

Gender Symbolism in Sampur and Samparan of Surakarta-Style Javanese Dance Costume Design

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ABSTRACT

Sampur and samparan are essential elements in the costume design of Surakarta-style female dance, serving as primary visual markers that distinguish the aesthetic characteristics of this dance style. Their presence extends beyond mere costume design in court dances such as bedhaya and srimpi; they also function as properties that must be animated by the dancer to harmonize with the movement patterns employed. This study aims to describe the form, meaning, and characteristics of sampur and samparan in the costume design of Surakarta-style female dance and to analyze their significance in the cultural expression of Javanese society. The research employs an ethnocoreological approach with qualitative methods. Primary data were obtained through participatory observation, in which the researcher was directly involved as a Javanese dancer. The findings reveal that sampur and samparan not only enhance the expressive quality of dance movements through distinctive accentuations but also reflect the cultural values and identity of Javanese society. Specifically, samparan is exclusively used in female dances due to its association with the ideal concept of womanhood in Javanese culture. Thus, sampur and samparan function not only in the visual and technical aspects of performance but also as symbolic elements that reinforce the identity of Javanese dance as an art form rich in philosophical and cultural meanings.

KEYWORDS

Ethnic Dance
Costume Design
Javanese Dance
Sampur
Samparan

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INTRODUCTION

Javanese dance, particularly as it has developed in Surakarta, is generally classified into two main types: *tari putra* (male dance) and *tari putri* (female dance). This classification is based on the gender of the character presented in the dance performance. Pamardi et al. (2014) emphasize that this categorization is grounded in the gender of the character portrayed in the dance, aligning with Uyun (2002), who differentiates Javanese dance into male and female dance based on the character being represented. A similar perspective is expressed by Hastuti and Supriyanti (2015), who state that the Surakarta-style dance tradition categorizes a dance as male and female dance according to the character's traits and role in the performance. Thus, Javanese dance can be classified into two primary categories rooted in the roles and characteristics portrayed.

The classification of Javanese dance into male dance and female dance is reflected in its presentation, particularly in the characteristics of movement. Male dance typically portrays a masculine character with broader movement dynamics, especially in the legs and arms, whereas female dance represents a feminine character through more delicate and restricted movements. Supriyanto (2012) states that male dance conveys masculinity through

expansive movements, while female dance embodies femininity with more refined and constrained gestures. Female dance is commonly performed in dance genres such as *bedhaya*, *srimpi*, and *gambyong* and is often used to depict female characters in *wayang* (Javanese puppet theater), including *Srikandi*, *Sembadra*, *Larasati*, *Sinta*, and *Trijata*. This perspective is reinforced by Narawati (2009), who highlights that female dance is predominantly featured in *bedhaya* and *srimpi*, as well as in other dances representing female characters in *wayang* narratives.

In addition to being reflected in movement patterns, the classification of Javanese dance into male dance and female dance is also evident in costume design, particularly in the Surakarta-style tradition. This distinction is most apparent in the costume design for the lower body and the way *sampur* (shawl) is worn. In male dance, the lower-body costume consists of trousers with loosely draped fabric, such as *sandatan* (*cangcutan*), *rapek*, and *supit urang*. This design accommodates a broader range of movements, allowing greater freedom of motion and enhancing the clarity of gestures. Conversely, in female dance, dancers typically wear *samparan*, a tightly wrapped lower-body costume that restricts movement compared to male dance. Additionally, differences in how *sampur* is worn in male dance and female dance further reflect the distinct characteristics of each dance style.

In Surakarta-style female dance, *samparan* and *sampur* play a crucial role in costume design, particularly in court-derived dances such as *bedhaya* and *srimpi*. Additionally, these costume elements hold significant importance in dances that portray characters from *wayang* traditions, which draw inspiration from narratives such as the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Panji Tales, and Babad Majapahit. In this regard, Hastuti and Supriyanti (2015) emphasize that in Javanese dance costume design, particularly in female dance, *samparan* and *sampur* hold a significant position. Similarly, Hapsari and Kurniawan (2021) explain that the costume design worn by female characters in Surakarta-style *wayang wong* performances typically includes *samparan* and *sampur*. This underscores the essential role of these elements in the costume design of Surakarta-style female dance.

Sampur and *samparan* are essential elements in costume design, almost always present in Surakarta-style female dance, making them distinctive visual markers of this dance tradition. Their presence serves as defining attributes, particularly in dances originating from the royal court, such as *bedhaya* and *srimpi*, as well as in performances depicting *wayang* characters. In established traditions, *samparan* is used in nearly all Surakarta-style female dances, except in *gambyong* and in roles such as *parkan* or *abdi dalem* in *wayang wong* performances. The absence of *samparan* in *gambyong* can be attributed to its origins as a *tledak* (folk) dance, which traditionally incorporates a pleated *wiru* cloth as part of its costume design. Thus, *sampur* and *samparan* function as significant attributes that represent the character and identity of Surakarta-style female dance, particularly in court-derived dances and *wayang* character portrayals.

