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The choreography of *laman silat* dance: a study of malay cultural expression at *kumpulan seni seri melayu*, Riau



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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze how the choreography of the *Laman Silat* Dance, created by Sunardi, embodies the expression of Malay-Riau culture through a combination of Malay-Riau silat movements with 'contrast' choreographic techniques. Using a qualitative approach with ethnographic methods, data was collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation analysis. The analysis focuses on the elements of choreography, including movement, music, costume, makeup, floor design, and lighting, as creative expression. The research findings reveal that the *Laman Silat* Dance expresses Malay-Riau culture through silat movements, clothing, and Malay-Riau music. The 'contrasting' yet dynamic choreographic composition depicts Malay-Riau culture's 'contrasting' yet dynamic richness. The Malay-Riau musical instruments used, poetic narration, and energetic movements with accents on the shoulders, head, and hands enrich this dance's aesthetic and narrative dimensions. Thus making it a representation of the cultural expression of Malay-Riau *silat*. This research contributes to the academic discourse in performing arts by highlighting the role of choreography as an artistic expression of Malay-Riau culture. The strength of this study lies in its comprehensive analysis of artistic elements as cultural expression, which offers a foundation for understanding the balance between contrast in choreography and contemporary movement in Malay-Riau culture. In addition, this research opens up opportunities for future studies to explore the influence of the *Laman Silat* Dance on the younger generation, especially in terms of how this dance can instill pride and cultural awareness in the midst of globalization.

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1. Introduction

Tari Laman Silat is a contemporary dance form rooted in Malay-Riau silat movements, created by Sunardi at Kumpulan Seni Seri Melayu (KSSM) in 2015. This dance was initially created to take part in the Festival or Dance Parade competition at the City and Riau Province levels. The *Laman silat* dance won first place in the Dance Parade at the Pekanbaru city level and third place at the Riau Province level. This dance eventually became one of the entertainment dance repertoires at KSSM. KSSM itself was founded in 2006 by a dance artist named Sunardi. The plan to establish a sanggar was to make it easier for the youth of Pekanbaru City who wanted to train themselves in the arts. Kumpulan Seni Seri Melayu is located in the middle of Pekanbaru city, on Jalan Tuanku Tambusai Gg Subur 8, zip code 28125. With the influence of outside culture, Sunadi was moved to establish a *Kumpulan Seni Seri Melayu*. On 7 October 2006, Kumpulan Seni Seri Melayu became a studio approved by the local government. *Kumpulan Seni Seri Melayu* now has a total of 87 members, and at present, there are 56 active members, 15

musicians, 30 dancers, 10 study members, and one studio leader with a background of students, students, and workers. Various competition activities began to be followed to increase the existence of the KSSM; some of the works that have been created in the Malay Series Art Collection include, among others, Time Dance, *Kiblat* Dance, *Bertimbang Salah* Dance, *Nyiru* Dance, *Dulang Pengantin* Dance, Because Of You Dance, *Siput Gondang* Dance, Dance *Pecan*, *Kinayat Sindir* Dance, *Anak Watan* Dance, *Muslihat Wan Sinari* Dance, Spirit Of *Serimelayu* Dance, *Kenduri* Dance, *Jalan Panjang* Dance that has been performed at various events and some of the works in the Malay Series Art Collection have received achievements, including the time dance following the 2005 Pekanbaru city dance parade getting first place. *Nyiru* Dance participated in the Pekanbaru City Dance Parade 2009 and won first place. *Gondang Siput* Dance participated in the National Dance Parade at TMII in 2010 and was the second-best presenter in the National Dance Parade. *Pekan* Dance participated in the dance parade at the Pekanbaru city level in 2011 and was the best presenter. *Kinayat's* satirical message dance was used in the Kepri regional dance parade in 2013 and was the best presenter. *Laman Silat* Dance participated in the 2015 Pekanbaru city dance parade, winning first place and third place in the 2015 Riau provincial dance parade. The *Jalan Panjang* dance participated in the 2016 Pekanbaru city-level dance parade competition and won first place. And many more achievements were obtained by the KSSM.

