

## Research Article

## Forms and Functions of Traditional Dance of *Likok Pulo* in *Pulo Nasi* (Nasi Island), Aceh Besar, Indonesia

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**Abstract:** Indonesia is a country rich in various forms of traditional arts. One of them is *Likok Pulo* dance originating from *Pulo Nasi* (Nasi Island), Aceh Besar District, Indonesia. The aim of this study is to find out and describe the forms and functions of *Likok Pulo* dance. As a qualitative study, to gather the data, this study conducts a direct observation and in-depth interviews with the selected relevant informants. Specifically, an interactive analysis model comprises four components, namely data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing is conducted. The study found that the forms of *Likok Pulo* dance consist of the prefix, essence, and the closing. Dancers enter the stage, salute, and greetings the audience are the prefix of the dance. The essence of *Likok Pulo* dance is characterized by movement when the dancer starts to move which has a medium to fast tempo. The closing is marked by one of the dancers walking on the hands of the other dancers which are likened to a bridge and saluting as the end of *Likok Pulo* dance. Meanwhile, the functions of *Likok Pulo* dance include entertainment, propaganda media, educational facilities, cultural identity, and tourism attractiveness. Due to the uniqueness and messages delivered in the *Likok Pulo* dance, it is suggested that the relevant government authority, particularly the education, cultural, and tourism departments should preserve the traditional dance of *Likok Pulo* by initiating and conducting traditional dance performances as a regular event of arts and culture in the region.

**Keywords:** Forms and functions of dance; Traditional dance; *Likok Pulo*; Cultural identity; Tourism attractiveness.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has a variety of interesting and famous forms of traditional dance (Acciaoli, (1985). *Saman* and *Seudati* dance found in Aceh Province, Indonesia is one of the interesting traditional dances that have been well-known nationally, regionally, and even globally. In addition to *Saman* and *Seudati* dances, many other types of traditional dances are spread throughout the districts in Aceh, including *Likok Pulo* dance in *Pulo Aceh*, Aceh Besar District. Literally, *Likok Pulo* dance comes from the Acehnese language, namely *Likok* means dance and *Pulo* means island. *Likok Pulo* dance was introduced in 1849 by a scholar named Syech Ahmad Badron, originally from Saudi Arabia who stranded in *Pulo Aceh*, Aceh Besar, Indonesia.

Although it is not known exactly when the first appearance of *Likok Pulo* dance in *Pulo Aceh*, Nurmairi as one of the successors and has become a *Syech* (expert) of *Likok Pulo* dance stated that it was firstly

created by an Arab cleric, named Syech Ahmad Badroen. When Indonesia was under the Dutch colonial era, Syech Ahmad Badroen was captured by the invaders and then sentenced to death when he refused to renounce his beliefs as a follower of Islam. However, before he was executed to the death sentence, Syech Ahmad Badroen made a final request to the invaders not to see the place of his death sentence for 40 days. It was said that Syech Ahmad Badroen was a man who possessed *karamah* (sacred) and stranded in *Pulo Aceh* and since then he started preaching spreading Islam in the island.

*Likok Pulo* dance etymologically consists of two syllables, namely *Likok* and *Pulo* which are from the Acehnese language. *Likok* means straight, *i'tidal*, and squat down, while *Pulo* means Island. From its name, it could be easily understood that *Likok Pulo* dance is a dance originating from *Pulo Aceh* and Syech Ahmad Badroen was the inventor or creator of the dance. According to Nurmairi or called Syech Bit,

Quick Response Code



Journal homepage:

<http://www.easpublisher.com/easjehl/>

Article History

Received: 15.05.2018

Accepted: 25.05.2019

Published: 16.06.2019

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*Likok Pulo* dance is inherited from one generation to another. The inheritance system used is an open inheritance system, which teaches the community or students who want to learn the dance freely.

There have been many studies explored the traditional dance-related issues, such as the traditional dance's creativity (Zuryaningsih *et al.*, 2019), choreography (Prita, 2014), ethno-cultural identity (Dunbar–Hall, 2003, Murtala *et al.*, 2019), messages (Mauidhah, 2017), values (Aini, 2016; Altas, 2017) and its roles (Dhuhri, 2016), music and dance interaction (Kunst, 1994; Kartomi, 1995; Dunbar–Hall, 2003, Fahlafī *et al.*, 2017), symbol and its meaning (Khaliqin, 2017), motion (Hegarini and Syakur, 2016, Anbarsanti and Prihatmanto, 2014) and model (Anbarsanti and Prihatmanto, 2014), existence (Gunawan *et al.*, 2017), and educational media (Basri *et al.*, 2017). However, the studies that specifically focusing on the traditional dance of *Likok Pulo* in *Pulo Nasi* (Nasi Island), Aceh Besar, Indonesia have been limited. Thus, this study intends to identify and explain in-depth the forms and functions of the *Likok Pulo* dance in *Pulo Nasi* (Nasi Island), Aceh Besar, Indonesia.