The significance of *sampur* and *samparan* in the costume design of Surakarta-style female dance lies not only in their function as visual attributes but also in their role as dance properties that must be animated by the dancer in harmony with the movement patterns. Mastery of the techniques for using these elements is an essential skill that enhances the dancer's expressive ability. Consequently, in every Surakarta-style female dance training session, the use of *sampur* and *samparan* has become an integral part of the practice. In dance education, both formal and non-formal, the importance of *sampur* and *samparan* is reflected in instructional practices. In formal settings, such as at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts (ISI) Surakarta, students studying Surakarta-style female dance are required to wear *sampur* and *samparan* as part of their practice attire or dance attributes. Meanwhile, in non-

formal education at Kraton Kasunanan Surakarta, these elements are fundamental in female dance training, particularly in *bedhaya* and *srimpi* performances. A similar practice is observed in Mangkunegaran, where in training sessions held every Wednesday morning, female dancers wear *sampur* and *samparan*, especially when learning *bedhaya*, *srimpi*, and *wireng* dance genres. Thus, *sampur* and *samparan* function not only as part of the costume design but also as dance properties that dancers must master through technical skills, ultimately enhancing both expression and aesthetics in Surakarta-style female dance.

As an expression of aesthetics, Surakarta-style female dance is deeply connected to cultural values and philosophical meanings rooted in Javanese societal perspectives and ideas. As an ethnic dance form, it is a cultural product that is closely intertwined with the value system and worldview of the society to which it belongs. Alkaf (2012) explains that ethnic dance, particularly Javanese ethnic dance, has a strong connection to the perspectives and ideas of Javanese society. Similarly, Hartono (2000) asserts that Javanese ethnic dance reflects the worldview and ideas of its people, as it is a product of their cultural heritage. Furthermore, Pramutomo et al. (2016) emphasize that ethnic dance is a cultural product of a particular society or ethnic group, evolving within various sociocultural contexts in which it exists. This suggests that ethnic dance is not merely a series of bodily movements but also a cultural text that reflects and is bound by the values, norms, and cultural identity of its community. Thus, as an ethnic dance form, Surakarta-style female dance not only represents an aesthetic expression but also embodies the cultural values and philosophy of Javanese society, which serves as the custodian of this dance tradition.

Cultural values and philosophy in ethnic dance are reflected through various artistic components that shape the performance, one of which is costume design. In dance, costumes function not only as visual elements but also as symbolic systems that represent specific meanings and philosophies. Kaunang (2021), in his study of *Kawasaran* dance in Tomohon, asserts that costume design carries symbolic meanings that can be interpreted. Similarly, Anam and Ismurdiyahwati (2024), in their research on *Boran* traditional dance in Lamongan Regency, highlight that costume design embodies both meaning and aesthetic values. Moreover, Amelia et al. (2024), in their study of *Topeng Ireng* dance in Magelang Regency, demonstrate that costumes and accessories in this dance represent values aligned with Javanese philosophy and Dayak culture. Anindri et al. (2021) further emphasize that the meaning and values of a dance can be understood through various elements, including the costumes worn by the dancers. Thus, in the context of Surakarta-style female dance, *sampur* and *samparan*, as significant components of costume design, serve not only as aesthetic expressions but also as reflections of cultural values and philosophy based on the perspectives and ideas of Javanese society.

This article aims to describe *sampur* and *samparan* as elements that hold significant positions in the costume design of Javanese dance, particularly in Surakarta-style female dance. As attributes in the costume design of female dance, *sampur* and *samparan* play a crucial role, not only in terms of aesthetic values but also in their profound philosophical meanings. Visually, these two elements enhance the expressive power of the movement patterns used in Surakarta-style female dance. Furthermore, as part of aesthetic expressions in ethnic dance, *sampur* and *samparan* also reflect the cultural values of their originating society—the Javanese people. The significance of *sampur* and *samparan* in the costume design of Surakarta-style female dance demonstrates that these elements serve as distinctive characteristics of the dance's visual identity. This is evident in the fact that almost every Surakarta-style female dance incorporates *sampur* and *samparan*, particularly in court-derived dances such as *bedhaya*, *srimpi*, and various female characters in *wayang* narratives.

Therefore, this study is essential in providing a deeper understanding of the forms, meanings, and characteristics of *sampur* and *samparan*, which play a significant role in the costume design of Surakarta-style female dance.

METHOD

The ethnochoreological perspective within a qualitative research framework is employed in this study to examine the significance of *sampur* and *samparan* in the costume design of Surakarta-style female dance. This perspective is chosen due to its strong relevance to the study of ethnic dance, which conceptualizes dance as a multidimensional phenomenon. Within this framework, dance is understood as a cultural text of an ethnic community, inherently linked to the contextual factors surrounding it. Dance is not merely an artistic expression but also a cultural product that reflects the values, worldviews, and ideas of its originating society (Sriyadi & Pramutomo, 2024). In this regard, Hendra (2018) asserts that ethnochoreology is an appropriate perspective for analyzing ethnic dance as a cultural product that embodies the beliefs and ideologies of the society that created it. Similarly, Pramutomo and Sriyadi (2023), in their study on *Tayub* dance, emphasize that this perspective facilitates a deeper understanding of the interrelationship between dance and cultural values. Narawati (2013) further supports this view, affirming that ethnochoreology serves as an effective approach in examining ethnic dance as a cultural manifestation that reflects the worldview of its practitioners. Thus, the application of the ethnochoreological perspective in this study is deemed appropriate for analyzing the significance of *sampur* and *samparan* in the costume design of Surakarta-style female dance, which represents one of the cultural expressions of Javanese society.