The explanation of KSSM's history and achievements is significant because it provides a historical context that confirms KSSM's journey and contribution to showcasing Malay-Riau culture. In addition, the achievements achieved reflect the quality and existence of this studio in the world of performing arts in Pekanbaru-Riau. Understanding KSSM's historical roots and achievements allows readers to see the group's strategic role in presenting local cultural expressions while building a foundation for artistic innovations such as the *Laman Silat* Dance. This shows KSSM's capacity as an art studio, a place of learning, and a producer of outstanding works. Therefore, further discussion of the choreography presented by KSSM through *Laman Silat* Dance is relevant to show how local cultural elements can become a form of cultural expression of the community. Dance serves as a powerful expression of cultural society, embodying social values, political identity, and philosophical ideas. Dance is a dynamic and evolving form of communication that connects individuals to their cultural heritage with each other, both within and across generations. The study of dance from various perspectives, including anthropology, philosophy, and neuroscience, provides a comprehensive understanding of its role in society [1]-[3]. Moreover, Dance is a multi-faceted cultural expression that encapsulates the essence of human experience, social dynamics, and identity. Moreover, Dance is a multi-faceted cultural expression that encapsulates the essence of human experience, social dynamics, and identity [4]-[10]. Based on understanding dance as a cultural expression above, Sunardi expresses Malay-Riau *Silat* culture in *Laman Silat* Dance. *Laman Silat* dance combines elements of the martial art silat, which is an integral part of Malay-Riau culture, with 'contrasting' choreographic innovations. Dance is an art form and a means of communication and cultural transmission. Dance embodies and conveys complex social values, beliefs, and identities [11], [12]. The beliefs and values that Sunardi understands about Malay-Riau *silat* are presented through the dance work *Laman Silat*. *Laman silat* dance comes from the word *laman* or another word for the yard, where the yard is used as a training ground for the Malay-Riau people. *Silat* is one of the martial arts learned by the Malay-Riau people with the aim of protecting themselves from external and internal disturbances. This *Laman Silat* dance is based on Malay-Riau silat movements. *Silat*, which is an integral part of the Malay cultural heritage, means more than just a martial arts technique; it is a symbol of respect and identity and an important self-defense mechanism for the local community. In this context, the definition of art includes works that demonstrate excellence in skill and are rooted in established traditions (as is the case with silat), which historically and culturally function as an art form laden with local values and symbolism [13].

The combination of silat elements with dance choreography in *Laman Silat* dance not only presents the aesthetics of art but also illustrates Malay-Riau silat's philosophical values and spiritual aspects. This is the basis of the choreographic narrative of *Laman Silat* Dance, which depicts the atmosphere of silat training carried out in the middle of the courtyard, accentuates

the principles of attacking and parrying represented through dynamic movements, and raises the value of divinity contained in Malay-Riau *silat* martial arts. In addition, Sunardi also expresses the narrative that *silat* for the Malay-Riau people is a self-fence in daily life, without arrogance. Inspired by this, Sunardi created the *Laman Silat* Dance to depict the spirit of Malay-Riau youth practicing *silat* in the middle of the courtyard. The dance is performed by eight male dancers, who present dynamic movements as a representation of *silat* training and martial arts principles. The uniqueness of the *Laman Silat* Dance lies in the combination of traditional *Silat* movements that are stylized into sharp contrast choreography and dynamic floor patterns. One of the 'contrasting' choreographies in this performance is presented in the form of eight dancers divided into two or three focus points, where each focus point performs movements with different tempos, levels, and spaces. This 'contrast' creates an interesting harmony and enhances the complexity of the choreography. In addition, the use of staccato movements, canon choreographic elements, and strong splits enrich the artistic complexity of this dance. However, despite their artistic uniqueness, the problem that arises is how these 'contrasting' choreographic elements can still express Malay-Riau culture. *Laman Silat* dance consists of four movements: *Sujud Syukur, Gelanggang Latihan, Menguji Ilmu, and Kembali ke Yang Satu*. The elements of movement in *Laman Silat* Dance are large and medium space, slow tempo, medium fast, and medium and strong energy. The theme of the *Laman Silat* Dance is the routine of Malay-Riau youth practicing *silat*. This *Laman Silat* dance lasts approximately 6 minutes. The music composer of this *Laman Silat* Dance is Zalvandri, and the musical instruments used to accompany the *Laman Silat* Dance are *Gong, Violin, Nafiri, Accordion, Gendang Panjang, Bebano, Celempong, Tamburin*. The makeup used in this *Laman Silat* Dance uses foundation, loose powder, compact powder, brown eye shadow, brown blas, black eyebrows, brown lipstick, and fake sideburns. The costumes used in the *Laman Silat* Dance are *sanjak, waist belt, red heart-coloured shirt with pattern and black pants, two hand bracelets (left and right), and Selempang*. *Laman Silat* Dance's floor design consists of three designs. The floor design consists of straight, diagonal, and curved lines and has facing directions such as front, back, right side, left side, right diagonal, left diagonal, and facing the circle. The dynamics contained in the *Laman Silat* Dance are changed from high level to medium level or medium level to low level. Also, the tempo changes from slow to medium to fast or vice versa from fast to slow tempo. The lighting for the *Laman Silat* Dance uses red stage lights. This *Laman Silat* dance functions as entertainment.

