



The Enchantment of the *Loh Boyo* Dance Performance by Srimpi Dance Studio in Pemalang Regency

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Abstract

This research aims to explain the form of performance and investigate the aesthetic appeal of the *Loh Boyo* dance at the Srimpi Dance Studio in Ampelgading District, Pemalang Regency. The study uses a qualitative method along with an ethnochoreology approach. The theoretical concepts applicable in this research include the theory of performance form by Soedarsono, the theory of performance aesthetics by Jazuli, and the theory of agency by Alfred Gell. The data collection methods used are observation, interviews, and documentation. To get the validity of data, triangulation of sources and methods was used, and data were analyzed by employing data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. The research findings indicate that the *Loh Boyo* dance performance comprises nine core working components theme, dancers, movements, accompaniment, costume, makeup, floor patterns, performance space, and lighting. The beauty of the *Loh Boyo* dance is represented by the unique movements dictated by the crocodile-like motion, a diverse pattern on the floor, energetic music, and original costumes, which help to create a powerful visual impression and aesthetic worth. These characteristics intensify the emotional appeal of the audience and symbolize the cultural recommendations of the coastal community in the Ampelgading district.

Keywords: *Loh Boyo* Dance, performance form, Charm, Ethnochoreology, Srimpi Dance Studio

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INTRODUCTION

Pemalang is a regency in north-central Java (Pantura). It borders the east with Pekalongan City, the west with Tegal City, and the south with Purbalingga Regency. Pemalang Regency is rich in artistic potential that can be explored, and one of these potentials is dancing. Several dances have been developed as the Pemalang Regency's iconic symbol because of the prolific involvement of the numerous dance studios in the area. These dance studios have brought about new modes of dance that have boosted the social activities of the coastal people. Pemalang also has numerous dance studios distributed throughout its different areas, and one of the dance studios still producing new dance pieces to this day is the Srimpi Dance Studio, which remains very much alive in the territory of Pemalang Regency.

Srimpi Dance Studio was established on 28 October 1991, and officially signed on 18 September 1997 in Pemalang Regency. Srimpi Dance Studio is located at Ujunggede Village, in Ampelgading District, Pemalang Regency, and is headed by Mrs. Hj. Ely Prihatin, S.Sn. This studio has developed new dances like the Denok Widuri, the Silakupang (Sintren, Lais, Kuntulan, and Kuda Kepang), the Nyi Widuri, the Pesona Kain Goyor, and other dances. Loh Boyo dance is a new dance style that Mrs. Ely Prihatin developed. Dance is an art form that comes to the senses through sight and is experienced through movements of the body, and this involves frequent movements of the feet and hands with musical rhythm recorded through hearing (Dewi, 2017).

The Loh Boyo dance has its own unique characteristics. At first glance, all eyes are drawn to the strikingly colorful costumes resembling white crocodiles with complete crocodile heads and tail costumes. The audience will be amazed after witnessing the performance of the Loh Boyo Dance, not only because of the costumes

but also due to the strong, powerful dance movements and the hand gestures resembling a crocodile's mouth, which are one of the distinctive features of the Loh Boyo Dance. Alongside this, the dynamic movements used to depict the harsh and brutal life of the white crocodile express a strong and vivid impression.

According to the appeal and unique performance structure of the Loh Boyo Dance, researchers are interested in conducting research on the Loh Boyo Dance at the Srimpi Dance Studio in Ujunggede Village, Ampelgading District, Pemalang Regency, specifically on the Loh Boyo Dance, as well as studying the charm and form of the Loh Boyo Dance performance. This happens due to the fact that the Loh Boyo Dance is currently frequently used as a representative in various competitions and has won various titles. The findings of this research are reported in a descriptive style. Therefore, the preservation of cultural heritage in Pemalang Regency is also likely to be a contribution of this research to maintain its relevance amid the increasing trend of modernization.

METHODS

Researchers used qualitative methods to conduct their research. Qualitative research methods were used to describe the charm of the Loh Boyo dance. Research on the charm of the Loh Boyo dance encompasses both the performance form and the appeal of the Loh Boyo dance. The qualitative method is a relatively new approach, and its popularity is relatively recent. A qualitative approach is especially applicable to this kind of investigation since it allows for understanding the cultural manifestations in the natural setting in detail.

