

Gambiranom Dance as a Culturally Constructed Aesthetic Behavior of Falling in Love in Javanese Tradition

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ABSTRACT

Love-themed dance repertoires occupy a significant position in the Surakarta dance tradition as cultural representations of emotional experience and Javanese values. Among these repertoires, Gambiranom represents the theme of *gandrungan* through a male solo dance that articulates the protagonist's psychological experiences of longing, affection, and determination in the pursuit of love. Although previous studies have examined its choreographic structure and performance form, limited attention has been given to its movement vocabulary as culturally constructed aesthetic behavior. This study investigates how aesthetic behavior in Gambiranom is shaped by the emotional experiences and everyday practices of Javanese society and embodied through its performance style. Employing a qualitative research design with an ethnochoreological approach, data were collected through participant observation supported by a literature study and analyzed through data reduction, categorization, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The findings demonstrate that the movement vocabulary of Gambiranom is not arbitrarily composed but derives from the stylization of everyday behaviors associated with the experience of falling in love, including longing, affection, self-grooming, emotional intimacy, and the determination to unite with one's beloved. These behaviors are transformed into aesthetic behavior through the choreographic conventions of Javanese dance and embodied in the *kiprahan* performance model with a *putra alus lanyap* performance style. The study concludes that aesthetic behavior in Gambiranom functions not only as a choreographic convention but also as a cultural identity through which Javanese society constructs and communicates the experience of romantic love within the tradition of ethnic dance.

KEYWORDS

Gambiranom dance; Aesthetic behavior; Ethnochoreology; Performance style; Javanese dance.

INTRODUCTION

Dance repertoire within the Javanese tradition functions not merely as a medium of aesthetic expression but also as a representational system through which emotional experiences, cultural values, and social constructs embedded in Javanese society are articulated. One of the dominant thematic categories in the Surakarta dance tradition is romantic love, as embodied in the *gandrungan* repertoire. Etymologically, the term *gandrungan* is derived from the Javanese word *gandrung*, which refers to an emotional state in which an individual is deeply in love or profoundly attached to another person. Based on its mode of presentation, *gandrungan* dance may be classified into two principal

forms: solo and duet performances. The solo form represents the affective experience of a character who is falling in love, emphasizing individual emotional expression, whereas the duet form, known as *pasihan*, portrays a romantic relationship through the dramatic interaction of two characters who share mutual affection. The distinction between these two forms extends beyond the number of performers; it also encompasses differences in narrative construction, strategies of emotional expression, and the aesthetic modes of communication established through movement, facial expression, and the interpersonal dynamics enacted between the characters on stage.

Within the category of *gandrungan*-themed repertoire in the Surakarta dance tradition, *Gambiranom* is regarded as one of the most representative works. The dance portrays the emotional experience of a character overcome by romantic love, depicting King Gambiranom's affection for Dewi Titisari. In the Javanese *wayang* tradition, King Gambiranom is another name for Raden Bambang Irawan, the son of Arjuna, whose story originates from the *Mahabharata* epic. This narrative is subsequently transformed into an independent dance work that emphasizes the character's psychological dimension, particularly the expressions of longing, attraction, and emotional turmoil accompanying the experience of falling in love. Consequently, *Gambiranom* transcends the mere representation of a *wayang* character by offering an aesthetic construction of *gandrung*—the experience of being deeply in love—from the perspective of Javanese culture.

By foregrounding the representation of the experience of *gandrung*, *Gambiranom* incorporates a wide range of expressive forms derived from the emotional experiences and social practices of Javanese society associated with falling in love. The attitudes and behaviors commonly exhibited by individuals experiencing romantic love are incorporated into the choreographic structure and subsequently subjected to processes of stylization, distortion, and artistic selection in accordance with the aesthetic conventions of Javanese dance. Through this transformative process, everyday behavior is reconfigured into aesthetic behavior—forms of action that no longer serve practical purposes but instead function as symbolic vehicles for communicating the meanings, emotions, and cultural values embedded within them. Accordingly, *Gambiranom* can be understood as an aesthetic representation that transforms the social experience of romantic love into the expressive language of dance movement.

