

Gender Fluidity in Lengger Banyumasan: Interplay of Masculine and Feminine Elements in a Traditional Javanese Dance

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the intricate gender dynamics within the Lengger Banyumasan dance, a traditional performance art from Banyumas, Central Java. Known for its captivating fusion of masculine and feminine elements, the dance embodies fluid gender roles through movements, costumes, and interactions between performers. This research investigates how both male and female performers navigate and express gender identities, challenging conventional norms and highlighting the dance's role in reflecting and shaping societal values. The findings contribute to understanding gender performativity within traditional arts, emphasizing Lengger Banyumasan's continued cultural relevance amidst modern influences.

INTRODUCTION

The vibrant art form of Lenggèr Banyumasan has long been a cornerstone of the cultural landscape in the Banyumas region of West Central Java, Indonesia. This traditional dance-drama not only captivates audiences with its intricate movements and rhythmic accompaniment but also serves as a powerful expression of the region's rich heritage, blending masculine and feminine elements in a harmonious display.

Historically, the Lenggèr Banyumasan has been deeply rooted in the local community, evolving as a vital component of various rites and celebrations (Laksmi, 2022). The performances often take place during significant life events, such as weddings or harvest festivals, reflecting the dance's deep-seated connection to the rhythms and rituals of daily life. This intimate relationship between the art form and the local populace has fostered a sense of ownership and pride, as the Lenggèr Banyumasan has come to be seen as a quintessential expression of Banyumas' cultural identity (Sutton, 1986).

At the heart of the Lenggèr Banyumasan lies a remarkable interplay between masculine and feminine elements. The presence of both male and female performers, each with distinct roles and movements, creates a dynamic tension that lies at the core of this art form. The male dancers, known as "Lenggèr", embody a bold, energetic, and often playful persona, executing powerful stomps and acrobatic leaps that showcase their physical prowess.

In contrast, the female dancers, referred to as "Ronggèng", embody a more graceful, sensual, and seductive presence, their movements marked by fluid, undulating gestures and delicate hand motions (Sutton, 1986; Handayani et al., 2019). This juxtaposition of masculine and feminine energies not only captivates the audience but also serves as a reflection of the broader cultural values and gender dynamics inherent in Banyumas society.

The Lenggèr Banyumasan's ability to encapsulate and celebrate the coexistence of masculine and feminine elements is a testament to its enduring relevance within the local community. This harmonious interplay, rooted in the egalitarian and honest character of the Banyumas people, serves as a powerful symbol of the region's inclusive and accepting ethos.

The Lenggèr Banyumasan's continued relevance and evolution within the Banyumas region underscore the resilience and adaptability of this traditional art form. As the region navigates the challenges of modernization and globalization, the Lenggèr Banyumasan remains a steadfast beacon, preserving and reflecting the essence of Banyumas' cultural identity, which is marked by the seamless integration of masculine and feminine elements (Suharto et al., 2016).

The Lenggèr dance, a traditional art form originating from the Indonesian province of Central Java, has long been recognized for its captivating blend of masculine and feminine elements. The Lenggèr dance is characterized by the interplay between the masculine and feminine energies. The masculine aspect is often embodied by the male performers, who exhibit a bold and assertive presence through their movements and gestures. These movements are imbued with a sense of power, strength, and confidence, reflecting the societal norms

and expectations associated with masculinity. Conversely, the feminine aspect is predominantly represented by the female performers, who exhibit a more graceful, fluid, and delicate quality in their dance.

However, the Lengger dance transcends the traditional binary understanding of gender, allowing for a more fluid and dynamic expression of both masculine and feminine elements. The dance often features male performers who embody a more androgynous or gender-transgressive persona, challenging the conventional notions of masculinity.

The exploration of the relationship between the masculine and feminine in Lengger dance reveals the complex and multifaceted nature of gender expression within this cultural tradition. The interplay of masculine and feminine elements in Lengger dance is not merely a matter of physical representation but also a reflection of the deeper sociocultural and historical contexts that have shaped this art form.