The lack of documentation and studies on the choreographic and philosophical aspects of Riau Malay Dance, especially *Laman Silat* dance, has made this dance less well-known among local and international communities. Existing research on Riau Malay Dance includes Joget Gamelan dance, which originated from Riau Lingga and spread to other areas such as Johor, Pahang, and Terengganu. The dance has been reconstructed over time to meet contemporary challenges while maintaining its traditional substance [14]. Furthermore, the Mak Yong Theatre, which includes dance, is a revived traditional performance that connects the Riau Islands to the early Malay kingdoms [15]. Other research on the creative process is that dance in Malay Mendu theatre involves improvisation and specific motifs, reflecting a rich choreographic tradition. [16]. In addition, there is a need to better document and transmit Malay dance to the younger generation to ensure its sustainability [17]. The difference between this *Laman Silat* Dance research and previous research is that no other researchers have examined *Laman Silat* Dance as the object of the problem, both textually and contextually. In addition, the *Laman Silat* Dance, as a source of ideas and dance movements, departs from the Malay-Riau *Silat*. Malay *silat* itself is a historical and cultural heritage. *Silat*, including its variations, such as Pencak Silat, is recognized as a cultural heritage by UNESCO, highlighting its importance in Malay civilization [18]. This recognition underscores its value as a cultural asset that needs to be preserved and promoted. So, indirectly, this *Laman Silat* Dance also helps preserve Malay cultural assets, especially Malay-Riau culture. Therefore, the importance of research entitled The Choreography of *Laman Silat* Dance: A Study of Malay Cultural Expression at *Kumpulan Seni Seri Melayu, Riau* is to be conducted. The purpose of this research is to analyze how the choreography of the *Laman Silat* Dance, created by Sunardi, embodies the expression of Malay-Riau culture through a combination of Malay-Riau *silat* movements with 'contrast' choreographic techniques.

2. Method

This research uses a qualitative method with ethnographic design to understand the Malay-Riau cultural expression reflected in the *Laman Silat* Dance in Pekanbaru, Riau. The ethnographic design was chosen because it allows researchers to observe and explore the cultural practices carried out by Sunardi in *Kumpulan Seni Seri* Melayu-Riau, as well as how he revives Malay-Riau cultural values through dance performances. Ethnography emphasizes understanding the cultural context and meaning of the phenomenon under study [19], [20]. The researcher was directly involved in this art activity to observe the interaction between dancers, musicians, and the audience in the performance context. Researchers in the ethnographic approach are directly involved or as participants in the natural environment of the research to observe the behavior and interactions that occur in the field [19], [21]. The sources in this study were four people: Sunardi, the *Laman Silat* Dance Choreographer; Zalvandri, the musician who supports the dance performance; and two *Laman Silat* dancers involved in the performance.

2.1. Data Collection Technique

In this study, data was collected through two types of sources: primary and secondary. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with resource persons involved in *Laman Silat* Dance to explore their experiences and understanding of dance and music performance elements and how these elements reflect Malay-Riau cultural expression. The first interview was conducted with Sunardi, the choreographer of *Laman Silat* Dance, to explore his understanding of dance movements and how these movements were created to reflect the Malay-Riau cultural expression. This interview also explores his views on the expression of Malay-Riau culture that he wants to convey to the audience through the dance movements he created. Furthermore, the interview with Zalvandri, a musician, focused on musical accompaniment in the *Laman Silat* Dance. The researcher explored how Zalvandri creates music that supports the choreography and conveys Malay-Riau cultural values and how the traditional music used plays a role in communicating cultural messages to the audience. Interviews with two *Laman Silat* dancers aimed to explore their experience in dancing, how they understand the meaning of the movements they perform, and how they feel the expression of Malay-Riau culture reflected in the dance. In addition to interviews, participatory observation was conducted to directly observe *Laman Silat* Dance performances held at various cultural events or festivals in Pekanbaru. This observation aims to see how the elements of dance, such as movement, music, costume, and interaction with the audience, work together to convey the expression of Malay-Riau culture. The researcher was directly involved in the observation process to gain a deeper understanding of the context of cultural expression behind the performance. As described in the literature, this design encourages direct collaboration with individuals or groups involved in the phenomenon being researched, thus creating an opportunity to actively engage stakeholders [22], [23]. This resulted in the collection of more in-depth and applicable findings in accordance with the participatory research objectives and relevant to the context of dance practice as cultural expression. Furthermore, the documentation includes a review of literature related to the elements of the *Laman Silat* Dance and Malay-Riau culture in Pekanbaru. This documentation also includes the analysis of relevant written data, such as articles, books, and other sources that can support a deeper understanding of the issues studied and provide a broader context of this dance in society.