The transformation of the social experience of romantic love into the language of dance movement, as exemplified by *Gambiranom*, cannot be separated from its position as a form of Javanese ethnic dance. As an ethnic dance tradition, *Gambiranom* is a cultural product shaped by the value system, worldview, and structures of meaning that have developed within the community that sustains it. From this perspective, dance is understood not merely as a medium of entertainment or artistic expression but also as a symbolic representation that reflects the ideas, emotional experiences, and cultural values of a community. Shay and Sellers-Young (2016) argue that ethnic dance is a cultural product intrinsically connected to the worldview, values, and ideas of the community to which it belongs, thereby serving as a vehicle for cultural aesthetic expression. Consistent with this perspective, Blumenfeld-Jones (1995) conceptualizes dance as a cultural text that embodies the perspectives, beliefs, and emotional experiences of cultural actors through aesthetic forms of expression. A similar view is advanced by Morales (2019), who maintains that ethnic dance reflects the cultural values and historical experiences of a community while also providing a medium through which its collective narratives and shared experiences may be understood. Furthermore, Akpan and Ekong (2017) explain that ethnic dance is a cultural product through which communities express their emotions, aspirations, and shared values, whereas Byczkowska-Owczarek (2019) emphasizes that the movements of ethnic dance embody cultural meanings and values articulated through

aesthetic expression. Accordingly, *Gambiranom* may be understood as a cultural text that constructs and represents Javanese conceptions of romantic love through forms of aesthetic behavior that have undergone processes of stylization within the medium of dance.

From the perspective of ethnic dance as both a cultural text and an aesthetic product of the community that sustains it, the formation of dance expressions cannot be separated from the emotional experiences and everyday practices of the culture-bearing community. Social experience and everyday behavior serve as primary sources of inspiration in the creative process, where they are transformed into movement patterns endowed with aesthetic value. Accordingly, the creation of dance is not an arbitrary process but one that is firmly rooted in social reality, which is subsequently transformed into artistic expression. Lewis (2013) argues that dance is intrinsically connected to emotional experiences and everyday practices, both of which provide the primary source of inspiration for the emergence of aesthetic behavior. Consistent with this view, Byczkowska-Owczarek (2019) maintains that ethnic dance reflects cultural meanings and emotional experiences that directly shape movement patterns and the construction of aesthetic behavior in performance. Furthermore, Ness (2016) explains that ethnic dance is deeply rooted in the everyday lives of the communities that practice it, with its kinesthetic and visual symbolism emerging through the transformation of existing social practices. Thus, aesthetic behavior in dance may be understood as a culturally constructed form of expression grounded in the emotional experiences and everyday practices of the community that sustains the dance tradition.

In line with this perspective, the present study aims to examine *Gambiranom* as a form of aesthetic behavior that is culturally constructed within the Surakarta dance tradition, with particular emphasis on the transformation of the emotional experiences and everyday practices associated with expressions of falling in love in Javanese society into the expressive language of dance movement. Specifically, the study investigates how social experiences, everyday behaviors, and emotional expressions related to the concept of *gandrung* are transformed into choreographic structures through processes of stylization, selection, and aestheticization in accordance with the aesthetic conventions of Javanese dance. Furthermore, this study seeks to analyze *Gambiranom* as a cultural text that represents the value system and worldview of Javanese society, in which romantic love is understood not merely as an individual emotional experience but also as one that is culturally institutionalized through artistic expression. By doing so, this study is expected to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between emotional experience, cultural construction, and the formation of aesthetic behavior in Javanese ethnic dance, while also enriching scholarly discussions on the representation of emotion in traditional performing arts.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design using an ethnochoreological approach, which conceptualizes dance as a cultural text that represents the knowledge system, values, and worldview of the community that sustains it. Within the framework of ethnochoreology, ethnic dance is understood not merely as a form of artistic performance but as a cultural product whose structures of meaning are constituted through the interrelationship among social practices, emotional experiences, and the aesthetic constructions of the culture-bearing community. This approach enables an examination of how the ideas, values, and worldview of Javanese society are articulated through the performance style of *Gambiranom*, particularly in its representation of romantic love grounded in the expression of *gandrung*. Accordingly, ethnochoreology provides an appropriate analytical framework for investigating how the emotional experiences and

everyday practices through which Javanese people express romantic love are transformed into stylized movement vocabularies that constitute forms of aesthetic behavior within the choreographic structure of *Gambiranom*. By adopting this perspective, the study offers a deeper understanding of the interrelationship between cultural practices, systems of meaning, and artistic expression in Javanese ethnic dance.