By examining the Lengger dance through the lens of embodied performance, social constructivism, and intertextuality, we can gain a deeper understanding of how gender is constructed, negotiated, and expressed within the realm of dance (Shea, 2018).

The Lengger dance is a Balinese dance genre that is categorized as a social dance, performed by a group of female dancers called "janger" and a group of male dancers called "kecak". The dance is characterized by the interplay between the masculine and feminine energies, with the male and female performers embodying different qualities and roles.

One of the key aspects of the Lengger dance is the way it challenges conventional gender norms and expectations. Male performers may take on a more androgynous or gender-transgressive persona, blurring the boundaries between masculinity and femininity.

Analyzing the Lengger dance through the lens of embodied performance, social constructivism, and intertextuality can provide insights into the complex and multifaceted nature of gender expression within this cultural tradition (Christofidou, 2021).

The purpose of this research is to examine the gender aspects in Lengger Banyumasan art, with a focus on the expression of masculinity and femininity in the movements and costumes. Lengger Banyumasan is a dance form that is deeply rooted in the cultural traditions of the Banyumas region in Central Java, Indonesia.

Dance is often seen as a reflection of the culture and identity of the community that supports it (Nugrahaningsih, 2020). Similarly, the Lengger Banyumasan dance communicates the cultural conditions and values of the Banyumas people. The presence of dance in a community is closely tied to its cultural image, serving as a non-verbal language that can convey the identities and characteristics of the performers and their society (Nugrahaningsih, 2020).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous research on traditional dances in Indonesia, such as Janger in Bali and Manduda in Simalungun, has revealed insights into the relationship

between dance and cultural expression. These studies have demonstrated how dance styles and movements can reflect the values, beliefs, and traditions of the communities that practice them.

In the case of Lenggèr Banyumasan, the dance is known for its unique blend of masculine and feminine elements, which are expressed through the movements and costumes of the performers. This study aims to delve deeper into the gender dynamics at play in Lenggèr Banyumasan, exploring how the dancers navigate and embody both masculine and feminine qualities in their performance.

Lenggèr in Banyumasan draws on a rich cultural heritage, and its gender dynamics are intricately tied to the social and cultural context of the region. By examining the expression of masculinity and femininity in Lenggèr Banyumasan, this research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between gender, performance, and cultural identity (Nugrahaningsih, 2020).

Therefore this study aims to explore the gender aspects in the Lenggèr Banyumasan art, with a focus on the expression of masculinity and femininity in the movements and costumes of the performers. Although Lenggèr Banyumasan is deeply rooted in the cultural traditions of the region, it also reflects the fluid and dynamic nature of gender expression within the community.

The traditional Javanese dance form of Lenggèr Banyumasan is a rich cultural expression that has long been a subject of scholarly interest. Particularly intriguing is the way this art form navigates the complex interplay of masculinity and femininity, offering insights into the social construction of gender identity. This research paper aims to elucidate the theoretical and practical benefits of studying Lenggèr Banyumasan through the lens of gender, with a focus on how it contributes to the broader understanding of gender studies and the preservation of traditional arts.

Theoretically, the exploration of masculinity and femininity in Lenggèr Banyumasan can provide valuable contributions to the field of gender studies. The dance form's fluid approach to gender representation challenges traditional binary notions of gender, inviting a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of gender identity and expression. As Judith L. Butler and other scholars have argued, gender is a performative construct, shaped by sociocultural factors and embodied through bodily practices. The ways in which Lenggèr Banyumasan performers negotiate and challenge gender norms through their movements and characterizations offer a rich site for examining the performative nature of gender.

Additionally, the study of Lenggèr Banyumasan can contribute to the growing body of research on the intersection of dance, gender, and sexuality. Scholars have recognized the potential for dance to be a site of gender transgression and experimentation, where performers can explore and subvert societal expectations of masculinity and femininity (Christofidou, 2021). The ways in which male Lenggèr Banyumasan dancers navigate the traditionally feminine art form, and the strategies employed by female performers to assert

their own agency and authority, can shed light on the complex and multifaceted nature of gender and sexuality in the context of traditional arts (Shea, 2018; Christofidou, 2021).