The primary data source in this study was obtained through participant observation, in which the researcher was directly involved as a Javanese dancer. This approach enabled the researcher to gain a deep understanding of movement patterns, expressions, and the use of dance properties, including *sampur* and *samparan* in Surakarta-style female dance. As an active participant, the researcher not only observed but also experienced firsthand various technical and aesthetic aspects inherent in dance practice. This method aligns with the ethnochoreological approach, which conceptualizes dance as a cultural text that must be understood within its broader contextual framework. Thus, the participant observation conducted in this study not only provided rich empirical data but also facilitated a more comprehensive analysis of the significance of *sampur* and *samparan* in the costume design of Surakarta-style female dance.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Form of *Sampur* and *Samparan*

In the traditional Surakarta-style dance, the technique of using *sampur* as part of costume design can be classified into two categories: for male dance and female dance. This classification is based on the distinct movement characteristics of each dance type. In male dance, the *sampur* is placed on the right and left sides of the waist, as illustrated in **Figure 1**. This placement creates a broader visual impression, aligning with the nature of male dance, which generally features wider movement space and volume. Conversely, in female dance, the *sampur* is typically wrapped around the waist and tied at the front, near the navel, as shown in **Figure 2**. This technique creates a narrower visual impression, consistent with the characteristics of female dance, which generally has more confined movement space and volume. Thus, the difference in *sampur* placement between male and female dance not only

serves as an element of costume design but also aesthetically supports movement expression in accordance with the distinctive character of each dance.



Figure 1. The technique of wearing *sampur* in male dance that uses a single shawl
(Source: Screenshot from <https://youtu.be/viHYRpslrsc?si=3dt4Xn-PxeMYfFLJ>, 2025)



Figure 2. The technique of wearing *sampur* in female dance
(Source: Screenshot from https://youtu.be/v9-O_TciB4g?si=R7i4gvJQDrvr0bUi, 2025)

The technique of wearing *sampur* in the costume design of female dance in the Surakarta-style, where it is tied at the front near the navel, as shown in **Figure 2**, is commonly used in court dances, particularly in the *bedhaya* and *srimpi* genres, as well as in dances representing female characters in *wayang* narratives. Meanwhile, in Surakarta-style traditional dances rooted in folk traditions, such as *gambyong* dance, variations exist in the technique of wearing *sampur*. In *gambyong* dance, the use of *sampur* differs, as illustrated in **Figure 3**, retaining the costume tradition of *tledek* or *tayub* dances that have developed in rural communities. However, within the Mangkunegaran palace environment, two *gambyong* dance genres—*Gambyong Pareanom* and *Gambyong Retna Kusuma*—have been incorporated into the court dance repertoire and adopt the *sampur* technique depicted in **Figure 2**. Thus, in the Surakarta-style traditional dance, particularly in female dance, the

sampur technique can be categorized into two main models, as shown in **Figure 2** and **Figure 3**.



Figure 3. The technique of wearing *sampur* in *gambyong* dance
(Source: Screenshot from https://youtu.be/zyX8_khiu6E?si=E77uY_pP8BrJly7s, 2025)



Figure 4. The technique of wearing *sampur* in male dance that incorporates two shawls
(Source: Screenshot from <https://youtu.be/wlr2yX-hY00?si=EySCe-3Y5Sdg9MDQ>, 2025)

In the Surakarta-style dance tradition, the use of *sampur* in male dance can be categorized into two main techniques. The first technique involves two pieces of *sampur*, with one piece draped across the front of the leg and the other across the back. In this technique, the *sampur* that crosses the back of the leg is typically tucked between the *keris* and the waist. This method is commonly applied in dances representing characters from *wayang* narratives, particularly those derived from the Ramayana and Mahabharata epics (*wayang purwa*). Meanwhile, in other male dance performances, the use of *sampur* is generally limited to a single piece draped across the back of the leg. The distinctions in *sampur* usage as part of male dance costume design can be observed in **Figure 4**. Unlike

male dance, in the costume design of female dance in the Surakarta-style, only one piece of *sampur* is used.

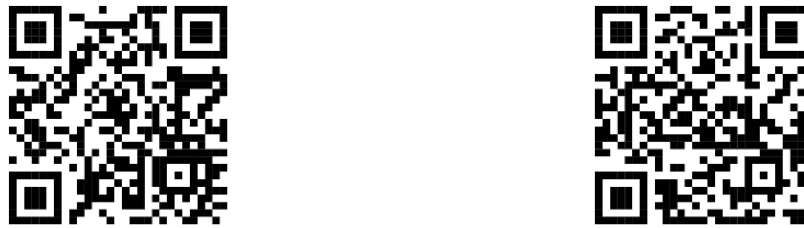


Figure 5. Techniques of using *sampur* and *samparan* in *Bedhaya Duradasih* dance (Left) and Techniques of using *sampur* and *samparan* in *Srimpi Anglirmendhung* dance (Right)

In the traditional Surakarta-style dance, *sampur* serves not only as an element of costume design but also as a dance property that enhances the expressive quality of various movement patterns. Nearly every movement sequence in female dance of the Surakarta-style integrates *sampur* as an essential component of the dance vocabulary. This can be observed in numerous movement patterns, such as *lembehan wutuh*, *lung-manglung*, *pendhapan*, *golek iwak*, *laras sawit*, *laras anglirmendhung*, *laras pangkur*, *sukarsih*, *engkyek*, *enjer ridhong sampur*, *enjer jimpit sampur*, and *ngalap sari*. In these movement patterns, *sampur* is manipulated using various techniques, including *seblak cul sampur*, *seblak jimpit sampur*, *ridhong sampur*, *kebyok sampur*, *kebyak sampur*, *mandhe sampur*, *rimong sampur*, *jimpit sampur*, and *ngolong sampur*. These techniques create spatial and dimensional movement effects that cannot be achieved with bare hands, generating residual movement that visually amplifies the expressive quality of the dance. For illustration, examples of these techniques can be observed in the video accessible via the QR Code in **Figure 5** and **Figure 6**. Thus, from an aesthetic perspective, *sampur* not only enhances the costume design but also significantly contributes to reinforcing the expressiveness of Surakarta-style female dance.