Consistent with this methodological approach, the primary data for this study were obtained through participant observation, in which the researcher was directly engaged as a dancer in the empirical practice of the Surakarta dance tradition, particularly in romantic love-themed repertoires relevant to the focus of the study. This direct involvement facilitated an immersive and contextually grounded understanding of the processes through which embodied experience, movement practice, and aesthetic behavior are internalized and enacted in the performance of *Gambiranom*. Consequently, the data extend beyond documenting the external dimensions of performance to encompass the experiential and practical consciousness that underlies the artistic process. In addition, the study was supported by a literature study as a secondary data source to strengthen the conceptual framework, broaden the analytical perspective, and provide a theoretical foundation for understanding aesthetic behavior in *Gambiranom*. The integration of the ethnochoreological approach, participant observation, and the literature study therefore enabled a more comprehensive analysis of the interrelationship among emotional experience, cultural construction, and aesthetic representation in *Gambiranom*, particularly with regard to the transformation of expressions of falling in love into forms of aesthetic behavior within the Javanese dance tradition.

The research design followed a qualitative, cyclical, and interpretive process, beginning with data collection that involved documenting empirical experiences derived from dance practice as well as gathering conceptual insights from relevant scholarly literature to strengthen the understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The collected data were subsequently reduced through processes of selection, categorization, and simplification based on the study's analytical focus, namely the representation of the experience of falling in love, the transformation of everyday practices, and the construction of aesthetic behavior within the choreographic structure of *Gambiranom*. As a result, only data with direct conceptual relevance were retained for further analysis. The subsequent stage involved interpretive data analysis, in which the relationships among social experience, embodied practice, and artistic expression were examined, with particular attention to how emotional experiences rooted in everyday life are transformed into aesthetically meaningful movement patterns through processes of stylization and artistic selection. The findings were then systematically organized to identify recurring patterns, conceptual relationships, and interpretive themes that explain the cultural construction of aesthetic behavior in the dance. Finally, conclusions were drawn inductively by synthesizing the principal findings to elucidate the interrelationship among emotional experience, cultural construction, and aesthetic expression in *Gambiranom*, thereby providing a comprehensive response to the objectives of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Gambiranom Dance as an Aesthetic Representation of the Experience of Falling in Love

Gambiranom is one of the dance repertoires within the Surakarta dance tradition that represents the emotional experience of falling in love. Within the thematic classification of Javanese dance, it belongs to the category of *gandrungan*, a dance form that portrays the psychological state of an individual who is deeply immersed in feelings of love, attraction, and the desire to establish a romantic relationship with the beloved. Consistent with the

characteristics of *gandrungan*-themed dances, *Gambiranom* is performed as a solo work that centers on the representation of a single character's emotional experience. The central figure portrayed in the dance is King Gambiranom, also known as Raden Bambang Irawan, the son of Arjuna, whose story derives from the Javanese *wayang* tradition, itself adapted from the *Mahabharata* epic (Salsabila et al., 2023). Accordingly, the choreographic structure of *Gambiranom* is designed to represent the psychological dynamics of a character experiencing the emotional turbulence of romantic love, making it a repertoire that specifically constructs the experience of *gandrung* within the cultural perspective of Javanese society.

The theme of romantic love in *Gambiranom* is derived from the *wayang* narrative *Bambang Irawan Rabi* (also known as *Bambang Irawan Krama*), which recounts Raden Bambang Irawan's struggle to marry Dewi Titisari, the daughter of King Kresna of the Kingdom of Dwarawati. The conflict begins when their planned marriage is canceled due to the intervention of King Baladewa, who insists that Dewi Titisari marry Raden Lesmana Mandrakumara, the son of King Duryudana of Hastina. This event gives rise to profound emotional turmoil in Bambang Irawan, characterized by disappointment, anger, sorrow, and an intense longing for Dewi Titisari. Following the counsel of his parents, Arjuna and Dewi Palupi, Bambang Irawan resolves to pursue his beloved despite the obstacles before him. Accompanied by the *Punakawan*—Semar, Gareng, Petruk, and Bagong—he undertakes a series of endeavors that ultimately enable him to assume the identity of King Gambiranom of the Kingdom of Rancangkenca. Under this royal identity, Bambang Irawan leads the forces of Rancangkenca in confronting the army of Hastina, which seeks to prevent his marriage to Dewi Titisari. After defeating the Hastina forces and driving them out of Dwarawati, Bambang Irawan ultimately secures King Kresna's blessing to marry Dewi Titisari (Maryono, 2019; Putra & Harpawati, 2026).

