Analysis of the Form and Movement Techniques of Punjen in Topeng Lengger Sontoloyo Dance at Setyo Langen Budoyo Art Association

Lailatul Sifa
Dance Education, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia
lailatulsifa0304@students.unnes.ac.id

Nazla Aisa Syafira
Dance Education, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia
firacidut@students.unnes.ac.id

Miracle Cristiano Bandanga
Dance Education, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia
miraclebandanga@students.unnes.ac.id

Bagas Harta Sanjaya
Dance Education, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia
sanjayab854@students.unnes.ac.id

Abstract

This study aims so describe the forms and movement techniques of Punjen in the Topeng Lengger Sontoloyo Dance at the Setyo Langen Budoyo Art Association. The research problem in this study concern forms and movement techniques of Punjen in the Topeng Lengger Sontoloyo Dance. This research empolys a qualitative approach with a descriptive methode. Research data were obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation regarding Punjen movement in the Topeng Lengger Sontoloyo Dance at the Setyo Langen Budoyo Art Association. The analysis of the movement form encompasses body stance and positioning, direction of movement form encompasses body stance and positioning, direction of movement, movement patterns, use of space, and the sequence of movements found in the Punjen movement. Meanwhile, the analysis of movement technique encompasses the use of the body, energy, time, balance, coordination, and precision in executing each sequence of movements. The research findings are expected to provide a systematic overview of the forms and movement techniques of Punjen, a significant element of the Topeng Lengger Sontoloyo Dance. This research is also expected to serve as a source of information and documentation for dancers, instructors, art students, and the general public in understanding and preserving the Topeng Lengger Sontoloyo Dance at the Setyo Langen Budoyo Art Association.

Keywords: *Movement forms, Movement techniques, Punjen, Topeng Lengger Sontoloyo Dance, Setyo Langen Budoyo Art Association.*

Corresponding Author:
Lailatul Sifa
Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang.
lailatulsifa0304@students.unnes.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

Traditional folk dance is an art form that has grown and developed within the community and is closely linked to cultural values passed down from generation to generation (Soedarsono, 1999; Suharti, 2004). Traditional folk dance serves not only as entertainment but also as an integral part of the social and cultural life of its supporting communities (Schechner, 2020). Each region has distinct forms, movement characteristics, presentation patterns, and techniques, reflecting the cultural background of its people (Kusumastuti, 2017). This diversity gives traditional folk dance its distinctive characteristics, which serve as a regional identity. Over time, traditional folk dance can undergo adaptations without losing its inherent characteristics. Therefore, the existence of traditional folk dance needs to be understood and preserved through various artistic activities carried out by the community and arts groups.

One of the arts groups that plays a role in preserving traditional arts is the Setyo Langen Budoyo Arts Association in Wonosobo Regency. This Association serves as a forum for artists to study, develop, and perform various traditional arts that have developed in the community. The Association's activities are not only related to the process of practice and performance, but also provide a space to pass on artistic knowledge and skills to the next generation (Noer & Zulfiningrum, 2022). One of the arts developed and performed by the Setyo Langen Budoyo Arts Association is the Topeng Lengger Sontoloyo Dance. The Association's existence plays a role in maintaining the sustainability of traditional arts through the process of passing on movements, techniques, and performance forms to the dancers (Mulyana & Dwiningrum, 2024; Rochimansyah et al., 2025).

The Punjen movement is a movement performed by two dancers, a male and a female dancer. During its execution, the female dancer is positioned above the male dancer's body, requiring balance, strength, coordination, precision, and cooperation between the two dancers (Prasetyo & Wibowo, 2020; Subekti, 2018). The Punjen movement not only has a distinctive visual form, but also requires certain techniques so that each series of movements can be executed correctly. The form of movement can be seen through body posture and position, direction of movement, movement patterns, use of space, and sequence of movements (Hadi, 2014). Meanwhile, movement techniques relate to the use of the body, energy, timing, balance, coordination, and precision of the dancer in performing the movements (Bartenieff & Lewis, 2013; Sustiawati, 2018). This complexity makes Punjen important to study in more depth so that its form and movement techniques can be documented and understood as part of the characteristics of the Topeng Lengger Sontoloyo Dance at the Setyo Langen Budoyo Art Association.