Moreover, the practical implications of this research extend beyond the academic realm. By highlighting the nuances and duality of gender representation in Lengger Banyumasan, this study can contribute to the preservation and promotion of this traditional art form (Christofidou, 2021). As the dance continues to evolve and adapt to contemporary contexts, understanding the gender dynamics inherent in Lengger Banyumasan can inform efforts to maintain the integrity and authenticity of this cultural expression (Christofidou, 2021; Migdalek, 2009).

Furthermore, the insights gained from this research can have broader applications in the field of dance education and performance. Incorporating the study of gender in Lengger Banyumasan into dance curricula can foster a greater appreciation for the diversity of gender expression in traditional arts, challenging rigid gender norms and empowering students to explore their own gender identities through the medium of dance (Migdalek, 2009; Shea, 2018; Wilkinson, 2020; Christofidou, 2021).

The Lengger dance, a traditional Balinese art form, has long been a subject of interest for scholars exploring the intersection of gender and cultural expression. Previous studies have delved into the historical and socio-cultural dimensions of this unique dance, shedding light on the ways in which it reflects and shapes gender norms within the Balinese context.

One such study, focused on the Topeng Endel dance, a coastal traditional art form from Tegal, Central Java, provides a relevant comparative lens. The Topeng Endel dance is reported to embody the physical and attitudinal characteristics of the coastal community, including their openness, bravery, and directness. Similarly, the Lengger dance, with its distinct movements and performative elements, is believed to encapsulate the cultural identity and gender dynamics of the Balinese people.

In a separate study, the Janger dance of Bali has been examined, exploring its history and contemporary popularity as a social dance performed by both male and female dancers. The Janger dance, like the Lengger, offers insights into the ways in which traditional Balinese arts have grappled with and represented gender roles and identities.

These existing studies serve as a foundation for further understanding the cultural significance and gender representations inherent in the Lengger dance, a unique and iconic Balinese art form. In these previous analyses, researchers have demonstrated the capacity of traditional arts to both reflect and shape the social and cultural landscape, providing a valuable framework for the present study on the Lengger dance.

The previous research on related traditional art forms, such as Topeng Endel and Janger, underscores the relevance and importance of exploring the Lengger dance in the context of gender representation and cultural identity. That research has set the stage for a more in-depth examination of the Lengger, its historical origins, and its role in shaping and reflecting the gender dynamics

within the Balinese society. Moreover, these existing studies serve as a springboard for the current research, which aims to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on traditional Balinese arts and their sociocultural significance.

Research about Lenggèr Banyumasan also often explore the historical and social contexts, as well as how the dance reflects and shapes gender roles and expressions within the Balinese culture (Handayani et al., 2019; Laksmi, 2022).

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research approach, utilizing ethnographic methods to gather data. Field observations of Lenggèr Banyumasan performances in Banyumas were conducted, focusing on movement analysis, costume symbolism, and audience reactions. In-depth interviews were carried out with performers, choreographers, and cultural experts to explore their perspectives on the expression of masculinity and femininity in the dance. Additionally, secondary data from previous studies and historical accounts were analyzed to understand the evolution of gender roles in Lenggèr. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns of gender fluidity and the sociocultural implications of these performances.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Lenggèr Banyumasan dance, originating from the Banyumas region of Central Java, Indonesia, offers a unique perspective on the portrayal of masculinity in traditional dance forms. The dance is characterized by distinct movements that are often associated with masculine attributes, such as strong, assertive, and dominant gestures (Nugrahaningsih, 2020).

One of the defining features of the Lenggèr Banyumasan dance is the way in which male dancers adopt and embody these masculine roles. The movements are often described as being "firm" and "powerful," with an emphasis on dynamic and percussive steps that showcase the dancer's physical strength and control (Blackwood, 2005). This is in contrast to the more graceful and fluid movements typically associated with female dancers in Javanese dance traditions.