2.2. Data Analysis Technique

Data collected through interviews and observations were analyzed using qualitative thematic analysis (TA). TA focuses on identifying recurring themes or patterns in qualitative data obtained from interviews, field notes, or other qualitative data sources. [24], [25]. Data were coded, grouped, and analyzed to identify emerging themes and patterns surrounding Malay-Riau cultural expressions in the *Laman Silat* Dance. This analytical process allows the researcher to explore the meaning contained in each dance element and how these elements convey deep cultural values.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Choreographic Analysis of Silat Laman Dance: An Expression of Malay Culture in Kumpulan Seni Seri Melayu, Riau

Laman Silat dance is a dance creation rooted in traditional movements created in *Kumpulan Seni Seri Melayu* by Sunardi in 2015; *Laman Silat* dance is a dance that tells the art of martial arts in Malay society known as *silat*. In analyzing *Laman silat* dance, the author examines the dance elements contained in *Laman silat* dance, such as movement, music, dynamics, floor design, makeup, costumes, themes, lighting, and staging. The dance is 6 minutes long, with contrasting compositions and dynamic floor patterns. Based on an interview on 13 December 2016 with Sunardi, the choreographer of the *Silat* page dance, said: "*Tari Laman Silat* is a dance that tells the story of martial arts in Malay society known as *silat*. This old *silat* dance is based on *silat* because, in the movements of this *Laman Silat* dance, there are various *silat* movements". Next, based on an interview on 15 December 2016 with Syafrinaldi as a dancer in the *laman silat* dance said: "Eight male dancers dance the *Laman Silat* dance, this dance has varying levels and tempos and also creates a lot of hand movements combined with Malay *silat* movements." For more details, the dance elements contained in the *silat* page dance in *Kumpulan Seni Seri Melayu*, Pekanbaru City, Riau Province are as follows.

1) Movement Composition in *Laman Silat* Dance as Malay Cultural Expression

Laman Silat dance uses Malay *silat* movements as the foundation of the work. The movements from Malay *silat* are developed, stylized, and innovated into movements that express gratitude, the atmosphere of training, fighting, and religiosity. This finding is consistent with the view that dance is a rhythmic practice of body movement that appears in a variety of human cultures around the world. Dance also has the potential to reveal human cognition, action, and interaction [26]. Based on the results of observations on 19 December 2016 that the author has made in the field, there are four varieties of movements in the *Laman Silat* dance, including the *Sujud Syukur* Variety, *Gelanggang Latihan* Variety, *Menguji Ilmu* Variety, *Kembali ke Yang Satu* Variety. Sunardi's *Laman Silat* dance, created in 2015, was inspired by the Malay *Silat* tradition. The dance not only showcases the martial art itself but also highlights the beauty and spirituality that is integral to Malay culture. By incorporating modified *silat* movements, *Laman Silat* achieves a high aesthetic value. One of the moves, known as '*Sujud Syukur*,' symbolizes the act of prayer performed before *silat* training, showing respect to a higher power. In addition, moves such as '*Latihan Silat*' and '*Menguji Ilmu*' visually depict elements of *silat* training and have deep symbolic meaning. *Laman Silat* is more than just physical agility; it also conveys the values of unity and self-control, which have great significance in Malay culture. Overall, *Laman Silat* is a dance that reflects not only the rich tradition of *silat* but also the underlying cultural values of the Malay people. This is because dance is a unique art with body movement as the primary means, and dance reflects aesthetics, culture, and human emotions [27].

Sujud Syukur's (praying) movement in *Laman Silat* Dance in Fig.1, based on the author's observation in December 2016 and interview with Sunardi, is performed by dancers before starting martial arts training. The purpose of this movement is to ask for protection from the creator and avoid unwanted things. This movement is characterized by looking up and then looking down. The *Sujud Syukur* movement at 0:57 features a moment of contrast with eight dancers divided into two groups: 6 dancers move together at a slow tempo, while the two dancers on the right move differently at a faster tempo and use low, high, and medium levels. They separate from the rest of the group, but at 1:03, they return to the group line with the same head movement and diagonal gaze to the right. At 1:15, the dance also contrasts with one dancer moving at a medium, high level, and fast tempo, while the other seven dancers moving at a low level and slow tempo. However, at 1:17, the one dancer moving separately returns to moving in unison. The following contrast occurs at 1:33 with a focus on 3 points: a. three dancers move simultaneously with a fast tempo at medium, low, and high levels; b. Three other dancers perform low-level movements at a medium tempo; c. two dancers at the back of the stage move at a slow tempo with high and medium levels. Then, the unison returns at 1:48.