Based on its design, *sampur* in the Surakarta-style dance can be classified into two main models: *sampur* with tassels (*gombyok*) and *sampur* without tassels. The fabric used for both models can be either patterned or plain, with common motifs including *gendolo giri*, *cindhe*, and *rintik*. In terms of dimensions, *sampur* in Surakarta-style dance typically ranges from approximately 35 cm to 100 cm in width and around 315 cm in length. The selection of fabric is based on its soft, smooth, flexible, and supple texture, such as silk, chiffon, and *santung*, to enhance movement expression in dance. Fabrics with these characteristics allow for residual movement, creating a natural drape and forming soft folds that are not stiff, enabling them to follow the dancer's body movements. In some cases, particularly when the fabric is too light, *gombyok* is added as a weight to enhance its visual aesthetic appeal. If the *sampur* used does not have *gombyok*, an alternative is to use *gotri* as a weight, as applied in *Bedhaya Ketawang* dance, where *sampur* is equipped with *gotri* to create a more aesthetically pleasing draping effect. Thus, in crafting *sampur* as part of Javanese dance costume design, both aesthetic and functional aspects must be considered, as *sampur* serves not only as a costume element but also as a dance prop that optimally supports movement expression.

In the costume design of Javanese traditional dance in the Surakarta-style, aside from *sampur*, another significant element is *samparan*. This element is exclusively used in the costume design of female dancers and is not found in male dance costumes. *Samparan* is a specifically designed fabric, typically measuring approximately 350 cm in length and 115–150 cm in width, worn around the legs using a particular wrapping technique. The fabric is

wrapped around the legs in a clockwise direction until it encircles the lower body, with about 150 cm of fabric left hanging in front or to the right of the navel. The lower end of the fabric is then passed through the space between the legs from front to back, forming the section known as *samparan*. The portion of the fabric that touches the floor (*samparan*) generally measures around 40–50 cm in length, depending on the dancer's physique. The taller and larger the dancer, the longer the *samparan* required to create proportions that align with the aesthetic values of the female dance costume in the Surakarta-style.

Etymologically, in the Javanese language, *samparan* derives from the word *sampar*, which means *disarug ngango sikil* (to be kicked, pushed, or shifted with the foot). This meaning aligns with the technique of using *samparan* in female dance of the Surakarta-style. Beyond serving as a crucial element in costume design that covers the lower limbs, *samparan* also functions as a dance property that enhances movement expression. In Surakarta-style traditional dance, particularly in female dance, the *samparan* or the fabric that touches the floor is moved to the right or left by kicking or pushing it with the sole of the foot. This movement creates residual motion, which visually enhances the aesthetic value and enriches the expressive quality of the dance movements.

In Surakarta-style traditional dance, particularly in female dance, nearly all movement patterns incorporate *samparan* as an integral part of the choreographic elements, similar to the use of *sampur*. Several movement patterns that utilize *samparan* include *lembehan wutuh*, *lung-manglung*, *pendhapan*, *golek iwak*, *laras sawit*, *laras anglirmendhung*, *laras pangkur*, *sukarsih*, *engkyek*, *ngalap sari*, and others. However, certain movements generally do not involve *samparan*, particularly those performed at a low level or in a seated position, such as *jengkeng* and *sila*. As an illustration, the technique of using *samparan* in *putri* dance of the Surakarta-style can be observed in the video accessible via the QR Code in **Figure 5**.



Figure 6. *Samparan* fabric design model that partially exposes the right lower leg (left) and *samparan* fabric design model that covers the entire lower legs (right)
(Source: Screenshot from <https://youtu.be/97411iaEG5M?si=9ab1dZLZOqp3nDAM>, 2025)

In Surakarta-style traditional dance, there are two *samparan* design models distinguished by the way the fabric is wrapped around the legs. The first model covers the entire lower limbs, while the second model leaves the lower right leg partially exposed. The visual differences between these two models can be observed in **Figure 6**. The first model is more commonly used and is prevalent in female dance of the Surakarta-style, particularly

in the *bedhaya* and *srimpi* genres, as well as in dances that portray female characters from *wayang* narratives. Meanwhile, the second model is specifically used to represent particular characters, such as Mustakaweni and female giant figures in *wayang* performances. Although these variations do not affect the technique of using *samparan* as a dance property, they do influence the required fabric length. The second model, which does not fully cover the lower limbs, generally utilizes a shorter piece of fabric compared to the first model.

The Meaning of *Sampur* and *Samparan*

Sampur and *samparan* are significant elements in the costume design of Javanese dance in the Surakarta-style, particularly in female dance. As integral components of costume design, these elements serve as expressions of Javanese cultural identity. In this context, *sampur* and *samparan* are closely associated with cultural values rooted in the perspectives and ideologies of the Javanese people, particularly those in Surakarta, as the custodians of this dance tradition. In line with Setiawan's view (2020), *sampur* and *samparan* are essential elements in the costume design of Javanese court dance, reflecting the cultural values of Javanese society.

Sampur is a long scarf or piece of fabric that, in Javanese terminology, is also referred to as *udhet*, particularly when worn by women. As part of the aesthetic expression of Javanese society, *sampur* or *udhet* holds a significant role in traditional dress, especially within the aristocratic circles of the royal court. *Sampur* has become an essential attribute of the *kampuhan* attire design, which was traditionally worn by women as a formal and ceremonial garment in the royal court (Maida & Muslich, 2022). Although this style of dress is now rarely found in everyday use, its tradition has been preserved in Javanese wedding ceremonies. The *kampuhan* (or *basahan*) bridal attire remains one of the traditional Javanese wedding dress styles, in which *sampur* continues to be an integral element of the bride's ensemble (Derista, 2019; Purnawangsih et al., 2020). Thus, *sampur* can be understood as an element that represents one of the aesthetic expressions in Javanese women's traditional dress.