The male dancers in the Lenggèr Banyumasan dance employ a range of techniques to convey these masculine qualities. For example, they often use wide and expansive gestures, such as sweeping arm movements and powerful jumps, to assert their physical dominance on the stage (Handayani et al., 2019). Additionally, the dancers may adopt a more upright and rigid posture, with a sense of confidence and authority that is reflective of traditional Javanese ideals of masculinity.

The Lenggèr Banyumasan dance is part of a larger complex of performing arts in the Banyumas region that are often described as "folk arts." These art forms are deeply rooted in the cultural traditions of the local community and continue to be practiced and celebrated despite the changing social and cultural landscape of contemporary Indonesia.

The resilience and vitality of the Lenggèr Banyumasan dance in the face of these changes is a testament to the enduring power of traditional cultural

expressions to shape and reflect the values and identities of the communities that sustain them (Sutton, 1986).

The Lengger Banyumasan dance, originating from the Banyumas region of Central Java, Indonesia, is a captivating performance that embodies the essence of femininity. The dance movements, characterized by their softness, delicacy, and expressive quality, serve as a profound representation of the feminine spirit (Rumiwiharsih, 2023).

One of the striking features of the Lengger Banyumasan dance is the graceful and fluid movements of the female dancers. The dancers' bodies move with a sense of elegance and poise, as if they are effortlessly gliding across the stage. This gentle, undulating quality of the movements is a reflection of the cultural values and societal expectations placed upon women in the Banyumas region, where femininity is often associated with qualities such as gentleness, refinement, and submissiveness (Santosa et al., 2017).

The dancers' movements are imbued with a sense of emotional expressiveness, as they convey a range of emotions through their gestures and facial expressions (Sutton, 1986). This emotional aspect of the dance is a testament to the deep-rooted cultural significance of the Lengger Banyumasan tradition, which serves as a medium for the dancers to connect with their audience and convey the nuances of the feminine experience (Sutton, 1986).

The Lengger Banyumasan dance is a powerful representation of the culture's reverence for femininity, as the female dancers embody the idealized notions of grace, elegance, and emotional expressiveness (Sutton, 1986). Through the delicate and captivating movements of the dance, the Lengger Banyumasan tradition serves as a means of preserving and celebrating the unique cultural identity of the Banyumas region.

The Banyumasan Lengger dance is a traditional performance art that has long been associated with the Banyumas region of Central Java, Indonesia. One of the key elements that contributes to the unique identity of this dance form is the costumes worn by the performers. The costumes not only serve an aesthetic purpose but also play a crucial role in communicating the gender roles and identities of the dancers.

In the Lengger dance, it is common to have both male and female performers. The male dancers often don traditional Javanese attire, such as the beskap (a type of formal jacket) and kain jarik (a wrapped skirt), which are typically associated with masculine presentation (Nugrahaningsih, 2020). These garments, with their structured silhouettes and angular lines, help to accentuate the masculine physicality of the male dancers. In contrast, the female dancers commonly wear the kebaya, a traditional blouse that is typically worn with a long skirt. The kebaya, with its delicate, form-fitting design and intricate embroidery, helps to convey the graceful and feminine qualities of the female performers (Santosa et al., 2017; Sutton, 1986).

The use of these distinct costumes not only reflects the traditional gender roles within Javanese culture but also serves to reinforce the performative aspects of gender identity. The embodiment of these gendered personas

through the costumes allows the dancers to transcend their own personal identities and assume the roles of their respective characters.

Furthermore, the costumes used in the Lengger dance are not merely static elements but rather dynamic components that interact with the movements and gestures of the performers. The fluidity of the female dancers' kebaya and the crisp lines of the male dancers' beskap work in tandem with the choreography to create a visual language that communicates the distinct gender expressions inherent in the dance (Sutton, 1986; Rahman, 2018).