This study hopes to provide information about the textual form of *Likok Pulo* dance. Even though the *Likok Pulo* dance in *Pulo Nasi* has become one of the non-objects cultural heritage, but many people did not know it. Since the emergence of *Likok Pulo* dance is a creation that exists and develops in studios, thus it is hardly known to the public. The findings of this study are also hoped to promote the traditional dance within the societies domestically and internationally. This is absolutely made possible as the dance has been openly inherited and spread to the society. The traditional dance is not only learned or known by the supporting dance community, but it can be better known by the public.

The rest of the study is structured in the following sequences. Section 2 briefly discusses the research method. Section 3 provides the findings and discussion on the forms and function of the *Likok Pulo* dance, and finally Section 4 concludes the study.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study is descriptive in nature. The forms and functions of the *Likok Pulo* dance are explained qualitatively. The subject matter is described comprehensively and in-depth. Data of the study is gathered using the method of observation, in-depth interviews with the selected relevant informants, documentation, and review of literature. The gathered data is subsequently analyzed qualitatively with reduction techniques, data presentation, data verification, and conclusions.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It has been noted that there have been six *Syech* (experts) who have taught and inherited the *Likok Pulo* dance in *Pulo Nasi*, Aceh Besar, Indonesia, namely: (i). *Syech Ahmad Badroen*; (ii). *Syech Sulaiman*; (iii). *Syech M. Nur*; (iv). *Syech Jaelani*; (v). *Syech Tengku Hamzah*; and (VI). *Syech Bit*.

### 3.1. Form of *Likok Pulo* dance

In this section, the forms of *Likok Pulo* dance are discussed:

#### 3.1.1. Dancers

Aceh is known as the veranda of Mecca in Indonesia which is very synonymous with Islamic tenet, so that in terms of art, especially dance, it cannot be separated from the local wisdom. We can see this in terms of their dancing, that is, there is no dance in Aceh that has dancers and is a couple or a combination of men and women. So the dance in Aceh only has dances that can be danced only by men or only women.

In this regard, *Likok Pulo* dance, the dancer is male. Drawing on its own history *Likok Pulo* dance was created by *Syech Ahmad Badroen* to deal with youth in ancient times to avoid disgraceful acts such as gambling, robbing, or drinking. So that if the young people have danced the *Likok Pulo* dance which is draining and no longer has the intention to commit disgraceful acts because they feel tired.

According to Hadi (2007) in the text and contextual dance study, the number of even or odd dancers is determined by the intention or desire of the dance stylist. In this regard, there are 8 dancers from *Likok Pulo* dance, although there are no provisions regarding the number of dancers, however, *Likok Pulo* dance has a provision that the number of dancers must be even.

#### 3.1.2. Motion

Some dances in Aceh always prioritize cohesiveness and motion that are displayed and have become distinctive characteristics such as *Saman* dance, *Seudati* dance, *Rapa'i Geleng* dance and various other types of dances. The same is true for *Likok Pulo* dance, which has become an identity of the *Pulo Aceh* community through its distinctive movements. The dance gestures are cast as hidden discrete states and phrase as a sequence of gestures with a range of dance movement (Anbarsanti and Prihatmanto, 2014).

Unlike other traditional dances such as *Seudati* or *Saman* that have a variety of dance moves or called in Aceh as the term *rukun* (pillars), the *Likok Pulo* dance does not have such term, *rukun*. One song has 2 – 4 different movements. So, it becomes a habit to mention the variety of motion by using the name of the song or poem in the movement. As for the names of songs in various forms of motion are as follows:

- *Ihum Allah*. The song or poem of *Ihum Allah* consists of three different movements.
- *Sinyak Top*. *Sinyak Top* songs or poems consist of three different movements.
- *Peme Ue*. The song or poem of *Peme Ue* consists of two different movements.
- *Di Pulo Aceh*. The song or poem *Di Pulo Aceh* consists of three different movements.
- *Areh Guda Plang*. The song or poem *Areh Guda Plang* consists of two different movements.
- *Jan Lon Jak*. The song or poem *Jan Lon Jak* consists of two different movements
- *Dayong-Dayong*. The song or poem *Dayong-Dayong* consists of two kinds of movements.
- *Syech Ahmad Badroen*. *Syech Ahmad Badroen's* song or poem consists of three different movements.