The approach to qualitative research is often called naturalistic or ethnographic and is quite popular in the domain of cultural anthropology, being increasingly much more popular these days in the analysis of traditional



performing arts (Sugiyono, 2022 p.16- 17). This research is also conducted under an ethnocoreological approach, utilizing a qualitative descriptive approach, and Srimpi Dance Studio along with the Loh Boyo dance form, are the subjects of this study. The textual exposition and the contextual explanation of ethnic dances can be performed with the help of ethnocoreology because it is an interdisciplinary direction of research (Supanto & Paranti, 2024).

The subject of this study is the Loh Boyo dance, which is performed in a competition at Universitas Semarang. The primary data refers to the data that has been gathered in the field, whereas secondary data is data in the form of existing documents ((Sugiyono, 2022). Data sources refer to the subjects from which the researcher may collect research data, whether by interview or questionnaire. The respondents refer to people who answered the questions, either in written or spoken form (Sujarweni, 2025).

Data collection involved the use of participant observation, structured and unstructured or spontaneous interviews, and documentation that involved taking photographs and videos of the Loh Boyo dance. Observation is a method that is employed to observe an object, which could be a person, an environment, or a scenario, carried out carefully and systematically, and documenting the findings accurately and precisely using various recording methods (Sugiyono, 2018).

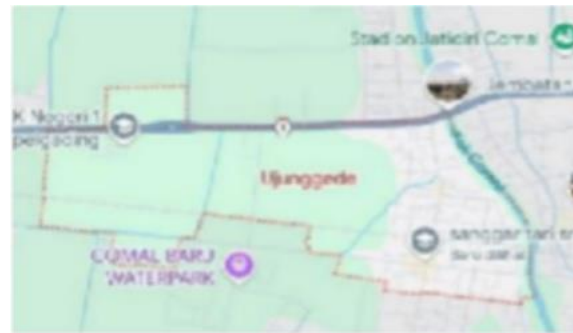
According to Sugiyono (2022), in qualitative research, data is influenced to be valid when there is no disparity between what the researcher reports and what took place in what the researcher is examining. Data validity is ensured through the use of both method and source triangulation. The researcher collects data through direct observation of the performance and by cross-checking responses obtained from different sources using the same

set of questions. The received data is placed in categories based on the key topics and created in a matrix to help the researcher notice patterns of connections between one aspect and another that are called the data presentation (Sujarweni, 2025). Techniques of data analysis include data reduction, presentation of data, and conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Srimpi Dance Studio in Ujunggede Village, Pemalang Regency

Srimpi Dance Studio is a dance studio located in the village of Ujunggede, within the Ampelgading District, Pemalang Regency. It serves as an education center on traditional



dance.

Picture 1. Map of Ujunggede Village

This studio keeps on preserving and developing the traditional Javanese dances and the dances with high cultural value, including Srimpi and various regional dances. The studio was opened to provide a platform where traditional dance could be taught and locals could access dance education. Moreover, the studio serves as a learning venue where young individuals can learn and advance their dancing skills in a non-formal setting.

This studio is known for its diverse dance performances, which have become part of the local culture, including Loh Boyo Dance and Denok Widuri Dance. Besides dancing, the studio often performs artistic shows at one of the traditional events, such as weddings and

cultural festivals. Besides their emphasis on dance, Srimpi Dance Studio also has makeup and costume services called Srimpi Wedding Gallery to support the organization of traditional-themed wedding ceremonies.

The Origins of Loh Boyo Dance The Loh Boyo dance was first introduced in 2011 in a parade and was made by Mrs. Hj. Ely Prihatin, S.Sn. Then, in 2023, the dance of Loh Boyo was re-enacted as a creative dance. The Loh Boyo Dance was influenced by one of the village folklores of LeBoyo village within Losari Village, Ampelgding Subdistrict, Pemalang Regency. The dance portrays the life of a group of white crocodiles inhabiting the banks of the Comal River.

The Performance Form of the Loh Boyo Dance This paper assesses the charm of Loh Boyo dance by examining its performance structure through an ethnocoreological perspective. This paper applies ethnocoreology to the Loh Boyo dance performance style at the Srimpi Dance Studio in Ampelgading district, Pemalang Regency. Loh Boyo dance comprises nine key elements of performance, which entail the following:

1. Theme

The Loh Boyo dance is a literary theme, a legend that narrates about a white crocodile. The Loh Boyo dance theme was founded on a popular story in LeBoyo Hamlet, Losari Village, a hamlet in the Pemalang Regency. Non-literary dances are developed based on the beauty of their movements, including space, time, and energy, and do not present any specified message or narrative (Septiyan, 2018). The elements of the Loh Boyo dance performance that could illustrate the theme of the dance include: movements, accompaniment, costumes, makeup, and the dancers' expressions.