Lengger Banyumasan, a traditional performance art from the Banyumas region of Central Java, Indonesia, offers a unique lens through which to explore the interplay of gender and musical expression. The intricate tapestry of sound and rhythm within this performance art reveals a complex dialogue between masculine and feminine elements, reflecting the broader sociocultural dynamics of the region (Sutton, 1986).

Banyumas is known for its distinct folk arts, which have maintained a strong presence in the local community, serving as a repository for cultural identity and values (Sutton, 1986). Within this context, the Lengger Banyumasan performance stands out as a vibrant and multifaceted expression of the region's artistic heritage. The study of the vocal and musical components of Lengger Banyumasan can offer insights into how gender is constructed and negotiated within this traditional art form.

One prominent aspect of the Lengger Banyumasan performance is the association of certain musical instruments with specific gender roles. The kendang, or double-headed drum, is often considered a masculine instrument, its rhythmic patterns and powerful sound evoking a sense of strength and virility. In contrast, the delicate and melodic tones of the gender, a type of metallophone, are often linked to feminine attributes. This division of musical roles reflects the broader societal perceptions of gender in Banyumas, where masculinity is often associated with dynamism and physicality, while femininity is characterized by grace and subtlety.

The vocal elements of Lengger Banyumasan also carry gender-specific connotations. The songs performed during the Lengger Banyumasan often feature lyrics that explore themes of love, relationships, and the human experience, with the male and female performers taking on complementary roles in their vocal delivery. The use of the Banyumas dialect, which is known for its colloquial and egalitarian nature, further reinforces the idea of a societal structure that values directness and equality, in contrast with the more formal and hierarchical language usage in other Javanese regions (Suharto et al., 2016).

By examining the intricate interplay between the vocal and musical elements of Lengger Banyumasan, we can gain a deeper understanding of how gender is expressed, negotiated, and challenged within the context of this traditional performance art. The resilience and adaptability of Lengger Banyumasan in the face of sociocultural changes further underscores the dynamic and evolving nature of gender representations in the region's artistic heritage (Suharto et al., 2016).

The analysis of the interaction between dancers and audience, including how the audience perceives and interprets the gender roles portrayed in the dance, as well as their responses to the masculinity and femininity displayed, is crucial in understanding the gender dynamics inherent in the Lengger Banyumasan dance tradition (Migdalek, 2009; Christofidou, 2021). The Lengger Banyumasan, a traditional Javanese dance form, involves both male and female dancers, each embodying distinct gender characteristics and performative styles.

The concepts of embodied performance, social constructivism, and enculturation, as well as the study of semiotics and the application of intertextuality, can provide valuable insights into the ways in which gender is constructed and perpetuated through dance discourses (Shea, 2018). Male dancers, in particular, must navigate the gendered and sexual attachments of their professional identity, often engaging in gender-transgressive acts that challenge societal norms (Christofidou, 2021). The drama classroom can be a site where these embodied gender inequities can be challenged and deconstructed (Christofidou, 2021).

The existing literature on gender and dance, such as *Intertextuality and Dance* (Shea, 2018) and *Men, Masculinities and Sexualities in Dance* (Christofidou, 2021), offer a foundation for understanding the complex relationships between dance, gender, and sexuality (Shea, 2018; Christofidou, 2021).

The nuances of how the audience perceives and responds to the gender representations in Lengger Banyumasan can shed light on the broader societal attitudes towards masculinity and femininity, and the ways in which dance serves as a medium for the negotiation and expression of gender identity (Christofidou, 2021; Shea, 2018).

The Banyumasan Lengger dance tradition is a unique cultural practice that challenges traditional gender norms. Performers often embody both masculine and feminine traits within a single performance, blurring the boundaries between gender identities (Migdalek, 2009; Blackwood, 2005). This fluidity in gender representation reflects the broader societal acceptance of gender diversity in the Banyumasan region of West Central Java (Blackwood, 2005).