### 3.1.3. Makeup and Clothing

*Likok Pulo* dance, which is a traditional dance with male dancers, does not prioritize makeup. Different things if the dancer is a female who needs makeup. So for *Likok Pulo* dance, it doesn't wear makeup when performing dance shows.

There is no special outfit used by *Likok Pulo* dancers in performing a performance or performance. However, the costume or clothing that is usually worn uses Acehnese clothes and a headdress or called *tangkulok*. In addition, there is no provision in choosing colours for the *Likok Pulo* dance clothes, but in general, the clothes used are red and green, while the trousers used are black.

### 3.1.4. Property

Property is one of the supports in a dance performance. Hidajat (2011) explains that property is a means of supporting motion as an expression of dance, because its identity is a tool, its presence is functional. The property used by *Likok Pulo* dance is *Boh Likok*. *Boh Likok* is a property shaped like a pipe with a diameter of 10cm. *Boh Likok* made of wood with the Acehnese language is usually called *Kayee Thoe Ie*. In addition to being a property in dance, *Boh Likok* becomes a tool that will later support to produce rhythmic sounds. As stated by Hidajat (2011) that property has a function as internal music is property that is played as a dance aid so that it produces sounds. In addition, the use of *Boh Likok* also replaces and avoids applause because clapping in Islam is not recommended because it is classified into the actions of the *Jahiliyyah* (ignorance).

### 3.1.5. Music

One of the supporters or elements of dance is music. Music becomes a part that cannot be separated from dance. In addition, music is one characteristic that gives a new nuance or identity to a dance. For example, most dances in Aceh make music itself as part of dance. The effects of the movements or pats caused make the dance in Aceh unique compared to other dances.

*Likok Pulo* dance uses two types of music namely external music and internal music. According to Sumaryono (2006), internal music is music that is raised by the dancers themselves, while external music is music that is raised by other people (musicians). *Likok Pulo* dance uses two types of music namely internal and external. The internal music in *Likok Pulo* dance is the body of the dancer himself when making dancers clapping hands and also when using the *Boh Likok* property in the same way when using his hands, while the external music used is *Rapa'i*. The numbers of musicians who use *Rapa'i* are three people.

The musical notation of *Likok Pulo* dance is as follows:

**The following the poem or song of *Likok Pulo* dance:**

*I hum Allah Allah meukrue meukrue  
Semangat lam bungong ka inseung  
I hum Allah Allah buda buda  
Ya jameun lam ka jangket teuma*

*Sinyak top gapu alee bak muroeng  
Sinyak top teupong alee bak jeumpa  
Badan ban seunut rupa bangsa lon  
Meurumpok ngeun lon nibak woe sikula*

*Peme ue ue di laot timue  
Geulumbang meusue taloe ie tarek  
Angen jipot riyeuk di meusue  
Nyo keuh lagu si rimueng balek*

*Di pulo Aceh na gampong rinon  
Kilometer nol meter nol geurasi nama  
Tanda yang kuat hy kuat lampu di peudong  
Beudoh jak kalon jak kalon batas Negara*

*Areh guda plang guda plang di lingkang talo  
Areh guda poe guda poe di lingkeu paya  
Areh di cutbang di cutbang hana pat meuruno  
Maklum di kamoe di kamoe aneuk sikula*

*Jak lon jak lon timang lam boh putik boh putik  
rambot  
Beungoh beungoh seupot lam angen angen  
peudoda  
Beujeut gata hai dek lam ta pawang ta pawang  
laot  
Meubek meubek ta takot lam nibaknibak bahaya*

*Dayong dayong perahu dayong  
Ta dayong teungeuh na pasar  
Likok lapeh lhee meu ek ngon meu tron  
Geulumbang alon dek tamong kualo*

*Syekh ahmad baideuhon ala baideuhon  
Deuhon syekh malem  
Ala husada ali gura hum maihot  
Bahgura hum maihoet lahoet hoet ala hum  
maihoet*

**3.1.6. Floor Pattern**

According to Hidajat (2011), the floor pattern is the formation of a moving group on the stage. The use of the floor pattern for *Likok Pulo* dance does not make a move or formation on the stage floor. *Likok Pulo* dancers only remain in a place with a sitting position. Thus, the formation for the floor pattern only lines parallel to the side horizontally.