Bambang Irawan's emotional journey in pursuing his love for Dewi Titisari constitutes the conceptual foundation for the characterization and expressive structure of *Gambiranom*. The sequence of events he experiences—from the emergence of his love for Dewi Titisari, the disappointment following the cancellation of their marriage, and his longing for his beloved, to his unwavering determination to win her hand—forms the continuum of emotional experiences that underpins the conceptual framework of the dance. Consequently, the primary focus of *Gambiranom* is not the representation of the narrative in its entirety but rather the portrayal of the protagonist's psychological state while immersed in the experience of *gandrung*. Through its movement vocabulary and expressive gestures, the dance presents a visual embodiment of the inner emotional turbulence of a young warrior experiencing attraction, longing, hope, and an ardent desire to attain the love he seeks. In this sense, Bambang Irawan's love story functions as a cultural source of inspiration that is reconstituted into forms of aesthetic behavior, transforming the experience of falling in love from a literary narrative into an artistic expression embodied in the medium of dance.

In the Javanese dance tradition, dance characters are generally classified into three principal categories: *putri* (female), *putra gagah* (vigorous male), and *putra alus* (refined male). This classification is based on the gender representation of the character as well as the character traits that constitute the foundation of the movement style (Sriyadi et al., 2025; Sriyadi & Wibowo, 2025). *Putri* dance represents female characters through movement qualities that are refined, graceful, and controlled, whereas *putra gagah* portrays strong, courageous, and authoritative male figures through movements that are dynamic, assertive, and expansive. In contrast, *putra alus* represents refined, courteous, and elegant male characters whose movement quality is characterized by restraint, composure, and control. More specifically, *putra alus* is further divided into two

subcategories: *putra alus luruh* and *putra alus lanyap* (or *mbranyak*). *Putra alus luruh* embodies a calm, humble, and self-controlled character through stable movements with minimal accentuation. By contrast, *putra alus lanyap* represents a character who retains the refined qualities of *putra alus* while exhibiting greater vitality, assertiveness, and expressiveness, resulting in movement that is more animated and dynamic (Maryono, 2019; Sriyadi & Wibowo, 2025). Thus, the distinction between these two subcategories lies not in the degree of refinement they embody but rather in the intensity and manner through which that refinement is expressed via the dance movement.

Based on this classification, *Gambiranom* belongs to the category of *putra alus lanyap*. This classification is reflected in the portrayal of King Gambiranom as a young warrior who embodies refinement and nobility while simultaneously exhibiting an active, dynamic, and expressive disposition (Maryono, 2019). These characteristics are manifested through movement qualities that are more assertive and energetic, with the controlled use of physical energy occasionally punctuated by distinct accents that reinforce the dance's dynamic and masculine character. Nevertheless, the performance remains firmly grounded within the aesthetic framework of *putra alus*, as evidenced by its relatively restrained spatial range of movement and its consistent emphasis on refined movement technique. These characteristics make the *putra alus lanyap* style particularly well suited to representing the emotional intensity associated with the experience of *gandrung*. As a result, the protagonist's experience of falling in love is presented not merely as a private psychological state but as an aesthetic expression that has been transformed into and communicated through the expressive language of dance movement.

In the Surakarta dance tradition, the theme of *gandrungan* is generally represented through two principal performance models: the *gambyongan* and *kiprahan*. The *gambyongan* model adopts many of the choreographic conventions associated with the *gambyong* dance genre, including its movement structure, movement quality, and musical accompaniment. This relationship is rooted in the fundamental concept of *gambyong*, which traditionally represents a young woman entering adulthood, a stage marked by increasing self-awareness of personal appearance and the emergence of romantic interest in the opposite sex (Ishiguro et al., 2024; Widyastutieningrum, 2004). Consequently, although *gambyong* does not explicitly narrate a romantic relationship, it embodies a symbolic representation of the development of emotional awareness and romantic attraction. These symbolic conventions have subsequently been adapted into a variety of *gandrungan*-themed repertoires, including male dance works, while preserving the characteristic musical idioms and movement vocabulary of the *gambyong* tradition.