In Javanese culture, the use of *sampur* or shawls has been recognized since the Hindu-Buddhist era, as depicted in reliefs and statues found in various temples from that period. Shawls were part of the attributes used to portray deities sculpted in temple carvings. Muthi'ah et al. (2021) explain that shawls were among the attributes featured on Harihara statues from the Majapahit era, particularly on the Harihara Simping and Harihara Sekaran statues. Similarly, Permata et al. (2022), in their study on female embodiment statues in Majapahit, note that shawls were worn by statues representing Gayatri, Tribhuwanatunggadewi, and Suhita. Yusuf (2021) also reveals in his research on statues at Sumbernanas Temple that shawls were commonly found attributes, as seen on statues of Agastya, Nandiswara, and Caturmuka. In several of these statues, the shawl is depicted as part of royal attire used to represent deities or nobility, typically accompanied by elaborate and complete jewelry. Additionally, the reliefs at Plaosan Temple illustrate the use of shawls as an integral part of the garments worn by deities. Thus, from an iconographic perspective, *sampur* or shawls has been a common element of clothing since the Hindu-Buddhist era. Its presence in Javanese dance performances can be interpreted as a form of continuity in aesthetic expression, particularly in traditional attire.

As a form of aesthetic expression, the *sampur* in Javanese dance of the Surakarta-style serves not only as an attribute in costume design but also as a dance prop that enhances movement expression. Nearly all movement patterns in Javanese dance of the Surakarta-

style incorporate the *sampur* to elevate the aesthetic value of the performance. As a dance prop, the *sampur* creates a sensory experience that is difficult or even impossible to achieve with bare hands. This aligns with the views of Susanti (2015) and Lestari & Heniwayti (2021), who argue that the use of props in dance can generate sensory experiences that cannot be realized solely through the dancer's body. Therefore, in Javanese dance, the *sampur* holds a significant role in reinforcing the aesthetic expression of movement patterns.

The use of the *sampur* as an integral part of movement can create various visual effects through the spatial forms and lines it generates, thereby producing a distinct sensory experience in each movement. This sensation arises because the *sampur* is capable of forming residual movement—an additional motion trace or visual effect resulting from the interaction between the dancer's bodily movements (particularly hand gestures) and the *sampur* as a dance prop. The residual movement produced by the *sampur* enriches the visual dimension of the performance, thereby enhancing movement expression. In Surakarta-style classical dance, for instance, techniques such as *seblak sampur*, *kebyak sampur*, and *kebyok sampur* create additional visual effects, such as the flicking or swinging motion of the *sampur*, which generates dynamic movement patterns. Thus, the residual movement of the *sampur* creates a distinctive visual illusion with unique movement dynamics, reinforcing the expressive quality of the dance.

In Javanese dance performances, the *sampur* functions as an expressive medium that aids in conveying meaning or messages through various movement patterns. Gusmail (2018) asserts that dance props serve to clarify the artistic concept of a performance while simultaneously reinforcing the expression of its essence or meaning. The use of props enhances the clarity and communicative nature of movement expression, making it easier for the audience to grasp the intended message. In this context, the *sampur* is often employed to amplify emotional expressions, such as sorrow or anger. For instance, in movement patterns such as *lung manglung* (*manglung*), *aruna*, and *kantaka*, the *sampur* serves as a supporting element in depicting sadness. In the *aruna* movement, for example, the *sampur* is used to express sorrow by emphasizing the gesture of wiping away tears. Additionally, in war-themed dances, the *sampur* is utilized as a weapon, both for attacking and defending against an opponent's strikes. Meanwhile, in dances with romantic or courtship themes, the *sampur* functions as a medium to enhance movement expression, particularly in conveying affection. In the *pondongan* movement pattern, for example, the *sampur* symbolizes a beloved partner being carried or embraced. This demonstrates that the *sampur* is not merely an aesthetic element in costume design but also plays a dramatic role in enriching the meaning of Javanese dance performances.

Similar to the *sampur*, the *samparan* in Javanese dance costume design, particularly in female dance, holds significant importance in supporting the expression of movement patterns. Beyond its function as a costume element, the *samparan* also serves as a dance prop that is almost always involved in every aspect of movement in female dance. In various movement patterns, the *samparan* is dynamically manipulated to the right and left through foot movements known as *seblak samparan*, creating an accentuated and rhythmic motion. The flexibility of the *samparan* fabric allows for the formation of residual lines when swayed, enhancing the visual aesthetics of the dance. Thus, in the Surakarta-style Javanese dance tradition, the *samparan* functions not only as a costume component but also as a prop that visually strengthens movement expression.

In *bedhaya* and *srimpi* dances, which developed in the Kraton Kasunanan Surakarta, the design of the *samparan* fabric is typically adorned with scattered flowers (*bunga tabur*).

These flowers are either inserted into the folds of the *samparan* or placed on the remaining fabric that touches the floor. When the *samparan* is swayed (*seblak*) to the right or left, the scattered flowers are lifted into the air, creating a visual effect that enhances the expressive quality of the movement patterns, thereby increasing the aesthetic value of the performance. Additionally, the use of flowers in the *samparan* is often accompanied by slivers of pandan leaves and other fragrant elements, which not only enhance the visual beauty but also introduce a distinctive olfactory aesthetic to the performance.