Lengger dancers are known to seamlessly transition between masculine and feminine personas, sometimes within the same dance sequence (Sutton, 1986). The use of specific costumes, props, and movements allows the performers to conjure up the essence of different gender archetypes. This embodiment of multiple gender identities is a crucial aspect of the Lengger tradition, which has been practiced for centuries.

The ability of Lengger dancers to inhabit both masculine and feminine roles speaks to the longstanding cultural recognition of gender diversity in this region of Java. Scholars have noted how traditional Javanese cosmology allows for the coexistence of multiple gender categories, beyond the binary of male and female (Ismoyo, 2020).

For example, the Bugis people of Indonesia recognize five distinct genders, including the bissu, a ritually significant "trans-religious leader" who

transcends typical male-female distinctions (Ismoyo, 2020). This understanding of gender as fluid and multifaceted is reflected in the Banyumasan Lengger tradition, where the dancers embody this spectrum of gender identities.

The performance of gender duality in Lengger dance must also be contextualized within Indonesia's complex colonial and postcolonial history. During the colonial era, certain gender-transgressive practices were met with hostility and attempts at suppression by European authorities (Blackwood, 2005). However, in the postcolonial era, there has been a resurgence of interest and celebration of gender diversity in Indonesian cultural expressions, as seen in the Lengger tradition.

The traditional Lengger Banyumasan dance from Central Java, Indonesia has a rich history that reflects the evolving role of gender within its cultural context (Davies, 2006). Traditionally, the Lengger dance was performed by individuals who did not conform to binary gender norms, recognized as part of the diverse gender landscape in Indonesian culture.

Historical accounts suggest that Lengger performances were often associated with ritual transvestites or individuals who "switched" genders, such as the waria (male-to-female transgender individuals) and tomboi figures (Blackwood, 2005). This indicates that Lengger may have roots in older traditions that acknowledged a "third space" of gender identity beyond the male-female dichotomy (Davies, 2006).

Over time, however, the Lengger dance has undergone changes in the way gender is perceived and expressed within its performance. As Indonesia grappled with the legacies of colonial rule and modernization, the public acceptance and representation of non-binary gender identities has fluctuated.

Today, the Lengger dance faces an increasingly complex landscape, with debates emerging around the role of gender pluralism in Indonesian culture (Davies, 2006; Ismoyo, 2020). Some argue that the Lengger and its associated gender expressions are a vital part of the country's cultural heritage, while others view such diversity as incompatible with mainstream social and religious norms (Ismoyo, 2020).

As such, the history of the Lengger Banyumasan dance provides a lens through which to examine the dynamic relationship between gender, culture, and social change in Indonesia (Ismoyo, 2020; Davies, 2006). That evolving relationship has shaped the way the Lengger dance is understood, performed, and valued within contemporary Indonesian society (Blackwood, 2005; Davies, 2006).

Lengger, a traditional dance form from the Banyumas region of Central Java, Indonesia, has long been a reflection of local values and perceptions surrounding gender roles. This tradition has served as a platform for both expressing and challenging conventional gender norms within the Banyumasan cultural context (Sutton, 1986).

The Lengger dance is deeply rooted in the region's rice cultivation and agricultural practices, with the ritual dance of Sang Hyang Dedari in Bali serving as a comparable example of how performing arts can be closely interwoven with the local cultural landscape (Villaluz, 2017). In Banyumas, the

Lengger dance has evolved to become a means through which community members can explore and negotiate gender identities and expressions.

Much like the Manduda dance in the Simalungun community, which serves as a reflection of mutual cooperation and shared cultural values, the Lengger dance in Banyumas communicates the lived experiences and cultural perspectives of its practitioners (Sutton, 1986). The performers' ability to subvert traditional gender roles through their embodied dance forms suggests that the Lengger tradition can function as a powerful medium for challenging entrenched social norms.

As the Banyumas region has sought greater recognition for its local arts and cultural heritage, the Lengger dance has become a focal point for discussions around the interplay between tradition and modernity, as well as the evolving attitudes towards gender and identity (Sutton, 1986). The resilience and vitality of the Lengger tradition, despite the forces of modernization and cultural homogenization, underscores its importance as a means of preserving and celebrating the unique character of the Banyumas region (Sutton, 1986).

