoulder. This dance conveys a message of a Sama woman dancing on a sail boat. Also he added this dance originated and introduced by the Sama of Tawi-Tawi. Particularly from the island of Simunul.

### Kuntaw



According to Sir. Nur Perong, *kuntaw* is a dance of self-defense resembling the martial arts of China, Japan and Burma. This dance originally is the martial arts of the Chinese, but it was adapted and practice by the Sama and Tausug as the male *Igal* variation.

In addition, Mr. Julie Jalilul, added that *kuntaw* dance is only performed by the male dancers that utilized hands strikes, kicking technique, grappling and martial arts weapons, like *Barung*. And the *Badju Lapi* attire for their costumes with a pair of *Pis Siyabit*. These costumes usually a combination of white and yellow, sometimes they used orange color which appears common to all.

However, Mr. Mohammad Jakaria, affirmed that *kuntaw* is an ancient Filipino martial arts dances and one of Mindanao's best kept secrets. He explained *kuntaw* comes from the Malay word *kuntaw* meaning the "fist". The Muslim of Mindanao combine precise and gentle gestures of the fist with jumps, kicks and deep knee bending.

### **Socio-cultural Implications of these Cultural Dances as they Regularly Performed in every Occasion**

According to Mr. Toti M. Togonon, the regular performance of cultural dances in every occasions in Tawi-Tawi has several implications, both culturally and socially. Culturally, the regular performance of cultural dance helps to preserve and promote the unique cultural heritage of the province of Tawi-Tawi. By performing this dances on regular basis, the people of Tawi-Tawi are able to keep their cultural traditions alive and ensure that they are passed down to the future generation.

Furthermore, he added that this helps to maintain cultural continuity and prevent the loss of important cultural knowledge and practice. Socially, the regular performances of cultural dances help to build a sense of community and social cohesion among the people of Tawi-Tawi. By coming together to perform this cultural dance, people from different communities can build relationship, promote understanding and foster a sense of unity. This can be particularly important in a province like Tawi-Tawi. Which is made up of many different island and municipalities. Additionally, the regular performance of cultural dance can have economic impact in revenue for the local economy. This can help to support local businesses and create job opportunities for people in the province.

## **Discussion**

The cultural dances of Tawi-Tawi is usually associated with nature. Specifically, it is formed during gracing good harvest, mimicking birds like *linggis* (heron), and connecting with ancestral spirits. These types of dances originated or formed in a Sama dominant settlers like municipality of Sitangkai and Simunul. These dances have no formal procedures because like other cultural dances in the Philippines, these dances are performed with a strong conviction of curing illnesses and improving economic condition in life. This can be confirmed on the statement of Dulce, Ma. Z., et al (2000) that Menuvu people perform the cultural dance with a strong conviction that their illnesses are cured, economic problem can be solved and guidance and protection are continuously receiving. It also stresses that dance for them, help them attain their peace, to live with a good life, and gain strength that may benefit them spiritually and physically.

## **Conclusion**

This study concluded that the origin of the dances basically is almost associated with nature, spiritual beliefs and mimicking on movements of common birds and most of these dances are coming from Sitangkai and Simunul island municipalities. Native musical instrument is very significant as it accompanies on the movement or gestures of the dances. The rhythm of music played exacts opposite to the gestures of the dancers. This helps maintain cultural continuity and prevented the loss of important cultural knowledge and practice as it fosters mutual understanding and unity within the different island municipalities of the province of Tawi-Tawi.

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