Research on the Topeng Lengger Sontoloyo Dance has been conducted from several perspectives. Damaris et al. (2024) discussed the design of a video tutorial for the movements of the Topeng Lengger Sontoloyo Dance gagrag Njantinan, as a learning resource for cultural and civic literacy. The study outlined the movement material based on body parts, namely foot, hand, and head movements, and developed a material, technical, and pedagogical design in the form of a video tutorial. Meanwhile, Kusumawardani (2013) examined the symbolic meaning of the Sontoloyo Giyanti Dance in Wonosobo Regency and explained the character of the Sontoloyo Dance as part of the Topeng Lengger tradition. Other studies also discussed the existence of Sontoloyo and Punjen in the Lengger Wonosobo performance from a cultural and presentational aspect (Garbo, 2011; Nasihah, 2010; Rahayuningtyas & Bisri, 2024; Setyawati, 2021; Triswanto, 2023; Yusantari, 2017).

Based on previous research, studies on the Topeng Lengger Sontoloyo Dance have developed in the aspects of movement documentation, learning, symbolic meaning, and cultural context. However, studies that specifically analyze the form and movement techniques of Punjen in the Topeng Lengger Sontoloyo Dance at the Setyo Langen Budoyo Art Association are still limited. Therefore, this research is directed to fill the study section by describing the form of Punjen movement based on body posture and position, direction of movement, movement pattern, use of space, and sequence of movements, as well as analyzing the movement technique based on body use, energy, time, balance, coordination, and accuracy.

METHODS

This research employed a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. The qualitative approach was used to gain an understanding of the form and movement techniques of the Punjen in the Topeng Lengger Sontoloyo Dance at the Setyo Langen Budoyo Art Association. Descriptive methods were used to describe the research findings based on data obtained in the field. The focus of this research was the form and movement techniques of the Punjen in the Topeng Lengger Sontoloyo Dance.

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through interviews with artists who have knowledge and experience with the Topeng Lengger Sontoloyo Dance, particularly the Punjen movements. Secondary data were obtained from documentation in the form of photos and videos, as well as written sources related to the Topeng Lengger Sontoloyo Dance and the Punjen movements.

Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted directly on the form and movement techniques of the Punjen in the Topeng Lengger Sontoloyo Dance. Interviews were conducted with informants to obtain information on the form and technique of the Punjen movements. Documentation was used to supplement the research data in the form of photos and videos related to the Punjen movements.

Data analysis was conducted through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation were selected and grouped according to the research focus. Next, the data were presented descriptively and analyzed based on the form and technique of the Punjen movements. The final stage was drawing conclusions based on the data analysis.

Data validity was verified through source and technique triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from informants with available documentation. Technique triangulation was conducted by comparing data from observations, interviews, and documentation. Accordingly, the data obtained can provide an overview of the form and movement techniques of the Punjen in the Topeng Lengger Sontoloyo Dance at the Setyo Langen Budoyo Art Association.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

Punjen is one of the interesting elements in the Sontoloyo dance performed by Setyo Langen Budoyo Association. This movement features a lengger dancer being lifted and carried on

the shoulders of a male dancer, so that visually it looks as if the lengger dancer is stepping high above the other dancers. Behind this seemingly flexible appearance, punjen is actually a collection of techniques that require precise body positioning, clear division of tasks, and a great deal of trust between dancers (Wulandari & Rahayu, 2022). This discussion explains the Punjen technique based on the information that has been collected, by examining each stage from the perspective of body position, grip, weight distribution, and coordination between the dancers.