Fig. 1. Sujud Syukur (praying) movement

The *Gelanggang Latihan* movement represents the process of silat training under the guidance of a teacher, represented by a dancer in the center of a semi-circular formation with seven other dancers, as can be seen in Fig.2. This movement tells the story of the interaction between teacher and students in silat training, where the teacher demonstrates silat techniques, and the students observe. In the *Gelanggang Latihan* movement, the 'Kontras' occurs at 2:22 with two focal points: The first group of 4 dancers moves at high and medium levels at a fast tempo. The second group of 4 dancers moves at a low level with a medium tempo, then changes to a fast tempo with a change in facing direction, but the level remains. Then, the unison returns at 2:35. The next 'Kontras' occurs at 2:44. The eight dancers are divided into two focal points: 1 group of 2 dancers roll in a seated position apart from the other six dancers; two dancers perform low-level movements at a medium tempo, while six dancers perform high-level movements at a fast tempo. Then, the unison returns at 2:48. At 2:49, another 'Kontras' focuses on 3 points on a right diagonal line. Group division: 3 : 3: The group of 2 dancers at the front moves from fast to slow tempo, and the three dancers in the center move from slow to fast tempo. The other three dancers at the back move staccato. Then, in unison again at 3:06.

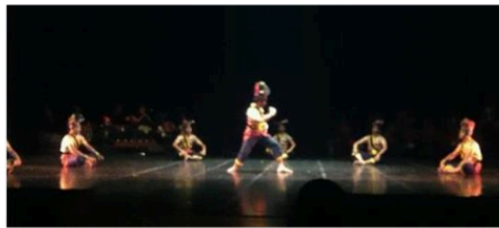


Fig. 2. Gelanggang Latihan movement

Menguji Ilmu movement in Laman Silat Dance is a fight choreography showcasing the dancers' silat skills. It depicts a dynamic duel that emphasizes defense and attack. It combines dance and combat, creating a fusion of the arts. Meanwhile, the *Menguji Ilmu* movement depicts the testing of a dancer's silat skills guided by a teacher. This movement features an aesthetic and entertaining silat duel. Each pair of dancers performs fighting stunts, highlighting their martial arts skills with dramatic techniques and choreography. The movements combine *silat* techniques with dance aesthetics, adapting to the tempo and dynamics of the group. These moves demonstrate martial arts proficiency and have a high aesthetic appeal. In the *Menguji Ilmu* movement, the 'Kontras' occurs at 3:11, focusing on 3 points and the main focus on the five dancers in the center. The other three dancers are in separate positions: 1 dancer at the front on the left, one at the back, and one at the front on the right. The three groups of dancers move at alternating fast, medium, and slow tempos. The group in the center moves at a low level, while the other dancers move at a high and medium level. Then, in unison again at 3:20. 'Kontras' returns at 3:32, focusing on 1 point, where one dancer moves at a high level in a fast tempo while the other seven dancers move at a low level in a slow tempo. Then 'Kontras' again at 3:39 with a play on the contrast in canon movement, with different facing directions, levels, and tempos. Then, in unison again at 3:51. *Menguji Ilmu* movement science can be seen in Fig. 3.

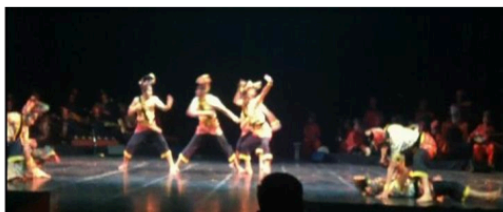


Fig. 3. Menguji Ilmu movement

Kembali ke Yang Satu movement is the closing part of the Silat Laman dance, which has its roots in *silat*, as can be seen in Fig.4. This movement is symbolic of effort and returning all achievements to the Almighty, according to an interview with the choreographer Sunardi. It reflects the philosophy that success is not solely the result of human effort but also the will of God. This movement emphasizes a movement structure that reflects strength, balance, and the philosophy of *silat*, which is the core of the *Laman Silat* Dance. The final movement shows surrender to a greater power, reinforced by a disciplined formation and consistent rhythm. The movements in *Laman Silat* Dance all reflect the harmony between martial arts techniques and dance aesthetics as an expression of Malay-Riau culture. An innovative mix of tempo variations, levels, and visual dynamics, the dance showcases the beauty of contrasting yet harmonious movements. Combining movements that utilize space and varied floor patterns strengthens the choreography and play of *silat* movements as an expression of Malay-Riau *silat* culture adapted into the performing arts.