Etymologically, *samparan* is derived from the word *sampar*, which, in the context of Javanese culture, generally carries a negative connotation. In ethical conduct, objects that are *sampar* (kicked or pushed aside with the foot) are often perceived as having little value or being less respected. However, in the context of *bedhaya* and *srimpi* dances, despite the *samparan* being positioned low, it retains its aesthetic significance, both visually and aromatically. This aligns with Rusini's perspective, which asserts that the use of *samparan* in *bedhaya* and *srimpi* dances continues to embody aesthetic beauty, even though traditionally, objects that are *sampar* are often associated with lesser value (Utari, 2020).

Samparan, as both a costume element and a dance property, reflects cultural values deeply rooted in the perspectives and beliefs of Javanese society. In the Surakarta-style Javanese dance tradition, *samparan* is exclusively used in female dances, as its presence is closely linked to the ideal concept of womanhood within Javanese cultural philosophy. Wahyu Santoso Prabowo states that *samparan* carries a philosophical meaning that represents the image of the ideal Javanese woman (Sriyadi & Prabowo, 2018). A similar view is expressed by Setyowati (2013), who affirms that *samparan* is intrinsically connected to the representation of women in Javanese culture.

From the perspective of Javanese society, the ideal woman is portrayed as a figure who is gentle, refined, and graceful in appearance. However, beyond her softness, she is also expected to possess firmness and competence. Fitriana (2019), in her study on the ideal Javanese woman based on *Serat Wulang Putri*, asserts that a woman should be gentle and speak with refinement while also demonstrating skill and decisiveness. A similar view is expressed by Farina and Lestari (2021), who state that the ideal Javanese woman embodies both gentleness and firmness, along with practical skills. This notion is further reinforced by Uyun (2002), who emphasizes that the Javanese ideal of womanhood prioritizes gracefulness without neglecting proficiency and decisiveness. Likewise, Ajrin (2017) affirms that Javanese women should exhibit courtesy and gentleness while maintaining strength and skill. Thus, in the Javanese cultural perspective, an ideal woman is not only characterized by her softness and elegance but also by her competence and assertiveness.

Javanese dance, as a form of ethnic dance, is deeply intertwined with cultural values rooted in the perspectives and beliefs of the society that owns and practices the dance tradition. Consequently, Javanese dance cannot be separated from these cultural values and serves as a representation of the norms upheld and applied by its cultural community. This connection is particularly evident in court dances that have developed within the royal palaces. Guntur (2019) explains that Javanese royal courts, as cultural centers emerging from the Islamic Mataram Palace, have cultivated various forms of art that have attained the status of *adi luhung* (supreme refinement) through artistic creations grounded in philosophy, norms, ethics, and ethno-aesthetics. Pamardi (2017) further states that dance is one of the royal court's cultural products, embodying moral guidance for the attainment of noble character and spirit, in harmony with the principles of life upheld by Javanese society. As a courtly cultural product, dance was typically created by the king or commissioned from

artists as a representation of the ideal way of life. In line with Brakel (1993), Javanese dance is not merely a stylization of movement but also an interpretation of human behavior in distinguishing actions that align or deviate from societal norms. Thus, Javanese dance performances are inextricably linked to the cultural values embraced by the society that sustains them.

In the context of *samparan* as an element of aesthetic expression in Javanese dance, it is closely associated with the cultural values upheld by the society that owns and preserves the dance tradition. As part of the Javanese ethnic community's aesthetic expression, *samparan* reflects the ideal image of Javanese women, who are traditionally characterized by gentleness, refinement, and warmth, yet are also expected to possess agility, alertness, and skill. In Javanese dance compositions, *samparan* serves as a symbolic representation of a woman's strength, dexterity, and expertise. In female dance, particularly *bedhaya* and *srimpi*, although the movement patterns are delicate, graceful, and fluid, a sense of strength and agility is conveyed through the manipulation of *samparan* (Sriyadi & Prabowo, 2018). In practice, *samparan* is flicked (*seblak*) to the right or left using the sole of the foot, creating a distinct and forceful accentuation. This strong accentuation contrasts with the typically soft, elegant, and feminine qualities of female dance movements. In line with Daryono's perspective, *samparan* in Javanese dance embodies assertiveness, courage, and skill through the dynamic accents it produces (Kresnawati, 2020).

***Sampur* and *Samparan* as Defining Characteristics of Javanese Dance**

The characteristics or distinctive features of a dance are closely linked to its presentational style, which reflects the essence of the dance and serves as the identity of a particular style. In dance, style refers to the mode of presentation that determines how a choreographic work is performed, creating variations that shape its unique characteristics and distinguish one style from another (Brakel-Papenhuyzen, 1991; Hughes-Freeland, 2009; Sedyawati, 1981). For example, the study by Hidayani and Lanjari (2019) indicates that the distinguishing features of the *Topeng Tumenggung* dance in the Slangit-style can be observed in its presentational techniques, including movement patterns, music, and costume design. Similarly, Nofitri (2015), in her research on the *Piring* dance in Gaguak Periang, emphasizes that performance style is a defining characteristic that differentiates one form of presentation from another. Thus, the style of presentation and the characteristics of a dance are intricately connected and can be analyzed through the techniques and modes of performance employed.

Sampur and *samparan* have become significant elements in Javanese dance performances, particularly in female dance of the Surakarta-style tradition. Their presence is highly prominent in traditional court dances such as *bedhaya* and *srimpi*, as well as in other dances that depict female characters in *wayang* narratives. Beyond serving as components of costume design, *sampur* and *samparan* also function as dance props that enhance expressive movement patterns. This highlights their crucial role in shaping how Surakarta-style Javanese dance should be performed. *Sampur* and *samparan* are essential elements that contribute to the distinct characteristics of female dance performances in the Surakarta-style tradition.