Banyumas Lengger, a traditional dance form from the Banyumas region of Central Java, Indonesia, has played a significant role in the discourse of gender and local identity (Munawirsazali, 2019). The performance of Lengger, which often features male dancers portraying female characters, challenges the rigid gender norms that permeate traditional Javanese society (Davies, 2006). The use of Ngoko Javanese dialect in Lengger songs further reflects the egalitarian and straightforward nature of the Banyumas people, who believe in the fundamental equality of all individuals.

The Lengger performance can be seen as a manifestation of the historical presence of gender-transgressive individuals in Indonesian culture. This is evidenced by the recognition of various gender identities, such as the Bugis people's five genders: *oroané*, *makkunrai*, *calabai*, *calalai*, and *bissu*. The Lengger dancer's ability to seamlessly transition between masculine and feminine roles reflects a more fluid understanding of gender, which was once more widely accepted in Indonesian society (Blackwood, 2005).

However, the Lengger tradition has also faced challenges in the modern era, as it has struggled to gain recognition and acceptance beyond the local Banyumas region. This is partly due to the rise of conservative social movements that have sought to impose a more rigid binary understanding of gender, which conflicts with the more inclusive and pluralistic gender identities that were once more prevalent in Indonesian culture.

Despite these challenges, the Lengger tradition continues to thrive in Banyumas, serving as a reminder of the rich diversity of gender identities and expressions that have long been a part of Indonesian society.

Modernization and the widespread use of social media have significantly influenced the expression of masculinity and femininity in traditional Javanese dance forms like Lengger Banyumasan. The Lengger dance, which typically features cross-dressing performers, has undergone adaptations and transformations in response to these cultural shifts.

In the late 20th century, the emergence of LGBTQ+ movements in Indonesia brought increased visibility to diverse gender identities and expressions, some of which appear to draw from older models of ritual cross-dressing (Blackwood, 2005). Contemporary transgender individuals, such as the waria (male-to-female transgender) and tomboi (female-to-male transgender), have been framed in similar terms as their colonial-era counterparts, suggesting a continuity of gender nonconformity in Indonesian culture (Blackwood, 2005).

Indonesia has a long history of recognizing and accepting various gender identities beyond the binary of male and female. The Bugis people, for example, have long acknowledged five distinct gender categories: oroané, makkunrai, calabai, calalai, and bissu. This diversity of gender expression has been a part of Indonesian culture, despite the recent rise in persecution and marginalization of transgender individuals.

The Lengger dance, which traditionally featured male performers dressed as women, has also been influenced by these cultural shifts. As modernization and social media have become more prevalent, the Lengger dance has seen adaptations in the way gender is expressed on stage (Davies, 2006; Ismoyo, 2020) Some performers may now embrace more fluid or androgynous gender expressions, while others may adhere more closely to traditional gender norms.

These transformations in Lengger reflect the broader social and cultural changes occurring in Indonesia, as the country grapples with the impact of modernization on its long-standing traditions and gender norms (Ismoyo, 2020; Davies, 2006).

Table 1. Research Findings on Gender Dynamics in Lengger Banyumasan

Aspect	Masculine Elements	Feminine Elements
Movements	- Strong, dynamic stomping and powerful leaps	- Fluid, gentle, undulating movements
	- Wide, expansive arm gestures showcasing strength	- Delicate hand motions and soft footwork
	- Assertive, upright posture symbolizing dominance	- Graceful body posture reflecting elegance and submissiveness
Costumes	- "Beskap" (formal jacket) with structured lines representing masculinity	- "Kebaya" (traditional blouse) with form-fitting design and intricate embroidery
	- Angular, bold silhouette accentuating physical strength	- Soft, flowing skirts accentuating femininity
Facial Expressions	- Assertive and playful, conveying power and confidence	- Emotional, expressive, conveying gentleness and sensuality
Symbolic	- Representing	- Representing nurturing,