Fig. 4. Kembali ke Yang Satu movement

2) Music in Laman Silat Dance as Malay Cultural Narrative

Music is an important element in dance as a rhythmic regulator and presents rhythms in harmony with dance movements. Based on the author's observations in December 2016, the accompanying music in *Silat Laman* Dance consists of traditional musical instruments, namely gongs, violins, nafiri, and long drums, presenting rhythms in harmony with dance movements, which seven musicians play. This music not only functions as a movement accompaniment but also plays a role in accentuating the dramatic atmosphere in each dance scene, following the tempo and intensity of the music in the dance, which changes according to the dynamics of the movement. An interview with Zalvandri (25 December 2016) revealed that the music-making process is done in tandem with the creation of the dance by harmonizing the tempo and mood of the music with the dance movements. In some parts, narration is also included as part of the musical composition, giving an expressive dimension to the Laman Silat dance performance. This collaborative process demonstrates the importance of musicality in reinforcing the narrative and emotional depth of the dance, creating an artistic experience that resonates between the dancer and the audience. The dancer's body movements are related to the music and other elements, and the result is believed to be appreciated by the public [28]. Each instrument has a specific purpose, such as creating a spiritual atmosphere or providing melody or rhythm. *Bebano* is a percussion instrument played by beating with the palm of the hand; in this dance, it creates an atmosphere of 'spirit' in the dance. The violin provides the melody with a strumming technique, while the tambourine contributes as a percussion instrument with cymbals or rattles.

The long drum or gendang silat is an important instrument with two heads played with rhythmic strokes, serving as a tempo setter in the movement. The ceremony, which is part of the *gong* family, is played with a wooden mallet, bringing a traditional Malay Riau atmosphere to the silat culture. The instruments work together to create harmony, with the *gong* and *tambourine* providing rhythm, the *Nafiri* adding ambiance, and the *Gendang Panjang* and *Bebano* reinforcing the rhythmic elements. The musical composition of *Laman Silat* dance involves seven types of musical instruments as well as vocal narration. The harmony between movement and sound is created through the collaboration between the composer and choreographer, making *Laman Silat* dance a profound cultural expression. Beautifully collaborated traditional instruments create a mesmerizing sound, presenting an atmosphere that matches the story of the dance performed [29]. The following narratives are chanted like poetry in *Laman Silat* dance music, resulting in a 'contrasting' musical composition. The rhythmic music combined with the dramatic recitation of the poem results in a 'unique' harmony of sound. One musician recites the narrative. The narrative is read as an affirmation of a fighter's life philosophy. Zalvandri, the composer of the *Laman Silat* dance, created the narration. The narration is read at the beginning and the end of the *Laman Silat* dance, as in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1. Narration at the beginning of the *Laman Silat* Dance

2	Poem	In English	Meaning
	<i>La la la la... la la la la la la la la... la la</i>	<i>La la la la... la la la la la la la la... la la</i>	<i>La la la la... la la la la la la la la... la la</i>
	<i>Bahwa diri bertangkalkan jiwa</i>	The body is anchored by the soul	The body must be controlled by a knowledgeable soul,
	<i>Antara kelembutan meluangkan gerak</i>	Between the softness of producing movement	Every movement in pencak silat has the charm and tenderness of a dance.
	<i>Keras menghantarkan wibawa jari</i>	hard as a symbol of finger sharpness	Strength in martial arts is symbolized by a stabbing movement, which means an attack using interlocking fingers.
	<i>Perisai tampak pada hati</i>	The shield was seen in the heart	The defense against attack is a heart that has knowledge and iman.
	<i>Hoi...Hulu memagarkan diri</i>	Hoi... self-defense upstream	Hulu is a symbol of self-defense in silat.
	<i>Hei... Hilir mengikat batin</i>	Hoi... Downstream ties the heart	Hilir is a symbol of inner bonds (<i>adab</i> and ethics) in silat.

This narrative in Table 1 emphasizes the duality between strength and tenderness, which is the essence of the movements in the *Laman Silat* dance. This dance not only displays the beauty of movement but also contains a deep philosophy rooted in the fundamental values of silat science. Some of the principles contained in the philosophy include (1) Self-Control: The body should always be controlled by a knowledgeable soul, reflecting the importance of awareness and balance in every movement; (2) Beauty of Movement: Every movement in pencak silat serves not only as a martial arts technique, but also exudes dance-like charm and tenderness, creating harmony between power and aesthetics; (3) Symbol of Power: The stabbing motion in Pencak silat-which is performed with the fingers close together-symbolizes a focused, purposeful, and powerful attack; (4) Self-Protection: Self-defence in silat is symbolized by the 'Hulu,' which represents a heart filled with knowledge and faith, as a shield against all physical and spiritual attacks; (5) Inner Bond: 'Hilir' symbolizes the inner bond that includes manners and ethics, showing that silat teaches not only technique but also high moral values. *Laman Silat* integrates these principles into dance movements, including strikes, thrusts, and self-protection. These movements are harmoniously assembled into a choreography that combines the play of space, time, and energy with prominent contrasts. The musical accompaniment enhances the atmosphere, creating a harmony that invites the audience to be swept up in the story of soul struggle and inner resilience implied in each movement.