In contrast to the *gambyongan* model, the *kiprahan* model developed from the dramatic and choreographic conventions of the Javanese *wayang orang* tradition, particularly from scenes portraying male characters within romantic narratives. This performance pattern is most commonly found in the *jejer* scene, the opening sequence in which a king, warrior, or nobleman appears before his courtiers and attendants. Within this dramatic context, the protagonist's psychological state is frequently conveyed through the integration of movement, music, and dramatic atmosphere, expressing emotions such as romantic attraction, longing, or the desire to marry a princess. Accordingly, the experience of *gandrung* in the *kiprahan* model is articulated through movement qualities that are more dynamic, assertive, and energetic, making it particularly well suited to the representation of male protagonists.

The coexistence of these two performance models demonstrates that the theme of *gandrungan* in the Surakarta dance tradition is not realized through a single mode of aesthetic expression. Rather, the representation of falling in love is constructed through diverse cultural traditions and choreographic conventions that give rise to distinct

movement characteristics. The *gambyongan* model emphasizes softness, refinement, and subtle emotional expression, whereas the *kiprahan* model foregrounds dynamism, assertiveness, and expressive intensity. This distinction suggests that the experience of *gandrung* in the Javanese dance tradition is a culturally constructed phenomenon that may be manifested through multiple aesthetic strategies, depending on the character portrayed and the representational context in which the dance is performed.

In relation to this conceptual framework, *Gambiranom* may be classified as a *gandrungan*-themed dance presented in the *kiprahan* model. This classification is evident not only in its portrayal of a male warrior as the central character but also in its performance structure, movement qualities, and expressive patterns. As a *kiprahan* dance, *Gambiranom* places the protagonist's emotional experience at the center of its representation, particularly the feelings of romantic love, longing, and the desire to attain the beloved. These emotional states are articulated through movement that is dynamic, assertive, and energetic while remaining firmly grounded within the aesthetic conventions of the Surakarta *putra alus* style. Consequently, the representation of falling in love in *Gambiranom* is conveyed not through the softness and delicacy characteristic of the *gambyongan* model but through the intensity of movement and bodily dynamism that embody the emotional turbulence of a young warrior immersed in the experience of *gandrung*. This distinctive quality establishes *Gambiranom* as a representative repertoire demonstrating how romantic experience in Javanese culture is culturally constructed and communicated through the aesthetic conventions of male dance. Accordingly, the experience of falling in love is understood not merely as an individual's psychological condition but also as a culturally constituted expression manifested through forms of aesthetic behavior.

As a *gandrungan*-themed repertoire performed in the *kiprahan* model, *Gambiranom* is distinguished by characteristic features reflected in its musical accompaniment, performance structure, and development of dramatic atmosphere. The principal musical composition accompanying the dance is *Lancaran Rena-Rena Laras Slendro Pathet Nem*, with the *lancaran* musical form serving as the primary hallmark of the *kiprahan* model in *gandrungan*-themed repertoires within the Surakarta dance tradition. Structurally, the performance of *Gambiranom* consists of three principal sections: *maju beksan* (introduction), *beksan* (main dance), and *mundur beksan* (conclusion). The *beksan* section is further divided into several segments that progressively develop the protagonist's emotional state. The opening segment is accompanied by *lancaran* music performed at a slower tempo than that of the *maju beksan*, thereby establishing a melancholic atmosphere that reflects *Gambiranom*'s feelings of sorrow and longing. The subsequent segment presents the *kiprahan* section, accompanied by a more dynamic and energetic *lancaran*, which conveys the protagonist's determination and emotional intensity in pursuing his beloved. The final segment employs *Ketawang Kinanthi Sandhung*, whose musical and lyrical content expresses romantic love, longing, and the desire to reunite with the beloved. Among these structural components, the *kiprahan* section constitutes the defining feature that establishes *Gambiranom* as a *gandrungan* repertoire in the *kiprahan* model, for it is in this section that the protagonist's emotional experience is articulated through movement qualities that are dynamic, assertive, and highly expressive, in accordance with the aesthetic conventions of the Surakarta dance tradition.