2. Dancer

The dance is mainly performed by women between the ages of 18 and 24 since these are the ages when those dancing maintain a youthful look, striking, and in good shape. Nevertheless, the Loh Boyo dance can also be danced by women of any age, including children, adults, and older women.

3. Movement

Elements of movement include body movements such as postures. They are categorized into hand, foot, body, and head movements (Sarifah & Indriyanto, 2018). The steps in the Loh Boyo dance imitate the crocodile's steps. The Loh Boyo Dance utilizes a wide range of movements from Surakarta. The movements of the Loh Boyo Dance entail the following: kengser maju Boyo, Boyo mlaku, mlaku telu Boyo, Boyo bingung, Boyo nglangi, Boyo nyerang, boyo ribut, ketiban pohon, boyo sedih, manembah or begging, gaining strength or ngreksa diri and Boyo bungah.

4. Accompaniment

The Loh Boyo dance accompaniment uses a set of gamelan instruments, including bonang barung, bonang penerus, demung, saron, kenong, kethuk, kempul, gong, kendang gede, and kendang ciblon. This accompaniment uses a melody originally written in the slendro scale but later changed to pelog by the composer, as revealed in an interview with composer Mr. Tri Budi Arsono.

5. Costume

The Loh Boyo dance features costumes in white, red, black, and gold colors to reflect the personality of the white crocodile. The attire includes white cuffs, white trousers, gold camisole, white and silver rapek wiru, jarik bokongan or triangular back rapek, black front rapek or ilat-ilatan, belt, Boyo necklace, slack Boyo neck cover, earrings, Boyo fin-shaped



wristbands, Boyo fin-shaped ankle bracelets, Boyo tail, and Boyo head. All these are the components of the costume that is worn during the Loh Boyo Dance.

6. Make up

The Loh Boyo makeup involves the application of corrective makeup. The cosmetic items involved are: skin preparation with moisturizer or moisturizing cream, primer, foundation, contour, loose powder, pressed powder, blush, eyeshadow, eyeliner, eyebrow pencil or eyebrow pomade, glitter, gray or brown soft lenses, eyelashes, and red lipstick.

7. Floor pattern

Floor patterns are the lines on the floor, or the paths of movement taken or made by the dancers, and they may be straight or curved lines. Based on these two categories of lines, different figures can be formed on stage, including zig-zag, diagonal, curved, and other kinds of lines (Jazuli, 2014).

8. The Performance venue

The performance area where the Loh Boyo dance was delivered is quite spacious since the Loh Boyo dance costumes possess their tails of very long lengths (Kusmayati in Supanto & Paranti, 2024).

9. Lighting

Lighting must also be carefully considered. However, this refers not to general lighting, but specifically to stage lighting. The use of special lighting, such as spotlights, is highly recommended to enhance the performance.

The Enchantment of Loh Boyo Dance

The Loh Boyo dance requires flexibility, balance, synchronized movements among dancers, and well-conditioned muscles. The transitions between movements are executed smoothly yet

powerfully, reflecting a deep mastery of dance technique.

The charm of Loh Boyo dance is built on three main aspects according to Alfred Gell's theory of agency, which are:

1. Agent and patient

The performer is a performer who interprets the personality of the crocodile, and the viewers play the role of a patient who receives the feeling. According to Gell, an artist can recreate how the artwork is created and should come up with a creative agency that surpasses their being, provides grounds, and possesses cumulative authority in the name of the artists who exercise technical skills (Fitriana dkk., 2020).

2. Enchantment and extradaily technique

The enchantment of the Loh Boyo Dance emerges through the combination of dramatic movements, dynamic floor patterns, rhythmic gamelan music, unique crocodile-shaped costumes, and the coastal folklore it portrays. This performance transports the audience into an extraordinary experience beyond daily life. Meanwhile, extradaily technique is reflected in the dancers' movements that go beyond ordinary bodily actions, such as rolling, jumping, arching positions, and the "penari naik" (rider) attraction. These require strength, flexibility, balance, and strong coordination.