Table 2. Narration at the End of the *Laman Silat* Dance

Poem	In English	Meaning
<i>Hoi...Hulu memagarkan diri</i>	Hoi... self-defense upstream	<i>Hulu</i> is a symbol of self-defense in silat.
<i>Hoi...Hilir mengikat batin</i>	Hoi... Downstream ties the heart	<i>Hilir</i> is a symbol of inner bonds (<i>adab</i> and ethics) in silat.
<i>Dalam kesombongan bukan kiranya</i>	In pride is not the way	<i>Seni bela diri bukan untuk pamer atau menyombongkan diri</i> (Martial arts are not for showing off or bragging)
<i>Seni menuai padi</i>	The art of reaping paddy	learning the science of paddy in martial arts
<i>Patuhlah kita menentang senja</i>	Obediently, we defy the twilight	<i>Sami'na Wa Atho'na</i> is the basic attitude that fighters must have.
<i>Maka terungkaplah tuntunan alam</i>	Thus, the guidance of nature is revealed.	Studying silat in Malay culture is very similar to studying religion as a guide to life.
<i>Hendak mendapatkan semangat</i>	Want to get excited	When the body is tired, the burning spirit stays lit
<i>Menyala...</i>	Switching on...	True fighters never give up.

The final part of the narrative describes the journey of finding meaning and reflecting on life experiences. It conveys the message that in the face of challenges, we must remain humble and obedient and adhere to religious teachings. The burning spirit must also continue to burn. Those messages are implied in the final movements of this dance that reflect a meaningful life journey.

3) Floor design of *Laman Silat* Dance as a dynamic Malay Riau Cultural Expression

Floor design in dance refers to the pattern of space dancers occupy and move through. The floor design of a configuration is formed from the movement and change of position of dancers in a dance performance space [30]–[32]. This design is something that must be internalized continuously as the dancer moves. Research conducted on the *Laman Silat* Dance at KSSM, Pekanbaru, found various floor patterns: straight lines, triangles, rectangles, semicircles, and parallelograms with dynamic changes. Dancers move to form these floor patterns in various directions, using diagonal, vertical, horizontal, curved, or circular designs. The results of an interview with Sunardi, the choreographer of this dance, reinforce these findings and state that the floor pattern in *Laman Silat* Dance is made in such a way that the floor pattern in *Laman Silat* Dance is dynamic, involving straight, diagonal, and curved lines that show the flexibility of the dancers' movements. Dynamic here is interpreted as a floor pattern that changes quickly, from diagonal lines to curved lines, in a fraction of a second. The floor pattern aspect of the *Silat Laman* Dance varies from straight-line patterns to semi-circular formations. Floor patterns serve to emphasize the interaction between dancers and accentuate visual dynamics as a symbol of harmony and deep coordination in silat. The 'dynamic' floor pattern depicts the dynamic life of the Pekanbaru (Malay-Riau) community. Changes in the urban fabric are developing rapidly in the city of Pekanbaru. Pekanbaru has undergone a transformation into a dynamic metropolitan city [33].

4) *Laman* Dance Dynamics

Dynamics play an important role in animating and drawing attention to dance movements, serving as the emotional essence of each movement. In the case of *Laman Silat* dance, dynamics are achieved using techniques such as level changes (low, medium, high) and tempo changes (slow, medium, fast). The author's observations reveal that every movement in *Laman Silat*'s dance shows significant dynamics, such as the prostration of gratitude, where the dancer transitions from a low level with knees on the floor to a high level with tiptoes and jumps. In addition to level changes, the tempo aspect is also very important in this dance form. For one, the movements to test knowledge are performed at a fast tempo, combining alternating movements and producing a lively rhythm. The interview with Sunardi confirms that dynamics include changes in speed in a dance, and in *Laman Silat* dance, dynamics are achieved through various techniques and levels synchronized with the tempo of the music. Therefore, dynamics in this dance form is more than just a physical transformation; it also incorporates the interaction between movement and music, which makes *Laman Silat* dance a highly expressive

art form. The 'contrasting' pattern of dynamics depicting traditional and modern life is so visible 'contrasting' in the life of the township community in Pekanbaru. This is evident in Kampung Bandar Senapelan, an early settlement in Pekanbaru, retaining its traditional Malay architecture and cultural heritage. This area has historical value and vernacular Malay architecture that is under threat due to rapid urban development [34], [35].