Aesthetic Behavior in Gambiranom Dance: A Cultural Construction of the Experience of Falling in Love

As a *gandrungan*-themed dance repertoire, *Gambiranom* centers on the representation of a protagonist's emotional experience of being deeply immersed in romantic love. Because it

is performed as a solo dance, the entirety of its expressive content constitutes a visualization of King Gambiranom's inner world as he imagines the presence of Dewi Titisari, the object of his affection (Maryono, 2019). This psychological state is embodied through a wide range of expressive movements that represent the emotional turbulence of romantic love, portraying the protagonist as absorbed in reverie and overwhelmed by his emotions. Consequently, his emotional state unfolds dynamically throughout the performance, shifting from moments of elation expressed through vigorous and energetic movement to feelings of longing, anxiety, and sorrow manifested in movement qualities that are more restrained, subtle, and contemplative. This emotional progression provides the conceptual foundation for the expressive structure of *Gambiranom* while illustrating how the experience of *gandrung* is culturally constructed as a form of aesthetic behavior within the Surakarta dance tradition.

The representation of the experience of *gandrung* in *Gambiranom* is constructed through a dynamic dramatic structure characteristic of the *kiprahan* performance model. The protagonist's psychological development unfolds progressively across each section of the performance, creating a coherent emotional trajectory. This progression begins with the *maju beksan* (introductory section), which establishes an atmosphere of vigor and vitality through energetic movement. In the first *beksan* section, the tempo and intensity of the musical accompaniment gradually slow, creating a subdued and melancholic atmosphere that represents the protagonist's longing and sorrow. These emotional states are embodied through movement qualities that are more restrained, refined, and contemplative. The dramatic intensity rises again in the second *beksan* section, where the protagonist's passion and emotional fervor are expressed through movement that is increasingly dynamic and expressive. In the third *beksan* section, the performance returns to a melancholic mood, portraying Gambiranom as though he were encountering Dewi Titisari within his imagination. This scene constitutes the emotional climax of the dance, as the protagonist realizes that the encounter exists only in his reverie. This realization subsequently gives rise to a renewed determination to transform his longing into concrete action in pursuit of his beloved, a resolve expressed in the *mundur beksan* (concluding section) through the restoration of an atmosphere characterized by confidence, energy, and resolve. Taken together, the dramatic structure of *Gambiranom* traces a continuous emotional progression from vigor and longing to hope and determination, thereby constructing the experience of *gandrung* as an aesthetic expression that represents the protagonist's emotional behavior through the expressive language of dance movement.

The emotional progression established through this dramatic structure is subsequently articulated through a range of movement patterns that represent the protagonist's vigor, longing, hope, and determination in pursuing his beloved. These movement patterns are not composed arbitrarily; rather, they are grounded in the behaviors and emotional experiences commonly observed in Javanese society when an individual is immersed in the experience of *gandrung*. Through processes of stylization, artistic selection, and adherence to the aesthetic conventions of Javanese dance, these everyday behaviors are transformed into forms of aesthetic behavior that function as symbolic media for communicating the experience of falling in love through the expressive language of dance movement. Accordingly, the emotional expression embodied in *Gambiranom* not only represents the protagonist's psychological state but also reflects the cultural construction through which Javanese society understands and expresses the experience of romantic love.



Figure 1. QR code directing readers to a video of the *laku telu rimong sampur glebakan* movement sequence
(Source: Sriyadi, 2026)

One form of aesthetic behavior representing the experience of *gandrung* in *Gambiranom* is embodied in the movement sequence *laku telu rimong sampur glebakan*. This choreographic motif represents the behavior of an individual engaged in a loving relationship through the act of soothing or gently cradling a beloved as an expression of care and affection. This representation is realized through the integration of *lilingan* head movements, in which the head alternately tilts to the right and left with a soft, flowing quality of energy, creating the impression that the protagonist is comforting or delighting the person he loves. Within the Javanese cultural context, such behavior constitutes a common expression of affection between lovers during moments of romantic intimacy. Through processes of stylization in accordance with the aesthetic conventions of Javanese dance, this everyday social practice is transformed into a choreographic motif that no longer serves a practical function but instead operates as a form of aesthetic behavior, symbolically communicating affection, emotional intimacy, and happiness associated with the experience of *gandrung*.

Another form of aesthetic behavior is exemplified by the *aruna* movement sequence, which represents the emotional experience of sorrow arising from longing for a beloved. In Javanese dance terminology, *aruna* literally denotes tears or weeping; accordingly, this movement sequence serves to articulate the protagonist's inner emotional struggle as he is consumed by longing yet unable to reunite with the person he loves. Such emotional experience reflects a form of social experience commonly recognized within Javanese society, in which unfulfilled longing gives rise to sorrow as an affective response. Through processes of stylization into the movement vocabulary of Javanese dance, this everyday emotional experience is transformed into the *aruna* movement sequence, which no longer functions as an ordinary expression of emotion but instead constitutes a form of aesthetic behavior representing the meanings of longing, sorrow, and profound affection within the experience of *gandrung*.