Roles	traditional male figures, such as warriors or dominant cultural roles	graceful, and seductive female archetypes
	- Often engaged in displays of physical prowess and assertive dominance	- Subtle, delicate, often emphasizing empathy and emotional resonance
Interaction with Music	- Associated with percussive instruments like "kendang" (drum), symbolizing virility	- Linked to melodic instruments like "gender" (metallophone), symbolizing delicacy
	- Rhythmic, powerful beats reinforcing masculine attributes	- Soft, melodic tunes accompanying feminine movements
Audience Perception	- Male audience identifies with the strength and boldness of masculine roles	- Female audience resonates with grace and emotional expressiveness
	- Audience sees masculine elements as traditional and dominant	- Audience sees feminine elements as central to nurturing and emotive representation
Gender Fluidity	- Male dancers may adopt androgynous roles, blending strength with fluidity	- Female dancers exhibit masculine strength in certain movements, challenging norms
Cultural Significance	- Masculine traits seen as protective, leaders in cultural symbolism	- Feminine traits seen as nurturing, supportive, and central to societal cohesion

Table 2. Analytical Categories and Indicators

Category	Indicator	Findings
Gender Performativity	Fluidity between masculine and feminine	Both male and female dancers often switch between or blend gender roles, subverting traditional norms
Cultural Symbolism	Representations of gender in art	Masculine and feminine traits are integrated, with male figures embodying power, and females grace
Impact of Modernization	Influence on gender roles	Modernization has led to more flexible interpretations of gender, including more androgynous performances

Audience Reception	Perception of gender in performance	Audiences often reinforce gender norms but appreciate fluid transitions between masculine and feminine
Historical Evolution	Gender role changes over time	Traditionally gender-specific roles have evolved, allowing for greater fluidity in contemporary performances

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study of Lengger Banyumasan dance reveals a complex interplay of masculine and feminine elements, challenging traditional gender binaries through fluid performances. This art form reflects and shapes gender dynamics within the Banyumas region, adapting to societal changes while maintaining cultural significance. The dance's ability to incorporate diverse gender expressions showcases its resilience and relevance in contemporary Indonesian society.

To preserve this valuable cultural heritage, efforts should be made to document performances, support local dance troupes, and integrate Lengger Banyumasan into cultural education programs. Incorporating its study into academic curricula, particularly in gender studies and performing arts, could foster a deeper understanding of gender fluidity in traditional art forms. Community-based programs using Lengger Banyumasan as a tool for discussing gender roles could promote inclusivity within local communities.

Supporting initiatives that explore contemporary interpretations of Lengger Banyumasan while respecting its traditional roots could ensure its continued relevance to younger generations. Further research on the psychological and sociological impacts of participating in and viewing Lengger Banyumasan performances could provide valuable insights into attitudes towards gender and sexuality in Indonesian society.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

To expand our understanding of Lengger Banyumasan and its role in gender expression, several areas of advanced research are proposed. A neurobiological study using neuroimaging techniques could investigate the neural correlates of gender performance in dancers, providing insights into the cognitive processes involved in fluid gender expression. A longitudinal study tracking Lengger Banyumasan dancers over several years could examine how their participation influences their personal gender identity and expression off-stage.

A cross-cultural comparative analysis between Lengger Banyumasan and other dance traditions worldwide that challenge gender norms could reveal broader patterns in the performative aspects of gender. A large-scale quantitative study using surveys and psychometric tools could measure how audience perceptions of gender are influenced by Lengger Banyumasan performances.

Exploring how factors such as class, ethnicity, and religion intersect with gender expression in Lengger Banyumasan could provide a more nuanced understanding of the dance's social impact. A digital ethnographic study of online communities where Lengger Banyumasan is discussed could analyze how digital spaces are shaping discourse around the dance and gender expression. Finally, an in-depth historical analysis tracing the evolution of gender representation in Lengger Banyumasan from its origins to the present day could provide valuable context for understanding its current form and significance.

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