1. The Charm of Movement

Extradaily technique refers to the use of movement techniques that are unusual or go beyond everyday bodily activities. In the Loh Boyo Dance, the application of extradaily technique is highly dominant, both in terms of movement technique and mastery of floor patterns. The dancers' movements involve a high level of physical ability, such as spinning the body during the ketiban pohon sequence, jumping while bowing down, rolling in the Boyo

bingung sequence, as well as arching movements that resemble a crocodile gliding in water. These movements require flexibility, balance, strong teamwork, and well-trained muscular strength. In addition, transitions between movements are performed smoothly yet powerfully, reflecting deep mastery of dance techniques. The movements demand unity, shared feeling, and equal power among all dancers.

The Loh Boyo Dance includes several movements that require complex techniques and maintain unity among the dancers. In addition to the rolling movements, the Loh Boyo Dance's attraction movements are performed with quite complex techniques, where the most important support is leg strength and balance. The movement of one dancer climbing onto another dancer creates a halo effect, evidenced by the audience's applause or shouts when the dancer performs this movement. Other movements that require complex techniques include rolling, rolling, and the jengkeng begagah movement, along with the movement of playing the crocodile head in a unified, powerful manner.

The initial attraction movement begins with one dancer in front with a strong horse stance and arms crossed forward to form an open crocodile mouth, then two dancers on the right and left sides hold the hands of the dancer who will climb, and one dancer behind helps the dancer lift his body up to the dancer. The dancer being climbed requires strong leg strength so that his body is raised and leans forward slightly.

The movements of the Loh Boyo Dance are complex, such as rolling, "jengkeng begagah," and the rider attraction that creates a dramatic effect. The sharp head movements of the crocodile head address demand unity and equal power among dancers to appear alive.

- The Charm of Floor Patterns

In terms of floor patterns, the dancers dynamically shift formations, such as circles representing water, diagonals to indicate conflict between characters, and zigzags depicting tension. These intricate floor patterns require precise spatial arrangement to ensure all movements remain synchronized, harmonious, and aesthetically appealing. This is what enhances the charm of the Loh Boyo Dance and captivates the audience. Dynamic floor patterns require extra-daily techniques, where dancers must pay attention to precision of movement, music, and synchronization to create a beautiful floor pattern.

In the Loh Boyo Dance, floor patterns are carefully arranged to enhance the atmosphere of the story and create a captivating visual appeal for the audience. These floor patterns are part of the performance's charm, providing a variety of movements that prevent monotony and emphasize the character of the dancers' movements. During the performance, the dancers create various floor patterns, including circles, diagonals, zigzags, and straight lines. Circular patterns are typically used to depict the dynamic and fluid movements of aquatic creatures following the flow of the water. Meanwhile, diagonal and zigzag patterns are used to depict parts of the performance that depict the tension or interactions between the Loh Boyo character and other characters. The regular and harmonious changes in floor patterns create a lively and moving performance, ensuring the audience never feels bored.

The beauty of the floor patterns in the Loh Boyo Dance is created not only by the dancers' positions, but also by the harmonious transitions between positions. Each dancer moves with controlled distance and speed, ensuring a neat and visually appealing formation. Furthermore, the combination of floor patterns and rhythmic musical



accompaniment enhances the dramatic atmosphere conveyed in the story.

With varied floor patterns, the dancers are able to bring the storyline to life visually, while simultaneously presenting an artistic beauty that is a key attraction for the audience. This is what makes floor patterns a crucial part of the charm of the Loh Boyo Dance performance by the Srimpi Dance Studio, Ampelgading District, Pemalang Regency.

- **The Charm of Musical Accompaniment**

The musical accompaniment in the Loh Boyo Dance is a crucial element that adds to the performance's appeal. The accompaniment is derived from Javanese gamelan, featuring instruments such as the kendang, gong, kempul, demung, saron, kenong, and bonang. The gamelan music has a dynamic rhythm that follows the dance's storyline. When the dance enters a tense section, the music becomes fast and loud, while when the scene calms down, the music becomes slower and softer. These changes in tempo help create an atmosphere that matches the dancers' movements and the storyline.

In addition to enhancing the atmosphere, the musical accompaniment also serves to regulate the rhythm of the dancers' movements. Through the beats of the drums and other instruments, the dancers can determine when to move quickly, when to pause, or when to shift positions. The harmony between movement and accompaniment makes the performance visually pleasing and comfortable for the audience. Furthermore, the distinctive gamelan music creates a traditional atmosphere that reinforces the local cultural feel of the Loh Boyo Dance. The accompaniment that is in harmony with the movements and story is what ultimately adds to the charm of the performance, making the audience not only enjoy the dance

movements, but also get lost in the musical atmosphere presented.