The significance of *sampur* and *samparan* in Surakarta-style Javanese dance performances is evident in the skill required by dancers to incorporate them as props. In relation to this, these two costume design elements are often introduced early in the learning process of female dance. For instance, during the training of *Bedhaya Pangkur* at the Kraton

Kasunanan Surakarta, as depicted in **Figure 7**, dancers already utilize *sampur* and *samparan*. Similarly, in rehearsals for *Bedhaya Ketawang*, these elements serve as essential components of the training attire. This indicates that *sampur* and *samparan* hold a significant position in female dance, requiring dancers to develop proficiency in using them both as costume elements and as integral dance props.



Figure 7. *Sampur* and *samparan* serve as significant attributes in the practice of *Bedhaya Pangkur* dance training (Source: Screenshot from https://youtu.be/nXU_9wkPtHg?si=7Y5Mj_9jr9d-NFRy, 2025)



Figure 8. The documentation of *langendriyan mandraswaran* at Pura Mangkunegaran (Source: Sriyadi, 2025)

Beyond the Kraton Kasunanan Surakarta, *sampur* and *samparan* are also integral to the costume design and dance properties of Pura Mangkunegaran. These two elements play a crucial role in female dance performances, particularly in the *wireng*, *bedhaya*, *srimpi*, and female characters within the *langendriyan mandraswaran* genre. Similar to the practice in Kraton Kasunanan Surakarta, the learning process for female dance at Pura Mangkunegaran frequently incorporates *sampur* and *samparan* to train dancers in manipulating these props effectively. For instance, during routine training sessions held every Wednesday morning at Pendapa Ageng Pura Mangkunegaran, female dancers are required to use *sampur* and

samparan as part of their practice attire. Additionally, in the documentation of *langendriyan mandraswaran* performances, even when the full costume is not worn, the female characters still use *sampur* and *samparan* (see **Figure 8**). This demonstrates that these two elements also hold significant importance in female dance performances at Pura Mangkunegaran.

As a vassal of the Kraton Kasunanan Surakarta, Pura Mangkunegaran has primarily oriented its dance development toward the Surakarta-style of Javanese dance (Soedarsono, 1999; Widyastutieningrum, 2012). However, during the reign of Mangkunegara VII, cultural interactions with the Kraton Kasultanan Yogyakarta led to the absorption of Yogyakarta-style dance. This process resulted in the emergence of Yogyakarta-style dance forms within Mangkunegaran (Sriyadi & Pramutomo, 2020; Suharti, 1990). Within this absorption, several innovations took place. One notable innovation was the incorporation of *samparan* in Yogyakarta-style dances that were adopted in Mangkunegaran, particularly in *bedhaya* and *srimpi* genres, where *samparan* was not traditionally used. Furthermore, *samparan* was manipulated similarly to its use in Surakarta-style dance, being flicked (*seblak*) to the right and left in accordance with the movement patterns employed (Sriyadi & Pramutomo, 2021). This indicates that *samparan*, a distinctive element of Surakarta-style dance, was preserved in Mangkunegaran, even when applied to dance forms adopted from Yogyakarta. Thus, *samparan*, which characterizes the performance style of the Kraton Kasunanan Surakarta, has been sustained in the development of dance at Pura Mangkunegaran.

Samparan in the costume design of Javanese dance performances can also be found at Pura Pakualaman. According to Soemaryatmi (1998), Surakarta-style dance began to develop in Pura Pakualaman during the reign of Paku Alam VII, particularly following his marriage to B.R.A. Retno Puwasa, the daughter of Paku Buwana X. Supporting this view, Kusmayati (1988) asserts that after this marriage, Paku Buwana X gifted Surakarta-style *bedhaya* and *srimpi* dances to be performed at Pura Pakualaman, facilitating the development of Surakarta-style dance within the palace environment. The *samparan*, as part of the costume design for *bedhaya* and *srimpi*, has been preserved as a distinctive characteristic of Surakarta-style dance in Pakualaman.

The use of *samparan* fabric as part of women's attire in Javanese culture, particularly in Surakarta, extends beyond dance performances. *Samparan* is also utilized in *wayang kulit purwa* performances of the Surakarta-style as a costume design element that visualizes female characters. This is evident in female *wayang kulit purwa*, which are depicted wearing long cloth. In addition to *wayang kulit* performances, *samparan* also plays a significant role in bridal attire, particularly in the *kampuhan* or *basahan* wedding dress style practiced in Surakarta. Thus, *samparan* represents one of the distinctive characteristics of women's attire in Javanese culture as it has developed in Surakarta.

In 1755, a treaty known as the Giyanti Agreement was established in Java, dividing the Islamic Mataram Palace into two separate entities: Kraton Kasunanan Surakarta and Kraton Kasultanan Yogyakarta. This division had a significant impact on the cultural development of each kingdom. Although both originated from the same cultural tradition, their subsequent evolution led to distinct differences. Each kraton developed its own unique cultural characteristics, including in dance performances (Hartono, 2000; Pramutomo, 2014). The two royal courts adopted different dance presentation styles, with one of the most striking differences being the use of *samparan* as part of the costume design in Surakarta-style dance, which is absent in Yogyakarta-style dance. In Yogyakarta-style female dance, the commonly used fabric design consists of *seredan* or *wiron*. Thus, *samparan* serves as a distinctive

element that differentiates Surakarta's dance presentation style from Yogyakarta's, despite their shared cultural roots.