This analysis follows the sequence of movements, from the initial role assignment and formation, through the process of climbing onto the back, lifting to the shoulders, holding onto the lengger dancer's feet, standing, and finally walking and handling when the lengger dancer is about to fall backward. At each stage, the discussion attempts to explain not only what the dancer is doing but also the reasons for choosing that technique and the importance of maintaining strength, balance, and safety.



Picture 1. Punjen Lengger Wonosobo Movement
(Source : Documentation Archive, October 16th, 2025)

Division of Tasks and Structure of the Dancers

In the Sontoloyo dance performance, five dancers contribute to the Punjen movement variations, consisting of four male dancers and one female dancer. Each male dancer has a different role. One dancer, as the "pemunjen," functions as the dancer who lifts the female dancer on his shoulders and carries her. Another dancer acts as a support for the lengger dancer, tasked with helping her ascend. Two other dancers act as guards, holding the female dancer's hands as she ascends. This division of tasks demonstrates that this dance performance is designed for cooperation with a tiered structure. Each dancer complements the shortcomings of the other dancers, and the safety of the female dancer in the highest position is a shared responsibility (Subekti, 2018).

Analysis of Formation and Starting Position

The formation is arranged from front to back, with the dancers acting as the pemunjen at the very front. They assume the right tanjak position, which is the movement in Javanese dance. The choice of a front position is logical, as this is the dancer who will be standing and walking, carrying the full weight, so their movement should be unimpeded. Behind the dancer as pemunjen, a dancer serves as the initial support. He is in a low bow with her hands clasped around the pemunjen waist and his head lowered beside her body. This low bow is crucial because his body will provide a solid foundation for the ascent. Next, the two handholders of the lengger dancer stand upright beside the foot support, facing inward. This inward-facing position allows them to directly view the lengger dancer and the support.

Technical Analysis of Climbing into the Back

At the beginning of the ascent, two people on the right and left sides act as hand supports, each holding one of the lengger dancer hands. The technique involves gripping the palms of one hand from below, while the other hand holds the lengger dancer arms near the armpits. This arrangement serves two purposes. The palm grip from below provides support that the lengger dancer can use as a strong hand support as she ascends, while the armpit grip provides support as the dancer makes a small jump to climb onto their back. Once the lengger dancer is on their back, the dancer acting as the support for their feet slowly lifts their back so they can move onto their shoulders. The word "slow" here is technically crucial. If the height changes drastically, the combined center of gravity could shift suddenly and throw the lengger dancer off balance (Ahmadi, 2019; Laws, 2002). By lifting their back gradually, the lengger dancer has time to adjust their position, whether sitting or leaning, and also to adjust their standing support.



Picture 2. Form and Technique of the Ascent
(Source : Documentation Archive, August 25th, 2025)

Analysis of Support Strengthening Techniques Through Tanjak Movement

An upright body position with tanjak legs is the starting point for all movements performed by the pemunjen, the dancer who lifts the lengger dancer. The purpose of this position is to create a more solid base, and the open legs provide a larger support area. The greater the support area, the easier it is to balance the combined weight without losing balance. Bending @@(Laws, 2002) knees helps lower the center of gravity and allows the thighs to act like springs, absorbing shocks, while an upright body keeps the weight of the lengger dancer aligned with the spine and prevents the dancer's back from hunching (Haas, 2018). It's interesting to note that the tanjak movement is performed more than once. According to information obtained, when the lengger dancer is about to fall backward, the pemunjen's legs are raised again in the tanjak position to provide stronger support. This suggests that the tanjak serves as a base position that can be used to signal the completion of the movement. Essentially, the tanjak movement aims to stabilize the pemunjen's body as the lengger dancer ascends and descends.

Analysis of the Pemunjen Hand Technique on the Lengger Dancer Feet

Once the lengger dancer is standing, her legs are held from behind. The dancer's thumbs grip the knees, while the other four fingers are placed behind the knees. This finger placement creates a circular grip around the knees, with the thumbs supporting the front and the four fingers supporting the back. In this way, the dancer's legs are bound from both sides, making it difficult for them to move freely or slide. At this point, the dancer is completely supported by her shoulders, and the dancer is holding both of her legs for stability. Touching the feet is not only to prevent the lengger dancer from falling, but also a way for the pemunjen to feel the lengger dancer movements. By holding the knees, the pemunjen can sense when the body's weight begins to shift, allowing her to react before the movement becomes a full-blown sway (Wijaya & Kurniawan, 2023).