**3.2. Functions of *Likok Pulo* Dance**

In general, a dance has a function attached to the dance itself such as entertainment, social integrity, cultural identity, educational facilities, or as a means of ritual (Depdikbud, 1981). *Likok Pulo* dance as one of the traditional dances with the background of the story

of *Syech* Ahmad Badroen used to function as a medium of propaganda. As explained earlier that *Syech* Ahmad Badroen was a *Syech* who was stranded in *Pulo Aceh* and originating from the Arab country. He created *Likok Pulo* dance to spread Islam and teach local people to avoid actions and behaviours that are contrary to Islamic teachings. The *da'wah* (preaching) media carried out by *Syech* Ahmad Badroen through *Likok Pulo* dance was carried out through movements that required high levels of concentration and the length of time spent to dance. Thus, the intention to do things that are contrary to the teachings of Islam was ignored again due to fatigue after dancing the dance. In other words this dance was a tactic used by *Syech* Ahmad Badroen to spread *da'wah*.

Aside from being a missionary medium, *Likok Pulo* dance serves as an educational medium. When the ancient dance was used as a propaganda medium, *Likok Pulo* dance is now used as an educational medium. The point is that the dance provides added value to the performers themselves or to the dance lovers. As said by Hadi (2007) that in the context of dance education serves to provide positive added value for others. In this case, *Likok Pulo* dance teaches and provides information for connoisseurs about the goodness conveyed in song poems.

*Likok Pulo* dance is a dance originating from *Pulo Aceh* with unique and distinctive characteristics with others. It has become commonplace in Aceh to generally dance in a sitting position, but *Likok Pulo* dance itself offers a dance dish with its own style and characteristics, namely by using the property of *Boh Likok*. With its characteristic that distinguishes it from other dances so *Likok Pulo* dance becomes a cultural identity. In addition, since 2016 the *Likok Pulo* dance has become recognized and awarded a non-object cultural heritage given by the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Republic of Indonesia.

The phenomenon of dance as a means of tourism has become commonplace for art groups or supporters of a dance that is traditional to modern. Likewise the case with *Likok Pulo* dance which can now be seen in various tourism events. However, as said by Hadi (2007) that when performing arts becomes a packaging art in tourism offerings, the duration used is short and solid. As is the case with *Likok Pulo* dance, when the dance was performed for tourism needs, the motion and variety were compacted and the duration of the show was also shortened. The variety of movements of the *Likok Pulo* dance, which usually consists of 20 different types of movements, only show 8 kinds of movements for tourism purposes.

**4. CONCLUSION**

*Likok Pulo* dance is one of the traditional dances originating from *Pulo Nasi*, Aceh Besar, Indonesia. This dance is a group dance performed by

male dancers. The form of *Likok Pulo* dance is a manifestation of the process of Islamic preaching (*da'wah*) carried out by Syech Ahmad Badroen to deal with the youth not to take actions outside of the teachings of Islam. The movements that are possessed are not much different from most sitting dances in Aceh in general which have a tempo at the beginning of a slow motion and are medium and very fast. However, what distinguishes this dance from the other dances is the property used, which is using *Boh Likok* to avoid the dancers clapping their hands.

The function of *Likok Pulo* dance is not only a means of entertainment, it also has a function as a medium of propaganda, an educational facility that provides added value for the performers or connoisseurs, as a cultural identity and has become an intangible cultural heritage, and a means of tourism. *Likok Pulo* dance is expected to be one of the learning materials that can be applied in schools or at art universities in Aceh as a manifestation of traditional dance preservation. In addition, this research is expected to be a reference material and can develop this research with more complex problems.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper is part of the research project supported by the *Lembaga Penelitian, Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat, dan Penjaminan Mutu Pendidikan (LPPMPMP)* (Institute for Research, Community Service, and Educational Quality Assurance), *Institut Seni dan Budaya Indonesia* (ISBI) Aceh, Kota Jantho, Aceh Besar, Indonesia [Grant No. 00040/IT11/L/PP/2018]. We really thankful for a good cooperation from the LPPMPMP ISBI, without the grant this paper would have not possible to be published in the present form.

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