5) *Costume and Makeup of Laman Silat Dance as Visualisation of Malay Warrior Aesthetics*

Dance costumes contain the theme of the dance work, the characteristics of the fashion design, the dancer's movements, and the lighting effects. Factors such as line, silhouette, color, material, and lighting have an influence on dance costumes and reflect the character and image of the dance [36]. *Laman Silat's* stage costume includes basic clothing, footwear, headwear, and accessories. This costume (Fig. 5) consists of a headband, a heart-red shirt with short sleeves and motifs, black $\frac{3}{4}$ length trousers with gold applications, and a black-red tanjak with black *bengkung*. The use of red, black, and gold colors reflects Malay culture's bravery, gallantry, and beauty. The costume is carefully designed, with gold applications on the cuffs, collar, and trousers to give a formal impression. The $\frac{3}{4}$ length trousers were chosen to allow the dancer to move freely in the silat performance. The red heart side cloth and black *bengkung* with gold bis are also used to give a strong impression. Overall, the costumes of *Laman Silat* dancers reflect the great Malay cultural heritage, combining the gallantry of *silat* and the beauty of Malay culture in one performance. Lexicon in dance costumes, such as head, neck, hand, body, and foot costumes, have cultural meanings [37].



Fig. 5. *Laman Silat* Dance Costume

Makeup in dance aims to create character and overcome strong lighting effects. Makeup is a key element in dance performances, where makeup in accordance with the character of the dance not only strengthens the identity of the performance but also adds to the overall charm of the dance [38]. *Laman Silat* dancers use makeup (Fig. 6) that uses black eyebrows, brown and black eyeshadow, and fake beards and mustaches. Other elements are also used, such as brown nose shading, brown blush, and matching colored lipstick, to create a manly impression. The makeup reflects the dashing character of the Malay warriors and ensures that the dancers' faces do not look pale under strong lighting. This shows that makeup is not only for aesthetics but also plays an important role in building identity and character in dance performances. The costumes and makeup worn by the dancers reinforce the brave and courageous character of the characters featured in this dance. Red costumes symbolize courage, while black represents strength and determination. The dashing makeup, which includes defined eyebrows, mustaches, and fake beards, creates visual accentuation and emphasizes the masculinity of the dancers.



Fig. 6. Laman Silat Dance Make-Up

6) Lighting Design as an Atmosphere Creator in Laman Silat Dance

Lighting in dance performances not only functions as a means of illumination but also as an atmosphere enhancer. Thus, lighting design in dance performances is very important because it affects the audience's experience in highlighting movements, creating visual patterns, and creating an atmosphere that is harmonious with the storyline of the dance [39]. In the *Silat Laman* Dance performance observed in December 2016, the lighting aspect uses a natural yellow color, which serves to create an atmosphere in line with the concept of martial arts training. The soft, dim light creates a more intimate atmosphere, thus reinforcing the traditional atmosphere of martial arts training. According to an interview with Sunardi, the lighting in *Silat Laman* Dance does not require many color variations because the theme is martial arts training. Therefore, a yellow color was requested when performing the dance. The use of yellow light color with the right intensity setting is considered important in creating the desired atmosphere. The choice of yellow color provides a natural background and supports the theme of the performance. Thus, lighting serves not only as a means of illumination but also as an artistic element that contributes to the narrative and atmosphere of the *Silat Laman* Dance.

4. Conclusion

The conclusion of this research confirms that the *Laman Silat* Dance, created by Sunardi, is a modern representation of Malay-Riau culture through a combination of silat movements, clothing, and traditional music processed with 'contrastive' choreographic techniques. The movements in the *Laman Silat* dance consist of the *Sujud Syukur* Movement, *Gelanggang Latihan* Movement, *Menguji Ilmu* Movement, and *Kembali ke Yang Satu* Movement. This movement represents the training atmosphere, the principles of attack and parry, and the divine in Malay-Riau silat culture. The 'contrasting' choreography and rich aesthetic elements such as poetic narration, motion accents on the shoulders, head, and hands, as well as the utilization of Malay-Riau musical instruments, illustrate the richness of culture that is adaptive to the times. Analysis of artistic elements such as costumes that depict a Malay-Riau fighter, dynamic floor design, music in which there is a poetic *nari* containing the philosophy of life of a Malay-Riau fighter, and lighting shows that *Laman Silat* Dance is not only a cultural expression but also an effective medium to preserve and develop traditional arts in a contemporary context. This research makes an important contribution to the discourse of performing arts by highlighting choreography as an artistic expression that reflects the dynamics of Malay-Riau culture. In addition, the results of this study open up opportunities for further study of the impact of the *Laman Silat* Dance on the younger generation, especially in instilling cultural pride in the midst of globalization.

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