Figure 2. QR code directing readers to a video of the *aruna* movement sequence
(Source: Sriyadi, 2026)

The experience of *gandrung* also gives rise to behavioral changes in everyday life, particularly those associated with personal appearance and self-presentation. Within Javanese culture, individuals who are deeply in love commonly make greater efforts to present themselves as clean, well-groomed, and attractive, both as a gesture of respect and as an attempt to gain the attention of the person they love. This social practice is subsequently transformed into *Gambiranom* through a series of movement sequences that represent the behaviors of *ngadi salira* and *ngadi busana*. *Ngadi salira* refers to the practice of caring for and maintaining bodily cleanliness, whereas *ngadi busana* denotes the attention given to the neatness and harmony of one's attire. These behaviors are most prominently represented in the *kiprahan* section, or the second *beksan* section, where the protagonist is portrayed as preparing himself for an anticipated encounter with his beloved. Through processes of stylization in accordance with the aesthetic conventions of Javanese dance, these practices of self-adornment are no longer understood as practical actions of everyday life but are instead reconstructed as forms of aesthetic behavior that symbolize the protagonist's hope, readiness, and sincere commitment in expressing the experience of *gandrung*.



Figure 3. QR code directing readers to a video of the *kiprahan* section
(Source: Sriyadi, 2026)

The representation of self-grooming behaviors associated with the experience of falling in love, or *gandrung*, is embodied through several movement sequences that are constructed as forms of aesthetic behavior, namely *trap jamang*, *udal rikma*, *timbangan sampur*, and *tumpang tali*. The *trap jamang* movement represents the act of adjusting the *jamang* (head ornament), symbolizing neatness and readiness in personal appearance. *Udal rikma* depicts the practice of arranging or grooming the hair as an expression of *ngadi salira*, or bodily self-care. Meanwhile, *timbangan sampur* represents the act of adjusting the *sampur* (dance scarf) so that the costume appears more harmonious and well arranged. The *tumpang tali* movement, in turn, symbolizes the act of applying makeup as an effort to appear more attractive before the beloved. Within the Javanese cultural context, this sequence of behaviors constitutes a common social practice among individuals experiencing *gandrung*. Through processes of stylization into the movement vocabulary of Javanese dance, these everyday actions are transformed into forms of aesthetic behavior that not only represent the practice of self-adornment but also symbolically communicate the protagonist's hope of gaining the attention, affection, and love of the person he desires.

The representation of affection within the experience of *gandrung* is also embodied through the *pondongan* movement sequence, which symbolizes the protagonist's desire to establish both physical and emotional intimacy with the person he loves. This sequence comprises two variations: *pondongan miwir sampur* and *pondongan mandhe sampur*. *Pondongan miwir sampur* is performed by extending both arms laterally while spreading the *sampur*, thereby creating the impression that the protagonist is opening his arms to embrace his beloved. In contrast, *pondongan mandhe sampur* represents the protagonist's

imagined experience of already holding his beloved in an embrace, conveying a more intimate and deeply personal expression of affection. Within the Javanese cultural context, embracing is regarded as a common expression of affection that reflects the emotional closeness shared by two individuals in a loving relationship. Through processes of stylization in accordance with the aesthetic conventions of Javanese dance, this affective experience is transformed into the *pondongan* movement sequence as a form of aesthetic behavior, symbolically communicating longing, affection, and the desire for emotional and physical closeness through the expressive language of dance movement.



Figure 4. QR code directing readers to a video demonstrating the *ebat ngancap naga wangsul* movement sequence, followed by the *pondongan mandhe udhet* movement sequence

(Source: Sriyadi, 2026)

Deepening longing and an increasingly intense desire to reunite with the beloved are also represented through the *ebat ngancap naga wangsul* movement sequence. This choreographic motif articulates the protagonist's psychological state of restlessness resulting from his inability to meet the person he loves. In this condition, the protagonist appears to imagine the presence of his beloved before him and attempts to approach her, only for the imagined figure to disappear and reappear from another direction. This recurring sequence of movements represents the inner emotional struggle of an individual whose mind is continually occupied by longing, such that the imagined presence of the beloved repeatedly emerges within his consciousness. Such an emotional experience is commonly recognized within Javanese society as a characteristic manifestation of *gandrung*. Through processes of stylization in accordance with the aesthetic conventions of Javanese dance, this emotional experience is transformed into the *ebat ngancap naga wangsul* movement sequence as a form of aesthetic behavior, symbolically communicating restlessness, longing, and an intense desire to reunite with the beloved through the expressive language of dance movement.