In Balinese dance, there is a fabric design that bears similarities to *samparan* in Javanese dance, particularly in the costume design of *Oleg Tamulilingan*. This paired dance features both male and female dance roles. Novitasari et al. (2023) explain that in the female dancer's costume design, a *kamen* extends toward the back. This aligns with Astini's (2013) assertion that this fabric is known as *kamen mekancut ke belakang*. In relation to movement patterns, the extended fabric plays a significant role in the dancer's footwork. For instance, when performing walking movements, the dancer must drag the fabric in a controlled manner to prevent the feet from getting tangled. To avoid such difficulties, a specific technique is applied, in which the dancer flips the extended fabric to the right or left using the foot before stepping forward. This indicates that the fabric design in *Oleg Tamulilingan* shares notable similarities with *samparan* in Surakarta-style Javanese dance.

The design of the *kamen mekancut ke belakang*, which bears similarities to the *samparan* in Javanese female dance costumes, originates from classical dance dramas that developed in Bali, such as *Gambuh* and *Arja* (Astini, 2013). *Gambuh* is a classical Balinese dance drama that scholars consider a continuation of *raket* performances from the Majapahit era (Vickers, 2020). In *Gambuh*, the fabric design extending toward the back resembles the *samparan* in Javanese dance and is typically worn by female characters. One of these characters is Putri, who wears *kain kacut* or *tapih lelancingan*, a long cloth extending behind the body. *Lelancingan* symbolizes grace, as well as greatness or majesty (Jeno et al., 2023). Ariyanto (1985) states that *Gambuh*, as a classical dance drama with high aesthetic value, served as an inspiration for the creation of various other Balinese dances. In line with this, the *lelancingan* or *kamen mekancut ke belakang*, which is commonly worn by female characters in *Gambuh*, has also been incorporated into other Balinese dances, such as *Oleg Tamulilingan*.

The designs of *lelancingan* and *samparan* share similarities in their use for female dance characters, particularly in the fabric extending behind the body, which is moved to the right or left by being kicked or flicked with the foot. However, in specific details, they exhibit significant differences. These differences lie in the fabric motifs used, the techniques or methods of wearing them, and their application in dance movement patterns. In terms of movement patterns, *samparan* is more frequently and dynamically moved to the right and left in various motion variations, while *lelancingan* does not necessarily follow the same movement patterns. *Lelancingan* is only moved when its presence obstructs the dancer's steps, requiring it to be flicked aside first to prevent being stepped on.

Unlike *samparan*, which is rarely found in other dance performances, *sampur* or *selendang* (shawl) has been widely used in various ethnic dance performances. In *Topeng Cirebon* dance, for instance, *sampur* functions not only as a costume design element but also as a dance prop (Dyah, 2007). A similar role is observed in *Gandrung* dance from Banyuwangi, where *sampur* plays a crucial role both as part of the costume design and as a prop that enhances movement expression (Efendi & Nurullita, 2019). Furthermore, in *Tayub* dance, *sampur* holds a highly significant position, serving both as attire and a dance prop. In this performance, the act of presenting *sampur* to an audience member symbolizes an invitation to dance with the performer (Widyastutieningrum, 2004). Thus, *sampur* is one of the most commonly used elements in both costume design and props across various ethnic dances.

Although *sampur* has generally been used as part of ethnic cultural expression in dance performances, its characteristics vary across traditions. These differences can be observed in the shape of the *sampur*, the technique of wearing it as part of the costume design, and its utilization as a dance prop. In Javanese dance of the Surakarta-style, *sampur* is an element that is almost always incorporated into movement composition, particularly in female dance performances. In general, the technique of wearing and using *sampur* in the Surakarta-style closely resembles that of the Yogyakarta-style. This assumption is based on the fact that both traditions share the same cultural roots, originating from the Mataram Islamic Palace. However, despite similarities in their fundamental principles, there are distinct differences in movement details. For instance, in Surakarta-style dance, there is a movement called *ridhong sampur*, which shares similarities with *cangkol udhet* in Yogyakarta-style dance. However, these movements differ in their specific execution: in *ridhong sampur*, the lower arm is positioned closer to the *cethik* or pelvis, while in *cangkol udhet*, the lower arm extends forward at a right angle. Thus, although *sampur* has become an integral part of cultural expression, its technique and usage remain diverse, reflecting the distinct characteristics of each dance style.

CONCLUSIONS

As essential elements in the costume design of Surakarta-style Javanese female dance, *sampur* and *samparan* serve not only as aesthetic attributes but also embody profound philosophical meanings. Visually, these elements enhance the expressive quality of dance movements, creating distinctive accents within each choreographic pattern. Beyond their decorative function, *sampur* and *samparan* reflect the cultural values of Javanese society, demonstrating a strong connection between artistic expression and cultural identity. Specifically, *samparan* is exclusively used in female dances, as its presence is closely tied to the idealized concept of femininity in Javanese cultural perspectives. The consistent use of *sampur* and *samparan* in Surakarta-style female dance underscores their significance as defining characteristics that distinguish this dance style from other forms of Javanese dance. In addition to their role as aesthetic and characteristic elements of Surakarta-style female dance, *sampur* and *samparan* are deeply intertwined with the cultural expressions of Javanese society. Their presence in Javanese dance, particularly in female performances, reflects the intrinsic relationship between artistic expression and cultural identity. Thus, *sampur* and *samparan* contribute not only to the visual and technical aspects of performance but also serve as symbolic elements that reinforce the identity of Javanese dance as an art form rich in philosophical and cultural meaning.

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