- **The Charm of Costumes**

The Loh Boyo Dance Costume is a costume specifically designed for the Loh Boyo Dance and cannot be worn by other dances. The Loh Boyo Costume is unique in its white color, a nod to the crocodile in the legend of Dusun LeBoyo. The uniqueness of the Loh Boyo Dance Costume lies in its shape, which resembles a white crocodile. The allure of the Loh Boyo Dance Costume lies in its crocodile tail and crown.

This crocodile head costume is one of the icons of the Loh Boyo Dance, making it look incredibly realistic, featuring the white crocodile that lives in the Comal River. The crocodile head is clearly depicted like a real crocodile, with eyes, nostrils, scales, and sharp teeth. The crocodile's tail is made with a scaly and sharp motif like thorns. To wear the crocodile's tail, it is made by tying a rope, then the rope is tied around the dancer's waist and tied with a belt. This crocodile's tail is very influential in the charm of the Loh Boyo Dance.



3. Hello effect

The iconic white crocodile costume makes a powerful first impression on the audience. The dance has been awarded several times, both at provincial and national awards, and this has made it an achievement for the local arts in Pemalang Regency. Its body and physical charm

represent the power of local storytelling, which is artistically and dramatically shown, using the means of movement, costume, and expression:

Picture 2. Loh Boyo Dance Performance
(Documented by Titing Aprilianti, 19th
December 2024)

CONCLUSION

The Loh Boyo dance is a traditional artistic expression from Pemalang Regency, rooted in the local legend of Leboyo Hamlet. Serving as a cultural asset of the region, this dance reflects the narrative and values of the legend through its choreography and symbolism. The Loh Boyo dance is commonly performed at cultural events and dance competitions, both within the regency and beyond.

The musical accompaniment for the Loh Boyo dance features a traditional set of Javanese gamelan instruments such as the kendang, bonang, saron, demung, gong, kempul, kenong, and ketuk. The variety of tempos and dynamics of the melodies performed by the gamelan ensemble are neatly matched with the moves of the dancers, which contributes to the creation of an immersive experience and the enhancement of the story told through the legend represented.

The scene can also be used to formulate a cultural history where the people in the audience get to feel the historical role of the Loh Boyo dance through the smooth flow of effects of the choreography and the accompaniment of the dance with the music.

Based on the research findings and data analysis, it can be concluded that the Loh Boyo dance has a strong aesthetic value because it integrates major components of a performance, which are movement, music, costumes, theme, and makeup. In the context of the agent and patient theory, the attractions of the dance are also exposed to the fact that the characters are intertwined with each other, one of which is more dominant, that is, the Loh Boyo dancer,

and creates the dramatic homogeneity and draws the emotional participation of the performance.

According to the theory of Enchantment and extradaily technique, the performance can be attractive. They achieve this by using techniques of movement which is beyond normal life, for example, the presence of attractive movements and agility, etc., to give a magical effect that influences the audience to listen to them. The different and dynamic patterns on the floor also contribute to this charm that delights the viewers. Meanwhile, the hello effect theory implies that the right impact of the first visual perception of the costume character might impact the perception of the whole performance in a positive way. Overall, the charm of the Loh Boyo dance lies in the interaction of the artistic components and the response of the audience, which makes it an invaluable cultural resource used to preserve and develop traditional arts in Pemalang Regency.

The suggestion of this research, according to the study on the enchantment of the Loh Boyo dance by the Srimpi Dance Studio in Ampelgading District, Pemalang Regency, can be as follows:

1. For Srimpi Dance Studio

It is hoped that the Loh Boyo dance will be able to live on, as it is treasured and refined with choreographic improvements, frequent training, and enhancement of the storyline that it will be interesting and applicable to young people.

2. The Government of Education and Culture of Pemalang Regency

One form of support is through the provision of facilities, promotional activities, and guidance to traditional dance studios, contributing to the preservation of regional cultural heritage.

3. For Future Researcher

It is hoped that this research will be further developed by exploring additional aspects, such



as the social function of the performance, the symbolic meanings embedded in the movements and costumes, and the psychological impact of the Loh Boyo dance on its audience. In doing so, the study may yield more comprehensive and meaningful findings.

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