Picture 3. Placement of the Pemujen Hands on the Lengger Dancer's Legs
(Source : Documentation Archive, September 14th, 2025)

Analysis of the Lengger Dancer's Standing Technique on Pemunjen's Shoulders

Balance and courage are key for lengger dancer in performing the punjen movement. The balance of the dancer's feet significantly influences their body position while on the shoulders of the performer. Once both feet are on the performer's shoulders, the dancer's knees must be straight and not bent. The dancer's body position also influences balance. While on top, the dancer's body leans slightly forward to maintain balance and prevent falling backward. In addition to body position, foot placement is also important. Avoid placing the soles of the feet straight forward, as this can reduce the amount of support and affect balance. The correct foot position is slightly angled forward, with the foot resting on the collarbone. This foot position correlates with the body's slight forward lean. Correct foot placement ensures greater stability, allowing the dancer to maintain balance during the Punjen movement (Hidayat & Nur, 2021).

Coordination, Trust, and Safety Aspects

All of the techniques described above can only be successful if the five dancers move in a highly coordinated manner. This coordination involves no words and is built through continuous practice, as during the performance, the dancers cannot signal each other. Often, these signals come in the form of music, breaths taken, or directly felt hand pressure. Therefore, unity when performing punjen is not only about memorizing the sequence of movements, but also about feeling the position of the other dancers with one's body. In terms of safety, the punjen technique contains several consistent protective principles. The weight is borne by more than one dancer, the support area is covered in a certain way, height changes are carried out carefully, and the foot holds are made circular and secure (Wulandari & Rahayu, 2022). The trust of the lengger dancers in the male dancers is also important for safety, because if the lengger dancers feel tense or uncertain, they will have difficulty coordinating their movements. Therefore, doing enough practice and warming up the leg and back muscles for the foothold dancers is very important in preparation (Franklin, 2013).

CONCLUSION

From the discussion above, the punjen technique in the Sontoloyo dance of Sanggar Setyo Langen Budoyo Art Association can be seen as a collection of orderly movements. Each part, position, and holding method has a clear technical reason. The tanjak position is used to maintain balance and also as a way to return to the starting position. The front-to-back standing position distributes the weight well and also relieves pressure. Holding hands and knees provides control without disturbing the lengger dancer's movements. Furthermore, the decision to release the grip when the long dancer leans back demonstrates a good understanding of maintaining balance. Therefore, punjen is not just a beautiful performance, but also a body knowledge passed down through practice. It combines the artistic value of traditional dance with the principles of safety and teamwork.

REFERENCES

Ahmadi, A. (2019). Kinesiologi dan biomekanika olahraga serta seni gerak. UNY Press.

Bartenieff, I., & Lewis, D. (2013). Body movement: Coping with the environment. Routledge.

Damaris, B., Sukaesih, S., Kusnandar, K., & Khadijah, U. L. S. (2024). Rancangan video tutorial gerak tari topeng Lengger Sontoloyo gagrag Njantinan sebagai sumber belajar literasi budaya dan kewargaan (Studi participatory action research di Dusun Giyanti, Desa Kadipaten, Kecamatan Selomerto, Kabupaten Wonosobo). Information Science and Library, 5(1), 40–52.

Franklin, E. (2013). Conditioning for dance: Training for peak performance in all dance forms (2nd ed.). Human Kinetics.

Garbo, G. H. (2011). Lengger Wonosobo: Sakral dan profan (Tesis). Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta.

Haas, J. G. (2018). Dance anatomy (2nd ed.). Human Kinetics.

Hadi, Y. S. (2014). Koreografi: Bentuk - teknik - isi (Ed. rev.). Cipta Media.