The foregoing discussion of these movement sequences demonstrates that aesthetic behavior in *Gambiranom* is not constructed through arbitrary choreographic forms but rather through the transformation of emotional experiences and social practices embedded within Javanese society. Expressions such as comforting a beloved, experiencing longing, enhancing one's appearance, imagining intimacy with a loved one, and feeling restless because of separation all represent behaviors commonly associated with the lived experience of individuals immersed in *gandrung*. Through processes of stylization, artistic selection, and adherence to the aesthetic conventions of Javanese dance, these everyday behaviors are reconstructed into a movement vocabulary that serves a symbolic function in communicating meanings, emotions, and cultural values. Accordingly, each movement sequence in *Gambiranom* functions not only as a choreographic element but also as a cultural representation that demonstrates how the experience of romantic love is transformed into forms of aesthetic behavior. This perspective further underscores that

aesthetic behavior in *Gambiranom* is fundamentally rooted in the everyday lived experiences of Javanese society. Consequently, its analysis must be situated within the broader context of the cultural practices that shape both the formation and the interpretation of each expressive movement.

This interpretation is consistent with a growing body of scholarship that identifies emotional experience and everyday practice as the primary sources from which aesthetic behavior in dance is constructed. Liang (2025) argues that emotional experiences and everyday actions provide the movement vocabulary that subsequently undergoes processes of artistic sublimation and refinement, ultimately becoming forms of aesthetic expression. Similarly, Sartwell (2005) maintains that aesthetic behavior is rooted in non-artistic activities and lived experiences that are subsequently transformed into the domain of art. Loke and Robertson (2010) likewise contend that emotional experiences and everyday actions can be reconstructed into movement vocabularies endowed with aesthetic meaning, thereby generating forms of expression that reflect the existential dimensions of human experience. Emphasizing the body as the medium through which such transformation occurs, Mullis (2006) explains that ordinary actions acquire aesthetic value through a process of somaesthetics, whereby embodied experience is transformed into artistic experience. Bergonzoni (2017), meanwhile, demonstrates that even the most ordinary actions, such as walking, can be reinterpreted as dance through phenomenological experience, giving rise to new movement vocabularies with aesthetic significance. From this perspective, the aesthetic behavior embodied in the diverse movement sequences of *Gambiranom* may be understood as a culturally constructed form that transforms the everyday experiences of Javanese society associated with *gandrung* into symbolic, communicative, and aesthetically meaningful movement.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that aesthetic behavior in *Gambiranom* is a cultural construct formed through the transformation of the emotional experiences and everyday practices associated with *gandrung* in Javanese society into a choreographic language that has undergone processes of stylization in accordance with the aesthetic conventions of the Surakarta dance tradition. The diverse movement sequences representing longing, affection, attention to personal appearance, emotional intimacy, and determination in the pursuit of love do not emerge as arbitrary forms of expression; rather, they function as symbolic representations of social behaviors embedded within the culture that sustains the tradition. These findings affirm that the emotional experiences embodied in *Gambiranom* are constructed not only as artistic expressions but also as manifestations of the value system and cultural worldview through which Javanese society understands and interprets the experience of falling in love.

Furthermore, this study demonstrates that this construction of aesthetic behavior is embodied through a *kiprahan* performance style characterized by the *putra alus lanyap* model, which is distinguished by movement qualities that are dynamic, assertive, and energetic while remaining firmly grounded within the refined aesthetic framework of the Surakarta *putra alus* tradition. This performance style functions not merely as a choreographic convention but also as a cultural marker that distinguishes the Javanese mode of representing the experience of *gandrung* from other forms of representation. Accordingly, the performance style of *Gambiranom* may be understood as an aesthetic expression that integrates emotional experience, social practice, and the Javanese cultural value system into the expressive language of dance movement. In doing so, it further reinforces the position of ethnic dance as a cultural text through which the identity of the community that sustains the tradition is represented.

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