Hidayat, R., & Nur, M. (2021). Analisis postur tubuh dan fleksibilitas sendi pada keseimbangan penari tradisional. Jurnal Keolahragaan dan Seni Pertunjukan, 7(2), 88–99.

Kusumastuti, E. (2017). Etnokoreologi tari tradisi Jawa: Perspektif bentuk, fungsi, dan makna. Pustaka Pelajar.

Kusumawardani, (2013). Meanwhile, Kusumawardani (2013) examined the symbolic meaning of the Sontoloyo Giyanti Dance in Wonosobo Regency and explained the character of the Sontoloyo Dance as part of the Topeng Lengger tradition.

Laws, K. (2002). Physics and the art of dance: Understanding movement. Oxford University Press.

Mulyana, A., & Dwiningrum, S. I. A. (2024). Lengger seni tradisional perekat nilai-nilai sosial budaya dan upaya pembelajarannya pada masyarakat Wonosobo. Ideguru: Jurnal Karya Ilmiah Guru, 9(1), 400–407. https://doi.org/10.51169/ideguru.v9i1.871

Nasihah, R. F. (2010). Kesenian tari Lengger di Desa Giyanti Kecamatan Selamerta Kabupaten Wonosobo (Skripsi). UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta.

Noer, F., & Zulfiningrum, R. (2022). Fungsi kelompok Langensari dalam upaya pelestarian tari Lengger Wonosobo. Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Komunikasi, 7(1), 9–26.

Prasetyo, A., & Wibowo, H. (2020). Biomekanika gerak pengangkatan tubuh (lifting) pada tarian berpasangan. Jurnal Olahraga dan Seni Gerak, 8(1), 32–45.

Rahayuningtyas, N. D., & Bisri, M. H. (2024). Fenomena trance pada pertunjukan tari Lengger Punjen di Sanggar Rukun Putri Budaya Wonosobo. Jurnal Sitakara, 9(2), 269–282.

Rochimansyah, R., Santosa, E., & Lastini, L. (2025). Fungsi tari topeng Lengger di Desa Reco Kecamatan Kertek Kabupaten Wonosobo. Jurnal Bahtera: Jurnal Pendidikan, Bahasa, Sastra, dan Budaya, 13(2), 102–116.

Schechner, R. (2020). Performance studies: An introduction (4th ed.). Routledge.

Setyawati, L. (2021). Budaya tari Lengger dalam perspektif hukum Islam di Kabupaten Wonosobo. Al-Mada: Jurnal Agama, Sosial, dan Budaya, 4(1), 64–77.

Soedarsono. (1999). Seni pertunjukan Indonesia di era globalisasi. Gadjah Mada University Press.

Subekti, M. (2018). Struktur penari dan distribusi beban fisik pada atraksi tari gaya Lengger. Jurnal Estetika Seni, 5(2), 77–89.

Suharti, S. (2004). Etnologi tari dan dinamika seni tradisi. Cipta Media.

Sustiawati, N. L. (2018). Pengetahuan dan teknik dasar tari. ISI Press.

Triswanto, J. (2023). Implementasi cengkok vokal tari Sontoloyo dalam komposisi karawitan "Jaloyo" (Tugas Akhir/Skripsi). Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta.

Wijaya, T., & Kurniawan, D. (2023). Pengaruh kontrol proprioseptif terhadap kestabilan tumpuan pada seni gerak ekstrim. Jurnal Sains Olahraga dan Kesehatan, 11(1), 50–61.

Wulandari, R., & Rahayu, T. (2022). Aspek keselamatan dan pencegahan cedera pada teknik pengangkatan (partnering) tari tradisional. Jurnal Keolahragaan dan Kinesiologi, 14(2), 112–125.

Yusantari, D. R. (2017). Fungsi tari Lengger Punjen dalam upacara Nyadran Tenongan di Dusun Giyanti Desa Kadipaten Kecamatan Selomerto Kabupaten Wonosobo. Greget: Jurnal Kreativitas dan Studi Tari, 16(2).